

NOUS AND SOUL IN PLOTINUS: SOME PROBLEMS
OF DEMARCATION

That there are certain difficulties about the relation of *Nous* and Soul, and in particular about how they differ cannot have escaped notice. Any serious student of Plotinus must sometimes have become uncomfortably aware that the two hypostases are not as clearly distinct as Plotinus sometimes asserts. But I think the problem is worth a closer inspection than it has so far—to my knowledge—received. Professor Armstrong has remarked that in some passages the distinction may become a little blurred⁽¹⁾. In the paper which he gave at Royaumont last year he attacked the question of the inconsistencies in Plotinus' statements about rest and eternity in *Nous*⁽²⁾, a question which, as we shall see, is closely related to the subject of this communication. Dr. Schwyzer in his Pauly article has gone so far as to say that when Soul is in the upper world it is in no way different from *Nous*⁽³⁾. While I would always hesitate to disagree with Dr. Schwyzer, and hope I have not misunderstood him, I think he has overstated the case, and given as Plotinus' view what is perhaps more correctly to be seen as the implication of some of his statements. This is a matter which must be discussed in connection with the texts themselves, but perhaps I may anticipate by saying that, while Plotinus perhaps ought to say that there is no difference, he does undoubtedly make certain distinctions, at least some of the time. These distinctions are more than the simple assertions that there are three distinct hypostases which one might regard as Plotinus' public position and which are generally held to be a correct statement of what he thought.

Let us start, then, with these assertions. While they will be well-known to members of this gathering, I think it is desirable to state a firm starting point before beginning to look at what is a rather fluid situation. Firstly there are three hypostases. We may leave aside the possibility that φύσις

(1) *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* ed. A. H. ARMSTRONG (Cambridge 1967), 250.

(2) 'Eternity, Life and Movement in Plotinus' Accounts of Νοῦς', in *Le Néoplatonisme*. Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Royaumont 9-13. 6.1969 (Paris 1971), 67-74 (here after *Le Néoplatonisme*).

(3) 'Plotinus' *RE* XXI.i (1951), 563.

or the lower part of Soul forms a fourth hypostasis (cfr. V. 2.1.26)⁽⁴⁾, since this is no part of Plotinus' usual professed position, and say that there are no more than three. For the same reason we may also say that there are no fewer. Briefly, the attributes of *Nous* and Soul are as follows. *Nous* is εἷς καὶ πολλοί, unity in diversity, while Soul is πολλαὶ καὶ μία (also πολλή καὶ μία: VI.9.1.39), diversity in unity (IV.8.3.10-11)⁽⁵⁾ *Nous* is eternal and above any form of time (IV.4.1.25 ff.). It is in immediate and permanent contact with the objects which are its contents (V.5.2, V.8.4.32-7). Soul exists always, but is linked with time (III.7.11 2off.), and its thinking involves a progression from object to object: the usual term is διέξοδος (V.8.6.11)⁽⁶⁾. In terms of each other Soul is an unfolding of *Nous*, its *logos* or deployment at a lower and more diffuse level (cf. I.1.8.6-8, IV.3.5.9-10). It is causally dependent on *Nous*, and therefore, by Pl's way of thinking, necessarily different: τὸ αἴτιον οὐ τὸ αὐτὸν τῷ αἰτιατῷ (VI.9.6.54-5). Further Soul has duties towards what lies below it, delegated to it by *Nous* which stands aloof. *Nous* is bound to remain at rest and has allowed its son to rule the world: ὁ οὖν θεὸς εἰς τὸ μένειν ὡσαύτως δεδεμένος καὶ συγχωρήσας τῷ παιδί τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς ἄρχειν (V.8.13.1-2).

These descriptions are our base. Before we leave it to discuss how far they in fact apply to *Nous* and Soul, let us look briefly at *Nous* and the One, where we may see signs of the difficulties that affect the lower hypostases. There is not a great deal to say here. But we may recall that, while one of the ways of attempting to indicate the nature of the One is to deny it all the attributes of *Nous*, there are passages which in fact apply to it language normally restricted to *Nous*. One comes at V.1.6.16-19 which probably speaks of the One turning towards itself to produce *Nous*⁽⁷⁾. The most notorious is V.4.2, where the One is said to be νοητὸν (line 13). It also has κατανόησις of itself—though Plotinus immediately qualifies this with οἷον συναισθήσει—and we are told that it is ἐν στάσει αἰδίῳ καὶ νοήσει ἐτέρως ἢ κατὰ τὴν νοῦ νοήσιν

(4) On this possible 4th hypostasis cf. ARMSTRONG, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus*. Cambridge Classical Studies 6 (Cambridge 1940), 86 and SCHWYZER, *loc. cit.*, 566.

(5) When Plotinus is talking in terms of the *Parmenides*—the relevant passages are 144 e and 155 e—*Nous* is ἐν πολλά and Soul ἐν καὶ πολλά, V. 1.8.25-6. It is better not to cite this passage as his usual formula as do C. RUTTEN, *Les catégories du monde sensible dans les Ennéades de Plotin*. Bibliothèque de la Fac. de Phil. et Lett. de l'Univ. de Liège, clx (Paris 1961), 34-5, and W. BEIERWALTES, *Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit (Enneade III 7)*. Übersetzt, eingeleitet und kommentiert von W. B. Quellen der Philosophie, 3 (Frankfurt/Main 1967), 58.

(6) This chapter with its famous comparison of *Nous* with hieroglyphic writing sets out the difference as clearly as any passage in Plotinus.

(7) This is if one accepts the reading αὐτὸ in line 18 as do HARDER and BRÉHIER but not CILENTO and HENRY-SCHWYZER. The reading is defended by P. HADOT in his review of HENRY-SCHWYZER, vol ii, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 164 (1963), 94, and the point is further discussed by him in *Porphyre et Victorinus* (Paris 1968), i, 320, n. 4. Cfr. now SCHWYZER, *Museum Helveticum* 26 (1969) 259 f.

(lines 17–19). These statements have caused much consternation, and have even led some scholars to claim that they represent an early stage of Plotinus' thought where he had not yet arrived at the concept of a One above *Nous* (8). Most would now accept that Plotinus' philosophy was sufficiently fully worked out by the time he began to write to preclude so great a change on so crucial a point (9). It seems less clear, however, that he was saying the same things as he said later (10). Professor Dodds has argued that he was influenced by Numenius' way of talking (11). Now this may well be true, but it does not solve the problem, because the fact that Plotinus is using Numenius' language does not mean that he did not himself hold the views that he expressed in it. After all he does often enough agree with Plato's views when he uses Plato's language. While there is no way of proving the point, it could well be that what we have here is something that most of us will have experienced, the realisation that when we come to write down ideas that had previously seemed clear enough, the expression we first give them is inadequate. We do know that Plotinus did not revise (12). Something of this kind may lie behind Plotinus' aberrant descriptions of the One. If so what he does would not be so very different from the way in which he will restate with a slight change of emphasis, or simply more carefully, and so at first sight differently, what remains basically the same position. And that can more easily be demonstrated. I have discussed elsewhere such a case, which might tempt one to see a development in connection with the faculties of the lower soul. Here Plotinus

(8) ARMSTRONG, *Architecture* 24, agrees with F. HEINEMANN, *Plotin, Forschungen über die plotinische Frage, Plotins Entwicklung und sein System* (Leipzig 1921), 122–3, in seeing such a stage in the first five treatises. With specific reference to V. 4 cf. O. BECKER, *Plotin und das Problem der geistigen Aneignung* (Berlin 1940), 31, and most recently HADOT, *op. cit.*, 325, who thinks that in V. 4.2.13 ff. Plotinus simply identified the intelligible and the One. A slightly different view may be found on p. 483 where HADOT, referring to lines 16–20, says Plotinus conceded the existence in the One of something corresponding to an intellectual activity.

(9) SCHWYZER, *RE* XXI.1, 561–2 and *Les Sources de Plotin. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique* (Fondation Hardt) V. 21–9.8.1957 (Vandoeuvres–Geneva 1960), 419–20 thinks the One is only νοητόν to *Nous*, as it is explicitly said to be at V. 6.2.7–9, cf. too BRÉHIER, V. 81 n. 1. ARMSTRONG, *Architecture*, 74 quotes both passages as evidence for this notion. HENRY, while agreeing with SCHWYZER about the way the One is νοητόν feels the expression to be odd nonetheless, *Sources de Plotin*, 420–1.

(10) On the One as νοητόν see previous note. J. M. RIST, *Plotinus. The Road to Reality* (Cambridge, 1967), 41 ff., tries to show the consistency of this passage with Plotinus' later writings, particularly in respect of the One's self-knowledge, but is perhaps too inclined to iron out the differences. In particular I am not certain that the υπερνόησις of VI. 8 [39]. 16.33 is the same as the ἐπέρωσις ἢ κατὰ τὸν νοῦν νόησις here: the latter may be an echo of the two Numenian νόησις. ARMSTRONG, *History*, 238, also takes both as parallel. On self-knowledge there seems to be some room for doubt, cf. SCHWYZER, *Sources de Plotin*, 374–5, and the discussion following his paper, 'Bewusst und Unbewusst bei Plotin'.

(11) 'Numenius and Ammonius', *Sources de Plotin*, 20.

(12) Cfr. PORPHYRY, *V.P.* 8.

seems to mark off an appetitive faculty (ὄρεκτικόν) in I.1.[53] (ch. 5.22–3) which is not to be found in IV.4 [28] (13).

In V.4 (and probably V.1. as well) we have a case where the boundary between two hypostases is not clearly marked, whatever the reason may be. But generally the difference between *Nous* and the One is clear enough. And it is not surprising that this should be so for the One has the advantage of being the first cause, and thereby less liable to confusion with its neighbour. And it has a neighbour on one side only. When we come to *Nous* and Soul the situation is less satisfactory.

Let us start from *Nous*, for the division between hypostases becomes less clear as we descend the scale. I shall not say very much about *Nous* as such, since I have little to add to Professor Armstrong's remarks on the subject, but for two reasons it will be as well to recall his conclusions. In the first place the variations in Plotinus' statements about *Nous* are a manifestation of the same difficulties as those that present themselves with regard to Soul. Secondly the problems involved are, so to speak, the reverse of those we meet when we come to deal with Soul. Starting from the notion of the eternal life of *Nous* Armstrong examined the different ways in which Plotinus talks about it, starting from the conception of it as a life without a history. From this point of view *Nous* is as it should be in what I have called Plotinus' public position. It is changeless, has no past or future, no transition from one condition to another, no process in its self-knowledge, which consists in 'static intuition'. The point is sometimes made by a contrast with the dynamic life of Soul. At other times, however, the importance of the changeless existence of true being is shown by 'raising Soul to the unchanging level'. In the treatises where this happens Plotinus seems to have been 'particularly inclined to minimize the distinction between Intellect and Soul, and to present Soul at its highest as purely noetic' (14). Here matters are perhaps more complicated than Armstrong in his brief reference to these passages implies, and what appears to be the raising of Soul may be a symptom of the uncertain boundary between *Nous* and Soul. So much for static *Nous*. But Armstrong goes on to show that when Plotinus talks about *Nous* in relation to the One it goes through a process of coming-to-be, which may even be caused by τόλμα, and involves an element of potency. All this involves duration, as does the ἔφεσις *Nous* directs to the One (15). Thirdly there are a few passages where the κίνησις in *Nous*—and here κίνησις is normally the μέγιστον γένος of Plato's *Sophist*—seems to be associated with a passage of time. The most conspicuous of these are V.8.3–4 and VI.7.13 where Plotinus talks about *Nous* ἐνεργησάντος δὲ αἰεὶ ἄλλο μετ' ἄλλο καὶ οἷον πλανηθέντος πᾶσαν πλάνην αἰεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ πλανηθέντος (lines 29–30), language which one would

(13) *Plotinus' Psychology. His doctrines of the embodied soul* (The Hague 1971), 40–41.

(14) *Le Néoplatonisme*, 69.

(15) *Ibid.*, 70–72.

expect to find used of Soul but not of *Nous* ⁽¹⁶⁾. From all this Armstrong concludes that Plotinus was in fact trying to have it both ways, that he wants a static eternal Intellect and yet wishes it to have a rich and varied inner life. This is to be explained partly at least by a tradition which presented Plotinus with more material than he could accommodate within the structure of his second hypostasis ⁽¹⁷⁾.

These explanations are certainly true, but may not contain the whole truth, for it may well be that Plotinus was prone to make only those distinctions most immediately to his purpose, and also that he was to some extent driven into his not entirely satisfactory position by philosophical difficulties which the system he professed could not fail to encounter ⁽¹⁸⁾. That this was so will perhaps emerge more clearly when we look at the other side of the coin, Plotinus' difficulties with Soul. Perhaps, though, it would be better not to speak of Plotinus' difficulties because this does not seem to be one of the cases where he was clearly aware that his views did involve problems ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Let us begin with a standard description of the hypostasis Soul and its relation to *Nous* from an early treatise, V.1 [10]. Soul comes after *Nous* and is derived from it. It is an image of *Nous* related to it in the same way as the spoken word to that still unspoken within the Soul (V.1.3.4-9). In fact Soul is the *logos* of *Nous* just as *Nous* is that of the One (V.1.6.44-5). *Nous* exalts the soul by being its father and by being present to it (ibid. 3.20-1). But Plotinus immediately goes on to explain the remark about presence with the words οὐδὲν γὰρ μεταξὺ ἢ τὸ ἑτέροις εἶναι, ὡς ἐφεξῆς μέντοι καὶ τὸ δεχόμενον, τὸ δὲ ὡς εἶδος. These words suggest significantly that in the last resort the difference between the two hypostases may be one of definition only. The notion that difference is the only distinction between two or more entities occurs in other cases where Plotinus seems unable to maintain in practice distinctions required by the outline statements he makes about the framework of his system. Thus ἐτερότης is given as the difference between the constituents of *Nous* at IV.3 [27].4.9-10 ⁽²⁰⁾ and 5.6-8, between the souls in the intelligible at VI.4 [22].4.24-6 and between immaterial entities in general at VI.9 [9].8.30-2 ⁽²¹⁾. And although the last two of these passages contrast ἐτερότης specifically with spatial difference, they are all alike in that Plotinus offers no suggestion as to what the otherness might be. But generally when

(16) *Ibid.*, 72-73.

(17) *Ibid.*, 74.

(18) The philosophical difficulty involved in Plotinus' account of eternal life was brought out in the discussion following ARMSTRONG'S paper by him and Professor LLOYD, *ibid.*, 76.

(19) Though there are some signs that he was, see [209f] below.

(20) Here Plotinus goes on to say that this is inappropriate to souls: he is now talking about souls in the world.

(21) Also between *Nous* and the One. I cannot see this simply as a sign of metaphysical sophistication as R. ARNOU seems to do, 'La séparation par simple alterité dans la "Trinité" plotinienne', *Gregorianum*, II (1930), 187-90.

Plotinus refers explicitly to the *relation* between *Nous* and Soul the subordination is clear enough. And it is just as clear in late treatises as in V. 1. This point is important because, as we shall see, a tendency for the differences to remain in the background, or even to disappear, emerges in the middle period. Yet nowhere is the difference clearer than in the treatise *On Time and Eternity*, III.7 [45]. In a passage which describes both the relation of Soul to *Nous* and the mode of activity proper to each, Plotinus writes that instead of intellectual movement we have that of a part of Soul, instead of stability and permanence process and the activity now of one thing and then of another, instead of no separation a unity of continuity, instead of one unbounded whole an endless succession, instead of a compact whole that which will be divisible into parts (III.7.11.48-56).

Starting from this set of characteristics of Soul, which we shall treat as the norm, we may go on to examine a number of other passages which do not seem to conform. Before we do so we must, however, be clear what it is that we are talking about. This is, in the first place, Soul as such, Soul independent of both the *cosmos* and the individual, the soul from which all other souls are derived. That this is in fact the true position of the hypostasis Soul, and that it is not to be confused with the world-soul, I have tried to show elsewhere ⁽²²⁾, and so do not propose to rehearse the arguments here. We shall however find that world-soul sometimes seems to fill the place of the hypostasis Soul, and that in a number of passages it is not immediately clear which of the two Plotinus is referring to: in some he may be thinking of the hypostasis Soul as it is manifested in the managerial aspects of the world-soul. After all the two are, in theory at least, the same.

Let us first take the various attributes of *Nous* and Soul in turn. If we start with the unity in diversity of *Nous*, which differentiates it from the total unity of the One itself, we shall find that here, while at times he stresses that their mode of being is not the same, Plotinus talks of both *Nous* and Soul in the same way. Just as Anaxagoras' phrase ὁμοῦ πάντα is used to describe the contents of *Nous* (V.9.6.3), so we find it used of Soul as well (VI.4.14.4). Similarly at IV.3.8.20-1 Plotinus, using what one might well take to be *Nous* language, says of the contents of Soul οὐ δίσταται τὰ ὄντα ἀπ' ἀλλήλων. In the first of these passages Pl. has to resort to saying that while Soul has its contents in this way, all together and yet separate, *Nous* has its in the same way but more so: οὕτως οὖν καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ὁ νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ ἔν οὐχ ὁμοῦ, ὅτι ἕκαστον δύναμις ἰδίᾳ (V.9.6.7-9). At other times Plotinus will say more explicitly that the contents of Soul are more fully deployed than are those of *Nous* ⁽²³⁾.

Closely connected with the unity in diversity of *Nous* is Plotinus' notion of its activity, a thinking that immediately grasps the whole of its object

(22) 'Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus', in *le Néoplatonisme*, 55-63.

(23) Cfr. the passages cited on p. [2].

without any kind of process or transition, what is generally termed non-discursive thought⁽²⁴⁾. This type of thought, νόησις, is to be contrasted with the δίανοια or λογισμός characteristic of Soul, which proceeds by movement from one object to another, a process commonly called διέξοδος or described by expressions like ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο λαβεῖν (V.3.17.23-4). The process stops when the mind enters into that possession of its object which is the mark of νόησις (cfr. I.3.4.9-20, IV.4.12.5-12). But on closer inspection we find that when Plotinus is concerned to stress the transcendence of Soul as such, as opposed to world-soul or the individual soul, he will deny it just those features of its activity which normally seem to be its peculiar characteristics. So when he is examining the conditions under which soul might have no memory he will say that it has none in the higher world because all things are present and there is there no διέξοδος and no μεταβάσεις ἀφ' ἑτέρου εἰς ἄλλο (IV.4.1.4-16). Now it is precisely because it is always in possession of its objects that *Nous* has no need of memory (cfr. V.9.5.29-34). Otherwise Soul is ἐν διεξόδῳ . . . ἀιδίῳ (III.7.13.43-4). The exemption from memory is even extended to the world-soul and the souls of the heavenly bodies (IV.4.6-7). The latter may be regarded as on a level with world-soul (cfr. II.1.5.8 ff, II.9.18.30-2)⁽²⁵⁾. Discursive thought too is denied to the star souls on the grounds that they neither seek knowledge nor suffer from ἀπορία (IV.4.6.8 ff.). And if this is true of the star souls it must *a fortiori* be true of Soul *tout simple*. And at II.9.2.10 ff., a passage which, though it uses language appropriate to world-soul, is fairly clearly about the hypostasis Soul, Plotinus explicitly states that soul manages body οὐκ ἐκ διανοίας . . . ἀλλὰ τῆ εἰς τὸ πρὸ αὐτῆς θέα.

Now if the hypostasis Soul lacks discursiveness there is nothing in its mode of apprehension which makes it any way different from *Nous*. Plotinus himself is not unaware of this for he writes ψυχῆς δὲ ἔργον τῆς λογικωτέρας νοεῖν μὲν, οὐ τὸ νοεῖν δὲ μόνον τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ νοῦ διαφέρουσι; (IV.8.3.21-3). Indeed he seems to have realised on at least one occasion the difficulties into which this situation would lead him, for there is a passage in IV.3.18 where he seems to be trying to have it both ways. He starts from the position that Soul should not have λογισμός before it leaves the intelligible. Λογισμός comes to it when it is in difficulties, filled with anxiety and weaker than it was: to need λογισμός is a diminution of *nous* in respect of self-sufficiency (lines 1-5). But, he goes on, there is a problem, for if soul there has no λογισμός how can souls here have it? He tries to answer this question by positing a kind of potential λογισμός in souls in the intelligible: this comes from *Nous* as an ἐνέργεια ἐστῶσα (lines 7 ff.). What this super-λογισμός could be is

(24) That this expression may mean nothing has recently been argued by LLOYD, 'Non-discursive thought—an enigma of Greek philosophy', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 70 (1969-70), 261-74.

(25) Cfr. *Le Néoplatonisme*, 59-60.

not at all clear. The expression ἐνέργεια ἐστῶσα would seem to be a negation of everything that is implied by διέξοδος and the other descriptions of discursive thinking in terms of movement or transition. M. Trouillard has drawn attention to this passage and explains it in terms of a kind of pure λογισμός, while he sees a pure motion in IV.4.6-9. They are pure because they are 'the pure flow of the mind and remain within it'⁽²⁶⁾. He has certainly put his finger on the difficulty, but for the reason just mentioned his explanation seems to be rather an intensified statement of the problem. At this stage we may recall those passages to which we have already referred, where *Nous*' activity is described in terms usually applied to Soul. Here is the focus of the problem. Soul may have the character of *Nous*, which itself calls for explanation, but at times we find that *Nous* has that of Soul, and when Plotinus tries to suggest a way of describing soul's activity when it is in a noetic condition without simply using the *Nous* language it is hard to see what he can mean. The apparent state of confusion does, however, suggest lines on which an explanation might be sought.

In the passage we have just considered discursive thought is connected with the soul's activities. Here we come to another of the theoretical differences between *Nous* and Soul, namely that Soul may have duties while *Nous* has none. Soul is responsible for the organization of subsequent being. In this capacity it usually manifests itself as world-soul or as the individual souls, but at times it looks as if Plotinus is making no distinction between the hypostasis Soul and the world-soul, or, to put it another way, he may be thinking of the hypostasis in terms of its organizational duties as they appear when it is providing the psychic element in the *cosmos*. An example of this way of thinking is probably to be found in the closing chapters of II.3, where Soul, in direct contact with *Nous*, passes on the soul below itself—that is φύσις—what it receives from *Nous* (II.3.17.15-16). This passage, and a similar one in the next chapter, might lead us to think that the hypostasis and the world-soul are simply the same, but there is enough evidence from elsewhere to show that this is not the case⁽²⁷⁾, and Plotinus may simply be thinking in terms of the world-soul having that direct access to *Nous* which the individual soul may have, and which would enable *Nous* to perform its demiurgic functions in conjunction with world-soul (cfr. II.3.18.14-16)⁽²⁸⁾. If we understand it in this light, we may wonder about the usefulness of the notion of a completely detached soul, a point to which we shall return later. In the present connection it would seem that in so far as the *cosmos* is run by the individual souls, Soul the hypostasis is just as free of duties as *Nous* itself.

Even if Soul has duties, it performs these without being in any way moved. Here Plotinus' vocabulary is very similar to that which he uses of *Nous*. He

(26) 'The logic of attribution in Plotinus', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1961), 131.

(27) Cfr. *Le Néoplatonisme*, 58.

(28) Cfr. *Le Néoplatonisme*, *ibid.*

will refer to Soul as μένουσα (c.g. IV.3.5.17, cfr. 8.55), a word which one would in the first place associate with *Nous* or the One (III.4.1.1-3, IV.3.13.22-3, IV.4.10.12⁽²⁹⁾, V.2.1.17)⁽³⁰⁾. He will also apply the word to the multiplicity of souls in the intelligible (VI.4.14.11), and it goes almost without saying that any attributes of transcendence applicable to souls in the plural must apply to Soul *qua* hypostasis. At IV.4.2.24-5 he writes ἡ καθαρῶς ἐν τῷ νοητῷ οὔσα ἔχει τὸ ἀμετάβλητον καὶ αὐτή. And while Soul remains unmoved in the same way as *Nous*, its power is unbounded in, as far as Plotinus' words would suggest, the same way as that of its theoretical superior. Both are infinite in that their power is infinite and in that they are not limited by anything outside: ἡ τῆ δυνάμει τὸ ἄπειρον... καὶ αὐταί τοίνυν οὐ πέρατι ἀλλοτρίῳ ἐστὶν ἐκάστη ὁ ἐστὶν (IV.3.8.36-9). Between these phrases Plotinus writes ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ θεός οὐ πεπερασμένος, and ὁ θεός usually means *Nous* or the One, which is probably not the subject of this remark⁽³¹⁾. *Nous* is δύναμις πᾶσα, εἰς ἄπειρον μὲν ἰούσα, εἰς ἄπειρον δὲ δυναμένη (V.8.9.24-6)⁽³²⁾, and it is not limited (φύσις οὐ πεπερασμένη: VI.5.4.14). Less often Soul seems to be given the same timelessness that *Nous* has, so for example in IV.4.15. Here the souls are described as αἰδίοι in a passage where αἰδιος is contrasted with ἐν χρόνῳ in apparently the same way as αἶων is contrasted with χρόνος. Time comes to be in connection with the activity of the soul. Though it would be easier to think in terms of a distinction between *Nous* being αἰώνιος and Soul being αἰδιος, such a distinction is not present here. This passage, then, is inconsistent with the clear attachment of time to the soul in III.7 (cfr. ch. 11.20-30)⁽³³⁾, but a necessary concomitant to the denial of memory to soul ἐν τῷ νοητῷ which we find in this part of IV.3-4.

It is in fact, and this should be no surprise, when Plotinus is talking about τὸ νοητόν as a whole that the distinction between *Nous* and Soul is most prone to disappear. A bipartite division of the world into intelligible and sensible being may already be found in IV.8 [6].6.23-8. But the clearest and most striking instance of this tendency to drop the distinction between

(29) Μένουσης here is almost certainly correct and is to be adopted by HENRY-SCHWYZER in the *editio minor*.

(30) It has almost become a technical term, cf. H. DÖRRIE, 'Υπόστασις. Wort—und Bedeutungsgeschichte', *Nachr. der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Phil-Hist. Kl.* (1955), 68-9.

(31) Otherwise RIST, 'Theos and the One in some texts of Plotinus', *Mediaeval Studies*, 24 (1962), 172.

(32) Even if τὸ πᾶν should be deleted here, as it is by all editors since KIRCHHOFF, except HENRY-SCHWYZER, the point still stands, for if one may say this of 'parts' of *Nous* one may also say it of the whole. In fact the next sentence supports HENRY-SCHWYZER.

(33) On this passage cfr. BEIERWALTES *ad. loc.* in *Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit*. I see no good reason for emending βουλομένης to βουλομένη in line 22, as do KIRCHHOFF, BRÉHIER and THEILER. While this dubious expedient would enable one to argue that the δύναμις οὐχ ἡσυχός of line 21 was not Soul itself, and so resolve part of the inconsistency, it would not help with the rest of the passage.

Nous and Soul is to be found in the treatise VI.4-5 [22-3]. The title of this treatise, περὶ τοῦ ἐν καὶ πρῶτον ἅμα πανταχοῦ εἶναι ὄλον, suggests a discussion of the second hypostasis⁽³⁴⁾, but its first sentence asks why Soul is present everywhere. In fact the treatise discusses both *Nous* and Soul, and sometimes the two together, moving from one to the other to such an extent that it is not always immediately clear which Plotinus is discussing at any given point. In the second chapter Plotinus begins by contrasting τὸ ἀληθινὸν πᾶν with its imitation, the visible world. He has just been talking about Soul, and announces no change of subject. But his language is such as he will normally use of *Nous*, for example τὸ πᾶν ἐκεῖνο καὶ πρῶτον καὶ ὄν (lines 13 ff.). Yet he immediately (lines 3-4) goes on to talk of the physical world as ὁ δ' ἄν μετὰ τοῦτο ἦ. Τοῦτο should be Soul rather than *Nous*, for Plotinus will not usually speak of anything other than Soul or the world-soul as μετὰ νοῦν. But what he says would apply equally well to both *Nous* and Soul, and this is true of much else in this treatise. These facts would best be accounted for by the assumption that he is more concerned with the factors common to intelligible being in the wider sense and not always equally concerned to distinguish the two layers of that kind of being. As the opening sentence of VI.4.2 suggests, he is explaining the different modes of existence appropriate to the sensible on the one hand and to the intelligible on the other. This does not, however, mean that Soul and *Nous* are treated as one throughout. We have seen the discussion centred on Soul at the start, and there are other parts of the treatise where he is clearly talking about *Nous*, as in VI.5.8. Moreover, if we fail to recognise such passages, we will be involved in difficulties such as the contradiction which Arnou saw between statements which Plotinus makes in various parts of this treatise about the status of the individual in the intelligible⁽³⁵⁾. Thus he found that the individual exists there according to VI.4.14, but not according to VI.5.12, a problem which is solved as soon as we recognise that VI.4.14 is about the individual at the level of Soul and VI.5.12 about the individual at the level of *Nous*⁽³⁶⁾.

The tendency to abandon, or at least to neglect, the *Nous*: Soul distinction may also be found in treatises written not long after, primarily in IV.3-4 [27-8] and to some extent in III.6 [26]. The reasons are not necessarily the same. In the first part of III.6, which could be regarded as preparatory work for the following treatise, Plotinus considers the role of soul, that is here the individual soul, in the affections (πάθη). His aim is to show that any actual changes involved take place in the body, and thus he will stress the ἀπάθεια of the soul. But it may be misleading to say, as does Professor Armstrong, that Plotinus is here 'raising the soul to the unchanging level' and that this

(34) The titles of Plotinus' treatises are not his own, but Porphyry's record of those most commonly used, cfr. *V.P.* 4.16-19.

(35) *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin* (Paris 1921), 204-8.

(36) Cfr. BLUMENTHAL 'Did Plotinus believe in Ideas of Individuals', *Phronesis*, II (1966), 70-3.

illustrates the importance for him of unchanging life (37). As Armstrong himself points out, it is physical change that Plotinus wishes to exclude from the soul. This becomes clearest in the course of III.6.5, where Plotinus deals with the paradoxical question with which the chapter opens, τί οὖν χρῆ ζῆτεῖν ἀπαθῆ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας ποιεῖν μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν πάσχειν, by showing that we must make soul which is already ἀπαθῆς in the sense of physically unchanging ἀπαθῆς in the sense of free from the evil results of the πάθη as well (38). Moreover the second part of the treatise is about the impassibility of matter, so that we should perhaps view the whole as an exploration of the implications of impassibility. We are certainly not entitled to see his comments on matter as a sign of his regard for the life of intelligible being. But it is probably true that Plotinus is more concerned to show the impassibility of the lowest soul here than anywhere else. The reason which immediately suggests itself is that the area of soul directly involved in the affections is the most likely to be subject to change.

When we come to IV.3-4 the two lines of investigation followed in VI.4-5 and III.6, into the omnipresence of the intelligible and the impassibility of the immaterial respectively, tend to converge. In the sphere of soul it is the higher area of soul that most properly manifests both characteristics, omnipresence and ἀπάθεια. And since in this treatise Plotinus has some difficulty in maintaining the ἀπάθεια of soul—the problem of III.6—while showing how it runs body—an aspect of the problem of VI.4-5—we should not be too astonished to find that he is more concerned to distinguish the more and less impassive parts of the soul than to draw the lines between higher soul and *Nous*. And it is the case that we find more careful distinctions made within the area of the lower soul here than anywhere else. We need only refer to the care with which he distinguishes the compound of soul and matter which is body, the compound of body and the irradiation from the lower soul, φύσις, which is τὸ τοιόνδε σῶμα, φύσις itself with its range of sub-faculties, the compound of φύσις and σῶμα which is the ζῶον (or κοινόν, σύνθετον, συναμφότερον) and ψυχὴ in the narrow sense with its faculties (cfr. esp. IV.4.18-21) (39).

Such then are some of the reasons why *Nous* and the hypostasis soul might be treated as one in IV.3-4. What is the evidence? A part of it we have already mentioned in discussing some of the ways in which Soul may be treated as *Nous*. These were the denial of memory (IV.4.1 ff.), timelessness (IV.4.15), lack of discursiveness (IV.4.6). The section on memory, as well as the previous discussion of the memories of the individual soul, which refers to its existence at the level of the hypostasis, speak explicitly of soul ἐν τῷ νοητῷ (IV.3.32.26, IV.4.1.1-2). In addition there are other

(37) *Le Néoplatonisme*, 68-9.

(38) Cfr. BLUMENTHAL, *Plotinus' Psychology*, 54-6.

(39) Cfr. *ibid.*, 61-2.

passages where the intelligible seems to be treated as a unit in the same way as it was in VI.4-5, though once again it is not always clear what is going on. We may refer to IV.3.5, where Plotinus on the subject of what happens to the disembodied soul of Socrates says ἡ οὐδὲν ἀπολείται τῶν ὄντων ἐπεὶ κακεῖ οἱ νόες οὐκ ἀπολούνται (lines 5-6): τὰ ὄντα need not strictly refer to the contents of *Nous*, for the point would be met by Socrates' survival at the level of Soul. The same is true of the remark about νόες (40). We may compare passages where Plotinus says in so many words that νόες exist in Soul (e.g. VI.4.14.2-3). In IV.3-5, however, he does still distinguish levels, for at the end of the chapter he speaks of soul ἡ μένουσα which is a *logos* of *Nous* and the partial *logoi*, that is the individual souls, which derive from it. Shortly afterwards, in chapter 8, ὄντα, is apparently again used generally of the contents of both levels of intelligible being, as is also νοητά (lines 17 ff.). The point at issue here too is the difference between material and immaterial existence. The distinction between *Nous* and Soul is still in theory maintained, for Plotinus goes on to speak of the infinity of Soul later in the chapter, albeit in terms that one would use of *Nous* as well (lines 35 ff.). We must therefore modify what has been said about the character of this treatise, for in these earliest chapters there is no abolition, even if there is some neglect, of the boundaries. But this situation may support our explanation of the position in the central part of the treatise. For the early chapters, 1-8, are devoted to the relations of the individual souls with each other and with the world-soul. Here one would expect comparison with *Nous* and its components, and it would be strange if the division between Soul and *Nous* did not emerge to a greater extent than in those parts of the work where Plotinus is investigating the operation of the embodied soul or the ways in which soul may exist as a transcendent entity. Similarly the distinction reappears later in the treatise where Pl. deals with the relation between the various levels of intelligible being (IV.4.16.17 ff.).

What conclusions may we draw from this by no means complete catalogue of apparently inconsistent statements? Starting from our proposed explanation of what is happening in IV.3-4, we might suggest that the notion of the hypostasis Soul is prominent only under certain conditions. Firstly when Plotinus is setting out formally his three hypostasis system. Thus it figures naturally in V.1 or in the single treatise which we have as III.8, V.8, V.5 and II.9 [30-33] which immediately followed IV.3-5, for example in II.9.1, and perhaps more significantly in V.6 [24], which comes between VI.4-5 and IV.3-4 (cfr. esp. V.6.4.14 ff.). Secondly it appears more or less clearly when Plotinus is discussing the relation between souls. But when he is discussing the relation of intelligible to sensible being, and the operations of soul in the world, either on a cosmic or on an individual scale, then the hypostasis Soul tends to merge with *Nous*. Τὸ νοητὸν, the world-soul and the individual souls are sufficient to provide an explanation of this world, and so we find pas-

(40) On this passage cfr. *Phronesis*, 11 (1966), 68-9.

sages where world-soul seems to be directly dependent on *Nous* (41). Here one might ask why it is Soul rather than *Nous* that sometimes disappears. For this three reasons suggest themselves. Firstly, Plotinus does not normally think of soul having access to the One except through *Nous* (cfr. e.g. VI.8.7.1-2) or being produced directly by the One (42). And since *Nous* is conceived as the One plus a sort of minimal multiplicity this is not unreasonable. So to remove *Nous* would leave an unbridgeable gap in the hierarchy of being. Secondly, the removal of *Nous* would deprive the world of its eternal model, a role which Plotinus always assigns to *Nous* rather than Soul: it is *Nous* which contains the Forms. Thirdly, if *Nous* disappeared, that kind of being would be removed from the system to a far greater extent than is the more diffuse kind by the disappearance of the hypostasis Soul, for Plotinus never suggests that the world could be run without some kind of soul, and that is still represented by world-soul and the individual souls when the hypostasis goes. He will even say that souls in the plural are derived straight from *Nous* at VI.7.23.19-20, where ψυχάς may or may not include the world-soul. Further the world-soul sometimes seems to have the character of purely independent soul as well as soul with a duty. In the difficult and confusing tenth chapter of IV.4, where certain remarks could apply to either *Nous* or the hypostasis Soul, and others to world-soul or the hypostasis, Plotinus seems to be expounding how *Nous* and the world-soul rule the cosmos. For direct rule by *Nous* there is no provision, though it is once mentioned as an alternative to rule through the intermediary of either Soul or some kind of soul in a passage where Plotinus says that in the context it makes no difference (V.8.7.14-16). Rule by τὸ νοητόν, in which Soul may be merged, is a different matter.

Another cause of Soul's tendency to lose its independence, or at other times those characteristics by which its independence may be discerned, may be found in the difficulties that must inevitably arise if one is to describe a number of immaterial existents. In the last resort the difference must be one of definition, and the number of things one may say about each *in itself* is limited. We have already referred to one passage which shows this difficulty clearly (43). Another may be found at V.2.2.18-20 where Plotinus tells us that *Nous* is even less in place than Soul (44). Μιμῆται δὲ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον πανταχῆ writes Plotinus (V.8.12.15). One might say that it does so too well. For as soon as one tries to define Soul as such, without taking into account the world-soul's care and protection of the *cosmos*, one is reduced to saying that Soul is like *nous* but not quite, or *vice-versa*, or even that it differs by difference alone (45). If soul is freed from concern with what is below and turns towards *Nous*

(41) Cfr. p.[210] above.

(42) But cf. VI.9 [9].3.10-13, where soul does seem to have direct access.

(43) See above, p. 6.

(44) ἡ δὲ μέχρι νοῦ, οὐ τόπω· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐν τόπῳ ἦν· ὁ δὲ νοῦς πολὺ μᾶλλον οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ, ὥστε οὐδὲ αὐτῆ.

(45) See the passages referred to on p.[207].

it becomes *Nous*: νοῦς γενομένη αὐτῆ θεωρεῖ οἷον νοωθεῖσα καὶ ἐν τόπῳ τῷ νοητῷ γενομένη (VI.7.35.4-5). The individual must strive to attain this condition, the hypostasis Soul has it as part of its nature. One can say, as Plotinus in fact does (I.6.6.16-18), that when Soul is most truly soul it is *Nous*. Such is the case when the transcendent immutability of intelligible being is being stressed. But when Plotinus is concerned with the active and dynamic internal life of *Nous* then the reverse situation applies. The only way in which Plotinus can describe the life of *Nous* is to allow it the process and transition whose exclusion usually marks the difference between the two hypostases. Plotinus had no vocabulary to describe a different sort of life for an intelligible entity from that of Soul. What he needed was perhaps an extra set of words to correspond to the οἷον phrases and the less common ὑπερ-words which he used of the One (46). And whether they could have had any real meaning is not at all clear. A more important factor may have been quite simply that if a form of non-static thinking, namely discursive thought, were applicable to the highest form of being which was not completely exempt from 'change', that is Soul *qua* hypostasis, then this type of activity would necessarily have to apply at the higher level, that of *Nous*, once its absolute unchangeability was abandoned. Hence some of the fluctuations which Professor Armstrong has discussed and which we may now see to be complementary to those we meet when we examine Plotinus' statements about Soul, either in itself or in so far as it forms a part of one noetic block of Being. Given the similarities between *Nous* and the hypostasis Soul we can understand why they are kept clearly apart only at those times when the relation between hypostases is under discussion. Then the causal dependence of Soul on *Nous* becomes prominent (e.g. V.1.7.42).

We have just mentioned that Plotinus may describe *Nous* by excluding from it the dynamic features of the life of Soul. This is perhaps a more helpful way of looking at the way of thinking behind Plotinus' statements than to think in terms of the ever greater multiplicity into which Plotinus depicts his world as unfolding. If one discounts the personal mystical experience to which Plotinus so rarely refers, a philosopher would have to elaborate the notion of the One by excluding the attributes of *Nous* rather than arrive at *Nous* by splitting up or adding to the One. As a matter of history one could even say that the notion of the One was reached by splitting up *Nous*. However much of a Platonist one may be and however strongly one might insist on the need to explain lower in terms of higher being, one cannot arrive at one's great Platonic truths without going through the process of abstraction from and comparison with the contents of the sensible world (47). And one might say that

(46) ὑπεράγαθος (VI.9.6.40), ὑπερνόησις (VI.8.16.33), ὑπερόντως (VI.8.14.43).

(47) Plotinus himself gives these as ways to knowledge of the One, cf. VI.7.36.6-8. The method of arriving at the One by abstraction goes back in the Platonic tradition to ALBINUS, *Did.* X = 165.14 ff. HERMANN; cfr. H. WOLFSON, 'Albinus and Plotinus on divine attributes', *Harvard Theological Review*, 45 (1952), 117 ff.

the *via negativa* to the One has already been trodden on the way to the delineation of *Nous* and Soul.

By its nature the One must be determined by what comes below, for its super-essence, if one may use the term, is to be what the others are not. Plotinus more than once stresses that the One is different from all the others (V.3.11.18, V.4.1.5-6). Less clearly motivated by the exigencies of the system, we find a tendency for the individual souls to be determined by what comes below them, though admittedly what is below has been pre-formed by the world-soul acting on matter. But since matter is devoid of all quality (cfr. II.4.14.24, VI.1.27.2), and individual souls and to a large extent the world-soul are theoretically identical, all individual compounds of soul and matter, or soul and body, should be identical too. That they are not is paradoxically due to body, which should have no influence on soul. Body receives as much soul as it can (VI.4.3.10-11). Differences between individuals may be caused not only by body (IV.3.8.5-9) but also by the environment (III.1.5.11 ff., IV.3.7.22-5)⁽⁴⁸⁾. And it seems not altogether unreasonable to see the problems about *Nous* and Soul as at least partly caused by these tendencies. If what it is to be *Nous* must be expressed in terms of Soul without removing so many of Soul's attributes that we arrive prematurely at a description of the One there is not much room for manoeuvre.

So far we have considered these problems of demarcation mainly in terms of *Nous* and Soul *qua* hypostases. If we accept that there is some serious doubt as to where the boundaries in the intelligible are we may be less perplexed by certain problems about the higher reaches of the individual soul. One is the question of Ideas of individuals. This is a doctrine for whose adoption by Plotinus there is very little firm evidence. I do not propose to discuss this question again here, but think it safe to say that some of the texts that appear at first sight to support the belief may be seen to refer either definitely, or at least possibly, to individuality at the level of Soul, whose contents are not described as Ideas, or rather vaguely in the intelligible, and so not necessarily in *Nous* itself⁽⁴⁹⁾. Definite examples are the passages we have already mentioned in VI.4-5⁽⁵⁰⁾, possible ones that in IV.3.5-6⁽⁵¹⁾ and also IV.3.12.1 ff. In general we may recall that *νόες* are often included in the contents of Soul (VI.4.14.2-3). All this suggests that we must view somewhat critically the idea that the undescended part of the individual soul, its *Nous*, is necessarily in the hypostasis *Nous*⁽⁵²⁾. When Plotinus tells us that not all the soul descends, he may mean that some of it remains at the level of the hypostasis Soul. It would then incidentally, for the reasons that we have mentioned, be a *nous*, but would not be there primarily, as would those entities which have

(48) On this point cfr. BLUMENTHAL, *Le Néoplatonisme*, 60.

(49) Cfr. *Phronesis*, II (1966), 61-80.

(50) See above [212] and *Phronesis*, II (1966), 70-3.

(51) See above [214] and *Phronesis*, II (1966), 68-9.

(52) When Plotinus uses *nous* to refer to the reason this is clearly at a lower level.

the status of Ideas. Thus we should have a sort of step in the intelligible world, with the individual *Nous* at one level below hypostasis *Nous* and its constituents, but at the same height as hypostasis Soul, the completely transcendent area of Soul. The basic statement of Plotinus' view on the the undescended intellect, IV.8.8.1-3, is not incompatible with such a situation. Below this second level of intelligible being would come the second level of the individual soul, namely the reason. Here we may recall the passage where Plotinus talks of it as τὸ μέσον, between that which is always turned upwards and that which is directed to the things here (II.9.2.4 ff.)⁽⁵³⁾. In the following lines Plotinus actually says that the part of our soul which is not a part is at the level of the world-soul, which works without διάνοια⁽⁵⁴⁾. And in this treatise, where Plotinus is defending his system of strictly three hypostases, world-soul tends to be seen as on a level with hypostasis Soul to a greater extent than in other writings.

In this light we may look at certain passages in two late treatises, V.3 [49] and I.1 [53], which look as if they may lower the status of the individual intellect from that which it is usually thought to have enjoyed in certain earlier writings. The picture is not entirely clear, and the problem would be less serious if there were not the difficulties we have discussed about where to draw the line between Soul and *Nous*. At V.3.3.23-6 Plotinus talks of a *nous* which is ours other than that which thinks discursively, and on top of it, but still ours even if we do not count it among the parts of the soul. Here we seem to have the usually accepted standard position. In the next chapter, however, at lines 20 ff., Plotinus seems to envisage self-knowledge taking place when we use a power of the soul above διάνοια—a power which must be our *nous*—and see a *Nous* which is really above us: ἄλλη δύναμις προσχρησάμενοι νοῦν αὐτὸ γινώσκοντα ἑαυτὸν κατοψόμεθα ἢ ἐκεῖνον μεταλαμβάνοντες, ἐπειπερ κακῆνος ἡμέτερος καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐκείνου⁽⁵⁵⁾. The ἄλλη δύναμις is probably a power between διάνοια and *Nous* itself, and that would be our *nous* at the level of hypostasis Soul, but here too Plotinus' words could be taken to mean that even a part of *Nous* itself is attached to our soul: then the use of the ἄλλη δύναμις would enable us to see itself as a *nous* which is in fact identical with it. Similar difficulties are presented by other passages in this treatise⁽⁵⁶⁾. The situation might once again be that Plotinus is concerned with the contrast between the self-knowledge allowed by that direct grasp of an object identical to the

(53) For the term μέσον cfr. I. 1.11.4.

(54) Here we may compare III. 4.6.21-3: χρὴ γὰρ οἰεσθαι καὶ κόσμον εἶναι ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἡμῶν μὴ μόνον νοητόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ψυχῆς τῆς κόσμου ὁμοειδῆ διάθεσιν: if the καὶ means 'and furthermore', then the top part of our soul is here too seen as being on a level with the world-soul. If ψυχῆς τῆς κόσμου ὁμοειδῆ διάθεσιν is to be taken as something additional to the κόσμος νοητός then we seem to have two transcendent layers of the individual soul, parallel with the world-soul and the κόσμος νοητός.

(55) This is part of a question: it is answered in the affirmative.

(56) Other doubtful passages in V. 3 are 4.8-10, 7.25-7, 8.44-8 and 9.7 ff.

subject which may be said to characterize the whole of the intelligible when the differences within it are not being stressed, and the inability of the discursive level to produce such self-knowledge.

We may look at some doubtful passages in I.1 in a similar way. Here Plotinus says that *nous* is common to all because it is indivisible, but that each of us has it as his own: ὅτι ἔχει καὶ ἕκαστος αὐτὸν ὅλον ἐν ψυχῇ τῇ πρώτῃ (I.1.8.3-6). Ψυχῇ τῇ πρώτῃ could mean the hypostasis, and here we may compare the phrase τῇ μὲν πρώτῃ τῇ μετὰ νοῦν in the next treatise (I.7 [54]. 2.6-7), or it could mean the top part of each individual soul: the latter seems less likely, but if it were what Plotinus means then the individual soul would in fact reach up into the hypostasis *Nous*. That is also suggested by I.1.9.13-15. The difficulty of interpreting these two treatises in this respect is crystallized in the last sentence of I.1, μέρος γὰρ καὶ οὗτοι (νοῦς) ἡμῶν καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον ἔνιμεν. Professor Theiler thinks that Plotinus is merely exaggerating in calling *nous* a part of us. One could object that if any part of *Nous*, or the intelligible, is in us, then so is the whole, but in so far as Plotinus is discussing what belongs to the individual and what does not he should be more precise. If Theiler is right then the intention of the closing remark would not be inconsistent with what seems to be the meaning of the passage in chapter 8.

On balance then it seems that these two treatises regard our *nous* as being in Soul, but the balance does not tilt very far. It may be that Plotinus' statements are so irritatingly ambiguous just because he was not here particularly interested in making the distinctions we are trying to find. Just as in the passages in V.3 he finds the conditions for self-knowledge in direct intuition and wishes merely to distinguish the kind of thought where they exist from that where they do not, so in I.1 he is basically concerned to define the ζῆλον, and so to distinguish what is and what is not part of the sensible man. Any distinctions within the intelligible are less important. But I think that these passages require a more detailed treatment than they can be given here and am prepared to find that my present view of them is inadequate. It is a question that I hope we might discuss. For the moment let it be said that in these discussions of the individual soul we seem to find that Plotinus will be less careful of differences within the intelligible than he would be if he were concerned primarily with these. And so the situation is very similar to that which we found when looking at *Nous* and soul *qua* hypostases. But while this way of looking at some of the problems may be helpful, we should not assume that it will solve them all (58).

(57) *ad loc.* THEILER compares V.3.3.24 ff.

(58) I should like to thank Professor ARMSTRONG for reading and criticizing a draft of this paper.

SOUL, WORLD-SOUL AND INDIVIDUAL SOUL IN PLOTINUS

RÉSUMÉ

Plotin affirme que toutes les âmes ne sont qu'une âme ; cette âme unique inclut l'âme du monde et les âmes individuelles. Pourtant toutes les âmes peuvent se comporter de manière différente, en particulier l'âme du monde. Cette situation engendre des incohérences. Le présent exposé est destiné à définir ce que sont exactement ces incohérences, ainsi que leur origine et leur étendue.

Plotin parle peu de la nature des différentes âmes. Au premier abord, on ne voit pas clairement s'il y a deux ou trois sortes d'âmes ; mais on peut finalement constater qu'il y a chez Plotin trois sortes d'âme et que l'âme du monde est différente de l'Âme-hypostase. Les âmes individuelles sont en théorie égales, par leur statut, à l'âme du monde. Plotin ne donne pas d'explication satisfaisante des différences qui existent entre les âmes individuelles ou entre celles-ci et l'âme du monde. Quand il examine les activités des différentes âmes, leur égalité disparaît. Ces différences paraissent résulter du corps. C'est encore une nouvelle incohérence, puisque les différences entre les corps sont produites en premier lieu par l'âme. De la même manière, le corps semble contrôler l'étendue de l'âme et il ne devrait pas en être ainsi. La supériorité de l'âme du monde sur les âmes individuelles provient du fait qu'elle possède un corps supérieur : de même les caractéristiques des âmes individuelles résultent de différences de corps et de milieu environnant, donc aussi des passions, auxquelles l'âme du monde n'est pas sujette. Le modèle qui régit les relations entre les âmes est le suivant : elles sont unies au sommet, divergent au plan de la raison et de la sensation et, curieusement, se réunissent au point le plus bas.

It is well known that Plotinus frequently asserts that all souls are one, a unity which includes both the world soul and the soul of each individual. It is equally well-known that all these souls can and do behave in different ways in spite of their fundamental unity. In particular the world-soul is very different in its conduct, if not in its essence, from the souls with which it is supposed to be identical. That these two positions are in fact inconsistent must be evident to all students of Plotinus, even though the point has not received much attention. In a way this is not surprising,