**The representation and reappraisal of St. Monica of Hippo in nineteenth-century women’s writing**

**Abstract**

Since she was commemorated as a saint in 387, Monica of Hippo has come to represent ideals of motherhood to successive generations. This article considers how three nineteenth-century women writers – Anna Jameson, Christina Rossetti, and Harriet Beecher Stowe –

engage with this legacy to offer new ways of imagining the empowering social potential of faith. In my analysis, I indicate how they contribute to the incarnation-inflected discourse of the second half of the nineteenth century and provide a helpful backdrop to understanding recent feminist appraisals of Augustine.

**Keywords**

Monica of Hippo, St. Augustine, Anna Jameson, Christina Rossetti, Harriet Beecher Stowe, feminist theology

All that we know about Monica of Hippo is what her son Augustine chose to say about her.

Recovering her and other women of antiquity is fraught with difficulty since, as Elizabeth A. Clark explains, the texts in which they are described are some of “the most rhetorically constructed,” their very “literariness” calling for hermeneutical suspicion.[[1]](#endnote-1) As Gillian Clark observes, we only know Monica’s name because Augustine gives it in the prayer which concludes Book 9 of the *Confessions*. In this, he asks that those who read his words may “at Thy Altar remember Monica Thy handmaid” so that her “last request of me, may … be, through the prayers of many, more abundantly fulfilled to her.”[[2]](#endnote-2) This prayer is Augustine’s response to the final request that Monica made to her sons: to bury her body anywhere but “to have her name commemorated at Thy Altar” (9.13.36). Gillian Clark explains that “‘[r]emember me at the altar’ means ‘remember me when you share the Eucharist.’”[[3]](#endnote-3) As Augustine indicates throughout the *Confessions*, Monica lived her life in a way that was not so saintly that prayers offered for her during the Eucharist were unnecessary. Particularly in his discussion of her final days, he indicates how Monica exemplifies what it means to *become* an altar that is – in the words of George Herbert’s “The Altar” – one “[m]ade of a heart and cemented with tears” (2), and to participate in the sacred community. Since the recognition of Monica as a significant figure in Christian devotional life in the twelfth century when, following the relocation of her bones from Italy to northern France, Augustinian canons and others who followed Augustine’s rule began to celebrate her feast on May 4th, what it meant for Monica to become both an altar and a participant in the Communion of Saints has come to be interpreted in various ways.[[4]](#endnote-4)

 In what follows, I introduce the person of Monica and consider her reception and reappraisal in literature and culture before considering how three different nineteenth-century writers from very different backgrounds and traditions – Anna Jameson, Christina Rossetti, and Harriet Beecher Stowe – recover her in ways that both contribute to the accentuation of Incarnation-inflected celebrations of Christ’s gentleness and compassion in the second half of the nineteenth century and anticipate ongoing feminist calls for a theology of embodiment.

 Boyd Hilton describes the mid-nineteenth-century move from the “Age of Atonement” to an “Age of Incarnation” in terms of a “shift” leading to an increased fascination with Jesus as an exemplary man, and the worship of a compassionate Christ of “almost feminine tenderness and humility.”[[5]](#endnote-5) In taking a longer chronological view, I suggest that, rather than a “shift,” the move might be considered more in terms of a gradual process of re-visioning that critiques dominant traditions and problematises the gendering of the sacred as male. In my analysis of the re-visioning of Monica that Jameson, Rossetti, and Stowe offer, I trace aspects of the long backdrop to the calls for a renewal of Christian theology that feminist theologians continue to make. I conclude by considering what the nineteenth-century reappraisal of Monica meant – and means now – for the recuperation of the unnamed woman who, Augustine complains, was “torn from my side as a hindrance to my marriage” (6.15.25).

1. **Monica as a model of saintliness and relationality**

Gillian Clark subtitles her 2015 book about Monica *An Ordinary Saint*. She comments that although some men wrote about the lives of holy women who renounced wealth and status to live in austerity, travelled widely, or funded monastic communities, this was not Monica. According to Clark, she was

a good Christian who showed love of God and love of neighbour. She went regularly to church, heard and read the scriptures, and prayed. She was a peacemaker in her household and among her neighbours, and she was charitable to the poor.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Augustine describes the outworking of these qualities in Book 9 of the *Confessions* when he reflects on Monica’s strict upbringing, the way she overcame her early “love of wine” (9.8.18), the forbearance she showed in her marriage to the unfaithful Patrick (9.9.19), and her actions as a peacemaker (9.19.20). As Peter Brown comments, it is at this point in Augustine’s journey that he recognises that his mother “had always been right; she had been the voice of God in his early life.”[[7]](#endnote-7) It is also at this point that Augustine recognises his mother as what Clark terms an “ordinary saint.” As he comes to terms with his grief after her death, he revises his perception of her. He no longer sees her as “the idealized figure that had haunted [his] youth like an oracle of God” but as an ordinary fellow human in need of prayer at the Eucharistic altar.[[8]](#endnote-8)

 Throughout the *Confessions*, Augustine describes his conversion as the result of Monica’s faith and prayers (3.11.19-21; 5.8.15; 6.1.1; 9.9.22) and he parallels closeness to her with closeness to Christ. In Book 3, he recounts the vision that inspired Monica in her all-absorbing pursuit of her son and her unflagging concern with his spiritual welfare:

For she saw herself standing on a certain wooden rule, and a shining youth coming towards her, cheerful and smiling upon her, herself grieving, and overwhelmed with grief. But he having … enquired of her the causes of her grief and daily tears, and she answering that she was bewailing my perdition, he bade her rest contented, and told her to look and observe, "That where she was, there was I also." And when she looked, she saw me standing by her in the same rule. (3.11.19)

When Augustine dismissed Monica’s rendering of the vision to excuse his behaviour and said that its true meaning was that she would convert to his religion of Manichaeism, she was quick to reply: “No; for it was not told me that, ‘where he, there thou also’; but ‘where thou, there he also’” (3.11.20). Although he was impressed by Monica’s reasoning, Augustine was frustrated by her persistence. As he explains in Book 9, it was only years later that he came to the recognition that in her pursuit of him, it was God who was speaking to him and revealing to him the possibility of his redemption.

 In his account of their spiritual ascent at Ostia, Augustine writes of how he and Monica reflected on the “eternal life of the saints” and glimpsed what lay beyond space and time (9.10.23). He then describes the way in which, in raising themselves beyond the temporal, they “did by degrees pass through all things bodily.” He continues:

[W]e were soaring higher yet, by inward musing, and discourse, and admiring of Thy works; and we came to our own minds, and went beyond them, that we might arrive at that region of never-failing plenty, where Thou feedest Israel for ever with the food of truth, and where life is the Wisdom by whom all these things are made, and what have been, and what shall be, and she is not made, but is, as she hath been, and so shall she be ever; yea rather, to "have been," and "hereafter to be," are not in her, but only "to be," seeing she is eternal. (9.10.24)

Augustine’s account of how he and his mother passed through all that is bodily and material echoes the Platonic and Neoplatonic terminology of spiritual ascent. However, whereas Augustine had, up until this point, been reliant on Neoplatonic methods in the quest to attain unity with God, the ascent provides him with a new orientation. He reflects that while the Neoplatonic books he read taught him that God came before all things and that “all things were made by Him,” they did not teach him anything of the incarnation (7.9.13). At the critical moment of the ascent, it is the realization of Christ’s presence in human relationships and in community that changes his perspective and ensures that, rather than experiencing a sense of loss following a vision of God, he instead experiences a reinvigoration of his faith. While, in Book 7, Augustine had lamented that he was too “puffed up with knowledge” to perceive anything of God’s character or grace (7.9.13; 7.20.26), in Book 9, he holds up Monica as a corrective to his solitary pursuit. As Kim Power comments, it is Monica’s ordinary qualities that provide Augustine with “an alternative model of piety to that of educated men” and a route to wisdom “through holiness that even simple uneducated people – especially women – can embrace.”[[9]](#endnote-9)

 After reflecting on the way in which Augustine uses a description of Monica’s participation in the ascent to indicate that “women and men have the same access to and experience of divine revelation,” Anne-Marie Bowery argues that he “regularly employs feminine imagery to describe God and God’s actions” in order that he might emphasize the universality of spiritual experience.[[10]](#endnote-10) Not only does Augustine use female pronouns to speak of Divine Wisdom (see the quote above), but he also describes God in maternal terms: God feeds the believer with “infant food” (1.6.7). The most significant thing that Monica teaches Augustine in her role as mediator of these aspects of God and as exemplar of what Bowery terms the “female face of Christ” is the value of seeking God in community.[[11]](#endnote-11)

 Augustine repeatedly stresses the relational aspects of the spiritual ascent he shared with Monica at Ostia. Through “discourse” and a mutual “admiring of Thy works,” both participants are brought to the same place of mystical contemplation where all difference between them is diminished. Their relationship is reframed as they become brother and sister in Christ and glimpse an eternity among the Communion of Saints. In a discussion of this passage, Janet Martin Soskice explains that Augustine’s description of the ascent points to a “profoundly social religious epistemology” and illuminates Monica’s role in modelling how “the life of the saints is social.”[[12]](#endnote-12)

 Rowan Williams reflects on how the social and “conversational” aspect of the ascent offers a challenge to the “Platonic model of individual escape from words and matter” that Augustine had espoused earlier in his life. He writes:

Heaven would be a perpetuation of the moment of fruition, the *shared* reaching out … and now all that can be said or understood of that fruition is through the image of the moment of mutual transparency that can issue from the intense exchange of words: where the fluidity of utterance itself, a play of words that is also the modification and re-forming of a relationship between material persons, so indicates or rather embodies its own unfinishable nature that it expresses or introduces the irreducible “difference” of God.[[13]](#endnote-13)

To follow Williams’s reasoning, the spiritual ascent that is described in Book 9 – largely in auditory terms – can be understood as both profoundly social and profoundly Eucharistic. In *Being Christian* (2014), Williams comments that “one of the most transformingly surprising things about Holy Communion is that it obliges you to see the person next to you as wanted by God.”[[14]](#endnote-14) Augustine’s prayer that Monica might be remembered at the altar of the Eucharist can be understood in relation to this experience of spiritual ascent since it was in “the moment of mutual transparency” that he came to see her as a fellow Christian and a sharer in an eternity with Christ and the saints.

 Augustine repeatedly draws attention to Monica’s physicality both as a mother and as someone concerned for the material needs of those around her. Interpreting her as a mediator of the divine or, as Bowery has done, as a figure of Christ means appreciating the way in which any relationship with the divine is enfleshed and forged in relationship with others and with the created world. In her work of systematic theology, *God, Sexuality, and the Self* (2013), Sarah Coakley reflects on what it means to have an embodied relationship with God. She considers the embodied process of shaping one’s desire for God and wonders whether a Platonic Christianity that “involves some sort of ‘purification’ of physical expressions of sexual love” can avoid “a kicking away… of the ladder that connects the divine to everything classically associated with the “woman”: materiality, physical desire, marriage, childbirth.” She suggests that if the “kicking away” of the ladder is unavoidable then the “tradition of ascetic Platonist Christianity” is “arguably the one most *inimical* to feminist concerns.”[[15]](#endnote-15) After recognising how the vision at Ostia is, in part, shaped by the language of Platonist Christianity, Coakley details the move that Augustine made, later in life, away from “highpoint ‘Plotinian’ experiences” and towards a recognition of the mirroring forth of the Trinity in “memory, understanding, and the will.”[[16]](#endnote-16) She explains that what came to matter most for Augustine was not an escape from human faculties but instead a relational reaching for “harmony and order, unity and cooperation.”[[17]](#endnote-17) Reading, as Williams does, Augustine’s account of the ascent at Ostia in terms of an anticipation of his later – and more fully worked out – embodied Christianity means recognising Monica’s role in illuminating how human relationships body forth God’s presence in the world.

 By the early nineteenth century, Monica had become the patron saint of mothers who hoped to save their children.[[18]](#endnote-18) In constructing her as a figure akin to the Victorian “angel in the house,” her embodied desire for God was largely ignored and her ethnicity as a Berber (an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa) was erased. As Rebecca Moore comments, the use to which she has been put by patriarchal authorities as “long suffering, living only for and through her children, having no independent identity” has, for a long time, been damaging “to women’s development and sense of self-worth.”[[19]](#endnote-19) While there is no doubt that representations of Monica as a sentimentalized weeping mother accentuated the silencing of women through the nineteenth-century, concurrent and proto-feminist representations of her as a powerful model of embodied relationality offer a challenge to Platonic Christianity’s otherworldly eschatology that dismisses the body and the temporal.

 In her critique of patriarchal paradigms, Rosemary Radford Ruether laments how “the churches have betrayed Christ by preaching a theology of female silencing and subordination” and highlights how, in response, “[r]edemption in modern feminism follows a modern Western cultural shift from otherworldly to this-worldly hope.”[[20]](#endnote-20) In what follows, I suggest that Jameson, Rossetti, and Stowe engage with mid-nineteenth-century debates about the incarnation and the feminisation of Christ to represent Monica in ways that challenge the damaging versions of her that cohere to the “theology of silencing and subordination” and highlight her role as a model for a renewed understanding of Christ, prayer, personhood, and the shaping of desire.[[21]](#endnote-21) I argue that their readings affirm a model of holistic personhood that refuses the Platonist tendency to value spirit or mind as superior to the body and that they anticipate the way in which later feminist theologians recoup the earth, the body, sexuality and maternity as sacred. As I do this, I extend the work of Mary McCartin Wearn and her contributors in *Nineteenth-Century American Women Write Religion: Lived Theologies and Literature* (2014) in their dismantling of the perception that the rise of a “feminine religious culture after 1800 [was] a regrettable force of anti-intellectualism” and in their recognition of how “female authors engaged, challenged, and, in some cases, rejected conventional doctrines, and how they deployed faith in their words, politics, and actions.”[[22]](#endnote-22) I suggest that for Jameson, Rossetti, and Stowe, the recovery of Monica of Hippo as an ordinary saint who experienced identification with Christ as body through her own body and through relationship holds an empowering potential for faith and for female subjectivity and has social and political implications that need further development.

1. **Anna Jameson**

Author and art-critic Anna Jameson (1794–1860) includes a discussion of paintings of Monica and Augustine in the first of her five-volume series *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848). She introduces Monica in the second sentence of the section on Augustine before moving on to explain the part Monica played in his conversion:

His mother, Monica, wept and prayed for him, and, in the extremity of her anguish, repaired to the bishop of Carthage. After listening to her sorrows, he dismissed her with these words: “’Go in peace’ the son of so many tears will not perish!”[[23]](#endnote-23)

As Clarissa Atkinson explains, the phrase, “the son of so many tears,” was used to identify Monica in the *Golden Legend* (1260) and, by the Middle Ages, had “entered the consciousness of certain Christian parents” and “began to occur independently, transforming biography into mythology.”[[24]](#endnote-24) Although Jameson uses the phrase to introduce Monica, she sidesteps its traditional and expected appropriation when she reaches a different conclusion about representations of the saint than many of her contemporaries.

 After describing a fifteenth-century picture in which Monica sits “supreme” on a throne and is “attended by twelve holy women or female saints,” Jameson turns to a contemporary representation:

 I saw in the atelier of the painter Ary Scheffer, in 1845, an admirable picture of St. Augustine and his mother Monica. The two figures, not quite full length, are seated; she holds his hand in both hers, looking up to heaven with an expression of enthusiastic undoubting faith – “the son of so many tears cannot be cast away!” He also is looking up with an ardent, eager, but anxious, doubtful expression, which seems to say, “Help thou my unbelief!”[[25]](#endnote-25)

<INSERT IMAGE HERE> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint\_Augustine\_and\_Saint\_Monica.jpg]

The position of the figures, with their hands clasped as they look up to heaven, indicates that the painting represents the experience of spiritual ascent Augustine shared with Monica at Ostia. As Atkinson notes, the painting served as the inspiration for a number of biographies and devotional volumes including Emilie Bougaud’s *Life of Saint Monica* (1865), which “exemplifies the ‘Monica’ of that time”: a white Monica of ideal maternity.[[26]](#endnote-26) In this, Bougaud asks readers to look at Scheffer’s painting and see in Monica a model of the woman whose “true mission … is in her home, to make her husband happy, and to bring up his children.”[[27]](#endnote-27) While Bougaud’s interpretation of Monica became hugely popular among Catholic readers, Jameson’s account goes some way in challenging it.

Jameson’s description of the representation of Monica’s expression of “enthusiastic undoubting faith” alongside Augustine’s “ardent, eager, but anxious, doubtful expression” is particularly significant when it is read alongside the account of the spiritual ascent in the *Confessions*. In this context, the visual image of Monica raised higher than her son – and according to Jameson expressing a deeper faith – is indicative of her Christ-likeness. Moreover, by attributing to Augustine the words of the father of the demon-possessed son, “Help thou my unbelief!” Jameson casts Monica in the role of Christ and teacher: she is able to “lift” up her son at the moment of spiritual ascent and reinforce both the miracle and power of prayer (Mark 9:24, 29).

 In the second volume of *Sacred and Legendary Art*, Jameson comments on how Mary is not to be considered the sole “goddess” in the Catholic Church.[[28]](#endnote-28) For her, the saints are divinities in the sense that they embody Christ’s presence and reflect aspects of God. As Gail Turley Houston argues, the female divinities that Jameson identifies bring into view what Grace Jantzen – in her feminist philosophy of religion – refers to as the ‘“divine horizon” of potentiality for women and the concomitant possibility for real historic change.[[29]](#endnote-29) In Jameson’s account of both Monica’s life as told by Augustine and her legacy in art, the simple metonymic identification between Monica and her tears is undermined. In describing the expression that Scheffer gives her – and by implying her role as guide in the experience of spiritual ascent – Jameson looks forward to the “Virgin Patronnesses” that she would discuss in the second volume of the series. She also anticipates the claim that she would go on to make in the fourth book of the series, *Legends of the Madonna* (1852), where after suggesting that it was perhaps because of an “especial veneration” for his mother that Augustine was “desirous to prove that through the Virgin Mary all womankind were henceforth elevated in the scale of being,” she recognises Christ “as a model man” who “united the virtues of the two sexes, till the idea that there are essentially masculine and feminine virtues intruded itself on the higher Christian conception, and seems to have necessitated the female type.”[[30]](#endnote-30) In the pages that follow, Jameson locates the normalization of this idea with Church Fathers of the fourth century and comments on how it was perpetuated through artistic representations of the “Madonna and Child” at the expense of representations of her as the Queen of Heaven or as Heavenly Wisdom.[[31]](#endnote-31)

In her discussion of Monica, Bowery extends Kari Elisabeth Børresen’s recognition that the “atyptical use of female metaphors describing God or Christ in the Christian tradition can be used as a starting point for a new theology.”[[32]](#endnote-32) She argues that an understanding of Monica as a mediator of the divine and as a figure of Christ helps inaugurate this “new theology” in that it disrupts “cultural biases that favour the masculine over the feminine.” These cultural biases allow for “the masculinity of Christ” to “eclipse the primary function of Christ: to be the means by which humans (all humans regardless of sex) come to know God’s love.”[[33]](#endnote-33) Jameson’s recognition of how Monica acts as a mediating Christ figure for Augustine, coupled with her recognition that Christ unites the virtues traditionally associated with the masculine and feminine, contributes to the nineteenth-century intensification of interest in the incarnation and to the valuing of the temporal and of female lived experience that anticipates the “new theology” that Bowery describes.

 This call for a “new theology” raises issues that have a particular urgency at this time as senior figures in the Catholic and Anglican church are held to account for a long history of abuse and cover-up and questions are asked about faulty doctrines of forgiveness that protect the reputation of perpetrators over the lives of victims. In a 2018 article in the *Church Times*, Linda Woodhead argues that there remains an urgent need to scope out a “new theology” in the wake of the problems exposed by the hearings of the IICSA (the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse). The theology that she envisions refutes any notion that “doctrine is a possession of the church” and looks to the implications of a belief in “a God who is present in, with, and through creation, and affected by it.”[[34]](#endnote-34)

I suggest that the work of a number of nineteenth-century women writers, which corrects the dominant discourse of a transactional exchange with an abstract God with an apprehension of what the incarnation means in understanding the continuities between the material and spiritual, anticipates and is valuable for its work of scoping out new theologies of embodiment which the church so desperately needs. Jameson is central to this project because of her contribution to the increased interest in the idea of female visionaries, female gods, and female-Christ figures and because of her articulation of a dynamic theology that disrupts gender and power binaries.

1. **Christina Rossetti**

Christina Rossetti’s (1830-1894) engagement with the figure of Monica can be helpfully understood in the context of her Anglo-Catholic commitment and her investment in the growing interest in female saints and discussions around the Incarnation and the Eucharist. In the first part of this section, I consider how Rossetti’s engagement with Augustine’s theology and with the figure of Monica can be seen in her early narrative poetry. I then turn to Rossetti’s more explicit discussion of Monica’s character in the entry for Augustine’s feast day (August 28th) in *Time Flies* (1885) in order to highlight the ways in which she engages with contemporaneous debates about the place of saints, and about intercessory prayer among the Communion of Saints, in a way that anticipates recent theologies of embodiment.

In her narrative poem, “From House to Home,” which she wrote in 1858 and published in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* in 1862, Rossetti gives voice to a female speaker who sees her spiritual double experience union with Christ through her body and who exemplifies the fact that the life of the saints is social. The placement of the poem – in the devotional section that comes at the end of the volume – means that its narrative of sisterhood and reconciliation echoes that given in the title poem, “Goblin Market.” As Marylu Hill has argued, “Goblin Market” echoes the “paradigm of desire” that is offered by the doctrine of the Eucharist and reveals how the physical body “may be used … in the service of what Augustine and [Edward] Pusey see as the highest good, that is, ‘the closest union of God and man.’”[[35]](#endnote-35) For Rossetti, Hill explains, “humans do not so much transcend the body as they experience the transcendent through it.”[[36]](#endnote-36) Significantly, it is Lizzie’s female body that is represented as Christ-like and, as Lynda Palazzo comments, her redemptive activity renders her “a female Christ demolishing the gender exclusivity of the sacred.”[[37]](#endnote-37) Read in these terms, Rossetti’s representation of Lizzie can be understood to anticipate the modern feminist theology which, as Ruether explains, sees redemption “not primarily in an otherworldly escape from the body and the finite world” but in terms of “transforming the world and society into personal and social relations of justice and peace between all humans.”[[38]](#endnote-38)

Whereas Laura is saved by her Christ-like sister Lizzie in “Goblin Market,” the speaker of “From House to Home” is saved by the Communion of Saints that embodies Christ for her and offers her a glimpse of herself as part of the divine community. Swooning in agony after the failure of her search for her divine companion, she experiences a death-trance in which she is surrounded by “spheres and spirits” (106) who discuss her fate. Recognising her as a “sister” (107), they eventually prepare her to “live again” (111) and, as means of strengthening, offer a vision of her spiritual double. This double “bled and wept, yet did not shrink” as she stood on thorns because she was sustained by a “chain of living links” that was “anchored fast in heaven” (133, 138, 140). She was able to drink from the cup “[b]rim full of loathing and of bitterness” because the hand of Christ distilled it into “[n]ew wine and virgin honey” (146, 150). Her stance of perseverance – which compels the speaker to a recognition of how Christ’s blood has redeemed her (222) and to a re-orientation of desire – recalls the way in which Augustine describes Monica in the prayer that ends Book 9 of the *Confessions*:

Unto the Sacrament of which our ransom, Thy handmaid bound her soul by the bond of faith. Let none sever her from Thy protection: let neither the lion nor the dragon interpose himself by force or fraud. For she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she be convicted and seized by the crafty accuser: but she will answer that her sins are forgiven her by Him, to Whom none can repay that price which He, Who owed nothing, paid for us. (9.13.36)

When “From House to Home” is considered in terms of this passage, Rossetti’s speaker can be situated as a figure of both Augustine and Monica. As Monica is strengthened by the vision of Augustine eventually sharing the same rule as her (and as Augustine is subsequently strengthened by recognising the validity of this vision), so Rossetti’s speaker is strengthened and has her desire shaped by a vision of her sister-self occupying the “inner ground” (126). Through this vision, she realises that she herself will eventually become one with Christ.

Rossetti’s concern to offer a theology that both attends to the Communion of Saints and demonstrates a commitment to ecological transformation emerges from her investment in Anglo-Catholicism. This investment came about as a result of her exposure to Sacramental theology during the years she attended Christ Church, Albany Street (1843-1876) and Christ Church, Woburn Square (1876-1894).⁠ It was in these churches that she heard many of the key leaders of the Oxford Movement preach and developed a familiarity with contemporary ecclesiastical debate.⁠ Of the 50 volumes of Ancient, Patristic and Early Modern writings that were translated and edited by the leaders of the Oxford Movement between 1838 and 1881, the first was Augustine’s *Confessions*. In the preface to this book, Edward Pusey calls his readers to a deeper understanding of holiness and asks that they might learn from Augustine “how to sanctify things common, by first sanctifying the vessel, wherein they are received, our own hearts.”[[39]](#endnote-39)

In *Christina Rossetti and the Bible: Waiting with the Saints* (2014), I describe Rossetti as the ideal “student” that Pusey envisages.[[40]](#endnote-40) For the purposes of this article, I want to draw attention to the implications of what Pusey describes as Augustine’s concern with “sanctify[ing] things common.” Pusey’s commitment to the Sacramental theology from which this concern comes can be illuminated by considering how, in an 1843 university sermon that led to his suspension for two years, he subscribed to the doctrine of the Real Presence (the belief that Christ’s resurrected presence – rather than corporal presence – was in the consecrated bread and wine). In *Christina Rossetti: Poetry, Ecology, Faith* (2018),

Emma Mason reflects on how significant it is that, despite the controversies, “Rossetti subscribed to the doctrine, and the implication that inanimate objects like bread and wine had an invisible reality confirmed her sense that all things, material and immaterial, are equal in God”.[[41]](#endnote-41) Throughout her study, Mason attends to Rossetti’s incarnation-inflected recognition “that all of creation is made of the divine and so interdependent with itself”.[[42]](#endnote-42) This recognition can be understood to look forward to feminist theologies of embodiment and to provide a lens through which Augustine’s early investment in Christian Platonism, which dismisses what is corporal, might be nuanced with an engagement with his more mature concern to “sanctify things common.”

In his address, *The Miracles of Prayer* (1866), which he delivered when he returned to the same pulpit twenty-three years after his controversial sermon on the Eucharist*,* Pusey describes how God’s grace works through commonplace things and ordinary people. At the start, Pusey attends to how the “unbroken, unfaltering prayers of … St. Monnica [sic]” that led to Augustine’s conversion were both inspired by and responded to by God.[[43]](#endnote-43) They stand, for him, as an example of the kind of “stupendous spiritual miracle” that is “daily renewed” by the working of grace through the faithful who are willing to co-operate with God.[[44]](#endnote-44) It is, Pusey argues, through this co-operation of the faithful that the church will unite and God’s love will be revealed in the world.

Rossetti demonstrates her engagement with this figure of Monica as an ordinary lay person who is faithful in prayer when she discusses her in the entry for Augustine’s feast day (August 28th) in her 1885 reading diary, *Time Flies*. In a text which exalts female spiritual heroes whose lives remain relatively “unknown” on earth, but yet are “well known … in Paradise,” she begins by focusing on the powerful effect of Monica’s prayers before moving on to discuss what makes Augustine a saint worthy of remembrance.[[45]](#endnote-45) She writes:

In early life an unbaptised Manichean heretic of strong passions and unbridled conduct, Augustine left his mother to watch, pray, agonise for him, while he rejoiced in his youth, walking in the ways of his heart and in the sight of his eyes, and not laying to heart that God for all these things would bring him into judgement.

Divine grace, however, responding doubtless to his mother’s prayers for his soul, proved at length stronger than his evil will and ways: he cast off his vices as the serpent casts its skin, professed the Catholic Faith and was baptised on Easter Eve in the year 387 by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.

Thenceforward, allowing for human frailty, he retained of the serpent only its wisdom, and put on harmlessness as a dove: yet not, alas! without putting it off under provocation.[[46]](#endnote-46)

Like Pusey, Rossetti stresses the power of “Divine grace” working through the prayers of a faithful mother. Love is shown to be stronger than evil and, once moved by grace, Augustine is baptised. While this is a complete transformation, Rossetti acknowledges he does not always retain the “harmlessness as a dove.” Following this assessment, she quotes directly from Sabine Baring-Gould’s *Life of the Saints* (1872-1889), a seventeen-volume encyclopaedia that was in the process of completion at the time, in order to give an overview of Augustine’s life and theology. What she then includes in her own words is her impression of his ordinariness and human frailty. She concludes: “we need not cavil at the blemishes of a saint who of his own free choice died the death of a penitent.”[[47]](#endnote-47) It is, for Rossetti, Augustine’s humility and penitential attitude – expressed through his prayer on his deathbed – that make him both Christ-like and a saint worthy of remembrance. His virtues in her eyes are the very characteristics of Monica, the ordinary saint. In representing Monica as an ordinary saint who is open to receiving and sharing grace, Rossetti affirms women’s bodies as sites of Divinity and articulates the need for an individual to apprehend the incarnation in relationship with others and the created world.

1. **Harriet Beecher Stowe**

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) uses the female characters in her fiction to critique the damaging legacies of Platonism and Calvinism that diminished female experience. Wearn groups Stowe with her sister Catherine Beecher in her observation of how both offer an “imaginative challenge to a traditionally masculine religious power structure [that] reflects the shifting landscape of nineteenth-century society – a gendered transformation of domestic, civic, and spiritual life.”[[48]](#endnote-48) I want to extend this recognition and stress how Stowe’s radical approach differed from her sister’s. While Beecher offers an outright critique of Augustine in her 3-volume work of systematic theology, *Common Sense Applied to Religion, or the Bible and the People* (1857), Stowe offers a more nuanced reading of Augustinian theology through engaging with the figure of Monica in the historical fiction she serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Minister’s Wooing* (December 1858- December 1859) and *Agnes of Sorrento* (May 1861- April 1862). She also, I suggest, offers a more comprehensive vision of the way in which religion empowers women to reform social thought.[[49]](#endnote-49)

 In *The Minister’s Wooing*, Stowe reframes Augustine’s theology in a way that is empowering for women. She offers a more compassionate vision of God than that given by “the clear logic and intense individualism of New England” which she critiques for “[deepening] the problems of the Augustinian faith” while “[sweeping] away all those softening provisions so earnestly clasped to the throbbing heart of that great poet of theology.”[[50]](#endnote-50) After describing the theological difficulties that the small New England community of the 1790s were working through following the presumed death at sea of the heroine Mary Scudder’s cousin and beloved, the sailor James Marvyn, Stowe compares the rigid Calvinism practiced by the minister Samuel Hopkins (based on a real figure who was a student of Jonathan Edwards) with the “softening provisions” Augustine gives in his discussion on the prayers for the dead:

Augustine solaced the dread anxieties of trembling love by prayers offered for the dead, in times when the Church above and on earth presented itself to the eye of the mourner as a great assembly with one accord lifting interceding hands for the parted soul.[[51]](#endnote-51)

One of the passages that Stowe may have been referring to here is in *The City of God*, where Augustine writes that God attends to the prayers for those who lived lives that were not entirely wicked or so saintly that they do not “need such mercy.”[[52]](#endnote-52) Through *The Minister’s Wooing*, it is the female characters who recognise this widespread need for mercy and who express the value of the prayers and intercessions that Augustine recommends. As they do so, they embody the convergence of the “Church above and on earth” and undercut the “systems” of the “hard old New England divines” with their sympathetic responses to human fallibility.[[53]](#endnote-53) “[W]here theorists and philosophers tread with sublime assurance,” Stowe writes, “woman often follows with bleeding footsteps; -- women are always turning from the abstract to the individual, and feeling where the philosopher only thinks.”[[54]](#endnote-54) Through their informal ministry and their prayers, the women she represents are ones who, like Monica, embody Christ in the way in which they touch the sacred in the seeds of ordinary things and respond to the experience of the presence of God and to the revealed truth that is about love rather than about doctrines.

*The Minister’s Wooing* is the first of the three novels in which Stowe alludes to Monica’s vision of Augustine on the wooden rule and, in this, it is Mary Scudder who is associated with Monica.[[55]](#endnote-55) Stowe suggests that it is because of Mary’s love for James that she is able to see him standing – as Monica saw Augustine – on the rule of faith. In drawing out this similarity, she indicates how Monica’s vision offers a challenge to the Platonic tradition that finds expression in the Puritan beliefs in New England:

Once, in an age, God sends to some of us a friend who loves in us, not a false imagining, an unreal character, but, looking through all the rubbish of our imperfections, loves in us the divine ideal of our nature, – loves, not the man that we are, but the angel that we may be. Such friends seem inspired by a divine gift of prophecy, – like the mother of St. Augustine, who, in the midst of the wayward, reckless youth of her son, beheld him in a vision, standing, clothed in white, a ministering priest at the right hand of God – as he has stood for long ages since.[[56]](#endnote-56)

As a result of constant prayer, Mary exemplifies the transformative and prophetic vision that Monica models in the *Confessions* and that Williams explains occurs with the Eucharist: seeing “the person next to you as wanted by God” (see above).

 The power of Mary’s intercessory prayers for James – which come from her recognition of the latent but “divine original” person he has been created to be – is expressed when he unexpectedly returns and declares himself a Christian the day before the planned marriage between Mary and the minister Hopkins. In the letter that James wrote to Mary which was delayed and arrived at the same time as he returned, he describes his experience of encountering God after identifying with Jacob who “saw a ladder in his sleep between him and heaven” and recognized “that there was a way between him and God, and that there were those above who did care for him, and who could come to him to help him.[[57]](#endnote-57) Ladder imagery runs through the novel and, as Kristin Wilkes comments, Stowe revises the ladder metaphor in Plato’s *Symposium* to argue against the disinterested benevolence of Hopkins and to indicate how “a person moves upward from natural, earthly loves to selfless love of God.”[[58]](#endnote-58)

In comparing the solace that Mary and James find in recognising the social and communal aspect of the spiritual journey to the individualist approach taken by Hopkins, Stowe comments:

There is a ladder to heaven, whose base God has placed in human affections, tender instincts, symbolic feelings, sacraments of love, through which the soul rises higher and higher, refining as she goes … This highest step, this saintly elevation … this Ultima Thule of virtue had been seized upon by our sage [Hopkins] as the *all*of religion. He knocked out every round of the ladder but the highest, and then, pointing to its hopeless splendour, said to the world, “Go up thither and be saved!”[[59]](#endnote-59)

Stowe indicates that the ladder envisaged here is inimical to female concerns when she shows the value of the Christian community. Although it is Mary who is emphatically linked to Monica, it is the “human affections” of the women who surround her that best reveal the character and function of the saint. Significantly, it is Candace, the most prominent black character of the novel, who first articulates a belief that James will return a Christian. Taking on the role of the “shining youth” who speaks to Monica in her dream (3.11.19), she speaks words of grace to her employer, James’s mother, and reassures her that the angels “has der hooks in sich [as James], and when de Lord wants him dey’ll haul him in safe and sound.”⁠[[60]](#endnote-60)  Stowe’s representation of how, along with Mary, both Candace and James’s mother reflect different aspects of Monica, is indicative of the way in which she reinstates the rungs of Plato’s ladder by a commitment to representing a salvic community that embodies grace in human relationships.

 Stowe began writing *Agnes of Sorrento* when she was on a holiday in Italy following her trip to Europe to secure copyright for *The Minister’s Wooing*. As in *The Minister’s Wooing*, a historical male clergyman (this time Savonorola) is shown to hold a faulty theology by a female lay character who is likened to Monica through the way in which she foregrounds the spiritual significance of romantic and familial love. The tropes of hagiography are used in describing this character, Agnes. Through the repeated comparisons between her and paintings of the Virgin Mary, Stowe demonstrates engagement with Jameson’s *Legends of the Madonna*. However, the early association between Agnes and Monica complicates any straightforward identification and foregrounds the Renaissance paintings of Monica as a powerful Christ-like figure that Jameson describes. After Agnes describes a vision she has of the cavalier she will eventually marry, her uncle Father Antonio – an artist/ monk and disciple of Fra Angelico – interprets it through the frame of Monica’s vision of Augustine sharing the same wooden rule. He tells her:

“It may be that the holy angel took on him in part this likeness to show how glorious a redeemed soul might become, that you might be encouraged to pray. The holy Saint

Monica thus saw the blessed Augustine standing clothed in white among the angels while he was yet a worldling and unbeliever, and thereby received the grace to continue her prayers for thirty years, till she saw him a holy bishop.”[[61]](#endnote-61)

Following this association between Agnes’s dream and Monica’s vision, Father Antonio then asks Agnes whether this is the first angel she has seen. As they discuss angelic visitations, he suggests that she “should see the pictures of our holy Father Angelico, to whom the angels appeared constantly.”[[62]](#endnote-62) Later in the novel, when Angelio and Agostino (the cavalier) meet Savonorola in Rome, they find him in “pensive contemplation before a picture of the Crucifixion by Fra Angelico.”[[63]](#endnote-63) Such paintings, we are told, “were painted by the simple artist on his knees, weeping and praying as he worked, and the sight of them was accepted by like simple-hearted Christians as a perpetual sacrament.”[[64]](#endnote-64) While Stowe stresses how Father Angelio takes on a dual role of artist who paints sacraments for the eye, and monk, who distributes the sacrament of the Eucharist, she points to Agnes’s concurrent role in revealing the sacramental and in embodying the presence of the divine to those around her.

 By having Agnes marry Agostino at the end of the novel, rather than entering the convent as both she and her uncle had initially intended, Stowe indicates her commitment to the marriage plot. It also consolidates Agnes’s association with Monica, who as a married woman affirms the spiritual value of “human affections” that, in *The Minister’s Wooing*, Stowe had argued form a rung on the “ladder to heaven.”[[65]](#endnote-65)

1. **Final reflections: Augustine’s unnamed partner**

In this final section, I want to consider the absence of Augustine’s unnamed partner in the reappraisal of Monica that Jameson, Rossetti, and Stowe offer and point to the way in which feminist theologies of embodiment that extend their ideas allow for her recuperation.[[66]](#endnote-66)

Augustine explains in the *Confessions* how, after he had had a son with his partner and had remained with her for fifteen years, Monica arranged a marriage for him with an heiress. Augustine agreed to – and wanted – this marriage even though it meant sending his beloved partner away. He describes his situation after she had left and while he began the two year wait for his fiancée to reach the age of marriage (which was 12) as part of his reflections on his own spiritual state:

Meanwhile my sins were being multiplied, and my concubine being torn from my side as a hindrance to my marriage, my heart which clave unto her was torn and wounded and bleeding. And she returned to Afric [sic], vowing unto Thee never to know any other man, leaving with me my son by her. (6.15.25)

For the most-part, twentieth and twenty-first century feminist readings of these words have attended to Augustine’s negative attitude towards women and sexual attachment. Børresen laments that “we know nothing of the fate of this woman who loved Augustine so much that she renounced any further relationships with men, and who, by leaving for Africa, was separated from her son.”[[67]](#endnote-67) While Augustine’s refusal to name his partner might be understood in terms of a concern to protect her identity, the fact that he ignores her anguish is outrageous to the modern reader. That Augustine was not a Christian at this point in the narrative has, I think, been forgotten by many who reflect on the episode through the popular assumption that religion – and consequently theology – is disempowering for female selfhood. After considering two twentieth-century fictional representations of Monica and of Augustine’s partner, I return to Jameson, Rossetti and Stowe in order that I might suggest how, despite the limitations in their treatment of Augustine’s partner, they nonetheless point forward to the holistic vision that is being worked out in current feminist and womanist theologies of embodiment.

Monica has – understandably – not been considered favourably in recent critical and creative work on her son’s partner. Jostein Gaarder’s 1996 novel, *Vita Brevis: A Letter to St Augustine*, consists of a letter to Augustine from the partner’s perspective. In this, she explains how it was Monica that stood between the love she and Augustine had for one another: “she placed herself between us, and it was she who finally won the duel, she certainly was a powerful woman, with great ambition for herself and her son.”[[68]](#endnote-68) In her 2007 poem, “To Aurelius Augustine from the Mother of his Son,” Ann Conrad Lammers offers another creative response as she gives voice to the pain of the unnamed partner. After reflecting on the spiritual ascent that Augustine and Monica shared as they gazed “into eternal space,” her speaker exclaims: “Since I am banished from that mystery / I will go elsewhere. You cannot unmake me by theology.”[[69]](#endnote-69) The assumption in both pieces is that one woman is left behind in order that another might succeed.

What I hope to have shown through my readings of the work of Jameson, Rossetti and Stowe is that all women can be remade “by theology” and that Plato’s ladder – and the hierarchal ladder that involves the narrative of upward mobility whereby a marginalized woman is left behind while another succeeds – can be re-imagined. The figure of Augustine’s partner is largely ignored by nineteenth-century women writers because they are working with a tradition from which she is absent (she does not appear in any of the iconography that Jameson discusses), and they are primarily concerned with expressing the empowering potential for female subjectivity in Christian tradition. However, their increasing insistence on the recovery of a feminine image of divinity, their articulation of how the transcendent is experienced through the body, and their emphasis on the spiritual value of romantic and familial love contributes to an incarnational theology – still in development today – which dismantles all hierarchies. Looking ahead, new imaginings of Monica in creative and critical work and imaginative recuperations of Augustine’s unnamed partner hold the potential to scope out the “new theology” that is so urgently needed.

1. Elizabeth A. Clark, “Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the ‘Linguistic Turn,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998), 414- 430 (416). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. *The Confessions of St Augustine Revised from a Former Translation*, trans. Edward Pusey (Oxford: John Henry Parker; London: J.G.F. & J. Rivington, 1843), 9.13.37. http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/Englishconfessions.html. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text including book, part, and section. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Gillian Clark, *Monica: An Ordinary Saint* (Oxford: Oxford UP,2015), 146. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. For an overview of how Monica has been interpreted in various ways from the twelfth to the twentieth century, see Clarissa W. Atkinson, “’Your Servant, My Mother’: The Figure of Saint Monica in the Ideology of Christian Motherhood,” in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female Image and Reality,* ed.Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, and Margaret R. Miles(Wellingborough: Crucible, 1987), 139-72; See also, Robin Lake Fox, *Augustine: Conversions and Confessions* (London: Penguin Random House, 2015), 362-63. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and*

*Economic Thought, 1795-1865.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 333. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid., 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography.* New Ed. (London: Faber, 2000), 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid., 157. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine on Women* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1995), 80. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Anne-Marie Bowery, “Monica: The Feminine Face of Christ,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine*, ed. Judith Stark (Pennsylvania State UP, 2007), 69-96 (77). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid. 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Janet Martin Soskice, “Monica's Tears: Augustine on Words and Speech,” *New Blackfriars*, 83 (2002), 448-458 (450, 457). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Rowan Williams, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer* (London: SPCK, 2014), 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay “On the Trinity”* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., 292-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., 293. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Clark, *Monica*, 169-170. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Rebecca Moore, “O Mother, where art thou?: in search of Saint Monnica,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine*, 147-166 (155). As womanist ethicist and theologian Delores S. Williams comments, the erasure of black women’s experiences from Christian theology and the perpetuation of the Anglo-American idea of “true womanhood” has been hugely damaging (Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll and New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 108)). For recent examples of portraits of Monica that correct her ethnicity see <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/black-saints-monica> and <https://www.themodernsaints.com/monica>. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1998), 6, 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. For more on how women writers embraced identification with a feminised Christ see Julie Melnyk, “‘Mighty Victims’: Women Writers and the Feminisation of Christ,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31.1 (2003), 131-157. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Mary McCartin Wearn, “Introduction,” in *Nineteenth-Century American Women Write Religion: Lived Theologies and Literature,* ed.Mary McCartin Wearn (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 1-15 (7, 13). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Anna Jameson. *Sacred and Legendary Art* [1848]*,* 2 vols(Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), i: 303. <https://archive.org/details/SacredAndLegendaryArtV2>. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Atkinson, “’Your Servant,” 144. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Jameson, *Sacred*, i: 309-10. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Atkinson, “Your Servant,” 159. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. M. L’Abbé Bougaud, *St. Monica*, in *Three Phrases of Christian Love,* trans. Mary Elizabeth Herbert (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1877), 1-25 (7). [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Jameson, *Sacred*, ii: 276. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Gail Turley Houston, *Victorian Women Writers, Radical Grandmothers, and the Gendering of God* (Ohio State UP, 2013), 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Anna Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* [1852] (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid., 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Bowery, “Monica,” 70. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Ibid., 78-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Linda Woodhead, “Forget culture. It’s a new theology we need.” *Church Times* (06 April

2018). <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/6-april/comment/opinion/iicsa-forget-culture-new-theology-we-need>. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Marylu Hill, “’Eat Me, Drink Me, Love Me’: Eucharist and the Erotic Body in Christina Rossetti's ‘Goblin Market’,” *Victorian Poetry,* 43.4 (2005), 455-472 (455). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid., 256. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Lynda Palazzo, *Christina Rossetti’s Feminist Theology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 25. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Ruether, *Women and Redemption*, 6 [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. *The Confessions,* xxxi. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Elizabeth Ludlow, *Christina Rossetti and the Bible: Waiting with the Saints* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 46. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Emma Mason, *Christina Rossetti: Poetry, Ecology, Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 58. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid, 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Edward Bouverie Pusey, *The Miracles of Prayer: A sermon preached before the university, in the Cathedral Church of Christ, in Oxford, on Septuagesima Sunday, 1866* (Oxford: Sold by J.H. and J. Parker, 1866), 6; for more on spelling Monnica’s name with two n*s* rather than one see Moore, “O Mother,” 149. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid, 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Christina Rossetti, *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (London: SPCK, 1885), January 13: 11-12. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid., August 28: 166-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Wearn, “Introduction,” 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. For more on Catherine Beecher’s writings on upholding the traditional feminine role see Ruether, *Women and Redemption,* 133. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing* [1859] Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1896), 248. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, edited and translated by R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), XXI.24; 1086. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Stowe, *Minister’s Wooing*, 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. In addition to *The Minister’s Wooing* and *Agnes of Sorrento*, Stowe alludes to Monica’s vision in *Oldtown Folks* (1869). [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Stowe, *Minister’s Wooing*, 103. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., 368. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Kristin Wilkes, “Repairing the Ladder to Heaven: Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *The Minister’s Wooing* as a Secular Novel,” *Christianity & Literature* 67.3 (2018), 436-453 (443). [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Stowe, *Minister’s Wooing*, 73. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid., 92. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Agnes of Sorrento* [1862] (Boston: James R. Osgood & co, 1880), 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid., 264. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. This section on Harriet Beecher Stowe has some overlap with the conference paper I gave at the 2018 Christian Literary Studies Group Conference. This paper appears in the conference proceedings as “Prayer and the role of the ‘Soul-Artist’ in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Historical Fiction,” *The Glass* 31.1 (2019), 44-50. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. For an account of critical readings of Augustine’s partner see Margaret R. Miles, “Not Nameness but Unnamed: The Woman Torn from Augustine’s Side,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine,* 167-188. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Kari Elisabeth Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Woman in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas; Text and Citations Translated from the Revised French Original by Charles H. Talbot* (Washington, D.C: University of America, 1981), 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Jostein Gaarder, *Vita Brevis: Floria Aemilia's Letter to Aurel Augustine,* trans. Anne Born (London: Orion 2010; e-book), Ch IV.  [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Ann Conrad Lammers “To Aurelius Augustine from the Mother of His Son,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine,* 301-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)