


12-1989

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Steven K. Strange  
*University of Pittsburgh*

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## Recommended Citation

Strange, Steven K., "Plotinus on the Articulation of Being" (1989). *The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter*. 155.  
<https://orb.binghamton.edu/sagp/155>

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## PLOTINUS ON THE ARTICULATION OF BEING

Steven K. Strange

## §1 Introduction

*Ennead* vi.2, the second book of the treatise *On the Genera of Being* (vi.1-3 [42-44]) presents itself as Plotinus' official account of the structure of the second Hypostasis, i.e. Intellect (*νοῦς*) or Being, what corresponds in his metaphysical universe to Plato's realm of Ideas or Forms.<sup>1</sup> For in vi.1, the first book of the treatise, Plotinus criticizes and rejects all competing conceptions of the nature of being, as answers to what he takes to be the central question of ontology, i.e. Plato's question at *Sophist* 242c, 'what are the number and kinds of beings?'.<sup>2</sup> He devotes detailed criticisms to the Peripatetic view (i.e. the ten categories of Aristotle) and that of the Stoics (the so-called Stoic 'categories'), because they are the only theories of the nature of Being besides Plato's that see it as consisting in a number of genera or kinds, which he argues is the only coherent way to conceive of Being (vi.1.1,1-14).<sup>3</sup> Having refuted the Peripatetic and Stoic theories in vi.1, he turns in the opening lines of vi.2 to developing his own view of Being, which he intends to be in agreement with Plato's (vi.2.1.1-5; cf. vi.3.1,1-2 where he claims to have successfully completed this task). Indeed, the account of the 'genera of Being' that he gives in vi.2 is closely modelled on Plato's discussion of the so-called 'greatest kinds' or *megista genē* in the *Sophist* (248e-259b).

Now Plotinus considers the correct ontological position to be not only that there are a number of different *genera* of Being, but that these are at the same time *principles* (*ἀρχαί*) of Being.<sup>4</sup> This is a clear reference to one of the horns of the sixth *aporia* of *Metaphysics* B (995b27-29, 998a20-b14): are the elements and principles of Being to be taken to be genera or to be primary (material) constituents? Plotinus' favored alternative, that they are genera, corresponds to the position attributed by Aristotle to the Platonists (cf. e.g. *Metaphysics* Δ3 *ad fin.*), and this helps explain Plotinus' emphasis on its agreement with Plato. (These connections provide a good example of the meaning of Porphyry's remark that the

<sup>1</sup>Vi.1-3 is the Plotinian treatise known to Longinus (*apud* Porphyry, *Vita* 19.26) as *On Being* (*Περὶ τοῦ ὄντος*): cf. P. Henry, *Les états du texte de Plotin* (Paris, 1938), pp.24-25 and O. Hoppe, *Die Gene in Plotins Enn. VI.2* (Diss. Göttingen, 1965), pp.79-80. Plotinus did not give titles to his works (*Vita* 4.16-19), but Longinus' title, presumably due to Amelius, from whom he got his copy (*Vita* 19.22-23, 20.5-9), is precise.

<sup>2</sup>1.3.4.2-6 treats this as the fundamental question of dialectic, but Plotinus like Plato sees dialectic as the science that is concerned with Being. Cf. also *Philebus* 17b and, for Aristotle, *Physics* A2 184b15-25 and *Metaphysics* A7 988b16-17 for the question of the number and kind of the principles (*ἀρχαί*), and *Metaphysics* Z1, 1028b2-7 for the number and kind of beings. Plotinus is alluding to the *Meta. Z* passage at vi.1.1,3-4.

<sup>3</sup>For refutation of other views of the nature of Being, he refers to the works of the 'ancients' (this is what is meant by *οἱ μὲρ' αὐτοί*, sc. *οἱ πάνυ παλαιοί*, at vi.1.1,4-5) i.e. to the *Sophist* itself and to the *Metaphysics* and the first book of the *Physics* (see the previous note). I have discussed the passage in detail in the first chapter of my dissertation, *Plotinus' Treatise On the Genera of Being* (The University of Texas at Austin, 1981); cf. also pp.964-965 of my "Plotinus, Porphyry, and the Neoplatonic Interpretation of the *Categories*", in H. Temporini and W. Haase, eds., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Teil II.36.1 (1987).

<sup>4</sup>This is argued in vi.2.2,1-20, to be discussed in §3 below. Note the formal division of various possible alternative views of the genera-principles relation at vi.2.1,5-16 (cf. Hoppe, p.43). For the connection with the sixth *aporia* of *Metaphysics* B, cf. my dissertation, pp.9-20, and Klaus Wurm, *Substanz und Qualität: Ein Beitrag zur Interpretation der plotinischen Traktate VI.1.2 und 3* (Berlin, 1973), p.225-227. Plotinus uses the term *ἀρχαί* where Aristotle speaks of *στοιχεῖα καὶ ἀρχαί* (*Meta.* 998b22-24). I have further argued in ch.1 of my dissertation that Plotinus takes the two positions distinguished at vi.1.1,13-14 to represent the horns of the seventh *aporia* of B (995b29-31, 998b14-999a23), i.e. whether, given that genera have precedence over constituents, it is the highest genera or the lowest species that should be taken as prior. The latter alternative (here referred to by the phrase *αὐτὰ τὰ ὄντα τῷ γένει τσαῦτα*, "that beings themselves are [merely] so many in genus") will then represent the Aristotelian alternative, refuted in vi.1.1-24. Cf. also my "Plotinus, Porphyry, and the Neoplatonic Interpretation of the *Categories*" (see preceding note), p.958.

whole of the *Metaphysics* is condensed into the *Enneads, Vita* 14.5-7) But Plotinus' argument for this claim, and his attempt in the later chapters of vi.2 to explain its meaning in terms of Plato's *megista genê*, is very difficult to follow. Gerhard Nebel,<sup>5</sup> writing in 1929, did not hesitate to declare it wholly incoherent. Despite his many useful insights on points of detail, Otfried Hoppe in his Göttingen dissertation of 1965<sup>6</sup> also found himself unable to comprehend the structure of Plotinus' argument. Klaus Wurm, in a critical yet sympathetic study of the treatise published in 1973,<sup>7</sup> was able to avoid a conclusion similar to Nebel's only by interpreting Plotinus' claim that the genera of Being are simultaneously principles of Being as a conscious paradox, ultimately inaccessible to discursive understanding.

Similar views can be found in commentators writing in English. A.C. Lloyd, who has done more than any other scholar to further the understanding of this fundamental treatise of Plotinus, argued in a seminal 1956 article that the conception of the structure of Being which emerges from the key argument of vi.2.19-20 is, in the last analysis, an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile Aristotelian logic with a Platonic metaphysics which can only rest on a mystical basis.<sup>8</sup> More recently, in an exchange with Richard Sorabji, Lloyd has reiterated the position that Plotinus' conception of νοήσις or non-discursive thought is that of the apprehension of a simple nature that transcends rationality and therefore philosophical formulation.<sup>9</sup> A similar view has been suggested by Andrew Smith, in a brief but important discussion.<sup>10</sup> Smith argues that Plotinus' use of the concept of potency (δύναμις, τὸ δυνάμει) to explain the interrelation of the Ideas in νοῦς in the argument of vi.2.20 can at best be analogical, given that Plotinus has explicitly banned potency from the intelligible realm (ii.5.3,4-19; v.9.10,14), and that this is symptomatic of his inability to give a literal description of intelligible reality.<sup>11</sup> Most recently, Gary

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<sup>5</sup>Plotinus *Kategorien der intelligiblen Welt* (Tübingen, 1929), cf. also his "Terminologisches Untersuchungen zu οὐσία und ὄν bei Plotin", *Hermes* 65 (1930), pp.422-455. Nebel's work is still quite useful despite its lack of charity in interpreting Plotinus' arguments.

<sup>6</sup>Above, n.1. Cf. p.81: "Es ist also deutlich, daß die Lösung des Problems [of vi.2.19,1-18] nicht auf der Begriffsebene erfolgen kann, auf der das Problem gestellt wird..."; p.83: "Die eigentliche Lösung verzichtet nun [in vi.2.21] vollends auf rational nachvollziehbare Argumente". Hoppe's introduction (pp.1-5) provides a devastating critique of earlier German commentary on vi.2.

<sup>7</sup>Above, n.4. See the incisive review of Wurm by T.A. Szlezák, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* 227 (1975), pp.216-225, esp. p.223.

<sup>8</sup>"Neoplatonic Logic and Aristotelian Logic I-II" *Phronesis* 1 (1956-57), pp.58-72 and 146-160, at pp.147-150. Cf. esp. his conclusion (p.150): "Plotinus tries to go down both paths at once [that of Aristotelian logic and that of Platonic metaphysics], not unconsciously but *because in the last resort he could accept antinomies of the understanding*, for they would be eclipsed by another kind of insight." (My emphasis.)

<sup>9</sup>"Non-Propositional Thought in Plotinus", *Phronesis* 31 (1986), pp.258-265: cf. esp. p.263: "...it [i.e. the experience of awareness of νοῦς] must be indescribable". Lloyd is responding in this article to Sorabji's "Myths about Non-Propositional Thought" (ch.10 of his *Time, Creation and the Continuum* [London, 1983]; an earlier version appeared in M. Schofield and M.C. Nussbaum, eds., *Language and Logos: Studies Presented to G.E.L. Owen* [Cambridge, 1982]). Sorabji, who holds that Plotinus thinks of non-discursive thought as propositional in nature, criticizes Lloyd's earlier essay "Non-Discursive Thought: An Enigma of Greek Philosophy", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* n.s. 70 (1969-70), pp.261-274. I argued for a view similar to Sorabji's in chapter 5 of my dissertation, on the basis of Plotinus' use of the notion of the κοινωμία τῶν γένων or συμπλοκή εἰδῶν of the *Sophist* (251de, 259e) to explicate the structure of the intelligible world in vi.2. In light of the arguments in Lloyd's 1986 article, however, the issue clearly requires further examination: cf. §2 and §4 *fin.* below.

<sup>10</sup>"Potentiality and the Problem of Plurality in the Intelligible World", in H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus, eds., *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honour of A.H. Armstrong* (London, 1981), pp.99-105. The difficulty with which Smith is concerned was first raised by Armstrong in his "Eternity, Life and Movement in Plotinus' Accounts of Νοῦς", in *Le néoplatonisme* (Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Royaumont, 9-13 juin 1969).

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Smith, p.102: "In a sense all talk of the intelligible is by analogy"; p.104: "...it is clear from the end of the chapter [i.e. iv.9.5, on the connection of which with vi.2.20, see below §4] that the idea of plurality in unity *remains inaccessible to normal reasoning*" (my emphasis). I have myself expressed a

Gurtler has attempted to defend Plotinus' position in vi.2, arguing that Lloyd and others have misunderstood the argument of vi.2.20 at crucial points, especially in its use of the concept of potency.<sup>12</sup>

I do not think, however, that Gurtler has properly understood the argument in question either. Nor has he or any other commentator succeeded in making clear how this argument fits into its context, i.e. as explaining how the *megista genê* are supposed to be at once genera and principles of Being in the way that Plotinus wants to claim they are (cf. vi.2.19,12-17, to which §2.19-27 looks forward), and how this relates to the general problem of the complexity of intelligible reality in Plotinus and the relationship of the Ideas to one another. If the argument is properly seen in its context, however, I think that some of its obscurities can be mitigated.

## §2 The Complexity of Being and Thought

First, however, it will be necessary to confront directly Lloyd's thesis about the nature of non-discursive thought in Plotinus. For if Lloyd is correct in claiming that Plotinus thinks of non-discursive thought as necessarily directed upon pure simples as its objects, and in particular upon Being as an undifferentiated *totum simul*,<sup>13</sup> then this will preclude any possibility of taking the argument of vi.2.19-20 and, more generally, Plotinus' account of the structure of the intelligible as serious ontology. For in that case he can at best be describing how we must think of Being, and not attempting to give an account of how Being in itself is. Lloyd's challenge is a powerful one, for there are certainly texts in vi.2 itself that seem to say that this is the way things are.<sup>14</sup> There is, however, another and better way of reading these texts that sees them as making a different and deeper point, and one that unlike Lloyd's is consistent with Plotinus' overall project in vi.2. My argument for this interpretation must be postponed to the end of the paper. For now, I shall restrict myself to independent reasons for thinking that Lloyd's thesis does not fit Plotinus' view of the nature of νοήσις or non-discursive thought.

For Plotinus, as for the Plato of the *Republic*, νοήσις is the sort of thought that is directed upon Being, the nature of reality as it is in itself, and νοῦς is the name of the associated cognitive faculty.<sup>15</sup> Plato thought of the content or objects of this sort of thought as a multiplicity of Ideas or Forms. He obviously faced difficulties in explaining how the Ideas were related to one another. This is not surprising, given that the Theory of Ideas clearly is a development of Parmenides' views about Being,<sup>16</sup> and

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view similar to the first of these statements in my *Aufstieg und Niedergang* article (above, n.3), pp.972-974. Indeed, it is obvious that talk about the intelligible, like any sort of technical language, must essentially involve metaphor or analogy, since its terms must be adapted by extension from ordinary speech, which is intended for use only about sensible reality and everyday experience. Plotinus, however, is committed to something much stronger than this, since he holds that the sensible world is itself somehow metaphysically an image or reflection (the term is precise: cf. vi.2.22,33 ff.) of the 'higher' intelligible world. But I do not think this needs to be interpreted in such a way as to preclude from the outset that Plotinus could ever in any way adequately describe what he is talking about.

<sup>12</sup>"The Origin of Genera: *Ennead* VI.2 [43] 20", *Dionysius* 12 (1988), pp.3-15. Gurtler unfortunately does not refer to Smith's article.

<sup>13</sup>Lloyd's 1969 essay argues only for the former, weaker claim, his 1986 article for the stronger one.

<sup>14</sup>The strongest support for Lloyd's thesis is provided by vi.2.3,21-32 (Lloyd 1986, p.265), which has a very close parallel v.9.8,19-9,2 (note the emphasis in both passages on the fact that it is *our* intellectual activity that is responsible for dividing up νοῦς). He can also cite from vi.2: 6.18-20 (soul's self-contemplation is the cause of its appearing many—supposed to be analogous to the case with νοῦς), 7.7-23 (it is the *observer* who finds νοῦς not one) and 8.1 (assuming that both the latter passages refer, like vi.2.3,21-32 and v.9.8,19-9,2 to the activity of our intellect). Cf. also iii.7 [45] 3,7 ff., the next treatise chronologically after vi.1-3, and also concerned with the *megista genê*.

<sup>15</sup>Νοῦς is therefore stronger than merely "thought", and νοήσις than merely "thinking" (*pace* Lloyd 1986, pp.262-263). It is not the name for thought in general, either, since not every case of thinking involves νοήσις. (This point is unaffected by Plotinus' thesis concerning the 'undescended intellect', that our soul is always in contact with the higher νοῦς, since he nevertheless does not think that we are always using it.) Νοῦς rather stands for necessarily true thought that is insight into the nature of things. But I will follow Lloyd's practice of speaking of 'thought' and 'thinking' for νοῦς and νοήσις.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. for example the Parmenidean language at *Rep.* v, 477a.

Parmenides had disallowed any sort of multiplicity within Being. The *Phaedo* (especially the Affinity Argument), which treats the Ideas as metaphysical simples, appears to leave no room for relations among Ideas, and Plato's remarks in *Republic* vi about the relation of the Idea of the Good to other Ideas are obscure. Plato's official attempt to resolve the difficulty in the *Sophist* (forecast in the *Parmenides*) by allowing internal relations among Ideas involves an explicit rejection of an important part of Parmenides' argument concerning the nature of Being.<sup>17</sup> Hence the multiplicity of the Ideas, as the fundamentally real natures, seems essential to Plato's version of Platonism; and moreover Plotinus is aware of this. It is then a point on which he would wish to be in harmony with his philosophical hero. V.1.4,39 in fact asserts without any sort of qualification that the objects of thought must differ among themselves, though no direct argument is offered for this there.

But there is another and perhaps related reason why a Platonist would want to find essential multiplicity in the intelligible realm, namely that knowledge of an Idea or Form involves knowing its definition, which states its essence or what it is. There is no reason to think that Plato ever abandoned this Socratic view, and Plotinus explicitly endorses it in his treatise on dialectic (i.3.4,3-6). But a definition is a complex statement and hence presumably so too is what it defines, i.e. the Idea. In any case Plotinus would certainly think so, since he adopts Aristotle's view of definition through genus and differentia.<sup>18</sup> And there are numerous texts which show that he does think so. Thus at vi.6 [34] 16,21-22, interpreting the Aristotelian evidence that Plato held the Ideas to be numbers, he considers the hypothesis that Man Itself is a dyad, viz. Rational + Animal. At vi.7 [38] 5,1, in the most important discussion of the origin of the Ideas, the Idea of Man is again said to be a λόγος, and at vi.8 [39] 17,15 and v.3 [49] 10,29, all Ideas are λόγοι. In vi.7.8 (17 ff.) and 10 (11 ff.), the eternal generation of the Ideas within νοῦς is described as the generation of the Idea-Numbers, i.e. as a series of increasingly internally complex objects: 10.11-12 says explicitly that it is the internal definitional complexity of ideas that is meant—the Idea is constituted by its differentiae. There is similar evidence in vi.1-3. Vi.3.15,24 ff. speaks of three levels of λόγοι: the sensible λόγος of Socrates, i.e. his immanent form, the spermatic logos which produces this and of which it is an image, and the λόγος of which this is an image, clearly the Idea of Man. At vi.2.10,3, each Form (εἶδος) as a part of Being (conceived as the One Being of *Parmenides* hypothesis II) is said to be a multiplicity: this must refer to its multiplicity as a λόγος. Vi.2.21,47 says that each εἶδος is both one and many.

The passages from vi.7 just cited indicate that in thinking of the Platonic Ideas as a structured hierarchy of internally complex definitional entities, Plotinus is thinking of the Animal Itself of the *Timaeus* (30cd, 39e). At *Timaeus* 39e, νοῦς is said to 'see' the Ideas in this animal. This shows that Plato thinks of the Animal Itself, which is of course the generic Idea of Animal, as internally complex.<sup>19</sup> Hence Plotinus is not wrong to take Plato's view to be that νοῦς has internally complex objects. But Lloyd rejects this on the grounds that Plotinus elsewhere rules out that in thinking the Ideas νοῦς thinks propositions.<sup>20</sup> The reference is to the first chapter of v.5 [32], where in the course of an argument for the thesis that 'the Ideas are not outside intellect', Plotinus refutes various alternative views of the relation between νοῦς and the νοητά. One of these views is that the νοητά should be taken to stand to νοῦς as the propositions of

<sup>17</sup>Plotinus is quite aware of this point: cf. v.1.8,14-26. At v.9.6,3 (cf. Smith p.99) he endorses Anaxagoras' modification (B1) of Parmenides B8.5 (Being is ὁμοῦ πάν): πάντα δὲ ὁμοῦ ἐκεῖ (in νοῦς) καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον διακεκριμένα (cf. lines 8-9: ὁ νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ αὐτὸ οὐχ ὁμοῦ, and vi.4.14,4-5). That is, he sees the importance of Anaxagoras' innovation as lying in his emphasis on the fact that νοῦς is plural just as much as it is one. It should be noted that v.9 is important as Plotinus' earliest discussion of the nature of Being (assuming what is usually assumed, but the text does not in fact say, that the list of the first twenty-one treatises Porphyry gives at *Vita* 4.22-65 is in chronological order). V.9 concentrates in large part on traditional problems concerning the Theory of Ideas.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Lloyd 1956-57 (n.9 above). I.3.4,2-6 includes giving genus-differentiae definitions in the task of dialectic.

<sup>19</sup>Vi.7.39, 9 ff. similarly argues, from considerations of perfection, that νοῦς must be able to think all Ideas simultaneously.

<sup>20</sup>Lloyd 1986, pp.261-262. This is directed against Sorabji, who argues that for Plotinus the objects of νοῦς are propositions.

Peripatetic or Stoic semantic theory do to the mind that knows them.<sup>21</sup> He rejects this view on the grounds that propositions are entities that are distinct from what they are about, so in this case at best could be *about* Ideas, and thus not be Ideas themselves. Plotinus' argument here is in no way inconsistent, however, with the view that Ideas, as the objects of thought of νοῦς, are themselves definitionally complex entities. He is only saying that νοῦς does not think propositions *about* these entities: rather it thinks the Ideas themselves, they just *are* its thoughts.<sup>22</sup>

I think that what has been said so far is sufficient to undermine the plausibility of Lloyd's thesis, but it also should be remarked that some of the passages he cites in support of his thesis do not in fact seem to be consistent with it. He refers a number of times, for instance, to v.8 [31] 4-6, a remarkable passage about the nature of intelligible world where Plotinus begins with one of his favorite Platonic texts, the description of the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος of *Phaedrus* 247ce, and ends with a famous remark about Egyptian hieroglyphics. But v.8.4 concerns not what our intellects but what gods, i.e. divine intellects, 'see' in the intelligible, and it appears definitely to attribute internal complexity to the objects of their knowledge. For the gods are said to see all Ideas manifest in every Idea (lines 6-8, cf. 11: ἐξέχει δ' εἰς ἕκαστω ἄλλο, ἐμφαίνει δὲ καὶ πάντα, and the reference to Lynceus at lines 25-27). Chapters 5 and 6, which discuss the knowledge of νοῦς (here called σοφ(α or 'wisdom'), i.e. divine knowledge and the paradigm of knowledge,<sup>23</sup> indeed deny that this knowledge is propositional (5.20;<sup>24</sup> cf. Lloyd p.260), and our problem in understanding the nature of this wisdom (4.48 ff.) is said to be that we think of knowledge as a collection of theorems, i.e. propositions, but as we have seen this cuts no ice for Lloyd: indeed we shall see that Plotinus thinks that the notion of a science as a system of propositions is a helpful and illuminating analogy for understanding the structure of intellect. The point of the reference to hieroglyphics at 6.11, which has not usually been properly understood, is to suggest the possibility of a knowledge which does not consist in making inferences. Inferences will not be necessary in direct knowledge of Ideas precisely because knowing one Idea essentially *involves* knowing its relations to other Ideas—as we shall see this notion plays a key role in the argument of vi.2.20. The same conception is at work in vi.7.2: knowledge of things in the sensible world involves knowing their causes or explanations, as Aristotle had said (*An. Post.* B2), but this is knowledge of an entity distinct from the explanandum: knowledge of the contents of intellect is not like this, because each of them contains its cause within itself. This is not to say that each Idea is its own complete cause: Plotinus is willing to assert self-causation only of the transcendent One, and then only in the context of responding to the objection that otherwise the One will be by chance (cf. vi.8.7 ff.). Rather it means that Ideas are (as in the *Sophist*) *internally* related to one another. We will return to this claim in §4 below, when we discuss vi.2.20.

### §3 The Genera as the Principles of Being

It is well-known that in vi.2 Plotinus identifies the genera of the intelligible world as the five 'kinds' discussed by Plato in the *Sophist*, i.e. Being, Motion, Rest, Same and Different.<sup>25</sup> For this he was strongly criticized by F.M. Cornford,<sup>26</sup> who thought that Plotinus had been misled by the mention of Being, Motion, and Rest at *Timaeus* 35a and 37a<sup>27</sup> into misunderstanding the meaning of Plato's text at *Sophist* 254d4-5, and taking it to say that the five items in question, instead of merely being very

<sup>21</sup>Lines 33-34: προτάσεις or ἀξιώματα (which are a kind of λεκτά, according to the Stoics). Plotinus has in mind, perhaps among others, Longinus' interpretation of the *Timaeus* (cf. Syrianus *In Meta.* 105.29-30).

<sup>22</sup>Hence Lloyd is right against Sorabji that the thought of νοῦς is non-propositional, but not that it is non-complex. Presumably Plotinus accepts that *discursive* thought is propositional in nature.

<sup>23</sup>Plotinus is thinking of the 'true knowledge' of *Phaedrus* 247e2.

<sup>24</sup>The reference here is again to Longinus' view.

<sup>25</sup>vi.2.7-8, which argue that these are five distinct highest genera of intelligibles, are closely modelled on *Sophist* 254-256 (but cf. nn.38-39 below). In §§9-18, he argues at length that anything else that might have been taken to be a genus of Being, including the principal Aristotelian categories, are either not genera or at least not highest genera.

<sup>26</sup>Plato's *Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and Sophist of Plato* (London, 1934), pp.273-278.

<sup>27</sup>It would have been more to the point for Cornford to have referred to *Parmenides* 145-146. Plotinus considers the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* to be about the world of Ideas.

important Ideas, are the 'categories' of intelligibles, i.e. the *summa genera* of Ideas. There are a number of things that can be said against Cornford in defense of Plotinus. First, it is not at all clear that Cornford's translation of Plato's sentence is to be preferred to Plotinus' interpretation,<sup>28</sup> which in any case is certainly not impossible. Plotinus' interpretation has the advantage of giving the Eleatic Stranger an answer to the question that he asks of all earlier philosophers, viz. how many and what entities there are<sup>29</sup>—clearly this is the principal motive lying behind Plotinus' reading. Further, it is not at all clear that Plotinus wants to make the claim that Cornford sees him as making (and that he has usually been seen to be making) that Being, Motion, Rest, Same and Different are the *summa genera* of Ideas, in the sense of a categorial classification of Ideas, an exhaustive list of widest genera, under some one of which any Idea whatever is to be found. But understanding what else might be meant by Plotinus' claim that Being, Motion, Rest, Same and Different are 'the genera of Being' will involve interpreting his claim in vi.2.2 that they are not only the genera but also the principles of Being, i.e. how he attempts to defend what he sees as the Platonist response to the *aporiai* of *Metaphysics* B.

Plotinus begins his discussion of the genera of Being in vi.2.1 by reiterating two points that he had established in vi.1, namely that (1) there must be a multiplicity of (kinds of) beings, not just one, and (2) when we say this, we are following Plato (*Timaeus* 27d-28a) in talking about the real world of intelligible Being, not the seeming being of the sensible world, which is really Becoming (his theory of the categories of which he will present in vi.3). He gives no argument for (1), only refers to arguments given by Plato and others (1.13-14). This of course is an allusion to Plato's and Aristotle's refutations of Parmenides' thesis that there is only one thing.<sup>30</sup> (2) is in effect a rejection of the search for a system of 'categories', in the sense of a complete classification of everything 'that there is'. Plotinus is concerned only with the highest degree of being.<sup>31</sup>

Vi.2.2 begins with the question: *how* is it that Being is not one? Plotinus' reply is that it is both one and many (again, he is thinking of the One Being of *Parmenides* hypothesis II, which is said to be a whole of parts). This claim is unargued here, but if pressed he would presumably defend it by appeal to his view that a higher degree of being goes along with a higher degree of unity (cf. e.g. vi.2.5,3-5), so that the highest degree of being must have the highest degree of unity compatible with its being Being. Parmenides' thesis having already been refuted, this cannot be pure unity, but must be the unity of a single thing that contains an internal multiplicity (cf. 2.3 here:  $\tau\iota\ \pi\omicron\upsilon\kappa\iota\lambda\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\nu\ \tau\alpha\ \pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\nu\ \epsilon\chi\omicron\nu$ ). His next question (2.3 ff.) is: given that this is so, and that there must be *genera* of being (established in vi.1.1, presupposed at vi.2.1,5 ff.), what must the situation then be? His answer has two parts: (1) there are a number of distinct highest genera, i.e. there cannot be a single genus under which they all fall; (2) *therefore* these genera must combine or 'mix' to constitute the whole of Being (i.e. intelligible reality).<sup>32</sup> (1) does not receive an argument until lines 32 ff.: namely that for X to be a genus there must be something else apart from X, for being a genus means having species, which must involve *differentiae*

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<sup>28</sup>Word order would seem to favor Campbell's rendering, "The most important kinds are those which we have just been considering...", which yields Plotinus' interpretation. The presence of the article with  $\delta\nu$  and its absence with  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\iota\sigma\tau\alpha$  is not decisive concerning which is subject and which predicate. "Αττα at 254c4 might be a case of deliberate understatement.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. above, p.1 with n.2.

<sup>30</sup>Henry and Schwyzer's reference in their apparatus here to *Sophist* 244-245 is correct, but the *Parmenides* reference should be to 142c ff. (the One Being a whole of parts) instead of 141e. *Physics* A3 should also be cited (see below). On the same point, cf. vi.1.1,4-8: the ancients had rejected the view that there was only one being  $\delta\tau\iota\ \pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \nu\omicron\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\omega\rho\omega\nu$ , because they saw that there must be multiplicity even in the case of intelligible being. Again it is quite clear that Plotinus cannot accept that the realm of  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  is in any sense a pure unity.

<sup>31</sup>Porphyry's rehabilitation of the Aristotelian categories as the genera of Being is probably to be taken as a contribution to the former enterprise, and hence need not be seen as *directly* competing with Plotinus' argument in vi.2.

<sup>32</sup>Hence we have to distinguish (though Plotinus does not always do so) between Being as one among the five genera of Being and the Being which is constituted by these genera, i.e. the realm of  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  or Ideas as a whole. Officially, the name for the latter is  $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$  (the view of ii.6.1, *init.*): I shall call it 'intelligible reality'. (Hoppe p.30 is wrong to deny that the view discussed at ii.6.1, *init.* is Plotinus')

that do not themselves fall under X. The differentiae must come from outside the genus (cf. vi.2.19,2-4, where the point is made explicitly).<sup>33</sup> The reason for the “therefore” in (2) is apparently that this is the only way to save the requirement that intelligible reality be a *single* thing that is also many. To say that the genera of Being are also principles of Being thus means that they are simultaneously genera and constituents of Being.<sup>34</sup> Plotinus is aware that this sounds extremely odd, not to say incomprehensible. Before we examine this issue, however, further comment on (1) is called for.

Lines 2.43-46 add a further argument for (1), the claim that there cannot be merely a single genus of Being, which is unfortunately quite obscure. It runs as follows:<sup>35</sup>

Also, because it is not possible to say that just any one of them [the genera] whatever taken by itself is either a being or a substance. If someone says it is a being, he will be saying this in virtue of the fact that being is accidental to it, as if he were to say that substance is white, for he would not be saying that it is precisely (ὅπερ) what white is.

The same point is made at 8.43-49:

These [Motion, Rest, Same and Different] are primary genera, since you do not predicate anything in the essence of them. For you will predicate Being of them, for they are beings, but not as their genus, for they are not precisely what a being is (ὅπερ ὄν τι). Nor is Being predicated essentially of Motion or Rest, for they are not species of Being. Some beings are species of Being, others participate in Being. Nor does Being participate in these things as its genera, for they do not lie above it, nor are they prior to Being.

That is, the other four genera are beings, but not species or instances of Being: it is not predicated in the essence of them. (This is all that is meant by saying that being is ‘accidental’ to them (2.44), not that they are contingently beings.) But what non-question-begging ground can Plotinus have for claiming this? The use of ‘white’ in the first passage and ὅπερ ὄν τι, “precisely what a being is”, in the second suggests that Plotinus has in mind Aristotle’s argument against Parmenides at *Physics* A3, 186a25-b14. This is perhaps not much help, given the difficulty and obscurity of the Aristotle passage, but the point there seems to be at least that Parmenides is unable to maintain the reality of true predication (Aristotle’s example is “This is white”). Now Plotinus clearly wants to insist that there are true predications in the case of intelligible reality: for instance that νοῦς and intelligible οὐσία are active and alive (i.e. predication of Motion of Being: 13.3-4, 15.4-10; cf. *Sophist* 248e-249a). But then Motion, as the activity and life of Being, cannot either be a species or a genus of it.

To return to the claim that the genera are also the constituents of Being: Plotinus clearly has in mind a reading of the *Sophist* according to which not only discourse but also intelligible reality is constituted by the κοινωνία of the Greatest Kinds.<sup>36</sup> Such a reading is not implausible if Plato is taken to claim that the *megista genê* are indeed the highest of the ideas, i.e. as ontologically primary among Ideas. Other ideas would be thought of as the results of the blending of the Kinds (hence Plotinus’ talk of ‘mixture’ in

<sup>33</sup>This is Aristotle’s view (*Topics* 144a36-b3). In the face of criticism by C. Rutten (“Le genre et la différence selon Plotin”, in *En hommage à Léon Graulich* [Liège, 1957], pp.639-648), Lloyd abandoned the claim of his 1956-57 paper (pp.68-69; based on a failure to distinguish οὐσία from ὄν at vi.2.5, *fn.*; cf. previous note) that Plotinus rejected this principle (cf. “Genus, Species and Ordered Series in Aristotle”, *Phronesis* 7 (1962), at pp.84-85).

<sup>34</sup>Cf. 2.9-10: “...all of them must together constitute a single nature, and the intelligible cosmos, which we call Being, must be a composite of all of them”; 13-17: “They will be principles, if Being is composed in this way out of many things and the whole of Being is constituted by them. If instead there were a number of things of which Being was composed, and all of them together combined to produce the whole of Being, but they did not have other things [reading ἄλλ’ (Creuzer) or ἄλλα at 15: *alia*, Ficino] falling under them, they would then have been principles of Being, but not genera of Being—as, for example, if one were to make the sensible object be composed of the four elements, fire and so on”.

<sup>35</sup>All translations from vi.2 are my own.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. vi.2.21,55: ἡ πάντων ἐν ἐνὶ ὄντων ὄλον συμπλοκή καὶ σύνθεσις νοῦς ἐστι.



2.19-26, cf. below, §4 *init.*). The difficulties with this reading and with what Plotinus says about it are far too complex to discuss fully here. The following two problems however may be briefly noted:<sup>37</sup>

(i) Not only intelligible reality as a whole but also each Idea will according to Plotinus be an active, stable nature that is the same as yet different from<sup>38</sup> every other Idea. Hence each Idea will contain 'portions' of all five Genera. This apparently precludes any Idea falling under any one Genus. Indeed, 8.26 with 41 actually asserts that every derivative Idea is an instance of all five. But Plotinus insists that the *megista genê* are true genera, and so must have their own species (and individuals!) falling under them (e.g. 2.6-8).

(ii) If the Genera are themselves Ideas, as it seems that they should be, they will necessarily each participate in every other.<sup>39</sup> But clearly none of them can fall under any other (2.6: μηδέν δὲ ἄλλο ὑπ' ἄλλο).

All that (ii) actually shows is that participating in an idea does not amount to falling under it: but this is clear independently from 8.46-47 (translated above). Now 10.22-27 asserts that Being (i.e. the Genus) is not the genus of every Form but only of "the 'being' that belongs to each Form". This could be taken to imply that the species falling under the Genera are not Ideas at all but constituents of them—the contributions to them from the 'mixture' of Being, Motion, Rest, and so forth. However, as already noted, 8.26 and 8.41 state that every Idea, apart from the Genera themselves, is an instance of each of them (ὄν τι, κινήσις τι and so forth). This suggests the following hypothesis to resolve the above two difficulties.<sup>40</sup> Saying that each Idea is an ὄν τι, κινήσις τι, etc. presumably means that they are to be identified with the *individuals* (ἄτομα) that are said to fall under each genus at 2.8.<sup>41</sup> They will be composed of the species of the Genera (= the being, motion, rest, sameness and difference that belong to each Idea). It will not be the case, then, that the classes of individuals that fall under each genus will be exclusive of each other: on the contrary, these classes will coincide (though their *species* will not overlap).<sup>42</sup> But it should be noted that Plotinus does not think of the Aristotelian categories as mutually exclusive either: cf. vi.3.14,19-20 with vi.1.12,27-30, which imply that the same item can fall into a number of different categories.<sup>43</sup>

#### §4 The Articulation of Being: vi.2.19-20

Unfortunately, Plotinus does not directly discuss the problem of how we are to understand the hierarchy of Ideas in terms of genus-species relations. He is more concerned with another difficulty that is raised by his claim in vi.2.2 that the genera of Being are also its principles. This is the one mentioned in 2.19-26:

<sup>37</sup>They were both clearly articulated by Nebel, who thought them insoluble: cf. n.6 above.

<sup>38</sup>Note that Plotinus sees Sameness as consisting not in the identity of an Idea with itself, as Plato does (*Soph.* 254d15) but in the sameness of the Ideas with each other, i.e. the fact that together they constitute a single nature. Sameness in this sense is for him the principal factor in the eternity of the Ideas: cf. III.7.3 and my "Plotinus on the Nature of Eternity and Time", to appear in Lawrence Schrenk, ed., *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, in the series *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* (Jude P. Dougherty, general editor); also J.E. McGuire and S.K. Strange, "An Annotated Translation of Plotinus, *Ennead* III.7, *On Eternity and Time*", *Ancient Philosophy* 8 (1988), at p.252.

<sup>39</sup>Note that Plotinus apparently allows Motion to mix with Rest, thus taking up Plato's hint at *Soph.* 256b, as perhaps he should. On this point, cf. C.D.C. Reeve, "Motion, Rest and Dialectic in the *Sophist*", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 67 (1985), pp.47-63. All five Genera are thus all-pervasive in the sense of the *Sophist*.

<sup>40</sup>This hypothesis was suggested to me by Michael Frede.

<sup>41</sup>This is consistent with vi.7.9, 34 ff., where Ideas are particular (καθ' ἑκάστων) intellects that are ultimate (ἔσχατον) in the hierarchy of genus and species.

<sup>42</sup>A difficulty for this hypothesis is that Plotinus seems to conceive of some Ideas as falling under some Genera *rather than* others, though perhaps under more than one: cf. 13.23-26, where Number is said to result from the mixture of Motion with Rest, whereas Magnitude is an instance of Motion alone or results from it.

<sup>43</sup>The vi.3.14 passage just repeats what is said at *Categories* 11a37-38, but this passage of the *Categories* is probably an interpolation. Lloyd 1962 (above n.33), pp.84 n.3 is wrong to see the Plotinus passage as merely dialectical instead of official doctrine.

Accordingly, since we claim that there are certain genera of Being, and that these same items are also principles of Being, shall we then produce the whole of Being by mixing together the genera along with everything falling under each of them, thus producing a mixture of all the beings? But in that case each of them will be in potency, not in act, nor will each thing itself be pure. Shall we let the genera be, and mix together the particulars? Then what will the genera on their own be? Rather, each of them will be on its own and pure, and the things that have been mixed together will not destroy them. But how is this possible? We will discuss these points later.

The forward reference is to vi.2.19-20, to which I will now turn. Plotinus' worry is that his analogy with mixture to describe the *κοινωνία τῶν γένων* may be misleading, since according to the Peripatetic view of mixture, its ingredients are only present in it potentially, not actually.<sup>44</sup> This will obviously not do as an explanation of how the Genera are present as the constituents of intelligible reality: they must be ontologically prior to, and thus in some sense exist independently of, that of which they are principles.<sup>45</sup> In fact, Plotinus insists that a Genus must produce its species (10.37-39), which entails that it has actual existence prior to them.

Vi.2.19 begins, however, with a different but related question: how is it that the Genera combine to produce their species? Plotinus' reply, as we saw in §3, is that they get their differentiae from each other, i.e. in the *σμπλοκῆ εἰδῶν* described in the *Sophist*.<sup>46</sup> Rather than explaining what these differentiae are (presumably the contributions to each Idea from each Genus),<sup>47</sup> he returns to the difficulty of 2.19-26 (19.7-17):

...it is clear that it [each Genus] will get them [its differentiae] from these genera [the other *megista genê*], by being added to them and combined with them and coming to be together with them. But when it came to be together with them, what it produced was this combination of all of them. How then do the other things that come after this combination exist? And how, since they are all genera, do they produce their species? How does Motion produce the species of Motion, Rest the species of Rest, and so forth? And here we must be careful to ensure that each genus does not collapse into its species, and that the genus does not become a mere predicate considered as existing only in its species, but that it is both in them<sup>48</sup> and in itself, and that when it is mixed with them it also exists pure and unmixed, so that it is not destroyed by contributing in some other way to the essence of the species.<sup>49</sup> These are the problems that we need to investigate.

The problem, then, is just the problem of how an intelligible Genus can be ontologically prior to its species, and yet help constitute them. How can this not be a mere contradiction in terms? It is this problem that is under discussion in the crucial and difficult argument that follows (19.18-20.29), and not, as some authors have thought, the problem of the origin of the Genera themselves.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup>That is, he here accepts the Peripatetic rather than the Stoic view of mixture: cp. his discussion of mixture in ii.7.

<sup>45</sup>This is the Platonist view of the seventh *aporia* of *Metaphysics* B, that the highest genera are the principles, and thus prior: cf. n.4 above. Cf. also 12.12-14.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. n.34 above. Hence a Genus does not *by itself* produce its species. Hoppe thinks Plotinus contradicts himself at §19 *init.* (pp.77-78), because he has misunderstood the technical term *οἰκεῖαι διαφοραί*, "proper differentiae", at 10.38. It does not imply that the differentia *belongs* to its genus, only that it can only serve as a differentia of that genus. The ultimate origin of this concept is *Metaphysics* 19 (cf. 1058a 36-37 with b22).

<sup>47</sup>Recall that Plotinus elsewhere says that Ideas are constituted *by their differentiae* (vi.7.10,11-12).

<sup>48</sup>Reading *ἐν ἐκείνοις* at 19.15 with Ficino.

<sup>49</sup>*Pace* Henry and Schwyzer's note, *ἄλλως* here means "in another way than the one we have described".

<sup>50</sup>Thus Gurtler (cf. his title, "The Origin of Genera") and Hoppe (p.80). Cf. 19.10: how do the *derivative* Ideas posterior to the 'mixture' exist? Plotinus' view concerning the origin of the Genera seems

Plotinus proposes to attack this problem by using the example of intellect (19.18-23):

But since we said that the compound of all beings is each intellect, but that Being and Substance<sup>51</sup> prior to its species and parts is also an intellect, we are saying that intellect as it is (ἡδῆ) is posterior.<sup>52</sup> Let us use this puzzle to further our investigation, and let us advance our understanding of what has been said by employing it as an example.

“Since we said...” refers to the preceding chapter, 18.12-15:

Intellect, since it is engaged in thinking Being and is the composite of all things, will not be one of the genera, and true Intellect is Being together with all the genera and consequently (ἡδῆ) is all beings, while Being by itself<sup>53</sup> taken as merely one genus is an element of Intellect.

Since Intellect as a whole is here denied to be one of the Genera, it cannot be an *example* of how a genus is prior to its species. But every Idea, both the Genera and derivative Ideas, is an intellect, though they are so in two different senses: the problem therefore is, how can intellect in one sense be prior to intellect in the other?<sup>54</sup> This is recognizably the same problem, since it is the problem of how an intelligible whole can exist prior to the existence of its parts.<sup>55</sup>

This ‘example’ of is further illustrated in §20 by an *analogy* between νοῦς or intellect and ἐπιστήμη, knowledge or science as it exists at the level of the soul (cf. *Sophist* 257cd). (The situation is complicated by the fact that the analogy is also itself an example of the genus-species relation.) Plotinus appeals to the interrelations of universal science, special sciences, and the theorems of the special sciences a number of times in the *Enneads* to illustrate points about the nature of nonsensible reality.<sup>56</sup> What he wants to do here, let us recall, is show how each Genus can be related to its species in such a way as to both constitute it and be prior to it. Chapter 19 runs as follows:<sup>57</sup>

Let us then conceive one<sup>58</sup> intellect that is in no way in contact with any of the partial intellects nor active concerning any object whatever, so that it does not become a particular

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to be that the rest of them are somehow generated from Being, as walking is from you (cf. 3.17-20), though Being cannot exist without them either (13.3,15.11). Presumably he relies here on the arguments of §§7-8.

<sup>51</sup>Here probably Being = the Genus, Substance (οὐσία) = the mixture of all the Genera, as at ii.6.1 *init.*: cf. n.33 above.

<sup>52</sup>I retain the Mss. text at 19.20, with Henry-Schwyzler's OCT.

<sup>53</sup>Retaining μόνον at 18.14: again the reference is to the doctrine of ii.6.1 *init.*

<sup>54</sup>Since Plotinus clearly distinguishes two senses of ‘intellect’ here, the problem is not, *pace* Gurtler p.5, how Intellect can be prior to *itself*. Intellect itself is not a Genus (cf. §18). The puzzle (*aporia*) is rather, how can the ‘true’ or ‘complete’ sense of intellect, intellect completed by all its parts, i.e. the Genera (ὁ ἕμπας νοῦς of 20.10) be the *posterior* signification of the term? As Gurtler notes, 20.23 ff. treats intellect as a genus: this probably shows that Plotinus is thinking of the application of the example to each Genus as an intellect containing particular intellects, i.e. particular Ideas, within it.

<sup>55</sup>The doctrine of intelligible reality as a ‘true whole’ that is prior to and produces its parts is mentioned in the next treatise, iii.7.4, 9-15: cf. the note *ad loc.* in McGuire and Strange (above, n.38).

<sup>56</sup>At iv.9 [8] 5,8 ff., to illustrate how soul can be at once one thing and many individual souls. (The same point is illustrated at iv.8 [6] 3,12 ff. by the analogy of a genus containing a hierarchy of species.) At iv.3 [27] 2,24 and 50, a theorem as ‘part’ of a science. At vi.4 [22] 11.10-12 the presence of different sciences in the soul is an analogy for the co-presence of forms in participants. Finally, at v.9 [5] 6,3-7 and 8,3-7, as here, the simultaneous co-presence of sciences in the soul illustrates the ‘Anaxagorean’ unity-in-diversity of the Ideas in intellect.

<sup>57</sup>My translation of this chapter should be compared with Gurtler's pp.5,6,8,9,10.

<sup>58</sup>Μέν at 20.1 marks the contrast with particular intellect.

intellect, as science is prior to its specific kinds, and a specific science is prior to the parts that are contained in it. Each science (πᾶσα),<sup>59</sup> while identical with none of its parts, is the potency of all of them, while each of these is what it is in actuality, and in potency all of them, and this holds for the universal science as well: the specific sciences, which lie in potency in science as a whole, and then get to be partial, are in potency the whole of science. For science is predicated of them as a whole,<sup>60</sup> not a part of it. It must however exist on its own and unmixed. [10] So also we should say that the whole intellect exists in one way, i.e. the intellect that is prior to the particular intellects that are in act, and that the particular ones<sup>61</sup> exist in another way: the partial intellects are constituted by everything, while the intellect that exists over all of them supplies what the particular intellects need, and is the potency of them and possesses them universally, while they on the other hand in themselves as partial intellects possess the universal intellect, as the particular science possesses science. And we should say that the great intellect exists on its own, and the particular intellects exist in themselves too, and the partial intellects are embraced by the whole intellect and the whole intellect by the partial ones, each of them existing on its own as well as in another, and the whole intellect existing on its own as well as in them, [20] and all of them are in potency in the whole intellect existing on its own, while in act it is all of them at once, but potentially each one separately, and they on the other hand are in act what each of them is, and in potency the whole. Insofar as they are what they are said to be, each is in act what it is said to be, but *qua* being in genus the whole, it is in potency the whole. The whole, on the other hand, *qua* genus is the potency of all the species that fall under it, and is none of them in act, but all of them are present silently in it. But *qua* being what it is in act prior to its species, it is not one of the particulars. It is necessary, if the specific intellects are to exist in act, that the activity that comes from the whole intellect become the cause of this.

Plotinus is concerned to emphasize here: (1) the priority of universal science, i.e. science as concerned with no particular object (we are to think of metaphysics or dialectic, the science concerned with Being in general), to all the special sciences, concerned with particular subject-matters, as its species; (2) the relative independence of the special sciences, the fact that one can possess a special science without possessing any other or the universal science, (3) the fact that each special science is in potency science in general (since it is a science, an instance, in the case of this particular subject matter, of the knowledge of Being in general—a species of the genus knowledge—and hence implicitly involves knowledge of Being) and hence each of the others (since all knowledge is connected, and starting from one science one can come to know the others<sup>62</sup>); (4) finally, the application of the details of this analogy to the case of Intellect, and hence to the Genera of the intelligible world. Note that the relation between the universal science and special sciences in (1) is treated as analogous to the relation between a special science and its theorems. In (2) and (3), the analogy with a science and its theorems again holds, for one can think about one theorem without thinking of the others,<sup>63</sup> yet one must *know* the others: this is very clearly stated at iv.9.5,13-26, where the implication is drawn, as here, that therefore the ‘part’ potentially *identical* to the ‘whole’ as well as to each other ‘part’. In fact, (3) is just the claim that the same sorts of relations hold in the case of the special

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<sup>59</sup>So Gurtler p.5, following Beutler-Theiler and Armstrong: the reference is not to the universal science. But Gurtler fails to see that τῶν ἐν μέρει in line 5 (which is neuter) must then refer to the ‘parts’ of a science mentioned in the previous line (i.e. the theorems of a special science): he also fails to take account of the μὲν...δέ contrast in lines 4-5. This makes it certain that οὐδὲν τῶν ἐν μέρει is a partitive genitive, rather than οὐδὲν being adverbial (parallel with line 1), as he takes it. Note that lines 14 and 25-26 both assert that the genus is δύναμις of its species.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. *Sophist* 257cd.

<sup>61</sup>Reading ΔΕ ΕΚΙΔΕΕΚΙΑΣΤΟΥΣ at 20.11-12 (dittography). This yields the same sense as Igal’s emendation, accepted by Henry and Schwyzer in their OCT.

<sup>62</sup>This sort of interconnection of knowledge is an assumption, but a Platonic one. Note that the application of this to the Ideas helps explain what is meant at v.8.4,11.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. v.9.6,5-6: “each kind of knowledge does its own work when the need arises without dragging in (οὐ συνεφέλκουσα) the others” (transl. Armstrong).

sciences *vis-à-vis* each other and the universal science. This point is absolutely fundamental to Plotinus' argument: for he must insist that the contents of Intellect, like the sciences, are potentially the *same thing* as one another: else Intellect will not be, as he claims, both *one* —in effect, a single individual—and many.

(1) represents Plotinus' main claim in the passage. The universal is prior to its species: it is independent of them (one can possess the universal science without being expert in the special sciences), while they, as instances of knowledge, presuppose it; it is capable of producing them all (knowledge of universal science can lead to the discovery of special sciences), hence it is *δύναμις πάντων*, the power of all of them, and potentially (*δυνάμει*) each of them separately. But further, Plotinus claims, it is already actually all of them together. This is claimed about Intellect at lines 21-22 (*ἐνεργεία δυντι τὰ πάντα ἅμα, δυνάμει δὲ ἕκαστον χωρὶς*), but is clearly supposed to be inferred from its application to the case of science. The claim is that the knower of universal science already actually knows everything, but in a universal way (cf. *Metaphysics* E1, 1026a30-31: first philosophy—identified by Plotinus with Platonic dialectic in i.3.4-5—is *καθόλου οὕτως ὅτι πρώτη*). Hence, since the analogy with the case of science is supposed to fit Intellect in detail, universal intelligible knowledge (of a Genus) is both prior to and helps constitute the knowledge of its species.

Lloyd (1986, p.265) presents as star evidence for his claim that the knowledge belonging to pure or higher intellect is simple the claim of vi.2.3,21-32 that it is our conceptions (*ἐπινοία*) that are responsible for dividing it up into different Ideas. We are now in a position to understand this passage (and the corresponding one at v.9.8 *fin.*-9 *init.*) in a different way. The knowledge of pure intellect corresponds to the universal science. Its object is nevertheless complex, just as the universal science is knowledge of the most general propositions about Being: in fact its object is just what Plotinus calls the 'mixture' of the *megista genê* of the *Sophist*. The dividing up of this 'mixture' by our conceptions or our intellects is the articulation of Being into particular derivative Ideas, corresponding in Plotinus' analogy to the knowledge of the special sciences. Each particular Idea is a *way* in which our intellects can know intelligible reality. As Plotinus sometimes says, the content of intellect essentially is a multiplicity of *δυνάμεις* or powers (iii.7.3, 5-9; vi.2.21,7-8, especially iv.4.1,33-36, on the way that soul knows different Ideas). These powers are just the different Ideas, and they are really different *as* powers. They are the capacities for Intellect's *becoming* known by us. (This alleviates Smith's worry about the seriousness of Plotinus' use of the notion of potency in vi.2.20.) Hence Intellect does contain a real multiplicity of intelligible objects, as Plato had claimed. Moreover, the thesis of vi.2.20,21 (*ἐνεργεία δυντι τὰ πάντα ἅμα*) is that this multiplicity of objects 'already' exists in act in a universal way in the thought of the higher intellect.