



*Self-Knowledge and the Discipline ‘in uita’ in Augustine’s De ordine**

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Introduction

At the beginning of the harvest holidays in the late summer of 386, Augustine resigned as Milan’s professor of rhetoric and withdrew from the city to the Cassiciacum estate with his mother and a group of friends.¹ During his rural retreat to his friend Verecundus’ country villa between his conversion (August 386) and baptism (spring of 387), he had been acutely conscious of his duty as the ‘disciplinary guide’ for pursuing a good life. Augustine’s earliest pieces of writings—*Contra Academicos*, *De beata uita*, *De ordine*, and *Soliloquia*—would testify to his progressive and pedagogical practices with the participants in the dialogues.

De ordine marks Augustine’s earliest written struggle with the problem of evil. In its prefatory letter addressed to Zenobius, Augustine presents two opposite viewpoints, from which arises the apparent discrepancy between divine providence, in which God cares for all human affairs, and the spread of human perversity all over [86] the world (*De ord.* 1.1.1).² In order to resolve the conflict one has to decide either that divine providence does not rule the world, or that human perversity derives from the will of God. Overwhelmed by the burden of evil, one would reject the former and necessarily accept the latter. At this point, a serious difficulty emerges: ‘whether the order of divine Providence embraces all things, the good and the evil’ (*Retract.* 1.3.1).³ In his dedicatory letter, Augustine explains the cause of its difficulty:

To perceive and to grasp the order of reality proper to each things,
and then to see or to explain the order of the entire universe by
which this world is truly held together and governed [...] is a very
difficult and rare achievement for men.⁴

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¹See Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 146-148. [86]

²I use the edition of Jean Doignon, BA 4/2 (1997); translation is from *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil*, trans. Robert P. Russell, FC 5 (New York: Cima, 1948). See also Doignon’s French translation; Sophie Dupuy-Trudelle, trans. in *Les Confessions précédées de Dialogues philosophiques*, ed. Lucien Jerphagnon, Œuvres, 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1998); Wataru Takahashi, trans. *Chitsujyo Ron* [On Order] (Tokyo: Chuou Shuppansha, 1954).

³*The Retractations*, trans. Mary Inez Bogan, FC 60 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1968), 13; for the difficulty of *De ordine*, see also Michael Patrick Foley, ‘Augustine, and the Philosophical Roots of the Cassiciacum Dialogues’, *REAug.* 45 (1999), 71.

⁴*De ord.* 1.1.1: trans. R. P. Russell, 239.

The chief cause of this error is that man does not know himself.⁵

Since he declares the disorder of his interlocutors' discussion of divine order, the dialogue that begins with their concern for the order of nature turns into Augustine's monologue about the order of discipline.⁶

The philosophical dialogues at Cassiciacum have been intensively studied. Some scholars have concerned themselves with Augustine's [87] enquiry at that time. So, careful attention has been paid to the historicity of the Cassiciacum dialogues: whether or not the dialogues are works of fiction.⁷ Its interpretative tradition originates with the difficulty of how to reconcile the retrospective account of his conversion in *Confessions* with the more contemporary evidence shown in the dialogues. Though some attempts have been made to expose the implicit commitment to Christianity in the dialogues, the issue of the correlation between *Confessions* and the Cassiciacum writings remains of interest.

My intention in this paper is not to elucidate the reason for believing *De ordine* to be a fairly accurate report of an actual conversation held at Cassiciacum, but rather to determine the intention of *De ordine*, with which Augustine is confident about his future: 'his books are all of them programmes'.⁸ Whatever one's viewpoint on the dispute of the historicity, it must be admitted that his switch from discussion to monologue is striking (*De ord.* 2.7.24). But, as we shall see, the transformation is carefully prepared. I make the [88] assumption that *De ordine* is neither simply a transcription of the conversation nor entirely a fictional account. In this paper, thus, I first survey the whole structure of *De ordine*. Then I examine the comparison between the wise (*sapiens*) and the unwise (*stultus*). I consider the aspect of cognition in which the unwise is said to be the knower and/or enquirer. Finally, I suggest that *De ordine* offers the programmatic practices for human perfection.

⁵*De ord.* 1.1.3; trans. R. P. Russell, 241.

⁶Phillip Cary describes Augustine's turn from dialogue to monologue as the shift from the *ordo rerum* to the *ordo disciplinarum*, and comments: 'Hence both are included in what Augustine says at the beginning of the discussions of order [...]'. See 'What Licentius Learned: A Narrative Reading of the Cassiciacum Dialogues', *AugStud*, 29 (1998), 154-155 and 155, n. 51. [87]

⁷With regard to the long debate about the historicity of the dialogues, see J. Doignon, 'État des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', in *Internationales Symposium über den Stand der Augustinus-Forschung*, eds. Cornelius Mayer and Karl Heinz Chelius (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1989), 47-86; Gerald J. P. O'Daly, art. 'Cassiciacum', in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, ed. Cornelius Mayer, i. (Basel: Schwabe, 1992), 771-781; Joanne McWilliam, 'The Cassiciacum Autobiography', *StPatr*, 18.4 (1990), 16, nn. 5 and 6. For the non-literal historicity of the dialogues and their substantial congruence with *Confessions*, see John J. O'Meara, 'The Historicity of the Early Dialogues of Saint Augustine', *VChr*, 5 (1951), 150-178. With reference to another interpretative possibility, see also Goulven Madec, 'L'historicité des Dialogues de Cassiciacum', *REAug*, 32 (1986), 207-231; Dennis E. Trout, 'Augustine at Cassiciacum: Otium honestum and the Social Dimensions of Conversion', *VChr*, 42.2 (1988), 132-146; Laurie Douglass, 'Voice Re-Cast: Augustine's Use of Conversation in *De ordine* and the *Confessions*', *AugStud*, 27 (1996), 39-54; P. Cary, 'What Licentius learned', 141-163; M. P. Foley, 'Augustine, and the Philosophical Roots'; J. McWilliam, art. 'Cassiciacum Dialogues', in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 138-142.

⁸See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (2nd edn., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 149. [88]

Synopsis of De ordine

From the viewpoint of the written composition, *De ordine* may be summarised thus:⁹

- Prefatory letter (1.1-5)
- Dialogue at midnight (1.6-21)
 - Dialogue A (1.6-21) [Augustinus – Licentius – Trygetius]
 - Dialogue A-1 (6-10: steppingstone) [Aug. – Lic.]
 - Dialogue A-2 (11-21: all exists in order) [Aug. – Lic. – Tryg.]
- Episode before noon on the first day (1.22-26)
 - Episode A (22-24: Lic. chants a Psalm) [Lic. – Monnica]
 - Words of warning [Lic. – Aug.]
 - Episode B (25-26: cock fight and Aug.'s reflection)
- Dialogue on the second day (1.27-33)
 - Dialogue B (27-29: definition of order) [Aug. – Lic. – Tryg.]
 - Episode C (29-30: quarrel) [Lic. – Tryg.]
 - Words of warning by Aug.
 - Monologue A (31-33: philosophy and wisdom, towards Monnica)
- Dialogue before noon on the third day (2.1-18)
 - Dialogue C (2-11: definition of order)
 - Dialogue C-1 (2-7: *sapiens* knows himself) [Aug. – Lic.]
 - Dialogue C-2 (7: nature of memory) [Aug. – Lic.]
 - Dialogue C-3 (8-9: nature of *stultus*) [Alypius – Aug.]
 - Dialogue C-4 (10-11: nature of *stultus*) [Aug. – Tryg.] [89]
 - [Absence of Lic.]
 - Monologue B
 - (12-18: ignorance – order of discipline – demand of method)
 - (18: problem posed) [Lic. appears again.]
- Dialogue after noon on the third day (2.19-54)
 - Dialogue D (19-24: on order)
 - Dialogue D-1 (19-21: to be without God) [Aug. – Lic.]
 - Dialogue D-2 (21: evil and divine providence) [Aug. – Lic. – Tryg.]
 - Dialogue D-3 (22-24: difficulty of divine providence) [Aug. – Lic. – Tryg. – Mon.]
 - Interruption of the dialogue (24)
 - Monologue C (24-27: divine law and twofold methods)
 - Interruption of the monologue (28-29) [Alyp. – Aug.]
 - Monologue D (30-52: order of discipline)

⁹On the structure of *De ordine*, see J. Doignon, 'Le *De ordine*, son déroulement, ses thèses', in *L'opera letteraria di Agostino tra Cassiciacum e Milano, Agostino nelle terre di Ambrogio*, eds. Giovanni Reale et al. (Palermo: Augustinus, 1987), 113-150; M. P. Foley, 'The *De ordine* of St. Augustine', Ph.D. diss. (Boston College, 1999), 301-306. [89]

Answer by Alyp. and the close (53-54) [Alyp. – Aug.]

This synopsis makes it clear that *De ordine*, divided into four parts: letter, dialogue, episode, and monologue, repeats those parts, though disproportionately. Its repetitious structure allows us to determine the author's design: the way of integrating the monologues with the dialogues and the episodes seems to be part of his design.

In the dialogue sections, not everyone participates to the same extent. Though Augustine introduces all members before the beginning of the conversation (1.2.5), for example, Navigius, probably Augustine's elder brother,¹⁰ does not definitely enter the conversations. Licentius is the primary speaker with Augustine, except his absence is suddenly referred to in dialogue C-4 (2.3.10, 4.11). Alypius has been absent from the villa for the first two days. His return is reported before dialogue C (2.1.1), and he only joins it once (2.3.8-9). Those strange comings and goings of participants lead us to suppose that the dialogue parts are not the assembled shorthand records, but rather almost the script, in which the scriptwriter has decided its story line, that is, who, when, and what speaking occurs.

Hence, I suggest that his intention is relevant to interpreting the entire work. If the author carefully chooses his material, he would not write superfluous scenes into it. The seeming digressions must [90] have a definite role within his plan. This is an utterly conventional view on the literary work.¹¹ In this case, every words does not refer to the author's idea.¹² Participants' statements would reflect their ideas at that time.

Above all, my reading of *De ordine* is that Augustine follows a well-established tradition of the literary form, the *mos dialogorum*, with which he was acquainted, most probably from Cicero and Plato.¹³

We can see the considerable extent to which the conventions of the dialogue form are found in *De ordine*. There are two distinctive features that the work shares in common with other popular dialogues: the order and sequence, and the description and situation. As to the former, the author confirms that the discussion is a separated part of the whole discourse held at Cassiciacum. Referring to another dialogue (*De beata uita*), he seems to be at pains to make it appear that its discussion actually took place within the sequence of the Cassiciacum conversations (2.1.1). As to the latter, there are several descriptions of the location, landscape, and progress of the dialogue: he mentions, for example, the opening setting of dialogue C (2.1.1). Dialogue A starts under the mantle of night (1.3.6);¹⁴ there also are interruptions for meals and Augustine's advice (2.2.7, 6.18). Licentius and Trygetius suddenly

¹⁰See S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 24. [90]

¹¹See Shinro Kato, *Shoki Puraton Tetsugaku* [Plato's Early Philosophy] (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1988), 6-8 and 16-26.

¹²For the pedagogical care for each personage, see Yukiko Okabe, *Augustinus no Kaigiron Hihan* [Augustine's Critique of Skepticism: A Study of *Contra Academicos*] (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1999), 4-5. See also Michael Payne Steppat, *Die Schola von Cassiciacum. Augustins «De Ordine»* (Frankfurt: Bock u. Herchen, 1980); J. Doignon, 'État des questions', 56.

¹³For some investigations of the *mos dialogorum* in the classical tradition, see Alfred Gudeman, 'Sind die Dialoge Augustins historisch?', *Silvae Monacenses* (1926), 16-27; Bernd Reiner Voss, *Der Dialog in der frühchristlichen Literatur*, *Studia et Testimonia Antiqua* 9 (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1970).

¹⁴Cf. Christian Schäfer, 'Aqua Haeret. A View on Augustine's Technique of Biographical Self-Observation in *De ordine*', *Augustiniana*, 51 (2001), 68-72. [91]

lapse into a silence in the midst of their talk (1.6.16, 6.23, 7.19). The more conscious we are of those [91] *mise en scène* in *De ordine*, the more we should assume Augustine's commitment to certain ways of the dialogue-form.

The work has a prefatory letter addressed to Zenobius, to whom the whole work is dedicated.¹⁵ We can see the typical topos of the preface (*prooemia*) derived from the Ciceronian treatises: the difficulty and appeal of the questions posed; the dedication to a paradigmatic image (Zenobius); the divergence of viewpoints on divine matter. There is also a certain type of the navigation allegory, which is traditionally connected with the process of writing, probably known to him from Roman poets (1.1.1, 2.20.54).

Those characteristics expose his endeavour to persuade the reader to accept the reality of the Cassiciacum discussion.¹⁶ Why did he choose to compose the discussion in the dialogue-form? Although we can not see a notable success in his attempt, it brings to the fore some practical and forward-looking intention with which Augustine sets out the coenobitic life for his companions: this is indispensable for our main problem. Seen in this light, I shall consider two dialogues, C and D, and explain the significance of the appearance of monologue B.

The sapiens and the stultus

In dialogue B (1.9.27-10.30), Licentius provides a definition: 'Order is that by which are governed all things that God has constituted'.¹⁷ [92] This dialogue between Licentius and Trygetius was aborted by the dispute about Trygetius' improper speech (1.10.29), and ended with Augustine's first monologue. Dialogues C and D, therefore, deal with its definition and the correlative: 'Does He not seem to you to be governed by order?'¹⁸

Dialogue C starts with C-1 about the definition of order. Here Augustine questions Licentius from the viewpoint of 'movement'. If the things arranged and governed are also moved, and things with God are not moved, while things without God are moved, then the things arranged and governed, namely, things in this world, are without God, as they are moved (2.1.3). Licentius is puzzled by these remarks, and Augustine proposes to examine his saying: 'what is to be with God' (*esse cum deo*) and 'what is not to be without God' (*non esse sine deo*).¹⁹ He first claims that whatever understands (intelligere) God is with God, and he receives Licentius' approval for the statement: the wise man understands God. Then, Augustine modifies it, and concludes that 'not everything which the wise man knows is with God, but that whatever of the wise man is with God, that the wise man knows'.²⁰ And both of them

¹⁵For the rhetorical method in the preface letter, see J. Doignon, 'Note complémentaire 1: Le préambule', BA 4/2, 331; idem, 'Note complémentaire 4: La dédicace', BA 4/2, 334-335. We should further consult about the ancient rhetorical theory: see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, trans. Matthew T. Bliss et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

¹⁶For the meaning of Augustine's attempt on the actuality of *De ordine*, see Catherine Conybeare, 'The Duty of a Teacher: Liminality and disciplina in Augustine's *De ordine*', in *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions*, eds. Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 49-65, esp. 51.

¹⁷*De ord.* 1.20.28: trans. R. P. Russell, 266. [92]

¹⁸*De ord.* 1.20.29: trans. R. P. Russell, 266.

¹⁹*De ord.* 2.2.4: trans. R. P. Russell, 276; cf. trans. J. Doignon, BA 4/2, 171, n. 11.

²⁰*De ord.* 2.2.5: trans. R. P. Russell, 277.

share their understanding of the cognition: 'to perceive by the senses is one thing, but to know is something else'. Because those things which pertain to the senses of the body, one is able to sense, but not to know. To know is 'contained in the intellect alone, and by it alone can it [anything] be grasped'.²¹ Hence, what is to be with God is known by the intellect.

The logic behind these discussions is as follows:

What is known by the wise man is to be with God.

The wise man knows himself.

The wise man is to be with God.

[93] This argumentation can be read in the context of classical philosophy.²² Late ancient epistemology depends largely upon a Platonic view of the bipartite division of sense and intellect, in which the autonomy of the intellect is functioning. Here it is the implication of the minor premise that would be considered. The premise means that the thing known by the wise man is the wise man himself and that the thing known and the knower are the same. The point is that the relationship, known to Augustine most probably from the *Enneads* of Plotinus,²³ of the subject (knower) and object (thing known) would be one of mutual dependence. Even separated from one another, the thing known and the knower are the same being, since its correlation expresses the internal structure of its existence. In this case, the acknowledgement of mutual dependence reveals the self-knowledge of the wise man.

The claim that the knower and things known are the same forms a close relation with the existence of the 'world-soul', because 'the thing known' necessitates 'the knower'. If the human soul still has not known everything, anything that should be known by the human soul must exist and be already known by except the human soul. Hence, Plotinus justifies the Intellect (*νοῦς*), separated from the human soul, that knows everything. However, Augustine does not manage to justify his reasoning. Here he only affirms that the wise man knows himself and expresses it as the shared idea of participants.²⁴ And the image of the wise man is depicted in the saying of Licentius. [94]

a wise man, who has everything in front of the interior eyes of the intellect, or in other words, who gazes fixedly and immovably on God Himself, with whom are all the things that an intellect can see and possess [...]²⁵

The dialogue proceeds to the problem of memory (2.2.6-7).²⁶ Licentius insists that memory is not necessary for the wise man, because he stares at and possesses everything that is before his eyes. Augustine indicates that the

²¹*De ord.* 2.2.5: trans. R. P. Russell, 278. [93]

²²See J. Doignon, 'Note complémentaire 14: De la connaissance et de l'âme', BA 4/2, 344-345.

²³For the significance of the mutual dependence of the knower and the thing known, see Sumio Nakagawa, *Sonzai to Chi: Augustinus Kenkyu* [The knower and Known: Augustine's Philosophical Thought] (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 2000), 167-196. See also J. Doignon, 'Note complémentaire 14', BA 4/2; Peter King, 'Augustine's Encounter with Neoplatonism', *The Modern Schoolman*, 82 (2005), 213-226.

²⁴See John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 83, n. 75. [94]

²⁵*De ord.* 2.2.7: trans. R. P. Russell, 280.

²⁶For the significance of this dialogue and its relation to Plotinus' thought, see Klaus Winkler, 'La théorie augustinienne de la mémoire à son point de départ', in *Augustinus Magister*, 3 vols. (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), i. 511-519. See also C. Conybeare, 'The Duty of a Teacher'.

wise man has 'the duty of teaching them [his fellows] wisdom' and memory is indispensable for teaching them. Here the dialogue about memory ends. While his remarks on the dialogue's direction: 'before I resume with order'²⁷ means that the problem should be solved, this dialogue seems not to be a simple digression.²⁸ Why not give a further psychological analysis of the role and place of memory? Because enough has been said. Then, what is it? It seems likely that the brevity of the dialogue closed with his prescription (2.2.7) reflects his design that would only raise a matter indispensable to the following discussion.

So, what is the matter? Here Licentius and Augustine are agreed that they themselves are not the wise man (2.2.7). And they have already affirmed that only the wise man is to be with God. If nothing is without God, what about the unwise? At this point, Augustine probably suggests the possibility that the unwise comes to be wise. What is required to become the wise man? As we have already seen, he must know himself, although these participants had not yet found the way. Thus, in the dialogue about memory, they ensure the possibility and impose the duty on the wise man to guide his fellows. They do not offer a detailed analysis of memory, but rather [95] expose the setting of education, in which participants are encouraged to accept themselves humbly and to follow the guidance of the wise man.

Dialogue C-3 also deals with the same issue. In C-3 Alypius, who has kept silent, is advised to enter the conversation. The appearance of Alypius probably expresses the author's intention to call the reader's attention to dialogue C-3: Alypius, who sees himself as the 'guard'²⁹ for the discussion, would be expected to clarify an important issue. Discussing with Alypius, Augustine would grasp the opportunity to show the participants his new idea. 'For, if whatsoever things,' says Augustine, 'a wise man understands are with God, and he cannot avoid un wisdom unless it is understood, then that source of mischief — impious to say — will also be with God'.³⁰ Alypius answers that one is not yet wise when he understands folly for the sake of escaping it and that the folly is not to be with him when he has become wise. Again Augustine questions whether un wisdom should be with the wise man, if he teaches what kind and quality un wisdom is and frees the unwise from it. There is a considerable disagreement between them.

What is the explanation for this apparent discrepancy? Their dispute there hinges on different understandings of un wisdom. Alypius claims that un wisdom is not empty and that, even he himself is not wise, yet he is said to know something, when he says that 'one understands un wisdom [...] he is not yet wise'.³¹ Augustine, at the same time, tells how strange that kind of un wisdom is with the wise man. So, he provides the definition of un wisdom (2.3.10). It cannot be understood, because it is the 'darkness of the mind'.³² It is unknowable just as the deprivation of knowledge. Then, un wisdom would be stated as follows: [96]

let him bear in mind that it [un wisdom] is present with him [*sibi*

²⁷*De ord.* 2.2.7: trans. R. P. Russell, p. 280.

²⁸See C. Conybeare, 'The Duty of a Teacher', 61. [95]

²⁹*De ord.* 2.3.9: trans. R. P. Russell, 284.

³⁰*De ord.* 2.3.8: trans. R. P. Russell, 282.

³¹*De ord.* 2.3.8: trans. R. P. Russell, 283.

³²*De ord.* 2.3.10: trans. R. P. Russell, 285. [96]

esse praesens], not in proportion as he the better understands it, but according as he has a lesser understanding of other things.³³

It serves to highlight the focus of the issue: hereafter, participants concern themselves not with the one who knows unwisdom, but rather with the one who knows that unwisdom is present to him, that is to say, he realises that he himself does not know anything except unwisdom.

Next I shall refer to dialogue D, since it reconsiders a proposition: 'what is to be with God'. It starts with the discussion about 'movement'.³⁴ It is defined as 'a passing from place to place'.³⁵ 'Perhaps, because', says Augustine, 'God is everywhere, then, wheresoever the wise man goes, [...] he is always with God'.³⁶ Licentius does not assent.³⁷ And Augustine suggests examining 'whether we can know also what "to be without God"'.³⁸ Although what is not with God is possessed by God, one is not with God, for he does not possess God. At this point, Augustine probably urges Licentius to consider the key issue of divine providence because he would identify the expression 'what is not with God' with the 'one apart from the order'. Accordingly he asks a question about 'whether God governs those things which we confess are not well governed'.³⁹ Then Licentius lapses into embarrassed silence. Again, Monnica appears and their discussion about divine providence runs into serious difficulty. [97]

the evil arose apart from order. If you grant this, you acknowledge that something can be done apart from order, [...] But if you do not grant it, then evil begins to appear to have had its origin by the order of God, and you will acknowledge that God is the author of evils, [...] ⁴⁰

Regarding this difficulty, Augustine sees that each participant has been 'preposterous and out of order'⁴¹ and advises them to hold the order of the search, by which they come to the wisdom. And he starts to deliver the dense monologue with which he exposes the order of discipline. There has often been doubt as to whether Augustine resolves this difficulty, since the discussion is interrupted and problem remains.⁴² However, it seems rather odd that Augustine, who elucidates the gradual steps in order to solve the difficulty in the following monologue, does not resolve it. His confidence in his own prescription for this difficulty seems to show that Augustine had

³³*De ord.* 2.3.10: trans. R. P. Russell, 286.

³⁴The Discussion about movement ceases immediately after Licentius' appearance. (2.6.18) It is considered to be one of the rhetorical device which warns the reader of the following conversation and emphasises it.

³⁵*De ord.* 2.6.19: trans. R. P. Russell, 294.

³⁶*De ord.* 2.6.19: trans. R. P. Russell, 295.

³⁷The reason why Augustine concedes its point to Licentius and proceeds to the next issue is also understood as the rhetorical device which emphasises Licentius' overlooking at the problem of the divine providence.

³⁸*De ord.* 2.7.20: trans. R. P. Russell, 296.

³⁹*De ord.* 2.7.20: trans. R. P. Russell, 296. [97]

⁴⁰*De ord.* 2.7.23: trans. R. P. Russell, 299-300 (translation is partly revised by me).

⁴¹*De ord.* 2.7.24: trans. R. P. Russell, 300.

⁴²See Josef Rief, 'Der Ordobegriff des Jungen Augustinus', in *Abhandlungen zur Moral theologie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1962), 12-18; Olivier Du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966), 183, n. 4.

already resolved it. At the same time, it is the author who directs the sequence of the conversations. Why does the Augustine when confronted with the difficulty in the dialogue turn the conversation to the monologue?

Monologues C and D are a more detailed explanation of the order of the discipline than that of monologue B. How does B start? In the beginning of monologue B, Augustine poses the same dilemma about theodicy for Trygetius (2.4.11). Unlike Licentius who falls silent, Trygetius answers immediately that if one 'raises the eyes of the mind and broadens his field of vision and surveys all things as a whole',⁴³ he will find all the things governed and ordered by divine providence. What are the implications of those different beginnings? Since there is the author's consistent intention both in the begin-[98]ning of monologues B and C, the result is that, at the turn of the conversation to the order of discipline, the author makes Trygetius express the idea directly connected with the idea of order, whereas the author, in the case of Licentius, intends to develop a more effective course through induction, persuading the reader of the necessity of order. The induction is expressed through the participants' silence and embarrassment. Above all, he attempts to interrelate two types of induction by evoking the reader to think again about Trygetius' answer. With Licentius' embarrassment Augustine reminds participants of Licentius' absence, when Trygetius formulated his idea (2.7.21).⁴⁴ The effective repetition of the turn to monologue, therefore, enables the audience to raise concerns about the monologue. At the same time, if the interruption of the conversation is considered to be a rhetorical device, we should not ask whether the difficulty of divine order is resolved.

It is precisely dialogues C and D that deal with the correlation between the wise and the unwise. Those opposite approaches to God imply the formal discontinuity of their commitment to wisdom. Since one who participates in wisdom is called wise, the unwise does not acquire wisdom. At the same time, the wise has the duty of teaching wisdom to his fellows. And the dimension of knowledge in which the unwise engages is defined as not the defection of cognition, but rather the self-knowledge of his ignorance. He does 'know' his lack of knowledge, who should be called not unwise, but rather the 'unknower' of wisdom. This leads us to a crucial point: what is necessary to enable the 'unknower' to participate in the wisdom?; or where do we realise his approach to the wisdom? I examine the order of discipline and consider the possibility of his approach to the wisdom. [99]

The core of the discipline 'in uita'

Augustine explains clearly and concisely the core of the discipline in monologues C and D, lest anyone be confused with the very expansive realm of its order: one should not desire to examine the dilemma of theodicy without 'twofold science, so to speak—the science of right reasoning and that of the power of members'.⁴⁵

Why does 'right reasoning', namely, the dialectic and the science of numbers occupy the privileged position in its order? As to the former, it has the

⁴³*De ord.* 2.4.11: trans. R. P. Russell, 287. [98]

⁴⁴See P. Cary, 'What Licentius learned', 153-154. [99]

⁴⁵*De ord.* 2.18.47: trans. R. P. Russell, 324.

power by which it produces art. It is the science of a motion of reason capable of defining, dividing, and synthesising.

How, therefore, would it [reason] pass on to other discoveries, unless it first classified, noted, and arranged its own resources—its tools and machines, so to speak—and bring into being that discipline of disciplines which they call dialectics?⁴⁶

Dialectic 'teaches both how to teach and how to learn'.⁴⁷ It considers various types of arguments developed in the realm of arts, and searches out dialectic itself. So, there is a circulative structure, in which it reflects on itself. Moreover, dialectic is called the 'discipline of disciplines'. It forms the basis of other disciplines and tests the method of argument used by other arts. Hence, it is admitted that it cannot 'pass on to other discoveries, unless bring into being discipline of disciplines'.

The science of numbers stands at the centre of disciplines, because it deals with the unity and power of numbers, in which one finds out the true necessity of the ratio (2.18.47; cf. 2.19.50). It puts in the 'order of wisdom's branches of study'⁴⁸ by helping comprehend 'the meaning of simple and intelligible numbers'.⁴⁹ If one held [100] fast to the order of the discipline and was devoted to the science of numbers, he would discover 'what unity in number is, and what its import is [...] in the things that we think and do here and there every day'.⁵⁰ Augustine depicts a direct sight and vision in the accomplishment of the philosophical investigation.

then [the soul] will it venture to see God, the very source of all truth and the very Father of Truth. O great God, what kind of eyes shall those be!⁵¹

Even one who knows himself as unknower has his soul's eyes 'as bleary',⁵² when he lives in this world. Augustine imposes the order of discipline on his fellows. In a passage from Plato's *Republic*, I encounter an archetype of Augustine's scheme.⁵³

Then dialectic, and dialectic alone, goes directly to the first principle and is the only science which does away with hypotheses in order to make her ground secure; the eye of the soul, which is literally buried in an outlandish slough, is by her gentle aid lifted upward; and she uses as handmaids and helpers in the work of conversion, the sciences which we have been discussing.⁵⁴

Plato illustrates the philosophical enquiry in which dialectic ensures the coherent approach of the soul's eye towards the truth. The soul's eye has been

⁴⁶*De ord.* 2.13.38: trans. R. P. Russell, 315.

⁴⁷*De ord.* 2.13.38: trans. R. P. Russell, 315.

⁴⁸*De ord.* 2.18.47: trans. R. P. Russell, 324.

⁴⁹*De ord.* 2.16.44: trans. R. P. Russell, 321. [100]

⁵⁰*De ord.* 2.18.47: trans. R. P. Russell, 324.

⁵¹*De ord.* 2.19.51: trans. R. P. Russell, 328.

⁵²*De ord.* 1.10.29: trans. R. P. Russell, 267.

⁵³See S. Kanzaki, 'Houhou to Taido' [The method and the Attitude], *Sobun*, 392 (1997) inspires me to reconsider Plato's passage.

⁵⁴*Rep.* 7, 533c7-d4: trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *Dialogues*, 4 vols. (4th edn., Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), ii. [101]

dimmed by the conventional way of looking at things. So the enquiry, which traces back to the principle, changes thoroughly its viewpoint. The activity with which one comprehends what is the nature of all things legitimately is anchored in the method of philosophical dialogue. Plato's understanding of the philo-[101]sophical enquiry reminds us about Augustine's scheme, in which the dialectic and the science of number acquire the premier status. Augustine shares a common ground with ancient philosophy, in which the concern for the method and approach enables the pursuit of truth.⁵⁵

Reason is a mental operation capable of distinguishing and connecting the things that are learned. But, only a rare class of men is capable of using it as a guide [dux] to the knowledge of God or of the soul; [...]⁵⁶

Dialectic deals with the reason itself which 'classified, noted and arranged its own resources' (2.13.38). And it serves as the 'guide' of every discussion, for it is the 'discipline of disciplines'. This understanding also reminds me of Plato's explanation of the arrangement of discipline: 'as handmaids and helpers [...] the sciences' are inextricably linked to dialectic as 'a guide'.

When we proceed to the centre of the discipline, a question is posed: how does the unknower approach to its core? What leads him to participate in wisdom? I shall examine the problem from the viewpoint of the unity of life in which the philosophical investigation is carried out. Here is Augustine's praise for the order before he offers its definition.

Order is that which will lead us to God, if we hold to it during life [in uita]; and unless we do hold to it during life [in uita], we shall not come to God.⁵⁷

[102] What does it mean the phrase 'during life'? If it signifies this life in which human beings are living, there could be still the contrast between this life and the next. When Augustine admits a few come to the knowledge of all things 'in this life' and that 'even after this life' no one can proceed,⁵⁸ it could be still available for the contrast.

all the liberal arts are learned partly for practical use and partly for the knowledge and contemplation of things, [...]⁵⁹

⁵⁵For the ancient and/or Platonic influences on Augustine's scheme, see Ilsetraut Hadot, *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984); Frederick Van Fleteren, 'St. Augustine, Neoplatonism, and the Liberal Arts: The Background to *De doctrina christiana*', in *De Doctrina Christiana: A Classic of Western Culture*, eds. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 18-20; Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, *L'ordre caché. La notion d'ordre chez saint Augustin*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes: Antiquité, 174 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004).

⁵⁶*De ord.* 2.11.30: trans. R. P. Russell, 308.

⁵⁷*De ord.* 1.9.27: trans. R. P. Russell, 264. [102]

⁵⁸*De ord.* 2.9.26: trans. R. P. Russell, 304; with reference to Augustine's belief in the possibility of human perfection in this life, see F. Van Fleteren, 'The Cassiciacum Dialogues and Augustine's Ascents at Milan', *Mediaevalia*, 4 (1978), 59-82; Naoki Kamimura, 'Friendship and the Ascent of the Soul in Augustine', in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church 4: The Spiritual Life*, eds. Wendy Mayer, Pauline Allen, and Laurence Cross (Brisbane: Centre for Early Christian Studies, 2006), 301-304.

⁵⁹*De ord.* 2.16.44: trans. R. P. Russell, 320.

This contrast impresses us with the fact that Augustine, who was invited to philosophical investigation by the love of wisdom, has devoted himself to the ideal in late antiquity. He faces the break between the contemplative and practical way of life. In the twilight of Roman society, the divergence between the pursuit of truth and the daily life has been synchronised with and promoted by the fractionation and specialisation of sciences. Consequently philosophical activity changes its nature. The accumulation of knowledge is dominant in the realm of individual sciences. By the term 'life', the daily life detached from the quest for truth is meant.

However, I shall grasp another feature of the 'life' in his praise of the order mentioned above.⁶⁰ We will suppose the following argumentation. [103]

The order leads us to God.

The X is an order that we hold to during life.

The X leads us to God.

I suggest that the candidate X would be the order of discipline because this is the order through which one becomes fit to know wisdom (2.18. 47). Moreover, the participants' faith in divine providence means that they share the idea that order embraces all of them. All is created and ordered by God. One is not led to God with being divided between his body and his mind. And it cannot be admitted that he is guided by the divine precept only when he searches out the truth. One is, on the contrary, led to God as the whole self. Hence, he should have faith in divine providence.

The 'life' signifies not the daily life separated from the pursuit of truth, but rather the whole of human existence itself, which has been formed and determined through one's continuous exercises. If one brings about his transformation of the mode of life without the divergence between knowing and living, he would expect his own perfection in this life. His art of living is not related merely to the cognitive or practical aspect, but to that of the self and of being. So, with the praise of order, Augustine immediately shows his faith that God leads 'us' to Himself.

We now believe and hope that we shall come to God.⁶¹

Augustine declares the transformation of the unknower into the wise man. As we have seen, the dimension of knowledge in which the unknower engages is defined as his self-knowledge of his lack of knowledge. At this point, he 'can' find himself searching out wisdom because the acknowledgement of his unknowness enables him to clear up the confusion and set the stage for his pursuit of wisdom. Meanwhile, the wise man would realise that his encouragement to follow the order of discipline is valid, only in the case that he as-[104]sesses one whose self-knowledge is appropriate for the enquiry into the wisdom. His advice for the participants proves that the unknower qualifies for the quest for truth.

⁶⁰For the significance of the 'life' in the philosophical investigation, see Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy As A Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (2nd edn., Paris: Albin Michel, 2002); Brian Harding, 'Metaphysical Speculation and its Applicability to a Mode of Living: The Case of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*, 9 (2004), 81-92. [103]

⁶¹*De ord.* 2.9.27: trans. R. P. Russell, 264. [104]

Alypius' saying, which is the only interruption in the monologue, seems to be a rhetorical device for realising and emphasising the qualification of the unknower.⁶² With his praise of order, Alypius throws doubt as whether only the 'men either are themselves divine or must have divine assistance to live the kind of life you have outlined'.⁶³ Although one proclaims the precept of the mode of life as divine and true, another conducts himself otherwise in his desire. Augustine answers his charge and praises his participants.

who that has known these youths, Licentius and Trygetius, would readily believe that they were now so zealously in quest of sublime truths and that they have suddenly and at this time of life declared such antagonism to worldly pleasures?⁶⁴

This view of the unknower as searching out the truth explains the importance of the conversations that the participants have hitherto held. A series of dialogues probably embodies their disciplinary attempts 'during life'. The distinctive features are thus enumerated: in the discussions one offers a provisional definition; with not too much modification, it is approved as a basis for further investigation; the successive arguments are followed by paradoxical ideas and obstacles; with its serious difficulty, an attempt to resolve it is made. There are some repetitions by which various viewpoints of the participants gradually turn to a much more plausible explanation of the relevant issues. Moreover, the author provides some rhetorical devices for the readers, with which they are urged to concentrate on the conversations and share its ideas. Hence, those dialogues are the experimental and public room for readers who are [105] concerned with the art of living. They reveal the continuous exercises towards human perfection.⁶⁵

It is noteworthy that the author Augustine appears in the dialogue. It is not the case with Platonic dialogues for the author to appear on the scene. Why does Augustine enter into the dialogue? We know that Augustine and his friends attempted to establish their coenobitic life at the Cassiciacum estate. And the Augustine within the dialogues says with joy that his fellows begin to address themselves to the enquiry into truth (2.10.29). The author's belief that whoever proclaims the love of wisdom collaborates in the pursuit of the wisdom is in fact based on his thought that it is the pedagogical interaction that inspires and cultivates true love of wisdom.⁶⁶ Since their collaborations needs the 'disciplinary guide', from his former career Augustine probably decided to cast himself as a mentor.

Augustine's choice also provides additional evidence for a hypothesis of the audience for the Cassiciacum dialogues. Some scholars who defend the

⁶²For the rhetorical setting of Alypius' interruption, see J. Doignon, BA 4/2, 249, n. 132.

⁶³*De ord.* 2.10.28: trans. R. P. Russell, 306.

⁶⁴*De ord.* 2.10.29: trans. R. P. Russell, 307. [105]

⁶⁵Augustine is acutely conscious of the continuity and further expansion of the dialogues, since he says in 1.9.27 that their discussions will produce another discussions and that 'the very series of discussions' (*successio sermonum*) will be incorporated into the order of the discipline (*ordo disciplinae*).

⁶⁶Augustine's earnest desire for the collaborative enquiry into the wisdom is evident from his monologue A (1.11.31-32) and paradoxically admitted by his attitude towards Monnica's refusal to write down her question (1.11.31): see Ragnar Holte, 'Monica, "the Philosopher"', *Augustinus* 39 (1994), 293-316. For the significance of the Cassiciacum dialogues not only as the testimony of his activity at this period, but also as the evidence of his discovery of a new activity that promises him more fertile areas, see P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 103-105.

historicity of the dialogues have assumed the historical reality of the participants. Those who reject its historicity have taken into account some personal history in the dialogues. They understand those accounts as some type of the intellectual autobiography and the author's apologia as well.⁶⁷ Because he resigned his post and retired to a villa, Augustine needs some justification for his decision. Therefore, they suggest the readers: those of the Catholic Church and of a Milanese circle that has been assumed to exist as a group of Christian Platonists.

I dare not reject the hypothesis. However, we should rather turn to those who appeared in the dialogue. The crucial point is that Augustine intentionally expresses the intellectual and spiritual application for the participants. Within the Cassiciacum group, as an organiser Augustine probably anticipated the future issues of each member (including himself). Those problems would be necessarily open to him at the actual conversations held there. By means of the literary devices, Augustine posed their tasks to the members so that they would face their personal issues respectively. Thus, he used their talk as the material and composed the dialogue. *De ordine* are not simply transcription of actual discussions and also not a fictional story. Augustine's choice of the pedagogical practice elucidates its significance: this work shows a type of exemplar of the intellectual and spiritual exercise for the participants.⁶⁸

With reference to the unknower in the dialogues, I am reminded of the remaining problem: where do we find the approach of the unknower to wisdom? I suggest the following argumentation.

What is known by the unknower (enquirer) is to be with the order of discipline.

The unknower (enquirer) knows himself.

The unknower (enquirer) it to be with the order of the discipline.

When the unknower, namely the enquirer, learns from the wise man and starts to enter into the order of discipline, he expects that he will know wisdom in future. As we have seen, the self-knowledge of his lack of knowledge except wisdom marks the beginning of the anticipation of his perfection. And the self-knowledge that he himself proceeds in the order of discipline bears the burden of his gradual steps towards his perfection. Hence, it is precisely the perspective [107] of his mode of life that enables him to follow the order of discipline.

It can be seen how in *De ordine* discipline comes to be highly valued and closely linked to human perfection. When Augustine turns to discipline, he begins by commenting as follows:

there is a certain exalted branch of learning [*disciplina*] [...] it promises to show that even all the things which we acknowledge to be evil are still not outside the divine order [...]⁶⁹

He proceeds to the explanation of discipline.

⁶⁷See J. McWilliam, 'The Cassiciacum Autobiography'; P. Cary, 'What Licentius learned', 138-140. [106]

⁶⁸For the relationship between the audience problem and the significance of the dialogue, see C. Conybeare, 'The Duty of a Teacher', 61-62. [107]

⁶⁹*De ord.* 2.7.24; trans. R. P. Russell, 300-301.

Now, this science [*disciplina*] is the very law of God, which, ever abiding fixed and unshaken with Him, is transcribed, so to speak, on the souls of the wise, so that they know they live a better and more sublime life in proportion as they contemplate it more perfectly with their understanding and observe it more diligently in their manner of living. Accordingly, this science imposes a twofold order of procedure on those who desire to know it, of which order one part pertains to the regulating of life, and the other pertains to the directing of studies.⁷⁰

It seems likely that he is concerned with the discontinuity between the daily life and the pursuit of truth. He continues to expound the moral precepts in daily life. However, we should see the consequence of one's compliance with a twofold order. If one adhered to it, he would 'know they live a better and more sublime life'. Guided by a twofold order, he would start to participate in order and recognise the 'science'. With enquiring the order, he would know the mode of life.

By confirming that this science undertakes to reveal that all things are ruled by the divine order, Augustine identifies it with wisdom, that is to say, the knowledge of the order of the universe (cf. 1.1.1). The wise man knows it. At the same time, the 'science' can be said to be 'transcribed' on the enquirer's soul, because he [108] knows the way of life. And his knowledge of the way of life has been effected by 'science', since it is written down on all the souls. Hence, I suggest the process of evolution that one resembles more and more the wise man as he comprehends the 'science' more fully. The wise man meditates upon it highly enough and the enquirer is in the process of seeing it.

Augustine admits the possibility that the enquirer comes to be the wise. The approach to 'science' is divided into two correlated and inseparable ways. The wise man teaches the enquirer wisdom. The enquirer consults his 'science' impressed on his soul about the teaching. So, his approach is affected not only by the dialogues with his mentor, but also by his internal consultation with his 'science'. The former has been actualised by the discussions held at Cassiciacum. The latter will be achieved by the internal dialogue with himself. How is the latter possible? In *Soliloquies* Augustine will undertake to answer it.⁷¹

Conclusion

De ordine represents the collaborative problem of the Cassiciacum members as the programmatic practice of discipline 'during life'. Augustine endeavoured to clarify the current affairs of each member (including himself) as they revealed them through their actual conversations held at Cassiciacum. He posed their problems, applying the rhetorical and dialectical method to the dialogue. So, their past, present, and future mode of life intersect in the discussions of the dialogue. And Augustine offers them the paradigmatic exercise for their progressive approaches to wisdom. The dialectical enquiry lies at the centre

⁷⁰*De ord.* 2.8.25: trans. R. P. Russell, 301. [108]

⁷¹For the possibility of the approach to wisdom by different ways, see *Soliloquia* 1.13.23. See also D. Trout, 'Augustine at Cassiciacum', 141. [109]

of the order of discipline, since the philosophical investigation has concerned for the argumentative method and approach to the truth.

Those who know themselves as enquirers share the burden of [109] their gradual steps towards human perfection. The perspective of the way of life allows them to follow the order of discipline and expect their perfection in this life. Augustine admits its possibility through the dialogues with the wise and the internal consultation with himself. Here a question remains: how does the enquirer discover his internal 'science' already transcribed on his soul? So far as its science is concerned, it is the object of knowledge, but not the means for its finding. The self-ruling path towards the wise man is shown only in his expectation of the perfection. However, he remains obscure on the method for actualising its internal 'science'. Augustine's return to the inner self will run into serious difficulty in knowing himself and shatter his confidence in the validity of the discipline for human perfection.