Dialectic of Freedom
Hans Jonas and Augustine

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I. Introduction

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel writes: "The principle of the Christian religion should be worked out for thought, and be taken up into thinking knowledge (*der denkenden Erkenntnis angeeignet werde*), and realized in this; so that it should achieve a reconciliation, having the divine Idea within itself, and so that the riches of thought and culture belonging to the philosophical Idea should become united to the principle of Christianity." What Hegel describes is the task that Christianity of the early centuries had to face in order to actualize itself in the world, "to make the principle of Christianity into the principle of the world." Such a task, which entailed the encounter between the biblical message and the philosophical tradition ("more specially neo-Platonic philosophy"), was accomplished by the Church Fathers, who "rendered the service of thus elaborating the Christian religion in thinking knowledge (*in der denkenden Erkenntnis*);" they "dealt with questions about the nature of God, the freedom of man, his relationship to God—who is the objective—, the origin of evil and so on; and whatever thought decided about these questions was brought by them into the Christian system and incorporated in it."[1]

Hegel considers the encounter between biblical faith and Greek thought as entirely justified and legitimate; those who "blame" the Church Fathers for having first brought philosophy into Christianity, and for having thus "corrupted the purity of Christianity as originally manifested," are wrong. That is because what is "given" by faith has a meaning only if we appropriate it through interpretation and understanding: "otherwise it is a dead and external thing, which is not present for me at all." The letter should be acted upon by the spirit: "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life," according to

1. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Eric Haldane and Frances Simson (London-New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), vol. 3, 10–11; *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann: 1927), vol. 18, 9–10.

the biblical expression. Therefore, the Church Fathers had to promote the encounter with philosophical thought: it was their "right" (*Recht*).[2]

Things have markedly changed after Hegel. The legitimacy of the encounter between the Christian message and the philosophical *logos* has been strongly contested by several parties, and the "blame" Hegel refers to in quoting Luther has again been hurled at the Church Fathers.

It is well known how the modern history of dogma, as developed within Protestant theology by Adolf von Harnack, Friedrich Loofs, Martin Werner and others, has made the "Hellenization of Christianity" the general explanatory principle of the whole development of Christian doctrine. The encounter of the Christian message with Greek philosophy, paralleled by an increasing "dejudaization," has been interpreted as the cause of the corruption of the original purity of the *kerygma*, the outcome of which has been the whole dogma of the Church.[3]

Since the early decades of the twentieth century, the debate about the "Hellenization of Christianity," which arose in the context of the modern history of dogma, has also acquired a philosophical relevance which goes beyond specific interpretations of the history of the Church of the early centuries. A significant example is the attention devoted by the young Heidegger to the original understanding of human existence as developed by early Christianity and still free from the ontological categories of Greek thought; this is attested in an exemplary way, according to Heidegger, by St. Paul and, in part, by Augustine.[4] This interest in early Christianity is confirmed by some of the Heidegger's first students; in particular, by Hannah Arendt, who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the concept of love in Augustine in 1929,[5] and by Hans Jonas, who himself devoted his first book to Augustine. The latter work was published in Göttingen in 1930,[6] in the same year as Jonas' doctoral thesis,

2. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 3, 12–13; *Werke*, vol. 18, 7–8.

3. Cf. Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Freiburg: J. C. Mohr, 1887), vol. 1, 24–67; vol. 2, 27–53; about this, cf. Eginhard P. Meijering, *Die Hellenisierung des Christentum im Urteil Adolfs von Harnacks* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1985); Mathias Lutz-Bachmann, *Hellenisierung des Christentums?*, in: *Spätantike und Christentum. Beiträge zur Religions-und-Geistesgeschichte der griechisch-römischen Kultur und Zivilisation der Kaiserzeit*, ed. Carsten Colpe, Ludger Honnefelder and Mathias Lutz-Bachmann (Berlin: Akademie, 1992), 77–98.

4. Cf. Otto Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen: Günter Neske Verlag, 1990), 40–65.

5. Hannah Arendt, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin* (Berlin: Springer, 1929).

6. Hans Jonas, *Augustin und das paulinische Freiheitsproblem. Ein philosophischer Beitrag zur Genesis der christlich-abendländischen Freiheitsidee* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930). In 1965 Jonas published a second edition of the book with a different subtitle: *Augustin und das paulinische Freiheitsproblem. Eine philosophische Studie zum pelagianischen Streit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965). From now on, I refer to the pages of this second edition.

completed under the guidance of Heidegger and Bultmann.[7] My purpose in this paper is to examine Jonas' book on Augustine, also with the intention of identifying some philosophical assumptions that, directly or indirectly, have exerted an influence on the debate about the "Hellenization of Christianity" developed during the twentieth century. As regards the more general issue about the presence of Augustine in Hans Jonas' thought, it is important to explain that the analysis of such a presence should be limited to his 1930 book. After this first essay the name of Augustine disappears almost completely from the horizon of Jonas' thought: it is rarely mentioned in his studies on Gnosticism, where, on the contrary, the analysis of the philosophical tradition of Late Antiquity—both pagan and Christian—is extensive and deep;[8] it never appears in Jonas' investigations of the philosophy of nature after the Second World War;[9] finally—and most significantly—it is almost absent in the studies of ethics which characterize the last phase of his thought.[10] As mentioned above, an analysis of the *presence* of Augustine in Hans Jonas' thought should therefore be confined to the book of 1930, and should also aim to detect the reasons for Augustine's *absence* in Jonas' later work.

II. The Hermeneutic Structure of Dogma

"In 1927 I was at a seminar by Heidegger concerning the question of free will (I don't remember the exact title); one of the issues which had to be dealt with was that of freedom or slavery of the will according to St. Augustine. I presented my seminar report and Heidegger was very impressed and spoke about it with Bultmann, who suggested that I publish it before doing my

7. Hans Jonas, *Der Begriff der Gnosis. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der Hohen Philosophischen Fakultät der Philipps-Universität zu Marburg* (Göttingen: Hubert & Co, 1930).

8. Cf. Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist.* Vol. 1, *Die mythologische Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934): the name of Augustine is mentioned, without any textual reference, on pages 7, 72, n. 1, and 118; Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist.* Vol. 2, *Von der Mythologie zur mystischen Philosophie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954): there is no reference to Augustine; Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion. The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), cf. 81, 91 and 249 with textual references.

9. Collected in the book Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life. Toward a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). German edition with the title *Organismus und Freiheit. Ansätze zu einer philosophischen Biologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973); new edition with the title *Das Prinzip Leben. Ansätze zu einer philosophischen Biologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1994).

10. In Hans Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung. Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1979), Augustine is mentioned only once in a note without any textual reference (63, n. 1) about the notion of *appetitus* connected with the Platonic concept of *eros*, according an idea already argued by Jonas in his first book on Augustine, as we shall see.

doctorate, in the series of studies which he directed, 'Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testament'." It is in this way that Jonas, in a 1975 interview, recalls the origins of his book on Augustine.[11] We are back in Marburg, where Jonas had moved to in 1924 in order to follow Heidegger, after having attended his courses for three terms in Freiburg, and where he made the other decisive encounter in his intellectual development, the one with Rudolf Bultmann, whose seminars on the New Testament Jonas actively attended. It was actually the publication of the book on Augustine which marked the beginning of a friendship, which, unlike that with Heidegger, became progressively stronger over the years to run, "like a silent sunbeam," throughout Jonas' entire life.[12] It is Jonas, again, in fact, who recollects in his commemorative discourse in honour of Bultmann, held in Marburg in 1976: "When the editor, after a negative review of my first book, became understandably hesitant to agree to the publication of my subsequent work on Gnosticism, it was Bultmann once again who insisted, threatening to withdraw from the direction of the series if the editor did not follow his opinion."[13]

Jonas doesn't say who was the author of that review. However, of the eight reviews devoted to the first edition of his book, it was probably the one published in 1930 by Hugo Koch in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* which caused the greatest stir.[14] Koch, in fact, forcefully criticized the incomprehensible conceptual apparatus used by Jonas, which showed his dependence upon the phenomenology of Heidegger and thus that he was completely at odds with Augustinian thought. These difficulties of language (which, according to Bultmann, "would have to be excused as a newcomer's excess of talent")[15]

11. The interview, in English, is contained in the book of Ioan Petru Culianu, *Gnosticismo e pensiero moderno: Hans Jonas* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1985), 136–37.

12. So Jonas writes in: Hans Jonas, *Wissenschaft als persönliches Leben* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 51.

13. Jonas, *Wissenschaft*, 53.

14. Hans Koch, in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 45 (1930): 469–70; the other reviews devoted to the first edition of the book have appeared in: *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 2 (1931): 2214 (Erich Dinkler) and 2215–17 (Hans von Campenhausen); *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 49 (1930): 500 (Gerhard Krüger); *Ricerche religiose* 23 (1931): 266 (Ernesto Buonaiuti); *Literarisches Zentral Blatt* 45 (1930): 296 (Hermann Diem); *Theologhisches Literaturblatt* 2 (1930): 325 (Georg Zänker); *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 48 (1930): 750 (René Gathy). The second edition of the book (1965) was devoted to the following reviews: *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 42 (1967): 38–40 (Eberhard Jüngel), see below, n. 16; *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 13 (1967): 147 (François Thannard); *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 11 (1967): 129–30 (François Bovon).

15. So Bultmann writes in his Preface to *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*; Bultmann here justifies his Preface—in which he emphasizes the contribution of new and fundamental ideas brought by Jonas to the understanding of Gnosticism—precisely with the misunderstandings which had been provoked by the previous book on Augustine.

had led Koch to observe, in a tone of complete irony: "If the content is equivalent in quality to the incomprehensibility of its language, then it must be quite excellent."[16] Koch's critical irony was not so much addressed to Jonas' contribution to the studies on Augustine as to the first "Appendix" of the book ("The hermeneutic structure of dogma"), from which Koch had drawn the majority of terms he considered incomprehensible. However, as often happens in the history of culture, the subsequent development of research had to transform into "realis" that which Koch, in his ironic judgement, had meant by "irrealis:" this precise "Appendix," in fact, played a very important role in the development of the theological theme of "demythologisation," so much so that even Bultmann, in his famous essay of 1941, *New Testament and Mythology*, could refer back, in the reconstruction of the history of the problem, to the "prominent arguments" by Jonas on the hermeneutic structure of dogma.[17] It is therefore from this first "Appendix" of the 1930 edition that I would like to start, in order to identify the methodological assumptions which guide Jonas in his interpretation of Augustine;[18] those assumptions which then also became fundamental to his later research on Gnosticism.[19]

As the very title of the book shows (*Augustine and St. Paul's Problem of Freedom*), Jonas' purpose is to investigate the Augustinian view of freedom starting from that resolute turning towards the theology of St. Paul which characterises Augustine's thought from the last decade of the fourth century onwards. This reference to St. Paul is what unites the development of Augustinian interpretations of freedom from the period before the outbreak

16. Koch in: *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 45 (1930): 469, and again on the same page: "… currently, Jonas, because of his rebellion against the sacred spirit of the German language, deserves three days and three nights locked up in the belly of a big fish." In 1967, reviewing in the same *Theologische Literaturzeitung* the second edition of the book on Augustine, Eberhard Jüngel took the right moves from the ironic judgement of Koch to offer, on the contrary, a highly positive assessment of the contribution of Jonas ("which now belongs amongst the classic works of hermeneutical theology"), and concluded: "I believe that a highly critical study of this book would constitute the best 'repair' through which German theology can be indebted to a scholar on whom once, in the name of German science, was to be inflicted 'three days and three nights locked inside the belly of a big fish'" (*Theologische Literaturzeitung* 42 [1967]: 38, 40).

17. See Rudolph Bultmann, "Neues Testament und Mythologie," in idem, *Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen* (München: Beck, 1941), 123, n. 25.

18. In doing this, I follow the direction indicated by Jonas himself, who (p. 25, n. 1) refers the reader to the first "Appendix" of the book for a justification of the methodology used in his investigation of Augustine.

19. As shown in the "Introduction" to the second volume of *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* published in Göttingen in 1954, 1–23. This "Introduction," dedicated to the problem of myth and "objectification," however, is derived from the doctoral dissertation by Jonas at Marburg in 1928, *Der Begriff der Gnosis* (see above, n. 7); it therefore belongs to the same period as the Appendix "The hermeneutic structure of dogma."

of the Pelagian controversy, and which finds its classic expression in *Ad Simplicianum*, to that which is instead characterised and also affected by this controversy, and which is examined here, in particular, on the basis of the first book of *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum.* According to Jonas, however, the analysis of such a development must aim at the reconstruction of the "categorical structures of its concepts of existence" (p. 24). In other words, it has to regain, through its conceptual apparatus, or beyond it, that real existential experience which is its true basis. For Jonas this is possible because the phenomena under discussion, which were at the centre of the Pelagian controversy, as true existential phenomena, still confront us today (p. 24): that is to say, we can directly access them, despite their historical distance, from our own experience. Only this "empathic understanding," as prerequisite to any hermeneutics (p. 94), will allow us to assess the adequacy or inadequacy of those linguistic and conceptual methods which, "at that time," during the controversy, the protagonists employed in their rational arguments. In this way, we expand the interpretation from a mere historical reconstruction of the past to a "phenomenological" character in its own right.

Pertinent to the "phenomenological" character of such an investigation is the fact that it must eliminate all dogmatic elements which played a key role in the Pelagian controversy, in particular the dogmas of original sin and predestination. These teachings—as is shown in the first "Appendix" of Jonas' book—should be understood as a "metaphysical hypostatization" of genuine existential phenomena which are the basis of every religious experience (p. 80) and which must be brought to light by a true hermeneutic analysis. On the other hand, according to Jonas such a process of "hypostatization" arises from and is supported by that original movement of "self-objectification" into which—as we shall see later—man inevitably lapses when trying to understand himself in relation to the origins and limits of his existence. Such "self-objectification" initially expresses itself through objectifying terms belonging to mythology and symbolism. To such a structure, however, is successively added more and more material which is both compromising and diverting: once fixed objectively in representations of myth and symbol, the original existential phenomena become available for conceptual thought, independently of their actual role in real existence, and can thus be included within general explanations of theological and dogmatic systems, whose role becomes increasingly strong in the case of those doctrinal disputes which, like the Pelagian controversy, spring up within the Church. These theological or dogmatic systems insert phenomena about human existence into the context of a rational and coherent whole and lose their historic and dynamic peculiarity. Through these systems, therefore, objectifying thought, with its logical structure, is ultimately seeking—if one is to express Jonas' basic idea—the

certainty of "what" (Was) and is trying to escape from the uncertainty of "that" (Dass), of that decision specific to faith, which is always open-ended and never unambiguously determined.

If, therefore, according to Jonas the dogmatic elements present within the Augustinian views of freedom should be removed, this means not only going back from their mythological wrapping to their original existential meaning, upon which they are based, but also producing an effective de-construction (Destruktion) for the dis-articulation of the conceptual, systematic and rational apparatus, within which, through dogma, the objectifying representations of symbols are included. Only in this way is it possible to offer a "hermeneutic analysis" of these "existential (or rather eminently 'practical') phenomena" which are the basis of all religious experience (p. 24), and thus an analysis of that genuine "self-interpretation" of human existence peculiar to proto-Christian faith, which—as we shall see—found its basic expression in St. Paul, and in reference to which, therefore, the view of Augustine should also be assessed.[20]

III. Christianity and Stoicism

The interpretation put forward by Jonas in the first Appendix of his book on Augustine shares with modern history of dogma developed in the context of liberal theology—despite the profound differences that separate it from the latter—the basic idea of an original purity of Christian *kerygma* corrupted through the subsequent superimposion of ontological categories of Greek thought, the outcome of which would become the dogma of the Church.[21] This purity can no longer be regained through historical enquiry, but only by an "empathic understanding," which—as we have seen—allows us, on the basis of our own experience, to recapture the true forms of existence peculiar to early Christianity. It is therefore fully in keeping with this methodological approach, by which actual historical mediations can be ignored, that Jonas seeks access to the Augustinian view of freedom by means of a preliminary and very general comparison between the original concepts

20. In such an interpretation, however, which sets the "objective" against the "existential," despite the undoubted elements of truth there is always the danger of taking the "short-cut" of an anthropological reduction of the divine: a reduction, that is to say, where statements of faith are turned into mere symbols of authentic existence, of inner conversion. This has often been pointed out in reference to Jonas' hermeneutics of dogma: cf., for example, Hermann Diem, *Kirchliche Theologie als Wissenschaft.* Vol. 2, *Dogmatik. Ihr Weg und zwischen Historimus Existentialismus* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1955), 27–45. As to concern the "short cut" followed by Bultmann in this sense, cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Le conflit des interpretations* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 393–415. As regards the question of an anthropological reduction of the divine, see what Jonas himself wrote in his essay "Heidegger und die Theologie," *Evangelische Theologie* 24 (1964): 641.

21. See Von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1, 24; vol. 2, 27 (see above, n. 3).

of the Christian faith and Greek thought. And, for such a position, which targets existential perspectives, not ontological foundations, "Greek thought" means the philosophy of the Hellenistic age, Stoicism in particular. According to Gadamer,[22] in the twenties this was one of the characteristic themes of Rudolf Bultmann's teaching at Marburg. Reflecting on the problem of a self-understanding of faith and its incompatibility with a transcendental view of self-consciousness,[23] Bultmann defined the Christian position in antithesis to the stoic ideal of self-sufficiency, interpreted as full autonomy.[24] Jonas also moves in that direction.

Within Stoicism—Jonas points out—freedom is an aristocratic-ethical ideal: it coincides with the independence of external reality and with self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*). What is proper to man, what characterises us in our own nature (*pros hemas*), is primarily what we have at our disposal unconditionally, that is, what is in our power (*eph'hemin*). This is the sphere of inner life, of consciousness. By means of such an identification of *pros hemas* with *eph'hemin*, i.e., by reducing what is "proper" to man (*idion*) to what, as the origin of knowledge and ethical intention, is in principle well known and therefore controllable, the problem of a possible freedom is already solved: to the extent that I am limited to this realm, to the sphere of what is "proper" to me, I am actually free. According to the Stoics, only *autarkeia*, therefore, as inner turning away from all that is beyond the self, makes possible that true peace of mind, that reliance on ourselves in the "safe" sphere of our inner life wherein freedom lies.

We understand how, according to the young student of Heidegger, through such a view the experience of life with its "facticity," or with basic "anxiety" pertaining to real life, is already lost or removed. By projecting onto the outside and thereby objectifying the unavoidable dialectic or division which is inside the consciousness, Stoicism eliminates the realm where the problem of freedom can find its significance. "Only the Judeo-Christian interpretation—Jonas writes—created the realm of that factual and living experience within which freedom could-and-should become a problem" (p. 25). Here, in fact, the problem of human freedom begins where, according to the Stoics, it ended, i.e. within that sphere of consciousness which the Stoics separated from everything external to it and thus regarded as "safe."

22. I refer to the two essays by Hans Georg Gadamer: "Zur Problematik des Selbstverständnisses. Ein hermeneutischer Beitrag zur Frage der Entmythologisierung," in idem, *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), vol. 1, 70–81; and *Heideggers Wege. Studien zur Spätwerk* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 25–38.

23. Gadamer, "Zur Problematik," 73–74.

24. See Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege*, 32–33.

If, according to the Stoics, the return of man to himself coincides with the attainment of freedom, for Christianity such a return places man *coram Deo*, and so introduces him to an abyss of consciousness which he experiences as radically inadequate. It is just when man, leaving behind the worldly realities to which he would cling, takes the extreme risk of placing himself under the gaze of God, that the issue of Christian freedom begins: the problem, namely, concerning the freedom of the will no longer with regard to the world, but with regard to itself. The believer, in fact, is called upon to accomplish the experience of being left to himself (*sibi relictum esse*) and of standing alone before God; through such an experience, even the sphere of consciousness, and primarily the sphere of ethical intentions, which, according to the Stoics we have at our disposal in an unlimited way (*eph'hemin*), is called in question: "Just where—Jonas writes—I must be an absolute subject, devoid of all external supports from the world, within the inner sphere entrusting entirely to myself, precisely where I can be only a subject and there is no longer any possible dissolution into an object, I experience my deepest and most basic powerlessness over myself—in respect of which to act inside the world is the scope of my power. This powerlessness paradoxically appears precisely where it concerns my 'will' and nothing else, where there is no longer any question of external success as a criterion of my power" (p. 21).

Placing himself naked before the eyes of God, before him who searches into the "heart and kidneys," the believer accepts the truth through which he is made manifest to himself in the extreme possibility of his being, and therefore at the utmost limit of his nature as a creature (p. 33). This, says Jonas (p. 33, n. 1), is what Augustine points to in the tenth book of the *Confessions*, where he is speaking from his most personal experience; which means, according to Jonas, where he is freed from that metaphysical apparatus through which that experience is obscured. Once man has dared so far, his failure, however, is assured; according to Jonas, here lies the tragic ambiguity of faith: "Taking upon himself what God requires of his existence, man also agrees to stand as a creature before God; grasping this highest possibility, assigned to him in a binding way, he has ventured forward and exposed himself in such a way that his failure is certain. That he experiences this failure is the sense of this very possibility and the purpose which is assigned to him" (p. 32). Only thus, in fact, man can prepare himself to receive grace.

IV. Between St. Paul and Heidegger

According to Jonas, this fundamental understanding of human existence in the light of faith is what emerges in a paradigmatic way from St. Paul, especially from the seventh chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans* (7. 7–25), which is taken as the key to the analysis of the Augustinian view of freedom.

Jonas devotes in particular "Appendix III" to an examination of the text of St. Paul; this "Appendix" is included in the second edition of the book on Augustine (1965), but contains the development of a draft first submitted to Bultmann in 1929.[25] For Jonas this chapter is of central importance not only because, during the Pelagian controversy, it was adopted by the same antagonists as a paradigm for their own interpretations; this chapter, in which St. Paul speaks in the first person about the condition of *homo sub lege*, could rather take this role because it expresses, in the form of an autobiographical account, namely as a subjective experience, some "truths" which are instead necessary, since they show the basic or universal nature of human beings (p. 93). It is through that nature that sin, about which St. Paul speaks, is "inevitably committed and is constantly recommitted" (p. 94).

Jonas begins by pointing out that the essential nature of human beings is constituted not only by self-consciousness, by man's ability to relate reflexively to himself and so establish himself as a subject (*cogito me cogitare*); which rather corresponds, "in the field of the real existence," to the reflexive nature of the will, the fact that the will "says not only 'I want to …,' but also, at the same time, 'I wish to want to …' (*volo me velle*)" (p. 99). This intrinsic reflexivity is what distinguishes the will from every mere *appetitus*, for whatever it might be; impulse, in fact, is always aimed at something and is never self-reflexive, whereas the will, while wanting something, wants itself at the same time. This self-affirming characteristic of the will forms the "a priori" basis underlying the individual acts of the soul, thus making them possible. Such a will "is nothing more than the basic way of being of a *Dasein* in general, and the word simply means that *Dasein*'s being is such that in each of its manifestations an interest in this or that is revealed, and that its final interest, or its ultimate goal, is its own being. In short, 'will' means what Heidegger understands by the term 'care'" (p. 95).

Significantly, however, it is precisely through such a concern for its own being that for Jonas the will is inevitably involved in a movement of self-objectification; hence necessarily, and at the same time in an act freely committed and constantly repeated (p. 96), it falls in upon itself. Compared to the objectification of the Self described in the Heideggerean "analytic of existence," this self-objectification of the will is for Jonas the primary and essential characteristic of human nature, through which the real "fall" of

25. The text of this "Appendix," entitled "Philosophische Reflexion über Paulus, Römerbrief, Kapitel 7," is published by Jonas for the first time in: *Zeit und Geschichte. Dankensgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag,* ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), 555–70. The English version ("Philosophical Meditation on the Seventh Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans") will next be included by Jonas in his book: *Philosophical Essays: From Ancient Creed to Technological Man* (Chicago: Prentice Hall 1974), 465–81. The quotations from this essay will refer to the German version published as an "Appendix" in the book on Augustine.

man comes about (p. 103); and it is precisely this original characteristic of human nature which is referred to by the Pauline concept of sin described in the *Epistle to the Romans*.

Objectification is a primordial act of human existence; through it, man separates himself from other beings which are placed in front of him, setting them in a world opposed to himself. In such a way, he places himself as a "subject" and, at the same time, he creates the "space" for his possible freedom against the reality which surrounds him. With that first separation, through which man "comes out of the original unity along with all of the other beings," he already gains the opportunity to place himself not only in front of an objectified world, but also in front of himself as an object. Through such a separation, by which man is able to acquire a perspective on himself, he leaves the immediacy of "humility" and "innocence as a creature" for the pride of "mediation in relation to himself" (p. 97). For this reason, the fall of man can be mythically ascribed to the fact of having eaten from the tree of knowledge (p. 102), namely to that self-knowledge which generates freedom and, at the same time, its unavoidable trap.

The original act of self-objectification, which characterises man's relationship with the world and with himself, inevitably involves the reflexive structure of the will itself, to whose nature, therefore, essentially belongs the possibility of changing itself from *volo me velle* into *cogito me velle*. In this change, freedom itself is lost: "Instead of living in accordance with the actions it has chosen, it looks at itself from the outside, ultimately forgetting and betraying itself. From the 'future' of an unconditional commitment to which it was bounded by action, it falls into a 'present' of 'objectified' data, where its curiosity is in the safe position of an observer, in contrast to the exposed movement of an actor" (p. 97). Certainly, because of its reflexive nature, the will always has within itself the opportunity of becoming aware of its reassuring "objectifications" and of redissolving what it has frozen in the present of representation (*visio*) into the uncertain future of decision (*vocatio*). By virtue of its original nature, however, it will collapse—again and again—into objectification.

V. The Antinomic Dialectic of Freedom

According to Jonas, this antinomic dialectic of freedom, and the experience within it every man is called upon to perform and to repeat within himself, is what St. Paul describes in the seventh chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans*, when he speaks about the condition of "man under the law" (*homo sub lege*). The law is indeed insidious: according to Jonas, it is not only, as it were, the impartial spectator in front of which this dialectic of the will takes place; the law is rather what really causes such a dialectic, at the very moment when,

as a condition of possibility of the morality, it demands self-consciousness. And this is the meaning Augustine gives to the law in his interpretation of the Pauline text during his "pre-Pelagian" period. The law *demonstrat infirmitatem*;[26] that is, it eliminates the security of "natural man" and gives him, precisely through his transgressing of the law, the *cognitio peccati*: "'Without the law, in fact, sin is dead,' it is as he said—asserts Augustine in *Ad Simplicianum*, commenting on the Pauline words—: sin is hidden, that is to say, it is considered as dead …. But when the commandment arises, sin revives."[27] Only through this knowledge, which establishes the scope of an explicit morality, does sin acquire its force and spiritual reality.

For this very reason, however, according to the original interpretation of St. Paul, there is for Jonas a more fundamental connection between law and sin than that which ascribes to the first a mere cognitive function of the second. Sin, in fact, is not only made manifest through the law, but rather is inevitably and inexorably committed because of the law. Herein lies for Jonas the "mysterious" sense (p. 42) of the words through which St. Paul states that "sin, finding an impulse by means of the commandment, deceived me and for its own means killed me" (*Romans*, 7.8). The most frequent interpretation of these words given by Augustine consists in affirming the existence of a merely psychological connection between prohibition and impulse, in the sense that from the first comes the desire to gain a new and additional *stimulus*, through which is increased "the sweetness of the forbidden."[28] For Jonas, however, this account is not completely satisfying: it does not explain why, right here, when faced with the command of the law, for St. Paul the will must necessarily succumb to impulses of lust and yet cannot, as in a Kantian perspective, for example, master them. Augustine—here, as in other cases—"weakens" and thereby trivialises the tempting, deceitful force (*exapatan*) and, with it, "the abyssmal, demonic danger" ascribed by St. Paul to the commandment of the law (p. 42). Just as it requires self-knowledge, just as it induces man to self-examination, it is the law itself that creates "the condition for the plight of freedom and the perversion of its purposes" (p. 102). In fact, since, through our sense of duty, the law makes the will reflexive, letting it enter the sphere of conscious morality, it offers the supreme temptation of self-objectification, the temptation to stand in front of itself, to look at itself in perspective, and therefore to judge itself, so forgetting and betraying itself. Therein lies for

26. See Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, 1.1.2, in *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, vol. 44, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), 10.

27. Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum*, 1.1.14; *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 44, 18. My translation.

28. See Augustine, *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola apostoli ad Romanos*, 32.39, in *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, vol. 84, ed. Johannes Divjak (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), 27; *Ad Simplicianum*, 1.1.5; *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 44, 15.

Jonas the authentic meaning of the Augustinian idea of *superbia* and of the Pauline concept of *kauchasthai*, the glorification of man in own workings, through which emerges "the specific structure of the fallen creature" (p. 44).

According to St. Paul, however, in this "deception" by the law, which, through its tempting power, gives impulse to sin and it kills each *voluntas bona*, lies its true meaning. Precisely because the attempt to obey the law is inevitably doomed to failure, man can experience the defeat of his humanity, and thereby, only in this way, open himself up—according to the Pauline logic—to receive grace: for, only in such a way, only by living to the full in the dialectic of "subjection to the law" can be realised that "death and resurrection in the Cross" which is a true participation in Christ.

The *status sub lege*, described in the seventh chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans*, therefore represents, for St. Paul, the condition that every man should implement and pass through again and again as a necessary and indispensable precondition to be open to receive the gift of grace. This means, however, that, "from a Pauline point of view, a *status gratiae* determinable in itself, in fixed terms, regardless of the *status legis*, of what man is in himself, as a mere man before God, is unthinkable" (p. 63). The proper self-interpretation of grace consists rather in recognizing it as structurally tied to the law: "In the *status gratiae* the *status legis* is therefore always assembled, dialectically and in a constituent way, like an abysmal background of its own real being" (p. 64).

If this dialectic between law and grace, always moving and continuously suspended, like "stages of development" of human existence related to each other, is cancelled and its distinctive components are understood as different phases uniquely determined by their content and separated—biographically and historically—from each other, then that real dimension of experience, of factual existence, which finds its expression in the Pauline concept of faith is radically lost. And for Jonas this is what happens with Augustine.

VI. An Ontological Interpretation of Freedom

The relationship between law and grace, and the related problem of man's insufficiency, is actually interpreted by Augustine according to a conceptual scheme that remains stable in the development of his thought: the law, as we have seen, is designed to show man his weakness (*infirmitas*), namely his inability to fulfil what is prescribed, so that his will renounces itself and turns back to its Saviour. Faith consists in such a conversion; it is obtained as a gift from the Spirit through grace and as that charity which, "poured in our hearts" (*Rom*. 5. 5), provides the will with the true freedom of goodness. While freedom, at a natural level, consists only in the *delectatio peccati*, the freedom achieved by grace makes it possible to fulfil the law. The *caritas* is conceived by Augustine—in contrast to the Pauline conception—as a force

given to the will almost "as if by magic" from above, which frees it from its impotence and places it beyond that sphere of creatures where insufficiency and sin are experienced. Leaving this sphere behind himself, man has now, as a gift, a real sufficiency as regards God's law, and with it the true freedom of the will.

According to Jonas, this ontological interpretation of the law-grace relationship becomes even more evident where Augustine makes of it a universal soteriological scheme (pp. 37–41). In this context, Augustine distinguishes four different "stages:" before the law, under the law, under grace, and at peace: "In the first stage, before the law—it is said in *De diversis quaestionibus*—we do not actually fight against the pleasures of the world; in the second, under the law, we fight but we are defeated; in the third we fight and win; in the fourth, we do not fight but rest in perfect and eternal peace."[29] Now, within this scheme, the second and the third stage—the only ones relating to human existence as its fulfilment—no longer constitute an inseparable unity, not even in the sense that they can be included in the biographical development of a single existence; rather they represent two historical periods, of which one, Jewish law, belongs to the past and has been superseded by the now dominant age of grace represented by the Church, in which "we fight and win." "The Church dominates; its origins in Judaism are a distant past and, as for the present, it is totally detachable, exactly in the manner of distinctions drawn for different historical periods" (p. 37).

Therein lies the paradigmatic significance which the personal experience of St. Paul, with his passage from Judaism into Christianity, takes on for the Church; a passage, however, which becomes objectified or "hypostatised" in a unique historical event no longer understood as the ever open and fundamental structure of human existence. "Where, in fact—writes Jonas—from the distance of a retrospective historical view, the law-grace dialectic is seen as a passage dating back to the past and doesn't even resemble the *constituens* of any Christian present, this leads necessarily to an impoverishment of both the conceptuality and the structure in the very being of Christians, with its own 'motility'—and therefore also of the dimension of thought and experience in which alone the original problem of freedom is rooted" (p. 38).

The analysis of the Augustinian doctrine of freedom in the "pre-Pelagian period" is disclosed by Jonas on the basis of the first book of the *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, where the whole passage from *Romans*, 7.7–25 is from the outset interpreted as referring to *homo sub lege*.[30] This enables Augustine to ascribe to man's will a positive relationship with the law of

29. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, 66, 7, in *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, vol. 44 A, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), 186. My translation.

30. See Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum*, 1.1.1; *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 44, 8.

God. As emerges in particular from the interpretation of verses 16–18, the will, not being under the influence of grace, is as yet unable to perform good deeds. However, thanks to the knowledge of the law, it disapproves its sin with which it is also involved. If, then, incited by lust, it "agrees to commit sin," it also has an original *consentire legi*, a real *condelectari legi Dei*, by virtue of which it rejects its own actions as unjust, even if then it continuously relapses into them.[31]

According to Jonas, the decisive factor here is that Augustine recognizes the presence in the human being of this double and conflicting *consentire*, which should be clearly seen in the light of that original and fundamental disagreement which characterizes the will when, assigned to itself and confronting the law of God, it experiences how the original intention to which it adheres and with which it agrees is still unattainable. Such an experience of the radical failure of the will is made possible by the fact that to man "under the law," namely "before" grace, is ascribed the capacity for a free self-determination about goodness; that is, a real and effective assenting to the law, not from a *timor servilis*, but precisely from an *amor iustitiae*, although this latter, without the help of grace, does not remain *invictus*: that is, it is unable to accomplish the goodness at which it aims.

It is exactly this interpretation of the text of St. Paul, and with it the assessment of the relationship between man's will and God's law, which is then abandoned by Augustine, becoming the central point of his dispute with the Pelagians. What they objected to, as is well known, was the idea of a constitutional inadequacy in man due to original sin. For them, on the contrary, man is capable of self-determination about goodness, as long as he is not closed to correct pronouncements of the will of God. This, however, was revealed in the New Testament, from which man can therefore receive a moral impulse to make the correct *studium virtutis*. To grace, conceived in this way as the teaching and example of evangelical doctrine, for the Pelagians may also belong the law, as an *adiutorium cognitionis*, although this constitutes only a first stage in the development of mankind, and therefore plays only a preparatory pedagogical role, not yet being able to educate the will in the fullness of freedom for which it is more properly suited. This transition from law to grace is entirely consistent with the Augustinian scheme about the different stages of salvation; by the Pelagians, however, it is understood in the sense that the will to goodness, which Paul ascribes in *Romans* 7 to the *homo sub lege*, represents an *initium*, an independent act on the part of man, upon whom God, *quo merito*, confers, by means of "grace" (that is, through the most perfect moral teaching revealed by the New Testament), the effective possibility of its full implementation. It is precisely to challenge this view

31. *Ad Simplicianum*, 1.2.19; *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 44, 48.

and to ensure the sovereign freedom of God and thus the absolutely "free" gift of grace, that Augustine feels constrained to apply the Pauline text, and the statements contained therein about *consentire legi* and *condelectari legi Dei*, no longer to *homo sub lege*, but rather to *homo sub gratia*. The reasons for this interpretative change are indicated by Augustine himself in *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum*: "I changed my opinion because I do not see how a man under the law should say 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man,' since this very delight in good (*delectatio boni*), by which, moreover, he does not consent to evil, not from fear of penalty, but from love of righteousness (for this is meant by 'delighting'), can only be attributed to grace."[32]

The *homo sub lege* is no longer recognized as having any positive relationship of his will to the law of God: what is peculiar to him is no longer the *amor iustitiae*, as Augustine stated in *Ad Simplicianum*, but only the *timor servilis*, and his freedom consists now only in the *delectatio peccati*.[33] According to Jonas, however, this means eliminating that sphere of ethical action into which man enters through a genuine consenting to the law, and within which alone he has the opportunity to experience his ultimate insufficiency.

In this way, the Pelagian controversy leads Augustine to a profound "dedramatization" of the experience of man in the face of faith, as described by St. Paul in *Romans* 7 (p. 58). The irreconcilable dialectic between will and impotence becomes lost; with it is also lost that experience of an inner division of the will which, in the Pre-pelagian period, was still recognized by Augustine in the presence in human nature of a double, conflicting and simultaneous *consentire*, both to law and to sin. Now, however, relating the words of St. Paul to the *status sub gratia*, where Apostle himself belongs, Augustine considers *consentire legi* to exclude any *consentire* of the will to sin.[34] The latter can therefore be completely transferred to an external reality, extraneous to the will, to that "instinctive movement of concupiscence" which is now ascribed to the "carnal body." In this way, the Pauline text is reduced to that usual and objectifying interpretation of the opposition between *nous-sarx* (or *pneumatikos-sarkikos*) which inhibits any real understanding of human experience in the fall of man, as described by the Apostle (see p. 58).

VII. Christianity and Greek Metaphysics

According to Jonas, the real conceptual perspective underlying this shift in the "Pelagian period" is to be found in ontological understanding of

32. Augustine, *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum*, 1.10.22, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiaticorum Latinorum*, vol. 60, ed. Karl Friedrich Urba and Joseph Zycha (Vienna: Tempsky 1913), 472. My translation.

33. Augustine, *Contra duas ep. Pel.*, 1.5.7; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, vol. 60, 437.

34. See Augustine, *Contra duas ep. Pel.*, 1.10.18; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, vol. 60, 468.

the will, where Augustine actually agrees with his opponents: "It is in fact a peculiarity of Augustine—Jonas observes right at the beginning of the book—that not only the theme and the starting point of the dispute, but even his objective viewpoint is left to some extent to be determined by the claims of his opponents; he only definitively regains his own position in the fight with them" (p. 23).

As already noted, according to Jonas' interpretation, the basic view of the Pelagians is characterized by considering the *delectatio boni* as an autonomous act that, although it represents only a "beginning," already qualifies the man, attesting the presence in him of a *bonum*. It is therefore a sort of *praecedens*, of "merit," in virtue of which God gives him the additional gift of grace. In such a way, the Pelagians identify *velle bonum* with *bene velle*, so that they reduce the will to a "substance," to a *res* with a value in itself, thus placing it within the "legal" sphere of *meritum*. It is exactly this basic premise that Augustine should have rejected, but he indeed leaves, as it were, as imposed by his opponents; and it is precisely because he accepts this premise that he then feels compelled to refer the same *propensio in bonum* by the will to the preceding action of divine grace: "For, if without God's grace the desire of good (*cupiditas boni*) begins with ourselves, merit itself will have begun—to which, as if of debt (*ex debito*), comes the assistance of grace; and thus God's grace will not be bestowed freely, but will be given according to our merit."[35]

For Jonas, however, in such a view, according to which the *propositum boni* is already regarded as a *bonum* in itself and, because of this, traced back to God, the original question concerning human freedom is completely abandoned by Augustine. The only issue discussed by Augustine during the Pelagian controversy is that concerning the origin of that *propensio in bonum* which can qualify any human act as *bonum*; a origin which for him, unlike the Pelagians, can no longer be ascribed to the self-determination of free will, but must itself already be "inspired" by God. Certainly, this *propensio in bonum* or *delectatio boni* needs the help of grace, which, in addition to the initial impulse, through the love "poured into our hearts," gives the actual ability to achieve goodness. In such a context, however, the essential difference between the two levels is for Jonas reduced to a merely quantitative difference, i.e., according to the measure or *quantum* of grace working in them.

According to Jonas, this appears clearly in the Augustinian view of the finite state of the will. For Augustine, this is determined not by its being always dependent on a "call" which confronts it with its own "ought-to-be," but by its receptivity; namely, by the fact that the will can only be moved by something which comes from outside and attracts it as a *bonum*. Thus, the

35. Augustine, *Contra duas ep. Pel.*, 2.2.18; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, vol. 60, 432. My translation.

will is no longer regarded as having that distinctive character of "reflexivity," that relationship with itself which is required by the *vocatio* of faith. Will is understood rather as a mere *appetitus*, uniquely determined—as *caritas* or as *cupiditas*—by the kind of *res* which precedes it and towards which it tends.[36] It is only within this "objectified" or "naturalised" context, as it were, that grace (and with it divine election) is regarded by Augustine as that *vocatio congruens* or *effectrix* which instils the original *propensio in bonum* itself; namely, as a force added to the will from outside and bringing within the horizon of its vision (*visio*) that perfect *bonum* which is able to attract it, so that it can now have an appetite for goodness, a *concupiscentiam bonam*, directed no longer at the *res temporales*, but at spiritual and eternal reality.

According to Jonas' view, as I tried to outline, we understand what this ontological interpretation of the will means, which reduces it to a mere *appetitus*: the original experience of Christian faith describes a state of human existence which cannot be brought to a final "objectification," or—according to the terminology used by Jonas—which is characterised by a structural "motility," and thus by its being "open" to the always uncertain future in its "fulfilment." *Appetitus*, on the contrary, points to that inauthentic attitude of human mind which aims only at what is "represented," and through which man understands himself only on the basis of what is "available," or—to use another expression of Jonas—of "wishing-to-have" and not "wishing-to-be." For, the basic structure of any *appetitus* lies in "wanting-to-have" and "wanting-to-retain" as its own object at which it aims and by which it is drawn and attracted. On the other hand, this *appetitus habendi* has to be set against the basic attitude of man described by Augustine as *beatum esse velle*: the *beatitudo* consists, in fact, in the firm and certain possession of goodness. This, however, can only be provided for a *bonum* which, as the *summum*, is that *res aeterna*, namely, in Jonas' view, that absolute and unchanging "present," by means of which alone the appetite is able to keep hold of a quiet possession.

With such a view, as Jonas describes it, we have moved away from the original "self-understanding" of human existence peculiar to proto-Christian faith towards the conceptual horizon of Greek (that is, platonic) metaphysics. This latter, in fact (according to the Heideggerean categories assumed by Jonas), regards "being" as a firm "being-present," as something to which our "seeing" can approach and have at its own disposal. That is why Augustine can now regard the true relationship with God's being as characterised no longer by *pistis*, but by that *visio* and *fruitio* associated with *beatitudo*: "The whole phenomenon—writes Jonas commenting on the Augustinian sentence:

36. See Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, 40.3*:* "ex diversis visis diversus appetitus animarum"; *Corpus Christianorum*, vol. 44 A, 127.

'*caritas* through which you want to see and enjoy'—[37]is directed primarily to a 'seeing' and not to a 'listening to.' After all, this is the ancient platonic *eros*, not the Christian *agape*, which has to be set in a framework together with listening to-obeying-believing. Again, this is closely connected with the Augustinian ontological principle, according to which God is regarded as the 'highest good' (*summum bonum*), and therefore as *res qua fruendum est*" (p. 77).[38]

According to Jonas, it is precisely by using such a conceptual apparatus from Greek metaphysics that Augustine is prevented from understanding the real question concerning human "insufficiency," and with it the actual issue of freedom itself. This issue, on the contrary, was at the centre of the original experience of life peculiar to early Christianity; this latter, still free from Greek thought, conceived of faith as that *vocatio* which plucks man out of any "reassuring" relationship with the world and with himself, and calls him back to that original attitude of "reflexivity," understood as "care" for his own being (*voluntas boni*), which is "never fixable in self-identity" (*voluntas bona*). For, man experiences it as having a structural "motility," through which he continually lapses into the "inauthenticity" of objectification (p. 79), so that the fulfilment of his own being reveals itself as an "infinite" task; as a possibility which man does not have at his own disposal, and in confronting which he experiences himself as ultimately powerless.

VIII. After Augustine

When, after his doctoral dissertation,[39] Jonas turned his attention to Gnosticism, an area of study which was to occupy him for more than three decades, he took a step which could be seen as a desire to return to that "real experience" of life which had been characteristic of proto-Christian faith, and which Augustine had concealed by using the ontological categories of Greek thought. Those categories, however, Jonas now for the first time claimed to have no connection with Gnosticism, arguing for the originality of a movement regarded by the then prevailing trends of research as a "syncreticstic" phenomenon, arising (in the words of Adolf von Harnack) from a "deep Hellenization of Christianity."[40] With Gnosticism—Jonas observes in the 1934 "Introduction" to *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*—we witness the birth of a "new picture of the world based on a new understanding of existence"

37. See Augustine, *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, 1.13, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 89, ed. Wolfgang Hörmann (Vienna: Tempsky, 1986), 17.

38. See Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 1.5, in *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, vol. 32, ed. Joseph Martin (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962), 67.

39. See above, n. 7

40. About the state of research on Gnosticism, see the reconstruction made by Jonas in the "Introduction" to *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, vol. 1, 20–35 (about Harnack, see above, n. 3).

(p. 23). This understanding of existence, which is at the root of the Gnostic systems, lies in that fundamental experience where the person feels "thrown into the world,"[41] as if into a reality where he does not belong, and where he is "alien," not at-home:[42] "alien," because he has fallen into the world from his own true Origin, and because this latter, calling him back to itself, enables him to see any "concern" for the world as an alienation from himself and as a forgetting of the genuine task of his life. Then "the 'alien' suffers the lot of the stranger who is lonely, unprotected, uncomprehended, and uncomprehending in a situation full of danger. The stranger who does not know the ways of the foreign land wanders about lost; if he learns its ways too well, he forgets that he is a stranger and gets lost in a different sense by succumbing to the lure of the alien world and becoming estranged from his own origin."[43] It is the "divine voice" which reminds man of his true origin and calls him back to his "ought-to-be-self" without the world, so that it throws him into that state of insecurity, of anxiety,[44] which derives from—or is expressed theologically through—the Gnostic conception of a radical dualism between God and the world. It is exactly by virtue of such an interpretation of human existence—in which one can see features in common with the proto-Christian experience of life described by Jonas in his book on Augustine as opposed to the Stoic view—that, while the figure of Augustine will gradually fade from the horizon of Jonas' investigations, Gnostic dualism, on the contrary, will remain a useful hermeneutic key to understanding that analogous, if more radical, dualism between man and world, between nature and mind, which characterises modern thought.[45] There will remain the need to formulate an answer to this kind of "Gnosticism," hidden in the spirit of modernity and its nihilistic outcomes, to guide Jonas in his maturity further along the philosophical path:[46] first in a project on the philosophy of the living organism, then in the search for a global ethic for a technological civilization.

41. Cf. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 323–25.

42. Cf. Jonas, *Gnosis,* vol. 1, 140–47.

43. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 49.

44. Jonas, *Gnosis*, vol. 1, 96–97.

45. In regard to this, see Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion,* 320–53 ("Gnosticism, Nihilism and Existentialism").

46. See Jonas, *Philosophical Essays,* 36–47.