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Caro salutis cardo: SHAPING THE PERSON IN EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The body is fashionable. Like other domains of inquiry, late antique studies have greatly profited from the new focus. In particular, the accent has been placed, more clearly than ever before, on the radical changes in attitudes toward the human body, around the Mediterranean, from the second to the fifth centuries C.E. In his new, major opus, Peter Brown studies at great length the Christian attitudes to the body, partly inherited from Judaism and quite new to the pagan world, and their implications for the perception of the person.[1] While facets of this transformation and its varied backgrounds have been analyzed in detail and approached from various perspectives, its intellectual and theological background is still worthy of investigation. Special attention should be called to the new conception(s) of

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[1] See Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), e.g., pp. 31-32 or 432-42. See also his chapter in the English translation of *Histoire de la vie privée,* ed. Paul Veyne, vol. 1, *A History of Private Life,* trans. Authur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 237-317, with a detailed bibliography (pp. 650-52). One item, at least, should be mentioned: A. Rousselle, *Porneia: De la maîtrise du corps ã la privation sensorielle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982). Brown's questions and, hence, his approach and emphasis, are rather different from my own. He insists on the multiple fracturation of the ancient notion of the human person while I am here more interested in its new structure. While he treats the subject first and foremost as a social historian, I tend to ask questions of intellectual history (see my review of Brown's *The Body and Society* in this issue, pp. 100-102).

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the human person that rendered this transformation possible and permitted the emergence of a newly reflexive self, that is, a subject turned back upon itself in ways unknown before. Moreover, the relationships between theological reflection on God's nature—even quite anthropomorphic conceptions of God's physical shape—and perceptions of the human person have been noticed but by no means given the whole measure of their fundamental importance.[2]

Although not quite identical, terms such as "reflexive self," person, or "singular subject" belong to the same nexus and may all be used legitimately to describe the new sensitivity to the individual that appears in late antiquity.[3] The important task of sorting out the precise differences between these terms and best applying them to the various contexts cannot, however, be dealt with here.

Major historical developments are always overdetermined, a truth recently noted anew by Charles Kahn.[4] This fact usually spells the doom of those fruits of hybris which attempt to offer exhaustive evidence or models that are too often sealed argumentative packages. There will be no claim in the following pages to develop a full-fledged theory or present a comprehensive interpretation; rather, the attempt will focus only on some aspects of the radical transformation of the person in late antiquity.

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[2] For recent approaches, see, e.g., J. D. Zizioulas, "Personhood and Being," in his *Being and Communion* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1985), pp. 27-65, esp. pp. 25-49; Zizioulas points out a radical change in cosmology as a necessary condition for the emergency of the person. Compare J. Daniélou, "La notion de personne chez les Pères grecs," in *Problèmes de la personne,* ed. I. Meyerson (Paris and La Haye: Mouton, 1973), pp. 113-21; and esp. Joseph Moingt, "Polymorphisme du corps du Christ," in *Corps des Dieux: Le temps de la réflexion* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 11:47-62. See also Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Form(s) of God: Some Notes on Metatron and Christ," *Harvard Theological Review* 76 (1983): 269-88, and "Origen on God's Incorporeality: Context and Implications," *Religion* 13 (1983): 345-58.

[3] The only history of the word "person" of which I am aware is H. Rheinfelder, *Das Wort Persona: Geschichte seiner Bedeutungen mit besondere Berücksichtgung des französischen und italienischen Mittelalters,* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, 77 (Halle, 1928). For a good collection of the evidence in antiquity, see R. Hirzel, *Die Person: Begriff und Name derselben im Altertum* (Munich, 1914). See also the important studies of Maria Daraki, "La naissance du sujet singulier dans les Confessions de Saint Augustin," *Esprit,* no. 2 (1981), pp. 95-115; and John Rist, *Human Value: A Study in Ancient Philosophical Ethics,* Philosophia Antiqua 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1982), esp. "Individuals and Persons," pp. 145-63. Compare two recent articles attempting to sort out some religious implications of this shift in the perception of the human person: R. Kirschner, "The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 105-24; and R. F. Newbold, "Personality Structure and Response to Adversity in Early Christian Hagiography," *Numen* 31 (1984): 199-215. Newbold points out the shift of emphasis undergone by pagan values by the end of the third century, from outer to inner purity, from deed to intention—thus preparing the ground for the new Christian values. On this shift, see Y. Shohat, "The Change in Roman Religion at the Time of the Emperor Trajan," *Latomus* 44 (1985): 316-36. See also M. Augé, *Génie du Christianisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), pp. 48 ff.

[4] Charles Kahn, "Discovering the Will: From Aristotle to Augustine," in *The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in Later Greek Philosophy,* ed. A. A. Long and J. M. Dillon (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 234-60.

From our point of view, the maturing corpus of Christian thought, from the second to the fourth centuries, culminated with the notion of a radical reflexivity of the self, a notion introduced in its clearest form by Augustine, and, as Charles Taylor reminds us, bequeathed by him to the Western tradition of thought.[5] It should be argued forcefully that this new notion was not only a product of the times but was developed in Christianity. The lack of a similar reflexivity of the self in the classical world is evident in the teachings of the different philosophical schools, which, in various ways, all show a basic lack of interest or respect for the self, the individual, and the particular.[6] The absence of the subject, as we understand it, in the mental and psychological experience of the ancients is also evident in the literature, where the self appears, more often than not, pale and stilted. To quote Paul Veyne, "No ancient, not even the poets, is capable of talking about oneself. Nothing is more misleading than the use of 'I' in Graeco-Roman poetry."[7]

It should be emphasized at the outset that, more than a new anthropology, it is first and foremost a fresh attitude toward the self that the Christians would discover, an attitude grounded in a few fundamental points of their theology and that could not have taken shape without this theology.

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[5] This fact is emphasized in his new book, Charles Taylor, *The Roots of the Self* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989). I wish to thank Mr. Taylor for putting at my disposal the typescript of an important chapter of this book. See also his "The Person," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History,* ed. M. Carrithers, S. Collins, and S. Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 257–81. For another philosophical inquiry on the concept of self and what the author calls its "myth," see A. Kenny, *The Self* (Aquinas Lecture, Marquette University, Milwaukee, 1988). For an Islamic perspective, see H. H. Schaeder, "Das Individuum im Islam," in *Der Mensch im Orient und Okzident* (Munich: Piper, 1960), pp. 239–306. For an enlightening anthropological study, see W. A. Christian, Jr., *Person and God in a Spanish Valley* (New York and London: Seminar Press, 1972). Compare D. Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Hermann, 1975), p. x.

[6] See, e.g., Rist, *Human Value* or most recently, the demonstration of this fact by Rémi Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), esp. pp. 141–48. In a series of learned articles, the late historian of Greek philosophy C. J. de Vogel has argued against this view of things. I have not been convinced by her arguments, which seem to grant more importance to the wording of concepts than to their semantic shifts. See, e.g., her "The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought," in *Studies in the History of Philosophy,* ed. J. K. Ryan (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1963), pp. 20–60, and "Plotinus' Image of Man," in *Images of Man in Ancient and Mediaeval Thought, Studia G. Verbeke . . . dictata* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1976), pp. 147–68. See also, for a synthetic view, F. M. Schaeder, "The Self in Ancient Religious Experience," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality,* ed. A. H. Armstrong (New York: Crossroads, 1986), pp. 337–59.

[7] Brown, *A History of Private Life,* p. 231.

The new sensitivity to the subject shown by the church fathers and, hence, the emergence of the reflexive self should indeed be seen as the acme of a trend in the new epoch. This trend was prepared by the emphasis on the "care of the self" studied by Michel Foucault in the (pagan) philosophical and scientific circles of the first two centuries of the Empire.[8] Prima facie this emphasis would seem to offer something close to what the Christians will propose. Yet, one should beware: Marcus Aurelius still reflects the old attitude and offers recommendations rather than indulging in introspection. For a Stoic thinker, indeed, the true man is passionless, and while the idea of conversion to wisdom plays a role, not so the process of conversion itself.[9] Once converted to wisdom, a man should shade away, forget, and ignore his previous patterns of thought and behavior. Where Plotinus sought to reach the state of contemplation (*theōreisthai*), it is on the path of sustained effort leading to it (*quaerere*) that Augustine will insist most.

Foucault distinguishes radically between the "care of the self," the *epimeleia heautou* recommended or practiced by the pagan thinkers, and the vastly different attitude developed by the Christian intellectuals, which involved renouncing and deciphering the self.[10] The Nietzschean overtones of such an approach are obvious. Nietzsche—as well as Schelling before him[11]—loathed Socrates' attempt at retrieving the hidden self, his recoiling from the archaic Greek attitude of acting out, publicly, in an altogether unreflexive manner, as the healthy way of expressing the self. For Nietzsche, this attempt was not a great moment in the history of Western thought but, rather, the beginning of a decadence, ultimately completed with the victory of

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[8] I refer here to the third and last published volume of Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité, Le souci de soi* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). Foucault died before he could complete the fourth volume of his history of sexuality, which was to be devoted to early Christianity; see, however, his "Le combat de la chastete," *Communications* 35 (1982): 15-25 (on John Cassian), and "L'écriture de soi," *Corps Ecrit* 5 (1983): 3-23 (on Evagrius and the *Vita Antonii*). See also P. Hadot, "*Exercices spirituels antiques et 'philosophie chrétienne,'*" in his *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1981), pp. 59-74.

[9] On Marcus's Stoicism see John Rist, "Are You a Stoic? The Case of Marcus Aurelius," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* ed. B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 3:23-45, 190-92.

[10] Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," in his *Philosophical Papers II: Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), esp. pp. 182-83.

[11] I owe this observation to Brague, p. 142, n. 27.

Christianity. Foucault is undoubtedly correct in pointing out a major difference in attitude toward the self among pagan and Christian thinkers under the Empire, although it should constantly be kept in mind that we are dealing more with Weberian *Idealtypen* than with neatly delineated and differentiated social realities. Once again, it should be emphasized that pagans and Christians lived in the same mental world, and it often appears that they were carried away from each other by the implications or the logical consequences of their ideas, appearing to do so, at times, more reluctantly than willingly.[12] Foucault's assessment, however, that the Christian thinkers tried to renounce the self is profoundly mistaken. Incidentally, this radical misinterpretation is rather similar to that of the anthropologist Louis Dumont, for whom early Christianity, like Buddhism, represents, in Weberian terms, a clear case of "otherworldly asceticism."[13] On the contrary, the Christian thinkers were striving, to a great measure successfully, to establish a new conception of the human person, a person to be first retrieved but then developed and cherished. In this respect, one of the most striking differences between the pagan and Christian ethos seems to be in the latter's dynamic approach to the person—a dynamism grounded in the idea, inherited from Judaism and utterly unfamiliar in the Greco-Roman world, that ethics is the kernel of religious life. In the Roman Empire, the idea of moral progress, or of personal reform, so well studied by Gerhard Ladner, is first and foremost a Christian one.[14]

It is the highly ambiguous status of the reflexivity developed by Christian thinkers that misled Foucault into offering such a radical misinterpretation. For these thinkers, turning upon oneself and reforming oneself was perceived as part of an ongoing and indivisible process of conversion (*metanoia*), that is, making constant efforts to turn away from former habits of thought, feeling, and behavior. This conversion was of a different nature than the one propounded by philosophers, since it was based on a very different perception of the relationships between faith and reason and on a promise of salvation for all and sundry unknown to the elitist philosophers.[15]

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[12] For a remarkably broad picture of the social, intellectual, and religious world in which both pagans and Christians moved, see Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London: Viking, 1987). Compare "Brave Old World," *New York Review of Books* (March 12, 1987), pp. 24 ff., where Peter Brown takes exception to Lane Fox's interpretation of Christian mentalities.

[13] Louis Dumont, "A Modified View of Our Origins: The Christian Beginnings of Modern Individualism," *Religion* 12 (1982): 1-27, reprinted in *The Category of the Person,* pp. 93-122. This article (a previous French version of which had been published in *Le débat* 15 [1981]: 124-45) has launched a scholarly debate. See, e.g., three responses in *Religion* 12 (1982): 83-91, as well as S. N. Eisenstadt, "Transcendental Visions—Other-Worldliness and Its Transformations," *Religion* 13 (1983): 1-17. Compare G. G. Stroumsa, "Old Wine and New Bottles: On Patristic Soteriology and Rabbinic Judaism," in *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations,* ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Albany: SUNY, 1985), pp. 252-60, 525-27.

[14] Gerhard B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).

Moreover, the emergence of the new subject was dependent upon two essential theological conceptions unknown to the classical world. First, the biblical idea that man—and woman—had been created in God's image (*homo imago dei*) permitted, as we shall see, the integration of the person, body, and soul in a way and to an extent unknown among both Stoics and Platonists, who were the fathers' main intellectual contenders in the first centuries.[16] This conception's Jewish roots were radically concretized, recast in a totally new way in Christian context, through the intermediary of Jesus Christ, both truly God and truly man.

Now—and here lies the core of what I have called the ambiguous status of the Christian reflexive self—just as it was being enlarged and unified through the integration of the body, the subject was at once broken again, in a new fashion. This time, the great divide was no longer between soul and body as representing lofty spirit and base matter but cut right through the subject itself. The conception of original sin and, hence, of the radical asceticism appearing on a grand scale in the fourth century was again rooted in Jewish soil, more precisely in those marginal splinter groups of Encratites familiar to us from the Dead Sea Scrolls and who seem to have left a deep imprint on early Jewish Christianity.[17] It is precisely this rift within the human person that rendered the new reflexivity possible.

Yet it is only with Augustine—to whom we shall return at greater length—that this new rift within the person became final, precisely at the same time that the new perception of the self was fully blossoming. In his thought, the tension is most strongly felt within the human will. The fundamental weakness of the will, coupled with the concept of *libera voluntas* required by the idea of responsibility, is the Ariadne's thread by means of which we can retrace the intricacies of Augustine's new attention to the sinner's paradigmatic psychology.[18]

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[15] On religious and philosophical conversion in the ancient world, see the classical work of A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933); and P. Aubin, *Le problème de la conversion* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1963).

[16] The best overviews of the interrelations between these two schools and early Christian thought are M. Spanneut, *Le stoicisme des Pères de l'Eglise* (Paris: Seuil, 1957); and E. von Ivanka, *Plato Christianus: Übernahme und Umgestaltung des Platonismus durch die Väter* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1964).

[17] See the important work of P. F. Beatrice, "Continenza e matrimonio nel cristianesimo primitivo (secc. I-II)," in *Etica sessuale e matrimonio nel cristianesimo delle origini,* ed. R. Cantalamessa (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1976), pp. 3-68, and his *Tradux peccati: Alte fonti della dottrina agostiniana del peccato originale* (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1978).

Incidentally, it is in this context that we should understand the paramount importance of sexuality for Augustine, who devotes to it a much more sustained reflection than any other Christian thinker before and also, probably, after him.[19] If Augustine can offer such new psychological insights, the reason should be sought, first and foremost, in his new reflexive attitude toward his own self, whose ontological status he recognizes to be as problematic as its existence is obvious.

In other words—and this fact can hardly be overemphasized—the process that reaches its peak with the radical novelty of the *Confessions* rests upon the two synchronic movements of the broadening of the self and its new interior breakdown.[20] With all its deep-seated ambiguities, the history of the reflexive self from Paul to Augustine forms a major chapter in the history of Western consciousness.[21] This chapter is that of the transformation of a structure of thought, characterized by objectivation, into another one, focusing upon the recognition of the individual's irreducibility. It is through this process, which was to be continued, at least, throughout the Middle Ages, and in this recognition that all Western conceptions of personalism are ultimately grounded.[22] We shall look at some aspects of the new religious sensitivity that rendered this recognition possible.

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[18] The bibliography on the topic is immense. A good orientation may be found in A. Schindler, "Augustinus," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979): 646–98. On Augustine's anthropology, one can still consult E. Dinkler, *Die Anthropologie Augustins* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1934); cf. G. Maertens, "Augustine's Image of Man," in *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, pp. 175–98. On the vast array of problems connected to his conception of free will, see particularly John Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 20 (1969): 420–47, reprinted in his *Platonism and Its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum, 1985); Kahn (n. 4 above); A. Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982), chap. 6; M. Clark, *Augustinian Personalism* (Villanova, Pa.: Augustinian Institute, Villanova University, 1970).

[19] See, e.g., Brown's remarks in *A History of Private Life* (n. 1 above), pp. 307 ff.

[20] One should remember that although the *Confessions* was widely read since its publication, many centuries will be needed for its worth to be truly recognized. In some ways, Petrarca appears to be the first author to truly relate to it. See P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1963). See also E. R. Dodds, "Augustine's *Confessions:* A Study in Spiritual Maladjustment," *Hibbert Journal* 26 (1927–28): 459–73; and Kahn.

[21] On the similarities between Paul's and Augustine's conceptions of the "retrospective self," see P. Fredericksen, "Paul and Augustine: Conversion, Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 37 (1986): 3–34.

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In some obvious sense, Greek philosophy does indeed provide the starting point for the development of the Western discovery of the self (in a subjective way) and of the person (in an objective way).[23] Yet, the status of the individual had to remain unclear in Greece as long as marks of individuality were primarily perceived as signs of imperfection—a well-known fact analyzed anew by John Rist.[24]

In Plato's *Alcibiades*—a text that through Porphyry influenced Augustine—the brash, ambitious, and self-satisfied young man is progressively led to acceptance of the Delphic maxim "Know thyself" and to the recognition that introspection should seek to discover the soul, which is the essence of man.[25] In the same dialogue, Plato underlines the indissoluble links that bind the individual's search for virtue, justice, and moral wisdom to the life of the city. It may be no mere chance that for the Greeks, who put so much weight on the public locus of political life, the discovery of interiority entailed the recognition of a fundamental chasm between body and soul, the latter alone being the real self.[26] This somato-psychological dichotomy, or dualism, might well be "the most questionable of all [Greece's] gifts to human culture," to quote E. R. Dodds.[27]

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[22] On the medieval follow-up of the interiorization process, see M.-D. Chenu, *L'éveil de la conscience dans la civilisation médiévale* (Montreal and Paris: Institut d'Etudes Médiévales and Vrin, 1969), for whom it is in the twelfth century that "man discovers himself to be a subject" (p. 15), Abélard being "the first modern man." See also C. Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (London: S.P.C.K., 1972). Compare, for the same process perceived through "la longue durée," J. Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval* (Paris, 1986), p. vii. On Christian personalism, see J. Pépin, "La notion d'idéal moral: Héroisme grec et sainteté chrétienne," in his *Les deux approches du christianisme* (Paris: Minuit, 1961), pp. 101-15, esp. 112. For a fresh approach that succeeds in integrating attitudes previously thought to be exclusive of one another, see C. W. Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" in her *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 82-109. Bynum shows that corporate awareness and the self could be emphasized at once in twelfth-century religion.

[23] For a recent study, see, e.g., S. Scolnicov, "Socrates on the Unity of the Person," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 7 (1985-86): 14-25. See also C. L. Griswold, Jr., "Self-Knowledge and the Idea of the Soul in Plato's *Phaedrus*," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 26 (1981): 189-200.

[24] Rist, "Individuals and Persons" (n. 3 above), esp. p. 152.

[25] On the origins and early history of the Delphic maxim, see P. Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même, de Socrate à Saint Bernard,* vol. 1 (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1974); on *I Alcibiades,* in particular, see pp. 14 ff. On the posterity of *I Alcibiades,* see J. Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l'homme et sur Dieu* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1971), pt. 1.

[26] See J.-P. Vernant, "Aspects de la personne dans la religion grecque," in his *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris: Maspéro, 1974), pp. 79-94, esp. 93. See also E. des

For Plato, therefore, and for his school of thought, to know oneself—the reflexive attitude par excellence—meant to attend to one's soul, at the exclusion of the body. The case of Aristotle is rather more complicated, since he succeeded in developing an anthropology which could not be subjected to the same kind of criticism as could Plato's. Aristotle, however, did not succeed any more than most other Greek thinkers in conceiving of a private, introspective meditation upon oneself.[28] In any case, Aristotle's influence remained largely limited to small philosophical groups in the first Christian centuries and had little impact on the formation of Patristic theology.[29]

As hinted above, the major mutation of late antique thought deeply transformed the attitudes to the person and had momentous implications on the subsequent stages of Western culture. The discovery of the whole person as a composite of body and soul not subject to reincarnation should not, however, be seen in isolation from other simultaneous radical changes in attitudes, toward the world or toward society, for instance. The turn upon oneself as a legitimate, nay, essential step in the search for God, occurred together with the development of a new ambivalence toward society at large, the state, and its structures. Thus, one can discern a correlation, however blurred it may be at times, between anthropological and political attitudes.[30] The cosmos, moreover, now created ex nihilo and having

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Places, "En marge du *TWNT:* Conscience et personne dans l'antiquité grecque," *Biblica* 30 (1949): 501-8. Compare H. Chadwick, "Gewissen," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 10:1025-1107.

[27] E. R. Dodds, *Christian and Pagan in an Age of Anxiety* (1965; reprint, New York: Norton, 1970), p. 29.

[28] See esp. the fine analyses of Brague (n. 6 above), pp. 111-70.

[29] On this limited impact, see A.-J. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Evangile* (Paris: Gabalda, 1932), excursus C, "Aristote dans la littérature grecque chrétienne," pp. 221-63. Thomas Aquinas wore Augustinian glasses when he interpreted Aristotle's anthropology. See A. C. Pegis, *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man,* Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Tradition (New York and London: Macmillan, 1963).

[30] See the recent studies of Elaine Pagels, "The Politics of Paradise: Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis 1-3 versus that of John Chrisostom," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 67-99, and "Christian Apologists and the 'Fall of the Angels': An Attack on Roman Imperial Power?" *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 301-25. These studies are integrated as chapters of her new book, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988). In the case of the classical world, this correlation has been studied by S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978). On the correlation between theological and political attitudes, see, e.g., A. Momigliano, "The Disadvantages of Monotheism for a Universal State," in his *On Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), pp. 142-58.

hence achieved a new unity, had also by the same token lost the lofty character with which it was invested in Greek thought, when still divine.[31]

The new interest in the self had a price, which should not be ignored. Diving into oneself meant the end of the soul's immersion within the universe, which had always been the core of astral mysticism in the ancient world. It is here, perhaps, that the distance between Plotinus and Augustine is the greatest. For Plotinus, indeed, the self is fully recovered only when recognizing its kinship (*suggeneia*) with the heavenly or divine world.[32] To be sure, the new trend did not quite eradicate traditional attitudes. To wit, the case of Origen's *Peri Archōn* and its remarkable posterity, both East and West. Although the one God may have created a united universe, he too often seemed to have left it to Satan's rule. Hence the need for the individual to recoil upon himself in his search for God. Ambiguity, indeed, might be the key word in describing Christian attitudes to the self, society, and the cosmos.

Just like biological mutations, this one was prepared by a long and subtle process of evolutionary changes. When Tertullian writes, in his lapidary style, *caro salutis cardo,* "the flesh is the axis of salvation,"[33] he already stands within a process begun before him, which still deserves our attention. Despite the large body of scholarly work on Patristic literature, relatively little seems to have been devoted specifically to our topic.

In a seminal yet schematic paper devoted to the roots of the modern notion of the person, Marcel Mauss underlined long ago its passage from the juridical to the theological realm. Mauss pointed out that while the Stoics had begun to develop a new attitude toward introspection, Christianity was left to provide the new sensitivity with a solid metaphysical basis.[34]

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[31] On the new cosmology implicit in Christian monotheism, see Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Gnosis und die christliche 'Entzauberung der Welt,'" in *Max Webers Sicht des antiken Christentums: Interpretation und Kritik,* ed. W. Schluchter (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 486-508.

[32] See, e.g., G. J. P. O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1973); and P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1973), esp. pp. 28, 36.

[33] Tertullian, *De resurrectione mortuorum* 8.2.

[34] Marcel Mauss, "Une catégorie de l'esprit humain: La notion de personne, celle de 'moi,'" in his *Sociologie et anthropologie* (1950; reprint, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), pp. 331-62, esp. pp. 357 ff. An English version of this essay opens *The Category of the Person* (n. 5 above). See also C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (1940; reprint, Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), chap. 11, "*Nostra Philosophia:* The Discovery of Personality."

A methodological presupposition of the present inquiry is that pivotal concepts around which religions or civilizations are organized tend to appear at early stages in their development.[35] In the case of Christianity, theological conceptions crucial for the shaping of a radically new conception of man are found already in the New Testament. It is, however, from the second to the fourth centuries that the new anthropology crystallized, as a direct consequence of the challenge to the emerging *Weltanschauung* on the part of alternative soteriological and epistemological attitudes or visions: Judaism, philosophy, and Gnosticism.

Hence, the major role played by the body in Christian soteriology is most clearly apparent in Patristic polemical literature. This role cannot be understood without recognizing the paramount importance devoted to the body of the Savior. As Joseph Moingt has reminded us recently, it is through its conception of a divine body that early Christianity could have contributed so significantly to ennobling the human body.[36] This is the case in some of the most fundamental works composed against various Docetic attitudes, first and foremost in Irenaeus's *Adversus Haereses.* The Savior's body, moreover, was conceived not only literally but also metaphorically. The Paulinian conception of the Church as the mystical "Body of Christ," of which the believers are members, entails a direct link between views of man and views of the "collective person," the Church.[37] It is in this light that the shift of emphasis given by the church fathers to the Delphic maxim (to which we shall return) should be understood, according to which the command "Know thyself" no longer refers exclusively to an epistemic attitude of the mind but to the drawing of the Church's social boundaries.

To what extent was this shift in basic attitudes a conscious phenomenon, perceived as such by those who performed it? There can be no clear-cut answer to this question, but some elements do suggest such a consciousness. Since Christianity was born and first developed as a religion of a new kind against which arose very diverse spiritual forces, it remained for a long time *religio illicita* from the intellectual as well as from the legal points of view. Their very marginality or illegitimacy forced upon Christian intellectuals a clear recognition of their own identity. Christian polemical and apologetical literature reflects the utter consciousness of this radical stand. This is particularly clear in Africa, where, from Tertullian to Augustine, the new conception of the person and the discovery of the reflexive self took shape decisively. This discovery has been hailed as "Christianity's greatest contribution to philosophy."[38]

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[35] Compare the pertinent remarks of F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 1.

[36] Moingt (n. 2 above).

[37] The bibliography of research on Paul's *soma christou* is immense. See, e.g., the well-documented study of C. Colpe, "Zur Leib-Christi-Vorstellung im Epheserbrief," in *Judentum, Urchristentum und Kirche, Festschrift für J. Jeremias,* BZNW 26 (Berlin: Topelmann, 1964), pp. 172–87.

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In the Roman world, a Christian was defined, above all, by his staunch belief in a few narrative statements presented as historical and centered around the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of a man—who also happened to be divine.[39] Faith in this supreme "Exemplar," as Peter Brown has called him, offered a new sense of identity, both personal and collective, that cut through all established criteria.[40] Paul is both the first and the most eloquent exponent of this new conception: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). The believers become members of Christ's body, of His flesh and of His bones (Eph. 5:30). A new social unity is thus achieved: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (1 Cor. 12:5).

From its inception, the powerful Pauline metaphor of Christ's mystical body exerted a major influence on the shaping of Christian thought. Its influence on the emerging anthropology and new sensitivity was compounded, however, by a few basic theological conceptions, which should at least be referred to here.

From Judaism, Christianity inherited both the belief in man's being made in the image of God—a belief expressly stated in the first chapter of *Genesis*—and belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead—

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[38] G. Florowsky, "Eschatology in the Patristic Age: An Introduction," in *Studia Patristica, I,* Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur 64 (Berlin: Akademie, 1957), 2:235-50, esp. 249. See also V. Lossky, "The Theological Notion of the Human Person," in his *In the Image and the Likeness of God* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir Seminary, 1974), pp. 11-123, who points out that despite a Christian anthropology, there is no elaborated doctrine of the human person in Patristic writings. Compare J. Daniélou, "La personne chez les Pères grecs" (n. 2 above); Daniélou points out that we witness in fourth-century writings the emergence and development of the concept of person, linked to the divine hypostasis, but not yet of a specifically human person. See also P. Hadot, "De Tertullien à Boèce: Le développement de la notion de personne dans les controverses théologiques," in Meyerson, ed. (n. 2 above), pp. 123-34.

[39] "You have forsaken God and put your trust in a man—what salvation can await you?" asks the rabbi in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho,* 8.4.

[40] P. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1 (1983): 1-25, esp. p. 10, where he refers to "the Exemplar of all Exemplars."

a doctrine slower to emerge fully in Jewish thought but already well established in the first Christian century.[41] This doctrine was rejected as a striking and insane novelty in the pagan world. To these two beliefs Christianity added a third one, the idea of Christ's incarnation. Seen as a whole, these doctrines offered a formidable stumbling block for pagan philosophical thought.[42]

The philosophers first objected to the idea that man had been made in the image of a transcendent God: this ran against the Platonic conception of a *suggeneia*, a genetic affinity, between the human soul and the divine.[43] In the Platonic tradition—which for various reasons turned out to be, much more than the Stoa, the main rival of the new faith in late antiquity[44]—the philosopher was an intellect embarrassed by or even ashamed of his body, to quote Porphyry's description of Plotinus,[45] and looking forward to the moment when, freed from the bonds of flesh, he would be able to return, for eternity, to a spiritual afterlife of pure contemplation. Hence the philosophers' profound repulsion for the Jewish and Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead. "Furthermore, are not these notions of yours absurd? For on the one hand you long for the body and hope that it will rise again," writes Celsus, around the mid-second century, adding that "persons who believe this are absolutely bound to the body."[46]

In so categorically rejecting the idea of resurrection from the dead, which Christian thinkers fused only later with the idea of the soul's immortality, late antique philosophers were the direct heirs of the classical Greek dichotomy between body and soul.[47] The divine had nothing in common with matter and should by all means seek to avoid it. For matter was directly related to evil, according to Platonic conceptions, and, hence, was deeply repulsive. Thus, Origen had to answer Celsus: "For what is properly abominable is of the nature of evil. But the nature of the body is not abominable, for in itself bodily nature is not involved in evil which is the originating cause of what is abominable."[48] It is in order to counter Celsus that Origen adopts the Stoic view according to which the body was morally neutral.[49] But there is more here than a Stoic conception opposed to a Platonic idea. For the Christian, the body could be no *adiaphoron* but, rather, was possessed in itself of major value. Pagan philosophers also rejected the idea of incarnation. For them, this was a grotesque contradiction in terms: how could God ever seek to incarnate Himself, to enter of His own will a human, corruptible body?

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[41] See A. Marmorstein, "The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead in Rabbinic Theology," in his *Studies in Jewish Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 145-61. For the earliest Christian belief, see O. Cullmann, *Immortalité de l'âme ou résurrection des morts? Le témoignage du Nouveau Testament* (Neuchâtel and Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1956).

[42] On philosophical anti-Christian polemic, see R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London: Duckworth, 1972), pp. 100-105. Compare A. H. Armstrong and R. A. Markus, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy* (London: Darkon, Longmann & Todd, 1960), pp. 46-57.

[43] A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), esp. pp. 1-17.

[44] One might note in this context that from Clement of Alexandria on, the Platonic influence on Christian thinkers becomes predominant and bypasses by far the Stoics' influence.

[45] So does Porphyry begin the description of his hero in *The Life of Plotinus.*

[46] These are the words of Celsus, a second-century philosopher, as quoted by Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.49. I cite the translation of H. Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 488. Compare ibid. 5.14, where Celsus refers to Jesus and Christians who reject the idea of resurrection.

[47] See, e.g., F. Refoulé, "Immortalité de l'âme et résurrection de la chair," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 163 (1963): 11-52; H. A. Wolfson, "Immortality and Resurrection in the Philosophy of the Church Fathers," in his *Religious Philosophy* (New York:

Most pregnant on this point are the famous words of Augustine in his *Confessions,* telling of the many deep-seated similarities he found between Platonic and Christian teachings as well as of the major difference he discovered between them: "There also did I read that God the word (*verbum, deus*) was not born of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor the will of the flesh, but of God. But that the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, did I not read there (i.e., in the books of the Platonists)."[50] More precisely, what shocked pagan intellectuals in the idea of incarnation was not only the desire of the invisible God to appear in the world—after all, this was a well-known problem of pagan theology, emphasized by the all-too-present statues of the gods—but the idea of flesh and its corruptibility and the fact that, according to Christian doctrine, incarnation had happened once, and only once, in history.[51] This disturbed the pagan thinkers most. Here again, the uniqueness of the divine paradigm, the unity of the person of Jesus Christ, formed the core of the pagan argument against Christianity.

For the Christians, of course, theological and anthropological conceptions were intimately linked. If God had made man in His image,

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Athenaeum, 1965), pp. 69-103; A. H. Armstrong, *Expectations of Immortality in Late Antiquity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1987). Compare J.-Y. Lacoste, "Les anges musiciens," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 68 (1984): 549-575.

[48] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.422.

[49] This was shown by H. Chadwick, "Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body," *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948): 83-102.

[50] Augustine, *Confessions* 7.9.

[51] For one instance among many, see the fifth treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum,* in *Hermès Trismégiste,* trans. A.-J. Festugière, ed. A. D. Nock (1946; reprint, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1972), 1:58 ff. Compare the excellent presentation of the problem in social and historical context in Lane Fox (n. 12 above), pp. 102-67.

it was through Jesus Christ that He had created Him. If Christ had incarnated Himself, He had done so in order to save man: through His own death and resurrection, He had offered victory over death and the gift of resurrection to everyone.

The unity of Christ, possessor of two natures but remaining nonetheless one single persona, is, of course, in a nutshell, the main achievement of centuries of Christological and Trinitarian pugnacious investigations. From our present perspective, one can only recall how this unity became the most powerful of models for Christian thought and behavior. At the personal level, the *imitatio Christi* was soon interpreted—beyond the martyrs' readiness to experience on their flesh what Jesus had suffered on His own—as the duty of unification of the human person through the integration of will and thought. On that issue, the Syriac tradition is particularly enlightening, which interprets Matt. 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" as "Those who, being two or three, have unified their own self, with them I am."[52] On that basis, the monk (*monachos*; Syriac *iḥidaya*), by virtue of his name, must succeed in unifying his whole person, becoming one on all counts, and remaining alone with himself and Christ, who resides in him. This exegesis is propounded not only by Philoxenus of Mabbug but also by no less a representative of mainstream Greek tradition than Gregory Nazianzen.[53]

At this point, one may cast doubt upon the truth of the rather commonly held conception according to which Christian asceticism, that is, since the fourth century, monasticism in its various forms, together with Gnostic dualist trends and in opposition to the more sober asceticism of the philosophers, manifested in the extreme, in the words of E. R. Dodds, "a contempt for the human condition and a hatred of the body" that was an endemic disease of the period.[54]

There is no denying that Christian ascetical attitudes sometimes took aberrant forms. But norms, even when those of rather marginal groups or situations, should be dealt with here, rather than aberrations. We shall see how much of Christian anthropology crystallized around the vehement rejection of Gnostic dualist attitudes. Suffice it here to note that Christians, more often than not, conceived of asceticism as an effort to strengthen and not to weaken the body. So does Athanasius, in his *Life of Saint Anthony,* one of the most influential books in the history of Christianity, describe how the father of all monks underwent fasts and vigils in order to fortify his body for the fight against the demon, not to mortify it.[55] It might be useful here to refer to phenomenological analysis, a method with which positivist historians feel uncomfortable but without which I fail to see how the historian of intellectual or religious trends can even begin to interpret the facts that he studies in their broader context.[56] Such a phenomenological analysis, I believe, reveals the ethos of Gnostic encratism to stand in radical contrast to Christian asceticism, despite some obvious blurring of the boundaries between them. This contrast is evident from the points of view of theological grounds, of practice, and of implications.[57] If the Christian holy man, whose imposing figure we have learned to recognize as rising over the horizon of late antiquity like a stylite saint on his column, could have become a total incarnation of values, it is precisely because he appeared in popular consciousness—in stark contrast with the pagan holy man, the philosopher—as an entity of body and soul, a "Christ-bearing exemplar."[58]

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[52] This exegetical tradition is studied by A. Guillaumont, "Monachisme et éthique judéo-chrétienne," *Judéo-Christianisme, recherches en hommage au Cardinal Daniélou, recherches de sciences religieuses* 60 (1972): 199–218, reprinted in his *Aux origines du monarchisme chrétien* (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1979), pp. 47–65, esp. pp. 55–58.

[53] Gregory Nazianzen, *Epigr.* 20, in *PG* 38, 93 A, quoted by Guillaumont, p. 56, n. 28.

[54] E. R. Dodds, *Pagans and Christians in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 35.

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For the collective as well as for the individual, the sense of identity is directly related to the perception of the outsider, the "Other," to use a term borrowed from the French. Polemics, therefore, play a most important role in the development of self-awareness, of reflexive consciousness.[59] For the early Christian theologians, heresies appeared as the closest, hence, the most immediate and dangerous threat to their emerging collective identity. They also realized very soon that

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[55] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 5, in *PG,* 848 B.

[56] This was a methodological assumption of my *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology,* Nag Hammadi Studies, 24 (Leiden: Brill, 1984). For a strongly dissenting attitude, see B. Layton's review in *Revue Biblique* 94 (1987): 608–13.

[57] See Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Ascèse at gnose: Aux origines de la spiritualité monastique," *Revue Thomiste* 81 (1981): 557–73.

[58] See esp. Peter Brown's seminal study, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101, reprinted in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 102–52. The "Christ-bearing exemplar" coining is Brown's, in "The Saint as Exemplar." On the figure of the philosopher, see G. Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 33–59.

[59] Studying a very different literary corpus and cultural area, S. Greenblatt reaches important conclusions on self-fashioning and its relation to the "threatening Other," which are also valid in our context. See his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), p. 9. I owe this reference to the kindness of P. Brown.

Christian doctrine was progressively defining and refining itself through heresiological discourse. *Opportet haereses esse,* they liked to quote the Apostle (1 Cor. 11:9). In this discourse, too, the place of the body, of flesh, both of Christ and of man, very soon became cardinal.

Few problems would seem to epitomize the main drive of Gnostic thought better than that of personal identity, of the anguished quest for the real self—"Who were we? What did we become? Where have we been thrown?" These were the crucial questions asked in the school of Theodotos, one of the leading Valentinian teachers.[60] But the self sought by the Gnostic and whose redemption he sought was only his spirit, his *pneuma,* in sharp contradistinction to his corruptible body and, sometimes, also his soul. In order to find his own self, the Gnostic thus sought to free himself from his body: "Everyone should practice in many ways to gain release form this element," reads the *Treatise on Resurrection* found at Nag Hammadi.[61]

Indeed, Harnack's famous dictum, according to which Gnosticism was the "acute Hellenization of Christianity," seems nowhere as true as in the field of anthropology. Of course, such a basic attitude had direct implications on the nature of Christ's body and of the resurrection. For the Valentinians, for instance, the body of the Savior was either psychic or spiritual—"pneumatic" (but never of a material or "hylic" nature)—while resurrection was spiritual and immediate, that is, understood metaphorically rather than as an eschatological, actual resurrection of the body.[62] In their own way, the Marcionites expressed similar ideas, but our interest here lies in the fathers' reaction to the Gnostic challenge rather than in a taxonomy of Gnostic conceptions.

A mere perusal of some of the early Patristic treatises reveals the urgency with which anthropological questions were asked and answered.[63] This urgency reflects the existential intensity with which the new sensitivity was emerging, and its importance is felt best in the context of the Gnostic challenge. Irenaeus insists so much on the humanity of Christ because he sees it as a warrant of the "salvation of our flesh, since were not the flesh to be saved, God would not have become flesh."[64]

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[60] *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 78.2, ed. and trans. F. Sagnard, Sources Chrétiennes, 23 (1948; reprint, Paris: Cerf, 1970), p. 202. The analysis of this anguished quest, unfortunately expressed in rather anachronistic Heideggerian parlance, formed the core of H. Jonas's classical study, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist, I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1934).

[61] *C.G.* II; 49, 26 ff., ed. and trans. B. Layton, Harvard Dissertations in Religion, 12 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1979), pp. 30-31.

[62] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* I.21.4, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, Sources Chrétiennes, 264 (Paris: Cerf, 1979), pp. 302-4. On Gnostic anthropology in general, see K. Rudolph, *Die Gnosis: Wesen und Geschichte einer spätantiken Religion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), pp. 98-131.

[63] On Patristic anthropology, see H. Karpp, *Probleme altchristlicher Anthropologie,* Beiträge z. Forderung christl. Theol., 43.3 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1950); and E. Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 79-110.

Hence a radical break with the Platonic conception of man and the elaboration of a new anthropology, which saw the essence of man not in his soul but in the composite of soul and body: "It is man, and not a part of man, who becomes to the image and the resemblance of God."[65] The perfect man is thus the mixing and the union (*sugkrasis kai henosis*) of soul and flesh.[66] "Soul and body together constitute the animal" is one of the main motifs in Aristotle's *De anima.* It is rather puzzling at first to notice the Aristotelian antecedents of this new anthropological sensitivity. Although the presence of Aristotelian elements in Augustine's anthropology has been noticed, they do not appear to have been the direct source of Patristic teachings.[67]

Similar anthropological principles appear in Pseudo-Athenagoras, *De resurrectione,* the first Christian work to have been devoted to the problem. The author affirms: "There is one living being composed of two parts, undergoing all the experiences of soul and body." He goes on, getting more specific: "It is man, not simply soul, who received understanding and reason. Man, then, who consists of both soul and body must survive forever; but he cannot survive unless he is raised."[68]

One can hardly accuse Tertullian of being an *esprit de système.* Yet, if there is one theme to which he keeps coming back, approaching it from various angles, each time with all the force of his conviction, it is that of the body or, rather, the flesh (both terms, *corpus* and *caro,* are more or less equivalent, although *caro* is less ambiguous) and its status.[69] In his case, as in that of Irenaeus, the polemical context is obvious: it is against Gnostics (Valentinians, Marcionites, even Cainites) that he fights in his treatises *On Baptism, On the Resurrection of the Dead, On the Flesh of Christ,* or *Against Marcion* (all written between 200 and 211). "But remember that man is properly called flesh—a term which first expressed the name 'man'" (Gen. 2:7–8). There is no need to refer to Aristotle, indeed, when the biblical roots are so obvious. Tertullian goes on: "I would readily insist on this . . . everything planned for man and given not to the soul alone, but also to the flesh."[70]

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[64] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5.14.1, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, and C. Mercier, Sources Chrétiennes, 153 (Paris: Cerf, 1959), pp. 181–87. The importance of this text is underlined by J. Daniélou, *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique* (Paris: Desclée, 1961), pp. 365–74.

[65] See the new synthetic work of A. G. Hamman, *L'homme, image de Dieu: Anthropologie patristique* (Paris: Desclée, 1986).

[66] Irenaeus *Adversus Haereses* V. 6.1.

[67] On the limited exposure to Aristotle of early Christian authors, see A. J. Festugière (n. 29 above). On the Aristotelian grounding of Augustine's anthropology, see P. Henry, *St. Augustine on Personality* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), esp. pp. 8–11. Compare A. C. Lloyd, "On Augustine's Concept of the Person," in *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays,* ed. R. Markus (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor, 1972), pp. 191–205; and W. R. O'Connor, "The Concept of the Person in Saint Augustine's *De Trinitate,*" *Augustinian Studies* 13 (1982): 133–43. Compare Pegis (n. 29 above), who claims that the Augustinian reinterpretation of Aristotle holds the key to the Thomistic doctrine of man.

[68] Athenagoras, *De resurrectione,* ed. and trans. W. R. Schoedel (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), respectively *De resurrectione* 15.2, 15.6, pp. 122–23, 124–25. According to the editor, the text was probably written as an anti-Origenian tract.

Elsewhere, he argues from the very weakness of the flesh against assigning to it sole responsibility for sin: "What absurdity, however, it is to attribute sin and crime to that substance to which you do not assign any good actions or character of its own."[71] Flesh, then, is ancillary to the soul in the commission of sin. On the other hand, it is usually through flesh, or at least with its help, that sin is committed. Thus, any full-fledged conception of the Final Judgment requires the presence of the entire man (i.e., flesh and soul) at the end of days.[72] In other words, divine justice itself demands the integral resurrection of man.[73] Through sin, the whole man was lost. Through Christ, therefore, it is the whole man who will be saved.[74]

The treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead* is in many ways a powerful apology of the flesh—both the flesh of man and that of Christ. In order to be able to fight Gnostic Docetism effectively, Tertullian must show that in the wake of Irenaeus, the Gnostic interpretation of Paul's harsh words against the flesh is mistaken: the Apostle only seems to condemn flesh. Actually, he refers to the sins of flesh. The vocable "flesh" in Paul's *Epistles* is a generic term for carnal practices.[75] Christ was thus really born in the flesh. Mary gave birth literally, not figuratively. The status of Christ's flesh is utterly respectable, since it was the model according to which God created man. Respecting the flesh of Christ is the prerequisite for respecting the human body: the soul that hates the body is also that which despises its creator or which denies or alters it in the very person of Christ.[76]

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[69] On the semantic fields of *corpus* and *caro* in Tertullian's vocabulary, see R. Braun, *Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 298–317, esp. p. 304. *Corpus* is more broadly defined than *caro* and is ambiguous. Thus Tertullian uses *caro christi* much more frequently than *corpus christi.*

[70] Tertullian, *De resurrectione mortuorum* 5.8–9. Text in E. Kroymann, ed., *Tertulliani Opera,* CSEL 47 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1906), vol. 3. See J.-P. Mahé's detailed analysis of the work in his introduction to *La résurrection des morts* (Paris: Desclée, 1980). Compare R. Sider, "Structure and Design in the *de resurrectione mortuorum,*" *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969): 177–96.

[71] *De anima* 40.

[72] Tertullian, *De resurrectione mortuorum* 14.10.

[73] Ibid., 56; 57.6.

[74] Ibid., 34.1–2. On the belief in resurrection of the dead, see for good presentation of the evidence and a useful bibliography, R. Staaks, "Auferstehung," *Theologische Real-Enzyklopädie,* 4:441 ff. Compare in particular R. M. Grant, "The Resurrection of the Body," *Journal of Religion* 28 (1948): 120–30, 188–208 (who is unable to answer the main question; namely why the fathers insisted on a physical conception of resurrection).

Through his insistence on the resurrection of the whole human composite, Tertullian is brought to some quite interesting reflections on the preservation of human identity: the notion of change must be clearly distinguished from that of destruction. "To be transformed is to be in a different way. Thus, when one is differently, one can still be oneself."[77] In *The Flesh of Christ,* Tertullian insists on Christ's love for man, the whole man, and in particular for his flesh, weak and humble. It is this man, in the flesh, that Christ loved and saved.[78]

The implications of these texts, chosen almost at random among many others, seem to me momentous. No pagan philosopher could have wished or dared express such love for the human body, a love that God was the first to show. *Caro salutis cardo:* the discovery of the person as a unified composite of soul and body in late antiquity was indeed a Christian discovery.[79]

This love that God so generously offered to man opened the way to repentance, forgiveness of sins, and salvation. While sins soil the soul (which Tertullian, in good Stoic fashion, conceives as corporeal), baptism cleanses it: although the water runs on the body, its benefits to us are spiritual. "The rite of baptism is a corporeal action, but its effect is spiritual since it delivers us from sin."[80] Baptism is thus a purification of the whole person; this rite is also the condition sine qua non of salvation. Since the passion and resurrection of the Lord, faith is naked without baptism and needs it as a garb of sorts.[81]

In other words, baptism accomplishes and symbolizes both the purification and integration of the individual as a whole and entry into the Church, that is, the mystical Body of Christ. The same rite that is the condition of salvation for the person also acts as the identification principle for the Church—thus excluding from possible salvation not only pagans and Jews but also heretics, since they do not partake in the same baptism.[82] The unity of the individual person, as well as the unity of the person of Christ, entails the unity of the Church, Christ's Body.

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[75] Ibid., 46, 49.7.

[76] Ibid., 20.3; 6.44; 63.6.

[77] Ibid., 55.1; 55.6.

[78] Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 4.3-4, in Mahé, ed. and trans.; Tertullian, *La chair du Christ,* Sources Chrétiennes, 216-17 (Paris: Cerf, 1975), 1:222-25.

[79] The central importance of the body since the earliest strata of Christian thought was the strongest insight of Nygren's classic *Eros and Agape;* cf. John Rist, "Some Interpretations of Agape and Eros," in his *Platonism and Its Christian Heritage,* vol. 1 (n. 18 above).

[80] Tertullian, *De baptismo* 7.2, in *Tertulliani Opera I,* ed. A. Reifferscheid and G. Wissowa, CSEL 20 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1890), p. 207.

[81] Ibid., 12.1; 13.2.

Similar anthropological conceptions were very widely adopted in both the East and the West and were securely established by the fourth century, as shown, for instance, by Nemesius of Emesa's *De natura hominis,* a work more remarkable for its synthetical character (including the full integration of philosophical and scientific accepted wisdom of the day) than for its originality.[83] Yet, it was in the West that the most radical breakthrough occurred. A direct line of influence joins Tertullian to his great African successors. Cyprian will state that there is no salvation outside the Church, while Augustine will make liberal use of a rather far-fetched biblical exegesis in order to fight the Donatists. *Deus dilectatio est* (1 John 4:8, 16): according to Augustine, the Donatists do not love God's Body, since they do not love its members, that is, the whole Christian community. "One cannot love the head without the members."[84] The Donatists cannot be accused of professing Docetic doctrines, since they recognize that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, but they behave as if they were Docetists. Indeed, to break the unity of the Church is to divide the Body of Christ, showing a total lack of respect for it. Only with the end of the schism will Christ be one, loving Himself; for when the members love each other, the body loves itself.[85]

For Augustine, both the Incarnation and the resurrection of the body played a major role in this reevaluation of the human body, after he had succeeded in partly disentangling himself from the Neoplatonic web of his early days as a Christian.[86] For him, moreover, the parallelism between personal and collective identity is particularly striking. After Origen, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ambrose, he comments on *Canticle* 1:8, "Nisi cognoueris temetipsam, opulchra inter mulieres."[87] Ambrose had pointed out that the verse shows Solomon—as well as Moses—to have predated the Delphic maxim, stolen from them by Apollo. Ambrose had insisted that knowing oneself meant recognizing that we are mortals and sinners in our body but also capable of a conversion of all our being through reason. Augustine, on his part, notes that this commandment is not addressed only to the soul but also to the Church: she must know herself, recognize herself as catholic. In other words, the verse offers a weapon to threaten the Donatists, who boast of being an African church.[88]

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[82] Ibid., 15.2. On the whole array of problems related to the symbolical meaning of early Christian ritual and theology pertaining to the body, see J. G. Gager, "Body-Symbols and Social Reality: Resurrection, Incarnation and Asceticism in Early Christianity," *Religion* 12 (1982): 345-463.

[83] For a detailed presentation of Nemesius's thought, see the introduction to G. Verbeke and J. R. Moncho, *Némésius d'Emèse, De Natura Hominis,* Corpus Latinorum Commentatorium in Aristotelem Graecorum, suppl. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

[84] *Commentary on I John,* 10.3, ed. and trans. P. Agaesse, Sources Chrétiennes, 75 (Paris: Cerf, 1961), p. 414.

[85] Ibid., 6.10. Et erit unus Christus amans seipsum. Cum enim se invicem amant membra, corpus se amat.

[86] See esp. H.-I. Marrou, *The Resurrection and St. Augustine's Theology of Human Values* (Villanova, Pa.: Villanova University Press, 1966). The French original was first published in *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 12 (1966): 111-35, and reprinted in H. I. Marrou, *Patristique et Humanisme: Mélanges,* Patristica Sorbonnesia 9 (Paris: Seuil, 1976), pp. 429-55. This article made use mainly of later texts. M. R. Miles has shown

Augustine, who deals with this verse in several places, usually tries to prevent an exegesis of the *Nosce te ipsum* that would place man at the end of the introspective process. Already in the *De vera religione,* the famous phrase "Noli foras ire, in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas" implies that man be passed over at the end of introspection, which should culminate with a *conversio* to God.[89] On all grounds, then, for Augustine, *nosce te ipsum* means something quite different from what it had meant for pagan philosophers: it is not only his soul that man must seek to attend to; collective identity is as important as personal identity. Self-knowledge does indeed lead to the knowledge of God, although it does not end up in Him directly (since there is no *suggeneia* between the soul and the divine).[90] Moreover, introspection also leads to one's neighbor, whom one cannot

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more precisely the evolution of Augustine's thought on this topic, in her *Augustine on the Body,* American Academy of Religion, Dissertation Series 31 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979). On the different sensitivities in the East and in the West about the resurrection of the flesh, see, e.g., Y. M. Duval, "La discussion entre l'apocrisiaire Grégoire et le patriarche Eutychius au sujet de la résurrection de la chair: L'arrière plan doctrinal oriental et occidental," in *Grégoire le Grand,* Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S. (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986), pp. 346–65.

[87] Augustine, *In Psalmos* 66.4.22, quoted by Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi même* (n. 25 above), 1:145, n. 148; cf. n. 147. The Latin retains a mistake already made by the Septuagint.

[88] Augustine, *In Psalmos* 118.2.13–14, quoted by Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi même,* p. 117; p. 118, n. 16; p. 147, n. 160.

[89] Augustine, *De vera religione* 39.72. Compare Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi même,* pp. 148–49.

[90] To be sure, Augustine's early writings, particularly those of the Cassiciacum period, were written under the spell of the *Libri Platonicorum.* R. J. O'Connell has argued in a sustained way that Augustine's early anthropology was shaped in a fundamental way by Plotinus. While the argument carries conviction to a large extent for the young Augustine, he later learned to distance himself from these early views. See esp. his *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man,* A.D. *386–391* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968).

love without self-knowledge. Above all, Augustine recognizes the fundamentally ambiguous character of introspection, a descent into the self that reveals both the misery and the greatness of human nature.

The new sensitivity to the human person was nowhere better expressed than in the *Confessions:* "As long as I accomplish my pilgrimage far from Thee, I am more present to myself than to Thee." Augustine departs here from both Neoplatonists and Stoics: there is neither a continuum between the soul and God nor an immanence of the divine. The continuum, for Augustine, is the temporal dimension, within which the recognition of the self takes place—a dimension ignored by the Greek philosophers and which links the subject to the cosmos in a new, historical, way. According to his own testimony, the *Confessions* was written so that we know "out of what depths one must cry unto Thee."[91] The chasm between God the creator and the soul of the individual, which is that of a sinner, can be bridged, but only through love, not directly through knowledge. Self-knowledge is necessary, but as a catalyst of love—first self-love and then love of other souls and love of God. It is in the *De Trinitate,* from book 9 on and particularly in book 14, that Augustine will develop his well-known view of the threefold process through which the soul remembers itself, understands itself, and loves itself, as an image of the Divine Trinity.

The *Confessions* is a book *sui generis,* which bears little resemblance to other antique autobiographies. In the *Confessions,* the contrite conscience brings a man to throw himself at God's mercy. Georg Misch has noted that "here began one of the most profound changes in European self-disclosure."[92] If one is to look for spiritual—although not literary—antecedents of the *Confessions,* Paul comes to mind first.[93] Already, in the story of his conversion, individual existence was given a transcendental structure—even though, or precisely because, it was that of a sinner. The total involvement in the imperfect person qua person, which Augustine revealed in his autobiography, has remained one of the major acquisitions of both European literary history and spiritual consciousness.[94] The *Confessions* represents nothing less than the majestic peak of a revolution within the ancient spirit, the first expression of the modern and paradoxical conception of the person, that is, a subjectivity at once entire and broken and therefore established in an immediate way through its reflexivity. In other words, it is the urgent need to close the gap within itself that permits the emergence of a new, reflexive attitude of the self.

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[91] Augustine, *Confessions* 10.5: "et ideo, quamdiu peregrinor abs te, mihi sum praesentior quam tibi"; *Confessions* 2.3: "ut videlicet ego et quisquis haec legi cogitemus, de quam profundo clamandum sit at te."

[92] See Georg Misch's seminal *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), 2:625–67; the quotation is from p. 531. One might add that Augustine's literary originality began already with the *Soliloquia,* which were the first example of that genre.

[93] Fredricksen (n. 21 above).

[94] See P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire* (n. 20 above).

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I have tried here to refer briefly to some of the main articulations in early Christian thought that led to the mature expression of the new sensitivity to the subject exemplified in the *Confessions.* I have also argued that these articulations stemmed from both a few pivotal theological conceptions and the urgent need to refute deviant interpretations of the Christian message. Hence, the direct correlation between conceptions of the individual and the reflexivity of the collective person, the Church.

It is a fact only partially accounted for that this new existential sensitivity remained the acquisition of the Western Church, where it was activated, while it was kept dormant in the East, where the Greek theologians developed a rather essentialist thought.[95] Although one is on very slippery ground indeed when trying to radicalize the differences between East and West in the largely unified urban culture of the Roman Empire, as Peter Brown has reminded us, the process of self-awareness on both sides was rather dissimilar.[96] Brown himself has pointed out that in the West Christians retained a "twice-born" attitude much longer and kept their distance from the *saeculum,* remaining to a large extent outsiders. He has also referred to what he calls Augustine's rejection of the Eastern monastic paradigm, a rejection closely related to his own direct interest in sexuality.[97] One might add that the more fully developed cult of the martyrs in the West permitted a greater emphasis on the individual—first as a model (the martyr or the saint) and then also as a follower of the model. Apologies written in Latin are much less intellectual or "philosophical" in character than those written in Greek. Rather than attempting to show that Christianity, the "barbarian philosophy," was a philosophy nonetheless, Latin apologists more simply argued for religious tolerance; thus, for instance, Tertullian's *Apologeticum* or his *Ad Scapulam.*[98] In the intellectual and spiritual synthesis of the Cappadocian fathers, which was to remain the hieratic heritage of Byzantium, the emphasis of the religious experience is on the ideal of the soul meeting God in the *homoiōsis theōi.* Following Jesus's behavior and precepts in daily life, the *imitatio Christi,* remained a more specifically Western ideal, that was to shape medieval spirituality up to the Reformation.[99] Indeed, the radical reflexivity bequeathed by Augustine to the Western tradition was, even more than a new anthropology, a new attitude—grounded in the recognition of the inescapable paradox of the human subject. When it gave birth to the reflexive self, it also delivered its twin brother: the person in search of his like, that is, intersubjectivity. Both attitudes, rendered possible simultaneously through the presence of God's love, were to become the two sides of the Western humanist tradition.

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[95] It may be no mere chance if *persona* was the only technical term to designate the aspects of trinity in Christian Latin, while the Greek theologians long preferred *hypostasis* to *prosopon.* See Braun, *Deus Christianorum* (n. 69 above), pp. 240–42; and G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought,* chap. 8 (I used the French translation, *Dieu dans la pensée patristique* [Paris: Aubier, 1955], pp. 142–57).

[96] Peter Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways," in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (n. 58 above), pp. 166–95.

[97] Ibid., pp. 174–75; see also his chapter in *A History of Private Life* (n. 1 above).

It would be the task of another, major study in historical and philosophical anthropology to analyze the complex relationships between these twin brothers. Such a study of the "intersubjective circle," as we may call it, would seek to describe the ways in which the wounded and contrite self develops at once humility toward itself and compassion toward others. This compassion becomes the new basis of ethics: the recognition of one's duties toward others as the only possible way of retrieving the *imago dei* and achieving a total reunification of the self. If this new ethics supposes religious foundations, it also has political implications: from Paul to Augustine, the communal and political dimensions of the *Corpus Christi* were progressively discovered until their integration in the *Civitas Dei.* It is throughout the creation that the traces of God are to be found (to use a concept developed by Augustine and surviving up to this day, in the philosophy of Emmanuel Lévinas). In its very brokenness and incompleteness the created cosmos reflects, just like the human person, the hidden presence of its Creator. Christian ethics and politics are hence possessed of a double and ambiguous character: together with their orientation toward the salvation of mankind, between mystical past and eschatological future, they are, fundamentally, ethics and politics of imperfection. Just as the *polis,* as noted above, was the context of the Greek conceptions of the person, so the Christian attitude is directly linked to a new perception of society. Only through compassion for one's neighbor can one hope to reach oneself. Some basic traits of early Christian thought may hence be shown to have transformed in depth the relationships between the person and society, as well as the very concept of the person.

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[98] On this topic which would need further research, see, e.g., J. H. Waszink, "Some Observations on the Appreciation of the 'Philosophy of the Barbarians' in Early Christian Literature," in *Mélanges Christine Mohrmann* (Utrecht, 1963), pp. 41–56.

[99] For the difference of emphasis in Eastern and Western Christian attitudes to the human person as the Image of God, see B. McGinn, J. Meyendorff, and J. Leclercq, eds., *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Crossroads, 1986), chap. 2.

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