

LOGOS

Logos is perhaps the most difficult term in Greek philosophy. Everyone knows the opening words of St John's Gospel: 'In the beginning was the *Logos*.' Students of the ancient world recall Heraclitus asking his hearers not to listen to him but to the *logos*,¹ and when they meet the term in Plotinus they sometimes find it impossible not to be struck by the resemblance to the *Logos* of Philo.² But such comparisons and the associated meanings they bring with them can often be more misleading than the reverse, and sometimes they involve a host of embarrassing questions. Such questions would be: 'Did Plotinus read Philo?, Had he ever heard of Philo?, Who did read Philo other than Jews and Christians?' 'But Plotinus read Numenius³ and found Philonic ideas there.' Yet there is no trace of the Philonic *Logos* in what we know of Numenius. When we are dealing with the term *logos* in Plotinus, therefore, we shall do well to disregard the *logoi* of others until we can discover, from the text of the *Enneads* themselves, exactly what Plotinus' own views were.

It has sometimes been said that a *logos* in Plotinus is the representative of a superior kind of reality at a lower level. Thus Noûs would be the *logos* of the One and Soul the *logos* of Noûs. I have however found only two passages which state this principle: 5.1.6.48ff. and 6.4.11.16. In the former the translation is not absolutely certain. We read as follows: οἶον καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ λόγος νοῦ καὶ ἐνέργεια τις, ὡςπερ αὐτὸς ἐκείνου. It is preferable to follow the majority of scholars in supposing that Plotinus is saying that just as Soul is in some way a *logos* and activity of Noûs, so Noûs is a *logos* and activity of the One; but it is just possible that Noûs is said to be not a *logos* of the One, but simply its activity. If, however, Plotinus is saying that Noûs is a *logos* of the One, there seems to be only

one parallel passage in the *Enneads*; and there is another which suggests that although the term might be used carelessly in this way, yet strictly speaking not Noûs but only Soul can be regarded as a *logos*. If the One were a Form, says Plotinus,⁴ then Noûs could be called a *logos*; since the One is not limited by form, but is the creator of form, then, we are to understand, Noûs cannot be a *logos*. And the only possible conclusion from this passage must be that a *logos* is the representative of something determinate and informed. It must be not the representative of the One, but only the representative of Noûs. It must be connected first and foremost, as at 5.1.3.13, with the representation of the Forms at the next level of reality, the level of Soul.

This being the case, it is necessary to enquire in general terms at this stage how Plotinus understands the nature and functions of Soul. We know that there is a Soul of the world and that there are particular souls, and that in some sense the existence of the one implies the existence of the others. Of this Soul or souls there are, as all commentators agree, two parts. One part is engaged in eternal contemplation of its priors;⁵ the other has 'come down' and created the world of material objects and particulars. The part which always remains 'above' in the Intelligible World⁶ will not be recognized by us unless we have attuned the *whole* of our soul to live in accordance with it. We have activities of that part of the soul which are normally unknown to us, just as we have perpetual (but unconscious) desires which are only brought to the surface when we grasp them, as Plotinus puts it (4.8.8.10-11), by our faculty of sense or our faculty of reason or both.

Now we have seen that soul has been described as a *logos* of Noûs. Our next task therefore is to see exactly what this means. *Logos* in the passage of 5.1.6 is associated with 'activity', and the natural sense of that passage would be that the term *logos* is to be understood of that part of the soul which does not remain at the level of Noûs and in contemplation of Noûs but carries the Forms, as Reason-Principles (λόγοι),⁷ into

matter, and thus differentiates matter in accordance with the individual Forms. We should expect therefore that the term *logos* would be applied to the power, originally derived from *Noûs*, by which the World Soul imparts its order to material objects. We should see that such a *logos* would be parallel to the *Logos* of Philo in that it organizes the world, but different in that it is not a hypostasis or level of reality in its own right. It would be an aspect of soul, to be understood, like soul in general, in terms of its origins in the Intelligible World, but also acting as a link between that world and material objects. If that is true, there would be no reason to think of it as an hypostasis in its own right.

But before we can go on to document this position from the *Enneads* themselves, a preliminary difficulty must be faced. If we say that there is a part of our soul that is perpetually 'above', how are we justified in calling such a part soul at all? Is not this superior part of us really a part of *Noûs*? Is this not what Plotinus means when he tells us, for example, that each of us is an intelligible world (ἑσμεν ἕκαστος κόσμος νοητός)?⁸ Does Plotinus not mean that the human being has within himself a part of the world of Forms?

It might be suggested that some such idea as this was what lay behind Plotinus' attitude to Forms of individual living things in *Ennead* 5.7.⁹ Indeed Cherniss¹⁰ has stated that 'the "individuals" for which Plotinus posits ideas are not the particular phenomena but only living organisms, and these "ideas of individuals" are simply the individual souls (*Enn.* 5.7: ἢ εἰ μὲν αἰεὶ Σωκράτης καὶ ψυχὴ Σωκράτους ἔσται αὐτοσωκράτης ὡς λέγεται ἐκεῖ, καθ' ὃ ἡ ψυχὴ καθέκαστα καὶ ἐκεῖ)'. What Cherniss seems to mean by this is that the eternal part of Socrates' soul must be identified with the Form of Socrates (αὐτοσωκράτης). It is a part of Cherniss' purpose to compare this supposed attitude of Plotinus with Aristotle's double use of the word *εἶδος* to refer to both form and soul, but the comparison leads to a very strange interpretation of Plotinus. If Cherniss is right, Plotinus has in fact so far blurred his distinc-

tion between Soul and *Noûs* as to make it worthless. Cherniss' argument would seem to be that whatever is immortal, such as the soul of Socrates, or at any rate its highest part, must be a Form. Hence the soul of Socrates (the highest part?) will be the Form of Socrates. There are however a number of objections to this. In 4.7.14, for example, we are told that when man's *tripartite* soul is separated from the body at death, not only will the highest part have the possibility of being detached from the two lower—which are specifically associated with terrestrial existence—but even the lower parts will not perish, since their source will not pass away.¹¹ We are presumably to understand that they will be put to other purposes in the cosmos. The point is therefore that immortality of some kind is the mark not only of *Noûs* but of the products of *Noûs*. Hence there is no reason to suppose that the soul of Socrates, if immortal, is identified with his Form.

What then does Plotinus mean when he says that each of us is an Intelligible World? We should immediately be aware of the strangeness of this statement. It is true that the whole man is able to contemplate the Forms and thus, momentarily, to be identified with them; but the whole man has other functions than contemplation in the hierarchy of being—functions which *Noûs* has not. Hence it would be no more true to say, 'We are each of us an Intelligible World', than it would be to say, 'We are each of us not an Intelligible World' (cf. 5.3.3.31). Similarly, since union with the One is within the range of every man's possibilities, we might say, 'Each of us is one with the One'. In itself, of course, this statement would be quite misleading as well as true. We should have to add, 'Each of us is not one with the One'. In fact, the explanation of 'Each of us is an Intelligible World' is quite simple. The idea is as much Aristotelian as Platonic and must be understood in terms of its Aristotelian roots. As Theiler has pointed out,¹² the notion of thinking of ourselves in terms of our 'dominant' part is fairly common in Aristotle. Plotinus has taken it over and for him 'dominant' would mean 'superior in the hier-

archy of reality'. Thus to say that each of us is an Intelligible World would mean that our souls are produced and governed by Νοῦς and are able to maintain contact with their source. It does not mean, as Cherniss' account of Ideas of individuals would require it to mean, that since our higher soul is simply a Form, Plotinus could do without the hypostasis of soul altogether, and content himself with speaking of Νοῦς and its λόγοι in the material world.

There are a few further remarks to be made. We have suggested that the highest aspect of our souls, the part which contemplates the Forms and does not descend, is still to be regarded as soul and not as Νοῦς, nor even as the 'Form of an individual'. But it might be objected that since to contemplate the world of Forms is the prerogative of the hypostasis of Νοῦς and since indeed Νοῦς is *identical* with its objects, then how can the highest soul *not* be a Form? A first response—perhaps merely *ad hominem*—would be: Does Plotinus then make the World Soul a Form? Is it identical with the Form of Living Creature? Why then does Plotinus call it a Soul? Why does Plotinus bracket Νοῦς and 'pure soul' together, though apparently as separate entities, at, for example, 3.3.5.17? Above all, perhaps, what is the meaning of the suggestion at 2.9.1.31 ff. that *logos* from Νοῦς makes Soul intellectual (ψυχὴν νοερὰν ποιῶν)? Could the solution be that although in the realm of Forms the hypostasis itself and all its parts are both intellectual powers and the objects of knowledge in themselves, yet Soul in itself is only intellectual and not, at least in the same sense, an *object* of intellection (νοερὸν but not νοητόν)? For indeed only the individual could know his own soul (cf. γνῶθι σεαυτόν), but the Forms must be the common objects of knowledge present to everything that has the power of knowing.

What we are suggesting therefore is that there is an intellectual power present at the level of Soul. In this respect Soul and Νοῦς are alike. Νοῦς however comprises the World of intelligible objects, which Soul does not; Soul on the other

hand has its own sphere of operation and emanation, different from that of Νοῦς and essential in the nature of things.

Perhaps the passage which makes the intellectual rôle of Soul, in this case the World Soul, clearest is 4.8.8.14 ff. Here Plotinus tells us that the World Soul has no power of discursive reason (λογισμός) as we have, but that it acts by purely intellectual means in its administration of the cosmos (τὸ ὅλον κοσμεῖ ὑπερέχουσα ἀπόνως, ὅτι μηδ' ἐκ λογισμοῦ, ὡς ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ νῶ). So it is not only the second Hypostasis, that of the Divine Mind, which has some kind of power of intellection. The World Soul, and, of course, the highest undescended aspect of our individual souls, have it too. Such soul 'remains', as Plotinus puts it at 5.1.10.23, among the objects of intellection—which it is able to recognize for what they are. We should notice however that our view of 4.8.8.14 must be modified by the nearly contemporaneous 5.1.3, where in l. 13 we read that the soul has intellection, but that this intellection is discursive (ἐν λογισμοῖς). This looks at first a straight contradiction of 4.8, but the truth of the matter probably is that the higher soul is somehow intermediate between discursive reasoning and νοῦς. Its objects are the intelligibles, but it has to look *up* to them (i.e. to Νοῦς) rather than within itself as Νοῦς does. Nevertheless even in 5.1.3 Plotinus still calls the soul νοερὰ.

We are now in a position to consider what is perhaps the clearest passage in which Plotinus distinguishes the functions of Νοῦς and Soul: 4.8.3.21 ff. The task of the soul in its more rational aspect (the higher part) is intellection, but intellection is not the soul's only function. If it were, how could it be distinguished from Νοῦς? The fact is that the soul is, as has often been said, a 'bridge-being'. Its peculiar task as soul is *both* to grasp its prior hypostasis, the World of Forms, and, as Plotinus goes on to say in our passage, to look to itself and in looking also to see what comes after itself. When it has seen this, it arranges it and directs it and rules it. It acts, as we shall see later, as Providence. Here then is the distinction of essential soul from Νοῦς. Soul is *essentially* concerned not only with

contemplation but also with the creation and administration of the world of nature. In this it represents the upward and downward movement which is common to the whole of Plotinus' system. Noûs contemplates the One and creates Soul. Soul contemplates Noûs and creates matter. We can see therefore that although the part of the soul which remains above in contemplation might be called our true self, it is neither itself a form nor indeed could it exist without the world-ruling aspects of the soul which are below it. It is regarded as our true self in Aristotelian fashion according to the principle by which an object as a whole is named after its dominant and superior part.

Now that we have seen something of the activity and life of the hypostasis of Soul in general, we can return to the problem of Soul and the *logos* of Noûs. It should be clear by now that the undescended part of the soul—which remains 'above' in contemplation—can hardly be regarded as the *logos* of Noûs if *logos* means any kind of representative. Rather we should look for an understanding of *logos* in terms of the whole soul and its products.

At this point the question of Plotinus' consistency comes up. Armstrong has suggested that in the treatises on *Providence* (3.2 and 3.3) the treatment of *logos* shows 'a remarkable development' of Plotinus' thought.¹³ It has long been recognized that these treatises are much influenced by Stoicism,¹⁴ but Armstrong holds that Plotinus has committed himself to his source-material to such an extent that his general doctrine of the three hypostases of the One, Noûs and Soul is compromised. He tells us that 'this is the most extreme modification which the doctrine of the three hypostases ever undergoes in the *Enneads*. The *Logos* is a fourth hypostasis even more clearly than nature, and a hypostasis, moreover, whose own structure is complex.' *Logos*, continues Armstrong, takes the place of Soul as an intermediary between Noûs and the visible world. It is very closely tied to Noûs (without mention of Soul) at 3.2.2.15 ff.; and at 3.2.16.13 ff., although it is said to be a

shining out (ἐκλαμψίς) from both Noûs and Soul, the connection with Noûs is important and Soul itself is said to be 'disposed in accordance with' Noûs when the *logos* is produced. Armstrong goes into further detail about the nature of this *logos*-hypostasis, as it appears to him to be, but as his evidence is largely drawn from parts of the *Enneads* other than the treatises on Providence it can hardly help to forward the case that the treatises offer a radically different view of the *logos*.

Armstrong however has further arguments about the treatises on Providence which we must consider.¹⁵ The *Logos* is, he tells us, represented here as the sole intermediary between the 'higher and lower worlds'. It combines the functions of the higher soul—Armstrong seems to refer here to the regulative power which the soul has over the visible universe—and of the lower soul or nature, which has a unifying or life-giving force and which maintains the cosmos in existence.¹⁶ Armstrong's view is therefore that the levels of reality below Noûs are Soul (which is undescended), and *Logos* (which is a product of Noûs and undescended soul together). As he himself puts it: 'Soul has withdrawn entirely to the higher world, to the realm of Noûs, there presumably to engage in its primary activity of contemplation. Its *secondary* activity [my italics] of generating and governing the sense-world has been taken over by the *Logos*. The two, of course, though distinct, are not for Plotinus separate. The *Logos* is of the nature of soul.¹⁷ They are, however, to be distinguished as clearly as soul and nature in the earlier treatises, though the *Logos* cannot, as we have seen, be correlated with nature or the lower soul.'

The problem which faces us at this stage is to determine whether anything Plotinus says about *logos* in the treatises on Providence is inconsistent with what he says about Soul elsewhere. We shall recall of course that we have already observed that Soul has two functions, one, that of its undescended part, of pure contemplation, and the other concerned with the direction of the visible universe. Our first inclination would be to say that this latter function is what Plotinus calls *logos* in the

treatises on Providence. Before considering this, however, we must investigate the relationship of soul and nature, for these too Armstrong tends to see as *separate* hypostases.

Armstrong's view is that we should take a passage of 5.2.1 in a rigorously literal fashion.¹⁸ When Soul gets down to the level of plants, it produces another hypostasis, says Plotinus (ὑπόστασιν ἄλλην ποιησαμένη). This 'hypostasis' is of course nature. Armstrong is aware that such a fourth hypostasis is precisely what Plotinus denies in 2.9.1 and 2.9.2, but tends to explain away the emphasis there on only three levels of reality as a strong protest against the absurd Gnostic proliferation of hypostases. But what would be the point of Plotinus' protesting that there are only three levels of reality if a Gnostic could quote from Plotinus himself that there are four? Armstrong claims that in 5.2.1 the process by which nature is produced from Soul is exactly that by which any one Plotinian hypostasis normally proceeds from another. Yet the process in 5.2.1 is *not* in fact of such a kind. In 5.2.1 the new 'hypostasis' nature is not produced, as is the normal Plotinian hypostasis, as the result of the contemplation by a being of its prior, but by its desire for what is inferior to itself. It is normal Plotinian doctrine that Νοῦς in contemplation of the One produces Soul. Yet according to 5.2.1 Soul in desire for its inferior (προόδῳ καὶ προθυμίᾳ τοῦ χείρονος) produces nature. Nature is thus not produced in the manner natural for a Plotinian hypostasis. Hence we may well doubt in what sense it is an hypostasis at all. The mere use of the word ὑπόστασις proves nothing. Plotinus is hardly rigorous in his use even of his most technical terms. The fact is that were the word ὑπόστασις not present in 5.2.1 the account of the appearance of nature would differ little from the normal Plotinian account of it as an aspect of the soul. We should compare the remark in 2.9.2 that trouble (πάθος) comes to the soul when it leaves the realm of Beauty with the picture in 5.2.1.18 of the soul both as being fulfilled by looking up to Νοῦς and remaining static in contemplation, and also as taking on movement and producing—

what? Not an hypostasis, but an image (εἶδωλον). And that image is nature.

There is a further textual point before we leave 5.2.1, which, though not certain enough to settle the matter by itself, is to my mind convincing and may certainly be used as additional confirmation once the general tenor of the chapter is clear. Henry and Schwyzer print in line 23 καὶ δοκεῖ καὶ ἡ ἄνω ψυχὴ μέχρι φυτῶν φθάνειν. This ἄνω is an emendation of Harder's for the ἀνθρώπου of the manuscripts, and, as Henry and Schwyzer indicate, ἄνω could easily be corrupted into the standard scribal abbreviation of ἀνθρώπου. Now if ἄνω is correct—and it certainly makes good sense—Plotinus is speaking here in his customary manner of the upper part of the soul, the undescended part, and comparing it with the lower part that organizes matter. Thus we should have two parts of the soul, the 'upper' soul and the 'hypostasis' of nature (produced in its peculiar way), and the chapter would once again seem perfectly in accord with Plotinus' normal views on the nature and aspects of the soul.

Armstrong has offered another piece of evidence about nature. In 2.3.9, he points out, we find a distinction between θεός and δαίμων. Θεός, Armstrong believes, represents the soul; δαίμων represents nature. The distinction of hypostases is thus in his view further emphasized. But a recollection of the rôle of δαίμονες in the *Symposium* should set this right. Δαίμονες link the visible world with the divine, yet they are indeed immortal, though inferior to the Gods. But nobody denies that the lower phase of soul (nature) is inferior to the higher. In view of these difficulties therefore we must conclude that Armstrong's verdict that the 'lower soul' really stands in much the same relation to the higher as Soul to Νοῦς is unproven. Since Armstrong's case fails to stand up to scrutiny, we should do better to rely on Plotinus' own words (e.g. in 2.9.1) and maintain three and only three hypostases—at least as far as nature is concerned.

Having cleared the difficulties about nature from the path,

we can return to the question of *logos*. The crux of Armstrong's case is that the *logos* of the treatises on Providence 'combines [my italics] the functions of the two universal soul-hypostases of the earlier treatises, the higher-soul and nature. The *logos* is in direct contact with matter. The division between the higher and lower phases of universal-soul is represented by a division between a higher and lower *Logos* or Pronoia (3.3.4).¹⁹ What we must do therefore is examine some of the uses of *logos* outside the treatises on Providence and compare them with the uses in these treatises themselves, and see if there are any significant differences. In the course of this examination we shall also be able to test Armstrong's opinion that nature in Plotinus is a 'unifying' and life-giving principle but that the *logos* of 3.2 and 3.3 possesses a regulative force as well.

Adapting Plato's *Phaedrus* (246c1-2) Plotinus tells us more than once that soul governs the world in accordance with *logos*.²⁰ In 4.3.9.30ff. we learn more about how this guidance takes place. The cosmos is compared to a large and varied house whose architect, while not descending to it, presides over it and looks after it from above (ἄνω γὰρ μένων ἐπιστατῆϊ). This is clearly the undescended part of the soul acting as a providential force in the universe. The chapter then continues with a wonderful comparison of the world to a net cast out in the sea of the soul and then to a shadow 'as large as the *logos* proceeding from soul'. We are to gather from what follows that the *logos* is again thought of as a regulative principle (apart from the providential 'soul above') and furthermore that it is in a sense connected with Noῦς as well as with the higher soul. What Plotinus says is that it 'is of scope to generate a cosmic bulk as vast as lay in the purposes of the Idea which it conveys'. *Logos*, then, 'conveys' the Forms into the particulars which it creates, thus giving them order as well as being. This is certainly what we should expect, for the hypostases cannot be separated and anything that is a part of soul as a whole—as is the *logos*—will possess marked characteristics of the cause of Soul, that is, of Noῦς.

That *logos* has a marked connection with Noῦς throughout the *Enneads* can be further demonstrated. A metaphorical account of its 'bursting into the garden of Soul' appears in part of the allegorization of Plato's story of the birth of *Eros* in 3.5.9: 'This means that the *logos*, upon the birth of Aphrodite, left the Intellectual for the Soul, breaking into the garden of Zeus. A garden is a place of beauty and a glory of wealth; all the loveliness that Zeus maintains takes its splendour from the *logos* within him; for all this beauty is the radiation of the Divine Intellect upon the Divine Soul, which it has penetrated.' A second example is to be found at 5.1.7.42ff. Here again *logos* appears in an interesting situation. It seems to be identified with Soul. It has two aspects, an upper part which circles about Noῦς and is called the trace and light of Noῦς, and a lower which generates and is connected with the material world. *Logos* then is here a generic name for Soul in all its functions. Indeed it is actually called a product of Noῦς (γέννημα) and an hypostasis.

There is no need to multiply examples of this type. Outside the treatises on Providence we may find *logos* used in somewhat varying ways, but always as some aspect of the Soul seen in terms not of its immediate derivation from Noῦς but of its connection with the material world. Plotinus is no stickler for exact terminology, but *logos* tends to be used to refer to the soul especially when it is a matter of conveying the εἶδη of Noῦς into material objects. If we are to distinguish it from nature at this stage, we should do so by saying that when Plotinus thinks of nature, he thinks (as Armstrong saw, despite his wish to make nature an hypostasis) of a power of Soul regarded as a power of no more than Soul; that is, he temporarily neglects the fact that Soul itself is a product and trace of Noῦς.

We should now turn to the accounts of *logos* in the treatises on Providence themselves to see how they accord with what we have found in the rest of the *Enneads*. We shall notice in these chapters that the word nature occurs rarely²¹—an indi-

cation perhaps of the correctness of Armstrong's view that the functions of the lower soul have been taken over by the *logos*—but we need not take too much notice of differences of terminology, as we have said, unless differences of doctrine are also apparent. Νοῦς then produces *logos* at 3.2.2.15 ff. (οὗτος δὲ ὁ λόγος ἐκ νοῦ ῥυεῖς); this is very similar to what we found at 5.1.7.42. Νοῦς is again closely identified with the production of *logos* at 3.2.16.10 ff. Here we read that *logos* is neither pure νοῦς nor νοῦς by itself (ἀπτονοῦς) nor the 'kind of pure soul',²² but a sort of illumination (ἐκλαμψις) deriving from both νοῦς and soul disposed in accordance with νοῦς—by which Plotinus must mean the undescended part of the soul. Putting these passages together we see that Νοῦς is represented in the visible world by the *logos*. This *logos* does not, of course, descend directly from Νοῦς in such a way as to be dissociated completely from the undescended part of the soul. From this point of view we can bracket Νοῦς and this pure soul together and treat pure soul as an intermediary through which the Forms are transmitted unhindered to the visible world as *logoi* or the reason-principles inherent in material things. The chief significance of *logos* here then would seem to be that it is that outflow of the higher soul and of Νοῦς which is concerned with both the creation and the administration of the visible world—which is of course exactly what we saw it to be in other parts of the *Enneads*.

If we wish to see this *logos* as clearly as possible in these treatises, we can find the most detailed analysis of its functions in 3.3.4, which we must therefore examine at length. The passage is one of the most obscure in the whole of the *Enneads*—which means that some of it cannot be translated with any certainty—but at least it is clear that Providence in the widest sense is to be understood as the mere existence of the highest part of the Soul. From this descends a *logos* to the visible world and this *logos* can be understood in two aspects. One aspect is creative (ποιητικός) while the other, while connected with the first (συννημμένος ἐκείνω), should be thought of as linking

superiors to inferiors. In terms of the dynamic of Plotinus' system, this seems to mean that *logos* can be understood first as a creative force deriving providentially from the higher soul (and ultimately from Νοῦς), and secondly as the opposite force to the creative procession, namely the return of the emanated products to their source. This return, we would suspect, is what gives the products of emanation whatever form they have at this level, just as at a higher level the return of the Indefinite Dyad to the One shapes the clear-cut Forms of the Intelligible World.²³

If therefore Armstrong is right, as he seems to be, in thinking that nature is a creative rather than a regulative force in the *Enneads* in general, we may conclude that it is to all intents and purposes here to be identified with one aspect of *logos*, namely the λόγος ποιητικός. But *logos* has another aspect too, and an aspect which is also peculiarly connected with Νοῦς, that is, an aspect which represents the power to turn back to one's source and in such turning to find one's own *order* in the universe.

So far we have shown that there is no real inconsistency between the account of *logos* in the treatises on Providence and that elsewhere in the *Enneads*, and that the *logos* of the treatises on Providence does not replace the Soul as an hypostasis mediating between Νοῦς and the visible world. Outside the treatises on Providence Soul is composed of two phases, of which the lower is concerned with the visible world. This phase is often called a *logos* and it represents Νοῦς in the visible world. In the treatises on Providence the same idea occurs. The *logos* is quite simply that power of Soul concerned with the visible world which can itself be seen in two aspects. The 'outflowing' creative aspect is what is normally called nature, though when Plotinus uses that term he prefers to think of products of Soul rather than to go back and refer Soul itself to its origins in the World of Forms. And since nature is concerned with the creation of the visible world rather than with its ordering, Providence is not associated with nature but with the *logos* in general.

This general position is confirmed in the extraordinary *Ennead* 3.8 on Contemplation. Plotinus begins (3.8.3.1) as follows: 'But if this Reason-Principle (nature) is an act—and produces by the process indicated—how can it have any part in Contemplation? To begin with, since in all its production it is stationary and intact, a Reason-Principle self-indwelling, it is in its own nature a Contemplative act. All doing must be guided by a *logos* and will therefore be distinct from *logos*: the Reason-Principle (λόγος) then, as accompanying and guiding the work, will be distinct from the work; not being action but Reason-Principle it is, necessarily, Contemplation. Taking the Reason-Principle, the *Logos* in all its phases, the lowest and last springs from a mental act (in the higher *Logos*) and is itself a contemplation, though only in the sense of being contemplated, but above it stands the total *Logos* with its two distinguishable phases, first, that identified not as Nature but as All-Soul, and, next, that operating in Nature and being itself the Nature-Principle' (trans. MacKenna-Page, slightly adapted).

If we recall that for Plotinus a lower level of reality is regarded as 'in' a higher, as *Noûs* is in the One, body in Soul and so on, this passage about the 'two distinguishable phases' of *logos* becomes clear. *Logos* in general is the offspring of *Noûs* through the undescended part of the soul: it descends to matter. Within this general *logos* is the phase which we call nature and which actually creates this material world. It was perhaps a little rash of Plotinus to distinguish even formally this out-going factor from its return to its source in the treatises on Providence, but we recall that even there the two are said to be 'connected'. It is in the light of this connection that we should view the 'shadowy contemplation', that is, the return to its source, which is allowed to nature in 3.8. And indeed this 'contemplation' is only what we should expect if nature is to create at all, for all creation derives from the contemplative process.

If then we are to conclude that there is little point in regard-

ing *logos* (or nature) as an hypostasis distinct from soul, what have we learned about the nature of reality in general according to Plotinus? What have the One, *Noûs* and Soul in common which *logos* (seen apart from Soul) and nature do not have? The answer is: The full power of contemplation. Only the One, *Noûs* and Soul can contemplate and only what can contemplate can be fully real. That is why the Soul is the lowest element of the 'real world' of Plotinus' philosophy. If we try to abstract elements out of Soul, like the *logos* or nature, we find that by themselves they can only dream of contemplation and that their products are the ever-changing unreal particulars. As we have seen, *logos* and nature are aspects or functions of Soul. If they were not what they are, as Plotinus himself says, then Soul would not be Soul, but *Noûs*. The apparent distinction of *logos* or nature from the general hypostasis Soul to which they belong is a mark of Soul's being itself not a One-Many (as is *Noûs*, the complex of mind and its object) but a One and Many, a third stage of progression away from the One. A fourth stage in this series could only be a Many without Unity at all, and this could only be the indefinite, unformed material base of the world, the last term in the procession from Unity to multiplicity.

Finally we may return to the question of whether the *logos*, as understood by Plotinus, bears the marks of previous thought. Armstrong finds it impossible not to be struck by the resemblance to the *logos* of Philo.²⁴ 'The Philonian *logos*, like that of Plotinus', he says, 'is the principle of unity-in-diversity, of the separation and uniting of contraries in the material world.' He adds, rightly, that so far the resemblance between the two philosophies could be explained by the indebtedness of both to Stoicism. He continues, however, by saying that what brings Plotinus in the treatises on Providence very close to Philo is the fact that '*logos* is, more than any other hypostasis (*sic*) in the *Enneads*, presented simply as an intermediary between the Divine and the material world. . . In the same way,' continues Armstrong, 'the *logos* of Philo is simply

an intermediary between God and the material creation.²⁵ But *logos*, as we well know, is an extraordinarily ambiguous word in antiquity and Armstrong's account of it in Philo seems to leave too much out. The *logos* of Philo is, for example, the place of Forms,²⁶ that is, it is more like Plotinus' Νοῦς than his *logos*.

Let us compare the uses of *logos* in Philo and Plotinus a little further. Following the Stoics, Philo regularly distinguished a λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and a λόγος προφορικός.²⁷ For the Stoics these phrases meant 'reasoning in the soul' and 'uttered speech' respectively. Philo however often associates the former with the Intelligible World and the Ideas, and the latter with the visible world.²⁸ As an equivalent of προφορικός he often uses the word γεγωνός and he speaks of this λόγος as an 'interpreter' (ἑρμηνεύς).²⁹ Let us compare this record with that of Plotinus. Plotinus speaks of a λόγος γεγωνός at 5.1.6.9. Now this is very curious, since Philo seems to be the only other writer whose extant works contain this phrase—and he uses it fairly often. If von Arnim is any index of the Stoic evidence, the phrase was not used in the Old Stoa; nor does it appear in Marcus Aurelius. It must have been used by writers other than Philo, but Philo is the only pre-Plotinian writer I can find who has it. This fact, though not very significant in itself, should at least encourage us to look further. Plotinus, we then find, knows of the doctrine of the two *logoi* (ἐνδιάθετος and προφορικός). He makes use of this distinction in at least two places in the *Enneads*: 1.2.3.27 and 5.1.3.7.³⁰ What he says in these passages fits well together. In 1.2.3.27 λόγος ἐν φωνῇ (the equivalent of προφορικός) is an imitation (μίμημα) of λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ (= ἐνδιάθετος). Similarly λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ is an imitation and an interpreter (ἑρμηνεύς) of Νοῦς. In 5.1.3.7 the λόγος ἐν προφορῶ is an image (εἰκὼν) of the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ (= ἐνδιάθετος) while the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ is an image of νοῦς. First we may notice a similarity with Philo. The word ἑρμηνεύς is used in discussing the two *logoi* in both Philo and Plotinus. But there is also a difference. In Philo it

is the λόγος προφορικός which is an 'interpreter' while in Plotinus this rôle is played by the λόγος ἐν ψυχῇ (or ἐνδιάθετος). The fact of the matter is that Plotinus has not followed Philo in fixing the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος in the world of Forms. If Plotinus had followed Philo, this *logos* would have been his second hypostasis—which it is not. Like the Stoics, but unlike Philo, Plotinus has employed both *logoi* at the level of the World Soul.³¹

What then must our general conclusion be? The use of the word ἑρμηνεύς—in different ways—in the two authors can be given little weight. It is certainly curious that apart from Plotinus Philo is to my knowledge the only author to use γεγωνός in this technical sense, but the fact that the phrase cannot be traced does not mean that it was not used, and we can base little on it. We should notice that, as has been pointed out,³² the *sense* of the distinction between προφορικός and ἐνδιάθετος—if not the actual words—goes back to Aristotle and Plato. It was then the most general possible commonplace, and since we lack further evidence we must regard the word γεγωνός simply as a curiosity. So far the evidence that Plotinus knew Philo is at best inconclusive.

And there are more general considerations. Who did read Philo in antiquity? As far as one can tell, the only people to do so were Jews and Christians or at least persons interested in Judaism.³³ Numenius *may* have read him; on a *priori* grounds at any rate Plotinus did not. And from what we know of Numenius' work, there is nothing to suggest that he took over anything which might introduce Plotinus to the Philonian *logos*.

Whatever slight similarities there are between Philo's *logos* and Plotinus' are almost certainly accidental. There is a good deal of Stoicism in Plotinus' conception; there are even echoes, *via* this Stoicism, of the *logos* of the world in Heraclitus, but in the main we shall be on safe ground if, until further evidence comes to light, we interpret Plotinus' *logos* out of Plotinus' text. The peculiar relation in the *Enneads* of Νοῦς, Soul, *logos*

and nature is not to be found—or even approximately found—in any earlier philosophy. If the connection of *logos* with Providence recalls the Stoics, the association with *Noûs* denies them. Whatever *logos* may mean to other ancient thinkers, it means to Plotinus that aspect of Soul which by transmitting the creative Forms creates, maintains and orders the visible world. And as Soul embraces all individual souls, so the *logos* embraces individual *logoi*.

THE SENSIBLE OBJECT

Dean Inge's view of Plotinus' doctrine of categories is hardly complimentary:¹ 'The long discussion of the Categories in the Sixth Ennead seems to me. . . the least interesting part of the whole book.' There is little doubt that the impression of dullness which often comes upon the reader when attempting this section of Plotinus' work is not least accountable to its difficulty. Those who know something of the history of ancient philosophy are aware that the whole critique of the Aristotelian categories is based on a long tradition of Stoic and Middle Platonic exegesis;² those mediievally inclined point out that for all Plotinus' attack on Aristotle, his pupil Porphyry installed the Aristotelian logic as the groundwork of Neoplatonic metaphysics. Yet although no one can deny the difficulty and sometimes the tedium of this section of the *Enneads* it has considerable philosophical value. It appears to be the opinion of certain polemical interpreters that Plotinus' whole discussion is misguided³—and so it is if looked at solely from an Aristotelian point of view. For the fact is that Plotinus' critique of both the Aristotelian and the Stoic categories depends upon certain of his own thoroughly Platonic principles. And these principles need clarification not merely to show the presuppositions with which Plotinus approaches the Aristotelian categories but for their own sake, since in the sections of the *Enneads* devoted to the categories we find almost the only passages where Plotinus deals with the metaphysical status of the sensible object.

Since Aristotle's categories were intended to refer to *σύνολα*—composites of form and matter—we can hardly understand a criticism of them by Plotinus unless we know how he accounts for the sensible object himself. More than that, the problem is of intrinsic importance; obviously so.