Providence and Pedagogy in Plotinus

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Providence and Pedagogy in Plotinus

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Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation examines Plotinus' pedagogy. I argue that his pedagogy aims at teaching students how to think and be attuned to their own unity, both of which have ethical ramifications. I identify six techniques he uses to achieve these aims: (1) using allusions, (2) leading readers to an impasse *(aporia)*, (3) using and correcting images, (4) self-examination and ongoing criticism, (5) treating opposites dynamically, and (6) thought-experiments. I also explain why and how these techniques are not applied to passive recipients but require their active involvement.

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DEDICATION

To Beatrice—without your love, support, and editorial work, this dissertation would not exist.

Introduction

Plotinus' manner of teaching was an extension of the way he lived philosophically. As a teacher, he was intent on dialogue, concerned with the process of someone's learning, and modeled how to integrate thought into one's life. Certain incidents that Porphyry recounts in his *Life of Plotinus* highlight these aspects of his teaching. For instance, his school was open to anyone who wished to attend (*VP* 1.14-15). Even the rhetorician Diophanes was allowed to read a defense of Alcibiades (*VP* 15.7-17). Diophanes claimed that a student, for the sake of advancing in his virtue, should submit to sexual intercourse with his master if the latter desired. Although this speech angered Plotinus, his response was not to leave or to exclude Diophanes from participation. Instead, he had Porphyry write and read a rebuttal. Connected to this insistence on dialogue was his prioritizing of someone's learning process over communicating settled doctrine. He valued an individual's inquiry to such a degree that his student Amelius complained about the disorder and what he perceived as abundant nonsense (*VP* 3.36-39). This esteem for the learning process is evidenced. Porphyry, to the annoyance of someone named Thaumasius, claims to have asked for three days about the soul's connection to the body. Thaumasius wished to hear something as if set down in a book, while Plotinus said that the book could not be written until Porphyry's impasses were resolved (*VP* 13.11-18).

This emphasis on dialogue and the learning process was not focused primarily on helping someone increase his or her body of knowledge. Plotinus himself only attended to *thought* (*VP* 8.7-8). This preoccupation with thought involved a whole way of living.

He praised Rogatianus, a senator and student, whose life gradually transformed to the degree that he gave up his property, his servants, and his rank (*VP* 7.32-36); dying people entrusted their children's education and their property to Plotinus (*VP* 2.6-10); his purported last words were "endeavor to return the god in us to the divine in the All" (πειρᾶσθε τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν θεὸν ἀνάγειν πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῷ παντὶ θεῖον, *VP* 2.26-27). For Plotinus, a life oriented toward thought involves not concentrating and directing one's energies to acquiring wealth, prestige, honors, or anything of that sort.[1] The life of thought is an endeavor of aligning what is divine in oneself with what is divine in the cosmos. As a teacher, Plotinus led his students toward that kind of life.

At this point, a question arises: can Plotinus still teach through his writings? Can one find in his writing this goal of leading someone toward a life of thought through a concern with dialogue and the learning process? A few passages from Porphyry's account point toward this possibility. Most of Plotinus' writings were produced in response to questions that arose from the meetings in his school (*VP* 4.11-12; 5.61-62). Even writings he produced when he was no longer teaching were sent to his student Porphyry (*VP* 6.1-25). Plotinus worked out his thought from beginning to end before writing it down and could keep the thread of his thought alive if his writing was interrupted (*VP* 8.9-19). These reports from Porphyry are not definitive evidence. Together, however, they suggest the possibility that Plotinus worked his thought out from a teaching context. In that case, finding a pedagogical aspect to his writing could be possible. If finding the aims and

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[1] *Ap.*, 29e-30c.

techniques of Plotinus' pedagogy in his writing is possible, then there is a pedagogical aspect to his writing.[2]

That is the purpose of this dissertation—to present at least some of the aims and techniques of Plotinus' pedagogy. In this dissertation, "pedagogy" refers to the activity of leading students. In general, leading involves guiding someone from this to that through some way and so requires a course. Since the one who leads does so from some motive, leading involves a course and a motive. In order to lead there must be someone who follows. Following, however, is not passive and is not the same thing as being dragged. The one who follows pursues the course, accompanies the guide, and does so from some motive of his or her own. This dynamic of leading and following appears in pedagogies, too. "The aims of Plotinus' pedagogy" refers to the specific ways that this dynamic appears in his writing. In presenting the aims of his pedagogy, the following questions are addressed. From what, to what, and along what path does Plotinus lead his readers? What is Plotinus' motive for being a guide? If they are to follow his lead and accompany him, what is required of his readers? What motive or motives are appropriate to Plotinus' teaching? One can read Plotinus for a number of reasons—to satisfy historical curiosity, to find definitive solutions, to learn to think. In examining the course he establishes, his own motives, and what is required to follow him, does one find that particular motives

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[2] See Schroeder, 2015, 145-178. Schroeder argues that Porphyry's account echoes Plotinus' own writing to such a degree that it appears that Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* "incorporates language from the Enneads to describe Plotinus himself" (174). This incorporation has the effect of "embodying the book in the man [. . . and] bringing Plotinus to life" (174). If Porphyry's account resembles and borrows from Plotinus' writing, then finding the pedagogical corollaries of Porphyry's account in Plotinus' writing should be possible.

are more appropriate than others? Although some of these questions have been partially addressed above, a full and in depth examination of them is required.

Since techniques are used to achieve these aims, one must examine these as well. There are techniques for leading and for following. For instance, Plotinus leads readers to an impasse (*aporia*) in a way that reveals the source responsible for that impasse, thereby indicating a possible way around it. Or, he uses two images to correct each other, since both introduce some aspects that are inappropriate to what is depicted in them. Plotinus, however, does not explicitly tell his readers that they are being led to an impasse or indicate its source. Readers, then, must be attentive both to where they are being led and to *how* they are being led. Further, Plotinus does not always state which aspects of his two images are appropriate, which are inappropriate, and how the images correct each other. Readers must realize this correction for themselves by being attentive to *what* the images entail and to *how* they work together.

This dynamic between leading and following indicates a main methodological component of this dissertation. The *content* of his presentation is not enough to discover his pedagogy. An attentiveness to and examination of the *manner* of his presentation is also necessary. Because Plotinus' writings are rooted in addressing particular issues and working through them, examining the pedagogical aspects of particular texts is better than abstracting his pedagogy out of many or all of his texts. Another methodological component, then, involves the selection of texts to examine. One main text and three accompanying texts have been selected. *On Providence I and II* (III 2[47] and III 3[48]) was selected as the main text for a couple reasons. Armstrong says of it that "we have

most vividly the impression of Plotinus thinking aloud, discussing the subject with himself as he writes" (Armstrong, 1967, 38). With this work, readers encounter an image of how Plotinus puts questions to himself along with how he addresses and works through these questions. III.2 even begins by alluding to the activity of giving an account. In drawing his reader's attention to this activity at the very beginning, Plotinus indicates that giving an account and those who give it have a central role in a discussion of providence. The topic itself concerns the intelligibility of the cosmos and, by extension, our ability to give an account of it. If Plotinus draws his readers' attention to giving an account, if this treatise about the intelligibility of the cosmos reflects how Plotinus himself forms an account, then this work can teach someone how give an account. It can teach someone how to think discursively. John Heiser argues that "Plotinus agrees with Plato that the learner learns, not by *hearing* a *logos*, but by *giving* one" (Heiser, 1991, 7). If that is true, then this work can be a fruitful resource for discovering Plotinus' pedagogic practices.

On the Knowing Hypostases and That which is Beyond (V.3.[49]), *On Virtues* (I.2.[19]), and *On Dialectic* I.3.[20]) are works that assist and expand this examination. V.3 discusses the relationship between the discursive thought of human beings and the non-discursive thought of Intellect. The dependency of the former on the latter explains how giving an account is possible and why we give accounts. Their purpose is not just to render our experience intelligible but to assist us in moving from thinking discursively to thinking non-discursively. Facilitating and guiding readers in this movement is a

significant part of Plotinus' pedagogy. Having examined V.3, Plotinus' account of providence is then re-examined as leading readers toward non-discursive thought.

On Virtues addresses two of the main difficulties that arise in III.2 and III.3: the problems of evil and of human responsibility in a providential cosmos. The resolution of both problems depends on our turning and moving toward Intellect, which the virtues help to make possible. Plotinus' discussion of virtues, then, contributes to the general examination into how we can think non-discursively. In particular, it specifies the ethical dimension of that endeavor. *On Dialectic* is an explicit discussion of pedagogy. Plotinus explains how he leads musically and erotically inclined souls to philosophy. He then explains how he points philosophically inclined souls to Intellect and teaches them dialectic. Through dialectic, the soul can give account of the sensible cosmos and can contemplate Intellect. Dialectical training, then, consists of learning to think discursively and non-discursively.

These treatises, for the reasons articulated above, form a good basis for examining the aims and techniques of Plotinus' pedagogy. This examination occurs through following Plotinus' discussion of providence. The first chapter of the dissertation demonstrates the pedagogical manner in which Plotinus introduces his readers to his hypothesis about providence. First, he alludes to Epicurus, Aristotle, and the gnostics. These allusions are occasions for readers to recognize and reflect on these thinkers as those with whom Plotinus is conversing. Through reflecting on them, readers can begin to see that Plotinus' discussion of providence includes questions about giving an account: for instance, what makes an account acceptable, upon what standards does this acceptability

depend, and what is the source of these standards? Through these allusions, Plotinus invites readers to begin asking themselves these questions and so examine themselves. This self-examination is not incidental to an account of providence but a necessary part of it. Second, Plotinus leads his readers to impasses in a way that exposes their source. In each case, certain ways of thinking are what obstruct a proper approach to providence. Removing the obstruction depends on changing the way one has been thinking. Again, self-examination shows itself to be necessary for an account of providence. At this point, the main impasse concerning providence is introduced: how are cosmic providence and the coming to be of individuals compatible? Third, one of the impasses is that cosmic providence is not like human forethought, and yet we must begin from our own experiences. We cannot unreflectively depend on our experience but must continual criticize of it and our use of language to understand providence. To move from the familiarity of human forethought to cosmic providence, which is exceptionally unfamiliar, one must be ready to re-evaluate how one is thinking and speaking. Self-examination, then, must be a continual part of thinking about and giving an account of providence.

Through the allusions, the impasses, and the insistence on self-examination, Plotinus leads his readers to his hypothesis about providence. Providence is the way in which the cosmos imitates Intellect. The second chapter of the dissertation, then, examines how the cosmos can be understood as an image of Intellect. In brief, Intellect is the original and primary unity in multiplicity. It consists of multiple parts, each of which is its own thinking activity that implies and is implied by all the other parts. The cosmos imitates

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this unity by being a unified whole that consists of parts striving to maintain their own unity. Unlike Intellect, however, the parts are separated from each other both in terms of their bodily magnitudes and the kind of life belonging to them. Both the whole and the parts fall short of the fully integrated unity of Intellect.

This chapter concludes with an examination of two pedagogical techniques. Plotinus uses two images to correct and support each other. He compares *logos*, which is what connects this cosmos to Intellect, to both a seed and a harmony. The seed image depicts a multiplicity coming from a unity, while the harmony image depicts a multiplicity gathered into a unity. The former has the defect of depicting the parts as mere functions of the whole, since the parts of a plant are at the service of the whole. The latter has the defect of depicting a unity that depends on an external source, since a harmony is produced by a composer putting the sounds together. The seed image corrects the harmony image by presenting this unifying power as an internal source. The harmony image corrects the plant image by presenting independent parts, since each note is its own particular sound. Together, these images depict the cosmos as consisting of parts with their own unity that are all unified together by an internal source. Because the *logos* is the source of both the parts and the whole this kind of unity is possible.

This kind of thinking that balances the integrity of each part and the unity of the whole leads to the second pedagogical technique. Plotinus requires readers to think about opposites in a particular way. He opposes *logos* and matter, the former imparting form and the latter remaining formless. However, Soul preserves the ongoing balance between them. His discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter shows readers how to think of opposites

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in this dynamic way. Instead of thinking about opposites as mutually exclusive, one thinks about them as in relation to each other through a third factor. His whole discussion of providence is a demonstration of how to think this way.

The second chapter, having introduced Soul, *logos*, and matter, leads to the third chapter. Through the dynamic between Soul, *logos*, and matter, this cosmos imitates Intellect, especially since Soul and *logos* are the connection between this cosmos and Intellect. Understanding Plotinus' hypothesis about providence, then, depends on understanding Soul, *logos*, and matter. Chapter three is a close examination of the role Soul, *logos*, and matter play in the formation of the cosmos. The cosmos is established and continuously formed through a multiplicity of souls animating bodies in a way that is consonant with the All-Soul. The *logos* of the whole cosmos, which comes from the All-Soul, is the projection of form onto matter. Particular souls contribute to the formation of the cosmos by fitting their own activities, their own *logoi*, into this *logos* of the whole. Matter, however, remains formless and so any total, final formation is impossible. There is a continuous dynamic, then, between the formlessness of matter and the *logoi* as the imparting of form coming from the All-Soul and particular souls. The shaping motion of living bodies, the production, interaction, and destruction among inanimate bodies, and the whole organization of all bodies into a single cosmos results from this ongoing dynamic.

The fourth chapter examines how Plotinus' discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter contains a pedagogical aspect. Plotinus exposes the limits of rational, discursive thought in a way that prepares one for the possibility of an intuitive, non-discursive way of

thinking. Discursive thought is propositional and involves a process of thinking through something. For Plotinus, the propositional character of discursive thought entails combining and dividing images from perception and from Intellect, using the latter to illuminate the former. While discursive thought works with images and not real beings, non-discursive thought is the immediate contact with real beings. Plotinus' pedagogy is a guide to thinking both discursively and non-discursively. Before examining how his discussion of providence guides readers from discursive toward non-discursive thought, this chapter traces that movement in outline form. In brief, this movement consists of shifting from looking outward to looking inward and from a limited perspective to a comprehensive vision. Plotinus' discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter, and by extension providence, is then re-examined in terms of how it guides readers toward non-discursive thought. In particular, passages are examined in which Plotinus discusses Soul, *logos*, or matter in the context of criticizing a limited point of view that guides readers toward a more comprehensive one. Although Plotinus' discussion of providence guides readers toward non-discursive thought, the moment of thinking non-discursively happens all of a sudden. One's noetic self seizes one's soul in an instant. No step by step procedure can guarantee it. Discursive thought can only prepare one for its possibility. Plotinus' use of thought experiments is examined as part of this preparation. These are imaginative and meditative exercises through which readers can prepare themselves for the possibility of non-discursive thought.

Like the fourth chapter, the fifth chapter shows how Plotinus' discussion of providence is inextricably bound to his pedagogical practices. It revisits the pedagogical

technique of exposing the source of an impasse in a way that points toward its resolution. Through this technique, Plotinus resolves two interrelated impasses that anyone who gives an account of providence must address: how can the cosmos be good when bad things happen in it and how can humans be responsible as parts of an ordered whole? Resolutions to difficulties about the problem of evil lead to difficulties about human responsibility and vice versa. Finally, both impasses are shown to be contained under another one, which is the main impasse introduced in the first chapter of the dissertation: how are cosmic providence and individual becoming compatible? The fifth chapter shows how the sources of these impasses are certain ways of thinking, which implies that getting around them requires changing the way one thinks. In particular, Plotinus guides readers through a thought experiment in which they attempt to see the cosmos and the individuals within it *as if* from the vantage point of the One.

The sixth chapter concludes the dissertation by connecting the techniques and aims of Plotinus' pedagogy to *On Virtues* and *On Dialectic*. This chapter demonstrates that Plotinus sees himself only as a guide and so understands the soul to be its own teacher. Since his role is to be a guide for a soul teaches itself, there is a close connection his pedagogical techniques and his philosophical endeavor. His philosophical method is a model for how to teach oneself to think both discursively and non-discursively. With *On Virtues*, this endeavor is discussed as purifying the soul so that it can become godlike. With *On Dialectic*, this endeavor is discussed as training the soul to give an account of the sensible cosmos and to quietly contemplate Intellect and even the One. In regard to himself and others, Plotinus is concerned with the possibility of experiencing and being

attuned to one's own unity. His philosophical and pedagogical endeavor is oriented toward realizing that possibility.

Chapter One
Giving an Account, Self-Examination, and Providence

Plotinus begins III.2.[47] by leading his readers to his hypothesis about providence through three pedagogical techniques. With these techniques, he begins to teach them how to think about providence—and, by extension, to think philosophically. He does not exercise these techniques on a passive audience. They only work if readers enact them for themselves and become active participants in the discussion. Any author requires some active involvement such as thinking through the steps of an argument for oneself. The kind of participation that Plotinus' text requires goes beyond that kind of involvement.

He requires readers to engage in an ongoing self-reflection that entails a continual criticism of how they think and speak. Looking at three of his pedagogical techniques in outline form begins to show how that is case. First, allusions to previous thinkers shape the context of the discussion. By reflecting on them, readers can see that an inquiry into providence must include questions about giving an account and those who engage in this activity. Second, Plotinus leads his readers to impasses in a way that exposes their source. In each case, the impasses follow from certain ways of thinking that must be altered in order to understand providence. Third, he indicates that if one wants to understand providence one must engage in a continual criticism of how one thinks and speaks. One must practice an ongoing self-examination to avoid imposing the experience of human forethought onto an understanding of cosmic providence. This self-examination, then, is not a mere addition to a discussion of providence but is essential to it.

1.1   Introduction to Pedagogic Techniques

Before examining these techniques in detail, the opening passage provides a sense of how they work.

> Surely, the man attributing who gives this All's being and formation to spontaneity and chance is irrational and belongs to a man who acquired neither thought nor perception: this, I suppose, is evident even prior to an account and many adequate accounts have been set down showing this (τὸ μὲν τῷ αὐτομάτῳ καὶ τύχῃ διδόναι τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ σύστασιν ὡς ἄλογον καὶ ἀνδρὸς οὔτε νοῦν οὔτε αἴσθησιν κεκτημένου, δῆλον που καὶ πρὸ λόγου καὶ πολλοὶ καὶ ἱκανοὶ καταβέβληνται δεικνύντες τοῦτο λόγοι, III.2.1, 1-5).[1]

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Plotinus does not assert the proposition, "spontaneity and chance are not causes of the cosmos." He subtly directs his readers' attention to the act of giving an account and to the one who performs this act. He does this by using expressions like τὸ διδόναι, ἀνδρός, and λόγος. He indicates that, in a discussion of the cosmos and attributing causes to it, his readers should not ignore the fact that human beings are giving these accounts. To see that he is pointing us in that direction, readers must be attentive to *how* he is writing. He implies, but does not directly say, that the role of those giving an account is not incidental to a discussion of providence. Readers can only see this implication by reflecting on why he includes references to accounts and attributing causes to the cosmos and then examining how that relates to providence. Sections two and three of this chapter are devoted to this examination

His allusions to Epicurus, Aristotle, and the gnostics contribute to revealing that an examination into the giving of accounts is essential to any discussion of providence. Just as in the example above, these allusions only serve that purpose if readers recognize and reflect on them. This pedagogical technique is an example of Plotinus encouraging his readers to seek and investigate for themselves, which Porphyry reports was a part of his teaching (*VP* 3.36-39).

1.2 Epicurus, Aristotle, and the Gnostics: the Relation between Accounts and Causality

Eric D. Perl and Arthur Madigan, S.J. for their assistance and instruction. Any errors or problems in translations are my own.

This section reflects on Plotinus' allusions to Epicurus, Aristotle, and the gnostics and carries out a way in which one could examine them. The results of this examination are threefold. First, it shows the relationship between kinds of causes and kinds of accounts. Second, it shows that Plotinus' own account of the cosmos along with his hypothesis about providence is in part a response to Epicurus, Aristotle, and the gnostics. Third, it leads to some questions about giving an account that are conducive to understanding Plotinus' discussion of providence. The following passage serves as the basis for this examination.

> Surely, attributing this All's being and formation to spontaneity and chance is irrational and belongs to a man who has acquired neither thought nor perception: this, I suppose, is evident even prior to an account and many adequate accounts have been set down showing this. And yet, in whatever way these things here come to be and have been made, some of which do not even seem to have come to be correctly, results in an impasse about the providence of the All. And while it occurred to some to say providence does not even exist, it occurred to others to say that what has come to be is the work of a bad artisan. We are concerned with investigating from the beginning and undertaking the account from the starting-point (τὸ μὲν τῷ αὐτομάτῳ καὶ τύχῃ διδόναι τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ σύστασιν ὡς ἄλογον καὶ ἀνδρὸς οὔτε νοῦν οὔτε αἴσθησιν κεκτημένου, δῆλόν που καὶ πρὸ λόγου καὶ πολλοὶ καὶ ἱκανοὶ καταβέβληνται δεικνύντες τοῦτο λόγοι· τὸ δὲ τίς ὁ τρόπος τοῦ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι ἕκαστα καὶ πεποιῆσθαι, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ἐνίων ὡς οὐκ ὀρθῶς γινομένων ἀπορεῖν περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς προνοίας συμβαίνει, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἐπῆλθε μηδὲ εἶναι εἰπεῖν, τοῖς δὲ ὡς ὑπὸ κακοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἐστι γεγενημένος, ἐπισκέψασθαι προσήκει ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὸν λόγον λαβόντας, III.2.1, 1-10).

Epicurus is the one who uses a notion of chance (τύχη) to account for the cosmos[2] and who denies the existence of providence (Armstrong, 1967, 42n). τύχη and αὐτόματον as

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[2] K.S. Guthrie, 1918, IV.1042; Bouillet, 1859, II.19; Both of these authors refer to Diogenes Laertius (hereafter DL), x.133 (*Letter to Menoeceus*), who reports that Epicurus says, "that some things happen of necessity, others by chance (τύχης), and others by our own agency" (All quotes and paraphrases are from Inwood and Gerson, 1994).

sources is an allusion to Aristotle.[3] Although Aristotle does not account for the cosmos or for coming to be in terms of spontaneity and chance, he does discuss them in the *Physics*. Plotinus is alluding to that discussion. Finally, the gnostics are those who propose that a bad artisan fashioned the cosmos.[4]

1.2.1 Epicurus: an atomistic account of the cosmos

A brief depiction of Epicurus' causal account begins to show why Plotinus calls someone giving that kind of account irrational. Epicurus starts with the principle that something cannot come from what is not, otherwise anything could come from anything without needing a seed.[5] Since something cannot come from what is not, then it cannot be reduced to what is not.[6] There must be indestructible and indivisible bodies from which all other bodies come to be and into which they pass away.[7] These atoms are the basic constituents for all the bodies that one can experience. They impart definite characteristics that determine the movement and qualities of bodies. The only qualities proper to atoms are shape, weight, size, and what necessarily accompanies shape: for instance, extension or occupying a space. Any other attribute associated with bodies do not properly belong to atoms: color, for instance.[8] The proper qualities necessarily determine the features characterizing the compounds that we can experience.[9]

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[3] Henry-Schwyzer, 1964, I.246; *Phys*., 195b30-198a15; *Metaph*., 984b14-18; Kalligas, 2014, 446.
[4] K.S. Guthrie, 1918, II.1042; Bouillet, 1859, II.20; Armstrong, 1967, 42.
[5] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.38; *DRN*, I.155-60.
[6] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.38; *DRN*, I.215-16.
[7] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.41; *DRN*, I.215-16.
[8] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.54; *DRN*, II.84-9,II.333-35, II. 478-80.
[9] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.54; *DRN*, II. 381-477.

Since perceived bodies move in space, there must also be empty space or void through which the atoms move.[10] This empty space and the number of atoms are unlimited.[11] However, the types of atoms are limited, even if determining how many types there are is not possible.[12] By their own weight, they necessarily flow at the same speed, since the void offers no resistance.[13] In their constant movement, they intersect, sometimes repelling each other and sometimes combining to form compounds.[14] These atoms meet by chance, not by plan or intelligence or any sort of divine assistance: not even the formation and movements of heavenly phenomena are divinely ordered.[15] Because of infinite space, the infinite number of atoms, and all the possible chance encounters, an infinite number of *kosmoi* in the one All are possible.[16] There is no limit to the possible combinations of these atoms into bounded areas of stars, planets, and other phenomena.[17] Since these atoms all flow at equal speed, they could only happen to intersect because of a slight, uncaused swerve.[18] This swerve not only explains how atoms could intersect but avoids fate and determinism. This uncaused movement introduces into any event the possibility of something spontaneous and indeterminate.[19]

With this background in mind, we can see implications regarding the relationship between the kind of causes that Epicurus uses and the kind of account he gives. Seeing

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[10] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.40; *DRN*, I.329-36.

[11] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.41; *DRN*, I.958-59, I.1035-37; Taub, 2009, 112.

[12] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.42; *DRN*, II.333-35, II. 478-80.

[13] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.61; *DRN*, II. 184-90, II.225-240; Taub, 2009, 113.

[14] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.43-4; *DRN*, I.1024-28.

[15] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.76-7; *DRN*, I. 1021-23, II. 1059, II. 1090-95 Morel, 2009, 78-79; Taub, 2009, 105, 108-09; Warren, 2009, 239.

[16] *Letter to Herodotus,* DL.x.45; *Letter to Pythocles*, DL.x.89; *DRN*, II.1067-1089; Taub, 2009, 112, 115.

[17] *Letter to Pythocles*, DL.x.88.

[18] Cicero, *De Finibus*, 1.19-29; *DRN*, II.216-24.

[19] Cicero, *De Fato*, 22-5; O'Keefe, 2009, 147-48.

this relationship helps determine how Plotinus' hypothesis about providence is in part a response to Epicurus. The basic framework for any possible explanation of alteration and coming to be is atoms moving through an infinite void.[20] All compounds are the result of external relations among atoms. Their multiplicity precedes any unity, and their uniting into a compound body is extrinsic to them. There is no source of unity that is already its own unity. Each atom exists prior to the unified body, and each will persist after the disintegration of that body. Epicurus does not give an account by positing an intrinsic, organizing power. Rather, he analyzes something into these atoms as its constituent parts and shows how change or becoming happens through a series of external relations. The being and formation of this All, and all the *kosmoi* in it, emerges from a variety of accidental intersections. In a word, Epicurus' account is mechanistic.[21]

Plotinus' notion of providence is in part a response to this kind of account. In particular, he depicts this All and individuals within it as possessing an internal source of life, motion, and unity. For him, something must be unified by that which is already its own unity.[22] His endeavor is to question and think back that source. However, he is not opposed to Epicurus simply because he prefers a different kind of explanation. His opening remark strikes at a difficulty that pervades Epicurus' account. This difficulty is why he calls someone who gives that kind of account irrational. Although the reasoning behind this claim is clarified in the subsection on Aristotle, we can begin to examine it now. In attributing chance and spontaneity to the being and formation of the All,

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[20] Morel, 2009, 65-66.
[21] Taub, 2009, 109.
[22] See II.4[12].7, 21-29 for Plotinus' criticism that atoms, as discontinuous material, could not form any compound unity.

Epicurus uses causes that do not belong to an account. With chance, one cannot definitively establish all the various converging factors that make an event happen or that makes something come to be. If referring an event or something's becoming to these converging factors is not possible, then an account is impossible.[23] With spontaneity, if an explanation depends on tracing something to causes but then terminates at an uncaused motion, the thing in question is left unexplained. That is why Plotinus says that the person what gives an account through chance and spontaneity is irrational (ἄλογος). His irrationality consists precisely in attempting to give an account by means of causes that do not belong to an account. Ἄλογος could even be translated as saying that such a person is "without account," is not actually giving an account.

The main focus of Plotinus' concern is the activity of giving an account and those who engage in this activity. From the very beginning, his discussion of providence includes being aware of the role that human beings play in questions about providence. His allusion to Epicurus points readers to these issues. He has not directly stated them or that one must reflect on them. Rather, he writes in a way that invites readers to make these reflections for themselves. Readers, however, must notice the allusion and do the work of examining its implications. For instance, if the person who gives an account of the cosmos through chance and spontaneity violates standards of acceptability, then what makes an account acceptable? Since acceptability and unacceptability are determined by the judgments of those who give and receive accounts, upon what grounds do they make these judgments, and how are they assured that these grounds are trustworthy? Plotinus

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[23] That is probably why Epicurus was content with articulating various possible explanations that did not contradict perception. See *Letter to Pythocles,* DL.x83-116; Taub, 2009, 108-12.

does not explicitly ask these questions, but they follow from an examination of Epicurus in the context of his opening assertion. In not asking these questions directly but gesturing toward them, Plotinus provides his readers with the opportunity to form and ask these questions for themselves. As will be seen in section three, asking these questions is conducive to understanding his discussion of providence. Now, however, an examination of Aristotle further clarifies the relationship between kinds of causes and kinds of accounts. This examination confirms that Plotinus is focused on the activity of giving an account and on those who give it.

1.2.2   Aristotle: nature, the unmoved mover, chance, and spontaneity

In book II of the *Physics* Aristotle depicts the various causes of change and coming to be. Unlike Epicurus, he argues that change and becoming depend on internal sources of motion. Part of this discussion includes an explanation why an account that traces something to chance (τύχη) and spontaneity (αὐτόματον) is not acceptable. This subsection explores both aspects of Aristotle's account.

For Aristotle, nature (φύσις) is an internal source of motion and rest (*Phys*., 192b8-20, 192b35-37).[24] Something's nature is not the material or elements into which it can be analyzed, which are only potentially something (193a29-193b1). Just as wood is not yet a bed or bronze a statue, flesh and bone is not yet an animal. Something's nature is "the form (μορφή) or look (εἶδος), which is not separate other than in speech (λόγος)" (193b4-6). The form is what makes the wood be a bed, the bronze be a statue, or the flesh and

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[24] Paraphrases and citations are from Sachs, 2008.

bone be an animal. This qualification, "not separate other than in speech" is important.

Aristotle is saying that the form active within some material is not separate from the plant

or animal. In giving an account, Aristotle says that one can isolate the form in one's

attention and speak as if it is separate, but it is inseparable within the living thing.

Aristotle's examples are a way in which he provides avenues for thinking together

what speaking presents as separate. One cause that he discusses is the material or that out

of which something comes to be (*Phys*., 194b25-27). He gives the example of bronze

which exists prior to the statue and is that out of which a statue is made. In this example,

the material remains part of the statue, implying that in natural thing the material cause is

present from the beginning and remains part of it. With a human being, for example, the

material is not primarily bone and flesh. For Aristotle, the menses from the mother serves

as the material because it is potentially a human being.[25] It remains as the material out of

which a new human being generates and takes form.

If the developing human being is forming, then the form within which this

development happens is also a cause. The form is the organizing power belonging to the

being of something (ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι, *Phys*., 194b27-29). Aristotle uses the

example of the octave, the two-to-one ratio, or number in general to illustrate what he

means by form (*Phys*., 194b28-29). All three examples indicate ways in which a

multitude functions together as a unity. The octave is not other than the tones occurring

within it, and the ratio is not other than what is related according to it. According to Joe

Sachs, "number" (ἀριθμός) "normally refers [. . .] to the numbers which we count, such

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[25] See *GA*729a10-729b19

as the dozen eggs in a carton, a multitude *of* something" (Sachs, 2008, 251). That sense of number accords with Aristotle's qualification about form not being separate from the thing. With these examples, Aristotle depicts a multiplicity united according to an ordering that is not separate from what is ordered. Since something's nature is under consideration, the form cannot be understood as a static structure. Rather, it is the range of abilities that constitute what the living thing is, which is not separate from the actual movements, changes, and actions of the living thing.

Any beginning of motion or rest requires a cause that initiates the process: "that from which the first beginnings of change or rest is, as the one who deliberates is a cause, or the father of a child, or generally the maker of what is made" (*Phys.*, 194b30-32).[26] These examples illustrate how the initiator of motion or rest is inseparable from what is moved or brought to rest. The one who deliberates and begins acting from that deliberation is the same person. A human being is brought about by someone with the same form. What is made receives its form from another being who possess the artistic skill, which is the form (*Metaph.*, 1034a24).

Finally, the end (τέλος) is that toward which the motion or rest is directed: "that for the sake of which, as health is of walking around" (*Phys.*, 194b33-34). As this example shows, the end is not a goal external to the activity. Exercising is not conducive to health as something outside of the activities and motions involved in it. Health is not the termination or cessation of these activities but the focal point of their continuation. The end of a living thing is similarly not a goal it heads towards. All the changes and all the

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[26] Sach's translation with slight change.

activities that it undertakes and performs revolve around the maintenance or even extension of its life. This end is within the changes and activities that belong to living being.

The examples that Aristotle uses to discuss these four causes help the reader to think about them as inseparable from what they cause. Since they are not separate from the one living thing, they are not separate from each other. [27] The mother supplies the potential or material, which is activated by the father's sperm bearing the form within it, which is the various abilities to act, move, and change that the human being performs and undergoes for the sake of being who he or she is. In this sense of the causes not being separate, Aristotle gives an internalist account of change and coming to be. Something becomes and holds together as a unity because of its internal nature, not because of a conglomeration of external relations.

Aristotle's causal account does not terminate at these four causes. He ultimately traces all motion, rest, and change back to one unmoved, first mover (*Phys*., 258b10-260a22). This unmoved mover is a final cause as that toward which all things are attracted. Although there are other unmoved movers—souls, for instance—that are causes by being the form and end of a plant or animal (*On the Soul*, 415b10-17), these are ends belonging to something that moves. In the *Metaphysics,* he distinguishes between two types of final: "that-for-the-sake-of-which is either *for* something or *belonging* to something, of which the former is and the latter is not present among motionless things. And it [the prime, unmoved mover] causes motion in the manner of something loved, and

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[27] See *Phys.,* 198a25-32 where Aristotle argues that three of the causes (formal, moving, final) coincide as one.

by means of what is moved moves other things" (1072b1-7).[28] A soul is a source of motion and activity in a living thing as integral to the animal or plant. It is an end *of* or *belonging to* something. In contrast, an end *for* something would be the way grain is an end for human beings. It is for the sake of our health, but that is incidental to its own being. In itself, grain does not live and grow for our sake but for its own. The unmoved mover that is the ultimate cause of motion, change, and rest, however, does not do anything for its own sake, since then there would be an end belonging to it. It directly moves the celestial beings in their continuous circular motion. By moving these, it indirectly moves all the other, non-celestial beings. It causes these motions through attracting these beings to itself—"in the manner of something loved"—but that is incidental to its own being. What is necessary to this unmoved mover is to live its life as an activity of thinking that is identical to all its thoughts (*Metaph.*, 1072b15-30). This life and activity is a cause by attracting all other beings toward it, and so it is a cause in the sense of being an end.

Plotinus' own account is closer to Aristotle's than to Epicurus'. In particular, he traces the cosmos and beings within it back to a self-thinking Intellect. He also depicts something's movement, activity, and unity as depending on an internal source. In contrast to Aristotle, however, he does not argue that "the begetter is sufficient to produce the things that come into being, and is responsible for the form's being in the material" (*Metaph.*, 1034a6-7). In fact, Plotinus' notion of providence addresses Aristotle's challenge to Platonists that separate forms cannot be causes of coming to be. His account

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[28] All paraphrases and citations are taken from Sachs, 1999.

shows how Platonic forms are separable and yet, nevertheless, can also be at work in something else. His notion of providence, then, is better understood in this context than when taken out of it. In alluding to Aristotle, Plotinus points his readers toward the context within which his discussion of providence is to be understood. This allusion only works if readers recognize it and ask why the allusion is there. Again, through the use of allusions, Plotinus invites readers to take an active role in the discussion of providence. In doing this work, the discussion and its context becomes one's own.

This context involves the issue of causal accounts and what makes them rational. Plotinus' allusion to Aristotle occurs in mentioning chance (τύχη) and spontaneity (αὐτόματον) as causes. Aristotle does argue that although both are causes, they do not belong to a rational account. Chance is an intersection of paths that incidentally causes an action (*Phys.*, 196b32-197a20). Aristotle uses the example of someone going to a market who does not frequent the place. There, he happens upon someone who owes him money and collects what is owed to him. This intersection of paths brings about an action and is therefore a cause. There was no intention to collect or return money. The crossing of paths was only incidentally for the sake of this action. Spontaneity, however, covers more instances than chance. The latter pertains only to those capable of deliberate action, while the former extends even to plants, animals, children, and inanimate objects (*Phys.*, 196a39-197b9). For instance, this same person could be knocked out by a falling stone. The stone and the man suddenly cross paths, and this intersection happens to cause an event. The distinction between chance and spontaneity is the following. If someone happens to kick a stone off a cliff and knocks out an enemy, then that would be chance. If

a gust of wind blows a stone off a cliff and the stone knocks someone out, then that would be spontaneity. Both chance and spontaneity are external causes in that they are not part of someone's or something's nature.

Aristotle argues that the name "spontaneity" (αὐτόματον) implies "that which itself happens in vain" (αὐτὸ μάτην, *Phys*., 197b30-32). He is talking about movements done for the sake of some action or event that causes the motion. If this action or event does not occur, the movement is in vain. For instance, someone takes a walk for the sake of inducing a bowel movement, which is supposed to be the cause of the walking. If the bowel movement does not occur, then the walk is in vain because the reason for the motion is not realized.

Aristotle does not deny that chance and spontaneity are not part of the cosmos. They are, however, beyond account (παράλογον), since "a reasoned account (λόγος) belongs to what happens always or for the most part" (*Phys*., 197a20-21). An explanatory account or a predictive account requires something that happens consistently on the basis of some definite source or sources. For an explanation, something is traced back to some definite source or sources that consistently impart definite features to something. For prediction, a definite outcome can be expected by knowing what consistently follows from the presence or absence of some definite source. Since chance and spontaneity are neither consistent nor definite, that which arises from them is unaccountable. The incidental intersections that led to an action or event do not consistently occur and are indefinitely many (*Phys*., 197a19-23, 198a1-5). If one attempted to enumerate all the incidental

factors that led to two people meeting in a market place or a stone falling one someone's head, one would never come to the end of it.

That is why Plotinus, in agreement with Aristotle, says that giving an account of this All through spontaneity and chance is irrational and is not even an account. The swerve of an atom is an uncaused change of direction. It is "in vain" in that whatever results from the swerve could never be said to be the reason for it happening. This change is neither for the sake of anything nor even occasioned by a push or pull from something else. It cannot enter into a causal account that would explain or predict something. The chance series of intersections between atoms that forms this All is indefinite, and referring this All back to them would also be indefinite. To try to account by means of spontaneity or chance, then, is to misunderstand the standards for giving an account.

The question arises, though: what are the sources of the standards for the rationality of an account, can they be trusted, and why are they trustworthy? In just the first few lines, Plotinus begins to prepare his readers to associate the issue of providence with an examination into what makes an account acceptable or not. His pedagogical technique of alluding to previous thinkers points one that direction. For this technique to work, readers must reflect on why he makes these allusions. Part of this reflection leads to this question about the source and trustworthiness of standards for giving an account. We are continuing to see how Plotinus focuses on the activity of giving an account and those who engage in it. This focus implies readers reflecting on themselves as givers and receivers of accounts. It requires their active involvement by engaging in a critical self-examination about their own standards for giving and receiving an account. Plotinus'

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allusion to the gnostics, who are the ones that say the cosmos is the work of a bad artisan, confirms this requirement.

1.2.3   The gnostics: mythical accounts at the service of turning inward

In *Gnosis: the Nature and History of Gnosticism*, Kurt Rudolph explains that "there was no gnostic 'church' or normative theology, no gnostic rule of faith nor any dogma of exclusive importance. No limits were set to free representation and theological speculation so far as they lay within the frame of the gnostic view of the world" (Rudolph, 1987, 53). The gnostics do not adhere to strict formulas or creeds but share a worldview, which they present in and through a variety of myths, symbols, and allegories. They utilize a variety of textual traditions—Jewish, Iranian, Greek, and Christian—but refashion these sources within their own perspective (Rudolph, 1987, 54). Part of this world view is expressed in stories about the origin of the cosmos. They present the cosmos as a "kingdom of fate," "an inhuman and anti-divine power" ruled by a head archon that "is usually identical with the creator of the world" They depict it as a prison for humanity that hostile powers produce and maintain. They describe the cosmos "as 'darkness,' 'death,' 'deception,' 'wickedness.'"[29] However, these powers can only control our physical existence, while we retain a "true" or "inner man." This true, inner self, "belongs to the supramundane spiritual realm."[30] Through a revelation about the

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[29] *Corp. Herm. VI 4;* Rudolph, 1987, 69.
[30] Rudolph, 1987, 70; Sinnige, 1984, 79-80.

origins of the cosmos and our true selves we find a way to escape this prison.[31] Gnostic

myth unites "cosmogony, anthropology and soteriology" (Rudolph, 1987, 70-1).

This revealed knowledge that is gnosis does not lead to redemption but is the

redemption itself.

> [Gnostic myth] gives the redeeming answer to the questions which stir mankind, as
> they are preserved for us in the gnostic extract in Clement of Alexandria: "Who were
> we? What have we become? Where were we? Whither have we been cast? Whither
> do we hasten? From what have we been set free?"[32]

Gnostic myth provides answers to questions that relate to humanity's experience of itself

in the cosmos. In asking "who were we" and "what have we become," there is a sense of

nostalgia and current unease.[33] We have fallen from the place we were and long to return

there. We do not feel completely at home here in the cosmos but need to be released. The

gnostic myths answer these questions through an account of the origin of the cosmos and

of humanity. They trace the cosmos to an artisan who is ignorant of his divine origin and

boasts of himself as the only God (Rudolph, 1987, 74-5, 78-9); or, the cosmos comes

from transgression, error, and failure, the creator failing to make it deathless.[34] They

present humans, however, as divine beings capable of undoing the work of the demiurge.

This demiurge forms our bodies as a likeness of our true, divine selves to distract us from

this capacity and keep us imprisoned in his creation (Rudolph, 1987, 95, 102, 107-8, 111-

12). Such accounts explain why we can experience the cosmos as indifferent or even

hostile to us, as deceptive or illusory, and as filled with suffering and death. The cosmos

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[31] Rudolph, 1987, 70-1; Bos, 1984, 21-23.
[32] Clem. Alex., *Ex Theodoto*, 78.2; Rudolph, 1987, 71.
[33] Armstrong, 1984, 46; Sinnige, 1984, 79, 82.
[34] Rudolph, 1987, 74-5, 78-9, 83-4; Armstrong, 1984, 44-5.

resembles its source, receiving and inheriting the characteristics of deceptiveness, wickedness, darkness, and death from the one who produces it.

In contrast to Epicurus and Aristotle, gnostic accounts rely heavily on myth. These myths help explain the existence of the cosmos and humanity's experience within it. They also present two distinct realms, one as replete with divine beings and the other as full of illusion. There is also a god who, by being from the one, creates the other. Humanity, although seeming to be part of the corporeal realm, retains something of the divine within and seeks to return to its true home. This return happens through knowledge, or gnosis, of our origins and by acting in accord with that knowledge—i.e., not following the needs and desires of the bodily prison. One must turn within toward the "true" or "inner man." The mythical accounts serve to help us awaken to our true selves.

Plotinus' own account shares certain features with this mythological way of speaking: for instance, tracing the cosmos we experience perceptually to one we experience noetically and assisting readers in turning inward to their true selves. He, too, posits a mediating power between what we experience noetically and perceptually. However, he does not severely separate the cosmos as experienced in perception from the one experienced in thought. The continuities between them are part of his affirmation and positive evaluation of the All. His notion of providence is crucial to this affirmation. There are even pedagogical implications to this continuity. In not seeing the cosmos as a mistake or an illusion, the implication is that examining and exploring it can help one achieve this inner knowledge. With a notion of providence, the cosmos becomes a guide toward and not a hindrance to this knowledge. Affirming and describing the cosmos

through a notion of providence makes contemplating its source—and, by extension, one's own source—possible. Plotinus is concerned with the possibility of forming an account that assists readers in this contemplative endeavor. That is why Plotinus focuses on the activity of giving an account and on those who perform this activity. He does not want readers to forget their role in either the account or the contemplating. They must, then, remain involved in ongoing process of self-reflection.

1.2.4 Summary of section

This examination of Epicurus, Aristotle, and the gnostics has led to some ideas that prove helpful in understanding Plotinus' notion of providence. For instance, there is the distinction between an internalist and externalist account. This difference is based on the kinds of causes used in giving an explanatory account. An externalist account posits that compound bodies are the result of external relations among atomic bodies. The unity of these atoms is extrinsic to them. An internalist account posits that sources of unity are intrinsic to compound bodies. These bodes take shape through an inner nature. There are also mythic accounts that appeal to spiritual or divine beings. This kind of account function as guides for turning inward and awakening to one's true self. Reflection on these different kinds of account forms a context for understanding Plotinus' own account. As will be seen, his account of the cosmos combines elements of internalist and mythic accounts. His notion of providence shows how bodies experienced perceptually contain their own inner source of life and unity. We, too, have an inner source and participate in providence. His account of the cosmos is an occasion for readers to turn within, recognize

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their source, and to think in a new way. Because these possibilities are part of his discussion of providence, Plotinus highlights the role of giving an account and those who give it in such discussions. He writes in a way that reminds readers to be attentive to the fact that any discussion of providence is inextricably bound to those engaged in the discussion. An understanding of providence, then, is bound up with examining and understanding oneself. By reflecting on his allusions, some questions emerged that are conducive to understanding his discussion of providence and engaging in self-examination: what makes an account acceptable? What are the sources for these standards, can they be trusted, and why are they trustworthy?

Finally, that is why Plotinus' pedagogical techniques require the active participation of his readers. To follow Plotinus' lead, one must take up and enact the techniques for oneself—and *on oneself*. That is, one must apply them in a self-reflective manner. The next three sections of this chapter examine another pedagogical technique, which continues to exhibit this dynamic between leader and follower. Plotinus leads his readers to an impasse (ἀπορία) in a way that exposes the source of the impasse. If readers attend to the source of the impasse, other possibilities of examination become available. Through these impasses and other avenues, Plotinus leads his readers to the notion that providence is the way in which this cosmos depends on Intellect.

1.3   How Obviousness Leads to Impasses about Providence

The first 27 lines of this treatise are structured by three μέν . . . δέ clauses. By means of this construction, Plotinus leads his readers from one assertion to a contrary assertion.

In presenting both assertions, he leads his readers to an impasse. He leads, nudges even, readers to each impasse in a way that exposes its source. In exposing the source, he indicates other ways for the inquiry to proceed. These other ways requires self-examination. This section examines the first μέν . . . δέ clause. Sections three and four examine the other two.

To begin, a brief examination of the contrary assertions, the impasse, and its source provides a general outline that a detailed examination can fill out. Plotinus begins by saying that whoever gives an account of the cosmos through spontaneity and chance is irrational, which is obvious to anyone with reason and perception (III.2.1, 1-5); and yet, it could be just as obvious that there is no providence or that the cosmos is the work of a bad artisan (1, 5-10). The impasse is this: the first assertion implies that providence can be an account of the cosmos but the second assertion immediately follows by saying that providence would be an inadequate account of the cosmos. From the standpoint of what seems obvious, the discussion of providence halts as soon as it begins. In experiencing this impasse within oneself and recognizing that accepting what seems obvious is the source of it, one can challenge oneself and start fresh.

1.3.1   III.2.1, 1-5: the obviousness that providence is possible

This clause begins in the following way: "[s]urely, attributing this All's being and formation to spontaneity and chance is irrational" (τὸ μὲν τῷ αὐτομάτῳ καὶ τύχῃ διδόναι τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ σύστασιν ὡς ἄλογον, 1, 1-2). The subject of the clause is the articular infinitive τὸ διδόναι. As noted earlier, Plotinus does not simply assert the

proposition that spontaneity and chance are not the sources of the cosmos. By focusing on the act of attributing causes to the cosmos and making it the subject of his sentence, he implies a reference to giving an account or making an argument as well as to the man (ἀνδρὸς, 1, 3) doing so. In pointing to this activity, he subtly directs his readers' attention to it. This activity and those who engage in it are just as much a concern in this inquiry as providence.

The account under consideration is about this All (τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς, 1, 1-2). Plotinus' use of the demonstrative ὅδε means that he is referring to *this here*, to what is nearer to us in contrast to what is further from us but also "what is present, what can be seen or pointed out" (LSJ, ὅδε, A). He focuses our attention on what can be perceived and indicated as well as what is closer and more familiar to us. Starting with what is familiar to us and moving to what is less familiar to us but more intelligible in itself is a significant aspect of Plotinus' philosophical method.[35] It further confirms that his focus remains not just on the question of providence but on those discussing it. Regarding providence, though, he suggests that it relates to the being and formation (οὐσίαν καὶ σύστασιν, 1, 2) of this All. An inquiry into providence is about the substantiality and unity of this cosmos. It is about its substance, not about incidental attributes. As will be seen in chapter two of this dissertation, "being" (οὐσία) is to be understood in an active sense and not as a static condition or state. Similarly, "formation" (σύστασις) is not to be understood as a static structure. The wholeness of the cosmos is a unity of active and interacting parts, the cosmos being a living, dynamic unity of these parts.

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[35] *Phys.*, 184a1-184b14; see also Gurtler, 2001, 100.

As part of the inquiry, there is the issue of what kinds of sources are appropriate and so can be used in the account of this cosmos' being and formation. If one were to use spontaneity and chance, then one would be using inappropriate causes. The person who attempts to give an account be means of them is irrational (ἄλογον, 1, 2), since arguing for them is actually not giving an account. Such a person "has acquired neither thought nor perception" (οὔτε νοῦν οὔτε αἴσθησιν κεκτημένου, 1, 3), since he has not attended to what is appropriate and inappropriate to an account. Plotinus supposes that the impossibility of explaining the cosmos' being and formation through spontaneity and chance is "clear even prior to an account" (δῆλον που καὶ πρὸ λόγου, 1, 4). Anyone who can perceive and reason clearly realizes that one cannot account for the cosmos through such causes. This impossibility is so clear that one does not even need an account. If someone wanted one, many are already available that sufficiently demonstrate it. In short, Plotinus is indicating that obvious impossibility of using spontaneity and chance to account for the cosmos. As discussed above, such accounts are not admissible according to standards of what makes an account acceptable.

A possibility is implied in this impossibility. As the Greek word πρόνοια suggests, providence implies some kind of thinking or intelligence operative in the cosmos. An account that posits providence must show that spontaneity and chance cannot be argued for as causes of the cosmos. Plotinus appeals to what seems obvious as a means of denying that one could give an account of the cosmos through such sources. If chance and spontaneity are clearly not admissible in an account of the cosmos, then some kind of intelligence could be argued for as a possible source. That one could make a case for

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providence is clearly possible. The δέ clause, however, shows that trusting what seems

obvious leads one in a contrary direction. One could just as easily deny providence or

attribute the cosmos to a bad artisan. Trusting what seems obvious leads to an impasse.

This impasse can become an occasion to question what seems obvious and the various

standards or assumptions that make something seem obvious. Indeed, Plotinus' objective

is not to negate the possibility of accounting for the cosmos through providence. Rather,

his intention is to cause perplexity so that one will question and examine the issue—and

oneself—in earnest.

1.3.2   III.2.1, 5-11: the obviousness that providence is impossible

In examining the δέ clause in conjunction with the μέν clause, one can see how

Plotinus leads readers to an impasse in a way that exposes its source. The clause begins

this way: "and yet, in whatever way these things here come to be and have been made,

some of which do not even seem to have come to be correctly, results in an impasse about

providence" (τὸ δὲ τίς ὁ τρόπος τοῦ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι ἕκαστα καὶ πεποιῆσθαι, ἐξ ὧν καὶ

ἐνίων ὡς οὐκ ὀρθῶς γινομένων ἀπορεῖν περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς προνοίας συμβαίνει, 1, 5-8).

The phrase "whatever way of coming to be belonging to each of these here" (τίς ὁ τρόπος

τοῦ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι ἕκαστα, 1, 5-6) implies that coming to be is not haphazard but has a

course or a direction. Each thing, however, is not moving toward some goal or

destination outside of its own becoming. Plotinus avoids such a notion by adding the

word πεποιῆσθαι.

The difference between the present infinitive (γίνεσθαι, 1, 6) and the perfect infinitive (πεποιῆσθαι, 1, 6) helps to clarify how to understand this directional movement. The present infinitive implies a continuous action, and the perfect infinitive implies a completed action (Smyth, 1920, 417). Both of them refer to some way or a way (τίς ὁ τρόπος, 1, 5-6). The sense, then, is that an ongoing movement of becoming is coupled with a sense of already being complete. Each and every thing continually becomes what it already is. Aristotle's notion of τέλος is helpful here. Each thing undertakes various motions and undergoes various changes to become and remain itself. Because these motions and changes are concentrated around being itself, its coming to be is a directional movement. All the variations are directed toward that invariance of something being what it is.

If each thing comes to be what it already is and yet it could seem that things do not always correctly (ὀρθῶς, 1, 7) come to be, there is an impasse about providence. Animals are born deformed, accidents happen, and premature deaths occur, which could lead one's reasoning away from accepting providential ordering. The appearance of the word ὀρθῶς is significant because it implies a standard of evaluation by which people measure, compare, or otherwise judge something. To say that some things do not correctly come to be is to assert this judgment on the basis of our own standards of correctness. Such standards determine expectations of what something ought to be as well as how or what events ought to happen. If a natural disaster occurs or an animal is born deformed, the world does not measure up to these standards and expectations. Certain standards of

correctness by which we judge and evaluate could lead to the obvious conclusion that there is no providence or even that a bad artisan formed the cosmos.

In one moment (the μέν clause), one accepts the possibility of providence because chance and spontaneity are obviously inadmissible in any account. However, in the very next moment (the δέ clause), one rejects that providence is actually an adequate account because irregularities, deformities, and unjust suffering appear to be part of the cosmos. Standards determining the *admissibility* of any account and standards determining the *adequacy* of an account of the cosmos each produce obvious claims.[36] The latter, however, immediately halts what the former begins. Plotinus, then, leads his readers toward this impasse in a way that exposes the source: the standards upon which assertions seem obvious. The unreflective acceptance of both standards compelled us to stop as soon as we began. We must reconsider what makes an account acceptable or what standards of correctness, if any, can be applied to judging and evaluating the cosmos. Only be reconsidering what was taken for granted is proceeding possible. In that case, Plotinus not only leads his readers to an impasse but indicates another way for the inquiry to proceed. This way is open only to those who engage in self-examination, since it involves reconsidering what one had taken for granted.

That is why this passage ends with Plotinus saying, "we are concerned with investigating from the beginning and undertaking the account from the starting-point" (ἐπισκέψασθαι προσήκει ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὸν λόγον λαβόντας, 1, 10-11). He distinguishes between those who assert as final decisions that there is no providence or

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[36] I am grateful to Arthur Madigan, S.J. for pointing out the necessity of clarifying this distinction between admissible and adequate.

that a bad artisan made the cosmos (1, 8-10) and those who are interested in examining the issue from the beginning. This return implies re-examining initial assumed standards. However, his use of ἀρχή—and even ἄνωθεν—implies returning to the source of our reasoning and the various standards by which it operates.[37] We are returning, then, to the beginning of inquiry in at least two senses: to what our initial assumed standards are and to their source. We are continuing to see that Plotinus is nudging us to ask about the conditions of giving an account and about who we are as beings that give accounts. He is continuing to indicate that such questions are essential parts of this discussion. Reflecting on the questions about the standards for giving an account, where they come from, and whether they can be trusted is one way that this self-examination can happen. Asking these questions is conducive to understanding Plotinus' text because we are going back to the beginning *with him*.

Before moving on, we should note that this section of Plotinus' text introduces the main difficulty for a discussion of providence: how can universal providence operate simultaneously with each and every thing becoming what it already is? We must present the whole in a way that does not clash with the integrity of the parts and must present the parts in a way the does not clash with the unity and order of the whole. Indeed, we will see in the fifth chapter that the problems of evil and of human responsibility are contained in the above difficulty.

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[37] Chapters three and four of the dissertation demonstrate this implication.

1.4   The Predicament of Giving an Account and the Technique of Continual

Criticism

The next μέν . . . δέ clause introduces another impasse. Exposing the source of this

impasse reveals a methodological requirement for understanding Plotinus' hypothesis

about providence. The impasse is this: human beings cannot start anywhere other than

their own experiences and use of language, and yet the human experience of forethought

is not a completely adequate basis for understanding providence. With this impasse,

Plotinus reinforces and extends the importance of self-examination. He indicates that

readers must continually criticize their experience and use of language in order to move

from what is intelligible to them towards what is intelligible in itself.

1.4.1   Providence is not like human forethought

This μέν clause is an imperative for readers to put aside (ἀφείσθω, 1, 15) a notion of

providence determined by their experience of forethought (πρόνοιαν, 1, 12). Plotinus

opposes the providence in each (πρόνοιαν ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ, 1, 12) in the μέν clause to that

which we are calling the providence of the All (ἥν δὲ τοῦ παντὸς λέγομεν προνοίαν εἶναι,

1, 16) in the δέ clause. The providence in each refers to our experience of planning ahead.

> [This providence] is an account before action about what needs to be produced or, of
> anything not needing to be effected, not to be produced or about anything we wish to
> be or not to be for us—let it be put it aside (ἥ ἐστι λόγος πρὸ ἔργου ὅπως δεῖ γενέσθαι
> ἥ μὴ γενέσθαι τι τῶν οὐ δεόντων πραχθῆναι ἥ ὅπως τι εἴη ἥ μὴ εἴη ἡμῖν, ἀφείσθω,
> III.2.1, 12-15.).

Human forethought consists of looking ahead and designing a plan. This plan serves as a

model for action. This model is an image of the actual deed, thing, or event. Those who

wish to accomplish the desired outcome outline what steps must be taken and what materials, resources, and tools are needed. Since there are contingencies in the material and in the environment, the making is susceptible to events beyond the control of the makers. The makers might bring something about that is not desired, so they try to foresee not only what to do and how to do it but what to avoid and how to avoid it.

This kind of planning involves needs and desires. It also involves thinking something through and so is a discursive activity. If one were to understand cosmic providence as similar to human planning, then one would import these inappropriate characteristics to it. That kind of analogy, which brings what is unfamiliar within the scope of what is familiar and renders it intelligible, is not appropriate.[38] Even if human forethought is like cosmic providence that does not imply the latter is like the former.[39] We cannot take what is familiar about human forethought and directly transfer that to cosmic providence without any process of correction. Nevertheless, humans are the ones giving the account and must start from their own experience. This experience, however, cannot be used uncritically. Examining the δέ clause in conjunction with this μέν clause shows how Plotinus thinks moving from what is familiar to what unfamiliar is possible.

1.4.2   The technique of continual criticism

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[38] See Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy,* 1966 (172-303). Lloyd discusses analogy as a procedure used by ancient Greek thinkers. They start with something familiar (like society or an organism) and make something unfamiliar known (like the gods or the cosmos) by saying how *it is like* the familiar thing. Both the familiar and unfamiliar are said to be alike. Plotinus' procedure is different: he starts by saying *the familiar is like* what is unfamiliar but *the unfamiliar is unlike* what is familiar. One is able to move to the unfamiliar from the familiar because the latter is like the former. However, one cannot use the conditions of the familiar to render the unfamiliar intelligible.

[39] For the difference between reciprocal and non-reciprocal likeness see I.2[19].2, 5-10; Gurtler,1988, 9-39; Schroeder, 1992, 12-13.

In moving from the claim that providence is not like the human experience of forethought to the claim that humans are the ones saying what providence is, Plotinus leads his readers to another impasse.

> And yet, that which we are calling the providence of the All, hypothesizing this let us conjoin what follows (ἣν δὲ τοῦ παντὸς λέγομεν πρόνοιαν εἶναι, ταύτην ὑποθέμενοι τὰ ἐφεξῆς συνάπτωμεν, III.2.1, 15-16).

Plotinus does not just assert or posit what providence is but refers back to us as the ones calling it providence. By including the verb for speaking in the first person plural, Plotinus highlights that his readers and himself are the ones giving the account. If we are the ones speaking, then we cannot ignore our own experiences. There is an impasse in that we cannot depend on our experience of forethought and yet cannot start anywhere other than our own experience.

The condition of being discursive thinkers is the source of this impasse. We can neither refer everything back to our own experiences and what is clear to us nor ignore our own role or start from anywhere else. That is the predicament of giving an account. If we who think discursively are in this predicament, we cannot ignore either side of it. This lesson both reinforces and extends the requirement of self-examination. Since speaking arises from the experiences of those who speak and what is clearer to them, advancing toward what is clearer in itself involves criticizing our experience and use of language (Gurtler, 2002, 115, 118).[40]

Impasses are conducive to this transition from what is intelligible to us to what is intelligible in itself. They impede the ways in which one is thinking and speaking. Such

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[40] *Phys.*, 184a20-184a22; *Metaph.*, 1029b3-1029b14.

impediments can be an occasion to reflect on, challenge, and adjust one's manner of thinking. As mentioned above, Plotinus produces a paradox by saying that we cannot depend on our experience of forethought while also indicating that we cannot start anywhere else. Thinking through this paradox requires challenging what is intelligible to us, especially challenging modes of thinking that render something intelligible to us. One cannot presume that cosmic providence is like human forethought, identify what one knows about the latter, and then directly transfer that to the former. This kind of analogical reasoning, which depends on reciprocal likeness, is inappropriate to the task of discussing cosmic providence. It is an attempt to make what is unfamiliar intelligible in terms of what is familiar. However, the attempt must be to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar not bring the latter within the scope of the former.

A method that remains available is to start from where one already is and continually to examine and criticize one's way of thinking. What can be retained in the notion of providence (πρόνοια) is that Intellect (νοῦς) is operative in the cosmos, which is "proceeding immanently to create a whole where the parts emerge from within it and at the same time act as co-agents in constituting its ongoing development" (Gurtler, 2002, 114-15). Intellect must not be understood as an external imposition on the cosmos, unlike human planning, which imposes a form on external materials. Human planning is limited to moving from one thing to another because it can neither grasp nor make a whole all at once. Intellect, however, is not limited in this way. The whole cosmos is not a gradual accumulation of parts external to one another or the whole but is produced whole and entire. The parts arise within the whole while also cooperating in its continuous

formation. How exactly does Intellect cause the cosmos? How is the cosmos produced as a whole and not as a gradual accumulation of parts? And how do the parts cooperate in forming its integrity? These are questions that can only be answered in the course of this dissertation. They are another way of expressing the main impasse discussed above: how can cosmic providence operate simultaneously with each being becoming what it already is?

Before we move on to the third main μέν. . . δέ clause, Plotinus' use of the word "hypothesizing" (ὑποθέμενοι, 1, 16) requires some discussion. He is not defining or definitively asserting what providence is. He is putting forward a hypothesis and examining what follows. By hypothesizing and not asserting what providence is, he indicates that he is not constructing the definitive, final theory of providence. There are also Platonic allusions in this word: for instance, to the method of hypothesis in the *Republic*, which involves two distinct movements (510b-511c, 533c-d).[41] One can take what is posited in the hypothesis as a given and then derive consequences, but one can also use the hypothesis dialectically—as a steppingstone to move toward the source of the assumption. As will be seen, Plotinus' discussion of providence is bi-directional. It not only derives and follows consequences but also points readers toward the source of his hypothesis—and, indeed, the source of discursivity in general.

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[41] There could also be an allusion to the *Parmenides* and the educative gymnastics (135c-136a) as well as Socrates' autobiography in the *Phaedo* (100a-102a); see Byrd 2007a and 2007b for connections to the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*.

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1.5   Causal Priority does not Imply Temporal Priority

This final μέν . . . δέ clause leads to an impasse regarding the notion of priority.

Plotinus says that there is and is not something prior to the cosmos. He brings readers to

this impasse to help them separate causal from temporal priority. If one assumes that the

cause temporally precedes its product, then one is starting from an assumption about

causality that is not appropriate to Plotinus' hypothesis about providence. Again, we are

seeing how a reader's self-examination, and even self-criticism, is a necessary part of

Plotinus' discussion of providence.

1.5.1   No time prior to the cosmos

This μέν clause conveys why one must not assign temporal priority to the source of

this cosmos. That sort of priority implies notions of forethought that have already been

set aside.

> So if, on the one hand, we were saying that after some time the cosmos, not being
> before, had come to be, we would be establishing providence in our account in the
> same way we were claiming it to be in each part, some foresight and accounting of
> god, how he might bring this All to be, and how it might be as best as it could be. (Εἰ
> μὲν οὖν ἀπὸ τινος χρόνου πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα τὸν κόσμον ἐλέγομεν γεγονέναι, τὴν
> αὐτὴν ἂν τῷ λόγῳ ἐτιθέμεθα, οἵαν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς κατὰ μέρος ἐλέγομεν εἶναι, πρόορασίν
> τινα καὶ λογισμόν θεοῦ, ὡς ἂν γένοιτο τόδε τὸ πᾶν, καὶ ἂν ἄριστα κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν
> εἴη, III.2.1, 17-22).

To begin, we should note that Plotinus is again making reference to speaking and so is

continuing to highlight our involvement. If one were to ascribe a temporal beginning to

the cosmos, one could imagine providence as the act of a divine being planning out the

cosmos prior to producing it. One could imagine a time of planning and then a time of

putting the plan into action. One must set aside the possibility of the cosmos having a temporal beginning as an implication of setting aside that providence is like human forethought.

One cannot think of causality as the cause being temporally prior to the effect. To understand the cosmos within the parameters Plotinus has set down requires challenging that view of causality. One must attempt to think of the cosmos as both always an entire whole and yet containing parts that are constitutive of its ongoing formation. In fact, as discussed in section three, even its parts are both already complete and yet continually becoming. Understanding this dynamic, both in terms of the whole cosmos and its parts requires understanding the kind of cause that Plotinus argues produces them.

1.5.2   The cosmos as an imitation of Intellect is providence

The δέ clause asserts that since the cosmos has always been, providence is the way in which it depends on Intellect.

> Since, on the other hand, we say this cosmos here is eternal and never not present, we would be correctly and consistently saying the providence [in regard to] the All is its being according to Intellect itself, and Intellect is prior to it, not as being prior in time, but that it is from Intellect, and That There is prior in nature and is the cause of this here as an original and exemplar, this here being a living likeness of and being through That There and eternally existing in this way (Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ ἀεὶ καὶ τὸ οὔποτε μὴ τῷ κοσμῳ τῷδὲ φαμεν παρεῖναι, τήν πρόνοιαν ὀρθῶς ἄν καὶ ἀκολούθως λέγοιμεν τῷ παντὶ εἶναι τὸ κατὰ νοῦν αὐτὸν εἶναι, καὶ νοῦν πρὸ αὐτοῦ εἶναι οὐχ ὡς χρόνῳ πρότερον ὄντα, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι παρὰ νοῦ ἐστι καὶ φύσει πρότερος ἐκεῖνος καὶ αἴτιος τούτου ἀρχέτυπον οἷον καὶ παράδειγμα εἰκόνος τούτου ὄντος καὶ δι᾽ ἐκεῖνον ὄντος καὶ ὑποστάντος ἀεί, τόνδε τὸν τρόπον, III.2.1, 22-30).

Plotinus' hypothesis about providence is the in which the cosmos imitates Intellect. He helps his readers understand this sense of providence through the play on words πρόνοιαν

(1, 23) and νοῦν πρό (1, 25). Providence is not prior-thought, which suggests a thought prior to action and is a sense of forethought already set aside. Rather, providence is thought-prior in that Intellect and its activity are prior to the cosmos. Through this play on words, Plotinus begins to lead one's attention away from forethought towards another way of understanding providence. It is the way in which the cosmos receives its being and formation from Intellect, which is prior in nature (φύσει, 1, 27) and as a cause (αἴτιος, 1, 27). Intellect is a cause as an original and exemplar (ἀρχέτυπον οἷον καὶ παράδειγμα, 1, 28), the cosmos being its likeness (εἰκόνος, 1, 28).This cosmos is the visible, bodily, moving imitation of Intellect. Although chapter two of this dissertation examines this relation in more detail, a brief inspection of it is necessary for the present discussion.

Giannis Stamatellos' examination of the Presocratic sources of Plotinus is helpful in understanding this relationship between the cosmos and its cause. For instance, Anaximander's ἄπειρον as not limited by either space or time is the source of all coming to be and passing away. It is the "origin of temporal becoming which preserves in its turn the everlastingness of its originative source in different recurring temporal conditions" (Stamatellos, 2007, 125). Because this indefinite source is inexhaustible, coming to be cannot cease. The source remains what it is in and through the variety of temporally ordered events rising out of and returning to it. Also, there is Heraclitus' notion that "becoming exists in a state of everlasting flux underlined by the ever-living force of fire" (Stamatellos, 2007, 127). Because fire is a living, unlimited source, it can generate the never ending flow of becoming. It retains its life as a source through these variations.

Stamatellos argues that in both Anaximander and Heraclitus the cosmos is everlasting in and through the variety of things that become. He shows that Plotinus takes up this sense of a cosmos that is everlasting in and through fluctuations.

Of course, Plotinus adds the Platonic language of original and image.[42] In and through all the various motions, changes, and events, the cosmos imitates Intellect.[43] Providence, understood as the cosmos' dependence on Intellect, is the dynamism between the continuous fluctuations and the stable unity of the cosmos. As a likeness, the cosmos is in continuous formation. As a likeness *of Intellect*, it has always been whole and entire. Plotinus' notion of providence contains *both* aspects.

Since one thing is said to be like another by those making the comparison, we are continuing to see that one cannot ignore the role of those giving such accounts. Providence as the cosmos being a likeness of Intellect is a way of giving an account of the cosmos. Plotinus even says, "we would be correctly and consistently saying the providence [in regard to] the All is its being according to Intellect." He again includes reference to himself and his readers as those speaking. He also refers to correctness (ὀρθός) and consistency (ἀκολούθως), which are values related to accounts. Without having some inkling or trace of Intellect within oneself, one cannot say or even understand that Intellect is prior and is a source. The ability to give or receive such an account, then, comes from our own connection to Intellect. As will be seen, this connection relates to the bi-directionality mentioned in section three. There are outward

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[42] *Parm.*, 132c-133a; *Tim.*, 29b, 37c-37d; *Rep.*, VI.509d-VII516b, X.596a-598c.
[43] See Schroeder, 1992, 24-39 for a discussion of the relationship between the language of "reflection" and continuity between original and image.

and inward intentions in the soul—the outward intention gives an account of bodily things, and the inward intention is a turn toward an experience of Intellect.[44] In both the activity of giving an account and in the turning toward Intellect, Plotinus is ultimately focused on the soul of the reader or student. Because that is his focus, we can see why he would draw his readers' attention to our role in a discussion of providence.

1.6 Summary of the Pedagogical Techniques

This chapter discussed Plotinus' pedagogical techniques in the context of examining how he begins to lead his readers to his hypothesis about providence through them. Abstracting these techniques from that context can help display how they work. First, the technique of alluding to previous thinkers is a way to encourage questions and inquiry, which Porphyry reports was central to Plotinus' style of teaching (*VP* 3.36-39; 13.11-18). Students were not passive recipients of his lectures but were active participants through asking questions and inquiring for themselves. They even produced their own writings in communication with each other (*VP* 15.7-17; 18. 8-24). In a similar way, his allusions can be occasions for readers to become actively involved in the text. They can reflect on and inquire into why he alludes to Epicurus, Aristotle, and the gnostics. In doing that work for themselves, they can raise questions that are conducive to understanding Plotinus' text. In particular, we saw that questions about giving an account, the standards for their acceptability, and the source of these standards help one enter into Plotinus'

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[44] See Schroeder, 1992, 12-17 for an argument that in a conjoined epistemological and ontological sense soul is responsible for the division of Intellect's unity in the formation of the cosmos.

discussion of providence. Because such questions come from one's own reflections, one participates in the formation of this discussion.

Second, there is the technique of leading readers to an impasse. This technique exposes that unreflectively using standards of acceptability or correctness to judge, evaluate, or give an account can lead one to contrary assertions. It provides an occasion to examine oneself and these standards. Engaging in this self-examination is an essential part of reading Plotinus' text and being actively involved in it. The involvement he requires is not just a matter of taking up and following an argument. Rather, it consists of being continuously immersed in a process of self-reflection.

Third, there is a technique that is related to that one, which is the practice of continual criticism. One must start with what is closer and more familiar to oneself. However, in moving to what is less familiar to one but more intelligible in itself, one must challenge and criticize the ways in which one uses and understands words. This continual criticism is part of Plotinus' general philosophical method. There is a pedagogical aspect, however, in that this criticism is part of the self-examination mentioned above. Self-examination is not a step that one can accomplish and then stop doing. Rather, it is a constant practice that is necessary for the movement toward what is intelligible but less familiar or clear to oneself. By participating with Plotinus in an ongoing criticism, readers become involved in a self-examination through which they could possibly come to know what is intelligible in itself.

Chapter 2
The Noetic Cosmos, the Sensible Cosmos, and Providence

Plotinus gives an account of the cosmos through his hypothesis about providence.

Providence is the way in which the cosmos imitates Intellect. Plotinus must demonstrate,

then, how Intellect is the source of the cosmos. He undertakes this demonstration by

depicting Intellect as the true, primordial cosmos. The corporeal cosmos is an imitation of

the noetic one. Section one of this chapter is devoted to unpacking this depiction of

Intellect as a cosmos. Section two is devoted to how Plotinus contrasts the corporeal and the noetic cosmos. Part of this contrast includes examining how Plotinus discusses *logos* and Soul as producing the corporeal cosmos. Because *logos* and Soul are that which form the corporeal cosmos, it remains connected to Intellect through them. Since providence is the cosmos as an imitation of Intellect and since the corporeal cosmos is formed from *logos* and Soul projecting form onto matter, understanding Plotinus' discussion of providence depends on understanding the dynamics between Soul, *logos*, and matter.

Nevertheless, Plotinus is aware of an impasse. Human beings use words or other images to give accounts.[1] In this chapter we will begin to see, however, that Plotinus understands Intellect to be identical with Being. This identity implies that such thinking is an immediate apprehension of Being. Because images of Intellect involve mediation, the images of Intellect presented in an account are not the same has having an experience of Intellect. To have that experience, one must think in the same way as Intellect. Without showing Intellect as a source, however, Plotinus cannot account for the cosmos through his hypothesis about providence. On the one hand, readers must experience the identity of Intellect and Being for themselves. On the other hand, Plotinus must put forward an account to guide readers toward that experience, which is an aim of his pedagogy. One way to resolves this impasse is discussed at length in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. However, the beginnings of its resolution are introduced in this chapter. Another purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine how Plotinus and his readers can experience the identity of Intellect, thinking, Being. On Plotinus' side, he guides readers

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[1] See V.3[49].2, 24-26; V.3.3, 17-19.

through the *manner* and the *content* of his writing, both of which contain his pedagogical techniques. On the readers' side, they must put these techniques to work in their own thinking. This chapter elucidates two of those techniques and what it means to put them to work for oneself. Plotinus uses two images to correct and support each other. He also treats opposites in a way that does not discard one or the other but that preserves both. While these techniques are part of his philosophical method in general, the discussion of them will show that they have a pedagogical function as well. Section three of this chapter is devoted to these two techniques.

2.1   The Noetic Cosmos

Plotinus begins his discussion of how Intellect is a cause (αἴτιος, III.2.1, 24) as an original and paradigm (ἀρχέτυπον οἷον καὶ παράδειγμα, 1, 24-25) by asserting that "the nature of Intellect and Being is the true and primordial cosmos" (ἡ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὄντος φύσις κόσμος ἐστὶν ὁ ἀληθινὸς καὶ πρῶτος, 1, 27). In saying that Being and Intellect have a nature (φύσις), he implies that they are a living source, not a mechanical, lifeless one. A little later (III.2.1, 31-35) he will confirm this sense of their being a living source. Since the same nature belongs to both Intellect and Being, they are inherently unified. They do not possess separate natures but live the same life. This identity is examined later in this section. Their nature is to be a cosmos (κόσμος, 1, 27). A cosmos implies a multiplicity of beings. These beings are mutually involved with each other in an interrelated whole. The nature of Intellect and Being, then, is to be such a multiplicity in the truest, most primordial sense. Any other manifold of mutually involved, interrelated beings can only

be an imitation and approximation of that multiform unity. As an imitation of that true, primordial cosmos, this cosmos has a trace of the original one. The main feature of this description is the relationship among the parts and between the parts and the whole. Through the activity of thinking, there is an internal concord among the parts and between the parts and the whole.

2.1.1 Concord expressed negatively

Plotinus begins to describe the concord between the whole and the parts and among the parts themselves through a series of negative statements.

> The nature of Intellect and Being is the true and primordial cosmos, not separate from itself nor enfeebled by division nor falling short nor coming to be by turns, inasmuch as each part does not tear away from the whole (ἡ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὄντος φύσις κόσμος ἐστὶν ὁ ἀληθινὸς καὶ πρῶτος, οὐ διαστὰς αφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲ ἀσθενὴς τῷ μερισμῷ οὐδὲ ἐλλιπὴς οὐδὲ τοῖς μέρεσι γενόμενος ἅτε ἑκάστου μὴ ἀποσπασθέντος τοῦ ὅλου, III.2.1, 27-31).[2]

The noetic cosmos is "not separate from itself" (οὐ διαστὰς αφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ, 1, 27-28). If it were separate from itself, the parts would be disconnected from each other. If the parts were disconnected, they would be discordant in some way and could even be at variance with each other. There would not be complete unity among them, and they would not be fully integrated into the whole. The whole, too, would lack complete unity because of discordant and even conflicting parts. The noetic cosmos, then, is "not enfeebled by division" (οὐδὲ ἀσθενὴς τῷ μερισμῷ, 1, 28). If there was division, each part would only be a portion or piece of the whole. This kind of division belongs to bodies, like a whole pie being sliced into pieces. Both the whole and the parts are depleted. The whole is lost

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[2] Unless noted otherwise, all translations are my own in this chapter.

by division into parts and is no longer whole. The portion of the whole belonging to one part is detached from every other part. However, in the noetic cosmos there is no "falling short" (ἐλλιπής, 1, 29). No part lacks what another has, and the whole does not lack anything. No remainder is left out. If a remainder was excluded, the whole could not be truly a whole. Since there is no "coming to be by turns" (τοῖς μέρεσι γενόμενος, 1, 29), the whole would not be complete all at once but would come to be through an accumulation of its parts. Such a whole cannot be complete all at once because each part contains a specific portion that is gradually added in the formation of the whole.

Plotinus explains that these characteristics are inappropriate to the noetic cosmos "inasmuch as each part is not torn away from the whole" (ἅτε ἑκάστου μὴ ἀποσπασθέντος τοῦ ὅλου, 1, 29-30). No part is severed from the whole or exists in isolation from another part. Because none of its parts are severed from the whole in any way, the whole does not internally separate, divide into pieces, leave something out, or come to be through accumulations of parts. In not detaching from the whole, the parts are in concord with each other and the whole. In having fully integrated parts, the whole maintains complete unity.

2.1.2   Concord expressed positively

Plotinus continues his depiction of the noetic cosmos through a series of positive assertions. These assertions extend the sense of concord by grounding it in thinking as an activity internal to the parts and the whole.

> But the whole life of it, that is the whole Intellect, lives in one and thinks together and produces the part, [which is] beloved to it, [as a] whole and [as] all, one neither

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separated from another nor became merely other and exiled from the rest: whence one part commits no injustice to another, not even if opposite (ἀλλ' ἡ πᾶσα ζωὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς ἐν ἑνὶ ζῶσα καὶ νοοῦσα ὁμοῦ καὶ τὸ μέρος παρέχεται ὅλον καὶ πᾶν αὐτῷ φίλον οὐ χωρισθὲν ἄλλο ἀπ' ἄλλου οὐδὲ ἕτερον γεγενημένον μόνον καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεξενωμένον· ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἀδικεῖ ἄλλο ἄλλο οὐδ' ἂν ᾖ ἐναντίον, III.2.1, 31-35).[3]

Plotinus emphasizes the living unity of the noetic cosmos: "the whole life of it, that is the whole Intellect, lives in one and thinks together" (ἡ πᾶσα ζωὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς ἐν ἑνὶ ζῶσα καὶ νοοῦσα ὁμοῦ, 1, 30-31). In characterizing the beings of the noetic cosmos as living and thinking, he presents it as active and dynamic. The parts are not statically or mechanistically connected. Each part is a particular intellect and, as an intellect, is thinking.[4] The whole of the noetic cosmos is an activity of thinking that occurs in and through these parts. Every part and the whole live together in this activity. Plotinus highlights this dynamic between parts and whole in saying that Intellect "produces the part [as a] whole and [as] all" (τὸ μέρος παρέχεται ὅλον καὶ πᾶν, 1, 32). The thinking of Intellect produces parts within itself that do not undergo any process of change or becoming. Each part is immediately whole and entire as an intellect. As an intellect that thinks and lives with the whole Intellect, each intellect is all the other intellects. Plotinus uses the example of a science to help illustrate this situation.[5] The content of the science does not differ from all its theorems, and each theorem contributes some particular aspect

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[3] This translation is based on P. Boot, 1983, 311-312.
[4] See V.9[5].8, 4-8. These chapters provide a good example of how the whole Intellect encompasses each intellect, which is its own power, how Intellect and Being are identical in the activity of thinking, and how each intellect is all the others by not being other than Intellect. The whole Ennead is also a short, good example of the pedagogical practice of moving from what is familiar to us and our souls toward what is more intelligible but unrecognized. For each intellect being the other intellects, see: Bréhier, 1958, 93-95; Wallis, 1972, 54-55; Gurtler, 1988, 12-14; Emilsson, 1996, 227-228; Stamatellos, 2007, 56-60, 149-50; Perl, 2014, 113-14.
[5] IV.3[27].2, 50-55; V.9.8, 4-8.

but also contains all the other theorems potentially. This potential does not mean that it becomes the others in actuality at some point in time. Rather, each theorem is its own content that implies and is implied all the other theorems within the one science.

Each intellect thinks its own content and has the content of every other intellect implied within it. Each part and the whole live together in this activity of thinking. Plotinus further articulates this concord between the parts and the whole and among the parts in choosing the word "beloved" (φίλος 1, 32), which is an allusion to Empedocles.[6] Like Empedocles, he sees love as a unifying power. For Empedocles, the combined activity of love and of strife on the four elements generate all the motion, change, and becoming in the cosmos. Plotinus concurs with Empedocles that both love and strife are present in the corporeal cosmos. Love alone, however, is operative in the noetic one. There is no power of separation or division between something and itself, one part and another, or part and whole.

Since love alone is operative, since the parts all live and think together, "one neither separated from another nor became merely other and exiled from the rest" (οὐ χωρισθὲν ἄλλο ἀπ' ἄλλου οὐδὲ ἕτερον γεγενημένον μόνον καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεξενωμένον, 1, 32-34). Because Plotinus qualifies "other" (ἕτερον) with "merely" (μόνον), he implies that each particular intellect is other than all the rest. This otherness, however, is not one of separation or isolation. No part of Intellect lives and thinks in exile from another part.

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[6] Stamatellos shows that Plotinus alludes to Empedocles in the next chapter of this treatise: the corporeal, perceptible cosmos is described as the work of both love (φιλία) and enmity (ἔχθρα, Stamatellos, 2007, 49-50). In Empedocles, love (φιλία) and strife (νεῖκος) together with the four "roots" (ῥιζώματα) of earth, air, water, and fire generate the cosmos; love and strife "are the *incorporeal* creative forces of the cosmos that act upon the four roots" (Stamatellos, 2007, 48-9). See LSJ, ἔχθρα, A, which cites III.2.2 for the philosophical connection between ἔχθρα and νεῖκος. In fr. 22, Empedocles associates enmity and strife (Stamatellos, 2007, 50). I am claiming that Plotinus begins his allusion to Empedocles in III.2.1.

Plotinus depicts the noetic cosmos as a rich manifold of intellects that are neither separated by otherness nor subsumed in a monotonous uniformity: "one in no way commits injustice to another, not even if it is opposite" (ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἀδικεῖ ἄλλο ἄλλο οὐδ' ἄν ᾖ ἐναντίον, 1, 34-35). One part does not act unjustly (ἀδικεῖ) to another part, does not take from another or interfere with another or in any way wrong another.[7] Since each intellect is its own activity of thought and is potentially all the others, there is no need to take from or interfere with another. Not even opposites vanquish, extinguish, or attempt to replace one another. Each one is complete and lives fully in the whole with every other part. Because of this intrinsic unity and complete integration, the life of one opposite does not depend on the destruction of another. They, too, live in concord in the noetic cosmos.

2.1.3   Thinking, making, and the identity of Intellect and Being

Because thinking is the activity constituting each and every part, none of which interfere with each other, there is complete stability in the noetic cosmos: "being everywhere one and complete, it stands still everywhere and has no alteration: indeed, it does not make one into another" (Πανταχοῦ δὲ ὄν ἕν καὶ τέλειον ὁπουοῦν ἐστηκέ τε καὶ ἀλλοίωσιν οὐκ ἔχει· οὐδὲ γὰρ ποιεῖ ἄλλο εἰς ἄλλο, 1, 35-37). Here, Plotinus emphasizes the difference between thinking and making to further articulate what he means in saying that Intellect is the true and primordial cosmos. The parts do not need to act on each other in order to think. They are what they think, and they think what they are. The making that

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[7] See *Rep.*, 500c. Socrates is describing what the philosopher contemplates, seeing things that neither wrong nor are wronged and which the philosopher attempts to imitate. I am grateful to Dr. Perl for pointing out this reference to me, especially given its pedagogical implications. The philosopher endeavors to fully incorporate thought into his or way of living.

occurs in the corporeal cosmos, however, requires that one thing be made into another. This activity is not intrinsically complete but requires something else to receive the action. The action of the maker is an outward movement toward the receiver, which changes according to the activity imposed on it. Neither the maker nor the recipient stands still in itself.

In contrast to making, thinking is an activity that remains within. Since the only activity that occurs in the noetic cosmos is thinking, there is no change or alteration. The last lines of this chapter in the treatise elucidate this distinction further, a distinction that also shows how Being and Intellect are one.

> For those blessed in every way it alone suffices to stand in themselves and to be this, the very beings they are, but being busy about many things is not safe [for] those who move themselves from out of themselves (τοῖς δὲ πάντη μακαρίοις ἐν αὐτοῖς ἑστάναι καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι, ὅπερ εἰσί, μόνον ἀρκεῖ, τὸ δὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν οὐκ ἀσφαλὲς ἑαυτοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν παρακινοῦσιν, III.2.1, 40-43).

Plotinus contrasts beings that, in their activity, remain within themselves and those that move away from themselves. Those who move, change, adjust, or are otherwise busy with something else direct their activity toward that thing. Because their activity is such that it must be exercised on something else, they move away from and out of themselves. They cannot remain within themselves. The blessed, in contrast, that stay still in themselves remain what they are. They are not inactive or lifeless, however. Since Plotinus is talking about intellects, they are thinking. Thinking is the activity in which beings stand still and so abide in their own fullness. Since they are intellects and preserve what they are through thinking, Intellect and Being are one in and through this activity.

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In sum, Plotinus has unfolded his understanding of the true and primordial cosmos in the following way. For a whole to maintain its integrity in multiplicity, all the parts must be preserved. For all the parts to be preserved fully, each part must be complete and not lack anything the other parts contain. He characterizes Intellect as a manifold of intellects. Each intellect is thinking, and preserves itself in this activity. Each part is complete in that it need not exercise its activity on something else. Living together in this activity, no intellect lacks what another one possesses. Intellect thinks Being in and through this rich multiplicity of intellects. Since the parts live as one in the activity of thinking, this activity preserves the whole as a multiform unity.

Although thinking and making have been distinguished, not every kind of making is mutually exclusive from thinking. The noetic cosmos also makes: "in abiding in itself, it makes nothing trivial" (ἐν τῷ ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ μένειν οὐ σμικρὰ ποιεῖν, 1, 44-45). Intellect does not move out toward the corporeal cosmos. By remaining within its own activity, the noetic cosmos makes the corporeal one.[8] The corporeal cosmos does not change into something else but becomes what is through this kind of making. The second section discusses how this kind of making occurs and how the corporeal cosmos depends on the noetic cosmos through it.

2.2   The Corporeal Cosmos

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[8] For this relation between abiding and producing, see Schroeder, 1992, 28-39. It is an example of Plotinus theory of two acts—there is an inner, constitutive act and an outer, secondary act that emerges from and reflects the first. See IV.3.10, 32-37 as another example. For discussions of this notion see Rist, 1967, 69-71; Wallis, 1972, 61-62; Emilsson, 1996, 224-25; Gurtler, 2015, 20-22.

The corporeal cosmos is "the nothing trivial" that the noetic cosmos makes. The former resembles the latter and so also differs from it. Plotinus depicts this difference by contrasting the kind of part-whole relationship that constitutes each cosmos. He depicts the continuity by describing how the noetic cosmos makes the corporeal one by means of *logos*. Because *logos* is a term with a variety of meanings in Plotinus' discussion of providence and has a Pre-Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic background, I leave it untranslated. Its various meanings in Plotinus' discussion of providence will emerge as the discussion proceeds. Sub-section one is an examination of the contrast between the noetic and corporeal cosmos, and sub-section two is an examination of how the former makes the latter.

2.2.1   The division among living bodies

What constitutes the difference between the noetic and the corporeal cosmos is not multiplicity as such but the *kind* of multiplicity.

> That is, out of that cosmos There that is true and one this one here subsists as not truly one: namely, it is many and has been divided into a multitude and one [part] has stood away from another [part] and has become alien and no longer only friendly but also hostile by separation and in falling short one is adversarial to another out of need. For the part does not suffice by itself, but in preserving itself is adversarial to another, preserved by it (Ὑφίσταται γοῦν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ ἐκείνου καὶ ἑνὸς κόσμος οὗτος οὐχ εἷς ἀληθῶς· πολὺς γοῦν καὶ εἰς πλῆθος μεμερισμένος καὶ ἄλλο ἀπ' ἄλλου ἀφεστηκὸς καὶ ἀλλότριον γεγενημένον καὶ οὐκέτι φιλία μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔχθρα τῇ διαστάσει καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐλλείψει ἐξ ἀνάγκης πολέμιον ἄλλο ἄλλῳ. Οὐ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ

αὐτῷ[9] τὸ μέρος, ἀλλὰ σῳζόμενον τῷ ἄλλῳ πολέμιόν ἐστιν ὑφ᾽ οὗ σῴζεται, III.2.2, 1-8).

The kind of multiplicity belonging to the corporeal cosmos is a divisible one. The noetic cosmos is "not enfeebled by dividing" (οὐδὲ ἀσθενὴς τῷ μερισμῷ, 1, 28), while the corporeal one "has been divided into a multitude" (εἰς πλῆθος μεμερισμένος, 2, 3). In such division, each individual part is only a portion of the whole. The portion that each part is remains detached from every other part. The parts cannot contain the whole, and the whole is divided up among the parts. Each part "has stood away from another" (ἄλλο ἀπ᾽ ἄλλου ἀφεστηκὸς, 2, 3-4) and "has become alien" (ἀλλότριον γεγενημένον, 2, 4). The parts are separate from each other, and the whole is internally divided. This separation and division is in contrast to the noetic cosmos having no part "exiled from the rest" (τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεξενωμένον, 1, 33-34).

These separate bodies have separate ways of living or existing. While the parts of the noetic cosmos all live together in the same activity, the lives or existence of the parts here occur in different activities. Because no particular body can contain all of corporeality and because they are constituted by different activities, they even contend with each other to maintain and expand themselves. Love is not the only force operative here, but the parts are hostile by separation (ἔχθρα τῇ διαστάσει, 2, 5-6). Plotinus alludes to Empedocles in affirming love and strife as operative in this cosmos (Stamatellos, 2007, 48-53). However, he does not use the notions of love and strife to describe two phases of

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[9] Bréhier, 1925, 25 contains ἀρκεῖ αὐτῷ; Henry-Schwyzer, 1951, I.269 (*editio maior)* contains ἀρκεῖ αὐτῷ as well. Henry-Schwyzer, 1964, I.247 (*editio minor*), however, contains ἀρκεῖ αὐτῷ but indicates in a footnote that it should be read as reflexive. The *editio maior* notes that the Perna edition, 1580, contains αὐτῷ and cites other copies that contain αὑτῷ.

an ongoing production but to describe a unified cosmos filled with a divided multiplicity.[10] Each body strives to maintain and extend its own life or existence, to remain whole and entire. Love is at work in this striving to remain one. This endeavor can include striving to keep other bodily beings alive, as in herd animals and families. In this way, love is the "first magician and alchemist."[11] It is the force among bodies that binds them together. This endeavor, however, can also imply trying to incorporate other bodies into one's own body or competing for territory or mates. The other body is striving to maintain and extends its life or existence, too. Strife, then, is also operative among these bodies in their endeavors to preserve themselves.

While in the noetic cosmos each part is complete, is the whole, and does not fall short (οὐδὲ ἐλλιπὴς, 1, 29), each body does fall short (ἐλλείψει, 2, 6). Bodily beings cannot remain whole and complete. From this lack and the urge toward preservation, they become adversarial (πολέμιον, 2, 6) with each other as they endeavor to maintain and extend themselves. Their primary aim is not to turn against each other but to be alive or to exist. Because no part is self-sufficient (ἀρκεῖ αὐτῷ, 2, 7) and able to be preserved by remaining within itself, they act on and change other bodies out of need (ἐξ ἀνάγκης, 2, 6).

We must note, however, that this depiction does not extend to planets and stars but only to beings below the moon. Celestial beings are imperishable and inexhaustible in their bodily life (Wallis, 1972, 62) because the fire constituting them does not flow

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[10] See IV.4[28].40 for love and strife, especially love, as essential to a unified, sympathetic cosmos; see also, Stamatellos, 2007, 49-50; Gurtler, 2015, 184-89.
[11] IV.4.40, 6-8, taken from Gurtler's translation, 2015, 85.

outwards but churns within.[12] As bodies, they fluctuate. Since their fluctuations remain

within, they do not have to replenish themselves by taking from other bodies.

Nevertheless, both combination and separation are active throughout the whole cosmos.

In explaining why magic spells work, for instance, Plotinus argues that the magician

utilizes forces of love and strife.[13] Magic spells are possible because the cosmos is a

single, living organism maintained in equilibrium through opposing forces.[14] Plotinus,

however, does not just repeat Empedocles' opposition of love and strife but uses them

within a different context. He explains the dynamic unity of this cosmos by showing its

dependence on Intellect through *logos* and Soul. In particular, he presents *logos* and

matter as the limits of this cosmos and depicts Soul as a balancing power. Sub-section

two examines this dynamic in detail, especially in relation to Plotinus' hypothesis about

providence.

2.2.2   Logos, matter, Soul, and providence

Intellect does not make the corporeal cosmos by a process of reasoning (λογισμῷ, 2,

9) or by seeking to make something. Instead, Intellect makes a "second nature by

necessity" (φύσεως δευτέρας ἀνάγκη, 2, 10). Whereas the first nature is full of living

intellects, the second nature is full of living bodies. From the necessity of its own

inherent ability, the noetic cosmos makes another cosmos.

> For it was primordial, having not only much but also all power: and this, therefore, is
> the power to make without seeking to make (Πρῶτον γὰρ ἦν καὶ πολλὴν δύναμιν ἔχον

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[12] II.1[40].3; Stamatellos, 2007, 125-26.
[13] IV.4.40 5-6, Stamatellos, 2007, 51; Gurtler, 2015, 184-85.
[14] Stamatellos, 2007, 51; Gurtler, 2015, 188.

καὶ πᾶσαν· καὶ ταύτην τοίνυν τὴν ποιεῖν ἄλλο ἄνευ τοῦ ζητεῖν ποιῆσαι, III.2.2, 11-14).

Seeking to make something implies a lack. One who seeks to make does not already have what is to be made and does not know immediately how to make it. The noetic cosmos has all power and so lacks nothing. "Having all power" implies that there is an inexhaustible excess. If there were not this excess, there would be some limit to the power of the noetic cosmos. However, if there was a limit, the noetic cosmos would be limited by another and would not have all power. Therefore, having all power implies an inexhaustible excess. From this excess, the noetic cosmos makes without seeking to make. Plotinus contrasts this kind of maker with the craftsman (τεχνίτης, 2, 14), who does not have within himself the ability to make (τὸ ποιεῖν οὐκ ἔχων) but has it as something acquired (ἐπακτόν), taking it from learning (μαθεῖν, 2, 16-17). Because the skill must be transmitted from one to another, the one who learns does not inherently have the skill to make in a fully active way. The *ability* to learn the skill is within the leaner, but the learner does not *possess* the skill. The condition of this kind of maker is marked by deficiency—neither having immediately what is to be made or inherently possessing the skill to make it.[15]

The kind of making that belongs to Intellect occurs not through seeking and lacking but through what is already possessed.

Intellect, therefore, giving something of itself to matter rears all things in peace and quiet: but the *logos* is this something flowing from Intellect (Νοῦς τοίνυν δούς τι

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[15] Whether or how this dynamic of learning and transmission is an aspect of a soul's learning to think as Intellect thinks is examined in chapters four and six of this dissertation.

ἑαυτοῦ εἰς ὕλην ἀτρεμὴς καὶ ἥσυχος τὰ πάντα εἰργάζετο· οὗτος δὲ ὁ λόγος ἐκ νοῦ ῥυείς, III.2.2, 15-18).

In being made from the excess of the noetic cosmos, the corporeal cosmos has something of the original within it. The *logos* is this something. In this use of *logos* there is an echo of Stoic *logoi spermatikoi*, the spermatic principles through which the cosmos has a rational order (Graeser, 1972, 41-43). While the Stoics describe these spermatic principles as "mechanical agencies" (Graeser, 1972, 43), Plotinus does not. He retains the sense of a seminal, organizing power but reconfigures *logos* as an incorporeal, internal power. The *logos* contains the whole corporeal cosmos in inchoate form. It contains all the various forms that belong to and determine each and every bodily being. These forms are all concentrated together in the *logos*.

Logos receives these forms from Intellect and imparts them to matter. However, since the cosmos has always been, matter does not temporally precede the imparting of form to it. Matter is like a screen or surface upon which forms are projected. However, it is like a screen that only comes about in and through such projections, not one that exists prior to them. It is the necessary condition for change, generation, and destruction, especially in terms of the elements changing into one another (II.4.[12].6, 2-3). Without matter, destruction would be a change into total non-being, which is impossible, instead of one form replacing another (II.4.6, 4-8). Plotinus' understanding of matter comes from Plato's *Timaeus* and Aristotle's *Physics*.[16] Because matter is the substratum for the formation of all bodies, it is without quality, shape, and size (II.4.8, 1-11). It is

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[16] *Tim*., 52a-53a; *Phys.* 192a-192b; Bréhier, 1958, 179; Perl, 2014, 145.

incorporeal (II.4.8, 2). As matter for all things, it is the single recipient for the formative

properties that constitute bodies (II.4.8, 7). It is that which underlies all the various forms

replacing one another (II.4.6, 9-10). It could not be matter for all things and receptive of

all formation if its own properties influenced that formation. In order to receive all forms,

matter must lack, and continue to lack, any and every formative aspect.

The question arises, however, how anyone could even conceive of that which lacks

all form. To address this question, Plotinus narrates what a soul experiences in

approaching matter. The soul begins by imaginatively removing all qualities and

quantities from bodies: their color, texture, scent, and taste as well as their size, shape,

and even their extension. In imaginatively removing everything that gives limit and

measure to bodies, the soul approaches matter as formless non-being. "Non-being" is not

to be understood absolutely but as furthest removed from and most opposed to being.

> The soul immediately throws the form of things upon it in anguish because of the
> boundlessness, as if in frightful flight of what is outside the being of beings and
> finding it unbearable to stay in non-being too long (ἡ ψυχὴ εὐθέως ἐπέβαλε τὸ εἶδος
> τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτῇ ἀλγοῦσα τῷ ἀορίστῳ οἷον φόβῳ τοῦ ἔξω τῶν ὄντων εἶναι καὶ
> οὐκ ἀνεχομένη ἐν τῷ μὴ ὄντι ἐπιπολὺ ἑστάναι, II.4.10, 33-36).[17]

There is a parallel between what the soul does to matter and how the soul conceives of

matter. The soul, "having become then somehow like (ὁμοιοῦται, II.4.10, 17)"[18] matter,

immediately casts form upon it. The soul's reaction to the limitless and fundamental

indeterminacy of matter is to project form onto it. Similarly, in trying to conceive of

matter, the soul gives itself some images or words or some other type of form it can

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[17] Armstrong translation with some changes, 1966, 129.
[18] Armstrong translation with some changes, 1966, 129.

apprehend. Having removed all possible form from its conception of a body and so having reached matter, soul immediately gives itself a definite form—for instance, calling matter a "nurse of becoming" (*Tim.* 52d) or "receptacle" (*Tim.* 53a) or "shaking tool" (*Tim.* 53a). This moment of giving itself a form is part of the soul's conception of matter. The one performing this exercise witnesses firsthand that matter receives all forms but does not actually become any of them.

All bodies along with the shapes, sizes, and qualities defining them arise and break apart upon matter. Matter remains completely without bulk, size, and form, and so all forms can occur on it.[19] *Logos*, as that which contains all the forms for the whole corporeal cosmos, stands in stark contrast to matter. However, *logos* and matter not are mutually exclusive. The dynamic between them produces all the motion and life in the cosmos.

> And [the cosmos], on the one hand, terminates at matter and *logos*, while on the other hand it originates from Soul establishing the mixture: one must not consider Soul to be in distress, directing this All with ease by a kind of presence (Καὶ εἰς ἅ μὲν λήγει, ὕλη καὶ λόγος, ὅθεν δὲ ἄρχεται, ψυχὴ ἐφεστῶσα τῷ μεμιγμένῳ, ἥν οὐ κακοπαθεῖν δεῖ νομίζειν ῥᾶστα διοικοῦσαν τόδε τὸ πᾶν τῇ οἷον παρουσίᾳ, III.2.2, 39-42).

These three—Soul, *logos*, and matter—are the main factors involved in the production of this cosmos. Soul is that from which this cosmos originates (ἄρχεται, 2, 40), while *logos* and matter are its limits. This origination cannot imply some beginning in time, since the corporeal cosmos has no temporal beginning. The limits cannot imply any sense of corporeality or extension, since neither *logos* nor matter is corporeal. In establishing the mixture (ἐφεστῶσα τῷ μεμιγμένῳ, 2, 40) of *logos* and matter, Soul originates bodily life

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[19] II.4.11, 41-45; II.4.12, 7-9.

by ensuring that neither predominates nor overtakes the other. It keeps *logos* and matter in an animated balance in which *logos* imparts life forms to matter, and matter continuously receives all these forms by never becoming any of them. They are limits, then, in the sense of being the two opposing conditions for bodily life and existence.

Soul directs (διοικοῦσαν, 2, 42) this cosmos without suffering distress (κακοπαθεῖν, 2, 41). It preserves the balance between *logos* and matter with ease (ῥᾶστα, 2, 41) by a kind of presence (τῇ οἷον παρουσίᾳ, 2, 42). Soul does not formulate a plan or calculate how to balance form and formlessness. Rather, the very presence of Soul creates the balance. Because Soul is present as divisible and indivisible, this balancing of *logos* and matter does not cause Soul any distress.[20] Soul is divisible in its relation to bodies and indivisible as rooted in Intellect.[21] Soul is divisible in that different powers operate in different parts of the cosmos. For instance, on the particular level, the different powers of a plant's soul function in the roots, branches, and flowers. These different body parts divide the soul by enacting its different powers. However, the powers are not scattered or dispersed in that the whole of the plant's soul is present to the whole body and to all its parts.[22] The powers remain concentrated together, otherwise the living body would not be *one organism* but a series of pieces and operations. That is why Soul does not suffer distress in directing the cosmos toward remaining a unified multiplicity of moving, changing, and living bodies. It does not become dispersed among the various motions and lives of these bodies. Even those bodies that are at variance with each other do not pose a

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[20] See Schubert, 1968, 46-47.
[21] See IV 1[4]1 43-76; Gurtler, 2015, 320, 322-328, 339-343.
[22] IV.1.1, 66-67; Gurtler, 2015, 328.

problem for soul. In remaining indivisible, Soul retains its integrity throughout the continuous generation and destruction of forms upon matter. In being divisible, it can be present to each one of these changes among forms.

Although the discussion above outlines the dynamics between Soul, *logos*, and matter, chapter three of this dissertation is devoted to filling out this brief sketch. In particular, there are subtle differences and interconnections between providence, Soul, and *logos*. Plotinus' presentation of them develops over the course of his discussion, and chapter three of this dissertation tracks that development. At the moment, however, how his hypothesis about providence relates to Soul, *logos*, and matter is beginning to emerge. Plotinus accounts for the being and formation of this All in terms of providence. Providence is the way in which the cosmos imitates Intellect. This cosmos is the unified multiplicity of corporeal life and existence. Since matter itself is incorporeal, the formation of bodies depends on *logos* and matter. *Logos* is from Intellect, and is imparted to matter by Soul. Since Soul, *logos*, and matter are the basic factors involved in the production of the corporeal cosmos and since providence is the cosmos as an imitation of Intellect, then this hypothesis about providence includes the dynamics between Soul, *logos* and matter.

Plotinus uses the images of a seed and a harmony to illustrate how this cosmos is like Intellect. These images convey the unity in multiplicity through which this cosmos is an imitation. Plotinus uses these images to correct each other, which is part of his general

philosophical method of removing features of an image that are alien to the original.[23]

However, it is also a key pedagogical technique in that it helps readers in the transition

from what is more familiar to what is less familiar. Plotinus' use of the seed and harmony

images is especially pedagogical because he does not explicitly indicate the correction: he

implies it in a way that allows readers to make the correction for themselves. Section

three examines how this technique works. It also examines another pedagogical

technique: the way that Plotinus uses opposites dynamically to guide his readers toward

Intellect and Being.

2.3 Using Images to Correct Each Other and Using Opposites Dynamically

Plotinus uses the images of a seed and a harmony to show that the possibility of

conflict does not undermine his theory of providence. They relate to the main impasse by

illustrating the compatibility between a unified cosmos and the coming to be of

individuals, even those in conflict among themselves. *Logos* is central to Plotinus'

depiction of this cooperation. Each image introduces both appropriate and inappropriate

aspects. Each one supports the appropriate aspects and corrects the inappropriate aspects

of the other. However, these images only work this way if readers attend to how they

function together, especially in the context of the main impasse. The pedagogical

technique depends on a reader's active participation. For instance, the seed image depicts

the cosmos as a multiplicity of parts continuously coming to life from a single, internal

source. The problem is that this image represents the parts as mere functions of the

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[23] For example, see I.6[1].9, 8-25, V.3.6, 28-31, V.3.9.10-19, V.8[31].9, 11-15, VI.4[22].7, 10-45; Wallis, 1972, 41-42, 61; Schroeder, 1992, 35.

whole. The harmony image depicts the cosmos as independent sounds united together by a single ratio. The problem is that this unity is extrinsic to each sound. Juxtaposing these images in the context of the main impasse, readers can see that the appropriate aspects support each other and each corrects the inappropriate aspects of the other. Together, these images depict the cosmos as a multiplicity of independent, living bodies emerging from and united by *logos* as an internal source.

2.3.1 Logos as a seed and as a harmony

The seed image illustrates a multiplicity coming from a single source. The plant starts as a seed containing the whole plant, though not in bulk but in formative power (ἐν λόγῳ, III.2.2, 19).[24] The seed contains the plant's *abilities* to sprout, take root, nourish itself, grow, branch out, flower, and produce more seeds. As it becomes a plant, the simple unity becomes a multiplicity of parts that could impede each other.

> So, both out of the one Intellect and the *logos* from it, this All arose and stood divided, and out of necessity some became beloved and gentle, others hostile and adversarial, and some intentionally, while others unintentionally injure each other, and opposing pairs destroying each other brought about the generation for others (οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς νοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ λόγου ἀνέστη τόδε τὸ πᾶν καὶ διέστη καὶ ἐξ ἀνάγκης τὰ μὲν ἐγένετο φίλα καὶ προσηνῆ, τὰ δὲ ἐχθρὰ καὶ πολέμια, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἑκόντα, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἄκοντα ἀλλήλοις ἐλυμήνατο καὶ φθειρόμενα θάτερα γένεσιν ἄλλοις εἰργάσατο, III.2.2, 23-28).

This comparison to a plant illustrates a simple unity producing a complex plurality and a single, internal power through which various parts can act. *Logos*, as from Intellect, is a single power containing the corporeal cosmos. The mixing of this power with matter

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[24] See page 65 above for the Stoic background of the *logoi spermatikoi.*

generates a variegated network of interacting bodies, each enacting their share of this power.

The above passage expresses the dynamism of this mixture. For instance, "this All arose (ἀνέστη, 2, 24) and stood divided (διέστη, 2, 25)." The corporeal cosmos moves and acts as a unity. It arose as a single living thing. Nevertheless, it is internally divided. By containing parts with separate lives, some of which are even at variance with others, it stands divided within itself. Plotinus' use of two μέν . . . δέ clauses depicts this dynamism even further. Some living bodies become beloved and gentle (φίλα καὶ προσηνῆ, 2, 25-26) to one another; others become hostile and adversarial (ἐχθρὰ καὶ πολέμια, 2, 26). Sometimes these living bodies intentionally (ἑκόντα, 2, 27) kill, eat, and attack each other, while sometimes they unintentionally (ἄκοντα, 2, 27) trample, impede, or otherwise injure each other. The lives of some living bodies are directly opposed to the lives of others, while sometimes they just happen to interfere with each other. Finally, the mutual destruction between opposing pairs (φθειρόμενα θάτερα, 2, 28) brings about generation for other things (γένεσιν ἄλλοις εἰργάσατο, 2, 28). Opposing pairs like hot and cold or dry and moist destroy each other but produce changes or generation in those things in which they occur.

These various oppositions occur within the context of *logos* imparting form to matter. Although the forms that constitute bodies come from the same source, a variety of separate bodies emerge in the imparting of form to matter. Since matter retains no formation, these bodies cannot keep their form forever. Through the source of formation in them, however, they strive to maintain and extend themselves. Sometimes this

endeavor is in agreement with other beings, but sometimes it is in discord. These various

living bodies intersect, assist, support, interfere with, or injure each other.

Plotinus then moves to a musical image that conveys how all these bodies gather

together.

> And [the *logos*] nevertheless instituted a single harmony upon them, which act and
> suffer in these various ways, every one of them uttering itself, while the *logos* upon
> them produces the harmony and single arrangement in all of them together. (καὶ μίαν
> επ' αὐτοῖς τοιαῦτα ποιοῦσι καὶ πάσχουσιν ὅμως ἁρμονίαν ἐνεστήσατο φθεγγομένων
> μὲν ἑκάστων τὰ αὑτῶν, τοῦ δὲ λόγου ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τὴν ἁρμονίαν καὶ μίαν τὴν σύνταξιν
> εἰς τὰ ὅλα ποιουμένου, III.2.2, 28-32).

A harmony is a relational unity between distinct sounds. Each sound is independent of

the others, but they become one sound through the harmonic ratio. In using a μέν . . . δέ

clause, Plotinus expresses a contrast between many independent sounds and one

harmonic ratio. Plotinus highlights the distinction between the various, independent

bodies that live their own lives and the one *logos* that unites them into a cosmos.

However, he depicts these independent bodies and the one *logos* such that neither

undermines or infringes on the other. Each body retains its own integrity and

independence but is nevertheless included in the whole. The unifying power produces the

whole but does not nullify the independence of the parts. In and through the variety of

interactions among all the various beings, *logos* produces this cosmos.

Through the movement of this long sentence (2, 19-32) and in associating *logos* with

two distinct images, Plotinus begins to indicate a way around the main impasse. Although

the images correct each other, Plotinus does not explicitly make this correction. He

indicates the possibility by associating *logos* with both images but leaves readers with the

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work of actually seeing this connection, making the correction, and thinking this issue out for themselves.

The sentence starts with *logos* as the formative power in a seed and ends with *logos* as a harmonic ratio. The source from which the multiplicity of this cosmos continuously springs is the same source that has gathered the multiplicity into a unity. With the seed image, a complex organism comes from a single source. Still, the parts of a plant are determined in their activity as mere functions of the organism. With this image alone, one would conceive of the living bodies in the cosmos as determined parts at the service of the whole. However, since a harmony is a relational unity of independent sounds, this image depicts each living body as an individual. Each one is striving to sustain its own life, "uttering itself", while the cosmos is a relational unity of these various endeavors. The problem is that a harmony is produced by a composer putting the sounds together. The seed image helps to correct this aspect by depicting the source of unity as an intrinsic, organizing power.

Together, these images illustrate the ways in which *logos* is a source as well as the dynamics between *logos* and matter. All the various forms that constitute the life or motion of each body are concentrated together in *Logos*. These forms, however, separate when imparted to matter such that individual bodies continuously emerge. Because mater remains without form, each and every body must strive to keep itself together. Each of them acts on, interacts with, and suffers the actions of others. *Logos*, however, continuously unifies them, not by imposing an order from the outside but by organizing them from within. Just as matter remains formless in relation to particular bodies, it

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remains formless in regard to the whole. The unity of the cosmos is not static but dynamic and ongoing. The rotation of the celestial sphere, the internal fluctuations of heavenly bodies, and the endless production of earthly bodies all contribute to the continuous production of the cosmos. The dynamic of *logos* imparting form to matter and matter receiving form but remaining formless produces the individual bodies and the unifying of them into one cosmos. The parts and the whole cooperate by being involved in this ongoing dynamic.

Since *logos* is both "in" and "upon" individual bodies and their interactions in the ongoing formation of this cosmos, Plotinus conveys the immanence and the transcendence of this source. The ἐν of the seed (2, 19) and the ἐπί of the harmony (2, 28 and 2, 30) help him convey both. On the one hand, it is not an external force unifying particular bodies or binding them together. It immanently forms each body and all of them together. On the other hand, it is neither localized within any particular body nor dispersed among their interactions. It embraces each body and includes all of them together.[25]

Through *logos* and matter, Plotinus depicts the corporeal cosmos as a manifold unity of interacting bodies and explains the structure of this cosmos as a likeness of Intellect. This cosmos is like the noetic one by consisting of independent bodies that are mutually involved with each other. Through *logos*, this cosmos is shown to depend on Intellect because it consists of bodies that maintain their own form and are unified into a whole.

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[25] Just as Plotinus says that body is in soul, not the other way round (IV.3.9), the same could be said of *logos*, especially since *logoi* are activities of Soul (III.3[48].1, 4-5). Chapter three of this dissertation discusses this issue in more detail.

However, because of matter, they cannot possess all forms and some cannot even keep their own form forever. Both *logos* and matter explain how this cosmos is *like* but *not identical* to Intellect. Plotinus, however, does not explain the dynamism of the cosmos only by opposing *logos* and matter but includes Soul as a third factor. This use of three main factors to explain the motion, change, and life in the cosmos has Pre-Socratic, Platonic, and Aristotelian roots. There is also a pedagogical dimension that parallels this way of giving an account: namely, treating opposites dynamically and not statically as a way of helping someone learn how to think in a dynamic way and, for Plotinus, to think as Intellect does. This distinction between "thinking dynamically" and "thinking statically" is discussed in detail in the next sub-section.

2.3.2   The dynamism of the cosmos and dynamic opposition as a pedagogical technique

There is a history of using a triadic structure in accounts of motion. Different philosophers give different accounts but they all have the common feature of setting oppositions in a way that includes a third term. For instance, Empedocles posits that Love and Strife are in opposition *and* that they act on the four elements to bring about the cosmos (Stamatellos, 2007, 48-53; 117-119; 142-145). Heraclitus presents opposed pairs as bringing about the cosmos through *logos* keeping them in a unified fluctuation (Stamatellos, 2007, 44-48; 114-117; 158-166).

Further, both Plato and Aristotle give accounts of motion using a triadic structure. In the *Timaeus*, Timaeus depicts Soul as a mixture of what is intermediate between divisible

and changing and between indivisible and unchanging being, sameness, and difference (*Tim*. 35a).[26] There are two triads here—the triad of sameness, difference, and being, each of which are divisible, indivisible, and intermediate.[27] For Soul to be a mixture that can animate a corporeal cosmos, there must be divisibility and indivisibility. For that combination to be possible, there must be an intermediate between these opposites. To account for the celestial motion of the fixed stars and the planets, there must be sameness and difference (36b-d). Difference can be mixed with sameness by means of being only if there is an intermediate condition of the divisible and indivisible in each (35a-b). In the *Physics,* Aristotle says that "[e]veryone makes contraries the original beings" (188a19). However, he then shows that there must also be the underlying thing that moves from one contrary to the other and upon which the contraries act (189a24-27). Ultimately, his own account sets form in opposition to matter, which in one sense is eternally deprived of form and in another sense reaches toward and receives form (192a1-30). For distinct reasons, all four philosophers set up some triadic structure in order to explain motion. In Aristotle and Empedocles, the motion requires a triad because there is something that moves from one pole to the other pole. In Heraclitus, *logos* is put forward as that which maintains a dynamic balance between various oppositions, and this dynamic balance is the motion of the cosmos. In the *Timaeus*, Soul is able to animate the cosmos because it is a mixture that allows it to be involved with bodies (being divisible) but to remain intact (being indivisible). Plotinus' own account includes all these various aspects. In his

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[26] Lee, 1965, 47.

[27] The introduction of the receptacle also involves introducing a third—the other two being the intelligible original and the sensible copy (48e-49a).

account, the motion of the cosmos comes from *logos* continuously imparting form to matter, which continuously receives form by remaining formless. Soul's presence, as divisible and indivisible, preserves an ongoing dynamic balance.

There is a pedagogical technique in using opposites dynamically, which one can contrast to using them statically. A static use of oppositions is seen in the way G.E.R. Lloyd describes Parmenides' presentation of a dilemma. Parmenides "wishes a choice to be made" between unchangeable being and unchangeable non-being, he "*forces an issue*" (Lloyd, 1966, 105).[28] Parmenides puts his readers on the horns of dilemma that demands a decision. This decision is between that which is and must be and that which is not and cannot possibly be.[29] One or the other must be chosen. I am calling this use of opposition—and, by extension, the kind of thinking involved in it—"static" because of the aim that determines it. The goal is to decide between alternatives and *rest in the decision*. A dynamic use of opposites, in contrast, is not determined by the aim of terminating at a decision. Rather, the aim is to keep the opposition alive by means of a third, relational term. This kind of thinking *remains in motion* because the one thinking continuously keeps the poles of the opposition in balance. Dynamic thinking does not accept the principle of excluded middle, while static thinking depends on this principle.

In requiring his readers to think *logos* and matter together through Soul, Plotinus requires his readers to think dynamically. As chapter five of this dissertation shows, this dynamic way of thinking is helpful in understanding how a good cosmos can contain

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[28] The emphasis is Lloyd's.
[29] Lloyd, 1966, 104. Lloyd points out that these are contraries, not contradictories. Both could be false. The contradiction of "it must be" is "it might be," not "it must not be."

suffering and evil as well as how human beings can be both determined and free. The reader's mind, by thinking dynamically, is flexible and able to see how that could be the case. Since, as seen above, opposites in Intellect do not harm each other. That is, the thinking of Intellect keeps opposites together. One's own thinking, then, moves closer to Intellect by thinking dynamically. This kind of thinking allows one to conceive of the cosmos in a dynamic way and to be prepared to think as Intellect does. We have seen, then, an indication of what will be made clear by the end of this dissertation. The kind of thinking involved in Plotinus' discussion of providence has the potential to prepare one to experience the noetic cosmos by thinking as Intellect does. As we have seen, Plotinus does not separate the cosmos that we perceive from the noetic cosmos. In fact, his whole discussion of providence is a way of showing and thinking through their connection. In this chapter, we have begun to see how *logos*, matter, and Soul are crucial to this discussion. Chapter three of this dissertation examines the differences and relationship between them in more detail. In doing so, it establishes a foundation for seeing how Plotinus discusses providence in a way that can lead one to experience the identity of Intellect, thinking, and Being. This experience is necessary for one to fully understand how the noetic cosmos is the source of the corporeal one. Chapter four follows, then, by demonstrating how Plotinus discusses Soul, *logos*, and matter in a way that can lead readers toward an experience of the noetic cosmos.

Chapter Three
Soul, *Logos,* and Matter

The second chapter provided an initial analysis of Plotinus' account of the cosmos through Soul, *logos*, and matter. Understanding his hypothesis about providence requires a more detailed examination of the relationship between Soul, *logos,* and matter than the previous chapter provides. This examination involves addressing the following three points. First, Plotinus discusses the emergence and development of particular bodies in terms of *logos* and matter. Second, Plotinus explains the interaction and ordering of these bodies into a whole through *logos* and matter. Here, Plotinus addresses the main impasse in his discussion of providence: how to account for the development of individuals and the ordering of the whole in a consistent manner. Third, for Plotinus, Soul and *logos* are distinct but nevertheless closely related. This difference and interconnection must be examined, especially in terms of how both have a mediating function. Both Soul and *logos* are involved in the projection of Being and Intellect onto matter.

3.1 Matter, *Logos,* and Particular Bodies

To examine in more detail how Plotinus accounts for the cosmos through Soul, *logos*, and matter, we must first articulate how *logos* and matter both contribute to the production of bodies. *Logos* imparts form to matter, and matter receives form but always remains formless. The ongoing formation of both animate and inanimate bodies is the result. *Logos* contains particular *logoi* that appropriate matter and are an inner source of

development and motion for animated bodies.[1] Although Plotinus does not accept the

materialism of the Stoics, his discussion of *logoi* resembles their use of *logoi spermatikoi*.

For both, these *logoi* are the source of the generation and movement of bodies.[2] Closer to

Aristotle, however, Plotinus sees these *logoi* not as corporeal but as unmoved movers.[3]

For Plotinus, these *logoi* are a living body's abilities to maintain and to develop

themselves. This striving must be continuous because matter remains formless. This

dynamic between form and formlessness is what generates animate bodies. The forms

belonging to inanimate bodies also come from *logos*, since matter does not contribute any

formative aspect. *Logos* imparts the arrangements of qualities and quantities in the

formation of these bodies. In the case of inanimate bodies, then, the dynamic between

logos and matter is the condition for their emergence.

Passages relevant to the discussion of how *logos* and matter share in the production of

bodily beings (4, 17-18) appear within the context of Plotinus showing that suffering,

death, and destruction do not invalidate a theory of providence. For instance, there are

animate bodies that attack and destroy each other by necessity and that do not come to be

to last forever (4, 13-16).[4]

> But [each living being] was coming to be because the *logos* was grasping all matter
> and was having in itself every one of those beings There in the higher heaven. For
> where could each come from if not those beings There? (Ἐγίνετο δὲ, ὅτι λόγος πᾶσαν

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[1] See III.3[48].1, 1-11 and Gelpi, 1960 for a discussion about the Universal Logos and its connection to and cooperation with particular *logoi* as well as the unity of soul and *logos*. The third section examines these issues in detail.

[2] Wallis, 1972, 68-69; Aetius I.7.33 = SVF 2.1027, part (Long and Sedley, 1987, 274-75); Long and Sedley, 1987, 277; Wagner, 1996, 156; White, 2003, 137.

[3] Corrigan, 1996, 110-11.

[4] Armstrong, 1967, 55.

ὕλην κατελάμβανε καὶ εἶχεν ἐν αὑτῷ πάντα ὄντων αὐτῶν ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ ἄνω οὐρανῷ· πόθεν γὰρ ἂν ἦλθε μὴ ὄντων ἐκεῖ; III.2.4, 18-20).[5]

Just before this quote, Plotinus describes the motion of life here as the "respiration" (ἀναπνοήν, 4, 16) of what is "still" (ἠρεμούσης, 4, 16), as the "breathing and stirring" (ἐμπνέουσαν καὶ οὐκ ἀτρεμοῦσαν, 4, 15-16) form of the motionless life There.[6] The motions and alterations of living bodies are oriented around what is immutable. Their alterations occur for the sake of keeping their form, which remains inalterable within them. Each living body is a moving, changing expression of this form. Plotinus uses the notions of both matter and *logos* to depict how that is possible. *Logos* contains within itself all the beings that are in the "higher heaven" (τῷ ἄνω οὐρανῷ, 4, 20),[7] and imparts the content of Being and Intellect to matter. This imparting happens through *logos* grasping (κατελάμβανε, 4, 19) all matter. All the various beings in *logos* bring matter into their grasp and so into their ability to give form.

While Plotinus says that *logos* takes hold of all matter (πᾶσαν ὕλην, 4, 19), he does not imply that this grasping of matter is static or ever finished. He continues by saying that disorder (ἀταξία, 4, 27) and lawlessness (ἀνομία, 4, 28) come about because order (τάξις, 4, 29) is imported (ἐπακτόν 4, 29) to matter. Transgression (παρανομία, 4, 31) is possible on account of *logos* bringing form to bear on matter (4, 27-31).[8] By itself, matter

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[5] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own in this chapter.

[6] Armstrong, 1967, 55.

[7] "Higher" should be understood in an ontological sense, not a spatial one. Being and Intellect are not spatially above this cosmos. What exactly Plotinus intends in speaking of Being and Intellect as τῷ ἄνω οὐρανῷ is worth investigating, especially in terms of the pedagogical implications. That is, what is the manner or way that someone must take in heading toward Being and Intellect? Is the movement toward what is transcendent an outward or inward movement? Chapters four, five, and six of this dissertation begins this examination but does not exhaust it.

[8] Armstrong, 1967, 57.

is only indeterminate, not disordered. Order and laws involve the establishment of limits and determinations. Form and limitation are imparted to matter from *logos* as an outside source. Matter, as fundamentally indeterminate and formless implies that there can be no final, definitive determination. Some indeterminacy always remains outside the reach of formation. The imparting of form to matter, then, must be continuous. Since each bodily being possesses some ability to for form and develop, since matter always remains formless, bodies must continuously endeavor to maintain their form. Only through moving and changing can they remain what they are.

Plotinus' account of the interaction among inanimate bodies like the destruction of fire by water and of something else by fire also depends on both *logos* and matter (4, 1-7). [9] Since matter lacks any formative aspects, including size, shape, and any other quality, these must come from *logos* (II.4.8, 19-26). Since the arrangement of these qualities and quantities into inanimate bodies is a formative aspect, it must also come from *logos*. [10] Since this arrangement includes extension and magnitude, each arrangement of sensible qualities precludes and could compete with an arrangement of opposite qualities (Kalligas, 2011, 766-67). If one arrangement is larger or stronger, it will destroy the body constituted by opposite qualities. Still, since *logos* is inexhaustible in its ability to give form, there can always be another set and arrangement of qualities and quantities to replace the destroyed body. Matter is a necessary condition for this interaction and for the inexhaustible possibilities of different sensible objects. It serves as the substrate for any arrangement of them, since it does not have any quality or quantity

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[9] Armstrong, 1967, 55.
[10] See Kalligas 1997 and 2011. These articles are discussed in the third section of this chapter.

of its own. It must underlie and receive the projection of form but remains completely

formless throughout all these projections. If it did not remain formless, it would not

receive any and all form. It receives form but is never actually formed. As the

fundamentally indeterminate and indeterminable receptacle, matter is the counterpart to

the inexhaustibility of the forms in *logos*.

Because a living thing is also a body, it depends on *logos* for the qualities and

quantities necessary to the life of that body.

> And, moreover, let the *logos* be said to have even the *logos* of the matter in it, the
> matter it works on for itself, qualifying it as its own matter or finding it already
> agreeable. For the *logos* of an ox is for no other matter than that of an ox (Καὶ ὁ
> λόγος δὲ λεγέσθω ἔχειν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὖ ἐν αὐτῷ τῆς ὕλης, ἥν αὐτῷ ἐργάσεται
> ποιώσας καθ᾽ αὐτὸν τὴν ὕλην ἤ σύμφωνον εὑρών. Οὐ γὰρ ὁ τοῦ βοὸς λόγος ἐπ᾽
> ἄλλης ἤ βοὸς ὕλης, III.3.4, 38-41).

The *logoi* of animated bodies cannot operate with any matter whatsoever. Animate bodies

contain specific capacities that require matter to be determined in a way that is receptive

to them. Since matter itself is without qualities or quantities and is completely

indeterminate, the *logoi* of these living things must contain that which determines matter.

All the bodily determinations that are appropriate for the movements and activity of these

animated bodies are contained in the *logoi* of these beings.

Animate and inanimate bodies alike, in their ongoing formation, are neither *logos*

alone nor matter alone but require both. The continual grasping of matter by a form

produces this ongoing formation. Since *logos* ceaselessly imparts form and matter

remains forever formless, the dynamic between the two is always ongoing. Even celestial

beings, since they are bodies, have a form that is involved with matter. As discussed in

the second chapter of this dissertation, they persist through an ongoing formation, since

the fire constituting them constantly churns within. They move in an endless circle because their fiery nature requires motion but lack the space to proceed in a straight line, so they move in a circle in the upper regions of the cosmos (II.2[14].1, 19-27). By means of *logos* and matter, then, Plotinus depicts the basic conditions for each and every body to move and to act.

3.2   Matter, *Logos*, and the Whole

Each and every body must be part of an ordered whole for there to be a cosmos. *Logos* maintains this complex whole through the various interactions of both animate and inanimate bodies. However, this unity is not an imposition of order in the way that an artisan imposes a unity onto various, separate pieces of material. Through the kind of cause that *logos* is, Plotinus shows the compatibility of affirming individual becoming and an orderly whole. *Logos* contains a variety of unequal forms, each of which is included in its internal structure. The result of this structure's appropriation of matter explains how divisions and conflicts happen but also how unity is maintained. The whole does not subsume the integrity of each part, and each part fits within the whole *as it is*.[11] The main impasse about providence is addressed here: how can one account for individual becoming and cosmic providence in a consistent way?

Regarding the internal structure of *logos*, it "has an intellectual intricacy" (ποικιλίαν νοερὰν ἔχοντι, 11, 9) with "dissimilar parts, being this [way] out of what precedes it" (ἀνόμοιος τοῖς μέρεσιν, ἐκ τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ὤν, 12, 3-4). *Logos*, as from Intellect,

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[11] See III.2.11, 1-7; III.3.3, 1-4.

contains parts that are distinct from one another. It is not a homogenous unity but a

variegated multiform unity. In containing these abundant differences, it must contain

opposites.[12]

> For, indeed, if it [*logos*] was not many, it would not be all nor [a] *logos*. But being [a]
> *logos* it is at variance with itself and the greatest variance is opposition: so that if it
> [were making] something wholly other, it would make something other [than itself],
> and maximally other, not less other: so that making extremely other, it will make
> opposites out of necessity and it [the *logos*] will be complete, not only if they [what it
> makes] are variants, but also if it were making opposites in order to be itself (Καὶ γὰρ
> εἰ μὴ πολὺς ἦν, οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἦν πᾶς, οὐδ᾽ ἂν λόγος· λόγος δὲ ὢν διάφορός τε πρὸς αὐτόν
> ἐστι καὶ ἡ μάλιστα διαφορὰ ἐναντιώσίς ἐστιν· ὥστε εἰ ἕτερον ὅλως, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον
> ποιεῖ, καὶ μάλιστα ἕτερον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ἧττον ἕτερον ποιήσει· ὥστε ἄκρως ἕτερον ποιῶν
> καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ποιήσει ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ τέλεος ἔσται, οὐκ εἰ διάφορα μόνον, ἀλλ᾽ εἰ καὶ
> ἐναντία ποιοῖ εἶναι ἑαυτόν, III.2.16, 52-59).

The focus in the passage above is on showing that what we consider bad has a place in

the overall order of the cosmos.[13] IV.4.36 contains a similar discussion about the rich

diversity in the All. The focus there is on showing that life extends even to what we

would consider lifeless. Interestingly, in both cases Plotinus argues that those with proper

training do not commit such errors.[14] In both cases, those with proper training can argue

for the independence of the parts in the cosmos and for their place in the whole.[15]

The context of the passage quoted above is Plotinus discussing how *logos*

interweaves all bodies into a single cosmos. In this way, he is addressing an impasse

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[12] See III.3.1, 1-8, which is discussed in section three, for the distinction between the whole *logos* and particular *logoi*. See also, Armstrong, 1940, 103; Wallis, 1972, 69.

[13] In IV.4.38 Plotinus argues that even being harmed by a planet's influence, not because the planet intended harm but because the receiver was unable to receive the good effect, is part of the cosmos being an interwoven whole that harmoniously consists of opposites.

[14] In the first case, the error is that life does not extend to everything; in the second case, it is that what we consider bad should not exist, especially in a providential cosmos. The fifth chapter of this dissertation focuses on Plotinus arguing that those without proper training are the ones who evaluate the cosmos negatively.

[15] See Gurtler, 2015, 163-67.

about how one can affirm the cosmos is well ordered when there is ceaseless conflict among animals and war between human beings. The possibility of these contentions comes from the kind of unity within *logos.* The impasse, then, is that *logos* and not matter is the source of these endless struggles (15, 1-13). The above passage provides a partial resolution to that impasse.[16] To be what it is, *logos* must contain variations within itself. As the *logos* of *everything*, it must contain the greatest possible variation. Since opposition is the greatest possible variation, then it must contain opposites.

In this argument, Plotinus distinguishes between "wholly other" (ἕτερον ὅλως, 16, 54-55) and "extremely other" (ἄκρως ἕτερον, 16, 56), the latter of which includes opposition (ἐναντιώσίς, 16, 54-55) as the greatest variance (ἡ μάλιστα διαφορά, 16, 55). If *logos* made something wholly other, then it would make something that is unrelated and external to itself.[17] Instead, it is at variance with itself in the highest degree, which is opposition. This opposition, however, remains within *logos*, since being unrelated and external belongs to being "wholly other." The opposites, then, that *logos* makes are in relation to each other as parts of *logos.* They are even integral to *logos* being complete. Plotinus' point, in short, is twofold: opposition is not the same as mutual exclusion, and opposition is crucial to *logos* being complete.

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[16] The issue of human beings harming and warring with each other is discussed in chapter five of this dissertation. The current discussion focuses on the more general issue of an ordering that depends on a multiform, diverse unity.

[17] In IV.5[29].8, Plotinus makes a similar point in defending cosmic sympathy as the condition for perception. He imagines an interlocutor positing that likeness, not sympathy, is the condition for perception. If there were a body outside this cosmos we inhabit, then under the interlocutor's hypothesis it would be possible to perceive it. However, soul is what makes something like. Since this other universe would have a "totally other soul" (ψυχὴ πάντη ἑτέρα, 8, 29-30), then whatever is in that universe could not be like whatever is in this universe. So, there would be no perception. The hypothesis that likeness is the condition for perception ends up contradicting itself.

Logos does not just contain opposites but produces opposite bodies from its content. The abundant variety in this cosmos would not be possible without *logos* producing bodies that are opposite to each other. Still, there would not be bodies without matter.

> The sensible cosmos is less one than its *logos*, since [it is] more multiple and [there is] more opposition, and the urge for life in each individual is greater, and its desire for unity is greater. But often those that desire also destroy whatever is desired, because it might be perishable, in eagerly striving toward their own good, and the longing of the part toward the whole draws what it can to itself (ἧττον ἕν ὁ κόσμος ὁ αἰσθητὸς ἤ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ, ὥστε καὶ πολὺς μᾶλλον καὶ ἡ ἐναντιότης μᾶλλον καὶ ἡ τοῦ ζῆν ἔφεσις μᾶλλον ἑκάστῳ καὶ ὁ ἔρως τοῦ εἰς ἕν μᾶλλον. Φθείρει δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐρῶντα τὰ ἐρώμενα πολλάκις εἰς τὸ αὐτῶν ἀγαθὸν σπεύδοντα, ὅταν φθαρτὰ ᾖ, καὶ ἡ ἔφεσις δὲ τοῦ μέρους πρὸς τὸ ὅλον ἕλκει εἰς αὐτὸ ὅ δύναται, III.2.17, 1-9).

Because of matter, the multiplicity and opposition of the sensible cosmos is greater than that of its *logos*. Opposite and different forms that subsist together in *logos* cannot do so once they appropriate matter. The bodies struggle to maintain their form and contend with other bodies in the endeavor to determine matter. Opposites and animate bodies with opposing life forms are not primarily seeking to destroy each other. Rather, each strives after its own unity. This endeavor often leads to destroying or harming other bodies. Even inanimate bodies, in acting towards maintaining themselves, exhaust the very things that sustain them: for instance, a flame destroying wood or wax. Each part of the cosmos "longs for the whole," meaning that it aims at being like the whole.[18] Each body strives to include and incorporate as much as it can.

Nevertheless, through *logos*, these various oppositions and differences remain unified. To depict this unity, Plotinus uses the image of someone pantomiming (ὀρχουμένου) with opposite movements coming from the same art (17, 10-11). The

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[18] See III.3.7, 17-20.

pantomime depicts a variety of characters. They each have different and even opposing motives or actions. She keeps them united them in a single dance. This unity derives from the one art, which contains the directions for these different and opposite motions within itself. The orderly movements of the dancer's body are not separate from the art determining them. Unlike the dancer, however, the cosmos does not need to rehearse or form a plan. Its *logos* contains different and opposite forms within itself, which immediately determine bodies to move, act, and live in certain ways. These forms are not separate from the bodies but are internal to them. The unity among the bodies is such that the particular forms for each body are within a vast collection of them. They are all part of the same *logos* through which the cosmos is a pantomime of Being and Intellect. Each body contributes to the motions that constitute this cosmic imitation in its own way, and all bodies are included in it.

Plotinus also uses the image of a painting, a city, and a play to depict this inclusion. In a painting, all the colors might not be beautiful on their own but if arranged properly, the whole is beautiful; in cities, not everyone has the same rights, but the functioning of the whole depends on the action of everyone; in a play, all the characters are necessary, the good and the bad, the noble and the lowly, the better and the worse (11, 9-17). Each example provides a sense of how a whole requires a diversity of parts, each of which must be included as the part it is to complete the whole. The kind of unity, then, associated with *logos* is not an ordering imposed externally upon different individuals. Since *logos* contains a variety of different forms, these are the determinations for the various bodies. The bodies in the cosmos are unified through this common source.

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Individual bodies are not subsumed into a cosmic whole in a way that undermines their

integrity. They contribute to this cosmos as the beings they are, even if that implies the

possibility of conflict. In fact, the kind of unity belonging to this cosmos entails conflict.

To illustrate this sort of unity, Plotinus uses the pedagogical technique of shifting

from one image to another. With this technique, he starts with one image and then

corrects it with the use of another, more appropriate image. This technique is different

from the one discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, which was the use of

two images to correct and support each other. Here, the *transition* from one image to

another, more appropriate one conveys the message. Like the technique discussed in

chapter two, this one is also part of his general philosophical method. It is pedagogic,

however, since Plotinus leaves readers the work of thinking through the implications of

the transition from one image to another.

> And yet, in fact, the drama leads the conflicting characters into a kind of single concord, producing consonance in the sense of producing the whole narrative out of conflicting characters. But there [in the cosmos], the conflict of divisions is from a single *logos*: and so something harmonious from conflicts would represent it more, and then one will inquire into why the conflicts are in the *logos*. If in fact here the [harmonic] ratios produce both the high and low notes and bring [the notes] together into one, being harmonic ratios in the musical scale itself, another greater ratio, they [the harmonic ratios] being lesser ratios and parts, then we might discern the opposites even in the All (Τὸ μὲν οὖν δρᾶμα τὰ μεμαχημένα οἷον εἰς μίαν ἁρμονίαν ἄγει σύμφωνον οἷον διήγησιν τὴν πᾶσαν τῶν μαχομένων ποιούμενος· ἐκεῖ δὲ ἐξ ἑνὸς λόγου ἡ τῶν διαστατῶν μάχη· ὥστε μᾶλλον ἄν τις τῇ ἁρμονίᾳ τῇ ἐκ μαχομένων εἰκάσειε, καὶ ζητήσει διὰ τί τὰ μαχόμενα ἐν τοῖς λόγοις. Εἰ οὖν καὶ ἐνταῦθα ὀξὺ καὶ βαρὺ ποιοῦσι λόγοι καὶ συνίασιν εἰς ἕν, ὄντες ἁρμονίας λόγοι, εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν ἁρμονίαν, ἄλλον λόγον μείζονα, ὄντες ἐλάττους αὐτοὶ καὶ μέρη, ὁρῶμεν δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ παντὶ τὰ ἐναντία, III.2.16, 37-45).

Plotinus first compares the unity among conflicting parts to the plot of a play. However,

through the course of a play, the conflict is resolved. A series of actions and events

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leading to a conclusion that resolves a conflict is an inappropriate representation. The conflicts in this cosmos arise from and remain concordant within the same source. The conflict among bodies is integral to the unity of the cosmos. Another image is needed that represents this dynamic, so Plotinus shifts to a musical image. A harmonic ratio produces opposite notes, the higher and lower, while a musical scale is a greater ratio containing various harmonic ratios. In contrast to the course of a play leading to a final resolution, a musical scale includes a variety of opposite notes as well as their concordance from the beginning. While a play resolves conflicts at the end, a musical scale contains the divergent sounds and preserves them in a harmonious way.

The kind of unity in this cosmos, then, is not one that gradually brings conflicting bodies into concordance. Rather, conflict is integral to the kind of unity there is in the cosmos for the following reason. These bodies emerge from *logos* appropriating matter. The forms that constitute the internal structure of *logos* determine the development of bodies, which are inseparable from these forms. The complete unity of *logos* requires opposite forms. In grasping matter, these forms produce bodies that differ and differ in the greatest degree. These bodies, in striving to keep themselves together enter into conflicts. Since these conflicts depend on diversity, which itself contributes to the completion of the cosmos, these conflicts are integral to the unity among these bodies. Their unity is not an emergent property but is continuously preserved through the ongoing grasping of matter by opposite forms. In short, their unity is produced because they are from the same source, which itself contains the greatest possible variety. The cosmos, as *the All*, is complete only by containing such diversity.

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Part of this unity in multiplicity involves division into distinct and dissimilar places proper to each kind of body. Plotinus uses the image of a pan-pipe to illustrate this notion (17, 71-86). The notes of a pan-pipe are located in particular places on the instrument. These places are proper to their own sound and contribute to an overall consonance. *Logos*, too, does not force beings into particular places in the cosmos.

> But one must assert the souls to be like parts of it and that it is not making them worse in order to insert them, but it belongs to them to assume a position according to worth (Ἀλλὰ φατέον καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς οἷον μέρη αὐτοῦ εἶναι καὶ μὴ χείρους ποιοῦντα ἐναρμόττειν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπου προσῆκον αὐταῖς καταχωρίζειν κατ᾽ ἀξιάν, III.2.12, 10-13).

Certain bodies inhabit places that are suitable to the kind of life or kind of existence belonging to them. *Logos*, then, in making bodies also makes places for these bodies. Souls are not forced into bodies or places that make them worse but assume bodies and places in the cosmos suitable to their capacities. Souls that can retain an everlasting, fiery body are fitted with celestial beings, while souls capable of growth and perception are fitted with earthly bodies. *Logos* contains all these various capacities. It contains the whole spectrum within itself and makes places proper to each kind of soul. Each kind of place and each kind of body contributes to the overall order of the cosmos.

Plotinus' topography of the cosmos includes distinctions of rank, as seen in the phrase "according to worth" (κατ᾽ ἀξιάν, 12, 13).[19] There are better and worse places along with better and worse animate bodies inhabiting those places. His account of the cosmos does not just see its order according to distinct places but distinct ranks. This ranking in no way implies that what is worse should not exist or that the cosmos should not include it.[20]

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[19] See also, III.2.8,1-12; III.2.17, 75-83; III.3.5, 1-8; III.5.7, 1-3.
[20] III.2.3, 1-2; III.2.17, 83-91; III.3.3, 21-25; III.3.4, 9-11; III.7.5-9.

Still, there is a question about the standard by which Plotinus forms this ranking of better and worse. The fifth chapter of this dissertation discusses this question in detail. What is important for now, however, is that the coherence of the cosmos includes distinct places and that *logos* forms it that way according to its internal structure. Because Plotinus says that souls are like parts of *logos*, we must now examine how they relate to this internal structure. This examination includes a presentation of the general relationship between Soul and *logos*.

3.3 Intellect, Soul, and *Logos*

In Plotinus' account of the cosmos, Soul and *logos* are intimately related. Both, as connected to Being and Intellect, are involved in imparting form to matter.[21] However, the exact demarcation and relationship between them is not easy to determine. For instance, in *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe*, Armstrong argues that in *On Providence* there appears to be a "modification" of Plotinus' usual way of giving an account, claiming that "Logos is a fourth hypostasis" (102). He argues that "Logos takes the place of Soul as intermediary between Νοῦς and the visible world" and that "Soul has withdrawn entirely to the higher world" (102, 105). He calls Logos a "representative of Νοῦς" and "the instrument by which the order of the Ideal world of Νοῦς is realized in the things of sense" (103, 107-8). Whereas Soul usually serves the purpose of explaining how the contents of Intellect become conveyed into the activity and motion of bodies, *logos* takes on that role in *On Providence*.

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[21] For instance, IV.3.[27].5, 9-19; IV.3.10, 10-14; IV.3.10, 38-43; IV.11, 14-22. See also, Armstrong, 1940, 98-108; Rist, 1967, 84-102; Wallis, 1972, 67-70; Blumenthal, 1996, 96-97 Rangos, 1999; Kalligas, 1997 and 2011; Gurtler, 2001, 99-124.

Rist, however, in *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, disagrees with Armstrong. He examines other works from Plotinus and sees similar relationships among Intellect, Soul, *logos*, and the cosmos in these and in *On Providence* (94-95). For Rist, Plotinus uses *logos* "as some aspect of the Soul seen in terms not of its immediate derivation from Νοῦς but of its connection with the material world . . . *logos* tends to be used to refer to the soul especially when it is a matter of conveying the εἴδη of Νοῦς into material objects" (95). He agrees with Armstrong that *logos* represents Νοῦς in the cosmos (96). However, he does not think *logos* replaces Soul in Plotinus' account of the cosmos in *On Providence*. Rist associates *logos* with what he calls "the lower phase" of Soul (97), which is Soul insofar as it relates to the corporeal. This "lower phase" is in contrast to the "higher phase" or "undescended part," which remains absorbed in contemplating Νοῦς (95).[22] *Logos* is the aspect of Soul in its production and ordering of the corporeal cosmos (96). It is not a separate hypostasis distinct from Soul (98-99).[23]

If we agree that *logos* is an aspect of Soul, there is still a question. How are souls like parts of *logos*? Is *logos* an aspect of the Soul that is one of the three primary foundations of reality—the Hypostasis-Soul—or of the so called "World-Soul"?[24] To answer these

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[22] See IV.3.4 for a discussion as to why Plotinus posits some Soul as not the soul of any body and as that in which all souls—including the World-Soul—reside as one.

[23] See Armstrong, 1967, 252 where he asserts the *logos* should not be seen as a fourth hypostasis. I bring up his claim from *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe* in order to indicate that discerning the differences between Soul and *logos* requires examination.

[24] See Schubert, 1968, 52-53, Wallis, 1972, 67-68, Rangos, 1999, 31-33, and Gurtler, 2001, 102 as examples for *logos* as a flexible concept that expresses mediation between One and Intellect, Intellect and Soul, and Soul and corporeality; It is Plotinus' way of articulating how a higher level of reality is represented on a lower level. Cf. Rist, 1967, 84-85 for the denial of *logos* as applying to Intellect's relation to One. Rist also designates *logos* "as the power of Soul concerned with the visible world" (97). At least in the context of *On Providence*, Plotinus' focus is on the way in which *logos* helps him depict how this cosmos is a manifestation of Being and Intellect in a corporeal manner. This current discussion, then, is

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questions, a detailed examination of some key passages from *On Providence* is required.

In particular, one must examine the relationship between Intellect, Soul, and *logos* along

with the relationship between Soul, *logos*, and the cosmos.

3.3.1   Soul, Intellect, and logos

In attempting to define *logos*, Plotinus distinguishes it from Soul and Intellect but also

depicts it as generated from both. In examining how Plotinus depicts this genealogy, we

can understand *logos'* relation to Soul and Intellect.

> Well then, the *logos* is this—yes, take heart! Perhaps we might even succeed—it is,
> accordingly, not unmixed Intellect nor Intellect itself nor Soul, at least not the pure
> kind, but fastened to that Soul and like a radiance beaming out of both, Intellect and
> Soul, and so Soul inclining toward Intellect begat the *logos*, this life silently
> possessing a rationality. But every life is activity, even the lowliest: but activity not in
> the way fire acts, but its activity, even if no perception is present, is movement not
> without some purpose. By these [movement and activity], at least, even if no
> perception is present and by sharing in any life whatsoever, it is directly enreasoned,
> but this means being shaped, for the power of activity according to life is a shaping,
> and moving in this way is a shaping (Ἔστι τοίνυν οὗτος ὁ λόγος—τετολμήσθω γάρ·
> τάχα δ' ἂν καὶ τύχοιμεν—ἔστι τοίνυν οὗτος οὐκ ἄκρατος νοῦς οὐδ' αὐτονοῦς οὐδέ γε
> ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς τὸ γένος, ἠρτημένος δὲ ἐκείνης καὶ οἷον ἔκλαμψις ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, νοῦ καὶ
> ψυχῆς καὶ ψυχῆς κατὰ νοῦν διακειμένης γεννησάντων τὸν λόγον τοῦτον ζωὴν λόγον
> τινὰ ἡσυχῇ ἔχουσαν. Πᾶσα δὲ ζωὴ ἐνέργεια, καὶ ἡ φαύλη· ἐνεργεια δὲ οὐχ ὡς τὸ πῦρ
> ἐνεργεῖ, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτῆς, κἂν μὴ αἴσθησίς τις παρῇ, κίνησίς τις οὐκ εἰκῇ. Οἷς
> γοῦν ἐὰν μὴ παρῇ καὶ μετάσχῃ ὁπωσοῦν ὁτιοῦν, εὐθὺς λελόγωται, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστι
> μεμόρφωται, ὡς τῆς ἐνεργείας τῆς κατὰ τὴν ζωὴν μορφοῦν δυναμένης καὶ κινούσης
> οὕτως ὡς μορφοῦν, III.2.16, 12-23).

Logos is neither Intellect nor Soul but depends on the latter and originates from both. In

particular, Soul inclining (διακειμένης, 16, 18) toward Intellect generates the *logos* of the

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limited to examining the concept of *logos* in relation to the production of bodily life and existence. Thus, it
is by no means exhaustive.

cosmos. That is, Soul contemplates Intellect and focuses its sight on the beings in

Intellect. Soul does not keep the content of this vision to itself but generates *logos* as a

byproduct. [25] As from Soul and Intellect, *logos* has traits of both. From Intellect, it

possesses reason. Reason, here, is not a faculty for making inferences, forming

abstractions, connecting and distinguishing concepts, or comparing and contrasting. The

reason *logos* possesses is silent and is the holding of a multiplicity together as one. The

content of *logos* is not inert. From Soul, *logos* has the trait of life: in particular, life as an

activity in which movements are not without purpose.

However, as Plotinus suggests, this purposive motion is not a movement toward some

goal or external end. Rather, this motion is the shaping inherent in living bodies. This

shaping motion cannot just be their growing into and maintaining a definite extension and

magnitude. The example of the dance, which Plotinus reintroduces after the passage

quoted above, makes this point clear (16, 23-27). The dancer is moved by his art and

enacts the formations directed by the art. His body *is* this shaping motion, and is

inseparable from the directives contained in the art for these motions. The dancer's

movements are the gradual development of a character or characters with definite

features and attributes, with a definite mode of life. The shaping motions of bodies, then,

are the gradual development of particular attributes and features constitutive of living

bodies. These motions contribute to the total mode of life belonging to these bodies.

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[25] This genealogy of *logos* is another example of Plotinus' theory of two acts (see note eight in chapter two of this dissertation). For the notion of contemplation as productive, see Rist, 1967, 67-71; Wallis, 1972, 62; Gatti, 1996, 31-34; Emilsson, 1996, 223-225. There is overlap between the productivity of contemplation and the theory of two acts. See *Tim*. 29d-e and the simile of the sun from *Rep*. VI.506d-511e as possible sources for this theory.

Bodies and their motions, however, are more intimately bound to that which imparts such motion than the dancer is to his art. The art contains the various directives determining the dancer's motions. *Logos* contains the forms from which the living motions of bodies take shape. In contrast to the dancer and his art, these living bodies do not need to think through or rehearse the content of *logos*. It is immanent within them and immediately supplies them with the life forms that their movements and actions are oriented around. From its connection with Intellect, *logos* is replete with these forms. From Soul, it is the imparting of them to bodies as the source of their living motion.[26]

3.3.2   Soul, logos, and the cosmos

This genealogy implies that *logos* depends on Soul: in particular, as will be seen momentarily, on the All-Soul, which is the Soul of the cosmos. How, in that case, can particular souls be said to be like parts of *logos*? A passage about the relationship between the All-Soul, the whole *logos* (ὁ πᾶς λόγος, III 3[48]1 3), and the cosmos helps to answer this question. The context of this passage is the following: to make souls, not the *logos* of the whole cosmos, responsible for what is bad deprives this *logos* of what is good as well.

> Now, the whole *logos* encompasses both the bad and the good, these also being parts of it: not, in fact, that the whole *logos* produces these, but the whole is [what it is] with them. For the *logoi* are an activity of a certain All-Soul, their parts of its parts, and the *logoi* have different parts proportionately to the one soul having different parts, so that even the ultimate works are different, being the products. But as souls are consonant so are the works consonant with one another: but they are consonant in this way, as unity coming from them, even if from opposites. For all that set out from unity are coming into unity together by a necessity of nature (Ἤ καὶ τὰ πονηρὰ καὶ τὰ

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[26] As will be discussed below, *logos* is not the agent that imparts but is the *imparting activity of* Soul.

χρηστὰ λόγος περιείληφεν ὁ πᾶς, οὗ μέρη καὶ ταῦτα· οὐ γὰρ ὁ πᾶς λόγος γεννᾷ ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὁ πᾶς ἐστι μετὰ τούτων. Ψυχῆς γάρ τινος πάσης ἐνέργεια οἱ λόγοι, τῶν δὲ μερῶν τὰ μέρη· μιᾶς δὲ διάφορα ἐχούσης μέρη ἀνὰ λόγον καὶ οἱ λόγοι, ὥστε καὶ τὰ ἔργα ἔσχατα ὄντα γεννήματα. Σύμφωνοι δὲ αἵ τε ψυχαὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλας τά τε ἔργα· σύμφωνα δὲ οὕτως, ὡς ἕν ἐξ αὐτῶν, καὶ εἰ ἐξ ἐναντίων. Ἐκ γὰρ ἑνός τινος ὁρμηθέντα πάντα εἰς ἕν συνέρχεται φύσεως ἀνάγκῃ, III.3.1, 1-11).

The reasoning in this passage in conjunction with notions already discussed indicate a way to resolve the difficulty mentioned above: how can *logos* depend on the All-Soul *and* how can particular souls be like parts of *logos*? The resolution of that problem can be distinguished into four points: 1) The whole *logos* contains *logoi* as parts that are determinations for the development of bodies; 2) These *logoi* are the activity of the All-Soul and, with the whole *logos*, establish the relationship between the whole cosmos and its parts; 3) Individual souls are not like parts of this *logos* as its content, but their activities are *logoi* and so parts of this whole *logos*; 4) Bodies are the ultimate products of these *logoi* and are unified by being connected to the same source.

First, Plotinus reiterates that the *logos* of the All is whole by containing and including the richest variety possible. Both the bad (τὰ πονηρά, 1, 2) and the good (τὰ χρηστά, 1, 2), the better and the worse, and all sorts of opposites must be included. This *logos*, however, does not produce or generate (γεννᾷ, 1, 3) these but is only the whole by including them. This *logos* is all-encompassing of what already is and does not produce its content. Its content are *logoi*, which are forms that determine the shaping motion belonging to bodies.

Second, these *logoi* are an activity of the All-Soul, and their parts are activities of its parts.[27] For this point and the third one, Plotinus' discussion of the All-Soul in IV.3 helps elucidate the relationship between the All-Soul, particular souls, and *logoi*. The All-Soul does not just keep what it sees of Being and Intellect to itself but imparts the content of its vision to matter. The whole *logos* and these *logoi* are the ways in which this All-Soul presses out toward matter. The All-Soul continuously expresses the content of its contemplative vision in corporeal form, while it itself remains focused on Being and Intellect.[28] These various *logoi* are this Soul's expressions, which are the determinations for the development of and interactions among bodies.

As Kalligas puts it, "[a]s the pattern employed by the soul in its effort to bring order on the chaotic indefiniteness of matter, the *logos* is the ultimate tool in making a cosmos out of a bewildering amassment of fluctuating non-entities" (Kalligas, 2011, 779). Although the representation of *logos* as a "tool" this All-Soul uses is inappropriate, the sense that *logos* is this Soul's endeavor to form matter into a cosmos is accurate. Soul does not use *logos* as a piece of equipment. Plotinus says these *logoi* are its activity (ἐνέργεια, 1, 5). *Logos*, then, is this Soul's ordering *activity*, not the agent or an instrument.

The organizing of various bodies into a cosmos is possible because particular *logoi* are already part of the one *logos*, which is an activity of the All-Soul.[29] This structure establishes the relationship between parts of the cosmos and the whole. The third and

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[27] Plotinus uses the singular (ἐνέργεια) to emphasize that unity of multiple *logoi* in relation to the one All-Soul.

[28] IV.3.6, 20-24, paraphrase based on Dillon and Blumenthal translation, 2015, 64; See also, IV.3.4, 22-24

[29] See also, Rangos, 1999, 13; Kalligas, 2011, 776-77; Gurtler, 2015, 18-19.

fourth points, which are discussed below, show how the relationship between part and whole is neither static nor unilateral. The images of *logos* that Plotinus uses (like the dancer, the combination of the seed and the harmony, and the transition from drama to music) already illustrate this dynamic. The dancer may move different parts of his one body according to the directions of the one art, but each movement of each limb contributes its own aspect to the whole. The seed with the harmony depicts the cosmos as a unified organism consisting of independent parts. A drama depicts a conclusive resolution of conflicting parts, while music depicts a single scale that preserves the individual divergent sounds in a harmonious way. In its own way, each image depicts the actions and interactions among the parts as contributing to the ongoing production of the whole just as much as the whole is the unification of their interactions. This dynamic follows from the way in which *logos* is a source: it is a whole that does not produce its parts but is "the whole with them" (ὁ πᾶς ἐστι μετὰ τούτων, 1, 4). It is whole by including these parts as they are.

Third, in that case, the whole *logos* does not contain particular souls as part of its content. Since the *logos* consists of *logoi* that are the activity of the All-Soul, saying that particular souls are constitutive parts or elements contained in *logos* would imply that particular souls are parts of this All-Soul. Plotinus rejects this possibility, since it would imply that individual souls are mere functions of the All-Soul (IV.3.3).[30] Instead, individual souls and the All-Soul belong to the one Soul that is not the soul of any body

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[30] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 187.

(4, 14-22).[31] The soul of each body retains an independent integrity and individuality apart from the All-Soul. Still, since no body is separate from the cosmos, these souls and their activities must be included within the cosmos. Souls are like parts of *logos* in some way, and a *logos* is what a soul gives to its body (10, 39).[32] This *logos* is an image (εἴδωλον) of the soul's own interior life (10, 39-40).[33] Their descent out (καθόδος) to bodies and their ascent inward (ἀνόδοις) are accomplished under one *logos* (ὑφ' ἕνα λόγον), and they concordantly conjoin themselves to the All (12, 14-22).[34] Particular souls, then, fit the *logoi* they give to bodies into this one *logos*. These *logoi* are part of this one *logos* and co-constitute its internal structure of various *logoi*. What souls give is included in its content without the souls themselves being contained in it. Each soul maintains its individual integrity, living in its own contemplation of Being and Intellect (5, 9-19).[35] Its outward activity that expresses that contemplation is included within the one *logos*. These expressions or images of souls' lives are the forms or shapes (μορφάς) of bodies (10, 41).[36] The shaping motion of particular bodies is imparted to them by souls, while the *logoi* are the imparting activity. The whole *logos*, then, and all the various *logoi* within it are the imparting activities belonging to individual souls and the All-Soul.

Fourth, the ultimate works (τὰ ἔργα ἔσχατα, III.3.1, 7) of these activities, their products (γεννήματα, 1, 8), are bodies. These bodies are concordant with each other, even

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[31] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 61; See also, IV.3.7, 20-23; Schubert, 1968, 46.
[32] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 74.
[33] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 75.
[34] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 77-78. The "journey inland" (ἄνοδος) is discussed at length in chapter four of this dissertation.
[35] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 62-63; See also Kalligas, 2011, 782.
[36] Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 75.

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if they are opposed to each other. Their movements and activities emerge from a united source such that they come into a unity together (εἰς ἕν συνέρχεται, 1, 11). The verb συνέρχεσθαι has connotations of "assembling" or "uniting together" (LSJ.A.II.1, 3) as well as "meeting in battle" (LSJ.A.II.2). Both connotations are present in Plotinus' discussion. Various bodies unite in conflict as well as in aligning or affiliating together. Both sorts of unity contribute to the whole cosmic order, which is dynamically preserved in the interactions among bodies. These bodies are products of a manifold and even opposite array of forms that internally determine their development. These internal forms are all bound together in a complex structure of various soul activities, each soul giving a *logos* from its inner life of contemplating Being and Intellect. Cosmic order, then, does not subsume these bodies into lifeless unvarying unity. Rather, cosmic order is a dynamically unified expression of Being and Intellect in corporeality through each soul according its activity to the activity of the All-Soul.

3.3.3 The image of a general, chance, and the dynamic unity of the cosmos

Along with the musical image already discussed, Plotinus depicts the unity and order of the cosmos through the image of a military general. This image illustrates how chance is included in cosmic order as well as the dynamism of this ordering. Regarding the former, Plotinus does not exclude chance events (συντυχίαι, 2, 1) from the cosmos. They follow consonantly from prior causes and are woven into the cosmos by following from them (2, 1-3).[37] However, this depiction does not remove the characteristic of chance

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[37] Armstrong, 1967, 115.

from such events, which are not determined in advance by the leading principle (τό ἡγούμενον) that weaves all things together (2, 3-4).[38] Plotinus uses the image of a general to depict how chance events can be part of this ordering.[39] A general leads soldiers. He sees their actions and experiences and supplies provisions: the "providential generalship" (προνοίᾳ στρατηγικῇ, 2, 5) sees what each body needs, how each of them acts and can be affected, and what follows from the interactions among them so that the results of these interactions may have a place in the overall order (2, 7-11).[40] *That* bodies will act in particular ways with each other and *that* these interactions will produce particular results is determined within the *logos*. However, *what* these bodies will actually do, *when* they will do it, and *how* they will intersect is not determined in advance. Their actual interactions and intersections contribute to the ongoing ordering of the cosmos, which cannot be completely determined in advance. Room is left open for incidental intersections and their results to become incorporated into the cosmos. The ordering adjusts to accommodate these events, which continuously contribute to the formation of the cosmos. Donald Gelpi argues that the "Universal Logos" reconciles and orders the frustrations in development that particular, seminal *logoi* inflict on each other in their intersections (Gelpi, 1965, 305). As discussed above, these *logoi* are the intrinsic forms determining the development of bodies. However, bodies do not develop in a vacuum. Different bodies in their development and motions inevitably intersect with and affect each other. These chance encounters become organized within the overall order of the

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[38] Armstrong, 1967, 115.
[39] See *Metaph*., 1075a14-26.
[40] Armstrong, 1967, 115-17.

cosmos. The ordering activity that is *logos* is not to be understood as rigidly determining. Whatever these bodies inflict on each other, whatever events happen to occur, they become incorporated and part of its overall ordering. The order is versatile enough to include them all. This ordering, then, is flexible, not fixed.

As mentioned above, a general provides for the individual needs of each soldier and knows the capabilities belonging to each. The general also strategizes about how to arrange the soldiers according to their capacity, ordering them toward engaging in conflict with the other side. Plotinus corrects this image, since the general only commands one side in contrast to "the great leader to whom all things are subject" (2, 14).[41] This correction implies that the ordering is all inclusive. However, it also changes the sense and orientation of the ordering. While a human general aims at defeating and dominating the enemy and so bringing the action to rest, "providential generalship" is like a general of *both sides*. The ordering of the cosmos, then, is directed toward perpetuating interactions. This ordering preserves the variety of intersecting motions and activities in which each bodily being continues to move and act in correspondence with other bodies. Plotinus, then, is not depicting the order inherent in the cosmos as static. Rather, he is depicting it as dynamic. His discussion of providence is similar to Heraclitus' *logos,* which preserves a dynamic unity between opposites.[42] For Plotinus, both the All-Soul and particular souls are directed toward the continuation of motion and life in the cosmos. This continuation requires that each body contains the formative powers it needs to move and to live. It also requires a unity among them through their

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[41] Armstrong, 1967, 117.
[42] Stamatellos, 2007, 161-64.

ongoing interactions. The *logos* containing the forms that determine the development of each body also sustains a dynamic ordering among their interactions. Because *logos* contains opposite forms, this ordering includes contentions and conflicts. Particular bodies may extinguish each other or live at the expense of another. However, the kind of order inherent in the cosmos does not include one kind of body at the expense of excluding another. Rather, it sustains an environment within which all of them can thrive.

3.4 Summary and an Impasse

Plotinus' hypothesis that providence is the cosmos as an imitation of Intellect, in conjunction with Soul, *logos*, and matter being the main contributing factors to this cosmos, can be elucidated in the following way. The providential character of the cosmos is the production of a living order for the vast multiplicity of living beings. This order is established and maintained through a network of souls imparting life to bodies in a way that is concordant with the All-Soul. *Logos*, as the activity of this All-Soul, appropriates matter. Individual souls fit their activities into this *logos* and so contribute to the production of the cosmos. Matter, however, must be the receptacle of all forms and so must remain formless. There can never be any final, total formation. There is, then, a continuous dynamic between matter remaining formless and *logoi* being the imparting of form. The shaping motion of living bodies, the emergence, intersection, and destruction of inanimate bodies, and the whole organization of all these is the ongoing result of this dynamic.

Although we have worked out how Plotinus' hypothesis about providence depends on the dynamics between Soul, *logos*, and matter, there is still an impasse introduced but left unresolved in the second chapter. If Plotinus' account of the cosmos is that it is an imitation of Intellect, then to understand that account fully requires an experience of Intellect. This requirement implies that one must think in the same way as Intellect. How can Plotinus' account lead readers to perform the kind of thinking proper to Intellect? The next chapter addresses this question by showing how his discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter serves this purpose. It reexamines Plotinus' discussion of them to demonstrate how he leads readers toward the possibility of thinking as Intellect does. As discussed previously and as will be shown further, that kind of thinking involves the identity of the thinker with what is thought. In that way, such thinking entails self-knowledge in the strongest possible sense. The fourth chapter demonstrates, then, that Plotinus' discussion of providence is pedagogical, since he leads readers toward that kind of thinking.

Chapter Four
Discursive Thought, Non-Discursive Thought, and Providence

The previous chapter showed how Plotinus' hypothesis about providence depends on articulating the relationship between Soul, *logos*, and matter. That chapter ended in an impasse. Fully understanding Plotinus' account of the cosmos depends on an experience of Intellect. This experience is possible only by thinking as Intellect does. This kind of thinking is an immediate apprehension in which the thinker is identical with what is thought. As such, it does not involve the movement from one thought, idea, or proposition to another. That kind of thinking is discursive, while the kind of thinking belonging to Intellect is non-discursive. The problem, then, is that Plotinus' account is discursive and yet fully understanding it depends on thinking as Intellect thinks. The question, then, is this: how can he lead readers toward the possibility of non-discursive thought through discursive means? This chapter examines how such guidance can occur.

This interpretation of Plotinus' account as facilitating a movement from discursive to non-discursive thought aligns with the purpose of a philosophical education. In the Socratic-Platonic tradition, the goal of philosophy is self-knowledge.[1] For Plotinus, self-knowledge in the most complete sense must be an immediate apprehension and so an identity of knower and known.[2] If the self that one thought was external to one's thinking, then one would only apprehend an image of oneself and not one's true self.[3] Self-knowledge, then, is only possible within thinking that is non-discursive.[4] Plotinus' discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter along with his criticisms of discursive thought are crucial in helping readers make this movement from discursive to non-discursive thought.

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[1] See *Phdr.* 229e-230a; *Ap.*, 30a-b; See also, *DA.*, 402a1-5.
[2] See V.3.1-9; O'Daly, 1973, 70-81; Rappe, 2000, 56-66.
[3] See V.5[32].1, 24-33; Perl, 2014, 108-09.
[4] See O'Daly, 1973, 7-19; Heiser, 1991, 37.

This movement involves a transition from approaching reality as exterior to approaching it as interior and a transition from a limited perspective to a comprehensive apprehension of reality. To exhibit the details of this movement, this chapter is divided into four parts: the first part of this chapter articulates the conditions under which discursive thought operates and distinguishes it from Plotinus' description of non-discursive thought. The second part outlines the movement from discursive to non-discursive thought. The third part uses Plotinus' discussion of providence to fill out this sketch and so demonstrates how his account is pedagogical. The fourth part summarizes the points discussed in this chapter in terms of the difference and interconnection between seriousness and play.

4.1   Discursive-thought, Intellect, and Truth

For Plotinus, discursive thought busies itself with combining and separating images of what is perceptible and what is intelligible. In this regard, the aim of discursive thought is to form an account in which images of Intellect illuminate and clarify images of perception. Images are the immediate objects with which discursive thought operates. In contrast, the non-discursive thinking which belongs to Intellect involves the thinking of beings themselves, which are unmediated by representations. Sense-perception, too, is directly related to what is perceived. Although human beings tend to operate within discursivity, thinking and perceiving non-discursively is not completely impossible for

us.[5] Distinguishing discursive from non-discursive thought begins to show how we can move from one to the other.

4.1.1 Discursive thought, logos, and giving an account

Plotinus begins depicting discursive thought by contrasting it with sense-perception. With sense-perception, "the perceptive part is perceptive only of what is external" (V.3.2, 3-4).[6] Even when perceiving affections in one's own body, what is perceived lies outside to the perceptual act (2, 4-8). Perception is directed outward. Perceptual acts are oriented toward things as externally existing realities. Still, perception works "by itself" (ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ, 2, 6).[7] Acts of perception are accomplished without depending on a mediating power. The condition of perception, then, is this: it is directed toward external objects, and it does not depend on another power to provide it with what is perceived.

Plotinus contrasts this condition of perception with reasoning: "the reasoning in it [the soul] makes determinations by combining and dividing the images available to it from perception" (τὸ δ' ἐν αὐτῇ λογιζόμενον παρὰ τῶν ἐκ τῆς αἰσθήσεως φαντασμάτων παρακειμένων τὴν ἐπίκρισιν ποιούμενον καὶ συνάγον καὶ διαιροῦν, 2, 8-10).[8] Reasoning (λογιζόμενον, 2, 8) depends on perception and, as he says later, the imagination (2, 7) to provide it with images (φαντασμάτων, 2, 9). The content of our reason derives from other powers. Images are what reason is directly involved with. We form judgments by

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[5] The focus of this dissertation is on the non-discursive thinking and not the ways in which sense-perception is directly related to the perceived.
[6] Armstrong's translation with slight change, 1984, 75. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations and paraphrases are from Armstrong in this chapter.
[7] My translation.
[8] My translation.

conjoining and separating these images. Reason also receives impressions (τύπους, 2, 10) from Intellect and combines and separates these as well (2, 9-11). This is the condition of discursive thought: depending on other powers for its content, working with images as its content, and "having the comprehension" (τήν σύνεσιν ἴσχει, 2, 25-26)[9] of things through their images.

Plotinus proceeds to examine how this comprehension occurs. He imagines a situation in which someone perceives someone else: discursive thought (διάνοια) does not say anything until it asks who this person is (3, 1-4). Only when this person cannot be identified through sense-perception does perplexity arise. This perplexity begins the process of thinking something through (διά-νοια) with language. This point is important, especially in terms of its pedagogical aspects. For Plotinus, being at an impasse is the impetus for thinking through and speaking about something. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, Plotinus begins his inquiry into providence by leading readers to impasses. By experiencing these impasses, their own reasoning can be stirred into action. The issues and questions can be appropriated as their own, and they can begin to think through them. By beginning this way, Plotinus provides readers with this opportunity.[10]

In the above example, the question is about the identity of another human being. In determining who it is—Socrates in Plotinus' example—a fundamental operation of discursive thought occurs: "but if it also explicates the form, it divides what the imagination gave" (εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐξελίττοι τὴν μορφήν, μερίζει ἃ ἡ φαντασία ἔδωκεν, 3, 6-

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[9] My translation.
[10] This point is discussed in more detail in the third section.

7).[11] What our imagination gave as a compact unity, our discursive thinking divides into parts. For instance, one might articulate a series of predicates concentrated together in one's image of Socrates—"is shoeless" or "is snub-nosed". In making determinations, discursive thought explicates its content into the details of its parts. In performing this operation, we combine verbal representations together, saying "this is that" or "this is like that"; we divide them from each other, saying "this is not that" or "this is unlike that". Through this operation, we explicate what we perceptually experience. As discursive thinkers, we are concerned with examining, inquiring into, and being busy about that which we perceive (3, 17-18). Even the assertion that "Socrates is good" is occasioned by our perception of Socrates (3, 7-9). The predicate "good", however, is not given by sense-perception. The soul already has this standard of goodness within itself, having received it from Intellect (3, 9-10). Through such standards, we determine, evaluate, or measure what we perceive according to our images of Intellect.

In discursive activity, we attempt to illuminate images of what is perceived with images of Intellect, endeavoring to unite both into one image.[12] The former are dim manifestations of the intelligibility within what is perceived, while the latter brighten and clarify them. This function of discursive thought is to disclose the intelligibility of that which is perceived.

> The natural order is also a *logos*, but a *logos* different from that of Intellect, since it is produced by nature as something ripe for contemplation, but no longer able to contemplate. This work of nature is the ground for both sensation and reasoning, which are directed to the external, but whose goal is knowledge. Reasoning in particular wants to match sensible objects with their counterparts in the realm of

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[11] My translation.
[12] See IV.3.31, 9-21.

Being, and gather the multiplicity of this universe into a whole, a *logos* of the unity of Intellect. The structure of unity is expressed nowhere more clearly, with reason a principle of unity operative in nature, and Intellect the source of both the unity of nature and unifying power of reason (Gurtler, 1988, 213-14).

The natural world is a *logos* by being replete with bodies, each of which has an internal source of development and is unified with other bodies in an orderly way. Through discursive thought, we attempt to give an account of the inner unity of each bodily being and the relations among them. We endeavor to unify our images of these bodies with images of Intellect to form a single account, to form a *logos* that resembles the unity of Intellect. In that case, discursive thought is bidirectional. On the one hand, with perception, it is directed out towards bodies in an attempt to render what is perceived intelligible. Giving a unified account of the various perceptual objects we encounter is a central concern for discursive thought. Such an account is possible because the unity of these bodies in this cosmos and the unifying power of rational thought are from and depend on the same source.[13] On the other hand, discursive thought is directed interiorly toward Intellect. As Gurtler's contrast of knowledge with sensation and reasoning suggests, the intention is also inward toward the contemplation of Intellect.

John Heiser makes a similar point:

By "giving a *logos*" to himself, then, the learner recovers awareness of the intelligible world present within him. This process, which Plotinus calls "thinking" (dianoia), or "reasoning" (logismos), is the characteristic activity of the embodied soul as such. This is the activity the *spoudaios* is finished with, except for "declaring what is within him to another." This means, as we shall see, that the *spoudaios*, 'in relation to himself,' is no longer functioning as an embodied soul (Heiser, 1991, 9).[14]

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[13] See Gurtler, 1988, 39 for an example of what he means by "the structure of unity".
[14] See Gurtler, 1988, 19-21. The final section of this chapter discusses the last part of this passage regarding the *spoudaios*.

The learner gives an account in an attempt to become aware of Intellect as already *within* him or her. The ultimate purpose of reasoning, speaking, and forming an account is not to create a perfect assemblage of images that accurately corresponds to the external world. Rather, the purpose is to become aware of what is already within one's soul, to move towards that interior reality. Both Gurtler and Heiser acknowledge that when we reason, we are directed toward something as other.[15] As discursive thinkers, we are not yet fully united with what is thought but persist in an experience of separation between ourselves and the object of thought. As much as we intend to contemplate Intellect through discursive thought, this kind of thinking inevitably falls short.

Discursive thought is capable of limited or qualified contemplation of Intellect and, with it, a limited or qualified self-knowledge. We are to teach (διδάξαι, V.3.6, 19) our discursive thought the way in which Intellect thinks itself, discursive thought being that part of our soul that is intellectual (νοερόν, 6, 20). The connection to pedagogy is clear. Significantly, however, the soul is its own teacher.[16] The goal of teaching oneself is to learn how Intellect thinks itself.

> But since the things which it [discursive thought] speaks are from its interior, coming to it from There, whence it also comes, it could come to know itself in this way, also being a *logos* and receiving its kin and fitting the traces into itself (ὄντων δὲ ἢ ἄνωθεν αὐτῷ γινομένων ἐκεῖθεν, ὅθεν περ καὶ αὐτό, συμβαίνοι ἂν καὶ τούτῳ λόγῳ ὄντι καὶ συγγενῆ λαμβάνοντι καὶ τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ ἴχνεσιν ἐφαρμόνττοντι οὕτω τοι γινώσκειν ἑαυτό, V.3.6, 25-28).[17]

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[15] Gurtler, 1988, 213; Heiser, 1991, 7-9. Both authors quote the same passage from III.8.[30].6, 19-40.

[16] Again, this aspect of starting with impasses and teaching oneself is examined in the third section. This self-thinking is connected to the importance of beginning with impasses, which prompts reasoning and compels readers to teach themselves. This self-teaching is also why Plotinus' pedagogical techniques only work when readers enact them in and for themselves.

[17] Armstrong translation, 1984, 91 with slight change.

This passage begins to establish how forming an account is part of learning how Intellect thinks itself. Each reader, as someone who thinks discursively, is a *logos* from Intellect and receives other *logoi* from Intellect. Each is capable of connecting these *logoi* together to form a sort of reunion of Intellect within him or herself. With discursive thought, we are capable of self-knowledge to the extent that we fill ourselves with and arrange together a variety of *logoi*. We recognize ourselves as a *logos* from Intellect by connecting together what is akin to us. In thinking discursively, we move through and connect this content part by part but cannot immediately possess all the parts or their unity. This reunion of Intellect and this self-knowledge is inevitably partial. Discursive thought and its content are inescapably traces of Intellect, not Intellect itself.

Although we cannot solely depend on discursive thought in our endeavors toward Being and Intellect, we are not to neglect it. The importance of discursive thought can be seen in Plotinus' claim that Intellect gives the human soul a kind of life in addition to procreation (γεννητικήν, 6, 29-30) and perception (αἰσθητικήν 6, 33). In contrast to the procreative life, "[Intellect] turned the soul's attention toward itself and did not allow it to scatter, but made it love the splendor in itself" (ἐπέστρεψε πρὸς ἑαυτὴν τὴν ψυχήν, καὶ σκίδνασθαι οὐκ εἴασεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀγαπᾶν ἐποίησε τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ ἀγλαΐαν, 8, 30-31).[18] In procreation, one's concern is with generating another. One is directed outward and towards multiplying, not inward toward unifying. One seeks fulfillment in another. Intellect, however, turns the soul's attention back toward itself. Plotinus' point is not that

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[18] My translation.

the soul admires itself. Rather, the soul comes to cherish what it already possesses and does not seek completion in another.

A perceptive life "looks outward and perceives [the external]. But the one receiving the light of true beings does not, so to speak, behold the visible things any better but, rather, the opposite" (αὕτη γὰρ ἔξω βλέπει καὶ αἰσθάνεται· ὁ δ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀληθῶν λαβῶν οἷον βλέπει (οὐ) μᾶλλον τὰ ὁρατά, ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον, 8, 33-35).[19] In perceiving, we become absorbed in those things that are outside of us. The implication, then, is that the kind of life Intellect gives our souls orients us toward that which is interior. We cannot see colors more vividly or hear sounds more clearly. Rather, we can contemplate that which is imperceptible and intelligible in our experience. This intelligibility is not external to the soul but internal. The kind of life that Intellect gives the soul is an inwardly directed life in which it recognizes the splendor already within it and does not seek completion in another.

The concern of the human soul ultimately cannot be with procreating or perceiving— "what remains, therefore, is for the soul to take in addition [to procreation and perception] an intellectual life, a trace of Intellect's life: for the true beings are There" (λείπεται τοίνυν ζωὴν νοερὰν προσειληφέναι, ἴχνος νοῦ ζωῆς· ἐκεῖ γὰρ τὰ ἀληθῆ, 8, 35-36).[20] Human souls have something more than just the ability to reproduce and perceive. We receive a trace of Intellect's life as an addition. Since Intellect's life is a thinking activity in which Being and Intellect are one, this is the trace our souls have. On the one hand, as discussed above, this trace implies an ability to form an account of what we

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[19] My translation.; the negation οὐ is a change from οὖ based on Adolf Kirchhoff's emendation.
[20] My translation.

perceive. On the other hand, this trace also implies an ability to turn inward in order to realize what we already possess. This trace, this intellectual life that resembles its source, can assist us in turning and moving toward that source. Nevertheless, Plotinus is clear that "the true beings are There" (ἐκεῖ γὰρ τὰ ἀληθῆ, 8, 36). They are not in our discursive thought, which is only a trace. Paradoxically, then, discursive thought is what connects us to Intellect and yet what prevents us from thinking non-discursively. The question, then, is this: are there discursive strategies through which we can surpass the limits of discursive thought? The third section shows how Plotinus' discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter, and by extension his hypothesis about providence, involve such strategies. However, before we turn to this issue, we must examine his theory of truth because it further determines the distinction between discursive and non-discursive thought.

4.1.2 Self-knowledge, Intellect, and Truth

Plotinus has what Sara Rappe and Eric Perl call an "identity theory of truth" or what Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson calls his "Internality Thesis."[21] All three authors show that Plotinus does not depict truth as a correspondence between our verbal representations and reality. Images can correspond to their originals, but that is not truth: "for truth ought not to be the truth of something else but to be what it says" (τὴν ἄρα ἀλήθειαν οὐχ ἑτέρου εἶναι δεῖ, ἀλλ᾽ ὅ λέγει, τοῦτο καὶ εἶναι, 5, 25-26). If truth were correspondence, it would

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[21] See V.3.5, 22-31; Emilsson, 1996, 238; Rappe, 2000, xiii; Perl, 2014, 110. For the identity of Intellect and Being see Lloyd, 1969, 261-74; Sorabji, 1982, 295-314; Lloyd, 1986, 258-65; Alfino, 1988, 273-84; Emilsson, 1996, 234-244Schroeder, 1996, 336-352; Rappe, 2000, 25-66; Perl, 2014, 107-114; Sorabji, who asserts that thinking of Intellect has a propositional structure, still affirms that thinking and being are identical. I am grateful to Dr. Perl for pointing out to me that Sorabji retracts this claim in "Is the True Self an Individual in the Platonist Tradition?"

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be a relation between an image and the original such that the one accurately matches the other. However, either some aspect of the original will be missing or the image will introduce some aspect alien to the original. If the image were perfectly indistinguishable from the original, it would be the original. If the image must contain some distinguishing aspect, the two cannot be identical. Since Plotinus understands truth as an identity, a correspondence between image and original does not fit his criteria of truth.

The one speaking must be identical to the act of speaking and what is said. There can be no separation between speaker, speaking, and spoken. That is not possible for discursive thought, since it operates in and with images. Only in Intellect is this possible: "for Intellect and Thought and Being are one in this way" (ἓν ἄρα οὕτω νοῦς καὶ τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὸ ὄν, 5, 26-27).[22] Intellect is not other than or separate from its thoughts but lives wholly in them. It is not a subject distinct from its thinking but *is* its thinking. As inseparable from its thoughts, Intellect is inseparable from *what is* thought. Intellect does not acquire Being as something it does not possess and must receive: "and this is the primary Being and is especially the primary Intellect having the beings, or rather is the same as the beings" (καὶ πρῶτον ὄν τοῦτο καὶ δὴ καὶ πρῶτος νοῦς τὰ ὄντα ἔχων, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς τοῖς οὖσιν, 5, 27-29).[23] If Intellect were to receive Being as something external, it would have an image as its content. It would be like sense-perception, which receives only an impression of something but not the thing itself. If it only had the impression, there would be something false in it because the reality would remain outside

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[22] My translation.
[23] My translation.

the content of what is thought. In that case, Intellect could err and be without a share in truth.[24] For Intellect to be what it is, it must not receive Being but be identical with it.

The primary beings are intellects that think themselves and all the other intellects.[25] Thinking is an activity (ἐνέργεια, 5, 33), not a potentiality (δύναμις, 5, 34).[26] Plotinus makes use of Aristotle's vocabulary, where the activity of building, being awake, or seeing is in contrast to the capacity for these.[27] If that which thinks was potentially thinking, it could move from a condition of unthinking to one of thinking. If it had a condition of unthinking, then it would not be truly Intellect. Its life of thinking is not imported to it (ἐπακτόν, 4, 35) by something else and so is not activated by another. Because Intellect is never not thinking, it is never without the content of thought. That which is thought, likewise, is never not in Intellect because that would imply Intellect potentially thinks it. Since what is thought is the content of an Intellect never not thinking, what is thought *must be* and so is being in the primary sense (οὐσία ἡ πρώτη τὸ νοητόν, 5, 37). The three are fundamentally inseparable: "all at once are one—Thinker, Thinking, Thought" (ἓν ἅμα πάντα ἔσται, νοῦς, νόησις, νοητόν, 5, 43-44). Since Intellect *is* its thinking and since what it thinks is identical with it, what it thinks must be thinking intellects. Intellect thinks itself in and through a variety of intellects that think what they are and are what they think.[28]

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[24] See V.3.5, 19-25. See alsoV.5.1, 51-69; Emilsson, 1996, 236-240; Perl, 2014, 108-109.
[25] See also V.9.[5].8; Bréhier, 1958, 93-95; Wallis, 1972, 54-55; Gurtler, 1988, 12-14; Rappe, 2000, 64-65 Stamatellos, 2007, 56-60, 149-50.
[26] Perl, 2014, 107-108.
[27] *Metaph,* 104837-1048b4.
[28] See O'Daly, 1973, 76-77.

That is truth for Plotinus—the identity of Intellect and Being through thinking. We previously saw that, for Plotinus, truth cannot be truth of another but must be what it says. Only the identity of Intellect and Being satisfies this condition, since the content of thought, the thinker, and the activity of thinking are inseparable.

Plotinus uses the example of a deductive science to illustrate this dynamic. [29] He describes how the science does not differ from the totality of its theorems. Each theorem contributes some particular aspect but also contains all the other theorems and the whole science potentially. This potential does not mean that a theorem becomes the others and the whole science in actuality at some point in time. Rather, each theorem is its own content but also has the content of all the others and the whole implied within it. Unlike discursivity, which must transition from one theorem to another, Intellect eternally thinks its content all at once and is full of intellects thinking themselves and all the other intellects.

As seen above, discursive thought operates by combining and dividing images and by uniting images from Intellect with those from perception. The thinking of Intellect cannot be discursive, then, because it is an immediate apprehension in which thinking, thinker, and thought are identical. Because truth is only possible in terms of this identity, then truth cannot belong to discursive thought. If truth belongs to the identity of Intellect and Being and if Plotinus' account of the cosmos is a product of discursive thought, which operates in and through images, then can these images lead one to truth and non-discursive thought? This non-discursive thought involves self-reflection/self-knowledge

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[29] V 9[5]8, 1-8; See also, Gurtler, 1988, 12-14; Heiser, 1991, 34-36; Perl, 2014, 114.

(as Rappe puts it)[30] or self-knowledge/self-thinking (as Emilsson puts it).[31] Only in non-discursive thought is genuine self-knowledge possible. If the self that is thinking or knowing were other than the self thought or known, then the former would only have an image of the latter.[32] Genuine self-knowledge cannot result from the conditions that determine discursive thought. The philosophical task and aim of knowing oneself, then, is at stake in this possibility of an account leading to non-discursive thought. To show how Plotinus uses discursive strategies in his discussion of providence, a preliminary outline of the movement from discursive to non-discursive thought must be sketched. This sketch can then be filled out by using Plotinus' discussion of providence as a specific instance of this movement.

4.2   Preliminary Sketch of Movement from Discursive to Non-Discursive Thought

Sketching out this movement requires specifying exactly what one is moving from, what one is moving toward, and the means by which the movement happens. Discursive thought involves a basic approach to the world, one in which there are various distinct existing objects that are external to our acts of reasoning.[33] In thinking discursively, we busily direct our attention outwards by means of verbal representations or other images. The transition from discursive to non-discursive thought consists of turning away from what is external toward the reality of Intellect. One way to see how that transition is

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[30] Rappe, 2000, 19.
[31] Emilsson, 1996, 236.
[32] See V.3.5, 1-25.
[33] See Rappe, 2000, 44.

possible involves examining how Plotinus argues that even sense perception is an activity

of the soul. In III.6.[26].1-5, Plotinus argues that we are mistaken in conceiving of our

soul as affected by external objects and so altered by them. Sense-perceptions are not

affections (πάθη, 1, 1) but activities (ἐνεργείας, 1, 2).[34] They are judgments (κρίσεις 1, 2)

made by the soul about affections, while the "body qualified in a particular way suffers

[the affection]" (τὸ σῶμα φέρε τὸ τοιόνδε, 1, 2-4).[35] Nevertheless, Plotinus affirms and

works through the paradoxical claim that "one must suppose that irrational reasons and

unaffected affections befall it [the soul]" (λόγους ἀλόγους καὶ ἀπαθῆ πάθη δεῖ

ἐπιγίγνεσθαι αὐτῇ οἴσθαι 1, 33-34).[36] These "irrational reasons and unaffected affections"

are transferred (μετενηνεγμένα, 1, 35) from the body to the soul, which has something

analogous (ἀναλογίαν, 1, 3) to them. As ἀπαθῆς, however, the soul is not affected in any

way by the action of something else. Plotinus asks, then, why we must seek to make the

soul free from affections through philosophy (5, 1-2). Purification (κάθαρσις), as a

criticism and correction by means of philosophy, is necessary to help redirect the sight

(ὁράματος, 5, 11) of the soul away from external objects. This purification involves

realizing that one's truer self is a soul attuned to Intellect and not a living body affected

by other bodies. Outlining the movement from discursive to non-discursive thought, then,

involves detailing this relationship between the affections of the body, the impassability

of the soul, and the work of purification.

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[34] See Emilsson, 2008, 126-140 for discussion on how perceptions are activities, not affections.
[35] Armstrong's translation with slight change, 1967, 211.
[36] Armstrong's translation with slight change, 1697, 213.

4.2.1 *Pathos*, *apatheia*, and purification

To begin, Plotinus' working through the paradoxical statement about "irrational reasons and unaffected affections" must be examined. This examination will show what part of our soul seems to be passive (παθητικός, 4, 1) and so susceptible to being affected. Although Plotinus depicts a reciprocal relationship between opinions and affections, he insists that the former are in the soul and the latter are in the body (4, 8-14). They are reciprocal in that affections may be conjoined (συνίσταται, 4, 9) with opinions, as when someone who expects to die feels fear. Some affections, however, lead the way (ἡγησάμενα, 4, 13) and produce (ἐμποιεῖν 4, 13) the opinion. Since Plotinus connects opinion and image (φαντασία 4, 21-22), which in V.3.2, 8-10 was said to come from perception, he is referring to experiences in which we perceive something frightful. What belongs to the soul is the image and the opinion associated with fear, not the perceptible alterations: "the trembling and the shaking" (ὅ τε τρόμος καὶ ὁ σεισμός, 4, 26) are in the body and not the soul.

Still, there are lines of connection. The bodily event is linked with what is "no longer opinion" (οὐκέτι δόξα, 4, 23) but is "a sort of dim opinion and unexamined image" (ἀμυδρὰ οἶον δόξα καὶ ἀνεπίκριτος φαντασία, 23-24). The soul, as that which opines and produces images, does not undergo change or experience affections. Through its own activity, it produces an image, which "we call an opinion" (καλοῦμεν δόξαν, 4, 18-19). The soul imagines and expects that something could happen to the body. In the case of

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fear, it imagines the possibility of physical harm or even death. The "dim opinion and unexamined image" derives from that opinion or expectation (4, 19) and is the cause (αἴτιον, 4, 45) of the bodily events associated with fear. These dim opinions and unexamined images are the analogue of what happens in the body, the "irrational reason and unaffected affection." Plotinus uses the example of a musician to illustrate this situation (4, 49-54). The player, and especially the melody, is the cause of the plucking and the string is what is affected. The soul, as the form, remains still in itself and does not undergo the changes associated with affections (4, 30-38). Nevertheless, just as the vibrations of the string are correlated with the melody, the events in the body are correlated with the opining of the soul.

In the production of images and opinions that have physical correlates, part of the soul looks toward the body and, by extension, its environment. Although the soul is not affected by that environment, the part of it that produces affections remains absorbed in it. The role of philosophy, then, is to help redirect the part of the soul that produces affections. As Sara Rappe argues, Plotinus' discussion of *apatheia* is distinct from the Stoic view. The Stoic view involves "a lack of emotional reactivity, and so it coincides with the optimal rational response to the world that is the province of the sage's special knowledge" (Rappe, 2000, 59).[37] By not being attracted to or repulsed by something in any way, the Stoic sage has no irrational reactions to the world.[38] This person does not predicate good or bad of what is indifferent and so does not respond or react to things in

[37] See also Graeser, 1972, 64.
[38] Stobaeus 2.88, 8-90.6 (*SVF* 3.78, 389, part) (Long and Sedley 65A); Galen, *On Hippocrates' and Plato's Doctrine* 4.2.10-18 (*SVF* 3.462, part) (Long and Sedley 65J); Long and Sedley, Vol. I, 420.

the world according to this misinterpretation.[39] For Plotinus, however, *apatheia* is achieved when the part of one's soul directed to bodily affections turns away from the external objects associated with them.

> For Plotinus, far from being an emotion, a *pathos* is an event that renders the mind subject to conditions imposed from without. Such a condition erodes or infringes on the autonomy of the mind, its self-determination, self-awareness, and self-attention. Hence *apatheia* refers to the original condition of the mind, before it comes to be occupied with the transitory objects of awareness that concern it in its embodied state. Again, *apatheia* is not only a moral condition of the mind, since a *pathos* is any event or experience to which the mind is subject. *Apatheia* seems to imply a mind not subject to experience, one that undergoes no conditioning (Rappe, 2000, 59).

A *pathos* occurs when the part of the soul discussed above focuses on the body and its environment. The affect occurs when the soul forms an opinion or an image related to the body. In paying attention to the body and its environment, the soul is distracted and turns away from its own activity, which is the contemplation of Being and Intellect. *Apatheia* occurs when the soul is not focusing on, desiring, avoiding, or being directed toward external, bodily things or images of them. With *apatheia*, the distinction is not between being empty and being full but between being internally turned toward Intellect[40] and being externally directed toward bodies.

For Plotinus, then, *apatheia* occurs not by removing the emotional reaction to an object. Rather, it occurs by removing one's orientation to external objects altogether, "since if the presentation is removed, the emotion it triggers will no longer be able to arise" (Rappe, 2000, 60). The purification involved in *apatheia* "would be to leave it [the soul] alone and not with others or not looking toward another nor having alien opinions"

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[39] See Brennan, 2003, 269-70.
[40] See III.6.2, 33-40.

(ἡ μὲν κάθαρσις ἂν εἴη καταλιπεῖν μόνην καὶ μὴ μετ' ἄλλων ἢ μὴ πρὸς ἄλλο βλέπουσαν μηδ' αὖ δόξας ἀλλοτρίας ἔχουσαν, 5, 16-18).[41] Whatever does not belong or is improper to the soul must be removed from its sight (ὅρασις, 5, 25).[42] This removal involves the soul no longer looking towards or having opinions that refer to what is external. The soul does not look at images but turns "the other way, towards those above/within away from those below/outside" (ἐπὶ θάτερα τὰ ἄνω ἀπὸ τῶν κάτω, 5, 18-19).[43] The soul turns away from perception and objects of perception and turns toward Intellect and the beings in Intellect. As discussed above, discursive thought busies itself with images, endeavoring to unite those from Intellect with those from perception. With *apatheia*, however, the habitual ways in which discursive thought works and the conditions under which it operates must be challenged. The dependence on words as verbal representations, the operation of combining and separating these representations, and being directed toward an external reality must all be criticized. The soul must focus its sight on Intellect alone, not on images of Intellect or any admixture of images from it and perception.

4.2.2 Introspection, comprehensive vision, and a thought experiment

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[41] Armstrong translation with slight changes, 1967, 231.
[42] See I.6.[1] for Plotinus' earliest discussion of this issue in his writing.
[43] Armstrong translation with slight changes, 1967, 231.

Along with this criticism of discursive thought, a particular kind of introspection is included in this movement from discursive to non-discursive thought. This kind of introspection is not an act of looking *at* the self. Rappe uses a thought experiment from V.8.[31].9 to help depict this introspection.

> This meditation involves a very careful direction of the mind and imagination of the student. Holding the simple image, the sphere, before the mind's eye, the reader is to fill up the space of that image entirely, exerting herself to the utmost to picture the entire universe of sentient and non-sentient beings in all their diversity. Certainly one would need at least some practice and effort to carry out all of the conditions of the meditation successfully (Rappe, 2000, 79).

One is to imagine, as much as possible, all of the plants, animals, inanimate objects, planets, and stars that populate the cosmos. Each one must remain distinct and yet contained within the single sphere, a "single object of thought" (Rappe, 2000, 79). This meditation is an introspective act. Introspection is not the self perceiving itself as an object. It is a seeing that contains other beings without looking toward them as external to or outside this act of sight. Introspection is a self-knowledge in which the self realizes it *is* its own activity of seeing. This act of sight is identical with all that is within it (Rappe, 2000, 87). Given Plotinus' theory of truth discussed above, this sort of introspection makes sense. Since truth is each intellect thinking itself and all other intellects within the whole Intellect, introspection as an isolated self looking at itself could not lead to such a thinking experience. If introspection was the self looking at or perceiving itself, there would be a dividing and duplicating of the self. The perceiving self would be treated as external to the perceived self. That kind of introspection could never lead to the identity of Being and Intellect. Introspection, then, is neither the activity of a self looking at itself

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nor of a self separated from other beings.[44] This imaginative experience of concentrating

on a totality within a single thought is only the first step toward such introspection.

Before we move to the next step, another aspect of this exercise must be described.

Namely, no being is to have any priority over any other being within this sphere (Rappe,

2000, 80). This exercise requires a detachment from the limited perspective involved in

being attached to specific objects. The one engaging in this meditation is not to focus on

one thing or kind of thing to the exclusion of another. Value judgments must not

predetermine what is worth including. The very act of imagining this sphere in a single

act involves being comprehensive or all-inclusive. As will be seen in the discussion of

providence in section three of this chapter, this comprehensiveness is crucial for the

movement toward non-discursive thought.

The next step is to keep this imaginative sphere in mind but then apprehend another

sphere, taking away the bulk, the places, and any sort of material aspect (9, 11-13). As a

pictorial image, the first sphere has extension and bulk and place. These aspects are

inappropriate and must be removed. Altering or correcting an image is a crucial part of

Plotinus' philosophical method. Since this method only works if readers participate in it

and actively perform the steps, we are continuing to see that it is also part of his

pedagogical practice. These alterations involve taking away those features that are alien

to the original.[45] Fundamentally, this alteration is a change in the way one is thinking and

in one's normal mode of thinking. That is why the final move is to invoke the god who

made that of which one has the image. Discursive thought and imagination would be

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[44] See Perl, 2014, 113-114 for the intelligibles as "intrinsically relational."
[45] See note 22 in chapter two of this dissertation.

tempted to make a smaller sphere and place it next to the original. Instead of relying on these powers, one is to pray for the god to come with his own cosmos, which is replete with divinities (9, 13-16). As Rappe claims, one treats this image as an icon that helps one to become aware of the god who is already present but unrecognized (Rappe, 2000, 89). This meditative exercise and the prayer prepare one to see this cosmos—and oneself—in a new way. It is a prayer to undergo a transformative experience. In this experience, one realizes that the noetic cosmos has been present all along (9, 15-28).

The outline of this movement from discursive to non-discursive thought involves the following: one starts with the experience of objects as external and the use of images as referring to them. Then, one criticizes discursive thought and this orientation to what is external. Along with this criticism is an act of introspection that has a comprehensive vision. Finally, the aim of this criticism and introspection is to realize that one's true self and other beings are already within Being and Intellect.

4.3 Providence and Moving from Discursive to Non-Discursive Thought

Now that we have outlined the general movement from discursive to non-discursive thought, Plotinus' discussion of providence can be used to fill out this sketch. In doing that, the pedagogical dimension of his discussion becomes apparent. This examination consists of three steps: first, returning to how Plotinus begins his discussion of providence shows the role of introspection and of criticizing discursive thought. Second, reexamining Soul, *logos*, and matter shows how Plotinus discusses them in a way that helps readers continue that introspection and criticism. Through them, readers can

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become prepared to see themselves and other beings as within Being and Intellect. Third, this examination leads to the question of whether Plotinus' account—and, by extension, his pedagogy—is closed or open-ended. That is, does his account and pedagogy form an enclosed, complete system? Or, does his account and pedagogy leave room for ongoing inquiry and questioning?

4.3.1 Impasses, criticism, and introspection

In returning to how Plotinus introduces his hypothesis about providence, one can see how impasses initiate discursive engagement while at the same time promoting a critical attitude that can carry over into a criticism of discursive thought. What could be obvious ways to resolve questions about a providential cosmos are blocked from the beginning— that there is no providence, that a bad craftsman made the cosmos, or that providence is like human planning and forethought. These preconceptions are put aside as the obvious routes to take. Instead, one must examine and get the account from the beginning, which, as we saw, implies a continual self-examination. Readers must be ready from the beginning to be critical of their normal, habitual ways of thinking. To follow Plotinus in earnest, this critical stance towards one's own reasoning must occur. His text may facilitate or be an occasion for this possibility, but readers must take up the lesson for themselves. At the same moment that Plotinus arouses one's discursive thinking he also suggests the necessity of a critical attitude. In being a challenge to habitual ways of thinking, this critical attitude is a step toward the possibility of non-discursive thought.

A significant part of this critical attitude includes challenging the preconceptions, standards, and ways of thinking that determine one's thinking. For instance, one cannot simply construct an account of providence on human experiences of forethought. This kind of anthropomorphic thinking must be avoided. As an implication of not seeing providence as like human forethought, readers must put aside any attempt to conceive of the cosmos as having a temporal beginning. This way of explaining and depicting something is inappropriate to the cosmos as having always been present. In both cases, the critical attitude and the turn toward self-examination operate together. Plotinus' readers, in their discursive activity, are becoming ready to move toward non-discursive thought.

For readers to want to become ready for this movement, there must be a motive. Plotinus supplies this motive by calling this cosmos an image of Being and Intellect. If an account of the cosmos is an account of an image, then he creates an occasion for wanting to experience the original. This situation is similar to VI.7.[38].31 where Plotinus describes how those who see the beloved "in an image" (ἐν τῷ εἰδώλῳ, 31, 10) and "wish to see the very one that is loved" (τὸ αὐτὸ ἰδεῖν ἐθέλειν τὸ ἐρώμενον, 31, 10-11).[46] The image is an occasion to recollect the original and to begin seeking to return to it.[47] The motive, then, for moving from discursive to non-discursive thought is introduced right as Plotinus begins to discuss providence. However, how does his discussion of Soul, *logos*,

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[46] Armstrong's translation with slight change, 1988, 181; See I.6.[1] and III.5.[50] for the connection between love, beauty, and Intellect. Chapter six of this dissertation also discusses this connection. See also Schroeder, 1992, 38.

[47] See Schroeder, 1992, 55-62; the image of the cave from the *Republic* and Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* also suggest this dynamic between image and the memory of the original.

and matter help readers make this movement and so to experience the cosmos and themselves in a new way?

Examining passages in which Plotinus explicitly criticizes faulty methods for investigating and for evaluating the cosmos will begin to help us answer that question. The first of these criticisms serves to challenge our limited viewpoints such that readers can begin to have a more comprehensive perspective.[48] Plotinus asserts that speaking ill of this cosmos or its source is misguided. He repeats that those who do so represent the source as some deliberating agent. Even if the source were such an agent, this cosmos would still be good. He proceeds to articulate the proper method for examining the parts and the whole of this cosmos.

> Accordingly, the one censuring the whole because of the parts would be out of place in making the accusation. For one must inspect the parts in reference to the whole itself, that is, if [they are] concordant and fit together with it and, when inspecting the whole, not to look at some little parts (Ὁ τοίνυν ἐκ τῶν μερῶν τὸ ὅλον αἰτώμενος ἄτοπος ἂν εἴη τῆς αἰτίας· τά τε γὰρ μέρη πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον δεῖ σκοπεῖν, εἰ σύμφωνα καὶ ἁρμόττοντα ἐκείνῳ, τό τε ὅλον σκοπούμενον μὴ πρὸς μέρη ἄττα μικρὰ βλέπειν, III.2.3, 9-13).[49]

To begin, the one who disparages the whole on account of some selected parts would be judging and evaluating inappropriately. One must investigate how the parts relate to the whole. The proper standard of judgment and evaluation is whether and how the parts have a place within the whole and fit together in an orderly way. Investigating the whole requires more than just bringing forth a few parts and basing one's judgment on them. To

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[48] See Rappe, 2000, 30-44 for her depiction of Plotinus' criticism of causal explanations leads to the realization "that the only real explanation for an event is to say that it belongs to a totality" (37) and to a "visionary passage" (42) in which a "subject appears to view the entire cosmic panorama as its own act of awareness" (43).
[49] My translation.

inspect the whole and the parts, one must extend past a limited point of view. Plotinus

directs his criticism at such a limited vantage point along with the standards of judgment

and evaluation determined by it. This limited perspective of looking at a few parts or

even many items in this cosmos is our normal tendency. To inquire into any part or into

the whole in earnest requires the investigators "not to look at some little parts" (μὴ πρὸς

μέρη ἄττα μικρὰ βλέπειν, 3, 13). By implication, their looking must extend toward the

whole. Only by undertaking such an extension can they begin to examine how parts fit

into the whole, connect together with all the other parts, and how the whole is the way it

is.

Included in this expansion from a limited view to looking toward the whole is a

criticism of improper methods for evaluating sensible bodily objects. Plotinus criticizes

those who would negatively evaluate what is mixed because it does not measure up to

what is unmixed. Implied in this criticism is some direction on how to move toward what

is intelligible.

> First, then, one must assume that in looking for the beauty in the mixed one must not
> demand it have in every way as much beauty as in the unmixed, nor to seek for the
> primary in the secondary, but since it also has body, one must also grant something
> comes from it [body] into the All and demand from *logos* as much as the mixture can
> receive, even if nothing of it [body] falls short (Πρῶτον τοίνυν ληπτέον ὡς τὸ καλῶς
> ἐν τῷ μικτῷ ζητοῦντας χρὴ μὴ πάντη ἀπαιτεῖν ὅσον τὸ καλῶς ἐν τῷ ἀμίκτῳ ἔχει, μηδ'
> ἐν δευτέροις ζητεῖν τὰ πρῶτα, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ καὶ σῶμα ἔχει, συγχωρεῖν καὶ παρὰ τούτου
> ἰέναι εἰς τὸ πᾶν, ἀπαιτεῖν δὲ παρὰ τοῦ λόγου, ὅσον ἐδύνατο δέξασθαι τὸ μῖγμα,
> εἰ μηδὲν τούτου ἐλλείπει, III.2.7, 1-7).[50]

The context of this passage is Plotinus confronting an impasse about how, in a

providential cosmos, the wicked can be rulers and the good can be ruled. If all depends

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[50] My translation.

on Intellect, a power extending to everything, if providence is "to leave nothing neglected" (6, 23), then how could the wicked rule the good? The quoted passage begins to address that issue, which the fifth chapter of this dissertation examines in detail. What is pertinent for the current discussion is Plotinus' criticism and what is implied in that criticism. In evaluating what is formed as a mixture, one must remember that what is mixed can never measure up to what is pure and unmixed. To censure or accuse bodily beings because they are not as shapely and good as a pure form is an inappropriate evaluative procedure. Neither the form nor that which receives it can be properly judged by such a process. That which receives the form can never be identical to it, and the form is limited by the capacity of the receiver.[51]

Another point is implied in this criticism. Namely, the ways in which we seek and examine "the secondary" and "the mixed" are not appropriate for seeking "the primary" and "the unmixed." As discussed in the previous section, discursive thought combines and divides images, articulates and explicates them, and is oriented to bodies through them. These rational procedures and this stance of being directed towards bodies may help lead one to Intellect but they cannot take one all the way. At some point, in seeking the primary and unmixed, one must forgo any sort of image and no longer direct one's attention toward bodies through them. One should not think of Intellect in a way that resembles the conditions under which discursive thought operates. If one were to try to conceive of Intellect or intellects in the same fashion as one conceives of extended,

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[51] See Clarke, 1952, 184-89; See also, Sharkley, 2009 and Gurtler, 2009.

external entities, one would be led astray. One must not attempt to experience these as external objects that are separate from oneself.

In combining this criticism with the one above, we can see how Plotinus' discussion of providence continues to fill out the movement outlined in the second section. One must attempt to extend beyond the everyday, limited point of view. A shift from a limited perspective to looking toward the whole is required. Part of this shift away from such a perspective is not being disposed toward objects as external realities. All must be experienced as internally intertwined with each other and with oneself. There is a connection between introspection and looking toward the whole, which will become clearer as we reexamine Plotinus' discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter. With these two criticisms and their lessons in mind, then, we can turn to how Plotinus' discussion of providence can lead readers toward non-discursive thought.

4.3.2   Plotinus' discussion of Soul, logos, and matter as pedagogical

Through the three main factors of the cosmos, Plotinus guides readers toward non-discursive thought. This section examines each one in turn to see how it functions to help readers move from one kind of thought to the other. In particular, passages are examined in which Plotinus couples Soul, *logos*, or matter with a criticism of discursive thought.

First, regarding matter, Plotinus is clear that the concept or account (λόγος) of the indefinite may be determined but the intuition of it must be indeterminate (II.4.10, 5-6). The *logos* of matter and its determination cannot refer to matter precisely because matter

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lacks any and all determination. The concept is empty and refers to nothing definite. The

indefiniteness of the intuition (ἐπιβολή, 10, 6) demonstrates that the *logos* of matter is

empty. Included in this conception is that whatever appears upon matter is to that extent

unreal. The projections of true beings occur on that which serves as the surface for the

projections. Matter is that surface upon which they may appear.[52] In that sense, matter

contributes to these images' status as images that appear and disappear.[53] To focus on

and be attached to appearances is to be involved with what is relatively unreal. A function

of Plotinus' discussion of matter, then, is to turn one away from what appears and is

partially unreal toward truth and being.

    A passage from Plotinus helps to show how his discussion of matter guides readers

toward truth and being.

> And indeed, the inner soul is not involved here in these events in life, but the outer
> shadow of humanity both wails and mourns and does all these deeds on stage, making
> stages all over the whole earth. For such are the works of a man who only knows
> how to live the lower and outer aspects, ignorant both in tears and seriousness that he
> is playing. For only by what is serious must one be serious in serious deeds, but the
> other man is a toy. But some act serious both by not knowing they are taking toys
> seriously and by being toys themselves (Καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἑκάστων
> οὐχ ἡ ἔνδον ψυχή, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ἔξω ἀνθρώπου σκιὰ καὶ οἰμώζει καὶ ὀδύρεται καὶ πάντα
> ποιεῖ ἐν σκηνῇ τῇ ὅλῃ γῇ πολλαχοῦ σκηνὰς ποιησαμένων. Τοιαῦτα γὰρ ἔργα
> ἀνθρώπου τὰ κάτω καὶ τὰ ἔξω μόνα ζῆν εἰδότος καὶ ἐν δακρύοις καὶ σπουδαίοις ὅτι
> παίζων ἐστὶν ἠγνοηκότος. Μόνῳ γὰρ τῷ σπουδαίῳ σπουδαστέον ἐν σπουδαίοις τοῖς
> ἔργοις, ὁ δ᾽ ἄλλος ἄνθρωπος παίγνιον. Σπουδάζεται δὲ καὶ τὰ παίγνια τοῖς σπουδάζειν
> οὐκ εἰδόσι καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς οὖσι παιγνίοις, III.2.15, 48-57).[54]

The context of this passage is Plotinus confronting the impasse about how there can be

continual conflicts in an orderly and good cosmos, especially when *logos* is the source of

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[52] See Kalligas, 1997, 397.
[53] See Perl, 2014, 146.
[54] My translation.

that order. A crucial part of Plotinus' response involves how to behold (θεᾶσθαι, 15, 45) these conflicts. He addresses this objection to the cosmos and its source by criticizing the perspective that would be its basis. This point of view takes property and possessions seriously. It values and is attached to appearances and associates a good life with acquiring them. In characterizing appearances as toys, Plotinus depicts them as playthings without substance. They are not worth taking seriously. Even the part of us that is attached to them is "the exterior shadow of man" (ἡ ἔξω ἀνθρώπου σκιὰ, 15, 49). The external, perceptible part of us is what remains interested in and involved with external, perceptible objects. But this part of us is an insubstantial manifestation of our inner self.[55] This "shadow" is unaware that he is playing. Plotinus' criticism aims at turning one's focus away from what is external toward what is internal. Both one's "shadow self" and the objects this self is oriented toward are appearances. As appearances, they are projections upon matter, which serves as a condition for their possible manifestation. In portraying matter as a surface upon which appearances only play at being real, Plotinus turns one's focus away from what is external and relatively unreal toward what is interior and truly real.

Coupled with this turn inward is the extension from one's limited perspective to a more comprehensive perspective. Plotinus' discussion of *logos* serves as a means for accomplishing this change in perspective. We can see his discussion of *logos* serving this purpose in the following passage.

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[55] Kalligas, 2014, 468. Along with claiming that the serious person is oriented to the truth of Being, Kalligas also points to the dichotomy of "seriousness-play." This dichotomy is examined in the final sub-section. There is also an allusion to the image of the cave from the *Republic.* See also Graeser, 1972, 83 for the possibility of Epictetus' influence on referring to the "outside world" as "sport".

But we are like those making accusations without experience in the art of painting, whenever the colors are not beautiful all over, but the painter renders what is fitting to each place: also, the city does not make use of equal rights, even those with good customs. Or, another example is someone who complains about a play because all the characters in it are not heroes, but even a servant, and a peasant also, speak coarsely. But the play is not beautiful if one were to remove the baser sorts, since it is filled out by them (Ἡμεῖς δέ, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄπειροι γραφικῆς τέχνης αἰτιῶνται, ὡς οὐ καλὰ τὰ χρώματα πανταχοῦ, ὁ δὲ ἄρα τὰ προσήκοντα ἀπέδωκεν ἑκάστῳ τόπῳ· καὶ αἱ πόλεις δὲ οὐκ ἐξ ἴσων, καὶ αἵ εὐνομίᾳ χρῶνται· ἤ εἴ τις δρᾶμα μέμφοιτο, ὅτι μὴ πάντες ἥρωες ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἰκέτης καί τις ἀγροῖκος καὶ φαύλως φθεγγόμενος· τὸ δὲ οὐ καλόν ἐστιν, εἴ τις τοὺς χείρους ἐξέλοι, καὶ ἐκ τούτων συμπληρούμενον, III.2.11, 9-17).[56]

In the context of this passage, Plotinus argues that *logos* makes everything, both the good and the bad. Seen within a certain perspective, this claim could leave *logos* susceptible to censure. Plotinus insists, however, that this accusation would be like someone untrained and inexperienced in painting criticizing a painter. The judgment that this cosmos should not contain anything bad, base, ugly, or harmful is issued from the standards of evaluation and expectations of someone not properly equipped to make such an assessment. Plotinus continues to require readers to challenge and abandon standards that could obstruct a proper understanding of this cosmos. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, he has been preparing readers for this task of challenging such standards from the beginning. In this case, the standard of evaluation seems to be that only what is similarly or equally noble or beautiful ought to exist—that only gods should be (11, 7-8). As the examples he uses suggests, the main problem is a limited but also an untrained perspective: whether one is expressing that everything in a picture should be eyes—and so, no hair—or only beautiful colors (nothing mud or dirt colored),[57] or cities where

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[56] My translation.
[57] *Parm.*, 130c-e.

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everyone has equal rights, or plays with only heroes. In these situations, one is not looking toward the whole and whether each part plays its own role in making the whole complete. The standard should not be based on selecting a section of this cosmos from one's personal vantage point, and it should not be an expectation that whatever is unbecoming should not be. Mud and dirt, too, have a place in this cosmos.

This criticism, directed at a limited perspective and inappropriate standards opens a way to understanding *logos*. Plotinus' discussion of *logos* helps one experience this cosmos as if from within the point of view of *logos* itself. As containing within itself the richest possible variety, *logos* serves as a sort of model for looking toward the whole. Instead of excluding something according to certain standards of evaluation, the attempt is to contain within our sight as much as possible and to be all-inclusive. We do not direct our attention *to* something in particular but attempt to see all things as included within one, single whole. To include all is to include opposites. This attempt to be all-inclusive, then, is assisted by thinking of opposites dynamically: better/worse, above/below, even inner/outer, are not treated as mutually exclusive. One sees them as all together in a harmonious fashion. One must be able to hold opposites together, not selecting one and discarding the other but preserving both. Although the inclusiveness of *logos* is the model, Plotinus is careful to indicate our limits. Human beings are parts, not all (14, 18-19). We cannot encompass everything and be forgetful of our limitations. We can be "made like the whole" or be "like a great and beautiful image of a god" but cannot *be* the whole or a god (14, 23-27).

Does this limitation imply that non-discursive thought is impossible for human beings? Plotinus' discussion of the human soul suggests a way in which non-discursive thought is possible for us. In fact, our discursive thought depends on non-discursive thought, as indicated in the first section and as will be discussed shortly. Nevertheless, the human soul also comes with certain limitations, especially because of its relationship to the body. The human soul—indeed, and all other souls—and the All-Soul are kindred, are "soul-sisters."[58] Our souls are "of like form" (ὁμοειδής, IV.3.6, 1) with the All-Soul. We possess all the same capabilities as this Soul, including the same powers of contemplation, and differ not in kind but in degree. [59] However, whereas the All-Soul's contemplation remains more closely connected to Being and Intellect, our souls give more attention to our bodies. We are more invested in and concerned with our bodies, which means that we tend not to turn our attention towards contemplation. Our focus remains within the limits and confines of taking care of our bodies. Still, each soul depends (ἐξηρτημέναι) on Intellect and each of them are individual expressions (λόγοι) of intellects.[60] By being of the same kind and by some part of our soul keeping itself in contemplation with our sister soul, each human being retains lines of connection to Intellect.[61] Because we are souls, each one of us can redirect our attention.

Plotinus offers a thought experiment or meditative exercise to assist one in this redirection.

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[58] See IV.3.6, 14; Helleman-Elgersma, 1980.
[59] See IV.3.6, 20-35; Helleman-Elgersma, 1980, 378-87; Dillon, 2015, 200-02.
[60] IV.3.5, 10; Helleman-Elgersma, 1980, 353-54.
[61] See IV.3.15.11-15, IV.3.30, IV.4.34.1-8; Helleman-Elgersma, 1980, 61-62; Wallis, 1972, 84-85; Heiser, 1991, 44-45; Dillon and Blumenthal, 2015, 310-11; Gurtler, 2015, 146-148.

It is necessary, as it seems, for someone who is intending to know Intellect to catch sight of the soul's most divine part. But one might bring this about equally also in this way, if one were first to take away the body from the man, and clearly from yourself, and next the soul forming this [body] and, very thoroughly, sense-perceptions and also strivings and desires and the other fooleries of these sorts, as very much inclining toward mortality. Indeed, the remainder of soul is this, the one we called the image of Intellect keeping alive some light from That, like the [light] of the sun beyond the sphere of its extension, the shining around it [and] from it (Ψυχὴν οὖν, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ τὸ ψυχῆς θειότατον κατιδεῖν δεῖ τὸν μέλλοντα νοῦν εἴσεσθαι ὅ τι ἐστί. γένοιτο δ' ἂν τοῦτο ἴσως καὶ ταύτῃ, εἰ ἀφέλοις πρῶτον τὸ σῶμα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ δηλονότι σαυτοῦ, εἶτα καὶ τὴν πλάττουσαν τοῦτο ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν δὲ εὖ μάλα, ἐπιθυμίας δὲ καὶ θυμοὺς καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τὰς τοιαύτας φλυαρίας, ὡς πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν νευούσας καὶ πάνυ. τὸ δὴ λοιπὸν αὐτῆς τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὃ εἰκόνα ἔφαμεν νοῦ σῴζουσαν τι φῶς ἐκείνου, οἷον ἡλίου μετὰ τὴν τοῦ μεγέθους σφαῖραν τὸ περὶ αὐτὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς λάμπον, V.3.9, 1-11).[62]

The purpose of this exercise is to shift from the limited perspective of focusing on one's body and its environment to the pure act of sight belonging to the All-Soul.[63] The first step in this exercise is to remove (ἀφέλοις, 9, 3) the body from the human being. Plotinus cannot mean a literal taking away of one's body. He must mean that one is to remove bodily aspects from one's orientation, attention, or interpretation of being human. Part of this removal, as the mentioning of strivings (ἐπιθυμίας, 9, 6) and desires (θυμούς, 9, 7) suggest, involves putting aside the needs and cares of the body. The body can be temporarily relieved of being concerned with avoiding or pursuing things in its environment. It can take a rest. Next, one withdraws "the soul forming this body" (τὴν πλάττουσαν τοῦτο ψυχὴν, 9, 5). The soul desists from exerting itself in shaping and molding the body. The activities of the soul directed toward the body also take a rest. Since these activities involve focusing on the particularity of this body, they involve

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[62] My translation.
[63] See V.3.8, 19-30 for Plotinus depiction of Intellect as light seeing light. Since this is the light of Intellect being kept alive, there is connection between this trace of light and sight. See also *Rep.,* 507c-509a.

remaining constrained within a limited perspective. By being relieved of this duty, the soul can redirect its focus.

   As Plotinus indicates and as mentioned above, this effort of the soul to form the body is not just about supplying a shapely extension and magnitude. It involves perceptions and the production of affections that come with them. One does not expend efforts trying to perceive something. The strivings and desires that come with perceptions are also put aside. Perceptions are not neutral but involve turning our attention to what is perceived. Our perceptions elicit a response to our environment—pursuing this or that, fleeing this or that, defending or attacking, so that even ignoring is an active response. All of these responses and reactions to our environment incline toward what is mortal in us (πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν νευούσας, 9, 8), since they involve pursuing what preserves or satisfies us, fleeing what harms or displeases us, or ignoring that toward which we are indifferent. These responses keep us focused on preserving and extending bodily life. The point is not that the body is bad but that it is limited by a focus on particular things.[64] The point is to help one extend beyond a limited perspective, no longer to fret about the death of the body but "to catch sight of the soul's most divine part" (τὸ ψυχῆς θειότατον κατιδεῖν, 9, 2). One gradually shifts one's sight from being fixed in and directed toward the body and its environment toward the part of the soul that is not associated with the body. One's sight becomes dislocated and reoriented.

   After all these aspects are removed, what remains is an image (εἰκόνα, 9, 9) of Intellect. A pure act of sight is left after the efforts of the soul toward the body are

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[64] See Helleman-Elgersma, 1980, 35-36.

removed. This sight keeps alive some of the light from Intellect. It does not merely hold

or receive this light but *is* it. Through this exercise, one learns that one's soul was already

engaged in this seeing. As discussed above, this seeing is not empty but full. It is not

mixed with any partial perspectives or bodily aspects. It is the all-inclusive seeing

associated with the All-Soul's contemplation of Intellect.[65] This seeing is possible for us

because of our kinship with this Soul. In this exercise, we catch sight of that kinship. We

do not direct our sight outward to particular things from a particular perspective. We

achieve an internal vision of Intellect.

This Soul is still an image, however, which implies that the non-discursive thinking

belonging to Intellect remains to be achieved. The apex of sight belonging to our soul is

the recognition of itself as an image of Intellect. This result, however, is not too

surprising. As discussed above, the final movement is a prayer for the god to come and

bring his own cosmos. All that is left in our power as a soul is this invocation. To think *in*

Intellect requires that one *be* an intellect. If this happens, one is no longer aware *as a*

human but as completely different.[66] One's soul is suddenly seized by the intellect of

which it is the expression. One is "stealing oneself away" (συναρπάσαντα ἑαυτόν, 4, 14-

15), this intellect "dragging the better part of soul" (ἐφέλκοντα τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄμεινον, 4,

15-16).[67] There is a difference in tone here from the prayer and invocation for the god.

Instead of the god coming, one's intellect seizes one's soul and drags it into itself so that

one thinks oneself as that intellect. In both cases, however, the limit of what is in one's

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[65] See IV.3.6, 15-17; Helleman-Elgersma, 1980, 60, 74-75, 376-77; Dillon, 2015, 200.
[66] See V.3.4. 11-12; Heiser, 1991, 9.
[67] V.3.4.12-14, paraphrase based on Armstrong's translation with some changes, 1984, 83.

power as a soul has been reached. Something must happen that is beyond the scope of one's discursive, rational powers. In our present case, the role of discursive thought is to become ready for one's noetic self to seize one's soul. Thinking all the other intellects is implied in thinking oneself as an intellect. With non-discursive thought, one thinks oneself and all beings as united in a single, eternal act. The extension of one's vision and the introspection in which one sees oneself and other beings as internally interconnected is crucial to this preparation. The suddenness of being seized, however, is important. It implies that no step by step procedure can guarantee it.

4.3.3   Open or Closed System?

If discursive thought and the giving of accounts leads to this activity of non-discursive thought, then is Plotinus susceptible to John Heiser's challenge that he has a closed system? Concluding his examination of Plotinus' notion and use of language, Heiser asserts that "an intuited network of eternal Forms is not an open-ended system" (Heiser, 1991, 79). An open system continuously develops through a philosophic soul whose work remains within the boundaries of reason and language (Heiser, 1991, 79). It implies that complete and total knowledge is a limit that can be continuously approximated by an infinite process but never achieved.[68] For Heiser, then, an intuition of eternal Forms that is free of discursive thought belongs to a closed system. There is no more development or inquiry. Heiser bases his assertion that Plotinus' system is closed on the claim that Plotinus must have felt that he was a *spoudaios* (Heiser, 1991, 78). The

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[68] See Balashov, 1994, 283-295.

spoudaios is the good or wise man who has achieved well-being (*eudaimonia*).[69] According to Plotinus' "theoretical account," the *spoudaios* only speaks or writes in order to declare what he already is and possesses to someone else (Heiser, 1991, 76). Since Plotinus posits *noesis* as something one has as a whole or not all, since the *spoudaios* has attained it, there is no more advancing or enhancing (Heiser, 1991, 77-78). The *spoudaios* no longer reasons about something but is vision (III.8.6, 36-38). If Plotinus felt he was a *spoudaios,* then he must have considered himself finished with reasoning and questioning. Heiser does acknowledge that Plotinus continued to write even after he stopped teaching orally (Heiser, 1991, 78). Since "the learner learns by giving a *logos*" (Heiser, 1991, 7), then Plotinus' practice of continuing to give accounts implies that he must have still been a learner. For Heiser, there is a disjunction between Plotinus' practice and his account, especially his account of the *spoudaios*.

Whether or not Plotinus felt that he was a *spoudaios* can be speculated on but seems fundamentally unverifiable. Examining, however, whether or not there is room for open-endedness within Plotinus' "theoretical account" is possible. At least two relevant passages suggest open-endedness in Plotinus' account. First, in the context of a passage discussed above (V.3.6, 25-28), Plotinus indicates that we do not remain in Intellect. After showing that self-thinking belongs to Intellect, he asks whether the account is persuasive (6, 8-9). He says 'no,' since necessity is in Intellect, persuasiveness (πειθώ, 6, 12) in soul. He continues by saying that while we were in Intellect, we were content and thought (ἠρκούμεθα καὶ ἐνοοῦμεν, 6, 15) and saw (ἑωρῶμεν, 6, 16) all gathered into one

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[69] See I.4.[46]; Heiser, 1991, 6n14, 26-30; Kalligas, 2014, 468.

because the soul kept quiet and followed Intellect. Since we have come to be (γεγενήμεθα, 6, 19) here in soul again, we seek (ζητοῦμεν, 6, 20) persuasion. At this point, the passage about teaching ourselves appears. The use of first person plural forms of verbs is significant. The point is that *we*, including Plotinus, as human beings do not rest content in Intellect but come back to the soul's seeking and inquiring. Plotinus, and any other human being, cannot help but come back to discursive reason, to "contemplate the archetype in the image" (ἐν εἰκόνι τὸ ἀρχέτυπον θεωρεῖν, 6, 19-20), to seek, question, give accounts, and be persuaded.

Second, in a brief autobiographical comment (IV.8.[6].1, 1-11), Plotinus confirms this dynamism of the human condition. He relates how he has woken up from his body into himself but also how he has come back to discursive thought and found himself to be at an impasse (ἀπορῶ, 1, 9): in this case, the impasse is about how soul comes to be in body. Part of his own autobiographical comment includes coming back to discursive thought from Intellect and also being at an impasse. The first passage and this autobiographical comment both suggest that human beings do not live fully in Intellect. This coming back does not occur just to report to others what is within oneself but is included in the condition of being an embodied human soul. Within Plotinus' own account, embodied human souls do not completely leave discursive thought, since that is "what we ourselves are" (V.3.3, 35-37). Because we are at the level of discursive thought, we do not always apprehend our own thinking: the other part of ourselves is always receiving something from perception (IV.3.30, 14-17). We apprehend our thought only through an expression or account of it, which enters through imagination and as an

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image (IV.3.30, 8-13). The embodied human soul, as perceptive and as a discursive thinker, implies that it cannot fully and wholly live at the level of non-discursive thought. We always come back to discursive thinking.

Plotinus insists that this limitation does not affect the well-being of the good person (σπουδαῖος). He contends that the wise person need not be aware that he is wise to be wise. His reasoning is that wisdom is in the substance (οὐσία), not imported to it, so that even while asleep or unconscious the *spoudaios* remains wise in his substantial activity (I.4.[46].9, 14-26). If the *spoudaios* can be wise even while asleep or unconscious, it is not impossible that this person can remain wise and well-off even in perplexity. He will need to reason and give accounts, and not just in details and particulars (Heiser, 1991, 77), by virtue of being human. These operations will not necessarily affect his wisdom and well-being. On the one hand, he can be in perplexity and investigating and giving an account. On the other hand, the "greatest studies" (μαθήματα μέγιστα) are always available to him (Heiser, 1991, 77).[70]

That these studies are just that, studies (μαθήματα), is significant. In either direction, toward what is sensible or toward what is intelligible—and beyond that to the One—the human being does not stop learning.[71] By virtue of being an embodied human soul, the *spoudaios* will not always be aware of his thought and so must seek and investigate and be in perplexity. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the noetic self is distinct and thinks

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[70]*Rep.,* VI, 504a.
[71] See VI.7[38].15-17: even Intellect's relation to the One is open-ended in that the former must always think the latter in multiplicity. Intellect can never be the One or grasp it in pure simplicity. In general, whatever depends on and has a trace (ἴχνος) of another, whether it is Intellect having a trace of the One (17, 14) or Soul of Intellect (17, 39), the dependent is open-ended in relation to what it depends on. It must continuously learn about that of which it has a trace.

differently than the embodied human soul. Insofar as the *spoudaios* is embodied, he remains distinct from his noetic self, which is the one whose thinking involves "an intuited network of eternal Forms" (Heiser, 1991, 79). Plotinus' theoretical account and in his own autobiographical comment both imply an open-endedness. The work of discursive thought, as investigating and giving accounts, is never and can never be finished. Any account, Plotinus' included, is open-ended precisely because the condition of the one giving the account is open-ended, is not fully in Intellect or fully in perception and corporeality.

Frederic M. Schroeder's depiction of the relationship between our discursive thought and noetic possibilities captures this dynamic. He presents this relationship as dialectical.

> If we see intuition as giving birth to speech and speech as the attempt to recapture intuition, then we must surely see the relation between intuition and speech as dialectical. If declaration belongs to the moment of vision, then discussion must have the immediacy of declaration as its goal. Thus, the relationship between declaration and discussion must also be dialectical (Schroeder, 1992, 76).

Discussion, as Schroeder uses the term, involves predicating one thing of another as well as denying that one thing belongs to another (Schroeder, 1992, 67). It involves dividing and combining concepts. Associating declaration with beauty, Schroeder suggests that declaration announces the being of something, summoning one to what is proclaimed (Schroeder, 1992, 72-3).[72] Discussion and declaration are dialectical in that discussion analyzes what declaration proclaims. Those in a discussion do not seek to end in a final, definitive analysis but to declare something. The one with the thought or insight produces

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[72] See also *Metaph.*, 1051b23-28, where Aristotle is discussing true and false in relation to uncompounded things: "touching and affirming something uncompounded is the true (for affirming (φάσις) is not the same as predication (κατάφασις))" (Sachs, 1999, 184).

a declaration, which announces the thought in a way that could summon others to it. The one proclaiming inscribes the thought into words and so translates it into a sharable, communicable form. Through the declaration, the thought is in a form that can be discussed. Those who discuss this declaration, however, have it within themselves to move toward their own experience of non-discursive thought. As Plotinus indicates, the soul of someone discussing has within himself the *logos* closely following thought (IV.3.30, 6-8). This *logos* is the one that is living and animate (*Phdr.,* 276a). Any reasoned, uttered speech is an expression of this inner *logos* (Heiser, 1991, 44-47). Through discussion, one's attention could begin to move toward that part of oneself attending to thought (Heiser, 1991, 46). In becoming one in attention with this living *logos*, one could have an insight and "steal oneself away" into Intellect. This insight can then be reflected in imagination. One could inscribe the thought into words and so make a declaration. This dialectic, which is ongoing, between a non-discursive insight and speech, between discussion and declaration reflects the condition of the embodied human soul.

4.4   Concluding Remarks: Seriousness and Play

This chapter can be summarized in terms of the opposition between seriousness and play. The poles of this opposition are not mutually exclusive but are interrelated through the living *logos* of readers. In examining this dynamic, we can continue to see how Plotinus' pedagogy is open-ended.

In commenting on a passage discussed above (III.2.15,48-57), Paul Kalligas points out that "the devotion of the *spoudaios* (the "serious" or "wise" man) to the truth of Beings makes all worldly things, including his own bodily existence, seem like mere *paignia* ("playthings")" (Kalligas, 2014, 468). He also suggests that Plotinus "relegates each of its poles [the opposition 'seriousness-play'] to a different ontological level" (Kalligas, 2014, 468). Play is connected to the level of sensible bodies, and seriousness to the level of intelligible beings. Play belongs to an orientation to the exterior of other things and to one's own exterior. That which appears and has the qualitative and quantitative aspects characteristic of appearances is not to be taken seriously. To be earnestly and zealously engaged with such appearances, up to and including one's own appearance, is like taking toys seriously. That which appears is to be taken lightly, casually, and amusedly. In contrast, the contemplation of Being and Intellect is to be taken seriously. The endeavor towards non-discursive thought and truth is worth being serious about. This movement of one's soul, this project and task, is laborious, careful, and solemn. It requires an ongoing criticism and challenge of one's standards of judgment and evaluation, of one's habituated modes of thinking and language use, and of one's attachment to appearances.

Kalligas points out in a comment on the opening of III.8 that Plotinus is "making use of another well-known rhetorical commonplace, according to which an alternation of "seriousness" (*spoudē*) and "playfulness" (*paidia*) is indispensable to any exacting endeavor" (Kalligas, 2014, 626). This treatise begins with Plotinus claiming that, before being serious, he will playfully assert that all things aim at contemplation (1, 1-13). After

asking if the paradox of such an account (λόγος) is endurable, he suggests that those who play are already contemplating or, at least, strive toward contemplation (1, 8-13). There is a way, then, to reconcile what Kalligas points out as a discrepancy between the alternations of seriousness and play in III.8 and the different ontological levels implied in III.2.15, 53-58. The expressions that form Plotinus' accounts are images. His writings are like the appearances that one is to approach playfully (*Phdr.*, 276b-e). To focus attention on formulations and memorizing them as the goal is to miss what must be taken seriously. Thinking or contemplating is what one must be wholly concerned with (*VP* 8.4-9). In fact, the turning point from play to seriousness in III.8 occurs at the moment of depicting the soul's experience of unity with what is known (6, 14-17). This possibility of non-discursive thought is what one must take seriously. Through playing with expressions, accounts, and images in discursive thought, this seriousness and what it is oriented toward can happen. That which one is focused on and striving toward is identification with the All-Soul and then with Intellect. Nevertheless, discursive strategies could be at the service of this endeavor. One takes contemplation seriously, not concepts and formulations. One may attend to these for the sake of contemplation but to treat them as the goal is to miss the point.

This dynamic between seriousness and play is possible through the reader's living *logos*. As that which closely follows thought, this inner *logos* is a reader's guide. When one's discursive thinking is guided by this *logos*, reading a text becomes an opportunity to think the thought this *logos* follows (*Phdr.*, 276d). The text and its author can help but only to the extent that they assist readers in realizing that the actual teacher is within.

Under the guidance of this *logos*, the text can be an occasion for the soul to teach itself how Intellect thinks. The discursivity the author exhibits in the text can serve as an example for the reader. However, the reader does not attempt to become like the author but to become like the model or paradigm that the author himself attempts to imitate.[73] If the reader, in his discursive thought, attempted to become like the author and his text, then that would be like taking an outer image seriously. To realize that one's inner *logos* is the guide is to approach the outer image—the text—playfully and the possibility of contemplation seriously.

Although seriousness and play are related to different ontological levels, any movement from discursive to non-discursive thought requires both. The condition of embodied human souls, as the discursivity between thought and perception, requires being both serious and playful. Even if one strives towards non-discursive thought and experiences an insight into truth, one inevitably returns to discursivity. However, upon this return, is one's experience of oneself and one's surroundings the same as before the insight? Or does the insight cause a fundamental change? The next two chapters, by examining how the cosmos can be good but contain bad things and how humans can be free and yet determined, show that there is a fundamental change. Plotinus' response to questions about the problems of evil and of human freedom in a providential cosmos depends on seeing oneself and one's world differently. This change of perspective is effected by making the movement toward non-discursive thought.

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[73] See I.2.[19].2, 5-10, I.2.7, 26-31. Chapter six of this dissertation discusses this treatise and this issue in detail.

Chapter 5
Evil, Responsibility, and Providence

The previous chapter showed how one of Plotinus' main pedagogical aims is at work in his presentation of providence. Namely, his discussion of Soul, *logos*, and matter was shown to guide readers toward non-discursive thought. The possibility of having a noetic insight is necessary—and, with it, this aim of his pedagogy—for understanding his

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hypothesis that providence is the cosmos as an imitation of Intellect. Fully understanding

what he means by providence, then, requires thinking as Intellect thinks, which means

thinking non-discursively. Part of this pedagogical aim involves exposing the limits of

discursive thought. This chapter continues in a similar vein. In particular, Plotinus'

resolution of two impasses that accompany discussions of providence depends on altering

one's perspective and way of thinking. Roughly speaking, these two impasses are the

problem of evil in a providential cosmos and the problem of human agency within an

ordered whole. The problem of evil is this: how can we say the cosmos is good and

providential if suffering, death, and imperfections exist within it? More specifically, how

is the suffering of good human beings under the activity of bad human beings possible in

a providential cosmos? The problem of human agency is this: if we say that humans are

parts of an ordered whole, how can we say they are responsible for themselves or their

actions?

In both cases, the difficulties are overcome by changing the assumptions and ways of

thinking that produce them. Undoing the difficulties involves thinking of opposites

dynamically instead of statically. One does not select one of the opposing pair at the

exclusion of the other but preserves both of them. The aim of holding both together is not

to generate a definitive, final account free of impasses. Rather, the aim is the possibility

of experiencing an insight.[1] This chapter shows that a resolution of the problem of evil

leads to a difficulty involving the problem of human agency and vice versa. Through

these alternations of impasse to resolution and resolution to impasse, the union of both

[1] See Gurtler, 2015, 169-170.

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difficulties under a common difficulty becomes apparent. This common difficulty is the one introduced in the first chapter: how is individual becoming compatible with a providential cosmos? Plotinus guides readers through a thought experiment in which they come to see this compatibility. As with the other impasses, working through this one depends on changing one's perspective. In particular, by attempting to see the cosmos *as if* from the vantage point of the One, readers can apprehend how individuals can come to be what they are within a single common order.

5.1 The Problem of Evil and Individuals

For an account of providence, the problem of evil involves difficulties about individuals and about the whole. Regarding individuals, Plotinus articulates three impasses: the destruction of inanimate bodies, the suffering and death of animate ones, and the harm human beings inflict on each other. How can the cosmos be good and well-ordered if destruction, disorder, and death exist within it? Although he focuses more attention on the third impasse, the other two still raise problems in an account of a providential cosmos. The following sub-sections take up each impasse in turn.

5.1.1 The destruction of inanimate bodies

Regarding inanimate bodies, like the elements fire and water, Plotinus says, "do not be surprised if fire is extinguished by water and something else is destroyed by fire"

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(III.2.4, 1-2).[2] Plotinus addresses the reader with a prohibition, since he uses a negation

with the second person subjunctive (μὴ θαυμάσῃς, 4, 2).[3] One should not marvel or

wonder at the fact that the elements destroy each other or that the destruction of one

generates another (4, 4-5).[4] One could only marvel at these facts because of an

assumption or expectation that the elements should be permanent and stably what they

are. Plotinus challenges this expectation. One cannot presume that whatever depends on

something else for its existence could or should be stably itself and indestructible. If

something comes to exist because of another, it is capable of being destroyed by another

(4, 2-4). As discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, *logos* contains all the forms

that appear in bodies, which includes the elements. The elements result, then, from the

projection of form onto matter.[5] They depend on something else for their existence and

are susceptible to instability and destruction. Inanimate bodies that are compounded out

of different elements, by extension, do not cause their own existence. They all depend on

something else to exist and are thereby susceptible to instability and destruction.

5.1.2   Harm and death among animate bodies

Animate bodies necessarily attack and destroy each other, since they did not come to

be in order to live forever (4, 17-18). These living bodies emerge through *logos* grasping

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[2] Armstrong, 1967, 55. Unless otherwise noted, all translations and paraphrases are from Armstrong in this chapter.

[3] Smyth, 1920, 1800; Plotinus' use of second person forms of verbs could also be him dialoguing with himself as he thinks through this problem and so is part of his general philosophical method. However, as discussed in the first chapter, readers who follow his philosophical method must actively engage in its practices.

[4] See *Tim.*, 49b-50a.

[5] See V.9.[5].3, 17-21.

matter (4, 18-20) and so they depend on form and matter. Their material condition implies the possibility of losing form, while their form is that through which they can remain whole. This dynamic is continuous. It requires animals to feed on other animals or plants and requires plants to compete for root space and sunlight. The destruction of animate bodies and their attacks on each other are the result of form and matter. An implication of their resulting from both is the possibility of harm or death from disorder and chance intersections. Plotinus insists that order and regularity being imported to and imposed on matter is the reason why disorder is possible (4, 28-31). The appearance of disorder, deformities, and irregularities, along with associated harms, does not imply that the cosmos is not well-ordered. To expect that cosmic order must imply the impossibility of disorder is to be misguided by an inappropriate assumption about order. This situation is similar to Plotinus saying that we should not expect the same beauty in the mixed and unmixed (III.2.7, 1-3). The kind of order this cosmos has results because form is projected onto matter, which does not possess any form of its own. The possibility of excess or deficiency arises because limit and form are brought to bear on what is inherently limitless and formless.

Those that must receive form cannot always do so, either because of themselves or because of some chance interference by another (III.2.4, 31-36). The former situation is examined in the next subsection: it involves beings "having free motion" (ἔχοντα κίνησιν αὐτεξούσιον, 4, 37). Regarding the latter, chance intersections among bodies can result in harm and deformities. Chance is not excluded from the kind of order belonging to this

cosmos.[6] Each body has what it needs to be itself and live the sort of life appropriate to it. Intersections among these bodies, however, could result in a body not realizing or fully receiving what it could have received. Both inanimate bodies and animate bodies can unintentionally affect and act on each other (4, 35-37). Although these chance intersections could prevent bodies from receiving what they need, this possibility does not imply a lack of order. Rather, the unity of the cosmos is the condition for any interaction to occur at all.[7] When interpreting or evaluating this cosmos, Plotinus argues that one cannot hold assumptions about order that exclude chance and disorder. Such an assumption is inappropriate given that order is brought to bear on that which lacks form and remains formless.

5.1.3 The suffering of human beings

Difficulties involving human circumstances, actions, and interactions in a providential cosmos must now be addressed. For instance, how is an account of providence compatible with poverty and illness, with the seemingly unfair distribution of good things to bad people and bad things to good people, and with the fact that wicked people are often rulers? Regarding situations like poverty and illness, Plotinus asserts that they do not affect the good and can even be beneficial to the bad (5, 7-8). Such troubles and misfortunes are inevitable, since, as Plotinus quotes from *Theaetetus,* "evils will not

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[6] See chapter three of this dissertation for this discussion.
[7] See IV.3.32-34 for Plotinus' discussion of how cosmic sympathy is the result of the All-Soul and particular souls' relationship to it and how this unity makes interaction possible.

be done away with" (5, 29).[8] The aim, then, is not to avoid or eradicate such predicaments.[9]

> For this belongs to the mightiest power, to be able to use even bad things beautifully and to be sufficiently furnished for turning misshapen things into other shapes. But on the whole, one must posit evil as falling short of good: there must be a falling short of good here, since it is in another. So, the other which the good is in, being other than good, brings about the falling short: for this [other] was not good (Τοῦτο δὲ δυνάμεως μεγίστης, καλῶς καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς χρῆσθαι δύνασθαι καὶ τοῖς ἀμόρφοις γενομένοις εἰς ἑτέρας μορφάς χρῆσθαι ἱκανὴν εἶναι. Ὅλως δὲ τὸ κακὸν ἔλλειψιν ἀγαθοῦ θετέον· ἀνάγκη δὲ ἔλλειψιν εἶναι ἐνταῦθα ἀγαθοῦ, ὅτι ἐν ἄλλῳ. Τὸ οὖν ἄλλο, ἐν ᾧ ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἕτερον ἀγαθοῦ ὄν ποιεῖ τὴν ἔλλειψιν· τοῦτο γὰρ οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἦν, III.2.5, 23-29).[10]

This passage illuminates why evils like poverty, sickness, and all sorts of sufferings are inevitable. Plotinus posits that "evil" (τὸ κακόν, 5, 26) means "falling short of good" (ἔλλειψιν ἀγαθοῦ, 4, 26). This defectiveness is necessary because what is good is in another. This other is responsible for the falling short, since it can only receive as much of what is good as it can.

Although evils such as sickness, loss, and all sorts of suffering are inevitable, that does not mean this cosmos is not providential. Prior to the above passage, Plotinus discusses how the *logos* always generates one thing from the destruction of another (5, 9-11). To change what has become misshapen, defective, or otherwise deformed into something else that is living and whole belongs to the "mightiest power" (δυνάμεως μεγίστης, 5, 23). Not the absence of destruction but the ability to put it into the service of generation is the mark of providence in this cosmos. Similarly, human beings can redirect

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[8] See *Theaet.* 176a5.
[9] See Socrates' response to Theodorus in *Theaet.*, 176a-e. Plotinus' notion of virtue and becoming god-like is discussed later in the next chapter.
[10] My translation.

their suffering. Illness, poverty, loss and various other modes of suffering might threaten our sense of unity and vitality. Nevertheless, we can reconfigure in ourselves and our surroundings what has become damaged or misshapen.

Looked at from this angle, suffering is not incompatible with a providential cosmos. Since this cosmos is form projected onto matter, change, generation, and corruption are inevitable. A providential cosmos does not imply that alteration and destruction will never happen but that generation and reformation will always happen.[11] Since the suffering that accompanies loss and destruction is inevitable, whether we should be spared suffering is not the right question. Rather, the question is whether we can use our suffering towards continuing and even enhancing our lives. Affirming the providential character of this cosmos means that we should be equipped to put our suffering to use and direct it toward our own ends.[12]

Before examining how we are equipped to redirect our suffering, we must first examine other impasses related to human circumstances in a providential cosmos. Plotinus affirms that "nothing is bad for the good man and nothing, correspondingly, good for the bad one" (6, 2-4).[13] Still, he is not content with this assertion and continues to list a series of perplexities: how the bad can possess what is according to nature (like health or beauty) and the good possess what is against nature (like illness and ugliness),[14] how the good could be slaves of the bad, or how wicked rulers could be allowed to

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[11] See Kalligas, 2014, 256.
[12] See Graeser, 1972, 57 for Stoic sources of this idea.
[13] Armstrong, 1967, 61; see Graeser, 1972, 82 for the possibility that Plotinus is following an example given by Epictetus (*Diss*., I, 28, 14).
[14] See Kalligas, 2014, 457.

commit atrocities (6, 4-17). The issue is that any making should not just look to the whole but to the parts and to put these in their proper places, especially when the parts are living (6, 18-22). Since the hypothesis about providence is that Intellect reaches everything in this All, the account must show that each thing "turns out beautifully" (καλῶς ἔχει, 6, 24-27). Things would seem to turn out more beautifully if good people ruled instead of wicked people and if good people possessed health and physical beauty, while the bad possessed the opposite. To address these impasses Plotinus argues for a change in thinking, and he guides readers toward this alteration.

Plotinus begins by going back to initial assumptions: "one must assume that in looking for the beauty in the mixed one must not demand it have in every way as much beauty as in the unmixed" (ληπτέον ὡς τὸ καλῶς ἐν τῷ μικτῷ ζητοῦντας χρὴ μὴ πάντη ἀπαιτεῖν ὅσον τὸ καλῶς ἐν τῷ ἀμίκτῳ ἔχει, 7, 1-3).[15] He asserts what must be assumed and, correspondingly, what would be inappropriate to assume. One cannot confront these impasses assuming that what is mixed should be as beautiful and shapely as what is unmixed. He continues by stating what else is being supposed or hypothesized as preliminary (ὑποθέμενον 7, 13): that one is not to seek (ζητεῖν, 7, 4) the primaries in the secondaries, that one is to grant (συγχωρεῖν, 7, 5) something of the unmixed comes to the All, and that one is to demand (ἀπαιτεῖν, 7, 6) of the *logos* only as much as the mixture can receive (7, 4-13). In beginning this way, Plotinus implies that overcoming these impasses must start with oneself and with how one is thinking.

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[15] My translation.

First, we are not to seek the primaries in the secondaries. The fourth chapter of this dissertation examined this issue from one angle: namely, that we cannot use discursive procedures and images to think non-discursively. However, another angle is that we cannot use the primary and unmixed to devalue what is mixed. We cannot negatively evaluate human beings in perception for not being as good and beautiful as the intelligible human being. Second, since something of the intelligible is present to what is experienced in perception, we can determine the degree to which a perceptible human being is like an intelligible human being. The question, then, is to what degree someone has assimilated himself to the intelligible.[16] Third, the form is limited by the receiver's ability. The form could have more to give, but the condition of the receiver determines the extent of its realization in the one receiving it. With these three basic notions in mind and guiding the investigation, how can these impasses about our experience in a providential cosmos be overcome?

The main movement towards unraveling this perplexity occurs by having the proper perspective about our place in the cosmos. Prior to narrowing his focus toward human beings, Plotinus indicates that the greatest part of the cosmos is filled with gods (8, 5-6). These gods are the celestial, everlasting bodies and their souls. In using the superlative (τὸ πλεῖστον, 8, 5) in reference to the section of the cosmos that contains gods (θεοί, 8, 6), Plotinus highlights that gods vastly outnumber the living bodies populating the earth. He implies, then, that these impasses about providence are limited to the smallest section

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[16] See IV.4.43-45 where Plotinus argues that contemplation, and by extension, the self that contemplates are alone uninfluenced by magic and passions, especially Nature as the primary magician. Those who are turned toward contemplation are free and most assimilated to the intelligible. This issue is discussed in more detail in section three of this chapter and in chapter six of this dissertation.

of the cosmos. Because he associates the upper parts of the cosmos with the head and the

face, which are more beautiful than the middle and lower parts (8, 3-5), greatest part of

the cosmos is also the more beautiful part. Although we might believe that our problems

are significant, they matter little if imagined from the vantage point of the whole cosmos.

As Armstrong notes, Plotinus' model of a geocentric cosmos does not lead him to inflate

our importance but to deflate it.[17]

Plotinus continues this shift in perspective by claiming that human beings occupy a

middle position in the cosmos.

> Injustice in human beings astonishes because many [people] expect humanity to be
> the worthy part in the All, as if nothing were wiser. But the fact is that humanity lays
> outstretched between gods and beasts and inclines toward both and becomes   like
> one or the other, while the many are in between (θαυμάζεται δὲ ἐν ἀνθρώποις
> ἀδικία, ὅτι ἄνθρωπον ἀξιοῦσιν ἐν τῷ παντὶ τὸ τίμον εἶναι ὡς οὐδενὸς ὄντος
> σοφωτέρου. Τὸ δὲ κεῖται ἄνθρωπος ἐν μέσῳ θεῶν καὶ θηρίων καὶ ῥέπει ἐπ᾽ ἄμφω
> καὶ ὁμοιοῦνται οἱ μὲν τῷ ἑτέρῳ, οἱ δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ, οἱ δὲ μεταξύ εἰσιν, οἱ πολλοί,
> III.2.8, 7-12).[18]

The astonishment at humans acting unjustly and wickedly stems from a mistaken

assumption about humanity. If we assume that human beings are the wisest and most

noble part of the cosmos, then we can be amazed that humans act foolishly and ignobly.

Human beings, however, live between gods and beasts. We are neither the loftiest nor the

lowliest part of the cosmos.

The mobility of human beings is implied in this relative position and value of being in

the middle (ἐν μέσῳ, 8, 9). Humanity is not necessarily stuck or fixed between gods and

beasts but inclines (ῥέπει, 8, 10) toward both. We live on a turning point between

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[17] Armstrong, 1967, 68-69 (n1); see also Gurtler, 2015, 119-121.
[18] My translation.

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possibilities. We can stay in the middle or move toward being like (ὁμοιοῦνται, 8, 10) gods as well as being like beasts. Because the possibility of this movement is in our power, we are responsible for what we do and who we become. Those who remain in the middle can be dragged down by those who incline toward the worse. Although better than their assailants, they have not prepared themselves not to suffer such assaults (8, 12-17). Plotinus uses the example of boys trained in neither soul nor body being attacked by boys trained in body but not soul. He then moves to a parallel situation in which mature human beings wage war (8, 17-36). All human beings are responsible for training their bodies and their souls. The committing of atrocities is not inconsistent with a providential cosmos because those who commit and suffer them are culpable. One must not blame providence for those who attack or for those who are attacked. Each one is in charge of his or her soul and body. There is no need for the god to fight for the unwarlike, to look after one's crops, or to ensure one is healthy (8, 36-42).

Plotinus is implying that a certain notion of providence is inappropriate: namely, that providence is a divine agency protecting human beings from harm or even intervening to preserve them. We can be shocked at atrocities in a providential cosmos only if we assume that providence is a divine agent who intervenes in human affairs or who somehow renders atrocities impossible. If we do not assume that about providence, then we cannot be shocked. To be sure, something of the divine does come to us as parts of this All. The work of the divine is limited by our receptive capacities. We are responsible for preparing the optimum conditions within ourselves to receive the divine. If the divine were to save those who failed to work on themselves, then it would not be acting

providentially (8, 43-52). This cosmos would be un-providential if people could fail to cultivate their own virtue and yet be saved by the divine.

Such a notion of providence would imply that humans are not their own sources of action and motion, and so they should not suffer from what follows from them. What is needed, then, is a notion of providence that includes human beings as sources but not as sources external to providence and cosmic order. At this point, the intersection between the problem of evil and that of determinism begins to emerge.

However, before moving to that discussion, there is still the following difficulty: how, in a providential cosmos, can bad people be endowed with good qualities like health or physical beauty while good people are not? The opposite sort of distribution would seem like a better plan or arrangement. Plotinus reiterates that the ordering in this cosmos accords with Intellect without any sense of accounting or planning (λογισμοῦ, 14, 1-2). Even if one were to form a plan, one could not devise a better way (14, 2-4).

> Something of this kind is recognized even in individual natures, which are always coming to be more toward Intellect than according to the arrangements of calculation. Certainly then, within each of the kinds of things coming to be continuously one is not to censure the productive *logos*, unless someone expects that each ought to become in the same way as those that have not become but are eternal, being always in accord with these in both intelligibility and in perceptibility, demanding a further supplement of good but not believing the form given to each as sufficient (ὁποῖόν τι γινώσκεται καὶ ἐν ταῖς καθ’ ἕκαστα φύσεσι, γινομένων εἰς ἀεὶ νοερώτερον ἤ κατὰ λογισμοῦ διάταξιν. Ἐφ’ ἑκάστου μὲν οὖν τῶν γινομένων ἀεὶ γενῶν οὐκ ἔστιν αἰτιᾶσθαι τὸν ποιοῦντα λόγον, εἴ τις μὴ ἀξιοῖ ἕκαστον οὕτω γενονέναι χρῆναι, ὡς τὰ μὴ γεγονότα, ἀίδια δέ, ἔν τε νοητοῖς ἔν τε αἰσθητοῖς ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὄντα, προσθήκην αἰτῶν ἀγαθοῦ πλείονα, ἀλλ’ οὐ τὸ δοθὲν ἑκάστῳ εἶδος αὔταρκες ἡγούμενος, III.2.14, 4-13).[19]

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[19] My translation.

An individual body's ongoing development is not the result of forming and following a plan. Rather, an internal form determines the living body to develop along its own way. This form is inseparable from the shaping movements belonging to the body. It suffices in supplying the body with all the capacities it needs to move, to act, and to live.

To censure the productive *logos* (αἰτιᾶσθαι τὸν ποιοῦντα λόγον, 14, 8) for the way a body is belongs to someone with inappropriate expectations. The source of the impasse, then, is in the person believing (ἡγούμενος, 14, 13) that the given form is not sufficient.[20] This person expects (ἀξιοῖ, 14, 9) that a mix of form and matter should be the same as unmixed, pure form. Only under that expectation would demanding (αἰτῶν, 14, 11) more of what is good be appropriate. One should not expect to find the primaries among the secondaries, to find what belongs to the intelligible in what is perceived. In Intellect, everything is all things, while each thing in the corporeal cosmos is not all things (14, 15-16). In Intellect, each part is the whole and all the other parts. In the corporeal cosmos, each part lacks something that the whole and the other parts possess. By being a corporeal part, a perceptible human being cannot be perfect in the way the whole is and so must possess imperfections such as illness or physical blemishes. To expect that someone, as a part, should have what every other part has is to be looking for the unmixed in what is mixed. Only by correcting that expectation is this impasse resolvable.

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[20] I translate ἡγούμενος as "believing" and not as leading, commanding, or something along those lines because I think it picks up the subject implied in ἀξιοῖ and corresponds with the singular, masculine nominative αἰτῶν so that it does not refer back to τὸν ποιοῦντα λόγον or τὸ εἶδος; LSJ, ἡγεῖσθαι, III.

Although human beings are parts of this cosmos and so are susceptible to imperfections, we can still increase its "beauty and order" (κοσμηθέν), making the cosmos of greater worth (14, 20-21).

> And indeed one comes to be such by being made like the whole and brought together so as to be like this and organized this way, so that even down in the place of humanity something radiates in it just as the stars radiate in the firmament of the gods, and there would be here an apprehension of something like a grand and beautiful divine-image (Καὶ γὰρ γίνεται τοιοῦτον ἀφομοιωθὲν τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ οἷον συγχωρηθὲν τοιοῦτον εἶναι καὶ συνταχθὲν οὕτως, ἵνα καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπου τόπον ἐκλάμπῃ τι ἐν αὐτῷ, οἷον καὶ κατὰ τον θεῖον οὐρανὸν τὰ ἄστρα, καὶ ᾗ ἐντεῦθεν ἀντίληψις οἷον ἀγάλματος μεγάλου καὶ καλοῦ, III.2.14, 23-27).[21]

Plotinus is talking about ethical, not physical perfectibility.[22] Although we are limited and cannot possess all that the whole has, we can imitate the whole. While this imitation cannot be done physically, the possibility remains for it to be done psychologically or ethically: in our lives, habits, and thinking. We can order and live our lives in such a way that something of the splendor, beauty, and wonder of the heavens shines within us. Our soul can become radiant. We can become a place in which a trace of the divine becomes manifest. If this possibility is in our power, then we are responsible for realizing it. In inclining toward both gods and beasts, we are responsible for what direction we move in or for not moving.

5.2   The Problem of Evil in the Whole and the Problem of Human Responsibility

Human responsibility introduces an impasse about its compatibility with cosmic order: how can humans originate something and yet be parts of an ordered whole?

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[21] My translation.
[22] See Kalligas, 2014, 465.

Overcoming this impasse requires clarifying the way we understand cosmic order, how the source of order operates, and how human beings are agents within this cosmos. To begin, the fact that the All is not external to us implies that we are not determined by it as if it were acting on us (10, 14-15). We are not merely subject *to* the All but are subjects *of* the All who participate in and contribute to its ongoing formation. "The celestial circuit" (τῆς φορᾶς, 10, 13) does not influence us such that we are passive recipients that contribute nothing of our own.[23] We are included within the All as members, and the ordering works with us, not on us.

> Given a principle, it finishes the causal sequence, bringing into the succession even what belongs to as many sources as there are: but humans, too, are sources. They move, at least, toward beautiful deeds by their own nature, and this source is free ('Αρχῆς δὲ δοθείσης τὸ ἐφεξῆς περαίνεται συμπαραλαμβανομένων εἰς τὴν ἀκολουθίαν καὶ τῶν ὅσαι εἰσὶν ἀρχαί· ἀρχαὶ δὲ καὶ ἄνθρωποι. Κινοῦνται γοῦν πρὸς τὰ καλὰ οἰκείᾳ φύσει καὶ ἀρχὴ αὕτη αὐτεξούσιος, III.2.10, 17-21).[24]
> .

The principal source of cosmic order does not determine what will happen. Rather, its ordering is the inclusion of various sources intersecting and interacting. The ordering occurs through whatever these sources originate and does not determine what they are or what they will do. Human beings, too, are sources. We are not determined to be, act, or move by some external force. We and what we originate are incorporated into an order but are not compelled or constrained by it or other bodies.

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[23] See IV.4.32-35 for Plotinus' discussion of how, as bodies, we are included in the All-Soul and are sympathetically related to other bodies. He compares human beings to skilled workers that retain a power that belongs to them and do not merely serve a master. Even the effect that the planets and their figures have on us depends on what particular human beings contribute from their own constitution. In IV.4.43-44 Plotinus argues that only the irrational part of our soul is influenced by magic, especially the "magic" of Nature (IV.4.43,23-26), while the contemplative part of our soul is unaffected. His discussion of the possibility of our lives being determined by what is free (αὐτεξούσιος, III.2.10, 21) in us, our "inner-soul," or by the "outer-shadow" parallels that distinction in IV.4.43-44.
[24] My translation.

By saying "at least" (γοῦν), however, Plotinus offers a qualifying remark. He says

that human beings, "move, at least, toward beautiful deeds by their own nature and this

source is free" (Κινοῦνται γοῦν πρὸς τὰ καλὰ οἰκείᾳ φύσει καὶ ἀρχὴ αὕτη αὐτεξούσιος,

10, 19-21). There is some source in us that is free, implying that perhaps not every

motion or action is free. Plotinus, then, does not see this impasse as so quickly overcome.

As will be seen, the constitution of *logos*, which is the source of order, is why this

impasse cannot be resolved so quickly. However, the constitution of *logos* also indicates

how to resolve the impasse. The resolution also involves examining human's "own

nature" (οἰκείᾳ φύσει, 10, 20) that is "free" (αὐτεξούσιος, 10, 21) along with how they

"move toward beautiful deeds" (κινοῦνται γοῦν πρὸς τὰ καλὰ, 10, 19-20) through it.

5.2.1   *Logos* as source and the drama of conflict

Each thing is not the result of "natural necessities and causal sequences" (11, 1-2).

Instead, "the *logos* makes all these things as their source" (ὁ λόγος ταῦτα πάντα ποιεῖ

ἄρχων, 11, 3). It makes even the so called bad things (τὰ λεγόμενα κακά, 11, 4) and does

so "according to reason" (κατὰ λόγον, 11, 4), not intending (οὐ βουλόμενος, 11, 5) all

things to be good (11, 3-5).[25] Whatever lives or exists in this cosmos depends on *logos*

and is not the result of a chain of causes or of natural elements interacting with each

other. Plotinus is arguing that each and every thing (ἕκαστα, 11, 1) depends on a single

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[25] Armstrong's translation with slight changes, 1967, 79. Right after this passage, Plotinus moves to the criticism discussed in chapter four of this dissertation. He compares the *logos* to a painter who does not make all things eyes. Those who censure the painter for not making the colors beautiful everywhere are called "untrained" (ἄπειροι, 11, 10). This passage, then, is connected to the resolution of impasses involving either having the proper assumptions or perspective or of making a correction of them. Also, this passage is connected to the intersection of the problem of evil and the problem of human agency in a providential cosmos. Both will be discussed in the third section.

source in contrast to being the result of various interactions among multiple sources. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, the latter would be closer to the Epicurean view. For Plotinus, a fully unified being would never result from a multiplicity but requires that which is already a unity.

Nevertheless, there is an impasse in saying that *logos* makes all things. By seeing how Plotinus overcomes this impasse, we can be in a position to understand how humans can be part of an ordered whole and yet be responsible. Here is the impasse: given the ongoing struggles among animals and the constant war among human beings how can such an arrangement be called good or beautiful (15, 2-9)?[26]The interweaving or combination (ἡ συμπλοκή, 15, 2) of the various bodies into a single cosmos is the work of *logos*. This impasse is connected to and intensifies the problem of evil. Previously, the indeterminateness of matter was the explanation for suffering, destruction, and death. However, since the inevitability of struggles and war are part of the order, which comes from the *logos*, this explanation no longer works (15, 9- 14). Because *logos* is the source of these ongoing conflicts, how can its product be called good?

The primary step toward resolving this impasse consists of a change in perception.[27] Plotinus invites his readers to behold (θεᾶσθαι, 15, 45) all deaths, murders, wars, and conflicts as if they were being played out on a stage (15, 44-48). Instead of interpreting an animal's death as final, one would understand the situation as if the animal were changing clothes. Death is merely exiting the stage as one thing and then reentering as

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[26] We will return to the problem of human agents in the ordered whole in the next sub-section, since this one leads to it in a way that shows the interconnection between both impasses.
[27] Kalligas, 2014, 466.

another. Without this ongoing corruption, generation, and transformation there would be a deprivation of life, and life would not occur in another (15, 29-31). Assuming a finite cosmos, there cannot be an infinite population at any given time. A rich variety can occur through living bodies passing away and making way for others. Since life here is a mixture in which one thing exists in another, there must be alteration and so motion. Without changes and movements, there would be neither life nor continuous mixture. The only way to maintain the infinitely rich variation of life here is through a multitude of finite interactions and conflicts with definite results—i.e., one animal survives and another perishes. These determinate moments serve the ongoing, endless production of corporeal life.[28] Since the *logos* unfailingly ensures this continuous production, it arranges this All well.

Regarding human beings, one is to behold the loss of life and of property, the seeming horrors of war and other conflicts, and all our expressions of sorrow as scenes on stages (15, 40-48). One must not be serious about this aspect of humanity, even if those involved take such events and experiences seriously.

> And indeed, the inner soul is not involved here in these events in life, but the outer shadow of humanity both wails and mourns and does all these deeds on stage, making stages all over the whole earth. For such are the works of a man who only knows how to live the lower and outer aspects, ignorant both in tears and seriousness that he is playing. For one must be serious in regard to serious deeds [done] by the serious person only, but the other man is a toy. But some act serious both by not knowing they are taking toys seriously and by being toys themselves (Καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἑκάστων οὐχ ἡ ἔνδον ψυχή, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ἔξω ἀνθρώπου σκιὰ καὶ οἰμώζει καὶ ὀδύρεται καὶ πάντα ποιεῖ ἐν σκηνῇ τῇ ὅλῃ γῇ πολλαχοῦ σκηνὰς ποιησαμένων. Τοιαῦτα γὰρ ἔργα ἀνθρώπου τὰ κάτω καὶ τὰ ἔξω μόνα ζῆν εἰδότος καὶ ἐν δακρύοις καὶ σπουδαίοις ὅτι παίζων ἐστὶν ἠγνοηκότος. Μόνῳ γὰρ τῷ σπουδαίῳ σπουδαστέον

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[28] See Carse, 1986.

ἐν σπουδαίοις τοῖς ἔργοις, ὁ δ᾽ ἄλλος ἄνθρωπος παίγνιον. Σπουδάζεται δὲ καὶ τὰ παίγνια τοῖς σπουδάζειν οὐκ εἰδόσι καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς οὖσι παιγνίοις, III.2.15, 48-57).[29]

This distinction between "inner soul" (ἡ ἔνδον ψυχή, 15, 49) and "outer shadow of humanity" (ἡ ἔξω ἀνθρώπου σκιά, 15, 49) parallels the distinction between "serious" (σπουδαίοις, 15, 54) and "playing" (παίζων, 15, 54). The acts and effects of war, conquest, and defeat could appear impressive and worth taking seriously. Plotinus invites readers to imagine that these works emerge from shadows that are "making stages all over the whole earth" (τῇ ὅλῃ γῇ πολλαχοῦ σκηνὰς ποιησαμένων, 15, 51-52). In comparing this aspect of humanity to shadows, Plotinus implies that these endeavors are the work of insubstantial non-entities struggling to convince themselves and others of their reality.[30] For a shadow to appear, there must be that of which it is a shadow, something upon which it is projected, and a light source. The shadow of humanity is a projection of the inner soul, which is directed toward Intellect in contemplation. In living this life around the light of Intellect, this inner soul casts a shadow.[31] This shadow ensures itself a place to appear, erecting cities, institutions, and territories within which it can seem to live. All over the earth such stages are built to house the shadow of humanity. Convinced that their concerns are worth taking seriously, the shadows believe they are real and substantial. Conflicts over ruling cities, over seizing or defending territories, and all sorts of actions are ways in which these shadows insist on their reality.

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[29] My translation.

[30] There is an allusion to *Rep*. VII 514-552. The movement back to the cave in Plotinus' pedagogy is discussed in chapter six of this dissertation.

[31] See Gurtler, 2015, 122-34, 163-84, 192, and 197-229 for his discussion of two acts, what part of humanity is free, and what part of humanity is influenced by cosmic events.

They must have other shadows to contend with and to recognize their appearance. In this recognition, the conviction of being real and serious is upheld.

The greatest threat to these shadows is not those who resist their advances and play along by contending. Rather, the greatest threat is the one who does not take them, their activities, or their stages seriously. There are pedagogical implications in refusing to accept the reality of these shadows. As discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, the aim of Plotinus' pedagogy is to guide readers towards living from their inner soul. From the vantage point of this inwardness, all the motives, actions, and effects of conflict become insubstantial. In imagining that what appears to be serious is truly playing, one could turn toward what is worth taking seriously. One could see not only lamenting and mourning but also victories, honors, and rewards differently. The former are not serious experiences, and the latter are not serious life goals.[32]

Ultimately, Plotinus' response to the issue of the never ending conflict among human beings is that these conflicts are not worth taking seriously. There is no longer an impasse

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[32] Of course, the problem for the teacher is that telling a shadow that its reality is just drama and play acting could be dangerous for the student, the teacher, and even the society. We can recall the discussion of the dangers of dialectical training in the *Republic* starting around lines 537d. The one who learns dialectic too early and begins to question notions of honor and justice that give shape to civil life could become convinced there is no honor or justice and become pulled around by all sorts of desires. Instead of questioning and challenging conventions at the service of seeking the truth, someone might take pleasure in ripping conventions apart. Socrates describes this youth not as a careful critic and truth seeker but more like a puppy tearing up the household in imitation of the true dialectician. Such a teacher could be called a corruptor of youths, making dialectic and philosophy an easy target. Since one who teaches that what the shadows call real are shadows and since the livelihoods of the shadows depend on the belief in their own reality and the belief that their concerns are serious, this teacher is a threat to the shadows. It is not surprising, then, that Plotinus mentions Socrates at this point (III.2.15, 58-9). Socrates also plays in the city (fighting in war, attending banquets, speaking in assemblies) but does so as an outer Socrates. The inner Socrates is not concerned with such play and does not forget himself in or mistake himself for the shadow Socrates. Plotinus' dialectical training and its connection to virtue is discussed in chapter six of this dissertation.

about how the *logos* can order this cosmos beautifully and yet include constant conflict among humans. This claim could certainly be difficult to accept, especially when one considers the horrors of war—not just the killing among soldiers but the civilians that always tend to get caught in the crossfire or those that are victims of pillaging. Plotinus claims that the truly substantial human being is the inner soul, whose activity and life centers on contemplating Being and Intellect. These conflicts only involve the shadowy part of humanity, not our interior life. This interior remains unaffected by such events.

5.2.2   Responsibility and the possibility of injustice in an ordered whole

Nevertheless, the resolution of this impasse leads to another one: if all comes to be beautifully, how can agents ever do wrong, act unjustly, or be wicked? How can the distinction between "according to nature" and "against nature" be maintained? How could there be impiety toward the divine (16, 1-8)? Basically, the question is this: how can someone introduce injustice, error, baseness, or impiety within a beautifully ordered cosmos? Implied, then, is a return to the question of how individuals can originate something and so be responsible for it in an ordered whole. Plotinus begins overcoming this impasse by expressing what the *logos* is in terms of its genesis from Soul and Intellect. As with the other impasses discussed so far, its resolution involves a change in perspective and adopting or having appropriate assumptions and expectations.

Recalling that one must not seek the primaries in the secondaries, one must not seek the unity of Intellect in the unity of the *logos*, and the unity of the latter should not be sought in the unity of this All. Unlike Intellect, the *logos* is neither everywhere complete

nor able to give itself whole and entire to what receives it (16, 28-32). A different sort of

unity belongs to the *logos*. Since all its parts are deficient in some respect, it is only by

the parts being brought together with their opposites that wholeness occurs. Since the

logos is whole only by bringing together opposite parts, it is whole only by containing an

internal conflict (16, 32-35). Given this internal constitution of this All's source, we

cannot expect it to contain only good and noble parts; it must also contain bad and base

parts in order to be whole and complete. The cosmos as perceived is less unified than the

logos of it (17, 3-4). Whereas the conflicting parts in the *logos* do not destroy one

another, perceptual opposites can harm and extinguish each other.[33]

    In combining both of these appropriate expectations with the realization that the *logos*

contains parts as they are,[34] we can begin to see how Plotinus works through the impasse

by using the example of actors and the author of a play.[35] The author of a play is not

responsible for actors being of first, second, or third rank but provides a role and words

for each one (17, 19-22).

> Surely, in like manner, a place even exists for each, one suiting the good and one suiting the bad. Each of the two, then, according to nature and *logos* advance into each suitable place, inhabiting the one it chose for itself (οὕτω τοι καὶ ἔστι τόπος ἑκάστῳ ὁ μὲν τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ὁ δὲ τῷ κακῷ πρέπων. Ἑκάτερος οὖν κατὰ φύσιν καὶ κατὰ λόγον εἰς ἑκάτερον καὶ τὸν πρέποντα χωρεῖ τὸν τόπον ἔχων, ὅν εἵλετο, III.2.17, 22-27).[36]

The *logos* does not make each human being bad or good. Since its wholeness depends on

including opposites, it makes room within itself and this All for each kind of human

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[33] See IV.4.38 and IV.4.41 for Plotinus arguing that the possibility of harm depends on the harmonious unity of the All, of which opposites are an essential, contributing factor.
[34] See III.2.12,10-13; III.2.17, 17-26; III.2.17, 59-64; III.3.3-4.
[35] See *Ench.* XVII for the possible Stoic influence for this example.
[36] My translation.

being. If it were to exclude any person or any kind of person, it could not be the *logos* of everything. The *logos* produces places and circumstances appropriate to every kind of person. Each person fits into the place that is appropriate to his or her own character and nature.[37] Each is responsible for his or her own being and so, also, the place that has been made suitable to that being. From within his or her own circumstances, everyone's life unfolds. There is a similar situation in a play (17, 29-42). The poet produces the words, the settings, and the situations, but the actors are responsible for the part that is suitable to them and for playing that part. The poet does not determine the actors' skills but does give each one an appropriate part. From within that part, the actors manifest their own abilities or inabilities.

Since the perceived cosmos is less unified than *logos*, the divisions and results of opposites are more drastic in the former than in the latter. The qualities and characteristics of bad and good people are more divisive, especially the closer one gets to either extreme. Their opposition produces greater effects—i.e., they may extinguish one another. Since the *logos* must include both the good and the bad to be whole, since it includes them as they already are, and since the appearances of the bad stand in sharp contrast to the good, wrongdoing, injustice, and impiety are all possible within this All. These possibilities are necessary for it to be complete, which implies that including opposites *as they are* is necessary for the cosmos to be whole. Without the appearance of sharp oppositions—including piety/impiety, justice/injustice—this cosmos would not be *this All*.

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[37] See *Rep*. X 617e-620e; Kalligas, 2014, 471.

Such a resolution could appear to be simply restating the problem and not resolving it. However, if we consider that Plotinus is not offering a rational *proof* but leading readers towards a change in perspective through rational and imaginative means, then there is a way through this impasse. His continued use of images suggests that his aim is to help readers see differently.

> Just as there is not one note in a pan-pipe, but even what is weaker and faint contributes toward the harmony of the whole, because the scale has been divided into parts that are not equal and, on the one hand, all the sounds are unequal, while on the other hand, the complete unity is from them all. And what is more, the whole *logos* is one but has been divided into unequal parts (ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἐν σύριγγι φωνὴ μία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐλάττων τις οὖσα καὶ ἀμυδρὰ πρὸς ἁρμονίαν τῆς πάσης σύριγγος συντελεῖ, ὅτι μεμέρισται ἡ ἁρμονία εἰς οὐκ ἴσα μέρη καὶ ἄνισοι μὲν οἱ φθόγγοι πάντες, ὁ δὲ τέλεος εἷς ἐκ πάντων. Καὶ δὴ καὶ ὁ λόγος ὁ πᾶς εἷς, μεμέρισται δὲ οὐκ εἰς ἴσα, III.2.17, 70-76).[38]

Plotinus returns to a musical image to express how there is an inequality not just in the perceptual cosmos but in the *logos* itself. The distinctions and relationship between unequal sounds is responsible for harmony. The pan-pipe, or any instrument, has places for each of the notes to make its own sound. Even the weaker or inferior sounds are a necessary part of the harmonic whole. Similarly, the *logos* consists of unequal parts, all of which contribute their own characteristics and yet are part of the whole. There are a variety of places in this All, each of which is appropriate for particular kinds of beings.

Each being, in its appropriate place, manifests or expresses itself in a way that contributes to the whole. Heard within a harmony, the inferior sounds are beautiful; understood from the vantage point of this All, the worse people "will be beautifully disposed" (17, 83-86). This inclusion or incorporation, however, does not eradicate the

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[38] My translation.

note's own sound or the bad person's own behavior. Plotinus' point is not to excuse the bad. Rather, he is trying to guide readers toward imagining the wicked and unjust from a different vantage point. From a limited vantage point that selects particular people, situations, or events, the wicked appear to be only that. With the various images Plotinus offers, however, one can move toward a more comprehensive perspective. From there, one could see how even the wicked, unjust, and impious contribute to the completion of this All. One could see they contribute *as who they are*, implying they are responsible for their own contribution. The movement toward and adoption of this perspective is the overcoming of the impasse.

Nevertheless, Plotinus does not rest content. In continuing to imagine the actor and poet, he claims that one must not introduce improvising actors who add their own words to an incomplete script. If that were the case, the actors would be part of the poet and not simply actors. The poet would have to foresee what they will say so as to incorporate it into the plot's overall unity (18, 8-14). Plotinus has in mind good consequences coming from bad deeds—like better children born from illicit affairs or a better city from one destroyed by wicked people (18, 14-18). He is highlighting a basic tension in any account of a providential cosmos. One does not want to introduce a different source to explain bad deeds, since that would rob the *logos* of good deeds, too; and yet one does not want individuals to be merely puppets or empty vessels of *logos* (18, 18-26). How, in giving an account, can one simultaneously affirm that individuals come to be as they are *and* that they are part of an overall order? Plotinus is still working through the impasse introduced at the beginning of this treatise. This impasse includes within itself the problem of evil

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and determinism. On the one hand, if each person is his or her own being, another force cannot be responsible for determining him or her to perform good or bad deeds. On the other hand, if each one of us lives within an ordered whole, then nothing can occur outside that order, and so its source must be involved with whatever happens in it. One would appear to be on the horns of a dilemma: either affirm the individual's ability to originate something outside the ordering, or affirm the ordering source's predominance and so attribute both the good and the bad to it. The former leads to something like the spontaneity of the swerve in Epicureanism, while the latter leads to something like the craftsman responsible for evil in Gnosticism.

5.3 Individual Becoming, Cosmic Providence, and Responsibility

Plotinus opts for a third way. This way involves focusing on the main impasse about how individuals can come to be as they are but still belong to an overall ordering. He does not choose between these as mutually exclusive alternatives. Rather, he thinks through a way to preserve both. He begins by discussing the whole *logos* and its relation to individual *logoi* and the All-Soul (III.3.1, 1-11). In the third chapter of this dissertation, cosmic order was shown to be a dynamically unified expression of Being and Intellect in corporeal form, not the subsuming of bodies into an unvariegated unity. With that depiction in mind, we can see how Plotinus guides readers in a thought experiment through which they can overcome this impasse.

5.3.1 A thought experiment and a change of perspective

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Plotinus begins by showing that conflict or individuality need not imply disunity,

since even individual horses conflict with each other but are nonetheless all horses: one

must assume this about human beings, too (1,12-16).

> Accordingly, moreover, one must join all these species together one after another into
> the one genus "animate": then, even those inanimate, again according to species, and
> after that into the one genus "the inanimate": next, if you wish, both together into
> being and, finally, into that which produces being. And, once more, having fastened
> upon this, go down dividing and seeing the One dispersed by coming first before all
> things and encompassing all together in a single organization, as one living being
> greatly variegated, each of them in it being busy with its affairs according to nature,
> while itself nevertheless being in the whole itself (Συναπτέον τοίνυν αὖ πάλιν πάντα
> τὰ εἴδη ταῦτα εἰς ἕν «τὸ ζῷον» γένος· εἶτα καὶ τὰ μὴ ζῷα κατ᾽ εἴδη αὖ· εἶτα εἰς ἕν «τὸ
> μὴ ζῷον»· εἶτα ὁμοῦ, εἰ βούλει, εἰς τὸ εἶναι· εἶτα εἰς τὸ παρέχον τὸ εἶναι. Καὶ πάλιν
> ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐκδήσας κατάβαινε διαιρῶν καὶ σκιδνάμενον τὸ ἓν ὁρῶν τῷ ἐπὶ πάντα
> φθάνειν καὶ ὁμοῦ περιλαμβάνειν συντάξει μιᾷ, ὡς διακεκριμένον ἓν εἶναι ζῷον πολὺ
> ἑκάστου πράττοντος τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ὅλῳ ὅμως ὄντος,
> III.3.1, 16-28).[39]

To overcome this impasse in the way Plotinus suggests, one must assume (θετέον, 1, 16)

something about humanity and about unity in general. Namely, one must understand

unity in a way that does not exclude individuals and the possibility of conflicts among

them. The above passage is a thought experiment through which one can experience unity

as compatible with individuality and individuality as compatible with unity.

First, as a necessary detour, I must explain why this passage works more like a

thought experiment than an inductive argument followed by a deductive one. The first

piece of evidence is Plotinus' use of the verbal adjective συναπτέον (1, 16), which

expresses the necessity of an activity that *someone* must perform.[40] In this case, the

necessity involves joining species together in order to understand the kind of unity in this

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[39] My translation.
[40] Smyth, 1920, 473.

cosmos. The second piece of evidence is his use of the second person imperative (κατάβαινε, 1, 21). It is as though he is giving directions about how to perform this exercise. Finally, when combining the "if you will" (εἰ βούλει, 1, 19) with this use of the verbal adjective and the second person imperative, that Plotinus is performing a thought experiment seems even more likely. He says, "if you will" when locating the two genera, "the animate" (τὸ ζῷον, 1, 17) and "the inanimate" (τὸ μὴ ζῷον, 1, 18) under "being" (τὸ εἶναι, 1, 19) and then that under "what produces being" (τὸ παρέχον τὸ εἶναι, 1, 19-20). Plotinus is most likely aware of Aristotle's discussion of the difficulties in positing being and oneness as genera.[41] A genus is differentiated into species by something that makes the difference, which must be and be one. For instance, under the genus "animal," we could call humanity the rational animal. "Rational" is what differentiates humanity as a species from other animals. Rationality must be and be one for this differentiation to work. We cannot predicate the species of the *differentia*, or else we would say that all rational beings are humans. Nor can we predicate the genus of the *differentia* independently of the species, or else we could say that that all rational beings are animals. The genus cannot be an essential predicate of the *differentia*. If "being" or "oneness" were genera, then either there would be nothing that differentiates species within them, or one could not attribute either being or unity to the *differentia*. If Plotinus were performing an induction toward being and oneness and then deducing cosmic unity from these, then he would be at a serious and unacknowledged impasse. However, this impasse does not arise if he is not trying *to prove* something but guiding readers in a discursive exercise

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[41] *Metaph*., 998b16-999a; 1059b16-1060a2; see also *VP* 14.6-8.

through which they can see themselves and the cosmos in a certain way. In particular, this exercise helps them experience cosmic unity and individual unity as harmonious.

The first part of this exercise involves the operation of unifying a multitude together under a single category. One begins by grouping individuals that move of their own accord under common forms or species (εἴδη, 1, 18). Then, one groups these forms all together into the one genus, "the animate." After that, one groups together individuals that do not move of their own accord. Then, one groups all these together under the single genus, "the inanimate." Next, one attempts to hold all living and non-living things together as one in so far as they *are*. Finally, one groups them into the unity that enables them to be. While performing this operation, recognizing that it is an activity of the human soul, that it is something *we do*, is important. The point of this exercise is not to achieve correct classifications or even to inductively verify that all things are in the One. Rather, like the thought experiment discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, one attempts to gather a multitude together and then hold it within a single act of vision, "seeing the One dispersed" (σκιδνάμενον τὸ ἕν ὁρῶν, 1, 21).

The reader is attempting to see *as if* from the vantage point of the One.[42] The point is to "fasten upon this" (ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐκδήσας, 1, 20). The impasse to be resolved is how individuals can come to be as they are while also belonging to an overall order. By imaginatively moving toward the source of unity, one attempts to see this possibility from that perspective. The second part of this exercise, then, is the instruction to "go down dividing and seeing the One dispersed" (κατάβαινε διαιρῶν καὶ σκιδνάμενον τὸ ἕν ὁρῶν,

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[42] See Schroeder, 1996, 347-49.

1, 21). Staying fastened to the One, as if from this vantage point, the reader begins to divide. One determines the boundaries of each thing and so sees the particular way in which it is one.[43] Seeing the One dispersed does not mean seeing it cut up and distributed. Instead, this dispersion happens by the One "coming first before all things and encompassing all together in a single order" (τῷ ἐπὶ πάντα φθάνειν καὶ ὁμοῦ περιλαμβάνειν συντάξει μιᾷ, 1, 21-23). The non-temporal priority of the One implies that it is always with each individual as the source of its unity. Without the One, no individual could be or be one. In dividing, the reader sees each thing receiving its integrity from the One, which permeates each thing.

The reader sees all things together within a single order. All things are in the One, although not as if in a substrate or a substance. Rather, the One "embraces" or "includes" (περιλαμβάνειν, 1, 22) all together within a single order. It does not hold or unite them as if it were an external force but as an inner source, which is why Plotinus calls this single order a living being. However, the one is not inner as if it were a localized property or constitutive element. It transcends any individual and all of them together and so unifies each of them and all of them together by being omnipresent.[44] Through this exercise, the reader sees this source as that which is the unity for individuals and as binding all of them together. If an individual was unified to the exclusion of the single order or the single order was unified to the exclusion of individual unity, then the One would be a deficient

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[43] See Perl, 2014, 123-129.
[44] See Rist, 1967, 25-27 and 213-230 (he emphasizes the transcendent aspect, probably because he is trying to argue against those who, like Bréhier, claim Plotinus is a mystic: see 228-229); Wallis, 1971, 91 (he presents the immanence-transcendence of the One as a dilemma); Costa, 1996, 361-63; Bussanich, 1996, 50-1; Perl, 2014, 129-132.

source. If the One is not deficient, then individual unity and a single order are compatible. The aim of this thought experiment is to *see* this compatibility, to see that this "single living being is greatly variegated" (διακεκριμένον ἓν εἶναι ζῷον πολύ, 1, 23). The reader sees each being striving and endeavoring to keep itself together within a common order.

5.3.2   Cosmic order and human culpability

Although Plotinus is showing the compatibility between the individual unity of distinct beings and the common order, he is also committed to degrees of individual differences. He concludes this thought experiment not only with examples but a μέν. . .δέ clause, which establishes a contrast. He contrasts the burning of fire and the deeds belonging to horses with human beings: the former two are examples of how particular beings engage in activities according to their nature (1, 24-25). On the one hand, horses or fires perform deeds (ἔργα, 1, 25) that belong to them as horses or as fires.

> On the other hand, human beings [do deeds] from themselves by nature, each in their own way, different human beings [doing] different [deeds], ἄνθρωποι δὲ τὰ αὑτῶν ἕκαστοι ᾗ πεφύκασι καὶ διάφορα οἱ διάφοροι, III.3.1, 25-26).[45]

Plotinus is saying that human beings are more differentiated among themselves than other animals are among themselves. This greater degree of differentiation implies that we can diverge from one another to a greater extent. Our deeds come from our own particular dispositions, and so our deeds are also more widely divergent. The other side of this distinction is that we are more culpable for our deeds. If we originate actions, motions, and events from our own individual differences, we are responsible for them.

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[45] My translation.

Nevertheless, the account of an individual's ability to originate and be responsible for an action cannot place him or her outside of the cosmos. Plotinus makes this point in responding to an imaginary interlocutor who says that "I have power to choose this or that" (3, 1-2). Plotinus responds this way:

> But these things you will choose have been organized together, because your choice [is] not an addition to the All, but you are counted in just as the one you are (Ἀλλ' ἅ αἱρήσει συντέτακται, ὅτι μὴ ἐπεισόδιον τὸ σὸν τῷ παντί, ἀλλ' ἠρίθμησαι ὁ τοιόσδε, III.3.3, 2-4).

The choice of one course of action or another involves surroundings and entities already included within cosmic order. This action and what follows from it are also included within that order. A number of factors coincide together to limit and determine the possibility of choices before they ever happen. The consequences of the choices are also limited and determined by being included within that order. In short, choice is not an autonomous act that transpires independently of what has been ordered together.

To whom, then, are we to assign blame—the maker or the individual (3, 5-7)? Plotinus' begins addressing this question by saying that "one must not blame at all" (ὅλως οὐκ αἰτιατέον, 3, 8). Blame is only possible when something could have been or someone could have done otherwise (3, 8-9). If one blames the cosmos or individuals within it, then one presumes it or they could have been or done otherwise. That presumption is inappropriate, at least when it comes to plants, animals, or the whole cosmos. The cosmos is to be affirmed as it is, not as we wish or want it to be. Human beings are uniquely capable of being culpable, if we can add something to ourselves to become better (3, 12-14). What can humans add to themselves, and how is this addition not external to the cosmos or its ordering?

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For this *logos* is consistent with another Soul, but Soul herself is consistent with Intellect, but Intellect is not some one thing among others but is all. But all things are many things. But being many and not the same implies there are firsts on the one hand, seconds on the other, and there are also those destined by worth to be successive after these. And, accordingly, even the living beings coming to be are not only souls but diminishings of souls, a sort of going out already going forth. For the *logos* of a living being, even if it were ensouled, is another soul [that is] not There, the *logos* moving away from her, and this whole becomes quite disintegrated pressing on toward matter, and what comes to be from it is even more wanting. Behold how far away what is coming to be stands and nevertheless is a wonder (Ἀκόλουθος γὰρ οὗτος ὁ λόγος ψυχῇ ἄλλῃ, ἀκόλουθος δὲ ψυχὴ αὕτη νῷ, νοῦς δὲ οὐ τούτων τι ἕν, ἀλλὰ πάντα· τὰ δὲ πάντα πολλά· πολλὰ δὲ ὄντα καὶ οὐ ταὐτὰ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα, τὰ δὲ δεύτερα, τὰ δὲ ἐφεξῆς καὶ τῇ ἀξίᾳ ἔμελλεν εἶναι. Καὶ τοίνυν καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ζῷα οὐ ψυχαὶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ ψυχῶν ἐλαττώσεις, οἷον ἐξίτηλον ἤδη προϊόντων. Ὁ γὰρ του ζῴου λόγος, κἂν ἔμψυχος ᾖ, ἑτέρα ψυχή, οὐκ ἐκείνη, ἀφ᾽ ἧς ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὗτος ἐλάττων δὴ γίνεται σπεύδων εἰς ὕλην, καὶ τὸ γενόμενον ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐνδεέστερον. Σκόπει δὴ ὅσον ἀφέστηκε τὸ γενόμενον καὶ ὅμως ἐστὶ θαῦμα, III.3.3, 21-31).[46]

The *logos*, as that which orders this cosmos, is congenial with "another Soul" (ψυχῇ ἄλλῃ, 3, 22). As discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, *logos* is an activity of the All-Soul. As such, it is a vitalizing principle, producing a living, dynamic order. This Soul is congenial with Intellect, which "is not some one thing among others but is all" (οὐ τούτων τι ἕν, ἀλλὰ πάντα, 3, 23). Intellect is not an entity that one could pick out and identify among other things. It *is* all things. But since "all" implies "many" and "many" implies variation, there are gradations in order—some first, others second, and others third.[47] This cosmos, as a corporeal, moving, perceptual manifestation of all beings in Intellect, is a living order. The gradations in this order have not been measured out as if we were to imagine a divine craftsman who is similar to a human one (3, 19-20). Instead, they are corporeal manifestations of differences in Intellect.

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[46] My translation.
[47] See VI.7.[38].9, 16-21 for Plotinus' discussion of how these gradations depend on nearness to the first principle.

As discussed in previous chapters, Intellect actively holds together as a complete unity. Although Intellect contains gradations, no being within it lacks the integrity of the whole. However, as the souls and *logoi* move out toward matter in the production of corporeality, the variations in the order become separated from each other. Souls and *logoi* can no longer contain the full integrity of the whole of Soul or of *logos* as they proceed out toward matter. Because there is less internal integrity in the sources, there is even less unity in the products. Plotinus asserts the imperative: "behold how far away what comes to be stands" (Σκόπει δὴ ὅσον ἀφέστηκε τὸ γενόμενον, 3, 30-31). We are to behold or contemplate how far away the corporeal, moving cosmos—the content of our perceptions—stands from Intellect. We are to contemplate how from the unity of Intellect, through gradations of souls and *logoi*, the bodies in the perceptual cosmos come to be separate from each other. It is nevertheless a wonder (ἐστὶ θαῦμα, 3, 31) because whatever is or happens in this cosmos remains inextricably connected to Intellect. This connection, through Soul and *logos* as well as though souls and *logoi*, is essential for how human beings can add something to themselves that is not external to this cosmos.

Plotinus indicates what this possibility of addition entails: "the *logos* of a living being, even if it were ensouled, is another soul [that is] not There, the *logos* moving away from her" (Ὁ γὰρ του ζῴου λόγος, κἂν ἔμψυχος ᾖ, ἑτέρα ψυχή, οὐκ ἐκείνη, ἀφ᾽ ἧς ὁ λόγος, 3, 27). Plotinus is suggesting that different souls can intersect and operate within one living being.[48] There is not a one-to-one correspondence between one living being and one soul. A living being can move and be influenced by different sources. If human

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[48] See Gurtler, 2015, 163-67 and 206-17.

beings are responsible for who they are and what they do, they must be capable of living according to a source other than those which determine their organic developments. These other sources are the *logoi* that are activities of the All-Soul.[49] These activities shape and determine our bodily life. Human beings, then, must not be simple if they are responsible for their deeds.

> For if, on the one hand, humanity were simple—I speak of simple in this way: only being the way one had been made to be, acting and suffering according to these [the traces of Intellect][50]—that would mean culpability is absent in regard to moral evaluation, just as in the case of other living beings. On the other hand, as it is, the bad human being is alone blamable, and this is perhaps reasonably said. For he is not only what he has been made to be but has another source, a free one, which is not outside providence nor the *logos* of the whole: for those There have not been detached from these here, but the stronger illuminates the weaker and perfect providence is this. On the one hand, [there is] the productive *logos*, but on the other hand [there is] the *logos* linking the superior [principles] to the produced things: the one There [is] providence from above, while the other providence [is] from the higher, the other *logos* conjoined to the one There, and the whole complex and the whole providence comes to be from both. Although human beings have another source, not all are using all they have, but while some use one, some use another or are using many other worse ones (Ἁπλοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—λέγω δὲ ἁπλοῦ ὡς τοῦτο ὃ πεποίται μόνον ὄντος καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ποιοῦντος καὶ πάσχοντος— ἀπῆν αἰτία ἡ κατὰ τὴν ἐπιτίμησιν, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ζῴων τῶν ἄλλων. Νῦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος μόνον ἐν ψόγῳ, ὁ κακὸς καὶ τοῦτο ἴσως εὐλόγως. Οὐ γὰρ μόνον ὅ πεποίηταί ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει ἀρχὴν ἄλλην ἐλευθέραν οὐκ ἔξω τῆς προνοίας οὖσαν οὐδὲ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ὅλου· οὐ γὰρ ἀπήρτηται ἐκεῖνα τούτων, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιλάμπει τὰ κρείττω τοῖς χείροσι καὶ ἡ τελεία πρόνοια τοῦτο· καὶ λόγος ὁ μὲν ποιητικός, ὁ δὲ συνάπτων τὰ κρείττω τοῖς γενομένοις, κἀκεῖνα πρόνοια ἡ ἄνωθεν, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἄνω, ὁ ἕτερος λόγος συνημμένος ἐκείνῳ, καὶ γίνεται ἐξ ἀμφοῖν πᾶν πλέγμα καὶ πρόνοια ἡ πᾶσα. Ἀρχὴν

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[49] See IV.4.36-37 for Plotinus' argument that parts of a living being that are not perceptibly alive have a hidden life and contribute to the life of the living thing. This hidden life and contribution depends on their connection to the All-Soul; see also IV.4.43-44 for Plotinus' argument that Nature influences our bodily life and practical activity. He, however, does not argue that the contemplative human will not engage in practical life, only that this person would not be absorbed in these actions and their consequences (IV.4.44, 17-37; Gurtler, 2015, 211-217). Chapter six of this dissertation continues this examination into Plotinus' discussion of "worldly" involvement in more detail.

[50] I attach "traces from Intellect" to "these" (ταῦτα) because the only neuter plurals that closely precede it are from III.3.3, 34—τὰ ἴχνη αὐτοῦ τοιαῦτα.

μὲν οὖν ἔχουσιν ἄλλην ἄνθρωποι, οὐ πάντες δὲ πᾶσιν οἷς ἔχουσι χρῶνται, ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν τῇ ἑτέρᾳ, οἱ δὲ τῇ ἑτέρᾳ ἢ ταῖς ἑτέραις ταῖς χείροσι χρῶνται III.3.4, 1-18).[51]

If human beings acted on and were affected by other things only according to how we were made, then holding us responsible would be unwarranted. To evaluate human beings in terms of what they do and experience implies that they are not simple. In such cases, one no longer attributes the actions of humans and what happens to them to innate compulsions to shape themselves in particular ways. The culpable human being could have been or done otherwise, which implies that he or she could have been determined by a different source (ἀρχὴν ἄλλην, 4, 7). In having access to another source of which we could or could not avail ourselves, we are responsible for whether we live in accord with that source.

This other source is free (ἐλευθέραν, 4, 7) but not outside of providence (οὐκ ἔξω τῆς προνοίας, 4, 7-8). Complete or perfect providence (ἡ τελεία πρόνοια, 4, 10) is the co-operation of two distinct types of sources—the stronger that illuminates the weaker (ἐπιλάμπει τὰ κρείττω τοῖς χείροσι, 4, 9-10). The stronger sources remain closely connected to Intellect. They impart the formation of a living unity with greater ease than what is further removed. Since these stronger sources illuminate the weaker ones, the latter are not disconnected from the former. By being connected to the stronger sources, the weaker ones still remain linked to and dependent on Intellect. The activities of both are complete providence because they constitute the totality of ways in which this cosmos depends on Intellect. The stronger kind of source that remains with Intellect is associated with the productive *logos* (λόγος ὁ ποιητικός, 4, 11) and providence from above (πρόνοια

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[51] My translation.

ἡ ἄνωθεν, 4, 13). The productive *logos* is that which makes something be what it is. There is also the *logos* that joins the stronger kind of source to the produced things (ὁ δὲ συνάπτων τὰ κρείττω τοῖς γενομένοις, 4, 11-12). These are not two distinct *logoi* but more like sides of the one *logos*, and higher and lower providence are two sides of the one providence. Each side of the one *logos* constitutes the ways in which this All depends on Intellect.

On the one hand, this cosmos depends on Intellect through the production of independent beings that sustain and shape themselves. The sources that bring something forth and hold it together are related to Intellect by supplying each being with its own form. On the other hand, the activity of joining the stronger sources to the things that are and the events that happen belongs to another side of *logos*. This joining together is the interconnection among the interactions of all the various bodies. It ensures that bodies, motions, and events are not isolated but contribute to an order. This order among multiple bodies is the way this cosmos imitates the internal unity among intellects. One side of *logos* or its activity does not temporally precede the other. The cosmos, as the single organization of various, independent bodies, is possible only on the basis of both sides working simultaneously.

Plotinus associates our free source with the productive *logos* and higher providence (4, 13-18). Since it is not outside providence, since providence is the way in which the cosmos depends on Intellect, this free source is not outside the cosmos. In using this word "free" (ἐλεύθερος), Plotinus has a section of the *Theaetetus* in mind. From *Theaet*172d to

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176a the word appears four times: at 172d, 173b, 175e, and176a.[52] This section ends with the passage about the impossibility of eradicating evils that Plotinus has already referenced.[53] In this section, Socrates associates freedom with leisure (σχολή, 172d) and philosophy. He distinguishes between those accustomed to giving an account in court and those who give an account in freedom and leisure. The former are constrained by time, necessity, and formal speeches, while the latter are not concerned with these, but "only if they hit upon 'that which is'" (ἄν μόνον τύχωσι τοῦ ὄντος, 172d). The former are accustomed to inhabiting public and political arenas, while the latter are not. The former are interested in and impressed by possessions and lineage, while the latter are interested in the whole earth, the heavens, and are "always looking to the All" (εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἀεὶ βλέπειν, 175a).[54]

Socrates' distinction is similar to the one between the "inner soul" and "outer shadow of humanity." The source of a human being's troubles is that which underlies the free source, which is not matter but the *logos* [of the human] and what comes to be and is according to it (4, 28-35). The source of troubles is oneself. Human beings that do not avail themselves of this free source remain concerned solely with the necessities of corporeal and public life. Their efforts are exerted toward establishing and maintaining an environment that supports or enhances their bodily life. They are caught up in the nexus of acting on and being affected by other things and other people. They are not truly free,

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[52] Benardete's translation, 2006, I.39-I.43.
[53] III.2.5, 29; III.2.15, 11.
[54] My translation.

since their actions are always reactions to external influences.[55] They can never originate an action fully from themselves. In other words, they are guided by sources and influences that preserve or threaten the "outer-shadow's" appearance.

In contrast, those who avail themselves of this free source concern themselves with the truth and the being of beings. For instance, they are not interested in appearing just in courts but in discovering what justice is. This free source is that part in us that inclines and leads us to the divine. It turns our attention away from what is exterior, including what is exterior about ourselves, toward what is interior. By becoming receptive to this source, we move toward our "inner soul" and the contemplation of Being and Intellect. This free source reminds us what is worth taking seriously. In being receptive to this free source, all conceptualizing, representing, and accounting are at the service of contemplation. Just as no desire or need will come to dominate and determine one's bodily life, no account will come to dominate and determine one's cognitive life.

For Plotinus, an orientation towards contemplation implies the ability to originate something, since production follows from contemplation.[56] As will be seen in the discussion of virtue in the sixth chapter of this dissertation, the primary production is not something external to oneself—an artwork, a building, a treatise, etc. Rather, one produces a way of life.[57] This way of life flows from one's own being and is not constructed out of a series of reactions to external influences. This ability is available to

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[55] See Armstrong, 1967, fn.1, 122-123, Kalligas, 2014, 476.
[56] See note 23 in the third chapter.
[57] See Kalligas, 2014, 475.

all human beings. We are responsible for whether or not we live according to this free source.

Plotinus further fleshes out this connection between our freedom and providence by distinguishing between "according to providence" and "by providence." Those who perform good deeds and live good lives act according to providence (κατὰ πρόνοιαν), but their actions are not committed by providence (ὑπὸ προνοίας); those who perform bad deeds and live bad lives do not act according to providence, and their actions are not committed by providence (5, 46-49). Providence is less like an agent acting through us and more like a model or an example. Since providence is the cosmos in so far as it depends on Intellect, then it is a model for how to depend on Intellect. It is an example of how to shape and determine one's life in imitation of Intellect.

If bad deeds arise from those who perform them and if they are responsible for these deeds, then there is an impasse about how diviners can predict the worse events. How can they look toward the heavens and predict what will happen (6, 1-3)? How can people be said to originate something and yet their deeds be predictable? Plotinus' answer to this impasse involves seeing the activity of diviners in a particular way.[58] Diviners contemplate a compound of matter and form, which means they contemplate the *logos* that does the forming. Their manner of contemplation differs from those who contemplate an intelligible living being (ζῷον νοητὸν, 6, 7-9). The divining art is discursive and uses discursive strategies. They are oriented toward what is intelligible but only insofar as it is in corporeality. Those who contemplate the beings within the cosmos

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[58] See IV.4.39 for Plotinus argument that one thing being a sign of another in this All depends on the sympathetic unity and the *logos* of this cosmos; see also Gurtler, 2015, 178-184.

also contemplate its origins and the providence over it (6, 9-11). They do not just examine something in isolation but as contained within a larger whole. Still, they only direct their attention to what is mixed and continues to be mixed. They cannot distinguish between providence or what accords with providence and what results from the substrate (6, 11-17). Interestingly, Plotinus asserts that such discrimination belongs to either a god or godlike man (6, 18-19).[59]

The diviner's art, then, does not give an account of the cause but only of the fact. Divination is a kind of literacy, a reading of natural letters (6, 19-21).[60] Celestial beings are signs for diviners. They interpret these signs by associating them with people and events on earth. They cannot explain why events and people turn out as they do. Their art is more associative than predictive. Since they do not identify and articulate causes, their art does not imply that people are determined to be and act a certain way. Their art depends on the condition that the celestial sphere corresponds with beings and events on earth and that both contribute to the structure of the cosmos (6, 23-26). Beings in the cosmos are sympathetically linked together and undergo similar experiences.[61] They are not severed from one another but are made like one another in some way (6, 27-29). These bonds of similarity establish the conditions under which associations are possible.

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[59] This assertion is interesting because Plotinus, right near the end of this whole discussion, is stressing the difficulty of clearly separating out what belongs to providence and comes from it and what belongs to the substratum. He is indicating to the reader that an account that claims to achieve this distinction must come from either a god or godlike man. Is Plotinus claiming this status for himself, is he leaving a space open in his own account for questioning and reexamination, or is he pointing out that readers would do well to recall the limitations of human rationality?

[60] See Gurtler, 2015, 178-84.

[61] See Kalligas, 2014, 480; see note 13 in the second chapter of this dissertation.

By means of analogy, the celestial beings signify something about earthly beings to the one who observes (6, 26-27). This kind of analogical reasoning produces a structure within which different things are shown to be similar.[62] With this structure, one represents observed correlations of likeness and unlikeness. Plotinus uses the following examples: an eye is to an eye as a foot is to a foot, and virtue is to justice as vice is to injustice (6, 31-36). By means of some common feature or aspect, what is different is shown to be related and similar. For instance, eyes come in pairs and feet come in pairs; virtue ensures justice and vice ensures injustice. Arrangements of planets and stars are different from people's characters or events on earth. Diviners, however, can interpret a similarity or common feature between them such that the former indicate something about the latter.

As a discursive operation, analogy is an attempt to represent the "analogy" or "correspondence" in the All. Only on the basis of the latter is the former possible.

> If, therefore, analogy [is] in the All, then to predict [is] in one's power: and if those there act in regard to these here, they act in the way that parts in the whole living being act toward one another, not as one generating another—for both are generated—but as each being the way it is by nature, and in this way it experiences what is suitable to its nature. Since it is this sort of thing, that sort of experience happens to it: and, indeed, the *logos* is one in that way (Εἰ τοίνυν ἀναλογία ἐν τῷ παντί, καὶ προειπεῖν ἔνι· καὶ εἰ ποιεῖ δὲ ἐκεῖνα εἰς ταῦτα, οὕτω ποιεῖ, ὡς καὶ τὰ ἐν παντὶ ζῴῳ εἰς ἄλληλα, οὐχ ὡς θάτερον γεννᾷ θάτερον—ἅμα γὰρ γεννᾶται—ἀλλ᾽ ὡς, ᾗ πέφυκεν ἕκαστον, οὕτω καὶ πάσχει τὸ πρόσφορον εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν, καὶ ὅτι τοῦτο τοιοῦτον, καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον τοῦτο· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ λόγος εἷς, III.3.6, 33-39).[63]

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[62] Chapter six of this dissertation discusses another kind of analogical reasoning.
[63] My translation.

Although Plotinus says "to predict" (προειπεῖν, 6, 34), the rest of the passage indicates that he means something more like association.[64] There are correlations among celestial and earthly beings that are similar to those in a living being. Different parts experience the same thing but in ways related to their nature: in the presence of something fearful, the skin sweats, the heart pumps rapidly, and the muscles tighten. As part of one organism, they all suffer something together but express this experience differently. The one *logos* is the organizing activity through which all things live and occur together in the cosmos. This common *logos* makes it possible for different beings to express something similar in their own way. To someone who can observe this similarity, these different expressions of a similarity can be interpreted.

5.4   Concluding Remarks: Impasses, Changes in Perspective, and Thinking Dynamically

Even at the end of this treatise, Plotinus highlights that confronting and resolving impasses requires adjustments in ourselves. For instance, he says one must not censure (αἰτιατέον, 7, 4) the inferior in the better but approve (ἀποδεκτέον, 7, 4) the better for giving something of itself to the inferior. Instead of focusing on the inferior, one sees how the better makes a place for everything. One sees how even what is inferior has some share in activity, unity, or life because of the better. This shift in orientation involves a change in oneself. We are seeing, then, that a pedagogical dimension continues

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[64] See Gurtler, 2015, 183.

to the very end of the treatise. Plotinus is still guiding readers toward a change in a

perspective that necessitates a continual self-examination.

This continuation of a pedagogical dimension is seen especially in his discussion of

how names work.

> For of what will it be providence? Of course, it will not be providence of itself or of the better: for when we talk about the higher providence, this naming relates to the lower side. For, on the one hand, that which [gathers] all into one is a source, in it all [are] together and all [are] whole. On the other hand, each already springs from this, that which is abiding within, as if from a single root staying still in itself of its own accord: but they burst forth into a divided multitude, each bearing an image of There, one immediately having come to be in another here. On the one hand, some are near the root, while, on the other hand, those advancing into the distance splinter even to the extent of being like branches, twigs, fruits, and leaves (Τίνος γὰρ ἔσται; Οὐ γὰρ δὴ αὐτῆς οὐδὲ τοῦ βελτίονος· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὴν ἄνω πρόνοιαν ὀνομάζοντες πρὸς τὸ κάτω λέγομεν. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἰς ἕν πάντα ἀρχή, ἐν ᾗ ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ ὅλον πάντα. Πρόεισι δὲ ἤδη ἐκ ταύτης ἕκαστα μενούσης ἐκείνης ἔνδον οἷον ἐκ ῥίζης μιᾶς ἑστώσης αὐτῆς ἐν αὑτῇ· τὰ δὲ ἐξήνθησεν εἰς πλῆθος μεμερισμένον εἴδωλον ἕκαστον ἐκείνου φέρον, ἄλλο δὲ ἐν ἄλλῳ ἐνταῦθα ἤδη ἐγίγνετο καὶ ἦν τὰ μὲν πλησίον τῆς ῥίζης, τὰ δὲ προιόντα εἰς τὸ πόρρω ἐσχίζετο καὶ μέχρις οἷον κλάδων καὶ ἄκρων καὶ καρπῶν καὶ φύλλων, III.3.7, 7-18).[65]

Those who expect (ἀξιοῦντες, 7, 6) the inferior to be abolished in this All would also

abolish providence. Plotinus highlights that *we* talk (λέγομεν, 7, 9) about providence and

are the ones naming it (ὀνομάζοντες, 7, 9). When we use the name "higher providence,"

this name implies what is opposite, what is "lower". Similarly, "better" implies what is

named as "inferior." When Plotinus says that the better relates to the inferior, this claim is

not just about the way things are. It is a claim about the way certain names work.

Whenever we use names that imply a contrast or comparison, the other side is always

included. One's expression and account, one's *logos*, necessarily includes opposites. In

forming expressions, especially ones involving evaluations and contrasts, we do not

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[65] My translation.

speak of discreet, isolated things. When we assert the existence of what is better, we immediately assert the existence of what is inferior. Those who want to affirm the one without the other understand neither the cosmos nor the way naming works.

Plotinus shows how the kind of thinking that retains one side in a pair of opposites and discards the other is misguided. One will inevitably run into an impasse by thinking in these terms: the cosmos is good or there is evil in it, humans are free or are determined, the cosmos is ordered or individuals come to be in their own way. If one thinks in this either/or way and keeps one side to the exclusion of the other, the discarded side will always have some evidence in its favor. Plotinus' account models and demonstrates another kind of thinking, one which involves preserving both sides. This kind of thinking, however, does not aim at a complete, definitive account. Rather, one holds the opposites together with the aim of generating an account from which an insight might happen.

In this particular case, one experiences oneself and the cosmos differently. For instance, in the above passage, one holds simultaneously that all are together and are a divided multitude. One does not choose one or the other. If one affirms both, constructing a way in which to envision both sides operating together becomes possible. The production of an image is helpful in envisioning this possibility. Plotinus uses the image of a tree in which various parts spring from a single root. The root stays hidden within but determines the motion, growth, and development of each part and the whole. All the parts remain themselves through their own motion and development, contributing to the whole in and through their own activities. This unity and their contribution to it are possible because of the single root.

Unity and division are not the only opposites in this image. Plotinus loads it with a number of them: staying still (ἑστώσης, 7, 13) and motion (πρόεισι and ἐξήνθησεν, 7, 11, 13), in oneself (ἐν αὐτῇ, 7, 13) and in another (ἐν ἄλλῳ, 7, 15), there (ἐκείνου, 7, 14) and here (ἐνταῦθα, 7, 14), one (μιᾶς, 7, 12) and many (πλῆθος, 7, 14), abiding within (μενούσης ἔνδον, 7, 12) and springing out (πρόεισι, 7, 11). The image of the tree does not prove that the cosmos is a single order filled with individuals all united in one source. Instead, it helps one envision how that is possible. Since this image depends on preserving both opposites, those interpreting it must keep the interplay between each side alive. The unity of the cosmos is thought together with the divisions in it, or its order is thought together with the coming to be of individuals. Thinking these together requires finding some means of relating each side. In Plotinus' image of the tree, the *life* of the organism is this means.

This chapter examined the following opposites: the possibility of evil and a providential cosmos, human responsibility and determinism, order and individual becoming. Plotinus' depiction of the cosmos shows how to preserve both sides and think them together. The image of a single thought's ongoing expression is another way to envision this possibility. In the thought, the content is concentrated together. As this thought enters into speech, either through graphic or phonetic material, it becomes articulated and divided. One word or phrase could sound harsher than another or could convey something unpleasant. Within the whole, however, it has its place and contributes to the fullness of the expression. Each part bears its own meaning and represents the thought in its own way. Still, they all fit together by depending on and expressing this

single thought. There is an internal logic that puts each part in its proper place and relates them all together. This organization does not determine the meaning of each part but contains each part as it is.

Chapter 6: Conclusion
Virtues, Dialectic, and the Autodidactic Soul

This dissertation has examined how a number of pedagogical techniques and aims are at work in Plotinus' discussion of providence. This final chapter examines how these techniques and aims are essential to the structure of two other works: I.2.[19] and

I.3.[20], *On Virtues* and *On Dialectic*. *On Virtues* and *On Dialectic* are both directed toward one's ethical and intellectual formation. This chapter will show how, for Plotinus, both kinds of formation remain inseparable in an education. *On Virtues* and *On Dialectic* provide a good framework within which to summarize and to extend the pedagogical findings of this dissertation. In particular, they elucidate an important feature of Plotinus' pedagogy. His discussion of virtues and dialectic demonstrates that the individual's soul is the focus of his teaching. Plotinus is not concerned about convincing students of a system or persuading them that he has a correct account. Rather, his concern is directed toward students' ability to give their own account, think for themselves, and become aware of the truth that is already in their souls. Since his teaching aims at these activities, that students must enact his pedagogical techniques for themselves makes sense. Ultimately, Plotinus' pedagogy is such that a student learns that his or her soul is its own teacher.

6.1   On Virtues: Selfhood and Likeness to God

Plotinus begins his discussion of virtues by articulating the motive for acquiring and practicing them.

> Since evils [are] here and by necessity wander about this place, but the soul wishes to flee evils, one must flee from here. What, then, is the flight? To become like god he [Plato] says. But this [would happen] if we became just and pious through prudence and completely virtuous. If, therefore, we become like by virtue, is it by god possessing virtue? And what god in particular? (Ἐπειδὴ τὰ κακὰ ἐνταῦθα καὶ τόνδε τὸν τόπον περιπολεῖ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, βούλεται δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ φυγεῖν τὰ κακά, φευκτέον ἐντεῦθεν. Τίς οὖν ἡ φυγή; Θεῷ, φησιν, ὁμοιωθῆναι. Τοῦτο δέ, εἰ δίκαιοι καὶ ὅσιοι

μετὰ φρονήσεως γενοίμεθα καὶ ὅλως ἐν ἀρετῇ. Εἰ οὖν ἀρετῇ ὁμοιούμεθα, ἆρα ἀρετὴν ἔχοντι; Καὶ δὴ καὶ τίνι θεῷ; I 2[19]1 1-8).[1]

Plotinus beginning his discussion of virtues by referring to *Theaetetus* 176a-b is significant. The previous chapter discussed this passage in relation to the possibility of living according to one's free source. This way of life entails a change of focus and attention. One turns away from bodily cares as well as public recognitions and toward contemplating Being and Intellect. Acquiring and practicing virtues involves this same change of focus. What this conversion consists of depends on what Plotinus means by saying, "one must flee from here" (φευκτέον ἐντεῦθεν, 1, 3). Is this an "otherworldly" or "unworldly" endeavor?[2] Is the flight out of fear, or is it out of repugnance?

To be sure, this conversion occurs through a fundamental change in the way one experiences oneself and other beings. However, this chapter argues that characterizing the endeavor as "otherworldly" or "unworldly" misrepresents Plotinus. One is reoriented in relation to one's body but does not neglect or despise it. One is reoriented in relation to others but does not "fail to notice" them.[3] This reading of *On Virtues* highlights the

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[1] My translation.

[2] See I.8.[51].6, 9-14 where Plotinus is clear that "flight" means flight from being wicked and living well on earth. See also Dillon, 1996, 320, 331; Baltzly, 2004, 301-303; Kalligas, 2004, 135; Russell, 200 4, 241; Stern-Gillet, 2008, 334-335. Stern-Gillet, 2014, 396-420 argues that the human soul as an "amphibious reality" accounts for why there are passages in which Plotinus' ethic involves a double concern: on the one hand, it involves caring for one's body as well as curative, practical action. On the other hand, it involves cultivating the stillness from which the soul can contemplate higher realities. She argues, however, that "the otherworldly strand dominates his ethical reflections" (415). Nevertheless, she also comments on Plotinus' pedagogic activity "by which he sought to induce them [his students] to turn their life around (*epistrephein*) into a direction opposite (*eis ta enantia*) to the one they had so far been heading towards" (416). It is this concern for the soul of anyone who sought to attend his lectures that I think constitutes his ethical concern for others. As I argue in the section on dialectic, his concern *as a philosopher* includes a concern for the soul of others.

[3] See Dillon, 1996, 324; In IV.4.44-45, Plotinus argues that the contrast between the sage and the practical man is not in terms of the one avoiding and the other being involved in public and bodily activities. Instead, "the sage and the practical man do these activities differently" (Gurtler, 2015, 210). If the sage marries and

pedagogical dimension of this treatise. By drawing on some of the aims and techniques of

Plotinus' pedagogy articulated in previous chapters, it will show that an orientation

toward Being and Intellect does not exclude a concern for this world. This reading

consists of answering the following four questions. First, how are we to understand

likeness? Second, what is the relationship between the civic and purifying virtues? Third,

how are we to understand Plotinus' notion of two selves? Finally, what does he mean by

"becoming like god"?

6.1.1   Two kinds of likeness

To understand Plotinus' notion of virtue, one must first examine how virtues can

make us like what does not need and so does not possess virtue. He begins by presenting

the false analogy of virtues to heat and fire (I.2.1, 32-41).[4] Beginning this way is similar

to his assertion that we are not to understand cosmic providence as analogous to human

forethought. In both cases, Plotinus prepares his readers to think about likeness in a

particular way by first articulating the wrong way to think about likeness. Regarding how

virtues make us like something without virtue, the comparison to something heated by

something that is hot but not itself heated is inappropriate. The hot but unheated entity

innately (σύμφυτον, 1, 37) contains heat, while what is heated receives this property as

something extraneous. This account (λόγον, 1, 38), if it kept to the analogy (ἀναλογίᾳ, 1,

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has children or holds public office, he does these activities within the context of being integrated with his
noetic self. The practical man, however, acts from irrational impulses that do not aim at making oneself
unified or contributing to a common good (see Gurtler, 2015, 208-217).
[4] Armstrong, 1966, 129-133. Unless otherwise noted, all translations and paraphrases are from Armstrong
in this chapter.

38), would make virtue a possession of that which gives it and something imported to the soul. Second, although the presence of fire makes something hot, the fire does not heat itself. This account (λόγον, 1, 40) is also inappropriate, since it would make virtue identical to Intellect.

We began with the premise that virtues make us like god, who does not possess virtues. The first case, however, ends up attributing virtue to god. The analogy to the hot but unheated thing treats virtue as something innate to god and so something that god has. The second case ends up identifying god with virtue. The analogy to fire treats virtue as one and the same as the source of virtue, not as distinct. In both cases, we contradicted the initial premise. The underlying mistake is in the kind of analogical thinking being employed. He is assisting readers in moving from a mistaken way of thinking toward one that is more appropriate to the issue at hand. In the analogical method employed above, likeness was depicted as reciprocal.[5] In reciprocal likeness, two things are said to be alike by means of sharing the same quality, characteristic, or some other feature (2, 5-7). In non-reciprocal likeness, one thing is like another, which is primary and not said (λεγόμενον, 2, 8) to be like that which resembles it: one must understand (λήπτεον, 2, 9) this likeness differently, and we cannot demand the same form (οὐ ταὐτὸν εἶδος ἀπαιτοῦντας) to be in both (2, 7-10). Plotinus highlights that this issue of similarity inextricably involves those who experience and discuss the likeness. Each kind of

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[5] See Gurtler, 1988 for an extended discussion of the difference between reciprocal and non-reciprocal likeness and how this distinction is crucial for understanding the way that multiple things can participate together in one form.

likeness relates to a different kind of analogical thinking: one that presumes a reciprocal likeness and the other that presumes a non-reciprocal likeness. [6]

In the present case, we cannot use the kind of analogical reasoning that moves from one thing to another by means of that which is common to both. Another method is necessary. Plotinus uses this example: a perceptible house is like an intelligible house, but the latter is not like the former. The perceptible house partakes (μεταλαμβάνει, 1, 44) of arrangement (τάξις, 1, 44), order (κόσμος, 1, 44), and symmetry (συμμετρία, 1, 46), while the intelligible house does not. If Plotinus has Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1034a24) in mind, the intelligible house is the worker's skill to produce the house extended in space.[7] Since the physical house was produced by that skill, the physical house is like the intelligible one. However, the skill to produce a house is not corporeal and so has no share in any of the attributes that pertain to a physical house. We, too, participate in arrangement (τάξεως, 1, 46), order (κόσμου, 1, 46), and consistency (ὁμολογίας, 1, 47), which come from Intellect and constitute virtue, but Intellect has no need of arrangement, order, or consistency and so has no need of virtue. Plotinus uses the kind of analogy that

[6] Kalligas, 2014, 136-37 interprets Plotinus as affirming that kind of analogical thinking that depends on reciprocal likeness is appropriate when showing how virtues make us like god, who does not possess virtues. However, Plotinus' shift to the difference between the intelligible house and the perceptible house *is contrasted* to the relationship between heat or fire to thing heated. This contrast is signaled at lines 41-43: this kind of analogical thinking would be appropriate if what the soul participated in was the same as that from which she came. Since, through virtues, soul participates in order, arrangement, and harmony, which Intellect does not need or share in, this kind of analogizing is inappropriate. The heated thing (*as* heated) both participates in the heat of the fire and is from the fire as the source; the perceptible house participates in order and arrangement, which are distinct from the source of the perceptible house.

[7] "[F]or instance a house comes from a house, insofar as it comes about by the action of an intelligence, since its form *is* the art by which it is built" (οἷον ἡ οἰκία ἐξ οἰκίας, ᾗ ὑπὸ νοῦ: ἡ γὰρ τέχνη τὸ εἶδος, Sachs' translation, 1999, 133). He also has Plato's *Parmenides* in mind, especially Parmenides' critique of the young Socrates' conception of the forms. Plotinus' notion of a non-reciprocal likeness resolves the difficulty by saying that the one form and the instances are not *alike*. The instances or participants are like the form, but the form is not like them (See Gurtler, 1988, 9-39).

depends on reciprocal likeness to make his point. The order, arrangement, and consistency in our lives relate to Intellect as the order, arrangement, and symmetry of a perceptible house relate to the intelligible house. The common feature is the relationship a corporeal being has to an incorporeal power as its source.

We can use that kind of analogy to clarify to ourselves how virtues make us like Intellect without needing to posit that the former is in the latter. Nevertheless, we cannot use that kind of analogy in actually moving toward Intellect in our understanding. As discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, our language and accounts are like Intellect, but the latter is nothing like the former. Because our accounts can resemble Intellect, they are not completely severed from it. However, we cannot identify some form common to both of them and then, by means of that form, transition from our account to Intellect. As discussed in the first chapter, we must continually criticize our accounts and the faculties that generate them as part of the movement from resemblance to reality. As will be seen, Plotinus' discussion of virtues follows a similar path. He guides readers toward Intellect through a criticism of the kind of thinking that prevents them from thinking as Intellect does.

6.1.2   Civic and purifying virtues

Plotinus distinguishes between civic and purifying virtues in order to discover that which virtues make us like (2, 1-5). The purpose of this discussion, as will be seen, is not

just to uncover something about something but "to find" in the sense of obtaining or gaining something.[8] The first step is to articulate what the civic virtues accomplish.

> Indeed, then, the civic virtues, the ones we mentioned above somewhere, really order and make [us] better, bounding and measuring desires and wholly measuring passions and removing false opinions by what is entirely better, bounded, and outside the unmeasured and unbounded according to what has been measured and is itself bounded. Insofar as measures [are] in the matter of the soul, they become like the measure There and have a trace of the best There (Αἱ μὲν τοίνυν πολιτικαὶ ἀρεταί, ἅς ἄνω που εἴπομεν, κατακοσμοῦσαι μὲν ὄντως καὶ ἀμείνους ποιοῦσαν ὁρίζουσαι καὶ μετροῦσαι τὰς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ὅλως τὰ πάθη μετροῦσαι καὶ ψευδεῖς δόξας ἀφαιροῦσαι τῷ ὅλως ἀμείνονι καὶ τῷ ὡρίσθαι καὶ τῶν ἀμέτρων καὶ ἀορίστων ἔξω εἶναι κατὰ τὸ μεμετρημένον, καὶ αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι. Ἧι μέτρα γε ἐν ὕλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ, ὡμοίωνται τῷ ἐκεῖ μέτρῳ καὶ ἔχουσιν ἴχνος τοῦ ἐκεῖ ἀρίστου, I.2.2, 13-20).[9]

The virtues that Plotinus calls "civic" (πολιτικαί) are from Plato's *Republic* (427e-433e)—wise (σοφή), courageous (ἀνδρεία), self-controlled (σώφρων), and just (δικαία). He distinguishes them from virtues of "purification" (κάθαρσις), which come from *Phaedo* (69a-e). In both kinds of virtue, the names of all four are shared.[10] However, the intention in them is different.[11] Plotinus highlights this difference by using the language of "measure" and "boundary" with regard to the former but not the purifying virtues. The civic virtues establish parameters for one's desires and passions. Instead of pursuing anything and everything in an unregulated way, one operates within limits that determine what one will pursue and not pursue along with the degree to which one will pursue or not pursue something. At the same time, these limits determine what one will avoid or

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[8] LSJ, εὑρίσκω, A.IV.
[9] My translation.
[10] In I.2.3, 15-19, he uses the same words, except for one notable substitution. Where Plato uses σοφός in regard to the civic virtues, Plotinus uses φρονεῖν. However, in *Phaedo,* φρόνησις is used.
[11] See Kalligas, 2014, 140.

not avoid and the degree to which one will or will not avoid it. These virtues establish limits for what is unbounded and indeterminate in the soul.

The removal of false opinions is an implication of these limits. One does not believe that what is not worth pursuing is worth pursuing or what is not worth avoiding is worth avoiding. They adjust the ways in which we conceive or envision ourselves and the world.[12] Previous chapters showed how Plotinus' pedagogy involves correcting assumptions and expectations. The civic virtues serve a similar function, especially since there is a trace of Intellect in them. Through them, a more expansive vantage point becomes possible. One does not seek to satisfy momentary impulses from a narrow perspective but looks ahead from a broad one. In their corrective function, they prepare one for the inward movement toward reality. They are part of the ongoing criticism that is crucial for the movement toward Intellect.

If these virtues are measures (μέτρα, 2, 18), then they are common standards or rules. An implication, then, is that one becomes like others through them, especially since Plotinus associates being unmeasured with being unlike (2, 20-21). In conforming to these standards of activity, one becomes like others conforming to them. Those who mutually share in these standards are alike and so are involved in a reciprocal likeness.[13] By being measures, these virtues allow one to adopt the vantage point of standards that are broad enough to include a multitude. We can see, then, the pedagogical dimension involved in Plotinus' discussion of the civic virtues. He is pointing toward the self-correction and extension of one's perspective implied in them. He is not primarily

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[12] See Stern-Gillet, 2009, 334.
[13] I am grateful to Gary Gurtler, S.J. for sharing an unpublished monograph that addresses this issue.

concerned with conveying information about civic virtues but is guiding the reader toward a new orientation.

However, Plotinus is clear that these virtues are not sufficient for becoming like god, which is the ultimate intention of the soul. He is also clear that we should be careful not to mistake the soul for god (2, 23-26). Plotinus is preemptively warning that those undergoing purification should not mistake their cleansed soul for the divine. For, as will be seen, the soul becomes like god through purification but the purity of the divine is not like the purity of the soul. What is this purification, then, and how is it related to virtues?

> Surely, since the soul is bad when confused with the body and becomes co-affected with it and agrees with it in every way, it would be good and possess virtue if neither agreeing with [the body] but acting alone—what to think and be wise is—nor being co-affected [with it]—what self-control is—nor fearing absence from the body—what to be courageous is—but then it would be led by reason and thought without opposition—this would be justice (Ἤ ἐπειδὴ κακὴ μέν ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ συμπεφυρμένη τῷ σώματι καὶ ὁμοφαθὴς γινομένη αὐτῷ καὶ πάντα συνδοξάζουσα, εἴη ἂν ἀγαθὴ καὶ ἀρετὴν ἔχουσα, εἰ μήτε συνδοξάζοι, ἀλλὰ μόνη ἐνεργοῖ—ὅπερ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν—μήτε ὁμοπαθὴς εἴη—ὅπερ ἐστὶ σωφρονεῖν—μήτε φοβοῖτο ἀφισταμένη τοῦ σώματος—ὅπερ ἐστίν ἀνδρίζεσθαι—ἡγοῖτο δὲ λόγος καὶ νοῦς, τὰ δὲ μὴ ἀνιτιτείνοι—δικαιουσύνη δ ἂν εἴη τοῦτο, I.2.3, 12-19).[14]

The soul, as bad, mistakes or confuses itself for the body.[15] It identifies with the body's needs, experiences, and desires as if they were its own. It forgets its own nature and activity. The experience of becoming absorbed in a movie or play is a helpful image. If one becomes absorbed in the plot or a character, one could begin to react and behave as if one was actually experiencing the depicted events or actually was the character.

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[14] My translation.

[15] By "body," Plotinus is probably referring to the living body and so the compound of soul (or, more exactly, image of soul) and body. Soul, as "acting alone," however refers to one's true self. This notion has been discussed earlier in terms of the "outer-shadow" and "inner-soul." The question of Plotinus' dualism is discussed in the next sub-section.

With the virtues, as purifying, the soul ceases to be attracted to the body and returns to itself. This purification recalls what was discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. In particular, it relates to the soul's production of affections when directed toward the body. These virtues are the removal of the soul's over involvement and mistaken identification with the body. To think and be wise (νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν, 3, 16) is the soul not agreeing with (μήτε συνδοξάζουσα, 3, 15) the body but acting alone (μόνη ἐνεργοῖ, 3, 15). The soul does not engage in activities that require bodily involvement. It engages in its own proper activity. This activity is its contemplation of Being and Intellect. It is the soul turning and looking toward the realities that are already within it. The soul, then, does not become preoccupied with the production of affections. In not being co-affected (ὁμοπαθής, 3, 16) with the body, the soul does not identify itself with the body's reactions to its environment. The soul does not adopt as its own the endeavors to secure corporeal needs and to shape the environment in order to satisfy desires and avoid harms. That is why Plotinus identifies not being one in affections with being self-controlled (σωφρονεῖν, 3, 17). In not being distracted by bodily needs or urges, it stays focused on its own activity.

By remaining centered in its own activity, the soul does not fear being absent from the body (φοβοῖτο ἀφισταμένη τοῦ σώματος, 3, 17-18) because it does not associate itself with the body's destruction. To be courageous (ἀνδρίζεσθαι, 3, 18) is identified with not fearing death because the soul does not confuse its own being with the conditions of corporeality—namely, with space and time. It does not imagine itself as a durational

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being or as one that must be located in some place. These conditions are irrelevant to its own life, which is a life of contemplation.

If the soul does not agree with the body, is not co-affected with it, and is not afraid of death, then it is led by reason and Intellect without opposition (ἡγοῖτο δὲ λόγος καί νοῦς, τὰ δὲ μὴ ἀντιτείνοι, 3, 18-19), which is justice (δικαιοσύνη, 3, 18) because the soul "minds its own business" (οἰκειοπραγία).[16] It does not confuse what is properly its own with that which is proper to the body. What is proper to the soul is following reason and Intellect. This reason (λόγος) is the "inner *logos*" that attends to and interprets Intellect.[17] For the soul to be led by this *logos* means that it concentrates all its activity and efforts toward Intellect.

This passage has led some commentators to argue that Plotinus' ethic is "other-worldly" or "unworldly." Stern-Gillet, for instance, argues that his notion of justice does not extend to the public sphere; the practice of virtues is concerned with self-perfection and not being interested in "ordinary psychic and social life" (Stern-Gillet, 2009, 337).[18] As she puts it, Plotinus' ethic is a "paradigm of rational aloofness" (Stern-Gillet, 2009, 341). As both she and John Dillon argue, Plotinus' ethic is not about living as the good man does, which they both take to mean that the concern of civic virtues is surpassed by virtues of purification.[19] To be sure, the concern of civic virtues is to live as the good man, while to undergo virtues of purification is to choose another life, that of the gods (7,

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[16] See I.2.6, 20; *Rep.*, 434c.
[17] See I.2.3, 27-33; see also the fourth chapter of this dissertation.
[18] She quotes the passage I.2.3, 12-19 as showing Plotinus' unworldliness (334-35).
[19] See I.2.7, 22-31; Dillon, 1996, 324; Stern-Gillet, 2009, 336.

24-27). The ultimate aim of Plotinus' ethic seems to require one to live a different sort of life from that of the good man, who seems to remain operative only in the public sphere.

However, as Plotinus continues to unfold his thought, a significant aspect emerges. This aspect indicates that likeness to the good man is indeed insufficient but does not thereby imply that Plotinus' ethic is ultimately unconcerned with this world.

> But likeness, on the one hand, in reference to these [good men] is as if an image had been made like [another] image from the same [thing]. [Likeness], on the other hand, is in reference to another [the life of the gods], since it is toward the model (Ὁμοίωσις δὲ ἡ μὲν πρὸς τούτους, ὡς εἰκὼν εἰκόνι ὡμοίωται ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἑκατέρα. Ἡ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλον ὡς πρὸς παράδειγμα, I.2.7.28-31).[20]

Dillon omits this part of the passage entirely (324), while Stern-Gillet omits the part about likeness to the good man being a likeness of images to each other (336).[21] However, this distinction is significant. Plotinus is referring back to the distinction between reciprocal and non-reciprocal likeness.[22] In doing so, he is continuing to guide readers in the continual self-criticism that is necessary in moving toward Intellect. Such criticism can lead to the realization that endeavoring to be like someone who is good is to remain focused in the wrong direction. Reciprocal likeness determines the thinking of the person with this focus. His concern is that he and the good man should be like on another. Such thinking is not sufficiently aware of the divine model (παράδειγμα, 7, 31) that the good man resembles.[23] The good man himself, however, could be concentrating on that

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[20] My translation.

[21] Baltzly, 2004, 302 also omits that part of the passage in his argument for why Plotinus views virtues as ultimately oriented to the unworldly. However, in a footnote (pp. 302-303) he does suggest that an otherworldly depiction of Plotinus can be challenged.

[22] Plotinus could also have the discussion of imitation from *Rep.*, *X* in mind.

[23] The qualifier "divine" is appropriate given the context of this passage. Further, there is the use παράδειγμα in *Timaeus* (28c-29a) to refer to the eternal pattern of which the sensible cosmos is a copy.

model and so endeavoring to assimilate himself to it. Plotinus' focus, then, is not on the limits of the good person as relegated to this world or the public sphere. Rather, he is highlighting that one should not be satisfied with looking to other people and striving to resemble them. The aim is to focus on and become like the divine model. To do that requires criticizing in oneself a dependence on thinking about likeness in a reciprocal way. This interpretation does not suffice to show that the characterization of Plotinus' ethic as "unworldly" or "other-worldly" is inappropriate. It does, however, contribute significantly to the overall depiction currently being drawn.

6.1.3   Two selves: is Plotinus a dualist?

Plotinus distinguishes between the soul and the self of everyday experience, the latter being the one who perceives, feels, and opines.[24] However, Plotinus is not a dualist in the modern sense of substance dualism. He does not posit two distinct substances. Rather, the distinction depends on what one experiences and identifies oneself with.[25] Plotinus' notion of selfhood can be clarified by examining how he answers the following question: "how does the purification deal with passion and desire and all the rest, pain, and its kindred, and how far is separation from the body possible" (5, 3-6)?

> Perhaps, on the one hand, [the soul] must [turn] away from the body, while in like manner gathering together toward herself as if in [her own] places, holding herself completely unaffected and, in order not to be troubled, only brings about necessary perceptions of pleasures as well as remedies and reliefs from sufferings; on the other

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[24] See I.1.[53]; Rist, 1967, 86-90 Wallis, 1972, 72-82; Clark, 1996, 281-85; Dillon, 1996, 326-28; Kalligas, 2000, 29-30; Rappe, 2000, 87-90; Stern-Gillet, 2009, 331-33; I am grateful to Gary Gurtler, S.J. for sharing an unpublished monograph that addresses this issue.
[25] See VI.7.6.13-19; O'Daly, 1973, 21-26, 30-36, 45-49, 60-65, 82-85, 91-94; Kalligas, 2000, 29; Rappe, 67-90; I am grateful to Gary Gurtler, S.J. for sharing an unpublished monograph that addresses this issue.

hand, [the soul] removes griefs and, if that's not possible, bears them lightly and regards them as slight by not sympathizing [with the body]. [The soul] also removes passion as much as possible, and altogether if possible, but if not, [she] at least does not share the irritation: the reflex is another's, but the reflex is small and weak (Ἀπὸ μὲν δὴ σώματος ἴσως μέν καὶ τοῖς οἷον τόποις συνάγουσαν πρὸς ἑαυτήν, πάντως μὴν ἀπαθῶς ἔχουσαν καὶ τὰς ἀναγκαίας τῶν ἡδονῶν αἰσθήσεις μόνον ποιουμένην καὶ ἰατρεύσεις καὶ ἀπαλλαγὰς πόνων, ἵνα μὴ ἐνοχλοῖτο, τὰς δὲ ἀληδόνας ἀφαιροῦσαν καὶ, εἰ μὴ οἷόν τε, πρᾴως φέρουσαν καὶ ἐλάττους τιθεῖσαν τῷ μὴ συμπάσχειν· τὸν θυμὸν ὅσον τε ἀφαιροῦσαν καί, εἰ δυνατόν, πάντη, εἰ δὲ μή, μὴ γοῦν αὐτὴν συνοργιζομένην, ἀλλ' ἄλλου εἶναι τὸ ἀπροαίρετον, τὸ δὲ ἀπροαίρετον ὀλίγον εἶναι καὶ ἀσθενές, I.2.5, 6-16).[26]

The crucial distinction is between this "other" to whom "reflex" belongs (ἄλλου εἶναι τὸ ἀπροαίρετον, 5, 15) and the soul. The pleasures, sufferings, and griefs along with the involuntary reactions to these do not belong to the soul but to the living being, which is the compound of soul and body.[27] How can these experiences and reactions be said "to belong to another" or "be of another" if that other is not a substance?

The answer to this question depends on articulating how, in purifying itself, the soul abides in its own life while still not being completely detached from the life of the compound. The soul, to begin with, "gathers toward herself as if in [her own] places" (τοῖς οἷον τόποις συνάγουσαν πρὸς ἑαυτήν, 5, 7). All the efforts and activities of the soul are redirected away from the body toward itself. It abides as if in its own places, not those that are alien or foreign to its way of life. It does not involve itself in any activity that requires a bodily organ. Although the soul may bring about perceptions of pleasures and reliefs from suffering, it does not become involved in these as if they belonged to it. It "holds itself completely unaffected" (πάντως μὴν ἀπαθῶς ἔχουσαν, 5, 7-8). It retains a

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[26] My translation.
[27] See Kalligas, 2004, 143.

clear boundary between an activity that is properly its own and one that necessarily includes the body. The cares and concerns belonging to the living body do not reach or penetrate into the soul's own life and activity. Even if the soul is turned away from the body, it is still the life source for that body, which lives in a surrounding environment. Other things within this environment can still harm or please this ensouled body. The soul is inevitably involved in these pleasures or pains. For the purified soul, however, this involvement is for the sake of not being disturbed. It does not become so drawn toward them as to be troubled or affected by them as if they actually belonged to it.

Because the living body may or may not be able to remain clear of distress and sorrow, the soul "removes griefs" (τὰς δὲ ἀληδόνας ἀφαιροῦσαν, 5, 11) or, at least, "bears them lightly" (πρᾴως φέρουσαν, 5, 12). The soul turned toward itself, however, "regards them as slight by not sympathizing [with the body]" (ἐλάττους τιθεῖσαν τῷ μὴ συμπάσχειν, 5, 11-12). Plotinus is clear that humans cannot control all the circumstances and events in their lives. Nevertheless, by not sharing the experience with the living body, the soul regards, posits, or reckons these events or circumstances as slight.[28] The soul's regarding a grief as slight or not is connected to the degree to which it associates with the living body. This connection between what the soul pays attention to and its association with the living body shows how Plotinus is not a substance dualist. The living body and its experiences depend on the soul: perceptions of pleasures, reliefs from suffering, griefs, and passions. All these experiences depend on the degree to which the soul associates itself with the body. The affections themselves are produced by the soul.

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[28] "Regards," "posits," and "reckons" are various ways to translate τιθεῖσαν.

Since the soul can abide in its own activity, while the living body's experiences depend on it, the soul is the one substantial reality. The ensouled body is an effect, a secondary activity of the soul that follows from its primary activity. It is an "outer-shadow" and not a substance.[29]

Still, the soul can pay more attention to its effects than to its own activity. In the previous subsection, this confusion with the living body was discussed as that which makes the soul bad. This possibility of confusion implies that the soul could come to identify more with the living body than with its own proper activity. Purification, then, is a process of detaching from the experiences of the body and turning toward its primary activity. The criticism and introspection discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation are necessary for this process. We are again seeing Plotinus helping readers reorient themselves by means of self-criticism. In the passage quoted above (5, 6-16), Plotinus depicts the soul as turning away from the body and toward itself. Being turned toward the body implies that the soul is fixated on the body's particular needs, vantage point, and environment. The soul in this situation operates within a limited scope. To realize its own proper activity requires turning away from the living body. The soul, in such cases, gathers toward itself and so does not pay attention to what is other than itself, "holding itself unaffected" (ἀπαθῶς ἔχουσαν, 5, 8). It is not affected by any object precisely because nothing external is admitted. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, *apatheia* for Plotinus was shown not to be indifference or lack of passion. *Apatheia* is "to leave [the soul] alone" (καταλιπεῖν μόνην, III.6.5, 16). The soul is alone with its own

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[29] See Kalligas, 2004, 118-19, 125, 467.

activity, which is the contemplation of Being and Intellect. This shift from the living body to the soul alone is not a shift from one substance to another. Rather, the soul changes the focus of attention from what is external to what is internal.

Plotinus' point is not that one substance experiences pains, pleasures, and griefs while another one merely endures them. Instead, the same being potentially engages in various experiences or activities. Whether, or the degree to which, the soul is sympathetic with the pleasures, pains, or sorrows of the body or the degree to which it abides in its own activity determines how it identifies itself. Human beings move along a spectrum— between "gods and beasts" (θεῶν καὶ θηρίων, III.2.8, 9). We can identify as more bodily or as more divine along with a variety of gradations in between. The virtues of purification, then, are not so much the purification of a substance as a process of the soul reorienting itself. This reorientation away from the body and toward the soul's own activity and the aim of becoming like the divine model both contribute to showing that Plotinus' ethic is not "unworldly" or "other-worldly." The final step is to articulate what becoming like god entails.

6.1.4 Likeness to god

Plotinus warns that one must not mistake the soul for god. The aim of the purifying virtues is not to become more like soul but to become like god. What, then, does he mean by saying that we become like god through these virtues? Having gone through the process of purification, the soul is already turned toward that which it is akin to her (I.2.4, 15-18).

Yet she did not have these [intelligible beings][30] but the impressions: it is necessary then to adapt the impression to the truths, of which the impressions [are impressions]. But perhaps one also speaks of having in this way: that Intellect is not alien and most of all is not alien whenever she [soul] looks toward it. But if not, even [Intellect's] being nearby is alien. Since even with the sciences, if we are not fully working according to these, they are alien (Εἶχε δὲ οὐκ αὐτά, ἀλλὰ τύπους· δεῖ οὖν τὸν τύπον τοῖς ἀληθινοῖς, ὧν καὶ οἱ τύποι, ἐφαρμόσαι. Τάχα δὲ καὶ οὕτω λέγεται ἔχειν, ὅτι ὁ νοῦς οὐκ ἀλλότριος καὶ μάλιστα δὲ οὐκ ἀλλότριος, ὅταν πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπῃ· εἰ δὲ μή, καὶ παρών ἀλλότριος. Ἐπεὶ κἄν ταῖς ἐπιστήμαις· ἐὰν μηδ' ὅλως ἐνεργῶμεν κατ' αὐτάς, ἀλλότριαι, I.2.4, 23-29).[31]

Prior to the purification and the conversion, the soul did not contain beings and truths but images. As discussed in the fourth chapter, discursive thought remains busy combining and dividing images from both Intellect and perception, the former illuminating the latter. Discursive thought, then, is not constituted by the possession of truths. One might not even be aware that the images are images. Those who only practice the civic virtues remain at the level of discursive thought. Above, these virtues were described as measures (μέτρα) that limit desires and passions. As measures, they were shown to be common standards for activity. Those who only practice civic virtues work from the vantage point of these standards. Their perceptions and the variety of passions, desires, and aversions that accompany them are brought under the influence of these standards. Such standards determine their lives by illuminating what is proper to pursue or flee and establishing the conditions under which one should do one or the other. By following the same standards as their fellows, the practitioners of civic virtues focus on making themselves like others. Practicing civic virtues, then, occur within discursive thought—

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[30] See Armstrong footnote, 1966, 138; Kalligas, 2004, 142.
[31] My translation.

applying rational images to perceptual ones so that the former illuminate the latter and seeing that differences are alike according to some common feature.[32]

With the purifying virtues, however, thinking differently becomes possible. One is less concerned about the application of standards or reciprocal likenesses and more concerned with adapting one's images to real beings. While these beings are in Intellect, which possesses them as its own, the soul can be said to have them in a different way. In directing one's attention toward Intellect, one realizes that it is not alien. "Having" in this sense means that one does not simply focus on one's images or representations. One challenges their veracity and recognizes them as what they are. In this critical stance, one turns them toward that of which they are images. One attempts to align and fit the images to the true beings instead of using these images to illuminate desires or aversions. By keeping these images turned toward the real beings in Intellect, one seeks to have the latter illuminate the former. In that case, Intellect is active and present within one. Plotinus uses the example of the sciences to illustrate how something can be alien and yet not alien. The sciences could be available for use, but if one is not actually engaged in their use, they are alien. They are only familiar to those who use them in their inquiries or accounts. In the current case, the virtues are images of the real beings in Intellect. For the purified soul, these virtues become links by which one remains connected to Intellect. As will be discussed momentarily, they are images in the sense of being activities through which one imitates Intellect.

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[32] See Stern-Gillet, 2014, 409.

Although virtues of purification make the soul like the god, someone who no longer

has any reflexive reaction or impulse has become this god (I.2.6, 3-7).

> For, on the one hand, he is the self who came from There, and his true self, if he
> became such as the one who came, is There. On the other hand, coming here he
> dwells with another and will make this one like himself according to the ability of
> that one There, inasmuch as it is possible to be un-goaded or, at least, do nothing
> unexpected by the master (Αὐτὸς μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃς ἦλθεν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ τὸ καθ' αὑτόν, εἰ
> γένοιτο οἷος ἦλθεν, ἐκεῖ ἐστιν· ᾧ δὲ συνῳκίσθη ἐνθάδε ἥκων, καὶ τοῦτον αὑτῷ
> ὁμοιώσει κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἐκείνου, ὥστε, εἰ δυνατόν, ἄπληκτον εἶναι ἢ ἄπρακτόν γε
> τῶν μὴ δοκούντων τῷ δεσπότῃ, I.2.6, 8-13).[33]

Plotinus distinguishes three "phases of human identity" here (Schroeder, 1992, 92).[34]

One's true self is the noetic one who remains in Intellect; there is the master (δεσπότῃ, 6,

13) who comes from the noetic self; finally, there is the one the master dwells with

(συνῳκίσθη, 6, 10). [35] This final one is the compound, the living body that can be made

like the master. As we have been discussing, this master is the soul that looks toward and

contemplates Intellect but that also shapes and determines the life of the ensouled body.

Although the compound is made like the soul, the soul is not the ultimate aim for this

endeavor to be made like. The soul derives its abilities from the noetic self by remaining

connected to and dependent upon its own intellect.[36] Being made like this noetic self is

the aim. This noetic self is divine.[37]As discussed in the second chapter of this

dissertation, those "blessed in every way stand in themselves" (πάντη μακαρίοις ἐν

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[33] My translation.
[34] See VI.7.5-6; O'Daly, 1973, 37, 58-59.
[35] See Schroeder, 1992, 92-95.
[36] See IV.3.5, 9-10.
[37] See Kalligas, 2004, 146.

αὐτοῖς ἑστάναι, III.2.1, 41).[38] As an intellect, the noetic self abides within its own activity of thinking. As discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, this was the self who does not think as a human and that seizes one into Intellect. To become like god is to become like this god within. This inner noetic self illuminates the soul through the virtues turned toward it, and the compound lives as the "unstricken" (ἄπληκτον) good horse from the *Phaedrus* (253d).

Plotinus' allusion to the myth from *Phaedrus* is significant, since the myth contains various cautions regarding the human soul. For instance, our soul always possesses the other horse (253e-d). Even the philosopher is one who has a wounded soul that "cannot see the truth and is thus unable to follow the path" (248c-d).[39] We should not mistake our soul for this divine, noetic self. Plotinus intimates this caution by returning to a discussion of virtue and distinguishing between Intellect and soul.[40] Wisdom in the soul is different from that in Intellect, and the other virtues are also in soul but not in Intellect. Highlighting this difference between soul and Intellect is part of Plotinus' caution not to confuse our soul with god. This caution is especially important given that he has just said that the effort (ἡ σπουδή, 6, 2) in the purifying virtues is to be a god (θεὸν εἶναι, 6, 3). The endeavor of the purifying virtues is to think as the noetic self. Nevertheless, even the purified soul that contemplates what Intellect has is distinct from the thinking in Intellect, which thinks "by immediate contact" (6, 14-19). As mentioned previously, the virtues in a soul turned toward Intellect are the ways in which the former acts in imitation of the

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[38] μακάριος is a form of μάκαρ, which is an epithet for the gods (LSJ, μακάριος, A; LSJ, μάκαρ, A.I).
[39] Scully, 2003, 29.
[40] See Kalligas, 2004, 146.

latter. The soul cannot immediately grasp what is in Intellect but imitates this by contemplation.[41] Wisdom in Intellect is this: "its activity and what it is" (Ἐνέργεια αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅ ἐστιν, 6, 16). As discussed in previous chapters, thinking is the activity in which Being and Intellect are one. A being is not other than its own activity of thought, which is not other than the being that is thought. What is thought, who is thinking, and the activity of thinking are all together as one. The soul, however, contemplates that which is not identical to it. Through contemplation, the soul looks toward the intellect within. This contemplation involves not looking out toward what is other but attending to what is already within. Plotinus is cautioning his readers not to confuse the contemplation of one's purified soul with the thinking of one's noetic self.

The other virtues are also ways in which the soul imitates Intellect. If justice is "minding one's own business" (οἰκειοπραγία, 6, 20), then in Intellect it is "unity with itself" (ἑνὸς πρὸς αὐτο, 6, 23). This justice is not that which involves a variety of different elements all doing their own part and not interfering with another's part. It is simply the unity inherent in an intellect. In the soul, however, "the greater justice is the activity toward intellect" (δικαιουσύνη ἡ μείζων τὸ πρὸς νοῦν ἐνεργεῖν, 6, 24-25). In contrast to justice as the righting of wrongs or the arrangement of parts into their proper function within a whole, this "greater justice" is the soul not departing from its own unity. By directing its efforts entirely toward Intellect, the soul retains its own integrity. This internal unity remains intact by the soul concentrating itself toward one activity, which is the contemplation of Intellect. One is careful, then, not to become involved in

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[41] See the next section on dialectic for a fuller discussion.

appetites or desires precisely because one's attention is inwardly focused: "being self-controlled is the inner turning toward intellect" (τὸ δὲ σωφρονεῖν ἡ εἴσω πρὸς νοῦν στροφή, 6, 25-26). One is "of sound mind," is in possession of a mind that is "safe and whole."[42] One is not threatened with being dragged into a variety of distractions by what is other than oneself. One's attention is fully absorbed in looking inwards to one's intellect.

In that case, "courage is not being affected in accord with the likeness of that toward which [the soul] looks, which is unaffected by nature" (ἡ δὲ ἀνδρία ἀπάθεια καθ' ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ πρὸς ὅ βλέπει ἀπαθὲς ὄν τὴν φύσιν, 6, 26-28).[43] Through *apatheia*, the soul is not "sympathetic with the inferior cohabitant" (συμπαθῇ τῷ χείρονι συνοίκῳ, 6, 28-29). Intellect inherently remains in and with its own content. Soul, however, must achieve this freedom from affection. The life of the "inferior cohabitant" (τῷ χείρονι συνοίκῳ) depends on interacting with an external environment. As discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, the soul involves itself with this cohabitant by producing affects in response to external events. By not directing its attention outward, the soul's activity is not determined by the actions of external things. By inwardly focusing, the soul recovers its own activity.

These virtues mutually imply one another (7, 1), especially since they all involve turning one's attention toward the noetic self and remaining in one's own proper activity. They are the soul's imitative activity of Intellect, through which one is receptive to and illuminated by Intellect.

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[42] LSJ, σώφρων, A.I and σῶς A.I.
[43] Armstrong's translation with slight change, 1966, 145.

6.1.5 How Plotinus' ethic is not "unworldly" or "other-worldly"

As focusing on being godlike, Plotinus' ethic could seem to be "other-worldly" or "unworldly." However, he does not put forward a choice between two opposing sides—either body or intellect—and then demand a decision. As discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, this kind of thinking aims at resting in a decision. Because of this aim, such thinking is static. In contrast, thinking of opposites dynamically occurs when the aim is to preserve both sides, not to select one over the other. If Plotinus were guiding readers to think of opposites such as body and intellect or sensible cosmos and noetic cosmos statically, his call to live the life of the gods would imply failing to be aware of or concerned with this world. As we have seen in previous chapters, however, he teaches readers how to think of such opposites in a dynamic way. We can apply this lesson to the current discussion. Our task becomes seeing *how* preserving both sides and holding them together is possible.

A passage from III.2 discussed in the fifth chapter suggests one way to think both sides together.

> And indeed one comes to be such by being made like the whole and brought together so as to be such as this and organized this way, so that even down in the place of humanity something radiates in it just as the stars radiate in the firmament of the gods, and there would be here an apprehension of something like a grand and beautiful divine-image (Καὶ γὰρ γίνεται τοιοῦτον ἀφομοιωθὲν τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ οἷον συγχωρηθὲν τοιοῦτον εἶναι καὶ συνταχθὲν οὕτως, ἵνα καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπου τόπον ἐκλάμπῃ τι ἐν αὐτῷ, οἷον καὶ κατὰ τον θεῖον οὐρανὸν τὰ ἄστρα, καὶ ᾗ ἐντεῦθεν ἀντίληψις οἷον ἀγάλματος μεγάλου καὶ καλοῦ, III.2.14, 23-28).[44]

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[44] My translation.

Plotinus' ethic is bi-directional. On the one hand, the focus of attention is on becoming like god. The totality of one's efforts is concentrated toward the noetic self. In this endeavor, the soul is purified such that it becomes receptive to the illuminations from this self and, since each intellect is potentially the whole of Intellect, all of Intellect. On the other hand, one becomes "like a grand and beautiful divine-image" (οἶον ἀγάλματος μεγάλου καὶ καλοῦ, 14, 27-28) that appears on earth. An ἄγαλμα is a statue that honors a god.[45] In this case, one's life on earth becomes a dedication to the divine. One resembles god in this other sense of producing and shaping one's life in a way that manifests the divine. Plotinus associates becoming this divine-image with becoming like the whole (ἀφομοιωθὲν τῷ ὅλῳ, 14, 23-24). One becomes a microcosm of the order and beauty of *this* cosmos. One's focus, life, and attention do not leave this sensible cosmos but participate in its providential character.[46] After all, this cosmos is itself an image of Intellect.

The projects of becoming like god and of becoming a divine-image are inseparable. Souls are the caretakers of bodies, but human souls can become too attracted to their bodies to the detriment of both.[47] One does not take care of the body by being overly involved in it or its environment. By shifting one's attention toward the inner-soul and noetic self, by looking to become like the divine model in Intellect, one takes better care of the body than by busily attending to it. One does not become involved with perceptions or images to the degree that one mistakes them for beings and truths. One

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[45] LSJ, ἄγαλμα, A.I.3; See also, *Phdr.,* 251a; Kalligas, 2004, 465.
[46] See Kalligas, 2004, 465 and the preceding chapter.
[47] See IV.3.4, 22-38; IV.3.7, 13-15; IV.3.12, 1-9; *Phdr.,*246b-c.

does not mistake the "outer-shadow" for one's "inner-soul." Rather, one attempts to be aware as this soul, which looks towards the noetic self and Intellect. One is not caught within a web of being affected and reacting but acts from a free source. One's days and life are ordered from within, not from without.

We are seeing that Plotinus is focused on readers coming to such realizations for themselves. *On Virtues* is structured in a way that guides readers toward such realizations by means of pedagogical techniques that resemble those we saw in *On Providence*. *On Virtues* brings out the ethical dimension in his pedagogical practice. We see more clearly than before how the techniques and aims of his pedagogy pertain to a whole way of living. By applying the pedagogical findings from previous chapters, we could see that Plotinus' ethic is not about a choice between this world and another world. Rather, the way of living implied in his ethic involves simultaneously assimilating oneself to the divine and manifesting the divine here on earth. There is, however, another sense of "worldly," which involves being concerned with one's fellows along with one's social and political environment.[48] Perhaps Plotinus is "unworldly" in that sense. His *On Dialectic*, which is contemporary with *On Virtues*, indicates a way to address this question.

6.2   On Dialectic: The Soul Learns to Teach Itself

Plotinus' practice and account of dialectic indicate his concern for the wellbeing of other humans. His ethic involves not just the movement toward the divine within. It

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[48] See Dillon, 1996, 320, 324; Stern-Gillet, 2009, 337; IV.4.40-45.

includes the pedagogic activity of leading and showing others how to make this movement for themselves.[49] Dialectic incorporates both aspects of his ethic. His practice of dialectic consists of leading and showing others (I.3.1-3). His account of dialectic shows how it is the way toward the divine (I.3.4-6). By examining both aspects, we can see how Plotinus' ethic is concerned with other human beings.

6.2.1 Dialectical practice

The first three chapters of *On Dialectic* are not *about* dialectic but demonstrate Plotinus' dialectical *practice*. In these chapters, one can see Plotinus both using dialectic and explaining its use as a pedagogic activity. The next subsection examines how his dialectical practice fits with his discussion of dialectic.

> What art, method, or training leads us up where we must be conveyed? Certainly, on the one hand, where one must go is toward the Good and the first source: take it as granted and demonstrated by many [proofs]. And in particular, through their process of demonstrating this, there was a leading up. But who must the one be who is led up? (Τίς τέχνη ἤ μέθοδος ἤ ἐπιτήδευσις ἡμᾶς οἷ δεῖ πορευθῆναι ἀνάγει; Ὅπου μὲν οὖν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν, ὡς ἐπὶ τἀγαθὸν καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν πρώτην, κείσθω διωμολογημένον καὶ διὰ πολλῶν δεδειγμένον· καὶ δὴ καὶ δι' ὧν τοῦτο ἐδείκνυτο, ἀναγωγή τις ἦν. Τίνα δὲ δεῖ εἶναι τὸν ἀναχθησόμενον; I.3.1, 1-6).[50]

Several features of this passage indicate Plotinus' dialectical practice. He begins with a question that pertains to taking a journey (πορευθῆναι, 1, 2). This journey involves being led up or in (ἀνάγει, 1, 2) toward the first source (τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν πρώτην, 1, 3). There are echoes here of Socrates' image of the divided line and his depiction of dialectic as

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[49] See O'Meara, 2003, 43-44, 73-86.
[50] My translation.

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moving one toward "the source of the whole" (τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴν, *Rep.* VI, 511b).[51]

Plotinus, however, does not just begin with a question. By contrasting the where (ὅπου, 1, 2) of the journey as a given with who (τίνα, 1, 6) must take it as the question, Plotinus indicates to his readers that they are the focus of the question. As was discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, his focus and concern is on the soul of the reader. He establishes this contrast through a μέν . . . δέ clause.[52] He takes for granted and as already demonstrated that the Good or First Principle is the direction of this movement. However, *who* must make this movement is the question. In indicating that that "the who" is the issue, Plotinus invites readers to begin realizing for themselves that their own souls are the focus of this discussion. A main feature of Plotinus' dialectical practice is leading readers to such realizations for themselves. In the first chapter of this dissertation, we saw Plotinus employing this method in leading readers towards impasses that became occasions for self-examination. There, too, the μέν . . . δέ structure was a grammatical tool for this dialectical practice.

Plotinus' depiction of his interaction with the musician and lover confirms that this practice focuses on individuals coming to realizations for themselves. In both cases, he starts by engaging with someone's current condition. For instance, the musician is inclined and excited toward beauty, although she cannot move toward beauty itself.

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[51] *Rep.* VI, 507d-511e; See also Byrd, 2007a and 2007b. She presents the dynamics of dialectic as leading to "an account which does not lead to contradictions, and this account, the first principle, will explain all (2007a, 157). Whether or not that is true of Plato I cannot say for sure, although it seems doubtful, especially since the highest part of the line is the noetic and the dia-noetic is second after it (511e). Further, in the simile of the sun, the Good is depicted as the source of being, knowledge, and truth and so also beyond these, too (507d-509d). Dialectic moves up this line toward this source as the unhypothetical first principle (510b, 511b). As will be seen, for Plotinus dialectic does not stop at an explanatory account but moves further toward non-discursive thought and union with the One.

[52] See Smyth, 1920, 2914.

Instead, she is ready to move toward images of it in sound, avoiding the inharmonic in favor of the rhythmical and graceful (1, 23-29). The musician is already concerned with beauty. Her perceptual experiences, those she pursues and avoids, are determined by this attraction to beautiful sounds. Plotinus' dialectical practice approaches and addresses this person from within this condition. From the musician's orientation to perceptual experience one must lead and teach her (ἀκτέον καὶ διδακτέον, 1, 31-32).[53]

This leading and teaching involves the criticism and expansion of the soul's experience discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. Through this teaching, the musician "separates the material" (χωρίζοντα τὴν ὕλην, 1, 30), no longer straining her ears toward acoustic beauty. She realizes that what excited her was "the intelligible harmony, the beauty in this, and the beautiful in general, not some particular beauty" (ἡ νοητὴ ἁρμονία καὶ τὸ ἐν ταύτῃ καλὸν καὶ ὅλως τὸ καλόν, οὐ τό τι καλὸν μόνον 1, 32-34). The teaching extends the musician's experience of beauty from being focused on instances of beauty to beauty itself. Instead of being focused on sounds, which are corporeal and are images of beauty, the musician begins to focus on the incorporeal and intelligible harmony, which is closer to beauty itself. She begins to experience the intelligibility within her perceptions. As intelligible, this beauty is already within her, which she "has without knowing" (ὧν ἀγνοεῖ ἔχων, 1, 34-35). The one who teaches,

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[53] See IV.4.40-45 where Plotinus associates music with the irrational soul and the possibility of being under a spell. However, this contrast does not reflect an inconsistency but the double possibility of an activity: music can both entrance the irrational soul and be a link to Intellect for the rational soul (see Gurtler, 2015, 187-189). The dialectician utilizes this double possibility by capturing the attention of the musician but then guiding her toward the intelligible harmony in music.

"must implant the discussions of philosophy" in the musician (λόγους τοὺς φιλοσοφίας ἐνθετέον, 1, 33-34). By doing so, he helps her realize what she already possesses.

This internal expansion of the musician's experience of beauty occurs by no longer focusing on what is outside. Rather, she focuses on what is already within. Because the direction is inward, this kind of teaching must lead a student toward making her own realizations.[54] The student must enact the critique of her own position and perform the acts of separation. She alone can realize and come to know what she already possesses. This practice is not one-sided: the teacher and student are both actively engaged. The teacher leads and employs techniques that help the student come to know what she already possesses. The student must take up and enact these techniques for herself.

Plotinus' discussion of the lover, into whom the musician can change, confirms that his dialectical practice involves a criticism and internal expansion of the soul's experience of beauty. The fact that the musician, having changed, can remain a lover or go further confirms that a student must enact the pedagogical techniques for herself (2, 1-2). Whether or not the student advances depends on the student's own activity. The movements and changes are in the students' power, not the teacher's: the lover "is someone remembering beauty in some way" (μνημονικὸς ἐστὶ πως κάλλους, 2, 3). Since this memory is inherent to the lover, the teacher depends on this memory being there. It cannot be given. There must be a critical operation, however, since the lover "is unable to observe [beauty] separately" (χωρὶς δὲ ὂν ἀδυνατεῖ καταμαθεῖν, 2, 3-4). Although the

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[54] See Byrd, 2007b, 374-76 for the distinction between passive and active models of learning.

lover has an intimation of beauty, she remains attached to this or that beautiful body. She looks outward for beauty, not realizing its presence within.

She must be taught not to seek and cling to beauty as something exterior and must be led by an account showing the same beauty is in all the bodies encountered externally (2, 5-8). As with the musician, this criticism leads the lover to extend her experience of beauty beyond the bodies to which she is attached. She first moves past any particular body and then goes on to what is incorporeal, to "beautiful ways of living and beautiful customs" (ἐπιθδεύματα καλὰ καὶ νόμους καλοὺς, 2, 9) as well as "arts and sciences and virtues" (ἐν τέχναις καὶ ἐν ἐπιστήμαις καὶ ἐν ἀρεταῖς, 2, 11-12).[55] These activities belong to and come from the soul. In experiencing the beauty in them, the lover realizes that beauty is interior to the soul. In particular, she experiences the beauty within her own interior: "next one must make [them] one" (Εἶτα ἕν ποιητέον, 2, 12). The lover must perform the activity of uniting these beauties together. Since this activity comes from her own soul, she is seeking beauty not by looking outward but by turning inward. The teacher still plays a part: "one must teach how they originate" (διδακτέον, ὅπως ἐγγίνονται, I.3.2, 13). The teacher still leads by pointing the lover toward the source of all these beauties. This dynamic between the teacher and student continues. The former continues to lead and show, while the latter continues to perform activities through which she makes realizations for herself. Still, Plotinus emphasizes the work of the student, since it is "from virtues that [one] already embarks toward Intellect, toward Being: There, one must take the inward course" (Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἀρετῶν ἤδη ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ νοῦν, ἐπὶ τὸ

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[55] See *Symp.*, 210c.

ὄν· κἀκεῖ βαδιστέον τὴν ἄνω πορείαν, 2, 14-15). Since becoming virtuous must come
from the lover's own activity, the movement toward Being and Intellect must ultimately
come from the student.

In Plotinus' dialectical practice, the criticism of one's limited perspective, the
extension of one's experience, and the inward realization of beauty are all bound
together. All three require the active engagement of the student. The way Plotinus writes
reflects this practice and the active participation of the student. His discussion of dialectic
begins with the possibility of realizing that the self is the concern of this discussion.
Readers must make this realization by attending to the contrast expressed through the μέν
. . . δέ clause. One continues to see the active role of the reader in Plotinus' discussion of
musicians and lovers. He does not directly assert that musicians or lovers must enact the
techniques for themselves. However, the language he uses—such as "separating,"
"possessing without knowing," "memory," and "virtues"—imply their active role.
Readers must make the inferences for themselves and unpack the implications in
Plotinus' language. Just as Plotinus' dialectical practice requires the active role of the
student, he invites and demands the reader's active involvement in the text.

His discussion of the philosopher continues this dynamic between teacher and
student: "[the philosopher] is the one who is by nature prepared and 'winged,' we may
say, and in no need of separation like the others" (τὴν φύσιν ἕτοιμος οὗτος καὶ οἷον
ἐπτερωμένος καὶ οὐ δεόμενος χωρίσεως, 3, 1-2). Unlike the musician and lover, the
philosopher is not outwardly directed. She does not require the critical exercises of
detaching herself from the limited vantage point of external objects, "having moved

upwards" (κεκινημένος τὸ ἄνω, 3, 3). As "winged," the philosopher already "takes flight"

and possess a more extensive vantage point. As τὸ ἄνω also suggests, she already moves

toward the interior.[56] She is already directed "upcountry" and away from the "coast" or

what is exterior. However, she "is wandering and only in need of someone showing [the

way]" (ἀπορῶν δὲ τοῦ δεικνύντος δεῖται μόνον, 2, 4). While the musician and the lover

must be brought to an impasse, the philosopher already recognizes her perplexity. The

musician and lover are unaware of their ignorance. Their devotion and attachment to

external objects prevents them from realizing that they do not know what they are

seeking. The philosopher, however, knows she is at an impasse.

Showing her the way means that "one must give mathematical studies for habituation

in introspection and trust in the incorporeal" (Τὰ μὲν δὴ μαθήματα δοτέον πρὸς

συνεθισμὸν κατανοήσεως καὶ πίστεως ἀσωμάτου, 3, 6). These studies do not just give the

philosopher mathematical proficiency. Rather, since shapes and numbers are incorporeal,

studying them implies not being directed outward to bodies. The study of mathematics

assists the philosopher in being acclimated to what is within her own soul. This

habituation toward introspection (κατανοήσεως, 3, 6) requires the activity of the student.

She does not passively receive information or even mechanically repeat operations. She

actively takes up the mathematical studies by realizing the content inherent in her own

soul. This realization and active involvement recalls that one does not learn by hearing an

account but by giving one.[57]

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[56] See LSJ, ἄνω, B.I, II.f.
[57] See the fourth chapter of this dissertation; Heiser, 1991, 7

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Plotinus continues to emphasize the student's active involvement by saying that she must be given accounts of dialectic (λόγους διαλεκτικῆς δοτέον, 3, 9) only after being led to the completion of virtues (3, 8-10). The student alone is capable of and responsible for bringing her virtues to completion. Even if she is led to that completion, she must remain actively involved in the achievement. The dynamic between teacher and student continues. The one leads, although not by exercising his powers on a passive recipient. The other follows, although not by copying or submitting to the teacher. The teacher of dialectic may give the accounts. However, the student only receives them and is "made a complete dialectician" (3, 11) by engaging in the activity herself.

6.2.2 The accounts of dialectic

Plotinus' discussion of dialectic confirms that the pedagogic practice discussed above is dialectical. In particular, it confirms that one learns dialectic only by undertaking the activity for oneself. He depicts dialectic as having a discursive and non-discursive part.[58]

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[58] This distinction between the discursive and non-discursive part of dialectic helps resolve difficulties in at least two different commentaries on this treatise. First, Annamaria Schiaparelli's "Plotinus on Dialectic" (2009) sees dialectic as enabling "us to understand the structure of each thing as it surfaces in the definition corresponding to a given classification, and one is thereby able to understand the structure of the entire intelligible world" (257). She also thinks that "dialectic seems to operate with a sort of intuitive grasp, which characterizes the activity of Intellect" (264). The first quote comes from her commentary I.3.4, 1-9 (which I suggest is the discursive part), and the second quote comes from her commentary on I.3.4, 14-16 (which I suggest is the non-discursive part). Also, in her conclusion she draws a parallel between the activity of dialectic and that of the soul: the former uses division and combination with regard to real beings, the latter with regard to linguistic expressions that are images of real beings (285). However, she mentions on several occasions that the work of dialectic is to give definitions and classifications of Forms. I take defining to be a linguistic activity, which is supported by the Aristotelian text (*Categories* 2a14-16) Schiaparelli herself uses—Aristotle is talking about how *we speak* (within those three lines he uses a form of λέγειν twice). Second, John P. Anton's "Plotinus and the Neoplatonic Conception of Dialectic" (1992) comes closer to this distinction within dialectic. However, he still sees, "*dianoia* qua *logismos* or discursive understanding [as] propaedeutic to dialectic" (26, n.19; see also, 28). However, to call the discursive part of dialectic "propaedeutic" or "preliminary" does not sufficiently capture Plotinus' claim that "[dialectic] is

On the one hand, then, [dialectic] is the skill that is capable of speaking in an account about each [thing]: what each [is], why it differs from others, what the commonality in them is, where each of these [is], if it is what it is, how many beings [there are], and, again, how many non-beings different from beings. This [skill] even converses about good and about non-good, about how many [stand] under the good and how many under the opposite, about what is clearly eternal and what is not this way, [conversing] about all with knowledge, not opinion (Ἔστι μὲν δὴ ἡ λόγῳ περὶ ἑκάστου δυναμένη ἕξις εἰπεῖν τί τε ἕκαστον καὶ τί ἄλλων διαφέρει καὶ τίς ἡ κοινότης ἐν οἷς ἐστι καὶ ποῦ τούτων ἕκαστον καὶ εἰ ἔστιν ὅ ἐστι καὶ τὰ ὄντα ὁπόσα καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα αὖ, ἕτερα δὲ ὄντων. Αὕτη καὶ περὶ ἀγαθοῦ διαλέγεται καὶ περὶ μὴ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὅσα ὑπὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὅσα ὑπὸ τὸ ἐναντίον καὶ τί τὸ ἀίδιον δηλονότι καὶ τὸ μὴ τοιοῦτον, ἐπιστήμη περὶ πάντων, οὐ δόξῃ, I.3.4, 2-9).[59]

The appearance of the words λόγῳ, εἰπεῖν, and διαλέγεται signal that Plotinus is presenting the discursive part of dialectic.[60] This part is the skill or trained habit (ἕξις, 4, 3) to form an account. It is the ability to define each thing, articulate the differences and similarities between them, and arrange them together in a systematic way.[61] Dialectic, then, is the ability both to identify individuals and to express the relations among them. Through dialectic, one skillfully distinguishes and collects beings together within a single account.

When Plotinus says "if it is what it is" (εἰ ἔστιν ὅ ἐστι, 4, 5), he could mean that dialectic is the ability to determine the attributes belonging to something or is the ability

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the skill that is capable of speaking about each [thing] in an account" (1.3.4, 2-3). This part of dialectic constitutes the skilled capacity to render intelligible what we experience in perception. This activity is a significant part of our philosophical endeavors. It is a crucial part of dialectic, not just an introduction to it. Anton himself lists five activities that dialectic enables us to do—four of them involve speaking (24-25)—which suggests that this part of dialectic is more than just be a propaedeutic to something else.

[59] My translation.; for the Platonic influences on this passage, see Schiaparelli, 2009, 256. She cites the following dialogues: *Rep.,* 534b3; *Soph*., 253d1-3; *Tim*., 37a6-b3; *Thea*., 208d6-9.

[60] Peter A. Kay's "Dialectic as the Science of Wisdom" (1995) associates this passage with discursive reason, since he discusses it as "'uttering' aspects of intelligible forms" (21) and then describes this "uttering" in terms of the "aspiring dialectician" who "remains 'separated' from complete intellection by the limitations of discursive thought" (30), citing III.8.6, 22-29.

[61] See Kay, 1995, 20-21; Schiaparelli, 2009, 256-58.

to say whether or not something actually is.[62] He could, of course, mean both. Since this

part of dialectic is discursive, the ability to verify what is said about something is implied

in both. That is, dialectic is the ability to verify if something is what it is *said to be*.[63]

Dialectic, then, is the ability to determine the amount of beings and non-beings. Plotinus

cannot mean "non-existing things": for how would one ever count that which does not

exist? He clarifies what he means by "non-beings" in adding "different from beings"

(ἕτερα δὲ ὄντων, 4, 6). Through dialectic, one can enumerate and distinguish beings or

substances from perceptible attributes.[64] One does not mistake the colors, shapes,

textures, or sounds for something's being.

In fact, dialectic is the ability to use opposites—being/non-being, good/non-good,

eternal/non-eternal—and generate a single account from these. This ability recalls the

Pythagorean table of opposites.[65] One can distinguish beings from non-beings and then

determine what belongs where. One can perform this action with good/non-good as well

as eternal/non-eternal. This ability resembles the *logos* discussed throughout Plotinus'

treatise on providence. By including opposites in one account, as well as what fits under

these opposites, one aims at forming an account of the whole. Dialecticians do not select

one opposite and discard the other but include both in a single account. They show how

opposites function together in producing the whole. Plotinus makes it clear, however, that

this endeavor is not isolated, since the dialectician converses (διαλέγεται, 4, 7) with

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[62] See Schiaparelli, 2009, 258-59.
[63] See I.3.5, 14-18.
[64] See Schiaparelli, 2009, 259; Kalligas, 1997, 397-410.
[65] See *Metaph*., 986a23-986b10; Lloyd, 1966, 15-85.

others. In conversation with others, dialectic is the ability to formulate an account of the whole.

We can begin to see how Plotinus' dialectical practice accords with his depiction of dialectic. Since dialectic involves forming an account of the whole, it entails extending beyond limited vantage points. The dialectician can, as it were, see further and so assist others in doing so. From within dialectic, one does not avoid or ignore speaking about anything but is free to examine and speak about each and every thing.[66] Because dialecticians are skilled in giving such an account, they can detect the limits of another's account and help that individual to extend past them. As the examples of the musician and lover indicate, this detection involves identifying and exposing assumptions that constrain one's thinking and experience. For instance, both assume that beauty comes to them from an external, perceptual object. They only listen or look for beauty in these. Dialecticians help them challenge this assumption and so extend the possibilities of their experience and accounts of beauty.

The ultimate aim of dialectic, however, is not the formation of a final, totalizing account.[67] One's soul, not accounts, is at stake in dialectic. As discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, the soul does not rest content with an account but moves toward non-discursive thought. The discursive element in dialectic is part of this movement.

> On the other hand, ceasing to wander about the perceptible, it [dialectic] settles in Intellect, has its business There, getting rid of the falsehood in speaking [and] feeding the soul in the plain of truth, using Plato's [method of] division toward determining

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[66] See *Theat.*, 172c-176a.
[67] See Gurtler, 2015, 169-170.

forms, on the one hand, and toward the what it is, on the other, but also with regard to the primary kinds: intellectually weaving that which comes from these until it passes through all the intelligible and, loosening it up again, it comes to the beginning, although now keeping still (for while being There it is in silence). No longer being busy, having come into unity, it beholds (Παύσασα δὲ τῆς περὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν πλάνης ἐνιδρύει τῷ νοητῷ κἀκεῖ τὴν πραγματείαν ἔχει τὸ ψεῦδος ἀφεῖσα ἐν τῷ λεγομένῳ ἀληθείας πεδίῳ τὴν ψυχὴν τρέφουσα, τῇ διαιρέσει τῇ Πλάτωνος χρωμένη μὲν καὶ εἰς διάκρισιν τῶν εἰδῶν, χρωμένη δὲ καὶ εἰς τὸ τί ἐστι, χρωμένη δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα γένη, καὶ τὰ ἐκ τούτων νοερῶς πλέκουσα, ἕως ἂν διέλθῃ πᾶν τὸ νοητόν, καὶ ἀνάπαλιν ἀναλύουσα, εἰς ὅ ἂν ἐπ' ἀρχὴν ἔλθῃ, τότε δὲ ἡσυχίαν ἄγουσα, ὡς μέχρι γε τοῦ ἐκεῖ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ οὐδὲν ἔτι πολυπραγμονοῦσα εἰς ἓν γενομένη βλέπει, I.3.4, 9-18).[68]

Plotinus signals the contrast between the discursive and non-discursive by using δέ in moving to the non-discursive part. Discursive thought busily combines and divides perceptible as well as intelligible images, illuminating the former through the latter. This kind of thinking remains focused on what is perceived. When dialecticians "cease wandering about the perceptible" (παύσασα δὲ τῆς περὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν πλάνης, 4, 10-11), they forgo this business of discursive thought.

"Getting rid of the falsehood in speaking" (τὸ ψεῦδος ἀφεῖσα ἐν τῷ λεγομένῳ, 4, 12-13) is further evidence of this movement to non-discursive thought. For Plotinus, truth is the identity of thinking and being. An image is different from the being it imitates. Plotinus has already said that dialecticians can distinguish beings from attributes, qualities, and whatever else is other than a being. Since an image of a being is other than that being, the dialectician knows the difference. Any account in language is not identical to the being or beings expressed in the account. Plotinus, then, is not just saying that dialecticians only utter true statements. At this point in their journey, they no longer

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[68] My translation.

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involve themselves with speech at all. They no longer focus their attention on images of beings but on the truth. After all, logical activity, which deals with propositions and syllogisms, is given to another art (4, 18-20).[69] The dialectician is not focused on the forms and rules of inference or propositional structure. The concerns of discursivity are no longer relevant in the "plain of truth" (ἀληθείας πεδίῳ, 4, 13).

Previously, dialectic involved the trained habit to speak and give an account. Plotinus distinguishes this ability from its "feeding of the soul" (τὴν ψυχὴν τρέφουσα, 4, 13).[70] In the word "τρέφειν," there are connotations not just of feeding and nourishing but also of raising and educating. Plotinus says both how the soul is reared by dialectic and the goal of this education. The method is "Plato's dividing" (τῇ διαιρέσει τῇ Πλάτωνος, 4, 15). Plotinus has the *Phaedrus* in mind, which he alluded to in the phrase "the plain of truth."[71] This method involves dividing what is one at its "natural joints" (ἄρθρα ᾗ πέφυκεν, 265e1). Socrates uses the example of dividing arms into left and right but also of madness, which is "one form inherent in us (ἓν ἐν ἡμῖν πεφυκὸς εἶδος, 266a2). In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates is describing speeches: in particular, the one by Lysias and his own. The former divides madness on the left, ignoring the right, while the latter divides madness on the right, ignoring the left (265e-266b).[72]

Plotinus, however, is depicting the non-discursive activity of the soul in Intellect. There, the soul divides the unity of Intellect into the individual forms. In dividing the

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[69] See also, I.3.5.10-24; Kalligas, 2014, 157.
[70] See LSJ, τρέφω, A.II.1, A.IV.
[71] *Phdr*., 284b-c; See also, Kalligas, 2014, 156.
[72] There could be an implicit critique of speeches in that a speech inevitably divides and focuses on one side of a unity at the expense of the other. The dialogue form, however, is clearly able to present both sides.

unity of Intellect, the soul does not articulate or define its parts propositionally.[73] Some remnants of discursivity are still present, since the soul does not grasp Intellect's unity and multiplicity all at once. The soul still engages in successive operations: going from undifferentiated unity to diversity, from diverse forms to their interconnection, and loosening up this interconnection to grasp Intellect's richly diversified unity.[74] The soul starts with Intellect's unity but without apprehending its rich diversity and so begins dividing that unity into its parts. The soul apprehends each form or intellect as the one it is in distinction from all the rest.[75] Plotinus combines Platonic and Aristotelian language in this passage. For him, dialectic can both identify the form and what it is for something to be. Through it, the soul becomes familiar with that which constitutes an individual being. Since this familiarization happens in the "plain of truth," it implies that the soul becomes united with the being. Since this being is an intellect, the soul thinks the content that is this being.

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[73] For discussions about whether thought in Intellect is propositional or non-propositional see Lloyd, 1969-70; Sorabji, 1982; Lloyd, 1986; Alfino, 1988.

[74] Cf. Kay, 1995, 24 and Kalligas, 2014, 156-57. Both authors also present this general schema of the soul gradually coming to apprehend the rich diversity in Intellect's unity. However, both of them understand and interpret the details of this passage differently from the way I do. Kay sees the first unity as the weaving together of forms. Implied in his discussion is that the soul "starts from indistinct and undistinguished experience." I agree with him that the soul starts this way but disagree that this is the case because "sensation is mixed up with thought." The remnants of discursivity, not sense-perception, are what prevent the soul from grasping the complex unity of Intellect in a single grasp. It is accustomed to thinking through a multifaceted unity part by part and not to grasping unity and multiplicity all at once in a single thought. Further, Kalligas sees the "loosening up" stage as resolving the forms back into the primary genera. Plotinus is quite terse in this passage, and I understand that this is a possible reading. However, the movement seems to be of the soul gradually coming into its own unity and thinking the way Intellect thinks, which is a single grasp of its internal content. The circuit of the passage suggests to me that Plotinus depicts the soul as starting from an indistinct grasp of Intellect's unity and returns to that unity but in a way that apprehends the diversity in that unity.

[75] See Schiaparelli, 2009, 263; Kalligas, 2014, 156.

The soul engages in this activity until reaching the primary genera, presumably those from the *Sophist*: being, sameness, otherness, rest, and motion.[76] These cannot be divided further but are the primary content of Intellect. At this point, the soul has fully clarified the diversity of Intellect. The next operation moves in the other direction, uniting this diversity in thought. In its own thinking, the soul apprehends the mutual implications inherent in each form by "passing through all the intelligible" (διέλθη πᾶν τὸ νοητόν, 4, 17-18). In "loosening it up again" (ἀνάπαλιν ἀναλύουσα, 4, 18), soul returns to the initial unity but now beholds it in its rich diversity. There are no more remnants of discursivity, no more being busy. The soul keeps still and quiet. Abiding in its own unity, it beholds Intellect's multifaceted unity. That is the goal of dialectic—soul resting in its own unity and beholding the content innately within. The soul no longer busily goes out toward others or even busily examines its own content. It beholds the whole of Intellect and all its details in a single, contemplative act.

Plotinus' phrasing, however, is ambiguous, which is not accidental. The "beginning" or "source" (ἀρχὴν, 4, 19) to which the soul comes could be the point at which the soul started—Intellect's unity—or the source of that unity, which is the One or the Good. The soul returns to Intellect's unity but no longer apprehends it as undifferentiated; and yet the soul comes to the ultimate source and beholds that. Plotinus confirms this double possibility: "on the one hand, [as] wisdom [dialectic is] about being, while on the other

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[76] See *Soph*., 252e-265a; Schiaparelli, 2009, 263-64; Kalligas, 2014, 156. That the Stranger's divisions in the *Sophist* always discard some part of the cut is telling. This procedure is in contrast to what is implied in Socrates' depiction of madness as "one form in us" or in the body having a left *and* right arm. The contrast is between discarding one half of a division and preserving a unified whole. The divisions that take place in Intellect and in Plotinus' notion of dialectic do not discard but preserve both sides. In making divisions, the goal is to preserve the integrity of what is divided and, as will be seen, the unity of the soul.

hand, [as] thought [dialectic is] about that which is beyond being" (φρόνησιν μὲν περὶ τὸ ὄν, νοῦν δὲ περὶ τὸ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ὄντος, 5, 8-9).[77] Through dialectic, the soul is oriented toward being. It beholds the individuality of each being and their mutual implication. This mention of "wisdom," in fact, brings us back to the discussion of virtues, which the next sub-section elaborates on further. Through dialectic as "thought", however, soul beholds that which exceeds being. Soul, having come into its own unity, obtains a glimpse of the source of all unity. In becoming one and fully experiencing its own unity, soul beholds (βλέπει, 4, 18) the One.[78] Again, we see that the concern of dialectic is the soul. The possibility of experiencing its own unity and beholding the source of that unity is the fundamental issue for dialectic.

Since that is the goal, the connection between Plotinus' dialectical practice and his account of dialectic becomes even clearer than before. With the musician and the lover, and even the philosopher, the soul learns not only where but also *how* to turn its attention. The dialectician, having experienced the unity of his or her own soul and beheld the source of that unity, realizes what course the soul must take. The soul must ultimately become still and quiet and so no longer busy about many things. It must attend to its own unity to behold the source of unity. The soul must first turn toward the beings in Intellect. For that to happen, the soul cannot direct its attention outward or be confined within a limited perspective. The soul must separate the intelligible content from the perceptual experience of something. In doing so, it comes to know that which is already within.

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[77] See Kalligas, 2014, 158.
[78] See VI 5[23]1 1-26; see also O'Daly, 1973, 82-84.

Dialectic itself eventually "feeds the soul in the plain of truth." Through dialectic, the soul must become its own teacher. To come into its own unity and behold its source, the soul must pass through all of Intellect. Dialectic is this course, and the soul must undertake it for itself. That is why, in the dialectical practice, the soul must always be the one performing the operations. The techniques cannot be passively received by the learner. They must be enacted by the learner for him to realize his inherent capacity to teach himself.

6.2.3   Dialectic, philosophy, and virtue: Plotinus as "intra-worldly"

Plotinus pedagogy is inextricably united with dialectic. Since dialectic is the leading of souls toward an experience of their own unity, his pedagogy involves leading souls toward this experience. The dialectician does not simply take care of his or her own soul but leads and teaches others to take care of theirs.[79] His pedagogy, then, is oriented toward individuals being concerned about their own souls.[80] Dialectic is not just a tool of the philosopher but "the valuable part of philosophy" (5, 7-10, φιλοσοφίας μέρος τὸ τίμιον). In that case, the philosopher cannot simply be concerned about his or her own soul. To engage in philosophy is to be at once attentive to oneself and another.[81] Plotinus, as a philosopher, is necessarily involved with and concerned about others and his pedagogy is an extension of that concern.

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[79] An examination of III 5 [50] would show that this concern is actually an activity of love. For Plotinus, teaching and philosophy are erotic.
[80] See *Ap.*, 30a-b.
[81] See *VP*, 8.12-24.

The connection between dialectic and virtue confirms this claim. Intellectual habits, virtues involved with particular experiences, and practical wisdom all depend on dialectic (6, 9-14). Since dialectic is connected with virtues and with a concern for others, it is concerned about another's virtue. Plotinus' philosophical endeavors are oriented around the cultivation of virtue in others and himself. As discussed above, virtues are double-sided. On the one hand, they involve the full participation in providence in which one takes care of one's body. On the other hand, they involve the soul attending to its own life and content. The dialectician assists another in developing both aspects. In this way, dialectic is directed toward the whole individual, toward taking care of one's body and one's soul. Both dialectic and virtue contain this double-sided dimension: the former is about oneself and others, the latter about one's body and one's soul. Given that Plotinus sees humanity as occupying a middle place, this double-sidedness makes sense.[82] Dialectic and virtue reflect this condition.

To be sure, the philosophical aim is to move toward the godly and away from the beastly. This movement, however, does not necessarily imply forsaking one's body, others, or the world. The soul participates in the providence of this cosmos. It gives form to the body so that it may live. Still, soul can only give this form by remaining connected to its own intellect. After all, providence is the way in which the cosmos depends on Being and Intellect. The cosmos, along with all its inhabitants, can live and exist only through their connection to Being and Intellect. Souls, including any given human soul, *are* this connection. In turning one's attention toward Intellect, one turns toward one's

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[82] See Kay, 1995, 5.

own interior but also toward the noetic core of this cosmos. Plotinus' philosophy, then, is not "unworldly" or "other-worldly." "Intra-worldly" is a description that better approximates both the spirit and the letter of his thinking.

6.3   Concluding Remarks

This dissertation has examined Plotinus' pedagogical techniques and aims. The intention has not been to be exhaustive of either but to begin studying how to identify them in his writing. More detailed and extensive research must include not only an examination of more treatises but posing questions like the following. What other techniques and aims can one find in his writings? Does Plotinus use the same techniques in all his works? Do particular questions and themes in distinct works manifest different techniques and aims? Are there overlaps and commonalities? If so, where? If not, why? How can one firmly trace his pedagogical techniques and aims back to Plato, Aristotle, and even the Pre-Socratics? Since teaching occurs in a community, since Plotinus himself had a school and relationships with politicians, what political implications and involvements are in his pedagogy—or any pedagogy, for that matter? The work of this dissertation and these questions can serve as a starting point for future research.

In summary form, the following are the pedagogical techniques this dissertation identified. First, Plotinus' use of allusions to previous thinkers serves a few purposes. For instance, allusions help the reader identify thinkers with whom Plotinus is conversing. They help shape the focus and direction of the conversation. The allusions to Aristotle's *Physics*, to Epicurus, and the gnostics indicate that Plotinus' discussion of providence is

concerned with questions of giving an account. A main focus of this discussion, then, is on the act of giving accounts and those who perform it. Second, he leads readers to impasses in a way that exposes the source of those impasses. This way of leading confirms that the activity of giving accounts and, indeed, those who give them are the focus of his discussion.

Third, Plotinus uses images in ways that help readers see differently. For instance, he uses two images—like a seed and a harmony—to help correct and support each other. By moving from one image to the next and seeing how the shortcomings in one image are offset by the strengths of the other, readers can experience the cosmos as a multifaceted unity consisting of independent individuals. In another instance—the shift from the drama to the musical image—Plotinus moves from one image to another such that the latter corrects the former. This shift helps readers imagine cosmic unity as the simultaneous, continual playing out of opposites and not a final resolution of them. In both cases, the technique only works if readers attend to the subtle changes between images. This technique of correcting images is part of his general philosophical method. However, there is a pedagogical dimension for at least two reasons: readers must perform this correction for themselves, and this correction is part of the self-examination through which they move from what is more to what is less familiar. Fourth, in connection with his use of images, Plotinus requires his readers to engage in an ongoing criticism of their discursive thought and use of language. One must begin from perceptual and discursive experience. In moving toward non-discursive thought, one must challenge the ways in which discursive thinking operates. In particular, one must challenge the assumptions and

standards that determine one's judgments, especially when these depend on a limited vantage point. Even the main factors in his account of providence—Soul, *logos*, and matter—serve this criticizing function. As with the correction of images, this ongoing criticism is part of his general philosophical method. There are, however, pedagogical dimensions for the same reasons indicated above.

Fifth, Plotinus uses opposites dynamically and not statically. By not posing opposites with the aim of provoking a choice, Plotinus requires readers to preserve both opposites in their thinking. Instead of halting their thought in the choice between opposites, readers must continue to work out the relationship between them. His whole discussion of providence is an exercise in examining the dynamics between Intellect and matter through Soul. He demonstrates a way of thinking that, if readers learn to adopt it for themselves, can assist them both in forming an account of the whole and moving toward non-discursive thought. Sixth, Plotinus uses thought experiments to help readers change their perspective. One thought experiment examined in this dissertation involves the soul detaching its attention from the body and the perceptions, passions, and desires associated with it. In this exercise, the soul can possibly come to align itself with the All-Soul in its contemplation of Intellect. Another thought experiment involves moving toward the source of unity in order to see the compatibility of cosmic unity and individual becoming. Although these thought experiments are part of his philosophical method, they are also part of his pedagogy. As already mentioned, they help readers change their perspective but only if they engage in these exercises for themselves. For readers who actively participate, these thought experiments teach them how to see and think differently.

Again, these six techniques are not intended to be exhaustive. Since their purpose is to transform the way one thinks, readers must enact them for themselves. They are not applied to or exercised on readers. They are available for readers to adopt and implement. That many of them are part of his general philosophical method is not surprising. As discussed above, through philosophy and dialectic the soul is its own teacher. Through these techniques and his philosophy in general, Plotinus models how to give an account and how to move from discursive to non-discursive thought. His account of dialectic shows that his teaching involves both. Regarding the former, the pedagogical aim is learning how to form an account of the whole. This part of his pedagogy engages the discursive part of the soul, which collects, divides, and unifies images from perception and intellection.

Plotinus' concern exceeds discursive thought. His teaching is oriented toward the soul's interiority. This movement inward, and the extension of one's perspective associated with it, is the fundamental aim of his pedagogy. Still, there are degrees of this inward expansion. One can adopt the vantage point of the *logos* or of our sister-soul. One can be seized by one's noetic self and perform the non-discursive thought of Intellect. Even being in touch with the One is a possibility. In each case, Plotinus' teaching is concerned about individual souls. His aim is to assist them in experiencing their own unity and their own contact with truth and being: or, better perhaps, for them to undergo this experience with him. Most importantly, in his discussion of dialectic, he demonstrates that the soul is its own teacher. He might lead and show the way. If the students are to learn, however, then they must ultimately teach themselves.

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