

## *Turning Evil to Good (ciu. 22.1)* The Anatomy of Evil in Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei*

### ABSTRACT

This article explores Augustine's views on the origin and development of evil as articulated in *De ciuitate Dei*. Written in the aftermath of the sack of Rome, a catastrophe that prompted accusations against Christians for neglecting traditional Roman values, Augustine's response was to refute these claims and present his theory of two cities: the *ciuitas Dei* and the *ciuitas terrena* – despite being eschatologically distinct, they coexist in the earthly realm of time and space. Although the two cities in Augustine's theology should not necessarily be read as diametrically opposed, they function in his analysis of evil as opposing poles, with the *ciuitas Dei* representing a God-centered community of goodness and the *ciuitas terrena* serving as the human-centered source and habitat of evil.

Augustine's two-city doctrine is fundamentally shaped by his understanding of good and evil, particularly how evil arises within creation, humanity, and society. This paper examines how the emergence of the *ciuitas terrena* results from a deviation from divine goodness, and explores whether this can be seen as a deliberate choice for evil. Through a sequential analysis of books 11 to 14 of *De ciuitate Dei*, our study identifies and analyzes in detail the key terms Augustine uses to describe evil, thereby unraveling his consistent logic pertaining to its nature and cause.

The article emphasizes core themes such as the rebellion of the devil, humanity's first sin at the Fall, and the transmission of evil through corrupted human nature. It identifies God, the devil, and humanity as the central actors: God permits evil for a greater good, the devil acts as its agent, and humanity errs by choosing lesser goods over God. Drawing on Augustine's earlier insights, the article presents his view that evil is not an independent force but a privation of good (*amissio boni*), a misdirection (*peruersitas*), and a deviation from goodness (*defectio*), rooted in the *mala uoluntas* (evil will) as a *causa deficiens*, or a deficiency in the will's orientation towards the good.

Central to this study are the following research questions: How does Augustine reconcile the existence of evil with an entirely good God? What is the role of free will in the emergence of evil, and how does divine justice respond to it? Furthermore, the present study discusses the enduring theological and moral questions that Augustine's responses raise, shedding light on his engagement with competing doctrines, including Manichaean dualism and Pelagianism. Through a detailed exegesis of relevant texts, the article seeks to clarify Augustine's nuanced views on the nature of evil, the dynamics of moral choice, and the ultimate triumph of divine order.

KEY WORDS: Augustine of Hippo, *De ciuitate Dei*, devil, creation, (relative) evil, (original) sin, *uitium*, *uoluntas mala*, *defectio*, *natura uitata*, *causa deficiens*.

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Various periods in Augustine's life were marked by his struggle with the problem of evil: its origin, how it manifests, and its pervasive influence on human life. In his *Confessiones*, Augustine retrospectively described how, in his youth as a Manichaean, he sought a simple explanation for the existence of evil. Later in life, after formulating his theory of original sin and inherent sinfulness, he found himself in conflict with so-called Pelagian thought. During this anti-Pelagian period, he composed a series of treatises elucidating his theories on the nature, origin, persistence, and manifestations of evil. He also addressed these themes in numerous letters and sermons. In the final phase of his life, Augustine completed his *magnum opus et arduum*, *De ciuitate Dei*, a comprehensive work spanning 22 books. The publication of this seminal text extended over approximately 14 years, from 413 to 427, during which Augustine, having largely resolved his disputes with the Donatists, became deeply engaged in intellectual opposition to what he considered to be Pelagianism.

Initially conceived as a refutation of pagan accusations that Christians were responsible for the fall of Rome in 410, *De ciuitate Dei* evolved into a profound examination of Roman society and its institutions. The work is structured in several parts: the first five books (written between 411 and 415) critique the political structure of pagan Rome, while books 6-10 (completed by 417) address its religion and philosophy. Books 11-14 (written between 417 and 418) explore the origins of the two cities, then books 15-18 (written between 419 and

424) examine their development, and books 19-22 (written between 425 and 426) discuss their ultimate destinies. Augustine contrasts the God-centered *ciuitas Dei* with the *ciuitas terrena*, which turns away from God.<sup>1</sup>

Although *De ciuitate Dei* was not primarily intended as a treatise on evil, the work nevertheless expresses Augustine's significant reflections on the origin, existence, and influence of evil within individuals and society. These reflections are set against the backdrop of his debates with Pelagius, Caelestius, and Julian of Aeclanum on free will and original sin, as well as Augustine's earlier engagement with Manichaeism on the existence of evil.

Scholarship has predominantly focused on Augustine's reflections concerning the origin and nature of evil, especially in relation to his Manichaeism past. It has also examined Augustine's thoughts on original sin, the inheritance of sinfulness, and the culpability of sin, which became central issues during his controversy with Pelagianism. General works on the problem of evil that address Augustine's views tend to emphasize these aspects, particularly his definition of evil as *priuatio boni*. However, specific studies on the theme of evil within *De ciuitate Dei* remain rare.

This article offers an anatomy of Augustine's understanding of evil as expressed in *De ciuitate Dei*, systematically dissecting the origin, presence, and operation of evil within creation, humanity, and society according to the *doctor gratiae*. It seeks to trace how Augustine grappled with the emergence of evil in a fundamentally good creation. As such, we will study how Augustine – as we state in the title of our article – came to assert that it is possible to bring good out of evil (*de malis bene facere*, *ciu.* 22.1). Our first objective is to examine how, according to Augustine, evil could arise and find an immaterial vehicle in the devil and his minions. We then investigate how the first human

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<sup>1</sup> For the timing, see G. O'DALY (1994): "Ciuitate dei (De –)," in: *Augustinus Lexikon* (ed. C. MAYER), Basel: Schwabe Verlag. DOI: 10.24894/AL.Ciuitatedei: Books *Ciu.* 1-3 are dated in late 413 or 414, *ciu.* 4-5 in 415. By 417, books 6-10 were written. Book 11 was begun at the latest in 417, book 14 was composed around 418. *Ciu.* 15 is dated at the earliest in 419, *ciu.* 18 completed in 424 or 425. By 426-427, *De ciuitate Dei* was completely finished.

beings became seduced and tainted by evil, how this sinfulness was transmitted to all of humanity, and what the consequences are for human coexistence. The focus of this article is on *ciu.* 11-14.

The research questions addressed in this article include: First, according to Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei*, what is the origin of evil in creation, in humanity, and in society? Second, what are the causes of evil in individuals and society? Finally, what remedies (potentially derived from these causes) does Augustine propose to counteract evil?

## 1. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK OF EVIL IN *DE CIUITATE DEI*

Based on the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*, Augustine developed an original solution to the problem of evil. Pre-Socratic philosophy posited that evil could not exist, as existence itself was seen as an unchangeable absolute good. According to reason, evil should not exist in a world created by a good God, yet experience suggested otherwise. Plato resolved this tension between reason and experience by asserting that the soul (the good) was imprisoned within the body (matter), which he deemed evil. Manichaeism, in turn, proposed a dualistic worldview, positing two separate realities of good and evil. The issue with both solutions is that they deny human responsibility, attributing the origin of evil to external forces: Platonism to the body or matter, and Manichaeism to an evil power. Augustine's original solution was to distinguish between absolute and relative evil (and good). What is created, having been made *ex nihilo*, is not of the same absolutely good substance as God, but of an inferior nature. Therefore, when a created being chooses to revert to its initial state, it can also choose to turn towards this lesser good. Thus, the will may opt for what is not absolutely good, giving rise to evil.<sup>2</sup>

Manichaeism advocated a dualistic concept of two independently existing realities, absolute good versus absolute evil, in conflict with-

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<sup>2</sup> See W. MAKER, "Augustine on Evil: The Dilemma of the Philosophers," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 15/3 (1984) 149-160.

in the world and within humanity. Consequently, it claimed that humans are not responsible for the evil they commit, rather it is the evil that resides within them. Augustine's response evolved through three phases: an initial rejection of Manichaeism, the maturation of his own ideas, and finally, his mature solution.<sup>3</sup> Augustine progressed from an absolute dichotomy of good versus evil to a framework in which absolute evil does not exist (and absolute good exists solely in God). Everything, therefore, is relative, varying in degrees of goodness, where good and evil, in both individuals and society, are always intermixed. After 410, in his polemics against the Donatists and the Pelagians, as well as in *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine further developed ideas conceived during his anti-Manichaean period. Central to these were the indisputable goodness of creation and human nature, the inevitability of sin due to free will, and the essential need for divine grace.<sup>4</sup>

In his autobiography, the *Confessiones*, Augustine identified three issues that rendered him susceptible to Manichaean theories: the origin of evil, the possibility of God having a human form, and the question of whether the actions of Old Testament patriarchs could be deemed just. Although it is the third issue – Old Testament justice – that Augustine developed most extensively, in the *Confessiones* he also provided insights into the conclusions he reached in later years regarding God's spiritual nature and the origin of evil.<sup>5</sup> In addition to defining evil as the absence of good (*privatio boni*), he offered a practical definition of evil as a perversion of the will. He further argued

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<sup>3</sup> See F. H. RUSSELL, "‘Only Something Good Can Be Evil’: The Genesis of Augustine's Secular Ambivalence," *Theological Studies* 51/4 (1990) 698-716. In a separate chapter, "Beyond Augustine's Anti-Manichean Polemic," Russell also describes Augustine's position on this issue after 410, in response to Donatists, Pelagians, and also in *De ciuitate Dei*. See Russell (1990), pp. 709-714.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See A. THOMAS, "The Investigation of Justice in Augustine's *Confessions*," in Richard J. DOUGHERTY (ed.), *Augustine's Political Thought* (Rochester Studies in Medieval Political Thought), Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2019, 105-128, where Augustine's early thinking on evil is presented and analyzed, primarily on the basis of Augustine's *Confessiones*, but also in retrospect and in comparison with *De libero arbitrio*.

that this perversion disrupts humanity's union with God when human nature, created by God, is marred by the perversity of lust.<sup>6</sup>

Evil, in Augustine's view, can be traced back to a tendency towards disorder within individuals. Order is good, while disorder is bad. Evil, as the absence of good, is possible only as disorder within an existing good. Humans have the potential (*possibilitas*) to choose either order or disorder, as they were created with this inherent capacity, and may make a wrong choice (*peruersio*) that leads to disorder.<sup>7</sup>

While early Christians during the persecutions emphasized their freedom from Roman authority, Augustine, in the post-persecution era, emphasized the opposite: humanity is not free but enslaved to sin and evil. Moreover, by extrapolating the inner conflicts within individuals to society, Augustine concluded that humans are incapable of self-governance. The narrative of the Fall was instrumental to this theology. Augustine's stance amounted to a defeat of human freedom, contrasting with the positions of the Donatists and the Pelagians, who upheld the significance of free will.<sup>8</sup>

The Donatists believed that humanity could be divided into two categories: the virtuous and the wicked. The former consisted of those who had remained steadfast in their fidelity to Christ, along with their followers, while the latter included those who had collectively betrayed Christ and those who had received baptism from them, be-

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<sup>6</sup> See Thomas (2019) 114, with reference to *Confessions* 3.15: "obviously the very fellowship [*societas*] that we ought to have with God is broken when the same nature of which he is the author is defiled by the perversity of lust." The text of *Confessiones* has: "Violatur quippe ipsa societas, quae cum Deo nobis esse debet, cum eadem natura, cuius ille auctor est, libidinis peruersitate polluitur" (*Conf.* 3:15; CCL 27, 35).

<sup>7</sup> See M. SCHMIDT, "Augustine on Evil as Potency for Privation," 8/29/2022; doi: <https://clarifyingcatholicism.org/claritas-fidei/augustine-on-evil-as-potency-for-privation/> (acc. 24/10/23).

<sup>8</sup> See E. PAGELS, "The Politics of Paradise: Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis 1–3 Versus That of John Chrysostom." *The Harvard Theological Review* 78/1–2 (1985) 67–99. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816000027395>. Later also included as Chapter 5 in E. Pagels: *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. 1988, New York: Random House. Pagels focuses on Augustine's political interpretation of the story of the Fall, in contrast to that of John Chrysostom. However, in *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine emphasizes the freedom of man as well, and also of the angels, see *ciu.* 22.1.

lieving that they could not be saved without rebaptism. In contrast, Augustine held that evil is intrinsic to the human condition; thus, all individuals are inherently corruptible (and, actually, corrupt) but can, through divine grace, become virtuous. Opposing the Donatist doctrine of moral segregation, Augustine argued that sinners must face punishment. Although the so-called Pelagians, like Augustine, also recognized a single category of individuals, they differed in asserting that all humans were inherently capable of moral action.<sup>9</sup> They believed humanity had the capacity and liberty to act righteously.

Both the Pelagians, who rejected the concept of original sin, and Augustine, in his arguments against them, referenced Ambrose. However, no evidence of the inheritance of Adam's guilt (*culpa, reatus*) by his descendants appears in Ambrose's texts. The primary distinction between Ambrose and Augustine regarding Adam's sin is that, for Augustine, the primal sin and its guilt are transmitted from Adam to his progeny, whereas for Ambrose, it is Adam's sinfulness, i.e., tendency to sin (and not actual sin) that is inherited. This distinction relates to Ambrose's greater emphasis on individual responsibility. For Ambrose, newborn children are without 'universal' guilt, as guilt is always personal.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> P.-I. KAUFMAN, "Augustine, Evil, and Donatism: Sin and Sanctity before The Pelagian Controversy," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990) 115-126. Kaufman's main work is an analysis of Augustine's strategy in a number of his anti-Donatist works, primarily *Contra epistolam Parmeniani*, *Contra litteras Petilian*, and *Contra Cresconium grammaticum*. These works date from 400, 401/405 and 405-6 respectively, see Kaufman (1990) p. 115 n. 2. In the time-plan of *De ciuitate Dei* this is the transitional situation between the paradisiacal beginning at creation, when humanity knew no evil (books 11-14), and the definitive separation of the just and the unjust at the end of time (books 19-22); in time and world both run through each other, without a clear separation (books 15-18). In a sense the opinions of Pelagians and Donatists are also reflected in the time-plan of *De ciuitate Dei*: the Donatist view of strict separation in books 19-22, the Pelagian conception of a class of people, good people, in books 11-14, and Augustine's idea of a mixture of both in books 15-18.

<sup>10</sup> See A. DUPONT, "Signs of an Augustinian Original Sin in Milan? The Origin and Nature of Human Sin according to Ambrose," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 74/2 (October 2023) 706-740.

## 2. THE ORIGIN OF EVIL: THE DEVIL

*De ciuitate Dei* represents a later treatment by Augustine of the theme of evil. While his earlier works focused primarily on philosophical and theological analysis, *De ciuitate Dei* adopts a more historical-exegetical and rational approach.<sup>11</sup>

Occasionally, Augustine provides a definition of evil as the loss of good (*amissio boni*),<sup>12</sup> or the absence of good (*priuatio boni*)<sup>13</sup>, framing it as the instrument by which the inherent goodness of nature is diminished and distorted.<sup>14</sup> With the first definition, Augustine explicitly asserts that every nature is inherently good. In earlier works, he also associated evil with a loss of order, defining order as a positive quality.<sup>15</sup>

### 2.1. The origin of evil

In *De ciuitate Dei* (books 11 to 14), Augustine explores the origin of evil as it pertains to creation, the devil, humanity, and the inception of both cities: the *ciuitas Dei* and the *ciuitas terrena*.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See D. PAGLIACCI, “Male e peccato: *De ciuitate Dei* XVI [XIV]. Riflessi antropologici,” in L. ALICI, R. PICCOLOMINI, A. PIERETTI (eds.), *Il mistero del male e la libertà possibile* (III): *lettura del De ciuitate Dei di Agostino*. Atti del VII seminario del Centro di studi agostiniani di Perugia (Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 54). 1996, Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, pp. 191-206, p. 192. Pagliacci makes this observation about *ciu.* 14, but it also applies to *De ciuitate Dei* as a whole.

<sup>12</sup> See *ciu.* 11.9: “Mali enim nulla natura est; sed amissio boni mali nomen accepit” (CCL 48, 330).

<sup>13</sup> See *ciu.* 11.22: “cum omnino natura nulla sit malum nomenque hoc non sit nisi priuationis boni” (CCL 48, 341).

<sup>14</sup> See *ciu.* 12.8: “malo minuitur atque deprauatur naturae bonum” (CCL 48, 364). PL 41 gives another definition as a title to *ciu.* 12.8: “malum est a bono defectio” (PL 41, 578).

<sup>15</sup> See also Schmidt (2022): “evil is the result of some realized potential for disorder within the person. As Augustine expounds in *De Moribus Manichaeorum*: ‘what is corrupted is actually perverted; and what is perverted is deprived of order; and order is good.’ ” The Latin text has: “[I]tem quod corruptitur, profecto peruertitur; quod autem peruertitur, priuatur ordine; ordo autem bonum est” (*mor.* 2.7; CSEL 90, 93).

<sup>16</sup> Book 11 was written in 416, book 14 around 420. In that period Augustine wrote his last works against the Donatists, but in those years he was mainly



In book 11, Augustine investigates the beginning of the celestial aspect of the *ciuitas Dei*, referring to the angels in heaven and the evil angels who separated from them.<sup>17</sup> He identifies distinctions in the phrasing used to describe the creation of light on the first day (Gen. 1:4) and the creation of day and night on the fourth day, along with the formation of the heavenly bodies to regulate the passage of day and night, thereby distinguishing between light and darkness (Gen. 1:14-18). Upon the conclusion of the fourth day's creation, the text states that God saw it was good, encompassing the entirety of the fourth day's creations, including heavenly bodies, day and night, light and darkness.

The formulation for the first day differs markedly: it states that God saw the light was good, noting His continued separation of light from darkness, and concluding the account of the first day. From this, Augustine inferred that only the light was deemed good on the first day, implying that darkness was evil. Conversely, on the fourth day, both light and darkness were seen as good.<sup>18</sup> Initially, angels symbolized both good and evil, being regarded as the light and darkness of

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concerned with the controversy with the Pelagians. In *De ciuitate Dei*, however, few direct traces of these controversies can be found. See BA 35, G. Combès (ed.), *La Cité De Dieu. Livres XI-XIV: Formation des deux cités*. Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1959, pp. 16-17. Other movements, Manichaeans, Origenists, pagan philosophers are mentioned by name.

<sup>17</sup> See *ciu.* 11.34: "Sed quoniam, si diligenter singula scrutemur atque trac-temus, quae in illo diuino libro de constitutione mundi scripta sunt, et multa dicenda et a proposito instituti operis longe digrediendum est, iamque de duabus istis diuersis inter se atque contrariis societatibus angelorum, in quibus sunt quaedam exordia duarum etiam in rebus humanis ciuitatum, de quibus deinceps dicere institui, quantum satis esse uisum est, disputauius: hunc quoque librum aliquando claudamus" (CCL 48, 354-355).

<sup>18</sup> See *ciu.* 11.20: "Denique nec illud est praetereundum silentio, quod, ubi dixit Deus: Fiat lux, et facta est lux, continuo subiunctum est: Et uidit Deus lucem quia bona est; non postea quam separauit inter lucem et tenebras et uocauit lucem diem et tenebras noctem, ne simul cum luce etiam talibus tenebris testimonium placiti sui perhibuisse uideretur. Nam ubi tenebrae inculpabiles sunt, inter quas et lucem istam his oculis conspicuam luminaria caeli diuidunt, non ante, sed post infertur: Et uidit Deus quia bonum est. [...]. Vtrumque placuit, quia utrumque sine peccato est. Vbi autem dixit Deus: Fiat lux, et facta est lux. Et uidit Deus lucem quia bona est; et postmodum infertur: Et separauit Deus inter lucem et tenebras [...]; non hoc loco additum est: Et uidit Deus quia bonum est, ne utrumque

the first day. By their nature, angels were inherently good, representing light. However, a subset of angels chose, by their own volition, to become malevolent, and were thus perceived as darkness.<sup>19</sup> In order to establish an orderly universe, God divided the angels into two distinct groups: those representing good and light, and those representing evil and darkness (*tenebrae angelicae fuerant ordinandae*).<sup>20</sup> Augustine elaborates on this concept in *ciu.* 11.19.<sup>21</sup>

The division between light and darkness symbolizes the division between good and evil. The light and darkness of the first day are to be interpreted spiritually.<sup>22</sup> The light of the first day signifies the radiance of God's truth (*illustratio ueritatis*).<sup>23</sup> This divine light represents God's essence, and with its creation, it is understood to encompass the angels (*angeli creati*), without yet distinguishing between good and evil angels, as in the very beginning all angels were good, not yet darkness. Even those angels who later became evil were originally light, enlightened by God's wisdom until a point when they chose to turn away from God.<sup>24</sup>

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appellaretur bonum, cum esset horum alterum malum, uitio proprio, non natura" (CCL 48, 338-339).

<sup>19</sup> See *ciu.* 11.20: "cum esset horum [lux et tenebrae] alterum [tenebrae=nox] malum, uitio proprio, non natura" (CCL 48, 339).

<sup>20</sup> See *ciu.* 11.20: "Et ideo sola ibi lux placuit Conditori: tenebrae autem angelicae, etsi fuerant ordinandae, non tamen fuerant approbandae" (CCL 48, 339).

<sup>21</sup> See *ciu.* 11.19: "Non mihi uidetur ab operibus Dei absurda sententia, si, cum lux prima illa facta est, angeli creati intelleguntur, inter sanctos angelos et inmundos fuisse discretum, ubi dictum est: Et diuisit Deus inter lucem et tenebras; et uocauit Deus lucem diem et tenebras uocauit noctem. [...] Inter illam uero lucem, quae sancta societas angelorum est illustratione ueritatis intellegibiliter fulgens, et ei contrarias tenebras, id est malorum angelorum auersorum a luce iustitiae taeter-rrimas mentes, ipse diuidere potuit, cui etiam futurum non naturae, sed uoluntatis malum occultum aut incertum esse non potuit" (CCL 48, 338).

<sup>22</sup> This stands in contrast to the account in Genesis 1:14-18, which describes the existence of light and dark that can be perceived by the senses: "Nam inter istum nobis notissimum diem et noctem, id est inter hanc lucem et has tenebras, uulgatissima sensibus nostris luminaria caeli ut diuiderent imperauit" (*ciu.* 11.19; CCL 48, 338). The light of the fourth day is the light that is visible to our eyes (*lux ista his oculis conspicua*) (*ciu.* 11.20; CCL 48, 338).

<sup>23</sup> See *ciu.* 11.19 (CCL 48, 338).

<sup>24</sup> See *ciu.* 11.11: "Quae cum ita sint, nullo modo quidem secundum spatium aliquod temporis prius erant spiritus illi tenebrae, quos angelos dicimus; sed simul ut facti sunt, lux facti sunt; [...] etiam illuminati, ut sapienter beateque uiuerent.

Once a group of angels turned away from God, a separation occurred between good and evil angels, or between light and darkness. The light symbolizes the light of truth (*lumen ueritatis*), while darkness represents the darkness of pride (*tenebrosa superbia*) of those angels who turned away from God.<sup>25</sup> Light further corresponds to divine justice, whereas darkness is its antithesis. Light also signifies the community of good angels (*lux, quae sancta societas angelorum est*), shining with the illumination of truth (*illustratione ueritatis fulgens*). Darkness opposes the light of truth and encompasses those malevolent angels who have deviated from the light of righteousness (*ei [ueritati] contrariae tenebrae, id est malorum angelorum auersorum a luce iustitiae taeterrimas mentes*).<sup>26</sup>

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Ab hac illuminatione auersi quidam angeli non obtinuerunt excellentiam sapientis beataeque uitae, quae procul dubio non nisi aeterna est aeternitatisque suae certa atque segura; [...]. Quatenus autem, antequam peccassent, illius sapientiae fuerint participes, definire quis potest?" (CCL 48, 332). Regarding the question of whether good and evil angels have different origins, Augustine contemplated three hypotheses. The first posits that from the beginning, there existed two distinct classes of angels: one perfectly blessed, and the other imperfectly happy, as they were uncertain of their future stability and the possibility of falling. The second hypothesis suggests that the devil and the class of evil angels were bad from the outset; they sinned and were punished, thus never experiencing true happiness. The third proposes that, initially, there was only one class of angels, who were imperfectly happy because their blessedness was not yet secure; some of these angels subsequently turned away from God, at which point the happiness of the remaining faithful angels became permanent. Lacking definitive biblical evidence to support any of these theories, Augustine refrained from committing to a single view prior to 416. This hesitancy is reflected in *De Genesi ad litteram*, where he continues to weigh all three hypotheses without conclusively endorsing one over the others. Similarly, in *De ciuitate Dei* 14.13, he revisits these possibilities, maintaining a degree of ambiguity. However, by 427, in *De correptione et gratia*, Augustine decisively adopted the third hypothesis, asserting that the division arose from a single class of angels, some of whom fell while others remained steadfast. This definitive stance is also reiterated in *De ciuitate Dei* 22.1: "qui liberum arbitrium eidem intellectuali naturae tribute tale, ut, si uellet, desereret Deum, beatitudinem scilicet suam, miseria continuo secutura; qui, cum praesciret angelos quosdam per elationem, qua ipsi sibi ad beatam uitam sufficere uellent, tanti boni desertores futuros, non eis ademisset hanc potestatem" (CCL 48, 806). (See BA 35, pp. 481-482, n. c. 8, "Les mauvais anges ont-ils été dès l'origine différents des bons?").

<sup>25</sup> See *ciu.* 11.19: "Solus quippe ille ista discernere potuit, qui potuit etiam priusquam caderent praescire casuros et priatos lumine ueritatis in tenebrosa superbia remansuros" (CCL 48, 338).

<sup>26</sup> See *ciu.* 11.19: "Inter illam uero lucem, quae sancta societas angelorum est illustratione ueritatis intellegibiliter fulgens, et ei contrarias tenebras, id est

The divine separation of light from darkness established a distinction between the holy angels and the unclean spirits (*inter sanctos angelos et imundos*),<sup>27</sup> which can be seen as a differentiation between the non-earthly (heavenly) aspect of the *ciuitas Dei* and the non-earthly aspect of the *ciuitas terrena*.<sup>28</sup> The separation of the non-earthly elements of these two cities is definitive,<sup>29</sup> unlike the separation of their earthly components.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, at the end of time, at the Last Judgment, the *ciuitas Dei* and the *ciuitas terrena* will be definitively and entirely separated.<sup>31</sup> Until then, however, the separation between

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malorum angelorum auersorum a luce iustitiae taeterrimas mentes, ipse diuidere potuit, cui etiam futurum non naturae, sed uoluntatis malum occultum aut incertum esse non potuit" (CCL 48, 338).

<sup>27</sup> *Ciu.* 11.19 (CCL 48, 338).

<sup>28</sup> This is about the separation between the two *ciuitates* to which Augustine devotes his *opus magnum*, the *ciuitas terrena* and the *ciuitas caelestis* (*ciuitas Dei*), see *ciu.* 14.28: "Fecerunt itaque ciuitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem uero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui" (CCL 48, 451).

<sup>29</sup> See *ciu.* 11.13: "Quis enim catholicus christianus ignorat nullum nouum diabolium ex bonis angelis ulterius futurum, sicut nec istum in societatem bonorum angelorum ulterius rediturum?" (CCL 48, 334).

<sup>30</sup> In the context of earthly time and space, Augustine posits that the two communities of people –which he refers to as "ciuitates": the city of God (*ciuitas Dei*) and the earthly city (*terrena ciuitas*)– are inherently mixed. The earthly context is therefore designated as "ciuitas permixta." For Augustine, evil is not merely the absence of good; it is a state of being devoid of the very essence of goodness. With regard to the earthly realm, the final separation is only made at the Last Judgment. Augustine discusses this in book 20, see G. O'DALY, *Augustine's City of God. A Reader's Guide*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 217: "[...] Augustine now feels that he can set out in summary form what is to be believed will 'come' at the final judgement: [...] the separation of good and evil [...]". See also *ciu.* 20.27: "Haec distantia praemiorum atque poenarum iustos dirimens ab iniustis, quae sub isto sole in huius uitae uanitate non cernitur, quando sub illo sole iustitiae in illius uitae manifestatione clarebit, tunc profecto erit iudicium quale numquam fuit" (*ciu.* 20.27; CCL 48, 751) and *ciu.* 20.30: "Duo nobis ad hoc opus pertinentes reliqui sunt libri, ut adiuuante Domino promissa compleamus; quorum erit unus de malorum supplicio, alius de felicitate iustorum" (*ciu.* 20.30; CCL 48, 758). Note that the Donatists did want to draw a strict distinction between good and bad, righteous and sinners, those who belonged to the church and those who were not allowed to belong.

<sup>31</sup> See *ciu.* 19.28: "Ad hos autem fines bonorum et malorum, illos expetendos, istos cauendos, quoniam per iudicium transibunt ad illos boni, ad istos mali; de

good and evil is not absolute. During the fall of humanity, the evil influence of the devil seems to have played a role in the decisions made by Adam and Eve in paradise.

The distinction between these two communities – among the angelic and demonic beings and within humanity – is not a matter of nature but of will. This distinction is observable in other communities as well, such as within the human person and the devil.<sup>32</sup>

## 2.2. Principle of Evil: the Devil

The Genesis texts that describe the origin of creation do not provide sufficient clarity regarding the underlying causes and rationale behind the existence of evil. To develop a coherent explanation, Augustine turns his attention to the figure of the devil as the principle of evil. In addition to the Genesis accounts concerning the beginning of creation and the origin of angels, both good and evil, Augustine identifies several passages from other books of the Bible that discuss the devil's origin, which he examines in *ciu.* 11.13-15.<sup>33</sup> The central issue Augustine grapples with is the question of the origin of evil. He cannot situate the source of evil outside of creation, as this would align with the Manichaean concept of a distinct principle of evil.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, situating the devil's origin at the beginning of creation would imply that God

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hoc iudicio, quantum Deus donauerit, in consequenti uolumine disputabo" (CCL 48, 699). See also *ciu.* 20.27.

<sup>32</sup> See *ciu.* 12:6, where Augustine elaborates on the evil will, especially of the devil, and later also of man (*ciu.* 14. 13). The devil, the bad angel, continues to have his evil will, which will never become good again, see *ciu.* 14.27: "ut [angelus malus] iam bonam uoluntatem ulterius non haberet" (CCL 48, 450).

<sup>33</sup> The biblical quotations supporting Augustine's argument about the beginning (*initium*) of the devil are the following: John 8:44: "Ille homicida erat ab initio et in ueritate non stetit, quia ueritas non est in eo" discussed in *ciu.* 11.13 and 11.14; 1 John 3:8: "Ab initio diabolus peccat" explained in 11.13; Job 40:14: "Hoc est initium figmenti Domini, quod fecit ad illudendum ab angelis suis" in combination with Ps 103:26: "Draco hic, quem finxisti ad illudendum ei" treated in 11.15.

<sup>34</sup> See *ciu.* 11.13: "Huic sententiae quisquis acquiescit, non cum illis haereticis sapit, id est Manichaeis, et si quae aliae pestes ita sentiunt, quod suam quamdam propriam tamquam ex aduerso quodam principio diabolus habeat naturam mali" (CCL 48, 334).

created an inherently evil entity. Moreover, the concept of the devil as the source of evil already appears in the narrative of the Fall (Gen. 3).

The devil's beginning is referenced in two Bible quotations: "Ille homicida erat ab initio et in ueritate non stetit" (John 8:44) and "Ab initio diabolus peccat" (1 John 3:8), which Augustine cites in *ciu.* 11.13. In the first quotation, 'beginning' (*initium*) must at least be understood as the beginning of humanity (*initium humani generis*), as only from that point could the devil have killed a person and thus be regarded as a murderer – Augustine argues.<sup>35</sup> It could also be argued that 'beginning' refers to the devil's own origin (*ab initio suae conditionis*).<sup>36</sup> The second quotation could similarly suggest that the devil was a sinner from the moment he was created (*ex quo creatus est*).<sup>37</sup> However, Augustine disagrees: the words "he did not stand in the truth" imply that he left the truth,<sup>38</sup> which suggests that the devil was, for a time, in the truth. At his creation, therefore, the devil must have been good, endowed with a good nature.<sup>39</sup>

In *ciu.* 11.15, Augustine provides further scriptural evidence of the devil's original goodness. The devil is described as morning light, existing in paradise without deficiency, implying that he was once without sin.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the term 'beginning' must be interpreted differently: it does not denote the origin or creation of the devil but rather the inception of his sin.<sup>41</sup> Other biblical references, stating that God cre-

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<sup>35</sup> See *ciu.* 11.13: "initium humani generis, ex quo utique homo factus est, quem decipiendo posset occidere" (CCL 48, 334).

<sup>36</sup> *Ciu.* 11.13 (CCL 48, 334).

<sup>37</sup> *Ciu.* 11.13 (CCL 48, 334).

<sup>38</sup> See *ciu.* 11.13: "[non dixit Dominus]: 'A ueritate alienus fuit'; sed: 'In ueritate non stetit', ubi a ueritate lapsus intellegi uoluit" (CCL 48, 334).

<sup>39</sup> See *ciu.* 11.13.

<sup>40</sup> See *ciu.* 11.15: "Sed quid respondetur propheticis testimoniis, siue quod ait Isaias sub figurata persona principis Babyloniae diabolus notans: 'Quo modo cecidit Lucifer, qui mane oriebatur' [Essai. 14:12]; siue quod Hiezechiel: 'In deliciis paradisi Dei fuisti, omni lapide pretioso ornatus es?' [Hiezech. 28:13sq] Vbi intellegitur fuisse aliquando sine peccato. Nam expressius ei paulo post dicitur: 'Ambulasti in diebus tuis sine uitio' [Ps. 16:6]" (CCL 48, 335).

<sup>41</sup> See *ciu.* 11.15: "non ab initio, ex quo creatus est, peccare putandus est, sed ab initio peccati, quod ab ipsius superbia coeperit esse peccatum" (CCL 48, 335).

ated the devil to be mocked (*quem finxisti ad illudendum ei*),<sup>42</sup> and that this was the beginning of God's creation (*initium figmenti Domini*),<sup>43</sup> can be understood to mean that God did indeed create the devil to be mocked, but that he only endured this fate after his fall into sin.<sup>44</sup>

Augustine states that every nature, including the devil's, possesses some intrinsic good;<sup>45</sup> indeed, a nature devoid of good does not exist.<sup>46</sup> Even the devil's initial nature was good, but was corrupted through his wrongful choice or orientation.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, the devil did not remain in the truth,<sup>48</sup> and chose to abandon God. Despite the inherent goodness of his nature, the devil could not escape divine justice.<sup>49</sup> In His justice, God punished the devil – not the good nature with which he was created, but the evil actions he committed.<sup>50</sup> The punishment consisted in God's ordering omnipotence (*potestas Ordinatoris*) removing the devil from the established order where he found rest,<sup>51</sup> by relegating him to a lower order, beneath that of good angels and humans.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Ciu.* 11.15 (CCL 48, 335).

<sup>43</sup> *Ciu.* 11.15 (CCL 48, 335).

<sup>44</sup> See *ciu.* 11.15: "sic intellegendum est, ut existimemus talem ab initio creatum, cui ab angelis illuderetur, sed in hac poena post peccatum ordinatum" (CCL 48, 335).

<sup>45</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13: "nec ipsius diaboli natura malum est" (CCL 48, 679).

<sup>46</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13: "esse autem natura, in qua nullum bonum sit, non potest" (CCL 48, 679).

<sup>47</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13: "peruersitas eam [naturam] malam facit" (CCL 48, 679).

<sup>48</sup> Reference to quotation from John 8:14, 'in ueritate non stetit' which Augustine dealt with in *ciu.* 11.13, and repeated in *ciu.* 19.13.

<sup>49</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13: "bonum Dei, quod illi est in natura, non eum subtrahit iustitiae Dei; ueritatis iudicium non euasit" (CCL 48, 679).

<sup>50</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13: "nec ibi Deus bonum insequitur quod creauit, sed malum quod ille commisit" (CCL 48, 679). See also J.M. SALAMITO, "Saint Augustin et la définition du peuple. Aux antipodes de l' 'augustinisme politique,'" *Les Études philosophiques* 206 (2021) 27-52, p. 34.

<sup>51</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13: "in ordinis tranquillitate non mansit, nec ideo tamen a potestate Ordinatoris effugit" (CCL 48, 679).

<sup>52</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17: "Itaque [Deus] fecit, ut diabolus institutione illius bonus, uoluntate sua malus, in inferioribus ordinatus illuderetur ab angelis eius" (CCL 48, 337). *Ciu.* 14.27 calls this the 'first evil will' (*prima mala uoluntas*, see *ciu.* 14.27; CCL 48, 450).

Augustine believes that the Bible mentions that the devil was created by God to be mocked after his fall (Job 40:14 and Ps 103:26). This appears paradoxical: How could a good God create the devil to do evil and then fall? In *ciu.* 11.17, where he explicates the mechanisms of the devil's fall, Augustine offers his interpretation of this paradox. The devil was good by disposition but became evil by his own will (*diabolus institutione illius bonus, uoluntate sua malus*); he is characterized by a good nature that was corrupted by evil volition.<sup>53</sup> A nature that has been corrupted must, by definition, have been intact to begin with. This implies that the devil was created with a good nature, devoid of deficiency. The deficiency in his now corrupted nature lies in his desire to turn away from God, rather than striving to be with God. This deficiency (*uitium*) is therefore inherently evil (*malitia*), contrary to nature (*contra naturam*), and arises from desiring wrongly, from a perverse will (*mala uoluntas*),<sup>54</sup> and from the misuse of a good nature.<sup>55</sup> The devil's evil will is permanent: following the initial act of rebellion that led to his apostasy, and due to his punishment and subsequent damnation by God, compounded by his obstinacy, the devil will never again possess a good will.<sup>56</sup>

Nonetheless, God restores order by making good use of the devil's malevolent will.<sup>57</sup> The devil's evil will, which led him to turn away from God, was turned to good purpose by God, ensuring that the

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<sup>53</sup> *Ciu.* 11.17 (CCL 48, 337).

<sup>54</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17: "Propter naturam igitur, non propter malitiam diaboli, dictum recte intellegimus: 'Hoc est initium figmenti Domini'. Quia sine dubio, ubi est uitium malitiae, natura non uitata praecessit. Vitium autem ita contra naturam est, ut non possit nisi nocere naturae. [...] Quapropter etiam uoluntas mala grande testimonium est naturae bonae" (CCL 48, 336).

<sup>55</sup> "[C]um illae [malae uoluntates] male utuntur naturis bonis" (*ciu.* 11.17; CCL 48, 337). In fact, it is not really explained what use the devil makes of his nature, and how this is an evil use.

<sup>56</sup> See *ciu.* 14.27: "Ac per hoc propter meritum primae malae uoluntatis ita damnato atque obdurato angelo malo, ut iam bonam uoluntatem ulterius non haberet, bene utens Deus cur non permitteret, ut ab illo primus homo, qui rectus, hoc est bonae uoluntatis, creatus fuerat, temptaretur?". BA 35 (p. 463) translates: "en punition de sa première volonté mauvaise le mauvais ange fut condamné et endurci au point de n'avoir plus désormais de volonté bonne".

<sup>57</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17: "ipse bene utatur etiam uoluntatibus malis" (CCL 48, 336).



distance the devil created between himself and God became his punishment. That punishment involved banishing the devil to the underworld (*in inferioribus ordinatus*),<sup>58</sup> where he was mocked by his fellow angels (*ut illuderetur ab angelis eius*).<sup>59</sup> Thus, his torments became beneficial to the saints whom he sought to harm through temptation (*ut prosint temptationes eius sanctis, quibus eas obesse desiderat*).<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, the Psalm could rightly assert that God created the devil for the purpose of being mocked. It was the creation of a good nature, which became evil by its own volition, and through which God, in His omniscience, foreknew that He could ultimately turn that evil to serve the good.<sup>61</sup>

### 3. MANKIND AND EVIL

#### 3.1. Circumstances of Man's Fall

In several passages of *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine references Genesis 3:1-19, the biblical account of the Fall of man.<sup>62</sup> These references

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<sup>58</sup> *Ciu.* 11.17 (CCL 48, 336). BA 35 (p. 85) translates, in combination with 'ordinatus', with: "relégué au rang des êtres inférieurs," Dyson (p. 471) with "to be brought low".

<sup>59</sup> *Ciu.* 11.17 (CCL 48, 336).

<sup>60</sup> *Ciu.* 11.17 (CCL 48, 337). Dyson (p. 471) translates with: "God caused the temptations of the devil to bring good to the saints whom the devil wishes to harm by them". Augustine does not specify here how the devil's punishment can benefit the saints in their temptations. An additional factor here seems to be that by being mocked, the devil has lost credibility with the saints.

<sup>61</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17: "Et quoniam Deus, cum eum conderet, futurae malignitatis eius non erat utique ignarus et praeuidebat quae bona de malo eius esset ipse facturus: propterea Psalmus ait: 'Draco hic, quem finxisti ad illudendum ei' [Ps. 13:26], ut in eo ipso quod eum finxit, licet per suam bonitatem bonum, iam per suam praescientiam praeparasse intellegatur quo modo illo uteretur et malo" (CCL 48, 336).

<sup>62</sup> According to the *index locorum scripturae* (CCL 48, p. 867), the individual verses of the story of the Fall, Gen. 3:1-19, can be found in the following places in *De ciuitate Dei*: Gen. 3:5: *ciu.* 14.13v58, *ciu.* 22.30v110; Gen. 3:6: *ciu.* 14.17v13; Gen. 3:7: *ciu.* 14.17v23; Gen. 3:9: *ciu.* 13.15v17, *ciu.* 13.23v46; Gen. 3:12: *ciu.* 14.11v94; Gen. 3:12sq: *ciu.* 14.14v8; Gen. 3:16: *ciu.* 15.7v109; Gen. 3:19: *ciu.* 13.15v22, *ciu.* 13.15v31, *ciu.* 13.23v46, *ciu.* 20.20v41.

are usually individual verses used to support or substantiate particular arguments, rather than a systematic discussion of the Fall narrative. Within *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine primarily employs a literal reading of Genesis. His approach draws heavily on his earlier work, *De Genesi ad litteram*. Although he had learned the allegorical interpretation from Ambrose, this method was insufficient for his polemics against the Manichaeans. Additionally, a literal explanation was required for the Pelagian controversy, as allegorical interpretations were too open to varied readings when addressing supernatural truths.<sup>63</sup>

In the central chapters of book 14 of *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine explores the mechanisms leading to the Fall of the first human couple. Against the backdrop of Genesis 3, he discusses how the first humans could succumb to sin.<sup>64</sup> Augustine's analysis is not a verse-by-verse examination but a series of reflections, supported by Bible verses or brief excerpts from Genesis 3, as well as from other scriptural texts. Much like a judge presiding over his *audientia episcopalis*, Augustine scrutinizes the guilt, responsibility, or complicity of the first humans, the role of the devil in this process, their relationship to God, and the consequences of the first transgression.

Building on earlier considerations in *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine investigates how evil could emerge within a creation that was inherently

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<sup>63</sup> See BA 35, p. 19.

<sup>64</sup> Read against an anthropological-ethical background, rather than a purely theological or historical-exegetical background, book 14 of *De ciuitate Dei* is Augustine's treatment of the story of man's initial yes or no to God's prescription, and as such provides his perspective on human responsibility. Three phases can be distinguished here: the original goodness of the human will in the initial light of God; man's alienation from God through the darkness of sin; and finally eternal bliss. The three phases can be interpreted in the sign of three perspectives: proximity (*vicinanza*), alienation (*lontananza*) and hope (*speranza*). Responsibility is situated in the second phase, which feels like exile, with disobedience being a key concept. With pride as its cause, disobedience led to sin, which disrupted God's order. The punishment for sin (*poena peccati*) was that man became disobedient to himself. Humanity, in solidarity in guilt, is also solidarity in the redemption it receives. God uses evil to do good, so that ultimately a new, more authentic identity of man is established. See PAGLIACCI (1996). A discussion of the mechanisms behind the Fall is found in *ciu.* 14.11, the underlying motives in the chapters that follow, particularly the evil will (*uoluntas mala*) in *ciu.* 14.13 and the pride (*superbia*) that led to it in *ciu.* 14.14. Shame is discussed in *ciu.* 14.17.

good, as created by God, and how some of the angels, most prominently the devil, immediately and definitively abandoned God after an initial phase of union with God.<sup>65</sup> These reflections on the devil and his nature are fundamental to Augustine's subsequent analysis of evil and the Fall, as the Genesis account explicitly mentions the devil as present at and the instigator of humanity's first sin. The following section delves into Augustine's perspective on how the first human couple could rebel against God, leading to their original sin. In this narrative, the devil is positioned as the chief strategist, while human nature serves as the fundamental premise upon which Augustine constructs his argument.

### 3.1.1. *Motivation of the Devil to Bring Down Man*

After the devil's own apostasy, which led to a separation from God and the truth, a fall from spiritual paradise,<sup>66</sup> and a descent to the lower realms of creation,<sup>67</sup> the devil sought to bring about the downfall of humankind. His motives can be attributed to two primary factors: his arrogance and desire for dominion;<sup>68</sup> and his jealousy towards humans, who continued to stand firm in God's goodness and truth, whereas he, the devil, had fallen from grace.<sup>69</sup> Following his humiliation and demotion within the order of creation, humanity now occupied a higher position than the devil.

### 3.1.2. *Man's Initial Situation and the Devil's Plan of Action*

Man existed in accordance with divine will, residing in a state of paradisiacal bliss that encompassed both the physical and spiritual

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<sup>65</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "[...] superbus ille angelus [Diabolus] [...] de cuius lapsu sociorumque eius qui ex angelis Dei angeli eius effecti sunt, in libris undecimo et duodecimo huius operis satis, quantum potui, disputaui" (CCL 48, 432).

<sup>66</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "de spiritali paradiso cecidit" (CCL 48, 432). The devil has no body, so he fell only from the spiritual paradise.

<sup>67</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17: "in inferioribus ordinatus" (CCL 48, 337).

<sup>68</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "quodam quasi tyrannico fastu gaudere subditis quam esse subditus eligens" (CCL 48, 432).

<sup>69</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "cui utique stanti, quoniam ipse ceciderat" (CCL 48, 432).

realms.<sup>70</sup> In this earthly paradise, the other living creatures were harmless and subordinate to the first human couple.<sup>71</sup> Yet, even at this early stage, humanity was not a *tabula rasa*. Internally, there was already an inclination towards self-aggrandizement. The devil, desiring subordinates,<sup>72</sup> suspected a similar predisposition in humans. It is this inner vulnerability that ensured the success of the devil's plan.<sup>73</sup>

The devil, acting as a master strategist, aimed to “creep into the thinking and feeling of man with malicious cunning.”<sup>74</sup> This process unfolded in two stages. Initially, the goal was to win the woman's trust through deceitful discourse. Subsequently, the devil sought to influence the man indirectly, through the woman, with the ultimate objective of bringing down the human couple as a whole. As an instrument of his deception and a spokesperson, the devil utilized (or rather *abused*, as Augustine states)<sup>75</sup> a suitable creature from physical paradise: the serpent, chosen for the specific task the devil had planned.<sup>76</sup> The serpent was “spiritually” subjected to the devil's malevolence, as the devil, being of a higher nature and having an angelic form, exerted authority over it.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “uiuēbat itaque homo secundum Deum in paradiso et corporali et spiritali” (CCL 48, 432).

<sup>71</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “duobus illis hominibus, masculo et femina, animalia etiam terrestria cetera subdita et innoxia uersabantur” (CCL 48, 432). The mention of both man and woman is striking here, where previously Augustine speaks of ‘homo’. This double mention introduces the devil's two-step plan.

<sup>72</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “gaudere subditis [...] eligens” (CCL 48, 432).

<sup>73</sup> Augustine discusses this in *ciu.* 14.13.

<sup>74</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “malesuada uersutia in hominis sensum serpere affectans” (CCL 48, 432). Dyson translates: “he sought to insinuate himself, by crafty suggestion, into the heart of man” (tr. Dyson, p. 605).

<sup>75</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “tamquam instrumento abutens” (CCL 48, 432).

<sup>76</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “colubrum in paradiso corporali, [...] animal [...] operi suo congruum, per quem loqueretur, elegit” (CCL 48, 432). The ‘fitting’ here is primarily bodily: the crawling (*serpere*, creeping in the mind of man) fits the physical movement of the snake, see *ciu.* 14.11: “animal scilicet lubricum et tortuosius anfractibus mobile” (CCL 48, 432).

<sup>77</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “eoque [colubro] per angelicam praesentiam praestantiorumque naturam spiritali nequitia sibi [diaboli] subiecto” (CCL 48, 432). The translation here is a little freer, actually it says: ‘subjected to the devil by spiritual cunning’. The point is that the devil exercises control over the serpent's brain.

The woman was targeted first, rather than the man, based on the assumption that the male was less susceptible to deception and more discerning. Augustine adds that it was deemed more likely that the man would be “caught” by “indulgence in the woman’s error” rather than by misjudgment.<sup>78</sup> Augustine draws on two biblical examples to support this argument: Aaron and Solomon. In both instances, the individuals did not act out of personal conviction but yielded to peer pressure.<sup>79</sup> This leads Augustine to conclude that the first man transgressed God’s law not because he believed his wife’s words to be true but because he complied with her request out of a sense of social obligation, aiming to preserve their bond.<sup>80</sup>

Augustine substantiates Adam’s disbelief in the devil’s words by citing: “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14). Here, the phrase “the woman was deceived” means that she accepted the serpent’s words as truth.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the

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<sup>78</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “[colubro] tamquam instrumento abutens fallacia sermoinatus est feminae, a parte scilicet inferiore illius humanae copulae incipiens, ut gradatim perueniret ad totum, non existimans uirum facile credulum nec errando posse decipi, sed dum alieno cedit errori” (CCL 48, 432-433). Augustine calls the woman here ‘the inferior part of the human pair’ (*pars inferior illius humanae copulae*). For the meaning of this statement, see E. PAGELS, “The Politics of Paradise: Augustine’s Exegesis of Genesis 1-3 Versus That of John Chrysostom,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 78/1-2 (1985) 67-99; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816000027395>; pp. 85-86. According to Pagels, Augustine links this statement to the creation of woman from the rib of man. She further interprets Augustine’s words within the context of his view that, after the Fall, humanity would no longer be capable of self-governance at a political level.

<sup>79</sup> Aaron, under pressure from the people, proceeded to make the idol, while Solomon was led into serving idols by the influence of his wives. Augustine addresses these examples in *ciu.* 14.11. Through such instances, Augustine broadens the concept of solidarity beyond the scenario of a man being seduced by a woman. For the case of the first couple, he employs an alternative formulation: “one person to another, human being to human being”; “uni unum, hominem homini” (*ciu.* 14.11; CCL 48, 433).

<sup>80</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “ita credendum est illum uirum suae feminae, uni unum, hominem homini, coniugem coniugi, ad Dei legem transgrediendam non tamquam uerum loquenti credidisse seductum, sed sociali necessitudine paruissse” (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>81</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: “Non enim frustra dixit Apostolus: ‘Et Adam non est seductus, mulier autem seducta est’ [1 Tim. 2:14], nisi quia illa quod ei serpens locutus est, tamquam uerum esset, accepit” (CCL 48, 433).

assertion that Adam was not deceived suggests he did not believe the serpent's claims. According to Augustine, it is incorrect to claim that Adam was not seduced, as he was fully aware that his actions were wrong.<sup>82</sup> It means that Adam was not seduced in the same manner as the woman,<sup>83</sup> who was misled by the devil's lies. Instead, Adam was deceived differently: by thinking he would not face harsh judgment if he blamed the woman,<sup>84</sup> by underestimating the severity of God's judgment, and by mistakenly believing he could be pardoned for his transgression.<sup>85</sup> Augustine's conclusion is that both were deceived, but in distinct ways: the woman through belief in the devil's lies, and Adam by failing to grasp the gravity of his guilt. Thus, beyond the concept of "accepting something untrue as true," Augustine introduces a second interpretation of seduction: "being seduced" as "not recognizing one's actions as sinful".<sup>86</sup>

In his analysis, Augustine asserts that both Adam and the woman succumbed to the devil's schemes,<sup>87</sup> committing sin in different ways.<sup>88</sup> The woman, he claims, was deceived by the devil,<sup>89</sup> and thus acted wrongly out of ignorance. In contrast, Adam consciously violated God's commandment out of a reluctance to be separated from his only companion, even if it meant participating in her transgression.<sup>90</sup> Despite believing his act might be forgiven, Adam acted with

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<sup>82</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "ille autem sciuit" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>83</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "in eo quidem, quo mulier seducta est, non est ille seductus" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>84</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "eum fefellit, quomodo fuerat iudicandum quod erat dicturus: 'Mulier, quam dedisti mecum, ipsa mihi dedit, et manducaui' [Gen. 3:12]" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>85</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "Sed inexpertus diuinae seueritatis in eo falli potuit, ut ueniale crederet esse commissum" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>86</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "Hos autem seductos intellegi uoluit [apostolus], qui id, quod faciunt, non putant esse peccatum" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>87</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "Etsi credendo non sunt ambo decepti, peccando tamen ambo sunt capti et diaboli laqueis implicati" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>88</sup> See the title of *ciu.* 14.11.2 in PL 41: "Aliter primi homines peccauerunt" (PL 41, 419).

<sup>89</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "credendo decepta" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>90</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "ille autem ab unico noluit consortio dirimi nec in comunione peccati" (CCL 48, 433). Here Augustine formulates even more strongly

full awareness and deliberate intent, which meant that he was not absolved of responsibility.<sup>91</sup> It is evident that Adam sinned by knowingly transgressing God's command.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.1.3. *Why God Set Up the Regulation That Led to the Fall: Framework*

In *ciu.* 14:12, Augustine elucidates the divine prohibition against consuming the forbidden fruit and the subsequent transgression of this commandment. The prohibition was a relatively straightforward directive for several reasons. First, human nature had not yet been compromised; thus, the body and its desires would easily comply with the will. Second, the prohibition was narrow in scope, making it easier to remember. Furthermore, there was an abundance of trees and fruits, with only one tree being off-limits. This ensured there was ample food available, making obedience relatively simple for humankind.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, God's precept was not primarily designed to avoid something evil, as there were no evil trees or fruits in the paradise created by God.<sup>94</sup>

The prohibition was not arbitrary; it was intended to foster human compliance,<sup>95</sup> and to underscore the potential for disobedience and the internal evil associated with it,<sup>96</sup> as well as its grave conse-

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what the aforementioned social necessity (*socialis necessitudo*) is: that man does not want to be separated from his company.

<sup>91</sup> See *ciu.* 14.11: "nec ideo minus reus, si sciens prudensque peccauit" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>92</sup> To substantiate this claim, Augustine draws upon two additional biblical quotations, see *ciu.* 14.11: "nam [Apostolus] utique ipsum [Adam] ostendit, ubi dicit: 'Per unum hominem peccatum intrauit in mundum', et paulo post apertius: 'In similitudine', inquit, 'praeuaricationis Adae' [Rom. 5:12-14]" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>93</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: "Hoc itaque de uno cibi genere non edendo, ubi aliorum tanta copia subiacebat, tam leue praeceptum ad obseruandum, tam breue ad memoria retinendum, ubi praesertim nondum uoluntati cupiditas resistebat" (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>94</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: "neque enim quicquam mali Deus in illo tantae felicitatis loco crearet atque plantaret" (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>95</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: "oboedientia commendata est in praecepto" (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>96</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: "Quis autem ruinam esse non uideat, quando fit mandati euidens atque indubitata transgressio? Propter hoc Deus illud prohibuit, quod cum esset admissum, nulla defendi posset imaginatione iustitiae" (CCL 48, 436). Evil,

quences – namely, the downfall of humankind. This internal evil was already present, though humans were not yet aware that their latent pride was a contributing factor to their downfall.<sup>97</sup> Only when their sin was exposed did the potential benefit arise that they might feel discomfort and recognize their own flaws.<sup>98</sup>

According to Augustine, obedience is the most crucial virtue for every rational being, serving as the foundation upon which all other virtues are built.<sup>99</sup> Every rational being is endowed with the capacity for authority, but the pursuit of personal desires over divine will can be detrimental.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.2. Augustine's Anatomy of the Original Sin

#### 3.2.1. *Initial Situation: the Good Nature, without Sin, of the First Human Couple*

The initial situation of the Fall narrative is characterized by the good nature of the first human couple, both man and woman. God had created a righteous being with a flawless nature, as an absolutely good God creates no defects.<sup>101</sup> Thus, humanity was initially without sin, and the first woman was also created before sin existed.<sup>102</sup> With the Fall, the transgression of God's commandment, evil became overt. However, evil would not have manifested if the first humans had not

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already internal and hidden within man as a result of his arrogance and pride, would thus become externally visible in the form of the transgression, the external act (see further, *ciu.* 14.13).

<sup>97</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “illa prorsus ruina, quae fit in occulto, praecedit ruinam, quae fit in manifesto, dum illa ruina esse non putatur” (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>98</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “audeo dicere superbis esse utile cadere in apertum manifestumque peccatum, unde sibi displiceant, qui iam sibi placendo ceciderant” (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>99</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: “mater omnium custosque uirtutum” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>100</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: “ita facta est [creatura rationale], ut ei subditum esse sit utile; perniciosum autem suam, non eius a quo creata est facere uoluntatem” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>101</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: “Deus enim creauit hominem rectum, naturarum auctor, non utique uitiorum” (CCL 48, 395-6).

<sup>102</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: “[femina] quae de illo facta est ante peccatum” (CCL 48, 395).



already harbored internal evil before the transgression.<sup>103</sup> A sinful act can only stem from a prior internal evil disposition.<sup>104</sup> Hence, evil was present beforehand, though hidden and internal, and only later expressed itself through open disobedience.<sup>105</sup>

If creation was good at the beginning, the question arises: what caused this internal evil? Augustine identifies the cause in the will. Just as a tree bears fruit according to its nature, so a person acts according to theirs. If a person commits wrongful actions, contradicting their good nature, it must be due to an internal cause that corrupts their nature. This internal cause is found in the free will of humanity, which falls short of the good. Evil arises from the human will,<sup>106</sup> and actions against nature can only occur through a defect of the will (*nisi uitio uoluntatis, quod contra naturam est, non utique fieret*).<sup>107</sup> The evil, initially invisible, must have originated from an evil will, as every evil action is preceded by such a will.<sup>108</sup>

Augustine had previously addressed this issue, notably in the context of the fall of the angels, discussing the origin of the evil will. By

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<sup>103</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “non ergo malum opus factum est, id est illa transgressio, ut cibo prohibito uescerentur, nisi ab eis qui iam mali erant” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>104</sup> Augustine compares this to the good fruits of a good tree, and bad fruits of a bad tree, based on the Bible quote Mt 7:18, see *ciu.* 14.13: “neque enim fieret ille fructus malus nisi ab arbore mala [Mt 7:18]” (CCL 48, 434). In *ciu.* 14.13 Augustine reiterates his stance on several occasions, particularly in the context of the original sin committed by the first human couple in disobeying God’s commandment.

<sup>105</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “In occulto autem mali esse coeperunt, ut in apertam inoboedientiam laberentur” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>106</sup> See *ciu.* 13.15: “ad malum quippe eius prior est uoluntas eius [homini]” (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>107</sup> *Ciu.* 14.13 (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>108</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “Non enim ad malum opus perueniretur, nisi praecessisset uoluntas mala” (CCL 48, 434). See also *ciu.* 11.19, where Augustine stated that God had foreknowledge of the hidden internal evil will of the apostate angels, and could thus separate light and dark, holy and evil angels: “Inter illam uero lucem, quae sancta societas angelorum est illustratione ueritatis intellegibiliter fulgens, et ei contrarias tenebras, id est malorum angelorum auersorum a luce iustitiae taeterrimas mentes, ipse diuidere potuit, cui etiam futurum non naturae, sed uoluntatis malum occultum aut incertum esse non potuit” (CCL 48, 338).

evil, the good in a nature is diminished or distorted.<sup>109</sup> Evil occurs when one turns away from the good. Such a defection (*defectio/defectus*) is not genuinely a turn towards evil but a perverse preference for a lesser good, neglecting a greater one.<sup>110</sup> It is not a defection towards evil or towards inherently bad natures, but a wrong turn (*male*) – contrary to the natural order – away from the highest form of existence towards a state of lesser being.<sup>111</sup> Consequently, one does evil.<sup>112</sup> The cause of evil is, therefore, a defection from the good.<sup>113</sup> Thus, the apostate angels, although created good, became evil.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, humanity also fell into evil.

The evil of changeable spirits stems from their evil will.<sup>115</sup> The Fall was only possible because man's will did not remain steadfastly directed towards the higher, unchanging good. Instead, it fell of its own accord into defection, turning towards itself. This defection occurred spontaneously (*spontaneus*), a result of the inconstancy of the free will, which does not always direct itself with full strength towards the supreme, unchangeable good, namely, God. Consequently, it falters.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> See *ciu.* 12.9: “Quo [mal]o minuitur atque deprauatur naturae bonum” (CCL 48, 364).

<sup>110</sup> See *ciu.* 12.8: “Ac per hoc qui peruerse amat cuiuslibet naturae bonum, etiamsi adipiscatur, ipse fit in bono malus et miser meliore priuatus” (CCL 48, 362). See *ciu.* 12.8, *fine*, where quite a number of examples are given, each time also connected with *uitium*.

<sup>111</sup> See *ciu.* 12.8: “deficitur enim non ad mala, sed male, id est non ad malas naturas, sed ideo male, quia contra ordinem naturarum ab eo quod summe est ad id quod minus est” (CCL 48, 362). For the connection between evil and disorder, see also Schmidt (2022).

<sup>112</sup> See *ciu.* 12.8: “deficiunt et ex hoc mala faciunt” (CCL 48, 362).

<sup>113</sup> *Ciu.* 12.9: “mali causa non [est] bonum, sed defectus a bono” (CCL 48, 364). In *ciu.* 12.9 Augustine discusses why some of the angels became bad, in contrast to other angels who remained good.

<sup>114</sup> See *ciu.* 12.9: “cum boni creati essent, tamen mali sunt” (CCL 48, 364).

<sup>115</sup> See *ciu.* 12.9: “ab ipsa [mala uoluntas] quippe incipit spirituum mutabilium malum” (CCL 48, 364).

<sup>116</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “Spontaneus est autem iste defectus, quoniam, si uoluntas in amore superioris immutabilis boni, a quo illustrabatur ut uideret et accendebatur ut amaret, stabilis permaneret, non inde ad sibi placendum auerteretur et ex hoc tenebresceret et frigesceret” (CCL 48, 434).

Augustine thus concludes that there is no efficient cause for the evil will that can be deduced from nature or existence.<sup>117</sup>

The cause of the evil will that led to the first sin was not a *causa efficiens* with a direct result; rather, it was a *causa deficiens*, whereby the consequence is the absence of good.<sup>118</sup> After Augustine identifies the cause as a defection from good, he seeks to understand the source of this defection. Quoting the Bible, “pride is the beginning of every sin,” Augustine argues that every evil deed or sin must be preceded by an inner bad will, with pride as the foundation of this malevolent will.<sup>119</sup> Augustine defines pride as the desire for a wrongful exaltation (*peruersa celsitudinis appetitus*), deemed wrongful because it diverts attention from the unchangeable highest good, which is God, and instead places man in that position.<sup>120</sup> Pride is a perverse imitation of God.<sup>121</sup> It is the evil whereby man, by wanting to please himself

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<sup>117</sup> See *ciu.* 12.9: “Cum ergo malae uoluntatis efficiens naturalis uel, si dici potest, essentialis nulla sit causa” (CCL 48, 364). See also C. STEEL, “Does Evil Have a Cause? Augustine’s Perplexity and Thomas’s Answer,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 48, no. 2 (1994) 251-273, pp. 254-256, where Steel discusses Augustine’s reflections on this topic in an article examining the evolution of thought concerning the origin of evil across several philosophical and theological traditions, including Stoicism, (Neo-)Platonism, Socrates, Augustine, Dionysius, Eriugena, Thomas Aquinas, and Kierkegaard. In his engagement with the Manichaeans, Augustine connects all evil with sin (*peccatum*), either as a sinful act or as a punishment (*poena*) for it. He asserts that evil cannot originate from God, who is infinitely good; rather, it arises when the creature, by its own free will, turns away from God, shifting from the higher to the lower. In *ciu.* 12.6-7, Augustine concludes that the cause of the evil will must be found within the will itself. However, in *ciu.* 12.9, where he further explores the origins of evil in the will, he ultimately determines that there is no direct cause. This does not pertain to a *causa efficiens*, with evil as its direct effect, but rather to a *causa deficiens*, where the good is either not attained or is abandoned.

<sup>118</sup> Augustine discusses this distinction in *ciu.* 12.7: “Nemo igitur quaerat efficientem causam malae uoluntatis; non enim est efficiens, sed deficiens, quia nec illa effectio sed defectio” (CCL 48, 362). The bottom line is that one cannot know the cause of the bad will, but one can observe that the good that a good will would bring about is absent. For a discussion see Steel (1994), pp. 254-256.

<sup>119</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “porro malae uoluntatis initium quae potuit esse nisi superbia? ‘Initium enim omnis peccati superbia est’ [Eccl. 10:13]” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>120</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “Quid est autem superbia nisi peruersae celsitudinis appetitus? Peruersa enim est celsitudo deserto eo, cui debet animus inhaerere, principio sibi quodammodo fieri atque esse principium” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>121</sup> See *ciu.* 19.12: “superbia peruerse imitatur Deum” (CCL 48, 677).

and to be his own light, turns away from the true light that would otherwise have truly enlightened him.<sup>122</sup> The consequence of pride is humanity's estrangement from the highest, unchangeable good toward a self-centered existence.<sup>123</sup> This evil of pride initially manifests in secrecy before becoming openly evident in subsequent actions.<sup>124</sup>

The result was negative: rather than attaining equality with God (the unchangeable, supreme good), man lost his status. He became disconnected from God, and by losing contact with the divine, he acquired a degraded status. As a would-be god, man is merely a created god; created gods are mutable and lack true divinity, and by associating himself with them, man effectively debases himself. Additional consequences of pride include separation from the light (akin to the apostate angels) and from God's truth (as experienced by the first woman in paradise), alongside the debasement that occurs when man fails to relate to God appropriately – failing to elevate his heart to God while simultaneously debasing himself.

Another form of pride, which Augustine deems even worse and more damaging than the initial manifestation, is the pride that arises when individuals seek excuses for their obvious sins.<sup>125</sup> In his examination of the Fall in Genesis 3, Augustine identifies this form of pride in the woman, who blames the serpent, and in the man, who blames the woman.<sup>126</sup> The woman claims she ate because the serpent deceived her, while the man argues that he consumed the fruit from the forbidden tree at the behest of the woman, whom God had provided as his companion.<sup>127</sup> Augustine's analysis is strict: first, it is a clear sin

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<sup>122</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: "malum, quo, cum sibi homo placet, tamquam sit et ipse lumen, auertitur ab eo lumine, quod ei si placeat et ipse fit lumen" (CCL 48, 435).

<sup>123</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: "sibi uero ita placet, cum ab illo bono inmutabili deficit, quod ei magis placere debuit quam ipse sibi" (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>124</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: "illud [...] malum praecessit in abdito, ut sequeretur hoc malum quod perpetratum est in aperto" (CCL 48, 435).

<sup>125</sup> See *ciu.* 14.14: "Sed est peior damnabiliorque superbia, qua etiam in peccatis manifestis suffugium excusationis inquiritur" (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>126</sup> See *ciu.* 14.14: "superbia in aliud quaerit referre quod perperam fecit: superbia mulieris in serpentem, superbia uiri in mulierem" (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>127</sup> See *ciu.* 14.14: "sicut illi primi homines, quorum et illa dixit: Serpens seduxit me, et manducaui, et ille dixit: Mulier, quam dedisti mecum, haec mihi

(*in peccatis manifestis*),<sup>128</sup> for which no forgiveness or healing is asked anywhere.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, in the face of such evident violation, their mutual admission of having eaten functions as a confession that ultimately incriminates them rather than serving as an excuse.<sup>130</sup> They have committed an offense that cannot be absolved merely because it was prompted by another's advice or suggestion.<sup>131</sup> This excuse suggests a misguided belief that something can supersede God, Whose will must always be followed and in Whom one must place unwavering faith.<sup>132</sup>

### 3.2.2. *Final Outcome: the Fall*

For humanity, the origin of evil lay not in the act of eating the forbidden fruit, but in the exercise of free will; man, in his pride, chose to prioritize himself over the supreme, unchangeable good. Through self-love, he was beguiled by the devil's claim that man could become 'as gods.'<sup>133</sup> Consequently, man severed his connection with God and God's supreme truth, falling prey to the serpent's wiles, through which the devil spoke. Without first delighting in himself, man would never

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dedit a ligno, et edi" (CCL 48, 436). See also *ciu*. 14.11: "Sed inexpertus diuinae seueritatis in eo falli potuit, ut ueniale crederet esse commissum".

Adam was aware of his wrongdoing but relied on the prospect of forgiveness, believing that a 'mitigating circumstance' might apply, namely, that he would not be held accountable because his actions were driven by solidarity with the woman.

<sup>128</sup> See *ciu*. 14.14 (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>129</sup> See *ciu*. 14.14: "nusquam hic sonat petitio ueniae, nusquam imploratio medicinae" (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>130</sup> See *ciu*. 14.14: "Sed accusatio potius quam excusatio uera est, ubi mandati diuini est aperta transgressio" (CCL 48, 436). Augustine also makes a distinction between Cain, who denied his deed, and Adam and Eve, who deny their guilt, but do not deny what they have done, see *ciu*. 14.14: "licet isti non sicut Cain quod commiserunt negent" (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>131</sup> See *ciu*. 14.14: "Neque enim hoc propterea non fecerunt, quia id mulier serpente suadente, uir muliere impertiente commissit" (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>132</sup> See *ciu*. 14.14: "quasi quicquam Deo, cui uel crederetur uel cederetur, anteponendum fuit" (CCL 48, 436).

<sup>133</sup> See *ciu*. 14.13: "Hinc enim et delectauit quod dictum est: 'Eritis sicut dii' [Gen. 3:5]" (CCL 48, 435).

have been susceptible to the devil's enticement.<sup>134</sup> This susceptibility enabled the woman to believe the serpent and fall under the devil's deceit.

Two key consequences followed for man: first, he placed greater trust in the woman's words than in God's commandment; second, he believed that his transgression was excusable and that forgiveness would come easily, as he chose not to abandon his companion, even if it meant they would both sin.<sup>135</sup>

Untruth influenced the Fall in several respects. The devil, choosing to live according to his own nature, turned away from God, Who is truth. In his seduction of man, he introduced the lie that man could attain equality with God by eating the forbidden fruit. This falsehood also marked man's actions: he chose to live according to his own desires, seeking happiness independently from God. The lie opened the way for evil, initially in paradise during the Fall and subsequently in the generations who sought happiness on their own terms. In *civ.* 14.4, Augustine presents another connection between untruth and sin: man was created righteous, intended for a life lived not according to himself but according to God, his Creator. Living according to God signifies aligning oneself with God's will rather than one's own.<sup>136</sup> Since God is truth, living according to God is synonymous with living according to the truth; conversely, living according to oneself is living according to a lie.<sup>137</sup> Living according to oneself, rather than according to God, constitutes a lie because man's goodness can only derive

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<sup>134</sup> See *civ.* 14.13: "diabolus hominem non cepisset, nisi iam ille sibi ipsi placere coepisset" (CCL 48, 435).

<sup>135</sup> See *civ.* 14.13: "ut uel illa crederet uerum dixisse serpentem, uel ille Dei mandato uxoris praeponeret uoluntatem putaretque se uenialiter transgressorem esse praecepti, si uitae suae sociam non desereret etiam in societate peccati" (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>136</sup> See *civ.* 14.4: "homo ita factus est rectus, ut non secundum se ipsum, sed secundum eum, a quo factus est, uiueret, id est illius potius quam suam faceret uoluntatem" (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>137</sup> See *civ.* 14.4: "Cum itaque uiuit homo secundum ueritatem, non uiuit secundum se ipsum, sed secundum Deum. Deus est enim qui dixit: 'Ego sum ueritas' [Io. 14:6]. Cum uero uiuit secundum se ipsum, hoc est secundum hominem, non secundum Deum, profecto secundum mendacium uiuit" (CCL 48, 418).

from God, not from man himself.<sup>138</sup> By living according to oneself, man sins, and in sinning, he abandons God, thus severing himself from the good that can come only from God.<sup>139</sup> A lie is thus something that appears good but is in fact harmful, or something intended to be better but that is, in reality, worse.<sup>140</sup> Accordingly, every sin is a lie.<sup>141</sup> There is no greater falsehood than desiring happiness while disregarding the life for which one was created.<sup>142</sup>

The fact that sin is rooted in falsehood originates with the devil. His estrangement from truth implied a pursuit of his own will rather than alignment with God. By speaking untruths based on his own perspective rather than on a divine source, he became the archetype of the liar, and with him, the lie itself began. From the lie emerged sin, which he used to deceive the first man. Those who live according to their own desires are thereby aligned in action with the devil.<sup>143</sup>

In sum, through the misuse of free will (*liberi arbitrii malo usu*),<sup>144</sup> man fell into sin (*lapsus est in peccatum*) through the intermediary of woman (*per feminam*).<sup>145</sup> This occurred by his own choice (*sponte*) and

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<sup>138</sup> See *ciu.* 14.4: “non ita uiuere, quem ad modum est factus ut uiueret, hoc est mendacium” (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>139</sup> See *ciu.* 14.4: “Vnde hoc, nisi quia de Deo potest bene esse homini, quem delinquendo deserit, non de se ipso, secundum quem uiuendo delinquit?” (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>140</sup> See *ciu.* 14.4: “Ergo mendacium est, quod, cum fiat ut bene sit nobis, hinc potius male est nobis, uel cum fiat, ut melius sit nobis, hinc potius peius est nobis” (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>141</sup> See *ciu.* 14.4: “Vnde non frustra dici potest omne peccatum esse mendacium” (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>142</sup> See *ciu.* 14.4: “Beatus quippe uult esse etiam non sic uiuendo ut possit esse. Quid est ista uoluntate mendacius?” (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>143</sup> See *ciu.* 14.3: “uiuendo secundum se ipsum, hoc est secundum hominem, factus est homo similis diabolo” (CCL 48, 418). See also *ciu.* 14.4: “Cum ergo uiuit homo secundum hominem, non secundum Deum, similis est diabolo” (CCL 48, 418).

<sup>144</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14 (CCL 48, 395).

<sup>145</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: “Omnes enim fuimus in illo uno, quando omnes fuimus ille unus, qui per feminam lapsus est in peccatum, quae de illo facta est ante peccatum” (CCL 48, 395). In *ciu.* 14.13 Augustine indicates that by his transgression, namely the eating of the forbidden fruit (*illa transgressio, ut cibo prohibito uesceretur*), man committed an evil act (*malum opus factum est*). Just as bad fruit can only come

was thus man's responsibility.<sup>146</sup> The factors leading to sin were pride as its root,<sup>147</sup> falsehood as its instrument, and disobedience as its outcome.<sup>148</sup> Paradoxically, the good within human nature also contributed to the first sin: Adam's desire for unity with Eve, though in itself a virtuous quality, led to the transgression.<sup>149</sup>

### 3.3. Direct Consequences of the Fall

In paradise, the first humans committed a conscious and deliberate transgression of God's commandment forbidding them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In tracing the progression leading to the Fall, it is evident that humanity already harbored the seeds of evil within, which became overtly manifest through the disobedience of this commandment. Man transgressed out of a natural solidarity with the woman, while the woman acted upon her belief in the devil's

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from a bad tree, so an evil act, when one acts against nature (*contra naturam factum est*), can only be the result of an evil disposition, through a defect of the will (*uitio uoluntatis*). See *ciu.* 14.13 (CCL 48, 434): "Non ergo malum opus factum est, id est illa transgressio, ut cibo prohibito uescerentur, nisi ab eis qui iam mali erant. Neque enim fieret ille fructus malus nisi ab arbore mala [Mt. 8:7]. Vt autem esset arbor mala, contra naturam factum est, quia nisi uitio uoluntatis, quod contra naturam est, non utique fieret".

<sup>146</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14. Augustine further describes how as a result man became pervert and condemned, and that the offspring that the first man begot were equally pervert and condemned, because all were already present – as seed – in the first man: "sponte deprauatus iusteque damnatus deprauatos damnatosque generauit. Omnes enim fuimus in illo uno, quando omnes fuimus ille unus, qui per feminam lapsus est in peccatum, quae de illo facta est ante peccatum" (CCL 48, 395-6).

<sup>147</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13-14. See also *ciu.* 14.3: "Dicit enim [apostolus] inimicitias, contentiones, aemulationes, animositates, inuidias opera esse carnis [Gal. 5:20]; quorum omnium malorum caput atque origo superbia est, quae sine carne regnat in diabolo" (CCL 48, 417).

<sup>148</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12, where Augustine explains that the act of eating was not inherently evil, as all fruit was good; rather, the sin lay in violating God's commandment. The transgression was marked by the pursuit of one's own will over that of the Creator, to whom one was meant to remain obedient. Thus, obedience is described as the guardian of all virtues

<sup>149</sup> See *ciu.* 12.28: "Nihil enim est quam hoc genus tam discordiosum uitio, tam sociale natura" (CCL 48, 384). See also *ciu.* 14.1. In *ciu.* 12.22, Augustine describes how humanity originated from a man, and then woman was created from man, to promote the unity of humankind.



lies. This act of defiance was simply an external continuation of an internal evolution already underway.

Through a desire for self-exaltation born of pride, and by choosing himself over God, man forfeited his privileged position in creation: instead of reflecting the image of God through a bond with God, he made himself into a god – a false, created god, lacking the attributes of infinity and immutability. Thus, man fell. By abandoning this primary connection with God, he also severed himself from God's supreme qualities – unchangeability, ultimate goodness, and truth. This disruption made it possible for the devil to deceive him with falsehood.

The immediate consequences of the Fall were twofold. First, man received a just punishment from God for his actions. Second, he imposed upon himself a deterioration of his own nature.

### 3.3.1. *The Vitiated Human Nature*

God created a good and righteous human being with an unblemished nature, as God, who is absolutely good, does not create anything deficient.<sup>150</sup> Every nature is inherently good, including both human nature and that of the devil,<sup>151</sup> and therefore does not stand in opposition to God.<sup>152</sup>

Adam's transgression of God's commandment stemmed from a nature that had become corrupt. Such a vitiation (*uitium*)<sup>153</sup> of

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<sup>150</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: "Deus enim creauit hominem rectum, naturarum auctor, non utique uitiorum" (CCL 48, 395-6). See also *ciu.* 22.1: "natura mutabilis, quamuis bona et a summo Deo atque incommutabili bono, qui bona omnia condidit instituta" (CCL 48, 806).

<sup>151</sup> See *ciu.* 19.13, and the discussion, concerning 'the devil as bearer of evil'. See also Salamito (2021), pp. 34-35, with quotes from *ciu.* 19.13, *ciu.* 11.9 and *ciu.* 11.22. Salamito notes that Augustine makes a distinction between the adjective 'mala', and the noun 'malum'. A nature is never evil (*malum*), but can be made evil (*mala*). It is *peruersitas* that makes nature evil (*ciu.* 19.13). The loss (*amissio boni*; *ciu.* 11.9, CCL 48, 330) of the good, or the absence of the good (*priuatio boni*; *ciu.* 11.22, CCL 48, 341), is given the name of evil.

<sup>152</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "natura igitur contraria non est Deo" (CCL 48, 357).

<sup>153</sup> *Vitium* actually means shortcoming, and is used in Augustine mainly in a moral sense. Where sin refers to a wrong action, *uitium* refers mainly to a defect, a bad quality, a vice. *Vitium* is then the consequence of sin, not the other

nature functions as an instrument of resistance to God,<sup>154</sup> standing in opposition to the good and thus representing evil.<sup>155</sup> For God, *uitium* is solely opposed to Him;<sup>156</sup> for (human) nature, however, it is both opposed and harmful to it.<sup>157</sup> To be harmful signifies a reduction in the good or in a good quality.<sup>158</sup> The latter reduction is not absolute; however if all good were eliminated, *uitium* itself would cease to exist.<sup>159</sup> Likewise, *uitium*, as opposed to good, can only exist where good is present. Absolute evil, therefore, does not exist.<sup>160</sup>

Since the first humans ate from the forbidden tree, their nature was indeed changed for the worse and vitiated.<sup>161</sup> Such vitiation of a good nature warrants punishment, and it is just that *uitium* should

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way around. (See G. VAN RIEL. "Vitium," [to be published] in: *Augustinus Lexikon* (ed. R. Dodaro/C. Mayer/C. Müller), Basel: Schwabe Verlag. DOI: 10.24894/AugustinusLexikon). About 25 times Augustine also directly equates *uitium* with *peccatum* (*ibid.*, n. 14). *Uitium* is a word that begins to appear frequently in Augustine's anti-Manichaean works and especially in his anti-Pelagian writings (*ibid.*, n. 1). In his controversy with the Pelagians, Augustine emphasizes that human nature was violated (*uitiata*) by original sin, and that the weakened human will had to struggle against evil inclinations ever since (*ibid.*).

<sup>154</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "uitium, quo resistent Deo qui eius appellantur inimici" (CCL 48, 357). In *ciu.* 12.3 Augustine addresses the interrelationship between human nature (*natura*), shortcoming/vitiation (*uitium*), evil (*malum*), and the will (*uoluntas*), which he identifies as the driving force behind the former. He also explains how this human nature has been corrupted by evil.

<sup>155</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "uitium quia malum est, contrarium est bono" (CCL 48, 357).

<sup>156</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "uitium ergo contrarium est Deo, tamquam malum bono" (CCL 48, 357).

<sup>157</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "naturae uero, quam uitiat, non tantum malum, sed etiam noxium".

<sup>158</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "Nam quid eis nocendo faciunt [uitia], nisi adimunt integritatem pulchritudinem, salutem uirtutem et quidquid boni naturae per uitium detrahi siue minui consuevit" (CCL 48, 357).

<sup>159</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "si omnino desit [bonum], nihil boni adimendo non nocet ac per hoc nec uitium est" (CCL 48, 357).

<sup>160</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: "Sola ergo bona alicubi esse possunt, sola mala nusquam" (CCL 48, 357).

<sup>161</sup> See *ciu.* 13.23: "mutata in deterius uitiatque natura" (CCL 48, 406; tr. Dyson, p. 570).

not go unpunished. It is not nature, which is inherently good, that is punished, but the vitiation (*uitium*), which is evil.<sup>162</sup>

The vitiation of nature does not originate from nature itself but from the will. Even when habit or natural progression exacerbates this vitiation, its root lies ultimately in the will.<sup>163</sup> As the will of a rational being can discern between good and evil,<sup>164</sup> it bears responsibility and is rightly punished when it chooses evil over good. Thus, Augustine holds that humans –just like angels– as rational beings capable of distinguishing between good and evil, are responsible for all vices arising from an evil will, even when these vices worsen through habit or natural development.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, the punishment of a vitiated nature is just.<sup>166</sup>

Through free will, the soul became sinful of its own accord, committing the first sin and thus becoming responsible for the Fall. Consequently, humanity was punished: the human body, initially incorruptible, became corruptible. The body's corruption, therefore, was not the cause of the Fall but rather its punishment.<sup>167</sup> As a result,

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<sup>162</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3, on the vitiated nature of the angels who turned away from God: “naturae etiam illae, quae ex malae uoluntatis initio uitiatæ sunt, in quantum uitiosæ sunt, malæ sunt, in quantum autem naturæ sunt, bonæ sunt. Et cum in poenis est natura uitiosa, excepto eo, quod natura est, etiam hoc ibi bonum est, quod impunita non est” (CCL 48, 357-358). See also Salamito (2021) p. 34, with reference to *ciu.* 12.3: “Elle [la nature] est nullement ‘génératrice de péché’; c’est la libre volonté des anges ou des humains qui, devenant elle-même mauvaise, la blesse – sans toutefois la changer totalement”.

<sup>163</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: “Non enim quisquam de uitiiis naturalibus, sed de uoluntariis poenas luit. Nam etiam quod uitium consuetudine nimioque progressu roboratum uelut naturaliter inoleuit, a uoluntate sumpsit exordium” (CCL 48, 358).

<sup>164</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: “De uitiiis quippe nunc loquimur eius naturæ, cui mens inest capax intellegibilis lucis, qua discernitur iustum ab iniusto” (CCL 48, 358).

<sup>165</sup> In contrast to the Manichaeans who, by attributing evil to an external existence, placed responsibility outside of man, and also in contrast to Platonism, which attributed evil to matter and not to the soul, see Maker (1984).

<sup>166</sup> See *ciu.* 12.3: “Hoc enim est iustum et omne iustum procul dubio bonum” (CCL 48, 358).

<sup>167</sup> See *ciu.* 14.3: “[...] corruptio corporis, quae aggrauat animam, non peccati primi est causa, sed poena; nec caro corruptibilis animam peccatricem, sed anima peccatrix fecit esse corruptibilem carnem” (CCL 48, 417).

corruptible flesh became a burden to the soul,<sup>168</sup> and a source of sin. While the body may indeed instigate sinful inclinations and desires, not all ills of a sinful life are attributable to the flesh alone, for otherwise, one would be absolving the devil, who possesses no flesh.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, it is inaccurate to assert that all evils besetting the soul stem from the body.<sup>170</sup>

Due to bodily corruption, human beings are afflicted by a host of conflicting desires.<sup>171</sup> Additionally, the body now resists the will, a resistance first demonstrated when the original human couple, out of shame, hid from God upon realizing their nakedness. This shame resulted from the fact that their bodies were no longer obedient to the soul, and the flesh was no longer subject to the spirit.<sup>172</sup> Their nakedness also symbolized the loss of God's grace.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> See *ciu.* 13.16: "Vnde illud est quod de Scripturis nostris in superiore libro commemorauimus: 'Corpus enim corruptibile aggrauat animam' [Sap. 9:15]. Addendo utique corruptibile non qualicumque corpore, sed quale factum est ex peccato consequente uindicta, animam perhibuit aggruari" (CCL 48, 397). See also I. Bochet. "Le corps: un poids pour l'âme?" *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 100/1 (2016) 27-43. Bochet illustrates how Augustine employs the biblical quotation from Wisdom 9:15, initially as a critique of Platonism, arguing that the body is not inherently a prison for the soul; rather, it is the corruptible body that constitutes this state, with the corruption serving as punishment for the Fall. Augustine then uses the same quotation against Pelagianism, asserting that such corruption could not be part of humanity's original condition and must therefore be a consequence of the Fall.

<sup>169</sup> See *ciu.* 14.3: "Ex qua corruptione carnis licet existant quaedam incitamenta uitiorum et ipsa desideria uitiosa, non tamen omnia uitae iniquae uitia tribuenda sunt carni, ne ab his omnibus purgemus diabolum, qui non habet carnem" (CCL 48, 417).

<sup>170</sup> See *ciu.* 14.3: "Verum tamen qui omnia mala animae ex corpore putant accidisse, in errore sunt" (CCL 48, 417).

<sup>171</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: "illa [natura humana] [...] tot et tantis tamque inter se contrariis perturbaretur et fluctuaret affectibus, qualis in paradiso ante peccatum, licet in corpore animali esset, utique non fuit" (CCL 48, 433).

<sup>172</sup> See *ciu.* 13.13: "Nam postea quam praecepti facta transgressio est, confestim gratia deserente diuina de corporum suorum nuditate confusi sunt [...] Iam quippe anima libertate in peruersum propria delectata et Deo dedignata seruire pristino corporis seruitio destituebatur [...]. Tunc ergo coepit caro concupiscere aduersus spiritum" (CCL 48, 395).

<sup>173</sup> See *ciu.* 14.17.

### 3.3.2. *Mortality and Death*

By their transgression, the first humans were also justly barred from the tree of life, thus subjecting human nature to corruption and, consequently, to death.<sup>174</sup> As a result, humanity would now face death – not immediately, but at a later time, when the body, worn down by age and exhausted by the passage of time, would finally die.<sup>175</sup> The body would no longer serve as a dwelling place for the soul, which would then depart.

Upon death, the body returns to the earth, as God declared: ‘dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’<sup>176</sup> God is the life of the soul,<sup>177</sup> and although the human soul is indeed immortal, one can still speak of the death of the soul when it is abandoned by God. The complete death of a human being, encompassing both soul and body, occurs when a soul forsaken by God departs from the body.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12: “illa [natura humana] duorum primorum hominum praeu-  
aricatione mutata est, ut tantae corruptioni, quantam uidemus atque sentimus,  
et per hanc subiaceret et morti” (CCL 48, 433). See A. DUPONT, “The Anti-Pe-  
lagian Context of *De ciuitate Dei*: Human Mortality in Books XIV & XXII,”  
in: A. DUPONT, G. PARTOENS (eds.), *Augustine of Hippo’s De ciuitate Dei: Content,  
Transmission, and Interpretations*, (Studia Patristica 127), Leuven/Paris/Bristol (CT):  
Peeters, 2021, 23-48.

<sup>175</sup> See *ciu.* 13.23: “[...] a ligno tamen uitae prohibitus traditus esset tempori  
uetustatique finiendus in ea dumtaxat uita, quam [...] posset in paradiso nisi pec-  
casset habere perpetuam. [...] ‘Qua die ederitis ex illo, morte moriemini’ [Gen.  
2:17]; non ideo debet absurdum uideri, quia non eo prorsus die a corpore sunt  
soluti, quo cibum interdictum mortiferumque sumpserunt. Eo quippe die mutata  
in deterius uitiatque natura atque a ligno uitae separatione iustissima mortis in  
eis etiam corporalis necessitas facta est” (CCL 48, 406).

<sup>176</sup> “But when Adam’s soul itself foresook his body, corrupted and decayed  
with age, there came into the experience of man the other death of which God had  
spoken while He was still punishing his sin: ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt  
thou return’ [Gen. 3:19]” (*ciu.* 13.15; tr. Dyson, p. 557). “Cum uero corpus anima  
ipsa deseruit aetate corruptum et senectute confectum, uenit in experimentum  
mors altera, de qua Deus peccatum adhuc puniens homini dixerat: Terra es et in  
terram ibis [Gen. 3:19]” (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>177</sup> See *ciu.* 13.15: “[mors] quae fit cum anima deseritur sua uita, quod illi  
Deus est” (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>178</sup> See *ciu.* 13.2: “Sed de ipso genere mortis uideo mihi paulo diligentius  
disserendum. Quamuis enim anima humana ueraciter immortalis perhibeatur,  
habet tamen quamdam etiam ipsa mortem suam. Nam ideo dicitur immortalis,

The first death of the soul, its abandonment by God, occurred immediately after the Fall.<sup>179</sup> Adam experienced this when God questioned him, asking where he was.<sup>180</sup> Thus, as a consequence of the Fall, the entire human being would endure this first death: body and soul both die.<sup>181</sup>

This first death is, in essence, an evil, for death is the opposite of life,<sup>182</sup> and life itself is a good.<sup>183</sup> Moreover, death is an evil as it is the consequence of sin.<sup>184</sup> However, death is not only the result of sin but also God's just punishment for it. In this sense, death is also just, as it aligns with God's will, who ordains all things well, ensuring that not everything is tainted by sin following the first transgression.<sup>185</sup> While the first death is the fate of all, with the help of God's grace, the second

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quia modo quodam quantulocumque non desinit uiuere atque sentire; corpus autem ideo mortale, quoniam deseri omni uita potest nec per se ipsum aliquatenus uiuit. Mors igitur animae fit, cum eam deserit Deus, sicut corporis, cum id deserit anima. Ergo utriusque rei, id est totius hominis, mors est, cum anima Deo deserta deserit corpus. Ita enim nec ex Deo uiuit ipsa nec corpus ex ipsa" (CCL 48, 385).

<sup>179</sup> See *ciu.* book 13, esp. *ciu.* 13.2, where Augustine discusses the death of man.

<sup>180</sup> See *ciu.* 13.15: "Nam in eo, quod inoboediens motus in carne animae inoboedientis exortus est, propter quem pudenda texerunt, sensa est mors una, in qua deseruit animam Deus. Ea significata est uerbis eius, quando timore dementi sese abscondenti homini dixit: Adam, ubi es? [Gen. 3:9] non utique ignorando quaerens, sed increpando admonens, ut attenderet ubi esset, in quo Deus non esset" (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>181</sup> See *ciu.* 13.15: "ut ex his duabus mors illa prima, quae totius est hominis, compleretur, quam secunda in ultimo sequitur, nisi homo per gratiam liberetur" (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>182</sup> See *ciu.* 13.4: "mors, quam uitae constat esse contrariam" (CCL 48, 388).

<sup>183</sup> See *ciu.* 13.2: "uita qualiscumque aliquod bonum est, dolor autem malum" (CCL 48, 386). Thus, the second death is likewise considered an evil: the body experiences pain, and, through the body, the soul also suffers.

<sup>184</sup> See *ciu.* 13.4: "Tunc enim mors est acquisita peccando" (CCL 48, 388).

<sup>185</sup> See *ciu.* 11.23: "et quia peccatum est, non ideo cuncta sunt impleta peccatis, cum bonorum longe maior numerus in caelestibus suae naturae ordinem seruet; nec mala uoluntas, quia naturae ordinem seruare noluit, ideo iusti Dei leges omnia bene ordinantis effugit" (CCL 48, 342), says Augustine about the celestials and with an appeal to Origen.

death may be averted.<sup>186</sup> Although death is an evil,<sup>187</sup> the righteous can still make good use of it.<sup>188</sup> Augustine demonstrates this through the example of the martyrs, showing that, by God's grace, death can become an instrument to overcome sin and enter into life.<sup>189</sup> By choosing to die rather than sin, the martyrs achieved eternal life. In the case of the righteous and martyrs, death was thus transformed from a punishment for sin into an instrument of justice, a pathway to life.<sup>190</sup> Therefore, while the first death befalls all, it can be a good for the righteous, though it remains an evil for the wicked.<sup>191</sup>

The first death, where soul and body are separated and the soul is forsaken by God, generally leads to the second death. Unlike the first death, which separates body and soul, the second death reunites them to endure eternal punishment. This state is called 'death' because both the soul and the body no longer partake in life: the soul is

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<sup>186</sup> See *ciu.* 13.11: "Agi tamen potest in adiutorio gratiae Redemptoris nostri, ut saltem secundam mortem declinare possimus. Illa est enim grauior et omnium malorum pessima, quae non fit separatione animae et corporis, sed in aeternam poenam potius utriusque complexu. [...] Numquam enim erit homini peius in morte, quam ubi erit mors ipsa sine morte" (CCL 48, 394).

<sup>187</sup> See *ciu.* 13.4: "non quia mors bonum aliquod facta est, quae antea malum fuit" (CCL 48, 388).

<sup>188</sup> See *ciu.* 13.5: "Ac per hoc lex quidem bona est, quia prohibitio est peccati; mors autem mala, quia stipendium est peccati; sed quemadmodum iniustitia male utitur non tantum malis, uerum etiam bonis: ita iustitia bene non tantum bonis, sed etiam malis. Hinc fit, ut et mali male lege utantur, quamuis sit lex bonum, et boni bene moriantur, quamuis sit mors malum" (CCL 48, 389).

<sup>189</sup> See *ciu.* 13.4: "Factum est per illorum culpam, ut ueniretur in poenam; fit per istorum poenam, ne ueniat in culpam; non quia mors bonum aliquod facta est, quae antea malum fuit; sed tantam Deus fidei praestitit gratiam, ut mors, quam uitae constat esse contrariam, instrumentum fieret, per quod transiretur ad uitam" (CCL 48, 388).

<sup>190</sup> See *ciu.* 13.4: "Nunc uero maiore et mirabiliore gratia Saluatoris in usus iustitiae peccati poena conuersa est [...] Sic per ineffabilem Dei misericordiam et ipsa poena uitiorum transit in arma uirtutis, et fit iusti meritum etiam supplicium peccatoris. Tunc enim mors est acquisita peccando, nunc impletur iustitia moriendo" (CCL 48, 388).

<sup>191</sup> See *ciu.* 13.2: "De prima igitur corporis morte dici potest, quod bonis bona sit, malis mala; secunda uero sine dubio sicut nullorum bonorum est, ita nulli bona" (CCL 48, 386).

separated from God, the source of life, and the body suffers unending torment.<sup>192</sup>

The second death, like the first, is an evil – indeed, the ultimate evil,<sup>193</sup> – because this death is without end; it cannot even be concluded by another death.<sup>194</sup> In no state is a person more subject to death; it is a death without cessation. While the first death can be considered good if one makes proper use of it, the second death remains an unmitigated evil for all who experience it.<sup>195</sup> Not all will undergo the second death; by God's grace, humanity can be freed from it.<sup>196</sup> For in His justice, God can transform the first death into something good, so that, with divine grace, a righteous individual may use the first death as a means to attain life,<sup>197</sup> thus averting the second death.<sup>198</sup> Such is the case for those belonging to the City of God. Conversely, those outside the City of God fall prey to this unending second death.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> See *ciu.* 19.28: "misera sempiterna, quae mors etiam secunda dicitur, quia nec anima ibi uiuere dicenda est, quae a uita Dei alienata erit, nec corpus, quod aeternis doloribus subiacebit" (CCL 48, 698).

<sup>193</sup> See *ciu.* 13.11: "Numquam enim erit homini peius in morte, quam ubi erit mors ipsa sine morte" (CCL 48, 394).

<sup>194</sup> See *ciu.* 19.28: "ac per hoc ideo durior ista secunda mors erit, quia finire morte non poterit" (CCL 48, 698). See also *ciu.* 13.11: "mors ipsa sine morte" (CCL 48, 394).

<sup>195</sup> See *ciu.* 13.2.

<sup>196</sup> See *ciu.* 13.11.

<sup>197</sup> See *ciu.* 13.4: "Factum est [...] transiretur ad uitam" (CCL 48, 388), quoted above.

<sup>198</sup> See above, *ciu.* 13.15: "secunda in ultimo sequitur, nisi homo per gratiam liberetur" (CCL 48, 396). See also *ciu.* 13.11: "Agi tamen potest in adiutorio gratiae Redemptoris nostri, ut saltem secundam mortem declinare possimus" (CCL 48, 394). See also *ciu.* 13.3: "A quo peccati uinculo si per Mediatoris Christi gratiam soluuntur infantes, hanc solam mortem perpeti possunt, quae animam seiungit a corpore; in secundam uero illam sine fine poenalem liberati a peccati obligatione non transeunt" (CCL 48, 387).

<sup>199</sup> See *ciu.* 19.28: "Eorum autem, qui non pertinent ad istam ciuitatem Dei, erit e contrario misera sempiterna, quae mors etiam secunda dicitur" (CCL 48, 698).



### 3.3.3. *Consequences for Posterity*

The human condition was irrevocably altered after the Fall: *sponte deprauatus*,<sup>200</sup> man had willingly become depraved, and through his sin, human nature had been vitiated.<sup>201</sup> Following the eating of the forbidden fruit, the first humans were duly punished: the severity of their transgression led to a condemnation that involved a deterioration of human nature.<sup>202</sup> This punishment (*poenaliter*) for sin was imposed on the first humans who had committed the transgression and was transmitted through human nature (*naturaliter*) to all their descendants.<sup>203</sup> Both the corrupted nature and the consequent punishment were thereby passed down through successive generations.<sup>204</sup> The condemnation of the original human pair extended to all their descendants, for in the first man, from whom all would descend, all humanity was already present in *semine* at the time of the original condemnation.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> *Ciu.* 13.14 (CCL 48, 395-6).

<sup>201</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: “natura [...] propter peccatum uitata” (CCL 48, 395).

<sup>202</sup> See *ciu.* 14.12, where Augustine elucidates the reasons for the grievous nature of the transgression committed by the first humans: it was a straightforward precept, easy to remember, and its observance was uncomplicated, as desire had not yet opposed the will. See *ciu.* 14.12: “Hoc itaque de uno cibi genere non edendo, ubi aliorum tanta copia subiacebat, tam leue praeceptum ad obseruandum, tam breue ad memoria retinendum, ubi praesertim nondum uoluntati cupiditas resistebat, quod de poena transgressionis postea subsecutum est, tanto maiore iniustitia uiolatum est, quanto faciliore posset obseruantia custodiri” (CCL 48, 434). In *ciu.* 14.15, Augustine provides two additional reasons: in addition to being a simple precept that was easy to remember and observe, it constituted a violation of a directive from the highest authority, namely, that of God. Furthermore, it was a precept accompanied by the prospect of the most severe penalties for its violation. See *ciu.* 14.15: “Vbi enim magna est inoboedientiae poena proposita et res a Creatore facilis imperata, quisnam satis explicet, quantum malum sit non oboedire in re facili et tantae potestatis imperio et tanto terrente supplicio?” (CCL 48, 437).

<sup>203</sup> See *ciu.* 13.3: “Pro magnitudine quippe culpae illius naturam damnatio mutauit in peius, ut, quod poenaliter praecessit in peccantibus hominibus primis, etiam naturaliter sequeretur in nascentibus ceteris” (CCL 48, 386).

<sup>204</sup> *Ciu.* 13.14: “sponte deprauatus iustequē damnatus deprauatos damnatosque generauit” (CCL 48, 395).

<sup>205</sup> See *ciu.* 13.3: “In primo igitur homine per feminam in progeniem transiturum uniuersum genus humanum fuit, quando illa coniugum copula diuinam sententiam suae damnationis exceptit” (CCL 48, 387).

Indeed, in the *semen* of the first man, all future generations of humankind were contained; and these generations inherited human nature not as it was originally created, but as it had been altered, i.e., diminished, as a result of sin and the ensuing punishment. Thus, from generation to generation, human beings are born with the same deteriorated condition.<sup>206</sup> This deterioration consists of two core elements: mortality, or the necessity of death (*mortis necessitate*), and sinfulness, or the inevitability of sin (*obligatione peccati*).<sup>207</sup> The inevitability of physical death is a characteristic of all men born since that time.<sup>208</sup> Alongside this compulsion towards death, the body also suffers from a rebelliousness against the will.<sup>209</sup> Humanity endures perpetual struggle with rebellious limbs, which no longer obey the will due to desire and the necessity of death.<sup>210</sup> This degenerated nature is passed on to all posterity, establishing the corruption of human nature as permanent.

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<sup>206</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: “Omnes enim fuimus in illo uno, quando omnes fuimus ille unus, qui per feminam lapsus est in peccatum, quae de illo facta est ante peccatum. Nondum erat nobis singillatim creata et distributa forma, in qua singuli uiueremus; sed iam erat natura seminalis, ex qua propagaremur; qua scilicet propter peccatum uitiatata et uinculo mortis obstricta iustaeque damnata non alterius conditionis homo ex homine nasceretur” (CCL 48, 395). See also *ciu.* 13.3: “[...] et quod homo factus est, non cum crearetur, sed cum peccaret et puniretur, hoc genuit, quantum quidem attinet ad peccati et mortis originem” (CCL 48, 387).

<sup>207</sup> See also *ciu.* 14.1: “Diximus [...] neque hoc genus fuisse in singulis quibusque moriturum, nisi duo primi, quorum creatus est unus ex nullo, altera ex illo, id inobedientia meruissent, a quibus admissum est tam grande peccatum, ut in deterius eo natura mutaretur humana, etiam in posteros obligatione peccati et mortis necessitate transmissa” (CCL 48, 414).

<sup>208</sup> See also *ciu.* 13.23: “iustissima mortis in eis etiam corporalis necessitas facta est cum qua nos necessitate nati sumus” (CCL 48, 406).

<sup>209</sup> See *ciu.* 13.13: “Tunc ergo coepit caro concupiscere aduersus spiritum, cum qua controuersia nati sumus, trahentes originem mortis et in membris nostris uitiatatae natura contentionem eius siue uictoriam de prima praeuaricatione gestantes” (CCL 48, 395).

<sup>210</sup> See *ciu.* 13.3: “sed hactenus in eo natura humana uitiatata atque mutata est, ut repugnantem pateretur in membris inobedientiam concupiscendi et obstringeretur necessitate moriendi, atque ita id, quod uitio poenae factus est, id est obnoxios peccato mortique generaret” (CCL 48, 387).

### 3.3.4. *Consequences for the World*

All humankind would have remained in eternal happiness if the first men had not, through their sin, transmitted the evil they introduced to their descendants.<sup>211</sup> The presence of evil in the world is thus the consequence of humanity's own actions, with mankind introducing evil into the world through sin, and subsequently bearing its weight.<sup>212</sup> From this initial evil arises a succession of calamities for all humanity, each misfortune linked to the suffering it brings. Augustine likens this degenerate origin to a corrupt root.<sup>213</sup> In line with his notion of evil actions springing from a malevolent will,<sup>214</sup> he draws the following analogy: just as a corrupt root yields a corrupt tree that bears corrupt fruit, so too did the vitiation of nature –initiated by the Fall– give rise to the sinfulness that accounts for the transgressions of subsequent human generations.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> See *ciu.* 14.10: “Quam igitur felices erant et nullis agitabantur perturbationibus animorum, nullis corporum laedebantur incommodis: tam felix uniuersa societas esset humana, si nec illi malum, quod etiam in posteros traicerent, nec quisquam ex eorum stirpe iniquitate committeret, quod damnatione reciperet” (CCL48, 430-1). In addition to the fall into sin by the first humans, Augustine presents a second possibility that could have disturbed humanity's happiness: the notion that a descendant might commit an evil for which they would be damned.

<sup>212</sup> See *ciu.* 22.1: “quae [mala] omnino nulla essent, nisi natura mutabilis [...] peccando ea [mala] sibi ipsa fecisset” (CCL 48, 806).

<sup>213</sup> See *ciu.* 13.14: “Ac per hoc a liberi arbitrii malo usu series calamitatis huius exorta est, quae humanum genus origine deprauata, uelut radice corrupta, usque ad secundae mortis exitium, quae non habet finem, solis eis exceptis qui per Dei gratiam liberantur, miseriarum connexione perducit” (CCL 48, 395-6). See also *ciu.* 14.28: “quando quidem uniuersa massa tamquam in uitata radice damnata est” (CCL 48, 450).

<sup>214</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “Non enim ad malum opus perueniretur, nisi praecessisset uoluntas mala” (CCL 48, 434).

<sup>215</sup> See *ciu.* 14.13: “Neque enim fieret ille fructus malus nisi ab arbore mala [Mt. 7:18]. Vt autem esset arbor mala, contra naturam factum est, quia nisi uitio uoluntatis, quod contra naturam est, non utique fieret” (CCL 48, 434).

## 4. GOD'S REACTION TO EVIL

### 4.1. God, Creator of Good, Undoes Evil

God is good and the creator of all good things, not of evil. Yet He foresaw that evil could arise, along with its consequences.<sup>216</sup> Every nature created by God is therefore inherently good. Evil, whether in fallen angels or in humanity, originates in the will, which becomes evil by its own choice. This evil begins as an internal corruption within the will but manifests through wrongful actions. Regarding the evil will, God, in His supreme justice as *ordinator*, reestablishes order: He reverses the process through which evil arose, making good use of the evil will, since evil originated from the misuse of good natures.<sup>217</sup> God, as the good creator of all natures, aids and rewards a will that remains good, and He turns away from and condemns a will that becomes evil. In this way, He orders every will, good or evil.<sup>218</sup>

#### 4.1.1. *Why God Allows Evil*

God did not compel sin but had foreknowledge of it. Although it was within God's power to prevent angels and humans from falling, He chose not to deprive them of this possibility, allowing them to comprehend the different consequences of their pride versus God's

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<sup>216</sup> God could make the separation between good and apostate angels because he had prior knowledge of this internal and still hidden evil, see *ciu.* 11.19: "ipse diuidere potuit cui etiam futurum non naturae, sed uoluntatis malum occultum aut incertum esse non potuit" (CCL 48, 338). It is not clear why Augustine makes this remark. It seems that by referring to God's foreknowledge, Augustine wants to indicate that the separation could occur before evil could become effective.

<sup>217</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17: "Sed Deus sicut naturarum bonarum optimus creator est, ita malarum uoluntatum iustissimus ordinator; ut, cum illae male utuntur naturis bonis, ipse bene utatur etiam uoluntatibus malis" (CCL48, 336).

<sup>218</sup> See *ciu.* 14.26: "Verumtamen omnipotenti Deo, summo ac summe bono creatori omnium naturarum, uoluntatum autem bonarum adiutori et remuneratori, malarum autem relictore et damnatori, utrarumque ordinatori, non defuit utique consilium, quo certum numerum ciuium in sua sapientia praedestinatum etiam ex damnato genere humano suae ciuitatis impleret [...]" (CCL 48, 450).

protection. This would make it evident to them how much evil pride brings and how much good God's grace provides.<sup>219</sup>

With the angels, God foresaw that some would choose apostasy, corrupting their inherently good nature. He did not deprive them of this possibility, deeming it more powerful and ultimately better to allow good to emerge from evil than to prevent evil altogether.<sup>220</sup> This position taken by Augustine has inspired the title of the present article.

In the case of humanity, God similarly foresaw that man would sin by breaking His law and forsaking Him. Yet He did not deny man free will, foreseeing the good He could bring from man's sins.<sup>221</sup> God, Who foresaw man's fall, nonetheless allowed him to be tempted by the devil's wickedness. Although God knew man would lose to the devil, He was also certain that the devil would be overcome by the descendants of the first humans, thereby bringing greater honor to the saints.<sup>222</sup>

#### 4.1.2. *God Makes Good Use of Everything, Even of Evil*

God, who is absolutely good, creates only good things. All natures created by God are therefore good. However, through the evil

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<sup>219</sup> See *ciu.* 14.27: "Ita factum est, ut nec Deum aliquid futurorum lateret, nec praesciendo quemquam peccare compelleret et, quid inter propriam cuiusque praesumptionem et suam tuitionem, angelicae et humanae rationali creaturae consequenti experientia demonstraret. Quis enim audeat credere aut dicere, ut neque angelus neque homo caderet, in Dei potestate non fuisse? Sed hoc eorum potestati maluit non auferre atque ita, et quantum mali eorum superbia et quantum boni sua gratia ualeret, ostendere" (CCL 48, 451).

<sup>220</sup> See *ciu.* 22.1: "cum praesciret angelos quosdam per elationem, qua ipsi sibi ad beatam uitam sufficere uellent, tanti boni desertores futuros, non eis ademit hanc potestatem, potentius et melius esse iudicans etiam de malis bene facere quam mala esse non sinere" (CCL 48, 806).

<sup>221</sup> See *ciu.* 22.1: "quem [hominem] similiter cum praeuaricatione legis Dei per Dei desertionem peccaturum esse praesciret, nec illi [homini] ademit liberi arbitrii potestatem, simul praeuidens, quid boni de malo eius esset ipse facturus" (CCL 48, 807).

<sup>222</sup> See *ciu.* 14.27: "Cum igitur huius futuri casus humani Deus non esset ignarus, cur eum non sineret inuidi angeli malignitate temptari? Nullo modo quidem quod uinceretur incertus, sed nihilo minus praescius quod ab eius semine adiuto sua gratia idem ipse diabolus fuerat sanctorum gloria maiore uincendus" (CCL 48, 451).

will, good natures have been misused and thereby vitiated. The concept of a just God presumes belief in divine order, wherein wrongdoing incurs punishment, but even evil<sup>223</sup> and evil wills<sup>224</sup> are used for good purposes. Accordingly, God made effective use of the devil, who had so corrupted himself through his initial evil act that he was incapable of any good will. God permitted humanity to be tempted by the devil so that man could overcome evil by resisting temptation and recognize the malevolence that had already taken root in him.

Temptation had two potential outcomes: either man, with God's assistance, would attain goodness by overcoming the devil, or he would fall into evil by arrogantly and independently yielding to temptation without God's help, thus alienating himself from God.<sup>225</sup> Even in paradise, man could not live a good life without God's aid. However, he had the capacity to choose evil, but in doing so, he would forfeit happiness and face just punishment.<sup>226</sup>

#### 4.1.3. God's Reaction to Man's Fall: Just Punishment, and Restoration

By eating the forbidden fruit, the first man had broken God's commandment and thus incurred His punishment. This transgression also introduced the evil that mankind would thereafter face. God's

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<sup>223</sup> See *ciu.* 22.1: "potentius et melius esse iudicans etiam de malis bene facere quam mala esse non sinere" (CCL 48, 806).

<sup>224</sup> See *ciu.* 11.17, regarding the devil: "Sed Deus sicut naturarum bonarum optimus creator est, ita malarum uoluntatum iustissimus ordinator; ut, cum illae male utuntur naturis bonis, ipse bene utatur etiam uoluntatibus malis" (CCL 48, 336-7).

<sup>225</sup> See *ciu.* 14.27: "Quando quidem sic erat institutus, ut, si de adiutorio Dei fideret bonus homo, malum angelum uinceret; si autem creatorem atque adiutorem Deum superbe sibi placendo desereret, uinceretur; meritum bonum habens in adiuta diuinitus uoluntate recta, malum uero in deserente Deum uoluntate peruersa" (CCL 48, 450-1).

<sup>226</sup> See *ciu.* 14.27: "ita bene uiuere sine adiutorio Dei etiam in paradiso non erat in potestate; erat autem in potestate male uiuere, sed beatitudine non permansura et poena iustissima secutura" (CCL 48, 451). Augustine compares this to a person who cannot live in the body without food, but, like a person who commits suicide, can choose not to live in his body. See *ibid.*: "Nam sicut in hac carne uiuere sine adiumentis alimentorum in potestate non est, non autem in ea uiuere in potestate est, quod faciunt qui se ipsos necant".

response to this is threefold: first, executing the punishment He had decreed for disobedience – namely, that man would die. Next, God addresses the evil that man unleashed, on one hand by His grace to save some from the second death, and on the other, by protecting righteous people from the evils afflicting the world. In doing so, God preserves the order of creation, allowing man to discern the difference between good and evil, between God's grace and human sin, and to witness their respective consequences.

Death was a just punishment for the first man's willful violation of God's commandment, a penalty decreed without distinction between body and soul. Bodily death was not part of God's original design, for He had not intended mortality at creation. However, after the Fall, God imposed physical death on humanity as a just recompense for sin.<sup>227</sup> This was enacted by removing man from paradise and the tree of life; thus, death occurs when the body separates from the soul, its life-giving principle.<sup>228</sup> The death of the soul, however, was self-inflicted: man distanced himself from God by his disobedience, and God affirmed this by likewise turning away from him.<sup>229</sup> Unless man is redeemed by divine grace, this first death, encompassing both body and soul, ultimately leads to the second death.<sup>230</sup> Here, the soul experiences a final, eternal separation from God, and the body, reunited with the soul, endures eternal suffering.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> See *ciu*. 13.15: "Vnde constat [...] ipsam nobis corporis mortem non lege naturae, qua nullam mortem homini Deus fecit, sed merito inflictam esse peccati, quoniam peccatum uindicans Deus dixit homini, in quo tunc omnes eramus: 'Terra es et in terram ibis' [Gen. 3:19]" (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>228</sup> See *ciu*. 13.15: "Neque enim corpus, quod de terra est, rediret in terram nisi sua morte, quae illi accidit, cum deseritur sua uita, id est anima" (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>229</sup> See *ciu*. 13.15: "Qua die me deserueritis per inoboedientiam, deseram uos per iustitiam" (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>230</sup> See *ciu*. 13.15: "ut ex his duabus [animae et corporis] mors illa prima, quae totius est hominis, completeretur, quam secunda in ultimo sequitur, nisi homo per gratiam liberetur" (CCL 48, 396).

<sup>231</sup> See *ciu*. 13.2: "Nam in illa ultima poena ac sempiterna ... recte mors animae dicitur, quia non uiuit ex Deo; ... nec uiuere corpus dicendum est, in quo anima non uiuendi causa est, sed dolendi" (CCL 48, 386).

God, as creator and organizer of all that exists, prevents the corruption of creation's order by the disorder stemming from the first humans' transgression.<sup>232</sup> Humanity, condemned in Adam, emerges from him as from a tainted root; yet, by His grace and according to His plan to establish the City of God,<sup>233</sup> God has extracted part of humanity from their evil state (*erutum malis*) and spared them the punishment of the second death. Had it not been for this grace, they, like the rest of humankind, would have suffered this just penalty for the Fall.<sup>234</sup> Thus, some righteous individuals are saved from the second death and find lasting happiness when the soul, rejoined to the body, is united with God. Through His grace, God undoes the evil of the second death, transforming the Fall's consequences for the better.<sup>235</sup> God, from Whom all human good originates, reverses the misfortune of the Fall, as He who initially created the soul from nothing also recreates it after its fall into sin, preventing it from being irrevocably lost.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> See *ciu.* 14.26: "nec sub illo [Deo] creatore ac dispositore peruersa inordinatio delinquentium rectum peruerteret ordinem rerum" (CCL 48, 450).

<sup>233</sup> See *ciu.* 14.26: "[Deo] non defuit utique consilium, quo certum numerum ciuium in sua sapientia praedestinatum etiam ex damnato genere humano suae ciuitatis impleret, non eos iam meritis, quando quidem uniuersa massa tamquam in uitata radice damnata est, sed gratia discernens [...]" (CCL 48, 450).

<sup>234</sup> See *ciu.* 14.26: "Non enim debita, sed gratuita bonitate tunc se quisque agnoscit erutum malis, cum ab eorum hominum consortio fit immunis, cum quibus illi iuste esset poena communis" (CCL 48, 450).

<sup>235</sup> See *ciu.* 14.1: "Mortis autem regnum in homines usque adeo dominatum est, ut omnes in secundam quoque mortem, cuius nullus est finis, poena debita praecipites ageret, nisi inde quosdam indebita Dei gratia liberaret" (CCL 48, 414).

<sup>236</sup> See *ciu.* 13.15: "ad malum quippe eius [homini] prior est uoluntas eius; ad bonum uero eius prior est uoluntas Creatoris eius; siue ut eam [animam] faceret, quae nulla erat, siue ut reficiat, quia lapsa perierat" (CCL 48, 396). Augustine contrasts the will of God, which precedes all good, with the will of man, which is responsible for evil. He also explains how God created the soul *ex nihilo* (*facere*) and how He restored it (*reficere*) after it was lost due to sin.



## 4.2. God-Loving Man's Attitude towards Evil

In *ciu.* 14.6, Augustine offers an insightful summary of the stance a God-loving man, a citizen of the City of God, should adopt toward evil:

“Therefore, the man who lives according to God and not according to man must be a lover of the good; and it follows from this that he must hate what is evil. Further, since no one is evil by nature, but whoever is evil is evil because of some fault, he who lives according to God has a duty of ‘perfect hatred’ towards those who are evil [Ps. 139:22]. That is, he should not hate the man because of the fault, nor should he love the fault because of the man; rather, he should hate the fault but love the man. And when the fault has been healed there will remain only what he ought to love, and nothing that he ought to hate.”<sup>237</sup>

In this passage, Augustine conveys the following argument: to live according to God is to love God, Who is absolute goodness. Thus, loving God means loving what is good. Since evil is the opposite of good, loving the good necessitates hating evil. This hatred of evil also extends to those who perpetuate it (*malis*), though not to the person himself but to the moral corruption (*uitium*) that degrades his nature. Ultimately, man is not inherently evil but becomes so due to a fault that renders his nature corrupt.

## CONCLUSION

In *De ciuitate Dei*, Augustine presents a mature and nuanced reflection on the existence and origins of evil, especially in books 11-14. He identifies the initial manifestation of evil in the biblical creation

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<sup>237</sup> *Ciu.* 14.6 (tr. Dyson, p. 590): “Quapropter homo, qui secundum Deum, non secundum hominem uiuit, oportet ut sit amator boni; unde fit consequens ut malum oderit. Et quoniam nemo natura, sed quisquis malus est, uitio malus est: perfectum odium debet malis, qui secundum Deum uiuit [cf. Ps. 138:22], ut nec propter uitium oderit hominem nec amet uitium propter hominem, sed oderit uitium, amet hominem. Sanato enim uitio totum quod amare, nihil autem quod debeat odisse remanebit” (CCL 48, 421).

story as the separation of darkness from light. This separation, initiated by the prideful fall of the angels, marked a permanent turning away from God's eternal light. Similarly, Augustine analyzes how evil entered humanity through the devil's influence during the Fall, using untruth and even the solidarity between the first humans to lead them astray.

Augustine contends that no one is inherently evil by nature; rather, anyone who is evil becomes so due to a fault (*nemo natura, sed quisquis malus est, uitio malus est*). The original transgression irreparably damaged human nature, allowing sinfulness to be transmitted to all descendants through this corrupted state (*natura uitata*). As a result, humanity was condemned to death: not only the first death, where the body perishes, and the soul is alienated from God, but also, in principle, the second death, or final separation from God. However, through God's grace, some are saved from this ultimate fate.

Unlike the absolute divide between good and fallen angels, the distinction between good and evil in humans is provisional, as both coexist within society in a *ciuitas permixtum*, where evil, rooted in the world after the fall, serves as a counterpoint to the good. Augustine thus seeks to explain how God engages with evil: it does not originate from Him, yet He allows it, foreseeing that He can bring forth greater good from it, a concept encapsulated in his assertion that God judges it "better to bring good even out of evil than to prevent evil from existing" (*ciu.* 22.1) which inspired the title of our article. Ultimately, through divine grace, those who are good will be saved and granted a place in the *ciuitas Dei*, where an eschatological separation between good and evil will finally be realized. Augustine views evil as a loss of good (*amissio boni*), as a deficiency in the will, not as an independent force; it stems from choosing a lesser good over the absolute good of God, rather than a direct choice for evil.

For Augustine, evil does not always arise from a willful choice to do wrong but often emerges when a lesser good is pursued over the ultimate good, which is God. Falsehood plays a pivotal role in the propagation of evil, which frequently masquerades as good. Yet the absolute good remains untouched by evil, underscoring that the strongest defense against evil lies not merely in choosing the good,

which remains susceptible to human error, but in aligning oneself wholly with the ultimate good. To live according to God's will, Augustine insists, requires a "perfect hatred" for all that is evil. Augustine's anatomy of evil, which exposes the complex reality of evil in human society, remains strikingly relevant to the moral complexities of our world today.

KRISTIAAN VENKEN (first author)

Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven, 3000  
Leuven, Belgium  
kristiaan.venken@kuleuven.be

ANTHONY DUPONT (second author)

Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven, 3000  
Leuven, Belgium  
anthony.dupont@kuleuven.be

