THE JOURNEY TOWARD GOD
IN AUGUSTINE’S CONFESSIONS
Books I–VI
CARL G. VAUGHT

A new interpretation of the first six books of Augustine’s Confessions, emphasizing the importance of Christianity rather than Neoplatonism.

This detailed discussion of Augustine’s journey toward God, as it is described in the first six books of the Confessions, begins with infancy, moves through childhood and adolescence, and culminates in youthful maturity. In the first stage, Augustine deals with the problems of original innocence and sin; in the second, he addresses a pear-stealing episode that recapitulates the theft of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and confronts the problem of sexuality with which he wrestles until his conversion; and in the third, he turns toward philosophy, only to be captivated successively by dualism, skepticism, and Catholicism. Augustine’s journey exhibits temporal, spatial, and eternal dimensions and combines his head and his heart in equal proportions. Vaught shows that the Confessions should be interpreted as an attempt to address the person as a whole rather than through our intellectual or volitional dimensions exclusively. The passion with which Augustine describes the end of his journey is reflected best in a sentence found in the opening chapter of the text—“You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

Interpreting this statement, Carl G. Vaught presents a more emphatically Christian Augustine than is usually found in contemporary scholarship. Refusing to view Augustine in an exclusively Neoplatonic framework, Vaught holds that Augustine baptizes Plotinus just as successfully as Aquinas baptizes Aristotle. It cannot be denied that Ancient philosophy influences Augustine decisively. Nevertheless, he holds the experiential and the theoretical dimensions of his journey toward God together as a distinctive expression of the Christian tradition.

Carl G. Vaught is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University. He is the editor and author of several books, including The Quest for Wholeness and The Sermon on the Mount: A Theological Interpretation, both published by SUNY Press.

CONTESTED NATURE
Promoting International Biodiversity with Social Justice in the Twenty-first Century
STEVEN R. BRECHIN, PETER R. WILSHUSEN, CRYSTAL L. FORTWANGLER, AND PATRICK C. WEST, EDITORS

Contends that effective biological conservation and social justice must go hand in hand.

How can the international conservation movement protect biological diversity, while at the same time safeguarding the rights and fulfilling the needs of people, particularly the poor? Contested Nature argues that to be successful in the long-term, social justice and biological conservation must go hand in hand. The protection of nature is a complex social enterprise, and much more a process of politics, and of human organization, than ecology. Although this political complexity is recognized by practitioners, it rarely enters into the problem analyses that inform conservation policy. Structured around conceptual chapters and supporting case studies that examine the politics of conservation in specific contexts, the book shows that pursuing social justice enhances biodiversity conservation rather than diminishing it, and that the fate of local peoples and that of conservation are completely intertwined.

“…Contested Nature opens new vistas on how social justice can be furthered through the establishment and management of protected areas while still meeting critical nature conservation objectives.” — David Harmon, executive director of The George Wright Society

Steven R. Brechin is Associate Professor of Sociology at The University of Illinois. He is the coauthor (with Patrick C. West) of Resident Peoples and National Parks: Social Dilemmas and Strategies in International Conservation. Peter R. Wilshusen is Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Bucknell University. Crystal L. Fortwangler is a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan. Patrick C. West is Vice President and Chairman of the Board of Windago Heights and editor of Windago Heights Press.

For a list of contributors, see page 58.
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTALISM AND LOCAL POLITICS

Transnational Advocacy Networks in Brazil, Ecuador, and India

MARI GUADALUPE MOOG RODRIGUES

Examines the internal politics of transnational environmental advocacy networks.

What is the role played by local organizations in transnational environmental advocacy networks? Global Environmentalism and Local Politics revisits this question by looking at transnational environmental activism in Brazil, Ecuador, and India. Rodrigues investigates the internal politics of these networks, focusing on their internal balance of power, choice of strategies, and distribution of resources among members at the international, national, and local levels. Contrary to existing assumptions, local organizations, rather than international or national non-governmental organizations, are the key players in these networks, while at the same time mere participation in transnational advocacy efforts does not necessarily lead to the empowerment of local organizations. Participation may, for example, impose unanticipated political and technical burdens, and despite their overarching common goal of environmental preservation, network members may have different understandings of what environmentally sustainable development is and how it can be best achieved.

“Rodrigues shows that participation of local groups in transnational activism does not always lead to their empowerment and can even threaten their material and physical safety.” — Jill M. Belsky, University of Montana

Maria Guadalupe Moog Rodrigues is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the College of the Holy Cross.

A volume in the SUNY series in Global Environmental Policy

Uday Desai, editor

WHAT MOVES MAN

The Realist Theory of International Relations and Its Judgment of Human Nature

ANNETTE FREYBERG-INAN

A critical look at the image of human nature that underlies the realist theory of international relations.

The realist theory of international relations is based on a particularly gloomy set of assumptions about universal human motives. Believing people to be essentially asocial, selfish, and untrustworthy, realism counsels a politics of distrust and competition in the international arena. What Moves Man subjects realism to a broad and deep critique. Freyberg-Inan argues, first, that realist psychology is incomplete and suffers from a pessimistic bias. Second, she explains how this bias systematically undermines both realist scholarship and efforts to promote international cooperation and peace. Third, she argues that realism’s bias has a tendency to function as a self-fulfilling prophecy: it nurtures and promotes the very behaviors it assumes predominate human nature. Freyberg-Inan concludes by suggesting how a broader and more complex view of human motivation would deliver more complete explanations of international behavior, reduce the risk of bias, and better promote practical progress in the conduct of international affairs.

“This is the best treatment of realism I have seen from an interdisciplinary standpoint. It borrows from philosophy, psychology, history, and elsewhere to provide a comprehensive assessment of realism as an interpretation of human nature and international relations.” — Patrick James, author of International Relations and Scientific Progress: Structural Realism Reconsidered

Annette Freyberg-Inan is the Civic Education Project Visiting Faculty Fellow at the University of Bucharest.

A volume in the SUNY series in Global Politics

James N. Rosenau, editor