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Between Presumption and Despair: Augustine's Hope for the Commonwealth

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Many political theorists dismiss Augustine as a pessimist about politics, assuming his "otherworldly" account of love precludes hope for this-worldly politics. This article challenges this pessimism by applying recent research on Augustine's "order of love" to reconstruct his implicit order of hope. Analyzing neglected sermons, letters, and treatises, I argue that Augustine encourages hope for temporal goods as long as that hope is rightly ordered and avoids the corresponding vices of presumption and despair. I then identify "civic peace" as a common object of hope that diverse citizens can share. By recovering hope as a virtue and reframing civic peace as a positive form of civic friendship, I argue that Augustine commends a hope for the commonwealth that avoids both presumption and despair. I conclude by analyzing how Augustine's vision of the commonwealth can inform contemporary political theory and practice.

While hope has been a prominent theme in American politics over the last three decades, it seems conspicuously absent from contemporary political discourse. In the face of partisan polarization, economic inequality, and social division, many citizens rightly feel tempted to despair, wondering if politics can offer any hope in our troubled times. A recent Washington Post–University of Maryland Democracy Poll (2017), for example, suggests that Americans have a "starkly pessimistic view of U.S. politics" (Wagner and Clement 2017). Seventy-one percent of respondents agreed that current partisan divisions have "reached a dangerous low point," which many see as the "new normal" rather than a temporary aberration (Washington Post–University of Maryland 2017; Wagner and Clement 2017). A survey by the Pew Research Center (2017b) affirms that Democrats and Republicans are more divided over "fundamental political values" than they have been since Pew began surveying in 1994. Another Pew poll shows that "the overall level of trust in government remains near historic lows," with almost 80% saying they either never trust the government to do the right thing (11%) or only trust the government some of the time (68%) (2017a). These trends invite us to ask what citizens may hope for in politics and whether, given current divisions, it is possible to share any of these hopes in common.

This article seeks to recover resources for conceptualizing political hope by turning to an unlikely source, Augustine of Hippo. While Augustine is often regarded as one of the most important thinkers in the history of Western political thought, his influence has emerged most recently in strands of political realism that emphasize the "corruption of self-interest" (Niebuhr 1986, 129) and seek to "give injustice its due" (Shklar 1989). As a result, Augustine is "usually numbered among the pessimists" (Elshtain 1998, 19). If Augustine offers any hope, most assume that it is a hope for heaven, not for politics. As Eric Gregory notes, many interpreters cast Augustine as "the patron saint of a dour and otherworldly pessimism which emphasizes the radical limits of politics and virtue as compared to a heavenly city" (2011, 34).

Undoubtedly, Augustine provides evidence to support such a view. In *City of God*, Augustine prosecutes a scathing polemic against imperial Rome, assailing the Romans' lust for domination and comparing the Roman empire to a "band of robbers" (1998a, 1. Preface, 5.19, 14.28, 4.4).[1] Throughout *City of God*, Augustine laments the "miserable condition of this life," bemoaning the "darkness" and "undoubted evils" that accompany political affairs (1998a, 19.8, 19.5). He even compiles a lengthy list of the "many and grave evils" that beset human life, going so far as to describe our condition as "a hell on earth" (1998a, 22.22–22.23). If these

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[1] Following accepted standards in Augustinian studies, all citations to Augustine's texts are to chapter, section, and/or paragraph numbers rather than page numbers. References to the original Latin are from Augustine (1995).

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passages were not enough to justify a "picture of a man pessimistic about politics" (Wills 1999, 129), interpreters have added fuel (and sometimes brimstone) to Augustine's fire.

Elsewhere, I analyze these passages and the methodological assumptions that underwrite overly pessimistic interpretations, focusing in particular on how interpreters often abstract Augustine's texts from their historical, rhetorical, and pedagogical contexts. Trained in the art of Roman rhetoric, Augustine frequently uses excessive rhetoric about the evils of this world to chasten the earthly desires of his readers and reorder their hopes to the heavenly city, even as he affirms the value of temporal goods and the importance of earthly politics (Lamb, forthcoming). While understanding Augustine's rhetorical and pedagogical purposes is critical to complicating influential views of his pessimism, this article challenges more substantive assumptions about his "order of love," which often fuels suspicions that Augustine is a gloomy pessimist and otherworldly escapist.

Hannah Arendt, for example, complains that Augustine's otherworldly love makes a "desert out of this world" and thereby diminishes political agency (1996, 19; cf. 93–7). Following Arendt, Martha Nussbaum argues that the "insistent otherworldly direction" of Augustine's love encourages passivity in politics and complicity in suffering (2001, 551–6). Meanwhile, David Billings cites Arendt to suggest that Augustine's otherworldly love precludes hope for this-worldly politics (2004, 135–6). "Augustine cannot develop an adequate view of politics," Billings argues, "because loving the world for its own sake is idolatry and secular (worldly) events cannot attain true significance. In other words, while Augustine's eschatological ends do provide a kind of hope, they do not provide political hope—i.e., a hope that can sustain and enrich political action" (2004, 135–6). Because Augustine considers love of the world to be "idolatry," these critics assume, he cannot commend any hope for this-worldly politics. Augustine's hope is not "for the world" but "against" it (Billings 2004, 136; cf. Arendt 1996, 106).

This article draws on neglected texts to challenge influential interpretations of Augustine's political pessimism and show how Augustine's hope for the commonwealth can inform contemporary politics. To situate the discussion, the first section sets forth Augustine's controversial account of the "order of love" (*ordo amoris*) and examines criticisms from three prominent political interpreters—Arendt, Nussbaum, and Reinhold Niebuhr—who worry that Augustine's order of love instrumentalizes the neighbor and evacuates the world of its value. The second section challenges the assumptions underlying these criticisms by synthesizing and integrating recent scholarship in religious studies to engage political critics who dismiss Augustinian hope because of anxieties about his "otherworldly" love. By highlighting how Augustine's order of love is focused as much on moral psychology as metaphysics, I show how he allows love for temporal goods as long as that love is properly ordered. The third section builds on this alternative account to reconstruct Augustine's implicit order of hope, an aspect of his thought that has gone unnoticed by scholars of Augustine. Drawing on sermons, letters, and treatises often overlooked by political interpreters, I argue that Augustine allows hope for temporal goods as long as that hope is properly ordered and thus avoids corresponding forms of disorder, namely, the vices of presumption and despair. The fourth section considers whether distinctly political goods can be among hope's proper objects. Focusing on Augustine's account of the commonwealth, I argue that Augustine commends "civic peace" as a common object of hope that can be shared by diverse citizens with different ultimate beliefs and commitments. Moreover, I contend this "civic peace" consists not merely in the absence of violence, as many interpreters assume, but in a more positive form of civic friendship among diverse citizens in the commonwealth.

I conclude by highlighting three ways in which Augustine's hope for such a commonwealth can inform contemporary politics. First, Augustine's triad of presumption, hope, and despair provides a more nuanced conceptual vocabulary for contemporary political discourse that avoids the common binary between optimism and pessimism. Second, his vision of the commonwealth reflects a way for diverse citizens to share common hopes without requiring either strict neutrality or totalizing adherence to the same tradition. Finally, his view of civic peace as a form of civic friendship entails an expansive view of the political that directs citizens' hopes to objects beyond elections or formal institutions of government, which is especially important at a time when ideological and electoral divisions might tempt despair.

THE ORDER OF LOVE

In *On Christian Teaching,* Augustine analyzes the Christian commandment to love God and neighbor by developing his early and influential account of the "order of love:"

> The person who lives a just and holy life is one . . . who has ordered his love, so that he does not love what it is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less (or love too little what should be loved more), or love two things equally if one of them should be loved either less or more than the other, or love things either more of less if they should be loved equally (1997a, 1.27.28).

To determine which objects to love and how to love them, Augustine employs a famous distinction between "use" (*usus/uti*) and "enjoyment" (*fruitio/frui*): "There are some things which are to be enjoyed, some which are to be used, and some whose function is both to enjoy and use. Those which are to be enjoyed make us happy; those which are to be used assist us and give us a boost, so to speak, as we press on towards our happiness, so that we may reach and hold fast to the things which make us happy" (1997a, 1.3.3).[2] Augustine goes

[2] For an excellent analysis of Augustine's distinction between "use" and "enjoyment" in light of his pilgrimage motif, see Stewart-Kroeker (2014; 2017, 204–4).

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on to clarify what use and enjoyment entail: "To enjoy something is to hold fast to it in love for its own sake. To use something is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love—if indeed it is something that ought to be loved. (The improper use of something should be termed abuse.)" (1997a, 1.4.4).

With this account in view, Augustine emphasizes that the "supreme" object to be "enjoyed" is God, the "supremely excellent and immortal being": "it is only the eternal and unchangeable things which I mentioned that are to be enjoyed; other things are to be used so that we may attain the full enjoyment of those things" (1997a, 1.5.5–1.6.6, 1.22.20). On this account, human beings should love only God for God's own sake; all other objects must be "used" to "enjoy" God (1997a, 1.3.3–1.4.4, 1.22.20–21).

As Augustine recognizes and critics hasten to point out, the priority of God in the order of love raises an "important question" (*magna quaestio*): "whether humans should enjoy one another or use one another:"

> We have been commanded to love one another [John 13: 34; 15: 12, 17], but the question is whether one person should be loved by another on his own account or for some other reason. If on his own account, we enjoy him; if for some other reason, we use him. In my opinion, he should be loved for another reason. For if something is to be loved on its own account, it is made to constitute the happy life, even if it is not as yet the reality but the hope of it which consoles us at this time (1997a, 1.22.20).

Thus, Augustine concludes, "a person who loves his neighbor properly should, in concert with him, aim to love God with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind. In this way, loving him as he would himself, he relates his love of himself and his neighbor entirely to the love of God, which allows not the slightest trickle to flow away from it and thereby diminish it" (1997a, 1.22.21). For Augustine, the love of neighbor and other temporal goods must always be "related" or "referred" to God (1997a, 1.23.22; 1998b, 4.12.18). Or, as he says in later formulations, human beings must love their neighbor and the world "in God" (1998b, 4.12.18; see Gregory 2008, 42).

Political Critics of an Otherworldly Augustine

To contemporary readers, especially those with Kantian sensibilities, Augustine's discussion of "use" and "enjoyment" can seem like a blatant violation of the categorical imperative, encouraging citizens to exploit the world and treat their fellow human beings as mere means to their ends. Arendt, for example, argues that Augustine tends "to strip the world and all temporal things of their value and to make them relative" (1996, 14).[3] As a result, Augustine's account of love drains this-worldly life of significance, requiring that we "stand against the world, not simply without it" (1996, 9–44, 106). Moreover, Arendt argues that Augustine's injunction to "use" other human beings to enjoy God instrumentalizes our neighbors, making them into mere "means and tools" rather than ends in themselves (1996, 37–44). As a result, we no longer love our neighbor *qua* neighbor or individual *qua* individual; rather, we love what is "eternal" in her (1996, 96). Loving our neighbor simply becomes an "occasion to love God" (1996, 96–7).

Nussbaum presses similar charges. While she praises Augustine's efforts to restore "compassion, along with other emotions, to a place of centrality in the earthly life," Nussbaum complains that Augustine's vision of Christian love remains too otherworldly and transcendent (2001, 551, 528–9, 552–5).[4] Targeting his contrast between "human or earthly love" and "Christian love, whose core is the love of God," Nussbaum argues that Augustine "repudiates the one and urges us, disdaining it, to cultivate the other" (2001, 528–9).[5] Citing Arendt, she suggests that Augustine's "otherworldly" account of love denies the value of this-worldly striving and eclipses human individuality (2001, 549–56). If Augustine requires human beings to order all loves to God, "it is a little unclear what role is left … for loving real-life individual people. For what one loves above all in them is the presence of God and the hope of salvation" (2001, 549–50). Ultimately, Augustine's attempt to "direct longing away from this-worldly virtue" encourages insensitivity to human suffering and earthly injustice (2001, 552–4). Rather than "taking action as best we can," Nussbaum concludes, Augustine admonishes us to "cover ourselves, mourn, and wait" (2001, 556).

Critics are not alone in raising suspicions about Augustine's order of love. Even an Augustinian as influential as Niebuhr shares these concerns. While Niebuhr praises Augustine as "the first great 'realist' in Western history," he identifies "several grave errors in Augustine's account of love" (1986, 124, 130). In particular, Niebuhr argues that Augustine's account of love instrumentalizes the neighbor: "The love of the neighbor is for him not part of a double love commandment, but merely the instrument of a single love commandment which bids us flee all mortality, including the neighbor, in favor of the immutable good" (1986, 136). Niebuhr blames this Augustinian flight on a lingering Neoplatonic focus on the nature of love's objects: "the emphasis lies always upon the worthiness or unworthiness of the object of our love; the insistence is that only God and not some mutable 'good' or person is worthy of our love" (1986, 137). While Niebuhr concedes that this formula is "a safeguard against all forms of idolatry," he nevertheless suggests that "using" the neighbor and earthly goods to enjoy God denies human individuality and trivializes the value of temporal goods (1986,

[3] For an insightful discussion of Arendt's interpretation of Augustine, see Gregory (2008, 197–240).

[4] According to Nussbaum, the Augustinian "ascent of love and desire from the earthly to the heavenly … strips away and leaves behind the merely human in love" (2001, 529).

[5] Nussbaum adds a qualifying footnote: "Not all Christian love is love of God: there may be human loves that are distinctively Christian. But these other loves are suffused by the love of God, and, as we shall see, their real object always is, in a way, God" (2001, 528n1).

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137–8). While Augustine is "too much the Christian to engage in a consistent mystic depreciation of the responsibilities and joys of this earthly life," he nonetheless insists on "performing these tasks for the ultimate, rather than the immediate end" (1986, 137). Like Arendt and Nussbaum, Niebuhr concludes that Augustinian love, taken on its own, furnishes a world-denying pessimism.

These objections threaten to undermine any plausible Augustinian hope for politics. If Augustine's order of love instrumentalizes the neighbor and deserts the world, it is difficult to see how Augustine can countenance any hope for this-worldly politics. While Augustine's rhetoric occasionally gives support for such readings, influential scholars in religious studies have recently challenged this interpretation, offering more subtle accounts of Augustine's order of love that recommend an expansive love for temporal goods, including the goods of politics. Unfortunately, this scholarship has yet to penetrate political theory. By lifting this alternative account into the discipline and showing its wide acceptance among respected scholars in religious studies, I hope to challenge prevailing interpretations of Augustine's otherworldliness and open new vistas on his political thought.

THE ORDER OF LOVE RECONSIDERED

Three assumptions tend to underwrite otherworldly interpretations of Augustine's order of love. The first is that the metaphysical status of love's object—its "worthiness or unworthiness," to quote Niebuhr—solely determines love's moral quality (Niebuhr 1986, 137; cf. Arendt 1996, 30–4; Nussbaum 2001, 542–3; for analysis, see Gregory 2008, 40–7, 197–240, 337n28). Because an infinite, eternal, and unchanging God is the most perfect being, the assumption goes, God is the highest object of love, and since temporal goods are subject to fortune and finitude, they cannot provide the security that eternal goods can. To realize our ultimate good, then, human beings should turn away from fleeting goods and toward the eternal good of God. Any love of the world "for its own sake" is, as Billings suggests, "idolatry" (2004, 135–6).

This concern about idolatry licenses a second assumption, namely, that love of eternal and temporal goods is mutually exclusive or competitive. Human beings must enjoy *either* God *or* neighbor; they cannot love both fully for their own sakes (Niebuhr 1986, 136–7; Arendt 1996, 30; Nussbaum 2001, 528–9; see Gregory 2008, 3–5, 35–47, 221, 319–50). This assumption is evident not only in Billings's concerns about idolatry, but in Nussbaum's suggestion that Augustine "repudiates" "human or earthly love" and "urges us, disdaining it, to cultivate [love of God]" (2001, 528–9). As Eric Gregory observes, the assumption behind such complaints is that Augustine endorses a "competitive tournament of loves between God and the world" (2008, 330; cf. 36, 221, 260, 323).

This either-or account of love fuels a third assumption about Augustine's distinction between "use" and "enjoyment." Most interpreters tend to view this relation as a *means-end* relation and then read it through a distinctly Kantian lens, assuming that Augustine requires that we "use" temporal goods and human neighbors instrumentally as mere "means and tools" to "enjoy" eternal ends (Arendt 1996, 32–4, 37, 40; cf. Chadwick 1986, 64; Marrou 1957, 79). Critics then indict Augustine for denying that the neighbor and the world have any intrinsic value. When this use/enjoyment distinction is interpreted through a Kantian lens, it generates charges of ethical instrumentalism and political pessimism.

Recently, scholars in religious studies, including Eric Gregory (2008, 197–240), Charles Mathewes (2007, 74–94), Sarah Stewart-Kroeker (2014; 2017, 204–44), and Rowan Williams (1989), among others, have challenged these assumptions by denying the implicit metaphysical and eschatological dualism they impute to Augustine. Augustine's God is not located simply in some "absolute future" or "transcendent region," as Arendt and Nussbaum assume (Arendt 1996, 48–50, cf. 36–44; cf. Nussbaum 2001, 549–56; 2009, 18–22).[6] Rather, God is "Being itself," the "author and creator of everything" (1998b, 9.4.11; cf. 7.17.23; 1997a, 1.10.10; cf. 1998a, 8.6, 12.2). If God is the "true ground" of all Being, then God is not completely separate from the world (1998a, 14.13). Rather, everything that exists has its being because it participates in God's being (1998a, 11.28, 12.5).[7] Moreover, if God is supremely good, then everything that exists also participates in God's goodness. It follows that, for Augustine, "Everything that exists is good" (1998b, 7.12.18; cf. 1953, 11.21, 18.35; 1990, 21.3; 1997a, 1.32.35; 1998a, 11.21, 12.1, 12.5).

This participationist ontology has radical implications for understanding Augustine's order of love. First, it challenges critics' first assumption that the metaphysical status of love's objects determines their moral quality (Gregory 2008, 40–1, 221, 337n28; Stewart-Kroeker, 2014, 211; 2017, 227). Rather than quarantining God to some transcendent realm and denying the goods of the world, Augustine suggests a more fundamental continuity between heaven and earth, time and eternity. If everything that exists is, in some way, good, then even finite, temporal goods partake in God's goodness. Temporal goods are still *goods*.[8] As Augustine writes, "Whatever God has made is good. Some are great goods, some are small goods, but all are good. Some are celestial good things, some are earthly good things; some are spiritual goods, some are bodily goods; some are eternal goods, some are temporal goods. But

[6] Standard accounts of Augustine in political theory share this emphasis on transcendence. Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe suggests that, for Augustine, "the truly important community is not this-worldly, but transcendent" and argues that Augustine's primary critique against classical philosophers targeted their "inappropriately earthly focus" (2011, 150–1).

[7] For discussion, see Gregory (2008, 41–4); Mathewes (2007, 74–94); Jenson (2006, 8–15); and Coles (1992, 17–8).

[8] As Augustine writes (1998a, 12.4), "For, though earthly things were not intended to be coequal with heavenly things, it would still not be fitting for the universe to lack these things altogether, even though heavenly things are better."

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they are all good, because the one who is good made them good" (1990, 21.3). In *City of God*, Augustine even rejects the claim that "the goods which [the earthly] city desires are not goods; for, in its own human fashion, even that city is better when it possesses them than when it does not…. These goods are goods, and they are without doubt gifts of God" (1998a, 15.4).[9]

If Augustine's participationist ontology undermines critics' first assumption about the metaphysical and thus moral status of temporal goods, it also challenges their second assumption about Augustine's either-or account of love. If human beings participate in God's being and goodness, then loving God does not necessarily crowd out, or compete with, love of neighbor or the world. In loving temporal goods properly, human beings also love God; the two loves are not mutually exclusive (see Gregory 2008, 44–5, 221–2, 322–50; Mathewes 2007, 82–4, 91–2; Jenson 2006, 28; Smith 2005, 201). In one sermon, Augustine even suggests that it is impossible to love the invisible God without loving the visible neighbor: "if you do not love the brother whom you see, how can you love God, whom you do not see?" (2008, 9.10).[10] Indeed, for Augustine, properly loving the neighbor simply *is* loving God: "Does he who loves his brother also love God? It must be that he loves God; it must be that he loves love itself…. By loving love he loves God…. If God is love, whoever loves love loves God" (2008, 9.10; cf. 1990, 21.2–3; 1998a, 11:28). In this context, love of neighbor does not compete with love of God but partly constitutes it. An either-or account of love that neglects this continuity fails to register Augustine's participationist ontology.

On Augustine's account, the primary problem is not with the metaphysical status of temporal goods or human neighbors, but with human beings who tend to love them in an inordinate or disordered way (Gregory 2008, 39, 221, 256–63; Mathewes 2007, 78, 83; Bowlin 2010, 297). As Augustine says of the "miser" who loves money, the "fault … lies not with the gold, but with the man; and this is true of every created thing: though it is good, it can be loved well or ill; well when the proper order is observed, and ill when that order is disturbed" (1998a, 15.22; cf. 12.8; 1990, 21.3) Thus, Augustine concludes, "a brief and true definition of virtue is 'rightly ordered love'" (1998a, 15.22).[11]

If virtue is "rightly ordered love," it follows that vice is disordered love, a *privation* or *perversion* of goodness (1998a, 12.3–4, 12.6–9, 14.6–7, 19.13).[12] Challenging the Manichean view of good and evil as competing forces in the world, Augustine argues that if God is all-good, then everything that God creates, including the material world, must be good, for God could not be responsible for creating anything evil (1998b, 7.12.18–7.16.22; 1998a, 11.22, 12.5–9). Even the nature of the devil is, in one sense, good (1998a, 19.13; 1953, 13.26). For Augustine, then, evil is not an independent force that competes with goodness, but a *deficiency* or *negation* of goodness, either a turning away from what is good (privation) or the wrongful use of a good for improper ends (perversion) (1998a, 11.9, 11.22, 12.7–9, 19.13; Elshtain 1998, 76–85; Mathewes 2001, 75–81; Jenson 2006, 15–32). The ontological and moral priority of goodness over evil thus furnishes what Gregory describes as a psychological "dialectic" between love and sin, virtue and vice (2008, 14–5, 20–2, 35–6). Since sin reflects the privation or perversion of love, love has ontological, moral, and psychological priority over sin: without a movement of love for some good, there would be no sin. Yet, because love can become disordered, love is always threatened by sin, the human tendency to love a good insufficiently or perversely (Augustine 1998a, 14. 6–7; 1997b, 352A.6; Gregory 2008, 14–5, 20–2, 35–36; Mathewes 2007, 82–5). In this life, love risks becoming deficient or excessive, and virtue remains threatened by temptations toward privation or perversion (1998a, 19.4; 1953, 19.37). As a result, one function of a virtue is to help human beings resist these temptations toward vice (1998a, 19.4).

Augustine is especially concerned about the vice of pride, or perverse self-love, which breeds a lust for domination that drives human beings to grasp temporal goods for their own purposes (1998a, 1.Preface, 1.30–31, 12.6, 12.8, 14.13–14, 15.5, 19.12, 19.15). Under the sway of pride, human beings assume they are self-sufficient and self-sustaining sources of their own being and goodness, putting themselves in the place of God and seeking to place others under their power (1998a, 1.Preface, 12.1, 14.13–14; 19.12; cf. Elshtain 1998, 16–8, 49–51; Jenson 2006, 25–8). Augustine attributes the Fall to this prideful assumption of self-sufficiency, which denies the ways in which human beings participate in God's being and goodness (1998a, 14.13–14). For Augustine, pride causes human beings to strive after more for themselves, to grasp at temporal goods and dominate their neighbors for their own private purposes rather than participate in a good that everyone can share in common (see 1998a, 1. Preface, 1.30–31, 12.1, 15.5, 19.12; Jenson 2006, 25–32; Gregory 2008, 42–4, 329–31, 343–7; Clair 2016, 60–1n48).

In light of Augustine's participationist ontology and concerns about pride and domination, Gregory argues that the function of Augustine's "order of love" is moral as much as metaphysical: "His philosophical and theological energies are devoted more to *how* one is to love in an actively ordering way rather than to an abstract metaphysical speculation on *what* one is to consider as appropriate objects of love" (2008, 221, cf. 40–2). Mathewes agrees: the order of love "is more dispositional than metaphysical: Augustine does not want us not to love the world, but rather to change how we love it, as a whole and in its component parts" (2007, 89–90; see also Williams 1989; Bowlin 2010, 297–9). Rather than

[9] "But," he adds, "if the higher goods are neglected … and those other goods desired so much that they are thought to be the only goods, or loved more than the goods which are believed to be higher, then misery will of necessity follow, and present misery be increased by it" (1998a, 15.4). I address this point below.

[10] For discussion, see Gregory (2008, 44–5); cf. Mathewes (2007, 81–7).

[11] For Augustine, virtue and vice reflect the "quality" of a person's will: "For if the will is perverse, the emotions will be perverse; but if it is righteous, the emotions will not only be blameless, but praiseworthy" (1998a, 14.6).

[12] For an insightful discussion, see Mathewes (2001, 59–103, esp. 64–5, 75–81).

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providing a moral doctrine that simply identifies the metaphysical nature of love's objects, Augustine supplies a moral and spiritual practice intended to chasten the pride that leads us to love temporal goods in perverse or inordinate ways. As Augustine preaches, "I am not saying that you should have no loves; I simply want your loves to be properly ordered" (2001, Sermon 335C.13; cf. 1990, 34.2).

This focus on moral psychology helps to disrupt critics' third assumption that Augustine's injunction to "use" temporal goods to "enjoy" God instrumentalizes the neighbor and deserts the world. Rather, the order of love has the opposite aim: it seeks to prevent idolatry and chasten the lust for domination, functioning as a regulative ideal that checks tendencies to harm, dominate, and possess others (Williams 1989, 140; Mathewes 2007, 78–93; Gregory 2008, 41–4, 329–31, 343–7; Bowlin 2010, 297–9; Stewart-Kroeker 2014, 205, 218–21; 2017, 239–44). As Rowan Williams writes, "The language of *uti* is designed to warn against an attitude towards any finite person or object that terminates their meaning in their capacity to satisfy my desire, that treats them as the end of desire, conceiving my meaning in terms of them and theirs in terms of me" (1989, 140). By enjoining us to love neighbors "in God" or to "use" rather than "enjoy" them, Gregory affirms, Augustine's order of love "aims to morally protect the neighbor from the self's prideful distortion that the neighbor exists only in terms of one's own ends, or that the neighbor is a threat to the self's relation to this infinite God" (2008, 42; cf. 221, 329–31, 346–7). In this way, loving others "in God" or "for God's sake" encourages prideful human beings to recognize that temporal goods are not theirs to abuse, dominate, or possess.

This conception of "use" and "enjoyment" fits with the more capacious sense of the terms in Augustine's original Latin, which do not bear the weight of Kantian interpretations.[13] Citing Augustine's definition of use and enjoyment in various texts, William Riordan O'Connor argues that "according to Augustine's own definition to use merely means to take up something into the power of the will, that is, to apply the will to something, consciously to allow the will to become engaged with it. This in itself does *not* dictate an instrumental attitude" (1983, 57; cf. Gregory 2008, 342). This reading fits with Augustine's own suggestions that God "uses" human beings, and that a relation of "use" is the bond of love that joins the members of the Trinity (1997a, 1.31.34–1.32.35; 1991b, 6.10.11; O'Connor 1983, 54, 58). In these contexts, "use" is not exclusively instrumental or exploitative, but describes a relation to goods pursued for the sake of something else, as constitutive parts of a larger whole (O'Connor 1983, 57–8). To quote Oliver O'Donovan, "use" and "enjoyment" name not "something we do," but "a relation in which we stand" (2002, 16).

Given this alternative account and the modern influence of Kantian renderings, it is perhaps best to recast Augustine's use/enjoyment distinction as his way of referring to *proximate* and *ultimate* objects (cf. von Heyking 2001, 224–5, 232; Mittleman 2009, 155). To *use* a good is to relate to it as a proximate object, to will it for the sake of something else, as a part of attaining what can be enjoyed. In most cases, to *enjoy* a good is to *rest* in a good obtained, or to seek a good as a distant or ultimate end, the *terminus* of one's desire and pursuit (1991b, 9.9.13, 10.11.17; O'Connor 1983, 55–9). While many influential interpreters map this use/enjoyment distinction onto an instrumentalist interpretation of "means" and "ends" (Arendt 1996, 32–4, 37, 40; Chadwick 1986, 64; Marrou 1957, 79), a more accurate account renders the proximate/ultimate object distinction in terms of parts and wholes—proximate goods that participate or take part in the ultimate unity of the whole (see Augustine 1998a, 11.31, 19.13, 19.16; cf. Elshtain 1998, 35; von Heyking 2001, 194–5; Mathewes 2007, 89–90). On this account, to "use" a neighbor or temporal goods is not to treat them as mere means, but to recognize them as part of creation, parts whose being and goodness depend on God and thus cannot be merely ordered to one's own selfish ends. This interpretation discourages instrumentalizing and dominating relations with the neighbor and the world and thereby authorizes a more positive view of temporal goods than critics tend to suggest.

Ultimately, by recognizing Augustine's participationist ontology, identifying temporal goods as proper objects of love, and casting "use" and "enjoyment" in terms of proximate and ultimate ends, this alternative account challenges critics who dismiss Augustinian love as either instrumentalizing or otherworldly. Augustine allows love for human neighbors and temporal goods as long as that love is properly ordered. And if Augustinian love is not as otherworldly as critics assume, Augustinian hope need not be either. Augustine's explicit order of love provides a model for reconstructing his implicit order of hope.

THE ORDER OF HOPE

For Augustine, hope, like all virtues and affections, depends on the movement of love. Indeed, "hope cannot exist without love" (1999a, 2.8). "[Y]ou can't even hope for anything you don't love. Love, you see, kindles hope, hope shines through love" (1994, 359A.4). This claim coheres with Augustine's view that all virtues and affections find their unity in love (1998a, 14.7, 14.9, 15.22; Bowlin 2010). In particular, hope is a kind of love for a *future good* that is *desirable* and *possible* to attain, but *not yet present or possessed* (1999a, 2.8). Hope is a kind of love for objects cast under this description.

Importantly, as in the case of love, Augustine explicitly includes temporal goods among hope's proper objects. In the *Enchiridion*, for example, he appeals to the Lord's Prayer to identify "what we should hope for" (1999a, 1.3, 30.114–6). The first three petitions—*Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*—identify hopes for "eternal gifts" that "will endure perfectly and immortally in our spirit and body" (1999a, 30.115, citing

[13] The following discussion is indebted to Gregory (2008, 335–50). For a complementary reading, see von Heyking (2001, 201–4).

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Matthew 6: 9–10). While these eternal goods are the ultimate objects of hope, Augustine identifies temporal goods as proper, if proximate, objects of hope in the last four petitions of the Lord's Prayer—*Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors, and do not bring us to the time of trial, but deliver us from the evil one* (1999a, 30.115, citing Matthew 6: 11–13). Since these petitions identify goods that are "necessary for acquiring the eternal gifts" and "concern our needs in the present life," they do not necessarily conflict or compete with eternal goods (1999a, 30.115). Hoping for these goods can be a proximate part of realizing the ultimate end.[14]

Augustine advances a similar claim in a sermon on Psalm 129, where he explicitly acknowledges the permissibility of hoping for temporal goods: "Am I condemning hope for worldly advantages, if God is besought to grant them? No, but there is another kind of hope proper to Israel. It is not Israel's true calling to hope for riches or bodily health or an abundance of earthly assets, *as though such things were its supreme good*" (2004, 129.11, emphasis added). This final caveat is significant: it implies that Augustine allows us to hope for certain temporal goods as long we do not hope for them as our supreme good, as long as we do not rest in them, either making them idols or dominating them as if they are ours to possess.

In places, Augustine even suggests we can hope for some temporal goods for their own sake. In Letter 130 to Proba, as in the *Enchiridion*, Augustine identifies proper objects of desire by appealing to the Lord's Prayer and describes "health" and "friendship" as temporal goods properly sought "for their own sake" (*propter se*) (2003, 130.12.22–130.13.24, 130.6.13).[15] He argues further that human beings may desire "a sufficient amount of necessary goods . . . sought not for their own sake but for the sake of [health and friendship], when they are sought in proper fashion" (2003, 130.6.13).[16] Among these goods, he includes "temporal well-being" and even "honors and positions of power" (2003, 130.6.12). "Yes," Augustine affirms, "it is proper to will these things if it is their responsibility to provide for those who live subject to them, not on account of these things themselves but on account of another good that comes from them," namely, the temporal well-being of the community (2003, 130.6.12). But, he insists, these temporal goods must only be proximate objects to be used rather than ultimate ends to be enjoyed. This admonition again reflects his concerns about pride and domination: if honors and positions of power are "desired on account of an empty pride over their superiority and on account of the superfluous or even harmful pomp of vanity, it is not proper" (2003, 130.6.12). But "if they desire for themselves and for theirs a sufficient amount of necessary things and do not desire any more, they do not desire improperly" (2003, 130.6.12). While Augustine suggests that human beings ought to "prefer eternal to temporal things" and love them "on account of" God, he still permits hoping for temporal goods for the sake of health or friendship, as long as this hope does not become disordered or perverse (2003, 130.5.11-130.7.14, 130.12.22–130.13.24; see also Studer 1990, 211).

Augustine's emphasis on hoping for such temporal goods in "proper fashion" highlights a crucial feature of his account. If hope is to be virtuous, it, like love, must be properly ordered (1998a, 14.6–9, 15.22). Strikingly, Augustine applies the same distinctions to hope that he uses to explicate his order of love.

In Sermon 157, for example, he invokes the distinction between *using* and *enjoying* in the context of hope rather than love. He praises those who are "hoping for eternal things which we cannot see" and admonishes those who are "hooked on temporal things that can be seen" (1992b, 157.5). Yet he acknowledges that those who hope for eternal goods should not abandon hope for temporal goods: "We too make *use* of them according to the needs of our journey; but we don't set our heart's *joy* on them, in case when they collapse we should be buried in the ruins. You see, we make *use* of this world *as though we were not using it*, in order to reach the one who made this world, and remain in him, *enjoying* his eternity" (1992b, 157.5, emphasis added). Here, Augustine employs the use/enjoyment distinction to chasten listeners against hoping for proximate, temporal goods as their supreme good or ultimate end.

In other sermons, Augustine identifies rightly ordered hope by identifying corresponding forms of disorder—namely, the vices of *presumption* and *despair*. In Sermon 87, for example, Augustine identifies "two evils" that "kill souls": "despair" (*desperatio*) and "perverse hope" (*peruersa spes*) (1991a, 87.10).[17] Despair is the *privation* of hope. *Desperatio* means literally to be "without hope," which Augustine considers a great evil since it causes us to withdraw from the good rather than "stretch" toward it in hope (see 1992a, 105.7; 2004, 129.10). When we despair, our hope becomes deficient, and we lose the capacity to seek our objects of hope or patiently endure the difficulties and delays associated with attaining a future good (1992b,

[14] Alan Mittleman is one of the few interpreters to note the permissibility of Augustinian hope for temporal goods: "Despite his disparagement of the misplaced, worldly hopes of paganism, Augustine does not deride worldly hope altogether. Just as he reconstructs virtue within a Christian mode as the practice of love, he validates hope for those worldly goods necessary for a Christian life, that is, for the life of the City of God as it steadfastly endures within the earthly city. Ultimate hopes coexist with proximate hopes. Just as the rabbis read a domesticated eschatology out of the petitionary prayers of the liturgy, so, too, Augustine finds the Lord's Prayer to be a concise expression of legitimate hope" (2009, 155; see also Studer 1990, 211, 217).

[15] For an illuminating discussion of Letter 130, see Clair (2016, 52–65).

[16] Augustine makes a similar claim in *The Excellence of Marriage* (1999b, 9.9): "Undoubtedly we should take note that God gives us some benefits that are to be sought after for their own sake, such as wisdom, health and friendship, and others are necessary for the sake of something else, such as learning, food, drink, marriage, and sleeping together." He goes on to emphasize the importance of proper "use" (1999b, 9.9).

[17] I translate *peruersa* as "perverse" rather than "wrongheaded," as Hill does. In Sermon 352A.7 (1997b), Augustine also describes "perverse hope" (*spem peruersam*) and "unbelieving despair" (*infidelem desperationem*) as the two vices related to hope.

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157.4; 1998a, 19.4). Augustine often ascribes this vice to those with a false self-estimation, distorted vision, or deficient faith (1991a, 87.10; 1997b, 352A.6–8). The despairing fail to see themselves and the world rightly, which causes them to withdraw from future goods that are actually within reach. The despairing either sink into a slothful lethargy where they have no motivation to act rightly, or they recklessly pursue other vices, believing that the certainty of eternal punishment licenses at least some form of "temporal enjoyment" (1991a, 87.10; 1997b, 352A.6–9). Either way, the despairing enter a "deep and dizzy whirlpool" where they "turn their backs" on God and fall "into various sins and vicious forms of behavior" (1991a, 87.10).

If despair constitutes the vice of deficiency, presumption constitutes the vice of excess, the *perversion* of hope. Those who escape despair, Augustine preaches, must "be careful they don't tumble into another whirlpool, and find that having been unable to die from despair, they now die from perverse hope," which is "equally pernicious" (1991a, 87.11; cf. 1997b, 352A.6). By "perverse hope," Augustine means a kind of presumption, which characterizes those who "hope in the wrong way," hoping "too much" for certain goods that are not possible or appropriate, or "too much" in God's assistance to achieve them without any effort on their own part (1997b, 352A.7–9). In one sermon, for example, he notes that hope can become perverse if it is a "hope for something unworthy, even if you hope for it from God" (2000, 31(2).6). The implication is that "unworthy" objects are not genuine goods: they cannot be ordered or referred to God. Elsewhere, Augustine suggests that hope can also become perverse or "false" (*spem falsam*) if it suggests or assumes "more than the facts warranted" (1997a, 3.30.43). Here presumption entails an excessive epistemic confidence in the possibility of realizing a certain good, which affects one's motivation to pursue it. Thus, presumption, like despair, can entail apathy or recklessness: the presumptuous either assume they have already attained their object of hope and thus do not need to do anything more to achieve it, or they rush headlong into its pursuit without a proper estimation of the risks and difficulties involved (2000, 31(2).1; 1991a, 87.11; 1997b, 352A.7–9). For Augustine, perverse hope is as dangerous as despair (1991a, 87.10–11).

That the virtue of hope is surrounded by vices on both sides reflects Augustine's dialectic of love and sin, where virtue will always be accompanied by temptations toward vice. The "human mind," Augustine argues, "dithers between opposite dangers, wavering between confession of its weakness and rash presumption, and for the most part it is tossed between these two and battered on either side, and whichever way it is driven there is a ruinous fall awaiting" (2000, 31(2).1).[18]

In another sermon, Augustine describes temptations toward presumption and despair as "two siren voices, each opposed to the other, but both dangerous, which lure people to destruction" (1997b, 352A.6). The fact that Augustine uses maritime metaphors to describe each of these vices as a "whirlpool" (*uoraginem*) is significant, especially in Hippo, a Roman port city where many in his audience were merchants or sailors familiar with the dangers of the sea (1991a, 87.10–11).[19] Vices, like whirlpools, are self-consuming, warping a person's character and creating bonds of habit that are hard to alter or escape. Moreover, if virtues aid the ascent to wisdom, vices, like whirlpools, cause human beings to curve in on themselves, plunging them into a downward spiral and pulling them farther away from God and the Good.[20] For Augustine, "the right sort of hope"—"good hope"—avoids the whirlpools of both presumption and despair (1991a, 87.10).[21]

Most often, Augustine discusses hope, presumption, and despair in relation to eternal goods (1991a, 87.10–11; 1992a, 105.7–8; 1997b, 352A.6–9; 2000, 31(2)), but since he commends hope for temporal goods, his order of hope can be extended to include proximate objects. By applying the same distinctions to both hope and love, Augustine implies that hope for temporal goods can be permissible as long as that hope is properly ordered and avoids the vices of presumption and despair. The question is whether Augustine believes distinctly political goods can be among hope's proper objects.

HOPE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

In *City of God*, Augustine famously rejects Cicero's definition of a commonwealth (*res publica*) as the property of a people "united in fellowship by common agreement as to what is right and by a community of interest" (1998a, 2.21; 19.21; cf. Cicero 1999, 1.39). In its place, Augustine offers a "more practicable definition" that recognizes a "commonwealth" even if a "people" has not achieved true justice (1998a, 2.21, 19.24). For Augustine, a commonwealth is the property of an "assembled multitude of rational creatures bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love" (1998a, 19.24). "In this case," he concludes, "if we are to discover the character of any people, we have only to examine what it loves … no matter what the objects of its loves may be" (1998a, 19.24).

Importantly, Augustine does not cast these common objects of love simply as ultimate, otherworldly ends. Rather, he includes proximate, this-worldly goods, the "good things appropriate to this life" (1998a, 19.13).

[18] Here, Augustine is actually describing two kinds of *presumption*, that of someone who confesses weakness but believes God will offer salvation no matter what, and the "rash presumption" of another who assumes that she can achieve salvation by her own efforts. What distinguishes the "presumption" of one who confesses weakness from the "despair" of another who professes weakness is that the presumptuous person still has a hope of salvation, whereas the despairing person has abandoned this hope, deeming salvation impossible.

[19] That Augustine identifies vices as "whirlpools" also fits with his pilgrimage motif: vices, like whirlpools, are obstacles on one's journey to the heavenly city. For more on Augustine's pilgrimage motif, see Stewart-Kroeker (2017).

[20] Jenson (2006, 6–46) identifies Augustine as a source of the idea of sin as being "curved in on oneself" (*incurvatus in se*).

[21] On the role of prudence in ordering hope and avoiding presumption and despair, see Lamb (forthcoming).

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Among the most important is "temporal peace, in proportion to the short span of a mortal life, consisting in bodily health and soundness, and the society of one's own kind; and all things necessary for the preservation and recovery of this peace" (1998a, 19.13). These goods are similar to the health, friendship, and "temporal well-being" that Augustine identifies in Letter 130 to Proba. In both texts, Augustine considers these goods proper as long as citizens observe right "order" and "use" (1998a, 19.13; 2003, 130.6.12–130.7.14).

For Augustine, the supreme good is not temporal peace but eternal peace, which consists in "a perfectly ordered and perfectly harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God, and of one another in God" (1998a, 19.13; cf. 19.11, 19.20). Although eternal peace is "our Final Good," temporal peace remains a genuine good: "For peace is so great a good that, even in the sphere of earthly and mortal affairs, we hear no word more thankfully, and nothing is desired with greater longing: in short, it is not possible to find anything better" (1998a, 19.11). Augustine's emphasis on temporal peace reflects his view of human beings as inherently social beings who desire peace with their fellows: "just as there is no one who does not wish to be joyful, so there is no one who does not wish to have peace" (1998a, 19.12). "Civic peace" (*concordiam ciuium*)—the peace of the city or commonwealth—constitutes one species of this temporal peace (1998a, 19.16). It consists in "peaceful association" among fellows, "an ordered concord, with respect to command and obedience, of the citizens" (1998a, 19.12–13).

Crucially, although Augustine distinguishes the "heavenly" and "earthly" cities by their loves and hopes (1998a, 14.28, 15.21, 19.1), he describes civic peace as a common good that citizens of both cities can share, even if they "use" it as a proximate object for different ultimate ends:

> both kinds of men and both kinds of household make common use of those things which are necessary to this mortal life; but each has its own very different end in using them. So also, the earthly city, which does not live by faith, desires an earthly peace, and it establishes an ordered concord of civic obedience and rule in order to secure a kind of cooperation of men's wills for the sake of attaining the things which belong to this mortal life. But the Heavenly City – or, rather, that part of it which is a pilgrim in this condition of mortality, and which lives by faith – must of necessity make use of this peace also, until this mortal state, for which such peace is necessary, shall have passed away. Thus, it lives like a captive and a pilgrim, even though it has already received the promise of redemption, and the gift of the Spirit as a kind of pledge of it. But, for as long as it does so, it does not hesitate to obey the laws of the earthly city, whereby the things necessary for the support of this mortal life are administered (1998a, 19.17).

Thus, Augustine concludes, "since this mortal condition is common to both cities, a harmony [*concordia*] is preserved between them with respect to the things which belong to this condition" (1998a, 19.17). Here, Augustine identifies a distinctly political good—civic peace or concord—as a common object of hope for diverse citizens in the commonwealth (cf. Johnson 2007, 166–70).

Critics, however, may wonder whether this civic peace counts as an object of hope at all. After all, most Augustinian realists interpret temporal "peace" in a negative, minimalist way, identifying peace simply as the mere absence of violence. For example, Robert Markus argues that, for Augustine, the purpose of politics consists solely in protecting "a lowly form of 'peace': the public order and security which human sin has made unstable in society" (1970, 174). "The greater goods," Markus argues, are "beyond the scope of politics" (1970, 174). Herbert Deane shares this tragic vision of politics as a *modus vivendi* whose remedial function is negative rather than positive: "the state, for Augustine, is an external order; the peace that it maintains is external peace—the absence, or at least the diminution, of overt violence…. It does not seek to make men truly good or virtuous. Rather, it is interested in their outward actions, and it attempts, with some success, to restrain its citizens from performing certain kinds of harmful and criminal acts" (1963, 117; cf. 133–4, 138–43). For these Augustinian realists, the primary purpose of politics is not to promote good but to prevent evil, not to foster internal virtue but to restrain external violence. Since this view has authorized influential accounts of Augustinian pessimism, it is worth considering whether the mere absence of violence provides an object of hope sufficient to motivate positive political action.

Augustine certainly believes that civic peace requires remedies and restraints. Indeed, when he explains what constitutes the "well-ordered concord" of "peace among men," he identifies a duty not to harm as the first principle (1998a, 19.14). Yet, following Cicero (1991, 1.31),[22] he also specifies more positive responsibilities of justice and civic friendship alongside these negative duties: "the order of this concord is, first, that a man should harm no one, and, second, that he should do good to all, so far as he can" (1998a, 19.14). This second, more positive form of concord challenges those who cast politics simply as a negative remedy for constraining the effects of sin. Augustine's commonwealth, like Cicero's, is not simply a set of minimal government structures, coercive laws, or political institutions, but also a set of *ordered relationships*, a kind of concord or civic friendship among those who belong to the *populus* (see 1998a, 19.3, 19.13–14; Elshtain 1998, 38–9; von Heyking 2001, 77–89; 2004, 182–4). Indeed, Augustine suggests that the pursuit of common goods requires "peaceful association" among citizens: the "society of one's own kind" remains a necessary precondition for temporal peace (1998a, 19.12–13). The

[22] In *On Duties*, Cicero identifies two fundamental duties of justice: "first that one should harm no one; and secondly that one serve the common advantage" (1991, 1.31; cf. 1.20). In particular, he suggests that citizens have a duty "to contribute to the common stock the things that benefit everyone together, and, by the exchange of dutiful services, by giving and receiving expertise and effort and means, to bind fast the fellowship of men with each other" (1991, 1.22; cf. 1.28). In appropriating a twofold formula similar to Cicero's, Augustine advocates a more positive form of concord.

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"city's life is inevitably a social one" (1998a, 19.17; cf. 19.5).

Augustine's emphasis on sociality in the commonwealth is even more evident in his original Latin. His definition of a "people"—*coetus multitudinis rationalis rerum quas diligit concordi communione sociatus*—is usually translated as "an assembled multitude of rational creatures bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love," which can suggest a kind of rational consensus of citizens (1998a, 19.24). But as John von Heyking notes, Augustine's invocation of coming together (*coetus*) in concord (*concordi*) has social and affective connotations that are often downplayed in modern accounts of Augustine's political thought (2001, 85–8; cf. 2004, 182–4). The difference is especially clear when contrasting Augustine's definition with Cicero's: in place of a people joined by common agreement on justice and law (*iuris consensu*) and the sharing of interests or benefits (*utilitas communione sociatus*), Augustine emphasizes agreement and harmony (*concordi communione sociatus*) around common objects of love (*rerum quas diligit*). While many interpreters assume that "common objects of love" refers to something closer to "common interests" (e.g., Klosko 2012, 233, 247), the modern language of interests can also suggest "rational" or "economic" interests that do not necessarily map onto the affective and social complexity of Augustine's account. "Values" or "common goods" are better analogies since they capture the ways in which these objects engage our affections along with our reason. Augustine's conception of the commonwealth carves out a political role for virtues and affections—such as love and hope—that are sometimes elided in contemporary political theories that emphasize epistemic justification and abstract rationality (for discussion, see Gregory 2008, 23, 38, 66–74, 99–107, 149–75, 241–56, 366–7; Hordern 2012).

That many critics downplay the associational and affective aspects of Augustine's thought may reflect their implicit metaphysical dualism and "futurist" eschatology, their view that heaven and earth are entirely distinct and that the eschaton is deferred indefinitely to some "absolute future" beyond temporal history (Billings 2004: 135–6; Arendt 1996, 18–9, 26–44). If one assumes a strict separation between the earthly and heavenly or the temporal and eternal, the relative peace of the *saeculum* can seem detached from participation in the City of God. But if one recognizes Augustine's participationist ontology, temporal or civic peace is no longer simply an absence of violence, but a kind of *participation* in the peace of the Heavenly City.[23]

Augustine suggests as much in *City of God*. When he identifies the various forms of peace—the peace of the body, irrational and rational souls, the household, the city, and the heavenly city—he identifies them in ascending order, suggesting that each participates in the larger whole (1998a, 19.13). He makes this part-whole structure explicit in 19.16, where he describes how "domestic peace has reference to civic peace": "A man's household, then, ought to be the beginning, or a little part, of the city; and every beginning has reference to some end proper to itself, and every part has reference to the integrity of the whole of which it is a part." Indeed, even the "peace of the unjust" ultimately participates in the peace of the heavenly city: "Even that which is perverse … must of necessity be in, or derived from, or associated with, and to that extent at peace with, some part of the order of things among which it has its being or of which it consists. Otherwise, it would not exist at all" (1998a, 19.12).[24] In the current age, Augustine holds that civic peace remains proximate and imperfect, but the properly ordered friendships that constitute the peace of the just are genuine goods, friendships that participate in friendship with God. Indeed, given the part-whole structure of human society, civic peace need not be a "lowly form of 'peace'" (Markus 1970, 174), but can constitute a more positive form of civic friendship that participates, even if imperfectly, in friendship with God.

If civic peace is a proper object of Augustinian hope, this hope, however, must also be rightly ordered to avoid the vices of presumption and despair. Peace, after all, is a fragile and "uncertain good": "If . . . there is no security even in the home from the common evils which befall the human race, what of the city? The larger the city, the more is its forum filled with civil law-suits and criminal trials. Even when the city is at peace and free from actual sedition and civil war, it is never free from the danger of such disturbance or, more often, bloodshed" (1998a, 19.5; cf. 15.4). Augustine's vivid account of social and political evils chastens citizens from finding rest in an imperfect commonwealth, either making an idol of politics or presuming that earthly politics is the supreme source of happiness (1998a, 15.4, 19.5–8). This is one of the core insights of Augustine's political thought: Augustine's diagnosis of political and social evils punctures any illusions that politics can escape the effects of self-interest or the temptations toward vice that exist on all sides. But Augustine's warnings against presumption do not thereby license pessimism or despair. As Kristen Deede Johnson argues, Augustine's political vision "lies somewhere in between the two extremes of completely abandoning the earthly city and looking to the earthly city to achieve utopian-like harmony and peace" (Johnson 2007, 169; cf. 176–9). Luke Bretherton agrees: "For Augustine, politics in the *saeculum* is about enabling a limited peace that is on the one hand shorn of messianic pretensions but on the other not given over to demonic despair" (Bretherton, 2010, 83; see also Mathewes 2007, 214–60; Avramenko 2007, 810).

[23] While John Milbank rejects a futurist eschatology and affirms Augustine's participationist ontology (2006, 394, 429–34), in his most rhetorically excessive moments, he tends to limit any "real" and "genuine" peace to the church (2006, 394–5).

[24] Citing this passage, Klosko recognizes that earthly peace "partakes to some extent of the heavenly peace," but he does not draw the same implications for his understanding of Augustine's commonwealth. Instead, he follows Deane in seeing the purposes of the "state" as primarily "negative" (Klosko 2012, 246–9).

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The order of hope that I have brought into view supplies the conceptual framework needed to identify the proper relation between temporal and eternal hopes and the moral vocabulary needed to describe an Augustinian posture toward politics. Augustine commends a virtue of hope that enables citizens to resist temptations toward political despair without thereby licensing the presumption that breeds idolatry, complacency, or cruelty. By discouraging citizens from having too much, or too little, hope for earthly politics, Augustine encourages a hope for the commonwealth that avoids both presumption and despair.

CONCLUSION

This article has sought to make three contributions to the study of Augustine within political theory. First, it has attempted to synthesize and integrate recent research in religious studies to challenge common assumptions about Augustine's otherworldly order of love and the political pessimism it seems to underwrite. Second, it has drawn on understudied sermons, treatises, and letters to highlight structural similarities between Augustine's explicit order of love and his implicit order of hope. These similarities, in turn, show how Augustine acknowledges the permissibility of hoping for temporal goods and identifies a virtue that resists vices of both perversion and privation. Finally, this article has recast Augustine's account of civic peace as a form of civic friendship in order to identify a distinctly political object of hope that diverse citizens can share in the commonwealth. Contrary to what many critics assume, Augustine's hope is not exclusively otherworldly or anti-political. Although he recognizes that politics is fraught with dangers, toils, and snares, he also acknowledges that civic peace is a genuine good and can even be a way to participate in the city of God.

If this reading challenges common interpretations of Augustine, it also seeks to highlight resources for contemporary political theory and practice, even for scholars and citizens who do not share Augustine's religious commitments or endorse the ultimate objects of his hope. While Augustine's concerns are different from our own and a comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of this article, I conclude by briefly identifying three potential contributions.

First, Augustine's triad of presumption, hope, and despair provides a useful conceptual vocabulary for analyzing hope in contemporary politics. Although a rhetoric of hope has recently pervaded public discourse, this rhetoric has often equated "hope" with "optimism" or "positive thinking," setting it in strict opposition to "pessimism."[25] While this binary may be appropriate in some contexts, it can be confining in others, causing defenders to ignore how the attitude of hope can swell into presumption and leaving critics with no other option but to embrace "pessimism" or even "despair." While thoroughgoing pessimism may be preferable to naive optimism, it can also license a kind of apathy or fatalism in the face of uncertainty, encouraging citizens to withdraw from politics rather than stretch toward difficult goods. When such despair becomes a habit—a vice—it can further entrench the social and political problems that prompted pessimism in the first place. To avoid temptations on both sides, citizens need a way to resist despair without thereby licensing presumption or false hope. Augustine's conception of hope as a virtue between these two vices provides the conceptual and political vocabulary needed to identify this posture. By recognizing temptations toward presumption and despair that accompany hope in various contexts, Augustine supplies critical leverage for distinguishing cases when hope is appropriate from cases when it is excessive or deficient. And by identifying a virtue that guides the affection, he highlights a disposition that can provide a more nuanced alternative to the binary rhetoric of optimism and pessimism that often pervades contemporary discourse.[26]

Second, Augustine's vision of the commonwealth shifts the focus of politics away from entrenched disputes over ultimate ends toward the need to share common objects of hope, even if those hopes are ordered to different ultimate ends. And Augustine does this in a way that requires neither strict neutrality nor totalizing exclusion. Contrary to what Robert Markus suggests (1970, 69–71, 151, 174), Augustine's commonwealth is not "autonomous" and "neutral" with respect to the good. Augustine clearly believes that civic peace participates in eternal peace and that some objects of hope are better than others (1998a, 19.13, 19.24). He also explicitly encourages citizens to bring their religious values and moral virtues into the public sphere (see 2001, Letters 138, 155, 189). While Markus concedes this in his later work (2006, 1–6, 44–8, 50–1, 63–4), he still occasionally slips into the language of "autonomy" and "neutrality" and even compares Augustine's position to Rawls's liberal conception of "overlapping consensus," in which citizens with diverse "comprehensive doctrines" arrive at a shared political consensus based on "public reasons" (Markus 2006, 5–7, 40, 44, 63, 66–9, citing Rawls 1996, 134, 11–5, 190–5, and Rawls 1985, 247–8). A better contemporary analogue for Augustine's view is Cass Sunstein's idea of "incompletely theorized agreement," a practical and provisional convergence around common goods that seeks to promote coordination and stability in the face of disagreement without requiring strict neutrality or comprehensive agreement on ultimate ends (Sunstein 1998). In recognizing how diverse citizens make common use of civic peace, Augustine endorses a similar kind of incompletely theorized agreement in the face of diversity and disagreement, encouraging citizens from diverse traditions to converge around the common good of civic peace, regardless of "any differences in the customs, laws, and institutions by which earthly peace is

[25] See, for example, Ehrenreich (2007); Scruton (2010, 2013); Banerjee and Duflo (2011, 202); Runciman (2013, xi–xix, 41, 52–3, 234, 304).

[26] For similar arguments in the context of Aquinas, see Lamb (2016a, 2016b). For other accounts of hope as a virtue in a democratic context, see, e.g., Mittleman (2009); Stout (2010, xv–xix, 254–9, 278–86); and Snow (2018).

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achieved or maintained" (1998a, 19.17).[27] "For whatever differences there are among various nations," Augustine argues, "these all tend towards the same end of earthly peace" (1998a, 19.17). It follows that citizens should seek to preserve public laws and institutions, "provided only that they do not impede the religion by which we are taught that the one supreme and true God is to be worshipped" (1998a, 19.17). As long as this freedom of religion is preserved, Augustine holds that civic peace can—and must—be a common object of hope among diverse citizens. Moreover, if such incompletely theorized agreement on civic peace remains provisional, fragile, and uncertain, as Augustine recognizes (1998a, 19.5), an Augustinian account of hope adds the recognition that citizens must not *presume* that their agreement is either fully comprehensive or completely stable, nor must they *despair* about realizing it when it seems impossible. An Augustinian account of common hopes thus coheres with Sunstein's conception of "incompletely theorized agreement" while also identifying the *affective* and *motivational* posture needed to seek or sustain it.

In a democratic context, this Augustinian account might align with a Tocquevillian ideal of democracy as "the art of pursuing in common the objects of common desires" (Tocqueville 2000, 514). Recently, Bonnie Honig has drawn on this Tocquevillian ideal to reassert the importance of "public things," objects of common concern that "press us into relations with others," encourage us to "act in concert," and "provide a basis around which to organize, contest, mobilize, defend, or reimagine various modes of collective being together in a democracy" (2017, 80, 6–7, 24). Honig suggests that a "common love for shared objects" can even supply objects of "hope" that enable citizens to resist temptations toward "messianism" and "despair" that accompany social change and cultural loss (2017, 61–6). While Honig draws on Jonathan Lear (2006) rather than Augustine to articulate her account of hope, her conception of hope as a way between "messianism" and "despair" coheres with the structure of Augustine's virtue, and her account of "common love for shared objects," including the "*res* of *res publica*," aligns with Augustine's vision of a commonwealth (Honig 2017, 61–6, 13; Augustine 1998a, 19.24). Indeed, some of the public things that Honig seeks to preserve—"air, water, earth," "climate, the planet, health care" (2017, 92, 56)—align with temporal goods that Augustine identifies as constituents and preconditions of temporal peace: "breathable air, drinkable water, and whatever the body requires to feed, clothe, shelter, heal or adorn it" (1998a, 19.13).[28] Such common objects can help to inspire political action and unite diverse citizens at a time of deep ideological, political, and religious polarization. Moreover, since some of the strongest religious critics of democracy have drawn on Augustine's authority to indict secular politics and encourage Christians to focus more on serving the church than engaging the world (Milbank 2006, 382–442; Hauerwas 1991, 13–44), this distinctly Augustinian vision engages Augustinians on their own terms to challenge ecclesial escapism and encourage Christians (and others) to forge civic friendships across difference.

Finally, and relatedly, this more positive vision of civic peace as a set of ordered relationships rather than the mere absence of violence offers a more expansive vision of "the political" (cf. Honig 2017, 13–5). Today, many citizens tend to equate "politics" with the laws, institutions, or procedures of "government" and thus despair about politics' responsiveness to ordinary citizens. But rather than seeing the commonwealth simply as a "state" or set of formal institutions, processes, or procedures, Augustine, like his Greek and Roman predecessors, imagines the commonwealth as the broader realm in which citizens pursue temporal goods in common. This is one reason why many Augustinians describe the public realm more inclusively, casting it in terms of "political society" (Brown 1972), "public life" (Mathewes 2007, 1–2, 160–6; Bretherton 2010, 3–6, 16–21, 71–125), or "a space for multiple publics" (Johnson 2007, 220–5). This more capacious vision of "politics" means that citizens can direct their action and attention to other objects of political hope when they despair about particular elections, institutions, or instantiations of power. At a time when hope seems absent from public life, a more expansive Augustinian vision of the commonwealth can thus supply valuable conceptual and motivational resources that can enable diverse citizens to seek common objects of hope while also resisting temptations toward presumption and despair.

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[27] An extensive analysis of Augustine's view of the *saeculum* and its implications for politics and so-called "pagan virtue" is beyond the scope of this article. I address these issues in a larger book manuscript currently in progress.

[28] To develop her defense of "public things," Honig (2017, 37–57) draws on Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1998), which offers an account of how public "things" can constitute and shape our "common world" (see, e.g., Arendt 1998, 50–8). Coincidentally, Arendt sets this account against Augustine's vision of Christian love and community, which she criticizes for its "worldlessness" and "unpolitical, non-public character" (1998, 53). One upshot of my effort to defuse Arendt's anxieties about Augustine's otherworldly love and elevate his vision of a commonwealth united around common objects is that it brings Augustine and Arendt closer together while recognizing their quite different politics of secular immortality and divine eternity. For more on Arendt's engagement with Augustine, see Gregory (2008, 197–240).

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