CONNECTING TRADITIONS:
AUGUSTINE AND THE GREEKS ON INTENTIONALITY

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According to the standard narrative found in encyclopedias and hand-books,[1] contemporary interest in intentionality traces back through Husserl and Brentano to late scholastic philosophy, and from there to Arabic philosophers such as Avicenna and Alfarabi. But at this point the trail is supposed to peter out. Nothing in ancient Greek philosophy, allegedly, corresponds.

Yet if one turns to the passage in the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* where Franz Brentano reintroduces the medieval termi-nology of 'intentional inexistence'—a *locus classicus* for contemporary discussions—one finds the following historical footnote:

> Aristotle had already spoken of this psychical indwelling. In his books *On the Soul* he says that what is experienced, as something experienced, is in the experiencing subject; that the sense receives what is experi-enced without the matter; and that what is thought is in the under-standing. In Philo, we likewise find the doctrine of mental existence and inexistence; but because he confuses this with existence in its proper sense, he arrives at his contradictory doctrine of *logos* and Ideas. The same holds for the Neoplatonists. Augustine in his doctrine of the *verbum mentis* and its issuing internally touches on this same fact. Anselm does this in his famous ontological argument; and the fact that he con-sidered mental existence to be a real existence is held by many to be the basis of his paralogism (cf. Ueberweg, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, **II**). Thomas Aquinas teaches that what is thought is intentionally in the thinker, the object of love in the lover, and what is desired in the desiring subject, and he uses this for theological ends. When Scripture speaks of the indwelling of the holy spirit, he explains this as an inten-tional indwelling through love. And he even attempts to find an anal-ogy for the mystery of the Trinity and the procession *ad intra* of the Word and the Spirit in the intentional inexistence which occurs in thinking and loving.[2]

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[1] E.g., Spiegelberg [1976]; Engelhardt [1976]; Knudsen [1982]; Crane [1998]; cf. Kneale and Kneale [1962], 229.

[2] Brentano [1924], I.125, note. Hedwig ([1978a], 79) claims that none of the passages in question concerns "the theme of intentionality", but rather the immanence

The first attribution in this list has already been the subject of some debate.[3] Brentano notoriously credits Aristotle with many of his own ideas; and even when there is some basis for his reading, it is often filtered through the lens of late scholasticism.[4] But Brentano's point does not rest on Aristotle alone. In citing Philo, the Neoplatonists and Augustine, he clearly believes that the idea has wide currency long before the Arabic philosophers.[5]

How far back can we trace it, then? Much depends, obviously, on how we frame the question. What, exactly, is a history of intentionality a history *of*? There are a number of different possibilities, and they have not always been carefully distinguished. But the ones with the greatest philosophical interest, I believe, justify Brentano's optimism. The Greeks were worried about intentionality from quite early on—by the midfifth century before the Common Era, it had already become thematized and problematized—and there is continued interest over the course of ancient philosophy. As part of this tradition, Augustine serves here, as in other areas, as a natural link between ancient and medieval discussions. There is a direct transmission via the Latin tradition, independent of the Arabic tradition.

The state of the question

The standard narrative itself traces back to an article first published in 1936 by the phenomenologist Herbert Spiegelberg, which was revised first in 1969 and once again in 1976.[6] His main concern was to show that modern usage of the term 'intentionality' is due to Husserl, although he allowed that the germ of this usage can also be found in Brentano (Spiegelberg [1976], esp. 122). Spiegelberg starts by noting that not every sense of the term 'intention' is rele-

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of the object. But this is surely to put too fine a point on the matter, as we shall presently see.

[3] Owens [1980]; Owens [1981]; Sorabji [1991]; Caston [1998].

[4] Hedwig [1978b]; Hedwig [1978a].

[5] Other dissenters from the received view include Kobusch, who like Brentano, argues that the notion of intentional or mental existence goes back to antiquity, especially in the Stoic and Christian traditions ([1987], 23–78); and Rohmer [1951], who traces the notion back to the Stoic doctrine of "secure apprehensions" (καταληπτικαὶ φαντασίαι). Against this interpretation, see below, pp. 36–7.

[6] Spiegelberg [1933/34]; Spiegelberg [1969]; Spiegelberg [1976]; similar remarks can be found in his history of the phenomenological movement: Spiegelberg [1971], 1.40–41.

vant, but only the "extrapractical" one—of a mental act's being directed at or referring to an object—a sense that applies to purely theoretical acts, such as thought, as well as to practical ones like volition (109). He then considers whether the various conceptions associated with the term match up with Husserl's. His remarks about the early history are perfunctory: "[t]hroughout ancient philosophy until the beginning of the High Scholastic period, '*intentio*' simply had the practical meaning of 'striving toward', 'intent to do something', 'exertion'" (110). It is not, he claims, until twelfth and thirteenth century translations of Avicenna that we find '*intentio*' in the relevant sense; and even then, he claims, it is used for a feature of the objects of mental acts, rather than something actlike (110). Thus, in Spiegelberg's view the phrases 'intentional inexistence' and '*esse intentionale*' do not adequately express the concept of intentionality, insofar as they apply to the objects of mental acts and not the acts themselves (120).[7]

Further support for these conclusions about the early history of the term can be found in P. Engelhardt's entry on '*intentio*' in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (1976). Although he argues that it is a mistake to separate the history of the practical and extrapractical senses, he nevertheless takes its use in the early Latin tradition to be primarily practical (466–467). On his view, its use for the contents of mental states occurs first in connection with the Arabic tradition, when the terms '*ma'na*' and '*ma'qul*' are rendered with the Latin '*intentio*' (469–470).[8] And while he notes Greek antecedents for many of these uses, he does not assign any of them a significant role (469).

Without even entering into details, one can already see the difficulty in this sort of approach. A *mélange* of different criteria are at work. Spiegelberg, for example, will only accept a case that fits a quite specific, Husserlian conception of intentionality. But the primary criteria in both articles are plainly terminological. To qualify, a text must not only use technical terms for intentionality, but terms that are *continuously linked* with our own terminology: the terms in question

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[7] For a critique of Spiegelberg's treatment of high scholastic theories on just this point, see Marras [1976].

[8] A similar distinction between the sense of '*intentio*' found in Augustine and that found in the Arabic tradition can be found in Hayen [1954], 37 and 196. Cf. also Hedwig [1978b], 260–261; although see n. 2 above.

must either be cognate with the German '*Intentionalität*' or connected to it via philosophical translations. But obviously a philosopher might have a technical term for intentionality without its being connected in this way; indeed, a philosopher might be concerned with intentionality without using any technical terms at all. This sort of approach will therefore be blind to much relevant evidence, even if it is right on the details. And if it is not, there may well be a continuous transmission of terminology reaching back to antiquity.

In point of fact, the received story is wrong at every level.

1. *Interest without terminology.* There are plainly ancient Greek philosophers concerned with intentionality from early on, despite the lack of technical terminology. It has already become problematized by the midfifth century in Gorgias' *On Not Being*, as well as in the work of various other Sophists worried about the possibility of falsehood, concerns that are arguably present still earlier in Parmenides.[9] By the time we reach Plato and Aristotle this concern has become thematized, as a recognized difficulty that requires an answer.[10] Much of this development takes place independently of a common specialized vocabulary.[11]

2. *Terminology without continuous transmission.* Various expressions are coined over time to designate intentionality, and often these parallel our own terminology, whether or not there is a continuous transmission via philosophical translations. Throughout antiquity, for example, the antithesis of 'presence in absence' is used to describe the way in which desire and thought can make "present" to us what is absent from our immediate environs or even absent from reality altogether.[12] In a more technical vein, the early Stoics speak of nonexistent intentional objects as "ἐννοήματα"—literally, immanent objects,

objects that are *in thought* (ἐν + νόημα), including "centaurs, giants, or anything else that, having been made up by a false thought, takes on an appearance, even though it does not have reality" (Seneca *Ep.* 58.15; cf. Sext. Emp. *Adv. math.* 9.49).[13] In late antiquity, we find frequent occurrences of the phrase 'existing in mere thoughts alone' (ἐν ψιλαῖς ἐπινοίαις μόναις) to designate the status of merely intentional objects.[14]

We even find the metaphor of a bow aimed at an object to express the directedness of mental states—the very image Spiegelberg uses ([1976], 115–116) to illustrate Husserl's supposedly distinctive conception of intentionality. In Plato's *Cratylus*, Socrates offers the following etymologies:

> Belief [δόξα] is so called either for the pursuit [δίωξις] the soul engages in when it seeks knowledge of how things stand, or for the shooting of the bow [τόξον]. It's more likely the latter—thinking [οἴησις], at any rate, is in line with this. For it seems to refer to the soul's being borne [οἶσις] towards the issue of what each being is like,[15] just as a plan [βουλή] compares to a shot [βολή][16] and willing [βούλεσθαι] signifies aiming at [ἐφίεσθαι], as does planning [βουλεύεσθαι]. All these things that follow on belief seem to be likenesses, as it were, of shooting, just as contrariwise negligence [ἀβουλία] seems to be missing the mark [ἀτυχία], as when a person does not strike or hit that at which he was shooting, which he willed, about which he was planning, or at which he aimed (420bc).

Notice the way in which the point is applied here to *both* practical *and* theoretical mental states. And just as plans can "misfire," so can beliefs: in trying to hit things as they are, one may fail to get things right. The image is elaborated in the *Theaetetus* as part of the effort to explain how false belief is possible:

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9 Gorgias: *On Not Being, apud MXG* 980a9–18; Sext. Emp. *Adv. math.* 7.7–82. Protagoras: DK 80 B 1; *apud* Platonem *Tht.* 167a7–8. Euthydemus: *apud* Platonem *Euthyd.* 283e–284c. Cratylus: *apud* Platonem *Crat.* 429c–434b. Antisthenes: V A 152, 153, 155 Giannantoni. For more general discussion, see my "Gorgias on Thought and its Objects", forthcoming in: V. Caston and D. Graham (eds.), *Essays on Presocratic Philosophy in honor of Alexander Mourelatos* (forthcoming, Ashgate publishing).

10 For a survey of Aristotle's views on the subject, see Caston [1998].

11 I plan to discuss all of these issues at greater length in *The Problem of Intentionality in Ancient Philosophy* (in progress, for Cambridge University Press).

12 E.g., Hesiod *Op.* 367; Thales DK A 1, §37; Parmenides DK B 4; Democritus DK B 202; Plato *Crat.* 420a46, *Symp.* 209c3, *Phaedr.* 255d8 (cf. *Lysis* 215b4–6); Aristotle *De mem. et remin.* 1, 450a25–451a17, *Rhet.* 1.11, 1370b23; 2.4, 1381b25, *Nic. eth.* 9.5, 1167a6; Epicurus *Gnom. Vat.* 35; also, importantly, *1 Cor.* 5:3, *2 Cor.* 13:10, *Phil.* 2:12, and *Col.* 2:5. Cf. Homer *Il.* 15.80; Gorgias *Enc. Hel.* 16.

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13 For more extensive discussion, see Caston [1999].

14 See esp. Alex. *In Top.* 355.13; Porph. *Isag.* 1.11; Philop. *In Gen. et Corr.* 284.18; Elias *In Isag.* 46.7–47.23, 49.17–21; David *Proleg. phil.* 46.35–47.1, *In Isag.* 110.23–111.1, 114.2–15, 116.5–15, 117.20–28, 118.12–22, 119.16–24, 130.18–23; outside of the Aristotelian tradition, Sext. Emp. *Adv. math.* 8.453–54, 459; 9.208, 209; 10.15. More generally, see Alex. *In Metaph.* 92.19, *In De sens.* 112.7, *De an.* 90.3, *Quaest.* 78.19; Plot. 3.9.7.6, 6.6.9.14; Porph. *In Categ.* 75.28; Syrianus *In Metaph.* 106.12; Simpl. *In Categ.* 11.9, 53.28, 216.11, 349.33, 506.5, 512.21, 517.11, *In Phys.* 621.33, 648.9, 766.27; Philop. *In Categ.* 9.17, *In An. Post.* 271.24, *In De gen. et corr.* 26.22; *In De an.* 38.3, 148.21, *In Phys.* 4.19–26, *Aet. mund.* 414.7, 433.26; Ascl. *In Metaph.* 376.37, 414.15, 434.1; Ps. Alex. *In Metaph.* 778.33, 779.9, 814.35; Eustr. *In An. Post.* 95.30.

15 Reading ἐπὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα with BW.

16 Reading πρὸς τὴν βολήν with the mss.

...firing, like a poor archer, he shoots wide of his aim and misses the mark [ἁμαρτεῖν], and it is this, then, that is called false (194a).

Plato himself believes that such a view faces serious difficulties. But he clearly thinks it is worth criticizing, because of its intuitive appeal. It belongs, in any case, to a history of intentionality.

3. *Continuous transmission of terminology.* Finally, the received story is not even correct on its *own* terms: there is in fact a continuous transmission of terminology. Much of the medieval terminology of intentionality—of 'impressed' and 'expressed species', the 'inner word', not to mention '*intentio*' itself—is already present in Augustine, who is frequently cited in scholastic discussions.[17] And his use, as we shall see, arises directly from his engagement with Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Neoplatonists. The use of '*intentio*' is prominent in his analysis of vision, which is much endebted to Chrysippus; and in the Stoic fragments we *do* find the sought after cognate, the Greek 'ἐντείνω'. So if it's terminology we're after, we can take the story back through late antiquity to the Hellenistic period at least.

Histories of intentionality

Obviously, it is not terminology we are primarily after, but what is expressed by it. And the occurrence of an expression is neither necessary nor sufficient for a given concept to be in play. Exceedingly different things can be signified by a single term—consider only the history of the terms 'substance', 'matter', or 'concept'—and, conversely, a single concept can be signified by many different terms. To capture the early history of a philosophical theme, we must be alert to the different ways it can be expressed, even before terminology has been coined and become canonical. Concordances and indices are not a sufficient guide for doing the kind of historical research we are interested in.

Once we abandon a primarily terminological study, though, the question immediately arises as to just what criteria we should use;

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[17] Hayen [1954], esp. 27, 37, 45, 196 (cf. also 38–40); Nash [1960]; Lindberg [1983], liv–lv. Vanni Rovighi ([1962], 31–32) also accepts a qualified version of this claim. For a sampling of references see, e.g., Spruit [1994], pp. 180–181, n. 23. On the medieval doctrine of species more generally, see Prezioso [1963]; Michaud-Quantin [1970]; Lindberg [1983]; Tachau [1988]; Spruit [1994].

and this in turn requires us to be more precise about just what we are searching for. Initially, one might think that a history should be concerned with *theories* of intentionality. But there is at least a prima facie difficulty here. Different people place different constraints— sometimes quite severe constraints—on what is to count as a theory: it has been argued, for example, that Plato does not have a theory of Forms because his statements on the subject do not fit a hypothetico-deductive model of explanation (Sayre [1993]). One might argue that such a standard is unnecessarily strict. But there is no need to get into a verbal dispute here. A good philosophical history should be concerned with more than theories in any case, even if 'theory' is taken in a fairly loose sense. Theories arise only when discussion has already advanced to a certain stage, much as with technical terminology; and there will always be interlocutors who are critical to a debate even though they do not have theories at all, but only objections and criticisms, or even an outright dismissal of the phenomenon in question.

One might try to cast one's net more broadly, then, by looking for philosophers who possess the *concept* of intentionality. Here too there are problems about what is to count as a concept, and above all what is to count as evidence that a given philosopher possesses the concept in question. But there is an even more fundamental problem still. *Which* concept of intentionality? The natural answer, of course, is *the* concept of intentionality, that is, a *correct* grasp of what constitutes intentionality. But this is precisely what our philosophers disagree about—in fact, it is just this disagreement that makes the history relevant and interesting. Even if one were bold enough to think that one's own conception were the correct one, all that could result from this approach would be a very whiggish history— one that saw everything as progressing towards our own enlightened state, while falling short in various measures. We would lose the chief benefit of a philosophical history, namely, the perspective that we gain on our own conceptions, by considering them from different vantage points—to see the ways in which our conceptions might have developed, as well as to determine which features are genuinely essential and which merely the result of prejudice or tradition.

We need a looser way of gathering these disparate threads together. One way is to look for contributions that form part of a single discussion, in an effort to respond to a single problem or, more exactly, a single *worry*—that is, what is *perceived* to constitute a problem. This

type of approach is more promising, both methodologically and philosophically. First, the question of evidence is as straightforward as anything can be in interpreting philosophical texts: it is much easier to tell whether someone is puzzled by something or responding to the puzzlement of others. Second, it places emphasis on what is of greatest relevance to philosophers: not *causal* questions, about who influenced whom or about cultural and psychological forces, influences that do not necessarily belong to the order of reasons; but rather (i) *dialectical* questions, about the sorts of philosophical pressures that lead one to adopt a certain position, and (ii) *evaluative* questions, about how well a given answer holds up against various criticisms, whether offered before or after. Such a history does presuppose that the issue has at some point become thematized and problematized, but it does not require this to be as explicit and formal at the outset as it will become over the course of discussion.

The problem of intentionality

Still, there are different problems one might be interested in. For example, there is the problem that Brentano himself was concerned with, of finding a criterion for psychological phenomena as *distinct* from physical phenomena, that is, of finding some characteristic that every mental phenomenon, and no physical phenomenon, possesses. Or there is what is sometimes referred to as "Brentano's problem"[18]—something that did not trouble Brentano, but is rather a problem his theory might be thought to raise *for others*—namely, the problem of offering a *physicalist* theory of intentionality, one that does not go beyond the kinds of entities and attributes recognized by the physical sciences. Neither of these is strictly the problem we should be concerned with, though. The first turns on Brentano's *use* of intentionality to solve *another* problem, concerning the autonomy of psychology. The second is closer, insofar as it turns on the nature of intentionality. But the difficulty is one that is idiosyncratic to certain modern theories. A proper history should be concerned with *any* philosophical attempt to account for intentionality, whether or not it is physicalist—if for no other reason than that this breadth of vision will give us a better perspective on our own physicalist inclinations.

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[18] The phrase is due to Field [1981]. Cf. Haldane [1989], 1f.

The problem of intentionality should, therefore, be framed in full generality, as the difficulty of providing a philosophical account of the nature of intentionality, in light of its various peculiarities; and by 'intentionality', we should understand that feature in virtue of which our mental states are *of* or *about* something, or more generally possess content. This characterization is meant to serve in the manner of a nominal definition, something that purports to refer to a particular phenomenon, which can then be subjected to further critique and revision. By using such a guide, not only will quite divergent solutions to the problem fall within the ambit of a history, but also attempts to *dissolve* the problem, by denying that there is any difficulty or even dismissing the phenomenon itself. The degree to which an author considers the problem of intentionality to be a problem is less important than the nature of his response to it. We are not concerned with philosophers' confidence or disdain, but with the way they maneuver through or around a certain stretch of conceptual geography. A history of intentionality that did not include Parmenides or Quine would simply not be worth the candle.

In framing the history as a history of responses to a problem, then, we are not requiring a philosopher to give a complete account, much less a theory, of intentionality. To give a complete account of intentionality would require, ideally, an answer to both a general and a specific question. First, what in general makes a mental state intentional—in virtue of what does it possess *any* content at all? Second, what makes a *given* mental state have the content it happens to have—why is it about *this* object (or property, or state-of-affairs) rather than another?[19] The second question may not admit of a single answer for all mental states: it is easy to imagine that the content of vision, desire and abstract thought might each involve very different analyses. But philosophers can obviously make significant contributions to this project without completing it or even attempting to complete it. Our concern is with the way the discussion is carried on.

What makes the problem of intentionality a *problem* is the peculiarity of certain features of states with intentional content—above all, the fact that they fail to obey familiar entailment patterns. Three

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[19] Here I agree largely with Tye ([1994], 139f.) about the kinds of questions that should be addressed, although he is primarily concerned with whether a naturalistic account of intentionality is possible.

failures were made particularly well-known by Chisholm [1955/56], along with another two by Anscombe [1981] and Geach [1980], respectively:[20]

1. *Failure of Existential Commitment.* 'Alexius is thinking of Pegasus' does not entail either 'Pegasus exists' or 'Pegasus does not exist'; nor does its negation entail either.
2. *Failure of Truth-Functionality.* 'Isabella believes the world is flat' does not entail either 'The world is flat' or 'The world is not flat'; nor does its negation entail either.
3. *Failure of Intersubstitutivity of Coextensive Expressions salva veritate.* 'Gottlob knows that Cicero is a cordate' does not entail either 'Gottlob knows that Tully is a cordate' or 'Gottlob knows that Cicero is a renate'.
4. *Failure of the Excluded Middle.* 'Elizabeth is thinking of a man' does not entail 'either Elizabeth is thinking of a man at least 6 ft tall or Elizabeth is thinking of a man under 6 ft tall'.
5. *Failure of Quantifier Exportation.* 'Jean promised to give me a horse' does not entail 'There is some horse that Jean promised to give me'.

Some have elevated these failures to a criterial role, in the hopes of securing the autonomy of psychology: if statements phrased in intentional language do not permit entailments that are licensed by their physicalist translations, then (one might argue) the reduction of psychology is impossible. But this strategy presupposes a model of reduction that is inappropriate for empirical sciences—a reducing science need not *paraphrase* or *translate* statements in so strong a sense.[21] Abundant counterexamples also cast doubt on whether these failures of entailment can serve as strict criteria for intentionality in any case.[22]

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[20] The rubrics and examples here are my own. I also do not want to suggest that failures of entailment associated with intentionality are limited to these five. Others have been proposed as well: see, e.g., Chisholm [1963]; Chisholm [1967b]; Chisholm [1967a]; Searle [1979]; Bealer [1993].
[21] Nagel's model of reduction, for example, requires only that necessary biconditionals or "bridge laws" link sentences of the reduced theory to sentences in the reducing theory, not that such sentences be analytically equivalent or synonymous (as appears to have been assumed in Chisholm [1955/56]). For an excellent elaboration of this criticism, see Kim [1971].
[22] For some criticisms of the various proposals, see esp. Cornman [1962]; Cornman [1964]; Luce [1964]; Sleigh [1964]; Sleigh [1967]; Lycan [1969]; Martin and Pfeifer [1986]; Pfeifer [1988].

Even so, such failures are still puzzling whenever they occur, and the fact that they are symptomatic of intentional states demands explanation, regardless of our views about the autonomy of psychology—we needn't take these failures to be criterial for them to be important to our task. For the purposes of a philosophical history, we can leave open the question of whether they form a single syndrome or instead stem from disparate causes;[23] and whether there remain still other difficulties in accounting for intentionality. Any attempt to grapple with any of these oddities should count as a response to the problem of intentionality.

Such a methodology should allow us to redress the balance left by the received history of intentionality. Here I can attempt only a part of that larger project in a cursory fashion.[24]

Looking back to Augustine

Augustine occupies one of the more intriguing, and vexed, roles in the history of intentionality. Because of the intellectual milieu in which he worked, the language he spoke, and his profound influence, he is bound to serve as a bridge between the ancient and medieval traditions: as has been noted, many of the terms used by later theories of intentionality can be traced back to him. Augustine's importance in the history of "extrapractical" intentionality has been largely overlooked,[25] I suspect, because of his association of *intentio* with the will (*uoluntas*). But in fact he makes *intentio* the centerpiece of his analysis of *cognition* in *De trinitate*—every act of vision, memory, and thought is said to involve *intentio* as an essential element. The theory accounts for content by appealing to this *intentio*, together with forms or *species* that are replicated at each successive stage of cognition. These views, moreover, stem from a critical engagement with

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[23] The first two failures, for example, seem to go together and form some of the oldest worries about intentionality (sometimes referred to as the "problem of presence in absence" and the "problem of error", respectively). The others concern the ways in which contents can be "thin" and abstract; and while some of these problems have a long history, they do not appear to have been taken to be an identifying feature of intentionality before Chisholm's search for logical criteria.
[24] For that larger project, see my *The Problem of Intentionality in Ancient Philosophy* (in progress, with Cambridge University Press).
[25] Exceptions to this generalization include Rohmer [1954], Vanni Rovighi [1962], and, to a limited extent, Hayen [1954].

Greek views on cognition: while rejecting key aspects of Aristotelian and Stoic theories, Augustine also incorporates elements from each, to produce an innovative synthesis.[26]

What is perhaps most distinctive about Augustine's theory, though, is the theological end it is meant to serve. Having become frustrated in his effort to understand the trinity in terms of the Aristotelian categories (cf. esp. 5.1.2–5.5.6), Augustine abandons a logical approach for a psychological one. If God is by nature triune and we—or, more exactly, our minds (cf. 12.7.12)—are made in his image, then *we* ought to contain images of this trinity as well; and so, by starting from the more familiar "trinities" within ourselves, we might hope to advance by means of psychological investigation to the more difficult case of the divine trinity (9.12.17; 11.1.1; 15.6.10; 15.8.14). Augustine begins with the "outer man", with an analysis of sense perception that focuses on vision, and then proceeds gradually towards the "inner man", by way of an analysis of memory and thought. Each of these trinities, of course, yields no more than an imperfect analogy, insofar as each lacks the unity attributed to the divine trinity. It is only when we reach self-knowledge—a form of thought, Augustine believes, that is independent of sense experience and the body—that we have anything that is worthy of being called an image of the divine trinity in any proper sense (14.8.11; although cf. 15.17.28, 41–42).

But all this helps rather than hinders. For the success of Augustine's strategy depends on the cogency of his trinitarian analyses: to the extent that his psychology is concocted or artificial, it cannot provide the kind of illumination he seeks. It ought to be possible, therefore, to defend his analyses on purely psychological grounds, *precisely because* of the theological end they are meant to serve.

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[26] I have avoided discussing Augustine's notion of the "inner word"—a large subject in its own right—because of the way he closely links it with knowledge (see esp. *De trin.* 9.7.12–9.14; 15.10.19–11.20, 12.22, and 15.24). This narrower epistemological role ill-suits it for the broad semantic and representational issues I am concerned with (which extend to animals as well as humans). For an excellent discussion of Augustine's notion of the mental word, with references to the secondary literature, see esp. Panaccio [1995]; Panaccio [1999].

Cognition and the multiplication of species

Augustine begins Book 11 with the analysis of vision. When we see a given body, there are three distinct elements to be considered: (i) the visible object; (ii) vision, that is, the activity of seeing; and (iii) the soul's *intentio*, "which keeps the sense of sight on the object that is seen, while it is seen" (*quod in ea re quae uidetur quamdiu uidetur sensum detinet oculorum*, 11.2.2). Before considering this third element in detail, it will help to consider the other two more closely first.

The visible object and vision are plainly meant to correspond to the father and the son. But their roles also follow from Augustine's realism. In general, objects are prior to the cognition of them, which they are said to "beget" (*cognoscibilia cognitionem gignunt, non cognitione gignuntur*, 14.10.13); hence, the visible object is also said to beget vision (11.2.3). But the visible object cannot produce vision by itself—it requires an animate subject, with a functioning sense of sight (11.2.3), a point that Augustine extends quite generally: "knowledge is born from both, from the cognizing subject and the object cognized" (*ab utroque enim notitia paritur, a cognoscente et cognito*, 9.12.18). For this reason, Augustine argues, the object cannot be considered a true parent, but only a "quasi-parent" (*quasi parens*, 11.5.9), in all cases where knower and known are different—that is, in *virtually all* cases of cognition—because the object requires the cooperation of the cognitive faculty, which is distinct from itself. The father, in such cases, cannot go it alone.

This process of "begetting" is quite literally a matter of information: the sense of sight is "informed" (*informatus*) by the visible object. Hence, vision is just "the form itself that is impressed on the sense by the same object" (*ipsa forma quae ab eodem imprimitur sensui quae uisio uocatur*, 11.2.2) or, more precisely, "the informing of the sense" (*informatio sensus quae uisio dicitur*, 11.2.3). Augustine likens it to the impression a signet ring makes in wax, except that in the case of vision the impressed form does not remain after the object has gone away. To that extent, he suggests, it would be more apt to compare vision to the imprint a signet ring makes in *water*, which disappears as soon as the ring is removed, even though such an image will be more difficult for "slower minds" (11.2.3) because no trace remains. This is a poignant remark, since earlier philosophers had appealed to water precisely as a *counterexample* to the signet ring analogy. Indeed, they argued against the Stoics that the senses would be even worse

off, since according to the Stoics the imprint in the soul would be made in *pneuma*, a hot gas.[27] Augustine accepts the example, but takes it on the contrary to support the original analogy: for a ring *does* make an imprint in water, he insists, even if not a lasting one.

All this might lead one to think that Augustine is working mainly from the Stoic tradition.[28] The Stoics eagerly embrace the signet ring metaphor. They define being appeared to (φαντασία) generally as an "impression" (τύπωσις) on the soul;[29] and when it is secure (καταληπτική), it is said to be "stamped, imprinted and sealed" (ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναποτετυπωμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη) by the object.[30]

But it would be hasty to conclude that the Stoics are Augustine's sole or even primary source. First, the signet ring analogy is fairly common throughout the tradition. Not only does Aristotle famously use it for both perception and memory, it also occurs prominently in Plato's discussion of false perceptual beliefs in the *Theaetetus*; and it occurs still earlier in Democritus and Gorgias in connection with vision and in Aeschylus and Pindar in connection with memory.[31] So we would need more evidence to connect it specifically with Stoicism.[32]

Second, a prominent feature of Augustine's account is the replication of forms (*forma, species*) at each stage of cognition. In vision, the sense of sight itself takes on the form of the object; and though sight loses this form once the object is removed, it in turn impresses a third form into memory. This form can later be "printed out" (*exprimitur*) from memory, when the object is recollected, to impress yet another form onto the soul's focus (*acies animi*, 11.3.6, 11.7.11–

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[27] Plut. *De comm. not.* 1084F–1085a; Sext. Emp. *Adv. math.* 7.374–75; cf. Plot. 4.7.6.37–44. The mss. of Sextus have a finger (δακτύλου) being pressed into the water; one might wonder, though, whether they are missing an 'ι', from an original δακτυλίου (ring).

[28] So Rohmer [1951], 28–30; Rohmer [1954]; and Spruit [1994], 179–180. O'Daly [1987], 100, who describes Augustine as "a child of Stoic dogmatism" in these matters.

[29] D. L. 7.46, 50 (= *SVF* 2.53, 55); Alex. Aphr. *Mant.* 133.25–28; Sext. Emp. *Adv. math.* 7.236, 227–28, 372, 376–77, 8.400–2 (= *SVF* 1.58, 1.484, 2.56); Plut. *De comm. not.* 1084f–1085a (= *SVF* 2.847).

[30] D. L. 7.46, 50 (= *SVF* 2.53, 60).

[31] Aristotle: *De an.* 2.12, 424a17–24; *De mem. et remin.* 1, 450a27–32; cf. *De an.* 3.12, 435a9. Plato: *Theaetetus* 191c ff.; cf. *Phil.* 39a ff. Democritus: *ap.* Theophr. *De sens.* 50 (= DK A 135). Gorgias: *Encom. Hel.* § 17. Aeschylus: *Suppl.* 179, *Prom. vinc.* 789, *Eum.* 275, fr. 530.21; cf. *Suppl.* 991–92, *Choe.* 450. Pindar: *Olymp.* 10.13.

[32] Rohmer [1954] claims that Augustine's discussion presupposes the Stoic notion of being appeared to *securely* (καταληπτικαὶ φαντασίαι); but I have been unable to find any decisive textual support for this view.

11.8.13). This emphasis on forms—and in particular Augustine's insistence that there are four distinct forms (11.9.16)—is foreign to Stoicism, just as is the emphasis on distinct faculties, each of which must receive a new form in order to rise to activity. For the Stoics, perception takes place only when the impression is made on the governing faculty (ἡγεμονικόν), despite a certain transmission (διάδοσις) from the peripheral organs. There is no sequence of faculties, serial imprintings, or multiplication of forms.[33]

The background Augustine is working from is most plausibly Aristotelian.[34] The notion of form is central to Aristotle's theory of cognition, and it appears to be received by each successive faculty: he appeals to the signet ring metaphor for both perception and memory, and speaks of thought as involving a similar reception of the object's form.[35] In fact, Aristotle even uses the image of a signet ring impressed in flowing water to explain how memory traces may not take in people who are in a state of excitement (καθάπερ ἂν εἰς ὕδωρ ῥέον ἐμπιπτούσης τῆς κινήσεως καὶ τῆς σφραγῖδος, *De mem. et remin.* 1, 450a32–b3). An Aristotelian influence would also explain an otherwise peculiar feature of Augustine's account. Augustine insists that at each stage of cognition, *two* forms are involved—one impressing and the other impressed—that are so intimately united during the act of cognition that their difference can be discerned only by reason (11.2.3, 11.3.6). He seems to be making the same point here, in less felicitous terms, that Aristotle does in *De anima* 3.2, when he claims that the activity of the perceptible object and the activity of the perceptual capacity are "one and the same, though different in being" and realized together in the perceiving subject (425b26–426a26), a doctrine that is also supposed to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to thought.[36] A number of passages seem to allude to other Aristotelian doctrines as well. He describes, for example, the imprints left behind as

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[33] Aetius 4.23.1 (= *SVF* 2.854), Plot. 4.7.7 (= *SVF* 2.858). Cf. Calcidius 220 (= *SVF* 2.879); Aetius 4.21.14 (= *SVF* 2.836).

[34] In this I agree with Vanni Rovighi ([1962], 26–32), although I think she goes too far in assimilating their views, especially regarding the efficacy of the sensible object. She takes *De trin.* to represent a reversal of Augustine's earlier Neoplatonic views on sensation, in favor of a fully Aristotelian model, but without taking into account, it seems, the views of *De Gen. ad litt.* 12. See below, pp. 39–40, 44.

[35] Perception: *De an.* 2.12, 424a17–24; cf. 3.12, 435a8–10. Memory: *De mem. et remin.* 1, 450a27–b11. Thought: *De an.* 3.4, 429a15–18.

[36] *Metaph.* 1074b38–1075a5. Cf. *De an.* 3.4, 430a35; 3.5, 430a19–20; 3.7, 431a1; 3.8, 431b21–29.

"remnants of the form" (*reliquias formae*, 11.2.4), much as Aristotle does in the *Parva naturalia* (ὑπόλειμμα, *De insomn.* 3, 461b21–22). And Augustine argues for the existence of such forms by appealing to after-images, just as Aristotle does (11.2.4; *De insomn.* 2, 459b7–18).[37] Such echoes clearly trace back to Aristotelian texts, even if Augustine's reception of them is mediated by other thinkers.[38]

Intentio: *the job description*

But if Augustine appropriates these elements from the Aristotelian theory, he also thinks they aren't sufficient to account for cognition by themselves. A *third* element is also required, parallel to the holy spirit, which is entirely absent from the Aristotelian account: *intentio*. As a psychological complaint, this is puzzling on the face of it, since whatever account one gives of the reception of forms in Aristotle, it is plainly meant to offer an account of the *content* of mental states. And Augustine accepts this, at least to a certain extent, insofar as he appeals to the *similarity* of the received forms in accounting for content[39]—otherwise, he wouldn't be entitled to any of the epistemological benefits that accrue to such a theory. For Augustine, similarity is supposed to guarantee a correspondence between the content of one's mental states and the objects from which they arise. So it is not at all obvious what is lacking in the Aristotelian account.

The puzzle only seems to be made worse when we turn to Augustine's descriptions of what the soul's *intentio* does. Most commonly, he describes it as keeping or holding the sense trained on the object (*in ea re . . . detinet/tenet*, 11.2.2). It further conjoins the two forms (*utrumque coniugit*) at each level of cognition (11.2.2; 11.3.6).

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[37] Other parallels include: *De trin.* 11.2.2 and *De an.* 1.4, 408b18–24; *De trin.* 14.6.8 and *De an.* 3.4, 429b5–9; *De trin.* 15.10.19 and *De int.* 1, 16a38; *De trin.* 15.22.43 and *De mem. et remin.* 1, 450b20–25.

[38] O'Daly, for example, denies that Augustine had access either to *De anima* or *Parva naturalia* ([1987], 102). But that hardly precludes indirect influences through the Aristotelian tradition. Plotinus is an obvious candidate here, but also Alexander of Aphrodisias, on whom Plotinus often depends. Alexander often speaks of an imprint as a "residue" and a "trace" (ἐγκατάλειμμα, *De an.* 38.10, 62.22–63.5, 68.4–11, 68.25–69.3, 69.15–18, 70.4–14, 70.23–71.2, 72.11–13, 97.11–14; ἴχνος, 62.22–63.5, 72.11–13). The terminology can also be found more widely: see, e.g., the summary of Aristotelian psychology in Sext. Emp. *Adv. math.* 7.219–26.

[39] Cf. 9.10.16–11.16 (cf. 9.12.17); 11.2.3; 11.3.6; 13.1.4; 15.10.19; 15.11.20; 15.12.22; 15.15.25; 15.27.50.

Finally, *intentio* is frequently identified as the will (*uoluntas*) or as some aspect of the will (*intentio uoluntatis*), and hence with love (*amor*). It has "the ability to couple the two" forms (*uim copulandi haec duo*, 11.2.5, 11.4.7) with what he sometimes describes as the "glue" of care or love (*curae glutino*, 10.5.7; *glutino amoris*, 10.8.11, also *Conf.* 4.10.15). But from an Aristotelian perspective, it is hard to see what work such "joining" really does. *Intentio* might seem at best to be little more than a facilitator, that just arranges matches, so to speak, between our capacities and objects in the world.

But Augustine also offers more promising characterizations. On a number of occasions he describes the *intentio* as guiding the sense to the object (*admouet*, 11.2.5, 11.3.6, 11.5.9) and as turning thought to an image in memory (*conuertit*, 11.3.6, 11.9.16), keeping our gaze there for as long as cognition of that object is to continue. In a roughly contemporaneous work, *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine speaks of the soul as directing the "force of its intention" towards bodily objects (*ad corporalia uim suae intentionis dirigere*) and, on other occasions, as turning away towards dream images (*in aliud auersa, cernit uisa somniorum*, *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.20.42–21.44). In *De trinitate*, he also describes the *intentio* as a "combiner and divider" (*coniunctricem ac separatricem*) of the various images in memory, which can then be submitted to thought's focus, thus making the *intentio* responsible for the inventions of our imagination. It is here, significantly, that falsehood first becomes possible, according to Augustine (11.10.17).

In view of these passages, it may seem that one of the main functions of the soul's *intentio* is *selective attention*—our ability to focus, at will, on various objects in our environment or in our thoughts.[40] This is a decidedly *active* feature of our cognitive processes, which commentators have endlessly (and unconvincingly) sought in earlier Greek philosophy. Aristotle, for example, offers no explanation of the phenomenon: the mechanisms he invokes in his account of cognition, including *phantasia*, are all passive. What experiences we have depends entirely on what happens to be in front of us, so to speak. Augustine, in contrast, emphasizes the role of *intentio* both in focusing on objects in our environment and in mentally constructing what isn't thus available.

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[40] A point rightly stressed by Vanni Rovighi ([1962], esp. 26 and 32), although, as will become clear shortly, I think she is wrong to *identify* the two. On Augustine and attention, see Neumann [1971]; Hatfield [1998].

One might object, however, that on Augustine's scheme, just as much as on Aristotle's, the content of our mental states is a function of which forms are impressed on a cognitive faculty: variations in one determine variations in the other. This is correct, but not to the point. For which forms are impressed on a cognitive faculty, according to Augustine, is itself a function of the soul's *intentio*—we have a large share in what winds up in front of us and under our gaze. His appeal to *intentio* thus belongs to an account of intentionality, specifically, to an account of why a given experience is of this object rather than that. Something that "joins" the soul to an object is thus responsible for the content the resulting state has.

This responsibility takes on added importance once we reflect on a peculiarity of Augustine's theory that distinguishes it from Aristotle's. In *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine firmly denies that any body can act on the soul and so that the visible object can affect the soul in any way (12.16.32), a Neoplatonic view that can be found elsewhere in his writings (e.g., *De musica* 6.5.8–15).[41] Yet at the same time he continues to speak of the production and imprinting of forms in cognition.[42] This leaves him with a hefty problem: to explain how the form of an object comes to be impressed in the faculty, if the object at most *occasions* the impression and does not, strictly speaking, bring it about (12.16.32–33, 12.20.42–43). On Augustine's view, the causal story can only be filled in by spirit, and *intentio* supplies the mechanism (12.20.42–43). But this move, in turn, threatens his theory in a new way. For if something other than the object is responsible for a form's being "impressed," then error can creep in at the very first step, since the form is no longer anchored in the external object by a causal chain originating from that object—which form gets impressed depends on the spirit. Augustine thus has an even greater need to assert that the impressed form must be exactly like the form of the object. According to *De trinitate*, the soul's *intentio* achieves this by "coupling" and "uniting" the forms in such a way that they cannot be distinguished, except by reason. This problem does not arise for Aristotle, who can rely directly on the agency of the object to transmit its form. For him, the activity of the object and perceptual activ-

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[41] Cf. esp. Plot. 4.4.23; also 3.6.1, 4.6.13.
[42] See esp. *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.24.50–51; also 12.6.15, 12.9.20, 12.11.22, 12.16.32–33, 12.20.42–43; 12.23.49. Cf. *Epist.* 147.38.

ity are "one and the same" not for any special epistemological reason, but because this is a feature of all causal interactions quite generally (*De an.* 3.2, 425b26–426a26; *Phys.* 3.3, *passim*). Because of the sharp distinction Augustine draws between the body and the spirit, he needs a third element in his account like *intentio*, where a monist like Aristotle does not.

Attention deficits

The suggestion that *intentio* is just to be identified with selective attention, however, faces an obvious objection. Augustine seems to apply his trinitatrian analysis to all intentional states, however rudimentary. But selective attention itself has intentional content: whenever we choose to focus, we are always after something or have something in mind; otherwise, our attending wouldn't be selective at all, but the result of blind forces. But if *intentio* is selective by its very nature, as an aspect of the will, then Augustine faces an unpleasant choice. Either its content must be analyzed in the same way, and so threaten an infinite regress of *intentiones*; or its intentionality must be taken as primitive and not further analyzable—a magical solution contrary to the whole investigation so far. Either way, Augustine will not be in a position to offer a thoroughgoing analysis of intentionality.

Although the second alternative seems unpalatable to many of us, it cannot be ruled out from the start—it is clearly a possible response to the problem of intentionality. But in the absence of explicit assertions about the primitive or ultimate nature of intentionality, it should remain a last resort, exegetically speaking, since it runs counter to the general tenor of Augustine's account, which tries to provide an explanation for why even a simple act like seeing is about what it is about.

The problem can be stated more generally. Augustine's appeal to will and attention is at its most attractive when he is accounting for the phenomenology of complex, higher-level phenomena, where a great deal of experience, memories, expectations and other mental states can reasonably be assumed to be involved. But as we confront simpler phenomena, this strategy becomes increasingly implausible. If he is to maintain a unified analysis across the board, we must find a more basic way of understanding the notions of will and *intentio*. Selective attention is too sophisticated to form the foundation

of Augustine's analysis and would leave him vulnerable to charges of circularity.

Augustine is sensitive to the difficulty. He repeatedly insists that in order to seek or love anything, we must have some antecedent notion of what we seek or love. In fact, he extends this point to all mental states above perception, that is, to all states that originate from within ourselves: their content must either be identical to, or derive from, contents we have previously experienced (*De trin.* 10.1.1; 10.2.4; 11.8.14; 15.21.41–15.22.42). The problem is that all previous experiences, including perceptual experiences, involve an *intentio*; and so the appeal to previous experience only seems to lead us to still earlier experiences, without end. Like Meno's paradox, it will be impossible to get started: for it seems (A) we cannot acquire even the most basic intentional contents without having an *intentio*; yet (B) having an *intentio* implies that we already have some intentional contents. If Augustine is not willing to reject (A) and concede that the most basic experiences do not involve an *intentio*, he must conclude that there is no first *intentio*, either because (i) our souls *always* possess intentional contents, or (ii) we *never* manage to have any intentional contents at all. Augustine insists on (A) explicitly: "the will is the first in time to issue from the human mind" (*tempora uoluntatem prius de humana mente procedere*, 15.26.47). And (ii) is clearly a nonstarter. So he seems to be left with (i). But how are we to make sense of the claim that we have always had intentional contents, *even prior to our first perceptions*?

Recollection or transcendence?

One answer would be to take the parallels to Meno's paradox seriously and extend Plato's solution from a narrowly epistemological domain (perhaps limited still further to *a priori* knowledge) to a broadly intentional domain. Augustine wouldn't need to address problems about *first* contents, then, because we wouldn't ever have to enter the intentional circle—we are *already* there from the start. On this suggestion, we are always in possession of a stock of intentional contents, which are, if not recollected in any familiar sense, at least utilized to form *intentiones* in our first acts of perception. Such a view would fit with views we find elsewhere. At *De magistro* 10.33, for example, Augustine applies a version of Meno's paradox to the case

of learning the meaning of a word.[43] This extension into a semantic domain suggests that Augustine might similarly be willing to extend it to the intentional domain. But the intentional version of the paradox is much more radical. It goes to the foundations of the mind in a way that not even the semantic version does; indeed, the semantic version presupposes that a solution is available at this deeper level. It is no longer a matter of understanding a conventional sign or representation; it is a question of having any mental state with content in the first place. Augustine would have to hold a version of the theory of recollection[44] not simply with regard to regulative ideals or standards, such as beauty or justice—the only sort of examples Augustine tends to offer—but with regard to the content of any thought or perception, however mundane or particular. Augustine does not explicitly endorse such a view, and it is much more extraordinary than anything he does endorse. If we can avoid committing him to it, we should.

A different, more economical approach would be for Augustine to take the most basic *intentiones* not as focused on particular objects, but rather as expressions of a more general desire for knowledge. The thrust of his analysis would then be that we must recognize and appreciate the desiderative element in all cognition, the *drive* to know. Such a drive needn't involve anything more than a very general kind of aim, an aim that arguably belongs to our nature as sentient creatures. This surely is what he has in mind at certain points in *De trinitate*, as for example when he speaks of our desire to see (*uidendi appetitus*), an urge (*nisus*) that can be felt even when our eyes are closed (11.2.2; cf. *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.20.43); and when he speaks more broadly about our desire for inquiry (9.12.18), something that "begins with desire and ends in love" (15.26.47). Such a theme would also fit easily into a long tradition in Greek philosophy, tracing back to Plato at least. And it would effectively disarm the threat of regress.[45]

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[43] For discussion, see Burnyeat [1999], esp. 295–296.

[44] Despite early enthusiasm for the theory of recollection (*De quant. an.* 20.34), Augustine later insists that this should not be understood as committing him to preexistence of the soul, but should instead be understood in terms of his theory of illumination, which explains how we could learn "from ourselves": *Retract.* 1.7.2 (cf. 1.4.4); *De trin.* 12.15.24; cf. *Epist.* 7.

[45] If such *intentiones* are themselves to be analyzed in terms of more basic *intentiones*, they will only uncover higher-level desires of the same general type (such as the desire to desire to know, and the desire to desire to desire to know, and so

Such an approach also fits well with how Augustine describes our *intentio*, something he does in extremely concrete and graphic terms—one is even tempted to say (wrongly) in *physical* terms. For in his theory of vision Augustine follows the main outline of the Stoic theory, while at the same time dematerializing it, thus transposing it to an entirely new domain. Both accounts appeal to the workings of *pneuma* within human anatomy, as it passes up from the central organ, through the passages we call nerves, to the peripheral organs;[46] except that for Augustine, *pneuma* or *spiritus* is not a hot gas, but an immaterial substance belonging exclusively to souls. According to the Stoic theory of vision, the *pneuma* literally *stretches towards* the object (ἐντείνειν), becoming taut throughout its length; and by jabbing and piercing through the pupil, it transmits this tension to the intervening air, shaping it into a cone with the object at the base. It is in virtue of this focused tensing of the air (ἔντασις, συνέντασις) that information about the object can be transmitted back to the eye and so to the governing faculty.[47] Augustine embroiders the physiology at length (*De Gen. ad litt.* 12.20.42–21.44), while skipping what happens in the intervening air, a simplification we also find in several of the doxographical summaries of the Stoic theory.[48] Instead, he colorfully imagines the *spiritus* slipping out into the world of bodies, hanging around in the air, and in general poking around.[49]

Augustine generalizes this account not only to all five senses (*De trin.* 15.3.5; *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.16.32), but to all cognitive acts. All involve an extension and an exertion of the soul, in an effort to get beyond itself. In fact, it is precisely this that sets animate beings apart from other things: unlike a mere attribute, which "does not extend beyond the subject in which it is" (*non excedit subiectum in quo est*), the soul *is* able to transcend itself, through knowing and loving other things (*De trin.* 9.4.5). Augustine thus appeals, ironically, to the

same lyrical image Spiegelberg uses to characterize what is supposed to be distinctive and new about Husserlian transcendence:

> Here something utterly new enters the world. Dead nature rises above its self-containment and reaches out beyond itself. This signifies a turning point in the cosmic order ([1976], 127).

It is this striving and outward-directedness that constitutes the most fundamental characteristic of *intentio* for Augustine. Will, love, and attention are the forms of *intentio* with which we are most familiar, but they are also highly developed mental phenomena not to be found as such on the most basic level. In order for *intentio*'s roots to flower in this way, it must possess some aspect of these states in germinal form, and Augustine identifies this as the drive towards transcendence. It is this primitive feature that enables us to have states with content. To write off Augustine's theory as simply concerning practical intentions, then, is to fail to appreciate the complete re-orientation he hopes to effect in the analysis of cognition.

Conclusion

There is, therefore, a good, preliminary case for tracing the problem of intentionality back, past the medieval tradition, to ancient Greek and Roman philosophy; and Augustine serves as the lynch pin connecting the two traditions. Augustine worries both about how mental states can have any content in the first place and about why a given state has the content it happens to have; and he attempts a systematic answer to both. But his thoughts are part of a longer discussion, concerned with the nature of mental content, that reaches long before him and well after. To demonstrate that satisfactorily, we would need much more extensive discussion than can be supplied here. But that desire to go further is itself, as Augustine teaches, the start of knowledge.

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on). Such a regress, though uneconomical, does not appear to be vicious, unlike a regress of first-order contents.

[46] Stoics: Calcid. 220 (= *SVF* 2.879); Aet. 4.21.14 (= *SVF* 2.836). Augustine: *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.20.42–43; also 12.16.32, 12.23.49.

[47] D. L. 7.157 (= *SVF* 2.867); Aet. 4.15.3 (= *SVF* 2.866); Alex. Aphr. *Mant.* 130.14–131.5 (= *SVF* 2.864). For further discussion of the Stoic theory, see Ingenkamp [1971] and Todd [1974].

[48] Aulus Gellius *Noct. Att.* 5.16.2 (= *SVF* 2.871); Calcidius *In Tim.* 237 (= *SVF* 2.863).

[49] *De trin.* 9.12.18, 11.1.1; cf. *De Gen. ad litt.* 12.16.32, 12.23.49.

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ARISTOTLE ON SENSORY PROCESSES AND INTENTIONALITY. A REPLY TO MYLES BURNYEAT*

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On the Soul II, 5

I appreciate Myles Burnyeat's courtesy in expressing his disagreement with my idea that the material cause of seeing is the coloration of the eye jelly and that there are corresponding physiological occurrences as material cause for the exercise of the other four senses. He has now written not only his original paper "Is an Aristotelian philosophy of mind still credible? A draft",[1] but also two fresh explications of his view.[2]

The case for my view was based on two different chapters, II, 11–12, starting towards the end of II, 11 and I will stand by everything I said about those chapters. So I am only considering here the question whether these other chapters express a different view. But I want to finish with a point about the whole perspective within which Aristotle writes *On the Soul*. This point will address Burnyeat's interpretation of *On the Soul* I, 1 in his first two papers and I believe it makes a positive difference to the case I earlier put about what Aristotle thinks.

My reaction to Burnyeat's two papers is different. On II, 7–8, I think the most crucial piece of evidence has not yet been brought into the discussion. On II, 5, however, I think his exposition is of the greatest value quite independently of what may be thought about our little debate. Let me mention one additional value. Suzanne Mansion thought the exposition of Aristotle's predecessors in *On the Soul*, Book I, lacked the usual connexion with dilemmas and solutions to dilemmas found in other treatises of Aristotle.[3] His work on II, 5 shows that the connexion exists at least in II, 5.

STUDIEN UND TEXTE ZUR GEISTESGESCHICHTE DES MITTELALTERS

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL THEORIES OF INTENTIONALITY

EDITED BY

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