

**NATURAL MINDS AND DIVINE TRUTH: RETHINKING THE  
AUGUSTINIAN<sup>1</sup> IDEA OF NECESSARY TRUTH**

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**Abstract**

*St Augustine of Hippo and the other fellow Augustinians, such as St Bonaventure, argued that the human mind lacks the cognitive capacity to attain the necessary, certain, and the immutable truth. This necessary, certain, and the immutable truth, they argued, can only come through divine illumination whose source is God. For this reason, many people have recourse to religious places in search of this immutable and necessary truth about nature and human beings. This paper argued that discourse about truths reduces to discourse about language truth. If it is true that language and meaning are natural and originate from human cognitive faculty, then statements about the idea of divine truth, divine illumination, necessity, and even every statement that purports to express or implies the existence of God, are all, as a matter of necessity, natural issues and are going to be product of man's cognitive powers. No truth of these statements can therefore be beyond the natural. The paper then concluded that, seriously speaking, presumptuously what the Augustinians are looking for might be termed human idols which are invariably inherent in human cognitive faculty.*

**Introduction**

St Augustine and the other proponents of his theory established that though man could be said to exist necessarily, that is, as thinking and doubting thing, everything about man is mutable and changeable. But, for Augustine, necessary truth could not be contained in the knowledge gained from the flux of experience. For this reason, human mind cannot attain the immutable, unchangeable, and necessary truth which underlines reality. Therefore, this immutable and necessary truth can only come from God through the medium of divine illumination. Hence, anybody in

search of the intelligible and unchangeable truth must be rightly positioned to have his mind divinely illuminated. In other words, certainty, reality and necessary truth can only come through divine illumination.

This question raised by Augustine and his proponents would lead us to a research into the origin of human language. It will make us ask a fundamental question that; is human language learned or given from above, natural or divine? In view of this question, we shall also examine the issue whether the meanings of our words and expressions are divinely fixed or human made. From the answers we get, we might be able to raise sufficient arguments to make our position. It is our hope that the consequences to the answers to these vital questions will give us a clue to the problem.

### **St. Augustine of Hippo**

Augustine could be classified among the early stage philosophers of medieval philosophy. His philosophy was immensely influenced by Platonic<sup>2</sup> and Neo-Platonic as well as the Judeo-Christian principles. He discovered that Platonism and Christianity have much in common and he then harmonized his belief in God with his understanding of Platonic theory in order to find a solution to his quests. One of the major questions of his philosophy is about the nature of and the justification for what we hold to be our knowledge claims. Particularly, he was interested in finding out about the knowledge of the intelligible truth and reality. He chose to find explanation for his quest in Christian theology. In position of Plato's form of the Good, Augustine substitutes God whose existence, he thought, is necessary. For him, since the existence of God is necessary, the whole of existence could be explained, using that necessary existence as a strong foundation. His division of the mode of acquiring knowledge into Sensation and Intellection is Platonic.

The main difference is that intellect, for Augustine, does not contemplate the forms but participates in or is enlightened by the divine light. Sensation for him only provides changing, temporal and contingent knowledge. This kind of knowledge does not contain the self evident truth and certainty, the type he was searching for. The reason is that the self evident truth cannot contain in the changeable phenomena of sensation. In search of this immutable truth, Augustine resorted to the exploration of his inward part, using the intellect to search for the intelligible truth. His idea of exploration into the inward part of self through the intellect is Platonic<sup>3</sup>. *The intellect* therefore, is a certain

power of the mind by which man can attain the unchanging judgment of the truth and certainty. This is because, “that the human mind can attain certainty was for him a fact beyond any reasonable doubt”<sup>4</sup>

Augustine methodologically established the necessity of the existence of human beings against the argument of the skeptics. He argued that he could doubt all the knowledge from the senses he previously held as true. He doubted sensual knowledge because they could not give him the self evident truth and certainty. He then argued that if he doubts, there is something which remains evidently certain which cannot be doubted. That is the thing which doubts, seeks happiness, knows, thinks, etc. That which doubts and seeks must exist necessarily and certainly. Then, man exists as the doubting, knowing, thinking, seeking thing<sup>5</sup>.

It is worth mentioning here that, according to Augustine, doubting, knowing, etc of things is not identical with the mind. This is because he argues that human mind is also mutable, perhaps because the mind changes with the flux of experience. It will then follow that the thinking, doubting, and seeking thing is different from the mind. This argument may be seen as problematic in the sense that it might be difficult to conjecture of thinking, doubting, seeking thing apart from the mind, (not minding the controversy on the existence of the mind or the soul). If the thinking thing exists necessarily, that means it is not mutable, but the mind is mutable. That further means that mind does not exist necessarily. From the fore-going, it strongly follows that the thinking thing is radically different from the mind. But it must also be noted that all the activities of the thinking thing are identified with the mind. It is the mind that is believed to think, doubt, seek, etc. If this is so, it means that the mind is identical with the thinking thing. This argument raises an issue of whether the mind is different from the thinking thing. This might require an independent research work.

Then two possibilities arise here. (1) It is either the mind exists necessarily as the thinking, doubting and seeking thing or (2) the thinking thing identified with the mind is also mutable and does not exist necessarily. Augustine may not favour any of the possibilities above. The third option which Augustine might be prepared to accept is to hold that the mind is radically different from that thinking thing. But, there seems to be a difficulty in justifying this position. This is because entities may be multiplied unnecessarily and we must always be conscious of the

Ockham's razor. Nevertheless, the Augustinians may wish to provide a stronger proof for that position.

However, the main concern of Augustine is "in our apprehension of necessary and immutable truths..."<sup>6</sup>. This is because "When I was in Italy, I often held converse with myself, as to the method by which truth is to be discovered. How I sighed for the truth, no one knows better than myself..."<sup>7</sup> He was concerned about the immutability and the necessity of some propositions such as mathematical and geometrical propositions, the truths of which are neither created nor alterable by human minds. Propositions such as,  $2+2=4$ , or the sum of the three angles of a triangle equals  $180^\circ$ , are seen as immutable. These kinds of truths are discovered and regulate human mind and are therefore described as analytic. This is because they cannot be thought otherwise without getting into a contradiction.

Having argued that human mind is mutable, some questions arise. These questions are: what is the implication of the independence of these truths as regard to human mind? How is it that the human mind, which is itself mutable and fallible, can attain certainty this way?<sup>8</sup> To the first question, Augustine argues that the independence of these necessary and the immutable truths depends on the eternal ground and the foundation of all truths, which is God. In other words, what can be categorized as certain and immutable self evident truths lies in the divine realm. The answer to the second question follows. That is, the fallible and mutable mind is enabled to attain absolute certainty by means of what is referred to as 'Divine Illumination'<sup>9</sup>.

This divine power of illumination is identified with light which empowers the mind to apprehend the necessity and immutability in a certain judgment. Besides, the divine power of illumination also enables the mind to make judgments about things in their relation to the eternal ideas or standards. If the certain and necessary truth of the entire object and phenomenal in the physical world can only be known via divine illumination, then it becomes consistent that the knowledge of the truth, science and the empirical world has its explanation in the divine realm. It also follows that human mind can not know anything independent of the light of the divine illumination, "since no creature howsoever rational and intellectual, is lighted of itself, but is lighted by participation of eternal truth"<sup>10</sup>.

If the knowledge of the necessary and intelligible truth based on the idea of divine illumination is predicated on the belief in the existence of God, then it becomes doubtful if the atheist could have access to such

kind of truth and necessary knowledge. But this light is given to every man, irrespective of his spiritual and moral condition<sup>11</sup>. This means that everybody is necessarily lighted either one believes in God or not. But again Augustine gives conditions for participating in and attaining such necessary truth and certain knowledge. Such conditions include living piously, chastely and diligently including prayer and good life. This comes back to the issue. It becomes doubtful if the atheist could attain this kind of knowledge if one looks at it from Augustine's point of view. If, however, the atheist could not attain this kind of knowledge, then it means that the theory is a relative one. But if God truly exists, his existence would not be a relative one and neither would he be contented with dealing with only those who fulfill the conditions above, since he is said to create all and he is not a God for a particular sect. Therefore, Augustine's theory needs a reformulation here with a view to taking care of those who do not believe in the existence of God. This is because it cannot be argued that those who do not believe in God could not attain the knowledge of an immutable and necessary truth. But, from another point of view different from Augustine's, it makes sense to argue that the atheist could fulfill those conditions. This is because it is possible to fulfill all the conditions above without believing in God. Whether Augustine would accept this position is another issue.

Augustine's aim is to find out what makes the intelligible truth possible. For him, an intelligible truth can neither be found in the changeable objects of nature nor in the mutable minds of man. Such truth is not the sort, which is found in the flux of nature; it is eternal and unchangeable. He then argues that each natural object participates in the pure eternal truth. In other words, this eternal truth is the universal and each natural object copies from or participates in it. For him, it is impossible for the mutable minds of man to understand or correctly perceive the pure truth unaided; therefore, there must be a cause which enables human minds to simultaneously perceive the truth. "This cause is God"<sup>12</sup>. He compares the way God works to the way the sensible Sun makes corporeal things visible to the eye, "so God's intelligible light renders the truths of science and wisdom manifest to the minds of men"<sup>13</sup>.

Now, the influence of Plato and Neo-Platonism is clearly evident in the brief explanation of the work of Augustine. To make it clearer, Patrick Aspell wrote,

Augustine appeared to be following Plato in using the Platonic approach to truth, namely, immutability a clear

sign of truth, and illumination as an account of the norm. He combined the Platonic idea of illumination with the Christian belief in the light which enlightens 'every man who comes into the world'<sup>14</sup>.

This theory of 'divine illumination' forms the basis of all of Augustine's epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. Through his theory of divine illumination, however, many other great thinkers such as St Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Don Scotus John were greatly influenced. The next section shall be based on Bonaventure's attempt to use Augustinian position to argue against the Aristotelian philosophers.

### **Giovanni Di Fidenza; St Bonaventure, 'Philosopher of the Exemplar'**

St. Bonaventure was introduced and immersed into the theory of Augustine by the duo of Alexandra of Hales and John of la Rochelle during his theological studies at the University of Paris. The influences of Plato, Neo-Platonism and Augustine are clearly evident in the philosophy of St Bonaventure. He started his theory by rejecting the Aristotelian theory, as interpreted by the Averroists and other lovers of Aristotle's theory, that reason alone can be used to explain and justify all the existence and our knowledge of them. As Augustine, he also identifies two sources of knowledge; reason and faith. Reason, he argues, will only succeed in providing the explanation of all things in the world according to their nature alone. But his argument, pace Augustine, is that there is limit to what reason can understand and then explain, since reason is the object of the mind and the mind is mutable and fallible. Then, for Bonaventure, the knowledge which reason can provide will also be changeable, fallible and mutable. But, it is apparently clear that the kind of knowledge which they are searching for is not the mutable, changeable or fallible one<sup>15</sup>. Since this kind of knowledge cannot be achieved from reason, an off-shoot of the mind, then it follows that man has to look for the other source for that kind of knowledge they are seeking. This other source of knowledge is identified with the belief in the power of the divine. Then, his main task is to harmonize reason and faith, Philosophy and Theology.

It must be stated that St. Bonaventure was also a theologian with his firm belief in the existence of God, with all its attributes. He was opposed to the bottom-up explanation of phenomena in Aristotle's theory. The bottom-up explanation is to the effect that the existence of the

transcendence entity or divine being is derived from the understanding of the nature of empirical phenomenal in the natural world. Aristotelian cosmogony and cosmology are what could be termed this-worldly affairs. The origin and the organizational explanation of the world are concentrated on how human mind could understand and interpret the natural phenomena. What this presupposes is that the existence of God depends to a large extent on the reasonability and the knowledge of the natural objects. What follows from this argument is that, all that the mind could apprehend is the natural truths. Such truths would come from the knowledge of the individual objects of nature. The existence of any transcendental entity would then be a derivative from nature.

This is a bottom-up explanation of the transcendence. If the explanation of the transcendence is bottom-up, then it means that such transcendental entity (for instance God), in a way, would be an invention of human reasoning. In other words, God, or any other metaphysical entities will then become the creative work of man and to know or understand God, all that would be done is to study the human reasoning ability. This would strictly lead to a purely anthropocentric position. This is what Plato, the Neo-Platonists and Augustine argue against in their theories. For them, the explanation and the knowledge of the world and intelligible truths are not bottom-up but up-down. This means that the explanation of the world and the nature of reality and self evident truths should be found in the understanding of the supreme metaphysical entity; in the case of Plato, it is the form of the Good, for Plotinus, 'The One' and, for Augustine and the rest theologians, that supreme entity is called 'God'. In fact, joining the theories of Plato and Augustine with his theology, Bonaventure argued that each individual changeable object in the world points to an unchangeable archetypal cause of all truth through which everything becomes intelligible<sup>16</sup>. This archetypal cause of all truth in Bonaventure's sense is God.

### **Duns Scotus**

Duns Scotus, like other Aristotelian philosophers, was preoccupied with the attempt to respond to series of argument put forward by Augustine and the Augustinians in favour of the theory, 'Divine Illumination'. Augustinians argued that human mind can not attain the intelligible truth without the influence of the divine illumination. Duns Scotus argued that "We can in fact attain certainty, and we can do so by the unaided exercise of our natural intellectual powers"<sup>17</sup>. In place of

Augustinian ‘*Divine Illumination*’, Scotus puts up the theory of ‘*Cognitive Intuition*’. For him there are some cognitive truths which the mind can know intuitively and certainly without any divine aid. For instance, the inference from valid syllogistic argument, causal judgment about empirical phenomenal, and some certain propositions reporting our immediate acts and sense experience, are certainly known by the mind<sup>18</sup>.

In a way to buttress this argument, Scotus argues that since the intellect engages in reasoning that makes reference to the actual existence of particular sensible objects, it becomes certain that the mind must certainly know that the sensible objects exist without any divine power. I think this argument possesses some element of potency. This is because moving objects presupposes the existence of the concept ‘motion’. This may be argued to be intuitively known by the cognitive power of the mind without any divine power. It is also intuitively known by the cognitive power of the mind that the flux in the empirical objects in the empirical world presupposes the concept ‘change’.

### **Rethinking the Augustinian Idea of Necessary Truth**

It may be objected that in the strict sense of it, what Bonaventure and other Augustinians are arguing is not that human mind can not attain some level of certainty. But the argument is that the kind of certainty that the mind can attain is a temporary and contingent one; one that may change any moment. But the type of certainty they are seeking is not a mutable or contingent one, but a necessarily immutable and unchangeable one. If the mind can attain any certainty at all as argued by Duns Scotus and the other Aristotelians, and they agree that the mind is itself mutable as well as the empirical world, then it becomes certain that such certainty is mutable. For, it is not clear how two mutable things, (the mind and the empirical world) can produce an immutable knowledge without any transcendental or divine influence.

Since the mind is mutable, it is certainly liable to error. It is not therefore the case that the mind can not attain some level of certainty, but such is not a necessary, an immutable and unchangeable one. Then, it can not form a solid and strong base for the epistemic edifice. This is the reason for their argument for the need for an immutable, unchangeable and necessary entity which can serve as the strong foundation for the intelligible truth. Since God necessarily exists as an unchangeable and immutable entity, then such foundation must be sought in him. And since the mind can not attain this intelligible truth itself, then it needs some divine assistance. That is their argument for the divine illumination.

**Explanation of the Natural Origin of Human Language**

In order to get a way through into the problem raised by the Augustinians, there are some very pertinent questions that must be raised. For instance, are there divine truths, is/are there God or gods, and are there infallible, necessary, and unchangeable truths as claimed by the Augustinians, and/or are there truths which are mind independent that the mind only attains through the so called divine illumination? We must note that questions about truths will eventually reduce to questions about statements which express those truths. This, invariably, reduces questions of truths to questions language truths. This is because an unexpressed truth is not a philosophical issue. To avoid energy dissipation therefore, we shall approach these questions from a holistic point of view. Therefore we shall briefly research into the human language and then raise some fundamental questions. For example, it may be of interest to ask whether human language is natural or divine, learned or given from above. It may also be of interest to ask whether human intuitions, feelings and emotions are natural or divine. Answers to these fundamental questions, presumably, will pave a way for us to proceed on the problem. Answering these questions will show us the nature of divine truth, if there are, and also the nature of natural truths.

For consistency's sake, the Augustinians will have to hold the position that human language is divine and therefore given from above. Contrary to their position, however, there are some other theories about language learning, backed up with convincing evidences, to establish the point that human language is learned and therefore not divine. For instance, Noam Chomsky (the mentalists), argued that human language is learned. For him, human language is a mentalistic system comprising rules which are to be learned so that as new situation arises, these rules are applied. That explains why Chomsky identifies two levels in language learning. These levels are 'competence' and 'performance'. The level of competence is the level of the ideal speaker-hearer who has a complete understanding of his language and is unaffected by such things as memory limitations, distractions, shift of attention, interest, and error in actual application of his language.<sup>19</sup> At the level of competence, system of rules and the method of their application are learned. And at the level of performance, the learned system of rules is applied to concrete life situations. Therefore, at the level of performance, every speaker is expected to have mastered the rules that enable him speak his language, whether he is conscious of this or not.

To clarify this issue further, Chomsky writes;

In the contrast, the discussion of language acquisition in preceding section was rationalistic in its assumption that various formal and substantive universals are intrinsic properties of the language – acquisition system, these providing a schemata that are applied to data and that determine in a highly restricted way the general form and in part, even the substantive features of the grammar that emerge upon presentation of appropriate data ...<sup>20</sup>

From this excerpt, it becomes clear, according to the mentalist, that human language is neither given from above nor is it divine, it is mentally and systematically learned. However, let not the reader be confused on what Chomsky said that;

Thus the form of a language, the schemata for its grammar, is to a large extent given, though it will not be available for use without appropriate experience to set the language forming process into operation<sup>21</sup>.

Readers may erroneously take Chomsky to mean that language is given from above here. This is not true. He is a mentalist and he is using this to establish the point that language learning is mentalistic in nature, even though the mental process sometimes uses the data from experience.

It is also important to briefly identify Quine's theory of language learning. For Quine, language learning is empirical in nature. This is because we learn language by carefully understanding the impact of stimulation on our nerve endings. In other words, language is learned as a response to the corpus of verbal or non-verbal stimulation. The society also plays an important role in language learning, for Quine. For example, the society praises or rebukes the correct or wrong verbal response to the impinging stimulation respectively. So, for Quine, our language is largely formed from our disposition to assent or dissent to some direct or indirect stimulation. That is why Quine's theory is called 'stimulus-response theory of language learning'. To explain this point further Quine writes that our language structure;

Primarily as a whole, is multifariously linked to non-verbal stimulation. These links attach to separate sentences (for each person), but the same sentences are so bound up in turn with one another and with further

sentences that the non-verbal attachments themselves may stretch or give way under strain.<sup>22</sup>

These are enough to show that human language is learned and not divine. Then, if language can be learned, it presupposes the possibility of being taught. Now, one most fundamental point of note in the theories identified is that language originates from man and hence it is highly dependent on human being.

On the question of our feelings, thoughts and emotions, there is no need to belabour the issue much; Augustine has already settled the issue. For him, human emotions, feelings, thoughts change with the flux of experience and therefore cannot attain the necessary truth. All that these mental stages can afford is mutable truth and knowledge. What this has certainly established is that all these mental stages are natural and not divine.

Now, having established that human language and mental stages are all natural, what are the consequences on the issue under discussion? The first thing to take note is that it means that any portion of our mental process; feeling, emotion, intuition, or thought expressed through human language is natural. Further from this, it follows that meaning is human dependent. In other words, since language originates from man, meanings of words and expressions are fixed by man. This is interestingly evident in the known fact that nothing in nature has its own name, names of things in nature are all man made. It then means that meanings are natural, strictly speaking. This explains the deep foundation of the conventionality of human language. What can we then bring out from all these in relation to the question of divine truth? Safely then, we can structure an argument out to make our point.

P1: Discourse about truths eventually reduces to discourse about language truth

P2: Language and meaning are man dependent hence natural

P3: No word or expression has an independent meaning apart from the conventional one

P4: Divine truth, necessary, infallible and unchangeable truth, etc, are all linguistic words and expressions

Therefore, 5, the meanings of divine truth, necessary, infallible and unchangeable truth, etc, are man dependent and hence they are natural.

From the argument above it becomes clear that our words and expressions are products of human cognitive faculty. It further means that

the meaning of the expressions in our language is man-made. There are some apparent consequences that can be drawn from this analysis.

### **Consequences of Naturalization of Human Language**

It follows that what we termed as divine truth, divine illumination, necessary truth, certainty, reality, etc, are all human inventions and they have whatever meaning that man confers on them. It then implies that there is no truth beyond man and at most no truth is beyond nature as far as that truth is about man's mental processes or man language. It further means that the expressions, 'there is divine illumination', 'God exists', '2+2=4', 'Water boils at 100° C', 'God is the source of all truths', etc, if they are truth, in whatever respect, are expressions of language or natural truth. In a clear term, it may be said that it is human being that actually gives existence to these truths.

It must also be borne in mind that as much as man is physical, man is also mental. We feel, think and reason, this power of rationality distinguishes man from other animals. From this rationality comes the natural power to arrange things as much as our rationality can stretch. Presumably, it may be noted that this cognitive ability in man has an infinitely stretching nature. Whenever man is able to apply this natural ingenuity to produce something new and better, they credit such invention to some supernatural forces, instead of recognizing the natural ingenuity or power. Even, such statements used to invoke the supernatural powers are themselves, by the same token of argument natural. This rational power of thought, when it is put to a qualitative use, produces some qualitatively systemized form of our expression. Some of these expressions, we say they are necessary or certain or the two together. So, from the fore-going, it is apparently clear that it is human being in their natural power that decides which expression or statement or term, judgment or truth is a priori and which is contingent, which is necessary, which is divine, which is unchangeable, which is certain, and so on. This is a departure from the Aristotelians who claimed that there are some things that the human mind is capable of knowing. This is, in a way, arguing that human linguistic ingenuity is the whole idea. This argument is not atheistic as it may be construed. Of course, it does not ban the wood carvers from doing their jobs and neither does it detract the priests from making idols out of the carved woods. But if we are consistent, the conclusion is necessary.

Let it not be objected that the whole analysis is extolling anthropomorphism. This is because such objection will be self stultifying.

That means if such objection is true, then its truth will only have depended on the natural arguments in this paper. From the arguments in this paper therefore, it then becomes clear that human being themselves are the creator of the idols<sup>23</sup> they worship their linguistic ingenuity which they have made so sacrosanct. But is there any better option? Well, this is not a call to disengage from such enterprise as that of the Augustinian but it must be borne in mind that what we claim that we are looking for is our handiwork.

Lastly, I must state here that the scope of this work is not to enter deeply into the causes and nature of religious beliefs. Ayer, as it were, has summarized the thesis. For him, “We are concerned only to answer those questions which arise out of our discussion of the possibility of religious knowledge. The point which we wish to establish is that there cannot be any transcendent truths of religion”<sup>24</sup>. This is because consistent with the arguments in this paper; all truths are human language dependent.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has shown how Augustine combines Platonic and the Neo-Platonic ideas together in his philosophical quest to know the origin of the intelligible truth. We argue that Augustine’s position is that human mind, being mutable and fallible, is bereft of the ability of the knowledge of necessary, immutable, unchangeable or self evident truth and reality unless they are illumined by God. In passing, I tried to argue that this argument may exclude the atheist from having such knowledge.

In order to understand the nature of the problem, I researched into the origin of human language and discovered through some notable theories that language is man made. As language is human invention, it also implies that meaning of our words and expressions are also human made and hence natural. It then means that human beings, through their language, are the creators of the divine truth and all other *idols* which are subsequently made sacrosanct. It then follows that most of what human beings seriously engage themselves in searching are what they created and/or are going to create themselves.

### Notes and References

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- 1 By 'Augustinian', I mean the theories of St Augustine and the proponents of that theory.
  2. Of the affinity of Augustine's theory with Platonic theory and Neo-Platonism, check Marcus Dods, *City of God, The works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, 1872, Volume 1, Book 8, pp 305-330
  3. Plotinus was also deeply influenced by Plato's theories. When he could not get a plausible explanation for the origin and organization of existence in the physical phenomenal, he retreated into the interior to use the mind or the intellect for the search of his cosmogony and cosmology. Although Plotinus borrowed this idea from his master, he makes use of it in a full blown way in his theory. It is evidently clear that Augustine borrows from this.
  - 4 F.C. Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy; An Introduction*, (New York, Dover Publications, 2001) p 18
  - 5 This is a precursor to Descartes 'cogito ergo sum', 'I think therefore I am'. It becomes clear from this therefore that Descartes philosophy was deeply influenced by the Augustine's philosophy.
  - 6 F.C. Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy*, p. 18
  - 7 D.D. John Gibb, and B.D. Montgomery, *The Confessions of Augustine*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1908), p xxxiv
  - 8 F.C. Copleston, p 19. Numbering, mine.
  - 9 Augustine's idea of Illumination is also Platonic. This is because Plato also employed the term when he was using the allegory of the sun to explain the process of the mind knowing the ideal form of the Good.
  - 10 Patrick J. Aspell, *Medieval Philosophy: The European Emergence*; (USA, The Council For Research in Values and Philosophy, 1999), p 16
  - 11 Ibid
  - 12 Ibid p 16
  - 13 Ibid
  - 14 Ibid p 17
  - 15 It is on this note that Patrick J. Aspell wrote that St. Bonaventure criticized Aristotle of triple blindness. "ignorant of exemplarism, providence, and man's future life, the peripatetic erred in affirming the eternity of the world, a single intellect for all men (as Averroes

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- interpreted Aristotle), and the equivalent of no rewards or punishment after death” Aspell J. Patrick, *Medieval Philosophy: The European Emergence*; (USA, The Council For Research in Values and Philosophy, 1999)
- 16 Patrick, J. Aspell, *Medieval Philosophy*: p 104. In this argument against the Aristotelians, the influence of Plato and Augustine are much seen in Bonaventure’s theory. In fact the adaptation of Plato’s theory of forms is clearly seen here.
- 17 Pasnau Robert: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; [www.http://Plato.Stanford.edu/entries/illumination](http://Plato.Stanford.edu/entries/illumination); First Published, Tuesday Nov. 2nd, 1999. Browsed on, 27th Feb., 2007.
- 18 *Ibid*
- 19 N. Chomsky, “Methodological Preliminaries”, In: J.F. Rosenberg and C. Travis, (eds) *Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1971) p 325
- 20 *Ibid*, p 358
- 21 *Ibid* p 356
- 22 W.V. Quine W. V., *Word and Object* (Cambridge, M. I. T. Press, 1960) p 12
- 23 ‘Idol’ here does not necessarily imply religion, it may be language, cognitive, economic, political or even divine.
- 24 A.J. Ayer, “Is Religious Knowledge possible”, in G.L Abernethy and T.A. Langford, (eds) *Philosophy of Religion, A Book of Readings*, (New York, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1968) p 260.