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Life (Zōē) in Plotinus' Explanation of Reality

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"LIFE" (ZŌĒ) IN PLOTINUS' EXPLANATION
OF REALITY

by

Roman T. Ciapalo

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago
in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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VITA

The author, Roman Theodore Ciapalo, is the son of Peter Ciapalo and Oksana (Sawyn) Ciapalo. He was born on May 12, 1950 in Quilmes, Argentina.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Enneads III, 7 (45), Plotinus speaks of eternity as life.¹ Nous insofar as It involves self-motion (i.e., contemplation) is also called "life." In Its contemplation Nous

is never other and is not a thinking or life that goes from one thing to another but is always the self same without extension; if one sees all this, he sees eternity in seeing a life that abides in the same and always has the All present to it, not now this and then again that, but all things at once, and not now some things and then again others, but a partless completion... It is something which abides in the same in itself but does not change at all but is always in the present.²

Hence, Nous

remains in its being just what it is. That, then, which was not and will not be but is only, which has being which is static by not changing to the 'will be,' nor ever having changed, this is eternity. The life, then, which belongs to that which is and is in being, all together and full, completely without extension or interval, is that which we are looking for, eternity.³

¹Here and elsewhere in this study we shall refer to portions of the Enneads as follows: III, 7 (45), 3, 13-23, where III refers to the Ennead, 7 to the treatise, (45) to the chronological position of the treatise according to Porphyry's ordering, 3 to the chapter, and 13-23 to the lines within that chapter.

²III, 7 (45), 3, 13-23. The translations are my own. See note 50.

³Ibid., 23-38.

But in Enneads III, 7 Plotinus also describes time as life. In Nous, which Itself is at rest and eternal,

there was a restlessly active nature which wanted to control itself and be on its own, and chose to seek for more than its present state. This nature moved and time moved with it; and so, always moving on to the 'next' and the 'after' and what is not the same but one thing after another, the soul made a long stretch of journey and constructed time as an image of eternity.⁴

Thus, Soul making the world of sense in imitation of that other world (of Nous and eternity) and moving with a motion which is not that which exists There but like it, "first of all put itself into time and then handed over that which came into being the material universe as a slave to time, by making the whole of it exist in time and encompassing all its ways with time."⁵ The result is that Soul presents one activity after another in ordered succession and thus produces the succession along with the activity so that Soul's present life is not like that which came before it. So the life (in Soul) is different and this "difference" involves a different duration. So the spreading out of life involves time; life's continual progress involves continuity of time, and life which is past involves past time. Hence, "time is the life of soul in a movement of passage from one way of life to another"⁶ and

⁴Ibid., 11, 15-19.

⁵Ibid., 29-32.

⁶Ibid., 43-45.

eternity is life at rest, unchanging and identical and already unbounded and time must exist as an image of eternity... Thus we must say instead of the life There in Nous, there is another life having the same name as this power of Soul.⁷

The preceding remarks clearly indicate two main points. First, in Plotinus' thought "life" (zōē) is crucial to a proper understanding of both eternity (and, hence, the entire realm of Nous, and even Its source, the One-Good) and time (and, hence, the entire realm of Soul and thereby the physical universe). Accordingly, his doctrine of zōē is an integral part of his theory of reality. Second, any presentation of Plotinus' thought, if it is to be adequate and complete, must take into account his theory of zōē.

The purpose of this study, then, is to examine those texts in which Plotinus speaks of "life" in order to make explicit what this concept means. Furthermore, because "life" is so intimately bound up with all levels of reality in Plotinus' system, an examination of this concept will help to provide a better understanding of what "to be real" means for Plotinus and thus will provide an additional helpful insight into his entire Weltanschauung.

Although there is abundant secondary literature on Plotinus' thought, little work seems to have been done on zōē specifically as it appears in his Enneads. This conclusion was reached after first consulting Bert Marien,

⁷Ibid., 45-49.

"Bibliografia Critica degli Studi Plotiniani" (Bari: G. Laterza and Figli, 1949; in V. Cilento, Plotino Enneadi, Vol. 3, Part 2, pp. 391-622). There we found that no work had been done ex professo on zōē in the Enneads prior to 1949.

Furthermore, little work has been done since 1949, as a careful examination of the appropriate volumes of J. Marouzeau, Juliette Ernst, et al. (eds.), L'Annee Philologique (Paris: "Les Belles Lettres," 1949 sqq.) made obvious. In fact, only one such work has been found.

Grigorios Kostaras in Der Begriff des Lebens bei Plotin takes up explicitly the problem of life in Plotinus.⁸ His work is divided into five key chapters. In Chapter One ("The Concept of Life") he explains that the foundation and source of life lie in the Soul. Soul and life, he argues, are to some extent identical.⁹ Similarly, life and movement are closely related, with movement having its source in the soul as well. Kostaras further identifies three different movements of the Soul (creating, perceiving and moving spiritually) and to these he connects three corresponding types of life: physical (biological), logical and spiritual. The human being may

⁸Grigorios Ph. Kostaras, Der Begriff des Lebens bei Plotin (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969). Hereafter, Kostaras, Begriff.

⁹Ibid., p. 25.

choose between these different types of life, of course, but should pursue the highest of these: the spiritual life.¹⁰

In Chapter Two ("The Life of the Body") Kostaras examines the first of these types of life: physical or biological life. First, he notes that through its relationship to the physical world (which is the soul's "empirical factor") and through its turn from unity to multiplicity, the soul introduces to matter the forms of transcendent reality and thereby gives life to the physical world.¹¹ Next, he takes up the soul's relationship to the body and explains it as the formation of the other (the physical) through the One (the Soul), which takes place in the so-called biological movement of the soul.¹² Third, he discusses the foundation of the life of the cosmos, which, he explains, is a complete and living organism whose parts are associated with one another in harmony and through logos.¹³

In Chapter Three ("The Life of the Soul") he turns to the second type of life: logical or mental life. He distinguishes between the finite and the infinite soul in order to describe the soul's turning from spiritual to sensual concerns and its subsequent return to unity.¹⁴

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 30-37.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 39-46.

¹²Ibid., pp. 46-54.

¹³Ibid., pp. 54-66.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 67-78.

Although his remarks are not at all clear he seems to be attempting to distinguish the higher or "infinite" part of any soul (whose life he earlier called "logical" or "mental") from the lower or "finite" part (which he described in chapter two) as well as from the hypostasis Nous.

In Chapter Four ("The Life of the Spirit") Kostaras discusses the third and highest type of life: spiritual life. He begins by describing Nous as the "true world," in which this "real life" occurs. It is the life of spirit as "self-moving unity of thought in the being and of the being in thought."¹⁵ Finally, in the fifth chapter ("Life as Good") Kostaras examines such topics as Plotinus' view of man, wisdom as the human ideal, the highest goal of human life and the means of achieving it.¹⁶

To the reader of Kostaras' work there appear several serious difficulties. First, Kostaras never satisfactorily (that is to say, explicitly and accurately) defines what "life" means. What he seems to offer as a definition, namely, "unity of the unending separation," is neither useful nor fully intelligible.¹⁷ Second, although he devotes some attention to the soul's relationship to the

¹⁵Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 103-134.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 135: "...das Leben die Einheit der 'undendlichen' Teilung ist."

body, he does not clearly articulate how the soul animates the body.¹⁸ Third, his treatment of the World Soul's relationship to the cosmos is both scant and facile. He does not explain at all the manner in which the World Soul gives life to the cosmos. Similarly, he leaves unexplicated the way in which Plotinus' logos doctrine (which he mentions but does not define) pertains to the World Soul's governance of the cosmos.¹⁹ Fourth, in his discussion of the Soul he seems to suggest that it is not genuinely a separate and distinct living hypostasis.²⁰ Fifth, he seems at different points to ascribe true life to both Soul and Nous despite the fact the Nous is clearly the higher level of reality and being.²¹ Finally, although he makes the rather insightful statement that life and movement are closely related he never adequately explains how these two key concepts are related.²²

Although there are other serious difficulties with Kostaras' work (not the least of which are his attribution of various decidedly un-Plotinian doctrines to Plotinus²³

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 46-54.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 54-86.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 67-86.

²¹Ibid., pp. 21-37 and 87-101.

²²Ibid., pp. 91-95.

²³For example, Kostaras seems to misunderstand the nature of Nous when he argues (p. 29) that It does not involve rest, but only motion (Der Nous ist nicht statisch, sondern bewegt sich...). What is surprising is that he then cites III, 9 (13), 9, 2-3, which explicitly indicates that in Nous there is both kinēsis and stasis.

and his almost total neglect of Platonic, Aristotelian and other influences on Plotinus' theory of life), our chief problem with his study is summed up best by the following comment of John Rist. "Perhaps the difficulty is that the discussion Kostaras offers us is too much a paraphrase of Plotinus and not an explanation of what he means."²⁴ It shall be the task of our study to attempt to overcome this and the other difficulties that seem to plague Kostaras' treatment of zōē.

There are many other studies, done since 1949, which, though they do not mention zōē in their titles, are devoted to topics linked to life by Plotinus (e.g., Nous, contemplation, energeia, dynamis, kinēsis,) or contain discussions of passages in the Enneads furnishing us with key texts on life (i.e., IV, 7 [2], 8, 5-11; VI, 9 [9]; III, 8 [30], 8; 10; VI, 7 [38], 13; 15; 17; 18; I, 4 [46], 3-4). In sampling such secondary literature the following questions were kept in mind: Does the work deal with a topic which is other than, yet relevant to, life in the Enneads? Secondly, does the work discuss a passage from the

²⁴John Rist, review of Der Begriff des Lebens bei Plotin, by Grigorios Ph. Kostaras in The Classical World, LXIV, 1970, p. 125. The following reviews of Kostaras' book seem to concur with Rist's unfavorable assessment: H. R. Schwyzer in Gnomon, XLVI, 1974, pp. 615-616; Wolfgang Hormann in Gymnasium, LXXVIII, 1971, pp. 565-566; E. W. Platzeck in Antonianum, XLVII, 1972, pp. 175-176; and Erich Lamberz in Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, 56, 1974, pp. 194-199.

Enneads which is part of a key text? The selective survey which follows illustrates that few if any works thus approached contained discussions of zōē.

Phillippus Pistorius in his study on neoplatonism refers to the Intellectual Principle (Nous) as a "living existent" and as a "creative force" in the universe.²⁵ Furthermore, in his discussion of the Soul he refers to it as the principle of life (psychē). In both instances no discussion of what life is in itself takes place.

In his study of Plotinus, Joseph Katz emphasizes that the reversion process is an important facet of the relationship of the hypostases to the One-Good.²⁶ What is surprising, however, is that he makes no reference to life in that discussion even though, for Plotinus, Nous in Its moment of epistrophē, as well as in Its moment of prohodos, is, in fact, primal life.

Although he devotes considerable space to a discussion of the dynamic aspect of Plotinus' universe, as expressed by his doctrines of prohodos and epistrophē, Leo Sweeney does not mention life in his article on the basic principles in

²⁵Phillippus Pistorius, Plotinus and Neoplatonism (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1952). Hereafter, Pistorius, Plotinus.

²⁶Joseph Katz, Plotinus' Search for the Good (Columbia University, New York: King's Crown Press, 1950). Hereafter, Katz, Good.

Plotinus' philosophy.²⁷ But, for Plotinus, life in its most fundamental aspects (and on its most pure level, Nous) involves both procession and reversion.

Émile Bréhier in his helpful book on the thought of Plotinus briefly mentions life in his chapter on the One.²⁸ There he notes that "life" designates "the dynamic current which proceeds from the good, in advance of all distinct determination. When this current is determined and is limited, life becomes Intelligence."²⁹ He concludes this brief discussion by stating that "for Plotinus, life is not yet a hypostasis. The word only calls attention to the vague, boundless substratum of Intelligence properly so called."³⁰ What he does not make at all clear, however, is what life is in itself and how it is related to the Intelligence (or Nous).

Wenceslao Eborowicz, in his elaborate two-part article explicating the Plotinian theory of contemplation, fails to

²⁷Leo Sweeney, S. J., "Basic Principles in Plotinus' Philosophy," Gregorianum 42 (1961): pp. 506-16. Hereafter, Sweeney, "Principles." Furthermore, no mention of zōē occurs in one of his more recent articles, "Are Plotinus and Albertus Magnus Neoplatonists?" in Graceful Reason: Essays in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Presented to Joseph Owens, C.S.S.R., ed. Lloyd P. Gerson, Papers in Medieval Studies 4 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983), pp. 177-202.

²⁸Émile Bréhier, The Philosophy of Plotinus, transl. by Joseph Thomas (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958). Hereafter, Bréhier, Plotinus.

²⁹Ibid., p. 141.

³⁰Ibid.

point out that life on any level intimately involves theoria.³¹ Such an omission is especially obvious in the section in which he attempts to define Nous, the level of reality on which both contemplation and life are found in their purest states.³²

In his illuminating article on the origin and history of the triad of being, life and thought, P. Hadot provides a very helpful preliminary discussion of the nature of life in Plotinus.³³ Although many of Hadot's remarks are helpful, two points are especially noteworthy, despite the fact that he articulates them all too briefly. First, he notes that movement is nothing other than life.³⁴ What precisely this movement entails and how it is found on other levels of reality will be a point of considerable attention in our study. Second, he finds credible the thesis that Nous as prohodos (or "pre-intellectual life," as Hadot puts it) is life.³⁵ This point too shall be examined in detail in our thesis.

In an interesting article examining the three major

³¹W. Eborowicz, "La Contemplation Selon Plotin," Giornale Di Metafisica, Part I: No. 1, Vol. 12 (1957), pp. 472-518 and Part II: No. 4, Vol. 13 (1958), pp. 45-82.

³²Ibid., Part II, pp. 57ff.

³³P. Hadot, "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et Avant Plotin," Les Sources de Plotin (Vandoeuvres-Geneve: Fondation Hardt, 1960), pp. 107-157. Hereafter, Hadot, "Être."

³⁴Ibid., p. 132.

³⁵Ibid., p. 135.

Plotinian terms for consciousness (antilepsis, parakolouthēsis, synaisthēsis) Edward Warren does not explain its very important relationship to zōē.³⁶ This omission is especially glaring in his treatment of synaisthēsis since he notes there that a human being's noetic life in Nous is eternal and that all of man's higher activities are perpetually active, but he does not go on to explain the nature of life itself.

Although John Rist in his valuable book on Plotinus' thought points out that the One is beyond life and that life is a trace of the One³⁷ and devotes an entire chapter to "happiness" (eudaimonia) in which he frequently refers to the happy life, he does not define what life is in itself.³⁸ Furthermore, in his article comparing the One-Good with Aristotle's God he argues that Nous (the Divine Mind) is not like the One in part because Nous does not live the same life.³⁹ This remark is troublesome because it seems to suggest (erroneously, as we shall argue later in this study) that the One somehow has life. In any case, he again fails to indicate what is meant by "life."

³⁶Edward W. Warren, "Consciousness in Plotinus" Phronesis Vol. 9 (1964), pp. 83-97.

³⁷J. M. Rist, Plotinus: The Road to Reality (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 27. Hereafter, Rist, Road to Reality.

³⁸Ibid., p. 149.

³⁹J. M. Rist, "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle" The Review of Metaphysics Vol. 27, No. 1 (Sept., 1973), pp. 75-87.

In John Deck's study of contemplation in Plotinus considerable attention is devoted to many passages of treatise III, 8 (30), which contains one of our key texts.⁴⁰ Deck explains that for Plotinus life and knowledge are coordinate and that Nous, "which is its own knowledge, its own theoria, is the first life, living through itself."⁴¹ Although such a statement is helpful, his subsequent remarks are brief and do not adequately explain how life and knowledge are related and, more importantly, what specifically constitutes primal life.

In the informative preface to his translation of the Enneads, A. H. Armstrong makes the rather controversial statement that the One "is Life and Power, an infinite spring of power, and unbounded life."⁴² That the One-Good is not life is a point that we shall defend later in this study. For now it will be sufficient to say that Armstrong does not offer any definition of the term "life," even though he ascribes it to the highest reality.

Similarly, Armstrong offers little explanation of zōē in his study of Plotinus, even though he does mention it

⁴⁰John Deck, Nature, Contemplation and the One (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967). Hereafter, Deck, Contemplation.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 26.

⁴²A. H. Armstrong, Plotinus, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. xix. Hereafter, Armstrong, Enneads.

with reference to soul.⁴³ Furthermore, he devotes an entire chapter (Ch. 3) to the One and the spiritual life without ever making clear how the experience of mystical union with the One is the highest form of human life. Similarly, his chapters on Nous as emanation (Ch. 4) and as mind (Ch. 5) contain no helpful explication of these two significant features of life.

More useful, although much too brief, is Armstrong's article on life, movement and eternity as they relate to Nous.⁴⁴ He presents an interesting argument that Plotinus' explanation of the eternal life of Nous is neither fully consistent nor completely coherent. What he fails to do, however, is to present an adequate and complete discussion of the nature of life itself. Instead, he argues that the inner life of Nous is characterized by eternity, which consists of the successive exploration of its intelligible content.⁴⁵ In our study we shall argue that such a view of eternity is inaccurate and that life on the level of Nous is identical with its simultaneous contemplation of intelligibles.

⁴³A. H. Armstrong, The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1967), pp. 83ff. Hereafter, Armstrong, Architecture.

⁴⁴A. H. Armstrong, "Eternity, Life and Movement in Plotinus' Accounts of Nous." in Le néo-platonisme. Actes du Colloque de Royaumont 9-13 Juin 1969. (Paris: Ed. du CNRS, 1971), pp. 67-74. Hereafter, Le néo-platonisme.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 73.

Henry Blumenthal, in two carefully wrought articles, makes no mention of zōē.⁴⁶ This is unfortunate since in the first article he refers to the kinēsis and the intellection of Nous, while never noting the fact that Nous is life precisely because of its self-kinēsis which is intellection. In the second article he points out that all souls are one (and yet also somehow different) without indicating that one way in which they are similar is that they are life principles.

The remarks of R. T. Wallis on life, though brief and scattered throughout his lucid work on Neoplatonism, are nevertheless useful as far as they go.⁴⁷ In one such passage he hints at a very important dimension of Plotinus' theory of life. "A closer approach to later Neoplatonic teaching is his [Plotinus'] suggestion that life should be equated with the second hypostasis in its unformed stage (i.e., with procession) and Intelligence with the stage of reversion, when it has received form and limit."⁴⁸ It is this suggested equation of life with both moments of Nous'

⁴⁶H. J. Blumenthal, "Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus," in Le néo-platonisme, pp. 55-66 and "Nous and Soul in Plotinus; Some Problems of Demarcation," in Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul Tema: Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente (Rome: Accad. Noz. dei Lincei, 1974), pp. 203-19. Hereafter, Atti.

⁴⁷R. T. Wallis, Neoplatonism (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1972). Hereafter, Wallis, Neoplatonism.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 50-61; 65-67; 87.

emanation from the One that our study shall attempt to explicate fully.

Although he cites relevant passages from III, 8 (30) and discusses contemplation in his book on the hermeneutics and philosophy of Plotinus, P. G. Castillo does not mention life.⁴⁹ Specifically, he discusses theoria as it is found in the intelligible world (i.e., perfect contemplation) and as it is related to Gnostic thought, but fails to explicate its important connection with primal life and ultimately with human life.

As the above sampling of secondary literature reveals, little significant work has been done on zōē in the Enneads. Accordingly, our study will be mainly based on portions of the Enneads themselves in which life is discussed. Before we describe our manner of proceeding in the chapters which are to follow, let us first enumerate (in chronological order) all the places in the treatises of the Enneads in which zōē (life) or some derivative expressions occur.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Pablo Garcia Castillo, Plotino: Hermeneutica y Filosofia (Salamanca: Instituto de Ciencias de las Educacion, 1984), pp. 96-107).

⁵⁰Multiple instances of zōē in a single line are indicated by the number in parentheses to the right of the citation. We are following the Greek text as found in Paul Henry and H. R. Schwyzer, Plotini Opera, Vols. I-III, "Oxford Classical Texts" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, 1977, 1982). The translations in this study are my own, but I have been helped significantly by the advice of Leo Sweeney, S. J. and also by Curtis Hancock, as well as by the following editions and translations of the Greek text:

I,	6 (1), 5,	30 (2)	II,	5 (25), 3,	19
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		35			39 (2)
	7,	11 (2)	III,	6 (26), 6,	15 (2)
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					26
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		49	IV,	5 (29), 6,	28
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		9			12
		15			13 (2)
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		17			18 (2)
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		51			20
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		9			28
		36			29 (2)
				9,	33
V,	6 (24), 6,	20			
		21			
		36			13
		39			14
					20
	10, 2				21

(50 continued)

- 1) Armstrong, A. H., Plotinus, Vols. 1-5. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966-84.
- 2) Idem, Plotinus, London: Allen & Unwin, 1953.
- 3) Bréhier, Emile, Plotin Ennéades, 6 vols. in 7, Paris: "Les Belles Lettres," 1924-38.
- 4) Harder, R. (Continued by W. Marg, R. Beutler and W. Theiler), Plotins Schriften, 5 vols. in 11, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956-67.
- 5) Cilento, Vincenzo, Plotino Enneadi, 3 vols., Bari: Laterza, 1947-49.
- 6) Creuzer, F. and G. H. Moser (eds.), Plotini Enneades cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione Castigata, Oxford: Typographicum Academicum, 1835.
- 7) MacKenna, Stephen (revised by B. S. Page), The Enneads, 4th ed., New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1969.

	3 (3)	24
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	26 (2)	4
	28 (2)	5
	29 (3)	6
	30	9
	31	12
	33	14
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	23	9
	29	10
35,	43 (2)	11
17,	11 (2)	12
	12 (3)	15
		16
	18	33
	20	35

	24			37
	25			38
	26			39
	28 (2)			40
	31		17,	1
	34			3
	35			
	36	I,	8 (51), 2,	6
	38			23
	39 (2)			
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	2		2,	6
	4			9 (2)
	6			10
	12		3,	1 (2)
	23			2
	27			3
	28			6
	30			7
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	36 (2)			
	47			
16,	23			
	25			
	27			
	28			
	29			
	30			

From the above texts we have selected the following key texts because they contain important and different information on what Plotinus means by life. We shall study them in the following order:

- 1) IV, 7 [2], 8⁵-11
- 2) VI, 9 [9], 9
- 3) III, 8 [30], 8; 10
- 4) VI, 7 [38], 13; 15; 17; 18
- 5) I, 4 [46], 3-4

Our procedure with each of these key texts shall be as follows.

- 1) State its context.
- 2) Give a literal translation or paraphrase of the key text.
- 3) Provide a commentary in order to make clear the key text's meaning. Specifically, this will involve tracing the movement of thought (i.e., making explicit the argument within the text).⁵¹ Reflecting on the meaning of zōē in itself and in its relationship to other essential concepts found in the key text, drawing inferences so as to explicate what is only implicit, and utilizing other texts in the Enneads whenever useful and relevant. In addition,

⁵¹For a profitable discussion of the reasons why such explicitation of Plotinus' arguments is both necessary and useful see Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 43-44.

other authors, whether classical or contemporary, will be consulted wherever truly helpful in explaining zōē in Plotinus.

- 4) Summarize the discussion and draw appropriate conclusions.

After we have examined all five key texts in this way, we shall, in a final chapter, summarize the conclusions issuing from these key texts and note how they fit into Plotinus' philosophy as a whole. Finally, we shall provide a thorough bibliography.

CHAPTER II

TEXT A: ENNEAD IV, 7 (2), 8⁵-11

The key text that we shall examine in IV, 7 (2) is found in Chapters 8⁵ to 11.¹ Before turning to this text, however, let us describe the treatise as a whole. According to Porphyry, IV, 7: "On the Immortality of the Soul," is the second treatise that Plotinus wrote and, hence, belongs to his early period, during which he produced works of "a slighter capacity, not yet attaining to the dimensions of his full vigor."² In this treatise Plotinus

¹The reference to Chapter 8⁵ indicates that Chapter 8 of Treatise IV, 7 is divided into several parts: 8, 8¹, 8², etc. That division is at least as old as Marsilius Ficinus, who divided Chapter 8 into six distinct sections as demanded by the sense of the text itself. The original Greek version of IV, 7 is incomplete in that a large portion of the text is lacking. This gap is filled by turning to Eusebius' quotations of Plotinus in the Preparatio Evangelica, XV, 22, pp. 49-67 (for Chapters 8-8⁴) and XV, 10, pp. 1-9 (for Chapter 8⁵). Additional information on the curious history of this text is found in Paul Henry and H. R. Schwyzer, Plotini Opera (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1951, 1959), Vol. 1, pp. ix-xxv and Vol. 2, pp. ix-xxvi.

²Porphyry, "On the Life of Plotinus," Chapter 6, lines 30-31. In A. H. Armstrong, Plotinus, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966-67), p. 15, hereafter: Porphyry, "Life."

Porphyry's remarks notwithstanding, it should be noted that Émile Bréhier, in Plotin Ennéades, (Paris: "Les Belles Lettres," 1924-28), Vol. IV, p. 179, (hereafter, Bréhier,

presents his own theory of the soul's immortality and evaluates views opposed to it.

We shall proceed by first giving the context of the key text, to be followed by the key text in paraphrase and translation, then by commentary and by conclusions.

In the first chapter Plotinus makes clear that if one identifies man with his soul alone and not with the body/soul composite, the question of man's immortality must be settled by an examination of the nature of the human soul itself. This examination is pursued for the remainder of the treatise, which may be divided into the following four sections. First, Plotinus examines and criticizes the Stoic position that the soul is a body (Ch. 2-8³). Next, he takes up the Pythagorean thesis that the soul is a harmony (Ch.8⁴).³ This is followed by a cluster of nine arguments against the Aristotelian definition of soul as the entelecheia of an organized body (Ch. 8⁵, 1-43). Finally, Plotinus gives his own view on soul as ousia (Ch. 8⁵, line 43 - Ch. 14), in part by systematically collecting several scattered references to soul found in the Platonic

(²continued)

Ennéades) describes IV, 7 as the most elementary and yet also the most scholarly treatise written by Plotinus. Hence, even in this early stage of his writing Plotinus' philosophical sophistication is evident by his use of numerous commentators to aid his defense and interpretation of Plato's theories.

³This thesis is also examined both by Plato (Phaedo, 85c-88e and 92a-95a) and by Aristotle (De Anima I, 4).

corpus.⁴ This presentation constitutes our key text.

TEXT A: IV, 7 (2), 8⁵ (line 43) - 11

[1] What then is its ousia? If soul is neither a body nor any condition of body, but rather a doing and making, and one whose multiplicity is contained in it and comes from it, what sort of ousia is it beyond its being present to bodies? Obviously [it is]⁵ that which we say to be genuine ousia. Since everything which would be called corporeal is a becoming and not an ousia, because becoming and perishing never belong to what is truly being [Nous], it [soul] is preserved by its participation in the being [of Nous] to the extent that it participates in It.

8⁵, 43-50:

*Τίς οὖν οὐσία αὐτῆς; Εἰ δὲ μήτε σῶμα, μήτε πάθος σώματος, πράξις δὲ καὶ ποιήσις, καὶ πολλὰ
 45 καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς, οὐσία παρὰ τὰ σώματα οὐσα ποία τίς ἐστίν; Ἡ δὴλον ὅτι ἦν φάμεν ὄντως οὐσίαν εἶναι. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ γένεσις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οὐσία, πᾶν τὸ σωματικὸν εἶναι λέγουτ' ἄν, γινόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, ὄντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν, μεταλήψει δὲ τοῦ ὄντος σωζόμενον,
 50 καθόσον ἂν αὐτοῦ μεταλαμβάνη.*

⁴Plotinus uses Timaeus, 27d, to distinguish between that which is born and perishes and that which really is (Ch. 8⁵, lines 44-50 and Ch. 9, lines 1-2). He has in mind Phaedrus, 245c-e, when he defines the soul as the principle of movement (Ch. 9, lines 3-9). He employs Phaedo, 105d, to argue that it is impossible for what has life essentially to become non-living (Ch. 9, lines 10-23). He echoes Sophist, 249a, when he affirms the primacy of life (Ch. 9, lines 24-25). Finally, he reiterates one of the main themes of the Phaedo when he notes that soul in its proper nature is imperishable and always tending to its original state (Ch. 9, lines 26-29). See the presentation in Bréhier, Ennéades, Vol. 4, pp. 185-86.

⁵The use of brackets (i.e., []) in the key text or in the movement of thought in this and subsequent chapters is meant to indicate that the bracketed phrases or sentences are not part of the very translation or paraphrase itself but are my interpolations as transitions, summaries, or inferences.

[Plotinus opens Chapter Nine with a brief description of Nous.]

[2] This other nature, namely, Nous, possessing being by itself, is all true being and neither comes to be nor perishes. If It should be destroyed, all other things would be destroyed and would no longer come to be from It. It also provides preservation to them, both to all the others and to this [physical] All preserved and ordered by soul. [3] Soul is indeed a principle of movement by furnishing movement to other things and is self-moved; giving life to the ensouled and thereby living body, it has a life which is from itself and which it never loses. For not all things are subject to a life brought in from outside, because this would involve an infinite regress. [4] There must be some one primally living nature, necessarily indestructible and immortal, inasmuch as it is the principle of life even for all other things.

9, 1-13:

Ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα φύσις, ἢ παρ' αὐτῆς ἔχουσα τὸ εἶναι, πᾶν τὸ ὄντως ὄν, ὃ οὔτε γίνεται οὔτε ἀπόλλυται· ἢ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα οἰχῆσεται, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ὕστερον γένοιτο τούτου ἀπολωλότος, ὃ παρέχει αὐτοῖς σωτηρίαν, τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ τῷδε τῷ παντὶ διὰ ψυχῆς σωζομένῳ καὶ κεκοσμημένῳ. 5 Ἄρχῃ γὰρ κινήσεως ἦδε χορηγοῦσα τοῖς ἄλλοις κίνησιν, αὕτη δὲ ἐξ ἑαυτῆς κινουμένη, καὶ ζωὴν τῷ ἐμφύχῳ σώματι διδοῦσα, αὕτη δὲ παρ' ἑαυτῆς ἔχουσα, ἦν οὔποτε ἀπόλλυσιν, ἅτε παρ' ἑαυτῆς ἔχουσα. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πάντα ἐπακτῷ ζωῇ χρῆται· ἢ εἰς ἄπειρον εἰσιν· ἀλλὰ δεῖ τινα 10 φύσιν πρῶτως ζῶσαν εἶναι, ἣν ἀνώλεθρον καὶ ἀθάνατον εἶναι δεῖ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, ἅτε ἀρχὴν ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις οὔσαν.

[5] Consequently it is necessary to grant in full a divine and blessed status to that which has life and being of itself [i.e., Nous]: primally being and primally living, its ousia having no part in change, neither coming to be nor perishing. For from what would it come to be or into what would it perish? [6] And if the name 'being' is to be attributed truly to Nous, it must not be the case that Nous is sometimes being and sometimes not being. Likewise, whiteness, itself a color, is not sometimes white and sometimes not white.

And if whiteness were identical with being, then whiteness [precisely because of its being whiteness] would always be. But it is only whiteness. [7] But that which has being of itself and primally will always be being. This being, primal and everlasting, is not dead like a stone or wood, but must be living and enjoying a pure life insofar as it remains [undescended and thereby] alone and by itself. [8] [However] if it descends as soul and mixes itself with something worse, it has an impediment to the best; but it does not lose its own nature and takes up its primal state by returning to itself.

9, 13-29:

Ἐνθα δὴ καὶ τὸ θεῖον ἅπαν καὶ τὸ μακάριον ἰδρῦσθαι δεῖ ζῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄν παρ' αὐτοῦ, πρῶτως ὄν καὶ ζῶν πρῶτως, μεταβολῆς κατ' οὐσίαν ἄμοιρον, οὔτε 15 γινόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον. Πόθεν γὰρ ἂν καὶ γένοιτο, ἢ εἰς τί ἀπόλοιτο; Καὶ εἰ δεῖ ἐπαληθεύειν τὴν τοῦ ὄντος προσηγορίαν, αὐτὸ οὐ ποτὲ μὲν εἶναι, ποτὲ δὲ οὐκ εἶναι δεήσει. Ὡς καὶ τὸ λευκόν, αὐτὸ τὸ χρῶμα, οὐ ποτὲ μὲν λευκόν, ποτὲ δὲ οὐ λευκόν· εἰ δὲ καὶ ὄν ἦν τὸ λευκόν μετὰ 20 τοῦ λευκόν εἶναι, ἦν ἂν αἰεὶ· ἀλλὰ μόνον ἔχει τὸ λευκόν. Ὡς δ' ἂν τὸ ὄν ἢ παρὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ πρῶτως, ὄν αἰεὶ ἔσται. Τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ ὄν πρῶτως καὶ αἰεὶ ὄν οὐχὶ νεκρόν, ὥσπερ λίθον ἢ ξύλον, ἀλλὰ ζῶν εἶναι δεῖ, καὶ ζωῆ καθαρᾷ κεκρήσθαι, ὅσοι ἂν αὐτοῦ μένη μόνον· 25 ὁ δ' ἂν συμμιχθῆ χειρόνι, ἐμπόδιον μὲν ἔχει πρὸς τὰ ἄριστα — οὔτι γε μὴν τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἀπολωλέναι — ἀναλαβεῖν δὲ τὴν ἀρχαίαν κατάστασιν ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ ἀναδραμόν.

[In Chapter Ten Plotinus concentrates on soul.]

[9] That the soul is akin to the divine and eternal nature has been demonstrated by making clear that it is not a body. And it has neither shape nor color nor is it able to be touched. However, one can certainly show that it is without these characteristics by the following. [10] Agreeing that all divine and true being is endowed with good and rational life, we must examine next what kind of nature our own soul has. [11] Let us therefore take [an individual human] soul, not one which is in the body and takes hold of irrational and wild desires and attracts to itself all other

passions, but one which is turned away from all of them and has, as far as possible, no association with the body. [12] This analysis makes clear that evils are appendages to the soul and come [not from within the soul but] from elsewhere, and that by its becoming clean, the best things, prudence and other virtues, are [then] its property.

10, 1-13:

Ὅτι δὲ τῇ θειοτέρᾳ φύσει συγγενῆς ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τῇ αἰδίῳ, δῆλον μὲν ποιεῖ καὶ τὸ μὴ σῶμα αὐτὴν δεδεῖχθαι. Καὶ μὴν οὐδὲ σχῆμα ἔχει οὐδὲ χρῶμα ἀναφῆς τε. Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκ τῶνδε ἔστι δεικνύναι. Ὁμολογουμένου δὴ ἡμῖν παντὸς τοῦ θείου καὶ τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος ζωῆ ἀγαθῆ κεχρησθαι καὶ ἔμφρονι, σκοπεῖν δεῖ τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς, οἷόν ἐστι τὴν φύσιν. Λάβωμεν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ τὴν ἐν σώματι ἐπιθυμίας ἀλόγους καὶ θυμοῦς προσλαβοῦσαν καὶ πάθη ἄλλα ἀναδεξαμένην, ἀλλὰ τὴν ταῦτα ἀποτριψαμένην καὶ καθόσον οἷόν τε μὴ κοινωνοῦσαν τῷ σώματι. Ἦτις καὶ δῆλον ποιεῖ, ὡς προσθῆκαι τὰ κακὰ τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ ἄλλοθεν, καθηραμένη δὲ αὐτῇ ἐννύπτει τὰ ἄριστα, φρόνησις καὶ ἡ ἄλλη ἀρετή, οἰκεία ὄντα.

[13] [Plotinus then argues (lines 13-30) that man's soul differs from the superior realities primarily because of its entanglement with the body. Hence, the true nature of the human soul (i.e., it is akin to the divine and is immortal) is discerned only when it is viewed in its pure state without association with the body. Plotinus then continues:]

[14] Let him examine the human soul, then, as separate [from the body], or rather, let him see himself as separated [from his body] and he will believe himself to be immortal, when he beholds himself to be in the intelligible and the pure [higher region of Nous]. [15] He will see an intelligence which sees not some sensible and mortal things, but which has intellection of the eternal in the eternal. He will see all things in the intelligible, having himself become an intelligible and luminous world, illuminated by the true

good, which pours out onto all the intelligibles the light of its truth. [16] [Hence,] it will seem to him that this indeed was often well said: 'Greetings to you, I am to you an immortal god';⁶ when ascending to the divine he looks intently at his resemblance to it. [17] If purification brings about in us knowledge of the highest [realities], the knowledges which are within [us all along] will appear, for they truly are knowledges. It is not by going outside of itself that soul sees temperance and justice, but it sees them by itself in its intellectual reflection upon itself and upon its primal state, as if seeing statues standing within itself, inasmuch as, having been accumulated with rust through time, it makes them clean again.⁷

10, 30-47:

Σκόπει δὴ ἀφελών, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ ἀφελών ἑαυτὸν ἰδέτω ³⁰
καὶ πιστεύσει ἀθάνατος εἶναι, ὅταν ἑαυτὸν θεάσῃται ἐν
τῷ νοητῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ καθαρῷ γεγεννημένον. Ὁψεται γὰρ
νοῦν ὄρωντα οὐκ αἰσθητόν τι οὐδὲ τῶν θνητῶν τούτων,
ἀλλὰ αἰδίῳ τὸ αἰίδιον κατανοοῦντα, πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ
νοητῷ, κόσμον καὶ αὐτὸν νοητὸν καὶ φωτεινὸν γεγενη- ³⁵
μένον, ἀληθεία καταλαμπόμενον τῇ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὃ
πᾶσιν ἐπιλάμπει τοῖς νοητοῖς ἀλήθειαν· ὡς πολλάκις
αὐτῷ δόξαι τοῦτο δὴ καλῶς εἰρήσθαι· χαίρειτ', ἐγὼ
δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀναβὰς εἰς τὴν
πρὸς αὐτὸ ὁμοιότητα ἀτενίσας. Εἰ δ' ἡ κάθαρσις ποιεῖ ἐν ⁴⁰
γνώσει τῶν ἀρίστων εἶναι, καὶ αἱ ἐπιστήμαι ἔνδον οὔσαι
ἀναφαίνονται, αἱ δὴ καὶ ὄντως ἐπιστήμαί εἰσιν. Οὐ γὰρ
δὴ ἔξω που δραμοῦσα ἡ ψυχὴ σωφροσύνην καθορᾷ καὶ
δικαιοσύνην, ἀλλ' αὐτὴ παρ' αὐτῇ ἐν τῇ κατανοήσει
⁴⁵ ἑαυτῆς καὶ τοῦ ὁ πρότερον ἦν ὡσπερ ἀγάλματα ἐν αὐτῇ
ἰδρυμένα ὄρωσα οἷα ὑπὸ χρόνου ἰοῦ πεπληρωμένα καθαρὰ
ποιησαμένη·

[18] [Plotinus concludes Chapter Ten (lines 47-52) by noting that the soul is best understood as a mass of living

⁶Empedocles, Fr. 112.

⁷See Plato, Phaedrus, 247 d-e. For helpful explanation of this point see Armstrong, Enneads, Vol. IV, n. 1, pp. 384-385.

gold which comes to be aware of its true nature only after it has knocked off all that had encrusted it. Thus purified, this living gold comes to be alone with itself and thereby realizes that it needs no beauty brought in from outside. It is supreme in itself, if only it would be left alone by itself. In Chapter Eleven, Plotinus continues his examination of the unalloyed soul by explaining that its chief characteristic is immortality.]

[19] Who having an intellect would deny that this sort of existent [soul] is deathless? It has life of itself which it does not lose. [20] For how can that which is not acquired not be always possessed, considering [for example] the way that heat is always linked to fire. I do not mean that heat is brought into fire but that, although not to the fire, then [at least] to the [combustible] wood underlying [and feeding] the fire. For by [the complete combustion of] this [wood] even the fire is destroyed. [21] Soul does not have life in this way [as burning wood has fire and heat], as though soul were like wood underlying [the fire consuming it]. Soul manifests a life [intrinsically] belonging to itself [just as heat intrinsically belongs to fire].

11, 1-9:

Περὶ τοιούτου χρήματος τίς ἂν ἀμφισβητοίη νοῦν ἔχων, ὡς οὐκ ἀθάνατον; Ὡς πάρεστι μὲν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ ζωή, ἣν οὐχ οἶόν τε ἀπολέσθαι· πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίκτητόν γε οὔσαν οὐδ' αὖ οὕτως ἔχουσαν, ὡς τῷ πυρὶ ἢ θερμότης πάρεστι; Λέγω δὲ οὐχ ὡς ἐπακτόν ἢ θερμότης τῷ πυρὶ, ἀλλ' ὅτι, εἰ καὶ μὴ τῷ πυρὶ, ἀλλὰ τῇ ὑποκειμένῃ τῷ πυρὶ ὕλη. Ταύτη γὰρ καὶ διαλύεται τὸ πῦρ. Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ οὐχ οὕτω τὴν ζωὴν ἔχει, ὡς ὕλην μὲν οὔσαν ὑποκεῖσθαι, ζωὴν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτῇ γενομένην τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποδείξει.

[22] For life is an ousia, and the soul is an ousia of a sort that is living through itself -- it is precisely for this sort of ousia that we are searching -- and one must admit that it [the self-living soul] is immortal;

otherwise, one must analyze the composite further and further back until one comes to the element which is immortal and self-moved, for it is not proper for this [final element] to share in death. [23] Or if one says that life is a passive quality brought into matter, one will in virtue of this very passive quality's coming into matter be compelled to admit that this passive state itself is immortal, [since it is] unreceptive to the opposite of what it carries. [24] But the soul is one living nature in energeia.

11, 9-18:

Ἡ γὰρ

10 οὐσία ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ, καὶ ἔστιν οὐσία ἡ τοιαύτη παρ' αὐτῆς ζῶσα — ὅπερ ἐστίν, ὃ ζητοῦμεν, ἡ ψυχὴ — καὶ τοῦτο ἀθάνατον ὁμολογοῦσιν, ἢ ἀναλύσουσιν ὡς σύνθετον καὶ τοῦτο πάλιν, ἕως ἂν εἰς ἀθάνατον ἔλθωσι παρ' αὐτοῦ κινούμενον, ᾧ μὴ θέμις θανάτου μοῖραν δέχεσθαι. Ἡ πάθος ἐπακτὸν τῇ ὕλῃ λέγοντες τὴν ζωὴν, παρ' ὅτου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος ἐλήλυθεν 15 εἰς τὴν ὕλην, αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ἀναγκασθήσονται ὁμολογεῖν ἀθάνατον εἶναι, ἀδεκτον ὄν τοῦ ἐναντίου ᾧ ἐπιφέρει. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐστὶ μία φύσις ἐνεργεία ζῶσα.

COMMENTS

We shall begin our analysis of this key text by showing the sequence of its principal arguments (i.e., its movement of thought).

a. The ousia of soul [i.e., of World Soul and individual souls]⁸ is not a body and hence is not

⁸In the first five treatises chronologically there is no explicit mention of the Soul (i.e., the All Soul) as a separate hypostasis or level or reality. As Dominic O'Meara (Structures Hiérarchiques dans la pensée de Plotin [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975], p. 41, hereafter: O'Meara, Structures) argues, prior to IV, 8 (6), there is no direct reference to the All Soul but only to the demiurgic World Soul and to individual souls. It is not until IV, 8(6), 6, 5-6; 7, 1-7

intrinsically involved with physical matter and becoming, but is a doing and a making. This ousia is preserved to the extent that it participates in another and higher nature, namely, in the being of Nous (#1).⁹

b. [Plotinus now gives relevant data on Nous. His argument here and in #c below, although it applies to both Nous (#2, #4) and soul (#3), parallels Plato's argument (Phaedrus, 245c-246a) for the immortality of the soul.] Because there cannot be an infinity of things, each of which has a life that comes from another, there must be some one reality, namely, Nous, which is primarily self-living and immortal and thereby the principle of life for all the other lesser levels of reality. Nous preserves all other things through Soul. This single, primally living nature is

(⁸continued)

that Plotinus explicitly argues that the All Soul is the immediate source of the World Soul and of individual souls and that it occupies a position in the intelligible world while forming and ordering the sensible universe. In treatises prior to IV, 8(6) Plotinus seems as yet unaware of the All Soul as such and hence relies on Nous to perform the function of vivifying World Soul and individual souls.

Some indication of this initial hierarchy (i.e., the One-Good, Nous, World Soul and individual souls, physical matter) is to be found even as early as the first treatise. There, in the context of Plotinus' discussion of the source of beauty, we learn that first there is the beauty which is also the Good or the One. From the One immediately comes Nous, Itself beautiful, which in turn gives Its beauty to soul (i.e., World Soul). Everything else is beautiful by the forming of this soul (I, 6 [1], 6, 25-32).

⁹Here and throughout our study the number in parentheses--e.g., (#1)--will be used to refer to the corresponding portion of paraphrase/translation given earlier.

identical with all true being and as such always remains in its original state of primal life and primal being and hence is truly divine (#2).

c. Soul is also the source of movement to the sensible universe and is itself self-moved¹⁰ and has life from itself [since it is the logos¹¹ of Nous, which Itself

¹⁰Clearly this argument is inspired by Plato's Phaedrus (245c-a) and Laws (Bk. 10; 889-a-899c). How precisely Plato influences Plotinus on this point will be explained further in our comments below.

¹¹Throughout this study we shall simply transliterate and leave untranslated the difficult Greek word λόγος. Although this term is not explicitly mentioned in the key text, we must briefly examine its meaning in order to make clearer the relationship of soul to Nous. This notion is best understood by means of two complementary studies, Donald Gelpi, "The Plotinian Logos Doctrine." Modern Schoolman 37 (1960) 301-315 (hereafter, Gelpi; see also Logos as a Cosmological Principle in Plotinus, M. A. Thesis, St. Louis University, 1958) and Gary Gürtler, S. J., Human Consciousness and Its Intersubjective Dimension in Plotinus, Ph.D. Dissertation, Fordham University, 1978, Chs. 8-9. Hereafter, Gürtler, "Human Consciousness."

According to Gelpi, logos functions in Plotinus' thought as the ontological explanation of the bi-directional relationship between a higher reality (the producer) and a lower reality (the product). This relationship may be specified in a twofold fashion. First, logos denotes the relation of a hypostasis to its products. Logos is a kind of principle or formative plan within the hypostasis and accounts for the formation and development of all the lower realities which proceed from the hypostasis (see IV, 3[27], 9-16; III, 2 [47]; III, 3 [48]; II, 3 [52], 16-17; see Wallis Neoplatonism, p. 689). Second, logos denotes a product's relation to its producer. Specifically, an item is a logos insofar as it is the higher precisely as existing on a lower level--and thus the lower is a logos of the higher--because the former has become more multiple and, hence, less real (see I, 2 [19], 3, 27-30). At the lowest level of reality a logos is that which comes upon matter and brings to it, among other perfections, unity, form, and beauty (I, 6 [1], 2, 13-24; IV, 7 [2], 2, 22-25; V, 9 [5], 9, 9).

is Primal Life because (we infer here) It is self-moved also]. In other words, by furnishing its own self-initiated movement to physical bodies soul gives them life. World Soul is the principle of movement of the sensible All and individual souls are the principles of movement of individual sensible beings. Soul is the first principle of motion for the sensible universe. But, it is Nous that is the ultimate first principle of all motion. As such Nous is a life without generation or corruption; a life that is first, eternal and divine (#3-#7).

d. [Next Plotinus takes up the soul in its relation to what is below it.] Even if soul were to mix with something worse like the body, which would be an impediment, it would not destroy soul's real nature, namely, to be self-moved, divine and to have a good and rational life, which it could take up again by returning within itself (#8-#10). It is not by looking to things outside it, but rather by intellectually reflecting upon itself, that the soul becomes

(11continued)

The above account of logos Gary Gürtler calls "extensive" because it explains the relationship of beings distinct from one another. In other words, it explains the "vertical" relationship between distinct levels of reality. But, Gürtler adds, from another point of view logos is "intensive" because it accounts for the unity-in-diversity needed at each level of reality. Viewed in this way, logos, as the principle uniting the forms constituting each hypostasis, explains the "horizontal" relationship among beings within a hypostasis. We shall have more to say about logos, in both its extensive and intensive aspects in Text C: III, 8(30).

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purified and thereby recognizes its true nature. Thus, purified soul is itself an intelligible world because it comes from and is illuminated by, the intelligible and eternal region of Nous and ultimately by the true good, the One. Such careful examination of a soul devoid of all its bodily associations reveals that its very ousia is to be alive, immortal, and self-moved (#11-#19).

e. The relationship between soul [i.e., World Soul and individual souls] and life may be compared to the relationship between fire and heat. As heat is always with fire, so life is always with soul because life follows from the ousia of soul just as heat follows from the ousia of fire. The further relationship between fire and its substratum (the combustible material) is not analogous to soul's relation to life since in the case of any burning thing even the very fire itself is eventually destroyed once it fully consumes its substratum. Life, however, neither departs from, nor is ever extinguished by, its presence with soul (#20-#22).

f. The soul is immortal, then, because it manifests a life which belongs to it intrinsically [because life is self-movement], just as heat intrinsically belongs to fire. Since life itself is an ousia, and soul has life, soul too must be an ousia which lives in itself. Thus, even if we were to suppose that life is only a passive quality which matter receives, this very passive quality would then be

what is immortal and hence ousia and soul. Soul, however, is a living nature in energeia (#23-#24).

Having presented Plotinus' movement of thought we must now elucidate several important issues in order to understand the meaning of life (zōē) in this key text: a) life as self-movement; b) the nature of the ousia of soul; c) the life of soul as praxis and poiēsis; d) the precise relationship between soul and Nous; e) the metaphor of fire and heat; f) the meaning of energeia in relation to soul and life.

a) Life as self-movement

In text A (#3-#4) Plotinus' argument, particularly in respect to the life of the soul, reflects the influence of Plato. Let us, then, begin our comments by examining Phaedrus, 245c5-e6.¹²

All soul is immortal; for that which is ever in motion is immortal. But that which while imparting motion is itself moved by something else can cease to be in motion, and therefore can cease to live; it is only that which moves itself that never intermits its motion, inasmuch as it cannot abandon its own nature; moreover this self-mover is the source and first principle of motion for all other things that are moved (245c5-9).

¹²In the Laws (Bk. 10; 889a-899c) Plato provides a more detailed proof of the soul's immortality. After explaining the nine types of physical kinēsis he posits the motion of soul as a tenth type of kinēsis and argues that its incorporeal self-motion is necessary for all the kinds of corporeal motion. In this way the Laws complements the Phaedrus by arguing that there must be more than one soul which is the cause of the corporeal or cosmic motions.

Plato next argues that a first principle by definition must be ungenerated and indestructible. Hence, the self-moved, as the first-principle of motion, cannot come to be nor perish. Otherwise no motion would be possible (245d1-e2).

Plato immediately states the following:

And now that we have seen that that which is moved by itself is immortal, we shall feel no scruple in affirming that precisely that is the essence [*ousia*] and definition [*logos*] of soul, to wit self-motion. Any body that has an external source of motion is soulless; but a body deriving its motion from a source within itself is animate or besouled, which implies that the nature of soul is what has been said (245e2-6).¹³

In the first section (i.e., 245c5-9) of the above passage, Plato argues that all souls are immortal (= ever-

¹³The translation I use here is by R. Hackforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 63-64. The Greek text itself is taken from *Platonis Opera*, Vol. 2, ed. John Burnet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

5 Ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος. τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον τὸ
 δ' ἄλλο κινεῖται καὶ ὑπ' ἄλλου κινούμενον, παύσαν ἔχον
 κινήσεως, παύσαν ἔχει ζωῆς. μόνον δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ κινεῖται, ἅτε
 οὐκ ἀπολείπειν ἑαυτὸ, οὐποτε λήγει κινούμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ
 τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα κινεῖται τοῦτο πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχὴ κινήσεως.
 d ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀγένητον. ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀνάγκη πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον
 γίνεσθαι, αὐτὴν δὲ μηδ' ἐξ ἐνός· εἰ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ἀρχῆ
 γίνοιτο, οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ἀρχὴ γίνοιτο. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀγένητόν
 ἔστω, καὶ ἀδιάφθορον αὐτὸ ἀνάγκη εἶναι. ἀρχῆς γὰρ δὲ
 5 ἀπολλομένης οὔτε αὐτὴ ποτε ἐκ τοῦ οὔτε ἄλλο ἐξ ἐκείνης
 γενήσεται, εἴπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς δεῖ τὰ πάντα γίνεσθαι. οὔτω
 δὲ κινήσεως μὲν ἀρχὴ τὸ αὐτὸ αὐτὸ κινεῖται. τοῦτο δὲ οὐτ'
 ἀπόλλυσθαι οὔτε γίνεσθαι δυνατόν, ἢ πάντα τε οὐρανῶν
 e πᾶσάν τε γῆν εἰς ἓν συμπεσοῦσαν στήναι καὶ μήποτε αἰθῆς
 ἔχειν ὅθεν κινήθεται γενήσεται. ἀθανάτου δὲ πεφασμένου
 τοῦ ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ κινουμένου, ψυχῆς οὐσίας τε καὶ λόγον
 τούτων αὐτὸν τις λέγων οὐκ αἰσχυνεῖται. πᾶν γὰρ σῶμα,
 ᾧ μὲν ἔξωθεν τὸ κινεῖσθαι, ἡψυχον, ᾧ δὲ ἐνδοθεν αὐτῷ s
 ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἔμψυχον, ὡς ταύτης οὐσης φύσεως ψυχῆς·

living) because they are ever-moving. For motion to be possible there must be an ultimate cause of motion. Such a cause must be itself a first and independent mover. For only the presence of such a primal mover can explain how things which are not self-moved can nevertheless be in motion.¹⁴

Would it be proper here to call the soul as first mover an efficient cause? While it is Aristotle who is to be credited with the first comprehensive and explicit treatment of the notion of efficient causality, it seems that we can discern already in Plato's thought the concepts and spirit, if not the specific terminology, of Aristotle's theory.¹⁵ The theory of (efficient) causality shows up in three areas of Plato's philosophy: the soul's causing its

¹⁴A further point is noteworthy here. W. K. C. Guthrie (A History of Greek Philosophy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975], hereafter: Guthrie, History, Vol. 4, pp. 420-421) points out that the doctrine that all motions arise from conscious awareness of an end is elaborated in the Laws (Book 10) and the Timaeus. "It brings out the importance," he notes, "for Plato of eros, to which he devotes so much attention in the Symposium and Phaedrus, for in its widest sense it is, as 'desire for the good' (Symposium, 204e), another name for self-motion of the soul and so of all motion and change in the universe." We shall examine further the views of Plato and Plotinus on eros and its relationship to zōē in Text B: VI, 9(9).

¹⁵On this point see Guthrie, History, Vol. 4, pp. 349-350.

own operations (e.g., knowing), the production of the sensible universe, and the motion of material things.¹⁶

Although the Demiurge is the most striking example of (efficient) causality in Plato's thought, it is not the only one. Indeed, there are as many (efficient) causes in the sensible universe as there are living things. The reason for this is that soul, whether it be the World Soul or an individual soul, is the self-moving cause of motion in the sensible world.¹⁷ Accordingly, from these considerations we may infer that in Plato to say that soul moves itself means that soul is able efficiently to cause or actually does efficiently cause its own activities or operations, the

¹⁶These two latter aspects are due to the agency of the Craftsman or Demiurge. The working of this agent (who is not a soul but a subsistent intellect) are described principally in the Timaeus (28c-30b), where the Demiurge takes hold of the chaos of matter and molds it into a rational, orderly and beautiful world using the Forms as its model and having its own goodness as its only motive (Timaeus 28a-c; Philebus 26e). Furthermore, the Demiurge must not be viewed as simply a dramatic and fictional device invented by Plato to explain this very difficult issue. The fact that Plato speaks of the Demiurge in other dialogues (which themselves are not nearly as dramatic or metaphorical as the Timaeus) with seriousness suggests that he did posit it as a real being and, hence, saw it as a genuine efficient cause of the sensible universe (see, for example, Republic, Book 6, 507c and Book 7, 530a; Sophist 265c; Statesman 270a; 273a-b). Helpful discussion of this point is provided by W. D. Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), hereafter: Ross, Ideas, pp. 127-128; J. B. Skemp, The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues (Cambridge: University Press, 1942), hereafter, Skemp, Motion, pp. 67-69.

¹⁷See, for example, Laws, Book 10, 894e-895a.

primary and most proper of which is the intellection of the Forms.¹⁸

Moreover, what moves itself (heauto kinoun) must be ever-moving and, hence, ever-living since it is not reliant on anything else to cause its motion and life. If it was moved by, or alive because of, another it would come into being and pass out of being (and thereby would be dependent on another) and could not be a first principle. Consequently, as Plato notes in the second section (i.e., 245e2-6) of the above passage, because what moves itself is ever-living, the very ousia¹⁹ and logos²⁰ of soul are self-kinēsis.

¹⁸That intellection is soul's proper and, hence, highest activity is a point made frequently by Plato, especially in Phaedrus 247b-248b; Republic, Book 4, 435b-442a; Timaeus 30b; 69c-70a; 89c-90a; Laws, Book 10, 897c-898c.

¹⁹The term ousia, whose multifaceted Aristotelian meaning and usage we shall examine later in our comments, seems to have had no precise philosophical sense in Plato's time. Joseph Owens suggests that before Aristotle this term

was vague and applicable to every type of Being and Becoming. In Aristotle it takes on one precise meaning after another. These meanings are not drawn out of any preconceived notion designated by the word, but develop successively as the various things denoted by the term are studied.

(The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics, 3rd ed., [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978], hereafter: Owens, Being, pp. 151-152).

More specifically, Plato seems to use the terms ousia and on synonymously (see, for example, Freidrich Ast, Lexicon Platonicum [Berlin: H. Barsdorf, 1908], Vol. 2, pp.

Now let us make clear how Plotinus incorporates this platonic argumentation into text A. Plotinus' presentation (#1-#7) is a more difficult and complex version of Plato's basic argument that life and movement in the sensible world depend on the life and self-motion of the soul. Plotinus' text here (especially #3-#4), however, is not without its exegetical difficulties. Specifically, it is at first difficult to determine whether the phrase "one primally living nature, necessarily indestructible and immortal"

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491-493 and Leonard Brandwood, Word Index of Plato [Leeds: W. S. Maney and Son, 1976], p. 679). According to Owens, Plato uses ousia in the Timaeus (35b; 37a) and in the Philebus (26d; 27d; 53c; 54a-c) to denote the term of the process of generation, and hence the term takes on the notion of a completely developed Being (Owens, Being, n. 62, p. 151). See also R. G. Bury, The Philebus of Plato (Cambridge: University Press, 1897), pp. 210-211; D. Peipers, Ontologia Platonica. Ad Notionum Terminorumque Historiam Symbola (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), pp. 88ff; G. R. G. Mure, Aristotle (London: E. Benn, 1932), p. 60. We shall take ousia to mean, for Plato, simply "what anything is" (Phaedo, 65d; 92d; see also Cratylus, 386d-e), the true essence of anything, or that which the mind seeks without the aid of the senses (Cratylus, 186a-b).

²⁰Although the term logos has a variety of meanings in Plato (see Theaetetus, 201c-210b), the most apt translation of this term in the present context is "definition" (i.e., the explicit statement of the meaning of a particular reality). In other contexts logos may mean either 1) "word" or "speech" (i.e., the mirroring of thought in speech), or 2) enumeration of the elements or parts of a thing. Helpful examination of Plato's use of this term is to be found in F. M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935), pp. 143-163 and Paul Shorey, What Plato Said (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1933), pp. 285-286.

refers to Nous, to soul or to both.²¹ The resolution of this ambiguity is suggested in our movement of thought, where (#c) we note that Nous and soul (i.e., World Soul and individual souls) are related to one another as ultimate cause of motion and life to proximate cause of motion and life. More precisely, the soul is in this text (as it is in Plotinus' thought in general) subordinate to Nous, insofar as it is a logos of Nous, that is, soul is Nous on a lower, more multiple level of reality. As such soul is the vehicle by which Nous animates and constitutes the sensible world.²² Thus, we may understand that both soul and Nous are referred to in #3-#4 but in a specific relation to one another, as lower reality (soul) to higher reality (Nous),

²¹We have already seen that Plotinus seems to show no awareness of the All Soul (but only of the World Soul and of individual souls) prior to the sixth treatise chronologically (IV, 8). In fact, even when the All Soul is explicitly mentioned it is still sometimes difficult to distinguish it from Nous or from the World Soul. This difficulty in Plotinus is discussed at length by Henry Blumenthal, both in "Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus," Le néo-platonisme. Actes du Colloque de Royaumont 9-13 Juin 1969 (Paris: Ed. du CNRS, 1971), 55-63 and in "Nous and Soul in Plotinus: Some Problems of Demarcation," Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul Tema: Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente (Rome: Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei, 1974), 204-219. Hereafter, Blumenthal, "Soul" and Blumenthal, "Nous," respectively.

²²It is possible that section #4 of the key text refers to Nous. However, given our understanding of logos in Plotinus' system, it is more likely because more illuminating that both Nous and soul are meant here. The relationship of soul to Nous, insofar as it is taken up in this key text, is explicated in a later segment of our comments.

in which the former is the channel through which the latter works in animating and constituting the sensible world.

Plotinus' argument here, though somewhat terse and initially opaque, contains implicitly very important information on the nature of life.²³ Making this argumentation more explicit will reveal at once how Plotinus is indebted to Plato and yet transcends him.

Plotinus' comments on the nature of soul (specifically, the World Soul and every individual soul, as each is a logos of Nous and the channel through which Nous animates and orders the sensible universe) indicate that there is life where there is self-motion and that life is intellection.²⁴

With this understanding of the close association of self-motion with life, it becomes clear that in text A Plotinus both follows Plato and transcends him. He follows Plato in his argument on the necessity of soul and by accepting his definition of intellection as a kind of

²³Although his argument here touches on the life of Nous it seems principally to be concerned with explaining the life and immortality of soul. Accordingly, we shall defer until our next key text (VI, 9 [9], which concentrates on life as the energeia of Nous) a full and complete discussion of the life of Nous.

²⁴Accordingly, if soul is life by virtue of its self-motion, which is intellection, we may infer here what later key texts (III, 8 [30] and VI, 7 [38]) will explicitly affirm, namely, that the life of a higher reality (i.e., Nous, of which soul is a logos) is even more perfect because even more closely linked with intellection.

kinēsis -- the self-motion of the soul. He transcends Plato by describing the life and self-movement of soul as subordinate to, because a logos of, another and higher reality (i.e., Nous). Suffice it for us to say here, then, that for Plotinus in text A, to be life is to be self-motion and noēsis. Hence, as we ascend to greater and greater levels of intellection we may expect to find greater and greater levels of self-motion and life.²⁵

b) The nature of the ousia of soul

Plotinus sets up his own, Platonically inspired treatment of soul after dismissing as incorrect the Aristotelian definition of soul as the entelecheia of the body (Ch. 8⁵, lines 1-43).²⁶ For Plotinus soul is an

²⁵This central theme will be developed in various ways in subsequent key texts. For example, in VI, 9 (9) we will see that because the One is beyond kinēsis It is therefore beyond life, intellection and being. In III, 8 (30) kinēsis will be implied in Plotinus' argument that since there are degrees of intellection there are degrees of life. Moreover, kinēsis will relate to the way in which Plotinus explains how contemplation is productive, both as a praxis and a poiēsis, on all levels of reality. In VI, 7 (38) we will see kinēsis to be important in Plotinus' explanation of the production of Nous, particularly in regard to how Nous as intellection is Primal Life, which is productive of the plurality of Forms. In III, 7 (45) Plotinus will employ kinēsis to explain how the life of Nous is distinguishable from the life of Soul: the former is a kinēsis which is eternity, the latter is a kinēsis which is time. Finally, in I, 4 (46) kinēsis will be implied in Plotinus' explanation of human moral conduct as the result of the human soul's correct intellection of truth and virtue.

²⁶Briefly, Plotinus' arguments against Aristotle (De Anima Bk. I, Chs. 4-5 and Bk. II, Ch. 3) are as follows: a) a mutilated member would remove along with itself its

existent which is intrinsically independent of physical matter and as such is a genuine ousia (#1). But what is an ousia? Although often translated as "substance," this term is more properly translated as "entity," since "substance" applies to only one, relatively restricted sense of ousia in Aristotle, to whom we now turn for an initial definition of ousia. Ousia as an ontological term may refer either to that which is reality or being, to the component which causes reality or being as act, or to the component which causes reality or being as potency.²⁷

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corresponding part of the soul (lines 7-9); b) the theory could not explain sleep (lines 9-11); c) nor the opposition of reason and desire (lines 12-14); d) nor the existence of thought independent of the body (lines 14-18); e) nor the preservation of images independent from sensible things (lines 19-23); f) nor the direction of desire towards a noncorporeal object (lines 23-25); g) nor the propagation of the vegetative soul of one plant by another (lines 25-35); h) in addition, the soul itself would be divisible, since it is the entelecheia of the body, which itself is divisible (lines 35-38); i) finally, the theory does not explain how some animals change themselves into other animals (lines 38-43).

Bréhier notes that Aristotle was himself aware of some of these difficulties, especially #d and #i (Ennéades, Vol. IV, "Notice," p. 184). It is also noteworthy that even at this early stage of his writing Plotinus utilizes his predecessors effectively and always for his own purposes, even to the point of turning their own arguments against them.

²⁷For Aristotle ousia signifies being per se or in the primary sense, where it has a logical as well as an ontological usage. As a logical term ousia refers to the subject of predication, and this in a primary sense: the individual thing (tode ti) which is the subject of a proposition; or, in a secondary sense, the genus or species predicated of a thing. As an ontological term ousia must be considered in three senses. Primal or original ousia is

Plotinus follows this Aristotelian definition only partially since in his system not all reality involves being or entity. His metaphysics, in short, is not an ontology (where to be real is to be) but a henology (where to be real is to be one).²⁸ Since reality for Plotinus involves primarily unity and not being, ousia has a limited

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that which is reality or being: the individual thing itself (tode ti) or the Unmoved Movers (Separate Intelligences) of the Metaphysics. Primary ousia is that which causes reality or being as act: the substantial form -- energeia or entelecheia and to ti ēn einai -- and accidental form. Secondary ousia is that which causes reality as potency precisely insofar as it receives primary ousia. It is either primary matter (with respect to substantial form) or substance (with respect to accidental forms). Secondary ousia is so called only through extrinsic denomination -- i.e., because it is a real component of a primal entity (Categories, Ch. 5; Metaphysics, Bk. V, Chs. 7-8; Bk. VII, Chs. 1-6, 17; Bk. VIII, Chs. 1-2, Bk. IX, Chs. 6-10).

I am indebted to Leo Sweeney, S. J., who provided much valuable information on these various meanings of ousia. Helpful discussions of these points may also be found in Owens, Being, pp. 137-154 and in his article, "Aristotle on Categories," Review of Metaphysics, 14 (1960), pp. 73-90.

Other valuable sources are G. A. Blair, "Meaning of 'Energeia' and 'Entelecheia' in Aristotle," International Philosophical Quarterly, 7 (1967), pp. 101-117 and L. M. DeRijk, The Place of Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy (Assen: van Gorcum, 1952).

²⁸For helpful discussion of this and related points see Sweeney, "Principles," pp. 506-516. Also consult E. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1952) pp. 21ff; Cleto Carbonara, La Filosofia di Plotino (Napoli: Libreria Scientifica Editrice, 1954), pp. 400-409; Bréhier, Plotinus, Ch. VIII, pp. 132ff; Jean Trouillard, "Un et Être," in Les Etudes Philosophiques 2 (1960) 185-196.

application insofar as beings (ousiai) make up only part of reality.²⁹

In his earliest treatises ³⁰ Plotinus provides us with a somewhat limited view of the ousia of soul. Soul is a logos and is related to, and comes from, a higher reality, Nous.³¹ In general, it is that reality which links the higher (and intelligible) level of Nous with the lower (and sensible) level of the material world.³²

More specifically, soul is a one³³ and a many.³⁴ There is one soul, namely, the World Soul,³⁵ which functions as a demiurge and makes the sensible world into one enormous living organism.³⁶ There are also many

²⁹Being involves form and determinateness. The One, however, is pure unity (thereby without form or determination) and, hence, beyond being. Being, then, occupies only a part of reality. Furthermore, since ultimate reality is unity, any deviation from unity (i.e., any involvement in multiplicity) is likewise a step towards unreality. Plotinus makes this and related points in the following texts: VI, 9 (9), 1; V, 5 (11), 5.

³⁰We shall confine our research here to the first five treatises (as ordered chronologically by Porphyry).

³¹I, 6 (1), 6, 25-32.

³²I, 6 (1), 1, 1-6; 2, 7-11; 4, 1-4; 5, 48-50; 6, 13-15 and 40-41. See also O'Meara, Structures, pp. 33-34, 40.

³³IV, 7 (2), 12, 13-14.

³⁴IV, 2 (4), 2.

³⁵IV, 7 (2), 13, 9-20; III, 1 (3), 8; V, 9 (5), 6; 14.

³⁶Plotinus' description of the World Soul's "lower part" as Nature indicates that World Soul is made up of lower and higher parts (V, 9 [5], 6; 14). See also IV, 8 (6), 3 and V, 2 (11), 1.

An individual human soul likewise is made up of parts. In IV, 7 (2), 14 and III, 1 (3), 8 it is tripartite. Elsewhere and later (e.g., IV, 3 [27], 7 and II, 1 [40], 5)

individual souls, each of which comes from the same source (i.e., from World Soul and, ultimately, from Nous), has a life of its own, is incorporeal, indivisible, and an ousia.³⁷ These souls animate the individual existents in the sensible world.³⁸ In this way both World Soul and individual souls of necessity lead a double life, so to speak, partly in the intelligible realm and partly in the sensible realm.³⁹ The level of reality which soul occupies, then, expresses both its intelligible nature (since it comes from Nous) and its causal and demiurgic function with respect to the sensible (since it forms and vivifies physical matter). In general, the ousia of World Soul and of individual souls may be described in a twofold way. First, it belongs to the intelligible nature and to the divine order (tēs theias moiras).⁴⁰ Second, it is the demiurge of the sensible universe.⁴¹

Reflection on the above remarks yields the following more specific formulation of soul's ousia. Since every ousia qua ousia is an image of Nous, Soul (because it is an ousia) is an image of Nous in all its respects including

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it is made up of only two parts. See Rist, The Road to Reality, p. 85, n. 6 for helpful discussion of this point.

³⁷IV, 7 (2), 14.

³⁸III, 1 (3), 8.

³⁹IV, 7 (2), 13.

⁴⁰IV, 1 (21), 1, 5.

⁴¹I, 6 (1), 6, 29-31; IV, 7 (2), 2, 22-25; V, 9 (5), 2, 15-18; 3, 26-36.

energeia, self-kinēsis, noēsis and life. In each case, then, (whether it is the World Soul or an individual soul), the ousia of soul consists of at least the following: a) a natural tendency to govern, form and thereby vivify physical matter; b) a genuine relationship to Nous as Its image and logos; and c) an intrinsic possession of life and, hence, immortality because life is self-motion.

c) The life of soul as praxis and poiēsis

The fuller meaning of soul's natural tendency to govern, form and thereby vivify physical matter may be explained in terms of praxis and poiēsis (#1). Two questions present themselves on this issue: what do praxis and poiēsis mean in these early treatises and what is their application to life and soul?

In I, 6 (1) World Soul is described as that which makes (poiēi) bodies beautiful by forming or shaping them (morphouseis). In fact, it makes (poiēi) everything it grasps and masters beautiful, as far as each thing is capable of participation (metalabein).⁴² In IV, 7 (2) World Soul is that which makes (poiēi) contraries in one and the same thing (e.g., a living thing is part solid and part liquid, partly dark and partly light, etc.).⁴³

Furthermore, World Soul is eager to make (poiēin

⁴²I, 6 (1), 6, 27-32.

⁴³IV, 6 (2), 4, 29-34.

speudei) and to be a demiurge (demiurgoi) and this explains the zeal with which it stretches towards the sensible. It is this eagerness to stretch towards physical matter that characterizes one of the World Soul's two aspects. Though linked with Nous as Its image and logos the World Soul nevertheless inevitably turns outward and downward and adds the sensible universe to its concern.⁴⁴

In what sense, then, is the World Soul both a praxis and a poiēsis? It is a praxis (a doing or acting) insofar as it inevitably looks to what is below it (i.e., physical matter, ultimately, which the World Soul forms and administers). As far as the nature of the World Soul is concerned this praxis is a natural and inevitable one. It is also, however, a turning away from unity towards multiplicity and hence unreality. It would seem, then, to be better for World Soul if this praxis never took place, if it did not "act" in this way or "do" this sort of thing.

The World Soul, however, is not simply a praxis but also is a poiēsis (a making or production) as well. It behaves in a manner proper to its nature, namely, by being demiurgically related to, and thereby producing, ordering, and governing, what is below it. Its demiurgic function (or poiēsis) ameliorates its turning towards multiplicity (or

⁴⁴IV, 7 (2), 13, 8-13. See also VI, 9 (9), 1, 17-20, where soul as demiurge is that which imparts unity to all things by fashioning, forming and ordering them.

praxis) by showing that the World Soul's very nature is to be productive and is thus something quite positive, since it imparts unity, intelligibility, and reality to that which has none of itself, the sensible world.

When dealing with an individual soul Plotinus seems to distinguish praxis and poiēsis much less clearly. For him, active souls, insofar as they act by making according to correct logoi, act of themselves whenever they do, in fact, act, but in everything else they are hindered in their own action and are passive rather than active.⁴⁵ Both action and making, praxis and poiēsis, seem to be proper and natural manifestations of the individual soul's life as a self-kinēsis provided they are carried out properly (i.e., in conformity with Nous).

Obviously, the distinction between praxis and poiēsis in the early treatises is not easily discerned because it is not yet fully developed here.⁴⁶ The classic dictionary

⁴⁵III, 1 (3), 10, 4-7.

⁴⁶In later treatises, especially III, 8 (30), 2-4, the terms poiēsis and praxis are more fully developed. There they are used to describe two kinds of results in the sensible world. These can be actions or "makings," which occur either by knowledge or contemplation of the true realities (poiēsis) or by physical production of sensible things (praxis). For further details on this distinction see Deck, Contemplation, pp. 93-209. We shall have more to say on this topic in text C: III, 8 (30).

distinction⁴⁷ between these terms seems to be ignored or at least de-emphasized (or perhaps blurred) to the extent that both terms seem to refer to World Soul's (or to an individual soul's) relationship to what is below it. We can, however, venture the following additional analysis here. As we shall only discover in a later key text (III, 8 [30]), praxis and poiēsis are kinds of contemplation or intellection. We have already seen in our first area of commentary that intellection is kinēsis. Praxis and poiēsis, then, are further ways of expressing how soul is a self-motion and a life. Specifically, a living being's praxis is any self-originated and self-caused doing or acting and its poiēsis is any self-originated and self-caused making or production.

d) The precise relationship between soul and Nous

Even in these early treatises, the World Soul's ousia is described as both active and productive of lower and, therefore, less unified reality. World Soul is also intimately related to its immediate source, Nous. Let us

⁴⁷The Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) defines praxis as "a doing...an acting...action...exercise" (p. 1459) and poiēsis as "a making...fabrication...production" which is opposed to praxis (p. 1429). We learn there also that poiēsis is derived from poieo, which is used, curiously enough, in two general senses: "to make" and "to do" (pp. 1427-9).

Likewise, J. H. Sleeman and Gilbert Pollet in Lexicon Plotinianum (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980) define praxis as "action" (column 888) and poiēsis as "creation, production, doing, action" (column 861).

now examine the precise nature of this relationship. Specifically, we are concerned with how World Soul (or any soul for that matter) can be said to have life of itself when it comes from and depends upon Nous, which also has life of itself.

Nous is identical with true ousia and comes from the One, who is above being.⁴⁸ In addition to generating World Soul and individual souls, Nous generates the sensible universe.⁴⁹ One way to view the relationship of Nous to World Soul is in terms of the function each has in the sensible universe. Nous, through the World Soul, is the maker and demiurge of the universe. While the World Soul imparts form and pattern upon the basic elements (i.e., air, earth, fire, water) in the universe, Nous provides to World Soul the logoi according to which this forming or patterning is to take place.⁵⁰ Nous, while remaining with intellectual being (i.e., the Forms) and living the purely intellectual life, works through World Soul by providing it with the archetype and model according to which it will produce and inform the sensible universe.⁵¹

⁴⁸V, 9 (5), 3, 1-4. Later, in V, 4 (7), 1, 9-10 Plotinus uses Plato's phrase epekeina ousias (Republic VI, 509b9) to describe the One/Good as beyond ousia. This also seems to suggest that the level of reality immediately below the One/Good, namely, Nous is genuine ousia itself.

⁴⁹V, 9 (5), 9, 3-14.

⁵⁰V, 9 (5), 3, 24-35.

⁵¹I, 6 (1), 6; 9; IV, 7 (2), 2; 13.

Plotinus describes an individual soul's relationship to Nous in these early treatises in moral and aesthetic terms. For example, what is the worst state for the human soul? One in which it has become ugly (i.e., dissolute, unjust, lustful, cowardly, jealous, etc.) by thinking mean and mortal thoughts and by living a life of bodily sensations and pleasures.⁵² The human soul's ugliness and hence its poor life is identical with its inclination to the material body it animates and the material world it inhabits.⁵³ Its purification and subsequent beauty, on the other hand, are identical with its becoming bodiless, intellectual (noēra), and thereby wholly divine.⁵⁴ Only by becoming form and logos does soul achieve unification with Nous (#14-17). Only then is it truly soul.⁵⁵

Such is the source of the human soul's genuine life: unification with Nous. Only when the human soul is raised to the level of Nous (by turning from the sensible outside, to the intelligible inside itself) does it increase in beauty and enjoy true life.⁵⁶ What exactly does this mean? The human soul, when raised to Nous, will view (eisetai) the Forms (ta eidē), through which all else is

52I, 6 (1), 5, 25-31.

53I, 6 (1), 5, 48-50.

54I, 6 (1), 6, 13-18.

55I, 6 (1), 6-9.

56I, 6 (1), 6.

beautiful by means of the products and ousia of Nous.⁵⁷ It will be united with Nous and will see what Nous sees and thereby truly live.

In these early treatises we see that the ousia of Nous is genuine and primal because it is identical with Nous' union with Its content, the Forms. This union occurs through contemplation, which is life on the level of Nous. In Nous this union is not merely intimate but also entitative.⁵⁸ Specifically, Nous lives by looking at the One and having present to itself a multiplicity of Forms, which are the One precisely as Nous and as Nous is able to apprehend and understand It. World Soul and individual souls live by looking to Nous and, more specifically, by looking to the Forms within Nous.⁵⁹ Each soul lives by seeing itself in Nous and thus is dependent on Nous. Each soul's life is its own, however, because each soul is Nous

⁵⁷I, 6 (1), 9.

⁵⁸I, 6 (1), 9, 37.

⁵⁹Plotinus commonly makes use of the metaphor of vision as a way of expressing the indeterminate active power (dynamis) as the first moment of every hypostasis. See, for example, I 6 (1), 7, 2-12; VI, 9 (9), 4, 16-29; 9, 46-56; 10, 4-14; V, 1 (10), 6, 41-48.

This "looking" will also be described as contemplation (IV, 8 [6], 3, 21-31). Deck (Contemplation, p. 4) notes that outside of III, 8 (30) contemplation explicitly as such, designated by the nouns theoria, and the cognate thea, and expressed by the verb theorein, "contemplate," is mentioned only occasionally. There is a discussion of contemplation in Nous in V, 3 (49), 5 which parallels that of III, 8 (30) and a fairly extensive treatment of the "contemplation" of the One by the "individual" soul in VI, 9 (9), 11.

on a lower level of reality and thus lives not as Nous does but precisely as soul.

The items that issue from the One, then, are in a way all part of a single living continuum. Each level of reality is a part of this continuum but also holds its own proper place in it. Each part is continuous with the rest insofar as it receives the influence and power of the higher (by being a logos and thereby actually being the higher on a lower level).

The difficulty in explaining soul's life, then, lies in the fact that each level of reality in Plotinus's system has a significance and a nature of its own but (except for the highest level, the One) cannot explain itself fully without reference to what is above and superior to it.

At this point in our study the following conclusions about the life of soul, whether it is the World Soul or an individual soul, seem justified. Once it is produced by Nous each soul has a life of its own and is self-living because each soul images Nous by being a self-kinēsis, a noēsis, an ousia, and energeia. Thus, in order to live fully and well each soul must rely on Nous, to which it is entitatively and monistically related. In other words, soul is a logos of Nous. As such, soul participates in various logically distinct perfections which characterize Nous: ousia, life, energeia, noēsis, and especially, self-kinēsis. And this is to say that soul is self-kinēsis and thereby

life because self-kinēsis constitutes life.

e) The metaphor of fire and heat

Perhaps another way of understanding the relationship between World Soul (or an individual soul) and life is to see it as analogous to the relationship between fire and heat (#20-#21).⁶⁰ This metaphor, among others, is often used by Plotinus to describe the way in which Nous proceeds

⁶⁰Although fire is discussed by many of the Presocratics (e.g., Anaximander, Anaximenes, the Pythagoreans, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and the Atomists), it functions most prominently in the system of Heraclitus. There it is the primary cosmic constituent: the archetypal form of matter. The world order as a whole can be described as a fire, portions of which are being extinguished while other portions are being rekindled. It always has been and always will be in this condition. See Kathleen Freeman, trans., Ancilla to the Presocratic Philosophers, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), fragments #30-31, pp. 26-27.

G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, in The Presocratic Philosophers (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), pp. 199-201, point out that the pure cosmic fire was probably identified by Heraclitus with aither, the bright fiery stuff which fills the luminous sky and surrounds the world. This aither was widely regarded both as divine and as a place of souls (see, for example, Aristotle, De Caelo, Bk. 1, Ch. 12, line 284a11). However, even the lower and mundane sort of fire, since it consumes fuel and emits smoke with such regularity, embodies the rule of measure in change which is found in the world process. Hence, it is naturally thought of as the very constituent of things which actively determines their structure and activity.

Fire also plays a fundamental role in Stoic thought, especially in their physics. There it is seen as "the hot" -- the element with the most active dynamis. Fire is also strongly linked with life (Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, [hereafter: SVF] ed. H. von Arnim [Stuttgart, 1964], II, 23) insofar as the principle of life, both in individuals and in the cosmos as a whole, is a kind of intelligent, fiery breath (SVF, II, 787).

from the One.⁶¹ What concerns us here, however, is not so much the particular context in which the discussion of fire and heat takes place as the information to be gained regarding the relationship of fire and heat itself.

What is fire? For Plotinus it is the most beautiful, subtlest, and finest of bodies, and thus has the rank of form (eidos) in relation to the other elements. Though not admitting anything else into itself, it warms everything.⁶² Fire has impulses (i.e., to give off heat), as does everything else which is subject to its structure and which moves according to it.⁶³

These "impulses" may be explained further in terms of energeia. Plotinus' understanding of this term here may be summarized in this way. If a component in a mixture loses its einai (i.e., what it is and should be), then it is no longer in act or in energeia. Energeia, since linked with einai, denotes a determinate nature or entity (ousia) which is in act.⁶⁴

Thus, there is in every thing both the energeia of its ousia and the energeia which goes out from its ousia. The first energeia is the thing itself, while the second energeia is what necessarily follows from the first and is

61v, 1 (10), 6, 34-37.

62I, 6 (1), 3, 19-26.

63III, 1 (3), 7, 20-21.

64IV, 7 (2), 8², 1-5.

in this sense distinct from the thing itself. In fire, then, there is the heat which is one with its ousia and the heat which goes out from the fire by virtue of the fact that the fire, while remaining unchangeably what it is, operates (energountos) according to its ousia.⁶⁵

Fire, then, both possesses heat intrinsically (because heat is its ousia) and also gives off heat to other things (because heat is also its energeia). In fact, the energeia of fire is to fire in the same way that the content of Nous' thought is to Nous itself.⁶⁶ In this way life belongs to World Soul and to individual souls. Each soul possesses life intrinsically (because life is soul's ousia) and also animates what is non-living (because life is also soul's energeia).

f) The meaning of energeia in relation to soul and life

As seen, the explanation of the relationship between fire and heat involved reference to energeia. A full explanation of soul's relationship to life in Plotinus' early treatises likewise involves energeia. For Plotinus soul is alive and immortal because it has life as part of its very ousia. Soul is neither material (#21)⁶⁷ nor is

⁶⁵v, 4 (7), 2, 27-33. See also V, 1 (10), 3, 10.

⁶⁶v, 9 (5), 8, 11-15.

⁶⁷IV, 7 (2), 2-8². In his criticism of the Stoic position on the human soul Plotinus utilizes several traditional Aristotelian lines of argument, a thorough account of which is found in Bréhier, Ennéades, Vol. 4, "Notice," pp. 179-181. Briefly, Plotinus' arguments in IV,

its life a mere condition imposed upon matter (#23).⁶⁸ On the contrary, the soul is a single nature which lives in energeia (#24).

(⁶⁷continued)

7 are as follows. a) The soul cannot be a simple body, since the four known elements and even the fifth added by Aristotle do not possess life in themselves. It cannot be a combination of simple bodies either, for if these were mixed together accidentally the result would not have life. Even if these were mixed together in some regular and orderly way, the cause of this regularity and order, and not the simple bodies themselves, would be the soul. Finally, the soul is not a combination of simple bodies in the way that the Atomists maintain, since there is no prevailing sympathy between the bodies (Chs. 2-3). b) Since, as the Stoics admit, each elementary body is composed of matter and form, if the soul is an elementary body like pneuma, then it cannot be in virtue of its matter, which is without quality, but must be in virtue of its form. Furthermore, soul must be an intelligent pneuma or fire (Ch. 4, lines 1-15). c) The soul cannot be a simple body because the effects of a simple body are themselves simple (Ch. 4, line 16; Ch. 5, line 7). d) One of soul's functions is to make the body grow. But a body can only make another body grow by growing itself. However, if the soul is a body and in growing must acquire other bodies, how will it preserve its identity and its memory? (Ch. 5, lines 7-24). e) The soul is found complete in each part of the body (in generation where the same seed produces two offspring, soul is complete in each of them). But something in which a part is identical to the whole must by nature transcend quantity and matter (Ch. 5, lines 24-52). f) If the soul is a body, one cannot explain perception, memory, sensation of pain, thought, and the virtues (Chs. 6-8¹). g) If the soul is a body, and the union of body and soul would result in soul's disappearance in the resultant mixture (Ch. 8²). h) The origin of soul is inexplicable, since the more perfect cannot spontaneously issue from the less perfect. (Ch. 8³).

⁶⁸Plotinus rejects the argument that life is a passive quality or condition imposed on matter. Even if this argument were true, he argues, the source of this quality or condition must necessarily be immortal and hence be soul, if an infinite regress is to be avoided. This argument closely parallels one presented by Simmias in the Phaedo, namely, that the soul is a harmony (Phaedo, 85c-88e; 92a-95a). Here Simmias states the theory as a potential

How does Plotinus understand energeia?⁶⁹ As we stated previously, a component which loses its einai (i.e.,

(⁶⁸continued)

objection to the view that the soul and the body are two distinct entities. One may describe the "harmony" (i.e., the being-in-tune) of a lyre in various ways -- that it is invisible, incorporeal, noble, and divine. All of these are also attributes of soul. But, even if it has all these characteristics, the harmony of a lyre cannot survive the destruction of the lyre itself. Hence the question: "Is it not possible, and perhaps even reasonable, to maintain that the soul is merely the blending, adjustment, or harmony of the bodily elements?" If it is such, how can it survive the destruction of that of which it was the harmony?

Plotinus answers with several criticisms, the most notable of which are as follows. First, soul is something prior; harmony is clearly something secondary or posterior. The plausibility of the theory of recollection (that the soul must have preexisted in order to be able to remember general terms in this life) demands this priority (IV, 7 [2], 8⁴, 11-12).

Second, the soul rules, guides, and occasionally conflicts with the body. If there are two distinct and often conflicting springs of action in man, it is obvious that he is a union of two distinct entities, body and soul, each having a distinct nature, pulling him in different directions. A body is something with a definite nature, so that once animated it will exert a pull in a definite direction. Since there is also a pull in a contrary direction it is inconceivable that the soul is no more than the activity of the body; it must be something whose distinct nature is the origin of the contrary pull. (IV, 7 [2], 8⁴, 12-13).

Third, the soul is an ousia and harmony is not (IV, 7 [2], 8⁴, 14). Fourth, if the mixture of bodies of which our body is composed is regulated by any sort of conformity or harmony, this is nothing more than health (IV, 7 [2], 8⁴, 14-16). Finally, it is necessary that the soul which is a harmony have another soul, in order to account for the production of the harmony in the first place. This is obvious in the case of musical instruments, which require a musician to produce the harmony in their strings (IV, 7 [2], 8⁴, 16ff).

⁶⁹My comments on energeia rely considerably on Curtis L. Hancock, Energeia in the Enneads of Plotinus: A Reaction to Plato and Aristotle (Ph.D. Dissertation: Loyola University of Chicago, 1985). Hereafter, Hancock, Energeia.

what it is and should be) is thereby no longer in act or in energeia. Energeia, since it is linked in this way with einai, denotes a determinate nature or entity (i.e., ousia).⁷⁰

Furthermore, energeia justifies one of Plotinus' most basic realizations, namely, that something lower in reality and perfection is dependent on that which is already perfected (i.e., has its own nature or einai). This priority he explains in terms of the relationship of act (energeia) to potency (dynamis).⁷¹ Since energeia denotes

⁷⁰IV, 7 (2), 8², 1-5.

⁷¹In his criticism of the materialist thesis of the Stoics Plotinus points out that they misunderstand the nature of cause and effect. For Plotinus a product cannot have greater perfection than that which produced it. To deny this fact is to deny the truth of one of the most basic principles of his thought, namely, that what is prior is of greater reality and perfection than that which is subsequent (IV, 7 [2], 8³, 7-25; V, 9 [5], 9).

In his criticism of the Stoics Plotinus expresses this basic principle in terms of energeia and dynamis. Whatever is in potency (i.e., is capable of being produced) requires something in act (i.e., something which is already real) to produce it (i.e., to bring it into act).

This formulation follows Aristotle's Metaphysics IX, 8, where he points out several ways in which energeia is prior to dynamis. It is prior both logically, since "being capable of something" is more complex than "being something," and ontologically, since something is in potency only if it can become something in act and this it can do only if there is something else already in act (i.e., something already real) to bring it to act.

The priority of act to potency is necessary if the metaphysician is to explain the relationship of all beings to their ultimate causes. This priority is especially important to Aristotle, for whom the ultimate explanation of things lies in their ends or final causes. But, of course, energeia is the end to which dynamis is directed and not the other way round.

a perfected nature, the priority of the superior to the inferior is likewise the priority of something in act to something in potency. As a result, the relationship of energeia to dynamis is essential to a correct understanding of the relationship between the higher and the lower realities.⁷²

Accordingly, since energeia denotes a complete and perfected nature, which is an ousia, it is obvious that the World Soul, and every individual soul as well, is an energeia. This conclusion is justified by the fact that each soul is a product of Nous, which is the highest ousia and which is identical with all being. As a result of this relationship, the World Soul and every individual soul is Nous, but on a less unified and hence lower and less perfect level of reality.⁷³

Finally, because the soul is a genuinely spiritual existent, thus transcending all physical things, it is not simply the entelecheia of the body.⁷⁴ The soul for Plotinus is authentic ousia, unlike the soul of Aristotle's

⁷²IV, 7 (2), 83, 7-20.

⁷³IV, 7 (2), 85, 40-50.

⁷⁴See note 24 above. Plotinus presents several arguments against Aristotle's view that the soul is the entelecheia of the body. These criticisms indicate that, for Plotinus, entelecheia and energeia are not synonymous. For a discussion of this topic see G. Bruni, "Note di polemica neoplatonica contro l'uso e il significato del termine entelecheia," Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana, 39 (1960), pp. 205-236, and G. Verbeke, "Les Critiques de Plotin contra l'entelechisme d'Aristote: Essai

system, which is ousia only in a limited sense. Though both Plotinus and Aristotle call soul ousia (and, hence, energeia), the latter maintains that the soul is in act only as the substantial form of the body. Plotinus, however, concurs with Plato in affirming that the soul is an independent being with no real need for the body.

The soul is indeed one nature which lives in energeia (#24).⁷⁵ This means that each soul's life (whether it is the World Soul's or an individual soul's life) is simultaneously soul's energeia as well. Life, then, is the ousia, the act or energeia and the self-kinēsis of each soul. This fact makes each soul to be genuinely immortal and independent of matter.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We will now summarize the data Plotinus provides on zōē in our key text. We are fortunate in that our very first key text has provided us with what seems to be the central insight in Plotinus' conception of life: self-motion.

Since self-motion primarily is cognition, for Plotinus, self-motion is self-cognition, a cognition which

(74 continued)

d'interpretation de l'Enneads, IV, 7, 8, 5", in Philomathes, Studies and Essays in Memory of Philip Merlan, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 194-222.

⁷⁵See also IV, 7 (2), 12, 13-14.

the self (e.g., Nous or the World Soul or an individual human soul) causes. To be alive, then, is to be efficiently causing one's own cognition. Every living existent possesses a soul, which is the principle of these operations. Accordingly, soul's very nature is to be self-moving and self-acting. Hence, if self-kinēsis is the very ousia or nature of soul, then soul qua soul is deathless.

Self-motion and immortality belong to the individual soul as well as to World Soul, for the individual soul participates, or is a logos of, the World Soul, which in turn is a logos of Nous (#1-#8). By holding this view Plotinus shows his indebtedness to Plato, for whom the life of the soul is self-motion, the prime manifestation of which is intellection.

Next, Plotinus shows that life is to soul as heat is to fire. This analogy is helpful because it provides an additional and very vivid way of viewing the nature of the necessary connection between soul and life. In both cases heat and life intrinsically (and hence necessarily) belong to fire and to soul, respectively. Each of the latter is an ousia and by its very nature is constantly present to the former (#20).

Plotinus further argues that it is necessary to isolate that component in man which lives in itself and, hence, is soul, lest the analysis deteriorate into an infinite regress of caused causes. The composite which is

man must be examined and dissected until the one element in him which is the source of his life (i.e., his soul) is discovered. When this component is found it will be seen to be immortal, because it is self-living and self-moved (#22).

Furthermore, it is not enough and, in fact, is misleading to speak of life as merely some sort of passive quality or condition of matter. Even if this view were correct, we would still be compelled to look to something else beyond the passive quality or condition -- namely, that which imposed this quality or condition upon the matter. And unless that cause was itself self-living the investigation would have to continue until just such a cause was found. Only the self-living can be soul. In short, the soul is immortal because it has life as its ousia or essential constitution and because this life is actual or in energeia (#23-#24).

To complete our analysis of zōē in the first key text let us answer the following questions: a) what is life on the level of World Soul? b) what is life on the level of an individual human soul? c) what is life in itself?

The World Soul, itself an ousia, lives principally because it participates in the highest ousia, Nous, which is identical with all being. Hence, by participating in Nous the World Soul is Nous but on a less perfect (because less unified) level of reality.

Life on the level of World Soul is both a doing

(praxis) and a making (poiēsis). It is a praxis because it inevitably looks to physical matter, which is below it, and informs and administers it. It is a poiēsis because it is demiurgically related to and thereby produces, orders, and governs what is below it. World Soul's life, then, is its looking above (to Nous), thus producing and looking to what is below (i.e., the physical universe).

Life on the level of an individual human soul is likewise both a praxis and a poiēsis, though it is not entirely clear how it is the latter. A human soul's life is apparently a praxis because it is capable of acting according to correct (i.e., rational) rules or logoi of conduct. Its life is also a poiēsis, since the human soul animates and moves a body as well as produces and makes various artifacts. These products may be evaluated as to their beauty or usefulness, for example, by assessing the extent to which their production was carried out in conformity with correct logoi.

The key component of the human soul's life, however, is to be found in another aspect of its relationship to Nous. The human soul's pure and good life is achieved when it has become bodiless (i.e., purified of all external concerns and all associations with physical matter) and thereby intellectual. The human soul truly lives, then, when it is unified with Nous and leads the purely intellectual life of knowing the One as Nous is able to know

it, as a multiplicity of perfect and eternal Forms.

Life in itself (in these very early treatises) is self-motion, an ousia, an energeia, and identical with an intellectual awareness (noēsis) of the One, which cannot be known in its perfect simplicity but rather must be apprehended as a plurality of forms.

Life itself is an ousia because the life of Nous is identical with the ousia of Nous. And the ousia of Nous consists in an eternal production and contemplation of the Forms. Because life is an ousia it always remains unalterably what it is (i.e., self-moved) and cannot admit its opposite. For this reason what has life intrinsically (i.e., as its very ousia) cannot lose its life and hence is immortal.

We are left with one final question. As we ascend to greater and greater levels of intellection and likewise of life, do we discover that the One is also a life? We must await our study of subsequent texts to determine whether Plotinus explicitly answers this question. By virtue of what we have discovered thus far we may infer that the One transcends life because It is neither (any sort of) kinēsis nor energeia. Plotinus, however, does not explicitly state this here, but fortunately there seems to be sufficient evidence in our next key text, VI, 9 (9), to support such a conclusion.

CHAPTER III

TEXT B: ENNEAD VI, 9 (9), 9

We shall now examine our second key text, Chapter Nine of VI, 9:¹ "On the Good or the One," which is the ninth treatise Plotinus wrote.² It is thus another of his early treatises, written before his association with Porphyry and the first³ in which Plotinus takes up the relationship of soul to the One as such.⁴

¹Although there are numerous instances of the term zōē in several chapters of VI, 9 (9), only chapter nine yields new and different information on zōē and, hence, constitutes our key text. However, we shall wherever necessary and appropriate refer to relevant data from those other chapters.

²Porphyry, "Life," Vol. I, p. 17, lines 66ff.

³Some brief remarks on the Primal Reality do occur earlier, in V, 4 (7), which Porphyry entitled: "How That Which Is After the First Comes From the First; and About the One."

⁴According to Fritz Heinemann, Plotin: Forschungen über die plotinische Frage, Plotins Entwicklung and sein System (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1921), Plotinus in his first five treatises (IV, 7; IV, 2; I, 2; I, 6; I, 3, according to Heinemann's ordering) calls his primal reality the Good solely. It is not until VI, 9, 6, 57-58 (ninth both for Heinemann and Porphyry) that Plotinus explicitly equates the Good and the One (calling the One "the Good above all good things"), having earlier in VI, 9, 5 implicitly suggested such an identification.

For additional information and a critique of Heinemann's position, see Armstrong, Architecture, pp. 23-26. See also P. Henry, Recherches sur le "Praeparatio Evangelica" d'Eusebe et l'edition perdue des oeuvres de Plotin publiée par Eustochius, (Paris, 1935), pp. 117-129;

In order properly to introduce Text B let us first briefly survey the treatises which precede it. After this we shall summarize relevant points in chapters of VI, 9 which are prior to the key text, give the key text in translation, followed by comments and conclusions.

After discussing the immortality of the soul in IV, 7 (2) (Text A), Plotinus next takes up destiny (III, 1 [3], 8). He points out that any soul (i.e., both the World Soul and individual souls) is truly free (and fully living) only when outside the influence of the body and all external causation. Next, in IV, 2 (4),⁵ Plotinus gives information on the ousia of soul. Each soul must be simultaneously a one-and-many if it is properly to administer what is below it. Accordingly, the World Soul gives life to all parts of the universe (and the individual soul to all parts of the body) while directing everything with wisdom (phronēsis).

But what is the source of this wisdom? Plotinus' answer is found in V, 9 (5), entitled: "On Nous, the Forms and Being."⁶ Each soul's wisdom comes from Nous, which itself is perfect life, perfect self-kinēsis and perfect

(⁴continued)

E. R. Dodds, "The Parmenides of Plato and the Neoplatonic One," Classical Quarterly, Vol. XXIII (1928): pp. 136-139; Rist, Road to Reality, p. 248, n. 3; Wallis, Neoplatonism, p. 45; Bréhier, Ennéades, Introduction, Vol. 1, pp. xviii-xxvi.

⁵IV, 2 (4), 2, 39-55.

⁶V, 9 (5), 2, 20-27; 6, 1-10; 10, 1-15.

energeia.⁷ Moreover, Nous is a one-in-many: a multiplicity of Forms, each of which is both a knower and a known. Though the One-Good above Nous always remains in complete unity, Nous knows the One-Good as unity and thereby produces this multiplicity of Forms and ultimately all lower realities. Nous, then, knows the One by contemplating It and also Itself as that one-many.

In the next treatise (IV, 8 [6]),⁸ "On the Descent of Souls into Bodies," Plotinus describes the relationship between the Soul and the physical world (and between the human soul and the body it inhabits). By turning within itself the human soul sees its ultimate destiny: living the highest life and being at one with the divine (i.e., Nous and, ultimately, the One). Though it is better for any soul to live in the intelligible world, the World Soul's nature makes it necessary for it to descend and give life to the world of sense and body. However, not even the human soul enters into the body completely. By its higher part soul always remains united to the intelligible world and, unaffected by earthly concerns, leads an undisturbed life.⁹

⁷V, 9 (5), 10 1-15.

⁸V, 9 (5), 4-5.

⁹As we noted in Chapter Two, prior to IV, 8 (6) there is no direct reference to the All Soul as such but only to the demiurgic World Soul and to individual souls. In IV, 8 (6) Plotinus first explicitly argues that the All Soul is the immediate source of the World Soul and of

The seventh treatise (V, 4 [7]), entitled, "How That which is After the First Comes from the First; and About the One," yields helpful data on the Primal Reality (the One-Good) and on Nous.¹⁰ The Primal Reality is simple, first, and transcends being (ousia). It necessarily produces Nous and all subsequent realities because It is all perfect and all powerful. Though absolutely simple, the Primal Reality has everything in and with Itself, including, curiously enough, life itself.¹¹

(⁹continued)

individual souls and that it occupies a position in the intelligible while forming and ordering the sensible. Accordingly, in my translation of this and all subsequent texts I will capitalize the first letter of Soul when it refers to the hypostasis (i.e., All Soul) and to the World Soul. I do not capitalize soul when Plotinus is speaking of an individual soul (e.g., a human soul).

¹⁰V, 4 (7), 1, 1-36.

¹¹In V, 4 (7), 2, 16 Plotinus makes the surprising remark that the One has life. On the face of it this seems to be contrary to his frequently repeated conviction throughout the Enneads (especially in III, 8 [30], 10, 3 and 30-31), and even in the first chapter of V, 4 itself, that the One transcends life.

Even this exceptional remark, however, seems not to violate Plotinus' general position on life as currently understood in our study. Eliminating the possibility that this remark is a haphazard one, no inconsistency within his system results if Plotinus' affirmation is through extrinsic denomination.

Extrinsic denomination (sometimes also termed "analogy of attribution") consists in attributing something to an object (which itself does not possess the attribute intrinsically) because it has a relationship to something which possesses the attribute intrinsically. In any analogy there is both difference and sameness. In extrinsic denomination the two subjects being compared are truly different but some term is attributed to both of them. Hence, they are similar in name and different in reality. For example, a certain food may be called "healthy" not

In the next brief treatise (IV, 9 [8]), Plotinus discusses whether all souls are one.¹² Each soul is itself a unity and all souls (including World Soul) come from and are one with their immediate source, the All Soul.

Treatise VI, 9 (9) whose ninth chapter contains our key text, is divided into eleven chapters, the first eight of which provide the following relevant data. All beings are real and are being ultimately because of their unity.¹³ Nothing could be if it were not somehow one.

(11continued)

because it itself possesses health, but because it is one cause of health in other things. For Plotinus, then, the One is not formally life but may be extrinsically "denominated" as such because It is the cause of life in all else. We must be careful, however, not to apply too rigorously the theory of analogy to the elements of Plotinus' thought since, as a strict monism, it ultimately admits only identity (i.e., reality) and negation (i.e., unreality) and shuns similarity and diversity.

Valuable treatments of analogy are found in Leo Sweeney, S. J., A Metaphysics of Authentic Existentialism (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), hereafter, Sweeney, AMAE, pp. 142-151; and H. A. Wolfson, "The Divine Attributes in Albinus and Plotinus," Harvard Theological Review 45 (1952), pp. 115-134.

¹²IV, 9 (8), 1; 4, 1-8.

¹³This is true of beings in the intelligible world and in the sensible world. The observations Plotinus makes here express the central principle of his thought, namely, unity. Leo Sweeney, S. J. (Principles," pp. 506-516) formulates this principle as follows. "Whatever is real is one." That is to say, to be real is to be one. Any item is real because of its unity and a fall into multiplicity is likewise a fall into unreality" (p. 511; see also V, 5 [32], 5, 11f; and VI, 6 [34], 1, 11f). "So true is this," Sweeney continues, "that the more unified something is, the more real it is, with the result that what is totally simple is the Prime Reality -- namely, the One, the absolutely first and highest hypostasis" (p. 511).

Sweeney identifies two other principles as basic to

For example, an army or a choir or a flock is only as long as it is one. Even a house or a ship is, and is real, only

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Plotinus' thought. The second basic principle "inserts a dynamic aspect into Plotinus' universe, since it is bound up with the position that whatever is genuinely real must by that very fact cause subsequent realities, which turn back to their source because of dependency upon it and desire for it" (p. 511).

We may formulate this second principle thus: Whatever is one is also good. It is obvious, Sweeney points out, that

It is an immediate sequel of his first principle, for that which is one is not only real but also is perfect and powerful. Now whatever is perfect and powerful automatically overflows and thereby produces another (but lesser) reality, which depends upon and tends back to its cause in love. Such is the twofold status which 'good' signifies when predicated of an item -- a reality and unity insofar as it is both the source of subsequents and the object of their love and tendency. (p. 512)

Accordingly, the more unified something is, the more perfect and more powerful it is, and the more appropriate it is to designate it as good. Thus, what is totally simple is not only the Supreme Reality but also the Supreme Good.

Plotinus' third basic principle follows from the second since it "is concerned with determining what relationships exist between the Good and Its products or, more generally, between cause and effect or, even more generally, between what is prior and what is subsequent" (p. 512). This third principle is best expressed as follows: Whatever is prior is of greater reality than that which is subsequent. The relationship of prior to subsequent, then, is simultaneously a relationship of higher and lower in actual values. Accordingly, what is prior is more unified, more perfect, more powerful and more independent than what is subsequent (see V, 9 [5], 9, 13-14; VI, 9 [9], 6, 16f; V, 2 [11], 2, 1f; II, 6 [17], 1, 56f; III, 8 [30], 5, 13f). Therefore, what is absolutely first is also in perfect possession of unity, perfection, power and independence. This is the highest level of reality, the One-Good.

if it has unity.¹⁴ Thus, the unity which constitutes the reality not only of choirs, ships, and houses but also of Nous and Soul, in each case leads us back to the One, by which they are all real (Ch. 1).¹⁵ Because Being (Nous) has life and intelligence, It is not dead. But, despite Its

¹⁴Such a listing of unities most likely has its origin in Stoic writings, possibly from Posidonius (See SVF, II, 336). Andreas Graeser in his helpful study (Plotinus and the Stoics [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972], pp. 72-75) reports that to some interpreters

Plotinus appears to make use of a Stoic opinion that differentiated between three different degrees of unity: there are things that are 'one' (a) in the sense of something that is ἡνωμένων (i.e., organisms and living beings); there are others that are 'one' (b) in the sense of being συναπτόμενα (i.e., ships and towers, etc.); and finally there are unities consisting of δελεζυγμένα or διασθηκότητα (i.e., armies and choirs). This classification, as found in Sextus Empiricus, Adv. Math. 9, 78 ..., is almost unanimously assumed to be Posidonian, although it has been objected...that on the basis of Plutarch, De Def. Or. 426A this way of looking at things as units seems to have been that of Chrysippus (SVF, II, 367), or that Chrysippus must have distinguished at least roughly between ἡνωμένα and δελεστηκότητα. It is difficult to demonstrate, however, what Posidonius' position actually was.

On this topic see R. E. Witt, "Plotinus and Posidonius," Classical Quarterly XXV (1931), p. 203; A. H. Armstrong, "Emanation in Plotinus," Mind 67 (1937), pp. 61-66; J. M. Rist, Stoic Philosophy, (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), p. 210.

¹⁵The One is not Aristotle's First Mover or God, who is subsistent thought which eternally thinks itself (Metaphysics, Book 12, Ch. 7, 1072b25-30; Ch. 9, 1074b33-35). Plotinus would object both to Aristotle's position that unity is not greater than being but is merely a transcendental term which is given equally to all the categories and to his view that all that is being is one and all that is one is being (Metaphysics, Book 2, Ch. 3, 998b15-26; Book 10, Ch. 2, 1054a13-19).

great unity and perfection, Nous cannot be the supreme reality: Nous Itself is not simple but is a unity-in-multiplicity and is both a knower and a known (Ch. 2). The soul, when it aspires to the level of Nous, can apprehend that which is beyond Nous and to which no perfection of Nous can be applied. Hence, the One cannot be any kind of movement (kinēsis), rest (stasis) or being (ousia). It likewise follows that zōē, because it is a self-kinēsis, and energeia do not apply to the One either (Ch. 3).

In order to ascend to the One, the self-kinēsis of the soul must become united with the unwavering self-kinēsis of Nous and eventually even go beyond intellection altogether.¹⁶ And on the level of Nous soul will live perfectly, but when it attains the One it will transcend even life itself (Chs. 4-5). Whatever is to be the first existent must be absolutely simple, for if It has any

¹⁶The One neither needs nor has knowledge because this would involve It in a dualism. It neither knows nor is ignorant (VI, 9 [9], 6, 42) and, in fact, is beyond thinking and knowledge (III, 9 [13], 9).

Thus, the human soul's ascent to the One must be through Nous but ultimately beyond Nous as well. Faced with its mysterious, if not unknown, goal the soul even experiences fear (VI, 9 [9], 3, 7) lest it should fail in its ascent. Rist points out that this

...is the nearest Plotinus comes to the notion of mystical darkness so common in Christian writers.... Plotinus' dilemma arises on a metaphysical rather than a moral plane. Can the soul, which has hitherto only recognized its finite manifestations, dare to live on a newly desired infinite plane? (Rist, Road to Reality, p. 220)

multiplicity at all It thereby admits of some imperfection and cannot be primary. But if as pure unity It is indeterminate it thus surpasses everything, including the self-kinēsis and life of Nous (Ch. 6). Thus, if a soul is to begin its ascent to the One, it must imitate It by freeing itself of all externals and turning totally inward.¹⁷ The son who truly comes to know himself, for example, simultaneously discovers his source and father (Ch. 7).¹⁸

Consequently, if the soul truly knows itself, it will see that its natural state is like a self-caused circular

¹⁷On this sort of inward-turning knowledge see Rene Arnou, Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin (Paris: Vrin, 1921), pp. 193-94; hereafter, Arnou, Le désir.

Plotinus also describes this condition as rapture or possession (VI, 9 [9], 11, 13). Such expressions make more vivid the fact that the soul is dominated and characterized by its source, the One. Whenever the soul abandons itself (VI, 9 [9], 11, 24), it becomes unlike itself and stands outside itself (VI, 9 [9], 10, 15; Chapter 11, 12 and 23.

¹⁸The metaphor of ascent (I, 6 [1], 7, 1-5; 9, 3-4; VI, 9 [9], 11, 11; V, 1 [10], 3, 3) is only one way Plotinus describes the soul's journey to the One. This journey he sometimes describes as a returning or "awakening" to our inner selves (IV, 8 [6], 1, 1). But, knowing ourselves involves knowing our origin (VI, 9 [9], 7, 32-33). This is the valuable contribution of those passages which refer to the One as a father or speak of the return of the soul to its source as a journey to the fatherland (I, 6 [1], 8, 6; VI, 9 [9], 7, 33; 9). For helpful discussion of the One as "Father" see John Rist, Eros and Psyche (Toronto: University Press, 1964), pp. 72-3; hereafter, Rist, Eros and Psyche.

motion around some central object.¹⁹ The soul thus discovers its identity with the All-Soul, the life of which is an everlasting and perfect circular self-kinēsis.²⁰ This self-movement has the One as its object and center. And the closer the soul's self-movement ultimately comes to the self-kinēsis of Nous the more concentrated will be the soul's vision of its true object, the One. Unfortunately, the soul's gaze is not always fixed upon the One, just as the members of a chorus are not always attentive to their conductor. However, when the soul finally beholds the One, it attains its true end. Then the soul does, so to speak, an inspired dance around It (Ch. 8).²¹ Now comes the key text.

KEY TEXT VI, 9 (9), 9

¹⁹This "circular movement" is, of course, a noetic self-kinēsis and does not involve any sort of physical motion.

²⁰In the Timaeus (37a-b) Plato describes the soul's intellection as a circular self-kinēsis which, when the soul descends into body, becomes disturbed and broken. For helpful remarks on this point, see Bréhier, Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, pp. 167-168.

²¹The metaphor of a dancing chorus occurs in VI, 9 (9), 1, 32; 8, 36-45; 9, 1-3). It has its origin, Bréhier points out, in a type of dance known as the "cyclic chorus" in which the chorus moved in a circle around an altar while singing and dancing. Occupying the center was the chorus leader holding a lyre (Bréhier, Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 184, n. 1).

[1] In this [circling sort of] choral dance the human soul sees the fount²² of life and the fount of Nous, the principle of being, the cause of good, and the root of soul. [2] The generated beings [life, Nous, being, the good, soul] do not pour out from and [thereby] diminish It [the One]²³ for It is not a material mass. Otherwise the generated beings would be perishable. [3] But, as the case stands, they are eternal because their principle [the One] always stays the same, not dividing itself into them and always remains intact.²⁴

²²Plotinus here utilizes the metaphorical pēgēn (literally, "fount," "spring," or "well-head") to describe the One. He sometimes likens emanation from the One to the flowing of a spring or river (see, for example, III, 8 [30], 10, 2-4). Even life itself is sometimes said to "flow out" from the One as if from a spring which gives itself totally to the rivers going forth from it (III, 8 [30], 10, 3-10).

However, the implication here (#1-#4) and elsewhere, VI, 9 (9), 3, 14-16, is that the One is the source of life but is not life Itself. Because Plotinus explicitly makes this point in our next key text (III, 8) we shall fully examine it there. See also Rein Ferwerda, La Signification des images et des métaphorés dans la pensée de Plotin (Groningen: J. B. Walters, 1965).

²³In the opening passages of the key text Plotinus does not explicitly mention the Primal Reality or the One-Good. However, the intent of the chapter is to explain the ascent of the soul to the One-Good and the remarks on emanation (e.g., #1, #4, #5) confirm that it is the One-Good that is the principle spoken of here.

In their explanatory comments Henry-Schwyzzer (Plotini Opera, Vol. 3, p. 322) note that A. J. Vitranga believes that ekeinon (line 3) should be understood as referring to to hen, the One, and Marsilius Ficinus explains that to hen is the intended subject in lines 3 and 4. Furthermore, Bréhier points out that it is the Good which is here described as the source of Intelligence and life (Bréhier, Enneades, "Notice," Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 168). Finally, as early as I, 6 [1], 7, 11-12, Plotinus refers to the Good (i.e., the One) as cause of life and mind and being.

²⁴As Plotinus makes clear here (#1-#4) and in VI, 9 (9), 3, 14-16, the One is the source of life and of all subsequent realities. But, though the One is the power of producing all things (V, 4 [7], 1, 9-10), It is not any of them. Accordingly, the One is neither Nous nor soul nor life nor ousia (VI, 9 [9], 39-46) but transcends them, a transcendence which he expresses often. See I, 6 (1), 9,

[4] Therefore they too remain [intact and dependent upon the One] just as light persists as long as the sun remains.²⁵

(²⁴continued)

37-41; V, 4 (7), 1, 9-10; 2, 38 and 40; VI, 9 (9), 3, 39-46; 11, 42; V, 1 (10), 8 7-8; I, 2 (19), 3, 31; I, 3 (20), 5, 7. He also makes the point in several later treatises, namely: IV, 4 (28), 16, 27; III, 8 (30), 9, 2; VI, 6 (34), 5, 37; VI, 2 (43), 3, 7-10; 17, 18-22; III, 7 (45), 2, 8; V, 3 (49), 10, 5; 11, 2-28; 12, 47-48; 17, 13-14; I, 7 (54), 1, 8. Specifically, the One cannot be life because life is self-kinēsis, whose highest manifestation is noēsis. But intellection is not a characteristic of the One but of Being (i.e., Nous and other lower realities) since intellection involves multiplicity: a duality of knower and known. The transcendence of the One over life will be taken up again and in greater detail in later key texts, especially III, 8 (30) and VI, 7 (38).

²⁵The sun and light analogy is applied repeatedly to the One in Plotinus' treatises (e.g., V, 1 [10], 2; V, 6, [24], 4; V, 5 [32], 7-8; and I, 7 [54], 1; see also V, 4 [7], 1, 23-41; VI, 1 [10], 6, 28-40; V, 3 [49], 12, 39-44). This analogy, along with that of the radiation of heat from fire (discussed in Text A), and of development and growth from a seed (V, 9 [5], 6; IV, 8 [30], 9; III, 3 [48], 7), provides another way of understanding the nature of emanation and the relationship of the One to its products. According to both R. E. Witt ("Plotinus and Posidonius," Classical Quarterly, Vol. 24, 1930, pp. 198 and 205-207) and A. H. Armstrong (Architecture, pp. 54-58), Plotinus' theory of light has a very prominent status in his thought and makes its first appearance as an element in his emanation doctrine. Both Witt and Armstrong maintain that Plotinus' doctrine probably depends on the account of color as a material απορροή of particles given in the Timaeus (67d) and is deeply affected by the Posidonian theory of light as well. Naturally, care must be taken to avoid conceiving light as a material outflow from the sun as the Stoics did. On the contrary, as Wallis (Neoplatonism, p. 61) points out, the image's popularity with Plotinus stems in large part from the fact that he regards light not as a body or (with Aristotle) as a modification of the air, but as something substantial yet incorporeal (IV, 5 [29], 6-7; II, 1 [40], 7, 26-30).

Plotinus' own contribution to the doctrine of light, Armstrong maintains, is twofold: light is incorporeal and it is an outflow from its luminous source (Architecture, p. 54). But Plotinus also argues that there is a close parallel between light and life, the energeia (of Nous and)

9, 1-7:

Ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ τῇ χορείᾳ καθορᾷ πηγῆν μὲν ζωῆς, πηγῆν δὲ νοῦ, ἀρχὴν ὄντος, ἀγαθοῦ αἰτίαν, ρίζαν ψυχῆς· οὐκ ἐκχεομένων ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, εἴτ' ἐκείνον ἐλαττούντων· οὐ γὰρ ὄγκος· ἢ φθαρτὰ ἂν ἦν τὰ γεννώμενα. νῦν δ' ἐστὶν αἰδία, ὅτι ἡ ἀρχὴ αὐτῶν ὡσαύτως μένει οὐ μεμερισμένη 5 εἰς αὐτά, ἀλλ' ὅλη μένουσα. διὸ κακείνα μένει· οἷον εἰ μένοντος ἡλίου καὶ τὸ φῶς μένοι.

[5] We are neither severed nor separate [in spatial terms]²⁶ from the One, even though our bodily nature intervened and drew us to itself. But we breathe [are alive] and are preserved since It does not give Its gifts and then withdraws, but always furnishes them abundantly, as long as It is the very reality which It is. [6] We are, indeed, more [real] when inclined towards It and There in the intelligible world is the good state of our inner reality,²⁷ and to be far from It is to be forsaken and weaker. [7] The soul rests There and is beyond evils, having returned into that place which is purged of evils.

(25continued)

of soul (IV, 5 [29], 7). Something lives, then, ultimately because the One by Its very nature is eternally present to it (or more accurately, the living item is present in the One) providing the means for its preservation (#4-#5). Other uses of the light analogy are to be found in I, 1 (53), 4, 12-18; IV, 3 (27), 22, 1-7; I, 1 (53), 4, 12-18. See also W. Beierwaltes, "Die Metaphysik de Lichtes in der Philosophie Plotins," Zeitschrift fur philosophische Forschung 15 (1961) 334-62 or A. H. Armstrong, "'Emanation' in Plotinus," Mind 46 (1937) 61-66.

²⁶Bréhier's commentary is helpful here: "on ne peut donc s'eloigner du Bien au sens local du mot" (Bréhier, Ennéades, "Notice," Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 168).

²⁷Here and later in our key text, (#18) Plotinus makes reference to εὐδαιμονία, which is a composite of εὖ ("well" or "good") and δαίμων ("genius," "spirit" or "inner reality") and should be translated as "the good state of one's inner reality." Translations such as "well being" or "happiness" do not fully express what Plotinus means by this term and, therefore, may be misleading.

9, 7-14:

οὐ γὰρ ἀποτετμήμεθα

οὐδὲ χωρὶς ἔσμεν, εἰ καὶ παρεμπεσοῦσα ἡ σώματος φύσις
 πρὸς αὐτὴν ἡμᾶς εἴλκυσεν, ἀλλ' ἐμπνέομεν καὶ σωζόμεθα
 οὐ δόντος, εἴτ' ἀποστάντος ἐκείνου, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ χορηγούντος 10
 ἕως ἂν ἡ ὅπερ ἐστί. μᾶλλον μέντοι ἔσμεν νεύσαντες πρὸς
 αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ εὖ ἐνταῦθα, τὸ <δὲ> πόρρω εἶναι μόνον καὶ
 ἦττον εἶναι. ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἀναπαύεται ψυχὴ καὶ κακῶν ἕξω
 εἰς τὸν τῶν κακῶν καθαρὸν τόπον ἀναδραμούσα.

[8] And There in the intelligible world the soul thinks; and There it is without passion. And there it truly lives. For there is living in the here-and-now [soul's earthly life] and without the divine -- a trace imitating the life There. [9] Life There is energeia of Nous; and energeia also generates gods quietly by contact with the One²⁸ and begets beauty, begets justice, and begets virtue.²⁹ [10] For the soul is pregnant with these, upon being filled with the divine, and this [state of being filled with the divine] is its principle and its goal. [11] This is the soul's principle because it is from there above, and this is the soul's goal [because] There [above is] the Good. And when it [the soul] has arrived There it becomes its true self and what, in fact, it is and always has been [i.e., There soul regains its proper nature]. [12] For involved with things here below it is degraded, in exile and without wings.³⁰

9, 14-24:

καὶ νοεῖ

15 ἐνταῦθα, καὶ ἀπαθῆς ἐνταῦθα. καὶ τὸ ἀληθῶς ζῆν
 ἐνταῦθα· τὸ γὰρ νῦν καὶ τὸ ἄνευ θεοῦ ἔχνος ζωῆς
 ἐκείνην μιμούμενον, τὸ δὲ ἐκεῖ ζῆν ἐνέργεια μὲν νοῦ.

²⁸On the other hand, perhaps pros (line 18) is being used reciprocally. This conceivably is its sense here. But what is the referent of ekeino then? Another alternative is that pros ekeino may mean "for that purpose." However, neither of these helps to eliminate nor to preserve the sense of Text B. Hence, the most likely referent of ekeino is the One.

²⁹See Plato, Symposium 209a; 212a; also see Armstrong, Enneads, Vol. III, pp. 182, n. 2-3.

³⁰This remark has its origin in Plato, Phaedrus 246c and 248c.

ἐνέργεια δὲ καὶ γεννᾶ θεοῦς ἐν ἡσυχῶ τῇ πρὸς ἐκείνο
 ἐπαφῇ, γεννᾶ δὲ κάλλος, γεννᾶ δικαιοσύνην, ἀρετὴν γεννᾶ.
 20 ταῦτα γὰρ κύει ψυχὴ πληρωθεῖσα θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦτο αὐτῇ
 ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος· ἀρχὴ μὲν, ὅτι ἐκεῖθεν, τέλος δέ, ὅτι τὸ
 ἀγαθὸν ἐκεῖ. καὶ ἐκεῖ γενομένη γίγνεται αὐτῇ καὶ ὅπερ ἦν·
 τὸ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἔκπτωσις καὶ φυγὴ καὶ
 πτερορρύσις.

[13] An indication that the Good is There is soul's love, which is natural to us. Accordingly, Love has been paired with soul³¹ in pictures and myths, for the soul is different from that God above, but is sprung from Him and hence of necessity loves Him. [14] And when soul is There she has heavenly love; here below her love is common.³² Aphrodite There is also heavenly, while here below she becomes common, prostituting herself, as it were. [15] Every soul is Aphrodite. This is suggested in the [circumstances of the] birth of Aphrodite and the simultaneous birth of Love.³³ [16] Therefore, soul loves God [the One] in accordance with her natural disposition and desires to be at one with Him in the same way that a girl loves a noble father with a noble love. [17] Whenever she [soul] comes into being and is deceived by wooings, as it were,³⁴ she exchanges [that noble love] for a mortal love and in the absence of her father is subjected to outrages. [18] But, coming to hate the wanton acts

³¹I follow Henry-Schwyzler (Plotini Opera, Vol. 3, p. 323), who substitute τῆς ψυχῆς for τὰς ψυχὰς, and Marsilius Ficinus (Plotini Enneades [Paris: Editore Ambrosio Firmin Didot, 1855], p. 537), who translates this passage as follows: "...amor ipse ingenitus animis et in scripti et fabulis...."

³²Plato, Symposium 180d; 203b-3.

³³See the very late III, 5 (50), where Plotinus attempts an allegorical interpretation of the Symposium's myth of the birth of Aphrodite.

³⁴Such Greek words as hoion or hosper ("so to speak") abound in Plotinus' writings and reveal both his great gift for richness of metaphor and, more importantly, his conviction (which he shares with Plato) that reality defies rigid verbal description and ultimately is inexpressible. For helpful discussion of this point see Wallis, Neoplatonism, p. 41.

here, and purifying herself of things here and returning again to her father, she is again well off.

9, 24-38:

δηλοῖ δὲ ὅτι τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ ἔρως
 25 ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς ὁ σύμφυτος, καθὸ καὶ συνέζευκται Ἔρως
 ταῖς Ψυχαῖς καὶ ἐν γραφαῖς καὶ ἐν μύθοις. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἕτε-
 ρον θεοῦ ἐκείνη, ἐξ ἐκείνου δέ, ἐρᾶ αὐτοῦ ἐξανάγκης.
 καὶ οὐσα ἐκεῖ τὸν οὐράνιον Ἔρωτα ἔχει, ἐνταῦθα δὲ
 πάνδημος γίγνεται· καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖ Ἀφροδίτη οὐρα-
 30 νία, ἐνταῦθα δὲ γίγνεται πάνδημος οἷον ἐταιριοθεῖσα. καὶ
 ἔστι πάσα ψυχὴ Ἀφροδίτη· καὶ τοῦτο αἰνίττεται καὶ τὰ τῆς
 Ἀφροδίτης γενέθλια καὶ ὁ Ἔρως ὁ μετ' αὐτῆς γενόμενος.
 ἐρᾶ οὖν κατὰ φύσιν ἔχουσα ψυχὴ θεοῦ ἐνωθῆναι θέλου-
 σα, ὡσπερ παρθένος καλοῦ πατρὸς καλὸν ἔρωτα. ὅταν
 35 δὲ εἰς γένεσιν ἐλθοῦσα οἷον μνηστείαις ἀπατηθῆ, ἄλλον
 ἀλλαξαμένη θνητὸν ἔρωτα ἐρημίᾳ πατρὸς ὑβρίζεται· μισή-
 σασα δὲ πάλιν τὰς ἐνταῦθα ὑβρεῖς ἀγνεύσασα τῶν τῆδε
 πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐθις στελλομένη εὐπαθεῖ.

[19] As for him to whom this emotion [of noble love] is unknown, let him consider, from the loves of this world, what it is like to attain the things one most loves, because these lovable objects [here] are mortal and harmful, loves of shadows, and thus he changes his opinion [about them] suddenly, because, after all, these are not the true beloved, nor our good nor what we seek. [20] But There is the true object of our love, with which we can unite, participating in It and truly having It, not enfolded in external flesh.

9, 38-46:

καὶ οἷς
 μὲν ἄγνωστόν ἐστὶ τὸ πάθημα τοῦτο, ἐντεῦθεν ἐνθυμείσθω
 ἀπὸ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἐρώτων, οἷόν ἐστι τυχεῖν ὧν τις 40
 μάλιστα ἐρᾶ, καὶ ὅτι ταῦτα μὲν τὰ ἐρώμενα θνητὰ καὶ
 βλαβερὰ καὶ εἰδώλων ἔρωτες καὶ μεταπίπτει, ὅτι οὐκ ἦν
 τὸ ὄντως ἐρώμενον οὐδὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἡμῶν οὐδ' ὁ
 ζητοῦμεν. ἐκεῖ δὲ τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἐρώμενον, ᾧ ἔστι καὶ
 συνεῖναι μεταλαβόντα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄντως ἔχοντα, οὐ 45
 περιπτυσσόμενον σαρκὶν ἔξωθεν.

[21] Whoever has seen this knows what I mean;³⁵ because the soul has another life then, both while coming towards It [by ascending to Nous] and upon already reaching It and sharing in It. [22] So that having been so disposed, the soul becomes aware that the supplier of true life is present to it, and that the soul needs nothing anymore. [23] On the other hand, it is necessary to put away everything else and come to rest in It alone and become It alone,³⁶ trimming away³⁷ the rest, as much as we are surrounded by It, so that we are eager to go away from here and we are vexed at our being here; and this is necessary in order that we may embrace the whole of ourselves³⁸ and have no part of ourselves which does not come into contact with the divine. [24] [Only when one has attained Nous] is it possible to see Him [the One] and see oneself as it is right to see [Him]. [25] [Then] one [is made] bright; filled with the intelligible light, or rather [has become] light itself, pure, weightless and buoyant. She [the soul] has become divine, or rather is divine. [26] Then she is illuminated; but if she is again weighed down, she is, as it were, like a mere flicker [of a flame which is gradually extinguished].

³⁵A similar phrase occurs in I, 6 (1), 7, 2, where Plotinus says of the Primal Reality (the One-Good) that "anyone who has seen It knows what I mean when I say that It is beautiful."

³⁶Chapter Eleven of this treatise, one of the more moving Plotinian passages, describes the soul's journey to the One as an "escape in solitude to the Solitary." See also I, 6 (1), 7, 9-11 and Plato, Symposium 211e1.

R. T. Wallis points out that even the Neophythagorean Numenius of Apamea used a similar phrase: "alone with the alone." However, his usage was probably "not significant, since it was a commonplace among ancient religious writers" (Wallis, Neoplatonism, p. 33).

³⁷Compare this expression to a similar one which describes the human soul's purification as a "stripping off of the garments" with which one is clothed (I, 6 [1], 7, 5-7). For discussion of this and related metaphors in Plotinus see Rist, Road to Reality, p. 188ff.

³⁸In this very difficult passage I rely on Bréhier's translation, which seems to convey the meaning of the Greek clearly.

9, 46-60:

ὅστις δὲ εἶδεν, οἶδεν
 ὁ λέγω, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ ζωὴν ἄλλην ἴσχει τότε καὶ προσιούσα
 καὶ ἤδη προσελθούσα καὶ μετασχούσα αὐτοῦ, ὥστε
 γνῶναι διατεθείσαν, ὅτι πάρεστιν ὁ χορηγὸς ἀληθινῆς
 ζωῆς, καὶ δεῖ οὐδενὸς ἔτι. τὸναντίον δὲ ἀποθέσθαι τὰ 50
 ἄλλα δεῖ, καὶ ἐν μόνῳ στήναι τούτῳ, καὶ τοῦτο γενέσθαι
 μόνον περικόψαντα τὰ λοιπὰ ὅσα περικείμεθα· ὥστε
 ἐξελεθεῖν σπεύδειν ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἀγανακτεῖν ἐπὶ θάτερα
 δεδεμένους, ἵνα τῷ ὄλῳ αὐτῶν περιπτυξώμεθα καὶ μηδὲν
 μέρος ἔχοιμεν, ᾧ μὴ ἐφαπτόμεθα θεοῦ. ὁρᾶν δὴ ἔστιν 55
 ἐνταῦθα κάκεινον καὶ ἑαυτὸν ὡς ὁρᾶν θέμις· ἑαυτὸν μὲν
 ἠγλαῖσμένον, φωτὸς πλήρη νοητοῦ, μᾶλλον δὲ φῶς αὐτὸ
 καθαρὸν, ἀβαρῆ, κούφον, θεὸν γενόμενον, μᾶλλον δὲ ὄντα,
 ἀναφθέντα μὲν τότε, εἰ δὲ πάλιν βαρύνοιτο, ὥσπερ
 μαραινόμενον. 60

COMMENTS

We shall begin our analysis of this key text, as in Text A, by showing the sequence of its principal arguments (i.e., its movement of thought), which is as follows.

In Chapters One through Eight Plotinus has stressed that any existent is real to the extent that it is one. Thus, the soul, if it is to live fully, must first ascend to Nous, which is a true energeia, a true self-kinēsis and a true life. By this union with Nous the soul may continue its ascent to the One, which is beyond energeia, kinēsis and life. Union with the One may be poetically described as a circular kind of dance around a central guiding figure.

a. But what is the One? Careful reflection upon Its nature reveals that It is the source of everything: life,

Nous, being, goodness and soul (#1).

b. [But someone might protest]³⁹ must not the supreme source of so many beings be diminished by Its productivity? Plotinus replies: this objection presupposes a materialistic and spatial image of the One who, as immaterial and supremely perfect, is undiminished in Its emanation of all else.

If this were not the case, namely, that the One were diminished in Its production, the beings below It would be perishable. But instead they are eternal. Hence, their principle is always the same and a self-sufficing producer and does not produce them after the fashion of a material mass, which produces by actually giving a part of itself to its product. But the One is so powerful as to produce without Itself being affected in any way (#2).

c. The beings below the One are eternal and yet because they are partly multiple they cannot themselves account for their own eternal reality. Therefore, there must be something self-sufficient, because perfectly simple, that accounts for their being. So long as their source exists they exist, just as light persists so long as the sun remains (#3-#4).

³⁹An interesting and potentially confusing element of Plotinus' style is his occasional dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor who presents a speech or a series of questions, which Plotinus then answers, often in the first person.

d. Since the presence and sustaining power of the One also explains our being [i.e., since we are real to the extent we are one], we are never really separate from the One. We are separate from It only because of [unreality and] matter. Accordingly, we are alive because the power of the One always sustains us and we are simply because the One is. Hence, since It is that which is intrinsically present to us and that which really sustains us as real, it follows that the more we become like It the more perfect we become. And since to be real is also to be good, the closer we approach to the One the more we transcend evil (#5-#7).

e. Hence, the soul finds repose in the intelligible world, which is beyond evil. And its rational nature, which here is distracted by matter and passion, is There unmolested and actualized. And There is true life and There the soul truly lives. [But someone might say: does it not live here also?] It does live here, but its life is but a vestige and a shadow of true life because here it is remote from the One, the source of life⁴⁰ (#8).

f. Life There is the energeia of Nous. This energeia generates all intelligible realities by its contact with the One. The soul lives truly on the level of Nous because that is the realm of perfect act. By virtue of its energeia Nous

⁴⁰See above, n. 11.

begets beauty, justice and virtue, which likewise exist in the soul because soul is a logos of Nous (#9-#10).

g. Once the soul comes to live There, it too aspires to become intimate with the source of reality, as its ultimate principle and goal. The One is the soul's principle because It alone fully explains that world of perfect act (Nous). It is the soul's goal because as the source of the real and thus the good, the One is the terminus of soul's love. Hence, by attaining to the intelligible world the soul perfects its nature, but if it remains here it is degraded and does not realize its true nature. It is, so to speak, in exile and without its wings (#11-#12).

h. [Sections #h, #i, #j, and #k of our movement of thought will refer primarily to love and do not explicitly mention zōē itself. Nevertheless they are important because it is through love that the soul moves away from this earthly life to the most noble life of Nous, which Itself lives through love of the One-Good.] The very fact that the soul by its nature loves and longs for its source proves that its good is beyond the sensible world.⁴¹ This explains why images of the god of love have historically

⁴¹Plotinus uses the desire or love metaphor to describe the soul's ascent to the One-Good and to explain the relationship of Nous to the One, as we shall see in our Comments.

accompanied the images of souls in pictures and myths. For since the offspring cannot help but love its parent the soul, being sprung from the One, cannot help but love It (#13).

i. The soul's love as realized There is heavenly, while here it becomes corrupted and distracted by matter. This poetically may be likened to Aphrodite's love, which in the heavens is pure and divine, but here like that of a harlot. Every soul in this respect is like Aphrodite. And as in the mythological literature, love is the offspring and constant companion of Aphrodite, so love is the offspring and constant companion of the soul. Therefore, soul by virtue of its very nature yearns for God and desires to be with God, not out of any kind of lust or wanton love, but out of a love that compares with the noble love of a girl for her noble father (#14-#16).

j. If soul's gaze is distracted from that noble object, her love becomes ignoble, corrupt and unwholesome, and subjected to wantonness and outrage. But the soul may, remembering her noble Father, choose to purge herself of her sins and return to love Him who is the source of her well being (#17-#18).

k. Of course those who are corrupted by mortal and lesser kinds of love cannot appreciate this noble love. In appreciating this higher love let them recall moments of satisfaction whenever, in regard to mortal and transient

objects, the lover comes finally to own the beloved. Hence, even they may come to understand such a noble love and the profound joy and fulfillment which accompany it (#19).

l. This comparison has its limits, however, because the objects of sensible love are only shadows and involve change. They cannot be the true objects of the soul's love nor can they be its good. The true object of the soul lies beyond this world of matter and flesh. The ignorant and those preoccupied with the sensible objects of love may have difficulty appreciating that the soul's ultimate object of love is There, but those who have experienced this kind of transcendent love know what is meant (#19-#20).

m. For to transcend this world is to transcend this life and to attain a better life by ascending to Nous and ultimately by sharing in the One. If the soul comes to understand that its true life is There, it becomes aware that it is alive and real because it participates in the supplier and source of life. It is in this that the source of soul's good and, hence, the true object of its love lie and the soul needs nothing else (#22).

n. On the other hand, in order for the soul to realize that its true life lies There it must first transcend the distractions of this world. Only thus does the soul attain to the intelligible world, wherein she realizes her true nature and has a kind of contact with God, by whom she is illuminated and thereby becomes divine. In

that intelligible world, then, she is as a bright eternal flame and filled with divine light. But if she is distracted by the world below she is as a mere flicker of a flame which gradually diminishes (#23-#26).

The following issues in the key text require clarification and comments: a) life as the energeia of Nous, and b) the role of eros in the life of Soul and in the life of Nous.

a) Life as the energeia of Nous

In text B (#9) Plotinus describes the life of Nous as energeia. This characterization adds significantly to our understanding of zōē itself, especially when this additional commentary is linked with our discoveries in text A, namely, that zōē is self-kinēsis and intellection.

As we saw in text A, energeia itself denotes a determinate (intelligible) nature or entity (ousia). In other words, energeia is the same as form (eidos). Hence, by describing the energeia of Nous as life, Plotinus means to say that the very nature of Nous is life.

But what specifically is this life which constitutes the energeia of Nous? If we can answer this question, we will strengthen our grasp of what Plotinus means by life in the strictest sense.

In attributing life to Nous Plotinus follows Aristotle to a certain extent. Let us, then, examine briefly what

life means for Aristotle. The term "life," for him, is understood in two senses: life everywhere below the level of God (e.g., plant life, animal life, human life, etc.) and life on the level of God.

Aristotle begins by noting that natural bodies may be divided into those that possess life and those that do not (i.e., the four elements and their compounds). By life on the lowest, or vegetal, level of natural substances is meant the self-nourishment, growth and deterioration of the natural body.⁴² Life on the animal level consists of powers and operations in addition to the above mentioned, among which are the power of producing motion and stopping with respect to place, the power of sensation, etc.⁴³ Life on the human level consists of an even greater variety of powers and operations, including the power of intellect.⁴⁴ In general, life on the level of plants, animals and human beings consists, for Aristotle, of their being able to be efficient causes of, and of their actually being efficient causes of, their own various operations.⁴⁵

⁴²De Anima, Book 2, Ch. 1, 412a13-15.

⁴³Ibid., Book 2, Ch. 2, 413a23-25.

⁴⁴Ibid., Book 2, Ch. 3, 414b18-19; 415a8-14.

⁴⁵For Aristotle it is obvious that there exists also the ceaseless, circular motion of the various heavenly spheres. Each sphere has a separate moving agent (or Intelligence) whose life the sphere desires to imitate, as closely as possible, by circular movement. Besides the separate intelligences, the heavenly spheres also involve each a soul informing matter, which is the fifth essence: quintessence (Metaphysics, Bk. 12, Ch. 8, 1073a25-b17).

Life on the level of God, however, does not involve the existent which is alive being the efficient cause of its own various operations. Rather, life there is identical with intellection and is itself uncaused. If on the human level, Aristotle argues, the highest activity is contemplation (and is an activity which human beings can have only for a while) and thereby constitutes perfect human life, then perfect life as such (the life of God) must be perfect intellection as such and energeia.⁴⁶ Accordingly, God (as Subsistent Intellection) is perfect and eternal life (since perfect life is equivalent to perfect knowledge, which, according to Aristotle, is pure act).⁴⁷ Thus,

⁴⁶That God's energeia is one of perfect intellection is the position of Metaphysics, Book 12, Ch. 7, 1072b14-31. This seemingly permanent dimension of his thought is expressed in various texts (e.g., On the Heavens, 292a22-b4; Nicomachean Ethics 1178b10; Politics 1325b28).

Although praxis is ascribed to God in the Nicomachean Ethics (1154b25) and the Politics (1325b30), it is meant there in the wider sense in which theoria is a kind of praxis (see Politics 1325b20).

Aristotle's position on energeia is explained in C. H. Chen, Sophia: The Science Aristotle Sought (New York: George Olms Verlag Hildesheim, 1976), Chs. 25-26.

⁴⁷For something to be alive, as we have seen, is for it to be capable of efficiently causing its own operations and/or to be actually efficiently causing these operations. In all existents we are able to observe that this "being alive" is a combination of act and potency. Each living existent has a soul, itself actuality, from which (as actuality) follow certain operative powers (active dynameis). When actuated by some object these operative powers efficiently bring about some result (e.g., intellection, a moral act, etc.), and for this reason may be called operations as acts. Specifically, what is known is the content-determining cause of the actuation of the knower and is the telic cause of the knower's actual loving. Thus,

where there is fully actualized knowledge there is true life.⁴⁸

Similarly, for Plotinus, Nous is pure energeia because its very nature is noēsis.⁴⁹ Accordingly, because its

(⁴⁷continued)

the good-as-known actuates and moves the living agent to act. The relevant fundamental Aristotelian principle here is that whatever is moved is moved by another; whatever goes from potency to act does so by that which is itself in act (De Anima, Book 3, Ch. 10, 433a9-32; 433b13-38; Metaphysics, Book 12, Ch. 5, 1071a4-18; Ch. 8, 1073a24-33).

Aristotle's examination of the various operative powers and their respective operations yields the conclusion that the highest human activity or operation is intellection itself (Metaphysics, Book 12, Ch. 7 1072b20-25). Hence, to be fully alive is to be actually and always knowing. To be perfect life is to be that state of intellection. To be subsistent intellection is to be subsistent life (Ibid., Book 12, Ch. 7, 1072b28-31).

⁴⁸Furthermore, where there is fully actualized knowledge and, hence, true life, there is, we may infer, true happiness as well (Metaphysics, Book 12, Ch. 7, 1072b25). Examination of the nature of happiness provides another means for understanding the life of Aristotle's God. In the Nicomachean Ethics (Book 10, Chs. 3-8) he explains happiness as follows. Perfect happiness (hē teleia eudaimonia) is theoretical activity (theoretikē energeia), which is coextensive with contemplation (theoria). Accordingly, the happiest life is the life of reason -- i.e., the philosophic or theoretical life (Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, Ch. 5, 1095b19; Book 10, Ch. 7, 1177a12-18; 1178a4-8; Ch. 8, 1178b7-32). The second happiest life, Aristotle adds, is life in accordance with practical wisdom and moral virtue -- i.e., the practical or political life (Ibid., Book 1, Ch. 5, 1095b18; Book 10, Ch. 8, 1178a9-22; Politics, Book 7, Ch. 2, 1324a40). Thus, intellection is the highest perfection for human beings. From this we can infer that God, for Aristotle, is perfect because He is subsistent intellection.

⁴⁹In order to understand this section more clearly let us examine the following terms as they are used by Plotinus (and note also the relevant Aristotelian influences): being in potency (to dunamei on), being in act (to energeia on), act (hē energeia) and potency (hē dynamis).

energeia is noēsis, only Nous is a knower essentially and absolutely. Furthermore, Nous must be eternal, and not temporal, because Its knowledge is simultaneous and always complete, not successive and piecemeal.⁵⁰

(49continued)

In II, 5 (25), 1, 10-15, Plotinus defines "being in potency" as that which can become something else after what it currently is. When a thing can acquire an accidental or a substantial form from an extrinsic cause it is said to be in potency or dynamis in the passive sense (Ibid., Ch. 2, lines 29-34). The Aristotelian origins of this definition are obvious from the fact (among others) that the Greek term to dynamēi on is used by Aristotle to describe passive dynamis (see, for example, De Generatione et Corruptione, Book I, Ch. 3, 317b16-18; Metaphysics, Book 4, Ch. 4, 1007b28 and Book 12, Ch. 6, 1071b19).

"Being in act" or to energeia on is the opposite of "being in potency" and thus refers to any being that is completed by a form (II, 5 [25], 1, 26-29; 2, 3-8). Being in act, however, is different from form itself, which is one component of being in act (II, 5 [25], 2, 10-15). Hence, being in act denotes both sensible and intelligible beings, since the latter are composites also. Here, too, the Aristotelian influence is apparent since to energeia on is used by Aristotle (see, for example, Metaphysics, Book 8, Ch. 6, 1045b17-23 and Book 9, Ch. 6, 1048b8) and since Plotinus' explanations of change seem to echo those of Aristotle.

"Act" or hē energeia is, for Plotinus (as well as for Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 4, Ch. 2, 1003b25-27), identical with form or eidos (II, 5 [25], 2, 28-31). Being in potency is that which receives, and is the substratum of, act. Act comes to being in potency extrinsically and unites with this substratum, thereby producing a composite: being in act (II, 5 [25], 2, 33-34).

"Potency" or hē dynamis is not passive but active dynamis, namely, a being's capacity (through its own perfection) to bring about and receive act. In other words, whatever is potency (active dynamis) has the perfection and the power to impart some form either to itself or to another. Hē dynamis (or active dynamis), then, is the active power of any living agent. (In preparing these remarks on energeia and dynamis, I have relied on the extensive explanations contained in Hancock, Energeia.)

⁵⁰See V, 9 (5), 1-4. Also see III, 7 (45), 3, 34-38.

Thus Nous is the eternal and highest being because It is identical with the object of Its knowledge. All beings other than Nous are temporal because they are, as beings whose knowledge involves succession, dependent on Nous to bring them to act.⁵¹ Finally, although the One is prior to Nous, such antecedence is not chronological but simply expresses the logical dependence of Nous (which Itself is eternally in energeia) on the One for Its reality.⁵²

Because Nous is both eternally in energeia and depends on nothing else for Its knowledge (once It has turned back to the One and been informed by It), It is Itself what It intellects -- It is both knower and known, subject and object (Nous and noēton).⁵³ Furthermore, since It is eternal, Its knowledge is not discursive, which is characteristic only of temporal beings, but intuitive.⁵⁴

⁵¹As a result, while all beings (including Nous) can be said to be alive, only Nous can be termed life itself. Only Nous, because It is eternal self-kinēsis and a self-intellection, truly is life.

How eternity is the life of Nous and how time is the life of Soul will be examined key text D: VI, 7 (38).

⁵²V, 9 (5), 5, 4-7.

⁵³See V, 9 (5), 5, 4, where Plotinus depicts Nous as in act and eternally Nous.

⁵⁴The characteristic act or energeia of Nous is noēsis, an intellection that immediately grasps the whole of the object in its entirety without any kind of process or transition. This is termed "non-discursive thought" by Blumenthal, but may also be called intuition. This type of thought (noēsis) is contrasted in a number of passages with dianoia or logismos, which proceeds by movement from one object to another διεξοδος and which is characteristic of soul (V, 1 [10], 11; I, 3 [20], 4, 6-19; II, 9 [33], 1, 24-30; V, 3 [49], 9, 23-25; 17, 23-24; I,

It is important to note that Plotinus' account of the life, intellection and energeia of Nous parallels Aristotle's explanation to a certain extent. However, it is equally significant that Plotinus, under Plato's influence, transcends Aristotle in at least two respects: first, by describing Nous as a self-kinēsis rather than akinētos,⁵⁵

(⁵⁴continued)

8 [51], 2, 8ff). This process is described by expressions like ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο λαβεῖν (V, 3 [49], 17, 23-24). This process of discursive thought is terminated only when the mind enters into that immediate, complete and eternal possession of its object which is the mark of noēsis (I, 3 [20], 4, 9-20; IV, 4 [28], 12, 5-12). In several instances there is also a contrast between the restless, and successive life of soul, and the quiet, unchanging and self-contained life of Nous (V, 2 [11], 1, 16-21; I, 4 [46], 3, 24ff; III, 2 [47], 4, 13-16). The precise nature of soul's life, especially the nature of soul's contemplation, will be explicated in our next key text, III, 8 (30).

In those cases where Plotinus is concerned primarily with stressing the transcendence of Soul (and sometimes even of World Soul and the souls of the heavenly bodies) he will often deny it some of its characteristic features. Thus he sometimes argues that neither Soul (IV, 4 [28], 1, 4-16) nor World Soul nor the souls of the heavenly bodies (IV, 4 [28], 6-7) need memory. But we may infer (and, hence, recognize a difficulty) that only that which knows intuitively (i.e., grasps its object completely and eternally) has no need of memory since no part of its knowledge is ever absent from it (V, 9 [5], 5, 29-34). On this topic see John M. Rist, "Integration and the Undescended Soul in Plotinus," American Journal of Philosophy 88 (1967) 410-422.

⁵⁵See Metaphysics, Book 12, Ch. 8, 1074a35-37. Plotinus accepts the Platonic conception of primal (as well as every other kind of) life as self-kinēsis. It is not possible, Plotinus reasons, for the Primal Reality to be primal life because life is a self-kinēsis which is the energeia of intellection, and that implies a duality of knower and known. Accordingly, if to be real is to be one, as Plotinus maintains, the Primal Reality cannot be Nous (which Itself is multiple), but must be simple and one (and, hence, above life).

second, by synthesizing the Platonic Forms with Aristotle's noēsis noēseos. We shall have occasion to expand on these important differences between Plotinus and Aristotle in later key texts. Let us comment only briefly on these matters here.

Plotinus, under the influence of Plato, considers intellection to be a kind of kinēsis and thus he is willing to ascribe it to his Nous. Aristotle does not call his God (or Nous) a kinēsis because this would obscure its principal cosmological role as Prime, but Unmoved, Mover.⁵⁶

The combination of Plato's World of Forms with Aristotle's Self-Thinking Intelligence (or Unmoved Mover) Plotinus probably saw in germinal form in the Timaeus (30cff), where the ideal model of the world is an intelligible living being and the Craftsman is an intellect, and in the Sophist (248e-249d), where true being consists in

⁵⁶In Book 12 (Ch. 6, 1071b12-22) of the Metaphysics Aristotle enumerates five requirements for the production of eternal motion. 1) There must be an eternal ousia 2) which is capable of causing motion 3) not only simply because it has the power (dynamis) to do so, but because it can actually exercise (energeia) it. 4) This ousia, then, must be energeia and not dynamis. 5) This ousia must be immaterial, since it must be eternal. Since that which moves by being moved by another cannot be first, there must be something that moves without itself being moved (Ch. 6, 1071b34-37). This unmoved mover must itself be motionless and yet somehow cause motion in others (Ch. 7, 1072a25-27). Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, then, may be termed a "mover" only through extrinsic denomination, as the final cause of all movement (by being an object of desire and love). On this last point see Metaphysics, Book 9, Ch. 8, 1049b24-25.

the forms, in motion, life and intelligence.

Thus aided by Plato, Plotinus concludes that Nous is actually a significant unity. Nous, in thinking Itself, thinks the infinite plurality of Platonic Forms. These Forms (noēta which Nous intellects) are the products of Nous and identical in nature with It. Each is therefore itself a life and intelligence. Each Form is also both an intelligible and an intelligence. The great unity of Nous is thereby emphatically assured by the fact that It is really a universe of beings (which themselves are individual intelligences or knowers) where each one knows and is known by every other. Furthermore, each Form is itself in act (energeia) and actually knows all other Forms.⁵⁷ Thus, Plotinus concludes, Nous is a one-in-many.

How precisely does the energeia of Nous, which is Its life, generate these Forms (#9)? Let us return briefly to Plotinus' explanation of how Nous comes to be. Nous is brought into being by the overflow of the One, which involves two moments. In the first moment (prohodos), Nous is indeterminate, unformed and dynamis. Plotinus also calls this first stage "intelligible matter."⁵⁸ In the second

⁵⁷See VI, 7 (38), 5 and VI, 2 (43), 20-22. Also see IV, 8 (6), 3, 14-16.

⁵⁸See II, 4 (12), 5, 24-37 and III, 8 (30), 11, 1-8. Why matter must be postulated in the Intelligible World is explained in the early chapters of treatise II, 4, where Plotinus stresses that it is free from the imperfections of its sensible counterpart. While both constitute the

moment (epistrophē), Nous turns back to the One out of desire for It (because the One is also the Good) and becomes thereby determined, formed and energeia.⁵⁹ Nous, however, cannot grasp the One all at once and in the latter's full perfection. Accordingly, Nous achieves an understanding of the One in terms of the world of Forms, the totality of which is the object of Nous' own contemplation. Thus, Nous contemplates Its source by also contemplating Itself.⁶⁰ In this way, Nous, the first product of the One, is both knower and known.⁶¹ Nous is a reality whose determination and life result directly from Its desire for Its ultimate

(58continued)

principle of indeterminacy within their respective worlds, intelligible matter does not share sensible matter's unsubstantiality and, of course, should not be regarded as evil (II, 4 [12], 5, 12-23; 15, 17-28; II, 5 [25], 3, 8-19). We shall examine intelligible matter further in key text D: VI, 7 (38).

⁵⁹IV, 7 (2), 8³, 6-25.

⁶⁰The lower (Nous) here is related to the higher (the One) insofar as it is a logos of the higher. However, our understanding of this relationship here is furthered by the doctrine of contemplation. Although Plotinus will make his position on contemplation more clear in later treatises (especially in III, 8 [30]), it may already be seen to function as early as treatise IV, 7 (2), 8³, 6-25, where he refers to the need of the inferior (the product) to "gaze upon" (or contemplate) the superior (the producer or source).

⁶¹owing to Its own vast perfection, Nous too overflows in Its own two-moment process of prohodos (dynamis) and epistrophē (energeia) and thus produces soul. Such evolution of energeia from dynamis through contemplation continues until all perfection and being are exhausted. Plotinus explains the relationship of contemplated and contemplator in treatise V, 2 (11), 1, 5-22. We shall have more to say about how contemplation relates to life in key text C: III, 8 (30).

source, the One-Good. The result of such a combination of Platonic and Aristotelian elements is the Nous of Plotinus' Enneads, a self-living (because self-moving) Intelligence whose contents are the Forms.⁶²

We may summarize this first area of clarification as follows. The energeia (i.e., that which makes an entity be formally what it is) of Nous is life and intellection (noēsis), which is a self-kinēsis whose ultimate object is the One. Other beings (e.g., Soul and Nature) have intelligence but only Nous is intelligence. Soul and Nature have intelligence only because they participate in (by being

⁶²In V, 9 (5), 5, 7-16 Plotinus makes clear why it is appropriate and even necessary, to join the Forms with Nous by arguing that the very nature of Nous is inseparable from the objects of Its intellection. In other words, Nous and noēton are not separable from each other.

This view is not entirely original to Plotinus, however. Albinus (second century A.D.) in his Epitome (or Didascalicos, Ch. 9) also identified his Supreme Deity with Aristotle's self-contemplating Intelligence (who was further identified with Plato's Demiurge and with the Form of the Good) and made the Forms be the thoughts of God. With regard to the theory of Forms Albinus thus accepted this common Middle Platonic interpretation, which was first found, among extant authors, in Philo of Alexandria (25 B.C. - 40 A.D.), in his De Opificio Mundi, Vol. 5.

Discussions of this and related issues are found in R. E. Witt, Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism (Cambridge, 1937); H. A. Wolfson, Philo (Cambridge, Massachusetts; 1947), Vol. I; A. H. Armstrong, "The Background of the Doctrine 'That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect,'" Entretiens sur L'Antiquite Classique, V: Les Sources de Plotin (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1960), pp. 393-425; John Dillon The Middle Platonists (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977).

logoi of) Nous.⁶³ Similarly, other beings have life (or are alive) but only Nous is life.⁶⁴ Soul and Nature have life only because they participate in (by being logoi of) Nous.

b) The role of erōs in the life of Soul and
in the life of Nous

Plotinus uses erōs (love or desire) to describe the soul's ascent to the One (#10, #13-#26)⁶⁵ and the

⁶³Precisely how Soul and Nature are intelligent and alive will be clarified in Text C: III, 8 (30), 8-10.

⁶⁴In III, 7 (45), 5, 11 Plotinus explains that there are degrees of life and that these degrees entail eternity and time. We shall have more to say on these points in text E: I, 4 (46), 3-4.

⁶⁵There are other texts (I, 6 [1], 7, 12-14; V, 8 [31], 10, 33; VI, 7 [38], 22; 36, 17-19; III, 5 [50]) where Plotinus describes the soul's ascent to the One-Good in terms of the love metaphor of the Symposium (206ff). This fact is relevant to text B because the soul's relationship to the One is described as a "longing" and is compared to the love of a noble maiden and to Aphrodite herself. However, though Plotinus seems to describe the maiden's love in the language of physical passion, he is careful to point out that it is more like that which is directed towards a noble father than that which is directed toward a bridegroom or some other sort of lover. Such a caution makes obvious that Plotinus does not follow Plato's doctrine of love (Symposium 180c-185c; 206c ff) without reservation. This point is further explained in his treatise on love, III, 5 (50), 1, 40ff. There Plotinus introduces the important distinction between the pure (and hence superior) love of beauty, which does not desire to generate, and the love which is mixed with desire for perpetuity and so seeks to generate (and hence is inferior). While in Plato all love up to the highest is essentially productive (Symposium 212a), in Plotinus authentic love is not. Consult Albert Marten Wolters, Plotinus 'On Eros': A Detailed Exegetical Study of Enneads III, 5 (Amsterdam: Filosofisch Instituut van de Vrije Universiteit, 1972).

relationship of Nous to the One.⁶⁶ He even mentions (some commentators contend) erōs as a "characteristic" of the One.⁶⁷

The role of love in the soul's journey is, as R. T. Wallis puts it, "an excellent example of a Platonic theme taken over by Plotinus and submitted to some drastic tacit corrections."⁶⁸ Among other things,⁶⁹ Plotinus takes exception to Plato's view that love aims at procreation in the beautiful.⁷⁰ For Plotinus the more perfect form of love is that which does not deliberately aim at production (although production may in fact be an occasional by-product), since such an aim is a sign of dissatisfaction with one's present state⁷¹ and a turning from one's center (or inner reality) towards what is outside and sensible.

⁶⁶See, for example, VI, 7 (38), 35, 19-33.

⁶⁷Treatise VI, 8 (39), 13, lff; 15, lff seems to provide the only data upon which J. Trouillard (La Procession plotinienne [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955], passim) and Rist (Eros and Psyche, pp. 76ff and Road to Reality, pp. 66-83) base their description of the One as willing and loving Itself. But, as Plotinus himself cautions (VI, 8 [39], 13, 1-5; 18, 52-53), such terms are ultimately inadequate because they imply (incorrectly) that the One has needs and, hence, is imperfect. (See also another late treatise, III, 5 [50], 7, 9-15 and Wallis, Neoplatonism, p. 64). Additional relevant comments are contained in Rist, "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle," Mind, Vol. 27, no. 1, p. 85ff.

⁶⁸Wallis, Neoplatonism, p. 86.

⁶⁹For helpful discussion of the ways in which Plotinus modifies the Platonic conception of erōs, see Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 86-88.

⁷⁰Symposium 206e.

⁷¹III, 5 (50), 1, 38-50.

Out of his great concern for preserving the primacy of the One-Good, Plotinus so radically distills the Platonic view of love that only one key point remains: the real aim or object of genuine love is union with the beloved.

The several instances in which Plotinus notes that contact with the One is made through the center of our soul further clarify the role of love.⁷² Our particular center is not itself the One. We must seek and focus on the center common to all souls (and indeed to all realities below the One).⁷³ Reflection on this analogy reveals that the centers of concentric circles cannot be distinguished unless the circles are moved apart.⁷⁴ Thus, the One is not something we contain, our inmost "self," so to speak,⁷⁵

⁷²II, 2 (14), 2, 6ff; V, 1 (10), 11, 9-15; VI, 8 (39), 18, 8ff.

⁷³VI, 9(9), 8, 10-12.

⁷⁴VI, 9 (9), 10, 16-18.

⁷⁵The use of the term "self" here is not meant to imply that Plotinus has an authentic philosophy of "self" or that he is aware of "self" in any sort of technical meaning. Even Gerard J. P. O'Daly notes in his study on the subject (Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self New York: Barnes and Noble, 1973, pp. 89-90) that Plotinus has

no fixed word --hence no concept, strictly speaking -- for 'self'. As P. Henry has pointed out, there is no word for 'person,' or self, in Greek, and so Plotinus uses autos to express the concept. He also uses hēmeis, or the reflexive hauton.. But if the word, and the explicit, canonized concept are missing here VI, 7, 35 and VI, 9, 11, adequate testimony has already been given of Plotinus' clear awareness of the importance of a concept of self - whether in the historical process or in reflection - to account for the identity of a human subject at the several levels of existence possible to man.

nor is It merely a remote and passive object of our gaze, waiting, as it were, for us to find It. On the contrary, the One is the reality which contains us, as our transcendent source, to which we return out of love for Its goodness (#13-#18).⁷⁶

Love, then, is desire for what is good. Specifically, it is the desire for, as Plato puts it, permanent possession

(⁷⁵continued)

However, at least one Plotinus scholar has disputed the "adequate testimony" provided by O'Daly. Leo Sweeney, in his article: "Mani's Twin and Plotinus: Questions on 'Self'," (Jay Bregman [ed.], Neoplatonism and Gnosticism [Norfolk, Virginia: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1988]) argues that terms like autos hēmeis, hauton, etc. do not refer to "self" in any technical sense of the word. Rather, they are sometimes used simply to emphasize the contrast between a pair of items (e.g., soul and body) while at other times they are used to refer to, and focus on, what something really or essentially is.

⁷⁶Wallis notes (Neoplatonism, p. 40) that, for Plotinus,

our true self is eternally saved and all that is required is to wake up to this fact, a process requiring self-discipline, but perfectly within the soul's own power (I, 6 [1], 9, 22-25). And it is doubtful whether his mysticism can be classified as 'theistic' without serious qualification.... The 'suddenness' of the vision is not necessarily proof of grace in the theistic sense, since, first, Plotinus is here echoing Plato (Symposium 210E, Epinomis VII, 341C-D), secondly, he stresses that the necessary movement is the work of the soul, not of the One (VI, 9 [9], 8, 33ff; V, 5 [32], 8, 13ff) and, thirdly, similar declarations occur in non-theistic mysticism, notably in Zen Buddhism. And Plotinus' denial that the One loves its products would seem to mark a decisive rejection of the fundamental tenet both of Christian mysticism and of theistic mysticism in general, that mystical union involves a reciprocal love-relationship between two persons.

of the Good.⁷⁷ This desire is another name for the self-motion, and hence life, of the soul and thus of all motion and change in the universe. Accordingly, there is a very close relationship between the soul's immortality, owing to its self movement, and its erōs. Based upon these considerations, then, we may infer that soul's genuine life is a self-kinēsis (i.e., intellection or contemplation) which is motivated and initiated by love of its ultimate object, the One-Good.

Desire or love is also fundamental to Plotinus' explanation of how and especially why Nous and soul are produced and produce subsequent realities. Each being, in the first moment of its production, is an indeterminate desire that through love of its source then reverts back to that source and is thereby made determinate. In addition, love is the inspiration, so to speak, for contemplation, which is necessary for production. The One-Good is the only object of Nous' love. The self-kinēsis of Nous, which is its very life, would make no sense and would not eternally originate if Nous did not love the One-Good. Love, then, is the reason why Nous lives.

In a later treatise, VI, 7 [38],⁷⁸ Plotinus

⁷⁷Symposium 204e-206a.

⁷⁸VI, 7 (38), 35, 19-33; 36, 17-19. We shall examine relevant portions of this complex treatise later in our study.

describes Nous as eternally and permanently in two simultaneous states, one "drunk" (loving) and one "sober" (knowing).⁷⁹ Nous has a) the power for thinking, by which It examines Its own contents, and b) a power by which It "sees" that which is above (the One) by a kind of intuition (by which It first simply "saw" and afterwards, as it "saw," acquired intellect and is one). The first of these is the contemplation of Nous when It is "in Its right mind," so to speak; the second is Nous in love. Nous, then, lives by eternally pursuing Its proper activity of knowing while It is eternally raised above Itself in the union of love.⁸⁰

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Obviously, VI, 9 is important to our study because it makes explicit, although tersely, what the life of Nous entails. Furthermore, it explains how, if Nous is alive, everything subsequent to It must be alive also. Finally it establishes the role and importance of erōs in any living being.

First, Nous is perfect as mind or knower because intellection (noēsis) is Its very nature (ousia) and essential act (energeia). It is Itself what It knows

⁷⁹See also III, 8 (30), 11, 23-24.

⁸⁰As Armstrong (The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy [Cambridge: University Press, 1967]), hereafter: Armstrong, Cambridge History, pp. 262-263) notes, Nous' "power of love seems to be identical with that unbounded life as it first came forth from the One."

because It is both knower and known. Its knowledge is not discursive but intuitive and, hence, It knows eternally and completely. Nous, then, may be said to be life because Its life is Its energeia and a self-kinēsis. Through Its self-kinēsis Nous causes Its own reversion (epistrophē) towards the One (and this reversion is the energeia of Nous).⁸¹ Nous, then, moves Itself intellectually to know the One. And this self-originated movement of Nous from active dynamis (Nous in the first moment of Its emanation from the One: prohodos) to energeia likewise marks the generation of the content of Its intellection: the world of intelligible Forms. Plotinus thus combines elements of Platonic and Aristotelian origin to describe the life of Nous more fully. The result of this combination is a self-moved Intelligence, whose contents are the Forms and whose life is energeia, which is precisely Its self-kinēsis as intellection.

Through Its life and intellection Nous is necessarily productive. Its principal products are the intelligibles, which It contains and which represent Its best grasp of the Primal Reality. Each intelligible Form is itself a knower and a known and alive. In this way Nous is a unity which is multiple, a one-in-many. The other beings Nous produces

⁸¹In what precise sense Nous in Its first moment of emanation from the One (prohodos) is also life will be discussed in text D: VI, 7 (38).

(e.g., Soul and Nature) have intelligence, but only Nous is intelligence. Accordingly, their lives are less perfect because they involve multiplicity of a higher magnitude. Soul and Nature, for example, have intelligence and life only because they participate in the primal intellection and life of Nous by being Its logoi.

A fuller answer to the question: "How does Nous live?" is provided by reference to the role of erōs in Plotinus' thought. Nous, the first product of the One, is a reality whose determination (through the moment of epistrophē) results from Its self-kinēsis of intellection. But Nous initiates its kinēsis out of love for Its source. In other words, Nous turns to the One and is filled by It because the One is the object of Its desire or love. The very motivation of Nous' self-kinēsis is the One's supreme goodness, to which Nous, and any being for that matter, is inexorably attracted.

In this way erōs further explains the life of Nous, insofar as It lives fully only through turning to the One-Good, the Source of Its life and content and the object of Its desire. Love for the One-Good likewise helps to explain more fully the life of soul, especially as it ascends first to its antepenultimate source, Nous, and then to its ultimate source, the One-Good.

By refining the Platonic view of eros Plotinus is able to bring into focus its role in his theory of life. Genuine

love involves neither the production of some artifact nor any physical or sensual liaison with another being. Its true aim is union with the primal reality -- the One-Good: the ultimate object of desire.

What genuine love motivates in any being is precisely self-kinēsis, (which is intellection and which ultimately has as its object the One as intelligible), which is the very life of that being.

Finally, although this key text has provided some information regarding the life of soul, several questions remain to be answered. First, in what specifically does soul's intellectual life consist? What does it mean to say that the life of soul involves contemplation and production? How does the life of soul differ from the life of Nous? What is the nature of the human soul's life? For answers we must proceed to our next key text, III, 8 (30).

CHAPTER IV

TEXT C: ENNEAD III, 8 (30), 8; 10

The key text we shall examine in treatise III, 8 is found in Chapters 8 and 10.¹ Before turning our attention to the key text let us describe the treatise as a whole. According to Porphyry, III, 8: "On Nature, Contemplation and the One," is the thirtieth treatise that Plotinus wrote² and hence, belongs to his middle period, during

¹Treatise III, 8 as a whole is a rich source of data on zōē and related notions. In Chapters 8 and 10 we find the synthesis of this data that our study requires. Specifically, we find there an integration of life with logos, contemplation and seriousness.

Secondly, although there is some discussion of life as dynamis in Chapter 11 of III, 8 (as well as in V, 1 [10], 7, 1-25 earlier), we shall defer full treatment of this issue to our next key text -- VI, 7 (38) -- which contains a more detailed and more extensive analysis of this relationship.

²Porphyry, "Life," p. 25, lines 30-35. treatise III, 8 is in fact the first part of a major work of Plotinus, including V, 8 (31); V, 5 (32); and II, 9 (33), the four sections of which Porphyry arbitrarily separated into distinct treatises (see Armstrong, Enneads, Vol. I, p. xi, Vol. II, pp. 220-221, and Vol. III, p. 258). For further information on these four treatises see D. Roloff, Die Grossschrift III, 8; V, 8; V, 5; II, 9 (Berlin, 1971). The problems raised by the appearance of these subdivisions as separate treatises are discussed in H. R. Schwyzer, "Plotin," in Pauly's Realencyclopädie, XXI, 487. For an evaluation of Porphyry's principles for arranging the treatises see R. Harder, "Eine Neue Schrift Plotins," in Kleine Schriften (Munich: Beck, 1960), pp. 303-13.

which he produced works "of the highest perfection."³ In order to introduce this key text, we shall briefly examine those treatises subsequent to Text B (VI, 9 [9], 18 sqq) and preceding III, 8, which contain helpful background data on zōē.

In treatise V, 1 (10), 2 Plotinus explains that the World Soul is that which immediately gives order, life and movement to the various parts of the sensible universe.⁴ In chapter 7, lines 1-25, he turns to Nous to describe It as an active power (dynamis) of Its own being.⁵ In Its first moment of emanation from the One, Nous is indeterminate intellection and for that reason It is life.

In treatise II, 4 (12), 5 Plotinus further describes the life of Nous in Its first indeterminate moment. He speaks of Nous as intelligible matter endowed with divinity (ton theon), life and thought. He distinguishes intelligible matter from sensible matter by noting that the

³John Deck, for example, considers III, 8 "worthy of special attention. It stands out for its finished literary execution, for its weaving together of central Plotinian themes, and for its unification of the Plotinian world by a contemplation present in all things below the One, the Plotinian God" (Contemplation, p. 3).

⁴The World Soul furnishes life to the universe both collectively and distributively. In doing so it is both immanent (by penetrating, illuminating and animating every item in the universe) and transcendent (by being above the heavens and the sensible cosmos).

⁵As noted earlier, we shall thoroughly examine the nature of life as dynamis in our next key text: VI, 7 (38).

latter is intrinsically lifeless and merely a "decorated corpse."⁶

After several treatises⁷ which are not particularly helpful to understanding zōē, we come to VI, 4 (22) and VI, 5 (23), both of which deal generally with the all-pervasiveness of life in the universe. Specifically, these treatises contain the following important points. a) Matter participates in an individual soul (VI, 4 [22], 16, 4ff). Hence, no soul ever really participates in body, for the inferior always participates in the superior and not the other way around. b) Time is the result of the diminished presence of Nous in the Soul (i.e., Soul is a logos of Nous). Nous is measureless, all powerful (i.e., dynamis), and nowhere limited. As such, Nous is outside of time. Its

⁶In II, 4 (12), 3, 6-18, Plotinus discusses intelligible matter and indicates that even intelligible realities are composite, but in a different way from sensible realities. Logoi in the intelligible world are composites of intelligible matter and form and of potency and act. But while in sensible existents matter is always receiving different forms, in intelligible realities matter always remains the same because each reality There contains all the forms at once. For example, insofar as the intelligible realities are in act, they make Nature itself be composite as it actuates and forms lower realities. In this way, Plotinus can be seen to anticipate his explicit explanation in III, 8 (30), 3-4 of how Nature causes and forms all vegetal life.

⁷See III, 9 (13): "Various Considerations;" II, 2 (14): "On the Circular Motion;" III, 4 (15): "On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit;" I, 9 (16): "On the Reasonable Departure;" II, 6 (17): "On Quality;" V, 7 (18): "Whether There Are Ideas of Particulars;" I, 2 (19): "On Virtues;" I, 3 (20): "On Dialectic;" IV, 1 (21): "In What Way the Soul is Said to be a Mean Between Undivided and Divided Being."

very eternity is identified with dynamis.⁸ c) The power that is Nous is present as one life, unfailing and inexhaustible. Hence, eternity is the life of Nous as Nous is related to Itself. Time is the life of Soul as Soul is related to Nous. The distinction between eternity and time, then, is a distinction between the lives of Nous and Soul.⁹

In treatise V, 6 (24), 6, 20-21, Plotinus further expands what was said earlier¹⁰ by defining life as intellection (noēsis). Life on any level (from Nous to Nature) will always be some sort of intellection.¹¹ In II, 5 (25), 3 Plotinus turns to the Soul and mentions that it is a potency (i.e., dynamis) for life. It is not a mere passive potency, however, but an active potency.¹² The

⁸VI, 5 (23), 11.

⁹VI, 5 (23), 12.

¹⁰V, 1 (10) and II, 4 (12).

¹¹It is only in Text C, however, that Plotinus fully explicates the connection between life and intellection.

¹²Plotinus insists in II, 5 (25), 2-3 that the following technical distinction be maintained between to dynamei on (being in potency or passive potency) and hē dynamis (potency itself or active potency). Passive dynamis is that capacity by which something is completely dependent on another for its own determination. Active dynamis, on the other hand, is that power by which something determines itself (i.e., brings about its own determination or realization). My analysis here is in agreement with that of Hancock, Energeia. Furthermore, the meaning of to dynamei on here correlates generally with Aristotle's usage of the same term in the Metaphysics (Bk. 4, Ch. 4, 1007b28 and Bk. 12, Ch. 6, 1071b19).

In the next treatise, III, 6 (26), 2, 34ff, we find further amplification of active dynamis as it relates to soul. The reasoning part of soul is not a passive potency,

status of Soul's life as dynamis is only metaphysically, not temporally, prior to the status of its life as energeia.

In Chapter 6 of III, 6 (26) Plotinus returns to life on the level of Nous. Since Nous is perfect intellect and the fullness of wisdom, Its life must necessarily be perfect. There is nothing to which Its power (i.e., dynamis) does not extend, nor can Its power be quantitatively limited.¹³ Similarly, in two other treatises (i.e., VI, 1 [10], 4 and V, 5 [32], 1), he describes Nous as at once intelligence, being and life.

Treatise IV, 3 (27), whose general topic is the nature of the sense powers and of the productive power of Soul, stresses that Soul's life is a productive power which makes possible all sensible life. Specifically, the Soul gives life to all things that do not of themselves possess life (Chapter 10). Finally, in IV, 4 (28), 36 we learn that the entire universe is ensouled, contains various dynameis and

(¹²continued)

as is physical matter (where there is physical change), but a self-realizing potency (i.e., an active dynamis). Active dynamis here describes the potency to act by one's own nature and not by any extrinsic necessity.

¹³As Armstrong points out (Enneads, Vol. III, n. 1, p. 234),

Real Being is limited for Plotinus in the sense that the number of Forms in it is finite, but unlimited in that it is eternal, its power is infinite and it has nothing outside to bound or measure it but is all-inclusive and so unincluded and is itself the absolute standard of measurement.

thereby is full of life (i.e., life itself entails the very notion of dynamis): More specifically, man's ascent to Soul is possible because he has the power of Soul in his life.¹⁴

We are now ready to examine III, 8 itself. Since our key text is found in the eighth and tenth chapters of the treatise, we shall briefly summarize relevant data from preceding and intervening chapters.

Nature is a logos and produces through contemplation because it is living. Nature causes life in others and is itself alive because it is related both to what is below and to what is above. The content of Nature's contemplation consists of the various logoi, which it uses to make sensible existents.¹⁵ These logoi can be called

¹⁴Since treatise IV, 5 (29) deals exclusively with the nature of soul's sense powers it offers no useful information on life.

¹⁵In certain additional passages of the Enneads (e.g., V, 7 [18]), Plotinus seems to suggest that there are forms of individuals. John Rist, in "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus" (Classical Quarterly n.s. 13 [1963], pp. 223-231) argues in favor of such an interpretation. He notes that because each human being is said to be an intelligible world (in III, 4 [15], 3, 22), he has within himself a part of the world of Forms. It is just such a consideration, Rist concludes, that lay behind Plotinus' attitude to forms of individual living things. (See also Rist, Road to Reality, pp. 86-88.)

H. J. Blumenthal, on the other hand, argues that Plotinus is undecided about forms of individuals ("Did Plotinus believe in Ideas of Individuals?" Phronesis 11 [1966], pp. 61-80). In his arguments Blumenthal points out that Plotinus in VI, 5 (23), 8 recants his position in V, 7.

contemplation in a passive sense as the content of contemplation (Chapters 1-2).¹⁶

Nature itself lives because it is related through contemplation to what is above it, namely, Soul. Soul contemplates, and the content of its contemplation is Nature which is its logos (Chapter 3, lines 8-12). Nature, in order to be what it is and to be living, must make. Indeed, its very life is its making through contemplation, in the twofold sense of an operative state and a content (Chapter 3, lines 17-25).¹⁷

Nature produces through contemplation and itself originates from the contemplation of Soul and ultimately

¹⁶How does Nature contemplate and thus produce its products (Chapter 1, lines 22-24)? In order to produce, Nature does not need tools or machines but only matter on which it can work and which it can form (Chapter 2, lines 1-5). How does this forming come about? Nature itself is a form without matter (Chapter 2, lines 22-23). It makes by simply contemplating and thereby the content of its contemplation (i.e., logoi) results. These logoi are the means through which Nature, itself a logos, produces sensible existents (Chapter 2, lines 28-30). Those logoi are themselves dead and they are at the end of the line of contemplation since they set up no further or lower level of things (Chapter 2, lines 30-34).

¹⁷The identification of the operative state of contemplation with the content of contemplation is established in III, 8 (30), 8, 1-10 and later in V, 3 (49), 5, 1-25 also. We understand θεωρία as an "operative state" so as to avoid the unfortunate and misleading connotation of translations like "activity" or even "operation," both of which suggest too strongly the notion of praxis and thus lead us away from the true nature of theoria itself as poiēsis.

even of Nous.¹⁸ Men, too, live by contemplating, but those whose contemplation is unclear and weak make action (praxis) be a substitute for genuine contemplation and reasoning (Chapter 4, lines 30-39).

Having considered how Nature's life and making (poiēsis) is a contemplation, Plotinus in Chapter Five turns to the Soul in order to show how and what its contemplation produces. When the Soul is fully alive, having attained its fullness of knowledge in contemplation and having become itself all a vision, it produces a further but weaker vision (i.e., Nature). This is so because Soul, although it is always filled and illuminated (and thus vivified) by Nous in which it remains, has two further parts or aspects. The first is the World Soul, which is Soul in its function of animating the sensible universe as a whole. But the second part, Nature, goes forth, leaving Soul in quiet repose (and union with Nous) above, and thereby produces the individual existents of the sensible world (Chapter 5, lines 12ff).

The second aspect of Soul is weaker than the first, because in Plotinus' system what goes forth is never equal, but always inferior, to what remains above. Thus, all

¹⁸Nature is a soul which is the offspring of a prior soul with a stronger life. Hence, Nature is the image of another and higher contemplation and thus what it produces is weak in every way because a weak contemplation produces a weak content (Chapter 4, lines 14-30).

actuation of Soul is contemplation and life, which however is weaker in Nature than in Soul (Chapter 5, lines 14-25).

Soul, then, contemplates and makes that which comes after it, Nature, which in turn contemplates but in a more external way and thus unlike its predecessor. In this manner contemplation makes contemplation and life makes life -- ever weaker and less vivid, but contemplation and life nonetheless.

Even the man of action (praxis), then, seeks contemplation and lives, although he does so weakly and incompletely. In this way action ultimately leads back to contemplation since what the soul receives is always a logos which understands silently (Chapter 6, lines 1-13).

But this logos resides more properly in the soul of the serious man (ὁ σπουδαῖος), where it is more silent and more fully possessed.¹⁹ There the soul genuinely lives and needs nothing because it is filled with true knowledge and enjoys the confident life that comes from possessing that knowledge as fully as it can. In the man of action, however, the known is still outside the knower. This duality exists precisely because his contemplation is of

¹⁹Further explanation of seriousness and of the serious man in to be found in to be found in my Master's Thesis, entitled Seriousness and Playfulness in Plotinus' Enneads (Loyola University, Chicago, 1978).

such a sort that it has not yet effected a union between knower and known.

The soul of the man of action, then, does not possess life fully because it does not possess the content of its contemplation completely, with the result that the soul wants to learn about the content more thoroughly and thereby achieve full contemplation and full life.²⁰

In Chapter Seven Plotinus merely repeats points on contemplation which we have already covered. Hence, we shall turn directly to the first section of our key text, lines 1-38 of Chapter Eight.

TEXT C: III, 8 (30), 8; 10

[1] Now inasmuch as contemplation ascends from Nature to Soul, and from Soul to Intellect, and the contemplations become always more intimate and united to the contemplators, and in the soul of the serious man the objects known tend to a [point of] meeting with the [knowing] subject since they are pressing on towards Intellect, clearly in Intellect both are now one, not by their becoming akin as in the best soul, but entitatively [by virtue of their ousia] and by the fact

²⁰When men act or speak or make an artifact of any sort, the result is an action or a word or an object of which they can be aware and which they can contemplate and thus live. Some men are carried into this kind of action, then, precisely so that they might see in this admittedly inferior way that they are yet incapable of apprehending fully with their intellect. For the soul of the man of action (praxis) cannot achieve contemplation and, hence, a full and complete life, except by going outside itself in this way. It lives truly only when it returns within itself and has the intelligibles as the content of its contemplation, for there is a part of soul which always looks to Nous and remains behind (Chapter 6, lines 14-40).

that thinking and being are the same.²¹ [2] For there is no longer one thing and another, for if there is there will be something else again which is neither the one nor the other. So this must be something where both are really one. [3] But this is living contemplation and not an object of contemplation as though it were in something else. [4] For that which is in something else is alive because of that other, not in its own right.

8, 1-12:

Ταῦτα μὲν οὕτω. Τῆς δὲ θεωρίας ἀναβαινούσης ἐκ τῆς φύσεως ἐπὶ ψυχὴν καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἰς νοῦν καὶ ἀεὶ οἰκειότερων τῶν θεωριῶν γιγνομένων καὶ ἐνουμένων τοῖς θεωροῦσι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς σπουδαίας ψυχῆς πρὸς
 5 τὸ αὐτὸ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ ἰόντων τῶν ἐγνωσμένων ἅτε εἰς νοῦν σπευδόντων, ἐπὶ τούτου δηλονότι ἤδη ἐν ἄμφω οὐκ οἰκειώσει, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἀρίστης, ἀλλ' οὐσία καὶ τῷ ταύτῳ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ νοεῖν εἶναι. Οὐ γὰρ ἔτι ἄλλο, τὸ δ' ἄλλο· πάλιν γὰρ αὐτὸ ἄλλο ἔσται, ὃ
 10 οὐκέτι ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο. Δεῖ οὖν τοῦτο εἶναι ἐν ὄντως ἄμφω· τοῦτο δὲ ἔστι θεωρία ζῶσα, οὐ θεώρημα, οἷον τὸ ἐν ἄλλῳ. Τὸ γὰρ ἐν ἄλλῳ ζῶν τι ἐκείνο, οὐκ αὐτοζῶν.

[5] If, then, an object of contemplation and thought [i.e., contemplation in its content] is alive, it must be self-living and not be a life of growth or of sense perception or of the rest of soul. [6] For thoughts in a way are of other sorts too, but one is a growth-thought, one a sense-thought, and one a soul-thought. [7] How, then, are they thoughts? Because they are logoi. And every life is a certain kind of thought, but one thought is dimmer than another, just as with life too. [8] But this [life of Nous] is clearer. And this first life and first intellect are one. [9] So the

²¹Plotinus is here alluding to Parmenides, fragment 3: "For it is the same thing to think and to be" (see Freeman, Ancilla, p. 42). Similar citations may be found in V, i (10), 8, 17 and I, 4 (46), 10, 9. For valuable comments on this fragment, see Leo Sweeney, S. J., Infinity in the Presocratics: A Bibliographical and Philosophical Study (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), p. 109, hereafter, Sweeney, Infinity.

first life is first ²² thought, and the second life is thought in the second degree, and the last life [is] thought in the last degree. [10] Every life, then, is of this kind and also a thought.

8, 12-21:

Εἰ οὖν

ζήσεται τι θεώρημα καὶ νόημα, δεῖ αὐτοζωὴν εἶναι οὐ φυτικὴν οὐδὲ αἰσθητικὴν οὐδὲ ψυχικὴν τὴν ἄλλην. Νοήσεις μὲν γὰρ πως καὶ ἄλλαι· ἀλλ' ἢ μὲν φυτικὴ νόησις, ἢ δὲ ¹⁵ αἰσθητικὴ, ἢ δὲ ψυχικὴ. Πῶς οὖν νοήσεις; *Ὅτι λόγοι. Καὶ πᾶσα ζωὴ νόησις τις, ἀλλὰ ἄλλη ἄλλης ἀμυδροτέρα, ὡσπερ καὶ ζωή. Ἡ δὲ ἐναργεσττέρα αὕτη καὶ πρώτη ζωὴ καὶ πρῶτος νοῦς εἰς. Νοήσις οὖν ἢ πρώτη ζωὴ καὶ ζωὴ δευτέρα νόησις δευτέρα καὶ ἢ ἐσχάτη ζωὴ ἐσχάτη νόησις. ²⁰ Πᾶσα οὖν ζωὴ τοῦ γένους τούτου καὶ νόησις.

[11] While perhaps men may speak of different kinds of life, yet they do not speak of different kinds of thought, but say that some are thoughts, but others are not thoughts at all, because they do not investigate at all what kind of thing life is. [12] But we must bring out this point, at any rate, that again our discussion shows that all things are a by-product of contemplation. [13] If, then, the truest life is life by thought, and this is the same as the truest thought, then the truest thought lives, and contemplation and the object of contemplation at this level are living and life, and the two together are one. [14] So, if the two are one, how is this one again many? For it contemplates something which is not one. For when it contemplates the One, it does not contemplate It as one; otherwise it does not become Intellect.

8, 21-38:

Ἄλλὰ

ζωῆς μὲν ἴσως διαφορὰς τάχ' ἂν λέγοιεν ἄνθρωποι, νοήσεων δὲ οὐ λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν, τὰς δ' ὅλως οὐ νοήσεις, ὅτι ὅλως τὴν ζωὴν ὃ τι ποτέ ἐστιν οὐ ζητοῦσιν. Ἄλλ' ἐκεῖνό γε ἐπισημαντέον, ὅτι πάλιν αὖ ὁ λόγος ²⁵ παρέργον ἐνδείκνυται θεωρίας τὰ πάντα ὄντα. Εἰ τοίνυν ἢ

²²Here I accept Müller's emendation as correct (Henry-Schwyzler, Plotini Opera, p. 406).

ζωὴ ἢ ἀληθεστάτη νοήσει ζωὴ ἐστίν, αὕτη δὲ ταῦτόν τῃ ἀληθεστάτη νοήσει, ἢ ἀληθεστάτη νόησις ζῆ καὶ ἡ θεωρία καὶ τὸ θεώρημα τὸ τοιοῦτο ζῶν καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ἐν ὁμοῦ τὰ δύο. "Ἐν οὖν ὄν τὰ δύο πῶς αὖ πολλά τοῦτο τὸ ἐν; "Ἡ ὅτι ³¹ οὐχ ἐν θεωρεῖ. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν τὸ ἐν θεωρῆ, οὐχ ὡς ἐν· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐ γίνεται νοῦς. Ἀλλὰ ἀρξάμενος ὡς ἐν οὐχ ὡς ἤρξατο ἔμεινεν, ἀλλ' ἔλαθεν ἑαυτὸν πολὺς γενόμενος, οἶον βεβαρημένος, καὶ ἐξείλιξεν αὐτὸν πάντα ἔχειν θέλων — ὡς βέλτιον ἦν αὐτῷ μὴ ἐβελῆσαι τοῦτο, δεύτερον γὰρ ³⁵ ἐγένετο — οἶον γὰρ κύκλος ἐξελίξας αὐτὸν γέγονε καὶ σχῆμα καὶ ἐπίπεδον καὶ περιφέρεια καὶ κέντρον καὶ γραμμαὶ καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄνω, τὰ δὲ κάτω· βελτίω μὲν ὄθεν, χείρω δὲ εἰς ὃ.

[Plotinus closes Chapter Eight (lines 38-48) by noting that Nous contemplates the One as a multiplicity. Consequently, Nous is universal since Its contents, the Forms, encompass all Being.

In Chapter Nine Plotinus turns from Nous to the primal reality, which he calls the Good or the One.²³ Nous cannot be the first, he argues, because multiplicity comes after unity and Nous is multiple, for It is both intellect and intelligible. There is very little we can say to

²³It was noted in Text B that, according to Fritz Heinemann, Plotin: Forschungen über die plotinische Frage, Plotins Entwicklung und sein System (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1921), it is not until VI, 9 (9), 57-58 that Plotinus equates the Good and the One.

This identification is further clarified in III, 8 (thirtieth for both Heinemann and Porphyry), where the Good is called the One because It is the source of the energeia in all things. Finally, Plotinus points out quite explicitly in II, 9, 1, 5-6 (24th for Heinemann, 33rd for Porphyry) that "when we say the One and when we say the Good, we must understand that we are speaking of one and the same nature."

describe the One adequately since It transcends the nature of the intellect. We must rely on a mystical intuition or ἐπιβολή (lines 20ff).²⁴

Having explained how Nous is not the primal reality, Plotinus in the last portion of our key text, Chapter Ten, makes explicit why the One must transcend life.]

[15] What is It [the One] then? The dynamis of all things. [16] If It did not exist, neither would all things, nor would Nous be the first and absolute life. That which is above life is the cause of life. [17] For the energeia of life [i.e., the life of Nous] is not altogether primary, but flows, as it were, as if from a spring. [18] For think of a spring that has no further origin, that gives all of itself to rivers, not expended by the rivers, but silently remaining itself. The rivers that come from it, before each of them flows away in its own direction, remain together still, although each in a way knows already where it will send its flow.

²⁴John Rist points out that the only philosophers to use ἐπιβολή technically before the days of Plotinus were the followers of Epicurus, who employed it in their arguments for the primacy of sensation. The meaning of ἐπιβολή is twofold. First, it is a "comprehensive [ἀθρόα] ...view of the data provided by the senses or the mind." In addition to its "comprehensiveness," an ἐπιβολή can be "not a grasping of new external data but a casting back of the mind on itself and on whatever impressions it has." This latter meaning is helpful, Rist argues, in clarifying III, 8 (30), 9, 20ff. There the One exceeds Intellect or Nous, whereas the highest knowledge we ourselves possess is that of Nous. By what ἐπιβολή ἀθρόα, he asks, can we then know the One? For Rist the answer is that

we can know it by means of what is like it in ourselves. In other words...it is only the One in us that enables us to know the One in itself. Ἐπιβολή is then, as for the Epicureans, both ἀθρόα and a turning of the self back upon itself. (Road to Reality, pp. 49-51).

10, 1-10:

Τί δὴ ὄν; Δύναμις τῶν πάντων ἥς μὴ οὔσης οὐδ' ἂν τὰ πάντα, οὐδ' ἂν νοῦς ζωὴ ἢ πρώτη καὶ πᾶσα. Τὸ δὲ ὑπὲρ τὴν ζωὴν αἷτιον ζωῆς· οὐ γὰρ ἡ τῆς ζωῆς ἐνέργεια τὰ πάντα οὔσα πρώτη, ἀλλ' ὡσπερ προχυθεῖσα αὐτῇ οἶον
 5 ἐκ πηγῆς. Νόησον γὰρ πηγὴν ἀρχὴν ἄλλην οὐκ ἔχουσαν, δούσαν δὲ ποταμοῖς πᾶσιν αὐτήν, οὐκ ἀναλωθεῖσαν τοῖς ποταμοῖς, ἀλλὰ μένουσαν αὐτήν ἡσύχως, τοὺς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς προεληλυθότας πρὶν ἄλλον ἄλλη ρεῖν ὁμοῦ συνόντας ἔτι, ἥδη δὲ οἶον ἐκάστους εἰδότας οἱ ἀφήσουσιν αὐτῶν τὰ
 10 ρεύματα·

[19] Or think of the life of a great plant, which courses through all of it while its origin remains and is not scattered over the whole of it inasmuch as it is settled in the root. [20] Therefore, this [the root] furnishes the plant its whole life, in its multiplicity, but remains itself not multiple in nature, but the source of the multiple life it furnishes. [21] And it is no wonder. Or it is a wonder how the multiplicity of life comes from what is not a multiplicity; and the multiplicity would not be if what is not a multiplicity had not existed before the multiplicity. [22] For the source of life is not distributed into the whole. For if it were it would destroy the whole; and the whole could no longer even come to be if the source did not remain by itself and different from it.

10, 10-19:

ἡ ζωὴν φυτοῦ μεγίστου διὰ παντὸς ἐλθοῦσαν ἀρχῆς μενούσης καὶ οὐ σκεδασθείσης περὶ πᾶν αὐτῆς οἶον ἐν ρίζῃ ἰδρυμένης. Αὕτη τοίνυν παρέσχε μὲν τὴν πᾶσαν ζωὴν τῷ φυτῷ τὴν πολλήν, ἔμεινε δὲ αὐτῇ οὐ πολλὴ οὔσα, ἀλλ' ἀρχὴ τῆς πολλῆς. Καὶ θαῦμα οὐδέν. Ἡ καὶ θαῦμα, πῶς τὸ πλῆθος τῆς ζωῆς ἐξ οὐ πλῆθους ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἦν τὸ 15 πλῆθος, εἰ μὴ τὸ πρὸ τοῦ πλῆθους ἦν ὁ μὴ πλῆθος ἦν. Οὐ γὰρ μερίζεται εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἡ ἀρχή· μερισθεῖσα γὰρ ἀπώλεσεν ἂν καὶ τὸ πᾶν, καὶ οὐδ' ἂν ἔτι γένοιτο μὴ μενούσης τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐτέρας οὔσης.

[23] Thus everywhere there is reference back to one. And in each case there is some one to which you reduce it, and this in every case to the one before it, which [still] is not simply one, until we come to the simply one, which cannot be traced back to something else.

[24] If we take the one of the plant -- for this is its source remaining [within it] -- and the one of the animal and the one of the soul and the one of the [physical] All, we are taking in each case that which is most powerful and valuable in it.

10, 20-26:

*Διὸ καὶ ἡ ἀναγωγὴ πανταχοῦ ἐφ' ἓν. Καὶ ἐφ' ἑκάστου μὲν ²⁰
τι ἓν, εἰς ὃ ἀνάξεις, καὶ τόδε τὸ πᾶν εἰς ἓν τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ,
οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἓν, ἕως τις ἐπὶ τὸ ἀπλῶς ἓν ἔλθῃ· τοῦτο
δὲ οὐκέτι ἐπ' ἄλλο. Ἄλλ' εἰ μὲν τὸ τοῦ φυτοῦ ἓν — τοῦτο
δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἡ μένουσα — καὶ τὸ ζῶου ἓν καὶ τὸ ψυχῆς ἓν
καὶ τὸ τοῦ παντός ἓν λαμβάνοι, λαμβάνει ἑκασταχοῦ τὸ δυνα- ²⁵
τώτατον καὶ τὸ τίμιον·*

[25] But if we take the one of the beings which truly are -- that one [i.e., the One] which is their origin and spring and power -- shall we lose faith and think of it as nothing?²⁵ [26] It is none of the things of which It is the origin; yet [It is] such [that], nothing can be predicated of It -- neither being nor entity nor life -- [because It is] above all such predicates. [27] But if you grasp It by taking away being from It, you will be struck with wonder. And directing your gaze to It and meeting It and coming to rest within It, [you will] understand It more and more intimately, comprehending It by the embrace [of intuition] and seeing Its greatness by the beings which exist after and through It.²⁶

²⁵Perhaps τό μηδέν here should be translated as "the nothing," in order to emphasize that the One is a reality of which nothing ought to be predicated.

Henry-Schwyzler in their textual notes point out that although Ficinus deleted the article in this (second) instance of τό μηδέν (in line 28), this second instance is "'nihilum' mysticorum posteriorum."

²⁶Armstrong (Enneads, Vol. III, p. 397, n. 1) points out that although the repeated συν in lines 33-35 defies translation, it seems to suggest the close presence of the One both with the Forms which spring from It and the contemplating mind.

In Chapter 11 of III, 8, Plotinus notes that Nous needs, depends on and desires the One, which Itself needs nothing. In addition, his remarks on dynamis and energeia on the level of Nous anticipate his extensive treatment of these notions in VI, 7 (38), our next key text.

10, 26-35:

εἰ δὲ τὸ τῶν κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὄντων
 ἔν, τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ πηγὴν καὶ δύναμιν, λαμβάνοι, ἀπιστή-
 σομεν καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ὑπονοήσομεν; Ἡ ἔστι μὲν τὸ μηδὲν
 τούτων ὧν ἔστιν ἀρχή, τοιοῦτο μέντοι, οἷον, μηδενὸς
 αὐτοῦ κατηγορεῖσθαι δυναμένου, μὴ ὄντος, μὴ οὐσίας, μὴ ³⁰
 ζωῆς, τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντα αὐτῶν εἶναι. Εἰ δὲ ἀφελὼν τὸ εἶναι
 λαμβάνοις, θαῦμα ἔξεις. Καὶ βαλὼν πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ τυχῶν
 ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ ἀναπαυσάμενος συννοεῖ μᾶλλον τῇ προσβολῇ
 συνείης, συνορῶν δὲ τὸ μέγα αὐτοῦ τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸ δι' αὐτὸ
 οὔσιν. 35

COMMENTS

We shall now present the movement of thought in Text C. Treatise III, 8 (30) describes in various passages life on the levels of Nous and Soul, the life of the serious man, the life of animals and plants (Ch. 8), and the transcendence of the One over life (Ch. 10). Accordingly, the movement of thought in the text consists of two parts. The first part (#a-#e) explicates the life of Nous in terms of contemplation and, through the logos doctrine, applies life to Soul, to the serious man, and to animals and plants. The second part (#f-#j) makes explicit how all life depends on the One, which Itself transcends life.

a. Contemplation [Plotinus begins] is more or less perfect (i.e., unified) with reference to the level of reality which is contemplating -- i.e., whether Nature, Soul or Nous. Also, the objects of contemplation are more or less united with their contemplators in reference to the level of reality (e.g., the objects of Nature are less

intrinsic to Nature than are the objects of Soul with Soul and Soul's objects are less united with it than the noēta are with Nous) (#1).

b. Indeed, on the level of Nous contemplated and contemplator are the same. And they are truly the same, not just interconnected, as they are on the level of Soul. The very ousia of Nous is the unity of the contemplator and the contemplated, a position which reflects the truth of Parmenides' famous formulation that thinking and being are the same (#2).

c. This unity of Nous and Its own intelligible contents is perfect life, for life consists in contemplation and Nous is perfect contemplation. [And in this way Plotinus' second hypostasis compares somewhat with Aristotle's "thought thinking itself," except that the former acquires content by contemplating an object other than itself while the latter loves and contemplates only itself.] Since Nous is perfect being, contemplation and life, all posterior beings, as logoi of Nous, are Nous manifested on diminished levels of reality. Thus, every posterior being is also a contemplation and a life. Hence, plants, animals and humans are thoughts too, but they are thoughts dimmed by their remoteness from Nous. This hierarchy of lives represents a gradation of thinkers more and more estranged from their thought (#3-#7).

d. So if one admits there are different kinds of

lives, he should admit that there are different kinds of thoughts. Some men do not admit this thesis because they do not realize that life is thought -- i.e., contemplation in its content (#8-#11).

e. Therefore, they do not fully appreciate that Nous is perfect life, since It is a unity of thinking and thought. Since Its life is contemplation it must be subject to a twofold analysis. It must be described as noēsis and noēton (knower and known). This duality results from the fact that Nous is not the first reality but the second. As inferior to Its source, Nous cannot be perfect unity and therefore cannot grasp perfectly Its object: the One. Hence, Nous fragments Its object into a multiplicity of forms, which are the content of Its own mind, and It knows the One by knowing these contents (#12-#14).

f. [In Chapter Nine Plotinus explains why Nous cannot be primal reality. Nous is multiple (since It is both intellect and intelligible) and multiplicity comes after unity. Secondly, Nous is a number, but the principle of number is prior to number. Therefore, the One is other than all things and is before all of them. Plotinus begins Chapter Ten with the statement that the One is the dynamis tōn pantōn. As such, not only can the One produce all things but It is in all of them as their dynamis.] The One

is the [active] dynamis behind all things.²⁷ Nothing would be living or would ever be for that matter if the One were not Itself above life and if the One did not exist. For only what is above life can be the cause of life (#15-#16).

g. Accordingly, the energeia of life can best be understood only in terms of what necessarily and logically precedes it and is its source, namely, the [active] dynamis of the One. The source of life, the One, may be compared with a spring that has no source outside itself, which gives waters to the rivers but always remains what it is in itself. The One may also be compared with the life that spreads itself throughout a huge plant, while still remaining somehow fixed in, and originating from, its roots. What goes out from the spring or from the roots is, of course, a living being, but one which is still in some ways bound to the source from which it arises. The life that runs through a plant, for example, depends on the existence and nature of its source, the root, and could not itself exist nor run through the plant without that root. Clearly, then, it is necessary to understand first the nature of the root or the spring or, in general, the ultimate source of

²⁷For a similar description of the One see also V, 4 (7), 2, 38 and the late treatise, V, 3 (49), 15, 32.

something if one is to understand how that item lives (#17-#19).

h. But how is it that the One, which is sheer unity and simplicity, can be the source of such a vast multiplicity? Although amazing, it is clear that such actually is the case. The multiplicity of life does come from what is not multiplicity, since the origin [the One] is not divided up into the All [Nous and, eventually, Soul] lest the All too be destroyed and since the origin must remain by itself and different from everything else lest the All not even come into being (#20-#22).

i. Accordingly, we must [Plotinus counsels] go back everywhere to the unity within each existent. In each case we find that there is some one -- some unity -- which is itself simple and irreducible, to which it can eventually be reduced. [As he has done elsewhere,²⁸ Plotinus here proceeds inductively.] From the oneness we perceive in plants, animals, our souls and the physical universe we may move to truly real beings [Nous and Soul] and then to the One, which is primal reality because of Its sheer unity and transcendence of being. It is the One which gives them oneness and thereby also reality and power. For the oneness which the One furnishes is that which is most powerful and most real in them. [Furthermore, this oneness constitutes

²⁸See, for example, VI, 9 (9), 1, lff.

their (active) dynamis to contemplate and thereby to make themselves and subsequent existents] (#23-#24).

j. In fact, the [active] dynamis in them is the One [since the One is (active) dynamis] just as the oneness in them is the One [since each of them is the One on a lower level of reality -- i.e., each existent is a logos of the One]. Thus, although the One is other than all Its products [inasmuch as the One Itself is not totally identical with all Its logoi], this otherness does not alter the fact that all reality found on any lower level is the One. The One is simply the undiminishable source of all else, including being, entity and life. Our initial "understanding" of the One comes when we examine Its traces and products in the sensible universe. Our ultimate "understanding" of the One comes only as a mystical intuition of It (#25-#27).

This movement of thought has contributed in several ways to our understanding of Plotinus' doctrine of zōē. In brief, Plotinus has indicated that the degree of perfection (i.e., unity) achieved by any contemplator is directly proportional to the degree of proximity between the contemplator and the contemplated (#1). At the highest level (i.e., the level of Nous), there is perfect life, which is the identity of thought and its object (#1-#3, #8). Other kinds of thoughts (i.e., those below the level of Nous) are lives too, but only to the extent that each is a logos, a less perfect manifestation of the life of Nous.

Hence, every life is a contemplation (#6-#11). Finally, the life of Nous and of every other being originates from the highest reality, Itself an active dynamis which is simple and one and undiminished in Its giving. Without the One nothing else would be and live (#15-#17).

We must clarify the following issues in Text C to develop further our understanding of zōē: a) life as logos; b) life as contemplation; c) the life of the serious man; d) how the One is the cause of life.

a) Life as logos

Plotinus' treatment of life in Text C manifestly relies on the notion of logos.²⁹ We learn there (#5-#7) that each existent below Nous is alive precisely because it is a logos of Nous. But what is a logos? Although the term appears frequently in III, 8, it is never adequately described.

In general (as we saw in Text A), logos functions as the ontological explanation of the bi-directional relationship between the higher (the producer) and the lower

²⁹For a brief but helpful survey of various views of logos, see Gelpi, n. 1, p. 302. Also see Gürtler, "Human Consciousness," Chs. 8-9.

In addition, consult Rist, Road to Reality (pp. 84-102), for whom logos is that aspect of Soul which, by transmitting the creative Forms, creates, maintains and orders the visible world.

(the product).³⁰ Donald Gelpi in his illuminating article entitled, "The Plotinian Logos Doctrine," makes this notion more precise by defining it as "an active power³¹ identical with the being of the hypostasis in which it exists and ordered to the production of some reality lower than itself."³² Furthermore, "the final logoi are the logoi of sensible form. Since sensible form does not produce any other being, the logoi of sensible form terminate the process of universal emanation."³³

³⁰First, logos denotes the relation of a hypostasis to its products. Logos is a kind of principle or formative plan within the hypostasis and accounts for the formation and development of all the lower realities which proceed from the hypostasis (see IV, 3 [27], 9-16; III, 2 [47]; III, 3 [48]; II, 3 [52], 16-17; this point is further explained in Wallis, Neoplatonism, p. 68).

Second, logos denotes a product's relation to its producer. Specifically, an item is a logos insofar as it is the higher precisely as existing on a lower level -- and, thus, the lower is a logos of the higher -- because the former has become more multiple and, hence, less real (see I, 2 [19], 3, 27-30. Wallis (Neoplatonism, p. 69) points out that this notion has its foundation primarily in Platonic psychology (Theaetetus 189e and Sophist 263e, for example).

³¹Dynamis is the Greek word here being translated as "active power" or "active, causal power." In this sense the One, for example, can be described as dynamis, since it is the causal power of all things (V, 3 [49], 15, 32-35). Thus the very ousia of Soul is a dynamis of the logos precisely because Soul is the power which produces the logos. In similar fashion, the various logoi are dynamis with regard to the sensible universe they inform and animate (VI, 1 [42], 10, 15-24). For additional discussion of this point see Gelpi, p. 312, n. 57. We shall have more to say on the subject of dynamis as it relates to zōē in our examination of Text D: VI, 7 (35).

³²Gelpi, p. 315.

³³Ibid., p. 315.

Accordingly, logos functions on each level of reality in Plotinus' system in the following way.³⁴ Nous, the second hypostasis, in two separate but related moments, emanates from the One, the first hypostasis. This second hypostasis is the logos and multifaceted image of the One and, as such, functions as the eternal archetype of the sensible world.³⁵ The third hypostasis, Soul, is the logos (as product and multiple image) of Nous.³⁶

³⁴According to Plotinus (II, 9 [33], 1, 31-33; III, 5 [50], 9, 20) logos does not constitute another nature between Nous and Soul and, hence, is not itself a separate hypostasis or level of reality. The arguments of Armstrong (Architecture, p. 102), for whom logos is a fourth distinct hypostasis, are decisively dismissed by evidence provided by Deck (Contemplation, p. 56, n. 1 and p. 63, n. 7).

³⁵See VI, 7 (38), 12.

³⁶See III, 9 (13), 3; II, 2 (14), 3, 1-6; III, 4 (15), 2; VI, 4 (22), 16; IV, 3 (27), 5; 9; 12, 1-8; 18; II, 9 (33), 7. Gelpi (p. 303) offers the following helpful explanation.

At its highest 'level' Soul remains in Nous and shares in the higher unity of the Nous. Its second 'level,' the World Soul, contains, generates, as well as transcends, the sensible universe. As the life principle of the sense world, the World Soul contains all the perfections of the sensible universe and draws them into a single vital unity. The third 'level' of Soul, particular Soul, participates in the divine Soul in the Nous but is the most scattered manifestation of Soul. It is Soul dividing itself in order to impart itself to the image of particular sensible beings. At their lowest levels of sensation and vegetation, particular Souls become enmeshed in and corrupted by matter. Matter terminates the Plotinian emanation and vitiates any form which attempts to fill its emptiness. The sensible universe results from the mixture of Soul and matter.

Logos thus has a bearing on how Plotinus understands Nous and Soul to be living. How Nous is a logos (i.e., the One-on-a-lower-level) may be explained in two ways.³⁷ Nous is a logos (and, hence, Itself lives and is cause of subsequent lives) insofar as It contains within Itself at a higher level of reality the entire complex of archetypal logoi (i.e., the Forms) corresponding to the logoi which subsequently also exist at the lower level of Soul.³⁸ Secondly, Nous is a logos insofar as It is a combination of unity and multiplicity (i.e., a one-in-many) which serves as the archetype of the less cohesive combination of unity and multiplicity (i.e., a one-and-many) which exists on the level of Soul.³⁹

Soul, then, depends on Nous as Its model and for its being and life. In fact, Soul is completed only by turning

³⁷It is worth noting that in V, 8 (31), 3, 1-10, Plotinus seems to suggest that logos cannot be predicated of Nous at all. In his article (n. 47, p. 310) Gelpi provides a detailed explanation of this difficult passage.

³⁸See Gelpi, p. 312; see also V, 9 (5), 5, 6-12. Of course, the priority mentioned here is not temporal but ontological.

³⁹Gelpi points out that for Plotinus

Nous is a logos merely analogous to the logoi of the Soul; for the Nous is a transcendent logos which grounds the essentially temporal and passible logoi of the Soul in the stability and permanence of its eternity. Being the prior principle of the two, the Nous communicates to the Soul the logoi which Soul possesses, through the lesser intelligence (Nous) which is in Soul itself. (pp. 312-313)

back to Nous in contemplation.⁴⁰ In addition, although on the level of Soul the logos of Nous and the Soul are identical,⁴¹ this identity must be understood in a twofold way. First, Soul is a logos insofar as Soul is related to what is below it by being ordered to the production of the entire sensible realm.⁴² Second, Soul is a logos insofar as it always depends on a higher reality (Nous, which Itself is a logos) for its own existence. The Soul lives, then, because logos there is a power of Soul (i.e., because Soul is Nous-on-a-lower-level), and ordered ultimately to the production of the entire range of sensible being.

The relationship between life and logos reminds us once again that life is intellection, which is a self-kinēsis. Every being has life precisely and only because it is a logos of some higher reality, which itself is a logos of a still higher reality (until we come to the highest reality, the One, of which everything else is a logos). Each of these beings lives to the extent that it is intellectual, that is, to the extent that it contemplates the One as multiple. It is precisely this intellection -- a

⁴⁰See III, 8 (30), 3, 1-23; 6, 9-27; 7, 1-22.

⁴¹See the very late treatise, VI, 1 (42), 10 15-24.

⁴²See IV, 7 (2), 2, 22-25; IV, 3 (27), 10, 38-42.

Gelpi (p. 313) distinguishes three levels of logos here. First, there is the "divine Soul" (All Soul), where the logoi are pure intellections and produce nothing sensible. Second, there is the "universal logos" (World Soul). Third, there is "particular logos" (individual soul).

self-kinēsis -- which is identical with the life of the being. But no being could be intellectual unless it somehow was identical with Nous, which is pure intellection and, hence, life par excellence. The only way in which something lives is by being the logos of Nous -- by actually being Nous on a lower level of reality.

Accordingly, Plotinus' logos principle may be seen to express two important dimensions of life. Logos as extensive shows that the order of beings is an order of products and a gradation of diminishing lives. This is logos in its "vertical" dimension. Logos as intensive, on the other hand, shows that each hypostasis, because it is a unity in multiplicity, is a single reality encompassing an infinite plurality of living beings. This is logos in its "horizontal" dimension.⁴³

b) Life as contemplation

We see in the Enneads that Nous, like the One,⁴⁴ is productive simply by being Itself. For Nous this means to be an intellectual life. Hence, on the level of Nous, contemplation (theoria) is intellectual knowledge (noēsis), which is life and which is necessarily productive. Let us

⁴³That logos functions as a principle of reconciling multiplicity and unity is argued not only by Gürtler but also by E. Früchtel, Weltenwurf and Logos (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1970), pp. 18 21, 39, 68 and Rist, Road to Reality, pp. 84-102.

⁴⁴See V, 4 (7), 2, 39-40; V, 1 (10), 6, 7-9; V, 5 (32), 12, 39-44.

examine the intellectual dimension of life more carefully.

In Nous there is a triple identity of the knower, the state of knowing, and what is known -- i.e., of contemplator, contemplation, and content of contemplation (#1-#2).⁴⁵ To this triple identification Plotinus adds another, namely, between knowledge and life.⁴⁶ Specifically, then, Nous is Its own knowledge and Its own contemplation, and, as such, is primal life, which lives through itself. Hence, if there is a scale of life (and everyday experience confirms that there is), there must be a corresponding scale of knowledge. Clearer and more unified knowledge (or contemplations) and lives mean better knowledge and lives, and the clearest, most unified and, hence, best life is Nous itself.

Plotinus' association of life with Nous is not without historical precedent. In the Sophist (248e-249a), for example, Plato notes that it would be entirely improper to

⁴⁵This point is also made in the late treatise, V, 3 (49), 5, 21-25; "the contemplation must be the same as the contemplated, and Nous must be the same as what Nous knows - - since, if it is not the same, there will be no truth."

*Εἰ τοῦτο, δεῖ τὴν θεωρίαν
ταῦτόν εἶναι τῷ θεωρητῷ, καὶ τὸν νοῦν ταῦτόν εἶναι τῷ
νοητῷ· καὶ γάρ, εἰ μὴ ταῦτόν, οὐκ ἀλήθεια ἔσται· τύπον γὰρ
ἔξει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ὄντα ἕτερον τῶν ὄντων, ὅπερ οὐκ ἔστιν
ἀλήθεια.*

⁴⁶In V, 6 (24), 6, 20-23 Plotinus identifies knowing, life, and being in Nous. In addition, he alludes to the general identification of life and knowledge later in V, 3 (49), 5.

assume "that motion, life, soul, understanding have no place in that which is perfectly real - that it has neither life nor thought, but stands immutable in solemn aloofness, devoid of intelligence."⁴⁷ For Plato, then, life also must be elevated to the level of supreme reality. Aristotle, too, links life with knowledge by identifying it with the First Mover, the Separate Intelligence.⁴⁸

Thus, for Plotinus, whether we speak of an individual human soul or of the hypostasis Soul itself (i.e., the All Soul), life at its most perfect and pure involves union with Nous through contemplation.⁴⁹

Our key text makes clear that life is intimately related to contemplation. Because nothing may be said to be (i.e., anything which has being, namely, any product of Nous) unless it contemplates, and because to contemplate means to live, then all beings, from All Soul down to the lowest sensible existent, are alive. In other words, every thing subsequent to Nous is alive precisely because it is a logos of Nous. All beings are lives and intelligences,

⁴⁷Here I follow F. M. Cornford's translation (Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., Plato. The Collected Dialogues (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), p. 993, except I have substituted "motion" for "change" in his translation of kinēsis.

⁴⁸See Metaphysics, Bk. 12, Ch. 7, 1072b13-29.

⁴⁹Because zōē thus involves noēsis or contemplation, which, in turn, involves an inherent duality, we infer that the One must transcend zōē.

then, because they all are more or less perfect images of their immediate source, Nous.⁵⁰

We have considered the noetic dimension of life on the level of Nous. Let us now examine briefly its productive dimension. Nous produces silently, without motion and without any self-depletion.⁵¹ It produces necessarily by living perfectly--i.e., by being and remaining what It is, sheer intellection.⁵² On the level of Nous, then, life is a poiēsis, a necessary kind of production to which the producer is ontologically prior,⁵³ and which is unmoved, intelligent, and proceeds by way of contemplation and not by any sort of discursive reasoning.⁵⁴

Let us investigate briefly also the way Soul and Nature live by producing. The higher part of the All Soul always remains with Nous. The production of the sensible universe is eternally effected by the lower part of the All Soul, the World Soul.⁵⁵ The World Soul's production,

⁵⁰Their ultimate source, of course, is the primal reality, the One.

⁵¹Since we learn relatively little in III, 8 about the productive dimension of Nous' contemplation, our brief analysis here relies on the rather late treatise III, 2 (47), 1, 38-45; 2, 15-16.

⁵²See III, 2 (47), 1; 2, 2-15. This motion of production will be used to describe the production of Soul and Nature.

⁵³See VI, 7 (38), 8, 5-12.

⁵⁴See III, 2 (47), 14, 1-6.

⁵⁵See IV, 3 (27), 6, 2; 9.

however, is no longer immobile, as the following passage illustrates:

Soul does not produce while remaining [unmoved], but being moved brings forth an image. Looking there, to its source, it is filled, and going forth to another, opposed movement it brings forth its own image, which is sensation and, in plants, Nature. Nothing is separated or cut off from what is before it. Accordingly, Soul seems to reach as far as plants; and in a certain way it does reach that far, for there is something of it [Soul] in plants.⁵⁶

In general, the living, productive movement of the All Soul has two facets: a movement toward Nous and a movement toward what is below, matter. Specifically, just as Nous lives by producing intelligently and without deliberation or discursive reasoning, so too the All Soul lives by producing without any deliberation outside itself or discursive reasoning.⁵⁷ World Soul lives by producing with consistency and uniformity, not by accident, but because it knows what must be and orders its inferiors to the pattern it has in itself.⁵⁸

⁵⁶See V, 2 (11), 1, 18-24:

Ἡ δὲ οὐ μένουσα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κινηθεῖσα ἐγέννα εἰδωλον. Ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα, ὅθεν ἐγένετο, πληροῦται, προελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς κίνησιν ἄλλην καὶ ἐναντίαν γεννᾷ εἰδωλον αὐτῆς αἰσθησιμὴν καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς. Οὐδὲν δὲ τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἀπήρηται οὐδ' ἀποτέμνεται· διὸ καὶ δοκεῖ καὶ ἡ ἄνω ψυχὴ μέχρι φυτῶν φθάνειν· τρόπον γὰρ τινα φθάνει, ὅτι αὐτῆς τὸ ἐν φυτοῖς·

⁵⁷See IV, 3 (27), 10, 15; IV, 4 (28), 10, 27-29; II, 9 (33), 2, 12-18.

⁵⁸See IV, 4 (28), 12, 29-36.

What connection is there between the life of Nature and its production of the sensible universe? Although the word φύσις⁵⁹ (Nature) is sometimes used by Plotinus to denote the very makeup of a thing, a principle, and even a hypostasis,⁶⁰ in III, 8 φύσις refers to the lower part of the World Soul. Nature is that part of the World Soul which makes plants and the earth itself be what they are and be living.⁶¹ Although Nature, so to speak, is the last outreach (or, more accurately, downreach) of the hypostasis Soul, it nevertheless contemplates and thereby lives and produces. Nature contemplates and the lines which bound bodies come to be.⁶² Nature's contemplation does not involve discursive reasoning, which is precisely the searching for what is not yet possessed.⁶³ Nature possesses itself (i.e., Nature is a logos of World Soul and

⁵⁹Deck (Contemplation, pp. 124-126) provides a brief but valuable analysis of the meaning of this difficult Greek word.

⁶⁰See, for example, III 6 (26), 4, 41-43; VI, 8 (39), 13, 38-40.

On whether Nature is (as Armstrong maintains) or is not (as Rist maintains) a separate hypostasis, see Armstrong, Architecture, pp. 86ff and Rist, Road to Reality, pp. 92-93. Concerning the meaning of hypostasis in general, consult John P. Anton, "Some Logical Aspects of the Concept of Hypostasis in Plotinus," Review of Metaphysics, 31 (1978), pp. 258-271; Heinrich Dörrie, "Hypostasis: Wort und Bedeutungsgeschichte," Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen (1955), pp. 68-74.

⁶¹See IV, 4 (28), 27, 11-17.

⁶²See III, 8 (30), 4, 5-10. Also, see Armstrong (Enneads, Vol. III, n. 1, pp. 368-369), who offers some helpful analysis of this passage.

⁶³Ibid., 3, 16-17.

ultimately of Nous) as the object of contemplation and thereby produces the sensible universe as the fruit of its contemplative labor.⁶⁴ The living contemplation and production of Nature is still a genuine poiēsis.⁶⁵ We must understand life, contemplation and production on the level of Nature as weakened kinds of knowledge.⁶⁶ Nature, then, is clearly a life because it is a self-kinēsis: a knowing power and a logos which possesses internally the object of its contemplation.

c) The life of the serious man

Just as Nature is a life by virtue of its contemplation, so man is a life for the same reason. We can begin to understand the nature of human life by contrasting the life of the serious man (ὁ σπουδαῖος) with the life of the man of action (πρᾶξις). Even the man of action seeks contemplation, although he does so weakly and incompletely.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, when the object of his activity is achieved, it comes to be present in his soul as an object of knowledge and contemplation because it is the good which is the goal of his activity.⁶⁸ Thus it is not outside but inside his soul as the proper object of his

⁶⁴For further examination of the role of Nature in Plotinus' system, see Deck, Contemplation, pp. 65-72.

⁶⁵See III, 8 (30), 2, 22-34.

⁶⁶See, for example, III, 8 (30), 4, 19-20.

⁶⁷See III, 8 (30), 4, 30ff.

⁶⁸See III, 8 (30), 6, 1-6.

contemplation. But he is not yet capable of recognizing this good as such because his soul is weighed down and distracted by the various activities and sensible things surrounding him. In this way, then, even action (praxis) ultimately leads back to contemplation since what the soul receives is always a logos which it understands silently.⁶⁹

But this logos resides more properly in the soul of the serious man, where it is more silent and more fully possessed. There the soul keeps quiet and needs nothing because it is filled with knowledge and enjoys the confidence that comes from possessing it fully. The more confident the soul of the serious man becomes, the more silent is its contemplation and the greater is the unity of its contemplation, and the soul's knowing comes into unity with what is known. It is this unity of knower and known which is the chief characteristic of the authentic human life of the serious man.

Let us examine this last point more closely. In the man of action there exists a bifurcation of knower and

⁶⁹Logos is, as we have seen earlier, essentially the higher reality as it is found on a lower level. For example, the content of Nous' contemplation insofar as it is found on the lower level of Soul is a logos. Similarly, what the soul of the man of action receives is always a logos because what his soul contemplates now finds itself on a lower level as a result of that contemplation.

⁷⁰See III, 8 (30), 6, 12-17.

known. What is known is outside the knower.⁷¹ And this duality exists precisely because his contemplation has not yet effected a union between knower and known. The soul of the man of action, then, does not possess its content completely with the result that the soul wants to learn about it more thoroughly and thus achieve full contemplation.⁷² It consoles itself by substituting various sorts of activities (e.g., making physical artifacts) for a true state of contemplation. The soul does this because even in its weakened state it still longs to see and to be filled with the contemplative vision.⁷³

When men act or speak or make something, the result is an action or a word or an object which they can be aware of and contemplate. Some men are carried into this kind of action, then, precisely so that they might see in this admittedly inferior way what they are yet incapable of apprehending fully with their intellect. For the soul of the man of action cannot achieve contemplation except by going outside itself in this way. When it returns within itself it has these objects as the content of its contemplation, for there is always a part of the human soul which "looks" to Nous (for the soul is Nous as logos) and

⁷¹See III, 8 (30), 6, 17-19.

⁷²See III, 8 (30), 6, 30-34.

⁷³See III, 8 (30), 4, 30-39.

remains behind, as it were.⁷⁴ This is precisely why the human soul's life admits of degrees of perfection. This is also why, though it has sunk to the level of praxis and no longer contemplates as it should, the human soul can always improve its life by turning within and recognizing its true nature (as logos of Nous, whose life it should seek to imitate).

The soul of the serious man recognizes this and, as a result, goes outside itself much less because he has already reasoned and thus with respect to himself he is vision and true life even when revealing to another what he has in himself.⁷⁵ What does Plotinus mean here? First, the serious man, when he goes outside himself, does so not to gain objects for contemplation, for he already has these within, but only in order to communicate them to others insofar as he can. Second, with respect to himself the serious man is already a vision because he has achieved true contemplation by coming to an intuitive unity with what he knows. He becomes increasingly unified within himself and ultimately with the primal reality precisely because he is able to focus his intellectual gaze ever more clearly upon the successively higher and more perfect levels of reality. And in this way he lives the perfect human life. He

⁷⁴See III, 8 (30), 6, 34-36.

⁷⁵See III, 8 (30), 6, 37-38

accomplishes this by first contemplating the Soul and coming to a greater and more distinct awareness of its nature and function and thereby coming to reside within the Soul and being unified with it. In doing so he sees that the Soul is the result and content of the contemplation of Nous and also that the Soul itself contemplates Nous. This realization impels him to look beyond the Soul and to contemplate Nous. When he reaches the level of Nous, his own intellect becomes akin to It and more and more united to It through contemplation. At this stage the human soul lives the true and pure life.⁷⁶

⁷⁶But the serious man sees that Nous contemplates something even higher still. Accordingly, he cannot stop his ascent when he reaches the level of Nous, but must continue beyond It to the One. This final ascent, however, no longer involves contemplation, nor life as we have been describing it, but entails a throwing of oneself upon the One, so to speak -- a contact and identity with the One through an intuitive apprehension (ἐπιβολή) of this Primal Reality, which lies beyond contemplation.

This ascent of the soul of the serious man from the level of Nature through Soul and Intellect to the One, then, is a direct reversal of the process of emanation. In order to reach the One the serious man must understand this hierarchy of reality that unfolds from the One and he must see how it can be collapsed back into the One. To do this the serious man must ascend through the successive levels leading to the One by contemplation (his true life) and finally by intuition. The final stage, when he reaches the One and achieves unity with It, no longer involves contemplation or, again, life as we have been describing it, but is

another kind of seeing, a being out of oneself [what one is as a distinct and lower existent], a simplifying, a self-surrender [a surrender of what one is as a distinct, less real and presumably living being], a

What, then, are the chief characteristics of the life of the serious man? His is a life of contemplation rather than action. He concentrates on knowledge and the pursuits of intellect rather than everyday and external activity. He has become increasingly unified within himself and eventually with Soul and Nous and ultimately with the One. Further, because he has turned his gaze to the One-Good, he has all that he needs within himself, and no longer needs to turn to what is outside his intellect. Unlike the man of action who must construct artifacts or utter sentences in order to see what he is contemplating, the serious man is

(76continued)

pressing towards contact, a rest, a sustained thought directed to perfect conformity. (VI, 9 [9], 11, 22-25)

There the serious man is no longer outside the One but within It and the two are really one. When man has done this he has achieved seriousness, just as the Soul has achieved seriousness through unity achieved in contemplation and as the Nous has achieved seriousness by coming to unity with the object of its contemplation.

There exists, accordingly, not only a unity within the serious man but also within the whole Plotinian hierarchy. For whether we ascend or descend through it, each level is obviously a logos insofar as it is related to what is above it and below it (with two exceptions: the One above which there is nothing, and the lowest level below which there is only the darkness of matter). It is also evident that these logoi or levels are related to one another through contemplation. From this perspective, then, it is possible to see how everything unfolds from the One, the source of all, and also returns to the One. It is this return to the One that the serious man wishes to achieve. And to the extent that he is increasingly unified within himself (and therefore with the Soul and Nous and, eventually, with the One) he becomes increasingly serious. Unity, the key to the entire Plotinian system, is at the heart of human seriousness and of life as well.

already a vision with respect to himself and all is within him.⁷⁷

d) How the One is the cause of life

The above comments have demonstrated the connection between the life of man and the life of Soul and Nous. However, neither Soul nor Nous is the absolutely first reality. As we saw in Text B (#1-#4) and elsewhere in VI, 9,⁷⁸ the One is the source of life and of all subsequent realities. Accordingly, since Soul and Nous are not primary, but derivative of ultimate reality, we are now compelled to address the question of the precise relationship of life to the Primal Reality, the One-Good. What, then, does it mean to say that the One is "supremely real" and the "source" of all else, including life?

For the answer let us turn briefly to VI, 9 (9), 1, 1-8. There Plotinus gives an inductively based (because it issues from reflection on concrete examples) explanation of what he means by "to be real" in reference to the One. Although difficult to grasp because of his use of the ambiguous Greek word einai and its derivatives, his

⁷⁷See III, 8 (30), 6, 37-40. In seriousness, then, we find that the one intuiting (i.e., the serious man) and the object intuited (i.e., the One-Good) have become a unity (#1). For the serious man, therefore, genuine fulfillment and ultimately eudaimonia (literally, the good state of his inner reality) consist in the unification achieved by his intellect through intuition of its object: The One-Good.

⁷⁸See VI, 9 (9), 3 14-16.

explanation may be expressed in the following three distinct ways. First, we may say that the One exists or actually is. That is, the One is not merely a mental construct or fiction but does actually exist as an independent item. Second, we may say that Nous is but that the One is not. Here we mean to distinguish Nous, which involves multiplicity (because It is a one-in-many⁷⁹ and thus is Being), from the One, which is sheer unity and thus transcends multiplicity and Being. Finally, we may also say that the One is real. By this we mean that the One is of value, significance and worth.⁸⁰ In fact, the One is supremely real because It is supremely valuable, significant and worthwhile.

As the supreme reality the One is the source and cause of all else, including life. What sort of causality does It

⁷⁹For further explication of this point see Leo Sweeney, S. J., "Are Plotinus and Albertus Magnus Neoplatonists," Graceful Reason: Essays in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Presented to Joseph Owens, CSSR, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson, Papers in Medieval Studies 4 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983), pp. 177-202; hereafter: Sweeney, Graceful Reason.

On "being" (to on) as meaning "one-many" see VI, 2 (43), 21, 45-58.

⁸⁰There are at least three sorts of value, worth and perfection: a) arbitrary (e.g., coins: the government arbitrarily declares this piece of round metal to be worth five cents, this piece ten cents, and so on; b) subjective (e.g., the special value which a watch acquires for me because given to me by my brother); and c) objective (i.e., the worth which is imbedded in the object itself, which in fact is the object). In our discussion of what "to be real" means we speak of value, worth and perfection in the objective sense. See Sweeney, AMAE, pp. 79-82.

exercise? We find an answer in our key text (#35-#38). The One's products flow out from It as do rivers from a spring which is itself unoriginated, which gives itself entirely to them and yet is not thereby diminished but remains Itself at rest and unchanged.⁸¹

Nous, because It thus resembles the One, produces in the same way -- that is, by pouring forth a multiple power, which is a product resembling its maker, just as That Which was before It did. This act originating from entity (or Nous) is Soul, which comes about while Nous remains at rest, for Nous too came about while That Which is prior to It remained unchanged.⁸²

Soul too is moved and thereby produces. It looks to Nous, whence it came, and is filled and thereupon goes forth to another opposed movement and thus generates its own image, namely, the sentient and vegetal levels of the physical universe.⁸³ Soul's descent to, and maintenance of, the vegetal level is accomplished by Nature, which Plotinus discusses explicitly and at length in III, 8 (30), 3-4. Nature is the Soul in its lowest descent towards matter and, as such, is the source of all logoi in plants. And just as Soul itself is alive precisely because it is the

⁸¹Plotinus offers a more detailed reply in V, 2 (11), 1, 5-21.

⁸²See V, 2 (11), 1, 13-18.

⁸³See V, 2 (11), 1, 18-21.

logos of Nous (i.e., Soul is Nous-on-a-lower-level), so too even plants live by being logoi of Soul.

What do we discover about the One's causality in these two passages? Each of them characterizes Its causality as literally "emanative."⁸⁴ In our key text (#35-#37) life is said to "flow out" from the One as if from a spring -- a spring which gives itself wholly to the rivers going forth from it, which in turn collect all together before flowing forth, although each knows even then the direction its streams will flow. Similarly, in V, 2 (11), 1, 8-9, the One, so to speak, overflows and thereby It has made something which is, to a degree, other than Itself. The product is other than the One only "to a degree" because it is still a logos of the One (i.e., the product is the One-on-a-lower-level).

Furthermore, the product is that dynamis which Plotinus in another treatise⁸⁵ calls "intelligible matter" and which becomes Nous (i.e., Being and true life) by turning back to and contemplating the One, thereby filling and actuating Itself. In turn Nous produces by similarly pouring forth intelligible matter and dynamis, which however has by now become multiple and moving. It becomes Soul by

⁸⁴This description is found in Sweeney, Graceful Reason, pp. 188-187.

⁸⁵See II, 4 (12), 1; 3-5. We shall take up the relationship of intelligible matter to life in our next key text, VI, 7 (38).

contemplating its source and thereby filling and actuating itself.⁸⁶ This second moment of causality on the levels of both Nous and Soul is exercised by intelligible matter, which fills and actuates itself, and thus lives, by contemplating its source, The One and Nous, respectively.⁸⁷

Accordingly, both our key text (#33-#45) and V, 2 (11), 1 describe the One as causing life through emanation, which for Plotinus is more illuminating and advantageous than efficient causality. The One in causing remains perfect; Its effects do not deplete It. Emanative causality occurs spontaneously, automatically and necessarily. The One produces because It is totally perfect and not because It freely chooses to produce. Emanative causality safeguards the transcendence of the One in particular and the nature of Plotinus' monism in general. What overflows from the One -- the intelligible otherness, matter,

⁸⁷In our key text (#35-#37) Plotinus develops and illuminates the twofold meaning of contemplation as operative state and as content (which he described generally in V, 2 [11], 1). In III, 8 (30), 3ff he explains that theoria is found on all levels of reality except the highest (because the One transcends contemplation and anything else that implies duality or multiplicity) and involves both an operative state of contemplating and its content (i.e., what is contemplated, what is caused by the contemplation). This content itself is in turn an operative state producing its own content. This continues until one comes to the logoi of plants, which are the content of Nature's contemplation but do not themselves contemplate. For additional data on contemplation, see Deck, Contemplation, Chs. 3-6.

operative power -- is logos of the One (i.e., the One-on-a-lower-level).⁸⁸

Furthermore, Plotinus' adoption of emanation rather than efficient causality distinguishes him from both Plato and Aristotle. A brief examination of Plato's description in the Timaeus of the Craftsman's fashioning of the physical universe (especially Plato's initial explanation -- 29d-30a -- of why the Craftsman ordered the sensible world as he did) makes clear his distance from Plato. For what cause, Plato asks, were becoming and this All constructed by him (the Craftsman) who constructed them? Because he was good and, thus, without jealousy, he desired that all things should come to be as much like himself as possible. Desiring then that all things should be good and, as far as possible, perfect, the god took over everything visible and in disorderly motion and brought it from disorder into order, since he judged order to be in every way better than disorder. Taking thought he realized that the presence rather than the absence of intelligence in the visible universe would make it better and that intelligence demands

⁸⁸Dynamis here is not to be compared with anything like Aristotelian prime matter, but rather should be understood as active dynamis or operative power (see Metaphysics, Bk. 5, Ch. 12, 1019a15-21). But Plotinus' dynamis is not merely a faculty of an individual soul (as it is for Aristotle) but is the entire overflow from the higher source, which helps constitute all lower existents by becoming energeia and filling itself through contemplation and by receiving such energeiai.

the presence also of soul. On the strength of this reasoning he constructed intelligence within soul and soul within body in such a way that when fashioning this All he might execute a work which is by nature as excellent and perfect as possible. Thus the god's providence brought about a world which is a living existent endowed with soul and intellect.

The radical difference between "emanative" causality, which Plotinus attributes to the One, and the "efficient" causality Plato ascribes to the Craftsman is made evident when we contrast the words each uses: "to flow," "to overflow," "to pour forth" versus "to construct," "to desire," "to take over," "to judge," "to take thought or to reason," "to execute a work," "to have providence." None of the verbs in the second group is applicable to the One, which transcends any sort of reasoning (and, hence, life), judging, desiring, or executing a task.⁸⁹ Aristotle's conception of efficient or moving cause is likewise quite different from Plotinus'. The causality of the One is strictly speaking not efficient or moving but "emanative"

⁸⁹This comparison of emanative and efficient causality is derived from Sweeney, Graceful Reason, pp. 186-188.

Such radical transcendence does not prevent Plotinus from sometimes ascribing to the One a mysterious sort of self-awareness (and, hence, perhaps life). For analysis of such passages in Plotinus, see Rist, Road to Reality, pp. 38-52, Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 58-59, and Gürtler, "Human Consciousness," Ch. 8.

precisely because Its products emanate, flow out, or pour forth from It.⁹⁰ Such a view of causality (as emanative) makes it possible for those products to be genuinely unified with the One (since they are the One-on-a-lower-level) and yet to be other than the One (to the extent that a logos of the One differs from the One Itself).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Clearly Text C has contributed to our understanding of zōē, especially in the way this principle relates to logos and to contemplation. Our investigation has revealed that each level of reality below the One is real because it is emanated from, and thus is a more or less multiple manifestation or logos of, the Primal Reality. Any existent (whether Nous, Soul, an individual soul or a sensible thing) is what it is insofar as it is a logos (i.e., insofar as it participates in what is higher, by actually being the higher-on-a-lower-level). Furthermore, since Nous is primal life (by being a self-kinēsis which is intellection), each level of reality below Nous is alive precisely because it is a logos of Nous. Like Nous, each reality below It is an active power (dynamis) identical with the being of the hypostasis in which it exists and ordered to the production of some reality lower than itself.

⁹⁰For Aristotle's discussion of causality see Physics, 194b16-195b30.

On this view, Nous is alive because out of desire for the Ultimate Good (the One) It moves Itself to contemplate the One-Good. In doing so It produces the content of Its contemplation, the entire complex of living intelligibles or Forms. These are the One inasmuch as Nous is able to contemplatively comprehend It (the One).

Next, Soul is alive because it is Nous-on-a-lower-level-of-reality. Hence, Soul is fully animated when it turns back to its source (Nous) in contemplation of the multiplicity of intelligibles There. Specifically, Soul lives because it, too, is a self-kinēsis which is intellection, but of a weaker and more multiple sort than that of Nous.

In short, all life below Nous is Nous as logos. All life is a self-kinēsis which is intellectual and productive. All products of Nous are alive precisely because they are Its images or logoi. Hence, all things (from the hypostasis Soul downwards) live and produce additional realities to a greater or lesser degree depending upon their contemplative closeness to, or remoteness from, the primal life of Nous.

Furthermore, life on the human level also admits of degrees and may be expressed in terms of its two extreme manifestations. The life of the serious man is one which involves identification between his intellect and Nous. Accordingly, his is a life of contemplation rather than action. He concentrates on intellection rather than on

external activity. He has become increasingly unified within himself (and in this way he has become unified with the One) and no longer needs to turn to what is outside his intellect (i.e., the sensible universe). The man of action (praxis), on the other hand, embodies a dichotomy between knower and known. Although he, too, contemplates (and thus lives, albeit imperfectly), he does so weakly and incompletely. His soul, accordingly, must still console itself by substituting various sorts of artifacts and external activities for a true state of fully internal contemplation (of its source, Nous and ultimately the One).

Our analysis makes obvious that the One is the undiminished source of all other realities, supremely real, unified and simple. As such, It is other than all other realities (because It is simple and they are multiple) and yet not entirely other than any of them (since they are all logoi of the One and, hence, they are the One-on-a-lower-level-of-reality). In addition, the One is both the source of life and above life. It is the source of all life because Its first product (Nous) lives only by Its self-initiated contemplation of the One as multiple. The One Itself is above life, however, because it does not contemplate or move Itself since any such phenomena would involve It in a duality (of knower and known, mover and moved, etc.), which Its very nature precludes.

Finally, although we have already examined the life of

Nous to some extent, the question of precisely how It and Its intelligible contents live has not been fully answered. Secondly, we must also clarify how the notion Life is logically distinct from Nous and Form. In other words, how are the three chief components of the intelligible world -- Life, Form and Nous -- related? Finally, although it is now somewhat clear how life is energeia, we have not yet elucidated how life is dynamis. These questions we shall take up in our analysis of the next key text: VI, 7 (38).

CHAPTER V

TEXT D: ENNEAD VI, 7 (38), 13; 15; 18

Our next key text is found in the rather lengthy and intricate treatise entitled by Porphyry: "How the Multitude of the Forms Came Into Being and On the Good."¹ Like Text C (III, 8 [30]) before it, Text D belongs to Plotinus' intellectually vigorous middle period. Owing to its thematic structure and considerable length, this treatise may conveniently be divided into two parts. In the first part (Chs. 1-14) Plotinus explicates the nature of Nous and in the second part (Chs. 15-42) he examines the connection between Nous and the Primal Reality, the One-Good.

The seven treatises between Texts C (III, 8 [30]) and D, though containing little significant information on zōē, do provide the following facts which are helpful to setting up the context for our key text. In V, 8 (31), "On the Intelligible Beauty," Plotinus examines how Nous and the World of Intelligibles are perfect beauty.² There (Ch. 4)

¹Porphyry, "Life," p. 20.

²This treatise, along with III, 8 (30), V, 5 (32), and II, 9 (33), originally made up one single work by Plotinus. Porphyry's editing is the reason for its division into four separate treatises. On this point see Armstrong,

he reiterates that life on the level of Nous is pure and undiminished. Such life is a wisdom (sophia) not acquired by discursive reasoning (logos) but always all present and complete. This life is the very ousia of Nous and is true wisdom and beauty.³

V, 5 (32), "That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intelligence and on the Good," repeats information on the life of Nous, especially as It is related to the Primal Reality. Nous lives and is intellective by being one with Its intelligible contents: the Forms (Ch. 2, lines 9-13). Although It is a close unity, Nous is not the ultimate or pure unity (and, hence, It is not the Primal Reality): It is the One-Good that as dynamis is the cause of Nous and Its intellective life (Ch. 10, lines 10-15). The next treatise, II, 9 (33), "Against the Gnostics," is largely polemical in nature and yields little helpful data on life. VI, 6 (34), "On Numbers," reminds us that it is Nous that is perfect life and perfect intellection and, by virtue of this perfection, is a great dynamis which, through Its self-kinēsis, produces all other lives and intelligences (Chs. 8,

(2continued)

Enneads, Vol. III, p. 358. For helpful discussion of the unity of these four treatises, see R. Harder, "Eine neue Schrift Plotins," Hermes 71 (1936) 1-10; Roloff, Grossschrift; V. Cilento, Paideia Antignostica, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1971); and Garcia Bazan, Plotino y las Gnosis, (Buenos Aires, 1981).

³For a discussion of the status of beauty with respect to the One see Rist, Road to Reality, pp. 53-65.

15 and 18). II, 8 (35), "How Distant Objects Appear Small, "Plotinus' study on optics, contains no information on zōē. In the brief I, 5 (36), "Whether Well-Being Depends on Extension of Time," Plotinus argues that the life of eudaimonia is found only on the level of Nous (i.e., in eternity) and not on any lower level (i.e., in time). Hence, the extension of time does not affect it (Ch. 7). Finally, II, 7 (37), "On Complete Intermingling," is primarily a critique of the Stoic view that two material substances, when mixed together, can completely interpenetrate one another and, hence, contains no helpful information on zōē.

We shall now examine VI, 7 itself. Since the first portion of our key text is not found until Chapter Thirteen of this treatise, we shall first summarize the preceding twelve chapters. It is wrong (Plotinus argues) to take literally Plato's explanation in the Timaeus (45a-b) of the production of the universe. Such an approach misconceives and even contradicts the kind of causality exercised by the Plotinian hypostases, which produce without reasoning and planning and which give to their products animation and spontaneous life (Ch. 1). Nous produces by knowing Its own contents, the eternal logoi for all beings. Because It knows simultaneously both the being and its cause (dioti), Nous differs from human intelligence, for the latter often

fails to have such simultaneous knowledge. (Ch. 2).⁴

Since Nous knows everything perfectly, nothing exists in the sensible world which was not produced by, and did not somehow first exist in, the intelligible world. Such a position, however, seems to entail several difficulties: a) is sensation to be found on the level of Nous? and b) do the forms of irrational beings exist on that level?

Plotinus' dismissal of the first difficulty is based upon the realization that a product is always inferior to what produced it. Hence, although the intelligible world is the principle of the sensible world, the deficiencies of the latter do not originate from, nor are they found in, the former. This is so because although both intelligible and sensible existents are indeed knowers, they are not equal as such. Sensible existents (the products) are merely images (i.e., logoi) of intelligible existents. In short, sensation is the result of the production of imperfect knowers and as such is not a part of the intelligible world, in which only perfect knowers are found (Chs. 3-8).

The second difficulty is met by noting three related facts. Plotinus argues that since the forms of irrational animals are lives and perfections, they are compatible with Nous. Insofar as they are forms, then, they are equal to

⁴In the Posterior Analytics (Bk. 1, Ch. 13, 78a22-78b-31) Aristotle shows how some types of knowledge do not involve a simultaneous awareness of the cause of a being.

all other forms, because each of them is the whole of the intelligible world' (Ch. 9). Next, he indicates that Nous itself would be imperfect, and the sensible universe would have no basis, if Nous did not admit an infinite multiplicity of forms and did not comprehend all beings in an eternal living moment (Ch. 10). Finally, he argues that the forms of plants and elements, since they reside in the intelligible world (for the same reason as do the forms of irrational beings) likewise are lives and perfections and are compatible with Nous (Ch. 11).

Properly understood, then, Nous is the universe of all lives, Forms and beings, all of which are actuated by Its eternal intellection or self-kinēsis.⁵ Precisely how the kinēsis of Nous actuates the plurality of lives is the issue of the first portion of our key text (Ch. 13).

⁵That self-kinēsis belongs to Nous was inferred in earlier key texts, especially Text A (IV, 7 [2]), Plotinus' presentation there (#1-#7) was a more difficult and complex version of Plato's basic argument that life and movement in the sensible world depend on the life and self-motion of the soul. In the movement of thought (Text A, #c) it was noted that Nous and soul (i.e., World Soul and individual souls) are related to one another as ultimate cause of motion and life to proximate cause of motion and life. More precisely, the soul (in Text A as well as in Plotinus' thought in general) is subordinate to Nous, insofar as it is a logos of Nous. That is, soul is Nous on a lower, more multiple level reality. As such soul is the vehicle by which Nous animates and constitutes the sensible world. Thus, we may understand that both soul and Nous are referred to in Text A (#3-#4) but in a specific relation to one another, as lower reality (soul) to a higher reality (Nous), in which the former is the channel through which the latter works in animating and constituting the sensible world.

TEXT D: VI, 7 (38), 13; 15; 17; 18

[1] Nous is not simple, and neither is Soul, which comes from It, but all beings are multiple [in inverse proportion] to their simplicity.⁶ [2] They are so [i.e., simple] not insofar as they are composites but insofar as they are principles and insofar as they are acts. [3] For the act of the last [intelligible reality] is simple [insofar] as [it is] a fading out [of act], but [the act] of the first [intelligible reality] is simple insofar as it is the totality of] all acts.⁷ [4] Nous moves with a movement that one would expect to find in beings which are multiple and yet always the same, and Its unity is not the same as something which is divisible into parts but is all together, since something which is in parts is not really a unity, but is divisible unto infinity. [5] But do we say that [Nous] is [i.e., originates] from something [else] and also [moves] toward something as [though] to a goal? [6] Then is what is between the All [and Its goal] like a line or like another body, something the same throughout and without diversity? [7] But what would be the worth of such a thing? For, if there were no change [in it], nor anything which brought it into a

(⁵continued)

Consequently, Plotinus' argument there, though somewhat terse and initially opaque, contained implicitly very important information on the nature of life. Making this argumentation more explicit revealed both how Plotinus is indebted to Plato and yet transcends him.

Plotinus' comments in Text A on the nature of soul (specifically, the World Soul and every individual soul, as each is a logos of Nous and the channel through which Nous animates and orders the sensible universe) indicated that there is life where there is self-kinēsis and that life is intellection. From this we may infer that as we ascend to greater and greater levels of intellection we may expect to find greater and greater levels of self-kinēsis and life.

⁶In many instances my translation of this key text is based upon Hancock, Energeia. Here and elsewhere in the translation of this key text I transliterate, rather than translate, the Greek word vous when it refers to the hypostasis itself. The term when it refers to an individual human intellect I translate as "intellect."

⁷Bréhier's translation is helpful (Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 83): "L'acte de l'être qui occupe le dernier rang dans le monde intelligible est simple; mais l'acte de l'être qui occupe le premier rang c'est tous les actes."

life of diversity, it would not be act, because such a state is in no way different from the absence of act. [8] And if the movement [of Nous] were of such a type, It would be only a single life and not the totality of life. [9] And life must be a totality and be all-encompassing and nothing must be without life. [10] Nous must move Itself into everything, or rather must have always been so moved.

13, 1-16:

*Ἔστι γὰρ οὔτε νοῦς ἀπλοῦν, οὔτε ἡ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ψυχὴ, ἀλλὰ ποικίλα πάντα ὅσω ἀπλᾶ, τοῦτο δὲ ὅσω μὴ σύνθετα καὶ ὅσω ἀρχαὶ καὶ ὅσω ἐνέργειαι. Τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἐσχάτου ἡ ἐνέργεια ὡς ἂν λήγουσα ἀπλή, τοῦ δὲ πρώτου πᾶσαι νοῦς
 5 τε κινούμενος κινεῖται μὲν ὡσαύτως καὶ κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ ὁμοία αἰεὶ, οὐ μέντοι ταῦτόν καὶ ἓν τι ἐν μέρει, ἀλλὰ πάντα· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ ἐν μέρει αὐτὸ οὐχ ἓν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο ἄπειρον διαιρούμενον. Ἀπὸ τίνος δὲ φαμεν ἂν καὶ πάντως ἐπὶ τί ὡς ἐσχάτον; Τὸ δὲ μεταξύ πᾶν ἄρα ὡςπερ γραμμὴ, ἢ ὡςπερ
 10 ἕτερον σῶμα ὁμοιομέρες τι καὶ ἀποίκιον; Ἀλλὰ τί τὸ σεμνόν; Εἰ γὰρ μηδεμίαν ἔχει ἐξαλλαγὴν μηδέ τις ἐξεγείρει αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ ζῆν ἐτερότης, οὐδ' ἂν ἐνέργεια εἴη· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἡ τοιαύτη κατάστασις μὴ ἐνεργείας διαφέροι. Κἂν κινήσις δὲ ἢ τοιαύτη, οὐ πανταχῶς, μοναχῶς δ' ἂν εἴη
 15 ζωή· δεῖ δὲ πάντα ζῆν καὶ πανταχόθεν καὶ οὐδὲν μὴ ζῆν. Ἐπὶ πάντα οὖν κινεῖσθαι δεῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ κενεῖσθαι.*

[11] A simple being [Nous], if it moves, is only that [which is moving], and either it does not advance into anything or if it does advance it [also] remains and, in this way, is [really] two things. [12] But if one [the first half of the duality] is the same as the other [the second half of the duality], the unity remains and there has been no advance.⁸ [13] But if there is a difference [between the two halves of the duality], the

⁸Here, too (#11-#12), Bréhier's translation is useful:

Si C'était un terme simple qui se meut, elle ne contiendrait que ce terme unique; ou bien elle même ne procede pas, ou bien, si elle procede, il y a autre chose qui reste immobile; il y a alors deux termes. Si le second est le meme que précédent, l'unité reste, et il n'y a pas eu veritablement procession. (Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 84)

initial unity has advanced with differentiation and has produced a third unity out of some sameness and difference. This product generated out of sameness and difference has a nature which is both the same and different. And it is not a single different something, but it is an all which is different, since its sameness is an all. [14] Since it is an all which is [both] the same and different, it does not lack other things. It has a nature, then, that brings difference into the All. [15] If all these different things were before it [was], it would be influenced by them. [16] But it is not subsequent to them [since] it produced them all, or rather was all of them.

13, 16-28:

‘A-

πλοῦν δὴ εἰ κινουῖτο, ἐκεῖνο μόνον ἔχει· καὶ ἡ αὐτὸ καὶ οὐ
 προὔβη εἰς οὐδέν, ἢ εἰ προὔβη, ἄλλο μένον· ὥστε δύο· καὶ
 εἰ ταῦτόν τοῦτο ἐκείνω, μένει ἔν καὶ οὐ προελήλυθεν, εἰ δ’
 20 ἕτερον, προῆλθε μετὰ ἐτερότητος καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐκ ταύτου
 τινος καὶ ἐτέρου τρίτον ἔν. Γενόμενον δὴ ἐκ ταύτου καὶ
 ἐτέρου τὸ γενόμενον φύσιν ἔχει ταῦτόν καὶ ἕτερον εἶναι·
 ἕτερον δὲ οὐ τί, ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἕτερον· καὶ γὰρ τὸ ταῦτόν αὐτοῦ
 πᾶν. Πᾶν δὲ ταῦτόν ὄν καὶ πᾶν ἕτερον οὐκ ἔστιν ὃ τι ἀπο-
 25 λείπει τῶν ἐτέρων. Φύσιν ἄρα ἔχει ἐπὶ πᾶν ἕτεροιοῦσθαι.
 Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἔστι πρὸ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἕτερα πάντα, ἤδη πάσχοι ἂν
 ὑπ’ αὐτῶν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔστιν, οὗτος τὰ πάντα ἐγέννα, μᾶλλον
 δὲ τὰ πάντα ἦν.

[17] These beings could not be except [insofar] as [they are] actuated by Nous, which always actuates [in such a way as to produce] one being after another, as if [It were] wandering down every road but [always] wandering within Itself. Nous is a wanderer that by nature wanders within Itself. The wandering which It has by nature is in real beings which keep pace with Its wanderings. [18] But It always remains Itself [unchanged]. And this is a permanent wandering. Its wandering is on the meadow of truth, from which It does not deviate. [19] It has and encompasses everything and makes for Itself something like a place for Its movement [and this is also] the place where it moves. [20] And this meadow of truth is diverse, thereby making traveling about in it possible. [21] If It were not always and in every way diverse, if It were without diversity, there would [eventually] be a stop [to the wandering]. [22] But if there were a stop, there would be no intellection. Hence, if It were at all, It would

not have had intellection. [23] But if this were the case, It would not be [at all]. It is [and must be] intellection. [24] And Its movement entirely fills all being, and all being is intellection completely and encompasses all life and [produces] one being after another. [25] It is something which is the same and which is different, and It is endlessly separating out different beings and making them apparent.

13, 28-44:

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα τὰ ὄντα εἶναι μὴ νοῦ ἐνεργήσαντος, ἐνεργήσαντος δὲ αἰεὶ ἄλλο μετ' ἄλλο καὶ οἶον
 30 πλανηθέντος πᾶσαν πλάνην καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ πλανηθέντος, οἷα
 νοῦς ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ ἀληθινὸς πέφυκε πλανᾶσθαι· πέφυκε δ'
 ἐν οὐσίαις πλανᾶσθαι συνθεουσῶν τῶν οὐσιῶν ταῖς αὐτοῦ
 πλάναις. Πανταχοῦ δ' αὐτός ἐστι· μένουσαν οὖν ἔχει τὴν
 πλάνην. Ἡ δὲ πλάνη αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀληθείας πεδίῳ,
 35 οὐ οὐκ ἐκβαίνει. Ἐχει δὲ καταλαβὼν πᾶν καὶ αὐτῷ ποιήσας
 εἰς τὸ κινεῖσθαι οἶον τόπον, καὶ ὁ τόπος ὁ αὐτὸς τῷ οὐ
 τόπος. Ποικίλον δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον τοῦτο, ἵνα καὶ διεξίῃ· εἰ
 δὲ μὴ κατὰ πᾶν καὶ αἰεὶ ποικίλον, καθόσον μὴ ποικίλον,
 ἔστηκεν. Εἰ δ' ἔστηκεν, οὐ νοεῖ· ὥστε καί, εἰ ἔστη, οὐ
 40 νενόηκεν· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, οὐδ' ἔστιν. Ἐστὶν οὖν νόησις· ἡ δὲ
 κίνησις πᾶσα πληροῦσα οὐσίαν πᾶσαν, καὶ ἡ πᾶσα οὐσία
 νόησις πᾶσα ζωὴν περιλαβοῦσα πᾶσαν, καὶ μετ' ἄλλο αἰεὶ
 ἄλλο, καὶ ὅ τι αὐτοῦ ταυτόν, καὶ ἄλλο, καὶ διαιροῦντι αἰεὶ τὸ
 ἄλλο ἀναφαίνεται.

[26] And Its entire journey is through life and is entirely through living beings, just as to someone who travels over the earth whatever he travels over is earth, even though earth contains [various] differences. It is the same with the life There. What it passes through is itself but is always [also] other than itself so that it is not itself. But it always has the same journey through what is not itself because it does not change but rather it is present to all differences in the same way and according to its sameness. [27] If there were not something that related to the different beings in precisely the same way and by virtue of its sameness, there would be nothing at all, neither in act nor act itself.

13, 44-51:

Πᾶσα δὲ διὰ ζωῆς ἡ πορεία καὶ διὰ
 45 ζώων πᾶσα, ὥσπερ καὶ τῷ διὰ γῆς ἰόντι πάντα, ἃ διέξεισι,
 γῆ, κἄν διαφορὰς ἔχη ἢ γῆ. Καὶ ἐκεῖ ἡ μὲν ζωὴ, δι' ἧς, ἡ
 αὐτή, ὅτι δὲ αἰεὶ ἄλλη, οὐχ ἡ αὐτή. Ἄει δ' ἔχων τὴν αὐτὴν
 διὰ τῶν οὐκ αὐτῶν διέξοδον, ὅτι μὴ ἀμείβει, ἀλλὰ σύνεστι
 τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ ὡσαύτως καὶ κατὰ ταῦτά· ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ περὶ
 50 τὰ ἄλλα τὸ ὡσαύτως καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτά, ἀργεῖ πάντη καὶ
 τὸ ἐνεργεῖα καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια οὐδαμοῦ.

[28] These other beings are It [Nous]. It is [thus] every being. If It is truly Itself, then It is everything. But if It is not everything, It is not Itself. [29] But if It is Itself complete and a totality, because It is everything else and is without nothing and nothing is incomplete in this totality, then there is nothing belonging to It which is not different, for it is through diversity of being that this being is complete. [30] If It had no diversity but were [entirely] the same instead of different, that would reduce Its being because [in that case] It would not have brought about the completion of Its own nature.

13, 51-57:

Ἔστι δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα
 αὐτός, ὥστε πᾶς αὐτός. Καὶ εἶπερ αὐτός, πᾶς, εἰ δὲ μὴ,
 οὐκ αὐτός. Εἰ δὲ πᾶς αὐτός, καὶ πᾶς, ὅτι τὰ πάντα, καὶ
 οὐδέν ἐστιν, ὃ τι μὴ συντελεῖ εἰς τὰ πάντα, οὐδέν ἐστιν
 55 αὐτοῦ, ὃ τι μὴ ἄλλο, ἵνα ἄλλο ὄν καὶ τοῦτο συντελεῖ. Εἰ γὰρ
 μὴ ἄλλο, ἀλλὰ [ἄλλω] ταυτόν, ἐλαττώσει αὐτοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν
 ἰδίαν οὐ παρεχόμενον εἰς συντέλειαν αὐτοῦ φύσιν.

[In Chapter 14 Plotinus describes Nous as a giant organism whose various components and functions are all brought together into a single living unity. Although each of its components has its own unique makeup, each nevertheless exists and functions in relation to the good of the whole organism (lines 15-22). Therefore, the unity of

the intelligibles within Nous is analogous to, but much more intimate than, any organic unity because the parts of Nous are truly identical with one another.⁹

With Chapter 14 Plotinus closes the first part of this long treatise. In Chapters 15-42, which comprise its second part, he examines the connection between Nous and the Primal Reality. This examination will take Plotinus beyond his treatment of life in the first part of this treatise, since it will require him to address the relation of life to the One-Good Itself. Here (Ch. 15) the key text resumes.]

[31] This life [of Nous], then, the manifold¹⁰ and the whole, the first and the one, who is there who when he sees It is not glad and does not scorn all other life? [32] For the other [lives] below are dark, little and dim and imperfect and not pure but [are] the pure that has become soiled. And if you look at these [impure lives], you neither see the pure [lives] nor live them [the pure lives] all at once. In them [the pure lives] there is nothing that does not live, and [does not] live purely, having no evil. [33] For evils are here because [here there is only] a trace of life and a trace of Nous. [34] There is the archetype, which he [Plato] calls formally good: for among the Forms it has the place of the Good.¹¹

⁹Here perhaps is another instance in which the "intensive" or "horizontal" dimension of logos is operative. Logos here accounts for the unity-in-multiplicity of the intelligible beings within the second hypostasis.

¹⁰Here I follow Armstrong in translating tēn pollēn as "the manifold" since this English term (rather than terms such as "multiplicity" or "plurality") seems best to convey the fact that the plurality of Nous is ultimately itself a unity (Plotinus, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953, p. 73). Furthermore, it would be a serious error to state that Nous is sheer, and only, multiplicity, since this is true only of sensible matter, which Plotinus (in II, 5 [25], 5, 23-33) holds is actually unreal.

¹¹This troublesome Greek term, ἀγαθοειδές, here is best translated as "formally good" since Plotinus intends

15, 1-10:

Ταύτην οὖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν πολλὴν καὶ πᾶσαν καὶ
 πρώτην καὶ μίαν τίς ἰδὼν οὐκ ἐν ταύτῃ εἶναι ἀσπάζεται
 τὴν ἄλλην πᾶσαν ἀτιμάσας; σκότος γὰρ αἱ ἄλλαι αἱ κάτω
 καὶ σμικραὶ καὶ ἀμυδραὶ καὶ εὐτελεῖς καὶ οὐ καθαραὶ καὶ
 τὰς καθαρὰς μολύνουσαι. κἂν εἰς αὐτὰς ἴδῃς, οὐκέτι τὰς 5
 καθαρὰς οὔτε ὀρᾶς οὔτε ζῆς ἐκείνας τὰς πάσας ὁμοῦ, ἐν
 αἷς οὐδέν ἐστιν ὃ τι μὴ ζῆ καὶ καθαρῶς ζῆ κακὸν οὐδέν.
 ἔχον. τὰ γὰρ κακὰ ἐνταῦθα, ὅτι ἴχνος ζωῆς καὶ νοῦ
 ἴχνος· ἐκεῖ δὲ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον τὸ ἀγαθοειδές φησιν, ὅτι
 ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσι τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἔχει.

[35] For the Good is There and [Nous is There, which] is good because life consists in contemplation. [36] Those objects which It contemplates are formally good they are those which Nous acquired when It contemplated the nature of the Good. [37] The Good came to It, not as He is There, but as Nous possessed Him. [38] For the Good is source and only out of Him [come the beings] in Nous and It is that which produces them out of Him. [39] For it is not right that the one [Nous] that looks at Him [the Good] should think nothing or should not think of the things in Him. For It [Nous] did not produce them [of its own power]. [40] For It had the power to produce from Him and to be filled with Its products, the products of Him Who gives what He Himself does not possess.

15, 10-20:

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀγα- 10
 θόν, ὁ δὲ ἀγαθός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ θεωρεῖν τὸ ζῆν ἔχων·
 θεωρεῖ δὲ ἀγαθοειδῆ ὄντα τὰ θεωρούμενα καὶ αὐτά, ἃ
 ἐκτήσατο, ὅτε ἐθεώρει τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν. ἦλθε δὲ
 εἰς αὐτὸν οὐχ ὡς ἐκεῖ ἦν, ἀλλ' ὡς αὐτὸς ἔσχεν. ἀρχὴ γὰρ
 ἐκεῖνος καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου ἐν τούτῳ καὶ οὗτος ὁ ποιήσας 15
 ταῦτα ἐξ ἐκείνου. οὐ γὰρ ἦν θέμις βλέποντα εἰς ἐκεῖνον
 μηδὲν νοεῖν οὐδ' αὐτὰ ἐν ἐκείνῳ· οὐ γὰρ ἂν αὐτὸς ἐγέννα.
 δύναμιν οὖν εἰς τὸ γεννᾶν εἶχε παρ' ἐκείνου καὶ τῶν
 αὐτοῦ πληροῦσθαι γεννημάτων διδόντος ἐκείνου ἃ μὴ
 εἶχεν αὐτός.

(11 continued)

it to refer to what is similar to, or influenced by, the Good and not to the Good Itself.

[41] But from unity itself comes a multiplicity to Nous. For Nous was unable to hold the power It took from the Good but fragmented it and made the one many, so that It might be able to bear it piece by piece. [42] So whatever It produced came from the power of the Good and is formally good and It [Nous] is good since It is composed of the beings which are formally good, a variegated sort. [43] So one might compare It to a living multiple sphere or to something multi-faceted [and] colored, shining with living faces; or imagine all the pure souls gather together in It, with no defect but complete in themselves, and the all-encompassing Nous set at their highest point, illuminating the region with intellectual light. [44] If one imagined It like this one would be seeing It from outside, as something different from oneself. But we have to become It ourselves and make ourselves that which we contemplate.

15, 20-32:

ἀλλ' ἐξ ἑνὸς αὐτοῦ πολλὰ τούτῳ ἦν γὰρ 20
 ἐκομίζετο δύναμιν ἀδυνατῶν ἔχειν συνέθραυε καὶ πολλὰ
 ἐποίησε τὴν μίαν, ἵν' οὕτω δύναιτο κατὰ μέρος φέρειν.
 ὃ τι οὖν ἐγέννα, ἀγαθοῦ ἐκ δυνάμεως ἦν καὶ ἀγαθοειδὲς
 ἦν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ἐξ ἀγαθοειδῶν, ἀγαθὸν ποικίλον. διὸ
 25 καὶ εἴ τις αὐτὸν ἀπεικάζει σφαῖρα ζώση ποικίλη, εἴτε
 παμπρόσωπόν τι χρῆμα λάμπον ζῶσι προσώποις εἴτε
 ψυχὰς τὰς καθαρὰς πάσας εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ συνδραμούσας φαν-
 τάζοιτο οὐκ ἐνδεεῖς, ἀλλὰ πάντα τὰ αὐτῶν ἐχούσας, καὶ
 νοῦν τὸν πάντα ἐπ' ἄκραις αὐταῖς ἰδρυμένον, ὡς φέγγει
 30 νοερώ καταλάμπεισθαι τὸν τόπον—φανταζόμενος μὲν
 οὕτως ἔξω πῶς ἄλλος ὢν ὁρώη ἄλλον· δεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν
 ἐκεῖνο γενόμενον τὴν θεὰν ἑαυτὸν ποιήσασθαι.

[We have seen in Chapter 15 that Nous Itself is not the Primal Reality but emanates from the One-Good. It does so in a two-moment process which may be compared to the phenomenon of sight. In the first moment of Its formation Nous is an active dynamis (a formless or object-less sight); in the second It turns back to Its source and is filled with intelligibles (a sight which has an object and is thereby determined). In Chapter 16 Plotinus notes that Nous also

experiences a vision of light from the One-Good and that this vision occurs at the same time as the fragmentation of the object of Nous' sight. Accordingly, the first stage of indeterminacy is an active power to behold two distinct objects: a) the infinite multiplicity of intelligibles, and b) the light of the One-Good.¹² The final portion of our key text resumes with Chapters 17-18.]

[45] But how do the beings [the Forms] in It and Nous Itself come to be if these beings were neither There in That [the One] which fills nor in That [Nous] which is filled? For when It was not yet filled, they were not [yet in Nous]. Is it not necessary for that which gives something of itself to have it [in the first place]? [46] But if so it is necessary that what gives is viewed as superior and what is given as inferior. For this is the case in the production of real beings. [47] First there must be something in act. The beings that come later are potentially whatever is prior to them [i.e., in act]. [48] And what is prior transcends the posterior and what gives transcends what is given because it is superior. [49] If therefore something is prior to act, it transcends act and therefore transcends [also] life. [50] If there is life in Nous, there is [necessarily prior to Nous] a giver of life who is greater and more valuable than life. [51] Nous has life but not because It requires a giver who has multiplicity. Its life is a certain trace of That [the One], but it is not the life of That.

17, 1-14:

*Ἀλλὰ πῶς ταῦτα ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτός, οὐκ ὄντων
ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ πληρώσαντι οὐδ' αὖ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ πληρουμένῳ;
ὅτε γὰρ μήπω ἐπληροῦτο, οὐκ εἶχεν. ἢ οὐκ ἀνάγκη, ὃ*

¹²In VI, 7 (38), 16, 24-31 Plotinus notes that the One-Good makes the intelligible beings (and through them everything else) good by illuminating them with Its light. Additional references to this sort of light may be found in VI, 7 (38), 17, 36-37; 19, 19-21; 21, 13-17; 22; 23, 1; 24; 36. For helpful additional explanation of VI, 7 (38), 15-16, see Bréhier, Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, pp. 53-54.

τις δίδωσι, τούτο ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ δεῖ ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις τὸ μὲν
 διδὸν μείζον νομίζειν, τὸ δὲ διδόμενον ἔλαττον τοῦ διδόν- 5
 τος· τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ γένεσις ἐν τοῖς οὐσι. πρῶτον γὰρ δεῖ
 τὸ ἐνεργεῖα εἶναι, τὰ δ' ὕστερα εἶναι δυνάμει τὰ πρὸ
 αὐτῶν· καὶ τὸ πρῶτον δὲ ἐπέκεινα τῶν δευτέρων καὶ τοῦ
 διδομένου τὸ διδὸν ἐπέκεινα ἦν· κρεῖττον γάρ. εἴ τι τοίνυν
 10 ἐνεργείας πρότερον, ἐπέκεινα ἐνεργείας, ὥστε καὶ ἐπ-
 ἐκεινα ζωῆς. εἰ οὖν ζωὴ ἐν τούτῳ, ὁ διδοὺς ἔδωκε μὲν
 ζωὴν, καλλίων δὲ καὶ τιμιώτερος ζωῆς. εἶχεν οὖν ζωὴν
 καὶ οὐκ ἔδειτο ποικίλου τοῦ διδόντος, καὶ ἦν ἡ ζωὴ ἴχνος
 τι ἐκείνου, οὐκ ἐκείνου ζωῆ.

[52] As It [Nous] contemplated That [the One], It was
 indeterminate. [53] [After] having looked There It
 [Nous] was determined, but That [the One] had no
 determination. [54] For something gazes directly at
 the One so as to be determined and so as to acquire
 boundary, limit and form for itself. [55] And [in this
 instance] the form is in the shaped while the shaper
 lacks form. [56] And the limit is not from without,
 like something drawn around a mass. The limit was that
 of the totality of life There [and life] was diverse and
 infinite, as radiating from such a nature [the One].
 [57] Life was not of [some] particular kind, for [then]
 it would be defined, as already [the life of] an
 individual. [58] It [life] is nonetheless defined,
 [though not as an individual thing]. It is defined as a
 unity-in-multiplicity. [59] Each thing within the
 multiplicity is also defined [60] All of Nous is
 defined as multiple through the multiplicity of life,
 and still It [Nous] is a unity because of Its
 determination [limit].

17, 14-25:

πρὸς ἐκεῖνο μὲν οὖν βλέ-
 15 πουσα ἀόριστος ἦν, βλέψασα δ' ἐκεῖ ὠρίζετο ἐκείνου ὄρον
 οὐκ ἔχοντος. εὐθύς γὰρ πρὸς ἓν τι ἰδοῦσα ὀρίζεται τούτῳ
 καὶ ἴσχει ἐν αὐτῇ ὄρον καὶ πέρασ καὶ εἶδος· καὶ τὸ εἶδος
 ἐν τῷ μορφωθέντι, τὸ δὲ μορφώσαν ἄμορφον ἦν. ὁ δὲ ὄρος
 οὐκ ἔξωθεν, οἷον μεγέθει περιτεθείς, ἀλλ' ἦν πάσης ἐκεί-
 20 νης τῆς ζωῆς ὄρος πολλῆς καὶ ἀπείρου οὐσης, ὡς ἂν
 παρὰ τοιαύτης φύσεως ἐκλαμψάσης. ζωὴ τε ἦν οὐ τοῦδε·
 ὠριστο γὰρ ἂν ὡς ἀτόμου ἤδη· ἀλλ' ὠριστο μέντοι· ἦν ἄρα
 ὀρισθείσα ὡς ἐνός τινος πολλοῦ—ὠριστο δὲ καὶ ἕκαστον
 τῶν πολλῶν—διὰ μὲν τὸ πολὺ τῆς ζωῆς πολλὰ ὀρισθείσα,
 25 διὰ δὲ αὐτὸν ὄρον ἓν.

[61] What is this 'determined unity'? It is Nous. Determined life is Nous. [62] But what is Its 'multiplicity'? It is the multiplicity of intelligences. All [the contents of Nous] are intelligences. [63] On the one hand there is the totality of Nous, on the other hand there are the many individual intelligences. [64] But is Nous, as a whole and as having each intelligence [within Itself], identical with any one intelligence which It has [within Itself]? [65] [If It were] then It would just have one kind of being. [66] If they [the intelligences] are many in number, there must be differentiation [in Nous]. [67] Once again, then, how does each intelligence have differentiation? It has differentiation because of what it is in itself and how it relates to the whole. [68] [Therefore] the All which is Intellect is not identical with any of the individual intelligences.

17, 25-32:

*τί οὖν τὸ “ἐν ᾧρίσθη”; νοῦς· ὀρι-
σθείσα γὰρ ζωὴ νοῦς. τί δὲ τὸ “πολλά”; νόες πολλοί.
πάντα οὖν νόες, καὶ ὁ μὲν πᾶς νοῦς, οἱ δὲ ἕκαστοι νοί. ὁ
δὲ πᾶς νοῦς ἕκαστον περιέχων ἄρα ταῦτὸν ἕκαστον
περιέχει; ἀλλ’ ἓνα ἂν περιείχεν. εἰ οὖν πολλοί, διαφορὰν
30 δεῖ εἶναι. πάλιν οὖν πῶς ἕκαστος διαφορὰν ἔσχεν; ἢ ἐν
τῷ καὶ εἰς ὅλως γενέσθαι εἶχε τὴν διαφορὰν· οὐ γὰρ
ταῦτὸν ὄτουοῦν νοῦ τὸ πᾶν.*

[69] The life of Nous was all power, and the vision which occurred There was the power of all beings, and Nous which thus arose is Itself the manifestation of all beings. [70] And Nous is positioned over the beings, not so that It may have a base, but so that [through Its vision] of that which is without form [the One] It may be the base for the form of the first forms.¹³ [71] And Nous becomes a kind of light to the Soul, in the same way that the One is [a kind of light] to Nous. [72] Whenever It determines the Soul It makes it rational, giving to it [the Soul] a trace of what It has Itself. [73] Thus Nous is a trace of the One. [74] And since Nous is a form and in going out [from the One]

¹³Bréhier's translation is helpful here: "L'Intelligence siège en eux, non pas pour y trouver in fondement, mais pour être le fondement des êtres premiers grâce à la vision qu'elle a de ce qui est sans forme" (Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 89).

is made multiple, the One is [and must be] without form and without shape, because in this way It makes form. [75] If the One were form, Nous would be logos.¹⁴ [76] It was necessary for the First to be entirely without multiplicity, for if It were multiple, It would depend on another and be from another prior to It.

17, 32-43:

ἦν οὖν ἡ μὲν ζωὴ δύναμις
 πάσα, ἡ δὲ ὄρασις ἡ ἐκείθεν δύναμις πάντων, ὁ δὲ γενό-
 μενος νοὺς αὐτὰ ἀνεφάνη τὰ πάντα. ὁ δὲ ἐπικάθηται
 αὐτοῖς, οὐχ ἵνα ἰδρυθῆ, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἰδρύσῃ εἶδος εἰδῶν τῶν 35
 πρώτων ἀνείδεον αὐτό. καὶ νοὺς δὲ γίνεται πρὸς ψυχὴν
 οὕτως φῶς εἰς αὐτὴν, ὡς ἐκεῖνος εἰς νοῦν· καὶ ὅταν καὶ
 οὗτος ὀρίσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν, λογικὴν ποιεῖ δούς αὐτῇ ὧν ἔσχεν
 ἴχνος. ἴχνος οὖν καὶ νοὺς ἐκείνου· ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ νοὺς εἶδος
 καὶ ἐν ἐκτάσει καὶ πλήθει, ἐκεῖνος ἄμορφος καὶ ἀνείδεος· 40
 οὕτω γὰρ εἰδοποιεῖ. εἰ δ' ἦν ἐκεῖνος εἶδος, ὁ νοὺς ἦν ἂν
 λόγος. ἔδει δὲ τὸ πρῶτον μὴ πολὺ μηδαμῶς εἶναι· ἀνήρ-
 τητο γὰρ ἂν τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ εἰς ἕτερον αὐτὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ.

¹⁴As we already noted in Text C (III, 8 [30]), the term logos is not without exegetical difficulties in Plotinus' Enneads. In order to understand its use in this passage we must distinguish the various ways in which Plotinus employs the term logos. In the broadest sense of the term, logos simply means a higher hypostasis on a lower level of reality. In this sense Nous may be said to be a logos since Nous is the One on a lower level of reality. In a more strict sense of the term, logos is the manifestation of the divine intelligibles. That is, logos denotes a form on a lower level of reality. It is this meaning of logos which Plotinus has in mind here when he denies that Nous is a logos. In this sense Nous could not be a logos because there are no forms above Nous. In the strictest sense of the term, logos is the productive principle (or seminal reason) somehow intermediate between Soul acting as Nature and the sensible universe. For further explanation of Plotinus' use of logos, see Rist, Road to Reality, pp. 84-85.

In addition to these three ways of understanding logos "vertically" there is also the "horizontal" dimension of logos. Logos is the expression of the necessary interrelationship of all the intelligibles. As such, logos is understood through Plotinus' doctrine of sympathy. For valuable discussion of sympathy see Gürtler, "Human Consciousness," Ch. 8.

[77] But in what way are the contents of Nous formally good? Is it that each is a form or is beautiful or is something? [78] If everything that comes from the Good has a trace or impression of It or from It, just as that which comes from fire has a trace of fire and that which comes from sweetness has a trace of sweetness; [79] [And if] life came into Nous from It [the Good] -- for [Nous] originated out of the act from It [the Good] -- and Nous exists because of It [the Good] and the beauty of the Forms is also from There, [then] everything formally good would be life and intelligence and form. [80] But what do they share in common? Simply because they come from the Good is not [reason] enough for there to be identity [declared among them]. [81] There must be something common in them. [82] What is produced from something may not be identical [with its producer] but rather [may be] diverse according as difference manifests itself in multiple recipients, since that which is given to the first act is different from that which is given by the first act. And that which these [the first act: life, the second act: intelligence, and the third act: form] produce here is also different. [83] But there is nothing to keep each thing from being formally good in a degree according to its own difference. [84] What explains the highest good?

18, 1-15:

Ἄλλ' ἀγαθοειδῆ κατὰ τί τὰ ἐν τῷ νῷ; ἄρα ἢ εἶδος
 ἕκαστον ἢ ἢ κατὰ ἢ τί; εἰ δὴ τὸ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ
 ἦκον πᾶν ἵχνος καὶ τύπον ἔχει ἐκείνου ἢ ἀπ' ἐκείνου,
 ὡσπερ τὸ ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἵχνος πυρὸς καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ γλυκέος
 γλυκέος ἵχνος, ἦκει δὲ εἰς νοῦν καὶ ζωὴ ἀπ' ἐκείνου—ἐκ 5
 γὰρ τῆς παρ' ἐκείνου ἐνεργείας ὑπέστη—καὶ νοῦς δὲ δι'
 ἐκείνον καὶ τὸ τῶν εἰδῶν κάλλος ἐκείθεν, πάντα ἂν ἀγα-
 θοειδῆ εἶη καὶ ζωὴ καὶ νοῦς καὶ ἰδέα. ἀλλὰ τί τὸ κοινόν;
 οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἀπ' ἐκείνου πρὸς τὸ ταῦτόν· ἐν αὐτοῖς
 γὰρ δεῖ τὸ κοινὸν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ 10
 μὴ ταῦτόν ἢ καὶ δοθὲν ὡσαύτως ἐν τοῖς δεξομένοις ἄλλο
 γίνεσθαι· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄλλο τὸ εἰς πρώτην ἐνέργειαν, ἄλλο δὲ
 τὸ τῇ πρώτῃ ἐνεργείᾳ δοθὲν, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἄλλο ἦδη.
 ἢ οὐδὲν κωλύει καθ' ἕκαστον μὲν ἀγαθοειδὲς εἶναι,
 μᾶλλον μῆν κατ' ἄλλο. τί οὖν καθὸ μάλιστα;

[85] But first it is necessary to consider this: Is, then, life good, life in itself, life in its simplicity, that life which may be known when all else is absent [from it]? [86] And the life that results from life There, is it such as to be something different from it [life There]? [87] Again, what is [the goodness of] such life? It is the life of what is good. But it is not the life of the Good Itself, but rather the life from It. [88] But if in that life there is something from That [the One] and this life is truly life and [because] we must admit that nothing valueless may come from That [the One], life in itself is truly good. [89] And [if] we are to speak about Nous accurately, we [must] say that It is good because It is from the First [the One]. [90] It is obvious that each form is good and is like the Good. [91] Every form must have something good, either as a [quality] common [to all the forms] or as [something] different, or as the first or as the second of things in a series. [92] We thus have demonstrated that each being here has in its ousia something of the Good and is itself good because of this. For life is not good absolutely but we say that life is genuinely what it is from the Good. This is also true of Nous and one must notice a certain sameness in them.

18, 15-31:

ἀλλὰ πρό- 15

τερον ἐκείνου ἀναγκαῖον ἰδεῖν· ἀρά γε ἀγαθὸν ἢ ζωὴ ἢ αὐτὸ
 τοῦτο ζωὴ [ἢ] ψιλὴ θεωρουμένη καὶ ἀπογεγυμνωμένη; ἢ
 ἢ ζωὴ ἢ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. τὸ δ' "ἀπ' αὐτοῦ" ἄλλο τι ἢ τοι-
 αύτης; πάλιν οὖν τί ἢ τοιαύτη ζωὴ; ἢ ἀγαθοῦ. ἀλλ' οὐκ
 20 αὐτοῦ ἦν, ἀλλὰ ἐξ αὐτοῦ. ἀλλ' εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ἐκείνῃ
 ἐνίοιτο ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ ἔστιν ἢ ὄντως ζωὴ, καὶ οὐδὲν
 ἄτιμον παρ' ἐκείνου [λεκτέον εἶναι], καὶ καθὸ ζωὴ, ἀγαθὸν
 <λεκτέον> εἶναι, καὶ ἐπὶ νοῦ δὴ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ ἀνάγκη
 λέγειν τοῦ πρώτου ἐκείνου, ὅτι ἀγαθόν. καὶ δῆλον ὅτι καὶ
 25 εἶδος ἕκαστον ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀγαθοειδές, ἢ οὖν τι ἔχει ἀγαθόν,
 εἴτε κοινόν, εἴτε μᾶλλον ἄλλο, εἴτε τὸ μὲν πρώτως, τὸ
 δὲ τῷ ἐφεξῆς καὶ δευτέρως. ἐπεὶ γὰρ εἰλήφαμεν ἕκαστον
 ὡς ἔχον ἤδη ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀγαθόν τι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο
 ἦν ἀγαθόν—καὶ γὰρ ἢ ζωὴ ἦν ἀγαθὸν οὐχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλ' ὅτι
 30 ἐλέγετο ἀληθινὴ καὶ ὅτι παρ' ἐκείνου, καὶ νοῦς ὁ ὄντως—
 δεῖ τι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁράσθαι.

[93] When, with all their differences, we ascribe sameness to [the contents of] life and Nous, there is no impediment to our maintaining that sameness exists in their very ousia, and yet this similarity may also be considered and separated by thought. [94] Life [when separated in thought] from a man and a horse [for example] yields [the concept of] animal. Likewise we may obtain [the concept of heat] from water and fire. The genus ['animal' or 'heat'] belongs primarily [to the first term in the above examples] and secondarily [to the other terms]. Each part, [whether considered together] or separately, may thus be commonly called 'good.' [95] But does this [argument] establish goodness in their very ousia? [96] Certainly, each as a whole is good, but its goodness is not like the goodness which belongs to the One. [97] How then are they good? As parts [of the Good]? No, because the Good is partless. [98] The Good Itself is a unity, but each being only has unity according to its own manner of being. [99] For the first act is good and the limit associated with the first act is good, as well as the [resultant] union of the act and the limit. [100] The first act is good because it comes from the Good; the second [act is good] because it is an ordered All that comes out of the antecedent good; the third [act is good] because it is a union of the [first] two. [101] [These subsequent goods] are derived and are not identical, just as from the same person speech, walking and other characteristics come forth; all of them properly [belong there].

18, 31-45:

διαφόρων γὰρ ὄντων,
 ὅταν τὸ αὐτὸ αὐτῶν κατηγορηθῆται, κωλύει μὲν οὐδὲν ἐν τῇ
 οὐσίᾳ αὐτῶν τοῦτο ἐνυπάρχειν, ὅμως δ' ἔστι λαβεῖν αὐτὸ
 χωρὶς τῷ λόγῳ, οἷον καὶ τὸ ζῶον ἐπ' ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἵππου,
 35 καὶ τὸ θερμὸν ἐπὶ ὕδατος καὶ πυρός, τὸ μὲν ὡς γένος,
 τὸ δ' ὡς τὸ μὲν πρῶτως, τὸ δὲ δευτέρως· ἢ ὁμωνύμως ἂν
 ἐκάτερον ἢ ἕκαστον λέγοιτο ἀγαθόν. Ἄρ' οὖν ἐνυπάρχει τῇ
 οὐσίᾳ αὐτῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν; ἢ ὅλον ἕκαστον ἀγαθόν ἐστίν,
 οὐ καθ' ἐν τὸ ἀγαθόν. πῶς οὖν; ἢ ὡς μέρη; ἀλλὰ ἀμερές
 40 τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἢ ἐν μὲν αὐτό, οὕτωςι δὲ τόδε, οὕτωςι δὲ
 τόδε. καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἐνέργεια ἢ πρώτη ἀγαθόν καὶ τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῇ
 ὀρισθὲν ἀγαθόν καὶ τὸ συνάμφω· καὶ τὸ μὲν ὅτι γενόμενον
 ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, τὸ δ' ὅτι κόσμος ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, τὸ δ' ὅτι συνάμφω.
 ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οὖν, καὶ οὐδὲν ταυτόν, οἷον εἰ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
 φωνῆ καὶ βάδισης καὶ ἄλλο τι, πάντα κατορθούμενα.

[102] Here in the sensible world goodness depends on order and rhythm. But what explains goodness There? [103] Someone might say that here the good is derived from outside because what is ordered is different from what orders, but There they are identical [and thereby good in themselves]. [104] But why are they good in themselves? It is simply because they come from There that we must maintain that they are good. We must agree that beings [There] are good because they come from the Good, but we must also explain how they are good [in themselves], namely, to understand that by which they are good.¹⁵

18, 45-51:

ἦ 45

ἐνταῦθα, ὅτι τάξις καὶ ῥυθμός· ἐκεῖ δὲ τί; ἀλλ' εἴποι τις ἄν, ὡς ἐνταῦθα ὅλον εἰς τὸ καλῶς ἔξωθεν διαφόρων ὄντων τῶν περὶ ἃ ἡ τάξις, ἐκεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτά. ἀλλὰ διὰ τί καὶ αὐτά; οὐ γὰρ ὅτι ἀπ' ἐκείνου δεῖ πιστεύοντας ἀφεῖναι· δεῖ μὲν γὰρ συγχωρεῖν ἀπ' ἐκείνου ὄντα εἶναι τίμια, ἀλλὰ ποθεῖ ὁ λόγος 50 λαβεῖν, κατὰ τί τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῶν.

COMMENTS

Let us now express the precise movement of thought in Text D. The first twelve chapters of VI, 7 are concerned with stating accurately the nature of Nous. In Chapter 13, which constitutes the first part of our key text), Plotinus shows how the four supreme genera of Plato's Timaeus (kinēsis, tauton, heteron, and ousia) relate to zōē. He also notes there the primacy of kinēsis in contributing to

¹⁵The remaining chapters of this treatise (i.e., VI, 7 [38], 19-42), though they do not contain new information on life, amplify several important notions subsidiary to life (e.g., the nature of the intelligible world, energeia). Accordingly, we will refer to them when necessary.

the explanation of life and of the other genera. Plotinus begins this chapter with a discussion of the simplicity of Nous.

a. The multiplicity of every being, including Nous and Soul, is inversely proportional to its degree of simplicity. And since something can only be a principle by virtue of its simplicity and not its multiplicity, then the first and last of the intelligible beings are completely simple. The act of the last being is simple, however, only in the sense that it is a reduction of act or being. The act of the first being is simple in the sense that it is the totality of all acts (#1-#3).¹⁶

b. But what sort of totality is Nous? The first being is a true unity and not merely a collection of something separable into an infinite number of genuinely distinct parts. It is a true unity precisely because Its movement [and, hence, Its life] is entirely within It (#4).

c. However, Nous cannot remain perfectly the same, since Its movement must have a starting point and an end, between which there must be variety. If this were not the case, Its movement [and life] would have no distinct stages and, as a result, there would be no act. Furthermore, if Its movement were always the same, It would lack variety and, hence, would not involve all lives and all acts. Nous

¹⁶See note 13, Text B (VI, 9 [9]).

would thus be only a single, non-multiple life. Therefore, so that there may be a totality of lives, Nous must eternally move through [and thereby animate] all beings (#5-#10).

d. If Nous is to comprehend the totality of lives It must advance into everything. For a simple being remains a unity either by advancing or by not advancing into anything. If it does advance it is a genuine duality because it moves through objects which are logically distinct from it. Thus it is a unity-in-multiplicity. In other words, it is one being comprehending many. If it does not advance, each member of the duality is really and logically indistinct from the other and thus it would make no sense to say that Nous comprehends all beings and all lives (#11-#12).

e. If there is a genuine duality, sameness and difference must result from the epistrophē of Nous. Out of this sameness and difference a third unity originates [i.e., Soul; the first and second unities having been the One and Nous, respectively]. This third unity is a totality which involves both sameness and difference: it is a unity-and-multiplicity. Its nature [like the nature of the second unity, Nous] is to introduce distinction among beings in a whole (#13-#14).

f. Now the different beings which Nous embraces either existed before It or after It. But if they existed before It Nous would be influenced by them and they would be

its source. But it is impossible that what is multiple can cause what is simple. Hence, what is multiple cannot be explained except by Nous [and by what is higher] (#15-#16).

g. Nous, then, is the principle of all beings [and thereby of all living things]. Its movement and act produce all [intelligible] beings, one after the other. Its movement is like that of one who travels to many locations and yet never goes outside of himself. Nous is identical with the locations to which It moves. It is the space for Its own movement. Because Nous never goes outside Itself, Its wandering is of a stationary sort, never straying from the "meadow" of truth (#17-#19).

h. But the "meadow" of truth must have differentiation. Movement [and life] would be impossible without differences. Furthermore, intellection would not be possible, and Nous and being would not exist. The movement of intellection must completely encompass every being. In this way all beings are produced and given life (#20-#24).

i. Because Nous is a unity producing multiplicity It is a sameness-in-difference. Nous eternally differentiates all beings. Its act of differentiation is Its movement. Its movement through the totality of lives is like that of a traveler over the earth. He travels to many different lands, all of which are on the same earth. Likewise, Nous is the same as the many different beings [which It contains] to which It moves. There can be no act [and no life] if

sameness is not present eternally to all different beings [within Nous] (#25-#27).

j. All beings are truly identical with Nous because Its very nature is to be a sameness-in-difference and a unity-in-multiplicity. If Nous did not contain all beings It would by nature be incomplete (#28-#30).

k. [Chapter 14 continues this discussion by arguing that Nous is best understood when It is viewed as a giant unified organism. Chapter 15, which we take up next, initiates the second part of this long treatise. In this second part Plotinus attempts to explain how Nous is related to the One-Good.] Nous is the most desirable life because It is perfect life -- a life that encompasses all beings. All other lives are inferior to It.] These lives [share in some measure of unreality and, therefore,] are dark, little, imperfect and impure. If one contemplates only these inferior lives he will live imperfectly and share in evil; here [in this earthly realm] there is only a trace of Nous. Only by contemplating the true and perfect lives [which are the divine intelligibles] will he live the true life: life without evil (#31-#33).

l. But the life of Nous is a true life: a life which consists in contemplation. By this contemplation Nous knows the Good and is formally good. The perfection of Nous consists in the unity of the intelligibles, each of which is a life. These lives are the objects of the contemplation of

Nous. They have the form of the Good and originate from the original contemplation by Nous of the One-Good. Nous did not acquire the Good qua Good, but as It was best able to receive Him. For the Good is the principle from which Nous acquires Its being and dynamis. For it is absurd to think that It could contemplate the Good and think nothing. It is equally absurd to think that It could contemplate the One-Good in Its complete perfection, for the product is always inferior to the producer. Thus, Nous is a separate and complete nature. It produces and fills Its own nature by becoming the universe of forms. This It becomes through the power which It receives from the Good Himself. Accordingly, the Good produces through emanation the realm of [life and] beings without Himself having the attributes of life and ousia. Thus, the Good [pure simplicity] gives what He Himself does not possess (#34-#40).

m. In this way, the One produces that which is a multiplicity; this results not directly from His own power but from the power which He conveys to Nous, which is however inadequate to know the One-Good qua One-Good. For Nous, lacking the perfection of the Good, was only able to know the Good by fragmenting Him. It could possess the Good only as far as Its inferior nature would allow. Thus, the power of Nous depends on the power of the Good and thus Nous is formally good. Nous is constituted by a plurality of forms, each of which is formally good (#41-#42).

n. Thus, the universe of Nous is a plurality of beings, all of which are formally good. This universe might be compared to a living and multiple sphere. Since each of the forms which constitute the universe of Nous is a unique life that is formally good, that universe may be compared to a diamond or crystal, multi-faceted, colorful, and shining with living faces. Or it may be likened to a gathering of pure souls, none of which has any defect, each illuminated by the most perfect being, Nous Itself (#43).

o. Of course, such analogies as these, while helpful, still mislead, for they help us to know Nous only externally, whereas we only truly know Nous when we become identical with It through contemplation (#44).

p. [In Chapter 16 Plotinus describes further the generation of Nous. Its first stage (indeterminacy) is an active power to behold two distinct objects: a) the light of the One-Good and b) the infinite multiplicity of intelligibles. Chapter 17 begins with the following objections, based on the assumption that "like produces like."]

How can what is multiple and differentiated originate from what is completely simple [the One]? Because the production of real beings entails that the producer be necessarily superior to the product. In this sense the

cause can indeed be different from the product it causes. (#45-#46).¹⁷

q. Accordingly, dynamis must always have act as a cause. But, if the product (i.e., that which is initially only dynamis) is first act (Nous) and its cause is both superior to and different from it, then that cause must transcend both act and life. Nous thus has life because It comes from what is even more perfect than life. Life, then, is different from, and a mere trace of, its source: the One-Good. Life, which was initially indeterminate, was made determinate by contemplatively turning back to its source. Its source [the One] is without determination because It is superior to and different from Its products (#47-#55).

r. What sort of limit or determination does Nous possess? It is obviously not any external sort of limit. The nature of the limitation that belongs to Nous would have to be purely internal and would not in any way have the sort of limitation that, for example, magnitude has. Nous, the totality of life, is intrinsically limited by the variety of differences arising from Its eternal attempt to contemplate and be an image of Its source, the One (#56).

s. The differences constituting Nous are Its lives and perfections, without which Nous would be incomplete.

¹⁷For valuable explanation of the Aristotelian nature of Plotinus' line of reasoning here, see Bréhier, Ennéades, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 54.

Its limit or determination is thus not like that of a single defined life. Nous is Itself determinate [a determinate unity] by being a unity-in-multiplicity and a totality of lives. Nous is determined because It is a universe of forms and Nous is a unity because It is an active dynamis [i.e., intelligible matter] (#57-#63).

t. While Nous comprehends all intelligences It is not identified with any single intelligence that It has. Otherwise It would be only one particular being and not the totality of them as is Its nature to be. In fact, every being is and lives precisely and only because of its relation to [the whole of] Nous. Nous became the sum total of lives by progressing from being indeterminate and active dynamis to being fully determined and act. It thus became the universe of forms, beings and lives and is prior to them because It is their principle [through Its vision of the One-Good] (#64-#70).

u. As the first principle of reality the One illuminates and animates Nous, which, by contemplating the One, becomes determinate and act. But just as the One is the principle that produces and illumines Nous, so Nous is in turn the principle that produces and illumines the Soul. The Soul is like Nous because it too has intellection, although of a less perfect sort, because it is discursive and not intuitive. Nous, too, is like the One-

Good because Nous is good, although in a less perfect way [because It is multiple]. The One-Good ultimately transcends Nous since the former is formless and indeterminate while the latter is formed and determinate. The One-Good cannot be a form since that would entail that Nous be logos and that the One contain the reasons for all things and thus be multiple. Rather, the One-Good must be entirely undifferentiated. Otherwise, the One-Good would depend on something other than, and prior to, It for Its determination (#71-#76).¹⁸

v. Nous, then, is like the One-Good because It is a trace of the One-Good. Accordingly, life, intelligence and form are also traces of the One-Good. What is it that makes life, intelligence and form good? The answer is that these distinct realities must have some one common and intrinsic characteristic which makes them good. Each of these three is good to the extent that it is a trace of the One-Good. The question remains: what is the good of these highest beings? (#77-#84)

w. It must first be determined whether life itself is in fact good [before we can ask where its goodness comes from]. Life is good because its origin, the One, is Primal Goodness, from which nothing worthless can come. For this same reason intelligence and form are also deemed good, and

¹⁸See note 9, above.

yet each also retains its own identity (#85-#92).

x. Each of these intelligibles and lives has its own identity, which differentiates it logically from all other intelligibles and lives in Nous. But because Nous is a universe of lives and intelligences Its goodness must differ from the goodness of the One, even though Nous has the One as Its source. For Nous is good as a one-in-many whereas the One is Good as purely one. Thus, both the first act [life] and the second act, limit [Nous], are good, so too is the third act, namely, the completed entity [the order of forms] resulting from these two. However, none of these three is identical with the One-Good, since each derives from and depends upon It (#93-#101).

y. What, then, explains how these three [intelligible] beings [life, Nous and form] are good? Goodness in the sensible world depends upon order and rhythm. Goodness in the intelligible world, however, cannot depend upon order and rhythm, which presuppose no outside cause. But there is no such separation in the intelligible world. Hence, goodness must somehow be intrinsic to the members of the intelligible world. Thus, although it is obvious that the intelligibles are good, it is not yet clear what intrinsically makes them be good (#102-#104). [Plotinus' answer, found in Chapters 22 and 23, is that the One is present to life and to the other intelligible beings

as a kind of light, which is the irradiation of the One-Good itself.]

The following items must now be clarified in order to make more explicit the meaning of zōē in the key text: a) life as epistrophē: zōē as it relates to kinēsis and to the other megista gēnē; b) life as prohodos: Nous as active dynamis.

a) Life as epistrophē: zōē as it relates to kinēsis
and the other megista gēnē

In Text D (especially #4-#30), Plotinus employs the concept of kinēsis or movement (in addition to the concepts ousia, tauton and heteron) to explicate how Nous is a one-in-many and a life. Plotinus' usage of these concepts seems to be influenced by Plato's application of them in the Timaeus to explain the composition of the World Soul.¹⁹ In addition to VI, 7 (38) Plotinus discusses the megista gēnē in VI, 2 (43).²⁰ There he seems to be relying on

¹⁹Four of the five megista gēnē of Plato's Sophist occur in VI, 7. Only stasis is not mentioned there. The reason for this omission seems to be that Plotinus must have had the Timaeus (in which stasis likewise is omitted) and not the Sophist (in which stasis is discussed) in mind when writing this treatise.

²⁰This treatise, along with VI, 1 (42) and VI, 3 (44), originally comprised one single work, which Porphyry entitled "On the kinds of being" and divided into three parts. See Porphyry, "Life," p. 21.

What makes VI, 2 (43) the most valuable of the three is that it addresses directly Plotinus' own view on the categories of being. VI, 1 (42) and VI, 3 (44) are concerned chiefly with refuting the positions of the Stoics and Aristotle, respectively.

Plato's Sophist (251a-260a) since he includes his fifth megiston genos: rest (stasis).²¹ By basing our study of the megista gēnē on both of these treatises we shall arrive at the fullest possible conception of them and of their relevance to zōē.

But Plato applies these concepts to Soul, while Plotinus employs them to explain the nature of the intelligible world. Such a shift in application is justified by Plotinus' logos doctrine. As we have already seen in Texts A (VI, 7 [2]) and C (VI, 8 [30]), an important dimension of Plotinus' logos doctrine explains how a lower (and, hence, inferior) reality is constituted by the same factors (only in a less perfect way) that constitute a higher (and, hence, superior) reality. Thus, for example, if Soul is a logos of (a less perfect instance of) Nous the characteristics of the former are more perfectly possessed by the latter. Plotinus' acceptance of Plato's account of the World Soul in the Timaeus makes it possible for him, by utilizing his logos doctrine in this way, to ascribe to the

²¹In the Sophist Plato is concerned with defining fully the nature of a sophist and with distinguishing him from the statesman and the philosopher. It is in his explanation of how false statements (the sophist's "stock in trade", so to speak) are possible that he is led to take up the megista gēnē.

Accordingly, he discusses the megista gēnē a) in order to counter the Parmenidean dictum that one cannot speak meaningfully about "that which is not" (241d-e) and b) in order to show that forms may themselves participate in other forms (251a-259d).

intelligible world (Nous) the four concepts Plato applied to the World Soul.

Let us now return to Plato and briefly examine his use of these concepts in the Timaeus. The Demiurge produces the sensible universe as the image of the World of Forms and endows it with soul. Since soul is prior and superior to body, its task is to rule body.²² But what does it mean to say that soul is prior and superior to body? It means that soul is a unity of three factors: intermediate ousia, intermediate tauton and intermediate thateron. These factors are termed "intermediate" because they lie between the eternal Forms and bodies. Plato's point here seems to be, then, that even in the realm of constantly changing being (the sensible universe) beings are, are identical with themselves and are different from all others, but they are so in a transient manner. That the disorder of the sensible universe is mastered (although not totally) by order is due to the World Soul's presence as intermediary between being and becoming.²³

The World Soul, too, is an ousia because it is a distinct being and has a definite nature, having been

²²See Timaeus 30a-34c.

²³Such is the interpretation of F. M. Cornford (Plato's Cosmology, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937, pp. 60-66) and, as Philip Merlan points out (From Platonism to Neoplatonism, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960, pp. 13ff), of Proclus as well (see, for example, Platonic Theology, VI, 9, 365).

patterned after the Forms themselves. The World Soul is constituted by an inner circle of difference and an outer circle of sameness. The inner and outer circles are there because the World Soul is a tauton and a thateron (the latter of which Plotinus refers to as heteron).

Finally, the World Soul is a twofold kinēsis. First, it is a self-moving principle and the circles of sameness and difference are its constituents and are the means (through efficient causality) by which it knows. Second, it is an intellection of both the intelligible universe and the sensible universe through the circles of sameness and difference.²⁴

Let us now examine each of these Platonic terms as they appear in Plotinus, in order to discern their relationship to zōē. In Text A (IV, 7 [2]) we noted that Plotinus' definition of life is based in part on Platonic arguments. If Soul is kinēsis and, as logos of Nous, imperfect intellection, then Nous must be perfect kinēsis in #4-#10 and #19-#26 of our current key text.

The relationship of kinēsis to zōē must therefore be understood in the same way that the relationship of intellection to zōē is understood. The emergence of

²⁴This explanation of the World Soul in the Timaeus is based on Leo Sweeney, S. J., Infinity in Plato's Philebus: A Bibliographical and Philosophical Study, Ch. 4, pp. 89-140 (forthcoming).

intellection, or Nous, was described in Text C (III, 8 [30]) as involving a two-moment process of prohodos (active dynamis) and epistrophē (act). Since intellection is kinēsis, the emergence of kinēsis may likewise be described as involving these two moments.

We shall examine kinēsis as prohodos (and, hence, as active dynamis, to which Plotinus alludes in #5) later in this chapter. This kinēsis is not yet intellection, since intellection comes only in the second moment of Nous' production (epistrophē), but is simply the overflowing of the One. Kinēsis as epistrophē (i.e., as act) is explained in Text D in terms of ousia (#17 and #24). In this explanation Plotinus once again shows his debt to Plato by his frequent descriptions of the kinēsis of Nous as a "wandering" in which It actuates and animates all ousiai. These ousiai are the acts which constitute the fulfillment of the kinēsis (or "wandering") of Nous (#17).²⁵ The kinēsis of Nous cannot, for Plotinus, occur simply during the moment of Nous' prohodos, since all beings would then remain indeterminate and in potency (#69).²⁶ As determinate, then, kinēsis is the actuation of every being and every life (#9-#10).²⁷ Furthermore, kinēsis is

²⁵See Timaeus 38cff.

²⁶See also VI, 7 (38), 40, 13-20.

²⁷In VI, 2 (43), 7, 35-36; 8, 1-5 and 11-18 Plotinus notes that kinēsis is the eternal intellection which actuates the intelligible realities.

related to the intelligibles themselves as well since every such Form is itself a noēton and hence contemplates from its own perspective the whole of the intelligibles.²⁸ But, as we shall explain later in this chapter, even kinēsis as indeterminate (i.e., as prohodos and active dynamis) is life.

The explanation of tauton and heteron also requires that the two moments of Nous' production be distinguished. An earlier Plotinian text (i.e., II, [4] 12, 5, 28-39) argues that heteron (and not just kinēsis) is necessary for explaining the production of any being because the product necessarily differs from the producer. For this reason, heteron in Text D (#25, #30, #52-#56) is said to be a characteristic of the first moment of Nous' production and, hence, of Nous' life as well.

One may profitably argue that heteron is also a characteristic of the second moment of Nous' production, since the multiplicity of beings is necessarily other than their ultimate source, the One-Good. In fact, it is heteron that makes the multiplicity of being possible, since it is (logically) prior to them (#15-#16).²⁹

²⁸See VI, 2 (43), 8, 14-18, 23-36, and 44-48.

²⁹In VI, 2 (43), 8, 31-43 Plotinus uses heteron to describe the variety in Nous (i.e., the differences among the Forms and the logical difference between intellection and its content).

Plotinus also notes (#26-#30) that tauton is a characteristic of the second moment of Nous' production (and, hence, a characteristic of Nous' life). This conclusion is based on the fact that the eternal intellection of Nous is ever-present to all Its objects or acts (#26-#30).

Tauton and heteron, when considered separately (i.e., as different dimensions of Nous) as well as together (i.e., as dimensions of one and the same reality: Nous) may be seen to contribute to our understanding of zōē in the following way. Life on the level of Nous is both a tauton and a heteron, namely a sameness-in-difference. Sameness (tauton) denotes the life of Nous mainly in Its second moment of production because it refers to the intellection present to and actuating all of the intelligibles.³⁰ Difference (heteron) denotes the life of Nous in both Its first and second moments of production because It is other than the One and because It is a universe of differentiated intelligibles. Each moment in its own right can be described as life.

Kinēsis in relation to tauton is the intellection generating and apprehending every intelligible. Kinēsis in relation to heteron is the noēsis that actuates all the different noēta and it is itself one of these noēta.

³⁰See also VI, 2 (43), 8, 34-43.

finally, stasis, (though it is not mentioned here in Text D but only later in VI, 2 [43], 7, 30-31; 8, 23-27; 15, 11-12) depicts Nous insofar as the content of Its contemplation is a universe of permanent and eternal intelligibles (i.e., Forms).

What Plotinus succeeds in achieving here (in Text D and in VI, 2 [43]), then, is a further elaboration and interrelation of the most perfect aspects of Nous: the megista gēnē. Since each of the megista gēnē is perfect act each expresses in its own way the whole life and universe of Nous.³¹ Furthermore, our consideration of the five principles - kinēsis, tauton, heteron, ousia and stasis - corroborates what we have discovered in previous key texts, namely, that kinēsis is of central importance to life. However, the full significance of kinēsis to our study is grasped when we consider that there are at least three important conceptions of kinēsis operative in Plotinus' thought.

But what are these three conceptions of kinēsis? Although distinct from one another they are also somewhat alike in that they all relate to intellection. The first sense of kinēsis, discussed earlier in Text A (IV, 7 [27]),

³¹See VI, 2 (43), 15, 4-12. Kinēsis denotes the act of Nous as intellection (VI, 2 [43], 8, 11-12); ousia as form (VI, 2 [43]; 8, 14-15); tauton as unity (VI, 2 [43], 8, 36-38); heteron as multiplicity (VI, 2 [43], 8, 34-36); and stasis as eternity (VI, 2 [43], 7, 27-30).

describes both the human soul and the hypostasis Soul. As applied to soul it signifies intellection; a signification that Plotinus draws directly from Plato. This signification of kinēsis is involved in Text D also since it is the Timaeus' conception of the kinēsis of the World Soul as cognition that forms the background of Plotinus' treatment of kinēsis in Text D. The important difference in Text D is that Plotinus elevates this principle to the level of perfect life; to the level of Nous Itself.

The second sense of kinēsis applies to Nous. Kinēsis is perfect intellection and, as such, describes the finished second hypostasis: Nous as epistrophē, life as fully realized. Nous considered as act is life because It has become determined by intellectually encompassing all the Forms (#41-#43). Nous as act actuates and animates the multiplicity of beings which are Its contents. In this sense Nous is not simply one single life but a multiplicity and totality of lives (#8).³²

Nous is likewise responsible for the life of all beings below It. All levels of reality below Nous, then, are alive precisely because and insofar as they are traces (and logoi) of Nous (#32-#33, #72). Accordingly, Nous may be said to be a totality of lives in a twofold way: a) as

³²Plotinus also appears to describe the intelligible world in this way in VI, 5 (23), 12, 9.

the multiple living content of Its contemplation of the One and b) as the source and cause of the life of every level of reality below It, since all beings below Nous are alive only because they are Its logoi (#31, #34).

The life of Nous as a totality of lives is elaborated further in a later treatise: III, 7 (45), "On Eternity and Time," which A. H. Armstrong considers to be "one of the two major discussions of time in the surviving works of ancient philosophers; the other being that by Aristotle (Physics IV, 10-14, 217b-224a)."³³ Its Chapters Three and Eleven provide valuable data regarding the link between eternity and the life of Nous and between time and the life of Soul.

Plotinus' own discussion of eternity and time in treatise III, 7 (45) is based on Plato's definition of time as a moving image of eternity (Timaeus 37d-38b), which seems to form the groundwork of his remarks about eternity (Chs. 1-6) and time (Ch. 7-13). Plotinus, in the context of explaining the five megista gēnē of the Sophist (254d-e), concludes that the act of Nous is a life which comprehends all realities in a single and eternal moment.³⁴ The life of Nous, then, is an eternal kinēsis involving intellection.³⁵

³³Enneads, Vol. III, p. 293. Plotinus criticizes Aristotle's position in III, 7 (45), 9; 12; 13.

³⁴See III, 7 (45), 3, 7-18.

³⁵See III, 7 (45), 11, 1-6.

The life of Soul is also a kinēsis, but on a lower (and, hence, less real and inferior) level of reality. Plotinus explains that Soul, as logos of Nous, is contemplation but of an inferior sort.³⁶ This is due to the fact that Soul's intellection is merely discursive (and, hence, successive) and not intuitive (or immediate).

As Soul presents one act after another, and then again another in ordered succession, it produces along with act, and goes on with another thought coming after that which it had before, to that which it did not previously exist because discursive thought was not in act, and Soul's present life is not like that which came before it.³⁷

Nous and Soul, then, are each a kinēsis and an act. The life of Nous as act is identical with a comprehension of all things in one eternal moment or "now." Soul is alive, on the other hand, because it is a logos of Nous as a participant in the life of Nous. The life of Soul thus involves a temporal comprehension of all things (i.e., in a series of successive moments). In this sense, Plotinus' Soul may be said to be comparable to Plato's aforementioned "moving image of eternity."

To these two conceptions of kinēsis (which apply to Soul and Nous, respectively) a third may be added. This third and somewhat elusive sense of kinēsis will have an important bearing on our understanding of Plotinus'

³⁶See III, 7 (45), 11, 35-40.

³⁷See III, 7 (45), 11, 35-40.

conception of life. It is kinēsis as prohodos -- the first stage of emanation of the second hypostasis out of the One (i.e., the second hypostasis understood as active dynamis or intelligible matter.)³⁸

b) Life as prohodos: Nous as active dynamis

So far we have determined that Nous as fully realized contemplation is life. But there is an eternally prior moment constituting the nature of the second hypostasis. This is the stage of prohodos (active dynamis), the potency for contemplation and not yet the full realization of contemplation. The presence of this eternally prior moment compels us here to ask the question whether Nous as indeterminate and unformed (as prohodos and active dynamis) is also life, and, if so whether this life is the more perfect. Since this first moment is described by Plotinus as intelligible matter perhaps we should begin our investigation there.

Plotinus' treatment of intelligible matter throughout

³⁸These three senses of kinēsis represent three different modes of intellection. The first two represent intellection as imperfect and perfect, respectively. The former is kinēsis which is time, the latter is kinēsis which is eternity. The third is intellection as potency (he dynamis), understood as active power, not passive potency. See, for example, II, 5 (25), 3, 22-28. Whether there seem to be elements in Plotinus' thought which indicate that life may also be defined as active dynamis (and not simply as energeia) is the issue we shall take up in the next section of comments.

the Enneads makes it clear that primarily we are to understand intelligible matter as active dynamis.³⁹ In the first moment of its existence, intelligible matter is undefined and shapeless. It receives shape and form when it turns back to contemplate the One and remains as the substrate of the intelligible realities. As a dynamis intelligible matter receives content (the Forms or acts) and it really unites itself with these acts in order to form a single nature.

Intelligible matter is genuinely real because it is the first emanant from (or product of) the One. As such, it may be said to be more real than any being below it. And, although intelligible matter is indeterminate, this indeterminacy is not a sign of its imperfection and unreality, but is an indication of its similarity with the Primal Reality, the One.⁴⁰

In II, 4 (12), 4, 7-8, Plotinus explains the necessity of intelligible matter by noting that each Form must have a characteristic distinguishing it from other Forms and each

³⁹See, for example, II, 4 (12), 1-5 and II, 5 (25), 3.

⁴⁰The chief reason that sensible matter is indeterminate is that it is below being and perfection. It is, in fact, devoid of form and, as such, it is that which is the eternal darkness and nothingness against which being, form and perfection terminate.

For further explication of this and related points, see J. M. Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," Classical Quarterly, 12 (1962), pp. 99-107, hereafter Rist, "Dyad."

must have something in common with others.⁴¹ In the same treatise (II, 4 [12], 5, 28-30), Plotinus notes that otherness (heteron) and movement (kinēsis) are related to intelligible matter. The otherness which is a characteristic of all beings is what distinguishes each level of reality from the One.⁴² Otherness is both a movement away from and a return to the One. In moving back to the One intelligible matter receives diversity and thereby the plurality of beings is produced. This otherness

⁴¹See II, 4 (12), 4, 7-8. Rist ("Dyad," pp. 104-105) notes that, for Plotinus, the distinguishing characteristic of the Forms is

the feature of shape.....And if they have shape...There must be something to receive the shape --plainly this is the common element mentioned above --and this 'something' must be matter or substrate. The conclusion is backed up by a second argument which suggests that, since the world of sense is an image of the Intelligible World and is based on matter, there must be matter in the Intelligible World likewise. A third argument holds that an ordered system involves both Form and a place wherein Form may be lodged, while a fourth -- most relevant to the present discussion --adds that, since in a sense the Intelligible World is diversified, there must be a basic shapelessness which can be the 'unity' which accepts diversification, and that this 'unit' must be Matter.

For helpful remarks on this topic see John Fielder, "Chorismos and Emanation in the Philosophy of Plotinus," in The Significance of Neoplatonism, Vol. 1 of Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern, ed. by R. Baine Harris (Norfolk, Virginia: Old Dominion University, 1976), pp. 101-120.

⁴²For an explanation of how "otherness" denotes all matter, whether sensible or intelligible, see J. M. Rist, "Plotinus on Matter and Evil," Phronesis 6 (1961), pp. 154-166.

accounts for the unity-in-multiplicity, and the life, of Nous.⁴³

Finally, Plotinus sometimes refers to intelligible matter as the "indefinite dyad" and sometimes simply as "intelligible matter." The term "infinite dyad" refers to intelligible matter in the first moment of Nous' production. Intelligible matter in this case is not to be viewed as the substrate of the Forms but as the active dynamis which issues from the One and subsequently returns to It.⁴⁴ The term "intelligible matter," on the other hand, in addition to denoting the active potency of prohodos also refers to that active potency persisting after the epistrophē of Nous.⁴⁵

Plotinus explains (in II, 4 [12], 5, 28-39) that the first moment of Nous' production (prohodos) is a kinēsis. But he is careful to distinguish (as we have already seen in earlier key texts) from this indeterminate kinēsis the determinate kinēsis which describes the fully realized Nous -- Nous in its second moment (epistrophē). In any case, it is important to realize that life belongs to both moments: Nous as indeterminate and determinate.

⁴³For additional discussion of this point, see Deck, Contemplation, p. 116.

⁴⁴See II, 4 (12), 5, 30ff.

⁴⁵See II, 5 (25), 3. In fact, the unformed active power which is the second hypostasis in the stage of prohodos is the same self-existent once formed during epistrophē.

However, the life which is Nous in Its indeterminate moment (as prohodos and active dynamis) may be seen as logically and eternally prior to the life which is Nous in Its determinate moment (as epistrophē and act). Why? Because, for Plotinus, dynamis itself is prior and superior to act in reality.⁴⁶ Life as active dynamis (or intelligible matter), then, is more perfect than the World of Forms (Nous as epistrophē) because it shares more intimately in the indeterminacy of the One. Intelligible matter really denotes a greater perfection than do the forms. Consequently, it is kinēsis as the first moment of Nous' production, insofar as it manifests active dynamis, intelligible matter and not form, that may be called primal life.

This is perhaps the most valuable insight with regard to the meaning of zōē in Plotinus for it illustrates the richness of his conception of life and brings into focus how life is operative in both moments of Nous' emanation from the One. Kinēsis explains the energeia of Nous (Nous as epistrophē). As such, kinēsis is the actuation of all the megista gēnē, which define and constitute the nature of Nous. Thus, Nous as energeia and life, is the megista gēnē, the forms which exist on the level of epistrophē.

But kinēsis is also a power (active dynamis) for

⁴⁶On this point, see Rist, "Dyad," pp. 105-106.

intellection which is present so as to distinguish Nous (in its first moment of emanation) from the One. Furthermore, not only kinēsis but otherness (heteron) is there also. In the stage of prohodos, kinēsis is the potency for intellection and is not yet intellection. It is an active power for movement, for separation, from the One, a separation which the term heteron conveys. To sum up, in Nous as energeia (epistrophē) kinēsis and heteron are acts while in Nous as active dynamis (prohodos) kinēsis and heteron are active potencies only, not acts.

It is precisely this latter realization (i.e., that primal life is active dynamis and prohodos), which Plotinus seems to hold only implicitly, that later Neoplatonists made explicit. Let us briefly examine how one such thinker, Proclus, makes the point that life is the dynamis of Nous.⁴⁷

He describes the process of emanation on the level of Nous as unfolding in three stages. Each of these stages

⁴⁷It was in the thought of Iamblichus the Syrian (fl. 300 A.D.) that the desire to interpret Plotinian logical distinctions as also necessarily ontological was first applied to Nous. Beginning with Iamblichus, the Nous of Plotinus was broken up into a triad of Being, Life and Intelligence, although this was prepared for in some passages in the Enneads (e.g., V, 4 [7], 2 and VI, 8 [39], 8). See Proclus, Commentary on the Timaeus, transl., Thomas Taylor (London, 1820), III, 45, 5ff. See also Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 129-134.

corresponds to one of the three parts of the triad of Being, Life and Intelligence. The three steps of the process (as outlined in Proposition 35 of the Elements of Theology) are immanence (in which the effect still exists in the cause, but with the capacity to flow out); procession (the actual act of emanation); and reversion (in which the effect turns back to its cause as its final and perfecting goal).

The immanent stage is Being, the widest and most perfect category (after unity). The second is Life, the movement of the second hypostasis away from the One (hence, life is the principle of all self-movement). The final stage is Intelligence, in which the second hypostasis contemplates Itself and the One and becomes filled with content (see Propositions 102 and 138).

Are each of these stages just steps in the development of the second hypostasis, or are they unique in themselves? For Proclus they are both. While they are successive and each is predominant at a certain stage of the procession, they still imply each other as cause or consequent. This may be expressed by saying that the triad is mirrored within each of its terms, so that while, for example, the first term has Being as its predominant character, it is at the same time Life and Intelligence as well (Proposition 103).

Life, then, is the movement of the second hypostasis out of the One. For Proclus the second hypostasis may be considered the exemplary principle of movement because its

movement is primal. The choice of zōē as a description for the middle term of the triad Being-Life-Intelligence, the movement of thought which links object to subject, is suggested by Plato, Sophist 248eff (Proposition 102). But it is the procession (zōē) and reversion (nous) of the second hypostasis which together constitute a single movement, the life of the universe (Proposition 102).⁴⁸

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Let us briefly summarize how this key text has enhanced our understanding of zōē in Plotinus' system. Ennead VI, 7 (38) is an elaborate and involved treatise which consists of two parts. Part One (Chs. 1-14) examines the nature of Nous while Part Two (Chs. 15-42) explicates the relationship of Nous to the Primal Reality, The One-

⁴⁸For additional helpful information, commentary and analysis see E. R. Dodds, Proclus: The Elements of Theology (Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press, 1963), especially pp. 252-272, and A. H. Armstrong, "Eternity, Life and Movement in Plotinus' Account of Nous," Le Neoplatonisme, Royaumont 9-13 juin 1969, Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971, pp. 67-74.

Behind this equation of life and dynamis there are several triads in the religious literature of the time. The most illuminating of these triads is presented by various Barbeloite tractates of the Nag Hammadi corpus (among them Allogenes, Zostrianos and The Trimorphic Protennoia) which identify a supreme dynamis called the Triple Power with life, intelligence and being (see, for example, Allogenes XI, 47, 7-25 and 48, 19-25). For references to the Nag Hammadi tractates, see The Nag Hammadi Library in English, ed. James M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row and E. J. Brill, 1977).

Good. The key text (Chs. 13, 15, 17 and 18) overlaps these two parts.

Our first task is to summarize those chapters which precede our key text. In Chapters One through Twelve Plotinus shows that Nous is a perfect knower and that its nature consists of the infinite multiplicity of Forms. Nous, then, is a single nature that comprehends the reasons for all beings, both intelligible and sensible. Plotinus shows this by interpreting Plato to be saying (in the Timaeus) that the Divine Intelligence, or Craftsman, knows and embraces all of the Forms (i.e., the reasons for all beings). From this interpretation he infers that the world of sensible being must first somehow exist in the intelligible world. In other words, Nous must be the cause of all sensible beings.

But if this is so, how can sense knowledge exist in the intelligible realm and how can the Forms of individual animals, plants and elements exist there also? To the first question Plotinus responds that sense knowledge as such does not (indeed, cannot) exist in the intelligible world. However, sense knowledge can exist there insofar as that which makes sense knowledge possible (namely, the sum total of the principles of knowledge) does exist in the intelligible world. To the second question he replies that insofar as the Forms of all things are perfections they are compatible with the nature of Nous. In addition, all Forms,

when considered as such, are themselves intelligences, irrespective of the qualities or deficiencies they have in their participants. Hence, they are all one in nature with Nous.

In the present key text (VI, 7 [38]) Plotinus is concerned with two main objectives. First, he seeks to explain further life as epistrophē by examining zōē as it relates to the Platonic megista genē, especially kinēsis. Second, he gives some indications concerning life as prohodos or the life of Nous as active dynamis.

In attempting to achieve the first of these objectives Plotinus relies on Plato's Timaeus (and Sophist) in order to explain how the five Platonic megista gēnē (kinēsis, stasis, tauton, heteron and ousia) relate to zōē. In the Timaeus Plato uses four of these notions (omitting stasis) to explain how the Demiurge formed the World Soul. In order that the World Soul should be the best of all sensible beings, the Demiurge blended tauton, thateron (for which term Plotinus substitutes heteron) and ousia into a whole. Next, this unity was cut into strips and these were bent into circles (an inner circle of difference and an outer circle of sameness). These circles were then put into cognitional motion, producing the cyclical movement of the celestial bodies. For Plato, it is through the motion of these circles of sameness and difference that the World Soul knows both the Forms and all sensible existents. In the

Sophist Plato employs all five of these notions to help him to determine the precise difference between the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher. In his discussion of the chief feature of the sophist, namely, his ability to employ false statements, Plato introduces the megista gēnē. They serve a dual purpose: a) to show that it is possible (contra Parmenides) to speak meaningfully about "that which is not" and b) to further explain the science of Dialectics by showing that true knowledge must consist in understanding how Forms relate to other Forms (and not just in understanding how sensible things relate to Forms).

By emphasizing an important dimension of his logos doctrine (i.e., that a lower reality is a less perfect instance of a higher reality) Plotinus transfers these notions to Nous. Thus, kinēsis, tauton, heteron, ousia and stasis are constitutive not only of Soul but, in a more perfect way, of Nous as well.

How, then, is zōē to be understood in relation to these notions? To understand the connection between kinēsis and zōē it is necessary to note that Nous is produced in a twofold process of prohodos (active dynamis) and epistrophē (act). Each moment is indeed a kinēsis and a life. Kinēsis as prohodos is not yet intellection, but it is life as sheer active power for intellection and, hence, is the indeterminate principle of all living beings and acts. Kinēsis as epistrophē is explicable in terms of ousia.

Here, too, Plotinus employs Platonic terms when describing the kinēsis of Nous as a "wandering" within Itself in which It animates all ousiai. This we may take as further justification of our inference, made earlier in this key text and in Text A (IV, 7 [2]), that by life Plotinus means a kind of kinēsis. These ousiai are themselves the acts which constitute the fulfillment of the kinēsis of Nous (Nous in Its determinate state). As determinate or act, then, Nous is the actuation of every being and every life.

To explain how tauton and heteron relate to zōē it is necessary to refer again to the two moments of Nous' production. Plotinus argues (in II, 4 [12], 5, 28-39) that a proper explanation of the production of any being must refer not just to kinēsis but to heteron as well. Why? Because any product is necessarily different from, by being less perfect than, its producer. Hence, heteron in our key text is a significant characteristic of the first moment of Nous' production and also of Nous' life. Heteron in the moment of prohodos is consequently identical with intelligible matter and active dynamis. Furthermore, it may also be said that heteron is a characteristic of the second moment of Nous' production, since the plurality of intelligible beings is necessarily other than their original source, the One-Good. Tauton also is a characteristic of the second moment of Nous' production and, hence, of Its life as well. Why? Because the eternal intellection of

Nous is ever-present to all of Its objects or acts. This factor is the trace of the One common to all beings and is life. Elsewhere in the Enneads (VI, 2 [43]) Plotinus, relying on Plato's Sophist, speaks further about the megista gēnē, this time bringing in the fifth genos, stasis (rest) as well. There he notes that even stasis applies to Nous because the content of Its contemplation is a universe of permanent and eternal forms.

What may we conclude regarding zōē in light of its connection with the concepts tauton, heteron, ousia, kinēsis and stasis? First, life on the level of Nous is both a tauton and a heteron, that is, a sameness-in-difference. Sameness denotes the life of Nous mainly in Its moment of epistrophē and difference denotes the life of Nous in Its moments of prohodos and epistrophē. Second, each moment of Nous' production may be termed life. Nous in Its first moment is life as pure active dynamis, as the indeterminate principle for all living beings and acts. Nous in Its second moment is life as the actuation and determination of all living intelligibles.

How might we better understand the life of Nous in the first moment of Its production? We notice that in Its first moment Nous is intelligible matter, which is first emanant from, or product of, the One. But intelligible matter is life as active dynamis. Hence, life as active dynamis may be said to be more real than any being subsequent (logically

and otherwise) to it. Intelligible matter, precisely as indeterminate and unformed, is more like the One than it is when it becomes determinate and formed (in the moment of epistrophē).

We may say, therefore, that life as active dynamis is Primal Life because it is more real than life as act. What would lead us to such a conclusion? Careful consideration of certain fundamental Plotinian principles, namely, "to be real is to be one" and "dynamis is more perfect than, because it is prior to, act."⁴⁹ Life as active dynamis may be said to be more perfect than life as act and intelligible matter (which is identified with life as active dynamis) may be said to be more perfect than the World of Forms precisely because intelligible matter, for Plotinus, shares more intimately in the indeterminacy of the One than does the World of Forms.

⁴⁹This latter principle is derived from Rist ("Dyad," pp. 105-106) who states that intelligible matter,

...the first effluence from the One, possesses by its very indeterminacy a kinship with the One which the Forms do not possess. As we read in Enn. 2.4.3, Matter 'there' is everything at the same time. It has nothing into which it can change, for it already possesses everything. This indeterminacy which can, on its return to its Source, yield any one of the eternal Forms, has of itself something more akin to the One than have these later determinations. The Forms are perfectly what they are; they are perfect being. Intelligible Matter has a shadow of the superiority of τό ἐπέκεινα in its potential of becoming all Real Beings.

Reflection on this problem led later Neoplatonists to posit additional hypostases. Proclus, for example, describes the process of emanation as involving three stages, each of which represents a separate hypostasis: first, the immanent stage (Being), second, the stage of prohodos (Life), and third, the stage of epistrophē (Nous). While these stages are logically successive and each predominates at a certain point of the process, they nevertheless imply each other as cause or consequent. Accordingly, the triad is reflected in each of its terms. Life, then, is the movement of Nous from immanence in the One to determination and actuation.

Finally, we have learned something from our current key text about the life of Nous as a totality of lives. To the brief discussion of this point in Text B (VI, 9 [9]) the following discoveries from our current key text may be added. Nous as act (epistrophē) actuates and animates the multiplicity of beings which are Its contents. Nous in this sense is not simply one single life but a multiplicity and totality of lives. Furthermore, all levels of reality subsequent to, or below, Nous are alive precisely because they are Its traces and logoi. Nous is a totality of lives both as the multiple living content of Its contemplation of the One and also as the source and cause of the life of every being on every level of reality below It.

Furthermore, the life of Nous may be seen to be identical with the intellection of all things in one eternal moment or "now." The life of Nous is eternity. The next level of reality, Soul, is alive (because it is a logos of Nous) but, involves temporality, because its intellection is successive. The life of Soul is time.⁵⁰

⁵⁰One may say that Nous, as eternity, is the Neoplatonic equivalent of what Plato (Timaeus 37c-d) calls the "eternal living being." Furthermore, the life of Soul, since it is an intellection that is successive and, hence, temporal, may be said to be the equivalent of what Plato (Timaeus 37d-e) calls the "moving image of eternity."

CHAPTER VI

TEXT E: ENNEAD I, 4 (46), 3-4

The last key text that we will examine is found in Chapters Three and Four of treatise I, 4. Let us first describe the treatise in general. This late treatise (forty-sixth chronologically) is one of several written near the end of Plotinus' life.¹ It is entitled "On the Good State of One's Inner Reality" because it is concerned primarily with the way in which man should live in order to attain his true good.² In other words, one's true good is

¹In fact, it is the first of the final nine treatises written by Plotinus, whose "power was already failing, and this is more apparent in the last four than in the five which precede them" (Porphyry, "Life," p. 25). The lack of power which Porphyry mentions here is the result of Plotinus' failing physical health. There would seem to be no good reason, however, for assuming from this that his intellectual powers suffered similar deterioration. Thus, we may, and shall, assume that even these final treatises, of which I, 4 is a member, represent Plotinus' mature thought.

²We shall interpret εὐδαιμονία, which is a composite of εὖ (meaning "well" or "good") and δαίμων (meaning "genius," "spirit" or "inner reality") as "the good state of one's inner reality." Interpretations such as "well being" or "happiness" do not accurately express what Plotinus here means by εὐδαιμονία and, therefore, are misleading and inadequate. For additional discussion of the meaning of εὐδαιμονία see John M. Cooper, Reason and Human Good in Aristotle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard

attained by living the life of eudaimonia.³

In order to introduce effectively this key text, we shall briefly survey those treatises preceding it which provide subsidiary information on zōē. Eight treatises intervene between Text D (VI, 7 [38]) and Text E (I, 4 [46]). Three of these require attention in preparing our context: VI, 8 (39), VI, 2 (43) and III, 7 (45). The other treatises in this group, while interesting in their own right, concern issues peripheral to "life" in Plotinus. II, 1 (40), "On the Heavens," and IV, 6 (41), "On Sense-Perception and Memory," mention zōē in passing but without advancing our knowledge of the subject beyond what we discovered in earlier treatises. VI, 1 (42) and VI, 3 (44), along with VI, 2 (43), initially comprised a single work, entitled "On the Genera of Being." Although VI, 1 and VI, 3 mention "life" they are primarily polemical in nature (against the Stoic and Aristotelian views of the genera of being)⁴ and hence not helpful to our study. Only VI, 2 is

(2continued)

University Press, 1975), pp. 89ff and W. Himmerich, Eudaimonia: Die Lehre des Plotins von der Selbstverwirklichung des Menschen (Würzburg: K. Triltsch, 1959).

³Here and elsewhere I transliterate, rather than translate, εὐδαιμονία in its various forms in order to avoid making the translation of this key text unnecessarily awkward.

⁴But see Steven K. Strange, "Plotinus' Treatise 'On the Genera of Being': An Historical and Philosophical Study" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1981), who modifies the polemic charge.

a clear statement of Plotinus' own position on the subject. Hence, we shall confine our attention to VI, 2 (43), along with VI, 8 (39) and III, 7 (45), in the following paragraphs.

VI, 8 (39) is a complex treatise which in its early chapters merely repeats principles which we have already discovered in earlier texts of zōē. In particular, they reiterate that man's life becomes more perfect as it comes to resemble Nous and ultimately becomes identified with It (i.e., perfect life).⁵ These relatively uninformative chapters, however, are followed by several extraordinary chapters in which Plotinus suspends his negative theology so far as to attribute ousia, energeia and even zōē to the One. The significant remark about life occurs at the close of Chapter Sixteen. "This awakening is beyond being, before Intelligence, before rational life. Even so He is these. He is thus an act above Intelligence and consciousness (phronēsis) and life."⁶

In spite of Plotinus' willingness here to ascribe life to the One and in spite of the treatise's general willingness to depart from negative theology, VI, 8 does not, in the final analysis, contradict our conclusion that life (and by association energeia and ousia) belongs

⁵See VI, 8 (39), 4-5, especially.

⁶See VI, 8 (39), 16, 34-37.

properly only to Nous, not the One. That VI, 8 does not force us radically to reassess these conclusions follows from the exceptional nature of the treatise, the unusual purpose behind its composition. Plotinus here seems to be willing momentarily to part with his general position regarding the One (a position which forbids ascribing life to the One) in order to refute what he considers to be an unacceptable interpretation of the Primal Reality.⁷ If

⁷Evidence of the exceptional nature of VI, 8 is brought out in its chapter seven, lines 12-15. There Plotinus refers to the tolmeros logos or "bold discourse" of an unnamed school of thought (*ἐτέρωθεν σταλεις*), which, as a forthcoming article by A. H. Armstrong suggests, "Two views of Freedom. A Christian Objection in VI, 8 (39), 7, 11-15," is orthodox Christian, and not Gnostic in nature. Although interesting in its own right, the question of the precise nature of this unacceptable school of thought is not one that concerns us directly. What is valuable is that Plotinus apparently finds this tolmeros logos so disturbing that in order to prevent it from confusing his own students he is willing to address it as if it were a respectable philosophical position. This fact alone would seem to explain why he considers it at such length in this treatise when elsewhere he might easily dismiss it by an appeal to his negative theology.

This "presumptuous discourse" takes the form of a dilemma: either the One has a cause or does not have a cause. If the One has a cause, then the One is being and would have a definite nature. If the One does not have a cause, then It is without explanation and thus exists merely by chance or accident.

Plotinus wants to reply to this misconception. He clearly understands that it is based on a mistake because it tries to look at the One from the vantage point of categories that would apply only to the order of beings. Hence, it is a mistake to apply any affirmative predicate to God within a negative theology. In other words, it is a violation of the principle of negative theology to say what God is instead of what God is not.

Because he is motivated by pedagogical and polemical considerations, then, Plotinus is willing to violate his own

this is so, then VI, 8 does not entail any reconstruction of our interpretation of Plotinus' position on life.

In treatise VI, 2 (43), "On the Genera of Being," Plotinus notes (Ch. 7) that life and ousia are both in the Soul. As perfections these must belong to every soul. And if they belong to Soul, which is a logos of Nous, they must belong to Nous as well. But if life belongs to Nous and Soul, and if life is a kind of kinēsis (i.e., self-kinēsis) it follows that kinēsis as a genus belongs to all life. Since kinēsis presupposes ousia, Plotinus argues that two genera, ousia and kinēsis, must be posited in Nous (as distinguishable, though not actually distinct, parts of It).

However, ousia and kinēsis are, to a degree, really distinct on levels of reality below Nous because reality here below is less perfect because more multiple. The sensible world compares to the real (i.e., intelligible) world as the image of a man does to an actually existing man. Just as the image of a man omits many of his perfections (among them, life), so sensible being omits many

(7continued)

negative theology and apply terms to the One he would ordinarily forbid. Plotinus notes in at least one instance (Ch. 13, lines 1-5) that he is not speaking accurately but is willing to do so in the present context in order to refute his enemies. Although he has terms like energeia explicitly in mind here (i.e., terms which he will use inaccurately here), we may infer that he here uses "life" in this way also. For additional helpful commentary on this treatise see Bréhier, "Notice," Vol. 6, Part 7, pp. 119ff and Hancock, Energeia, pp. 220ff.

perfections of true being. Hence, to try to understand life solely by examining its function in the sensible universe is to fail to understand life truly.

In addition, life on the level of Nous entails some Forms, the supreme genera, which are at once perfect acts, perfect intelligibles and perfect lives. These acts, identified with the life of Nous, are the five genera of Plato's Sophist (i.e., ousia, kinēsis, tauton, heteron, stasis). These are the supreme categories, of which the Aristotelian categories are mere shadows, and are the supreme objects of epistēmē.

On the level of Nous, then, the various genera are not actually or materially distinct as such. However, they are of such a nature as to be capable of being distinguished when one reflects on Nous. Hence, nothing in the contents of Nous is really distinct per se but only distinguishable in thought. Of course, the genera do exist on the level of Nous, but in a way that does not involve the sort of distinction and separation found in the sense world.

Based on this conception that the constituents of Nous are only separable in thought one must conclude that Nous is true life. Where there are, to a degree, material distinctions, such as between ousia and accidents in sensible existents, there is only the appearance of life (Chs. 14-15).

In III, 7 (45), "On Eternity and Time," Plotinus again

expresses the life of Nous in terms of Plato's megista gēnē. Perfect life is pure act, and pure act can be regarded from five different points of view: ousia, kinēsis, tauton, heteron and stasis. Whether taken individually or collectively, each megiston genos represents the whole reality which is the second hypostasis, which, by virtue of having its life realized in a single moment, is eternity.

In other words, where there is such a great unity that the constituents of Nous are distinguishable in thought only, life is eternity. Elsewhere (on the level of Soul, for example) life is time.⁸ Thus we find III, 7 further endorsing Plotinus' conclusion in VI, 2 that the absence of real priority and posteriority in the nature of Nous makes it perfect life: a life meriting the description "eternal."

Following his conclusions in VI, 2 (43), 14-15, Plotinus here (III, 7 [45], 3) repeats that the Soul contains real priority and posteriority, bringing fragmentation and diminution of being, and thus is not eternity but time. The sense world, then, is not life per se but only the shadow and appearance of life, because the separation is spatial and temporal making the genera more distinct and less real.

We may now elucidate I, 4 itself. In the first four

⁸This and related relevant aspects of treatise III, 7 were discussed in Text D: VI, 7 (38).

chapters Plotinus attempts to establish that the truly good life, which is the genuine human good, is the highest and most perfect life, the life of Nous. The truly good human life (like the life of Nous) should be focused on the One-Good and should be independent of all external and sensible concerns, which are manifestations of man's lower nature. Only then is it a life of eudaimonia. In the last twelve chapters he focuses his attention on the nature of eudaimonia itself. Since our key text consists of Chapters Three and Four we shall first summarize the chapters which precede them.

If one says, as Plotinus claims that Aristotle does, that the good life (eudaimonia) is identical with the performance of one's proper functions and with the attainment of one's proper end, then one would be compelled to say that non-human living beings, including plants, are capable of attaining this good life as well.⁹ If Plotinus' claim is correct (and we shall argue later in this chapter that it is not) then one must conclude that Aristotle would seem to be inconsistent when he views eudaimonia as an achievement restricted to human beings while at the same time apparently defining it in so general

⁹This is in fact what Plotinus seems to be saying in I, 4. Whether his assessment of Aristotle is accurate or fair is another matter. There seems to be no evidence in the Nicomachean Ethics that eudaimonia can properly be applied to non-rational beings.

a fashion that it appears to apply to any living being, whether human or non-human (Ch. 1).

Similarly, both the Epicurean and the Stoic views of eudaimonia are unacceptable when studied carefully and critically. The view of the Epicureans is too narrow, since it equates the good life with a life of pleasure and serenity. Eudaimonia, however, is more than mere pleasure or the conscious experience of tranquility or peace of mind. The Stoic position, while more accurate because of its identification of eudaimonia with the life of reason, nevertheless is also unsatisfactory because of its unexplained reference to the satisfaction of primary natural needs. The difficulty here is that, although the Stoics are quite correct in what they say, they do not satisfactorily explain how the good life is possible for the beings which are capable of it. They cannot explain why they hold their position (Ch. 2).¹⁰ We now turn to the key text, Chapters Three and Four.

Text E: I, 4 (46), 3-4

[1] We, however, express from the start what we understand by eudaimonia. Let us suppose that we assume that eudaimonia [is found] in life. [2] If we make "life" apply in the same sense [to all living beings],

¹⁰Plotinus' reaction to the positions of Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics on eudaimonia will be taken up in greater detail later in this chapter. Against Aristotle he will argue that he seems to make eudaimonia rely on externals; against the Epicureans that they limit their concern only to the sense world; and against the Stoics that they do not portray accurately human nature and destiny.

and allow that all living beings are able to acquire eudaimonia, then [we must conclude that] those [beings] live well in actuality who possess one and the same thing, [something] which all living things naturally may acquire. [3] And for this reason we would not give this power to rational beings on the one hand but not to irrational beings on the other. [4] For life is common [to both], and it is life which, [when] received, tends towards eudaimonia, if eudaimonia is brought about by a kind of life. [5] So I think that those who say that eudaimonia is to be found in rational life are unaware that, since they do not place it in the life which living things have in common, they are really assuming that it is not [associated with] life at all. [6] They would have to say that the rational power on which eudaimonia depends is a quality [other than life]. But the foundation [of their argument] is rational life.

3, 1-15:

Ἡμεῖς δὲ λέγωμεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τί ποτε τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὑπολαμβάνομεν εἶναι. Τιθέμενοι δὴ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἐν ζωῇ, εἰ μὲν συνώνυμον τὸ ζῆν ἐποιοῦμεθα, πᾶσι μὲν ἂν τοῖς ζῶσιν ἀπέδομεν δεκτικοῖς εὐδαιμονίας εἶναι, εὖ δὲ ζῆν ἐνεργεῖα ἐκεῖνα, οἷς παρῆν ἔν τι καὶ ταῦτόν, οὐ ἐπεφύκει δεκτικὰ πάντα τὰ ζῶα εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν τῷ μὲν λογικῶ ἔδομεν δύνασθαι τοῦτο, τῷ δὲ ἀλόγῳ οὐκέτι· ζωὴ γὰρ ἦν τὸ κοινόν, ὃ δεκτικόν τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἔμελλεν εἶναι, εἴπερ ἐν ζωῇ τιμὴ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὑπῆρχεν. Ὅθεν, οἶμαι, καὶ οἱ ἐν λογικῇ ζωῇ λέγοντες τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ¹⁰ γίνεσθαι οὐκ ἐν τῇ κοινῇ ζωῇ τιθέντες ἠγνόησαν τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν οὐδὲ ζωὴν ὑποτιθέμενοι. Ποιότητα δὲ τὴν λογικὴν δύναμιν, περὶ ἣν ἡ εὐδαιμονία συνίσταται, ἀναγκάζονται ἂν λέγειν. Ἀλλὰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον αὐτοῖς λογικὴ ἐστὶ ζωὴ· περὶ γὰρ τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο ἡ εὐδαιμονία συνίσταται.

[7] Eudaimonia is connected with this [life] as a whole, that is, with another kind of life. I do not mean "another kind" in the sense of a distinction in thought, but in the sense in which we speak of one thing as prior and another as posterior. [8] The term "life" is used in many ways, differing according to the ordering of the things to which it is applied, first, second, and so on; and "living" means different things in different contexts. [9] It is applied in one way to plants, in another to irrational animals, in various ways [to things] distinguished from each other by the clarity or dimness of their life; so obviously the same

applies to "[living] well." [10] And if one [thing] is an image of another, obviously its good [life] is the image of another good [life].

3, 15-24:

ὥστε 15

περὶ ἄλλο εἶδος ζωῆς. Λέγω δὲ οὐχ ὡς ἀντιδιηρημένον τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἡμεῖς φαμεν πρότερον, τὸ δὲ ὕστερον εἶναι. Πολλαχῶς τοίνυν τῆς ζωῆς λεγομένης καὶ τὴν διαφορὰν ἐχούσης κατὰ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ δευτέρα καὶ ἐφεξῆς καὶ ὁμωνύμως τοῦ ζῆν λεγομένου ἄλλως μὲν τοῦ 20 φυτοῦ, ἄλλως δὲ τοῦ ἀλόγου καὶ τρανότητι καὶ ἀμυδρότητι τὴν διαφορὰν ἐχόντων, ἀνάλογον δηλονότι καὶ τὸ εὖ. Καὶ εἰ εἶδωλον ἄλλο ἄλλου, δηλονότι καὶ τὸ εὖ ὡς εἶδωλον αὐτοῦ εὖ.

[11] If eudaimonia belongs to that which has a superabundance of life -- to that which is in no way deficient in life -- it will belong only to the being which lives superabundantly.¹¹ [12] Such [a being] will have the best [life], if the best among beings is the truly alive and perfect life. [13] So its good will not be something brought in from the outside. Nor will the basis of its goodness come from somewhere else and [thereby] bring it into a good state. [14] For what could be added to the perfect life [in order] to make it into the best life? If anyone says that [it is] the nature of the Good, that is our own way of speaking, but for now we are not looking for the cause, but for what is within. [15] It has often been said that the perfect life, the true [and] real life, is in that intelligible nature, and that other lives are incomplete [and mere] appearances of life, not perfect or pure and no more [real] lives than its opposite. [16] But now, briefly stated, as long as living things proceed from a

¹¹Rist (Road to Reality, p. 142) translates τὸ ἄγαν ζῆν as "excess of life." This translation, however, seems to carry with it a certain negativity since the word "excess" frequently denotes an additional and unwanted quantity while, for Plotinus, life is never possessed so fully that a portion of it would be unwanted. Although MacKenna's rendering, "fullness of life," is more to the point, we shall use Armstrong's version, "superabundance of life," since it most faithfully seems to render the contextual meaning of this Greek phrase.

single principle but do not have life to the same degree as It, the principle must be the first and most perfect life.

3, 24-40:

Εἰ δὲ ὅτω ἄγαν ὑπάρχει τὸ ζῆν — τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν ὁ μηδενὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἐλλείπει — τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν, 25 μόνῳ ἂν τῷ ἄγαν ζῶντι τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὑπάρχοι· τούτῳ γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἄριστον, εἴπερ ἐν τοῖς οὐσι τὸ ἄριστον τὸ ὄντως ἐν ζωῇ καὶ ἢ τέλειος ζωῆ· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν οὐδὲ ἐπακτὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὑπάρχοι, οὐδ' ἄλλο τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἀλλαχόθεν γενόμενον παρέξει αὐτὸ ἐν ἀγαθῷ εἶναι. Τί γὰρ τῇ τελείᾳ 30 ζωῇ ἂν προσγένοιτο εἰς τὸ ἀρίστη εἶναι; Εἰ δέ τις τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν ἐρεῖ, οἰκείος μὲν ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν, οὐ μὴν τὸ αἴτιον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐνυπάρχον ζητοῦμεν. Ὅτι δ' ἡ τελεία ζωῆ καὶ ἡ ἀληθινή καὶ ὄντως ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ νοερᾷ φύσει, 35 καὶ ὅτι αἱ ἄλλαι ἀτελεῖς καὶ ἰνδάλατα ζωῆς καὶ οὐ τελείως οὐδὲ καθαρῶς καὶ οὐ μᾶλλον ζῶαι ἢ τοῦναντίον, πολλάκις μὲν εἴρηται· καὶ νῦν δὲ λελέχθω συντόμως ὡς, ἕως ἂν πάντα τὰ ζῶντα ἐκ μιᾶς ἀρχῆς ᾗ, μὴ ἐπίσης δὲ τὰ ἄλλα ζῆ, ἀνάγκη τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν πρώτην ζωὴν καὶ 40 τὴν τελειοτάτην εἶναι.

[17] If, then, man can have perfect life, the man having this life is eudaimon.¹² If not, one would have to attribute eudaimonia [only] to the gods, if among them alone this kind of life is to be found. [18] But since we maintain that this eudaimonia is to be found among men, we must consider how it is so. [19] What I mean is that, as is clear from what has been said elsewhere, man has perfect life by having not only sense-life but reasoning and true intelligence [as well]. [20] But is it as being different, that he has this difference? No, for he is not a man at all unless he has this [reasoning and true intelligence] either potentially or actually and such a one we say is eudaimon.

¹²Eudaimon here and elsewhere in this key text refers to the person who possesses eudaimonia and, hence, whose inner reality is in a good state.

4, 1-11:

Εἰ μὲν οὖν τὴν τελείαν ζωὴν ἔχειν οἷός τε ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ταύτην ἔχων τὴν ζωὴν εὐδαιμών. Εἰ δὲ μή, ἐν θεοῖς ἂν τις τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν θεῖτο, εἰ ἐν ἐκείνοις μόνοις ἢ τοιαύτῃ ζωῇ. Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν φαμέν εἶναι καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώ-
 5 ποῖς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν τοῦτο, σκεπτέον πῶς ἔστι τοῦτο. Λέγω δὲ ὧδε· ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἔχει τελείαν ζωὴν ἄνθρωπος οὐ τὴν αἰσθητικὴν μόνον ἔχων, ἀλλὰ καὶ λογισμὸν καὶ νοῦν ἀληθινόν, δῆλον καὶ ἐξ ἄλλων. Ἄλλ' ἄρα γε ὡς ἄλλος ὢν ἄλλο τοῦτο ἔχει; Ἡ οὐδ' ἐστὶν ὅλως ἄνθρωπος μὴ οὐ καὶ
 10 τοῦτο ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐνεργείᾳ ἔχων, ὃν δὴ καὶ φαμέν εὐδαι-
 μονα εἶναι.

[21] But shall we say that he has this perfect kind of life as [an intrinsic] part of himself? The other man, we hold, has this potentially, having some part, but the man who is eudaimon already is this, who obviously both is this actually and has passed over into identity with it. [22] Everything else is just something he wears. You could not call it [a genuine] part of him because he wears it without wanting to. It would be his if he united it to him by an act of the will. [23] What, then, for him is the good? Rather, he himself is the good that he has. That which transcends him is the cause of whatever he has in him. And it is good in one way, [and] in another way, it is present to him. [24] The evidence for this lies in the fact that the man in this state [of eudaimonia] does not seek to have anything else. What [else] could he seek? Certainly not anything worse, and he has the best joined to him. [the man] who has a life like this has all that he needs in life.

4, 11-23:

Ἄλλ' ὡς μέρος αὐτοῦ τοῦτο φήσομεν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ εἶδος τῆς ζωῆς τὸ τέλειον εἶναι; Ἡ τὸν μὲν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον μέρος τι τοῦτο ἔχειν δυνάμει ἔχοντα, τὸν δὲ εὐδαιμόνα ἤδη, ὃς δὴ καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ ἐστὶ τοῦτο καὶ μετα-
 15 βέβηκε πρὸς τὸ αὐτό, εἶναι τοῦτο· περικεῖσθαι δ' αὐτῷ τὰ ἄλλα ἤδη, ἃ δὴ οὐδὲ μέρη αὐτοῦ ἂν τις θεῖτο οὐκ ἐθέλοντι περικείμενα· ἦν δ' ἂν αὐτοῦ κατὰ βούλησιν συνηρημένα. Τούτῳ τοίνυν τί ποτ' ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν; Ἡ αὐτὸς αὐτῷ ὅπερ ἔχει· τὸ δὲ ἐπέκεινα αἴτιον τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλως ἀγαθόν, αὐτῷ παρὸν ἄλλως. Μαρτύριον δὲ τοῦ τοῦτο εἶναι
 20 τὸ μὴ ἄλλο ζητεῖν τὸν οὕτως ἔχοντα. Τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ ζητήσῃε; Τῶν μὲν γὰρ χειρόνων οὐδέν. τῷ δὲ ἀρίστῳ σύνεστιν. Αὐτάρκης οὖν ὁ βίος τῷ οὕτως ζωὴν ἔχοντι.

[25] If he is serious, he has all that he needs for eudaimonia and for the acquisition of good. There is no good that he does not possess. [26] What he seeks he seeks as a necessity, not for himself but for something that belongs to him. That is, he seeks it for the body which is joined to him. [27] And even though it is a living body, he seeks the things [needed] for this living [body] of his, not the things needed for the [serious] man. [28] And he [the serious man] knows its [true] needs, and gives it what he gives it without taking away anything from his own [true] life. [29] His eudaimonia will not be diminished in times of bad fortune. Such a [good] life remains even so. When his family and friends die he knows what death [really] is, in the same way that serious people who die know [what death is]. [30] Even when the death of family and friends causes him grief, this does not grieve [what is most real in] him, but only that in him which has no intelligence; and he will not allow this grief [to affect him].

4, 23-36:

Kān

σπουδαῖος ἦ, αὐτάρκης εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ εἰς κτήσιν ἀγαθοῦ· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἀγαθὸν ὃ μὴ ἔχει. Ἄλλ' ὁ ζητεῖ ²⁵ ὡς ἀναγκαῖον ζητεῖ, καὶ οὐχ αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ τινι τῶν αὐτοῦ. Σώματι γὰρ προσηρητημένῳ ζητεῖ· κἄν ζῶντι δὲ σώματι, τὰ αὐτοῦ ζῶντι τούτῳ, οὐχ ἅ τοιούτου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶ. Καὶ γινώσκει ταῦτα καὶ δίδωσιν ἅ δίδωσιν οὐδὲν τῆς αὐτοῦ παραιρούμενος ζωῆς. Οὐδ' ἐν τύχαις τοίνυν ἐναντίας ³⁰ ἐλαττώσεται εἰς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν· μένει γὰρ καὶ ὡς ἡ τοιαύτη ζωὴ· ἀποθνησκόντων τε οἰκείων καὶ φίλων οἶδε τὸν θάνατον ὃ τι ἐστίν, ἴσασι δὲ καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες σπουδαῖοι ὄντες. Οἰκείοι δὲ καὶ προσήκοντες τοῦτο πάσχοντες κἄν λυπῶσιν, οὐκ αὐτόν, τὸ δ' ἐν αὐτῷ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, οὐ τὰς ³⁵ λύπας οὐ δέξεται.

COMMENTS

Let us now present the movement of thought in Text E.

In the first two chapters of I, 4 (46) Plotinus aims to show

that the Aristotelian, Epicurean and Stoic positions regarding the nature of perfect human life are unacceptable. He criticizes Aristotle for an apparent inconsistency. He claims that Aristotle both identifies a being's eudaimonia with the performance of its proper function (and the achievement of its natural end) and denies eudaimonia to non-rational beings (Ch. 1, lines 1-26 and Ch. 2, lines 1-31). He also rejects the Epicurean identification of eudaimonia with the life of pleasure or tranquility (Ch. 1, lines 26-30). Finally, he criticizes the Stoics for their irreconcilable identification of eudaimonia (and the life of reason and virtue) with the view of the importance of the primary natural needs (Ch. 2, lines 31-55).

In Chapters Three and Four Plotinus presents his own view of eudaimonia. As a preface to this, however, he examines what he considers to be some erroneous conceptions of eudaimonia.

a. Some philosophers (e.g., Aristotle) suppose that eudaimonia belongs to anything that has life. For them, rational and irrational living things, to the extent that they are able to live fully in the way that is proper and natural to them, are capable of achieving eudaimonia (#1-#4).

b. Other thinkers (e.g., the Stoics) argue that only those beings endowed with rational life are capable of achieving eudaimonia. But they do not realize that in

denying eudaimonia to some kinds of life they really do not attribute it to life at all. They obviously would have to say that the "rationality" on which eudaimonia depends is a quality other than life (#5-#6).

c. But [Plotinus begins] merely being alive cannot be an adequate condition for eudaimonia. There are many types of living beings but each of them is different by the degree, or "brightness" or "dimness," of its life. What is required for eudaimonia is that the living being have a superabundance of life; that is, that it have the best life, namely, the life of pure intellection (#7-#11).¹³

d. Thus, eudaimonia is found in the "intelligible nature" or Nous and in human beings, who through their possession of intellect are able to attain the One-Good by contemplation. The One-Good in this context functions as the underlying foundation of this superabundant life because It is the intelligible content of the contemplation of Nous and of human beings. Accordingly, if Nous is the superabundance of life and if only beings which are endowed with Nous (or rationality) can attain this superabundance and, hence, eudaimonia, then irrational animals, plants (and

¹³Aristotle would not disagree with this last point, namely, that the human activity of intellect (i.e., pure thought) represents perfect human eudaimonia. Hence, the life of intellect, as it contemplates knowledge possessed and pursues further knowledge, fulfills the conditions necessary for eudaimonia. See, for example, Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. 10, Ch. 6, 1177b19-26.

certainly non-living things) can neither live superabundantly nor enjoy eudaimonia (#12-#16).

e. [In Chapter Four Plotinus continues his analysis of human life. He begins by asking what must be the case in order for man to have perfect life.] Man is one of the logoi of Nous, so he is life too. Men are capable of eudaimonia (experience tells us that); hence, eudaimonia does not apply (as the Epicureans seem to imply) to the gods only (#17-#18).

f. How then does it manifest itself in man? It clearly does so because man, as logos of Nous, is an intelligence -- he has reason in addition to his sense knowledge. Without intelligence a man is not truly a man. It follows from this that his eudaimonia is actualized to the extent that his intelligence is actualized. This means that the more he is like Nous, the more he has eudaimonia (#19-#20).

g. To have eudaimonia in potency is to have it "in part." But a man who has realized his intelligent nature, who has become identical with Nous, has completely realized his eudaimonia, so that he does not have it but is it (#21).

h. Hence, his good is not something he pursues extrinsically; it is himself, when completed as being and as Nous. Everything else is some accident to his nature. By his willing to be only what he is and not what is accidentally attached to him, he remains detached from

external things (#22).

i. He has the good life by the presence of the Good in him. His possession of the good renders it needless for him to look outside of himself for the good. If a man has the good, why need he seek the good? To look outside of himself would be to look to what is worse (#23-#24).

j. Such a man as this has all that he needs in life. He is the truly serious man. For to be serious is to be virtuous, which means that one has the good. If he seeks something, then, what he seeks he does not seek as a good for himself but for another, the body. He gives to the body only what it needs, with no diminution of his eudaimonia (#25-#28).

k. Accordingly, he can have eudaimonia in spite of whatever happens to him. This much the Stoics and Epicureans saw. Whether he might lose a fortune or friends and relatives or anything else, he (i.e., his inner reality) is unaffected and his eudaimonia undiminished. Only that which is not identical with Nous (i.e., the outer man) is affected. His grief originates from here [the earthly life and its concerns] and not from There [the life of the serious man] (#29-#30).

To understand fully life in this key text we must make explicit the following issues: a) eudaimonia in Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics; b) the relation of Plotinian eudaimonia to the life of the serious man.

a) Eudaimonia in Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics

i) Eudaimonia and Aristotle. What, then, is Aristotle's position on eudaimonia? He does not reduce his theory to a single principle, nor does he approach it from a purely abstract viewpoint. Rather he starts from experience and seeks to keep room for as many aspects of this issue as are necessitated by experience. To begin with, he asks the question of man's proper end and concludes that it is the same as the end for the state. The only difference is that he conceives the end of the state as more noble, for it involves the final perfection of many people, rather than of a single individual.¹⁴

But what is this end which each man seeks for himself (and the statesman for all the citizens)? It is happiness, eudaimonia, which Aristotle defines as that quality which makes a human life complete.¹⁵ This happiness is based on man's possession of certain goods which both fulfill his potentialities and satisfy his wants. These goods are for Aristotle divided into three categories: goods of the soul, goods of the body and external goods.¹⁶ While all three are regarded as true goods (not just neutral "things

¹⁴W. F. R. Hardie, Aristotle's Ethical Theory, 2nd Edition (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 17-19. Hereafter, Hardie, Ethical Theory.

¹⁵Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, Ch. 7, 1097b15.

¹⁶Ibid., Ch. 8, 1098b10-20.

preferred") and as relevant to happiness, they are not considered equal: the good of the soul is held to be most essential for happiness.¹⁷

This good "turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if there is more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete...in a complete life."¹⁸ It is not one activity but many, which have a place in the good life.¹⁹ But one of these is best and most complete, and this is the activity which most fits with man's ergon (i.e., his unique and proper function).²⁰ This unique activity is contemplation. Hence, living rationally will, when given preeminent position in a complete life, bring true happiness to man.²¹

On this point Plotinus would be in agreement (at least nominally) with Aristotle, but his reasons for doing so would differ from Aristotle's. Aristotle, who regards the human soul as an entelechy and, hence, considers the living human being as a composite of matter (body) and form (soul), would argue that if eudaimonia is an activity according to virtue, then it must be in accordance with the highest of virtues, the virtue of man's best part, intellect.

¹⁷Hardie, Ethical Theory, p. 20.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 22.

²⁰Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, Ch. 7, 1097b²⁵.

²¹Hardie, Ethical Theory, pp. 25-26.

Plotinus, who considers the human soul not as an entelechy but as an independent and complete existent in itself which makes use of the body as though the latter were an instrument, would argue that it is the soul as intellectual that is the true man and that lives the true life.²²

Aristotle's position, accordingly, seems to suffer from one significant difficulty. Since he argues that bodily and external, as well as moral, goods are necessary for happiness he cannot regard virtue alone as sufficient for eudaimonia. Hence, for Aristotle (but not for Plotinus, at least not in the same way and not for the same reasons) friends and external goods are necessary accompaniments of eudaimonia.²³ And since deprivation of health, prosperity, family and reputation would reduce or even destroy a man's happiness, his state of eudaimonia cannot exclude good fortune and the actions of others rather than merely relying on the state of his own mind or soul.²⁴ It seems obvious, then, that the fullest happiness and the highest human life are possible only rarely and briefly

²²See, for example, I, 1 (53), 3, 3. Plotinus, as does Plato before him, seems to regard the soul's embodiment as a natural but regrettable necessity.

²³Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, Ch. 8, 1099b1-10.

²⁴Hardie, Ethical Theory, p. 26.

owing to the demands of the composite nature of man.²⁵

Plotinus also seems to raise a second difficulty with Aristotle's position on eudaimonia. Because, in Plotinus' estimation, Aristotle sometimes defines eudaimonia in such a way that it could be regarded as the accomplishment of any being's proper or natural tasks, Plotinus concludes that such a state of eudaimonia would have to be possible for any living being, not just humans and gods. Such a view, of course, would be incorrect according to Plotinus since eudaimonia is something which applies only to beings which can enjoy the life of intellect superabundantly. However, it is not at all clear that there is any textual basis in Aristotle for such an allegation by Plotinus. In the Nicomachean Ethics, for example, Aristotle repeatedly argues that eudaimonia is an achievement of beings who are rational or human. He never seems to indicate that sub-human forms of life would be capable of achieving eudaimonia (since they could possess neither the moral nor intellectual virtues).

What, then, is Plotinus getting at with this sort of criticism? Perhaps he intends to point out a much more basic weakness in Aristotle's system, namely his view that the human soul is an entelechy. It may well be the case

²⁵See Nicomachean Ethics, Book 10, Ch. 7, 1177b34, where Aristotle notes that man's duty is to make himself, so far as he can, immortal.

that he is interested in showing the full implication of holding the Aristotelian view of eudaimonia.²⁶

ii) Eudaimonia and the Epicureans. In treatise I, 4 (46), Plotinus pays less attention to the Epicureans and to the relationship between pleasure and eudaimonia than one might expect. This would seem to be so because, as Rist notes, "the treatise is aimed at those at least partially converted and aware of Plotinus' view on Epicureanism."²⁷ But what is the position of the Epicureans regarding eudaimonia? Let us briefly examine its chief features.

In examining their position it is necessary to keep in mind that the Epicureans were essentially materialistic in their conception of man and the universe. Hence, they understood eudaimonia exclusively in physical terms. And since the only good and evil that the body knows is pleasure and pain, they are the only good and evil for man.²⁸

²⁶A related difficulty is noted by Whitney Oates who, in Aristotle and the Problem of Value (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 3-17), argues that Aristotle is not consistent in relating being and value. In other words, although there seems to be an objective dimension to Aristotle's ethical thought, in the final analysis he does not provide any definite guides regarding the nature and structure of that objective dimension.

²⁷Road to Reality, p. 139.

²⁸Cyril Bailey, The Greek Atomists and Epicurus, (New York: Russel and Russel, Inc., 1967), p. 486. Hereafter, Bailey, Atomists. Useful explanation of the Epicurean position is also provided by John Rist, Epicurus: An Introduction (Cambridge: University Press, 1972).

Accordingly, the way for man to achieve eudaimonia is to live in such a way as will maximize his pleasure and minimize his pain. And the best way to do this is to learn to distinguish between negative and positive desires, thereby guaranteeing a stable condition in the body. This distinction between negative and positive desires stems from Epicurus' conviction that not all pleasures are worthy of human pursuit, since some of them might lead to pain in the long run.²⁹ Why so? Because the body's capacity for pleasure is limited. The point of satiety is also the point at which freedom from want is achieved. To go beyond this point is to experience pain. Hence, a rationally lived life is the best, for it enables man to live in such a way as to avoid pain.³⁰

In his analysis of pleasure, Epicurus distinguishes three kinds. First, there are those natural and necessary pleasures whose chief purpose is to relieve pain, such as the consumption of food and drink, enjoyment of shelter, relief from anxiety, etc. This kind of pleasure is most basic, and of these the most fundamental of all is the pleasure of the stomach.³¹ The second type is that which is "natural but not necessary." This includes a variety of

²⁹George Panichas, Epicurus (New York: Twayne Publishing, Inc., 1967), p. 103 Hereafter, Panichas, Epicurus.

³⁰Bailey, Atomists, p. 495.

³¹Ibid., p. 488.

physical pleasures and some luxury. The final type of pleasure is that which is "neither natural nor necessary." This type includes things such as honors and social status and is considered by Epicurus to be actually destructive.

Why would Epicurus consider any pleasure to be destructive? Because he sees pleasure as usually associated with some pain, either antecedent, accompanying or resultant. The life of greatest pleasure is that of greatest equilibrium and of least pain.³² Hence, any individual pleasure which involves a great deal of mental unrest or eventual discomfort is to be avoided.

The wise man for Epicurus is "most free from trouble."³³ He avoids any external checks or ties, such as family, political life, etc., and lives in total self-sufficiency and self-centeredness. This is man's "inner life," a life free from mental strain and excessive lust.³⁴

Eudaimonia, then, involves a constant possession of the necessary pleasures. Some of these are necessary for life (food and drink), some for repose of the body (shelter and clothing) and some for happiness.³⁵ The third are the

³²Ibid., pp. 491-92.

³³Panichas, Epicurus, p. 104.

³⁴Ibid., p. 109.

³⁵Bailey, Atomists, p. 493.

pleasures of the mind, which lie in contemplation of past, present and future pleasures of the body.

There are special types of pain for the body and the mind. One of those belonging to the mind is fear, which can lead one to lose hope for pleasure in the future. The two greatest fears concern death and intrusion by the gods into the natural order. The reason for fearing the former is obvious. The reason for fearing the latter is that if the laws of nature may be broken at any time, then nothing in the natural order can be depended upon, and the philosopher's peace will be broken.³⁶ The way to overcome these fears is by taking up philosophy, which teaches that the gods are totally disinterested in man and nature and that death, since it is the complete annihilation of the person, involves no pain. Accordingly, there is nothing to fear.³⁷

Because it is instrumental in helping man to overcome fear and to understand which pleasures are worth pursuing, philosophy is essential to his "blessed life," Epicurus' name for the final goal of man, which involves the health of the body and the tranquility of the mind.³⁸

Of course, what Plotinus finds most objectionable in the Epicurean view is precisely its exclusive concern for

³⁶Ibid., p. 501.

³⁷Ibid., p. 501.

³⁸Ibid., p. 505.

the sense world and for sensation. Such a life, one which is limited entirely to sensation and to untroubledness, cannot be the life of the serious man. His life, the truly good life, is different from the life of plants or brute animals and, hence, cannot depend on any faculty possessed by either of these lower forms. Hence, any position that limits the good life to pleasure, sensation, or even untroubledness (ataraxia) must be eliminated from consideration by Plotinus.³⁹

iii) Eudaimonia and the Stoics. With the Stoic view we encounter a very austere approach to human life, one calling for complete self-control and holding only the noblest and most arduous values as worthwhile. Where it can be seen most perfectly is in their conception of eudaimonia, that condition which is best for man and which will make him happiest.

First, let us briefly look at the typically Stoic moral judgment in general. This involves classifying things according to three categories: morally evil, morally good or morally indifferent. Evil is obvious, at least to the Stoics, since it consists of all those vices men normally find repugnant: dishonesty, injustice, treachery, wanton cruelty, etc.

³⁹See Rist, Road to Reality, p. 141.

Moral indifference, however, is slightly more complicated. It does not mean that a thing is morally valueless but only that good or evil are not necessarily involved in it. It can be used for either end,⁴⁰ which then determines whether the user was acting badly or well. For this reason intention is more important to the Stoics than to many ancient philosophers, most of whom regard good or evil as objective and as belonging to the act itself.⁴¹

These indifferent things are conceived as having varying values, and the evaluation and choice of these unequally valued things form a large part of man's moral activity.⁴²

While many different things fall into this category of the indifferent, some of which are evil, the good is limited to virtue (arētē in the narrow sense), that is, virtuous acts and persons. It consists only of those things which are good in themselves and could not be used for evil.⁴³ And only in possession of this true good is eudaimonia

⁴⁰F. H. Sandbach, The Stoics (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), p. 29. Hereafter, Sandbach, Stoics. For valuable additional discussion see John Rist, Stoic Philosophy (Cambridge: University Press, 1969) and Andreas Graeser, Plotinus and the Stoics: A Preliminary Study (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972).

⁴¹I. G. Kidd, "Moral Actions and Rules in Stoic Ethics," in The Stoics, John Rist, ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978), p. 242.

⁴²Sandbach, Stoics, p. 29.

⁴³Ibid., p. 28.

achieved. One's happiness does not depend on anything but moral virtue.⁴⁴ Obviously, however, a virtuous man deprived of other things (health, wealth, reputation, family) would feel unhappiness, and possession of these or other indifferent things would bring feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. To overcome this apparent difficulty the Stoics do not attempt to describe eudaimonia as a subjective feeling, but identify it with such things as "living a good life" and being virtuous.⁴⁵ The Stoics, then, do not worry about whether possession of primary natural things (those indifferent things most necessary to health and survival) is relevant to one's eudaimonia. While these things make life more pleasant, they do not affect man's virtue and so do not increase his perfection and happiness.⁴⁶

But while the possession of indifferent things does not make one more virtuous, the correct attitude toward it does.⁴⁷ Thus one's virtue is intimately bound up in the world of indifferent things. The proper attitude concerning them is described as "life according to nature," a criterion

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 29-30.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 41.

⁴⁶Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, reprinted in W. J. Oates, ed., The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers (New York: Randon House, 1940), Ch. 8, Section 1, p. 544. Hereafter, Aurelius, Meditations.

⁴⁷Epictetus, Discourses, reprinted in The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers, Ch. 6, p. 290. Hereafter, Epictetus, Discourses.

for choosing indifferent things according to their relative values and appropriateness to given circumstances.⁴⁸

By "life according to nature" the Stoics mean life according to human nature. Plants and animals have certain activities which are proper to them by their natures and so does man. The way to determine this life is by right reason and philosophy, which is not only theoretical but practical as well, since it attempts to show by what actions man could exercise his proper faculties and be a true and wise man.⁴⁹

In determining what actions are proper to himself, however, the wise man does not refer only to himself but also to other men and to the cosmos as a whole. When reason shows a conflict between self-interest and the good of the whole, nature demands that man choose the latter. Also, since the cosmos is determined by God, no one should refuse to acquiesce in what is obviously His will (i.e., the ultimate good). Man would be guilty of vice if he hoped for a "good" contrary to what was ordained by Divine Providence.⁵⁰

The end and goal of human life, then, is a) to live

⁴⁸It is by going "the right way" and thinking and acting properly that one can pass "life in an equable flow of happiness" (Aurelius, Meditations Ch. 5, Section 34, p. 524).

⁴⁹Epictetus, Discourses, Ch. 9, p. 297.

⁵⁰Ibid., Ch. 6, p. 291.

consistently with nature and with the rule of Providence, b) to choose indifferent things according to true philosophical principles and c) to concern oneself only with what is truly one's virtue. In doing this man could not help but achieve eudaimonia.

Obviously, the position of the Stoics regarding eudaimonia is not entirely at odds with that of Plotinus. They both agree that the eudaimon (i.e., the man who has eudaimonia) is one who leads a life governed by reason and virtue. Such a person is likewise unperturbed by bodily concerns or external predicaments (as is obvious in his remarks in I, 4 [46], 5, 1-17). In fact, concerns and circumstances of this kind are entirely irrelevant to the achievement of eudaimonia.

The Stoic view is not without its difficulties, however. The Stoics view the nature of man as single and simple, while Plotinus regards it as involving two facets: the lower or outer man (i.e., that part which can be, and frequently is, affected by external concerns and which is the soul-in-body) and the higher or inner man (i.e., that part which always remains unperturbed and within itself and which is the soul as intellect). Plotinus effectively illustrates his point by noting (I, 4 [46], 13, 5-12) that unless one distinguishes between these two aspects of man it will be unintelligible how one can have eudaimonia while at the same time enduring the many difficulties of the earthly

life. In other words, the man of eudaimonia can legitimately be said to suffer happily even while being tortured (e.g., by literally being roasted alive in a mechanism called the "bull of Phalaris"⁵¹) only if it is the "outer" man (or his lower half) who suffers the physical pain while the "inner" man (or his higher half) remains undisturbed and happy in his contemplation of the Good.

It seems, then, that although the Stoics value the life of reason and virtue they do not, and perhaps ultimately cannot, adequately explain why such a life is desirable and why external concerns are inconsequential to eudaimonia.

b) The relation of Plotinian eudaimonia to the life
of the serious man

In a previous key text (Text C: III, 8 [30]) we pointed out that the chief characteristic of the serious man is the unity he achieves through contemplation and intuition. The present key text focuses on Plotinus' discussion of the good state of the serious man's or inner reality (i.e., on his εὐδαιμονία). If all living things could be said to have life in exactly the same

⁵¹Phalaris, tyrant of Acragas (c. 570/65 - 554/49 B.C.), became legendary for his ingenious cruelty, especially for the hollow brazen bull in which his victims were roasted alive. For further information see The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "Phalaris," by Arthur G. Woodhead, p. 809.

way, then Plotinus could allow that all of them were capable of achieving a good state in their inner reality. But such is not the case. Although many kinds of beings are living, each kind is different by virtue of the brightness or dimness of its life (#9). Life, for Plotinus, is an analogous notion, since its meaning is both similar and diverse at the same time through his system. Life always involves intellection in some form, although in varying ways and to different degrees from one level of reality to another.

Merely to be living, then, is not a guarantee of eudaimonia (#2-#4). A good state of inner reality belongs only to that which has a superabundance of perfect and true life (#11). And as long as living things proceed from a single origin (Nous) but do not have life to the same degree as It, that origin must be the first and most perfect life.

But man, too, is capable of having this perfect life. Consequently, he is capable of achieving the good state of his inner reality. But what is this "good"? It is what he has. The One or Good is the ultimate and extrinsic cause of the good in him. The fact that It is good is different from the fact that It is present to him. The man who has achieved the good state of his inner reality actually is that state; he is identical with it. Everything else is just something he wears, so to speak. If he is serious, he has all that he needs for the good state of his inner

reality and for the acquisition of the good, for then there is no good which he does not possess. The things which he does seek are, out of necessity, not for himself but for the body which is joined to him. He knows its needs and fulfills them without taking anything away from his own true life. Thus neither pain nor sickness nor anything else of this sort can reduce the good state of the serious man's inner reality.

Such things as good health and good fortune (Plotinus goes on to point out in Chapters Five through Eight) have no attraction for the serious man because they do nothing to enhance his good state. But he seeks them nonetheless since they contribute to his being. And he rejects their opposites because they move him towards non-being and away from true life and because their presence is an obstacle to his goal. But even if such opposites are present they do not diminish his good state at all. Thus, while the serious man does not actively desire misfortune, he sets his excellence⁵² against it and thus overcomes it if it should

⁵²We shall translate ἀρετή as "excellence" or "perfection" (rather than "virtue"), because it refers primarily to the excellent state or perfection of the serious man's inner reality, not solely to his moral virtue. For Plotinus, as we shall shortly see, a serious man is good or achieves ἀρετή only by becoming unified within himself and with the One. This is not to say, however, that ἀρετή excludes entirely the notion of moral virtue. It is the serious man who alone has gained the true vision of reality by becoming unified within himself and with the One and who thus has the excellence of knowing how to treat his

come. In general, the serious man does not look at reality as others do. He holds his reality within and allows nothing, not even personal pain or bad fortune, to penetrate there.

Plotinus' procedure, unlike that of his above-mentioned opponents, is to start with the serious man and to ask whether his inner reality is in a good state as long as he is serious. Plotinus also asks what factors, if any, militate against the presence of this good state (#18). These questions, which are the concern of treatise I, 4 as a whole, come to greater focus in the passages which comprise our current key text. What if the serious man is unconscious or is not acting according to his excellence⁵³ -- can he even then be in a good state?⁵⁴ Plotinus' answer is both clever and novel. To be unconscious or to be

(⁵²continued)

fellow men properly and fairly. In another treatise (I, 2 [19], 7), Plotinus describes the life of the serious man in terms of ἀρετή. All excellences of the soul are related to intellect. The soul's sight directed toward intellect is wisdom, both theoretical and practical, which is the excellence belonging to the soul. All excellences are purifications in the sense that they are the results of a completed process of purifying unification. Thus, the serious man leaves everything behind in favor of the life of the gods, because he wants to become similar to them. Only in likeness to the gods -- i.e., in unity with the One -- can he achieve the purification or unity which characterizes seriousness.

⁵³See note 52, above.

⁵⁴See I, 4 (46), 9, 7-8. For Aristotle's rather different view on these points consult, for example, Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. 10, Ch. 6, 1176a33-35.

unaware of something does not automatically eliminate the object of which one happens to be unaware. For example, the man who does not know that he is healthy is healthy all the same. So too with the man who is wise: even if he does not know that he is wise, he will be no less wise as a result.⁵⁵

But does wisdom not require awareness and consciousness of its presence? Furthermore, is not the good state of one's inner reality to be found only in actual wisdom?⁵⁶ To these objections Plotinus answers that the underlying reality of wisdom consists in the very being of wisdom, and this does not cease in someone who is asleep or, in any sense of the term, unconscious. This means that the very being and reality of the serious man must be

⁵⁵See I, 4 (46), 9, 8-11. Here Plotinus seems to be arguing against the Aristotelian distinction (De Anima, 412a) between the first actuality of a living body (e.g., a man possessing knowledge) and the second actuality (e.g., a man exercizing his knowledge). Plotinus, Rist contends, "refuses to recognize the different actuality of virtue and happiness in the man awake and the man asleep. If a man is unconscious of the fact that he is healthy...this does not prevent him from being healthy; if he is unaware of his personal attraction, that does not mean that he is not personally attractive; similarly he argues that if he is unaware of his wisdom, surely he must be equally wise" (Road to Reality, p. 147).

However, Aristotle could well counter with his own notion of a habit or state as something permanent and which, like Plotinus' eudaimonia, is present even when one is not conscious of it. For a discussion of the status and result of the good man's awareness of his goodness see John M. Rist, "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle," The Review of Metaphysics 27 (1973): 75-87.

⁵⁶See I, 4 (46), 9, 11-14.

independent of his consciousness of it. It is a constant state of actuation and is not affected by sleep, sickness or even magic.⁵⁷ Only a part of the serious man will be unaware of this actuation. Similarly, when he undergoes physical growth it is only a part of him -- the outer, less real part -- which grows and changes. But that is not what he really is. The truly real part of man is within: the intellect and its potential and actual operation. He is the actuation of the intellect, so much so that when it is in act he is in act also.⁵⁸

In other words, since wisdom is itself a kind of ousia it can neither cease nor change. The serious man's wisdom (i.e., the Nous within him) is itself unceasing and unchanging and, hence, is unaffected by the absence or

⁵⁷See I, 4 (46), 9, 17-25. In VI, 4 (38), 43, 1-11, Plotinus also discusses whether the serious man can be affected by magic. He concludes that the soul or the rational part of the serious man cannot be affected by magic and other such distractions because they only affect his lower and irrational part. Therefore, IV, 4 presents essentially the same position as I, 4: the life and good state of the serious man's inner reality is not affected even if he is driven out of his senses by illness or magic arts. In short, the serious man is one who lives the life of Intellect. His "inner reality" or δαίμων is never turned away from the One. But Nous and the One are far beyond the influence of magic. Likewise the truly living and real part of the serious man, since it is unified with Nous and the One, is not affected by magic. For further discussion of Plotinus and magic see E. R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), pp. 286-89; Philip Merlan, "Plotinus and Magic," Isis 44 (1953): 341-48; and A. H. Armstrong, "Was Plotinus a Magician?" Phronesis 1 (1955): 73-79.

⁵⁸See I, 4 (46), 9, 25-30.

presence of consciousness. Plotinus can argue this way because of his view, mentioned in earlier key texts, that there is a part of the human soul which always remains on the level of Nous, where it contemplates the Forms perfectly. The man who has achieved seriousness (as we noted in Text C: III, 8 [30]), is one whose whole being or personality has become integrated with that higher part of his soul. For him, the concerns of the lower part of his soul have become insignificant. This higher part, identified with Nous, contemplation and, hence, true life, continues to function, so to speak, in spite of any external problems or pains that may befall the serious man.

Plotinus notes in another treatise that it is man's disposition (i.e., what he has within -- the good state of his inner reality) which makes his actions excellent.⁵⁹ Thus someone who is not active can have his inner reality in a good state, because actions do not produce goodness of themselves. It is the serious man who gets the benefit of goodness in his action, not from the fact that he acts nor from the circumstances of his action, but from what he has achieved: true life in unity with the One or Good. Thus, his pleasure in the fact that, for example, his country is saved will be there even if it is a bad man who saves it. It is not the saving itself but one's own inner reality

⁵⁹See I, 5 (36), 10. See also note 51, above.

which causes the pleasure of its good state. To place the good state of one's inner reality in actions is to locate it in something outside excellence and the soul.⁶⁰ The actuation of the soul (i.e., its true life) lies in intellect and thought and this is the good state of one's inner reality.⁶¹

Thus, the inner reality of the serious man is always in a good state precisely because it consists of his always actuated intellect, which is true life, even though another part of him, his outer aspect, is not always aware of this actuation. A man's inner reality, then, is always actuated regardless of the state of his outer aspect. His other and outer aspect consists of the physical body and its sensory functions and is subject to various distractions such as sleep, unconsciousness, sickness, magic, and the like.⁶²

⁶⁰Of course, the serious man's indifference to misfortune (both his own and that of others) and, in general, to all outer or sensory experiences, Plotinus would argue, serves to emphasize the true source of his eudaimonia. Plotinus, however, does not seem to be concerned with completely negating the significance of outer experiences. See, for example, Gürtler, "Human Consciousness," pp. 265ff.

⁶¹It is possible that Aristotle's view might harmonize with Plotinus' here. After all, both Plotinus and Aristotle would agree (albeit for rather different reasons) that it is the life of philosophic thought that is fundamental to eudaimonia.

⁶²In I, 9 (16), 13ff, Plotinus makes a similar point when he asks us to imagine a man who is aware that he is beginning to go mad. Such a thing, he says, is not likely to happen to a serious man. Even if it should happen to him, however, the serious man will consider it as something inevitable but will not allow himself to be disturbed by it.

This outer and inferior part of man is often unaware of its counterpart's intellectual actuation and life and thus assumes that in the absence of such consciousness this actuation and life are likewise absent. But the inner and real and truly living part of man does not merely have the actuation of intellect: it actually is this actuation. The very nature, reality and life of the serious man is unity achieved through intellect.

We saw in an earlier key text (Text C: III, 8 [30]) that unity, the hallmark of seriousness, is achieved in part through the intellect as it journeys towards identification with Nous and ultimately with the One. The inner reality of a serious man, then, will always be in a good state because his life is that of intellect. His intellect has as its object and end the One-Good, with which it achieves initial contact through contemplation and ultimate contact through a mystical union. But in what does this earthly intellectual life consist? What does the serious man do and how does he act, given this desire ultimately to achieve unity with the One? For an answer we must look to a later portion of I, 4, namely, Chapter 11. There Plotinus again takes the serious man as his starting point and considers him as a whole being

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In other words, his becoming mad will disturb only his outer aspects but not his inner reality, which will remain unperturbed in its good state.

and not piecemeal as his opponents often did.

Plotinus argues that if we investigate in what the good state of the serious man's living inner reality consists, we shall find that his attention is directed inward and that external activities do not interest him. The inner life of intellect, characterized by a turning inward towards unity, is of utmost interest to the serious man. It is folly to look for him in external activities or to seek the object of his contemplation or desire in outward things. His inner reality achieves its good state through intellect, specifically through his contemplation of the levels of Soul and Nous (thereby leading him to unity within himself) and ultimately through a mystical union with the One-Good. This good state would not even be possible "if one said that outward things were to be desired and that the serious man desired them."⁶³

His good state does not prevent the serious man from wishing that all men (including himself) were prosperous and not subject to evil and suffering. But if these latter should be present, the good state of his inner reality will be unaffected. But would not the serious man be essentially

⁶³See I, 4 (46), 11, 3-12. Plotinus does not mean that the serious man must deny himself any reasonable comforts, but only that he knows their proper value and function and thus can appreciate them simply for what they are: necessary but ultimately worthless concerns of earthly life. See I, 4 (46), 16, 10ff; II, 9 (33), 9, 3-8; and I, 6 (1), 11-13.

selfish and without compassion for his fellow man? Plotinus might respond as follows. The good state of the serious man's inner reality is not affected by the rise and fall of his neighbors' (or his own) good fortune precisely because such fluctuations belong to the outer aspect of man while the serious man's attention is turned inward to a region unaffected by fortune, sickness, magic, death and the like. Thus, while he would not deny himself or his fellow man any of the material comforts of life, the serious man's own life (i.e., his inner reality, the life of intellect) does not depend on such comforts for the maintenance of its good state.⁶⁴

So it is that only when man turns to the life of intellect, and thus comes to unity, does he become serious. In this way his inner reality comes to be in a good state. When he achieves seriousness and this good state, he is no longer subject to the distractions of everyday living, which affect his outer half. He sees that they are neither truly real nor valuable. "His light burns within, like the light in a lantern when it is blowing hard outside with a great fury of wind and storm."⁶⁵

⁶⁴See I, 4 (46), 11, 12-17.

⁶⁵See I, 4 (46), 8, 4-6.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is obvious from our analysis of this key text that Plotinus' position on eudaimonia (and its relation to seriousness and true life), while profiting from Aristotelian and Stoic insights, is an original one. Basically, perfect (or superabundant) life is to be found in Nous and in the intelligible nature of man. Both Nous and human beings (i.e., the inner man in each human being) are life, while all other living things merely have life, precisely because they are less perfect and dimmer versions of Primal Life, the life of Nous. Hence, eudaimonia, the good state of one's inner reality, is identical with the attainment of the One-Good by any being which has life superabundantly, namely, to the degree that such a being possesses an intelligible nature, or Nous.

As we turn specifically to human life it is important to note briefly in what ways Plotinus' position is at variance with the otherwise valuable views of the Epicureans, Aristotle and the Stoics. Plotinus' rather terse rejection of the Epicurean view of eudaimonia is not surprising. As Rist argues, the brief treatment of pleasure as the operative factor in eudaimonia in treatise I, 4 may profitably be explained by the fact that Plotinus' arguments there are "aimed at those at least partially converted and

aware of Plotinus' views on Epicureans."⁶⁶ The brevity of his remarks notwithstanding, it is obvious that the argument that physical pleasure is the sufficient and necessary condition for true life and, hence, eudaimonia runs significantly counter to Plotinus' view of the good and true life as the life of intellect -- the life of the inner man.

Against Aristotle Plotinus argues that it is a mistake to say that human eudaimonia is in many ways genuinely dependent on, and affected by, the presence of external factors and bodily necessities. Not only does this view ignore the valuable Plotinian distinction between the inner (intellectual and, hence, real and genuinely alive) and outer (earthly and bodily and, hence, unreal) man, but it seems to make the enjoyment of perfect eudaimonia ultimately available only to those in heaven. What Plotinus seems to have the greatest difficulty with is Aristotle's view of the human soul as an entelechy. To view the soul as the form of the body is necessarily to involve oneself in difficulties⁶⁷ of the sort that Plotinus claims exist in Aristotle's position on eudaimonia.

The Stoic position, for Plotinus, encounters a similar difficulty. Although their emphasis is on virtue as the necessary and sufficient condition for eudaimonia (rather

⁶⁶Road to Reality, p. 139.

⁶⁷See above, pp. 237-241 and Chapter Two, pp. 43-48.

than on virtue supplemented by various external conditions), it is likewise difficult to see how, in all but a few exceptional instances, human beings could ever achieve genuine eudaimonia.⁶⁸

It is obvious from the above comments that, as far as the serious man is concerned, the body is for Plotinus a mere addition to his inner reality (#26), while his inner reality is united to him by an act of the will (#22).⁶⁹ What might be called the serious man's inner reality does not really need the various bodily necessities (#26). Their presence or absence does not contribute to his eudaimonia or true life but merely to the continuation of his bodily existence.⁷⁰ Plotinus is able to hold this view primarily because he believes that part of the soul always remains with Nous, constantly living in perfect contemplation of the divine intelligibles and unspoiled by the earthly life. The serious man is fully integrated within himself, so much so that the lower part of him has become irrelevant. Thus, the higher soul is continuously operative within the serious

⁶⁸There is no man, Plotinus argues in I, 4 (46), 4, 10-12, who does not possess eudaimonia either actually or potentially. Not all men actually become serious, of course, but all are capable of such an achievement if they choose it.

⁶⁹At this juncture of his discussion of this passage Rist notes that it is good to "recall the use of συναρτᾶν with reference to the 'sympathy' of the universe, that is, to the fundamental nature of the world, at 2.3.7.16" (Road to Reality, p. 145).

⁷⁰See for example I, 4 (46), 15, 1-12.

man. Why? Because for Plotinus the soul of the serious man, as logos of Nous, is itself eternal and unchanging and, hence, unaffected by the presence or absence of consciousness, pain, pleasure and other concerns.

In this way Plotinus' henological perspective (i.e., that to be real is to be one) can also be seen to be a theory of morality. When the serious man achieves unity, he actually has the good within himself: he is the good. The unity in the serious man is identical with goodness (the unity is the good state of his inner reality) because the Primal Reality, the One-Good, which unifies man, is also the Supreme Good, the primal and emanative cause of his goodness. Just as the One and the Good are identical, so too unity and goodness are one and the same state in man and consist of his seriousness.

As noted elsewhere, a man achieves proximate unity (with Nous) and true life by purely intellectual means, contemplation and intuition. But practically he also achieves this unity by detaching himself from the concerns of the universe in which he lives. He is free from everything and everybody. With the achievement of the good state of his inner reality, the serious man has the proper perspective with which to view and to evaluate the people, things and events around him. He knows that the real man is other than his outward parts. Hence, any pursuit that involves those outward parts will only prove to be a

distraction from what is his real and true life.

This, however, does not mean that the serious man has no regard for other persons. While it is true that he does not allow their everyday interests and activities (which are mere decorations) to overwhelm him, he does strive, insofar as he is able, to help others achieve the same state of seriousness he already enjoys. Accordingly, his life serves as a model for those who are not yet serious, so that they might learn from it and thus come to unity themselves.⁷¹

The serious man, then, takes as good not the merely apparent goods of this world but the One or Good of the highest realm, with Whom he eventually becomes identified. This type of unity is his ultimate goal and is achieved by a mystical contact. Such mystical union, Plotinus argues, involves going beyond Nous and is akin to taking a leap into the unknown.⁷² When one has made this "leap" he has achieved a kind of "contact" with the One and a certain "vision" of It.⁷³ This contact is by likeness and it is a

⁷¹As Armstrong notes in the Preface to his translation of the Enneads, "the primary object of all Plotinus' philosophical activity is to bring his own soul and the souls of others by way of Intellect to union with the One" (Vol. 1, p. xxv). Even Plotinus' reputed last words seem to bear this out: "Try to bring back the god in you to the divine in the All!" (Porphyry, "Life," Ch. 2, lines 26-27).

⁷²See V, 5 (32), 4, 8.

⁷³As Rist (Road to Reality, p. 222) points out, cognates of the word "contact" (hapto) are found in various treatises: VI, 9 (9), 11, 24 and V, 3 (49), 10, 42; 17, 34. That Plotinus employs terms such as "vision" and "seeing"

grasp of the One-Good by a power in us that is like the Primal Reality.⁷⁴ At this point all differences seem to cease and the human soul has become "blended" or "mixed" with the One-Good.⁷⁵

Although such an approach is helpful, perhaps the metaphor of the converging centers of two circles is a better Plotinian description of the human soul's union with the One.⁷⁶ In any case it seems apparent that the human soul in its mystical union with the One is enraptured,⁷⁷ filled with God,⁷⁸ has abandoned itself,⁷⁹ and is not wholly itself.⁸⁰ Rist seems to argue plausibly that all of these descriptions suggest that the human soul has achieved its highest state when it has isolated itself from the finite realm and surrendered itself and become fully

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to describe this sort of contact is confirmed by Porphyry ("Life," Ch. 23). It must be remembered, however, that words such as "vision" are ultimately insufficient and unsatisfactory descriptions of man's ultimate contact with the One since the aim of Plotinian mysticism is not mere seeing or vision of the Primal Reality but union with It. See, for example, VI, 9 (9), 11, 22.

⁷⁴See VI, 9 (9), 4, 27 and III, 8 (30), 9, 22-23.

⁷⁵See I, 6 (1), 7, 13; VI, 7 (34), 34, 15. Rist points out that it "is not a question of a literal blending of such a kind that there is no distinction but an association of such a kind that the metaphor of blending is the most appropriate description" (Road to Reality, p. 223).

⁷⁶See VI, 9 (9), 10.

⁷⁷See VI, 9 (9), 11, 13.

⁷⁸See VI, 9 (9), 9, 21.

⁷⁹See VI, 9 (9), 11, 24.

⁸⁰See VI, 9 (9), 11, 12.

receptive to the infinite realm.⁸¹

Does the human soul live at this level of mystical union with the One? And does it enjoy eudaimonia there? These questions are difficult to answer owing to Plotinus' obvious reluctance to describe non-metaphorically the nature of the mystical union itself. This much we may be able to venture, however. If eudaimonia is achieved only by those who enjoy a superabundance of life, because they alone are endowed with intellect, and if the One-Good is above life (insofar as It is the source of life, presumably even superabundant life), then what the human soul enjoys in its mystical union with the Primal Reality must be a state beyond life and beyond eudaimonia. Why? Because eudaimonia is dependent on intellect, while the mystical union is supra-intellectual (since such mystical union no longer involves a duality of knower and known).

But the serious man has a proximate goal as well -- ascent to and identity with Nous -- which is a necessary preparation for his eventual mystical union with the One. This proximate goal he achieves by an intellectual contact with the One, in which the Primal Reality is understood as a multiplicity of Forms⁸²

⁸¹Road to Reality, p. 224.

⁸²That this goal is proximate is obvious, Rist argues, because Nous "is not pre-eminently simple, pre-eminently all-embracing. Likeness to God in the full sense must mean an ascent beyond the realm of the finite Forms to

It is obvious, then, why non-intellectual concerns seem so insignificant to the serious man. He recognizes that some things contribute to his good inner state while others only belong to his outer and inferior half, the body.⁸³ To the latter he gives only what it needs in order to exist because he realizes that it makes no contribution to his state of seriousness and true life and, hence, must be ignored and eventually discarded. Because he has achieved proximate unity with the One through contemplation and intuition, he therefore understands the true nature of the All in which he lives his everyday life. This, he sees, is merely a reflection of the true All of Nous and, as such, is less perfect, less unified and, therefore, less real. Thus the activities, problems and events which occur in it are only imitations and are only as real as the actions and events on a stage, which belong only to the outer part of man. Only by refusing to be distracted by such external activity can the real part of man, the inner part, achieve unity, true life and seriousness. And only then is his ultimate and mystical

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the realm of the infinite One whose dominant character of simplicity (ἁπλως) is emphasized throughout the whole of the Enneads" (Road to Reality, p. 217). See also Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 88-89.

⁸³See III, 4 (15), 2, 6-16. If man is to achieve salvation and purification he must "escape" to the upper world and rise to what is intelligible, to Nous and eventually to God, the One-Good.

union with the One possible. The human soul, Plotinus urges, must not actively pursue this union but rather should wait quietly for its arrival.⁸⁴

⁸⁴See V, 5 (32), 8, 4. We are in agreement with Rist on this point, who notes (Road to Reality, p. 225) that if we "pursue" the One "of course we shall always tend to specify it, to see it under some particular aspect. We must learn instead to be passive, to let it come, as it will come if we take away our own restlessness, that very restlessness which prevents us from being like it."

What Plotinus seems to be making here is primarily a psychological, not an ontological, remark. One's psychological disposition should be one of patience and passivity when awaiting union with the One. Thus, while union with Nous is, in a sense, automatic, or at least predictable, union with the One is not. The serious man must wait for it to occur.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter we shall present a brief resume of the insights Plotinus has provided on zōē in the five key texts we examined. Subsequently we shall offer some preliminary conclusions regarding Plotinus' overall position on life.

SUMMARY

Fortunately, our very first key text (IV, 7 [2], 85-11) provided one of the central insights necessary for an accurate understanding of life: self-motion. Since motion primarily is cognition, Plotinus argues, self-motion is self-cognition, a cognition which the being itself (e.g., Nous or an individual human soul) causes. To be alive, then, is to be efficiently causing one's own cognition. Every living existent possesses a soul, which is the principle of these operations. Accordingly, soul's very nature is to be self-moving and self-acting. Thus, if self-kinēsis is the very ousia or nature of soul, then soul qua soul must be deathless.

Furthermore, self-motion and immortality belong to the individual soul as well as to World Soul, since the individual soul participates, by being a logos of, the World Soul, which in turn is a logos of Nous.¹ Plotinus here shows his indebtedness to Plato, for whom the life of the soul is self-motion, the prime manifestation of which is intellection.²

Plotinus further argues that life is linked with soul with an intimacy akin to that between heat and fire. Such an analogy is useful because it offers an additional and very vivid way of viewing the nature of the necessary connection between soul and life. In both cases heat and life intrinsically (and, hence, necessarily) belong to fire and to soul, respectively. Each of the latter is an ousia and by its very nature is constantly present to the former.

Plotinus argues next that it is necessary to isolate that component in man which lives in itself and, hence, is the human soul. That there must exist a first principle of

¹In the first five treatises, chronologically taken, Plotinus does not refer to the Soul (i.e., the All Soul) as a separate level of reality. As we have argued earlier in our study (Text A: IV, 7 [2], note 8), in treatises prior to IV, 8 (6) he seems unaware of the All Soul as such and, accordingly, utilizes Nous to vivify the World Soul and individual souls.

²This point Plato presents clearly in the Phaedrus (245c5-e6) and in the Timaeus (36b-37c). He argues that all souls are immortal or ever-living because they are ever-moving. Furthermore, because what moves itself is ever-living the very ousia of soul must be self-kinēsis.

life in human beings is obvious from the fact that the only alternative to such a principle is an infinite regress of caused causes. Accordingly, the composite which is man must be examined and dissected until the one element which is the source of his life (i.e., the soul) is discovered. When this component is found it will be seen to be immortal, because it is self-living and self-moved.

Furthermore, it is inadequate and even misleading to speak of life as merely a passive quality or condition of matter. If this view were correct, it would be necessary even then to isolate the ultimate cause of such a quality or condition. And unless that cause was itself self-living the investigation would have to continue until just such a cause was found, for only the self-living can be soul. In short, the soul is immortal because it has life as its very ousia and because this life is actual (i.e., energeia).

The second key text (VI, 9 [9], 9) furthered our understanding of zōē by focusing on its prime possessor, Nous. Since Nous is primal life, everything subsequent to It must be alive also. But in what sense is Nous perfect life?

Nous is perfect as mind or knower because intellection (noēsis) is Its very nature (ousia) and essential act (energeia). It is Itself what It knows because It is both knower and known. Its knowledge is not discursive but intuitive and, hence, It knows eternally and completely.

Nous, then, may be said to be life because Its life is Its energeia and self-kinēsis. Through Its self-kinēsis Nous causes Its own reversion (epistrophē) towards the One (and this reversion is the energeia of Nous).

Nous, then, moves Itself intellectually to know the One. And this self-originated movement of Nous from active dynamis (Nous in the first moment of emanation from the One: prohodos) to energeia likewise marks the generation of the content of Its intellection: the world of intelligible Forms. In this way several Platonic and Aristotelian elements are combined to describe the life of Nous more fully. From Aristotle³ he receives the notion of Nous as noēsis noēseos, although Plotinus does not agree that It is akinētos. From Plato he accepts the notion that intellection is a kind of kinēsis (i.e., a self-kinēsis) and applies it to Nous.⁴ Plotinus also locates the Platonic World of Forms within Nous as Its intelligible content. The result of this combination is a self-moved and self-living Intelligence, whose contents are the Forms and whose life is energeia, which is precisely Its self-kinēsis of intellection.

Through Its life and intellection Nous is necessarily productive. Its principal products are the intelligibles,

³See Metaphysics, Book. 12, Ch. 8, 1074a35-37.

⁴See Timaeus, 30c ff and Sophist, 248e-249d.

which It contains and which represent Its best grasp of the Primal Reality. Further, each intelligible Form is itself a knower and a known and is alive. In this way Nous is a unity which is multiple, a one-in-many. The other beings Nous produces (e.g., Soul and Nature) have intelligence, but only Nous is intelligence. Accordingly, their lives are less perfect because they involve greater degrees of multiplicity. Soul and Nature, for example, have intelligence and life only because they participate in (by being logoi of) the primal intellection and life of Nous.⁵

The life of Nous is further explained by reference to the role of erōs. Nous, the first emanant of the One, is a reality whose determination (in the moment of epistrophē) results from Its self-kinēsis of intellection. But Nous initiates its kinēsis out of love for its source. In other words, Nous turns to the One and is filled by It because the One is the object of Its desire of love. The very motivation of Nous' self-kinēsis is the One's supreme goodness, to which Nous, and any being for that matter, is inexorably attracted.

⁵Participation in Plotinus consists in the fact that a lower reality is imaged not through a higher reality's exemplarity nor through a Demiurge but by the fact that the lower reality is a higher reality on a lower level (i.e., by the fact that the lower is a logos of the higher), as the being of the other on a lower level. A logos, then, is the very reality of a lower being, in relation to a higher level of reality.

In this way erōs applies to the life of Nous, insofar as It lives fully only through turning to the One-Good, the source of Its life and the object of Its desire. Love of the One-Good likewise helps to explain more fully the life of soul, especially as it ascends first to Nous and then to its ultimate source, the One-Good.

The third key text (III, 8 [30], 8; 10) contributed to our understanding of zōē especially in its relation to logos and to contemplation. Each level of reality below the One is real because it emanates from, and thus is a more or less multiple manifestation (or logos) of, the Primal Reality. Any existent (whether Nous, Soul, an individual human being, a brute animal, a plant, or even a lump of coal) is what it is insofar as it is a logos -- i.e., insofar as it participates in what is higher by actually being the higher-on-a-lower-level.⁶ Furthermore, since Nous is primal life (by being a self-kinēsis which is intellection), each level of reality below Nous is an active power (dynamis) identical with the being of the hypostasis in which it exists and is ordered to the production of some reality lower than itself.

⁶In general, every being is a life because every being is ultimately a logos of Nous. Accordingly, all beings in varying and diminishing degrees entail cognition (and hence are alive), except for the lowest level of life, which is cognition only in the sense that it is the content of the contemplation of a higher reality.

From this perspective Nous is alive because out of desire for the Ultimate Good (i.e., the One) It moves Itself to contemplate the One-Good. In doing so It produces the content of Its contemplation, namely, the entire complex of living intelligibles or Forms. These are the One inasmuch as Nous is able to know It (the One).

Next, Soul is alive because it is Nous-on-a-lower-level-of-reality. Hence, Soul is fully animated when it turns back to its source (Nous) in contemplation of the multiplicity of intelligibles There. Specifically, Soul lives because it, too, is a self-kinēsis which is intellection, but of a weaker and more multiple sort than that of Nous. In short, all life below Nous is logos of Nous. All products of Nous are alive precisely because they are Its images or logoi. Hence, all things (from the hypostasis of Soul downwards) live to a greater or lesser degree depending upon their contemplative closeness to, or remoteness from, the primal life of Nous.⁷

⁷Contemplation, for Plotinus, involves an operative state and a content. Nous, for example, is a combination of an operative state and an intelligible content. This content is itself, when found on the next lower level of reality, identical with Soul (i.e., All-Soul), which in turn is an operative state with a content. The content of its contemplation is the World Soul, individual human souls, brute animal souls, and Nature. The content of Nature's contemplation is vegetal life, either in plants as such or in human and animal bodies. Individual human souls both actively contemplate and have a content. Animal souls do as well, although their "contemplation" is of a very weak sort, namely, sensation rather than intellection as such. Both

Furthermore, life on the human level also admits of degrees and may be expressed in terms of its two extreme manifestations. The life of the serious man involves identification between his intellect and Nous. Accordingly, his is a life of contemplation rather than of action. He concentrates on intellection rather than on external activity. He has become increasingly unified within himself (and in this way with the One) and no longer needs to turn to what is outside (i.e., the sensible universe). The man of action (praxis), on the other hand, embodies a dichotomy between knower and known. Although he too contemplates (and thus lives, albeit imperfectly), he does so weakly and incompletely. His soul, accordingly, must still console itself with various sorts of artifacts and external activities rather than with the genuine objects of contemplation (Nous and ultimately the One).

The fourth key text (VI, 7 [38], 13; 15; 17; 18) contained further elaboration of two key points. First, Plotinus seeks further to explain life as epistrophē (in relation to the Platonic megista gēnē, especially kinēsis)

(7continued)

human beings and brute animals produce cognitive products as well as produce biological offspring. Finally, plants may be said to contemplate only in a purely passive sense, namely, as the content of the contemplation of a higher reality.

and life as prohodos (i.e., the life of Nous as active dynamis).

In explaining life as epistrophē Plotinus relies on the five megista gēnē of Plato (kinēsis, stasis, tauton, heteron and ousia). Plotinus' use of these categories comes from the Timaeus (in which Plato uses only four of the five, omitting stasis) and from the Sophist (in which he employs all five). In the Timaeus Plato uses the categories to explain how the Demiurge formed the World Soul. In order that the World Soul should be the best of all sensible beings, the Demiurge blended tauton, thateron (for which term Plotinus substitutes heteron) and ousia into a whole. Next, this unity was cut into strips and these were bent into circles (an inner circle of difference and an outer circle of sameness). These circles of cognitional motion produced the cyclical local movement of the celestial bodies. For Plato it is through these circles of sameness and difference that the World Soul knows both the Forms and all sensible existents.⁸

In the Sophist Plato investigates the precise difference between the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher. In his discussion of the chief feature of the sophist, namely, his ability to employ false statements, the megista gēnē serve a dual purpose: a) to show that it is

⁸See Timaeus, 35a-38b.

possible (contra Parmenides) to speak meaningfully about "that which is not" and b) to explain further the science of dialectics by showing that true knowledge must consist in understanding how Forms relate to other Forms (and not just in understanding how they relate to sensible things).⁹

Plotinus transfers these categories to Nous by emphasizing an important dimension of his logos doctrine, namely, that a lower reality is a less perfect instance of a higher reality. Accordingly, if the five categories apply to the World Soul (for Plato as well as for Plotinus), then they apply, for Plotinus, all the more perfectly to the next higher level of reality, Nous.

How, then, does each of the five categories apply to zōē? The all-important connection between kinēsis and zōē may be made clear by noting that Nous is produced by the twofold process of prohodos (active dynamis) and epistrophē (act). Each of these two moments is indeed a kinēsis and a life. Although kinēsis as prohodos is not yet intellection, it is life as sheer active power for intellection and, hence, it is the indeterminate principle of all living beings and acts. Kinēsis as epistrophē is best understood in terms of ousia. Here, too, Plotinus employs Platonic terms when describing the kinēsis of Nous as a "wandering"

⁹See Sophist, 237a-241a.

within Itself in which It animates all ousiai.¹⁰ These ousiai are themselves the acts which constitute the fulfillment of the kinēsis of Nous in Its determinate state. As determinate act, then, Nous is the actuation of every being and every life.

How heteron and tauton relate to zōē is also explained in reference to the two moments of Nous' production. Plotinus argues (in II, 4 [12], 5, 28-39) that a proper explanation of the production of any being must refer not just to kinēsis but to heteron as well. This is so because any product is necessarily different from, by being less perfect than, its producer. In this sense heteron is a significant feature of the first moment of Nous' production and also of Nous' life. Heteron in the moment of prohodos is identical with intelligible matter and active dynamis. Furthermore, heteron is in a sense a characteristic of the second moment of Nous' production, since the plurality of intelligible beings is necessarily other than their original source, the One-Good. Tauton also is a characteristic of the second moment of Nous' production and, hence, of Its life as well because the eternal intellection of Nous is ever-present to all of Its objects or acts. This factor is the trace of the One common to all beings and is life. Elsewhere in the Enneads (VI, 2 [43]) Plotinus relies on

¹⁰See Timaeus, 39d.

Plato's Sophist to bring in the fifth genos as well: stasis (rest). There he notes that even stasis applies to Nous because the content of Its contemplation is a universe of permanent and eternal Forms.

The fifth and final key text (I, 4 [46], 3-4) provided valuable information on eudaimonia (the good state of man's inner reality) and its relation to seriousness and true life. Plotinus' basic position is that perfect life on the human level is to be found in the intellectual nature of man and that all other, lesser lives are lives precisely because they are less perfect and dimmer versions of primal life, the life of Nous. Hence, eudaimonia, the good state of one's inner reality, is identical with the attainment of the One-Good by those beings which have life to the fullest degree (i.e., superabundantly), namely, Nous and human beings (as well as, of course, the All Soul, World Soul and astral souls).

In turning specifically to human life it is important to note that Plotinus' position is somewhat at variance with the views of the Epicureans, Aristotle and the Stoics. It is obvious, for example, that the Epicurean view that physical pleasure is the sufficient and necessary condition for true life and, hence, for eudaimonia is incompatible with Plotinus' view of the good and true life as that of intellect -- the life of the inner man.

Against Aristotle Plotinus argues that it is a mistake to say that human eudaimonia is in many ways genuinely dependent on, and affected by, the presence of external factors and bodily necessities. Not only does this view ignore the valuable Plotinian distinction between the inner (intellectual and, hence, real and genuinely alive) and outer (earthly and bodily and, hence, unreal) man, but it seems to make the enjoyment of perfect eudaimonia ultimately unavailable in this earthly life. He also takes exception to Aristotle's view that eudaimonia is the accomplishment of any being's proper or natural task. If this were true, Plotinus contends, eudaimonia would be achievable by any being, not merely humans and gods. However, eudaimonia applies only to beings which can enjoy the life of intellect superabundantly.

The Stoic position, for Plotinus, encounters a similar difficulty. Although the Stoics emphasize virtue as the necessary and sufficient condition for eudaimonia (rather than virtue supplemented by various external conditions) it is likewise difficult to see how, in all but a few exceptional instances, human beings could ever achieve genuine eudaimonia.

Obviously for Plotinus, as far as the serious man is concerned, the body is a mere addition to his inner reality, which does not really need the bodily necessities. Their presence or absence does not contribute directly to his

eudaimonia or true life but merely to the more or less pleasurable continuation of his bodily existence. Why? Because the intellectual part of the soul always remains with Nous, constantly living in perfect contemplation of the divine intelligibles and unspoiled by the earthly life. The serious man has integrated himself to the extent that the lower part of him has become irrelevant. For Plotinus the soul of the serious man, as logos of Nous, is itself eternal and unchanging and, hence, unaffected by the presence or absence of consciousness, pain, pleasure and other concerns.

In this way Plotinus' henological perspective (i.e., that to be real is to be one) also affects his theory of morality. When the serious man achieves proximate (or intellectual) unity, he actually has the good within himself: he is the good. This unity in the serious man is identical with moral goodness because in intellectually grasping the Primal Reality he also grasps the Supreme Good, the primal and emanative cause of his goodness and the final cause of his moral behavior. Just as the One and the Good are identical, so too unity and goodness are one and the same state in man and thus constitute his seriousness and moral goodness.

Man achieves this proximate unity, and thereby enjoys true life, by purely intellectual means. He paves the way for this achievement by detaching himself from the concerns of the universe in which he lives. He becomes free from

everything and everybody. With the achievement of the good state of his inner reality, then, the serious man has the proper perspective with which to view and to evaluate the people, things and events around him. He knows that the real man is other than his outward parts. Hence, any pursuit that involves those outward parts will only prove to be a distraction from what is his real and true life.

However, while he does not allow the everyday interests and activities (which are ultimately mere decorations) of others to overwhelm him, he does strive, insofar as he is able, to help them achieve the same state of seriousness he already enjoys. Accordingly, he tries to live an exemplary life so that those who are not yet serious might learn from him and thus come to seriousness themselves.

But man also achieves an ultimate sort of unity with the One-Good. This unity, however, is no longer effected by intellectual means but by a mystical contact. It is a union with the One that the serious man is prepared for, precisely by having led a life of contemplation, and awaits patiently.¹¹ It is not a union whose achievement he can

¹¹Plotinus describes the mystic's journey as one which requires that he strip away everything, put away all shape and let every Form go. See, for example, VI, 7 (38), 34, 4 and V, 3 (49), 17, 38.

fully control or predict, but rather is something that comes upon him suddenly and totally.¹²

CONCLUSIONS

What, then, may we conclude about Plotinus' conception of life? Let us begin by noting what life in itself (i.e., the life of Nous) consists of. Next, it will be worthwhile to explore the connection of life with its ultimate source—the Primal Reality (i.e., the One-Good). Finally, we will comment on the nature of human life.

Perfect life (or the life of Nous) is self-kinēsis, ousia and energeia, and is identical with a noetic awareness of the One, which Itself cannot be known in Its perfect simplicity and unicity but rather must be understood as a plurality of Forms or intelligibles.

Life on the level of Nous, then, is both a tauton and a heteron, that is, a sameness-in-difference. Sameness denotes the life of Nous mainly in Its moment of epistrophē, whereas difference denotes the life of Nous in Its moment of prohodos and epistrophē. Furthermore, each moment of noetic production is a kinēsis and, hence, also may be termed life. Nous in Its first moment is life as pure active dynamis, as the indeterminate principle for all living beings and acts. Kinēsis as prohodos is not yet intellection, but it is life

¹²See VI, 9 (9), 8, 22-43; 11, 15-16.

as sheer active power aimed at intellection. Nous in Its second moment is life as the actuation and determination of all living intelligibles. Noetic kinēsis as epistrophē is profitably explained in terms of ousia. Here, likewise, Plotinus reverts to Platonic terminology in describing the kinēsis of Nous as a "wandering" within Itself in which It animates all ousiai. These ousiai are themselves the acts which constitute the fulfillment of the kinēsis of Nous (i.e., Nous in Its determinate state). Accordingly, as determinate act Nous is the actuation of every being and every life.

How might we better understand the life of Nous in the first moment of Its production? We notice that in Its first moment Nous is intelligible matter, which is the first emanant from, or product of, the One. But intelligible matter is life as active dynamis. Hence, life as active dynamis may be said to be more real than any being subsequent to it. Intelligible matter, precisely as indeterminate and unformed, is more like the One than when determinate and formed (in the moment of epistrophē). Accordingly, we may say that life as active dynamis is truly Primal life because it is more real than life as act (since it shares more intimately in the indeterminacy of the One than does the World of Forms).¹³

¹³On this point see Rist, "Dyad," pp. 105-6.

Finally, the life of Nous is a totality of lives. Nous as act in Its moment of epistrophē actuates and animates the multiplicity of beings which are Its content. Nous in this sense is not a simple and single life but a multiple and total life. Furthermore, all levels of reality subsequent to and below Nous are alive precisely because they are Its traces and logoi. Nous is a totality of lives, then, both as the multiple living content of Its contemplation of the One and also as the source of the life of every being on every level of reality below It.

Nous, since It is identical with the intellection of all things in one simultaneous moment (or "now"), is eternity. The next level of reality, Soul, is alive (because it is a logos of Nous) but involves temporality, since its intellection is successive. For this reason, the life of Soul is time.

The relationship between life and logos reminds us once again that life is intellection, which is a self-kinēsis. Every being has life precisely and only because it is a logos of some higher reality, which itself is a logos of a still higher reality (until we come to the highest reality, the One, of which everything else is a logos). Each of these beings lives to the extent that it is intellectual, that is, to the extent that it contemplates the One as multiple. It is precisely this auto-kinetic intellection which is identical with the life of any being,

except for those at the lowest level of reality. For Plotinus, even the physical universe is good and alive to the extent that it has some trace of being (i.e., some trace of Nous or intellect) or logos. The visible universe is produced by logos and its very reality is, in fact, a spreading out of the various logoi which are the content of the contemplation of Nature. The coming of these logoi upon matter is, among other things, a coming to life.¹⁴ But some of these logoi (i.e., plants) are so diminished in their intellectuality that they do not actually contemplate and hence do not produce a content. They themselves are alive merely as the content of Nature's contemplation, which is ultimately a logos of Nous. Of course, individual human souls both contemplate and have a content. So too do animal souls, although their so-called contemplation is really sensation.¹⁵ Both humans and brute animals produce cognitive products and biologically generate offspring. Thus, no being can be cognitive in some sense unless it somehow ultimately is related to Nous, which is pure intellection and hence life par excellence. In any event, the only way in which something lives is by being the logos of Nous -- by actually being Nous on a lower level of reality.

¹⁴Consult IV, 7 (2), 2, 22-25.

¹⁵See, for example, III, 8 (30), 8, 13-17.

Accordingly, Plotinus' logos principle may be seen to express two important dimensions of life. Logos as extensive shows that beings are ordered as products and are a gradation of diminishing lives. This is logos in its "vertical" dimension. Logos as intensive, on the other hand, shows that each hypostasis, because a unity in multiplicity, is a single reality encompassing a plurality of living beings. This is logos in its "horizontal" dimension.

Furthermore, this relation of lower to higher may also be described in terms of erōs. Genuine love, for Plotinus, involves neither the production of an artifact nor the establishment of a physical or sensual liaison with another being. Its true aim is union with the ultimate object of desire: the One-Good. Accordingly, what genuine love motivates in any being is precisely its self-kinēsis. The highest manifestation of self-kinēsis is intellection which ultimately has as its object the One as intelligible, and this is the very life of that being. Thus, Plotinus' theory of life, from its highest manifestation to the lowest trace, involves a rationally appetitive dimension.

But what is the nature of the ultimate object of this rational appetite? The Primal Reality -- the One-Good -- is the supreme and undiminished source of all other

realities because It is perfectly unified and simple.¹⁶ As such, It is other than all other realities (precisely because It is simple and they are multiple) and yet not entirely other than any of them (since they are all logoi of the One and, hence, they are the One-on-a-lower-level-of-reality). In addition, the One is both the source of life and above life. It is the source of all life because Nous, Its first product, lives only by Its self-initiated contemplation of the One as multiple. Yet the One Itself must be above life since Its very nature precludes contemplation or self-kinēsis, which would involve It in a duality of knower and known, mover and moved. The Primal Reality's products flow out from It as water from a spring which is itself unoriginated and undiminished.¹⁷ This sort of causality may be characterized as "emanative." The One-Good in causing other realities Itself remains perfect and undepleted. Emanative causality occurs spontaneously, automatically and necessarily. The One produces because It is totally perfect and not because It freely chooses to produce. Emanative causality safeguards the transcendence of the One in particular and the nature of Plotinus' monism in general. What overflows from the One -- the intelligible

¹⁶See I, 6 (1), 7, 9-10; VI, 9 (9), 3, 14-16; and III, 8 (30), 8, 1-12.

¹⁷See III, 8 (30), 10, 1-10.

otherness, matter, operative power -- is logos of the One (i.e., the One-on-a-lower-level).

Finally, what is human life? Life on the level of an individual human soul is both a praxis and a poiēsis (though Plotinus never makes it entirely clear how it is the latter). A human soul's life is apparently a praxis because it is capable of acting according to correct rational rules or logoi of conduct. Its life is also a poiēsis, since the human soul animates and moves a body, as well as produces and makes various artifacts. These products may be evaluated as to their beauty or usefulness, for example, by assessing the extent to which their production was carried out in conformity with correct logoi.

The key component of the human soul's life, however, is to be found in another aspect of its relationship to Nous. The human soul's pure and good life is achieved when it has become actually intellectual and thereby purified of external concerns and associations with physical matter. The human soul truly lives when it becomes bodiless; when it is unified with Nous and leads the purely intellectual life of knowing the One as Nous is able to know It, as a multiplicity of perfect and eternal Forms.

What are the characteristics of the best human life as it is lived in the sense world? In other words, to what extent can the human soul live truly in this world? The serious man, he who lives truly, is one who takes as good

not the merely apparent goods of this world but the One-Good of the highest realm, with Whom he initially becomes intellectually acquainted and ultimately mystically united. Such ultimate mystical unity is his only goal.¹⁸

Accordingly, some things contribute to his good inner state while others only belong to his outer and inferior half, the body. To the latter he gives only what it needs to exist because he realizes that it makes no contribution to seriousness and true life and, hence, must largely be ignored and eventually fully discarded.

The concerns of body and the events of daily life seem insignificant to the serious man because he has achieved proximate unity with Nous through contemplation and therefore understands the true nature of the physical world in which he spends his everyday life. He recognizes this universe as merely a reflection of the true All of Nous and thereby less perfect, less unified and less real. The

¹⁸Such proximate (i.e., intellectual) unity with the Primal Reality is his only deliberate goal. It alone constitutes true life and the good state of his inner reality. But mystical union with the One is the ultimate human achievement. It seems, however, not to be entirely predictable and automatic and, hence, appears to be somewhat beyond the scope and control of even the serious man. At best he can only prepare himself properly, by becoming as much like Nous as possible, for that ultimate moment. Accordingly, the human soul's mystical "return" to the One seems to be the result of careful preparation and patient waiting. Its achievement is a perfect stillness which is a supra-life and a supra-eudaimonia, if indeed it is even life and eudaimonia at all. See, for example, VI, 9 (9), 8, 22-43; 11, 15-16.

activities, problems and events which occur in it are only imitations and have only the reality and worth of actions and events in a theatre. For this reason they are not to be taken seriously. Only by refusing to be distracted by such external activity can the real part of man (the inner man) achieve seriousness, true life and eudaimonia and thus prepare himself for the ultimate and mystical union with the Primal Reality, in which he is alone with the Alone.¹⁹

¹⁹I, 6 (1), 7, 9-10.

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We shall employ the following abbreviations in our bibliography:

- ACI: Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul Tema: Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente. Rome: Accad. Noz. dei Lincei, 1974.
- MS: Modern Schoolman.
- PR: Philosophical Review.
- Gr: Gregorianum.
- LN: Le néo-platonisme. Actes du Colloque de Royaumont 9-13 Juin 1969. Paris: Ed. du CNRS, 1971.
- CQ: Classical Quarterly.
- Ph: Phronesis.
- RIP: Revue internationale de Philosophie.
- RP: Revue Philosophique.
- LSP: Les sources de Plotin. Vandoeuvres-Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1960.
- RPL: Revue Philosophique de Louvain.

RMM: Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale.

Mn: Mnemosyne.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy .

April 14, 1987
Date

Leo Sweeney
Director's Signature