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## Unraveling immortality and the genesis of human soul in st. Augustine's selected works

**Abstract.** *The article intends to explore topics concerning the eternal nature and the origin of the human soul. Augustine's ontological perspective on humanity upholds the truth of its existence. In ancient philosophy and Christian theology, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and its origin has been an ongoing area of interest and debate. Saint Augustine, one of the most important theologians and philosophers in the history of the Catholic Church, addressed this issue in his works, considering both philosophical and theological aspects of the existence of the human soul. The author justifies his views by referring to the Holy Bible and to the vital functions of man. Also, he points to the dissimilarity between sensual and mental cognition. As part of its consideration, it relies on the Latin phrase anima rationalis which refers to the rational soul (animus). What speaks for immortality of the soul is the argument of evidence of the lack of a quantitative element, as well as the concepts of truth and life. The foregoing command gives grounds to believe that a human being remains a unique whole of physical and spiritual unity. Also, one of the the key thinks is the certainty of self-knowledge derived from the continuation of gnoseology, which proves that humans are capable of reflective, mind and abstract thinking, and the cognitive activity of the soul shows the ability to transcend the mortal body. This approach does provide a deeper understanding of the role of the soul in human life and in the context of eternity, an important topic in Christian theology and philosophy.*

**Keywords:** *St. Augustine, gnoseology, human being, immortality, soul*



This article attempts to analyze selected issues in Augustine's philosophy by looking at his views on the nature of the human soul, its relation to God and the prospect of immortality, examining the implications for modern theological and philosophical reflection.<sup>1</sup> In the philosophy of Augustine, one of the key writers in antiquity, the immortality of the soul is a central issue with profound theological and philosophical implications. His reflections on the human soul are directed toward understanding it as a transcendent entity with cognitive and spiritual capacity. In his ontology, the ancient Christian thinker signaled anthropological pluralism, in light of which man is not a system of neurons or a piece of matter, but remains a unique whole of physical-spiritual unity. According to Augustine, the soul constitutes an immaterial and at the same time real reality, this peculiar phenomenon activates our actions in the aspect of being and theorist-cognition, and also determines the realization of spiritual life. The position of the Bishop of Hippo is extremely interesting, for the soul is presented (along with the spirit which is its dimension of openness to the God) as a certain central and at the same time mental (in the *psyche*) element in man moved by volitional aspirations. This is extremely important not only from the philosophical point of view of his doctrine, but also from the theological one. Our author uses numerous evidences supporting its immortality. These include an analysis of the phenomenon of life and the argument from the absence of a tensile element. The latter concerns immutable ideas and concepts, which Augustine defines as mental entities *res intelligibiles*. In his view, the acceptance or rejection of immortality has a significant impact on human existence, the desirability and meaningfulness of action, both in axiological and subjective terms.

## 1. Genesis of the human soul

The existence and nature of the soul is an extremely important question for people both philosophically and religiously. Throughout history, numerous concepts have emerged, often sparking heated debates about the nature of its origin. The question remains a momentous anthropological problem and often a topic of paramount importance to many earlier thinkers. At this point it is difficult not to mention the achievements of Greek philosophers such as Plato<sup>2</sup> and Aristotle.<sup>3</sup> Augustine discussed at length the origin of the human soul. However, it should be noted that his position in this regard was not clearly defined. The philosopher writes:

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<sup>1</sup> See St. Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, XXXIV-77.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Plato, *Timaios* VII, 34B, in: Platon, *Dialogi*, t. 2, tłum. W. Witwicki, Antyk, Kęty 2005, p. 683.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *On the soul*, II, 412a, 412b, in: Arystoteles, *Dzieła wszystkie*, t. 3, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2003, pp. 68–70.

Harum autem quatuor de anima sententiarum, utrum de propagine veniant, an in singulis quibusque nascentibus novae fiant, an in corpora nascentium iam alicubi existentes vel mittantur divinitus, vel sua sponte labantur, nullam temere affirmare oportebit. Aut enim nondum ista quaestio a divinatorum Librorum catholicis tractatoribus pro merito suae obscuritatis et perplexitatis evoluta atque illustrata est; aut si iam factum est, nondum in manus nostras huiusmodi litterae pervenerunt.<sup>4</sup>

The first concept mentioned is Traducianism. According to this position, God does not create the soul individually, for the spiritual nature is passed on by the parents. Augustine used this description to explain the consequences of original sin: “Si ergo altera talis esse coepit, non solum ante peccatum, sed ante omnem vitam suam, qualis alia post vitam culpabilem facta est, non parvum bonum habet, unde Conditori suo gratias agat.”<sup>5</sup> The background to this thought is the question of the inheritance of negative consequences as a consequence of bad will. It can be successfully concluded that Traducianism is one of the possible interpretations. The theory under discussion is the opposite of creationism, according to which the human soul is created directly by God. At the core of the whole issue is the combination of the language of philosophy with discourse based on God’s revelation. The author uses the biblical doctrine of creation and expresses the belief that God is the creator of the human soul: “Audisti quanta vis sit animae ac potentia: quod ut breviter colligam, quemadmodum fatendum est, animam humanam non esse quod Deus est; ita praesumendum, nihil inter omnia quae creavit, Deo esse propinquius.”<sup>6</sup> Augustine referred to certain hypotheses in circulation at the time, which were formulated by early Christian theologians such as St. Irenaeus of Lyon and St. Gregory of Nyssa. The latter advocates the creation of the soul by God, its existence the author sees in what the biblical text of Genesis refers to as the breath of life.<sup>7</sup> Augustine’s second interpretation is a position characteristic of creationism.

The Tagasta thinker does not attempt to answer the question of how many souls exist. Our philosopher does not directly indicate which of the above concepts could be considered ultimately true. On the other hand, in his opinion, all of them can be reconciled in some way with the Christian truths of faith. It should be mentioned here that the Church’s position on this issue has not yet been clearly defined.<sup>8</sup>

Augustine elaborated on the genesis of the human soul by commenting on the first two chapters of Genesis. This is especially true of the account of creation, in which God brings Adam and Eve into life (Gen. 1, 26–28; 2, 21–23). The biblical pericope includes two descriptions, each of which instructs us that the essence

<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, III, XXI-59.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, III, XX, 56.

<sup>6</sup> St. Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, XXXIV-77.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. B. Czyżewski, *Patrystyczna interpretacja Rdz 2, 7: „Pan Bóg ulepił człowieka z prochu ziemi i tchnął w jego nozdrza tchnienie życia”*, “Vox Patrum” 2016, 36, t. 65, p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> See *Orzeczenie Soboru Laterańskiego V, Breviarium Fidei*, Poznań 1989, p. 189.

of man includes both the spiritual and material worlds. Augustine drew on this knowledge, recognizing that God creates the soul individually.<sup>9</sup> The Christian thinker develops the above concept in the course of polemics with the prevailing views of his time that questioned the biblical description. This primarily concerns the position of the Manichaeans. According to their worldview, man owes his existence to the evil spirits of the archons, who created the human body in order to imprison in it a divine particle of light.<sup>10</sup> An echo of Orphic mythology can be heard here, so to speak. According to the doctrine in question, man is a medley of light and shadow and a field of constant struggle between good and evil. The archetype of man created by the archons is the First Man, in whom the soul of the *pars Dei* falls into the power of the principle of darkness. The Manichaean myth shows evil as an integral part of human existence, there is talk of autonomous and fully destructive evil. The basis of evil understood ontologically is the human psyche, in which negative behavior manifests itself in the form of passions and sexual desires.<sup>11</sup> Augustine polemicized against the doctrine of Manichaeism and ultimately rejected it. He also opposed the position that man was created by evil spirits. The author favored the Christian interpretation; in his view, human souls are created by God in one way or another.<sup>12</sup>

Other descriptions assume the self-existence of human souls, while the very moment of their union with the body is not explicitly discussed by Augustine.<sup>13</sup> The Hippo attempts to resolve this difficulty in two ways. In the first case, God sends pre-existing souls to animate the human body, according to the second description, the soul entered the body of its own accord. Augustine writes:

Cum enim in hunc mundum, sive Deus, sive natura, sive necessitas, sive voluntas nostra, sive coniuncta horum aliqua, sive simul omnia (res enim multum obscura est, sed tamen a te iam illustranda suscepta) veluti in quoddam procellosum salum nos quasi temere passimque proiecerit; quotusquisque cognosceret quo sibi nitendum esset, quave redeundum, nisi aliquando et invitos contraque obnitentes aliqua tempestas, quae stultis videtur adversa, in optatissimam terram nescientes errantesque compingeret?<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, III, XXI-59.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. Myszor, *Manicheizm podstawowe idee*, in: Święty Augustyn, *Pisma przeciw manichejczykom*, tłum. J. Sulowski, wstęp ks. W. Myszor, Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, Warszawa 1980, p. 28. See Plato, *Fedon*, XLIV, 95C-E.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. K. Rudolph, *Gnoza. Istota i historia późnoantycznej formacji religijnej*, Nomos, Kraków 1995, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> See St. Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, I-1.

<sup>13</sup> See R. J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man*, A.D. 386-391, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1968, Cambridge, 1968, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> St. Augustine, *De beata vita*, I-1. See Święty Augustyn, *O życiu szczęśliwym*, in: *Dialogi filozoficzne* t. 1, tłum. A. Świderkówna, Pax, Warszawa 1953, p. 8.

The above question proved so complicated that the philosopher himself refrained from expressing a clear opinion.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, then, this issue continues to be of keen interest to interpreters dealing with the biblical origins of creation. According to Agnieszka Kijewska, Augustine's statements testify that he was a proponent of a concept referring to Plato's philosophy.<sup>16</sup> In this view, the existence of the soul precedes man's bodily existence.<sup>17</sup> The above thesis is also propounded by Robert J. O'Connell, who believes that for Augustine the incarnation is a punishment for a sin committed before birth.<sup>18</sup> Among Augustinologists we can also find opinions questioning the susceptibility of his teaching to the Neoplatonists. For example, Andrzej Kasia writes that:

Over the years, Augustine gradually stiffened his philosophy in the spirit of church orthodoxy. And in working out his theology, he necessarily also had to attribute some positive qualities to the human body. So he rebuked the Platonists and Origenes for considering the body as a prison of the soul, arguing that the union of the soul with the body is natural and that the body only lost its perfection as a result of original sin.<sup>19</sup>

A similar view is also supported by Roland Teske. The American scholar rightly reminds of the fact that Augustine rejected the Platonic concept of preexistence.<sup>20</sup> Other scholars admit the indirect hypothesis of the soul's fall into the body.<sup>21</sup>

There is no doubt that Augustine took over some elements from Greek philosophy in his first period, but it should be kept in mind that he was not a Platonist *sensu stricto*. Speaking against Neoplatonic anthropology, he pointed out the difference between the concepts of creation and preexistence. The philosopher did not mix the concepts presented above, and it is also worth mentioning that he distanced himself from cyclic theories assuming reincarnation. Therefore, despite some doubts, relating to the issue of the relationship between the soul and the body, the unambiguous message remains, according to which the human soul was

<sup>15</sup> See St. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I, 3.

<sup>16</sup> See A. Kijewska, *Święty Augustyn*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 2007, p. 151.

<sup>17</sup> The doctrine of Platonic provenance has its repercussions in the anthropology of Origen, who adopted the thesis of preexistence to explain the differences arising from different ontological dualism. The combination of the language of ancient philosophy and the exegesis of the Bible can be clearly seen in his writings. The work of this thinker has made a special mark in the area of the early Christian tradition. Origen signaled the view according to which the soul exists eternally, while the body is an element intended to perfect it. It is from him that we learn that the question of the origin of the soul was not obvious at the time. See R. Sala, *Początki życia ludzkiego w komentarzach patrystycznych*, "Polonia Sacra" 2013, 17, no. 1(32), pp. 59–60.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. R.J. O'Connell, *Augustine's Rejection of the Fall of the Soul*, "Augustinian Studies" 1973, no. 4, pp. 28–30.

<sup>19</sup> A. Kasia, *Św. Augustyn. Filozofia starożytna i średniowieczna*, Warszawa 1960, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> See R. Teske, *Augustine's Philosophy of Memory, of memory*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Augustines*, edited by E. Stump and N. Kretzmann, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J.M. Rist, *Augustine, Ancient thought baptized*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 111–112.

not punished by staying in the body. Writing: “Deum igitur habet auctorem ut sit anima,” the author confirms the creationist theory.<sup>22</sup> In this view, each human soul is created directly by God.

## 2. Immortality of the soul as an expression of immaterial reality

A momentous issue falling within the scope of philosophical aspects of human nature was for Augustine the question of immortality of the soul. Józef Pastuszka distinguished two types of arguments used by the Christian thinker. The first group includes the cognitive functions of man.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis here falls on the basic elements of Augustine’s gnoseology such as the concept of life, the analysis of mental powers and direct consciousness. We read: “Ego certe, Domine, laboro hic et laboro in me ipso: factus sum mihi terra difficultatis et sudoris nimii. Neque enim nunc scrutamur plagas caeli aut siderum intervalla dimetitur vel terrae libramenta quaerimus; ego sum, qui memini, ego animus. Non ita mirum, si a me longe est quidquid ego non sum; quid autem propinquius me ipso mihi?”<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere, the author writes: “A. – Ecce oravi Deum. R. – Quid ergo scire vis? A. – Haec ipsa omnia quae oravi. R. – Breviter ea collige. A. – Deum et animam scire cupio. R. – Nihilne plus? A. – Nihil omnino.”<sup>25</sup> W powyższym dialogu odnajdujemy partycypację procesu samoświadomości skierowaną na życie duchowe i doświadczenie wewnętrzne. Jak słusznie zauważa A. Kijewska, istnieją dwa powody, dla których autor przedkłada poznanie siebie i Boga nad poznanie świata. Według niej pierwszy wynika z przekonania co do tego, że dusza ludzka jest nieśmiertelna i niematerialna, natomiast drugi ma swoje źródło w nauce o Trójcy Świętej.<sup>26</sup> The Bishop of Hippo declares:

Nam sicut ipsa immortalitas animae secundum quemdam modum dicitur; habet quippe et anima mortem suam, cum vita beata caret, quae vera animae vita dicenda est; sed immortalis ideo nuncupatur, quoniam qualicumque vita, etiam cum miserrima est, numquam desinit vivere: ita quamvis ratio vel intellectus nunc in ea sit sopitus, nunc parvus, nunc magnus appareat, numquam nisi rationalis et intellectualis est anima humana.<sup>27</sup>

It can be seen that Augustine considers the immortality of the soul taking into account not only the psychological aspect, but also the strictly philosophical and

<sup>22</sup> St. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, 1. See Święty Augustyn, *Księga osiemdziesięciu trzech kwestii*, przeł., komentarzami opatrzyła I. Radziejowska, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewecki, Kęty 2012, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. J. Pastuszka, *Niematerialność duszy ludzkiej u świętego Augustyna*, Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, Lublin 1930, pp. 68–121.

<sup>24</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessionum*, X, 16. 25.

<sup>25</sup> St. Augustine, *Soliloquiorum*, I, II-7.

<sup>26</sup> See A. Kijewska, *Święty Augustyn*, p. 143.

<sup>27</sup> St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIV, IV, 6.

religious aspect. Pastuszka gives another type of arguments, it is about negative evidence, which, according to him, is supposed to prove the immateriality of the soul. The researcher mentions the problems relating to the absence of a tensile element and statements testifying to the substance indivisibility, while the justification of its immaterial character can take two different starting points, ontological and gnoseological.<sup>28</sup> In the first aspect, we can say that the soul animates the human body.<sup>29</sup> Some believe that the recognition of this view could imply a belief in the light of which the soul of animals would also be immortal. Such a position is proclaimed by Frederick Copleston making it clear that the above argument must also be considered in a gnoseological context.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the problem of immateriality cannot be separated from positive arguments, this follows from the assumptions of Augustine, who writes:

Tale est illud quod ibi dictum est: non esse vitam cum ratione ulli nisi animae; neque enim Deo sine ratione vita est, cum apud eum et summa vita et summa sit ratio; et illud, quod aliquanto superius dixi: Id quod intellegitur eiusmodi esse semper, cum intellegatur et animus, qui utique non eiusmodi est semper. Quod vero dixi: Animum propterea non posse ab aeterna ratione separari, quia non ei localiter iungitur, profecto non dixissem [...] quae non locis sed incorporaliter iunctae fuerant.<sup>31</sup>

In this light, every existence has its origin in God, so the human soul cannot be considered as the first and ultimate principle of life for its own sake. In attempting to justify the immateriality of the soul, Augustine refers to Plato's philosophy. In his writings, he most often draws attention to the idea of life, intellectual cognition and mental memory: "Huic soli enim licet videre nihil esse in rebus potentius et magnificentius iis naturis, quae, ut ita dicam, sine tumoribus esse intelleguntur: tumor enim non absurde appellatur corporis magnitudo, quae si magnipendenda esset, plus nobis profecto elephantis saperent."<sup>32</sup> Spiritual existence cannot be considered in quantitative or spatial terms. The Christian thinker made a profound analysis of intellectual cognition and demonstrated the difference between the object of sense and mental cognition. Many experts on his philosophy describe these views as moderate idealism.<sup>33</sup> However, it should be noted that the issue under analysis is not a faithful copy of Plato's thought. The position proposed by the Church Father does not necessarily undermine – contrary to idealism – the empirical sources of

<sup>28</sup> Cf. S. Kowalczyk, *Człowiek i Bóg w nauce św. Augustyna*, Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, Warszawa 1987, p. 101.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessionum*, X, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. F. Copleston, *Historia filozofii*, t. 2, *Od Augustyna do Szkota*, przeł. S. Zalewski, Pax, Warszawa 2000, p. 94.

<sup>31</sup> St. Augustine, *Retractionum*, I, 5, 2. Cf. Św. Augustyn, *O nauce chrześcijańskiej...*, p. 193.

<sup>32</sup> St. Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, XIV-24.

<sup>33</sup> See L. Schumacher, *Divine Illumination. The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge, Challenges in Contemporary Theology*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2011, p. 11.

cognition. Such a thesis is propounded by L. Schumacher and Gillian Clark.<sup>34</sup> In their view, the bishop of Hippo recognized the total reality of sense things. The aforementioned scholars show that in Augustine's notion material things are not, as in Plato, shadows of ideas, but have existence in the full sense, in other words, they exist in a real way. Of similar importance for him are spiritual values, among which should be mentioned wisdom, truth and virtues. These concepts are characterized by the fact that they are universal and non-spatial.

Let's take a look at Augustine's statements that include an analysis of the soul's vital functions. In one dialogue, the author suggests that: "Est autem animus vita quaedam: unde omne quod animatum est, vivere; omne autem inanime quod animari potest, mortuum, id est vita privatum intellegitur. Non ergo potest animus mori."<sup>35</sup> The philosopher uses the rhetorical argument in favor of the fact that what is the carrier of life cannot perish. Thus, for him, the recognition of the mortality of this phenomenon represents an internal and logical contradiction, since the antithesis to the soul is death. Of course, this view is a continuation of the thought contained in Plato's *Phaedo*, but with the difference that our author slightly alters the Greek argument in favor of biblical anthropology, in light of which the soul owes its indestructible nature to God (Matthew 10:28). Augustine attempts to formulate an essential definition of the soul. He writes: "Si autem definiri tibi animum vis, et ideo quaeris quid sit animus; facile respondeo. Nam mihi videtur esse substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata."<sup>36</sup> In his statement, he emphasizes substance understood in terms of a real existing subject that activates all rational actions. The cited definition, flowing from Plato's philosophy, is reflected in the rich terminology with which the author defines the issue.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting that with all this pluralism in considering the nature of the soul, it is impossible to see a complete lack of belief in its existence. Augustine's fierce opponents did not have a dilemma relating to theoretical atheism, which in the 17th century was accepted with approval by academia. The only difficulty was to specify what this phenomenon is. Therefore, the subject of Augustine's analysis does not oblige the necessity of providing proof of the existence of the soul, in the sense of defending the view of its total exclusion; for what reason would he have to prove the reality of a mental entity that in his mind was obvious beyond all doubt?

For Augustine, another testimony in favor of the immortality of the soul was the question of intellectual cognition. The author developed his position in the course of a polemic against the views of academics (i.e., skeptics) widespread in his time,

<sup>34</sup> Cf. G. Clark, *Philosopher: Augustine in Retirement*, in: *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. by M. Vessey, Wiley-Blackwell 2012, p. 262.

<sup>35</sup> St. Augustine, *De immortalitate animae*, IX-16. See Święty Augustyn, *O nieśmiertelności duszy*, in: *Dialogi filozoficzne* t. 2, tłum. M. Tomaszewski, Pax, Warszawa 1953, p. 95.

<sup>36</sup> St. Augustine, *De quantitate animae*, XIII-22.

<sup>37</sup> See G. O'Daly, *Anima, Animus in Augustinus Lexikon*, vol. 1, Schwabe, Basel 1986, pp. 315–317.



who questioned man's cognitive abilities. And although the skeptics accurately demonstrated the unreliability of the operation of the senses, their critical arguments did not conclusively convince Augustine, for whom the question of knowing the truth was a priority. Referring constantly to his everyday experience, the author recognized the immutability of mathematical truths, which he regarded as the basis for cognitive realism.<sup>38</sup> Commentators on his philosophy confirm this position, which consequently leads to the conclusion that our inquiries remain unerring in this regard. Mental cognition constitutes a kind of personal experience, which, as we remember, pervades the sphere of mental authorities, memory, intellect and will. This epistemology is extremely important, for realism in experience is not limited to sensory-somatic aspects. Human cognition is not only perception, but also mental authorities, that is, the activity of discursive-analytical thinking and intuition. For Stanisław Kowalczyk, the fact of the existence of the inner spiritual self is obvious, for if it did not exist, the phenomenon of mental cognition, reflective thinking and self-awareness would be impossible.<sup>39</sup> Hence, Augustine exemplifies this on the example of the act of doubt, which is a kind of confirmation of the reality of the soul.

In his writings, Augustine attempted to refute the arguments of the academic school. Suspension of judgment is not an outcome in his philosophy, as it was for the skeptics. In his view, doubt or confusion argues for the existential reality of the human soul. Let's see how he justifies his claims:

Nulla in his veris Academicorum argumenta formido dicentium: Quid si falleris? Si enim fallor, sum. Nam qui non est, utique nec falli potest; ac per hoc sum, si fallor. Quia ergo sum si fallor, quomodo esse me fallor, quando certum est me esse, si fallor? Quia igitur essem qui fallerer, etiamsi fallerer, procul dubio in eo, quod me novi esse, non fallor. Consequens est autem, ut etiam in eo, quod me novi nosse, non fallar. Sicut enim novi esse me, ita novi etiam hoc ipsum, nosse me.<sup>40</sup>

Antoine Arnauld rightly pointed out the philosophical convergence of his views with Descartes' position. In his view, at the root of the famous construction of the *cogito* are the principles of proof for the existence of God, contained in the treatise *De Civitate Dei*.<sup>41</sup> The above relationship caused Zbigniew Janowski to juxtapose selected statements of the Bishop of Hippo with analogous formulations of the French philosopher.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Cf. E. Sienkiewicz, *Poznawczy realizm egzystencjalny według św. Augustyna*, "Teologia w Polsce" 2012, nr 6(1), p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. S. Kowalczyk, *Człowiek i Bóg w nauce...*, p. 103.

<sup>40</sup> St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XI, XXVI. See Święty Augustyn, *Państwo Boże*, Antyk, Kęty 2002, p. 431.

<sup>41</sup> See A. Arnauld, *Zarzuty czwarte – List do przesławnego męża*, in: Rene Descartes, *Rene Descartes, Medytacje o pierwszej filozofii, Zarzuty uczonych mężów i odpowiedzi autora, Rozmowa z Burmanem*, Antyk, Kęty 2001, p. 177.

<sup>42</sup> See Z. Janowski, *INDEX augustino-cartésien. Textes et commentaire*, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris 2000.

The world of spiritual values is another issue that, according to Augustine, points to the immateriality of the human soul. In this context, the Christian philosopher lists truths and concepts that, in his view, are immaterial categories. Among them he includes virtues, geometrical concepts and mental entities. The bishop of Hippo proclaims: "Mens ergo ipsa sicut corporearum rerum notitias per sensus corporis colligit, sic incorporearum per semetipsam. Ergo et se ipsam per se ipsam novit, quoniam est incorporea. Nam si non se novit, non se amat."<sup>43</sup> For Augustine, the soul apprehended as an incorporeal reality is one of the truths of direct undoubtedness, which are apprehended through intuition and self-reflection. According to him, cognition and participation in non-material values makes man similar to the objects he participates in. Some of the above goods are transcendent, immaterial and immortal. Augustine illustrates his position with an example of analyzing the concept of truth. His argument can be stated as follows: truth as immortal cannot perish, because even if it were annihilated, it would be true to say that it has ceased to exist.<sup>44</sup> It seems obvious that a person can affirm the above-mentioned values.<sup>45</sup> The philosopher's statements lead to the conclusion that truth cannot exist in a destructible subject, otherwise not only would the soul itself be mortal, but also the laws in which it participates would be destructible.

The issue of self-consciousness was equally important to Augustine. From the point of view of his philosophy, the issue of self-knowledge concerns the reality of existence. In his writings, the Bishop of Hippo does not shy away from answering the question of the reality of what exists. Most often he appeals to intuition and intellectual analysis of cognitive functions:

Non itaque velut absentem se quaerat cernere, sed praesentem se curet discernere. Nec se quasi non norit cognoscat, sed ab eo quod alterum novit dignoscat. Ipsum enim quod audit: Cognosce te ipsam, quomodo agere curabit, si nescit, aut quid sit: Cognosce; aut quid sit: Te ipsam? Si autem utrumque novit, novit et se ipsam [...]. Sed cum dicitur menti: Cognosce te ipsam, eo ictu quo intellegit quod dictum est: Te ipsam, cognoscit se ipsam; nec ob aliud, quam eo quod sibi praesens est. Si autem quod dictum est non intellegit, non utique facit. Hoc igitur ei praecipitur ut faciat, quod cum praeceptum ipsum intellegit facit.<sup>46</sup>

According to Augustine, the human soul is an entity capable of conscious self-reflection, which means that it is responsible for several important functions, among which the philosopher lists intellectual-cognitive activity, as well as the operation of the mental authorities of memory, intellect and will. Acts of self-consciousness confirm the real existence of being and speak for the immateriality of

<sup>43</sup> St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IX, III, 3.

<sup>44</sup> See St. Augustine, *Soliloquiorum*, II, II-2.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, XXXIX-72.

<sup>46</sup> St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, X, IX, 12. See Święty Augustyn, *O Trójcy Świętej*, tłum. M. Stokowska, wpraw. J. Tischner; pol. i przypisy J.M. Szymusiak, Znak, Kraków 1996, p. 322.

*res intelligibiles*. It should still be reminded of the fact that our philosopher adopts the so-called contingent realism. Thus, it is not a matter of having a whole human being in one place and an abstract soul in another, nor is it a matter of equating the above concepts. For this reason, it is impossible to radically separate the two ontological aspects of humanity. Augustine realizes that he still touches only a shred of the mysterious complexity of this phenomenon, hence he so often confesses his helplessness and admits his ignorance, and even takes the risk of balancing on the edge of orthodoxy. It is worth remembering that his argument is actually a philosophical reflection on the whole man. This is indicated by a number of the author's numerous statements testifying to the fact that man has been included in the totality of his being in both bodily and spiritual aspects, and therefore human nature cannot be limited to the soul alone. The analysis presents various viewpoints on the immortality of the soul. Each of these approaches sheds some light on the issue, but also carries certain limitations. One direction argues in favor of an eternal source, recognizing that the soul, as the creator of this source, can possess an eternal nature. Various viewpoints on the immortality of the soul are presented that broaden the perspective on the issue, emphasizing its significance and implications. Arguments that rely on the soul's transcendence and its connection to the unlimited realm of eternity point to the potential permanence of its existence. One approach relies on the existence of an eternal source, arguing that the soul, as a creation of this source, can be eternal in itself. This assumption is linked to religious and philosophical beliefs. The idea of the soul's transcendence points to its ability to reflect and think, suggesting a separation from the body. An important clue in the debate is the soul's ability to be aware of existence, suggesting the possibility of survival outside the physical body. Nonetheless, these perspectives remain open to different interpretations and continue the debate in the areas of philosophy, theology and science, the context of which influences the formation of beliefs and analysis of evidence.

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