

ST. AUGUSTINE'S EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE EDUCATION PROCESS

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Abstract

St. Augustine's epistemology can be seen in his doctrine of divine illumination, where he distinguishes knowledge got through the senses, inferior reason, and superior reason. Augustine was interested in education and he was a teacher very interested in how learners get the best knowledge from the teaching and learning process. He held that love of God, expressed through love of neighbour was to be the bedrock of the teacher-pupil relationship, but he did not clearly state the bridge or connecting link between the teaching and learning process. So, through critical analysis. This essay intends to explore Augustine's divine illumination theory as the missing link between teaching and learning. It employs the method of exposition and critical analysis.

Keywords: St. Augustine, Epistemology, Basis, Teaching, Learning, Divine Illumination

Introduction

History has it that Aurelius Augustine, popularly known as Saint Augustine or Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, was born in A.D. 354 at Thagaste, in North Africa. Thagaste was a town forty-five miles south of Hippo in the Roman province of Numidia, which is the current Algeria. Augustine's father was Patricius (a pagan), and his mother was Monica (a Christian). Through his mother's persistence in pressuring Augustine to become a Christian, Augustine ended up becoming a Christian, and through his writings a rich intellectual

foundation of Christianity was established in the West. Augustine became enthused about philosophy through his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*, when he went to Carthage for further studies in his late teens. Then he taught rhetoric in Carthage and later in Rome and Milan.

As a thinker, Augustine was more of a restless seeker than a systematic thinker. He restlessly sought to unravel the problem of evil, which may be said to have characterized his intellectual and moral struggle in life. This restless search brought Augustine to romance briefly with the dualistic philosophy of Manichaeism, and then dived headlong into the Neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus. To bring a solution to his struggle with the problem of evil, Augustine synthesized the ideas of Neoplatonists with Christianity; upholding the teachings of the Bible but equally realizing that broad education was needed to maintain these teachings in the intellectual and political climate of his time.¹

For Augustine, the ultimate purpose for education is turning towards God, because in his analysis for the presence of evil, Augustine notes that evil is not a being but human exercise of the free will in rejecting God Who is the Ultimate Good.² Augustine believes that education helps save humans from the self destructive path of rejecting God in human's exercise of the free will, and he dedicated himself to delivering a good number of teaching and learning aid to facilitate the education of humans. This point is presented by Raymond Canning thus:

Augustine of Hippo offers a rich resource for philosophical, theological and pastoral reflection on teaching and learning. Already in December 386, four months or more before his baptism, he had proposed, in *On Order* 2,7,24-19,51, a program for education in the liberal arts, the object of which was the vision of beauty, the vision of God. Shortly afterwards, in his *Soliloquies*, he had explored the epistemological foundations of such a program, focusing on the highest of the liberal arts, i.e., philosophy, the subject matter of which for him was God and the soul. Then, in the late 380s, in the

dialogue with his son, Adeodatus, called *The Teacher*, he developed an accompanying theory of language and interpretation, a theory that would be further worked out and applied in his classic treatment of the interpretation of Scripture in *On Christian Doctrine* dating from the mid to late 390s. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 415-418 as he explores different mental analogies in his work, *On the Trinity*, he should draw attention also to the *amor studentium*, i.e., “the sort of love... that the studios have, that is people who do not yet know but still desire to know some branch of learning.... The more... the thing is known without being fully known, the more does the intelligence desire to know what remains.... The object of our inquiry is what it is that [someone] loves in that which he is studios to know.”³

Augustine placed education within the realm of the search for love, and indicates that education comes through the instrumentality of teaching and learning. Through teaching, the phenomenon to be known is exposed, while through learning, the exposed phenomenon is grasped. But a close consideration of the elements of teaching and learning in Augustine's philosophy of education may leave one asking: “Are the elements of teaching and learning in Augustine's philosophy of education parallel to themselves or do they have a point of convergence?” This paper argues that there is a point of convergence for the elements: teaching and learning, in Augustine's philosophy of education, and that point of convergence lies in Augustine's epistemology. But before digging deep into this, let us consider two philosophical trends that influenced Augustine.

Platonic and Aristotelian Influence on Augustine

Augustine is ordinarily considered to be a Platonist, and he even made allusion to the strong influence of Neoplatonism on him thus: “In the regular course of study I came upon the book of a certain

Cicero... that book of his contained an exhortation to philosophy. It was called Hortensius. In fact that book changed my mental attitude, and changed the character of my prayers to Thyself, O Lord.”⁴ Augustine held firmly to Neoplatonism and was pleasantly surprised by its unexpected agreement with Christian doctrine:

Therein I read, not, indeed, in these very words, but quite the same thing, supported by means of many and manifold reasons, that: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Furthermore, I read that the soul of man, though it gives testimony of the light, is not itself the light, but the Word, God Himself, is the true light, that enlightens every man who comes into the world.... Again, I read there that the Word, God, was born not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of flesh, but of God.⁵

Neoplatonism offered Augustine the soft landing he needed to accept the Christian faith, yet retain his pagan literary culture. So Augustine belongs to the Platonic school of thought, but Robert C. Trundle notes that “Augustine is normally associated with Plato's essentialism rather than Aristotle's 'organismic' empiricism. But... both Aristotle and Plato presented paradigm metaphysical options. And an open-minded reading of Augustine's philosophical theology belies some mediation between them.”⁶ The metaphysics of Plato was attractive, especially to a thinker like Augustine, for the fact that it made a distinction between two realities together with a soul that knew eternal ideas, just as the Scripture made a distinction between unchanging spiritual reality and a changing corporeal reality. Yet, Plato's metaphysics loses its attractiveness in the face of the claim in the New Testament that all things will pass away, and that includes knowledge, leaving only Love (agape) that will endure forever. Also, the New Testament teaching of the resurrection of the body, which is ultimately connected to Love, cannot find a place in Platonism which regards the body as a 'dark' receptacle, obscuring

the cognitive 'light' of the soul. For these difficulties with Plato's metaphysics, an alternative is found in Aristotle's metaphysics, based on the fact that:

...it is easier for the later Greeks as well as for Augustine to embrace an Aristotelian paradigm in which the *mind*, without recourse to a pre-existing soul, distinguished immutable universal ideas from mutable objects. For one thing, this was a simpler thesis. For another, this thesis would give an omniscient God some possible role in illuminating such objects. Further, these objects *qua* unities of form and matter implied a unity of body and soul. Though the later implied the death of soul and body alike, it rendered a personal resurrection viable and significant. [But]... the significance of the resurrection was tainted by an Aristotelian view of a single reality that, while involving a cosmological principle of causation, proceeded *ad infinitum* into the past. Besides an infinite past conflicting with *creatio ex nihilo*, it further anchored in otherwise transcendent God in a single reality.⁷

Having pin-pointed the attractive and unattractive metaphysical options of Platonism and Aristotelianism, Tundle submits that "it is reasonable to suppose that Augustine limitedly embraced both. The Platonic ontology of two realities explained the transcendence of God as well as both an inferiority of corporeal reality and sin-laden human condition,"⁸ which reveals the inherent fault in human knowledge and self deception in wanting to use just only human knowledge to solve moral and political problems, while doing away with God. The Aristotelian epistemology explained the merciful immanence of God, despite its fruitless pursuits of godless utopias. It acknowledges the ordered and rationality at play in the world, and these tended towards empiricism, yet the medium of articulating them cannot solely be limited to bodily senses. This is in close

association with Augustine's claim in the *On Free Choice of the Will*, that persons “are forced to admit that the order and truth of numbers have nothing to do with the bodily senses;”⁹ a claim that is not meant to mean that the real mathematical ideas are to be found in another 'real world of ideas' but that mathematical ideas cannot just be merely explained out on the base of a materialist account of perception. To explain the fact that ideas cannot be limited to strict materialist account of perception, Augustine in the *City of God* exhibits an Aristotelian-like understanding of the 'infusion' of the material body of human beings with an inner light or intelligence;¹⁰ and with this persons are able to numerically articulate the various parts of mutable bodies that are said to constitute a body, no matter how small it may be. But then, Augustine will count it as folly when human beings confuse the rational inner light, used both in nature science and mathematics, with the wisdom of God. This reveals Augustine's leaning to Platonic ontology of an unchanging (spiritual) realm that is not to be confused with cognitive knowledge. Augustine notes this distinction in his *On Free Choice of the Will*, when he identified in Solomon's words in Eccles. 7. 26, his futile search for wisdom: “I and my heart have gone round to know and to consider and to search out wisdom and number”¹¹

To make a claim of having learnt something, would involve for Augustine the dual understanding of one learning the rules of valid inference as being different from learning the truth of propositions. Augustine portrays this difference when he said that one “who knows that there is a resurrection of the dead is better than another who knows that it follows from the proposition that there is no resurrection of the dead that 'then Christ is not risen’”¹² Augustine acknowledges, from the above, that humans have knowledge claims that are based on inferences, yet he is of the opinion that learning a proposition's truth is better, especially a truth revealed by God. In this regard, Augustine would opine that in secular reason lies an inner light which can be said to be a kind of lower wisdom, having its link and source in a higher wisdom, which may be supposed to be the light of God illuminating the lower wisdom of humans; this he expressed thus:

Just as the objects which men see in the sunlight and choose to enjoy are many and varied, yet the light in which the sight of each man watching sees and holds what he enjoys is one; so even if the goods are many and varied from which each man may choose what he wishes [...] nevertheless it is possible that the very light of wisdom [...] is one wisdom common to all wise men.¹³

Augustine notes that it is the sun that illumines the objects that humans see and enjoy; and no matter how many the objects are that are illuminated by the sun, it is the same one sun that illuminates them all. The illumination of the objects cannot and should not be equated to the illuminating act of the sun. Bringing this analogy to the human act of cognition, Augustine would reckon it foolishness for humans to elevate human cognitive inner light to an absolute light of God, and hence start perceiving themselves as gods. From the foregoing it can be seen that Augustine is principally influenced by the thoughts of Plato, yet it cannot be said that he was not in any way influenced by Aristotelian thoughts.

Augustine and the Acquisition of Knowledge

In *De Magistro*, Augustine dealt with the issue of epistemology and the acquisition of knowledge. The style adopted by Augustine in *De Magistro* was to analyze language, its semantics and its semiotics, and the reason for adopting this style was for the reason that “knowledge acquisition implies learning, learning implies teaching, and teaching involves either the telling or the showing of something to someone;”¹⁴ and for Augustine, the most obvious form of teaching would appear to involve telling something to someone. In this regard, meaning and concept are important to Augustine, for the fact that something bears meaning and it is conveyed through concept.

While not considering in this study Augustine analysis of language as a medium for acquiring knowledge, it is to be noted that for learning to take place, there are some requirements to be met

according to Augustine; and this he explained with the analogy of the birdcatcher. Though Augustine used the imagery of the birdcatcher in both *De Magistro* and *De Animae Quantitate* in varying contexts, yet with regard to learning and the requirements needed for learning to take place, he used that imagery to show that,

Firstly, it is a nostalgic glance back to his youth which focuses upon the place of play and enjoyment in the learning process, the learner should be filled with wonder ('*admirans*' DM 32) and should want to know ('*scire cupiebat*' DM 32). Secondly, and most significantly, there is the contrast, in the *de animae quantitate* passage, between the studious life of the young adult and the outdoor life of the young child. The contrast highlights learning through direct experience and learning through study.¹⁵

Augustine used the imagery of the birdcatcher often in his writings, and this for him would interpret to mean that the birdcatcher is "...involved in the act of grasping discrete items of knowledge (as represented by birds) and is employing his equipment so as to gain this knowledge. The equipment is a metaphor for the practical tools which one is in possession of to this end, namely, reason and the practical tool of argumentation."¹⁶ Also, "the birdcatcher is instructing the spectator in the use of the equipment so as to capture the bird, or piece of knowledge, and in this sense is a teacher."¹⁷

When a teacher wants learning to take place, he or she can teach through the form of telling or showing; two forms of teaching that are expressed in *De Magistro*. These forms of teaching can serve to encourage or remind a listener to look and thereby learn. But if telling as a form of teaching is used in the learning process then it means that words must be involved, yet, Augustine perceives words as empty signals except if they are already known; that is, a word taken alone signifies nothing if that thing is not already known. A problem that arises from this, is that if knowledge cannot be learned through words, then how can the words of a narrative, especially historical narrative, give some knowledge of certain occasion? To resolve this kind of problem, Augustine considered a section of the narrative from the Book of Daniel (Dan. 3), wherein Ananias, Azarias, and Misahel were thrown into the furnace by

Nebuchadnezzar because of their faith in the God of Israel. It can be argued that the words of the narrative were already known, and so their meaning is conveyed. But what of the names of the young men thrown into the furnace, the words hardly convey the knowledge of these names? To respond to this, Charles Connaghan notes that,

The story itself, which primarily demonstrates the power of belief, signals the response to the place of narrative within Augustine's epistemology. Testimony is, in itself, concerned with belief and not with knowledge. Everything which one receives in historical testimony is most accurately described as something we believe (*credere*) rather than know (*scire*). This fact is observed by the authorities, upon whose testimony one must base one's belief (“...*ipsi quibus credimus...ait enim propheta*”), in Scripture. For it is stated (Isaiah 7:9), that unless one believes, one will not understand, which signals an awareness that these two items (belief and understanding) are distinct.... What one understands, one also believes, but one does not understand all that one believes. Also, what one understands, one knows, but one does not know all that one believes – *quod ergo intellego, id etiam credo; at non omne, quod credo, etiam intellego, omne autem, quod intellego, scio; non omne, quod credo, scio* - The conclusions provided by the above statements are that, although understanding entails knowledge and belief, belief does not entail understanding or knowledge. Belief would then appear to be a prerequisite for knowledge and understanding, although not *vice versa*, and so belief is useful as a progression towards knowledge and understanding. This is to say, as knowledge and understanding require belief and belief does not require knowledge and understanding, then belief must be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for knowledge and understanding.¹⁸

What can be seen as established from the foregoing is that by reason, one can affirm that it is useful to believe what is known, even when human knowledge is limited, because humans cannot know everything. No matter how close or necessary belief may be to knowledge, Augustine makes a clear distinction between knowledge and belief in a passage from the *Retractationes* (1.14.3) on the *de utilitate credendi*, because for him knowledge has some additional factor which the firm reasoning of the mind adds to true belief. So the distinguishing factor between knowledge and belief for Augustine is reason, because by this the item in question is understood. “Justified true belief cannot, in this sense, be equated with knowledge, for such belief does not provide an understanding of something. It is only the firm reasoning of the mind, leading to an understanding of the item under consideration, which can accurately be described as knowledge.”¹⁹

Augustine's Philosophy of Education

Augustine was very interested in education and though self-education may have been possible during his time, yet, he believed that it was better to have an educated work-force of teachers, who through their education and combined force can match on equal grounds with the 'pagans' of his time who boast of the fact that they understand and explain the Scripture without the aid of instructional directions from anyone. Augustine would argue to the fact that such persons may rejoice in God's great gift in them, yet they must not forget that they learnt to read because they were first taught by human teachers.²⁰ Though Augustine's philosophy of education centered on Christianity, so he advocated that the core of the Christian curriculum should be the Bible. Deducing from this, Augustine was advocating that if any educational endeavour was to be meaningful, then it was to have a core of concentration; and this is to be conveyed with sound linguistic method. This idea is largely gaining increasing recognition in curriculum development in educational systems of the world.

In holding the core of the Christian curriculum to be the Bible, Augustine was of the opinion that all other branches of learning may be used to help in the correct interpretation of the

Bible: “Let every good and true Christian understanding that wherever truth may be found, it belongs to his Master.”²¹ Following from this, Augustine indicates that discernment must not be played down while allowing other branches of learning to be used in properly moderating the core of concentration of a curriculum of an educational system. To the teacher, especially the Christian communicator, Augustine stresses that a teacher must understand the principles of language, knowing the meaning borne by ideas that are translated from one language into another, and appreciate how ideas are communicated to the learner: “Through words we learn only words...the knowledge of words is completed only after the things they signify are understood.”²² In this regard, there should not be a passive spectator in Augustine's philosophy of education, because both teacher and learner must be active in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

For Augustine, the possession of virtue by a teacher was a principal requisite before a teacher can teach others: “Do not look for an evil teacher; if a man is evil, then he is not a teacher; if he is a teacher, then he is not evil.”²³ Augustine was very particular about the teacher possessing virtue before teaching others because the teaching of the teacher will be more effective when the teacher practices what he or she teaches.

Augustine on Teaching and Learning

In *The Teacher*, Augustine gave a more focused consideration on teaching and learning, especially in his discussion with his son, Adeodatus, when he admonished him “to be discriminating about words, to question and test the assumptions underlying assertions, and to take delight in contemplating created truth;”²⁴ and then there is the call on teachers to “introduce their students to the culture of the intellect,”²⁵ because the student's intellect is central to the subject of education. This notion can be summarily seen in *The Teacher* thus:

Do teachers advertise that they verbally transmit their own acts of understanding, or the truths of their disciplines, for students to receive and retain? What

father sends a child to school with the silly aim of finding out what the teacher's understanding is? Rather, when all subjects, even those concerning virtue and wisdom, have been expounded by those who profess them, then, students, if they are really to be called that, investigate within themselves whether what they are hearing is true, strenuously putting it to test of their own interior truth. That is the point at which they learn. And when they reach an inner conviction of truth, they praise their teachers, not realizing that, even if the teachers knew what they were saying, the praise rightly belongs to the taught ones not the one who taught. Men make the mistake of calling others their teachers when they are no such thing, since there is a near-simultaneity between what is said and what is understood, and where inner assent follows so quickly on outer discussion they think the latter caused the former.²⁶

For Augustine, learning takes place within the learner because of what is to be learnt and what that which is learnt is to the learner. In Augustine's view, the purpose and goal of all learning exercise is to learn of God, that is, to learn that there is God and learn about God, because it is really the same God that is the learner's very life. This may go to explain why the teaching method that may be deduced from Augustine's *Confessions* is not strictly directed towards self-transformation in any classical sense of the term, but towards the total surrender to God alone who can transform, heal, and properly channel one's life away from self-destruction: "For what am I to myself without Thee, but a guide to mine own downfall?"²⁷

Augustine's concept of Divine Illumination: The Bridge between Teaching and Learning

The epistemology of Augustine or his theory of knowledge is well laid out in his divine illumination theory, wherein he proposes three cognitive operations which are the senses, the inferior reason and the superior reason, and he noted that each operation has its own

unique and peculiar objective to attain. Augustine held that knowledge of things like colour, odour, etc., are got through the use of the senses. Inferior reason is used to obtain scientific knowledge because scientific knowledge occupies itself with the corporeal world and seeks to discover universal laws through the process of abstraction. And then, having knowledge of eternal truth comes by way of the superior reason, through divine illumination and not through reminiscence.

Espousing his theory of divine illumination in the *Confessions*, Augustine notes that the mind needs external enlightenment for it to participate in truth, because it is not itself the nature of truth. You will light my lamp, Lord.²⁸ With this view, he defines illumination as that which makes eternal truths visible. In this regard, ideas like truth, justice, etc., are made more visible, and the truth of judgment shown. In his theory of divine illuminations, Augustine notes that the senses know only the qualities of the body because they are only concerned with the knowledge of this visible world. Yet, he notes that the soul, which is part of the body, is not passive with regard to sense knowledge because “the soul is absolutely superior to the body and that it cannot depend on the body in any of its activities, not even sensible activities.”²⁹ The soul may be superior to the body that bears it, yet the soul connects to the body because sensation is an activity exercised by the soul through the body; for the body receives sensation from other bodies, and the soul acquires knowledge of corporeal world through gleaning from the sensation received by the body. It is for this reason that Augustine holds that it is through mediation that bodies are known: “The soul gathers the image, not the sense, of all the sensible objects.”³⁰ This shows the pride of place that Augustine accords to the soul, placing it as the engine room of human daily activities; and so it takes precedence over all other human activity.

Another way of acquiring knowledge that Augustine spoke about in his elaborations of his theory of divine illumination was inferior reason (*ratio inferior*), which was the means of acquiring scientific knowledge. Augustine claimed this to be so because of his notion that “Scientific knowledge occupies itself with the corporeal

world and seeks to discover universal laws through the process of abstraction,"³¹ thereby making it an imperfect way of acquiring knowledge, since it is subject to human limitations and not reliable. The world is filled with a lot of imperfections, and since scientific knowledge preoccupies itself with the corporeal world that is bound by imperfections, then the knowledge characterized as scientific knowledge cannot but be imperfect and unreliable, and thus is obtained through inferior reason and cannot claim to be superior knowledge. Augustine is not condemning scientific knowledge outright because science has done many positive things to improve the world and living conditions, yet because of the fact that scientists are human beings, who are imperfect beings, they are subject to failures and imperfections. Scientific knowledge is imperfect because it is based only on the corporeal world, and denouncing any form of metaphysical knowledge.

Augustine holds that metaphysical knowledge is fundamental and vital for knowledge to be superior and reliable, and because this is lacking in scientific knowledge, it cannot claim to give reliable or superior knowledge. Eternal truths are superior knowledge and they need superior reason to attain them.

The central point in Augustine's theory of divine illuminations rests on the superior reason, and to this, Augustine opines that it can attain eternal truth because of the contingency of the known object and the contingency of the knowing subject. Augustine was not able to explain the knowledge of eternal truths with the doctrine of reminiscence, as Plato did, because he rejected the notion of the pre-existence of the soul; rather he explained the knowledge of eternal truths with his doctrine of illumination. Augustine acknowledges the corporeal world but also believed in realities that transcend the corporeal world, which are not attainable through scientific knowledge but through divine mediation. So for Augustine, the attainment of real knowledge comes only through the light of reason grounded in divine illumination.

Since in Augustine's consideration divine illumination is the need for one to attain real knowledge, and it has been established from the foregoing above that love of God through love of neighbour is to guide the teacher-pupil relationship, then it can be said that

Augustine's divine illumination is the basis for the teaching-learning relationship. To teach means that the teacher has some form of acquired knowledge to be communicated to the learner. The starting point for the teacher will be to have love for acquiring the 'real' knowledge to be communicated, and then have the love to communicate the knowledge despite the human limitations and existential challenges that will befall the teacher. But the teacher, according to Augustine, will not be able to acquire the 'real' knowledge to teach without divine illumination to enlighten the teacher's reasoning. With divine illumination, the teacher transcends beyond the knowledge of the corporeal realities which come to him or her through the senses or use of inferior reason, and is opened up to eternal truths or real knowledge through use of superior reason. From the foregoing, a teaching process guided by divine illumination is revealed by which the teacher can be said to be thought the real knowledge that he or she will communicate to the pupil or learner.

In like manner, there is a learning process also guided by divine illumination that takes place with regard to the learner. In this case, the learner, moved by love for knowledge, surrenders him or herself in love to a teacher from who the learner reposes confidence of being led to the knowledge being sought. But the leaning process cannot take place if the learner does not allow or dispose him or herself to the guidance of divine illumination that carries the learner beyond the corporeal world realities that surround and may aid the teaching of the teacher, so as to transcend beyond these and with superior reason attain the real knowledge being sought. It therefore follows, that both teaching and learning are guided and directed by divine illumination, by which attainment of real knowledge is made possible in the process of teaching and learning. This can be perceived when Augustine said: "Truth, when did you ever fail to walk with me, teaching me what to avoid and what to seek.... Without you I could discern none of these things,"³²

for divine illumination guided the teaching of what Augustine was to avoid, and the same divine illumination guided the learning of what Augustine was to seek.

Evaluation

Augustine acknowledged that sensations of bodily qualities and the sensitive knowledge of colours, odour, etc., are obtainable through the use of the senses. The inferior reason can be used to obtain both the laws of the physical world and the scientific knowledge, while superior reason leads one to the knowledge of eternal truths that are obtainable through divine illumination. This in a nutshell presents a quick view of the epistemology of Augustine.

When Augustine, in his theory of divine illumination, uses inferior reason and superior reason, he presents two functions in which knowledge takes on two opposing directions. Superior reason tends toward the divine, the universal, the eternal and the immutable realities, while inferior reason tends towards the world, the contingent, the mutable realities. Though both inferior and superior reasons are necessary to human beings, yet with respect to their hierarchical relations, we are faced with a choice involving the entire personality.

In the process and act of teaching and learning, it is the whole personality of a person that is involved. A teacher cannot be teaching just with the mouth and other parts of the body are completely left out of it, nor can a learner be leaning with just the brain and other parts of the body are completely left out. So it involves making a choice to opt for the primacy of contemplation and hence orient all activity toward the divine and the eternal, or choose the exclusive exercise of science, and orient oneself toward the corporeal world. Should there be a reduction of the human person to purely scientific dimension, then only self-affirmation will characterize the aim of human beings, just as the annulment of contemplation in the name of science has led people to use the whole in view of the particular. The vocation of pure science ought to tend towards contemplation, since through the senses it can have knowledge of the corporeal world, which should ordinarily lead it to contemplate beyond the corporeal world to get to wisdom, but because of the annulment of

contemplation from science, it ends up in egoism, anarchy, individualism, etc. It may therefore be for such reason that Augustine held that love of God, through love of neighbour, was to permeate the teacher-pupil relationship, and divine illumination guide the teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

Though Augustine does not have a systematically treated document or writing on epistemology or theory of knowledge, yet it cannot be said that Augustine did not have a theory of knowledge. To a great deal, Augustine's theory of knowledge can be seen in his treatment of divine illumination, wherein he espoused that the use of inferior reason leads to the knowledge of the corporeal world, while the use of superior reason leads to eternal truths, knowable through divine illumination.

In the teaching and learning process, characterized by the giving and reception of knowledge, the divine illumination cannot be discounted because it is by it that there is a basis between teaching and learning, for the fact that divine illumination is needed to attain the knowledge that will be taught, and the same divine illumination is needed by the receiver to understand that what is to be received is real knowledge.

ENDNOTES

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20. Cf. *De Doctrina Christiana*, Pref., 4.
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