

St. Augustine's «notitia sui» Related to Aristotle and the Early Neo-Platonists *

IV. AUGUSTINE AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

a) General principles of epistemology

Always prepared critically to accept or critically to reject what he found in neo-Platonism, Augustine seems to have discovered his bearings from the moment of his conversion. The arrival in North Africa of the devout neo-Platonist minded pagans presented a potentially greater problem than could be faced up to in earnest argument with them in the salons of Carthage. There was the possibility of a greater pagan reaction than under Julian : a widespread apostasy of the intellectual classes as they struggled to make sense of their experiences of invasion. The enthusiasm with which some had embraced the half-way position of Arianism was threatening. Serious consideration was necessary in order to establish a position at once orthodox and philosophically reputable, which would also include a critique of neo-Platonism in two respects.

Firstly it ought to be able to show, even with its demythologising of paganism, the resultant philosophical structures still contained a mass of contradictions, and that therefore only a thorough renewal of philosophy through contact with Christian inspiration held out any promise of finding coherence; and secondly that it contained grave misconceptions about the constitution of the individual. Augustine's problem was to prevent the possible concentration of all the remaining energies of Graeco-Roman philosophy into what would have been an oppositionless Averroism, seven hundred and fifty years before its time, with consequences from its conception of the individual as needing to be transcendently absorbed, disastrous for religious and social life.

*) Continuation of *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), pp. 70-132 and 364-401.

It is possible to read every page of the *De Trinitate* VIII onwards as if neo-Platonist thought were in his mind and as if he were deliberately and critically restructuring it to make it acceptable; and in particular to make its reflections on the self-knowing and self-loving of *νοῦς* and the One as the basic metaphysical structure of the individual human mind. A mass of probable textual allusions to Plotinus can be found to justify this theory. The disappearance of so much of Porphyry's writings has almost certainly deprived us of the possibility of confirming the presence of allusions to them. Augustine's critique seems to be in two lines. One was by an implicit attack on the transcendent hypostases through a restructuring of the human personality on a model not unlike those of Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, with the unequivocal assertion of the independence of each individual *mens*, characterised by the integrating and delimiting function of the individual *memoria*. The other line of critique lay in the use of modified neo-Platonist triads. Whilst his principle for modifying the triads of Plotinus is clear, our ignorance of Porphyry is a great hindrance. In those next two chapters the position of Augustine will be described, firstly with regard to his general teaching on epistemology, and then with regard to his triadic teaching.

Mens and Memoria in the Individual

The term *mens* brought together into a human unity concepts which in *νοῦς* and *ψυχή* of the Greek of neo-Platonism had at best an ambivalent but essentially transcendent meaning; it not only unified the faculties but individualised their possessor. As well as its use by Cicero ¹⁾, its occurrence in Chalcidius's commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* would have commended itself to Augustine. Here it was used of God: « est igitur mens Dei intelligendi aeternus actus » ²⁾; and yet without any merging or identification it could be found in man, equated with his intellect, and made the highest part of the

¹⁾ According to V. D'AUGUSTINO *mens* can include the will and sometimes be equivalent to *νοῦς*: 'Studi sul significato delle voci *animus*, *anima* e *mens* e sui loro reciproci rapporti' in: *Atti della R. Accademia delle scienze di Torino, Classi di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 73, 1937/8, p. 123.

²⁾ CLXXVI, WASZINK edition, p. 205.

soul : « animae pars altera sanctior diviniore, quae mens atque intellectus est » ³⁾).

Augustine's discussion of the memory include some most delicately sensitive passages of subjective self-analysis, especially in the *Confessions*. They are far more nuanced and of wider scope than his possible sources to which some commentators have drawn attention in Latin rhetor literature ⁴⁾. His training would have made him very memory-conscious, but his reflections later were metaphysical in range. Significant as was the rhetor's consciousness of memory, more significant are the parallels between Augustine's and Aristotle's teaching on it ⁵⁾.

Firstly, for both the basis principle establishing the existence of memory is substantially identical. Aristotle insists on the existence of memory because there must be an original implantation of a perception which persists, so that subsequent remembering can draw on it. If it did not persist in a memory, it could not be recalled ⁶⁾. Augustine speaks of something ultimate and first which lies in the memory,

« where we also find those contents which we think of for the first time, and where the inner word is begotten... from the understanding which already existed in the memory, but was latent there, although even thought itself, unless it had a memory of its own, would not return to those things which it had left in the memory when it thought of other things » ⁷⁾.

Secondly, even though Aristotle's position that « one does not remember in the present what one experiences in the present » ⁸⁾ seems to be contradicted, even conceivably deliberately contradicted, by Augustine's paradoxical assertion of the possibility of

³⁾ *ib.* CCVII, p. 225.

⁴⁾ See F. A. YATES, 'The Ciceronian Art of Memory' in : *Medioevo e Rinascimento, Studi in Onore di Bruno Nardi* II, Florence 1955, pp. 878 ff; W. SCHMIDT-DENGLER, 'Die 'Aula Memoriae' in den Konfessionen des heiligen Augustin', in : *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 14, 1968, especially pp. 81 ff.

⁵⁾ Commentaries or Latin doxographic works could have provided the link.

⁶⁾ *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* I, 451 a 23 ff.

⁷⁾ *De Trinitate* XV, 21, 40 : « ... hoc etiam primum cum cogitarem invenimus, et gignitur intimum verbum... de intelligentia quae in memoria jam fuerit, sed latebat quamquam et ipsa cogitatio quamdam suam memoriam nisi haberet, non reverteretur ad ea quae in memoria reliquerat, cum alia cogitaret ».

⁸⁾ *op. cit.* I, 451 a 31. cf. *ib.* 449 b 13 : 'nor is there memory of the present, but only perception'.

a memory of the present ⁹⁾, and even though Aristotle *a fortiori* denies there to be a memory of the future ¹⁰⁾ whilst Augustine even more paradoxically asserts the rôle of memory with regard to the future ¹¹⁾, there was the possibility of taking the words of Aristotle — that one does not remember in the present what one experiences in the present ¹²⁾ — in a different sense from their evident one. If the present is to be just moving point of an unextended 'now' which is the boundary between past and future according to Aristotle's *Physics* ¹³⁾, the experience of time would have only the unselfconscious intensity of the dancers of Plotinus's image ¹⁴⁾. But if it were admitted that time *as experienced* was essentially not of a point but of brief *continuum* through which the intention of the mind continues ¹⁵⁾, in which one got one's bearings and in which self-consciousness was involved, and if it were conceded that the centre of attention was always temporally a little behind what it perceived, not only because it was engaged in linking up its actual experience with past experiences but also because time was involved in expressing to itself what it was experiencing, and if the explanation of this time-involvement lay in the memory which would become the *sine qua non* of coherent experience, then the Aristotelian principle, *praeter intentionem auctoris*, could justify the giving to the

⁹⁾ *De Trinitate* XIV, 11, 14: 'in re praesenti quod sibi est mens, memoria sine absurditate dicanda est'.

¹⁰⁾ *op. cit.* 449 b 10-11: 'It is impossible to remember the future, which is an object of conjecture or speculation'.

¹¹⁾ *Confessiones* X, 8, 14: '... in aula ingenti memoriae meae... ex eadem copia etiam similitudines rerum vel expertarum vel ex eis, quas expertus sum, creditarum alias atque alias et ipse contexo praeteritis atque ex his etiam futuras actiones et eventa et spes, et haec omnia rursus quasi praesentia meditor'.

¹²⁾ See n. 8.

¹³⁾ VIII, 263 a 23-25.

¹⁴⁾ Cf. *Ennead* IV, 4, 8: '... if this chorus dances always (*déi*), its dance is completed at each instant; there is thus no instant nor place in which it will not be complete; and thus there will be no desire and it will measure neither space nor time in its dance; in consequence, it will not remember it at all' (following Bréhier).

¹⁵⁾ Cf. Augustine on the evanescence of the present: 'id solum est, quod praesens dicatur; quod tamen ita raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat, ut nulla morula extendatur... praesens autem nullum habet spatium' (*Confessiones* XI, 15, 20). But 'Et tamen perdurat intentio' (*ib.* 28,37); and length of time is measured in its expectation or in the memory (*ib.*). For time as a 'distensio animae', see *Confessiones* XI, 26,33. 29, 39. cf. also *Commentary on Psalm XXXVIII*, 7-9.

memory of a central epistemic rôle and, of necessity, an involvement in experience of the present.

Thirdly, the teaching of the *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* II ¹⁶⁾ that memory is self-conscious is strikingly parallel to Augustine's teaching on *memoria sui* ¹⁷⁾. Fourthly, there is a surprising number of detailed textual similarities between Augustine's treatment on memory and the *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*. The comparison of perception by the sense powers to wax receiving a seal is one of the normal Stoic images, but it does occur in Aristotle's text ¹⁸⁾. The impossibility of water receiving an impression occurs in both ¹⁹⁾. Both agree that the process of recollection is not under the control of the will ²⁰⁾; and both consider in connection with memory, states of madness and conditions of confusion between what is real and imaginary ²¹⁾. Finally, Augustine states that he arranged his material in form which is consistent and consecutive and that it could easily be re-learned if forgotten, and this is reminiscent of the desiderata for recollection of Aristotle ²²⁾.

But despite these similarities, which cannot have been mediated to Augustine by neo-Platonism because its hermeneutic transformation of Aristotelian themes had relegated the *memoria* to *ψυχή*: partly in its memory of *νοῦς*, but partly in its attachment to what was unreal, there are undoubtedly differences from Aristotle's teaching. The most striking is that for Aristotle memory is not in *νοῦς* ²³⁾.

Commentators have tried to characterise the nature of the Augustinian *memoria* over and above its Aristotelian counterpart.

For M. Schmaus it is « near our conception of 'consciousness', 'the range of one's mind' » ²⁴⁾. For G. Söhngen, « in fact the *memoria*

¹⁶⁾ 452 b 26-28.

¹⁷⁾ *De Trinitate* XIV, 6, 9: 'mentem semper sui meminisse'. As for Augustine self-knowing and self-loving were a condition of knowing or loving anything else, self-remembering would probably be a condition of remembering anything else.

¹⁸⁾ *De Trinitate* XI, 2, 3; *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* I, 450 a 32 (also in *De Anima* II, 12, 424 a 19, and III, 12, 435 a 9).

¹⁹⁾ *De Trinitate* ib.; *De Memoria*... I, 450 b 3.

²⁰⁾ *De Trinitate* XI, 4, 7; *De Memoria*... 2, 453 a 14 ff.

²¹⁾ *De Trinitate* ib.; *De Memoria*... I, 450 b 31 ff.

²²⁾ *De Trinitate* XV, 3, 4; *De Memoria*... 2, 452 a 2.

²³⁾ It is another case of the divide between mind and body which Aristotle could not bridge: *De Memoria*... I, 450 a 9 ff: *νοῦς* cannot make itself dependent on phantasms or involve itself in time.

²⁴⁾ 'Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des Hl. Augustinus', Münster 1927, p. 324: 'kommt unserem Begriffe 'Bewusstsein', 'Gedankenkreis' nahe'.

performs in the *Confessiones* what *intellectus* does in the Aristotelian system of Thomas »²⁵). For J. Guitton « in a general way, the memory is the faculty by which the soul is present to itself »²⁶). For L. Cille-ruelo, it is the « organo de perduración, distensión, unificación y conservación »²⁷).

It is all of these things, and something more. If it does overlap with the place of intellect in the Thomist part of the Aristotelian tradition, it still has its pure memory aspect. It is that from which knowledge which is not under consideration is called to be present; and perhaps here in the least elegant part of the theory: its content includes together intellectual and other notions²⁸). For the memory always has its content, whether cogitating it or not, even if it is only memory of the self « ... we betake ourselves to the inner memory of the mind by which it remembers itself, and to the inner understanding by which it understands itself and to the inner will by which it loves itself, where these three things are always together at the same time, and always have been together at the same time, from the moment when they began to be, whether one thought of them or whether one did not think of them »²⁹).

The mind, being incorporeal, is already known to itself; as with Aristotle's transcendent mind its self-presence is complete. From the memory which contains it, it has to make this self-knowledge conscious³⁰). However, that it should consciously know itself, it has with the deliberation of Aristotle's embodied mind to express

²⁵) 'Der Aufbau der augustinischen Gedächtnislehre, *Confessiones* X, 6-27' in: *Die Einheit in der Theologie*, Munich 1952, p. 72.

²⁶) J. GUITTON, 'Le temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et Saint Augustin', Paris 1959³, p. 244. Based on *De Trinitate* XIV, 7, 10: 'Si nos referamus ad interiorem mentis memoriam qua sui meminit'.

²⁷) 'Pro Memoria Dei', in: *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 12, 1966, p. 69.

²⁸) *Confessiones* X, 9, 16: 'quae de doctrinis liberalibus percepta nondum exciderunt'; *ib.* 12, 19: 'continet memoria numerorum dimensionumque rationes et leges innumerabiles'.

²⁹) *De Trinitate* XIV, 7, 10: (cf. n. 26) '... ubi haec tria simul semper sunt, et semper fuerunt ex quo esse coeperunt, sive cogitarentur, sive non cogitarentur', cf. the child's self-knowledge: 'non ignorare se potest, sed cogitare se non potest' (*ib.* 5, 7).

³⁰) cf. *ib.* 6, 9: 'Res quippe incorporea intellecta conspicitur et intelligendo cognoscitur... ita sibi nota erat, quemadmodum notae sunt res quae memoria continentur, etiamsi non cogitentur'.

itself to itself ³¹). But the difference from Aristotle is very clear: for him the self-presence of *νοῦς* was in undistended timelessness, hardly relatable to a human embodiment. For Augustine, even though the *mens* was time-distended, it was still present to itself. But this distension imposed upon it the duty of tending, through ecstasy, to eternity conceived in Christian terms ³²).

Taking over the function of *νοῦς* in Plotinus with its complete self-presence, the *memoria* also took over the function of *ψυχή* with its function of bringing together the multiplicity of experiences into a unity, not only as the common sense of Aristotle relating simultaneous but separate *sensata* but bringing together experience spread out through time. Gathering these together and self-gathering, it reproduced at the level of the individual *mens* the desire of *ψυχή* to emulate the timeless intense contemplation of *νοῦς* ³³). If Augustine swung unmistakably in the Roman-Stoic tradition of individual *mens* away from the Greek-Aristotelian tradition of transcendent *νοῦς*, he consented to speak in a language acceptable to both. Eclectic tradition had faced here an impasse exactly parallel to Aristotle's own. Augustine's traversing of this impasse could go even a little further and find a place for one-in-many transcendence of the neo-Platonist type in an explanation of the inherence of men in the Christian Godhead. Plotinus made memory an indication of being earthbound and weak ³⁴); Augustine found a weakness in memory which he wished to rectify — a weakness which arose out of its involvement in time; so forgetfulness was a regrettable part of human life: « For with us to be is not the same as to know. For we know many things which live in some manner through our memory, and also die in some manner through forgetfulness, and, therefore, they are no longer in our knowledge, yet we are; and when our knowledge

³¹) *ib.* IX, 11, 16: '... cum se mens ipsa novit atque approbat, sic est eadem notitia verbum eius, ut ei sit par omnino atque aequale, atque identidem...'.
³²) References to ecstasy in *Commentaries on Psalms* XXX (II, I, 2; II, III, 10), XXXIV (II, 6); LXVII (36), CIII (III, 2). For Augustine's search for timelessness, see *Commentary on Psalm XXXVIII*, 7: 'Est illud simplex quaero', and on *Psalm CI* (II, 10): '... aeternitas, ipsa Dei substantia est... quidquid ibi est non nisi est'. The reference to ecstasy clearly alludes to neo-Platonism. For parallels to 'est' cf. *Enneads* III, 7, 3, V, 1, 4 (of *νοῦς*), V, 5, 13 (of the Good), VI, 7, 38 (as said of the Good is not as said of any other thing), VI, 8, 19 (of the One).

³³) Cf. previous note 32.

³⁴) See *Ennead* IV, 3, 32: 'the good soul is the forgetful'.

has slipped from us and perished out of our mind, yet we live »³⁵). It was at once a brilliant insight into the means of a wholesale unification of knowledge and an inversion of neo-Platonist speculation to give to the despised human memory the same function as the self-gathering and knowledge unification of their *ψυχή* and providing the possibility of the presence to self of their *νοῦς*. As we shall see it was another brilliant and parallel insight to take from the neo-Platonist hypostases the conception of their being the ultimate centres of consciousness, and therefore to be the conditions of meaningfulness and intelligibility by linking together the disparate, and to apply this to the human *mens*. In making the memory in the individual *mens*³⁶) play substantially the same rôle in knowing as the hypotases, with a deep, often undisclosed, self-consciousness as a condition of consciousness of anything else, Augustine in fact had reconstructed the elements of Aristotelian analysis in the *De Anima* III in such a way that it embraced the phenomena of the other Aristotelian subjectivity structures. For this comprehensiveness the price to be paid was the indistinction of sense contents from intellectual contents, and the assertion of illumination as the source of intelligibility — but with no stated limit on how far into sense experience it would penetrate.

Fundamentally important in Augustine's thinking, the *memoria* is displayed in two different ways which correspond with two qualitatively different approaches to the question of self-knowledge. In the *Confessions* particularly and the *Commentaries on the Psalms*, memory is continually being related to the consciousness of the passage of time; the interest lies in coming to a kind of self-knowledge which is more empirical: a knowledge of one's own qualities, pursued under a moral compulsion. For this kind of knowledge there is no ending: « nec ipse capio totum quod sum »³⁷).

³⁵) *De Trinitate* XV, 15, 24: 'quia non hoc est nobis esse, quod est nosse. Multa quippe novimus quae per memoriam quodam modo vivunt, ita et oblivione quodam modo moriuntur: atque ideo cum illa jam non sint in notitia nostra, nos tamen sumus; et cum scientia nostra animo lapsa perierit a nobis, nos tamen vivimus'.

³⁶) Some triadic structures are based on *mens*, others include *memoria*. SCHMAUS writes that *memoria* 'is a direction of the activity (eine Tätigkeitsrichtung) of *mens*' ('Die psychologische Trinitätslehre...', p. 313).

³⁷) *Confessiones* X, 8, 15. cf. J. M. LE BLOND on the orientation of the memory-teaching of the *Confessiones*: 'St. Augustine grasped before Bergson that the funda-

This personalism and this sensitivity to the passage of time and its bearing on self-consciousness is quite different from the philosophical quality of *De Trinitate* VIII-XV. Here another genre of writing is evident: metaphysical, non-empirical, non-anecdotal, and almost timeless. Far from speaking of the disproportion of subject to object it speaks of their equality: « *mens et amor et notitia eius... cum perfecta sunt aequalia sunt* »³⁸). The content and its continual allusiveness have in mind always the neo-Platonism which he wished to combat, to make certain that the superior insight of Christian philosophy would make it the legitimate heir of Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition. The ultimate subject matter — the eternal Godhead — and the type of analysis impose an immobility on the content, just as they did with the neo-Platonists.

Augustine was certainly aware of the difference between the two approaches which, under the aspect of self-knowledge, is contained in the distinction between *totum* and *tota*. This corresponds approximately to the difference in English between « all » and « whole »; one can give one's attention to the whole of an object without taking all of it in. So Augustine writes :

« ... it is absurd to claim that the mind (= *mens*) does not know as a whole what it knows. I do not say that it knows all, but that what it knows it knows as a whole. When it, therefore, knows something of itself which it cannot know except as a whole, it knows itself as a whole. But it knows itself as knowing something, and it cannot know something except as a whole. Therefore, it knows itself as a whole »³⁹).

mental condition of all conscious activity is to continue in duration, and that it is conscious is due to this duration' ('Les Conversations de saint Augustin', Paris 1950, p. 183). But the *De Trinitate* considers simultaneity as well as duration.

³⁸) *Op. cit.* IX, 4, 4. J. M. LE BLOND's unawareness of the divergence of genres of Augustine's works accounts for the mistake in his plausible judgement that 'Unlike Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, Augustine could not draw on a deep knowledge of philosophers who had preceded him; so it was natural that he was led to draw much more on his own background, reflecting less on books than on things and on himself'. (*Op. cit.* pp. 47-48). Whatever the *De Trinitate* is, it is certainly not a development only out of his own inner experience.

³⁹) *De Trinitate* X, 4, 10: 'Sed absurdum est dicere, non eam totam scire quod scit. Non dico: totum scit; sed quod scit tota scit. Cum itaque aliquid de se scit, quod nisi tota non potest, totam se scit. Scit se aliquid scientem, nec potest ququam scire nisi tota. Scit se igitur totam'.

Yet Augustine proposed a connection between all-ness and whole-ness, and it is possible to use this as a means of reconciling the self-knowledge of the *De Trinitate* (whole-ness) with that of the *Confessiones* (all-ness):

« when the mind knows itself as a whole, that is, knows itself perfectly, its knowledge extends through all of it » ⁴⁰).

That it should know itself as a whole makes it possible to know all of itself; the distinction into kinds of self-knowledge does not correspond to a distinction in the subject matter.

Augustinian Noetic

Similar to Aristotle's in many respects, Augustine's epistemology yet lacks a clear account of the nature and mode of formation of universals. This has been noted by E. Gilson and U. Alvarez ⁴¹). In general terms, the teaching on intellectual knowledge of Augustine would be related, one would suppose, to two of his characteristic teachings: his doctrine of illumination, and his teaching on the eternal reasons.

Augustine certainly accepted that there were intelligible entities, but he did not seem to say that the mind made them: in terms of the Aristotelian structures they would be relatable to that of *Metaphysics* XII (on which Porphyry had written a commentary ⁴²)) and his analogy with the mediation of light more like Plato's than that of *De Anima* III 5. « But we ought rather to believe that the nature of the intellectual mind is so formed as to see these things, which, according to the disposition of the Creator, are subjoined to

⁴⁰) *Ib.* IX, 4, 7: 'mens vero cum totam novit, hoc est perfecte novit, per totum eius est notitia eius'.

⁴¹) E. GILSON, 'Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin' Paris 1943, pp. 115 ff.; U. ALVAREZ, 'El conocimiento racional y la abstracción en san Agustín', in: *Ciudad de Dios* 77, 1961, pp. 241 ff. U. ALVAREZ plausibly proposes that the place of universalising in Augustine was in the area where the memory relates its sense impressions to the eternal truths, the basis of all knowledge, and then conveyed the resultantly formed intelligibles to the intellectual memory.

⁴²) There are however no means of confirming that Augustine learned of the Aristotelian problematic in this way; the existence of the commentary is only known from a remark in Simplicius's sixth century commentary of the *De Coelo* ('In Aristotelis de Coelo Commentaria', edited I. L. HEIBERG, Berlin 1893, p. 503, line 34). Cf. R. BEUTLER, 'Porphyrios', in: PAULYS-WISSOWA R.E., XXII, 1, column 284.

intelligible things in the natural order, in a sort of incorporeal light of its own kind » ⁴³). Though he certainly believed in special illumination from divine wisdom in what properly belonged to divine revelations ⁴⁴), he also certainly believed that an illumination from divine truth was necessary in all human knowledge ⁴⁵). The position which Augustine set out in the early dialogue, *De Magistro*, remained substantially unaltered :

« when it is a question of things which we behold with the mind, namely, with our intellect and reason, we give verbal expression to realities which we directly perceive as present in that inner light of truth by which the inner man, as he is called, is enlightened and made happy. But, here again, if the one who hears my words sees those things himself with that clear and inner eye of the soul, he knows the things whereof I speak by contemplating them himself, and not by my words. Therefore, even when I say what is true, and he sees what is true, it is not I who teach him. For he is being taught, not by my words, but by the realities themselves made known to him by the enlightening action of God from within » ⁴⁶).

Of the understanding of revealed Christian teaching he could write : « (Deus) docet scientiam insinuando cognitionem ».

⁴³) *De Trinitate* XII, 15, 24 : 'sed potius credendum est mentis intellectualis ita conditam esse naturam, ut rebus intelligibilibus naturali ordine, disponente Conditoris subjuncta sic ista videat in quadam luce sui generis incorporea'.

⁴⁴) *Commentary on Psalm CXVIII*, 18, 4 : 'Deus itaque per seipsum quia lux est, illuminat pias mentes, ut ea quae divina dicuntur vel ostenduntur, intelligant'.

This illumination could be quite personal : 'Domine Deus une, Deus Trinitas, quaecumque dixi in his libris de tuo, agnoscant et tui : si qua de meo, et tu ignosce, et tui. Amen' (*De Trinitate* XV, 28, 51). Those who are puzzled over what they ought to expect of this illumination will have to be satisfied with the answer of a deeper insight and a surer judgement — over a scripture-philosophy relationship.

⁴⁵) Cf. *Commentary on Psalm CXVIII*, Sermon 23, 1 : 'Nulla quippe creatura, quamvis rationalis et intellectualis, a seipso illuminatur, sed participatione sempiternae veritatis accenditur'.

⁴⁶) *Op. cit.*, 12, 40 : 'Cum vero de his agitur, quae mente conspiciamus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur, quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce veritatis, qua ipse qui dicitur homo interior, illustretur et fruitur; sed tum quoque noster auditor, si et ipse illa secreto ac simplici verbo videt, novit quod dico sua contemplatione, non verbis meis. Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo vera dicens vera intuentem; docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus Deo intus pandente manifestis'.

⁴⁷) *Commentary on Psalm CXVIII*, Sermon 17, 3. Cf. *ib* : 'Deus, quando vult docere,

The place of divine illumination in other epistemological contexts was the discernment of unchanging intelligible realities and in the assistance for the judgement to assent to what was correct.

«It is the province of the superior reason to judge of these corporeal things according to incorporeal and eternal reasons which, if they were not above the human mind, would certainly not be unchangeable; and yet unless something of our own were subjoined to them, we should not be able to employ them as standards by which to judge of corporeal things. But we judge of corporeal things according to the standard of dimensions and figures, which as the mind knows, remain unchangeable» ⁴⁸).

The background to this lies in both the noetic of Plato and Old Testament Wisdom speculations, but the neatness of the conception bears the mark of the systematisation of the neo-Platonist conception of *νοῦς* and *νοητά*. It would be misleading to separate religious inspiration entirely from the normal illumination of the mind, for the same God gives light in both. Following Plato Aristotle made a speculative identification of the religious and philosophical conceptions of mind and its activity, identifying thinking with the «divine». Neo-Platonist demythologisation had the same intention. The case with which Augustine passed in his early works between religious and philosophical categories indicates the continuity and unity in his knowledge. Again in the *De Trinitate* he speculatively identified philosophical with doctrinal religious positions.

Where Augustine's position had ground in common with philosophical speculation he systematically opposed the kind of transcendence given by neo-Platonism to the hypostases. In the matter of epistemology it meant in fact a return, whether consciously or not, to a position nearer to Aristotle's.

prius dat intellectum, sine quo ea quae ad divinam doctrinam pertinent, homo non potest discere... quando Deus ea docet, sic docet... aperiendo veritatem'.

⁴⁸) *De Trinitate* XII, 2, 2: 'Sed sublimioris rationis est judicare de istis corporalibus secundum rationes incorporeales et sempiternas: quas nisi supra mentem humanam essent, incommutabiles profecto non essent, atque his nisi subjungeretur aliquid nostrum non secundum eas possemus judicare de corporalibus. Judicamus autem de corporalibus ex ratione dimensionum atque figurarum quam incommutabiliter manere mens novit'.

Aristotelian rather than neo-Platonist Epistemology

a) Because the being of man was not identical with knowing ⁴⁹⁾, and the intelligence not already filled, because identical with all intellectual knowledge upon which it was always actively intent, he in fact asserted against neo-Platonism the Aristotelian position of a potentiality for knowledge ^{49a)}. Even the *De Magistro*, which speaks of knowledge existing before instruction ⁵⁰⁾, also quite clearly speaks of a potentiality to be instructed by Christ, the only true teacher ⁵¹⁾. And man can be possessed by the desire to know sense objects and to learn a science of which he was hitherto ignorant ⁵²⁾.

b) Augustine's explanation of the manner in which involvement with material things harms the soul is in fact a moralising embroidery of the basis of Aristotle's conception of sensation

« because they are bodies which it has loved outside of itself through the senses of the body, and with which it has become entangled by a kind of daily familiarity, it cannot bring them into itself as though into a country of incorporeal nature, and, therefore, it fastens together their images, which it has made out of itself, and forces them into itself. For in forming them it gives them something of its own essence (*Dat enim eis formandis quiddam substantiae suae*), but it also keeps something by which it may freely judge of the species of these images; this is what is called more precisely the mind, namely, the rational understanding which is kept in order to pass judgement. For we perceive that we have, in common with the beasts, those parts of the soul that are informed by the images of bodies (*quae corporum similitudinibus informantur*) ⁵³⁾.

There is a passage in *De Anima* II, of which this may be an extended interpretation; « sense is that which is receptive of the form of

⁴⁹⁾ *Id.* XV, 15, 24 : 'non hoc est nobis esse, quod est nosse'.

^{49a)} Cf. *Ennead* IV, 6, 2 : which accepts some potentiality in the senses but not in intellectual knowledge. It is possible to see a limited parallelism between Aristotle's and Augustine's ideas of the activity of knowing. In *De Anima* III the mind must make what it has to know; in Augustine the mind must *cogitare* (cf. his etymology of *cogitare* in *De Trinitate* XI, 3, 6) and *creare* from its inner memory an expressed *verbum*.

⁵⁰⁾ *Op. cit.*, 12, 40 : '... qui posset, antequam loquerer, ea ipsa interrogatus exponere'.

⁵¹⁾ *Id.* 14, 46 : '... ille, quia tu adhuc non potes discere'.

⁵²⁾ See *De Trinitate* X, 1, 1-2.

⁵³⁾ *Id.* X, 5, 7.

sensitive objects without the matter, just as the wax receives the impression of the signet ring without the iron or the gold... » ⁵⁴) Thus he did not follow Plotinus's explicit rejection of sensation as passive reception of a form ⁵⁵), and his attempted explanation of it in terms of a shock of an external object ⁵⁶).

c) The similarities between Augustine's account of the memory and Aristotle's have already been drawn, and its absence from *νοῦς* has been noted as a difference ⁵⁷). Plotinus followed Aristotle's transcendent subjectivity structure faithfully in making its activity timeless and a memory for it unnecessary. Even though Augustine made the self-reflecting memory take over the rôle of self-knowing *νοῦς* as the ultimate centre of subjectivity, and even though he followed the neo-Platonists in making free use of the basic principle of the common sense as Aristotle conceived it as a means of noetic systematisation, this extension of the latter and the dissimilarities of the former are insufficient to make Augustine's subjectivity structure far removed from Aristotle's empirical structures. In Augustine the memory embraces the activity of Aristotle's internal common sense — embracing as well in continuity what the common sense does in simultaneity. Aristotle left the sense powers with considerable independence, and only impressionistically related them to an overall principle. That the imagination functioned in conditions of unconsciousness (in dreams or when the sight was not functioning), and was capable of making mistakes, inclined him not to treat it as an indubitable internal sense power ⁵⁸). The inaccuracies of the imagination (conceiving black swans and quadruped birds) were, for Augustine, an argument for the presence of the imagination within the memory on which it drew ⁵⁹), as was its contribution to reminiscence ⁶⁰). Doubly unlike Aristotle in its confident systematisation and its memory-centredness, Augustine's structure was yet more like it in his rejection of the rigidities of superhuman neo-Platonism and in its acceptance into human activity of a lively variability — accounted

⁵⁴) *Op. cit.*, 12, 424 a 18-19.

⁵⁵) *Ennead* III, 6, 3 (explicitly rejects the image of wax receiving a form); IV, 6, 1.

⁵⁶) *Ib.* I, 8, 14.

⁵⁷) See *supra* pp. 187-188.

⁵⁸) *De Anima* III, 3.

⁵⁹) *De Trinitate* XI, 10, 17. Cf. *ib.* 3, 6.

⁶⁰) *Ib.* 7, 12 and 8, 13.

for not by the independence of the faculties but the adaptability of the containing memory itself.

d) Most like Aristotle is Augustine's discussion on what prompts cognitive activity into action. In sense knowledge, even if the power has to be directed to the object by the intention of will, there is no question but that the sense power receives the form of its knowledge from the object ⁶¹). That intelligible realities are apt to be received by the intellect ⁶²) dispenses with the need for an agent intellect. The acceptance of passivity in the cognitive powers sets him quite apart from Plotinus's view. He can be credibly supposed to be familiar with the difficulties of Aristotle's commentators in reconciling the accounts of knowledge in *Metaphysics* XII and *De Anima* III ⁶³). That he was for the former can be inferred from two texts in the *De Trinitate* :

i) '... we must obviously hold fast to this principle that everything which we know begets the knowledge of itself within us at the same time. For knowledge is born from both, from the one who knows and the object that is known' ⁶⁴).

ii) '... knowable things, whether they precede in time or begin to be at the same time, beget knowledge and are not begotten by it' ⁶⁵).

The alternative positions in the second extract correspond with the positions in the long-standing debate among Aristotle's commentators over the seemingly opposed positions taken up in *De Anima* III and *Metaphysics* XII. His option for the position that intellectual objects are not created by the mind but themselves create the knowledge, in making it the fulfilment of a potentiality of mind, opposes him to the neo-Platonist denial of there being any potentiality in knowing. Awareness of this debate would demand a far deeper appreciation for the reconciliation of the two texts together than that provided by A. Stöckl: 'Without an object no knowledge.

⁶¹) *Ib.* X, 5, 7.

⁶²) *Ib.* XII, 15, 24 : '... ista videat in quadam luce sui generis incorporea...'

⁶³) Cf. *supra* p. 192 and n. 42.

⁶⁴) *De Trinitate* IX, 12, 18 : '... liquido tenendum est quod omnis res quamcumque cognoscimus congenerat in nobis notitiam sui. Ab utroque enim notitia paritur, a cognoscente et cognito'.

⁶⁵) *ib.* XIV, 10, 13 : '... sive tempore praecedentia, sive simul esse incipientia, cognoscibilia cognitionem gignunt, non cognitione gignuntur'.

But the subject must be active in this knowledge' ⁶⁵). The first extract has the same idea that the object actively produces knowledge, but *congenerat* ⁶⁷) does not mean that the mind is passive to the object's activity: that would make the object alone truly 'generate' the knowledge. In the activity of the subject (also present in sensation) might there not be an eclectic proposal for the inclusion of a residuum of activity from the *voûs* of *De Anima* III, now shorn of the transcendent divine nature which had harassed the commentators for so long?

⁶⁶) 'Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie zur Zeit der Kirchenväter', Mainz 1891 and Aalen 1968, p. 303.

⁶⁷) 'Congenerat...' is reminiscent of a passage in the *Adversus Arium* of MARIUS VICTORINUS: 'sed quoniam tunc cognoscibilia et habetur et dicitur, cum est cognoscencia: relativa sunt enim, et *se invicem* tenent et *pariunt* aut invicem interimunt' (IV, 23. Text edited by P. HENRY and P. HADOT, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* LXXXIII part I, Vienna 1971). Elsewhere HADOT has thrown doubt on whether Augustine had read this (v. « L'Image de la Trinité dans l'Ame chez Victorinus et chez Augustin », in: *Studia Patristica* VI = Texte und Untersuchungen Vol. 81, Berlin 1962, p. 433).

Additional evidence that Augustine may have read the *Adversus Arium* comes from the way in which he rejects self-knowledge as a kind of twinning: 'An quasi geminatur, ut et illic sit et hic, id est, et ubi conspiciere, et ubi conspici possit; ut in se sit conspiciens, ante se conspicua' (*De Trinitate* XIV, 6, 8). The *geminatur* could well have in mind the innocently expressed view of VICTORINUS, so intent in defending the equality of the Father and the Son, and using the language of noetic, which would have denied the unity of the Trinity by making the Son to be produced outside the Father. Cf. *op. cit.*: 'cum autem se videt, geminus existit et intelligitur videns et quod videtur' (III, 2); '... (intelligentia) intellexit semetipsam, hoc quodam modo gemina facta, velut intus et foris, filius est genitus ab existentia Patris' (IV, 31). More radically, Augustine's criticism bears on PLOTINUS's idea that the self-thinking of *voûs* was inevitably a loss of simplicity. HADOT has drawn attention to parallel texts (e.g. *Ennead* VI, 7, 39) in his commentary on the *Adversus Arium* (VICTORINUS, 'Traité Théologique sur la Trinité' II, Sources Chrétiennes 69, Paris 1960, p. 935). R. MARKUS agrees with HADOT's negative conclusions about Augustine's knowledge of VICTORINUS's text ('Marius Victorinus and Augustine', in: *Cambridge Philosophy*, Cambridge 1967, p. 340). There he incautiously characterises Augustine's trinitarian theology as being, by comparison with VICTORINUS's, 'at once more scriptural in its approach and less metaphysical in procedure'. But the metaphysical approach is of the highest importance, and the scriptural setting as much of the metaphysics had the same writer in mind: PORPHYRY, the writer of *Contra Christianos*, for whom the gospels were a tissue of contradictions.

The Aims of the De Trinitate

The principle purpose of this essay is the elucidation of the significance of the *De Trinitate* in its teaching on self-knowledge. Before beginning this task it will be to the point to sum up the number of related aims which Augustine had from the moment when he evidently makes a new beginning at the opening of Book VIII :

« Let us turn our attention to these subjects which we shall analyse in a more interior manner than the way in which we have treated them before » ⁶⁸).

a) The work began as anti-Arian writing, and that intention continued. Arians had brought together neo-Platonist subordinationist triads and scriptural texts which seemed to have a subordinationist meaning. By demonstrating a non-subordinated trinity on the human mind Augustine could construct a case for the likelihood of a non-subordinated Trinity in the Godhead. An effective critique of neo-Platonism would deprive Arianism of its intellectual support.

b) Probably more important in the second part was the need to compose a statement of orthodox Christian belief in the Trinity in terms of the Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition i.e. with relationship to the strongly structured and comprehensive neo-Platonism of Plotinus and Porphyry, showing at the same time that this belief was the product of the Christian scriptures ⁶⁹).

c) This meant in some respects a critical rejection of neo-Platonist themes and expressions, and in other respects a deliberate critical acceptance of its ideas into the system. The spirit was at once orthodoxly Christian and philosophically eclectic — that eclecticism which offered a model in its philosophical structuring of how

⁶⁸) *Op. cit.*, I, 1 '... quae modo interiore quam superiora tractabimus'.

⁶⁹) For example, the three scriptural extracts in *De Trinitate*, XI, 5, 8 are most pertinently placed to relate the argument to orthodox Christian teaching in a way most likely to attract the attention of a neo-Platonist reader. They come not so much as conclusions but, as in music, the intervention of a repeated high transcendent note after the development of a lower and busily groping passage, which they answer : the first two as a reassuring echo, but the third as a sharp and criticising dominant

'... 'Nolite conformari huic saeculo' ...'

'quandoquidem Deus fecit omnia bona valde' ...'

'Eritis sicut dii' ...'

With the first two neo-Platonists would be agreed; but the third was a criticism of neo-Platonist presumption : their search for ecstasy equated with original sin.

religious and philosophical conceptions might be brought into a single construct, and at the same time provided Augustine through complete works, translations, commentaries and doxographies, with encyclopaedic collection of philosophical ideas from the past. Particularly necessary was the replacement of the continuity between divine and human with the separation of individual *mens* and transcendent God, as in the conception of an 'exchange of natures', the Christian doctrine of grace, quite scripturally based, taught a less than substantial divinisation of man.

d) Consequently there had to be a quite fresh beginning in the accounting for the structure of personality. Consciousness and self-consciousness were to be made personal. Against Plotinus, though not Porphyry, they had to be insisted on as a characteristic of God. As for man, it had to be unequivocally maintained that his mind was an absolute principle of his own mental activity. Triadic activities attributed to both the One and *voûs* were unequivocally and deliberately asserted of the human mind in its own right and associated with the characteristics of *ψυχή*; and together they were posited in the *mens* of Stoicism and the *memoria* of composite origin. The conception of self-knowledge as a condition of knowledge of anything else, taken from the Aristotelian tradition, was shorn of any transcendence in its source and neo-Platonist developments, and applied to a structure individually complete — as in the *Parva Naturalia* and *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. And in this autonomous structure, treated timelessly and unanecdotally, there is a comprehensive reference to cognition of every kind. Of the time-bound, richly anecdotal view of the *Confessions* there is no space to treat in this thesis.

Subjectivity unassisted by friendship

As a consequence of the autonomy which he attributed to every individual, without undervaluing friendship Augustine dispensed with the place of a friend in coming to self-knowledge; only when one had come to true self-knowledge could one correctly value one's friend. A *De Trinitate* text probably alludes to the section in Plato's *Alcibiades I* which compares the friend's rôle with seeing oneself reflected in his eye-pupil⁷⁰). The idea is rejected on the grounds

⁷⁰) See *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, 380.

that the highest clarity must be the knowledge of the self to itself; as with the primacy of self-love, the primacy of self-knowledge was a metaphysical necessity. (Provided they were related to the love and knowledge of God there was not necessarily any pride about them; and the priority of self-love over love of neighbour could even claim divine warrant ⁷¹).

« The mind cannot love itself unless it also knows itself, for how can it love what it does not know? Or if anyone says that the mind by a general or special knowledge believes that it is such, as it experiences others, he is speaking in a very foolish manner. For whence does a mind know another mind if it does not know itself? (Unde enim mens aliquam mentem novit, si se non novit?)

For not as the eye of the body sees other eyes without knowing itself, does the mind know other minds and does not know itself. For we see bodies through the eyes of the body, because we cannot refract the rays which shine through them and touch whatever we see, and reflect them back into the eyes themselves, except when we are looking into a mirror. But this is a subject that is discussed very subtly and very obscurely, until it can be clearly shown whether it is actually so, or whether it is not so. But whatever may be the nature of the power by which we see through the eyes, we certainly do not see the power itself, whether it be rays or anything else, with the eyes, but we seek it in the mind; and if it is possible, we comprehend it in the mind. As the mind itself, therefore, gathers the knowledge of corporeal things through the bodily senses, so it gains the knowledge of incorporeal things through itself, since it is incorporeal. (Mens ergo ipsa sicut incorporearum rerum notitias per sensus corporis colligit, sic incorporearum per semetipsam. Ergo et semetipsam per ipsam novit, quoniam est incorporea) » ⁷²).

It is hardly possible that a later passage does not allude to *Alcibiades* I. Here he sees a real danger that in being over-impressed by what

⁷¹ 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', *Leviticus* 19, 18 and *Matthew* 22, 39 (and parallels). Cf. *Sermo* CXXVIII, 3, 5: 'Si autem nondum nosti diligere te, timeo ne descipias proximum tuum sicut te' (PL 38, 715), and *Commentary on Psalm* CXVIII, 8, 2: 'Quomodo ergo diligit proximum tamquam seipsum, qui nescit et seipsum'.

J. BURNABY considers the controversial aspect of the priority of self-love ('Amor Dei', London 1938, pp. 116 ff).

⁷² *De Trinitate* IX, 3, 3. Cf. M. CHASTAING, 'St. Augustin et le problème de la connaissance d'autrui': a study in three parts in a meditative style, written as from the first person, based on a wide range of texts. (*Revue Philosophique* 151, 1961, pp. 109ff; 152, 1962, pp. 90 ff; 153, 1963, pp. 223 ff).

one thinks one sees in other people, one may apply a quite unreal conception of oneself to oneself. And as to searching into the eyes of others it is only satisfactory to look into a mirror to obtain a good reflection of oneself; but the immediate way in which the mind knows itself has no analogy with this.

« Behold! the mind seeks to know itself and is inflamed with this desire. Therefore, it loves, but what does it love? Itself? But how, since it does not yet know itself, and no one can love what he does not know? Or has it become acquainted with its own beauty in the same way as we usually hear about people who are absent by means of a report? Perhaps, then, it does not love itself at all, but the image which it forms of itself, and which may be far different from itself. Or if the mind forms an image that is like itself, and, therefore, when it loves this fancied image it loves itself; then, perhaps, it knows other minds from which it forms an image of itself, and so it is already known to itself generically (*genere ipso*). But why then does it not know itself, since it knows other minds, if nothing can be more present to itself than itself? But if it were with the mind as with the eyes of the body, to which the eyes of others are better known than its own eyes to themselves, then let it not seek itself for it will never find itself. For eyes will never see themselves except in a mirror; nor are we to believe in any way that such means may be also used for the contemplation of incorporeal things, or that the mind should know itself as it were in a mirror » ⁷³).

Admittedly the parallelism is not complete: in *Alcibiades* I it was a question of seeking the reflection of oneself in the eye of a friend, not just searching the eyes of others. But the principle of Augustine undercuts its argument: the friend, the *alter ego*, cannot possibly be known to one as one is able to be known to oneself; and here he agrees with Plotinus that the mind can in no way look at itself from outside ⁷⁴).

The place of friendship is not absent from Augustine's account of self-knowledge, but it does not have the sense of dependence on the other which Plato gave it. He is primarily concerned with how it is possible to recognise another soul as just, and therefore lovable ⁷⁵):

⁷³) *De Trinitate* X, 3, 5.

⁷⁴) Cf. *Ennead* V, 8, 11: 'νοῦς ... can never stand away and with bodily eyes apprehend itself'.

⁷⁵) *De Trinitate* VIII, 6, 9. Here there is a parallel in Aristotle who taught that 'friendship is a virtue, or involves virtue' (*Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 1155 a 4), and

« He therefore who loves men ought to love them, either because they are just or that they may be just. So ought he to love himself also, either because he is just or that he may be just, for in this way he loves his neighbour as himself without any danger ».

For Augustine the man capable of friendship will make certain that he has something to contribute before making a friendship and that they will be united in the possession of the highest of ideals.

Augustine's Structure of Subjectivity

In the setting of an individual *mens*, human subjectivity is considered without either attention to the obscuring of knowledge through sin and evil or a place for the need of divine illumination ⁷⁶). Eclectic systematising of subjectivity, especially the neo-Platonist transcendent hermeneutic of Aristotle, had already placed self-knowledge at the centre of all other knowing; Augustine's transposition of transcendent categories to the individual *mens* took this as proven.

As always insisting on the priority of self-knowledge consequent on the immediacy of self-presence, and with this self-knowledge as the only means of knowing other souls, Augustine begins his examination of self-knowledge in Book VIII.

'For what is so intimately known, and what knows itself to be itself (*seque ipsum esse sentit*), than that through which all other things are likewise known, that is, the soul (*animus*)

that the best kind of friendship is not just out of personal usefulness or common pleasure, but, more rarely, among those who love each other for the sake of the other (*ib.* ch. 3). Cf. also sharing a 'friend's consciousness of his existence' (*ib.* IX, 1170 b 11-12. see *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, p. 127).

HADOT suggests of this and other similar *De Trinitate* texts that 'the philosophical source from which Augustine borrowed the conceptual material of the *De Trinitate* had some relationship with the *Nicomachean Ethics*', and he thinks in terms of Poppyry's lost commentary ('L'Image...' in: *Studia Patristica* VI, p. 440. Cf. *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, p. 76).

⁷⁶) Here a hastily finished dissertation by M. STUMPF, 'Selbsterkenntnis und Illumination bei Augustinus', Munich 1944, is really an attempt to say how Augustine should have written on self-knowledge in the *De Trinitate* if he had related it to illumination. His conclusions are in the spirit of Augustine — though unsupported by any references. 'Self-knowing as an act of knowledge is therefore a spiritual (*geistiges*) light through which the soul becomes aware of itself' (p. 39); and 'When the mind (*Geist*) shines its light, then the light of the Logos shines as well' (p. 103).

The dissertation has very few references to neo-Platonism.

itself. For we recognise the movements of bodies also from their resemblance to ourselves, and from this fact we perceive that others live beside ourselves, since we also move our body in living as we observe these bodies to be moved. For even when a living body is moved... we notice that something is present within that bulk (moles), such as is present in us, so that we are able to move our bulk in a similar way, and this is the life and the soul. Nor is this the property, so to speak, of human prudence and reason. For even beasts sense the fact that not only do they themselves live, but also that they live with others like them and with one another, and that we ourselves do so. Nor do they see our souls except through the movements of our bodies, and that at once and very easily by a sort of natural familiarity (quadam conspiratione naturali). Therefore, we know the soul of anyone at all from our own, and from our own we believe of him whom we do not know. For we are not only conscious of our soul, but we can also know what our soul is by studying our own, for we have a soul'.

Unaware of the variety of subjectivity structure in Aristotle's works, R. Schneider proposed that 'self-feeling' from an inner sense characterised Aristotle, Stoicism and Augustine together as 'the specific form of sensitive life' ⁷⁸). However, the place he refers to in Aristotle ('*De Anima* III, 2 Anfang') explicitly denies the existence of any self-conscious sense besides the sense powers themselves ⁷⁹), whilst the passage he refers to in Augustine, almost as if he had heard of this Aristotelian theory, explicitly denies the self-consciousness of each external sense and proposes that in man this function is performed by the reason ⁸⁰). Against Aristotle's assertion that if self-consciousness is taken away from the individual senses there would be an infinite regress ⁸¹), Augustine asserts that the process terminates with the reason. This certainty, so unlike the divergence of Aristotle's structures with their perceptiveness and greater elegance, was prepared for by centuries of eclectic systematisation. Eclecticism and Romanitas in their hermeneutical transformation of Aristotelian variety and profundity were guided by two unquestioned

⁷⁷) *Op cit.*, VIII, 6, 9.

⁷⁸) 'Seele und Sein. Ontologie bei Augustin und Aristoteles', Stuttgart 1957, p. 167.

⁷⁹) 425 b 15-16.

⁸⁰) *De Libero Arbitrio* II, 3, 9: 'non enim quo sens colorem vides, hoc eodem vides etiam ipsum videre... Quidquid est aliud quo sentiri potest omne quod scimus, ministerium rationis est'.

⁸¹) 425 b 16.

epistemological criteria. First, the desire for a simple form in which all knowing could be comprehended; in sensation and in intellection that meant the control of activities conceived of as peripheral or outer by an inner centre of reference and self-consciousness. Secondly, there was the presumption that this form applied analogously to both. Therefore Porphyry saw no incongruity in applying the pattern of the common sense as embodying an epistemic principle of the most universal significance even to the level of the One itself ⁸²). Conversely, Augustine felt himself free to apply neo-Platonist noetic and erotic principles attributed to the hypostases to the individual *mens*. But theoretical comprehensiveness was not enough: the range of the presiding reason could be made to include moral activity as well as thinking. Therefore when the judging activity of reason is described it is not just an epistemic judgement of separating and uniting, but a moral judgement of value as well.

‘... in regard to those things which are below reason, that is of bodily things and the bodily senses and the inner sense, what else but reason (ratio) tells us how one is better than another, and how reason is nobler than any of them? This could not happen unless it judged them’ ⁸³).

It is true that a precedent can be found for this in the aberrant structure of *De Anima* III ⁸⁴), with which Augustine’s utilitarian product has so much in common; but style and method are widely apart. The eclectic spirit was impatient of anything but the final result of reflection, reduced to its simplest expression; and inner self-consciousness could be given with complete ease a place in this pattern.

In *De Trinitate* IX this pattern is developed into a generalised

⁸²) Cf. *Commentary on the Parmenides*, fr. XIII, 23 to XIV, 4, following HADOT’s version (‘Porphyre et Victorinus II’, Paris 1968, pp. 108-9): ‘in the same way that the power of sight does not attain the audible (etc.) ... but there is a power which transcends them, which distinguishes their object, which knows their identity and their difference... in the same way one can say that the power according to which the *voûs* that cannot return to itself sees is different, superior to the distinction between knowing and known and beyond these two by its majesty and power’.

⁸³) *De Libero Arbitrio* II, 6, 13 (translation by M. PONTIFEX, O.S.B., Westminster and London 1955, pp. 90-1).

⁸⁴) See ch. 4: ‘by mind I mean that part by which the soul thinks and forms judgements’ (429 a 23); ch. 7: ‘when (the thinking soul) asserts or denies that they are good or bad’ (431 a 16-17).

theory of the necessity of self-knowledge as a condition of knowledge of anything else. It was not Augustine's personal discovery but a transformation of neo-Platonist conceptions according to the status of an individual mind, perhaps intent on eternity, but involved in time. For Plotinus and Porphyry self-knowledge and other knowledge in *voûs* were essentially identical not only conditionally inseparable, with an ontological, though not temporal, priority of self-knowledge over knowledge of anything else. The movement of return upon oneself, was the condition of identity, integrity, completeness — though its self-knowledge was fundamentally a consequence of knowledge of the One and the sense of separation from it. The transposition of the characteristics of this hypostatic self-knowledge to the individual involved the need to develop the memory as the faculty of time-bound self-knowledge and consciousness to connect what was separate in time as well as diverse. As the essential identity of self-knowledge and object-consciousness is transformed into self-knowledge as a condition of object consciousness, the ontological priority of self-knowledge becomes a temporal priority; it exists in the child ⁸⁵⁾ and the unselfconscious before its presence is adverted to. Partly as a consequence of characterising the function of *ratio* as a faculty of judging, the complete identity of subject and object in the original structure of Aristotle is replaced by a dianoetic superiority, remaining undivided over what it has to judge. This presidency may do no more than emphasise an element already in Aristotle ⁸⁶⁾, but *judging* between opposites did not arise in the cognitive activity of *voûs*. *Notitia sui* is an interior citadel whose existence is a condition of there being any knowledge of anything else, because it becomes identified with *mens* itself.

De Trinitate Book IX : Self-Loving and Self-Knowing

Book IX begins with a scripturally-based statement of the Christian conception of the search for God, affirming the coherence of belief based on authority with truth as sought by the understanding, ⁸⁷⁾ after which an account of the Trinity ends with the statement

⁸⁵⁾ *De Trinitate* XIV, 5, 7.

⁸⁶⁾ Cf. *De Anima* III, 7, 431 a 18-20: 'The last thing to be affected is a single entity and a single mean, although it has more than one aspect'.

⁸⁷⁾ *Loc cit.*, 1, 1. 'De credendis nulla infidelitate dubitemus, de intelligendis nulla temeritate affirmemus; in illis auctoritas tenenda est, in his veritas exquirenda'.

from 1 John IV : « Deus charitas est ». Augustine's intention is to build bridges with neo-Platonist thinking, for the Evangelist's statement has its counterpart in Plotinus's description of the One : « ... desire and substance are one and the same thing with him »⁸⁸). Though the One is remote from man, Plotinus said (broaching the theme which is Augustine's own) « we can sometimes see in ourselves a nature like his »⁸⁹). Therefore to go from the image to the supreme principle was to pursue a relationship sought by Plotinus himself :

« We are not yet speaking of heavenly things, not yet of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but of this imperfect image (de hac impari imagine), which is an image nevertheless, that is, of man »⁹⁰).

That Augustine should begin this book with an account of God in terms of love and speak of the divine image in man firstly in terms of love is probably a deliberate counterpart to the Platonic doctrine of *ἔρως* which reappears strongly in Plotinus as the way to God and ecstasy : *ἔρως* is born from the soul in its effort at the contemplation of the One ; it is « a being worthy of the object it contemplates »⁹¹). And « one arrives there if one is of a loving nature, and if from the beginning one has the disposition of a true philosopher »⁹²). Justified by the Plotinian text that we can sometimes see in ourselves a nature like that of the One he applies the triad of loving which is attributed to the One as 'Father of Reason' in *Ennead* VI⁹³), who is « at the same time object loved, love, and self love »^{93a}) to the human *mens*, slightly changing its order : « Ego et quod amo et ipse amor »⁹⁴). Initiating a type of analysis with concordant totalities of *mens*, *notitia* and *amor* (so unlike the empiricism of the *Confessions* with its self-mystery), Augustine asserts that in the case of self-love, as in self-willing, the love or will is equal to the *mens*.

⁸⁸) *Ennead* VI, 8, 15 : τὰντὸ ἡ ἔφεσις καὶ ἡ οὐσία. Translation follows BRÉHIER.

⁸⁹) *Ennead* VI, 8, 15 (following BRÉHIER).

⁹⁰) *De Trinitate* IX, 2, 2.

⁹¹) *Ennead* III, 5, 3 : all of *Ennead* III, 5 is concerned with *ἔρως*.

⁹²) *Ib.* V, 9, 2.

⁹³) *Op. cit.*, 8, 15 : The triad is repeated again in *De Trinitate* XV, 6, 10.

^{93a}) καὶ ἐράσμιον καὶ ἔρως ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔρως (*ib.*, translation follows BRÉHIER).

⁹⁴) *De Trinitate* IX, 2, 2.

« But what does to love oneself mean, other than to wish to be with oneself to enjoy oneself. And when anyone wishes himself to be just as he is, then the will is equal to the mind, and the love is equal to the lover » ⁹⁵).

And this love, which is equal to the self of the lover, is not extrinsic equality but a substantial identity. Augustine argues :

« And if love is a substance, it is certainly not body but spirit; the mind is not body but spirit. Yet love and mind are not two spirits, but one spirit; not two essences but one essence » ⁹⁶).

Only after this exercise, based on the primacy of love in the commandments of Scripture but concessive at once to the Platonic tradition of the primacy of *ἔργως* and to the spirit of Romanitas in style, does Augustine turn to the question of self-knowledge for « the mind cannot love itself unless it also knows itself, for how can it love what it does not know? » ⁹⁷) The simplicity of the later expression does not quite lose its allusiveness to the rambling, unrelated Greek themes of daimonic *ἔργως* and the precept to « Know Thyself ».

The *mens* knows itself through itself: 'ergo et semetipsam per se ipsam novit, quoniam est incorporea' ⁹⁸); and this means there is an equality between itself and its self-knowledge. This is reminiscent of a passage in Plotinus which makes the self-knowledge of the One depend on the absence of otherness — i.e. that there is a perfect coincidence between itself and its self-knowledge: 'he who has no difference in himself is always present (to himself)' ⁹⁹).

⁹⁵) *Id.* 'Quid est autem amare se, nisi sibi praesto esse velle ad fruendum se? Et cum tantum se vult esse, quantum est, par menti voluntas est, et amanti amor aequalis'. To complete the parallelism of the account there is also a text in PLOTINUS which equates the One with his will: 'He is entirely will... His will is himself' (*Ennead* VI, 8, 21). By contrast the will of *ψυχή* is uncertain (*ib.* IV, 4, 17).

⁹⁶) *De Trinitate*, *loc. cit.*: 'Et si aliqua substantia est amor, non est utique corpus, sed spiritus: nec mens corpus, sed spiritus est. Neque tamen amor et mens duo spiritus, sed unus spiritus; nec essentiae duae sed una'. There is a partial parallel to this in PLOTINUS: 'That our good is there is shown by the very love inborn (*σύμφυτος*) with the soul' (*Ennead* VI, 9, 9).

⁹⁷) *De Trinitate* IX, 3, 3: 'Mens enim amare se ipsam non potest, nisi etiam se noverit: nam quomodo amat quod nescit?'

⁹⁸) *Ib.* 3, 3.

⁹⁹) *Ennead* VI, 9, 8. *Sententia* XV of PORPHYRY develops Plotinus's thought; — for this as a source of *De Trinitate* IX, 3, 3 cf. *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, p. 393, n. 146. Cf. also *infra* chapter V for Stoic associations.

And so there is the same equality between the human *mens* and its self-knowledge as there was between itself and its self-love. In both cases there can be a dyad : 'But just as there are two things, the mind and love, when it loves itself, so there are two things, the mind and its knowledge, when it knows itself' ¹⁰⁰). And the two dyads can be conflated to form a triad, embracing together knowledge and love in a way that Greek thought never had done : 'Therefore, the mind itself, its love and its knowledge are a kind of trinity ; these three are one, and when they are perfect they are equal' ¹⁰¹).

Thus two neo-Platonist conceptions of the self-love and the self-knowledge of the One are simplified in themselves and are interrelated and then applied to the human *mens*. Its self-knowing and self-loving are detached from divine self-knowing and self-loving. The possibility of attainment of this perfect equality in the human *mens* makes it clear that there is no need for a man to seek absorption of mind and soul into a transcendent whole ; it became conceivable too that the mind could generate its norm of truthfulness in self-knowing, and a moral norm through its self-loving. So it set up a moral ideal as clearly as the neo-Platonist, but unmistakably human.

Important consequences follow from this conception of a mental triad-in-unity. If mind, its self-knowledge and self-love can be identified — mind completely present to itself in self-knowledge, and in self-love not two spirits but one — it follows that the knowledge by *mens* of other things and its love of other besides itself are extensions of its self-knowledge and self-love. So consciousness presupposes self-consciousness : not as the binding structure of the entire noetic cosmos, not as an insight into the nature of thought, but as a consequence of the realisation that self-love and self-knowledge mean the complete presence of *mens* to itself. Derived from the more transcendent conceptions, the rejection of a transcendent

¹⁰⁰) *De Trinitate* IX, 4, 4 : 'Sicut autem duo quaedam sunt, mens et amor eius, cum se amat ; ita quaedam duo sunt, mens et notitia eius, cum se novit'.

¹⁰¹) *Ib.* 'Igitur ipsa mens et amor et notitia eius tria quaedam sunt et haec tria unum sunt ; et cum perfecta sunt aequalia sunt'. Love and knowledge are brought together by PLOTINUS, though not systematically, in the contemplation of the One by νοῦς : νοῦς ἐρῶν ... ἐρῶν γίγεται (*Ennead* VI, 7, 35). A possible origin in PORPHYRY for the description of the unity of the triad is given by J. PÉPIN, 'Une Nouvelle Source de saint Augustin : le ζήτημα de Porphyre sur l'Union de l'âme et du corps', in : *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 66, 1964, pp. 92-100.

and separated faculty alone made possible an integrated structure of subjectivity. Similarly there would be no loving of anything else unless there were first self-loving :

'the mind can also love something else beside itself by the same love by which it loves itself. Similarly, the mind does not know itself alone, but also many things. Therefore, love and knowledge are not in the mind as in a subject, but they are also there substantially as the mind itself is' ¹⁰²).

And so,

'if the love by which the mind loves itself ceases to be, then the mind will also cease to love at the same time; likewise, if the knowledge by which the mind knows itself ceases to be, the mind will also cease to know at the same time' ¹⁰³).

Thus self-love and self-knowledge search for that equality with themselves which Plotinus made out to be the law of knowing, and striving after knowing, and the measure of truth ¹⁰⁴).

« When the mind, therefore, knows itself fully and nothing else with itself, then its knowledge is equal to it, because its knowledge is not from another nature when it knows itself. And when it perceives itself fully and nothing more, then its knowledge is neither less nor greater than itself » ¹⁰⁵).

When the mind knows itself, and takes complaisance in itself — loves itself, it has to express itself to itself in a *verbum* which is none-the-less, through its substantial presence to itself, identical and equal to itself :

¹⁰²) *De Trinitate* IX, 4, 5: 'Mens autem amore quo se amat, potest amare et aliud praeter se. Item non se sola cognoscit mens, sed et alia multa. Quamobrem non amor et cognitio tamquam in subjecto insunt menti; sed substantialiter etiam ista sunt sicut ipsa mens'.

¹⁰³) *Ib.* 5, 6: 'Amor autem quo se mens amat, si esse desinat, simul et illa desinat esse amans. Item notitia qua se mens novit, si esse desinat, simul et illa nosse desinat'.

¹⁰⁴) *Ennead* VI, 6, 1: 'everything seeks not the alien but itself'; *ib.* V, 5, 2: 'essential truth is not accord with anything else, but accord with itself' (following BRÉHIER). The theme of mind in equality with itself and its Stoic origin are discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁵) *De Trinitate* IX, 4, 4: 'Mens vero cum se ipsam cognoscit, non se superat notitia sua; quia ipsa cognoscit, neque secum quidquam aliud, par illi est cognitio, cum se ipsam cognoscit. Et cum se totam nihil amplius percipit, nec minor nec major est'.

« When the mind knows itself and approves what it knows, this same knowledge is in such way its word, that it is wholly and entirely on a par with it, is equal to, and identical with it, because it is not the knowledge of a lower essence, such as the body, nor of a higher essence such as God. And since knowledge has a likeness to that thing which it knows, namely that of which it is the knowledge, then in this case it has a perfect and equal likeness, because the mind itself, which knows, is known. And, therefore, knowledge is both its image and its word, because it is an expression of that mind and is equalled to it by knowing, and because what is begotten is equal to its begetter » ¹⁰⁶).

In this way neo-Platonist concepts of knowing and loving can be satisfactorily employed for Christian conceptions. The model for human knowing is not the One with its purity of self-love, self-willing and self-knowing nor the transcendent all-knowing, self-knowing νοῦς, drawing men by love into an ecstasy knowledge; the human mind has an independence and the measure of its knowing is equality with itself, as the measure of its morality is a love and a will which exactly corresponds with itself, in relationship to which all other knowing and all other willing should fall into their natural place.

De Trinitate X : « eine Interpretation des delphischen γνώθι σεαυτόν »

Theiler has written that « the greater part of Book X up to section 16 is without relationship to the Trinity; there is found an interpretation of the delphic oracle's γνώθι σεαυτόν » ¹⁰⁷).

But Augustine had concerns in view far more contemporary than the Oracle: perhaps, though Theiler does not say so, Porphyry's own commentary on 'Know thyself' addressed to Iamblichus, of which only a few fragments remain ¹⁰⁸).

¹⁰⁶) *De Trinitate* IX, 11, 16: 'Ex quo colligitur, quia cum mens ipsa novit atque approbat, sic est eadem notitia verbum eius, ut ei sit par omnino et aequale, atque inferioris essentiae notitia est, sicut corporis; neque superioris, sicut Dei. Et cum habeat notitia similitudinem ad eam rem quam novit, hoc est, cuius notitia est; haec habet perfectam et aequalem, quia mens ipsa, quae novit, est nota. Ideoque et imago et verbum est, quia de illa exprimitur, cum cognoscendo eidem coaequatur, et est gignenti aequale quod genitum est'.

¹⁰⁷) W. THEILER, 'Porphyrios und Augustin', republished in: *Forschungen zum Neu-Platonismus*, Berlin 1966, p. 220.

¹⁰⁸) See *supra* *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, p. 392, n. 143.

Speculatively synthetic though it was, the rigour of the metaphysical reflection on self-knowing and self-loving in Book IX kept itself within neo-Platonist terms of reference. Yet Plotinus's concern in self-knowledge extended to loss of oneself and re-discovery. These interests are also pursued in Book X, yet without the heart anguish of the *Confessions* or the moralising of the *Sermons*: in fact with that combination of ethical with metaphysical outlook which was neo-Platonism's own.

The difficulty in self-knowing is due to the unnecessary obscurity which comes from looking for the self as for something unknown and strange :

« What does the mind love therefore, when it ardently seeks to know itself while it is unknown to itself... ? »

« ... has it become acquainted with its own beauty in the same way as we usually hear of people by means of a report ? Perhaps then, it does not love itself at all, but the image which it forms of itself, and which may be different from itself » ¹⁰⁹).

Augustine insisted that the self was not so remote nor was the process so difficult. If the mind is present to itself so completely, the search for true self-knowledge, even where it does not seem successful, is in fact self-knowing :

« this is indeed very remarkable, that it does not yet know itself, and it already knows how beautiful it is to know itself ! ... But where does it know its own knowing if it does not know itself ? ... For it knows itself as seeking and not knowing, while it seeks to know itself » ¹¹⁰).

Reminiscently of a passage in Plotinus where he insists that a being which knew itself in part by another part could not know all ($\tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$) of itself ¹¹¹), Augustine continues that this line of argument would lead to a contradiction :

¹⁰⁹ *De Trinitate* X, 3, 5 : 'Quid ergo amat mens, cum ardentem seipsam quaerit ut noverit, dum incognita sibi est ? ... An ei fama praedicavit speciem suam, sicut de absentibus solemus audire ? Forte ergo se non amat, sed quod de se fingit, hoc amat, longe fortasse aliud quam ipsa est...'.

¹¹⁰ *Ib.* 'Et hoc quidem permirabile est, nondum se nosse et quam pulchrum sit se nosse, jam nosse ! ... Ubi ergo nosse suum novit, si se non novit ? ... Novit enim se quaerentem atque nescientem, dum se quaerit ut noverit'.

¹¹¹ *Ennead* V, 3, 1.

‘What shall we, therefore, say? That the mind knows itself in part, and does not know itself in part?’¹¹²).

Here he makes the distinction between ‘whole’ and ‘all’ referred to above:

‘When (the mind), therefore knows something of itself which it cannot know except as a whole (tota), it knows itself as a whole (totam)’¹¹³).

The apparent difficulty in self-knowledge comes about through an inaccurate conceptualisation of what it entails. The metaphysical approach with its grasp on the principle which lies within every search for self-knowledge is the only means of giving meaning to the multiplicity of these searches and, in fact, of making clear the kind of knowledge which they look for but fail to find.

The possibility of being wholly self-concerned produces the best answer to the question

‘why was (the mind) commanded to know itself? It was, I believe, that it might consider itself and live according to its nature, that is, that it might desire to be ruled according to nature, namely under Him to whom it must be brought into subjection, and above those to whom it must be preferred: under Him by whom it must be governed, above those whom it must govern. For it does many things through evil desires, as though it had forgotten itself’¹¹⁴).

Perhaps not only neo-Platonist noetic was present in this reflection, but its bearing on it was immense: Augustine was in fact proposing again that complete change in focus which we are finding repeatedly in the thought of the *De Trinitate*. According to Plotinus and Porphyry self-equality, even in this life, was only possible in ecstatic union with the One; even *vous* did not completely possess it. And in his embodied condition, man had an illusory nature, incapable, because not independent, of finding complete coincidence with itself. In place of absorption into the divine, Augustine insisted on

¹¹²) *De Trinitate* X, 4, 6: ‘Quid ergo dicemus? an quod ex parte se novit, ex parte non novit?’

¹¹³) *Ib.* cf. *supra* p. 192 and nn. 39 and 40.

¹¹⁴) *Ib.* 5, 7: ‘Ut quid ergo ei praeceptum est, ut se ipsam cognoscat? Credo, ut se ipsam cogitet, et secundum naturam suam vivat, id est, ut secundum naturam ordinari appetat, sub eo scilicet cui subdenda est, supra ea quibus praeponenda est; sub illo a quo regi debet, supra ea quae regere debet’.

the status of subjection in which the human mens remained the centre of its personal activity. That fall towards not-being which Plotinus described ¹¹⁵) would not be a cosmic flaw, a diffusion into multiplicity of everything outside the One: there would indeed be a fall ('labitur in minus et minus quod putat amplius et amplius'), but it would specifically be a moral decline ('perdit securitatem'); for to live according to its nature meant to live in subjection to God, outside of whom there is no possibility of finding this self-equality ('nec ipsa sibi, nec ei quiquam sufficit recedenti ab illo qui solus sufficit') ¹¹⁶).

In place of an ascesis leading to an awareness of the self-knowing of νοῦς through the self-knowing of ψυχή, Augustine proposed the possibility of the mind's discerning a self-thinking which it has never not been without. The way to discern this self-thinking is deliberately to discard every sense- and bodily-related experience and the burden of imagery which accompany them, and so to become aware of one-self as within.

'Let the mind, therefore, know itself, and not seek itself as though it were absent: let it fix the attention of its will, by which it formerly wandered over many things, upon itself, and think of itself. So it will see that there never was a time when it did not love itself, and never a time when it did not know itself; but because it loved another thing with itself, it has confused itself with this other thing, and as it were grown together with it. And so while it embraces diverse things as though they were one, it came to regard as one, things that were diverse' ¹¹⁷).

The mind can be certain that, when, without any imaginative construction (*imaginale figmentum*), it thinks that it lives, that it remembers, understands and loves itself, it is knowing itself; for then, as with the Husserlian ἐποχή, only itself is left:

'And if it adds nothing from these thoughts (of material things)

¹¹⁵) *Ennead* VI, 6, 1.

¹¹⁶) *De Trinitate* X, 5, 7.

¹¹⁷) *Ib.* 8, 12. 'Cognoscat ergo semetipsam, nec quasi absentem se quaerat, sed intentionem voluntatis qua per alia vagabatur, statuatur in semetipsam, et se cogitet. Ita videbit quod nunquam se non amaverit, nunquam nescierit: sed aliud secum amando cum eo se confudit et concrevit quodam modo; atque ita dum sicut unum diversa complectitur, unum putavit esse quae diversa sunt'.

to itself, so as to regard itself as something of the kind, then whatever still remains to it of itself, that alone is itself' ¹¹⁸).

From this reflection he takes self-memory, self-knowledge and self-love as related essentially. This is the first entry of *memoria sui* into the argument: it would be challenging to neo-Platonists to have the memory, despised except for its recollection of what was above it ¹¹⁹), fit only to be discarded ¹²⁰), introduced as an image of a fully conscious and self-conscious deity. It takes the place of *mens* in the triad of Book IX: three mutually comprehensive activities were to be a better image of the Christian divine triad than a faculty and two equivalent powers.

Firstly he expresses their mutual embracement in terms of a complete account of all possible pairings of their activities.

'For I remember that I have a memory, understanding and will; and I understand that I understand, will and remember; and I will that I will, remember and understand; and at the same time I remember my whole memory, understanding and will... Wherefore when all are mutually comprehended by each one, and are comprehended as wholes, then each one as a whole is equal to each other one as a whole, and each one as a whole is equal to all together as wholes; and all these three are one life, one mind and one essence' ¹²¹).

That this statement is in enneadic form ¹²²) is significant with relation

¹¹⁸) *Ib.* 10, 16: 'Ex quorum cogitationibus, si nihil sibi affingat, ut tale aliquid esse se putat, quidquid ei de se remanet, hoc solum ipse est'.

¹¹⁹) *Ennead* IV, 4, 4.

¹²⁰) *Ib.* IV, 3, 32.

¹²¹) *De Trinitate* X, 11, 18: 'Memini enim me habere memoriam, et intelligentiam, et voluntatem; et intelligo me intelligere, et velle, atque meminisse; et volo me velle, et meminisse, et intelligere, totamque meam memoriam, et intelligentiam, et voluntatem simul memini... Quapropter quando invicem a singulis et tota omnia capiuntur, aequalia sunt tota singula totis singulis, et tota singula simul omnibus totis; et haec tria unum, una vita, una mens, una essentia.

¹²²) Noted by P. HADOT: 'L'Image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez Augustin', in: *Studia Patristica* VI, Berlin 1962, p. 436. According to LYDUS, in whom the fragment is conserved, PORPHYRY had written of a Chaldaean Oracle, 'Divine is the number of the ennead, being formed as three triads and constituting the summits of the theology of Chaldaean philosophy' (cf. H. LEWY, 'Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy' (Recherches d'Archéologie, de Philosophie et d'Histoire XIII), Cairo 1956, p. 105, n. 163); Porphyry's enneadic arrangement of Plotinus's writings is significant here (HADOT, 'Porphyre et Victorinus' I, Paris 1968, p. 262 and n. 1).

to the thesis that Augustine had Porphyry's philosophy in mind. Whilst leaving to the next chapter ¹²³⁾ a speculative appreciation of Augustine's ennead, these historical observations can be made here. Hadot has pointed out the likelihood that Porphyry constructed an ennead reducible to a grill whose horizontal elements of being — life — thought have the vertical elements of Father — Life — Intellect ¹²⁴⁾. Elsewhere he has also linked Augustine's ennead with one in Victorinus :

'Triplex igitur in singulis singularitas et unalitas in trinitate' ¹²⁵⁾.

The mutual containment of the three powers in Augustine's ennead and their embracement by the memory, commended itself as a model for the Christian triad-in-unity ¹²⁶⁾, whereas Porphyry could not reduce nine-foldness to a unity, and Victorinus could only assert it without justification by argument.

Secondly, he expresses their mutual embracement in terms of a coincident unity of all three together :

« We have found the mind in the memory, understanding and will of itself in that just as it was always understood to know and always to will itself, so at the same time it always remembers itself, always understands itself, and always loves itself » ¹²⁷⁾.

This inner triad is the irreducible nucleus, the essential self-knowing activity of the human mind. Presupposed in any *cogitatio*, awareness of it derives from it without altering it; but it always exists regardless of awareness of it: unvarying, always complete and continuous through time.

¹²³⁾ See the next chapter V.

¹²⁴⁾ 'Porphyre et Victorinus' I, pp. 262-7, especially 267.

¹²⁵⁾ *Adversus Arium* IV, 21, 30 (C.S.E.L. edn., p. 258). Cf. HADOT, 'L'Image...', p. 435-6. A triad of *esse* — *vivere* — *intelligere* is found in triplicate.

¹²⁶⁾ H. EIBL ('Augustin und die Patristik', Munich 1923, p. 324) considers the possibility of an ennead with a grill whose horizontal members are both identified with the vertical ones of *esse* — *intelligere* — *amare* and identified with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He sees a resemblance with a possible ennead in Plato. But it is not Augustine's authentic ennead, whose mutual embracement of *memoria sui* — *notitia sui* — *voluntas sui* gives it at the same time a simple unity.

¹²⁷⁾ *De Trinitate* X, 12, 19: 'Mentem quippe ipsam in memoria et intelligentia et voluntate suimetipsius talem reperiēbamus, ut quoniam semper se nosse, semperque se ipsam velle comprehendebatur, simul etiam semper sui meminisse, semperque se ipsam intelligere et amore comprehenderetur...'

De Trinitate XIV: Similarities to De Anima III,4 on Self-Knowledge

For Plotinus, if the body were thrown out of harmony, there might be an activity of reason or mind, but it could pass without there being awareness of the fact¹²⁸); for Augustine it was normal and human for there to be knowing in the mind which would not become conscious unless there were deliberate *cogitatio*. This was the natural way of knowing; this division was not in itself the consequence of a flaw in man's powers. Even though the mind is immediately known to itself, it is in need of *cogitatio* in order consciously to think of itself:

'But so great is the power of thought (*cogitationis*) that not even the mind itself may place itself, so to speak, in its own sight, except when it thinks of itself. And consequently nothing is so in the sight of mind, except when one thinks of it (*cogitatur*), that not even mind itself, by which is thought whatever is thought, can be in its own sight in any other way than by thinking of itself'¹²⁹).

That this self-thinking requires an *interior verbum* we have already seen¹³⁰) but it would be inaccurate to conceive this formation of a thought of the self as making a division in itself:

'... is it, as it were, doubled, so that it is both there and here, that is, both where it can see and where it can be seen...? When the truth is consulted it does not give any of these answers...' ¹³¹).

But this is not the activity of the triad of mutual equivalences of *mens*, *notitia sui* and *amor sui* of Book IX, nor the ennead of mutual containment of the pairings of *meminisse sui*, *se nosse* and *se velle* of Book X¹³²). For therein lies the essence of Augustine's subjectivity structure: irrespective of its ever becoming conscious, the inner activity of mind is continuous through time from the moment

¹²⁸) *Ennead* I, 4, 10.

¹²⁹) *De Trinitate* XIV, 6, 8: 'Tanta est tamen cogitationis vis, ut nec ipsa mens quodam modo se in conspectu suo ponat, nisi quando se cogitat; ac per hoc ita nihil in conspectu mentis est, nisi unde cogitatur, ut nec ipsa mens, qua cogitatur quicquid cogitatur, aliter possit esse in conspectu suo, nisi se ipsam cogitando'.

¹³⁰) *Ib.* IX, 11, 16. See *supra* p. 210-211 and n. 106.

¹³¹) *Ib.* XIV, 6, 8: '... an quasi geminatur, ut et illic ait et hic, id est, et ubi conispicere, et ubi conspici possit... Nihil horum nobis veritas consulta respondat'.

¹³²) See *supra* pp. 215-216.

of its coming into existence; and the outer and conscious activity of knowing and willing other objects besides the self is dependent on the inner and unceasing self-remembering, self-knowing and self-loving. To a remarkable degree the conscious, deliberate self-thinking corresponds to the kind of self-knowledge in Aristotle's *De Anima* III when the mind deliberately turns its attention to itself¹³³); the deep continuity of *se nosse* is a counterpart to the timeless self-thinking of pure thought¹³⁴). And this is in accord with the comprehensiveness of Augustine's structure which attributes to *mens* a limited element of the divine *voûs* of Aristotle and the neo-Platonists.

Consciously or unconsciously, Augustine followed Aristotle's thought in recognising simultaneous¹³⁵) and continuous time-awareness¹³⁶) as necessitating a faculty as the medium of coherent experience. But the conclusions went beyond Aristotle's in proposing the memory as the necessary container of all experience, the total co-ordinator of cognition. So primary did it become in his thought that he felt obliged to ask whether *memoria sui* were in fact by itself the essential activity of the mind so that *notitia sui* and *voluntas sui* came after it even temporally as derivative *cogitatio*. 'For if this is so, then the mind does not have these three things, so that it remembered itself, understood itself, and loved itself; but it only remembered itself, and afterwards when it began to think of itself (*cogitare se*), then it understood and loved itself'¹³⁷). And this would mean that the image of the Trinity could not be found in self-knowing and self-loving, but only in self-remembering¹³⁸).

¹³³) *De Anima* III, 430 a 2-4 Cf. *supra Augustiniana* 27, 1977, pp. 113, 122, 128-129.

¹³⁴) In 429 b 5-10 is an attempt to bridge the distance between divine, timeless pure (self-conscious) thinking and its human counterpart.

It has been interpreted along with *Metaphysics* XII, 9 (1072 b 20-23) as asserting that object thinking is at the same time self-thinking. And this self-thinking is at least something like, perhaps identical with, the divine state of full self-knowing. Cf. *Augustiniana* 27, 1977, 123, also 113, 121, 130.

¹³⁵) *De Anima* III, 2, 426 b 28: *De Sensu et Sensibilibus* 7, 447 b 11.

¹³⁶) *De Sensu et Sensibilibus* 7, 448 a 27.

¹³⁷) *De Trinitate* XIV, 6, 9: 'Si enim hoc ita est, non habebat haec tria, ut sui meminisset, et se intelligeret, et amaret: sed meminerat tantum sui, et postea cum cogitare se coepit, tunc se intellexit atque dilexit'.

¹³⁸) *Ib.* 7, 10: 'videbatur quidem imago illius trinitatis et ad solam memoriam pertinere'.

He grants that actual thinking may draw on the resources of the memory :

'the gaze of the mind is formed in remembering from those things which are contained in the memory, and... some such thing was in him when he remembered before he thought... I am now referring to understanding as that whereby we understand when actually thinking, that is whereby our thought is formed after the finding of those things which had been present in our memory, but of which we were not thinking' ¹³⁹).

In this case there is an object in the memory which, with the loving attention of the knower, produces knowledge in him : 'I am referring to will, love, or dilection as that which unites this child with its parent, and is in some way common to both' ¹⁴⁰). This is very like the deliberate self-thinking of *De Anima* III which required the interpretation of choice and will.

But in the case of inner self-knowing, and continuing in the same imagery, there is an exception to the principle 'cognoscibilia cognitionem gignunt, non cognitione gignuntur': with complete self-presence this knowing is as divisionless as that of Aristotle's divine νοῦς. From this principle of self-knowledge of mind through its self-presence it is clear that the inner element in mind cannot be self-memory alone :

'For (mind) is not adventitious to itself, as if to the mind already existing, there were to come from somewhere else that same self not already existing; or as if it did not come from somewhere else, but in the mind already existing, there were born the mind itself not already existing, just as there arises in the mind which already existed, the faith which did not exist; or as if the mind sees itself, as it were set up in its own memory, after it had learned to know itself by recollection; just as if it were not there before it knew itself, since from the moment that it began to be, it has certainly never ceased to know itself, never ceased to remember itself, never ceased to love itself' ¹⁴¹).

¹³⁹) *Ib.* : '... ex iis quae memoria continentur, recordantis acies informetur... et (tale)... in illo erat ubi ante cogitationem meminerat... Hanc autem nunc dico intelligentiam, qua intelligimus cogitantes, id est, quando eis repertis quae memoriae praesto fuerant sed non cogitabantur, cogitatio nostra formatur'.

¹⁴⁰) *Ib.* : '... et eam voluntatem, sive amorem, vel dilectionem, quae istam prolem parentemque conjungit, et quodam modo utrisque communis est'.

¹⁴¹) *Ib.* 10, 13 : 'neque enim adventitia sibi (mens) est, quasi ad se ipsam quae jam erat, venerit aliunde eadem ipsa quae non erat; aut non aliunde venerit, sed in

It is ridiculous to suppose that self-knowing would have to come into existence at a later time within the memory of the self. Without any necessity to go above itself in order to discover itself and without any circular thinking of out-going and return upon itself¹⁴² (as the neo-Platonists supposed), this thinking, whether consciously or not, offered eirenically a modification to the two self-knowledge situations of Aristotle's *De Anima* III in order to create a subjectivity structure which was humanly complete. In its consummate eclecticism Augustine's structure could take in and interrelate other elements (in the nature of memory and will) which may be traced to an indirect, even conceivably direct, knowledge of Aristotelian texts. 'Human nature, therefore, has been so formed that never does it not remember itself, never does it not know itself, never does it not love itself'¹⁴³. Such a lapidary statement, though, breathes forth a non-Greek spirit: a 'claritas' and a 'Romanitas', which yet conveyed more authentically than Cicero and Varro the impression of that power and modesty of mind which goes with a connatural grasp, like Aristotle's himself, of those realities treated by him as 'meta-physical'.

Conclusion

Augustine's conception of self-knowing in the *De Trinitate* is in fact a resolution of the Aristotelian problematic whose transcendent side had come to him in the completely rigorous and all-inclusive form of neo-Platonism. Rejecting their transcendent conception of mind, he yet incorporated the characteristic of primary self-knowing into his conception of the individual *mens* which, though it had in part a Roman Stoic background, kept an Aristotelian rôle of judging: not only the value, whether good or bad, of its objects, but also separating and uniting the objects of experience.

se ipsa quae jam erat, nata sit ea ipsa quae non erat; sicut in mente quae jam erat, oritur fides quae non erat: aut post cognitionem sui recordando se ipsam velut in memoria sua constitutam videt, quasi non ibi fuerit antequam se ipsam cognosceret; cum profecto ex quo esse coepit, nunquam sui meminisse, nunquam se intelligere, nunquam se amare destiterit'.

¹⁴²) See the next chapter V.

¹⁴³) *De Trinitate* XIV, 14, 18: 'Sic itaque condita est mens humana, ut nunquam sui non meminerit, nunquam se non intelligat, nunquam se non diligat'.

In addition, from the material principally as presented to him by eclectic neo-Platonism (and with a degree of awareness of its ultimate sources for which we can only conjecture), he did in fact pursue the eclectic path further. He brought into an ordered arrangement the Aristotelian teaching of self-knowing and the Platonist teaching on *ἐπισως*, already linked together but only hesitantly inter-related by Plotinus. And he did this with a deliberate hermeneutical change: scaling down their notions as re-thought out by the neo-Platonists to the level of the individual with his *mens*, his knowing integrated together over his time-bound experience through his *memoria*. The individual man in terms of whom Augustine reinterprets this philosophical data is not, like the neo-Platonist hypostases, timelessly thinking and self-thinking, nor, like the neo-Platonist initiate, finding that at the higher stages of his union with the Good, his will is transformed into pure thought. The true constitution of the self is that it exists and acts through these faculties:

'Ego memini per memoriam, intelligo per intelligentiam, amo per amorem... Ego per omnia illa tria memini, ego intelligo, ego diligo, qui nec memoria sum, nec intelligentia, nec dilectio, sed haec habeo' ¹⁴⁴).

At its centre the self is always and has always been self-remembering, self-thinking and self-loving, whether it has averted to the fact or not. Here its inner unvaryingness resembles the changelessness of the neo-Platonist conception; but it is not against its nature to embrace the variety of its other experience as it passes through time.

(to be continued)

Edward Booth,

¹⁴⁴) *Ib.* XV, 22, 42.