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Marcin Godawa

Conditioning of Intellect in Christian Contemplation in the Light of Definitions and St. Augustine's Experience

Abstract: According to Christian anthropology, full spiritual development of a man can be ascertained by taking into account contemplation in its two forms, that is, acquired and infused prayer, and recollection of the knowledge of God obtained as a privileged treat of that state. The order of examination raises the question of independence or conditioning of the human intellect. The Catholic Church teaches that 'contemplation' means the coherent cooperation of the entire complex of human capacities – mainly the intellect, will and memory – with God's grace. An analysis of selected texts that address the idea of contemplation and that could be perceived as representative units of this type, especially St. Augustine's description of his spiritual experience, brings a deeper insight into the problem of conditioning. Reason is considered part of the theological triad and is thus strongly connected with will and memory in one common relation to God. This correlation, which is typical of acquired contemplation, remains and is also changed through infused [mystical] experience. In this process the Holy Spirit, being actualized above discursive deliberation through the simple act of gazing on the truth, subordinates the intellect to the grace of illumination that is the extraordinary inspiration. This shows how the intellect in harmony with nature serves the supernatural aim of human vocation, which is sanctification. Since infused contemplation of God prefigures the greater heavenly and eternal contemplation "face to face" (*visio beatifica*) it clearly indicates that human mind goes through and far beyond cognitive knowledge and that the subordination of reason has a very positive sense.

Key words: intellect, will, acquired and infused contemplation, illumination, simple gaze on the truth, subordination of reason, happiness

Povzetek: **Pogojevanje uma v krščanski kontemplaciji v luči definicij in izkušnje sv. Avguština**

Povzetek: Po krščanski antropologiji se lahko polni človekov duhovni razvoj ugotavlja z upoštevanjem kontemplacije v dveh njenih oblikah, to je: pridobljena in vlita molitev in obujanje spomina spoznanja Boga, ki je bilo pridobljeno kot privilegirani priboljšek tega stanja. Zaporedje preiskav postavlja vprašanje glede neodvisnosti ali pogojevanja človeškega uma. Katoliška Cerkev uči, da »kontemplacija«

pomeni skladno sodelovanje celote človeških zmožnosti – predvsem uma, volje in spomina – z božjo milostjo. Analiza izbranih besedil, ki zadevajo idejo kontemplacije in ki bi lahko veljala kot predstavniki te zvrsti, posebno spisi sv. Avgušтина, v katerih so opisane njegove duhovne izkušnje, prispeva h globljemu vpogledu v problem pogojevanja. Razum velja za del teološke triade in je tako močno povezan z voljo in s spominom v skupno razmerje do Boga. Ta povezava, ki je značilna za pridobljeno kontemplacijo, ostane in se spremeni pri vliti (mistični) izkušnji. V tem procesu je um, po preprostem dejanju zrenja resnice, podrejen milosti razsvetljenja, ki je izredni navdih Svetega Duha. To kaže, kako um v sozvočju z naravo služi nadnaravnim ciljem človeške poklicanosti, ki je posvečevanje. Ker je vlita kontemplacija Boga predpoda večje nebeške in večne kontemplacije »iz obličja v obličje« (*visio beatifica*), jasno nakazuje, da gre človeški um skozi kognitivno spoznanje in daleč prek njega in da ima podreditev razuma zelo pozitiven smisel.

Ključne besede: um, volja, pridobljena in vlita kontemplacija, razsvetljenje, preprosto zrenje resnice, podreditev razuma, sreča

The way of spiritual development of man can be inter alia measured by contemplation (Słomkowski 2000, 122) which emerges in two kinds of acquired or infused (mystical) contemplation. Since this prayer presupposes some knowledge of God the role of reason is evidently shown. However, here arises a question whether the activity of human intellectual capacity – intellect or understanding or reason¹ – dominates as a sign of independence so close to contemporary self-defining of man² or if it has to be harmoniously and necessarily combined with other human abilities and subdued to the higher reality. With the eminent clearness theology of spirituality points out the latter answer. Despite some differences, which express theological pluralism, it is commonly accepted that contemplation embraces man as a whole being with intellect and the rest of his or her faculties in the fullest harmony of them and that it submits him or her to the greater life of God. By the synthesis of selected and representative texts and especially by the analysis of Saint Augustine's auto-descriptions of his spiritual experiences this presentation shows how deeply understanding is conditioned within the theological triad of three capacities and next in the areas of both acquired and infused contemplation and that this state has a very positive sense.

1. Theological Triad of Intellect, Will and Memory

Here used as an opening example, a meditation by Adam Opatowiusz, an early modern Polish writer (1574–1647), allegorically reflects the comprehension of a

¹ These three terms are here used as synonyms (Augustine, *Trin.*, X.11.17–18). Intellect and reason (understanding) are the same human capacity though they can be distinguished respectively as simple knowledge or knowledge through the process of reasoning (Więckowski 1960, 298; Gilson 1960, 292).

² The question is outstandingly lectured by Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*.

soul's involvement in contemplation – characteristic of the teaching of the Catholic Church. Analyzing the motive of the revelation of God (Ex 3:1–6) the author depicts Moses who is a shepherd as a figurative representative of man of prayer. He states: »And you, oh my soul, are a shepherd. You have received from the Lord a soul and a body; in your soul there are reason, will and memory.« (Opatowiusz 1633, 404) The idea of a shepherd and sheep presupposes one principle in man that is an ontological person which possesses and manages all its powers. Following this order a soul is ascribed by the triad of higher human faculties – memory, intellect and will – which according to St. Augustine's *De Trinitate* constitutes in a soul the ontological image of the Holy Trinity (Augustine, *Trin.*, XIV.6.6). The memory (*memoria*) represents the Father as the Begetter while the understanding (*intelligentia*) – the Son as His co-eternal Word. Next, the will (*voluntas*) or love³ – which cannot exist without memory and understanding – reflects the Holy Spirit (XV.21, 40–41). In turn, a human person who possesses three faculties evokes one common divine nature in God.⁴ Therefore, it is well-understood that this human triad was commonly accepted as an anthropological focus of spiritual life more exactly for two reasons: 1) as the highest part of a soul (*mens, nous*)⁵ and 2) as the ontological image of God determining the perspective of getting similar to Him. In his anthropological considerations Augustine strongly stresses that on the one side memory, understanding and will are differed as three faculties when they are mutually related but on the other side each of them is one mind or substance when it is referred to itself. This oneness is inseparably connected with their equality because »if they were not equal, and this not only each to each, but also each to all, they certainly could not mutually contain each other; for not only is each contained by each, but also all by each.« (X.11.18) From this point it is easy to go to the topic of the article and to state that will and memory are not less important than pure intellect. If the three faculties represent the Three Divine Persons and if the Three Persons are absolutely equal one another it means that also intellect, will and memory must be joined by theological equality and be placed in the same level.

However, the idea is even multiplied by Opatowiusz' acknowledgement that a flock of thoughts and a flock of desires are uncountable. This whole variety is to be managed by a soul that evokes the concept of a free person who is able to take full responsibility for his or her spiritual life and decisions, so strongly preached by the Catholic Church. In the allegory the management is depicted as taking care of a flock: »(Moses) conducted his flock into the desert. Similarly you (my soul) took your flocks away from the infective desert of the world and conducted it into the deep desert of thinking-about-God and of lament for your sins.« (Opatowiusz

³ Will is traditionally understood as love (Augustine, *Trin.*, XV.7.12) and is also connected with affections (XV.XXI.41).

⁴ Obviously, the difference between man and God is still retained (Augustine, *Trin.*, XV.20.39; XV.22.42; XV.23.43). Nota bene, Augustine's use of a *person* illustrates God's nature.

⁵ Following Gilson's presentation of Thomism these are two main faculties: intellect and will but memory belongs to intellect (Gilson 1960, 292).

1633, 405) A soul governs its abilities by leading them out from the dangerous world to the state of »thinking-about-God« (*bogomyślność*), which includes meditation along with contemplation (Godawa 2006, 19–23).

This truth is surprisingly confirmed when the motive of leaving a flock appears in a mystical level. In imitation of Moses leaving his flock for seeing the great vision a human soul is called in such a way: »And you, oh my soul, if you see the flaming Lord's face, please, awake your desire and forgetting your flocks, which are in your body, be in hurry with your flock of reason, will and memory to see God injured in human nature.« (Opatowiusz 1633, 407)⁶ The act of moving aside what is in human body represents the special prayer of ecstasy that means so intensive experience of living God that bodily abilities are temporarily suspended. Just in this phase of *disconnection*⁷ the three main capacities – reason, will and memory – steadily take part together in the experience of ardent contemplation marked by the motive of gazing. The main conclusion is that in this process the whole man is involved in the definite order though the triad is accentuated. Such a model practical teaching ought to be next comprehended more theoretically.

2. Intellect Combined with Other Capacities in Acquired Contemplation

Having acknowledged that it is time to examine a group of commonly accepted definitions of contemplation in regard of not-only-cognitive human share in that. Keeping the line of spiritual progress firstly acquired contemplation will be taken into account. Garrigou-Lagrange explains: »Acquired contemplation is generally defined by those who admit its existence at the end of meditation as simple and loving knowledge of God and of His works, which is the fruit of our personal activity aided by grace«. (Garrigou-Lagrange 2014, 3:31) For the present topic it is important that the contemplation fluently appears from ordinary meditation when man wants to enjoy the truth which he had considered before and he or she does it through *looking at* that. In turn, acquired contemplation is equal to the higher stage of a meditating soul which does not need already to search for particular senses but wants to rest on the truth; therefore it is also named *a prayer of simplicity* (Garrigou-Lagrange 2014, 3:31; Słomkowski 2000, 225). Garrigou-Lagrange's description: »a simple and loving knowledge of God« precisely presents the essence of that prayer. Knowledge of contemplation is not only simple but more significantly *loving* one which means that the acts of cognition and loving must be strictly joined in one reality and that human understanding is accompanied by will as a factor of love. Two main human capacities are present herein.

⁶ This analysis concerns Opatowiusz' texts which had been already undertaken but from the other point of view (Godawa 2009, 11–23).

⁷ Similarly taking off Moses' shoes means the necessary purification of a soul from »bad affects, habits, anger, hatred, will to come back to sins« (Opatowiusz 1633, 408).

Saint Ignatius of Loyola in *The Spiritual Exercises* – a representative book of Christian doctrine which shaped the modern spirituality – delivers a technical presentation of the contemplation: »For, if the person who is making the Contemplation, takes the true groundwork of the narrative, and, discussing and considering for himself, finds something which makes the events a little clearer or brings them a little more home to him – whether this comes through his own reasoning, or because his intellect is enlightened by the Divine power – he will get more spiritual relish and fruit, than if he who is giving the Exercises had much explained and amplified the meaning of the events. For it is not knowing much, but realising and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul.« (Ignatius 1914, 2) The pure cognitive process of collecting information as much as possible is not valid here (»not knowing much«) because the work of mind must be concentrated on a small piece of information (»something«) to draw its more profound sense. Ignatius says that even one word could suffice (Ignatius 1914, 252). In connection with this attitude of mind two possible phases are divided, namely natural »reasoning« as well as »realizing and relishing« the object.

The latter is more strictly conditioned by the role of the Holy Spirit's inspiration and it is depicted as the more important element which overcomes and supplements cognition. Ignatius' terms – »spiritual relish and fruit«, »contents and satisfies the soul« or – from other pages – »to rest«, »to content myself« (76), »consolation« (Ignatius 1914, 252; Godawa 2011, 126–128) – indicate an affective dimension of human nature and evidently show that the spiritual growth proceeds through the whole area of human personality. The pair: *reason–will* connected with emotions (affects) is like the motor for that in the sense that what has been thought is next more interiorly accepted by emotional and will activity (»relishing«) up to give fruits. Figuratively the cooperation was depicted in Opatowiusz' picture of a soul as a press: »When someone puts grapes into the press and pushes it then wine juice flows immediately. Equally when reason and will start to consider then gratitude flows immediately like oil or precious ointment.« (Opatowiusz 1633, 321) The construction and method of operation of a press which requires working two simultaneous factors outstandingly illustrate the necessity of intellect and will as two correlated capacities. The transformation of *material* of prayer into its results is depended on the bilateral action which means that solely intellectual penetrating would be as much profitable as a damaged appliance. The will is needed not only to support the intellect in its very basic and natural way of doing but also – and it is crucial here – to produce spiritual effects, which Opatowiusz enumerates: »the precious ointment of sorrow and tears«, »the oil of the love of God« and »the juice of desire and determination to fulfill vows.« (Opatowiusz, 1633, 321) The direction of the will as well as the semantics of the effects focused on willing and loving show the strong dependence of reason on will to such an extent that without the cooperation of intellect with will acquired contemplation does not achieve its aim.

Two other important points of Saint Ignatius' book allow one to confirm more strongly the necessity of human holistic involvement in contemplation. Firstly, the

rule named shortly *tantum-quantum* states that man's end is to praise the Lord and to save his or her soul by this means and that all other goods can only be help so »from this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it« (Ignatius 1914, 23). In accordance with such a wide and positive rule also all the human possibilities should be adequately drawn on in prayer and anything useful should not be excluded. The fact that human life is measured by the transcendent divine aim situates cognitive knowledge in harmony with the entire human attitude and prevents from the danger of perceiving the world as projection of human thought and from every kind of solipsism.

This Ignatius' foundation next repeats itself more practically in the first meditation of *The Spiritual Exercises* which serves as a model for the rest. There is a place for using imagination with senses when man prepares himself or herself to meditate by creating a visible picture of an object (47). Further instructions are even more important: »The first Point will be to bring the memory on the First Sin, which was that of the Angels, and then to bring the intellect on the same, discussing it; then the will, wanting to recall and understand all this in order to make me more ashamed and confound me more ...« (50) Here three capacities – memory, intellect and will – are singled out as a main complex of human work in contemplation. Their parallel role is stressed by the same postulate *to bring each of them to the matter* supplemented by the subsequent expression »to bring the Three Powers« (51) from which the name of Ignatius' method derives (*the method of three powers*). In connection with them also some of their results are enlightened. Memorizing makes grounds for the intellect whose role is to »discuss« the object while the will supports both of them that is »recalling« and »understanding«. However, this nexus of operations tends to form a special attitude here of »being ashamed and more confounded« where the presence of feelings is also noticeable. The role of intellect – which appears as necessarily related to the rest of human capacities – must be crowned by the real end of meditation-contemplation that is a colloquy between man and God for example like a conversation of two friends (53). A form of *colloquy* is so broad that it contains the whole human being – not only a cognitive activity – just as a spiritual colloquy differs from studies.

The essential role of *the Three Powers* is better justified when it is considered as associated with an activity of divine grace. In the Church doctrine each capacity is subjected to a particular kind of grace, but in the main area intellect is referred to faith, will to love while memory to hope so that three human powers contact three divine and infused virtues (Garrigou-Lagrange 2014, 1:3; John 2015, II.6.1–6). Furthermore, it can be prolonged to the statement that three gifts of the Holy Spirit help the human natural capacities in order to receive and use the potentials of supernatural virtues in the following order: the gift of understanding⁸ cooperates with reason and faith, the gift of wisdom – with will and love while the gift of kno-

⁸ Obviously, this supernatural gift of understanding differs from the human natural understanding (reason) which is the main topic here.

wledge – with memory and hope (Garrigou-Lagrange 2014, 1:3.). Ultimately, this whole complex – here mentioned in short and by pointing out its dominants – aims to make man docile or amenable to the Holy Spirit's inspirations. At this point the essence of humanity and the essence of sanctification go together and just due to such relations man has to be only holistically comprehended.

3. Subordination of Intellect in Infused Contemplation

The idea expressed previously concerns acquired contemplation as well as infused contemplation but in the latter some essential changes must be taken into account by comparison of their definitions. Whereas the ordinary prayer has been described as »a loving knowledge of God«, the mystical one is »infused and loving knowledge of God.« (Garrigou-Lagrange 2014, 3:31) In fact, this mystical knowledge must also be integral to love – and for this reason it is often depicted as love between the bride and the bridegroom – but here occurs a different kind of learning because a soul is being enlightened by the extraordinary light granted by God to man. Garrigou-Lagrange recalls the difference between an ordinary »cooperating« grace and a special actual »operating« grace which makes infused contemplation: »... we must see clearly the specific difference between the human mode in which even the infused virtues operate and the superhuman mode of operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the acts of which have precisely as their immediate rule the illumination and special inspiration of the interior Master. This inspiration is an elevated form of actual operating grace, which moves us to act freely above all discursive deliberation.« (3:32) *Infusing* in contemplation means that the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit – in other words the »actual grace« – enables and stirs man to receive the knowledge in a form of illumination. More exactly, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit influences a human »connaturalness with divine things« by infused love linked to the gift of wisdom (3:32). The new cooperation produces the »quasi-experimental knowledge of God« which is just infused contemplation. Its substantial trait is the fact that it emerges »above discursive deliberation« and therefore man derives this wisdom not through intellectual operations or cognitive skills but by being illuminated in a passive attitude. Thus, the role of understanding is here more limited or to speak better more dominated by the higher kind of communicating a truth. It leads to the conclusion that the final point of spiritual development and knowledge lies *far beyond* the pure cognitive area that is in the state where man concentrates not on a line of reasoning but simply on getting wholly opened to the Holy Spirit's illumination. This divine light puts the intellect in an appropriate place as well as supplies the entire accomplishment of human life.

The nature of contemplation is regularly represented by the motive of *a light* and hence it is named *illumination* whereas from the perspective of man it is rendered by a semantically related term *a gaze* and the like.⁹ The relation of gazing

⁹ Obviously, looking on God is depended on His illumination in both kinds of prayer respecting the difference between them.

on emerges from a few other cardinal definitions of contemplation too. Having recalled the Greek etymology the contemplation as looking on is perceived more exactly because *theōria* derives from *thea* which means »seeing«. More popularly and at the point though out of a natural reliance *theōria* was largely explained as »*Theon horaō*« that is »to look on God« (Špidlik et al. 2004, 138–139) through a higher wisdom (*gnōsis*) and love (*agapē*) (Szram 2002, 28–29). In this experience the whole man is involved by uniting knowledge with love and by employing a special kind of intuition – »a spiritual sense.« (32–33) Dionysius the Areopagite – a universally accepted authority who had a great influence on the mystical doctrine in the East and the West – teaches on the mystical state as follows: »Unto this Darkness which is beyond Light we pray that we may come, and may attain unto vision through the loss of sight and knowledge, and that in ceasing thus to see or to know we may learn to know that which is beyond all perception and understanding (for this emptying of our faculties is true sight and knowledge).« (Dionysius 2014, 100–101) Since the aim of human way is God alone who radically overcomes everything else and is »beyond all perception and understanding« the final fulfillment is paradoxically depicted as entering into »Darkness beyond Light«. Man attains that through »the loss of sight and understanding« – or »Light« – that leads to the conclusion that the ordinary human learning must be suspended for the goal is situated far »beyond« one's capacities. It is also important that emptying of natural faculties is tantamount to this »true sight and knowledge« that has been illustrated with an example of a sculptor who removes all the impediments in order to show the hidden statue which had been formed in his mind (100–101). Although it seems to be the end of human knowledge contemplation remains indeed *true knowledge and vision* – rendered above by »we may learn to know« and »we may attain into vision« and »true sight and knowledge«. Despite its mystical transformation the complex of human faculties is still retained so as to share the new experience of infused contemplation. Thomas Merton reminds us that the most important task of the intellect in contemplation is to protect a soul from deviation from the straight way of the faith to the divine union. Like headlights of a car which help to keep a road at night the reason is necessary for infused contemplation albeit subdued to the higher reality (Merton 1988, 120–121).

This apprehension faces a question of an exact place where the union between man and the Lord occurs. Theologians agree that the direct connection of an individual and God is being attained just in love whereas reason – still needed – perceives God by its judgment which is indeed a judgment over conceptual knowledge (Merton 1988, 75). Notwithstanding Saint Thomas Aquinas defines the act of union as a speculative act of intellect but he alone states that the perfect happiness – which is strictly connected with contemplation (Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.180.4) – is reached only over speculative science (Merton 1988, 108) because this science is limited by sensual data (Merton 1988, 107; Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II.3.6). Furthermore, the relation between two most important human capacities presents itself as follows: »Consequently the contemplati-

ve life, as regards the essence of the action, pertains to the intellect, but as regards the motive cause of the exercise of that action it belongs to the will, which moves all the other powers, even the intellect, to their actions«. In this sense the intellect is determined by the will which means also by the love because »desire and love pertain to the affective or appetitive power« and this power moves one to contemplation *for love* of »the thing seen« or of »the very knowledge that one acquires by observation«. Finally, it shows again that the knowledge is inseparably tied up with the love so that »the contemplative life terminates in delight, which is seated in the affective power.« (Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.180.1) On the one hand, this Thomism-intellectual view demonstrates paradoxically and more evidently how much intellect is conditioned by love while on the other hand it still underlines the apprehension of contemplation as knowledge in the following short definition: »Contemplation regards the simple act of gazing on the truth.« (II-II.180.3)¹⁰ Gazing by its relation to the truth means actual knowledge. At this point the Western tradition along with the Eastern one presents the concept which lets us realize the submission of intellect to the reality of spiritual life. Namely, the intellect is necessarily associated with the whole personality, mainly with love, and next the understanding serves the final aim of the whole human development which can be an exclusively supernatural one and higher than the cognitive power. The concept of infused contemplation as *the simple act of gazing on the truth* in the meaning that man is subordinated to and illuminated by the extraordinary grace expresses the awareness of the limits imposed upon human mind.

The way of making reason subjected has been theologically explained by Tanquerey who examined St. John of the Cross and St. Therese the Great's teaching. At the beginning, one of the signs of mystical contemplation is an unexpected *inability to meditate and to make reflections* on divine things with the intellect that is motivated by the fact that God starts then to communicate Himself to man through a new infused light (»in pure spirit«) above discursive deliberation (Tanquerey 1930, 1424). Furthermore, there is a specific order of participation of human capacities in the process of mystical illumination. As the first, in the prayer of sweet quietude – the first step of mystical life – only the will connected with the intellect are united with God however the intellectual power of understanding is away from the experience and therefore it along with imagination can produce some troubles (1938). Thence, the unification begins with the will but the understanding as well as »all the interior faculties« are associated later – in the prayer of full union – that makes a soul absolutely sure of God's presence (1449–1450). Such a union is strengthened in the prayer of ecstatic union and after the dark night of the spirit it terminates in the transforming union or the spiritual marriage when a soul enjoys God directly in the closest intimacy, serenity and indissolubility (1470) especially through the *intellectual vision* of God's reality (1472). It comes to conclusion that in infused contemplation the intellect 1) may not be taken separately but only in harmony with the rest of the faculties; 2) it perma-

¹⁰ »Simple« means that contemplation finally consists in only one single act of gazing on the truth (Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.180.3).

nently belongs to the contemplation up to be a place of intellectual vision; 3) because of serving the greater reality it must be transformed from its ordinary use to the state of more passive participation in the new prayer.

The contemplation comprehended as a gaze, illumination, vision is during the earthly life a herald of the eternal and infinite experience of the Saints in heaven that is to the beatific vision (1469). This heavenly state exceeds the former one in quality because man is then already free of his or her temporal limits. For this reason he or she gazes on the Lord not yet »indistinctly, as in a mirror« but finally »face to face« (1 Cor 13:12) which in the theological language means looking at the essence of God through the light of His glory. The passage between the mystical-earthly and heavenly realities is clearly and interestingly displayed by St. Bernard of Clairvaux in *On Loving God*. The human life is here divided into three phases according to the three actions deriving from the biblical saying allegorized: »Eat and drink, friends; be intoxicated, dearest.« (Song 5:1) »Eating« renders life-till-death in the flesh because a soul obtains spiritual food by the work of faith and love. »Drinking« is shared by those who »have set aside their bodies« and »are allowed to drink deeply the wine of love« as free from the labor. This is the state of the saved which despite its bliss still remains uncompleted that is marked by the image of drinking then wine mixed with milk interpreted in the following way: »The soul mixes the sweetness of natural affection with the wine of divine love when it desires to resume its glorified body«. The state between the death and the resurrection contains enjoying God's love like a wine but »not to the point of intoxication« yet because of some personal longing of the soul for its renewed body which just like milk »tempers« the wine. At this point it becomes clear that in heavenly contemplation the whole man has to be involved so that even the pure spiritual activity does not suffice and the fullness is achieved only when the soul resumes its body.

This final and the third experience takes a form of *intoxication* of which it is said that it »overthrows minds and makes them forget everything« (Bernard 2005, 83–84). Free of every care man experiences as much as it is possible the new immortal life and God's love (84). From this perspective they are seen both the holistic participation of man in God as he or she needs a body to be fully happy and the limitation of intellect because it is to be overthrown. However, it does not mean that mind or reason become unnecessary. In Bernard's image of a drop of water dissolved in wine the human »substance« still »remains« but »in another form« and »with another power.« (80) Thus, the mind (reason) belonging to the substance (nature) is still needed and being no longer concerned with a care for a body – finally after the resurrection – it shares God's life which is represented by drinking from »the goblet of wisdom.« (Bernard 2005, 83; Ps 23:5) That confirms the cognitive dimension of the fulfillment as it is in whole directed by Wisdom (Bernard 2005, 84). If then man has to love God with »all his or hers soul« and »all his or hers strength« (80) the reason is still present there but in really »another form« of joining divine Wisdom (78–84).

4. Reason Gazing on the Truth According to Augustine's Description

Two categories of *the gaze on the truth* as well as face-to-face looking or *drinking-intoxication* show that the submission of contemplating intellect could be expressed by using the quasi-sensual elements which in natural order are lower than mind. However, here gazing or tasting means analogically the experience of God so great that it surpasses the only cognitive way. These *spiritual senses* render sharing the higher religious life in which the whole man harmoniously gets involved and they could be ascribed to both acquired but especially to infused contemplation. Against this tradition a famous St. Augustine's dictum could be interestingly analyzed as an epitome of the mystical contemplative experience. The author of *The Confessions* reports:

»And being thence warned to return to myself, I entered into my inward self, Thou leading me on; and I was able to do it, for Thou wert become my helper. And I entered, and with the eye of my soul (such as it was) saw above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the Unchangeable Light. Not this common light, which all flesh may look upon, nor, as it were, a greater one of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should be much more resplendent, and with its greatness fill up all things. Not like this was that light, but different, yea, very different from all these. Nor was it above my mind as oil is above water, nor as heaven above earth; but above it was, because it made me, and I below it, because I was made by it. He who knows the Truth knows that Light; and he that knows it knoweth eternity. Love knoweth it. O Eternal Truth, and true Love, and loved Eternity!«

Thou art my God; to Thee do I sigh both night and day. When I first knew Thee, Thou liftedst me up, that I might see there was that which I might see, and that yet it was not I that did see. And Thou didst beat back the infirmity of my sight, pouring forth upon me most strongly Thy beams of light, and I trembled with love and fear; and I found myself to be far off from Thee, in the region of dissimilarity, as if I heard this voice of Thine from on high: »I am the food of strong men; grow, and thou shalt feed upon me; nor shall thou convert me, like the food of thy flesh, into thee, but thou shalt be converted into me.« And I learned that Thou for iniquity dost correct man, and Thou dost make my soul to consume away like a spider. And I said, 'Is Truth, therefore, nothing because it is neither diffused through space, finite, nor infinite?' And Thou criedst to me from afar, 'Yea, verily, *I Am that I Am*.' And I heard this, as things are heard in the heart, nor was there room for doubt; and I should more readily doubt that I live than that Truth is not, which is 'clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made'.« (Augustine, *Conf.*, VII.10.16)

The characteristics of the infused contemplation appear here evidently. Starting from the phenomenological point of view St. Augustine's experience is presented

as a *new gaze on God* which corresponds to the favorable mentioned above apprehension of the contemplation. The author names his activity »seeing with the eye of my soul« and then he indicates a higher way of doing – marked by a word »above« – because he »saw (it) above the same eye« (of his soul) and »above his mind«. At this point the issue of knowledge *above discursive deliberation* recurs being strengthened by the description of what he saw. The object is »the Unchangeable Light« equipped with a series of remarks which stresses its supernatural and extraordinary origin. Thus, the light was »very different« from any and even brightest kind of physical light so that its position »above mind« is justified by the difference between the Creator and the creature in the form that »being above mind« refers to the continuing creation (»above it was, because it made me«). Obviously, the author recognizes the Light as God alone with any doubt (»nor was there room for doubt«) which echoes the very important trait of mystical experience, mentioned above by the prayer of full union.

The next important thing in Augustine's description is the identification of knowing the Truth with the Light: »He who knows the Truth knows that Light«. It means that »the Light« or illumination is a form of knowing God and then that leads once again to the concept of contemplation as *the simple act of gazing on the truth*. This experience also confirms the fact that the accomplishment of a soul's life consists in knowledge – that is suggested by the expression »knows the Truth« – but this is the knowledge of a different kind because it has a form of gazing and is strictly connected with the other dimensions of human life. The most significant bond occurs between knowing and loving exactly like in the general picture of mystical life, presented before. The author says that »love knoweth« eternity – that is God – thus learning is essentially conditioned by love and it does not exist without. Hereafter, this connection is developed by the following invocation: »O Eternal Truth, and true Love, and loved Eternity!« which let us look deeper into the question. In description of the experience of God's infinite reality three nouns are drawn on in order to show that God is both »Truth« and »Love« and that in the relationship with Him these two dimensions must appear on a human side. Moreover, the process of interchange of terms goes further because each noun becomes an adjective to the other one. Such a subtle structure presents both the variety and absolute unity of God's nature. From the point of view of this article the most significant is the direct expression: »true Love« but the same could be achieved with the deduction: Truth is eternal and Eternity is loved so Love is true.¹¹ All that reveal that infinite God can be perceived from various perspectives but because He is one and the same God the human experience of Him has to indeed possess each of His dimensions ergo knowledge strictly connected with love. In this way God's nature reflects in human life which evokes the theology of man as the image of the Trinity, a substantial one for Augustine. Hence, the necessity of respecting intellect as related to love and to the other human dimensions is ultimately justified by the nature of God as the object of human

¹¹ Nota bene that also »Unchangeable Light« expresses the same as »Eternal Truth«.

understanding all the more that man experiences God in himself or herself for God is within (Taylor 2012, 254–259).

Continuing the presentation, now the Creator's action towards man can be pointed out. God accurately prepares Augustine to receive new mystical knowledge by lifting him up to see what was impossible before and by beating back the infirmity of his sight followed by pouring forth upon him »most strongly« His »beams of light« which is His infused illumination. As a result the man experiences it not only by learning God as well as his own position but also by »love and fear«. From this dynamic aspect the idea of contemplation arises which is prepared by God and concerns the whole man.

At the end the whole involvement of man in contemplation is suggested in the very interesting way. Namely, God's communicating through contemplation refers not only to gazing on but also to other spiritual senses. In the confession analyzed here the motive of illumination is accompanied by the motive of God's voice which explains the new prospect to man and by virtue of bringing information it is even closer referred to knowledge. In turn, this self-explanation contains the motive of food that is God who gives Himself to man so as to convert him or her into Himself.

This trait of the contemplation appealing to three spiritual senses can be supplemented by other famous Augustine's auto-description:

»Too late did I love Thee, O Fairness, so ancient, and yet so new! Too late did I love Thee! ... Thou calledst, and criedst aloud, and forcedst open my deafness. Thou didst gleam and shine, and chase away my blindness. Thou didst exhale odours, and I drew in my breath and do pant after Thee. I tasted, and do hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace.« (Augustine, *Conf.*, X.27.38)

In the parallel series of sentences he addresses God's action to all five human senses to stress its fullness as well as the fact that it presupposes and incorporates the whole human abilities into experience. The only supernatural reality is so rich that it is perceived as calling-hearing, shining-sight, odor, taste and touch. The rule that man shares one God's essence in plenty of its aspects repeats here itself but now it concerns the nature in acting. It is not less important to see results of that because on the one hand the grace operating through these spiritual senses prepares man for contemplation by removing impediments (deafness, blindness) while on the other hand, it produces very positive feelings suggested clearly by drawing God's odors and panting after Him, burning for His peace on account of His touch and tasting God entailing the state of hunger and thirst which evokes the truth that the experience of infinite God awakes in man the desire for the ultimate fulfillment which as St. Gregory of Nyssa claims in *The Life of Moses* has no end. Such a full-side picture presents that in the mystical contact man is transformed and fully satiated and that intellect is included in the whole reality. While in the first group seeing or hearing could connote a kind of knowledge the second

group of senses – smell, taste and touch – recalls the other extra-cognitive dimensions of the state. If Augustine's apprehension of God as beauty («Fairness») – which again appeals not only to the cognitive power – is added it will reveal on the whole the holistic involvement of man in the contemplation.

The present analysis along with St. Thomas' above-mentioned statements that happiness is reached over speculative science and that contemplation is a dimension of happiness which consists in knowledge but terminates in affective delight shows the very *positive meaning* of the conditioning of human intellect in the contemplation. The consideration of speculative science is »a certain participation of true and perfect happiness« (Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I.II.3.6). The idea of *participation* implies subordination but the mystical subordination gives an access to the higher reality of ultimate happiness. The analytical insight into Augustine's life confirms that thesis with special clarity from the perspective of subjective experience. The contemplation signifies a kind of knowledge in which the reason is double-conditioned by its bond with love as well as the other capacities and by its subjection to God. Furthermore, Augustine's definition of a happy life which is »joy in the truth« (Augustine, *Conf.*, X.23.33) can be used as a summary of this consideration. »Truth« suggests again that a happy life is a kind of knowledge but this knowledge is so strongly connected with affection that from a subjective perspective the joy is preferred in the definition whereas from the objective perspective the joy derives from and is conditioned by the truth that is the higher divine reality. Thus, happiness or contemplation consists in the knowledge which necessarily united with affection participates in the Lord.

5. Conclusion

The attentive review of the representative definitions and descriptions of Christian contemplation shows that human intellect (reason, understanding) that is the power of getting knowledge is essentially conditioned by its intra-relation to the whole personality and by its extra-relation to the greater reality. Augustine's triad of human capacities suggests that in analogy to the Trinity reason acts as strictly combined with love and memory. The liaison between intellect and love (affection) continues in the acquired contemplation – comprehended as *loving knowledge* of God – being its methodological core and referring to the other human capacities.

In infused or mystical contemplation the submission of intellect to God's reality is more expressively shown because it is enlightened with the operating grace in the form of *illumination* which acts above discursive deliberation. On that account the contemplation is depicted as *the simple gaze on the truth* or by the equivalent terminology and it is said to remain actual knowledge but transformed and terminating in delight. This character is rendered in the following definition: »infused and loving knowledge of God« which means that the intellect strictly corresponds to the human affective power (*loving knowledge*) and is accommo-

dated to the new divine light (*infused* knowledge). Allowing the whole human being – with body and soul – it is possible to observe how its particular capacities share the union with the Lord on the earthly mystical way up to the ultimate heavenly state. The motive of *intoxication* with Wisdom lets us notice that the reason – as a counterpart of wisdom – is harmoniously integrated with the whole nature since in the only resurrected body God will be praised with all the human strength.

The topic can be next interestingly observed in St. Augustine's auto-description of the mystical event. The analyzed excerpt epitomizes the significant features of the contemplation along with the role of reason within. His own experience contains the knowledge of God – which is implemented above mind and discursive deliberation as His illumination received by man with entire sureness. In the comprehension of the mystical prayer in the form of enlightenment or gazing on the truth knowing remains actually connected with loving because human nature reflects God's infinite and multi-aspect essence. The idea of illumination means also clearly the submission of human intellect to the Light which is God alone. However, the whole substance of the experience is expressed by means of a variety of spiritual senses which again situates reason within the whole personality and underlines its subjection to the contemplative action. In connection with the definition of a happy life as »joy in the truth« – through contemplation – the conditioning of reason by love and the whole personality and the subordination of that to God shows that the loving knowledge of contemplation reaches the highest positive sense.

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