It is no accident that the bottom of Dante's hell is cold. The core of eternal punishment in the *Commedia* is not a furnace of fire but a lake of ice where sinners are frozen hard and fast forever.¹ This image still startles new readers of the poem--it is so far from what any of us would call the "traditional" picture of hell. Yet in another way it is deeply traditional, growing out of a complex of inter-related Augustinian language, conceptuality and metaphor that had already shaped the thinking of the West for nearly a thousand years. Within this traditional complex fire is predominantly a heavenly rather than hellish metaphor. For flame by nature rises, heading (as ancient physics would have it) toward its home among the fiery stars of heaven. Charity in Augustine is spiritual fire, an ardent desire raising the soul toward God. The movements of Dante's souls are governed by this metaphor of fiery charity. The lake of solid ice at the bottom of the universe just works out its negative implications: the descent into hell means leaving warmth and light behind. Its positive implications can be seen in the happiness of Piccarda, at peace even in the lowest sphere of heaven because all her desires come to rest in the highest Light of all, like fire finding its natural place in the stars (*Par. 3:70-87*). And the movement depicted by the metaphor can be seen in the wonderful rule of ascent on Mount Purgatory, where the climb gets easier as you go (*Purg. 4:88-94*)--for the closer you get to...
heaven the less earthly is your weight and the more like fire, ascending naturally and without effort.

Ice and fire, immobility and ascent, weight and rest, make visible the trajectories of love in Dante's world. We need sensible metaphors for this, because love is a movement not in space but in the will, a psychological rather than corporeal dimension which we can experience and understand but cannot literally imagine. For imagination requires sensible images drawn from the world of bodily things, while the soul is a dimension of its own, altogether beyond the grasp of the senses. So Dante, following Augustine, represents the one dimension by the other, using the bodily ascent of fire as a metaphor to represent the love which moves souls toward God. And he expects us to understand the underlying physics of this metaphor (which Augustine spells out in strikingly Dantecan terms, as we shall see in the second part of this essay).

There is something else Dante expects us to understand about these metaphors, which is our overarching thesis here. The truth of the poem lies in the representation of will, not of bodies. The "bodies" we see in the poem are only shades, whose very being is in fact impossible according to Dante's own Thomistic physics, as we shall see in the first half of the essay. The shades are literally fictions. And they would be something worse--something like a lie--if their author did not intend us to interpret them allegorically, in full awareness of their metaphorical meaning. Indeed all good readers of the Commedia use the key of will to unlock Dante's allegory, even if they are unaware of the key's Augustinian source. The fact is Dante cannot tell us a story about the afterlife that is literally true. This is not only because he does not know which of his contemporaries and ancestors are really in hell or purgatory or heaven. (He knows he does not know this, and expects us to know it as well, warning us explicitly that we who cannot see into God's mind must not try to judge who is in heaven or not, Par 20:133-135).
More fundamentally, he has no way of representing the experience of disembodied souls except metaphorically. According to his own view of the world, a disembodied soul has nothing to do with the senses, being invisible, inaudible and intangible, and moreover being incapable of having sense experiences of its own. So metaphor is all he's got if he is going to tell a story about souls after death.

Part I of this essay spells out why Dante cannot give us a literal representation of the experience of departed souls and Part II sketches key Augustinian elements in the metaphorical framework that makes Dante's allegorical narrative possible. We thus proceed from an intractable theological problem to an exceedingly poetic solution. The poetry leaves the theological problem unresolved, but gives us something else which is well worth the theologians' while.

Part I: The Problem of Disembodied Souls

Dante's problem is in many ways the opposite of a problem that took up a great deal of Augustine's attention. Augustine is a Christian Platonist who must take very seriously the pagan Platonist objections to the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body (City of God 13:18 and 22:11). The idea of souls going to heaven after death was quite at home in Platonist philosophy--indeed it originated there\(^3\)--but bodies are quite a different thing. To ancient philosophers heaven looked like the oddest place in the world for a human body to dwell, since they had no notion of outer space or life on other planets (modern notions which replaced the ancient belief in heaven) but rather conceived of heaven as a realm of higher and better things, imperishable beauty, perfect motion and living fire. The human body is not made of such celestial stuff but seems rather (as the first chapter of the Bible itself strongly suggests) to be
designed for life on earth, as it is made of flesh and blood, not fire, and moved by feet, not wings. So it is no surprise that pagan Platonists should insist that only disembodied souls could conceivably find themselves at home in heaven. What Dante finds problematic, on the other hand, is precisely disembodied souls, not resurrected bodies. For the story he has to tell is set in the present time, before judgment day and the resurrection of bodies from the dead. Having inherited from Augustine and the theologians who followed him a basically Christian Platonist belief that souls lived on in the interim between death and resurrection, he must make sense of people having feelings even when they have no bodies—a problem only exacerbated by the Aristotelian view of the soul he takes over from Thomas Aquinas.

To bring this problem into focus we can begin by contrasting two stories, both of which belong to the legacy Dante inherits from the Western Christian tradition through the likes of Augustine and Aquinas. One is the story told in churches every Easter, in which a group of women arrive at Jesus' tomb and discover his body is missing. They are told: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen" (Luke 24:5f). The message is not that there is life after death, but that Jesus is no longer dead. That is why his body is gone from the tomb: though he died, he is now a living human being, and living human beings have living bodies, not corpses in a grave. The whole of orthodox Christian faith depends on this message: that the same body of Christ which hung on the cross is now raised from death. This is not a story about the soul living on after death, but about death itself being undone. Plato's story about life after death is quite different. In the Phaedo he tells how one of Socrates' disciples asks Socrates, just before his execution, how he wants to be buried. The master laughs gently and warns that they will have to catch him first, which will not be so easy. Ever-so-kindly he corrects his grief-striken disciple, trying to persuade him "that I am this Socrates who is now
talking and setting forth what I say, but he believes I am that dead thing he will be seeing in a little while, and so he asks how to bury me."\(^5\) The point of course is that the body they will bury is not the real Socrates. His body will remain in the tomb forever but that does not really matter, for the real Socrates is an immortal soul, not a rotting corpse. In this Platonist story death is not undone, for it is not an evil to be overcome but an opportunity for release from the body and its needs, desires, pleasures and pains (\textit{Phaedo} 64a-65a). The Platonist looks forward to an afterlife whose centerpiece is not resurrection but liberation from the body.

In Platonist philosophy one aspires to be like Socrates; in Christian faith one hopes to be like Jesus. It is not obvious that we can be like both, for immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body are two quite different ways of telling the story of the human self. In the Platonist story our true self never really dies, whereas in the Gospel story we die but God gives life to what is dead. Yet long before Augustine, the Christian tradition undertook to make one story out of the two. This was not an inevitable undertaking, and some early Christian writers resisted it.\(^6\) But the overwhelming preponderance of the orthodox Christian tradition ended up trying to combine the Platonist story with the Biblical story, so that the afterlife takes place in two stages: first the immortal soul is released from the body in death, and then on the last day it is reunited with the body when all humanity is raised from the dead to face God's judgment.\(^7\) This combined story requires an interim between death and resurrection in which the immortal soul is rewarded or punished, even before judgment day and the raising of the body to life.

If there is such an interim, the Scriptures have little to say about it, and what little they do say is unsystematic and hardly mentions the soul. There are, to begin with, no Bible stories about departed souls going up to heaven. Elijah and Jesus, the two Biblical figures who ascend to heaven, go bodily and alive (2 Kings 2:11, Acts 1:9), and both are expected to return. There is
one Biblical picture of souls already in heaven, but they are not happy: they are complaining about the delay of judgment day (Rev. 6:9-11). Most vividly, there is Jesus' parable about Lazarus, the poor man who died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom while the rich man who ignored him died, was buried and found himself tormented in Hades (Luke 16:19-31). Locations in this story do not seem to be what we would expect. Here as in many other passages the New Testament uses the word "Hades," the classical Greek term for the underworld, rather than "Gehenna" (another New Testament term for hell derived from the Hebrew word for the valley in which unclean things were burned outside Jerusalem). In this story at least, the place of reward seems to lie in the underworld not far from the place of torment, as the rich man is close enough to call out to Abraham and be heard. One understands why Augustine, expressing confidence that his dead friend Nebridius is now safe in Abraham's bosom, adds, "whatever that is, which is signified by this bosom." In fact Thomas Aquinas locates "Abraham's bosom" in hell, because that is where Christ descended after his death to free the souls of the Old Testament faithful. Dante follows suit and puts Abraham, before the death of Christ, in the same place beneath the earth as unbaptized infants and virtuous pagans (Inf. 4:58). But this means that "Abraham's bosom," as a distinct state of the afterlife, no longer exists after Christ came to free the Old Testament faithful from hell. On this Dantean-Thomistic account, wherever Nebridius was, it was not Abraham's bosom! That gives us some idea how hard it is to keep these stories straight.

Whatever we make of "Abraham's bosom" (and we always have the option of not taking the parable so literally) it is typical of the New Testament that the word "soul" (psyche) does not occur in the story. It is absent as well from the most extensive and elusive Biblical passage bearing on this issue, in which Paul speaks of being absent from the body yet present with the
Lord, but develops this thought by referring not to an immortal soul divested of its body but to an everlasting house from heaven (could he mean the resurrected body?) that will swallow up the mortality of the flesh and clothe it with life. With so little Biblical evidence to go on, Christian theologians and poets who believe in immortal souls have a great deal of room to invent more elaborate and systematic stories about what happens to them in the interim between death and resurrection. Amongst the variety of possible stories, one of the questions that took longest to decide, interestingly, is whether human beings could experience ultimate happiness or beatitude without their bodies. Augustine, for instance, is convinced that there is reward and punishment even before the resurrection, but is not always sure that the reward is the same as the ultimate happiness of heaven. He hesitates on this score because he does not want to make the resurrection of the dead look unnecessary. "What need is there for spirits of the dead to receive their bodies in the resurrection," he asks, "if even without bodies they can be afforded that supreme happiness?" Eventually Christian stories of life after death came universally to include the Platonist conviction that death means the release of the soul from the body (like Augustine's mother, "that devout and pious soul…released from the body," Confessions 9:11.28) together with the doctrine that such souls could go immediately to hell or heaven, where ultimate punishment and beatitude were dealt out to them even before the resurrection. On this latter point, which Augustine himself was so unsure of, the church did not officially make up its mind until after Dante's death. Aquinas, writing in the previous century, still must deal with alternative opinions on this point, though he has no hesitation in setting forth the now-official doctrine as the correct one (ST I 64.4 reply3 and Supp. 69.2).

The philosophical problems about the interim state stem from the fact that orthodox Christians may accept the immortality of the soul but cannot accept Socrates' suggestion that the
body is not really essential to who we are. On this reckoning, the state of the soul between death and resurrection cannot be anything natural to us, but an anomaly not easily compared to any other kind of being in heaven or earth. The "separated soul," as Aquinas calls it, is neither angel nor ghost. Ever since the church's rejection of the speculations of Origen, orthodox Christianity was clear on the point that human souls are (as Aquinas puts it) "not of the same nature as the angels" because "it is natural to the soul to be united to the body" (ST I 118.3). Although we shall become equal to the angels, according to Jesus' teaching, this does not abolish the distinction between human nature and angelic nature, which "will always remain" (ST I 108.8).

Nor can a heavenly soul be thought of as a ghost. Plato's suggestion on this score is revealing. Perhaps souls do haunt graveyards, he suggests, looking like the bodies they once inhabited, but that is only because they are morally compromised and impure, still attached to bodily things and affected by them (Phaedo 81b-d). A pure soul will not appear like that. Christian story-telling likewise has a place for ghostly visitations from the unhappy denizens of Purgatory or Hell (like the ghost of Hamlet's father or of Scrooge's business partner Marley) but heavenly souls visit us in dreams and visions, not in the forlorn state of a ghost. Augustine in fact argues that, apart from a special miracle, it is not in the nature of departed souls to appear to the living at all, except when we dream of them in the likeness of their bodies, the same way we dream of living persons without their being actually present. On the rare occasions when the dead do appear in person, it is a special miracle contrary to the order of nature.

The problem is compounded by Thomas Aquinas' Aristotelian physics, according to which the soul is the form of the body. Every form has its matter, the material which is suitable for it. For example, a saw is a form or species of thing that can be made out of iron or steel or other metals, but not out of other materials such as air or water (ST I 76.5 reply 1). Likewise, the
human soul is a form that requires the right kind of matter, and only flesh and bone will do (ST I 75.4). Separated from its appropriate matter in death, it loses most of its natural powers, especially those that require sense organs. It cannot even move bodies from one place to another, as the angels can. There is no room in Aquinas' view of the world for disembodied souls carrying boulders on their backs, like the souls of the proud on the lowest terrace of purgatory. This is one reason why Dante prefaces his depiction of this purgation by reminding the reader (yet again) not to stop at the literal meaning of the poem: "pay no attention to the form of the punishment; think of what comes after" (Purg. 10:109f). We are to see in this punishment not unbearable physical pain but the laborious liberation of the will, like looking at an ugly worm but seeing in our mind's eye the angelic butterfly it will become when transformed, free to fly to divine justice with nothing to fear or be ashamed of (Purg. 10:124-126).

It is something of a confidence trick, therefore, when Dante the poet has Statius in Purgatory explain the physical nature of the "shades," beginning with a learned Thomistic-Aristotelian disquisition on how the rational soul comes to be embodied in the womb and culminating in the utterly unAristotelian fancy that after death the "informing power" of separated souls can give shape and color to the surrounding air so as to make it look and move like their bodies (Purg. 25:88-99). Air can no more be formed by a human soul than water can be formed into a saw: it's just the wrong kind of matter for the purpose. So at the literal level, Statius' explanation of the nature of the shades is spurious. But Dante the poet gives us a clear hint of its allegorical meaning when he brings Statius to the actual point of the explanation. Dante the pilgrim had wondered how mere shades could look famished, like the emaciated souls of the gluttonous he had seen on the previous terrace of Purgatory (Purg. 25:19-21). Surely shades don't need to eat! Statius's answer is that "the shade is shaped according as desires and
other emotions stamp us" (Purg. 25:106f). The reader is left to work out the implication: these dead gluttons cannot eat anything, yet they desire to eat and their aerial "bodies" make visible the ravenous appetite of their souls. This confirms the strategy of interpretation that every alert reader of the poem has already been using: to understand Dante's shades as visible images of desire, emotion, choice and love, the acts of a soul's will as it is turned toward or away from God. Statius' long explanation serves to build this interpretive insight into the fictitious physics of Dante's world.

The poet needs a fictitious physics because the Aristotelian physics he actually believes in will not serve the purposes of his story, which requires souls not only to be visible but also to have sensible experiences such as pain. Early in the Purgatorio Virgil assures the Pilgrim that although the shades are too insubstantial to cast a shadow they do have feelings. The power of God "disposes suchlike bodies to suffer torment, heat and cold" (Purg. 3:31f). But Virgil only tells us that this is so, not how. For "how this happens, He does not want revealed to us…Rest content, human race, with the that" (Purg. 3:33-37). At this point Virgil launches into a long warning about the limits of human reason and all the things that philosophers like Plato and Aristotle will never know. If there is one thing philosophy cannot tell us, the poet seems to be suggesting, it is how disembodied souls can feel pain.

He has perhaps read his Aquinas on this point. For the great medieval philosopher did try to answer the question of how disembodied souls can suffer from corporeal hellfire, and his account is not very convincing.23 Separated from the body and its sense-organs, the soul's sensory powers are not simply inactive (or "mute" as Dante puts it in Purg. 25:82) but non-existent: there simply is no capacity for sensation in the separated soul.24 So according to Thomas a soul without its body cannot have sensible experiences: it does not see or hear
anything, nor have any physical pleasure or pain. This means there is a serious problem about how hellfire can hurt anyone prior to the resurrection of the dead. A bodily thing such as fire "cannot naturally act on a spirit, nor in any way be hurtful or distressful to it, except in so far as the latter is in some way united to a body" (ST Supp. 70.3). Thomas's solution is to argue that there is more than one way for a soul or spirit to be united to a body. In addition to embodiment, in which a soul is the form of a living body, spirits (such as angels) can move bodies or simply be located in some particular bodily place. Normally, disembodied spirits are present in whatever place they want to be (ST I 52.2), but Thomas suggests that by a special arrangement of divine justice the spirits in hell (both separated souls and demons) are restricted to a place of fire, imprisoned or confined within the flames. On the face of it, this seems a rather tepid account of the torments of hell: souls are bound in hellfire that cannot cause them physical pain but merely curtails their freedom of movement. Could this really be all? Thomas suggests that fire is not all there is to hell: snow and cold also contribute to the torment, because "just as every creature will be to the blessed a matter of joy, so will all the elements conduce to the torture of the damned" (ST Supp. 97.1). Yet the only harm any of these bodily elements can do to disembodied spirits is to keep them in one place.

But in view of Dante's poetry it is perhaps enough. Quite apart from the physical pain of it (which Dante does not mention) the sinners frozen solid at the very bottom of hell are a terrifying symbol of the deepest meaning of all sin: to be stuck, immobilized, hopelessly attached to sensible things rather than free to turn to God, the Good of the intellect which all in hell have lost (Inf. 3:18). This means that the real punishment of hell is torture for the will rather than pain for the senses. As Aquinas puts it, "a place is not punishment for an angel or soul as affecting its nature to change it, but as affecting its will to sadden it, when the angel or soul grasps that it is in
a place not suitable to its will" (ST I 64.4 reply 1). The crucial thing about the punishments of Dante's hell is not how much they hurt but how hateful they are, how awful it is to be stuck with these same sensible things forever: the sullen mud of the wrathful, the filthy rain of the gluttonous, even the buffeting wind of the lustful, which is just another way of being stuck, helpless, unable to move by one's own power, confined to an endless, aimless, involuntary movement. Other forms of punishment, which are visited directly on the "bodies" of the shades, still represent the will as unable to escape, regroup or redirect itself, as in the loathsome diseases of the falsifiers (Inf. 29), the dismemberment of the schismatics (Inf. 28) and the hideous metamorphoses of the thieves (Inf. 24 and 25).

To think of divine punishment this way is ultimately to shift emphasis from popular notions of hell (literal fire and brimstone and devils with pitchforks--all images that the poet of course is willing to use) to a specifically Augustinian ethics of the will, where the soul's final state is defined by how it loves rather than what it feels. For Augustine love is both a motive force and a cause of union: to love something is to desire to be one with it, and the desire itself moves the soul toward union with what it loves. All the souls in hell are, in one way or another, eternally one with whatever it is they loved more than God. This state is what Thomas calls the "punishment of sense" in hell, in contrast to the "punishment of loss." The one is a confinement to the sensible things the soul loved, the other is the loss of God, whom the soul did not love yet who alone is its true happiness. To be united with God forever is eternal bliss; to be united to anything else forever, irrevocably and exclusively, is eternal punishment. The punishment of loss thus corresponds to what we turn away from in our sin, the punishment of sense to what we turn toward. This language of turning toward and away, conversion and aversion (conversio and aversio in Latin) is one of those Augustinian metaphors deep-rooted in
the Western tradition that has given centuries of Christian poets, preachers and theologians a sensible language for the movement of the will. For the will to turn to something is literally to love it, but figuratively to move in its direction. Turning is spiritual nearness, as Thomas says (ST I 106.1). So the punishment of sense in hell means to be forever in the neighborhood of ice, mud, filth or fire, while the punishment of loss means to be forever far from God. (The souls in limbo are unique in suffering no punishment of sense but only punishment of loss, the "untormented grief" of those who "without hope live on in desire."\(^{28}\)

Aquinas applies the same pair of terms to purgatory, where the punishment of loss is the delay in seeing God and the punishment of sense is "the punishment by bodily fire" (ST App. 1, 2.1), which we can now gloss as meaning anything to which the sinners in purgatory are stuck--boulders (the proud), earth (the avaricious), unattainable fruit (the gluttonous) or fire (the lustful) until the law of the mountain releases them for ascent. Purgatory cleanses the "stain of sin" which is contracted by the soul precisely when it attaches itself too firmly to earthly things (ST I-II 87.6). The rationale of punishment here is based on a fundamental point of the Augustinian moralism which Aquinas and Dante both inherit: sin is evil in the will, which means the will's turning to seek ultimate happiness in temporal goods (which are truly good things but cannot make us eternally happy) and thus turning away from the one eternal Good, our true happiness or beatitude, which is God.\(^{29}\) The stain of sin is contracted by a kind of spiritual attachment, in which love--acting as a unifying force like glue--causes the image and desire of these lower goods to stick to the soul, besmirching it like a mirror that ought to receive and reflect the divine light but is darkened by the earthy materials stuck to it (ST I-II 86.1). Purgatorial pain gets the soul unstuck from these lower goods, tearing the will away from them and turning it back to God; it is the agonizing work of cleaning off the mirror (ST I-II 86.2; cf.
App.1, 2.6). Of course in the poetic logic of the *Purgatorio*, this can be accomplished by having souls be stuck against their will to material elements representing what they once loved too much but now spurn, as the avaricious are turned face down to the earth (*Purg.* 19:188-120).

Finally, there is one more problem about the "separated soul" in Thomistic philosophy, which affects heaven itself. You might think that the pure, disembodied soul would take to heaven like a duck to water, and that is certainly the impression one gets from the Platonist story in the *Phaedo*. But for an Aristotelian things are not so simple. If embodiment is natural to human souls, Thomas argues, then even their highest spiritual function cannot be performed in the absence of the lower powers rooted in the body, such as sense and imagination. In the distinctively Aristotelian theory the human intellect, which is the power of understanding ("understanding" and "intellect" being the same word in most European languages, *intellectus* in Latin, *intelletto* in Italian, *nous* in Greek) cannot function naturally without "turning to phantasms of bodies," mental pictures which the imagination derives ultimately from sensible things.  

Augustine, as a Platonist, regards turning to phantasms as a carnal bad habit, but for an Aristotelian this is simply how the human intellect naturally works. So there is a problem about how the separated soul, which has neither sense organs nor power of imagination, can exercise its highest function, which is understanding. The solution is for the soul to function for the time being just like an angel, turning directly to intelligible things (i.e. things understood by the intellect without the senses) rather than to mental images of bodies. Dante depicts this turning when he has souls in heaven speak of seeing things (especially Dante's thoughts) by looking in the mind of God.

This is actually a higher form of understanding than living human beings ordinarily possess, and the real problem it poses is why the resurrection of the body would be anything but
a distraction and a comedown for souls in heaven. Of course the soul without the body is incomplete and to that extent imperfect, but Thomas believes its intelligence is clearer, since it is freed from "the weight and care of the body" (ST I 89.2 reply 1). Here Thomas speaks like a Platonist. Similarly, he argues that the punishment in purgatory will be more severe than any on earth, precisely because the will of separate souls is utterly whole, undistracted by things of the body. The punishment of loss in purgatory, for instance, is unparalleled in earthly experience in that "after this life holy souls desire the supreme Good with the most intense longing, because their longing is not held back by the weight of the body and because, had there been no obstacle they would already have gained the goal of enjoying the supreme Good--so it follows that they grieve exceedingly for their delay" (ST App.1, 2.1). In this intensity and undivided simplicity of will the separated soul once again resembles an angel, who is not a compound of higher and lower natures, "so that the inclination of the one nature impedes or retards the impetus of the other, as happens in a human being, in which the movement of the intellectual part is slowed or impeded by the inclination of the sensual part; for when there is nothing to slow or impede it, a nature moves with its whole power" (ST I 62.6).

In this regard Dante may be the better philosopher, as he insists that not only is the soul reunited with its body more perfect, but "the more perfect a thing is, the more it feels the good and pain as well" (Inf. 6:107f). After the resurrection all experiences are more intense, both the joy of heaven and the pain of hell. Virgil gives this explanation early in the journey through hell, but the lesson is repeated in heaven, where Solomon himself explains that "when the flesh is put on again, glorious and holy, our person is more graced for being whole" (Par. 14:43-45). The resulting grace will increase the souls' vision of God, which in turn increases their ardor and brightness. Their bodies, clothed in a heavenly radiance, will nonetheless outshine it like an
incandescent coal glowing brighter than the surrounding flame (Par. 14:52-57). The resurrected flesh will be more glorious than the glory of shades in heaven.

Part II: **Fire and Light**

Dante never solves the philosophical problems about the experience of disembodied souls, even though he sometimes pretends to. His real business is to tell a story, and the nature of disembodied souls in the *Commedia* is first of all a story-telling problem. How can a pilgrim visiting the realm on the other side of death have any kind of conversation with the departed, and what does he have to learn from them? The poet's solution to this problem resolves no philosophical difficulties, but does present all sorts of lessons for those who wish to learn the meaning of Christian life and how the soul draws near to God. For this purpose--the purpose of Dante's story-telling--a superb set of metaphors is sufficient. The metaphors are not haphazard but systematically related (as we are about to see in the case of fire, light and wings) providing the framework for an allegorical narrative in which what souls do is represented by how bodies move. In fact this is the foundational metaphor without which Dante's narrative is impossible: the notion that the action of the will is a kind of movement of the soul, analogous to but different from the movement of bodies. The metaphor is Augustinian. "Anyone who is aware of a will in himself is aware of the soul moving itself," says Augustine, adding the qualification: "But this movement is not from place to place like a body, for to move in place belongs only to bodies." The soul moves itself "by will, that is, by a movement that is not in place." Hence phenomena of movement in space can be exploited in any number of ways to describe changes of the will, which are the movements of the soul.
The most fundamental law of movement in ancient physics has to do with the way each physical thing heads home to be in its element. Dante is fully aware of this physics and tells us quite explicitly to take it as an analogy for movements of the soul. In the course of a series of discourses on free will and love that are literally at the center of the poem (cantos 50-52 out of 100) the poet has Virgil explain: "as fire moves upward by its own essence, born to rise where it remains more in its own element, so the soul, caught, enters into desire, which is spiritual motion, and never comes to rest until the thing loved makes it rejoice." This sets forth the metaphorical backbone of Dante's narrative, the structural framework for the movement of its souls. It is a metaphor that comes to him ultimately from Augustine, who perhaps gets it from the writings of Cicero--where it is not a metaphor at all.

Cicero said the soul is made of fire, and he meant it quite literally. He was presenting the view of the Stoic philosophers, who were materialists: for them both God and the soul are material things, made of a living, divine fire. (As far as the soul goes, at least, their view was not so far-fetched: after all, our metabolism is founded on chemical processes of oxygenation--we burn our food to make energy, and the difference between a living body and a corpse is that the latter has stopped burning). So Cicero defines the soul as a fiery breath--which explains not only why it can survive the death of the body but also why it naturally ascends to heaven. For in ancient physics a thing's weight can pull it upward. To explain the point in Aristotelian terms (which Cicero, ever the eclectic, was also willing to use), everything moves until it finds its natural place of rest. So fire finds rest only in heaven, because there it is in its element, rejoining the fire of which the stars are made. In just the same way a stone falling downhill comes to rest in its own element, earth. This homecoming is of the very essence of natural movement, which can be diverted from its goal only by an act of violence contrary to a thing's nature--and that only
temporarily, as we see when we throw a stone toward heaven and watch it fall back to earth. All four elements, earth, water, air and fire, keep heading home where they belong, being ordered by weight, as we can see by picturing a lake--any lake--and noticing the spatial order of the elements: at the bottom of the water is always earth and above it always air. That order is the very nature of things. And equally in the nature of things, according to ancient physics, is that above the air--beyond the atmosphere surrounding the earth with its changeable weather--there is only the perfect fire of heaven.

Augustine turns Cicero's materialist account of the soul into metaphor. "My love is my weight," he famously says (Confessions 13:9.10), meaning not only that the desire for earthly things can weigh us down like the heaviest of the elements, but that there is also a desire that lifts us up like the lightest. The weight of charity, the love of God, pulls us upward with a motive force like fire seeking its place of rest in the heavens. Thus it is that Augustine invents the fundamental metaphoric language of Dante's heaven, by describing the Holy Spirit as God's Gift kindling in our wills the fire of heavenly love: "My love is my weight, by it I am carried wherever I am carried. By Thy Gift we are inflamed and carried upward; we burn and go…By Thy fire, Thy good fire, we burn and go, for we go up to the peace of Jerusalem" (ibid.) As flame does not rest until it reaches heaven, the will afire with charity keeps the restless soul in movement until it finds rest in the heavenly Jerusalem with God: "In Thy Gift we find rest; there we enjoy Thee. Our rest is our place. Love carries us up there and Thy good Spirit lifts up our lowliness from the gates of death. In Thy good will is our peace."37

With that last word we find ourselves in Dante's heaven, where the first soul he meets explains the place to him in precisely these Augustinian terms. To be in heaven, Piccarda tells the Pilgrim, is for the human will to rest in the will of God, so that "the form of this blessed
existence is to be held in the divine will" (Par. 3:79f). "Form" here has the Aristotelian meaning of "essence": Piccarda is giving us a definition of the very essence of heaven. From this definition follows what is probably the most famous line of the poem, which sounds like it could have come straight from the Augustinian passage just quoted: "and in His will is our peace" (Par. 3:85). To express this astonishing ontology of heaven, this being in God's will as in one's element ("the great sea to which all things move," Par. 3:86) the poet starts to re-make human language by creating unheard-of "in" verbs, such as when he has Piccarda explain that all heavenly souls are in peace and unity with one another because God "in-wills us to His will."\textsuperscript{38} Later in Paradiso, souls are said to in-him themselves (9:73), in-you and in-me themselves (9:81), in-it themselves (22:127), in-lilify (18:113) and in-gem themselves (18:117), in-womb (21:84) and in-truth themselves (28:39). It is as if to say: we must understand the dimension in which these souls live and move and have their being in a new way, not like bodily places but like resting in enjoyment of another's love. And because they rest together in God they rest also in each other.

This coming of souls to rest in God and in each other must not be confused with the immobility of souls in hell. That in effect is the confusion the Pilgrim makes when he wonders whether Piccarda wants a higher place than the one she has (Par. 3:65f). As if there were punishment in heaven! He has it all wrong: here, no place is a prison, and there is indeed no place for the soul outside of God himself. Therefore the only place where the blessed can literally be located is above space altogether--in the empyrean, the heaven of fire where God is.\textsuperscript{39} This highest heaven is "not in space" (Par. 22:67), for it is above the outermost revolving sphere of the universe, which has "no other where than the divine Mind" (Par. 27:109f). There in the place beyond all places there is no need of movement through space, and thus we leave behind
even the imagery of dancing souls that was so frequently found in the lower reaches of heaven.

At the very top of the universe we see the whole company of souls seated together, each one in its own place (Par. 32). This is the end of the soul's movement, in the sense of a journey coming to its end when you finally arrive home after long exile. Movement ends here not in imprisonment but in the goal toward which all movement aims. Hell is hell precisely because all movement in this direction comes to an end in a quite different sense, by the soul turning its own will forever in the wrong direction.

So the Augustinian metaphor of fire gives Dante a way to portray both movement and rest for the soul, as well as the immobility of the soul in hell. Abandoning the Thomistic notion of confinement in fire as well as the traditional picture of hell as a place of fire beneath the earth (an unnaturally low place for fire to remain, as Thomas recognizes, ST Supp. 97.7) Dante follows out the implications of the Augustinian metaphor by picturing hell at its core as bereft of any trace of fire, lacking all warmth like a face numbed and made unfeeling by the cold (Inf. 33:100-102). If the poet must confine disembodied souls in some bodily element or other, then the water of life, frozen hard as stone, is a better choice than fire because it is more deeply consistent with the underlying physics of the Augustinian metaphor. Fire always wants to ascend, which is precisely the direction in which the will of infernal souls never turns. Here everything is earthbound, crushingly heavy. It is a brilliant innovation when Dante insists that hell is not only beneath the earth but at very its center, the point where all the heaviness of the universe converges (Inf. 32:73f).

The metaphorical implications of the physics of fire also explains some of the peculiarities of movement in the Commedia. Not only is the climb up Mount Purgatory easier than going on the level ground below because the higher up you get the lighter you are (Purg.
12:115-126), but the ascent in heaven itself is absolutely effortless. The pure soul rises, we are
told in both places, as easily as water running downhill (Purg. 4:91-3, Par. 1:136-138). It is as if
the power of heavenly ascent had become second nature. More precisely, this power is super-
natural, in the strict Thomist sense of a God-given ability beyond the natural power of the soul--
as incandescence is not natural to iron but becomes intrinsic to it when the iron is heated enough
in fire. Grace is thus "superadded," as Thomas will say, to the natural power of the soul so as to
make it easy and delightful to love God. It is this delightful ease of attraction to God that is
figured in the effortless ascent to heaven. Once again, the real point of the story lies in the
movment of souls in the dimension of will and love. Whether his body also literally goes up to
heaven, Dante does not say, because--like Paul in his experience of rapture--he does not know.

Dante spends some time in the early cantos of the Paradiso getting us used to the kind of
movement that is second nature to the supernaturally graced soul—how similar it is, for instance,
to sunlight reflected back up to heaven "just like a pilgrim wanting to return" (Par. 1:51). From
the perspective of the blessed in heaven it is the downward motion of souls on earth that looks
odd and unnatural, like fire resting quietly on earth as if it were a stone (Par. 1:141) or more
ominously, like fire falling to earth in a bolt of lightning (Par. 1:92f, 133f). This is an image of
what Aristotle would call "violent" motion--a thing moving contrary to its nature like a stone
hurled upward. It is in this context that Dante turns to a discussion of wills coerced by violence
in Paradiso 4. A will firmly fixed on its true goal will inevitably return to it as soon as it has
opportunity; for violent motion, unlike natural motion, lasts only so long as outside force is
applied. Just try keeping a stone up in the air--or, to imagine the opposite direction of
movement, try holding a bottle full of air under water: as soon as you let go it pops back up.
Such is the heavenward movement of all pure wills, and such would have been the movement of
Piccarda's coerced will if it were pure: "for the will, if it does not will, is not extinguished but acts as nature acts in fire, though violence twist it a thousand times" (Par. 4:76-78).

The full power of the metaphor of fire does not come into view, however, until we see its connection with the metaphor of light. The two metaphors might seem like obvious partners, but they apparently had largely separate careers prior to Dante. The metaphor of fire goes back through Augustine to Cicero, whereas the metaphor of light goes back through Augustine to Plato. It concerns specifically the intellect rather than the will--the eyes by which the intellect sees rather than the love with which the will burns. In his "allegory of the cave," Plato made vision the West's fundamental metaphor for understanding, associated growing light with the ascent of the soul out of the dark cave of ignorance, taught Christians to think of holiness as an increasing purity and strength of vision, and pictured our seeing the Good of the intellect as if we were looking straight at the sun, the source of all illumination and being.42

Augustine talks all the time about seeing God with the eye of the mind, and he explicitly links this talk with the Platonist tradition.43 Of course one does not have to be a Platonist to talk as if the mind sees things. But there are some distinctive things Platonists do with the metaphor of intellectual vision, particularly when they talk about the divine light shining so brightly that it dazzles the mind and forces it to look away, so that we first must practice our vision on things less bright than the intelligible Sun. This distinctively Platonist imagery is central for Augustine, who from the very beginning of his career as a Christian writer aimed to see God "the way the sun is shown to the eyes" (Soliloquies 1:6.10), and who realized that this required a program of training and strengthening the eye of the mind, very much as Plato said in the allegory of the cave.44 And one hardly needs to mention how pervasive and structurally important this imagery is for Dante: how the Pilgrim rises from earth to heaven precisely by following Beatrice in
looking straight at the sun (Par. 1:46-63), how Christ himself is seen in heaven as the light of a dazzling sun (Par. 23:28-33), how the angels of Purgatory shine with an intensity that literally dazzles the eye (Purg. 2:36-40, 8:35f, 9:79-81, 15:10-12, 17:52-54, 24:142-144, 27:59f), how Beatrice's smile is so bright with beauty it is dangerous (Purg. 31:1-15, Par. 21:1-12), how the Pilgrim is repeatedly dazzled in heaven itself (Par. 5:3, 7:58, 14:78, 25:118-139, 28:16-18, 29:9, 30:46-51), how the ascent into the higher reaches of heaven requires a repeated strengthening of his eyes so he can gaze at glories that would earlier have blinded him (Par. 22:124-126, 23:46-48, 26:70-79, 30:55-60,73-87). And then at the end a striking reversal: Dante's conviction that he would have been dazzled if he turned away from the highest vision of all (Par. 33:76-78).

In connecting the two metaphors of fire and light Dante creates a powerful way of relating will and intellect. It is as if the light of the intellect kindles fire in the will. As several passages in the Paradiso explain, the souls of the blessed first see then love, and the more fully they see God the more ardently they glow with love (Par. 5:1-9, 26:28-36, 28:110f, 29:139-141). The connection between seeing and desiring is essential not only in heaven but in all human life from birth (Purg.17:128f; cf. 18:22-25). So when heaven adds grace to nature, the result is a causal sequence that begins with divine grace and ends with human joy: the more the light of grace is given to a soul, the fuller its vision, which kindles greater love and results in the soul's shining more brightly in greater joy (14:40-42, 21:88-90, 29:139-141).

The connection between light and love also explains why, no matter how far up souls are in Purgatory, they cannot climb except in the daylight. Our ascent is impossible without the prior descent of light from above. Figuratively, then, the light of heavenly fire does descend, but this is not nature but grace. We see this at the very beginning of Dante's journey, when he is still on earth with the rest of us mortals. It is sunset; the natural light of day departs and all living
things on the face of the earth are freed from their labors except Dante, "and I alone was preparing for war, to bear both the road and the pity of it" (Inf. 2:1-5). It is a labor, a warfare, and a road for which he is not ready until he hears of grace descending from the very height of heaven, from Mary to Lucia to Beatrice and then to hell itself, where Beatrice goes to commission Virgil as Dante's rescuer and guide (Inf. 2:94-114). The effect of this news is depicted in one of the loveliest similes in the poem: to prepare for this kind of warfare Dante does not close himself up in some kind of protective armor but is opened to the light above, like a little flower warmed by the sun after a frosty night (Inf. 2:127-129). Thus a supernatural light replaces the natural light of the visible heavens that he will not see in the "starless air" of hell (Inf. 3:23), instilling "ardor in the heart" (Inf. 2:131) without which the journey is unthinkable.

At the other end of that harsh road, the beginning of the Purgatorio is filled with a gentle light, a "sweet color of Eastern sapphire" that refreshes the eyes and makes seeing once again a delight (Purg. 1:13-16). The sky in the East is made to laugh by the light of Venus, "the beautiful planet that strengthens love" (Purg. 1:19f). It is almost sunrise, and a quiet, joyous expectancy hangs in the air as the light grows, associated now with Mars, the planet of warfare (Purg. 2:14). In one of the most exciting moments in the Commedia, the literal sun dawns unnoticed (Purg. 2:35-37) while the Pilgrim's eyes are attracted instead to the dawning light of an angelic boatman who brings a cargo of souls to shore effortlessly, for "he scorns human contrivances and wants no oar or sail other than his wings" (Purg. 2:31f). What dawns here is the power of a kind of motion that was absent from hell but belongs naturally to the blessed angels, and that human souls must acquire laboriously as they climb Purgatory and grow wings of their own--the "wings of strong desire" (Purg. 4:28f; cf. 11:38f). And so a specifically Platonist image for the elevating power of love, intimately associated with Plato's original story
about souls going to heaven (*Phaedrus* 249a), joins the Ciceronian image of the weight of fire. The soul rises because as it learns to love higher things it grows wings. A hideous parody of the same image is fresh in our minds from the last canto of the *Inferno*, where Satan's featherless wings (once as beautiful as the wings we keep seeing in Purgatory) are constantly at work but move him nowhere, only chilling the lakes of hell to keep him and the traitors surrounding him stuck fast forever, as far away from the light of heaven as one can possibly be.45

**Conclusion**

Dante is not teaching us how to picture the afterlife. That would be reading him too literally. The very intensity with which the *Commedia* insists on its own truth underscores this point. When in heaven Dante's forefather Cacciaguida tells him to keep all lies out of his poem (*Par.* 17:127) we surely should not forget that this episode is literally false: Dante never spoke to Cacciaguida and in fact has no idea whether he is really in heaven. If we read the poem literally, the injunction to tell no lies is itself a lie. The truth the poet insists on is found elsewhere, in the various figurative levels of meaning to which he keeps drawing our attention: he is very serious indeed in his claims to be telling us the truth about the movement of our souls.

The most stunning instance of this is in the portrayal of Geryon, the monster of fraud who carries the Pilgrim down to the eighth circle of hell where all the liars are. It is hard to believe in such a creature, and the poet finds himself wishing he could shut his mouth rather than speak "that truth which has the face of a lie" (*Inf.* 16:124). Such is the truth of Dante's poetry, literally false on the face of it but hiding its truth within. It is a truth the reader must find by looking beneath the surface, like Virgil who "does not look merely at the work but sees with judgment the thought on the inside" (*Inf.* 16:119f). This is just the opposite of fraud, which hides
falsehood beneath the appearance of truth. That is the poetic point of the figure of Geryon: "His face was the face of a just man, so much benignity he had on the outside of his skin, and the rest of his trunk all of a serpent" (Inf. 17:10-12). So when Dante swears to the reader "by the notes of this Comedy" that he really did see such a monster (Inf. 16:127-130) we must understand: he is not defrauding us with the false appearance of truth but giving us a truth hidden within what is obviously false. We won't find the truth of the poem by taking it literally. But with that fair warning, the poet swears by the lasting greatness of his poetry that it is true.

For Dante, then, the real achievement of the poem is to tell us the truth. It does this not by showing how the afterlife will literally look and feel, but by representing in the language of metaphor and allegory what the movements of our soul are like already in this present time: what it is like to be stuck in sin, to rise to God, and to find our peace in Him. Its great success can be seen in contrast to the kind of degenerate Christian moralism that is utterly without poetry, where heaven means a reward paid to whomever most rigidly follows the rules, and hell is what you get for stepping out of line. Dante makes palpable the deeper moralism of the Augustinian tradition, according to which hell is getting stuck forever with what you wanted (when what you wanted was something other than God) and heaven means resting in God's everlasting love, and we get there by the hard work of loving. It is not like being a good little girl or boy so you can get a great big cookie when you die, but rather learning how to be drawn, ever more powerfully, by love for the only thing that is beautiful enough to make the whole universe happy forever. The only reward for this kind of love is to get what you love.

Phillip Cary

Eastern University

2 Cf. also Par. 13:130-142, a warning put in the mouth of Thomas Aquinas himself, commenting on his earlier remark on Solomon: "everyone below is eager for news of him" (Par. 10:111). Since this earlier passage actually points out Solomon's place in heaven, you might think the poet is giving us the news which so many people on earth below are eager to hear. But Aquinas' commentary warns us against drawing this conclusion: Dante the pilgrim may see Solomon in heaven, but Dante the poet knows no more about his salvation than the rest of us.

3 See especially Plato, Phaedrus 248e-249a.

4 The difference between these two stories was highlighted by Oscar Cullmann in a 1955 lecture that played a major role in subsequent theological discussion, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" available in Krister Stendahl, ed. Immortality and Resurrection (New York: Macmillan, 1965).


6 See Tatian, Address to the Greeks, chapter 13, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, reprint 1989), which was written sometime in the mid-second century, as well as the lengthy argument against the immortality of the soul in Arnobius, Against the Pagans 2:13-51, in Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 7 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1949), which was probably written not long after 300.

7 For "the last day" as Judgment Day, when all the dead shall be raised, see John 6:39, 11:24 and 12:48.


10 Cf. ST Supp. 69.6, which distinguishes the "limbo of children," where unbaptized infants remain, from the "limbo of the Fathers," where Abraham rested until Christ came (the one is properly hell, as it involves eternal punishment, while the other is not) yet locates them both in the same place.

11 2 Cor. 5:1-10, echoed briefly in Phil. 1:23ff. I take "mortality" in 2 Cor. 5:4 to be equivalent to "our mortal flesh" in 4:11, which is in turn equivalent to "body" throughout chapters 4 and 5--also described as "jars of clay" in 4:7, "the outer man" in 4:16, and (translating quite literally) "our earthly house of tent" in 5:1. To this rich array of terms for the body, Paul contrasts not the soul, but simply "I" or "we"--i.e., whoever will be raised with Jesus (4:14).

12 "In the time intervening between a man's death and the final resurrection, souls are contained in secret receptacles, according as each one is worthy of either rest or distress," Augustine, Enchiridion 109 (Latin text in the Bibliothèque Augustinienne series, Œuvres de Saint Augustin, vol. 9 [Paris: Desclée De Brouwer et Cie, 1947]). Evidently Augustine is thinking here that Abraham's bosom is not quite the same place as heaven. This passage of Augustine poses a problem for Aquinas, who argues for the later view that holy souls go straight to heavenly bliss even before the resurrection, ST Supp. 69.2.

13 Sometimes he does seem to be sure of it, as in Letter 164:8.


15 See the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Washington: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1994) paragraph 1023, quoting from an Apostolic Constitution of Pope Benedict XII in 1336, which finally settles the issue that his immediate predecessor had left open.

16 Origen had suggested that human souls and angels, being both rational creatures, are the same sort of being--originally created bodiless in heaven--but that we humans were separated from the others when we sinned and "fell" into embodiment, On First Principles, 1:5-6, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, reprint 1982). Redemption, in this theological scheme, must mean ultimate freedom from bodies, as in Plato, Phaedo 114c.

17 Cf. also ST I 75.7, where Aquinas addresses the question "Whether the soul and an angel are of the same species?" and answers firmly in the negative.

18 Luke 20:35ff. Note in this passage that it is not disembodied souls but the "children of the resurrection" who become "equal to angels."


20 Ibid. 18-21. Aquinas, commenting on this Augustinian text, agrees that any appearance of the dead to the living is outside the order of nature, ST Supp. 69.3.

21 ST. I 117.4 (separated souls cannot move bodies); cf. 110.3 (angels can move bodies).

22 Purg. 25:36-75. Cf. ST I 118.1 reply 4.

23 ST, Supp. 70.3. The hellfire Thomas has in mind is found in the New Testament, specifically Matthew 25:41. Thomas is no naïve literalist, and gives reasons why he finds it preferable to interpret hellfire as a bodily reality rather than a metaphor (Supp. 97:5-6), in which he follows Augustine, City of God 21:9f and 20:22 (cf. ST Supp. 97.2).
24 ST. Supp. 70.1. Thomas points out why this is a specifically Aristotelian rather than Platonist view of the soul in Supp.
70.2, and explicitly allies Augustine's view of the soul with the Platonist view. The conceptual root of Thomas' position
here is his sharp distinction between the essence of the soul and its powers, and his conviction that the powers of the soul
proceed from the essence of the soul as their cause but are not present in the soul as their subject (see I 77.5 and 6).
Augustine himself attributes powers to the soul which are neither purely intellectual (like seeing things in the mind of God)
nor purely bodily (like using our literal eyes). He calls this middle level of perception "spiritual vision" and discusses it
extensively but hypothetically in book 12 of On Genesis according to the Letter. It is the kind of vision we have in dreams,
where we do not see bodies but the likeness of bodies. This gives Augustine a way of conceiving of the soul's non-
intellectual experiences after death, though he is too cautious and unsure to say much in detail about them. Perhaps most
revealing is a letter in which he tells a story about a young man appearing in a dream to someone who can't imagine life
after death. The dream-figure asks the dreamer: "what then are the eyes by which you see me?" None of us are in a
position to give a confident answer to this question, Augustine thinks, but we can at least follow the implications of the
phenomenon, as the dream-figure goes on to suggest: "As the eyes of your flesh are inoperative, doing nothing at all while
you lie in your bed and sleep, and yet nonetheless there are 'eyes' with which look at me and you use them for 'seeing'; so
also when you are dead, doing nothing with the eyes of your flesh, there will be in you a life by which you live and senses
by which you have feeling. So from now on beware of doubting that there is life after death" (Letter 159:4 [Latin text in
Patrologia Latina, vol. 33]). This Augustinian view, if it were available to Dante, might have afforded him a more useful
conception of the experience of disembodied souls, were it not for Augustine's conclusion that the soul after death does not
go to a bodily place (like the underworld or heaven) because it is not aware of bodily things but only of likenesses of bodies
(On Genesis according to the Letter 12:32:60-34:67). This may account for Augustine's puzzlement about the location of
"Abraham's bosom" (Confessions 9:3:6) and whatever other "hidden receptacles" (Enchiridion 109) receive the
disembodied but conscious soul after death.
25 ST Supp. 70.3. Cf. I 64.4 reply 3 (the demons also are consigned to hellfire).
26 The best introduction to these pervasive themes of Augustine's doctrine of love is still Burnaby, Amor Dei (London:
27 ST I-II 87.4 and Supp. 97.5. The term for punishment, poena, can also be translated "pain," but I think the point here is
precisely that the punishment is not defined in terms of physical pain.
28 Inf. 4:28,42.
29 This imperative of ordered love, in which we put the eternal Good before temporal goods, is pervasive in Augustine;
perhaps its most influential exposition is in book 1 of his treatise On Christian Doctrine.
30 ST I 89.1. Phantasm is a Greek term related to phantasia (whence our "fantasy") which is the power of imagination. For
the underlying theory on the human intellect's need to "turn to phantasms" see ST I 84.7 and I 85.1-2.
31 Confessions 7:1:1. For Augustine virtue requires turning away from phantasms (On Music 6:11.32 and 6:16.51-52), a
version of Plato's insistence on purifying the soul from its attachment to bodily things in Phaedo. For an introduction to this
epistemology of evil in Augustine, see G.R. Evans, Augustine on Evil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp.
p. 36-53.
32 A few of the more prominent examples of this pervasive theme are Par. 8:85-90, 9:73-75, 15:61-63, 17:37-45, 21:49-50.
Cie, 1952).
34 Purg. 18:28-33. In the interest of idiomatic English my translation obscures the technical philosophical language Dante
uses here. "Essence" is my rendering of forma, "element" of materia: form and matter, the two key terms of Aristotelian
physics. "Born" is nata, from the root word whence both Italian and English get the word natural. Dante is stressing that
the movement of fire toward heaven is natural, completely physical. (Indeed "physical" is just Greek for natural, as physics
is just Greek for the science of nature, and the Latin word natura translates the Greek word physis).
account of the complex influence of Cicero on Augustine's view of the soul, see my Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self
36 The identification of the Holy Spirit as God's Gift is a prominent theme in Augustine's Trinitarian theology, On the
37 Confessions 13:9.10. In that last line, so very Dantean, Augustine is surely thinking of the angelic doxology: "Glory to
God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).
38 Par. 3:77 (a suo volere ne invoglia).
39 Par. 4:28-56. For the empyrean as the place of the blessed, cf. Aquinas ST I 66.4.
40 See for example ST II-II 23.2 and I-II 109.2.
41 Par. 1:73-75, echoing Paul in 2 Cor. 12:2. "Rapture" is the technical term for Paul's supernatural experience according to
ST II-II 175.1.
42 Plato, Republic 7:514a-519b (cf. also 6:507a-509b, where the imagery of the Good as the Sun is introduced).
Soliloquies 1:13.23 seems clearly to be borrowing Platonic language to propose something very much like the educational program of strengthening and training of the mind's eye that we find in Plato's Republic 7:5165a-b, though Augustine does not explicitly mention Plato's text and may know of it only secondhand. For discussion of the importance of the Platonist metaphor of dazzlement for Augustine's spirituality see Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self, pp. 73-76.

I owe this observation to my student Mark O'Dwyer.