

Vulnerable minds and vulnerable bodies as the secret of strength in Gregory of Nyssa

This paper re-examines Gregory of Nyssa's treatment of grief in the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*. It has been argued on one hand that Gregory finds a morally positive space for grief among other emotions; on the other, that whilst Gregory depicts other passions such as desire as 'ascending'- being transformed into a morally positive equivalent – he excludes grief from this scheme. I argue that Gregory does indeed find a morally positive space for grief, allowing it to ascend like other passions. The apparently ambivalent place of grief in *On the Soul* is set in the context of humanity's physical vulnerability as characterised in *On the Making of Humankind*: there, our physical weakness enables us, counter-intuitively, to achieve more. Similarly, in *On the Soul*, our grief actually aids reason.