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In The Self's Place: The Approach Of Saint Augustine (Cultural Memory In The Present)



Synopsis

In the Self's Place is an original phenomenological reading of Augustine that considers his engagement with notions of identity in *Confessions*. Using the Augustinian experience of confession, Jean-Luc Marion develops a model of selfhood that examines this experience in light of the whole of the Augustinian corpus. Towards this end, Marion engages with noteworthy modern and postmodern analyses of Augustine's most "experiential" work, including the critical commentaries of Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Marion ultimately concludes that Augustine has preceded postmodernity in exploring an excess of the self over and beyond itself, and in using this alterity of the self to itself, as a driving force for creative relations with God, the world, and others. This reading establishes striking connections between accounts of selfhood across the fields of contemporary philosophy, literary studies, and Augustine's early Christianity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"*In the Self's Place* is astounding in its rigor both in terms of its use of the original Latin and in terms of its breadth of familiarity with the larger Augustinian corpus . . . *In the Self's Place* should be of particular interest to those readers who have strong interest in and familiarity with ongoing conversations in both theology and philosophy . . . [F]or all those who are stimulated by what contemporary philosophy and classical theology have to say to one another, this is, without doubt, an essential read." (Rico G. Monge)"Jean-Luc Marion's new book is a feast that should be savored by anyone with an interest in either the thought of Saint Augustine or in Marion's phenomenological

philosophy . . . I think it would be difficult to speak too highly of Marion's achievement in this book . . . In the Self's Place is a landmark, advancing every position which it touches." (Andreas Nordlander Anglican Theological Review)"The confrontation of Heidegger with Nietzsche, the confrontation of Derrida with Heidegger, and now the confrontation of Marion with Augustine! In the Self's Place engages with Augustine's Confessions, one of the incomparable texts that open the intellectual and religious space we call 'the West.' Here Marion continues his critiques of the self and metaphysics, his analysis of praise, and his bold case for the univocity of love. Also he shows us something new: how his theory of the saturated phenomenon can be used to read a canonical narrative. A major achievement!" (Kevin Hart)

Jean-Luc Marion is Greeley Professor of Catholic Studies and Professor of the Philosophy of Religions and Theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Professor of Modern Philosophy and Metaphysics at the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne), and a member of the Académie Française. Among his books to have been translated into English are Being Given (Stanford, 2002) and The Crossing of the Visible (Stanford, 2004).

While I think at times that Marion's interpretation of Augustine is more Marion than Augustine, this is a very insightful, thought provoking analysis of the issue of the self in both theology and philosophy. Marion's distinctions offer new pathways for understanding not only philosophically, but for patristic thought but mystical thought in general. I highly recommend this work. It's an absorbing read.

An close, insightful reading of the Confessions of Augustine by an important contemporary French philosopher, Jean-Luc Marion. Highly recommended reading.

Jean Luc Marion's work on is cogent, nuanced and sophisticated. Its style is subtle and polished. Marion is a lucid writer and does not allow himself to simplify a challenging interpretation of the nexus between Cartesian rationalism and Augustine's platonism. This work is not for beginners. It is modern in its approach and yet faithful to the timeless nature of the philosophers under discussion. In fact, one of the more significant aspects of this analysis is to show the permanent, i.e., timeless value of augustinian ideas. They fit comfortably into any modernist context and any contemporary cultural framework. Sincerely, Peter McConkey

In praise of this profound and accessible study, I leave to the Latinists and philosophers and

theologians to appraise its advances in our understanding of Augustine. But Marion's keen critical attention to the form of the Confessions and the insight on offer for anyone who allows him- or herself to become a question—these observations are available and invaluable to all. Instead of cataloguing the virtues of *In the Self's Place*, I offer an oblique and personal—yet not at all personal—tribute. Before reading the book I had been engaged for three years writing a novel based on the seven deadly sins. The project had gone dry until this study exposed my failure in having rather badly misunderstood my characters by loving too little or too well. Oblique confirmation of the power of verisimilitude . . . and its failure? As in reading Dante, one need not be a philosopher, a theologian, a Christian, or even religious—or none of these at first—to profit from this scrupulous and provocative study. James Swearingen

This would be as definitive a close reading of this masterpiece as we might wish for. Yet to read it is not the end point: it's to practice what Augustine himself does - to Confess praise to one's Creator and so to know oneself a loved creature coram Deo!

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