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# LIGHTING AND KNOWLEDGE AT SAINT AUGUSTINE

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(Received 14 April 2009, revised 22 August 2009)

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## Abstract

Saint Augustine's doctrine about knowledge may be called the doctrine of divine illumination of intelligences. The soul cannot reach truth without the mysterious influence of God, and God does not show Himself to us, He appears by producing in our souls some images of these truths, images which then determines what we call knowledge. The Lord speaks to the soul in the way that He prints inside it the representation of eternal truths, which are also the cause of our knowledge. The ideas are not innate, the ideas produce successively in the soul what I know in themselves. Therefore and by comparison, the theory of lighting is comparable with the influence of grace on will, and nobody doubts that grace manifests itself in an effective manner. The light that lights the soul is compared with the grace that justifies the soul. The possibility of illumination comes from the interiorization of Absolute and for this reason it is better to say that we are in God than that God is within us. This is the meaning of the Augustinian interiorization. Lighting does not need a mediator in order to function. What is in us deeper even than ourselves is God, and Saint Augustine's calling is that of offering thinking a maximum density. God cannot hate in us what He Himself has putted there, that is the power to know. How we know and how we believe are however processes wrapped in mystery. Truth is not a stranger to conscience and the internal experience turns into a metaphysic of the light.

*Keywords:* lighting, knowledge, soul, light

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## 1. *Noverim me, noverim te*

In *Soliloquies* (II, 1, 1) there is a well-known prayer of Augustine: *Deus semper idem, noverim me, noverim te. Oratum est* (God, You that are always the same, here I am, I would like to know myself and, alike, to know Thee. This is my prayer). Chapter 1, 7 of Book I is a preparatory invocation after which Augustine starts dealing with the topic he had in mind, that is to make an analysis of his own consciousness with the declared purpose of offering a rational foundation to Christianity. Augustine's dialog with reason goes like this: Augustine: *Ecce oravi Deum.*/ Reason: *Quid ergo scire vis?!* Augustine: *Haec*

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*ipsa omnia quae oravi*)/ Reason: *Breviter ea collige*./ Augustine: *Deum et animam scire cupido*./ Reason: *Nihilne plus?*./ Augustine: *Nihil omnio*. And Reason answers: *Ergo incipe quaerere*. (Augustine: Here is how I asked God./ Reason: So, what would you like to know?/ Augustine: All that I wanted to know./ Reason: List them shortly./ Augustine: I would like to know God and what soul is./ Reason: Nothing more?/ Augustine: Nothing else.)

And then he says that he loves *the soul* and not necessarily *the animated* ones. There is here a play on words that is allowed by Latin, because *animalis* (derived from *anima-ae*) meant initially everything that was animated, alive, only then referring just to animals. Augustine will make a difference between *anima* and *animus*, between soul and reason. He makes this distinction since he knows from the heathen philosophers that *anima sentit et animus cogitate* (the soul feels, the thought thinks). Augustine seeks for the solution of one problem only: knowing the truth about God and human soul. The way towards truth is not an external one, it is inner. In *De Vera Religione* (39, 72) he will say that it is not outside ourselves that we shall wander: *Noli foras ire; in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas; et si tuam naturam mutabilem inveneris, transcede et teipsum* (Do not waste yourself outside. Go back to yourself. The truth can be found in the inner man and, if you find out that your nature is changeable, go beyond thyself).

*Mihi quaestio factus sum* states in *Confessions*, ‘to self I became a problem’. Where does Augustine initiate from? From the transformation of reason into something objective and so the controversy with reason must end with the knowledge of God and the soul. And this because it is impossible for a spirit that knows how to be rational and which, in the end, reasons indeed, not to be able to get to know the truth in the end (*quo enim pervenit omnis bonus ratiocinator, nisi ad veritatem*). The soul is the place where God expresses Himself in a human being; I want to get to know the soul because only the soul can contemplate God. This implies the belief that God is not just another object among others, God is our own *a priori*. *Quaestio de Deo, quaestio de anima*, here is everything! Only God is better than soul. The soul is known before the body, without the body and better than the body.

The idea of God is the highest point of Augustine’s doctrine, and the knowledge of soul is the path that leads to the knowledge of God; one could say that Augustine is building his theodicy on psychology. The spirituality of soul is one of the theories upon which Augustine had no doubt and strongly argues the essential separation between soul and the material world. The nature of the soul’s union with the body remains for Augustine a mystery. The soul is simple, not complex, while man appears to Augustine like a complex nature, where substance and spirit unite without mixing. Therefore, there are two kinds of life inside the soul; one that the soul communicates to the body and another one through which it lives itself. The soul is the life of the body, God is the life of the soul and tears are the blood of our soul. Saint Augustine will reject the Platonic and Origenist Dichotomism, according to which the body is a prison for the soul, and will even admit that there is in the soul a natural inclination

towards living inside a body. The united soul with the body is the spiritual soul, the only one recognized by Augustine. *De Duabus Animabus* firmly rejects the theory of the two souls in the sense given by the Manichaeans: a good soul, spread by God and a wicked one, derived from the dark. *Spiritus* is a unique reality, one which thinks, unlike *anima* which animates *corpus*. The spiritual soul belongs to the inner man, the body represents only the exterior man. With this soul, the body itself exists: *per animam ergo corpus subsistit, et ea ipso est, quo animatur*. The soul-body report goes like this: *Et cum corpus et anima sit unus homo, quamvis corpus et anima non sint unum* (through the spiritual soul the body subsists, and the spiritual soul animates it; and as the body and the soul are one and the same man, the body and the soul are not one and the same). This formula [*Epistle to Pascentius*, 2, 12] may seem excessive, but its purpose is to exclude a mixture that would annihilate the perfect spirituality of the body.

It is understood that this union of two entities that are so different has always seemed to Augustine an unfathomable mystery. But then, the residence of the soul is not a special part of the body, like the head or the heart, but the whole body itself and this fact is a consequence of the invisible simplicity of the soul. Soul is not essentially simple, but it is so only in relation to the body, because simple in itself can be called only that nature that is said to possess everything that is itself or which cannot lose anything from itself because everything it has is itself. But this can be said only about God. The soul itself, subject *only* from this perspective to change, has in itself the difference from subject and predicate, from substance and property [*De Trinitate*, VI, 6, 8: *Quomodo simplex et multiplex sit substantia Dei*; *De Civitate Dei*, XI, 10: *Deus unus est et trinus, cuius natura simplex est et immutabilis*].

We can distinguish strictly in Augustine, in the soul, a *pars inferior* (soul is for the body the principle of vegetative and sensitive life) and a *pars superior* (the rational soul, the fact that the body submits to a rational power which commands him, and here we have memory, intelligence and will). And so the spirit (spiritual soul, *pars superior*) is related to the body as thought relates to action. The soul (*pars inferior*) is in the body the principle of the functions which determine life; spirit is soul when considered intelligence, case in which it shows itself master of the soul and it is the image of God inside man [*De Civitate Dei*, XII, 21]. Freedom belongs to the soul only and even when the human being takes advantage its advantage, it still remains a privilege so that even the most corrupted soul must be considered with much superior to the most beautiful body [*De Libero Arbitrio*, III, 15; *De Vera Religione*, 22] [1].

Briefly, the rational soul (spiritual) is the one by which God manifests Himself in humans. The rational soul is better than the body, but even this one is far better than nothing. The fact of personal existence is for Augustine inseparable from the fact of thinking. Moreover, he admits the existence of soul and the outside world not just because he proves it, but because he observes it. Created by God, the soul tends to God as to its purpose and it is during this process that Augustine finds the seven distinct moments that he mentions in *De quantitate Animae*, XXXIII, 70-76.

Augustine never ceases to state that the soul, in the knowledge of itself, learns the principle of knowing God: *noverim me, noverim te!* This is about a *unitive* knowledge towards which the soul aspires: *experimentalis Dei notitia* (testing conscience with and of God).

## 2. Intellectual knowledge

Love cannot light itself up for imaginary things and the truth checked up by the affective elements is safer. Faith started out of love and sustained by it is more veracious than the ‘truth’ sustained by logic only. To this is added also the mystical element which transforms intuition into lighting.

Intellectual knowledge (or the way in which the intellect gets to know the truth) is a mystery. The problem is important not only for its difficulty, but especially for the part that this theory has in Augustine’s system. It is not an isolated problem, but a matter of greater issues that concerns our dependence upon God. For Augustine, wit needs *the light of God* in order to get to the truth.

It is about explaining the origin of intellectual ideas separated from the inferior knowledge obtained by means of senses. The last ones represent Science; we are interested in wisdom, says Augustine. Between *sapientia* and *scientia* only the antithesis is allowed in Augustine, since the two terms are vague. In *De Trinitate*, for example, ‘curiosity’ leads to *scientia* and the term acquires this way a pejorative value. Via counterweight, in *Confessions*, *scientia* is valued positively, while ‘curiosity’ remains just a pseudo-science. One could upbraid Augustine for not being able to create a technical language (like the ones from Aristotle, Saint Thomas, Kant); there is no strict Augustinian terminology. *Scientia* opposes to *fides*, as *scire* (or *intellegere*) opposes to *credere*. *Scientia* is the certainty which is not introduced through authority (*auctoritas*), like *fides*. But careful, *scientia* is not the result of the empirical knowledge; it is rational knowledge, certainty founded exclusively on ration. *Scientia* is from empirical knowledge as soul is from body or rational spirit from soul. *Sapientia* takes over *scientia* and it adds the love: *intelligimus sapientiam in cognitione et dilectione eius quod semper est [...] quod est Deus* (we conceive wisdom as being knowledge and love of what is eternal [...] what it is God). *Sapientia* is the contemplation of truth. Here is a significant place: “All those that the Word made body suffered for us in time and space belong – according to the distinction given to us, already demonstrated – to Science (*scientia*), not to wisdom (*sapientia*). But that namely the Word is timeless and without space, is co-eternal with the Father and undivided everywhere, if it may, and it most certainly may, utter about this a real statement, that statement will belong to wisdom (*sapientia*) [...]. Therefore, our science is Christ and our wisdom is the same Christ. He plants our belief about fleeting things and He also shows the truth about the immortal ones. Through Him we wander to Him, we aspire through science to wisdom, but we do not deviate from the One and Same Christ” [*De Trinitate*, XIII, 19, 24]. Ergo: *scientia* is concerned with the external world, the action. *Sapientia* has as objective the contemplation of God.

Augustine wants to justify the fact that human intelligence is the individual force which always perceives the absolute, while human intelligence it is characterized first of all by individuality. Each has its own senses [*De Libero Arbitrio*, II, 7, 15] [2]. Evodius is asked: “but, in terms of reason, don’t any of us possess his own? Because I can understand what you cannot, and you cannot know if I understand, but I know. Now tell me, is there something that any subject who rationalizes can see *communiter* through the soul and through individual reason?” Evodius answers that something like this is mathematical theories and Augustine infers: “the essence (and truth) of numbers continues motionless and complete; it can be looked at *communiter* by all those who rationalize”. What comes next is the fact that intelligence is individual, however there is no wisdom for each but one for all and that, as far as the human being participates, gives itself. *Sapientia* is the truth in which we feel and seize the Supreme Good. Absolute truth, which each has in its own reason, is common to all.

All this reasoning leads to *the issue of innateness*, issue which appears in *Contra Academicos* (III, 14, 31) and in *Soliloquies* (II, 20, 35). In *Contra Academicos* Augustine tells us: “if you ask me from where wisdom learns the wit, I will answer: in itself” (*Si quaeres ubi inveniat ipsam sapientiam, respondebo: in semetipsis*). *De Quantitate Animae* proves that soul does not increase and that all the speculative knowledge are the obscure or clear vision of innate knowledge (XV, 25-26; XVI, 27-28; XVII, 29-30; XIX, 33), and God, without the mediation of any reality, manages inside the souls of men. Such a unity cannot come from senses. Music is not the one that makes harmony; the harmony of the body is not entirely in the statue, no matter how perfect the statue is; we can however find it in certain degrees, since it is transmitted from the divine wisdom of the artist’s hands and works itself through the hands of the artist.

Innateness is followed by reminiscence and, influenced by Plato, Augustine writes in *Soliloquies* (II, 20, 35) about the ones stroked down by forgetting that are brought to light by teaching: *Tales sunt qui bene disciplinis liberalibus eruditi; siquidem illas sine dubio in se oblivione obrutas eruunt discendo, et quodammodo refodiunt* [*De Quantitate Animae* (V, 7-9)] resumes the statement: to learn means to remind yourself and to make what you forgot relive. This is however an abuse which Augustine re-examines in *Withdrawals*. In a too Platonically manner, in the first two works, Augustine shades now: let’s not imagine that the ignorant ones had from the very beginning knowledge and then they just forgot it! Here is where Plato’s drawback is. The explanation that the ignorant ones, well interrogated, are able to answer correctly sometimes, is a natural one: in the light of eternal rationality, they can ‘see’ the immutable truths.

Saint Augustine insists upon this also in *De Trinitate* precisely because the transmigration of souls is in stake, a theory which the bishop of Hippo does not accept. The ignorant ones can prove a certain spontaneous science, but this does not prove that they had assumed it in a past life. Why? The world is, even without knowing it, a perfect geometer, which however does not entitle us to assume that in a previous existence we all learned geometry! The reason is another: because God is everywhere and because the soul is alive and is inside God, the soul can remember itself. How? Throughout what Augustine calls *memory*. It is a subject upon which Augustine insists without being exhausted, especially in *Confessions* (book X).

In *De Trinitate* (IX-X) Augustine speaks about the impossibility of not being able to know. How does he justify it? Beginning with happiness: we want happiness and we have a vague idea about it; we want happiness and, before having it, we already possess it, because if we did not have in our soul the shortened impression of any happiness, we would also not have the desire to know it. *Ita cum aliud sit non se nosse, aliud non se cogitare* [*De Trinitate*, X, 5, 7] [3]. By necessity of its nature, the soul is not without self-memory and neither without self-love. But, adds Augustine, the soul may exist even without possessing any science, since *to be* does not identify with *to know*. For the soul the fact that it lives is essential, that it knows it lives, but it has no need inside to think about his life. Augustine makes himself clear when he says that the soul reaches itself and gets to know itself if it is memory to itself. That is, the soul, felt itself through thinking, understands itself and recognizes itself as being itself. It knows itself the way things inside memory are known and to which we do not think about anymore.

In other words, the teleological issue of the value of knowledge is essential for Augustine, while the genetic issue of the source of ideas comes secondly. The problem of the possibility of knowing ourselves can only be solved by a return to the immediate data of consciousness; the genetic issue is subsequent. The Augustinian context includes therefore *sensitive knowledge*, *scientia* and *sapientia*.

*Sensitive knowledge* does not associate with anything innate. The perceived object acts upon the organ of sense and, in the same instant, his action also ceases; but this action is nothing else than the previous condition of the act of feeling. This act is entirely an operation of the soul, an acquaintance which the soul receives from the pressure beard by the body. Since the inferior cannot act against what is superior, it is unacceptable for the body to produce anything inside the soul, so that the organic state cannot be considered the efficient cause of a state of knowledge. Sensation is a function exercised by the soul in the body for the benefit of the soul, without this sensation to be thinking. Augustine concludes: *feras non habere scientiam*. And, right away, we go to: what is the difference between science and sense - *Scientia et sensus quid differant*. And then, how could sensation (*sensus*) distinguish inside man from *scientia* since

*sensus* would already be an act of thinking? *Scientia* is the knowledge of sensitive things, but a knowledge superior to sensation. Therefore, the soul, being superior to the body, cannot be impressed by things from outside itself; the body, on the other hand, is.

We call *science* any knowledge of reason; there is the rational knowledge of temporal things, while *sapientia* is the intellectual knowledge of eternal things. Wisdom is the superior reason and its purpose is contemplation; science is the inferior reason and it ends with action. This way science implies a reliable relationship between wisdom and bodily things and it is precisely upon the nature of this relationship that Augustine insists. So: the science of a bodily object is not an act of reason; this determination is not produced in the soul by a bodily activity, but is the result of a spontaneous attitude of the soul. Science or rational knowledge of bodily things is an operation through which intelligence distinguishes and appreciates for action the bodily realities that are presented to it in and through sensations. Intelligence uses this judgement while forming ideas which it attributes to things, since it observes in things the material achievement of these ideas. But things are changeable, so that to know means to include in thinking an object that does not change: God.

To the effort of intelligence of searching God, Augustine adds the love, and so contemplation becomes a work of art of intelligence and love. We can distinguish, in the hierarchy of wisdom, the *ascetic wisdom* (starting point of spiritual progress), the *apostolic wisdom* (transmitter of those received from God) and the *contemplative wisdom*, the one which attaches to the divine science the speculative science. Man incorporates in the contemplative wisdom the supernatural realities communicated to him by God, and contemplation is the most elevated form of wisdom; it would consist, for Augustine, in 'colloquiums' with God and it is easy to observe the distance that Augustine puts between the manner that the Christian has in order to be contemplative and the contemplation of the Neo-Platonists. It is noteworthy that Augustine, when speaking like a Christian, points out that man is the unity soul-body, and when he starts to get philosophical, he ends up again using Platonism. In order to get to know, Augustine follows the path that goes from the *outside inwards* and from here to the *superior* and what is true is the constant way (*vere esse est enim semper eodem modo esse*).

### **3. Thinking and language**

Saint Augustine establishes a report between thought and language starting with the fact that, as a whole, knowledge is spread through language-word. *De Magistro* declares that thinking is different from language and from all the other signs through which it manifests itself. Adeodatus says: *Tu autem*

*quaeris eas quae, quodlibet sint, uerba certe non sunt, quam tamen ex me tu quoque uerbis quaeris. Prior itaque tu sine uerbis, ut ego deinde ista conditione respondam.* (You however ask for those things that, no matter what they are, they are definitely not words. First of all, you should ask without words, so that I can then answer you in the same way.) [*De Magistro*, 3, 5]. For Augustine, the world includes ‘signs and things’ (*signa et res*), but a *thing* becomes *sign* only to the extent that it signifies. *De Dialectica* defines sign: *Signum est et quod seipsum sensui, et praeter se aliquid animo ostendit* (Sign is what shows itself to senses and, besides itself, it also indicates something else to the spirit.) [*De Dialectica*, V, 7]. We cannot perceive thinking without language. All the words of language are signs, any clear perception belongs to a determination of thinking as any determination is identified to a sign. On the other hand, the sign is not comprehensible unless we already have a convenient knowledge of the significant thing: *Cum enim mihi signum datur, si nescientem me inuenit cuius rei signum sit, docere me nihil potest: si uero scientem, quid disco per signum?* (For when we are given a sign, if I did not know anything about the thing that it represents, it would not be possible for it to teach me anything about itself; and if I already know it, what could I possibly find out through the sign?) [*De Magistro*, 10, 33] [3, p. 287] This when it is about intellectual knowledge; but if this is about possessing a sensible notion, experience is required, finding the facts.

*De Catechizandis Rudibus* shows that understanding lights up the soul, language is slow and different from the intellectual so that, while language is performed, the agreement has already passed and leaves traces in memory. Tracks last for as long as language (word) does and according to these tracks we built the articulated signs, i.e. the expression of a language: Latin, Greek, Hebrew and so on. But, in themselves, these signs are neither Latin, nor Greek nor of any other language. Language is for thinking what sensation is for reflection.

There is in us a confused knowledge, infinite and superior to any language, one that preserves the meaning unadulterated. Signs never drain the background of things. The idea of *verbum cordis* is meant to prevent the error of considering signs for themselves and inside themselves. It is clear that understanding a text means going beyond its letter and that no language can take over a sense. Giving as an example the word *beatitudo*, Augustine writes: *Audimus nomen hoc, et rem ipsam omnes appetere fatemur; non enim sono delectamur [...]. Nota est igitur omnibus, qui una voce si interrogari possent, utrum beati esse uellent, sine ulla dubitatione, uelle responderent* (We hear this name and we all admit wanting the thing in itself; because we are not happy only with its sound [...] It is, thus, known by everyone, that if people could be asked in the same language if they would like to be happy, they would immediately answer yes.) [*Confesiuni*, X, 20, 29], but the designated thing is neither Greek, nor Latin and so on. Same happens with the truth which, *intus in domicilio cogitationis, nec hebraea, nec graeca, nec latina, nec barbara ueritas*



[*Confesiuni*, IX, 3, 5], is the same for everybody and is consumed irrespective of language [4].

The deepest place where Augustine deals with this topic we find it in *De Trinitate* (XIV, 7, 10). The bishop studies our intelligence in order to trace in it marks from the Trinity and gives to this fact, which is fundamentally for thinking, the name of *verb*. The verb, says Augustine, cannot exist in our intelligence without being thought of (*sed quia ibi verbum esse sine cogitationes non potest*), since we think everything we say, including what we say about this inner verb that does not belong particularly, as seen, to any language. The verb signifies our already discernible thinking, but previous and superior to language. Meaning is thus stated: thought is the verb that we pronounce inside ourselves and it is neither Greek nor Latin and so on. When we are forced to introduce it to those to whom we speak, we adopt a sign to turn it into a manifest; otherwise, it will remain *verba cogitare* (thought, without being expressed with sound).

Words, gestures, attitudes, mimic are also signs. In order to reach at expressing the verb, the inside language must be 'exceeded'; however, any language is a determined one, while the inner verb precedes all signs. And then, it is noteworthy that Augustine calls 'verb' all those notions that language has not yet determined; 'verb' is also the undetermined term of the sensible thing, of the pure intelligibility also, while the verb, does not Augustine cease to repeat, does not belong to any language (*intimum verbum quod nullius linguae est*). What is important is the fact that the unity of verb leads to the unity of speculative thinking, for God is not an intelligible multiple. Speculative knowledge is a fundamental unit since man perceives the intelligible, unique in itself. Augustine calls scholars or philosophers those who are capable of grasping scattered theories in sciences and bringing them to a simple unity (*De Ordine*, II, 3, 10; 4, 11; 4, 12; 4, 13; 7, 20; 7, 23). In philosophy, the philosopher does not find more than the unity!

Another report that is established is the one between speech and learning. How do we learn? The act of learning is the result of our own energy, but only God is able to put our energy in motion. The pupil-master report appears in two works written during the same period: *De Musica* and *De Magistro*. *De Magistro* (especially chapters 10, 11, 12) is written particularly for explaining the act of teaching and *Confessions* (XI, 8, 10) say that the teacher is the unaltered truth. Truth warns at the exterior and instructs the interior (*foris admonet, intus docet*). A 'way' of learning should look like this: *magister-docere-veritas-loquendo-vita beata*. In other words: who is the one (*magister*) who can teach (*docere*) people the truth (*veritas*) with speech (*loquendo*) in order to have the access to the happy life (*vita beata*)? The answer is a neo testamentary one: *Unus est magister vester Christus* (Mathew 23. 8, 10). Since language is insufficient and unsatisfactory, silence is suggested as alternative and two Augustinian sermons deals with the problem ('Praise to the Peace' and 'About Silence'). Augustine

examines more than just the possibilities of language, its inabilities. Everything lies in finding the correspondence between thought and the power of the word to represent thought, and Augustine is convinced that in most cases the word outdistances the thought. That is why we need lighting.

#### 4. The lighting

In order to discern the truth, intelligence needs the light of God and our dependence upon Him is here complete. The main formulas of Augustine in this matter are:

- God is the sun of the soul and the distinct truths are emphasized by His light;
- God is the only teacher, the only inner master of the soul;
- God is the light of the soul and in this light we see everything; the soul is the eye, God the light;
- the soul has because of its nature an intimate relationship with the distinct light.

From all these, it results Augustine's doctrine on the divine lighting of the intelligent. Soul cannot reach truth without a mysterious influence from God, and God does not show Himself to us (*objective*), but by generating (*effective*) inside our soul some images of these truths, images which cause the knowledge of us. In scholastic language, it is about the part assigned by the peripatetics to the factor called *intellectus agens*, which produces in us *species impressae*. The teacher speaks to the soul, in the sense that he prints in it the representation of eternal truths, which are also the cause of our knowledge. The ideas are not innate; the ideas produce successively in the soul what I know in themselves. Therefore, *lux sui generis* is not God Himself, but is produced by God, and the theory of lighting is comparable with the influence of grace on will, and no one doubts that grace manifests itself in an effective manner. The light that lights the soul is compared with the grace that justifies the soul. They are both forms created inside the soul [*De Trinitate*, XII, 15, 24] [5].

The possibility of illumination comes then from the interiorization of Absolute. Saint Augustine does not accept the innate ideas or the anamnesis, because they used to imply the pre-existence of soul, theory rejected by the bishop. And then, the anamnesis can be fought against with arguments related to common sense. Plato states in *Menon* (82b) that we know geometry since we remember it. Agreed, says Augustine, and then why are there so few geometricians? Truths do not appear in spirit as innate, nor are they created by it, by the spirit. Certainly, in Augustine the spirit lacks the productivity, but that does not mean that it also lacks the activity. However, truth is not a stranger to conscience, as a matter of fact it animates it. Inner experience becomes a metaphysic of the light.

It is better to say that we are in God than that God is within us. This is the sense of Augustinian interiority, and the soul passes through itself only to surpass itself. This is the activity of the soul and the divine essence in which the conscience is in makes this very activity possible. Lighting does not need a mediator (an intellect-agent) in order to function. Such an intellect-agent would also work, from the outside of thinking, on thinking. However, lighting exercises itself on thinking *directly*. It is foreign to Platonistic reminiscence and Aristotelian abstraction, that means to the *abstraction* of intelligible from sensitive. If we must distinguish between these two, we see that Aristotle gives account of *concept*, Augustine of *truth*. *Immediate* is in stake for the bishop, *mediate* for the Stagirite, the *lighting of thinking* through God for Augustine, *lighting the object* through a type of thinking that God illuminates, in Aristotle. What is in us deeper even than ourselves is God, and Augustine's calling, from a philosophical perspective, is that of offering thinking a maximum density.

In summary, one can say that Aristotle spoke the language of Science and understood that not all knowledge comes from the world of Ideas. Plato spoke the language of wisdom and confirmed the Ideas. Saint Augustine knew how to speak both languages. He was able to do this also because of the theory of lighting the intellect by the Ideas of God.

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