



***AUGUSTINE ON MIND,  
HUMAN AND DIVINE***



# THE ABRAHAMIC FAITHS AND ANCIENT WISDOM

**L1:** *Aristotle and the Qur'an in Andalusian Islamic Thought*

**L2:** *Reading Hebrew Scripture as a Philosophical Text*

**L3:** *Augustine's Vanquishing of Christian Anti-Intellectualism*

**L4:** *Augustine on Mind, Human and Divine*

# PLAN FOR TODAY

- Memory
- "Ocular" theory of mind
- Understanding Trinity

# MEMORY

## *Confessions 10.26* [Handout 56-67]

Great is the power of memory, an awesome mystery, O my God, a profound, infinite complexity! It is the mind, and this is nothing other than my very self. What am I, then, O my God? What is my nature? It is teeming life of every conceivable kind, and exceedingly vast. See, in the measureless plains and vaults and caves of my memory, immeasurably full of countless kinds of things which are there either through their images (as is the case for all bodies), or by being themselves present (as is the case for what belongs to the liberal arts), or by registering themselves and making their mark in some indefinable way (as with emotional states which the memory retains even when the mind is not actually undergoing them, although whatever is in the memory must be in the mind too).

# MEMORY AS RECEPTACLE

## Vast storehouse

### Inventory:

- Class 1: Bodies, imaginary things - in memory by virtue of images (10.12-15)
- Class 2: Intelligibles, objects and truths known *a priori* - by virtue of the objects themselves being present
  - Things having to do with the liberal arts (10.16-18)
  - Innumerable principles and laws of numbers (10.19-20)
- Class 3: Affections of the mind - joy sorrow, fear, desire (10.21-22)
- Class 4: Memory itself (10.23-25)

# MEMORY AS LIMIT OF THOUGHT

*Trinity* 11.14 [H106-12, cf. *Trin.* 11.6 (H86-97)]

The reason why no one can think about anything bodily unless he has sensed it is that no one remembers anything bodily unless he has sensed it. **So the limits of thinking are set by the memory** just as the limits of sensing are set by bodies. The **senses receive the form** (*species*) of a thing from the body we sense, the **memory receives it** from the senses, and **the gaze of the one who is thinking** (*acies cogitantis*) from the memory.

## *Soliloquies* 1.12 [H1-9]

For reason . . . promises that she will display God as clearly to your mind as the sun appears to the eyes. For **minds are, as it were, souls' senses**. The most certain truths arrived at by the sciences are like the **objects** which are **illuminated by the sun** – such as the earth and all the things on the earth – so that they can be seen. Now it is God Himself who illuminates, and **reason [is] to minds** what the **power to see is to eyes**. Now to have eyes is not the same thing as to have the power to see, and to have the power to see is not the same thing as to see.



# CENTRAL ANALOGY – VISION & COGNITION

Sensory Vision	Intellectual "Vision" (Illumination)	Occurrent Sensory Thought	Occurrent Thought (generally)
Body (visible object)	Intelligible object	Image (representation)	Object/Representation
Eye (visual power)	Reason/Mind's gaze ( <i>acies mentis</i> )	Mind's gaze ( <i>acies mentis</i> )	Mind's gaze ( <i>acies mentis</i> )
Sun (corporeal light)	Intelligible light	[Light]	[Light]
Vision requires body present to the eye in appropriate conditions	Intelligible present to the mind's gaze (informing it)	Image present to the mind's gaze (informing it)	Object present to the mind's gaze (informing it)

# OCULAR THEORY OF THOUGHT (OTT)

To think [be consciously aware of] some thing R is for R (or a representation of R) to be present to the mind's gaze

Component parts:

- Cognitive **power**: mind's gaze (*acies mentis*)
- Cognitive **object**: object or representation
- Cognitive **relation**: direct cognitive contact (cognitive "presence" to mind's gaze)

Occurrent thinking consists in the cognitive power's direct contact with a cognitive object; the presence of an object to the power; **the power's being informed by an object**

# MEMORY'S ROLES IN OTT

Memory's roles in our cognitive economy:

- encoding and retaining what we "experience"
- making information from our experience available for other cognitive purposes

To cognize (know) some thing R consists in memory's retention of R (or a representation of R); (I cognize (know) the Giralda Tower even when I'm not occurrently thinking of the Giralda Tower provided that an image of the Giralda Tower is stored in my memory)

To think R is for the mind's gaze to be informed by R (or a representation of R)

- Memory is the limit of our thinking, the boundary of the mind's gaze
- Something is available to mind (for thinking) if and only if it is in memory

		A	B	C
		<p><b>Structure</b></p> <p>'→' = 'makes <b>direct</b> cognitive contact with'</p> <p>'↓' = 'makes <b>indirect</b> cognitive contact with'</p>	<p>"Where" is the <b>direct object</b> of cognitive contact?</p>	<p><b>Relation</b> of mind to the <b>intentional object</b> of cognition</p>
1	Sense perception (ideal, analogical base)	sense → sensible (body)	in a place	direct (with body)
2	Sensory thought	mind's gaze → image ↓ sensible (body)	in memory	indirect (with body)
3.1	Intellectual perception	mind's gaze → intelligible	intelligible realm (above mind)	direct (with intelligible)
3.2	Intellectual thought	mind's gaze → representation ↓ intelligible	in memory	indirect (with intelligible)

# COGNIZING INTELLIGIBLES

Sensory Vision	Intellectual "Vision" (Illumination)	Occurrent Sensory Thought	Occurrent Thought (generally)
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**TRINITY**

# TRINITY – NICEA

## Nicene Creed [H194-99]

I believed in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. "God from God, light from light, true God from true God," begotten, not made, **of one being with the Father**, through whom all things were made. . . .

**Three persons in one substance:** **Father** is God, **Son** is God, **HS** is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God

- Each person **is not** any of the other persons (the three persons)
- Each person is spoken of in **relation** to the others
- Each in itself is fully God (the **one substance**)

# FINDING TRINITY IN HUMAN BEINGS

## *Trinity 9.1* [H68-75]

With regard to the question at hand, therefore, let us believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, the Creator, and the ruler of all creation; that the Father is not the Son, nor is the Holy Spirit the Father or the Son, but that there is a trinity of inter-related persons, and the unity of an equal substance. But let us seek to understand this, imploring the help of Him whom we wish to understand; and in the measure that He shall grant, desiring to explain what we understand. . . .



# FINDING TRINITY IN MIND

## THE STRATEGY

### *Trinity* 10.18 [H76-85]

These three then, **memory, understanding, and will**, are not three lives but one life, nor three minds but **one mind**. So it follows of course that they are **not three substances but one substance**. When memory is called life, and mind, and substance, it is called so with reference to itself; but when it is called memory it is called so with **reference to another**. I can say the same about understanding and will; both understanding and will are so called with **reference to another**. But each of them is life and mind and being with reference to itself. For this reason these three are one in that they are one life, one mind, **one being**.

# FINDING TRINITY IN MIND

## THE STRATEGY

Memory: the (retained) **object**

Understanding: the **activated power** (the instance of occurrent thinking)

Will: the **binding** agent

(Recall: thinking (now) of the Giralda Tower)

Mind: the **one substance**

# FINDING TRINITY IN MIND

## SENSORY THOUGHT

### *Trinity 11.6* [H86-97]

When the form of the body is taken away which was perceived by the bodily senses, there remains a likeness of it in the memory, to which the will can again turn the gaze (*aciem*) to be formed by it from within, just as the sense was formed from without by the sensible body presented to it. And so one gets another trinity, out of the memory and internal sight and the will which couples them together . . . But instead of the form of the body which was sensed outside, there now appears memory retaining that form (*speciem*) which the soul drank in through the sense of the body; and instead of that sight (*visio*) which was outside when the sense was being formed from the sensible body, we now have a similar sight within when the mind's gaze (*acies animi*) is formed from what the memory retains, and absent bodies are thought about.

# FINDING TRINITY IN MIND

## SELF-THOUGHT

### *Trinity* 14.8 [H147-52]

... But such is the power of thought that the mind itself is not able to place itself, so to speak, in its own sight (*conspectus*) except when it thinks itself. And this is because nothing is in the mind's sight except when it is thought, with the result that the mind itself (by which anything that is thought is thought) cannot be in its own sight in any other way than by thinking itself. ...

## *The Trinity* 14.8 [H153-60]

It remains, therefore, that its sight is something belonging to its nature, and the mind is recalled to it when it thinks itself, not as it were by a movement in space, but by an incorporeal conversion. But when it is not thinking itself, it is indeed not in its own sight, nor is its gaze formed from it; nevertheless, it knows itself, as if it were a memory of itself for itself. It is like someone versed in many sciences: what he knows is contained in his memory, nor is anything from there in his mind's sight except when he thinks it. All the rest is stored away in a kind of hidden knowledge which is called memory.

# FINDING TRINITY IN MIND

Trinitarian "parts": Memory, Understanding, Will

Trinitarian relations:

- Father (unbegotten, begetter), Son (begotten), Holy Spirit (love)

Trinitarian unity: mind's act of occurrently thinking itself

# THE TRINITARIAN IMAGE

	Sensory thought	Intellectual thought	Self-thought	Trinity
Memory	Image	Intelligible	Mind	Father
Understanding	<i>Gaze informed by an image</i>	<i>Gaze informed by an intelligible</i>	<i>Gaze informed by mind itself</i>	Son/Word
Will	Binding the gaze to the image	Binding the gaze to the intelligible	Binding the gaze to mind	Holy Spirit

## *Trinity* 14.13 [H176-82]

... from the moment that [the mind] began to be, it has certainly never ceased to remember itself, never ceased to understand itself, and never ceased to love itself, as we have already shown. And, therefore, **when it is turned to itself in thought, a trinity comes to be** in which a **word**, too, can now be understood. It is formed indeed from thought itself with the will uniting both. **Here, then, we may recognize more clearly the image which we are seeking.**



# THE TRINITARIAN IMAGE

	Sensory thought	Intellectual thought	Self-thought	Trinity
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Understanding	<i>Gaze informed by an image</i>	<i>Gaze informed by an intelligible</i>	<i>Gaze informed by mind itself</i>	Son/Word
Will	Binding the gaze to the image	Binding the gaze to the intelligible	Binding the gaze to mind	Holy Spirit

## *Trinity* 15.25 [H183-93]

What is that which can be a **word** and, for that reason, is already worthy of the name "word"? What, I say, is this word, **formable and not yet formed**, except something of our own mind which we cast this way and that in a kind of revolving motion, when now this and now that is thought by us, just as it was found, or as it occurred? And then **a true word comes to be** when **that which we cast in a revolving motion** (as I have said), lands on **that which we know** and is **formed by it**, taking on its complete likeness in such a way that **just as any thing is known, so it is also thought**, that is, without vocalization, without the thought of vocalization which, of course, belongs to some language – this is the way it is expressed in the heart.

# MIND AS IMAGE OF GOD AS TRINITY

Memory, Understanding, and Will **comprise the one substance of Mind**

When the mind thinks itself occurrently, Memory, Understanding, and Will are **related to one another by relations like the relations that define the divine trinitarian persons**

When the mind thinks itself occurrently it constitutes the **image of God (as Trinity)** in a human being

