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Pathology, Therapeutic Discipline and Its Limits in Augustine: A Dialogue with Foucauldian Readings

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Abstract: Recently, there have been some attempts to reframe the Augustinian view of political realism in terms of the Foucauldian concept of resistance and discipline; attempts which resonate with another Foucauldian, post-colonial understanding of Augustine. This paper addresses both political realist and post-colonial ‘Foucauldian approaches’ to Augustine, examining how Augustine envisages critical resistance and counter-disciplines in the midst of the earthly city’s domination. Redefining political realism as the tragic ambiguity of healing intermixed with disease, it will examine how Augustine allows (and offers) social criticism of the earthly city’s ethos, civic rituals and networks of disciplinary power, not least through the heavenly city’s counter-disciplines, including the sacraments, oration, rebuke, coercion, and civic virtues. It is argued that, as Augustine’s understanding of social criticism and counter-discipline is concerned with spiritual freedom and the effect of grace, it does not collapse into support for disciplinary measures of human control.

Keywords: Augustine; discipline; Foucault; political realism; post-colonialism; pathology; therapy

1. Introduction

Foucault has been considered an important reference point for reading Augustine’s idea of discipline. Foucault’s view on the interconnections among the networks of power, the formation of subjectivity, and resistance inspired the political realistic understanding of discipline in Augustine and the post-colonialist appropriation of Augustine for dismantling the interioristic presuppositions of defining religion, as is specified below. Augustinian ethicists who refer to Foucault come to reframe political realism as a matter of grappling with the tragic ambiguity of political power and domination through resistance, social criticism, and discipline in the midst of the networks of power (Morgan 2020, pp. 15–23; Schuld 2000, pp. 1–22). Talal Asad, a renowned anthropologist influenced by Foucault, also addresses Augustine’s idea of discipline to emphasize that there is no essence of religion as a matter of some interior, symbolic experience, but instead the ongoing disciplinary exercise of power that constructs human subjectivity through various institutional forces (Asad 1993, p. 35).

Addressing these two Foucauldian strands of reading Augustine, this paper reconstructs Augustine’s idea of therapeutic discipline, as it addresses the political realistic concern for negative resistance as social criticism and engages with Asad’s post-colonial concern for disciplinary controls through the networks of power as positive counter-resistance.

On the one hand, the political realist appropriation of Foucault in reading Augustine focuses on the negative project of unmasking the mechanisms of power. The Niebuhrian tradition of political realism aspires for love amidst any balance of power with a clear awareness that any social-political order is not immune to the corruption of self-interests (Niebuhr 1986, pp. 123–40). As penetrating into the tragic aspect of moral-political pursuits entangled with the unavoidable reality of domination, the Foucauldian frame of Augustine’s political realism suggests resistance through social criticism amidst the reproductive networks of power (Schuld 2000; Morgan 2020). Expanding the Foucauldian frame of political realism, this paper aims at framing Augustine’s idea of discipline as social criticism

in terms of the motifs of therapy and pathology. However, referring to Foucault's later interest in the technologies of the self and its tension with the technologies of domination, which the political realist reading did not address, I will suggest counter-disciplines in Augustine beyond social criticism, which encompass the sacraments, persuasion, coercion, and civic virtues.

On the other hand, the post-colonialist appropriation of Foucault in reading Augustine takes discipline as the comprehensive project of power conditioning desire, which problematizes the divide between the religious and the secular. Recently, though not influenced by Foucault's perspectives nor by post-colonialist perspectives, there have been solid historical studies on Augustine's view of discipline that focus on the literary aspect of education (Conybeare 2005), epistolary correspondence for exhortation and admonition (Ebbeler 2012), and the role of rhetoric in the justice of the city (Dodaro 2004) within classical studies and patristics. However, according to Wetzel, as the concern for resituating the Augustinian position in "the fractious twenty-first century", grappling with "the global debate over religion", comes to increase, there is a growing necessity to delve into "the intersection between temporary and ultimate realities" in Augustine's thought (Wetzel 2012, pp. 3–5). In that respect, the post-colonialist emphasis on discipline and its implication to the intersection of the religious and the secular would be helpful in reading Augustine. Following this concern, I examine how Augustine's idea of discipline addresses the disciplinary networks of power conditioning the experience of truth and desire. However, even though sharing Asad's emphasis on the networks of power and the formation of subjectivity, as inspired by Foucault, this paper does not follow Asad's concept of discipline as the monolithic imposition of governmentality. It rather refers to Foucault's own emphasis on the non-monolithic, polymorphous, fragmented disciplines of domination and the counter-disciplines of self-transformation to highlight Augustine's ambivalent viewpoint of the two cities.

As will be elaborated, the question of the networks of power, truth, and discipline is a matter of pathology and therapy in Augustine. The recent trend of Augustinian scholarship in moral theology and patristic theology grapples with the therapy of desire through self-examination, rhetoric, and education that corrects the complex of passions, misguided beliefs, and disoriented desires (Sorabji 2000; Kolbet 2010). Following this frame, the current project shows how the heavenly city's therapeutic pursuit of the right ordering of love involves resistance through social criticism negatively and counter-disciplines positively amidst the earthly city's disciplinary networks of power and their effects on desires, affects, and disoriented perspectives on the ends of civic peace, civic ethos, and cults. The frame of therapy and pathology complements the political realist concern for the tragic ambiguity of political reality and social criticism and the post-colonialist concern for disciplinary measures by addressing perspectives, desires, and affects, while tackling Foucault's account of the technology of the self as a matter of setting up right uses and ends within the networks of domination.

I will show how Augustine's view of the heavenly city's interacting with political reality is characterized by therapy and pathology, which allows room for the ambiguous, interstitial coexistence of the two cities. The first section shows how the political realist motif of the tragic ambiguity of political reality, which invites Foucault's own frame of domination and resistance, can be reframed in terms of the dynamic interplay of therapy and disease. As I am tackling the Foucauldian frame of political realism, I examine how the earthly city encompasses a fluid range of the collective habit of experience covering from irruptive, destructive passions to goal-oriented, relatively stable functions, which overlaps with the heavenly city's pursuits ranging from the ongoing suppression of vices to eternal health. As relating to the political realist emphasis on social criticism amidst the networks of domination, which reflects Foucault's earlier position and his later emphasis on the technology of the self, the second section reveals how the therapeutic care of self-transformation entails the ongoing social criticism against dominant perspectives on values and social utility. I will examine how Augustine calls for the heavenly city's self-critical struggle with residual diseases and its resort to grace while raising social criticism against the earthly city's myopic perspectives mired in self-referential values of utility and self-glorifying civic cults and virtues without seeing the supreme good. The third section

demonstrates how the post-colonialist emphasis on disciplinary measures, which is to be corrected and complemented by the political realist emphasis on ambiguity, sheds light on Augustine's positive accounts of counter-disciplines and their effects on affects, desires, and value-orientations. I will tackle how the positive disciplines of the heavenly city aim for spiritual freedom through diverse material, institutional measures, which structure affective experiences of fear and love by relying on the sacraments, scriptural interpretation, and oration, rebukes, coercions, and civic virtues. The fourth section considers how Augustine's idea of discipline, even though seemingly controlling collective affects, aims for a goal contrary to its initial end, which consists in leading people to attain spiritual freedom and to be receptive to the uncontrollable effect of grace. Finally, the fifth section analyzes how these two Foucauldian readings, both the political realist reading and the post-colonial reading, can be corrected and improved, when reading Augustine's views on the two cities in light of Foucault's accounts of the tension between the discipline of domination and that of self-transformation.

2. The Intermixture of the Therapeutic and the Pathological in Political Reality

Framing political reality in terms of pathology and therapy, Peter Brown shows that "the obvious fact of domination as a feature of political society" is "a vast mental hospital," which is a state of captivity (Brown 1995, pp. 24–28). Political reality is a symptom of collective orientations and derangements. "Political activity is merely symptomatic . . . it is merely one way in which men express orientations that lie far deeper in themselves," as revealing "the basic symptom of the dislocation of this order" and "all forms of deranged relationships" (Brown 1972, pp. 35–36). This pathological frame opens up an approach to the heavenly city's fluid relation to the political reality of the earthly city, which explains various modes of the intermixture between the two cities while envisaging a model of Christian realism. Grappling with Cicero's definition of the republic in Book 2 and Book 19 as "the common agreement on what is right" (*iuris consensu*) and "a community of utility" (*utilitatis commune*), which is to be organized for justice by higher authorities, Augustine underscores that the Roman republic, without the true founder, Christ, failed to achieve any justice in its history according to this definition.¹ To begin with his account on the people and its republic, which is different from Cicero's definition, Augustine invents a new model of defining the republic of a people and assessing its condition of "health" (*salus*) according to the criteria of "the shared object of love," entailing a wide range of variations. With his new definition of the republic as "bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love," Augustine reveals how his new definition entails a fluid range of comparison.² "The better the objects of this agreement, the better the people; and the worse the objects, the worse the people" (*tanto utique melior, quanto in melioribus, tantoque deterior, quanto est in deterioribus concors*).³ This fluid range between better and worse is not simply axiological but involves pathology and therapy. Augustine recounts how the history of Rome had been full of "seditions and civil wars" that corrupted the "the bond of concord," "as it were, the health of people" (*salus populi*), when "the ungodly city" was not obeying God and failing to control vices with reason.⁴

This new definition of the republic and its therapeutic/pathological gradation allows Augustine to envisage the fluid ranges of the pathological relapse of the earthly city and the therapeutic pursuit of the heavenly city and the dynamic intermixture of the two orientations. As much as "the two cities are indeed entangled and mingled with one another" but will be separated at the eschaton, there are also "many reprobates" (*reprobi*) that are "mingled with good people" within "the church (*ecclesia*)" to be separated at the eschaton.⁵ Borrowing the term from Griffiths, *sub specie aeternitatis* and *sub specie saecularitatis*, the heavenly city and the earthly city are indistinguishably intermixed

¹ (Augustine 1998, pp. 78, 960); *De Civitate Dei*, 2.21, 19.23.; Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 41, 13–804.

² (Augustine 1998, p. 960); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19.24.

³ (Augustine 1998, p. 960); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19.24.

⁴ (Augustine 1998, p. 960); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19.24.

⁵ (Augustine 1998, pp. 49, 896); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 1.35.; *De Civitate Dei*, 18.49.

everywhere, even within the church, if seen from the perspective of saeculum, while these two cities are separate and distinct, if seen from eternity (Griffiths 2012, p. 43). Augustine's redoubled accounts of intermixture, which is the intermixture between the two cities and the intermixture of the two groups of people within the church, rather provide some analytic frames of explicating the fluid ranges of social pathology and therapy. As interpreting the biblical story of inter-marriages as an allegory for "mixture" (*permixtio*) and defining it as "the free choice of the will" for "lapsing into lower goods," he underscores that the distinction of the two cities hinges on whether it is "well-ordered love" (*caritas ordinata*) for God or love for lower goods with "perturbed order" (*ordine perturbato*).⁶ While aligning itself with the therapeutic orientation toward God and humility but struggling with the residual relapse into self-love and pride in all aspects of cultural and political life, the church has its "members united to a head," Christ and his sacrificial provision of the sacraments, but has some reprobates within it.⁷ As van Bavel succinctly puts, "there is no perfect identity between the church and the city of God; she is the city of God in the condition of the church . . . There is identity and nonidentity at the same time (Bavel 1999, p. 173)." In contrast, lust as the pathetic drive for self-love in opposition to the authority of God and humility exposes a socio-political entity to various vices, ranging from irruptive perturbations to cruel, cold-hearted insensitivities. While there is "a city [that] is convulsed (*quattitur*) by those affects (*affectibus*) as if by diseases and upheavals,"⁸ there is another city that "seems to control and in some way temper those emotions" but is mired in "the rare vanity (*rariore vanitate*)" of "being so entranced by their own self-restraint that they are not stirred . . . by any emotion."⁹ The earthly city achieves its relative degree of peace in restraining emotions, whether it is susceptible to irruptions of passion or goal-oriented callousness. Though a people alienated from God is "wretched (*miser*)," this people as a group "loves a peace of its own," which is "not to be despised."¹⁰ Even though the people of the earthly city would not have this peace in the eschaton or in its final goal (*in fine*), nor utilize well (*non bene utitur*), this relative degree of peace "matters" (*interest*) to the Christian pursuit of peace.

The reason why there is the shared concern for the usages of peace between the two cities is that they are inherently "intermixed" (*permixtae*).¹¹ As far as both cities are situated in this temporal life, the heavenly city should not despise but appreciate any achieved condition of peace while trying to utilize it. The heavenly city appreciates this shared peace as something provisionally (*interim*) utilizable, though finding the earthly city's myopic, self-serving scope of peace as problematic. To the heavenly city, the peace of the earthly city is "not to be despised" but "matters" for its own utility, even though this peace of the earthly city has its limitation "from which the people of God is liberated through faith."¹²

The heavenly city's therapeutic pursuit of peace is still in the process of regaining its health from its residual diseases, just as the earthly city's impaired function of peace is not dysfunctional entirely. The ambiguous existence of the church consists in coming to be therapeutic but being dangerously contiguous with diseases. Its therapeutic presence accommodates itself to the given condition of social diseases, despite its lofty, hopeful vision of the eternal peace. Augustine's emphasis on faith as the means of therapy does not guarantee the complete state of health in this temporal life. Not only the shared pursuit of the earthly peace but also the heavenly city's unique pursuit of the eternal peace through faith (*illa communis sive nostra propria*) are entangled with pathological conditions, thus being merely "a solace for our wretchedness (*solacium miseriae*) rather than the joy of blessedness."¹³

⁶ (Augustine 1998, p. 680); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 15.22.

⁷ (Augustine 1998, p. 815); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 17.20.

⁸ (Augustine 1998, p. 602); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 14.9.6.

⁹ (Augustine 1998, p. 602); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 14.9.6.

¹⁰ (Augustine 1998, pp. 961–62); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 26.

¹¹ (Augustine 1998, pp. 961–62); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 26.

¹² (Augustine 1998, pp. 961–62); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 26.

¹³ (Augustine 1998, p. 962); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 27.

From Niebuhr to the most recent Foucauldian reinterpretation of Augustine, the issue of the intermixture of the two cities has been the *locus classicus* that grounds political realistic interventions on the earthly city. Touching on “the commingling of the two cities,” Niebuhr focuses on how to secure a permissible equilibrium of justice and peace when facing the dynamic force of individual and collective self-interest and holding onto the ideal of love, especially in the context of the class struggle of the Cold War era (Niebuhr 1986, pp. 130–35). Instead of grappling with the pursuit of love and justice amidst the dynamic balance of self-interested power, the Foucauldian reading of Augustine’s political realism has centered on the church’s intervention on the secular realm of politics, which involves the mixed attitudes of resistance and participation. While Schuld underscores that “citizens must dedicate themselves to tackling practical difficulties in the political realm” in the midst of “moral and political ambiguities” (Schuld 2000, p. 13), Morgan also points out that “both simultaneously register suspicion toward political institutions without shying away from . . . the sorrowful necessity of civic duty” (Morgan 2020, p. 19). As has been demonstrated and will be elaborated further, this deep sense of ambiguity and unavoidable involvement with political reality is inseparable from Augustine’s discussion of therapy and pathology. The heavenly city’s pursuit of eternal peace cannot but be concerned with the earthly city’s lethargic, precarious peace, despite its critical stance, while also taking the shared temporal situation of ambiguous mixture with the earthly city as the heavenly city’s own condition of resistance.

As those Foucauldian interpretations show in common, the promise of reading Augustine in light of Foucault consists in Foucault’s relentless suspicion of any idealistic account of political reality as attaining the semblance of peace through the repressive, reproductive domination of the networks of power and entailing the possibility of resistance within it. When addressing political power, Foucault argues that “the rules of right” order power through “the mechanism of power” while power controlled by these rules also generate some “truth-effects” subservient for that mechanism, instead of grounding the rightful use of power on truth. As he notes “the rules of right [that] formally delineate power, and on the other hand, at the opposite extreme, the other limit might be the truth-effect that power conducts and which, in their turn, reproduce that power” (Foucault and Ewald 2003, p. 24). For Foucault, the rules of right and the truth-effects, though guiding and reproducing the mechanism of power, are ever-shifting, malleable byproducts of domination. Political reality is exposed to “the multiple forms of domination” and “the multiple subjugations,” as “the system of right and the judiciary field” are “vehicles for relations of domination” and “polymorphous techniques of subjugation” (Foucault and Ewald 2003, p. 24). Political power is not “a phenomenon of mass and homogenous domination,” but the field of domination operating “through networks” where individuals “both submit to and exercise this power” (Foucault and Ewald 2003, p. 29). In this respect, political power entails the aspect of repression as well as the aspect of re-shaping and resistance. Basically, political power “represses nature, instincts, a class, and individuals” (Foucault and Ewald 2003, p. 15). In addition, political power engaging with “a silent war” on individuals under the semblance of “civil peace” not only “re-inscribes” “the disequilibrium of forces” but also opens up the possibility of resistance as “modifications of relations of force” (Foucault and Ewald 2003, p. 16). “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault 1978, p. 95). As much as power passes through individuals entangled in its networks of domination, there are also possibilities of resistance that can be initiated by individuals and their groups. Foucault’s view of political reality as subservient for multiple instances of domination and its inherent possibility of resistance sheds light on the Augustinian emphasis of the heavenly city’s resistance through the pursuit of eternal justice and peace in the midst of the earthly city’s pursuits of domination and its coercive peace. Even though therapy and pathology are not central concerns for his account of power and resistance, nor for Foucauldian interpretations of political realism, their accounts of power and resistance sheds light on Augustine’s view of power dynamics entangled in the intermixture of therapy and pathology in a political realm. In that respect, the Foucauldian reading of Augustine’s political realism should be complemented by the motifs of therapy and pathology, given

that political power is never neutrally given but always symptomatic of diseased collective orientations and passions.

3. The Social Criticism on the Pathology of the Earthly City

As previous Foucauldian readings of political realism have noticed, power produces individuals through its own networks but also equips them to challenge, critically, the existing networks of power. Revisiting how the Foucauldian project of “unmasking the disciplinary power of a regime of truth” is helpful for “empow[ering] protest against it,” the political realist reading of Augustine also notes that Augustine would “affirm and make use of Foucault’s call to resistance” (Morgan 2020, p. 19). Referring to “Foucault’s analysis of disciplinary formation,” Morgan notes how Augustine “unmask[s] the perverse direction [that] hollow objects of love take” and “directs his strongest suspicion to these hollow objects, whether Rome itself, . . . or sex, knowledge, or glory” (Morgan 2020, p. 18). However, this Foucauldian reading, which relies on Foucault’s earlier works such as *Power/Knowledge*, does not address Foucault’s later interest in the technology of the self in struggle with the technology of power, which center on the Greco-Roman ethics of self-care and Christianity. It has not been examined whether Foucault’s later interest in the technology of the self sheds light on revisiting Augustine’s political realist resistance, as consisting of social criticism and counter-discipline, in the midst of the disciplinary networks of domination. It is not an overstatement to say that the possibility of resistance amidst the reproductive networks of power hinges on how individuals employ “their own technologies of the self” to grapple with “technologies of power” (Foucault 2000, p. 224). As much as there are “technologies of power” that “subject them to certain ends or domination,” there are also “technologies of the self” that permit “individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being” (Foucault 2000, pp. 224–25). As far as individuals are committed to “transform[ing] themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness” with their own means of attaining it in their like-minded communities, they struggle with various technologies of domination oriented to impose certain ends or goals on individuals.

Foucault’s genealogical analysis of the tension between technologies of power and technologies of the self centers on various strands of ethics in the period of classical antiquity and different models of creating the self through ascetic practices. Exploring how the Greco-Roman tradition of philosophy and Christian spirituality developed different visions of the care of the self, Foucault notes that the tradition of Christian morality defines “taking care of ourselves” as a matter of attaining “immortality” through the ascetic practice of “self-renunciation” which aims at “gaining access to another level of reality” (Foucault 2000, p. 238). Foucault’s accounts shed light on how the technological project of taking care of the self for immortality and self-renunciation involves tensions with the technologies of domination that impose their own ends through the networks of power, as can be seen in Augustine. Augustine envisages his own version of resistance and social criticism against various technologies of domination imposing their own ends or goals onto individuals, especially when these individuals employ their own technologies of self-renunciation for immortality. Addressing this issue, Augustine also employs the frame of therapy and pathology.

The heavenly city’s therapeutic tendency to aspire for the complete peace of immortality amidst its struggle with residual diseases is distinct from the earthly city’s lethargic tendency to maintain a relative peace despite its destructive tendency of self-love. The two different orientations of constructing social stability generate different forms of social norms and social consensus on pursuing a good life in society, while sharing a fluid range of overlapping areas between them. As mentioned before, fluidity consists in that the two cities have “the shared usages” (*communis usus*) of engaging with mundane natural, cultural goods when they have their own “proper (*proprius*)” ways of setting up “the end of usage”

(*finis utendi*).¹⁴ Despite their shared concern for taking advantage of any point of social equilibrium, they have different ways of referring a given usage to its implied end. “In the earthly city, then the whole use of temporal things is referred (*refertur*) to the enjoyment of earthly peace. In the heavenly city, however, such use is referred to the enjoyment of eternal peace.”¹⁵ Markus succinctly summarizes the different ways of reference-making in this way. “Whether they are used, and thus valued conditionally, in reference to something else of more ultimate value, or loved to be enjoyed, that is unconditionally, for their own sake. All share in using these (temporal) things, but each has his own purpose in using them” (Markus 1970, p. 68). In contrast, O’Donovan takes this reading as a “misreading.” There are no common uses between these two cities but only a misuse in the earthly city because “there is no utility, no real final good, which gives value to the pursuit of the intermediate goods” among those of the earthly city (O’Donovan 1995, p. 140). Though O’Donovan’s reading sounds too strong, the common usages, as conditioned in the earthly city’s disoriented utility, even imply different underlying concerns, even up to the level of incompatibility. The earthly city, not driven by faith, seeks to achieve any relative level of peace by creating a coercive, precarious “concord of citizens concerning domination and obedience,” which takes “a kind of cooperation of men’s wills,” no matter what kinds of consensus on right and utility they would achieve.¹⁶ The pathological orientation of the earthly city is mired in a perspective of organizing social cooperation in terms of a matter of domination or submission. The therapeutic orientation of the heavenly city, even though getting through “its captivated life of pilgrimage” hinges on a perspective of referring any order of using mundane goods to God as the source of good, while respecting the law of the earthly city, so that “harmony (*concordia*) is preserved in both cities.”¹⁷

Addressing different perspectives on shared uses of peace in the midst of residual diseases, Augustine tackles the ongoing process of conflict and resistance, which involves not only the heavenly city’s self-critical attitude to its remaining disease but also its social criticism against the earthly city. On the one hand, Augustine underscores how the heavenly city needs to struggle with any possible irruption of vices within itself, which can be restrained only by holding onto the perspective of faith and the practice of prayer in pursuit of grace. On the other hand, he also emphasizes how the heavenly city resists and conflicts with the earthly city’s perspectives that tend to idolatry myopic pursuits of temporal goods as ends in themselves and to ground its civic virtue on such idolatries.

First, Augustine envisages that prayer is the indispensable medium for detecting and restraining residual vices within the heavenly city, as prayer follows faith that brings about justice in the soul with the hope of the complete health of immortality. Underscoring the effect of prayer on the heavenly city, or “such just persons” (*iustis talis*), Augustine argues that the reason of those just persons, if without prayer, does “not exercise perfect control over vices in this mortal state,” nor “allow[s] themselves to be governed without resistance” (*sine conflictu*), while “some evil thing still creeps in” (*subrepat*).¹⁸ Augustine does not shy away from pointing out how the supposed function of the reason in the heavenly city entails an ongoing struggle with residual diseases having infiltrated into its own pursuit of justice. The heavenly city is still entrapped in the pathological situations of vices, despite its pursuit of the peace of eternity and vulnerable to ongoing irruptions of vices within its own as much as outside of itself. In spite of the shared vulnerability to vices, justice as a matter of obedience to God is therapeutic. In this justice of the soul that anyone obedient to God realizes in one’s life, there comes to be “the reason governing repugnant vices” “by subduing and resisting them,” which is only possible when “the grace of merits” and “remissions of sins” are sought from God through prayer.¹⁹ Though

¹⁴ (Augustine 1998, p. 945); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19.16.

¹⁵ (Augustine 1998, p. 940); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19.14.

¹⁶ (Augustine 1998, p. 945); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 17.

¹⁷ (Augustine 1998, p. 946); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 17.

¹⁸ (Augustine 1998, p. 963); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 27.

¹⁹ (Augustine 1998, p. 963); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 27.

justice attainable through faith and prayer leads to the revitalized control of reason over vices through grace, justice in this life is not yet complete but on the way to healing, which is “to be referred (*referendae*) to the final peace” and “the cured nature” (*sanata natura*) of immortality.²⁰

In addition to the self-critical awareness of its own residual diseases yet to be healed, the heavenly city grapples with the hegemony of the earthly city by engaging with a social criticism on the earthly city’s tendency to absolutize its pursuit of temporal goods and to ground false civic morality on idolatry. When a city is mired in those myopic perspectives of organizing social cooperation according to a closed utility for domination without reference to God, it idolatrizes various cultural activities into pseudo-divine qualities and constructs civic virtues based on false models of excellence. The pursuit of relative goods without any reference to the supreme good is coupled with false religions, i.e., polytheistic worships imbued in ordinary social activities. Augustine points out how various popular beliefs of many gods exercise comprehensive influences over ordinary, mundane human activities. “And so too with all the things which touch our lives. There is a god who has charge of cattle of corn, or wine, of oil, of woodlands, or money, or navigation, of war and victory, of marriage, of birth, and of fertility and so on.”²¹ Failures to refer all human activities to the eternal good are susceptible to the idolatry of making all those ordinary, mundane activities distorted by various religious phantasms. With the growth of pride and disobedience to God, people create phantasms around their desired objects or affairs, elevate their values into the source of happiness, and desire them obsessively. “Whatever the erring soul in its swelling pride can imagine, they hold as an object of religious worship ... there remain the vices, and they are drawn towards the notion of worshipping them.”²² Many people suffer from the disease of “being weakened by the love of transient things” and “by pain at losing them,” thus being mired in “the custom of this life,” “the bodily senses”, and “vain images” and “phantasms.”²³ The polytheistic worship of devils ruined the republic through “the depraved morals (*pessimis moribus*) of the citizens.”²⁴ Worshipping different gods incurs the collective delusions of their seductive authority by representing their gods as examples and inciting mimetic desires.²⁵ As rebutting the charge that Christianity is inimical to the republic, in contrast with pagan traditions’ praise of “character (*mores*)” for “a city,” Augustine reveals how they “imitate their quarreling gods” and “undermine the city” by having “the bond of concord shattered.”²⁶ Losing the final criteria of the supreme good as one’s axiological source, people absolutize their achievements or ordinary tasks as divine while collectively imitating different gods. From these diseases, their mind should be “healed” to “see the immutable form of things” and its “beauty.”²⁷

Then, how can those of the heavenly city resist these forms of diseased civic morality mired in their closed concern for utility without transcendent values? This question touches on the counter-discipline of the heavenly city in struggle with the hegemony of the earthly city, which influences the innermost affects of fear and love. Polytheistic representations of gods’ actions and public cults are to be “abandoned in a sudden change or restrained by fear or shame (*aut timore vel pudore*)”²⁸ and not allowed to “be gazed or to be imitated (*spectandum imitandumque*).”²⁹ Christ and his church provide “precepts directed towards the highest morals and against wicked morals.”³⁰ “Moral precepts of Christianity, the divine action of miracles and the divine aid of grace are to be “recommended, narrated, and

²⁰ (Augustine 1998, p. 963); Latin text from Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 27.

²¹ (Augustine 1998, p. 946); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 17.

²² (Augustine 1953, p. 260); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 38.69.; *De Vera Religione*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 34, 121–72.

²³ (Augustine 1953, p. 226); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 3.3.

²⁴ (Augustine 1998, p. 83); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 2.23.2.

²⁵ (Augustine 1998, p. 87); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 2.25.1.

²⁶ (Augustine 2001, p. 35); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 138.2.10.; *Epistulae*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 33, 61–1162.

²⁷ (Augustine 1953, p. 226); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 3.3.

²⁸ (Augustine 1998, p. 91); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 2.28.

²⁹ (Augustine 1998, p. 91); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 2.28.

³⁰ (Augustine 1998, p. 87); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 2.25.2.

praised.”³¹ The exhortation to restrain polytheistic civic cults and to promote the worship of the one God and moral precepts touches on the gist of discipline as inherently therapeutic. The idea of discipline (*disciplina*) as “the medicine of the mind” encompasses “restraint and instruction” (*coercitionem et instructionem*) which resort to “fear” (*timore*) and “love” (*amore*) respectively.³² He situates coercion or restraint in the Old Testament’s motifs of fear and carnal slavery (*servitus*) while relating instruction to the New Testament’s motifs of love and spiritual freedom (*libertas*).³³ The broad range of discipline stretching from carnal coercions to spiritual education for freedom rests on the nature of spiritual wisdom as the end of discipline. “For wisdom, though at first it restrains men and subdues them by some labors in the way of discipline (*exercitatoris*) . . . it educates them by the help of temporary restraints and folds them afterwards in its eternal embrace, the sweetest and strongest of all conceivable bonds.”³⁴ Discipline implies the program of spiritual progress from carnal, exterior constraints to spiritual, interior freedom. The motif of discipline keeps recurring in his concern for the church’s task of exercising intra- and extra-ecclesiastical disciplines, which include the inherent sacramental character of the church, the church’s task of persuasion and coercion, and contribution to civic virtues.

4. Therapeutic Disciplines of the Heavenly City

Revisiting Augustine’s idea of discipline, Talal Asad focuses on how Augustine’s view implies the collaboration with some networks of power to create the condition of inducing a desired pattern of experience to people (Asad 1993, p. 35). “It was not the mind that moved spontaneously to religious truth, but power that created the conditions for experiencing that truth” (Asad 1993, p. 35). While merely underscoring how Augustine resorts to the networks of power for shaping collective experience, Asad’s reading does not consider Foucault’s own nuanced distinction between technologies of domination and technologies of the self, nor Augustine’s distinction between the two cities. In contrast, another Foucauldian reading of Augustine, especially suggested by Morgan, addresses the question of discipline in the sense of resistance as the critical unmasking of the disciplinary power of domination that shapes the objects of desire, as was dealt in the previous section. Undeniably, Foucault’s earlier work on discipline from the 17th century focuses on the disciplinary power of domination, given that discipline implies “the specific techniques of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise,” as diverging from “the rituals of sovereignty” and “apparatuses of the state” (Foucault 1977, p. 170). However, if considering his later works on the genealogy of techniques of the self in classical antiquity and Christian spirituality, it is possible to reconstruct a more positive vision of counter-discipline as self-imposed technologies of the self from Foucault and to relate this view to reading Augustine’s idea of discipline. Foucault develops a nuanced view of discipline that cuts across not only techniques of domination but also techniques of self-cultivation. While showing how “the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization” concerns “techniques of domination” and “techniques of the self,” Foucault argues that the techniques of self-cultivation interact with the imposition of discipline more or less and entail their own counter-disciplines for truthful life (Foucault 2000, pp. 177–78). “What we call discipline is something really important in this kind of institution; but it is only one aspect of the art of governing people in our societies. Having studied the field of power relations taking techniques of domination as a point of departure, I would like . . . to study power relations starting from the techniques of the self” (Foucault 2000, pp. 177–78).

Grappling with the disciplinary techniques imposed for domination, individuals, who desire “the constitution of, or the transformation of, the self” in Christianity, need to take up disciplinary measures of “self technology” and its “set of truth obligations” (Foucault 2000, pp. 177–78). While the

³¹ (Augustine 1998, p. 91); Latin text from *De Civitate Dei*, 2.28.

³² (Augustine 1887a, p. 56); Latin text from *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, 28.56.; *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 32, 1309–1378.

³³ (Augustine 1887a, p. 56); Latin text from *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, 28.56.

³⁴ (Augustine 1886, p. 247); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 26.2.; *Epistulae*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 33, 61–1162.

technology of the self in general consists in “discovering the truth, being enlightened by truth, and telling the truth,” the Christian truth-obligations center around the truth of self-knowledge by not only “explor[ing] who he is,” “what is happening within himself,” “faults”, and “temptations,” but also “tell[ing] these things to other people” (Foucault 2000, pp. 177–78). Even though not using the term counter-discipline, Foucault argues that truth-obligations serving the technologies of the self are not merely about a matter of subjective attitudes, but about inter-subjective, institutional disciplinary techniques of the truthful power of Christianity that individuals employ for the ascetic practice of self-transformation. In order that individuals achieve “a certain renunciation of the self,” which is “asceticism,” “Christianity imposed a set of conditions and rules of behavior for a certain transformation of the self,” while encouraging each of them to “bear public or private witness against oneself” (Foucault 2000, pp. 238, 242). As much as the technologies of domination tend to determine individuals’ ways of life as their instruments, individuals can develop their own counter-disciplinary measures of working on self-transformations through self-examination, communal rules and conditions, and communications. Though Foucault’s frame is helpful in identifying the implicit tension between the disciplinary techniques of domination and the disciplinary techniques of asceticism, Augustine’s own frame is much more complex. Emphasizing the discovery of truth and spiritual freedom as the end of therapeutic self-transformation, Augustine shows how Christians resort to counter-disciplinary measures of faith, rituals, the sacraments, and intra- or extra-ecclesiastical persuasion and coercion, which influence their innermost affects of fear and love. Similarly, Dodaro suggests how “the spiritual arts of penitence,” which include “self-examination, confession, prayer for pardon, and forgiveness of others,” function as the pivot for “the essence of civic virtue, of piety, and thus the heart of patriotism” as these spiritual exercises lead people “toward the freedom to live interiorly as citizens in God’s city” (Dodaro 2004, p. 218). Even though Dodaro’s accounts are centered more on the voluntary projects of spiritual exercises that ground personal transformation and civic virtues, the present Foucauldian reading focuses on diverse therapeutic disciplines addressing different persons with the subtle interplays of the networks of power, as ranging from collective, coercive constraints to individual spiritual freedom.

In his earlier works, such as the True Religion, discipline demands faith from not only uneducated common Christians (*imperitae multitudini*) but also well-educated Christians (*eruditus*), as faith initiates the process of learning from authority and leads to its completion as “fulfilling any rational discipline.”³⁵ Authority as a kind of therapeutic means is concerned with the majority of people newly initiated into faith while preparing them for the more fulfilled way of living out the inner, contemplative life of reason.³⁶ Discipline is the learning process that encompasses diverse heuristic tools delivering the ever-unfolding depth of wisdom, as ranging from faith to higher wisdom. As Conybeare notes, discipline reveals ambiguity, as it denotes “both learning . . . and, by extension, the things learnt” and “the process by which things are learnt” (Conybeare 2005, p. 59). Disciplines as ranging from authority to higher wisdom constrain and guide diverse persons by influencing their fear or love through some explicit, material signs, and symbolic practices, whether rituals or some moral injunctions. “All over the inhabited world, the Christian rites (*sacra christiana*) are entrusted to men who are willing to make profession and to undertake the obligations required . . . Multitudes enter upon this way of life from every race, forsaking the riches and honors of the present world, desirous of dedicating their whole life to the one most high God.”³⁷ Rituals, as bearing the sacramental character, utilize explicit, literal, material signs pointing to the divine truth for exploring further mysteries and orienting actions as encouraged by moral injunctions. First, the sacraments impose external, institutional constraints on people’s fundamental impulses so that they imbue “piety begin[ing] with fear” and make it “perfected

³⁵ (Augustine 1953, pp. 240–41); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 17.33.

³⁶ (Augustine 1953, p. 247); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 24.45.

³⁷ (Augustine 1953, p. 228); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 3.5.

in love.”³⁸ Second, the sacraments relying on literal, carnal signs of truth lead people to participate in the ongoing process of searching and discovering, and practicing the eternal truth, as relating to different levels of spiritual achievement. Though the sacramental disciplines constrain the most fundamental level of fear and love by resorting to carnal symbols and external restraints, they finally lead to the deeper form of spiritual knowledge and freedom. They are “the restraints of wisdom” leading to “true freedom.”³⁹ As much as there is a broad range of spiritual progress from the carnal to the spiritual, there is the historical dispensation of the sacraments. The dispensation of the sacraments develops from “the servitude under the old law” “constrained by fear” and “burdened with many sacraments” to “few most health-giving (*saluberrima*) sacraments” in the New Testament.⁴⁰ Discipline incurs the progress from the observance of the law and its external incentives of fear to the internal incentives of love for free, truthful participation in Christ.

As departing from his earlier distinction between authority and reason and giving more emphasis on the transition from carnal constraints to spiritual freedom, Augustine in his later works shows how the disciplinary aspects of the sacraments lead diverse persons to participate in Christ in common without failing to note the range of spiritual progress. When explaining the symbolic function of “the sacraments of baptism and Lords’ body and blood,” Augustine states how there exist different levels of discovering meaning from given signs and revering it knowingly with shared attentive attitudes, revealing the gist of his view on discipline. On the one hand, those who are enslaved to material signs “attend to and worship a thing which is meaningful” but finally “remain unaware of its meaning.”⁴¹ On the other hand, there are those “spiritual and free” (*spiritalis et liber*) who “attend to or worship a useful sign” by realizing “its force and significance” and focusing on “the thing to which all such things are to be related.”⁴² All participants are united as they are attending to given signs of the sacraments. However, some focus on the invisible reality as the reference point of evaluating all things signified in these signs, while others fail to reach that level but merely cling to signs. Instead of making a sharp divide between them, the disciplinary project of the sacraments aims at resonating with diverse people while leading those relying on carnal restraints into spiritual freedom and divine truth. In his later works such as *On Christian Teaching*, Augustine brings up the metaphor of doctors dressing different wounds in different ways and prescribing different principles of medication, when he addresses God’s ineffable, skillful employment of diverse therapeutic methods corresponding to different patients in the church.⁴³

One of the most crucial aspects of intra-ecclesiastical disciplines consists in leading diverse persons into the process of self-transformation toward spiritual freedom through interpretation and persuasion. The one and same therapeutic power of divine wisdom heals different diseases in the church by leading different applications to address different symptoms. “So he ties together his own body with its many members performing different tasks in a bond of unity and love (*nodo unitatis et caritatis*) like a healing bondage. And at the present time, he trains it and purges it by means of various disagreeable medicines.”⁴⁴ Augustine emphasizes that there are “instructions given to all people alike” while also directed to “particular persons.”⁴⁵ The primary stages of discipline through interpreting the scriptures consist in learning “the fear of God” and coming to be docile to the “holiness” of the scriptures, which leads to the justice of the soul and its virtues through faith, hope, and love.⁴⁶ The disciplinary project of oration touches on the fundamental dimension of affects leading to more attention to

³⁸ (Augustine 1953, pp. 240–41); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 17.33.

³⁹ (Augustine 1886, p. 247); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 26.2.

⁴⁰ (Augustine 1953, pp. 240–41); Latin text from *De Vera Religione*, 17.33.

⁴¹ (Augustine 1997, p. 75); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.9.13.; *De Doctrina Christiana*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 34, 15–122.

⁴² (Augustine 1997, p. 75); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.9.13.

⁴³ (Augustine 1997, p. 14); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.14.13.

⁴⁴ (Augustine 1997, p. 15); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.16.15.

⁴⁵ (Augustine 1997, p. 81); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.17.25.

⁴⁶ (Augustine 1997, pp. 33–34); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 2.7.9.–2.7.10.

instruction and actions according to it. While “being made to listen” to instruction and “moved so that it can be impelled to action” after instruction, the audience “values what you [= the orator] promise, fears what you threaten, hates what you condemn, and embraces what you commend.”⁴⁷

However, Augustine enters some gray areas of the conflict between the ecclesiastical project of corrective discipline and various cases of resistance attributable to residual diseases within and outside the church. Augustine suggests various cases of corrective disciplines, which he terms as rebuke (*correptio*), correction (*correctio*), and admonition (*admonitio*) (Grossi 1999, pp. 242–45). While *admonitio* and *eruditio* imply “a long process in which elements of fear or constraint, of external inconvenience are never excluded,” *correptio* and *correctio* are not “punitive” but “a positive process of corrective treatment” (Brown 1972, pp. 270–75). While defending his position against the criticism from Donatists, Augustine states that he did not mean to let “the church discipline neglected.”⁴⁸ He describes discipline as “rebuke” (*correptione*), “healing punishments” (*medicinali vindicta*), “terrorizing gentleness” (*terribili lenitate*), or “severe charity” (*caritatis severitate*).⁴⁹ The discipline of rebuke restrains “those restless” from disturbing order and tranquility in their community through external coercive power inviting fear and submission.⁵⁰ The discipline of rebuke is not for the sake of a punitive purpose, but for a corrective and restorative purpose.⁵¹ Explaining how rebuke is restorative, rather than punitive, Augustine compares harsh measures of rebuke to “an iron scalpel (*ferrum*) not of an enemy inflicting injuries, but of a doctor doing surgery (*medici secantis*).⁵² Criticizing Donatists’ rash attempt to separate the wheat from the tares, Augustine emphasizes that the point of rebuke is not to have a separate, pure community with “an impious presumption,” but to try not to lose anyone of Christ’s members from its own purity.⁵³ Rebuke is therapeutic because it heals those unruly ones in the church by including them into its disciplinary measures of restoration, as well as promoting the health of the whole community by treating those unruly separately within the church.

While the discipline of rebuke is intra-ecclesiastical in the sense of restoring those who bring about disorder within the church, various cases of coercion and admonition tend to be extra-ecclesiastical in collaborating with legal enforcements through violence. The tension with Donatists and various cases of riots pushed his idea of discipline to the far extreme. As Ebbeler traces Augustine’s epistolary correspondence with Donatist leaders at the time of Honorius’ Edict for Unity, Augustine shifted his position by stopping “friendly correction” or admonition through “corrective letter exchanges” and endorsing “state-sanctioned, coercive correction” (Ebbeler 2012, pp. 154–55). Augustine suggests two interrelated ways of admonition (*admonitio*) leading people “to health . . . from destruction,” which consist of “the sermons of Catholic preachers” and “laws of Catholic leaders.”⁵⁴ As for the conflict with Donatists intersecting ecclesiastic disciplines and public concerns, the disciplinary measures of rebuke go beyond the intra-ecclesiastical areas of education and persuasion. As for Donatists’ murdering of a Catholic presbyter, which is one of many cases of disturbing “public peace” following the failure of ecclesiastical disciplines, Augustine affirms the role of the magistrate in “being vigilant of preserving the public peace,” where persuasion comes to an end.⁵⁵ Even though the magistrate’s intervention of preserving public peace is not an ecclesiastic discipline any longer, but a discipline for public security, Augustine calls for restorative measures of addressing those crimes instead of punitive measures of vindictive punishment.⁵⁶ Despite “the boldness of committing violence not to be released,” Augustine

⁴⁷ (Augustine 1997, p. 118); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.12.27.

⁴⁸ (Augustine 1887b, p. 598); Latin text from *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*, 3.4.5.; *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*. In Migne 1844–64, vol. 43, 245–383.

⁴⁹ (Augustine 1887b, p. 598); Latin text from *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*, 3.4.5.

⁵⁰ (Augustine 1887b, p. 598); Latin text from *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*, 3.4.5.

⁵¹ (Augustine 1887b, p. 598); Latin text from *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*, 3.4.5.

⁵² (Augustine 1887b, p. 598); Latin text from *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*, 3.4.5.

⁵³ (Augustine 1887b, p. 598); Latin text from *Contra Litteras Petiliani Donatistae*, 3.4.5.

⁵⁴ My translation, Latin text from *Epistulae*, 185.2.8.

⁵⁵ (Augustine 1886, p. 470); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 133.1.

⁵⁶ (Augustine 1886, p. 470); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 133.1.

underscores that “the medicine of repentance (*poenitendi medicina*)” should not be ignored.⁵⁷ Augustine encourages the magistrate not to “exercise the lust of vengeance” but to have “the will to cure the wounds of sinners” that they inflicted on themselves.⁵⁸ The therapeutic value of discipline manifests in the case of his accounts of a possible war of the commonwealth against another city or another group. Even “wars might be waged by good people” so as to make “licentious lusts subdued” for the disappearance of vices.⁵⁹ Those extreme cases of discipline that border on the public uses of violence are framed as therapeutic and other-regarding, even when disciplinary measures against them go beyond the boundaries of intra-ecclesiastical disciplines.

Just as discipline opens up a variety of possibilities, ranging from material constraints to spiritual freedom, it has a broad range of applications covering intra- and extra-ecclesiastic disciplines of coercions and intra-ecclesiastic disciplines of persuasion. Between these two extremes, Augustine envisages how the church’s internal discipline and its collective cultivation of character contribute to the flourishing of the city and civic virtues. In his letter to Nectarius, Augustine shows how the true flourishing of the city lies in promoting piety and its effects on the character of people as well as restraining impiety and licenses. “Compare the choices: would you prefer your hometown to flourish with piety or with license, with reformed characters (*correctis moribus*) or with atrocities unchecked.”⁶⁰ Civic virtues covering frugality, continence, marriage bond, and other “character (*mores*) that is chaste, honorable, and upright,” make “a city be powerful” (*praepollet*) and “flourish” (*florere*).⁶¹ The proper way to promote virtuous character is the communal project of implementing public piety and moral injunctions through the worship of God. As he notes, “[virtuous] character,” is “being taught and learnt in the churches increasing in the whole globe,” along with “piety, by which the true and truthful God is worshipped.”⁶²

5. The Limits of Discipline

As touching on the counter-disciplinary measures of the technologies of the self, Foucault’s interpretation of the early Christian monastic tradition, especially Cassian, suggests that these communal measures for self-renunciation entail some institutional displays of self-renunciation and submission to authorities in a teacher-master relation. Individuals need to perform “a ritual of recognizing oneself as a sinner and penitent” and “the verbalizing exercises in relation to a teacher-master,” while also being committed to contemplation and obedience (Foucault 2000, pp. 243–45). In addition to the obligation to turn their thoughts to God for contemplation, they need to fulfill the duty of obedience, which is “complete control of behavior by the master, not a final autonomous state,” as a way of “the new technology of the self” (Foucault 2000, p. 246). Even though Foucault’s reading of the early Christian monastic tradition envisages the total submission to an authoritative teacher-master, this reading does not apply to Augustine’s account of discipline as entailing inherently what is contrary to itself, which is spiritual freedom as its end attainable through grace.

The analysis of counter-discipline in the previous section might sound as if Augustine would resort to comprehensive disciplinary systems that rely on the priestly control of the sacraments, scriptural interpretation, oration, and various coercive social controls, while manipulating the collective habit of lived experience. However, Augustine reveals how the limit of human control is unavoidable in those disciplinary measures. Just as discipline ranges from various material, institutional constraints to education for spiritual freedom, the influence from divine agency, which is grace, works through those disciplinary measures indirectly and influences interior experience directly, as well. Even when he

⁵⁷ (Augustine 1886, p. 470); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 133.1.

⁵⁸ (Augustine 1886, p. 470); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 133.1.

⁵⁹ (Augustine 1886, p. 485); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 138.2.14.

⁶⁰ (Augustine 2001, p. 3); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 91.2.

⁶¹ (Augustine 2001, p. 3); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 91.2.

⁶² (Augustine 2001, p. 3); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 91.3.

underscores the necessity of disciplinary controls, the effect of discipline is neither traceable to practice itself, nor to its recipients, but to what cannot be controlled through discipline, which is the grace of God. Disciplinary measures of structuring the habit of experience through fear and constraint make “the individual act of self-determination” incorporated into “the invincible purpose of an Omnipotent God (Brown 1972, p. 269). Moreover, the desired goal for the effective power of discipline lies in replacing discipline with spiritual freedom through one’s process of cultivation.

The disciplines of oration and interpretation become effective, not due to the control of indoctrination or rhetorical manipulation, but on account of the direct effect of the divine revelation and grace. First, implying the transition from the mere external understanding of the sign to the internal spiritual wisdom of referred spiritual reality, Augustine’s theory of interpretation encourages the audience to pursue the spiritual freedom of discovering the divine truth beyond the limit of mere literal meanings. “A miserable kind of spiritual slavery (*animae servitus*)” consists “in interpreting signs as things themselves” and “being incapable of raising the mind’s eye above the physical creation to absorb the eternal light.”⁶³ The audience ultimately needs to enter the “Christian freedom (*Christiana libertas*)” of participating in spiritual things revealed in their related signs, in other words, “raising them to the level of things of which these were signs.”⁶⁴ The goal of the discipline of scriptural interpretation is an interpretation to be discovered in one’s spiritual freedom and spiritual vision beyond mere obedience to authority and flat literality. Second, the discipline of persuasion through oration reveals the limit of discipline, as the function of eloquence, and its effect is indirect, finally relying on the divine truth that generates these changes in the audience. It is much more about “seeing Christ’s humanity as speech” and “keeping our attention fixed on God’s eloquence,” as Cavidini notes (Cavidini 1995, pp. 164–81). Augustine does not confine the agent of persuasion only to human orators. “Such things were not produced by human labor, but poured from the divine mind with both wisdom and eloquence.”⁶⁵ Persuasion is possible because the divine Word communicates its wisdom to different persons.

The limit of discipline is also apparent in his accounts of rebuke. The effect of discipline hinges on the uncontrollable, direct power of divine grace, and opens up the uncertainty of who would benefit from the discipline while pointing to the benefits rendered to those who impose discipline with benevolence. While trying to refute the charge of nullifying human will and moral responsibility in the situation of anti-Pelagian controversy, Augustine defends the good of rebuke and underscores the importance of grace at the same time. The imposition of rebuke is not merely an institutionalized social action of reshaping people but a medium of leading people to the true doctor, God, who can actually bring health. “Let them concede that they should be rebuked by their superiors by whom the Christian grace is preached. However, it is not denied that God can correct anyone God would want when no one is rebuking, and lead anyone to the health-giving pain (*ad dolorem salubrem*) of penitence through the hidden and the most powerful medicine of his power.”⁶⁶ Harmonizing the necessity of human acts of rebuke and the free play of God’s divine grace, Augustine makes a surprising conclusion: God’s power of healing is infinitely diverse, not bounded in finite human measures of discipline, while rebuke is given for the sake of the good of those who rebuke, not those to be rebuked, without any concern for one’s own authority or domination. As he notes, “a man then profits by rebuke as he feels sympathy and helps, who makes improve those whom he would want to do without rebuke.”⁶⁷

Finally, the limit of discipline is also manifest in Augustine’s account of civic virtues, as Augustine underscores that civic virtues are not merely a matter of the collective pursuit of civic integrity but an issue of participating in the grace of God with the attitude of humility. Corresponding to his accounts on the Christianized version of the four cardinal virtues as a matter of participating in the love of God

⁶³ (Augustine 1997, p. 72); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.5.9.

⁶⁴ (Augustine 1997, p. 74); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.8.12.

⁶⁵ (Augustine 1997, p. 114); Latin text from *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.7.21.

⁶⁶ (Augustine 1887c, p. 474); Latin text from *De Correptione et Gratia* 5.8.

⁶⁷ (Augustine 1887c, p. 474); Latin text from *De Correptione et Gratia* 5.8.

in the Morals of the Catholic Church,⁶⁸ Augustine defines civic virtues as the collective participation in the love of God within the city. He defines civic virtues as “loving what ought to be loved,” which consists of “the prudence” of choosing well, “the fortitude” of evading no hardship, “the temperance” of allowing no temptation, and “the justice” of having no pride.⁶⁹ The integrative impulse of loving God, which he terms “tending toward him,” constitutes the “character” of people.⁷⁰ Even though Johnson views that Augustine’s conception of virtue as “a divine gift through grace to men” departs from the classical conception of virtue as the collective inner control but returns to the earlier Roman concept of virtue as a miraculous power, it is much more about reframing the classical conception into the Christian idea of virtue (Johnson 1975, pp. 117–24). The civic virtues resting on the collective orientation toward the love of God are correlated with the civic virtue of humility. As can be seen from Augustine’s depiction of the emperor Theodosius’ public repentance for his massacre, the public manifestation of humility in confessing one’s “fallibility” is a character of “virtuous statesman” in contrast with “literary models of civic virtue” coupled with personal glory and public achievements (Augustine 1998, pp. 234–45; Dodaro 1994, pp. 93–94).

6. Rethinking Foucauldian Readings of Augustine

Why Foucault, in reading Augustine? As was noted above, it is because Foucault is helpful for highlighting the political realistic aspect of discipline that critically confronts the networks of domination and envisages the counter-disciplinary systems of self-transformation without denying those given networks of domination as the unavoidable condition of resistance and self-transformation. The relevance of Foucault in reading Augustine leads to a more thoroughgoing analysis of the two Foucauldian interpretations of Augustine, the political realistic reading and the post-colonial reading. On the one hand, the existing Foucauldian political realist reading of Augustine, which focuses on discipline in the sense of resistance through social criticism against the disciplinary networks of domination, is to be complemented by the positive aspect of counter-discipline that corresponds to Foucault’s later emphasis on the technology of the self. On the other hand, the Foucauldian post-colonialist reading of Augustine’s discipline, which underscores the institutional networks of power in molding collective experience, needs to consider Foucault’s later emphasis on the tension between domination and self-transformation and Augustine’s concern for the limit of discipline. As I showed throughout the paper, these two Foucauldian readings of Augustine’s discipline can be improved and corrected if incorporating Augustine’s language of therapy and pathology.

When the political realistic reading appropriates Foucault, this reading pays attention to a relentless social criticism as a resistance that reveals the underlying networks of domination amidst any ideals of social institutions without losing sight of political responsibility situated in them. Taking note of “the tragic consequence of the ambition to gain power and dominion over others,” Schuld underscores how “an Augustinian political realism” aware of “the moral ambivalence of social institutions” “situates Foucault’s often alarming cultural critique within a long-standing Christian tradition” (Schuld 2000, pp. 14, 20). Morgan focuses more on how resistance as social criticism discloses the mechanism of power and its disciplinary networks without denying the necessity for intervening on these disciplinary networks. Revisiting Foucault’s concern for “unmasking the disciplinary power of a regime” and its “mechanisms” and facilitating resistance, Morgan finds some points of similarity between Augustine and Foucault (Morgan 2020, p. 18). He resorts to the motif of political realism and its tragic aspect of “the grievous state of needing to condone and cultivate the peace of Babylon” in his appropriation of Foucault’s ideas of power, its reproductive networks, and resistance (Morgan 2020, p. 20). His political realistic reading of Augustine’s discipline through the

⁶⁸ (Augustine 1887a, p. 48); Latin text from *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, 15.25.

⁶⁹ (Augustine 2001, p. 96); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 155.4.13.

⁷⁰ (Augustine 2001, p. 96); Latin text from *Epistulae*, 155.4.13.

lens of Foucault culminates in calling for the critical sensitivity to “mal-formative political rhetoric and practices” and “positive account of social virtues” in his conclusion, though not elaborating on what they are (Morgan 2020, p. 20). As this reading relies on Foucault’s earlier view of discipline as a matter of domination and resistance as social criticism against the disciplinary networks of power, it does not lead to a more positive aspect of counter-discipline in Augustine’s thought, which resonates with Foucault’s later concern for the disciplinary techniques for self-transformation.

Talal Asad’s post-colonial reading of Augustine in light of his Foucauldian perspective suggests a more positive view of discipline with his emphasis on the social, disciplinary power of shaping religious experience, though disregarding Foucault’s distinction between the disciplinary technologies of domination and that of self-transformation and Augustine’s distinction of the two cities. Challenging the so-called liberal-Protestant paradigm of anthropology and the liberal secular exclusion of Muslim minorities, Asad revisits Augustine’s idea of discipline to dismantle the binary between the religious and the secular. Influenced by Foucault and Peter Brown’s reading of Augustine, Asad suggests how Augustine’s view on discipline unsettles the scientific and ideological presupposition of religious normality as the interior experience of religious symbolism. “Note that it is not mere symbols that implant true Christian dispositions, but power- ranging all the way from laws (imperial and ecclesiastical) and other sanctions (hellfire, death, salvation, good repute, peace) to the disciplinary activities of social institutions (family, school, city, church) and of human bodies (fasting, prayer, obedience, penance)” (Asad 1993, p. 35). Challenging Geertz’s definition of religion as a symbolic experience, Asad attributes this view to Augustine’s own concept of discipline. Asad describes how Augustine’s idea of discipline is about the networks of power structuring desire and practice. “Augustine was quite clear that power, the effect of an entire network of motivated practices, assumes a religious form because of the end to which it is directed. ... It was not the mind that moved spontaneously to religious truth, but power that created the conditions for experiencing that truth” (Asad 1993, p. 35). Asad’s rendering of Augustine rests on his indebtedness to Foucault, who provides conceptual frames for his post-colonial critiques of religion. Taking up Foucault’s genealogy, he argues that the nation-state from the 19th century invented “new styles of classification and calculation, and new forms of subjecthood” with its unique sense of “normality,” which is a privatized interior religiosity, while underscoring that “there is nothing essentially religious,” nor “sacred experience” (Asad 2003, pp. 24–25). The modern liberal nation-state initiated “the development of different moral and political disciplines” inseparable from “governmentality,” while exacting loyalty from its subjects and constructing a normal model of “enlightened and tolerant religion” (Asad 2003, p. 193). However, Asad’s emphasis on the disciplinary networks of power shaping the religious experience of the self does not consistently follow Foucault’s own view of the disciplinary networks of power as non-monolithic, fragmented, and entailing resistance within them as well as his later emphasis on the disciplinary technologies of the self in struggle with the disciplinary technologies of domination. In addition, Asad’s reading does not consider Augustine’s view of the counter-disciplines of the heavenly city that constantly grapple with the earthly city’s disciplinary networks. Moreover, Asad’s Foucauldian reading of Augustine misses Augustine’s nuanced understanding of discipline as tentatively employed but finally discarded for the sake of interiority and spiritual freedom, which Asad’s genealogical view of it as a modern secular invention fails to note.

These two Foucauldian readings of Augustine would contribute to the constructive project of resituating Augustine’s thought on therapeutic discipline in the demise of “secular liberalism” and “resurgent fundamentalisms,” following Wetzel’s diagnosis (Wetzel 2012, p. 4). Asad envisions the public presence of Islamic religious agency, often regarded as fundamentalistic according to the criteria of secular liberalism, by challenging the liberal-secular normality of private religiosity and its implicit interests in efficient governmentality. His reading of Augustine’s discipline is intended to follow the same frame. For Asad’s reading, the Christian community having its own disciplinary measures for constructing the patterns of experience needs to create its own disciplinary space by implementing

various institutional practices and dismantling the networks of normative forces in the modern liberal secular order as the earthly city.

However, seen from the political realist concern for tragic ambiguity, this reading cannot but be simplistic. The therapeutic pursuit of the church, which is a historical community of believers identifiable as the heavenly city only at the eschaton, is imbued with residual diseases in its earthly existence of pre-eschatological *saeculum* and struggles with any conditions of the earthly city susceptible to perturbations. Avoiding an anti-secular project of imagining a counter-cultural, alternative community, the Foucauldian political realistic reading shows how the church in a modern liberal society has its own promises and limits in bringing therapeutic transformation to its own existence and interactions with diverse socio-cultural, political forces not completely dysfunctional but open for shared usages. This Foucauldian political realist reading eschews the pitfall of quietism. Griffiths' views that *peregrinatio* would not endorse "political progressivism," not to mention "political perfectionism," with a stance of "political quietism" sensitive to the unavoidable outcome of "the blend of the good and the dreadful" (Griffiths 2012, pp. 52–53). However, the therapeutic frame that undergirds political realism can uphold an attitude of situational meliorism with its commitment to therapeutic interventions on any given situation, no matter whether the church's contribution touches on shared uses on temporal goods in a specific situation or proclamations of the final end or the supreme good. This position stands more closely to Peter Iver Kaufman's dialectics of "bad" and "not all bad." Though the chronic badness of "no complete cures, no way out from the sins" even found in the alliance between Christianity and the Roman political culture, there are the news of "not all bad", with the blessing of the celestial city and occasional consolations of various temporal goods in human social, cultural, and political life (Kaufman 2012, pp. 55–56).

This political realist concern for tragic ambiguity leads to relentless self-criticism and social criticism as a form of resistance. This resistance through social criticism is ready to unmask any self-enclosed, self-serving pursuits of ends and utilities implicit in any social consensus on domination under liberal regimes as well as even institutional churches. Social criticism as a form of resistance needs to be motivated by the concern for self-transformation through humility and the openness to grace. However, the emphasis on tragic ambiguity and social criticism as resistance does not exclude therapeutic disciplines for strengthening the distinct identity of the church as the actual, historical community of authentic and inauthentic believers while making the awareness of this distinct identity more nuanced. Defining its identity as the sacramental community for participating in spiritual freedom through the grace of Christ, not through institutional practices, does the church consisting of authentic and inauthentic believers employ diverse disciplinary measures for supposedly promoting diverse therapeutic pursuits, while it leaves room for ever-elusive works of grace. With regard to its extra-ecclesiastical disciplinary efforts crossing the boundaries between the church and the civil society in the liberal regimes, such as coercion and civic virtues, the church cannot but grapple with internal and external challenges. The church needs to scrutinize self-critically whether its motivation to collaborate with or pressure the liberal regimes emerges from humility and neighbor love, not tied to its implicit lust for domination. It also should consider how its good-willed therapeutic interventions on civil society can sustain reactions from the regimes' networks of domination. Peter Iver Kaufman rightly suggests that "humility" and "his sensitivity to civic corruptibility" "kept him [Augustine] from importuning statesmen to evangelize political culture and the social order" (Kaufman 2017, p. 4). However, in so far as one's sense of humility being receptive to divine grace and the love of neighbors attainable through disciplines would surpass these internal and external challenges, the church's pursuit of extra-ecclesiastical disciplines is not unjustifiable in the liberal regimes. If guided by relentless self-criticism and social-criticism against any instance of the lust for domination, there should be the ongoing project of testing and negotiating boundaries with the networks of the power of liberal secular regimes, while taking these networks as the church's unavoidable matrix for exercising therapeutic interventions on the diseased socio-political life.

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