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# Augustine and Victorinus: An Analysis of a Trinitarian Argument

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# Augustine and Victorinus: An Analysis of a Trinitarian Argument

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Honors Thesis: Arts & Sciences, Philosophy

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## Part I Introduction

### 1. Overview and thesis

In his book *On the Trinity*, Augustine breaks new ground in the understanding of our minds in his desire to teach his readers how it is that we can love God, if we with our finite minds cannot comprehend an infinite creator. He believes that if we only love what we know, how can we come to know God in order that we may love him? Augustine then develops a philosophic progression of what we do know, namely our own minds. In Book X he describes a trinity of the memory, the understanding and the will which he explains are “not three lives but one life, not three substances but one substance”<sup>1</sup>; this was to guide his readers to look within their minds to help them discern a mental trinity as a guide to comprehend the God of Christianity.

In Augustine’s day there was only the beginning of what we know now as Christian philosophy. The dominant philosophy of that era was a Neoplatonic synthesis of works by Plotinus, Porphyry and a strange mix of prophesy and philosophy titled *The Chaldean Oracles*.

Augustine’s own education also included a Latin translation of Aristotle’s *Categories*, and most likely a Latin translation of Porphyry’s *Isagoge* ( in English, *Introduction*, a work meant to be a guide to Aristotle’s *Categories*) and he recalls his love and desire to study philosophy inspired by the writings of Cicero.<sup>2</sup> In the writings of Augustine, scholars note the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy,<sup>3</sup> Augustine highlights this himself with quotes within his

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine *On the Trinity Books 8-15* Gareth B. Matthews Editor; Stephen McKenna Translator. (2002, New York, Cambridge University Press) X.11.18

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* cf. Book VII (finish this later)

<sup>3</sup> See especially Gerard O’Daly, *Augustine’s Philosophy of Mind* (1987, University of California Press, Berkeley); Roland J. Teske *Augustine of Hippo: Philosopher, exegete, and Theologian* (2009, Marquette Studies in Philosophy, Milwaukee) Peter Manchester’s “The Noetic Triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine” in

writings which can be traced back to either works he collected and read, or works that were given to him, but all were most likely a part of his personal library.<sup>4</sup>

But the philosophy of Augustine's day had nothing like the Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Plotinus' *Enneads* there is an existing trinity-like relationship of the three hypostases but they are arranged in a hierarchy of higher to lower, and the One of Plotinus' vision is beyond transcendent, unknowable, and totally other. Further, according to one scholar, the word "hypostasis" was nothing more than "an editor's convention and not a technical term," used to describe the Noetic triad.<sup>5</sup> As a source, *The Enneads* seem **not** to offer anything that could be used as a philosophy to underpin Augustine's writing on the Christian Trinity.

John Dillon as well, writes that the "trinities" we see in Neoplatonic thought, are mostly due to a tendency to triadic "schemata" in Greek philosophy.<sup>6</sup> The only triad he notes as a possible influence, is found in the *Chaldean Oracles*, and that is believed to have influenced Porphyry to write of a trinity of "Father (or Existence, *hyparxis*), Power, Intellect..." which also may have influenced Plotinus and the "moments" in Nous of Being, Life and Intellect.<sup>7</sup> But remember again, this is not suitable as a philosophical model for the Christian Trinity, for this triad-in-Nous is a second step lower, as it were, in the emanation or overflow of the One and not within the transcendent Being or One. Manchester very clearly writes that the Plotinian

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*Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*. Richard T Wallis & Jay Bregman, Edts. (1992, State University of New York Press, Albany) and Christopher Stead's "Augustine's Philosophy of Being" in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, Godfrey Vesey Edt. (1989, Cambridge University Press, New York).

<sup>4</sup> In Pier Franco Beatrice essay "Quosdam Platonicorum Libros: The Platonic readings of Augustine in Milan" in *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 (1989, Leiden, Brill) 248-281; he has created a list to show the fragments and quotes from the *The Enneads*, c.f especially p 251 a

<sup>5</sup> Peter Manchester "The Noetic Triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine" in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*. Richard t. Wallis & Jay Bregman, Editors. (1992, Albany, State University of New York Press) 207

<sup>6</sup> John Dillon "Logos and Trinity: Patterns of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity" in *The Philosophy in Christianity* Godfrey Vesey, Edt. (1989, New York, Cambridge University Press) 7

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 8

hypostatic series of Being, Life and Nous “...never made a plausible model for the Christian trinity even when it held the field more or less alone.”<sup>8</sup>

Knowing now that the philosophy of the Christian trinity could not and should not have been used from the work of Plotinus, as the infamous Arian Heresy attests to, and yet we know that Neoplatonic philosophy *was* an influence on Augustine, the question is; did he create a totally new philosophy *ex nihilo* when he wrote *On the Trinity*, or did he build on another’s foundation? In this thesis I suggest rather, that a significant influence on Augustine’s philosophy was from Marius Victorinus and his *Theological Treatise on the Trinity*.

This influence is not simply a matter of looking for a quote, but searching for an underlying philosophical argument. I will be highlighting a part of Augustine’s argument in *On the Trinity* that I believe shows Victorinus’ influence on Augustine. While Marius Victorinus’ arguments are very dense and difficult, I do believe that Augustine understood them well, and incorporated Victorinus’ philosophy into his own.<sup>9</sup>

I contend that Augustine used the argument form developed by Marius Victorinus in his work *Theological Treatise on the Trinity*, specifically his argument for the consubstantiality of the Trinity using the example of “*esse, vivere, intelligere*” to explain how three substances can exist as one substance without paradox or contradiction. I believe that this is the bridge that Augustine uses to explain the human mind as both tripartite and unitary; to show how humans could understand how they are made in the image of a Trinitarian God.

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Manchester “The Noetic Triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine” in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*. Richard T. Wallis & Jay Bregman (1992, Albany, State University of New York Press) 208

<sup>9</sup> Peter Manchester writes, “I judge that Augustine is aware of Victorinus as a theologian in his own right and not just as translator of Plotinus and Porphyry, but he does not adopt or even consciously respond to the Porphyry-Victorine analysis of the noetic triad itself... That Augustine does not even understand the *esse, vivere, intelligere* triad is event...” c.f. above 217. The point is taken, but I disagree as this is not about the noetic triad, but about the *imago Dei* and the philosophical argument to prove how one substance can be three and yet one.

The focus of this project will be to look at the philosophy of both Augustine and Victorinus, and not their theology. It may seem impossible to separate theology from philosophy in this era; in fact, philosophers like Norman Kretzmann call the study of these questions, like the doctrine of the Christian Trinity, “Philosophical Theology” and does not separate them.<sup>10</sup> But in my work, explaining the mystery of the Trinity is not my main focus, but the philosophy used to explain the Trinity is.

Philosophical arguments tell stories and leave clues to show where they came from and what their roots are; they have a certain form, if you think of this Platonically. When reading the writings of other scholars, both ancient and new, oftentimes there is a sense of knowing if you and the author have studied the same texts. Sometimes it is the direct quote you recognize; like a direct quote from Plato or Aristotle, or the habit of Christian writers who add quotes from the Bible in order to make a point. Some examples are if you recognize a reference to an analogy you have previously read, or if a writer uses a reference to “whiteness” or “snub-nose-ness,” that would be a reference to Aristotle.

When reading contemporary philosophy, a reference to “what it is like” to be something, Thomas Nagel should come to mind. If I mention Mary and seeing red, you will probably know that I am talking about Frank Jackson’s writing on qualia. So if students and scholars of philosophy recognize these references, I am showing how I recognized the form in Augustine’s argument that pointed me to Victorinus. In my thesis I will highlight the form of argument used,

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<sup>10</sup> See Norman Kretzmann’s chapter “Reason in Mystery” in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, (1989, New York, Cambridge University Press) 29. Kretzmann asks the question about mysteries like the Trinity; “What is it about those propositions that can elicit such a commitment from a philosopher? Or does he view them as initially credible only because he is also a Christian?” Personally, I might not have chosen this topic but for my Christian faith, but as Augustine challenged us to walk in the light of “faith seeking understanding” I feel that a deep study of the patterns of thoughts that are the foundation of much of Christianity is vital to maintain a “living” faith.

i.e. three substances being one substance, which should show a connection between Augustine and Victorinus.

An initial objection to this thesis might be to say, that it would be expected that both Marius Victorinus' and Augustine's arguments would intersect, as Neoplatonism was the school of philosophy of this era. But my answer is that this form of philosophical argument which was developed by Marius Victorinus was both novel and a bridge from the Neoplatonic thought of his day. This *esse, vivere, intelligere* argument was original to Victorinus, and was a new philosophy of the Trinity. This particular argument, I challenge is also found in Augustine's writings in *On the Trinity*, but used in a slightly different way.

As I wrote above, there was no coherent philosophy within Christianity that would explain the Christian Trinity as well as Marius Victorinus *Theological Treatise*. Furthermore, there was no Latin philosophy in existence which would have been an aid to Augustine, whose Greek skills may not have been up to that challenge. Victorinus' philosophical theology may have been difficult to understand, but I believe that Augustine reformulated Victorinus' argument to explain the image of God in human beings, using the same substantial argument more accessibly for his readers.

I believe that Augustine used the same conceptual argument which Victorinus used to explain the Trinity in order to defeat Arianism, and then repurposed the *esse, vivere, intelligere* argument order to effectively explain the image of God in humanity; to teach how to find that image within the human mind.

## **Part II Context and history: Introduction to Marius Victorinus**

### **1. Context**

In Book VII, ix (13) of *Confessions*, Augustine writes, “Through a man puffed up with monstrous pride, you [God] brought under my eye some books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin.” These books, he notes, led him to an epiphany that he “...saw and it was made clear to me that you [God] made all things good...”<sup>11</sup> which ended his long held belief in a Manichean duality of good and evil matter in competition over the world. Augustine describes his first encounter with these “Books of the Platonists” and read words that admonished him to “...return into myself...” to find the hidden way to God apart from what he believed was the teaching of the Catholic church of his youth and the contradictions he saw of those who were a part of it. The next several sections of *Confessions* contain quotes noted by Chadwick as coming from various sections of *The Enneads* including Ennead I, V and VI<sup>12</sup>. Although Augustine did not have a complete translation of Plotinus into Latin, it must have been enough to give him a solid grounding in the philosophical highlights of Plotinus’ brand of Neoplatonism.

Then in Book VIII, Augustine tells of a notable visit he made to Simplicianus; someone who Augustine thought of as “...a man of much experience and much learning.” (VIII, 1) Augustine tells Simplicianus that he has read “...some books of the Platonists, which had been translated into Latin by Victorinus, at one time rhetor in the city of Rome...” and then relates the story told to him by Simplicianus about the later life of Victorinus and how he converted in public to Christianity. It seems that this story had a decisive influence on Augustine and he may have seen his own struggle in light of the later life of Victorinus.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick (2008, New York, Oxford University Press)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid c.f. footnotes on pp 123-127.

<sup>13</sup> Pier Franco Beatrice, “Quosdam Platoniorum Libros: The Platonic Readings of Augustine in Milan” in *Vigiliae Christianae* (1989, Leiden, E.J. Brill)263. Beatrice wrote “...a decisive influence was exerted on him by Simplicianus’ s tale of the conversion of Marius Victorinus. In fact, Augustine was the pains and the conflicts of his personal experience reflected in the African rhetorician converted to Christianity thirty years before.



But it also seems quite plausible that Victorinus, as someone who was both a well known and successful teacher of rhetoric, and was from Africa as well, would have been someone that Augustine already knew of; in fact, it would be more unusual if Augustine did not know of him or his writing. During his youthful studies, Augustine used at least one book translated into Latin by Victorinus, and that was Aristotle's *Categories*, and it is quite probable that Augustine already had a copy of the *Isagoge* of Porphyry translated into Latin by Victorinus as well. If he did not have that book of Porphyry in Carthage, then it is possible that works by Porphyry were included in the "Books of the Platonists" as theorized by Pier Franco Beatrice.

The question asked by Beatrice regarding the content of the platonic books received by Augustine in Milan, is whether or not we can know exactly what Augustine read that influenced him to renounce his Manichaeism, and is it possible to know what other works influenced his later writings.

For the purpose of my thesis, what Augustine read matters only to establish a source of the Neoplatonic influence found in his writing, specifically in *On the Trinity*. There are several possible sources; either Marius Victorinus, or Plotinus and parts of the *Enneads* and all or part of Porphyry's commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*, or even *Against Christianity*, a book we only have a few fragments left, inserted in others writings.

If Augustine had as part of those platonic books, a translation of Porphyry's Commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*, could it be that he formulated his own Noetic triad, influenced by Plotinus and Porphyry, but independent of Victorinus. Beatrice notes the influence of the Neoplatonic material which he believes Augustine "... compared his Christian thought [to] for

his whole lifetime.”<sup>14</sup>

It seems to Beatrice that Augustine learned of Porphyry’s *Philosophy from Oracles* among those books translated by Victorinus, who gave them the name *de regressu animae*, the name that Augustine uses when he quotes from them in *City of God* Book X.<sup>15</sup>

But Beatrice believes that the sole source of Neoplatonic influence was from that Latin translation of both Plotinus and Porphyry. He also make note that Augustine is known to transform ideas to the extent of making them unrecognizable, while making them his own.<sup>16</sup> There is one problem with thinking that Augustine would make an idea “unrecognizable”; how would a scholar like Beatrice recognize them in the first place. I would persist in saying there was something recognizable in the thoughts of Augustine that allowed someone like Beatrice to note the influence of another philosopher or theologian.

But the book *On the Trinity* was written by Augustine later in his career as the bishop of Hippo, so what may be of more use, is to consider what books on the subject of the Trinity were already available to Augustine. Mary Clark lists available possibilities which include Tertullian,

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<sup>14</sup> Pier Franco Beatrice “Quosdam Platonicorum Libros: The Platonic Readings of Augustine in Milan” *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 (1989, Leiden, E.J. Brill) 249

<sup>15</sup> The reference to Porphyry is in Augustine, *City of God* Book X, beginning in Chapter 9. Beatrice writes, “...it is not excessively imprudent to affirm that through the *Philosophy from Oracles*, translated by Marius Victorinus, Augustine acquired that knowledge of Neoplatonic and Hermetic literature which he then displayed in *De Civ. Dei*. In short, we think that all the all the Porphyrian fragments *de regressu animae*, the fragments on the statues of the gods and the letter to Anebo have to be linked to the *Philosophy from Oracles*. We also think that, through the *Philosophy from Oracles*, Augustine came to know Porphyry’s religious thought and then, thanks to him he discovered wide fragments of the philosophical and religious literature of the Greeks, from Plato to Plotinus...” Ibid. 257

<sup>16</sup> Ibid c.f. 250

Hilary of Poitiers from the Latin Fathers and Marius Victorinus Afer; from the Greek Fathers he would have had available Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>17</sup>

Following clues to discover the influences on another writer, and discovering what they have read is a difficult proposition, yet maybe it will be possible to find supporting evidence by looking closely at the philosophy of Marius Victorinus when compared to the philosophy of Augustine. First, however, in the next section I will start with an introduction to the theologian and philosopher, Marius Victorinus Afer.

## 2. Who was Marius Victorinus?

Marius Victorinus was born in Africa around 281-291AD and became a renowned teacher of rhetoric in Rome. He was educated in Greek and Latin, and devoted to Neoplatonic ideas. Victorinus was honored by a grateful senator, who placed a statue of him in Trajan's forum. From the little that we know of him, it seems that he was an outstanding educator in the late Roman Empire. He was an old man just converted to Christianity when Augustine was still a boy in Africa, and by the record within the Confessions, it is his Latin translations of Aristotle's *Categories* and (possibly) Porphyry's work *Isagoge (Introductions)* which Augustine studied in his schooling in Carthage; this same work of Porphyry that was later re-translated by Boethius.

His secular works prior to his conversion, are *Ars Grammatica*, *Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam*, and two lost works: *In Ciceronis Topica commenta* and *De syllogismis hypotheticis*. His post-conversion writings are *The Theological Treatise on the Trinity* which

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<sup>17</sup> Mary Clark, "Victorinus and Augustine: Some Differences" in *Augustinian Studies*, Vol. 17, 1986, p. 147 I also want to add after talking with Andy Cain, that in this study, I neglected to note the work of Cyprian as a possible influence to Augustine. That will have to be for later study.

contains the *Letter to Candidus, Against Arius, Hymn I, II and III*. Other works of his are exegetical works on Ephesians, Galatians, and Philippians.

As already mentioned above, Augustine relates the only existing story of Victorinus' conversion to Christianity from Paganism. From that record in *Confessions*, and what we know of the late Antique Roman Empire, Victorinus had to leave his teaching position in 362, when Emperor Julian forbade Christians to teach or hold government offices.<sup>18</sup> From those "books of the Platonists," Victorinus' translations unknowingly helped Augustine to better understand the spiritual realities of good and evil which removed "... an intellectual block to his believing what the God of Scripture was teaching."<sup>19</sup> Victorinus spent the last years of his life writing the theological and scriptural treatises listed above. What is more important to the Latin West is that he was the first Latin writer to compose a systematic metaphysical treatise on the Trinity<sup>20</sup>.

Within Victorinus *Theological Treatises*, there are references from Plotinus' *Enneads*, but according to Clark, the greater influence may have been from Porphyry's commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles* studied in the master work done by Pierre Hadot in 1968; a book titled *Porphyry et Victorinus*.<sup>21</sup> But the main impetus for Victorinus' theological treatises on the Trinity seemed to be the Council of Nicea and the formulated creed in which it was written that, among other doctrines, "... The Son is consubstantial with the Father [which] was declared at the Council. It does not follow that this statement was clearly understood."<sup>22</sup> So rather than

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<sup>18</sup> Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatise on the Trinity*. Mary Clark, Translator. (1981, Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press) 4

<sup>19</sup> Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatise on the Trinity*. Mary Clark, Translator. (1981, Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press) 5

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid 7

<sup>22</sup> Ibid 10. I was challenged on whether there existed clear philosophy to underpin the Creed of Nicea by another philosopher, so in a quick look through the works of Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, where he is writing on the history of the development of how the church fathers thought and wrote about the Logos in the Trinity, I found that it was mainly theology, not philosophy. There is a development of a Christian theology/dogma

accepting the doctrine on faith, Victorinus created a philosophical theology to explain how the Three-in-One Godhead could logically exist.

In his theological essays, Victorinus explains how the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God as well, yet the three are not three gods, but One God, and are consubstantial, and how this can be logically comprehended. Victorinus uses a common philosophical understanding of the word “to be” (to exists) and the word “to act” early in his argument. He shows that we understand the word “*esse*” (to be) as containing within it the concept of “to act” (*agere*). He is also shows the hiddenness of God and how the Son was also hidden within God the Father until actualized—in the act or by acting—when the world was created by God the Father through the Son. At the end of his first letter to Candidus, in his final prayer he expresses that all this is still only a partial knowledge of God.

Victorinus assumes that his readers believe that God exists, that they know the works of Plato and Aristotle, are well versed in Plotinus’ *Enneads* and what we now call Neoplatonism. Further, he assumes that his readers are familiar with at least some of the writings of Numenius, Porphyry, and have read or know of *The Chaldean Oracles*.

Now that the context is set, let’s look at these two arguments.

### **Part III: Compare and Contrast the arguments of Marius Victorinus and Augustine**

#### **1. The arguments**

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with little that I can see is actual philosophy in explaining how it happens that someone like the late 4<sup>th</sup> century writer Lactantius wrote (according to Wolfson) “Before all ages, he says, the Father enclosed the Son ‘in the secret, impenetrable depth of His sacred mind,’ but when He was about to create the world, the Son ‘came forth from the mouth’ of God...”(p. 197)This is not philosophy, but a story created to underpin theology. When one insists that the Logos (Jesus) was in the Father from the beginning of creation by solely quoting scripture, that is faith-based theological dogma. I admit as well, that I may be looking at these writings with the eye of analytic philosophy, but there does not seem to be anything but theological stories; but perhaps more study would correct my impression. What we see in Victorinus is more philosophy that was grounded in the Neoplatonism taught and understood in his day.

Below is a table with a comparison of the two arguments. I am simply reproducing a simplified version of each argument; Victorinus' argument is for the unity of the terms to explain the existence of God in Trinity using "to be", "to know" and "to understand." Augustine's argument is to show how the mind has within it a trinity of memory, understanding and will; which exists as one life, one mind and one essence and we speak of them in the singular.

Before I get to the analysis, I will briefly summarize Victorinus' argument leading up to the highlighted parts in the table below. Beginning in Book III, Part I section 3 of *Against Arius*; Victorinus explains that power is life and knowledge in repose, but since life and knowledge are actions they are equal to Christ, who is both the knowledge and action of God.

Then in *Against Arius* Part II, he repeats that all life is necessarily movement. He explains about any life, and specifically life of God, that if God "looks" outside it is movement from repose.<sup>23</sup> So for God to look "outside" to what is exterior, is to desire to know what one is, and is considered by Victorinus to be a sort of "begetting", that is how the Son is begotten by God, but also how they are one, consubstantial, or *homoousion*. He uses this analogy to explain how it can be that the Son not only is equal with the Father, but how it could be philosophically or theologically speaking, that the Son is coeternal with the Father and how to reconcile how it is that the Son is begotten, but still existent from eternity.

Finally in section 4, he explains that *Logos* is like a seed and "...the power of the existing of those things which are and of those things which can be or which could have been."<sup>24</sup> This

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<sup>23</sup> Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatise on the Trinity*. Mary Clark, Translator. (1981, Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press).223, In *Against Arius*, part II, sec. 1

<sup>24</sup> Found in *Against Arius* II, 2, (4)

sounds very much like a universal form or maybe even prime matter; or perhaps the building blocks of what thinkers grappled with in later history.

**Table 1: comparison of Victorinus and Augustine**

| Victorinus: <i>Theological Treatise on the Trinity: Against Arius III, 1.4.</i>  | Augustine: <i>On the Trinity, Book 10, Chapter 10.13-14 and Chapter 11.18</i>   |
|--|---|
| Vi1. (Ad Ar. III, 3-5) “Indeed, since these three are living and intelligent existences we must consider that these three, ‘to be,’ ‘to live,’ ‘to understand’ are three so that they are always one and contained in ‘to be,’ I say, which on high is ‘to be.’ In this ‘to be,’ therefore is this ‘to live,’ this ‘to understand,’ all as to substance, subsisting as one.”                           | Au1: (X.10. 13) “All know, however, that they understand and live; they refer what they understand to the understanding, but refer being and life to themselves. And no one doubts that no one understands who does not live, and that no one lives who does not exist. Therefore, it follows that that which understands also exists...” |
| Vi2. . For ‘to live’ itself is ‘to be.’ For in God it is not such as it is in us, where that which lives is one thing, and the life which makes it live is another thing. Indeed, if we suppose and admit that life itself is and exists, and that that which is its own power is identical with its ‘to be,’ it will become clear that we must take as one sole and same thing ‘to be’ and ‘to live.’ | Au2 “Moreover, they know that they will, and they likewise know that no one can will, who is not and who does not live; and similarly, they refer the will to something which they will with that will. They also know that they remember, and they know at the same time that no one would remember unless he both existed and lived...” |
| Vi3: This reasoning has the same force when applied to knowledge. Therefore, this ‘to understand’ in itself is the same as its own ‘to be,’ and this ‘to be’ which is ‘to understand’; this ‘to understand’ in itself is knowledge.  | Au3: (X.10.14) On the other hand who would doubt that he lives, remembers, understands, wills, thinks, knows, and judges? For even if he doubts, he lives; if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts; if he doubts, he understands that he doubts; if he doubts, he wishes to be certain; if he doubts, he thinks; if he doubts ,he        |

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|--|--|
|  | <p>knows that he does not know; if he doubts he judges that he ought not to consent rashly. Whoever then doubts about anything else ought never to doubt about all of these; for if they were not, he would be unable to doubt about anything at all.</p>  |
| <p>Vi4: Therefore, 'to be' is 'to be' of life and 'to be' of knowledge, that is it is itself life and knowledge" "Then, that which is life and that which is knowledge are one sole and same 'to be.'" "Because if these, as individuals and two by two, are one, it follows that 'to live' itself is the same as 'to understand.'" "For if 'to be' is 'to live,' if 'to be' is the same as 'to understand,' it follows that 'to live' and 'to understand' are one, since they have one sole 'to be.'</p>  | <p>Au4: (X.11.18) Since these three, memory, understanding and will, are therefore not three lives but one life, not three substances, but one substance. For when we speak of memory as life, mind, and substance, we speak of it in relation to itself; but when we speak of it simply as memory, we speak of it in relation to something else</p>   |
| <p>Vi5. To that is added that 'to be' itself is nothing other than 'to live.' For that which does not live loses 'to be' itself, so that as long as each thing exists, just so long does it have its own 'to live'; whence, the 'to be' dies with life. when we speak of eternal things, we understand differently the 'to live.' Namely, in the sense of knowing that one lives. But to know is to understand. Therefore, to know is to understand, and to know that you live it to live. Therefore, to understand, this will be 'to live.'</p> | <p>A5: We may also say the same of the understanding and will; for they are called understanding and will with relation to something else, yet each in respect to itself is life, mind and essence. Therefore these three are one in that they are one life, one mind and one essence. And whatever else they are called in respect to themselves, they are spoken of together, not in the plural but in the singular.</p> |
| <p>Vi6. If this is so, if to live and to understand are one, and since 'to be' which is 'to live' and 'to understand' is one, these three are one in substance, three in substance. For since they have their own power and signification and they also are as they are named, necessarily they are both three and nevertheless one, since the three constitute together each unity that</p>   | <p>A6: But they are three in that they are mutually referred to each other. And if they were not equal, not only each one to each one, but each one to all, they would certainly not comprehend each other. For not only is each one comprehended by each one, but all are also comprehended by each one.</p>  |



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| each one is singly.” |  |
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## 2. Comparison<sup>25</sup>

Starting first with Victorinus, and the table section Vi1, he begins with his assumptions regarding his framework describing the Trinity: “...since these three are living and intelligent existences we must consider that these three, ‘to be,’ ‘to know,’ and ‘to understand’ are three so that they are always one and contained in ‘to be’” (*...cum sint ista existentiae viven tres, intellegentesque, animadvertamus haec tria esse vivere intelligere, it atria esse.*) This development of ‘to be,’ ‘to live,’ and ‘to understand,’ Victorinus explained earlier in this work, that ‘to be’ contains both ‘to live’ and ‘to understand’ within his conception of the word “to be” which was explained in *Against Arius Ib*)<sup>26</sup> In this same thought, he also adds a clarification that he is writing about the divine ‘to be.’ He will explain more on this divine/creaturely difference later in his argument. So in the divine ‘to be’ he writes, “In this ‘to be,’ therefore is this ‘to live,’ this ‘to understand,’ all as to substance, subsisting as one.” (*In hoc igitur esse, hoc est vivere, hoc intelligere, omnia substantialiter ut unum subsistentia.*)

Now to the first of Augustine’s argument in table Au1, he begins with an assumption that “All know, however, that they understand and live; they refer what they understand to the understanding, but refer being and life to themselves.” (*omnes tamen se intelligere nouerunt et*

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<sup>25</sup>The Latin texts I am using are: Marii Victorini *Opera: Pars Prior Opera Theologica*, Paulus Henery S.I & Petrus Hadot, (1971, Vienna, Helder-Pichler-Temsky) and Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Trinitate Libri XV* (Libri 1-XII) W.J. Mountain Cura et Studio, Fr. Glorie, Auxiliante (1968, Turnholti, Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii) And I can assure you that any errors are my own.

<sup>26</sup> In *Against Arius IB*, Victorinus explains first that “the One” or “the Monad” is the state of God before any existence. When “to be” the actual existence came to be, that is the Father. Then the *Logos* as the Son, came to be as a begetting, or the Father looking outside of himself, and that act “begot” the Son, then all creation was made from the Father as “to be” through the Son as “to live” and the Spirit is both Wisdom and “to understand” which is also the name of substance “or for existence, for it truly signifies “to be.” C.f. sections 50-55

*esse et vivere, sed intelligere ad quod intellegunt referent, esse autem et vivere ad se ipsas*) He also claims “...no one doubts that no one understands who does not live, and no one lives who does not exist.” (*nulli est dubitum nec quemquam intelligere qui non vivat, nec quemquam vivere qui non sit.*) He then concludes “therefore, it follows that that which understands also exists” (*Ergo consequenter et esse et vivere id quod intellegit...*)”So existence entails both living and understanding.

Table Vi2, and the second section of Victorinus’ argument; here he and Augustine are making the same claim, that “For ‘to live’ itself is ‘to be.’” (*Vivere enim ipsum id est quod esse.*) Although Victorinus clarifies that being and living is not the same “in us” as in God, still his point is that both living and being are identical. “Indeed, if we suppose and admit that life itself is and exists, and that which is its own power is identical with its ‘to be,’ it will become clear that we must take as one sole and same thing ‘to be’ and ‘to live.’” (*Etenim si ponamus accipiamusque ipsam vitam esse atque existere quodque ei potentiae sit id ipsum sit ei esse, clarum fiet unum atque idem nos accipere debere esse et vivere.*)

Here is the first place where it looks like both are making the same philosophical point, that living and existing mutually entail each other; at least for human beings who also have understanding.

Moving on to section Au2; Augustine adds to his previous claim that “...they likewise know that no one can will, who is not [does not exist] and who does not live...” (*...velle se sciunt neque hoc posse quemquam qui non sit et qui non vivat partier sciunt...*) To willing as proof of both existing and living, Augustine adds remembering, so to remember is also to live and both entail existing. “They also know that they remember, and they know at the same time

that no one would remember unless he both existed and lived..." (*Memnisse etiam se sciunt simulque sciunt, quod nemo meminisset nisi esset ac viveret...*)

On to Vi3 where Victorinus adds "This reasoning has the same force when applied to knowledge." (*haec ratio est visque eadem intelligentiae est utique ille.*) That "to understand" entails existence, or "has its own 'to be'" and there is no difference between understanding and knowledge. He argues this way: "Therefore, this 'to understand' in itself is the same as its own 'to be' and this 'to be' which is 'to understand'; this 'to understand' in itself is knowledge." (*Hoc ipsum ergo intelligere hoc est quod est ei esse, idque esse quod est itellegere ipsum hoc intelligere intelligentia est.*)

Au3 has Augustine's cogito-like argument where he shows to his readers that if they doubt their existence, there is no doubt they exist. "On the other hand who would doubt that he lives, remembers, understands, wills thinks, knows, and judges?" (*Vivere se tamen et meminisse et intelligere et velle et cogitare et scire et iudicare quis dubitet?*) For if you are capable of doubting, this entails that you live, remember, understand, think and judge. "For even if he doubts, he lives; if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts; if he doubts, he understands that he doubts; if he doubts, he wishes to be certain; if he doubts, he thinks; if he doubts, he knows that he does not know; if he doubts he judges that he ought not to consent rashly." (*Quandoquidem etiam si dubitat, vivit; se dubitat, unde dubitet meminit; si dubitat, dubitare se intellegit; si dubitat, certus esse vult; se dubitat, scit se nescire; si dubitat, iudicat non se temere consentire oportere.*) So Augustine concludes "Whoever then doubts about anything else ought never to doubt about all of these; for if they were not, he would be unable to doubt about anything at all." (*Quisquis igitur alicunde dubitat de his omnibus dubitare non debet quae si non essent, de ulla re dubitare non posset.*)

In Vi4, Victorinus argues that ‘to be’ is ‘to be of life and ‘to be’ of knowledge, then life and knowledge are a part of ‘to be.’ “Therefore, ‘to be’ is ‘to be’ of life and ‘to be’ of knowledge, that is it is itself life and knowledge” (*Esse ergo esse et vitae et intellegentiae est, id est quod vita et intellegentia.*) He then uses a logical progression of life equals knowledge, and ‘to live’ equals ‘to understand.’ He writes, “Then that which is life and that which is knowledge are one sole and same ‘to be.’” (*Unum igitur quod vita et idem esse quod est intellegentia.*) He then finished this thought with, “... if these, as individuals and two by two are one, it follows that ‘to live’ itself is the same as ‘to understand.’” (*... si haec in singulis atque in binis unum, sequitur ut ipsum vivere hoc sit quod intelligere.*) For as he has argued, if ‘to be’ has its own ‘to live’ and if ‘to be’ is ‘to understand’ it follows then that ‘to live’ and ‘to understand’ are also one in this same ‘to be.’

In Augustine’s writing in Chapter 10, I skip over his discussion about what the mind is made of, and how we know a good mind by what it wills to enjoy; I move ahead to Chapter 11, section 18, above in the table Au4; where he states “Since these three, memory, understanding, and will, are, therefore, not three lives but one life, not three minds but one mind, it follow that they are certainly not three substances, but one substance.” (*Haec igitur tria, memoria, intellegentia, voluntas, quoniam non sunt tres vitae sed una vita, nec tres mentes sed una mens, consequenter utique nec tres substantiae sunt sed una substantia.*)<sup>27</sup>

A major difference that can already be seen while comparing these two arguments is that in Augustine’s philosophy, his triad of three substances, memory, understanding and will, are all contained within mind, actually making a fourth substance. In Victorinus’ triad there are only

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<sup>27</sup> In the Latin, *una substantia* is in italics, so to highlight Augustine’s emphasis I used bold. The highlighting is not in the translation.

three: 'to be,' 'to live,' and 'to understand.' But remember that Victorinus is talking of God; of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Augustine, on the other hand, is speaking of the mind of human being, incased in a body where (as Victorinus wrote,) "to live is one thing and the life which makes it live is another thing" when referring to created beings. Augustine's program is to teach his readers how to know God in order to love him, and to show that there is something within us that we can "know" and that is the image of God within; our soul, and more specifically in our minds.

To finish out section Au4, Augustine makes the point that "For when we speak of memory as life, mind, and substance, we speak of it in relation to itself; but when we speak of it simply as memory, we speak of it in relation to something else." (*Memoria quippe quod vita et mens et substantia dicitur ad se ipsam dicitur; quod vero memoria dicitur ad aliquid relative dicitur.*) Here is a passage that is hinting towards the understanding of each person of the Trinity as being both unitary as the One God, and yet each in relation to each other within the godhead.

In Vi5, Victorinus is further explaining his comment in Vi2, and finishing his syllogism in Vi4; how created things lose their 'to be' when they die. He writes, "For that which does not live loses 'to be' itself, so that as long as each thing exists, just so long does it have its own 'to live'; whence, the 'to be' dies with life." (*Quod enim non vivit ipsum esse ei deperet, ut quamdiu quidque sit, hoc sit ei suum vivere, unde commoritur esse cum via.*) But he reminds us that "when we speak of eternal things, we understand differently the 'to live.'" (*sed, nos, cum de aeternis loquimur, aliud vivere accipimus, hoc est ipsum scire quod vivas,*) Victorinus completes his clarification of creature vs. creator by writing that this is our sense of knowing that we are alive, rather in the divine, aliveness is just a part of "to be" and is never lost. "Namely, in the sense of knowing that one lives. But to know is to understand. Therefore, to know is to understand, and to

know that you live is to live. Therefore, to understand, this will be ‘to live.’” (*Scire porro hoc est quod intelligere. Ergo scire intelligere est et scire quod vivas, hoc est vivere. Id ergo erit intelligere quod vivere.*)

Back to Augustine and Au5, where now he is finishing his relations going from memory to understanding and will, he writes “We may also say the same of the understanding and will; for they are called understanding and will with relation to something else, yet each in respect to itself is life, mind and essence. Therefore **these three are one** in that they are one life, one mind and one essence. And whatever else they are called in respect to themselves, they are spoken of together, not in the plural but in the singular.” (*Hoc de intellegentia quoque et de voluntate dixerim, et intellegentia quipped et voluntas ad aliquid dicitur. Vita est autem unaquaeque ad se ipsam et mens et essential. Quocirca **tria haec eo sunt unum** quo una vita, una mens, una essentia; et quidquid aliud ad se ipsa singular dicuntur etiam simul, non pluraliter sed singulariter dicuntur.*)

Now the last two segments of these arguments, first from Vi6, and Victorinus’ conclusion of this long passage. He writes “if this is so, if to live and to understand are one, and since ‘to be’ which is ‘to live’ and ‘to understand’ is one, these three are one in substance, three in substance.” (*Quod si ita est, ut unum sit vivere et intelligere, et, cum unum sit esse quod est vivere atque intelligere, substanita unum, subsistenita tria sunt ista.*) Here is his summation of how it is that ‘to be,’ ‘to live,’ and ‘to understand’ can be three substances comprehended separately, yet he has just shown that all three can exist as one substance and have their own being or ‘to be.’ Finally he finishes by writing, “For since they have their own power and signification and they also are as they are named, necessarily they are both three and nevertheless one, since the three constitute together each unity that each one is singly.” (*Cum enim vim ac significantiam suam*

*habeant atque ut dicuntur et sint, necessario et sunt tria et tamen unum, cum omne, quod sigulum est unum tria sint.)*

And the last passage, Au6; Augustine writes “But they are three in that they are mutually referred to each other.” (*Eo vero tria quo ad se invicem referuntur.*) He is speaking of memory, understanding and will, and each in respect to itself is life, mind and essence. He concludes by writing, “And if they were not equal, not only each one to each one, but each one to all, they would certainly not comprehend each other, for not only is each one comprehended by each one, but all are also comprehended by each one.” (*Quae si aequalia non essent non solum singular singularis sed etiam omnibus singular, non stique se invicem caperent. Neque enim tantum a singularis singular, verum etiam a singularis omnia capiuntur.*)

### **3. Commentary**

Looking over these two arguments, with two different trajectories; Victorinus goal to show how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, represented by ‘to be,’ ‘to live,’ and ‘to understand’ can be understood to be one unity yet three substances, equal and interrelated. In the end, Victorinus’ goal was to win the argument against those still committed to the Arian Heresy.

But Augustine was committed to helping the people in his bishopric, and other likeminded monks following his guidance in parts of the growing but embattled kingdom of God. His books had to be understood by a variety of learners, and under all this was pressure to be not only orthodox, but to develop convincing arguments to some sophisticated pagan readers. Augustine’s goal seems to be understandable orthodoxy.

Looking back over the two arguments, there seem to be some similarity in Augustine when you compare his “All know, however, that they understand and live; they refer what they understand to the understanding, but refer being and live to themselves” and Victorinus’ “Indeed, if we suppose and admit that life itself is and exists, and that which is its own power is identical with its ‘to be,’ it will become clear that we must take as one sole and same thing ‘to be’ and ‘to live.’” The first is appealing to commonsense human knowledge of life and being, and the second by Victorinus is strictly referring to the divine, from a human point of view.

As Victorinus describes the tri-schematic of ‘to be,’ ‘to live,’ and ‘to understand,’ as actually contained in ‘to be’ and his entailment relationships that lead to ‘to know’ and ‘to understand’ being equal and having their own ‘to be.’ He finally shows that ‘to be’ is of life, and of knowledge, and that if you live you understand. In his final push for knowing and understanding and living Victorinus states (Vi5) “Therefore, to know is to understand, and to know that you live is to live.”

Augustine takes up what looks like a negative version of the argument above, the “to know that you live, is to live” of Victorinus by writing of doubting you live to prove that you live with the lead-in comment, “On the other hand who would doubt that he lives, remembers, understands, wills, thinks, knows, and judges?” If Augustine was influenced by Victorinus, he takes a simple argument and fleshes it out far beyond the compact and concise argument of Victorinus; turning this into something very reminiscent of Descartes. But this still does not show a clear connection, only possibilities that could be just coincidence.

There is one area that seems much closer: Augustine writes in what is labeled Au4, “Since these three, memory, understanding, and will, are, therefore, not three lives but one life, not three minds but one mind, it follow that they are certainly not three substances, but one



substance.” (*Haec igitur tria, memoria, intellegentia, voluntas, quoniam non sunt tres vitae sed una vita, nec tres mentes sed una mens, consequenter utique nec tres substantiae sunt sed una substantia.*) Now look at Victorinus: “if this is so, if to live and to understand are one, and since ‘to be’ which is ‘to live’ and ‘to understand’ is one, these three are one in substance, three in substance.” (*Quod si ita est, ut unum sit vivere et intelligere, et, cum unum sit esse quod est vivere atque intelligere, substantia unum, subsistentia tria sunt ista.*) Augustine writes “three substances, one substance” “...tres substantiae sunt sed **una substantia**” and Victorinus writes “*substantia unum, subsistentia tria sunt ista*” or “three are one in substance, three in substance.”

Yes, this seems like a standard view of describing the Trinity now, but perhaps not so common in that era<sup>28</sup>, so maybe there is something else that these two philosophers have in common.

When their arguments are summed up, the two arguments seem to have much more in common: Victorinus’ argument is making the case that ‘to be,’ ‘to live,’ and ‘to understand’ are one and contained in ‘to be’ and that is what makes three substances unified yet by making the case that each is a separate idea, or substance in the case of the Trinity can be seen as contained together in unity. It is easy to agree with him that yes, there are three concepts that can be contained within the single concept of being.

When looking again at Augustine’s summation in Au4, Au5 and 6, it can be seen that he has made the case that in Memory, understanding and will, each one contains life, mind and substance. His conclusion is that, “When we speak of memory as life, mind, and substance, we speak of it in relation to itself; but when we speak of it simply as memory, we speak of it in

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<sup>28</sup> I concede that this is a theological or philosophical idea that may be contained in the Greek Fathers; that is an area that would require more study on my part. But as Augustine had written in *Confessions* of not liking the study of Greek, and not feeling confident in that language, the Latin works of Victorinus seem like a more likely source for this phrase.

relation to something else.” The same is true in his description of understanding and will; each of them contains life, mind and substance (or essence). Victorinus’ conclusion to his argument is nearly the same;

if this is so, if to live and to understand are one, and since ‘to be’ which is ‘to live’ and ‘to understand’ is one, these three are one in substance, three in substance. For since they have their own power and signification and they also are as they are names, necessarily they are both three and nevertheless one, since the three constitute together each unity that each one is singly.

In the philosophy of Victorinus is a “functional precursor of the Augustinian doctrine of predication by relation”<sup>29</sup> and this seems to be the strong philosophical similarity with the philosophy of Victorinus; I think that this is more than a coincidence. The similarities in the use of the nested relations within mind in Augustine’s writing, when the arguments are placed side by side with the philosophy of Victorinus, there is a striking similarity in the style and type of argument for it to have both caught my attention and for me to believe that Augustine not only understood Victorinus’ argument, but also made use of the philosophical idea of *esse, vivere, intelligere* as his model of “life, mind and essence.”

#### **Part IV: Summary and Conclusion**

I have covered a lot of ground in this project, and looked at a lot of ideas. My thesis began with assumptions about the state of the beginning school of thought called Christian philosophy; and that the main school of thought was Neoplatonism as written by both Plotinus and Porphyry, and influenced by a work titled *The Chaldean Oracles* which Porphyry wrote a commentary on. But in all of this mix of philosophy plus religious practices, there really was nothing that was suitable for use in explaining how the Christian God was both one and three.

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<sup>29</sup> Peter Manchester “The Noetic Triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine” in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*. Richard T. Wallis and Jay Bregman Editors (1992, Albany, State University of New York Press) 216

This difficulty was highlighted by the infamous Arian Heresy, which was built upon a Neoplatonic idea incompatible with the Christian Trinity.

As I wrote at the start, it is possible that Augustine created his philosophy used in *On the Trinity*, directly from the writings of Porphyry's commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles*, which according to John Dillon<sup>30</sup> contained a horizontal triad more suitable for use in Christian Trinitarian philosophy. But I think that a more plausible story is that Augustine studied and used Marius Victorinus' *Theological Treatise on the Trinity* as his influential guide for the philosophy within *On the Trinity*.

This project was to highlight the philosophical arguments of both Marius Victorinus and Augustine; both meant to explain trinitarian relations that help in the understanding of the Trinity. But there are some very striking differences between the two writers. One immediate difference is that Augustine begins with the human soul and mind in order to help his reader to find the image of God which is found in the mind; this in order to be a guide in comprehending the Trinity. On the other hand, Victorinus begins with explaining how God can exist as Father, Son and Holy Spirit consubstantially, then he moves "downward" to the human soul and the image of God.

The clues that led me to find this influential argument from Victorinus to Augustine's argument were a similarity of ideas. So through a process of elimination of what it is that Augustine could have read to influence his work in *On the Trinity*, I began with references to Plotinus' *Enneads* in Augustine's *Confessions* and *On the Trinity*, which introduced me to Porphyry, and finally lead me to find Victorinus' *Theological Treatise*. In Victorinus philosophy I found what I believed was the source of some of similar thought between the two. Reading the

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<sup>30</sup> Above, c.f. page 2

“‘to be’ is ‘to live’” that Victorinus wrote, and comparing this to Augustine’s “no one lives who does not exist”; this convinced me that there may be a connection between the two.

Another hint was finding within the work of Victorinus, the idea that there was a masculine and feminine phase within the Trinity. His source for this came straight out of Plotinian philosophy found in the *Enneads*. Victorinus’ reasoning has its source in the Neoplatonic idea that life is a descent, passion or feminine aspect of spiritual life, and wisdom is an ascent or masculine spiritual phase.<sup>31</sup> Augustine makes an oblique reference to this idea in *On the Trinity* XII.6.7 and corrects it. Augustine also takes time to correct what seems to be Victorinus’ idea that man was made in the image of the *Logos*, which was one way to explain both the soul of man and his body as bearing the image of God.<sup>32</sup> This creates problems with theological anthropology; in fact Augustine seems to be addressing this when he writes, “For such expressions are customary in these Scriptures; yet there are some who, though they profess the Catholic faith, do not consider them carefully.”

The final breakthrough was to take the two arguments and place them side-by-side and compare them for similar word choice and if I could see a similarity of thought. When examining their writing in this way, there is a conceptual similarity, but not a verbal similarity. This comparison, I believe, shows where Augustine seemed to have learned a style of argument from another writer, and made it his own.

There are many scholars who have studied Augustine over the centuries, but fewer have spent the same amount of time and thought studying the writings of Marius Victorinus. When one studies the works of Victorinus and his *Theological Treatise*, his incorporation of

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<sup>31</sup>Augustine *On the Trinity Books 8-15* Gareth B. Matthews Editor; Stephen McKenna Translator. (2002, New York, Cambridge University Press) XII,6,7

<sup>32</sup>Mary Clark, “Victorinus and Augustine: Some Differences” in *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 17, 1986. 152-53

Neoplatonic ideas within a clear understanding of what constitutes orthodox Christian belief seems in some ways quite modern in its formulation.

Early in my studies when first reading Plato and later Plotinus, I was initially amazed by what I thought were great commonalities with the Christian faith; but after spending more time studying the Neoplatonic works of both these philosophers, I do not believe that the similarities are as close as I originally thought. Although Christianity's understanding of ultimate reality as spirit can be understood and explained in a philosophic tradition that began with Plato; this Ultimate Good, or the One of Neoplatonism are not the Trinity of Christianity.

In the philosophical and theological idea of explaining a God which is both three and one, both Victorinus and Augustine take time to explain the complex philosophy of what it means to exist, what is being, or how it is that three attributes, substances or persons could be One godhead; both with the goal to lead people away from paradoxical and heretical thinking, and to teach someone how to think about ultimate reality. But the Trinitarian philosophy developed by Victorinus, his distinctive triad of "*esse, vivere, intellegere*" which he used to support and explain the consubstantiality of the Trinity, I believe is the bridge that Augustine needed to explain his image theology, a philosophy that supports the idea of the three substances that are also one without contradiction. Augustine used this concept to support his idea that persons can come to know and love God by first understanding the image of the Trinity that exists within their minds.

While the passages I highlighted above are very suggestive of an influence from Victorinus to Augustine, it is by no means a "slam dunk." Any other links that could be conjectured from Victorinus to have made my thesis stronger, would have been if I had found direct quotes in Augustine from Victorinus' work that featured fragments of either Porphyry's

*Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles* or the anonymous *Commentary on the Parmenides*, as researched by Pierre Hadot. But as Mary Clark knew Hadot's work well and mentioned it in her footnotes in the *Theological Treatise on the Trinity*; she makes no mention of a link with Augustine other than the similar image theology used by him in *On the Trinity*.<sup>33</sup>

If I were to look for more proof of a stronger influence on Augustine by Victorinus, it would mean researching both Victorinus' commentary on Cicero, then studying Augustine's writings for references to Cicero as well; this might be another source of influence that could yield direct quotes from Victorinus' earlier writing. Still, that might not tell anything more than Augustine studied Victorinus' works in Carthage or Rome during his days as a teacher.

One other interesting connection to note, is that Augustine did use the triad of *esse, vivere, intelligere* in *On the Trinity* VI.10.11; but according to Clark, that triad actually played no role in Augustine theology. But she does say that Augustine used this example and wording to express the "unity of the soul but not the distinction of activities as with Victorinus."<sup>34</sup> It seems that in Augustine's writings, his use of *esse, vivere, intelligere* was as a "ladder of ascent to the Trinity" and that of "fulfilled existence is in life and knowledge."<sup>35</sup> But as I have shown above, it is not so much the exact words, but the use of the concepts represented in Augustine's argument as "life, mind and substance."

When thinking of the history of Christian philosophy, and the works of Augustine, I believe that he needed a bridge to get him to a place of a more coherent and orthodox philosophy of the Trinity that was clear, concise and teachable. I believe that that bridge most likely was

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<sup>33</sup> The footnotes are on pages 222, 227 and 231, and all are in areas that might have been "picked up" by Augustine, but there is no reference by Mary Clark to finding links in *De Trinitate*.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Clark, "Victorinus and Augustine: Some Differences" *Augustine Studies* Vol. 17, 1986. 149

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*

within the philosophy of Marius Victorinus; a man expert in rhetoric, and someone that I believe was a strong influence on Augustine.

In this thesis, I believe that I have provided support for showing some influence on Augustine; by the similarity of the philosophical ideas to the work of Victorinus. Augustine seems to have used the argument form of Victorinus; three substances, one life, or existence. This is the bridge from Neoplatonic philosophy that Augustine needed to explain the human mind as both tripartite and unitary; to show how humans could understand how they are made in the image of a Trinitarian God.

This supports as well, my contention that philosophical arguments tell stories and leave clues to show where they came from and what their roots are. And these clues can be seen in this side-by-side comparison of both writers.

As complex and difficult as Victorinus' arguments are, Augustine took those arguments and elaborated in a way to both illuminate and teach his readers how to think about their own minds, and where to find that image of God within humanity. As any great teacher does, Augustine helped so many people negotiate Neoplatonic philosophy and made it relevant to Christianity with the complex tools given to him in the philosophy of Marius Victorinus Afer.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> There are many people that I want to thank, including my friend Gayle Gunderson at the CCU Library for doing some scans for me, for Dr. Stanley & Dorle Obitts for cheering me on and giving me some good philosophical suggestions, and several First Transit bus drivers who have listened patiently to parts of my thesis, and to Dom Bailey and Andy Cain for being on my panel; but most of all, I want to thank my thesis advisor Bob Pasnau for being patient with me, asking hard questions, challenging my ideas, helping me to refine my writing but most of all, to help me develop my philosophical "voice." But in the end, *Soli Deo Gloria!*

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