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THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HUMAN BODY IN THE WRITINGS OF AMBROSE OF MILAN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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To each of you, may this work warrant your trust and support of me.

ABBREVIATIONS OF DOCUMENTS

AMBROSIAN WRITINGS

De Abraham	De Abraham [libri duo]
De Apol. Dav.	De apologia prophetae David
De Bono mortis	De bono mortis
De Cain	De Cain et Abel
De Excessu Sat.	De excessu fratris sui Satyri
De Fide	De fide ad Gratianum
De Fuga	De fuga saeculi
De Helia	De Helia et Ieiunio
De Iacob	De Iacob et vita beata
De Incarn.	De incarnationis dominicae sacramento
De Ioseph	De Ioseph
De Instit. virginis	De institutione virginis
De Interpell. Iob	De interpellatione Iob et David
De Isaac	De Isaac et anima
De Mysteriis	De mysteriis
De Nab.	De Nabuthae historia
De Noe	De Noe

ABSTRACT

This study, an investigation into Ambrose of Milan's thought on the human body, is based on his writings which provide a panorama of intellectual and spiritual development recorded over the course of his twenty-three year bishopric [A. D. 374-397]. Adding to earlier research, this study proposes an examination of one major idea within this remarkable man's literary legacy. Although he never wrote a specific treatise on the subject, his works are imbued with the genesis, nature, meanings and religious significance of the human body.

Ambrose's anthropological thought is permeated with the tridimensional dynamic of God, humanity and the world. From this essential premise, his thoughts, beliefs and attitudes flow. In his deliberations, descriptions and interpretations about the human body, he subjugates both Classical and Christian sources to his perceived task, a Christian understanding of human nature.

The framework follows an incremental pattern which describes and interprets bodily nature. Seven interpretative levels provide a systematic model of inquiry for textual and conceptual analyses. Special emphasis is given to Ambrose's adaptation of the Stoic infrarational faculties. The interpretative levels describe the human body as constituted, created, healthy, controlled by passions, mediated by reason, celebrated and transformed. This theoretical construct illuminates the data drawn from his writings in an orderly fashion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

De Obitu Theodos.	De obitu Theodosii
De Obitu Val.	De obitu Valentiniani
De Officiis.	De officiis ministorum
De Paenit.	De paenitentia
De Paradiso	De Paradiso
De Patriarch	De Benedict. Patriarchis
De Sacramentis	De sacramentis
De sacra. regenera.	De sacramento regenerationis sive de philsophia
De Spiritu	De Spiritu Sancto
De Tobia	De Tobia
De Viduis	De viduis
De Virginibus	De virginibus
De Virginitate	De virginitate
En. Ps.	Enarrationes in XII Psalmos Davidicos
Ep.	Epistulae
Exhort. virginit.	Exhortatio virginitatis
Expos. ev. Lucum	Expositio Evangelii secundam Lucum
Expos. Ps.CXVIII	Expositio Psalmi CXVIII
Expl. symb.	Explanatio symboli ad initiandos
Hexameron	Hexameron
Sermo Contra Auxentium	Sermo contra Auxentium de Basilicis trandendis

ADDITIONAL ABBREVIATIONS

Burns	*Theological Anthropology*, [1981].
Colish	*The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, [Vol. I *Stoicism in Classical Latin Literature*, and Vol. II *Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century*, [1986].
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum, Vienna: 1866-
Dudden	*The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose*, [Vols. I and II, 1935].
FC	Father of the Church, Washington, DC: 1947-
Frend	*The Rise of Christianity*, [1984].
Kelly	*Early Christian Doctrines* [1977].
Mara	*Patrology*, Vol. IV, [1986].
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, New York, NY: 1886-1896.
Paredi	*Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, [1964].
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, Paris: 1844-1864.
PSt	Patristic Studies, Washington, DC: 1922-
Vasey	*The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*, [1982].

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AMBROSE AND HIS TIMES

This study is an investigation of Ambrose of Milan's anthropological thought on the human body. His extensive and varied literary forms provide a panorama of intellectual and spiritual development recorded over the course of his twenty-three bishopric A.D. 374-397.[1] As the nature of historical documentary research is to build upon earlier contributions, this study proposes an examination of one major idea within this remarkable man's literary legacy. Although he never wrote a specific treatise on the subject, his works are imbued with the genesis, nature, meaning and importance of the human body.

The theme of human body affords an opportunity of compiling and interpreting Ambrose's perspectives of body as physically manifested and symbolically significant. The task of accruing such perspectives is made more complex by the manner of the man and the characteristics of his writings. Therefore an overview of Ambrose, as a fourth century bishop

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[1]The date of Ambrose's consecration as Bishop of Milan is contested. The date of A.D. 373 is supported by: F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935], 68; and W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 618. Adherents for date of A.D. 374 include: Otto Faller, "La data della consacrazione vescovile di sant'Abrogio," in *Ambrosiana* [Milan: 1942], 97-112; F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* rev. 2d. ed., [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983], 42.

and supporter of Nicene Christianity, is needed to present a contextual landscape upon which the man, his choices and his contributions can be seen more clearly.

His lifetime spanned a hiatus between the great military efforts which bound the fourth century. The post-Constantinian era was alive with periods of momentous change in the forms and content of the Empire.[2] Ambrose experienced relative social stability afforded him as the third child of the Pretorian Perfect of Gaul. His life, following the death of his Father, had all the advantages and conditions of a privileged existence. His education was commiserative with his status. His legal career and service to the empire culminated in his appointment as *consularis Aemiliae et Liguriae* by the age of thirty.[3]

Historical records describe the radical change in his life. The events are recounted in the hagiographic account of the acclamation, his reluctance and the eventual consecration as Bishop of Milan, December 7, 374.[4] As governor gave way to the willing ecclesiastic administrator, Ambrose displayed equal enthusiasm with his new position as he had with his

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[2]For overviews of this period, see: William Hugh Clifford Frend, "From Pagan to Christian Society 330-60,"; "Hero of a Lost Cause: The Emperor Julian 360-63,"; and "New Perspectives in West and East 363-99," chaps. in *The Rise of Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 554-650; and Ramsay MacMullen, "Conversion of Intellectuals,"; "How complete Was Conversion?"; "Conversion by Coercion," chaps. in *Christianizing The Roman Empire [A. D. 100-400]* [New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1984], 68-101.

[3]F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935], vol. I, 61; hereafter cited as Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 1-370 and vol. II, 371-755. For an overview of Ambrose's early years and literary preferences see: Dudden, "Ambrose's Childhood and Education," 1-21; and the recent study by Vincent R. Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose: A Study on De Nabuthe*, Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum" vol. 17 [Roma: Institutem Patristicum "Augustinianum", 1982], 7-16.

[4]See *Vita Ambrosii* by Paulinus of Nola c. 422 composed at the request of Augustine; *PL* 14, 27-46; also, Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 68-74.

original career. For more than two decades, until his death April 4, 397, he advanced causes of Christianity through his pastoral mandate.

The perceptions of Ambrose's powerful personality and contributions span the centuries from fourth to twentieth. This western patristic author occupies a special place within fourth century Christian literature. His contemporaries described him as a pillar of the church and the flower of Latin writers.[5] People of the Middle ages numbered Ambrose among the four Doctors of the Latin Church. Twentieth century scholars describe him as the champion of Orthodox Christianity who distinguished himself as a theological teacher, rhetorician, preacher and political leader.[6] His literary efforts are critiqued as having "neither the depth and gift of an Augustine, nor imagination, fire and aptitude of a Jerome".[7] But this concern about his perceived lack of originality and brilliance is balanced with views of his forthrightness and earnestness. This realistic, rather than studied, man was oriented towards the essential, decisive, and practical dimensions of his ecclesiastical responsibilities.[8]

Milan, the city of his episcopal administration, was the hub of the Roman Empire. Within the dynamics of this world class city prevailing trends, topics and conflicts ebbed and flowed like currents among its ordinary and extraordinary inhabitants. Legal recognition of

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[5]Pierre-Henri Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity From Tertullian to Boethius* trans. H. Wilson [London: K. Paul, Trench, Truber, 1924], 286; hereafter cited as Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*.

[6]For a more sensitive portrayal of Ambrose, see H. F. von Campenhausen, "Ambrose," chap. in *The Fathers of the Latin Church* trans. M. Hoffmann. [London: A. & C. Black, 1964], 87-128; hereafter cited as Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*.

[7]Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 276-277.

[8]Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 90.

Christianity brought desired, and on occasion, unwanted support. Competing issues or struggles were now in the public domain. The ensuing scrutiny added another component to the examination and articulation of the Christian message. Many voices were added to any debate as the number of Christian converts increased. Representing all social groups, they changed the demographic characteristics and profiles of Christian communities and their clergy.[9] Interrelated questions associated with classical culture, philosophical systems, coexisting religions, developments in Christian doctrines and relationships among Christian centres were but a few of the subjects which animated the passions and minds of the Milanese. These cultural forms, so intricately intertwined, are now disengaged for a brief inspection.

Now that more educated people were coming into the Christian orb, questions arose: should Christians continue to use the literary forms of an earlier era; should the works be read by Christians in general or clergy in particular; what guidelines if any should be tried; what were the implications of attempting to separate the cultures; and what were the consequences of such an attempt for the education, intellectual and spiritual lives of Christian laity and clergy? These questions were not mere speculation; the struggles and tensions are evidenced during the reign of Julian [A.D. 360-363], the Altar of Victory incident [A.D. 384] and as late as Jerome's

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[9]For an overview of the dynamics of the period and the process of conversion, see again Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire [A. D. 100-400]*, [New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1984]. MacMullen claims a dramatic fourth century expansion and estimates the conversion pattern as: "Increase in numbers of Christians from five to thirty million, let us say, in less than a century, constituted remarkable growth, a quintupling wholly through conversion [for there is no reason to think that Christian families differed at all from pagan ones in their rate of births or deaths]. The increase was both cause and effect of the church's assertiveness." Ibid., 86.

'Ciceronianuses, non Christianus' dream.[10] Ambrose's response can best be seen in the literary efforts of his life. His answer was affirmative to the literature and norms of the classical traditions. These 'old learnings', maintained and adaptated, could provide resources and continuity for the Christian forms. However, his acceptance was not extended to the institutional structures associated with the state tolerance of religious practices.

Two major philosophical systems, Neoplatonism and Stoicism, held particular interest for many Christian communities. These philosophical tenets could provide a vehicle for bridging existing cultures and for the maturation of the Christian intellectual development. The inherent difficulties, associated with building upon Greco-Roman philosophical approaches and language would be discussed across many centuries. Ambrose's response was confirming again. He responded to the arguments suggested by Neoplatonic antagonists of Christianity,[11] and readily used and adapted components of both systems with skill.[12]

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[10]For an introduction to all issues see, Adalbert Hamman, "The Turnabout of the Fourth Century: A Political, Geographical, Social, Ecclesiastical, and Doctrinal Framework of the Century," chap. in *Patrology*, vol. IV, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature: From the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. A. DiBerardino, trans. P. Solari [Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986], 1-32.

[11]For an evaluation of Ambrose's understanding and adeptness with inherent philosophical difficulties, see Courcelle's partial reconstruction and analysis of Ambrose's non-extant *De sacramento regenerationis sive de philosophia* and other extant texts: Pierre Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: from Arnobius to St. Ambrose," chap. in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964], 151-192.

[12]Stoic scholar, M. L. Colish evaluates Ambrose's attitude and use of philosophical thought: "When all of Ambrose's works are considered and when his use of Stoicism is put in context, what emerges is an Ambrose who is trying neither to prove the inferiority of philosophy to the Gospels nor to synthesize it systematically with the Gospel. Ambrose does not labor under the uncritical delusion that Stoicism is isomorphic with Christianity. Nor does he reveal the slightest need to agonize or to fulminate over the relations between Athens and Jerusalem. He makes the discriminations, choices and adjustments that he wishes to make, whether early or late, with an

The multiplicity and popularity of religions in Roman society was indisputable.[13] These religions coexisted and offered people a diversity of public and private forms, practices and beliefs. Few religions demanded that adherents follow only one cult. Some forms did require secrecy of either membership or ceremony. Ambrose's response to religious groups and cults may be described as less than cordial. His reponses were generally aimed at refuting beliefs and practices.[14]

By the latter part of the fourth century, some established Christian centres were known for their theological, philosophical and exegetical methods. Relations between the East and West were becoming less frequent as language barriers compounded the ability to communicate freely. Early Councils accentuated some differences yet demonstrated more similarities. The greatest

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independent spirit and in a calm and businesslike manner. There is no indication that he views this process as a means of resolving any pressing personal problems." Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition From Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*: *Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought Through the Sixth Century* vol. II, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, vol. XXXV [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985], 50-51; hereafter cited as, Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*.

[13]For the years 370-390, Bloch's initial search of inscriptions revealed the religious affiliations of twenty three people, nineteen men and four women: "To begin with the old official priesthoods: 12 of the men are *pontifices maiores* or *Vestae*, 4 are *augures*, 8 *quindecim viri sacris faciundis*, 2 *septemviri epulonum*. To pass to the oriental cults: 15 are *tauroboliati*, 9 of the 19 men in the lists are priests of Mithras, 3 of these in addition hold the charge of *pontifex Solis*[against 2 not affiliated with Mithras], 10 are linked with Hecate, 7 with Liber, 6 with Isis. The accumulation of priesthoods is evidence of the scarcity of people who were willing to shoulder the responsiblity of these cults." [203] in: H. Bloch, "The Pagan Revival in the West at the End of the Fourth Century," chap. in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964], 193-217.

[14]See also Dudden, "Ambrose and The Pagan Party," chap. in *St. Ambrose*, 241-269.

efforts were spent on resolving issues involving Trinitarian and Christological doctrines.[15] These dialogues did much to promote questions of anthropology. In defining and articulating the person and natures of Christ, concepts of human nature and embodiment ensued. The zeal of some heterodox groups often involved political and institutional forms.[16] Ambrose's responses were definitely those of an adversary. He denouced the dualistic cosmology of Manicheism, rejected the strident montheism of Arianism and condemned the patheistic tendencies of the Mystery religions. Ambrose's reply, as an orthodox follower of Nicaea, was unequivocal.[17] His challenge to heterodoxy manifests a vast accumulation of many themes, sources and skills.[18] These choices are so sharp that origins can be identified clearly.[19]

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[15]For a concise overview see William G. Rusch, *The Trinitiarian Controversy* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981], 1-30; and Richard A. Norris, Jr. *The Christological Controversy*. [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980], 1-31; and Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 1-29. Sources of Early Christian Thought: A Series of New English Translations of Patristic Texts Essential to an Understanding of Christian Theology, ed. William G. Rusch, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981].

[16]For an overview of the issues see, Dudden, "Ambrose's Action against Arianism. His Relations with the Eastern Church," chap. *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 185-269.

[17]See, Dudden, "Ambrose as Teacher of Ethics," chap. XX in vol. II, 502-554; and Paredi, "The Moralist," chap. XV, 311-330.

[18]See, Dudden, "Ambrose as Theologian," chap. XXI in vol.II, 554-677; and Paredi, "His Preaching," chap. XII, 257-277.

[19]There are numerous influences and themes found in Ambrose's works. His moral and dogmatic works are influenced by Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Epiphanius. His exegetical writings, carefully researched by H. Savon, show the distinct methods of Philon and Origen : "Philosophie, Judaisme et Arianisme [*De Cain* et *De Noe*]," and "La religious cosmique [*De Abraham II*]," chaps. *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philo le juif* Tome I. [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1977], 85-139, 140-198.

1.2 NATURE AND SCOPE OF INQUIRY

These introductory remarks serve to identify contextual landscape upon which Ambrose made his eventual choices. Using these themes, issues, resources and controversies as antecedents, the nature of his anthropological thought on the human body may now proceed. The term body can be found in at least four major themes within Ambrosian corpus: the Stoic cosmological notion of world body or body of the world, the ecclesiastical notion of Christ as body of the church, the Christological concept of the Body of Christ, as well as the human body as constituent of human nature. Each theme represents and deserves a separate study. It is the fourth anthropological theme which is the primary subject of this study.

This bodily perspective may, at first, suggest a profound dualism within Ambrose's beliefs and attitudes. But, this is not the intent. A few preliminary remarks may serve as guidelines to his complex thought. It is through an investigation of his literary works that his complicated, often ambiguous and enigmatic thoughts and perspectives relating to body, soul, and body-soul issues arise. Although he uses the tripartite perspective of body *[corpus]*, soul *[anima]* and spirit *[spiritus]* most frequently, he does not suggest a trichotomy of human nature composed of two souls. Rather he uses the spirit *[animus]* as the principle of thinking and willing, and soul *[anima]* as the principle of feeling and desiring. The former is the substance or ruling principle which governs the sensuous element which functions as the connecting means between the spirit and the body. Although distinguished as two parts, together they represent the soul as a unity over the body.[20]

Thus for Ambrose, the human being is first of all corporeal, secondly of a sensual nature,

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[20]Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 505-506.

and thirdly of a spiritual nature. Early in his career he suggests a means of expressing the relationship between the body and soul as the basic constituents of human nature. Taking a classically derived notion of the soul *[pneuma]* directing the mind and the body through intrarational faculties, he adapts the notion and describes an anthropological perspective in which the soul is examined as faculties or powers: the five bodily senses, the power of speech, the ability to propagate and the eighth power of reason. As the first seven powers are subject to the control of reason, some characteristics of the *animus*, and all the characteristics of the anima are seen in relationship with the body. The notion of the eight faculties emerges in rather a distinctive manner.

Ambrose also describes these faculties of five bodily senses and the powers of speech, procreation and reason in another configuration of seven bodily gifts [*septem carnalium munerum*] and the power of reason [*rationabile*]. Although this concept has received inadequate analysis, this study employs the concept as a means to explore and express aspects of his anthropology.

Another component within the deliberations of Ambrosian anthropology which requires a brief consideration is Ambrose's use of the term **flesh**. This expression represents a significant theme within his documents. The term is **not** synonymous or interchangeable with the word **body** which is usually associated with the themes of Creation, Incarnation and Resurrection. Ambrose uses the term **flesh** in a distinctive way and associates it with the flesh of man and the flesh of Christ in a sense in which both are inextricably bound. Human sinfulness and final determination are seen and contrasted within the dynamics of soteriology and redemption. The strongly theological doctrines of this theme are not explicitly developed within this study. One

separate and comprehensive study on this subject has been completed.[21]

Lastly, these preparatory remarks may suggest an inquiry devoid of a component essential to Ambrose's anthropology. The concept is relationship. The Ambrosian perspective of the human being must be placed within the context of tridimensional relationship of God, humanity and world. To view the human being without involvement and grounding in creation would be as inconceivable as describing the being without relationship to its Creator or its participation with the world. Consideration of these threefold relationships represents an integral and substantial theme within this study. As the initial remarks comprise the matrix from which the research questions are formulated, the next section covers the recent research on the topic of this study.

1.3 CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON VIEWS OF THE HUMAN BODY

This section reviews selected twentieth century patristic commentaries for their contributions to an understanding of early Christian anthropological thought: the first part involves primary remarks of a broad nature and selected general investigations;[22] the second part contains specific works on the human body. Studies of Ambrosian investigations used in this work are cited in the third section of the introduction.

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[21]André Loiselle, "'Nature' de l'homme et Histoire du Salut" étude sur l'anthropologie d'Ambroise de Milan." [Ph.D. diss., Faculte de Theologie de Lyon, 1970].

[22]For a theological overview of the state early Christian anthropology see: Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition [100-600]* vol. 1, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971], 279-292.

Ambrose did not write as detachment observer of fourth century dynamics. He was an active participant of his era and integrated beliefs and concepts of classical and Christian thought into his perspective of human nature. Like other fourth century Christian authors, he used earlier sources, refined his anthropological questions and developed his own distinctive responses. His threefold foundation, characterized by Neoplatonic and Stoic Greek philosophy, hellenistic Judaism as epitomized by Philo of Alexandria and hellenistic Jewish Christianity as described by Paul, were not unique to Ambrose.

Many earlier Christian Apostolic and Apologetic authors had chosen tenets of classical philosophy and Pauline theology. During the second century Gnostic anthropology, assessed as heterodox, had disembodied human nature.[23] By insisting on a dualistic cosmology and by emphasizing a spiritualized existence seeking *gnosis* with God, gnostic followers eclipsed and alienated the human body through the denigration of matter and depreciation of human activity and responsibility. Irenaeus of Lyon [c.130-c.200] responded with traditional views of all human beings created by God after His likeness and image, possessing free will for an initial earthly existence in which the glory of God is man fully alive. His development of the doctrine of recapitulation did much to optimize anthropological and Christological thought.[24]

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[23]Elaine Pagels' early text, *The Gnostic Gospels*, presents a set of exciting, provocative and controversial interpretations of Gnostic thought. In this work, Pagels analyzes the social meaning of the controversy surrounding Christ's resurrection and lays great significance on the political function served by the doctrine of bodily resurrection: Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* [New York: Random House, 1979], 6. Gilles Quispel describes Pagels' latest book as ". . . original, mature and a splendid vindication of its authoress' solid and existential scholarship." See Gilles Quispel, review of *Adam, Eve and the Serpent*, by Elaine Pagels, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 [1989]: 100-103.

[24]For a concise overview see: Kelly, Chap. I, I.3, "The Gnostic Way." 22-28; and VII. 3 "The Theory of Recapitulation." 170-174: in J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th

By the third century, components of earlier ideas can be located and epitomized in two major anthropological forms, asceticism and Christian Platonism.[25] These anthropologies often coexisted in spite of profound differences in understanding human nature. Asceticism, as a tradition, existed as part of the early Christian communities and emerged in its fullest as the way of confessors and martyrs. The emphasis on human resources and freely willed obedience to serve God in a worldly hostile environment would be rewarded in this world by God's grace and in the next world by rising from the dead and gaining eternal paradise.[26] The second form, Christian Platonism, did share some of the beliefs and practices of asceticism. However the importance of autonomy and self-determination is lessened. Its proponents, beginning with Justin Martyr and continuing with Origen, emphasized human reasoning as the divine image which seeks knowledge of God. This desire, implanted in the spirit of the human being, strives for union by participating in the immutable goodness of the uncreated being. The tensions

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ed., rev. [London: A & C Black, 1977]. Hereafter cited as Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*.

[25]A recent contribution by J. Patout Burns, *Theological Anthropology* not only tenders a selection of early Christian anthropologies gleaned from the Gnostic movement to Augustinian tradition, but also represents a re-emerging interest in translated primary documents. Another feature of this work is the conceptual overview which precedes the translated documents. See, J. Patout Burns, *Theological Anthropology*. Sources of Early Christian Thought: A Series of New English Translations of Patristic Texts Essential to an Understanding of Christian Theology, ed. William G. Rusch, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981], 1-22. Hereafter cited as: Burns, *Theological Anthropology*.

[26]See J. P. Burns's overview on the gnostic and ascetic movements, 1-6. He concludes: "The freedom of self-determination to good or evil, which is the inalienable divine image implanted in humanity at its creation, stands as the foundation of this anthropology. The exercise of this autonomy for good may be enhanced or encumbered by environmental factors whose actual influence, however, depends upon the individual's own prior consent. Through repeated choices a person will orient himself to either good or evil. In the resurrection God will stabilize the just in good as a reward for fidelity and fix the sinnerin the evil he has consistenly preferred." Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 6.

between created matter and spirit is clearly seen in the capacity and desire for God in each human regardless of an inherited concupiscence, the passions and powers of which limit liberty of the human spirit. The ultimate desire of the human spirit is knowing and loving God in this earthly existence and realizing full union with God beyond death.[27]

Fourth century social and political changes, heralded by the Constantinian era, expedited the development and promotion of both anthropological movements. The ascetic form encouraged the withdrawal of many men and women from the main streams of society. The pattern varied: many physically withdrew to isolated regions; some simply withdrew to the Holy Land; others entered centres of monastic life; and still others remained in cities and retreated from social activities and obligations. The philosophical form, identified with Neoplatonism, set out to use the new analytic tools in the service of Christianity.[28]

Both movements carried with them an understanding of human nature constituted as body-soul; each movement believed the human being possessed an innate propensity and capacity to

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[27]See J. P. Burns's overview on Christian Platonism, 6-10; he concludes: "Platonic Christianity differs significantly from the anthropology of the ascetic tradition. It describes the Christian life as the growth of a spiritual desire for God rather than as the faithful obedience to the divine commands through which one earns a reward in the next life. It conceives of grace as God's operation which revives and nourishes, which removes the obstacles to the development of the desire God created in humanity. The primary grace is God's self-revelation in the economy of creation and salvation which culminates in the incarnation of the Word. Participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, either baptism or through physical death and resurrection, heals the concupiscence of the flesh and gives it a new spiritual life. The commandments of God, along with the teaching and example of Christ and his saints, inspire and guide the Christian's purification and development." Burns, *Theological Anthropology,* 9.

[28]Burns comments: "Origen's earlier formulations were developed and perfected first by Athanasius [d. 373] and then by the Cappadocian theologians. Origen also provided the foundation for the mystical theology developed by Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius of Pontus [d. 399] to guide Christians beyond the practical wisdom and ascetical practices of the Egyptian monks." Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 12.

desire and choose the **good** as required by God.[29] As well, both forms supported the belief that human independence, in cooperating with grace, is essential to an understanding of human dignity and divine justice. The Neoplatonic form would maintain that the inherent human desire is developed through asceticism and contemplation.[30] Many of these assumptions would be challenged in the fifth century by Augustine of Hippo.[31]

It is in these intellectual milieux that Ambrose became the ecclesiastical leader of Milan. The Bishop, not fully prepared in theological and philosophical thought, faced many challenges and choices. The difficulties would endure in Christian interpretation and articulation of the creation of matter and the first humans, the understanding of human nature and its relationship to the Creator, the practices and ways of conducting life in bodily and spiritual dimensions, as well as the final disposition of the body and soul.

This brief and limited overview has alluded to what early Christian writings reveal about three cultural dynamics, Greek philosophy, Hellenized Judaism and Hellenized Christian theology, all of which flow into history of fourth century anthopological deliberations concerning

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[29]See also Werner Jaeger regarding his understanding of Greek thought. An implicit knowledge of the body is found in his article "Greek Medicine as Paideia."Werner W. Jaeger, "Greek Medicine as Paideia," chap. in *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture* Vol. 3 [New York: Oxford University Press, 1971]: 3-45; and Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* [Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1961; or London: Oxford University Press, 1962].

[30]See Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 15-16.

[31]See Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 12-19 for comments on Augustine's contributions and 19-22 for the Augustinian tradition.

asceticism and Neoplatonism.[32] Hopefully these remarks may serve as a background from which Ambrose's contributions may be seen with greater clarity and appraised more fully in this study. At this time it is sufficient to say that most of Ambrose's philosophical reflections rest upon Neoplatonic concepts and the addition of Stoic doctrines. His theological thought and exegetical activities are based on Paul, Philo, Origen, Didymus, Hippolytus, Athanasius, Basil and other contributors of Neoplatonic thought.[33] The review of selected studies, involving more information on particular anthropological topics and themes, follows.

General Investigations

Curiosity about human nature, a theme penned by many authors of early Christian documents, is still a pursuit of contemporary commentators on early Christian thought. Two contributions, identified as definitive by A. H. Armstrong and Gerhard B. Ladner[34], are Hans von Balthasar's *A Theological Anthropology*[35] and Jean Daniélou's contribution "Question

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[32]Chadwick examines the classical tradition as it was synthesized by Justin, Clement of Alexandria and Origen; see Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* [New York: Oxford Press, 1966]; also, "Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body." *Harvard Theological Review*, 41 [1948]: 83-102.

[33]Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 113-114.

[34]See comments of A. H. Armstrong and Gerhard B. Ladner regarding their dependence on the contributions of von Balthasar and Daniélou in: A. H. Armstrong, "Platonic Elements in St Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of Man.", *Dominican Studies* 1 [1948]: 113-26; and Gerhard B. Ladner, "The Philosophical Anthropology of Saint Gregory of Nyssa." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 [Cambridge, Mass.: 1958]: 60-94.

[35]Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Das Ganze im Fragment* [Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1963] translated as *A Theological Anthropology* [New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967]; and *Man in History: A Theological Study* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1968].

d'anthropologie."[36] Although these studies represent an earlier period of investigation, they do characterize the theological approaches and themes which conserve a lengthy tradition; and as such, these references remain important theological works.

Many later modern efforts often select different approaches and choose certain patristic authors as the focus of study.[37] Concerning fourth century anthropological thought, commentators appear to focus on two patristic authors, Gregory of Nyssa [c. A. D. 330-395] and Augustine of Hippo [A. D. 354-430]. The former represents the Greek speaking Christian East and the latter represents the Latin speaking Christian West. No documentation exists to support Ambrose's contact with Gregory.[38] Yet ample testimony survives to support Augustine's knowledge of Ambrose.[39]

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[36]Jean Daniélou, "Question d'anthropologie." In *Message evangélique et culture hellénistique aux IIe et IIIe siècles*, [Paris: Desclée, 1961]: 355-90. See also, *Platonisme et théologie mystique: Doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégorie de Nysse* [Paris: Aubier, 1944]: pp 27ff. regarding the "skin as dress".

[37]See the work of Burns which was used earlier, but cited again as an example of such an approach: J. Patout Burns, *Theological Anthropology*. Sources of Early Christian Thought: A Series of New English Translations of Patristic Texts Essential to an Understanding of Christian Theology, ed. William G. Rusch, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981].

[38]Jean Gribomont speculates: "How the work of the Cappadocians, and of Gregory of Nyssa in particular, remained outside the mainstream of Western thought in regard to its more significant manifestations remains unclear. Its exceptional importance was immediately recognized, but there seem to have been factors which held it in check. One possible explanation is offered by the antipathy of Rome toward the ecclesiastical policy of Basil or towards the Council of Constantinople of 381." Jean Gribomont, "The Translations of Jerome and Rufinus," Chap. in *Patrology*, ed. Angelo DiBerardino vol. IV, trans. Placid Solari [Westminister, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986], 210. Dudden has no reference to Gregory and supports the improbability of Ambrose's direct knowledge of Gregory of Nyssa.

[39]Sister Barbara Beyenka researched Augustine's documents for the total number of references to Ambrose of Milan. She has identified 408 occurrences by name or by various titles. She concludes: "If our study has done nothing more, it has been witness to the richness and variety of expression which marks the Latin of Augustine, for he has used over ninety

The contributions of these influential bishops and monastic innovators are legendary. The influences of Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa provide a basis for Christian anthropologies which had far reaching consequences. Although Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose never met, the Milanese bishop corresponded with the older brother, the Bishop of Caesarea. Basil's influence is directly manifest through Ambrose's knowledge and adaptation of the Basilian *Hexameron.*[40] Although Basil's document does not contain an extensive treatment of human structure and function or the beauty of Roman poetical verse, there are some definitive similarities in philosophical perspective and theological thought.

As a contemporary of Ambrose, Gregory's efforts provide another perspective of fourth century dynamics. Although coexistent in time and their interests comparable, only Gregory produced an anthropological treatise.[41] Studies, describing the anthropological contributions of this great Cappadocian, include Platonic and Neoplatonic inquiry,[42] anthropological

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different words and phrases to speak of the Bishop of Milan. . . .In ways that are still little known, the thought of Ambrose, *flos inter scriptores*, flowers in many of Augustine's finest passages." Barbara Beyenka, "The Names of St. Ambrose in the Works of St. Augustine." *Augustinian Studies* 5 [1974]: 27-28. No extant Ambrosian document names or identifies Augustine.

[40]See Dudden, *St. Ambrose*. vol. II, 680.

[41]Gregory of Nyssa, *De opificio hominis*, in the *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 44, 125-256. For background data see: Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. III, 263-264.

[42]See these four selected studies by A. H. Armstrong, "Platonic Elements in St Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of Man.", *Dominican Studies* 1 [1948]: 113-26; "The Form of Man in Plato." *Downside Review* 202 [Autumn, 1947]: 363 ff.; "The Soul of Man in Plato." *Downside Review* 201 [July, 1947]: 237 ff.; and "Lumen de Lumine." *Dublin Review* 437 [April, 1946]" 132-133. See also Cherniss' classic study in which he addresses the Greek and Christian tensions between matter and spirit: H. F. Cherniss, "The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa.", *University of California Publications in Classical Philology*, XI for 1930-1933 [Berkeley: 1934]: 1-92.

analyses,[43] comparative efforts,[44] and theological thought.[45]

Augustine, the West's major fourth and fifth century patristic author, receives equivalent attention from twentieth century commentators. Augustine of Hippo's anthropological treatises have been the source of multiple studies which identify his sources, follow his intellectual development and plot the forward trajectories of his thought.[46] Although Ambrosian scholarship benefits greatly from these analyses, the emphasis of this study remains Ambrose's anthropological thought.

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[43]Gerhard B. Ladner, "The Philosophical Anthropology of Saint Gregory of Nyssa." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 [Cambridge, MA: 1958]: 60-94; and Daniel E. Scuiry, "The Anthropology of St. Gregory of Nyssa." *Diakonia* 18 [1, 1983]: 31-42.

[44]See: Werner Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Marcarius* [Leiden: 1954]; and Frances M. Young, "Adam and Anthropos: A Study of the Interaction of Science and the Bible in Two Anthropological Treatises of the Fourth Century." *Vigiliae Christianae*. 37 [1983]: 110-140. Young contrasts the views of Gregory of Nyssa and Nemesis in a comprehensive manner; her text, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press; London: SCM Press, 1983], provides a contextual framework.

[45]See Hans. U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée, Essai sur al Philosophie Religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse* [Paris: Beauchesne, 1942]; and Jean Daniélou, *Platonisme et Théologie Mystique, Essai sur la Doctrine Spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse* [Paris: Aubier, 1944]; a second edition was published in 1953.

[46]These references are particularly important for their contributions to Ambrosian-Augustinian thought: Peter R. L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* [London: Faber & Faber, 1967; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969]. W. H. C. Frend critiques the text as: "Of these [literature on the North African church] I regard Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, with its erudition and sensitive handling of Augustine, as the best, and it contains a full bibliography to 1965." In *The Rise of Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984]: 683; Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* [Past Masters Series], [Oxford: University Press, 1986]. Chadwick's text tenders an analysis of Augustine's theological and pyschological acumen; and Robert J. O'Connell, *Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968]. O'Connell collects and summarizes references related to Augustine's emerging anthropology. See also Agostino Trapé's comments on Augustinian anthropological thought. In Mara, *Patrology*, vol. IV, 412-415 and 435-445.

Selected Works on the Human Body

The aforementioned selected anthropological studies, philosophical inquiries and biblical commentaries on the human body represent common themes of patristic research. Recently, within the last twelve to fifteen years, another type of work has developed. Rather than initiating the investigations from soul-body dualism or from the theological perpsective of soteriology, these studies begin with a focus and sense of the human body. These works do not deny the established dichotomous or trichotomous views of the human being, but rather, emphasize thematic and analytic contributions which can be attained by initiating the inquiry from a bodily perspective and addressing other anthropological issues and concerns as natural corollaries. These innovative works proceed from a different vantage point and encourage different questions and responses. Some recent contributions which advance an understanding of historical context and issues concerning the human body are now discussed.

Often general or survey works express optimistic or pessimistic opinions regarding the role of Western Christianity in formulating attitudes toward the human body. Frank Bottomley's descriptive work, *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom*[47], represents such an undertaking. Using the methodology of history of ideas, he provides a chronology spanning the development of thought on the human body from the Graeco-Roman to the Reformation period. He ascribes the advancements and benefits contributed by Christian thought. His assessment of Ambrose's contributions is summarized within the context of his era and his culture. The Bishop is represented as the realistic pastor and ecclesiastical leader who applied Roman

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[47]Frank Bottomley, *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom* [London: Lepus Books, 1979].

principles of discipline and authority to spiritual life and modified them to a qualified asecticism and Christian Neoplatonic desiring and pursuit of God.[48]

Specific themes, involving the human body and its meaning, play a prominent role in patristic contributions to the history of ideas. The phenomenon of asceticism, as indicated earlier, represents such a prevailing theme of study.[49] Peter Brown's contributions to the study of early Christian ascetic thought are notable.[50] His text, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*,[51] examines the practice of permanent sexual renunciation and spans the period from the journeys of Paul to the death of Augustine.

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[48]Frank Bottomley, "The Beginnings of Systematic Thought", *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom*, 65-73.

[49]See also: Henry E. Chadwick, "The Ascetic Ideal in the History of the Church." In W. J. Sheils, ed. *Monks, Hermits, and the Ascetic Tradition* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985]: 1-24. Chadwick adds particular psychological perspectives and offers compelling insights into the ideal of Christian ascetical thought; Elizabeth A. Clark, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Late Ancient Christianity*, Studies in Women and Religion 20. [New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986]. Clark's thirteen essays span the late patristic period and probe the tensions between such values as ascetic renunciation and feminine advancement, and authority and humility; and W. J. Sheils, ed., *Monks, Hermits, and the Ascetic Tradition* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985]. This collected edition offers a variety of Christian perspectives into the ideal and its practices.

[50]Two of Peter R. L. Brown's earlier texts, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* [Berkeley: University of California, 1982] and *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981] raise critical issues and identify fundamental alterations which occurred in the social, political, economic, and architectural contexts between the fourth and sixth centuries. His work inspires a greater understanding of historical approaches and methods.

[51]Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988]. Brown claims: "If my book gives back to the Christian men and women of the first five centuries a little of the disturbing strangeness of their most central preoccupations, I will consider that I have achieved my purpose in writing it." Ibid., Preface, XV. For Brown's analysis of Ambrose of Milan, see Chapter Seventeen, "Aula Pudoris: Ambrose." 341-365. Hereafter this text is cited as Brown, *The Body and Society*.

In his chapter devoted to the Milanese Bishop, Brown contends that Ambrose's understanding of the human body must be perceived through the dynamics of his personality, reasoning and intellectual predilection.[52] Identifying what Brown considers as strong antitheses within Ambrosian thought, he admonishes Ambrose for an inability to comprehend Origen's thought associated with key circumstances of the human sensuality and especially human reproduction.[53] Brown assesses Ambrose's reasoning pattern as anthithetical in nature and dismisses the possibility of any synthesis. An alternate interpretation, which might describe this Ambrosian trait of polarities as that of the dialectic method, is not mentioned by Brown. He evaluates Ambrose's strength in a more singular, practical manner, that of a great preacher.[54]

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[52]Brown's assessment of Ambrose depicts an inflexible man with rigid beliefs and an organized agenda: "He propounded a world view marked by sharp antitheses and by hard boundaries. . . We must always bear in mind this aspect of Ambrose, even when we study the most seemingly intimate and sheltered aspects of his thought. We are dealing with a man whose imaginative world was a tensile system. It was built up through a series of potent antitheses--Christian and pagan, Catholic and heretic, Bible truth and 'worldly' guesswork, Church and *saeculum*, soul and body." Brown, *The Body and Society*, 347.

[53]Brown's appraisal of Ambrose's use of Origen is assessed as: "For Origen, however, this was a taint that could be transcended by the free will. . . .Like a thumbprint on clear glass, it was visible only in the growing light of the glory that lay in store for the transformed body. It did not speak of original sin, as this was later understood in the Latin West: it was not the sign of an irrevocable fall of all mankind in Adam. This was not so for Ambrose. The sheer sweep of Origen's cosmic view largely escaped him. The one transformation that riveted his attention was that brought about by conversion and baptism in the Catholic Church. He had no wish to consider the prospect of a long, slow purification of the soul, as it journeyed through a mighty universe." Brown, *The Body and Society*, 352. Brown's comments are remarkable in their ascribed intent of Ambrose's probity and ability to reason.

[54]Brown, dependent on H. Savon's work, writes: "A connoisseur of Origen's allegorical style, Ambrose was a past master of the alchemy of imagery. His greatest gift as a preacher had been the instinctive artistry with which he conveyed the dynamism of change." Brown, *The Body and Society*, 363.

Margaret Miles' *Augustine on the Body*[55] provides an intriguing study which probes the depths of Augustine's intellectual development assisted by modern psychological methods. She uses four categories to describe Augustine's thought on sensation, asceticism, the incarnation and the resurrection of the body. Miles acknowledges Ambrose's influence on Augustine,[56] as well as Ambrose's anthropological contributions to an Augustinian bodily perspective.[57] Her analysis and appreciation of paradox are most keen.[58] Miles continues her research on the significance of the human body employing a wider perpsective.[59]

Alvyn Pettersen's *Athanasius and the Human Body*[60] investigates the Alexandrian's

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[55]Margaret R. Miles, *Augustine on the Body* A.A.R. Dissertation Series, 31 [Missoula Montana: Scholars Press, 1979]; hereafter cited as Miles, *Augustine on the Body*. See also an earlier work on Augustine's imprint on Western perception and thought of the human body: Henri-Irênée Marrou, *L'ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez Saint Augustin* [Montréal, Paris: Vrin, 1950].

[56]Miles writes: "the influence of Scripture and patristic authors became more and more central to Augustine after his ordination as a bishop; he quoted Ambrose more frequently than any other Christian writer except Cyrpian, whom he quoted extensively for polemical purposes in the Donatist controversy." Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 5.

[57]See Miles on Ambrose's influences on the theory of sensation, 20; on asceticism, 58-60; on the incarnation, 86-87; and on the resurrection, 106. Miles, *Augustine on the Body*.

[58]For example, Miles comments: "It is curious to notice the ways in which a monistic metaphysical system such as Stoicism compensates with a strong experiential dualism, while a philosophy like Neoplatonism with a marked systematic dualism can acknowledge, perhaps more readily, the final unity." Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, chap. IV, note 16, 153.

[59]In more recent works Margaret Miles develops themes which stress the experiences of women within the early Christian epoch. She emphasizes the meaning of asceticism, the nature of sensory experiences and specifically, the female form as viewed through the historical perspective of art. See, Margaret Miles, *Fullness of Life: Historical Foundations for a New Asceticism* [Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1981]; and *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* [Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1989].

[60]Alvyn Pettersen, *Athanasius and the Human Body* [Bristol: the Bristol Press, 1990]. Hereafter cited as Pettersen, *Athanasius*.

anthropology with remarkable insights. Pettersen approaches Athanasian contributions through a framework of five dimensions: the body as created and its relation to the soul, the body of Christ in relation to all humanity then to all Christians, the individual as body, and lastly the body and its salvation. Pettersen's multifaceted analyses emphasize the physical nature of the human and its consequential meaning of service. Some Neoplatonic and many Christian influences found within Athanasius' thought, are echoed in the works of Ambrose. Details of these similarities, and on occasion differences, are described later within this study.[61]

Philological research sustains another category of studies which adds to the knowledge, use and development of the word, body. Quantitatively, the contributions are immense. Only selected entries are cited for their contributions as background to comprehend Ambrose's use of Greek, Hellenistic Judaic and Hellenistic Judaic Christian sources.

E. Schweizer's article, "Soma."[62] presents a carefully prepared historic overview of the term and its position in biblical and patristic documents. C. J. de Vogel's "The *SOMA-SEMA*

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[61]Two earlier notable studies on Alexandrian patristic authors include: Walter John Burghardt's *The Image of God in Man According to Cyril of Alexandria* [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1957]. This work stresses the societal norms and customs relevant to his and ensuing ages. The second study is J. Roldanus' *Le Christ et L'Homme dans La Théologie D'Athanase D'Alexandrie: Étude de la conjonction de sa conception de L'homme avec sa Christologie,* Studies in the History of Christian Thought, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, vol., IV, [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968]. This text treats the dependent patristic resources and theological understanding of man as a spiritual creation in the Image of God.

[62]E. Schweizer, "Soma.", article in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds., Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol.7 [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdman Co., 1964-1976]: 1024-1094.

Formula: Its Function in Plato and Plotinus Compared to Christian Writers."[63] investigates the tensions as applied to an understanding of Platonic anthropology in general and specific conditions in particular authors. Vogel's understanding of the prison-temple figure is presented in chapter seven of this study.

Biblical scholars expend much energy on issues pertaining to the human body. Specific works, principally Pauline in orientation, contribute to the overall understanding of the scriptural data base. R. H. Gundy's *"Sôma" in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology*[64] affords a precise analysis of concepts and continuing influences. J. A. T. Robinson's *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, although an earlier work, represents a primary work in the field.[65] These references, not directly cited with reference to Ambrose's use of Paul's anthropology, do contribute knowledge of various perspectives of Pauline thought.

This section has presented a brief synopsis of the early intellectual developments of Christian anthropological movements. Modern investigations of two contemporary authors of

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[63]C. J. de Vogel, "The *SOMA-SEMA* Formula: Its Function in Plato and Plotinus Compared to Christian Writers." *In Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honour of A. H. Armstrong*, eds., H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus [London: Variorum Publications Ltd., 1981]: 79-95. Vogel's article is in response to a dissertation by E. Schroten, "Kerker of tempel? Over de zin van de lichamelijkheid."[Prison or Temple? On the Meaning of Corporeality], [Ph. D. diss., University of Utrecht, 1970]. The issue is the interpretation of Plato's anthropology. See also Vogel's article on Plotinus, in *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought, Studia Gerardo Verbeke*, Symbolae: Facultatis Litterarum et Philosophiae Lovaniensis, ser. A, I, eds., F. Bossier; C. Laga et al. [Leuven: Leuvan University Press, 1976]: 147-68.

[64]R. H. Gundy, *"Sôma" in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976].

[65]Robinson emphasizes the Pauline use of Greek word for body is an extension of the Hebrew usage, not for the parts of the man, but for the whole person. See, John Arthur Thomas Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* Studies in Biblical Theology 5 [London: SCM Press, 1961], 31.

Ambrose were cited as exemplaries of the fourth century Christian East and West. The efforts and contributions of these men dominate modern research and twentieth century scholarship's investigations to understanding human nature. The second part included recent inquiries exclusively focused on the human body. In the latter years of this century, an interesting shift in emphasis and methodology appears. Chronological and doctrinal works are less numerous. The development of thematic approaches is of particular significance. With these primary efforts completed, the specific Ambrosian studies examined or used in this work are now presented.

1.4 AMBROSIAN SOURCES AND STUDIES

Modern investigations have done much to probe sources and to identify notions in the Ambrosian corpus. These efforts represent consistent and genuine contributions to the understanding of Early Christian thought. Well documented and readily accessible collections[66] and computerized systems serve as guides to these efforts.[67] The existing data base will

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[66]For major collections of Ambrosian works and commentaries see: P. F. Beatrice, R. Cantalamessa, A. Persic, L. F. Pizzolatol, D. Scaglioni, G. Tibiletti, and G. Visonà, *Cento anni di bibliografia ambrosiana [1874-1974]*, [Milano: Pubbicazione della Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1981]; and M. G. Mara, "Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster and Nicetas," chap. in *Patrology*, vol. IV, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature: From the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon* ed. A. DiBerardino, trans. P. Solari [Westminster. MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986], 145-180.

[67]For example, computerized searches for patristic resources are conducted at Quebec's BIBP Centre, the University of Laval: La Banque d'Information Bibliographique en Patristique: Bibliographic Information Bank in Patristics [BIBP]; a search of 18,500 documents completed June 1990, using the key words *Corps et Ambroise de Milan [sauf Corps eucharistique et Corps mystique]* produced two studies; thus this search underscores the lack of work in this area. The two documents written by Courcelle and Hadot are listed with philosophical works. An expanded search, using other key words such as corps, anthropologie, Adam, and sens, will be

continue to grow with rigour as the sixteen hundredth anniversary of Ambrose's death approaches.

This section emphasizes studies which distinguish the Classical and Christian sources and influences which can be discerned in the Ambrosian documents. Other works which identify and sustain an understanding of direct and indirect anthropological concerns and issues are included. These selected works are introduced at this point in the study to indicate the scope of previous research and avoid replications of efforts. Specific contributions are cited and integrated within the text of this study where the relevance can be more easily demonstrated.

Marcia Colish's two volume study, *The Stoic Tradition From Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*,[68] chronicles Stoic philosophic thought and its development in the areas of physics, ethics, logic, literature and law. She analyzes the transmission and eventual influences of Stoic thought on certain Latin Christian authors.[69] Acknowledging and commending Ambrosian contributions to Stoic thought she devotes part of the chapter, "St. Ambrose and St. Jerome",[70] to evaluate Ambrose's knowledge and application of Stoic concepts. Her work provides original

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completed after the completion of this study. A recent work by Jacques Berlioz [et collaborateurs], *Identifier sources et citations*, L'atelier du Médiéviste, vol. 1 [Turnhout: Brepolis, 1994] is highly recommended as a resource.

[68]Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition From Antiquity to the Early Middles Ages* Vol. I, *Stoicism in Classical Latin Literature*; Vol. II, *Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought Through the Sixth Century* Studies in the History of Christian Thought, ed. Heiko a. Oberman, vols. XXXIV, XXXV [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985]; hereafter cited as, Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*.

[69]See also, Marcia L. Colish, "Cicero, Ambrose, and Stoic Ethics: Transmission or Transformation?" chap. in *The Classics of the Middle Ages*, eds. A. Bernardo and S. Levin, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies vol. 69 [Binghamton, NY: State University of New York, 1990], 95-112.

[70]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition,* vol. II, 48-91; for the Ambrosian section, see 48-70.

insights into Ambrose's psychology, his use of Stoic doctrines and appropriations of Ciceronian themes.[71]

Other classical sources within Ambrose's thought were discerned through efforts of Courcelle, Madec and Savon. Their efforts are described as superb achievements from post-war French patristic scholarship.[72] Madec's analysis of Ambrose's philosophical concepts and choices, especially classical dualism and Plotinian influences, provides a substantial contribution not only to Ambrosian but early Christian thought.[73] Courcelle's Neoplatonic studies identify sources and significance imagery used by the Milanese bishop.[74] Also, the work of Hadot must be included for his examination of Platonic and Neoplatonic influences within three Ambrosian homilies.[75]

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[71]Colish's assesment of Ambrose's personality differs sharply from P. R. L. Brown's appraisal. She describes Ambrose as a". . . confident, judicious administrator whose achievement of a new and balanced integrations of his sources bespeaks his inner serenity, his intellectual penetration, and his awareness of his pastoral responsibilities." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 72. She also credits him with the capability to counsel ". . . the golden mean, not ascetic extremism, in their exercise [of virtue]." Ibid., 69.

[72]Peter Brown comments: "The uncovering of the sources that nourished the thought of Ambrose is one of the very finest achievements of post-war French patristic scholarship.", Brown, *The Body and Society*, note 26, 346.

[73]See, Goulven Madec, *Ambroise et la philosophie*, Études Augustiniennes, 47 [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1974]

[74]Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, [Paris: de Boccard, 1950], 106-138; also, "Tradition platonicienne et traditions chrétiennes du corps-prison." *Revue des études latines* 43 [1965]: 406-443.

[75]Pierre Hadot, "Platon et Plotin dans trois sermons de saint Ambroise," *Revue des études latines* 34 [1956]: 202-222.

Hervé Savon's *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le juif*,[76] represents the most extensive study of Ambrose's use of Philonic methods and sources. Using a four stage approach Savon analyzes five major works, *De Paradiso, De Cain, De Noe, De Abraham II and De fuga saeculi*, for source similarities, emerging variations, *la christianisation* and the development of themes by Ambrose.[77] Although Savon's study provides a solid basis for identifying Philonic contributions to all early documents, the study is especially useful for comprehending Ambrose's adaptations and innovation of Philo's exegetical methodology and themes.[78]

Commentaries, describing Ambrose's life and times, represent the labours of French, German, Italian and English speaking scholars. These established texts offer distinct perspectives of the man and his contributions: Labriolle's concise, poetic literary overview;[79]

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[76]Hervé Savon's *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le juif* [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1977]. Hereafter cited as Savon, *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le juif*.

[77]Savon's *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le juif*. See 18-19 for the approach used by Savon; see 377-385 for general conclusions. For a concise overview see, Hervé Savon, "Saint Ambroise et saint Jérôme, lecteurs de Philon," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase, II 21.1 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984], 731-759; Ambroise, 731-744.

[78]Hervé Savon "Maniérisme et Allégorie dans l'oeuvre d'Ambroise de Milan." *Revue des études latines*, 55 [1977]: 203-221; see 218-220 for an overview of Ambrose's great gifts as pastor, homilist and master of imagery.

[79]Pierre de Labriolle, "St Ambrose, Bishop and Diplomat," chap. in *History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius*, trans. Herbert Wilson [London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1924], 263-286. For a later work which includes text dates see: William G. Rusch, "Ambrose of Milan and Ambrosiaster," chap. in *The Later Latin Fathers*, [London: Duckworth, 1977], 47-67.

von Campenhausen's sensitive, insightful history;[80] Paredi's fact-filled, often inspirational and vibrant descriptions of Ambrose;[81] and Dudden's clearly written, mostly analytic, and nearly encyclopedic two volume reference.[82]

Published and unpublished dissertations provide another field of Ambrosian scholarship. These contributions may be classified in two methodological groups: historic-literary criticism and history of ideas. The former studies, often completed during the early period of this century, stress the delineation of sources used by Ambrose. A representative sample of such studies is now presented.

The Catholic University of America's Patristic Series, edited by Roy J. Deferrari, has contributed many syntactic, source and textual studies which have enhanced the efforts of Ambrosian scholarship: M. F. Barry's *The Vocabulary of the Moral-Ascetical Work of Saint Ambrose*,[83] M. A. Adams' *The Latinity of the Letters of Saint Ambrose*,[84] M. D. Diederich's

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[80]Hans F. von Campenhausen, "Ambrose," chap. in *The Fathers of the Church*, trans. Manfred Hoffman [London: A. & C. Black, 1964], 87-128.

[81]Angelo Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe [Notre Dame, IN; University of Nore Dame Press, 1964].

[82]F. Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 2 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935]. As stated earlier, this text was abbreviated to: Dudden, *St. Ambrose*.

[83]Mary Finbar Barry, *The Vocabulary of the Moral-Ascetical Work of Saint Ambrose*, Ph. D., diss., Patristic Studies, ed. Roy J.Deferrari, vol., 10 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1926].

[84]Mirian Annunciata Adams, *The Latinity of the Letters of Saint Ambrose*, Ph. D. diss., Patristic Studies, ed. Roy J.Deferrari, vol., 12 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1927].

Vergil in the Works of St. Ambrose,[85] M. A. Martin's *The Use of Indirect Discourse in the Works of St. Ambrose*,[86] and M. R. Delaney's *A Study of the Causulae in the Works of St. Ambrose*.[87] This series was also responsible for translations and commentaries of many Ambrose's documents some of which are used later in this study.

These works contain meticulous textual analyses which add considerable depth to any examination of Ambrosian thought. Although the nature of such detailed investigations is not the predominant methodolgy during the latter part of this century, the contributions of these works are extraordinary.

The second class of studies uses the history of ideas method which is more common during the second half of this century. These studies emphasize analysis of concepts using a thematic approach. Although the main task of the following studies is the identification of specific themes or ideas within the Ambrosian documents, their remarkable contributions place Ambrose within the wider historical stream of ideas.

D. H. Williams' historical reconstruction investigates the late fourth century Homoians-Nicenes controversy. He challenges the traditional concepts of the lifeless Latin Arianism being

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[85]Mary Dorothea Diederich, *Vergil in the Works of St. Ambrose* Ph. D. diss., Patristic Studies, ed. Roy J.Deferrari, vol., 29 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1927].

[86]Marie Antoinette Martin, *The Use of Indirect Discourse in the Works of St. Ambrose*, Ph. D. diss., Patristic Studies, ed. Roy J.Deferrari, vol., 20 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1930].

[87]M. Rosella Delaney, *A Study of the Causulae in the Works of St. Ambrose* Ph. D. diss., Patristic Studies, ed. Roy J.Deferrari, vol., 40 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1934].

decimated by the uniform pro-Nicene West. He proposes two events play important roles in the Homoian threat: Ambrose's discovery of Protasius and Gervasius' relics in 386 A. D. and Magnus Maximus' invasion of Italy in 387 A. D.. He attributes a definite political role to the Nicene Bishop of Milan's use of martyrs bodily remains.[88]

V. R. Vasey sought to identify the social doctrine of Ambrose through the examinination of his diatribe, *De Nabuthe*. As a literary genre, this form of classic instruction dealing with ethical concerns, acts as a vehicle to express themes of exploitation, poverty, avarice and social excesses. Vasey's well documented, analytic work concludes that Ambrose's social doctrine is basically a theological position and a theological solution which emphasizes poverty and rights, justice and charity, class-harmony and the common good.[89] Some of Vasey's insights are presented in chapter five of this work.

André Loiselle's "'Nature' de l'homme et histoire du Salut: Étude sur l'anthropologie d'Ambroise de Milan."[90] emphasizes the theological considerations of human nature and suggests that Ambrose achieves an explicit unity and congruent Christian anthropology; and even if his articulation and terms are not as precise as some might wish, the realism of man and his history are not comprised.

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[88]Daniel Harrison Williams, "Nicene Christianity and its Opponents in Northern Italy: An Examination of Late Fourth Century Anti-Arian Polemics and Politics with Particular Emphasis on the Early Career of Ambrose of Milan" [Ph. D. diss., University of Toronto, 1990].

[89]Vincent R. Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose: A Study on De Nabuthe*, Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum" vol. 17 [Roma: Institutem Patristicum "Augustinianum", 1982].

[90]The status and importance of this theological study was presented earlier: André Loiselle, "'Nature' de l'homme et Histoire du Salut: étude sur l'anthropologie d'Ambroise de Milan." [Ph.D. diss., Faculte de Theologie de Lyon, 1970].

Baziel Maes', *La loi naturelle selon Ambroise de Milan*, represents one of the most referenced dissertations.[91] Avoiding the difficulties of biblicizing or oversimplifying, the work is described as the finest treatment which conserves a lively and nuanced sense of the ambiguities of Ambrose on the natural law.[92]

William Dooley compared Ambrosian teaching on marriage and family life with general fourth century trends. His findings suggest Ambrose's understanding of marriage as a contract, sacred institution and way of salvation carried with it basic Roman and Christian values. The roles of spouse and parent are featured as well as moral standards which apply equally to men and women.[93]

Other dissertations which are not cited within this work include the themes of: trinitarian dynamics accentuating the Holy Spirit,[94] the priest as perceived by the Milanese Bishop,[95] solidarity as notion within the context of creation, sin and redemption,[96] a theory of church-

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[91]Baziel Maes, *La loi naturelle selon Ambroise de Milan*, Analecta Gregoriana, 162, Facultatis theologicae, B 52 [Roma: Presses de l' Université Grégorienne, 1967].

[92]See Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 52-53.

[93]William Joseph Dooley, *Marriage According to St. Ambrose* The Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity ed. Johannes Quasten, no. 11 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948].

[94]Norman Joseph Belval, "The Holy Spirit in Saint Ambrose" [Ph. D. diss., Fac. S. Theol, apud Pont. Univ. S. Thomas de Urbe, 1971].

[95]Roger Gryson, "Le Prêtre selon Saint Ambroise" [Ph.D. diss., Universitas Catholic Lovaniensis, 1968].

[96]James A. Mara, "The Notion of Solidarity in Saint Ambrose's Teaching on Creation, Sin and Redemption" [Ph.D. diss., Faculty of Theology, Pontifical University, Gregorium, 1970].

state relations,[97] an examination of studies concentrating on the *Vita Ambrosii* composed by Paulinus of Milan,[98] Mary as Virgin,[99] and lastly a reconstruction of the New Testament texts cited in the Ambrosian corpus.[100]

Taken as a whole, these studies demonstrate the elaborate character and complexity of Ambrose's thought. Major studies, which trace either Ambrose's participation in individual ideas or Ambrose's original ideas influencing and contributing to ensuing generations, are yet to be done. It is interesting to note that Lovejoy himself selected Ambrose's idea of communism as an area of personal research.[101]

This third section completes the reviews of literary, linguistic, textual and conceptual analyses of selected Ambrosian scholarship. The next section identifies the nature of this study's research method and process.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method of this study is history of ideas and as such, employs critical appraisal which involves textual and conceptual analyses. The intentions are not to provide a

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[97]R. C. Clark, "St. Ambrose's Theory of Church-State Relations" [Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1971].

[98]R. M. McClure, "Studies in the Test of the *Vita Ambrosii* of Paulinus of Milan" [Ph. D. diss., University of California: Los Angeles, 1971].

[99]Charles William Neumann, *The Virgin Mary in the Works of Saint Ambrose*, Paradosis, 17 [Fribourg {Suisse}: University Press, 1962].

[100]R. W. Muncey, *The New Testament Text of St. Ambrose*. Texts & Studies: Contributions to Biblical & Patristic Literature, second series, 4 [Cambridge: University Press, 1959].

[101]A. O. Lovejoy, "The Communism of St. Ambrose," chap. in *Essays in the History of Ideas* [Baltimore: J. Hopskins, 1948], 296-307.

theological examination or to change prior evaluations of Ambrose. But rather, the purposes are to enhance the knowledge of his Classical and Christian anthropological sources which he had at his command, and to determine how he transmitted or transformed these sources. The method supports opportunities for an inductive process which examines Ambrosian documents and exposes the modern reader to Ambrose's own voice through selection of relevant excerpts.

External criticism, concerning authenticity and genuineness of data, is addressed by use of critical editions. The Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum [CSEL] Series edited by the Academy of Vienna is the preferred edition. J. P. Migne's *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina*, Paris, is used when specific works are not contained in critical editions. French translations are obtained from *Sources chrêtiennes* edited by H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou. These critical series and texts address the concerns regarding the evaluation of historical data and minimize the chance of error and distortion.

Non-critical English translations, consulted and cross-referenced, include: *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* edition revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* edited by P. Schaff and H. Wace, and *The Fathers of the Church* edited by L. Schopp.

The issue of dating the Ambrosian corpus is most complex. The person and the place are not contested. The chronology of some documents is debated, or at least, challenged. A chart of patristic scholars' positions on the dating issues has been prepared and is placed as an appendix. The selected authors represent the early, middle and late periods of this century.[102]

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[102]For issues of dating see: F. H. Dudden, "The Writings of Ambrose," chap. in *The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose* vol. II, 678-710; M. G. Mara, "Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster and Nicetas," chap. in *Patrology*, vol. IV, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature: From*

Mara's recommended dates, which are supported and derived from a summary of the arguments[103], are generally considered reliable unless evidences for other dates can be substantiated. The variations, often spanning a four year period, may affect sources dependency and may or may not affect this work.[104] Dates and issues relating specific documents correspond to the first entry of the work within this study.

Internal criticism, dealing with the reliability or accuracy of data, is partially substantiated by use of critical editions of the documents. The key issues of historical representation and bias within the Ambrosian corpus are examined by comparisons with accounts in other documents, general knowledge of themes and events obtained from secondary works, acknowledgement of Ambrose's perspective and views and knowledge of degree of competence

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the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon ed. A. DiBerardino, trans. P. Solari [Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986], 152-180; A. Paredi, "Works of Saint Ambrose," *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times* trans. M. J. Costelloe [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964], 435-440; and W. G. Rusch, "Ambrose of Milan and Ambrosiaster," chap. in *The Later Latin Fathers* [London: Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1977], 47-67. As the issues of dating the Ambrosian corpus are complex, a summary chart is appended; see Appendix One.

[103]M. G. Mara, "Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster and Nicetas," chap. in *Patrology*, vol. IV, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature: From the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon* ed. A. DiBerardino, trans. P. Solari [Westminster. MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986], 152-180; hereafter cited as Mara, *Patrology*, vol. IV.

[104]For example, Vasey, favouring R. Gryson's assigning of dates, comments that much of the Ambrosian chronology ". . . is still tentative, but eventual modifications in dating his corpus will not affect materially the conclusion of this study, since his social thought from its first expression to the end remains coherent and unchanged." [17] Vasey does detect what he considers is a change in the dominant sources used by Ambrose: "About 386 a marked change comes over Ambrose's writings, a change due in great measure to newly demonstrated interest in philosophy. *De bono mortis* [386] and *De Jacob et vita beata* [386] display a marked Neo-Platonic turn." Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*, 28. Mara identifies the date of the former treatise as 390 and the latter as 386-388. Mara, *Patrology*, vol. IV, 157-159.

and authority attributed to Ambrose.

As indicated, Ambrose's anthropological thought permeates most if not all of his writings. The tridimensional dynamic of God, humanity and the world form the fundamental matrix of his belief system. From this essential premise, his thoughts, beliefs and attitudes flow. In his deliberations, his choices and his writings about the human body, he subjugates both classical and Christian sources to his perceived task, a Christian understanding of human nature. For to perceive Ambrose's understanding of the individual as composed of body and soul, one must understand Ambrose's relationship among cosmological, anthropological and theological viewpoints.

While attempting to comprehend this elaborate matrix embedded in the Ambrosian documents, it became apparent that multiple layers of sources and levels of meanings were evident. Using an inductive method of selecting specific passages, clustering groups of similar texts, identifying concepts, and then classifying the concepts, a series of categories were developed to convey his bodily views. These categories suggested an approach to define the study's framework or design.

This framework follows an incremental pattern which describes and interprets bodily nature using seven categories delineated in chapters which follow. The views describe the conceptual layers and interpretative levels of the human body as constituted, created, healthy, controlled by passion, mediated by reason, finally, possessing inherent beauty and transformed in glory. Together these levels form a theoretical model of inquiry.[105]

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[105]The notion of anthropological levels of investigation is derived from: Willemien Otten, *The Anthropology of Johannes Scottus Eriugena*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, ed. A. J. Vanderjagt, vol. 20 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991], 6, 190-203; hereafter cited as Otten, *The*

The basic research hypothesis is that this theoretical construct will illuminate the data drawn from Ambrose's writings in an orderly fashion.

As the approach of this study is an Ambrosian perspective of the human body, the starting point of inquiry differs from any other anthropological investigation of Ambrose's thought. As a comprehensive examination of the human body, this study goes beyond the identification or inventory of sources. The study's significance springs from a systematic investigation which defines and develops views at a textual layer and then proceeds to content analysis at a conceptual layer. From these analytic layers, levels of interpretations are evaluated and judged for a comprehensive articulation of Ambrose's perspective of the human body. The study also tests the extent of Stoic influences, particularly the eight intrarational faculties, and suggests these faculties play a role in Ambrosian thought.

Chapter Two "The Body as Constituted: Participant in Nature" initiates the first level of investigation and interpretation, the most observable characteristic of the human body, its composition and design. Classical scientific theories of the elements and the humors are used by Ambrose to describe the source and structure of the physical body as well as the patterns and tasks of human growth and development.

Chapter Three "The Body is Created: Genesis Revisited" builds on the classical understanding of the body by exploring its nature as created and constituted in the image and likeness of God. This second interpretive level features Ambrose's exegetical skills, acquired from Philo and Origen, and further developed through personal insights. The threefold meaning of scriptural texts, literal, moral, and mystical or spiritual senses, help to explain the revealed

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Anthropology of Johannes Scottus Eriugena.

nature of the human being as constituted male and female.

Chapter Four "The Body as Healthy and Ill" addresses the third level of interpretation. Given his position that the human body participates in nature and is created by a caring God, Ambrose compiles much information about behaviours which promote health and treat illness. To this scientific knowledge he integrates additional dimensions relating to the Christian meaning of suffering and the role of Christ as healer.

Chapter Five "The Body in Roman Society: Passions and Pleasures" examines a fourth level of interpretation through the roles that personal choices and perceived societal expectations play in understanding the human body within the context of Roman society. Cultural norms, social actions and practices which emphasize the five senses, speech and propagation unmediated by the faculty of reason have direct consequences for the physical and spirtual health of human beings.

Chapter Six "The Body as Instrument of Powers and Transformation" continues the examination of personal choice and societal expectations. But this time the social milieu is within the Christian cultural context. Social actions and personal practices which feature the seven gifts of senses, voice and propagation are developed in an hierarchical, Ambrosian pattern of good and better. Ambrose interprets the bodily powers mediated by reason as either good [those which are ordinary or normative] or better [those which are gifts or counsels beyond normal expectations]. This fifth level of interpretation, in which the Christian body functions more closely as an instrument of the soul, adds yet another level to the Ambrosian perspective of the human body in action.

Chapter Seven "The Body as Celebrated and Transcendent" incorporates and enhances

the previous levels through the exploration of the nature and structure of the human body as extolled in poetic and lyrical imagery. In this sixth level, the enigmatic and mystic qualities of human bodily nature are allegorized in prose and song. But perhaps the final or seventh interpretative level, which describes the body as transformed and glorified, represents Ambrose's most definitive perspective of the human body. These introductory remarks relating to Ambrose as an historical person, anthropological issues, current Patristc studies and the research methodology of this study serve as guidelines to the Ambrosian landscape which now unfolds. In the subsequent chapters one major bodily theme, representing each level of interpretation, will be described, examined and analyzed for contributions to Ambrose's understanding of the religious significance of the human body.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BODY AS CONSTITUTED:PARTICIPANT IN NATURE

Ambrose sees the human being as interactive with the natural world; both share the elements of the visible, temporal world adorned with splendour and beauty and both possess the potential and ability for growth and development. Strongly influenced by philosophical thought of Neoplatonism and Stoicism, Roman themes, and Christian authors, Ambrose uses and adapts classical thought by adding Christian attributes, purposes and meanings.

This chapter initiates the first level of investigation and interpretation of the most observable characteristics of the human body, its composition and design. Classical elemental and humoral theories are employed to describe the source, structure and function of the physical body as well as the growth patterns and developmental tasks of the human.

2.1 THE SOURCE OF THE HUMAN BODY:

NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

However fanciful, Stoicism represents the best of early classical thought concerning cosmology and the theory of elements.[1] The Stoic world-view contains theological consequences regarding the universe, as well as, anthropological implications affecting the nature of human beings: "In moving from the apologists to St. Ambrose [339-97] we move to a new historical

[1]For an overview, see Colish, "Cosmology," *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 22-27.

situation that brought with it possibilities for a new theological and pastoral emphasis and new uses of Stoicism on the part of Christian thinkers."[2]

Ambrose adapts Stoic thought to present his perspective of a created universe.[3] He rejects the dualistic, pessimistic cosmological views of Gnosticism and Manicheism as erroneous.[4] He postulates a created, optimistic universe characterized by Christian orthodoxy.[5]

For Ambrose, the human body participates in the cosmos. In his exegetical commentaries, he expounds at great length on the formation of the elements: "In fact, with heaven and earth were created those four elements from which are generated everything in the world. The elements are four in number: heaven, fire, water, and earth--elements which are found mingled in all things."[6] These elements are by design:

> We read of each of the world's objects created in due order, of the firmament, the earth, the fruit-bearing trees, and the various species of animals. Lighter elements, such as air and fire, were given a higher position, while the heavier

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[2]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 48.

[3]Colish comments on Ambrose's use of Stoic tradition: "Ambrose sometimes defeats the reader's initial expectations by treating Stoicism in a merely incidental manner in contexts where one would think him more inclined to advert to it *in extenso*. His protracted discussion of creation in the *Hexameron*, for example, does not inspire him to support or to refute Stoic physics and metaphysics." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 51. Commenting on this text, Colish acknowledges its dependence on Basil's work, as well as the possibility of reading the work as an 'attack on Manicheism'. Ibid., 49.

[4]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.8.30; CSEL 32-1, 29-31; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 33-34.

[5]Dudden describes Ambrose's perspective in a different manner: "Ambrose's view of the world--derived not from Cicero, but from Philo--is predominantly gloomy. The world is a sorry place. Earthly life abounds with physical and moral evils." Dudden, II, 511. The Ambrosian citation listed, *De Bono Mortis*, appears to be most curious as many 'positive' exegetical documents authored by Ambrose are not cited in this section of Dudden's work.

[6]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.6.20; CSEL 32-1, 17; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 19.

elements, such as water and earth, were placed below them.[7]

These elements are transient and finite: "God created first, therefore, heaven and earth, but He did not will them to be perpetual; rather, they subserve the final end of our corruptible nature."[8] The elements are interdependent:

> These would have it, then, that first the four elements were generated by the Lord our God--that is, heaven, earth, sea, and air--for the reason that fire and air are the causes of things, while earth and water furnish the material from which are derived the beauty and form of the world.[9]

This interactive character of the elements form the world and possess beauty. The Latin *elementa* indicates 'agreement' and 'harmony'.[10] The elements share specific characteristics:

> If we should desire to make a test of these elements with our bodily senses we find that their qualities exist in a certain combination. For example, we discover earth to be dry and cold; water, cold and humid; air, warm and humid; fire, warm and dry. Thus, each and every one of the elements is bound together by qualities shared in common with some other element.[11]

Ambrose rejects the notion of a fifth element. Speculation on a theory which supports a fifth element as the soul's substance cannot be warranted:[12]

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[7]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.6.23; CSEL 32-1, 398; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 424.

[8]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.8.28; CSEL 32-1, 26; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 30.

[9]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.8.30; CSEL 32-1, 29; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 33.

[10]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.4.18; CSEL 32-1, 72; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 81.

[11]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.4.18; CSEL 32-1, 71-72; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 81.

[12]Savon comments: l'âme, loin de n'être qu'une réaction accidentelle ou l'occasion d'un développement édifiant saisie un peu à l'aventure, semble bien exprimer une attitude intellectuelle caractéristique de l'évêque de Milan. Hervé Savon: Chapitre IV: La religion cosmique [De Abraham II] section IX. L'âme est-elle immortelle? *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon Le Juif*, 194. For a complete discussion see: Chapitre IV: La religion cosmique [De Abraham II], 141-195; especially, "Le cinquième corps.", section VIII, 178-185 and "L'âme est-elle immortelle?", section IX, 185-195.

> They labor to no purpose who, in order to claim perpetuity for the heavens, have thought it best to introduce the so-called fifth ethereal body, although they can see, as well as I can, that, if an entirely dissimilar part is attached to a body, it usually gives that body a defect rather than otherwise.[13]

Four elements form the world. No more are needed. Thus the elements are ordered, limited and reciprocal. They also possess beauty and harmony. These elements, including the body's constitutency, are not mere abstractions. The properties are characterized by beauty, form and colour.

Ambrose believes the human body is at once both macrocosm and microcosm: "First, let us make note of the fact that the body of man is constructed like the world itself."[14] The body is fashioned of clay[15] composed of the elements: "For what is so unlike fire and water, air and earth, of which the creature that is our body consists?"[16] These very elements can also be described in patterns manifested among all things of the cosmos. Their constituency reveals the resplendent brillance of a visible world: "Now blue is like the air we breathe and draw in;

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[13]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.6.24; CSEL 32-1, 23; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 25. See section, 1.6.23-24; CSEL 32-1, 21-23, for Ambrose's complete discussion of the fifth nature of a new body.

[14]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.55; CSEL 32-1, 246; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 268. F. Bottomley cites the importance of this imagery: "To my knowledge, this is the first occurrence in Western thought of the ideas of the microcosm and macrocosm, twin notions which were to have a long [and fruitful] history." Frank Bottomley, *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom*, 190-191.

[15]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 12.54; CSEL 32-1, 312; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 333. Savage translates "de limo factus est, terra ei mater est, coruptibilibus inuolutus est." as "He [man] was made of slime, earth is his mother, and he is involved in things corruptible." ; 'de limo' may be translated as mud or clay. See also *De Noe* 86; *Ep.* 72.19; *Expos. Ps CXVIII* 10.10, 10.15, 10.18.

[16]Ambros. *De Isaac* 7.59; CSEL 32-1, 638; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 48.

purple, again, represents the appearance of water; scarlet signifies fire; and white linen, earth, for its origin is in the earth. Of these four elements, again, the human body is composed."[17]

Beyond the brilliance of the elemental characteristics, the body, too, shares the attributes of the four humors: "We are a composite of the diverse elements mixed together, cold with hot, and moist with dry."[18] Ambrose's emphasis on these points may seem excessive. The notion of body-soul *mixture* is an important feature of anthropological deliberations. Classical thought's emphasis on the mind's superiority carried with it many implications.[19] By emphasizing the Christian values, implicit in the doctrines of Incarnation and Resurrection, Ambrose maintains the merit of created matter.[20]

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[17]Ambros. *De Fide* 2. Prol. 12, CSEL 73-8, 61-62; trans. by H. de Romestin, NPNF Series 2, 225; see also Ambros. *De Virginibus* 3.21; trans. by H. de Romestin, NPNF Series 2, 384. De Romestin comments on the meaning of these hues: ["These colours entered into the fashioning of the High Priest's Ephod {Ex. xxviii. 5,6} and the Vail of the Tabernacle. Probably a little symbolism was attached to the ornaments of Ahasuerus' palace at Susa, "where were white, green, and blue" {or violet} "hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble." White and green might represent the earth, blue the air, purple the sea and water generally, in the curtains: whilst in the variegated marble pavement, red would naturally symbolize fire, blue the air, white water {as colourless when pure}, black earth {the soil}. Notice "the air we breathe," etc--"Aëris quem spiramus et cujus carpimus flatum." Compare Virgil *Aen.* I.387,388.] Ibid., footnote 3, 225.

[18]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.6; CSEL 32-1, 381; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 405.

[19]Miles supports this opinion by identifying some implications of such beliefs: "Classical thought valued the mind with the result that the body, the denied or repressed component, was left to "return" negatively and regressively in such cultural phenomena as the popular demand for entertainment featuring sex and violence--the symptom in every age of inadequate integration of the body--and the astonishing social wastefulness of slavery." Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 2.

[20]Miles relates the significance of these differences in thought: " The classical model of the human person is that of a mixture of the soul and the body; its method of description and ethical actions is analysis and hierarchical evaluation of these components. The Christian model, on the other hand, is that of a unity; its method is relative valuation, or ordering, of the members

The human body is like all of the cosmos. But the human being, as a whole, is unlike the rest of creation. Ambrose describes the human constitution in a Pauline manner: "Each and every man is first of all corporeal; secondly, he is of a sensual nature; and thirdly, he is spiritual in that he is carried to the third heaven to behold the brilliance of spiritual grace."[21] This trichotomy is indeed marvellous and complex.[22] Ambrose does not suggest a triplicate human nature of body and two souls; rather, these parts correspond to his use of the tripartite perspective of body *[corpus]*, soul *[anima]* and spirit *[spiritus]*. He faces the perennial challenge of articulating the relationship between the body and soul.

He uses the spirit *[animus]* as the principle of thinking and willing. This substance, as the masculine part, governs the soul *[anima]*, the principle of feeling and desiring. The sensuous, as the feminine part, is the connecting means between the spirit and the body. Although distinguished as two parts, together they do represent the soul as a unity over the body.[23] The body without an animating principle is dead. The sensual and spiritual principles

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of the unity. In Christian thought the body achieves a radically new significance, not only explicitly in the doctrines of the Incarnation and the resurrection of the body, but implicitly as a metaphor for the Church. The idea of mixture was deeply troubling both to classical [Stoic and Neoplatonic] and to dualist [Gnostic-Manichean] thought. It described an experience of contamination of the higher by the lower elements." Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 2.

[21]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 11.53; CSEL 32-1, 310; trans. by Savage FC 42, 331.

[22]Ambros. *De Noe* 10.31-33; CSEL 32-1, 432-434. In this document, Ambrose explains the trichotomy of human nature as: *animal vivum*, *mortale* and *rationale*. Dudden states: "As regards man's constitution, Ambrose adopts the trichotomy derived from Plato--spirit, soul, and body.[Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.6; *De Instit. Virginis*, 14.] This does not, of course, imply that man has two souls [Ambros. *Ep*.33.2.]; it merely distinguishes two parts of the soul--a rational and an irrational part. [Ambros. *De Abraham* 1.4; 2.2.57.]." Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 505-506.

[23]See Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 505-506.

require the physical body to exist in the physical world.[24]

The 'corporeal' part of human nature is the visible, finite body. As stated earlier, it is characterized by the elements of the cosmos and possesses beauty:

> But something must be said on the subject of the human body. Who can deny that it excels all things in grace and beauty? Although it seems in substance to be one and the same with all earthly things, certain wild animals have superiority in strength and size. Yet the form of the human body, by reason of its erectness and stature, is such that is lacks massive hugeness as well as abject lowliness. Moreover, the very appearance of the body is gentle and pleasing without those extremes of size and of insignificance which might lead either to dread or to indifference.[25]

The excellence and the harmony of the body are evident. The gracefulness and beauty are real.

Early in his career he suggests a means of expressing the relationship between the body and the soul as the basic constituents of human nature. The ancient Stoic monism numbered eight parts or faculties of the soul *[pneuma]*.[26] The Middle Stoa had adapted the notion

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[24]Cf., Pettersen's studies on Athanasius's thought: "The body is then seen as the physical prerequisite to a whole existence; it is that part of a person in and through which he or she lives and acts in this physical world." Alvyn Pettersen, *Athanasius and the Human Body* [Bristol: The Bristol Press, 1990], 6.

[25]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.54; CSEL 32-1, 246; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 268.

[26]Although Dudden cites the strong Platonic influence within the Ambrosian works, there is evidence to support Stoic thought within the deliberations of senses: "The human *pneuma* directs all the activates of the mind and body through the faculties of the soul. The ancient Stoics numbered eight parts or faculties of the soul: The five senses, speech, procreation, and the *hegemonikon* or directive *logos*. It is important to note that a mind-body split is inconceivable in this psychology, since one and the same force directs the physical senses and the cognitive and intellectual processes. Strictly speaking, there are no irrational faculties in man. . . . Considering the centrality of psychological monism to the Stoic system of ethics, it may be surprising to learn that this doctrine was rejected by members of the middle Stoa and by some of the Roman Stoics as well." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 28.

whereby the soul directs the mind and the body through infrarational faculties.[27]

Ambrose modifies this concept, in an appropriate fashion, to serve his Christian aims. He transforms the faculties into seven bodily gifts and describes the human being's sensual nature as:

> Besides the five bodily senses, man has the power of speech and the ability to propagate. He also has an eighth power, the power of reason. The other powers are subject to death unless they are subject to the control of reason. Wherefore, the man who is without reason in exercising these faculties incurs danger to himself. A loss of reason, therefore, brings with it an ineffectual use of these seven bodily gifts. They have no efficacy without the saving bonds of reason.[28]

In addition to the basic bodily senses, this anthropological perspective, in which the soul [*anima*] is examined as infrarational faculties or powers, provides a means of articulating the relationship between the body and the soul.[29] As the first seven powers are subject to the control of reason, some characteristics of the *animus*, and all the characteristics of the *anima* are seen in relationship to the body.

Ambrose claims the individual who does not exercise 'saving' reason in these

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[27]Citing the changes of Panaetius and Posidonius, Colish detects the influences of Platonic and Aristotelian teachings on the middle Stoics. Colish suggests two possibilities for these adaptations: "One is the idea that they taught the existence of irrational faculties in man simply because this way was a conclusion which squared with their own personal observation. The second is that they adopted psychological dualism as a means of defending certain ethical doctrines of the Stoa, wishing in particular to account more convincingly for the origin of the passions than the ancient Stoics had been able to do and to elaborate a more gradualistic approach to the development of virtue. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 28-29.

[28]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.34; CSEL 32-1, 406; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 433.

[29]Wolfson's philosophical analysis and philological summary appraise these "internal senses" or "postsensational" faculties as complimentary to the physical body's senses. He traces the notion usage from Aristotle to Augustine, Gregory the Great and Erigena. Harry A. Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophical Texts." *Harvard Theological Review*, 28 [April, 1935]: 69-133.

infrarational faculties incurs risk: "A loss of reason, therefore brings with it an ineffectual use of these seven bodily gifts."[30] Ambrose describes the ability of reason and the intellect in a variety of ways.[31] He identifies the faculty of perception as: ". . .the most congenial aid to the work of our minds. Except for our intellect [*nous*] the mind has been unable to find another faculty so like itself."[32] The human being has the 'power of discernment' by the 'application of sober logic' to form a judgment; the human mind is superior to all creatures: "God surely has given you a sense of perception, whereby you can know things in general and can form a judgment about them."[33]

Human nature is also capable of experiencing emotions. Following Pauline persuasion, Ambrose writes: "The Apostle had spoken of the offspring of the better sort, that is, all that is associated with and is capable of reasoning. To this category he now added those of the

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[30]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.34; CSEL 32-1, 406; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 433.

[31]Dudden classifies Ambrose's thoughts on the soul by distinguishing two parts, the rational and irrational: "The former, called *spiritus*, *mens*, or *animus*, is the principle of thinking and willing; the latter, called the *anima irrationabilis* or simply *anima*, is the principle of feeling and desiring [Ambros. *De Cain* 1.41; *De Noe* 92; *De Abraham* 2.2; *De Officiis* 1.98,227]. The former is the 'substance' and 'strength' and 'ruling principle' of the soul [Ambros. *De Noe* 92; *De Bono Mortis* 44; *Ep*. 43.14]--the masculine element whose function is to govern the feminine or sensuous element [Ambros. *De Abraham* 2.84; *De Cain* 2.8; *Ep*. 45.17]. The latter is the connecting medium between the spirit and the body [Ambros. *Ep*. 66.8,9]; and it is also the agency whereby the spirit is corrupted and drawn to the pursuit of carnal things [Ambros. *De Isaac* 5; *Ep*. 45.17]. While, however, the two parts of the soul are thus exactly distinguished, the soul itself is represented as a unity, over against the body." Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 506. This description comes close to depicting Ambrose's thought as a tripartite conception of the soul as reason, will, and appetite.

[32]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 11.51; CSEL 32-1, 308; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 330.

[33]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 11.52; CSEL 32-1, 309; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 330.

common crowd whose concern is with what might be callad[sic] perceptions of a lowlier kind.[34]

For Ambrose, the perceptions of a 'lowlier kind' are associated with emotions. The human being is capable of experiencing two types of emotions:

> We see, therefore, that man is governed by two sorts of emotion, one that is under control and the other uncontrollable. In the latter case man rushes headlong, carried away by his animal nature, which itself lacks stability and co-ordination, into physical pleasures which are devoid of reason. In the former instance man's emotions are disciplined, subject, as it were, to the guidance and moderating influence of a leader. Whenever man's nature is under control, there it shows itself to be masculine and perfect.[35]

The gender-coupled understanding of masculine and feminine characteristics is associated with the Platonic philosophy as mediated by Philonic thought: "The latter [the figure of the woman for the emotions of the mind and heart] is called by the Greeks *aisthêsis*. According to this theory, when the senses are deceived, the mind, which the Greeks call *nous*, falls into error."[36] Ambrose continues with Philonic support: "Hence, not without reason the author to whom I refer accepts the Greek word *nous* as a figure of a man and *aisthêsis* as that of a woman."[37] He also uses the Philonic masculine-feminine characteristics associated with the virtue-vice theme.[38]

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[34]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.3; CSEL 32-1, 379; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 402.

[35]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.4; CSEL 32-1, 380; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 403-404.

[36]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 2.11; CSEL 32-1, 271; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 293.

[37]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 2.11; CSEL 32-1, 271; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 293-294. Cf. Philo, *De opificio mundi* 59; *Legum allegoriae* I 29. See also Richard A. Baer, Jr., "Man's Lower Nature: The Realm of Male and Female," in *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* [Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1970], 35-44.

[38]The characteristics of the soul are: "Some of these conceptions are associated with the female sex, such as malice of thought, petulance, sensuality, self-indulgence, immodesty, and other vices of that nature which tend to enervate the traits associated with what is distinctively masculine. These last are the virtues of chastity, patience, wisdom, temperance, fortitiude, and justice, which make it possible for minds and bodies to struggle with zeal and confidence in our

In addition, following Philonic imagery of the 'two-fold birth' of the soul, Ambrose relates the two women theme, the 'mystery' of the cohabitation of 'Pleasure-Virtue'.[39] This relationship of passions and virtue within Ambrosian thought is, at best, complicated.[40]

It is with the discipline of the mind that the senses are controlled. But these same emotions are part of human nature:

> It is clear, therefore, that those emotions which are in accordance with the law of the mind emanate from God's goodness, whereas all other emotions are dominated by the body. [5] Those emotions, therefore which are morally good are the first-fruits of our senses, whereas the others are of common and indifferent stock.[41]

Ambrose classifies and differentiates between the emotions which he considers to be those of the 'first-fruits'. Following Pauline thought, he says: "But these [pleasure and delights of the flesh] are not the first-fruits of this body of ours. Since we are composed of soul and body and spirit, the first place is held by that admixture in which the Apostle desires that we find sanctification

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pursuit of virtue." Ambros. *De Cain* 1.10.47; CSEL 32-1, 376-377; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 400. See Philo, *De sacr.* 31. 183, 23, 31.

[39]Ambros. *De Cain* 1.4.13; CSEL 32-1, 348; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 369-370. See Philo, *De sacr.* 5.167, 11, 22, 28.

[40]Colish remarks: "First, he[Ambrose] sees the passions, which it is reason's task to subjugate, as natural, a notion deriving from Platonic and Aristotelian anthropology. On the other hand, he offers no suggestion as to how the passions actually can contribute to virtue under reason's guidance, an approach that indicates his affinities with the Neoplatonic view of the body as a prison in which the soul is incarcerated and from which it must be freed by reason. Second, Ambrose maintains that reason is not autonomous in man and that it must be informed by the divine law in order to know why and how to check the passions. . . .Ambrose omits entirely the category of judgment as the origin of the passions. With the Platonists and Aristotelians, with the middle Stoics and Cicero, he roots them in man's subrational nature. He also subdivides and coordinates them in his own way. . . .The distinction, once more shows his rejection of the monistic psychology of the Stoa and his preference for a more hierarchical view of the human constitution." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 55-56.

[41]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.4-5; CSEL 32-1, 380; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 403-404.

[1 Thess. 5.23.]".[42]

Reiterating the relationship of behaviours associated with the sanctification of the soul, body and spirit, Ambrose distinguishes between 'fruits' of human endeavour:

> The first-fruit of this admixture are[sic] those of the spirit, that is to say, the creative and generating thoughts that emanate from the the soul in its vigor. Only those thoughts are first-fruits which are devoid of malice and wickedness and all kinds of wrong-doing. There are, of course, certain bodily pleasures which are necessary. These are the pleasures of eating, sleeping, drinking, walking, and like functional processes. These, however, are not in the category of first-fruits. The Lord has put His stamp of approval not on these, but on the others which we have mentioned, those thoughts and actions which imply chastity, piety, faith, and devotion.[43]

He associates the two components consistent with his understanding of human nature as soul and body: the spirit's 'first-fruits', which are life giving thoughts such as chastity, piety, faith and devotion versus those thoughts such as malice, wickedness and wrong doing which are devoid of the spirit's 'first-fruits'; and secondly, he appears to classify the bodily pleasures and the functional processes as part of temporal nature.

It is in his consideration of the Stoic mandate, 'know thyself'[44] that he clarifies this complex relationship.[45] He strives to balance the primary constituency of the human as body

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[42]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.5; CSEL 32-1, 381; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 405.

[43]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.1.6; CSEL 32-1, 381-382; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 405-406.

[44]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.42; CSEL 32-1, 233; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 255.

[45]Colish assesses Ambrose's 'most salient inconsistency': "Here Ambrose wavers between the early Stoic identification of reason and virtue with nature, with its correlative view of the passions as contrary to nature, and the Platonic , Aristotelian, middle Stoic and Ciceronian conception of the passions as natural but as subject to the rule of reason if they are to lead to virtue. He does not see the problem involved in using nature simultaneously in both senses, although this enables him to invoke nature as an ethical norm while at the same time instructing one natural faculty to repress another. Completely absent from Ambrose's analysis is the Stoic idea of *eupatheia*, which might have provided at least a partial solution to the dilemma."

and soul. Both are created by God who can create no wickedness. Ambrose struggles to resolve the issue by using the superiority of the spirit and mind over the body as a means of establishing the human essence as that of soul and mind.[46] Ambrose uses this qualified dualism of body and soul to express these same features of human life.[47] He distinguishes the essence of humanity:

> 'Attend to thyself alone,' says Scripture. In fact, we must distinguish between 'ourselves,' 'ours,' and 'what surrounds us.' 'Ourselves' refers to body and soul. 'Ours' are the members of our bodies and our senses. 'What surrounds us' consists of our money, our slaves, and all that belongs to this life. 'Attend to thyself,' therefore, 'know thyself,' that is to say--not what muscular arms you have, not how strong you are physically, or how many possessions or power you have. Attend, rather, to your soul and mind, whence all our deliberations emanate and to which the profit of your works is referred.[48]

The Stoic mandate 'know thyself' is now used with the classical form of *nos-vos*.[49] Ambrose adapts both forms to serve his belief that the human being's essence resides in the superior or higher part of human nature. The Christian mandate is to know the true 'self', that is, the soul

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Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 65-66.

[46]Pettersen comments on Athanasius' struggle: "Alongside this soul, seemingly divine by nature, is Athanasius' understanding of the body, created *ex nihilo*, and so naturally on the creaturely side of the ontological gulf between God and creation. If the *Contra Gentes* does give this anthropological picture, the body of a man is *naturally* inferior to his soul, in the same way that creation is inferior to God." Pettersen, *Athanasius and the Human Body*, 9.

[47]Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucum* 2.9; CSEL 32-4, 45-46: Cf. *De Noe* 8.24-26; CSEL 32-1, 428-430: *De Isaac* 2.4-5; CSEL 32-1, 644-645: *De Bono Mortis* 8.64-79; CSEL 32-1, 687-700: *Expos. Ps.CXVIII* 10.18; CSEL 62, 214.

[48]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.42; CSEL 32-1, 233; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 255.

[49]Solignac comments on this hexameral passage: ". . . ensuite, partant de cette idée que *anima* et *mens* sont nous-mêmes, et le corps seulement *nostrum*, il affirme que l'âme seule est faite à l'image de Dieu;" Aimé Solignac, "Image et ressemblance," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* [Paris: Beauchesne, 1970]: II.B.5, col. 1417.

which carries the *imago dei* in human nature.[50]

For Ambrose, the soul is most complex, yet most simple. He dismisses the Origenistic theory of pre-existence which would deny the unity of the human being.[51] He rejects the Traducian theory of Tertullian[52] which would link the transmission of the soul exclusively to the procreative human act.[53] He spurns the very question of memepsychosis as the human soul is created in the image of God.[54] Ambrose views the soul as immediately created by God and 'inspired' or 'infused' into the body as the animating principle.[55] In an address to the soul, he states:

> Be fully aware, O beautiful soul, of the fact that you are the image of God. And, man, be aware that you are the glory of God. Hear the words of the

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[50]Ambrose's use of Platonic anthropology is evident: "He [Ambrose] accepts the infrarational faculties in man as ethically relevant in order to support the positive value of bodily goods. Ambrose's aim in rejecting the monistic psychology of the early Stoa is to underscore the distinction between the body and the soul, as a means of elevating the soul over the body in the light of the soul's eternal destiny. In effect he uses a Platonic and Neoplatonic anthropology against the Stoa in the service of Christian ends." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 69.

[51]Ambros. *Expos. Ps CXVIII* 9.13; CSEL 62, 196. See Dudden, vol. II, 507.

[52]Tertullian, *De anima*, chaps. 23-41.

[53]Ambros. *Ep.* 28.10; CSEL 82-1, 190-191; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 14, 73. All subsequent translations are cited from: *Saint Ambrose: Letters*, trans. Sister Mary Melchior Beyenka. The Fathers of the Church, ed.Roy Joseph Deferrari. vol. 26 [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1954; reprinted with corrections, 1967; reprinted, 1987: page references are to 1987 reprint edition].

[54]Courcelle writes: "For the human soul, created in the image of God and destined to have dominion over the animal, could not possibly, in as much as it was rational, be transformed into an animal. It was really the view of Porphyry and the later Neoplatonists, too, that St. Ambrose was condemning." Pierre Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism," in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century ed. A Momigliano* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964], 163.

[55]See Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 506-507.

> Prophet on the question of glory: 'Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me.'[Ps. 136,6.] That is to say, in my work your majesty, O God, has become more wonderful; in the counsels of men Your wisdom is exalted. When I contemplate myself such as I am known to You in my secret thoughts and deepest emotions, the mysteries of Your knowledge are disclosed to me.[56]

In this poem, Ambrose characterized the soul with beauty, glory and the image of God whose wisdom, knowledge and mysteries can be discerned through contemplation of human reason and awareness. The intensity of this relationship is extraordinary, as the Word of God penetrates all things: "It is strong, and keen, keener than any sword extending even to the division of the soul and spirit, of joints, also, and of marrow, a discerner of the thoughts of all. [Cf. Heb. 4.12.]"[57]

Ambrose contrasts the soul with the elements of the world and describes the soul in glowing imagery:

> She [the soul] is praised, moreover, because she is faithful and strong in speech, prolific in diverse fruits, like the one dove [Cf. Cant.6.8-9.] having unity of spirit, in whom there is peace, who has made both one [Cf. Eph. 2.14.] and who is not composed of unlike elements of a separate and contending nature. For what is so unlike as fire and water, air and earth, of which the creature that is our body consists? . . .Therefore such a soul is a dove and is perfected, that is, sincere and spiritual and not disturbed by the passions of the body, in which there are "conflicts without and anxieties within."[2 Cor. 7.5.][58]

Unlike the body which participates in the elements of the world, the soul soars freely. It is fruitful, perfected, sincere and spiritual. This mystical imagery of the dove supports the perspective of the soul's flight after death.

For, the human body is finite and subject to death: "Death consists in the severance of

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[56]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.50; CSEL 32-1, 241; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 263.

[57]Ambros. *De Cain* 1.8.32; CSEL 32-1, 367; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 389.

[58]Ambros. *De Isaac* 7.59; CSEL 32-1, 683; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 48-49.

the body from the soul and is at the same time the termination of our life here."[59] The unity of the body and soul is underscored with this termination for there is judgment beyond: "When the soul is released from the body and has reached a terminus of this life, there is still the dubious problem of the judgment to come. What is thought to be a terminus turns out to be none at all.[60] The 'enigma' of death continues with the discussion of Christian beliefs.

In summary, Ambrose weaves the 'corporeal', 'sensual' and 'spiritual' natures of human beings into an elaborate trichotomy. For him, the human body is excellent, gentle, pleasing and harmonious. The sensual nature contains eight infrarational faculties. 'The lowlier' senses have the faculty of perception and emotions. These emotions are of two types: those devoid of reason, and those disciplined by the mind. Reason has discernment, logic and judgment. The intellect or the mind relates creative, generative thoughts which emanate from the soul in its vigor. From these vibrant actions come the first fruits of devotion, and hence by inference, the second fruits of bodily functional processes. The soul is the essence of human nature. It has beauty and glory, faith and strength, as well as fruitfulness. The worldly unity of the body and soul is evident at death when the human body is separated from the soul.

2.2 THE STRUCTURES AND FEATURES OF THE BODY

Ambrose, dependent on medical philosophical sources and Christian authors, principally Basil of Caesarea,[61] pronounces his understanding of the sturctures and functions of the human

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[59]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.35; CSEL 32-1, 406; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 434.

[60]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.2.9; CSEL 32-1, 385; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 410.

[61]See Basile de Césarée, *Homélies sur l'hexaéméron* Texte grec, introduction et traduction de Stanislas Giet, *Sources Chrétiennes 26 [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1968].*

body through the means of the literary genre, *Hexameron*. In it, he credits the goodness of the human body to its Creator's design and assigns functional and allegorical purposes to structures. The human body is always within Christian framework.

The descriptions and ascribed nature of human beings comprise some of the earliest, extant documents of Greek Classical thought. The theory and practice of medicine comprise many of the initial documents of Greek scientific literature. The content of these works reflect general observations, specific signs and symptoms of disease, various treatment modes as well as dietary management for sickness and health.[62]

Within the context of this literary and scientific heritage, Ambrose proposes his descriptions and analysis of the body. His use of the dialectic is evident in the pattern of 'like-unlike': the human being is like most creatures; but, he is also unlike or more by his position as the final or summative act of creation. Another style component, that of allegorizing the human body, is most apparent in his writings. The allegorical methods are discussed in later chapters.

Ambrose's knowledge and understanding of the human body is comprehensive and impressive. Although many of his works contain general anatomical descriptions of bodily structures and functions, his *Hexameron* is the principal resource for his writings on these subjects. The nature of this document is all the more extraordinary as it was originally preached as a homily to the Milanese during Easter Week. The use of classical, scientific data as discourse for Holy Saturday, underscores the beliefs of the man, and mandate of his ministry.

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[62]Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], 1-2.

In his introductory remarks, Ambrose invites his audience to join with him on a 'tour' of the visible creation. His preface underscores two Christian exhortations: first, "...how the Creator of the universe has conferred more abundant benefits on you than on all the rest of His creatures."; and secondly, "While you share with the rest of creatures your corporeal weakness, you possess above and beyond all other creatures a faculty of the soul which in itself has nothing in common with the rest of created things."[63] His caution is clear. The human being is a created composite of the visible and the invisible universe.

In its overall form the body is graceful and beautiful. It has erect position and pleasing proportions.[64] The head is its 'commander-in chief'[65] which is covered with hair protecting the center and source of all senses in the brain.[66] For Ambrose, the structure of the body is understood with clarity. However, the concept of function is often ascribed as functions and or purposes. The concept of physiology is basically understood as relationships among the internal activities and organs.

The uniqueness and individual features of each head displays the characteristics by which each person is known.[67] The forehead reflects the person's state of mind. The eyebrows function by protecting the eyes and offering charm to a smiling face.[68] The eyes, acting as

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[63]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.1.2; CSEL 32-1, 204; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 228.

[64]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.54; CSEL 32-1, 246; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 268.

[65]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.55; CSEL 32-1, 247; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 268.

[66]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.56; CSEL 32-1, 248; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 270.

[67]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.57; CSEL 32-1, 248; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 270.

[68]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.58; CSEL 32-1, 249; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 271.

'watch towers',[69] are the easiest sense to rouse and are located nearest to the brain which is centre of the ability to see.[70] Protected by the eyebrows and cheeks, the high position of the eyes are further circumscribed by the nose, forehead and jaw which defend and balance the face. The protected orbs of the eyes contain the pupils which are the organs of sight. Additional safety is offered by the filaments of hair which form the eyelashes.[71]

The brain is housed in the head close to the eyes and other senses of the body. The brain is the origin of the nervous system and of all sensations of voluntary movement. Agreeing with those competent in the art of medicine, Ambrose reinforces the concept of the brain as the cause of all sensory and activity.[72] The brain is also the beginning point of the arteries and natural heat which gives warmth and life to vital organs or parts. He agrees with the opinion that the brain is the starting point of the heart. He further supports the idea that the nerves serve as organs of each of the senses and proceed from the brain to perform specific functions throughout the various parts of the body.[73]

As the collecting point of all the senses, the brain is softer than the other organs. This softness allows for sensitivity of impressions which come from the more taut, hardy and efficient nervous system. From the brain, all nerves radiate and then report sensory information: that is, the images seen by the eyes, the sounds heard by the ears, the odour perceived by the nose,

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[69]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.59; CSEL 32-1, 249-250; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 271.

[70]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.55; CSEL 32-1, 247; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 269.

[71]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.60; CSEL 32-1, 252; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 272.

[72]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.61; CSEL 32-1, 252; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 273.

[73]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.61; CSEL 32-1, 252; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 273.

the sound made by the tongue and the taste experienced by the mouth.[74]

Ambrose equates the significance of hearing with nearly that of sight. Thus for him, the ears are pronounced and serve many functions. The ears are ornamental and protective against anything falling from the head. Their ampleness prevent intense sound from injuring interior structures and shelter hearing from damaging temperature extremes. The curving of the ear assists in movement, modulations and improves perceptive of sounds. Ambrose's understanding of ear wax is unique. For him, the wax functions to maintain the voice, to assist the memory and to add sensory pleasure.[75]

The nose cavity, with its two nares, slows and encourages the perceiving of odour. Thus scent or fragance remains to gratify the brain and senses. Ambrose suggests the scent may linger for an entire day. The nose allows a safe exit route for 'purgaments' or drainage from the upper regions of the head.[76] The sense of touch has its own importance. He states: "It represents the keenest sort of pleasure and gives as well an honest report of facts. Frequently, we are able to prove by touch what we cannot do with the aid of the eyes."[77]

The region of the mouth and the tongue have many functions. They give vigour to the other structures and senses. Without the ingestion of food and refreshments, the whole body is affected and thus, the senses would be diminished and unable to sustain themselves.[78]

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[74]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.61; CSEL 32-1, 251-252; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 273.

[75]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.62; CSEL 32-1, 253; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 274.

[76]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.63; CSEL 32-1, 253; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 274-275.

[77]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.65; CSEL 32-1, 253; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275.

[78]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.65; CSEL 32-1, 254; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275.

Correctly Ambrose claims that the strength of the body is maintained by absorption and restoration of sufficient food: "For that reason, those exhausted by hunger have no sensation of pleasure in the use of the senses. Not being, as it were, participants [Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.149], they have no part in the predilections of these senses."[79]

The functions of the teeth include the chewing of food and the articulation of the voice. The teeth assist with the daily and pleasurable provision of necessary nourishment. He observes that the presence or absence of teeth often give evidence that old age is approaching or has been achieved. He astutely states: "Because of the loss of teeth, really nourishing food cannot be assimilated."[80]

The tongue performs the dual functions of eating and speaking. Comparing the tongue to the hand which brings food to the teeth, the tongue operates like a 'plectrum or quill' in producing speech [Cf. Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.149].[81] Embellishing speech beyond its action of articulation, Ambrose states:

> It is carried through the void on the wings of the air which is affected by this impulsive force, at once stirrring and calming the emotions of the hearer, pacifying the angry, lifting up the down-hearted, and consoling the grief-stricken. Granted that man shares his vocal powers with the birds, there is, nevertheless, nothing in the irrational animals which can be equated with the sound of the human voice, provided, as it is, with rational powers.[82]

The functions of speech are indeed powerful. Ambrose acknowledges not only the potential but also the effect of human discourse. He further recognizes the qualitative component of its

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[79]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.65; CSEL 32-1, 254; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275.

[80]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.66; CSEL 32-1, 254; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275.

[81]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.67; CSEL 32-1, 254; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275.

[82]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.67; CSEL 32-1, 254; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275-276.

operation: "Neither the rhythm of a speech nor the tones and notes of musical science will enter into my discussion at the point."[83] As an orator and hymnist, the human voice has deep significance and meaning for Ambrose. For him, the lips articulate the words which reflect the activities of the mind: "What is the mouth of man but an avenue for discourse, a fount of disputation, a reception hall for words, a repository of the will?"[84]

The throat or neck is understood as the connection through which vital contacts and breath pass.[85] The arms and fore-arm muscles, together with the hands provide action and adaptable for holding objects by reason of their prolonged fingers: "The hand is the outpost of the entire body, as well as the defender of the head. Although it is lower in position, the hand serves to decorate and beautify the top of the head with becoming adornments."[86]

The thorax is described as the 'wicker-work' of the chest and the abdomen is characterized by the tenderness of the stomach.[87] These structures protect the internal organs and prevent injury to the intestinal folds. The relationship of the heart and lungs is portrayed as:

> What is more conducive to health than that the lungs should hold a position contiguous to the heart? When the heart flares up with anger and indignation, it can soon be moderated by the action of the blood and vapor in the lungs. Again, the lungs are tender because they are ever filled with moisture so as to offset

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[83]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.67; CSEL 32-1, 256; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 277.

[84]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.68; CSEL 32-1, 256; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 277-278.

[85]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.69; CSEL 32-1, 257; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 278.

[86]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.69; CSEL 32-1, 257; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 278

[87]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.70; CSEL 32-1, 257; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 278-279.

immediately the rigidity induced by indignation."[88]

The interrelationship of cardiopulmonary function and the effects of emotions are described briefly and succinctly to mention the obvious. Clearly Ambrose's intent was to be inclusive of all components of the body: "Our purpose is not to probe deeply like a physician nor is it our design to search into what is hidden far in the haunts of nature."[89]

The investigation of the abdominal cavity includes the relationship between the internal organs and the digestive processes. The spleen is ascribed as absorbing food and then eliminating by-products or waste. The liver passes the liquified food-stuffs through its 'fine fibers'. This matter is transformed into the blood: "This serves to produce vital strength and is not evacuated with the excrements of the body."[90] The intricate design of the intestines supports the passage of food pieces at a moderate rate thus preventing uncontrolled hunger and obsession for food. The relationship of the intestinal activity to health and illness is understood.[91] The fundamental processes of assimilation and transportation of food are vital to sustain human life. In a summative paragraph Ambrose reiterates:

> It is providentially designed, therefore, that the food be first digested in the upper ventricle and next be liquified in the exhalation of the liver. The resulting fluid is then tranfused into the the rest of the body. Our limbs are nourished by this substance, providing growth for the young and endurance for the old. The superfluous residue is carried through the intestines and finds its exit by the

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[88]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.70; CSEL 32-1, 257; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 279.

[89]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.70; CSEL 32-1, 258; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 279.

[90]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.71; CSEL 32-1, 258; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 279.

[91]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.71;CSEL 32-1, 258; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 279.

customary 'door in the side'.[92]

This overview affords a synopsis of the interconnectedness of human structures by which nutrition and elimination occur. The 'superfluous food' exits the body posteriorly from the face"...so that, when we bend over, our countenance may not be contaminated."[93] In an obtuse statement, Ambrose cautions: "At the same time, take note of the fact that the shameful parts of the body are placed there where they cannot cause us shame when they are suitably covered with clothing."[94]

Attributing pulsation to veins, he recognizes the structures as "...a messager either of infirmity or of health."[95] They are distributed throughout the body and are encased in such a manner as to be 'easily' located and 'readily' felt. The covering of flesh does not occlude their being observed.[96] In a similar fashion, bones are also covered with a 'thin coating' of flesh and are secured with tendons. Reiterating earlier comments, Ambrose mentions the top of the head has the benefit of being covered with 'thin skin' and 'thick hair' as protections against the weather.[97]

In a questioning manner, he comments on the relationship between the veins and reproductive ability: "What shall I say of the genitals, which from the veins in the region of the

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[92]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.71; CSEL 32-1, 258; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 280.

[93]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.72; CSEL 32-1, 259; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 280.

[94]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.72; CSEL 32-1, 259; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 280.

[95]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.73; CSEL 32-1, 259; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 280.

[96]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.73; CSEL 32-1, 259; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 280.

[97]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.73; CSEL 32-1, 259; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 281.

neck through the reins[sic] and loins receive the generating seed destined for the function and satisfaction of procreation?"[98] This curt statement summarizes his statements on the organs of reproduction.

The legs are adequate to bear the weight of the entire body without undue effects. The knee has and maintains particular 'flexibility'. Athough some creatures have four legs, the human being like the birds has two legs: "Hence man has kinship with the winged flock in that with his vision he aims at what is high. He flies as if on the oarage of wings by reason of the sagacity of his sublime senses."[99] The ninth homily closes with assurances of the beauty of the human being and the wonder of creation.

Ambrose has promulgated the Christian perspective by subjugating and adapting scientific knowledge and poetic Roman expressions.[100] His cosmic vision of creation and creatures are viewed through the prism of Christianity. The Milanese respond with enthusiasm.[101]

2.3 HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Greek paradigm on development is located as a theme in many Ambrosian documents. He defines the process of growth as both potential capacity and actual change.

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[98]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.73; CSEL 32-1, 259-260; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 281.

[99]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.74; CSEL 32-1, 260; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 281.

[100]See, M. D. Diederich, *Vergil in the Works of St. Ambrose* PSt 29 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1931]; and M. T. Springer *Nature Imagery in the Works of Saint Ambrose* PSt 30 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1931].

[101]See Ramsey MacMullen, "Nonreligious Factors in Conversion," chap. VI, in *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. [100-400]*, 52-73.

This change process has characteristics which are inherent, logical and sequential in the human species. Each stage has particular tasks and events of physical, social and spiritual nature. His keen interest in this paradigm can be the subject of speculation: he understands the principle of the change process within bodily, human nature and appears eager to understand the process within the spiritual dimension as well. As pastor and bishop these concepts would serve as frameworks for spiritual growth and counsel.

From his early to late works, Ambrose examines this phenomenon in his exegetical, homiletic, funeral orations and dogmatic treatises.[102] The significance of the theme may rest with Ambrose's need to identify, and possibly adapt, the physical stages of human growth for his own reasons. If the observable nature of growth patterns can be so understood, then conceivably, the nature of spiritual growth might also be demonstrated.[103] Hence, as the physical needs and activities of the human can be assessed and supported, the spiritual needs and

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[102]Émilien. Lamirande, "Les âges de l'homme selon saint Ambroise.", *Cahiers des Études anciennes*, no. XIV, 1982. Mélanges Étienne Gareau [Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1982]: 227-233. Lamirande provides an exceptional overview of this theme within the Ambrosian corpus; hereafter cited as: É. Lamirande, "Les âges de l'homme selon saint Ambroise."

[103]For an excellent overview of this theme, see: Émilien Lamirande, 'Âges de l'homme et âge spirituels selon saint Ambroise: Le commentaire du psaume 36.' *Science et Esprit*, XXX [no. 2, 1983]: 211-222. Sommaire: Ambroise ne voit pas de correspondance nécessaire entre les diverses étapes de la vie physique et celles de la vertu. La division des âges spirituels importe moins d'ailleurs que la mise en lumière du terme où ils tendent, c'est-à-dire la maturité de la foi. Si approximatifs que soient ces rapports, on peut pourtant associer enfance et faiblesse, jeunesse et bouillonnement chaotique, âge adulte et relatif équilibre. On peut aussi discerner un progrès d'ordre spirituel entre l'étape juive et l'étape chrétienne de la vie du Peuple de Dieu. Ibid., 222.

struggles can be identified and nourished.[104]

In an applied sense, Ambrose might use this concept of physical and spiritual developmental framework as teacher and preacher. He could prepare his clergy in the counselling of individuals. Thus clergy and people would benefit from a more exacting perspective relative to the individual's specific stage of growth and development. He might also, with greater clarity and assurance, counsel members of his congregation.

The rationale of this question may be tested within the pastoral context of his advice to priests. Using his resources and responding to questions, Ambrose counsels Horontianus, one of his priests. Of the nine extant letters to him,[105] four are reflections on the Ambrosian *Hexameron*. The content of these letters suggests an ongoing dialogue about the nature of the created order. This Ambrosian homily had various effects on listeners. For Horontianus, the need was to comprehend the span, changes and functions of the human being. An initial question on contemporary human conception and genesis may have stimulated this response.

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[104]For a superb development of this idea, see: Émilien Lamirande, 'Enfance et développement spirituel. Le commentaire de saint Ambroise sur saint Luc.' *Science et Esprit*, XXXV [No. 1, 1983]: 103-116. Sommaire: Les études sur le thème de l'enfance spirituelle dans l'ancienne tradition chrêtienne sont encore peu nombreuses. On s'attache ici au Commentaire de saint Ambroise sur saint Luc. L'évêque de Milan, dont on reconnaît de plus en plus l'apport dans le domaine de la spiritualité, s'arrête aux enfants privilégiés que furent Jean-Baptiste et Jésus, de même qu'aux paroles que retiennent les Évangiles sur l'enfance. Son premier réflexe est de souligner la faiblesse ou l'indigence de l'enfant et il répond ainsi d'avance à une certaine manière de privilégier l'innocence enfantine. Même s'il finit par découvrir des qualités propres à l'enfance et des concordances entre la condition de l'enfant et la grandeur spirituelle, il insiste surtout sur le dépassement de l'enfance et on ne saurait le mettre au nombre de ceux qui ont idéalisé celle-ci. Ibid., 116.

[105]J.R. Palanque, "Deux correspondents de S. Ambroise." Revue des études latines 11 [1933]: 152-163. Palanque believes all the letters to Horontianus were written in the year A.D. 387.

Ambrose delights in speaking of the intrauterine life:

> How wonderful it is that for most men their genuine beginning is formed in the seventh month [the seventh month from conception], and one who will issue forth at a later time begins the course of his life's generation. But we see that nature itself prohibits the eighth month as the season for bringing forth children; if some grave necessity perchance opens the barrier of the womb [cf.Virgil, *Aen.* 2.259] at that time, peril is advanced for the mother and child.[106]

Ambrose believes human viability occurs the seventh month after conception. Human birth at eight months gestation brings 'peril' for both mother and child. His concern for the health of the mother and fetus seems quite genuine. Within the context of the whole letter, Ambrose uses the occasion to discuss creation and the allegorical meaning and significance of the numbers six, seven and eight.

Other Ambrosian documents reveal his attitudes about reproduction and fertility. In an allegory of Sara's pregnancy [Gen.18:11], Ambrose describes the event as joyous:

> Indeed, Sara was going to bring to birth the child that God had granted and, therefore, also had promised; she was going to give birth to joy and the sober intoxication of delight; she was about to bring forth offspring earlier than the expectation [Cf. Vergil, *Georgics* 3.348.] by reason of a natural disposition to a quick labor, and she was delivered of wisdom.[107]

Jacob's safe delivery, in spite of prematurity and a quick labor, was a delightful event.

Ambrose's curiosity about human development is not limited to the genesis of life. His interest covers the entirety of lifespan. In a specific correspondence, Ambrose draws on sources[108] to identify and allegorize seven developmental stages of the human being:

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[106]Ambros. *Ep.* 31.4; CSEL 82-1, 218; trans by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 50, 266.

[107]Ambros. *De Fuga* 8.47; CSEL 32-2, 200; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 317.

[108]É. Lamirande, "Les âges de l'homme selon saint Ambroise." 230-231. Lamirande cites Ambrose's dependency on Philo [*De opificio mundi* 103-105] and Clement of Alexandria [*Stromata* VI, 144].

> The number seven should be esteemed because the life of man passes through seven stages to old age, as Hippocrates, the master of medicine, has explained in his writings. The first age is infancy; the second, boyhood; the third, youth; fourth, adulthood; fifth, manhood; sixth, maturity; seventh, old age. So there is the infant, the child, the youth, the young man, the man, the man of experience, and the aged.[109]

Citing Hippocrates' framework, Ambrose numbers the seven stages and designations of human growth and development. The pattern is repeated with the landmarks of each of the stages:

> Solon imagined that there were ten periods of life, each of seven years' duration. The first period of infancy extends to the time when he cuts his teeth, which he uses in chewing his food and articulating his speech so that it is distinct; boyhood extends to the time of puberty and carnal temptations; youth to the growth of the beard; adulthood to attaining of perfect manliness; the fifth age is manhood--during its seven-year period it is fully adapted to marriage; the sixth period, too, is assigned to manhood, which is well-suited to display prudence and is vigorous in its action; the seventh period and the eighth show man ripe in years, vigorous in his faculties, and his speech endowed with a quality of delivery not unpleasant; the ninth period still has some strength left, while in speech and wisdom it is more mellow; the tenth period of seven years completes the span, and one who reaches this period will after the full course of time finally knock at the gate of death.[110]

Solon's pattern of ten periods differs only in the number of events. To this framework Ambrose adds the developmental tasks associated with each period. In human life, there is order and sequences which can be anticipated. The human undergoes patterns of changes, each pattern with specific purposes. The concepts of order and purpose within the change process has definite meaning for Ambrose:

> Both Hippocrates and Solon admitted either seven ages or seven-year periods. In these the number seven should prevail. The eighth period introduces one continual period in which we grow up into a perfect man, knowing God, possessing the fullness of faith, wherein the measure of genuine life is fulfilled.

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[109]Ambros. *Ep.* 31.12-14; CSEL 82-1, 222-223; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 50, 269.

[110]Ambros. *Ep.* 31.12-14; CSEL 82-1, 222-223; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 50, 269-270.

[Cf. Eph. 4.13][111]

He notes the similarities of ideas of Hippocrates and Solomon and proceeds to allegorize the number seven. In addition to the sense of progressive stages, Ambrose adapts the work of Philo Judaeus,[112] and counsels Horontanius that the stages of human life can be plotted using specific, observable behaviours and activities.[113] But it is the added stage or the eighth period, which brings full life and maturity. The knowledge of God and the experience of faith appear to represent the unending period of growth.

Ambrose does use other patterns and resources to describe his understanding of human development. Although the previous passage describes seven phases, other Ambrosian writings reveal additional categories. Ambrose uses three stages,[114] four stages,[115] as well as six

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[111]Ambros. *Ep.* 31.12-14; CSEL 82-1, 222-223; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 50, 270.

[112]Beyenka cites verses 31.12-13 as strongly dependent, if not direct transmission of Philo; see, Philo Judaeus, ed. L. Cohn [Berlin 1896]. *De mundi opificio* 36.105 contains the reference to Hippocrates; 35.104 contains the reference to Solon. Beyenka, *Saint Ambrose: Letters* FC 26, no. 50, notations 33 and 34, 269. Ambrose's knowledge of this Philonic work is supported by Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 113, notation 2, for a listing of works.

[113]É. Lamirande, 'Les âges de l'homme selon saint Ambroise.', 231. Lamirande presents a list of the stages:

1er âge *infantia [infans]*	1-7 ans	1er hebdomade
2e âge pueritia [puer]	8-14 ans	2e hebdomade
3e âge *adulescentia [adulencens]*	15-21 ans	3e hebdomade
4e âge *iuuentus [iuuenis]*	22-28 ans	4e hebdomade
5e âge *aetas uirilis [uir]*	29-42 ans	5e hebdomade
6e âge *aeui maturitas [ueteranus]*	43-56 ans	6e hebdomade
7e âge *senectus [senes]*	57-70 ans	7e hebdomade

"Ambroise retient même l'idée que le cinquième âge est le plus apte au mariage et á la procréation." *Ibid.*, footnote 42, 231. Nous avons montré ailleurs qu'Ambroise a vraisemblablement emprunté sa division à son collègue Basile de Césarée.

[114]Ambros. *De Virginibus* 1, 5; éd. Cazzaniga, 5; Ambros. *Ep.* 16.5; CSEL 82-1, 116; and Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.4.56; CSEL 32-1, 247-248. Lamirande attributes Ambrose's dependency on the works of Seneca [*Epist.* 121. 16], Cicero [*Cato maior* 2.4] and Basil of Caesarea [*Hom.*

stages,[116] to describe the maturation and span of human life.

Human generation is intermingled with the stages, functions and roles of each period. Ambrose orders his thoughts on procreative acts by framing human developmental stages and examples from nature. His complex commentary includes the developmental phases of human sexual activity and the ensuing tasks of parenting. Thus, generative actions are placed within certain phases of human life when the male or the female is within reproductive years.

> Youths generally assert the desire of having children and think to excuse the heat of their age by the desire for generation. How much more shameful for the old to do what is shameful for the young to confess. For even the young who temper their hearts to prudence by divine fear, generally renounce the works of youth when progeny have been received. And is this remarkable for man, if beasts mutely speak a zeal for generating, not a desire for copulating? Indeed, once they know the womb is filled, and the seed received by the generative soil, they no longer indulge in intercourse, or the wantonness of love, but they take up parental care.[117]

Combining the Stoic tradition on procreative purposes with his Christian conviction on fertility and embryonic growth, Ambrose's reproach is unequivocal: avoid sexual activity when the female is pregnant so uterine sanctity is preserved and God is not aggravated.

Ambrose's caution, to men about their restless and casual sexual acts, carries with it a strong warning about the possibility of 'sterility'. Drawing on the elements and creatures of nature, Ambrose reiterates his opinion on the meaning of sexual intercourse within the life cycle

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de hominis origine 1.13] respectively.

[115]Ambros. *De Cain* 1.3.11; CSEL 32-1, 346-347; Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucum* 1.43; SC 45, 68-69; and, Ambros. *De Abraham* 2.9.66; CSEL 32-1, 620.

[116]Ambros. *En. Ps.I* 9; CSEL 65, 8.

[117]Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucam.* 1, 43-45; CSEL 32-4, 38-39; trans. by Noonan, *Contraception*, 79.

of human beings.

> Yet men spare neither the embryo nor God. They contaminate the former and exasperate the latter, "Before I formed you in the womb," He says, "I knew you and sanctified you in your mother's womb." To control your impatience, note the hands of your Author forming a man in the womb. He is at work, and you stain with lust the secret of the sacred womb? Imitate the beast or fear God. Why do I speak of beasts? The land itself often rests from the work of generating, and if it is often filled with the seeds thrown by the impatient eagerness of men, it repays the shamelessness of the farmer and changes fertility to sterility. So even in the elements and the beasts it is a shame to nature not to cease from generating.[118]

Comparing animals and the earth with human behaviour, Ambrose reprimands human creatures for copulating when the woman is pregnant.[119] If an incentive is needed to follow this mandate, he suggests the individual emulate the beasts, or at least, dread God. The Roman imagery of land and sowing would be clearly understood.

In this passage, he replaces the classical understanding of conception and fetal development with the passage of Isaiah 49:1, with God as the Author and sustainer of intrauterine life. The profoundly religious and poetic imagery of Isaiah now competes with the theories of Aristotle's primacy of male seed, Stoicism's 'pneuma' and Soranus' agricultural or sowing allusions.[120] From conception to death, God remains the creator and author of life.

Ambrose's thought on human life in general, and conception, developmental stages and

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[118]Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucam.* 1, 43-45; CSEL 32-4, 38-39; trans. by J. T. *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* Enlarged ed. [Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1986], 79. Noonan adds: "Ambrose uses 'senex' for old. *Senex* usually means over forty, but can mean over fifty, when contrasted with *juvenis* or *adolescens* by Latin authors. Noonan, *Contraception*, footnote number 22, 79.

[119]Noonan summarizes the adoption of the Stoic rule by early Christian writers and councils; see Noonan, *Contraception*, 76-81.

[120]For a concise summary of the theories of classical biology and ensoulment, see Noonan, *Contraception*, 88-91.

aging in specific, are most positive. Human life is God given, logically ordered as a process of changing and developmentally sequenced with specific roles and tasks. All human forms of growth are to be valued.

The aging process is part of creation: "Nature has old age and illness which serve as so many impediments to our lives. But old age becomes sweeter and more useful by its wise counsels and characters."[121] In addition, old age serves a purpose: "It becomes more ready to face inevitable death with constancy and becomes more heroic in quelling lusts of flesh [Cf. Cicero, *De senectute* 14.47]. Infirmity of the body, too, is conducive to sobriety of the mind."[122]

Ambrose, keenly aware of his own aging, views this stage as period of opportunity: "But I am not ashamed to be converted in my old age along with the whole world. Surely it is true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age feel shame which cannot rectify itself. It is not the old age of years which is entitled to praise, but that of character."[123] Within the context of the letter to Emperor Valentinian, Ambrose marshalls his arguments against the restoration of the Altar of Victory [Autumn, A.D. 384]. The aging and passing of this period of Roman history contrasts sharply with the aging of human beings. It is in self-awareness, learning and developing character that the merit of aging rests.

Ambrose believes the experience of aging should have some benefits or at least, some

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[121]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.8.31; CSEL 32-1, 32; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 35.

[122]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.8.31; CSEL 32-1, 32; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 35-36.

[123]Ambros. *Ep.* 73.7; CSEL 82-3, 37; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 8, 40.

respite: "Old age ought to be the harbor after one's earlier life, not the shipwreck of it."[124] His references to old age and aging occur often enough to support an independent study on this topic.

For Ambrose, the subject of death is a complex issue and major theme. He is influenced by many sources and describes the phenomenon in assorted ways. Only one aspect, physical death, is presented now. The topic continues in chapter seven of this work. Ambrose's deliberations on the experiences of loss within life are strongly influenced by Paul. Ambrose expresses himself in a lengthy syllogism,[125] and attempts to deal with the 'contradictory ideas' of life and death. Using four categories of: 'to live in life', 'to die in death', 'to die in life', and 'to live in death', he extends the meanings of death within temporal and eternal existence. He summarizes a most lengthy reflection with: "You see how the word 'death' is subject to manifold interpretation, but that this life here is ours to contend with."[126] This complex passage is rich with Philonic and Pauline influences and is deserving of research in its own right. The immediacy of this life informs the focus of human struggle.

Ambrose knows death as a separation of the body from the soul. This event does not hold a threat:

> With the coming of death, man's bodily sufferings are ready to cease, not to increase. The fears, in fact, which frequently haunt us in this present life--the griefs, pains, lamentations, and tortures of varied sort, the mutilations provoked by exposure to illness and disease--all these for mankind are more often the equivalent of death. Death under such circumstances truly appears to be a mercy,

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[124]Ambros. *De Iacob* 2.10.44; CSEL 32-2, 60; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 175.

[125]For a discussion of the five types of Stoic syllogism, see Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 53-56.

[126]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 9.42-45; CSEL 32-1, 298-303; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 320-325.

> not a penalty which has the character of finality. By a sentence such as this our life is not taken away. We experience a life that is far better.[127]

A pessimism or weariness of life, may be interpreted from this passage. The 'fears', persistence of acute or chronic suffering, inflictions of intractable physical, or emotional pain, and mutilations exact a cost within a lifetime.

The process of departing this life occurs many times. The fragility of the human body is described in harsh terms. Simply, Ambrose counsels: "Accordingly, let us not be afraid of death, because it is rest for the body, and for the soul a freedom or separation."[128] This rest or dissolution is not permanent. He supports the credal tenets and believes in the resurrection of the body and the reunion of the separated body and soul.

His writings support and integrate, although modified on many occasions, the ideas, values and literature of classical traditions which he perceives as compatible with Christianity. For in his, and many other early Christian minds, Greek philosophy originated with Moses:

> He repeatedly attributes the Stoic and other philosophical ideas that he approves of expressly to the Bible, claiming that the Greeks borrowed them from that source. To the extent that he raises physical question in the *Hexameron* he bypasses Stoicism in favor of Neoplatonism or Aristotelianism. His anthropology is also derived from these two schools.[129]

Ambrose rejects the ancient Stoa's monism, but does adapt Middle Stoicism's doctrine involving the eight infrarational faculties and qualifies the Neoplatonic and Aristotelian dualism.

To these he adds the poetic beauty of Roman authors. He adapts Greek paradigms of developmental stages and growth to serve the teaching role of laity and clergy. He adapts the

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[127]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.35; CSEL 32-1, 406-407; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 434.

[128]Ambros. *De Isaac* 8.78; CSEL 32-1, 699; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 65.

[129]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 50.

works of others to ascribe Christian purpose and meaning to the visible presence of the human body. As one modern commentator insightfully observes:

> Nor does he reveal the slightest need to agonize or to fulminate over the relations between Athens and Jerusalem. He makes the discriminations, choices, and adjustments that he wishes to make, whether early or late, with an independent spirit and in a calm and businesslike manner. There is no indication that he views this process as a means of resolving any personal problems.[130]

This first level of interpretation reveals the human body as constituted of the 'worldly' elements and humors to the extent that all objects and beings are composed of the basic materials. All objects and beings, sharing in these same sources, follow an inherent order or law which guides structure, developmental processes and functions. These processes are purposeful in design and the purposes can be discerned by human understanding. The next level of interpretation examines Ambrose's scriptural perspective on the human body's origin and composition.

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[130]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 50-51.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BODY AS CREATED:GENESIS REVISITED

Ambrose's description of the observable, scientific nature of the human body are augmented with another level of interpretation. The second level contains Ambrose's thought on the revealed, created nature of the body and its relationship to the soul. As with most early Christian writers, his universe consists of two spheres, God and creation.[1] The ontological gulf is bridged through revelation. God is not hidden from human knowing or reasoning or experiences. Exegetical efforts disclose a God who is known and who cares. The human body and the soul are created as the apex of creation. This created nature is revealed in Biblical sources. Ambrose's exegetical method is threefold: literal explanations, historical or moral dimension, as well as allegorical meanings. The two Genesis accounts form a nucleus from which his exegetical activities are examined.

Ambrose's contribution to fourth century Latin exegetical methodology is described as positive:

> Biblical exegesis, applied primarily to the Old Testament, makes up the largest single segment of Ambrose's *oeuvre*. His most signal contribution to Biblical scholarship was his Latinization of the polysemous interpretation of the text

[1]See, Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 580-581.

> pioneered by Philo and first applied to Christian exegesis by Origen. Apart from his exegetical and controversial writings Ambrose also produced works of straightforward theological exposition.[2]

Many Ambrosian documents contain his beliefs about the cosmos and humanity's origins: "It was Ambrose, however, perhaps inspired by his acquaintance with the Cappadocians, who painted the picture in the most glowing colours."[3]

Ambrose was not the first Western Patristic writer to use allegorical exegesis. In the interpretation of Scripture, he uses three levels of meaning:

> . . .--a literal or natural meaning, a moral meaning, and a mystical or spiritual meaning [Cf.*In Ps 36 enarr.* 1.2]. Corresponding with the threefold meaning was a threefold interpretation--the literal which expounded the simple, evident import of the passage, the moral which drew out its practical teaching for the regulation of conduct, and the mystical or spiritual which brought to light the latent references to Christ, Christ's Kingdom, and the mysteries of the Christian faith.[4]

His preference is the allegorical method. His choice is purposive: "But Ambrose gave to it special importance because it enabled him to multiply *ad infinitum* edifying considerations in connection with texts, and to combat effectively the heretics with whom he happened to be dealing."[5] In correspondence with Bishop Constantius, Ambrose reveals his feelings: "Holy Scripture is a sea which has in itself deep meanings and all the mystery of prophetic riddles."[6]

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[2]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 49.

[3]J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. [London: A & C Black, 1977], 353. Hereafter cited as Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*.

[4]Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 457-458.

[5]Labriolle adds: "Was it not by this means that he made a conquest of the intelligence of Augustine who was still imbued with very many Manichaean prejudices?". Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 282.

[6]Ambros. *Ep* 2.3 as translated by Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 281, [classified as *Ep*. 36.3 in CSEL 82-2].

3.1 THE GENESIS NARRATIVES: CREATION OF THE HUMAN BEING

Creation of the first human being is placed within the context of the cosmic creation. It is within the context of a discussion of pagan Roman rites and the creation's progress,[7] that Ambrose conveys a Virgilian description of the cosmological changes which proceed human creation:

> But, he [Symmachus] says, we must keep the rites of our ancestors. What of the fact that everything has made progress later to a better condition? The world itself, which at first was composed of elements in a void, in a soft mass, hardened or was clouded with the confusion of a shapeless piece of work, did it not later receive the forms of things by which it appears beautiful when the distinction between sky, sea, and earth became set? The lands shaking off their misty shadows wondered at the sun. The day does not shine at first, but as time proceeds it is bright with an increase of light and grows warm with an increase of heat.[8] [cf. *Ecl.* 6,31]

The cosmos, alive with elemental dynamics, grows in form over time. From this beginning, the human being was created, not made, but created. The human is a creation of God and thereby is good. This Ambrosian emphasis prepares the way for an understanding of the goodness of the body and soul.

Ambrose places Adam's creation outside of Paradise.[9] Ambrose stresses created not

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[7]Ambros. *Ep* 73; CSEL 82-3, 34-53; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 8, 37-51.

[8]Ambros. *Ep* 73.23; CSEL 82-3, 47; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 8, 46-47.

[9]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 4.24; CSEL 32-1, 280; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 301.

made, but **created** by God. Adam toiled in the Garden of Eden.[10] Yet, he was a heavenly being who experienced freedom from cares and tedium.[11] Adam was accustomed to 'conversing' with God.[12] But God 'said': "It is not good for man to be alone"[Gen. 2.18.]. The creation of woman is within Paradise and from the same substance as Adam:

> Not without significance, too, is the fact that woman was made out of the rib of Adam. She was not made of the same earth with which he was formed, in order that we might realize that the physical nature of both man and woman is identical and that there was one source for the propagation of the human race. For that reason, neither was man created together with a woman, nor were two men and two women created at the beginning, but first a man and after that a woman. God willed it that human nature be established as one.[13]

Man and woman are the same nature, in that they share the same physical nature. There is no mystery or speculation about 'disparate' human natures. All human beings descend from one couple as: "He did not take a part from Adam's soul but a rib from his body, that is to say, not soul from a soul, but 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh' [Gen. 2.23.] will this woman be called."[14] Woman shares the flesh of man, but her soul is as distinct as his soul. There is a definite equality: "In such fashion, also, is the generation of men reckoned which is understood to include that of women, also."[15]

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[10]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 4.25; CSEL 32-1, 281; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 302.

[11]Ambros. *Expos. Ps.CXVIII* 15.36, 4.5; CSEL 62, ; cited by J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 353.

[12]Ambros. *En. Ps. 43.* 75; trans. by Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 353.

[13]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 10.48; CSEL 32-1, 306; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 327.

[14]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 11.50; CSEL 32-1, 307; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 328-329.

[15]Ambros. *Hexameron* 1.10.37; CSEL 32-1, 39; trans. by J. J. Savage, FC 42, 42. The reference is to the hours and length of the day and night being of equal or similar degree.

The biblical account of the Fall represents a major issue not only for early Christian writers but also for critics of Christianity.[16] Followers of Neoplatonism and late Stoicism claimed the material creation, being irrational and thus incapable of union with God, remains subject to a meaningless repetition of growth and decay. This understanding, which is opposed and inimical to the spirit's development into God, maintains the diversity between the nature and destiny of matter and spirit. The divine purpose in joining them for humanity becomes puzzling and mysterious.

In his deliberations on the meaning of the Fall and the current state of the human condition, Ambrose uses two theories: one based on the works of Philo's allegory of eating the 'fruit' which developed into an eating-fasting-mortification theme commonly found in the ascetic movement's anthropology; and a second theory involving disobedience which is associated with the Christian Neoplatonic movement and its emphasis on human reasoning and choice.

The event of Eve's temptation is recalled.[17] But it is in a text on fasting, that Ambrose uses the Genesis narrative to underscore the significance of food as an initial source of anguish within paradise. Reviewing the days of creation, he pauses at the sixth day when the beasts of the earth were created and occasioned the ability to eat and make use of foods: "When food began to exist, then the completion of the world was made. . . .And by this sign it was made

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[16]Courcelle discusses the attacks against Judaeo-Christian revelation: the stories of Genesis, the perceived disagreement and incompatibility between the Old and New Testaments, the idea of an incarnate Son of God, and the precepts of morality and asceticism. Pierre Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism," *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964], 158-161.

[17]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 5.29, 10.46-48 and 13.61-68; CSEL 32-1, 285, 304-306 and 321-326.

manifest that through food the world would necessarily be destroyed, since through this it had ceased to be increased."[18]

In addition to the Philonic theme of fasting, Ambrose maintains the theme of disobedience as an institution or 'law'. It is the disobedience of this law, by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which caused the transgression:

> The law was from the Lord God, the transgression of the law, from the devil; sin was through food, hiding after food: the knowledge of weakness was in food; the virtue of strength, in fasting. Hence as long as they fasted from forbidden things, they did not know that they were naked: after they ate of the forbidden tree, they realized that they had been made naked.[19]

The logic of the narrative is made clearer when Ambrose reiterates that appetite drove the man and the woman from paradise, and abstinence or fasting will recall them. Paraphrasing Gen.3.21-22, Ambrose chides the human's desire to 'become as one of us': "Because you have wished to be what you were not, you have ceased to be what you were. Accordingly, while you were aspiring to be above yourself, you have begun to be beneath yourself."[20] Evil is not basic to human nature: "The solution, unless I am mistaken, lies in the act that, since disobedience was the cause of death, for that very reason, not God, but man himself, was the agent of his own death."[21] Desire and pride constitute the causes of the event.

Christian thought on the meaning of these acts varied. Origen himself seems to have

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[18]Ambros. *De Helia* 4.6; CSEL 32-2, 415-416; trans. by Buck, *De Helia in PSt.* XIX, 49. English translation from: S. Ambrosii, *De Helia et ieiunio, A Commentary, with an Introduction and Translation*. Translation by Mary Joseph Aloysius Buck. Patristic Studies, Vol. XIX. [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1929].

[19]Ambros. *De Helia* 4.7; CSEL 32-2, 416-417; trans. by Buck, *De Helia in PSt.* XIX, 51.

[20]Ambros. *De Helia* 4.8; CSEL 32-2, 417; trans. by Buck, *De Helia in PSt.* XIX, 51.

[21]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 7.35; CSEL 32-1, 292; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 313.

considered it the consequence of a prior sin, though many of his disciples attempted less radical solutions. Those Christian Platonists, who affirmed that God originally created human beings as a union of body and spirit, also asserted that God subjected the appetites and desires of the body to the governance of the spirit and ordered them to its fulfilment. But the proper order within the human person was reversed. The dynamism of the spirit became the passion which serves the bodily appetites; the conflict can be fully healed only in the dissolution of the flesh in death and its reconstitution in a spiritualized form.[22]

Ambrose reflects upon two questions concerning Eve: did she fear the separation from Adam and hence offer him the 'fruit'?[23] Or, did Adam tell her what God had told him? Did Eve know what God had told Adam?[24] But Eve is forgiven or pardoned as she told the truth.[25] Eve plays an even larger role within history: "If the woman was to be the first one to sin, the fact that she was the one destined to bring forth redemption must not be excluded from the operations of Divine Providence."[26] Adam, participating in Eve's sin, brought about his

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[22]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 8-9.

[23]Ambros. *De Paradiso*, 6.33-34; CSEL 32-1, 290-292. Ambrose sets aside the question and states: "But, if what Scripture says is true, cupidity was the motive of her act." Ibid., 6.34; CSEL 32-1, 292; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 312-313.

[24]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 12.58; CSEL 32-1, 318. Ambrose resolves the question: "Scripture does not reveal the exact words that Adam used when he disclosed to her the nature and content of the command. At all events, we understand that the substance of the command was given to the woman by the man." Ibid., trans. by Savage, FC 42, 336.

[25]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 14.71; CSEL 32-1; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 329. For an evaluation of these passages, see: M. R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1988], 89-93.

[26]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 10.47; CSEL 32-1, 305; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 327. The Pauline passage, 1 Tim. 2.14., is given a superb interpretation: "Yet woman, we are told, 'will be saved by childbearing,' in the course of which she generated Christ." Ibid..

own downfall by failing to obey God's commands.[27]

In the allegorical tradition of the double creation narrative,[28] Ambrose continues with the second creation of the human:

> Therefore He first clothed him in a tunic of skin and spoke thus: '*Behold Adam*', as if He should say: 'Behold thy cloak, behold thy worthy raiment, this clothing becomes thee. They who aspire to divine things are held worthy of such adornment. Behold whither thy sin hath brought thee; behold now in this tunic of skin, thou, as if one of us, hast opened thine eyes. Look about carefully: thou seest thyself naked, whom thou thought'st clothed.'[29]

The 'tunic of skin' represents the final creation and naming of the human. The covering is a commendable and praiseworthy garment. Ambrose reinforces his Philonic based conviction in the next statement: "Accordingly appetite makes us naked, fasting covers us even when we are without clothing."[30]

The elaboration of the 'tunic of skin' is not a new covering, but rather a replacement for a prior 'garment': "Adam had been covered by a cloak of virtues before he transgressed. But uncovered, as it were, by his transgression, he saw that he was naked, because the garment which he had he had lost."[31] The process of cover-uncover-cover presents an absorbing notion when it is coupled with the garment-naked-tunic imagery.

Responding to the questions from clergy, he addresses the tensions of qualified dualism

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[27]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 6.30-34; CSEL 32-1, 290-292; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 308-313.

[28]For a remarkable edition of eight essays, see G. A. Robbins, *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in the Garden* Studies in Women and Religion, vol., 27 [Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988].

[29]Ambros. *De Helia* 4.8; CSEL 32-2, 417; trans. by Buck, *De Helia in PSt.* XIX, 51.

[30]Ambros. *De Helia* 4.9; CSEL 32-2, 417-418; trans. by Buck, *De Helia in PSt.* XIX, 51.

[31]Ambros. *De Helia* 4.9; CSEL 32-2, 417-418; trans. by Buck, *De Helia in PSt.*. XIX, 53.

within human nature. His reply conveys direct expressions about the nature of the person:

> Since man is composed of body and soul [for the present it will suffice to speak of this and not mention the spirit], he is naturally not the same in both, but what is natural to the body is contrary to the nature of the soul, and what is natural to the soul is contrary to the nature of the body, so that, if I mention what is natural to a visible object, it is contrary to the nature of what is not seen; and what is natural to what is not seen is contrary to the nature of what is seen; and what is natural to what is not seen is contrary to the nature of the visible object. It is no incongruity in the men of God if there should be some things contrary to physical nature which are in accord with the nature of the soul. [32]

Ambrose 's emphasis on the duality, and the mention of trichotomy, reaffirms his preference for identifying the physical or observable body in contrast with the unseen nature of the soul.

When asked the meaning and relevance of Paradise by a fourth century layman, Ambrose responds with the theme of Paradise within human nature. Unlike some earlier Christian authors, the human journey is not a return to Paradise, but rather an advance to Jerusalem. The subject of Paradise is timeless. Responding to Bishop Sabinus,[33] Ambrose describes his understanding of various 'opinions' on paradise. Nearly ten years have passed since his major work on this theme: "I wrote on this subject a long time ago when I was not yet an experienced bishop."[34] Citing his agreement with others' beliefs, he prefaces his views on human's place in relation to paradise by stating:

> Some hold one opinion, others another, yet all agree that in paradise [Cf. Gen. 2.9] were planted the tree of life and the tree of knowledge which distinguishes good and evil, together with other trees, full of strength, full of life-giving powers, breathing and rational creatures. Wherefore one concludes that the real paradise cannot be considered earthly, nor planted in any particular spot, but situated in the principal part of our nature, which is animated and vivified by the

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[32]Ambros. *Ep.* 69.17; CSEL 82-2, 186; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 16, 96.

[33]Ambros. *Ep.* 34; CSEL 82-1, 232-238; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 129-134.

[34]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.1; CSEL 82-1, 232; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 129.

> virtues of the soul and the infusion of the spirit of God.
>
> Moveover, Solomon, by inspiration, clearly declared that paradise is within man.[35]

This reasoning affords Ambrose ample room for further insights of human nature. The paired concepts of life and knowledge, good and evil, strength and powers, alive and rational created beings, form a basis from which he can continue to examine his knowledge of human nature's composite constitution and qualities.

Never satisfied with singular formulations, he reiterates the tensions or dual character of human nature within the framework of Christian thought:

> Therefore, paradise is in the higher part of our nature, luxuriant with the growths of many opinions, where God in the beginning put the tree of life, that is, the root of piety, for this is the very substance of our life, if we give due homage to our Lord and God.
>
> He has planted in us, too, a nursery of the knowledge of good and evil, for man alone among other living creatures of earth has the knowledge of good and evil. There are also many other plants whose fruits are virtues.[36]

The tensions of 'higher' and by consequence lower, as well as the inherent presence of good and evil, provide dynamic tautness or strain with the soul and body relationship. Created as a whole, the human being possesses distinct and potential capacities within his nature. Deep within that nature the knowledge of Paradise resides. It can be ignored but never forgotten.

This formulation, presenting God's knowledge of man's inclination towards 'cunning' rather than 'perfection of wisdom', supports a transition to an understanding of a reasoned life. Ambrose emphasizes the Author's placement of the 'zest' for life and the exercise of virtue: "So He ordered man to eat of every tree in paradise, but not of the tree of the knowledge of good

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[35]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.2; CSEL 82-1, 232-233; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 130.

[36]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.7; CSEL 82-1, 233-234; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 131.

and evil." [Cf. Gen. 3.2,3][37]

The nature of the human is not without resources. The sensory component of Adam was breathed upon by God. Ambrose speculates that the Creator performed this act to fortify all future human beings.

> Now I know why the Lord God breathed into the face of man. There is the seat and abode and enticement of lust--in the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth--[breathed there] in order to fortify our senses against such lust. These things He infused into us as the serpent did cunning. For it is not pleasure, but labor and continuous meditation, along with the grace of God, which give perfect wisdom.[38]

This extraordinary passage gives symmetry or balance to human nature. Yes, the passions and pleasures can be awakened. However, the human senses have received fortification.[39] Human actions of work and contemplation along with God's grace provides the inclination and capacity for perfection of wisdom, his true purpose.

The human's 'corporeal' nature is flesh. This flesh is the manifestation of the observable or visible part of human nature. But for Ambrose, this dimension is interactive with the other parts:

> Thus, you are not flesh alone. What is flesh without the guidance of the soul and the vigor of the mind? We put on the garment of flesh today and tomorrow it is

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[37]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.9; CSEL 82-1, 234; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 131.

[38]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.11; CSEL 82-1, 235; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 132.

[39]Pettersen assesses Athanasius' position: "Rather we should look both to an anti-Arian argument and to the contemporary philosophical contest. For, on one hand, it is clear that Athanasius sought at all costs to deny that any passions, whether physical or psychological, belong to the asomatic realm. The Arians argued that the passions endured in the Incarnation were suffered by the Logos; and they therefore concluded that the Logos was passible and creaturely. The Alexandrian bishop countered this view; he safeguarded the divinity of the Logos from this attack by referring **all** passions to the assumed body." Pettersen, *Athanasius and the Human Body*, 6-7.

> laid aside. The flesh is temporal, whereas the soul is lasting. Like a garment for the body, such is flesh for the soul. You are not, therefore, a garment, but one who puts on a garment for use. And so you are told to 'strip off the old man with his deeds and put on the new'[Col. 3,9,10.]--you who are renewed not in the quality of the body, but in the spirit and affirmation of the mind."[40]

Ambrose uses many sources for his understanding and articulation of the whole human being. Often relying on Old Testament texts and resources, he builds upon what is known. The exegetical linkage of Testaments is common within his reasoning.

Ambrose takes his argument further. His thoughts project beyond the human situation of paradise. He continues with a heredity or transmission component of this belief:

> But if the first man, who was placed in paradise and talked with God, [Gen. 2.15] could fall so easily, though made from virgin clay, but lately formed at God's word and created, not yet clotted with the gore of homicide and slaughter, not polluted with shameful and unbecoming deeds, not yet condemned in our flesh to the curse of tainted heredity--how much more easily later on has the slippery road to sin brought the human race to a greater precipice, since one generation in turn succeeds another, a generation more base succeeding one less wicked?[41]

Hence the 'paradise' within the first human was breached in spite of favourable conditions. All humans thereafter will share in this transgression or rift. The individual is not punished for Adam's sin, but only for the sins which are committed by the person.

This heredity component contains another dimension of succeeding deterioration. Ambrose's explanation forms a basis for the problem of evil in a universe created by God and prepares the way for a Christological solution. Using the imagery of the natural, magnetic attraction he reiterates:

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[40] Ambros. *Hexameron*, 6.6.39; CSEL 32-1, 230-231; trans. by J. J. Savage, FC 42, 252-253.

[41] Ambros. *Ep*. 34.13; CSEL 82-1, 235-236; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 132. For a concise overview, see Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* 354-356.

> How much truer it is that the condition and nature of the human race has fallen from a purer into a less pure state when it reaches the more wicked?
>
> If the natural law is weakened in substances which are incapable of sin, how much more is its vigor dulled by souls and bodies tainted with evil! For, when evil had appeared and innocence been destroyed, there was no one to do good, not even one.[Cf. Ps. 13.11] The Lord came to restore grace to nature, in fact, to give it increase, that where sin abounded grace might more abound. [Cf. Rom. 5.20] It is clear, then, that God is the Author of man, and that there is one God, not many gods--One who made the world, and one world only, not many, as the philosophers maintain.[42]

This understanding of the 'fall' from innocence, which undercuts the human condition and the natural law of creation, is balanced with the Lord's restoration of created order. The recovery of grace to nature is accomplished. To assure clarity, Ambrose responds quickly to the philosophical and theological claims of Stoics, Manichaeans, and other 'disclaimers'.[43]

To restate his position, Ambrose persists and describes human beings as created subsequent to the creation of the world, as 'inhabitants of the world', as 'fellow citizens of saints', and as the handiwork of God. But, he strongly cautions: "Let us beware of having that man, our understanding, enervated by woman, that is, by passion, for she was deceived and beguiled by the pleasures of the senses. Let her not enslave and drag him over to her laws and purposes."[44] The layered meaning of created and worldly orders is typified in the male-female imagery of the graced-sensual distinction.

Veering from the total implications of Philo's thought, Ambrose does maintain Philonic

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[42]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.15; CSEL 82-1, 236; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 133.

[43]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.15; CSEL 82-1, 236; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 133.

[44]Ambros. *Ep.* 34.16; CSEL 82-1, 237; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 133.

category in exegetical activities.[45] Philo claimed the higher nature of man is asexual, whereas man's lower nature is involved in the male-female polarity. This description of the human created after the image of God seems initially to constitute a denial of participation in the sphere of sexuality. When Philo refers to the sense-perceptible world as female and the realm of mind as male, it is clear that he is using the categories male and female quite differently. Accordingly to this second usage, female refers to the material, sense-perceptible realm, which includes the male-female polarity, whereas male refers to that realm which is intrinsically asexual, that is, the sphere of *nous*, the Logos, and ultimately God himself. This represents a transition from that which is human to that which is divine.[46]

Not content with one theory to comprehend the sense-perceptible world of female and the realm of mind as male, Ambrose turns to the imagery of 'two men in one':

> Our inward man is one who was according to the image and likeness of God; our outward man is fashioned of clay. Therefore again in Genesis, He reveals to you two creations of man, showing that by the second [creation] man was created.
>
> Therefore, just as there are two men, so is there a twofold life: one of the inward, the other of the outward man. Indeed, many actions of the inward man reach to the outward one, in the same way as the purity of the inward man passes over into bodily chastity.[47]

Coupling the imagery of two men, he describes the soul as participating in the image and likeness of God while the body participates in the elements of the cosmos. The mention of the two creation narratives is used to support the dual creation of the person with particular

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[45]For a comprehensive study of Philo's attitudes and understanding of women as a scriptural categories, see Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perceptions of Women*, Atlanta, GA: Scholar's Press, 1990.

[46]Richard A. Baer, Jr., *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970] 48.

[47]Ibid., 97. See Genesis 1.27 and Genesis 2.7.

emphasis on the second narrative. As natural sequels he extends the dyadic imagery to include two-fold life. The actions of life, in this passage, progress in one direction. The inward man 'reaches' forth to the outward man.

Ambrose proposes Adam's creation outside of Paradise, Eve's creation inside of Paradise. The human creature, as revealed in its genesis, is unique among the created order. The human being is also singular in a common creation from which all human beings emerged from one being and pair; these qualities of uniqueness and singular origin support the equality of all human beings as they share in this revealed common origin and equality. The current status and condition of humanity relates directly to these historical events. However, the continuance of those events are altered through the event of Christ.

3.2. IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

The human being's being, created in the image and likeness of the Creator [*imago dei*], carries with it the principle of divine image. As with other Christian authors, Ambrose found himself attributing the image to the soul alone.

The Image of God occupies Ambrose's exegesis.[48] This image and likeness is of the Creator [Gen. 1.26.]. It is the Father and the Son in one likeness and one image.[49] He says:

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[48]See, Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II 612-616; and Aimé Solignac, "Image et ressemblance: Pères de l'église," col. 1406-1425. *Dictionnarie de Spiritualité* Fasc.XLVIII-XLIX. [Paris: Beauchesne, 1970].

[49]Ambros. *De Fide* 1.3.23, 1.7.53; CSEL 78, 12, 21; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 294, 209; Cf. *Hexameron* 6.7.41.

"And what that 'likeness' is you are not unaware, you who have been made to the 'image and likeness of God'."[50] Ambrose believes: "The 'image' of God is virtue, not infirmity. The 'image' of God is wisdom."[51] The soul is 'painted' with 'imprint': "Precious is that picture which in its brilliance is in accord with that divine reflection."[52]

Beauty was with Adam before his transgression: "But after his fall he lost that celestial image and took on one that is terrestrial."[53] The image continues to dwell, but to reside in the soul: "Our soul, therefore, is made to the image of God. In this is man's entire essence, because without it man is nothing but earth and into earth he shall return [Cf. Gen. 3.19.]."[54] The excellence of soul is the priority of the human being: "Your soul is made to the image of God, whereas your body is related to the beasts. In one there is the holy seal of imitation of the divine. In the other there is found base association with beasts and wild animals."[55]

Thus, Ambrose questions: is the flesh made to this divine seal? He states: "The flesh, therefore, cannot be made to the image of God. This is true, however, of our souls, which are free to wander far and wide in acts of reflection and of counsel. Our souls are able to envisage

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[50]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.7.31; CSEL 32-1 80; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 91. The context of the passage is a response to Manichaean assertions: "Do you recognize the fact that you are the work of Christ? With His own hands He formed you, as we read, yet you, Manichaean, you assume for yourself another author." Ibid., 3.7.32.

[51]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.41; CSEL 32-1 232-233; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 254.

[52]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.42; CSEL 32-1 232-233; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 255.

[53]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.42; CSEL 32-1 232-233; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 255.

[54]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.43; CSEL 32-1 234; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 256.

[55]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.43; CSEL 32-1 234; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 256.

and reflect on all things."[56] Although the human body is able to travel about and experience many things and other people, the body is not able to discern the 'image': "That, therefore, is made to the image of God which is perceived, not by the power of the body, but by that of the mind."[57]

The soul is tuned to other boundaries and covert dimensions. Its natural citizenship is in heaven, unlike the ascetic anthropological movement's emphasis on regaining Paradise. He believes: "That soul, then, is made to the image of God, in form like the Lord Jesus. Those men are saints who are conformed to the Son of God."[58] Human beings are capable of reflecting the divine image by their actions. Thus, there is a moral precept associated with the justification of the soul: "Is justification bestowed on you in terms of the body or of the soul? But there can be no doubt about the answer, since justice, from which justification is derived, is naturally a mental, not a physical quality."[59]

The greatest compliment which Ambrose affords the human being is the honour of the Son of Man finding repose in His creature: "He found rest, however, after He had made man to His own image."[60] He finds rest in the actions of humanity.[61] The 'beautiful' soul is preserved through the action and contemplation: "Take heed of what goes into you and what

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[56]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.45; CSEL 32-1 235-236; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 257.

[57]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.45; CSEL 32-1 235-236; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 258.

[58]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.46; CSEL 32-1 237; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 259.

[59]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.46; CSEL 32-1 237; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 259.

[60]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.49; CSEL 32-1 240; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 261.

[61]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.49; CSEL 32-1 240; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 262.

comes out. I do not refer to food which is absorbed and ejected, but to words and thoughts."[62] Hence, the soul's immortality is beyond appraisal: "Because your soul is a priceless thing, poor man, be on your guard, The soul is everlasting, although the flesh is mortal."[63]

The concept of 'God as Artist' has importance in Ambrose's 'cosmetic theology' which is presented in this section. The modification of God's beauty in His creature is a serious concern.[64] The shedding of blood is another grave offense: "If it is a serious offence to adulterate the work of God, what shall we say of those who slay the work of God, who shed human blood and take away the life that God has granted?"[65] Implicit in these actions is a component of the inner and outward nature of the human being.

For Ambrose, the soul is made to the image of God. Although the body does not share in this image, the body is an artistic creation of God who is a 'craftsman' and 'painter of distinction'. Thus men and women should recognize God's work:

> He should not erase that painting, one that is the product of truth, not semblance, a picture, expressed not in mere wax, but in the grace of God. I speak, also, of women. They erase that painting by smearing on their complexions a color of material whiteness or by applying an artificial rouge. The result is a work not of beauty, but of ugliness; not of simplicity, but of deceit. It is a temporal creation, a prey to perspiration or to rain. It is a snare and a deception which displeases the person you aim to please, for he realizes that all this is an alien thing and not your own. This is also displeasing to your Creator, who sees His own work obliterated.[66]

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[62]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.50; CSEL 32-1 241; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 263.

[63]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.52; CSEL 32-1 243; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 265.

[64]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.47; CSEL 32-1 238; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 259-260.

[65]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.48; CSEL 32-1 239; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 260.

[66]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.47: CSEL 32-1, 238; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 259-260.

To reiterate his point, Ambrose challenges further by asking for a personal response: "Tell me, if you were to invite an artist of inferior ability to work over a painting of another of superior talent, would not the latter be grieved to see his own work falsified?"[67]

Moving beyond the sorrow that an ordinary artist might feel, Ambrose extends his caution: "He commits a serious offense who adulterates the work of God. It is a serious charge to suppose that man is to be preferred to God as an artist!"[68] To assure the complete significance of altering the human body, Ambrose rephrases his position: "It is serious, indeed, which God has to say this about you: 'I do not recognize My colors or My image, not even the countenance which I have made. What is not Mine I reject."[69] Ambrose's pastoral teaching is clear. The human body has intrinsic beauty which is to be preserved and maintained. As the bodily actions and outward appearance reflect the soul's nature and hence, the human's creation, any modification or alteration of the human body in any manner causes concern. Ambrose does not tolerate any temporary alterations or permanent mutilations for cosmetic or religious reasons. Even the piercing of women's ears prompts a retort:

> Even in shackles do women delight, provided they be fastened with gold. They do not think that they are burdens if they are costly, they do not consider them fetters if in them a treasure is resplendent. Women enjoy even wounds, so that gold may be inserted in their ears and that pearls may hang down.[70]

The human form is to be maintained and preserved. The cosmetic effect afforded by jewellery

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[67]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.47: CSEL 32-1, 238; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 260.

[68]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.47: CSEL 32-1, 238; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 260.

[69]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.47; CSEL 32-1, 238: trans. by Savage, FC 42, 260.

[70]Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.26; CSEL 32-2, 481; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 63.

does not find pleasure in Ambrose's reasoning.

Religious actions like circumcision are definitely an occasion for admonishment. Corresponding with Bishop Constantius, Ambrose responds to questions concerning circumcision. His eventual evaluation is that Christians are 'excused' from this rite. He argues that the body is in accord with nature at birth, so, circumcision is unnecessary: "But, now that the name of Christ has been given them, they need no bodily sign, for they have attained the honour of a divine title."[71] Christian people do not need the ritual pain. They associate themselves with the suffering of Christ: "Indeed, many actions of the inward man reach to the outward one, in the same way as the purity of the inward man passes over into bodily chastity."[72]

The Artist has created the human body with beauty and with the law of nature. Bodily actions are an outward expression of inward life. Hence, no outward expression of behaviour, dress or ornamentation should detract from its inner life. No temporary or permanent bodily changes are necessary as a sign. Thus, any practice which alters the body as image, or the body as functioning within a Christian framework is reproached. Ambrose's 'cosmetic theology', based in Stoic thought, is a creative adaptation:

> Ambrose's chief innovation in the handling of this topic lies in the fact that he does not approach it from the standpoint either of sexual ethics, the monastic vocation, or asceticism. Rather, he see it as one among a larger group of moral problems which all involve deception, cruelty, or dishonesty in one way or

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[71]Ambros. *Ep.* 69.11; CSEL 82-2, 183; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 16, "Ambrose to Constantius," [undated]: 94.

[72]Ambros. *Ep.* 69.20; CSEL 82-2, 186; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 16, "Ambrose to Constantius," [undated]: 97.

another.[73]

He invokes the artistry of God and the inner life and the outward bodily manifestations of the person. His cosmetic theology, transmitted and adapted, is uniquely his development.

3.3 MALE AND FEMALE: ISSUES OF GENDER AND CATEGORY

Issues relating to human sexuality form a recent area of research. Particular studies contribute to an understanding of the fourth century landscape and offer a contextual framework. Some of these works are cited before proceeding to specific Ambrosian documents. These major studies include: Aries and Bejin's edited work, *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*[74] which provides much data of sexual forms and traditions; Paul Veyne's ambitious study, *Histoire de la vie privée*, Vol. I, *De l'Empire romain à l'an mil*[75] which represents the first in a series of major contributions placing the family within the framework of social and political developments; and the work of Michel Foucault's momentous three volume work, *L'histoire de la sexualité*, [76] which is acknowledged by Patristic scholar, Peter

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[73]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 51.

[74]Philippe Aries and André Bejin, *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, [London: Basil Blackwell, 1985].

[75]Paul Veyne, ed., *Histoire de la vie privée* Vol. I, *De l'Empire romain à l'an mil* [Paris: Le Seuil, 1985]: 19-224; trans., by A. Goldhammer, *A History of Private Life* Vol. I, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* [Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987]: 16-233.

[76]Michel Foucault, *L'histoire de la sexualité,* vol. 1, *La volenté de savoir* [Paris: Gallimard, 1976], trans. by Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality*. vol. 1, *An Introduction* [New York: Pantheon, 1978]; *L'usage des plaisirs: Histoire de la sexualité,* vol. 2, [Paris: Gallimard, 1984], translation, *The Use of Pleasure: History of Sexuality* [New York: Pantheon, 1985]; *Le*

Brown.[77] Discussing the methodologies and contributions of these important research works would occupy a major part of this study. But, it is to the singular works and contributions of Ambrose that this study is directed.

Beyond the unique and singular creation in the image of the Creator, the human being is created as male and female. As a composite creature of body and soul, the human being is sexually designated male or female. Ambrose does not ascribed to the theory designating sexuality to the events of Paradise and the Fall. The discernable human design reflects and reveals a caring Creator.

Ambrose holds many views on the nature of human sexuality. Like the Stoics,[78] he believes that the human being naturally craves the good and seeks to be in harmony with nature. Through his possession of the 'logos' man naturally possesses the power to achieve this harmony and a state of virtue. From this position, he establishes a stance concerning the status of men

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souci de soi: Histoire de la sexualité, vol. 3, [Paris, Gallimard, 1984], translation, *The Care of the Self: History of Sexuality* [New York: Pantheon, 1987].

[77]Brown states: "At a crucial moment in my own work, I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to take heart from the humbling serenity and unaffected craftsmanship of Michel Foucault, in what I was not to know were his last years." Brown, *The Body and Society*, Preface, xvii.

[78]Colish remarks: "The principle of sexual equality is emphasized more by some Stoics than by others. An important model for the Stoics in this area was the ethics of Cynicism. The Cynics argued that men and women should wear the same kind of clothing and receive the same kind of education. They also taught that marriage should be seen as a moral companionship between equals and not merely as a biological and economic necessity, views which they put into practice in their own lives as well as in their teaching. The Stoics adopted the Cynic position and linked it to their own theory of human nature. In this way they gave their sexual egalitarianism a much more solid philosophical foundation." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 37.

and women and their respective sexual equality.[79] Middle Stoa developments demonstrate the components which are relevant to Ambrose:

> But it is the Roman Stoa which presents the best developed teaching on this subject, both in theory and in practice. Seneca and Musonius Rufus develop such themes as the equal capacity for virtue and the equal moral obligations which nature gives to men and women, arguing that the sexes share an equal need for philosophical education and attacking any notion of double standard. Seneca couples the theory with a practical concern for the moral cultivation of women, addressing consolation and spiritual direction to a number of women in his circle of friends and relations.[80]

Ambrose's thoughts on sexual equality are found only within the conditions of Paradise. Generally, his thought bears strong Platonic, Philonic and Pauline influences.[81] Ambrose does support the concept for equal capacity when discussing the requirements of duty, virtue and moral obligations. He does support sexual equality for the needs of general and Christian education. But, the philosophical, biblical and exegetical persuasions dominate or at least colour

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[79]Colish comments on early Stoic thought: "None the less, although he was influenced by Cynic ethics, Zeno adheres to the Platonic doctrine of the community of wives, despite its obvious incompatibility with the moral equality of the sexes. Chrysippus drops Zeno's sexual communism and it does not reappear in the teachings of the Stoa after his time. The Stoics' general tendency to internalize the virtues, making them human and not merely masculine possibilities, coupled with Panaetius' elaboration of rules for the application of ethical principles to all kinds of people, strengthened the case for sexual equality." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 37-38.

[80]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 38.

[81]For a concise overview of sexual attitudes and beliefs, see J. T. Noonan, "Part One: Shaping of the Doctrine 50-450." *Contraception*, 9-139. The contributions of Philo of Alexandria are discussed. Ibid., 53-55, 86-87, 90. Noonan identifies eight themes which he derives from Scripture: "The more particular tests of the New Testament which form the doctrine on sexuality, in which the rule on contraception if born, may be analytically reduced to eight themes: the superiority of virginity; the institutional goodness of marriage; the sacral character of sexual intercourse; the value of procreation; the significance of desire as well as act; the evil of extramarital intercourse and the unnaturalness of homosexuality; the connection of Adam's sin and the rebelliousness of the body; the evil of 'medicine.'" Ibid., 37

his perspective about human sexual equality.[82] A component, similar to the Platonic doctrine of the 'community of wives', may be active within his deliberations. Or at the least, social influences of the Roman Stoa may form a slight part of his overall Christianized viewpoint on sexual equality.

Accepting the divinely created and differentiated male and female, Ambrose maintains the traditional interpretation of the concept in which males and females are assigned comparably yet distinctive roles.[83]

One modern commentator has suggested that: "In the Christian West, gender difference was thought to be biologically based, scripturally attested, God ordained, and unquestionable."[84] As with all general evaluations, there is some accuracy. But as with all general statements, the many personalities and pluralism of thought are smoothed to the point that individual contributions are blurred.

Ambrose's understanding of humanity as sexually designated carries with it specific implications. While explicating the Genesis narratives, he ascribes roles, endeavours and functions as either male or female. Ambrose, himself, sees the figure of Eve through varying

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[82]Philosophic inquiry of the human body spans the history of Western thought. Some current efforts into this theme exemplify the dominance of this subject. Prudence Allen's *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC- AD 1250*, panoramic in its vista, presents a historic overview and analysis of philosophic thought pertaining to sex identity and differentiation. See, Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC-AD 1250* [Montreal: Eden Press, 1985]. Reviewed by Beatrice H. Zedler, *Speculum*. 62 [1987]: 898-900. Zedler describes the work as a valuable collection, almost encyclopedic in coverage and clearly organized.

[83]Prudence Allen, "The Adoption of Aristotlian and Platonic Concepts," chap. III in *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC-AD 1250* [Montreal: Eden Press, 1985], 127-236.

[84]M. R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1989], xiv.

stages. As stated earlier, she was created in Paradise. She was the one to yield to temptation. But her honesty was admirable. It is through her gender that redemption came. Adam was created then moved into Paradise. He also yielded to temptation. It is through his gender that redemption was accomplished.

In Paradise, Ambrose believes: "The creation of both man and woman is considered to be good."[85] For Ambrose, the man was created yet the woman was made. To 'solve' this dilemma, the bishop uses Gen 2.18. His exegesis of the passage explicates a difference in the words 'created' and 'made'. From this variation, he relegates Eve to the role of 'helper', similar to official and military roles. He assigns her another role, that of collaborator of 'major import', in the process of generation.[86] In this cautious manner, he finds a scriptural solution to his dilemma. His attitude is clear. The figure of helpmate is that of inferiority. In another attempt, Ambrose reiterates the word 'built' in the creation of woman: ". . . because a household, comprising man and wife, seems to point toward a state of full perfection. One who is without a wife is regarded as being without a home."[87] The cultural imperative of public and private spheres of place and duty complete the discussion.[88]

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[85]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 10. 46; CSEL 32-1, 304; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 325.

[86]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 10. 48; CSEL 32-1, 306; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 327.

[87]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 11.50 ; CSEL 32-1, 307; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 329.

[88]For an overview of feminist contributions, see Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Women as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views." *Feminist Studies* 8 [no.1, 1982]: 109-31; and Susan R. Suleiman's edited collection, *The Female Body in Western Culture*, Susan R. Suleiman, *The Female Body in Western Culture* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986]. A complementary text by Edward Shorter provides a valuable resource of statistics citing the incidence of mortality, illness and therapeutics. See Edward Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies* [New York: Pantheon, 1982].

Yet there is another choice of lifestyle which Ambrose also supports. That choice is the option not to remain under the control of men. Traditionally the young Roman woman went from the control of her father to the control and obedience of her husband. Ambrose suggests the option of dispensing with familial obligation and selecting another calling with direct obedience to God. This latter alternative expands freedom and choice.[89]

Ambrose's understanding of human sexuality is also expanded and developed in the seventh Stoic infrarational faculties. He uses reproductive activity to formulate his thoughts on marriage and virginity as a norm and gift. Though differing in physical characteristics and functions, they remain equivalent in terms of relationships with their Creator. Each immortal soul extends beyond the transitory, elemental level of physics to an eternal relationship with God. Ambrose stresses equality through the vehicle of religious expression.

Fourth Century Christianity is credited with a major cultural shift in which religious traditions altered basic patterns of relationships; this paradigm shift can dramatically be attributed to religious ideals: "As we trace the way in which the cult of the healthy body gave way to monastic asceticism we will not be concentrating on the mystical aspect of man's relationship with God."[90] The assumptions convey the conviction that before the dominance of Christianity, there was a universal belief in the healthy body; and secondly, that the writers

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[89]See P. Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC - AD 1250* [Montréal: Eden Press, 1985]. Of Allen's three suggestions regarding sexual identity, Ambrose clearly identifies male and female as equal when considering human genesis and then again when discussing the seven bodily gifts or counsels. Compare, "The Adoption of Aristotelian and Platonic Concepts," chap. III, 230-236.

[90]Aline Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* trans. by F. Pheasant. [Oxford: BLackwell Ltd., 1988], 5.

of Christian antiquity can be separated from their spiritual essence or from the context of their interaction with other religions. Each of these assumptions precludes the histories and influences of other coexisting cultures and religions.

Ambrose promoted moral-ascetical lifestyles for all men and for all women. The degree of practice varies with the choice of the individual. He does so with the context of his understanding of the Gospels. Although he has been described as having a 'Janus-like quality' about his relation between Church and society, his counsels and advice to men and women are indeed indistinguishable.[91]

Ambrose presents a complicated view of woman as category and virgin as sub-category. In a discussion of the Law which Christ obeyed, Ambrose integrates the concepts of Law, Incarnation, and Womankind:

> ...and He did not refuse what is Law, as He was born of a woman, born under the Law. I have said 'He was born' according to the Incarnation, but 'of a woman' according to sex. Womankind is the sex, virgin is the species; the sex has to do with nature, a virgin with integrity. In so far as He was born of a woman, that is, in a body. He came under the Law.[92]

The passage centres on Christological mysteries as well as the dynamics of His birth. What is interesting is Ambrose's development of woman as a sexually signed person by nature, and of woman, as a virginal person by character or principle. His advice to single and widowed women shares a common tone: don't marry or marry again and be subject to a husband. His

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[91]See Brown, *The Body and Society*, 363.

[92]Ambros. Ep. 1.17; CSEL 82-1, 9; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 20, "Ambrose to Justus," [before 381]: 113.

list of disadvantages is clear.[93]

Ambrose's attitude toward sexuality can be described as complex and ambivalent. Ambrose appears to believe that man differs from woman, but not in human nature. The man is superior and the woman is inferior. The man's realm is the public domain and the woman's world is the private sphere. Yet both man and woman are co-heirs in virtue and in redemption. But, his overall attitude is positive.

Other concepts affecting Ambrose's understanding of the human creation theme include nature theology and natural law, which has been the subject of an important investigation.[94] Ambrose's thoughts on the subject of natural law are well researched by scholars.[95] His views are complex and may be viewed as inconsistent:

> The assimilation of nature and natural law to the law of God is a theme that occurs repeatedly in Ambrose's exegetical and ethical works. He handles it very inconsistently in works large and small throughout his *oeuvre*. Sometimes he Biblicizes the idea of natural, subordinating it radically to God's transcendent order and creative will. At other times he treats nature as a norm, accessible to man by reason, that counsels the equality of all men, the common sharing of property, the priority of the common good, and other Stoic desiderata.[96]

Although this evaluation has much merit, there is another component which needs to be addressed, the law of God and the 'laws' or norms of man. This law extends to the actual

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[93]For a comprehensive treatment of women's lives during the fourth century, see Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 133-159.

[94]See, Bazil Maes, *La loi naturelle selon Ambroise de Milan* [Roma: Presses de l'Université Grégorienne, 1967], 6-8, 26-28, 33-37, 50-64, 123-138 and 146-147.

[95]See, Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 119; Colish *Stoicism* vol. II, 52-54; Dudden, vol. II, 520-521, 614-616; and Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 269-275.

[96]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 52.

appearance and actions of men and women.

Ambrose's position is most clear. In personal correspondence to parishioner, Irenaeus, the bishop counsels:

> Nature clothes each sex in its proper raiment. Moreover, in men and women, there are different customs, different complexions, different gestures, gait, and strength, different qualities of voice. . . . There [in heathen temples] it is considered holy for men to assume women's clothing and female gestures. For this reason the Law declares that every man who puts on a woman's garment is an abomination to the Lord. . . It is to be expected that chastity will be lost where the distinction of the sexes is not observed, and where nature lays down definite instruction, as the Apostle says:. . .[1 Cor. 11.13-15.].[97]

Even the outward appearance, the outer man, of the individual must reflect his sexuality. The cultural practices of others are not to be imitated by Christians:

> How unsightly it is for a man to act like a woman! Let those who curl their hair like women also conceive and bear children. The one sex is veiled; the other engages in war. There is an excuse for those who follow their native customs, barbarous as they are, the Persians, the Goths, the Armenians. But what is greater than one's native land.
>
> What shall we say of those who consider it a sign of luxury to have in their service slaves wearing curls and ornaments, while they themselves have long beards and the slaves have streaming hair?[98]

Ambrose believes that the created sexual being is consistence in the appearance of the 'raiment'. Women and men differ in their bodily actions as well. In an appeal to the Natural Law, he admonishes these practices. He urges continuity with the Law and consistency of the relationship with the Creator.

Clergymen receive greater admonishment: "For the condition of the mind is often seen

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[97]Ambros. *Ep.* 15.2, 15.4, 15.6; CSEL 82-1, 112, 113-114; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 79, 435-437

[98]Ambros. *Ep.* 15.6; CSEL 82-1, 113-114; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 79, 436-437.

in the attitude of the body."[99] This time his appeal is to virtue. His beliefs are strong enough that he prevents the ordination of one man and requested that a man not walk in front: ". . . because he actually pained me by the seeming arrogance of his gait."[100] Ambrose suggests the manner of deportment.[101]

The concept of relationship between the inner and outer human being is not the only relationship to which Ambrose extends his understanding and development of natural law and theology. Beyond the dynamics of the human person, these components permeate all of the natural world, even to the relationship of church and state. The laws of God are not the laws of man; the separation of civic and ecclesiastical spheres and procedures is vital:

> This, then, is the action of an insolent individual [Auxentius], not of a well-meaning bishop. See, O Emperor, you are rescinding your own law in part. Would that you did so, not in part, but entirely, for I would not want your law to be above the law of God. God's law teaches us what we are to follow; man's laws cannot teach us this. These alter the conduct of the timid; they are unable to inspire confidence.[102]

In his concept of natural law, adapted from Stoic philosophical doctrine, Ambrose explains the world and human beings within the pattern of divinely ordained laws befitting all of the created order.[103]

Although the body does not share in the image and likeness, Ambrose creatively uses the

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[99]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.18.71; PL 16 25-194; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 13.

[100]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.18.72; PL 16 25-194; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 13.

[101]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.18.73-74; PL 16 25-194; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 13-14.

[102]Ambros. *Ep.* 75; CSEL 82-3, 79; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 54.

[103]Although Ambrose's contributions are explicated in the major study cited earlier. Baziel Maes major research was cited earlier. His work clearly explicates Ambrose's contributions. This thesis identifies and selects one component with special applicability to the human body.

principle and applies its intent to the body as a creation of God. The same attention is given men, both laity and clergy, and women. This adaptation of Stoic thought is uniquely Ambrosian.

The Bishop of Milan envisions a profound understanding of human physical properties and activities. His psychological perspective is enhanced by a deliberate attempt to go beyond an understanding of the causal, observed occurrences of human life. He gives particular meaning to the common acts and the rare events of living. The nature of this ascribed meaning is religious.

The issue of compatibility and continuity of Classical culture with Christian culture is always evident in Ambrose's works. Yet the question of intractable confrontation is not evident for he selects and adapts these classical manuscripts and concepts for his own use. Yet one Ambrosian priority must be kept in mind:

> Even in those treatises where the Stoic content is the richest Ambrose approaches the subject matter from a Biblical point of view. His method is that of a Scripture scholar and his illustrative examples are typically drawn from the Bible. He repeatedly attributes the Stoic and other philosophical ideas that he approves of expressly to the Bible, claiming that the Greeks borrowed them from that source .[104]

As pastor, he is committed to believe that the actions of a person contain a deeper meaning and significance. Within his Christian belief system, he stresses the theological positions and exegetical interpretations of his beliefs. His reflections on specific actions and behaviours continue in the later chapters.

Ambrose's dominant influences, in understanding the created human body, are Hellenized

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[104]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 49-50.

Judaism and Christianity. He draws upon the Alexandrian hermeneutical method and the content of two Christian anthropological movements, asceticism and Christian Neoplatonism. Going beyond the physical level, a Christian level of interpretation is added and integrated.

The human creature, as revealed in its genesis, is unique among the created order and is also singular in a common creation from which all human beings emerged. These qualities of a distinctive and an exceptional origin support the equality which all human beings share and reveal the commonness which can be distinguished as 'humanity'.

Furthermore, the human soul is created in the image and likeness of God and extends its principle of the divine image and purposiveness to the human body. As originally designed by its Creator, the human being is constituted bodily as either male or female. The third level of interpretation, which covered topics of health and illness, pursues the direct consequences and responsibility of maintaining bodily health through human actions.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BODY AS HEALTHY AND ILL

Created by a caring God, the body and the world have innate goodness as a consequence of their beginning. As the human being and the world share in the emanation of divine creation, there is an inherent relationship. The world, known by human reason, provides its bounty for the bodily health and care of the human in health or disease. The resulting interaction accords a giving and receiving which supplies the necessary components for health and comfort. In addition to human well-being, nature also provides the measures for healing and cure.

Not content to limit the bodily health within the observable dynamics of nature, Ambrose uses his exegetical skills and integrates another level of health and healing. These changes within the created order are not informed by reason. These occurrences, associated with the cult of saints and Christ's intervention as *Christus Medicus,* articulate the religious dimension. Before beginning this next level of interpretation a brief synopsis of medical philosophical thought, available to Ambrose, is presented as a background of probable choices from which he made his choices.

4.1 GRECO-ROMAN SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The life expectancy of the fourth century person cannot be stated with certainty.[1] The Roman citizen of the second century Empire might experience a life span of less than twenty-five years. Fewer than four out of every one hundred adults lived beyond their fiftieth year.[2] In order to achieve a stable population, the estimated fecundity rate would approach an average of five offspring for each woman. Young girls were recruited early for their task. The approximated median age of Roman girls at marriage is set as low as fourteen years of age.[3] These estimates of life expectancy and prospect of longevity give the following section more importance.[4]

Ambrose's understanding of the human body and its features has been demonstated in

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[1]For a greater appreciation of fourth century dynamics, see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey* 2 vols.[Oxford: Blackwell, 1964]; *The Prosopograpghy of the Late Roman Empire* 3 vols. [Cambridge: University Press, 1971-]; and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire, Economy Society and Culture* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987].

[2]A. R. Burn, "Hic Breve Vivitur," *Past and Present* 4 [1953]: 1-31; and K. Hopkins, "On the Probable Age Structure of the Roman Population," *Populations Studies* 20 [1966]: 245-264.

[3] B. W. Frier, "Roman Life Expectancy: Ulpian's Evidence," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 86 [1982]: 215-251; and Keith Hopkins, "The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage," *Populations Studies* 18 [1965]: 309-327.

[4]See the demographic work completed by medievalist scholar, Josiah Cox Russell, *Late Ancient and Medieval Population* [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1958] vol. 48, pt. 3.

previous chapters. Although Ambrose wrote in Latin, his native tongue his style[5] and grammar[6] continue to be the subject of philologists' research. Yet, it is his facility in Greek, the language of science, which gave him the opportunity to study Hippocratic and Galenic sources which dealt specifically with anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, medicine and dietetics. His background in history, physics, biology and philosophy represented but a few of the themes for his mind and pen. Many ideas and customs of antiquity, some of them quite extraordinary, was maintained as a valuable source. An examination of these concepts and his

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[5]Adams assesses the 'latinity' of his letters. She comments: "From a survey of the rhetoric of the Letters we may conclude that Ambrose is truly a man of his age. . . .In general the data drawn from the present study present additional material for the proper understanding of patristic Latin; the Latin of Ambrose is not that of Cicero; from the standpoint of language, by reason of the elements that have accrued to it during four centuries of Christianity, it is a much better vehicle for the expression of the thought of its time; and from the standpoint of literature it needs no justification." M. A. Adams, *The Latinity of the Letters of Saint Ambrose*. Patristic Studies, vol. 12 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1927], 129. Barry evaluates another type of his literary output: "As we would naturally expect, the vocabulary of Saint Ambrose, in this moral-ascetical works, bears the imprint of his intellectual training. He knew the Greek and Roman classical authors well. . . .By and large, we are impressed with the fact that Saint Ambrose was most careful in his choice of words and was much inclined to be a purist. This, in a great measure, is responsible for his being called by his contemporaries "the flower of Latin writers." M. F. Barry, *The Vocabulary of the Moral-Ascetical Works of Saint Ambrose*. Patristic Studies, vol. 10 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1926], 274.

[6]Martin reports Ambrose's 'appreciable' departure from the usage of the Classical language in the structure of the Indirect Discourse in Latin syntax and concludes: ". . .the language of St. Ambrose may be an indication of the nature of Indirect Discourse in patristic Latin literature generally." M. A. Martin, *The Use of Indirect Discourse in the Works of Saint Ambrose*. Patristic Studies, vol. 20 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1930], 160. Whereas Delaney finds evidence to support the opinion that the rhythmical system of Latin prose was in the process of an evolution from one system to another. The exact period of transition is difficult to appraise due the 'hasty composition' of some of his writings. M. R. Delaney, *A Study of the Clausulae in the Works of St. Ambrose*. Patristic Studies, vol. 40 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1934], 148.

knowledge of the body in health and illness are appropriate within this study. A short overview of Greco-Roman thought and contributions precedes his contributions and is pertinent to the development of his perception of bodily activities.

Medical philosophy characterizes Hellenistic scientific ideas. This Greek metaphysical thought and scientific knowledge include a religious dimension within the healing arts. Roman contributions, principally acquired from Greek concepts, integrate a specific understanding of world processes and explain health, as relationships between elements and humoral properties in harmony.

A brief overview of the development may serve as a background for understanding the heritage which flourished and sustained fourth century ideas and experience. These notions and practices of health and medicine are inexplicable. Within their logic, a perspective of early Greek thought abides. Emergent with rational natural philosophy, the interplay of Greek medicine and philosophy can be identified. Reducing the dependence on magic, theology and mythology, the fifth and fourth century medical writers sought a causal basis for understanding health and illness. Not all of the attempts were successful. The co-existence of Greek secular and religious forms of health and healing practices were found to function symbiotically and on occasion, harmoniously. The shrine of Asclepius, on the island of Cos, was a prime example of such complementary principles and customs.[7]

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[7]Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990], 2. Hereafter cited as Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*.

By the time of Hippocrates [B.C. 460-370], the natural philosophy concept of the four elements can be found in some of the sixty treatises which bear his name. Plato [B.C. 428-348] depicts physiological theories in his *Timaeus*. Aristotle [B.C. 384-322] displays marked interest in the medical topics of health, illness, structures and functions of specific body systems and organs.[8]

The investigations of Alexandrians, Herophilus [fl. c. B.C. 280] and Erasistratus [B.C. fl. c. 250] advance the science of anatomy and correct many neurological errors of the early writers.[9] One of the most splendid Hellenistic contributions, the *De Materia Medica* of Pedanius Dioscorides [fl. c. A.D. 41-68] exemplifies the finest herbal pharmacologic compedium. This systematic collection represents a major development for the medical treatment of illnesses.[10]

Most of these contributions were incorporated and synthesized by the Greek author and physician Galen [A.D. 130-200]. This writer basically recast earlier Hellenistic works, especially those of Hippocrates. Galen's own eclecticism, characterized by rational and

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[8]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 3.

[9]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 3: "It is clear that both Herophilus and Eraistratus engaged in extensive dissections of human cadavers--in late antiquity they were sometimes also accused of having practiced human vivisection. Among their achievements was the correct identification of the relation of the brain and the nervous system [Aristotle had believed that powers of motion and sensation originate in the heart]."

[10]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 3.

empirical medicine, was strongly Platonic although some Aristotelian components are evident.[11]

Galen proposed teleological explanations for all phenomenon:

> A view that the purpose of everything was predetermined sometimes deluded him into distorting what he saw or into presuming a function for an organ because Nature must have given it a clear purpose. These preconceptions [which led him on a path of error from today's vantage point] were the very characteristics in his teachings that were attractive to medieval Christian minds. Aristotle had said, "Nature does nothing without a purpose." Galen insisted that he could perceive the purpose.[12]

There was no apparent medical successor to Galen: "In late antiquity, medicine as a field of investigation suffered the same neglect as other scientific subjects: no significant additions to knowledge or major modifications of theory in nosology, therapy, physiology, or anatomy can be identified after Galen."[13]

In the eastern half of the Roman empire, scientific and medical learning based on early and late Hellenistic writings, prospered.[14] In the western half of the empire, medical theory and practice were distinctly Greek in nature. Often the medical practitioners were slaves or

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[11]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 4. "His voluminous writings bring together almost the entire heritage of Greek medicine in all fields: he addressed not only anatomy but also physiology, pathology, semiotics [symptomatology], hygiene, and therapy. This terminology is not entirely anachronistic: although not Galen's own, it originated in the Hellenistic period."

[12]Albert S. Lyons, "Galen", chap. in *Medicine: An Ilustrated History* ed. Albert S. Lyons and R. Joseph Petrucelli [New York: Abradale Press, 1978], 251. Hereafter cited as Lyons, *Medicine*.

[13]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 5.

[14]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 5: "For example, schools in Alexandria in the sixth century A.D. taught a medical curriculum based on sixteen major works of Galen; and late ancient and Byzantine compilers, among them Oribasius [fourth century A.D.], Aetius of Amida [sixth century], and Paul of Aegina [seventh century], produced compendia of Galenic teaching for the use of practitioners."

freedmen of Greek heritage. Roman men, educated in the Greek language as well as scientific and philosophical thought, read medical treatises as part of their educational pursuits: "In addition, Latin writers on medicine, of whom the most notable was the encyclopedist Celsus [first century A.D.], drew upon Greek sources in composing or compling their own works."[15]

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, the need for translations was unnecessary. But in late antiquity, political, linguistic and cultural breach became more evident. Those in the Latin West who were interested in the practical, medical sciences had to rely on translated and adapted sections of Greek medical knowledge. Hence only a slight part of the discipline was available to the majority of Latin readers.[16] By the late fourth century few individuals had a knowledge or facility in Greek. Ambrose was one of these persons. His bilingual ability facilitated explicating data from earlier Greek language tracts and to draw upon Greco-Roman notions of the past. In addition his facility expedited translations and correspondence with Greek speaking Christians of the Eastern empire. His letter from Bishop Basil of Caesarea may be cited as an example.[17]

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[15]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 5-6.

[16]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 6. "The translation of Greek medical works had begun by the fifth century when Caelius Aurelianus translated a gynecological work of Soranus [first century A.D.]. By the mid-sixth century, a synopsis of Oribasius' compilation and a small group of Hippocratic and Galenic writings had been translated into Latin, probably in northern Italy; the latter were apparently the subject of formal lectures, similar to those given in Alexandria, at Ravenna some time between about 550 and 570.

[17]Basil, *Ep.* 197.1.36-1.40 [*Saint Basil: The Letters*, trans. by R. J. Deferrari, vol. III [New York: G. P. Putman's sons, 1930], 92. The status and integrity of Basil's letter continue to be questioned. As recently as 1990, Williams writes: "The sum total direct evidence for Ambrose's request to Basil rests on a letter of Basil [Ep. 197] written to Ambrose in reply to a previous communication [now lost].. . . The chief difficulty in adopting this letter as evidence for the attitudes of the early Ambrose is the strong probability that the second half of the letter is not

During the late fourth century Christian concepts and ideals about medical science and the healing arts were being developed:

> To the extent that the most influential patristic writers considered anatomy, physiology, or pathology as branches of knowledge, their predominant attitude to these subjects was much the same as to most other types of information about the natural world, or to secular learning in general: modified acceptance, subordination to Christian exegetical purposes, and a rather low level of interest.[18]

This modern historical evaluation of patristic authors' intent and mindset, can be viewed from other perspectives. Both sides of this issue are supported by modern studies. Some emphasize Christianity's compatibility with medicine,[19] while others stress the tensions between Classical and Christian understandings.[20]

Beyond the speculation of modern writers, evidence demonstrates that a most complex relationship existed between the scientific, medical heritage and intellectual Christian thought or reasoning. The issues included beliefs about the body-soul dualism, the source of disease,

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genuine. Articles by A. Cavallin and A. Paredi testify to the fact that the second part of Basil's letter 197 is missing in most [and the earliest] manuscripts, appearing only in a tenth century Greek manuscript [Codex Parisinus Suppl. 1020] of an unknown origin. It is not our purpose here to weigh the merits of their arguments, but is instructive to point out the remarkable absence of corroborating evidence that might favor the authenticity of the second half of the letter." Daniel H. Williams, "Nicene Christianity and Its Opponents in Northern Italy: An Examination of Late Fourth Century Anti-Arian Polemics and Politics with Particular Emphasis on the Early Career of Ambrose of Milan" [Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1990], 204-205.

[18]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 7.

[19]Darrel W. Amundsen, "Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 56 [1982]: 326-50.

[20]Vivian Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander, Aspects of Medicine in Late Antiquity," in *Symposium on Byzantine Medicine, Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 [1984]: 1-14; _____, "Murders and Miracles: Lay Attitudes to Medicine in Classical Antiquity," in *Patients and Practitioners*, ed. Roy Porter [Cambridge: University Press, 1985]: 45-53.

the meaning of illness and suffering and, the restoration of health by natural and supernatural means.[21] The dualism does not mean Christian denial of bodily health or concerns. Ambrose was knowledgeable about medicine although he does not consider himself a professional physician. In the *Hexameron*, he claims

> We have set forth these matters in a fashion so brief and succinct that we seem, in the manner of the unskilled, just to touch on the merely obvious. Our purpose is not to probe deeply like a physician nor is it our design to search into what is hidden far in the haunts of nature.[22]

Ambrose's brevity and purpose for including medical matters represent an integration of secular knowledge serving the Christian ideals which he professes. As he affirms the grace and beauty of the human body, as well as its worldly constitution, he is most influenced by the works of Cicero's *De natura deorum* and Basil of Caesarea's *Hexameron.*[23]

The classical humoral theory was basic to an understanding of medicine and the world. The four basic elements of water, air, fire, and earth possess special qualities of moist, dry, hot, and cold. From these elements and specific qualities, four humors were derived: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. These humors form the basis of Hippocratic medicine. The notions and practices are summarized:

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[21]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 8.

[22]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.70; CSEL 32-1, 257-258; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 279.

[23]One modern author cites Ambrose's inclusion of classical physiological theory as an example of Christian ancillary use of others' contributions: "His [Ambrose] source for the physiological material was Cicero, who had presumably drawn upon a medical author. The [hexaemeral] passage is just as characteristic in its derivativeness and its subordination of secular learning to a religious purpose as it is in its use of scientific information from non-Christian sources." Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 9.

> By the time of Hippocrates the Greeks had developed a hypothetical system which explained the mechanism of illness in terms of four basic humors of the body. One can detect a clear progression of ideas in Greek metaphysics that led to this system: the teaching that four basic elements [water, air, fire, and earth], each with its specific quality [moist, dry, hot, and cold], comprise the entire universe: the concept that pairs of opposites [with concomitant emphasis on the number 4] were to be kept in equilibrium to achieve harmony in the cosmos and health in the microcosm of man; the special effects on the body and mind of the seasons, which were at first three and then four; the visible secretions of the body, also at first three [blood, phlegm, and bile] and then four by separating bile into yellow and black.[24]

Eventually, a framework or hypothesis was needed to organize these concepts: "The key principle was that all body fluids were composed of varying proportions of blood [warm and moist], phlegm [cold and moist], yellow bile [warm and dry], and black bile [cold and dry]."[25] Thus when these "humors" were in balance the body was in health; surplus or shortage of one or more caused illness.

He knew Greek attitudes toward mental disease had developed gradually from belief in supernatural or demoniac causes to more reasoned explanations. As early as the fifth century B. C. the mind and its derangements were clearly located in the brain: " Yet even Plato, a contemporary of Hippocrates, classified madness mythologically into four main types: prophetic [mediated by Apollo]; ritualistic [as in the Dionysian ceremonies]; poetic [inspired by the Muses]; erotic [under the influence of Aphrodite and Eros]."[26]

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[24]Albert Lyons, "Medicine in Hippocratic Times," chap. in *Medicine: An Illustrated History*, ed. A. S. Lyons and R. J. Petrucelli [New York: Abrams Press, 1978], 195. Hereafter cited as Lyons, *Medicine*.

[25]Lyons, "Medicine in Hippocratic Times," *Medicine*, 195.

[26]Lyons, "Medicine in Hippocratic Times," *Medicine*, 195.

Although the theory of 'humors' and the types of mental health coexisted, an integrated approach did not appear. The intellectual approaches and methods varied greatly. An intriguing development in the four humoral theory occurred with the contribution of Galen, Greek physician to Marcus Aurelius. The 'Galenic' application of the theory progressed into the four basic temperaments: "The four fundamental humors {phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile} were responsible for health and illness, and Galen elaborated this conception in classifying all personalities into four types: phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric, and melancholic, terms still used to characterize dispositions."[27]

The classification of personalities is not evident in the Ambrosian writings. The explanations rest with Ambrose's anthropological view. A predetermined facet in human nature would undermine self-determination and freedom of choice. His reasoning, strongly influenced by Stoic and Neoplatonic ideals, may account for this omission. The concept of determined classifications, such as zodiac natal dates or four humoral personality groups could undermine the ability of free will and free choice. Another hypothesis may be related to his unawareness of Galenic thought on this subject. Ambrose could however find kinship with Galen's predominant teleological reasoning. Although Ambrose's aims and motives exist within a Christian theological perspective, the theme of purposefulness is common to each man.[28]

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[27]Lyons, "Galen," *Medicine*, 254.

[28]Lyons, "Galen," *Medicine*, 251.

4.2 AN AMBROSIAN PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH AND ILLNESS

As voracious reader and keen observer of life, Ambrose's repertoire of literature and experiences provided him with unusual interests. His understanding of the dynamics of health and illness represents an example of such exceptional learning.

Ambrose possesses an exceptional understanding of the theory and application of health. Intellectually, he comprehends concepts of well-being. He knows health promoting customs, practices and habits. He discerns the tendencies, actions and patterns which diminish or erode its human presence. The four principles of the Hippocratic method gained, probably from the works of encyclopedists Cornelius Celsus [*De Medicina*], and Pliny the Elder [*Historia Naturalis*], are indirectly evident in Ambrose's writings. These four principles are summarized as: observe all, study the patient rather than the disease, evaluate honestly and assist nature.[29]

For Ambrose, the human body exhibits qualitites of well-being. The body's general appearance reflects characteristics associated with the health status of the whole individual: "The figure itself of the body is full of dignity. No blush of drunkenness is suffused on the cheeks to offend the gaze of onlookers, but the countenance is bright with a chaste pallor inspiring respect. Speech is rather serious, the eye rather modest, the gait rather firm and moderate;. .

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[29]Lyons, "Hippocrates," *Medicine*, 206-217; for an overview of the Hippocratic principles, see 216-217.

."[30] Hence the parameters of health include the overall appearance of stateliness with the clear visage, articulate expression, astute sight and balanced stride.

He identifies specific body parts which are observed or highlighted for specific forms of assessment. The human face is of particular interest: "For the face is often the index of the conscience; and, as it were, the silent speech of the mind, when we either feel remorse for sin or rejoice in our innocence."[31] The demonstration of the intellect, being apparent to the observer, is not unique to Ambrose. He uses the person's expressions to assess the physical, cognitive and spiritual dimensions of the individual.

Ambrose understands the nature of mental health. Through his faculty of observation, he formulates notions of psychological strain. Documentation of his impressions form a representative part of his writings. The association of mental health expressed in bodily actions is indeed accurate: ". . .for frequently a disturbance of the mind is betrayed by the disordered pace. The rather intent look is, as it were, both the arbiter of his thought, and the silent interpreter of the heart; so that it neither disguises sadness nor is it changed by immoderate laughter."[32] Ambrose scans the face as well as the gait: "He destroys his face who cherishes one thing in his heart, and outwardly pretends another."[33] The human stride and facial

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[30]Ambros. *De Helia* 10.35; CSEL 32-2, 431; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 69.

[31]Ambros. *De Helia* 10.37; CSEL 32-2, 434; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 71.

[32]Ambros. *De Helia* 10.35; CSEL 32-2, 431-432; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 69.

[33]Ambros. *De Helia*. 11.38; CSEL 32-2, 434; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 71.

expression connotate the condition of the heart and the mind.

Ambrose also speaks of his own mental health. He uses the words 'anxiety' and 'peace'. There exists a quality of the Stoic wise man or 'sage'. He transforms this theme into a Christian attribute in which the 'Peace of Christ' becomes utmost in his thinking. There is sufficient Ambrosian usage of the tensions, 'peace-anxiety', to warrant a separate study. An example is cited to note his adaptation.

In a letter to Simplicianus, Ambrose speaks of peacefulness. He is relating the 'inner life' of the human being: "The exterior man has many parts in him; the interior man is filled with wisdom, with favors, with beauty."[34]

> What is so rich in God's sight as the peaceful and modest spirit which is never disturbed? Does not that man appear to be rich who has peace of soul, the tranquility of repose, so that he longs for nothing, is stirred by no storm of passion, tires not of the old, seeks the new, and always by desire becomes poor in the midst of the greatest riches?
>
> Truly that is a rich peace which surpasses all understanding [Cf. Phil. 4.7.]. A rich peace, a rich dignity, a rich faith: 'The faithful man has the whole world for his possession' [Prov. 17.6 {Septuagint}.]; it is a rich simplicity, for those are riches of a simplicity which nothing scatters, which entertain no despondent thought, or suspicious or fraudulent one, but pours itself out with pure affection.[35]

The qualities of peace reside in the soul. This calm, which desires or craves nothing, appreciates the 'old', and anticipates the 'new', is related to the dynamics of dignity and faith. The outward expression of this peace is demonstrated in simplicity. The interior man is visible

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[34]Ambros. *Ep.* 10.2; CSEL 82-1, 163; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 55, "Ambrose to Simplicianus," [c. 386]: 303-304.

[35]Ambros. *Ep.*10.3-4; CSEL 82-1, 164; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 55, "Ambrose to Simplicianus," [c. 386]: 304.

to an observer. The interactive unity of the individual is seen in human behaviours.[36] The dynamics of this unity appear less important to Ambrose than the expression of actions.

The humoral theory is the basis for understanding fourth century pathology. When the 'humors' are in balance the body is healthy. When any one or more of the 'humors' are in imbalance, either an excess or deficiency, illness occurs. The ensuing sickness or imbalance was viewed as a process:

> There were three stages of disease: a change in humoral proportions caused by external or internal factors; the reaction of the body to this by fever or "boiling"; the resultant crisis when the disorder ended through discharge of the excess humor--or by death. The emanations or humors of the body were often seen during illness [blood, phlegm from the nose, vomit, fecal matter, urine, sweat], and frequently an illness did suddenly disappear after reaching a crisis--the dishcarge of one of the humors.[37]

Ambrose's knowledge of health and illness extends beyond the physical structure and function of the body, to include the psychological and intellectual dimensions of the mind. He recognizes forms of disease described in early Greek thought and the medical science of his day. It is interesting to speculate how he acquired this data.[38] What is more engaging is his ability to

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[36]For a discussion on this quality of peacefulness or tranquillity, see Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 65-66. "The fourth and last virtue, temperance, has as its basic condition and chief characteristic tranquillity of mind. Ambrosian temperance is not clearly linked to the virtue of prudence, for it involves self-knowledge in performing the duties appropriate to the individual's talents, obligations, and circumstances. Temperance also supplies the decorum that governs the practice of all the other virtues. Decorum, indeed, is the main rubric under which Ambrose analyzes temperance. What interests him particularly about decorum is its role in guiding the exercise of virtue, rather than the conditions of self-knowledge and self-rule that make it possible. He is much less interested in contemplating autarchy in itself as a psychological state than with examining its consequences in action." Ibid., 65.

[37]Lyons, "Medicine in Hippocratic Times," *Medicine*, 195.

[38]See, Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 19-20.

apply this information in his daily life.

His perceptions and recording of these human conditions are done with such accuracy. The explanations of the pathology may be 'amusing' to the modern mind, but his works represent the paramount scientific contributions of his era. This section covers but a part of his learning on this subject. Another section, covering the common health problems associated with social customs and behaviours, continues in chapter five.

Ambrose's knowledge ranges from awareness of specific occurrences of anatomical dysfunction to observations of an entire pathological process. For example, his understanding of gastrointestinal function and hypermobility: "For, when the interior is emptied and drained at the moment when the food is being immediately evacuated, an inordinate and insatiable desire for food and drink must necessarily follow--a result which without question may lead to an early death."[39]

Ambrose's grasp of the course of an entire disease process is astute. His explanation of acute and chronic alcoholism is best rendered in the vivid descriptions of his own words. The acute need of alcohol is noted and associated with body tremours: "When he is wanting, the tremours cease; but drunkenness causes a perpetual trembling. The bodies of the intoxicated sweat wine; if you touch them even lightly you press out wine."[40]

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[39]Ambros. *Hexameron*, 6.9.71; CSEL 32-1 258; trans. by J. J. Savage, FC 42, 279.

[40]Ambros. *De Helia* 16.58; CSEL 32-2, 445; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 87.

In a more comprehensive description, Ambrose describes drunkenness as the 'kindling wood of passion', the 'incentive of madness', and the 'poison of folly':

> This vice changes the senses and forms of men; through this vice from men they become neighing horses; since indeed, being warm with the natural heat of the body and inflamed beyond the measure of nature by the heat of wine, they cannot restrain themselves, and are excited to bestial passions, so that they have no time prescribed in which it would be fitting them to indulge in coition. They lose their voice, they change color, their eyes burn with passion, they pant with open mouth, they snort with distended nostrils, they are enkindled into rage, they go out of their senses.[41]

The nature of the individual is dramatically altered from human to bestial. Physiological and intellectual changes are evident. He attributes this deviation not only to the depression of higher intellectual processes and the super heating of the body, but also to direct pathological changes: "From this comes dangerous delirium, from this comes the heavy affliction of gall stones, from this comes fatal indigestion, from this comes frequent vomiting on the part of those who belch forth half eaten dainties together with the blood of their inner vitals."[42]

These complications of neural and hepatic toxicity, coupled with the gastric and oesophageal bleeding, remain relevant sixteen hundred years later. Ambrose's detailed capitulum on alcohol-induced delirium crisis is quite a remarkable description of body-mind interaction:

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[41]Ambros. *De Helia* 16.59; CSEL 32-2, 446-447; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 87.

[42]Ambros. *De Helia* 16.59; CSEL 32-2, 447; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 87.

> From this comes also deluding visions, uncertain sight, and tottering gait. Often they leap over shadows as if they were pitfalls. The ground sways beneath them, suddenly it seems to be raised and lowered as if it were turning. In terror they fall upon their faces and grasp the ground with their hands; or they imagine that they are being engulfed by mountains rushing upon then. There is rumbling in their ears like the crashing of a tossing sea and shores resounding from the waves. If they see dogs they think them lions and flee. Some are convulsed in uncouth laughter, others weep with inconsolable grief, others perceive senseless terrors. While awake they sleep, while asleep they quarrel. Life to them is a dream and their sleep is deep. They cannot be aroused by any voices; whatever be the shock by which you would imagine they must be aroused, unless they recover, they cannot awake.[43]

This documentation of a person experiencing acute alcohol psychosis is extraordinary. The individual is strikingly portrayed. The increase of sensory distortion and decrease of judgment are climaxed in a comatose state.

Ambrose's three levelled account of the external actions, pathology, and internal dynamics, presents a total perspective on acute and chronic forms of alcoholism. His knowledge of this disease is another example of his understanding of the human body in health and illness.

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[43]Ambros. *De Helia* 16.60; CSEL 32-2, 447; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 89.

4.3 HEALTH PROMOTION AND THERAPEUTIC MODES

Given his beliefs that the human body participates in nature and is created by a caring God, Ambrose compiles much information about behaviours which promote health and treat illness. As divinely fashioned, the human being holds the responsibility of nourishing the body. The whole world of matter, vegetation and the other creatures provide examples of behaviours to be observed, imitated and used for the promotion of health, the prevention of disease and comfort during irreversible illnesses.

The study of folkways and use of pharmaceutics play a crucial role in Roman society. Health issues are resolved by the scientific knowledge, herbal remedies and magical charms of the age. The designation of these terms requires clarification as the meaning is not always clear. One consideration, which may clarify these difficulties, is the interpretation of the terms within the context of the literary genre.

Translation of the terms demands the ability to live with some uncertainty. The vagueness of interchangeable expressions gives occasion to some difficulties:

> In both the tradition preserved by Plutarch and in Gaius the key word is "medicine" --in Greek *pharmakeia*, in Latin *veneficium*. In both languages the term means use of "magic" or "drugs." The ambiguity of the term, which is preserved in each language although different roots form the words, is deliberate, and reflects the attitude of Greco-Roman culture. Drugs are intimately associated by this culture with magic; the users of Greek or Latin see no need to have two words to differentiate magic and the drugs. The ambiguity of the term, then, is inherent. A univocal translation suppresses one of the two meanings suggested

by the word in most contexts.[44]

Hence clarity of translation is not always possible. One guideline, which might assist in approximating an authentic rendering, is the perception of the medicine in a holistic manner similar to the concept of a shaman-healer. Another guideline might be the description of medicine by Gaius, who uses *venera* or *medicamenta* to mean ". . . that which when employed changes the nature of that to which it is employed" [Justinian, *Digest* 50.16.236].[45]

The intent or action of the medication may support an accurate sense of the substances's properties. The cultural customs may supply more information and additional details. And, an awareness of the health needs or social concerns, which occasioned their use, provides even more details for a greater understanding of translations and meanings.

Yet what is Ambrose's judgment and evaluation of these substances? The classifications of scientific knowledge, herbal remedies and magical charms can be found within his writings. He completely accepts the first two but renounces the last: "How ridiculous is the current belief that you can be brought to earth by magical charms! These are old wives' tales, the gossip of the common crowd. . . .There are many men who provoke the church, but the charms of the magician can not harm her."[46] The use of incantations, charms and amulets were still evident

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[44]Noonan, *Contraception*, 25.

[45]Noonan, *Contraception*, 25. Noonan acknowledges the research and recommendations of C. Pharr. In addition, Noonan cites the use of the word with the young: "The term 'medicine' in respect to children primarily designates abortifacients." See, Clyde Pharr, "The Interdiction of Magic in Roman Law." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 63 [1932]: 272-273. Ibid., 25.

[46]Ambros. *Hexameron* 4.8.33; CSEL 32-1, 138-139; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 157.

in the fourth century.[47] Accusations of magic could bring denunication and execution.[48] The charge of sorcery still carried the penalty of death.[49]

Ambrose's attitude toward therapeutic subustances appears positive. He subscribes to the practises and remedies:

> Hence, that art of medicine is older which can cure by use of herbs and juices. No condition of health is founded on a firmer basis than that which is acquired by the aid of health-giving nourishment. Wherefore, following the guidance of nature we are led to believe that food is our sole medicine. It is certain that open sores are closed by the use of herbs; our internal ills are cured by herbs. For this reason physicians need to know the efficacy of herbs, for from this source the practice of medicine took its rise.[50]

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[47]A. A. Barb, "The Survival of Magic Arts," chap. in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964]. Barb asserts a relationship between the mythical formula of '*in illo tempore* and the eventual Christian liturgical prayer structure: "In fact if your take the liturgical prayer of the Christian Church today, the so-called 'Collects', you will find again and again this figure of speech: 'O god, who, *in illo tempore* didst this or that, grant now this or that analogous favour.' There was, of course, no lack of stories in the Old and New Testaments which could be repeated or referred to. More than a dozen such references are for instance, contained in a single exorcism which has come down to us under the name of St. Ambrose, the great fouth-century Bishop of Milan, and similar prayers rightly or wrongly attributed to his Greek contemporary in the East, St. Basil, have fared better still." Ibid., 122. The document, which Barb cites, is the once contested: Ambros. *Explanatio symboli ad initiandos*, CSEL 73, 1-12. For the issues of dating and authorship, see Mara, *Patrology*, vol. IV, 170-171.

[48]See Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 565-567.

[49]"In 384 the case against Priscillian was reopened, this time at Bordeaux. The charge seems to have been Manicheism, as before. Priscillian, for reasons not entirely clear, appealed from the decision of the council to the emperor, a disastrous move. He and some of his following were arraigned not for Manicheism but on even more serious charges of sorcery. In 385 Magnus Maximus entrusted the case to his praetorian perfect Evodius, and the latter found then guilty. Despite appeals by Ambrose of Milan and Martin of Tours, Priscillian, the Aquitanian widow Euchrotia, four clery, and a poet named Latronianus were executed." Frend, *The Rise of Christianty*, 712-713.

[50]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.13.57; CSEL 32-1, 100; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 112.

He integrates the practices and remedies to God's creation which supplies the gifts of the earth. The foods, which are part of nature's bounty, provide the most life giving 'medicine': "Definite foods have been allotted to us which are known to all, foods which provide us with both pleasure and physical health."[51] The human's bodily senses play a most important role:

> Our strength declines unless it is restored by continued absorption of adequate food. For that reason, those exhausted by hunger have no sensation of pleasure in the use of the senses. Not being, as it were, participants [Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.428], they have no part in the predilections of these senses.[52]

The experience of food has a sensual aspect which enhances its properties and enjoyment as well as provision of health.

Ambrose uses the irrational animals' 'knowledge' of medicines to chide the Milanese. For, if the creatures know what ingredients help them, reasoning human beings should be able to discover which substances assist them.[53] He states:

> Each and everything which is produced from the earth has its own reason for existence, which, as far as it can, fulfills the general plan of creation. Some things, therefore, are created for our consumption; other things serve for other uses. There is nothing without a purpose; there is nothing superfluous in what germinates from the earth. What you consider as useless has use for others; as a matter of fact, it often is useful to you in another way.[54]

Ambrose covers all categories of vegetative forms and structures to demonstrate his point. Trees provide a 'twofold gift': "at one and the same time we are granted nourishment for our bodies and a means of warding off the sun's rays in the cool of their shade; the fruit provides food and

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[51]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.9.38; CSEL 32-1, 84; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 96.

[52]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9 65; CSEL 32-1, 254; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 275.

[53]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.9.41; CSEL 32-1, 86; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 98.

[54]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.9.39; CSEL 32-1, 84-85; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 96.

the leaves give us occasion for enjoyable living."[55] The medicinal properties of bark, sap, gum and leaves can be ascertained by 'experiment' and used as God planned their purpose and adaptation.[56]

Vines are depicted: "First of all, there is nothing more pleasing than the scent of a blossoming vine. Furthermore, the juice, when extracted from the flower of this vine, produces a drink which is pleasureable and health-giving."[57] Fruits, vegetables and herbs are cited as the 'generosity of God' offered to humans: "This sort of food is wholesome and useful, too, in that it wards off disease and prevents indigestion."[58]

Plants and herbs can be prepared for the conservation of health and the prevention of illnesses: "Slumber is often induced, too, by the use of the mandrake, whenever the sick are troubled by their inability to sleep. Why need I speak of opium which has come to be used almost daily, inasmuch as severe intestinal pains are allayed by its use."[59] The usual poisonous nature of hellebore can bring relief to the 'prolonged sufferings of a sick body'.[60] The preparations of potions is described:

> Water becomes bitter by the infusion of wormwood, becomes stronger from an admixture of wine and more tart when garlic is added; it becomes heavy or sweet as the result of the addition of poison or honey. In fact, if the mastick tree and

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[55]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.16.65; CSEL 32-1, 105; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 118.

[56]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.16.65; CSEL 32-1, 105; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 118.

[57]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.12.49; CSEL 32-1, 92-93; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 104.

[58]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.7.28; CSEL 32-1, 77; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 88.

[59]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.9.39; CSEL 32-1, 85; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 97.

[60]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.9.39; CSEL 32-1, 85; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 97.

> the fruit of turpentine tree or the kernel of nuts are infused with water, the resulting mixture can readily take on the filmy nature of oil.[61]

These mixtures of active ingredient and solution might be used to concoct a plenitude of tonics. Honey may be used as a constituent of a compound or as a single medication in its own right: "It contributes not to our pleasures alone, but to our health as well. It soothes our throats and ministers to our wounds. Even to our organic ills it serves as a healing draught."[62]

Ambrose's homily concerning nature's endowment of health and pleasure has been preached. But, he adds another category of biological substances which protect the individual from threat or danger. He attributes these herbs with extraordinary properties associated with cultural lore: "The application of the leaves of a bramble to a serpent bring[s] about his death. Gnats will not trouble you if you anoint yourself with wormwood which has been cooked in oil."[63] One particular herb, although it has medicinal and protective properties, raises Ambrose's ire:

> Why do I need to mention the fact that men are fond of garlic and use as a food a substance which the leopard avoids? Hence, as soon as a person gets ready to prepare garlic, a leopard, who is unable to tolerate it, is apt to leap forth from that region. To think that you use for food and infuse into your vitals a substance [Cf. Horace, *Epodes* 3.5], whose very odor a ferocious wild beast cannot endure! But it serves as medicine for those in pain. Let it be used as medicine, then, for invalids and not as food for banqueters.[64]

Humans should admire the fruits of nature; he never says one must like all the properties of the

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[61]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.15.62; CSEL 32-1, 103; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 115.

[62]Ambros. *Hexameron* 5.21.70; CSEL 32-1, 192; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 215-216.

[63]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.8.37; CSEL 32-1, 84; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 95.

[64]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.4.28; CSEL 32-1, 223; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 245.

created order.

Pharmaceutical usage is another area of Ambrose's interest. He is aware of particular medications or drugs which promote, modify or restore health. From major to minor illnesses, he writes of the therapeutic approaches which have significance for the human body. His knowledge of health problems and concerns encompasses all developmental ages.

Ambrose is attentive to the health needs of children. He is informed on the common problems of parasites. The treatment for this condition is medication. Within the context of his advice on fasting, he remarks:

> Bitter things are wont to be more beneficial even to our bodies themselves. For just as worms, when they are produced in the inmost vitals of children through the indigestion of food, cannot be destroyed unless a bitter potion be administered, or medicines of a pungent quality be injected, from the odor of which they die, so the virtue of fasting having entered the depth of soul destroys the hidden sin.[65]

Ambrose is cognizant of the long term effects of parasitic conditions upon the internal organs of the body. He believes that food is the source of the invasive agent. He knows that medication is required to rid the body of such a problem and attributes the drug's effectiveness to the action of its 'odor'. Following the point of parasitic death, he also takes the opportunity and parallels the action and virtue of fasting as penetrating the depth of the soul and destroying 'hidden' sin.

In addition to the needs of children, his thoughts on human beginnings cover a wide subject area and are generally located with perspectives on contraception, conception and birth.

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[65]Ambros. *De Helia* 11.38; CSEL 32-2, 434; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 73.

His knowledge of conception, embryology and fetology is part of the scientific theory base of his age. His comments on reproductive acts include the prevention or interruption of fetal life. He identifies potions or drugs which would prevent pregnancy:

> Even the wealthy, in order that their inheritance may not be divided among several, deny in the very womb their own progeny. By use of parricidal mixtures they snuff out the fruit of their wombs in the genital organs themselves. In this way life is taken way before it is given.[66]

Although the language strongly suggests the wealthy have the means to obtain abortive compounds, the reality of contraceptive preparations is definitely present in this capitulum.[67] Ambrose, in his own reasoning, may not differentiate between these substances. Whether he means the prevention or interruption of embyronic life, can only be surmised. But, the choice of 'parricidal' strongly suggests the extinguishing of life not yet 'given'. Ambrose's admonishment is against avarice and the taking of life before it occurs.[68]

Another aspect of the passage applies to the use of potions during marriage. Within this context, Ambrose condemns the use of abortifacients to protect the rights of inheritance. What

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[66]Ambros. *Hexameron* 5.18.58; CSEL 32-1, 184; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 207.

[67]Noonan supports this interpretation: "The poor abandon their children; rich women 'deny their own fetus in their uterus and by parricidal potions extinguish the pledges of their womb in their genital belly.' says St. Ambrose in the fourth century [*Hexameron*, 5.18.58, CSEL 32-1:184]. By those potions he definitely means abortifacients and probably includes contraceptives. At a minimum, his statement supports what might otherwise be guessed, that the potions, costing money, would be the prerogative of those able to afford them." Noonan, *Contraception*, 19, footnote number 19.

[68]Noonan supports this interpretation. He also distinguishes other possibilities relating to administration and duration of *venena* or "medicines"; that is, were the preparations oral or external, temporary or permanent measures? He also cites Dubarle's contribution regarding the crimes of murder, abortion, and sterility: A. Dubarle, "La Bible et les pères ont-ils parlé de la contraception?" *La Vie spirituelle* vol. 15, Supplement [1962], 599. Noonan, *Contraception*, 98-99.

is not as clear is his reasoning about the isolated acts of prevention, in contrast with the actual practice of contraception. Does he condemn both acts? Does his condemnation also refer to parents who limit the number of children but have not prevented all acts of procreation? An exact interpretation of Ambrose's thought is, at best, speculative in nature.

Ambrose does support the generative propagation and the growth of population. Although his general views on virginity and celibacy are discussed later in this paper, his view on societal expansion is usually not as well known. Ambrose's conviction is very clear. He supports a minority position which affords a wider ecclesiastical intent. He reasons sensibly that propagation is valued because ". . . the number of the devout people is increased."[69]

In another area, Ambrose differs from some of his contemporaries by differentiating between contraceptives and anaphrodisiacs. The former measures are condemned; the latter preparations are permitted.[70] His attitude may be inferred from passages in which substances are named, but no denunciation is made. In a commentary of Psalm 136.2, Ambrose interprets the willows as symbols of abstinence and chastity. By not alluding to the contraceptive properties, he may consider the willow as merely an anaphrodisiac substance.[71] Again, he comments: "And it has not escaped our notice that the ravings of the sensual passions frequently have been stayed by hemlock. . . ."[72] As this latter passage is within the context of the

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[69]Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucam.* 1, 30; CSEL 32-4, 29; trans. Noonan, *Contraception*, 82. For an examination of four grounds which might have existed for favoring population increases, see Noonan, *Contraception*, 81-85.

[70]Noonan, *Contraception*, 104.

[71]Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucum* 2.70; CSEL 32-4, 78.

[72]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.9.39: CSEL 32-1, 85; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 97.

beneficial purposes of all creation, his acceptance of the potions which have anaphrodisiac effects may be implied. His reasoning may be associated with the qualified acceptance of specific herbal preparations and the alteration of bodily function without the violation of the individual's constitution.[73]

This list of therapeutic substances is not meant to be exhaustive. But it serves as a sample of Ambrose's interest and repertoire in this area of scientific knowledge. The underlying principles of God's beneficence in creation, and of nature's order and role as teacher. The study and discernment of nature enables the human being to understand God's purpose and gifts. All has been provided for humanity. Individuals can delineate the purposes. Hence the world supplies life-giving 'nourishment' for human needs.

In addition to nourishment, Ambrose promotes health by means of activity. He encourages the maintenance of the body through action: "The body's strength is increased by frequent exercise. Lack of exercise tends to diminish or weaken our bodies. In fact, persons who refrain from exercises lose even that strength which is natural to them."[74]

His thought on the meaning of disease represents several dimensions. Ambrose believes that unhappiness due to illness is unnecessary: "Is it not clear that a disability cannot be an impediment to happiness."[75] He sees health and illness as part of living. His understanding of human nature demands that both the soul and the body deserve, require and receive care. Illness may be interpreted as an occasion for reflection. He does support a biological basis for

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[73]Noonan, *Contraception*, 103-104.

[74]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.6.22; CSEL 32-1, 397; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 423.

[75]Ambrose. *De Iacob* 9.37; CSEL 32-2, 47; trans. by McGuire, FC 65, 169.

illness. His understanding of acute and chronic problems has been discussed. Ambrose is aware that accidents and trauma affect the ability of the person to the maintain essentials of life.

He ascribes to all the means to assure health and to restore physical, mental and spiritual health. These measures include both natural and supernatural means. Early Christianity had witnessed the healing of both body and soul, a dimension which does not lessen with Ambrose:[76]

> The frequency of physical healing in the Gospels could be understood as endorsing a concern for the body's well-being. But at the same time, miracles were the most striking testimony imaginable to the superior effectiveness of religious over secular healing: healing miracles were not only prominent in the Gospels, they also played a very large part in the cult of saints and shrines as it developed in the late ancient centuries. As a consequence, although secular and religious healing continued to exist side by side as they had since at least the time of Hippocrates, the relationship between them shifted as the classical world gave way to the Christian Middle Ages.[77]

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[76]For more details, see, H. C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracles and Magic in New Testament Times*, Society for New Testament Studies: Monograph Series, ed. G. N. Stanton, no. 55 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986].

[77]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 9.

4.4 CHRISTIAN MEANINGS OF HEALING

In the western empire, the role of the Roman physician was generally accepted. There was a contrast between urban and rural areas. Although some medical practitioners travelled to the country, the metropolitan regions were well supplied. In some of the larger urban settings, publicly salaried municipal practitioners were appointed. Medical attendants were also provided for the army.[78] There were no established medical programmes, institutes or licensing. However, Roman law did regulate the accountability and liability of medical practitioners for injury to their clients.[79]

Although there is limited knowledge of Ambrose's assessment of physicians, his evaluation of midwives is quite clear.[80] The Bishop of Verona is reminded that the testimony of paid midwives, who generally attended the birth of infants, is not to be taken over that of a 'consecrated' person.

To this secular knowledge of health practitioners, Ambrose adds Christian symbols and meanings. The designation of Christ as the Physician is a recurrent theme in the Ambrosian corpus.[81] The portrayal of the imagery can be evaluated as complicated or just discursive. For

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[78]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 6.

[79]Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 6.

[80]Ambros. *Ep* 56.8-10; CSEL 82-2, 88-90; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 32, 156-157.

[81]For Augustine's development of the theme, see the article by Rudolph Arbesmann, "The Concept of 'Christus medicus' in St. Augustine," *Traditio* 10 [1954]: 1-28.

on some occasions, the association is with bodily health and healing; on other occasions, the symbolism refers to the spiritual vitality of the soul; and again, the expression may represent the well-being and healing of the whole individual. Regardless of the state of development within Ambrose's thinking, *Christus medicus* is evident in his documents. Closer examination of the associations, within the context of the documents, allows various meanings of the imagery to emerge.[82]

The figure of Christ as Physician is used to promote Christ as healer and comforter:

> If you should suffer a wound, take heed and run to a physician, to seek a remedy in repentance. Take heed, because you are made of weak and stumbling flesh. May the good physician of souls, the Divine Word, come to your assistance. May the oracles of the Lord be to you like health-giving medicines. Take heed that no unrighteous word lie hidden in your heart, for it creeps through your body like poison, bringing with it deadly infection. Take heed, lest you forget the God who made you, and do not take His name in vain.[83]

The two-fold level of treatment involved in this passage, addresses the bodily aspect of injury and the subsequent advice of seeking a physician's care. The invocation for 'health-giving medicines' encourages pleas for a united or whole healing of bodily and spiritual needs. This prayer to the Divine Word as physician, petitions the healing of both physical and spiritual dimensions of an individual. The aspect of worthiness underscores the status of the person's petition.

On other occasions, another more spiritualized healing is featured: "The Apostles, who were to be His friends, said as they asked the good Physician to heal their weak faith: 'Increase

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[82]It is interesting to note that the greater number of Ambrosian references to Christ as Healer occurs in his letters.

[83]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.50; CSEL 32-1, 242-243; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 264.

our faith.'[Luke 17.5.]"[84] The focus of this example is centered on spiritual weakness which can be healed through prayer. Health occurs with increasing faith as the nature of spiritual healing.

Anxieties related to the postponement of Christian initiation is explained in correspondence with Bellicius. He believes his illness may be caused by his deferral of Baptism. The underlying questions, 'what is the cause of my illness' and 'why is this incident happening to me', form the basis for a vengeful deity. Ambrose reassures him that Christ is not the cause of the illness.[85] In a second letter to this parishioner, Ambrose reiterates the Lord's caring and curative caring role:

> There is a blindness resulting from sickness which obscures the vision and is remedied by the passage of time. There is a blindness which is caused by flowing humors and this, also, when the trouble is removed, is generally cured by the skill of medicine. From this you may know that when one is cured who has been blind from birth it is not a case of skill but of power. The Lord gave health, and He used no medicine, for the Lord Jesus healed those whom no one else had cured.[86]

Once again, Ambrose's knowledge of medicine assists in explaining the natural pathological processes associated with blindness and distinguishing them from the Creator of health. Bellicius is reminded of God's healing power. Divine action intercedes into the natural order.

The religious dimension overflows into the classical image of the sage as ecclesiastical

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[84]Ambros. *Ep*. 66.8; CSEL 82-2, 204-205; trans, by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 48, "Ambrose to Horontianus," [undated]: 253-254.

[85]Ambros. *Ep* 9.2; CSEL 82-1, 70; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no.66, "Ambrose to Bellicius," [undated]: 401.

[86]Ambros. *Ep* 67.2; CSEL 82-2, 205; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no.67, "Ambrose to Bellicius," [undated]: 402-402.

roles and functions take on a healing component. Ambrose describes the role of a bishop:

> Therefore, not only in every act, but especially, in the demand for a bishop, malignity should have no place, for in him the life of all is formed; so that he is a man preferred to all by a calm and peaceful decision, being chosen from among all, one who is to heal all, for 'the meek man is the healer of the heart.' [Prov.14.30] And the Lord in the Gospel calls Himself this healer, saying: 'It is not the healthy who need a physician, but they who are sick.'[Matt. 9.12]
>
> He is the good Physician, who has taken upon Him our infirmities, has healed our illnesses, and yet He, as it is written, did not glorify Himself. . . .[87]

In the imitation of Christ's role, the clergy of Vercelli are encouraged to elect a successor to Eusebius. Ambrose emphasizes the qualities which he believes are best for the people of this region. The importance of calmness, peacefulness and healing is stressed. Christ, as exemplar, anticipates all forms of healing. The message of Christ's healing role is proclaimed and written. In a personal affirmation he tells his congregation: "I am the servant of Christ, redeemed by His blood; I have given up myself entire to Him."[88] Citing temptations, as acts which disassociate the individual from the works of Christ, Ambrose states:

> We have taken refuge with the physician. He has cured our former wounds, and if any pain remains, a remedy will not be wanting. Although we have done some injury, He will not be mindful of it Who has once forgiven. Although we have committed grievous faults, we have found a great physician; we have received the great medicine of His grace; for great medicine removes great sins.[89]

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[87]Ambros. *Ep.*14.45, extra collectionem; CSEL 82-3, 286; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 59, "Ambrose, servant of Christ, called bishop, to the Church at Vercelli and those who invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. May grace be in you from God the Father and His only-begotten Son in the Holy Spirit," [396], 337-338.

[88]Ambros. *De Helia* 20.75; CSEL 32-2, 457; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 101.

[89]Ambros. *De Helia* 20.75; CSEL 32-2, 458; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 101.

The offering of the total Self, may be understood on at least two levels. Primarily Ambrose has surrendered himself completely to Christ, and secondarily he has given himself completely to the healing graces of Christ as physician. Next, the symbolism of cure, wounds, pain and injury are relevant to the totality of his human nature. Christian healing comes with absolute acceptance. The qualified dualism of the body is diminished by the image of *Christus medicus*. The interaction among the human body, the mind and spirit is enhanced. It is the unity of the whole person who suffers. The whole body and soul, suffer and heal, in an integrated experience. Bodily actions are transformed into the life of the soul.[90]

Another means of Christian healing is associated with the fourth century cult of saints. Ambrose's thought and actions involving human bodily remains represent an intriguing series of challenges. His writings on his brother Sartyrus' death are filled with human compassion and a sense of loss. His concern for the remains of Emperors Gratian,[91] and Valentinian II[92] are known. His only known correspondence with Basil of Caesarea requests the return of the remains of an earlier bishop of Milan.[93]

Another component of his thought relates to the discovery of two sets of martyrs buried within the gardens of Milan. One of his final acts as bishop was to travel for the consecration

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[90]See Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 41-46 and 59-60.

[91]Beyenka: "Ambrose had gone twice to the Consistory of Maximus and bore many affronts while there, first in the winter of 383-384 when he pleaded for peace on behalf of the young Valentinian, and later at the beginning of 385 when he begged that the body of Gratian be returned for burial at Milan." Beyenka, *Ep.* FC 26 no. 9, 56, note 3.

[92]Ambros. *Ep.* 25; CSEL 82-1, 206-208; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 4, "Ambrose to Theodosius the Emperor," [August, 392]: 26-28.

[93]Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, *Ep.* 197 [A. D. 375], NPNF, vol. 8, 42.

of the church and the installation of the altar's relics.

Can his preoccupation with remains be focused solely on family, emperors and saints? What are the dynamics associated with these behaviours and events? An examination of selected documents points to a preoccupation or exquisite sensivity to the needs of grieving people.

In the latter part of the fourth century, the occurrence and nature of miracles take on a greater significance.[94] The convergence and interception of martyrs, relics, and miracles form an overwhelming combination.[95] The spontaneous healing associated with persons or relics become a dynamic force with Milan as well.

The interpretations of these events are generally sought in the political domain.[96] Some

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[94]See, Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* The Haskell Lectures on the History of Religions, New Series, ed. J. M. Kitagawa, no. 2 [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981], 26-28, 36-37, 63-66; Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I 307-314; W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* 416, 565-66; R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400* 94-98.

[95]Siraisi comments: "St. Augustine, for instance, in recounting miracles of healing he claimed to have seen at firsthand, provided emphatic and detailed accounts of the previous failure of skilled physicians to cure those subsequently healed by supernatural means. Meanwhile, the physical care of the sick poor early came to be considered a characteristic manifestation of Christian charity, and if carried out in person, of holy self-mortification on the part of the giver. One example is St. Jerome's eulogy of Fabiola [d. 399], a wealthy Roman lady whose saintly activities included founding an infirmary and caring for the sick with her own hands. The beliefs and attitudes just summarized embodied certain tensions and ambiguities. For the most part, Christian and even monastic tradition permitted, and in some respects encouraged, the preservation and study of secular medical books, a moderate concern for one's own physical health [provided the superior claims of the soul were acknowledged], and the practice of healing by members of religious communities. Thus, St. Augustine's rule for nuns specifically recommended consultation with a male medical practitioner by any nun who fell sick." Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine* 9.

[96]Williams hypothesizes: " Instead, it will be proposed that two events are responsible for breaking the threat which Homoianism posed to Nicene supremacy: the discovery of the relics of Protasius and Gervasius in 386, and, more importantly, the invasion of Italy in 387 by the pro-Nicene Magnus Maximus." Daniel Harrison Williams, "Nicene Christianity and Its

scholars suggest that the discovery and celebration of the findings are most opportune.[97] But the point of this particular examination is Ambrose's description of the experience, not the intent of his action. He writes about his 'reluctance' concerning the peoples' request for the relics of martyrs. Then suddenly, he is deeply aware or perceives divine activity or a sign.

This direct, though vague feeling appears to create in his consciousness an impression or antecedent feeling which he acts upon. Citing the Lord's favour bestowed upon him, Ambrose does find human remains. The nature of his experience is highly coloured with sensory activities of feeling, perception, and consciousness.

Two later experiences follow a similar pattern. The discovery of Agricola and Vitalis in 393 A.D. at Bologna.[98] Two years later, the transfer of the martyr Nazarius, brings a 'repeat' of the discovery of Gervasius and Protasius. After Nazarius' remains were brought from a garden outside the walls to the city centre, Ambrose left Milan and went to the garden. There he prayed. The remains of Celsus were then discovered and transferred to the Cathedral.[99] The experience of 'feeling' or awareness is cited once again.

These events enhance Ambrose's reputation. These discoveries supported increased

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Opponents in Northern Italy: An Examination of Late Fourth Century Anti-Arian Polemics and Political with Particular Emphasis on the Early Career of Ambrose of Milan" [Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1990], 10.

[97]Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 298-308, and Chapter XII, "The discovery of the Relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius." 308-320.

[98]See Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 316-317; and Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, 254, 360.

[99]See Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 318-319; and Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, 254, 369-370.

edification within the religious community. The relevance of these relics and other discoveries was culturally significant to the rising cults and shrines of martrys and saints. In general, these events brought a greater awareness and affirmation of the Christian religion.

Ambrose's own contribution is considerable. The philosophical and theological implications met the social criticism of the Christian beliefs in an afterlife and in the resurrection of Christ. For Ambrose, these events supported his theological beliefs in the expectation of the Resurrection of the body.

Another aspect of the cult is associated with Classical Roman thought and practices. The Roman 'cultural psyche', which stresses the burial of the dead even to the point of burial societies, is deep within the social traditions of antiquity. These influences, plus the emphasis by Ambrose, affords dignity to human remains of all people and efficacy to the sanctified remains of the holy people. He targets all Christian people. Even the emperor's family is included. In a letter to Theodosius regarding the burial of Valentinian II: "But we shall have time to weep later; let us now attend to his burial which your Clemency has commanded to take place here. If he has died without baptism, I now withhold what I know."[100] Ambrose then discusses the rites and follows with a suggestion for porphyry vessel tablets. He cites the pain and suffering of his two sisters during these stressful times.

His pastoral sense, as seen in his documents, overtakes this phenomenon. For the sake

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[100]Ambros. *Ep.* 25; CSEL 82-1, 206-208; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 4, "Ambrose to Theodosius the Emperor," [August, 392]: 26-28.

of the living, a proper disposition of the body carries great importance for Ambrose. The burial site is a place for remaining family or people to visit and honour the deceased. He does discourage the 'unruly festivities' near the grave site. An examination of his thought and influences reveal both Classical and Christian thought and practices.[101]

The relationship between human bodily remains and relics suggests a dignity far surpassing most understanding of mortal remains. The incidents of miraculous events point to a unity not realized before Christianity.

Ambrose's qualified dualism is supported by an understanding of the integrated, comprehensive responses and experiences of the body and the soul. The role of Christ as Healer and the miraculous cures associated with relics, provide means of accessing and harmonizing whole levels of Christian beliefs and practices into a cohesive tenet of divine intervention into the natural order. Classical thought and Christian beliefs play a dominant role in Ambrose's deliberations concerning bodily health. He transmits the scientific data of his age and attributes worldly plants and therapeutic agents to the benevolence of God. The human being, through reason, is able to discern nourishment for promoting health and pharmaceutic remedies of comfort and cure for disease.

Ambrose's qualified human dualism supports an understanding of integration or constitutionally whole response and experience of body and soul. For he is not content to limit the bodily health within the dynamics of nature. Ambrose acknowledges and integrates another

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[101]For the most comprehensive study of works cited earlier [footnote 94], see Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* The Haskell Lectures on History of Religions, ed. J. M. Kitagawa, New Series, no. 2 [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981].

level of health and spiritual healing beyond the created order, perception or reason. These changes occur through Christ's intercession as *Christus Medicus*.

The next level of interpretation integrates earlier, bodily perspectives of constituency, creation and health and moves to another vantage point from which the investigation of the human body can be seen in a wider context. The Ambrosian tripartiate view of human nature plays a major role in appraising the human body as perceived within the social milieu.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BODY IN ROMAN SOCIETY:PASSIONS AND PLEASURES

Ambrose's beliefs, involving the revealed human origin and ascribed equality, propel his thought into the social arena.[1] He moves with ease to an understanding of a common human confraternity. Proper to human nature all people share similar physical and social needs. In the meeting of these needs, the individual is interdependent with members of the society who join together and form basic social structures dealing with economic strategies, agrarian policies, judicial codes and public health practices.

This fourth level of interpretation focuses his understanding of human interaction within the framework of the Roman social ethos inclusive of briefs, customs, norms and expectations. The complexity of the fourth century Empire was readily understood by the former civil and current ecclesiastical leader of Milan.

Most examinations of his ideas on social dynamics and issues are viewed through social ethics, political or social theory. These perspectives place Ambrose within the context of his era. He uses the literary and rhetorical forms of diatribe and polemic with searing effectiveness.

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[1]For a masterful examination of these themes, see: Vincent R. Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose: A Study on De Nabuthe*, Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum" vol. 17 [Roma: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum", 1982]. Hereafter cited as Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*.

As with most complex forms, multiple layers can be found. This interpretation aims to explicate his understanding of the human body within this social context and to emphasize the health and wellness of humans played out against a broader landscape involving *humanitas* and unreasoned behaviours.

One modern commentary describes Ambrose as possessing a wider framework than many other fourth century Christian writers: "At the same time, Ambrose's works are far broader in scope than those of any of the apologists, granting the fact that there were some apologists whose interests were not confined to controversy."[2] In the sense of an apologist whose words addressed emperors and plebs alike, Ambrose's treatises and homilies present Christian thought. His words challenge not only governmental policy, but every day events as well.

Ambrose's interest lies in problems which affect society as a whole, the family as a unit or the individual person in particular. The social issues of economic practices, agrarian policies, violence, entertainment forms and health problems, indirectly and directly influence the quality of daily living. These problems often diminish all individuals and create circumstances which alter the conditions in which the Christian message and lifestyle could be negated or at the least not sustained. An examination of Ambrose's attitudes on these factors affords another dimension of his understanding of the human body within the context of society.[3]

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[2]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 49.

[3] "Among the shorter works of St. Ambrose there are three, namely, the *De Helia et Ieiunio*, the *De Nabuthae*, and the *De Tobia* which are so similar in construction, subject matter, and style that they may be said to form a trilogy. These three works are directed in common against flagrant social evils and vices in the last half of the fourth century. Thus, the *De Helia* attacks chiefly the evil of intemperance, the *De Nabuthae*, avarice and luxury, the *De Tobia*, usury. Hence they have a peculiar historical interest, because of the light which they throw on the society of the period. Furthermore, since their subject matter is presented in a highly

5.1 SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS AND ECONOMIC PRACTICES: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Some aspects of societal customs and norms come under sharp appraisal by the Milanese bishop. The economic practice of usury, agrarian policies and forms of violence, all thought condoned by society, dramatically affect the daily well-being of many people. Ambrose employs the diatribe as a mirror to reflect the social behaviours which have bodily implications and strain self-determination and freedom. Ambrose does not differentiate: he is as demanding of pagan Romans as he is of Christians.

His invective is based on the valuing of *humanitas*, the Stoic doctrine of human solidarity: "The Stoics constructed the theory of one society, predicated upon the principle that all men are brothers."[4] The Christian genesis narrative describes all people, as the descendents of Adam and Eve, equal.

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imaginative and vivid manner, they may lay claim to some literary significance." M. J. A. Buck, *S. Ambrosii, De Helia et ieiunio: A Commentary, with an Introduction and Translation*, Catholic University of America, Patristic Studies, ed. R. J. Deferrari. vol. XIX [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1929], xiii. Hereafter cited as: Ambros. *De Helia*, trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt*. vol. XIX.

The other texts of the trilogy include: *S. Ambrosii, De Nabuthae: A Commentary, with an Introduction and Translation*, translated by M. R. P. McGuire. The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies, ed. R. J. Deferrari, vol. XV [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1927] hereafter as: Ambros. *De Nab.*, translated by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt*. vol. XV; and *S. Ambrosii, De Tobia, A Commentary, with an Introduction and Translation* trans. L. M. Zucker. The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies, ed. R. J. Deferrari, vol. XXXV [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1933] hereafter cited as: Ambros. *De Tobia*, trans. by Zucker *De Tobia, in PSt* vol. XXXV.

[4]Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*, 67.

Ambrose views the Stoic *cosmopolis*[5] as the human expectation of moral obligations to each other; for him, "All men form a natural moral community of rational beings. In ideal terms this community is a cosmopolis transcending all existing social and political configurations. In practical terms, this doctrine gives Stoic ethics an inescapable social dimension."[6] The notion of duties flows from these concepts. The idea of challenging social conditions or structures, was never used as a sanction by Stoic members. The imperfections of society do not obliterate the duty of the wise man to serve his community: "In contrast to Aristotelianism, which sees participation in civic life as a means to the actualization of virtue, Stoicism sees service to society as a duty incumbent upon the sage, whose wisdom and virtue are already perfectly realized."[7]

Ambrose's beliefs about a shared human nature, inherent in the concept of *humanitas*, are evident in many forms. For him, all individuals, rich or poor, come into the world in the same fashion and are recognized in the same manner: "For why are you proud, O rich man? Why do you say to the poor: 'Do not touch me'? Were you not conceived in a womb and born from a womb as a poor man is born? Why do you boast of your noble lineage?"[8] Ambrose's

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[5]Ambrose instructs his Bishop Sabinus about humanity's place in the world: "First, therefore, He created the world and then the inhabitants of the world for whom all the world was to be a fatherland. Even today, if, wherever the wise man goes, he is a citizen and knows his own, nowhere considering himself a mere pilgrim or a foreigner, how much more was the first man an inhabitant of all the world, and as the Greeks say, a 'cosmopolite' for he was the final work of God, continually talking with God, a fellow citizen of the saints, a groundbed of virtues." Ambros. *Ep* 34.16; CSEL 82-1, 237; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 25, 133.

[6]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. 1, 38.

[7]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 39.

[8]Ambros. *De Nab*. 13.54; CSEL 32-2, 499; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt*. vol. XV, 83.

words are just as strong with beginning or end of the individuals' bodily life:

> Nature, therefore, knows not how to discriminate when we are born, it knows not how, when we die. It creates all alike, all alike it encloses in the bosom of the tomb. Who can distinguish the forms of dead? Uncover the earth and, if you can, pick out the rich man.[9]

Nature does not distinguish among human beings as they enter and leave this world.

Even in death, the earth treats every mortal in the same way. It is only with entombed material belongings that the individual might be identified: "Silken garments and robes interwoven with gold, in which the rich man's body is enveloped, are losses to the living and not helps to the dead."[10] The verification of the rich leads to another factor regarding the disposition of wealth. Ambrose questions the burial of goods which could assist the living, especially the poor.

Questions relating to social status or wealth are set aside. His sympathy is with the poor.[11] Ambrose succinctly counsels the Milanese: "Poverty is not a crime, there is no infamy in indigence, but to be in debt is shameful, and not to pay, shameless."[12] To reiterate his advice, he summarizes his position:

> You are rich; do not take a loan. You are poor; do not take a loan. You are rich: you suffer no necessity of begging. You are poor: consider the difficulty

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[9]Ambros. *De Nab.* 1.2; CSEL 32-2, 470; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 47.

[10]Ambros. *De Nab.* 1.3; CSEL 32-2, 470; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV., 49.

[11]Ambrose's concerns for the poor extend to the development of the idea of *pauper mysticus* in contrast with the person of wealth; see Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*, 238-241.

[12]Ambros. *De Tobia* 21.81; CSEL 32-2, 566-567; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 95.

> of paying. Wealth is diminished by interest, poverty is not lightened by interest; for never is evil corrected by evil nor is a wound healed by a wound, but is made worse by an ulcer.[13]

The bodily depiction of wound and ulceration is a multi-levelled image of the effects of usury. For Ambrose, it contributes to the wounds of societal dysfunction, familial disruptions, and individual destitution. He acknowledges the consequences on the health of all.

The issue of slavery has importance for Ambrose. On a personal level his empathy was great enough to sell church vessels to ransom slaves. The ownership of humans as slaves appears as part of the social fabric of most early and late societies.[14] The wide-spread practice was not unique to Roman Empire. The reasons for its survival during the latter part of the fourth century are beyond the scope of this thesis. Churchmen of the East and the West did acknowledge and denounce the institution of slavery; but they did not move for its elimination. The concept of dramatic social change or defiance was not manifest. The abuses of power and wealth were challenged in homilies but the elimination of the practice lacked the understanding and cultural will.[15] No individual was a slave by nature. But differences in social status were normative within the social framework, and hence were accepted.

Ambrose's position does not appear to dispute slavery. He does react to the practice and the power of the affluent classes. He holds them accountable for their administration and

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[13] Ambros. *De Tobia* 21.82; CSEL 32-2, 567; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 95.

[14]Colish comments on Stoic perspective of *logos* within the universe: "The *logos* of each man is the *logos* of every man. In their common possession of reason, a fragment of the divine *logos*, all men by nature are equal. On this basis, the Stoics argue that slavery and sexual inequality are contrary to the law of nature." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 36.

[15]Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 570-571 and 588.

possible exploitation of other human beings. He encourages steady improvements for living conditions of the poor and the slaves. He exposes the social conditions which maintain their plight through preaching activities and by condemning particular unjust behaviours.[16]

The economic power, which the rich had over the daily lives and health of the poor, concerned Ambrose. His anthropological notions logically extended into social ethics. The social institution involving economic power participated in the daily lives of all persons. His condemnation of usury was particularily strong. He sees this practice as a social problem which affects the health, well-being, and on occasion life or death. He is most articulate on this subject:

> Such , O rich men, are your kindnesses! You give less and you exact more. Such is your humanity that you despoil even while you are helping. Even the poor man is fruitful to you unto gain. The usurer is needy: he has what he may render if you compel him, he does not have what he may spend. You are merciful men, certainly, who enslave to yourselves him whom you free from another. He pays usury who lacks food. Is there anything more terrible? He asks for medicine, you offer him poison; he begs for bread, you offer him a sword; he begs for liberty, you impose slavery; he prays for freedom, you tighten the knot of the hideous snare.[17]

This invective is indeed a denunciation of an entire group within society. His fury is against those who maintain a disparity between those who have economic resources and those who have few, if any, material means. Ambrose's chief concern is hardship which is imposed on the people who are desperate for the basic needs of life.

Ambrose believes that the poor are not the only people at risk. He states: "The money

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[16]Ambros. *De Nab.* 1.1; *De Officiis* III.7, 45-51; *Expos. ev. Lucum* II.41.

[17]Ambros. *De Tobia* 3.11; CSEL 32-2, 523; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 31.

of the usurer cannot stay still very long in one place, being accustomed to pass through many. It cannot be kept in one bag; it seeks to be turned and counted. It requires use, that it may acquire usury."[18] He cautions about the 'parasites' who suddenly befriend an individual and encourage him to spend lavishly. The process of personal loss and decline is related vividly in a long capitulum.[19] Ambrose attributes most responsibility to one side of this relationship: "We accuse the debtor because he has acted somewhat imprudently, but nevertheless there is nothing wicked than the usurers, who think that another's loss is their gain, and regard as their own loss whatever is possessed by others."[20]

Ambrose's sense of drama and power of observation portray the human anguish of an ensnared young man experiencing the final stages of the decline.[21] The terror or panic of the

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[18]Ambros. *De Tobia* 5.16; CSEL 32-2, 526; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 35.

[19] Ambros. *De Tobia* 5.19; CSEL 32-2, 527; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 37.

[20]Ambros. *De Tobia* 6.23; CSEL 32-2, 529; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 39.

[21] This passage is cited as an example of Ambrose style and content in the diatribe as well as the portrayal of the man undergoing strain: "Why do you flee, or whither will you flee? If anyone knocks at night, you think it is the usurer; straightaway you are under the bed. If you notice someone entering suddenly, you leap out the door. A dog barks and your heart palpitates, perspiration breaks out, your pantings shakes you, you seek how you may lie to put the usurer off, and when you have been granted a deferment, you rejoice. The usurer pretends he is worried about your ruin, but he gladly grants it; like the hunter who has netted a wild beast, he is sure of his prey. You kiss his head, you embrace his knees. and like a stag struck by a poisoned arrow, after going a little further you fall, overcome at length by the poison; or you are like a fish which has been caught on the hook, and wherever he flees, carries the wounding hook with him. . . .Your hook is the interest of the creditor. You devour the hook and the worm gnaws you. It is the bait itself which deceives. . . .You flee in the streets since you cannot be safe within walls. The usurer, when he wishes, finds you. Finally, when you have reached the end of your time, like a wolf in the night he rushes on you, he does not allow you to sleep, on the long-awaited day he drags you into public or compels you to subscribe to deeds

young man is almost tangible. Ambrose's understanding of extreme and prolonged stress is so accurate that his physiological descriptions are truly authentic. In addition to making his point about the practice and effects of usury, Ambrose displays his knowledge of crisis responses within the human body.

Ambrose's own words serve to describe the dilemma of economic debt and slavery in dramatic terms. He recounts an experience of seeing a poor man accused and hauled off to prison over an incident involving a wine transaction ["because wine was wanting to the table of the man of power"]. Public auction of his sons was a definite possibility. Some one did come to his assistance. But after arriving home, he finds his home and assets pillaged.

Using his psychological insight, Ambrose weaves a lengthy passage which might describe the man's contemplation.[22] He does not formally oppose slavery; but he does not sanction

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of sale. That you may conceal your loss of decency, straightaway you sign, intending to sell your ancestral tomb. . . . Soon the much-vaunted lands also are sold, and no longer are documents brought in, but chains." Ambros. *De Tobia* 7.26; CSEL 32-2, 533-534; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 43-45.

[22]Perhaps this capitulum reveals more about Ambrose; but it is an extraordinary study of human anguish in general, and fatherly passion in particular. The length of the quotation may appear excessive, but the power of Ambrose's words are amazing nearly sixteen hundred years later: "Let us consider now the storms raging in the father's mind regarding which of his sons he should give up first. 'Which' he says, 'shall I sell first? For I know that the price of one will not suffice to feed the rest.' This alone is a fertile source for anguish! 'Which shall I offer? Which will the grain auctioneer look upon with favor? I shall offer my first born. But he was the first to call me father. He is the oldest of sons, and I rightly honor him as the eldest. But I shall give my youngest. Yet I embrace him with a more tender love. For the former I blush with shame, the latter I pity. I groan at the rank of the one, at the age of the other. The former already feels a deep anguish, the latter does not understand it. I am moved by the sorrow of the one, by the inexperience of the other. I will turn to the rest. That boy caresses me more, this one shows me greater reverence. The former is more like his father in looks, the latter a greater asset. In one I sell my image, in the other I betray my hope. Ah, wretched men! I cannot find what to do, I have no choice. The forms of my misfortunes, the chorus of my tribulations, encompass me!. . . How shall I forget, how shall I put aside the mind of a

slavery either. This diatribe does follow traditional form and a conventional theme. The values of paternity in this passage are clearly delineated. The love of a father for each of his sons is so distinct. The options for the whole family are indeed very bleak. The mother's perspective is not noted. The response or uncertainty of the remaining siblings is addressed through the viewpoint of the father. A general attitude of acquiescence and submission to societal conventions underscores the dynamics. The pointed condemnation of this practice is followed by a extensive section on avarice.

Ambrose's understanding of this type of loss might be judged as too naive or sympathetic. He is aware of the wide variations in human motivation, behaviour and consequences. His assessment of other similar situations is not as empathetic. Citing another occasion of seeing children sold for the debts of the father, Ambrose censures both the father's folly and the usurer's inhumanity:

> Even a father often sells his children by authority of his parenthood, but not with the consent of piety, and he drags the unfortunates to the auction with a shamefaced countenance, saying 'Pay, my children, the expense of my gluttony,

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father? How shall I auction off a son, with what speech shall I agree upon the price, with what hands shall I surrender a son into servitude, with what eyes shall I behold him as a slave, with what kisses at his departure shall I bid him farewell, with what words shall I excuse the deed? Son, I have sold you for my food. Hence the table of the poor man is now more deadly than that of the rich. The latter auctions off the sons of others, I sell my own: he imposes a necessity, I bring a free will. . . .I am at a loss, I confess, but what shall I do? I shall sell none. But while I am considering one, I shall see all perishing with hunger. If I give up one, with what eyes shall I see the rest mistrustful of my lack of paternal affection, lest I sell others also? With what shame I return home, how shall I enter, with what feeling shall I dwell there who have denied myself a son whom disease has not carried off nor death snatched away? With what conscience shall I consider my table which as with olive plants was graced about with so many sons? Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.22-24; CSEL 32-2, 478-480; trans by McGuire, *Ce Nabuthae in Pst.* vol. XV, 59-61.

> pay the cost of your father's table, disgorge what you have not devoured, return what you have not received, better through this, that by your sale-price you redeem your father, by your slavery you buy your father's freedom.'[23]

Initially this case appears as a similar situation. But the dynamics are very dissimilar and warrant a different response. There is no anguish for the father, only for the children. The circumstances are not the same. This time it is not the father's mismanagement of his business, but the father's entertainment of his friends. Regardless of the cause, the result is the same: the children are sold into slavery.

The convention of holding ancestral lands and tombs, as principal for loans, is distasteful to the modern mind. The custom may not have been as discomforting for the fourth century human being. The loss of such lands was indeed a great sorrow and shame. Ambrose's greater distress, matched only by his amazement, is the action of holding a dead body as security on a debt: "How often have I seen the dead held as a pledge by usurers and denied burial while the interest is being demanded!"[24] His response is predictable. Let the usurer have the body; but, he must fulfil his obligations and bury the dead: "I therefore commanded the body to be lifted and the order of the funeral rites to be conducted at the home of the usurer."[25] Ambrose does not bemoan the loss, or 'funeral' of the usurer's money.

His questioning of human relationships with the world are raised when issues of exploitation of persons or nature arise. So too, he raises issues relating to the appropriateness

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[23]Ambros. *De Tobia* 8.30; CSEL 32-2, 535; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 47.

[24]Ambros. *De Tobia* 10.36; CSEL 32-2, 537-538; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 51.

[25]Ambros. *De Tobia* 10.37; CSEL 32-2, 538; trans. by Zucker, *De Tobia, in PSt.* vol. XXXV, 53.

of opulent possessions which are composed of the bounty of the earth, often at risk to human being. Any alteration of the body through the use of lavish adornment draws his ire. His criticism is levelled at both sexes. To the man, Ambrose says:

> What a terrible judgment, O rich man, are you bringing upon yourself! The people are starving, and you close your barns; the people weep bitterly, and you toy with your jewelled ring. Unhappy man, in whose power it is to save the lives of so many, and there is not the will! The jewel in your ring could preserve the lives of the whole people.[26]

The women of rich men are not spared Ambrosian ire. While presenting the 'laments' of the poor man, Ambrose chides the rich man for closing his ears and hardening his heart to the suffering of others: "But perhaps you may return home and talk with your wife. She may argue you to redeem the one sold. Nay, rather will she urge you to purchase female ornaments and finery with what you can free a poor man even at a small cost."[27] Women, who demand adornment, receive the same admonishments:

> But even gems have their weights, even garments their coldness. They perspire in their gems and shiver in their silks; yet the costliness of these things pleases, and what nature abhors, avarice commends. . . . I do not deny that a certain brilliancy of these stones is pleasing, but still it is only of stones. And these very stones, polished contrary to the use of nature in order that they may put aside the roughness of rocks, admonish that it is rather the hardness of the heart that should be polished.[28]

Regardless of the source of the wealth, women experience the same possessiveness as men. Ambrose does concede the beauty of gems as natural properties of the earth. But, he uses the

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[26]Ambros. *De Nab.* 13.56; CSEL 32-2, 500-501; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 87.

[27]Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.25; CSEL 32-2, 480; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 63.

[28]Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.26; CSEL 32-2, 481; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 63.

occasion to reiterate the essence of natural forms and to admonish those whose hearts have turned to stone.

The use of precious commodities, furnishings and structures are also under scrutiny: "She [wife] will impose upon you the necessity of expenditures that she may drink from a goblet set with stones, sleep on a purple couch, recline on a silver sofa, and load her hands with gold and her neck with strings of gems."[29] But, men who use gold for exorbitant purposes are reproached.

Female adornment is one condition. But the male actions of construction and decoration of palaces are another situation. The inequity of human living conditions is contrasted with remarkable skill. [30] Ambrose reminds the rich man: "Therefore you are the custodian, not the master of your wealth, who bury gold in the earth; surely you are its servant and not its lord."[31] The stewardship of the man is seriously questioned. He is chastised for his greed, insensitivity, and his pitiless nature. For Ambrose, the bodily needs of food and shelter are

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[29]Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.26; CSEL 32-2, 481; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 63.

[30]The opulent dwelling contrasts starkly with the state of the poor. Ambrose describes the situation: "Not in golden ceilings nor in tables of prophyry is the merit of the heir. This glory does not belong to men, but to metals, wherein men are punished. By the needy is gold obtained and to the needy is denied. They labor to obtain, they labor to find what they know not how to have. Yet I wonder why, then, O rich man, you think you should be puffed up, since gold is rather the material of the stumbling block than a cause of commendation. . . . Furthermore, your very palace itself does not remind you of your shame, who in building wish to surpass your riches, and yet do not vanquish them. You cover your walls, you strip men naked. The naked man cries before your house, and you neglect him. He cries, and you are solicitous as to what marbles you will use to cover your floors. The poor man seeks money and has it not; a man asks for bread, and your horse champs gold under his teeth." Ambros. *De Nab.* 13.54-56; CSEL 32-2, 499-500; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 85.

[31]Ambros. *De Nab.* 14.58; CSEL 32-2, 502; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 87.

clearly echoed in the Beatitudes: " Who says: 'For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave men to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me'."[32]

In the matter of managing the earth's resources, the theme of stewardship dominates. Ambrose chides the wealthy:

> Not from your own do you bestow upon the poor man, but you make return from what is his. For what has been given as common for the use of all, you appropriate to yourself alone. The earth belongs to all than those who do. Therefore you are paying a debt, you are not bestowing what is not due.[33]

The earth is common to all human beings. The theme of stewardship is very strong. The rich man takes the earthly gifts of water, grain and fruit as his alone. As a miser, he is anxious about the harvest:

> The miser is always deeply worried by abundant crops because he thereby foresees a cheapness in food-stuffs. For abundance belongs to all, scarcity is lucrative to the miser alone. He is pleased rather by enormous prices than by the abundance of commodities, and he prefers to have what he alone may sell than what he may sell together with all. See him in fear lest his heap of grain overflow, lest, streaming out over the barns, it may pour upon the poor, and an occasion for some good be obtained by those in want. For himself alone he claims the products of the earth, not because he wishes to use them himself, but because he wished to deny them to others.[34]

Ambrose does not have difficulty with the goods of the earth which are associated with monetary transactions. He does however have difficulty with the management of commodities: "They are

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[32]Ambros. *De Nab.* 14.59; CSEL 32-2, 504; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 89.

[33]Ambros. *De Nab.* 12.53; CSEL 32-2, 498; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 83.

[34]Ambros. *De Nab.* 7.35; CSEL 32-2, 486-487; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 69.

goods if you bestow them on the poor, wherein you make God your debtor by a kind of pious usury. They are goods if you open the barns of your justice so that you may be the bread of the poor, the life of the needy, the eye of the blind, and the father of orphan children."[35]

Ambrose's advice applies to all possessions:

> Why do you daily measure, and count, and seal? Why do you balance gold, weigh silver? How much better would it be, were you a generous distributor rather than an anxious custodian! How much more would it avail to your favor to be named the father of many orphans than to have countless staters sealed in your money-bag! For money is left here, favor goes with us to the judge of merit.[36]

To minister to the things of the body alone is to miss the rewards which could be achieved. The intriguing recommendation regarding the 'fathering' and care of orphans is repeated. There appears to be a sense of balance within Ambrose's reasoning: the loss of children through debt and the restoration of children through merit. A child may be sold for the economic liabilities of the father. A child may be restored by the laudable action of another 'father'.

The theme of stewardship, regarding property and economic means, is a most important component within Ambrose's moral reasoning. His sense of stewardship and concern about ownership of the land includes the care and management of people who carry out the labour. In the context of describing the necessary preparation of feasting and banquets, he lectures the wealthy on their treatment of the poor who work the estates:

> How many are killed, so that what delights you may be secured! Deadly is your hunger; deadly, your luxury. One fell from a roof top when he was building

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[35]Ambros. *De Nab.* 7.36; CSEL 32-2, 487; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 69-71.

[36]Ambros. *De Nab.* 8.39; CSEL 32-2, 489; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 73.

> spacious store-houses for your grain. Another fell from the highest branches of a lofty tree while he was searching for the kinds of grapes to bring down, from which wines worthy of your table might be pressed. Another was drowned in the sea because he feared that a fish or an oyster might be wanting to your table. Another was frozen stiff by the cold of winter while he was intent on tracking hares and catching birds in cribs. Another, if perchance he has done anything displeasing, is scourged to death before your eyes and sprinkles the very banquet itself with his flowing blood.[37]

For the landholder, the poor have little meaning. The price of an individual's life is inconsequential. The working conditions are wretched. Bodily sustenance is barely maintained. Injury and death are expectations.

The merchants who ply the sea are chastised as well. Their business ventures create peril for seamen: "You of course complain of repeated shipwrecks: who compels you to sail? As if you do not make lands unsafe through the envy of riches, and excite many to piracy! God did not make the sea for navigation, but on account of the beauty of the element."[38] For Ambrose, the sea remains part of creation which enjoins a purpose: "He has given to fishes, not to men, to pass through the path of the sea. For food was the sea given to you, not for your peril; use the food, but not for gain. Why do you create peril for yourself from enjoyment?"[39]

The sea shares its gifts of food. Ambrose criticizes the merchants for profiting then condemning the sea for their losses: "Why, at last, do you, as an impatient sailor, so often hasten to plough and dig up the waves? Why do you tempt the blameless seas, provoke the

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[37]Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.20; CSEL 32-2, 477-478; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 57.

[38]Ambros. *De Helia* 19.70; CSEL 32-2, 514; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 95.

[39]Ambros. *De Helia* 19.71; CSEL 32-2, 515; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 97.

storms? Oh insatiable avarice of merchants!"[40] The potential loss of lives may mean little to the trader, but these same lives have significance for the bishop.

The land and sea as contributors of the food for society fulfill the purposefulness of creation. The use of elemental earth and water for avarice is definitely condemned. The loss of human life for banquet provisions is beyond Ambrose's comprehension. The urban settings, even the kitchens of the wealthy, do not offer any greater protection as will be demonstrated later in the next section.[41]

Ambrose's concern is not with the principle of acquisitions or property ownership; but rather, he objects to the mindless exploitation of human beings or gifts of the earth. These actions reflect decisions unmediated by reason. An anthropology,[42] using a qualified dualism, demands an interactive human nature in which performed bodily actions have direct consequences for the life of soul.

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[40]Ambros. *De Helia* 19.71; CSEL 32-2, 454; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 97.

[41]Vasey summarizes: "This right that he extends to the merciful and charitable, he founds on the law of nature, namely, on two principles: the earth produces for all men and all men are brothers, and on supernatural motives: the eternal rewards to them." Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*, 205.

[42]Ambrose's valuing of human relationship is expressed in the vocabulary he uses to describe human relations: "Five words express the union that binds men together, *consors, commercium, comitatus, societas*, and *similis*." Vasey, *The Social Ideas in the Works of St. Ambrose*, 233.

5.2 SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND AMUSEMENTS UNMEDITATED BY REASON

Ambrose's use of the ascetic and Neoplatonic perspectives of the human being play a significant role in these deliberations. Many persons, lacking reason, are drawn into social excesses which limit freedom and fortitude. Societal expectations, regarding entertainment duties and responsibilities, seriously affect the conduct of wealthy lives persons, but dramatically alter the lives of others in often deadly ways.

An examination of Ambrose's thoughts and beliefs, concerning amusement and entertainment, reveals his understanding of the relationship which exists between social influences and bodily actions. Although his intellectual context is always redeeming the whole person, Ambrose does address the effects of specific behaviours and bodily actions which affect the spiritual and physiological health of the individual.

Ambrose usually integrates these behaviours and actions within the events of daily living. The circumstances flow together and form an interconnected whole:

> Fasting knows not the money-lender, is ignorant of the nature of interest; the table of those who fast is not redolent of usuries; the interest on the debt contracted by his father does not strangle the son of a temperate man; the pledged rights of a sober man dead do not trouble the widow; the palace of a fasting man, uninvolved in debt, does not exclude its heir.[43]

Actions have present and future consequences for the failure or success of an individual's status. The relationship between needs and costs is clearly stated. The social roles of father, widow and son need not be jeopardized. Just as usury, avarice and slavery impact the quality of Roman

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[43]Ambros. *De Helia* 9.31; CSEL 32-2, 429; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 65.

life, so do the extravagances of the banquets. The resulting behaviours find disfavour with Ambrose.

The conspicuous practice and consequences of excessive eating and drinking often form topics for pastoral concern and homiletic expression. Using a battle theme, Ambrose places the tendencies of overindulgence within the allure of temptation. Citing the experience of Christ [Luc. 4.2-4], Ambrose relates the tempter's action: "He held out food as the bait of his snare, as it were, that he might thus ensnare the bodily appetite; the Lord preferred fasting that He might loose the snare of the tempter, that He might loosen his bonds."[44] Using the parable of Lazarus [Luc. 16.20-24], alcoholic beverages, both wine and 'strong drink',[45] are a primary target: "At the very feast while they drink, they thirst; and when they have become drunk they drink more. Just as if a whirlpool had been opened, wine is no longer drunk but is poured in; the cup is not sipped but drained."[46] For Ambrose, the problem is not only consideration of the spiritual dynamics of 'bodily appetites', but also the consumption and conditions which encourage the injurious behaviours. Lengthy banquets and local taverns foster an atmosphere conducive to drinking, eating, and other forms of conduct: "We see that sacrilege was joined to drunkenness. For as restraint is the mother of faith, so drunkenness is the mother of faithlessness. Into what crime does it not rush headlong?"[47] The following sections examine Ambrose's counsels for **moderation** and his attitude about living and extravagant lifestyles.

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[44]Ambros. *De Helia* 1.1; CSEL 32-2, 411; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 45.

[45]Ambros. *De Helia* 15.54; CSEL 32-2; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 85.

[46]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.27; CSEL 32-2, 427; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 63.

[47]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.41; CSEL 32-2; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 75.

The struggle between bodily need and indulgence forms the framework for Ambrose's thoughts about the consumption of food. In a parody of food and knowledge, as nourishment for the body and soul, Ambrose contends:

> For not all food is material nor all meat corporeal: there is the meat of the mind, as we have said, on which souls feast; concerning which the Lord says: *My meat [cibus] is to the will of my Father who is in heaven* [John 4,34]. This is the meat of angels, namely to serve the Divine Will. For them there is no care of courses, no familiarity with banquets, no renewal feasts, no drinking of wine or intoxicants, no distention of the body, no vexation of the stomach.[48]

His words are clear. The essence of life is to serve, not to be served. The substances of 'meat' are steadfastness not insatiability. The intent of human corporeality is moderation not immoderation.

In response to people who question the exacting nature of moderation, Ambrose retorts: "They say that fasting is severe: let them tell who has died from fasting. Many while dining, many while they were vomiting up their feast, have poured forth their souls."[49] The health problems of bulimia and bulimarexia stand in marked contrast to restraint and moderation.

To emphasize his point, Ambrose reveals his anger about the former practices. He furnishes a graphic characterization of the total banquet spectacle. He also shows his own displeasure about the quantity of animals killed for a banquet and mockingly demands: "Finally what animal has bemoaned that fasting was the cause of its death?"[50] The next two verses portray the procurement and the preparation for a feast. The description of the activities might border on the ridiculous, were it not for the discord. Ambrose's own words serve best to

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[48]Ambros. *De Helia* 3.5; CSEL 32-2, 414; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 49.

[49]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.23; CSEL 32-2, 424; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 59.

[50]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.23; CSEL 32-2; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 59.

describe the chaos:

> Let the knife of the scoundrel cooks for once keep holiday; let the caterer rest, who before it is daylight knocks at the doors of others, and, as if some war were imminent, awakens those sleeping. You see that he is disturbed, you notice him panting. You ask what is the cause of his trouble. He says "My master feasts and he seeks where the best wine is sold, where the firmest sow's matrix is kept, where, the tenderest liver, where, the fattest pheasant, where, the freshest fish." He runs about everywhere and when he has found out, he hastens at top speed, he arouses his sleepy master.[51]

The master then gives the price he is willing to pay. The caterer responds with his explorations of the morning:

> If the price of fish disturbs him, he asserts that nowhere can better be found, indeed they are not to be had. 'Yesterday' he says, 'there was a tempest, to-day, there is a storm; scarcely was I able to seize upon this one as it lay hidden. Many are gathering in the market. If you do not take it, another will give more and what will you serve at dinner? That is the age of this wine, this is the choice oyster from that lake.' Such is the bargaining over each thing; a spear, as it were, is driven between caterer and vender.[52]

The banquet expenses are exorbitant. Ambrose relates the cost of such events: "In his excitement he sells his patrimony, he continues to ask through whom the rights of his property are impaired.[53] The confusion of the conditions in the kitchen ensues:

> There is rushing to the kitchen, a great noise arises, an uproar is made. The entire household is now in confusion, all are cursing because no rest is given them. Now at last, give rest to the cook, raise the butler's right hand, his fingers are stiff with cold. The [that] man employs his hands in icy water. Those wash marbles; they clean floors soaked with wine and covered with fish bones. How many are wounded while they walk about![54]

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[51]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.24; CSEL 32-2, 425; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 61.

[52]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.24; CSEL 32-2, 425; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 61.

[53]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.24; CSEL 32-2, 426; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 61.

[54]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.25; CSEL 32-2, 426; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 61.

The household staff and slaves have no respite. The situation may be described as less than conducive to health. But at last the feast is ready: "At the feast itself there is shouting of the banqueters, the groans of servants being beaten. If perchance anything has displeased your friends, they laugh; you get indignant."

> For one let the house be quiet from the great noise and confusion of those running tither and thither, from the sound of slain animals; let it be free from the smoke and smell of half burned meats. You would think it not a kitchen, but a slaughter house; that a battle was being fought, not a dinner being prepared; so does everything swim in blood.[55]

Ambrose vividly portrays the multiple dynamics of the private 'world' of the Roman household. The nexus of a private world in preparation for a public spectacle provides insight into a cross-section of all social groups. The public marketplace, the barter and auction of provisions and the private deals are displayed. The master's loss of patrimony for potential prospect is revealed. The jeopardy and hazards experienced by the household staff, before and during the banquet, are evident. Ambrose cannot comprehend the desire or the continuance of such events. The perils are tallied in the actual costs for all participants.

Thus, for Ambrose, the indulgence of feasting is not just a private activity. It involves the whole social matrix. The banquet conditions affect economic order and well as societal values. His counsel for restraint finds its support in Stoic and Christian thought. The corresponding value of sobriety is also confronted with the festivities of the banquet. An exploration of Ambrose's attitude and advices follows.

The tensions between control and excess form the basis for Ambrose's attitude about the

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[55]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.25; CSEL 32-2, 426; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 61-63.

spiritual and bodily problems associated with alcohol. He preaches moderation and sobriety. He believes that drunkenness was unknown until Noah's lifetime; and that the act of excessive drinking generated many problems. His belief is so strong that he associates the initiation of servitude with the making of alcohol: "Unimpaired liberty was the possession of everyone before wine was discovered; no one knew how to exact the obedience of servitude from his consort in nature. There would be no servitude to-day if there had been no drunkenness."[56]

His denunciation of excessive wine is explicit: "Intoxication has this one characteristic, that it softens and loosens the hearts of the intoxicated; for just as fire tries hard iron, so also even the hearts of proud men melt in the fire of wine."[57] He directs his counsel towards the poor, the rich as well as soldiers and women. Some examples of his counsels and rebukes are now cited.

To the poor, Ambrose chides men who dally at inns: "Men without a tunic, without even funds for the following day, lounge at the doorways of taverns. They pass judgment on emperors and officers of state; indeed they seem to themselves to reign, and to command armies."[58] The altered state of mind and dress appear to go beyond the typical social commentaries which men of any age make on their form of governance:

> In drunkenness do they become rich who, in reality, are poor. They bestow gold, dispense money to people, and build cities, who do not have the wherewithall to pay the innkeeper the price for their bodies' drinking. For wine is hot within them, they know not what to say. They are rich men while they are drunk; as

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[56]Ambros. *De Helia* 5.11; CSEL 32-2, 419; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 53.

[57]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.43; CSEL 32-2, 437; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 75.

[58]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.42; CSEL 32-2, 436; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 75.

> soon as they have digested the wine, they perceive that they are beggars. In a single day they drink the labors of many days.[59]

Next, the aggrandizing effects of the wine enhance the self-image. The individual manifests his strength in physical aggression: "How much grace and comeliness do they seem to have when they cannot stand! The mind must needs [sic, necessarily] reel, the tongue stammer, bloodless pallor suffuse the countenance, and the foulness of drunkenness becomes a horror."[60] Social structures give way to egalitarian fellowship:

> All, under the influence of wine, seem equal to one another, no one is inferior. The poor man does not yield to the rich, seeing that he does not know that he is poor; nor the weak to the strong, whose whole strength is in drinking; nor the beggar, to the man of wealth; nor the ignoble, to the illustrious; since drinkers count him king who has vanquished men in drinking.[61]

Ambrose's ire is not directed only to economically disadvantaged people. His anger is equally aimed at the wealthy youths.[62] Perhaps his descriptions of army banquets are the most precise and remarkable. Using a battle theme as a framework for his characterization, Ambrose relates the military order and precision of the festivities. Like battle plans being enacted, the banquet strategy is unfolded as the courses of the meal is detailed to the progressive size of wine

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[59]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.42; CSEL 32-2, 436; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 75.

[60]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.43; CSEL 32-2, 436; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 75.

[61]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.44; CSEL 32-2, 437; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 75.

[62]Ambros. *De Helia* 12.45; CSEL 32-2, 437-438; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 77.

containers.[63] The drinking challenges and wrestling matches follow no rules: "All are intoxicated, victors and vanquished all lie drunk, most of them in a stupor."[64] The practices and extravagance of the feasts occasions a stinging rebuke:

> A sad spectacle for the eyes of Christians and a deplorable sight. You may see young men terrible for their enemies to behold, being carried outside from the banquet, and thence being carried back to the banquet; being filled again that they may empty themselves, and being emptied that they may drink. If anyone is more modest, so that he blushes to rise when now he can no longer hold his immoderate draughts, he pants feverishly, groans, sweats, and show by signs what he is ashamed to confess.[65]

The accompanying music and the wine receive similar condemnation. The convention of procuring women does not meet with accord: "Many also, in Persian fashion, have women worthy of the companionship of drunkards brought in; and from these they receive saucers; and they recline with these women seated with them. And they hold this a rite of hallowed observance and the ministry of drunkenness."[66] The laughter of servants, directed to their masters, is also noted by Ambrose.

In addition to the dubious banquet activities, he mentions the insidious use of wine for the act of **duplicity**:

> Many also employ wine as an instrument of torture; and those from whom torments do not elicit a word of betrayal, they tempt through drink to betray the

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[63]Ambros. *De Helia* 13. 46-50; CSEL 32-2, 438-441; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 77-81.

[64]Ambros. *De Helia* 13.49; CSEL 32-2, 440; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 79.

[65]Ambros. *De Helia* 13.50; CSEL 32-2, 440-441; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 79-81.

[66]Ambros. *De Helia* 15.54; CSEL 32-2, 444; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 85.

> state of their country, the safety of citizens and the plans of their own defense; for courage frequently overcomes pain, but drink expels loyalty. I know that many, though sorely wounded by cords, have refused to tell their name; who has conceaied amid his cups what he wished to remain hidden.[67]

The deceitful means of obtaining information does not rest well with Ambrose. The possible loss of state security is a major concern. The violation and breach of defence involve the protection of all citizens regardless of religious persuasion. The lives of all people are at risk during increasingly unstable times.

The consequences of excessive drinking affect not only the rich and poor, soldiers and state, but also women: "But why should we speak about men, when even women, whom a more solicitous care should urge to the chastity of sobriety, drink unto drunkenness?"[68] Ambrose underscores the widespread societal problems of alcoholism. In an interesting pattern, he cites the general incidence of inordinate drinking throughout all strata of Milanese society.

He also reveals his own perspective regarding women's responses to imbibing: "Then they rising, whom it does not befit to be heard or be seen by strangers even within the privacy of their homes, sally forth in public with unveiled head and brazen face!"[69] The relationship of the private and public spheres becomes blurred under the influence of alcohol. The roles of women are developed within societal and religious domains. Needless to say, the clouding of

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[67]Ambros. *De Helia* 17.63; CSEL 32-2, 449; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 91.

[68]Ambros. *De Helia* 18.66; CSEL 32-2, 450; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 93.

[69]Ambros. *De Helia* 18.66; CSEL 32-2, 450; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 93.

the private and public realms is not taken lightly or without censure.[70]

The public conduct of unrestricted women is not a sight which Ambrose relishes. His understanding of womanly conduct differs from these actions: "Wine has inflicted upon us the loss of so many souls! For if wine and women cause men to depart from God, because both drunkenness and passion are allurements to sin; if singly and separately they do this, what would they do united?"[71]

In an interesting exegesis of Gen. 19.33, Ambrose relates the incident of incest related to Lot's drunkenness.[72] The factors of age, sex, solitude and site are associated with the 'origin' of incest. Yet, the act is couched within the imagery of woman. Ambrose does not attribute any action to daughters, other than the preparation and serving of the drink. But, he does use the symbolism of 'offspring' and 'mother' to denote the relationship of incest and drunkenness. The male or father's activity receives a subtle yet reasoned accounting for his behaviour. But overall, Ambrose does suggest an explanation, and ascribe censure, however qualified it may be stated.

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[70]Ambrose writes: "These in the public squares perform, before the gaze of debauched youths, dance shameless even to men, tossing their hair, trailing their tunics, with torn garments, with naked arms, clapping their hands, leaping with their feet, uttering loud cries, inciting the passion of the youths towards themselves by their histrionic movements, impudent eyes, and disgraceful wantonness. A circle of young men look on and a pitiable spectacle takes place." Ambros. *De Helia* 12.66; CSEL 32-2, 451; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 93.

[71]Ambros. *De Helia* 18.67; CSEL 32-2, 451; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 93.

[72]" We read also that Lot's daughters made their father drunk on that mountain to which they had fled in fear of the fires of Sodom, and in which they were dwelling in a cave. Age, sex, solitude, and a place more fitted for the dens of wild beasts than for the dwellings of men, suited and conspired to drunkenness. And so drunkenness was the origin of incest, an offspring worse than its wretched mother." Ambros. *De Helia* 5.12; CSEL 32-2, 419; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 55.

This judgment of wine and women form a common perspective of his age. The evaluation of womanly behaviours springs from a cultural base. An interpretation of Ambrose's opinion may be seen from various views: the best rendition would see women as having a higher standard of conduct; the negative account would see women as having a lower standard of behaviour. Hence any deviation from the cultural norm, or Ambrose's expectations, would be seen as either discordant to women's nature or the actual manifestation of their constitution. However his perspective is interpreted, he does perceive the dynamic of alcoholism: "Wherefore not without cause does a certain wise man say before us: *A drunken women is great anger.*"[Eccli. 26, 11][73] Ambrose's psychological discernment applies well to both sexes in his descriptions of alcohol-induced behaviours.

As a pastor, Ambrose sustains his reasons on social and religious grounds. He cites the very nature of human embodiment: "Man runs the risk of being the clay of his body, and he himself is guilty of his own voluntary madness, of his free willed corruption."[74] Ambrose is not against the consumption of alcohol. He is against the excessive use of wine and strong drink.

For Ambrose, the associated social problems of drinking undermine human conduct and living: "What then of those who are intoxicated before evening and frequently until dawn? Therefore, as the woe that is their due, they have quarrels. They engage in disputes; they rush

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[73]Ambros. *De Helia* 18.67; CSEL 32-2, 451; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 93.

[74]Ambros. *De Helia* 14.51; CSEL 32-2, 441-442; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 81.

into bloodshed; they go, or are called, to judgment."[75] But the most significant assertion against intoxication rests with religious motivation: "There is , therefore, inebriation from sin; there is also, from grace. And perchance this inebriation from grace belongs to our nature, because, being made to the image and likeness of God, we ought to be filled with the Holy Spirit."[76] Thus, Ambrose's objections to excessive drinking rest with the behaviours which diminish the image and likeness of God residing in human nature. After a long allegorical treatment of coins and payment, he closes with an application of the coin and its image as a metaphor for Christ.[77]

Thus, this lengthy section on Ambrose's perspective on excessive banqueting and alcoholism reveals many concepts on his ideas, beliefs and attitudes about the human body, societal roles, economic relationships, and the social context of human embodiment. The excessive, unreasoned use of food and alcohol, suggests the possibility of violence to self or others; the peace of the Stoic sage and the altered image of God are not supported by the Bishop of Milan.

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[75]Ambros. *De Helia* 15.53; CSEL 32-2, 443-444; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 83.

[76]Ambros. *De Helia* 16.61; CSEL 32-2, 448; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 89.

[77]Ambrose corresponds with Bishop Justus; the significance of the 'didrachma'[Exodus 30.12-16] is the topic: "You, therefore, be one and the same as the image of God, not sober today but drunk tomorrow; today peaceable, on the morrow litigious; today virtuous, on the morrow incontinent. Each one is changed by variation of his habits and becomes someone else; in this condition he is not recognized for what he was, and he begins to be what he was not, not his genuine self. It is a serious matter to be changed for the worse. Be like the image on the drachma, unchangeable, keeping the same habits every day. When, you see the drachma, see the image; when you see the Law, see Christ the image of God, in the Law. And because He Himself is the image of the invisible and incorruptible God, let Him shine for you as in the mirror of the Law." Ambros. *Ep.* 12.2; CSEL 82 3, 14; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 20, 114.

Social amusement, consisting of excessive feasting and drinking, contribute to temporary, and on occasion, permanent injurious effects. Extreme behaviours of violence to self and others have implications for social dynamics and for the intrinsic image of the Creator within each human being. In addition the health perspective and wellness of human beings are comprised both physically and spiritually.

Ambrose's candid assessment of societal norms and practices may be perceived solely as a classical diatribe refuting particular aspects of Roman society, or as a Christian moral admonishment of unreasoned behaviours which eclipse the image of the Creator. Yet, the underlying concept, examined in this chapter, is his anthropological thought which is basic to social criticism and Christian ethics.

This level of interpretation emphasizes Ambrose's scrutiny of the role that societal expectations and personal choices play in comprehending the human body within the context of Roman society at large. He condemns economic practices bereft of reasoned acts and benevolence for other humans. Extreme social actions and unreasonable practices, which burden the seven faculties and soul, also come under censure. The bodily powers, manifesting extreme passions and pleasures, limit human autonomy and self-determination. All these behaviours precipitate direct and indirect consequences for the physical and spiritual health of human beings. The fifth level of interpretation moves within the Christian milieu and further examines Ambrose's thought on social customs and personal choice. His tripartite view of human nature has specific implications for bodily acts and spiritual dimensions.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BODY AS INSTRUMENT OF POWERS AND TRANSFORMATION

In a most elaborate manner of harmonizing ascetic and Christian Neoplatonic anthropological traditions, Ambrose uses notions which integrates components of these movements. He employs the tensions of the lower-higher, inferior-superior, outward-inward and external-internal aspects to describe the human constitution and behaviours. There is an idea of 'mixing' while maintaining a distinction within his qualified anthropological dualism. A sense of unity is preserved while maintaining a distinction. The perspective affirms the order and unity of human being. The tripartite structure of corporeal, sensual, and spiritual natures. The sensual nature is represented by Middle Stoa doctrine of eight infrarational faculties.

This level of interpretation explicates a proposed framework which views bodily acts as unreason, mediated by reason and exceptional or gift. The first of three tiers, human behaviour devoid of reason was presented in the previous chapter. The notion of a tier system with Ambrosian thought is supported by modern scholarship.[1]

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[1]The notion of a stratified framework within Ambrose's thought is supported by Jan L. Womer. Although Womer uses a two tier moral structure, this author chooses a three layered framework to explain and integrate Ambrose's lifelong considerations and ordering of the social and individual behaviours. The layers are identified as: devoid of reason or unreasoned acts; reasoned or normative acts; and beyond reason or habitual acts. In contrast, Womer states:"About A.D. 391 he wrote *The Duties of the Clergy*, in which he attempted to offer guidance to those he had already ordained. He used as his model the work of Cicero *De Officiis*

His use of Late Stoicism's eight infrarational faculties, illustrates the sensual part of the tripartite nature. The seven faculties representing the bodily gifts of the five senses, speech and procreation, all mediated by reason, play an important role in Ambrose's deliberations of ordinary and extraordinary behaviours enacted by the human being.

The structure describes and illuminates Ambrose's hierarchical or layered instructions regarding sensory, speech and procreative acts. The human bodily actions are further descibed as behaviours mediated by reason and classified as good, ordinary or normative, and better or that which is beyond the normal expectation, at the level of gift. The behaviours, associated with this framework, and actions which are sacramental and instrumental follow.

6.1 THE BODILY GIFTS AS MEDIATED BY REASON

The human being is the apex of a functioning creation; but, his place is not a position without responsibility. The privilege has duties. The social and spiritual dimensions, inclusive of life style and vocation. The social context of these concepts are closely integrated within the perception of fourth century Roman persons. The idea of self in isolation from family or social referents would be quite difficult to conceive. The behaviour of the body as social and as instrument of the soul are closely related.

The human body is mortal and good. The eight faculties are the five bodily senses, and

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and developed his thought under two heads: that of what is honorable and beyond the normal call of duty; and that of what is ordinary and expected of everyone." Jan L. Womer, *Morality and Ethics in Early Christianity*, Sources of Early Christian Thought, ed. William Rusch, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 27.

the powers of speech, procreation, and reason. The 'lowlier' powers of speech and procreation have the faculty of perception and emotions. These emotions are of two types, those devoid of reason, and those disciplined by the mind. Reason has discernment, logic and judgment. The intellect or the mind relates creative, generative thoughts which emanate from the soul in its vigor. From these vibrant actions come the first fruits of devotion, and hence by inference, the second fruits of bodily functional processes. The soul is the essence of human nature.

The sixth and seventh powers or 'bodily gifts' are mediated by the eighth, that is, reason. Although Ambrose does not present a theory of sensation, there is an underlying connectedness within his thought. As actions of the bodily senses are present in most of his moral and ascetical teachings, there is a continuance with the sixth and seventh gifts which are also mediated by reason or the intellect.

In his integration of the faculties, he has described a hierarchy. This order and unity is necessary as the human being has been created by God. Ambrose has appealed to the bodily senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste [nutrition] and touch in most of his works.[2] Ambrose believes: "Christ must dwell in the human senses if not only sin is to disappear from, but also the desire to sin."[3] The senses are created and protected by God.

In his pastoral manner, he says: "The sun is more pleasing after the night; the very light is brighter after darkness and sleep is sweeter after wakefulness; health itself is more enjoyable

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[2]For a summary of Ambrose's vivid appeals to the senses, see: M. T. Springer, *Nature-Imagery in the Works of Saint Ambrose*, Patristic Studies, vol. 30 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1931], 141.

[3]Ambros. *Expos Ps.CXVIII* 1.10; as trans. by Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 125.

after the trials of sickness."[4] The sensory nature of his examples is striking. No listener could deny his own bodily experiences of these events.

In addition, God 'participates' in the bodily actions of the human:

> There is no question of God's participations in an act of nature such as eating, drinking, sleeping. These and other functions of the body were granted to you freely by God. They are not in the nature of favors. However, thoughts that are holy are the gifts of God and are inspired by His Grace. On the other hand, ordinary natural and human acts 'do not defile a man, but it is what comes out of the mouth.'[Matt. 15.11.18.][5]

The bodily actions are natural. They also participate in another dimension, that of divine life. The inherent consequence is:

> . . .the body as an instrument or tool. Like a highly skilled artisan, the soul leads the body in its service where it will, fashions out of it the form it has chosen, and makes the virtues it has willed resound in it [Cf. Prophyry, *De abstinentia* 1.43.]; now it composes the melodies of chastity, again those of temperance, the song of sobriety, the charm of uprightness, the sweetness of virginity, the seriousness of widowhood.[6]

The body as an instrument of the soul sings the songs of virtue through bodily actions, counsels and lifestyles.

Ambrose also describes these infrarational faculties of five bodily senses and the powers of speech, procreation and reason in another configuration of seven bodily gifts *[septem carnalium munerum]* and the power of reason *[rationabile]*.[7]

The encouragement of discipline of the bodily senses is understood as a normative

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[4]Ambros. *De Helia* 9.32; CSEL 32-2, 429; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 67.

[5]Ambros. *De Cain* 1.10.45; CSEL 32-1, 370; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 399.

[6]Ambros. *De Bono mortis* 6.25; CSEL 32-1, 726; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 89.

[7]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.34; CSEL 32-1, 406 trans. by Savage, FC 42, 433.

behaviour. The action of fasting is advocate. But not all fasting is acceptable. The 'restraint' of a miser is called into question. Ambrose relates the story of a man who sealed his granary and counted each of his loaves of bread: "I have learned also, on genuine evidence, that whenever an egg was put before him, he used to complain that a chick had been killed."[8] The opulence of banquets, a recurrent Ambrosian theme for the diatribe, comes into question as well: How pious would be your fasting if you set aside the expense of your banquet for the poor!"[9] The behaviours of fasting and moderation have importance for Ambrose. These actions are sanctioned by his understanding of the Christian lifestyle. His reasons can be located in his religious values and his knowledge of societal dynamics. Generally his advice is common to men and women regardless of their public status or ecclesiastical position.

He does not question the bodily need for food, but rather the extravagance of the indulgent living: "Who has made his own home worse by fasting, who has thereby impaired his wealth? To whom is luxury not suspect, to whom is abstinence not venerable? Whose bed has frugality lusted after, whose modesty has drunkenness not offended?[10] The disciplines associated with fasting are those which Ambrose promotes. From these actions come many spiritual and physical advantages:

> Fasting is the instruction of continence, the discipline of chastity, the humility of the mind, the chastisement of flesh, the mark of sobriety, the norm of virtue, the purification of the soul, the expenditure of compassion, the foundation of gentleness, the allurement of charity, the grace of age, the protection of youth,

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[8]Ambros. *De Nab.* 4.18; CSEL 32-2, 477; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 57.

[9]Ambros. *De Nab.* 5.19; CSEL 32-2, 477; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 57.

[10]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.22; CSEL 32-2, 423; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 59.

> fasting is the alleviation of infirmity, the nourishment of health. No one through fasting has fallen into apoplexy; on the contrary no one has not thereby checked and repelled such things.[11]

These benefits encompass all levels of human functions and accomplishments. All developmental groups gain regardless of age. Even the promotion of health and the prevention of disease are included in the inventory of values and blessing. But, it is the more common effects of social and physical gratification that reveal Ambrose's views on the subject of overindulgence.

Often, he approaches this subject through the exercise of fasting. He does distinguish hunger from restraint: "Not all hunger, however, makes fasting acceptable, but the hunger which is entered upon through fear of God. . . . Hunger alone however, is not demanded, but the full discipline of fasting."[12] Although he retains a capacity and desire for God, each human being inherits the desire of sensual satisfactions. During this life, the desire can be aggravated by free consent to bodily desires, which adds the power of custom and deepens the person's servitude.[13]

Describing the body as instrument of the soul: Ambrose writes: "Our souls were destined to complete the task appointed by our Pilot, namely, by the use of reason to bring under subjection the irrational emotions of our bodies."[14].

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[11]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.22; CSEL 32-2, 423-424; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt*. vol. XIX, 59.

[12]Ambros. *De Helia* 10.34; CSEL 32-2, 430; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt*. vol. XIX, 67.

[13]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 8.

[14]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.36; CSEL 32-1, 407; trans. Savage, FC 42, 435.

Ambrose's counsel and beliefs concerning the practice of fasting are quite universal. His thoughts are grounded in the events and examples of Scripture. His praise of [H]Elias' fasting is so great that Ambrose attributes an assumption of the body to this behaviour: "Justly the Divine Will judged him worthy of heaven, so that with his very body he was snatched up, since he lived the heavenly life in the body and exemplified on earth the manner of living above."[15] The importance of this behaviour, as a 'heavenly' act, is described as:

> For what is fasting unless the substance and image of heaven? Fasting is the restoration of the soul, the food of the mind; fasting is the life of the angels; fasting is the death of guilt, the destruction of sins, the means of salvation, the root of grace, the foundation of chastity.[16]

The significance of [H]Elias' virtue can also be found in John the Baptist: "Who by human power could have mounted fiery horses, fiery chariots; who could have guided aerial chariots save him who had changed the nature of the human body by virtue of incorruptible fasting?"[17]

During fasting the outward appearance of the body is to be maintained. The head is to be anointed and the face is to be cleansed both literally and figuratively.[18] The flaunting of one's fast is proscribed: "Therefore do not boast when you fast, do not glory lest fasting profit you nothing; for those things which are done for ostentation will not prolong their fruit into the future, but they consume the reward for present deeds."[19]

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[15]Ambros. *De Helia* 2.3; CSEL 32-2, 413; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 47.

[16]Ambros. *De Helia* 3.4; CSEL 32-2, 413; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 47.

[17]Ambros. *De Helia* 3.4; CSEL 32-2, 414; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 47.

[18]Ambros. *De Helia* 10.36-37; CSEL 32-2, 432-434; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 69-71.

[19]Ambros. *De Helia* 11.40; CSEL 32-2, 435; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 73.

Ambrose's exhortation remains the same: fasting has meaning and is effective in common or extraordinary life events. He extends his lesson in an remarkable way. Theologically, he describes fasting as a virtuous, conciliatory 'sacrifice'.

The theme of suffering and malevolent events is consist with Ambrose's reasoning. In his advice to clergy, he reiterates: "Ought we not rather avoid this [wrong-doing], than death, or loss, or want, or exile, or sickness? Who would not think some blemish of body or loss of inheritance far less than some blemish of soul or loss of reputation?"[20] Thus, the evils of the body appear to have less consequence than the evils of soul. The 'Roman' Ambrose maintains his belief in the honour of the family name, by placing familial esteem near to the 'Christian' honour of the soul. The personal presence approximates the personal essence in unity. There appears to be a hierarchy of these temptations; personal suffering is the higher form of testing. In addition his horror of public disorder for the Milanese Christians is perceived as ruinous as disorder is put in tension with the inheritance of God's tranquillity. Ambrose's judgment of God's not testing his body has implications regarding his understanding of illness and infirmity.

When asked if the 'devout life' can be lived in the body Ambrose responds:

> Some, however, there are who think a blessed life is impossible in this body, weak and fragile as it is. For in it one must suffer pain and grief, one must weep, one must be ill. So I could also say that a blessed life rests on bodily rejoicing, but not the heights of wisdom, on the sweetness of conscience, or on the loftiness of virtue. It is not a blessed thing to be in the midst of suffering; but it is blessed to be victorious over it, and not to be cowed by the power of temporal pain.[21]

To those of both extremes, he answers that a blessed life is possible in spite of all forms of

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[20]Ambros. *De Officiis* 3.4.24; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 71.

[21]Ambros. *De Officiis* 2.5.19; PL ; tran. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 46.

human experiences. The body may be fragile and experience pain. But, it is the meaning ascribed to the suffering that is important. To be 'victorious' over the suffering and not to be overcome by pain represents the virtuous life. There is representation of martyrdom. Not the martydom of physical death. The martyrdom which can mean death to pain and achievement through reasoned actions.

In the Stoic manner, Ambrose supports the theory that the intellect fails to perceive the nature and value of its objects. Adapting the Stoic tenet, Ambrose adds the factor of guilt [shame] to concept of false judgments. The intellectual error lies within reason. It has the ability to make correct judgments about the nature of virtues and vices.[22] For the Christian, the nature of virtues is known. For Ambrose, human nature can be transformed and the entire person, body and soul, can be redeemed.[23]

Ambrose maintains both the ascetic tradition and Neoplatonic thought on the human's sensual desires. He accepts the ascetic tradition's premise or foundation of the freedom of self-determination to good or evil, which is understood as the inalienable divine image implanted in humanity at its creation.[24] Ambrose also accepts Christian Platonism's identification of the divine image in humanity, not as the autonomy of self-determination as rationality, but as the human capacity for knowledge of God.[25]

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[22]See, Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 42-50.

[23]Ambros. *De Helia* 21.80; CSEL 32-2, 462; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 105.

[24]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 6.

[25]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 7.

6.2 THE POWERS OF SPEECH AND SILENCE: PROCREATION AND CHASTITY

During the fourth century, the cultural significance of speech is cited as a factor in successful conversion of many people to Chirstianity.[26] Ambrose's rhetorical efforts are most persuasive. His homiletic style is cited by his contemporaries. The Stoic tradition certainly supported a superb training in the theory and skill of the art.[27] Ambrose gives great importance to speech. He prefaces his advice with the mental 'motions' of reflection and passion. The former searches for truth; the latter promotes action:

> . . .speech is divided into two kinds: first, as it is used in friendly conversation, and then in the treatment and discussion of matters of faith and justice. In either case we must take care that there is not irritation. Our language should be mild and quiet, and full of kindness and courtesy and free from insult. . . Let there be discussion without wrath, urbanity without bitterness, warning without sharpness, advice without giving offence. And as in every action of our life we ought to take heed to this, in order that no overpowering impulse of our mind may ever shut our reason [let us always keep a place for counsel], so too, ought we to observe that rule in our language, so that neither wrath nor hatred may be aroused, and that we may not show any signs of our greed or sloth.[28]

These characteristics are classic in their simplicity. The virtues are most evident. All Christians can achieve success in the performance of this advice.

But Ambrose adds another dimension: "Thus the movement of the body is a sort of voice

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[26]R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984], 64-67.

[27]For an overview, see Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 51-58.

[28]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.22.99; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 18.

of the soul."[29] The sense of speech can be used for the many purposes of good. Ambrose sees speaking as a cause for concern as well:

> Sin enters in when we open our mouths to utter what is unrighteous. How does sin find entrance? We read: 'In the multitude of words you shall not escape sin,' [Prov. 16.19.] When a multiplicity of words has come forth, sin has found an entrance, for in this very multiplicity of words what we utter is not in the slightest degree subject to measure. Because of lack of prudence we fall into error. In fact, to give expression to our thoughts without duly weighing our words is in itself a grave sin.
>
> For that reason be not imprudent in your speech. The lips of the imprudent man furnish an occasion for evil.[30]

Speech must be mediated by reason. This idea is reinforced with the use of the Stoic 'sage' theme. In addition, he suggests how silence can be used in the face of accusations.

Recommending that the Christian refrain from kindling the coals of a sinner, he counsels: "For that reason, then, the holy man is silent, even if a servant abuses him; even if a poor man insults him, the just man is silent; even if a sinner casts his reproaches, the just man laughs; even if one that is weak gives a curse, the just man gives a blessing."[31] His reasoning is related to reward in heaven. So, the holy man is:

> And so, one who acknowledges an accusation ought to keep silent so as not to irritate the wound and tear the scar. Likewise, one who does not acknowledge it ought also to keep silent, for he is hearing of the misdeed of another and not his own. But if he replies, he makes it his own. If he is silent, he casts it back and wounds the caluminator. He ought also to keep silent who is confident of the aforesaid reward, for one who has not a judgment does not suffer prejudgment.[32]

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[29]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.18.71; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 13.

[30]Ambros. *De Cain* 1.9.36-37; CSEL 32-1, 370; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 392-393.

[31]Ambros. *De Interpell. Iob.* 2.6; CSEL 32-2, 247; trans, by McHugh, FC 65, 356. See also, Maria Tasiato, *L'oeil du silence: Eloge de la lecture* [Editions Verdier, 1989], 27, note 19.

[32]Ambros. *De Interpell. Iob.* 3.9; CSEL 32-2, 248-249; trans, by McHugh, FC 65, 35-358.

Ambrose's advice can be used by all Christians. The imagery of wound and healing is a most interesting presentation of ideas. He does go beyond the ordinary. He adds other dimensions of symbolic representation, as well as religious meaning as he encourages the use of calmness and silence for men and women.[33]

Ambrose's personal beliefs about the virtue of silence extend to his reading silently.[34] In his advice to clergy, Ambrose opens this work with the importance of silence;" Now what ought we to learn before everything else, but to be silent, that we may be able to speak? Lest, my voice should condemn me, before that of another acquit me; for it is written: 'By thy words thou shalt be condemned.'[Matt. 12.37]"[35] He continues:

> How many have I seen to fall into sin by speaking, but scarcely one by keeping silent; and so, it is more difficult to know how to keep silent than how to speak. I know that most persons speak because they do not know how to keep silent. It is seldom that any one is silent even when speaking profits him nothing. He is wise, then, who knows how to keep silent.[36]

The silence assists the 'reproaches of thoughts' and the 'judgment of conscience': "We are chastised also by the lash of our voices, when we say things whereby our soul is mortally injured, and our mind is sorely wounded."[37] Citing the operations of the inner life, he insists:

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[33]"The Stoics define language as utterance. Language is sound. It is corporeal, material and sensible. Hence language is part of the world of real being. Words, real beings themselves, are natural signs of natural objects." Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. I, 53.

[34]Campenhausen comments: "Ambrose was, so far as we know, the first figure in antiquity no longer to read books aloud but only silently and in meditation." Hans F. von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 124.

[35]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.2.5; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 1-2.

[36]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.2.5; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 2.

[37]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.2.6; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 2.

"Guard thy inner self. Do not neglect or condemn it as though it is worthless, for it is a valuable possession; truly valuable indeed, for its fruit is not perishable and only for a time, but is lasting and of use for eternal salvation."[38]

Ambrose exhorts the clergy: "Silence, again, wherein all the other virtues rest, is the chief act of modesty. . . . Let no one suppose that his praise belongs to chastity alone."[39] Ambrose believes that: "The mirror of our mind often enough reflects its image in our words."[40] His advice is the same to women: "The virtue of silence, especially in Church, is very great.[41] After using the imagery of the frogs, he continues: "While the shamelessness of men is such, that many care not to pay that respect to the religious feelings of their minds, which they do to the pleasure of their ears."[42]

The themes of bodily actions, first fruits, reason, and mind's mirror inundate all levels of the sixth faculty. The problems of sin, the wounding of the soul and the pursuit of virtue culminate in the religious significance of speech and silence. The practical bishop cannot fully explain how these behaviours occur; but he expresses counsels to which he gives religious meaning. In his appeal to reason and near ascetic actions, virtue can be achieved. Ambrose believes: "We undergo correction by keeping silent, whereas we stumble into error by our

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[38]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.3.11; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 3.

[39]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.18.68-69; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 13.

[40]Ambros. *De Officiis* 1.18.68; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 12.

[41]Ambros. *De Virginibus* 3.3.11; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 382.

[42]Ambros. *De Virginibus* 3.3.14; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 383.

contentions."[43] The strength of his convictions can be seen in his life, homilies and documents. Ambrose is: ". . . so far, the first figure in antiquity no longer to read books aloud but only silently and in meditation."[44]

Ambrose sees procreation as the seventh faculty. He defines the bodily gift in a broader perspective than perhaps the Stoics intended. He appears to amplify the concept with meanings of propagation and generativity. The reproductive aspect is associated with marriage; and the generative aspect is associated with ascetic or spiritual lifestyles for men and women. This strategy affords the inclusion of all previous senses. As well, he can substantiate a tension between these attributes. The inherent roles of biological and spiritual familial patterns can be established.

Ambrose's views on the topic of marriage are well researched.[45] This exploration emphasizes the theme of embodiment; that is, the seventh power of procreation as it is mediated by reason. Ambrose believes strongly in the relationship between spouses: "The divine law has bound together husband and wife by its authority, and yet mutual love remains a difficult matter. For God took a rib from the man, and formed the woman so as to join them one to the other,

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[43]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.7.24; CSEL 32-1, 399; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 425.

[44]Campenhausen adds: "A special excursus, going beyond Cicero, is concerned with the value of silence. . . .To be sure, he had a weak voice which he protected by this practice; yet beneath this new exercise which he inaugurated is hidden a deeper change of literary apprehension and general intellectual enjoyment." Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 124.

[45]See: W. J. Dooley, *Marriage According to Saint Ambrose* Patristic Studies, vol. 11 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948]. Dooley's is the most comprehensive study.; Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. I, 1224-125, 137-142, 157-159, 393-397; and Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 278-280.

and said: 'They shall be one flesh.' [Gen.2.24.]"[46] Again using a different image, Ambrose states:

> The same law binds the present and the absent; the same bond of nature cements together the rights of conjugal love between the absent as well as the present. The necks of both parties are linked together in the same beneficent yoke, even if one of them should find himself in regions entirely remote, because both parties share in the yoke of grace which is one of the spirit, not of the body.[47]

Later in the same chapter, he reiterates the theme. Using the Genesis narrative, he says: "Why, then do you cleave one body apart? Why do you divide one spirit? That is an adulterous offense against nature."[48] Acknowledging possibilities of intramartial conflicts, he exhorts the mutual respect and endurance of each other. He reminds the husband and wife of their respective roles.[49]

Ambrose's teaching extends to the public and private roles which comprise society. The dialectic supports the 'like-unlike' behaviours of all creatures and human beings in particular. The generation of the human species definitely involves the human body. The setting or milieu which fosters and nourishes the visible component of human nature receives the reasoning of the Milanese bishop. He states:

> We have here the message of the Scriptures which declares: 'Children, love your fathers; parents, do not provoke your children to anger.'[Col. 2.20, 21] Nature has implanted in beasts the instinct to love their own brood and hold dear their own progeny. They know nothing of relations-in-law.[50]

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[46]Ambros. *De Viduis* 15.89; PL 16; trans. by de Romestin, NPNF 10, 407.

[47]Ambros. *Hexameron* 5.7.18; CSEL 32-1, 153; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 173.

[48]Ambros. *Hexameron* 5.7.19; CSEL 32-1, 155; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 175.

[49]Ambros. *Hexameron* 5.7.18-19; CSEL 32-1, 153-155; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 173-175.

[50]Ambros. *Hexeramon* 6.4.22; CSEL 32-1, 218; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 240-241.

The concerns, created by successive marriages or relationships, receive Ambrose's attention:

> Here, parents do not become estranged from their offspring by the act of changing consorts. They know nothing of preferences given to children of a later union to the neglect of those of a former marriage. They are conscious of the value of their pledges and are unaquainted with distinctions in respect to love, to incentives due to hate, and to discriminations in acts that involve wrong-doing.[51]

Using nature's imagery as a guide, Ambrose cites the examples of animals, who having a more simple constitution, do not pervert truth: "And so the Lord has ordained that those creatures to whom He has bestowed a minimum of reason are endowed with the maximum of feeling."[52]

Modern commentors evaluate Ambrose's thought as having no 'systematic hostility' against marriage: "With his customary good sense and his care for strict fairness, he also abstains from certain brutal misogynism of which ecclesiastical writers have not always been sufficiently sparing."[53] Ambrose's thought is described as a 'skillful amalgam' of Stoic, Neoplatonic, and Christian asceticism: "In his treatise *De virginitate*, Ambrose demonstrates the lack of fanaticism in his exhortation to virginity; he repeats that virginity is a gift of God and also calls marriage a 'gift'."[54]

> Some one may say, 'Do you, then, discourage marriage?' Nay, I encourage it, and condemn those who are wont to discourage it. . . .For he who condemns marriage, condemns the birth of children and condemns the fellowship of the human race, continued by a series of successive generations--for how can generation succeed generation in a continual order, unless the gift of marriage

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[51]Ambros. *Hexeramon* 6.4.22; CSEL 32-1, 218; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 241.

[52]Ambros. *Hexeramon* 6.4.22; CSEL 32-1, 218; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 241.

[53]Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 279.

[54]Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 59; citation to: Ambros. *De Virginitate* 2.8; 5.23; and 8.34.

stirred up a desire for offspring.[55]

Ambrose's perspective on the gifts, or counsels, applies equally to the married, clergy, and ascetic men and women. His emphasis supports the seventh gift as it is mediated or harmonized by the intellect.[56] The classical form of marriage and chastity receives new motivation and enhancement from Christian values.

Adultery and seduction are concerns for the bishop. He believes adultery to be a loss of respect: "There are occasions for sin. Do not seek the bed that belongs to another. Do not by guile enter into another union. Adultery is a grievous offense. It does violence to nature.[57] The process of enticement and seduction can be soberly or drolly evaulated by Ambrose[58]

The use of women's body and beauty as a temptation and stumbling block to the children of Israel is set within the context of the Jewish people not being overcome by such behaviour. The question of women's body and beauty is construed as an apparent means to an end.

Of interest, Ambrose does not cite examples recording male seduction of females. The call for mutal respect of spouses and their offspring, establishes an embodiment within the senses as mediated through body, mind and spirit of the family as a whole. The exhortation for

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[55]Ambros. *De Virginitate* 8.34; as cited by Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 60.

[56]Ambrose's suggestions are based on tradition: "In its content his ascetic preaching barely went beyond what was already taught by Cyprian in this respect. There are basically three stages of chastity in the church: marriage, as far as possible only once, widowhood, and the holy virginity of the 'brides of Christ'. Voluntary virginity is a virtue first brought into the world by Christianity;. . ." See, Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 96.

[57]Ambros. *Hexeramon* 5.7.19; CSEL 32-1, 155; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 175.

[58]For an overview of this theme within Ambrose's writings, see: Émilien Lamirande, "Quelques viasges de séductrices. Pour une théologie de la condition féminine selon Saint Ambroise," *Science et Esprit* XXXI [1979]: 173-189.

complimentary roles based on virtues and duties supports the classical and Christian ethic.[59]

He does not promote an exaggerated asceticism: "Ambrose is a typical defender of the contemporary Christian and the late classical ideal of life, which recognizes spiritual seriousness and ethical discipline in matters of sex almost solely in the form of renunciation."[60]

The framework of normative and exceptional behaviours suggests Ambrose made: ". . .an attempt not only to offer practical moral instruction to the clergy but to show the relationship between Christian ethics and earlier philosophy. It marks a step beyond the usual lists of unprincipled and honourable actions and illustrates reflection on the philosophical and logical structure that underlies ethical understanding and teaching."[61]

6.3 THE BODY AS SACRAMENTAL

Ambrose's thought on the nature of sacraments contains perspectives on the human body. The theory and history of Sacramental Theology are not treated in any depth. Rather, the emphasis is on Ambrose's beliefs of the descriptive and sacramental nature of the human body as instrument of the soul: the body is washed, anointed, signed, and fed for the well-being of the total person.

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[59]Womer credits Ambrose's perspective: "To control the possibility of extreme or harmful, morbid asceticism beyond reasonable ways, he also supports the role of the bishop as teacher of ascetic practices and theology for clergy and monks." Womer, *Morality and Ethics in Early Christianity*, 27.

[60]Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, 96.

[61]Womer, *Morality and Ethics in Early Christianity*, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 27.

Ambrose supports the meaning of Baptism, as entry into the acceptance of Christian life. The initiation ritual allows the baptized individual into the full knowledge of the Christian faith:

> Now time warns us to speak of the mysteries and to set forth the very purpose of the sacraments. If we had thought that this should have been taught those not yet initiated before baptism, we would be considered to have betrayed rather than to have portrayed the mysteries; then there is the consideration that the light of the mysteries will infuse itself better in the unsuspecting than if some sermon had preceded them.[62]

The rite of passage into the Church brings with it many benefits. After baptism, the Christian learns of the 'mysteries' which are not available to the uninitiated person.

Ambrose encourages the Milanese to reconsider postponing Baptism. He exhorts them to set aside their delays, excuses and renew themselves with grace. He lists the benefits of the 'Sacrament' in body imagery: "You are purified from sin and are not burned, you are cured and do not suffer, you are remade, and are not dissolved, you do not receive the sting of death, and you rise again."[63] The experiences of burning, suffering, dissolution, and death are replaced with themes of purification, cure, renewal and immortal life.

A Milanese ritual, the washing of the feet, is strongly emphasized during the baptismal rite. He explains:

> Peter was clean, but he should have washed his feet, for he had the sin of the first man by succession, when the serpent overthrew him, and persuaded him to error. So his feet are washed, that hereditary sins may be taken away; for our own sins are remitted through baptism.[64]

Baptism has two 'washings'. One has its meaning in the symbolic act by which the 'serpent's

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[62]Ambros. *De Mysteriis* 1.2; CSEL 73-7, 89; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 5.

[63]Ambros. *De Helia* 22.85; CSEL 32-2, 485; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, PSt.* vol. XIX, 109.

[64]Ambros. *De Mysteriis* 6.32; CSEL 73-7, 102; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 16.

poison is washed away. This act is related to the inherited sin. The second 'washings' is directly related to the sins of the individual. In the act of immersion, the 'dove' descends and the 'raven' takes flight: "The water is that in which the flesh is immersed, that all carnal sin may be washed away. All disgrace is buried there."[65] The Trinitarian formula is most prominent:

> You were asked: 'Do you believe in God the Father almighty?' You said: 'I do believe,' and you dipped, that is: you were buried. Again you were asked: 'Do you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and in His cross?' You said: 'I do believe and you dipped. So you were also buried together with Christ. For who is buried with Christ rises again with Christ. A third time you were asked: 'Do you believe also in the Holy Spirit?' You said: 'I do believe,' you dipped a third time, so that the threefold confession absolved the multiple lapse of the higher life.[66]

Through the triple immersion of the body and the triple confessional acclamations, the individual is buried with Christ. The person is assured that he will rise with Christ. This act of resurrection will be of the whole person; just, as the act of initiation involved the whole individual. Thus, the power of speech mediated by reason, and the washing of the whole body convey the instrumental function of the human body.[67]

The Bishop of Milan differentiates between baptism and chrism.[68] He does not separate the liturgical action; but he does emphasize its significance: "Ambrose attempts to distinguish the regenerative activity of the Spirit in baptism from the bestowal of His sevenfold gifts in the

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[65]Ambros. *De Mysteriis* 3.11; CSEL 73-7, 93; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 9.

[66]Ambros. *De Sacrmentis* 2.7.20; CSEL 73-7, 34; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 286.

[67]For a summary of Ambrose's complete views on Baptism, see: Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 353-356, and 430-432.

[68]For a summary of his beliefs and practices, see: Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 432-436.

consignation which follows."[69] He states:

> So recall that you have received a spiritual seal, 'the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of holy fear,[Cf. Isa. 11.2-11.3.] and preserve what you have received. God the Father sealed you; Christ the Lord confirmed you, and gave a pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts, as you have learned in the lesson of the Apostle.[Cf. 2 Cor. 5.5][70]

Through the anointing of the body with scented oil, the person is 'sealed'. This outward sign signifies an inward dynamic of Trinitarian life. The bestowing of the spiritual 'seal' indicates the receiving of the seven gifts. These gifts are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and holy fear. These spiritual gifts are manifested through bodily actions of anointing and being anointed with chrism.

The understanding of Eucharist, as sacrament, represents two of Ambrose's finest developments on the nature of the body.[71] He insists that the consecrated elements are the Body and Blood of Christ. The consecration, or change, occurs in the nature of the elements. Not only does this change happen, but action occurs through the priestly words of institution. This development is completely consistent with his reasoning. For he distinguishes exterior ritual from interior presence. He does so with the outward and inward natures of the human being. The external observable body coexists with the internal non-observable soul.

His reasoning is consistent. There is an outward observable element but an inward non-observable presence. He takes great care to differentiate the spiritual nature of the Body and

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[69]Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 435.

[70]Ambros. *De Mysteriis* 7.42; CSEL 73-7, 106; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 20.

[71]For a summary of Ambrose's contribution, see Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 422, 426, 445-450; and Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, 593-597, 644-650.

Blood of Christ: "Christ is in that sacrament, because the body is Christ's. So the food is not corporeal but spiritual."[72] Ambrose's attributes of the priestly recitation, or speaking, the words of institution are quite consistent as well.

The numerous Eucharistic passages in his writings form the basis of a general study. Only a few examples are cited within the limits of this investigation:

> Look at these events one by one. It says: 'On the day before He suffered, He took bread in His holy hands." Before it is consecrated, it is bread; but when Christ's words have been added, it is the body of Christ. Finally, hear him as He says: 'Take and eat of this, all of you ; for this is my body,' And before the words of Christ, the chalice is full of wine and water; when the words of Christ have been added, then blood is effected, which redeemed the people. So behold in what great respect the expression of Christ is able to change all things. The Lord Jesus Himself testified to us that we receive His body and blood. Should we doubt at all about His faith and testification?[73]

> But why do we use arguments? Let us use His own examples, and by the mysteries of the Incarnation let us establish the truth of the mysteries. . . .
> The Lord Jesus himself declares: 'This is my body.' Before the benediction of the heavenly words another species is mentioned; after the consecration the body is signified. He Himself speaks of His blood. Before the consecration it is called blood. And you 'Amen,' that is, 'It is true." What the mouth speaks, let the mind within confess; what words utter, let the heart feel.[74]

The timelessness of the same words and same rhythm demonstrates Ambrose's conviction. Yet his understanding of the Body of Christ carries two additional levels of meaning. The Eucharistic presence which is cited here, the physical, real body of Christ and the mystical

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[72]Ambros. *De Mysteriis* 9.58; CSEL 73-7, 115; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 27.

[73]Ambros. *De Sacrmentis* 4.5.23; CSEL 73-7, 56; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 305.

[74]Ambros. *De Mysteriis* 9.53-54; CSEL 73-7, 112-113; trans. by Deferrari, FC 44, 25-26.

incorporation of humanity in Christ.[75]

Preparation for the banquet of the 'Mystical Table' is gained by abstinence: "Accordingly hunger is the patron of the banquet, and the table is made more pleasing through fasting."[76] The invitation to the Lord's feast is affirmed by human behaviour: "Therefore if holy fasting leads us to that venerable table, if by this hunger we can purchase those things which are eternal, why do we hesitate about the things which are within the sphere of human use, since fasting makes these also more pleasing for us?"[77] The ordinary acts of life can be exalted and secure extraordinary benefits of eternity. These gains can be achieved by all.

Ambrose does advocate a limited action of fasting occurs with the daily midday Eucharist:

> The fast is mandated; take care that you do not neglect it. If hunger urges you to a midday meal and lack of self-control disinclines you to fast, you are nonetheless better served by a heavenly banquet. Let not well prepared meals force you to miss the heavenly sacrament. Delay a little: the end of the day is not far removed. There are indeed many days of this sort when one ought to arrive in church right at midday, as hymns are to be sung and the sacrifice to be offered. Then indeed stand ready to receive this [spiritual] nourishment, to eat the body of the Lord Jesus, in which is the remission of sins and a pledge of divine reconciliation and eternal protection.[78]

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[75]See Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, 645-650, 593-594, 610-611 and 624-626. For an interesting treatment of Philonic use of the term *Eucharistia* see: Jean LaPorte, *Eucharistia in Philo* Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, vol. 3 [Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983], 179-185.

[76]Ambros. *De Helia* 9.32; CSEL 32-2, 429; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 67.

[77]Ambros. *De Helia* 10.33; CSEL 32-2, 430; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 67.

[78]Ambros. *Expos. Ps. CXVIII*, 48; CSEL 62, 180; trans. by James McKinnon, ed., *Music in Early Christian Literature*. Cambridge Readings in the Literature of Music. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 127. Hereafter cited as McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*.

This action of fasting occurs within the context of the preparation for sacramental participation. Ambrose is most clear in his counsel. There is no contest. The ingestion of a meal can be delayed. The reception of spiritual nourishment is the priority. The tensions of bodily concepts is intriguing. In addition, the spiritual rewards include reception, reconciliation and protection.

The bishop's words, meaning and message are known. The 'Mystical Table', like the experiences of sun, light, sleep and health, is more 'pleasing' and appreciated after fasting. The instruction is reinforced through the incidents of daily life. The spiritual dimension of abstinence is expounded as well. Ambrose reiterates the worth of fastings in a manner of sacrifice: "It is a good viaticum for a journey, a good viaticum for one's life, a good viaticum on the sea: it stays shipwrecks, it husbands food."[79] The behaviour can be performed anywhere at anytime. During times of calm or crisis, fasting takes on an internalized, sacramental element. Although Ambrose believes there are three sacraments, baptism, confirmation or chrism, and the eucharist, one example of ordination is included. Again, the bodily acts take on the performance of instrument of the soul.[80]

Ambrose mentions the practice of some men who have withdrawn to islands. Their purposes are associated with ascetic lifestyles:

> Why should I mention the islands, ringed by the sea as by a necklace, where those who have renounced the attractions of earthly indulgence and resolved firmly to be chaste, choose to hide from the world and avoid the dubious affairs of this life? The sea, then is a sanctuary for temperance, a training ground for continence, a retreat for austerity, a secure harbor, peace on earth, and sobriety in this world. It is moreover an inducement to devotion for these faithful and

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[79]Ambros. *De Helia* 8.22; CSEL 32-2, 424; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 59.

[80]For a complete overview of clerical orders, see: Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, "The Orders of Ministers in the Time of Ambrose," 129-132.

> pious men, that as their psalmody [cantus psallentium] vies with the sound of softly lapping waves, the islands applaud with a gentle chorus of blessed undulations, and resound with the hymns of the saints.[81]

But withdrawal from social settings is not a prerequisite of Ambrose's understanding of the ascetic dimension. Ambrose's reasoning is related to an undertone of withholding or absence from a pleasurable thing or act. The ascetic lifestyle requires training or disciplining of all eight faculties.

In a friendly letter to Felix, Bishop of Como,[82] Ambrose reminisces with his colleague about the anniversary of Felix's consecration to the 'high-priesthood': "Your ordination, which you received through the laying on of my hands, and through the blessing in the name of the Lord Jesus, [Cf. *2 Tim.* 1.16] will not be censured."[83] The consecration of Felix seems to occur with the imposition of hands and the recitation of the words of blessing. The event, purpose and meaning of the Ambrose's bodily actions have deep consequences for his own memory as well as the sacramental life and activities of Felix. Ambrose believes that the human body has apparent meaning beyond the observable. In a curious passage preceding this statement, Ambrose using the imagery of Aaron as the Old Testament symbol of priesthood, counsels Felix about the manner in which Christ, as the new priesthood speaks and teaches:

> In the Holy of Holies, moreover, like the Word, He whom we do not see stands within each one of us, separating the faculty of reasoning from the lifeless bodies of our deadly passions and plague-ridden thought. He stands as one who has come into this world to dull the sting of death, to close its devouring jaws,

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[81]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.5.23; CSEL 32-2, 74; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Literature*, 130.

[82]Ambros. *Ep.* 5; CSEL 82-1, 35-38; trans by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 19, "Ambrose to Felix," [c. 380]: 102-105.

[83]Ambros. *Ep.* 5.5; CSEL 82-1, 37; trans by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 19, 105.

> to give everlasting grace to the living, to grant resurrection to the dead. [Heb. 2,14,15][84]

In this remarkable passage, he shares with Felix, his own understanding of the mystical dimensions of priestly and humanly dynamics during liturgical activities. God dwells within; He separates reason, from passions and thought. This Incarnational God changes the meaning of death, grants grace to those living, and assures resurrection to those who are dead. Ambrose uses every opportunity to understand scripture and to teach its meaning within the ordinary and extrordinary events of life. The interplay among living and dead assumes the life of grace as well as the death to sin. The body expresses the creation and revealed action of God. From these dynamics, the body is also treated as sacramental.

The classical philosophical forms of Neoplatonism and Stoicism are carried or transmitted forward in Christian theological thought. The anthropological implications of a qualified Christian Neoplatonism and a transformed Stoic doctrine of eight faculties serve to inform a Christian culture with observable attributes, behaviours and lifestyles signifying an internal process of spiritualization. The proposed three tier development of embodied acts mediated by the sensory faculties, and communicated through patterns of unreasoned, reasoned, and exceptional choices, reflects a discernible hierarchy that suggests a harmonizing of the ascetic and Christian Neoplatonic anthropological movements. The body as instrumental and sacramental supports the process of a spiritualizing body. The six and seven levels of interpretation describe the body not only as celebrated through imagery, prayer and hymns but transformed through death and resurrection.

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[84]Ambros. *Ep.* 5.5; CSEL 82-1, 36-37; trans by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 19, 104.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BODY AS CELEBRATED AND TRANSCENDENT

Ambrose's enjoyment of poetic and lyrical forms represents a proportion of his documents. This aspect of his personality, discernible in his writings, finds expression through enigmatic and mystical qualities in which human bodily nature is symbolized in prose and song. This sixth level of interpretation explores the bodily metaphors and allegorizations to celebrate another dimension of Ambrose's contemplation and deliberations on human body and its relationship to the soul.

The seventh level of interpretation, the body as transformed and glorified represents Ambrose's most definitive thought on the religious significance of the body. The mortal body altered by death awaits the promise of the resurrection. Then, the body, united once again with its soul, becomes the glorified, transcendent embodiment of its Creator.

The importance of Christian Neoplatonic thought to these levels can be seen as in the continuing process of spiritualization. Although Ambrose maintains both the ascetic tradition and Neoplatonic thought on the human's sensual desires, he accepts the ascetic tradition's premise or foundation of the freedom of self-determination to good or evil, which is understood as the inalienable divine image implanted in humanity at its creation.[1]

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[1]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 6.

He also accepts Christian Platonism's identification of the divine image in humanity not as the autonomy of self-determination but as rationality, the human capacity for knowledge of God. Although he retains a capacity and desire for God, each human being inherits the desire of sensual satisfactions. During this life, the desire can be aggravated by free consent to bodily desires, which adds the power of custom and deepens the person's servitude.[2] The more a person knows and loves God, the more he hungers for God. As the desire grows, a relapse into sensual pursuits become increasingly improbable.[3]

Ambrose's beliefs are best expressed as: "The created spirit can never stop changing: hence its beatitude consists in an unceasing and ever-increasing development in the knowledge and love which unites it to the divine Spirit. This union with God may begin during earthly life, and its joys may be anticipated in mystical prayer." [4] This Christian Neoplatonic tradition differs significantly from the anthropology of the ascetic tradition as it describes the Christian life as the growth of a spiritual desire for God rather than as the faithful obedience to the divine commands through which one earns a regard in the next life.[5]

7.1 POETIC IMAGERY AND BODILY EXPRESSIONS

This sixth level of interpretation incorporates and enhances the previous levels through an exploration of the nature and structure of the human body as extolled in poetic and lyrical

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[2]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 7.

[3]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 9.

[4]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 9.

[5]Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 9.

imagery. Ambrose's perception of the body, as art and metaphor, considers his understanding of aesthetics which fosters a view of the body as beautiful. This beauty is real. His reasoning requires a substantive rather than ascribed descriptive ideal of the body. To this philosophical principle he enjoins his theological beliefs: "Therefore let His image shine forth in our profession of faith, let it shine forth in our love, let it shine forth in our works and deeds so that, if it is possible, all His beauty may be represented in us."[6] This beauty is corporeal. For in the next sentence he says:

> Let Him be our head, because, "the head of man is Christ" [1 Cor. 11:3.]; let Him be our eye, that through Him we may see the Father; let Him be our voice that through Him we may speak to the Father; let Him be our right hand, that through Him we may bring our sacrifice to God the Father.[7]

The beauty of Christ is mystically alive in the nature of the human being. Ambrose believes that all bodily parts, the senses, and human reasoning have a higher significance.

Ambrose borrows and creates a variety of images for the human body. The Ambrosian imagery provides a vehicle for his praise of the Creator and the created alike. The body exceeds the observable. The body is seen and unseen. It possesses nature and supernature. His meaning of the body is derived from metaphysical and aesthetical perspectives.

Beyond the written word as prose, Ambrose the lyricist, composed joyous hymns and music. The content of his energies give glory to the Creator. The human body, as the agent of such actions, expresses not only praise of God but also proclaims the bodily vehicle which performs the actions and offers the worship. The beauty and glory of the body are reflected in

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[6]Ambros. *De Isaac* 8.75; CSEL 32-1, 694; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 59.

[7]Ambros. *De Isaac* 8.75; CSEL 32-1, 694; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 59.

these efforts.

Ambrose defines beauty as possessing harmony and symmetry: "True beauty, in fact, consists of a fitting adjustment in each part and in the whole, so that the charm in each part and the full appropriateness of the form in the completed work are worthy of commendation."[8] This acclaim is found in the human body as the microcosm and macrocosm of the world itself.[9]

The fragility of human life in the body is a recurrent theme in the Ambrosian corpus. He writes of the transitory character of human nature. On occasion he uses the colours and images of the grasslands, meadows and gardens to portray the human condition. One particular flower has captivated him:

> Mingling formerly with the flowers of the earth and without thorns, the rose, most beautiful of all flowers, displayed its beauty without guile; afterwards the thorn fenced around this charming flower, presenting, as it were, an image of human life in which what is pleasing in our activities is often accompanied with the stings of anxieties which everywhere surround us. In fact, the elegance of our life is entrenched and hedged about by certain cares, so that sadness is close neighbor to beauty.[10]

The poetry of human life as a rose is extraordinary. The misfortunes of life are as thorns surrounding human beauty. He cautions his listeners: "Although you may shine, man, with the splendor of nobility or by reason of your superior power or by the brillance of your virtue, the thorn is ever close to you, the bramble is ever near you."[11]

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[8]Ambros. *Hexameron* 2.5.21; CSEL 32-1, 58; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 65. Savage describes this passage as ancient literary criticism which followed this pattern; Cf. Pliny, *Epistola* 8.4; 2.5; 3.15. Ibid., 65.

[9]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.55; CSEL 32-1, 246; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 268.

[10]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.11.48; CSEL 32-1, 91; trans. by Savage FC 42, 102-103.

[11]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.11.48; CSEL 32-1, 91; trans. by Savage FC 42, 103.

The 'mind's thorns' and the 'spirit's bramble' stand in marked contrast to the rose. He counsels: "Ever be mindful of what is beneath you. You blossom into life above a thorn and this beauty does not last for long. In a brief passage of time each and every one of us withers in the flower of his age."[12] His supplication of life's beauty and its fleeting quality are so genuine.

This rose theme, with the inclusion of the lily,[13] is important enough to use with the image of Christ: "The rose and the lily symbolize the Holy Eucharist: You gather here the new Flower which gives the good odor of the resurrection and the splendor of eternity, and the rose is the Blood of the Lord's body."[14]

As he muses about the marvels of creation and its author as 'Creative Wisdom', Ambrose uses the emerging buds of spring life to represent the life cycle:

> For, in the appearance of a bud on one hand, and in the provision of a green herb, on the other, there lies an image of the life of man and what may be termed a clear indication and mirror of our nature and of our condition. That green herb and flower of the field are a figure of the flesh of man, as the true interpreter of divinity has expressed in organ tones: 'Cry! What shall I cry? All flesh is grass and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen, but the word of the Lord endureth forever.' [Isa. 40.6-9; 1 Peter 1.24][15]

The flesh of man blooms and flowers. It knows the joys of happiness. One particular image, enjoyed by Ambrose, is that of the 'royal palace':

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[12]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.11.48; CSEL 32-1, 91; trans. by Savage FC 42, 103.

[13]For Ambrose, the lily symbolizes the resurrection; Cf. Ambros. *Expos. ev. Lucum* 8.127; Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.412.

[14]Ambros. *Expos. Ps.CXVII* 14.2; CSEL 62; trans. by Springer, PSt. 30, 62.

[15]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.7.29; CSEL 32-1, 78; trans. by Savage FC 42, 88.

> We have now completed our general discussion of the human body. It can be compared to a royal palace, which, though it has a number of adjoining halls still preserves the appearance of a unified whole.[16]

The harmony, beauty and elegance of the body are indeed majestic. This and other architectural and structural images are numerous enough to support a separate investigation.

But not all Ambrosian images are perceived as exemplary. The Platonic concept of the body as prison,[17] is a most difficult metaphor.[18] The 'prison' imagery is distributed throughout his works. When discussing the spirituality of the soul, he preaches: "Truly happy is that life when every man who is conscious of having lived well has cast aside the trappings of this flesh and has freed himself from this prison of the body [Cf. Cicero *De republica* 6.14.][19] He also uses the imagery to express the 'separation' of the body and soul at death: "And at least, in its departure, we see how the soul of the dying man gradually frees itself from the bonds of the flesh and, passing out from the mouth, flies away as if freed from the prison,

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[16]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.9; CSEL 32-1, 256; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 278.

[17]The concept, body as a prison, has received much study: see P. Courcelle, "Traditions platonicienne et chrétienne du corps-prison," *Revue des études latines* 43 [1965]: 406-443; for other references to Ambrosian citations see, 423-426 .

[18]Research on this metaphor continues. For some, a misinterpretation of the *soma-sema* formula has occurred: "For in fact, Plato took human life much more as a challenge than as some kind of penance; and, when referring to the cave simile, one must never forget that this philosopher, who has sometimes been called an "educator', considered the essential task of education to be precisely the unbinding of the prisoners in the cave, making them turn around and dragging them up to the light of the real world." C. J. de Vogel, "The *SŌMA-SEMA* Formula: Its Function in Plato and Plotinus Compared to Christian Writers," chap. in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A. H. Armstrong*, ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus [London: Variorum Publications Ltd., 1981], 89.

[19]Ambros. *De Cain* 2.9.36; CSEL 32-1, 407; trans. by Savage, FC 42., 434-435.

the poor abode that is the body."[20]

In his exegesis of Genesis narrative, he uses the metaphor to express the problem of enticement in the garden: "Although of superior nature, his soul is nevertheless subject to temptation, since it exists in the prison house of the body--witness my own experience in being unable to avoid sin."[21] The lament of the soul is related as 'she' questions reluctantly how: ". . .to return to the enclosure of the body and the gloomy prison of its passions?"[22] Her answer comes with the meaning of the God as Incarnation.[23] For her averse 'robe' is also a temple:

> Flesh you are not, I repeat. It is not said of the flesh: 'For holy is the temple of God and this temple you are.' And elsewhere: 'You are the temple of God and the Spirit of the God dwells in you [1 Cor. 3.17.], that is to say, in those who have had a new birth and in the faithful in whom the Spirit of God dwells. It does not dwell among the carnal, for it is written: 'My spirit shall not remain in these men forever, because they are flesh' [Gen. 6.3].[24]

Ambrose, not always consistent in his use of images, ascribes the 'prison' and 'temple' motifs as an expression of the relationship of body to soul. On another occasion, he uses the 'temple' motif as the house of God, or the dwelling place of the Lord:

> He wanted that temple which is built in the hearts of men, to whom it may be said: 'You are the temple of God [1 Cor. 3.16.], in which the Lord Jesus might dwell and from there set out to redeem all mankind. There also could be

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[20]Ambros. *De Bono Mortis* 2.5; CSEL 32-1, 706; trans. by Savage, FC 65, 72-73. See P. Courcelle, "Traditions platonicienne et chrétienne du corps-prison," *Revue des études latines* 43 [1965]: 425-426.

[21]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 12.54; CSEL 32-1, 312; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 333.

[22]Ambros. *De Isaac* 6.52; CSEL 32-1, 676-677; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 42.

[23]Ambros. *De Isaac* 6.53; CSEL 32-1, 677-678; trans. by McHugh, FC 65, 43-44.

[24]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.6.39; CSEL 32-1, 231; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 253.

> prepared a sacred chamber in the womb of the Virgin where the King of heaven might live and a human body become the temple of God, which though it was destroyed, might yet be restored to life on the third day.[25]

The garment of flesh can be weak; but it is deserving of care.[26] For, the heart of individual is the temple of the Lord. In his championing of Nicene orthodoxy, Ambrose believes the Incarnation and Resurrection assure the redemption of humanity and the resurrection of the human body.

Beyond philosophical interpretations of the body, Ambrose reaches into the classical motifs and adapts them for his purposes. His modifications are of a religious nature. The most poignant example is given during the homily of his brother Satyrus. It is the longest and most complete passage of the phoenix as symbol of the human resurrection.[27] Ambrose further adapts the Stoic-type motif by eliminating the cyclic idea and by resorting to a natural theology argument.[28] "By the very act of his resurrection the phoenix furnishes us a lesson by setting

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[25]Ambros. *Ep.* 12.3; CSEL 82-1, 179; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 80, "Ambrose to Irenaeus," [c.387], 449.

[26]For a most important discussion of this interpretation of Ambrose's work, see C. J. de Vogel's evaluation: "Whatever theologians fed on modern anthropology may say, this much is clear, that such tests of Paul and that from the Book of Wisdom, which was frequently quoted by Christian authors of the early centuries, including Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, and Augustine the Platonist, give an eloquent testimony to the fact that for those comparatively early Christians who were so keenly aware of the essential difference between philosophy and Christian faith, the prison "model" of understanding human life existed side by side with the temple "model", and this because both the prison *experience* and the temple experience were real things in their lives." C. J. de Vogel, "The *SŌMA-SEMA* Formula: Its Function in Plato and Plotinus Compared to Christian Writers," chap. in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A. H. Armstrong*, ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus [London: Variorum Publications Ltd., 1981], 93. {see previous footnote numbered, 18}

[27]Ambros. *De Excessu Sat.* 2.59; CSEL 73-7, 281. See also *Expos. Ps.CXVIII* 19.13.

[28]See Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 52.

before us the very emblems of our own resurrection without the aid of precedent or of reason."[29] The 'emblem' is a constant reminder of God's care for the individual and the ultimate plan for humanity.

The Ambrosian masterpiece, *De officiis ministrorum* inspired by Cicero's *De officiis*, is renowned.[30] The 'wise man' undergoes a development in his letters to Simplicianus.[31] In *De Iacob et beata vita*,[32] Jacob serves as the model of virtue: he is the exemplar of the *summum bonum*. the Stoic sage is transformed into the Christian wise man. The Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Jacob,[33] serve as figures of moral types: "Abraham stands for faith; Isaac stands for sincerity of heart; Joseph stands for purity. Jacob's preeminent virtue is fortitude in the midst of struggles. He stands for the soul's endurance of toils; he is a kind of Christian Hercules."[34] Ambrose does not integrate the Stoic doctrines; but rather, he uses them for his own purposes of edification.

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[29]Ambros. *Hexameron* 5.23.79; CSEL 32-1, 257; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 219. Springer cites Ambrose's version as the closest to Clement of Rome [Epist. I.25]; M. T. Springer, *Nature-Imagery in the Works of Saint Ambrose* PSt 30, 140.

[30]For an excellent comparison of the two texts, see Colish *Stoicism*, vol. 2, 54-70. See also: Raymond Thamin, *Saint Ambroise et la morale chrétienne au IV^e siècle: Étude comparée des traités "Des devoirs" de Cicéron et de Saint Ambroise* [Paris: 1895], 201-309; Maurice Testard, "Étude sur la compositions dans le *De officiis ministrorum* de Saint Ambroise," in *Ambrosie de Milan: XVI^e centenaire de son élection épiscopale*, ed. Yves-Marie Duval [Paris, 1974], 182-183; M. L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. 1, "Cicero", [Leiden, 1985], 126-158.

[31]Ambros. *Ep.* 7; CSEL 82-1, 43-66; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 54, "Ambrose to Simplicianus,"[386]: 286-304; and, Ambros. *Ep.* 10; CSEL 82-1, 73-78; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 55, "Ambrose to Simplicianus," [386]: 303-307.

[32]Ambros. *De Iacob et vita beata*. CSEL 32-2, 3-70.

[33]Ambros. *De Ioseph* 1.2; CSEL 32-2, 74.

[34]Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, vol. II, 55.

The classical figures of chariot, driver and horse provide another theme for the understanding of the human being's operations. In this imagery, the soul is portrayed in singular fashion:

> We read in another passage--the Church or the soul saying--: 'He made be the chariots of Aminadab.' If, then, the soul is a chariot, see lest the flesh be the horse; but let the driver be the strength of mind which rules the flesh, and which, after the manner of horses as it were, checks its movements with the reins of prudence. They have fallen asleep, therefore, who have mounted the pleasures of the body, governing them with no moderation. Hence he preferred to call them riders rather than horsemen or drivers. For the driver, by training and skill, drives his horses as he wishes, so that he may urge them on in their course, or turn them back when ungovernable, or recall them when wearied, or bring them around gentle according to his will.[35]

This passage characterizes the trichotomy of human nature. The soul is the chariot; the driver is the mind; and the horse is the flesh. The relationships among the three are most obvious. The discipline of the mind bears the responsibility for governing the flesh. Implicit in his analogy, Ambrose sees the 'driver-mind' as the guide, by its 'by training and skill'. The mind has a variety of approaches which guide the performance of the passions.

The last classical reference to be cited is the figure of the contender. Ambrose employs the imagery of the individual as 'athlete' and winner of the crown of victory. Ambrose rests his argument on the tensions of victor and vanquished. Broadening this imagery of the end of a contest, to the end of time, Ambrose states:

> The athletes rejoice who can say: Thy kingdom come, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. The creature of the world, that now sighs deeply and travailleth, will rejoice that it will be delivered from the vanity of the world, because that creature also is subject to vanity, until the adoption of the sons be

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[35]Ambros. *De Nab.* 15.64; CSEL 32-2, 470; trans. by McGuire, *De Nabuthae in PSt.* vol. XV, 93.

multiplied and the redemption of the entire body be completed.[36]

The fulfilment of the entire body is the crown for the victor. The imagery of contest is fully appreciated in the victory of redemption.

Beyond these classical references, Ambrose allegorizes bodily features or parts which, by the Creator's design, serve to add beauty to the human body. These few citations represent but a few of the total references which might be used to demonstrate Ambrose's creativity and use of imagery.[37]

All of creation has inherent purpose. Thus, the human body's features or parts serve to reflect the Creator's design, purpose or goodness. In an overview of the beauty of the human body, he highlights the 'celestial' head and exclaims: "The body as a whole may be likened to a dark and filthy prison unless it is illuminated by the visual power of the eye. The eyes in man correspond to the sun and moon in the heavens."[38] As the great orbs of the heavens, they provide light to the individual. Wisdom resides near the heart: "The breast, in fact, is frequently referred to as the seat of wisdom."[39] The usual limbs of action receive special attention. The purpose of the knees serves both social and devotional aims:

> The knee has a certain flexibiltiy, by reason of which the offended master is especially appeased, his ire softened, and his favors induced. This is the gift of

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[36]Ambros. *De Helia* 21.80; CSEL 32-2, 461-462; trans. by Buck, *De Helia, in PSt.* vol. XIX, 105.

[37]Burns comments on the origin of this process: "Origens's appropriation and development of the allegorical interpretation used by exegetes of the Homeric writings and the Hebrew spcriptures provided a method for the prayer and speculation of Christian mysticism. Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 7.

[38]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.55; CSEL 32-1, 247; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 269.

[39]Ambros. *De Paradiso* 15.74; CSEL 32-1, 332; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 353.

> the most high Father to His Son: 'That in the name of the Lord every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth and every tongue shoud confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father [Cf. *Phil.* 2.10][40]

Equally, the two legs serve to express humility and faith: "The leg expresses the emotion of humility and the submission of constant service. Faith makes the Son equal to the Father and makes evident that the same glory belongs to each."[41] The sense of symmetry involved in the lower body serves as a reminder not only of virtues but also sustains the theological positions of the Father and the Son.

In addition to bodily allegories, Ambrose uses allegory for bodily actions. Some commentators attribute mystical qualities to Ambrose. Others readily disagree or dispute this quality among his many gifts. The majority of the modern sources consulted agree that this Bishop of Milan experienced and envisioned a profound understanding of human physical properties and activities. His psychological perspective is enhanced by a deliberate attempt to go beyond understanding the causal, observed occurrences of human life. He gives particular meaning to the common acts and the rare events of living. The nature of this ascribed meaning is religious.

As pastor, Ambrose is committed to believe that the actions of a person contain a deeper meaning and significance. Within his Christian belief system, he stresses the theological positions and exegetical interpretations of his beliefs. Poetic attributes and poetic expressions celebrate human corporality and spirit. With profoundly scriptural and strongly Neoplatonic components, Ambrose moves the tripartite perspective of the human being closer to an

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[40]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.74; CSEL 32-1, 260; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 281.

[41]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.9.74; CSEL 32-1, 260; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 281.

achievement of unity. In addition to the theological beauty which the body manifests, Ambrose bestows many poetic and lyrical descriptions upon the living human body. As the quantity of references far exceeds the scope of this study, a select few, must represent the many.[42]

7.2 MYSTICISM: PRAYERFULNESS AND MUSIC

Musical expressions provide Ambrose with multiple references and images of the human body. The integration of biological functions, theological concepts and liturgical practices point to reciprocal and redemptive actions of the human body.

Ambrose believes the Book of Psalms has many benefits for human beings. Using the concept of history, he frames the meaning of the psalms within the context of individual 'cure' and 'ancestral' memory:

> History teaches, the Law instructs, prophecy proclaims, reproach chastens and moralizing persuades; in the Book of Psalms there is the successful accomplishment of all this along with a kind of balm of human salvation. Whoever reads there, has a special remedy whereby he can cure the wounds of selfish passion. Whoever is willing to look closely, discovers a variety of contests prepared for him, as if in a communal gymnasium of souls or a stadium of virtue, from which he can select for himself the one for which he knows himself best suited, in which he can more easily win the crown. If one is eager to study the deeds of our forebears and wishes to imitate them, he finds contained within a single psalm the entire range of ancestral history so that he gains a

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[42]Generally Ambrose uses imagery for purposes of edification. Modern commentators speak well of his skill: "He is at his best in a musical and richly-colored prose that borders on poetry and liturgy." E. K. Rand, *The Founders of the Middle Ages* [New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1928], 97; "Nature-imagery supplies him with fragments of color, of form, of objective fact and subjective fancy, of oriental allusiveness, of classical reminiscence and of scientific theory, and these he fits into his mosaic of morals and dogma." M. T. Springer, *Nature-Imagery in the Works of Saint Ambrose* PSt, vol. 30 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1931], 142.

> treasury of memories as a stipend for his reading. Things explained with more brevity also seem easier.[43]

Although this capitulum is intense with Ambrose's perspective on many topics, the bodily images are quite intriguing. The psalms, as balm of healing and as remedy of wounds, vivify the curing of the whole human. The actions of reading and reflection on the psalms share in the rehabilitation of the whole being and connect the individual to the heritage and corporate memory of all believing beings. Bodily acts participate in the saving or redemptive endeavours.

From external musical instrument to internal bodily musical instrument, Ambrose plays the human body as a source and agent of harmony and song:

> Just as he who ordinarily plays the cithara [*cithara canere*], if he saw it was badly damaged, indeed unusable, its strings limp and its body broken, would set it aside and not feeling the need of its rhythms [*numeros*] would regale himself with his own voice; so would this man allow his corporeal cithara to lie at rest and find delight in his heart.[44]

The beauty of the human body as 'corporeal cithara' is remarkable. In the absence of a musical instrument, a human body through its voice enacts and performs as a musical instrument; the bodily acts resonate and delight his spirit.[45] This remarkable imagery is used by Ambrose for the joy of a daily moment.

Later in this same text, Ambrose repeats the cithara motif but the imagery is rephrased

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[43]Ambros. *Explanatio psalmi* 1.7.; CSEL 64, 6; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 126.

[44]Ambros. *De Jacob et vita beata* 1.8.39; CSEL 32-2, 30-31; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 129.

[45]McKinnon comments on this passage and then questions its possible significance and inspiration to a work completed by Raphael: "A man's body is compared to a broken musical instrument and his heart to the human voice. Could there be a connection with Raphael's famous painting of Saint Cecilia?" McKinnon, *Music is Early Christian Literature*, 129.

in tones of immediate pain and sorrow. On this occasion, the present contains the immortality. The broken instrument is not the cithara but the shattered victims of Antiochus. In his commentary on the seven Maccabees and their mother, Ambrose recounts the sorrowful event:

> What cithara could give forth sweeter song than her dying sons in their final agony? For a spontaneous groaning burst from their lips, despite their unwillingness. You might look upon their mangled bodies arranged in a row as the strings of an instrument [*fila chordarum*], and you might hear in their victorious sighs the sounding of the seven string psaltery. Not so were those enticing songs of the fabled Sirens able to attract a listener; for they led one to shipwreck while these led one to the triumphant sacrifice. Not so could the song of the swan calm the ears and the spirit; for swans die by lot of nature while these died out of love and devotion. Nor does the soft cooing of doves in the solitary grove echo so sweetly as the last words of these as they died. Nor does the moon shine forth so among the stars as this mother among her sons, both when she led them to martyrdom as one lighting their way, and when she lay among them embracing them as victors. [46]

All of creation participates in anguish and death. The allure of the Sirens' destructive call to men, the dying swan, the solitude of the passing dove, and the waning moon and stars know the notes of cessation. Yet, the deaths of seven faithful sons take on a new meaning. Unlike the creature of nature, the mangled bodies of these young men are victorious instruments upon which the psalms of old were played. As brooding as this allusion may seem to modern tastes, the bodily image is indeed very forceful in any age.

The cithara's symbolism and the Maccabees' massacre have particular significance for Ambrose. The imagery of the event and the mother's response appears not only in his exegetical work on Jacob, but also in his moral tract to the clergy. In the latter, he compares the voices of the dying sons to the notes of the stringed lyre: "What shall I say of the mother, who joyously

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[46]Ambros. *De Jacob et vita beata* 2.7. 56; CSEL 32-2, 68-9; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 130.

looked upon the corpses of her sons as so many trophies, who delighted in their dying cries as in the singing of psalms, and saw in her offspring the fairest cithara of her womb and the harmony of devotions, surpassing the rhythm of any lyre [*omni lyrae numero*] in sweetness?"[47] Again, this symbolism may be unpleasant to modern inclinations, but Ambrose's laud of the mother is genuine. The support and gift of her sons are praiseworthy. Loss and death have meaning beyond the apparent renown of this world. The bodily death events have significance by offerings of faithfulness and glory to God.

Yet, the witness and the heritage of the psalms do not always lie within the overt, horrific spectacle or the societal, public domain. The psalmic tradition can be incorporated into the daily life of the individual. The 'corporeal cithara' plays in the recesses of the private sphere as well: "When the new day finds you meditating upon the word of God and when so grateful a task as praying and singing psalms delights your mind, once again you say to the Lord Jesus: 'You have made the passing of the morning and evening to be joyful'."[48] The passage of the day and night contain a rhythm of delight.

His pastoral admonishments, about conduct during the early morning hours, include specific actions and cautions. To the devout virgin, Ambrose gives this advice: "[Christ] seems to come late when you sleep too long; he seems to come late when you miss your prayers; he

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[47]Ambros. *De Officiis* 41.212; PL XVI, 84; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 132.

[48]Ambros. *Expos. Ps. CXVIII* 19.30; CSEL 62, 438; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 128.

seems to come late when you fail to raise your voice in psalms."[49] To the morning inbiber, Ambrose counsels:

> Therefore not without justification [does Isaiah say] woe unto them who require the drink of intoxication in the morning, who ought to render praise to God, to rise before dawn, and meet in prayer the sun of justice, who visits his own and rises before us, if we rise for Christ rather than for wine and strong drink. Hymns are sung [*hymni dicuntur*], and you grasp the cithara? Psalms are sung, and you take up the psaltery and tympanum? Woe indeed, because you disregard salvation and choose death.[50]

The contrast of actions is apparent. The behaviours differ dramatically. The manner in which an individual 'drinks in morning' does have unending significance and consequence.

As the rhythm of the day closes with the coming of evening, Ambrose reveals his personal activities: "During the reading, when I had rested my mind somewhat [having abandoned my nocturnal study], I began to reflect upon the verse which we had used in the evening at the vigil [uesperi in uigiliis]: 'You are the fairest of the sons of men' [Ps 44.3], and 'How beautiful are the feet of the those who announce him' [Isa 52.7]."[51] This nightly practice of Ambrose has persisted for many years. Sixteen years earlier,[52] he counselled his sister in

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[49]Ambros. *De Virginitate* 12.69; PL 16, 283; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 129.

[50]Ambros. *De Helia* 15.55; CSEL 32-2, 444-5; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 128-129.

[51]Ambros. *Ep.* 29.24; PL 16, 1001; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 131.

[52]Ambrose's advice to Irenaeus is dated by M. M. Beyenka as the Summer of 393 [Ambros. *Ep.* 11; CSEL 82-1, 305; trans. by Beyenka, FC 26, no. 79, "Ambrose to Irenaeus, greetings." [Summer, 393]: 437; some sixteen years earlier, Ambrose gave the same counsel to his sister [*De virginibus ad Marcellinam sororem* is dated by M. G. Mara as December 377, *Patrology*, IV, 167].

this habit:

> But I wish also that even in your bedchamber you weave together psalms with the Lord's prayer in frequent interchange, both as you stand vigil and before drowsiness suffuses your body; so that at the very beginning of rest sleep finds you free from anxiety over secular affairs and meditating upon those of heaven. And indeed he who first coined the name of philosophy itself, bade the tibia player, each day before going to bed, to play soothing tunes [*molliora canere*], in order to still his heart, disturbed by worldly cares. Yet he, like one who washes bricks, sought in vain to banish secular matters with secular means.[53]

In the privacy of her room, Marcellina is encouraged to maintain a balance among the aspects of her life. Combining the Lord's prayer and the psalms, she can sustain the acts of meditation and free herself from the anxieties associated with temporal events. When the body is freed from apprehensions, the celestial experiences gain perspective. To reinforce his beliefs about the bodily tensions connected with daily life impinging on the abilities to meditate and sleep, Ambrose reminds his sister of a similar action suggested by Pythagoras.

Beyond these familial customs, Ambrose encourages all persons to consider these practices:

> At the least divide your time between God and the world. When the darkness of night prevents you from performing in public the deeds of this world, then, as you have leisure time for God, give yourself to prayer, and, lest you sleep, sing psalms, thus cheating your sleep by means of a beneficent fraud. In the morning hasten to church and offer the first fruits of your pious devotion, and afterwards, if worldly necessity calls, you are not excluded from saying: 'My eyes have anticipated the morning that I might meditate upon thy words' [Ps 118.148]. You may now with peace of mind proceed to your duties.[54]

The day and the night are framed with prayers. Anxieties, sleeping and public responsibilities

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[53]Ambros. *De Virginibus* 3.4.19; PL 16, 225; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 133.

[54]Ambros. *Expos. Ps. CXVIII* 19.32; CSEL 63, 438; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 128.

are strengthened with devotional behaviours. The secular and spiritual dimensions form alternating and harmonizing patterns of living.

In a similar manner, the men and women use their time and efforts in hymns and songs as well as work and achievement. Through bodily actions, they choose to perform their devotional actions and maintain responsibilities in a less worldly fashion. Their pattern of secular life is more circumscribed, but does contain the alternating and harmonizing patterns of living.

Ambrose expresses importance and meaning of psalmodic and liturgical practices for church members. The entire capitulum is quoted to maintain the context of his words:

> What is more pleasing than a psalm? David himself puts it nicely: 'Praise the Lord', he says, 'for a psalm is good' [Ps 146.1]. And indeed! A psalm is the blessing of the people, the praise of God, the commendations of the multitude, the applause of all, the speech of every man, the voice of the Church, the sonorous profession of faith, devotion full of authority, the joy of liberty, the noise of good cheer, and the echo of gladness. It softens anger, it gives release from anxiety, it alleviates sorrow; it is protection at night, instruction by day, a shield in time of fear, a feast of holiness, the image of tranquillity, a pledge of peace and harmony, which produces one song from various and sundry voices in the manner of a cithara. The day's dawning resounds with a psalm, with a psalm its passing echoes.[55]

The powers of the psalms are impressive. Not only do they offer blessing to people and praise to God; but the psalms also offer a plentitude of qualitative benefits to human life. Through the language of every person, as the voice of the church, they grant professed faith, authoritative devotion, joyous liberty, sounds of good cheer, and the resounding of exhilaration. The psalms when said aloud decrease anger, anxiety and sorrow; they supply protection, instruction,

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[55]Ambros. *En. Ps., Explanatio psalmi* 1.9; CSEL 64, 7-8; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 126.

defense, holiness, serenity, peacefulness and harmony. The contributions of these human qualities, experienced at first light, reverberate with one united, musical voice through the moments of the day. Ambrose's list of feelings and attributes cuts to the heart of human needs and concerns. The inventory generates an encompassing definition of health.

The realization of the psalmic effects appears to be overwhelming for all people. Differing from his understanding of Pauline admonishments, Ambrose encourages both sexes and every age group to join their voices in the singing of the psalms:

> The Apostle admonishes women to be silent in church, yet they do well to join in a psalm; this is gratifying for all ages and fitting for both sexes. Old men ignore the stiffness of age to sing [a psalm], and melancholy veterans echo it in the joy of their hearts; young men sing one without the bane of lust, as do adolescents without threat from their insecure age or the temptation of sensual pleasure; even young women sing psalms with no loss of wifely decency, and girls sing a hymn to God with sweet and supple voice while maintaining decorum and suffering no lapse of modesty. Youth is eager to understand [a psalm], and the child who refuses to learn other things takes pleasure in contemplating it; it is a kind of play, productive of more learning than that which is dispensed with stern discipline. [56]

Identifying developmental phases and social status of the Milanese, Ambrose keenly displays his understanding of human growth patterns and apprehensions. His understanding of children is particularly sensitive and reliable. The effects of 'play' for children and pleasure for adults reflect a depth of human awareness.

With similar practical wisdom, Ambrose delights in another aspect of psalmodic activity:

> With what great effort is silence maintained in church during the readings [*cum lectiones leguntur*]! If just one person recites, the entire congregation makes noise; but when a psalm is read [*legitur*], it is itself the guarantor of silence because when all speak [in the response] no one makes noise. Kings put aside

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[56]Ambros. *En. Ps., Explanatio psalmi* 1.9; CSEL 64, 7-8; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 126-127.

> the arrogance of power and sing a psalm, as David himself was glad to be observed in this function; a psalm, then, sung by emperors and rejoiced in by the people. Individuals vie in proclaiming what is of profit to all. A psalm is sung at home and repeated outdoors it is learned without effort and retained with delight.[57]

As a careful observer of human behaviour, he recognizes the benefit of participation. All persons join the recitations regardless of social or legal status. All take part in this sensory experience and profit through the retention of the words and melody in everyday actions and in the liturgy. Beyond his application of the practice, Ambrose selects one of his favourite symbols, the cithara, to reinforce his understanding of the psalm's powers:

> A psalm joins those with differences, unites those at odds and reconciles those who have been offended, for who will not concede to him with whom one sings to God in one voice? It is after all a great bond of unity for the full number of people to join in one chorus. The strings of the cithara differ, but create one harmony [*symphonia*]. The fingers of a musician [*artificis*] often go astray among the strings though they are very few in number, but among the people the Spirit musician knows not how to err. [58]

The unifying and conciliatory energies of the psalms manifest one voice and one accord of great beauty.

The concept of 'symphonia' can be located in another exegetical work: "For this a symphony [*symphonia*], when there resounds in the church a united concord [*indiscreta concordia*] of differing ages and abilities as if of diverse strings; the psalm is responded to

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[57]Ambros. *En. Ps., Explanatio psalmi* 1.9; CSEL 64, 7-8; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 127.

[58]Ambros. *En. Ps., Explanatio psalmi* 1.9; CSEL 64, 7-8; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 127.

[*psalmus respondetur*], the amen is said."[59] The integration of psalmodic unity and congregational participation, as the source of musical harmony, has deep significance for Ambrose.

He employs not only scriptural sources but also Roman lyrical expressions for his articulation and appreciation of melodic themes. The lyric forms of Roman poets, especially the esteemed works of Virgil, supply an ongoing source of reflections. The Virgilian imagery and action of the sea provide Ambrose with another opportunity to describe the beauty of the natural world and to express a more important perspective to his people. The natural rhythm of the sea's motions and tides becomes the continuous chorus of the music and sounds of exaltation:

> How could I grasp the beauty of the sea in its entirety as viewed by its Creator? Why say more? What is that harmony of the waves other than the harmony of the people? Hence the Church is frequently and appropriately compared to the sea, first, because all its entrances are flooded by the incoming tides of people, and then because it hums with the prayers of the entire people like the washing of waves, and resounds with the singing of psalm responses [*responsoriis psalmorum cantus*] like the crashing of breakers.[60]

In this striking metaphor, Ambrose uses the motions of sea and tides to vivify the harmonic patterns of church and its people. Their psalms rival the waves of the water and from these motions the sound of praise are emitted. The tides' flow and ebb are the reverberations of the men and women, maidens and children as they pray and sing psalms. The consonance and unity of the church and its people are manifest in this marine symbolism.

In another passage, Ambrose uses a play on the words 'canticum' and 'incantator':

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[59]Ambros. *Exp. Evam. Sec. Lucam* 7.238; CSEL 32-4, 388; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 129.

[60]Ambros. *Hexameron* 3.5.23; CSEL 32-I, 74-75; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 130.

> Many provoke the Church, but the charms [*carmina*] of the soothsayer's art are not able to harm her. Those who enchant [*incantatores*] avail not where the chant [*canticum*] of Christ is sung [*decantatur*] daily. The Church has her own enchanter [*incantatorem*], the Lord Jesus, by whom she has voided the spells of the magical charmers [*magorum incantatium carmina*] and the venom of serpents.[61]

Within the context of negating the Chaldean practices, Ambrose's repartee undercuts the superstitions of his age. The enchantments of Christ and chants of His church 'void the spells' of all other diviners.

The efficacy of psalms and hymns is also supported by the clerical offices as well. The capacities of the lector and cantor are distinguished: "One is considered better qualified to enunciate a reading, another more pleasing with a psalm, another more solicitous to exorcize those burdened by an evil spirit, and another more suited to have charge of the sacred things."[62] Clearly, the reading of the Word by the lector is not associated with the skill of the cantor. The responsibilities of the latter requires particular abilities which are notable and enhance the reputation of the Milanese service.

The tasks of the cantor does not include personal inclusions or additions: "[Christ] upon the cross, when he gave up his spirit, said to the Father: 'Into thy hands I commend my spirit" [Lk 23.46]. Therefore others ought not to add, as do the cantors [*psaltae*], 'Lord', which I have not found in my Latin codex, nor in the Greek, nor in the Gospel."[63]

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[61]Ambros. *Hexameron* 4.8.33; CSEL 32-I, 139; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 130-131.

[62]Ambros. *De Officiis* 45.215; PL XVI, 87; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 132.

[63]Ambros. *De interpell. Iob.* 4.6.23-24; CSEL 32-2, 284; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 129. McKinnon, in an introductory sentence, asserts: "A rare,

The custom of Milanese singing influences not only the congregation but also arouses those beyond the assembly. Ambrose is encouraged by those who comment on his liturgical activities:

> They also say that the people are led astray by the charms of my hymns [*hymnorum carminibus*]. Certainly; I do not deny it. This is a mighty charm [*carmen*], more powerful than any other. For what avails more than the confession of the Trinity, which is proclaimed daily in the mouth of all the people? All vie eagerly among themselves to profess the faith; they know how to praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in verse [*in uersibus*]. All then are rendered masters, who had scarcely managed to be disciples.[64]

The charms or power of the liturgy provide an interesting look into the art and practice of Milanese soothsayers. Invoking the Trinitarian formula, Ambrose attributes the power of credal statement as animating the hearts of all faithful regardless of initiation stage.

7.3 THE PHYSICAL BODY AS MORTAL YET TRANSFORMED

The spectre and experiences of death is evident throughout Ambrose's career. The depth of Ambrosian feeling regarding death is experienced most keenly in his work *De excessu fratris sui Satyri*. The homily, *De bono mortis*, offers another perspective regarding three types of death. And the strongly influenced Origenistic funeral orations, *De obitu Valentiniani* and *De obitu Theodosii*, proclaim the public dimension of classical form. Together, these texts

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perhaps unique, usage by Ambrose of *psaltes*, the Greek term for cantor."

[64]Ambros. *Sermo contra Auxentium* 34; PL 16, 1017-18; trans. by McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 132-133.

constitute a major subject of study.[65]

Ambrose speaks of various levels of death which all Milanese listeners could appreciate. As a Christian bishop, he sees his role as supporter and teacher. This role presupposes a religious meaning for the dissolution of the physical body and the extinction of human relationships. In his anthropology, he reinforces the continuation of the 'life', in all its dimensions. Conceivably, his own last words might give an indication of his beliefs.

The near to last words of Ambrose are reported by Paulinus of Nola. Overhearing some 'nobles' suggesting that Ambrose ask the Lord for a longer life, the bishop responds: "I have not so lived among you that I am ashamed to live nor do I fear to die, because we have a good Lord."[66] These are not the words of a pessimist wishing 'freedom' from 'bondage'. But rather, these words are the expression of a man's faith. Ambrose's remarks do not request life or death, just complete surrender to his Lord's will whatever it may be. The reality of death is lessened by the faithfulness of the man. His Christian beliefs gave promise to the worth of the human being in its fullness and worth.

The human body is mortal but its incarnate actions are not. In truth, the human mirrors his Creator: "But let us consider the precise order of our creation: 'Let us make mankind,' He said, 'in our image and likeness.' [Gen. 1.26.]"[67]

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[65]For completed research, see: P. Courcelle, "Plotin et Saint Ambroise," *Revue de philologie* 76 [1950]: 29-56; P. Hadot, "Platon et Plotin dans trois sermons de S. Ambroise," *Revue des études latines* 34 [1956]: 202-220.

[66]Paulinus, *Vita Sancti Ambrosii: Mediolanensis Episcopi, a Paulino eius Notario ad beatum Augustinum conscripta: A Revised Test, and Commentary, with an Introduction and Translation* X.45; trans. by Mary Simplicia Kaniecka, PSt. vol. 16 [Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1928], 91.

[67]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.40; CSEL 32-1, 231; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 253.

As always, Ambrose reminds his listeners that the image and likeness are found in the soul. He exhorts:

> That soul of yours is painted by God, who holds in Himself the flashing beauty of virtue and the splendor of piety. That soul is well painted in which shines the imprint of divine operation. That soul is well painted in which resides the splendor of grace and the reflection of its paternal nature. Precious is that picture which in its brilliance is in accord with that divine reflection.[68]

The portrait of the Artist is found in the imprint of grace. Hence God, after making the human in His likeness and image, finds rest within His greatest creation: "God does not find repose in these [animals], but in the actions of man whom He has made to His image and likeness and who ought not to veil his head, since 'he is the image and glory of God.'"[69]

God rests in the accomplishments of His human creatures. Ambrose expresses his gratitude: "I give thanks to our Lord God, who made a work of such a nature that He could find rest therein."[70] The concepts of portrayal in image and likeness, actions and operations, and peace and respite are given purpose in power of the Incarnation and Resurrection. He explains:

> It may well be that He had given a symbolic picture then of the future Passion of the Lord, thus revealing that in man one day Christ would find repose. He anticipated for Himself repose [of death] in the body for the redemption of mankind, as He declares is His own words: 'I have slept and taken my rest and I have risen up, because the Lord hath protected me' [Ps. 3.6.]. He, the Creator, rested."[71]

As the body of Christ is revealed, so too, the body of the human will be proclaimed in its resurrected body.

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[68]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.7.42; CSEL 32-1, 233-234; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 255.

[69]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.8.49; CSEL 32-1, 240; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 262.

[70]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.10.76; CSEL 32-1, 261; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 282.

[71]Ambros. *Hexameron* 6.10.76; CSEL 32-1, 261; trans. by Savage, FC 42, 282-283.

The final determination of the human body is transformation in glory gained through the relationship and activities during an incarnate life. The process of spiritualization or pneumatization which is initiated as part of divine restoration by means of mystical, sacramental and redemptive through faith, works and grace.[72] Like the indwelling image, the fact of the Incarnation and Resurrection, the human being will be re-united. An inaugurated eschatology was begun. Like Ambrose's favoured mythical image, the phoenix, emptied of its cyclical content and struggle, transformation is promised.

Classical and Christian cultures inform the body as celebrated through imagery and music. At this sixth level of interpretation there is no strain or dichotomy. Ambrose not only transmits the classical forms but he also adapts them through the artistry of his own personality and spirtuality. His purposes are Christian edification and praise of the Creator. These poetic and lyrical expressions are filled with grace and beauty. The Neoplatonic ideal of beauty is indeed alive.

The Christian Neoplatonic anthropological concept of the divine image residing in the human is manifest through Ambrose's description of the ever increasing search for God's love. The joy experienced in prayer and song is but an anticipation of the union which awaits the being. The tripartite view of human nature, with the adapted Stoic thought, is harmoniously united in the total corporeal, sensory and spiritual experience of mysticism. The seventh level of interpretation, that of bodily transformation through earthly death and an awaited resurrected body and union with the soul, climaxes the religious significance of the human body and serves to integrate the Christian anthropological thought of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.

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[72]Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, vol. II, 624-631.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The title of this study affirmed the most general conclusion that can be made about Ambrose's determination of the human body. The Ambrosian corpus contained multiple passages, descriptions and interpretations concerning the religious significance of the human body. His comments portray the body in terms which ranged from elemental matter to eschatological transformation. While his comments were expansive and copious, they did not arise within a deliberate framework. The thesis task was to study Ambrose's notions in a systematic manner. This task required first of all, the location and selection of relevant passages, secondly the textual analysis of the passages within the context of their literary genre, thirdly the examination of the Classical and Christian sources within Ambrose's views, fourthly his transmission and transformation of these sources, fifthly the conceptual analysis of his numerous comments regarding the body in order to establish coherent patterns or categories, and finally the critical appraisal of the conceptual framework formed by these categories as systematic means to account for Ambrose's comments regarding the body.

The primary focus of the thesis was the human body as one component of Ambrose's anthropological thought. Interest in the soul, as a topic for study, was limited and of secondary consideration. This theoretical separation and examination of the human being was not totally unique or unprecedented. The decision to explore Ambrose's writings concerning the body, as

distinct from his views of the soul, was not artificially derived. Hellenistic propensity toward philosophical dualism facilitated viewing the body as a distinct topic of inquiry. As well, Ambrose's tridimensional perspective of God, humanity and nature assured that the study of the religious meaning of the body could be undertaken even if it was explored separately from the soul.

Beyond these theoretical issues the Christian predisposition, toward regarding the body as of only secondary significance in relation to the primacy of the soul, has long ignored the body as a focus of scholarly inquiry. This work has attempted to redress that situation. This is not to suggest that the body has not been a focus of current scholarly inquiry. Many works are identified within this study. However, only two studies have had as their focus fourth century Christian authors' notions concerning the body. Neither has dealt specifically with Ambrose's writings on the body. Numerous other cited studies had touched on Ambrose's anthropology; but, this is the first study to examine Ambrose's views of the human body in an orderly fashion.

A further contribution is that not only was the body dealt with systematically; but, it was dealt within the context of the fourth century and earlier traditions. Within that historical context, this study appraised Ambrose's ability to build upon the approaches and literary efforts which preceded his age and to discern the compatibility of classical perspectives of the human body within the Christian anthropological movements of Asceticism and Christian Neoplatonism. The success, which Ambrose achieved on this and other themes, is evidenced by the availability of copied and printed Ambrosian manuscripts. These works serve to corroborate the esteem and value his contributions have held during the sixteen centuries following his death.

This study, employed a unique inductively initiated framework of interpretative categories or levels by which Ambrose's thoughts were systematically organized and explicated. This framework proved to be sufficiently comprehensive to contain the variegated nature of Ambrose's thoughts regarding the body. Indeed it allowed for a multidimensional understanding of Ambrose's bodily comments flowing from physical to the metaphysical and the symbolic. These brief comments regarding the contribution made by this study do not adequately address the complexity which were dealt with in this study. Additional comments on these and other issues continue within this section.

Ambrose did attribute religious significance to the human body. In fact, there was not one but many levels of meaning. Each level provided a specific perspective which complemented the other dimensions. These perspectives, taken as a whole, constituted Ambrose's achievements and advancement of Christian anthropological thought. Yet, was his thought decisive and consistent? If so what were these unqualified findings? Were there ambiguities or unresolved components within his thought? If so what were these considerations? To answer these questions, three areas of key findings and conclusions are briefly presented for consideration: [1.] the body's constitution and its relation to the soul; [2.] the passionate, mediated and instrumental body; and [3.] the revealed symbolic and transformed body.

[1.] The Body's Constitution and its Relation to the Soul

Familiar with Classical and Christian thought, Ambrose described the human body as a microcosm and a macrocosm composed of the worldly four elements and humours. His love and appreciation of cosmic beauty were found throughout his writings. Yet his acceptance of the contemporary physics did not include the associated humoral personality theory. The exclusion

of such a theory was consistent with Ambrose's thought about the roles of reason and of choice within human nature.

His idea of creation and its elemental composition completely rejected the monism of Stoicism as well as the dualistic principles of Manichaeism and Gnosticism. Ambrose understood the cosmic sources of the human body as matter created by a God whose design and caring could be discerned by human beings. Ambrose did caution that the human body, constituted of earthly matter representing a natural reality within the scientific realm, was unlike the soul, subject to death.

To explicate the dynamic relationship of the physical body to its animating principle or soul, Ambrose accepted the dualism of Christian Neoplatonism. As a philosophical circle some members strongly supported the hierarchical, confrontational concept of inferior body and superior soul. Other Christian Neoplatonists expressed the unity of outer body and inner spirit with an ordering or relative valuing of the components. As Margaret Miles has so clearly indicated, this latter Christian perspective gave a new importance to the human body whose religious significance was assured by the doctrines of resurrection of the body, the Incarnation, and the Church as the Body of Christ.

As well as Christian Neoplatonism, Ambrose followed the Pauline notion of corporeal, sensual and spiritual natures. He accepted this tripartite view of human nature expressed as body [*corpus*], soul [*anima*] and spirit [*animus*]. To these notions of the human constitution, Ambrose modified Stoicism's concept of eight infrarational faculties and recast them as seven bodily powers or gifts and the power of reason. This adapted Stoic perspective, in which the *anima* included infrarational powers, provided a means of articulating the relationship among

the corporeal, sensual and spiritual natures.

As the first seven powers were subject to the control of reason, some characteristics of the *animus*, and all the other characteristics of the *anima* were seen in relationship to the body. The ordering of these infrarational powers within human nature afforded a view of the body as a corporeal prerequisite to knowing and acting in the physical world. The paradigm provided Ambrose with the means of describing reasoned human actions as possessing virtue before full contemplation and knowledge about the nature of ethical or moral acts occurred.

In order to support the contention that human beings are in accord with their nature endowed with reason and virtue [and hence passions are considered contrary to nature], Ambrose blurred the distinction between understanding passions as natural and yet as subject to the rule of reason. Ambrose unfortunately did not deal with the theoretical problem which arose from concurrent use of these designations. As Marcia Colish has so keenly observed, his usage did however allow him to promote nature as an ethical norm while at the same time directing one natural faculty to repress another.

[2.] The Passionate, Mediated and Instrumental Body

The Milanese Bishop had described human perception as the most congenial aid to the mind; and except for the intellect [*nous*], the mind could not find a faculty so like itself. The power of discernment occurred with the application of logic to form judgments. The experiences of emotions were located subrationally and classified as either unstable, uncoordinated passions devoid of reason, or as controlled, disciplined emotions guided by reason and intellect. Ambrose derived this notion, of reason's task to subjugate naturally occurring passions, from Platonic and Aristotelian anthropology. His preference for a more hierarchical, or perhaps more

accurately an ordered view of the human constitution, provided him with a means to articulate the bodily nature, bodily acts and their significance.

By the nature of its creation the human body, containing the five sense organs, speech and procreative capabilities, could not be understood as naturally evil or irrational. The body, classified as distinct from the soul, was understood as the organized matter through which the soul acts. Thus the body possessed an instrumental function essence to human life in a material world. And linked with this world, the body represented more than an object of the soul. The human body received information and executed human action. These convictions and other beliefs lead Ambrose to make intellectual choices which endowed human bodily actions with significance beyond the observable and the physical to that which was metaphysical in nature.

The conjoined concept of seven infrarational powers mediated by reason, in spite of the identified inconsistency, did provide Ambrose with an opportunity to classify bodily acts within a three tier system. The three classifications included: extreme passions and pleasures unmediated by reason; passions and pleasures of the seven bodily powers mediated by reason; and pleasures of the seven bodily powers disciplined and mediated by reason. The importance of these classifications can be noted in the various patterns he used to convey these same meanings. For example, he voiced obligations enacted by the body in the language of duty: that is, he described three categories: duties which were minimized or completely curtailed; duties which were honourable or expected; and duties which were beyond and perfected. He also described the sensual experiences of human nature as bodily acts which were devoid of reason; those that were good, ordinary or normative; and lastly, those that were as better, extraordinary or beyond the normal expectation, at the level of counsels or divine gift.

The actions of the seven bodily powers had direct and indirect consequences for the physical and spiritual health of human beings. Sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch perceived the delights as well as the healing properties which Providence placed in the world. The senses, and the corresponding bodily powers mediated by reason, promoted, maintained and restored the whole person; for example, human speech, as the sixth bodily power and mirror of the soul, could howl in reckless disorder, speak in controlled thoughtful ways, or through silence and tranquillity counsel peacefulness.

Behaviours unmediated by reason were manifest as extreme passions which limited human autonomy and self-determination. Bodily actions or duties which were ordinary or extraordinary by necessity emphasized self control. Extreme forms of mortification or asceticism were rejected in favour of self discipline. Any denunciation or denigration of the human body lead to destruction of **all** beings and the natural order. Withdrawal from the public world into the domains of hedonism or extreme idealism was also disavowed by Ambrose. Human behaviour could debase or spiritualize the five bodily senses, speech or procreation. Moral conflicts were not opposing 'substances': evil was an accident, a deviation from nature's goodness. Even death of the body was not evil.

Ambroses's ordering of human bodily acts represented an original and important contribution to an understanding of the human body operating in the world. He effectively nullified any ethical dualism which saw the human body as evil. Christian beliefs and attitudes gave value and meaning to the body. The senses, created and blessed by God, were mediated by soul.

[3.] The Revealed, Symbolic and Transformed Body

Ambrose maintained the traditional biblical understandings of human nature by relating scriptural contributions, gleaned from Judaism and Christianity. He used both Testaments to serve his purposes and employed the Hellenized interpretative methods of Philo and Origen. Although his preference was for Old Testament passages, he did use the Gospel of Luke and Pauline Epistles with greater frequency than other New Testament texts. Ambrose's use of three exegetical methods appealed to every social level and intellectual preference.

The meaning of human genesis held an important place in Ambrose's exegetical deliberations. He insisted that the first Adam was **created** by God. Thus the human being had merit and worth. Secondly, Ambrose contended that the creation occurred outside of Paradise during the events of the cosmic creation. This understanding of human beginning inextricably bound the being to the elemental universe. His soul, breathed into body by God, carried the image of its Creator. The female, created by God in Paradise, was of the same physical nature as Adam. And as with his creation, her soul was as individual and as distinct as was his soul. There was no inequality of sex nor disparity of nature. God willed human nature to be established as one.

This careful interpretation of the second being's creation emphasized the singularity of human nature and assured the progeny of all human beings from this one pair. Sharing a common creation from the earth, and yet with individually unique souls, the male and female possessed equality. This important belief had direct implications for singularity of the species and for the eventual redemptive acts associated with the Second Adam.

The human soul, uniquely created and in the image and likeness of God, extended its

principle of the divine image to the created human body. The *imago dei* as Creator resided in the soul of each male and female. In an interesting juxtaposition, Ambrose described the divine image as residing in the human soul and the divine natural law as imprinted on the fleshy tablet of the human heart. These analogous godly dimensions revealed in Scripture and discerned by human reason represented the Creator's caring and plan for creatures and creation alike.

Ambrose's understanding of the final destination of the human being was not a retrospective journey to the Garden of Eden but a purposive ascent to the New Jerusalem. Paradise was not a place but a part of human nature. Situated principally in the higher part or soul of human being, paradise can be forgotten but never ignored.

Last in creation, the human being was the apex and as such, was complex and impressive in every detail. Ambrose saw the intricacies of the human body and assigned functional and allegorical purposes to each structure and function. He promulgated Christian perspectives by subjugation and adaptation of scientific knowledge. The Greek developmental paradigm underscored the bodily process of growth as both potential capacity and actual change. The nature of this change process defined not only bodily but also social and spiritual growth. Each developmental stage shared the characteristics of regeneration, inherent order and consistency. Life processes from embryonic life to death contained the power of a continuing genesis which revitalized the worldly elements and humours. Matter and spirit were joined by God. Ambrose could not explain the puzzle and mystery of such an arrangement, but in his thoughts and his Christian beliefs, he attempted a means to express and to bridge the ontological gulf existing between God and humanity, Creator and creatures.

Ambrose's most definitive thought on the religious significance of the body emerged with

the process of continuing spiritualization. The final determination of the human body was gained through the relationships and activities during an incarnate life. In Ambrose's treatment of the body as instrument, Christian, Stoic and Neoplatonic themes predominated. The Christian sacramental dimensions of Baptism, Chrism and Eucharist and their bodily involvement with water, oil, wheat and wine supported growth of grace within nature. He could not fully explain grace or the soul's divine image, but he could and did affirm them as the searching love and increasing mystical sense of Christ's 'indwelling'. The belief gave him an opportunity to appeal to reason and afforded the action of virtue. The act of Genesis, as well as the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ assured the religious purpose of the human body.

Ambrose adapted and developed poetic and lyrical expression to visualize and hear the beauty of the human 'sea' at prayer. The mystical flowers, musical instrumentation and the rising phoenix gave promise as eschatological symbols. These poetic attributes and metaphorical expressions gave significance to bodily, sensual images. The hierarchical levels or orders appeared to lessen as the experience of harmony, prayer and wholeness became more evident in human life. The corporeal, sensual and spiritual natures unfolded into a greater vision of 'immanence'. The mortal body, altered by death, awaited the promise of the resurrection. Then, the particular body, united once again with its unique soul, became the glorified, transformed and transcendent embodiment of its Creator.

In summary, Ambrose's synthesis contributed to Christianity's understanding of the human body through the selection, inclusion and adaptation of Classical literary forms, scientific knowledge, creative and mythological images. He harmonized components of the fourth century Christian anthropological movements. He encouraged the rationality, self-discipline and

monasticism of the ascetic movement and emphasized the journey and mysticism of the Christian Neoplatonic movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After all evidences and conclusions have been stated, there remains an opportunity to recommend three research major areas. The first recommendation centres on the word **body**. The clear and ever present danger, when examining one component of a larger more complex topic, is to eclipse other components of the Ambrosian corpus. As initially stated, the general theme of the body can be found as a constituent of human nature as well as three other perspectives: namely, the Stoic cosmological notion of world body or body of the world, the ecclesiastical notion of Christ as body of the church, and the Christological concept of the Body of Christ. These four complex bodily notions coexist in an elaborate Ambrosian matrix. The need to integrate these bodily perspectives remains and should be attempted as a separate study using a qualitative approach such as phenomenological methods or philosophical foundational inquiry.

Another major research area involves Ambrose's writings which describe and interpret how people communicate and ascribe symbolic meanings. The analyses of beliefs and orders of power relations can identify social, political and economic constraints within their historical context. Distinctive relationships of dominance and contradictions can be explicated and critically appraised. Phenomena such as the roles and images of women, family and disenfranchised persons, as well as issues of privilege, powerlessness and ownership, can be

explored through research activities which examine the most basic, societal structures within their historical context. In order to accomplish such investigations, Critical Social Theory approaches and methodologies are strongly recommended and encouraged.

The third enterprise, a comparative project involving the contributions of other fourth century writers, perhaps Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea or Gregory of Nyssa. A more extensive examination would sample published studies involving Western and Eastern inquiries and select one or more concepts directly related to anthropological issues. A research approach such as Meta-Analysis design or Concept Analysis methods would help to integrate these completed studies and determine what is specially know about the selected area of interest.

Ambrose was a practical man of action and a contemplative man of ideas and beliefs. His writings supported perspectives of the human body as physically existent, symbolically meaningful and religiously significant. During his lifetime, his homiletic activities and literary works reached in, through and beyond the precincts of Milan. People of every social group heard the echoes of Classical traditions in his vision of Christian embodiment. The words of Augustine still attest to the Bishop of Milan's authenticity and abilities. Ambrose achieved a Christian, anthropological synthesis of a moderate, balanced nature which integrated his personal observations and experiences with his theological and philosophical beliefs.

APPENDIX
DATING OF THE DOCUMENTS

Issues of dating the Ambrosian corpus are most complex. The person, Ambrose, and place, Milan, are uncontested in these documents. The chronology of the writings are debated, or at least, challenged. This chart facilitates an overview of the possible dates and presents various patristic scholars' positions on the dating issues. The Ambrosian commenters represent the early and late periods of this century.

DOCUMENTS	[1] DUDDEN	[2] QUASTEN [Mara]	[3] RUSCH
De Abraham	post 377	382-383	387
De Apol. Dav.	383-390	383-387	383
De Bono Mortis	post 390	390	387
De Cain	377	375-378	375-376
De Excessu Sat.	375	378	377-378
De Fide i, ii iii, iv	378 380	377-378 380	380 380
De Fuga	391-394	387, 391, 394	[prior] 391
De Helia	389	377-390	387-391
De Iacob	386	386-388	386
De Incarn.	381	382	382
De Ioseph	388	387-390	389
De Instit. virg.	392	391-391	391
De Inter.Iob.	388	383, 387, 390	undated
De Isaac	390	387-391	386
De Mysteriis	undated	390	387-390
De Nab.	395	389-390	394
De Noe	378	378-379/383-384	378-384
De Ob. Theodos.	395	395	395

De Ob. Val.	392	392	392
De Officiis	386	377, 391	391
De Paenit.	386-390	384-390	387
De Paradiso	377	375-378 [SC 383]	375
	DUDDEN	QUASTEN [Mara]	RUSCH
De Patriarch	377-390	390	389
De Sacramentis	undated	390	390
De Spiritu	381	381	381
De Tobia	385	387-390	[prior] 380
De Viduis	376	377-378	377
De Virginibus	376	377	377
De Virginitate	377	378	378
En Ps. [12]	indiv.	later life	394?
Ep.dated/undated	380-396	approx. 379-396	as dated
Exhort. Virgin.	394	393	393-394
Expos. ev. Lucum	390	377-378, 385-389	387-388
Expos. Ps.CXVIII	389	386-390	387-388
Expl. symb.	undated	undated	undated
Hexameron	387	386-390	387-390
Sermo. contra Auxentium	386	386	386

[1]F. H. Dudden, *The life and Times of St. Ambrose* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935], vol. II, 678-710.

[2]M. G. Mara, "Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster and Nicetas," chap. in *Patrology*, vol. IV, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature: From the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon* ed. A. DiBerardino, trans. P. Solari [Westminster. MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986], 152-180.

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