

The *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* and the Origin of the Soul

Roland J. Teske, in his recent translation-commentary of the *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* (which I shall abbreviate to *GenMan*) along with the *De Genesi ad Litteram, Liber Imperfectus (GenImp)*, remarks of the former that «Perhaps no other work of Augustine's provides such an insight into his early view of man as a soul fallen into a mortal body¹. I firmly agree with that evaluation, and consequently I warmly welcome Teske's translation. It will, one hopes, invite scholars to examine more closely a work that has received too little attention, and one which is central to evaluating a thesis which is still struggling for acceptance.

Olivier Du Roy, who has given us some of the most meticulous analyses of Augustine's early writings, might be counted on to agree with Teske's comment, though there are some clouds on that horizon, as we shall shortly see². Gerald J. P. O'Daly, on the contrary, must be counted as disagreeing: Teske quotes him, accurately, as claiming that «Nowhere in his early writings does [Augustine] unequivocally assert the soul's pre-existence» (a requisite element to the fall-of-the-soul view). That claim could be perfectly true and still tell us nothing conclusive on the issue, but for the fact that O'Daly goes on to maintain that the theory of pre-existence is, for Augustine, «never more than one possibility among others³» (67n65).

1. *St. Augustine on Genesis*, in *The Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 84. Translation, Introduction and notes by Roland J. TESKE, S.J. The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 1991. I shall refer to this volume as Teske, followed by page- and, where appropriate, footnote-number. References to the biblical book of *Genesis* will read *Genesis*, plus the book and verse numbers, both in arabics. Citations of Augustine's commentary, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, give only Book and paragraph number (so, for example, II, 7) unless the context fails to make it evident that the citation refers to that work; in such cases, the abbreviation *GenMan* is used, followed by book and paragraph numbers.

2. See *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin*, by Olivier DU ROY, Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1966. (Henceforth: *Trinité*).

3. TESKE, p. 67, note 65. Teske's reference is to Gerald J. P. O'DALY's *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, U. of California Press, Berkeley, CA, p. 199. O'Daly's remarks here

There can be grounds, accordingly, for disagreeing with Teske's judgment. For that judgment, in the case before us, is beset with two orders of difficulties. The first set of difficulties arises from Augustine's own text; the second set arises more from the varying ways scholars, including Teske – and myself – have come to interpret that text.

Allow me to begin with a difficulty of that second sort: dealing with it from the very outset will serve to clear the decks for later stages in our discussion. Teske correctly reminds his readers that I have drawn ammunition from *GenMan*, among others of Augustine's works, to argue that he thought of Adam and Eve as "fallen souls"⁴. But then, explaining what that "fallen soul" view implies, he declares that I have envisaged it as the soul's fall from a condition of sheer disembodiment into an embodied condition⁵. That view he contrasts with the view held by Olivier Du Roy: that our souls indeed "fell", but into a condition of "mortality", which (if I understand Du Roy correctly), comes down to mean into embodiment in "mortal" bodies, and all which that implies⁶. But the resulting picture is one of disarray: "fall of the soul" theory appears to be suspect inasmuch as its principal adherents cannot agree among themselves on an essential of their position: what the soul fell *into*.

But doubts only multiply (Teske appears to be saying) when one inspects Augustine's own affirmations on this matter. And here we move to the first order of difficulties mentioned earlier. At one moment it appears that the soul was originally created as member of the "spiritual" and "invisible" order of beings (II, 4)⁷ while a moment later it seems that God's original creative act clothed it with a body, albeit a "celestial" body (II, 10)⁸. This immediately introduces a confusion about the original condition the soul fell *from*.

Now one is initially tempted to conjecture that this second confusion may partially account for the earlier confusion about what the sinful soul fell *into*: consider the pre-sinful soul as disembodied, and symmetry of thought would suggest that one envisage its fall as into embodiment; but consider it as originally embodied in a "celestial" body, and a similar symmetry would suggest that it "fell" into a body of an inferior sort, a "mortal" body. Teske proffers the opinion that I chose to view the soul as having fallen *into* a body

substantially reproduce his more connected treatment in «Augustine on the Origin of Souls», in *Platonismus und Christentum: Festschrift fuer Heinrich Doerrie* (ed. H.D. Blume/F. Mann) = *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 10, 1983, 184-91 (henceforth: «Origin of Souls»).

4. TESKE, *ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, but see also p. 128, note 142, and cf. p. 129, note 148.

6. TESKE, p. 67, note 65. He refers to *Trinité* p. 289, note 2.

7. TESKE, p. 97, note 14.

8. TESKE, p. 128, note 142.

and, presumably, *from* a state of disembodiment, whereas Du Roy views the fall as terminating in a *mortal* body. Du Roy leaves his readers to guess at what type of embodiment, if any, the soul enjoyed before its fall : the omission was excusable, since his concerns were not directly anthropological, after all. But he insists that Augustine did not regard embodiment *as such* as resulting from the soul's sinful fall ; thought-symmetry would again suggest, therefore, that he must have viewed the fall's *terminus a quo* as some sort of embodiment, presumably in an "immortal" body⁹.

But this difference between Du Roy's position and what Teske describes as mine is largely a construct of Teske's imagination. I did, it is true, regularly employ the expression "fall of the soul" as a convenient label for my position, but I thought I had made it clear enough that that short-form designation referred to the soul's fall from a "celestial" body into the "mortal" bodies of our present experience. Ironically, Teske's clearest misrepresentation of my position occurs in note 142 on page 128 of his translation, where Augustine (in II, 32) is describing the properties of the celestial (or "heavenly") bodies. But it was precisely after having quoted at length that paragraph of Augustine's text, that I called attention to the fact that both Plotinus and Augustine «entertain the idea of the soul's embodiment in the paradisiac state», although Augustine, for his part, prescribes that the body in question must be "heavenly, transparent and guileless (*coeleste, perspicuum, simplex*)". «We are not, therefore, I added, in the world of 'pure spirits'» as a reader acquainted with Thomist angelology might be tempted anachronistically to assume ; when Augustine describes our ultimate restoration to the paradisiac condition as a «'change into angelic form' [he] means that the soul will once again don a celestial body it once had¹⁰».

We have just found typified one of the greatest difficulties impeding an accurate reading of Augustine's earliest *De Genesi*, one which appears occasionally to have ensnared even the most careful of readers. Our twentieth century expectations can induce us to read into Augustine's "figurative" interpretation what later Scriptural scholarship and theological elaboration have brought us to see as the most obvious meaning of *Genesis*. So, when Augustine would have us see that God originally created Adam and Eve as the superior, rational and inferior, animal "parts" of "Soul" (II, 12) – "Soul" meaning some vast and hypostatic reality, to which neither the definite nor indefinite article of our English language comfortably applies – many of us find it near impossible to clear our minds of the familiar picture of Adam and Eve as two distinct, individual, embodied human beings. And even when Augustine finally succeeds in coaching us to grasp that the original Adam-Eve composite is this "celestially" embodied super-reality, we can fail to take

9. *Trinité*, p. 289. note 2.

10. See my *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, Cambridge MA., The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968, pp. 164-65. (Henceforth : *Early Theory*).

seriously that «this *corpus coeleste* [is] a body, and yet in a sense quite different from our ordinary use of the term» (or, one should add, from the way in which more recent thought would use the term)¹¹.

A trace of such inertial thinking may account for another difficulty Teske seems to have experienced. I must also confess that I had not perceived this difficulty sharply enough, until I thought to detect its presence behind Teske's prose. I am referring to the problem, or apparent problem, mentioned above : that of reconciling what Augustine says (at II, 32) about the soul's celestial embodiment, and his prior claim (II, 4) that the soul was originally part of the "invisible" creation. Teske reads Augustine as interpreting that "invisible creation" (of *Genesis* 2, 4-5) as "soul" existing aloft («before they were on earth»), before (in Teske's terms) having «fallen into body and time». "Man", therefore, Teske concludes, is here being viewed as «a soul that has fallen *into body* and time¹²», the theory which, we saw, Teske has imputed to me, but which would set Augustine's thought at odds with itself. And I have to admit that my prose in *Early Theory*, on p. 158 (which deals with this passage about the "invisible creation", and which Teske cites *in loc*), might have guarded more carefully against that misinterpretation. The soul, as Augustine speaks of it here, is indeed far from "embodied", but I should have added the qualification alluded to above, «as a modern reader would understand that term, 'embodied'».

Let me admit then, that in this instance Teske seems to have been tricked partially by Augustine, but also, perhaps as abetted by me. Our principal concern, though, is this: is Augustine here being inconsistent, or can these two views of the soul in its pre-fallen state – "invisible" and yet "embodied" – be reconciled? And can they be reconciled in such a way as to confirm the view that this first *De Genesi* conveys a "fall of soul" message to Augustine's readers?

I believe they can, and that they were reconciled in Augustine's own thinking. But reconciling them compels us to enter far more completely into Augustine's mind as he tells us about the nature of that "heavenly" body. We must not think of it as a body like the bodies of our present experience, with the single difference that it is situated locally in the heavenly realm : rather, it was a body essentially different in quality and *kind*. This may be alien to our thought-ways, but it was the way the Greek Fathers thought when they spoke of "immortal" and "spiritual" bodies, as did Greek secular thinkers, including Plotinus, when they spoke of the "astral" body the soul bore in the higher world¹³.

11. *Early Theory*, p. 165.

12. TESKE, p. 97, note 14.

13. See the discussion in *La Genèse au Sens Littérale*, Vol 48 of the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* series, Paris, *Études Augustiniennes*, 1972, by P. AGAESSE S J and A. SOLIGNAC S.J., pp. 690-95.

To focus on the point which concerns us here, the long and short of it was, I suggest, that the “celestial” or “heavenly” body seems clearly to have been, to Augustine’s way of thinking, “invisible” as we would ordinarily mean that term. Notice how he stresses its *simplicitas*, its *perspicuitas* : whatever body it may have does not impede another’s view of our interior thoughts and affections, it permits of none of that privacy and duplicity made possible by the opacity of our present “mortal” bodies : it is, in a word, perfectly transparent, allowing for unimpeded expression to, and unobstructed insight into one’s spiritual interior by, one’s companion souls.

Significantly, that term *simplicitas* returns to Augustine’s pen (II, 19 & 23) when he explains what he thinks Genesis must mean by the “nakedness” of Adam and Eve : the context makes it plain that to wear a “heavenly” body is tantamount to wearing no body at all, in *our* way of thinking “body”.

There is every reason to believe, moreover, that the *De Genesi ad Litteram, Imperfectus Liber* testifies retrospectively to the same manner of thinking. “Among bodies”, Augustine tells us there, «there are none better than the body of the heaven. Indeed, heavenly bodies are completely different from earthly bodies, and the heavenly ones are better. I do not know how anything that surpasses their nature can still be called a body» (*GenImp* 29). This is a kind of body, therefore, which leaves the soul as starkly “naked”, as perfectly visible, as the fabulous Emperor was in his new clothes. Only an “invisible” body could do that.

Teske has found still another *locus* where Augustine’s text might be thought to cast doubt on the presence of the “fall of soul” view in his first *De Genesi* : he calls attention (30-31) to the passage (II, 17) where Augustine seems to be speaking of God’s creating the pre-fallen Eve, not (“figuratively”) as the lower, “animal” part of celestially situated Soul, but (“historically”) as “this”, i.e., an individual “visible” woman dwelling in “this” lower corporeal world :

«Quapropter etsi visibilis femina secundum historiam de corpore viri primo facta est a Domino Deo, non utique sine causa ita facta est, nisi ut aliquod secretum intimaret...»

Teske draws his interpretation from the sentence which Augustine begins with the conditional term, *etsi* ; the condition is expressed in the indicative mood (*creata est* : “she was created”), and Teske evidently infers from that indicative that Augustine intended the verb to affirm that Eve’s creation *factually* occurred *secundum historiam*. «Augustine is clear, he writes in a virtual translation of the above, that in the historical sense a visible Eve was made from Adam’s body while he slept¹⁴».

This interpretation of Augustine’s Latin, however, would place him squarely into contradiction with what he had previously told us, that Eve was originally created as “animal soul” and part of the “spiritual” creation, and Teske has clearly seen this possibility, and seems willing to accept it as fact

14. TESKE, p. 114, note 84.

(30-31). Now Augustine is far from being infallible, but it is difficult to imagine him making an argumentative gaffe of this order. So, I have tried to show elsewhere¹⁵ that in this instance *etsi*, followed by the indicative, seems far more plausibly to express an argumentative tactic familiar to any professional rhetor : the *dato non concessio* move which momentarily “grants” (in the indicative) the premiss of the adversary’s position, but purely for the sake of argument, and without “conceding” it as factually true. The point of the exercise is to show that *even if the adversary’s supposition were true*, the *inference* the adversary had drawn from it would be invalid. Applied to the present case, Augustine seems to have in mind the Manichee propensity to interpret these chapters of *Genesis* literally (or, in Augustine’s terminology, “historically”) ; from that literal interpretation they proceeded to draw all sorts of outrageous (even “blasphemous”) objections ; they would have little patience, therefore, with Augustine’s resolve to interpret such passages as intended “figuratively”, in order to teach some lesson to the readers of an after time. Hence Augustine’s insistence : that «even if it were the case that Eve had been created, before her sinful fall, as ‘this visible woman’, it would not follow that the manner of her creation, from her husband’s rib, would hold no spiritual lesson for us» – as the Manichees appear to have claimed.

So much for the principal difficulties and inconsistencies Teske thought he detected in Augustine’s work¹⁶. Had those difficulties been real, they would seriously have weakened his own contention that *GenMan* contained a view of the human being as “fallen soul”. But despite the most serious objections he himself has brought against it, Teske’s original contention survives examination.

Up to this point, however, that conclusion remains essentially negative. Can one show positively, from Teske’s own version of *GenMan*, that Augustine is here proposing that theory ? The answer to that, I submit, is yes. But to support that answer, I must now be permitted a certain measure of repetition.

As Augustine interprets *Genesis*, once again, God did not first create Adam and Eve as “children of this world”, individual man and individual woman (I, 30) ; He fashioned them as part of the “invisible creation” (II, 4). «Before they were upon the earth» (II, 5), they seem to have been more on the order of

15. See my Review Article of Teske’s translation in *Augustinian Studies*, 22 (1991), 223-30. Teske has written an article on «Saint Augustine’s View of the Original Human Condition in the *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*», for that same issue, pp. 141-56, where he views his position on the question as “much closer to”, though still somewhat different from, mine. Teske’s article came to my attention too late to influence the contentions advanced here, but I do not think it would urge any substantial revision of those contentions.

16. On what could be conceived of as an additional difficulty, see the discussion of Paradise as a “place”, in TESKE p. 116. I think of this issue as already dealt with in my preceding remarks.

«male and female» principles of a single hypostatic reality, “Human soul”, *masculus* and *femina* joined in “chaste conjunction”. The higher (rational) part of Soul was fashioned to “rule”, and the lower (“animal” or sensible) part to “obey”, so that their thoroughly a-sexual union “filled the earth”, not with flesh-and-blood children, but with “good works”, rather, and “immortal joys”. That spiritual union was fecund also in the sense of “giving life to [the] Body”, by which Augustine appears to mean “all corporeal nature” (II, 12). That corporeal nature, in its turn, remained totally subject to Soul’s governance (I, 30 ; II, 15). Rational soul (“Man”) was to be governed by the divine “Wisdom” it contemplated, while “Woman” – lower or “animal” soul – was to be governed by the wisdom Man drew from his contemplation of that Wisdom. All of this obtained as long as Soul still dwelt in “Paradise”, before it sinned and was “dismissed” to “labor” on “earth” (II, 5). “Paradise”, however, was a “place” which was not literally a place : since Soul was not embodied in the way bodies in “this” lower world are embodied, it dwelt in an a-spatial “spiritual” condition, *beata vita*, or “happiness” (II, 12, 20).

It was not an easy task for Augustine to elicit this disincarnate picture of Adam and Eve from the text of *Genesis*. There were at least two massive difficulties to get round. First, he had to neutralize the resolutely incarnate cast of *Genesis*’s message that God made Adam and Eve to “multiply and fill the earth”, and placed His first creative blessing on their sexual union toward that end. Second, he had to deal with *Genesis*’s later affirmation that God made Adam from the “mud of the earth”.

We have seen how Augustine managed to turn the first of those difficulties (I, 30) by “figuratively” interpreting the command to “multiply” as referring to a “spiritual” union which produced spiritual progeny in the form of “good works” and “immortal joys”. The second difficulty puts him to a certain amount of waffling, but the main thrust of Augustine’s reply (II, 8-9) clearly aims at salvaging the disincarnate character of the pre-fallen Adam-Eve “couple” : the creation from earthly “mud” refers to a preliminary stage in the fashioning of Adam, a stage which was then followed by God’s raising and “establishing” him in the loftier spiritual status of the *Beata Vita* spoken of earlier. Only then, Augustine is implying, may we consider God’s creation of Adam as having reached its intended completion ; God never intended him to remain a creature embodied in an “animal” body.

Parenthetically, this mention of clay compelled Augustine to answer a captious Manichee objection : they insisted on taking “mud” literally and carped at the fact that God should have formed man “fragile and mortal” from so base a material. That complaint can be answered, Augustine felt, by reflecting on the mysterious meaning “mud” – as the combination of earth and water – may have in Scripture. Besides, man became “fragile and mortal” only *after* sin. Think, too, of God’s unlimited power to transform even such humble materials into a body which, before sin, would have «afflicted man with no trouble or need, and wasted away from no corruption». But the formation of

man's body from "mud" has unmistakably made work for Augustine's "spiritual" views : it is emblematic that he implicitly admits that some radical transformation of that original material would be required.

Meantime, Augustine could feel entitled to interpret all of *Genesis's* other intimations, that Adam and Eve were created as embodied and individual man and woman (II, 15, 17), as referring to their subsequent penal condition¹⁷. Sin was what caused "soul" to become *homo laborans in terra*, "man laboring on earth", encased in a "mortal" (and "animal") body as consequence of his "fall". Originally, soul did not even need to go through the "laborious" process of drawing knowledge from the senses, as incarnate humans would have to do after their fall : all of soul's knowledge was effortlessly "poured" into it by reason of the immediate contact it enjoyed with the supernal Wisdom Who was "fountain" of Truth (II, 5).

Moreover, all mutual knowledge of soul to soul was similarly immediate and intuitive : clothed in the transparency of celestial bodies, their interiors were perfectly "naked" to each other. After the fall, this is no longer the case ; within the opaque "mortal" body which now cloaks the soul, there lurks the spiritual space of secrecy – the inward domain of the *proprium*, exclusive and private (I, 32 ; II, 24). This has also become the domain of the "lie", *mendacium* : for into it our fellow-souls can never peer in order to verify whether the thoughts and feelings we outwardly express by means of symbols are truly our own.

This is the closest Augustine comes, in this early work, to hinting that sin and fall accounted for our "individuation". But that reading of his first *De Genesi* jibes with other hints he has dropped in his early dialogues: that in the overworld to which we aspire, every spiritual "part" is equivalent to the "whole" (*Ord* 2, 51) so that we must be, even now, as much if not more "one" soul rather than many (*Quant* 69). That reading also jibes with what he will tell us in his later works, when controversy obliges him to return explicitly to this problem of the soul's origin : the soul's *propria vita* is clearly tantamount to what a later age will term "individuation"¹⁸ and it followed upon an earlier state in which our several souls were one single soul, living a mysterious kind of life, perfectly common to all (*Civ* 13, 14 ; *Conf* 12, 18ff.).

The error the Manichees constantly commit is that of deriving their notion of "man", as God originally intended him, from the kind of human beings we all know from our experience : corrupt, mortal, and laboring under the weight of punishment for that primal sin. But a similar kind of facile thinking, Augustine was convinced, underlay the tendency to interpret everything in these chapters of *Genesis* as though they were meant to be understood literally and "historically", and as though from the very beginning they meant to tell the story of a particular man called Adam, and a particular woman called Eve.

17. TESKE, pp. 30-31.

18. See my *The Origin of the Soul in St. Augustine's Later Works*, New York, Fordham University Press, 1987, pp. 187-97 and 209-10.

It is especially interesting to observe how Augustine proposes that we understand (at *GenMan* II, 10), the words of *Genesis* (2, 7), where God is said to «breathe into [man] the breath of life». This expression, Augustine tells his readers, could imply one of several possibilities. First, it could imply that «up to this point there was [i.e. existed] only the body» (*adhuc corpus solum erat*); in this hypothesis, the text must be read as affirming that the soul was «at this point joined to the body»: *animam adiunctam corpori hoc loco intelligere debemus*. But now (Augustine's Latin here is far from pellucid) that first hypothesis sub-divides into two: *Genesis* may be supposing, on the one hand (*sive*), that «the soul had already been made (*iam facta erat*), but still existed as though in the Mouth of God (*tanquam in ore Dei erat*), that is, in His Truth and Wisdom», meaning, evidently, His Eternal Word. On this supposition, the “breathing forth” must refer to the moment «when it [the already existing soul] was breathed forth» both from and by God into the body.

Or, a second sub-possibility: it could be that the soul did not already exist, but «was *then* made [at the moment] when God breathed forth the breath of life into the mud-figure He had formed»: *sive tunc anima facta est, quando in illud figmentum Deus insufflavit spiritum vitae*; in this case, that “breathing forth” must be understood as the “activity” whereby God «made the soul in man by the [S]pirit of His power»: *fecit animam in homine*.

In a second major possibility, not only “the body” existed, but “man” had already “been made”, i.e. man composed of *both* “body and soul”: God's “breath”, in this case, must be thought of as «acting upon the [already] living soul» in order to “add” to it the power of “sensation”.

Teske notes, correctly, I am convinced, that the supposition that the soul was «already made, but remained in God's truth and wisdom», insinuates that Augustine may already have been thinking of the “third” of the famous “four hypotheses” on the soul's origin which he outlines (later, it would seem) in *De Libero Arbitrio* III, 56-57. In that third hypothesis, as Teske expresses it, «the soul made by God already existed somehow in God and was subsequently sent into the body¹⁹».

Teske's suggestion gains considerable plausibility from the way Augustine phrases the very next hypothesis which he proposes – that the soul “was made”, not before, but only then (*tunc*) when God breathed forth the soul “into the mud” which He had formed. Thus, as Augustine expresses it, the soul was made precisely in such a way that God *fecit animam in homine*: «made the soul *in man*», and not, as in the preceding hypothesis, in a preliminary step “apart from” man, so to speak. This has all the earmarks of the expression Augustine gives to the “creationist” hypothesis in *Lib* III, 56, where souls «are made, one by one, *in each* [child] which comes to be born: *in unoquoque nascentium*. Once again, Teske seems right on target: Augustine is evidently saying that «Adam's soul was created at the point of embodiment²⁰». In other

19. TESKE, p. 104, note 43.

20. TESKE, p. 105, note 45.

words, he may very well have already been thinking in terms of those classic “four hypotheses” on the soul’s origin which he outlines in *De Libero Arbitrio* III.

One might object to that suggestion that there is no explicit mention of either the “traducianist” or “fallen soul” hypotheses. But a moment’s reflection will show that while traducianism would rightfully come into any discussion of how the first (Adamic) soul was transmitted to its post-Adamic offspring (the topic being discussed in *Lib* III), it has no place in a discussion focusing, as here, on the origin of that first soul.

But, one might then object, why is there no mention of the “fourth” or “fall of the soul” hypothesis? Augustine begins to reply to this query in the very next sentence. *Nondum tamen spiritualem hominem debemus intelligere qui factus est in animam viventem, sed adhuc animale* : «Nonetheless, we must not think of the man [whom *Genesis* depicts as having been] made into a living soul as already a spiritual man, but to this point [only] an animal man». That caveat is plainly meant to apply to each and all of the foregoing possibilities he has suggested – whichever meaning of “breathing forth” we settle upon, we must be clear that Scripture meant us to understand that the “living soul” which resulted was the “animal” man Paul writes about, not a “spiritual” man. He goes on to say, as we have already noted, that it was only after having been first made “animal” that the soul was then raised to the higher status of “spiritual” existence in the “paradise” of “the happy life”. And it was from that lofty eminence that the soul «sinned,... was dismissed from paradise» and reverted to «a state that was animal». Here, then, we have the fourth or “fall of the soul” hypothesis, but expressed in the strongest terms possible : for no matter which of the possible interpretations of the soul’s creation we choose to adopt, each of them eventually issues into the soul’s sinful fall from a condition of spiritual bliss into the penal miseries of our present “animal” existence.

That equivalence between man’s penal state of mortality and the “animal” state will cause Augustine some problems later (*Retr* I, 10, 3). So will the facile supposition that all four hypotheses can cohere with “fall of the soul” theory. But it is clear from Augustine’s subsequent expressions that our hope in Christ is to be “recreated” and “restored” to the same spiritual and a-spatial “paradise” we once inhabited : *restituamur in paradisum*²¹. Verbs prefixed by re- are already beginning to convey the circularity of a theory where “man” (or “soul”) is viewed as returning, ideally, to the Father’s House which it originally left.

Teske, accordingly, seems clearly to have been correct in declaring that his first *De Genesi* provided a rich lode of evidence to support the view that the early Augustine thought of us humans as fallen souls. And yet O’Daly is also

21. TESKE, p. 105, note 49.

correct in maintaining that nowhere, in this work, at least, does Augustine «unequivocally assert the soul's pre-existence». That claim, however, is by no means identical with the companion-claim O'Daly goes on to make, that in Augustine's early writings pre-existence «is never more than one possibility among others». O'Daly grounds that latter contention upon a surprisingly limited examination of Augustine's first *De Genesi*: he interprets two and only two texts, while referring only allusively to several others. For reasons I cannot fathom, he fails to acknowledge the existence of the generous array of texts which both Teske and I have found relevant to the issue²². Yet it would seem obvious that when Augustine writes that before its sin the human soul was part of the "invisible" and "spiritual" creation, that it existed in a placeless "paradise" and in utterly transparent celestial bodies, all its knowledge fed to it through immediate contact with the fountain of Divine Truth, and that only because of its sin was it "dismissed" into "this" spatial and visible world of rebellious mortal bodies and dependence on the bodily senses, the preexistence of the soul must have been so obviously an implicit to the moderately cultivated reader of his time that Augustine does not feel the slightest need to "unequivocally assert" it. A man need not strive to prove that he is riding a bicycle by suspending his activities of pumping, steering, and maintaining his balance, in order to shout «Look, I'm riding a bicycle! »

The puzzling character of O'Daly's performance is only underlined by the way he interprets Augustine's exegesis of the first of his two texts, *Genesis* I, 26-27: he admits that this text, which recounts man's being made to the image of God, «is understood allegorically» and «refers to man, the rational phenomenon, rather than man, the created soul²³». "Adam", O'Daly is conceding, does not necessarily denote for Augustine the individual historical "man" we would spontaneously understand that name to designate. Here he has left the door open to the interpretation both Teske and I have based on a closer exegesis of Augustine's text: Adam stands for the masculine, "rational" part of "Soul", and Eve for Soul's corresponding "feminine" or "animal" part. At this point, one fully expects O'Daly to connect up what this particular text tells us about that "Soul" with what Augustine tells us in the whole array of related texts we have examined above. But unaccountably, he steps gingerly back from doing any such thing.

The only other text O'Daly seriously considers is Augustine's interpretation of *Genesis* 2, 7: here, he combines two hypotheses into one by telling us that Augustine interprets God's "breathing" (upon the man He had formed from "mud") as symbolizing either «the ensoulment of an already existing body, or, if man already exists as body and soul, it can express the beginnings of

22. Note that DU ROY, in *Trinité*, develops his case for the "fallen soul" position chiefly from Augustine's *De Moribus Ecclesiae et Manichaeorum* (pp. 234-36) and *De Musica*, (pp. 288-89). But this only betrays the fact that the direct focus of his study is, legitimately, Trinitarian rather than anthropological.

23. See O'DALY, «Origin of Souls», 185.

sentience²⁴». He then has Augustine adding that the former of these two cases «would be consistent both with a pre-existent soul» (retained, as we saw, in the “Mouth” of God), as well as with «the soul’s creation in the moment of [God’s breathing]».

To this point O’Daly, Teske, and I are basically in agreement. We also agree that the language of that first alternative – featuring the pre-existent soul – «suggests a Platonically inspired idea of soul». But why not take the further step of making that interpretation even more precise : why not admit that it is remarkably close to the expression of the “third” of the *De Libero Arbitrio*’s four “hypotheses” on the soul’s origin ; that hypothesis specifies that souls are created, pre-exist their entrance into mortal bodies, but are “sent” by God, innocently on their part, into those mortal bodies. That alternative once clarified, why not further point out that the formula, «the soul’s creation in the moment of [God’s] *insufflatio*», accords perfectly well with Augustine’s habitual expression of the “second”, creationist hypothesis ? And indeed, why stop even there ?

But Professor O’Daly once again exhibits his odd habit of stopping short just when his analysis is entering upon its most interesting phase ! And only by stopping short can he serenely conclude that «Augustine is not concerned with the correctness of either view», and leave the question at that.

For while it seems true (as O’Daly goes on to write) that Augustine is primarily concerned with arguing to the anti-Manichaeian conclusion he draws in the *next* paragraph, that «the mutable soul is created [and not] part of the divine nature», it is also true that he continues the *very same paragraph* which O’Daly has been summarizing by saying that «We should not yet think of [the] man who was made into a living soul as spiritual, but as still animal». Obviously, he means to say that whichever of the two alternatives we choose, that the soul was either “sent” or “created” at the very moment of God’s *insufflatio*, the result was an “animal” Adam. But then Augustine adds further that Adam was “made spiritual” when God – subsequently, obviously – “established” him in paradise. He then goes on : «Thus, after he sinned... and was dismissed from paradise, he remained in such a state that he was animal. And so all of us who were born from him after sin first bear the animal man... » O’Daly is partially right : Augustine need not be concerned about which of those two alternative explanations of the “animal” soul’s origin is correct. But a large part of the reason for his insouciance is that, in the end, both solutions issue in the same result : the “fall of the soul”. For Augustine makes it plain that man was subsequently elevated from his initial “animal” to the “spiritual” state of happiness, then sinned, and was “dismissed” to the “animal” state familiar to all of us. But, Augustine adds, significantly, that we may hope, through Christ, to be “recreated” and “restored” (*restaurati*) to that lost paradise (II, 10). On all of these affirmations, O’Daly says nothing.

Granted, Augustine will later detect, and smoothe out, the difficulties inherent in this solution: the “fall of the soul” is not so easily reconcilable with

24. *Ibid.*

the second and third of his famous hypotheses. But he has not spied out those difficulties quite yet. In the meantime, how Professor O'Daly can think we shall be "restored" to that spiritual paradise, without our having "pre-existed" there, I am at a loss to understand.

R.J. O'CONNELL
Fordham University
Bronx, N. Y. 10458-5198

SUMMARY : Roland J. Teske admits to two principal difficulties against his own claim that the *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* portrays the soul as "fallen". But those difficulties dissolve if we accept (1) that Augustine thought of the "celestial" or "spiritual" body as "invisible", and (2) that the *dato non concessio* style of his argument implies that he does not grant the Manichee inference that the pre-fallen Eve was "historically" created as an embodied, individuated "woman". This first *De Genesi*, therefore, consistently portrays Adam-Eve as "Soul", created as celestially embodied, and subsequently fallen into "moral" or "animal" bodies as a result of sin.