Augustine on Creation, Providence and Motion

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Augustine's theology of creation has been criticised for its Platonic tendency to denigrate matter and a supposedly extrinsic view of divine providence that is reminiscent of design and even deism. This article counters such criticism and argues that Augustine explicitly blends extrinsic and intrinsic notions of providential teleological order. For Augustine, God 'administers externally the natures he has created internally' by inscribing the *rationes seminales* within creatures and conferring motion through the mediation of measure, number and weight. By resisting a dualism of intrinsic and extrinsic teleological order, Augustine avoids many of the problems that characterise modern theologies of creation and provides a more coherent account of divine providence.

The Christian doctrine of creation has a number of aspects: the identity of the creator, the divine act of creation *ex nihilo*, the natures and ends of created things and God's providential governance of creation. Within this scheme, there are two foundational and related questions: how are we to distinguish between God and creation, and how is creation related to its creator? The two dominant views of creation available to early Christian theologians from the Greek philosophical tradition presented problems on both counts. Emanationism, articulated most clearly by Plotinus in the third century, suggests that creation flows from God by necessity much as light emerges from a candle.[1] Creation is simply a 'stretching' of divine being so that God and

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[1] Plotinus, *Ennead V*, trans. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), V.1.6. Nevertheless, it might be noted that Aquinas entitles his principal question on creation in the *Summa Theologiae* '*de modo emanationis rerum a primo principio*'. Of course, for Aquinas the 'emanation' of all things from the first principle is a wholly free act of God who creates *ex nihilo*. In common with the Neoplatonists, Aquinas does not regard creation as any kind of motion (that is, one thing becoming another).

creation are somehow coterminous. As the emanation of all things is conceived in Neoplatonism, the freedom of God's creative act is compromised and the distinction between God and creation is difficult to identify. The Greek tradition also offered a view of creation either as existing in endless time or as the ordering of chaotic matter that had always existed. In both cases, a material nature stands alongside God and does not find its ultimate origin in the divine. Once again, it seems difficult to distinguish God and creation because there appear to be two principles of creation: God's action plus an always-existent material upon which God acts. Both emanation and construction seem problematic in relation to the doctrine of God, so Jewish and Christian theologians articulated a radical alternative in the form of creation *ex nihilo*.[2] The simplicity and freedom of God mean that God cannot be constrained in his creative act by pre-existent matter and must be the unique source and focus of being. Creation *ex nihilo* has a double implication: God is the absolute source of everything that is not God (including time and space) and creation is, in itself, nothing. The act of creation is the wholly gratuitous and unnecessary donation of being by God. At every moment, creation is sustained in existence by God's eternal gratuity. In God's creative act there is not one thing (God) and suddenly two things (God plus creation). There is only one focus of being and all else exists by participation in that single source. The difference between God and creation is articulated in terms of God's unchanging eternal simplicity and creaturely composition and motion.

Augustine, writing in 390AD around four years after his conversion to Christianity, gives a succinct version of this patristic view of creation through a brief dialogue. The doctrines of creation *ex nihilo* and divine immutability are central to his understanding.

> But you say to me: "Why are they failing?" Because they are subject to change. "Why are they subject to change?" Because they do not have being in

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[2] For a recent and wide-ranging discussion of creation *ex nihilo*, see David Burrell, Carlo Cogliati, Janet Soskice and William Stoeger (eds.), *Creation and the God of Abraham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

the supreme degree. "Why not?" Because they are inferior to the one by whom they were made. "Who is it that made them?' The one who *is* in the supreme degree. "Who is that?" God, the unchanging Trinity, since he both made them through his supreme Wisdom and preserves them through his supreme Kindness. "Why did he make them?" So that they might be. Just being, after all, in whatever degree, is good, because the supreme Good is being in the supreme degree. "What did he make them out of?" From nothing, since whatever is must have some kind of specific look, however minimal.[3]

Although Augustine's view of creation appears wholly consonant with wider Christian teaching, it has recently been subject to criticism arising from a suspicion of his Platonism.[4] It is alleged that, under the influence of his reading of Cicero's translation of Plato's *Timaeus* as well as other Platonist writings, Augustine held a dualistic view of the relation between the spiritual and material. According to Colin Gunton, he denigrated the material realm and proposed that matter is manipulated by a divine designer according to the pattern of eternal forms. In particular, this neglects the centrality of Christ, the one through whom all things are created (John 1.3; Colossians 1.16), in a properly Christian doctrine of creation.[5] Augustine, still

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[3] Augustine, *De vere religione* ('True Religion'), paragraph 35 available in Edmund Hill, O.P. et al, trans., *On Christian Belief* (New York: New City Press, 2005).

[4] Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

[5] Colin E. Gunton, 'Creation' in Gunton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 149-150. See Augustine, *De civitate dei,* VIII.12 in R.W. Dyson, trans., *The City of God against the Pagans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 328-329: 'But above all…there is the fact that, when the words of God were brought to the holy Moses by an angel, and Moses asked the name of Him Who charged him to go and deliver the Hebrew people out of Egypt, the answer was: 'I am who am; and thou shalt say to the children of Israel, He Who is sent me unto you.' This is as if to say that, in comparison with Him Who truly is, because He is immutable, things which are created mutable have no being. This is a view which Plato vehemently held and most diligently commended; and, as far as I know, this statement is found nowhere in the

haunted by his Manichean past, purportedly denies value to the world's material processes and proposes a cosmic hierarchy that prioritises spiritual natures.[6] Despite numerous treatises in which Augustine points to the centrality of creation *ex nihilo*,[7] Gunton detects an ambivalence about this core Christian teaching because material creation, far from being 'very good' according to the testimony of Genesis, is described by Augustine as 'close to being nothing'.[8] Gunton wonders whether a Greek doctrine of the eternity of formless matter still lurks in the back of Augustine's mind. Allied to this concern about a denigration of the material is another common criticism of the patristic doctrine of creation as it came under the spell of Platonism: Augustine's thought features a strong distinction – or even dualism – between divine eternity and worldly time that apparently precludes any intelligible notion of divine action.[9] Another related criticism concerns an alleged two-stage understanding of creation in Augustine's theology. First, God creates the intellectual world of ideas and, secondly, the material world which imitates the forms. According to Gunton, this has 'had the effect of tying the doctrine of creation to a belief that species were created as timeless and unchanging forms, a belief that made theories of evolution more difficult to engage positively during the nineteenth century.'[10]

Broadly speaking, Gunton's criticisms place Augustine within a tradition of thought that regards the universe as designed in a fashion that is closely analogous to the

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books of those who came before Plato, other than where it is said, 'I am who am; and thou shalt say to the children of Israel, He Who is sent me unto you.''

[6] Gunton, *The Triune Creator*, p. 77.

[7] Amongst many examples, see Augustine, *De fide et symbolo* ('Faith and the Creed'), 2(2) in Michael G. Campbell, O.S.A. et al., trans., *On Christian Belief* (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2005); *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* ('On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees'), I.3(5) in Edmund Hill, O.P., trans., *On Genesis* (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2002); *Confessiones* ('Confessions'), XII.7, XII.17, XIII.33 in F.J. Sheed, trans., *Confessions* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006).

[8] Gunton, *The Triune Creator*, p.78-79. Augustine, *Confessiones*, XII.8.

[9] Gunton, *The Triune Creator*, p. 83.

[10] Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 2.

human manufacture of artefacts.[11] On this view, God imposes form upon passive matter much as the human designer of an artefact imposes her design upon the material at her disposal. This reverses the Aristotelian teaching that art imitates nature; now human artifice is the model according to which we understand the divine act of creation. This way of understanding divine creativity is often thought to have a precedent in Plato's *Timaeus* because of the divine craftsman's fashioning of disorderly matter by the application of the 'eternal model'. So the Platonist Augustine is easily slotted into this story of a divine designer standing over and against a recalcitrant or formless materiality that has no intrinsic value.[12] The teleological structure of creation becomes external, being imposed from without upon passive matter according the priorities of the authoritarian divine will. Material nature is not intrinsically ordered to particular ends and therefore has no intrinsic value, but has that order imposed upon it according to forms contained within the divine mind.[13]

To explain further, one is faced with two apparently different views of teleological and providential order. They can be described via Aristotle's distinction between the natural, which has within itself a principle of motion and rest, and the artificial, which

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[11] At first glance, there appears to be textual evidence for this interpretation. See, for example, St. Augustine, *In Evangelium Iohannis Tractatus*, I.9 available in John Rettig, trans., *Tractates on the Gospel of John 1-10* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1988): 'For the heart first begets a design in order for you to construct some building, to erect some massive structure upon the land…So, if human design is praised because of some great building, do you wish to see what a design of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the Word of God?'

[12] The interpretation of Plato's cosmology, in particular the meaning of the 'divine craftsman', is much contested. See Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R.G. Bury (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999). For recent discussions see David Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), ch. 4; Sarah Broadie, *Nature and Divinity in Plato's* Timaeus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), ch.1.

[13] For a detailed discussion of the dualism between intrinsic and extrinsic teleology, see Simon Oliver 'Aquinas and Aristotle's Teleology', *Nova et Vetera* 11(3), 2013, pp. 849-870.

does not have within itself a principle of motion and rest.[14] Take the example of a photocopier. The goal of the machine is the production of copies of a given document. That teleological order is not, however, intrinsic to the materials from which the photocopier is built. Such order comes from the intentionality of the photocopier's designer and operator. The material nature of the photocopier – the metal, electronics and toner – has an order and orientation *imposed upon it* by the designer and operator. Such order and orientation does not emerge from the form of the photocopier's material parts but has its origin in human design and manufacture, that is, in the forms present in the designer's mind. The material stuff from which the machine is made is passive or even resistant to the form and order imposed upon it by the process of design and manufacture. Once the photocopier is manufactured and in operation, the designer and operator can withdraw and hope for no paper jams. This is a crude analogue to the deistic view of God's creative activity: God orders recalcitrant matter according to a model in the divine intentional mind and then withdraws as the cosmic machine operates according to a determined pattern. Matter, because it is not intrinsically allied to form on this view, is of doubtful value and this is Gunton's key concern. In contrast to the artificial, the teleological order of the natural – an acorn, for example – is intrinsic to the creature by virtue of its formal nature. The acorn hides *within itself* the form of oak tree in its potential guise. That potential is actualised through the normal operations of nature as the tree grows from the seed. Unlike a photocopier, an acorn will unfold its nature into an oak tree, a lamb into a sheep and a girl into a woman. These natural things move themselves, hence they have within themselves a principle of motion and rest. The material nature is always blended with a form that is intrinsic to that nature. Matter therefore has a value associated with its proper form and final goal; the teleological order is intrinsic and part of a creature's nature. Note, however, that a similar difficulty remains concerning God's relation to the created order: once forms are inscribed in creatures through a blending with materiality, and the direction in which their natures will unfold is established, can God simply withdraw? The possibility of a naturalised teleology, such as one finds in Plotinus or the Stoics, remains.

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[14] Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), II.1-2.

So an understanding the universe as a work of divine artifice akin to the products of human manufacture is part of the deistic theology that became so prominent in early modernity; God can stand back from his cosmic machine, repairing it periodically but otherwise not intervening in its smooth, predictable and autonomous workings. Indeed, this could be seen as the doctrine of creation that rendered God superfluous and ceded cosmology and the understanding of nature to an autonomous natural science. At his most intemperate, Gunton places Augustine at the root of this theological tradition, regarding him as a proto-deist with a disastrous legacy.[15] Similarly, one may opt for a purely naturalised teleology in which creaturely orientation to particular ends is intrinsic, requiring nothing supernatural.

One may dismiss Gunton's criticism of Augustine's view of creation and his accusation of deism as eccentric marginalia.[16] Yet it is part of a wider critique of any theology of creation that seeks to blend pagan Greek learning, particularly Platonism, with Christian scripture and creation *ex nihilo*. It is alleged that creation *ex nihilo*, grounded in the scriptural witness to God as sovereignly free and the source of all things, was formulated precisely as a critical response to Gnosticism and Platonism; a Christian theology of creation should not appropriate pagan learning in so uncritical a

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[15] Gunton, *The Triune Creator,* p.83: 'However, we should accept only that part of his [Augustine's] argument that would distinguish divine eternity from worldly time. In other respects, Augustine's legacy has been more problematic, if not actually disastrous, and provides the conditions for the development of a deism like Hawking's. It is when we pursue the question of the relation of God's eternity to worldly time that we again stumble on the contamination of Augustine's thought by his platonic inheritance. Because for Augustine God is by definition timeless, it becomes difficult to conceive of any involvement of God in time.'

[16] For an assessment of Gunton's reading of Augustine on creation, see William B. Whitney, *Problem and Promise in Colin Gunton's Doctrine of Creation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), ch. 1. See also Bradley Green, *Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in Light of Augustine* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Scott A. Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine: An Ecological Analysis* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008).

fashion, particularly a variety that denigrates the material. In addition, Augustine's thought can also be included amongst the classical articulations of the doctrine of creation that have been criticised for their dualist metaphysics. God apparently stands as the active source of all being over and against a passive creation that has no integrity and intrinsic value.[17] This allegedly undergirds a host of pernicious dualisms that have plagued Christian theology, amongst them subject and object, nature and culture, mind and matter, male and female.[18]

Within this picture, where does Augustine fit? In this article I will argue that Augustine's theology of creation, far from offering a proto-deism or denigration of materiality and temporality via the imposition of an extrinsic teleology, does precisely the opposite. His view shows how some of the problematic elements of modern theologies of creation might be avoided. Following carefully the narrative of Genesis, Augustine has a two-fold understanding of creation in which matter is understood principally as receptive of form. This is not, however, a passive receptivity and there is no interval between the creation of matter and the reception of form. The six days of creation establish the *rationes seminales* ('rational principles' or 'seminal reasons') in the material order that have their origin in the eternal Word. Potentialities are established and then realized through providentially guided motion as creation participates in God through number, measure and weight. The providential and teleological order of creation is not extrinsic because matter is not passive and neutral with respect to form. But crucially neither is the providential teleological order of creation exclusively intrinsic. Creation has within itself the rational principles of its own perfection and is drawn towards its goal by God's continual providential care and

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[17] For a range of critical approaches to creation *ex nihilo* along these lines, see Thomas Jay Oord, ed., *Theologies of Creation:* Creatio Ex Nihilo *and its New Rivals*, (London: Routledge, 2015). For an alternative to creation *ex nihilo* that is ambivalent about Augustine's doctrine of creation, see Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[18] Rowan Williams confronts critics of the traditional doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* in ''Good for Nothing'? Augustine on Creation', *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994), pp. 9-24, reprinted in Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), ch.4. See also Scott A. Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine,* ch.1.

guidance. God is both within and beyond the creature in such a way that we find the blending of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of divine providence and creation's orientation to specific ends. Whilst in no sense being like creation, God is both immanent to creation and wholly transcendent. For Augustine, retaining that balance is crucial to a coherent understanding of creation. It avoids those pernicious dualisms to which modern doctrines of creation are allegedly prone.

In the Beginning: Matter and Form

For Augustine, scripture teaches that the doctrine of creation begins not with general observations about nature, but with God. Indeed, the opening verses of Genesis point to the mystery of the Trinity: the Father is indicated by the word 'God' and the Son is indicated by 'beginning', for the eternally begotten Word spoken by the Father is the principle (*archē*) of all things. The Spirit, the abundant and generous divine love, broods over the waters.[19] In discussing the very beginning or principle of creation and the unformed basic material that is ordered by God, the focus is on the Word through whom all things are made.[20] Augustine makes a distinction between the Word as *archē* and the Word as God's utterance. As *archē*, the Word is the principle of creation as it comes into being in an imperfect state. As God's utterance, the Word bestows perfection on creation.[21] Creation is brought into being through the Word as principle and that same Word immediately calls it back to perfection. There is no interval between the *archē* and the call to turn to the creator. The Word calls primordial creation 'so that it may be given form by adhering to the creator, and by imitating in its own measure the form which adheres eternally and unchangingly to the Father, and which instantly gets from him to be the same thing that he is.'[22] It is through participation in the Word that creatures receive their own form and become perfect and complete. In a similar vein, in *De vera religione* Augustine claims that God is 'uncreated form' (*forma infabricata*) who gives beauty to creation by being the

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[19] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* ('The Literal Meaning of Genesis'), I.6.12 and I.18.36 in Edmund Hill, O.P., trans., *On Genesis* (New York: New City Press, 2002).

[20] Augustine, *In Evangelium Iohannis Tractatus* [Tractates on the Gospel of John], I.

[21] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, I.4.9.

[22] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, I.4.9.

source of harmony and the beauty of all beauty (*omnium speciosissimus*), for the beauty of all things comes from God (*omnis enim species ab illo est*).[23]

Augustine also refers to this 'formless and quality-less matter' at the beginning of creation using the ancient Greek term *hyle*.[24] In the beginning, God called back to himself this dark and formless void; God called creation to light. This creation and return to God under the call of the Word is an imitation of the Son's eternal return to the Father.[25] As Michael Hanby points out, *hyle* is 'interposed in the interval between the Father's intention of and delight in the Son and the Son's response to and vision of the Father.'[26] In being placed within this eternal begetting and return, *hyle* participates in the conversion to form as it is brought to existence from nothing and called to receive its form in the Word of God. However, as Hanby and a number of commentators point out, Augustine's reflections on *hyle* also indicate that it is not passive and indifferent.[27] Although barely intelligible, it is 'a capacity for forms' which renders *hyle* both beautiful and good.[28] Just as wisdom and the capacity for wisdom are goods, so form and the capacity for form are goods. Moreover, because every good comes from God, *hyle* comes only from God. Therefore, far from being

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[23] Augustine, *De vera religione* , paragraph 21. Augustine is using *forma* and *species* almost synonymously to indicate the 'look' or 'beauty' of things. This particular passage is concerned with the beauty of the body. Here, I am indebted to Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of St. Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.100, n. 22.

[24] Augustine, *De natura boni* ('The Nature of the Good'), 18, available in Boniface Ramsey, ed., *The Manichean Debate* (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2006).

[25] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, I.4.9: 'By so turning back and being formed creation imitates, every element in its own way, God the Word, that is the Son of God who always adheres to the Father in complete likeness and equality of being, by which he and the Father are one; but it does not imitate this form of the Word if it turns away from the creator and remains formless and imperfect, incomplete.'

[26] Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 86.

[27] Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*, pp. 85-88; Scott A. Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine*, pp. 99-104; Rowan Williams, 'Good for Nothing', p. 17.

[28] Augustine, *De natura boni*, 18.

evil *hyle* is not even indifferent to the good because it is always seeking form. Insofar as *hyle* shares in intelligibility and being at all, one might say that it is brought to existence as that which intrinsically possesses the form of seeking form.[29] This means that the potentiality of *hyle* is never a pure or bare potentiality because it is measured by the prior and eternal actuality of the Word to which it is converted. In other words, for Augustine creation has existence only through its intrinsic orientation to the Good, this being a participation in the eternal orientation of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father, an orientation of love that is the Holy Spirit. As Dunham points out, Augustine emphasises this pneumatological source of creation's goodness in *The City of God*: 'God made what He made not from any necessity…but simply from His own goodness: that is, so that it might be good…And if this goodness is rightly understood to be the Holy Spirit, then the whole Trinity is revealed to us in the works of God.'[30]

So for Augustine, matter or *hyle* is not a pure and empty possibility for such a thing could not exist. Neither is it a substrate to which is added or imposed a form that might be regarded as alien to matter. In fact, Augustine avoids the dualism of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' when it comes to form's relation to matter in creation. Form is not purely intrinsic to material nature in such a way that created natures become self-sufficient and autonomous after the moment of creation. Neither is form purely extrinsic in such a way that the order of creation is imposed upon indifferent or recalcitrant matter after the fashion of a human designer of an artefact. Matter intrinsically seeks form through its origin and participation in the Word who is both within and beyond creation. The primordial creation is first and foremost receptive, indicating the fundamentally asymmetrical relation of creatures to the creator: God is the source of being and creatures receive existence at every moment. So Augustine writes, 'But then all was close to nothingness, for it was still utterly formless; yet is was not nothing, for it could receive form.'[31]

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[29] For an argument along these lines with respect to Aristotle's notion of matter, see Simon Oliver, 'Aquinas and Aristotle's Teleology'.

[30] Augustine, *De civitate dei*, XI.24 cited in Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine*, p.102.

[31] Augustine, *Confessiones*, XII.8: '*illud autem totum prope nihil erat, quoniam adhuc omnino informe erat; iam tamen erat, quod formari poterat.*' See also *De vere*

In *De Trinitate* and his literal commentary on Genesis, Augustine describes the formation of matter in a slightly different way. God's providential establishment of creation is via the *rationes seminales*, a concept of Stoic origin that was deployed by the Neoplatonists.[32] These are 'causal reasons' or 'primal formulae' that are brought to actuality through the motion of time. Within creatures, God provides certain seeds of reason that set limits to their development. Put another way, the *rationes seminales* establish the general direction of a creature's motion towards a particular goal or purpose; by means of its *rationes seminales*, an acorn is set in motion towards the oak tree, the chick towards flight, the child towards learning and knowledge, and so on. Because these seeds are a creature's principle and contain in potential form its *telos*, they are also the basis of creation's intelligible motion in time because they establish a beginning and end. The potentialities within creatures are always defined by their orientation towards an actuality that is eternally established in the Word. So the *rationes seminales* are, in an important sense, the basis of creation's history because they establish the direction of creaturely activity and development.[33] However, is this somehow deterministic? Are creatures established on a particular path of development

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religione, 18: 'For the good is that which has been formed; even the potentiality, therefore, of being formed is a good of some sort, and that is why the author of all good things, who has bestowed form on them, has himself also made the potentiality of being formed.'

[32] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, III.2.13: 'Thus it is the creator of all these invisible seeds who is the creator of all things, since whatever comes into our ken by a process of birth received the beginnings of its course from hidden seeds, and derives its due growth and final distinction of shape and parts from the as it were original rules.' (translation adapted). Translation from Edmund Hill, O.P., trans., *The Trinity* (New York: New City Press, 1991). See also *De Genesi ad litteram*, VI.14.25.

[33] Augustine makes the same point with respect to form in *Confessiones* XII.11: 'Now, unless a man is all wandering and whirled about with empty fantasies in the emptiness of his heart, would he dare assert that if every form were taken away and made utterly naught…this sheer formlessness could show any changes of time? Obviously it could not, for where there is no change of movement (*motionum*) there is not time: and there is no change (*varietas*) where there is no form.'

via their intrinsic *rationes seminales*? At first glance, this could also issue in a naturalistic or deistic interpretation of creaturely development (reminiscent of design) whereby God simply establishes the internal principles and goals of creatures via the *rationes seminales* before standing aside to allow creation to realise itself. This is not how Augustine understands God's act of creation. Rather, through his reading of the seventh day of creation and the divine rest, we will see that God sustains his creation at every moment and providentially guides it towards its proper end.

Motion and Providence

In his literal commentary on Genesis, Augustine asks how it can be that God can 'rest' on the seventh day. Surely creation cannot be a labour which challenges divine omnipotence and makes God weary. Neither does God create and then simply stand back from his creation, for creation requires God's continual and gratuitous sustaining power.[34] Similarly, we cannot conclude that God needs to create and is therefore somehow perfected by his act of creation, because God enjoys eternal bliss and fulfilment. In no sense does God need creation, even if God desires creation. So Augustine states that,

> we take it that God so rested from all his works which he had made that from now on he set up no new kind of nature any more, not so that he stopped holding together and directing the ones which he had already set in place. Thus both statements are true: that *God rested on the seventh day* (Genesis 2.2) and that *he is working until now* (John 5.17).[35]

Augustine points out that God's act of creation is complete in the sense that all that is and will be needed for creation's divinely ordained purposes is now latent within the created order, even if it is yet to be realised. The foundations or principles of creation

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[34] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.12.22: 'It is not, you see, like a mason building houses; when he has finished he goes away, and his work goes on standing when he has stopped working on it and gone away. No, the world will not be able to go on standing for a single moment, if God withdraws from it his controlling hand.'

[35] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.12.23.

are in place through the *rationes seminales* or 'causal reasons' that hold, in their potential guise, the forms that will be actualised through creation's motion that has an angelic source. Thus Genesis makes a key claim concerning the created order: it is complete, whole and therefore 'one' (a *uni*verse), this being ritually expressed in the Sabbath rest. Genesis therefore announces creation's goodness in terms of its wholeness or completeness. It is sufficient and features no intrinsic lack. There is a sense in which all things are created simultaneously at the beginning – as we read in Genesis – and yet are also unfolded within the processes of time.[36] So Augustine writes,

> But clearly, if we suppose that he now sets any creature in place in such a way that he did not insert the kind of thing it is into that first construction of his, we are openly contradicting what scripture says, that he finished and completed all his works on the sixth day. Yes, within the categories of the various kinds of thing which he set up at first, he manifestly makes many new things which he did not make then. But he cannot rightly be thought to set up any new kind, since he did then complete them all. And so by his hidden power he sets the whole of his creation in motion, and while it is whirled around with that movement, while angels carry out his orders, while the constellations circle round their courses…he unwinds the ages which he had as it were folded into the universe when it was first set up. These, however, would not go on being unwound along the tracks, if the one who set them going stopped moving them on by his provident regulation.[37]

We will return to the importance of the Sabbath rest below. For now, it should be noted that the *rationes seminales* do not set creation on a narrowly deterministic path in such a way that nothing new or surprising emerges in creation. This is underlined by Augustine's brief discussion of miracles. God does not prime the universe and then simply allow it to unfold along a narrow and restrictive path; the causal formulae can unfold in different ways that are consistent with the original potentialities they hold. We know this because there is a normal and predictable pattern of unfolding that we

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[36] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, V.23.44.

[37] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, V.20.41. See also IV.12.23.

witness in nature, whereas in the occurrence of miracles (Augustine mentions water into wine at Cana) we see a different pattern of unfolding.[38] But this different pattern is not, insists Augustine, violently inconsistent with the original *rationes seminales*. So the original seeds within creation have an aptitude for a wide range of development according to the providential will of God. This also has the implication that, within the order of creation, miracles are not a fracture of that order, but a providential realisation of a usually hidden possibility with creation according to God's gracious purposes.[39]

A further important aspect of Augustine's view of divine providence concerns its extent throughout the created order. It is not the case that God orders the higher levels of the cosmic hierarchy such as the heavens which behave with steady regularity whilst the lower levels exhibit chance and chaos; God providentially orders the whole.[40] As Lewis Ayres points out, for Augustine it is the incarnation that re-orientates our perception of the extent of divine providence and the ordering of the cosmos.[41] The prologue to St. John's gospel teaches that all things are created through the Word; it is the Word that is made flesh and therefore shares a material nature. Once material nature has been assumed by God to reveal the infinite and reconcile all things to himself, there is, in principle, no limit to the possibilities for material nature *per se* under the providential ordering of the Word. All men, in being flesh, are but

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[38] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, VI.14.25.

[39] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IX.17.32: 'But over and above the natural course and operation of things, the power of the creator has in itself the capacity to make from all these things something other than what their seminal formulae, so to say, prescribe – not however anything with which he did not so program them that it could be made from them at least by him. He is almighty, for sure, but with the strength of wisdom, no unprincipled might; and he makes from each thing in its own time what he first inscribed in it that he could make from it.'

[40] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, V.22.43.

[41] Lewis Ayres, 'God' in *Late Ancient Knowing: Explorations in Intellectual History*, ed. Catherine M. Chin and Moulie Vidas (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), p. 140.

worms, yet humanity also shares a spiritual nature with angels.[42] Humanity, in lying at the heart of the comic hierarchy, connects the lowest and the highest in the created order whilst they nevertheless remain in their proper places. So God, through the incarnation, becomes a worm (Psalm 21.7 and Job 25.6), as it were, and reaches to the heart of the cosmos to reveal that 'There is no shape, no structure, no union of parts, no substance whatsoever which can have weight, number and measure unless it is through that Word.'[43] As Ayres points out, we cannot see God's providence lying only within that which we intuit as having ontological value; God orders and guides all things, from worms to angels, to their proper ends (Psalm 148.7).[44] It is the Word through whom all things are made that lies at the heart of creation as the origin of its existence and order. The eternal reasons that lie complete in the Word become the *rationes seminales* that are implanted in creation to unfold in due time according to the providential will of God.

The providential work of God, which unfolds creation according to the Word's eternal reasons expressed as *rationes seminales* in creatures, is essentially a conferral of motion by God's Wisdom that 'reaches from end to end mightily, and arranges all things sweetly'.[45] However, God is not subject to motion or change; this is what distinguishes a cosmos saturated in motion from God who is replete and requires no motion as the means of acquiring perfection.[46] So how can God confer motion upon creation? Augustine elucidates this matter through an interpretation of texts from the Wisdom of Solomon where we read that Wisdom, as well as pervading creation and ordering all things sweetly, is 'more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things'.[47] According to the Neoplatonic tradition that so influenced Augustine, God's life is not the absence of motion in the way that a stationery body lacks motion. Rather, God is beyond motion and rest in such a way that God's life has to be described as a 'motionless motion' or, to use the words of

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[42] Augustine, *In Evangelium Iohannis Tractatus*, I.13.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ayres, 'God', p. 140.

[45] *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.12.23 citing Wisdom 8.1.

[46] Augustine, *Confessiones*, XII.11.

[47] Wisdom 8.1 and 7.24.

Wisdom, 'more mobile than any motion'.[48] This is best imagined by means of a rotating globe. The circular motion of the sphere is most perfect because unlike, for example, a rotating cube, it moves entirely within its own boundaries and is therefore complete and one. Any one moment of the sphere's rotation is identical to any other so it is not, strictly speaking, temporally divisible. A sphere's rotation can be so rapid that it is impossible to judge whether it is at motion or at rest. Strangely, its motion is a kind of rest in the sense of being complete. Using this as a metaphor for the full actuality of the divine life, we can see that God's life is complete, one, and entirely within its own eternal bounds in the same way that a sphere's rotation is complete and one. Yet this 'motionless motion' is also 'life itself' in being supremely dynamic. It is a share in this supremely dynamic life – which is beyond the distinction between motion and rest – that divine Wisdom imparts to the created. Indeed, Augustine notes the scriptural connection between motion and life in Acts 17.28 where we read about Paul's teaching in Athens, the centre of Greek learning, that 'In him we live and move and have our being.' We are 'in' God not in the sense of being one with his life, but in the sense that God confers upon creation a participation in the motionless motion of his life. Moreover, Wisdom's ordering of all things sweetly implies that cosmic motion is not one of effort or force, but springs spontaneously and naturally from creatures' *rationes seminales* in such a way that it is swift and nimble.[49] So life and motion are intimately connected in Augustine's cosmology, as they were for both Plato and Aristotle; should Wisdom's motionless motion be withdrawn, creatures 'will perish forthwith'.[50] It is the natural movements of things, conferred by God, which constitutes creaturely life and existence.

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[48] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.12.23: '…from this it is clear enough to those who look into the matter rightly that she bestows this incomparable and inexpressible and this – if you can grasp it – this motionless movement of hers upon things by disposing them sweetly, so that undoubtedly if this is withdrawn, and she abstains from this activity, they will perish forthwith.'

[49] For an exploration of this theme in Aquinas, see 'The Sweet Delight of Virtue and Grace in Aquinas's Ethics', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7(1) (2005): 52-71.

[50] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.12.23.

Augustine's discussion of Wisdom's conferral of cosmic motion marks a development of Plato's *Timaeus*. For Plato, the motion of the cosmos is derived from the rotation of the World Soul that is first conferred on the heavenly spheres and thence pervades the living cosmos.[51] It is easy to imagine that this motion is communicated through efficient causes (the World Soul acting on creatures) or participation in the Forms (and supremely the Form of the Good) through creatures' inherent desire for their perfection. For Plato, this motion is what constitutes the cosmos as a living creature. The importance of the *rationes seminales* for Augustine adds more detail to Plato's cosmology by identifying a kind of formal cause of teleological motion as intrinsic to creatures. The *rationes seminales* are created expressions of the eternal reasons that lie in the Word or God's Wisdom. So those formal principles of motion are both intrinsic to creatures and also extrinsic in pointing to the eternal ordering reason of God. The source of cosmic motion and, therefore, life itself lies both within and beyond the creature. The creature truly moves itself, yet cannot move itself without the sustaining motion of God's providential Wisdom that is the motionless motion of the divine life. Whereas for Plato cosmic motion is conferred more clearly from a transcendent source – the demiurge and the World Soul via the heavenly spheres and the souls of creatures – Augustine balances this with a more thorough description of an intrinsic principle of motion via the *rationes seminales*.

Yet it is Augustine's meditation on Paul's teaching that creation lives, moves and has its being in God lies behind his clearest articulation of the nature of divine providential governance that indicates his radical distance from any modern notion of a designed creation or deistic creator.[52] The way in which God moves creation indicates a blend of intrinsic and extrinsic formal and teleological order. Whilst God is immutable, spiritual creation is moved temporally. In addition, the material order, which is subject to place and therefore local motion, is moved both in time and space. God is the cause of 'inward natures' – the *rationes seminales* – which he administers 'outwardly' by the movement of wills and bodies, the former in time and the latter both spatially and temporally. With the prologue of John's gospel in the

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[51] Plato, *Timaeus*, 35a-37c.

[52] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, VIII.26.48.

background,[53] time and space – the basis of motion and therefore life – come into being *in* God who, as the principle of time, space and motion, is simultaneously *beyond* these categories. So Augustine writes,

> …but we should realise that in the operation of divine providence these things do not happen in the operation by which he creates natures, but in the one by which he also administers *externally* the natures he has created *internally*.[54]

So the forms of creatures are not imposed externally upon passive matter from which God subsequently withdraws after the fashion of a human designer. Neither is God a formal pantheistic principle that is purely intrinsic to the created order in such a way that naturalistic understandings of teleology would become thinkable. God's creative providence is simultaneously external and internal because God is simple and beyond created categories. God can therefore be infinitely proximate to creatures – closer than our own breathing – whilst being irreducibly and ontologically other.

The relation of simple and unmoved divinity to a universe saturated in motion is an important concern for Augustine. Whilst motion is central to his understanding of creation and providence, this physics requires a governing metaphysics in order to render it intelligible.[55] To put the matter simply, motion requires a principle and goal that are beyond motion. These are the boundaries that 'measure' movement. Augustine explains this in a number of ways, one of which occurs in a seemingly

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[53] John 1.3-4: 'All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.'

[54] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, VIII.26.48 (my italics).

[55] This is essentially the problem addressed by Plato in the *Timaeus*. The *khora* or 'receptacle of becoming' is chaotic. In the Newtonian sense, it is not static. For Plato, it lacks motion not because it is 'still', but because it lacks teleological *order*. In forming the cosmos, the divine craftsman applies metaphysical order to material nature and thereby confers proper motion – that is, intelligible stability that comes from directedness.

curious metaphorical aside in Book VIII of *De Genesi ad litteram*.[56] There is a hierarchy of motion beginning with the creator Spirit that is beyond motion. Spiritual creatures are moved in time but not space; such motion would include, for example, willing and thinking. Finally, bodily creatures are subject to motion in time and space. Because humanity, being composed of soul and body, is spiritual and corporeal, it is subject to both psychic and local motion. The soul is the immediate source of motion in the creature, but how can an unextended substance that is not subject to local movement be the source of a body's movement through both time and place? Of course, this is an ancient philosophical problem and Augustine explores it through a metaphor: the joints of the body. The motion of a finger through space is possible via that which is motionless, namely the joint around which the moving finger pivots. One might also think of the forearm moving via the still point of the elbow joint. The hierarchy of motion begins with the self-moving soul that is subject only to temporal movement. This motion is transmitted through the body's still points – its joints – to those parts of the body (the limbs) subject to both local and temporal motion. Augustine's point seems to be that motion has its principle in something that is not subject to motion, or is subject to a different kind of motion. He claims that the soul moves the body not as a mechanical efficient cause, but 'with an intention' (*quadam intentione*). This strange and, at first glance, unconvincing metaphor is more effective in illustrating a metaphysical point characteristic of Neoplatonism that was to receive clearer expression in later thinkers: motion is rendered intelligible in being *measured* by that which does not move.[57] In other words, it is in relation to a still point beyond motion (rather than another moving body) that motion is judged most intelligible because such motion can be described as motion *to*, *away from* or *around* that point.[58]

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[56] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, VIII.20.39-21.41.

[57] For example, see Nicholas of Cusa, *De sapientia* on the simplicity of God as the measure of creation. Available in Jasper Hopkins (trans.), *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Nicholas of Cusa*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2001), pp. 496-526.

[58] It should be noted that in the context of classical physics as articulated by Newton and his successors, this is a very strange understanding of motion. For Newton, motion is a state of a body, not a process. It is rendered intelligible in relation to absolute space. Rest is simply the state of motion reduced to zero. It is nothing to do

In turn, a purely temporal non-spatial motion is relative to, and measured by, a metaphysical 'still point' in the form of an eternal principle and goal. Ultimately, the motionless and eternal creator is the measure of all motion, for all motion, whether local or psychic, is towards or away from God as creation's principle and end.

Measure, Number and Weight

This notion of a measure of motion leads us to one of the most distinctive features of Augustine's writing on creation, namely his focus on Wisdom 11.20: 'But you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.'[59] Measure, number and weight (*mensura*, *numerus*, *pondus*) are physical and metaphysical categories that delineate the bounds within which creation unfolds from the *rationes seminales*.[60] In *De Trinitate*, Augustine describes the way in which creatures have been 'seminally and primordially created in the very fabric, as it were, or texture of the elements; but they require the right occasion actually to emerge into being.'[61] The world is 'heavy with the causes of things' and, when the right occasion arises, they are brought to birth by unfolding their measures, numbers and weights that are secretly assigned by God who is the primary cause of creatures. All three categories propose a limit for each creature and thereby grant that creature a particular mode of existence and an appropriate goal. By establishing a creature's boundaries, it is distinguished from

with the arrival at a goal or the cessation of a process of actualization. See Simon Oliver, *Philosophy, God and Motion* (London: Routledge: 2005), ch.6.

[59] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.3.7-IV.7.14.

[60] See Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.3.7 ff., especially IV.4.9: 'The words [measure, number and weight], you see, will have all the richer a flavour for you as referring to higher things, the less you are mere flesh with reference to lower things.' Augustine refers to this verse from Wisdom in numerous places. Early texts such as *De natura boni* (paragraph 3 *et passim*) refer to *modus*, *species* and *ordo*. A detailed discussion of this theme can be found in W.J. Roche, 'Measure, Number and Weight in St. Augustine', *New Scholasticism* 15.4 (1941), pp. 350-376. Other discussions to which I am much indebted can be found in Williams, 'Good for Nothing'; Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of St. Augustine*, pp. 101-110; Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine*, pp. 92-99.

[61] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, III.16.

other creatures and is prevented from any straining after limitlessness that would be an idolatrous mimicry of God who is beyond limit. So 'measure' is the key limit that indicates the boundaries of a creature's existence and the appropriate ('measured' or 'balanced') mode of its existence. It establishes the creature within intelligible bounds as a 'this' rather than a 'that'. 'Number' indicates the harmonious proportions of a creature's being in such a way that it fits as a part within the whole. 'Weight' indicates the creature's innate tendency towards its *telos*, much as the heavy object is carried to its proper place through its form. Although measure, number and weight, as aspects of God's providential ordering of creation, are the means by which creation participates in God, they are not aspects of divine being. Augustine is clear that God is 'measure without measure', 'number without number' and 'weight without weight'.[62] In other words, whilst God is the source of measure, number and weight, he is not these things in himself for God is not measured, numbered or weighed. God establishes a form of existence for creatures via their measure, number and weight, but God is not thereby a form of existence; he is existence itself. So Augustine writes,

> …insofar as measure sets a limit to everything, and number gives everything its specific form, and weight draws everything to rest and stability, he [God] is the original, true and unique measure which defines for all things their bounds, the number which forms all things, the weight which guides all things.[63]

As Dunham and others have shown, Augustine associates measure, number and weight with the Trinity.[64] The Father, who is the source and principle of all things, is the measure of creatures by the establishment of their beginning and end. The Son, through whom and for whom all things were made, establishes creaturely number and proportion because in the eternal Word we find the forms of creatures and the

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[62] *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.4.8.

[63] *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.3.7.

[64] Dunham, *The Trinity and Creation in Augustine*, pp. 95-99. See also Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of St. Augustine*, p.109 and Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la Foi En la Trinité Selon Saint Augustin* (Paris: Études augustiniènnes, 1966).

harmonious and beautiful structure of the universe.[65] Finally, the Holy Spirit is the 'weight' of creatures that providentially guides them in motion towards a *telos* in stability, resting as that which they were made to be. Whilst the material creature is drawn to its proper place in the cosmos by its physical weight, the 'weight' of the spiritual creature's will and love draws it to repose in a certain form of spiritual existence, for example a state of wisdom.[66]

By the mediating categories of measure, number and weight, Augustine establishes the centrality of (to use the parlance of later scholastic Aristotelians) formal and final causation. Creatures are measured through their form. This limits them and allows the actualisation of a particular potency to be this or that creature. Weight is a creature's orientation to its proper end in the fulfilment of its form. So formal and final causation are necessarily connected. Form and finality are also the basis of creaturely motion for they establish the unfolding of a formal nature in a particular direction. Indeed, Augustine is clear that, without form, there can be no motion because motion is passage from form to form as creatures seek the actualisation of their proper form.[67] Without such motion arising from formal natures, there would be no time and the universe would be without history: 'for where there is no form and no order, nothing comes and nothing passes away, and as a consequence there are no days nor any changes to mark the duration of time.'[68] Moreover, Augustine links weight and final causation when he writes of the link between *amor* and *pondus*: 'My love is my weight: wherever I go, my love is what brings me there.'[69] The 'weight' of creatures is their desire for the fulfilment of their formal natures; that 'weight' carries them to particular ends. Through form, they constantly seek stability, order and rest within the complex negotiations of creaturely motions within the cosmic order. In the human

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[65] Augustine, *In Evangelium Iohannis Tractatus* [Tractates on the Gospel of John], 1.9.3. For *numerus*, Augustine occasionally substitutes *forma* or *species*.

[66] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.4.8: '…and there is a weighing for the will and for love, which shows what should be weighed and for how much in seeking or avoiding it, preferring or disregarding it.'

[67] Augustine, *Confessiones*, XII.11.14.

[68] Augustine, *Confessiones*, XII.9.9.

[69] Augustine, *Confessiones*, XIII.9.10

person rightly orientated, this movement is love as we desire rest in God. One can speak analogously of the 'love' and 'desire' of all creatures that carries them to their proper end. This includes the weight of objects that carries them to their proper place. Teleological order belongs to inanimate and animate alike as all seek stability and order through measure, number and weight.

Against this background and the importance of measured motion, what is the significance of creaturely and divine rest? We saw above that God rests on the seventh day because the work of creation is complete and whole in the sense that creation possesses all that it requires to fulfil God's purposes, even if only latently or potentially. Yet God continues to work in the providential guidance of creation to its proper end and stability through the mediation of measure, number and weight. Augustine's interpretation of divine rest, which comes immediately after his consideration of measure, number and weight in the literal commentary on Genesis, finally reveals the teleological and providential order of creation: creatures are to seek their rest or fulfilment in God and the Sabbath, which belongs to all creation, is a ritual anticipation of the consummation of all things in God.

> So all that remains for us to understand, perhaps, is that he granted rest in himself to the rational creation in which he also created the man, after perfecting him through the gift of the Holy Spirit…so that we should be borne along by the impetus of desire to the place where we shall rest, the place, that is, where we shall look for nothing further, when we reach it. After all, just as God is rightly said to do whatever we do by his working in us, so God is rightly said to rest, when we rest thanks to his munificence.[70]

In seeking to reconcile divine immutability with temporal categories such as rest or coming to know, Augustine claims that, when scripture speaks of these things, in a very strict sense the change must be ascribed to creatures rather than God. For example, when we read in Genesis 22 that God came to know Abraham's fear of him, God does not realise some knowledge in himself through the process of time. Rather,

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[70] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.9.16.

this 'coming to know' refers to God bringing Abraham to know the fear of the Lord.[71] When scripture tells us that God rests, in a strict sense this means that God brings his creatures to rest in his goodness, for in that goodness they find their fulfilment. This rest is not, however, a stasis or a quantity of motion reduced to zero. It is completion in the sense that the creature has nothing further to actualise as that creature. The *rationes seminales* have been brought to fruition through God's providential care in measure, number and weight. Creatures now share in the divine stability that is intimated in every ritual Sabbath (Genesis 2.1-3; Deuteronomy 5.14; Leviticus 25.4). The Sabbath punctuates creation's processes and reminds us that creation's good, unlike God's eternal goodness, is the outcome of motion. It is a teleological process whose end is disclosed obliquely in the Sabbath, particularly in Christ's new resurrection Sabbath. That *telos* is worship. Creation's weight carries it to the worship of God where it finds its ultimate purpose and stability. God's rest is creation's rest when we shall look for nothing further. Only in the divine goodness, in the vision of God, do we look no further because our looking is complete.

Conclusion

The problematic aspects of modern understandings of creation tend to rest on a series of dualistic distinctions that make it difficult to articulate the wholeness of creation and its proper relation to God. One such distinction concerns intrinsic and extrinsic providential order. On the one hand, Augustine is accused of denigrating the value of the material and holding a Platonic view of the extrinsic nature of teleological order that ascribes no intrinsic value to the material order of creation. In this article, we have seen that this is an erroneous reading of the theology of creation that is scattered through Augustine's treatises. God administers externally, through measure, number and weight, the natures he has created internally in the *rationes seminales*. He draws material and spiritual creation into his life by the conferral of motion that leads to a share in the divine stability or 'motionless motion' of God's eternal rest. In the beginning God creates the heavens and the earth as two extremes: on the one hand, primal matter receiving form, and on the other the pure forms of the angelic natures that enjoy the vision of God. The former is radically potential, the latter replete and actual. His providential governance extends between these extremes. The incarnation

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[71] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV.9.17.

lies at the heart of creation between these extremes and reveals the full extent of God's providential governance of creation as the Word takes a material nature to itself. It is hard to imagine a theology of creation further removed from the deism of early modern thought. Yet Augustine's view also indicates that our understanding of providential teleological order must resist the dualism of intrinsic and extrinsic because this can give rise to further dualisms that become fatal for an adequate doctrine of creation because the concepts are mutually exclusive.[72] God is both intrinsic and extrinsic, transcendent and immanent, but this is only intelligible through a clear distinction between creator and creation in which the relation of creatures to God is wholly asymmetrical. God's eternal simplicity draws creatures to share in divine rest through the measure of their form, the number of their beauty, and the weight of their love.

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[72] For example, there can only be a 'dualism' of time and eternity in Gunton's sense if these categories are univocal and therefore mutually exclusive. In Augustine's terms, eternity measures time and is blended with time, but of course it is never collapsed into time. But this means that eternity is not a very special or very extended kind of time, nor is it something we are expected to imagine.