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ENERGEIA IN THE ENNEADS OF PLOTINUS:

A REACTION TO PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

by

Curtis L. Hancock

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

Doctor of Philosophy

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1984

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VITA

Curtis Lynn Hancock was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on August 1, 1950, the son of John Daniel and Pauline Lois Hancock. He was educated in the public schools of Oklahoma City. He attended John Adams Grammar School, Franklin Roosevelt Junior High School and U. S. Grant High School. Upon graduation from the last in 1968, he entered the University of Oklahoma on an athletic scholarship. He graduated with a B. A. in philosophy in 1972 and with an M. A. in philosophy in 1974.

In February of 1975 he enrolled in the Department of Philosophy of Loyola University of Chicago. After one semester at Loyola he returned to Oklahoma for personal reasons. He returned to Loyola in the Fall of 1977, completing by 1980 his course work and candidacy exams for the Ph. D..

He is the husband of Kathryn L. Hancock and is the father of two, Jason (age 14) and Elizabeth (age 10). He has taught philosophy and a variety of other subjects as an Instructor in Adult Education at the University of Oklahoma. Presently, he teaches philosophy at Cardinal Newman College, St. Louis, Missouri.

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INTRODUCTION

Aristotle's neologism, ἡ ἐνέργεια, which occurs in almost all his writings, from the very earliest to the very latest,¹ appears often in the writings of such Hellenistic philosophers as the Epicureans, the Stoics and, especially, Plotinus.² Our present study aims to discover how the last named, who is the founder of the Neoplatonic school, accommodates the Aristotelian doctrine of energeia to his own distinctive metaphysics.

That this is a worthwhile project would seem evident given the numerous instances of energeia in the Enneads. Indeed, Plotinus employs the term more often than Aristotle himself.³ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that at least one prominent scholar of Neoplatonism doubts the significance of energeia in Plotinus' system. According to Philip Merlan

¹Energeia appears as early as the Protrepticus (see W. D. Ross, Fragmenta Selecta Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955, fragment 14) and as late as the Poetics, Politics and Rhetoric. For a helpful listing of the instances of energeia in the works of Aristotle see G. A. Blair, "The Meaning of 'Energeia' and 'Entelecheia' in Aristotle," International Philosophical Quarterly, 7 (1967), p. 103.

²That energeia appears in the writings of these thinkers is confirmed by consulting the following sources: (1) Glossarium Epicureum, Hermannus Usener, ed. (Roma: Edizioni Dell'Ateneo e Bizzarri, 1977), p. 255; (2) Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, J. von Arnim, ed. (Leipzig: 1903-1924; repr. Stuttgart, 1964), Vol. I, p. 50; (3) Lexicon Plotinianum, J. H. Sleeman and G. Pollet, eds. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), pp. 374-384.

³Aristotle uses energeia 537 times (according to Blair, "The Meaning of 'Energeia' and 'Entelecheia' in Aristotle," p. 103) compared with Plotinus' 768 times, which we record below.

in The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy, "Plotinus does not have much use for either of the two concepts of actuality and potentiality."⁴ Merlan bases this conclusion on the assumption that, since the dynamis/energeia distinction originates out of the peculiar demands of Aristotle's philosophy of becoming and matter, it has little value in a philosophy developed mainly along Platonic lines. While we may protest even here that such a view underestimates the synthetic power of Plotinus' acute mind, we will withhold final judgment on the extent of Plotinus' commitment to energeia until our study is complete. In other words, in examining how energeia is operative in Plotinus, one of our chief aims will be to answer whether, contrary to Merlan, energeia is a central doctrine in Plotinian metaphysics.⁵

In addition to testing the truth of Merlan's view, this study is demanded in the face of the absence of any other thorough study on the subject in Plotinus. This is confirmed by a survey of secondary literature on Plotinus. The three primary bibliographical sources, Bert Marien's "Bibliografia Critica degli Studi Plotiniani" (which records studies up to 1949), L'année philologique and Bulletin Signalétique (both of which list studies from 1949 to the present), disclose an absence of careful studies of energeia in Plotinus.⁶ There has been no book primarily

⁴The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy, A. H. Armstrong, ed.; Part I written by Merlan: "Greek Philosophy from Plato to Plotinus"; see p. 49 for above quotation (Cambridge: University Press, 1967).

⁵For the most part throughout this study I will merely transliterate energeia. The preferred translation or translations of the term will be clarified and emphasized in the final chapter of this book.

⁶Bert Mariën, "Bibliografia Critica degli Studi Plotiniani," in V. Cilento, Plotino Enneadi, Vol. 3, Part 2, pp. 391-622 (Bari: G. Laterza

devoted to energeia in Plotinus. Some books on other subjects have touched on the topic in passing but insufficiently. Chapter four of René Arnou's 1921 study, Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin,⁷ gives a mere six pages to the issue, based on a small sampling of texts, and fails to investigate whether the doctrine develops from Plotinus' early to late treatises. Serious limitations are also apparent in Hans Buchner's 1940 volume, Plotins Möglichkeitslehre.⁸ Buchner provides no separate chapter on energeia, offers no thorough study of the important texts and mainly treats the subject only to illumine dynamis in Plotinus.

Only four articles merit attention. Two of them, one by G. Bruni, "Note di polemica neoplatonica contro l'uso e il significato del termine entelecheia,"⁹ published in 1960, and another by G. Verbeke, "Les critiques de Plotin contra l'entéléchisme d'Aristote: Essai d'interprétation de l'Enneads, IV, 7, 8, 5,"¹⁰ published in 1971, are helpful but only of peripheral importance. They only consider Plotinus' polemic against Aristotle's doctrine of entelecheia, which (as we shall see in Text A) Plotinus rejects, believing that it pertains only to Aristotle's theory

and Figli, 1949); L. Marouzeau, Juliette Ernst, et al (eds.), L'année philologique (Paris: "Les Belle Lettres," 1949 sqq.); N. Dusoulier, et al (eds.), Bulletin Signalétique, Section 519 (or 19 in some tomes): "Philosophie, Science religieuses" (Paris: Centre de Documentation du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1949 sqq.).

⁷René Arnou, Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin, repr., 2nd ed. (Rome: Presses de l'Université Gregorienne, 1967).

⁸Hans Buchner, Plotins Möglichkeitslehre (Munich: Pustet, 1970).

⁹G. Bruni, "Note di polemica neoplatonica contro l'uso e il significato del termine entelecheia," Giornale Critico della Filosofia 39 (1960), 205-236.

¹⁰G. Verbeke, "Les critiques de Plotin contra l'entéléchisme d'Aristote: Essai d'interprétation de l'Enneads, IV, 7, 8, 5," in

of soul and that it is in no way synonymous with, or even related to, energeia. A third and very brief article, "La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin,"¹¹ published by C. Rutten in 1956, relies basically upon only two treatises (V, 4 and II, 5) and yet tries to give a definitive statement about energeia with questionable results. For example, Rutten seems to reduce energeia solely to activity and then refuses to consider Plotinus as a monist. Finally, there is Andrew Smith's intelligent article published in 1981, "Potentiality and the Problem of Plurality in the Intelligible World."¹² This article is accurate and carefully constructed. However, with its focus on dynamis rather than energeia and with its brevity (eight pages) it does not diminish in any way the need for our study. None of these scholars provides adequate information on energeia, but I will consult them (and of course others) when relevant.

Before investigating energeia in Plotinus, let us first briefly consider how various scholars interpret energeia in Aristototele. A survey of secondary literature uncovers a prevailing opinion: energeia signifies eidos, which is ousia in the most basic sense.¹³ The words of Joseph Owens typify this interpretation: "'Entity' [ousia] and 'form' [eidos]"

Philomathes: Studies and Essays in Memory of Philip Merlan (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 194-222.

¹¹C. Rutten, "La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin," Revue Philosophique 146 (1956), 100-106.

¹²Andrew Smith, "Potentiality and the Problem of Plurality in the Intelligible World," in Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of A. H. Armstrong, R. A. Markus and H. J. Blumenthal, eds. (London: Variorum Publications, 1981), pp. 99-107.

¹³Metaphysics Eta 3, 1043 a 29-1043 b 18; also Zeta 3, 1029 a 29-30; Theta 8, 1049 b 5-1051 a 3. See ahead to Text A, notes 15-21.

are equated. Act is prior in Entity or form because it is itself form; potency is not form, but has form only through its act."¹⁴ The remarks of C. H. Chen we may add for emphasis:

Since the form is 'that precisely in virtue of which a thing is called a this,' it is itself determined as 'a this,' i.e., it is actually 'a this.' Aristotle then goes a step beyond matter's being potentially 'a this' and form's being actually 'a this,' to call the former expressly 'potentiality' and the latter 'actuality,' in order to stress their distinction.¹⁵

It is important to note that basic to this interpretation is the view that prime matter is only passive dynamis and of itself powerless to effect perfection, form or energeia. Prime matter can acquire form or energeia only through the agency of another which already possesses form or energeia. In other words, energeia is really distinct from prime matter, and it is for this reason that "pure act" is altogether dissociated from matter.

¹⁴Joseph Owens, The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1963), p. 254. Owens says elsewhere in the same work that "the priority of act assures the absolutely dominant role of form, for Aristotelian act and form are understood to coincide" (p. 255).

¹⁵C. H. Chen, Sophia: The Science Aristotle Sought (New York and Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1976), p. 307. The following authors also support Owens' and Chen's interpretation: Werner Jaeger, Aristoteles: Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung (Berlin: Weidmannsche-Buchhandlung, 1923), translated by K. Robinson as Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 220; Werner Marx, The Meaning of Aristotle's Ontology (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), p. 50; A. E. Taylor, Aristotle (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), pp. 48-49; Josef Stallmach, Dynamis und Energeia: Untersuchungen am Werk des Aristoteles zur Problemgeschichte von Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1959), p. 50 sqq.; Anfann Stigen, The Structure of Aristotle's Thought (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget Trykningssentral, 1966), pp. 218-238; Giovanni Reale, Il Concetto di Filosofia Prima e l'Unità della Metafisica di Aristotele (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1967), translated by John R. Catan as The Concept of First Philosophy and the Unity of the Metaphysics of Aristotle (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1979), p. 60 sqq.; A. Rosales, "Dynamis y Energeia," Revista Venezolana de Filosofía 1 (1973), 77-109; G. E. M.

In essence, the above scholars argue that energeia primarily signifies form as a reality distinct from, but superior to, matter. However, at least two scholars, namely, J. H. Randall and his student G. A. Blair, dissent from the prevailing view.¹⁶ According to them, energeia should be translated as "activity" because energeia belongs primarily to motion.¹⁷ So understood, energeia is "the operation or functioning of powers (dynamis) in a process of change".¹⁸ The most basic of these "powers" is, of course, prime matter itself: matter is the power for form or ousia and form is what energeia (understood as "activity") signifies. In a word, for Randall and Blair, form is the "activity" of matter.¹⁹

We may here ask about the application of energeia to eternal ousiai. If energeia is the "activity" of sensible matter, how can we describe as energeiai those entities which always are and never become? Randall

Anscombe and Peter Geach, Three Philosophers, essay on Aristotle (chapter one) by Anscombe, pp. 54-55 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973).

¹⁶See J. H. Randall, Aristotle (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), esp. ch. 6, pp. 107-144; see Blair, "The Meaning of 'Energeia' and 'Entelecheia' in Aristotle," 101-119; see also his doctoral dissertation 'Ενέργεια and 'Εντελέχεια in Aristotle (Fordham University, 1964).

¹⁷Randall and Blair give primacy to the following quotation from the Metaphysics (Theta 5, 1047 a 30-32): "The word energeia, which is associated with the word entelecheia, has been transferred to other things from motions, to which it is especially applicable. For motion above all things seems to be energeia." They take this statement to command the interpretation that every energeia must be a kind of operation or functioning analogous to the outcomes of motions or processes. One wonders how Randall and Blair might explain away Aristotle's comment at Metaphysics Theta 1, 1046 a 1-4.

¹⁸J. H. Randall, Aristotle, p. 129.

¹⁹For some critical remarks regarding Randall's and Blair's translation of the dynamis of matter as "power" see C. H. Chen's Sophia: The Science Aristotle Sought, chs. 25 and 26; see ahead to Text A, n. 10.

insists that energeia, still understood as "activity," applies to eternal objects analogically. Eternal entities "are not 'outcomes of processes'; they are just 'outcomes'."²⁰ Such ousiai are "activities" of their own appropriate matter:

ousia is to matter as activity (energeia), even when that activity is not strictly the outcome of a motion or process of change, but is only the functioning--perhaps, as in the case of the stars, the eternal and unchanging functioning of the powers of that matter.²¹

Furthermore, one may wonder how this interpretation reconciles with Aristotle's conception of the Separate Intelligence, which is "pure energeia." Randall responds that the First Reality is a myth, a remnant from Aristotle's Platonic adolescence, and is incoherent with Aristotle's overall metaphysics. Nonetheless, as a myth the doctrine of the Separate Intelligence may conform roughly to the doctrine of energeia conceived as "activity" or functioning, since the Separate Intelligence is the idealized projection of man's own supreme operation or functioning--namely, contemplation.²²

In sum, while most Aristotelian scholars agree that energeia basically denotes form, some deny that form or energeia is something really distinct from the operation, functioning or "activity" of matter. This disagreement forces us to consider Aristotle's conception to be problematic until we have clarified his position by studying and contrasting it with Plotinus.

This we shall do by isolating all instances of energeia in the Enneads, selecting the most important for detailed investigation. These

²⁰J. H. Randall, Aristotle, p. 130.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., pp. 140-142.

important instances constitute the "key texts" or key passages revealing the nature of energeia in Plotinus' system.

To insure that our examination is clear and exegetically sound, I have established the following methodology. First, we shall take up each key text in the chronological sequence of the treatises. Thereby, we shall be in a position to eventually judge whether Plotinus modifies his views on energeia over the course of his fifty-four treatises. Secondly, we shall prepare for an examination of each key text by commenting on the precise context of that treatise within Plotinus' Enneads as a whole. In particular, the precise relationship of the key text to the treatises that immediately precede and follow it shall be identified. Thirdly, the key text itself shall be translated in as exact a fashion as possible, even at the price of a certain inelegance in English. A translation of Plotinus, if truly accurate, forbids elegant English because Plotinus writes inelegant Greek.²³ Fourthly, since Plotinus' texts are often abstruse and elliptical, it shall be helpful to show the movement of thought for each key text. By "movement of thought" I mean simply the separate steps comprising the overall argument of a key text. Fifthly, we shall subject the important issues manifest in each key text to a careful and thorough commentary, the results of which shall be immediately summarized. After all key texts have been analyzed, our study shall end with

²³For this reason my own translations will rely heavily on Marsilius Ficinus' Latin translation of the Enneads (Plotini Eneades cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione Castigata, F. Creuzer and G. H. Moser, eds. [Oxford: Typographicum Academicum, 1835]). Even four centuries after its composition, Ficinus' translation is of considerable value for its prizing the literal over the elegant. The work has the special virtue of taking few liberties with the Greek terms (i.e., Ficinus employs common Latin words whenever possible) and of remaining relatively faithful to the original Greek syntax.

a chapter summarizing all our findings and reaching ultimate conclusions.

Before attempting to identify our key texts, let us isolate all instances of energeia in the Enneads. The following table lists all occurrences according to the chronological order of the treatises. The rubric for the following table is as follows. Each entry states first the Ennead and the particular treatise within it. The next number contained in parentheses indicates the place of the treatise in the chronological order. Next come the numbers for the chapter of the treatise and the line(s) wherein energeia occurs. An additional number sometimes occurs in brackets to signify how many instances of energeia occur on a single line of a chapter.²⁴

²⁴In this study I have primarily followed the Greek text as found in Paul Henry and H. R. Schwyzer, Plotini Opera, Vols. 1-3 (the so-called "editio maior"); (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959-1973). The translations of Plotinus in this book are my own, but I acknowledge a special debt to Leo Sweeney, S.J., David Hassel, S.J. and Dr. Francis Catania for their recommendations. The following editions and translations of Plotinus' Greek text have further assisted me:

(1) Armstrong, A. H., Plotinus, "Loeb Classical Library," Vols. 1-3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966-1967).

(2) Idem, Plotinus (London: Allen and Unwin, 1953).

(3) Bréhier, Émile, Plotin Ennéades, 6 vols. in 7 (Paris: "Les Belles Lettres," 1924-1938).

(4) Harder, Richard (continued by W. Marg, R. Beutler and W. Theiler), Plotins Schriften, 5 vols. in 11 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956-1967).

(5) Cilento, Vincenzo, Plotino Enneadi, 3 vols. (Bari: Laterza and Figli, 1949),

(6) Creuzer, F and G. H. Moser (eds.), Plotini Eneades cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione Castigata (Oxford: Typographicum Academicum, 1835).

(7) Henry, Paul and H. R. Schwyzer, Plotini Opera, "Oxford Classical Texts," 3 vols. (the so-called "editio minor"); (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1982).

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II, 3 (52), 13, 28, 44	I, 7 (54), 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 13,	
14, 12		15, 17, 18, 20
		3, 8

Sum Total of Instances: 768

From the above texts we have selected five which contain significant information regarding energeia and which are our key texts. These we shall take up in the following order:

Text A: IV, 7 (2), 82, 83 and 85

Text B: V, 4 (7), 2

Text C: II, 5 (25), 1-5

Text D: VI, 7 (38), 13, 17-18, 37 and 40

Text E: VI, 2 (43), 7-8, 14-15

Let us now examine each of these key texts, aiming ultimately at determining how they fit into Plotinus' philosophy as a whole.

TEXT A: ENNEAD IV, 7 (2), 8², 8³ and 8⁵

The key text that we will presently examine consists of chapters 8², 8³ and 8⁵ of IV, 7.¹ Before examining this text, we should briefly note the place of treatise IV, 7 in Plotinus' writings and make evident the immediate context within which the key text occurs.

According to Porphyry, IV, 7, "On the Immortality of the Soul," is the second treatise that Plotinus wrote.² In this treatise Plotinus defends the Platonic view of the soul's immortality by exposing weaknesses in opposing theories. Seven chapters precede the first occurrence of energeia in the treatise.³ In those chapters Plotinus attacks the materialism of the Epicureans and Stoics.⁴ He advances a host of arguments

¹Chapter 8 of IV 7 is subdivided into 6 subordinate chapters, 8, 8¹, 8² - 8⁵. Some historical facts relating to how the manuscript of chapter 8 was transmitted from ancient to modern times explain its curious structure. The archetype of IV 7 contains a lacuna, which fortunately can be filled by Eusebius' quotations of Plotinus in the Preparatio Evangelica XV 22, 49-67 (which supplies 8-8⁴) and XV 10, 1-9 (which furnishes 8⁵). Ficinus also divided chapter 8 into subordinate chapters, apparently convinced the text fell into 6 distinct sections. For further information, see Henry-Schwyzler, Tome I, pp. ix-xxv and Tome II, pp. ix-xxvi.

²Porphyry, "On the Life of Plotinus," chap. 4, line 25. In A. H. Armstrong, Plotinus, Vol. I (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966-67), p. 15.

³If chapter 8 is considered as 6 chapters rather than one large chapter with 6 parts, then the first instance of energeia follows 9 chapters, because it first occurs in 8².

⁴Emile Bréhier has described IV 7 as "le plus élémentaire et pour ainsi dire le plus scolaire qu'ait écrit Plotin: l'on y trouve de nombreux résumés des commentateurs utilisés par Plotin." Plotin Enneades, (Paris: "Les Belle Lettres," 1924-28), Vol. IV, p. 179. He adds that

to show that soul cannot be reduced to matter and hence is incorruptible.⁵ The initial portions (#1-#8) of the key text consist of such arguments and its last portion (#9-#10) is a criticism of Aristotle's position on the soul.

Key Text

"[1] If the soul were a body it would penetrate every part. And if this penetration occurs, it must accord with other kinds of mixture of bodies. But if there is a mixture of bodies, none of the mixed components remains in act. Hence the soul would no longer be in act if penetrating the bodies; it would be in potency only and thus would lose its being."

82, 1-5:

*"Ἐτι εἰ σῶμα οὖσα ἡ ψυχὴ διήλθε διὰ παντός, κἂν
κραθεῖσα εἴη, ὅν τρόπον τοῖς ἄλλοις σώμασιν ἢ κρᾶσις. Εἰ
δὲ ἡ τῶν σωμάτων κρᾶσις οὐδὲν ἐνεργεία ἐᾷ εἶναι τῶν
κραθέντων, οὐδ' ἂν ἡ ψυχὴ ἔτι ἐνεργεία ἐνείη τοῖς σώ-
μασιν, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει μόνον ἀπολέσασα τὸ εἶναι ψυχῆ."*

"[2] [If bodies completely interpenetrated there would be no part of the one, however minute, to which the other was not present.]⁶

Alexander of Aphrodisias and Albinus furnish arguments for Plotinus' assault on the Stoics and Epicureans, p. 183.

⁵Plotinus depends on Aristotle for a number of these arguments as Bréhier remarks: "Pour la critique du matérialisme stoïcien et épicurien, Plotin utilise des arguments traditionnels, arguments d'école qui ont très peu à voir avec la philosophie platonicienne, et qui se rattachent pour l'essentiel, aux chapitres II et V du livre I du traité d'Aristote Sur l'ame."

⁶This sentence is a condensation of line 5-15.

[3] Thus if [soul were a body] it would be divisible into parts, but that is impossible: because it would thus entail division ad infinitum and thus infinity would be in act and not just in potency."⁷

82, 16-20:

, εἰ καθ' ὅτιοῦν σημεῖον καὶ μὴ μεταξύ
σῶμα ἔσται ὃ μὴ τέτμηται, εἰς σημεῖα τὴν διαίρεσιν τοῦ
σώματος γεγονέναι, ὅπερ ἀδύνατον. Εἰ δέ, ἀπείρου τῆς
τομῆς οὕσης — ὃ γὰρ ἂν λάβῃς σῶμα, διαιρετόν ἐστιν —
οὐ δυνάμει μόνον, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τὰ ἄπειρα ἔσται.

"[4] [The soul cannot be just vital breath—a kind of body according to the Stoics—]⁸ . . . a nature which becomes soul because of external circumstances. For that nature or breath, which is inferior, would be prior to Soul, which is superior, and Intelligence would be even more posterior. [5] But no, the order should be reversed: if Intelligence comes first, the Soul follows; then, in general, what is lower always comes after what is higher, according to the natural order. [6] Therefore, if their god qua intelligence is later and is generated and has intellection only acquired from without, the result would be that [in Plotinus' interpretation of their position] neither Soul nor Intelligence nor God exists: if a being in potency [as would be Soul, Intelligence or God if

⁷Plotinus is apparently convinced that the Stoics hold that the parts of the body (and therefore of the soul) are infinite in act.

⁸In my translation of this part of the key text (#4-#8) I have shifted between using capital and lower case letters for God, Intelligence and Soul. When capitalized these terms refer to Plotinus' hypostases; otherwise, they refer to the Stoic principles. That these terms signify different things for Plotinus and the Stoics will become clearer in my comments below. In general, I capitalize the first letter of Soul only when it refers to the hypostasis, as is customary. Hence, I do not capitalize soul when Plotinus is speaking of the human soul.

posterior] should come about, it could not pass into act [and thus come about] if a being in act were not prior as is Intelligence. For what will thus bring it to act if there were not another prior being? [7] For if it will bring itself into act (which is absurd), this will only happen by its gazing upon that which is not in potency but in act.⁹ Nevertheless, that which always remains itself, even if it were in potency, could desire to bring itself into act by itself and this will be better than to be only in potency.¹⁰ [8] What is prior is superior to and has a nature other than body and is a being always in act. Hence both Intelligence and Soul are prior to Nature and thus Soul is not breath or body. Other reasons have been given by others why Soul could not be a body, but the above reasons are enough."

8³, 6-25:

ἀλλ' οὖν φασί γε προτέραν φύσιν
 ψυχῆς εἶναι κατὰ συντυχίας τὰς ἔξω γιγνομένην. Συμβαίνει
 οὖν αὐτοῖς τὸ χεῖρον πρῶτον ποιεῖν καὶ πρὸ τούτου ἄλλο
 ἔλαττον, ἣν λέγουσιν ἕξιν, ὃ δὲ νοῦς ὑστατος ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς
 δηλονότι γενόμενος. Ἡ εἰ πρὸ πάντων νοῦς, ἐφεξῆς ἔδει
 ψυχὴν ποιεῖν, εἶτα φύσιν, καὶ αἰεὶ τὸ ὑστερον χεῖρον, ἥπερ
 πέφυκεν. Εἰ οὖν καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὸν νοῦν ὑστερος
 καὶ γεννητὸς καὶ ἐπακτὸν τὸ νοεῖν ἔχων, ἐνδέχοιτο ἂν μηδὲ
 ψυχὴν μηδὲ νοῦν μηδὲ θεὸν εἶναι. Εἰ τὸ δυνάμει, μὴ ὄντος
 πρότερον τοῦ ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ νοῦ, γένοιτο, οὐδὲ ἦξει εἰς ἐνέρ-
 γειαν. Τί γὰρ ἔσται τὸ ἄγον μὴ ὄντος ἐτέρου παρ' αὐτὸ
 πρότερου; Εἰ δ' αὐτὸ ἄξει εἰς ἐνέργειαν, ὅπερ ἄτοπον, ἀλλὰ
 βλέπον γε πρὸς τι ἄξει, ὃ οὐ δυνάμει, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ ἔσται.

⁹Since the Nous becomes energeia and ousia by gazing on the One, would it not follow that the One, since it is the source of the nature of Nous, is itself energeia and ousia? Perhaps, but I will argue later in this chapter that energeia and ousia are aligned and therefore the One by transcending ousia transcends energeia.

¹⁰Brehier brackets the Greek of this sentence (to which he adds a negative) and considers it to be a gloss. But I follow Henry-Schwyzler and take it to be a portion of Plotinus' own text.

Καίτοι τὸ αἰεὶ μένειν τὸ αὐτὸ εἶπερ τὸ δυνάμει ἔξει καθ' ἑαυτό, εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἄξει, καὶ τοῦτο κρεῖττον ἔσται τοῦ δυναμένου οἷον ὄρεκτὸν ὄν ἐκείνου. Πρότερον ἄρα τὸ κρεῖττον καὶ ἑτέραν φύσιν ἔχον σώματος καὶ ἐνεργεία ὄν αἰεὶ πρότερον ἄρα καὶ νοῦς καὶ ψυχὴ φύσεως. Οὐκ ἄρα οὕτως ψυχὴ ὡς πνεῦμα οὐδ' ὡς σῶμα. Ἄλλ' ὅτι μὲν μὴ σῶμα λέγοιτ' ἂν, καὶ εἴρηται καὶ ἄλλοις ἕτερα, ἱκανὰ δὲ καὶ ταῦτα.

[9] Chapter 84 bridges the two parts of our key text. In this chapter Plotinus, following Plato, rejects the Pythagorean doctrine of the soul as a "harmony" or right proportion of bodily parts.¹¹ In chapter 85 Plotinus considers whether the soul is the entelecheia of this body, as Aristotle said. According to that theory the soul is the form of the body.¹² After making several ingenious objections against

¹¹Plato discusses the Pythagorean theory in the Phaedo 85c-86e and again at 92a-95a. Simmias speaks for the Pythagoreans, arguing that the soul may not be anything in its own right, but may simply be the tenuous product of the body's parts and functions; hence, it is something that disappears once the organism degenerates. The soul is likened to a lyre, which plays well so long as it is finely tuned and so long as its parts are sound; once worn or damaged, it is a lyre in name only.

Plotinus basically echoes in chapter 84 the criticisms Plato brings against this position. These arguments are really three: (1) that the harmony theory of soul is incompatible with the doctrine of anamnesis and pre-existence of soul (which even Simmias admits is reasonable); (2) that the theory has unacceptable ethical consequences; (3) that the theory cannot explain the control of soul over body.

¹²In the second book of De Anima, ch. 1, 412 a-413 b 10, Aristotle argues that soul and body are two aspects of a living thing, standing to one another in the relation of form to matter. His analysis of soul rests on the teleological character of his philosophy, which holds that all things exist for an end. Now the body must exist for the soul and not vice-versa. If soul existed for body, the superior would exist for the inferior. It is, then, for the good of the soul that it is united to body; the body is necessary for the perfection of the soul. Hence, it is only natural that soul is united to body.

Since the soul is the body's form, it is not, therefore, a separable or independent existent, as in Plato's philosophy. This contrast with Plato explains why he endeavors to make clear that the soul is nothing apart from body. The soul may be described, accordingly, as virtually a

Aristotle,¹³ Plotinus states the following: [10] [But if the soul is not the entelecheia of the body,] what is the ousia of soul? If soul is neither body nor any property of body but is rather a doing and making and contains multiplicity and is the source of multiplicity, what sort of

mere aspect of matter or of potency, almost an epiphenomenon of a kind of body.

After describing the soul as the form (eidos) of the body, Aristotle goes on to define it as "the entelecheia of a natural body endowed with the capacity for life" or as "the first entelecheia of a natural organic body." (De Anima Beta 1, 412 a 27 b, 4: $\Psi\upsilon\chi\eta\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\gamma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \eta\ \pi\rho\omega\tau\eta\ \sigma\upsilon\mu\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\upsilon\gamma\alpha\mu\epsilon\lambda\ \Psi\upsilon\chi\eta\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\acute{\epsilon},\ \delta\ \delta\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\ \eta\ \delta\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$)

This term entelecheia is important because Aristotle uses it throughout his writings as a synonym for energeia. Literally it means "having the end within" and hence refers to the eidos of the thing (in the case of a living thing, the soul) because the eidos is both the formal and final cause of a thing; that is to say, both its nature and own standard of perfection. It is synonymous with energeia, for we will discover later that energeia denotes the reality of every existent, which is its eidos (and also its ousia or to ti en einaí).

The distribution of these terms, energeia and entelecheia, in Aristotle's writings has been presented by George A. Blair in his article, "The Meaning of Energeia and Entelecheia in Aristotle," International Philosophical Quarterly, VII (1967), 101-117. According to Blair the term energeia is the older of the two, originating as far back as Aristotle's dialogues. Energeia is also more common in Aristotle's corpus, occurring 537 times to 116 times for entelecheia.

Blair also attempts to argue that energeia/entelecheia do not refer to the basic reality of every existent. Accordingly, the best translation of these terms is not "act", but "activity," the form of a thing, in fact, being a kind of activity. His account of energeia is the consequence of some mistaken notions about Aristotle's use of the word dynamis as signifying mainly "power." For a helpful criticism of Blair's position, and a defense of my understanding of energeia in Aristotle, see C.-H. Chen, Sophia: The Science Aristotle Sought (New York: Georg Olms Verlag Hildesheim, 1976), chs. 25 and 26.

¹³Brehier summarizes these arguments as follows: "1. Un membre mutilé devrait emporter avec lui une partie de l'ame (7.9); 2. Le sommeil serait inexplicable (9-11); 3. La théorie ne peut expliquer l'opposition de la raison au désir (12-14); 4. ni l'existence de la pensée indépendante du corps (14-18); 5. ni la conservation d'images indépendantes des choses sensibles (19-23); 6. ni la direction du désir vers un objet non corporel (23-25); 7. ni la propagation de l'ame végétative d'une plante, à une autre (25-35); 8. de plus l'ame serait divisible, si elle este entelechie d'un corps qui est divisible (35-38); 9. enfin on ne peut expliquer comment des animaux se changent en d'autres animaux." (Brehier, Plotin Ennéades, Vol. IV, p. 183.)

ousia is it in contrast with bodies? Evidently, it is what we call a true ousia. Since everything which would be termed corporeal is a becoming and not an ousia (for whatever becomes and perishes is not a true ousia), the soul is conserved only through participation in being and to the extent it does participate in being."

85, 43-50:

Τίς οὖν οὐσία αὐτῆς; Εἰ δὲ μήτε σῶμα, μήτε πάθος σώματος, πράξις δὲ καὶ ποιήσις, καὶ πολλὰ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς, οὐσία παρὰ τὰ σώματα οὔσα ποία τίς ἐστιν; Ἡ δὴ ἄλλοι οὐκ ἦν φαμεν ὄντως οὐσίαν εἶναι. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ γένησις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οὐσία, πᾶν τὸ σωματικὸν εἶναι λέγοιτ' ἄν, γινόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, ὄντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν, μεταλήψει δὲ τοῦ ὄντος σφωζόμενον, καθόσον ἂν αὐτοῦ μεταλαμβάνη.

Comments

The first step in analyzing our key text is to show the sequence of its principal arguments, i.e., its movement of thought. This is as follows:

a. If the soul is a body, it penetrates every part [as the Stoics argue]. In this case soul would not be in act but in potency and, therefore, would be without its einai (#1).

[Therefore the soul's einai is to be in act, not in potency. In chapters 11 and 12 of IV, 7 this will be reasserted by describing soul as a nature which is alive and in act.]

b. [Again according to the Stoics] if soul is a body, it is present to all bodies (#2).

c. Therefore soul is divisible ad infinitum. This would entail an actual infinity. But this is impossible. There is only a potential infinity [as Aristotle has shown] (#3).

d. Moreover, soul is not breath or the sort of nature which arises from external sources. [Why? Because then that external source or nature would be prior to Soul, which would then be posterior and inferior to its external source and yet would be prior to Intelligence (#4).]

e. No, here is the order: Intelligence is followed by Soul. It is only natural that the higher is before the lower, [for the higher is the cause of the lower (#5)].

f. But if Plotinus were to follow the Stoic position (where god-nous is posterior and is thereby itself caused [and therefore itself is a being in potency], then Plotinian Soul and Intelligence and God [=the One] do not exist. Why? Soul and Intelligence and God are in potency and could come into act only if a being in act were prior [but what being in act could be prior to God? None, and a fortiori Intelligence and Soul would not be.] For causing a being-in potency to be in act only results from a prior being in act (#6).

g. [But suppose someone should object:] "God or Intelligence or Soul could reduce itself from potency to act" (#7).

This is an absurdity but let us grant it for the moment. This reduction could only occur by God or Intelligence or Soul contemplating that which is prior to each in act [and no such object of contemplation could exist as prior in the current supposition and therefore God or Intelligence or Soul cannot reduce itself from potency to act].

[Plotinus has refuted the Stoics. But he does grant them this:] if that which is in potency is eternal and immutable, then it might have as

the object of its desire the goal of bringing itself into act and this is at least better than to be in potency [without such a desire].

h. [But Plotinus brushes aside even that concession by stating the general conclusion:] the prior is superior to and is other than body. Therefore intelligence and soul [because superior] are prior to nature and bodies. And therefore [Intelligence and] Soul are not bodies (#8).

i. [After rejecting in chapter 8⁴ the Pythagorean view of soul as a harmony of bodily parts (#9), Plotinus in the initial sections of chapter 8⁵ refuses to accept Aristotle's theory of soul as the entelecheia of the body. In its final lines he asks:] What is the ousia of soul which is neither a body nor the form or entelecheia of body? His answer: ousia authentically is that which transcends body, as well as generation and corruption, and is that which is [in act--see above #a and #f]. But soul is that which is productive power. It is the container and source of multiplicity and is other than body [is in act, see #e and #f above] and thus it is ousia by participating in a higher being [in act, which is Intelligence--and which, in turn, participates in God] (#10).

Having shown the movement of thought, we must now clarify several important issues in order to understand energeia in the key text: first, that the components of a mixture are not in act (#1); secondly, that an actual infinity is impossible (#2-#3); thirdly, that the priority of the superior to the inferior is a basic principle of Plotinus' philosophy (#4-#6) and is explained through the doctrines of logos and contemplation (#7-#8); fourthly, that the soul is not an entelecheia of the body (#9) but is an authentic ousia, which of its nature exists separately from the body and participates (metambanein) in true being (#10).

The Components Of A Mixture Are Not In Act

The argument with which Plotinus opens the key text (#1) and which contains the first instance of energeia in the Enneads is aimed against the Stoics. They had explained the relation of soul and body as a mixture of two material principles, the one completely interpenetrating the other.¹⁴ Plotinus objects by arguing that when things are mixed together they are altered in such a way that they are no longer in act but in potency. Plotinus here is obviously following Aristotle, as the following quotation demonstrates:

Since some things are in potency while others are in act, the ingredients of a compound can be in one sense and yet not be in another sense. The compound may be in act other than the ingredients from which it has resulted;

¹⁴A few words on the Stoic theory of soul are necessary. The Stoics' doctrine of soul is intimately connected with their physics, according to which reality is one substance, having two principles or aspects, one active (to poioun) and the other passive (to paschon). (See Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, [hereafter referred to as SVF] ed. H. von Arnim [Stuttgart, 1964], I, 85, 86; II, 299-303).

The active principle, the cosmic pneuma, is the source of all life, order and goodness; hence, it is at once Soul, Intelligence and God. The passive principle is of the same stuff but differs by being less refined and by having less cohesion. It represents the material universe as unformed or devoid of qualities. The cosmic pneuma performs the same function in the cosmos as the human soul does in the body.

The fundamentals of Stoic cosmology were developed by the early Stoa and accepted by the later Stoics without much modification; this is due in large part to the fact that after Posidonius cosmological questions ceased to interest the Stoics. (See Michael Lapidge, "Stoic Cosmology," The Stoics, ed. J. M. Rist, [Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1978], pp. 162, 168.) Chrysippus seems to be the primary formulator of the pneuma doctrine (SVF II, 439-462). Plotinus must not have thought that individual differences among the Stoics were noteworthy, for he never refers to any Stoic by name. He seems to regard all their views as of one piece; i.e., each Stoic is recognized as a faithful representative of the whole school. (See Andreas Graeser, Plotinus and the Stoics, [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972], pp. 1-9.) Plotinus studies Stoic cosmology and considers several aporiai which pertain to their notion of mixture in II, 7 (37).

nevertheless each of the ingredients may still be in potency what it was before they combined.¹⁵

De Gen. I, 10, 327 b 22-26:

ἐπι

δ' ἐστὶ τὰ μὲν δυνάμει τὰ δ' ἐνεργείᾳ τῶν ὄντων, ἰνδέχεται τὰ μίχθῃσα εἶναι πως καὶ μὴ εἶναι, ἐνεργείᾳ μὲν εἴτερον ἴσως τῷ γιγνόμενῳ ἔξ αὐτῶν, δυνάμει δ' ἐπι ἐκατέρου ἄπερ ἦσαν πρὶν μίχθῃσαι, καὶ ἐκ ἀπολλωλότα

It is uncertain what kind of mixture or compound Aristotle has in mind in this passage, but it seems to be something like a chemical compound, say bronze, in which the result of the combination of components is qualitatively different from each of them.¹⁶ Aristotle employs energeia to express this difference. What he seems to be saying is this: since only that which is in act (energeia) genuinely is (einaí), and since only a separate or independent thing, whose nature is not absorbed or altered by another, is in act, then components of a mixture are only in potency.

¹⁵It is possible that Plotinus had this precise text in mind when wrote #1. We know he had read Alexander's De Miktione, which refers to this passage in Aristotle (see Graeser, ibid., pp. 1-9).

¹⁶Aristotle insists that a true mixture should be homogeneous. "If mixing has taken place, the mixture ought to be uniform throughout and just as any part of water is water, so it should be with mixture" (De Gen. 32 a 10-13). A gathering of grains of barley and wheat would clearly be an inferior type of mixture (synthesis) for it would lack homogeneity. In some mixtures there is not mutual assimilation. If one component is predominant in bulk, there will not be a mutual assimilation but a change of the lesser component into the greater. "A drop of wine does not mix with ten thousand measures of water, for its form (eidos) is dissolved and changes so as to become part of the total volume of water" (ibid., 328 a 27-29).

The insistence on homogeneity shows why he uses energeia/dynamis to explain the alteration of the natures of components in a mixture so as to constitute the nature of the mixture.

Only when separated out of the mixture are the components in act.

Keeping this text and similar passages in mind, we can understand more precisely what Aristotle means by energeia: it denotes whatever genuinely is or is real. In Aristotle this means an independent existent with a determinate nature, i.e., an ousia.¹⁷ This last term is often translated "substance," but it is better rendered in English as "entity," since "substance," as that word is generally understood, is only one sense of ousia for Aristotle.¹⁸ Now ousia may denote either the entity

The Stoics would object to this idea of mixture, preferring a different kind of mixture called krasis, in which every component remains in act. In such a mixture each component penetrates every other, regardless of the volume of the mixture or the greater bulk of any component. This interpenetration is complete, down to the minutest parts, each of which is occupied jointly by every other. Hereby, the nature of each component is unaltered.

For a lucid account of the differences between Aristotle and the Stoics on mixture see Samuel Sambursky, The Physics of the Stoics (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), esp., ch. 1.

¹⁷Metaphysics, Gamma 2, 1003 b 25-27.

¹⁸Ousia signifies being per se or in the primary sense. Aristotle uses it both logically and ontologically. Logically, ousia refers to that which is the subject of predication. This may be primary logical ousia, which is the individual thing (tode ti), the logical substrate (to hypokeimenon) serving as the subject of a proposition. Then again, ousia may be used in a secondary logical sense, referring to the genus or species ascribed to a thing. Also ontologically ousia has a primary and a secondary sense. Primary ontological ousia is the individual thing, denoting at once the eidos and the whole complex thing (tode ti), including its accidental forms. Secondary ousia is called ousia only by extrinsic denomination; i.e., not because it is an entity (tode ti) but because it is a real component of an entity and can be abstractly considered as separate. It refers to either the ontological "substrate," which may be prime matter (substrate of substantial form) or substance (substrate of accidental form). It is only in this latter secondary sense that ousia should be translated "substance."

For a helpful discussion of the best translation of ousia see Joseph Owens, The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics (1st ed.; Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1957), pp. 65-75; also an article by the same author: "Aristotle on Categories," Review of Metaphysics, 14 (1960), 73-90, esp., p.77.

itself, a concretized or individuated nature, or that by which it is an entity, namely, its form (eidōs)¹⁹ or essence (to ti en einai).²⁰ Hence we find Aristotle ascribing energeia not only to a concrete individual but also to eidōs²¹ and to to ti en einai.²² In each case energeia denotes whatever is real or causes something to be real. Energeia, then, for Aristotle means the reality of every existent.²³

Plotinus' appeal to Aristotle here is remarkably informative. For he indicates in his early writings both a familiarity with Aristotle's doctrine of energeia and a willingness to use it for his own philosophical purposes.

But Plotinus has not accepted Aristotle's understanding of energeia without qualification, and this caution is due to his different account of the nature of reality. He can accept that energeia signifies ousia, but if he is consistent with the rest of his metaphysics, he cannot apply it to the reality of every existent, e.g., the One. Why? Because in Plotinus' metaphysics not everything that is real is a being. Plotinus' metaphysics is not an ontology, where to be real is to be, but an henology, where to be real is to be one. In other words, reality is unity, not being. In an ontology such as Aristotle's, where to be real is to be and to be is primarily ousia, then energeia will apply to every existent, to anything real and most especially to his God, the Separate Intelligence,

¹⁹Metaphysics, Zeta 3, 1029 a 29-30.

²⁰Ibid., Zeta 7, 1017 b 21-22

²¹Ibid., Theta 8, 1050 b 2-3.

²²Ibid., Eta 3, 1043 b 1.

²³Ibid., Theta 3, 1047 a 1-2.

who is subsistent energeia. The following famous passage from the Metaphysics prove this:

If, then, the manner of God's being is as good as ours sometimes is, but eternally, then this is marvelous; and if it is better, this is still more marvelous; and the latter is the case. And life belongs to God, for the energeia of the intellect is life, and He is energeia; and His energeia is in virtue of itself a life which is the best and which is eternal. We say that God is living, eternal and the best; so life and constant duration and eternity belong to God, for this is God.

Meta. Lambda 7, 1072 b 25-30

ὡς ἡμεῖς ποτὲ ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ θαυμαστόν· εἰ δὲ μᾶλλον, ἐστὶ
θαυμασιώτερον. ἔχει δὲ ὡδὲ καὶ ζωὴ δὲ γε ὑπάρχει· ἡ
γὰρ τῷ ἐνέργεια ζωὴ, αὐαῖνος δὲ ἡ ἐνέργεια· ἐνέργεια δὲ ἡ
καθ' αὐτὸν αἰώνου ζωὴ ἀρίστη καὶ αἰδῖος. φημὲν δὲ τὸν
θεὸν εἶναι ζῶντα αἰδῖον ἄριστον, ὥστε ζωὴ καὶ αἰὼν συνεχεῖς
καὶ αἰδῖος ὑπάρχει τῷ θεῷ· τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ θεός.

But in Plotinus, when energeia signifies ousia, it will have a limited application, for beings (ousiai) occupy only part of reality.²⁴

²⁴Being presupposes form and determination. But the One, pure unity, is without form or determination. He transcends being. Hence, being is only part of reality. It signifies a partial falling away from reality because it is no longer sheer unity, but unity-in-multiplicity. The following sampling of texts stresses the primacy of unity in Plotinus' thought. In VI, 9, 1, 1, even being is based on unity, for what could be if it was not one? An army, flock, house and ship are each one and cease to be if they suffer disunity. In V, 5, 5, 11, as quantity must participate in number to exist, so being must share in unity. Being is a trace of the One. Indeed, it is probable that the word, "being" (to einai), is derived from the word, "one" (to hen). In VI, 6, 1, 1, evil is proportionate to multiplicity, with infinity being completely evil. In ibid., line 19, the universe is beautiful not because it has extension but because it has unity and, thus, does not fall away into infinity. See also VI, 2, 11, 17. (See also Leo Sweeney, S. J., "Basic Principles in Plotinus' Philosophy," Gregorianum 42 [1961], 506-516, esp., n. 17.)

An Actual Infinity is Impossible

In pointing to another difficulty with the Stoic theory of soul, Plotinus again draws on Aristotle (#2-#3). Plotinus argues that the Stoic theory of complete interpenetration of soul and body entails an absurd consequence, an actual infinity.²⁵ By rejecting the possibility of such a result he clearly follows the tradition of Aristotle, whose view on the matter is stated in the Metaphysics:

But also the infinite and the void and all similar things are said to exist in potency and in act in a different sense from that which applies to many other things, e.g., to that which sees or walks or is seen. For of the latter class these predicates can at some time be also truly asserted without qualification; for the seen is sometimes thus named because it is being seen. But the infinite does not exist potentially in the sense that it will ever have separate existence; it exists potentially only for knowledge. For the fact that the process of dividing never comes to an end ensures that the activity exists potentially, but not that the infinite exists separately.

Meta. Theta 6, 1048 b 9-17:

ἄλλως δὲ καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον
καὶ τὸ κινεῖν καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, λέγεται δυνάμει καὶ ἐν-
γεία πολλοῦ τῶν ἴστων, οἷον τῷ ὁρώτι καὶ βαδίζοντι καὶ
ὀρωμένῳ. ταῦτα μὲν γὰρ ἐνδέχεται καὶ ἀπλῶς ἀληθεύο-

²⁵Plotinus realizes a Stoic would protest against his argument (see above, #1) based on mixture (on grounds that the kind of mixture they speak of is krasis, the components of which remain in act) and therefore he takes up the possibility of complete interpenetration of soul and body in this next portion of the key text (#2-#3). He commonly writes as though in dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor, first addressing an issue, then following up with replies to likely objections. This type of question-and-answer dialogue is particularly noticeable in III, 8 (30) and VI, 7 (38). For an interesting discussion of Plotinus' style of writing, see R. T. Wallis, Neoplatonism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), pp. 42-43. Also see below, n. 42.

εἶναι ποτε· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὁρώμενον εἶ· ὁρᾶται, τὸ δ' ὅτι
 ὁρᾶσθαι δυνατόν· τὸ δ' ἄπειρον ἔχ' ἕτω δυνάμει εἰς ἃς
 ἐνεργείᾳ ἐσόμενον χωριστόν, ἀλλὰ γνώσει. τῷ γὰρ μὴ
 ὑπολείπειν τὴν διάρκειαν ἀποδίδωσι τὸ εἶναι δυνάμει ταύ-
 ταν τὴν ἐνέργειαν, τῷ δὲ χωρίζεσθαι οὐ.

In the Physics Aristotle again elaborates on the question of infinity at length and makes clear his reasons for denying that it can be actual. I will briefly summarize his reasoning.

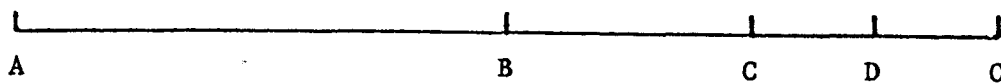
According to Aristotle, infinity can be a characteristic of quantity, motion and time. It belongs to the latter two, though, because of their relationship with the former: motion is infinite if the magnitude covered is somehow infinite and time is infinite only as a measure of an infinite motion. What, then, is apeiria when found in quantity? Basically it has to do with certain conditions of a line. Let AO be an actual line of definite length.

 A

O

Points terminate it at beginning and end and, thus, such a line is finite. Because of its definite dimensions, it can be measured, known and described. Its extension is related to the terminating points in somewhat the same way as matter to form, and the line is itself a composite, so to speak, of matter and form. Since perfection and actuality, no less than intelligibility, arise from the presence of form, AO is not only knowable but is perfect and actual as well. Consequently, the condition of finiteness in AO arises from its possession of definite dimensions and is aligned with perfection, actuality and knowledge.

But how is AO infinite? If AO is finite in so far as it has definite dimensions because of its initial and final terminating points, it is infinite inasmuch as it can be conceived without one or other of those terminations. Thus AO is infinite with respect to increase inasmuch as, no matter what its actual length may be, one can always imagine it as without its final point and thus as extending further. AO is also infinite with respect to decrease under certain conditions. Thus, no matter how small it actually becomes by its initial point receding towards its final one, one can always conceive it as smaller, provided that the recession through subtraction of parts takes place according to a fixed ratio. Thus, let AO be divided at B, C, D, etc. so that $AB=1/2 BO$, $CD=1/2 CO$ and so on.



The subtraction of AB, BC, etc. from AO can go on forever and some of AO will always be left. No matter how small that remaining part becomes one can conceive of it as still smaller because it too is similarly divisible. consequently, AO is infinite with respect to decrease when viewed without the initial point it actually has.

With what characteristics is such infinity connected? Finitude is, as previously suggested, lined with intelligibility, actuality and perfection because extension in a finite line is related to its terminal points as matter and form. Thus form is the source of knowableness, actuality and perfection. In contrast infinity is lined with a state of unintelligibility, mere potentiality and imperfection. An infinite line, precisely as infinite, is unknowable because it lacks definite dimensions and, thus, cannot be measured or described. Its infinity is merely a

potential condition since every line is actually finite because of its definite length, though it can be considered as subjected to an endless process of addition or division because of the very nature of quantity. An infinite line is imperfect when viewed as lacking the determinate dimensions it should and actually does have.²⁶

If the above is Aristotle's view of infinity, we are not surprised to find it agreeable to Plotinus, who holds that intelligibility presupposes form. Hence, Plotinus too must deny an actual infinity, at least for the realm of being.²⁷ Certainly throughout the rest of the Enneads he insists that quantity is only potentially infinite.²⁸

Plotinus is aware that the Stoics also accept Aristotle's view of infinity and, therefore, he knows that his argument against them is effective. They clearly could not tolerate such a serious charge of inconsistency.

The Priority Of The Superior To The Inferior As A Basic Principle Of
Plotinus' Philosophy.

Plotinus continues his assault on the Stoics (#4-#7). He here

²⁶This explanation of Aristotle on infinity has been drawn from L. Sweeney, S.J., Infinity in the Presocratics: A Bibliographical Study (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), pp. 120-121.

²⁷Here we are clearly referring to the universe of being, where there is form and intelligibility. It may be that the One, which transcends being, is infinite. For discussion of whether the One is infinite see: L. Sweeney, S. J., "Infinity in Plotinus," Gregorianum 38 (1957), 521-535 and 713-732. For a contrary view, see W. Norris Clarke, S.J., "Infinity in Plotinus: A Reply," Gregorianum 40 (1959), 75-98. For Sweeney's reply and reassessment, see "Plotinus Revisited," ibid., 40 (1959), 327-331; and "Another Interpretation of Enneads VI, 7, 32," The Modern Schoolman 38 (1961), 289-303.

²⁸See especially, VI, 6, 17, 1-3; 18, 1 ff.

takes up their doctrine on the generation of soul--that soul is the cosmic pneuma having undergone a certain change. One of the most striking features about his portion of the key text is Plotinus' constant shifting from the Stoics' position to his own interpretation of their position.²⁹ By presupposing his own position as the basis of his interpretation he could be charged with an unfair practice in his criticism.³⁰ But the text is still valuable for our purposes because Plotinus again furnishes information on energeia.

His criticism of the Stoics is basically this: they ask us to believe something absurd--namely, that the inferior (the cosmic pneuma) can produce the superior (psyche).³¹ This belief violates a basic truth about the relation of cause and effect. For something to produce another it must have all the perfections, in some way or other, which it transmits to its product. To deny this is to admit the possibility of something coming from nothing. This conviction about the superiority of cause to effect is essential to Plotinus' entire explanation of reality. It is, in fact, the third basic principle of his philosophy, and proceeds from prior principles.

What are these principles? The first we have already mentioned: "whatever is real is one." That is to say, to be real is to be one. Any

²⁹See n. 6a above.

³⁰The Stoics could argue that, because they subscribe to a materialist monism, every product of reality can be understood as not really distinct from its cause but as just a modification of it. Since every product is indistinct from its cause, the cause cannot be said to be superior or inferior.

³¹According to the Stoics, pneuma brings about both physis (the souls of plants) and psyche (the souls of animals). See above, n. 9.

item is real because of its unity. A fall into multiplicity is likewise a fall into unreality. So true is this that the more unified something is, the more real it is, with the result that what is totally simple is also the Primal Reality, namely, the One, the absolutely first and highest hypostasis.

The second principle inserts a dynamic aspect into Plotinus' universe, since it implies that whatever is genuinely real must by that very fact cause subsequent realities, which turn back to their source out of dependence upon it and desire for it. This principle, then, issues into his doctrines of procession (prohodos) and of reversion (epistrophe).

How can this second principle be formulated? Perhaps something like this: "Whatever is one, also is good." Obviously, this is an immediate sequel to his principle concerning unity, for that which is one not only is real but also is perfect and powerful. Now whatever is perfect and powerful automatically overflows and thereby produces another (but lesser) reality, which depends upon and tends back to its cause in love. Such is the twofold status which "good" signifies when predicated of an item--a reality and a unity in so far as it is both the source of subsequents and the term of their love and tendency.³² Further, the more

³²Plotinus frequently makes the following two points both in one and the same text and yet also separately: (1) what is perfect gives rise to products inevitably, spontaneously, automatically by reason of its very perfection and power and (2) each product turns back to its source because of desire and love. The following list includes examples of both kinds of texts: V, 4,(7), 1, 20s; V, 1, (10), 76, 5s; V, 2 (11), 1, 1s; II, 9 (33) 8, 10s; V, 3 (49), 11, 1s. Also see V, 1, (10), 1, 1s; V, 5 (32), 12, 1s: Desire for beauty is always conscious in humans; however, everything desires and aspires to the Good by a natural tendency and innate desire. Hence, the Good is prior to Beauty. Also: V, 7 (38), 20, 16s. and ibid., 21, 1s: The Good is also prior to Intelligence because everything seeks the Good and Intelligence is desirable only as a good. (See L. Sweeney, S.J., "Basic Principles in Plotinus' Philosophy," n. 18.)

unified something is, the more perfect and the more powerful it is, and the more aptly it can be designated as good. The result is that what is totally simple is also the Supreme Good. For as the ultimate source of absolutely all else and as the universal goal of all appetite, the One is also the Good.

Whatever is one, then, is also good--good to others by producing them automatically and necessarily, good for others as the object of their seeking.

If Plotinus' second basic principle grows out of his first, his third closely follows upon the second, since it is concerned with determining what relationships exist between the Good and its products or, more generally, between cause and effect or, even more generally, between what is prior and what is subsequent. How can it be expressed? Perhaps as follows: "Whatever is prior is of greater reality than that which is subsequent." That is to say, the relationship of prior/subsequent is simultaneously a relationship of higher/lower in actual values. For example, that which is prior is more unified, that which is subsequent is less so. What is prior is more perfect and powerful, what is subsequent is less so. The prior is independent, the subsequent is dependent.³³ Accordingly, that which is absolutely first is also pure unity, total perfection and power, complete autonomy. This is the highest hypostasis, the One and Good.³⁴

³³For instance, see II, 8 (30), 5, 13s; II, 6 (17), 1, 56s; V, 9 (5), 9, 13-14; VI, 9, (9), 6, 16s; V, 2 (11) 2, 1s.

³⁴In this discussion of the three basic principles in Plotinus' philosophy I have relied on Fr. Sweeney's article, "Basic Principles in Plotinus's Philosophy," pp. 511-512.

It is this third principle which according to Plotinus the Stoics violate. Hence, the portion #4-#7 of the key text is important because Plotinus here expresses the third principle as it is applied to the

A few words on the term "hypostasis" should also be added here. To understand what Plotinus means by "hypostasis" it is helpful to consult V, 1 (10) which Porphyry entitled, "On the Three Hypostases." There Plotinus discusses the Soul, the Intelligence and the One as hypostases. In this treatise it is clear that "hypostasis" refers to an existent which is the ground or source of its own reality because of its great unity and therefore is the ground and source of its own great perfection and power. In his article, "Some Logical Aspects of the Concept Hypostasis in Plotinus," The Review of Metaphysics 31 (1978), p. 258, n. 2, John Anton has identified four basic features of an hypostasis: (1) as power an hypostasis is infinite and non-spatial (VI 3, 8, 35 ff.; VI, 9, 6, 10-12); (2) as unaffected by what it produces an hypostasis is "undiminished giving," suffering no diminution in its reality (III, 8, 8, 46-48 and 10, 1-19); (3) as independent an hypostasis produces without inclination, will or movement (V, 1, 6, 25-27; V, 3, 12, 20-29); (4) as transcendent an hypostasis has no knowledge of its products; the One as hypostasis transcends knowledge altogether (VI, 7, 39, 19-33); the lower hypostases know only the causal principles they contain within themselves (IV, 4, 9, 16-18; V, 8, 3, 26-27). For more information on the meaning and history of the term see Heinrich Dörrie, "Hypostasis: Wort und Bedeutungsgeschichte," Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen (1955), pp. 35-92, esp., pp. 68-74. Also see R. T. Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 62-63.

As to the exact number of the hypostases some scholars have argued that there are more than three. A. H. Armstrong, for example, in his Architecture of the Intelligible World in the Philosophy of Plotinus (Cambridge University Press, 1940), p. 102, maintains that there are five hypostases: One, Intelligence, Soul, Logos and Nature. But most scholars, e.g., Rist, Deck, Anton and Wallis, deny that Nature and Logos are hypostases. They refuse Nature mainly on grounds that it is not mentioned in either V, 1 or II, 9, where Plotinus devotes special attention to the hypostases. As for Logos the consensus follows Wallis, who, relying on II, 9, 1, 57-63, concludes: "Logos is not a separate Hypostasis but expresses the relation of an Hypostasis to its source, its products, or both" (Neoplatonism, p. 68). In this study I accept Wallis' judgment to Logos but hold that Nature is an hypostasis. Despite its omission from V, 1 and II, 9 Nature manifests those attributes defining a hypostasis tabulated by Anton above. In several treatises, especially, III, 8 (30), Nature is described as an eternal and productive ousia, undiminished in production; for this reason it may be counted among the hypostases.

Anton (art. cit., p. 259 ff.) insists that the One is an hypostasis—indeed, the hypostasis par excellence, protē hypostasis (VI, 8, 15, 30). But Deck, in his book, Nature, Contemplation and the One: A Study in the Philosophy of Plotinus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), takes exception arguing that labeling the One an hypostasis too rigidly

order of beings, in terms of energeia/dynamis:³⁵ whatever is in potency (capable of being produced) requires something in act (something already a being) to produce it (bring it into act). His formulation of this principle of the priority of act to potency follows perfectly Aristotle's Metaphysics.³⁶

The priority of higher to lower in Plotinus' philosophy can generally be explained by his doctrines of logos and of contemplation.

What is a logos? The word appears many times in Plotinus' writings but it is never adequately described.³⁷ He seems to mean this: logos is

describes Him in terms of being. Deck's caution is understandable. But as long as one does not identify hypostasis or productive reality purely with the productivity of ousia, it seems permissible to judge the One an hypostasis. This seems especially sound given that the One satisfies perfectly the four characteristics of an hypostasis outlined by Anton.

³⁵Strictly speaking, when Plotinus formulates this third principle in Text A in terms of act and potency, he formulates it only as it applies to the order of beings. In other words, he probably does not mean to say that the ultimate or first principle of all reality is energeia, only that what is first in being is energeia. We elaborate on this point below.

³⁶Metaphysics, Theta 8. In this chapter Aristotle identifies several ways in which energeia is prior to dynamis. It is prior logically since "being capable of something" is more complex than "being something." But it is also prior ontologically. Something is in potency only if it can become something in act, but this it can do only if something in act, something already real, is there to bring it to act.

The remainder of book Theta makes it clear that the science of metaphysics depends on the priority of act to potency in order to understand the relationship of all beings to their ultimate causes: e.g., the relationship of matter to form and the sensible universe of motion to the eternal and separate Intelligences. This priority is essential to Aristotle's teleological view of reality, in which the ultimate explanation of things lies in the ends which they subserve, i.e., their final causes. But energeia is the end to which dynamis points, and not the converse.

³⁷Donald Gelpi, in his article, "The Plotinian Logos doctrine," Modern Schoolman 37 (1959-60), p. 315, has tried to remedy this deficiency. He defines logos as "an active power identical with the being of the hypostasis in which it exists and ordered to the production of some reality lower than itself." Furthermore, "the lower reality which it

a higher hypostasis present on a lower level.³⁸ For example, the Intelligence is the One as present on a lower level and hence is the logos of the One. The Soul is the Intelligence on a lower level and thus is the logos of the Intelligence. Nature is the Soul on a lower level and therefore is the logos of the soul. Accordingly, every logos relates to two levels of reality. The Soul relates to Nature below (Nature is the logos of Soul) and to Intelligence above (Soul is the logos of Intelligence); Nature to Soul above and to sensible things below; Intelligence to the One above and to Soul below.

Obviously, the relationship of the higher to the lower is in terms of logos. But this relationship is further clarified by Plotinus' position on contemplation--a doctrine which is suggested in the text (#7-#8) when he refers to the need of the inferior (the produced) to "gaze upon" (contemplate) the superior or source (that which is in act).

The Intelligence is brought into being by the overflowing of the Perfect One. In the first moment of this procession, the Intelligence is unformed, indeterminate and dynamis,³⁹ but it turns back out of desire

produces will always be another logos of an inferior nature, except in the case of the final logoi. The final logoi are the logoi of sensible form. Since sensible form does not produce any other being, the logoi of sensible form terminate the process of universal emanation."

³⁸The following are informative texts on logos: I, 6, 2, 15-28; IV, 7, 3, 31-32; 4, 14-22; III, 1, 7, 1-4; V, 9, 3, 11-37; 5, 23-26; IV, 8, 6, 1-16; V, 1, 3, 4-16.

(To isolate these text I have consulted two works on Plotinus: The first, J. H. Sleeman and Gilbert Pollet, Lexicon Plotinianum, [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980], pp. 601-613; and the second Donald Gelpi, Logos as a Cosmological Principle in Plotinus, [Unpublished Master's Thesis, St. Louis University, 1958], pp. 28-30.)

³⁹This indeterminate stage is also called "Intelligible Matter" by Plotinus (see II, 4, 5, 24-37; III, 8, 11, 1-8). R. T. Wallis briefly explains this analogous use of the term "matter": "His [Plotinus']

for the Good and is formed, determinate and energeia (#7). The Intelligence is unable to apprehend the One in the latter's full perfection; it therefore fragments its understanding of the One into a world of forms, which are the objects of its own consciousness. Hence, the Intelligence contemplates the One by also contemplating itself. It is both knower and known. But Intelligence is also superabundant in perfection; it too overflows. This overflow also is unformed, indeterminate and dynamis and, by turning back to gaze upon the Intelligence, the overflow becomes formed, determinate and is energeia. This overflow is the Soul. The emergence of energeiai out of dynamis through contemplation is repeated again and again as beings overflow until at last being and perfection are exhausted.⁴⁰

justification lies in Aristotle's description of the soul's cognitive powers as 'matter' for the forms they receive (though the term 'intelligible matter' had already been used by Aristotle in quite another sense; cf. Met. Z, 10, 1036 a 9-10; Z, 11, 1037 a 4-5; H, 6, 1045 a 34-6). Why matter must be postulated in the Intelligible world is explained in the early chapters of the treatise II, 4, where Plotinus is careful to stress that it is free from the imperfections of its sensible counterpart; while both constitute the principle of indeterminacy within their respective worlds, Intelligible Matter does not share sensible matter's unsubstantiality and, of course, should not be regarded as evil (II, 4, 5, 12-23; 15, 1728; II, 5, 3, 8-19)" (Neoplatonism), p. 66).

⁴⁰The dynamic relationship of the contemplated and the contemplator in regard to the hypostases is expressed in V, 2 (11), 1, 5-22:

Because nothing is in [the One], everything comes from It. And so that being may be produced, It is itself not a being. And This is the first producer of being. For being perfect, searching after nothing, lacking nothing, needing nothing, It overflows and its overflow makes another. And this product turns back to It and is filled and is Its contemplator and this is Intelligence. Since it halts and turns toward the One that it may see, it becomes at once Intelligence and Being. Since, therefore, [the Intelligence] is in this relation to the One, in order to know the One Intelligence

One final comment on chapter 8³ (#4-#8). To what extent does Plotinus' commitment to the Aristotelian doctrine of the priority of act to potency affect his view of the One? It would appear that Plotinus

is produced and is the same as being. This [Intelligence], then, is like the One and produces in the same way, pouring out much and powerfully--and from this comes forth a form--which in turn overflows as did the prior. And this product out of being is the act of Soul, which remains as a being itself.

The Intelligence in remaining itself is the prior producer. But the Soul makes [something] without remaining fixed, but it makes an image by moving. And since by contemplating Soul was produced, so it overflows bringing forth from its its movement another, and this product is an image of it and is sensible and is Nature.

Ἡ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ, διὰ τοῦτο ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντα, καὶ ἵνα τὸ ὄν ᾗ, διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς οὐκ ὄν, γεννητῆς δὲ αὐτοῦ· καὶ πρώτη οἶον γέννησις αὕτη· ὄν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν μηδὲ δεῖσθαι οἶον ὑπερρρῦη καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλήρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο· τὸ δὲ γενόμενον εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς οὗτος. Καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄν ἐποίησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν. Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔσθη πρὸς αὐτό, ἵνα ἴδῃ, ὁμοῦ νοῦς γίγνεται καὶ ὄν. Οὗτος οὖν ὢν οἶον ἐκεῖνος τὰ ὅμοια ποιεῖ δύναμιν προχέας πολλήν — εἶδος δὲ καὶ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ — ὥσπερ αὖ τὸ αὐτοῦ πρότερον προέχεε· καὶ αὕτη ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς τοῦτο μένοντος ἐκείνου γενομένη· καὶ γὰρ ὁ νοῦς μένοντος τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο. Ἡ δὲ οὐ μένουσα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κινηθεῖσα ἐγέννα εἰδωλον. Ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα, ὅθεν ἐγένετο, πληροῦται, προελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς κίνησιν ἄλλην καὶ ἐναντίαν γεννᾷ εἰδωλον αὐτῆς αἰσθησιν καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς.

does not intend to apply energeia to the absolutely first principle. In other words, the priority of energeia to dynamis correctly applies only to the order of beings. This, of course, accords perfectly with our prior conclusion that energeia signifies ousia or being. In the case of Aristotle, where to be real is the same as to be, there is no difficulty in ascribing energeia to every existent. Energeia would apply especially to God, who is the supreme being, perfect ousia. But in Plotinus, where to be real is to be one, energeia has a limited application. It should not be used to describe the One (=God), for He is supremely real but not a being (epekeina tēs ousias).⁴¹ Of course, these remarks assume that Plotinus' use of energeia is consistent with the rest of his philosophy, but we can only be certain of such consistency upon completing this study.⁴²

The Soul Is Not An Entelecheia Of The Body But Is An Ousia

In chapter 84 (#9) Plotinus reminds us (by recapitulating Plato's arguments against the Pythagoreans) that it is the Platonic theory of soul which he aims to defend in the treatise. Even though he has used Aristotle's arguments occasionally in the treatise, he is satisfied only with Plato's theory. Chapter 84 prepares us for 85 in which Aristotle's theory of soul is explicitly criticized.

The first 40 lines of chapter 85 are a series of arguments against

⁴¹Plato, Republic, 509 b; Plotinus, V, 4, 9-10.

⁴²Certain treatises appear contradictory about whether energeia should be ascribed to the One. In I, 7 (54) Plotinus says the One transcends energeia; in VI, 8 (39), V, 3 (49) and perhaps (implicitly) V, 4 (7), the One is energeia. We will postpone discussion of this question until we take up these treatises.

Aristotle's view of the soul as the entelecheia or form of the body. These criticisms reveal something very important: Plotinus does not regard energeia and entelecheia as synonyms. He clearly conceives entelecheia as exclusively connected with Aristotle's theory of soul and not to be confused with energeia, which, Plotinus believes, 'applies more generally to all philosophy and is a basically satisfactory doctrine.'⁴³

Against Aristotle, Plotinus defends a Platonic theory of soul, in which soul is an independent existent, transcending all things physical. For Plotinus soul is a true ousia and thus is unlike the soul of Aristotelian philosophy. The human soul is a true ousia by virtue of its ultimate dependence on and identity with the hypostasis Soul. Aristotle's soul is ousia only in a limited sense. Both Plotinus and Aristotle agree in calling soul ousia and, hence, energeia, but the former denies that the soul is in act only as the form of the body. No, soul is an independent being without need of body. The human soul is the manifestation of and logos of the hypostasis Soul, which, as Plotinus says later, "is one nature which lives in act" (IV, 7, 11, 17-18: ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐστὶ μία φύσις ἐνεργείᾳ ζῶσα.

⁴³Only once does Plotinus use entelecheia in a way synonymous with energeia: IV, 2, (4), 1, 3. He appears consciously to avoid using entelecheia at all in later treatises. For a detailed discussion of Plotinus' criticism of the Aristotelian doctrine of entelecheia and of his aversion to the term in his own writings, see G. Bruni, "Note di polemica neplatonica contro l'uso e il significato del termine entelecheia," Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana, 39 (1960), 205-236; and G. Verbeke, "Les Critiques de Plotin contra l'entéléchisme d'Aristote: Essai "d'interprétation de l'Enneads, IV, 7, 8, 5," in Philomathes, Studies and Essays in Memory of Philip Merlan (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 194-222.

Plotinus' final words in the key text invoke again his logos doctrine (#10) and thus explain his fuller meaning for ousia, energeia and Soul. By being a logos of Intelligence, Soul is a kind of being, since it is a one-in-many; i.e., Soul is Intelligence (with which the whole universe of being is really identical) as present on a lower level. Yet the Soul must overflow so as to produce subsequent beings; hence, it too contains the universe of being in its own way; it is just a lower instance of the multiplicity-in-unity of Intelligence.⁴⁴

By being the Intelligence on a lower level, Soul participates in being and thus in Intelligence; it is the logos of Intelligence. Here we have a case of Plotinus taking over an important Platonic doctrine and adapting it to his own purposes. But his is a more literal sense of participation. A lower reality participates in a higher not because it has or shares in the higher reality's perfection, but because it really is that higher reality on a lower level.⁴⁵

⁴⁴In III, 7 (45), 11, Plotinus contrasts Intelligence and Soul in terms of eternity and time:

Instead of being [an unbounded] eternal whole, [the Soul] is a continuous unbounded succession, and instead of [being] a whole all together, a whole which always will be, it comes into being part by part. For this is the way it will imitate that which is already a whole, already all together and unbounded, by intending to be always making an increase in its being, for this is how its being will imitate the being of the intelligible world (lines 54-58).

⁴⁵Plato's theory of participation, certainly as presented in the Phaedo 100 b-102 d, is based on three principles or factors: (1) the Form itself, e.g., Tallness or Beauty; (2) the perfection immanent in a thing, e.g., tallness or beauty; (3) the thing or participant itself. The second factor, which may be called the "immanent" or "participated perfection," is very important since its mediation between the Form and the participant enables the Form itself to remain unaffected. This view

By participating in being, by being Intelligence on a lower level, Soul is an authentic ousia, and, most importantly, an energeia.

Summary and Conclusions

We will now summarize the information Plotinus conveys on energeia in our first key text. The opening passage (#1), in which he criticizes the Stoic view that soul is mixed with body, is especially fruitful, for it indicates what he intends energeia primarily to signify. This meaning is implied in his discussion of the alteration of the nature of a component in a mixture. If a component loses its einai, i.e., what it is and should be, then it is no longer in act. By being linked with einai, energeia must denote an individual determinate nature, in a word, an entity (ousia).

He next shows (#2-#3) that the Stoic doctrine of complete interpenetration of soul and body entails an actual infinity. He is apparently convinced that if the soul completely interpenetrated the body, it would be present simultaneously to an infinity of bodily parts; hence, soul would be actually infinite. His denial of an actual infinity no doubt follows from the conviction (which he shares with Plato and Aristotle) that being (form or determinateness) implies limit.

Thirdly, Plotinus employs energeia in formulating for the order of beings the third of his three basic metaphysical principles, namely that something posterior in reality or perfection depends on another which is already perfected, i.e., which has its own nature (einai: see line 18 of

of participation is based on a dualism between a world of transcendent forms and sensible particulars. Plotinus' doctrine differs because it is adapted to a monism, where reality is one and participation is used to explain how this One nonetheless pluralized itself on diminishing levels of reality.

g3). Accordingly, since energeia denotes the perfected nature of a being, then the priority of the superior to the inferior among the universe of beings is the priority of something in act to something in potency. Thus, the priority of energeia to dynamis is central to Plotinus' account of the dynamic relationship between posterior, imperfect beings and the ultimate beings. We must, of course, forbid that Plotinus intends the priority of energeia to apply to every level of reality, for, it would appear, that the One, by transcending being (ousia), transcends energeia, and thus could be called energeia only by extrinsic denomination.

Fourthly, Plotinus' rejection of Aristotle's theory of soul implies that he separated entelecheia from the doctrine of energeia. In Aristotle the value of the term entelecheia is totally dependent on the worth of his psychology; hence, it is to be dismissed with that psychology. For Plotinus energeia is a doctrine having a far wider application than just the soul.

Fifthly, from the fact that energeia refers to a complete, perfected nature, which is also an ousia, we can infer that Plotinus intends Soul to be an energeia. The Soul warrants this description by virtue of its participating in the highest ousia, the Intelligence--that being which is itself identical with all being. Hence, by participating in Intelligence, the Soul is the Intelligence, but on a more imperfect (less unified) level of reality.

What should we say by way of some final reflections? Our most important finding has been that Plotinus in IV, 7 implicitly agrees with Aristotle on certain basic matters pertaining to energeia. The precise extent of this agreement is difficult to determine because Plotinus uses energeia for mainly negative or polemical purposes in Text A. It will be

easier in later treatises, where he addresses the issue formally and explicitly (especially in II, 5, which is Text C), to ascertain the depth of his commitment to Aristotle on energeia. But regardless of the limitations of this present text, it is evident that he concurs with Aristotle at least on the following points: (1) that energeia designates ousia (#1); (2) that an actual infinity is impossible (#2-#3); (3) that act is prior to potency (#6-#7); (4) that soul is act (even though Plotinus denies it is entelecheia; #9-#10).

But even at this early stage in our study, it is clear on two counts that Plotinus certainly does not follow Aristotle blindly or after the fashion of a disciple. First, if he did accept Aristotle uncritically, he would accept entelecheia as equivalent to energeia. Secondly, he exhibits a willingness even in this largely polemical treatise to fashion and adapt energeia to his own philosophical position. For example, we find him using energeia (#4-#8) to explain the priority of supreme realities, not because motion of lower realities requires such priority but because the imperfections of lower realities require prior and more perfect existents. Despite his debt to Aristotle on energeia, then, Plotinus is not simply an Aristotelian metaphysician. He relates to Aristotle just as he does to Plato on countless other issues. He respects their views because he esteems the philosophical tradition, but mainly as an inspiration, rather than as a substitute, for his own philosophy.⁴⁶

⁴⁶A. H. Armstrong expresses well the sincerity and honesty which characterize the Plotinian philosophy: "He starts by reflecting on his experience and trying to clarify it. In doing this his respect for tradition leads him naturally to seek help from the ancient philosophers, but he is never satisfied simply to repeat their statements; they are for him helps to further reflection leading to clearer understanding" (Plotinus, Vol. III, pp. 296-297, n. 1).

TEXT B: ENNEAD V, 4 (7), 2

Our next key text is taken from the seventh treatise that Plotinus wrote and is entitled "How That which is after the First comes from the First; and about the One." In order to introduce this text, let us briefly note the treatises between our preceding key text (IV, 7 [2]) and V, 4, 2. After taking up the question of the Soul's immortality in IV, 7, Plotinus next investigates Destiny (III, 1 [3]). The subsequent treatise (IV, 2 [4]) concentrates exclusively on Soul: "On the Essence of the Soul." Treatise five is entitled "On Intellect, the Forms and Being" (V, 9 [5]). In this latter, an important treatise, he discusses the nature of the Intelligence and its relation to the lower hypostasis, Soul. Here he describes the Intelligence as a one-in-many, a universe of Forms, each of which is identical with every other, each a knower and an object known. In the last of the intervening treatises, Plotinus treats of the relation of Soul to the physical world: "On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies" (IV, 8 [6]).

Treatise V, 4 (7), which contains our key text, is divided into two chapters. Chapter One makes the following relevant points. The One is the first and the source of all else (line 8). The very reality of the One is to be one. Yet the One transcends being (ousia) and therefore transcends language and knowledge (lines 9-10). Because He is the Primal Reality, the One is necessarily simple (lines 12-15). He is unique and by no means a body (lines 16-21). The product of this First Existent is a one-in-many and is produced out of necessity, not chance (line 21-26).

The One is all-perfect and all-powerful (pantōn ton ontōn dynatōtaton; lines 23-26).

Plotinus next proceeds inductively by turning to the world of sensibles. Whenever sensible things achieve perfection, he notes, they produce others (lines 27-34). How much more, then, should the One produce others out of His perfection (lines 34-36). He produces because He is without jealousy¹ and is all-powerful. Because He is perfect, He must produce (lines 36-39). His first product, the second of all existents, is, like the One, perfect and powerful; nonetheless, this second of all existents is less powerful than the One, although it is more so than all subsequent realities (lines 39-41).

Chapter Two, which is our key text, opens with an objection: if the Intelligence (the second existent) has such great perfection, why is not its Producer Himself an Intelligence? Plotinus answers in the remainder of the key text.

Key Text

"[1] If therefore the producer were itself intelligence, that which comes after would be inferior to intelligence, but it ought to be linked with intelligence and be like intelligence. But since the producer is beyond intelligence, its product must be Intelligence.

¹Plotinus undoubtedly has the Timaeus (29 e) in mind here, where Plato describes the maker of the world as good and therefore free of envy:

Ἄγαθος ἦν, ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδείς
 περιουδενός οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἕκτος
 ὅτι πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια
 ἑαυτῷ.

"[2] But why is the producer not intelligence, whose energeia is intellection? Intellection looks at the Intelligible which is the One as contemplated and turns toward it and, itself indeterminate (because it is like a seeing), it is (so to speak) perfected and is made determined by the Intelligible. [3] Consequently, it has been said the 'Forms and numbers are constituted by the indefinite dyad and the One,' which Forms and numbers are the Intelligence.

"[4] Accordingly, Intelligence is not simple but is a many and manifests composition; it is indeed an intelligible but is already a vision of multiplicity. Hence, it is itself an intelligible, but it is also intellection. Hence, it is by nature twofold. (There is another intelligible after it, too.)"

V, 4, 2, 1-12:

Εἰ μὲν οὖν αὐτὸ νοῦς ἦν τὸ γεννῶν, νοῦ ἐνδεέστερον, προσεχέστερον δὲ τῷ καὶ ὁμοιον δεῖ εἶναι· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐπέκεινα νοῦ τὸ γεννῶν, νοῦν εἶναι ἀνάγκη. Διὰ τί δὲ οὐ νοῦς, οὐ ἐνέργειά ἐστι νόησις; Νόησις δὲ τὸ νοητὸν ὁρῶσα καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐπιστραφεῖσα καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνου οἶον ἀποτελουμένη καὶ τελειομένη ἀόριστος μὲν αὕτη ὡσπερ ὄψις, ὀριζομένη δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ. Διὸ καὶ εἴρηται· ἐκ τῆς ἀορίστου δυνάδος καὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς τὰ εἶδη καὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί· τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ νοῦς. Διὸ οὐχ ἀπλοῦς, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ, σύνθεσιν τε ἐμφαίνων, νοητὴν μέντοι, καὶ πολλὰ ὁρῶν ἤδη. Ἔστι μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς νοητὸν, ἀλλὰ καὶ νοῶν· διὸ δύο ἤδη. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλο τῷ μετ' αὐτὸ νοητὸν.

"[5] But how does this Intelligence come from the Intelligible [=the One]? [In this way:] the Intelligible remains in Itself and is not in want, as is that which sees and thinks [=the Intelligence]—that which thinks is in want as related to the Intelligible. [6] The Intelligible [the One] is not in such a way as to be without perception but It has everything in and with Itself, while totally discerning Itself: life is in It, as well as everything [else], and its katanoēsis of Itself by a sort of synaisthēsis [a kind of self-perception through, with or by means of another] is Itself and consists in an eternal repose and intellection other than that of the Intelligence [i.e., an intellection which is not entirely reducible to or equivalent to the contents of the noēsis of the second hypostasis]."2

2, 12-19:

Ἄλλὰ πῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ ὁ νοῦς οὗτος; Τὸ νοητὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένον καὶ οὐκ ὄν ἐνδεές, ὡσπερ τὸ ὄρων καὶ τὸ νοοῦν — ἐνδεές δὲ λέγω τὸ νοοῦν ὡς πρὸς ἐκεῖνο — οὐκ ἔστιν οἷον ἀναίσθητον, ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ, πάντα διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ, ζωὴ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἡ κατανόησις αὐτοῦ αὐτὸ οἶονεὶ συναίσθησει οὕσα ἐν στάσει αἰδίῳ καὶ νοήσει ἐτέρως ἢ κατὰ τὴν νοῦ νόησιν.

2Since the precise meanings of the terms katanoēsis and synaisthēsis are difficult to discern in this passage, I have chosen to merely transliterate them, indicating in brackets and in our comments later what the expressions may mean.

"[7] Accordingly, if a product occurs while It [the One as intelligible] remains in repose within Itself, the product is generated from the One whenever It [the One] has to the highest degree what the product is. Hence, the product comes out of It [the One as Intelligible] when the Latter retains Its own proper character; because It remains true to Itself, the product occurs. When It remains the intelligible, the product becomes intellection.

"[8] Since the product is intellection and since it is an intellection of its source (for it has no other source), the Intelligence comes to be and is different to some extent from the intelligible [the One], and yet to some extent is that intelligible and is Its likeness and image."

2, 19-26:

Εἴ τι οὖν μένοντος αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ γίνεται, ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦτο γίνεται, ὅταν ἐκεῖνο μάλιστα ἦ ὁ ἔστι. Μένοντος οὖν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ οἰκείῳ ἤθει ἐξ αὐτοῦ μὲν τὸ γινόμενον γίνεται, μένοντος δὲ γίνεται. Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐκεῖνο μένει νοητὸν, τὸ γινόμενον γίνεται νόησις· νόησις δὲ οὕσα καὶ νοοῦσα ἀφ' οὗ ἐγένετο — ἄλλο γὰρ οὐκ ἔχει — νοῦς γίγνεται, ἄλλο οἶον νοητὸν καὶ οἶον ἐκεῖνο καὶ μίμημα καὶ εἶδωλον ἐκείνου.

"[9] But how does it arise if That remains immobile? It arises as an energeia. Now energeia is either that 'of' an entity or that 'from' an entity. The energeia which is 'of' an entity is that which each entity itself is as energeia. The energeia which is 'from' that entity and which must, in every case, follow necessarily from the entity is other than it. [10] Take fire as an example: there is a heat which constitutes the entity of fire and a heat which comes immediately from the fire because the fire acts according to the nature of its entity by retaining its constitution as fire.

"[11] The same situation is found There. [The One] remains in His own proper nature even more forcefully [than does fire], but from the perfection which is in Him and from the energeia which is present to Him [with and through the Intelligence]³ an energeia comes about which achieves an hypostasis [=the Intelligence], which thereby achieves being and entity from a power which is great--indeed, the greatest of all--and all else is Its effect. [12] If all existents are this [namely, an effect of the One], That is beyond all and thus is beyond entity. Indeed, if all existents are Its product, the One is prior to all and has no equal among all those existents and for that reason It is beyond the very being of entity."⁴

2, 26-42:

Ἄλλὰ πῶς μένοντος ἐκείνου γίνεται ;
 Ἐνέργεια ἢ μὲν ἐστὶ τῆς οὐσίας, ἢ δ' ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐκάσ-
 του· καὶ ἢ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας αὐτό ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια ἕκαστον,
 ἢ δὲ ἀπ' ἐκείνης, ἣν δεῖ παντὶ ἔπεσθαι ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐτέραν
 οὐσαν αὐτοῦ· οἷον καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρὸς ἢ μὲν τίς ἐστὶ συμ-
 πληροῦσα τὴν οὐσίαν θερμότης, ἢ δὲ ἀπ' ἐκείνης ἤδη γινο-
 μένη ἐνεργοῦντος ἐκείνου τὴν σύμφυτον τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἐν τῷ
 μένειν πῦρ. Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐκεῖ· καὶ πολὺ πρότερον ἐκεῖ μένον-
 τος αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐκείῳ ἦθει ἐκ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ τελειό-
 τητος καὶ συνοῦσης ἐνεργείας ἢ γεννηθεῖσα ἐνέργεια ὑπό-
 στασιν λαβοῦσα, ἄτε ἐκ μεγάλης δυνάμεως, μεγίστης μὲν
 οὖν ἀπασῶν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι καὶ οὐσίαν ἦλθεν· ἐκεῖνο γὰρ
 ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας ἦν. Καὶ ἐκεῖνο μὲν δύναμις πάντων,
 τὸ δὲ ἤδη τὰ πάντα. Εἰ δὲ τοῦτο τὰ πάντα, ἐκεῖνο ἐπέκεινα
 τῶν πάντων· ἐπέκεινα ἄρα οὐσίας· καὶ εἰ τὰ πάντα, πρὸ
 δὲ πάντων τὸ ἐν οὐ τὸ ἴσον ἔχον τοῖς πᾶσι, καὶ ταύτῃ δεῖ
 ἐπέκεινα εἶναι τῆς οὐσίας.

³This energeia, which in the couplet-language of Text B (see #9) is equivalent to the energeia "of" the entity, cannot be found in the One Himself, who is above being and entity (#12) and is thereby above energeia. (See below our comments on katanoēsis and synaisthēsis and our comments on the two kinds of energeia.)

⁴The remainder of V, 4, 2 contains no remarks particularly relevant to energeia. Hence, we omit them from our translation.

Comments

Let us observe the procedure we followed in studying Text A and outline the movement of thought in our present key text.

Why, Plotinus asks at the beginning of Text B, is the Producer Himself not an Intelligence? His answer begins with the third line of the Text.

a. If the Producer were the Intelligence, His product could not be an intelligence, which would thus be too imperfect to be the first product and the second existent. No, the Producer transcends Intelligence and its product can accordingly be Intelligence (#1).

b. But someone might still object: the energeia of Intelligence is so great that the Producer should also be an Intelligence. [Plotinus refuses to concede but begins to explain what Intelligence really involves:] Even though intellection is the energeia of Intelligence, the second hypostasis is subordinated to the One which serves as the Intelligible to which the Intelligence turns and which it contemplates. Thereby, its original state of indetermination becomes determined and it is perfected by the One and becomes Intelligence (#2); the latter's content is the Forms and Numbers which, as Plato is supposed to have said, "are constituted by the indefinite dyad and the One" (#3). Hence, the Intelligence is not simple but entails multiplicity and composition [which also is an object of its knowledge and thus] it itself is an intelligible as well as an intelligence. Hence, Intelligence by nature involves duality (#4).

c. The One is absolutely simple [see V, 4, 1, paraphrased above in the context to this key text], but He has a kind of knowledge with and

through the Intelligence, which is knowing per se. Accordingly, the One has knowledge through "mediation," i.e., through the knowledge of His first product, the Nous. Since the Nous is the universe of life and everything else, the One can be said to encompass life and everything through "mediation," i.e., through His producing and conserving the powers and energeiai of Nous. The One's knowledge is a katanoēsis or synaisthēsis, a knowledge through or with or by means of another, namely, His logos, the Nous. While the One's knowledge is through or by means of the Nous, its knowledge and eternal repose is distinct from that of the Intelligence, for the noēsis of the latter, i.e., Nous as thinking independently and not as instrument of the One, does not involve the One's self-perception (#6).

d. But how does the Intelligence come from the Intelligible which is the One? In this way: the One lacks nothing (although the Intelligence is in partial need because of its way of thinking; #5) and produces simply by remaining at rest with Himself, by retaining His own proper characteristics and reality. Consequently, the One persists as an intelligible and His product comes about as an intellection (#7). As intellection and as contemplating the One (see #2), the product became Intelligence, which to some degree differs from and yet is the One and His likeness and image (#8).

e. [Having rooted the origin of the Intelligence in the One's immutability and self-persistence, Plotinus now inquires how, since production appears to connote change in the producer,] Intelligence can arise if the One remains immobile. The answer: because the Intelligence is an energeia (see #2). Now, energeia is of two sorts: that constitutive "of" entity as act; secondly, that issuing "form" an entity and constitu-

tive of some other entity (#9). For example, the heat of fire itself is an energeia constituting that fire; whereas the heat [of the water in the pan on the flame] which the fire of itself naturally gives off is an energeia, and yet the fire persists as fire (#10).

f. Production out of the One may be said to involve a similar twofold energeia. The One may even be described as an energeia "of" an ousia, provided that one understands such energeia to be ascribed through "mediation". Accordingly, the energeia "from" the One, that is the single energeia which constitutes the entity of the Intelligence, may also be described as though it were in fact the energeia of the One, an energeia the One would have if It did not transcend being. Thus, the energeia "of" the ousia, which belongs to the One through mediation, is the same as the energeia "from" the ousia, which is the completed second hypostasis, the universe of einai and ousia (#11).

g. Intelligence and all other subsequent existents (see #2) are products of the One, because they are energeiai from Him (#11). The One thereby transcends all of them (none of which is its equal) and thus transcends being also. In fact, the One is beyond the very being of entity (#12).

The following issues in this key text require clarification and comments: the energeia of the Intelligence (i.e., its noēsis; #2); the Intelligence fashioning itself by turning back and gazing on the One (its overflow is in two moments: in the first the overflow is indeterminate and is equivalent to the Indefinite Dyad of Plato's "Unwritten Doctrines"; in the second it is determined and perfected by the One--i.e., the overflow acquires content: the Forms and Numbers of Plato; #2-#3); the One's self-knowledge: katanoēsis or synaisthēsis (#6); the nature of production

(#1-#5; #7-#8); the two kinds of energeia (#9-#11); fire as an illustration of production and of the two kinds of energeia (#10); the meaning of epekeina einai tēs ousias (#12).

The Energeia of the Intelligence

In Text B Plotinus states (#2) that the Intelligence (=Nous) is perfect being, the energeia of which is intellection (noēsis). This description of Nous is important because it implies certain details pertaining to the essential structure of the Intelligence and to its relationship to the One.

If our conclusion to Text A is correct--namely, that energeia primarily refers to whatever makes an entity be what it is (i.e., a certain kind of ousia)--Plotinus in Text B is saying that intellection is the very nature of the Intelligence. Other beings, such as the Soul and Nature, may have intelligence but only one being authentically is Intelligence. In fact, Soul and Nature have intelligence only because they participate in that which is Intelligence.⁵

Plotinus does not elaborate on the energeia of the Intelligence in the present text, but we need only draw on earlier treatises,⁶ especially V, 9 (5),⁷ to supply sufficient details on the subject.

⁵That Soul and Nature are intelligent is explained throughout III, 8 (30). Lesser intelligences, including man, are there described as contemplators and logoi of the Nous.

⁶Plotinus has given some attention to the nature of the Intelligence even in his very first treatise; see I, 6, especially chapters 6 and 9.

⁷V, 9 offers sufficient information on energeia to justifiably qualify as a key text in its right, but because it focuses mainly on the energeia of the Intelligence, I prefer to use it in my comments on V, 4.

If noēsis is the essential act of the Intelligence, then the Intelligence is perfect as a knower or mind. For a being whose nature is to know does not have merely the power to know; it is knowing per se. In other words, noēsis is its energeia, not its dynamis. Furthermore, it is eternal, for only a potential knower is in time.⁸

In relation to all other beings, Intelligence is superior, for other beings obtain knowledge through becoming and time. They are not knowers absolutely or essentially. As potential intellects they ultimately depend on the Intelligence itself to achieve energeia.⁹

⁸See V, 9, 5, 1-4: "The Intelligence . . . must not be in potency and become Intelligence after unintelligence. If this were the case, then we would have to discover another prior Intelligence; instead it is in act and eternally Intelligence."

Δεῖ δὲ νοῦν λαμβάνειν, εἴπερ ἐπαληθεύσομεν τῷ ὀνόματι, μὴ τὸν δυνάμει μηδὲ τὸν ἐξ ἀφροσύνης εἰς νοῦν ἐλθόντα — εἰ δὲ μή, ἄλλοι πάλιν αὐτὸν πρὸ αὐτοῦ ζητήσομεν — ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ αἰεὶ νοῦν ὄντα.

Of course, Plotinus is not forgetting that there is an existent prior to the Intelligence, but he insists that this priority is not in time. The Intelligence is dependent on the One for its reality but is still eternally in energeia.

⁹Plotinus identifies the Soul as a potential intellect in the following informative passage (V, 9, 4, 1-12): "Why then must there be something higher than Soul, unless the Soul itself were prior? Rather the Intelligence is prior and other than Soul, and better--better, indeed, in nature. For it is not the case as some think, that Soul, once perfected, produces Intelligence. For how would that potency be in act, if there were not a cause to bring it to act? For if this happened according to chance, it would not come to act. For the first realities are necessarily posited in act, self-contemplating and complete. The later incomplete things are generated by these prior things and completed by them; and they are matter to the prior producing existent and are completed by being formed."

Since the Intelligence is an eternal act, depending on nothing else for its knowledge, it is its own intellectual object.¹⁰ It is at once subject (Nous) and object (noēton). Transcending time and becoming, it is a purely intuitive knower, for discursive reasoning is the condition of a being in potency for knowledge. On this account the Intelligence is comparable to Aristotle's Separate Intelligence, Self-Thinking Thought (noēsis noēseos).¹¹ This is the limit of the comparison, however, because Plotinus goes ahead to develop an elaborate explanation of the Divine Mind

Διὰ τί οὖν δεῖ ἐπὶ ψυχῇ ἀνιέναι, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτὴν εἶναι τίθεσθαι τὸ πρῶτον; Ἡ πρῶτον μὲν νοῦς ψυχῆς ἕτερον καὶ κρεῖττον· τὸ δὲ κρεῖττον φύσει πρῶτον. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ, ὡς οἴονται, ψυχὴ νοῦν τελεωθεῖσα γεννᾷ· πόθεν γὰρ τὸ δυνάμει ἐνεργεία ἔσται, μὴ τοῦ εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἄγοντος αἰτίου ὄντος; Εἰ γὰρ κατὰ τύχην, ἐνδέχεται μὴ ἔλθειν εἰς ἐνέργειαν. Διὸ δεῖ τὰ πρῶτα ἐνεργεία τίθεσθαι καὶ ἀπροσδεᾶ καὶ τέλεια· τὰ δὲ ἀτελῆ ὕστερα ἀπ' ἐκείνων, τελειούμενα δὲ παρ' αὐτῶν τῶν γεγεννηκότων δίκην πατέρων τελειούντων, ἃ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἀτελῆ ἐγέννησαν· καὶ εἶναι μὲν ὕλην πρὸς τὸ ποιῆσαν τὸ πρῶτον, εἴτ' αὐτὴν ἔμμορφον ἀποτελεῖσθαι.

¹⁰See V, 9, 5, 4-7: "If it [=the Intelligence] has a wisdom not borrowed [from without], if it knows something, it knows [it] of itself, and if it has something, it has [it] of itself. If it knows out of itself, it is itself what it knows."

εἰ δὲ μὴ ἑπακτὸν
τὸ φρονεῖν ἔχει, εἴ τι νοεῖ, παρ' αὐτοῦ νοεῖ, καὶ εἴ τι ἔχει,
παρ' αὐτοῦ ἔχει. εἰ δὲ παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ νοεῖ,
αὐτός ἐστιν ἃ νοεῖ.

¹¹See Aristotle, Metaphysics Lambda, ch. 7, 1072 b 20-25. Plotinus implicitly acknowledges that the Intelligence is comparable to Aristotle's Separate Intelligence in his criticism of the Stagirite in V, 1 (10), 9. (Also consult V, 3 [49], 11-14; V, 6 [24]; and VI, 7 [38], 35-37.) For an interesting discussion of how Plotinus and Aristotle differ on the Intelligence see J. M. Rist, "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle," Review of Metaphysics 27 (1973), 75-87.

along mainly Platonic lines. He combines with Aristotle's description of Self-Thinking Thought the Platonic doctrine of a world of perfect Forms to arrive at a remarkable and detailed conception of the intelligible world. In this synthesis the Forms actually become the contents of the Intelligence.¹² In V, 9, 5, 7-16, Plotinus justifies this coupling of Forms and the Intelligence by arguing that its objects must be inseparable from its nature.

For if its ousia were different from the objects it contemplates, that same ousia would itself be unintelligent and in potency rather than in act. These two [=Nous and noeton] are not separable, then, from each other. But our custom makes us separate these intelligible items from one another. What, then, is the act and what is the intellection, in order that we may posit that these are the same as what the Intelligence knows? Clearly the truly existing Intelligence contemplates the beings [=the Forms] and posits them. It [=the Intelligence] is these beings. For it contemplates them either elsewhere or in itself as its very self. But

¹²Several of Plotinus' predecessors had already conceived of such a synthesis. Philo of Alexandria (25 B.C.-40 A.D.) had already made the Forms the thoughts of God, as is evident in his Works (see the "Loeb Classical Library" edition, edited and translated by F. H. Colson, G. H. Whittaker and R. Marcus, 12 vols., London, 1929-1962, esp. Vol. 5). Albinus later (second century A.D.) influenced all of Middle Platonism by identifying the contents of the Divine Mind with the Platonic Forms (see his Epitome, ch. 9, edited by P. Louis, Paris, 1945). For interesting discussions on the origin of this doctrine see H. A. Wolfson, Philo (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), Vol. I, pp. 229 sq. and 249 sq. See also R. E. Witt, Albinus and The History of Middle Platonism (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), p. 71, who attributes the development to Xenocrates.

In spite of such authorities as Philo and Albinus, the issue of whether the Forms should be inside Nous was controversial even in Plotinus' day, as is indicated by the fact that his colleague Longinus held that the Forms were separate from the Intelligence. For a discussion on the contrast between Plotinus and Longinus on the question of the content of Nous see A. H. Armstrong, "The Background of the Doctrine 'That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect,'" Entretiens sur L'Antiquité Classique, V: Les Sources de Plotin (Geneve: Fondation Hardt, 1960), pp. 391 sqq..

elsewhere is impossible. For where is "else-where" There? They are then itself and in itself.

Εἰ γὰρ ἡ μὲν οὐσία αὐτοῦ ἄλλη, ἃ δὲ νοεῖ ἕτερα αὐτοῦ, αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ ἀνόητος ἔσται· καὶ δυνάμει, οὐκ ἐνεργείᾳ αὐ. Οὐ χωριστέον οὖν οὐδέτερον ἀπὸ θατέρου. Ἔθος δὲ ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν κακείνα ταῖς ἐπινοίαις χωρίζειν. Τί οὖν ἐνεργεῖ καὶ τί νοεῖ, ἵνα ἐκείνα αὐτὸν ἃ νοεῖ θώμεθα; Ἡ δὴλον ὅτι νοῦς ὧν ὄντως νοεῖ τὰ ὄντα καὶ ὑφίστησιν. Ἔστιν ἄρα τὰ ὄντα. Ἡ γὰρ ἐτέρωθεν ὄντα αὐτὰ νοήσει, ἢ ἐν αὐτῷ ὡς αὐτὸν ὄντα. Ἐτέρωθεν μὲν οὖν ἀδύνατον· ποῦ γάρ; Αὐτὸν ἄρα καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ.

If the Intelligence is the universe of Forms, it is also (we may add) the universe of being, since the Forms are the determinate natures of all beings and ultimately every being is a logos of the Intelligence. In the final analysis think and being are the same, and Parmenides in his famous fragment is essentially correct.¹³

Plotinus appeals to the later Platonic dialogues to give authority to his conclusion that the Forms constitute the Intelligence. In the Sophist (248 e-249 a) Plato admits life and intelligence into the world of the Forms.¹⁴ Additionally, in the Timaeus (30 c 3-7) he conceives the

¹³See fragment 3: "For it is the same thing to think and to be" (translated by Kathleen Freeman, Ancilla to the Presocratic Philosophers [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971], p. 42). Plotinus cites this fragment several times: III, 8 (30), 8, 6-8; I, 4 (46), 10, 9; V, 1 (10), 8, 17-23, attributing it explicitly in this last instance to Parmenides. For a valuable commentary on the fragment see Leo Sweeney, Infinity in the Presocratics, p. 109.

¹⁴We must not (Plato says) "be easily convinced that change, life, soul, understanding have no place in that which is perfectly real--that it has neither life nor thought but stands immutable in solemn aloofness, devoid of intelligence" (Cornford's translation; ὡς ἀληθεῶς κίνησιν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ φρόνησιν ἢ βεδέωσιν

world of Forms as a single entity, the eternal "Living Being."¹⁵ From such passages Plotinus draws a conclusion which helps demonstrate the great unity that belongs to the Intelligence: the Forms, the noēta of the Intelligence, are not just lifeless objects of contemplation but are themselves intelligences. Each Form, then, is an intelligible, and an intelligence. Accordingly, Plotinus is able to reply to those who would object that introducing Forms into the Intelligence makes it pluralistic and imperfect. Its perfection is preserved because now the Intelligence is a unity, a universe of knowers, each of which is known by and knows every other. Each Form is a unique entity which through itself expresses the whole intelligible cosmos. He also relies on energeia and dynamis to explain the relationship of each Form to the All: each is itself in act but is all others in potency.¹⁶

πειθασόμεθα τῷ παρτελῶς ὄντι μὴ παρῆναι,
 μηδὲ ζῆν αὐτὸ μηδὲ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν
 καὶ ἄγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, ἀκίνητον ἑστὸς
 εἶναι;

¹⁵This characterization of the world of Forms as a unified whole is echoed when Plotinus refers to the Intelligence as "the All" (to pan; e.g., III, 8 10, 16-17).

¹⁶See VI, 2 (43), 20; VI, 7 (38), 9, 31-38. As an instance of a text prior to V, 4, let us quote IV, 8 (6), 3, 14-16: "In the Intelligence there is present the Intelligence itself--a great living being potentially everything and beings which themselves are in act but which in another sense are in potency."

Καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ νῷ τὸ μὲν νοῦς περιέχων δυνάμει
 τὰλλα οἷον ζῶν μέγα, τὰ δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ ἕκαστον, ἃ δυνάμει
 περιείχε βάτερον

Plotinus realizes that this intelligible order, in which each part is really indistinct from every other, is not easy for the limited human intellect to comprehend. He therefore assists us with several analogies, the most noteworthy of which is the parallel between the Intelligence and "a self-contained deductive science, like Euclidean geometry, where each theorem has its own specific content, but contains by implication the whole of the science in question."¹⁷ Since each theorem is the foundation for all later conclusions, it contains potentially the entire science. Of course, as R. T. Wallis has noted, "the unity binding Intelligence is closer than the analogy suggests, since the sciences familiar to us belong to the level of discursive thought."¹⁸ Despite this limitation, however, such an analogy¹⁹ is helpful in emphasizing that the Intelligence is a unity and that its elements are only logically and not really distinct.

A final and important conclusion follows from Plotinus' characterization of the Intelligence as the act of noēsis: it cannot be the First Existent (#1). As a being the Intelligence is perfect, but it is being nonetheless and therefore is a composite (#4). Intelligence, at the very least, is analyzable into the duality of subject and object. It is a unity of logically distinguishable items. As a one-in-many the Intelligence is dependent and thus is not absolutely first in reality. Only pure unity can be self-sufficient and unlimited and therefore be First.

¹⁷R. T. Wallis, Neoplatonism, pp. 54-55.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁹Other analogies include that of individuals within a species and of separate species under the genus itself (V, 9, 6, 9-10); also that of the seed (V, 9, 6, 10-11), which contains in potency everything that will constitute the fully grown plant.

That the Intelligence is not the Supreme Reality contradicts a common assumption in Greek thought. The great cosmological and metaphysical systems of classical Greece had agreed that perfection consists in form (eidos) and limit (peras);²⁰ accordingly, the Intelligence would satisfy traditional standards of perfection. Plotinus does not appear to be insensitive to this tradition, as is evident in the question with which he prefaces the key text: why does not the Intelligence suffice as the Producer? Text B may be taken as a response to this traditional view and shows that Plotinus both accepts and rejects the tradition. He accepts it as an ontologist. He admits that the Intelligence is ens perfectissimum, even ens realissimum (where ens signifies only being). But he denies it as an henologist. For if to be real is to be one, the perfect reality must be without multiplicity. Hence the Intelligence may be ens perfectissimum, but only something else can be res perfectissima (where res means reality).

Plotinus is not without some precedent in breaking with tradition. He appears to regard his conclusion that true perfection belongs

²⁰The Being of Parmenides is a perfect form, a sphere definite and limited, "for powerful Necessity holds it in the bonds of Limit, which constrains it round about, because it is decreed by divine law that Being shall not be without boundary. For it is not lacking; but if it were [spatially infinite], it would be lacking everything" (fragment 8, translated by Kathleen Freeman, Ancilla to the Presocratic Philosophers, p. 44).

The elements of form and limit are clearly presupposed as the standards of metaphysical perfection in Plato. In the Philebus (16 c-d; 23 c-26 d) he concurs with the Pythagoreans that reality, including the Platonic Forms, consists of two principles, the Limited and the Unlimited, the former of which brings form and order to the latter.

Aristotle clearly shares in this tradition by making eidos the very reality of an existent; eidos causes something to be a certain kind of being and therefore determines and limits it. See our earlier discussion of Aristotle on infinity in Text A.

to a transcendent Unity as a refinement of Plato's intuition that the supreme perfection (the Good) lies beyond being.²¹ Apparently, he also is indebted to the Middle Platonists who believed that a reality is above the Intelligence, which for this reason is one among several Intermediaries between man and God.²² But undoubtedly Plotinus is the first to transform these glimpses of a transcendent reality into a fully developed vision.

In conclusion we may say that the very energeia of the Intelligence condemns it to multiplicity, which necessarily carries some measure of imperfection. As a result, while the Intelligence is a self-contained, perfect ousia in its nature as the energeia of noēsis, it is nonetheless dependent on another reality for its emergence into being. How this generation takes place is the primary subject of V, 4. To begin to understand this process, let us first consider how it is expressed in the rather obscure doctrine attributed to Plato in ancient times (#3).

Indefinite Dyad as First Moment of Nous

In discussing Text A we quoted V, 2 (11),²³ where Plotinus distinguishes two moments in the generation of the Intelligence: procession (prohodos), in which the product is indeterminate and dynamis, and rever-

²¹He specifically interprets Plato's Good as the transcendent source of the Nous at V, 1 (10), 8.

²²See Albinus, Epitome, ch. 10. Celsus apparently held that God is transcendent; see Origen, Contra Celsum, VII, 45, translated with commentary by H. Chadwick (Cambridge: University Press, 1953). The Gnostics especially stress the transcendence of God along with a plurality of Intermediaries; see J. Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Tractates in English (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977).

²³See Text A, n. 37a.

sion (epistrophē), in which the Intelligence is determinate (acquires Forms) and energeia. These two moments are implicit in our present key text (#2-#3; #5-#10), where Plotinus describes a process whereby the Intelligence of its own power becomes energeia. This is particularly implied when he likens the Intelligence to a kind of sight (opsis; #2), for the Intelligence is in its first moment only a power, as is a man with his eyes shut, but in its second moment of contemplating its object (namely, the Intelligible, the One) it is determined and brought into act, just as sight is actuated by its object. In its first moment, the Intelligence is only a proclivity (epheis) or power for contemplating; i.e., it is only the dynamis or noēsis.²⁴

In the next portion of the key text (#3) Plotinus draws on the "Unwritten Doctrines" (agrapha dogmata),²⁵ which Aristotle and others

²⁴See V, 3 (49), 12.

²⁵This exact phrase occurs at Physics Delta, ch. 2, 209 b 14. In general Aristotle attributes to Plato an explanation about the origin and the status of the world of Forms that many scholars believe conflicts with the content of the dialogues. Essentially, Aristotle says that according to Plato's oral teachings the Forms are Idea/Numbers having their source in the One and the Indefinite Dyad of the Great/Small (See especially, Meta. Alpha, ch. 6; Phys. Delta, ch. 2, 209 b; Meta Mu and Nu). For Aristotle Plato's explanation of Forms is a development of "the arche-philosophies" of Parmenides and the Pythagoreans. The One of Parmenides becomes a separate cause that works on the Indeterminate Dyad of the Pythagoreans to fashion the Forms and the phenomenal world.

The Unwritten Doctrines have generated significant controversy in recent years. Scholars have debated whether they are genuinely Plato's views. Some of the most impressive Greek scholars are represented on both sides of the controversy. Among notable defenders are Leon Robin, La Théorie platonicienne des idées et des nombres d'après Aristote (Hildesheim: G. Olm, 1963); Cornelia de Vogel, Philosophia, Part I: Studies in Greek Philosophy (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970); W. D. Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951); H. J. Kramer, Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1959); K. Gaiser, Platons ungeschriebene Lehre (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1968); J. N. Findlay, Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines (New York: Humanities Press, 1972).

attribute to Plato, in order to explain the cause and moments in the production of Intelligence. He identifies the three factors in such Doctrines--(1) the One, (2) the Forms/Numbers and (3) the Indefinite Dyad (aoristos dyas)--and equates them with elements in his own metaphysics.

Critics are Harold Chernise, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy (second edition; New York: Russell and Russell, 1962); Gregory Vlastos, "On Plato's Oral Doctrine," Gnomon 41 (1963), 641-55; W. K. C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), Vol. 5, 418-442. For a general bibliography on the Unwritten Doctrines, see K. Gaiser, Platons ungeschriebene Lehre, pp. 565-71; supplemented in the second edition, pp. 575-77; and Jürgen Wippern (ed.), Das Problem der ungeschriebenen Lehre Platons (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 449-464 (also includes several reviews).

The arguments in support of this interpretation of Plato are legion and the limits of our present study prohibit any detailed evaluation of the Unwritten Doctrines, but I should briefly mention a few of the more common arguments.

(1) The Authority of Aristotle. Many argue that it is unreasonable to doubt Aristotle's testimony, since a thinker of his acuteness, who studied with Plato personally for many years, would probably not misrepresent so basic a teaching of his Master's as the theory of Forms. Against this conclusion scholars, such as Guthrie and Cherniss, have questioned Aristotle's reliability because of his peculiar ways of interpreting the history of Greek philosophy. "Aristotle is an invaluable source of information on his predecessors provided that allowances are made for his known habits of mind. One of these is a tendency to regard earlier philosophers as forming a linear progression, trying one after the other to solve the same problems on such the same basic assumptions. A striking example is Phys. 189b 8-16, where he equates a physical contrariety of the Presocratics like dense and rare with the later doctrine of the One and excess-and-defect as universal archai. He himself inherited far more of the old Ionian spirit than did Plato" (Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. V, p. 421).

(2) The testimony of Aristoxenus. Supporters of the Unwritten Doctrines claim that Aristoxenus' report (Elementa Harmonica 2, Meiborn, 122 Macran, P. 30) of a lecture which Plato delivered in approximately 359 B.C., entitled, "On the Good," is an instance of the tradition of oral teaching that prevailed in the Academy--teaching which was mainly for the benefit of his most intimate followers and which had precedence over his written teaching. But far from supporting an oral tradition, objectors argue, it supports nothing more than the occurrence of an actual lecture. In fact, it would seem to discredit the significance of an oral legacy in the Academy, for Aristoxenus reports that the lecture was attended by ordinary Athenians, who were upset that Plato would lecture to them on a highly technical philosophical subject--an indication that his lectures were not given just for selected intimates. Moreover, this particular incident appears to be unconnected with routine Academy discussions and, hence, is unlikely to ground any conclusions.

The One and the Forms of course become respectively the One (the transcendent cause of being) and the perfected Intelligence. However, it is more difficult to show precisely how he incorporates the Dyad into his position. This question deserves considerable attention because it bears on the status of dynamis in the intelligible world.²⁶

(3) Support of the Seventh Letter. In this letter (341b-342a), Plato expresses a preference for the spoken over the written word. Hence, the Unwritten Doctrines, since presumably based on his oral teaching, supporters argue, more representative of Plato's true views than the dialogues. In reply, Vlastos and others argue that an ancient philosopher's preference for oral over written teaching (which is not in the least surprising for a Greek philosopher steeped in religious and mystical traditions) does not imply that the former would in content differ from the latter, particularly in light of the fact that the dialogues show the care and work of a lifetime.

(4) Evidence from the Dialogues. The more enthusiastic proponents of the Unwritten Doctrines (e.g., DeVogel and Findlay) insist that the dialogues themselves intimate, however obliquely, the esoteric doctrines. These scholars refer commonly to the Philebus (16d), where Plato holds τὸν ἀπειρὸν αὐτοῦ [sc. τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἰδεῶν] . . . τὸν μεταξὺ τοῦ ἀπειροῦ καὶ τοῦ ἑνός; a comparison of 16c with 14e, 18a and 19a in the same dialogue is thought to indicate that peras and apeiron are the constituents not only of all sensibles but also of the Forms. Parmenides 157 ff. presumably supports the view that the Forms are constituted from the One and Plurality. "By comparing Theatetus 176e with Republic 506a and the Parmenides, the Good is identified with the One. By extending the comparison to include passages in the Gorgias, the Symposium and the Phaedrus we may conclude that ἑν and ἀπειρον (πλεῆξ) are the ἀγαθὸν αὐτό and the κακὸν αὐτό of the Unwritten Doctrines" (Vlastos, "On Plato's Oral Doctrine," 642).

But most objectors including Vlastos, insist that these texts at best only prove that some of the expressions in the dialogues may bear some similarity to terms in the Unwritten Doctrines (e.g., apeiron being similar to the Indefinite Dyad).

While the final judgment on the controversy is probably many years away, I suspect more and more scholars will come to doubt that the Unwritten Doctrines are faithful to Plato because mainly "it seems an odd perversity to reject or to depreciate a philosopher's ipsissima verba in favour of obscure and contradictory second or third hand reports of what he possibly might have said" (E. N. Tigerstedt, Interpreting Plato [Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1977], p. 83).

²⁶We will take up the subject of the Dyad again in our next key text, II, 5, which in treating act and potency discusses intelligible matter.

In order to fit it into his own metaphysics Plotinus modifies Aristotle's conception of the Indefinite Dyad in the Unwritten Doctrines, particularly in regard to its nature as unlimited (aoristos) and as potency. In Aristotle's account the Dyad is indefinite and in potency with reference to what the One produces out of it, but the Dyad still has some measure of determinacy insofar as it is the first plurality of two things: the Great and the Small (mega kai mikron).²⁷ The function of the Dyad as a potency is to receive form and to pluralize it in such a way as to make it double. For this reason Aristotle refers to the Dyad as a duopoion.²⁸

In the case of Plotinus, however, the Indefinite Dyad is thoroughly indeterminate. It is not plurality but the potency or, rather, power (the active ground or condition) of plurality, which is the finished Intelligence.²⁹ Hence, the Dyad is not a duopoion but a posopoion, the potency for any and every determinate plurality.³⁰

For Aristotle the Dyad appears to have a purely passive function, but for Plotinus it is an active rather than a passive potency.³¹ While

²⁷Metaphysics Nu, ch. 4, 1091 b 30 sqq.

²⁸E.g., ibid., Mu, ch. 7, 1082 a 15; ch. 8, 1083 b 36.

²⁹For a handling of Plotinus' account of the Dyad see J. M. Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," Classical Quarterly 12 (1956), esp. 100-101. The Dyad may be called a kind of "matter" because it is indeterminate and receptive of form. We will discuss both intelligible and sensible matter in Text C, II, 5 (25).

³⁰Rist notices this difference in Aristotle's own text (1083 a 13) and argues that this is the sense which Plotinus gives to the Dyad ("The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," p. 100).

³¹The distinction between active dynamis and passive dynamis occurs in Aristotle. He speaks of dynamis to produce change in another and dynamis to be changed by another in the following texts: Meta. Delta, ch. 12, 1019 a 15-1020 a 6; Theta, ch. 1, 1045 b 35-1046 a 11; ch. 6,

it may be indefinite, it is not inert, since the Dyad desires to return to its source and through this ephe^sis initiates of itself the stage of reversion. To some extent, then, it causes its own determination. The comparison to sight (opsⁱs) in the key text (#2) reinforces this interpretation, for the faculty of vision partly makes possible its own determination. An object alone is not sufficient for vision to occur. The faculty, the active power, must be operable as an efficient cause.

These remarks on the Indefinite Dyad bring us to one final observation: dynamis appears to be significantly prior to energeia in the intelligible world, for in addition to the dynamis of the Dyad, there is the infinite dynamis of the One. A twofold dynamis, then, is ground of all beings, all energeiai. The perfection of indeterminate dynamis is the source of all subsequent realities, which happen to be determinate energeiai. If the relationship of dynamis and energeia is basic to the genesis of all hypostases posterior to the One, this relationship clearly requires further elaboration, which we will supply in our comments on the nature of production below and in our comments on the nature of intelligible matter in Text C.

The One's Knowledge: katanoēsis or synaisthēsis

We have already discussed Plotinus' definition of the Intelligence as an eternal act of noēsis. Let us turn now to a later portion of Text B (#6) in which he apparently states that the One possesses a kind of knowledge (synaisthēsis; katanoēsis). We may be surprised at his willingness to affirm knowledge of the One, because he persistently maintains,

1048 a 25-b 4. The distinction is also implied in his example of knowledge at De Anima Beta, ch. 5, 417 a 21-29.

even in Text B itself (#12) and in the chapter preceding it (V, 4, 1, 9-10), that the One transcends ousia, description and therefore intellection.

Is Plotinus inconsistent or is there a way to interpret Text B (#6) so that his commitment to the radical transcendence of the One is unaffected?

It would seem that there are three possible interpretations of #6, only one of which is acceptable. The first interpretation is simply that Plotinus here ascribes knowledge to the One through intrinsic denomination, i.e., the One in His intrinsic nature is a knower. This interpretation, however, should be accepted only if no other plausible explanation of the Text is available, for ascribing knowledge to the One in this way contradicts Text B itself (#12), as we noted above, as well as Plotinus' general philosophy of the One.

The second interpretation is that Plotinus ascribes knowledge to the One through extrinsic denomination. Accordingly, the One does not have knowledge intrinsically but may nonetheless be called a knower because He is the cause of all knowledge.³² As the cause of all perfec-

³²Extrinsic denomination (also called analogy of attribution) consists in attributing something to an object not because it belongs to that object intrinsically but because the object has a relationship to another which has the attribute intrinsically. For example, the wind may be called "cold" not because it is capable of experiencing cold, but because it is the cause of cold in animals. In Plotinus the One is not formally ousia but may be extrinsically "denominated" such because It is the cause of ousia. In several places Plotinus implies that we can form some concept of the deity by His effects (V, 3 [49], 14, 7-8; VI, 7 [38], 36, 6-8; VI, 8 [39], 8, 1 sqq.). In every case of analogy there is something similar and something diverse. In extrinsic denomination the subjects are really diverse but some name or term is attributed to both of them. In other words, in name they are similar but in reality different.

tions, including knowledge, the One has all perfections virtually; i.e., He has all perfections in a transcendent and indeterminate sense because He is the supreme power necessary to produce them. While this interpretation is an improvement over the first, it is still less convincing than the third, which is more specific and addresses the peculiar language (katanoēsis; synaisthēsis) of #6.

The interpretation we endorse here is this: the One is a knower through mediation; that is to say, the One has self-awareness by means of the Intelligence. Accordingly, the One knows Himself not through His own intellection, for He is beyond intellection, but through the intellection of His logos, the Nous, whose nature is intellection.³³ This interpretation explains the difference between noēsis and katanoēsis according to whether the Intelligence acts independently as a knower or as an instrument. Likewise Plotinus' selection of the word synaisthesis, rather than the simple aisthēsis, indicates that the One has experience or awareness through the Nous, on which level aisthēsis properly belongs.

To suggest that other kinds of analogy, e.g., eminence and proportionality, can be present in Plotinus' system seems mistaken. For if, as we have argued, his thought is a monism, then it cannot accept a strict theory of analogy. Analogy requires similarity and diversity, but in a monism there is only identity and negation (reality and unreality).

For a general explanation of analogy see Leo Sweeney, A Metaphysics of Authentic Existentialism (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1965), pp. 142-151. For an informative treatment of analogy in Plotinus refer to H. A. Wolfson, "The Divine Attributes in Albinus and Plotinus," Harvard Theological Review 45 (1952), 115-134.

³³We should note that, strictly speaking, "mediation" is a kind of extrinsic denomination, since it attributes a perfection to something, not because it has it intrinsically, but because another, which has the perfection intrinsically, is related to it. But for the sake of clarity and emphasis I have considered "mediation" separately, for it expresses a specific type of predication by relation: that of instrumentality. The Nous "mediates" as an instrument between the One and His self-knowledge.

Such an account of these terms katanoēsis and synaisthēsis is in harmony with Liddell-Scott, which identifies possible usage for both kata- and syn- as "through" and/or "with another."³⁴

Hence, the Nous as it knows itself is the act of noēsis. The One as It knows Itself through and with the Intelligence is katanoēsis or synaisthēsis. This interpretation has the virtue of agreeing with the central objective of Text B: to explicate the relationship of the second hypostasis to the First. Furthermore, it enables Plotinus to respond to opponents who would insist that the First Reality has intellection. Plotinus surely has such an objection in mind in Text B, since his emphasis on the One's transcendence contradicts the traditional Greek view that ousia, eidos, peras, energeia and noēsis must belong to the supremely real. Plotinus' careful use of qualified language, through the terms katanoēsis and synaisthēsis, suggests that he wants to concede something (namely, that the One with qualification is a knower) to the Greek tradition without compromising his negative theology, which presumes the absolute transcendence of God.³⁵

The Nature of Production

Let us now examine how production originates from the One in order to understand more precisely the generation of the Intelligence, since

³⁴H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), see Vol. I, p. 883, esp. entry B, IV; see Vol. II, p. 1690, esp. entry A, #7. In addition to these prefixes the Liddell-Scott lists the separate terms κατανοέω and συναισθηματι as well. They define the latter terms as to "perceive simultaneously" or to "share in perception," definitions which give further credence to our interpretation.

³⁵See our comments above on the "energeia" of the Intelligence, especially n. 20.

the mode of this generation is the principal concern of the key text (especially #1; #5-#10).

For Plotinus productivity is the necessary consequence of perfection, which is identical with unity. Unity should also, then, entail production. That it does so is clear from the basic principle of Plotinus' philosophy which we have already identified.³⁶ To him it is inconceivable that a perfect existent (pure unity) would not communicate its goodness outside itself, a view the Schoolmen would later express by the words, "Bonum est diffusivum sui." Consequently, production is not a matter of will but of necessity.³⁷ Any perfection is productive, and this is certainly true of the Good, whose perfection is unlimited. As Armstrong observes, Plotinus turns Plato's moral rule, "being good means doing good," into a law of the cosmos.³⁸ Experience itself confirms that good begets good. Living beings reproduce themselves. Even inanimate objects impart something of themselves (V, 4, 1, 30), e.g., fire heats and snow gives off cold. If such imperfect beings strive to transmit their excellence, how could the One who is wholly perfect remain unproductive (V, 4, 1, 34-36)?

Does the One lose any perfection in producing another? Plotinus answers negatively (#7), introducing the Neoplatonic theory of "undimin-

³⁶See comments on Text A.

³⁷It is true that in VI, 8 (39) Plotinus does assign will to the One, but as we will show later (in setting up the context to Text E) VI, 8 is written for exceptional reasons and is not representative of Plotinus' position regarding the One.

³⁸A. H. Armstrong, "Platonic Eros and Christian Agape," Downside Review 79 (1961), 105-121.

ished giving."³⁹ The one is infinite in power (V, 4, 1, 23-26) and therefore is unaffected when He produces. In fact, this is true of every hypostasis. Each can produce interminably and without diminution of its perfection. Otherwise it would not be necessarily and eternally what it is.⁴⁰

Production of the Intelligence occurs, as we have seen, in two moments: procession and reversion. These two moments are not temporal but eternal. The One produces the second existent without "before" or "after" since the two moments of the Nous express the manner in which it is eternally dependent on the One (Unity and Reality), a dependency which is present because the Nous is composite. Despite this dependency the stage of reversion enables the Intelligence to become an eternal ousia and hypostasis, thereby sharing (as much as any being can) in the One's reality.

Both key texts studied thus far indicate that contemplation is involved in the two levels of production. In Text A the Soul attains determination and becomes an ousia as it turns to "gaze upon" (blepon; #7) its immediate source, the Intelligence. In the current key text (especially #2, #4, #5, #8) the Intelligence is at first only like undertermined sight until it turns to contemplate the One and is actuated.

In the first moment of an hypostasis there is only a proclivity (epheis) for contemplation, an active dynamis to revert back to and be informed by an intelligible. As Rist says of the Dyad, the first moment in the formation of the second hypostasis,

³⁹See III, 8 (30), 8, 46-48; 10, 1-19; see also V, 5 (32), 5, 2-7.

⁴⁰See IV, 3 (27), 8, 35 sqq.; cf. VI, 9 (9), 6, 10-12.

this proclivity may . . . be compared with what Plotinus elsewhere describes as unconscious contemplation. In the eighth treatise of Ennead 3 he asserts that all things, even down to the vegetable world, are striving (the word is ἐπιέσθαι which brings us back to ἐφεσις) after contemplation. If such an urge is the symbol of existence even among inferior beings of the world of sense, it would be foolish to deny it to the substrate (τὸ ὑποκειμενόν) of the Second Hypostasis. The likelihood is that the Dyad or Matter betrays in its ἐφεσις towards the One that symbol of existence shared by all things with the smallest claim to reality.⁴¹

In the light of Rist's conclusion production is a transition from power or "unconscious contemplation" to a stage of act or realized contemplation. The stage of perfection or act must (because perfection is productive) give rise to another existent, a logos, which itself is a power that contemplates its source and brings about another entity; this cycle of production must continue until perfection is exhausted.⁴²

Aware that the human intellect is not truly capable of grasping precisely how metaphysical production occurs, Plotinus turns to the world of physical production for assistance. He relies on the image of "emanation," comparing the outflow of light from the sun to the emergence of being out of the One. This is an impressive and helpful metaphor, and quite natural for a mystic like Plotinus, who respects the limits of denotative language.

The metaphor of emanation has special meaning because of Plotinus' conception of light, which has a kinship with the intelligible world by

⁴¹J. M. Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," p. 101.

⁴²Once perfection is exhausted, emanation ends. This would seem to imply that sensible matter, since it is perfectionless and unreal, is not the result of emanation. At times, however, Plotinus seems to say that matter is the last of all emanations (see III, 4 [15], 1). Whether matter is not emanated but is the eternal contrary to reality or whether it is the terminus of the whole sequence of emanations is a question we will take up in Text C.

reason of the fact that light is not a product of body (and here he disagrees with the Stoics).⁴³ As far as Plotinus is concerned, to describe production through the metaphor of light is to draw upon the most perfect image available to man.

Emanation illustrates production in essentially two ways. First, it depicts the dependence of the intelligible world on the One: just as the sun causes physical objects to be perceptible, the One causes the supreme beings to be intelligible. Secondly, emanation illustrates the gradual exhaustion of reality in production: just as light radiating from the sun decreases in intensity the further it goes until at last it terminates in total darkness, so the effects of the One diminish in reality until they end against the total unreality of matter. This second point about production follows from the basic principle of Plotinian philosophy (which we cited in treating Text A)⁴⁴ that the prior existent is always more real than the posterior. Since Plotinus is a monist, this principle reminds us of another basic principle in Plotinus: unity is perfection.⁴⁵ But because the product must necessarily be less perfect than its source, the first effect on the One must involve multiplicity

⁴³The Stoics had argued that light was an outflow from a material body, the Sun (SVF, II, 650). But in spite of Plotinus' strong objection to the materialism of the Stoics, he is very much indebted to their work on emanation, especially to Posidonius, who even conceived of "undiminished giving." In the end, however, the Stoics are presenting mainly a doctrine of emanation that is cosmological, whereas Plotinus' doctrine is metaphysical. Two helpful articles contrasting Plotinus and the Stoics on emanation are R. E. Witt's "Plotinus and Posidonius," Classical Quarterly 24 (1930), 198-207, and A. H. Armstrong's "'Emanation' in Plotinus," Mind 46 (1937), 61-66. For texts in Plotinus see IV, 5 (29), 6-7; cf. II, 1 (40), 7, 26-30.

⁴⁴See Text A, passages between notes 30 and 32.

⁴⁵Again, see Text A.

(#4), which introduces imperfection, i.e., unreality. If this is the case, reality is in fact one. Nothing can be truly and adequately distinct from the One if it is real. Everything is real only to the extent it is the One, but it is distinguishable from its source by virtue of its unreality and multiplicity. The effects of the One are distinct from it as the unreal differs from the real. Plotinus' account of production, then, since based on the primary principles of his philosophy, reveals that his thought is a monism. There is one central reality to which unreality is attached because multiplicity is the necessary consequence of the One's overflow.

So far, we have explained production as the formation of energeia from metaphysically prior dynamis: namely, that which constitutes the first, indeterminate moment of the hypostasis and the One Himself, the greatest dynamis of all (#12).⁴⁶ In the next section of our comments we will consider in what way Plotinus explains production as the formation of energeia from energeia.

The Two Kinds of Energeia

In the key text (#9 and #11) Plotinus introduces energeia in order to explain production. He distinguishes two types of energeia, one of which refers to a being which emanates, the other to its effect. The

⁴⁶We must not assume, after the fashion of Aristotle's theory of change, that production for Plotinus is a transition from a less perfect to a more perfect stage of reality. Production is from a prior moment of dynamis to a posterior moment of energeia, but the dynamis, while indeterminate, is not imperfect. The One Himself is indeterminate but absolutely perfect. The indeterminacy of sensible matter does imply imperfection but the indeterminacy of intelligible matter does not. See ahead to our treatment of intelligible matter in Text C, notes 45-47.

first kind of energeia is that "of" an ousia: the second is that "from" an ousia. The former is that which makes an entity be what it is, its essence. Such is the meaning of energeia uncovered in Text A and indeed appears to be what the word primarily signifies. However, Plotinus now introduces a second energeia: that which follows from the ousia. Identifying this second kind of energeia has value for his account of production because the energeia "from" the ousia is not just an ephiphenomenon or accidental effluence of the primary energeia but a necessary emanation from it.

We have seen that production is the outpouring of an hypostasis, which as a self-sufficient existent, infinite in power and undiminished in giving necessarily diffuses itself.⁴⁷ The perfection which is the source of production Plotinus calls the energeia "of" an ousia, the intrinsic act of an entity. This intrinsic perfection gives rise to another act, the energeia "from" an ousia, which, although generated from and dependent on a prior perfection, is itself an ousia. There is the energeia of Nous (#2) which, since a perfection is productive of another energeia, which is the Soul. Just as the Nous produces an act that is the Soul, this latter hypostasis generates an act that is Nature, which next generates its own diverse logoi.

What makes these two kinds of energeia relevant to emanation is the necessary association between them. The act which follows from the ousia does so necessarily. To invoke again the metaphor of emanation: there is a necessary connection between the sun and its light. The sun simply

⁴⁷See John Anton, "Some Logical Aspects of the Concept Hypostasis in Plotinus," p. 258, n. 2. (See Text A, n. 32.)

would not be what it is without its necessary effect or property, light.⁴⁸ Where there is the second act, there must be the first. By virtue of the intrinsic perfection of the ousia, another act or perfection emanates. As long as there are ousiai, emanation will continue and will be exhausted only when ousiai no longer diffuse themselves, when production ends and all that is left is the utter formlessness and negativity of matter.

Unless one reads Text B carefully he is likely to conclude that Plotinus intends this relationship of the two kinds of energeia to also involve the One. Such a conclusion, however, would seem mistaken, since, as we have noted repeatedly, especially in our discussion of katanoēsis, Plotinus states in V, 4 that the One is beyond being and hence beyond energeia. This refusal to attribute energeia to the One also respects our conclusion in Text A that energeia, by virtue of signifying eidos and ousia, belongs only to Nous and its logoi.

The correct interpretation of this portion (#9-#11) of Text B would seem to parallel the interpretation we offered for the earlier passage (#6) concerning the One's knowledge. There we explained that the One may be described as a knower, provided one understands that that ascription comes through "mediation" (a specific type of extrinsic denomination) and not through intrinsic denomination. The One "knows" because He employs the Nous, which is knowing per se, as His means or instrument. The same case would seem to apply regarding the apparent implication at #11 that the One is the first energeia "of" an entity, producing the first energeia "from" an entity, the Intelligence. The couplet energeia tēs ousias vs.

⁴⁸The closing lines of I, 7 (54), 1 support this statement. Also see IV, 5 (29), 7.

energeia ek tēs ousias belongs on all levels of reality except the One, where there is no energeia because there is no ousia. Yet there is a way in which the One may be said to possess energeia: through the relationship of the Intelligence to the One. It appears to be on this basis that Text B suggests that the One is the first energeia "of" an ousia. The dependence of the Nous, pure energeia, on the One makes it possible to ascribe energeia itself to the One: He is said to have energeia present to Him (synousēs energeias) because the perfection in Him (ek tēs en auto teleiōtētos) emanates an energeia tēs ousias, which is the second hypostasis. Through mediation this energeia tēs ousias is applicable to the One as though He is an energeia productive of the energeia of Nous. In sum the first energeia "of" an ousia is the same as the first energeia "from" an ousia, namely, the Divine Intelligence. But the One, because of the relationship of the Nous to Him, may be called the first energeia "of" an ousia, an energeia which the One would intrinsically possess if it did not transcend ousia.

Based on the above interpretation we can admit that Plotinus describes the one as energeia (specifically, energeia tēs ousias) in Text B without admitting energeia into His intrinsic nature. Thereby we preserve the consistency of Plotinus' general philosophy of the First Reality.⁴⁹

⁴⁹We might note another reason for denying that the One is energeia tēs ousias except through mediation. If the One were such, then (in order for Plotinus to be consistent) He would also have to be energeia ek tēs ousias, meaning that another reality would be superior as His cause. Perhaps it is because of difficult texts of this kind, and their apparent implication, that drove later Neoplatonists, especially Iamblichus and Damascius, to posit realities higher than the One.

Fire as an Illustration of Production and of *energeiai*

I have chosen to devote some space to Plotinus' example of fire (#10-#11) to illustrate how production occurs generally and how the two kinds of act relate to one another. Fire is not just one among many examples to illustrate emanation. Plotinus has a special conception of fire, as is clear from the earliest treatise, I, 6.

Fire is itself more beautiful than all other bodies, because it has the rank of form in relation to the other elements; it is above them in place and is the subtlest of all bodies, being close to the immaterial. It alone does not admit the others; but the others admit it: it warms them but is not itself cooled.

I, 6, 3, 19-24:

"Ὅθεν καὶ τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸ παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα σώματα καλόν, ὅτι τάξιν εἶδους πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα στοιχεῖα ἔχει, ἄνω μὲν τῆ θέσει, λεπτότατον δὲ τῶν ἄλλων σωμάτων, ὡς ἐγγὺς ὄν τοῦ ἀσωμάτου, μόνον δὲ αὐτὸ οὐκ εἰσδεχόμενον τὰ ἄλλα· τὰ δ' ἄλλα δέχεται αὐτό. Θερμαίνεται γὰρ ἐκεῖνα, οὐ ψύχεται δὲ τοῦτο

Here he describes fire as having an affinity to the intelligible world, because regardless of its circumstances, it remains more perfectly what it is, being unaffected by other things even while it affects them. Things are altered by fire because of its heat. This property is necessarily connected with fire. In this respect it is like a Form, a perfect ousia, for a Form and what is associated with it are connected by necessity. Because of the intimate connection of fire and heat, physical fire is the best image of the interrelationships of intelligible Forms. Physical fire is a participant of the perfect Form of Fire which subsists in the intelligible world. Because There Heat has an intrinsic, unique

and essential connection with Fire, so in the physical world heat and fire are necessarily associated. Rist, in an interpretation of II, 6 (17), 3, 14 sqq., concludes that

in other things, that is in warm objects, heat is merely a trace, a shadow and an image of its real nature, but in the Form of fire that real nature is not merely a quality but a Form and an activity which is essentially and necessarily associated with fire.⁵⁰

We may interpret II, 6 (17) in light of the two types of energeia previously discussed concerning production: what appear as accidental qualities in this world in fact have an intrinsic connection with one another in the intelligible world, for what appear here as really distinct exist There as really united; and this is to say that qualities here are simply energeiai suffering greater fragmentation and disunity than the energeiai There (the eternal Forms) which they image. Nonetheless, in some physical existents, especially fire, there are still evident interconnections of energeiai testifying to their profound participation in the perfect interconnections found in their archetypes. Fire is an energeia "of" an ousia producing necessarily an energeia "from" its ousia, namely, heat. By so doing it mirrors better than any other physical existent the necessary connections of energeiai in the intelligible world.

Rist sees the influence of Plato behind Plotinus' account of fire and the two types of energeia. "The connection of the Phaedo with Plotinus' view of 'emanation' of heat from fire and thus ultimately of the hypostases of the intelligible universe each from a higher principle

⁵⁰I would prefer the word "act" in this quotation instead of "activity," because the latter suggests praxis, which according to Plotinus is a property of inferior and physical being. See III, 8 (30), 5-6. The quotation is from J. M. Rist, Plotinus: The Road to Reality, pp. 68-69.

has apparently passed unnoticed."⁵¹ In particular Rist is thinking of the Phaedo, 103 a-105 a, part of which Hackforth translates as follows:

"Do you speak of 'hot' and 'cold'?" "I do."
 "Meaning by them the same as 'snow' and 'fire'?"
 "Why no, of course not." "That is to say, the hot is different from fire, and the cold from snow." "Yes." "But I think you would agree that what starts as snow cannot ever, as we were saying just now, admit the hot and still be what it was: still be snow and also hot; on the approach of the hot it will either withdraw or perish." "Quite so."⁵²

103 c 10-103 d 8:

ἔφη, εἰ ἄρα συνομολογήσεις.

θερμὸν τι καλεῖς καὶ ψυχρὸν;

Ἐγωγε.

Ἄρ' ὑπὲρ χιόνα καὶ πῦρ;

Μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγε.

Ἄλλ' ἕτερόν τι πυρὸς τὸ θερμὸν καὶ ἕτερόν τι χιόνος τὸ ψυχρὸν;

Ναί.

Ἄλλὰ τόδε γ' αἶμαι δοκεῖ σοι, οὐδέποτε χιόνα γ' οὔσαν δεξαμένην τὸ θερμὸν, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν ἐλέγχομεν, εἶτι ἴσασθαι ὅπερ ἦν, χιόνα καὶ θερμὸν, ἀλλὰ προσιόντος τοῦ θερμοῦ ἢ ὑπεκχωρήσειν αὐτῷ ἢ ἀπολείσθαι.

Πάνυ γε.

That Plotinus is aware of this passage is historically likely and is especially indicated by his use of dechomai in the above quoted text from I, 6 (1). He builds on Plato's theory of Forms in the Phaedo to suit his own creative purpose, which is to explain the production of being. In the Phaedo (103 a-105 a) Plato makes a significant statement about the nature of Forms: they intrinsically must remain themselves or

⁵¹Ibid., p. 69.

⁵²R. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedo (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), pp. 149-150.

not be at all, and their necessary effects, like heat from fire, demonstrate their intrinsic natures. Plotinus agrees but adds that this explains the generation of beings from prior ousiai. In other words, Plato's remarks are more than just a statement about the fixed, absolute world of Forms. The truth of the Phaedo can (for Plotinus) be interpreted in the light of the distinction between the energeia "of" the Form or ousia and the energeia "from" the Form or ousia to arrive at a Neoplatonic theory of production of the universe. This shows how rich a carefully selected image, such as fire, can be in the writings of Plotinus.

The Meaning of epekeina einai tēs ousias

In the closing passage of the key text (#12) Plotinus speaks again of the transcendence of the One. Here he is again expressing what he said earlier in the treatise (ch. 1, line 10) that the One is beyond entity (epekeina ousias). But the present text is noteworthy because of its emphasis. The One is not merely above entity but above the very being of entity (epekeina einai tēs ousias). With the addition of the word einai Plotinus implies why the One must be beyond the realm of Nous and ousia. The very being or constitution of entity is form and limit. The Nous is a realm of diversity and division, a one-in-many. But according to the principles of Plotinus' philosophy diversity and plurality are aligned with unreality. To be real--indeed to be the sole reality--the One must be free of limit and ousia.

Moreover, the association of ousia with energeia and the identification of Intelligence with the first ousia and the first energeia make ousia and energeia inapplicable to the One. If Plotinus' philosophy is consistent, he cannot ascribe energeia and ousia to the One through

intrinsic denomination. Fortunately, Text B itself protects Plotinus from inconsistency, since such passages as #6 and #11-#12 indicate that he attributes ousia and energeia to the One through mediation.

Summary and Conclusions

Text B has added valuable information to our study of energeia. In particular it makes possible a deeper understanding of energeia in the intelligible world than does Text A with its limited concentration on the Soul.

Early in Text B (#2) Plotinus defines the Intelligence as a being whose energeia is noēsis. This brief statement implies a wealth of information. First, the Intelligence is a distinct ousia whose life consists in eternal contemplation. In this respect it resembles Aristotle's Separate Intelligence (noēsis noēseōs). Secondly, it contains the entire universe of being, constituted by the eternal Platonic Forms, each of which is itself an all comprehending Intelligence. Each is unique in act (because it is a self-complete, perfect ousia), but each is every other Form in potency (because each knows, i.e., possesses cognitively, every other Form). Thirdly, the Intelligence appears to satisfy classical standards of perfection, since it is a universe of form and limit, and yet because a composite it is not ultimate reality.

Plotinus' reference to the Unwritten Doctrines of Plato (#3) suggests something about the role of dynamis in the intelligible world. Here Plotinus adopts the elements of the Unwritten Doctrines as factors in his own account of the generation of Nous. The Intelligence emerges from a prior condition of dynamis (which Plotinus equates with the Indefinite Dyad) by contemplating the One so as to become perfected and in

energeia. The Dyad is an active dynamis, which turns back to contemplate the Good, and in so doing is perfected so as to become the completed second hypostasis. The dyad does not remain itself but is an eternally prior aspect of the Intelligence, which expresses the latter's dependence on the One (#1).

The very perfection of the Intelligence, the energeia of noēsis, apparently compels Plotinus to recognize that the One involves some kind of knowledge. But he is still careful to qualify this knowledge, because the One transcends ousia and thus transcends the contents (eidē or noēta) of noēsis. For this reason Plotinus attributes to the One katanoēsis rather than noēsis, the former term signifying a kind of knowledge suitable for an existent transcending Intelligence.

What specifically does Plotinus convey by the term katanoēsis? We isolate three possible interpretations. The first is that the One is a knower in His own intrinsic nature. According to this view the One has a knowledge so perfect that the mere term noēsis is inadequate to convey it. Hence, Text B supplies the modified term katanoēsis. This interpretation, however, we reject on grounds that it contradicts Plotinus' general position on the transcendence of the One (V, 4, 1, 9-10 and a portion of Text B itself [#12]).

The second interpretation is that katanoēsis describes the One as a knower through extrinsic denomination. But we reject this interpretation because it does not address the motive behind Plotinus' selection of the unique prefixes kata- and syn- in his expressions, katanoēsis and synaisthēsis, for the One's knowledge.

The correct interpretation appears to be a third one: the One possesses knowledge with or through (hence syn-aisthēsis and kata-noēsis)

the Intelligence, which is knowing per se. This interpretation not only saves Plotinus from inconsistency but also accords with the chief objective of Text B: to elucidate the relationship of Nous to its Source and Object, the One. In the case of katanoēsis the relationship may be expressed as one of "mediation." Through the agency of His logos, whose very energeia is noēsis, the One possesses a kind of knowledge.

Production is the process by which the unlimited dynamis (#12) of the One overflows into greater and greater levels of multiplicity, which can obversely be described as entailing less and less reality. Production is described through the metaphor of emanation. Every reality is a perfection which, according to the basic principles of Plotinus' philosophy, must give off effects.

Associated with the account of production is Plotinus' distinction between two type of energeia (#9-#10). The first is energeia as we discovered in Text A: energeia as ousia, the intrinsic form of a being. The second kind of energeia is contributed by Text B. This type of energeia does not refer primarily to the energeia of a being (an ousia) but to that which is produced out of it. Text B connects these distinctions with production in the following way: the very perfection of a prior being (the energeia "of" its ousia) emanates a second act (the energeia "from" its ousia), which as a distinct ousia in its own right (an energeia "of" an ousia) generates a subsequent ousia. Production, then, continues so long as there is perfection (concentrated in ousiai) sufficient to emanate further perfection (energeiai "from" ousiai); where the emanation ends, the perfectionless being-in-potency (to dynamēi on)⁵³

⁵³This technical expression Plotinus employs in II, 5 (25) to denote the sheer receptivity (passive potency) of sensible matter. This

of matter begins.

In the passage (#11) on the two kinds of energeia Plotinus appears to apply energeia to the One. But we conclude that the couplet "energeia 'from' / energeia 'of' the ousia" belongs on every level of reality except the One, who must transcend energeia since He is not ousia. Nevertheless, there is an energeia from the One, which is the Nous, the energeia of noēsis. By virtue of the dependent connection of this product with the One, the First Existent is said to have an energeia itself. In other words, energeia belongs to the One through mediation: energeia is present to or with It (synousēs energeias) but does not constitute It. In this unique case the energeia from the One, which constitutes the energeia of the Nous, is attributed to the One as though it could properly belong to the First Existent. In a word, the Nous is the energeia that the One would have if It did not transcend ousia.

Plotinus' words at #11 are very elliptical, but attention to linguistic subtleties (e.g., synousēs) indicates attribution through mediation (as with katanoēsis and synaisthēsis) rather than through intrinsic denomination and saves Plotinus again from serious inconsistency.

These two types of energeia ("of" and "from" ousia) are admirably demonstrated by the example of fire, which of all physical bodies Plotinus believes is closest to the immaterial world. Fire and its property, heat, are connected by necessity and thus illustrate well the nature of production, for the generation of subsequent from prior beings is the

term and its correlate will be discussed in Text C, which encompasses every chapter of II, 5.

generation of energeiai which proceed from prior energeiai. Because fire is what it is, fire is act (the energeia "of" its ousia); from this perfection there necessarily emanates a second act, heat (the energeia "from" its ousia). Fire simply would not be what it is without its essential property heat.

Finally, it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the closing passage of Text B, which declares not only that the One transcends entity but that He transcends the very being of entity. This brief remark supports our conclusion in Text A that the One transcends energeia because He transcends ousia. It also supports our interpretations in Text B regarding katanoēsis and energeia as inapplicable to the One: rather such terms can apply to Him only through mediation, a specific kind of extrinsic denomination.

Some additional remarks may be made in finally assessing Text B. Plotinus is faithful to Aristotle in his use of energeia both here and in Text A. But in both passages he is using Aristotle's central conception of energeia to explicate his own Neoplatonic philosophy. In Text A this is mainly to illumine the Soul. In the present Text it is to grasp better the intelligible world itself and the production of being. This amplification of his use of energeia to intelligibles makes it clear that energeia is at the heart of his metaphysics. It is not merely a notion that he borrows from Aristotle. Energeia contributes to his own unique explanation of reality and therefore deserves considerable attention, which Plotinus explicitly gives it in our next key text.

TEXT C: ENNEAD II 5 (25), 1-5

The importance of our present key text is indisputable. It is an explicit study of energeia and entitled "On What is in Potency and in Act." It is the twenty-fifth treatise that Plotinus wrote, belonging to his "middle period," in which, according to Porphyry, he wrote works of the highest quality.¹

Although Text C may be of high quality, it has several dimensions which make its exegesis difficult. It presupposes more than a passing acquaintance with Aristotle's conception of how energeia and dynamis apply to the physical universe and, more precisely, to prime matter. Secondly, it restricts our attention almost entirely to sensible and intelligible matter in Plotinus. Accordingly, nothing is said of whether energeia is applicable to the One and relatively little is directly said of energeia with reference to the Nous itself. Moreover, Plotinus proceeds in a technical and abstruse manner² and the result is a series of highly condensed and elliptical pages.

Finally, II, 5 seems to have little or no connection with treatises

¹Porphyry, "On the Life of Plotinus," p. 25.

²The language Plotinus uses in II, 5 is very austere and lacks some of the lyrical flourishes of other treatises from Plotinus' middle-period--for example III, 8 (30), 10, where the Source of reality is likened to an inexhaustible spring and to the roots of a tree. Another notable example of figurative language is the image of the dance, which he employs even in the early Enneads (VI, 9 [9], 8 and 9). In several middle treatises, IV, 4 (28), 33-35; VI, 7 (38), 7, the procession of being from the One is itself compared to the movement of a dance; and in III, 6 (26), 2, Plotinus compares the parts of the soul to assigned parts in a dance.

which chronologically precede it. V, 6 (24) deals with the One as transcending noēsis, Intelligence and Soul. VI, 4 (22) and VI, 5 (23) are concerned with the omnipresence of Soul. In IV, 1 (21) Plotinus speaks of Soul as intermediate between Intelligence and the physical world. In treatises which are directly prior to IV, 1 he takes up disparate topics, many of which seem to be unrelated to the core of his metaphysics--e.g., I, 3 (20), which is on dialectics; I, 2 (19), on virtues; V, 7 (18), on whether there are Forms of individual existents; II, 6 (17), on quality;³ I, 9 (16), on a soul's departure from the body in death; III, 4 (15), on daimones; II, 2 (14), on circular motion; III, 9 (13) which is a collection of notes on miscellaneous topics.

An exception is II, 4 (12), which concentrates on both sensible and intelligible matter. Manifestly, it thereby is relevant to Text C and is directly adjacent to it in Porphyry's arrangement of the treatises. Hence, let us use II, 4 in setting up the context of our present key text.⁴

The treatise opens (II, 4 ch. 1, 1-10) with Plotinus' observation that for Aristotle matter is a "substrate" (hypokeimenon) and for Plato it is a "receptacle" (hypodochē) of form, but that they disagree when describing the nature of matter and its relationship to the physical

³This treatise, which we cited in discussing fire in Text B, does contain some helpful information on energeia but it is more suitable to examine it with reference to quality in Text E (VI, 2).

⁴Like Text C II, 4 is a rather technical treatise which addresses Aristotelian concepts. "The treatise is a good example of Plotinus' method of work at its most professional and technical, a close and critical discussion of the views of the Stoics and of Aristotle. As often, he is particularly concerned to carry through a critical rethinking of Aristotle's doctrine designed to adapt it to Platonism as he understood it" (A. H. Armstrong, Plotinus, Vol. II, p. 104).

and intelligible worlds. At the close of chapter one (lines 15-19) Plotinus introduces the question of whether there is intelligible matter. In chapter two he assumes the role of an imaginary adversary who objects as follows: "If the being of matter must be undefined and shapeless and if there is nothing undefined or shapeless among the excellent beings There, matter is not There" (lines 2-5). Also the fact that the intelligibles are simple and eternal makes matter unnecessary (ibid., lines 5-8).⁵

He replies to these objections in chapter three. First of all, the indeterminate and shapeless can be There if it is open to determination and formation from prior and more perfect realities. For example, Soul is open to such a perfective process from the Intelligence and the logos (lines 1-6). Secondly, realities in the intelligible realm are composite but in a different way from existents in the sensible world. Logoi There are composites of matter and form, of potency and act, and by their act they make Nature itself be composite as it actuates and forms lower things.⁶ In such sensible existents matter is always receiving different forms successively as one form pushes another out. As a result nothing lasts and matter is constantly changing. But in the eternal realities matter always remains the same and always has the same form. In fact,

⁵The adversary amplifies this last objection with the following criticisms (lines 7-12): (1) that which becomes requires matter but not that which always is what it is; (2) it is unreasonable to posit matter There either as produced or as eternal; for if produced, what would produce it; and if eternal, it would be among the primals and what is to prevent us from allowing that they all exist by chance if matter exists There? (3) also would not intelligible composites be bodies if matter unites with form There?

⁶This statement seems to anticipate III, 8 (30), 3-4, where Nature causes and forms all vegetal life.

matter There has all the forms at once and thus cannot change. Consequently, matter There is never without form inasmuch as it contains all forms. Indeed, matter here is never without form either, although it has forms only successively (ibid., lines 6-18).

Plotinus continues to discuss intelligible and sensible matter in chapters four and five, which make the following important points. Intelligible matter is that which the Forms have in common and which, as their substrate, receives morphai and thus differentiates them (ch. 4, lines 2-7). Matter is the unity in which the many Forms constituting intelligible reality exist and which thereby becomes varied and multiply shaped.⁷ Yet of itself it is shapeless and undefined and is none of the things that are on it and in it, as one discovers by mentally abstracting from intelligible matter its variety, shapes, logoi and intelligibilities (ibid., lines 14-20).

Someone can become aware, Plotinus continues, that both sensible and intelligible matters are somewhat similar. If one advances into a corporeal thing until he comes to its depth and darkness, there he reaches matter, whereas the light in such a thing is its form and logos (ch. 5, lines 4-12). Likewise, an intelligible reality also entails both form and matter. This last is a darkness, which receives a defined and intelligent life from the form.⁸ In contrast, sensible matter is defined

⁷The intelligible world is not just sheer plurality but is unity-in-diversity. Intelligible matter makes it possible for the separate Forms to belong to a common universe. In III, 8 (30), 10 Plotinus says that anything at all must have a unity. Intelligible matter is the perfection that provides unity for the intelligibles.

⁸The Indefinite Dyad (i.e., intelligible matter in the first moment of production from the One) is not yet an Intelligence but is alive as a desire and a formless sight (opsis). It wills its formation and energeia by turning to behold its Source (see V, 3 [49], 11).

but is not alive or thinking and is, indeed, a decorated corpse (ch. 5, lines 4-12).

Intelligible matter is a true substrate because shape There is true shape, whereas sensible matter is only an image of a substrate because the shape it receives is also only an image.⁹ Matter There by underlying Form is ousia. Rather, matter There, together with Form imposed on it, makes a whole which is an illuminated ousia (ibid., lines 12-23).

Such chapters in II, 4 furnish the context of our current key text. Before taking up that text, let us summarize the information on intelligible matter which these chapters have provided.

First, intelligible matter

(a) is indeterminate and undefined because it is open to determination and form from high realities;

(b) is a component in intelligible realities or logoi;

(c) always has the same Form and, in fact, possesses all Forms; it is never without Form and therefore never changes (ch. 3).

Secondly, intelligible matter

(d) is the substrate which Forms have in common;

(e) is the oneness in which these Forms exist and remain; it is a oneness which is of itself shapeless and undefined despite the Forms in and on it (ch. 4).

⁹The inferiority of sensible form seems to be reasserted later in the treatise (ch. 12, line 1 sq.). Form is doomed to become size because matter is so unstable. The chapters on sensible matter (6-19) peak in 14-16, where Plotinus identifies matter with privation and evil. Ultimately, the sense-world is a "phantom on a phantom" (III, 6 [26], 7, 24) and both matter and the whole sense-world have the being of non-being. "The being of these is the being of things that are not" (III, 6, 6, 32-33). This judgment, of course, follows from Plotinus' Platonic conviction that the sense-world is only an image of the intelligible.

Finally, matter in the intelligible realm

(f) is darkness itself, and yet together with Form it is a part of a living and intelligent reality;

(g) is a genuine substrate and not merely a phantom and once informed comes close to being an ousia by helping constitute an illuminated ousia (ch. 5).

Such then in summary is the context which II, 4 provides and now let us turn to II, 5, which is our key text and which will view matter explicitly in the light of energeia and dynamis.¹⁰

Key Text

[1] "One speaks of being in potency and being in act; and one speaks of act as something within real beings. We must consider then what is being in potency and what is being in act [and what is simply act and what is simply potency]. [2] Is to be in act the same as act, and if something is act, is this in act, or is each ['act' and 'being in act'] different or is it not necessary for being in act to be act?"

II, 5, 1, 1-6:

Λέγεται τὸ μὲν δυνάμει, τὸ δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ εἶναι· λέγεται δὲ τι καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ ἐν τοῖς οὐσι. Σκεπτέον οὖν τί τὸ δυνάμει καὶ τί τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ. Ἄρα τὸ αὐτὸ τῷ ἐνεργείᾳ εἶναι ἢ ἐνεργείᾳ, καὶ εἴ τί ἐστὶν ἐνεργείᾳ, τοῦτο καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ, ἢ ἕτερον ἑκάτερον καὶ τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ ὄν οὐκ ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐνεργείαν εἶναι;

¹⁰There are three main reasons for my choosing the entire treatise as the key text. (1) Each chapter contains important and new information on energeia; (2) the treatise is brief enough to make presenting it as a whole possible; (3) by presenting the entire treatise I can make clear how each chapter builds organically on the one before it.

[3] That there is being in potency in sensible things is evident, but we must consider if it is in intelligible realities. [4] Now only being in act is There. And if being in potency could be There, it would always only be in potency, and if it were eternal, it would in no way come to act because [it is prevented] from coming into act by not being in time.¹¹

1, 6-10:

Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὸ δυνάμει, δῆλον· εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς, σκεπτέον. Ἡ ἐκεῖ τὸ ἐνεργεῖα μόνον· καὶ εἰ ἔστι τὸ δυνάμει, τὸ δυνάμει μόνον αἰεὶ, καὶ αἰεὶ ἦ, οὐδέποτε ἂν ἔλθοι εἰς ἐνεργεῖαν τῷ οὐ χρόνῳ ἐξείργεσθαι.

[5] But first what do we say being in potency is, if indeed [as is the case] being in potency ought not be spoken of [There] simply at all? For there is no being in potency without its being potency of something. [6] For instance, bronze is in potency a statue. For if nothing would come from it or upon it and if it did not become something after what it was

¹¹The following translations have assisted me in translating this passage. Harder-Theiler: "Und was das Potentielle angeht, so ist klar, daß in der Sinnenwelt vorkommt; ob es aber auch in der geistigen Welt ist, muß geprüft werden. Nun, es gibt dort wohl allein das Aktuelle; und wenn es dort das Potentielle geben sollte, so wäre es ewig potentiell; und wenn es weig wäre, so käme es nie zur Aktualität, weil es durch die Nicht-Ziet davon fern gehalten wird." (Plotins Schriften, Band II [Hamburg: Felix Weiner, 1962], p. 89.) Bréhier: "Il est clair que des êtres en puissance se trouvent dans les choses sensibles. Y en a-t-il aussi dans les choses intelligibles, ou celles-ci ne contiennent-elles que des êtres en acte? Si elles contenaient un être en puissance, il resterait toujours, seulement en puissance; il ne passerait jamais à l'acte, puisque, la-bas, aucune opération ne s'effectue dans le temps." (Plotin Ennéades, II, p. 76.) Ficinus: "neque unquam procedat in actum propterea quam minime peragatur." (In Creuzer and Moser, eds. Plotini Enéades cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione Castigata [Oxford: Typograph-icum Academicum, 1835], p. 82.)

and it could not receive anything, it would be solely what it was. [7] But what it was, was already present [There] and not going to be. What other, then, could it have been after what was already present? Such a thing would not be in potency at all. [8] One must then speak of something in potency as being able to become another after what it already is, either remaining along with its production of the other or giving itself over to that which it could be and being destroyed itself. [9] For the bronze is in potency a statue in one sense, and in another sense water is in potency bronze and air is in potency fire.

1, 10-21:

Ἄλλὰ τί ἐστὶ τὸ δυνάμει πρῶτον λεκτέον, εἰ δὴ τὸ δυνάμει δεῖ μὴ ἀπλῶς λέγεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ δυνάμει μηδενὸς εἶναι. Οἷον δυνάμει ἀνδριάς ὁ χαλκός· εἰ γὰρ μηδὲν ἐξ αὐτοῦ μηδ' ἐπ' αὐτῷ μηδ' ἔμελλε μηθὲν ἔσεσθαι μεθ' ὃ ἦν μηδ' ἐνεδέχετο γενέσθαι, ἦν ἂν ὃ ἦν μόνον. Ὁ δὲ ἦν, ἤδη παρῆν καὶ οὐκ ἔμελλε· τί οὖν ἐδύνατο ἄλλο μετὰ τὸ παρὸν αὐτό; Οὐ τοίνυν ἦν ἂν δυνάμει. Δεῖ τοίνυν τὸ δυνάμει τι ὄν ἄλλο ἤδη τῷ τι καὶ ἄλλο μετ' αὐτὸ δύνασθαι, ἧτοι μένον μετὰ τοῦ ἐκεῖνο ποιεῖν ἢ παρέχον αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνῳ ὃ δύναται φθαρέν αὐτό, δυνάμει λέγεσθαι· ἄλλως γὰρ τὸ «δυνάμει ἀνδριάς ὁ χαλκός», ἄλλως τὸ ὕδωρ δυνάμει χαλκός καὶ ὁ ἀήρ πῦρ.

[10] "If being in potency is of such a nature, then can it be called the potency to what it will become; for example, is bronze the potency of the statue? [11] Well, if potency is taken according to production [=an operative power], certainly not. [12] For potency, if taken in the productive sense, would not be said to be in potency. [13] But if being in potency is said to pertain not only to being in act but also to act, then potency would be in potency. [14] But it is better and clearer to speak of being in potency with reference to being in act, and potency in reference to act.

[15] "Being in potency understood in such a sense is like something which is a substrate to affections, shapes and forms, which it is going to receive by its nature.¹² And indeed it strives to come to them and [receives] some for the best and some for the worse and [these latter] spoil them [i.e., the things which are constituted by that substrate and the affections, shapes, etc. it receives and] each of which is in act and is other [than the substrate].¹³

1, 21-34:

Τοιοῦτον

δὴ ὄν τὸ δυνάμει ἄρα καὶ δύναμις λέγοιτο ἂν πρὸς τὸ ἐσόμενον, οἷον ὁ χαλκὸς δύναμις τοῦ ἀνδριάντος; Ἡ, εἰ μὲν ἡ δύναμις κατὰ τὸ ποιεῖν λαμβάνοιτο, οὐδαμῶς· οὐ γὰρ ἡ δύναμις ἢ κατὰ τὸ ποιεῖν λαμβανομένη λέγοιτο ἂν δυνάμει. Ἐἰ δὲ τὸ δυνάμει μὴ μόνον πρὸς τὸ ἐνεργεῖα λέγεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἐνέργειαν, εἴη ἂν καὶ δύναμις δυνάμει. Βέλτιον δὲ καὶ σαφέστερον τὸ μὲν δυνάμει πρὸς τὸ ἐνεργεῖα, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν πρὸς ἐνέργειαν λέγειν. Τὸ μὲν δὴ δυνάμει τοιοῦτον ὥσπερ ὑποκείμενόν τι πάθει καὶ μορφαῖς καὶ εἶδεσιν, ἃ μέλλει δέχεσθαι καὶ πέφυκεν ἢ καὶ σπεύδει ἐλθεῖν, καὶ τὰ μὲν ὡς πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὰ χεῖρω καὶ λυμαντικὰ αὐτῶν, ὧν ἕκαστον καὶ ἐνεργεῖα ἐστὶν ἄλλο.

¹²"Affections" is my translation of the Greek παθή. Admittedly, this is not wholly satisfactory because of the emotional connotations of the word but it still seems the least defective among such alternatives as "influences," "passivities" and "experiences." Also: the term ὑποκείμενον is a participle which I translate as a noun, "substrate," in order to make clearer what Plotinus means by the term.

¹³My translation here is based on Bréhier: "ou qu'il s'efforce de saisir en lui, visant tantôt à la forme la meilleure pour lui, tantôt à des formes inférieures qui le détruiraient, mais dont chacune est en acte et différente de lui" (Plotin Ennéades, II, p. 77).

[16] "We must consider [sensible] matter: whether it is being in potency to the things which are formed [and simultaneously] is something else in act, or is nothing in act. [17] And in general do those other things which we say are in potency themselves remain when receiving the form and come to be in act, or is 'being in act' predicated of the statue, 'the statue in act' being opposed only to 'the statue in potency.' But 'being in act' will not be attributed to that of which 'the statue in potency' was used. [18] If this is so, being in potency does not become being in act, but out of the former, being in potency, comes the latter, being in act. [19] Being in act is neither matter nor the form imposed upon it, but is the composite. [20] And this is so if a different entity would come into being, for example, a statue from bronze. For the statue is another entity because it is the composite. [21] But in the case of those things of which nothing remains [e.g., water when it becomes bronze--see #9 above], what was in potency was altogether different.

2, 1-15:

Περὶ δὲ τῆς ὕλης σκεπτέον, εἰ ἕτερόν τι οὐσα ἐνεργεία δυνάμει ἐστὶ πρὸς ἃ μορφοῦται, ἢ οὐδὲν ἐνεργεία, καὶ ὅλως καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἃ λέγομεν δυνάμει λαβόντα τὸ εἶδος καὶ μένοντα αὐτὰ ἐνεργεία γίνεται, ἢ τὸ ἐνεργεία κατὰ τοῦ ἀνδριάντος λεχθήσεται ἀντιτιθεμένου μόνον τοῦ ἐνεργεία ἀνδριάντος πρὸς τὸν δυνάμει ἀνδριάντα, ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦ ἐνεργεία κατηγορουμένου κατ' ἐκείνου, καθ' οὗ τὸ δυνάμει ἀνδρίας ἐλέγεται. Εἰ δὴ οὕτως, οὐ τὸ δυνάμει γίνεται ἐνεργεία, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος πρότερον ἐγένετο τὸ ἐνεργεία ὕστερον. Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεία ὄν τὸ συναμφότερον, οὐχ ἡ ὕλη, τὸ δὲ εἶδος τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῇ. Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν, εἰ ἕτερα γίγνοιτο οὐσία, οἷον ἐκ χαλκοῦ ἀνδρίας· ἄλλη γὰρ οὐσία ὡς τὸ συναμφότερον ὁ ἀνδρίας. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ὅλως οὐ μενόντων φανερόν, ὡς τὸ δυνάμει παντάπασιν ἕτερον ἦν.

[22] "But when the grammarian in potency becomes so in act, then is not being in potency somehow the same as being in act? For Socrates is the same when wise in potency or wise in act. [23] Accordingly, is it the same when the ignorant man becomes knowledgeable? For he was knowledgeable in potency. [24] It is only by accident that the ignorant man becomes knowledgeable. For he was in potency knowledgeable not in so far as he was ignorant (his being ignorant was accidental to him) [but by reason of his soul] and the soul having itself the right disposition was in potency and thereby became knowledgeable. [25] Well, then, does he remain in potency, [i.e.,] is he in potency a grammarian when already a grammarian [in act]? Nothing prevents this and let us present it differently: there [at first] he is only in potency, at a later time the potency has the form.

2, 15-26:

Ἄλλ' ὅταν ὁ δυνάμει γραμματικὸς ἐνεργείᾳ γένηται, ἐνταῦθα τὸ δυνάμει πῶς οὐ καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ τὸ αὐτό; Ὁ γὰρ δυνάμει Σωκράτης ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ σοφός. Ἄρ' οὖν καὶ ὁ ἀνεπιστήμων ἐπιστήμων; Δυνάμει γὰρ ἦν ἐπιστήμων. Ἡ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὁ ἀμαθὴς ἐπιστήμων. Οὐ γὰρ ἡ ἀμαθὴς δυνάμει ἐπιστήμων, ἀλλὰ συμβεβήκει αὐτῷ ἀμαθεῖ εἶναι, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ καθ' αὐτὴν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχουσα τὸ δυνάμει ἦν ἤπερ καὶ ἐπιστήμων. Ἐτι οὖν σώζει τὸ δυνάμει, καὶ δυνάμει γραμματικὸς ἤδη γραμματικὸς ὢν. Ἡ οὐδὲν κωλύει καὶ ἄλλον τρόπον ἐκεῖ μὲν δυνάμει μόνον, ἐνταῦθα δὲ τῆς δυνάμεως ἐχούσης τὸ εἶδος.

[26] "If then being in potency is the substrate and being in act is the composite, the statue, what should the form imposed on the bronze be called? [27] It is not a mistake to call the shape and the form the act, by which the statue is in act and not merely in potency; the shape and form are not act simply [and subsistently], but the act of this thing.

[28] But we should perhaps more properly speak of yet another act, the act opposed to the potency [or power] that brings it about. [29] For being in potency has being in act through another [the bronze becomes an actual statue through the sculptor], but for the potency [=operative power] what it can do by itself is its act. [30] For instance, [the act of one's moral power] is his moral habit and the activity named after it— e.g., courage and courageous deeds [are the act of a moral person].¹⁴ These things then are such.

2, 26-36:

Εἰ οὖν ἔστι τὸ μὲν δυνάμει τὸ ὑποκείμενον, τὸ δ' ἐνεργείᾳ τὸ συναμφοτέρον, ὁ ἀνδριάς, τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἐπὶ τοῦ χαλκοῦ τί ἂν λέγοιτο; Ἡ οὐκ ἄτοπον τὴν ἐνεργείαν, καθ' ἣν ἐνεργείᾳ ἔστι καὶ οὐ μόνον δυνάμει, τὴν μορφήν καὶ τὸ εἶδος λέγειν, οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἐνεργείαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦδε ἐνεργείαν· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄλλην ἐνεργείαν τάχα κυριώτερον ἂν λέγοιμεν, τὴν ἀντίθετον τῇ δυνάμει τῇ ἐπαγούσῃ ἐνεργείαν. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ δυνάμει τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ ἔχειν παρ' ἄλλου, τῇ δὲ δυνάμει ὁ δύναται παρ' αὐτῆς ἢ ἐνεργείᾳ· οἷον ἕξις καὶ ἡ κατ' αὐτὴν λεγομένη ἐνεργεία, ἀνδρία καὶ τὸ ἀνδρίζεσθαι. Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὕτως.

[31] "Now we must speak on the topic in preparation for which we have discussed these previous matters: in what way there is being in act in the intelligible existents and whether each intelligible is only in act or is act and if act is all and if being in potency is There also. [32] If indeed matter is not There, in which being in potency could be, or if nothing is There which is going to be other than what it already is, or if nothing is There which by changing into another and remaining

¹⁴If we may also use the illustration of the sculptor, his act is his artistic talents, which are also his operative powers. It is these powers which make possible the perfections and shapes in the statue but which themselves are recipients of perfections from the operations of the sculptor. See comments below.

itself generates something else, or proceeding out of itself gives being to another in place of itself, then among those beings that are eternal and not in time there is nothing There in which being in potency can be.

3, 1-8:

Οὐ δ' ἕνεκα ταῦτα προείρηται, νῦν λεκτέον, ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς πῶς ποτε τὸ ἐνεργεῖν λέγεται καὶ εἰ ἐνεργεῖν μόνον ἢ καὶ ἐνέργεια ἑκαυτῶν καὶ εἰ ἐνέργεια πάντα καὶ εἰ τὸ δυνάμει κάκει. Ἰὺ δὲ μήτε ὕλη ἐκεῖ ἐν ἣ τὸ δυνάμει, μήτε τι μέλλει τῶν ἐκεῖ, ὃ μὴ ἤδη ἐστὶ, μηδ' ἔτι μεταβάλλον εἰς ἄλλο ἢ μένον ἕτερόν τι γεννᾷ ἢ ἐξιστάμενον ἑαυτοῦ ἔδωκεν ἄλλω ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἶναι, οὐκ ἂν εἶη ἐκεῖ τὸ δυνάμει ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶ, τῶν ὄντων καὶ αἰῶνα, οὐ χρόνον ἐχόντων.

[33] "If then someone were to ask those who place matter There among the intelligible existents, whether being in potency is not There too in regard to the matter There--for even if matter There is of a different sort, there will nonetheless be in each thing something like matter, something like form and the composite--what will they say? The something like matter There is form, since even the soul which is form could be matter to another. [34] Then is it in potency to that other? Certainly not; for that [other] would be its form and form would not afterwards come to it separated except by thought; and thus soul has matter [and Form is there all along] inasmuch as it is thought of as a duality, but both are one nature, just as Aristotle says the fifth element is immaterial.¹⁵

¹⁵Armstrong remarks in a footnote to his translation that "Aristotle never actually says this: it may perhaps be taken as implicit in De Caelo A. 3. 270 a-b, where he argues that the celestial substance 'the body that moves in a circle' must be ageless, impassible, without any sort of quantitative or qualitative change. Possibly Plotinus depends

[35] "But how are we to speak of the soul? For it is in potency living whenever it does not yet exist but will be, and it is in potency musical, and is other things that it is not always but will become; hence there is being in potency in the intelligibles. But should we conclude that there is being in potency in the intelligible world? No. The soul is not these things in potency but is the potency of these things.

3, 8-22:

Εἴ

τις οὖν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν νοητῶν τοὺς τιθεμένους κάκει ὕλην ἔροιτο, εἰ μὴ κάκει τὸ δυνάμει κατὰ τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἐκεῖ — καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἄλλον τρόπον ἢ ὕλη, ἀλλ' ἔσται ἐφ' ἐκύστου τὸ μὲν ὡς ὕλη, τὸ δὲ ὡς εἶδος, τὸ δὲ συναμφότερον — τί ἐρουῖσιν; Ἡ καὶ τὸ ὡς ὕλη ἐκεῖ εἶδος ἐστίν, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ εἶδος ὄν πρὸς ἕτερον ἂν εἴη ὕλη. Οὐκοῦν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο καὶ δυνάμει; Ἡ οὐ· εἶδος γὰρ ἦν αὐτῆς καὶ οὐκ εἰς ὑπερόν δὲ τὸ εἶδος καὶ οὐ χωρίζεται δὲ ἀλλ' ἢ λόγῳ, καὶ οὕτως ὕλην ἔχον, ὡς διπλοῦν νοούμενον, ἄμφω δὲ μία φύσις· οἷον καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης φησὶ τὸ πέμπτον σῶμα αὐλον εἶναι. Περὶ δὲ ψυχῆς πῶς ἐρουῖμεν; Δυνάμει γὰρ ζῶον, ὅταν μήπω, μέλλη δέ, καὶ μουσικῆ δυνάμει καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσα γίνεται οὐκ ἀεὶ οὕσα· ὥστε καὶ ἐν νοητοῖς τὸ δυνάμει. Ἡ οὐ δυνάμει ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ δύνάμεις ἢ ψυχὴ τούτων.

[36] "But how is being in act There? Is it like the statue is in act, namely, a compound of both matter and form, because each intelligible reality has already received form? Rather we should say because each is a form and is perfectly what it is. [37] For Intelligence does not come from a [passive] potency to think to the act of thinking-- for otherwise it would need something before it not in potency [i.e., it would need pure

here on some Peripatetic commentator on this passage, who drew the conclusion that Aristotle thought that the quintessence was without matter because he states so clearly that it is absolutely unchanging, and there is therefore no need to postulate any matter in it to be the substrate of change" (Plotinus, Vol. II, pp. 162-63). Aristotle explicitly states that his fifth element has matter in Meta., Theta, 8, 1050 b 22.

or eternal act before it] —but the All is [already and permanently] in it. For something in potency desires to be brought into act by another, in order that it become something in act. But that which has itself of itself so as to be eternal, would be act. [38] So all the primals are act. For each has what it needs just from itself and eternally, and this is true of the soul which is not in matter but in the intelligible. And the soul in matter is an act of another sort—such as a plant-soul, for this is act, [i.e.,] what it is.

[39] "But even though all things There are in act, are they all also act? Why not? If indeed it is well said that the nature There is sleepless and life and the best life, then, the noblest acts would be There. And all beings There are in act and are act and all are lives and that place is the place of life and that place is the origin and spring of true soul and Intelligence.

3, 22-40:

Τὸ

δὲ ἐνεργεία πῶς ἐκεῖ; Ἄρα ὡς ὁ ἀνδριάς τὸ συναμφοτέρων ἐνεργεία, ὅτι τὸ εἶδος ἕκαστον ἀπέληφεν; Ἡ ὅτι εἶδος ἕκαστον καὶ τέλειον ὃ ἐστι. Νοῦς γὰρ οὐκ ἐκ δυνάμεως τῆς κατὰ τὸ οἶόν τε νοεῖν εἰς ἐνεργείαν τοῦ νοεῖν — ἄλλου γὰρ ἂν προτέρου τοῦ οὐκ ἐκ δυνάμεως δέοιτο — ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ πᾶν. Τὸ γὰρ δυνάμει βούλεται ἑτέρου ἐπελθόντος εἰς ἐνεργείαν ἄγεσθαι, ἵνα ἐνεργεία γίνηται τι, ὃ δ' αὐτὸ παρ' αὐτοῦ τὸ αἰεὶ οὕτως ἔχει, τοῦτο ἐνεργεία ἂν εἴη. Πάντα οὖν τὰ πρῶτα ἐνεργεία· ἔχει γὰρ ὁ δεῖ ἔχειν καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ αἰεὶ· καὶ ψυχὴ δὴ οὕτως ἢ μὴ ἐν ὕλη, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ νοητῷ.

Καὶ ἡ ἐν ὕλη δὲ ἄλλη ἐνεργεία· οἶον ἡ φυτικὴ ἐνεργεία γὰρ καὶ αὕτη ὃ ἐστιν. Ἄλλ' ἐνεργεία μὲν πάντα καὶ οὕτως, ἐνεργεία δὲ πάντα; Ἡ πῶς; Εἰ δὴ καλῶς εἴρηται ἐκείνη ἡ φύσις ἄγρυπνος εἶναι καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ζωὴ ἀρίστη, αἱ κάλλιστα ἂν εἴεν ἐκεῖ ἐνεργεῖαι. Καὶ ἐνεργεία ἄρα καὶ ἐνεργεία τὰ πάντα καὶ ζῶαί τὰ πάντα καὶ ὁ τόπος ὁ ἐκεῖ τόπος ἐστὶ ζωῆς καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ πηγὴ ἀληθοῦς ψυχῆς τε καὶ νοῦ.

[40] "All other things, then, each of which is something in potency, that is, which already is but is said to be in potency to another, has being in act as something else. [41] But when we speak of [sensible] matter, which we say is in potency all beings, how is it we can say it is something in act in real existents? For if so, it would not be all beings in potency. [42] If then it is not a factor in beings, it itself necessarily cannot be. How then could it be something in act and not be a factor in beings? [43] But though it might not be a factor of the beings which come about on it, nothing prevents it from being something else, if all beings need not be in matter.

4, 1-10: *Τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα πάντα, ὅσα δυνάμει τί ἐστίν, ἔχει καὶ τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ εἶναι ἄλλο τι, ὃ ἤδη ὄν πρὸς ἄλλο δυνάμει εἶναι λέγεται· περὶ δὲ τῆς λεγομένης εἶναι ὕλης, ἣν πάντα δυνάμει λέγομεν τὰ ὄντα, πῶς ἐστίν εἰπεῖν ἐνεργείᾳ τι τῶν ὄντων εἶναι; Ἡδὴ γὰρ οὐ πάντα τὰ ὄντα δυνάμει ἂν εἶη. Ἐἰ οὖν μηδὲν τῶν ὄντων, ἀνάγκη μηδ' ὄν αὐτὴν εἶναι. Πῶς οὖν ἂν ἐνεργείᾳ τι εἶη μηδὲν τῶν ὄντων οὐσα; Ἄλλ' οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἂν εἶη τούτων, ἃ γίνεται ἐπ' αὐτῆς, ἄλλο δὲ τι οὐδὲν κωλύει εἶναι, εἴπερ μηδὲ πάντα τὰ ὄντα ἐπὶ τῇ ὕλῃ.*

[44] "Because it is none of these things on it, and these are beings, it is not a being. [45] But certainly it would not be a form, since it is imagined as something without a form. So then it could not be numbered in them [i.e., among the Forms]. So it will not be in this way also. If then it is not in both these ways, then it will not be all the more. [46] If then it has escaped the nature of true beings and cannot attain to those which are said to be falsely, because it is not even a phantom of logos as these are, in what kind of being can we know it? And if in no sort of being, what would it be in act?

4, 10-18:

Ἡ μὲν δὴ οὐδὲν ἐστὶ τούτων τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῇ, ταῦτα δὲ ὄντα, μὴ ὄν ἂν εἶη. Οὐ μὲν δὴ ἀνείδεόν τι φανταζομένη εἶδος ἂν εἶη· οὐ τοίνυν οὐδ' ἐν ἐκείνοις ὄν ἀριθμηθεῖη. Μὴ ὄν ἄρα καὶ ταύτη ἐστὶ. Ἐπ' ἄμφω ἄρα μὴ ὄν οὔσα πλείονως μὴ ὄν ἐστὶ. Εἰ δὴ πέφευγε μὲν τὴν τῶν ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄντων φύσιν, οὐ δύναται δὲ ἐφικέσθαι οὐδὲ τῶν ψευδῶς λεγομένων εἶναι, ὅτι μὴδὲ ἰνδαλμα λόγου ἐστὶν ὡς ταῦτα, ἐν τίνι τῷ εἶναι ἂν ἀλοίη; Εἰ δὲ ἐν μηδενὶ τῷ εἶναι, τί ἂν ἐνεργεῖα εἶη;

[47] "How, then, do we speak of it? How is it the matter of beings? Because [it is they] in potency. Then because [it is they] already in potency, is it already what it is going to be? [48] But its being is only an announcement of what it is going to be.¹⁶ It is as though its

¹⁶In III 6 (26), 7, 16-27, after describing matter as non-being, Plotinus describes it also as an "announcement": "It always presents opposite appearances on its surface, small and great, less and more, deficient and superabundant, a phantom, which does not remain and cannot get away either, for it has no strength for this, since it has not received strength from intellect but is lacking in all being. Whatever announcement it makes, therefore, is a lie, and if it appears great, it is small, if more, it is less; its apparent being is not real, but a sort of fleeting frivolity; hence the things which seem to come to be on it are frivolities, nothing but phantoms on a phantom, like something in a mirror which really exists in one place but is reflected in another; it seems to be filled, and holds nothing, it is all seeming." (Except for a few changes I follow Armstrong's translation, Plotinus, II, 241-43.)

καὶ τὰ ἐναντία αἰεὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ φανταζόμενον, μικρὸν καὶ μέγα καὶ ἡττον καὶ μᾶλλον, ἐλλείπον τε καὶ ὑπερέχον, εἶδωλον οὐ μένον οὐδ' αὖ φεύγειν δυνάμενον· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐδὲ τοῦτο ἰσχύει ἅτε μὴ ἰσχὴν παρὰ νοῦ λαβόν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐλλείψει τοῦ ὄντος παντὸς γενόμενον. Διὸ πᾶν ὃ ἂν ἐπαγγέλληται ψεύδεται, κἂν μέγα φαντασθῆ, μικρὸν ἐστὶ, κἂν μᾶλλον, ἡττόν ἐστὶ, καὶ τὸ ὄν αὐτοῦ ἐν φαντάσει οὐκ ὄν ἐστίν, οἷον παίγνιον φεύγον· ὅθεν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐγγίγνεσθαι δοκοῦντα παίγνια, εἶδωλα ἐν εἰδώλῳ ἀτεχνῶς, ὡς ἐν κατόπτρῳ τὸ ἀλλαχοῦ ἰδρυμένον ἀλλαχοῦ φανταζόμενον· καὶ πιμπλάμενον, ὡς δοκεῖ, καὶ ἔχον οὐδὲν καὶ δοκοῦν τὰ πάντα.

being were postponed for that which it will be. [49] So its being in potency is not to be something, but is to be in potency all things. [50] And being nothing of itself but what it is, matter, it is not in act at all. For if it will be something in act, it will be what it is in act, and thus will not be matter. Accordingly, it would not be matter absolutely but only as in the way bronze is. [51] Accordingly, this would be non-being, not something other than being, like motion.¹⁷ The latter rides on being, as if coming from it and yet being in it; but the matter is as if cast out and completely separated from being and unable to change itself; but matter is always as it was from the beginning--non-being. [52] It was not anything in act from the beginning, since it stood apart from all beings nor did it become. For it has not been able to take even a tinge of color from the things that wanted to slip into it. But remaining directed to something else, it is in potency to what comes next.

5, 1-17:

Πῶς οὖν λέγομεν περὶ αὐτῆς; Πῶς δὲ τῶν ὄντων ὕλη; Ἡ ὅτι δυνάμει. Οὐκοῦν, ὅτι ἤδη δυνάμει, ἤδη οὖν ἔστι καθὸ μέλλει; Ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτῇ μόνον τὸ μέλλον ἐπαγγελνόμενον· οἷον τὸ εἶναι αὐτῇ εἰς ἐκεῖνο ἀναβάλλεται, ὃ ἔσται. Τὸ τοῖνυν δυνάμει οὐ τι, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει πάντα· μηδὲν δὲ ὄν καθ' αὐτὸ, ἀλλ' ὃ ἔστιν ὕλη ὄν, οὐδ' ἐνεργεία ἐστίν. Εἰ γὰρ ἔσται τι ἐνεργεία, ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ἐνεργεία, οὐχ ἢ ὕλη ἔσται· οὐ πάντῃ οὖν ὕλη, ἀλλὰ οἷον ὁ χαλκός.

Intelligible matter is also an "announcement" but of eternity and perfect being (III, 7 [45], 3, 25).

¹⁷Motion (kinēsis) and Otherness (heterotēs) are properties of intelligible matter. (See II, 4, 5, 28-29, which we quote below in our comments on intelligible matter.) Sensible matter is also other than the source of being but is not a motion, for motion in the sensible world is caused by Soul.

Εἴη ἂν οὖν τοῦτο μὴ ὄν, οὐχ ὡς ἕτερον τοῦ ὄντος, οἶον κίνησις· αὕτη γὰρ καὶ ἐποχεῖται τῷ ὄντι οἶον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ οὔσα, ἢ δέ ἐστιν οἶον ἐκριφεῖσα καὶ πάντη χωρισθεῖσα καὶ μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτὴν οὐ δυναμένη, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἦν — μὴ ὄν δέ ἦν — οὕτως αἰεὶ ἔχουσα. Οὔτε δὲ ἦν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐνεργεῖα τι ἀποστᾶσα πάντων τῶν ὄντων οὔτε ἐγένετο· ἃ γὰρ ὑποδῦναι ἠθέλησεν, οὐδὲ χρωσθῆναι ἀπ' αὐτῶν δεδύνηται, ἀλλὰ μένουσα πρὸς ἄλλο δυνάμει οὔσα πρὸς τὰ ἐφεξῆς,

[53] When the realities had come to an end, matter appeared, and was caught by the things that came into being with it, and took its place as the last of these. [54] So, being caught by both [the sensible and the intelligible], it could belong in act to neither class of realities; it is only left for it to be in potency, a sort of weak and dim phantom unable to receive shape. So it is in act a phantom; so it is in act a falsity; this is the same as 'that which is truly false'; this is 'what is really unreal.'¹⁸ If then it is non-being in act, it especially is not being; it is really non-being.¹⁹ [55] That, then which has its truth in nonbeing is very far from being in act among beings, for if you are dealing with things which exist as falsity and if you take away their falsity, you have taken away their entity; and if you bring things to act which have their being and entity in potency, you have destroyed the cause of their being, since their being was in their potency. [56] If then we

¹⁸See above n. 16 and n. 9.

¹⁹I base my translation of this sentence on Ficinus: "si ergo in actu non ens, magis itaque non ens: atque non ens enter" (Creuzer and Moser, eds., Plotini Eneades cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione Castigata, p. 85). Also see Harder-Theiler, Plotins Schriften, Band II, pp. 99-101: "Ist sie also aktuell ein Nichtseiendes, so ist sie in umso hoherem Grade nichtseiend, und also wahrhaft nichtseiend."

must keep matter as indestructible, we must keep it as matter. One must say it would seem only that it is in potency in order that it may be what it is, or else one must refute these arguments."

5, 17-36:

τῶν δ' ὄντων ἤδη παυσαμένων ἐκείνων φανείσα ὑπό τε τῶν μετ' αὐτὴν γενομένων καταληφθεῖσα ἔσχατον καὶ τούτων κατέστη. Ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων οὖν καταληφθεῖσα ἐνεργεία μὲν οὐδετέρων ἂν εἴη, δυνάμει δὲ μόνον ἐγκαταλέλειπται εἶναι ἀσθενές τι καὶ ἀμυδρὸν εἰδῶλον μορφουῖσθαι μὴ δυνάμενον. Οὐκοῦν ἐνεργεία εἰδῶλον· οὐκοῦν ἐνεργεία ψεῦδος. Τοῦτο δὲ ταῦτόν τῳ ἀληθινῶς ψεῦδος· τοῦτο δὲ ὄντως μὴ ὄν. Εἰ οὖν ἐνεργεία μὴ ὄν, μᾶλλον μὴ ὄν, καὶ ὄντως ἄρα μὴ ὄν. Πολλοῦ ἄρα δεῖ αὐτῷ ἐνεργεία τι τῶν ὄντων εἶναι τὸ ἀληθές ἔχοντι ἐν τῷ μὴ ὄντι. Εἴπερ ἄρα δεῖ αὐτὸ εἶναι, δεῖ αὐτὸ ἐνεργεία μὴ εἶναι, ἵνα ἐκβεβηκὸς τοῦ ἀληθῶς εἶναι ἐν τῷ μὴ εἶναι ἔχη τὸ εἶναι, ἐπεὶπερ τοῖς ψευδῶς οὖσιν, ἐὰν ἀφέλης τὸ ψεῦδος αὐτῶν, ἀφεῖλες αὐτῶν ἦντινα εἶχον οὐσίαν, καὶ τοῖς δυνάμει τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχουσι εἰσαγαγὼν τὴν ἐνεργείαν ἀπολώλεκας αὐτῶν τῆς ὑποστάσεως τὴν αἰτίαν, ὅτι τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῖς ἐν δυνάμει ἦν. Εἴπερ ἄρα δεῖ ἀνώλεθρον τὴν ὕλην τηρεῖν, ὕλην αὐτὴν δεῖ τηρεῖν· δεῖ ἄρα δυνάμει, ὡς ἔοικεν, εἶναι λέγειν μόνον, ἵνα ἢ ὁ ἐστίν, ἢ τούτους τοὺς λόγους ἐξελεγκτέον.

Comments

In order to comment intelligently on Text C, let us first trace its movement of thought. II, 5 consists essentially of three parts, in the first of which (chapters 1 and 2) Plotinus works out the meaning of four crucial notions (being in potency [τὸ δυνάμει ὄν] vs. being in act [τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ ὄν]; potency [ἡ δύναμις] vs. act [ἡ ἐνέργεια]). In the second part (chapter 3) he applies that fourfold conception to the intelligible realm and, finally (chapters 4-5), to sensible matter. Now we shall take up each part in detail.

Part One:

a. Plotinus begins by announcing (#1) that he aims at studying the four conceptions: being in potency vs. being in act; potency itself vs. act itself.

b. This study he initiates through several questions--e.g., is being in act the same as act or are they different (#2)? is being in potency found in the intelligible realm (#3)?

c. There are several reasons why one should answer the latter questions negatively. Being in potency There could never come into act (#4). It would need to be the potency of something (to take an example from the sensible world, bronze is in potency to the statue cast from it), which would have to become something other than what it was (#5-#6). But this is impossible There, because becoming cannot occur in the intelligible world (#7) no matter whether what is in potency remains as part of the new product (e.g., bronze remains in the statue) or disappears and loses its own nature (e.g., water ceases to be water in bronze, and air in fire; #8-#9).

c. Plotinus next inquires whether being in potency may be called potency (e.g., is bronze, which is the statue in potency, the potency of the statue? #10). The answer is "no" if dynamis refers to an operative power (literally: hē dynamis kata to poiein; #11-#12) but "yes" if it refers to a passive potency and if being in potency pertains not only to being in act but also to act itself (#13). But it is preferable to keep the original contrast: being in potency vs. being in act; potency vs. act (#14).

d. When being in potency has reference to being in act, then it is like something underlying and naturally receiving pathe, shapes and forms,

which it even strives to obtain and which constitute, together with it, a being in act. This last can be good or deficient depending on whether the forms received are good or harmful (#15).

e. In order to clarify further his four crucial notions (see above, #a) he investigates matter in the sensible world. [Prime] matter is being in potency to the things which, together with the forms received, it constitutes. But of itself is matter being in act (#16)? More generally, does such [secondary] matter as bronze, which is the statue in potency, remain in act when the statue comes to be and is in act (#17)? No, being in potency does not become being in act but is that from which the being in act (e.g., statue) comes (#18). Being in act is neither matter nor form but is their compound (#19), which is different from each component and yet either contains them (e.g., the statue has both bronze and shape; #20) or absorbs them (e.g., the bronze absorbs or destroys water; fire absorbs air; (#21).

f. Plotinus next focuses the question of whether being in potency also is being in act in the finished product upon the case of the grammarian or, more generally, upon the case of anyone passing from ignorance to knowledge (#22-#23). When an ignorant person becomes knowledgeable, that by which he was in potency is his soul (#24). Yet the latter remains in potency [to knowledge other than grammar through its operative powers and to writing and speaking grammatically through its operative habit of grammar; (#25)].

g. Having studied being in potency and being in act, Plotinus now turns to act and potency as such. The form or shape which causes the bronze to be a statue is act--not act in an absolute or subsistent sense but as immanent in some particular thing (#26-#27). Such an immanent act

has come about by that which is other than (par' allou) both the being in potency (e.g., the bronze) and the being in act (the statue)—[namely, by the sculptor, who through his operative powers of intelligence and artistic talents reduces the potency in the bronze to act (the form of the statue)]. But "act" can also signify the operation, as well as the operative habits, which an operative power (dynamis) produces of and in itself (par' autēs) [e.g., the actual casting of the bronze by the sculptor through his operative powers, which thereby acquire artistic habits, which in turn perfect those powers]. Or, again, in the case of a moral agent acting courageously, his energeiai are his courageous conduct [which issues from his practical intellect and will] and the virtue of courage [which he acquires through such conduct; (#28-#30)].

Part Two:

h. Chapters one and two (#1-#30) have prepared us for chapter three, which is the second and most important part of the treatise, for here Plotinus inquires how the four basic notions (see #a, above) apply to the intelligible realm (#31).

1. He beings by considering whether being in potency applies to the intelligible realm. One must answer negatively whether one posits matter in the intelligible realm or not. If one denies that matter is in the intelligible world [and certainly sensible matter is not There], then being in potency cannot be There, because intelligible existents are eternally what they are; hence it is a universe without change or becoming, in which one thing does not become another (#32; see also #3-#4 and also #c, above). But even if one admits [as Plotinus does] matter into the intelligible world [not sensible matter but matter of a different sort--so-called "intelligible matter"], there will still be no being in potency

There. This is the case even though at first sight one would seem to find in each intelligible thing something like matter, something like form and something like the composite. Being in potency, however, is not There because the something like matter There is really the active power of the intelligible nature seeking to acquire further perfections. For example, the Soul is one formal nature but has matter to the extent that it can acquire further energeia (#33).

Is soul then in potency to those perfections which are distinguishable from it? No. If soul were in potency to them they would be its form, but soul is already form and such perfections are distinct from it only by abstraction. The soul and its perfections [are really one nature and] are only mentally separable (#34).

j. At this point Plotinus considers potency in the relationship between the intelligible world and the human soul. Before the human soul exists, it is only in potency alive, is merely in potency musical and is solely in potency to other such attributes before it has attained them (#35). Do such potential situations introduce being in potency into the intelligible realm? No. The soul is not in potency to such perfections as life and music but is the potency (=operative power) of acquiring such things (#35): it acquires such perfections through itself--i.e., par' autēs (See above, #29 and #g).

k. Plotinus next considers how being in act is There. Intelligible existents are in act but not in the same manner as are sensible existents, for a sensible existent is an obvious compound of matter and form (e.g., the bronze statue), whereas an intelligible existent [is a perfect union of two components, it] is truly one form [or nature] and is perfectly what it is [a true ousia]. For example, the Intelligence is perfect

and eternal and not dependent on a being in act to bring it to knowledge, for it is itself always knowing and is always in act (#36-#37).

m. Next he asks: are intelligible beings not only in act but also acts? Yes, because each is eternal and perfect. And this is true also of soul--both souls in matter (e.g., a plant-soul is act by being what it is) and, especially, souls outside of matter, which are self-sufficient and eternal (#38). The intelligible realm constituted by Intellect is a place of supreme life and noblest acts. Everything there is in act (#39).

Part Three:

n. Having explained how the four crucial expressions apply to the intelligible world, Plotinus returns to the sensible world and, specifically, to sensible matter. He observes that a being in potency, since it already exists, has being in act as something else [although it still can become another] (#40). Some beings in potency are in act because they already exist as something definite, but they are in potency nonetheless because even though they are already something in act, they still can become another (e.g., bronze is already in act as bronze [a determinate being] but it is in potency to becoming a statue). Is this also true of prime matter in the sensible world? Can it be in potency all things and also be something in and of itself, i.e., something in act (#40-#41)? No, because if it were in act or even in genuine factor in real beings, it would in fact belong to the class of real beings and not be in potency all of them (#41).

o. If it is not in real beings and not in act, how can it be at all (#41-#42)? If we admit that not everything that exists is in the class of beings that come to be on matter, then we may say that matter

still in a way exists (#43). But it is still true to say matter is not a being because neither is it one of the things that come to be on it nor is it a form (#44-#45). And since the beings that come upon it are themselves only images or shadows of true form and logos, we have all the more reason to declare that matter is very remote from being. (#46).

p. But if matter is not a being, how can we speak of it? We speak of it [as having "being" only in a very limited or weak sense--] as in potency to beings: it is the matter and potentiality for all beings. But this brings us back to our earlier question (#41; see also #m, above): is matter of itself something [in act] in addition to being in potency all things (#47)?

Again we should reply negatively, for matter [unlike bronze which is already something in act before being in potency in relation to another] is not already something but always is only what it will be (#48); matter is always to be in potency--in potency in an absolute sense (#49). Hence, matter is not in act at all (#50).

q. Matter, then, is non-being but not in the way that motion is not being. Motion is merely other than being because it is a mode of being, but matter is non-being in the sense of being the opposite of being (#51). It is impossible for matter to be any of the beings that come upon it and it is totally unaffected by them [because non-being can have no relationship with being] (#52).

r. Matter itself exists below the eternal intelligible existents and even the mutable sensible existents. It could be considered the least real of the latter class of things, but in reality it belongs to neither class of things, since it is only a dim phantom of reality (#53-#54). We speak of matter and posit it in reality, but it is ultimately

not a being and not real. We may express it paradoxically: matter is truly false and really unreal. It has reality only in the minimal sense that it is in potency all things; the very entity of matter is to be in potency and if you take this away from it, you take away what little being it has (#55-#56).

The following issues must be clarified and discussed in detail in order to grasp the full importance of this complex treatise: the meaning of the four key notions: being in potency vs. being in act and potency vs. act; the application of these four expressions to the intelligible world; the nature of intelligible matter; the nature of sensible matter.

The Meaning of the Four Basic Notions

One of the most important features of Text C is that it does not treat simply of hē energeia and hē dynamis but, in the interest of a more subtle and complete analysis, adds to these the notions to energeia on and to dynamei on. It is also significant that Plotinus separates these expressions into two sets: hē dynamis as the correlate of hē energeia; to dynamei on of to energeia on. By insisting that this order be respected (#14), Plotinus indicates that each term has a distinct and technical meaning. Indeed, his use of these terms is obviously careful throughout the treatise. Before we study to what philosophic purpose Plotinus puts these terms, let us uncover the meaning of each.

(1) Being in potency (to dynamei on). Early in the text (#5-#6) Plotinus defines being in potency: something which can become something else after what it already is. For example, bronze being in potency because it can become something else--say, a statue; so, too, is water because it can become something else such as air or even bronze (#6-#9).

In the first instance bronze retains its essence but acquires additional form through an extrinsic agent (the sculptor); in the second, water actually loses its nature, acquiring from outside another essence (#8-#9). From these helpful examples we may infer that something is in potency when it can receive either accidental or substantial form from an extrinsic cause. Hence, being in potency is obviously dynamis in the passive sense--the capacity to be formed by another (par' alloi; #29), i.e., to receive perfection purely by the agency of another and to be a substrate (#15).²⁰

That Plotinus follows Aristotle in this description of being in potency is indicated on several counts. First, the Greek expression to dunamei on is the precise phrase which occurs in Aristotle in his frequent remarks on passive dynamis.²¹ Secondly, Plotinus' repeated comments on bronze (#6-#9; #17; #20-#21; #26-#27; #50) echo Aristotle's common use of chalkos and andrias to illustrate being in potency.²² Thirdly, Plotinus' comment early in the text (#3-#5) that being in potency cannot belong to the intelligible world on grounds that no change occurs there, coupled

²⁰Of course, in the case of water becoming bronze or air, i.e., in substantial change, the nature of the thing is lost in the change (#8) and, therefore, prime matter remains as the substrate and not the thing itself.

²¹The following texts are instances of to dunamei on in Aristotle. De Gen. Gamma, 317 b 16; Meta. Beta, 6, 1002 b 33; Gamma, 4, 1007 b 28; Theta, 8, 1050 b 8; Lambda, 6, 1071 b 19, Nu, 2, 1089 a 28; in this last text to dunamei on is explicitly identified as the principle of change. Aristotle does not use the expression as formally as Plotinus, however, because occasionally it expresses active potency in his writings: see Meta. Theta, 3, 1047 a 25; Delta, 7, 1017 b 1-10.

²²For example: De Gen. Alpha, 10, 328 b 8-14; Pol. Alpha, 8, 1256 a 5-10; De Part. An. Alpha, 1, 640 b 23-29; Meta. Delta, 2, 1013 b 6 sqq.; Phys. Beta, 3, 195 a 33 sqq.; De Gen. An. Alpha, 18, 724 a 23-27; Phys. Alpha, 7, 190 a 25-27.

with his examples of substantial and accidental change in bronze and water (#8-#9), signals that being in potency functions as the principle of change for his philosophy just as it does for Aristotle's. Being in potency is the basis for change because it can acquire form successively.²³ Fourthly, Plotinus' account of sensible matter as being in potency par excellence has its basis in Aristotle's theory of prime matter, although they differ on a few central points (see below our comments on sensible matter).²⁴ Finally, Aristotle's distinction between prime and second matter also appears in Ennead II, 5, when Plotinus separates prime matter from other kinds of being in potency (#16-#17; #50).²⁵ Matter, for Plotinus, because it has of itself no form but is in potency all forms (#41), is being in potency in an absolute sense, but other existents, such as bronze, are in potency in a relative sense: while already formed existents, they may acquire further perfections from an extrinsic cause. Because they are like matter in their receptivity for form, being in potency in the relative sense may be called "the matter" of

²³Here I am thinking of substantial or accidental change, and in the latter case of either qualitative or quantitative change. Movement, another kind of accidental change, is change in place but not of form.

²⁴Aristotle does hold that prime matter is pure receptive potency but he also maintains, unlike Plotinus, that it is real. He allows that it unites with form to comprise one nature, whereas Plotinus prefers a dualism of matter and form to Aristotle's hylomorphism.

²⁵Prime matter is formless and incorporeal being in potency, whereas second matter is a corporeal, sensible thing which can still be shaped. Aristotle separates the two kinds by the expressions protē hylē and hylē eschatē: Meta. Theta, 7, 1049 a 26; Delta, 4, 1015 a 7; Eta. 4, 1044 a 16-23; Delta, 3, 1014 b 32; Phys. Beta, 1, 193 a 29; and especially, Meta. Lambda, 3, 1069 b 35-1070 a 2. Plotinus does not use the expression eschatē hylē, his references to second matter, such as bronze, being implicit and determined by the context of his discussion, but he does refer to protē hylē at II, 4 (12), 6, 14 and VI, 5 (23), 11, 37.

the forms that perfect them. This is not prime, but "second", matter.²⁶

(2) Being in act (to energeia on). Being in act is the contrary of being in potency (#14). While being in potency refers to any existent disposed to receive form through the agency of another, being in act signifies any existent completed by form (#17). Plotinus, however, is careful to demarcate being in act from the completing form itself (#19). The form is a component of being in act. The latter is constituted of matter or substrate (which in the sensible world is being in potency)²⁷ and of form. Hence, unlike its contrary, being in act describes not only sensible things but intelligibles as well, for existents There are also composites. They differ from sensible composites, however, because their components unite so intimately as to constitute one complete and perfect nature; in fact, it is only through metaphysical thinking that one can distinguish separate elements in the intelligible world (#33-#34).

With the exception of prime matter, being in potency is already being in act but is in potency to what it may yet become (#40; #50). This is why earlier we divided absolute (prime matter) from relative (second matter) being in potency. Bronze is an instance of being in act

²⁶Even intelligible beings (although they are not beings in potency, as we shall discover), because they may receive perfections from prior realities, are called "matter" (#33).

²⁷Since being in act exists in the intelligible world, where no being in potency exists, one may question why Plotinus insists (#14) that being in act is, properly speaking, the contrary to being in potency. It should just as reasonably be set down as opposite potency itself (hē dynamis). But there is no real difficulty in making being in act the opposite of both potency and being in potency; it is Plotinus' inductive approach in the treatise that leads him to stress that being in act is contrary primarily to being in potency, for he begins his study with the sensible world where being in act results from form and a substrate, which is being in potency.

which is also in potency. Bronze qua bronze is a definite thing (being in act), but it is also in potency because a sculptor may shape it so it will acquire additional (and accidental) form (#6, #20; #29).

The relationship of an entity to what it can become--i.e., the relationship of being in potency to being in act--compels Plotinus to ask the following important question. In the transition from being in potency to being in act does the former become the latter or is the resulting being in act different from the prior being in potency? Does the former truly become the latter or does the latter merely come out of the former and become an altogether different being (#17-#18)?

Plotinus' answer requires some careful distinctions. First, he answers in regard to second matter. If the original being is considered in and of itself, i.e., as a being in act, then, it is necessarily different from the product it is said to become. Why? Because every being in act differs from every other since each is a unique product of matter and form. But if the prior existent is considered not in and of itself but relatively to that form it will acquire, i.e., as being in potency, it is partly identical with the resulting composite. In this sense it is correct to say the prior becomes the latter, for it remains as the substrate, which, together with its new form, constitutes the composite. The exception to this would be those cases in which the nature of the being in potency is totally lost in the change from being in potency to being in act (i.e., in substantial change of water into bronze; #8-#9; #21).²⁸

²⁸Although the prime matter of the prior being, Plotinus would agree, remains as the ultimate substrate of the being in act.

Secondly, he suggests an answer with regard to prime matter. Like second matter prime matter is both different from and partly identical with the resulting being in act, depending on one's point of view. From the standpoint of its nature matter is certainly altogether different from the composite and, indeed, from anything in act because it is never in act as anything (#50) but is purely and eternally in potency all things (#41). But insofar as it is the substrate on which forms may exist, it remains in the product as a component (see below on the nature of sensible matter).

Again, Plotinus appears to follow Aristotle. To energeia on is a frequent expression in Aristotle.²⁹ In addition, Plotinus' implied reference to accidental and substantial change in explaining whether and in what sense being in potency remains after change indicates that he is working consciously under the influence of Aristotle's philosophy of change.³⁰

²⁹De Gen. An. Beta, 1, 734 b 21; Meta. Eta, 6, 1045 b 21; Theta, 6, 1048 b 8; De Gen. Alpha, 10, 327 b 23; De Gen. An. Alpha, 22, 730 b 21. Plotinus' careful separation of to energeia on from hē energeia could be based on Aristotle's conception of ousia. Aristotle holds that ousia in the strict sense applies to the composite of form and matter--form and matter being ousial in less preferred senses. Respecting Aristotle's distinctions Plotinus may have designated ousia in the proper sense with the expression to energeia on and may have reserved hē energeia for secondary ousia or eidos--the component of to energeia on. (See Aristotle's Meta. Delta, 8, 1017 b 10-25; Eta, 1, 1042 a 24-33.)

³⁰Aristotle maintains that in every change something changes and something else remains the same. In substantial change the substantial form is lost and replaced by another while the prime matter of the original thing remains. In accidental change (specifically, quantitative and qualitative causes) an accidental form or shape is lost (e.g., growth and change of shape) and replaced by another while the substantial form remains. In motion, the third type of accidental change, an entity remains the same but changes in place. See Phys. Alpha, 7, 190 a 30 - 190 b 10.

(3) Act (hē energeia).³¹ Plotinus tells us that act designates form (#27). This accords with our findings as early as Text A, where act denoted ousia or eidōs. As we confirmed also in Text A the identification of act with eidōs agrees with Aristotle's use of energeia.³²

It will help us better prepare for hē dynamis if we briefly summarize how act relates to being in potency and being in act. Act is that which being in potency receives and for which it is substratum. In its relationship to act being in potency qua being in potency is really (and perhaps ironically) impotent to acquire act. Act comes to being in potency extrinsically (par' allou; #29) and this will prove important when next we consider how act relates to potency itself.

Act unites with the substratum and thereby produces a composite, a being in act. Being in act differs from act as whole differs from component part. Nevertheless, at times Plotinus, focusing apparently on the formal unity of an intelligible being in act, uses hē energeia and to energeia on interchangeably (#31-#39).

In addition to hē energeia standing for form, the key text suggests that in certain cases it also means activity. Our comments on hē dynamis will explain why and where Text C uses hē energeia as activity.

(4) Potency (hē dynamis). Potency, the correlate of act (hē energeia), is a very important notion in Text C. On the one hand,

³¹Since it is helpful to understand act in II, 5 before treating the more complex notion of potency, my remarks on act precede those on potency.

³²Because energeia denotes form and ousia, to study ontology is to study energeia. This explains why any discussion of the One is omitted from II, 5, for since He transcends ousia, He is excluded from any formal discussion of energeia.

being in potency is passive dynamis, i.e., that which is formed by another (par' allou; #29); on the other, potency itself is active dynamis, the capacity of an existent by virtue of its own perfection (par' autēs; #29) to produce and to receive act. The difference between being in potency and potency itself is expressed in a few elliptical and cryptic sentences in the key text (#28-#30; #35-#37), but these brief remarks are fundamental for understanding the entire treatise.

We can grasp more precisely the meaning of potency through the following analysis. Being in potency receives form from an agent that is not in potency but is (operative) potency since the agent has the perfection and power to impart form to another. Now if we reflect carefully on what an agent can produce, it is evident that the agent's powers are not in every case aimed at the production of a being in act from a being in potency. The agent's powers may generate operations that also perfect these powers themselves. An agent's acts or activities (depending on whether the agent is a sensible or an intelligible existent)³³ may terminate not only in an extrinsic product but also in an intrinsic one. In other words, the operation of the agent not only effects a new form in an external object but also is a new form in the operative power of the agent. The difference may be expressed in terms of an agent's transient and immanent operations. In the first case the agent's operation terminates in an extrinsic object because it makes a transition from the agent to another (a being in potency) and thus is called transient. In the second

³³The word "activity", with its suggestion of praxis, should not be applied to intelligible being according to what Plotinus tells us in III, 8 (30), 4-6. Here he explains how in human affairs praxis is really theoria but of a very dim and weak sort. Theoria is the only appropriate perfection attributable to Nous, since praxis is relegated to the sensible order only.

case the same act of the agent originates and terminates in the agent's own operative powers. Rather than communicating act merely extrinsically the agent's powers also intrinsically or immanently affect themselves.³⁴

Plotinus assists us in understanding potency in a passing and implicit allusion to the sculptor (kata to poiein; #10-#11). The sculptor has an active dynamis to act so as to perfect (1) an extrinsic object, the bronze; or (2) an intrinsic object, himself. In both instances his talents and artistic judgment are the active powers which bring about act. But in the latter instance (2) they are also the recipients of perfections or energeiai because the active powers belong to the sculptor who is perfected by these acts. One and the same agent is both the origin of act (active dynamis) and the terminus of act (energeia). This observation is important, for it explains how intelligibles may receive perfections and yet not be in potency. Instead, they are active powers able to perfect themselves further in act (#34; #35; #37; see below our next section of comments).

Plotinus' additional examples of knowledge (#22-#25)³⁵ and moral

³⁴Leo Sweeney, S.J., in A Metaphysics of Authentic Existentialism, explains transient and immanent operations in connection with efficient causality: "Carving is such an activity as to perfect something which is other than the agent itself, and hence is called 'transient' activity. But other activities (for example, assimilation of food, thinking) perfect the agent himself and are called 'immanent'. Efficient causality involves both sorts, since even the latter produce something new (for example, increase of size, concepts and propositions), although this is within the agent," p. 288, n. 12; also see p. 233, n. 24. Of course, it is also important to recognize that a transient activity from another point of view may be called immanent. This is important for our interpretation of the key text in which the sculptor himself is perfected by the exercise of his talents and artistic skills, which also perfect the extrinsic object, the statue.

³⁵In this passage of the key text Plotinus uses τὸ δυνάμει ὄν until line 25 where δυνάμει appears. The shift in expressions may suggest that being in potency can apply to such an entity as soul only if

conduct (#30) further explain how one and the same agent is both source and recipient of act. Knowledge is a perfection of an agent, the human soul (#24). As the soul, an active power, acts to acquire knowledge, its power as a knowing agent acquires content and is perfected. The active power for knowledge and the act of knowledge both belong to the soul.

Finally, there is the example of moral conduct. Moral habit is an operative power (kata to poiein) for particular operations or moral activities (#30).³⁶ As moral acts perfect and give content to moral habit, the agent's moral power becomes strengthened. By being both power and recipient of moral act, the moral agent is a good example of how the source of active dynamis is also ultimately the recipient of the energeia of immanent operations.

In summary, hē dynamis is the active power of a living agent. A living agent is the meeting-place of both active dynamis and the energeia that follow from them. For example, the sculptor through his talents and the moral agent through his habits are the producers (kata to poiein; #11) of specific operations (activities) but are also the recipients of specific perfections (acts) that result from those operations. In essence, the agent has energeia through his own active power. In our next section of comments we will show how this convergence of hē dynamis and hē energeia

used in the stipulated sense (pointed out earlier in the Text, #10-#14) in which it is the contrary of act and really equivalent to potency (hē dynamis). So the change may be intentional on Plotinus' part, and is perhaps a way to prepare us for chapter three (#33-#37) where he makes it clear being in potency cannot in the strict sense apply to intelligibles.

³⁶It is important to note that really there are two sets of acts involved in moral conduct. First, there is the activity which is brought about by the active power; and, secondly, the perfection or act (= habitus) the agent receives from its activity.

in one and the same agent has important consequences for Plotinus' explanation of production in the intelligible world.

Application of the four expressions to the intelligible world.

In chapter three of II, 5 (#31-#39) Plotinus leaves off studying the meanings of the four expressions themselves and considers whether and how they apply to the intelligible world. Hence, the initial two chapters (#1-#30) have been preparatory for the remaining three, which study matter, first, in the intelligible world (chapter three) and, secondly, in the sensible world (chapters four and five; #40-#56). Chapters one and two have studied potency and act inductively by drawing on examples from the sensible world. Thus, they prepare us for the heart of the treatise, chapter three, which shows how the four key notions apply to the intelligibles.

(1) Being in potency (to dynamēi on). Plotinus concurs with Aristotle that being in potency has no place in the intelligible world.³⁷ Chapter three of II, 5 (#33-#34) simply reiterates what Plotinus says in the first chapter (#3-#5) since being in potency is the principle of change, it could serve no purpose and therefore has no place in the immutable world of intelligible beings. At one point (#33) Plotinus' imaginary objector protests that since one intelligible being may receive form from another (e.g., Soul from Nous) and since therefore this intelligible being is matter to that other, then being in potency must also belong to the intelligible world. In answering this objection Plotinus differenti-

³⁷Meta. Theta, 8, 1050 b 8.

ates potency from being in potency. Intelligible matter receives perfection but solely because it is operative power to cause and to receive it. For example, Soul, in that metaphysically prior moment to being formed by Nous, is still an urge, an active power, to revert back to its source.³⁸ Soul in its relations to its source is "matter" (#33; #36) but not inert or powerless. Potency but not being in potency belongs to intelligibles. Being in potency is limited to the sensible world because it explains how beings which lack perfection and power depend wholly on the agency of others to acquire form. Thereby, being in potency explains how becoming occurs.

(2) Being in act (to energeia on). Being in act refers to a composite of matter and form and since composites here are really only images or phantoms of composites There,³⁹ being in act certainly applies to the intelligibles. Intelligible beings are composites because matter and Form constitute them. But the matter There, while a substrate for Forms, is an active power and not a principle of change (see below on intelligible matter). Moreover, intelligible matter genuinely unites with Form and, thereby, constitutes a single, perfect nature (#34).⁴⁰ A sensible composite, on the other hand, is only a poor image of the intelligible because the impassible nature of sensible matter makes the composite's components unable to truly unite (see below on sensible

³⁸See V, 2 (11), 1, V, 1 (10), 3; III, 7 (45), 11, 1-20; III, 3 (48), 21; II, 3 (52), 17, 15; I, 7 (54), 2, 6.

³⁹II, 4 (12), 5; also 15.

⁴⁰We may recall II, 4, 5 where intelligible matter helps constitute an "illuminated ousia."

matter).⁴¹

We know that in sensibles matter and form are really distinct. Matter repels form and never in any constitutive way unites with form. But the key text states clearly that intelligible matter and form are not really distinct. This is the intent of Plotinus' words that "the matter There is really form" (#33).

Hence, intelligibles are composites only in a logical and not a real sense. That aspect of them which is intelligible matter is really identical with the whole, the intelligible ousia or form. Further, it is distinguishable from the form only by philosophical analysis. Accordingly, as being in act, intelligibles differ in two important respects from sensibles: (1) intelligibles are not composites of being in potency and of act, but only of potency (active power) and of act; (2) the components of intelligibles are logically, not really, distinguishable. It follows, finally, that Plotinus does not hold an Aristotelian hylomorphic theory, for sensible existents reflect a Platonic dualism of form and matter (where matter actually repels form and is as non-being to being) and intelligible existents are unitary ousiai without really

⁴¹III, 6 (26), 9, 35-37: "So that if anything is affected, it cannot be matter but must be a composite . . ." *Ἀνάγκη τοίνυν, εἴ τι πάσχει, μὴ ὕλην, ἀλλὰ τι συναμφοτέρων ἢ ὅλως πολλὰ ὁμοῦ εἶναι;*

ibid., ch. 11, 29-31: "so that its participation would not be, as people think, by being affected. but of another kind, so that it only seems affected" *ὥστε οὐχ οὕτως ἢ μετὰ λήψεις ὡς οἰόνται παθούσης, ἀλλ' ἕτερος τρόπος οἶον δοκεῖν;*

ibid., ch. 14, 29: "matter remains and receives nothing, but checks the approach as a repellent base" *ἀλλ' ἔμεινεν ἢ αὐτὴ οὐδὲν δεξαμένη, ἀλλ'*

ἐπισχοῦσα τὴν πρόοδον ὡς εἶδρα ἀπωθουμένη; *ibid.*, ch. 10, 25-27: "for matter is existing precisely as matter, it is not possible for it to be altered in so far as it is matter, but it must stay as it is" *ἐπειδὴ τὸ εἶναι τῆ ὕλης ἐστὶ τὸ εἶναι ἢ ὕλη, οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτὴν ἀλλοιοῦσθαι καθ' ὃ τι ὕλη ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ μένειν.*

(See below our comments on sensible matter.)

distinct constitutive principles.

(3) Act (hē energeia). Every intelligible is an act because determined and defined by a perfect Form (#36; #38-#39). This realm of pure act is the universe of Nous and is Plotinus' equivalent to Plato's world of Forms and to Aristotle's Separate Intelligence. This is the universe of true being and, therefore, of true act. What is act There is more perfect than what is act here (#39; #46). Act here is a logos and a phantom of intelligible act. The difference between perfect intelligible acts and imperfect sensible acts rests mainly on Platonic rather than Aristotelian reasons. In other words, Plotinus does not separate the two realms because the one requires the other in order to be in motion. Yet, for Plotinus sensible energeiai in their very reality are inferior to and dependent on intelligible acts.

(4) Potency (hē dynamis). The key text admits potency to the intelligible world while refusing to admit being in potency (#33-#37). The reason is that intelligible beings are able of their own power to act and to receive act. This explanation is basic to Plotinus' account of the emergence of hypostases.

We have already seen this to be true in Text B where Plotinus identifies the One as the supreme Dynamis of all reality and conceives the Indefinite Dyad as an active dynamis which, by its disposition to receive form, makes the production of being possible. Now we shall see how Text C helps us to better appreciate in what way dynamis is operative in Plotinian metaphysics.

Specifically, when, through the examples of sculptor, knowledge and moral conduct, Plotinus' explanation of potency in chapter two (#16-#30) is connected with his observation on the same subject in chapter

three, we can apprehend more securely his theory of production and his general account of the relationships which intelligible realities have to higher ones.

In our earlier comments we discovered that an agent is really both active power and energeia, because he is the source of operations that perfect himself.⁴² In other words, the agent is the origin and the term of certain types of operations. For instance, the moral agent's habits are powers which acquire content (energeia) through activities (another sense of energeia) that follow from these powers. The fact that dynamis and energeia belong to the same agent has important consequences for an analysis of production of realities, for this production consists in an active dynamis reverting back in contemplation to its source so as to acquire determination or content and thereby becoming energeia. In ontogenic and cosmogenic production every reality insofar as it is an active power emanates another reality. This other reality is the manifestation of the prior existent's operation, although this other reality is better expressed as an operative state.⁴³ This operative state is itself an active power (i.e., the dynamis of intelligible matter), which, through the act of reversion acquires content or energeia by

⁴²See comments on potency (hē dynamis) when discussing the meaning of the four basic notions. The situation is really more complex than stated here. For instance, the active powers (will and habits) of a moral agent which cause operations, which are energeiai, are also themselves energeiai. But for our purposes it suffices to speak of them here solely in reference to their operations, and thus we can set up a parallel between them and the operative power which overflows from the One and the Nous.

⁴³The word "operation" suggests "activity" or "praxis" and thus should not be ascribed to the stages of intellection in production. Cf. n. 32a.

contemplating its source. Of course, as happens in this sort of production, this content or energeia, which is itself an active power, overflows and produces still another operative state. In this last state we have also the two types of energeia set apart in Text B. The productive reality is that energeia "of" the ousia; because this energeia is also an active power, it generates still another energeia (that "from" the ousia). This latter in its first and indeterminate moment is an active dynamis but then becomes, in its second moment, an energeia. This entire procession continues until content is exhausted, until all that remains below is the pure passivity of matter.

In sum, II, 5 is important because behind its brief remarks on he dynamis is a complex doctrine of act and potency which explains the procession and reversion of intelligible existents.

The Nature of Intelligible Matter

Some attention to intelligible matter is necessary if we are to grasp the importance of chapter three of II, 5 (#32-#39). We already have touched on this topic when in Text B we treated the Indefinite Dyad and when in our remarks on II, 4 (12), 1-5 we set up the context of our present key text.

From these earlier discussions we know generally that intelligible matter is an active dynamis. Undefined and shapeless in the first moment of its existence (as the Indefinite Dyad), it receives shape and form by turning to contemplate its Source and remains as the substrate of these realities.⁴⁴ As a dynamis it acquires content or Forms and truly unites

⁴⁴Here we are obviously thinking of the intelligible matter of

with these energeiai so as to form a single nature.

Unlike sensible matter, which is in the final analysis unreal (see below our comments on sensible matter), intelligible matter qualifies as a genuine reality, since it is, in fact, the first product of the One. In fact, as that which in the first moment of production emanates from the One, it may claim status as the most real of all existents subsequent to the One. Its indeterminacy, rather than denoting imperfection as does the indeterminacy of sensible matter,⁴⁵ may signify kinship to the perfection which transcends being.⁴⁶

Intelligible Matter, the first effluence from the One, possesses by its very indeterminacy a kinship with the One which the Forms do not possess. As we read in Enn. 2.4.3, Matter "there" is everything at the same time. It has nothing into which it can change, for it already possesses everything. This indeterminacy which can, on its return to its Source, yield any one of the eternal Forms, has of itself something more akin to the One than have these later determinations. The Forms are perfectly what they are; they are perfect being. Intelligible Matter has a shadow of the superiority of τὸ ἐπέκεινα in its potential of becoming all Real Beings.⁴⁷

Nous. All intelligibles, such as Soul and Nature, have intelligible matter but the Indefinite Dyad seems restricted to the first moment of Nous alone. This restriction is no doubt due to the tradition from which Plotinus acquires the concept of the Indefinite Dyad and which proposed it as contrary to the One. Therefore, in Plotinus' philosophy it should belong on the level of the first emanation.

⁴⁵The indeterminacy of sensible matter is the result of its contrareity to perfection and being. It is impotent and imperfect and not one among forms; in fact, it is alien to form. It is an outcast (ekritheisa; #51) of reality, the emptiness or sterility where being gives out.

⁴⁶This will, of course, seem peculiar to a philosopher whose metaphysics embraces only ontology. But it is quite acceptable to an henology, where to have perfection something need not be determinate but only have unity.

⁴⁷J. M. Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in

Granting the unique nature of intelligible matter, we may ask why Plotinus posits this reality in the first place. Why is he convinced that intelligible matter is necessary for his metaphysics? One answer is found in II, 4, where he says that if there are Forms, each must have a characteristic distinguishing it from every other and each must have something in common with every other.⁴⁸ Rist mentions this and a few additional reasons in an informative statement.

The distinguishing characteristic is, says Plotinus, the feature of shape (*μορφῆ*). And if they have shape, he continues, there must be something to receive the shape--plainly this is the common element mentioned above--and this 'something' must be matter or substrate. The conclusion is backed up by a second argument which suggests that, since the world of sense is an image of the Intelligible World and is based on matter, there must be matter in the Intelligible likewise. A third argument holds that an ordered system involves both Form and a place wherein Form may be lodged, while a fourth--most relevant to the present discussion--adds that, since in a sense the Intelligible World is diversified, there must be a basic shapelessness which can be the 'unity' which accepts diversification, and that this 'unity' must be Matter.⁴⁹

Another very important reason for intelligible matter has been identified by John Fielder in his article, "Chorismos and Emanation in the Philosophy of Plotinus."⁵⁰ For Fielder intelligible matter is necessary for the production of diversity, division and limit in reality. Whether we are thinking of intelligible matter in the production of Nous or of Soul, this matter is a necessary precondition for the generation of a different

Plotinus," 105-106.

⁴⁸II, 4 (12), 4, 7-8.

⁴⁹J. M. Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," 104-105.

⁵⁰This article is contained in The Significance of Neoplatonism, Vol. One of Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern, R. Baine Harris, ed. (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1976), pp. 101-120.

level of reality.⁵¹ Indeed, the same is true of sensible matter. Its contrareity to the reality of Nature makes possible the generation of logoi which it receives (for example, plant and animal natures). Matter, whether sensible or intelligible, is characterized by Otherness and Movement since it is other than and moves away from prior realities. Plotinus mentions how Otherness and Movement pertain to intelligible matter in II, 4.

For Otherness There is always and that which produces [intelligible] matter; for this is the principle of matter, and it is the first Movement. For this reason Movement, too, was called Otherness, because Movement and Otherness came about together. The Movement and Otherness which came from the First are indeterminate and need It to determine them; and they are determined when they turn to it. But before the turning matter, too, was undefined and the Other . . . and unilluminated from the First. For if light comes from the First, then that which receives the light before it receives it has everlastingly no light; but it has light as other than itself, since the light comes to it from something else.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid., p. 114.

⁵²II, 4 (12), 5, 28-39.

Καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἑτερότης ἡ ἐκεῖ αἰεὶ, ἢ τὴν ὕλην ποιεῖ· ἀρχὴ γὰρ ὕλης αὕτη, καὶ ἡ κίνησις ἡ πρώτη διὸ καὶ αὕτη ἑτερότης ἐλέγετο, ὅτι ὁμοῦ ἐξέφυσαν κίνησις καὶ ἑτερότης· ἀόριστον δὲ καὶ ἡ κίνησις καὶ ἡ ἑτερότης ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου, κακείνου πρὸς τὸ ὀρισθῆναι δεόμενα· ὀρίζεται δέ, ὅταν πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιστραφῆ· πρὶν δὲ ἀόριστον καὶ ἡ ὕλη καὶ τὸ ἕτερον καὶ οὕτω ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ἐδῶπιστον ἐκείνου. Εἰ γὰρ παρ' ἐκείνου τὸ φῶς, τὸ δεχόμενον τὸ φῶς, πρὶν δέξασθαι, φῶς οὐκ ἔχει αἰεὶ, ἀλλὰ ἕλλα ὃν ἔχει, εἴπερ τὸ φῶς παρ' ἄλλου. Καὶ περὶ μὲν τῆς ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ὕλης πλείω τῶν προσηκόντων παραγυμνωθέντα ταύτη.

This "otherness" which characterizes all beings,⁵³ is what differentiates every hypostasis from its source. Otherness is a movement away from the source but is also a movement back toward its source, in which it receives diversity and produces, thereby, the plurality of beings. Without this otherness there would be multiplicity, no unity-in-diversity, no unreality associated with reality. As Deck remarks if intelligible matter were not present the Nous would be the One.⁵⁴ Because it is Otherness, intelligible matter in its first moment is aptly identified with the Indefinite Dyad, which was, according to the Platonic Unwritten Doctrines, contrary to the One and necessary for production.

It is noteworthy that Plotinus speaks of intelligible matter in two ways: first, as the "Indefinite Dyad," and, secondly, as "intelligible matter" proper. The Dyad is intelligible matter in the first moment of production-- i.e., not as substratum of forms but as active dynamis which proceeds out of the One in order to revert back to Him and be completed. Plotinus uses "intelligible matter" proper to express the active potency that remains after the stage of reversion in the Nous and every other hypostasis. This is the intelligible matter that occupies his attention in II, 5. Whereas the Indefinite Dyad applies strictly to the first moment of the overflow of Intelligence, intelligible matter may apply to the receptivity of any hypostasis. In other words, Soul and Nature also

⁵³In a comment on II, 4, 16, Rist explains how otherness describes matter both here and There. "All beings, that is, everything associated with any kind of matter, possess 'otherness'; intelligible matter is 'other' than the One, that is than what is 'beyond Being', matter 'here' is other than Being" ("Plotinus on Matter and Evil," Phronesis, 6 [1951], 155-156).

⁵⁴John Deck, Nature, Contemplation, and the One (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 116.

have intelligible matter.⁵⁵

As we have already shown Plotinus weaves into his doctrine of intelligible matter an intricate theory of act and potency. Intelligible matter is a substrate unlike sensible matter; both are characterized by otherness and are necessary for the generation of being but intelligible matter is an active dynamis that becomes a living act. The role of dynamis in the intelligible realm is explained by intelligible matter, which, therefore, has an important place in Text C.

The Nature of Sensible Matter

The final two chapters of II, 5 (#40-#56) are considerably helpful for understanding one of the most elusive subjects in Plotinus' philosophy: sensible matter. In these passages "he conceives of matter in the sense-world as a potentiality which never can be actualized, an essential negation, 'that which is really unreal'; this paradoxical conception is stated more clearly, perhaps, in the last chapter of this treatise than anywhere else in the Enneads."⁵⁶ A few words on matter will help us appreciate its paradoxical nature and its status as a being in potency, which makes it especially relevant for our study of energeia.

Text C tells us essentially that prime matter is in potency all things (#41; #49) and yet is nothing in and of itself (#41; #44; #50; #54). If prime matter is in potency everything, then it cannot be, for

⁵⁵There is no mention of the Dyad in II, 5 because Plotinus is mainly interested not in the One, nor in the first moment of emanation, but in the fully formed Nous, the Soul and physical existents. In other words, he is mainly interested in the emanations to the extent they are acts and not potencies.

⁵⁶Here I quote Armstrong, Plotinus, Vol. II, p. 153.

once it becomes something (defined and determinate) it no longer is everything in potency--i.e., it is no longer prime matter (#41; #50). As the potency for all forms prime matter cannot be, for to be is to be form (#45); i.e., prime matter must be eternally different from form to be able to receive all forms (#52). Moreover, because form denotes act, matter is not act and because it is never a complete or composite entity matter is never in act (#45; #50; #52). It is also true that matter is not potency as active dynamis because it does not acquire perfection through its own power (par' autēs), for it has nothing in and of itself.⁵⁷ Consequently, prime matter may only be described as being in potency--and this in the perfect sense: an everlasting capacity to receive form without itself ever being a form.

Prime matter is in potency all things and therefore is the principle of change. Change follows upon its nature because, unlike intelligible matter, sensible matter does not have all forms at once but only successively.⁵⁸ Forms come to and depart from matter while it remains (#52). Hence, Plotinus' matter, like Aristotle's, is the ultimate substratum which is permanent in change.⁵⁹ We must be careful, however, not to exaggerate the similarity between the two thinkers. Plotinus accepts that prime matter is absolute being in potency and the principle of change but rejects Aristotle's position that this matter is real (#54-#55). Consequently, he must also disagree with Aristotle that matter

⁵⁷In II, 4 (12), 8, 9-11 he describes matter as something completely without qualities and in the same chapter (lines 23-26) says that anything at all which matter may have comes through form.

⁵⁸II, 4, 3, 6-18.

⁵⁹Physics Alpha, 9, 192 a 25-33.

unites with form to comprise a true ousia.⁶⁰ Plotinus prefers a Platonic to an Aristotelian view of matter when assessing the relationship of matter to form. Form and matter differ as do being and a phantom of being (#46). Matter is an outcast (ekritheisa; #51) of reality and is separated from the perfection of being (choristheisa; #51). As a result it can never unite with form, for how can the unreal add anything to the real? Plotinus' theory of matter reflects a dualism between matter and form and is alien to Aristotelian hylomorphism.

Although matter is forever separate from form and being, it still has a kind of nature which is its otherness, its separation from being. In Rist's words:

This "otherness" is its nature ($\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$), a nature which is not essentially quantified but continually admits a flux of changing qualities. Plotinus finds no difficulty in the idea of entities being unqualified, for he says "Is not Quality itself unqualified?" (2, 4, 13). If this is so--and nobody disputes the existence and discussability of Quality--then the mere absence of qualities does not rule out the potential "existence" of matter, or prevent its "possession" of a nature.⁶¹

Matter is, then, a paradoxical existent which must be reckoned with in any successful philosophy, and yet it is not among the beings which are the object of the philosopher's method, for prime matter is and is not.

In this paradoxical view of matter Plato appears to have influenced Plotinus. In the Sophist Plato distinguishes between two kinds of negation, concluding that "not being something" is not the same as non-

⁶⁰Metaphysics Zeta, 8, 1032 a 34-35; 1033 b 18-19.

⁶¹J. M. Rist, "Plotinus on Matter and Evil," Phronesis, 6 (1961), 156.

existence.⁶² To say that something is non-being may mean that it is simply other than being, and not that it absolutely is not.⁶³ In other words, matter has no being but still has some kind of existence.

Matter's nature as non-being makes it a unique existent and difficult for the philosopher to understand, for if he treats matter as another being (i.e., as a form) he will never grasp it.⁶⁴ The philosopher must prepare his mind for non-being rather than being. To do this he must abandon ordinary reasoning and adopt the "bastard reasoning" to which Plato referred in the Timaeus.⁶⁵ This thinking does not originate in the intellect but comes about in an illogical and mysterious way. One must employ "another intellect which is not intellect," an intellect that is devoid of all form and being. Intellect must leave its own light, as it were, and go outside "to experience something contrary to itself." It must deny itself and become intellectless in order to see matter which

⁶²See Sophist 257 b: "When we speak of 'that which is not', it seems that we do not mean something contrary to what exists but only something that is different . . . So, when it is asserted that a negation signifies a contrary, we shall not agree, but admit no more than this--that the prefix 'not' indicates something different from the words that follow or rather from the things designated by the words pronounced after the negative" (F. M. Cornford translation).

⁶³I, 8 (51), 5, 8 ff.

⁶⁴Plotinus implies in II, 7 (37) that the Stoics fail to understand matter because they regard it as an authentic being, and, in fact, as the only being.

⁶⁵For Plotinus' comments on the "bastard reasoning" of Plato's Timaeus, see II, 4 (12), 12, 34-35: "that which wants to be a thought about matter will not be a thought but a sort of thoughtlessness; or rather the mental representation of it will be spurious and not genuine, compounded of an unreal part and with the diverse kind of reasoning. It was perhaps because he had observed this that Plato said matter was apprehended by a 'spurious reasoning'." (See Timeaus 52 b 2.)

exists outside being.⁶⁶

This description of matter as non-being brings to mind an interesting and important question. If matter receives form, does it not attain to being by this association? Plotinus answers negatively. To understand why he answers thus, we need to examine how matter relates to form.

Matter retains its nature as non-being, despite its connection with form, because it is impassible (apathēs).⁶⁷ Plotinus actually says that matter has contact (ephaptonene) with form and participates (metalambanein) in form but is unaffected by this contact or participation.⁶⁸ "It was not anything in act from the beginning, since it stood apart from all beings nor did it become. For it has not been able to take even a touch of color from the things that wanted to come into it, but remaining directed to something else it is in potency to what comes next" (#52). Plotinus' doctrine of impassibility is his philosophic explanation of the eternal dualism between matter and form. Matter never admits and actually repels form⁶⁹ and for this reason, if one speaks correctly, form is not in matter (ἐν ὑλη) but on it (ἐπὶ ὑλη).⁷⁰

⁶⁶I, 8 (51), 9.

⁶⁷The impassibility of soul and matter is the subject of III, 6 (26). On Plotinus' objective in this treatise, R. T. Wallis writes that "his aim here is to preserve the soul from substantial change and emotional disturbance in answer both to the Sceptics' charge that a being subject to these cannot be immortal (I. 1. 2. 9-13, III. 6. 1. 28-30) and the Gnostics' admission of sin and ignorance into the spiritual world" (Neoplatonism, p. 74). Of course, in order to accomplish these aims Plotinus must first discuss the impassibility of matter; this is why the chapters on matter in III, 6 precede those on soul.

⁶⁸VI, 5 (23), 8, 15-22.

⁶⁹III, 6 (26), 14, 29-35.

⁷⁰An example of ἐπὶ ὑλη is found in V, 9, 5, 2, 13-14. "The beauty of bodies are acquired, they are in them as the forms are on matter ..."

Plotinus commonly uses the analogy of the mirror to illustrate the way in which matter receives and yet repels form.⁷¹ The mirror relates to its image in much the way as matter relates to form. The mirror receives its image but does not unite with it. The mirror and image are not identical; the image is merely on the mirror and not in it. The same is true of matter and form; they do not unite; form is merely reflected on matter.⁷²

The nature of matter brings to mind the question of its origin. Basically, there are two alternative answers to this question, as Brehier explains: either "it is a term distinct from the realities which proceed progressively from the One, and it may set itself against these realities" or "it is the last term in the procession of the realities, that is to say, the sterile stage in which the productive force which has proceeded from the One at last dies out."⁷³

There is no simple answer as to which of these views Plotinus accepts. It appears that he accepts each of them at different times in the development of the Enneads.⁷⁴ For example, in the following early text, III, 4 (15), 1, matter under the guise of absolute indefiniteness is

⁷¹That matter receives and repels form is one way to express the paradox of matter. Other ways are that it is real and unreal (#54); everything (in potency) but nothing (in act; #52).

⁷²The analogy of matter as a mirror occurs in several places in the Enneads; see especially, III, 6 (26), 7, 22-23; IV, 3 (27), 11, 6-14.

⁷³Émile Brehier, The Philosophy of Plotinus, tr. by Joseph Thomas (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 180.

⁷⁴This judgment, of course, may offend those who deny that Plotinus' writings, because written after he had become 49 years of age, and presumably, had reached philosophical maturity, do not significantly develop (e.g., A. H. Armstrong, Plotinus, Vol. I, p. vii; R. T. Wallis, Neoplatonism pp. 44-45).

explicitly linked with the chain of emanations which has its source ultimately in the One.

The expressions of some realities came into existence while the realities themselves remain unmoved, but soul was already said to be in motion when it generates the sense-perception which is its expressed form and the power of growth which extends also to plants. For the soul has the power of growth when it exists in us, too, but it dominates because it has, so to speak, become isolated. Does this power of growth, then, produce nothing? It produces a thing altogether different from itself; for after it there is no more life but what it produces is lifeless. What is it then? Just as everything which was produced before this was produced shapeless, but was formed by turning towards its producer and being, so to speak, reared to maturity by it, so here, too, that which is produced is not anymore a form of soul--for it is not alive--⁷⁵but absolute indefiniteness.⁷⁶

According to this text, then, matter is the last emanation of reality; it

⁷⁵Matter is not alive and is, therefore, separate from the effects of Nous, which we saw are living thoughts. Matter is not thought and life and, therefore, contributes nothing to reality. This is why in II, 4 (12), 5, 4-12 he calls the corporeal world a "decorated corpse."

Even though it is nothing more than a decorated corpse the sensible world is the best possible image of the intelligible and, therefore, is still to be appreciated (II, 9 [33], 4, 22-23). The sensible world is still beautiful (V, 8 [31], 8, 7-23); even the plants here are the fairest image of the Plants There (VI, 7 [37], 11, 6-17).

⁷⁶III, 4 (15), 1, 1-12:

Τῶν μὲν αἱ ὑποστάσεις γίνονται μερόντων ἐκείνων, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ κινουμένη ἐλέγετο γεννᾶν καὶ αἰσθησιν τὴν ἐν ὑποστάσει καὶ φύσιν καὶ μέχρι φυτῶν. Καὶ γὰρ ἔχει αὐτὴν καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν οὔσα, κρατεῖ δὲ μέρος οὔσα· ὅταν δὲ ἐν φυτοῖς γένηται, αὕτη κρατεῖ οἶον μόνη γενομένη. Αὕτη μὲν οὖν οὐδὲν γεννᾷ; Γεννᾷ πάντη ἕτερον αὐτῆς· οὐκέτι γὰρ ζωὴ μετὰ ταύτην, ἀλλὰ τὸ γεννώμενον ἄζων. Τί οὖν; Ἡ, ὡς περ πάν, ὅσον πρὸ τούτου ἐγεννᾶτο, ἀμόρφωτον ἐγεννᾶτο, εἰδοποιεῖτο δὲ τῷ ἐπιστρέφεσθαι πρὸς τὸ γεννησάν οἶον ἐκτρεφόμενον, αὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὸ γεννηθὲν οὐ ψυχῆς ἔτι εἶδος — οὐ γὰρ ἔτι ζῆ — ἀλλ' ἀοριστίαν εἶναι παντελῆ.

is the end of perfection and the level of sheer imperfection.

Plotinus never explicitly states that matter is posited eternally as the contrary to the perfections which proceed from the One, but certain texts imply as much. For example, in the very late treatise, I, 8 (51), he describes matter as evil, and because it is evil (i.e., the opposite of the Good), it would itself not seem to qualify as one among those things that have their source in the Good.

The intellect is the first act of the Good and the first *ousia*; the Good stays still in Himself, but intellect moves about Him in its act, as also it lives around Him. And Soul dances round Intelligence outside, and looks to it, and in contemplating its interior sees God through it. "This is the life of the gods," without sorrow and blessed; evil is nowhere here, and if things had stopped here there would not have been any evil, only a First and a second and a third goods.⁷⁷

Evil, then, is non-being; it is outside of being, and yet not like the One which is supra-being, but as infra-being. Evil is non-being in the sense of a privation. Evil exists as the absence of something (a particular form) that ought to be in a particular place. Something is evil, then, accidentally--not because of what it is but because of what it ought to be but is not. But if evil is an accident, it still makes sense to

⁷⁷I, 8 (51), 2, 21-28:

Καὶ ἔστι πρώτη ἐνέργεια ἐκείνον καὶ πρώτη οὐσία ἐκείνου μένοντος ἐν ἑαυτῷ· ἐνεργεῖ μέντοι περὶ ἐκείνον οἷον περὶ ἐκείνου ζῶν. Ἡ δὲ ἔξωθεν περὶ τοῦτον χορεύουσα ψυχὴ ἐπὶ αὐτὸν βλέπουσα καὶ τὸ εἶσω αὐτοῦ θεωμένη τὸν θεὸν δι' αὐτοῦ βλέπει. Καὶ οὗτος θεῶν ἀπήμων καὶ μακάριος βίος καὶ τὸ κακὸν οὐδαμοῦ ἐνταῦθα καὶ εἰ ἐνταῦθα ἔσται, κακὸν οὐδὲν ἂν ᾔην, ἀλλὰ πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερα τὰ γαθὰ καὶ τρίτα·

say it is something—something which must exist in the first place so as to exist in another. In spite of its status as a privation it is still a something—an accident but not an ousia.

For if evil occurs accidentally in something else, it must be something itself first, even if it is not ousia. Just as there is absolute good and good as a quality, so there must be absolute evil and the evil derived from it which inheres in something else . . . So that which underlies figures and forms and shapes and measures and limits, decked out with an adornment which belongs to something else, having no good of its own, only a shadow in comparison to real being, is the ousia of evil (if there really can be ousia of evil); this is what our argument discovers to be primal evil, absolute evil.⁷⁸

⁷⁸Ibid., ch. 3, 23-40:

κακόν, δεῖ τι πρότερον αὐτό εἶναι, κἄν μὴ οὐσία τις ᾗ. Ὡς γὰρ ἀγαθὸν τὸ μὲν αὐτό, τὸ δὲ ἢ συμβέβηκεν, οὕτω καὶ κακὸν τὸ μὲν αὐτό, τὸ δὲ ἤδη κατ' ἐκεῖνο συμβεβηκὸς ἑτέρω. Τίς οὖν ἀμετρία, εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ ἀμέτρῳ; [Τί δὲ «μέτρον μὴ ἐν τῷ μεμετρημένῳ»;] Ἄλλ' ὥσπερ ἐστὶ μέτρον μὴ ἐν τῷ μεμετρημένῳ, οὕτω καὶ ἀμετρία οὐκ ἐν ἀμέτρῳ. Εἰ γὰρ ἐν ἄλλῳ, ἢ ἐν ἀμέτρῳ — ἀλλ' οὐ δεῖ αὐτῷ ἀμετρίας αὐτῷ ἀμέτρῳ ὄντι — ἢ ἐν μεμετρημένῳ ἀλλ' οὐχ οἷόν τε τὸ μεμετρημένου ἀμετρίαν ἔχειν καθ' ὃ μεμέτρηται. Καὶ οὖν εἶναι τι καὶ ἄπειρον καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἀνείδεον αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ πρόσθεν, ἃ τὴν τοῦ κακοῦ ἐχαρακτήριζε φύσιν, καὶ εἰ τι μετ' ἐκεῖνο τοιοῦτον, ἢ μεμιγμένον ἔχει τοῦτο ἢ βλέπον πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐστὶ τοιοῦτον ἢ ποιητικόν ἐστὶ τοιοῦτου. Τὴν δ' ὑποκειμένην σχήμασι καὶ εἶδεσι καὶ μορφαῖς καὶ μέτροις καὶ πέρασι καὶ ἄλλοτρίῳ κόσμῳ κοσμουμένην, μηδὲν παρ' αὐτῆς ἀγαθὸν ἔχουσαν, εἰδῶλον δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὰ ὄντα, κακοῦ δὴ οὐσίαν, εἰ τις καὶ δύναται κακοῦ οὐσία εἶναι, ταύτην ἀνευρίσκει ὁ λόγος κακὸν εἶναι πρῶτον καὶ καθ' αὐτὸ κακόν.

So if there is an absolute good that is the cause of all good things, there must be an absolute evil that explains all evil things. The insistent contrast of evil to the One and the identification of matter with evil would seem to support the conclusion that matter does not emanate from the One. This view appears supported by texts from Plotinus' middle period, such as III, 6 (26), 14, 29-35, when he describes matter as repellent of form.

The most plausible conclusion concerning the origin of matter is that Plotinus was constantly reassessing his position throughout his writings. Support for either alternative stated by Bréhier may be found in the Enneads.⁷⁹

Plotinus is more definite on his view of the nature of matter. It is non-being; pure passive potency; without form and without a determinate nature; privation; impassible; evil; nothing in and of itself, only a phantom and an announcement of what it may become.

Summary and Conclusions

Obviously, II, 5 is at the heart of our study because it formally examines energeia and explains, although abstrusely and elliptically, how it applies to Plotinus' entire ontology.

First, the treatise illumines energeia by contrasting it with three related expressions: dynamis, to dynamei on and to energeia on. Energeia here primarily means form or ousia, which corroborates what we

⁷⁹My comments on sensible matter rely heavily on William J. Carroll, Plotinus on the Origin of Matter (M. A. Thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1973), which is a definitive study of matter with an extensive bibliography.

concluded in Texts A (IV, 7) and B (V, 4). This is not, however, the only sense of energeia in Text C. II, 5 indicates that energeia may sometimes mean "activity." This is implied in Plotinus' brief remarks on moral conduct (#30): energeia may refer (1) to the content or character received from such conduct (this is energeia in the sense of form, perfection or ousia) or (2) to the operation or "activity" or the moral agent whereby he attains energeia in the first sense.

What do the three other expressions mean? Dynamis is active power--the capacity of an existent by itself to produce and receive act. To energeia on refers not to that component of something which is act, i.e., form, but to the whole being--the composite of matter and form. The matter of an intelligible composite is a dynamis which has perfected itself and, thus, has acquired energeia. The substrate or matter of a sensible composite, however, is not dynamis but to dynamei on, which I have translated "being in potency." This is passive potency--the capacity of an existent to be formed by an extrinsic agent. Passive potency in the purest sense is prime matter, which never truly admits act but is eternally in potency and always other than form.

Text C proceeds inductively, first drawing on instances from the sensible world to explain the meanings of the four expressions. The examples of the sculptor, of knowledge and of moral conduct illustrate hē dynamis and hē energeia; bronze and water illustrate to dynamei on and to energeia on. This concentration on the sensible world is preparatory for chapter three (#31-#39), in which Plotinus considers how the four expressions describe the intelligible order.

Since Plotinus' reasoning in II, 5 is elliptical and oblique, we have relied principally on our comments to make clear how chapter three

builds on the prior chapters. The instances of the sculptor, as well as of the human soul in knowledge and moral conduct, show that the same agent is sometimes the source and the term of operations, for he can exercise active powers so as to receive acts. In other words, an agent by his own powers is perfected immanently when he receives act from those powers. He perfects another (a being in potency) when his operations are transient--i.e., when he imparts act from himself to another. Plotinus' examples of sensible agents serve to explain, I have argued, how on the metaphysical level an agent's active dynamis (intelligible matter) brings about through reversion its own energeia.

Intelligible matter is an otherness (heterotēs) and motion (kinēsis) away from its source (e.g., the Indefinite Dyad from the One). Sensible matter is also an otherness but is ultimately unreal. In the case of either intelligible or sensible matter, the otherness therein is necessary for the production of some subsequent level of reality.

Unlike sensible matter, intelligible matter is real, although inferior to its source. Indeed, in the case of the Indefinite Dyad, intelligible matter is perhaps more real, i.e., more like the One, than any subsequent reality.

As active power intelligible matter is an authentic reality that unites with form to comprise an "illuminated ousia." In this respect it differs profoundly from sensible matter, which, because impassible, never unites with form. Consequently, the entire sensible world is really only a phantom of the true ousia! There and is ultimately "a decorated corpse."

Sensible matter is excluded from the processions of lives and thoughts from the Intelligence. The intelligible realm is pure act and,

hence, is the realm of life. It is being at its most complete. Like sensible matter the One is not life. But unlike sensible matter, the One is distinct from life because It is the source of life and not because it is the receptacle of life. The Intelligence is life in the truest sense because it is thought that comprehends all being in a single eternal moment. The Soul is life in an inferior sense because it manifests its life successively or in time.

Sensible matter is separate from life and being but still has a nature. Indeed, if the philosopher fails to grasp its nature, his system will contain grievous errors. The nature of matter is non-being; it is the being in potency of that which can receive all forms (successively) but never by itself any form. Thus, prime matter is eternally in potency because impassible--i.e., incapable of being affected by form or being.

Prime matter is privation, sterility, non-being and ultimately the same as evil. Because it is the principle of evil it is likely that Plotinus prefers that it not be connected with the chain of emanations from the One but that it be simply posited as the eternal opposite to the emanating perfections of reality. It is, then, the darkness upon which the light of emanation finally plays out. On this question of the origin of matter, however, Plotinus suggests varying views and his thought appears to change throughout his writings.

In conclusion Ennead II, 5 is an important treatise which discloses how energeia is important for Plotinus' metaphysics. The treatise also shows how dynamis is significant if we are to properly understand energeia. Dynamis explains how an agent acquires energeia and this is crucial in explaining the network of dynamis and energeia in the intelligible world.

It is in his view of dynamis that Plotinus departs from Aristotle

in Text C. Aristotle does not apply dynamis to the intelligible world and certainly not to any theory of ontogeny and cosmogony. Plotinus, on the other hand, must adapt dynamis to his own philosophic vision of reality. He makes dynamis central to the intelligibles though he follows Aristotle by insisting, at the same time, that intelligibles are acts.

One final observation: the One is absent from Text C. Plotinus tells us something significant by so omitting the First Reality. The One, we may assume, has no place in a treatise on energeia if, as we have concluded earlier, He transcends form, ousia, being, that is, energeia. The One is not mentioned in Text C because the One is necessarily excluded from any metaphysics describing the world of energeia.

Our next key text studies the One closely, however. It will help us appreciate the complex way in which Plotinus relates the One to energeia in his philosophy while maintaining that the One transcends energeia.

TEXT D: ENNEAD VI, 7 (38), chs. 13, 17, 18, 37 and 40

We take our next key text from the long and complex treatise which Porphyry entitled "How the Multitude of the Forms came into being and On the Good."¹ This work centers mainly on the nature of the Intelligence (chs. 1-14) and its relationship to the transcendent Good (chs. 15-42). It is rich in its use of "energeia", the word (or some form of it) occurring 44 times.

VI, 7 belongs, like Text C (II, 5 [25]), to Plotinus' middle period, although chronologically it occurs thirteen treatises later. The treatises between II, 5 and VI, 7 do not add significantly to our knowledge of energeia and therefore deserve only brief attention before we take up Text D.

III, 6 (26) immediately follows II, 5 chronologically and is entitled "On the Impassibility of Things without Body." We referred to this treatise several times in Text C because it contributes to Plotinus' theory of sensible matter. III, 6 uses the term energeia often but adds no new information on the subject, reiterating that energeia signifies eidōs and ousia.

Treatises IV, 3 (27), IV, 4 (28) and IV, 5 (29) were, before the editing of Porphyry, the second part of one long work on soul, the first part of which consisted of III, 5 just mentioned. III, 6 considered how the human soul is unaffected by bodily experience, whereas the subsequent three treatises explain how the hypostasis Soul and all posterior souls

¹Porphyry, "On the Life of Plotinus," p. 20.

originate from the Intelligence. IV, 4 in particular describes the ascent of the human soul to levels of Soul and of Intelligence. IV, 5 contains some remarks on energeia and emanation, which clarify Plotinus' doctrine of production.² All three of these works affirm (as does Text A) that soul, whether the hypostasis or a lesser soul, is act.

The next treatise that Plotinus wrote, III, 8 (30), is among the most important in his entire corpus and is entitled "On Nature and Contemplation and the One." In this work he explains that contemplation is the basis of all production. The Intelligence results from its eternal contemplation of the One and, in turn, produces all subsequent lives and acts by its contemplation.³

V, 8 (31), "On the Intelligible Beauty," explains in Platonic fashion how the world of Forms is perfect beauty. V, 5 (32), "That the Intelligibles are not outside the Intelligence and On the Good," is informative on the nature of the Intelligence and the primacy of unity but contains little on energeia. Nor are the remaining five treatises directly relevant to our study. Two of them are purely polemical: II, 9 (33), "Against the Gnostics," and II, 7 (37), "On Complete Intermingling," which is an evaluation of certain cosmological views of the Stoics.⁴ VI, 6 (34), "On Numbers," expresses a metaphysical theory of numbers that, while interesting in itself, has little bearing on energeia in the

²See Text B, n. 44.

³Several passages in III, 8 (esp. ch. 8) contain some noteworthy observations on life and the nature of the Intelligence, to which we will refer later in our comments.

⁴We referred to this treatise in Text A, n. 12, when commenting on Plotinus' use of energeia in his criticism of the Stoic doctrine of mixture.

intelligible world. The remaining treatises are not, on the whole, metaphysical in content, as their titles indicate: II, 8 (35), "How Distant Objects Appear Small"; I, 5 (36), "Whether Well-Being depends on Extension in Time."

Now we are ready to examine VI, 7 itself. Since we do not encounter the first part of the key text until its chapter thirteen, our first task is to construct a brief synopsis of the initial chapters so as to understand how the key text relates to the development of the whole treatise. In particular this synopsis will help us to eventually relate the first part of the treatise (chs. 1-14), in which Intelligence is defined as energeia, to the second part (chs. 15-42), in which energeia is denied of the One.

Philosophers err (Plotinus begins) by assuming that Plato intends his account of production in the Timaeus to be understood literally (ch. 1).⁵ A literal interpretation of the Timaeus obscures the unique nature of the divine Intelligence by likening it to a human craftsman. When the Intelligence knows its own contents, it knows the eternal reasons for all beings. In other words, it knows simultaneously a being and its why. In this respect it differs from human intelligence, for which (as Aristotle shows) knowledge of a thing and knowledge of its why often differ (ch. 2).⁶

⁵Taken literally the Timaeus implies that the sensible world is the product of divine planning. But this is impossible (Plotinus argues in chapter one) because planning or reasoning must proceed from premises immediately known. But neither sensation nor intelligence can account for such premises in the divine Intelligence, for sensation does not exist before sensation is produced and, if intelligence provided immediately known premises about the sense-world, sense-knowledge would be a science.

⁶Plotinus' discussion in chapter two is based on the Posterior

If the Intelligence knows perfectly and embraces everything, then there is nothing produced in the sensible world that does not first exist in the intelligible world. But this would seem to imply serious difficulties, for many aspects of the sensible world seem incompatible with the intelligible world. First, how can sense-powers exist in pure Intelligence? This question presents no difficulty if one remembers that the product must be inferior to the producer. Accordingly, it is not necessary to assume that, because intelligible existents are the principles of sensible existents, the imperfect characteristics of the latter belong to the former. While both the producer (the intelligible existent) and the product (the sensible existent) are knowers, they are not equal

Analytics Alpha, ch. 13, 78 a 22-78 b 3. There Aristotle explains that certain types of knowledge do not immediately disclose the why ($\delta\iota\omicron\tau\epsilon$) or cause of a thing, but require an inference to discover it. "Knowledge of the thing differs from knowledge of the thing's why. To begin with they differ within the same science and in two ways: (1) when the premises of the syllogism are not immediate (for then the proximate cause is not contained in them--a necessary condition of knowledge of the why of a thing); (2) when the premises are immediate, but instead of the cause the better known of the two reciprocals is taken as the middle; for of two reciprocally predicable terms the one which is not the cause may quite easily be the better known and so become the middle term of the demonstration." This second kind of reasoning is inductive and he contrasts two examples showing under what conditions the why of a thing can and cannot be proven. "Thus (2) (a) you might prove as follows that the planets are near because they do not twinkle: let C be the planets, B not twinkling, A proximity. Then B is predicable of C; for the planets do not twinkle. But A is also predicable of B, since that which does not twinkle is near--we must take this truth as having been reached by induction or sense-perception. Therefore A is a necessary predicate of C; so that we have demonstrated that the planets are near. This syllogism, then, proves not the why but only that the thing is: since they are not near because they do not twinkle, but, because they are near, they do not twinkle. The major and middle of the proof, however, may be reversed, and then the demonstration will be of the why. Thus: let C be the planets, B proximity, A not twinkling. Then B is an attribute of C, and A--not twinkling--of B. Consequently, A is predicable of C, and the syllogism proves the why, since its middle term is the proximate cause." (I have followed, except for a few adjustments, W. D. Ross in this translation, Aristotelis Opera [Oxford: 1908-52] Vol. , pp.).

as knowers, for the product is merely an image or logos of the producer. Sensation and sense-powers are the consequence of the production of imperfect knowers and therefore do not belong to the universe of Forms or perfect knowers (chs. 3-7).

Secondly, how can the Forms of irrational beings exist. There? Unlike sense-powers irrational beings (or rather their Forms) can exist in the intelligible world. First, the Forms of beasts are lives and perfections and, therefore, compatible with the Intelligence. Indeed, forms qua forms are equal, for every form is really the whole of the intelligible world (ch. 9). Secondly, if the Intelligence did not admit an infinite plurality of forms and did not comprehend all beings in a single, living moment, it would be deficient and there would be no ground for the sense world (ch. 10). For the same reason that the Forms of beasts inhabit the intelligible world, the forms of plants and elements do so likewise. They are perfections and lives and are compatible with the Intelligence (ch. 11).⁷

Overcoming these misconceptions about the Platonic account of production has shown that the Intelligence is a perfect knower and a universe of diverse forms, teeming with life (ch. 12). This brings us to the initial portion of the key text, where it is shown how the Intelligence as a unity-in-multiplicity involves energeia.

Section One:

"[1] For intelligence is not simple, nor is the Soul which is

⁷Plotinus actually argues in chapter eleven (lines 17-71) that the elements have a kind of life, as is demonstrated by the variety of surface and subsurface chemical changes and the growth of metals deep inside the earth.

from it, but all beings are multiple insofar as they are simple [i.e., beings are multiple in inverse proportion to their simplicity]. [2] And they are such [=simple] not insofar as they are composites but to the extent they are principles and to the extent they are acts. [3] For the act of the last [intelligible] is simple as a fading-out [of act], but [the act] of the first [intelligible is simple as the totality of] all acts.⁸

VI, 7, 13, 1-4:

Ἔστι γὰρ οὔτε νοῦς ἀπλοῦν, οὔτε ἡ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ψυχὴ, ἀλλὰ ποικίλα πάντα ὅσῳ ἀπλᾶ, τοῦτο δὲ ὅσῳ μὴ σύνθετα καὶ ὅσῳ ἀρχαὶ καὶ ὅσῳ ἐνέργειαι. Τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἐσχάτου ἡ ἐνέργεια ὡς ἂν λήγουσα ἀπλῆ, τοῦ δὲ πρώτου πᾶσαι.

"[4] The Intelligence moves with a movement that one expects to find in multiple beings which are forever the same, and certainly its unity is not the same as something [divisible] into parts, but is everything together, since something in parts is indeed not a unity, but is divisible into an infinity.⁹ [5] And do we say that [the Intelligence] is from something [i.e., has an origin] and in addition [moves] toward something as to a term? [6] But then is what is between the All [and its term] like a line or like something else such as a body, homogeneous and unvaried? [7] But what would be the value of that? For if there were no change nor if anything brought it into a life of diversity, it would not

⁸The translation of this last sentence (#3) agrees with Bréhier: "L'acte de l'être qui occupe le dernier rang dans le monde intelligible est simple; mais l'acte de l'être qui occupe le premier rang c'est tous les actes" (Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 83).

⁹See Text A, comments on infinity.

be act, for in no way is such a condition different from the absence of energeia. [8] And if [its] movement were of this sort, it would be only a single life and not the whole of life. [9] And it is necessary that life be all and be all-encompassing and that nothing be without life. [10] The Intelligence must move itself into everything, or rather have always been so moved.

13, 4-16:

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τε κινούμενος κινεῖται μὲν ὡσαύτως καὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ καὶ ὁμοία αἰεί, οὐ μέντοι ταῦτόν καὶ ἐν τι ἐν μέρει, ἀλλὰ πάντα· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ ἐν μέρει αὐτὸ οὐχ ἔν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο ἄπειρον διαιρούμενον. Ἄπο τίνοσ δὲ φαμεν ἂν καὶ πάντως ἐπὶ τί ὡς ἔσχατον; Τὸ δὲ μεταξύ πᾶν ἔρα ὡσπερ γραμμῆ, ἢ ὡσπερ ἕτερον σῶμα ὁμοιομερές τι καὶ ἀποίκιον; Ἄλλὰ τί τὸ σεμνόν; Εἰ γὰρ μηδεμίαν ἔχει ἐξαλλαγὴν μηδέ τις ἐξεγείρει αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ ζῆν ἑτερότης, οὐδ' ἂν ἐνέργεια εἴη· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἡ τοιαύτη κατάστασις μὴ ἐνεργείας διαφέρει. Κἂν κίνησις δὲ ᾗ τοιαύτη, οὐ πανταχῶς, μοναχῶς δ' ἂν εἴη ζωή· δεῖ δὲ πάντα ζῆν καὶ πανταχόθεν καὶ οὐδὲν μὴ ζῆν. Ἐπὶ πάντα οὖν κινεῖσθαι δεῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ κενεῖσθαι.

"[11] A simple existent [=the Intelligence], if it moves, is only that [which is moving or knowing], and either it does not advance into anything or if it does advance it [in a sense] remains and, thus, is a duality.¹⁰ [12] But if one is the same as the other [i.e., if the first member of the duality is the same as the second], the unity remains and there has been no advance.¹¹ [13] But if there is a difference [between

¹⁰Brehier translates this sentence as follows: "Si c'était un terme simple qui se meut, elle ne contiendrait que ce terme unique; ou bien elle même ne procede pas, ou bien, si elle procede, il y a autre chose qui reste immobile; il y a alors deux termes" (Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 84). Richard Harder renders it as follows: "Ferner, entweder bleibt er er selbst und schreitet zu nichts hinaus, oder, wenn er hinausschreitet, ist er als Bleibender etwas anderes: folglich Zwei" (Harder-Theiler, Plotins Schriften, Band III, a, p. 283).

¹¹Again Brehier: "si le second est le même que précédent, l'unité reste, et il n'y a pas eu véritablement procession (Plotin, Vol.

them], the original unity has advanced with differentiation and has produced out of a certain sameness and difference a third unity.¹² This generation out of sameness and difference is a product that has a nature which is same and different. And it is not a particular different something, but it is an all which is different, for [=just as] its sameness is an all. [14] Since it is an all which is the same and an all which is different, it is not something that lacks other things. It has a nature, then, that introduces difference into the All. [15] If all these different beings were before it, it would be influenced by them. [16] But it is not subsequent to them, it produced all of them, or rather was all of them.

13,16-28:

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

"[17] These beings could not exist except as actuated by the Intelligence, which actuates always [so as to produce] one being after another, as if wandering down every path but wandering [always] within itself--such beings the Intelligence, since real in itself, generates

6, Part 2, p. 84). Harder-Theiler: "Und ist dies Zweite mit dem anderen identisch, so bleibt er immer noch eines und ist nicht hinausgeschritten" (Plotins Schriften, Band III, a, p. 283).

¹²A triad is evident here: sameness, difference and the synthesis of sameness and otherness.

by its wandering. This wandering which it has by nature is in real beings who travel along with its wanderings. [18] But it is always itself. And its wandering is stationary. Wandering for it is in the plain of truth, from which it does not stray.

"[19] It has and embraces everything and makes for itself and for its movement, as it were, the place where it moves. [20] And this plain [of truth] is varied, so that traveling about in it may occur. [21] If it were not in every respect and always varied, [that is] if it were simply without diversity, it would stand still. [22] But if it stood still, there would be no intellection. And thus, if it stood still at all, it would not have intellected. [23] But [in fact] if this were the case, it simply would not be. It is, then, intellection. [24] And its movement completely fills all being, and all being is wholly intellection and encompasses all life and [produces] eternally one being after another. [25] It is something which is the same and different, and it is ceaselessly separating out different beings and making them manifest. [26] And its entire journey is through life and is entirely through living beings, just as for a traveller over the earth everything which he traverses is earth, even though earth admits differences [as to countries, cities, etc.]. And so it is with the life [of the Intelligence]: that through which it passes is itself, although it is always other and not itself. But always it has the same passage through what is not itself because it does not change; rather it is present to all differences precisely in the same way and according to its sameness. [27] For if there were not something that related to the different beings in precisely the same way and by virtue of its sameness, nothing would be--nothing in act, nor any act itself.

13,28-51:

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα τὰ ὄντα εἶναι μὴ νοῦ ἐνεο- γήσαντος, ἐνεργήσαντος
 οἷα δὲ αἰεὶ ἄλλο μετ' ἄλλο καὶ οἷον πλανηθέντος πᾶσαν πλάνην καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ
 πλανηθέντος, νοῦς ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ ἀληθινὸς πέφυκε πλανᾶσθαι· πέφυκε δ' ἐν οὐσίαις
 πλανᾶσθαι συνθεουσῶν τῶν οὐσιῶν ταῖς αὐτοῦ πλάναις. Πανταχοῦ δ' αὐτός ἐστι·
 μένουσαν οὖν ἔχει τὴν πλάνην. Ἡ δὲ πλάνη αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀληθείας πεδίῳ,
 οὐδ' οὐκ ἐκβαίνει. Ἐχει δὲ καταλαβὼν πᾶν καὶ αὐτῷ ποιήσας εἰς τὸ κινεῖσθαι οἷον
 τόπον, καὶ ὁ τόπος ὁ αὐτὸς τῷ οὐ τόπος. Ποικίλον δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον τοῦτο, ἵνα
 καὶ διεξίῃ· εἰ δὲ μὴ κατὰ πᾶν καὶ αἰεὶ ποικίλον, καθόσον μὴ ποικίλον, ἔστηκεν.
 Εἰ δ' ἔστηκεν, οὐ νοεῖ· ὥστε καί, εἰ ἔστη, οὐ νενόηκεν· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, οὐδ' ἔστιν.
 Ἔστιν οὖν νόησις· ἡ δὲ κίνησις πᾶσα πληροῦσα οὐσίαν πᾶσαν, καὶ ἡ πᾶσα οὐσία
 νόησις πᾶσα ζωὴν περιλαβοῦσα πᾶσαν, καὶ μετ' ἄλλο αἰεὶ ἄλλο, καὶ ὅτι αὐτοῦ
 ταυτόν, καὶ ἄλλο, καὶ διαιροῦντι αἰεὶ τὸ ἄλλο ἀναφαίνεται. Πᾶσα δὲ διὰ ζωῆς ἡ
 πορεία καὶ διὰ ζώων πᾶσα, ὡσπερ καὶ τῷ διὰ γῆς ἰόντι πάντα, ἃ διεξίῃσι,
 γῆ, κᾶν διαφορὰς ἔχη ἡ γῆ. Καὶ ἐκεῖ ἡ μὲν ζωὴ, δι' ἧς, ἡ αὐτῆ, ὅτι δὲ αἰεὶ ἄλλη,
 οὐχ ἡ αὐτῆ. Ἀεὶ δ' ἔχων τὴν αὐτὴν διὰ τῶν οὐκ αὐτῶν διέξοδον, ὅτι μὴ ἀμείβει,
 ἀλλὰ σύνεστι τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ ὡσαύτως καὶ κατὰ ταυτὰ· ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ περὶ τὰ ἄλλα
 τὸ ὡσαύτως καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ, ἀργεῖ πάντα καὶ τὸ ἐνεοργεῖα καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια
 οὐδαμοῦ.

"[28] These other beings are, in fact, itself; thus, it is every-
 thing. If it is truly itself [=the Intelligence], then it is everything.
 But if it is not everything, it is not [in fact] itself. [29] But if it
 is everything and everything is it, because it includes all beings and if
 it is without nothing because nothing is incomplete in this totality,
 then there is nothing belonging to it which is not different. For this
 reason both the other and this Intelligence complete each other. [30]
 For if it had no difference but were the same rather than different, that
 would lessen its own proper being since it has not brought about the
 completion of its own nature."

13, 51-57:

Ἔστι δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα
 αὐτός, ὥστε πᾶς αὐτός. Καὶ εἶπερ αὐτός, πᾶς, εἰ δὲ μὴ,
 οὐκ αὐτός. Εἰ δὲ πᾶς αὐτός καὶ πᾶς, ὅτι τὰ πάντα, καὶ
 οὐδέν ἐστιν, ὅτι μὴ συντελεῖ εἰς τὰ πάντα, οὐδέν ἐστιν

αὐτοῦ, ὃ τι μὴ ἄλλο, ἵνα ἄλλο ὄν καὶ τοῦτο συντελῆ. Εἰ γὰρ
 μὴ ἄλλο, ἀλλὰ ἄλλῳ ταῦτόν, ἐλαττώσει αὐτοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν
 ἰδίαν οὐ παρεχόμενον εἰς συντέλειαν αὐτοῦ φύσιν.

[Plotinus closes the first part of the treatise (chs. 1-14) by employing an analogy common to the Enneads. The Intelligence is comparable to an organism, which is a unity of diverse parts and functions. Each part of an organism has its own nature but exists for the good of the whole. The unity of the Intelligence is even greater because its parts are really identical with one another (ch. 14).]

[Part two of the treatise (chs. 15-42) aims to answer the following question: what is the nature of goodness which appears in the intelligible beings? Plotinus begins by explaining the origin of the Intelligence from the Good.¹³ The nature of production forbids that the Intelligence is the Good, upon which the Intelligence depends for its being. The Intelligence results from an eternally prior moment in which it is an active power, a sight; this sight needs an object and it turns to behold the Good, which it cannot completely grasp. The inadequacy of its vision turns its objects into multiple forms, which are the essential contents of the Intelligence and the eternal reasons for all successive existents. The Intelligence unites all this multiplicity into one nature and thus it is a cosmos of sameness and difference (ch. 15). In addition to these stages of active power (formless sight) and reversion to the object (determination of that sight), there is a vision of the illum-

¹³Of this second part of the treatise Brehier says the following: "l'on aborde une des oeuvres qui font le mieux comprendre la nature de la mystique de Plotin; la transcendance du Bien au-dessus de toute détermination, l'union de l'âme avec le Bien au-dessus de toute connaissance, tels en sont les deux motifs essentiels" (Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, pp. 51-52).

ining light of the Good,¹⁴ which is simultaneous with the stage of determination or fragmentation of the object (ch. 16).¹⁵

[The next section of the key text begins with chapter seventeen.]

Section Two:

"[31] But how do the beings [=the Forms] in the Intelligence and the Intelligence itself arise if these beings were not There in That [=the One] which fills nor indeed in that [=the Nous] which is filled? For when it was not yet filled, they were not [yet in it]. But is it not necessary that the giver have what it gives? [32] But it is necessary in these matters that the giver be thought of as superior and the gift as inferior to the giver. For such is the case in the production of real beings. [33] For first there must be something in act; and the posterior things are potentially whatever is prior to them [and in act]. [34] And the first transcends the secondary things and the giver transcends the gift because it is superior. [35] If therefore something is prior to act, it transcends act and thus transcends life. [36] If then there is life in the Intelligence, there is a giver of life who is greater and of more worth than life. [37] The Intelligence has life but not because it requires a giver who has plurality. Its life is a certain vestige of That

¹⁴The question of the precise nature of this light present to the Intelligence is what Plotinus aims to answer in this second part of the treatise.

¹⁵Chapter sixteen slightly amends the account of conversion (epistrophē) to the Good found in chapter fifteen. In chapter fifteen the Intelligence is, at first, a formless vision which beholds the Good and secondly, becomes a vision of the forms (its own contents). In the following chapter, however, out of the initial stage of formlessness comes a twofold vision: first, a vision of the infinite variety of forms; secondly, of the illumining light of the Good. (See Bréhier, Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, pp. 53-54.)

[=the Good], but it is not the life of That [=the Good]. [38] As life looked towards That, life was indeterminate. [39] But after life looked There it was determined [i.e., bounded, made distinct], but That had no determination. [40] For as soon as something looks at the One it is determined by this and takes into itself boundary and limit and form. [41] And [in this case] the form was in the shaped; but the shaper was without shape. [42] And the limit was not external, as if it were something drawn around a magnitude; but the limit was that of the totality of life There; the boundary was diverse and infinite, as radiating out from such a nature [i.e., from the One who is infinite]. [43] Life was not that of something definite, for then it would be defined as already an individual. [44] [While it is not defined as an individual thing,] yet it is nonetheless defined. It is defined then as a certain unity-in-multiplicity. [45] Each item of the multitude is also defined. [46] The whole Intelligence is defined as multiple through the multiplicity of life, and yet it is a unity by virtue of its limit.

17, 1-25:

Ἄλλὰ πῶς ταῦτα ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτός, οὐκ ὄντων ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ πληρώσαντι οὐδ' αὐ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ πληρουμένῳ ; Ὅτε γὰρ μήπω ἐπληροῦτο, οὐκ εἶχεν. Ἡ οὐκ ἀνάγκη, ὃ τις δίδωσι, τοῦτο ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ δεῖ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις τὸ μὲν διδόν μείζον νομίζειν, τὸ δὲ διδόμενον ἔλαττον τοῦ διδόντος· τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ γένεσις ἐν τοῖς οὐσι. Πρῶτον γὰρ δεῖ τὸ ἐνεργεῖα εἶναι, τὰ δ' ὕστερα εἶναι δυνάμει τὰ πρὸ αὐτῶν· καὶ τὸ πρῶτον δὲ ἐπέκεινα τῶν δευτέρων καὶ τοῦ διδομένου τὸ διδόν ἐπέκεινα ἦν· κρεῖττον γάρ. Εἴ τι τοίνυν ἐνεργείας πρότερον, ἐπέκεινα ἐνεργείας, ὥστε καὶ ἐπέκεινα ζωῆς. Εἰ οὖν ζωὴ ἐν τούτῳ, ὃ διδοὺς ἔδωκε μὲν ζωὴν, καλλίων δὲ καὶ τιμιώτερος ζωῆς. Εἶχεν οὖν ζωὴν καὶ οὐκ ἔδειτο ποικίλου τοῦ διδόντος, καὶ ἦν ἡ ζωὴ ἴχνος τι ἐκείνου, οὐκ ἐκείνου ζωῆς. Πρὸς ἐκείνο μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα ἀόριστος ἦν, βλέψασα δ' ἐκεῖ ὠρίζετο ἐκείνου ὄρον οὐκ ἔχοντος. Εὐθύς γὰρ πρὸς ἐν τι ἰδοῦσα ὀρίζεται τούτῳ καὶ ἴσχει ἐν αὐτῇ ὄρον καὶ πέρασ καὶ εἶδος· καὶ τὸ εἶδος

ἐν τῷ μορφωθέντι, τὸ δὲ μορφώσαν ἄμορφον ἦν. Ὁ δὲ ὅρος οὐκ ἔξωθεν, οἷον μεγέθει περιτεθείς, ἀλλ' ἦν πάσης ἐκείνης τῆς ζωῆς ὅρος πολλῆς καὶ ἀπείρου οὔσης, ὡς ἂν παρὰ τοιαύτης φύσεως ἐκλαμψάσης. Ζωὴ τε ἦν οὐ τοῦδε ὄριστο γὰρ ἂν ὡς ἀτόμου ἤδη· ἀλλ' ὄριστο μέντοι· ἦν ἄρα ὀρισθείσα ὡς ἐνός τινος πολλοῦ — ὄριστο δὴ καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν πολλῶν — διὰ μὲν τὸ πολὺ τῆς ζωῆς πολλὰ ὀρισθείσα, διὰ δὲ αὐτὸν ὅρον ἓν.

[[47] What then is this 'defined unity'? It is the Intelligence. For determined life is the Intelligence. [48] But what is its 'multiplicity'? It is the multitude of the intelligences. All [the contents of the Intelligence] are intelligences. [49] On the one hand, there is the totality of the Intelligence; on the other, the many individual intelligences. [50] But is the whole Intelligence that has each intelligence identical with any one intelligence that it has?¹⁶ [51] But then it would embrace solely one kind of thing. [52] If then they are many, there must be differentiation [in the Intelligence]. [53] Again, then, how does each intelligence have differentiation? It comes to have differentiation because of what it is in itself and how it relates to the whole. [54] For the totality of the Intelligence is not identical with any of the individual intelligences.

17, 25-32:

Τί οὖν τὸ «ἐν ὀρίσθη»; Νοῦς· ὀρισθείσα γὰρ ζωὴ νοῦς. Τί δὲ τὸ «πολλά»; Νόες πολλοί. Πάντα οὖν νόες, καὶ ὁ μὲν πᾶς νοῦς, οἱ δὲ ἕκαστοι νοῖ. Ὁ δὲ πᾶς νοῦς ἕκαστον περιέχων ἄρα ταῦτόν ἕκαστον περιέχει; Ἀλλ' ἓνα ἂν περιεῖχεν. Εἰ οὖν πολλοί, διαφορὰν δεῖ εἶναι. Πάλιν οὖν πῶς ἕκαστος διαφορὰν ἔσχεν; Ἡ ἐν τῷ καὶ εἰς ὅλως γενέσθαι εἶχε τὴν διαφορὰν· οὐ γὰρ ταῦτόν ὄτουσιν νοῦ τὸ πᾶν.

¹⁶I follow Ficinus in translating the phrase ἄρα ταῦτόν ἕκαστον περιέχει: "numquid uelut eundem continet unumquemque."

"[55] The life of the Intelligence was a universal power and the vision which then occurred There was the power of all beings, and the generated Intelligence is itself the manifestation of all these beings. [56] And the Intelligence is placed over these beings, not so that it may be established, but so that [through its vision] of that which is without form [i.e., the One] it may establish the form of the first forms.¹⁷ [57] And the Intelligence becomes as a light to the Soul, just as the One does to the Intelligence. [58] And whenever the latter determines the Soul it makes it rational, giving to it a trace of what it has itself. [59] Intelligence then is a trace of the One. [60] And since the Intelligence is a form and in going out [from the One] is made plural, the One is formless and shapeless, for thus it makes form.¹⁸ [61] If the One were a form, the Intelligence would be a logos. [62] It is necessary that the First be utterly without plurality, for its plurality would make it dependent on another existing before It.

17, 32-43:

*Ἦν οὖν ἡ μὲν ζωὴ δύναμις
πάνσα, ἡ δὲ ὄρασις ἡ ἐκεῖθεν δύναμις πάντων, ὁ δὲ γενό-*

¹⁷Here I basically follow the Bréhier translation "L'Intelligence siège en eux, non pas pour y trouver un fondement, mais pour être le fondement des êtres premiers grace à la vision qu'elle a de ce qui est sans forme" (Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 89).

¹⁸Of this precise text (#63-#64) Rist remarks as follows: "The only possible conclusion from this passage must be that a logos is the representative of something determinate and informed. It must not be the representative of the One, but only the representative of Noûs. It must be connected first and foremost, as at 5.1.3.13, with the representation of the Forms at the next level of reality, the level of Soul" (The Road to Reality, p. 85). While this may be for Plotinus the strict or preferred sense of logos, it is nonetheless true that he elsewhere uses logos to refer to "the representative of the One" (See esp. V, 1 [10] 6, 48ff.; VI, 4 [22] 11, 16). Logos appears, in addition, to refer sometimes to the seminal reason of a thing--the productive principle or form of something as it exists eternally in the Intelligence (see earlier, n. 8).

μενος νοῦς αὐτὰ ἀνεφάνη τὰ πάντα. Ὁ δὲ ἐπικάθηται αὐτοῖς, οὐχ ἵνα ἰδρυθῆ, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἰδρύσῃ εἶδος εἰδῶν τῶν πρώτων ἀνείδεον αὐτό. Καὶ νοῦς δὲ γίνεται πρὸς ψυχὴν οὕτως φῶς εἰς αὐτήν, ὡς ἐκεῖνος εἰς νοῦν· καὶ ὅταν καὶ οὗτος ὀρίσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν, λογικὴν ποιεῖ δούς αὐτῇ ὧν ἔσχεν ἴχνος. Ἴχνος οὖν καὶ νοῦς ἐκείνου· ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ νοῦς εἶδος καὶ ἐν ἐκτάσει καὶ πλήθει, ἐκεῖνος ἄμορφος καὶ ἀνείδεος· οὕτω γὰρ εἰδοποιεῖ. Εἰ δ' ἦν ἐκεῖνος εἶδος, ὁ νοῦς ἦν ἄν λόγος. Ἐδεῖ δὲ τὸ πρῶτον μὴ πολὺ μηδαμῶς εἶναι· ἀνήρητο γὰρ ἂν τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ εἰς ἕτερον αὐτὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ.

"[63] But in what way are the contents of the Intelligence like the Good?¹⁹ Is it because each being is a form or all are beautiful or what? [64] If something comes from the Good, it has in every respect a trace and type of That from which it comes, just as fire is a trace of the fire from which it comes and sweetness is a trace of the sweetness from which it originates.²⁰ [65] Now life came into the Intelligence from the Good--for the Intelligence originated out of the act from the Good and--the Intelligence exists because of the Good and the beauty of the Forms is from There also. [66] All these things--life, intelligence, form²¹--are like the Good. [67] But what do they have in common? For the fact that they come from the Good is not enough for there to be

¹⁹Plotinus obviously regards this question as equivalent to the alternative formulation: "what is the nature of that light which illumines the intelligible world?" This seems correct, for his answer in chapter thirty-six--that the light or goodness There is the Good Itself, who is, at once, immanent to all beings (as their internal reality) and transcendent (as the indeterminate source of determination, Intelligence and being)--adequately solves both formulations of the question.

²⁰See Text B, comments on fire.

²¹In this passage Plotinus divides the intelligible order into three distinct acts, the first of which is prior, atemporally, to the second and the second to the third. These acts are life, Intelligence and form (See Brehier, Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 54).

identity [among them]. [68] For there must be something common in them. For what may be produced from something might not be identical but rather diverse according as difference comes about in multiple recipients, since that which is given to the first act is different from that which is given by the first act.²² And that which these [prior acts] produce here is also different. [69] But there is nothing to prevent that each thing is good, more or less according to its own difference. [70] What then explains the highest good?

18, 1-15: 'Αλλ' ἀγαθοειδῆ κατὰ τί τὰ ἐν τῷ νῷ; Ἄρα ἡ εἶδος ἕκαστον ἢ ἡ καλὰ ἢ τί; Εἰ δὴ τὸ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἦκον πᾶν ἴχνος καὶ τύπον ἔχει ἐκείνου ἢ ἀπ' ἐκείνου, ὡσπερ τὸ ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἴχνος πυρὸς καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ γλυκέος γλυκέος ἴχνος, ἦκει δὲ εἰς νοῦν καὶ ζωὴ ἀπ' ἐκείνου — ἐκ γὰρ τῆς παρ' ἐκείνου ἐνεργείας ὑπέστη — καὶ νοῦς δὲ δι' ἐκείνον καὶ τὸ τῶν εἰδῶν κάλλος ἐκείθεν, πάντα ἂν ἀγαθοειδῆ εἶη καὶ ζωὴ καὶ νοῦς καὶ ἰδέα. Ἄλλὰ τί τὸ κοινόν; Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἀπ' ἐκείνου πρὸς τὸ ταῦτόν· ἐν αὐτοῖς γὰρ δεῖ τὸ κοινόν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μὴ ταῦτόν ἢ καὶ δοθέν ὡσαύτως ἐν τοῖς δεξομένοις ἄλλο γίνεσθαι· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄλλο τὸ εἰς πρώτην ἐνέργειαν, ἄλλο δὲ τὸ τῇ πρώτῃ ἐνεργείᾳ δοθέν, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἄλλο ἦδη. Ἡ οὐδὲν κωλύει καθ' ἕκαστον μὲν ἀγαθοειδὲς εἶναι, μᾶλλον μὴν κατ' ἄλλο. Τί οὖν καθὸ μάλιστα;

"[71] But before [we know what explains the highest good], it is necessary to know whether life is good, life in and of itself, life contemplated in its simplicity and stripped bare of all other qualities. [72] And surely the life which results from Life is something different from such life There. [73] But again what is [the goodness of] this latter life? It is the life of what is good. But it is not the life of the Good itself, but rather the life from It. [74] But if in that life

²²In other words, the first act, life, is different from the second act, Intelligence, and from the third act, form.

there should be something form the One and this life is truly life, and if we must affirm that nothing worthless may be from That; life in and of itself is indeed good. [75] And [if] indeed we are to speak truthfully about the Intelligence, we say it is good [because] it is from the First. [76] And it is evident that each form is good and is like the Good. [77] Every form must have something good, or something common [to all] or rather something different, whether as the first or as the second of things in a series. [78] It follows that we have established that each thing here has in it something and, because of this fact, is itself good. For life is not good absolutely [i.e., without a cause], but we say that life is truly what it is because it is from the Good; this is also true of the Intelligence; one must see a certain identity in them.

18, 15-31:

*Ἄλλὰ πρό-
τερον ἐκεῖνο ἀναγκαῖον ἰδεῖν· ἄρα γε ἀγαθὸν ἢ ζωὴ ἢ αὐτὸ
τοῦτο ζωὴ ἢ ψυχὴ θεωρουμένη καὶ ἀπογεγυμνωμένη; Ἡ
ἢ ζωὴ ἢ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, τὸ δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλο τι ἢ τοιαύτη.
Πάλιν οὖν τί ἢ τοιαύτη ζωὴ; Ἡ ἀγαθοῦ. Ἄλλ' οὐκ
αὐτοῦ ἦν, ἀλλὰ ἐξ αὐτοῦ. Ἄλλ' εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ἐκείνῃ
ἐνίοιτο ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ ἔστιν ἢ ὄντως ζωὴ, καὶ οὐδὲν
ἄτιμον παρ' ἐκείνου λεκτέον εἶναι, καὶ καθὸ ζωῆ, ἀγα-
θὸν εἶναι, καὶ ἐπὶ νοῦ δὴ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ ἀνάγκη λέγειν
τοῦ πρώτου ἐκείνου, ὅτι ἀγαθόν· καὶ δῆλον ὅτι καὶ εἶδος
ἕκαστον ἀγαθόν καὶ ἀγαθοειδές. Ἡ οὖν τι ἔχει ἀγαθόν,
εἴτε κοινόν, εἴτε μᾶλλον ἄλλο, εἴτε τὸ μὲν πρώτως, τὸ δὲ
τῷ ἐφεξῆς καὶ δευτέρως. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ εἰλήφαμεν ἕκαστον
ὡς ἔχον ἤδη ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀγαθόν τι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο
ἦν ἀγαθόν — καὶ γὰρ ἢ ζωὴ ἦν ἀγαθὸν οὐχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλ' ὅτι
ἐλέγετο ἀληθινὴ καὶ ὅτι παρ' ἐκείνου, καὶ νοῦς ὁ ὄντως —
δεῖ τι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁρᾶσθαι.*

"[79] When, given all their differences, we attribute sameness to [the contents of] life and Intelligence, nothing prevents us from holding that this sameness exists in their very entity, and yet this sameness

may be considered apart in one's thought. [80] For example, life [mentally separated] from a man and a horse brings about [the notion of] animal; also heat we may derive from water and fire. The genus [of animal or of heat] belongs primarily [to the first term in the above examples] and secondarily [to the other terms]. Each part [together] or each separately, then, could be commonly called 'good'.

"[81] But then does this establish goodness in their very entity? [82] Truly each as a whole is good, but not like the goodness which belongs to the One. [83] How then? As parts [of the Good]? No, the Good is without parts. [84] The good itself is a unity, but each [plural] thing may have unity according to its own manner of being. [85] For the first act is good and the limit associated with the first act is good, as well as the union of the act and the limit [i.e., the resultant entity]. [86] And the first act is good because it comes from the Good; the second, because it is an ordered All out of the prior good; the third because it is a union of the two. [87] [These lesser goods] are derived, then, and are not identical [with one another], just as out of the same person issue speech and walking and other characteristics, all of them rightly there.

18, 31-45:

*Διαφόρων γὰρ ὄντων,
ὅταν τὸ αὐτὸ αὐτῶν κατηγορηῖται, κωλύει μὲν οὐδὲν ἐν τῇ
οὐσίᾳ αὐτῶν τοῦτο ἐνυπάρχειν, ὁμῶς δ' ἔστι λαβεῖν αὐτὸ
χωρὶς τῷ λόγῳ, ὅλον καὶ τὸ ζῶον ἐπ' ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἵππου,
καὶ τὸ θερμὸν ἐπὶ ὕδατος καὶ πυρός, τὸ μὲν ὡς γένος, τὸ
δ' ὡς τὸ μὲν πρῶτως, τὸ δὲ δευτέρως· ἢ ὁμωνύμως ἂν
ἐκάτερον ἢ ἕκαστον λέγοιτο ἀγαθόν. Ἄρ' οὖν ἐνυπάρχει τῇ
οὐσίᾳ αὐτῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν; Ἡ ὅλον ἕκαστον ἀγαθόν ἐστίν,
οὐ καθ' ἐν τὸ ἀγαθόν. Πῶς οὖν; ἢ ὡς μέρη; Ἄλλὰ ἀμερῆς
τὸ ἀγαθόν. Ἡ ἐν μὲν αὐτό, οὕτωςι δὲ τόδε, οὕτωςι δὲ
τόδε. Καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἐνέργεια ἡ πρώτη ἀγαθόν καὶ τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῇ
ὀρισθὲν ἀγαθόν καὶ τὸ συνάμφω· καὶ τὸ μὲν ὅτι γενόμενον
ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, τὸ δ' ὅτι κόσμος ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, τὸ δ' ὅτι συνάμφω.
Ἄπ' αὐτοῦ οὖν, καὶ οὐδὲν ταυτόν, ὅλον εἰ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
φωνῆ καὶ βᾶδις καὶ ἄλλο τι, πάντα κατορθούμενα.*

"[88] Here [=in this world] goodness depends on order and rhythm. But what accounts for goodness There? [89] A certain answer is possible: here the good is derived wholly from outside because the ordered is different from the orderer, but There they are the same [and therefore good in and of themselves].

"[90] But why are they good in themselves? For it is not just because they derive from There that we must profess our belief that they are good. True, we must agree that beings [There] have worth because they derive from the Good, but we nonetheless should undertake an explanation of how they are [intrinsically] good--i.e., to comprehend that by which they are good.²³

18, 45-51:

*H

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

²³The question of the intrinsic perfection of realities keeps the interest of Neoplatonists long after Plotinus. Proclus, in particular, refines the issue through his notion of *αὐθυπόστατον*. This notion, usually translated "self-constituting," refers to that perfection which a reality (or, more precisely, a participant) receives from a monad directly or immediately (such as what soul receives from an intelligence, intelligence from a being or a being from a henad) and which intrinsically constitutes the participant's nature. Such a perfection is "self-constituting" because it is an immanent cause.

[Having now rejected various solutions to the question, "what is the goodness present to the intelligible beings" (ch. 18; #66-#84), Plotinus proposes and rejects two additional solutions (ch. 19).²⁴ He proposes yet another in chapter twenty:] the Intelligence is itself the Good. But several difficulties follow from this solution. First, analysis of the desire of the soul shows that this position is untenable, because the soul's love for the good has priority over any desire for intelligence. Moreover, the soul values the Intelligence because it conducts the soul to the Good; the soul is not content to end its search with the Intelligence. Thirdly, intelligence is one among many goods, the desirability of which is variable. Consequently, the Intelligence depends on something prior for its goodness (ch. 20).]

Proclus contrasts these authypostata with a perfection which a participant receives from a monad indirectly or mediately (as soul from a being [through the mediation of an intelligence] or an intelligence from a henad [through the mediation of a being]) and which belongs to the participant only intermittently or transiently.

Several publications help clarify Proclus' notion of authypostaton. First, I recommend Leo Sweeney, "Participation and the Structure of Being in Proclus' Elements of Theology," in The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1981), pp. 140-55 and 177-81. This paper is particularly helpful in explaining the relation of authypastaton to metechomenon ("participated perfection") in Proclus. Also see: John Whittaker, "Proclus' Doctrine of the ἈΥΘΥΠΟΣΤΑΤΑ (Geneve: Foundation Hardt, 1975) pp. 193-238. In addition consult E. R. Dodds, The Elements of Theology (Oxford: 1933; reprinted, 1963).

²⁴These two arguments are brief. Perhaps the good is simply any object of desire. But in that event the good becomes an extrinsic condition of being and not the very cause of its being. Also objects of desire are variable and therefore the good would not be common to all beings.

Perhaps (Plotinus continues) we should follow Plato [Republic 352 e] and assume that the good of a being is its virtue. But we understand what virtue is because of its contrast to vice; since there is no vice in the intelligible world, we cannot know what virtue means There. Also virtue is an addition to a being, but an intelligible is simply what it is, without anything extraneous.

[If the soul will appeal to its own internal experience of love for the Good rather than the method of intellection, judgment and analysis, it will see clearly that the Intelligence is inferior to the Good. The Good alone can provoke indubitable and essential love of the soul (ch. 21). Following Plato's "amorous folly" of the Phaedrus (251 c),²⁵ one can further explain why the Intelligence is lovable, for an object may be loved not because of what it is itself but by virtue of the light that shines upon it. The Intelligence is illumined by the light of the Good and is therefore lovable (ch. 22). The love of the light that illumines the Intelligence is not like desire that dissipates and distracts the soul. It is an experience of that reality which is most interior to the Intelligence and to all beings (ch. 23).]

[Before directly answering the question, "what is that in the intelligibles which make them good?," or, as he now puts it, "what is the nature of that light which shines on the intelligibles,"²⁶ Plotinus devotes six chapters (24-30) to solving seven aporiai, which pertain to the relationship of any being to the good.²⁷ With these aporiai dissolved,

²⁵In the Phaedrus Plato speaks of the love of an object because it reflects the light of Beauty itself; the lover appreciates sensible beauty because it causes a recollection of intelligible Beauty--that Beauty which makes beauty possible. For Plotinus the beauty and goodness of the intelligibles is the result of the light of the Good; intelligible goodness and beauty make possible an ascent to the Good, which transcends the intelligible order altogether (see chs. 32-36).

²⁶As early as chapter sixteen (lines 21, 24-31) Plotinus identifies the Good with a light which illumines the intelligibles and thereby makes them good. Prior to chapter twenty-four he refers to light in this sense several times (ch. 17, lines 36-37; ch. 19, lines 19-21; ch. 21, lines 13-17; ch. 22; ch. 23, line 1).

²⁷Here follows a list of these aporiai and their respective solutions. (1) Is the Good itself good as the good of a certain being or as the good of all beings? As the internal reality of each and every

he addresses the central issue again.]

[The internal experience of the soul testifies that the light which radiates on the intelligible beings has its source in the most lovable of objects (ch. 31).²⁸ This source cannot be the Intelligence, for the Intelligence admits of some measure of imperfection, however minute, and

being, the Good is good of all beings (ch. 27). (2) Is the Good desired because of that which is received from It or for the sake of the enjoyment it provides? Since the Philebus (21 c and 65a) has shown that the good is neither intelligence nor pleasure alone but their mixture, it is not incorrect to say the Good is desired for the joy It may bring us (ch. 25). (3) The above two aporiai each entails a difficulty: (a) the first implies that the good for a being consists in that which it receives; Plotinus answers affirmatively, but with a qualification: the good of a being is its form (that which is received) but the source of that form, the Good, that which all desire, is transcendent (ch. 27); (b) the second requires that we determine whether it is the Good or something else that makes us have enjoyment; Plotinus replies it is the Good, for we desire something, seek pleasure in something, only to the extent it is good (ch. 29). (4) Is the Good itself good by virtue of what it is intrinsically or because of something added to it? Of course, the Good is all-perfect and thus is good intrinsically (chs. 28-29). (5) Is the Good simultaneously the good of itself and of others? Ultimately the question makes no sense because only that in need or with desire can seek the Good; the perfect Good, however, has no needs or desires (ch. 25); if the question were to make sense, we would answer that the Good is indeed the good for itself, for It is the indeterminate ground of its own perfect reality (ch. 41). (6) Is the Good and the good for all of nature? Beings seek the Good by acquiring form; however, because matter is alien to form, it is excluded altogether from the Good (ch. 28). (7) Does one actually want to know that the Intelligence is good because the transcendent Good is present to it or merely because it brings us pleasure and self-love? Plotinus' answer is twofold: first, the desire for the Good is other than self-love (because true love of our own nature consists in desiring union with our source; ch. 27); secondly, that the Intelligence brings us pleasure does not imply that we do not seek the Good (rather than the Intelligence), since we have already seen (ch. 25) that we quite reasonably seek the Good for pleasure (ch. 29). (In this summation I have largely followed Brehier, Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, pp. 56-60.)

²⁸Plotinus describes this experience of the Good by recounting characteristics of the soul in love from the Phaedrus, which Brehier summarizes as follows: "impression d'une lumiere et d'une vie plus grand qu'elle venue jusqu'a elle; choc de la rencontre; desir passionne; effort pour imiter ce qu'elle voit; mepris des beautés sensibles, souillées et périssables; affermissement de son être propre et sentiment de sa realité, tels sont les caracteres de cet état supérieur" (ibid., p. 60).

therefore requires a perfect source, whose simplicity precludes any attributes belonging to the intelligible order.²⁹ Consequently, the Good Itself is the source of the intelligible light and is beyond form (chs. 32-33).^{30]}

[Because the Good transcends form and Intelligence, the soul is not content to know Its products. It experiences joy and absence of disquiet not through intellection but through union with that light which illumines Intelligence but which has its source in that which is beyond Intelligence (ch. 34). Reflection and cognition are preparatory stages for ascent to the Good, but It can be reached only by abandoning cognition (ch. 35). Finally, we can explain the light present to the Intelligence which causes its worth: it is an immediate intuition with which we may unite but which no reflective determination can replace.³¹ This light is the radiance of the Good Itself (ch. 36).]

[Having explained that the light present in the Intelligence is the radiance of the Good which is beyond form, being and noēsis, Plotinus, in the remaining chapters of VI, 7, replies to certain objections which maintain that the Good must have knowledge. We pick up the key text with

²⁹Plotinus is here inspired by the Parmenides (137 c-142 a) to develop what Dionysius the Areopagite would later call "negative theology," which consists in denying of the One every trait that presupposes determination or ousia. Accordingly, in chapter thirty-two Plotinus argues that, since Its products are form, the Good is without form.

³⁰Plotinus also introduces beauty in chapters thirty-two and thirty-three and, as Brehier observes (Plotin, Vol 6, Part 2, p. 61), makes beauty appear as an intermediate between the Good and the forms.

³¹Brehier describes well the culmination of Plotinus' quest in chapter thirty-six: "Qu' est-ce que cette lumière que le Bien rayonne sur la pensée? On voit maintenant cette solution; elle est dans un intuition immediate qui nous identifie à cette lumière et que ne saurait remplacer aucune détermination réfléchie (ibid., pp. 62-63).

chapter thirty-seven.]

Section Three:

"[91] Those who attribute knowledge to Him [the Good] have not supposed that He thinks about the inferior existents coming from Him, although some say it is absurd that He not know other things. [92] But those who hold that he does not know anything else still give Him self-knowledge, finding nothing nobler, as if by intellection He could be made more majestic and could be stronger by thought than by being what He is in Himself. [93] But intellection [itself] is not valuable unless it is from Him. [94] For in what is His value--in His intellection or in Himself? If His value is in intellection, He will be of less worth; if in Himself, He is perfect prior to intellection and is not perfected by intellection. [95] But if He is act and not potency, He must have intellection. But if He is such an entity that eternally knows and this, they say, is His act, they admit that He is a duality--namely, entity and intellection. Accordingly, they would say He is not simple but rather something else has been added to Him, [96] just as to the eyes are added the seeing which is act, even though the eyes are always seeing. [97] But if they say He is in act because He is act and intellection, then being intellection He would not intellect, just as movement is not itself moved. What then?

"[98] But are not the beings There said to be entity and act? [99] We agree that beings are many and yet are also different, whereas the First Existent is simple."

37, 1-19:

*Οἱ μὲν οὖν νόησιν αὐτῷ δόντες τῷ λόγῳ τῶν μὲν
ἐλαττόνων καὶ τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔδοσαν· καίτοι καὶ τοῦτο*

ἀτοπον τὰ ἄλλα, φασί τινες, μὴ εἰδέναι· ἀλλ' οὖν ἐκεῖνοι ἄλλο τιμιώτερον αὐτοῦ οὐχ εὐρόντες τὴν νόησιν αὐτῷ αὐτοῦ εἶναι ἔδοσαν, ὡσπερ τῇ νοήσει σεμνοτέρου αὐτοῦ ἔσομένου καὶ τοῦ νοεῖν κρείττους ἢ κατ' αὐτὸν ὃ ἐστὶν ὄντος, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτοῦ σεμνύνοντος τὴν νόησιν. Τίνι γὰρ τὸ τίμιον ἔξει, τῇ νοήσει ἢ αὐτῷ; Εἰ μὲν τῇ νοήσει, αὐτῷ οὐ τίμιον ἢ ἦττον, εἰ δὲ αὐτῷ, πρὸ τῆς νοήσεως ἐστὶ τέλειος καὶ οὐ τῇ νοήσει τελειούμενος. Εἰ δ' ὅτι ἐνέργειά ἐστὶν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύναμις, δεῖ νοεῖν, εἰ μὲν οὐσία ἐστὶν αἰεὶ νοοῦσα καὶ τούτῳ ἐνέρνειαν λέγουσι, δύο ὁμῶς λέγουσι, τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὴν νόησιν, καὶ οὐχ ἀπλοῦν λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ τι ἕτερον προστιθέασιν αὐτῷ, ὡσπερ ὀφθαλμοῖς τὸ ὄραν κατ' ἐνέργειαν, κἂν αἰεὶ βλέπωσιν. Εἰ δ' ἐνέργεια λέγουσιν, ὅτι ἐνέργειά ἐστὶ καὶ νόησις, οὐκ ἂν οὐσα νόησις νοοῖ, ὡσπερ οὐδὲ κίνησις κινῶιτο ἂν. Τί οὐ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγετε οὐσίαν καὶ ἐνέργειαν εἶναι ἐκεῖνα; Ἄλλὰ πολλὰ ταῦτα ὁμολογοῦμεν εἶναι καὶ ταῦτα ἕτερα, τὸ δὲ πρῶτον ἀπλοῦν,

[The source of intellection itself (Plotinus continues) does not intellect. It has no prior which can be its object of knowledge. Hence, it must be beyond knowledge so as to be the source of knowledge. The absence of knowledge in the Good is not a privation. He is without knowledge because He is too perfect to be a knower (ch. 37, 19-31). Moreover, the One is beyond knowledge because He has no desire and, therefore, does not seek an object. For Him to be a knower would mean that He would seek Himself as a prior reality, which is absurd, since He is the First Existent. While He is without noēsis, He is not without a transcendent and indeterminate kind of self-awareness (ch. 38). Thought is based on form and sameness and difference, which the simplicity of the Good excludes (ch. 39). Our key text closes with the fortieth chapter of VI, 7.]

"[100] That there must be no intellection in the Good is evident to those who are in touch with this nature. [101] It is necessary to be persuasive in these discussions, if indeed words may convey the matter.

One must mingle persuasion with the necessity [of demonstration]. [In other words, it is now necessary to complement the method of demonstration employed in earlier chapters with the method of persuasion.] [102] Hence, it is necessary for knowledge that all intellection be from something and be of something [i.e., have an object]. [103] The Intelligence is the combination of the substratum from which it comes [=itself in the moment of active potency] and the objects of which it thinks. [104] And by such a determination of substratum, Intelligence becomes act, and it completes what is in potency There, while it does not produce anything. [105] For it is what it is only when completed. For if the intellection is united with entity and that entity, then the entity could not be in that from which it comes. For it would not generate anything which is already there in it. [106] But it [=the prior potency or substratum] is a power for production and produces out of itself. [107] And its act is its entity. And it is with and in entity. And its intellection and its entity are not different [except in thought.] [108] And it is a nature which knows itself and not another; for its intellection and its entity are not different except in our way of thinking about them as that which is intellected and that which intellects; thus, the Intelligence is a plurality as has often been observed. [109] And this is first act, which brings an hypostasis into being, and it is the image of another, which is something so great that entity is produced.

40, 1-20:

Καὶ ὅτι μὲν μὴ δεῖ νόησιν περὶ αὐτὸν εἶναι, εἰδεῖεν ἂν οἱ προσαψάμενοι τοῦ τοιούτου· δεῖ γὰρ μὴν παραμύθια ἅττα πρὸς τοῖς εἰρημένοις κομίζειν, εἴ πῃ οἶόν τε τῷ λόγῳ σημῆναι. Δεῖ δὲ τὴν πειθῶ μεμιγμένην ἔχειν τὴν ἀνάγκην. Δεῖ τοίνυν γινώσκειν ἐπιστήσαντα, ὡς νόησις πᾶσα ἔκ τινός ἐστι καὶ τινός. Καὶ ἡ μὲν συνοῦσα

τῷ ἐξ οὗ ἐστὶν ὑποκείμενον μὲν ἔχει τὸ οὐ ἐστὶ νόησις, οἶον δὲ ἐπικείμενον αὐτῇ γίνεται ἐνέργεια αὐτοῦ οὐσα καὶ πληροῦσα τὸ δυνάμει ἐκείνο οὐδὲν αὐτῇ γεννώσα· ἐκείνου γάρ ἐστιν, οὐ ἐστὶ, μόνον, οἶον τελείωσις. Ἡ δὲ οὐσα νόησις μετ' οὐσίας καὶ ὑποστήσασα τὴν οὐσίαν οὐκ ἂν δύναίτο ἐν ἐκείνῳ εἶναι, ἀφ' οὗ ἐγένετο· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγέννησέ τι ἐν ἐκείνῳ οὐσα. Ἄλλ' οὐσα δύνανται τοῦ γεννᾶν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐγέννα, καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτῆς ἐστὶν οὐσία, καὶ σύνεστι καὶ ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ, καὶ ἔστιν οὐχ ἕτερον ἢ νόησις καὶ ἡ οὐσία αὐτῆ καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ἑαυτὴν νοεῖ ἢ φύσις, οὐχ ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἢ λόγῳ, τὸ νοούμενον καὶ τὸ νοῦν, πλῆθος ὄν, ὡς δέδεικται πολλαχῆ. Καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη πρώτη ἐνέργεια ὑπόστασις γεννήσασα εἰς οὐσίαν, καὶ ἰνδαλμα ὄν ἄλλου οὕτως ἐστὶ μεγάλου τινός, ὥστε ἐγένετο οὐσία.

"[110] If the Intelligence were the Good and not from the Good, then it would be nothing other than the Good and not be of itself an hypostasis. [111] It is first act and first intellection, and thus there is neither act nor intellection before it. [112] If then one goes beyond this entity and this intellection, he does not come to [another] entity and intellection but comes to something wonderful beyond entity and intellection--this something has in itself neither being nor thought but is free in itself and of itself from these factors so that it has no need of them. [113] For there is no giving of act before act is produced, because otherwise it would be already [act] before it was produced. [114] Nor [can there be] intellecting which produces intellection. For already there would be intellection before intellection comes to be. [115] For it is altogether true that intellection, even of the Good, is beneath the Good. [116] Thus, intellection does not belong to the Good. I do not mean that the Good escapes intellection [by the Nous]---for such intellection is a fact--but that in the Good there is no intellection. [117] Otherwise, the One would be the Good together with something less than itself, namely, the intellection of itself. [118] But if intellec-

tion is beneath It, then intellection and entity would be on the same level. [119] If intellection is better [than the Good], then its intelligible object is beneath it. [120] But intellection is not in the Good; it is less than the good and it is through the Good that it has worth. [121] And thus intellection is different from the Good; for the latter is pure and free from other beings and from intellection. [122] The Good, since free of intellection, is purely what it is and it is not restricted by the presence of intellection; [hence], it is not impure but is one. [123] And if someone makes this [the Good] at once an intellection and a thought, [then] he makes it entity and thought united with entity, and thus makes the One be Intelligence itself. Thus, one must find another before [or above] the One. For this act and this intellection are either the completion of another substrate or co-hypostasis existing before the One. And thus the One would have another nature which would very likely be intellection i.e., [the Intelligence].

40, 21-49:

Εἰ δ' ἦν ἐκείνου καὶ μὴ ἀπ' ἐκείνου, οὐδ' ἂν ἄλλο τι ἢ ἐκείνου ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ὑπόστασις ἦν. Πρώτη δὴ οὕσα αὕτη ἐνέργεια καὶ πρώτη νόησις οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι οὔτε ἐνέργειαν πρὸ αὐτῆς οὔτε νόησιν. Μεταβαίνων τοίνυν τις ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς οὐσίας καὶ νοήσεως οὔτε ἐπὶ οὐσίαν ἤξει οὔτ' ἐπὶ νόησιν, ἀλλ' ἐπέκεινα ἤξει οὐσίας καὶ νοήσεως ἐπὶ τι θαυμαστόν, ὃ μῆτε ἔχει ἐν αὐτῷ οὐσίαν μῆτε νόησιν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἔρημον αὐτὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν δεόμενον. Οὐ γὰρ ἐνεργήσας πρότερον ἐγέννησεν ἐνέργειαν· ἤδη γὰρ ἂν ἦν, πρὶν γενέσθαι· οὐδὲ νοήσας ἐγέννησε νόησιν· ἤδη γὰρ ἂν νενοήκει, πρὶν γενέσθαι νόησιν. Ὅλως γὰρ ἡ νόησις, εἰ μὲν ἀγαθοῦ, χεῖρον αὐτοῦ· ὥστε οὐ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἂν εἴη· λέγω δὲ οὐ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, οὐχ ὅτι μὴ ἔστι νοῆσαι τὸ ἀγαθόν — τοῦτο γὰρ ἔστω — ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀγαθῷ οὐκ ἂν εἴη νόησις· ἡ ἐν ἔσται ὁμοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἔλαττον αὐτοῦ, ἡ νόησις αὐτοῦ. Εἰ δὲ χεῖρον ἔσται, ὁμοῦ ἡ νόησις ἔσται καὶ ἡ οὐσία. Εἰ δὲ κρεῖττον ἡ νόησις, τὸ νοητὸν χεῖρον ἔσται. Οὐ δὲ ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἡ νόησις, ἀλλὰ χεῖρον οὕσα καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ ἀγαθόν

ἀξιοθβεῖσα ἐτέρωθι ἂν εἴη αὐτοῦ, καθαρὸν ἐκεῖνο ὡσπερ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ αὐτῆς ἀφείσα. Καθαρὸν δὲ ὄν νοήσεως εἰλικρινῶς ἐστὶν ὃ ἐστὶν, οὐ παραποδιζόμενον τῇ νοήσει παρούσῃ, ὡς μὴ εἰλικρινές καὶ ἐν εἶναι. Εἰ δέ τις καὶ τοῦτο ἅμα νοοῦν καὶ νοούμενον ποιεῖ καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ νόησιν συνοῦσαν τῇ οὐσίᾳ καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸ νοοῦν θέλει ποιεῖν, ἄλλου δεήσεται καὶ τούτου πρὸ αὐτοῦ, ἐπεὶπερ ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἡ νόησις ἢ ἄλλου ὑποκειμένου τελείωσις ἢ συνυπόστασις οὐσα πρὸ αὐτῆς καὶ αὐτῇ ἄλλην ἔχει φύσιν, ἢ καὶ τὸ νοεῖν εἰκότως.

"[124] For it has an object that it intellects, because there is another prior to it. [125] And [consider] when it knows itself: even in its self-knowledge it has that [prior] object and it is out of that other that it contemplates itself. [126] Anything which has nothing prior to it or with it from which it originates--how can it have intellection and how can it know itself? For what could it seek or desire? What would be its power? Would its power not be external to itself in knowledge? [127] I mean consider whether the power which it knows is different from the power by which it knows. If these be one, what is there to seek?"³²

40, 49-56:

Καὶ γὰρ ἔχει ὁ νοήσει, ὅτι ἄλλο πρὸ αὐτῆς· καὶ ὅταν αὐτὴ αὐτὴν, οἷον καταμανθάνει ἃ ἔσχεν ἐκ τῆς ἄλλου θέας ἐν αὐτῇ. Ὡς δὲ μήτε τι ἄλλο πρὸ αὐτοῦ μήτε τι σύνεστιν αὐτῷ ἐξ ἄλλου, τί καὶ νοήσει ἢ πῶς ἑαυτόν; Τί γὰρ ἐζήτει ἢ τί ἐπόθει; Ἡ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ ὄση, ὡς ἐκτὸς οὐσης αὐτοῦ, καθὸ ἐνόει; Λέγω δέ, εἰ ἄλλη μὲν ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἐμάνθανεν, ἄλλη δέ, ἣ ἐμάνθανεν· εἰ δὲ μία, τί ζητεῖ;

³²In chapter forty-one Plotinus continues the argument that the Good cannot intellect because intellection is a response to need and is consigned to inferior existents so that they might live better. He closes the chapter by repeating his negative theology: predicates imply imperfection and therefore cannot describe the One. In chapter forty-two Plotinus concludes the treatise with two final statements: first, he presents the order of the highest realities (the Good, the Intelligence, the Soul); secondly, he invokes the authority of Plato (Letters 312 e) to justify excluding the Intelligence from the First Existent.

Comments

Now we must undertake to express clearly and concisely the movement of thought in Text D. The initial twelve chapters of Text D explain that, because everything in the sensible universe originates from the intelligible, the intelligible world is a universe of infinite variety. After these chapters we encounter the first of several passages which comprise the key text. Taken together these passages fall into three sections. Section One (ch. 13) explicates how and why the Intelligence is a sameness-in-difference (unity-in-multiplicity) and is, thereby, act and encompasses all beings. Section Two (chs. 17-18) describes how what is prior passes from dynamis to energeia and thus gives rise to Intelligence and makes evident its dependence on the Good. Section Three (chs. 37, 40) replies to those who object that the Good is Intelligence and act.

Section One.

a. Every being is multiple in inverse proportion to its degree of simplicity. This is true of the Intelligence and also of its product, the Soul. [Since simplicity denotes perfection or reality,] a being is a principle and an act in proportion to its degree of simplicity. [Because all intelligible beings are principles,] the first and the last of them are simple. But the act of the last being is simple as a diminution of act or being, whereas the act of the first being is simple as the totality of all acts (#1-#3).

b. What kind of totality is the first of the intelligibles [=the Intelligence]? It cannot be a collection or something separable into [really distinct] parts, for such is not a true unity. But the Intelligence is a true unit because its [act or] movement takes place in itself and is, thus, forever the same (#4).

c. But the Intelligence cannot remain perfectly the same, for its movement must have a beginning and a terminus, between which there must be diversity; otherwise, there would be no distinct stages in its [life or] movement and, consequently, there would be no act. Moreover, if its movement were uniform, it would be without differentiation and, therefore, it would not encompass all lives and acts. Instead, it would be only a single, undifferentiated life. In order for there to be a totality of lives, the Intelligence must move through all beings (#5-#10).

d. The movement of a simple existent retains its unity but in one of two ways: either by not advancing into anything or by so advancing. If the latter kind occurs, the Intelligence is a duality, a unity-in-difference. If the former kind of movement takes place [where the one member of the duality is really and logically the same as the other], there is only pure unity and no true movement (#11-#12).

e. If there is duality, sameness and difference issue from the original advance and out of this sameness and difference another unity results [e.g., the Soul is a totality which results from the Intelligence]. But this product is not a pure unity but is also a sameness-in-difference and a totality. For also as a sameness present to differences it encompasses multiple beings. In other words, its nature, too, is to distinguish beings in a whole (#13-#14).

f. The differences which the Intelligence encompasses are [in nature] either prior or posterior to it. If they were before it, the Intelligence would be influenced by them. But in such a case they would be its source, [but it is absurd to hold that simplicity can be caused by diversity]. The multiple beings have no explanation without the Intelligence (#15-#16).

g. Consequently, the Intelligence is the principle of all beings. Its movement and act produces all beings, one after the other. Its movement is analogous to a wanderer who journeys to many places, except this wanderer never strays outside itself. It is the same as the places to which it moves; it is the space for its own movement. It is as though all the places in its wanderings travel along with it. Since it never journeys outside itself, its wandering may be called stationary. It wanders in a plain of truth, from which it cannot stray (#17-#19).

h. This plain of truth has differentiation; otherwise, there could be no movement through it. Without differences, then, there is no movement [or act]--simply, a cessation [of life and] of being. Moreover, without movement there could be no intellection; hence, there could be no Intelligence and, therefore, no being. Intellection, as a result, must move everywhere, producing and encompassing all beings. To repeat: the Intelligence is the same and different. It is forever distinguishing and manifesting beings [through its movement and act]. Its movement through all lives may be likened to a traveller over the earth: he journeys always on the same earth but to many different places. The Intelligence is the same as the many differences to which it moves, for there can be no act if sameness is not forever present to all the different beings (#25-#27).

i. If the very nature of the Intelligence is to be sameness-in-difference, then all beings are it and it is all beings. If it is not everything, then it cannot be itself. It must encompass all differences, or else it is incomplete in nature (#28-#30).

[In summary: Section One argues that act involves simplicity-in-multiplicity, which describes the Intelligence, a simple existent that

embraces all beings, each of which, in turn, is an act because each is a simplicity-in-multiplicity. The Intelligence actuates all beings because it is a kind of movement that, through reversion, completes itself. This completion or determination results in the plurality of beings. As a movement present to the plurality of beings, the Intelligence is a sameness-in-difference. Hence, act is the completed movement of the Intelligence, that is, sameness-in-difference.]

Section Two.

[After showing in chapter fourteen that the Intelligence is like an organism, i.e., a unity of parts and functions, Plotinus begins the second part of the entire treatise, which considers how the Intelligence relates to the transcendent Good. In chapter fifteen and sixteen he explains that the Intelligence is a sameness-in-difference because it originates out of an active power, which contemplates the perfectly simple source and, thereby, brings about its own determination.]

a. [Someone might object as follows to Plotinus' account of the origin of the Intelligence:] How can a reality that is differentiated originate from pure simplicity [for is not all production from "like to like"]? Must not the cause have or be what it gives? [Plotinus replies:] In the production of real beings the giver or producer is necessarily superior to the gift or the product. [Hence, it is possible that the cause is unlike the result by virtue of its superiority] (#31-#32.)³³

³³Bréhier notes that Plotinus has Aristotle in mind during this line of reasoning. Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of production: one in which the cause has the same nature as the effect (e.g., man begetting man); the other in which the cause is totally unlike the effect and greater in power (e.g., the sun generating man). The mistake of the above objection, Plotinus insists, is the presumption that all production is like the former (Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 54).

b. Moreover, that which is in potency requires a cause which is in act. But if the product, that which is at first only potency, is first act and its cause is superior to and unlike it, then that cause transcends act and life. The Intelligence has life because it originates from something that is more perfect than life. Hence, life is unlike its source in nature and is only a vestige of that source [=the Good] (#33-#37).

c. Life was originally indeterminate but was limited and made determinate by reversion back to its source in contemplation. But that source is superior to and unlike its product and is, therefore, without determination. The One determines another but remains Itself indeterminate (#38-#41).

d. What is the nature of this limit [=determination or form] that the Intelligence has? It does not have an external limit, such as a magnitude would have [for such limitation is imposed from without and would make the Intelligence a passive potency]. Its limit is, instead, internal: as the totality of life the Intelligence is limited by intrinsic distinctions and forms and thereby encompasses infinite differences as it images (as best it can) its infinite source (#42).

e. [As proven already (Section One #c, #h-#i)] the Intelligence is a life that must encompass all lives, or else it is incomplete and there can be no being or act. Its limit therefore is not that of a single, defined life [cf. #8], but it is determinate nonetheless as a unity-in-multiplicity, the totality of all lives (#43-#46).

f. But what precisely is this "defined unity" [this unity-in-diversity]? As the Intelligence it is a unity; as having multiple forms and intelligences as its contents and objects it is a multiplicity (#47-#49).

g. Is the Intelligence the same as any one of the intelligences it has as an object? No, since in that case the nature of the Intelligence would be destroyed, for it would not be the totality of different beings but only a particular being. Each intelligence or being exists because of its relation to the whole Intelligence [i.e., each difference is what it is because of the sameness which is the Intelligence] (#50-#54).

h. In order to be the totality of all intelligences or beings, the Intelligence was, as we have seen [Section Two, #c], at first an indeterminate, active power and then was determined and became the universe of [acts] forms or beings. And it is prior to all the different forms, not so as to be one among them [see Section Two, #g], but so as to be their principle insofar as it is an image of the formless One (#55-#56).

i. The Soul relates to the Intelligence, just as the Intelligence relates to the One. It is a light that illumines the Soul, just as the One illumines it. Moreover, the Soul has a vestige of the Intelligence in that it intellects also [although discursively], just as the Intelligence has a vestige of the Good [in that it is good, although in multiplicity]. But the Good [as we have seen, Section Two, #a-#b] transcends the Intelligence. Whereas the Intelligence is form and determinate, the Good is formless and indeterminate. If the Good were a form, the Intelligence would be a logos. [For the Intelligence to be a logos the Good would have to possess the reasons for all things, but that would make It multiple.] The Good, however, must be absolutely without differentiation, for if differentiated, It would require something prior, on which it would depend for determination (#57-#62).

j. How is the Intelligence like the Good? Because it has form or

beauty? Or is there another reason that it is good? We know, of course, that it is good because it is a vestige of the Good. All these [acts], then, are vestiges of the Good: life, intelligence and form (#63-#67).

k. But it is not enough to hold that these realities are good because they have a common origin in the Good. We may still ask: what is intrinsically present to each that makes it good? This is a difficult question, which can be answered only by discovering in these distinct acts [namely, life, Intelligence and form] a common characteristic which makes them good. These realities [life, Intelligence and form] are distinct; the first act can be different from its results, since it may produce perfections which become manifest in diverse recipients.

Nonetheless, to the extent that each is a trace of the Good, each is good in proportion to its own difference. We must now investigate what constitutes the good of the highest beings (#68-#70).

m. [It may now be asked:] if it cannot be known in what the goodness of the intelligible world consists, how can it be known to be good at all? It is obvious that the intelligibles are good because of their origin. [Their common origin does not indicate what intrinsically makes them good, but it does demonstrate that they are good], for what is without worth could not come from the Good [Section Two, #j]. Thus, life is good and also Intelligence and form are good (#71-#78).

n. [But now someone might object:] If Intelligence, life and form are distinct from one another [and they are distinct logically], how can there be something (namely, goodness) common to them? [Would not their separate identities be destroyed if they were in some respect the same?] No, each retains its entity, for the mind [through abstraction] may identify something common to diverse things; e. g., the notion of life

may be derived from different animals--horse and man; heat from water and fire (#79-#80).

o. The very fact that their goodness is mixed with differentiation demonstrates that they are unlike the Good. [Nonetheless, they are good, and thus, must share in the Good in some way.] Do they share in the Good as parts of the Good? Certainly not, for the Good is without parts. They share in the Good in that they have a trace of unity [and to have a trace of unity is to have a trace of the Good, since the Good is the One] in their plurality. For example, the first act [=life] and the second act, limit [=Intelligence] are good, as is the completed entity [=the order of forms] resulting from these prior realities. None of these goods, however, is the same as the Good because each is derived from that dependent on the Good (#81-#87).

p. Again, the original question recurs: what is present to the intelligible beings that accounts for their goodness? Obviously, in the sensible world it is order and rhythm that constitute goodness. But what accounts for it in the intelligible world? For it cannot be rhythm and order and constitute goodness. There, for the good here is derived from outside because the ordered is different from the orderer, but no such separation exists. Thus, goodness is intrinsic to the intelligibles and the question remains: what is this goodness? (#88-#89).

q. So the search for what makes the intelligible good must continue. Their derivation from the Good explains that they are good but does not explain what intrinsically makes them good (see immediately above, #m; #90).

[The central points concerning energeia in Section Two are as follows. Since the Intelligence is first act and first life, the cause

of the Intelligence is beyond act and life. If act requires sameness and difference (as demonstrated in Section One), then the One, which is without difference, must transcend act. Nevertheless, as the source of the realm of sameness and difference, i.e., of the Intelligence, whose nature is a threefold act (life, intelligence and form), the One is the source of act (and is act through extrinsic denomination). Furthermore, the acts of the Intelligence are good, despite their inferiority to the Good, for they are vestiges of their source by virtue of their sameness or simplicity. The One is present to these acts as a kind of light, the precise nature of which occupies those chapters intervening between Section Two and Section Three.]

Section Three

[Plotinus has searched for an answer through chapters nineteen to thirty-six to the question, "What is the nature of the light present to the intelligible realities that makes them good or desirable?: He finally answers this question in chapter thirty-six: the light present to the intelligibles which makes them good is an immediate intuition of that reality internal to all existents; it is a direct experience of the real, which transcends cognition and Intelligence; it is union with the radiance of the Good itself, who transcends act and Intelligence.]

a. [The Peripatetics and others object to Plotinus' conclusion that the Good, while the illumining source of all knowledge, is not Himself a knower on the following grounds:] While it may not be a perfection for the Good to know other things, it is a perfection for Him to know Himself, for self-knowledge is the supreme perfection (#91-#92).

b. [Plotinus replies as follows:] But intellection, even self-intellection, is not the supreme perfection. Intellection only has worth

because of the Good. The Good is without intellection because He is more perfect than intellection. If He is more perfect than intellection, it is a mistake to think that knowledge will add to His perfection. As all-perfect and the source of all perfection, intellection has perfection from Him (#92-#93).

c. [The matter may be considered in this way:] What accounts for the perfection of the One? Is it Himself or intellection? But if His value consists in intellection, He admits imperfection [for intellection implies duality and dependence]. He must be prior to intellection to make intellection possible. Hence, He is prior to intellection and not perfected by it (#94).

d. [The Peripatetics object again.] Is not the Good pure act, rather than potency, and therefore Intelligence? [Plotinus replies:] But if He is Intelligence, He cannot be the First Existent, for intellection implies duality (intellect and object). While it remains a simple existent, the Intelligences may be analyzed into a duality. Its parts may be eternally united (just as the eyes and their act of vision are always together) but are logically separable (#95-#96).

e. Consequently, to insist that the One intellects and is act and yet retains His perfection as simple is to admit that He is an intellect that does not intellect, just as movement does not move. No, intellection is incompatible with the perfection of the Good. Intelligible beings are entity and act and they differ from the Good (#97-#99). [In the remainder of chapter thirty-seven and in chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine, Plotinus further argues that the One must transcend noesis, energeia and ousia, for if the One does not transcend the intelligible world, the latter cannot exist. The One has no need of nōesis because He is perfect and

therefore free of desire. He seeks nothing. Intelligence presupposes sameness-in-difference, which the pure simplicity of the One excludes.]

f. There are two ways to know that the Good is beyond knowledge. First, we know this through mystical union with Him. We can enter into this Reality and associate with Him only if we leave behind noēsis. Secondly, we may know His transcendence not mystically but philosophically, although this is far less satisfactory and has value mainly to persuade those who have never enjoyed mystical experience with the Good (#100-#101).³⁴ [But let us attempt this philosophical explanation.]

g. Knowledge must come from a prior power and have an object. Knowledge is the determination of a prior power, which may be called the substratum for knowledge [and also for form, limit and act]. Knowledge is the determination of this substratum, but the resulting entity is not altogether different from the indeterminate, prior potency: through determination one and the same existent becomes completed [or actualized]. In other words, out of this prior potency the Intelligence becomes itself. In conclusion, this potency [=the first moment in the production of the intelligible world] is prior to intellection, entity and act, for these are all the same (#102-#107).

h. The Intelligence admits plurality, however, even if its intellection, act and [entity] are all the same, for these are logically distinct. [As unity-in-multiplicity and the completion of the active power for intellection,] the Intelligence is the first act and second hypostasis (#108-#109).

i. The Intelligence is sameness and difference and, therefore, is

³⁴See Text B, comments on katanoēsis.

derived from a prior existent. Since it is entity, that from which it derives (and of which it is merely an image) is beyond entity. Since act is the same as entity, the source of the Intelligence is also beyond act. As completely transcendent, the Good is perfect, self-sufficient and First Reality (#110-#113).

j. The Good is beyond act because He is unproduced [and yet is the ultimate source of all production], while act is produced out of a prior potency. Intelligence is act, produced from and by potency, and therefore beneath the Good. Consequently, the Good, although He may be the object of the Intelligence, does not Himself intellect. If He intellected, He would be imperfect; He would be a unity-in-multiplicity, for intellection and entity are together (#113-#118).

k. [Let us consider another objection.] Perhaps intellection is prior to the Good. [Plotinus replies:] This is absurd, for in that case intellection would have its object posterior to it. Intellection, then, would exist before that which makes intellection possible, for intellection requires a prior object that it may actuate its own potency for knowledge. Consequently, intellection exists and is good because of the Good which exists before it (#119-#122).

m. It follows that the Good is simple and perfect because removed from and unmixed with intellection. Intellection, then, is imperfect; i.e., it is dependent on a reality before it (because it is an active power requiring an object so as to bring itself into act). So if the Good is Intelligence, He must have a prior object, for there are only two alternatives: the Good is determining principle for the Intelligence or He is Himself Intelligence and requires a principle. Therefore, the First Existent cannot be Intelligence (#123).

n. Furthermore, if the Good were intellection, He would need and seek something. But if He is the First Existent, He could only need and seek Himself. He would be His own object for knowledge; He would have to be His own prior. But this is absurd, for the Good would have to exist before He in fact exists in order to be the object He seeks [i.e., the result would have to be prior to the cause] (#124-#127).

[Section Three in essence elaborates on the findings of Section Two. Contrary to Greek philosophical tradition, the One is not Intelligence, because He is not a duality or sameness-in-difference. Consequently, He is not act.]

Presenting this movement of thought has shown how Text D contributes in important ways to Plotinus' doctrine of energeia. In general Plotinus has argued the following: the intelligible world, the world of sameness-in-difference, in which the kinēsis of the Intelligence manifests all beings, is the world of energeia (Section One), which the One, since it is perfectly simple and without difference, transcends (Section Two and Three.)

We must now study the following issues in Text D to further refine our knowledge of energeia: first, the role of kinēsis, ousia, tauton and heteron in the intelligible world; secondly, the nature of life; finally, the transcendence of the Good over energeia.

Ousia, Kinēsis, Tauton and Heteron in the Intelligible World

Plotinus' description of the intelligible world in Text D (especially #1-#30; Section One, #a-#f) relies heavily on four notions: entity (ousia), movement (kinēsis), sameness (tauton) and difference (heteron). Plotinus employs these notions so as to explain how, by generating and

encompassing all beings, the Intelligence is a unity-in-multiplicity. Since as a one-in-many the Intelligence is energeia, a knowledge of these four notions is important for our study.

The conjunction of these four expressions in Text D reflects the influence of Plato's Timaeus,³⁵ where Plato depends on them (except that he uses thateron for Plotinus' heteron) to explain the formation of the World Soul. Hence, in order to understand how these expressions figure in Text D, we must first summarize how they belong to the Timaeus.

Plato's relevant remarks begin at 30 a. When constructing the sensible universe, the Demiurge realized that, if the sensible world was to be beautiful, intelligent and good, i.e., if it was to be a worthy image of the eternal living All or the world of Forms, it must contain soul. Since the soul is superior to body, the Demiurge desired that soul rule body (34 b-c). This precedence demanded that soul be composed of three ingredients: ousia, tauton and thateron, each in a state intermediate between sheer indivisibility of the Forms and divisibility of things;³⁶ that these three be blended into a sort of unity (35 a); that this unified whole be marked off into divisions measured by numbers forming two geometrical proportions and corresponding to the intervals of a musical scale (35 b-36 b). The Demiurge next cut this whole lengthwise and bent it round into circles, of which the outer belongs to sameness, the inner to difference (36 b-d). He set these circles in locomotion,

³⁵Explanation of how these four notions reflect the influence of Plato's Sophist will be postponed until Text E (VI, 2 [43]), which presents Plotinus' interpretation of all the megista genē (ousia, kinēsis, stasis, tauton and thateron).

³⁶In other words, the components of soul are intermediate between that which is always "self-same" (the eternal Forms) and that which "becomes and is divisible" (bodies).

for, unless they move, they cannot constitute soul, whose very nature is to be everlasting self-movement.³⁷ The visible manifestation of this movement is the planets (planēta) and the stars (astra), whose local motions are regular and thus make possible time (36 e; 38-a-e). But there is also an invisible counterpart of this locomotion of the World Soul. As invisible participant of reason and harmony, as the best of existents brought into being by the best and eternal beings, the Soul has true knowledge of immutable beings and true belief of sensible beings through the moving circles of sameness and difference (37 a-c).³⁸

In summary the Timaeus uses our four notions in the following ways--
ousia: the World Soul is an ousia because the Demiurge fashions it according to the divine exemplars so as to be a distinct existent with a definite nature; tauton and thateron: that nature is specifically constituted by two circles, an inner circle of difference and an outer circle of sameness; kinēsis: Soul is kinēsis in two respects: first, as the principle moving itself cognitively through the circles of sameness and difference, which thereby forms the heavenly bodies, including the "wanderers" or planets, and imparts to them their circular locomotion; secondly, as an intellection of the intelligible All and the sensible All through the circles of sameness and difference.³⁹

³⁷Plato does not literally mean that the Demiurge set the Soul in locomotion, for already in the Phaedrus (245 c-246 a) he has defined Soul as the eternal self-moving existent necessary for all cosmic movement. This position is expressed again in the tenth book of the Laws (893 b-895 a), where Plato identifies Soul as the cause of all other kinds of kinēsis.

³⁸For this distillation of the Timaeus I am indebted to L. Sweeney, Infinity in Plato's Philebus: A Bibliographical and Philosophical Study (forthcoming), Ch. IV: "Participation of Things in Forms," pp. 89-140 (typescript).

³⁹The necessary association between soul, kinēsis and intellection

Now before explaining how Plotinus applies this exposition to his conception of the intelligible world and ultimately to energeia, we must first ask how such application is possible in the first place, given that Plato in the Timaeus focuses on Soul, whereas Plotinus in Text D focuses on Nous. The answer appears to rest with Plotinus' doctrine of logos, according to which what constitutes an inferior being also constitutes, except in a more perfect way, its superior. Accordingly, since Soul as a vestige of Nous (#58) is defined as ousia, kinēsis, tauton and heteron, the Intelligence may likewise be defined.

Let us begin with kinēsis to explain how Plotinus adapts these notions to his metaphysics and relates them to energeia. Plotinus is able to ascribe kinēsis to the Intelligence by accepting Plato's definition of kinēsis as intellection. If kinēsis defines Soul, which is imperfect intellection (#57-#58), then kinēsis may certainly define Nous, which is perfect intellection. This judgment, that kinēsis is intellection, would seem the only feasible interpretation of Plotinus' remarks describing the life and the act of the Intelligence as a "movement" which manifests everything (#4-#8; #10; #19). Since Plotinus maintains consistently throughout Text D (e.g., #24; #95; #97; #111) and elsewhere in the Enneads (e.g., V, 9 [5]; V, 4 [7]; III, 8 [30]; III, 7 [45]; V, 3 [49]) that the life and the act of the Intelligence is intellection, it must be assumed that he also intends kinēsis to mean intellection. This assumption seems especially confirmed by the observation that, if the movement of the Intelligence were stopped, there would be no intellection (#22).

With the knowledge of kinēsis as intellection, it becomes possible

Plato stresses in the Sophist, 248 a-251 a, on which we will comment in Text E.

to explain precisely how kinēsis is operative in the intelligible world. If kinēsis is intellection, the word will express the operative states of the Intelligence in the same way that "intellection" does. In other words, kinēsis is simply an alternative way of expressing the role of intellection in the intelligible world. This is the key to understanding how kinēsis relates to energeia, for just as intellection is described as undergoing the moments of prohodos or dynamis and epistrophē or energeia, so kinēsis may be identically described.

We have already witnessed when discussing intelligible matter in Text C how kinēsis relates to dynamis. There we quote II, 4 (12), 5, 28-39, where Plotinus describes the overflow of the One as kinēsis. We interpreted this remark to mean that without kinēsis nothing posterior to the One can exist. Indeed, we concluded, following Fielder,⁴⁰ that kinēsis is the necessary condition in the production of every hypostasis. Based on what we now know of kinēsis, we realize that by affirming the necessity of kinēsis in II, 4 Plotinus is simply affirming the necessity of intellection. More precisely, the overflow of kinēsis produces intelligible matter as an active dynamis, which in turn produces actual intellection, and is thus the first necessary stage in the generation of every hypostasis.

While Text D does not altogether neglect kinēsis as dynamis (as implied in #5) it focuses mainly on reversion and therefore kinēsis as energeia. To explain exactly how kinēsis relates to energeia, Plotinus introduces the notion of ousia in Text D (#17;#24). And in this discussion he exhibits further reliance on the Timaeus by likening kinēsis to a

⁴⁰John Fielder, "Chorismos and Emanation in the Philosophy of Plotinus," p. 114; see Text C, n. 50.

"wandering" (planēthentos) as it actuates all ousiai.⁴¹ These ousiai are the energeiai which terminate this wandering of Nous (#17). Hence, ousiai or energeiai are necessary to the extent that reversion is necessary in production, for they mark the end of production, the finished hypostasis. If kinēsis terminated in procession, the universe of beings would remain forever in potency (#55; #106, #107). That is to say, if there were no impetus (epheisis)⁴² beyond the initial movement from the One, the universe of beings would remain indeterminate and there would be no act (#7). Only as determinate is kinēsis the actuation of lives and being (#9-#10).

This distinction between Nous as intelligible matter and Nous as beings or acts also explains how sameness and difference relate to kinēsis in Text D. We discovered the close relationship of heteron with kinēsis in the same passage from II, 4 to which we referred above. There (II, 4, 5, 28-39) Plotinus states that not only kinēsis but also heteron is necessary in production. That difference must define kinēsis in procession follows from the fact that, if an existent moves from its source, it necessarily separates itself or becomes distinct from that source. Difference, then, is a necessary characteristic of intelligible matter or active dynamis.

However, text D makes it clear that what constitutes difference in procession constitutes sameness in reversion. This follows since intelligible matter in reversion what remains constant, common and present to all beings or acts (#26-#30). Indeed, it is intelligible matter which

⁴¹In fact Plotinus uses planēthentos (or some other form of the verb planao) eight times in seven lines (#17-#19) of chapter thirteen.

⁴²Plotinus connects kinēsis with epheisis at III, 9 (13), 9, 4. For other remarks on epheisis see III, 8 (30), 7, 5; 11, 23.

makes the ousiai possible, for they are (logically posterior to it (#15-#16)). Hence, what constitutes difference in reversion must be opposed to intelligible matter in the duality of Nous. Accordingly, heteron refers not to Nous but to the multiplicity of beings that determine Nous. Since these beings are forms or acts, difference must signify energeia in reversion.

So far we have considered sameness and difference separately. Taken separately each denotes one of the dual aspects of the second hypostasis. Sameness denotes Nous or active dynamis (that which is determined); difference denotes Noēta or energeia (that which determines). But sameness and difference, since they are only different aspects of a single existent,⁴³ may be taken together as defining a unified whole. Understood in this way, sameness and difference define the universe of intelligible beings and therefore define energeia itself. Thus, we discern one of the important findings of Text D: to be energeia is to be sameness-in-difference.

If one reflects on how Plotinus interrelates these four notions, ousia, kinēsis, tauton and heteron, one must observe that kinēsis is central. By integrating all the other notions with kinēsis, Plotinus defines kinēsis as energeia and thereby exhibits how creatively he interprets his predecessors, for the union of kinēsis and energeia represents a synthesis of both Plato's and Aristotle's conceptions of intellection. This synthesis is remarkable since Aristotle's conception of intellection as energeia would seem at first to be altogether incompatible with Plato's conception of intellection as kinēsis. According to

⁴³How the various aspects of Nous are logically distinct ways of expressing a single reality will be explained in Text E.

the Stagirite kinēsis cannot mean intellection, for, if so, it could be ascribed to the Separate Intelligence. This ascription, however, is forbidden by Aristotle's ontology, according to which what is supremely real is perfect and complete and, therefore, immutable and immobile (akinētos). For Aristotle kinēsis implies mutability, imperfection and dependence and therefore cannot belong to the supreme existent, the Separate Intelligence.⁴⁴ Accordingly, Nous is energeia, not kinēsis, for energeia signifies perfection and completion.⁴⁵

Since Plato and Aristotle are at odds on the nature of intellection, how can Plotinus logically combine their conceptions of intellection in Text D? Plotinus achieves the synthesis by employing kinēsis and energeia in complementary rather than conflicting ways. He uses Platonic kinēsis to explain the emergence of Nous in reality and Aristotelian energeia to explain the nature of that existent as a completed or perfected hypostasis. In essence, kinēsis and energeia do not conflict in Plotinus' conception of intelligence, because he combines them in such a way as to express different aspects of a single existent.

This union of Plato and Aristotle results from Plotinus' refusal simply to mimic Plato's conception of kinēsis in the Timaeus. Plotinus is willing to transcend Plato and apply kinēsis to the intelligible world

⁴⁴This view of kinēsis contrasts dramatically with Plato's, according to which kinēsis is so perfect as to exist on the same level as the eternal Forms (see Sophist, 248 e).

⁴⁵See Physics Theta, esp. ch. 5 (256 a 3-258 b 9); Metaphysics Lambda, chs. 5-7 (1071 a 1-1073 a 12). Also see the following works from the secondary literature: J. B. Skemp, The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1967), p. 33, n. 2; J. L. Ackrill, "Aristotle's Distinction between energeia and kinēsis" in New Essays on Plato and Aristotle (New York, 1965), pp. 121-141; Philip Merlan, "Aristotle's Unmoved Movers," Traditio IV (1946), 1-30.

itself, the world of Forms. And it is his motive behind this elevation of kinesis to the intelligible world that explains why he is attracted to Aristotle's doctrine of energeia. Plotinus realizes that Aristotle's theory of potency and act provides him with a means to explain what Plato cannot help him explain: the relationship of the Nous to the transcendent Good. From a Plotinian point of view Plato cannot explain this problem, because he does not fully realize that a sound metaphysics must be an henology. Once one fully understands that to be real is to be one, however, then he will realize that Nous, since it is a one-in-many, is dependent and therefore relates to the One as product to producer. It is this relationship of product to producer that makes Aristotle's conception of Nous appropriate in an otherwise Platonic explanation. Since, according to Aristotle, production in general consists in a movement from indeterminacy or potency to determinacy or act, the production of the Nous (Plotinus concludes)⁴⁶ may likewise be said to consist in such a movement. The Aristotelian conception of Nous as energeia, then, perfectly defines for Plotinus the final stage in the production of Nous.

Thus, Plotinus achieves a synthesis of two positions so as to explain how the Intelligence is a one-in-many. He achieves this synthesis through a long and complex discussion based on the multiple relationship of four notions: kinesis, ousia, tauton and heteron, which Plotinus extracts for his own special purposes from Plato's Timaeus, a dialogue whose influence on Text D will further appear in our next section of comments.

⁴⁶Aristotle himself, of course, does not explain Nous as emerging into act out of potency, because the Nous of Aristotelian philosophy is the first existent. Hence, Nous is simply eternal, independent act.

The Nature of Life

Plotinus' treatment of life (zōē), which we have already glimpsed in prior key texts,⁴⁷ is central to his conception of the intelligible world, and occupies the attention of several important treatises.⁴⁸ VI, 7 figures among these important treatises because it explains how life relates to the universe of beings, to the One Himself and, most importantly, to energeia.

Text D introduces life along with kinēsis (#7-#9). This association is not accidental, for the second existent can only be kinesis if it is life (#24; #50). This judgment, that Intelligence is life, has the authority of Plato, who elevates life to the same level as the Forms in the Sophist, and of Aristotle who attributes life to the Separate Intelligence in the Metaphysics.⁴⁹ Moreover, this judgement would seem to have inductive support, for, since the best lives in the sensible world are intelligent, the perfect union of life and intelligence would seem to be necessary in the intelligible world.⁵⁰

If the Intelligence is life, life must consist of two distinct stages, identical with the moments in the production of the Intelligence. Life, therefore, is dynamis or energeia, depending on whether one considers Nous as indeterminate or as determinate (#7; #41-#42; #58). Intelligible matter, Nous as dynamis, is life because it is an underdetermined

⁴⁷See Text B (#6) and Text C (#35; #39).

⁴⁸For example, see VI, 9 (9), 9; III, 8 (30), 8-10; III, 7 (45), 3; 5; 10-11; I, 4 (46) passim.

⁴⁹For Plato, see Sophist, 248 e; for Aristotle, see Metaphysics Lambda, ch. 7, 1072 b 13-29.

⁵⁰Plotinus argues precisely this point at III, 8 (30), 8, 1-8.

perfection empowered of itself to contemplate the One (#42;#58).⁵¹ Life in its first moment is itself a power dependent on another power, the One (#126-#127; cf. #36). But it is the completed Nous, Nous as energeia, that is life in the most definite and perfect sense (#50).

Nous is truly actual because it actuates all beings (#9;#24;#58). Its nature would remain forever a potency, incomplete and imperfect, if it did not actuate and make manifest all beings (#17;#24;#30). Life, then, is complete act to the extent that it actuates and encompasses all Forms. Since every Form is itself a nous, every Form is a life. Hence, by comprehending all Forms, the Nous comprehends all lives. Accordingly, Nous is not a single or individual life (#8) but is the totality of all lives, because it is the actuation of all lives. The intelligible world, thus, may be said "to boil with life."⁵²

This account of the Nous as all-encompassing life has implications regarding the production of all beings posterior to Nous. If Nous is life and if its own infinite contents are lives, then all inferior beings are lives as well, for all perfections posterior to Nous are what they are as its logoi and ichnē (#58). Because all logoi of the Intelligence must themselves be contemplations, they must also be lives. For this reason the procession of all beings below the intelligible world is a procession of gradually diminishing lives. Plotinus expresses this point

⁵¹Later Neoplatonists (e.g., Proclus, Platonic Theology, VI, 9, 365), partly because of the influence of the Chaldean Oracles, hold that life (strictly speaking) is only dynamis or the second existent as indeterminate, and is (as indeterminate) a separate hypostasis; once this second hypostasis undergoes reversion or is in energeia, it should no longer be considered life but the third hypostasis, Intelligence.

⁵²VI, 7, 12, 23; VI, 5 (23), 12, 9.

when contrasting the Intelligence with its logoi in III, 8 (30).

For the other lives [=those less real than the Nous] are thoughts in a way, but one is a growth-thought, one a sense-thought and one a soul-thought. How, then, are they thoughts? Because they are logoi. And every life is a thought, but one is dimmer than another, just as life [has degrees of clarity and strength]. But this life [=the life of Nous] is clearer; this is first life and first intelligence in one. So the first life is thought, and the second life is thought in the second degree, and the last life is thought in the last degree. All life, then, belongs to this kind and is thought. But perhaps men may speak of different kinds of life, but do not speak of different kinds of thought but say that some are thoughts, but others not thoughts at all, because they do not investigate at all what kind of thing life is.⁵³

53III, 8 (30), 8, 14-24 (following mainly Armstrong's translation).

Νοήσεις μὲν γὰρ πως καὶ ἄλλαι· ἀλλ' ἢ μὲν φυτική νόησις, ἢ δὲ αἰσθητική, ἢ δὲ ψυχική. Πῶς οὖν νοήσεις; Ὅτι λόγοι. Καὶ πᾶσα ζωὴ νόησις τις, ἀλλὰ ἄλλη ἄλλης ἀμυδροτέρα, ὡσπερ καὶ ζωὴ. Ἡ δὲ ἐννεγεσττέρα αὕτη καὶ πρώτη ζωὴ καὶ πρῶτος νοῦς εἰς. Νόησις οὖν ἢ πρώτη ζωὴ καὶ ζωὴ δευτέρα νόησις δευτέρα καὶ ἢ ἐσχάτη ζωὴ ἐσχάτη νόησις. Πᾶσα οὖν ζωὴ τοῦ γένους τούτου καὶ νόησις. Ἄλλὰ ζωῆς μὲν ἴσως διαφορᾶς τάχ' ἂν λέγοιεν ἄνθρωποι, νοήσεων δὲ οὐ λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν, τὰς δ' ὅλως οὐ νοήσεις, ὅτι ὅλως τὴν ζωὴν ὁ τι ποτέ ἐστιν οὐ ζητοῦσιν.

In III, 6 (26), 6, 10-16 (which is chronologically very close to III, 8) Plotinus, before taking up the question of the impassibility of matter, describes Nous in these terms: "being, what one could truly call being, is real being; and this is that which has nothing lacking to its being. Since it is completely, it has no need of anything for its preservation and being but is cause to the other beings, which merely seem to be. If this is correct, it must necessarily be in life, and in perfect life; or, if it falls short of this, it will be no more existent than non-existent. But this means that it must be intellect and wisdom in its fullness" (again, mainly after Armstrong).

Ἔστι γὰρ τὸ ὄν, ὃ καὶ κατ' ἀλήθειαν ἂν τις εἴποι ὄν, ὄντως ὄν· τούτο δὲ ἐστιν, ὃ πάντῃ ἐστὶν ὄν· τούτο δὲ, ᾧ μηδὲν ἀποστατεῖ τοῦ εἶναι. Τελέως δὲ ὄν οὐδενὸς δεῖται ἵνα σώζοιτο καὶ ἤ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις αἴτιον τοῖς δοκοῦσιν εἶναι τοῦ δοκεῖν εἶναι. Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς λέγεται, ἀνάγκη αὐτὸ ἐν ζωῇ καὶ ἐν τελείᾳ ζωῇ εἶναι· ἢ ἐλλείπον οὐ μᾶλλον ὄν ἢ μὴ ὄν ἐσται. Τούτο δὲ νοῦς καὶ πάντῃ φρόνησις.

In sum the universe is a hierarchy of lives because it is a hierarchy of thoughts and acts.

The Intelligence is supreme in this hierarchy of lives because its intellection is perfect. It is perfect because it comprehends all beings at once. In a late but important treatise, III, 7 (45), Plotinus comments on this all-embracing life so as to distinguish the energeia of Nous from the energeia of its principal logos, Soul. The multiple aspects of Nous, i.e., entity, sameness and difference, movement and rest, are really identical.⁵⁴ They reflect the unity of an existent whose life or energeia is eternity. While a person may analyze this existent into multiple parts, eventually

one puts it all together again into one, so as to be only life, compressing the otherness in these intelligible realities [=ousia, sameness, differences, movement and stability], and seeing the endlessness and self-identity of their act, and that it is never other and is not a thinking or life that goes from one thing to another but is always the selfsame without extension or interval; seeing all this one sees eternity in seeing a life that abides in the same, and always has the all present to it, not now this, and then again that, but all beings at once, and not some beings, and then again others, but a partless completion.⁵⁵

⁵⁴III, 7, (45), 3, 7-10.

⁵⁵III, 7, 3, 10-18 (after Armstrong).

Οὕτω δὴ καὶ συνθεῖς πάλιν αὐτὸ εἰς ἓν ὁμοῦ εἶναι ζωῆν μόνην, ἐν τούτοις τὴν ἑτερότητα συστοίχας, καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας τὸ ἄπαυστον καὶ τὸ ταῦτόν καὶ οὐδέποτε ἄλλο καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἄλλου εἰς ἄλλο νόησιν ἢ ζωῆν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὡσαύτως καὶ ἀεὶ ἀδιαστάτως, ταῦτα πάντα ἰδὼν αἰῶνα εἶδεν ἰδὼν ζωῆν μένουσαν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἀεὶ παρὸν τὸ πᾶν ἔχουσαν, ἀλλ' οὐ νῦν μὲν τόδε, αὐθις δ' ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἅμα τὰ πάντα, καὶ οὐ νῦν μὲν ἕτερα, αὐθις δ' ἕτερα, ἀλλὰ τέλος ἀμερές,

Thus, the act of the Intelligence is life as eternal and represents the plotinian equivalent of the "eternal living being" of Plato's Timaeus.⁵⁶

Soul is less perfect than the Intelligence and therefore cannot encompass all beings at once. Its intellection is not intuitive but discursive and thus must manifest its acts successively.

For as Soul presents one act after another, and then again another in ordered succession, it produces the succession along with act, and goes on with another thought coming after that which it had before, to that which did not previously exist because discursive thought was not in action, and Soul's present life is not like that which came before it.⁵⁷

Because it manifests its life successively, Soul is time. And just as Nous is the equivalent of Plato's "eternal living being" (to autozoon), the Soul is the equivalent of the "moving image of eternity".⁵⁸

If eternity is life at rest, unchanging and identical and already unbounded, and time must exist as an image of eternity (in the same relation as that which this All stands to the intelligible All), then we must say that there is, instead of the life There, another life having, in a way of speaking, the same name as this power of the soul, and instead of intelligible movement there is the movement of a part of Soul; and instead of sameness and self-identity and abiding, that which does not abide in the same but does one act after another, and, instead of that which is one without distance or separation, an image of unity . . . for this is the way in which it will imitate that which is

⁵⁶Timaeus, 37 d.

⁵⁷III, 7 (45), 11, 35-40 (Armstrong).

Τὴν γὰρ ἐνέργειαν αὐτῆς παρεχομένη ἄλλην μετ' ἄλλην, εἰθ' ἑτέραν πάλιν ἐφεξῆς, ἐγέννα τε μετὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας τὸ ἐφεξῆς καὶ συμπροῆει μετὰ διανοίας ἑτέρας μετ' ἐκείνην τὸ μὴ πρότερον ὄν, ὅτι οὐδ' ἡ διάνοια ἐνεργηθεῖσα ἦν οὐδ' ἡ νῦν ζωὴ ὁμοία τῇ πρὸ αὐτῆς.

⁵⁸Timaeus, 37 c-38 c.

already whole, already all together and unbounded, by intending to be always making an increase in its being of the intelligible world. But one must not conceive time as outside Soul, any more than eternity is outside real being. It is not an accompaniment of Soul nor something that comes after (any more than eternity There) but something which is seen along with it and exists in it, as eternity does There [with real being].⁵⁹

Thus, both Intelligence and Soul as lives are energeiai. They differ, however, because one is energeia and life in a perfect sense, whereas the other is a participant in energeia and life. The one is energeia so perfect as to comprehend reality in an eternal "now". The other is energeia in a less perfect way, and therefore is destined to comprehend reality as best it can--in successive moments or in time.

So far we have explained life only as it relates to beings, but

⁵⁹III, 7, 11, 45-62 (Armstrong).

*Εἰ γὰρ αἰὼν ἐστὶ ζωὴ ἐν
στάσει καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ ὡσαύτως καὶ ἄπειρος ἤδη, εἰκόνα
δὲ δεῖ τοῦ αἰῶνος τὸν χρόνον εἶναι, ὡσπερ καὶ τόδε τὸ πᾶν
ἔχει πρὸς ἐκεῖνο, ἀντὶ μὲν ζωῆς τῆς ἐκεῖ ἄλλην δεῖ ζωὴν
τὴν τῆσδε τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς ψυχῆς ὡσπερ ὁμώνυμον
λέγειν εἶναι καὶ ἀπὸ κινήσεως νοερᾶς ψυχῆς τινος μέρους
κίνησις, ἀντὶ δὲ ταυτότητος καὶ τοῦ ὡσαύτως καὶ μένοντος
τὸ μὴ μένον ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, ἄλλο δὲ καὶ ἄλλο ἐνεργεῖν, ἀντὶ
δὲ ἀδιαστάτου καὶ ἐνὸς εἰδωλον τοῦ ἐνὸς τὸ ἐν συνεχείᾳ
εἶναι, ἀντὶ δὲ ἀπείρου ἤδη καὶ ὅλου τὸ εἰς ἄπειρον πρὸς τὸ
ἐφεξῆς αἰεῖ, ἀντὶ δὲ ἀθρόου ὅλου τὸ κατὰ μέρος ἐσόμενον
καὶ αἰεῖ ἐσόμενον ὅλον. Οὕτω γὰρ μιμήσεται τὸ ἤδη ὅλον
καὶ ἀθρόον καὶ ἄπειρον ἤδη, εἰ ἐβελήσῃ αἰεῖ προσκτώμενον
εἶναι ἐν τῷ εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ τὸ εἶναι οὕτω τὸ ἐκεῖνον
μιμήσεται. Δεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἔξωθεν τῆς ψυχῆς λαμβάνειν τὸν
χρόνον, ὡσπερ οὐδὲ τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκεῖ ἔξω τοῦ ὄντος, οὐδ' αὖ
παρακολούθημα αὐτῷ ὕστερον, ὡσπερ οὐδ' ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ' ἐνορώ-
μενον καὶ ἐνόντα καὶ συνόντα, ὡσπερ καὶ ἐκεῖ ὁ αἰὼν.*

Text D also considers how life relates to the One. In the course of that discussion Plotinus explains that the One is not life but instead transcends life. Since the One transcends life for the same reasons that He transcends act, it will be simpler to combine our exposition of the transcendence of the One over zōē with out discussion of his transcendence over energeia.

The Transcendence of the One Over Energeia

The single most important finding in Text D is that the One by transcending life transcends energeia (#35). This, of course, follows from the fact that life, as defined and determined, is energeia. Although VI, 7 is not the first treatise to explicitly state that the One transcends energeia,⁶⁰ nor is it the last,⁶¹ it is the first of our key texts to do so. Thus, Text D corroborates our conclusion reached in every prior key text that the One transcends energeia.

Plotinus' reason for denying energeia and zōē of the One is that both imply plurality and therefore are incompatible with the pure simplicity of the One. The One cannot be life, because life is intellection,

⁶⁰Of course, the transcendence of the One over energeia is implied wherever Plotinus remarks that He transcends ousia or Nous (e.g., I, 6 [1], 9, 37-41; V, 4 [7], 1, 10; 2, 38-40; VI, 9 [9], 11, 42; V, 1 [10], 8, 7-8; I, 2 [19], 3, 31; I, 3 [20], 5, 7; IV, 4 [28], 16, 27; III, 8 [30], 9, 2; VI, 6 [34], 5, 37; VI, 2 [43], 3, 7-10; 17, 18-22; III, 7 [45], 2, 8; V, 3 [49], 10, 5; 11, 2-28; 12, 47-48; 17, 13-14; I, 7 [54], 1, 8). But the first treatise where he explicitly argues His transcendence over energeia is III, 9 (13), 9, 8-12; followed eleven treatises later by V, 6 (24), 6, 3. Here we should also mention that against the above texts which deny energeia of the One stands VI, 8 (39) which repeatedly affirms energeia of the One. This treatise, however, is not a reliable representation of Plotinus' doctrine of energeia, as we will explain in our context to Text E.

⁶¹See I, 8 (51), 2, 1-9 and I, 7 (54), 19-20.

which implies duality. The One also cannot be energeia, because energeia is life or intellection as determined. Because of their plurality life and energeia depend on a prior existent. But since the cause of first life and first act must be purely simple, the cause is beyond life and act.

By arguing that the One is totally dissimilar to energeia, Plotinus must reconsider the common Greek philosophic assumption that every producer must be like its product. Plotinus refers to this assumption while responding to an imaginary interlocutor, probably a Stoic, early in chapter seventeen (#31-#37). His response invokes the peculiar character of his monistic metaphysics. In an ontology the producer in every case must have the same nature as the product, because determinate being follows upon determinate being, nature upon nature. But in a henology, in which there is only one reality, there must be a producer, namely, the First Existent, which is unlike its product, since the product admits multiplicity or unreality. To make the One like His product would be to regard Him as a being, for the very notion of likeness has its basis in ousia, and would destroy His unique nature and His pure unity.

Plotinus' denial of energeia in the One is simply a corollary of his negative theology, which forbids positive ascriptions of the One because they are based on ousia or unity-in-multiplicity. Since energeia is equivalent to ousia, i.e., sameness-in-difference, energeia is something the One cannot be.

Summary and Conclusions

Let us close our treatment of Text D with a careful summary. Text D is a study of energeia in Ennead VI, 7 (38), a long and difficult

treatise consisting of two parts. Part One (chs. 1-14) of VI, 7 is a detailed examination of the nature of the Intelligence; Part Two (chs. 15-42) is an examination of the relationship of the Intelligence to the Good. Within this two-part treatise fall three separate sets of passages which contain very important information on energeia. These sets of passages we label "Sections"⁶² so as to avoid confusing them in our references with the two general "Parts" of the treatise. Specifically, Section One (ch. 13) falls within Part One of the treatise; Sections Two (chs. 17-18) and Three (ch. 37, lines 1-19 and ch. 4) fall within Part Two. Let us begin by summarizing the context which prepares for Section One.

In the opening twelve chapters of VI, 7, Plotinus interprets Plato's Timaeus to hold that Divine Intelligence (=the Demiurge) knows and encompasses the eternal Forms, the reasons for all beings. This implies that everything in the sensible world first exists in the intelligible world. Plotinus answers two important questions in order to explain precisely how the Nous is the cause of all sensible beings. First, how can sense-knowledge exist in the intelligible world? Plotinus answers that, while sense-knowledge qua sense-knowledge cannot exist There, sense-knowledge can exist There in the sense that all the principles of knowledge, which make sense-knowledge possible exist There. In other words, sense-knowledge is a logos of the Intelligence and thus has its source in the intelligible world.

Secondly, how can the Forms of irrational animals, plants and

⁶²We found it convenient to label these passages "Sections" when charting the movement of thought in Text D.

minerals exist There? Plotinus replies that the Forms of all things are perfections and therefore are compatible with the nature of the Intelligence. Furthermore, all Forms qua Forms are intelligences, regardless of the qualities or imperfections of their participants, and are therefore one in nature with the Intelligence.

By answering these questions (chs. 1-12) Plotinus demonstrates that the Intelligence is a perfect knower whose nature consists of an infinite plurality of noeta or Forms. The Intelligence is a single nature that comprehends the reasons for all beings. Chapter thirteen (Section One) aims to explain how this unity-in-multiplicity is energeia. This explanation centers around four notions: kinēsis, ousia, tauton, heteron, which Plotinus acquires from Plato's Timaeus. In that dialogue Plato employs these four notions to describe the formation of the World Soul. According to Plato the Demiurge formed the World Soul so that it would be the best existent in the sensible universe. This superiority required that soul be composed of three ingredients: ousia, tauton and thateron (which Plotinus renders as heteron). The Demiurge blended these ingredients into a whole. He cut this unity into two strips, bending them round into circles, an inner circle of difference and an outer circle of sameness. He next set these circles into cognitive motion and thereby produced the circular cycles of the celestial bodies, which make time possible. Through the circles of sameness and difference, the Soul has both true knowledge, since it apprehends the eternal Forms, and true belief, since it knows all sensible beings.

Plotinus adopts these four notions of the Timaeus and boldly elevates them to the intelligible world. Accordingly, kinēsis, ousia, tauton and heteron become no longer merely constituents of Soul but of

Nous as well. Plotinus is justified in so elevating these notions by authority of his doctrine of logos, which maintains that Soul is simply a less perfect instance of the Nous itself. Hence, if kinēsis, ousia, tauton and heteron are constitutive of Soul, they are constitutive of Nous.

Kinēsis in particular belongs to Nous because Nous is intellection. If, according to Plato, Soul is intellection because of its eternal self-motion, then, Plotinus concludes, Nous as pure intellection and cause of Soul is certainly self-motion. That Plotinus intends kinēsis to signify intellection is confirmed by several passages in Text D, where the movement of Nous is identified as the cause of all beings. Since elsewhere Plotinus describes intellection as the cause of all beings, we may assume that in Text D he intends to link kinēsis with intellection. This connection explains how kinēsis relates to dynamis and energeia. Since kinēsis is so closely linked with the role of intellection in reality, then kinēsis relates to dynamis and energeia precisely as intellection does.

In Text C we witnessed how kinēsis relates to dynamis. Quoting II, 4 (12), 5, 28-39, we discovered that kinēsis as intellection is first indeterminate and potential before becoming determinate and actual. Moreover, since intellection is necessary in all production, we concluded that kinēsis as dynamis is a necessary condition for the production of every hypostasis.

Text D complements these remarks from II, 4 by explaining how kinēsis is energeia. Essentially, kinēsis becomes energeia by moving from indeterminacy to determinacy. What is first only active power in prohodos becomes complete act in epistrophē. To explain exactly how kinēsis becomes energeia, Text D introduces ousia, the second of the four notions from the Timaeus. Plotinus states that the movements or

"wanderings" (planēthentos, a word that echoes the planēta of the Timaeus) of the Nous actuate all ousiai, all intelligible beings. These ousiai are the energeiai which complete the Nous. By contemplating its source the Nous produces the universe of beings. This contemplation constitutes the stage of reversion, without which all beings remain forever in potency.

Section One introduces the remaining Platonic notions, tauton and heteron, to further explain how Nous is dynamis and energeia. Heteron has a wider application than tauton, since heteron applies to both procession (dynamis) and reversion (energeia). We have seen how heteron belongs to procession in the same passage from II, 4 which we cited above. In that passage (ch. 5, 28-39) Plotinus states that heteron is a property of kinēsis in the first moment of an hypostasis, because, if an existent moves from its source, it is necessarily different from that source. Heteron in procession is therefore another name for intelligible matter or active dynamis.

Text D adds to the discussion in II, 4 by demonstrating that heteron in reversion no longer refers to intelligible matter or dynamis but to form or energeia. The form of intelligible matter is actually the infinite plurality of beings. These ousiai constitute difference because they are opposite the unifying nature of intelligible matter.

What then constitutes sameness? Whereas difference characterizes intelligible matter in procession, sameness characterizes intelligible matter in reversion. This is because intelligible matter is that which is common to all Forms. Intelligible matter is sameness in the sense that it is eternal intellection present to all beings.

The separation of sameness and difference is the result of philosophical analysis, rather than the result of any real separation. The Nous is in reality one nature, a unified existent. Accordingly, the Nous is neither sameness nor difference but sameness-in-difference. Since the Intelligence as a whole is pure energeia, sameness-in-difference may be taken as the very definition of energeia.

Of these four notions, kinēsis, ousia, tauton and heteron, kinēsis appears to be fundamental, for, in the final analysis, the remaining three notions represent various aspects of kinēsis. In fact, these other notions relate to kinēsis so as to define it as energeia. By integrating these notions with kinēsis in this way, Plotinus achieves a synthesis of Plato's and Aristotle's conceptions of intellection. This would at first seem impossible since Aristotle's Separate Intelligence is pure energeia because it is purely immobile (akinētos). Plotinus, however, achieves the synthesis by employing Aristotle's and Plato's conceptions of intellection in complementary rather than conflicting ways. Platonic kinēsis explains the generation of Nous and Aristotelian energeia explains the completion of Nous as an hypostasis. Plotinus is willing to incorporate the Aristotelian notion of energeia so as to explain the relationship of Nous to the transcendent Good, a relationship which Plato does not explain because his metaphysics is not a fully developed henology. As an henologist, however, Plotinus realizes that Nous, since it is a one-in-many, must be dependent on the One as product to producer. Accordingly, Aristotle's theory of energeia becomes a valuable way for Plotinus to explain the final stage in the production of Nous.

In addition to these four important notions, kinēsis, ousia, tauton and heteron, Plotinus introduces in Section One of Text D a fifth notion,

zōē, which also reflects the influence of Plato's Timaeus. Plotinus associates life with kinēsis in Text D. This association is necessary, because, if kinēsis is intellection, then kinēsis must be life. Hence, the Intelligence as perfect kinēsis is perfect life. This conviction, that Intelligence is life, not only has the authority of Plato and Aristotle but also empirical support, for the best lives in the sensible world are intelligent.

If life is intellection, then life must consist of two stages, just as intellection does. Life in its first stage is active dynamis and in its second, energeia. Life is dynamis or energeia depending on whether one considers intellection as indeterminate or determinate. In its initial stage, as indeterminate, life is an active power that proceeds from the Power of all beings, the One. By contemplating this original Power, life achieves its completed stage and is act. Only as act is life fully realized and determined. Therefore, energeia is the most perfect kind of life.

If life is the same as Nous, then life is energeia as it actuates all being or Forms. Since every Form is itself a nous, every Form is also a life. Hence, Nous is life not as a particular life but as the universe of all lives. From this conclusion follows a remarkable observation: if Nous is life, then all beings, from Soul and below, are lives, because they are logoi and vestiges of Nous. Since the sensible world is a gradation of intelligences, it is also a gradation of lives. Moreover, because to be an intelligence or life is to be an act, the sensible world is also a hierarchy of acts.

Beyond the sensible world is the source of all these gradations of lives or acts, the Nous itself. The Nous is their source because it is

perfect life and act. Its perfection lies in encompassing all beings in a single moment. Hence, the Intelligence is eternity and the equivalent of Plato's autozoon, "the eternal living being" of the Timaeus.

Soul, the principal logos of Nous, is inferior to its source and therefore cannot comprehend all beings at once. Its life or act must manifest itself successively and thus in not eternity but time, equivalent to Plato's "moving image of eternity" of the Timaeus.

Life is the last important subject to illumine energeia in Section One. Three chapters intervene between Sections One and Two of Text D. The first of these chapters (ch. 14) closes Part One of the treatise. In this last chapter Plotinus concludes that, as a totality of lives, the Intelligence is like an organism, a unity of diverse parts and faculties. Thus, Plotinus concludes Part One by stressing that the Intelligence is a unity-in-multiplicity.

Chapters fifteen and sixteen introduce Part Two of the treatise. These chapters explain that the Intelligence is dependent on the One as product to producer. In particular they state that as an active power or sight the Nous requires the One as its cognitive object. Without a prior object the Nous would remain forever in potency.

This brings us to Section Two, chapters seventeen and eighteen, whose chief points are reiterated in Section Three, chapters thirty-seven (lines 1-19) and forty.⁶³ These sections focus on the single most impor-

⁶³In the eighteen chapters that span Sections Two and Three, Plotinus explores the relationship between the Intelligence and the Good by asking a specific question: what is the cause of the goodness present to the intelligible beings? Before answering this question Plotinus devotes seventeen chapters to considering various possible solutions. In chapter nineteen he proposes and rejects two of them. First, he considers whether the intelligibles are good because they are simply desirable. This solu-

tant finding of Text D: the One transcends energeia. By transcending energeia, of course, the One transcends intellection and life. All three of these aspects of Nous presuppose duality and therefore are incompatible with the pure simplicity of the One. An existent that has some measure of multiplicity cannot be the first existent, for multiplicity is the same as perfection. Hence, without a perfectly simple prior existent (i.e., an existent which altogether transcends multiplicity), the Nous would have no cause. In other words, the One must transcend energeia for energeia to exist.

It is the nature of his henology that forbids Plotinus to attribute energeia of the One. If the ultimate source of reality must be pure unity, then all products of that Source must be wholly unlike It because they admit multiplicity. Thus, Plotinus cannot wholly accept the traditional philosophic principle that the producer must be like its product. He admits the truth of this principle for the universe of beings (where nature follows nature) but denies it for all of reality. There is one producer, namely, the One, that must be totally dissimilar to its products.

tion must be rejected since desire has to do with something outside any good being. Secondly, he rejects the possibility that the good of a being is the same as its virtue. Virtue is posterior to the nature of a being and therefore cannot be the very cause of the good of a being. Chapters twenty to twenty-three consider whether the Intelligene is itself the Good. If this were true, the love of the soul would be content with knowledge alone, but instead the soul aspires to a higher good than knowledge.

After considering several aporiai (chs. 24-30), which aim to clarify how any being must relate to the good, Plotinus reiterates (chs. 31-35) that the intelligible world is not sufficient to explain its own goodness. Again, this conclusion turns on the earlier observation (chs. 20-23) that cognition i.e., union with Nous, does not satisfy the soul's love. Hence, what causes goodness in the intelligibles is that which transcends Intelligence altogether. The cause of goodness is the illumination of the Good Itself, which makes possible an intuition of reality that no cognition can replace (ch. 36).

Without this original dissimilarity, the universe of beings cannot exist.

As a closing observation it appears that Plotinus develops energeia as he does in Text D to help accomplish the over-all task of the treatise, which is to distinguish the Intelligence from the transcendent Good. This means that energeia is a way of reinforcing Plotinus' negative theology. In other words, energeia is introduced in VI, 7 as a way of expressing what the Nous is and what the One cannot be.⁶⁴

Ultimately, what separate the Nous from the One is the former's nature as a plural existent. Specifically, Text D explains this plural nature by relating energeia to four specific aspects of Nous: kinesis, ousia, tauton and heteron. Text D, however, does not exhaust Plotinus' comments on these four notions. In a later treatise, VI, 2 (43), he again discusses them (along with a fifth notion, stasis), but mainly under the influence of Plato's Sophist rather than the Timaeus. To see how this discussion develops and how it involves energeia, let us now turn to VI, 2 as our Text E.

⁶⁴This emphasis on negative theology explains why Plotinus is careful in Text D to avoid describing the Nous in ways that suggest too close a similarity with the One. This caution even leads him to deny (ch. 17; #61), contrary to other treatises, that the Nous is a logos of the One. Plotinus must avoid such a way of explaining the relationship of Nous to the One because it would threaten the very task of Text D. The very notion of logos implies intelligibility, which Text D argues the One must transcend. Thus, in Text D Plotinus must restrict logos to the universe below the Intelligence. In other treatises, where the interests of negative theology are not as pressing, he is willing to apply logos to the Nous. See n. 18.

TEXT E: ENNEAD VI, 2 (43), chs. 7, 8, 14 and 15

Our final key text is taken from VI, 2, the forty-third treatise in chronological order. VI, 2 was originally the second part of a single project, which Porphyry entitled "On the Genera of Being" and divided into three treatises, VI, 1 (42), VI, 2 (43), VI, 3 (44).¹ Although these three treatises originally formed a single composition, they are not all identical in purpose and scope. Whereas VI, 1 and VI, 3 are mainly polemics against the Stoics and Aristotelians on the categories of being, VI, 2 is a constructive exposition of Plotinus' own position on the subject. Specifically, VI, 2 aims to demonstrate how the five supreme genera of Plato's Sophist are the logically distinguishable constituents of the intelligible world. This demonstration is especially rewarding for our purposes because of the relationship of energeia to each of these genera.

Only four treatises intervene between Text D (VI, 7 [38]) and Text E. Two of these may be dismissed as irrelevant. II, 1 (40), "On the Universe," is mainly a cosmological treatise and fails to even mention energeia.² IV, 6 (41) is a psychological study, "On Sense-Perception and Memory," and yields nothing new on energeia. Of the remaining two treatises, VI, 1 (42), of course, is important because it introduces the entire discussion *περὶ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος* and speaks of energeia often. But in spite of its importance, VI, 1 will not be treated as a

¹Porphyry, "The Life of Plotinus," p. 21.

²VI, 8 (39) will be discussed in the subsequent paragraph.

key text. The reason for this rests primarily in the purely negative intent of the treatise. Since VI, 1 is a polemic, it is relatively unreliable as a source of Plotinus' own views concerning the categories of energeia. Any positive information it contains is negligible. Hence, we shall subordinate relevant points from VI, 1 to an investigation of VI, 2, which is a direct and positive presentation of Plotinus' views.³

The remaining intervening treatise, which also happens to be immediately subsequent to VI, 7 (Text D) in both chronology and Porphyry's arrangement, is VI, 8 (39). This composition, entitled "On Free Will,"⁴ would seem to demand the closest inspection, because at first glance it appears to constitute one of Plotinus' most important treatises on energeia. The treatise not only abounds with instances of energeia, the word occurring 66 times in 21 chapters (compared with 44 occurrences in the 42 chapters of VI, 7),⁵ but also it uses energeia in ways and contexts alien to most other treatises. For instance, consider the following remarkable passage from chapter seven (lines 46-54):

The hypostasis [of the Good] would be, so to speak, the same as His act, for there would be no difference; how could there be a difference [in

³Likewise we must subordinate relevant points from VI, 3, which seeks to resolve some of the aporiai that Plotinus sets up in VI, 1 concerning Aristotle's categories. Both VI, 1 and VI, 3 appear to argue that sensible ousiai are transitory and thus ultimately unable to support a genuine theory of categories. Nonetheless, Plotinus allows that sensible ousiai have at least momentary stability and can admit certain predicates, namely, the first five of Aristotle's original ten categories. By no means, however, could the Aristotelian categories, even if reduced to five, ever apply to intelligible ousiai, as VI, 2 makes clear.

⁴Porphyry, "The Life of Plotinus," p. 21.

⁵Concerning the number of times energeia appears in any treatise, II, 5 (Text C) is the most remarkable. Energeia occurs there 61 times in five brief chapters.

the Good], if there is no difference in the Intelligence. The act [There] belongs as much to the being as the being to the act. Thus, "acting according to nature" does not apply [to the Good], for neither act nor life, so to speak, issues from His entity. But the entity accompanies and is associated eternally with act, and out of both He makes Himself and is self-complete and [dependent on] nothing.⁶

Here, in spite of his repeated statements throughout the Enneads that the One is not ousia and energeia, Plotinus unabashedly attributes both traits to the One.

A passage from chapter twenty (lines 9-15) is even more extreme.

For one should not fear that we posit the first act [=the Good] to be without entity. On the contrary, His act is posited, so to speak, as His very hypostasis. If any hypostasis were without act, then the principle of all beings would be imperfect and the most complete would be incomplete. And if act were added [to entity], unity would be destroyed. If then act is more perfect than entity, and the First is most perfect, the First is act.⁷

⁶The translation is mine.

Ὅταν δὲ

δὴ ἢ οἶον ὑπόστασις αὐτοῦ ἢ οἶον ἐνέργεια ἦ — οὐ γὰρ ἢ μὲν ἕτερον, ἢ δ' ἕτερόν ἐστιν, εἴ γε μηδὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ νοῦ τοῦτο, ὅτι μᾶλλον κατὰ τὸ εἶναι ἢ ἐνέργεια ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τὸ εἶναι — ὥστε οὐκ ἔχει τὸ ὡς πέφυκεν ἐνεργεῖν, οὐδὲ ἢ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἢ οἶον ζῶν ἀνενεχθήσεται εἰς τὴν οἶον οὐσίαν, ἀλλ' ἢ οἶον οὐσία συνοῦσα καὶ οἶον συγγενομένη ἐξ αἰδίου τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν αὐτὸ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ, καὶ ἑαυτῷ καὶ οὐδενός.

⁷Again, my translation.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ φοβητέον ἐνέργειαν τὴν πρώτην τίθεσθαι ἄνευ οὐσίας, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὴν οἶον

This passage not only further violates Text D by affirming energeia of the Good, but it also offends another central conclusion of our study by separating energeia from ousia.

These are only a sampling of many such passages in VI, 8,⁸ and therefore we must answer the following question before taking up Text E: why is VI, 8 not a key text--indeed, a most important key text? The answer lies in the peculiar purpose of VI, 8, which is not disclosed until chapter seven of the treatise. At lines 12-15 of chapter seven Plotinus refers to a group of thinkers outside his own school⁹ who endorse a certain "presumptuous discourse" (tolmeros logos), consisting of two assertions offensive to Plotinus' position on the One: "[the Good] is what He is by chance, and only by chance, and is not master of what He is;" and, secondly, "[since] it is not by Himself that He is what He is, He is without freedom or arbitrium,¹⁰ and either acts or does not

ὑπόστασιν θετέον. Εἰ δὲ ὑπόστασιν ἄνευ ἐνεργείας τις θεῖτο, ἔλλιπής ἢ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἀτελής ἢ τελειότατη πασῶν ἔσται. Καὶ εἰ προσθεῖη ἐνέργειαν, οὐχ ἔν τηρεῖ. Εἰ οὖν τελειότερον ἢ ἐνέργεια τῆς οὐσίας, τελειότατον δὲ τὸ πρῶτον, πρώτη αὖ ἐνέργεια εἶη.

⁸Consider, for example, ch. 12 (lines 22-37); ch. 13 (lines 5-11); ch. 16 (lines 12-18); ch. 20 (lines 34-39).

⁹That these thinkers are outside his own school I take to be the meaning of the Greek phrase ἑτέρωθεν σταλείς.

¹⁰For the prepositional phrase ἐπ' αὐτή, translated literally as "it is for him," there is no single corresponding word in English. The phrase means freedom of choice or free-will, which is easily translated into the German Verfügung, but I shall follow Ficinus, who translates it as arbitrium.

act on account of necessity."¹¹ Plotinus' task in VI, 8 is to refute the "presumptuous discourse," and especially its first assertion, although Porphyry's title wrongly suggests that Plotinus focuses on the second.¹²

In essence the "discourse" presents Plotinus with a dilemma: either the One has a cause and a determinate nature and, then, He is being and not the transcendent principle of being; or the One does not have a cause and a determinate nature and, then, He exists only by chance.¹³

Now, one would expect Plotinus to make short work of this dilemma by invoking negative theology.¹⁴ Instead, he takes a far more elaborate route by invoking the notion of will. He presumes that by granting the

¹¹The Greek is as follows:

ὡς τυχοῦσα οὕτως ἔχει, ὡς ἔχει, καὶ
οὐκ οὔσα κυρία τοῦ ὃ ἐστίν, οὔσα τοῦτο ὃ ἐστίν οὐ παρ'
αὐτῆς οὔτε τὸ ἐλεύθερον αὖ ἔχει οὔτε τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῇ
ποιούσα ἢ μὴ ποιούσα, ὃ ἀνάγκασται ποιεῖν ἢ μὴ ποιεῖν.

Bréhier expresses the two assertions thus: "l'Un n'a d'autre origine que le hasard et n'existe que par accident; l'Un ne tenant pas son être de lui-même n'est pas libre et fait nécessairement tout ce qu'il fait" (Plotin, Vol 6, Part 2, p. 119), Harder-Theiler writes as follows: "dieses Wesen sei in seinem Zustande nur von Ungefahr, habe nicht Vollmacht über das, was ist, sei das, was es ist, nicht aus sich selber und besitze daher weder Freiheit noch freie Verfügung, indem es tue oder nicht tue, was zu tun oder nicht zu tun es gezwungen sei" (Plotinus Schriften, Band IV a, p. 19).

¹²Bréhier makes this observation, ibid..

¹³Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁴An appeal to negative theology would be appropriate because, according to Plotinus' general position on the One, the "discourse" is a false dilemma, assuming mistakenly that the One is subject to the attributes of ousia, to which alone chance and nature can apply.

One a will, he can show that the One has a raison d'être and is free.¹⁵ In order to do this, however, he must violate negative theology, for will would seem to belong properly only to an intellect.¹⁶ This abandonment of negative theology allows Plotinus to ascribe not only will to the One but also energeia. But why does Plotinus follow this more difficult course when he could dismiss the "discourse" abruptly? Apparently, he regards the "discourse" as so important that it demands refutation on its own terms. Since the "discourse" ignores negative theology in its description of the One, Plotinus himself is willing to ignore negative theology in order to refute the "discourse."

But why does Plotinus invest the "discourse" with such importance? It is in answering this question that we can begin to see why VI, 8 is not a key text. The answer appears to be that Plotinus perceives the "discourse" as a Gnostic threat within his own school.¹⁷ That the "discourse" would interest Plotinus' students is not surprising, since to some degree it resembles Plotinus' own view concerning the One.¹⁸ Hence,

¹⁵To accomplish this a certain period of preparation is necessary, for the will is primarily a human faculty and considerable explanation is required to grasp how it can belong to the One. Accordingly, VI, 8 divides into two parts. Part One (chs. 1-6) investigates human will and arbitrium and in what sense these notions may be ascribed to divine beings; Part Two (chs. 7-21) investigates will as ascribed to the One so as to reply to the "presumptuous discourse."

¹⁶Plotinus argues this in chapters three to five.

¹⁷In a forthcoming article, "Two Views of Freedom: A Christian Objection in VI, 8 (39), 7, 11-15," A. H. Armstrong argues that the "presumptuous discourse" has orthodox Christian rather than Gnostic authorship. For our purposes the origin of the "discourse" makes no difference. Our point stands: VI, 8 was written in response to an alien philosophical threat within Plotinus' own school.

¹⁸This resemblance consists in the fact that the One is without cause and nature and hence would seem to exist by chance and to be without

it is possible that careless students might regard the "discourse" as the logical outcome of Plotinus' own theology. Plotinus himself is aware of the resemblance and personally struggles against the persuasive logic of the "discourse," as he admits in chapter twelve (lines 2-3): "Take hold, my soul, lest you be foully persuaded by these reasons and fall into uncertainty."¹⁹ Plotinus realizes that the Gnostic position is close enough to his own to cause profound intellectual disturbance or confusion, which Bréhier likens to a kind of vertigo.²⁰ It is to avoid this vertigo and to safeguard his disciples that Plotinus has written the entire treatise.²¹

It is this personal and pedagogical purpose behind Plotinus' refutation of the "discourse" that disqualifies VI, 8 as a key text. In order to safeguard his students from Gnosticism (or some such alien school), Plotinus is willing to suspend momentarily his negative theology and to describe the One in positive terms, including energeia. That Plotinus is conscious of straining language beyond the limits of sound philosophy is evident in his constant qualification of sentences with the adverb ^εοἶον. In fact, he explicitly regrets his abuse of language at the opening of chapter thirteen.

We must introduce these names [=e.g., energeia, kurion, ousia] to what we are seeking, though it is not accurate to do so; let us say again that, speaking accurately, we must not admit

arbitrium. Only a student thoroughly familiar with Plotinus' view of the transcendence of the One could distinguish Plotinus' theology from the Gnostic error.

19 Πάλιν γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ οὐδὲν τι πεισθεῖσα τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἀπορός ἐστι.

20 Bréhier, Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 122.

21 Ibid.

even a logical duality in the One, but we are using this present language in order to persuade our opponents, though it involves some deviation from accurate thought.²²

In this quotation Plotinus is, in effect, asking the reader to excuse the aberrant nature of VI, 8, because it is written primarily as a refutation and not as a statement of his own position, and therefore he also disqualifies the treatise for our purposes. A treatise inspired mainly by the interests of pedagogy and refutation is not likely to furnish reliable insights into its author's own position. Hence, contrary to what one might originally expect, VI, 8 is not Text E. Let us now turn to VI, 2, which is rightfully Text E.

Having criticized Aristotle and the Stoics in VI, 1,²³ Plotinus endeavors in VI, 2 to defend the Platonic theory on the genera of being.²⁴ This defense, of course, requires Plotinus to adjust Plato's theory to his own unique vision of the intelligible world. Since the relationship

²² Translation mine.

Ἄλλ' εἰ καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα ταῦτα ἐπάγειν δεῖ οὐκ ὀρθῶς τοῦ ζητουμένου, πάλιν αὖ λεγέσθω, ὡς τὰ μὲν ὀρθῶς εἴρηται, ὅτι οὐ ποιητέον οὐδ' ὡς εἰς ἐπίνοιαν δύο, τὰ δὲ νῦν τῆς πειθοῦς χάριν καὶ τι παρανοητέον ἐν τοῖς λόγοις.

²³Plotinus criticizes the Aristotelian categories from chapter one through twenty-four of VI, 1; he criticizes the Stoic categories from chapter twenty-five through thirty.

²⁴Plotinus makes it clear from the opening lines of the treatise (ch. 1, 1-5) that his task is to defend his conception of the Platonic megista gene. "After having examined the position concerning the ten categories [of Aristotle] and having spoken of [the Stoics], who reduced everything to a single genus, placing as subordinate to this unity its four forms, we should next make evident our own opinions on the subject [of the genera of being], striving to show the agreement of our convictions with the opinion of Plato."

between the Platonic genera and energeia does not begin to appear until chapter seven of VI, 2, it is necessary first to summarize important points in its opening six chapters. In this summary we will emphasize how Plotinus perceives the fundamental role of the genera in the intelligible world so as to simplify our task of relating them to energeia.

Before defending the Platonic division of being into five supreme classes (Plotinus begins), the meaning of the expression "genera of being" must be determined. Accordingly, there are several questions to answer at the outset. (1) Is being comprised only of a single genus or of several genera? (2) If several, are the genera also principles?²⁵ (3) Is being truly a primary genus or is it a species of a higher genus, whose other species is becoming? Plotinus answers this third question immediately, declaring it absurd, for it would entail that reality and unreality, being and non-being, are of the same kind (ch. 1).

Plotinus' answer to the first question is that being is comprised of several genera, which are the most universal Forms. His answer to the second question is that the genera are principles, for they are the constituents of intelligible being. But these answers (Plotinus goes on

Ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῶν λεγομένων δέκα γενῶν ἐπέσκεπται, εἴρηται δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν εἰς ἓν ἀγόντων γένος τὰ πάντα τέτταρα ὑπὸ τὸ ἓν ὅλου εἶδη τιθεμένων, ἀκόλουθον ἂν εἴη εἰπεῖν, τί ποτε ἡμῖν περὶ τούτων φαίνεται τὰ δοκοῦντα ἡμῖν πειρωμένοις εἰς τὴν Πλάτωνος ἀνάγειν δόξαν.

²⁵From lines 7 to 13 of chapter one Plotinus considers all the logical possibilities concerning the relationship of principles of being to its genera.

to say) entail certain difficulties. How do the genera relate to one another so as to constitute being? Do they relate as a mixture of really distinct elements? If they are a mixture, does this imply that separately each is only in potency and not an independent act? Most importantly, does not admitting a plurality of genera destroy the unity of being? And can unity be retained except by admitting a superior genus to which all the others are subordinated? It certainly is not permissible to explain the various genera as the result of differences added to being, the supreme genus. If being were a single genus, multiple beings could not exist, for differences must be added to a genus extrinsically. This last difficulty consists of a dilemma: if there is no supreme genus, being loses its unity; if there is a supreme genus, being loses its multiplicity (ch. 2).

How can this dilemma be overcome? The solution lies in positing as the source of the genera of being a unity which is not itself a genus. This unity is the One Himself, who transcends being and nonetheless is the cause of being. As the product of the One, being is a unity; in fact, being is unity, but only on a diminished (more multiple) level of perfection. As a manifestation of the One, being is really a whole, and yet it is analyzable into distinct genera. The genera of being are the logically distinguishable constituents of intelligible being (ch. 3).

As unities of distinct parts body and soul are useful analogies for grasping the unitary but diverse character of intelligible being. The body is a whole, whose inseparable components, entity, quantity, quality and movement, are distinguishable by abstraction. The same is true of the soul. The soul comprehends multiple logoi, all of which are really

identical with, but logically distinct from, the soul. The soul is itself a logos of Nous and, accordingly, reflects in its own way the five genera of being (chs. 4-6).

It is in identifying certain genera in soul that Plotinus makes the transition to identifying genera in the Intelligence. Here our key text begins.

"[1] What factors, then, and how many are observable [in soul]? [2] We have already discovered entity and life in the soul. [3] Entity is common to every soul and life is common to every soul, but life is also in the Intelligence. [4] Having introduced the Intelligence and its life, let us posit a single genus, movement, which is common to all life. [5] Entity and movement, which is first life, let us posit as two genera. [6] For even if they are [really] one, they are separable in thought, which finds them to be one and yet not one; otherwise they could not be separated.

7, 1-8:

Τίνα οὖν ἔστι καὶ πᾶσα τὰ ἐνορώμενα; Ἐπειδὴ ἐν ψυχῇ εὕρομεν οὐσίαν ἅμα καὶ ζωὴν — καὶ τοῦτο κοινὸν ἢ οὐσία ἐπὶ πάσης ψυχῆς, κοινὸν δὲ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ, ζωὴ δὲ καὶ ἐν νῶ — ἐπεισαγαγόντες καὶ τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὴν τούτου ζωὴν, κοινὸν τὸ ἐπὶ πάσῃ ζωῇ τὴν κίνησιν ἐν τι γένος θησόμεθα. Οὐσίαν δὲ καὶ κίνησιν τὴν πρώτην ζωὴν οὐσαν δύο γένη θησόμεθα. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἓν, χωρίζει αὐτὰ τῇ νοήσει ὁ ἐν οὐχ ἐν εὐρών· ἢ οὐκ ἂν δυναθεῖν χωρίσαι.

"[7] Witness also that in other things there is clearly a separation of movement and life from being; if not in true being, then at least in the shadow of being and in that which is being in name only. [8] For as in the image of a man, many things are omitted and, above all, the principal thing, life, so it is that the being of sensible things is but

a shadow of [true] being, and is separated from the greatest being, which is life in the primary sense. [9] Thus, we can here [i.e., in the sensible world] separate being from life and life from being.

7, 8-15:

Ὅρα δὲ καὶ ἐν

ἄλλοις σαφῶς τοῦ εἶναι τὴν κίνησιν ἢ τὴν ζωὴν χωριζομένην, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τῇ σκιᾷ καὶ τῷ ὁμωνύμῳ τοῦ εἶναι. Ὡς γὰρ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ ἐλλείπει καὶ μάλιστα τὸ κύριον, ἡ ζωὴ, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὸ εἶναι σκιὰ τοῦ εἶναι ἀφηρημένον τοῦ μάλιστα εἶναι, ὃ ἐν τῷ ἀρχετύπῳ ἦν ζωή. Ἄλλ' οὖν ἔσχομεν ἐντεῦθεν χωρίσαι τοῦ ζῆν τὸ εἶναι καὶ τοῦ εἶναι τὸ ζῆν.

"[10] There are many species of being and [even] a genus. [11] But movement neither is subordinate to being nor is in it; rather, it is with being, and is found in being but not as in a substrate. [12] For movement is the act of being and neither of the two exists apart the other except in thought, but the two natures are [really] one. [13] For being is in act, not in potency. [14] And if each of the two is considered separately, movement appears in being and being in movement, just as in the one which is [i.e., the One of the Parmenides],²⁶ each [of the two—one and being—] is distinct from the other and yet is the other. [15] Nonetheless, intellection says that there are two terms and that each form is twofold and one.

²⁶Here Plotinus refers to the second hypothesis of the Parmenides (142 b-157 b), where "the one which is" (which Plotinus identifies with the second hypostasis) is a unity having many parts. So when Plotinus here says that "in the one which is each [of the two—one and being] is distinct from the other and yet is the other," he is saying that the whole, the complete Nous, has the part (one of its aspects or genera, e.g., movement) and the part has the whole (e.g., movement has the whole intelligible world because movement is the eternal contemplation of all beings).

7, 16-24:

ὄντος μὲν δὴ εἶδη πολλὰ καὶ γένος· κίνησις δὲ οὔτε ὑπὸ τὸ ὄν τακτέα οὔτ' ἐπὶ τῷ ὄντι, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τοῦ ὄντος, εὐρεθείσα ἐν αὐτῷ οὐχ ὡς ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ· ἐνέργεια γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐδέτερον ἄνευ τοῦ ἐτέρου ἢ ἐπινοία, καὶ αἱ δύο φύσεις μία· καὶ γὰρ ἐνεργεία τὸ ὄν, οὐ δυνάμει. Καὶ εἰ χωρὶς μέντοι ἐκάτερον λάβοις, καὶ ἐν τῷ ὄντι κίνησις φανήσεται καὶ ἐν τῇ κινήσει τὸ ὄν, οἷον καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς ὄντος ἐκάτερον χωρὶς εἶχε θάτερον, ἀλλ' ὁμως ἡ διάνοια δύο φησὶ καὶ εἶδος ἐκάτερον διπλοῦν ἐν.

"[16] The movement which appears with being does not alter the nature of being but rather is made complete in this being. [17] It is eternally of such a nature and thus is permanent in its movement. [18] [Hence,] if one were not to introduce rest [into being], he would be even more mistaken than he who would not give movement [to being]. For it is more evident to reflection and intellection that rest accompanies being than that movement does. [19] For existents There remain themselves and unaltered and they have a single intelligibility.

7, 24-31:

Κινήσεως δὲ περὶ τὸ ὄν φανείσης οὐκ ἐξιστάσης τὴν ἐκείνου φύσιν, μᾶλλον δ' ἐν τῷ εἶναι οἷον τέλειον ποιούσης, αἰεὶ τε τῆς τοιαύτης φύσεως ἐν τῷ οὔτω κινεῖσθαι μενούσης, εἴ τις μὴ στάσιν ἐπεισάγοι, ἀτοπώτερος ἂν εἶη τοῦ μὴ κίνησιν δειδόντος· προχειρότερα γὰρ ἢ τῆς στάσεως περὶ τὸ ὄν ἔννοια καὶ νόησις τῆς περὶ τὴν κίνησιν οὔσης· τὸ γὰρ κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ ὡσαύτως καὶ ἓνα λόγον ἔχον ἐκεῖ.

"[20] One may regard rest as a single genus, distinct from movement; in fact, it appears as the contrary of movement. [21] That rest is also different from being is clear for several reasons. [22] If rest were the same as being, then, quite rightly movement should be the same as being.

[23] For why would rest but not movement be the same as being, when movement is the very life and act of being itself? [24] However, just as we separate movement from being, as both the same [in reality] but as not the same [in thought], and thus we say they are two and yet one, in like manner we separate rest from being and yet do not separate it (except by thought), so as to posit it as another genus among real beings.

7, 31-41:

"Ἐστω δὴ καὶ στάσις ἐν γένος ἕτερον ὄν κινήσεως, ὅπου καὶ ἐναντίον αὐτῆς φανείη. Τοῦ δὲ ὄντος ὡς ἕτερον, πολλαχῆ δῆλον αὐτῆς εἶη καὶ διότι, εἰ τῷ ὄντι ταῦτόν εἶη, οὐ μᾶλλον τῆς κινήσεως ταῦτό τῷ ὄντι. Διὰ τί γὰρ ἢ μὲν στάσις τῷ ὄντι ταῦτόν, ἢ δὲ κίνησις οὐ, ζῶη τις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ τῆς οὐσίας καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ εἶναι; Ἄλλ' ὡς περ ἐχωρίζομεν τὴν κίνησιν αὐτοῦ ὡς ταῦτόν τε καὶ οὐ ταῦτόν αὐτῷ καὶ ὡς δύο ἀμφω ἐλέγομεν καὶ αὐτὸν ἔν, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ τὴν στάσιν χωριοῦμεν αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸν οὐ χωριοῦμεν τοσοῦτον χωρίζοντες τῷ νῷ, ὅσον ἄλλο γένος θέσθαι ἐν τοῖς οὐσίαις.

"[25] But if we totally combine rest and being into a unity, saying that there is absolutely no difference [between them], and in like manner combine being with movement, then we would make rest and movement the same through the mediation of being, and we would make movement and rest one.

7, 41-45:

"Ἡ εἰ συνάγοιμεν πάντα εἰς ἓν τὴν στάσιν καὶ τὸ ὄν μηδὲν μηδαμῆ διαφέρειν λέγοντες, τό τε ὄν τῇ κινήσει ὡσαύτως, τὴν στάσιν καὶ τὴν κίνησιν διὰ μέσου τοῦ ὄντος εἰς ταῦτόν συναζόμεν, καὶ ἔσται τῆμιν ἢ κίνησις καὶ ἢ στάσις ἓν.

"[26] One must posit these [=entity, movement and rest] as three, since the Intelligence knows each separately. [27] Simultaneously the Intelligence knows them and simultaneously it posits them since it knows

them, and they are since they are known. [28] For those things which have their being with matter do not have their being in the Intelligence. [29] But these three genera are without matter, and for beings without matter, when thought, the thought [of the Intelligence] is their very being.²⁷

8, 1-5:

Ἄλλὰ χρὴ τρία ταῦτα τίθεσθαι, εἴπερ ὁ νοῦς χωρὶς ἕκαστον νοεῖ· ἅμα δὲ νοεῖ καὶ τίθησιν, εἴπερ νοεῖ, καὶ ἔστιν, εἴπερ νενόηται. Οἷς μὲν γὰρ τὸ εἶναι μετὰ ὕλης ἐστί, τούτων οὐκ ἐν τῷ νῷ τὸ εἶναι· [ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὔλα] ἃ δ' ἔστιν αὔλα, εἰ νενόηται, τοῦτ' ἔστιν αὐτοῖς τὸ εἶναι.

"[30] Observe the Intelligence in its purity and intensely contemplate it, but not with these bodily eyes. [31] You see the hearth of being and a sleepless light on it;²⁸ and you see how beings rest in it and are distinct and yet are all together; and you see abiding life and an intellection which is not in act with reference to the future but with reference to the present or rather to that which is now and always is now, and the present is eternal, a thought thinking in itself and not outside.

²⁷In translating this last sentence I have not followed the suggestion of Henry-Schwyzler to delete the bracketed words, ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὔλα, since they supply a premiss in Plotinus' argument. Instead I follow the majority of translators who retain them. Bréhier: "mais les etres qui sont dans l'intelligence sont sans matiere" (Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 2, p. 107); Harder-Theiler: "die Klassen aber sind immateriell" (Plotins Schriften, Band IV a, p. 194; Ficinus: "alioquin forent a materia segregata" (Creuzer-Moser [eds.] Plotini Eneades cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione Castigata, p. 398).

²⁸This remark, of course, is reminiscent of VI, 7 (Text D), chapters 15-36 *passim*, which states that the Good is the eternal light which illumines and brings goodness to the intelligible beings.

8, 5-11:

Ἴδε δὲ νοῦν καὶ
καθαρόν καὶ βλέπον εἰς αὐτὸν ἀτενίσας, μὴ ὄμμασι τούτοις
δεδορκώς. Ὁρᾶς δὴ οὐσίας ἐστὶν καὶ φῶς ἐν αὐτῷ ἄυπνον
καὶ ὡς ἔσθηκεν ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ὡς διέσθηκεν, ὁμοῦ ὄντα καὶ
ζωὴν μένουσαν καὶ νόησιν οὐκ ἐνεργοῦσαν εἰς τὸ μέλλον, ἀλλ'
εἰς τὸ ἤδη, μᾶλλον δὲ « ἤδη καὶ αἰεὶ ἤδη », καὶ τὸ παρὸν αἰεὶ,
καὶ ὡς νοῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ οὐκ ἔξω.

[32] [By analyzing the intellection of Nous, Plotinus now contrasts act and movement with being and entity only to connect them.] In thinking there is act and movement, but in the Nous thinking itself there is entity and being. [33] For the Nous thinks provided it is and by thinking itself [it provides] beings and being is that in which thinking is grounded. [34] For act with reference to itself is not entity, and act with reference to that which results from thinking is being, [35] for that which is seen is being; being, however, is not the seeing itself. Even the seeing itself has being [only] because it is from being and is directed to being [and thereby] also is being. [36] But seeing is being in act and not in potency and thereby it combines and does not separate the two [couplets--i.e., act and movement vs. being and entity]. For thinking makes itself be that [=being and entity] and makes being and entity be itself [=thinking].²⁹

²⁹Is Plotinus in this passage (#32-#36) distinguishing being (ὄν) from entity (ουσία)? Could it be as Inge suggests (The Philosophy of Plotinus [Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1968], p. 60) that on signifies only the genus, whereas ousia refers to the genus in union with the other four genera? While there are some grounds to believe such (e.g., see II, 6 [17], I, 1-13), it is unlikely that Plotinus intends to make the distinction in Text E. Throughout most of the treatise he appears to use the terms interchangeably. Thus, if there is such a distinction in the passage in question (#32-#36), it does not appear to be of a technical sort crucial to our understanding of VI, 2.

8, 11-18:

Ἐν μὲν οὖν τῷ νοεῖν ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἡ κίνησις, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἑαυτὸν ἢ οὐσία καὶ τὸ ὄν· ὧν γὰρ νοεῖ καὶ ὄντα ἑαυτὸν, καὶ εἰς ὃ οἶον ἐπερείδεται, ὄν. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐνέργεια ἢ εἰς αὐτὸν οὐκ οὐσία, εἰς ὃ δὲ καὶ ἀφ' οὗ, τὸ ὄν· τὸ γὰρ βλεπόμενον τὸ ὄν, οὐχ ἡ βλέψις· ἔχει δὲ καὶ αὕτη τὸ εἶναι, ὅτι ἀφ' οὗ καὶ εἰς ὄν, ὄν. Ἐνεργεῖα δὲ ὄν, οὐ δυνάμει, συνάπτει πάλιν αὐτὰ δύο καὶ οὐ χωρίζει, ἀλλὰ ποιεῖ ἑαυτὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ κεῖνο ἑαυτὸν.

"[37] Being is the most firmly established of all and that about which all else have established their rest. [38] Being has a rest which does not come to it by borrowing but it has rest from itself and in itself. [39] Being is that at which intellection comes to a stop, though intellection is a rest which has no beginning and being is that from which intellection starts, though intellection is a rest that never started; for movement does not begin or end in movement. [40] Again, the Form at rest is the limit of Intelligence, and Intelligence is the movement of the Form. Accordingly, every being is both movement and rest, which themselves are all-pervading genera; and everything subsequent is a particular [sort of] being, a particular [sort of] rest and a particular [sort of] movement.

8, 18-27:

Ὁ δὲ τὸ πάντων ἐδραιότατον καὶ περὶ ὃ τὰ ἄλλα, τὴν στάσιν ὑπεστήσατο καὶ ἔχει οὐκ ἐπακτόν, ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ εἰς ὃ λήγει ἡ νόησις οὐκ ἀρξαμένη στάσις, καὶ ἀφ' οὗ ὠρμηται οὐχ ὀρμήσασα στάσις· οὐ γὰρ ἐκ κινήσεως κίνησις οὐδ' εἰς κίνησιν. Ἔτι δὲ ἡ μὲν ἰδέα ἐν στάσει πέρας οὐσα νοῦ, ὃ δὲ νοῦς αὐτῆς ἢ κίνησις.

Ὡστε ὄν πάντα καὶ κίνησις καὶ στάσις, καὶ δι' ὅλων ὄντα γένη, καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ὑστερόν τι ὄν καὶ τις στάσις καὶ τις κίνησις.

"[41] Now when anyone sees these three, having come into contact with the nature of being, he sees being by the being in himself and sees the other two in themselves by the movement and rest in himself, and fits his own being, movement and rest to those in Intelligence. [42] They come to him together in a sort of confusion, and he mingles them without distinguishing them; then, as it were, by distancing himself a little from them, he sees them both as the same but nonetheless as distinct, namely, as being, rest and movement. These three are the same and [yet] each is one. [43] Does he not then say that they are different from each other and distinguish them in difference, and see the difference in being when he posits them as three, though each of them is [really] one? [44] Again, when he brings them back to unity and sees them in a unity, all one, does he not collect them into sameness and, as he looks at them, see that sameness has come to be and is? [45] So we must add these two, the same and the different, to those first three so that there will be in all five genera: the last two give to subsequent beings the characters of being different and same; for each such being is a particular 'same' and a particular 'different.' 'Same' and 'different' taken simply and without the 'particular' are the [supreme] genera.

8, 27-43:

Τρία δὴ ταῦτα ἰδὼν τις, ἐν προσβολῇ τῆς τοῦ ὄντος φύσεως γεγενημένος, καὶ τῷ παρ' αὐτῷ ὄντι τὸ ὄν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἰδὼν τὰ ἄλλα, τῆν κίνησιν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ τῇ ἐν ἑαυτῷ κινήσει, καὶ τῇ στάσει τὴν στάσιν, καὶ ταῦτα ἐκείνοις ἐφαρμόσας, ὁμοῦ μὲν γεγομμένοις καὶ οἷον συγκεχυμένοις συμμίξας οὐ διακρίνων, οἷον δ' ὀλίγον διαστήσας καὶ ἐπισχῶν καὶ διακρίνας εἰσιδὼν ὄν καὶ στάσιν καὶ κίνησιν, τρία ταῦτα καὶ ἕκαστον ἔν, ἄρ' οὐχ ἕτερα ἁλλήλων εἴρηκε καὶ διέστησεν ἐν ἑτερότητι καὶ εἶδε τὴν ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἑτερότητα τρία τιθεὶς καὶ ἐν ἕκαστον, πάλιν δὲ ταῦτα εἰς ἓν καὶ ἐν ἐνὶ καὶ πάντα ἓν, εἰς ταῦτόν αὖ συνάγων καὶ βλέπων ταυτότητα εἶδε γενο-

μένην καὶ οὔσαν ; Οὐκοῦν πρὸς τρισὶν ἐκείνοις ἀνάγκη δύο ταῦτα προστιθέναι, ταὐτὸν, θάτερον, ὥστε τὰ πάντα γένη γίγνεσθαι πέντε πᾶσι, καὶ ταῦτα διδόντα τοῖς μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ ἑτέροις καὶ ταῦτοῖς εἶναι· καὶ τι γὰρ ταὐτὸν καὶ τι ἕτερον ἕκαστον· ἀπλῶς γε ταὐτὸν καὶ ἕτερον ἄνευ τοῦ «τι» ἐν γένει ἂν εἴη.

"[46] These are the primary genera, because you cannot apply any [other] predicates to them which would express what they are. [47] For [although] you will certainly predicate being of them, for they are beings, still [you do not predicate being of them] as their genus, for they are not particular beings; nor can you predicate being as the genus of movement and rest, for they are not species of being. All beings are either species of being or participants of it. [But the other four genera are neither species nor participants.] [48] Nor does being participate in them as its genera, since they are neither higher nor prior to being."

8, 43-49:

Καὶ πρῶτα δὲ γένη, ὅτι μηδὲν αὐτῶν κατηγορήσεις ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι. Τὸ γὰρ ὄν κατηγορήσεις αὐτῶν· ὄντα γὰρ· ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς γένος· οὐ γὰρ ὅπερ ὄν τι. Οὐδ' αὖ τῆς κινήσεως οὐδὲ τῆς στάσεως· οὐ γὰρ εἶδη τοῦ ὄντος· ὄντα γὰρ τὰ μὲν ὡς εἶδη αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ μετέχοντα αὐτοῦ. Οὐδ' αὖ τὸ ὄν μετέχον τούτων ὡς γενῶν αὐτοῦ· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπαναβέβηκεν αὐτῷ οὐδὲ πρότερα τοῦ ὄντος.

[The five genera of being, then, are entity, sameness, difference, movement and rest. That these alone are the primary genera of being can be proven indirectly by dismissing all alternatives. For example, as has already been argued (chs. 3-4), the One is not a primary genus, because He transcends being and cannot be a predicate or admit differences (chs. 9-12).]

[Neither is quantity a primary genus. Quantity is either discontin-

uous, i.e., number, or continuous, i.e., extension or magnitude. But the unity of intelligible being, in which all genera are really identical with one another, precludes number. And the genera cannot be magnitudes, since they do not contain matter. Hence, quantity is posterior to the primary genera (ch. 13).]

[The key text resumes by dismissing quality as a primary genus.]

"[49] Concerning quality, why is it not in the primary genera?

[50] Quality is not There because it is posterior to and subsequent to entity. [51] It is necessary that primary [sensible] entity have [accidental] qualities following upon it, but not as though it was constituted by them nor as though it was completed through them. If so, it would be posterior to quality and quantity.

[52] In entities composed of multiple parts, there are numbers and quantities which make these entities distinct, and yet qualities can be seen in them as something they have in common.

[53] But in the primary genera there is no differentiation that must be made between simples and composites, but the difference is between simples and those realities [=other Forms, which themselves are simples] that complete entity as such and not any particular [sort of] entity.

14, 1-11:

Περὶ δὲ τοῦ ποιού, διὰ τί οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις ; Ἡ ὅτι καὶ τοῦτο ὑστερον καὶ μετὰ τὴν οὐσίαν. Δεῖ δὲ τὴν οὐσίαν παρακολουθοῦντα ταῦτα ἔχειν τὴν πρώτην, μὴ ἐκ τούτων δὲ τὴν σύστασιν ἔχειν μηδὲ διὰ τούτων συμπληροῦσθαι ἢ εἴη ἂν ὑστέρᾳ ποιότητος καὶ ποσότητος. Ἐν μὲν οὖν ταῖς συνθέταις οὐσίαις καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν, ἐν αἷς καὶ ἀριθμοὶ καὶ ποσότητες διαλλαγὴν ἐποίησαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ποιότητες εἴεν ἂν καὶ κοινότης τις ἐν αὐταῖς θεωρηθῆσεται· ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρώτοις γένεσι τὴν διαίρεσιν οὐχ ἀπλῶν καὶ συνθέτων δεῖ ποιεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶν καὶ τῶν τὴν οὐσίαν συμπληρούντων, οὐ τὴν τινὰ οὐσίαν.

"[54] Now it is not absurd that a particular [sort of] entity should be completed by quality; it has its entity prior to quality. [This entity completes itself with] a particular quality as though the quality [like accidental qualities] came from a source external to the entity; but the entity it has belongs to it essentially. [55] Nonetheless, we have maintained elsewhere that the completions of entity are qualities in name only.³⁰ [56] Those things which are external and are posterior to entity [alone] are strict qualities. [57] And those factors which are essentially in entities are their acts, whereas those which are subsequent upon them are what they undergo from outside. [58] We may now state that what completes a particular [sort of] entity does not belong to entity generally--[that is, to entity as entity]. For nothing is added to man qua man [that is, man on the human level] that might constitute his entity: entity comes from above ["animal"] before

³⁰Here Plotinus refers to a distinction made in the much earlier treatise, II, 6 (17). At several places in that treatise (e.g., ch. 1, lines 7, 20-23, 31-32, 36-39) he indicates that the verb *συμπληροῦν*, and its various forms, should refer only to the specific differences of entities (see especially ch. 1, lines 19-24; however, he later--ch. 2, lines 3-8--allows one to occasionally call accidental qualities "completions," since they further complete an entity already perfected by its specific difference). He goes on in II, 6 to conclude that specific differences are the acts of the logoi of sensible entities (ch. 2, lines 20-25). For example, heat is an act of the logos, fire (ch. 2, lines 14-20; ch. 3, lines 14-20). Only those things which are not acts of the logoi of entities are true qualities (ch. 3, 20-22). (However, even accidental qualities are traces or shadows of acts. These acts are eternal Forms which have necessary and intrinsic relationships with other Forms.)

In Text E Plotinus resurrects this distinction between essential qualities (qualities in name only, #55) or completions (symplērotika or diaphorai) and accidental qualities (pathē) so as to strengthen his argument for refusing quality a place among the megista genē. Specifically, he attempts to prove (#59-#66) not only that accidental qualities cannot belong to the supreme genera but also that the very essential qualities, which are the intrinsic energeiai of sensible entities, cannot belong There.

specific difference is added; thus, man is already animal before rational is added as a specific difference.

14, 11-22:

Τὴν μὲν γὰρ τιὰ

*οὐσίαν συμπληροῦσθαι καὶ ἐκ ποιότητος οὐδὲν ἴσως ἄτοπον, ἐχούσης ἤδη τὴν οὐσίαν πρὸ τῆς ποιότητος, τὸ δὲ τοιόνδε ἔξωθεν, αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν οὐσίαν ἃ ἔχει οὐσιώδη ἔχειν. Καίτοι ἐν ἄλλοις ἠξιούμεν τὰ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας συμπληρωτικὰ ὁμω-
νύμως ποιά εἶναι, τὰ δ' ἔξωθεν μετὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπάρχοντα ποιά, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργείας αὐτῶν, τὰ δὲ μετ' αὐτὰς ἤδη πάθη. Νῦν δὲ λέγομεν οὐκ οὐσίας ὅλως εἶναι συμπληρωτικὰ τὰ τῆς τινὸς οὐσίας· οὐ γὰρ οὐσίας προσθήκη γίνεται τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ καθὸ ἀνθρωπος εἰς οὐσίαν· ἀλλ' ἔστιν οὐσία ἀνωθεν, πρὶν ἐπὶ τὴν διαφορὰν ἐλθεῖν, ὡσπερ καὶ ζῶον ἤδη, πρὶν ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν ἦκειν.*

"[59] How then do the four [other] genera complete entity [which is the primal genus] without causing the entity to be qualified [i.e., without the four other genera being its qualities or specific differences]? For it is not a particular [sort of] entity. [60] It is said that being is first and yet it is clear that being is not other than movement or rest or difference or sameness. [61] And that movement itself does not act as a quality is equally apparent, but to say more will make it even clearer. [62] For if movement is the act of entity and if being is in act, and if in general the primary genera are in act, then movement cannot be an accident but is an act of being in act, nor [if one were to speak with complete accuracy] can it even be said to be a completion of being [as a specific difference] but to be being itself.

15, 1-10:

Πῶς οὖν τὰ τέτταρα γένη συμπληροῖ τὴν οὐσίαν οὕτω ποίαν οὐσίαν ποιῶντα; Οὐδὲ γὰρ τιὰ. Ὅτι μὲν οὖν τὸ ὄν πρῶτον, εἴρηται, καὶ ὡς ἡ κίνησις οὐκ ἂν εἶη ἄλλο οὐδ' ἡ στάσις οὐδὲ θάτερον οὐδὲ ταῦτόν, δῆλον· καὶ ὅτι οὐ ποιότητα ἐνεργάζεται ἡ κίνησις αὕτη, ἴσως μὲν φανερόν,

λεχθὲν δὲ μᾶλλον ποιήσει σαφέστερον. Εἰ γὰρ ἡ κίνησις ἐνέργειά ἐστὶν αὐτῆς, ἐνέργεια δὲ τὸ ὄν καὶ ὄλως τὰ πρῶτα, οὐκ ἂν συμβεβηκὸς εἴη ἡ κίνησις, ἀλλ' ἐνέργεια οὐσα ἐνέργεια ὄντος οὐδ' ἂν συμπληρωτικὸν ἔτι λέγοιτο, ἀλλ' αὐτῇ.

"[63] Thus, movement has not been rendered into something posterior, or into a quality, but has been placed on the same level as being. [64] For it is not the case that being is and then is moved; nor is it the case that being is and then is at rest. Nor is rest something happening to being from outside. [65] Nor are sameness and different posterior to being, as though being entails multiplicity only by this latter addition [of sameness and of difference]. No, being is what it always was--a one-many. But if being is a multiplicity, then difference belongs to it, and if being is a many which is one, then sameness belongs to it. And these are added to being. [66] But when we turn to consider the lower realm, there are other things which do not make entity exist precisely as entity but only render entity qualified and quantified, and they generate genera but not the primary genera."³¹

³¹Of the remaining seven chapters of VI, 2, three (chs. 16-18) continue to discuss why certain realities cannot be among the primary genera. Relation, the fourth of Aristotle's categories, cannot be a primary genus because it presupposes multiple beings, which by their reference to one another make relation possible (ch. 16). Neither is the Good a primary genus, for the Good is above ousia and thus cannot be among the genera of being (ch. 17). Also beauty is not a genus, because beauty is reducible either to being, which is already a genus, or to the Good, who is above all genera (ch. 18). The last four chapters no longer consider the main theme of the treatise, namely, what and how many are the primary genera, but take up a new discussion and therefore may be said to comprise what Richard Harder calls an Anhang (Plotinus Schriften, Band IV b, p. 475). These chapters aim to explain how each form (in itself) is act and (in relation to every other) is potency. While these remarks on energeia are helpful, we need not presently discuss them, having referred to them already in Text B (see our comments on the energeia of noēsis).

15, 10-18:

ὥστε οὐκ ἐμβέβηκεν εἰς ὑστερόν τι οὐδ' εἰς ποιότητα, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ἅμα τέτακται. Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ὄν, εἴτα κεκίνηται, οὐδὲ ἔστιν ὄν, εἴτα ἔστη· οὐδὲ πάθος ἢ στάσις· καὶ ταυτόν δὲ καὶ θάτερον οὐχ ὕστερα, ὅτι μὴ ὑστερον ἐγένετο πολλά, ἀλλ' ἦν ὅπερ ἦν ἐν πολλά· εἰ δὲ πολλά, καὶ ἑτερότης, καὶ εἰ ἐν πολλά, καὶ ταυτότης. Καὶ ταῦτα εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν ἀρκεῖ· ὅταν δὲ μέλλῃ πρὸς τὰ κάτω προίεναι, τότε ἄλλα, ἃ οὐκέτι οὐσίαν ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ ποιὰν οὐσίαν καὶ ποσὴν οὐσίαν, καὶ γιγνέσθω γένη οὐ πρῶτα.

Comments

The movement of thought in Text E proceeds as follows.

[In the opening six chapters of VI, 2 Plotinus argues the following important points: (1) the five Platonic genera are the constitutive principles of intelligible being; (2) these genera are logically independent of and equal to one another; (3) the union of these genera is not the result of subordination to a higher genus but the result of participation in the One; (4) body and soul (since each is a one-in-many) are useful analogies for understanding how intelligible being is a unity that encompasses multiplicity; especially soul (since it is the logos of Nous) is useful because in its own imperfect way it reflects the unity of intelligible being. While still discussing what perfections belong to soul, Plotinus introduces chapter seven, where he begins to explain how the five genera belong to the Intelligence and are acts.]

a. What factors and how many are observable in soul? At least two factors are evident in soul: entity and life. These are present to soul because soul is independent of body and brings life to body. But because entity and life are in soul, they must be Intelligence as well [for soul is the logos of Intelligence]. Moreover, movement is common to all lives

[because life implies movement] (#1-#3).

b. Having moved from soul to Intelligence, one must posit not only life in the Intelligence but the genus, movement, as well, [for life or intellection is movement].³² Since Intelligence is also entity [as a perfect, independent being], then both entity and movement are primary genera. [Because entity and movement are two aspects of the intelligible world (which is a unity),] they are [really] identical but logically distinct (#4-#6).

c. Whereas in the intelligible world life and movement are not [really] distinct from being, in the sensible world life and movement are really distinct from being. This is because sensible being is a shadow of true being and thus cannot attain the unity of true being. Sensible being is to [true or] intelligible being as an image of a man is to that man himself. Just as in the image many things are omitted, especially life, so in sensible being (since sensible being is only an image of true being) many perfections are absent [or, at least, greatly diminished], especially life. Hence, in the sensible world life appears as really distinct from being, but it certainly is not distinct There from being (#7-#9).

d. [As a unity of logically distinguishable elements,] being is a genus having many species. Being also has movement as an eternal accompaniment. But being does not have movement in such a way that movement is subordinate to being [as, for example, a species is subordinate to a genus]. Nor does movement belong to being as a form in a substrate [where one, the form, is the perfection, and the act, while the other,

³²See our comments on the nature of zoe in Text D.

the substrate, is the (passive) potency]. No, movement is neither distinct from being nor subordinate to being, because it is really the very act of being. Being is act and because it is act it is movement; otherwise it would be in potency [for only that which is in potency (=passive potency), namely, prime matter or non-being, exists without movement (=life)].³³ Because movement is the very act of being [and because being is never without its act], movement and being are not [really] distinct; they are separable only in thought (#10-#13).

e. Even though being and movement are logically distinct, their real and necessary association is very evident [for movement must be, and being, if perfect, requires life or movement], just as in the case of "the One which is" [of Plato's Parmenides], the whole is really the same as the part and the part the same as the whole. In other words, intellection separates movement and being and yet grasps that they are united. Being is one and yet two because it is also movement (#14-#15).

f. Movement is a necessary and eternal aspect of true being; otherwise being would be incomplete [for only imperfect being lacks movement]. But if movement must accompany being, then rest must accompany being, for it is clearer that being necessitates rest than that being necessitates movement. This is because without rest being is neither eternal nor one (#16-#19).

g. [While rest and movement are really the same as being,] rest

³³The Nous cannot be in potency to the Forms, for it actually produces the Forms, although it requires a coexistent producer, the One. Nous is the very power (δ δυναμις) of the Forms not a passive recipient (τ ὸ δυναμιεῖν) of their power. Its act is possible only because of its prior active power. If its objects were permanently and really distinct from it, the Nous would forever be dependent on them (again, see comments on the energeia of noēsis in Text B).

and movement are [logically] distinct from one another. Indeed, they are contraries. That rest is also logically distinct from being is clear. If rest were [logically] the same as being, then movement also would be the same as being, for movement is the life and act of being. But one does not [logically] identify rest with being, just as one does not [in the same way] identify movement with being. Because they are logically distinguishable from being, rest and movement may be considered as genera together with being. If one identified rest with being and movement with being, he would have to conclude through the mediation of being that rest is the same as movement. [But instead they are contraries] (#20-#25).

h. So far, then, there are at least three genera of intelligible being: entity, movement and rest. These genera are known by the Intelligence, which posits them when it knows them. Since these genera exist in the Intelligence, they exist without matter, which cannot exist There. Their independence of matter means that they depend on the Intelligence, for what is incorporeal can exist only through intellection (#26-#29).

i. [To understand how the intelligence is a unity that encompasses multiple Forms,] one must contemplate the Intelligence, not with one's eyes [but with one's own intelligence]. By this contemplation one will discover that the Intelligence is the hearth of being [that it is the universe of true being]; that the light [of the Good] eternally illumines it; that perfect beings, which are [really] one with but [logically] distinct from each other, rest There eternally; that life and intellection are There; that the intellection There is eternal act and, simply by knowing itself, comprehends [everything] in a single, eternal "now" (#30-#31).

j. [Plotinus now briefly interrupts his reflections on being, rest and motion by contrasting act and movement with being and entity, and then by linking them through his doctrine of intellection.] Act, as well as movement, is present in thinking but in order for there to be entity and being Intelligence must have an object that is; it must think itself (#32-#33), even though it can only think if it is (#33). Act itself is not automatically entity but is so only in reference to that which results from thinking or act (#34) or seeing. This, however, is being only as from and directed to being (#35). But because seeing is in act and not in potency, it unites act, movement, being and entity, for seeing or thinking makes itself be being and entity, which also constitutes thinking itself (#36).

k. [After that digression Plotinus continues to speak of being, rest and movement.] As what is most firmly established, being from and in itself entails rest, since it is the terminus of intellection (#37-#39). Being or form at rest determines intellection but form as moving is identical with intellection itself. Thus, being, movement and rest are primal genera common to all, although particular sorts of being, of rest and of movement are operative on subsequent levels (#40).

m. One such subsequent level is that of an individual knower, who in order to successfully contemplate being, rest and movement, must unite himself with being. [In other words, he must ascend through contemplation to the intelligible world itself.] He can ascend to Nous and know being by the being in himself; likewise he can know rest and movement by the rest and movement in himself. When he knows being, rest and movement, he knows them at first intuitively and as they exist all together in unity. But if he detaches his thinking somewhat from this union of being,

movement and rest, he can analyze being and separate it from movement and rest (#41-#42).

n. Being, movement and rest are distinct from one another [if only by philosophical analysis]. This means that differentiation is also an aspect of being. [In other words, to (logically) separate being, rest and movement from one another is to make difference a part of being.] On the other hand, to realize that being, movement and rest are [really] one is to make sameness also a part of being. Hence, to the original three genera there must be added a fourth and a fifth, sameness and difference. Accordingly, all beings are "same" and "different." But "same" and "different" here refer to particular kinds of beings. However, what is "same" and "different" There is being itself, not any particular sort of being. In other words, sameness and difference There are genera of being (#43-#45).

o. "Same" and "different" as applied There must be primary genera because one cannot predicate anything of them which would differentiate them as though they were particular sorts of things. As aspects of being they are neither prior to being nor posterior to it. They are not genera for being [for that would mean they are prior to being]; nor is being a genus for them [because that would mean being is prior to them] (#46-#48).

[In essence chapters seven and eight (#1-#49) of the key text argue the following: the world of intelligible being consists of five logically distinct genera or forms. The first of these is entity, because the Nous (which encompasses all beings) is a separate, complete existent; the second is movement, because the Nous is an eternal life and intellection; the third is rest, because the Nous knows, causes and is constituted by the

eternal beings or Forms; the fourth and fifth genera are sameness and difference, because the Nous is a single intellection (a unity) of the plurality of beings (a multiplicity). Each of these genera is an act in that it represents a logically distinct aspect of the Nous itself, which as a whole is pure act.]

[The chapters that intervene between chapter eight and chapter fourteen (which begins the latter portion of the key text) argue that the One is not a primary genus (chs. 9-12) and that the Aristotelian category of quantity cannot be a primary genus (ch. 13). The key text resumes with Plotinus taking up another Aristotelian category, quality.]

p. [Plotinus asks why quality is not among the primary genera?] He answers that quality cannot be among them because quality is [really] posterior to and dependent on ousia [whereas the primary genera are only logically posterior to ousia]. It is necessary that qualities belong to sensible ousia [for through its qualities sensible ousia becomes completed,] although this is not to say that sensible ousia qua ousia is perfected or constituted by its qualities, for, then, it would be posterior to its qualities (#49-#51).

q. In entities that are composed of multiple parts, there are numbers and quantities which distinguish them from one another, as well as qualities which these entities have in common. These quantities and qualities are composite and are posterior to the entities, which are simple. But in the primal genera there is no [real] difference between the simple ousia and completions which make it composite, but the difference is between a simple ousia [the genus ousia, i.e., ousia as such] and those other simples [the other primal genera] which complete ousia as such rather than any particular sort of ousia. [The other genera complete

the genus ousia in the sense that they are logically distinct aspects of ousia] (#52-#53).

r. [While it is unreasonable to hold that the primal genus ousia is completed by qualities,] it does not seem unreasonable to hold that a particular sort of ousia (e.g., man) is completed by its qualities. It has ousia prior to its qualities and it brings about those qualities which are its completions [=specific differences] as if they were [like its accidental qualities] from an external source. But the completions of an ousia are not from an external source and therefore [as was shown in II, 6 (17)] are qualities in name only. The completions of ousia [i.e., its specific differences] are not its qualities but its acts. Only those factors which are altogether unrelated to the ousia, only those which are pathē, are, strictly speaking, qualities (#54-#57).

s. But even though the completions of a particular sort of ousia are its acts, they do not belong to the ousia qua ousia. The completions are posterior to the ousia, just as man is already "animal" before his specific difference "rational" is added (#58).

t. But if one allows that the other genera There are acts and completions of the genus ousia, are they completions after the fashion of specific differences? No, specific differences are posterior to ousia and thus cannot belong to the primal genus ousia but only to a particular sort of ousia. Everything There--being, movement, rest, sameness and difference--is the same [and therefore there is nothing distinct or posterior which could be a specific difference or a quality] (#59-#60).

u. For example, while movement is an act of being, it is not an act after the fashion of a specific difference. This becomes clearer if one considers kinēsis further. Movement is an act of being because

everything There, including entity and being, is act. This unity of act means that movement is neither an accident of being nor a completion of being [that would make being really distinct from other acts There] but is being itself (#61-#62; also see #32-#36).

v. The various genera, then [as acts of being], represent how being is at once really one but logically many. Everything There [is act and] really the same and thus [accidental] qualities do not belong There. Nor do specific differences belong There because, even though they are acts, specific differences belong only to particular [sorts of] entities rather than to entity as such. But certain beings [=specific differences and accidents] here make entity qualified and quantified. These completions and accidents generate genera, but, of course, not the primary genera (#63-#66).

[The principal argument of chapters 14 and 15 (#49-#66; #p-#v) is as follows. The supreme genera cannot be true qualities (i.e., accidental qualities) because such qualities are always posterior to ousia, whereas nothing is posterior to anything else in the intelligible world. Moreover, the supreme genera cannot be qualities after the fashion of specific differences, even though, like specific differences, they are acts. For the acts of a particular sort of ousia are posterior, whereas the acts which are the intelligible genera are neither prior nor posterior but are the logically distinct aspects of Nous itself.]

In sum: Text E argues that the intelligible world consists of five logically distinct Forms or genera, each of which is an act because it reflects a different aspect of the Nous itself, which is pure act.

To fully understand energeia in this our last key text, let us examine and clarify two important issues: Plotinus' interpretation of the

megista genē of Plato's Sophist; and the nature of quality.

Plotinus' Interpretation of Plato's Megista Genē

Plotinus' development of energeia in Text E results largely from his interpretation of megista genē of Plato's Sophist. Hence, to ultimately understand Text E, we must take up Plotinus' handling of the megista genē, focusing especially on how he modifies Plato's position so as to accommodate energeia. To introduce this discussion we will turn to the Sophist.

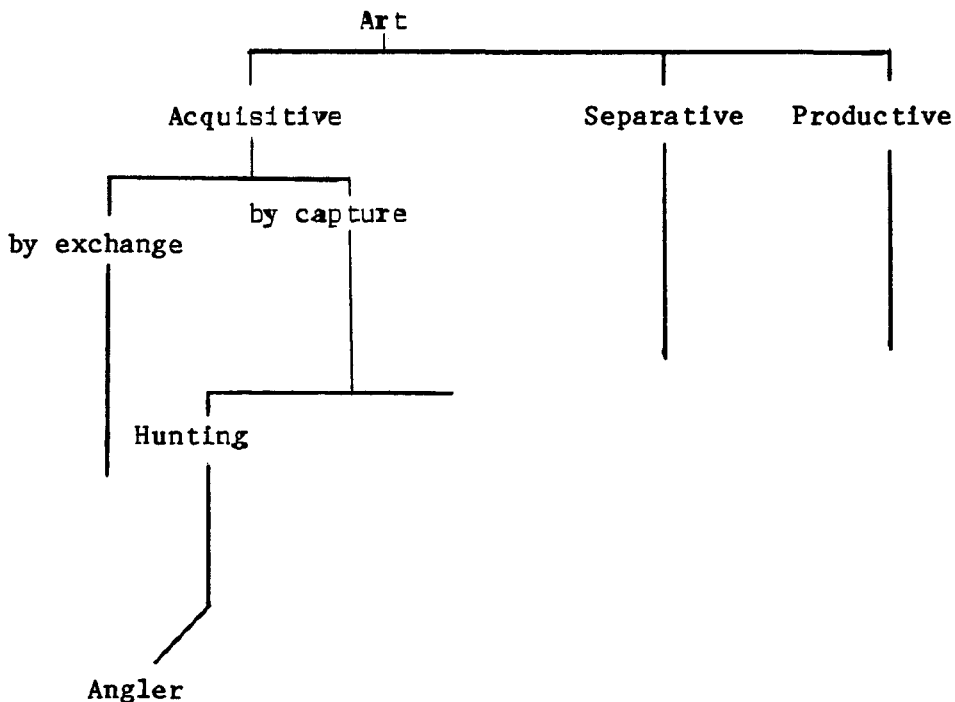
Let us begin by summarizing certain important portions of the Sophist which lead to Plato's treatment of the megista genē. Early in the dialogue (217 a) Plato considers whether there is any difference between the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher. After judging that they differ from one another, he states that the task for the remainder of the dialogue is to define the first of the three, the sophist.³⁴ Plato next (218 a-221 c) chooses to explain his method of

³⁴Plato takes up the second of these three characters in the Statesman. Since he wrote dialogues on the sophist and the statesman, it is likely that he intended to write one on the philosopher as well. There are at least three indications of this, which Cornford has conveniently summarized: "(1) At Soph. 253 e, after the description of Dialectic, the Stranger says: 'In some such region as this we shall find the philosopher now and hereafter, if we look for him.' (2) That Plato did not think of this account of Dialectic as sufficiently describing the philosopher seems to be implied at the beginning of the Statesman (257 a-c), where Theodorus speaks as if the Sophist had accomplished only one-third of the task and asks the Stranger whether he will now take the Statesman first or the Philosopher. (3) Later (258 a), Socrates, discussing who shall act as respondent in the Statesman, remarks that Theatetus has already served in the Theatetus as Socrates' respondent and in the Sophist as the Stranger's and suggests that the young Socrates should answer the Stranger in the Statesman (as he does) and 'myself on another occasion'" (Plato's Theory of Knowledge, [New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957], p. 168).

Dialectics or Collection (synagoge) and Division (diairēsis)³⁵ which he will use to define the sophist. This method consists of identifying a genus and dividing it into its various species and sub-species. He next, in a half-playful manner, illustrates the method by defining the angler.³⁶ Afterward (221 c-237 b) he applies the method directly to defining the sophist. Beginning with the genus "hunting" (at which he had arrived when considering the illustration of the angler), Plato identifies six

³⁵Plato has briefly characterized the method of Dialectics (Collection and Division) 265 d. There he states that Collection must precede Division, because otherwise one will not understand how the many divisions belong under a single genus or Form.

³⁶Plato begins this illustration with the genus Art. He divides this genus into three species: the acquisitive, the separative and the productive. He further divides acquisitive art into subspecies so that the entire division may be diagrammed as follows.



divisions (221 c-231 c), each of which expresses a characteristic of the sophist. After summarizing and criticizing these six divisions (231-235 a)³⁷ he chooses a new genus (which also was discovered when defining the angler), the image-making division of productive art. Starting with this genus, Plato eventually concludes (235 a-236 c) that, because the sophist provokes disputation in every field of knowledge, he promotes falsehood and illusion, for no one can be an expert in all knowledge. With this tentative definition Plato faces a new task, for, if his description of the sophist is to stand, he must solve the traditional Greek problem concerning the possibility of false statements and false appearances. This problem is of special importance for Plato, because to affirm that either false statements or false appearances are possible is to offend the Eleatic tradition which he respects. If false statements are possible, then there can be, contrary to Parmenides, meaningful statements concerning what is not, for a false statement affirms that something is not what it is or is what it is not. If false appearances are possible, then there can be, contrary to Parmenides again, things which are not, for an appearance (eidolon) is not what it seems to be or is what it does not seem to be. This problem, concerning how what is not in some sense is, occupies the remainder of the dialogue, and it is within this discussion that Plato introduces the megista genē.

In the passages of the Sophist which remain before the megista genē appear, Plato evaluates his own commitment to the Eleatic position, which

³⁷These six divisions identify the sophist as a hunter, three kinds of a salesman, a lover of eristics and a deceitful employer of cathartic method. Plato concludes that none of these characteristics precisely defines the essence of the sophist. He undertakes in the next passage (235 a-237 b) to find what these characteristics have in common.

holds dogmatically that what is cannot in any sense not be and that what is not cannot in any sense be. Plato agrees with Parmenides that absolute non-being can never in any sense be (237 c-239 c). What absolutely is not can never be the object of meaningful discourse. He disagrees with Parmenides, however, by holding that in some sense non-being has meaning (239 c-242 b). Before explaining how what is not can in some sense be, Plato (242 c-251 a) decides to investigate that which truly is (to pantelōs on), thinking that, if one first understands that which is, he will be better prepared to eventually understand that which is not. What is significant in this passage is Plato's dramatic break with the Eleatic tradition, which comes with the announcement that among the class of that which truly is belongs not only the unmoved (the Forms) but also the moved (intelligence or soul).³⁸

At this point Plato finally introduces the megista genē, the purpose of which is twofold: first, to prove once and for all against the Eleatics that there can be meaningful statements about what is not; secondly, to further demonstrate the science of Dialectics by showing how Forms

³⁸Plato argues (248 a-251 a) that, since both the unmoved (the eternal Forms) and the moved (intellect and soul) are necessary for knowledge, kinēsis must belong to the order of the truly real. He expresses this realization emotionally at 248 e: "But tell me, in Heaven's name: are we really to be so easily convinced that in actual fact movement, life, soul and understanding have no place in that which truly is--that it has neither life itself nor thought, but stands unmoving, solemn and holy, without intelligence?" (translation mine).

ὡς ἀληθῶς κίνησιν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ φρόνησιν ἢ ῥαδίως πεισθησόμεθα τῷ

παντελῶς ὄντι μὴ παρῶναι, μηδὲ ζῆν αὐτοῦ μηδὲ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν καὶ ἄγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον,

ἀκίνητον ἰστὸς εἶναι;

participate in Forms.³⁹

Plato begins (251 a) by considering, without any explicit justification,⁴⁰ three of the megista genē: being (ousia), motion (kinēsis) and rest (stasis). The best way to understand these Forms, Plato says, is to consider how they relate to one another. Both motion and rest are; therefore, motion and rest combine with or participate (metechein) in being.⁴¹ Motion and rest, of course, cannot combine with each other, for each is the contrary of the other. Since motion and rest combine with being, being is the most universal of the three Forms. Nonetheless, motion and rest are truly megista genē, for they divide all

³⁹The Sophist differs from earlier dialogues by holding that an existent may participate in more than one Form and that Forms may themselves participate in other Forms. Thus, Plato has expanded his doctrine of participation to involve not only the relationship of individual sensible objects to Forms (monoeidēs) but also the relationship of Forms to other Forms (polueidēs). This change in participation has impact on Plato's theory of Dialectics: now genuine knowledge will not just consist in understanding how sensibles relate to Forms but in the way Forms relate to each other. It is Plato's task to consider some of those relationships in his treatment of the megista genē (251 a-259 d).

⁴⁰Plato probably begins with these three Forms because he has just finished explaining (248 a-251 a) that the realm of ousia must admit the moved and the unmoved. However, it is important to point out that Plato apparently does not intend to identify the kinēsis which is the megiston genos of 251 a-259 d with the kinēsis which is intellection of 248 a-251 a. The latter, kinēsis as intellection, belongs to the order of the truly real but is not itself the same as the Form of kinēsis which is one of the supreme genera and noēta of Dialectics. As we shall discover in our comments below, Plotinus, unlike Plato, does identify kinēsis as intellection with kinēsis as megiston genos, in keeping with his radical and dynamic interpretation of Plato's theory of Forms. See Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 272; see also J. B. Skemp, The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues, p. 19.

⁴¹As Cornford notes (ibid., p. 256) participation of Forms in Forms is not the same as participation of individual things in Forms. Participation of Forms in Forms is a symmetrical relationship and therefore may be called a kind of combining or blending. In contrast participation of things in Forms is asymmetrical and therefore should not be called a blending.

beings between themselves; something either moves or rests. In addition, it is also evident that motion and rest are not reducible to being. If they were the same as being, each would be the same as the other. But this is absurd, since motion and rest are contraries.

Besides these three (being, motion and rest), there are at least two other megista genē.⁴² First, since every Form is distinct from every other, difference (heteron) must belong among the supreme classes or Forms (Plato appears to use genos or eidos synonymously). Secondly, since every Form is identical with itself, sameness (tauton) must also belong among the megista genē. Like being, difference and sameness combine with every Form and therefore are more universal than motion and rest.

These considerations have prepared Plato to solve the problem concerning non-being raised in the earlier part of the dialogue. He has shown that both motion and rest participate in being and thus are. Also motion and rest participate in sameness, since each is itself, and in difference, since each is separate from everything else. Now, it is this last genos, i.e., difference (heteron), that enables us to explain how what is not in some sense is. When one says "something is not", he may not mean "something absolutely is not" but only that "something relatively is not," that it "is not something else." In other words, the expression "something is not" does not necessarily mean something is opposite

⁴²Plato nowhere indicates that his list of the five megista genē is exhaustive. Plotinus, however, does appear in Text E to regard the list as complete. His position there is probably the result of his aim to provide a set of categories which will replace the Aristotelian ones. It is probably only as years passed that he began to appreciate how Plato's mere list of five could satisfy that aim, for in the much earlier treatise, V, 1 (10), 4, 34-41, Plotinus includes Nous among the supreme genera.

(enantion) that which is but is merely different from that which is.

Having reached this conclusion that not-being is, Plato has now proven that falsehood and illusion are possible. He next shows that not-being can combine with discourse in such a way as to make false expressions.⁴³ Thus, through the analysis of the megista genē, Plato has vindicated his definition of the sophist, as one who mistakes what is not for what is and what is for what is not.

Let us now examine how Plotinus adopts Plato's doctrine of the megista genē.

A careful reading of Text E reveals that he does not simply repeat Plato's position regarding the megista genē but recasts it for the sake of his own philosophy.⁴⁴ This recasting of the Sophist leads Plotinus to deviate from Plato in several respects. These modifications are important because they bear on how and why energeia is operative in Plotinus' philosophy, as we will show in the comments that follow.

⁴³Plato realizes that simply proving the possibility of not-being does not complete his task. He still must prove that not-being can combine with discourse and thus make falsehood and sophistry possible. Plato (261 a-264 b) analyzes language to prove that not-being combines with discourse. There are (he says) two main classes of words: nouns and verbs. Verbs are symbols of actions (praxeis) and nouns are names (onomata) of persons or things. For discourse to be meaningful, nouns must combine with verbs. The simplest discourse consists of a single noun and a single verb, e.g., "a man understands." Furthermore, every statement has a certain quality (poios tis): it is either true or false. Consider the following statements: "Theatetus now sits"; "Theatetus now flies." The first statement has the quality of truth, but the second has the quality of falsehood. From these observations it is clear that false thoughts can be expressed through words, thereby making the art of sophistry possible (264 b-268 d).

⁴⁴In my comments on this Plotinian recasting of the Sophist I am indebted to John Anton's fine article, "Plotinus' Approach to Categorical Theory" (in The Significance of Neoplatonism, edited by R. Baine Harris, pp. 83-99) and to John Rist's book, Plotinus: The Road to Reality (especially chapter 8 on the sensible existent).

The first, and perhaps most conspicuous, difference between Plato and Plotinus on the megista genē lies in the latter's description of the intelligible world as a realm not only of noēta but also of noēsis (#29-#31; #32-#36). This difference, of course, results from Plotinus' interpretation of the Platonic Forms as the logically distinct contents of the Demiurge or divine Nous. Accordingly, for Plotinus the megista genē, the most universal Forms, are not just Forms or the supreme objects of the science of Dialectics but are those ousiai which most perfectly represent the nature of the living Intelligence, the second hypostasis. This recasting of the megista genē is best illustrated by kinēsis. Whereas for Plato there appears to be no identification of kinēsis as megiston genos with kinēsis as intellection (Sophist, 248 e-249 d), for Plotinus this identification is fundamental to his conception of the intelligible world (#4-#6; #23-#24; #32-#36; #40). Plotinus involves kinēsis in his explanation of each of the two logically distinct aspects of the intelligible world, noēta and noēsis. Kinēsis is the eternal noēsis which actuates the intelligible realities (#12; #23; #26-#29; #31; #32-#36). Kinēsis also pertains to the noēta, for every Form is also an intelligence which contemplates from its own point of view the whole of the intelligibles (#35-#36; #40-#42; #47). Moreover, each of the other megista genē denote in some way either one or both of the dual aspects of Nous. Stasis describes Nous to the extent it is a universe of eternal, stable Forms which are the contents of its eternal contemplation (#18-#19; #40; #64).⁴⁵ Tauton is Nous in that all the logically distinct

⁴⁵We have already explained (Text A, comments on the priority of the superior to the inferior in Plotinus' thought; Text C, comments on the application of the four expressions to the intelligible world) that

aspects and contents of the intelligible world are really identical (#43-#45). Nous, the whole, is the same as its parts (#14). Heteron denotes the diversity in Nous: the distinctions of Forms and the logical separation of noēsis from noēta (#42-#45). Ousia signifies that the contents of the intelligible world are determinate natures, true beings and perfect Forms (#18-#19; #31; #32-#36).⁴⁶

Now one should have no difficulty in seeing how Plotinus connects energeia to his conception of the megista genē, for energeia figures prominently in his interpretation of the intelligible world as union of noēsis and noēta. Energeia mainly refers to the noēta which are the products and the objects of the contemplation of Nous.⁴⁷ This contemplation is at first only an active dynamis. The latter, however, reverts back to its source by contemplation and thereby acquires content or energeia, which consists in the plurality of the intelligibles. For this reason energeia may be generally defined as the content of the contempla-

Nous (as well as every hypostasis) undergoes two moments in its production, the first moment of which is the emanation of dynamis from the One. The second is the contemplation which that active dynamis engages in—a contemplation which is both operative state and content. This last especially deserves the title of energeia and is in turn contemplation as both operative state and content, and it thus produces the next level of reality. As lower and lower levels of energeia are reached, lower and lower levels of contemplation are also reached, so that eventually contemplation is no longer productive but ends against the empty and passive dynamis of matter.

⁴⁶That ousia means determination explains why neither matter nor the One is ousia. Both matter and the One are indeterminate: the former because of its inferiority to ousia; the latter, because of its superiority.

⁴⁷As we have already seen (#32-#36; also see n. 28) energeia sometimes refers to noēsis rather than noēta. Strictly and more properly speaking, however, energeia refers to the noēta, since the Forms are the complete realization (or actuation) of the active power of noēsis.

tion of an hypostasis (see above, n. 45). Accordingly, the megista genē, since they are the most universal contents of the divine mind, are the most perfect energeiai (#61-#65). Because each megiston genos denotes an aspect of Nous, each may be said to reflect in its own way the entire actuality of Nous. Accordingly, kinēsis represents the act of Nous as intellection (#32); stasis, as immutability and eternity (#18); tauton, as unity (#44); heteron, as diversity (#43); ousia, as intelligibility or form (#35).

A second basic difference between the two thinkers regarding the megista genē is that Plotinus conceives them as categories of being. That this is a radical departure from Plato is evident, since the Sophist nowhere speaks of the megista genē as categories. Indeed, Plato never uses the word kategoria to signify a property of being.⁴⁸ It is Aristotle, not Plato, who first uses kategoria in this sense.

But why would Plotinus be anxious to treat the megista genē as categories and genera? The answer is that these genē provide him with an alternative to the Aristotelian categories, which he regards as inadequate since they are based on sensible ousia. To Plotinus the Aristotelian theory of categories is problematic because it mistakenly assumes that sensible ousia qua sensible ousia is real and therefore a fit object for science. Against Aristotle Plotinus holds that the sensible ousia qua sensible ousia is unreal and only a shadowy image of an intelligible ousia. To find the reality of sensible ousia, one must refer to its logos, which exists in the intelligible world. Hence, genuine science can only be of intelligible beings.

⁴⁸See Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 274-278.

What the Aristotelian theory lacks, Plotinus argues, the Platonic doctrine of the megista genē can supply. The five supreme Forms or genera are real and therefore can ground true epistēmē. Energeia is part of this new conception of the categories, for energeia describes the true beings (#62). The five megista genē are true categories because they are acts. The Aristotelian categories are only images of acts, or at best only ephemeral, shadowy acts, and thus are inadequate to ground epistēmē.

In a third respect Plotinus differs from Plato by not allowing participation among the megista genē (#47-#48). This may be because for Plotinus participation is associated with the doctrine of logos, the purpose of which is to explain the hierarchy of realities. Accordingly, Plotinus employs participation only to describe the relationship of lower existents to higher ones. A second reason he does not permit participation among the highest Forms is that his conception of participation, since it is designed for the needs of an henology rather than an ontology, is far more literal than Plato's. According to Plotinus, when one existent participates in another, it actually acquires the reality of that other. The participant, to the extent it is real, is identical with that in which it participates and, ultimately, is identical with the One. But since the product must be less perfect than the producer (and participation is a kind of production), participation is always between a lower and a higher and never between the megista genē which are equal in reality.

By rejecting participation Plotinus must find a substitute which will explain the interrelationships between the megista genē. This substitute he finds in his doctrine of energeia. Through energeia he explains how each megiston genos is distinct from the remaining genē and yet is also identical with them. Since through abstraction every genus

is separable from all the others, each may be thought of as a distinct act. Considered separately each genus represents from its own point of view the entire actuality of Nous. For example, kinēsis represents the energeia of Nous as intellection (#32) producing its own noēta, which are represented by the acts of stasis and heteron (#31; #40; #43). In reality, however, all the genera are identical (#44). Together they are a real unity which constitutes the pure actuality of Nous. Accordingly, the Intelligence may be defined as a real union of five logically distinct energeiai: ousia, kinēsis, stasis, tauton and heteron. These genē together represent the contemplation of Nous and its contents. Clearly, since energeia very suitably explains the interrelationships of the genera as well as their individual natures, Plotinus has no need to depend on Plato's doctrine of participation.

Plotinus differs from Plato in a fourth respect by denying that the megista genē are the primal realities. For Plato the megista genē as the supreme principles of Dialectics are also the supreme beings. As the supreme beings the genē are also the supreme realities, for Plato's metaphysics is an ontology. Plotinus' metaphysics, however, is a henology and therefore the megista genē as the supreme beings are subordinate to the One, the supreme reality.⁴⁹ The genera are the contents of the contemplation of Nous and therefore are derivative rather than primary in reality.

⁴⁹John Anton has carefully pointed out ("Plotinus' Approach to Categorical Theory," pp. 87-90; 96-97) that Plotinus' interpretation of the Platonic genera is guided largely by his mysticism, whereby the megista genē are not just objects of Dialectics but also are important objects in the Soul's journey back to God. The megista genē are the penultimate stage in this journey. When Soul unites with these Forms, it may contemplate God through the Nous itself and may ultimately unite with the One so as to transcend cognition altogether.

Although the megista genē do not constitute for Plotinus the primal reality, they nonetheless serve the same purpose for his metaphysics as they do for Plato's, namely, to ground epistēmē. For Plotinus, since the One transcends cognition, the supreme objects of knowledge can exist only on the second rather than the first level of reality. Because the second level of reality is the universe of acts, Plotinus ironically employs the Aristotelian notion of energeia to reject Aristotle's conception of epistēmē, which is based on sensible ousia, in favor of a Platonic conception, which is based on intelligible ousia. To provide further support for this Platonic position on epistēmē, Plotinus criticizes in the latter portions of VI, 2 (specifically, chapters 13-16) certain Aristotelian categories, one of which, quality, is especially relevant because it involves energeia in several important respects.

The Nature of Quality

In chapters 14 and 15 (#49-#66) of Text E Plotinus basically argues that the megista genē as the true objects of cognition cannot admit qualities. In explaining why the intelligible world precludes qualities, Plotinus, by way of brief, obscure and elliptical arguments, makes an important contribution to his doctrine of energeia. This contribution is more implicit⁵⁰ than explicit and is essentially twofold, revealing (1) how energeia as content of contemplation on the sensible level contrasts with energeia as content of contemplation on the intelligible,

⁵⁰The argument in chapters fourteen and fifteen implies several remarkable conclusions so long as one realizes that Plotinus is relying somewhat on his earlier discussion of quality in II, 6 (17) and that he is at once presenting his own position on quality and criticizing Aristotle's.

and (2) how energeia, although originally an Aristotelian doctrine, conforms to a Platonic explanation of the sensible existent and the categories. To witness how Text E develops this twofold contribution, let us first briefly recapitulate its central argument concerning quality. Essentially, the argument is as follows. The megista genē are such perfect energeiai that none of them is prior or posterior to any other (#62-#65). All qualities, however, whether essential (=diaphorai or symplērotika) or accidental (pathē) are less perfect energeiai (#49-#51; #55-#58) and therefore are posterior to the ousiai which they modify.⁵¹ An accidental quality (e.g., whiteness in man) presupposes an ousia (man) to which it may attach itself as an external energeia. Moreover, an essential quality (e.g., rationality in man) presupposes an ousia (animal; #58) for which it can be a differentiation and necessary energeia. In conclusion qualities, even though they are energeiai, cannot belong among the megista genē, the supreme intelligibles, where there is only perfect energeia, the absence of real distinctions and nothing prior or posterior (#53; #60; #62-#66).

This argument aims not only to present Plotinus' own position on quality but also to criticize Aristotle's. As a criticism of Aristotle, however, this argument does far more than focus exclusively on quality. It is also an indictment of Aristotle's entire theory of categories, because the same reason that excludes qualities from the intelligible

⁵¹Text E does not explicitly identify accidental qualities as acts; however, we know them to be such from II, 6 (17); (see also n. 29). To supply this detail here is appropriate since it helps to stress how the first part (the refusal to admit accidental qualities into the intelligible world) of Plotinus' argument parallels the second (the refusal to admit essential qualities into the intelligible world).

world likewise excludes the remaining categories, especially Aristotle's primary ousia (tode ti). Since for Aristotle all categories, like quality, are sensible, none of them, Plotinus concludes, can be genuine objects of epistēmē. According to Plotinus, then, Aristotle's theory of categories, as well as his entire philosophy of the sensible existent, fails because it mistakenly assumes that sensible ousia, which for Plotinus is only pseudo-ousia, can ground epistēmē. Only immutable and eternal ousia is a true noēton and can form the basis of authentic science. Thus, the argument on quality in Text E betrays Plotinus' conviction that without the Platonic Forms knowledge is impossible.

In place of an Aristotelian theory of quality Plotinus substitutes a Platonic one.⁵² Essentially, this Platonic explanation, as we have seen, holds that qualities can exist only in the sensible world, where there are only images and traces of true beings. Qualities are condemned to this lower level because they require real distinctions, which the intelligible world precludes. By examining the role of energeia in this position, we can see precisely why qualities belong exclusively to the sensible world.

If qualities are energeiai, they must be the products and the contents of contemplation.⁵³ But qualities are the energeiai of precisely what contemplation? We have already discovered that they are not the qualities of Nous, for they entail that things are really prior or posterior. Qualities, therefore, are the result of the inferior con-

⁵²This Platonic substitution, of course, also holds true for all the Aristotelian categories.

⁵³See n. 43.

templation of Soul or Nature.⁵⁴ Whereas Nous can comprehend all beings intuitively and in a single eternal moment, Soul can comprehend them only discursively and in successive moments.⁵⁵ The contents of Nous form a great unity and are really indistinct from each other. The contents of Soul, however, form a lesser unity and to a degree are really distinct from each other. It is on this level of lesser unity, where there are real distinctions, that qualities can appear. In the intelligible world all acts are really united. This is because Nous can at once grasp how one and the same nature (or Form) can have multiple, although really indistinct, characteristics. Thus, there is no fragmentation or separation in the intellection of Nous. For example, Nous can grasp intuitively and immediately how human nature can at once and in one real respect be both rational and musical.

This is because all perfections There are Forms that constitute a unity in which there are only logical distinctions. The Intelligence sees at once how the Form, Man, is really the same as The Rational and The Musical. The contemplation of Soul, however, is weaker and thus cannot intuitively and immediately know how all Forms are really identical. Soul can know how rational and musical relate to the ousia, man, only as they are really distinct from one another. The contemplation of Soul is fragmented and in time; hence, it can only know perfections when they are prior or posterior to each other.

⁵⁴According to III, 8 (30), 1-5 Nature is the reality that produces qualities. However, since Plotinus is somewhat unclear on whether Nature is a separate hypostasis, I will regard the Soul (but in its function as Nature) as the source of qualities. This is appropriate since the contrast we discussed between Soul and Nous in Text D will apply here.

⁵⁵Our comments in Text D on life explain how Nous as eternity differs from Soul as time.

The contents of the contemplation of Nous are the archetypes of qualities. These archetypes themselves, however, are not qualities. Qualities are these natures as they are subject to the contemplation of Soul in time and as logoi in a fragmented, imperfect world. What are pure acts There are here only imperfect acts and inferior ousiai.

In conclusion, Plotinus' theory of quality is complex, resulting from his general position on production and from his reaction to the Aristotelian theory of categories. Quality is energeia because it is the content of Soul in its reversion to Nous. However, because only the energeiai of Nous, the archetypes of the contents of Soul, are true onta and true noēta, qualities belong to a world which is largely unreal and illusory and which by no means can ground the science that Aristotle sought.

Summary and Conclusions

Our final task is to summarize our conclusions on energeia in Text E, a study of Ennead VI, 2 (43), 7-8 and 14-15. This treatise is the second part of a trilogy concerning the genera of being (*περὶ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος*), the first and third parts of which are VI, 1 (42) and VI, 3 (44) respectively. Unlike VI, 1 and VI, 3, which are polemics against the Aristotelians and Stoics, VI, 2, while it contains polemical passages, is primarily a statement of Plotinus's position on the primary genera.

Before taking up VI, 2 we found it obligatory to explain why VI, 8 (39)-- a treatise containing many remarkable passages on energeia-- is not a key text. We concluded that VI, 8 is not rightfully Text E because Plotinus wrote it for reasons that make it unreliable as a statement of

his view on energeia. The purpose of VI, 8 is to refute an argument brought against Plotinus' position on the One by certain contemporary critics (perhaps Gnostics). This argument, which Plotinus labels (ch. 12, line 11) a "presumptuous discourse" (tolmeros logos), presents essentially the following dilemma: either the One has a cause and a determinate nature and, therefore, He is a being and not the transcendent source of being; or the One does not have a cause and a determinate nature and, therefore, He exists by accident or chance. Rather than dismiss this argument as irrelevant, since it fails to take into account his negative theology, Plotinus appears to accept it as a legitimate challenge. This acceptance, however, is only a pretense so as to allow him to refute these critics on their own terms, presumably for the benefit of his students. To accomplish this end, Plotinus is willing temporarily to suspend (as he explicitly tells us in chapter 13, line 1-5) his negative theology and to describe the One in positive terms, such as ousia and energeia. Accordingly, the exceptional character of VI, 8 renders it unsuitable for a study of energeia and, thus, we pass on to VI, 2 (43) as the legitimate Text E.

Text E divides generally into two parts, the first consisting of chapters seven and eight (#1-#48) and the second of chapters fourteen and fifteen (#49-#66). The six chapters that precede the first part of Text E makes several important points. (1) The Platonic genera are the logically distinct components of intelligible being; (2) each genus represents from its own point of view the entire nature of Nous and therefore is equal to every other genus; (3) although logically distinct from each other, the genera really constitute a single, living reality, the unity of which results from participation in the One; (4) the unity

of the genera is analogous to the unities of body and soul, which first should be studied before one examines the intelligible realities.

In chapters seven and eight (#1-#48) Plotinus, following Plato, identifies the five most universal Forms or megista genē (ousia, kinēsis, stasis, tauton, and heteron) of the intelligible world. However, he does not simply repeat Plato but modifies Plato's treatment of the subject to suit his own metaphysics. Specifically, he departs from Plato in four important respects. First, whereas for Plato the noēsis of the Demiurge is really separate from the noēta (the eternal Forms) for Plotinus the Demiurge (=Nous, the second hypostasis) and the noēta together form a single nature. Consequently, according to Plotinus the megista genē are not only the ultimate objects of cognition but are also the necessary living principles of all beings. As a logically distinct constituent of Nous, each megiston genos represents either one or both of the dual aspects of Nous: noēsis and noēta. Kinēsis, for instance, may signify both noēsis and noēta. As the former kinēsis is the eternal intellection (after Sophist 248 e-249 d) which actuates the eternal Forms. As the latter kinēsis is one of the Forms, the supreme objects and contents of intellection. Kinēsis, therefore, is at once energeia as intellection and energeia as noēton. The remaining genera are also energeiai. Stasis refers to the diverse energeiai which are the immutable and eternal products of the noetic energeia of Intelligence. Tauton expresses that the multiple energeiai of Nous are unified into one nature. Heteron, in contrast to tauton, expresses that the unity of Nous can be divided by abstraction into plural energeiai. Ousia refers to the actuality of Nous as both a sameness and a difference. Ousia signifies sameness because Nous is a complete, unitary energeia with a determinate nature. Ousia

signifies difference because Nous is comprised of multiple energeiai, each of which is a determinate nature.

Secondly, Plotinus, unlike Plato, regards the megista genē as categories. Plato has no reason to regard them as such because the whole question of categories or predicamenta did not arise until Aristotle. With the Aristotelian legacy before him, however, Plotinus conceives the Platonic genera as constituting a theory of categories. He not only posits the genera as categories but also considers them an alternative to the Aristotelian categories. Essentially, Plotinus argues that the megista genē, since they are immutable noēta and energeiai, can alone ground knowledge of the nature of being. The Aristotelian categories, since they are transitory noēta and shadowy energeiai, can provide only the illusion of knowledge. True epistēmē, the knowledge of immutable and eternal being, requires the supreme objects of the intelligible world, i.e., the principles of Dialectics, and not the objects of the sensible world, i.e., the principles of Aristotelian philosophy.

Thirdly, Plotinus does not employ Plato's doctrine of participation to explain the interrelationships of the megista genē. There appear to be three reasons he does not rely on participation. (1) According to Plotinus an existent participates in another to the extent it is a logos of that other. In other words, a participant is an inferior manifestation of a superior reality. Since the doctrine of logos mainly describes the causal relationship of higher to lower, participation, by its association with logos, cannot express relationships between the megista genē, which are equal realities. (2) Plotinus' conception of participation is very literal, according to which a participant actually is its archetype on a lower level, a level of greater multiplicity and unreality. Thus, for

the same reason as above, participation cannot apply to the interrelationships between the megista genē. (3) Plotinus does not require participation since he can rely on energeia to explain the interrelationships of the genera. As energeiai the genera are in one respect identical in that each is really the same as the entire actuality of Nous. However, they differ in that each may be considered by abstraction as a distinct act representing from its own point of view the unitary nature of Nous.

Finally, Plotinus parts with Plato by denying that the megista genē are the primary realities. Except for his provocative remark in the Republic (509 c), Plato's metaphysics is essentially an ontology.

Accordingly, the megista genē as the supreme Forms or onta are the supreme realities. However, since Plotinus' metaphysics is monistic, the megista genē in his philosophy have derivative rather than primary status in reality. The primal reality must be purely One. Since the genera as energeiai and ousiai presuppose some measure of multiplicity, they cannot constitute the first reality. The ultimate reality transcends energeia and ousia and therefore cognition. Thus, for Plotinus Plato's science of Dialectics cannot discover reality but only bring us to its threshold.

After presenting his interpretation of Plato's megista genē, Plotinus attempts to strengthen his position indirectly by explaining why certain realities cannot be true categories. In particular he criticizes certain Aristotelian categories. When he takes up the category of quality (chapters fourteen and fifteen; #49-#66) he introduces the second part of Text E.

His comments on quality argue that neither essential nor accidental qualities belong among the megista genē. This is true even though qualities are acts. The very nature of qualities presuppose real dis-

tinctions so that some things can be prior or posterior to others. Even essential qualities (=specific differences), while they are necessarily related to their ousiai,⁵⁶ are really posterior to them and therefore cannot have a place in the intelligible world. In other words, none of the megista genē completes (symplēratāi) the primal genus ousia in the way specific difference completes a sensible ousia.

This criticism of quality betrays an almost complete rejection of Aristotelian philosophy, for by denying quality a place in the intelligible world, Plotinus denies it a place in genuine epistēmē. Since Aristotelian science is based on the assumption that qualities disclose ousia or eidos, such a science is only illusory. The ousiai that qualities disclose are imperfect and not genuine noēta.

Qualities are not true objects of epistēmē because they result from contemplation of Soul rather than contemplation of Nous. As an inferior power Soul contemplates and produces energeiai which contain many real distinctions and which manifest themselves in time rather than in eternity.

These energeiai resulting from the fragmented and diminished contemplation of Soul are qualities. They presuppose real distinctions and therefore cannot belong in the intelligible world where everything is apprehended intuitively and as a unity. What appear here as qualities are There really perfect Forms. For example, in the sensible world the

⁵⁶Plotinus' illustration at #58 makes it clear that the logos of the sensible ousia which a completion differentiates is itself a genus. It deserves to be an ousia by virtue of its greater universality. This shows a Platonic conception of ousia: the greater the universality, the greater the reality. Hence, "animal" is the ousia which "rational" differentiates.

ousia man exists with qualities which are really distinct from it. This is because the inferior contemplation of Soul is unable to grasp how a single nature can have at once distinct and yet really identical characteristics. However, in the intelligible world the superior contemplation of Nous can immediately grasp how human nature can be really the same as other Forms. Whereas Soul can only grasp how man is both musical and grammatical by making real distinctions between these characteristics and the ousia, Nous can grasp how Man is both Musical and Grammatical by knowing precisely in what way such Forms are all really identical.

In essence Text E shows that one can understand quality only if he sees it in connection with Plotinus' view of production. Qualities are the inevitable products of a contemplation which has begun to diminish as it achieves lower and lower levels of reality. Qualities are energeiai to the extent they are images and participants of the energeiai There, which are not qualities because they are only logically separable from each other.

In conclusion Text E depends on Plato and Aristotle to accomplish certain very important demands on Plotinus' metaphysics. The first of these is to provide a ground for epistēmē. Plotinus relies on the Platonic doctrine of the megista genē to satisfy this provision. They support epistēmē by enabling Plotinus to show how a Platonic theory of being, knowledge and the categories has advantages over an Aristotelian theory. However, Plotinus relies on Aristotle to help establish the second demand of his metaphysics. Under Aristotle's influence Plotinus comes to understand that the ultimate being must be an Intelligence. Then, by transcending both Plato and Aristotle he concludes that the

megista genē are the living eternal constituents of this Intelligence. They are not separate from Intelligence, as Plato thought, but are the very nature of Intelligence. This enables Plotinus to give the megista genē a function that even Plato could not have foreseen. The megista genē are not only Forms but are also the necessary penultimate stage on the soul's journey back to God. Accordingly, the megista genē at once satisfy the demands of epistēmē and mysticism.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Let us now close our study of energeia in Plotinus with a general summary and some final conclusions.

Text A: Plotinus Adapts Aristotle's Doctrine of Energeia

Our project opened with an examination of energeia in three chapters of Ennead IV, 7, chronologically the second of Plotinus' fifty-four treatises. The object of this treatise is to defend the Platonic theory of the human soul against opposing theories, including Aristotle's. This polemic against Aristotle, however, does not prevent Plotinus from adopting as his own the former's doctrine of energeia. This becomes immediately apparent in chapters 82 and 83 (#1-#8) of Text A, where Plotinus employs energeia in a series of criticisms against the Stoics. Energeia first emerges when he attacks the Stoic position that the soul is corporeal. Plotinus interprets the Stoics as maintaining that the union of soul and body is really a kind of mixture (krasis). Such a mixture, however, would destroy the very being (to einai) of the soul, for the components of a mixture are in potency and not in act. The actuality of soul, therefore, militates against Stoic materialism.¹

This criticism, however brief, is sufficient to indicate what energeia means for Plotinus. If dynamis signifies a nature altered by or

¹It should be noted that a Stoic would immediately object to Plotinus' argument on the grounds that it fails to respect the Stoic distinction between mikton and krasis. The latter is a kind of mixture which consists of elements interpenetrating each other so that each retains its actuality. (See Text A, n. 14).

subordinated to elements of a mixture, energeia signifies a nature free from such alteration or subordination. So understood, what Plotinus means by energeia accords with Aristotle's meaning when the latter speaks of energeia as it pertains to mixture in De Generatione (Bk. I, 10, 327 b 22-26), a passage Plotinus himself may have had in mind:

Since some things are in potency while others are in act, the ingredients of a compound can be in one sense and yet not be in another sense. The compound may be in act other than the ingredients from which it has resulted; nevertheless each of the ingredients may still be in potency what it was before they combined.²

Supported by this quotation as well as by other passages from Aristotle,³ we may take Aristotle to be saying specifically that energeia refers to that which is a distinguishable or determinate or intelligible nature, namely, an eidos or ousia. We may take Plotinus to be implying the same in his criticism. Thus, the opening lines of Text A are remarkably informative, revealing at once what energeia primarily means for both Aristotle and Plotinus. This agreement we will discover again and

²Here we reproduce the Greek text which we recorded in Text A (see n. 13):

Ἐπεὶ δ' ἐξὶ τὰ δυνάμει τὰ δ' ἐνεργείᾳ τῶν
 ὄντων, ἐνδέχεται τὰ μίχιστα εἶναι πῶς
 καὶ μὴ εἶναι, ἐνεργείᾳ μὲν ἑτέρου ἔντος
 τοῦ γεγονότος ἐξ αὐτῶν, δυνάμει δ' ἔτι
 ἑκατέρου ἄπερ ἦσαν πρὶν μίχῃναι, καὶ
 οὐκ ἀπολωλότα.

³See Metaphysics Gamma 2, 1003 b 25-27; Theta 8, 1050 b2-3.

again throughout our study of the Enneads.

Despite this concord between the two thinkers, it must be remembered that Plotinus is a Neoplatonic, rather than an Aristotelian, metaphysician and therefore must give energeia a subordinate, rather than a primary, role in his explanation of reality. Aristotle, of course, is under no such restraint and may conclude that energeia signifies the reality of every existent. This follows from the fact that Aristotle is an ontologist, for whom reality is being (ousia or to on or eidos). As a henologist, however, Plotinus cannot hold such a view. For him reality is not being, but unity. Accordingly, energeia by signifying being presupposes some measure of multiplicity and therefore cannot refer to the reality of every existent but only to that which has already to some degree fallen away from reality. Moreover, while Aristotle can apply energeia to the supreme reality, Plotinus cannot. He may agree with Aristotle that energeia describes perfectly the divine Nous; however, for Plotinus, the divine Nous is derivative, not primary, in reality. Consequently, if Plotinus is consistent with his basic philosophic principles, energeia must never apply to the One and must never be taken to mean unity but only unity-in-multiplicity.

Energeia appears also in Plotinus' second criticism of the Stoics in Text A (#2-#3). If soul were corporeal, as the Stoics maintain, it would be divisible into infinitesimal parts, whereby it could interpenetrate the whole body. Plotinus concludes that this interpenetration would result in an actual infinity (energeia ta apeira) which he, like Aristotle, considers absurd.⁴

He follows Aristotle in a third respect (#4-#8) by appealing to the principle that energeia is ontologically prior to dynamis. Plotinus

invokes this principle so as to uncover another absurd implication of the stoic psychology. Since the Stoics argue that the divine Intelligence and even God are only the results of the alterations of the cosmic pneuma, they imply that the superior can come from the inferior. This is impossible, however, because the superior (the actual) must exist before the inferior (the potential). Of course, it is not surprising to find Plotinus drawing on this Aristotelian principle since it is compatible with the third of the three basic principles of his philosophy, namely, that whatever is prior in the universe is more real than whatever is posterior.⁵

However, we must be cautious at this point and not assume that Plotinus intends his third principle to be fully equivalent to Aristotle's principle regarding the priority of act to potency. The reason for this is that Plotinus cannot hold the priority of act to be absolute since the One, by transcending being is beyond energeia. Act may be prior in the order of beings (in the realm of Nous and all subsequent existents), but it cannot be prior in the order of reality. Indeed, the One is not act but sheer active power: dynamis tōn pantōn (III, 8 [30], 10, 1; cf. V, 4, 1, 25).

Finally, we find Text A (#9-#10) accepting Aristotle's doctrine of

⁴It is important to note that Plotinus does not deny that infinity is a perfection of the One. The One is infinite (apeiron or oriston) by transcending the limitation (peras) and determination (horos) of energeia which is identical with the Intelligence. For illuminating texts see VI, 9, (9), 3, 4-39; V, 5 (32), 6, 4-5; 11, 1-5; VI, 7 (38), 17, 15-40; 28, 28; 32, 9; 33, 13-21.

⁵The first two principles are that whatever is one is real and that whatever is one is also good. For our full discussion see Text A, especially those passages contained in the pages corresponding to notes 29 through 37.

energeia but rejecting his doctrine of entelecheia. Whereas Aristotle appears to regard the two doctrines as basically identical, Plotinus regards them as distinct, considering entelecheia to be exclusively bound up with Aristotle's psychology. Along with rejecting Aristotle's theory of soul, then, Plotinus rejects entelecheia. However, he is willing to accept energeia, interpreting it as a genuinely ontological doctrine rather than a purely psychological one. Energeia does not just describe the human soul but all beings, and especially the hypostases Nous and Soul since both are true ousiai.

Text B: Plotinus Has Dynamis Prior to Energeia
in Distinguishing the One from the Intelligence

Although as brief as its predecessor, Text B, consisting of the second chapter of Ennead V, 4 (7), presents a far more elaborate picture of energeia, for it indicates some of the most important ways by which the theory is operative in Plotinian metaphysics. Plotinus must treat of energeia in order to achieve the primary objective of Text B. This is to explain the relationship of Nous, the meeting-place of the eternal Forms, to its principle, the One. Specifically, Plotinus draws on Aristotle's doctrine of energeia to describe the production of the second hypostasis out of the First.

When describing the Intelligence as energeia, Plotinus of course is following Aristotle for whom energeia as perfect ousia most suitably applies to Nous. In Text B (#2) Plotinus specifies that this ousia is one whose very energeia is noēsis. This description, when complemented by relevant observations from V, 9 (5), provides the clue for explicating Plotinus' brilliant but complex conception of the intelligible world.

Because of our discovery in Text A that energeia primarily means ousia, we can justly conclude in Text B that, by defining Nous as the energeia of noēsis, Plotinus means that Nous is nothing less than pure intellection. While other beings, such as Soul and Nature, may share in noēsis or, as we may say, have noēsis, the Intelligence simply is noēsis, thereby constituting the very first noēsis. Indeed, all subsequent beings have noēsis only because they are logoi of that which is noēsis.

Several other perfections must belong to Nous if it is an existent whose energeia is intellection. First, Nous is an eternal knower. This follows because Nous does not merely have the power to know but is knowing per se. Accordingly, Nous must be an intuitive knower, because discursive knowledge requires becoming and time. Secondly, as an eternally actual, rather than potential, knower, Intelligence must be its own object of knowledge. If its object were separate from itself, it would be dependent on and in potency to that object. Thus, Plotinian Nous is comparable to Aristotelian noēsis noēseōs. However, Plotinus goes beyond Aristotle, explaining that, when the Nous contemplates itself, it contemplates the Platonic Forms which are the contents of the divine Mind. Consequently, Plotinus' vision of the intelligible world is a synthesis of Platonic Forms and Aristotelian Intelligence.

Thirdly, we may infer that, if eidos is the same as ousia and if Nous is identical with every eidos, the divine Intelligence is perfect being and is really the whole universe of beings, a conclusion which Plotinus takes to vindicate Parmenides' famous statement (fragment 3) that thinking and being are the same.⁶

⁶See Text B, n. 10.

From this analysis of Nous as the energeia of noēsis, it follows that Nous must be the second and not the first reality (#1). The plurality of the noēta, even though comprised of only logically distinct elements, admits some disunity and thus is necessarily derivative rather than primary in reality. Nous is being and composite and therefore requires ultimate simplicity as its cause. Thus, Plotinus in Text B confirms what we concluded in Text A that energeia by denoting being cannot denote the First Reality. While energeia may describe the ens perfectissimum (where ens signifies only being), it cannot describe the res perfectissima (where res means reality).

After this critically important description of the nature of the Intelligence as energeia of noēsis, Plotinus considers exactly how the Nous originates out of the One. In doing so he incorporates (#3) a term borrowed from the "Unwritten Doctrines" (agrapha dogmata) of Plato, namely, the "Indefinite Dyad" (aeoristos dyas). By this obscure term Plotinus designates intelligible matter or the first moment of the emanation of Nous. This first moment, which Plotinus calls the stage of prohodos of procession, is dynamis in the sense of active power. This moment is necessary for the Intelligence to become a distinct hypostasis, because it first must separate itself from the One before it can, inspired by love, undergo epistrophē or reversion which consists of a contemplation producing the universe of Platonic Forms and the energeia of Nous.

Plotinus' appropriation of the Indefinite Dyad proves that dynamis is significantly prior to energeia in his system. Hence, Text B confirms our interpretation of Text A where, for Plotinus' philosophy, the Aristotelian principle of the priority of act to potency was cautiously limited to the order of beings alone. Text B supports this restriction

in two ways: first, by showing that Nous is indeterminate and is dynamis until Nous contemplates the One and thus becomes energeia and, secondly, by showing that the One Itself is absolute power (pantōn tōn ontōn dynataton, cf. ch. 1, lines 23-26 or V, 4).

We have already seen that Text B (#2) defines Nous as an energeia consisting of eternal intellection. However, Text B (#6), even at the apparent risk of Plotinus' negative theology, also ascribes knowledge (katanoēsis and synaisthēsis) to the One.

There are three alternative interpretations one can give to this ascription of knowledge to the One: the One knows through intrinsic denomination (in and of His very nature He has knowledge); secondly, the One knows through extrinsic denomination (He causes knowledge in the Intellect); and, thirdly, He knows through mediation (He knows inasmuch as the Intellect has knowledge; i.e., He knows through the Intellect). The first two interpretations are unacceptable since neither has the support of the key text. The first interpretation is particularly objectionable since it contradicts other parts of the key text (#1-#2; #12), as well as the chapter that precedes it (V, 4, 1, 9-10), where Plotinus emphasizes the One's transcendence over intellection and being. Accordingly, the correct interpretation appears to be that the One has knowledge through the Intellect. This interpretation is made plausible by Plotinus' selection of katanoēsis and synaisthēsis, rather than simply noēsis and aisthēsis, to signify the One's knowledge. These terms indicate that the One is not a knower in his own intrinsic nature but through or with Nous, which is the One on a lower level of reality. In other words, the One has knowledge by virtue of the relation of Intellect to Him. Hence, katanoēsis and synaisthēsis may be predicated of the One

through "mediation" rather than through intrinsic or extrinsic denomination.⁷

One may wonder why Plotinus feels a need in Text B to ascribe katanoēsis to the One. The answer appears to be that he wants to reply to opponents, imaginary or otherwise, who would insist that the First Reality has intellection. It is only natural for Plotinus to anticipate an objection of this kind, since his commitment to the One's radical transcendence challenges the traditional Greek supposition that intellection is the consummate perfection. By replying as he does (that the One in a sense has intellection), Plotinus is able to concede something to the Greek tradition but also to preserve his general position on the transcendence of the One.⁸

The heart (#5-#11) of Text B shows how energeia is basic to Plotinus' account of the production of the hypostases. Since all things, even inanimate objects, must strive to communicate their perfections to other existents, we may infer that the One, who is unlimited in power and perfection (so unlimited in fact that His reality is altogether undiminished in its productivity), must certainly strive to so communicate His perfection. This necessary communication of the Good brings about another existent, also superabundant in goodness, namely, the Intelligence. As we have seen, this existent is generated in two eternal (not temporal) moments: a moment of procession and dynamis and a moment of reversion and

⁷As explained above in Text B (n. 2), however, predication through mediation is a specific sort of predication through extrinsic denomination.

⁸See Text D, n. 59, for a list of passages in Plotinus stating the transcendence of the One over energeia, as well as over ousia and noēsis.

energeia. These two moments not only apply to the generation of Nous but to all levels of production. All hypostases are produced through a stage involving dynamis and one involving energeia. As a hypostasis becomes energeia, its own perfection must overflow and produce the next level of reality. Hence, in this way, energeia may be said to generate energeia. Plotinus attempts to explain this priority of energeia in production (as it applies to the levels of Nous and below) by distinguishing between the energeia "of" an ousia and the energeia "from" an ousia (#9-#11).

Plotinus' writings furnish certain analogies to help clarify this distinction. One of these analogies, that of fire, he mentions in Text B (#10-#11). In our experience of natural phenomena, we often find certain entities, such as fire, consistently producing certain effects. The perfection which empowers an entity to emanate a certain product may be called the energeia "of" an ousia, while the effect itself may be called the energeia "from" an ousia. For example, fire (the energeia "of" an ousia) radiates heat (the energeia "from" an ousia) and snow radiates cold. Plotinus regards this relationship of energeiai as true on all levels of being and invokes it as a principle necessary for explaining production of the hypostases. Accordingly, Nous is an energeia "of" an ousia as it emanates Soul, an energeia "from" an ousia. Likewise Soul is an energeia "of" an ousia as it produces Nature (or whatever we may wish to call the subsequent living cosmos), an energeia "from" an ousia. Nature takes its turn as a prior energeia and so does every subsequent level of being until perfection and energeia are exhausted, terminating against the darkenss, sterility and unreality of prime matter.

Because of what we know about the nature of the One, it would appear incorrect to extend this relationship of energeiai to the level of the

One itself. To say the One is energeia tēs ousias would contradict other important passages of V, 4, (e.g., ch. 1, lines 9-10 and #12 of the key text) in which Plotinus declares that the One transcends ousia. Hence, we must seek another interpretation of lines 34-36 (Text B, #11):

ἐκ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ τελειό-
τητος καὶ συνούσης ἐνεργείας ἢ γεννηθεῖσα ἐνέργεια ὑπό-
στασιν λαβοῦσα,

The answer seems to rest with "predication through mediation" which we employed earlier to explain #6. Accordingly, energeia belongs to the One in the same way katanoēsis belongs to Him. The One is not energeia intrinsically but only through His product, the Intelligence, which depends on Him. If we look at the One from the standpoint of this relationship of dependence, then He can be said to have energeia present to Him (synousēs energeias) in light of the fact that the perfection present in Him (ek tēs en autō teleiotētos) and proper to Him allows Him to be the source of the energeia tēs ousias of the Intelligence. This latter simultaneously is applicable to the One through mediation as though the One involved also an energeia tēs ousias from which the energeia of the Nous came.

Thus, while Text B implies that every energeia ek tēs ousias requires an energeia tēs ousias which is an altogether separate existent, the relation of the Nous to the One must be an exception. In other words, the One cannot be energeia tēs ousias, simply because He is not ousia. Moreover, if the One were energeia tēs ousias, consistently He would also have to be an energeia ek tēs ousias, in the sense that another reality would be above Him as His cause. Hence, Intelligence, not the One, is the very first energeia tēs ousias, although the One may be said to involve both energeia tēs ousias and energeia ek tēs ousias through mediation.

Text C: Hē Dynamis as Intelligible Matter
is Prior to Hē Energeia as Achieved Eidos;
and the Two Constitute To Energeia On in
Nous

Texts A and B do not study energeia as their primary subject, and, therefore, we must extract what they tell us about energeia from their treatment of different, albeit related, topics, such a Soul (Text A) and Intelligence (Text B). With Text C, however, we take up a treatise, II, 5, (25), which studies energeia as its main subject. Consequently, Text C demands our closest attention.

A very important contribution of Text C is its distinction between two types of energeia as well as two types of dynamis.⁹ The first two chapters of II, 5 (#1-#30) state that hē energeia differs from to energeia on, just as hē dynamis differs from to dynamei on. The former distinction we translate as that between "act" and "being in act," and the latter as that between "potency" and "being in potency."

To understand these distinctions, it is best to begin with to dynamei on since it characterizes sensible matter and thereby is the basis of helpful inductive illustrations. In simplest terms being in potency is something which can become something else (#5-#6). Bronze, for instance, is being in potency because it can become a statue; water, because it can become something else altogether, e.g., air or bronze (#6-#9). Such examples indicate that something is a being in potency if it can receive

⁹The two kinds of energeia distinguished in Text C are more analytical and technical than the two kinds distinguished in Text B (i.e., than the distinction between energeia tēs ousias and energeia ek tēs ousias). For this reason the distinction in Text C appears repeatedly throughout the Enneads.

either accidental or substantial form from an extrinsic cause. Hence, being in potency is passive dynamis: that which can be a substrate (#15) for another or rather that which can be formed by another (par' alloi; #29).

So understood, to dunamei on compares readily with elements in the Aristotelian philosophy. First, Aristotle himself uses the Greek phrase to dunamei on to mean passive potency. Secondly, Plotinus' example of bronze (chalkos; #6-#9; #17; #20-#21; #26-#27; #50) echoes one of Aristotle's favorite illustrations of passive potency. Thirdly, by saying that being in potency makes change possible (from which it follows that being in potency cannot belong in the immutable intelligible world), Plotinus accepts Aristotle's position that being in potency is the principle of change. Because of this third parallel Plotinus is willing to largely accept Aristotle's doctrine of prime matter as pure passive potency. Furthermore, since prime matter is always being in potency and never being in act, for both thinkers it is the ultimate substratum of change. Finally, Plotinus also accepts Aristotle's distinction between prime matter (protē hylē) and second (eschata hylē) matter, as is indicated by his illustrations regarding bronze (#16-#17; #50). Prime matter is being in potency in an absolute sense, while second matter is such only relatively.

A grasp of to dunamei on prepares one for its correlate, to energeia on, an expression which also appears in Aristotle. Being in act refers to any existent which is completed by form (#17). Thus, to energeia on, unlike to dunamei on, may belong in the intelligible world, for intelligible beings are also completed by form. However, the matter which is There completed by form is "intelligible" and potency (hē dynamis) rather

than being in potency (to *dynamai* on). Unlike sensible matter, the matter there is indeterminate but real and, as such, truly unites with form. In other words, intelligible matter and form are only logically distinct. In the intelligible world there is no sensible matter, no being in potency, and therefore no change. In the sensible world, however, every being in act is subject to change and therefore is also a being in potency. Each sensible thing is a composite of matter and form but is in potency to some extrinsic being. We may say generally, then, that with the exception of prime matter every being in potency is also a being in act.

Plotinus asks (#17) an important question regarding the relationship of being in potency to being in act: where there is change, does being in potency really become being in act or is the resulting being in act altogether different from the prior being in potency? There is no simple answer to this question. The resulting being in certain ways is the same and in certain ways is different from the prior being in potency. This is true whether one considers the being in potency as second or as prime matter. If second matter is considered in itself, i.e., as being in act, then it is different from the product it becomes, because every being in act is a distinct composite of matter and form. But if second matter is considered not in and of itself but relatively to that form it will acquire, then it is partly the same as the resulting being in act. In other words, if second matter is considered as a being in potency, it may be said in a sense to be the same as the product. It is the same in that it remains as the substrate for the newly received form. This is true, however, only of accidental change; in substantial change the form is altogether lost and therefore cannot be said to be a part of the product.

Like second matter, prime matter is also partly distinct from and

partly identical with the resulting being in act, depending on one's point of view. Since matter is never itself in act, matter is necessarily different from the resulting composite. But matter is certainly a part of the composite, since it is the ultimate substrate of the latter.

This brings us to hē energeia itself. Here Plotinus says the energeia is form (#27). Thus, Text C further confirms the finding of our prior key texts that Plotinus follows Aristotle by identifying energeia with eidōs. How does act (energeia) relate to the prior two distinctions, being in potency and being in act? Being in potency receives and becomes substrate of act. Since being in potency is passive dynamis, act comes to being in potency only through the agency of another (par' allou; #29). The resulting union of being in potency (substrate) and of act (form) brings about a being in act. Hence, to energeia on denotes the whole, whereas hē energeia denotes the part. At times Plotinus uses hē energeia and to energeia on interchangeably. This is permissible in that an existent is an intelligible unity because of its form.

Finally, we come to hē dynamis, which we translate "potency." How exactly does hē dynamis differ from to dynamēi on? Plotinus answers that the former is active potency or power but that the latter is passive potency. Whereas being in potency is determined by another (par' allou; #29), potency (hē dynamis) determines itself, or rather the agent who exercises the potency determines it. Plotinus explains this through his allusion to the sculptor (kata to poiēin; #10-#11). The sculptor's perfections (his talent, imagination and artistic judgment) cause operations perfecting not only external objects but also the sculptor's active powers themselves. Through the sculptor's active powers, he perfects himself. One and the same agent is origin and recipient of act.

Plotinus further elaborates this point through the illustrations of the knower (#22-#25) and the moral agent (#30). Knowledge is possible through knowing powers which belong to a subject who himself is perfected (i.e., acquires energeia) through the exercise of those powers. Moral conduct is the result of powers (habits) which themselves are further perfected by that conduct.

Potency, therefore, is the active power of a living agent. The agent, moreover, has act through his own active power, because an agent perfects himself through his powers and their immanent operations.

These technical distinctions furnish the principles for an analysis of the intelligible world which appears in chapter three of Text C (#31-#39). As noted earlier, if to dynamēi on is the principle of change, it cannot belong in the intelligible world. Hence, while it is correct to call intelligible beings potencies (more precisely, active powers), it is incorrect to call them beings in potency.

Being in act applies to the intelligible world because intelligible beings are composites of matter (albeit intelligible matter) and form. True, the matter There is a potency rather than a being in potency; nonetheless it is a logically distinct constituent of an intelligible being which, as composite, may be called a being in act. Because an intelligible being is a composite of potency and act rather than of being in potency and act, it is a real unity of parts only logically distinct. This differentiates it sharply from sensible beings, for the latter are composed of sensible matter which repels form and thus never really unites with its act. It is for this reason that sensible beings are poor imitations, mere shadows, of intelligible beings.

All intelligible beings are pure acts, because each is really

identical with its form, having intelligible matter only in a logically distinguishable way. The beings are the logically distinct contents of a single, divine nature, namely, the second hypostasis which by comprehending all acts may itself be called pure act.

Without energeia belonging to the intelligible order, there could be no energeia in the sensible, for the sensible exists as a participant or logos of the intelligible. As the logoi of Nous reflect a descending hierarchy of perfections, the entire universe of beings may be considered a gradation of energeiai.

How precisely does potency (hē dynamis) belong in the intelligible world? Potency is the procession out of the One which, through its own perfection and tendency (epheisis), reverts back to its source so as to become energeia. Potency is that indeterminate perfection which makes possible an order of existents (energeiai) which are distinct from the One. Thus, Plotinus applies to production (which he explains in greater detail in Text B) the realization that active power and act can describe the same existent. Just as a knower or moral agent may under his own power perfect himself, so Nous may under its power perfect itself. This it does by reverting to its source, contemplating It and becoming thereby energeia. Hence, Text C repeats a central finding of Text B: dynamis is necessary in explaining the nature of the Intelligence (as well as of every hypostasis).

The indeterminate power (hē dynamis) which accounts for intelligible being is, of course, intelligible matter, which Text B calls "the Indefinite Dyad." The kinship of intelligible matter to the indeterminacy of the One makes it a perfection even greater than that of being itself. This sharply contrasts intelligible matter with its sensible counterpart,

sensible matter, which Plotinus paradoxically describes in the closing passages of Text C (#40-#56) as "truly false" and "really unreal." As pure being in potency sensible matter is nothing in itself; yet it is in potency all beings since it may serve as the substrate successively of all forms. In order to be the substrate of all forms, matter must never be any single form and therefore is unable to truly unite with any form. As the eternal capacity for form, matter is never itself in act. As being in potency matter is powerless to acquire form without an extrinsic agent.

Although matter is alien to being (an "outcast," ekritheisa, of reality; #51) and indeed repels being, it nonetheless has a kind of nature, which can be known only to the "bastard reasoning" described in Plato's Timaeus (52 b). Like intelligible matter, sensible matter is an otherness (heterotēs). Just as intelligible matter is the otherness which makes it possible for a distinct hypostasis to exist; so sensible matter is the otherness by which sensible forms can exist. Whereas, however, the otherness of intelligible matter is real and perfect, the otherness of sensible matter is unreal and imperfect. Plotinus' treatises unfortunately do not consistently specify in what way sensible matter is other than the One. His texts at different times support opposite views. On the one hand, Plotinus regards matter as the final product or stage of emanation, as the darkness and sterility which comes as emanation is exhausted. On the other, matter is the unproduced, unreal something eternally opposite the One, it is the darkness and sterility against which (not into which) emanation gives out.¹⁰

¹⁰Emerging out of Plotinus' very latest treatises is the dualist position that matter does not emanate (see I, 8 [51]). This is contradicted by the early treatise, III, 4 (15), 1. Each of these treatises follows

Text D: Plotinus Elevates the Cosmological Principles (Kinēsis, Ousia, Tauton and Heteron) of Plato's Timaeus to Explain How the Energia of Life of the Intelligence Differentiates it from the One.

While very informative Text C is irritatingly brief, particularly in its remarks on energeia in the intelligible world. This terseness, however, is corrected by Text D (VI, 7 [38], 13; 17-18; 37 and 40), which elaborates on the nature of energeia in the intelligible world, explaining also why the One transcends energeia.

The nature of Nous is the focus of Part One (chs. 1-15) of VI, 7, in which the first Section, chapter thirteen (#1-#30), of Text D occurs. Prior to chapter thirteen Plotinus presents an interpretation of Plato's Timaeus, holding that the Demiurge is equivalent to the Plotinian Nous, one nature comprehending the plurality of Platonic Forms. Since the Demiurge is the cause of the sensible world, Plotinus concludes that there is nothing here that does not have its archetype There. But such a position, he admits, entails difficulties. How can the imperfections and deficiencies that appear here belong There, where there is only perfect being? Plotinus explains (chs. 1-12) that inferior beings in the sensible world result from the fact that as logoi they cannot be equal in reality to their causes. All beings in the intelligible world are equal and perfect. They only display imperfections as they appear in the world of becoming. Hence, the forms of even irrational and inanimate beings are

periods of uncertainty. Plotinus expresses uncertainty in two treatises which antedate III, 4: namely, IV, 8 (6), 6 and II, 4 (12). Likewise he is uncertain in the following later treatises: IV, 5 (23), 8; II, 5 (25), 5; III, 6 (26), 14; V, 8 (31), 7; VI, 3 (44), 7; III, 2 (47), 2. Again, see William J. Carroll, Plotinus on the Origin of Matter (M. A. Thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1973), p. 132.

proper to the nature of Nous, for they are perfect beings and are themselves (as they exist There) intelligences. Such beings only have imperfections insofar as imperfections appear in their participants. Plotinus concludes from this analysis that the intelligible world is a universe teeming with living, perfect, intelligible beings, each of which is a form or an act.

Chapter thirteen of VI, 7, which is Section One of Text D, undertakes to describe more fully the unity-in-multiplicity of Nous. To accomplish this Text D borrows four special principles from Plato's Timaeus: kinēsis, ousia, tauton and heteron. In the Timaeus Plato employs these principles to explain the World Soul. First, the Soul is an ousia because the Demiurge fashions it according to the divine exemplars so as to be a distinct existent with a definite nature. It entails tauton and thateron insofar as that nature also is specifically constituted by two circles, an inner circle of difference and an outer circle of sameness. Soul is kinēsis in two respects: first, as cognition of the intelligible All and of the sensible All through the circles of sameness and difference; secondly, as the principle cognitively moving itself and thereby imparting to all heavenly bodies their circular locomotions, which in turn reflect the order and harmony of time as "the moving image of eternity."

In chapter thirteen of VI, 7 Plotinus simply elevates these Platonic principles to the level of Nous. He employs them in particular to explain how the diverse nature of Nous is the result of its cognition. Kinēsis is this eternal intellection which brings about the infinite plurality of noēta or forms (#4-#8; #10; #19). Of course, kinēsis is at first only the active power for intellection and is not intellection in the full sense. It is the indeterminate epheis or tendency which is separate

from the One and is preparatory for reversion, for full contemplation and energeia. To express more precisely how kinēsis is necessary for the full realization of all intelligibles, Plotinus connects kinēsis with energeia. This connection is evident in Plotinus' conception of life (zōē) as presented in Sections One (ch. 13) and Two (chs. 17-18) of Text D.

Plotinus agrees with Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics that life in the truest sense is intellection. Accordingly, the highest life will not be the One, which transcends intellection, but the Nous, which is the very energeia of intellection. If life is best exemplified by Nous, then life will consist of two stages, prohodos (dynamis) and epistrophē (energeia). As Nous exists in procession, it is only life as indeterminate, like its source, the One. By contemplating its source, life is completed and becomes energeia. Fully realized and determined life, therefore, is the actuated Nous (#50).

Intelligence actuates the plurality of Forms and beings as it actuates itself. Accordingly, Nous is not just a single life but all lives, a universe teeming with life (ch. 12), equivalent to "the eternal living being" of Plato's Timaeus. Since every being subsequent to Nous is really only Nous on an inferior level of reality, every sensible being is a life and an act (#58). Indeed, the logoi of Nous, by virtue of reflecting ever decreasing levels of perfection, reflect a diminishing hierarchy of lives. The sensible hierarchy of lives and acts is the product of the contemplation of Soul, the third hypostasis and the principal logos of Nous. Because its life is realized only successively and in time, its products represent Plotinus' equivalent of "the moving image of eternity" depicted in the Timaeus.

Of course, if life is Intelligence, then the One must transcend

life and energeia. Text D is the first of our key texts to explicitly state this transcendence of the One over energeia, arguing this point on grounds that life and act rest on duality, whereas the Source of these perfections must be sheer simplicity (#31-#41).

Text E: The Megista Genē are the Logically Distinct Energeiai Constituting the Second Hypostasis and Existing as the Supreme Objects of Dialectics

The four principles (ousia, kinēsis, tauton and heteron), which Text D employs to explain the role of energeia in the intelligible world, also appear (along with a fifth principle, stasis) in our final key text-- though this text is more under the influence of Plato's Sophist than of his Timaeus. Text E (VI, 2 (43), 7-8; 14-15) is the second of a three-part study. It includes VI, 1 (42) and VI, 3 (44), the aim of which is to clarify and defend Plotinus' interpretation of the Platonic theory of the megista genē against the alternative theories of the Aristotelians and Stoics. VI, 2 in particular argues that the Platonic megista genē are the true noēta, onta and energeiai, each of which is one in reality with the divine Nous, the Plotinian equivalent of the Platonic Demiurge.

It was necessary to preface our treatment of the Text E with a brief discussion of Ennead VI, 8 (39), which chronologically follows right after VI, 7 (Text D). Although VI, 8 refers to energeia often and in ways apparently in conflict with Texts A through D, it nonetheless does not warrant attention as a key text. This conclusion follows from a careful evaluation of the purpose of VI, 8. The objective of the treatise is to uncover the mistake in the Gnostic position (which Plotinus calls a tolmeros logos--ch. 12, line 11) that the One is either an ousia or the product of chance or accident. Although this position clearly shows a

failure to appreciate negative theology, Plotinus responds to it in VI, 8, as though it were a respectable position and a fair challenge, presumably for the sake of showing once and for all to his students the error of Gnosticism. In pretending to respect this Gnostic argument, Plotinus is willing to speak of the One in positive terms, including ousia and energeia. However, Plotinus is still quite aware that such a practice conflicts with sound philosophy, as his disclaimer in chapter thirteen (lines 1-5) indicates. Since the presentation of VI, 8 is largely contrived for the benefits of a polemic against the Gnostics, the treatise cannot be regarded as a faithful representation of Plotinus' views on energeia. For this reason VI, 2 (43) rather than VI, 8 (39) is Text E.

Text E falls into two parts, the first consisting of chapters seven and eight (#1-#48) and the second of chapters fourteen and fifteen (#49-#66). Part One is a direct statement of Plotinus' own position on the megista genē, while Part Two is a criticism of one aspect of Aristotle's position on the categories and the genera. Both parts have significant bearing on energeia in Plotinus' philosophy.

Chapters seven and eight of Text E culminate a discussion that originates in the opening chapters of the treatise. Chapters one through seven lay down several important conclusions. First, the megista genē are not only the ultimate objects of the science of Dialectics but are also the logically distinct constituents of the intelligible world which are identical with the second hypostasis. Secondly, each genus is equal to every other, since each is really identical with every other. Thirdly, the real unity of the intelligible world results from its participation in the One. Lastly, the unities of body and soul are analogous to the intelligible unities and therefore make helpful beginnings toward a

knowledge of the intelligible world.

In chapters seven and eight (#1-#48) Plotinus shows that an analysis of the intelligible world yields five supreme Forms: ousia, kinēsis, stasis, tauton and heteron. While he follows Plato in accepting these Forms as the ultimate beings and objects of knowledge, Plotinus parts from his predecessor in several respects. First, whereas Plato separates the noēsis of the Demiurge from the Forms, Plotinus unites them. This union of noēsis and noēta unlocks Plotinus' whole account of the role of the megista genē in the intelligible world. Each genus represents either one or other of those two logically distinct components of Nous: noēsis and noēta (#29-#31; #32-#36). Kinēsis is the noēsis which actuates the eternal Forms (e.g., #12; #26-#29). But kinēsis from another point of view is itself a Form, since every Form is an intellection and, therefore, also a noēton (#35-#36; #40-#42; #47). Furthermore, in these two respects kinēsis is energeia. Kinēsis is energeia in that it is the actuation of all Forms and in that it itself is numbered among the totality of acts.

The other four megista genē are likewise energeiai. Stasis is the energeia of Nous signified by the Forms which are the termini of kinēsis (#18-#19; #40; #64). Ousia is energeia in two respects: first in that Nous as a whole, i.e., as the second hypostasis, is the Plotinian equivalent of Aristotle's noēsis noēsēos and thus is pure act; secondly, in that each of the Forms (each an ousia) is a logically distinct act (#18-#19; #31; #32-#36). Heteron is energeia since it also refers to the plurality of the Forms (#42-#45). Finally, tauton is energeia in that it denotes the unity of all Forms comprehended by the divine noēsis (#43-#45).

Secondly, Plato does not regard his megista genē as categories, yet Plotinus interprets them as such in order to refute the Aristotelian and Stoic theories of categories. In fact, Plotinus holds that the Platonic genera are the only true categories because they are modes of perfect or intelligible being, which alone is a true noēton. Accordingly, Plotinus rejects the Stoic and Aristotelian categories because they are grounded on sensible being which is unreal and a false noēton. Consequently, Dialectics, the science of Platonic Forms, is genuine epistēmē, while Aristotelian and Stoic wisdom is a pseudo-science.

It is important to see that Text E involves energeia in this conception of the categories because energeia describes these supreme onta and noēta (#62). The megista genē are genuine categories, the most comprehensive modes of being, because they are acts. The Aristotelian categories are only pseudo-ousiai and therefore pseudo-energeiai. Accordingly, they can only support pseudo-epistēmē.

Thirdly, Plotinus' indebtedness to energeia frees him from the Platonic doctrine of participation when he explains the interrelationships of the megista genē (#47-#48). Since participation, as Plotinus understands it, is between lower and higher realities, it is not suited to an account of the supreme genera, which are equal realities. This equality is, in the final analysis, due to the real identity of the genera. As identical with Nous they may collectively be defined as pure act. As logically distinct they are each an act. Thus, energeia rather than metechein explains the nature and relationships of Forms for Plotinus.

Fourthly, Plotinus does not admit with Plato that the megista genē are the primary realities. As the supreme objects of Dialectics, the genera are the supreme beings, but Plotinus relegates them to a secondary

place in reality since, for him, being entails some measure of multiplicity and imperfection. The First Reality, however, must be purely one and thus perfect. For Plotinus ontology must give way to henology; moreover, Dialectics must ultimately give way to negative theology and mysticism, the object of which transcends the genera.

After Plotinus' presentation in chapters seven and eight of VI, 2, he highlights several questions to illumine further his conception of the megista genē. First, he responds at length to the question of whether the One can be Himself a genus (chs. 9-12). Secondly, he considers whether the Aristotelian category of quantity can belong among the megista genē (ch. 13). After replying negatively to this last question, he next (chs. 14-15; #49-#66) explains why the Aristotelian category of quality cannot belong There. His comments in these chapters form the second part of Text E in which he clarifies how energeia in the sensible world contrasts with energeia in the intelligible.

In general Plotinus argues here (#49-#66) that quality presupposes real distinctions and therefore cannot belong in the intelligible world. This is true whether one considers essential or accidental qualities (symp̄lērōtika or pathē) even though both, like the megista genē, are energeiai. Essential qualities are acts that flow directly from an ousia, but are nonetheless really distinct from those ousiai and thus cannot belong where there are only logically distinct existents. Accidental qualities certainly cannot belong There since they are acts altogether extrinsic to ousiai. In essence, then, the megista genē do not complete (symp̄lēratai) intelligible ousia in the way that qualities complete sensible ousia. In the sensible world the completion is between the really distinct and the prior ousia and the posterior qualities. However,

in the intelligible world the completion is between what is really identical and what is only logically distinct (#53; #60; #62-#66).

When Plotinus denies quality a place among the intelligibles, he denies quality a place in science as well, for the intelligibles are the only true objects of science. Qualities are part of sensible ousiai which are, according to Platonism, shadows and phantoms of true reality. Obviously, such a view veils a serious criticism of Aristotelian philosophy, since, according to that school, sensible qualities and ousiai are the proper objects for science. Thus, Text E betrays a purely Platonic conception of science and implicitly charges Aristotelian science with the pursuit of illusions.

Since qualities, as well as sensible ousiai, appear on an inferior level of reality, it must be assumed that they are not objects of the contemplation of Nous. Qualities result from the inferior contemplation of Soul. The contemplation in the intelligible world would forbid qualities, since the object of contemplation There is a real unity, only logically fragmented. Accordingly, the Nous through its contemplation is able at once to comprehend how one Form or act is really the same as (i.e., neither prior nor posterior to) another. Nous knows that The Human is in real union with The Grammatical and The Musical. The contemplation of Soul, however, fragments its object, producing real distinctions and thereby producing qualities and separate ousiai.

Accordingly, Soul cannot know the real identity of man and musical. It knows them as really distinguishable acts--the one as an ousia and the other as a quality.

Thus, Text E shows, as did our other key texts, that energeia is bound up with Plotinus' account of production and is fundamental to his

contrast of the intelligible with the sensible world.

What shall we say by the way of some final conclusions concerning energeia in Plotinus? The first is simply that energeia is a central doctrine in his metaphysics. This conclusion is clearly implied by the preceding summary of our key texts which show that energeia and/or its correlate, dynamis, is involved with almost all significant subjects in Plotinus' philosophy: e.g., the production of the hypostases out of the One; the transcendence of the One over being, life and Intelligence; the nature of contemplation; the hierarchy of beings and lives; the nature of the intelligible world, the universe of Plato's megista genē; the nature of the One itself (who is not energeia but pure active dynamis); and the nature of prime matter (which is not energeia but pure passive dynamis).

Plotinus' commitment to energeia is further demonstrated by the simple fact that he devotes an entire treatise (indeed one from his middle period, in which, as Porphyry says, he produced works "of the highest perfection"),¹¹ namely, II, 5 (25), our Text C, to the energeia/dynamis distinction. He there presents certain technical distinctions which, on the whole, prevail throughout the Enneads, namely the expressions he energeia vs. hē dynamis and to energeia on vs. to dynamei on. These distinctions are critical in Plotinus' accounts of the intelligible and the sensible worlds¹² and, thus, they are important to his philosophical project as a whole.

¹¹Porphyry, *The Life of Plotinus*, p. 25 (lines 34-35).

¹²Three of the distinctions--namely, to energeia on, hē energeia and he dynamis--are operative in both the intelligible and the sensible worlds. However, the final distinction--to dynamei on--is operative only in the sensible world (see Text C, #31-#34).

On the basis of such evidence, then, we must conclude that Philip Merlan (in The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy, as quoted in our Introduction)¹³ is quite mistaken in his remark that Plotinus has no need for either energeia or dynamis. On the contrary, our study has shown that without energeia Plotinus' entire ontology is quite inexplicable.

By studying precisely how energeia is operative in that ontology, we have come to a second conclusion: energeia, which is synonymous with contemplation (noēsis) and being (ousia; eidos; to on; noēton), should be translated in various ways out of respect for the fact that there are different levels of contemplation and being and that there are different ways of looking at being. Of course, in its most perfect sense, i.e., when signifying Divine Mind and the intelligible world, energeia should be translated as "act" or "achieved perfection." These seem to be the best English equivalents for reality which is perfect thought or being, i.e., for reality which is fully realized unity-in-multiplicity. It is important to note that these terms will also apply to any logos of Intelligence, in that every logos is a certain thought or being realized on a certain level of perfection.

In addition to "act" or "achieved perfection" it is also correct to translate energeia as "actuation," since form and intellection emerge out of a prior dynamis. If energeia properly describes the stage of epistrophē, then energeia has in a sense "become" and thus may be translated as "actuation," signifying that which has become act.

Additionally, as it refers to the level of human praxis, a weakened

¹³See Introduction, p. 1 and note 3.

kind of contemplation that entails the development of moral habits and conduct, energeia may be correctly translated as "activity." This is a translation of the term that we uncovered in our comments on Text C.14

Thirdly, we come to one of the most important conclusions of our study: Plotinus' handling of energeia may be generally described as a reaction, in both positive and negative ways, to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Of course, a response to Aristotle is demanded by the simple fact that in the first place Plotinus adopts Aristotle's neologism, energeia. Upon accepting this term, Plotinus finds it reasonable to follow Aristotle in several applications of its doctrine. Of these applications, of course, the most conspicuous is the description of the second hypostasis as pure act. Here it is important to recall that, while Plotinus denies energeia of the highest reality, he agrees with Aristotle that energeia signifies ousia and form and therefore most perfectly applies to the divine Nous, the Separate Intelligence. By so describing perfect Intelligence, energeia (Plotinus agrees) must signify perfect life, for, as Aristotle argues in Book Lambda of the Metaphysics, to contemplate most fully is to live most fully.

Additionally, we find Aristotelian influence in the way Plotinus separates hē dynamis (active potency or power) from to dynamei on (passive potency). The former expression, as it applies to the order of beings, denotes perfection that is rooted in energeia. Active power follows from the presence of form (act). The latter expression, to dynamei on, applies only to that which from a certain point of view lacks form or determination

¹⁴But such a translation is accurate only with reference to praxis, not elsewhere as others (e.g., A. H. Armstrong and S. MacKenna) would have it.

(act). In the strictest sense passive potency characterizes prime matter, which is never form but the eternal capacity for form (act). This general analysis clearly harmonizes with Aristotle's conception of active and passive potency and witnesses to Plotinus' willingness to remain faithful to Aristotle's idea of dynamis as well as energeia. That he is faithful regarding the latter notion is particularly evident in his conception of hē energeia as form and to energeia on as a completely realized or informed being. This interpretation of these expressions accords perfectly with Aristotle's conception of them.

The influence of Aristotle is evident even when Plotinus takes up ostensibly Platonic tasks, such as his handling of the Sophist's megista genē. His task here is to justify the Platonic categories over the Aristotelian ones, and yet he does not hesitate to employ Aristotelian energeia to achieve this objective. He defines each of the megista genē as energeia. This definition follows from the fact that each megiston genos is only logically distinct from the second hypostasis which is pure act. Accordingly, each Form, logically or abstractly considered, is also act.

We may note a certain irony arising from this treatment of the Platonic genera. Because the megista genē, Plotinus concludes, are perfect energeiai, they are true objects of science; however, the Aristotelian categories are imperfect energeiai and not true objects of science. Hence, we find Plotinus employing Aristotle to condemn the latter's theory of science.

We should add that Plotinus is even indebted to Aristotle's potency/act distinction when Plotinus offers a dynamic account of the intelligible world. He draws on Aristotle because, unlike Plato, Plotinus

argues that the universe of Forms (while eternal) is dependent on the One and thus "emerges" into being. To explain this emergence of the second hypostasis, Plotinus employs act and potency in ways Aristotle himself could not have foreseen. Plotinus incorporates the act/potency principle by explaining that out of a prior potency, indeed, the ultimate potency (hē dynamis tōn pantōn) which is the infinite active power of the One, the order of posterior hypostases (acts) originates.

But it is here that we also note a divergence from Aristotle in two important respects: (1) for Plotinus this emergence from potency to act is a movement not into perfection but imperfection; (2) for Plotinus the absolute priority of the One, who is sheer dynamis, renders objectionable the Aristotelian principle that energeia is ultimately prior to dynamis in reality. These divergences prove that, no matter how indebted he may be to Aristotle in many respects, Plotinus often qualifies his acceptance of Aristotle's doctrines. He does not follow Aristotle as if he were a disciple, that is, as if he were himself an Aristotelian. This is demonstrated by his rejection of Aristotle's notion of entelecheia (which we discussed in Text A). Plotinus, of course, agrees that soul is act (energeia), for it is a logos of the hypostasis, Soul, but denies that it is merely the act (entelecheia) of the body. Soul is an act because it is a complete, independent ousia, not because it is incomplete and dependent.

Plotinus does not follow Aristotle uncritically, because he thinks of himself primarily as a Platonist. In fact, as Bréhier observes,¹⁵ he often perceives himself as an enemy of Aristotelianism. For this reason Plotinus' adaptation of energeia is largely governed by Platonic princi-

¹⁵Plotin, Vol. 6, Part 1, p.8

ples. This is evident, for example, in the way he appropriates energeia to his Platonic conception of that most fundamental megiston genos, kinēsis. He satisfies the demands of Aristotelian philosophy by characterizing the Separate Intelligence as pure act but also satisfies Platonic philosophy by describing the second hypostasis as motion. This synthesis would at first seem impossible since Aristotle infers that the Separate Intelligence as pure act must be akinētos. But Plotinus can achieve this synthesis because he makes Platonic kinēsis prior to Aristotelian energeia, in the sense that kinēsis is the eternal pre-condition for the actuation of the divine ousiai and eidē which constitute the second hypostasis. The Intelligence is at once kinēsis and energeia because the former condition is logically prior to the latter.

Plato's doctrine of participation, although reinterpreted somewhat by Plotinus, also governs the incorporation of energeia into Plotinus' philosophy. According to Plotinus every lower being is an act because it is a participant in a higher being or higher act. Because Plotinus' philosophy is a monism, he interprets participation in a far more literal sense than Plato. For Plotinus a lower existent participates in a higher because it really is that higher but only as manifested on a lower, more fragmented, more multiple, more unreal level of being. Thus Plotinus' conception of participation is expressed in his logos doctrine: a logos is a higher existent on a lower level of reality. Since every logos is an act, we can say that Plotinus adapts energeia to his interpretation of the Platonic doctrine of participation.

Of course, Plato's theory of Forms is a basic theme in Plotinus, as we have seen in our treatment of the megista genē. He does not hesitate to refashion energeia to suit the Platonic theory of Forms, at least as

he understands it. If, according to Aristotle, energeia belongs to Intelligence, then it should also, Plotinus infers, belong to the Platonic Forms, for they are the logically distinct but really identical constituents of Divine Mind, resulting from its act of epistrophē. Accordingly, Plotinus concludes that each Form is itself an intelligence and a separate life. Each Form is an act that contains all other lives and acts. This is so because in its intellection it comprehends the eternal reasons for all beings. Thus, the second hypostasis is, considered individually, pure act and is also, considered universally, the totality of acts.

Given the above observations, we may conclude that isolating the Platonic and Aristotelian influence on Plotinus' doctrine of energeia is a chief contribution of this study.

Let us append a fourth and fifth conclusion. Fourthly, we observe that energeia is at the heart of Plotinus' negative theology, according to which the philosopher can never adequately express what the One is, only what it is not. Plotinus often implies that the One is unknowable and ineffable on grounds that it is not energeia.¹⁶ This, of course, becomes quite clear given what we now know about energeia. If energeia signifies the universe of ousia and eidē, the divine noēta, and the objects and conditions of all knowledge, then it cannot signify the One. Ousia is one-in-many, not purely one. Another way of saying this is that, since the One is not energeia or form, it is unknowable and beyond predication. Thus, our reflections on energeia deepen our appreciation for the paradox of Plotinian mysticism: the One must be "known" through

¹⁶See especially III, 9 (13), 9, 8-12; V, 6 (24), 6, 3; III, 8 (30), 10, 3; VI, 7 (39), 17, 9-11; V, 3 (49), 15, 32-34; I, 8 (51), 2, 1-9; I, 7 (54), 19-20.

not-knowing.¹⁷

Lastly, energeia does not appear to fundamentally change or develop throughout the Enneads. The issues in which energeia emerges often vary from treatise to treatise, but the basic notion itself perdures from the early to the late treatises. The stability of energeia is further indicated by the fact that the distinctions between nominative and dative uses of energeia and dynamis (which are emphasized in Text C) occur in the very earliest treatises (see especially IV, 7 [2] and V, 9 [5]) and persist throughout the Enneads.

Despite the fact that the meaning of energeia remains stable throughout the Enneads and despite the fact that Plotinus inherited the word and, to some extent, the doctrine from Aristotle, still its meaning was considerably altered when Plotinus inserted it into his own metaphysics. This metaphysics is an henology and not an ontology and, thus, he transposes energeia into a different and higher key.

With these words we complete our investigation. We have now discovered what energeia is for Plotinus and how it is operative in his philosophy. But this achievement brings us to new questions. How influential is Plotinus' theory of energeia? How does energeia appear in the writings of his immediate successors: e.g., Porphyry, Proclus, Iamblichus, Damascius, Pseudo-Dionysius? Can one discern the influence of Plotinus' handling of energeia in the writings of the Church Fathers? Is such influence as evident in the Latin Fathers (who translate energeia as "actus" and "actualitas") as it is in the Greeks? Indeed, if it were not for Plotinus, would the doctrine of energeia have been generally lost

¹⁷See VI, 9 (9), 7-10.

to medieval philosophers until the recovery of Aristotle in the thirteenth-century? Furthermore, altogether apart from the question of Plotinus' influence, it would be of intrinsic interest to ask about the theories of act that appear in medieval, modern and contemporary thinkers generally. Also there would be no small value in inquiring into one's own personal position regarding energeia. These are all questions that we might, and perhaps should, address at a later time.

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In this catalogue of literature on Plotinus I have adopted the following abbreviations:

ACI: Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul Tema: Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente. Rome: Accad. Noz. dei Lincei, 1974.

CF: Cuadernos de Filosofia.

CQ: Classical Quarterly.

Gr: Gregorianum.

LN: Le néo-platonisme. Actes du Colloque de Royaumont 9-13 Juin, 1969. Paris: Ed. du CNRS, 1971.

LSP: Les sources de Plotin. Vandoeuvres-Geneve: Fondation Hardt, 1960.

Mn: Mnemosyne.

NECT: Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought. Essays in Honour of A. H. Armstrong. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus, eds. London: Variorum Publications, 1981.

Ph: Phronesis.

PR: Philosophical Review.

RIP: Revue internationale de Philosophie.

RMM: Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale.

RP: Revue Philosophique.

RPL: Revue Philosophique de Louvain.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy.

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