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SOME MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE
"DE BEATA VITA" OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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Dedicated
to
Our Mother of Sorrows
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Preface

St. Augustine was firmly grounded in classical tradition yet the powerful influence of rhetoric on literature resulted in his use of vivid and picturesque modes of expression.

In the "De Beata Vita" this picturesqueness is attained partly by the use of diminutives, which suggest familiar things; partly by homely words which make vivid the daily life of his young pupils and by the frequent use of rhetorical figures.

The figures of speech in this essay form a vital part in its development and are an aid to a clear understanding of the subject matter proposed.

The purpose of this study is to investigate St. Augustine's use of the major figures of speech in the "De Beata Vita."

The rhetorical figures checked for this thesis are metaphor, metonymy, simile, personification and hyperbole.

The figures checked were listed in the order in which they occur in each chapter. No attempt was made to group them according to their content.

The sentences in many instances are long, so phrases or clauses containing the rhetorical figures are stated, instead of the entire sentence.
The following texts have been used: Ruth Allison Brown; F. E. Tourscher, O.S.A. Other works are given in the bibliography.
The life of St. Augustine is revealed to us in part in his "Confessions," a most touching book, since it tells the inner story of a soul.

St. Augustine was born November 13, 354, at Tagaste, a small town in Numidia. His father, Patricius, was a heathen, but his mother, Monica, belonged to a Christian family. Although St. Augustine had grown up in a Christian home under the pious guidance of his devout mother, it was not until the latter years of her life that she saw the beneficial results of the Christian training she had given him. As a small boy he had responded, but when he left home to further his education, his pagan environment with its immorality appeared to blot out all influence of his early training. From the age of eleven to nineteen he took no serious interest in anything Christian. Then he read the "Hortensius" of Cicero. This work influenced him greatly, so that a desire for wisdom and a search for true knowledge which was the motivating power of this book, seemed to enter into him and became for the remainder of his life a strong stimulus.

This quest for knowledge led him through many paths. He fell into the clutches of the Manicheans and for nine years was held captive. Shaken with doubt
he was attracted to the New Academy; dissatisfied here he turned to Neoplatonism.

An important factor in St. Augustine's spiritual development was the influence of St. Ambrose who was bishop of Milan where Augustine was teaching rhetoric. The sermons of St. Ambrose had made such an impression on Augustine that he determined to study the Christian religion. The crisis came in July, 386, on the day when he heard a voice say to him: "Tolle, lege." (Take and read.) He opened the Bible at the verse in the Epistle to the Romans in which St. Paul recommends we "put on Jesus Christ."

Augustine spent eight months at Cassiciacum near Milan and was then baptized by St. Ambrose. On his return journey to Africa in 387 he suffered the loss of his saintly mother. Here the "Confessions" come to an end. His public life begins.

In 391, on a visit to Hippo, he was appointed by the people to become the coadjutor to Valerius, the old and venerated bishop of that city. He succeeded Valerius in 396 and for thirty-five years was the outstanding leader of the Church in Africa, and the arbiter of the western controversies; Donatism and Pelagianism. He died in 430.

The influence of St. Augustine was not restricted to Donatist and Pelagian quarrels. He refuted
all the other heresies of his time, especially Manichaism. His teaching was heard throughout the world and he exerted a profound influence upon Christian spirituality.
Content of the "De Beata Vita"

This essay is a philosophical discussion which took place at Cassiciacum, a typical Italian countryside. Here St. Augustine is quietly preparing for the privilege of Baptism. The work is dedicated to Manlius Theodorus who afterwards attained consular rank.

The participants are St. Monica, the only woman, who gives to the discussion the benefit of her long years of Christian faith; Licentius, the youthful, impetuous son of Romanianus, Augustine's benefactor who provided funds that were needed for Augustine's early education; Trygetius, a pupil and deep thinker who expresses his appreciation at the close of the discussion and longs for daily spiritual feeding; Navigius, Augustine's brother; Adeodatus, Augustine's son, who makes only one reply and that such a remarkable one that his father orders the words to be recorded exactly as the boy uttered them; Lartidianus and Rusticus, Monica's nephews who are present but contribute nothing to the arguments.

This discussion began in celebration of St. Augustine's birthday and lasted three successive days. The prologue presents a comparison of the pursuit of philosophy with travel at sea.
St. Augustine opens the argument with a discussion of the essentials required for the constituent parts of man's nature. Then follows the question as to the desire for happiness. Everyone agrees the desire is innate. When they are asked in what true happiness consists, various answers are given. St. Augustine commends especially the answer of his mother, that true happiness consists in the possession of the desired object if it be good. This desired object is the everlasting and unchanging good, namely, God.

A blow is given the Academics who still seek, and therefore cannot be happy since they do not possess. The second day's discussion is based on the question, Who possesses God. Various opinions are given. Monica approves all the opinions but especially the answer of Adeodatus that he possesses God who does not have an unclean spirit. Objections arise and are answered to the satisfaction of all.

The conclusions drawn from this day's arguments are: he who has found God and has Him graciously inclined is happy; he who seeks God has Him graciously inclined but is not yet happy; he who through sin is cut off from God is not only not happy but has God ungraciously inclined toward him.
The argument for the third day presents a new and negative definition of happiness: he is happy who has no want. Unhappiness and want are synonymous. To be in possession of God is to want nothing. Since God is wisdom He is to be sought in the search for happiness. Therefore happiness consists in a knowledge of God and in an understanding of what truth is.

Throughout these discussions St. Augustine makes many references to his own life by which we get an insight into the struggles and difficulties he encountered before he was on the path that led to his conversion and to the land of a happy life.

St. Monica recites the hymn of St. Ambrose to the Blessed Trinity. Following this, St. Augustine closes the discussion with a prayer of thanksgiving to God, the Almighty Father.
Metaphor

A metaphor is an implied comparison between unlike objects that have one point in common. As or like is not used.¹

A figure of speech in which the comparison is implied instead of being formally stated is a metaphor.²

Chapter I

St. Augustine begins with a poetic comparison of the pursuit of philosophy with travel at sea.

If to the port of philosophy from which one proceeds to the region and land of the happy life... (1 sq.)³

Those who pursue philosophy must weather the storms of adversity.

... unless some tempest push us off our course. (12 sq.)⁴

Navigators embarking on the sea of the world and bound for the port of philosophy and a happy life are divided into three classes.

1. J. C. Tressler, English in Action, Book Two
2. A. Cook, The Art of Poetry
3. Si ad philosophiae portum, equo iam in beatae vitae regionem solumque procedit... 
4. ... nisi aliqua tempestas... compingeret
Therefore I seem to see three classes of sea-farers whom philosophy can include. (15 sq.)

The first class portrays the type of people who are self-satisfied and plan ahead carefully as far as they can see. They go as far as is comfortable without burdening themselves. They lack faith and are governed by reason.

The first are those who with a slight effort and an indolent stroke of the oars move off a short distance and settle themselves in a state of tranquility. . . (17 sq.)

The second type of sea-farer is impetuous, daring and determined.

The second class are those who deceived by the beguiling appearance of the sea have decided to advance into the deep and dare to travel far from their native land. (21 sq.)

Boldly and recklessly they go out upon the sea of life and become involved in many sins.

1. Igitur hominum quos philosophia potest accipere tria quasi navigantium genera mihi videar videre.

2. Unum est eorum quos parvo impetu pulsuque remorum de prosimo fugiunt seseque condunt in illa tranquillitate. . .

3. Alterum qui, fallacissima facie maris decepti, elegerunt in medium progradit longeque a sua patria peregrinari audent.
If a wind from the stern which they think favorable has driven them on, they enter the depths of misfortune, elated and rejoicing. (24 sq.)

With varying vicissitudes they sail the tempestuous and treacherous sea.

... a devastating tempest and a gale blowing in the opposite direction brings them to sound and genuine joys. (29 sq.)

Through blows and perils caused by their own mistakes, they are finally forced to reflection and repentence.

Many have not wandered too far and are brought back by adversities that are not so serious. (31 sq.)

St. Augustine when speaking of the second class of sea-farers who set out to sea but do not intend to return, says that after intentional or unintentional delays, they have recourse to the writings of learned men. He probably refers to the Manicheans whom he believed for a time were learned and whom he therefore followed.

1. Si a puppi ventus, quem prosperum putant, fuerit prosecutus, penetrat in altissima miseriarum elati atque gaudentes.

2. ... saeviens omnino tempestas contrarie-que flans ventus qui eos ad certa et solida gaudia perducat.

3. ... pleri nondum longius evagati quibus-dam non ita gravibus molestiis reducuntur.
These are the men who when lamentable tragedies of their fortunes... have driven them... to the books of learned and erudite men... (32 sq.)

He recalls his youth and his mother's teaching.

... on the very threshold of youth they remember their dearly beloved native land even though they are in the midst of the waves. (38 sq.)

The third type, although adventuresome, maintain a level-headed recollection of their goal which they finally reach.

There is a third class between these, who either on the very threshold of youth or after being tossed about for some time...

St. Augustine was probably thinking of his own youthful experiences. The teachings of his mother were for him the beacons which he never completely forgot.

... they look back to certain beacons and remember their dearly beloved native land. (39 sq.)

---

1. Hi sunt homines quos, cum vel lacrimabiles tragvediae fortunarum suorum... in libros doctorum sapientissimorumque hominum truserint...

2. ... in ipso adulescentiae limine... et suae dulcissimae patriae quamvis in ipsis fluctibus recordantur.

3. Genus inter haec tertium vel in ipso adulescentiae limine vel iam diu multumque iactati.

4. ... tamen quaedam signa respiciunt, et suae dulcissimae patriae recordantur.
They are encouraged to set out again.

... they set out again on a straight course for their homeland, deceived in no wise and without delay... (41 sq.)

The haste with which they attain their goal is conditioned by their individual responses to external conditions.

... more frequently, wandering either amid clouds or watching intently the stars setting in the sea or captivated by certain enticements they neglect good opportunities for sailing and off the course too long, they are often even in danger. (42 sq.)

Many are driven most unexpectedly into the haven of peace.

They are often driven by some adversity of vacillating fortune, by a tempest opposing their efforts, into the most desired life of tranquility. (45 sq.)

The mountain of vain glory represents worldly ambition which is a hindrance on the journey to a happy life.

1. ... recto cursu in nullo falsi et nihil narrati eam repetunt...

2. ... plerumque vel inter nubila deviantes vel mergentia contuentus sidera, vel nonnullis inlecebris capti, bonae navigationis tempora differentes errant, diutius saepe etiam periclitantur.

3. Quos item saepe nonnulla in fluxis fortunis calamitas, quasi conatibus eorum adversa tempestas, in optatissimam vitam quietamque compellit.
A huge mountain stands before the port itself
where it causes the passage to be extremely
narrow for those who are entering. (49 sq.)

St. Augustine may be thinking of himself when
he says that men are lured there even from the main-
land of Christianity.

This (mountain) must be feared most seriously
and must be avoided with all caution. (51 sq.)

... it frequently attracts men from the harbor
itself and hold them through their delight in
its sheer loftiness, whence they like to look
down on others. (56 sq.)

Newcomers are often warned concerning the
hidden snares and are urged to follow the path to
the happy land.

They often warn newcomers not to be deceived by
the hidden rocks underneath nor to think it easy
to climb up to them. (57 sq.)

... they point out where newcomers on account
of the proximity of the happy land may enter
without danger. (59 sq.)

---

1. Unus inmanissimus mons ante ipsum portum
constitutus quo etiam ingredientibus gignit angustias.

2. (Mons) vehementissime formidandus cautissime-
que vitandus est.

3. ... de ipso portu ad sese homines in-
vitet, eosque nonnumquam detinet ipsa altitudine
delectatos unde ceteras despicere libeat.

4. Hi tamen admonent saepe venientes ne aut
occultis subter scapulis decipliantur aut ad se ascen-
dere facile putent.

5. ... et qua sine periculo ingrediantur,
propter illius terrae vicinitatem benivolentissime docent.
The pursuit of vain glory or worldly ambition may appear to offer as much happiness as true wisdom, but upon close investigation it proved unreliable.

And so when newcomers envy them their vain glory, they show them a place of security. (61 sq.)

Does reason show those who are approaching and entering upon philosophy that they must fear any mountain more than the haughty pursuit of shallow glory? (62 sq.)

... as they tumble headlong into darkness it takes from them the glittering home which they had just barely seen. (66 sq.)

St. Augustine refers to clouds which hindered his progress in the study of philosophy. They probably were his pursuit of literature and his love of worldly pleasures from which he found it difficult to tear himself away.

... but mists were not lacking to confuse my course. (75 sq.)

---

1. Ita cum eis invident vanissimam gloriam locum securitatis ostendunt.

2. Nam quern montem alium vult intellegi ratio propinquantibus ad philosophiam ingressiae metuendum nisi superbum studium inanissimae gloriae?

3. ... eisque in tenebras revolutis, eripiat luculentam domum quam paene eam viderant.

4. ... sed mihi nebulae defuerunt quibus confunderetur cursus meus.
All the philosophies which he tried before his conversion were like stars which at first seemed high and lofty but as he studied them more thoroughly they gradually descended until nothing remained to be admired.

\[\ldots \] I confess I followed stars which sank into the ocean and thus led me astray. (76 sq.)\(^1\)

The Manicheans concealed the flaws of their doctrine by speaking with a convincing charm. This held him captive for nine years.

\[\ldots \] I dispelled that murkiness. (79 sq.)\(^2\)

St. Augustine thought that the tenets of Manichaeism which were not clear to him would finally be explained, but he was disappointed in this regard.

I did not agree but I thought they were concealing in those coverings something great which they would sometime reveal. (82 sq.)\(^3\)

After he had crossed the sea of error, perplexity and doubt, he enjoyed a great degree of happiness.

---

1. \ldots fateror quibus in errorem ducerer, labentia in Oceanum astra suspexi.
2. \ldots illam caliginem dispuli.\ldots 
3. Non adsentiebar sed putabam eos magnum aliquid tegere illis involucris quod essent aliquando aperturi.
4. \ldots traiecto isto mari.\ldots
He submitted willingly to be guided by the tenets of the Academics in dissatisfaction and adversity. He did not rely on these tenets during intervals of calm, but put them to the test of storms.

... for a long time the Academics held the tiller of my ship as it battled the winds. (85 sq.)

Then I came to these lands. (86 sq.)

Just as mariners travelled the seas with the assistance of the North Star, so St. Augustine arrived at his desired destination with the help of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.

Here I learned of the northern constellation to which I entrusted myself. (86 sq.)

At first it was only his eloquence that appealed to St. Augustine, but gradually St. Ambrose's words found a way into his mind and spirit.

... under full sail and with all oars pulling make that harbor quickly and there find rest. (94 sq.)

The anchors referred to were his worldly attachments, particularly his profession of rhetoric and the influential contacts it involved.

---

1. ... diu gubernacula mea repugnantia omnibus ventis Academici tenuerunt.
2. Deinde veni in has terras.
3. His septentrionem cui me crederem didici.
4. ... totis velis, omnibus remis in illum sinum raperem ibique conquiescerem.
I would have broken away all anchors holding me if my esteem for certain men had not restrained me. (97 sq.)

A severe trial was necessary before he would be brought to his senses.

What else was left except that a storm which seemed adverse should come to my rescue? (99 sq.)

The traditional pagan symbol of destruction is used to denote his narrow escape from pagan destruction.

not being able to sustain the burden of that profession of mine by which perhaps I was sailing to the Sirens. . . (102 sq.)

After a severe struggle he finally yielded.

I cast off everything and brought my ship through, battered and weary, to the desired harbor of tranquility. (103 sq.)

St. Augustine probably referred to Neo-platonism as the philosophy which aided him to a full understanding of Christianity.

1. . . . sic exarsi ut omnes illas vellem anchoras rumpere nisi me nonnullorum hominum existimatio commoveret.

2. Quid ergo restabat aliud nisi ut immoranti mihi superfluus tempestas quae putatur adversa succurreret?

3. . . . illius professionis onus sustinere non valens, qua mihi velificabam fortasse ad Sirenas. . .

4. . . . abicerem omnia et optatae tranquillitati vel quassatam navem fessamque perducerem.
You see in what philosophy as if safely into a port, I sail. (105 sq.)

He had been deceived so many times he was still cautious.

But even the port itself is wide and although its great size presents less danger, yet it does not exclude error entirely. (106 sq.)

He needed the guidance of St. Ambrose which he followed with docility and humility in spite of his aggressive spirit.

For I do not know how to approach that part of the land which alone is really happy. (107 sq.)

He was happy in the new discovered joys of Christianity.

... very easily and with a slight effort I shall arrive at that happy land. (114 sq.)

It was through the influence of St. Monica who had already reached the harbor that St. Augustine was able to gather others to the haven of a happy life.

I am gathering my dear ones to that harbor. (116 sq.)

1. Vides in qua philosophia, quasi in portu navigem.

2. Sed etiam ipse late patet, eius magnitudo quamvis iam minus periculosum, non tamen penitus excludit errorem.

3. Nam cui parti terrae quae profectione una beata est, me admoveam eamque contingam prorsus ignoro.

4. ... ad ipsam beatam vitam parvo conatu facillime accedam.

5. ... ad istum portum necessarios meos congregam.
Chapter II

St. Augustine begins this chapter with a discussion of the composition of a human being and the necessity of food for sustenance and development within natural limits. Then he transfers the discussion from physical to spiritual nourishment. He asks:

Has the soul no nourishment of its own? (34 sq.)¹

St. Monica answers his question.

I believe the soul is not nourished by anything other than knowledge and understanding of things. (36 sq.)²

St. Monica attempts to explain her answer.

... by such repasts does the soul nourish itself, that is, on its thoughts and cares, if it can obtain something through them. (43 sq.)³

The discussion of thought and knowledge as food for the soul continues.

... the souls of those who have not drunk from the fountain of liberal arts are hungry and famished. (49 sq.)⁴

---

1. Nullane (anima) habet alimenta propria?

2. Nulla re alia credo ali animam quam intellectu rerum atque scientia.

3. ... talibus epulis animus pascitur, id est; curris et cogitationibus suis, si per eas aliquid percipere possit.

4. ... animos eorum qui nihil bonarum artium hauserunt ieiunos et quasi famelicos esse.
Trygetius decided their souls, too, are filled.

Their souls are full but with vices and worthlessness. (50 sq.)¹

This (worthlessness) is a sort of barrenness and hunger of souls. (52 sq.)²

A comparison is then made between the results obtained from bodies which lack food and souls that are uneducated.

As a body that is denied food is subject to sickness, sores and maladies which indicate hunger, so the souls of the uneducated are filled with disease whereby they show their malnutrition. (53 sq.)³

There is a distinction between classes of food for the soul as well as for the body.

So there are two kinds of food for the soul; one, wholesome and beneficial; the other, unwholesome and harmful. (68 sq.)⁴

This being his birthday he desires to give them a special repast.

---

1. Plenos et illorum animos esse arbitror sed vitiis atque nequitia.

2. Ista ipsa est quaedam sterilitas et quasi fames animorum.

3. Nam quem ad modum corpus detracto cibo plerumque morbis atque scabie repletur, quae in eo vitia indicant famen, ita et illorum animi pleni sunt morbis quibus sua ieivnia confitentur.

4. . . . ita animorum duo alimentorum genera, unum salubre atque utile; alterum, morbidum atque pestiferum.
... I should serve a more sumptuous meal. ... If you are hungry I shall tell you what this meal will be. (72 sq.)

The young men under his guidance are exhorted to avoid intellectual and spiritual listlessness.

... I ought rather to pray that you should enjoy such feasts more than those of the body. (75 sq.)

In praising his mother, St. Monica, St. Augustine uses an expression which symbolizes the intense upward struggle necessary to attain true knowledge.

Mother, you have truly reached the heights of philosophy. (87 sq.)

He is almost apologetic for the presence of his mother at this discussion. He feels it is necessary to explain that her mental reactions are like those of a great man.

... forgetful completely of her sex we believed some great man was seated with us. (97 sq.)

The word 'voraciter' used in a humorous way helps to make the mental feast realistic.

---

1. ... prandium paulo lautius. ... exhibere debere, quod autem hoc sit prandium si esuritis proferam.

2. ... vota facienda sunt ut tales epulas potius quam illas corporis desideretis.

3. Ipsam prorsus, mater, arcem philosophiae tenuisti.

4. ... oblití penitus sexus eius, magnum aliquem virum considere nobiscum crederemus.
Since the investigation would be tedious today and since even souls suffer from overabundance in their feasts if they indulge in them greedily and to excess. . . (160 sq.)\(^1\)

Referring to the mental feast, St. Augustine says:

I should like to have you munch on a tidbit which has suddenly entered your host's mind. (165 sq.)\(^2\)

The mental feast becomes appetizing when it is described in such a manner.

. . . as if concocted and seasoned with scholastic honey. (166 sq.)\(^3\)

Alypius was a close friend of Augustine. They experienced similar conversions and were baptized at the same time. The youthful Licentius has been swept along by the enthusiasm of this little group but suddenly recalls the prestige of the Academy. He hesitates, not knowing what to say.

But I will swallow no more of this and will save my share for Alypius. (185 sq.)\(^4\)

---

1. Quod hodie quia longum est et habent in epulis suis et animi quandam luxeriem, si ultra modum is eas et voraciter inruant. . .

2. Illud modo libenter ligurriatis volo quod subito mihi ministratori vestro in mentem suggestum est.

3. . . . quasi scholastico melli confectum atque conditum.

4. Sed nihil hinc admittam in viscera et partem meam servabo Alypio.
... for I do not know how you have concocted
and spiced the dish you have placed before me.
(189 sq.)¹

Navigius will accept the explanation in its
entirety.

Even though my palate has sampled a little I
shall swallow it all gladly... (191 sq.)²

"A great good for the soul" is likened to
honey, pleasing but not essential to life. "To find
truth" is the meal necessary to sustain life worth
living. "To be wise" is desirable, as nuts are de­sir­able at a meal, but life is still possible without
them.

For the dish you fear to taste is made from
these three ingredients, honey, meal and nuts.
(205 sq.)³

Licentius calls attention to the long and
rich heritage of the Academics and he brings out
charges that were commonly made against Christianity
by pagans, namely, that their religion promised happi­ness to the afflicted and distressed and that none
but children could fail to see the fallacies of these
promises. He is referring here to Alypius.

---

1. ... nam nescio quo modo contortum hoc
   et aculeatum quod posuisti...

2. Quare totum etiam palato aliquantum remorso
   ...

3. Nam his tribus quasi melle, farre, atque
   nuculeis illud metuis gustare confectum est.
Will he yield to this miserable bait for children? (206 sq.)

Here is a clear indication of the procedure followed in this and other dialogues. It was from notes taken down by specially trained men that Augustine wrote the dialogues in their final form.

Licentius realizing that he is losing his argument resorts to saying anything that comes to his mind. But when he understands what he is saying is to be written he attempts to deny what he has said.

So I kept the youth on tenterhooks, between modesty and constancy. (220 sq.)

But when with these words I was jokingly urging him to eat his morsel... (222 sq.)

St. Augustine refers here to his mother's storehouse of Christian faith and experience. She may supply those who lack these because of their youth or inexperience.

... bidding them draw from her storehouse.
(232 sq.)

1. Illene huic tam pravae puerarum inlecebrae cederet?

2. Ita adolescentem inter verecundiam atque constantiam exagitatum tenebam.

3. Sed cum his verbis eum iocantes quasi ad vescendam particulam suam provocamus...

4. ... quasi de suo cellario promendum imperans.
Chapter III

The discussion on the characteristics of happiness with the mental feast as the setting is continued in this chapter. St. Augustine has not prepared the intellectual meal but is only serving what God, the source of all true wisdom has prepared. This banquet is always prepared but man seldom enjoys it because of worldly interferences.

You have arrived late at the banquet. (2 sq.)¹

... but convinced by the small number of courses... (4 sq.)²

... there would not be much in the way of leftovers. (6 sq.)³

Dependence on Divine Guidance is here made clear.

There is one who ceases not to prepare not only all meals for all men but also such feasts. (9 sq.)⁴

St. Augustine has decided to abandon the Academics but he is seeking argument to justify his stand in opposition to the Academy.

1. Tarde venisti ad convivium.
2. ... sed paucitatis ferocarum securitate...
3. ... non multum enim reliquiariun credendum erat remanisse.
4. Alius est enim omnibus eum omnes tum maxime tales epulas praebere non cessat.
he will warn that those sweets which I rashly accepted against the interests of my health are exacting this penalty from me. . .

He is careful not to continue the discussions to the point where they would become tiresome. Interest is still keen when the little group is dismissed. Wherefore, so that you may not be satiated, I ask that you assemble at this table tomorrow.

1. . . . illa dulcia quae contra valitudinem meam temere accepi has de me poenas exigere. . .

2. Quare peto, ne fastidio vobis sit, ad istam mensam oras convenire.
Chapter IV

The introduction to this chapter consists of a delightful picture of the little group strolling down into the meadow and selecting comfortable spots where they may be at ease to listen to what St. Augustine has to say.

St. Monica stated

... unhappiness is nothing but want. (10 sq.)

Shall we not say he was in want when he lacked wisdom? (96 sq.)

Licentius agrees upon this point.

For no poverty is greater or more unhappy than lack of wisdom... (103 sq.)

Foolishness is pointed out as one of the causes of unhappiness.

Poverty of the mind is nothing else but folly. (106 sq.)

... it follows that folly is a want. (117 sq.)

St. Augustine uses a very striking comparison between happiness and the extremes of being alive or dead.

---

1. nihil esse aliud miseriam quam egestatem.
2. Cum egeret sapientia non dicemus?
3. Nam et naior egestas nulla est quam egere sapientia... 
4. Est animi egestas nihil aliud quam stultitia.
5. sequitur ut stultitia sit egestas.
We conclude that folly is unhappiness. (147 sq.)¹

An explanation is given to the distinction implied between "mentis sapore" and "stultitia." The sterility signified by the latter is comprehensible to the one so afflicted, but he is powerless to remedy the situation.

Sallust's attention to literary effect, his rather philosophic treatment of history appealed to St. Augustine, and he pays Sallust a sincere and deeply-felt compliment.

We shall be free from fear of being chastised, for careless use of words by those who have given us their property to use. (178 sq.)²

Happiness is tied up with the finding of Christian knowledge which is possible through the participation of the soul in Divine Wisdom.

Whoever is happy has his own measure, namely wisdom. (233 sq.)³

Pride and its dangers are stressed as being an obstacle to the finding of happiness.

---

1. Stultitiam esse miseriam conficimus.

2. Liberabimur aut metuendum est ne ab eis castigemur quod incuriose utimur verbis, qui res suas nobis ad utendum dederunt.

3. Habet ergo modum suum, id est, sapientiam quisque beatus est.
... having banished all feeling of satiety...
(254 sq.)

A certain admonition which pleads with us to remember God, to seek Him, and, having banished all feeling of satiety, to thirst after Him, emanates to us from the very fountain itself of truth. (255 sq.)

The soul, by an inner sense, shares in true knowledge through the light of everlasting reason.

... that secret sun pours this brightness into our inward eyes. (255 sq.)

The soul shares in true knowledge through the light of reason which is intelligible to the soul since it is endowed with thought, memory and will.

This light appears to be nothing other than God Who is perfect without any impairing or disfiguration. (258 sq.)

Although St. Augustine had contributed most, intellectually, he was urged to develop his ideas by the questions of those who were present and their interest in his explanations.

... I cannot deny I have been fed by my own guests. (281 sq.)

---

1. ... ut eum pulso omni fastidio sitiamus.

2. Admonitio quaedam quae nobiscum agit ut deum recordemur, ut eum quaeramus fastidio sitiamus de ipso ad nos fonte veritatis emanat.

3. ... hoc interioribus luminibus nostris iubar sol ille secretus infundit.

4. Nihilque aliud etiam hac appareat esse quam deum nulla degeneratione impediente perfectum.

5. ... ut me negare non possim ab invitatis meis esse satiatum.
Trygetius voiced the gratitude of those in the group and their interest in this spiritual feeding.

I wish you would feed us with this measure every day. (283 sq.)

---

1. Vellem hoc modo nos cotidie pasceres.
Summary:

The Metaphor is the figure of speech most frequently used in this essay. It is most numerous in Chapter I and least in Chapter III.

In Chapter I the prominent and prolonged metaphor of the sea is used. It is of universal appeal and creates a natural introduction to his discussion. He compares the pursuit of philosophy and of the happy life with all its troubles and dangers to a voyage on the sea with its billows and storms.

Another striking metaphor is developed in the remaining chapters. It is the comparison of the pursuit of happiness to a mental feast in which knowledge of God and philosophy are the chief sources of nourishment.

The following gives a mathematical survey of the metaphors in each chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Metaphors</th>
<th>1 in every lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word is used for another which it clearly suggests.¹

Metonymy which literally means the employment of one name for another, is expressed by substituting the container for the contained, the sign for the thing signified, the cause for the effect, or the effect for the cause.

Chapter I

St. Augustine describes his own earnest search for the truth and how he battled the winds of dissatisfaction, lost as it were in the sea.

... as it battled all winds in the midst of the waves. (85 sq.)²

Chapter II

The word "vasculo" is probably used to give a familiar and intimate touch to his picture of the little group living at Cassiaciacum.

... you said you noticed what dish we were serving. ... (40 sq.)³

---

1. Tressler, J. C., English in Action, Book II
2. ... omnibus ventis in mediis fluctibus
3. ... dixisti advertisse quo vasculo uteremur.
Licentius has taken a keen interest in the discussion, and St. Augustine is pleased with him. For perhaps this, too, will be added to this feast of ours so that the hearty appetite of Licentius may not be neglected. . . (113 sq.)

Chapter IV

Much time is given to the discussion that "want" means "lack" of a thing.

Would we not say he was in want if he lacked silver and money? (95 sq.)

As long as we seek and are not satisfied by the fountain itself. . . (261 sq.)

The activities of the three Persons in one God are represented.

These three things show to those who understand, the one God and the one Substance after all the vanities of varied superstitions have been rejected. (267 sq.)

In these discussions St. Augustine contributed most, yet he was encouraged to develop his ideas by the contributions of those present. He appreciated their interest.

1. Forte enim etiam hoc isti nostro convivio subministrabitur ne Licenti aviditas neglegatur. . .

2. Ergone hunc egentem diceremus si egaret argento et pecunia?


4. Quae tria unum deum intellegentibus unamque substantiam exclusis vanitatibus variae superstitionis ostendunt.
I render thanks to the supreme and true God and to you who although cordially invited, have heaped gifts also on me. (278 sq.)

Summary:

Seven figures of Metonymy are listed: Chapter I, 1; Chapter II, 2; Chapter III contains none; Chapter IV, 4.

The total number is noticeably smaller than the number of metaphors. The ratio is about one to twelve.

---

1. Gratias ago summo et vero deo... vobis qui concorditer invitati multis etiam me cumlastis mun'eribus.
Simile

A simile is a definitely stated comparison of two unlike objects that have one point in common. Regularly as or like is used to make this comparison.\(^1\)

The readiest means of illustrating an object or action is by representing it as like something else. When such comparisons, made between objects of different classes, is definitely expressed, it is called a simile. \(\ldots\) The comparison is often denoted by the word like; but as, so, just as, similar to, and many more expressions may be used for the purpose; sometimes the formal term of comparison may be omitted.\(^2\)

Chapter I

St. Augustine briefly summarizes the various theories in regard to the origin of man. Naturally he places divine origin first.

For since God or nature or necessity or our own will or a combination of these \(\ldots\) have cast us into this world as into a stormy sea \(\ldots\)

(6 sq.)\(^3\)

\(1.\) Tressler, J. C., English in Action, Book II


\(3.\) Cum enin in hunc mundum sive deus, sive natura sive necessitas sive voluntas nostra sive coniuncta horum aliqua \(\ldots\) velut in procellosum salum nos proiecerit \(\ldots\)

34
The pursuit of futile glory which is deceptively attractive but unsubstantial and ruinous is one of the chief obstacles to arrival at the happy land.

The mountain must be avoided. . . for it is so resplendent and is clothed in such a deceiving light that it presents itself as a dwelling place. . . (52 sq.)

Chapter II

Bodies suffer from disease and malnutrition.

Souls do also, and their malnutrition is evident.

For just as a body denied food is often ridden with sickness and scabs, maladies which indicate hunger, so the souls of the uneducated also are filled with diseases whereby they betray their malnutrition. (53 sq.)

Food for the soul is compared with that of the body.

. . . just as there are two kinds of food for the body, so there are two kinds of food for the soul. (67 sq.)

The value of the spiritual food served will depend on the appetites and healthy conditions of the guests.

1. Mons vitandus est. . . nam ita fulget ita mentiente illa luce vestitur incolendum se offerat. . .

2. Nam quem ad modum corpus detracto cibo plerumque morbis atque scabie repletur, quae in eo vitia indicant famem, ita et illorum animi pleni sunt morbis quibus sua ieiunia confitentur.

3. . . . ut corporum, ita animorum duo alimentorum genera inveniuntur. . .
... for sick souls just as we see in physical illness, refuse and spit out their food. (77 sq.)

Chapter III

Those who indulge in forbidden foods and fancies must suffer the penalty exacted.

Hence Licentius will claim a victory over us and like a wise physician he will warn that those sweets I rashly accepted against the interests of my health are exacting this penalty from me. (82 sq.)

St. Augustine discussed the question of the unhappy man as being one who is poor and needy. The question of happiness was developed from a positive point of view. Now he develops it from a negative point.

Chapter IV

The following comparisons are vivid and striking and leave an indelible impression on the mind.

Now darkness does not come and go, so to speak, but absence of light is itself identical with darkness just as lack of clothing is identical with nakedness. (132 sq.)

1. aegri enim, sicut in morbis ipsius corporis videmus cibos suos recusant et respuunt.
2. Quare iam de nobis Licentius triumphant mihi que contra valitudinem meam temere accept has de me poenas exigere quasi prudens medicus admovebit.
3. Non enim tenebrae quasi veniunt aut recessunt, sed carere lunine hoc ipsum est iam tenebrosum esse ut carere veste, hoc est esse nudum.
When clothing is put on nakedness does not flee as if it were something movable. (134 sq.)

A comparison difficult to understand:

Just as every man, therefore, who is foolish is unhappy and every man who is unhappy is foolish, so we must admit not only that everyone who is in want is unhappy, but also that everyone who is unhappy is in want. (143 sq.)

The necessity of "Modus"—moderation—is the great lesson St. Augustine wished to teach his little group.

Therefore, just as truth is begotten of moderation so moderation is learned by truth. (245 sq.)

1. Non enim veste accedente veluti aliqua res mobiles nuditas fugit.

2. Sicut ergo et omnis stultus miser et omnis miser stultus est, ita necesse est non solum omnem qui egeat miserum sed etiam omnem qui miser sit egentem esse fateamur.

3. Ut igitur veritas modo gignitur, ita modus veritate cognoscitur.
Summary:

Simile is used ten times in the "De Beata Vita:" Chapter I contains two; Chapter II, 3; Chapter III, 1; and Chapter IV, 4.

Most of the similes occur in the discussion of happiness being a lack of nothing—want. Since want is folly and folly is unhappiness, folly and want are identical. Happiness is wisdom and whoever attains true wisdom comes to God and is happy.
Personification

Personification, a kind of metaphor, consists in giving personal attributes to inanimate objects or abstract ideas.

Chapter I

Satisfaction and pleasure cause many to be careless and reckless in their pursuits.

Everywhere the bewitching satisfaction of pleasures and honors entices them. (26 sq.)

Some having repented can no longer be induced to sail recklessly on the sea of life with its manifold sins.

They wake up in port from which no promises of the seas with her deceitful smile can lure them away. (36 sq.)

Augustine himself tells us that fame which came to him as a result of being a great teacher of rhetoric—

... held me back from flying at once into the embrace of philosophy. (91 sq.)

1. Tressler, J. C., English in Action, Book II

2. Eius usque quaque fallacissima serenitas voluptatem honorumque blanditur.

3. In portu evigilant unde illos nulla moris illius promissa nemium falso videntis excludant.

4. ... in philosophiae gremium celeriter advolarem.
Chapter II

In discussing food as a necessity for life and growth of the soul, Augustine says starvation is due to barrenness and famine, that is, worthlessness.

... worthlessness the mother of all vices... (56 sq.)

Chapter IV

Many qualities have been represented as the mother of all virtues.

Justly many have said that worth is the mother indeed of all virtues. (186 sq.)

Summary:

Personification is used only six times throughout this essay. Chapter III contains no figure of personification according to these findings.

They are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 every 46.6 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 every 238 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 every 286 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 every 158.6 lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ... ipsam nequitiam matrem omnium vitiorum. ...

2. Merito virtutum omnium matrem multi frugalitatem esse dixerunt.
Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure based on exaggeration.\textsuperscript{1} Hyperbole expresses that things or conditions are better or worse, greater or less than they really are for the sake of the effect produced.

Chapter I

The choice of words used in this description leave no doubt in the mind as to the finality of the destruction that comes to those who unreasonably seek worldly ambitions.

It has nothing substantial or solid within and with a crackling of the ground crust beneath it, it plunges down and swallows up those who are walking above, puffed up with themselves and they tumble headlong into darkness.\ldots \textsuperscript{2}

He acknowledges the important influence the reading of Cicero's "Hortensius" had upon him.

\ldots I was fired with such an enthusiasm for philosophy that I immediately considered devoting myself to it. \textsuperscript{3}

\begin{itemize}
    \item 1. Tressler, J. C., \textit{English in Action}, Book II
    \item 2. Ita nihil intus plenum atque solidum habet ut inflatos sibi superambulantes subcrepante fragili solo demergat ac sorbeat eis in tenebras revolutis.\ldots
    \item 3. \ldots tanto amore philosophiae succensus sum ut statim ad eam ferre meditantur.
\end{itemize}
Chapter II

The question was asked: "Who possesses God?"
Several answers had been given. Rusticus remained silent but was not pressed for an opinion.

. . . he was silent not so much because of de-liberation as because he was tongue-tied by shyness. (155 sq.)

He pictures the eagerness with which his friends seek to avoid any mistaken ideas gathered from his words.

And they seem to me especially like those who . . . when they dine with very greedy and ravenous guests refrain from snatching the food either through a sense of dignity or because they are deterred by modesty. (226 sq.)

Chapter IV

C. Sergius Orata went to extremes in order to gratify his inordinate desire for luxury and then suffered anguish lest he should lose all he had gained.

1. . . . non deliberatione magis quam pudore impeditus silere.

2. Qui mihi prorsus similis visi sunt. . . .
   his qui cum epulantur inter avidissimos rapacissimosque convivas, a rapiendo vel gravitate sese abstinent vel pudore terrentur.
He was crushed by this fear and amply confirmed that common saying: "The faithless man is wise in his own evil." (83 sq.)

Summary:

Hyperbole appears six times in this work.

Chapter III contains none.

The following is the result obtained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Hyperbole</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 every 70 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 every 119 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 every 286 lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 1 every 158.6 lines

---

1. Quo metu frangebatur illudque vulgare satis adserebat: 'Infidum hominem malo suo esse cordatum.'
Conclusion

A figure of speech is an attempt to give clearness and emphasis in language by means of an appeal to the emotions through a picture or through a vivid forceful turn of expression.

St. Augustine was a master in developing both of these ideas.

The metaphor of the harbor was applied very early to human life, especially with a religious significance. The harbor represented rest after a stormy life of adversity and misfortune. In the "De Beata Vita" this picture is presented very skillfully.

The figure of the sea is one of universal appeal and a vivid and elaborate picture of it serves as an introduction to this essay.

The naturalness of his descriptions cannot be overemphasized; his discussion of physical and spiritual nourishment; the effects of malnutrition in both cases; the comparison of happiness with the extremes of being alive or dead.

The skillful choice of a few words in a sentence may give a complete picture.

The metaphor is the figure of speech most frequently used in this essay. This is important for the metaphor is a very bold, energetic figure in which
the hearer or reader is hurried over an intervening space and forced to grasp some idea instantly. It is a favorite with public speakers and also with people who argue a great deal. Its preponderance with St. Augustine is an index to his methods.

Metaphors occur once in every 9.5 lines. The greatest number occur in Chapter I where there is one in every 3.4 lines; the least in Chapter III where there is one in every 20.7 lines.

A simile is of great value in rendering thought clear. It makes language forceful and effective. It is a comparison, imaginative rather than literal, and it is stated directly. If the writer or speaker is familiar with his subject and is in earnest, comparisons will rise in his mind. The effectiveness of this figure of speech depends upon the familiarity of the reader or hearer with one of the two things compared.

Most of the similes occur in the discussion of the mental feast. St. Augustine was familiar with his subject and was deeply in earnest in presenting it to his youthful hearers and so to make his discussion effective he chose an object with which they were all familiar—a banquet. He compares a mental repast with an ordinary banquet. He develops, step by step, the similarities between them.
The simile occurs only 10 times throughout the essay, one in every 73.8 lines.

Chapter III, the shortest chapter containing 124 lines, has only 7 figures of speech; 6 metaphors and 1 simile.

Metonymy should be used to clarify ideas and to produce a happy effect. The external relation that exists between the two things compared should be evident. St. Augustine made little use of this figure of speech. He preferred instead to state his comparisons as a direct metaphor since it is a more forceful expression.

Metonymy occurs 7 times throughout the essay, an average of 1 in every 112.6 lines. The use of personification and hyperbole is still more rare, each occurring only 6 times.

Personification consists in representing inanimate objects and abstract motions as endowed with life and intelligence. "Enticing Pleasure," "embrace of philosophy," "smile of the sea" are the objects and ideas personified in this essay.

Hyperbole is founded on exaggeration. It should be used sparingly; and it is never proper unless the subject exceed the common measure. It is dictated by violent emotion and, therefore, must be brief. It says more than it means.
When St. Augustine was carrying on these discussions, he was quietly preparing for the privilege of baptism. The nature of the subject matter and the conditions under which the group assembled for discussions probably accounts for the little use he made of the hyperbole.

The following is a mathematical survey of the figures of speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Metonymy</th>
<th>Simile</th>
<th>Personification</th>
<th>Hyperbole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of the occurrence of the metaphor to each of the other figures of speech is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>--</th>
<th>Metonymy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simile

| 8        | :  | 1        |

Personification

Hyperbole

17 : 1
Considering the sum total of the figures of speech, the following survey is noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Figures of speech</th>
<th>1 in every...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.8 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.7 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.5 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.9 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>7 lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The foregoing table shows the great number of major figures of speech used in this essay. At the same time, St. Augustine does not fail to carry out his purpose in conducting these discussions. "Modus," moderation, was developed step by step. It must be maintained and loved not occasionally but everywhere, if there is a true desire to attain happiness, to return to a participation in the source of all truth, God. His final sentence is significant:

This measure, I reminded, must be maintained and must be loved everywhere, if you have at heart our return to God.1

1. Modus, inquam, ille ubique servandus est, ubique amandus, si vobis cordi est ad deum reditus noster.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


