In his *Memoir*, Norman Malcolm claims that Wittgenstein revered the writings of St. Augustine. He told me he decided to begin his *Investigations* with a quotation from the latter's *Confessions*, not because he could not find the conception expressed in that quotation stated as well by other philosophers, but because the conception *must* be important if so great a mind held it.\textsuperscript{133}

If we consider Augustine’s writings with equanimity and postpone the temptation to ridicule encouraged in certain post-Wittgensteinian quarters, we should not be surprised to discover that some facets of Wittgenstein’s album reflect Augustinian themes. In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein explicitly refers to Augustine more than any other philosopher. This would be quite natural even if the task of that book were to refute the philosophical theories of the latter. But Augustine is sometimes cited with deference. For example in §§ 89-90, where Wittgenstein deals with the now infamous Augustinian query “What is time?”, we can discern on careful reading that the basic suggestion conveyed in the passage rests upon the support afforded by Augustine and not upon a criticism of what he does. Needless to say, the appropriate response will not be to undertake a study of Wittgenstein’s latent Augustinianism; but it will be useful to see that neither is the *Investigations* in any significant sense an anti-Augustinian polemic. Augustine has not been hurriedly appropriated as the subordinate interlocutor for a didactic discourse. Although his views are subject to correction and clarification, he occupied Wittgenstein’s thoughts in more than a superficial or adversarial manner. It will therefore be fitting to examine a few general tendencies exemplified by both of them in order to characterize a mood which seems to permeate the way they approach the philosophic enterprise. The following remarks are offered as nothing more than general observations, but it is hoped that they can

play some role in countering the fruitless and misleading assumption that these two philosophers have a radically different way of going about philosophy and that Wittgenstein's philosophy is in part defined in terms of its opposition to Augustine.

The motto to *Philosophische Bemerkungen* comes from Augustine: “Et multi ante nos vitam istan agentes, praecstruxcrant aerumnosas vias, per quas transire cogebarum multiplicatum labore et dolore filiis Adam.” 134

The preface of this book picks up on some related motifs which turn out to be more than playful figures:


Ich möchte sagen “dieses Buch sei zur Ehre Gottes geschrieben,” aber das wäre heute eine Schurkerei, d.h. es würde nicht richtig verstanden werden. Es heisst, est ist in gutem Willen geschrieben und soweit es nicht mit gutem Willen, also aus Eitelkeit etc., geschrieben, soweit möchte der Verfasser es verurteilt wissen. Er kann es nicht weiter von diesen Ingrädenzen reinigen, als er selbst davon rein ist.135

134 On the flyleaf of *Philosophische Bemerkungen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964). From *Confessions*, Book I, Chapter IX: “... and many before us, passing the same course, had appointed beforehand for us these troublesome ways by which we were compelled to pass, multiplying labor and sorrow upon the sons of Adam,” tr. by J. G. Pilkington.

135 *Ibid.*, Vorwort. Here is a very rough translation:

This book is written for those who approach it in a friendly spirit. This spirit is other than that of the mainstream of European and American Civilization in which we all stand. The latter expresses itself in progress, in the building of greater and more complex structures; the former in a striving for clarity and perspicuity, whatever the structure. It wishes to grasp the world at its periphery – in its multiplicity – while the other wishes to grasp it at its center – its essence. Therefore, this latter (spirit) aligns a system toward something else, climbs – as it were – from step to step, on and on, while the former (spirit) remains where it is and desires to grasp always the same things.

I should like to say “this book is written to the glory of God,” but that would be a dirty trick, i.e. it would not be correctly understood. It means that this book is written in good will, and as much as is not written with good will, without vanity, etc. that much the author would like understood as condemned. He can cleanse it of these ingredients no further than he himself is cleansed of them.