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*Augustine and Wittgenstein* ed. by John Doody, Alexander E. Eodice, and Kim Paffenroth (review)

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John Doody, Alexander E. Eodice, and Kim Paffenroth, editors. *Augustine and Wittgenstein. Augustine in Conversation: Tradition and Innovation*. New York: Lexington Books, 2018. Pp. xii + 204. Cloth, \$95.00.

Forty years ago in this journal, Herbert Spiegelberg examined Wittgenstein's direct references to Augustine in the works that were available to the public at that time ("Augustine in Wittgenstein: A Case Study in Philosophical Stimulation." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 17 [1979], 318–27). Although there are many allusions to Augustine in the portions of the *Nachlass* to which Spiegelberg did not have access, Wittgenstein read only the *Confessions* and his interest lay in a small set of topics for which certain sentences from Augustine served him as repeated proof texts. Given these facts and given how fundamentally Wittgenstein disagreed with Augustine about the nature and purpose of philosophy, it is difficult to imagine a study that could take us considerably beyond Spiegelberg's. Unsurprisingly, then, although the present volume's contributions are sometimes of high quality (e.g. Myles Burnyeat's 1987 piece is reprinted) or insightful, it does not on the whole achieve this. In consequence, it could be useful for introducing undergraduate students to Wittgenstein's handling of Augustine, though only with supplementation and corrections from a professor, particularly regarding the content of Augustine's thought.

Naturally, the bulk of the essays (seven out of ten) concern philosophy of language and of religion. Regarding language, Chad Engelland (29) shares with Burnyeat (16) the position that Wittgenstein has more in common with Augustine's *Conf.* 1.8.13 than he acknowledges. Additionally, Engelland asserts that, *pace* Wittgenstein, Augustine does not hold that babies have pre-linguistic internal language, and that Augustine correctly believed (unlike Wittgenstein) that babies do not need language-training, as animals do (23, 30). Instead, babies possess a power to pick up instituted meaning because they are members of the human species (30). This is close to Augustine's position. However, it is not clear that Augustine thinks young children (*parvuli*) lack mental sentences of all types, including, for example, sayables (*lekta/dicibilia*) in the form of exclamations or wishes. What he does consistently assert is that young children cannot understand precepts or assent to propositions—attested by the ability to distinguish appearance from reality—until "reason is stronger." Furthermore, Augustine *does* hold that babies and young children are cognitively equivalent to other animals; hence initial word learning is indeed association reinforced by habituation (*pace* Engelland, 30). (Engelland cites Augustine's *quant. an.* 33.72 in support of his claim that human memory must be fundamentally different from animal memory even in small children. However, Augustine asserts that humans and animals share the power of sense-memory in *quant. an.* 33.71.) And while Engelland is right that Augustine thinks humans have an inborn orientation toward language, it would have been interesting to point out why: Augustine adopts the (ultimately Stoic) theory of human self-affiliation found in Cicero and Seneca (*oikeiōsis/conciliatio*), as displayed later in the text (*Conf.* 1.20.31).

Caleb Thompson interprets Wittgenstein's puzzling admonition to the Vienna circle to "go ahead and talk nonsense" (alluding to *Conf.* 1.4.4, "Et vae tacentibus de te quoniam loquaces muti sunt.") as follows. It is permissible to speak about ethics (absolute value), provided one acknowledges that this is literally non-sensical, since language can be about relative value only. It should be noted here that Wittgenstein's two allusions to this sentence are not contradictory (*pace* Thompson, 58); they could assume the same translation of it, but with differing emphases. Where Wittgenstein *is* to be faulted is in the translation he invents and insists on. This translation is almost certainly incorrect given the Latin composition, and the sense Wittgenstein makes the sentence bear is conceptually ill-suited to both the immediate and larger context of the book (*pace* Thompson, 59–60).

In philosophy of religion, one can find similarities between Wittgenstein and Augustine. Both thinkers are unlike modern philosophers who define miracles as "breaking the laws of nature," both think religious practice is an integral part of human life, and both recognize sexual life as a legitimate focus of ritual expression. These are pointed out by Espen Dahl (95), David Goodwill (124), and Brian Clack (76–78). However, attempts to find items

of philosophical significance in these and other cases alternatively lead to dead ends, misrepresentations of Augustine in an attempt to assimilate him to Wittgenstein, or false dichotomies in which Augustine is made to differ from Wittgenstein more than he does.

Finally, Duncan Richter's interesting and elegant essay on willing argues against Peter Hacker. He interprets Wittgenstein's mention of Augustine in *Philosophical Investigations* 618 ("My will does not obey me." (Augustine)) as a rejection not of will in *Conf.* 8.9.21, but of will in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Richter's reading is textually possible, it seems, although perhaps not plausible. If Augustine's "will" does not function as a representative of the picture Wittgenstein criticizes in this passage, then the allusion to *Conf.* 8.9.21 lacks philosophical purpose. Wittgenstein would be saluting one of his favorite authors, who had happened to describe "willing," but nothing more.

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