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THE MUTATION OF THE AUGUSTINIAN CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN BODY. CRITICAL LOOK AT THE OVERCOMING OF DUALISM BY MONISM BY A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER?

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ABSTRACT: Between his writings of his youth and those of his maturity, Saint Augustine did not remain constant in the conception of the human body. If the former opposes the body to the soul which transcends it, the latter suppresses this opposition and reconciles them in a monism which will have, through the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, purged the body of its harmful concupiscence. This reflection strives to show that the body, integrated into Augustinian monism, is no longer a component of the ordinary man who is in the empirical world where he satisfies his libido, it is a metaphysical entity specific to angels. It is also a question of showing that this monism, with the hints of a metaphysical totality, lives on the celebration of the death of the material body as the basis of the libido, even though liberals are increasingly thinking of a codification of sex life in a Christian environment, the quest for happiness not excluding the enjoyment of the benefits of libido which is, like faith, one of the essential natural elements on which man bends to rise with joy to God, source of happiness.

Keywords –soul, body, God, dualism, monism

I. INTRODUCTION

Any serious reflection on soul-body relationships in Saint Augustine cannot elude the discontinuity that exists between his thought of youth and that of old age. From the first to the second, there is a proven mutation. He ostensibly shifts from dualism to monism, to the effect of reconciling the soul with the body beyond the empirical world. This monism responds, according to him, to the expectations of Christianity whose deepening of the principles pushed him to abandon dualism under the leadership of an ardent faith and an unwavering love for God, creator of heaven and earth. Convinced, in fact, that the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection allow God to save and perfectly merge the soul with the body after their tumultuous stay on earth, Augustine sees in this union the exquisite expression of a monism which definitively puts an end to the endless quarrels of the latter. The transcendent and divine character of monism, the fruitfulness and perfection of which are thus established by Augustine, does not however hold without raising a question relating to the existence of the ordinary man, who uses his own body to mark his presence in the world or to satisfy his sexual desires. In this vein, we must ask ourselves whether the body, integrated into Augustinian monism, is a component of the ordinary man who experiences the empirical world and satisfies his libido there. In other words, by substituting, from a Christian perspective, monism for dualism, does Augustine not set up a metaphysical totality which sacrifices the real body, the seat of our libido, in the name of an angelic happiness situated outside within our reach?

To answer this question, we will proceed with a philosophical triptych, whose first part highlights the dualistic approach to soul-body relationships, an approach corresponding to the juvenile thought of Saint Augustine; the second accounts for the monist approach as an expression of the philosophical maturity of the Bishop of Hippo; the third is a critique of monism in relation to its metaphysical character and the implications of such an attribute on real man, and in particular on his body as the seat of libido.

II. SAINT AUGUSTINE AND THE DUALIST APPROACH TO SOUL - BODY RELATIONSHIPS: A JUVENILE CONCEPT

In Saint Augustine, author of *Confessions* [Augustine, 1964], the monist conception of soul-body relationships is preceded by a dualistic approach which he attributes to his philosophical immaturity. There follows a proven mutation between his youthful thinking and his senile thinking. In what then precisely does his thought consist?

From the outset, it must be recognized that this thought is the vehicle of a dualistic conception of soul-body relations, a conception adopted in a way by proxy, in view of the plethora of doctrines he has known and which have furnished, from the outside, his mental universe. Indeed, during his adolescence, Augustine did not yet think for himself, since as a good repeater of ideas already constituted in space and time, he almost faithfully took up his predecessors who only saw between the body and the soul conflicting relationships. Neither Plato nor the Neoplatonists, no one considered soul-body relationships other than from a dualistic perspective, especially since the body was, in the latter, demonized, considered the seat of degrading concupiscence and sin. In spite of their methodological differences, all affirm that “the body is only the source of a thousand things to do, causing uproar and confusion [and that] the soul reasons most perfectly when it is not disturbed by hearing, vision or pain, nor any pleasure” [Richir, 1993; p. 30]. Therefore, the young Augustine himself did not distinguish himself from the dualism of his Platonizing or neo-Platonizing predecessors. Out of conformity, he asserted that the body is originally responsible for human misfortunes, and in particular for his childhood debauchery and setbacks. In regret, he will hammer, later, for the attention of God: “I want to remember my past shame and the carnal impurities of my soul. Not that I love them, but in order to love you, my God” [Augustine, 1964; p. 37].

From this perspective, he thinks that under the empire of the body, he forgot God in his youth, forgetting the consequences of which are mental disorder and existential mediocrity. Convinced that the body constrains us to the sensitivity of alienating things that compromise the elevation of our soul towards God, Augustine thinks that “we must absolutely flee these sensitive things and take the greatest care of what, as long as we are in charge of this body, our wings are not immobilized by their glue” [Augustin, 1864-1872; I. 24]. In other words, the body is like this sticky sap which keeps the soul in the shroud of the material world, thus forcing it to lose the flexibility and mobility which allow the latter to transcend it and to escape freely towards the world. spiritual and divine. It is fitting that Jeanne-Marie Roux writes: “In her youth, she says, her condemnation was final. The body is a prison, it encumbers the freedom of the soul: through its intervention, the sensitive exerts on the soul an attraction contrary to the spiritual aspiration which should guide it and, if we abandon ourselves to it, the passions disorder and disorientate the good intentions of the soul. The body must therefore be treated with the greatest suspicion, its requests treated with the greatest caution” [Roux, 2011; pp. 57-58].

Indeed, the young Augustine is convinced, following Plato, that the body is the cemetery of the soul which alone can guarantee the life and happiness of man. Of the body, he only has negative thoughts that reduce him to the bestial part of the human being that must be removed, if we want the survival and happiness of the latter. “From such a perspective, the body is first and foremost a source of worry, a burden, a curse” [Roux, 2011; pp. 54-55]. From the body, the young Augustine therefore has the same aversion that Plato had of the sensitive world, and of the soul, the same admiration he had for the intelligible world. Just like the sensitive world in Plato, the body, for the adolescent Augustine, is the seat of darkness, of absolute evil; he is responsible for the life of debauchery that we lead and which constantly distances us from God. The body is one of the sensitive things whose weight negates our soul's ability to ascend towards God. Therefore, we must abandon this sensitive body so that it no longer has the possibility of immobilizing our soul with its heaviness, of preventing it from accomplishing its spiritual mission. By thus condemning the body, the young Augustine confers at the same time on the soul a total freedom and a blunt spiritual force which allow it as well to oppose systematically to the fatal grievances of the bodily passions as to facilitate its ascent towards the divine world. : “it is through my soul itself that I will ascend to him. I will overcome this force that attaches me to my body and fills my body with life. It is not with her that I can find my God” [Augustine, 1964; p. 209], he says.

In this perspective, the dangerousness of the body is completely consumed by the young Augustine who immediately sets out to set up an anthropology which violently criticizes the human body, as the most formidable obstacle to the achievement of the spiritual mission of blade. Such an anthropology reduces the

human being to the pure, disembodied soul, which is saved only by the desertion of its bodily shell in particular, and of the empirical world in general. The true man is the soul. The body is but an enemy whose objective is the annihilation of the freedom of the soul or its killing. In one of his deepest pleas, the author of the *Soliloques* asks God to come to the aid of his soul taken hostage by the body: "I have only one thing to command you, I do not ' do not know any other: it is to flee entirely from all sensitive things and to take great care, as long as we are in this mortal body, that the wings of your spirit are not stopped by the glue of this world, for we need all their strength and all their activity to fly us from darkness to pure light; this light does not deign to show itself to those who are still locked up in the prison of the body, only insofar as they are able to fly in the air, when this prison breaks or dissolves. So when you are in such a disposition that nothing earthly pleases you, believe me, at the same time, at the same instant, you will see what you want" [Augustine, 1864-1872; p. 136].

In the anthropology of the adolescent Augustine, the body is the root of ignorance and evil, while the soul is the root of wisdom and supreme good. The body knows nothing good and does nothing good. It prevents man from seeking the truth by keeping him in pain and torment. The soul alone knows the truth and the good which it puts into practice, for its own happiness and that of others; it is the luminous source of truth and of the happiness of mankind. Augustine remembers very well, in his distinction of the respective attributes of the body and the soul, the contribution of the great lesson of Cornelius Celsus which he sums up as follows: "I am forced to embrace the opinion of Cornelius Celsus who says that the supreme good is wisdom, and the sovereign evil the pain of the body. The reason he gives does not seem bad to me. Since we are composed, he says, of two parts, that is to say of a soul and a body, and the first part, the soul, is the most perfect, the supreme good must be the perfection of the first part; the sovereign evil, is what is worst in the second. Now, wisdom is what is most perfect in the soul, like pain, what is worst in the body. It can be concluded, I think, without fear of being mistaken, that the supreme good of man is wisdom; the sovereign evil, pain" [Bonnardière, 1986; pp. 135-136].

Another memory that will have marked him in the conceptualization of soul-body relationships is that of Cicero. In Book IV of the *Confessions*, he returns to the central influence that Cicero's published work *Hortensius* had on him. And as he says himself, reading this book got him out of his ignorance and made him want to philosophically seek the truth about the body in its relationship with the soul. "The accustomed order of study had led me to the book of a certain Cicero, whose language almost all scholars admire more than their heart. Now this book contains an exhortation to philosophy; it is titled *Hortensius*" [Augustine, 1964; p. 54], he says. The sought-after truth is thus found, not on the side of the speculations without any real rational basis which he had already gleaned here and there during his childhood, but on the side of God, the renowned embodiment of Truth. For him, to philosophize now consisted of placing his reason in the search for God, because it is from this rational quest for the divine that the true relationship of soul to body will ultimately emerge. In other words, reading Cicero was, in many ways, the distant trigger for Augustine's conversion to Christianity: "reading, he says, changed my feelings; she turned to you, Lord, my prayers; my wishes and desires became quite different. All my vain hopes suddenly lost their value to me, and I longed for immortal wisdom with incredible ardour"[Augustine, 1964; p. 54].

In short, in *Les Confessions*, Saint Augustine draws up a very negative assessment of the body as he experienced it from a young age, and above all, as it is described and interpreted by the theorists who preceded it. Thus, the opposition he establishes between body and soul is not much different from that which Christians establish between hell and heaven. Body and soul are, so to speak, originally in an antagonistic relationship like that which separates evil from good, suffering from joy, night from day. The young philosopher was now preoccupied with knowing how he will get his soul out of this hellish situation, to place it in a sphere where it will enjoy the fullness of its spirituality. To remedy the problem, he believes that a life conforming to the requirements of the Holy Scriptures is the best solution, because it allows man to have not only a much deeper knowledge of soul-body relationships, but also the possibility of envisioning a monism that unites them perfectly after death, and of which God is the maker. His youthful thoughts therefore end on a note of hope on going beyond classical dualism by a monism of soul-body relationships. This hope is underpinned by an unwavering adherence of the young philosopher to the Christian doctrine of the mysteries of the Incarnation and of the Resurrection, an adhesion which also marks the beginning of a philosophical maturation which consists in going to the discovery of the truth of body and soul by oneself. Hence the relevance of this parable of Lucretia: "Just as a child's body is tender and frail, so his walk is uncertain, so the accompanying thought is weak. Then when

the forces have increased with age, the reflection also grows and the power of the spirit increases” [Lucretia, 1878; p. 102].

III. SAINT AUGUSTINE AND THE MONIST APPROACH TO SOUL-BODY RELATIONSHIPS: A PERCEPTION OF MATURITY

The monistic approach to soul-body relationships is logically a perception of maturity that contrasts its youthful approach. This philosophical maturity of Saint Augustine coincides with his conversion to Christianity, and in particular with a deep grasp of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, these mysteries being understood as the plan, conceived and concealed first of all by God, to save man, then revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, at a young age, Augustine did not have a thorough knowledge of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection. He knew that if God gave life to his son Jesus Christ after his crucifixion, this Risen One could only live as a pure Spirit, and not as a being with a real body. So he thought that when a man dies, his physical body is gone for good. The reality of the resuscitated body seemed to him quite doubtful, given the totally deconstructive character of Platonic and Neo-Platonic discourses. However, the discourse of the Gospel was quite different, and it had to be imbued with it to flush out the truth after which the risen body really remains, does not turn into an abstraction. This calls into question the irreducibility of classical dualism and suggests, from the perspective of the Gospel, the possibility of a monism that reconciles the soul with the real body after death. Such a reconciliation is all the more possible since during the resurrection God totally purifies the body of its impurities, of its harmful turbulences, and raises it to the same level of perfection as the learned soul. Jeanne Marie Roux concisely sums up this maturation of Augustinian thought: “If Augustine recognized in his early works that the body had to be resuscitated, he qualified this fact by specifying that this purified body could only be “spiritual”, the materiality of the resuscitated body then seemed to him highly problematic. However, it then appeared to him that by such a doctrine he was contradicting the Gospel, where Christ does speak of the resurrection of bodies. Moreover, God incarnated, he gave a body to his son! According to Augustine of maturity, it is therefore that a harmonious union of body and soul is possible, that it is indeed incarnate humanity that God intends to save” [Roux, 2011; p. 59].

The resurrection of the body retains its concreteness and gives it a value that it does not have in the dualists who treat it with disdain. This concreteness and value are so certain that God himself did not send his son, Jesus Christ, to earth as a pure spirit; the latter arrived there with a body, without which he would be invisible and lack enough to really mark his presence among men. Even crucified, he was resurrected with his material body. “It is visible and proper flesh, says Augustine, that we must undoubtedly believe the resurrection” [Roux, 2011; p. 60]. The ignorance of the reality of the resuscitated body would, according to him, arise from the pure and simple pride of our dualist philosophers who want, from his lust, to make him feel guilty to the point of disqualifying him from their respective anthropologies. But they forget that by resuscitating the body, God rids it of its concupiscence and preserves its materiality.

Indeed, it is necessary to be convinced that the monism of Augustine makes it possible to transcend dualism and to sign, on the altar of Christianity, the act of marriage between two substances purified by God, namely the soul and the body, since the saved soul only survives by incarnating, that is to say by integrating the body which was also saved. By the double divine action, namely the Incarnation and the Resurrection, the body recovers its letters of nobility within Christianity, the slave of yesterday becomes the free man who must be treated with the same attention as his master of 'yesterday. In other words, before God, body and soul have the same dignity and all need each other to survive: there is no resurrection without an incarnation, nor an incarnation without a resurrection. If during their stay on earth they come to be opposed, this opposition is not to be considered as an original and absolute given; it is rather an accident of historical course caused by the men (Adam and Eve) who committed the original sin by refusing to respect the Word of God. As a result, the body rebelled against the soul and the soul lost control of the body to the point of sinking into the destabilizing passions of the latter. This is to say that in the plan of God, soul and body were condemned to a harmonious and non-conflicting life, eternally. And to reconnect with such harmony, they must go through the ordeal of death which allows God to purify them again, in order to put them back together for eternity. This is what Augustine emphasizes with conviction: ‘The will therefore only truly enjoys free will when it is not a slave to vices and sins. This had been the gift of God: man lost it through his own fault; and only the one who gave it to him can

return it. So the Truth said, "When the Son delivers you, then you will be truly free". It is like saying: "When the Son has saved you, then you will be truly saved". He is indeed our liberator, because he is our savior" [Augustine, 1864-1872; XIV, XI, 1].

In the meantime, we realize that, in Augustine, God is not the root of evil in the world: it is rather the man who, by abuse of will, creates evil by derogating from divine laws. He clearly shows in Book XIII of *Confessions* that the evil inherent in the passions of the soul or of the body participates in original sin. In *La Cité de Dieu*, he is even more explicit when he affirms: "the existence of evil in the world does not come from the positive will of God but from the fallen will of man since the sin of Adam " [Augustine, 1864-1872; p. 357]. For him, "God, [...] created the upright man, and therefore with good will" [Augustine, 1864-1872; p. 195]. It would therefore be a mistake to think that a man is naturally bad because he naturally has a bad body. At birth, he is as good as his body. He only becomes so when his free will makes the suicidal decision to defy the word of God. Contrary to what dualists think, the body poses no danger to the soul before original sin. The body is not inherently bad, and its resurrection proves that it is capable of good.

"There is no resurrection without an incarnation, nor an incarnation without a resurrection", we said above. This logically implies that the soul and the body form an organic whole in which the soul animates and vivifies the body, while the latter informs it through its senses [Balklouche, 2006]. Man is a unity composed of soul and body, so that a soul without a body would be an abstraction, and a body without a soul would be a vulgar object devoid of meaning or spirit like other inanimate objects in the world. In this light, dualism is obsolete, and monism implies that "There is no longer a soul external to the body, if by that is meant a higher spirit which would live outside the body. In man, soul and body are all equal and one is neither superior nor external to the other. They are all the indivisible parts of man and none of these parts is privileged. According to Sartre, "the problem of the body and its relations with consciousness is often obscured by the fact that we first pose the body as a certain thing having its own laws and capable of being defined from the outside, whereas 'we reach consciousness through the type of intimate intuition that is proper to it'" [Teguezem, 2019; p. 229].

Indeed, in the Christian perspective defended by Augustine, monism is such that "the quest for a pure, disembodied spirituality misses the specificity of the human being. Man is not reduced to his soul or his body; it is an organic whole whose constituent elements are soul and body" [Teguezem, 2019; p. 229]. The introduction of monism corresponds well to the Augustinian logic according to which "the soul and the body form an indivisible whole and that the existence of man is a synthetic and dynamic totality beyond which we cannot really define" [Teguezem, 2019; p. 233]. The whole of man is necessarily organic, that is, the unity of soul and body is synthetic. Thus, we must define man in relation to his mind, his body, his physical and human environment, his relations with others, etc. As Sartre said so well, and although from an atheist perspective contrary to Augustine's Christian one, "the existence of someone forms a whole which cannot be divided: the inside and the outside, the subjective and the objective, [...] necessarily resonate with one another, because they are aspects of the same totality" [Sartre, 1976; p. 176].

As we can see, monism constitutes, for Augustine, a fairly relevant victory over dualism, since it is part of a logic of totalization which necessarily links the soul and the body before the birth and after the death of the man. And the subject of this totalization is not man, but God the creator and governor of all things. Monism is presented, so to speak, not only as a gift from God, but also as the sacred expression of the divine power which consists in creating man by vertically imposing an internal and necessary connection to his two fundamental components, to know the soul and the body. The sacredness of monism therefore invites us to recognize the existence of a God to whom we owe perpetual love and fidelity, if we want to avoid its rupture and promote its sustainability, a pledge of our happiness on earth and in heaven. Faith in God then intervenes as the life-giving source of monism and of our person. We must be grateful to God, since he "took on the aspect of a servant for the salvation of men" [Jaspers, 1994; pp. 213-214]. Monism is inseparable from God its maker, and our role as humans is to lead a life according to his Word in order to fully enjoy the virtues of this monism. Hence the need to live in "contenance", asceticism, because, according to Augustine, the lack of chastity is a vice which consists in living to the rhythm of passions which dangerously compromise the sustainability of monism as perfect expression of the harmony between our soul and our body. In short, "far from substituting evil for evil, [contenance] proposes to cure evil with good, [to] repress and cure all the delights of concupiscence contrary to the delight of [divine] wisdom" [Augustine, 1864-1872; VIII, 28].

Moreover, the monist is, for Augustine, the fruit of his philosophical-Christian maturity. As such, he is a blunt weapon against dualism as he knew and believed it during his young age. The deep understanding of the gospel has brought the shattering denial of dualistic speculations specializing in the systematic deconstruction and condemnation of the human body. Through the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, Augustine realized, over time, that the radical devastation of the body, if it is not arbitrary, it is based on the refusal to recognize God who has created the good soul and body before original sin, which goodness can be renewed after death by their acceptance in paradise. Therefore, Augustine shows the necessary and harmonious connection of soul and body in a man who believes in God and his word. The act of the unifying faith of the monist thus prevails over that of the reason separating the dualists. But of what philosophical relevance would this victory be in the absence of God presented by Augustine, via the mysteries of the Resurrection and the Incarnation, as the alpha and the omega of the congenital and post-mortem harmony between the soul and body? Is the body embedded in monism, at bottom, a component of the ordinary man who experiences the empirical world and satisfies his sexual desires? In other words, isn't this monism, in truth, a dismal project which sacrifices the real man and his libido?

IV. CRITICISM OF AUGUSTINIAN MONISM

The Augustinian overcoming of dualism through monism deserves to be recognized. But the intelligibility of this monism is entirely ordered to God who ensures its life and sustainability. In doing so, monism is transformed into a liberticidal, stable and anhistoric metaphysical totality which sacrifices empirical man and his libido, in the name of an angelic happiness located beyond his reach.

It would be dishonest, we think, not to recognize the efforts made by Saint Augustine to overcome the dualism of his Platonic and Neoplatonic masters, a dualism which consists precisely in presenting the soul and the human body as two fundamentally antagonistic realities condemned to dwell eternally in conflict, the first always considering the second as a concupiscent pseudo-reality which alienates it and keeps it in suffering, so much that her happiness is only possible through the latter's death. Faced with this state of affairs, Augustine's merit was to show that the antagonism of soul and body is not fundamental, natural, but rather accidental, for when they come out of the hands of God, they are perfectly and peacefully united, and the safeguard and the perpetuation of this harmonious union depended on the capacity of the man to respect the divine instructions referring to it. Unfortunately, original sin, the failure to follow these guidelines, has broken the pre-established harmony; hence the permanent conflict and human suffering.

Augustine's merit is also to have shown that this dualism should not plunge man into total despair, because if the latter decides to live as a Christian, to lead an existence conforming to the divine word, he gives, to his soul and to our body, the chance to be elected for paradise, that is to say to be rehabilitated by God, after death, for an eternal and harmonious life. So, may it be at the beginning of human life as a divine act which encloses the soul and body in a living and peaceful whole, may it be at the end of human life as a divine gesture that repairs the crack created in this soul-body totality by the irreverent man, the fact remains that monism is the appropriate solution that a Christian philosopher can bring against dualism.

But whatever the relevance of Augustine's argument and the fruitfulness of his monism in deconstructing dualism, it is a question of a divine construction which is imposed on man at the beginning and at the end of his life, which supposes that if it had not been for original sin, man would live, like a puppet of invisible forces, within a totality that he did not himself create, and his role would be reduced to respecting passively the laws of the metaphysical system which dominates it and vertically indicates to it the way to follow. There is therefore in Augustinian monism an alienation of freedom and of the existential autonomy of man that should be denounced.

Furthermore, this monism is totally abstract, since it is not viable or experimentable in the empirical world. At the beginning of our existence, original sin did not allow man to taste his virtues or derive any benefit from them. Coming after death as the act by which God forgives man his sin and restores peace between his soul and his body, monism does not cross paths with man living in the empirical world. It is therefore as if there was a permanent divorce between monism and concrete man, the presence of one always supposing the absence of the other. Truly, this is a monism that existed before humanity and will still exist after it. This monism is therefore not of this world which is ours and which overflows with men jealous of their freedom and autonomy.

Therefore, the soul and body integrated into it are not the components of the ordinary man who experiences the empirical world and satisfies his sexual desires. These are metaphysical entities which have no reality other than the problematic one of the Essences or the Platonic Ideas. This completely calls into question the concreteness of the resuscitated body supported by Saint Augustine, in accordance with his alleged mature understanding of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection.

In our view, monism is an ahistorical totality, stable and situated outside the *a priori* frameworks of existence that are space and time. In its stability, it takes on a metaphysical connotation that dismisses change in its essential attributions, to assert itself as an arrested totality, as a dead unit. And as Gilbert Simondon rightly says, “in any area, the most stable state is a dead state, it is a degraded state from which no transformation is possible without the intervention of an energy external to the released system” [Simondon, 1989; p. 541]. On a human scale, monism should be alive, because it expresses an internal dynamic between two realities (soul and body) in constant search of their perfect harmony. By removing his monism from such dynamism, Augustin appears to Michel Onfray as a “rhetorician who does not discuss biological information or even humans” [Onfray, 2003; p. 110]. This means that his monism is not human, especially since it presents itself as an “immaterial incorruptible principle, without birth and without death, inaccessible to time, parcel, divine spark torn from the sky” [Onfray, 2003; p. 164]. On the other hand, human monism is dynamic, corruptible, temporal, and its temporalization always coincides with that of the man who lives it from within. Indeed, Augustine's monism is a paradisiacal supra-reality beyond the reach of the common man. It is an aerial monism specific to saints, angels, gods and not concrete men.

From there to think that such a monism was cleverly set up by Augustine to satisfy his Christian faith and to firmly support both the veracity of the mysteries of the Resurrection and the Incarnation as well as the existence of a quiet life and happy after death. From there to think that the life of the man, here below, is only wars and misfortunes because of the concupiscence and the incontinence of the body. All things that raise violent controversies in atheistic circles, where one fiercely denies the existence of God and the afterworlds, and makes man eager and in love, the being abandoned to himself who overcomes, passionately, the divide between a free soul and a desiring and loving body. Hence the relevance of these laconic remarks by Jean-Paul Sartre: “Man is nothing other than what he is doing. [...] Nothing existed prior to [his] project; nothing is intelligible in heaven, and man will first be what he intends to be” [Jaspers, 1957; pp. 22-23].

Moreover, when Augustine rooted the rupture of the unitary nucleus of monism in original sin, he implicitly affirmed that it is the body which is the cause of this rupture, for it is by yielding to the satisfaction of carnal desires that the soul commits sin. This then suggests that a man's happiness lies in quarantining, if not in killing his body as the seat of libido. However, the body plays capital roles in human life. It is through the body that we concretely mark our presence in the world; it is also through it that we joyfully fulfill our projects, our desires and our passions; Finally, it is through it that we procreate and perpetuate the human species. What would become of a man without his real body? Surely a pure mind, wandering in a metaphysical universe without empirical crutches, thus offering no possibility of identifying itself and counting itself among the immediate and concrete influencers of the course of the world.

We ultimately believe that Augustine's monism is a meta-reality that sacrifices man and libido on the altar of God and his ascetic imperatives. Against Augustine, we believe that the harmonization of relations between soul and body does not necessarily lie in the systematic ablation of incontinence, of libido, but in an intelligent practice of it, so as to bring about man to possibly direct his gaze towards God from a particular libidinal base which is his own. We are of the same opinion as Gérard Huber, when he affirms that the human body is, according to nature's wish, in resonance with sexuality so that to suppress the libido is to “abrogate the very definition of human species” [Huber, 1938; p. 19]. The elimination of libido is therefore a real denial of human nature, a denial which inevitably leads to a false knowledge of man. And yet the libido rescue in a Christian philosophy like Augustine's is possible, provided that one carefully reconciles the practice of one's sexuality with the imperatives of Christian morality. We believe that if the Christian ceases to see in all sexual practices the root of evil and prescribes to lovers a sexual code which defines their duties and rights in this matter, so as to preserve peace between the faithful, the libido will survive in the Christian world. Nowadays, liberal priests have realized that “their vows of chastity are in many cases too difficult to keep” [Soupa, 2019; p. 19], and that “when you shut down sexuality in a box, one day it breaks out” [Blanc, 2015; p. 112]. In truth, we

are convinced that the sexuality of the body can be controlled and redirected in the realization of our projects or the ideals that we pursue, as this indispensable psychological and natural booster without which we will resign or lack the courage in the face of adversity. By ethically discriminating bad sexualities (homosexuality, pedophilia, bestiality, etc.) from good ones (heterosexuality, conjugal sexuality), we at the same time prohibit ourselves from peremptorily demanding the destruction of their productive source which is the human body.

The achievement of happiness does not exclude, in our opinion, the satisfaction of sexual needs if these are ratified by a duly elaborated religious code, and especially if, in such a code, the legislator “sees no other last end for sexual activity as obtaining and retaining happiness” [Robin, 1963; p. 72]. The development of our soul necessarily passes through that of the body with which it forms an organic whole. In addition, sexual activity is the cement of an intersubjectivity where the actors, in the majority of concerted cases, communicate the most, open up to each other for shared happiness. Pope Francis recognizes that sexuality is a wonderful gift that God has given to his creatures” [Pope Francis, 2016]. Augustine is therefore wrong to exclude the libido from the pursuit of happiness, peremptorily claiming that it is a dangerous obstacle. Michela Marzano describes this unfortunate exclusion as follows: “One of the areas where the complex relationships that each have with their body and with the bodies of others are revealed is the sexual domain. If only because our most intense relationships with others are sexual relationships, and erotic desire is always an opening to others, both in its body and in its subjectivity. Yet it is precisely this area that has long been neglected by philosophers, sexuality often being perceived as something dangerous” [Marzano, 2007; p. 107].

From this perspective, we cannot give credit to an angelic monism, like that of Augustine, which claims to build human happiness on the systematic ruin of libido. This is one of the ontological attributes of human beings, and practiced with respect of codified mores within a given community, it would help to make man happy. “Man, Michèle Onfray rightly asserts, cannot be an angel without matter, without flesh without sex and without phallus” [Onfray, 1991, p. 145].

V. CONCLUSION

Overcoming dualism through monism constitutes, in Saint Augustine, a great philosophical mutation between his youthful conception and his senile perception of soul-body relationships within the Christian establishment. But a critical look reveals, beyond the philosophical progress made by our philosopher against his dualist predecessors, the metaphysical character of this monism which transforms it into a metaphysical totality which is imposed only by the concomitant death of the empiric man and his libido. He is, so to speak, the vehicle of an extraterrestrial happiness that is beyond the reach of the common man whose libido is demonized and fought by conservatives of old religious orthodoxy, including Augustine, as a real obstacle to the development of the human being. But today, and especially in liberal circles, there is a real rise in the need to domesticate the libido by codifying its practices within the Church, so as to consider it as a positive element in the search for human happiness, because man is not an angel without sexual life, sexuality being part of the natural order of human existence.

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