“I desire to know the power and nature of time, by-which we measure the movements of bodies.”¹ This sentence, with which I closed the preceding chapter and to which I will return, signals—as I observed in chapter 4—a shift within the time-investigation in _Confessions_ XI. Having rejected a specific identity of ‘times’ (tempora) with the celestial revolutions in XI.23.29, yet having also suggested a thesis in which _motus omnis_ constitutes ‘times’ (tempora), Augustine then sharpens his question: hereafter, his question of ‘time’ (tempus) is a question of that “by-which we measure the movements of [all] bodies” (XI.23.30). As Augustine specifies in XI.24.31,² it is _solely_ this ‘by-which’ of temporal mensuration that provides the most originary sense of his word ‘time’ (tempus), and this ‘by-which’ he comes to describe as a ‘dilation’ (distentio).

The preceding chapters sought to identify the speculative condition for the timelessness of the _caelum intellectuale_ in _Confessions_ XII, and in so doing, to clarify a sub-phenomenal condition for ‘time’ (i.e. dilation)—for beasts as for humans—in _Confessions_ XI. Augustine’s _natura intellectualis_ is timeless because it is fleshless; sensual _contuitus_ and the duplicity of _praesens_ that characterizes it are rather the condition of a _vita temporalis_. In short: ‘no sensation = no dilation = no time (tempus).’ But _sensus carnis_ (i.e. _anima-animus_ as _vita corporis_) is not the sole condition of time in the _Confessions_, as we will see after briefly reconstructing Augustine’s concept of “indeterminate matter” (_materia informis_) in _Confessions_ XII, which is also timeless. If the _haerere_ is Augustine’s intellectual condition for (dimensive) _time_—and thus, remotely, for the timelessness of the hyper-heavenly—what is his corporeal condition for (mutive) _times_?

Unlike the fleshlessness of the _caelum intellectuale_, which is never explicitly stated in _Confessions_ XII (and which thus required the analysis of subterranean links between books X and XII), Augustine repeatedly articulates (1) the absolute indeterminacy of his _materia informis_, and (11) the speculative conditions

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¹ Aug. _Conf._ XI.23.30: _ego scire cupio vim naturamque temporis, quo metimur corporum motus._

² Aug. _Conf._ XI.24.31: _cum itaque alius sit motus corporis, alius quo metimur quamdui sit, quis non sentiat quid _horum potius tempus dicendum sit_?
for this material’s timelessness (and thereby, obliquely, for ‘times’) in book XII. The most significant aspect of this condition can be stated, for the purposes of the present exposition, as ‘no motus omnis = no tempora.’ This formula captures the logical dependence of tempus upon motus that Alliez and Castoriadis deny in Confessions XI. Yet neither Alliez nor Castoriadis contests that this dependence is stated in Confessions XII, though only disjunctivists—such as Castoriadis—take this into consideration (see 2.3). Indeed, it is precisely the clarity of this condition in Confessions XII that provokes the question of a critical disjunction between Augustine’s time-statements in books XI and XII—a question to which the present work is, in part, devoted. Let us recall Castoriadis’ verdict:

Augustine contradicts himself openly and naively…. Time here [in Confessions XII] has ceased to be just the distentio animi [of book XI], the stretching of my mind; it is that in which the forms vertuntur, are changing into one another, and it is produced by this mutation of forms, strictly dependent on it.4

Pace Castoriadis, it is not ‘time’ but ‘times’ which are ‘produced by [a] mutation of forms’ in Confessions XII (as in XI.23.29); and pace Castoriadis, there is no ‘contradiction’ to be observed here.

But to begin: What is Augustine’s concept of the materia informis?

### 9.1 Informitas and Timelessness (Conf. XII.6)

In chapters 7 and 8, I sought to demonstrate that, and how—albeit tacitly—a similar remotive or reductive procedure on time that issues (as von Herrmann suggests) in Augustine’s conception of eternity in Confessions XI, also operates on sense-temporal presence and pleasure to issue in his conception of the caelum intellectuale in book XII. The difficulty of this hyper-heavenly is, as I have observed, that it is conceived as living but not as a life.

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3 Alliez (1996, 273 n. 148) dismisses the force of Augustine’s statements in Conf. XII for obscure, putatively methodological reasons.
