NEITHER THE MORNING, NOR THE EVENING STAR IS SO FAIR

VIRTUE AND THE SOUL OF THE WORLD

IN PLOTINUS, *TREATISE 19* (I, 2) AND *TREATISE 20* (I, 3)

by

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li raggi de le quattro luci sante
fregiavani sì la sua faccia di lume,
ch'i' l vedea come 'l sol fosse davante.

Purgatorio *i. 37-39*

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ABSTRACT

In *Treatises 19* (I, 2) and *20* (I, 3), Plotinus unfolds several 'grades' of virtue by interpreting the Platonic dialogues. Beginning with the goal of *Theaetetus*, "likeness to god", Plotinus frames his discussion with a glance to the virtue exhibited by World Soul, giving a cosmic significance to the Delphic command, "know thyself". Within this cosmic framework, the limited sphere of human, "political" virtues is subordinated to higher forms of purification. Purificatory virtue is revealed as the missing step between the political virtues and their archetypes. This step is mediatory and dynamic; as a lower form of purification, civic virtue is dignified as the necessary condition for the soul's divinisation. World Soul is the exemplary possessor of perfect virtue, and as such operates as the *mediatrix* for human souls. This particular mediation illustrates the foundation of virtue for Plotinus: the non-anthropocentric, providential activity of the most contemplative of all souls.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AJP	American Journal of Philology
Alcibiades	Plato, *Alcibiades Maior*
Armstrong	Plotinus, *Enneads.* Translated by A.H. Armstrong. 7 vols. Loeb Classical Library Series. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966-1988
Bergeron-Dufour	Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De l'âme.* Translated (French) by M. Bergeron and R. Dufour. Paris: J. Vrin, 2008
Brisson-Pradeau	Plotinus, *Traités 7-21.* Translated (French) under the direction of Luc Brisson and Jean-François Pradeau. Paris: GF Flammarion, 2003
DA	Aristotle, *De Anima*
Dam. *In Phaed.*	Damascius, *Commentary on the* Phaedo *of Plato*
Didask.	Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*. References to Alcinous give the line numbers first, followed by the chapter and page numbers of the Dillon translation (Dillon, John. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) in parentheses.
DL	Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*
Ferroni-Achard-Narbonne	*Plotin: Œuvres Complètes: Introduction, Traité 1 (I, 6) Sur le beau*. Text établi par Lorenzo Ferroni. Introduit, traduit et annoté par Martin Achard et Jean-Marc Narbonne. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012
H-S	*Plotini Opera.* Ediderunt Paul Henry et Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1982
EN	Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*
Olymp. *In Phaed.*	Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the* Phaedo *of Plato*

Prolegomena	Anonymous, *Prolegomena to the Philosophy of Plato*
Saffrey-Segonds	Marinus, *Proclus, ou sur le Bonheur (Vita Procli)*. Texte établi, traduit et annoté par H.-D. Saffrey et A. Ph. Segonds. Paris: Belles Lettres, 2001
Sent.	Porphyry, *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*. Edidit E. Lamberz. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1975. References to the *Sentences* refer first to the Porphyrian numbering, then in parentheses to the page and line number in the Lamberz edition.
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*
VP	Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter 1
Introduction

It belongs to the one who has given birth to true virtue and nourished it to become beloved of god, and if anyone among men could become immortal, would it not be he?

(Plato, *Symposium* 212a5-7)[1]

[One must show] the lover that…there is beauty in arts and sciences and virtues. Then one must make them one, and teach where they come from. But from virtues he can at once ascend to intellect, to being; and There one must go the higher way.

(Plotinus, *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 2.1, 10-13)[2]

1.1 Virtue in the Symposium

Virtue plays a crucial role in Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*. First, it is initially the *capacity* for virtue in the young man's soul that draws the lover to him and necessitates the lover's contemplation of the beauty of ways of life (ἐπιτηδεύματα), laws (νόμοι) and sciences (ἐπιστήμαι): the lover contemplates all these in order "to give birth to such ideas as will make young men better."[3] Second, as the beauty of soul, invisible to the senses, virtue is itself one of the highest objects of contemplation in the lover's ascent to the vision of Beauty Itself; though it is not named explicitly in the contemplative ascent described first at 210b6-e1 and again at 211b6-d1, it may be counted among the "fine things to be learned" (τὰ καλὰ μαθήματα) in the "great sea of beauty" (τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ). Virtue is thus what the lover seeks, and also among the things he contemplates. Finally, virtue is the very fruit of what is necessarily a productive contemplation: the lover yearns to give birth (τίκτειν) to virtue in the beloved, and it is through this yearning and the ascent which it initiates, as we have just seen, which

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[1] Plato, *Symposium* 212a-b: τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἴπέρ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ;

[2] Plotinus, *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 2.1, 11-13: ὁ δὲ ἐρωτικός…ὅτι καὶ ἐν τέχναις καὶ ἐν ἐπιστήμαις καὶ ἐν ἀρεταῖς. Εἶτα ἓν ποιητέον καὶ διδακτέον, ὅπως ἐγγίνονται. Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἀρετῶν ἤδη ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ νοῦν, ἐπὶ τὸ ὄν· κἀκεῖ βαδιστέον τὴν ἄνω πορείαν.

[3] Plato, *Symposium* 210b6-d1.

culminates in the birth of virtue within himself through the vision of Beauty. It is this birth, the birth of *true* virtue (ἀρετὴ ἀληθής), as well as its nourishment, that determines the lover's apotheosis and his belovedness in the eyes of the gods, as Diotima's final words to Socrates indicate.[1] Virtue is thus absolutely crucial to the argument of the *Symposium* in many ways, to the ascent of the soul, the culmination of her vision, and to her giving birth and consequent immortalisation. Like *Eros* in Diotima's speech, therefore, virtue too may be said to be born out of the union of Poros and Penia, the union of plenty and poverty. Virtue, it seems, is what draws the soul upward toward her principle, and yet it is also the element within the soul which can define her in contrast to the Beauty which she may be brought to behold.

1.2 Plotinus and the Symposium in Treatise 20 *(I, 3)*

In his description of the mode of the lover in *Treatise 20* (*Ennead* I, 3),[2] the second quotation in the epigraph above (*20* (I, 3) 2.10-13), Plotinus draws out rather more explicitly the role of virtue in the *Symposium*'s ladder of ascent. If virtue in the *Symposium* existed only at the level of "fine ways of life and fine laws" (ἐπιτηδεύματα καλὰ καὶ νόμους καλούς), then Plotinus' description of the lover's education in *Treatise 20* (I, 3) would represent a reversal of terms, for the virtues are the step "immediately" (ἤδη) below Intellect and Being in *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 2. But virtue in the *Symposium*—as well as in other Platonic dialogues such as the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*—in fact reveals a certain pervasiveness and polyvalence, and a sustained and careful treatment of this polyvalence is manifest throughout Plotinus' corpus. To put Diotima's account in the *Symposium* in Plotinian terms, virtue is vital both to procession and conversion, living and present not only as one rung on the ladder of beauty but at all

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[1] *Symposium* 212a5-7, quoted in the epigraph above.
[2] All references to the Plotinian corpus are given first by treatise number in chronological order, with the Porphyrian ordering given in parentheses. The text used, unless otherwise indicated, is the three-volume Oxford Classical Text: *Plotini Opera*, Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer, eds. 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1982; henceforth H-S).

levels, according to the mode of being proper to that level. We "incline to virtue", and virtue is the very substance of the incline itself: it marks the interiority of the ascent, for unlike the beauty of bodies, the beauty of soul is invisible, present either indirectly—and providentially—in the beauty of virtuous action, or immediately, to those who can recognize, however faintly, the reflection of their own soul's essence in the glimpse of another's inner order.

1.3 Virtue in Treatise 19 *(I, 2) and* Treatise 20 *(I, 3)*

Nowhere is the polyvalence of virtue in Plato and its importance as a key term in procession and conversion more thoroughly treated by Plotinus than in *Treatise 20* (I, 3), "On Dialectic", and its chronological and Enneadic partner, *Treatise 19* (I, 2), "On the Virtues". The treatment of the 'grades' of virtue laid out in these two *Treatises* is in fact crucial for Plotinus' later considerations of $\pi\rho\tilde{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and $\pi o\iota\acute{\eta}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (i.e. *Treatise 30* (III, 8)) as well as of liberty and what is truly "up to us" (i.e. *Treatise 39* (VI, 8)). Plotinus rebukes the Gnostics in *Treatise 33* (II, 9) for not having any treatises devoted to virtue: this underlines the importance of *Treatises 19* and *20* to his corpus. As a crucial rung on the ladder, virtue's importance to the ascent of the soul and to the uncovering of her true nature must be articulated, but its polyvalence must also be carefully untangled, for without this untangling soul remains in danger of either losing herself in her own virtuous deeds, or of believing herself above them altogether.

We propose here, therefore, to consider how virtue is unfolded in *Treatises 19* and *20*. First, in Chapter Two of this thesis, we shall see how Plotinus frames the discussion of likeness to god ($\dot{o}\mu o\dot{\iota}\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \theta\varepsilon\tilde{\omega}$) in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) by a glance toward the cosmos: the soul finds her desire reoriented to the intelligible by a brief but important consideration of the desire of World Soul for the same. It is in light of this reorientation that the civic virtues reveal themselves as insufficient for the human soul's divinisation, and fully purified virtue reveals itself as the virtue proper to World Soul, as well as the object of the human soul's pursuit ($\sigma\pi o\upsilon\delta\acute{\eta}$), achieved in part through her participation in an

intellectual theurgy that likens her to World Soul. *Treatise 19* (I, 2) implicitly assumes the cosmological application of the Delphic command, *γνῶθι σαυτόν.*

In Chapter Three, we shall consider further how civic virtue receives its subordinate place relative to the virtue of World Soul looking to Intellect. In his treatment of political virtue and its place relative to the "greater virtues" – the paradigms—Plotinus makes use of the distinction in *Treatise 20* (I, 3) of three kinds of soul, the musician, the lover, and the philosopher (a distinction inherited from the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*). The introduction of civic virtue relative to World Soul and Intellect, and the analogies which follow from this introduction, proceed by a kind of force (*βία*) are addressed to the musician, who must be indoctrinated with respect to the kind of likeness he must pursue. The second treatment of civic virtue, which follows upon the introduction, proceeds by way of persuasion (*πειθώ)* and addresses itself to the lover, who, after the manner of the ascent in the *Symposium* outlined above, must be taught to see the beauty in virtues, after ways of life and laws, before he can go "the higher way". Ultimately, we see in Chapter Three that *Treatise 19* is concerned with redefining civic virtue as a lower form of purification, rather than the whole of virtue in itself, or a category entirely separate from the higher kind of purificatory virtue with which the *Phaedo,* for instance, is concerned. Plotinus carefully 'unfolds' the purificatory nature of virtue out of the initial distinction between civic virtue and the "greater" virtues set out in *Treatise 19*'s introduction.

In Chapter Four we consider the nature of purificatory virtue introduced in chapter three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) and also as it is treated in chapters four through six of *Treatise 20* (I, 3). Plotinus' manner of enumerating and describing these virtues in *Treatise 19* is carefully crafted to reflect the change in the scriptural background from the *Republic* to the *Phaedo*: purificatory virtue belongs to the account of the *Phaedo* and its emphasis on the bipartition of body and soul rather than the tripartition within the soul emphasized by the *Republic*. The virtues consequently take on a different character to reflect this shift,

and the mode of discourse also changes once again as the philosopher becomes the addressee, rather than the lover.

In Chapter Five we consider this second shift in mode further. With this second shift, as the purificatory virtues and their relation to conversion, completion and perfection are discussed in chapters four to six of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) we witness an increasing emphasis on the virtue of wisdom. As courage may be said to be the virtue definitive of virtue in its middling purificatory mode, when the soul learns to turn away from the passions, and to count what happens to her body as of no account, so wisdom may be said to be the virtue definitive of purified virtue: the soul as fully purified is fully turned to Intellect and filled by that vision. The advent of σοφία thus marks the perfection of the soul as soul, as our "sister" World Soul would tell us if we were to consider her providential contemplation. This lesson in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is in fact taken up in *Treatise 20* (I, 3) as well, in the last chapter of that treatise. I propose that the distinction there between "natural" and "perfected" virtues,which has long been a perplexing problem for commentators, be read as in fact informed by the argument of *Treatise 19* (I, 2).

By way of conclusion, in Chapter Five we also return to the purified virtue whose character we found in Chapter Two was essentially that of World Soul, perpetually turned to Intellect and yet caring for all that is soulless at the same time, possessing, in other words, both σοφία and φρόνησις. The increasing emphasis on σοφία which began in the activities of νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν in the description of purificatory virtue culminates in the last few chapters of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) and the enumeration of 'purified' virtue in chapter six of the *Treatise.* Together with σοφία there we find an increased emphasis on δικαιοσύνη, justice, as well. This is because the insertion of justice into the picture of the soul's higher perfection presents a particular difficulty for Plotinus, as its lowest definition, the ensuring that each part does its own business and is limited to its own sphere, seems to depend fundamentally upon a multiplicity that requires ordering. Yet the introduction of the problem of justice also effects the introduction of the paradigms in chapter six and seven. Wisdom and justice were the virtues with which we

began *Treatise 19* (I, 2), and at the end of the *Treatise* we find these two virtues are the cause of a kind of intertwining of the virtues of the purified soul and the paradigms themselves. Justice (whose proper name in fact seems to be οἰκειοπραγία – the only virtue not to keep its lower appellation in its paradigm) and wisdom together are the virtues definitive of the purified virtue and providential activity of World Soul.

While it is certainly the case that chapter seven of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) insists that the one who possesses the civic virtues and has ascended even to the attainment of the purificatory virtues (i.e. the philosopher of *Treatise 20* (I, 3)) will "leave behind the life of the good man, and choose the life of the gods," –that is, continue until their purification is complete—Plotinus is nonetheless careful to delineate for the political virtues their limited sphere, and provides through his reading of the *Phaedo* an account of purificatory virtue as the missing step between the political virtues and their archetypes in *Νοῦς*. This missing step is an essentially mediatory one; understood as lower forms of purification, the civic virtues receive a certain undeniable dignity and worth as the condition for the possibility of the human's divinisation. On the other side of purification, World Soul is in fact the exemplary possessor of perfect, pure virtue, and as such may be understood as a kind of *mediatrix* for human souls.

1.3.1 Why Treatise 19 *(I, 2) and* 20 *(I, 3) Should be Read Together*

That *Treatise 19* (I, 2) and *Treatise 20* (I, 3) belong together is clear for reasons both internal and external to the logic of the *Treatises*. On external grounds, in Porphyry's chronology, *Treatise 20* follows on the heels of *Treatise 19,* and both belong to the early period of Plotinus' career, shortly before Porphyry joined him in Rome around 263 CE.[1]

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[1] Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 4 (henceforth *VP*). For a brief summary of the consequences of the doubt cast on this by Heinemann for Plotinian scholarship, see Jean-Marc Narbonne, introduction to *Plotin: Œuvres Complètes: Introduction, Traité 1 (I, 6) Sur le beau*, text établi par Lorenzo Ferroni, introduit, traduit et annoté par Martin Achard et Jean-Marc Narbonne (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012; henceforth Ferroni-Achard-Narbonne), xxxvi. See also *Plotino: Sulle virtú: I 2 [19]*, intro., testo greco, trad. e comm. di Giovanni Catapano (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006), 7-9. Pushing for a more accurate dating,

Porphyry himself saw fit to keep the two *Treatises* together in his re-ordering, placing them both in the First *Ennead* among the "ethical treatises" (τὰ ἠθικώτερα).[1] Narbonne and Achard suggest that these two treatises belong together in a further sub-division of the first phase of Plotinus' career, to the time following the definitive series *Treatises 9-11* (VI, 9; V, 1; V, 2) when, having established the main structural lines of his system, Plotinus "could content himself with supporting the edifice, adding complementary touches in places, but without a definite plan," responding to the problems of the moment.[2]

Further internal evidence may be found in the continuity between where *Treatise 19* (I, 2) ends and where *Treatise 20* (I, 3) begins. *Treatise 19* (I, 2) exhorts the soul to flee evil and seek likeness to god through the acquisition of virtue, and persuades the soul through various modes of discourse to seek a likeness beyond that which civic virtue provides. In other words, *Treatise 19* (I, 2) begins with the necessity of flight, and gives a kind of outline of the itinerary. The four cardinal virtues, φρόνησις, ἀνδρία, σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη, enumerated no less than four times in four different ways, provide a kind of essential structure to the itinerary, highlighting its major elements. Following this, *Treatise 20* (I, 3) begins with the question, "What art, or method, or practice is there, which will lead us up?" The *Treatise* thus assumes the necessity of the flight, and seeks to fill out the details of the anagogical movement to which *Treatise 19* (I, 2) initially exhorts us.[3] The two *Treatises* in fact might easily be combined under the title, "Concerning the Way Up".

Catapano suggests that *Treatise 19* was not written before 257 CE.

[1] Porphyry, *VP* 24.17, 36-37.

[2] Ferroni-Achard-Narbonne, xlix. Cf. *VP* 5.60-61. It should be noted that this is how Porphyry characterizes the *middle* period of Plotinus' career (c. 263-268), encompassing *Treatises 22- 45*.

[3] See Jean Michel Charrue, intro. and trans., "Traité 20 (I, 3): Sur la dialectique," in *Plotin: Traités 7-21*, Luc Brisson and Jean-François Pradeau, eds. (Paris: GF Flammarion, 2003; henceforth Brisson-Pradeau), 469.

1.3.1.1 The role of Porphyry

Despite the significant internal and external indications that the two *Treatises* should be read together, this has rarely been done.[1] This is for two reasons, both concerning Plotinus' student and biographer, Porphyry.

1.3.1.1.1 The legacy of the fourfold enumeration

First, there is the question of the legacy of the unfolding of virtue's polyvalence in *Treatise 19* (I, 2). The fourfold enumeration of the fourfold cardinal virtues in *Treatise 19* enjoys a remarkable future in Neoplatonic thought; Iamblichus, Proclus, Marinus, Olympiodorus, Macrobius and many others all find further folds of virtue to iron out, expanding the "grades" of virtue above and below the enumerations of *Treatise 19* (I, 2). The important role of Porphyry in the systematization, transmission and transformation of this aspect of Plotinus' *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is incontestable: *Sentence 32* of his *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*[2] is essentially a summary of and commentary on *Treatise 19* (I, 2), often repeating it word for word, and even where not word for word holding to the same order of enumeration of the cardinal virtues, which changes with each enumeration, as we shall consider in Chapter Four below. The focus of Porphyry's summary is in fact the fourfold enumeration of the four virtues, to which he makes

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[1] Two notable exceptions are *Plotino: Sulle virtú: I 2 [19]*, Giovanni Catapano, intro., testo greco, trans. e comm. (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006), 9-15; and Dominic J. O'Meara, "Aristotelian ethics in Plotinus," in Jon Miller, ed., *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 53-66. Catapano in fact situates his commentary on *Treatise 19* (I, 2) within the chronological context of the two treatises immediately before and the two immediately after *Treatise 19*: *Treatise 17* (II, 6), "On Substance, or on Quality"; *Treatise 18* (V, 7), "On the Question Whether there are Ideas of Particulars"; *Treatise 20* (I, 3), "On Dialectic"; *Treatise 21* (IV, 2), "How One Says that the Soul is an Intermediary Between the Indivisible Reality and the Divisible Reality". From these surrounding treatises Catapano draws the conclusion that Plotinus was primarily concerned in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) with the nature of the intelligible, and its relation to our own souls, a concern which Porphyry's inclusion of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) among the "ethical treatises" might tend to obscure.
[2] Porphyry, *Porphyrii sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, E. Lamberz, ed. (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1975; hereafter *Sent.*)

further correspondences, explicitly linking each enumeration with a specific ontological level. The civic virtues belong to man, the purificatory to the $\delta\alpha\acute{\iota}\mu\omega\nu$, the contemplative virtues to the $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, and the paradigmatic virtues to the $\theta\epsilon\tilde{\omega}\nu\ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$.[1]

Scholarly opinion is divided in its evaluation of Porphyry's role: for some it amounts to a gross distortion and over-schematisation with disastrous consequences;[2] for others, Porphyry's brief summary ensures the treatise's easy and far-reaching transmission[3] and contains some crucial developments regarding the level of civic virtue that provide a more fertile ground than Plotinus for a Neoplatonic political philosophy and for an ethical structure for the human as human.[4]

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[1] *Sent.* 32 (p. 31, lines 4-8 Lamberz)

[2] John Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue," in *Platonismus und Christentum: Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 10)*, H-D. Blume and F. Mann, eds. (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983) (= Chapter XVIII in John Dillon, *The Golden Chain*: *Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity* (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1990)), 96; *idem,* "An ethic for the late antique sage," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, Lloyd P. Gerson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 322; D.V. Bugai, "Plotinus' Treatise *On the Virtues* and its Interpretation by Porphyry and Marinus," *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 42.1 (2003): 89-95. The latter is a particularly caustic appraisal of Porphyry as a deadening scholastic spirit and Marinus as a superstitious ritualist.

[3] H. van Lieshout, *La Théorie Plotinienne de la Vertu: Essai sur la Genèse d'un Article de la Somme Théologique de Saint Thomas* (Freiburg, Suisse: Studia Friburgensia, 1926), 93-96.

[4] H. van Lieshout, *La Théorie Plotinienne de la Vertu*, esp. 77-122; Wayne J. Hankey, "Political, Psychic, Intellectual, Daimonic, Hierarchical, Cosmic, and Divine Justice in Aquinas, Al-Fârâbî, Dionysius, and Porphyry," *Dionysius* 21 (2003): 206-211; Dominic O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 40-49, esp. 43-45; Dirk Baltzly, "The Virtues and 'Becoming Like God': Alcinous to Proclus,"*Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 301, 319; Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé and Luc Brisson, "Le Système Philosophique de Porphyre dans les *Sentences*," in *Porphyre: Sentences*, ed. Luc Brisson (Paris: Librarie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2005), I: 131-132; Sebastian Ramon Philipp Gertz, *Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism: Studies on the Ancient Commentaries on Plato's* Phaedo (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 52-54.

Porphyry's focus on the enumerations does allow for the easy and widespread transmission of the core of *Treatise 19* (I, 2)'s argument as a kind of trope.[1] If we consider Porphyry's treatment of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) in light of its original place in Plotinus' corpus before *Treatise 20* (I, 3), however, it is clear that Porphyry's focus on the enumerations of the virtues does come at the price of the connection between the two treatises, particularly their psychagogical character. Part of what this thesis will consider, therefore, is the enumerations of the four virtues as anagogical tools functioning within the various modes of discourse of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) and *20* (I, 3). Reading *Treatises 19* and *20* together in this way yields a richer understanding of Plotinus' treatment of virtue than Porphyry's summary conveys, as valuable as that nonetheless is in other ways.

1.3.1.1.2 The authenticity of Treatise 20 *(I, 3), 6*

Second, the value of reading the two treatises together has been called into question by the suspicion that the final chapter of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) is by another hand, not Plotinus'. Georges Leroux has argued, further, that this other hand is Porphyry's, and that his aim in adding chapter six to *Treatise 20* (I, 3) is precisely to tie the *Treatise* back more tightly to *Treatise 19* (I, 2).[2] This argument seems to imply that the connection between the *Treatises* is more or less of Porphyry's making. Reading the two treatises together, however, it is clear even apart from chapter six of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) that the treatises complement one another. In particular, *Treatise 20* (I, 3) sheds valuable light on the nature of purificatory virtue as it is described and enumerated in its fourfold form in chapter three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2). So the bulk of Chapter Four of this thesis treats the latter half of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) (chapters four and five) in relation to *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 3 and points toward an interpretation of chapter six of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) that sees its continuity

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[1] For instance, Macrobius' use of Porphyry's fourfold enumeration of the four virtues easily and effectively finds its way to the medieval world, particularly to Aquinas and Bonaventure, with Plotinus' name attached. See Hankey, "Political, Psychic, Intellectual," 207, 213; Catapano, *Plotino: Sulle virtú: I 2 [19]*, 46, 49.

[2] Georges Leroux, "Logique et Dialectique chez Plotin: Énneade 1.3 (20)," *Phoenix* 28.2 (1974): 181, 182 and n.5, 183, 188.

with the rest of the *Treatise* as well as with *Treatise 19* (I, 2) and therefore no necessity in attributing it to the hand of Porphyry.

Chapter 2
ὁμοίωσις θεῷ in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1: The Cosmological Picture

Treatise 19 (*Ennead* I, 2) begins with the Platonic exhortation to seek ὁμοίωσις θεῷ ('likeness to god', *Theaetetus* 176b2). Alcinous' treatment of this expression in the *Didaskalikos*, among that of other authors,[1] indicates its prevalence as a Platonic doctrine in the Middle Platonic context in which Plotinus' thinking was formed.[2] However, in the Plotinian anagogy the dictum receives a distinctively thorough and original treatment.[3] Along with the declaration of *Treatise 30* (*Ennead* III, 8) that "all things come from contemplation and are contemplation,"[4] ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is Plotinus' most profound way of describing at once both the procession of all things from the One, and the conversion of all things back to the First through Intellect and its emanation, Soul. The emphasis in *Treatise 19* is clearly on "likeness to god" as an imperative of flight (φευκτέον ἐντεῦθεν, 1.3) for us. It concerns, in other words, the individual soul's achievement of "likeness to god" through her conversion to Intellect by means of World Soul, through her

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[1] Such as Eudorus of Alexandria, Theon of Smyrna, Gaius and Apuleius. See Jean-Marie Flamand, intro. and trans., "Traité 19 (I, 2): Sur les vertus," in Brisson-Pradeau, 420. See also A.H. Armstrong's comments in the discussion following the exposé of H. Dörrie, "Die Frage Nach Dem Transzendenten Im Mittelplatonismus," in E.R. Dodds et al., *Les Sources de Plotin: Dix Exposés et Discussions* (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 224-225. Armstrong suggests that Plotinus has Alcinous specifically in mind.

[2] Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*, 181.19-182.13 (John Dillon, trans. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28.1-2, p. 37-38; henceforth *Didask.*). On the relation of this Platonic maxim in the Hellenistic period to the Stoic "living in accordance with nature" and the Pythagorean "follow God", see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), ch. 3; *idem*, *Alcinous*, 171.

[3] Plotinus makes frequent use of *Theaetetus* 176a-b outside of *Treatise 19*, providing as it does both the diagnosis of evil and the cure of flight. Plotinus' most extended treatment of the passage is to be found in *Treatise 51* (I, 8) 6.1-4, 9-12, 14-17; 7.1, 8, 11-12, 15. Other passages: on "evils are here", see *46* (I, 4) 11.15-16, 14.16; on "evils cannot be destroyed", see *47* (III, 2) 5.29, 15.10-11; on "one must flee from here", see *15* (III, 4) 2.12; *52* (II, 3) 9.20; on "likeness to God", see *1* (I, 6) 6.20; *46* (I, 4) 16.10-13; on "following wisdom", see *33* (II, 9) 6.40, 15.39; on the life of gods compared to that of men, see *9* (VI, 9) 11.48-49; *27* (IV, 7) 14.12-14.

[4] *Treatise 30* (III, 8) 7.1-2: ...πάντα τά τε ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄντα ἐκ θεωρίας καὶ θεωρία...

purification by means of virtue.[1] In Plotinus' thought, however, because Intellect itself receives all its fecundity in converting towards its Source, conversion and procession as the self-diffusiveness of the Good belong together: "all things when they come to their perfection produce."[2] Despite its emphasis on purification and return, then, *Treatise 19* cannot, and does not, exclude entirely a treatment of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as procession. In fact, Plotinus' consideration of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ in *19* (I, 2) as both procession *and* conversion is crucial to the anagogical movement of the treatise and to its influential hierarchy of virtues by which the accounts of virtue in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* find their place within the ascents of the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*.

The explicit role of World Soul, the heavens and the cosmos in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is small, but these lesser divinities are in fact quietly crucial to the individual soul's acquisition of virtue and self-knowledge. Our consideration in *Treatise 19* of what ὁμοίωσις θεῷ might mean begins with a fleeting glance to the Soul of the All, and as we shall see with the help of some later treatises, this slightest of glances shapes the entire discussion of virtue in a fundamental way. In fact, *Treatise 30*'s declaration of the essential productiveness of all contemplation has its tiny seeds here in the "wonderful wisdom" (φρόνησις θαυμαστὴ) (1.9) and ὄρεξις (1.13) of World Soul with which *Treatise 19* (I, 2) opens.

2.1 Treatise 19, *Chapter One: We Begin with World Soul*
As Plotinus will make explicit in his later work against the Gnostics (*Treatise 33* (II, 9)), an account of virtue and a proper understanding of the nature and dignity of the

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[1] See Dominic O'Meara, "Aristotelian ethics in Plotinus," in Jon Miller, ed. *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 62. O'Meara notes that the title of the *Treatise* ("On the Virtues"), given by Porphyry, does not reflect the particularity of the concern, which is more precisely the relation between ὁμοιώσις θεῷ and the virtues as the means to this τέλος.

[2] *Treatise 10* (V, 1) 6.37-38. See also *Treatise 11* (V, 2) 1.13-16: "Resembling the One thus, Intellect produces in the same way, pouring forth a multiple power—this is a likeness of it—just as that which was before it poured it forth. This activity springing from the substance of Intellect is Soul…." See Jean Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne.* 2nd ed. (Paris: Hermann, 2011; reprint of 1955 original), 104; Vladimir Jankélévitch, trans. *Plotin. Ennéades I, 3: Sur la dialectique* (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 22-26.

cosmos, and of the far greater dignity of its abundant origin, go hand in hand. The close relation of virtue's purificatory nature and the dignity of the cosmos is clear within the first ten lines of *Treatise 19*: procession and purification appear together, captured between the two senses of "here" (ἐνταῦθα, lines 1 and 9).

Following the wording of the *Theaetetus* exactly, Plotinus begins, "evils are here" (τὰ κακὰ ἐνταῦθα, 1.1). Evils are here, necessarily, and the soul wishes (βούλεται, 1.2) to flee them, and with them all contingency.[1] So flight "from here" is urged (φευκτέον ἐντεῦθεν, 1.3). We rehearse the *Theaetetus'* series of syllogisms linking this flight to "being made like god" through becoming "just and holy by means of wisdom" (δίκαιοι καὶ ὅσιοι μετὰ φρονήσεως, 1.4-5),[2] and are thus led to virtue as the means of the soul's purification.

2.1.1 The Virtues of the Theaetetus: δικαιοσύνη καὶ ὁσία μετὰ φρονήσεως

The virtues of the *Theaetetus* passage used to describe the means of the soul's purification merit a closer look. As we shall see throughout *Treatise 19*, the order in which the particular virtues are enumerated is not accidental to Plotinus' account: each of the four fourfold enumerations of the cardinal virtues is ordered differently. Let us note here, then, that through this reference to the *Theaetetus*, justice becomes the first virtue named in *Treatise 19* (I, 2). This is in keeping with that virtue's relation to the goal of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ in other Platonic dialogues as well. In Alcinous' summary of the various forms of Plato's presentation of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, for instance, justice shows itself to be a Platonic constant:[3]

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[1] The juxtaposition of ἐξ ἀνάγκης and βούλεται here recalls a later Plotinian account of virtue's role in freeing the soul from necessity through "intellectualizing" her: *Treatise 39* (VI, 8) 6.4-14.

[2] See Catapano, *Plotino: Sulle virtú,* 79-80, n. on lines 1.4-5. I follow Catapano here in translating μετὰ φρονήσεως as "by means of wisdom" rather than "together with wisdom".

[3] *Didask.* 181.19-182.13 (Dillon, *Alcinous*, 28.1-2, p. 37-38).

> Sometimes [Plato] declares that likeness to God consists in being intelligent, and just, and pious, as in the *Theaetetus* (176a-b).... Elsewhere he asserts that it consists only in being just, as in the last book of the *Republic* (613a): 'For, by the gods, that man will never be neglected who is willing and eager to be just, and by the practice of virtue to be likened to God so far as that is possible for man.' In the *Phaedo*, further, he declares that likeness to God consists in becoming self-controlled and just [82a-b].

In Aristotle too, we may remember, justice is not only the name of a particular virtue, but in a certain sense "the whole of virtue" (ὅλη ἀρετή).[1] The common proverbs testify to this, calling justice the "strongest of the virtues" (κρατίστη τῶν ἀρετῶν), that in which "all other virtues are combined" (ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ συλλήβδην πᾶσ᾽ ἀρετὴ ἔνι), and that in comparison to which "neither the evening, nor the morning star is as wonderful" (οὔθ᾽ ἕσπερος οὔθ᾽ ἑῷος οὕτω θαυμαστός).[2]

The other virtue named here at the beginning of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is φρόνησις, enumerated not merely as another particular instance, but as bound with and accompanying justice: (δίκαιοι...μετὰ φρονήσεως, 1.5). It is this virtue in particular which causes us to consider "the soul of the cosmos" (ἡ τοῦ κόσμου ψυχὴ, 1.8) seeing as we are "here" (ἐνταῦθα ὄντας, 1.10), in the world that proceeds from the "wonderful wisdom" (φρόνησις θαυμαστή)[3] of her "leading part" (τὸ ἡγούμενος, 1.9). World Soul

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[1] Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* (henceforth *EN*) V 1130a.

[2] *EN* V 1129b-1130a. See also *Treatise 1* (I, 6) 4.10-12 and *Treatise 34* (VI, 6) 6.37-42).

[3] Plotinus' use of θαυμαστή to describe World Soul's φρόνησις at this juncture, now that δικαιοσύνη and φρόνησις have been paired and bound together, recalls Aristotle's use of a fragment of Euripides' *Melanippe* regarding justice, cited among his series of proverbs testifying to the greatness of the virtue: "neither the evening nor the morning star, it is thought, is so wonderful" (θαυμαστός) (*EN* V 1129b28-30, quoted above). Plotinus refers twice to this Euripidean fragment in the *Enneads*, once in describing the face (πρόσοπων) of the Phaedran pair δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη (*Treatise 1* (I, 6) 4.10-12), and once in describing the πρόσοπων of δικαιοσύνη alone (*Treatise 34* (VI, 6) 6.37-42). See V. Cilento, "Mito e poesia nella Enneadi di Plotino," and subsequent discussion in E.R. Dodds et al., *Les Sources de Plotin,* 261-262, 301, 314; see also Augustus Nauck, recensuit, *Tragicorum*

seems most particularly to possess these (μᾶλλον δοκοῦντι ταῦτα ἔχειν, 1.7), the cardinal virtues of wisdom and justice.

In addition to the virtues of δικαιοσύνη and φρόνησις, however, Plotinus adds a consideration of virtue *as a whole* (καὶ ὅλως ἐν ἀρετῇ, 1.5) to the line of reasoning he draws from the *Theaetetus.* This addition is significant and appears to perform two functions. First, it makes explicit what the *Theaetetus* passage implies: that the means of the soul's flight from evils is to be found in her acquisition of *virtue*, which is the state of "justice together with wisdom". However, the articulation of the general category of virtue also raises more questions. Does being "altogether (ὅλως) in virtue" mean possessing "all the virtues" (πᾶσαι, 1.12)—not only justice and wisdom, but also moderation and courage, the four virtues which in their perfection are understood by Aristotle and especially the Stoics to be mutually entailing?[1]

The addition of καὶ ὅλως ἐν ἀρετῇ thus appears to lead Plotinus to echo Aristotle, perhaps against Alcinous,[2] in asking how god could possibly possess σωφροσύνη and ἀνδρία, virtues which seem inseparable from the matter they form, as states of soul relative to the things which lie outside her, whether those things are desired or feared (1.12-15). He also echoes Alcinous in implying a distinction between these two "irrational" or "subsidiary" (ἑπόμεναι) virtues and the "predominant" (προηγούμεναι)

Graecorum Fragmenta. 2nd ed. (Lispia (Leipzig): B.G. Teubner, 1926): Euripidis frag. 486.; see also Ferroni-Achard-Narbonne, 51-52n8.

[1] See Flamand, "Traité 19," in Brisson-Pradeau, 463n.146.
[2] *NE* X.8 1178b8-18. Cf. Alcinous, *Didask.* 181.36-182.1 (Dillon, *Alcinous*, 28.3, p. 38). See A.H. Armstrong's comments in the discussion of H. Dörrie, "Die Frage Nach Dem Transzendenten Im Mittelplatonismus," in E.R. Dodds et al., *Les Sources de Plotin*, 224-225. Armstrong suggests that Plotinus has Alcinous specifically in mind here, using Aristotle against him initially to deny that World Soul (reasonably identifiable with Alcinous' "god in the heavens"(ἐπουράνιος θεός)) possesses the virtues, at least as they are understood in their political mode. See also Dillon, *Alcinous,* 173-174; Catapano, *Plotino: Sulle virtú*, 81-82, n. on 1.6.

virtues of justice and wisdom, deriving their perfection from them.[1] Plotinus uses this consideration of virtue in general and of these subsidiary virtues in particular to an interesting and rather unexpected end. As nothing can come to her from the outside, World Soul is credited with lacking nothing and fearing nothing: the traditional application of σωφροσύνη and ἀνδρία cannot apply to her. Yet Plotinus suggests that World Soul does indeed desire, and the object of her desire is the same as that of our souls: the intelligible (εἰ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ὀρέξει ἐστὶ τῶν νοητῶν ὧν καὶ αἱ ἡμέτεραι, 1.13-14).[2]

There is no mistaking the word for desire here: ὄρεξις. World Soul's movement is due to her aspiration, and the movement of the sphere of the All reflects this aspiration.[3] It is World Soul's divine *desire* for the intelligibles that allows us to locate the derivation of both the cosmos and our virtues in *Nous*: "it is clear that for us both the cosmos and the virtues are from there."[4] To put it another way, in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) it is the consideration of the lower virtues of moderation and courage, those pertaining typically to the appetitive and thumatic parts of soul, those which one would typically not associate with divinity, which launch us beyond World Soul to her principle and ours. Here is our

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[1] *Didask.* 183.38-184.10 (Dillon, *Alcinous*, 30.3, p. 40-41); cf. Apuleius, *De Platone* 2.9.234. Apuleius does not make the distinction of "predominant" and "subsidiary" but does distinguish between the "perfect" virtues of wisdom and prudence (*sapientia et prudentia*) and the "semi-perfect" virtues of courage and self-control. The criterion of perfection is that the higher virtues are teachable, as sciences (*disciplinae*) while the lower virtues are acquired through "use and experience" (*usu et experiendo*), though they are also "not totally alien from the sciences". For Apuleius, further, justice has an ambiguous status relative to this distncition, being in Plato at one time a science and at another a disposition acquired through habit. See Dillon, *Alcinous*, 185-186.

[2] Reading αἱ ἡμέτεραι [ψυχαί]. See Catapano, *Plotino: Sulle virtú*, 89 n. at 1.14.

[3] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 16.23-31; 35.32ff.

[4] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1.15: δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἡμῖν ἐκεῖθεν ὁ κόσμος καὶ αἱ ἀρεταί. Cf. *Plotinus Ennead I*, A.H. Armstrong, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966): "it is clear that our good order and our virtues also come from the intelligible." Armstrong's translation captures the application of ἡμῖν to both κόσμος and αἱ ἀρεταί, but the larger significance of κόσμος, the good order of the All, of which *our* good order is an image, should not be left behind here.

first indication that both ὁμοίωσις and ἀρετή—the latter considered both in general and in its fourfold cardinal specificity—may require several different and carefully considered reinterpretations, corresponding to several different levels of divinity. Plotinus will consider the question of the unity and the mutual implication of the virtues within this larger investigation of how different levels of being might possess different kinds of virtue.

Let us sum up what these first ten lines or so indicate about the *Treatise* and its orientation. First, the *Theaetetus* sets the context for the investigation of virtue, defining its τέλος as the soul's freedom from the evils associated with embodiment. Our first port of call in the search for the god to whom likeness is possible through the acquisition of virtue leads us to World Soul, who is presented to us as a kind of model of productive wisdom and justice. Virtue, then, is first considered as something which is to be found in soul as soul.

2.2 The Contemplative Virtue of World Soul: Testimony from Other Treatises

Let us return, however, to the question of World Soul's virtue. With the consideration of the soul as fully purified and converted in chapters six and seven of *Treatise 19* we return to World Soul, but apart from the opening chapter of the treatise the cosmological picture receives no sustained or explicit consideration. Evidence from other treatises, however, particularly the closely related *Treatises 27* and *28* (IV, 3-4) "On Difficulties about the Soul" and *Treatise 33* (II, 9) "Against the Gnostics", speak where *Treatise 19* is silent. They reveal that the Soul of the All possesses the purified virtues of the soul as they are enumerated in *Treatise 19*: σοφία καὶ φρόνησις as contemplation of what Intellect possesses (ἐν θεωρίᾳ ὢν νοῦς ἔχει); δικαιοσύνη as activity toward the same (τὸ πρὸς νοῦν ἐνεργεῖν); σωφρονεῖν as the inward turn (ἡ εἴσω πρὸς νοῦν στροφή); ἀνδρία as complete ἀπάθεια (*19* (I, 2) 6.12-13, 23-26). In imitating this free living of the All toward its source the human too, as like to the All as possible, finds his freedom.

In *Treatises 27* through *28*, kept together by Porphyry along with *Treatise 29* as *Enneads* IV, 3-5, Plotinus concerns himself with the nature of Soul as hypostasis, as demiurgic producer of the cosmos,[1] as the rational principle of both the cosmos and the human individual, and as the centre of sense-perception, nutrition and growth in the animal.[2] Following the structure of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De Anima* closely,[3] he begins *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) with the thought that to consider the nature of soul is to obey the Delphic oracle's command to "know thyself" (γνῶθι σαυτόν).[4] Unlike Alexander, however, whose treatise is concerned explicitly with soul as it "belongs to a body subject to generation and corruption,"[5] Plotinus is interested in both "the things of which the soul is the principle and those from which it is (ὧν τε ἀρχή ἐστι καὶ ἀφ'ὧν ἐστι)."[6] Self-knowledge as soul-knowledge for Plotinus is thus not only living 'in accordance with nature' (κατὰ φύσιν),[7] but also a necessary step in the ascent toward a higher form of reflexivity belonging to another, higher, self.[8]

Plotinus is not opposing Alexander here. Rather, he is interested in setting Alexander's (and Aristotle's) account of soul within the larger Platonic picture. Both Alexander and Plotinus are setting themselves against a Stoic account of an all-encompassing fate that

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[1] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 6.1-3. See *Treatise 2* (IV, 7) 13.6-8 for the first appearance of this doctrinal difference from the *Timaeus.* See also *Treatise 10* (V, 1) 2.2-6. See Richard Dufour, "Le Rang de L'Âme du Monde au Sein des Réalités Intelligibles et Son Rôle Cosmologique chez Plotin," *Études Platoniciennes* III (2006): 96-99.

[2] The variety of this enumeration alone demonstrates that Plotinus'consideration owes much both to Plato (especially the *Timaeus*) and Aristotle (*De Anima*).

[3] Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *De l'âme* 1.4-6. M. Bergeron and R. Dufour, trans. (Paris: Vrin, 2008; henceforth Bergeron-Dufour), 66-67. See Luc Brisson's translation and notes, *Plotin. Traités 27-29* (Paris: GF Flammarion, 2005).

[4] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 1.8-10.

[5] Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *De l'âme* 1.1-2 (Bergeron-Dufour, 66-67).

[6] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 1.7-8.

[7] Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *De l'âme* 2.2-4 (Bergeron-Dufour, 66-67).

[8] This same interest is evident in Plotinus' treatment of the problem of self-knowledge against the Skeptics in the later *Treatise 49* (V, 3). See Bertrand Ham, *Plotin. Traité 49 (V, 3)* (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 18.

extends to the lives of individuals. Because of his Platonism Plotinus is able to give a fuller account of what Alexander's κατὰ φύσιν presupposes without being able to name. Though the introduction is clearly influenced by Alexander's work, the difference in Plotinus' use of the Delphic command betrays another influence, that of the radical reinterpretation and extensive meditation on that same command as it is found in Plato's *Alcibiades Major*.[1] In that dialogue the human's self-understanding as soul[2] and her knowledge of god are discovered together and the difference between the human and the divine is thereby reduced[3] with the additional reflecting mediation of another good and wise soul.[4] The *Alcibiades Major* in fact undergirds not only the introduction but also the whole of the three treatises "Concerning *Aporiai* of the Soul" (*Treatises 27 through 29*), with the best and wisest soul, that Soul of the All—the Zeus of the *Phaedrus*—taking up Socrates' mediating and exemplary role throughout.

2.2.1.1 The Alcibiades Major: *Tracing its Influence on* Treatises 27 *and* 28

The profound influence of the *Alcibiades Major* on later Neoplatonism has been well documented. Under Iamblichus' systematic program, in which the Platonic dialogues are catalogued and ordered in an anagogical curriculum, the *Alcibiades* is the first dialogue to be read,[5] and commentaries on the dialogue exist from the hand of Proclus

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[1] Plato, *Alcibiades Maior*, in *Platonis Opera* I, ediderunt . (Oxford: Oxford University Press; henceforth *Alcibiades*). Scholars are divided as to whether Plato or Alexander is the primary influence. Sharples outlines the positions: R.W. Sharples, "Alexander of Aphrodisias: Scholasticism and Innovation," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.36.2 (Berlin: De Grutyer, 1987): 1222.

[2] See esp. *Alcibiades* 130e8-9; 132c7-10.

[3] Ham, *Plotin. Traité 49 (V, 3)*, 15, 17; Wayne Hankey, "'Knowing as We are Known' in *Confessions* 10 and Other Philosophical, Augustinian and Christian Obedience to the Delphic *Gnothi Seauton* from Socrates to Modernity," *Augustinian Studies* 34.1 (2003): 34; Gwennaëlle Aubry, *Plotin. Traité 53 (I, 1)* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 22-23, 27-28.

[4] Wayne J. Hankey, "'Behold thy mother,' Sermon for the Requiem of Petronella Neish, St George's Round Church, December 6, 2011 at 10 a.m.": 4. In Aristotle *EN* IX this friendship importantly becomes an internal one: the good man is a friend to himself. See also Ham, *Plotin. Traité 49 (V, 3)*, 18-19.

[5] Jean Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l'homme et sur Dieu*, 95-101; Hankey, "Knowing as We are

and Olympiodorus.[1] Though explicit references to the *Alcibiades* are rare in Plotinus, nonetheless the *Enneads*, characteristically Hellenistic in their interest and orientation, are deeply imbued with the dialogue's exhortatory spirit, its concern with salvation and "care of the self" (ἐπιμέλεσθαι ἑαυτοῦ), its important distinction between "us" (ἡμεῖς) and "what belongs to us" (τὰ ἡμετέρα), and its emphasis on vision and reflection—coming to see oneself as seeing through the seeing eye of another—as an expression of ascent and assimilation to god. This is especially true of the later *Treatises 49* (V, 3) and *53* (I, 1) which in Porphyry's re-ordering come close to framing the Plotinian corpus: both treatises take on the *Alcibiades'* exhortation to look to "who we are", problematize it, and seek the essence of ἡμεῖς through and beyond soul's partitions and discursivity, in the very movement itself beyond the historical, embodied self to a kind of noetic self that outlasts all cycles of reincarnation and transmigration, beyond διανοία to νόησις.[2] *Treatises 27* and *28* (*Enneads* IV, 3-4) play out a similar passage through soul's powers and activities on a cosmic scale, the background against which the operations and essence of the individual soul must be understood.

2.2.1.2 Soul and What Belongs to Her

As we have already said, *Treatise 27* begins with the Delphic oracle, the obedience to which is articulated as the discovery of the mediating activities of soul in relation to what is above and below her. Knowledge of her activities gives "knowledge in both directions" (ἐπ' ἄμφω τὴν γνῶσιν δίδωσιν, 1.7-8);[3] further, the search for the nature—the

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Known," 13 and n.73.

[1] Proclus, *Sur le premier Alcibiade de Platon,* A. Ph. Segonds, ed. and trans. (French) 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985-1986); Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato,* L.G. Westerink, ed. and trans. (English) (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1982). In general, see A.J. Festugière, "L'ordre de lecture des dialogues de Platon aux Ve-VIe siècles," *Museum Helveticum* 26 (1969): 281-296; For a brief summary of and commentary on the different Neoplatonic interpretations of the dialogue, see Gwennaëlle Aubry, *Plotin. Traité 53 (I, 1)* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 22.

[2] *Treatise 53* (I, 1) 7.14-24. See Gwennaëlle Aubry, *Plotin. Traité 53 (I, 1)* passim, esp. 27, 56, 58, 271, 290, 341.

[3] See also *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 3.1-12.

"what"—of the seeker (τὸ ζητοῦν τί ποτ' ἐστὶ τοῦτο) is in fact a movement toward the perfection of that seeker's intellectual activities in the "lovely vision of Intellect" (τό γε ἐραστὸν...θέαμα τοῦ νοῦ, 1.6-12). In these first few lines of *Treatise 27*, therefore, we have in highly concentrated form the 'double conversion', so to speak, of the *Alcibiades*: first the 'negative'objective distinction of the external things which we possess and should govern, such as our goods, our bodies, our characteristics (τὰ ἡμετέρα = ὧν τε ἀρχή [ἡ ψυχὴ]) from what we are properly (ἡμεῖς = ἀφ'ὧν ἐστι [ἡ ψυχὴ]); then the positive, deeper form of self-knowledge that follows from the ἐπιμέλεσθαι ἑαυτοῦ,[1] the reflexive activities of knowing and thinking (τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν[2] = τό γε ἐραστὸν λαβεῖν θέαμα τοῦ νοῦ) by which the soul becomes conformed to Intellect.[3]

2.2.1.3 Why Individual Souls Do Not Come from the Soul of the All

In their consideration of the provenance of individual rational souls, chapters two through ten of *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) enact a gradual unfolding of the τὰ ἡμετέρα-ἡμεῖς distinction of the *Alcibiades* with an eye not only to the individual soul but also to the entire ordered whole. Plotinus implicitly seeks a reconciliation of cosmological accounts of World Soul's ontological primacy and greater dignity over individuals and her providential care "for all that is soulless"[4] with the *Alcibiades*' identification of the imperatives γνῶθι σαυτόν and ἐπιμέλεσθαι ἑαυτοῦ, which both direct the individual soul to her essence, rather than to what belongs to her.[5] In other words, what is at stake in these *aporiai* about the soul is the right interpretation of Plato. Proceeding by means of a kind of *sic et non* structure, Plotinus first addresses three objections drawn from

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[1] *Alcibiades* 124a8-d3.

[2] *Alcibiades* 133c1-2.

[3] Thanks to Evan King for these insights on the *Alcibiades Major*, delivered in Dr Wayne Hankey's Neoplatonism seminar on "Self and Mysticism," September 28, 2011, Dalhousie University.

[4] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 1.33-34: ψυχὴ δὲ πᾶσα παντὸς ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ἀψύχου. See *Phaedrus* 246b6.

[5] *Alcibiades* 127e9ff, 130eff.

Platonic cosmological considerations—*Philebus*,[1] *Timaeus*[2] and *Phaedrus*[3] —which appear to argue for the derivation of individual souls from the Soul of the All as parts from the whole, lending strength to a Stoic interpretation of Plato.[4] The reply to these objections takes the form of a lengthy consideration of the various part-to-whole relations that could inhere between World Soul and individual souls (chapters 2-6), given that World Soul and individual souls share the same form (*ὁμοειδῆ*, 2.2, 34, 59; 6.1). It becomes clear that Soul remains something that both World Soul and individual souls participate in, herself remaining separated from all body, "herself by herself" (*αὐτὴ ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς*, 2.57; *τὸ ἓν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μὴ πῖπτον εἰς σῶμα*, 4.14-15), the cause of both World Soul and individual souls' being many-from-one,[5] of their "living together with each other" (*συνούσας ἀλλήλαις*,[6] 4.17) as theorems of one science (2.55-57; 5.14-18).

It also becomes clear that because of her rational principle, her trace of Intellect,[7] Soul's unity underlies even the diversity of her functions. Further, it is because of this rationality's derivation from the Intelligible that all the individual manifestations of Soul which share in this rationality must be whole manifestations, each individual soul being fundamentally a unity unto herself, rather than a part of Soul. The diversity of functions—nutritive, motive, and aesthetic—by which each individual soul and the Soul of the All "take care" of their respective bodies, marks "what belongs to us" (*τὰ ἡμετέρα*),[8] while participation in "pure Intellect"[1] through the dianoetic *activity* by

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[1] *Philebus* 30a5-6.

[2] *Timaeus* 90c8-d1. See also ibid., 30b-d.

[3] *Phaedrus* 246b6.

[4] *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta,* J. von Arnim, ed. 4 vols. (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1964), II 633.39-40; II 774.18 (henceforth *SVF*) (= Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* Vol. 2, R.D.Hicks, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), VII 143.4-5; VII 156.12-157.1 (henceforth *DL*)). See H-S. Vol. II, 11, n. on 27 (IV, 3) 1.17-18.

[5] See also *Treatise 6* (IV, 8) 3.10-13: "there had to be many souls and one soul, and the many different souls springing from the one, like the species of one genus, some better and others worse, some more intelligent and some whose intelligence is less actualized."

[6] Taking Harder's addition of *ἀλλήλαις*.

[7] See also *Treatise 49* (V, 3) 2.

[8] See also *Treatise 49* (V, 3) 3.40-41: "But sensation seems always to be ours (*ἡμέτερον*), it

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which our souls are ὁμοειδές with the undescended Soul, is what defines "us" (ἡμεῖς) (4.30-31).[2] This distinction of activities marks the distinction between two different conceptions of soul, one which cannot admit of the possibility of self-knowledge, and one that can:[3]

> And if souls were like sense-perceptions, it would not be possible for each one of us to think himself (αὐτὸν νοεῖν), but [only the Soul of the All would do so]; but if thinking were proper to the soul (εἰ οἰκεία ἦν ἡ νοήσις), each soul would be independent (ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἑκάστη).

This passage indicates that, in addition to the body allotted us by our "sister soul" (ψυχὴ ἀδέλφη, 6.13),[4] "what belongs to us" includes "another form of soul" (ἄλλο ψυχῆς εἶδος),[5] the soul responsible for the lower capacities such as perception. It is this soul's character, sensations and passions which are determined by "following the circuit of the All" (τὸ δὲ συνέπεσθαι τῇ τοῦ παντὸς περιφορᾷ, 7.20); through her inextricable connection to the body this soul maybe said to be a part of the whole. The soul to whom the possibility of self-knowledge belongs, however, is the soul who is a whole unto herself.

2.2.1.3.1 Philebus *30a: Soul, World Soul and Souls*

Having replied therefore in general to the Stoic objections, showing that individual souls and World Soul share a common provenance in the Soul separate from all body, Plotinus goes on to address the three Platonic passages in detail. The first of the three Platonic passages in *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) that pose difficulties for Plotinus is from the

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is agreed—for we always perceive…"

[1] *Treatise 49* (V, 3) 3.15-21.

[2] *Treatise 27* 4.30-31; *Treatise 52* (II, 3) 9.14-39; *49* (V, 3) 3.35-45.

[3] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 3.27-28.

[4] See also *33* (II, 9) 18.16; Wypkje Helleman-Elgersma, *Soul-Sisters: A Commentary on* Enneads *IV 3 (27), 1-8 of Plotinus* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980), 57.

[5] *Treatise 53* (I, 1) 8.19-20; 12.9, 21. See *Timaeus* 69c7.

Philebus. It appears to indicate that individual rational souls come from World Soul, as their bodies come from her body:[1]

> Where did [our body] get a soul, unless the body of the All were ensouled, since that body has the same things [as ours], and indeed, finer things in every way?

The *Philebus* passage itself is easily dealt with by a more careful contextual reading. Plato's real point, Plotinus shows, is simply that, as there are individual souls within the All, so also the All itself must be alive and ensouled. There is, in other words, such a thing as a Soul of the All.[2] The Demiurge's mixing-bowl from the *Timaeus* (41d7) accounts for the difference in dignity between the body of the Soul of the All and the bodies of individual intellective souls to which the *Philebus* passage points. Placed in its context and paired with the *Timaeus,* the *Philebus* passage thus does not necessitate understanding World Soul as equivalent to the 'hypostasis' Soul.[3] Properly interpreted, the *Philebus* passage preserves the sense in which World Soul and individual souls may be understood as possessing the same form (ὁμοειδῆ, 2.2, 34, 59). Both look to the same thing, Intellect, to receive their form. As the most perfect beholder and therefore the most powerful maker,[4] the leading part of the Soul of the All may become a model of virtue for the individual soul.

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[1] *Philebus* 30a.

[2] *Treatise 53* (I, 1) 7.1-7.

[3] H.J. Blumenthal, "Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus," *Le Néoplatonisme, Colloques internationaux du CNRS* (Paris: 1971) (= Chapter III in H.J. Blumenthal, *Soul and Intellect: Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism (*Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1993)), 57. Blumenthal shows here that World Soul and the hypostasis are not identical for Plotinus. See Richard Dufour, "Le Rang de l'Âme du Monde," 90-92.

[4] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 6.27-34. See Richard Dufour, "Le Rang de l'Âme du Monde," 99.

2.2.1.3.2 Timaeus: συμπαθεία

Our "sister soul" provides for us both our body and "another form of soul" which follows the circuit of the All and receives its character and passions from it (*27* (IV, 3) 7.20). This is Plotinus' interpretation of the following passage from the *Timaeus*:[1]

> the motions that have an affinity to the divine part within us (συγγενεῖς εἰσιν κινήσεις) are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe (αἱ τοῦ παντὸς διανοήσεις καὶ περιφοραί). These motions each must follow (συνεπόμενον) in his mind, motions which were distorted around the time of his birth.

Plotinus interprets this passage from the *Timaeus* as showing that we "follow round the circuit of the All" (συνέπεσθαι τῇ τοῦ παντὸς περιφορᾷ), have our characters ordered by it (ἤθη ἐκεῖθεν κομίζεσθαι), and are affected by it (πάσχειν παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ) (*27* (IV, 3) 7.20-21), a situation which may be characterized as the "sympathy" (συμπαθεία) which the lower soul that comes from the All shares with the All (8.1-2). But as we see in the *Timaeus* passage above, the imperative for the soul's restoration to her original condition, the imperative to return to the ἡμεῖς, also involves a conscious recognition and use of this sympathy between the cosmos and the individual. The συμπαθεία inhering between the body of the All and individual bodies and between the lower soul of the All and individual nutritive and appetitive souls is a reflection and consequence of the kinship (συγγενεία) World Soul shares with rational souls. It belongs to World Soul to possess "unity, sameness, and likeness" (ἐν τῇ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῇ τὸ ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν καὶ ὁμοίως, *28* (IV, 4) 17.36-37), and in this, the motion of the Same within her, both she and the individual soul who imitates her find their kinship in contemplation.[2]

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[1] *Timaeus* 90c8-d1.

[2] See *Timaeus* 36d-37c. See also *Republic* VI 500c-d: "[The philosopher] as he looks at and studies things that are well-ordered and always the same…imitates them and tries to become like them (ἀφομοιοῦσθαί) as much as he can…Then the philosopher, by consorting with what is divine and ordered…himself becomes as divine and ordered as a human can be." See Carlos Fraenkel, *Philosophical Religions from Plato to Spinoza: Reason, Religion and Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 52.

The Soul of the All is thus, through her virtuous example, a kind of *mediatrix* for any individual rational soul. These passages from the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus* uncover the implicit parallel between the introductions of *Treatises 19* and *27*. The noble ὄρεξις of World Soul for the intelligibles[1]—her unceasing activity toward them—launches us as individual human souls away from τὰ ἡμετέρα, away from soul as principle to the principle of soul itself, Intellect and, ultimately, to the Good.[2]

2.2.1.3.3 Phaedrus *246aff.*

Phaedrus 246b6, "all soul cares for all that is soulless", presents a more direct challenge than the *Philebus* to the imperative of the *Alcibiades* to "care for oneself". In showing that this statement refers not only to World Soul's activity, but to the activity of every perfect soul (*27* (IV, 3) 7.18-19), Plotinus deepens this challenge. The solution in fact lies in the nature of the purified virtues, which belong to the "ancient state of the soul" (ἀρεταὶ μὲν δία τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς ψυχῆς).[3]

Now the ethical imperative to "care for oneself" manifests itself throughout the *Alcibiades* as the cultivation of specific virtues. All four 'cardinal' virtues— δικαιοσύνη, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, and φρόνησις—receive mention in the dialogue. δικαιοσύνη is the first to be discussed (109b5ff). ἀνδρεία arises embedded in Socrates' proof that the just is also always the advantageous (114d4-116a11). Then all four appear in the story of the boy raised in the Persian court (121e6-122a1). σωφροσύνη arises much later on, equated with self-knowledge in the discussion of the distinction between τὰ ἡμετέρα and ἡμεῖς and that distinction's relation to the Delphic injunction (131b4-8). σοφία/φρόνησις arises last, in the analogy of the eye seeing itself as a seeing eye in the reflecting pupil of another eye (133b10-c6). σωφροσύνη is raised immediately after this, again in its identity with self-knowledge and the distinction between what belongs to us and who we are (133c18-19). The discussion turns to virtue in general (134b7-9), then to δικαιοσύνη καὶ

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1.13-14.
[2] *Treatise 50* (III, 5) 3.36-38.
[3] *Treatise 52* (II, 3) 8.13-14.

σωφροσύνη (134c10-11), and finally again to *δικαιοσύνη* in Alcibiades' promise to cultivate justice in himself (135e4-5).

σωφροσύνη clearly plays an important role in this interchange of the virtues throughout the *Alcibiades*. It is identified directly with the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* at two crucial moments, and the second identification relates it directly to self-knowledge as the activity of the soul's highest part in knowing and thinking (*τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν*, 133c1-2). The virtue is thus central both to the dialogue's initial negative moment, in which the soul is stripped of what belongs to her, and also to its secondary, positive moment of the soul's conformation to Intellect.

As in the *Charmides*, *σωφροσύνη* is stripped of its aristocratic connotations of gentlemanly conduct[1] to reveal a fundamental reflexive, inwardly oriented stance. This corresponds to that virtue's purified character as described in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) (*ἡ εἴσω πρὸς νοῦν στροφή*)[2] and as possessed by World Soul in *Treatise 28* (IV, 4), where she is always self-directed (*τὸ πρὸς αὑτό*).[3] The coincidence of the *πρὸς νοῦν* and the *πρὸς αὑτό* is crucial to the harmonizing act of *σωφροσύνη* as the achieved state of inward conversion. Hence Chapter 4 of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), where Plotinus discusses the difference between the process of purification (*ἡ κάθαρσις*) and the achieved state of "having-been-purified" (*τὸ κεκαθάρθαι*), hangs on the virtue of *σωφροσύνη* understood as soul's inward aspiration toward the Good.[4] The movement from soul's many "impressions" (*τύποι*) to the things themselves which are also within her is fundamentally a work of

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[1] *Alcibiades* 131b4-5; *Charmides* 159b3. Cf. *Statesman* 307a7-b7; Matthias Vorwerk, "Plato on Virtue: Definitions of ΣΩΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ in Plato's *Charmides* and in Plotinus *Enneads* I.2 (19)," *AJP* 122.1 (2001): 36-37, 43.

[2] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 6.23-26; 7.6-7.

[3] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 8.57-60.

[4] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 4.1ff. See *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 16.25-29; Émile Bréhier, "ΑΡΕΤΑΙ ΚΑΘΑΡΣΕΙΣ," *Revue des Études anciennes* (1940) Republished in *Études de Philosophie Antique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), 240. All subsequent references refer to the pagination of the republication.

"harmonisation".[1] The harmonisation of the parts of soul that belongs to *ἡ σωφροσύνη ἡ πολιτική*[2] is but an image of this greater self-identification by which the soul comes to know intellect as "not another" (*οὐκ ἀλλότριος*).[3]

The inward turn (*στροφή*) of *σωφροσύνη* that effects the coincidence of *νοῦς* and self in the *Alcibiades* and in *Treatise 19* (I,2) is crucially an *activity*, and a single one. The nature of virtue as a single activity is expressed in both the Platonic dialogue and the Plotinian treatise by *δικαιοσύνη*. When Alcibiades promises to "cultivate justice within" (*ἐντεῦθεν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἐπιμέλεσθαι*, 135e4-5), he is replacing the "self" (*ἑαυτοῦ*) with the virtue which has come to be known, through the mediation of *σωφροσύνη*, as knowing and thinking (*τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν*, 133c1-2). In *Treatise 19*, fully purified *δικαιοσύνη* is the soul's "activity towards intellect" (*τὸ πρὸς νοῦν ἐνεργεῖν*, 6.23-34).[4] The justice of the political man, by which each of the several parts of the soul attends to its own respective business, is a mere image of the purified soul's single activity towards intellect, whose activity is also one (6.20-22). Similarly, the Soul of the All in *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) has one work: "for it does not sometimes look there and sometimes not; for if it left off looking it would be perplexed; for there is one soul and one work."[5]

The heavenly bodies manifest this singleness of purpose, moving along concerned only with their own affairs (*τὰ αὑτῶν πράττοντα*),[6] and not in order to cover distance. Their business (*τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῖς*) is not the sights they pass; their mind is on other things.[7] This is their justice. In this equivalence of the *δικαιοσύνη* and self in act, therefore, we find the reconciliation of the cosmological and the individual significance of *ἐπιμέλεσθαι* in the *Phaedrus* and the *Alcibiades*.

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 4.24-25.

[2] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1.18.

[3] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 4.26-27.

[4] Note also the frequency of *ἐνεργεῖν* in chapter 4 of *Treatise 19* (I, 2).

[5] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 10.14-16.

[6] Cf. *Phaedrus* 247a4-7.

[7] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 8.34-41.

Though "soul cares for all that is soulless,"[1] governing the body, nonetheless World Soul is not in any way affected by the body she rules.[2] World Soul is present to her universe and masters it, but does not belong to it and is not herself mastered by it (ἔμψυχος τῷ τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ, ἔχων ψυχὴν οὐχ αὑτοῦ, ἀλλ᾽ αὑτῷ, κρατούμενος οὐ κρατῶν, καὶ ἐχόμενος ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔχων, 9.34-37).[3] The unaffected activity of the soul oriented to her principle operates as mastery on the things below her.

Purified courage in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) takes the form of complete ἀπάθεια (6.25-26), of which heroic deeds which fear not death but only shame are imperfect instances.[4] The noetic paradigm goes still further, making ἀπάθεια an image of "immateriality and abiding pure by itself" (τὸ δὲ οἷον ἡ ἀυλότης καὶ τὸ ἐφ᾽αὑτοῦ μένειν καθαρόν, 7.6-7). This reflexive "abiding" (μένειν) which is central to the notion of courage in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is also linked in *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) to the fecundity that results from inward conversion. The Soul of the All, "abiding in herself (μένουσα οὖν ἐν αὑτῇ), makes, and the things which she makes come to her, but the particular souls themselves go to the things" (*27* (IV, 3) 6.24-25). The degree to which the individual soul imitates, holds to, and achieves the ἀπάθεια of the Soul of the All is none other than the degree to which she is free from the cycle of reincarnation and the punishment exacted by the "inescapable divine law" (ἀναπόδραστος θεῖος νόμος, 24.10-11), from the "justice in the nature of things" (παρὰ τῆς ἐν τοῖς οὖσι δίκης, 24.8-9).[5]

Courage as World Soul's unaffected "abiding" firmly in her vision of Intellect has also to do with the focus in *Treatises 27* and *28* (IV, 3-4) on soul's proper relation to the faculty of memory. In mythological terms, the shade of the human in Hades is bound precisely by its memories of "everything which the man had done or experienced" (πάντα, ὅσα ἔπραξεν ἢ ἔπαθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, 27 (IV, 3) 27.16-17). All these attachments to the body

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[1] *Phaedrus* 246b6; *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 1.34-35; 7.13.
[2] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 4.22-38; 6.11-15; 7.11-18; 12.8-12; 17.28-31; *28* (IV, 4) 23-26.
[3] Cf. *Treatise 6* (IV, 8) 2.15ff.
[4] See *Alcibiades* 115b1-116a11; 122a7-8. Cf. *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 5.12-16.
[5] Cf. *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 45.28-29.

and to the memory that relies on the body's perception of the passage of time amount rather to a turn away from and ignorance of soul's ancient nature and signature, separated intellectual activity. This is Plotinus' interpretation of the "river of Lethe" (ὁ τῆς Λήθης ποταμὸς, 26.55-56) in the Myth of Er of the *Republic*: the body's instability, its flux and flow, is itself the river that causes forgetfulness. A greater freedom lies in the memories pertaining to the multiple lives lived previous to the one most recently discarded (27.17-20), as this involves the soul's outlasting of the body. Ultimately, however, "l'âme bonne est oublieuse" (32.18)[1], forgetful not only of "human concerns" (ἀνθρωπεία σπουδάσματα, 32.16), but of the concerns of each of the bodies she has inhabited: her recollection tends toward the perspective of the whole through the multiplicity of her lives. Through the recognition of the multiplicity of her powers, soul is led to the unity that underlies them and abides their coming to be and passing away (32.10-24).

The character of purified courage leads us at the end of *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) to σοφία, in the articulation of the crucial difference between shade and soul, between the political man and the contemplative sage:[2]

> That Heracles [i.e. the shade Heracles of *Odyssey* 11] might talk of his heroic deeds (ἀνδραγαθίας ἑαυτοῦ), but the one who holds these to be unimportant and has been transposed to a holier place (εἰς ἁγιώτερον τόπον) and has come to be in the intelligible and has been stronger than Heracles in those contests in which the wise compete (ἰσχύσας τοῖς ἄλθοις, οἷα ἀθελύουσι σοφοί)…it is consistent to say that this soul will contemplate those things and act among those things (ἐκεῖνα θεωρεῖν καὶ περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἐνεργεῖν).

Porphyry's mid-sentence division of the last section of *Treatise 27* from the first section of *Treatise 28* (marked here by the ellipsis) recognizes not only a shift from τὰ ἡμέτερα to ἡμεῖς, but also from ἀπάθεια to ὅρασις, from soul's powers and mastery to her

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[1] Trouillard trans., *La purification plotinienne*, 143.
[2] *Treatises 27* (IV, 3) 32.24 –*28* (IV, 4) 1.1-4.

fundamental, defining activity in act. The soul's purified σοφία καὶ φρόνησις in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is similarly equated with her sight toward Intellect (πρὸς νοῦν ἡ ὅρασις, *19* (I, 2) 7.7-8). This ὅρασις is considered in *Treatise 28* precisely as the sight of World Soul (Zeus) and the heavenly bodies in their perpetual circular motion: they always see god (*28*, (IV, 4) 7.1-2).[1]

The reconciliation of the cosmological to the ethical account of "care" thus amounts to none other than the articulation of the relation of Necessity to the soul's finding her freedom in the choice and exercise of virtue. This requires an account of the kind of virtue the Soul of the All possesses, for understanding World Soul's activity as perfectly virtuous is central to seeing fate as ordered to providence, the lower causes as ordered to the higher. "Virtue belongs to the free man" (ἐλευθεροπρεπὲς δὲ ἡ ἀρετή, 135c6), and yet, as Socrates insists, Alcibiades' "escape" from the slavery of vice depends on God (ἐὰν θεὸς ἐθέλῃ, 135d6). As World Soul and individual souls share the same form, an individual soul's catching sight of World Soul's self-ordering to Intellect corresponds to the *Alcibiades'* analogy of the seer coming to see himself as seeing in the seeing eye of another; the knower comes to know himself as knower in the knowing of another. To understand fate as ordered to providence, and World Soul's virtue as the cause of this order, is itself a providential insight that points to the means of Alcibiades'—and our— escape: the acquisition and free exercise of the purifying, intellectualizing[2] virtues which we share with "leading" (ἡγούμενον), more divine (θειότερον) part of the Soul of the All.[3]

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[1] Cf. *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 25.3-4.

[2] See *Treatise 39* (VI, 8) 5.34-37: "If then virtue is a kind of other intellect (οἷον νοῦς τις ἄλλος ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετὴ), a state which in a way intellectualizes the soul (ἕξις οἷον νοωθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν ποιοῦσα), again, being in our power does not belong to the realm of action but in intellect at rest from actions."

[3] Cf. *Treatise 52* (II, 3) 9.1-47.

Let us consider this notion of the World Soul as the higher 'other' in *Treatises 27* and *28* a little further in relation to the *Alcibiades*. The radical reversal of the traditional interpretation of the Delphic command effected in the *Alcibiades*, by which the human is assimilated to god through his self-identification with the highest part of soul, requires the presence and providential care of another, specifically the good and wise friend or lover. Socrates, the only one who has ever truly loved Alcibiades—not his body or his other possessions, but Alcibiades himself—is the only one who can awaken Alcibiades to himself as a thinking, knowing (τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν, 133e) soul through his own exercise of those very activities in the presence of Alcibiades (131b-132a). In Aristotle this friendship between the higher and the lower is first of all internal; the well-reared, virtuous young man is a friend to himself through his obedience to the authoritative element within him.[1] His friendship with another is in fact an extension of this self-relation, by which the love of the good in each may be increased and their contemplation extended.[2] Plotinus' treatment of World Soul in *Treatises 27* and *28* in fact makes use of both the external and internal προνοία of the "other". First, it is in looking to the powers and activities of the Soul of the All and to the motions of the heavenly bodies that we come both to the recognition of what is "our own"—what is given to us from the All— and also through their contemplation to the contemplative activity that is in fact "ourselves". Second, the relation of higher and lower within the All itself, whereby the unchanging stability of its intelligence produces and orders the variety and divided intelligence of the universal living being's many parts,[3] alerts us to the similar relation that inheres within ourselves:[4]

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[1] *EN* IX 1168b-1169a.

[2] *EN* IX 1170a-b; 11721b-1172a.

[3] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 11.6-28; 17.34-39.

[4] *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 32.7-10. Cf. *28* (IV, 4) 11.12-14; 12.39-49.

it is proper for both the inferior (χείρονα) and the better (μάλιστα) [soul] to aspire to the activities of the memory of the better, whenever the latter is itself of good quality (ἀστεία): for someone can be rather good (ἀμείνων) from the beginning and can also become so as a result of education by the more excellent [soul].

So the transition from Heracles boasting of his heroic deeds to the sage's contemplation that bridges the end of *Treatise 27* and the beginning of *Treatise 28* is in fact fundamentally an internal one.

2.2.1.3.4 Alcibiades as the Praktikos

Plotinus rarely cites the *Alcibiades* directly. Chapter 44 of *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) is thus a rare moment:[1]

> everything which is directed to something else is enchanted by something else; for that to which it is directed enchants and draws it; but only that which is self-directed (τὸ πρὸς αὑτό) is free from enchantment. For this reason every action (πρᾶξις) is under enchantment, and the whole life of the practical man (πᾶς ὁ τοῦ πρακτικοῦ βίος): for he is moved to that which charms him. This is the reason for saying, "'The citizen body of great-hearted Erectheus' is fair of face." … Contemplation alone remains incapable of enchantment because no one who is self-directed (πρὸς αὑτὸν) is subject to enchantment, for he is one (εἷς γὰρ ἐστι), and that which he contemplates is himself (τὸ θεωρούμενον αὐτός ἐστι), and his reason is not deluded, but he makes what he ought and makes his own life and work (καὶ τὸ ἀλλ'ὃ δεῖ ποιεῖ, καὶ τὴν αὑτοῦ ζωῆν καὶ τὸ ἔργον ποιεῖ).

Socrates cites this same Homeric passage in his conversation with Alcibiades, using it to warn Alcibiades against the being drawn into the political life of Athens for love of the citizens without proper training (γύμνασαι).[2] Plotinus takes this Platonic allegorization of Homer one step further, turning it into a diagnosis of the plight of every practical

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[1] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 43.16-21, 44.1-4.
[2] *Alcibiades* 132a5. Cf. *Iliad* 2.547.

man. On the other side of desire and passion, World Soul's self-directed inward stance beckons the individual human away from the "magic of nature" (ή τῆς φύσεως γοητεία, 44.30) to the freedom of contemplation. It lies beyond the transmigrations of bodies which express the soul's operating according to its many lower faculties. "The soul which neither chooses what is better here below, nor has any share in what is worse, changes to another place, a pure one, and has the position which it chose." (45.45-48) *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) thus ends with the freedom of the Soul of the All as an image for the freedom possible for the human who chooses well.

2.2.1.4 Treatises 27 *and* 28: Conclusion

Carrying the Delphic command in its Alcibidean interpretation through to the end of *Treatises 27* and *28* reveals the extent to which Plotinus' account of World Soul corresponds to the role of the other, wiser soul which Socrates plays in the *Alcibiades.* In these collections of *aporiai* concerning the soul the diverse powers possessed by individual souls—nutrition, perception, appetite, spirit, imagination, memory, calculation and intellection—are considered against how World Soul, the heavenly bodies, and even the Earth[1] possess (or do not possess) them. The cosmological perspective of Platonic dialogues such as the *Philebus,* the *Timaeus*, and especially the *Phaedrus*, is brought to bear on the exhortation to the individual soul, γνῶθι σαυτόν. In having us immediately consider the virtue of the Soul of the All and the wonderful wisdom of its "leading part", *Treatise 19* (I, 2) implicitly assumes the cosmological application of the γνῶθι σαυτόν; in light of this perspective the limitations of the "political virtue" of practical men are evident. The gaze and activity of World Soul and the heavenly bodies toward Intellect propels *Treatise 19* past a civic understanding of virtue toward something more inward and intellectual that nonetheless does not despise the logic of procession and the world that has come forth from it. In the opening paragraph of *Treatise 19*, therefore, we can detect the seeds of Plotinian poetic contemplation which *Treatises 27-29* fill out in their consideration of World Soul and

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[1] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 22.4ff.

souls. It will be the work of the masterful *Treatise 30* (III, 8) to develop the relation between $\pi o i \eta \sigma \iota \varsigma$ and $\theta \epsilon \omega \rho i \alpha$ still more fully.[1]

2.2.2 Treatise 33 *(II, 9): Against the 'Gnostic' Conception of World Soul*

Treatises 27 and *28* point to and describe World Soul's virtue in such a way as makes its imitation desirable, bringing the individual rational soul to recognize her inner dignity. Soul came to know herself as her intellectual activity through seeing that activity in exemplary form in the heavens and the All. *Treatise 33* (II, 9), on the other hand, exhorts this imitation explicitly for almost the opposite reason, against those who would exalt themselves, in the arrogance of their particularity, beyond their proper sphere and without due measure (9.27ff), thereby confusing the logic of procession and return through purification (8.34-39; 13.1-6).[2]

As in *Treatises 27* and *28*, what is at stake in part in *Treatise 33* (II, 9) is the right interpretation of Plato, particularly of the *Phaedrus* (246c) and *Timaeus* (39e) (*33* (II, 9) 6.14ff). Contrary to the views of certain Platonizing Gnostics within Plotinus' company,[3] the soul that "has shed its wings" ($\pi\tau\epsilon\rho o\rho\rho\upsilon\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\sigma\alpha\nu$ $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\psi\upsilon\chi\grave{\eta}\nu$, 4.1)[4] is not to be understood as the "hypostatic" separated Soul, nor as the Soul of the All, but only as individual, particular souls. Individual, particular souls are bound to their bodies in a way that the Soul of the All is not (7.11-18). Using Gnostic terminology against itself,[5]

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[1] On the development in Plotinus' thought from *Treatise 6* (IV, 8) to *Treatise 30* (III, 8) of the non-reflection (i.e. discursivity) of *Nous*/Soul into an "effective-productive-contemplation" see Jean Marc Narbonne, *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 122-125. Narbonne here notes the *absence* of this productive contemplation in *Treatise 19* (I, 2); however, as I have endeavoured to show here, the development in the later treatises of the activities of World Soul and nature which culminates in *Treatise 30* (III, 8) has its tiny seeds in the "wonderful wisdom" ($\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ $\theta\alpha\upsilon\mu\alpha\sigma\tau\grave{\eta}$) of World Soul with which *Treatise 19* (I, 2) begins.
[2] For an overview of the attitude of some Gnostic texts toward the cosmos, see Narbonne, *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics*, 108-11.
[3] See ibid., 68-69; 119-120.
[4] Cf. *Phaedrus* 246c; *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 7.18-19.
[5] By the evidence of *Treatise 33* itself, $\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ appears to be a Gnostic term to describe the

Plotinus turns the Soul of the All's demiurgic making and governing into the diffusive overflow of her erotic "inclination" towards the intelligible world (*οὐ μᾶλλον νεύει ἐκεῖ*, 4.11-12); through her governance she "manifests the greatness of the intelligible nature" (*ἐνδεικνυμένην τῆς νοητῆς φύσεως τὸ μέγεθος*, 8.10-11) and an "extraordinary wisdom" (*σοφίαν ἀμήχανον*, 8.15).[1]

In *Treatises 27* and *28*, the powers and operations of the individual human soul find their dignity in relation to the Soul of the All's universal and timeless paradigmatic operations (in the case of memory, for example). Likewise, in *Treatise 33* (II, 9), human virtue finds itself defined within the context of the virtue of the All and of the highest souls within it, the heavenly bodies (8.31-39). The criticism against the Gnostics that "they have made no study concerning virtue"(*τὸ μηδένα λόγον περὶ ἀρετῆς πεποιῆσθαι*, 15.27-28) is thus a thorough-going one, revealing the degree to which this group has failed to make *any* study of the soul, of its parts or diverse operations or affections, for even the study of her lower attributes would contribute to an understanding of her essence and most excellent activities.[2] A study of the soul such as that in *Treatises 27* through *29* (IV, 3-5) is, as we have seen, itself a study in virtue, one that propels the soul through and past the measured control of her partitions to her underlying unity and purity in self-directed intellectual activity. Without any study of the soul, no purifying self-knowledge is possible, and knowledge itself becomes reduced to a murky memory of an utterance (*μεμνημένον ὀνόματος*, 15.36-37) rather than an active and internally perceived presence: "without true virtue the 'god' that is spoken is merely a name"(*ἄνευ δὲ ἀρετῆς ἀληθινῆς*[3] *θεὸς λεγόμενος ὄνομά ἐστιν*, 15.40).

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fall of Soul and *Sophia*: *33* (II, 9) 5.29; 10.19-20. Cf. Narbonne, *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics*, 67.

[1] *Treatise 33* (II, 9) 2.10-20; 3.8-12; 4.15-17. Cf. *ἀμήχανον τὸ ἀγαθόν*, *Republic* VI. 509a6; *ἀμήχανον τὸ ἐκεὶ κάλλος*, *Symposium* 21e2; *Treatise 33* (II, 9) 17.36.

[2] Aristotle, *De Anima* I.1 402b21-23.

[3] Cf. *Phaedo* 82a.

In its emphasis on the piety and praise due to the heavens *Treatise 33* (II, 9) recalls the beginning of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), where, following the *Theaetetus*, becoming godlike means becoming "just *and holy* according to wisdom" (δίκαιοι καὶ ὅσιοι μετὰ φρονήσεως, *19* (I, 2) 1.4-5). As we have seen, in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) the fact that 'evils are here' (τὰ κακὰ ἐνταῦθα, 1.1) does not amount to a contempt for this world. The ἐνταῦθα is reiterated within the first ten lines with a much more positive connotation, as our finding ourselves 'here' becomes sufficient reason to consider the Soul of the All's ἡγούμενον as the first candidate for the goal of assimilation (καὶ γὰρ εὔλογον ἐνταῦθα ὄντας *[ἡγουμένῳ] ὁμοιοῦσθαι*, 1.9-10). The logic of self-diffusive goodness must ultimately govern the flight if it is to be a pious one.

In *Treatise 33* (II, 9) the contrast between this attitude of Plotinus and that of the 'Platonizing Gnostics' toward this flight could not be more deliberately drawn:[1]

> Not honouring (οὐ τιμῶντες) this handiwork (ταύτην τὴν δημιουργίαν) or this earth, [the Platonizing Gnostics] say that a new earth has come to be for them, for which they will depart from here (ἐντεῦθεν ἀπελεύσονται): and that this is the principle (λόγον) of this world. And yet why do they need to come to be there (ἐκεῖ) in the paradigm of the world, which they hate?

2.3 The Cosmological Picture: Conclusion

In *Treatises 27* and *28*, World Soul is the higher 'other' of the *Alcibiades*, in whom individual souls may come to know themselves as knowing. As such, she is the crucial agent in the human soul's coming to understand fate as ordered to providence. In *Treatise 33* (II, 9) the observer who does not despise the heavens in their eternal motions is freed to come to this providential insight. To recognize προνοία in the enduring presence of the intelligible, manifested visibly by the life of the All, is the essence of

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[1] *Treatise 33* (II, 9) 5.24-28.

piety (εὐσέβεια).[1] The ordered whole "has not been abandoned and will not be abandoned" (ἀλλ' ὅ γε κόσμος ἐκεῖθεν ἔχει καὶ οὐκ ἀπολέλειπται οὐδ'ἀπολειφθήσεται, 16. 29-30). Once again, the logic of self-diffusive goodness, this time understood as enduring presence or remaining, governs the mind's ascent from lower to higher forms of thinking and being. Coming to recognize the god's enduring presence to his world is the beginning of an actual participation in the work of προνοία itself, within oneself, as well as for another. In mythological terms, "it is not lawful for there to be envy among the gods" (μὴ θέμις φθόνον ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς εἶναι, 17.17);[2] becoming a god for us also must mean imparting the self-diffusive goodness acquired only through contemplation's productive activity.

Treatise 19 (I, 2) thus begins with a glance to the providential activity of World Soul in order to get us past merely human virtue. Plotinus' view, then, is decidedly *not* anthropocentric; the perspective of the human is necessarily partial and therefore fate-bound, while the perspective of soul, coincident in its purest form with the Soul of the All, is the perspective of providence. Clement of Alexandria's emphatic anthropocentrism provides a striking point of contrast to Plotinus' account of World Soul as the human's guide to the providential viewpoint:[3]

> Certainly [God] heals the soul through herself (καθ'αὑτὴν)…we receive through His good ordering (παρὰ τῆς εὐταξίας) the best and firmest order (τάξιν). First this good ordering occupied itself with casting the sun's rotations around the world and the heaven, and the courses of the rest of the stars, for the sake of man (διά τὸν ἄνθρωπον). Then it concerned itself with man himself, for whom it had undertaken all its labours (περὶ ὃν ἡ πᾶσα σπουδὴ καταγίνεται). Considering him its most

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[1] *Treatise 33* (II, 9) 16.15-17.

[2] Cf. *Phaedrus* 247a7; see also *Timaeus* 29d7-30c1; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.2 982b32-983a4.

[3] Clement of Alexandria, *Clément d'Alexandrie: Le Pédagogue*, Introduction et notes de Henri-Irénée Marrou, traduction de Marguerite Harl (Paris: Cerf, 1960; henceforth *Paed.*) I 2, 6, 5-6. My translation of the French. See Carlos Fraenkel, *Philosophical Religions*, 7 n. 19.

important work, it guides his soul in the direction of wisdom (φρόνησις) and temperance (σωφροσύνη), and equips his body with beauty and harmony. Finally, into the actions of mankind it breathes in (ἐνέπνευσεν) uprightness (κατορθοῦν) and its own good order (τὸ εὔτακτον...τὸ αὐτῆς).

For Plotinus, the human is not the most important work. Civic virtue and purificatory virtue are lower forms of World Soul's purely contemplative virtue, and it is the task of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) to locate their place relative to her activity.

Chapter 3
Civic Virtue in *Treatises 19* (I, 2) and *20* (I, 3)

The scale of virtues outlined in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) points ever toward an increase in integration in a way that pushes the soul beyond the realm of the political and the human; ultimately it must be said that Plotinus leaves the political behind in all its necessarily dappled variety. The sage "will not live the life of the good man which civic virtue requires. He will leave that behind, and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like" (*19* (I, 2) 7.24-27). While it is certainly true that this push beyond the political will be redressed in later Neoplatonic thinkers such as Porphyry, Macrobius, Iamblichus, Proclus, Olympiodorus and Damascius, so that the value of human community and particularly the role of the ruler within that community is significantly elevated,[1] nonetheless the question of the role and value of "political virtue" in Plotinus' thought and its implications for the sage's ethical action and care for others remains the subject of some debate.[2]

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[1] H. van Lieshout, *La Théorie Plotinienne de la Vertu* (Freiburg, Switzerland: Studia Freiburgia, 1926), *passim*, esp. 177-122; Wayne J. Hankey, "Political, Psychic, Intellectual, Daimonic, Hierarchical, Cosmic, and Divine Justice in Aquinas, Al-Fârâbî, Dionysius, and Porphyry," *Dionysius* 21 (2003): 206-211; Dominic O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 40-49, esp. 43-46; Dirk Baltzly, "The Virtues and 'Becoming Like God': Alcinous to Proclus,"*Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* XXVI (2004): 301, 319; Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé and Luc Brisson, "Le Système Philosophique de Porphyre dans les *Sentences,*" in Brisson, ed. *Porphyre: Sentences* Tome I (Paris: Librarie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2005), 131-132; Sebastian Ramon Philipp Gertz, *Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism: Studies on the Ancient Commentaries on Plato's* Phaedo (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 52-54.

[2] See, for example, John Dillon, "An ethic for the late antique sage," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus,* Lloyd P. Gerson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 315-335; Charles Brittain, "Attention Deficit in Plotinus and Augustine: Psychological Problems in Christian and Platonist Theories of the Grades of Virtue," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 18 (2002): 223-263; Mark L. McPherran, "Reason's Ascent: Happiness and the Disunity of Virtue in Plato and Plotinus," in *Rationality and Happiness: From the Ancients to the Early Medievals*, Jiyuan Yu and Jorge E. Garcia, eds. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 135-158; O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 43-44, esp. 44 n11; Alexandrine Schniewind, *L'éthique du sage chez Plotin* (Paris: Librarie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2003); John Dillon, "Alexandrine

I wish here to consider, first, how civic virtue is introduced, characterized and superseded, in light of World Soul's small but important role in the beginning of the *Treatise,* outlined in the previous chapter; second, the degree to which Plotinus' account of civic virtue in particular and the grades of virtue in general depends not only on the *Republic* and *Phaedo,* but also on other Platonic dialogues, especially the *Phaedrus, Symposium* and *Laws*; and, third, the treatment of civic virtue in other Plotinian treatises, especially *Treatise 20* (I, 3), with which *Treatise 19* (I, 2) should be read.

Plotinus' aim in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) concerning ἡ ἀρετὴ ἡ πολιτική is to give a clear articulation of that virtue's important but subordinate place in the hierarchy of being. This means considering several Platonic accounts of virtue in light of one another, in varying degrees of explicitness. The net result of these considerations is that civic virtue is revealed to stand near the beginning of the soul's spiritual ascent, important by reason of the measured stability that it imparts to the soul, through the government of φρόνησις that its definition requires, but nonetheless a lower species of purificatory virtue, and not the virtue constitutive of likeness to god, except derivatively. Its categorization, however, as a lower species of *purificatory* virtue, rather than a separate category from purification, is important to understanding its worth in Plotinus' thought.

3.1 Civic Virtue Finds its Place Relative to World Soul and Intellect: 1.1-20

As we saw in Chapter One, though civic virtue is the lowest 'grade' of virtue in the Plotinian system, it is not the kind of virtue with which Plotinus begins *Treatise 19* (I, 2). The question of what ὁμοίωσις θεῷ might mean, given its context in the *Theaetetus* passage with which the treatise begins, drew us to a consideration well beyond the theatre of human political life, to the cosmic picture, to World Soul, the virtues proper to it, and its desire (ὄρεξις) for the intelligibles as the principle of both the visible world's order and ours. Guided by the traces of World Soul's φρόνησις, evident in the world in which we find ourselves, the individual soul in her desiring 'part' finds herself

Schniewind, *L'éthique du sage chez Plotin*" (Review), *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2004.05.02 (2004).

reoriented to her proper objects, the possession of which amounts to none other than the exercise of her own highest activity. Only these noetic objects, actively possessed, can provide her with an enduring satisfaction.[1]

Having established that for Soul both virtue and the direction of her desire lie properly in her principle, Intellect, Plotinus asks whether *Νοῦς* itself (*ἐκεῖνο*) has the virtues (*19* (I, 2) 1.15-16). The answer here in chapter one of *Treatise 19* is as yet incomplete. What is certain is that the virtues "called political", at least these (*τὰς γε πολιτικὰς λεγομένας ἀρετὰς*), do not belong to Intellect. This qualified answer produces the first explicit, complete enumeration and definition of the four 'cardinal' virtues familiar from the *Republic*, *φρόνησις*, *ἀνδρία*, *σωφροσύνη*, and *δικαιοσύνη*,[2] as they relate to the tripartite structure of both city and soul and the overarching right order of ruler to ruled within each. As it was debatable (*ἀμφισβητήσιμον*, 1.11) whether World Soul possessed the virtues according to this same tripartite structure, given that it is the All and nothing can come to it from outside that it might either desire or fear, still less likely (*οὐκ εὔλογον*, 1.16) is it that tripartition and the virtues which pertain to a logic of internal agreement and harmony would adequately describe the excellence of Intellect's partless unity. So the first description of each virtue's character in its political mode requires its immediate exclusion from the dignity of Intellect.

This initial, qualified denial of virtue in *Νοῦς* completes the movement by which the negation of desire and fear relative to exterior objects in World Soul led us to consider her as turned inward, desiring what is within and above her in her principle. What Émile Bréhier has pointed out about the aim of the treatise as a whole is evident here in these first twenty lines: the definition of virtue as a) an acquired (*ἐπακτόν*) state of soul and b) what belongs to the composite (*συναμφότερον*) of soul and body requires its

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[1] Cf. *Treatise 46* (I, 4) 6.17-18.
[2] *Republic* IV 427e10-11.

exclusion from the very higher modes of being to which the *Theaetetus* exhorts us.[1]
Virtue, then, is the means to a likeness within which it itself has no place.

3.2 Two Kinds of Virtue: 1.21-3.10

At this point in the treatise, two kinds of virtue present themselves: the civic ones and "the greater virtues which have the same name" (τὰς μείζους τῷ αὐτῷ ὀνόματι χρωμένας, *19* (I, 2) 1.22-23). Plotinus' discussion at this juncture in chapter one requires some unpacking, as he is up to several things at once, and there are some difficulties in the text. Three problems may be distinguished here, the considerations of which are in fact sustained to the end of the treatise. First, given the negative context in which political virtue has been introduced, a certain effort to "save the appearances" is required, as tradition (ἡ φήμη) calls men who possess political virtue 'godlike' (θείους, 1.23-26), even if this is not properly, in Plotinus' eyes, the Platonic position (3.9-10). Second, the nature of these "greater" virtues must be articulated: just what are they? Third, how can civic virtue produce likeness to god without in fact being possessed by god himself?

3.2.1 The Godlike Political Men of Tradition: 1.21-26

The tradition of calling statesmen, kings and law-makers "godlike" by reason of their various actions to and for the city is long and well established on the authority of the likes of Homer and Hesiod. In fact, Plotinus' consideration of the πολιτικός/πρακτικός in general throughout the *Enneads* is consistently shaped by Homer, who is almost always mediated through Plato. Homer is called upon to give the clearest testimony of the πρακτικός' godlike nature: because of his law-making King Minos is said in the *Odyssey* to be "the familiar friend of Zeus" (Μίνως ὀαριστὴς τοῦ Διὸς, *9* (VI, 9) 7.23-24).[2] Yet, as we saw in Chapter One, following the lead of the Alcibiades, Plotinus also engages Homer, allegorically interpreted, to warn of the dangerous charms of the

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[1] Émile Bréhier, "ΑΡΕΤΑΙ ΚΑΘΑΡΣΕΙΣ," 238-239.
[2] *Odyssey* 19.178-9. Cf. *Laws* I, 624b, and the pseudo-Platonic *Minos,* 318e-320d. See Pierre Hadot, *Traité 9 (VI, 9)* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 98n.143, 180-182.

practical life: "The citizen body of great-hearted Erectheus is fair-faced" (τὸ εὐπρόσωπος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ μεγαλήτορος Ἐρεχθέως δῆμος, *28* (IV, 4) 43.19-22).[1] In other places, the danger and the derivative glory of πρᾶξις are brought together in Homer's Heracles, the archetypal practical man whose shade stalks Hades while the hero himself resides among the gods.[2]

Among these various employments of Homer by Plotinus to describe the "divine" quality of political men, the use here in chapter one is brief, merely evoking, rather than citing, the examples of Heracles and Minos.[3] However, it should alert us to the tone and mode of the treatise at this point. Plotinus' style here is highly discursive, proceeding by question and answer in a manner reminiscent of a conversation between him and an interlocutor, perhaps a student.[4]

3.2.2 The "Greater Virtues": 1.21-2.4

Just what are these virtues which are said to be "greater" than the civic ones? Given the division Plotinus makes in chapter three between civic and "purificatory" virtues, it is not unreasonable to think that he anticipates that division here. This is how Armstrong, for instance, appears to understand the flow of the argument, so that lines 26-27 (ἀλλ᾽ ἑκατέρως γε συμβαίνει ἀρετὰς ἔχειν κἂν εἰ μὴ τοιαύτας) require no addition of a subject and thus may be translated as something like "it is possible to have virtues on

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[1] *Iliad* 2.547; cf. *Alcibiades I* 132a5.

[2] *Treatise 53* (I, 1) 12.32-40; cf. *Odyssey* 11.601-602. Cf. also *Treatise 27* (IV, 3), 14.16; 27.7, 13; 32.24-27; Jean-Marie Flamand, trans., "Traité 19 (I, 2): Sur les vertus," in Brisson-Pradeau, 448 n.28; John Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue," 94. On Plotinus' use and development of the duality of Heracles in *Treatise 53* and elsewhere, see Gwennaëlle Aubry, *Traité 53 (I, 1)* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 327-332. On the use of Heracles more generally in Neoplatonism, see Jean Pépin, "Héraclès et Son Reflet dans le Néoplatonisme," in *Le Néoplatonisme: Colloque International sur le Néoplatonisme, Royaumont, France, 1969* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971), 167-192.

[3] There may also be a hint of a reference here to the end of the *Meno.*

[4] See Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2) Sur les vertus," in Brisson-Pradeau, 444-445n7.

both levels, even if not the same kind of virtues."[1] The Henry-Schwyzer edition, however, reads the subject of this sentence as the ἐκεῖνο of line 15—Intellect, that is—so that the sense of the sentence is "But whatever the case [concerning whether or not any likeness may come through the possession of civic virtue], it happens that god possesses the virtues, even if not the same ones [as political men]."[2] On this latter interpretation, the "better virtues" are those tentatively ascribed to Intellect: not the purificatory virtues which will be described in chapter three on Platonic authority, but rather, as will become apparent by the beginning of chapter two, the intelligible archetypes themselves.

This reading makes far better sense of the series of analogies (heat to what is heated, fire to what it heats, and intelligible house to perceptible house, 1.31-45) which follow this series of questionings. These analogies discursively[3] give way to each other as an appropriate model for the soul's divinisation through her participation in the civic virtue which Intellect does not possess is gradually approximated.[4] The first analogy, suggesting that the relation is like that between what is heated and the presence of heat, which itself does not need to be heated, does not work because while heat may be acquired (ἐπακτὸν) by the thing that is heated, it is also a natural quality (σύμφυτον) inherent in the source (i.e. fire); civic virtue, however, has already been denied of Intellect. The second analogy, that fire makes something other than itself hot, but does not itself need fire to be hot, would elevate virtue to the level of god, which is also not desirable.[5] What is necessary is to demonstrate that what civic virtue gives to soul—her

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[1] MacKenna shares this interpretation: "on both levels there is virtue for us, though not the same virtue." Stephen MacKenna, trans. *Plotinus: The Enneads*, John Dillon, ed. (London: Penguin, 1991), 16.

[2] Flamand's French translation follows H-S here: see Brisson-Pradeau, 432 and 448n30; so does John Dillon's English translation, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 95.

[3] See Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2): Sur les vertus," in Brisson-Pradeau, 444-445n.7; 448 n.25 on the discursive character of this treatise.

[4] See Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 95. Dillon reads the καὶ at line 33 intensively: "and, more precisely…"

[5] Though John Dillon rightly points out that Plotinus could push this particular analogy further by distinguishing between 'hot' as an acquired quality and as a causative one,

measure and order and harmony—is itself essentially predicable of that virtue, but not of the principle whence virtue comes. This is where the analogy of the perceptible to the intelligible house comes in.

The arrangement, order, and proportion (τάξις, κόσμος, συμμετρία, 1.45-46; cf. ὁμολογία, συμφωνία, 1.18-19) characteristic of the perceptible house do not exist in the Intelligible archetype. Plotinus is in fact quite emphatic on this point, enumerating the trio of τάξις, κόσμος and συμμετρία/ὁμολογία no less than three times, each time in a different order (1.45, 46-47, 47-48).[1] The transition from συμμετρία to ὁμολογία –from the language of "proportion" to that of "agreement"—marks the addition of a further degree of precision to the analogy, a movement from the visible participation of the house to the invisible participation of the soul. Plotinus has already in an earlier treatise rejected the Stoic attribution of the beauty of virtue to a kind of "mechanistic and extrinsic"[2] symmetry in the soul—a theory which verges too closely on a corporeal conception of virtue and of soul.[3] ὁμολογία, on the other hand, is a word that more closely approximates the beauty proper to what is simple and one, and therefore more appropriately describes the unifying power of civic virtue in the soul governed by reason, as another early treatise attests: "the soul has virtue when it is unified into one thing and one agreement" (καὶ ἀρετὴ δὲ ψυχῆς, ὅταν εἰς ἓν καὶ εἰς μίαν ὁμολογίαν ἑνωθῇ).[4] The analogy of the perceptible to the intelligible house, discursively unveiled,

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ibid. 95. However, it may be argued that Plotinus in fact implicitly makes this distinction in chapter two of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), where the civic virtues are called "themselves measured" (αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι, 2.18) as well as the measure of soul's matter: they are like the "measure" in Intellect to the extent that they cause measure to be in the soul, but Intellect is only measure in the causative, and not in the qualitative sense.

[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1.45: ἐν τῷ λόγῳ οὐκ ἔστι τάξις οὐδὲ κόσμος οὐδὲ συμμετρία; 1.46-47: οὕτως οὖν κόσμου καὶ τάξεως καὶ ὁμολογίας μεταλαμβάνοντες ἐκεῖθεν καὶ τούτων ὄντων τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐνθάδε; 1.47-48: οὐ δεομένων δὲ τῶν ἐκεῖ ὁμολογίας οὐδὲ κόσμου οὐδὲ τάξεως, οὐδ' ἂν ἀρετῆς εἴη χρεία.

[2] Ferroni-Achard-Narbonne, cccx.

[3] *Treatise 1* (I, 6) 1.21-55; cf. Anne-Lise Darras-Worms, *Plotin: Traité 1 (I, 6)* (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 123-135, esp. 134-135. Cf. *Treatise 2* (IV, 7) 8.24-45.

[4] *Treatise 9* (VI, 9) 1.16-17. See also *Treatise 1* (I, 6) 2.19-20: προσιὸν οὖν τὸ εἶδος τὸ μὲν ἐκ

and the small change in the wording by which the analogy's application to virtue and the soul is made more appropriate, thus makes virtue's *unifying* power in the soul more evident than the initial articulation of the four virtues' roles given at 1.17-21.

Let us take this movement through analogy seriously, as a carefully articulated line of questioning designed to draw the interlocutor away from a unitary Stoic understanding of virtue that would make it the same for both god and man.[1] Chapter one of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is thus a dialectical prologue that is also a preparation for the spiritual ascent which comprises the rest of the treatise, as well as its attendant, *Treatise 20* (I, 3). Through World Soul as intermediary, we have been led as far as to admit that the god to whom we may hope to be likened is not simply the "good men" whom tradition has taught us to call "divine", but Intellect, from whom the good men of the city also derive their virtue.[2] A brief glance toward the beginning of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) further reveals the anagogical method at work here in *Treatise 19* (I, 2).

3.2.2.1 The Musician of Treatise 20 *(I, 3) and* Treatise 19 *(I, 2) 1*

In *Treatise 20* (I, 3), on the authority of the *Phaedrus* (248d1-4), Plotinus sets out three kinds of souls who have all, before their descent into the body of a human child, "seen all or most things" in the intelligible world and are therefore capable of returning there: the musician, the lover, and the philosopher (*20* (I, 3) 1.6-10). The musician, who does not naturally "go the upward way", is the man who, though not "quite able to be moved through [beauty in] himself" (ἀδυνατώτερον δὲ παρ' αὐτοῦ), nonetheless is "ready to be moved by what occurs in a way as its impressions" (ἕτοιμον δὲ ἐκ τῶν τυχόντων οἷον

πολλῶν ἐσόμενον μερῶν ἓν ἤγαγε καὶ ἐν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ πεποίηκεν. See also Ferroni-Achard-Narbonne, ccxi; *Treatise 26* (III, 6) 2.1-33.

[1] See, for example, Plutarch, *On Common Conceptions* 1076a (*SVF* 3.246).

[2] This in fact constitutes a constant refrain throughout the treatise. See 6.3, "Our concern, though, is not to be out of sin, but to be god"; 7.24-28, "he will not live the life of the good man which civic virtue requires. He will leave that behind, and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like."

ἐκτύπων). Through the well-formed quality of his "interior disposition",[1] therefore, the musician naturally inclines to what is harmonious and unified, "rhythmical and shapely" (τὸ εὔρυθμον καὶ τὸ εὔσχημον) among exterior, perceptible things. Drawn and distracted as he is by one beautiful sensation after another, he is unable to discern the common term of beauty among them; he is governed by sensation rather than by thought. He must therefore "have the doctrines of philosophy implanted in him" (καὶ λόγους τοὺς φιλοσοφίας ἐνθετέον); a force that leads to faith (πίστις) in the knowledge he already possesses without knowing it is the mode of education proper to him (εἰς πίστιν ἀκτέον ὧν ἀγνοεῖ ἔχων, 1.34). This mode involves his being led through the proportions and analogies which he loves so much without knowing why to their ordering rational principles, and from there to the separated archetypes of both: from ἀναλογίαι to λόγοι to χωρίζοντα τὴν ὕλην (1.29-34).

Now this is precisely the mode of discourse with which *Treatise 19* (I, 2) begins: the question of the likeness to god which civic virtue might produce is sought through a series of analogies which, as they grow in their precision, first unveil virtue's relation to the physical symmetry which initially captures the musician's attention (though through a different organ of sense, sight rather than sound); then draw him to his deeper love, harmony, to which he is already attuned; force him beyond harmony to virtue as the λόγος that causes harmony in the soul; and finally force him still further, beyond virtue as the λόγος of harmony to the principle, separate Intellect, which does not possess virtue in this way, though it causes it in the soul.[2] *Treatise 20* (I, 3) thus makes clear how the method of proceeding by analogy in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) relates to the question of virtue and what the state of the soul who is to receive spiritual education in virtue must be. Plotinus' final words of chapter one point to the degree to which the preparatory nature of *Treatise 19*'s introduction corresponds to the mode of the musician, and indicates that the rest of the treatise must now address itself to the lover: "it is necessary to induce

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[1] Cf. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Plotin*, Énneades *I, 3: Sur la dialectique*, 34.
[2] A similar movement, though expanded, may be observed in *Treatise 1* (I, 6) 1-6.

persuasion by argument, not remaining content with force" (δεῖ δὲ πειθὼ ἐπάγειν τῷ λόγῳ μὴ μένοντας ἐπὶ τῆς βίας, 1.53-54).[1]

3.2.3 Two Kinds of Likeness: 2.4-26

We have concluded above that the two kinds of virtue enumerated in chapter one are "civic" and the archetype of the virtues existing in the Intelligible, which the civic virtues participate. What follows in chapter two of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is a corresponding consideration, carried out in a different mode, of "two kinds of likeness", which enables a more robust description of the effect the civic virtues have on the soul.

Let us first address the change in mode from chapter one to chapter two with another glance at *Treatise 20* (I, 3). First, in *Treatise 20* Plotinus is clear that the three kinds of souls are not rigidly defined; the musician may turn (μετάπεσοι) into a lover and may even from there proceed to become a philosopher (*20* (I, 3) 2.1-2). The catalyst of this change is simply the effect of dialectic upon the soul at whatever level she inhabits. Towards the end of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) this becomes clear as Plotinus pairs the presence of dialectic and wisdom (σοφία) so that both together form the criterion for the distinction between lower and higher virtues. The shift in the mode of discourse between chapter one and chapter two of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) reflects this understanding of the parallel motions of dialectic and the growth of virtue. In fact, the move from βία to πειθώ signalled at the end of chapter one enacts the movement in the soul from musician to lover. Reading *Treatise 19* (I, 2) together with *Treatise* 20 (I, 3) gives a clearer sense of *Treatise 19*'s anagogical character, its reflection of the framework of Platonic reading, commentary and discussion, which Hadot has collectively described as a spiritual exercise.[2]

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[1] See Pierre Hadot, trans., *Plotin: Traité 38* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 16-18. See also Alexandrine Schniewind, "Quelles conditions pour une éthique plotinienne?", in Michel Fattal, ed. *Études sur Plotin* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), 53-54.

[2] See Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Arnold I. Davidson, ed, Michael Chase, trans. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 86, 115n53, 104-106, 109. For Hadot, the act of reading itself may be considered a spiritual exercise, when the reader seeks to "meditate calmly, ruminate, and let the texts speak" to him.

Chapter two of *Treatise 19* also gives us a more detailed description of the nature of civic virtue. Where chapter one gave us the scriptural passage, taken almost directly from the *Republic*, in chapter two's description we see civic virtue as if from the inside, having moved past the language of analogy and even considering how the civic virtues in forming soulish matter (ἐν ὕλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ) bring it into a greater likeness to the formless Good.

As with the "two kinds of virtue" of chapter one, Plotinus' thought in chapter two needs a bit of unpacking. The first kind of likeness is the kind that is reciprocal, between two things that share a common principle. This, as the last lines of the treatise characterise it, is the likeness two images (εἰκόνες) of the same subject share in regard to each other (7.29-30). This kind of likeness pertains to civic virtue's operation in at least two ways. First, on the level of civic life, the man who is seeking perfection in this kind of virtue may look to his betters in the *polis* for a standard by which to measure himself. To look to them is to look as if in a (perhaps distorted) mirror; any difference between reality and reflection is one of degree, not of kind. To the extent that two good men are both equally virtuous, their actions will be mirror images of one another. Second, on the level of the soul, the civic virtues which "set us in order" (κατακοσμοῦσι), and "make us better by limiting and measuring desires and altogether measuring the passions and taking away false opinions" (ἀμείνους ποιοῦσιν ὁρίζουσαι καὶ μετροῦσαι τὰς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ὅλως τὰ πάθη μετροῦσαι καὶ ψευδεῖς δόξας ἀφαιροῦσαι), which make exterior to us what is "unmeasured and unbounded" (τῶν ἀμέτρων καὶ ἀορίστων ἔξω εἶναι), are themselves limited (αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι). They impart to the soul what they themselves also possess (*19* (I, 2) 2.14-18), a characteristic which marks them as realities that belong properly to the natural excellence of the human soul.

The second kind of likeness is non-reciprocal (οὐκ ἀντιστρέφον), that of an image to its model (πρὸς παράδείγμα, 7.30). The image may be said to be like the model, but the model cannot be said to be like the image; the image participates the model. Once again, this kind of likeness applies to civic virtue in at least two ways. First, on the level of the

individual soul, in the measuring effect it has in soul's matter (ἐν ὕλη τῇ ψυχῇ), civic virtue imitates and participates the measuring activity of Intellect. Civic virtue's higher participation in Intellect possesses the character of being not only what is measured (formed matter, i.e. body), but also measure for another. The importance of virtue's being both caused and causing is better conveyed by Henry-Schwyzer's punctuation at line 18 (not followed by Armstrong), whereby καὶ αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι begins a new sentence as a concessive aorist rendering lines 18-20 as follows: "And while they are themselves limited, by which fact they are measures in matter for the soul, they are made like to that measure There and have a trace (ἴχνος) of the Best There."[1]

Second, on the level of the city, the civically virtuous man, in so far as he is both measured himself and also a measure for others partakes of the second kind of likeness to the archetype. This is where the danger for the political man, and for the individual soul as well, comes in. This higher degree of participation in the limiting activity of Intellect can deceive the soul into imagining that because she provides the measure for body, she is herself "god, even the whole of god" (ὥστε καὶ ἐξαπατᾶν θεὸς φαντασθεῖσα, μὴ τὸ πᾶν θεοῦ τοῦτο ᾖ, 2.25-26). The error comes through forgetting that virtue's character as both measured and measuring are likenesses of the second kind, dependent on a higher principle without being identifiable with that principle.

3.2.4. Civic Virtue as Purificatory: 3.1-10

The articulation of the second form of likeness, the likeness of imitation to paradigm, launches us into another perspective on virtue in chapter three, or rather a deeper consideration of Plato's exhortation at *Theaetetus* 176b-c, one which, Plotinus tells us, will clarify the nature of civic virtue as well (3.2-5). At this point, it is interesting—and rather surprising—to note that the adjective μείζων, "better", reappears in the treatise here (3.1-2). At first glance this is surprising because it seemed at the beginning of chapter two that this "better" kind of virtue had turned out not to be virtue at all, but rather the

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[1] See Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2) Sur les Vertus," in Brisson-Pradeau, 435, 452n51.

paradigm of virtue in Intellect. However, what was stated at the beginning of chapter two still needs further investigation before the word 'virtue' can be persuasively dropped from the paradigm in Intellect. The aim of the next step of the argument is thus twofold: to show that there is in fact another kind of virtue other than civic virtue, which is proper to the soul, by the articulation of which the real nature of the paradigm, which does not belong to soul, will be better established (3.5-6).

It is here that the purificatory virtues are introduced, on the authority of the *Phaedo*. Their relation to the civic virtues is not altogether clear, however:[1]

> Plato, when he speaks of "likeness" as a "flight to God" from existence here below, and does not give the virtues in citizenship only the name virtue, but adds "political", and when he elsewhere calls them all together (*ἀπάσας*) "purifications", is clear, positing that there are two [kinds of virtue], and that likeness [to god] is not according to civic virtue.

What is of note is the small but important word, "all together" (*ἀπάσας*) of line 9. This word seems to make "purifications" a word which encompasses all the virtues, including the civic ones.[2] If this is the case, then the virtues proper to the city are being included as a sub-group of a larger category, the whole of virtue, and under this larger denomination, the civic virtues are more properly understood as "purifications". This was in fact already hinted at in the more detailed description of the civic virtues which we received in chapter two: as well as being the soul's *acquisition* of measure and order, the civic virtues also *abolish* false opinions (*ψευδεῖς δόξας ἀφαιροῦσαι* , 2.15-16). This aphaeretic quality which civic virtue possesses in relation to the purification of opinion anticipates the independent activity of purificatory *νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν*, which drives out all opinion held in common with the body (*εἰ μήτε συνδοξάζοι, ἀλλὰ μόνη ἐνεργοῖ*, 3.14-15). So while there are indeed "two kinds of virtues" on the Platonic reading, there

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 3.5-10.
[2] See also *19* (I, 2) 7.8-10.

is considerable evidence here that they are not to be understood as mutually exclusive categories; rather, Plotinus is arguing that the civic kind of virtue is a species of purificatory virtue. This does not prevent the civic virtues from being understood as purificatory in a lower sense than other virtues within the genus, and this is in fact what Plotinus means by saying that "likeness [to god] is not according to the civic kind." (3.9-10)

One of the most important aspects of Plotinus' *Treatise 19* (I, 2), as well as of the entire first Ennead in Porphyry's rearrangement is the guide it provides for the correct reading of Plato's political and ethical thought by later Neoplatonists.[1] This reading of civic virtue as a lower kind of purificatory virtue, as itself a purification, is in fact taken up more explicitly by Plotinus' inheritors. Marinus' description of the political virtues in the *Vita Procli*, for example, as those that "govern and moderate anger, desire, all the affections, they scatter false opinions" closely resemble Plotinus' in chapter one of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), and Marinus adds that these political virtues too are "certain purifications" (καὶ αἱ πολιτικαὶ καθάρσεις τινές εἰσιν).[2] Further, in their subdivisions of their extended ladder of virtue, both Olympiodorus and Marinus place political virtue and purificatory virtue together on the same intermediate level of "the involutive process", as both being concerned with the "integration of the inferior powers".[3] This indicates further the extent to which civic virtue belongs with the purificatory virtues and may be considered a lesser species of purification. Olympiodorus also makes even the virtues lower than the civic correspond to a certain kind of purification. The ethical virtues are defined as the virtues of well-raised children and domestic animals. Both these virtues and the civic ones which surpass them belong to public rites of purification (πάνδημοι καθάρσεις). The higher, 'purificatory' virtues, on the other hand, belong to the secret rites of initiation (ἀπορρητότεραι).[4] On our reading of chapters one through

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[1] O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 68.

[2] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 18; see Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 190.

[3] Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 192.

[4] Olympiodorus, *In Phaed*., Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 194-5.

three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), then, in the mode of his argumentation Plotinus is more in concord with, and perhaps directly the inspiration for, these later more 'elevated' views of political virtue as a kind of purification corresponding to the rites and divinities of public religion.

3.2.5 Two Kinds of Virtue: Conclusion

Let us sum up what we have discovered so far about the origin and worth of civic virtue. Having swiftly established that our desire to achieve likeness to god through virtue is directed to Intellect, as the direction of the desire of that lesser divinity, World Soul, indicates, Plotinus introduces and describes the four civic virtues of the *Republic* by first denying them of Intellect (1.16-21). He then proceeds to "save the phenomena", separating what is true in the common δόξον that politically virtuous men are 'godlike' from what is illusory and deceptive, a move which may be divided into two modes of discourse, force (1.21-49) and persuasion (2.1-26), and which therefore addresses itself respectively first to the musician and then to the lover of *Treatise 20* (I, 3). Up to this point the primary distinction at work is that between civic virtue and the paradigms in Intellect, such as they appear, for example, in the *Phaedrus*, and the distance between imitation and paradigm is great. As Plotinus himself indicates, however (3.3), civic virtue's real nature attains to a greater clarity with the consideration of what is directly above it: through another look to Plato, this time to the *Phaedo*, the nature of purificatory virtue is described, and civic virtue finds itself encompassed as well as subordinated by the advent of this term.

3.3 Civic Virtue in Plato and Treatise 19 (I, 2)

Scholars have tended to describe Plotinus's general approach in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) as an attempt at a reconciliation of two Platonic dialogues: the account of the virtues of the city and soul in the *Republic* seems contrary to the account of the *Phaedo*, in which the virtues appear as 'purificatory'.[1] On this reading, Plotinus' "theory of grades of virtue"

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[1] See, for example, John Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 92-93.

speaks to the "apparent contradiction" and sets it within the more general problem of whether or not god possesses the virtues by which we are likened to him.[1]

There is indeed a good deal of evidence for a *Republic-Phaedo* dichotomy functioning as a primary structuring principle of *Treatise 19* (I, 2). The first enumeration of the four cardinal virtues, called 'political' (πολιτικὰς, 1.16-21), is taken almost verbatim from the *Republic* (IV, 427d3-434d, especially 430c); later in the treatise (chapter three), when the designation of the virtues as "purifications" (καθάρσεις) is said to occur "elsewhere" (ἀλλαχοῦ, 3.8) in Plato, the *Phaedo* (69b-c, 82b-c) is surely meant. It is nonetheless important not to let the *Treatise*'s structuring principle limit either the depth of Plato's own treatment of virtue throughout his corpus, or of Plotinus' reading of Plato. Plotinus is not merely setting the two accounts side by side, so that the account in the *Republic* is surpassed by that in the *Phaedo*. Rather, the discussion in the *Republic* at the very least hints of an underlying hierarchical understanding of virtue, which is taken up and more thoroughly treated in other dialogues such as *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo*. Plotinus' reading of the *Republic*, in *Treatise 19* (I, 2), as well as in other treatises spanning the entirety of his work (from *Treatise 1* (I, 6), *20* (I, 3), *39* (VI, 8), to *53* (I, 1)), is sensitive to these hints in Plato.

3.3.1 The Adjective πολιτική in the Republic and the Phaedo

The danger of too sharp a *Republic-Phaedo* dichotomy is particularly evident in the comparison of *Republic* IV 430b-d and *Phaedo* 82b-c: although virtue receives the adjective πολιτική in both places, the two passages cannot be conflated. In the *Republic* passage, courage is being qualified in a civic context (Socrates says, "accept it…as my account of *civic* courage"), as "the power to preserve through everything the correct and law-inculcated belief about what is to be feared and what isn't."[2] The context of the *Phaedo* passage, on the other hand, is very different. σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη in this passage appear as they are 'commonly' understood, possessed "without philosophy and

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[1] Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 93, 96.
[2] *Republic* IV 430b1-4.

intelligence"; moderation, for example, is the "simple-minded moderation" (εὐήθη)

discussed earlier (68e), which was deemed unbecoming of the philosopher. In other

words, when conjoined with δημοτικὴ, πολιτική at *Phaedo* 82b-c functions in a markedly

different way from the *Republic*. In the *Phaedo* passage σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη have

been separated from ἀνδρεία and φρόνησις in a way that does not reflect the reasoned

relation of governor to governed definitive of civic virtue in *Treatise 19* (I, 2): they are not

here meant to be understood as performing the harmonising and unifying roles they

possess in the *Republic*. The use of this same passage from the *Phaedo* in *Treatise 15* (III, 4)

shows that in fact Plotinus divides this passage into two separate judgements in the

afterlife:[1]

> Those, then, who guarded the man in them, become men again….The
> man who practised community virtue (τὴν πολιτικὴν ἀρετὴν) becomes a
> man again; but one who has a lesser share of political virtue a political
> creature (πολιτικὸν ζῷον), a bee or some such thing.

The first soul—the man of 'community virtue'—may be understood to have practiced

the complete political virtue of the *Republic*; the second, the imperfect, incomplete

'social' virtue of the *Phaedo*. The later Neoplatonists follow Plotinus in this

interpretation, making the distinction more explicit: the two types of virtue in the *Phaedo*

passage are ethical (αἱ ἠθικαί, the virtues of children and domesticated animals, learned

by habit and training but able to exist apart from each other, not having the binding

power of φρόνησις), and political (the virtues of practical men, which are rationally

chosen and do mutually imply one another).[2] Purificatory virtue is thus being contrasted

against two levels of virtue, not one. It is important, therefore, to heed Trouillard's

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[1] *Treatise 15* (III, 4) 2.16-17, 28-30.

[2] L.G. Westerink, trans. *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo: Volume I: Olympiodorus* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1976), Lecture 8 §2-3 and note, p. 116; *idem*, trans., *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo: Volume II: Damascius* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1977), I §139-148 and notes, pp. 84-89.

warning: one must not confuse the political virtues of the *Republic* with "le conformisme que stigmatise le *Phédon*, 82b."[1] "Political virtue" as it is understood in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) has a higher dignity than the picture given at *Phaedo* 82b: when practised perfectly—that is, when definitive of the whole soul—it is the virtue proper to the human. Further, we should keep in mind that the *Republic*, Plotinus' authority here for the nature and status of civic virtue, seeks, in Carlos Fraenkel's words, a "cultural revolution", that is, a kind of city-wide purification akin to the erasing of a slate (*Republic* 501a).[2] Plotinus never fails to remember that the city of the *Republic* exists for the sake of better viewing the soul; on this view the *Republic*'s radical project suddenly reveals itself to be really "on the way" to the *Phaedo*'s emphasis on purification and ἀφαίρεσις, just as civic virtue may be understood as the initial stages of inner purification rather than a wholly separate ethical category. Plotinus' juxtaposition of the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* in *Treatise 19* (I, 2), when read as a functional *anabasis* in light of the spiritual modes of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) thus serves in fact to reveal these two dialogues' deeper agreement on the proper place and dignity of civic virtue.

3.3.2 Plato's Laws

As we have seen so far, *Treatise 19* (I, 2)'s Porphyrian title is misleading: the *Treatise* is not concerned with the nature of virtue in general, but rather more specifically with the relation of virtue to the τέλος of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. The nature of virtue is sought simultaneously with the nature of god, and the presence of both virtue and god are sought in the unfolding of *Treatises 19* and *20* (I, 3). In light of this context, then, we should consider the possibility that civic virtue here may not receive its fullest articulation: its role in the two *Treatises* is limited by the scope of their anagogical movement. A brief glance to Plotinus' comments on civic virtue in *Treatise 9* (VI, 9) and

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[1] Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 189. Cf. Carlos Steel, "Commentary on Brittain: Attention Deficit in Plotinus and Augustine," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 18 (2002): 264; Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 97.
[2] Carlos Fraenkel, *Philosophical Religions*, 82.

his use of the *Laws* there indicates that he may have more to say about civic virtue and the men who possess it than the context of *Treatises 19* and *20* may permit.

As we have said, the *Republic* seeks to revolutionize the order of the city. The *Laws*, on the other hand, has the rather more realistic project of (once more in Fraenkel's phrasing) "a philosophical reinterpretation of the *nomoi* established by Minos and Lycurgus to bring out their rational character which alone justifies describing them as divine."[1] Plato's reinterpretation involves an allegorization of the Homeric scriptures.[2] King Minos' designation as "the familiar friend of Zeus" (*Μίνως ὀαριστὴς τοῦ Διὸς*) is grounded in his law-making ability, and the laws which he enacted are rationally grounded in directing the *polis* to what is best.[3] This unchanging *τέλος* underlies the variety of laws which might be legitimately instantiated, depending on contingencies such as times of war.[4]

Plotinus also considers the divine origins of constitutional activity in *Treatise 9* (VI, 9) through the figure of Minos, and, like Plato, seeks the necessary philosophical reinterpretation to account for Minos' divine status.[5] This reinterpretation takes up the *Laws*' philosophical reading of *Odyssey* 19.179, but also goes further. In an extremely surprising analogy, Minos' 'converse' with Zeus[6] is compared to the mystical union. Minos' Homeric epithet as "the familiar friend of Zeus" (*Μίνως ὀαριστὴς τοῦ Διὸς*) is reinterpreted not as referring to his law-making powers, but rather to that original dwelling in union with the god of which those powers are derivative. It is this union which makes him "familiar friend" (*ὀαριστὴς*), "the lawgiver from the side of Zeus" (*ὁ τῆς παρὰ Διὸς νομοθέτης*, see *Laws* 630c), "divine" (*θείας*, see *Laws* 630e), rather than the activity of law-making itself. In *Treatise 9* (VI, 9) therefore, we see Plotinus pushing

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[1] Fraenkel, *Philosophical Religions*, 83.
[2] *Laws* 624a-b. See *Odyssey* 19.178-179.
[3] *Laws* 630a-631e. Cf. *Laws* 738a-e.
[4] Fraenkel, *Philosophical Religions*, 85-86.
[5] *Treatise 9* (VI, 9) 7.23-29.
[6] *Treatise 9* (VI, 9) 7.22: *ὁμιλήσαντα*. Cf. *Laws* 624b: *συνουσίαν*.

Plato's point in the *Laws* much further, both in terms of the higher degree of union and God-likeness that Minos is afforded, and also in terms of the degree to which his law-making gifts are incidental to his likeness to God. We see this in the alternative reading Plotinus suggests, by which Minos may be understood as one of those of the *Phaedrus* who (as in *Treatise 20*) "has seen much" (*Phaedrus* 248d2): "or rather it is because, having judged political activity unworthy of him he wished to remain always above, and this would be the state of one who has seen much" (*9* (VI, 9) 7.26-28).[1] Along with this radical use of the character of Minos in *Treatise 9*, however, comes a certain elevation of the dignity of his political activity, which Plotinus never denies of him, though he does deny any idea of that activity being ultimately definitive of his divine status. It is important to keep this moment in mind when evaluating Plotinus' judgement of political virtue. Read in light of *Treatise 9* the treatment of civic virtue in *Treatise 19* reveals its cursory nature; there is no distinction made between different kinds of practical and political activity, no consideration in *Treatise 19* of the worth of law-making, for instance. *Treatise 19* ought not to be taken as Plotinus' definitive word on the subject of political virtue, though as we have seen, it does provide us with the essential truth about civic virtue's ultimately subordinate position in regard to higher forms of purification and union.[2]

3.3.3 The Anagogy of σωφροσύνη in the Phaedrus

The influence of the *Phaedrus* on these two early treatises of Plotinus has already been seen in the articulation of the three kinds of soul in *Treatise 20* (I, 3), which help to trace the anagogy of *Treatise 19* (I, 2). The role of the *Phaedrus* in providing the anagogical tenor of the two treatises in fact extends beyond the importance of the musician-lover-

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[1] See Hadot, *Traité 9*, 99 n. 145. I am with Hadot in applying this clause to Minos.
[2] Cf. O'Meara, "Aristotelian ethics in Plotinus," 62. O'Meara points out that Porphyry's title is "too general" for *Treatise 19* (I, 2): the treatise is not simply about virtue but about virtue's relation to the goal of assimilaton to God. In the context of this particular question and the spiritual exercise which its investigation enacts, then, the good of political virtue is necessarily subordinated.

philosopher triad.[1] Plotinus' account of civic virtue in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) draws not only from *Republic*, but also particularly from the *Phaedrus* and its account of σωφροσύνη.

In the conversation between Socrates and Phaedrus σωφροσύνη is a matter of constant consideration. First, that virtue is associated by Socrates with the miserliness of the non-lover and contrasted with the divine madness (μανία) of the lover, which is more "ennobling" (κάλλιον), as being from a god rather than man (244e). As augury (οἰονοϊστική) is to the madness (μαντική) of the Delphic prophetess, the priestesses of Dodona and the Sibyl, so σωφροσύνη is to μανία of the lover. Through this analogy and its playful etymologies σωφροσύνη becomes associated with the human, with discursive thought (διανοία) and inquiry (ἰστορία). This association is strengthened to the extent that later in Socrates' ecstatic palinode it comes to acquire the epithets "human" (ἀνθρωπίνη, 256b6) and "mortal" (θνητή, 256e5).[2] However, moderation is also named as one of the virtues characterizing the good horse (253e), and, finally, σωφροσύνη receives the great dignity of being among the circuit of "the things that really are", which the soul beholds outside the heavens. It follows δικαιοσύνη (247d, 250b)[3] and stands beside beauty "on a holy pedestal".[4]

The association of σωφροσύνη with the "human" and the "mortal" indicates its particular significance to the life of the *polis*—it is in this sense the "civic virtue" *par excellence.* However, Socrates' description of the importance of the mad women of Delphi and Dodona to civic life indicates the extent to which the life of the *polis* depends upon an excess of irrationality which it can neither contain nor control, but which it must rather recognize and revere:[5]

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[1] It should be noted that this triad is also fundamental to the *Republic*. See, for example, *Republic* IV 403c6-7.

[2] Stephen Scully, trans. *Plato's* Phaedrus (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2003), 129-30.

[3] Plotinus uses this image of σωφροσύνη following δικαίοσυνη explicitly in *Treatise 31* (V, 8) 9.

[4] Plotinus uses this image of σωφροσύνη explicitly in *Treatise 1* (I, 6) 9.14-15.

[5] Scully, *Plato's* Phaedrus, 244a8-b3.

> …the prophetess at Delphi and priestesses at Dodona do many good things for Greece, in private and public matters (δημοσίᾳ), when they are mad (μανεῖσαι), but when they are of sound mind and self-controlled (σωφρονοῦσαι) they do next to nothing (βραχέα ἢ οὐδέν).

It is "divine madness" which draws the soul upward and allows her the glimpses of the virtues in themselves: "civic" self-control must give way to purificatory forms of madness which essentially effect a radical transformation of what virtue is understood to be. Plato articulates several different 'kinds' of σωφροσύνη throughout the *Phaedrus*; tracing its reinterpretation all the way to the top of the intelligible provides a series of footholds for the ascending soul. This, moreover, is precisely how Plotinus uses the enumerations of the four virtues in *Treatise 19* (I, 2); the virtues provide a kind of topography of the landscape of each level in the ascent.

As we have already seen in our consideration of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) in light of *Treatises 27 – 29* and *Treatise 33*, the *Phaedrus* also provides the crucial background to the articulation of World Soul's role in the soul's itinerary. The *Phaedrus* is thus crucial in several ways to the anagogical strategy of *Treatises 19* and *20,* and may provide a particular precedent for the characterization and subordination of civic virtue as a lower, weaker form of purification.

3.4 Civic Virtue: Conclusion

Civic virtue acquires its deceptive character when the soul is turned toward what is exterior to her and when her desire for the good is curtailed such that she treats the acquisition of this virtue as the end rather than a step on the path homeward. The error is easily made, as it stems from conflating what is the good for the body and the lower shadow-soul associated with it with what is the good for the soul.

The whole drive (ἡ σπουδὴ) of *Treatise 19* is against this possibility, not toward "right action for man (κατόρθωσις ἀνθρώπῳ)", by which he may keep himself "out of sin"

(ἔξω ἁμαρτίας), but rather toward divinization (*19* (I, 2) 6.1-3). In this search for godlikeness, the life that is defined, measured and governed by political virtue is to be practised only until, with the advent of "higher principles and different measures" (μείζους δὲ ἀρχὰς...καὶ ἄλλα μέτρα, 7.21-22), the agent is freed to leave it behind for another, "that of the gods" (ἄλλον δὲ ἑλόμενος τὸν τῶν θεῶν, 7.26-27). This drive is evident in the way civic virtue is introduced and transcended. Plotinus first situates civic virtue relative to World Soul's virtue, next to which it immediately pales in comparison. Then he subordinates it further by comparing it to "the greater virtues", understood initially as the paradigms of virtue in *Νοῦς*. This comparison expresses the very great distance that lies between the human and the divine. Finally, through a consideration of the two kinds of likeness, and an exegetical turn to the *Phaedo*, Plotinus introduces another kind of virtue, unfolding it from the distinction between paradigm and civic manifestation. This new form of "greater virtue" in fact makes the nature of civic virtue clearer and elevates it, revealing it also as a kind of lower purification, the first step in the journey. Civic virtue thus receives both its proper subordination and its due dignity in light of World Soul and the fully purified example which she sets. It remains now to be seen how this newly unveiled purificatory virtue stands relative to World Soul's perfect contemplation.

Chapter 4
Purificatory Virtue in *Treatises 19* (I, 2) and *20* (I, 3)

For Plotinus, following Plato, all virtues are purifications (καθάρσεις). The aim of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is largely to make this manifest, to bring the purificatory nature of virtue to bear on the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ of *Theaetetus* 176b, so definitive of Middle Platonic ethics. So the central consideration of the *Treatise* begins in its third chapter, and we must consider the re-enumeration of the four cardinal virtues that occurs there as the enumeration and description most definitive of their real character in the soul. It is important, in other words, to recognize that "purificatory virtue" is not simply another "level" of virtue to which the soul may and should aspire; it is in fact the defining feature of virtue as a whole, responsible for unveiling the soul's true nature, stripped of the accoutrements by which she has projected herself into the world of matter and becoming.

4.1 Purificatory Virtue in Treatise 19 *(I, 2)*

Let us first consider the order of enumeration in chapter one of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), before turning to what is different in chapter three. In chapter one, the cardinal virtues were first listed in their order in the *Republic*: prudence (φρόνησις), courage (ἀνδρία), moderation (σωφροσύνη) and justice (δικαιοσύνη).

4.1.1 The Order of Enumeration in Republic *IV*

The order in which the virtues are discovered and enumerated in the *Republic* IV is important to the way the argument proceeds, first in relation to the soul-writ-large, and, second, in relation to the soul herself, the description of which relies on the consideration of the order of the city.

4.1.1.1 Virtue in the City as the Soul-Writ-Large

The first two virtues correspond to the discovery of the classes of the soul-writ-large, enumerated from the top down, and the second two are ordered towards the goal of the inquiry, justice (430c-d)). Thus wisdom (σοφία) is found first, as the virtue proper to the

governing guardian class (429a). Courage is the second discovery and, as the power (δύναμις) to preserve (σώζειν) right belief regarding what has been set down in the laws, is proper to the soldier class (429b-430b). The distinction between σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη proves the most difficult to determine, and the decision to investigate σωφροσύνη first is based on the fact that δικαιοσύνη is the goal of the conversation (430c-d). Rather than assigning σωφροσύνη to the lowest class of money-makers, Socrates and Adeimantus "divine" (ἐμαντευόμεθα) that σωφροσύνη instead does not belong to any one class, but rather "spreads through the whole", incorporating the third class, along with the other two, into the harmony of good government (431e-432a). This leaves δικαιοσύνη as the remainder and the crown, "through which the city shares still further in virtue" (τὸ δὲ δὴ λοιπὸν εἶδος δι᾿ ὃ ἂν ἔτι ἀρετῆς μετέχοι πόλις, 432b), and by which each part of the city does his own work (433b). It belongs to both the beginning and the maturity of the good city, as "the power that makes [the other virtues] to grow in the city, and that preserves them when they've grown for as long as it remains there itself" (433b-c).

4.1.1.2 Virtue in the Soul in Republic IV

The enumeration of the four virtues of the city is applied to the description of the rightly ordered soul at *Republic* 441e-442d, where the rational part (τὸ λογιστικός) is said to rule, the spirited part (ἡ θυμοειδής) to obey as the rational part's ally (ὁ σύμμαχος), and the two together, on the strength of the soul's musical education, to govern the appetitive part (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικός) through their common belief that the rational part should rule (τὸ λογιστικὸν ὁμοδοξῶσι δεῖν ἄρχειν, 442c-d). The order of enumeration is once again important to the way the argument proceeds, as the harmony of the rational and spirited parts is what enables the greater harmony of the soul as a whole that is σωφροσύνη, and justice is the establishment in the soul of a "natural relation of control" (τὸ δικαιοσύνην ἐμποιεῖν τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ κατὰ φύσιν καθισάναι κρατεῖν τε καὶ κρατεῖσθαι ὑπ᾿ ἀλλήλων, 444d).

Plotinus' enumeration in chapter one of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) represents a contraction of the two considerations of the virtues in *Republic* IV. The importance of the order of the virtues' enumeration is clearest in the description of the soul-writ-large, and Plotinus keeps to this order in his treatment, though he ultimately leaves behind the consideration of the city's parts to focus solely on the order civic virtue produces in the individual soul.[1] The order of the enumeration in chapter one is therefore the order of the virtue of the ruler (φρόνησις), of the auxiliary (ἀνδρία), of the ruled as brought into agreement with the ruler and auxiliary (σωφροσύνη), and finally the overarching relation of control between ruler and ruled (δικαιοσύνη) considered as a whole.

4.2 Treatise 19 (I, 2), 3 and Treatise 20 (I, 3) 4-6

The re-enumeration in chapter three changes the order of chapter one slightly, by reversing the order of the two inner terms so that moderation precedes courage.[2] Further, all the abstract nouns conveying the virtues of the first enumeration are replaced with present infinitives (*νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν; σωφρονεῖν; ἀνδρίζεσθαι*, 3.15-18), with the exception of *δικαιοσύνη*, and all the substantives conveying the parts of the soul are replaced with indicative verbs in the optative mood (*μήτε συνδοξάζοι, ἀλλὰ μόνη ἐνεργοῖ; μήτε ὁμοπαθὴς εἴη; μήτε φοβοῖτο; ἡγοῖτο…μὴ ἀντιτείνοι*, 3.14-18). Finally, the first term, prudence (*φρόνησις*), is replaced with the twofold *νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν* (3.15), and the last term, *δικαιοσύνη*, involves the twofold leadership of *λόγος καὶ νοῦς* (3.17-18). What do these three seemingly small changes signify?

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[1] O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 40.
[2] Cf. Michael Chase, "What does Porphyry mean by *θεῶν πατήρ*?" *Dionysius* 22 (2004): 78 n. 11. In this article on Porphyry's *Sent. 32*, Chase notes this same change in the order in which Porphyry's enumerates the purificatory/theoretical virtues, though he does not draw any conclusions as to why Porphyry might reverse the order. Porphyry is in fact simply observing Plotinus' orders of enumeration in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) throughout *Sent. 32*, a state of affairs which might suggest to us the deliberate nature of this move not so much in Porphyry as in Plotinus.

4.2.1 The Change in Order in Treatise 19 (I, 2)

The change in the order of enumeration reflects the shift from the *Republic* to the *Phaedo* effected in chapter three, and the carefulness with which this shift is undertaken. The overarching principle of the order of the *Republic* is preserved in that the priority of the governing activity of reason is recognized first, the auxiliary activity of spirit is kept in its subordinate place relative to reason, and the role of justice as the order of ruled and ruling crowns the four. In other words, in this preservation of the first and fourth terms lies the preservation of the logic of the *Republic*. As we argued above, while the shift from the *Republic* to the *Phaedo* in chapter three is a major structuring principle of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), nonetheless it is by no means Plotinus' aim to present a rigid dichotomy between the two dialogues. The order of enumeration of these virtues here in chapter three reflects the continuing importance of the *Republic*'s account.

Meanwhile, however, the reversal of the inner terms of enumeration, whereby the activity of σωφρονεῖν precedes that of ἀνδρίζεσθαι, presents quite a dramatic change in the orientation of our consideration of virtue, a change that ultimately reflects the perspective of the *Phaedo* and the particular attention to the virtue of courage which is paid in that dialogue.

4.2.1.1 Courage in the Phaedo

Courage receives a privileged consideration in the *Phaedo*. As we saw above, in the *Republic* courage, along with wisdom, belongs to one particular class in the city, while σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη belong to the whole. In the *Phaedo*, however, σωφροσύνη's role as the agreement and harmony between the spirited and rational part which enables the appetitive part's incorporation into the harmony of the whole soul is forgotten as the dialogue considers not so much the tripartition within the soul as the bipartition of body and soul. Thus in the *Phaedo* σωφροσύνη is identified more with "treating the passions with disdain and orderliness" (ὀλιγώρως ἔχειν καὶ κοσμίως) and, still further, "disdaining the body" (τοῦ σώματος ὀλιγωροῦσίν, 68c). On the bipartite model

courage's role in the *Republic* of preserving right opinion regarding what is and is not to be feared is in fact magnified and points to the soul's fundamental unity more than σωφροσύνη does. The dialogue's manifest emphasis on departure from the body and philosophy as a preparation for death indicates the degree to which the virtue of courage is definitive of the philosopher and lover of truth.

Several of Plotinus' Neoplatonic inheritors also saw courage as the defining virtue of the *Phaedo*, as well as of the entire 'level' of purificatory virtue. In Iamblichus' Platonic curriculum, the *Phaedo* is the dialogue that corresponds to the purificatory level of virtue, to be read after the *Gorgias*, which concerns civic virtue.[1] In his commentary on the *Phaedo*, following Proclus (whose own prologue to the *Phaedo* is lost), Olympiodorus discovers the dialogue's *skopos* of purification in its dramatic context and links it specifically to the cultivation of the virtue of courage:[2]

> But others liken courage to the purificatory way of life because of its unrelenting attitude towards inferior things; for such is courage, firm towards inferior things; in this way, too, Socrates is not swayed by Xanthippe and his crying child, but remains unmoved by them.

There is thus good evidence for taking courage as the defining virtue of both the *Phaedo* in particular and of purificatory virtue in general, and the order of enumeration which we find in chapter three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) may very well reflect this more unitary view of courage as a virtue pertaining to the whole good of the soul.

4.2.2 From Abstract Nouns to Present Infinitives in Treatise 19 *(I,2) 3*

The move from chapter one's list of the virtues as abstract nouns and substantives (φρόνησις, ἀνδρία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη) to chapter three's list of the virtues as

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[1] *Prolégomènes à la philosophie de Platon,* texte établi par L.G. Westerink, traduit par J. Trouillard et A. Ph. Segonds (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990; henceforth *Prolegomena*), 26.18-44; see Gertz, *Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism*, 18-19; 58-59.
[2] Olympiodorus, *In Phaed*. 8.1.7-11. See Gertz, *Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism*, 24-25.

present infinitives (*νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν, σωφρονεῖν, ἀνδρίζεσθαι*) embedded in a rather long future less vivid conditional phrase marks the transition from speaking of the soul's partition (*τὸ λογιζόμενον; τὸ θυμούμενον; τὸ ἐπιθυμήτικον*) to her fundamental noetic activity. Activity characterises purificatory virtue: purificatory *νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν* is nothing other than the soul *acting* alone (*μόνη ἐνεργοῖ*), and its wisdom is an imitation of the purity of the divine and its activity (*καθαρὸν γὰρ καὶ τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια τοιαύτη, ὡς τὸ μιμούμενον ἔχειν φρόνησιν*, 3.) The replacement of abstract nouns and substantives with verbs thus reflects purificatory virtue's closer approximation to the active life of God, and marks the beginning of the transition from "what belongs to us" (*τὰ ἡμέτερα*) to what is truly us (*ἡμεῖς*), an inner transition from the self as consciously identified with the composite—the man who knows the extent of his own virtue by means of the measure of the political men around him—to the self as identified with reason—the one who knows the extent of his own virtue by means of the activity of that virtue itself toward its archetypes. *Treatise 53* (I, 1) speaks to this transformation of the self which we see coming into effect here in chapter three:[1]

> When the influences from above do not act upon us, they are active in the direction of the upper world. They act upon us when they reach as far as the middle (*τοῦ μέσου*). What then? Are we not also what is before this middle? Yes, but we must become conscious of this fact (*ἀλλ'ἀντίληψιν δεῖ γενέσθαι*). For whatever we have, we do not always use. But when we order (*τάξωμεν*) the middle part either towards the things above, or in the opposite direction [then we use what we have], or [to put it another way, we use] whatever we bring from potency or habit into actuality (*ἢ ὅσα ἀπὸ δυνάμεως ἢ ἕξεως εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἄγομεν*).

Plotinus uses the enumeration of the purificatory virtues in chapter three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) to bring us to the emphatic conclusion that what divides our activity from God's

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[1] *Treatise 53* (I, 1) 11.2-8. See Pierre Hadot, *Plotin ou la Simplicité du Regard* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1963), 31-32.

activity is that ours occurs according to our state (τὴν δὴ τοιαύτην διάθεσιν τῆς ψυχῆς καθ'ἥν νοεῖ, 3.19-20), while Νοῦς does not have states (ἢ οὐδὲ διάκειται, 3.23). Despite the fact that the purificatory virtues enable the articulation of this distinction, which clarifies the nature of both the purificatory and the civic virtues (the latter being understood, as we saw above, as lower forms of purification) relative to the paradigms, and despite the fact that they are themselves "states", nonetheless their description in the form of present infinitives points to the conscious identification of the "middle" part with its activity.

4.2.3 From φρόνησις to νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν in Treatises 19 and 20

The bipartitions of φρόνησις into the activities of νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν, and of δικαιοσύνη into the leadership of λόγος καὶ νοῦς do not signify the *addition* of an activity to the soul, but rather indicate the transitional nature of the purificatory state and its relation to civic virtue. Here is further evidence that civic virtue should be understood under the category of purificatory virtue, rather than as a separate classification unto itself. For purificatory virtue still involves φρόνησις, an activity which, as we saw in the description of civic virtue, belongs to the soul's discursivity (1.17) and ultimately must be understood as an imitation of noetic activity. Plotinus lays this out consistently:[1]

> and indeed, concerning such a state (διάθεσιν) of the soul, according to which she intelligises (νοεῖ) and is thus unaffected (ἀπαθὴς), if one were to call this state likeness to god (ὁμοίωσιν...πρὸς θεόν), he would not be missing the mark. For the divine (τὸ θεῖον) also is pure, and the activity is such that the one who imitates it (τὸ μιμούμενον) has practical wisdom (φρόνησις).

From this passage, at the purificatory level φρόνησις is the trace of νοήσις in practical action, something that is to be gradually eliminated, it seems, as the soul approaches a fully purified state. There is more to be said about this side of purificatory virtue of

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 3.19-22.

wisdom, however. Both in this treatise and elsewhere in Plotinus, φρόνησις receives a more precise treatment than other virtues, which reveals its greater affinity to νόησις and the mediatory role which, in a way, we also witnessed in chapter one with the consideration of World Soul's φρόνησις, with which this entire inquiry found its proper orientation and ground.

4.2.3.1 φρόνησις *in* Treatise 20 *(I, 3)*

The second half of *Treatise 20* (I, 3), for example, revisits the role and worth of φρόνησις, in its relation to σοφία and νοῦς. The affinity of the discussion of dialectic here to the ethical treatise which precedes it has long been recognized, though not a few scholars have deemed the *Treatise*'s ethical culmination (chapter six) as confused,[1] even incoherent, and have suspected it to be the work of another hand (possibly Porphyry's), working with the motive of drawing the two treatises into a closer relation.[2] I do not wish here to wade too deeply into that debate, which remains at the level of speculation, based largely on the interpretative difficulties with which the last chapter challenges us. Rather, I propose simply to read the conclusion of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) tentatively as one piece, to see what kind of clarification, if any, it might bring to the account of purificatory activities of νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν as they are set out in *Treatise 19* (I, 2).

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[1] See Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Plotin.* Ennéades *I, 3: Sur la dialectique,* 82-83.

[2] Heinemann thinks it was added after the rest of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) was composed. Harder thinks this was not by the hand of Plotinus at all, and that the account of dialectic's relation to ethics is incoherent. Georges Leroux, "Logique et Dialectique chez Plotin: Énneade 1.3 (20)," *Phoenix* 28.2 (1974): 181, 182 and n.5, 183, 188 suggests that the sixth chapter may have come from the hand of Porphyry, precisely to draw *Treatise 19* and *20* together by bringing the discussion of dialectic directly to bear on ethics, renouncing the Stoic position on dialectic in the process. On somewhat the other side, seeing continuity between chapter six and the rest of the treatise and thus little necessity for attributing chapter six to Porphyry see Alexandrine Schniewind, "Quelles conditions pour une éthique plotinnienne?" in Michel Fattal, ed. *Études sur Plotin* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000); Charrue, "Traité 20 (I, 3): Sur la dialectique," in Brisson-Pradeau, 473.

4.2.3.1.1 Treatise 20 *(I, 3) 4: The Ascent of Dialectic*

Having set out the distinctions and relations between the three kinds of soul (musician, lover, philosopher) in the first half of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) (chapters one through three), in chapters four through six Plotinus turns to consider the nature of dialectic, which "must be given" not only to the philosopher, but also to the other two kinds of soul (ἥν δεῖ καὶ τοῖς προτέροις παραδιδόναι, 4.1-2). In the course of a long sentence (4.6-23) that forms the bulk of chapter four, ἡ διαλεκτική is shown to govern the whole ascent of the soul, first guiding her flight from the sensible to the intelligible (4.6-10); then feeding her among the intelligible realities in the "plain of truth" (4.10-16); and finally pointing toward her hyper-scientific further unification (4.16-19).[1] Dialectic takes on a highly active and even personified role, if you will, in this ascent, speaking (εἰπεῖν), discussing (διαλέγεται), studying (τὴν πραγματείαν ἔχει), feeding the soul (τὴν ψυχὴν τρέφουσα) and so on. Its ascent is characterised particularly by a move from an occupation with its "business" (ἡ πραγματεία, 4.11) in Intellect to the point where it "busies itself no more" (οὐδὲν ἔτι πολυπραγμονοῦσα, 4.18), leaving "logical activity" (τὴν λεγομένην λογικὴν πραγματείαν) to another art (ἄλλη τέχνη) (4.19-20). This is all for the purpose of preparing us for chapter five, for the gradual distinction of Plotinus' understanding of Platonic dialectic from the post-Aristotelian and Stoic "logic", the latter being seen as a tool (ὄργανον) rather than a way and a reality.[2]

4.2.3.1.2 Treatise 20 *(I, 3) 5: dialectic, the purest part*

Chapter five of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) is structured around the question, "where does dialectic derive its principles (τὰς ἀρχὰς)?" (5.1) The answer is that Νοῦς gives the capable soul her principles, so that through "combining, interweaving and distinguishing" these the soul arrives at "perfect intelligence" (εἰς τέλεον νοῦν, 5.4). Here Plotinus states, quoting Plato, that "dialectic is the purest part of intelligence and practical wisdom" (ἔστι γάρ,

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[1] See Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 194.
[2] See Charrue, "Traité 20 (I, 3)," in Brisson-Pradeau, 472; Leroux, "Logique et Dialectique chez Plotin," 183.

φησιν, αὕτη τὸ καθαρώτατον νοῦ καὶ φρονήσεως, 5.4-5).[1] As in *Treatise 19* (I, 2), so in *Treatise 20* (I, 3): *νοῦς* and *φρόνησις* are paired. But Plotinus continues to sharpen what he means by *φρόνησις* here as he does not in *Treatise 19*. As "our most valuable state" (*τιμιωτάτην οὖσαν ἕξιν τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν*)[2]—in other words, as the purest part of *φρόνησις*, the virtue proper to soul—dialectic is said to be concerned with being (*περὶ τὸ ὄν*);[3] as the purest part of *νοῦς*—one might say as *σοφία*—dialectic is concerned with what is beyond being (*περὶ τὸ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ὄντος*, 5.5-7).[4] Dialectic works as the highest part of each ontological level—whether soul or Intellect—to draw it up into its principle.

The identification of dialectic with *φρόνησις* rather than with soul is consistent with Plotinus' later treatment of the spiritual anagogy in *Treatise 38* (VI, 7),[5] where virtue as the form for soul becomes a kind of "intermediate ontological degree between soul and *Νοῦς*."[6]

Further, Plotinus insists that dialectic is "not to be thought a tool which the philosopher uses" (*οὐ γὰρ δὴ οἰητέον ὄργανον τοῦτο εἶναι τοῦ φιλοσόφου*, 5.9-10), but rather a state which "has beings as a kind of matter" (*οἷον ὕλην ἔχει τὰ ὄντα*), for which we were prepared in chapter four by the degree of agency assigned to the science (*ἐπιστήμη*). We have already seen, just a few lines previous, that it is dialectic in its mode as the purest part of *φρόνησις* that has to do with being; so these *τὰ ὄντα* which are a kind of matter waiting to be in-formed are in fact the proper possession of *φρόνησις* as much as of dialectic. This recalls the relation between civic virtue and soul's "matter" which we saw in *Treatise 19* (I, 2).[7] But if the mode is higher here, which it seems to be, what is the difference between this *φρόνησις* and its lower imitation? In *Treatise 19*, civic *φρόνησις*

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[1] See Plato, *Philebus* 58d6-7.
[2] Dialectic is also called a *ἕξις* at 4.3.
[3] That dialectic is concerned with reality itself (*τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ*) and being (*τὸ ὄν*) comes from *Sophist* 218c, 254a.
[4] Cf. Leroux, "Logique et Dialectique chez Plotin," 182.
[5] *Treatise 38* (VI, 7) 25.25-33.
[6] Pierre Hadot, *Traité 38*, 301.
[7] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 2.18-19.

was understood to be measure of the matter of soul that was itself measured and clearly bounded. Can this purificatory φρόνησις, identified as it is with dialectic's ascending motions toward Νοῦς, and possessing as it does real beings for its content, be said to be a measure for these real beings in the same way that civic φρόνησις is measure for the body? And what is the status of purificatory φρόνησις itself relative to measuredness?

It is certain that purificatory virtue's status relative to measuredness and measure is quite different from that of civic virtue. To the extent that purificatory virtue is a process that still involves the activity of φρονεῖν, it can be said to be a measure.

4.2.3.1.2.1 Two Analogies

Here we may look back to chapter three of *Treatise 19*. Speaking of the difference between soul's intellectual activity (νοεῖν) and that of *Νοῦς* itself, Plotinus makes the following analogy:[1]

> as the spoken word (ὁ ἐν φωνῇ λόγος) is an imitation (μίμημα) of that in the soul, so the word in the soul is an imitation (μίμημα) of that in another: as the uttered word, then, is broken up into parts (μεμερισμένος) compared with that in the soul, so is that in the soul as compared with that before it, which it interprets (ἑρμηνεὺς).

Plotinus repeats the analogy twice here. The first time, at 3.27-29, the common term is μίμημα, imitation. This alerts us to the fact that the kind of likeness being discussed here is the second, non-reciprocal type that we considered in chapter two. Though civic virtue at this point is not mentioned explicitly, it in fact exists in the analogy as the "spoken word", and is treated now as an imitation not of the paradigm in Intellect directly, but rather of the λόγος in the soul, the principles as they are actively possessed and known by soul. Here, we see a continuation of the fulfilment of Plotinus' promise at the beginning of the chapter that in the investigation of the two kinds of likeness and the

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 3.27-31.

discovery thereby of the nature of purificatory virtue "the real nature of civic virtue will also become clearer" (*καὶ σαφέστερον ἔσται μᾶλλον καὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς ἡ οὐσία*, 3.2-3). Purificatory virtue thus appears as if another level of imitation had just been unfolded from the interior of the original imitation that characterized civic virtue's relation to the paradigms earlier in the treatise. For purificatory virtue, understood primarily in its aspect as the activity of *νοεῖν*, has revealed itself as the primary imitation of the paradigm, and civic virtue as the secondary imitation, as a lower form of purification.

The difference between this newly discovered primary imitation and its noetic paradigm lies in the fact that the noetic activity in soul is an acquired state (*διάθεσις*), while Intellect's *νοήσις* is its very life; *Νοῦς* "does not have states" while acquired states are in fact definitive of soul (*οὐδὲ διάκειται, ψυχῆς δὲ ἡ διάθεσις*, 3.23-24). The introduction of *διάθεσις* at line 19 and its subsequent use throughout chapter three (3.23 (x2), 24) is emphatic and significant: this is in fact the first time that either *ἕξις* or *διάθεσις*, words so characteristic of and central to both Aristotelian and Stoic ethics, and in general to Middle Platonic inheritances of the same,[1] has occurred explicitly in *Treatise 19*, and it will occur again only once outside of chapter three.[2] What makes the difference between imitation and reality is that the one's noetic activity comes to it as "from another", while the other possesses that activity as it very self. Beyond *Νοῦς*, the One does not think at all.

The second reiteration of the analogy at 3.29-31 reveals a different emphasis. We move from an emphasis on *μίμημα* as the common term of the analogy to a rather more complicated common term: as the spoken word is "broken into parts" (*μεμερισμένος*) compared to its principle in the soul, so also the principle in the soul is "broken up" compared to its principle in Intellect. The division of what is united in *Νοῦς* requires that soul act as an interpreter (*ἑρμηνεὺς*) of that prior unity.

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[1] See Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2)," in Brisson-Pradeau, 453-454 n. 71.

[2] *ἕξις* appears only once in the whole *Treatise*, in the concluding chapter seven (7.20). It occurs several times in *Treatise 20* (I, 3), however, describing both virtue and dialectic, where *διαθέσις* does not appear at all: 4.3, 5.6, 6.6, 6.7 (x2).

There is a similarity between this analogy in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) and that with which chapter five of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) concludes:[1]

> So [dialectic] does not know about propositions (προτάσεως)—they are just letters (γράμματα)—but in knowing the truth it knows what they call propositions, and in general (καθόλου) it knows the movements of the soul, what she affirms and what she denies, and whether she affirms the same thing as she denies or another, and if things are different from each other or the same; whatever is submitted to it it perceives by casting forth, as sense-perception also does (προσφερομένων ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις ἐπιβάλλουσα), but it hands over petty precisions of speech to another [discipline] which delights in them (ἀκριβολογεῖσθαι δὲ ἑτέρᾳ δίδωσι τοῦτο ἀγαπώσῃ).

As logic is to dialectic here, so is civic virtue to purificatory virtue in the analogy in *Treatise 19* (I, 2). Dialectic in this passage, like purificatory virtue, still belongs properly to soul and possesses as realities what logic, like civic virtue, possesses in imitation.

Two further things are striking about this passage: first, that dialectic knows "in general" (καθόλου) the movements and activities of soul; second, that whatever comes to it it perceives by casting forth (ἐπιβάλλουσα). In this general knowledge and this "intuition" (as Armstrong translates) we may discern the two movements or modes of dialectic outlined above, as they apply to dialect in relation respectively first to φρόνησις and second to νοῦς. As we have also seen, these are the two activities which characterize purificatory virtue in *Treatise 19*: νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν. To consider φρονεῖν first, we need to read a little further into chapter six of *Treatise 20* (I, 3).

4.2.3.1.3 Treatise 20 *(I, 3) 6:* φρονεῖν

In chapter six, the last section of *Treatise 20*, of disputed authorship, Plotinus considers dialectic's relation to the sphere of ethics, passing briefly through physics on the way. It

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[1] *Treatise* 20 (I, 3) 5.17-24.

is precisely this consideration of dialectic vis-à-vis physics and ethics that Leroux finds objectionable;[1] in chapter five, as well as throughout the Treatise to this point, the argument has been building to a contrast and an eventual subordination of logic to dialectic.[2] Logic and dialectic are the main "parts" of philosophy to which Plotinus is referring earlier in the treatise, of which dialect is the "most honourable part" (φιλοσοφίας μέρος τὸ τίμιον, 5.9; cf. 6.1). The consideration of physics and ethics in chapter six represents a shift to a different way of partitioning philosophy, a Stoic one,[3] in the return to which Leroux sees a collapse into the very confusion between logic and dialectic which Plotinus is at pains in the earlier part of the *Treatise* to correct.[4] Let us leave aside the question of authenticity for the time being, however, and attribute this new way of partitioning philosophy merely to a shift in emphasis or perspective on Plotinus' part. Let us propose tentatively that chapters four and five are concerned to show logic's subordination to dialectic, and that the difficult last chapter broadens the consideration of dialectic to include its relation to other typical branches of philosophy, regardless of which philosophical system the branches enumerated happen to suggest. After the degree to which the discussion in chapter five involved and suggested ethical implications, indeed, it is not surprising here to find ethics prioritized, even leaving aside *Treatise 20*'s apparently close chronological relation to *Treatise 19* (I, 2).

So, in chapter six, "theorizing concerning ethics" (περὶ ἠθῶν...θεωροῦσα) is said to be "from there" (ἐκεῖθεν)—that is, derived from dialectic as it directs the soul to Being. The "[virtuous] dispositions and the disciplines from which the dispositions come" are added to this theoretical inheritance (προστιθεῖσα δὲ τὰς ἕξεις καὶ τὰς ἀσκήσεις, ἐξ ὧν προίασιν αἱ ἕξεις, 6.6-7). The role of the disciplines (ἀσκήσεις) here may alert us to the level of virtue Plotinus intends here: he means what the later Neoplatonists will call the

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[1] Leroux, "Logique et dialectique chez Plotin," 188.
[2] See *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 4.18-20: "dialectic leaves what is called logical activity, about propositions and syllogisms, to another art, as it might leave knowing how to write." Cf. *20* (I, 3) 5.17-24, quoted above.
[3] *DL* VII. 39-41; Plutarch, *On Stoic self-contradictions* 1035A (*SVF* 2.42).
[4] Leroux, "Logique et dialectique chez Plotin," 185.

"ethical" virtues,[1] which are produced by the habituating, measuring work of the ἀσκήσεις and are added to what belongs to the soul through the gift of her principle.[2] Plotinus moves from these ethical virtues to the "logical states" (αἱ λογικαὶ ἕξεις), which have "as if they were already their own the things from there" (ὡς ἴδια ἤδη[3] τὰ ἐκεῖθεν, 6.7-8).[4]

Now it is a question at this point how one should understand these λογικαὶ ἕξεις. Charrue takes them to be the fully purified virtue of *Treatise 19* (I, 2),[5] which Porphyry in *Sentence 32* renames, as a separate grade, "contemplative virtue" (τέλειος θεωρητικός), "the virtues of the one who is a perfect contemplator and beholder (ἄλλαι αἱ τοῦ ἤδη τελείου θεωρητικοῦ καὶ ἤδη θεατοῦ)."[6] The adjective λογικαί, however, cannot really

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[1] See Chapter Two, p. 56 above, for this category of virtue, which belongs to Iamblichus' inheritance of Plotinus and characterizes the virtue possessed by children and domestic animals.

[2] *Treatise 53* (I, 1) 10.13: "But the virtues which result not from thought but from habit and training belong to the joint entity (αἱ δ'ἀρεταὶ αἱ μὴ φρονήσει, ἔθεσι δὲ ἐγγινόμεναι καὶ ἀσκήσεσι, τοῦ κοινοῦ)." Cf. *Treatise 38* (VI, 8) 6.25.

[3] This ἤδη is hard to translate and I am somewhat partial to the alternative reading of εἴδη, found only in manuscript B, which would render the sentence "the logical states have as if they were their own the forms that are from there." This makes more sense of the neuter plural. But then the majority of the manuscripts read ἤδη and εἴδη renders the phrase rather redundant.

[4] This sentence is quite difficult and Armstrong and Charrue differ quite drastically here. First, the verb ἴσχουσι can be taken either transitively as "possess" with the accusative objects τὰ ἐκεῖθεν, and later τὰ πλεῖστα (Armstrong, following Bréhier, Cilento, and Schwyzer), or intransitively as a form of "to be" with the (nominative) predicates τὰ ἐκεῖθεν and later τὰ πλεῖστα (Charrue, "Traité 20 (I,3)," in Brisson-Pradeau). Charrue's translation thus runs (my translation of the French): "The intellectual dispositions come from dialectic as if it possessed them properly; effectively, even if they are with matter, the majority come from there." I follow Armstrong (et al.) here, though I have modified his translation. See Dominic O'Meara, "Aristotelian ethics in Plotinus," in Jon Miller, ed., *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 55-56, esp. notes 8 and 9. O'Meara makes some tantalizing references to the translation (French) and commentary of Jean-Baptiste Gourinat, *Plotin. Traité 20 (I, 3)* (forthcoming) in regard to this passage. I look forward to reading Gourinat's interpretation.

[5] Charrue, "Traité 20 (I, 3)," in Brisson-Pradeau, 489 n.81.

[6] See Porphyry's fourfold enumeration, *Sent.* 32 (p. 22, line 14 – p. 23, line 3 Lamberz). Cf.

bear this theoretical significance very well, especially given the contrast drawn between ἡ λογική and ἡ διαλεκτική which seems to have been the thrust of chapters four and five.[1] Discursivity and syllogistic, propositional thinking do not describe well the virtue whose perfected state may be described as "sight and the impression of what is seen, implanted and working in it" (θέα καὶ τύπος τοῦ ὀφθέντος ἐντεθεὶς καὶ ἐνεργῶν, *19* (I, 2) 4.) I would suggest rather that these λογικαὶ ἕξεις belong to a lower level than the "purified"; they are characterized by reasoning rather than by vision.

It is possible that the designation of these virtues as ἕξεις rather than ἀρεταί indicates that they are a larger category of virtue which includes the four cardinal virtues (in their civic mode) as described in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) along with other virtues pertaining to learning, reasoning and deliberation. This does seem to reflect the relation of virtue to learning evident in the philosopher-soul described in chapter three:[2]

> [The philosopher] must be given mathematical studies (τὰ μαθήματα) for habituation (πρὸς συνεθισμὸν) to consideration of and faith in what is immaterial—he will receive them easily, being naturally disposed to learning (φιλομαθὴς); he is by nature virtuous (φύσει ἐνάρετον) and must be brought to perfect his virtues (πρὸς τελείωσιν ἀρετῶν ἀκτέον), and after his mathematical studies instructed in dialectic and made a complete dialectician (ὅλως διαλεκτικὸν ποιητέον).

The philosopher is as naturally disposed to learning as he is to virtue, and his learning proceeds, as does his virtue, through a process of habituation. The process of habituation which the philosopher undergoes in his intellectual life is directed towards increasing his capacity for noetic activity, and his faith in the objects of that noetic activity, the

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Marinus, *Proclus, ou sur le Bonheur,* H.-D. Saffrey and A. Ph. Segonds, eds., (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001; henceforth Saffrey-Segonds), lxxxviii-xc.

[1] See, for example, 4.18-20: "[Dialectic] leaves behind logical activity (τὴν λεγομένην λογικὴν πραγματείαν) about propositions and syllogisms, to another art, as it might leave knowing how to write (ἄλλη τέχνη)."

[2] *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 3.6-10.

immaterial. At first glance, this passage might seem to parallel the opening of Alcinous'
Didaskalikos (*The Handbook of Platonism*), where the Middle Platonist lays out the
necessary characteristics of the would-be philosopher:[1]

> The first necessity [for the philosopher] is that he be naturally apt at those
> branches of learning which have the capacity to fit him for, and lead him
> towards, the knowledge of intelligible being, which is not subject to error
> or change…. Furthermore, he must also be endowed with a temperate
> nature, and in relation to the passionate part of the soul, he must be
> naturally restrained…. The prospective philosopher must also be
> endowed with liberality of mind, for nothing is so inimical as small-
> mindedness to a soul which is proposing to contemplate things divine
> and human. He must also possess natural affinity for justice, just as he
> must towards truth and liberality and temperance…. These natural
> qualities, if they are combined with correct education and suitable
> nurturing, render one perfect in respect to virtue…. These Plato was
> accustomed to name homonymously with the virtues, temperance and
> courage and justice.

However, the two passages are very different, and in fact may be understood as
operating on different levels. A brief comparison will make this clear and reveal what
Plotinus is doing with his description. Where Alcinous names the means of the
philosophically-minded man's perfection in virtue—"correct education and suitable
nurturing"—Plotinus is silent, stating only that "he must be led to the completion of his
virtues" (πρὸς τελείωσιν ἀρετῶν ἀκτέον). Alcinous' list of imperatives forms a
collection of character-based criteria for detecting the would-be philosopher, while
Plotinus' list of imperatives outlines the way forward for the philosopher who is already
well on his way. This man must be "shown" (δεικτέον) how to continue his already
upward-tending journey, and "set free" (λυτέον); he must be "taught" (δοτέον), "led"
(ἀκτέον), "taught" some more (δοτέον), and finally he must be "made" (ποιητέον) into a

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[1] *Didask.* 152.6-25 (Dillon, *Alcinous*, 1.2-4, p.3).

complete dialectician. The tone of the passage draws its inspiration from the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus*, and as such it points us toward an understanding of the completion of virtue in its purificatory mode. There is further evidence for this in Plotinus' use of ἐνάρετον, which is of Stoic, not Platonic, provenance. Chrysippus: "The virtuous man (ἐνάρετον) effectively possesses the theory and the practice of the actions he must accomplish."[1]

Further, for Plotinus the perfection of the philosopher's virtue, as we will see at the end of *Treatise*, requires the presence and activity of σοφία within him, which comes with the completion of his dialectical instruction. In what is a rather strange use of the term, but not an impossible one, the philosopher's "natural virtue" should be understood as his possession not only of the so-called "ethical virtue" which results "from habit and training", but also of civic virtue, which involves the possession and use of φρόνησις. It is by this that "he has begun to move to the higher world" (3.3). So the civic virtues may be understood as λογικαὶ ἕξεις to the extent that they involve the government of the rational part of the soul (τὸ λογιζομενον)[2]. What follows the description of the λογικαὶ ἕξεις in chapter six confirms this. The "other virtues" described in lines 9-11 in fact use "reasonings" (τοὺς λογισμοὺς) towards "particular passions and actions" *(ἐν τοίς πάθεσι τοῖς ἰδίοις καὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν)*. Rather than see these as a return to the τὰς ἕξεις καὶ τὰς ἀσκήσεις of line 7, which do not require rational thinking, I would like to suggest that these "other virtues" are one sub-category, so to speak, of the λογικαὶ ἕξεις of line 8: they apply reasoning to the particular actions and passions with which they are concerned. And this sub-category includes three of the four cardinal virtues in their civic mode: σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρία, and δικαιοσύνη. Other λογικαὶ ἕξεις might include, along with φρόνησις, other forms of ratiocinative activity, and indeed, perhaps even the other three virtues in their purificatory mode.[3] Among the four cardinal virtues, then, as well

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[1] *SVF* III 295.34-35 (= *DL* VII 126.1-2). See Pradeau, "Traité 20 (I, 3)," in Brisson-Pradeau, 484 n. 37.
[2] See *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1.17.
[3] See Dominic O'Meara, "Aristotelian ethics in Plotinus," 55-56 (esp. n.9), 61. His

as among the soul's other rational capacities, φρόνησις is singled out, considered as a "*superior* form of reasoning" (ἐπιλογισμός τις) by virtue of three things: first, its greater concern with the universal (τὸ καθόλου μᾶλλον); second, its interest in whether there is mutual implication among the virtues (εἰ ἀντακολουθοῦσι); and third, its concern with whether and when and how to act (εἰ δεῖ νῦν ἐπισχεῖν ἢ εἰςαῦθις ἢ ὅλως ἄλλο βέλτιον). This first element, the greater concern of φρόνησις for the universal, ties it particularly to the description of dialectic set out at the end of chapter five (also quoted above):[1]

> in knowing the truth it knows what they call propositions, and in general (καθόλου) [dialectic] knows the movements of the soul, what she affirms and what she denies, and whether she affirms the same thing as she denies or another, and if things are different from each other or the same…

This greater concern with the universal by which φρόνησις reveals its kinship with νοήσις, διαλεκτική and σοφία is what distinguishes that virtue among the other cardinal virtues in their civic mode, drawing them up toward their purificatory manifestations and further enabling the soul's ascent toward the completion of her purification.

4.2.3.1.4 Treatise 20 *(I, 3) 6:* νοεῖν

The close relation of φρόνησις to νοήσις is further emphasized in chapter six of *Treatise 20* (I, 3). While φρόνησις is distinguished from the other virtues by its *greater* concern for the whole (καθόλου μᾶλλον), it is in fact dialectic and wisdom (ἡ δὲ διαλεκτικὴ καὶ ἡ σοφία) which in fact "provide the whole for the use of φρόνησις, in a universal and immaterial form" (ἔτι καθόλου καὶ αὐλως πάντα εἰς χρήσιν προφέρει τῇ φρονήσει, 6.13-15). Here we see the work of the noetic activity which is paired with φρονεῖν in

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reading, however, would see the "other virtues" of lines 9-11 as a separate group from the λογικαὶ ἕξεις, rather than a sub-group which use τοὺς λογισμοὺς in regard to specific πράξεις and πάθη.

[1] *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 5. See above, page 74.

Treatise 19 (I, 2). If we recall the "naturally virtuous" philosopher of chapter three, who already possesses civic virtue, including φρόνησις, among other λογικαὶ ἕξεις, we remember that the task set for him was an increase in faith (πίστις) in the existence of the immaterial. So the philosopher's task is one of progress in purification; he stands in the order of purificatory virtue and this will not reach its completion until in the ascent of dialectic φρόνησις is absorbed wholly into σοφία, until Being is transparent to what is beyond It.

And here in chapter six we find a return to the question of the "natural virtues" (φυσικαὶ ἀρεταὶ, 6.18), or "the ones below" (τὰ κάτω, 6.15). As we have seen by looking back to the description of the philosopher, and through our reading of the ascent of dialectic described in ethical terms in the beginning of chapter six, we ought to be careful here not to read these "natural virtues" as exactly synonymous either with the "natural virtues" of Aristotle,[1] the Stoics, and the Middle Platonists,[2] or as this category is inherited by the later Neoplatonists,[3] which are the lowest form of virtue, "intimately mixed with temperaments, most often opposed one to another,"[4] belonging innately to living things, even to infants and wild animals—it is by this category, for example, that the lion may be thought courageous, or the lamb gentle.[5] The virtues called "natural" here ought

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[1] *EN* VI 13, 1144b 1-9, 30-37. ἡ φυσικὴ ἀρετή is contrasted with "virtue properly so-called" (ἡ κυρία ἀρετή). The difference between natural virtue and the proper virtues in Aristotle is that the natural virtues are innate dispositions or tendencies of character and can exist apart from one another; the proper virtues those which are acquired together with φρόνησις.

[2] *Didask.* 152.1-28, 183.17-184.35 (Dillon, *Alcinous*, 1.1-4, 30.1-6, p. 3, 40-41); Apuleius, *De Platone* 6.

[3] See Saffrey-Segonds, lxxxiii-lxxxv.

[4] Damascius, *In Phaed.* I, §138. Damascius connects these virtues to *Politicus* 306a-308b9 and *Laws* XII 963c-e9. See Saffrey-Segonds, lxxxv.

[5] See Dillon, *Alcinous*, 182-183; *idem*, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue," 92; O'Meara, "Aristotelian ethics in Plotinus," 63-64. Both Dillon and O'Meara read the "natural virtues" here as synonymous with those belonging to the lower levels of the later Neoplatonists' systems of gradations. O'Meara (63n25) does note that the difference between the Aristotelian φρόνησις (*EN* 1144b17) and the Plotinian σοφία (6, 19) as the *sine qua non* of perfection calls the direct inspiration of the Aristotelian model

rather to be identified with the *civic* or "human"[1] virtues, those proper to man as a rational and political animal, the composite of soul and body. The more φρόνησις is paired with and turned to its principle σοφία, the more these incomplete (ἀτελὲς, 6.24) "natural virtues" grow to their perfection and maturity by virtue of their illumination from above.

If by "natural virtue" here Plotinus does indeed include civic virtue as it exists in the morally upright, political man who lives unaware of his deeper and more original character,[2] then it could be said that by the end of chapter six not only have we been led beyond the Middle Platonic interpretation of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ of *Theaetetus* 176b advocated by the likes of Alcinous and Apuleius, but we have been led beyond that interpretation by a kind of transformation of their own terminology. Chapter six seems to effect a transformation of the Middle Platonic distinction between φυσικαὶ ἀρεταὶ and τέλειαι ἀρεταὶ even while it makes use of it.[3] It is a move not unsimilar to the introduction of the purificatory virtues as the primary form of imitation of the paradigms in *Treatise 19* (I, 2), chapter three which we considered above: there, Plotinus unfolded the purificatory virtues out of the initial distinction between civic virtue and the "greater" virtues, understood in chapter one of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) as the paradigms.

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into question.

[1] See *EN* I 1102a: "Clearly it is human virtue (ἀρετὴν ἀνθρωπίνην) that we must consider…. By human virtue, we mean that of the soul, not that of the body… The politician, then, must consider the soul, and consider it with a view to understanding virtue, just to the extent that is required by the inquiry…"

[2] See Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne,* 143. Trouillard appears to understand the incomplete and defective virtue of chapter 6 as the civic virtues insofar as they are incapable of freeing us from the passions against which they defend us. Perfect, fully purified virtue is, on the other hand, in Trouillard's term, "la vertu d'oubli", the virtue of the soul who is no longer mindful of the contingencies against which political virtue guarded her. The end of the purified soul's virtue is a higher liberty that implies no resistance (*La purification plotinienne,* 64, 148). See below, chapter 5.

[3] Cf. Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue," 92-93. Dillon traces Plotinus' sources for this distinction in *Treatise 20* (I, 3) to Alcinous and Apuleius, though he takes Plotinus to be using their distinction without modification. Cf. *Didask.* 183.17-31 (Dillon, *Alcinous,* 30.1, p. 40).

Here, he subtly unfolds the civic virtues out of the distinction between natural virtue and perfected virtue. The effect in both cases is an upward motion of the soul; one by which the newly subordinated virtues are swept upward too and in a way given a new dignity by virtue of the greater light that illuminates them. So, while *Treatise 19* (I, 2) teaches the practical, political man that his civic virtue is of a lower order than he might have believed it to be, nonetheless his virtue also receives a kind of dignity in being recognized, through the character of the higher, purificatory form of virtue that stands above it, as itself a kind of purification. The same is true here in Plotinus' use of "natural virtue": if the civic virtues can be understood as "natural", their perfection through the advent of σοφία also draws the other forms of unreflective excellence which we share with the animals into a relation with what is above.

Chapter six of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) remains an extremely difficult part of the text, fraught with interpretative problems due to the confluence of Stoic, Aristotelian and Platonic ethical terms (at least these) with Plotinus' own work in *Treatise 19* (I, 2). The reading of the last three chapters of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) given above by no means presumes to eliminate these interpretative problems, but I hope it does at least give us a better sense of why φρονεῖν is paired with νοεῖν at the purificatory level in *Treatise 19* (I, 2), and perhaps also suggests some avenues towards seeing the continuity between chapter six and the rest of *Treatise 20.*

4.3 Purificatory Virtue: Conclusion

The enumeration of the four cardinal virtues in their purificatory mode in chapter three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) reveals three things through its transformations of the enumeration of the civic mode in chapter one. First, there is in chapter three's enumeration a reversal of the order of terms such that σωφρονεῖν precedes ἀνδρίζεσθαι, reflecting the perspective of the *Phaedo* and its emphasis on courage as a virtue of the whole soul rather than of only the spirited part. Second, the shift from abstract nouns (φρόνησις, ἀνδρία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη) to present infinitives (νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν, σωφρονεῖν, ἀνδρίζεσθαι) reflects the purificatory virtues' closer approximation of the activity of

God, even as the difference between soul and *Noῦς* is further defined along the lines of disposition.[1] Third, the partition of *φρόνησις* into *νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν* simultaneous with the redefinition of these activities as the soul's "acting alone" (*μονὴ ἐνεργοῖ*) reflects the redirection toward and increasing coincidence of the soul's moral thinking with the universal principles received from *ἡ διαλεκτιὴ καὶ σοφία*. As Plotinus puts it in *Treatise 1* (I, 6), "soul, when she is raised to *Noῦς* increases in beauty. *Noῦς* and the things of *Noῦς* are her beauty, her own beauty and not another's, since only then is she truly soul."[2] Purificatory virtue is thus not merely another level of virtue, but is the virtue proper to the soul as soul. It remains to be seen what sort of perfection of this purification *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is leading us to.

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[1] Cf. Aristotle's line of reasoning in *Eudemian Ethics* 2.1, 1219a30ff.: "Since an activity is a better thing than a disposition, and the best activity than the best state, and since virtue is the best state, the activity of virtue is the soul's greatest good" (*ἐπεῖ βέλτιον ἡ ἐνέργεια τῆς διαθέσεως καὶ τῆς βελτίστης ἕξεως ἡ βελτίστη ἐνέργεια ἡ δ'ἀρετὴ βελτίστη ἕξις, τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐνέργειαν τῆς ψυχῆς ἄριστον εἶναι).*

[2] *Treatise 1* (I, 6) 6.16-18.

Chapter 5
Purified Virtue in *Treatises 19* (I, 2) and *20* (I, 3)

5.1 Purificatory…Purified? The Place of the Third Enumeration: 19 *(I, 2) 4-6*

In chapter four of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) a new course of questioning is launched, in which the proper relation between virtue and purification is sought. This line of questioning continues until roughly the sixth and penultimate chapter of the *Treatise*, which concludes with what seems to be a second enumeration of the purificatory virtues:[1]

> So the higher justice (δικαιοσύνη ἡ μείζων) in the soul is her activity towards intellect (τὸ πρὸς νοῦν ἐνεργεῖν), her moderation is her inward turning to intellect (σωφρονεῖν ἡ εἴσω πρὸς νοῦν στροφή), her courage is her freedom from affections (ἡ δὲ ἀνδρία ἀπάθεια)…

Wisdom is left out of this enumeration; it receives its second description earlier in chapter six: "wisdom, theoretical and practical, consists in the contemplation of that which intellect contains" (σοφία μὲν καὶ φρόνησις ἐν θεωρίᾳ ὧν νοῦς ἔχει, 6.12-13). Why wisdom is separated from the other virtues at this point, we will discuss below.[2] For the moment, it is reasonable to consider the order of re-enumeration here as σοφία καὶ φρόνησις, δικαιοσύνη, σωφρονεῖν and ἀνδρία, and to see it as in some fashion a conclusion of the discussion of chapters four to six. But what kind of conclusion? Is it a simple restatement of the purificatory virtues from a different perspective, now seen as oriented to their paradigms, rather than as distinguished from the civic virtues, as Dillon sees it?[3] Or is Porphyry on the right track in making this a third, "contemplative" level of virtue, that of the soul "looking inward to Intellect and already filled by it" (αἱ δὲ ψυχῆς πρὸς νοῦν ἐνορώσης ἤδη καὶ πληρουμένης ἀπ'αὐτοῦ)?[4] In order for us to

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 6.23-27.

[2] Page 93. Cf. Porphyry, *Sent.* 32 (p. 27, line 3 – p. 28, line 5 Lamberz). Porphyry keeps this definition of σοφία καὶ φρόνησις together with the other virtues in his enumeration of the "contemplative virtues". Cf. Chase, "What does Porphyry mean by θεῶν πατήρ?", 79.

[3] Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 100.

[4] Porphyry, *Sent.* 32 (p. 29, lines 10-11 Lamberz).

determine the function of this enumeration within the argument as well as within the soul's *itinerarium*, we must consider first the line of reasoning that leads us from chapter three to chapter six.

In chapter four of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), it becomes necessary to establish the proper relation of three terms in regard to ἀρετή: purification (κάθαρσις), perfection (τέλος) and conversion (ἐπιστροφή). The ritual undertone of the terms in this chapter is striking, and reflects the fact that Plotinus is continuing to draw from the *Phaedo* here, especially 69a-d.[1] There Socrates interprets the riddles of "those who established the mystic rites for us" (οἱ τὰς τελετὰς ἡμῖν οὗτοι καταστήσαντες): in the saying "there are many who carry the thyrsus, but the Bacchants are few,"[2] the Bacchants are the philosophers. Further, as we saw above, in its concern with the perfection of virtue and the character through the advent of σοφία the final chapter of *Treatise 20* (I, 3) also addressed itself to the philosopher, the one who already possesses "natural", human, civic virtue, possessed of and governed by φρόνησις as he is. The coincidence of the language of ritual initiation with that of perfection in virtue in this new line of questioning in chapter four of *Treatise 19* (I, 2) thus betrays signs of another transition in mode, from a discourse directed to the lover to one directed to the philosopher, the one who has "begun to move above, and is only at a loss for someone to show him the way."[3]

In chapter four of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), then, we make the transition from virtue as the means of likeness to God to the question of that likeness itself which the aphaeretic activity of virtue reveals: conversion and purification occur simultaneously, and neither are the good: "the good will be what is left after purification, not the purification itself" (4.8-9). This good (ἀγαθὸν) of the purified soul turns out to be not quite hers alone: rather, as her nature tends toward both the evil and the good, her good relies on the beings to

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[1] Cf. Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2)," in Brisson-Pradeau, 455-457, esp. n. 82, 84, 89, 95, 99, 100.
[2] Phaedo 69c8-d1: *ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι.*
[3] *Treatise 20* (I, 3) 3.3-4.

which she allies herself and is to be found in her "fellowship with that which is akin to her" (τὸ συνεῖναι τῷ συγγενεῖ, 4.14).

5.1.1 The Return to World Soul: A Theurgical Moment

The pair of *συν*- prefixes at *19* (I, 2) 4.14 might remind us of the kinship (*συγγενεία*) between World Soul and individual souls, which we discovered in *Treatises 27* and *28* (IV, 3-4), and the role of that kinship in the correction of the soul's motions as she learns to "follow the motions of the All" on the authority of the *Timaeus* (90c8-d1).[1] To despise this kinship is to tend away from the intelligible, as the condemnation of the Gnostics' disdain for the visible universe in *Treatise 33* (II, 9) asserts:[2]

> there are souls in [the heavenly bodies] too, and intelligent and good ones, much more closely in touch with the beings There than are our own (*συναφεῖς τοῖς ἐκεῖ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ αἱ ἡμῶν*)…because [the Gnosticizing Platonists] despise the kindred of those higher beings (*τῶν συγγενῶν ἐκείνοις*) also, they do not know the higher beings either but talk as if they did.

World Soul and the celestial souls are our kindred, and are themselves the kindred of the intelligibles which they contemplate and by which contemplation they move and order the cosmic sphere. The fellowship with what is akin is further described as "a sight and the impression of what is seen, implanted and working in the soul" (*θέα καὶ τύπος τοῦ ὀφθέντος ἐντεθεὶς καὶ ἐνεργῶν*, 4.19-20). Now the connection between this union with the kindred and the active union of sight and impression recalls another, more positive moment in Plotinus' dialogue with the Gnostics, the centrepiece spiritual exercise described in *Treatise 31* (V, 8):[3]

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[1] See above, Chapter Two.
[2] *33* (II, 9) 16.9-14.
[3] *Treatise 31* (V, 8) 9.1-16.

Let us then apprehend in our thought (τῇ διανοίᾳ) this cosmos, with each of its parts remaining what it is without confusion, gathering all of them together into one as far as we can, so that when any one part appears first, for instance, the outside heavenly sphere, the imagination of the sun, and, with it, the other heavenly bodies follows immediately, and the earth and sea and all the living creatures are seen, as they could in fact all be seen within a transparent sphere. Let there be, then, in the soul a shining imagination of a sphere, having everything within it…taking away the mass: take away also the places, and the mental picture of matter within yourself, and do not try to apprehend another sphere smaller in mass than the original one, but calling on the god who made that of which you have the mental picture, pray him to come. And may he come, bringing his own universe with him, with all the gods within him…

In *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1 we were led to consider the Soul of the World as the divinity to whom we should seek likeness because we find ourselves "here" in its universe, the order and beauty of which give cause for wonder. "Wonder" (θαῦμα) in Plotinus is the human's characteristic response to the evident φρονήσις,[1] σοφία[2] and non-discursive τέχνῃ[3] as well as the providence (πρόνοία)[4] and power (δυνάμις)[5] of World Soul. In teaching that the individual soul is moved by wonder not only to *seek* the paradigm upon which World Soul depends, but also to imitate the demiurge of the *Timaeus* in seeking to *make* the image more like the paradigm by making it in herself, the spiritual exercise described in *Treatise 31* (V, 8) exhorts the student soul to make "the world as a whole both one's offering and one's act of worship."[6] This is thus an immaterial theurgic act, by which the human enters into divine activity, exchanges the human for the divine, and seeks to coincide with the All so that the individual soul's particular human

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 1.13.

[2] *Treatise 31* (V, 8) 6.13-16; cf. σοφίαν ἀμήχανον, *33* (II, 9) 8.15.

[3] *Treatise 47* (III, 2) 13.16-21.

[4] ibid., 7.14-15.

[5] *Treatise 28* (IV, 4) 45.27-30; *33* (II, 9) 2.15; *40* (II, 1) 4.15.

[6] Sara Rappe, "Self-knowledge and subjectivity in the *Enneads*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, Lloyd P. Gerson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 269.

perspective may be corrected, expanded, and thus restored to its original scope and power: "[man] has ceased to be the All now that he has become man; but when he ceases to be man he "walks on high and directs the whole universe;" for when he comes to belong to the whole he makes the whole" (γενόμενος γὰρ τοῦ ὅλου τὸ ὅλον ποιεῖ, 7.33-35).[1]

This inner theurgy is not the work of a moment's consideration. Rather, it requires a remarkable capacity to attend to the visible cosmos in all its dappled variety and particularity without the slightest distraction or preference of one imagination over another.[2] Anyone continually drawn by the indefinite relativity of the sensible will not be able to attain to such a vision, nor will the one who clings to one body and has not yet come to know the invisible beauty inherent to soul. In other words, this exercise implicitly assumes the acquisition of the civic virtues: this is an exercise for the philosophic soul. Man cannot become more than man without first becoming fully man—and so the exercise assumes the civic virtues in its exhortation to surpass them. Further, the exercise uncompromisingly demands not merely the many but the All: in so doing it seeks perfection, that is, the inculcation of the purified virtue of World Soul.

This exercise's relation to purified virtue is clearer when juxtaposed with a similarly worded exercise described in *Treatise 10* (V, 1), beloved of Augustine:[3]

> Let [the individual soul] look at the great soul, being herself another soul which is no small one, who has become worthy to look by being freed from deceit, and the things that have bewitched the other souls, and is established in quietude. Let not only her encompassing body and the body's raging sea be quiet, but all her environment: the earth quiet, and the sea and air quiet, and the heaven itself at peace. Into this heaven at

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[1] Cf. *Phaedrus* 246c1-2. See *Treatise 27* (IV, 3) 11.1-13. See also Gregory Shaw, "Eros and Arithmos", 121; Zeke Mazur, "*Unio Magica:* Part II: Plotinus, Theurgy, and the Question of Ritual," *Dionysius* 22 (2004): 35-36, 45-47; Martin H. Curran, "The Immaterial Theurgy of Boethius" (MA Dissertation: Dalhousie University, 2012), 25-27.
[2] See Rappe, "Self-knowledge and subjectivity," 261.
[3] *Treatise 10* (V, 1) 2. Cf. Augustine, *Confessions* IX. 10.

rest let her imagine soul as if flowing in from outside, pouring in and entering it everywhere and illuminating it…

Plotinus is emphatic in his silencing of the visible world here: this inner quietude is decidedly the pre-requisite for further ascent. The individual soul prepares herself for the coming of Soul in a generous flow of intellectual light; she prepares herself not only to receive this coming, but to *imagine* it. As the consequences of this overflow, all the things which World Soul's body contains fall out of the scope and concentrated serenity of her contemplation of the Intelligible. The exercise of *Treatise 10* (V, 1) becomes a kind of exhortation to the praise of the nature of Soul, addressing itself to the one who sees the beauty of another but has not yet come to know the beauty of the All, or of himself: "…why does one let oneself go and pursue another? But by admiring the soul in another, you admire yourself" (*10* (V, 1) 2.49-51). Now it is precisely the serenity of the body of the *All*, rather than the confusion and conflict of its parts, which the first stage of the exercise in *Treatise 31* (V, 8) seeks to imitate (*31* (V, 8) 9.1-2). But where the exercise in *Treatise 10* (V, 1) leads to the contemplation of Soul, actively imagined, *Treatise 31* (V, 8) leads to the Intelligible, actively received: it is the arrival of a whole other cosmos which is awaited, and its arrival cannot be imagined, but only invoked: "may he come."

The god's coming is considered still further in *Treatise 31* (V, 8), and he is seen first by "the oldest among the gods", Zeus, with the other gods and souls, the capable ones, following in his train (*31* (V, 8) 10.1ff.) The imagery and spirit of the *Phaedrus* is in clear evidence here,[1] and continues as their vision of the Intelligibles is described: it is the "source and nature" ($\pi\eta\gamma\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\nu$, 10.13[2]) of virtue, of the just ($\tauο\hat{\upsilon}$ $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}ου$) and of $\sigma\omega\phi\rhoσ\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$ which are particularly beheld, depending on the nature of the beholder. Plotinus in fact makes these two virtues the only two examples of vision, highlighting

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[1] As it is in *Treatise 10* (V, 1) 2. Cf. *Phaedrus* 245cff.

[2] Note that in Plato, the vision is of "justice itself and moderation" ($\alpha\grave{\upsilon}\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iοσ\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta\nu...\sigma\omega\phi\rhoσ\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta\nu$, 247d6). Plotinus' insertion of "source and nature" ($\pi\eta\gamma\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\nu$) may be picking up on the pair "source and origin" ($\pi\eta\gamma\grave{\eta}$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\grave{\alpha}\rho\chi\acute{\eta}$) from earlier in the dialogue (245c9).

the centrality of virtue in this spiritual exercise as the guide to the intelligible.[1] With World Soul, Zeus, leading, the gods and souls, "anyone who is his fellow-lover" (σύνεραστής, 10.23), arrive finally at the vision of beauty, and find themselves both filled with and transformed by this vision, "likened to that upon which they walked" (ὁμοιωθέντες τῇ ἐφ᾽ ἧς ἐβεβήκεσαν, 10.29). The end of this stage of the exercise is a vision of the god within, likened to a kind of possession (10.41-43).

Let us return to *Treatise 19* (I, 2) with these cosmically significant spiritual exercises described in *Treatise 10* (V, 1) and *Treatise 31* (V, 8) in mind, especially their evocation of the central myth of the *Phaedrus*. Though there are no such theurgical acts explicitly enacted in *Treatise 19* (I, 2), nonetheless the interiorization of the mysteries is evoked[2] in the consideration of the relation of perfection to conversion, as well as the soul's union and conjunction with World Soul in the phrase τὸ συνεῖναι τῷ συγγενεῖ (*19* (I, 2) 4.14). This continues in chapter five of the *Treatise*, which pushes the investigation towards a clearer articulation of the "the extent of the purification" (πόσον κάθαρσις, 5.1). With this push we have now decidedly left the life of human virtue behind; the question of "likeness" thus becomes also a question of "identity": "in this way it will become clear to which [god] there is likeness, as well as to which god there is identity" (οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἡ ὁμοίωσις τίνι φανερὰ καὶ ἡ ταυτότης τίνι θεῷ, 5.1-2). This consideration of both likeness and identity leads us to the gradations of divinity which Porphyry will pick up on and systematize further in his summary in *Sentence 32*: the man who is not yet fully purified, who because of the trace of the involuntary in him is double, may be considered a double kind of god or spirit (θεὸς ἂν εἴη ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ δαίμων, 6.4-5); the fully purified

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[1] It is also interesting to note that Plotinus leaves out the third example of vision which is in the Platonic passage: ἐπιστήμη. Further, he transfers the discussion of the distinction between the ἐπιστήμη of the world of Becoming and the ἐπιστήμη of the world of Being to the virtue of σωφροσύνη, taking this as an opportunity to describe paradigmatic σωφροσύνη as "that glory over all, playing upon what we may call the whole extension of that world" (ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ πᾶσι περὶ πᾶν τὸ οἷον μέγεθος αὐτοῦ ἐπιθέουσα τελευταία ὁρᾶται, 10.16-17).
[2] Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 195.

one is no longer a man, but "simply god, and one of those gods who follow the First" (θεὸς μόνον: θεὸς δὲ τῶν ἑπομένων τῷ πρώτῳ, 6.6-7). Here, then, the Platonic background reveals itself once more as the *Phaedrus*, and the exemplary role which World Soul plays in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) is still more in evidence.

From this brief sketch of chapters four through six of *Treatise 19* (I, 2), juxtaposed with the cosmic theurgies of *Treatise 10* (V, 1) and *31* (V, 8) we can trace the following trajectory. The two kinds of likeness have been established and purificatory virtue has been unfolded out from the initial distinction between civic virtue and the paradigms of virtue in Intellect in chapters two and three of *Treatise 19* (I, 2). This clarifies civic virtue's place as well as its proper character as a lower form of purification. Chapter four of the *Treatise* begins a new investigation, one that evokes the language of the mysteries and, through the scriptural background of the *Phaedrus*, leads to the reintroduction of World Soul into the consideration of virtue, as both our exemplar and our fellow-lover.

5.1.2 σοφία καὶ φρόνησις

Why, in the enumeration of the virtues in *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 6, does wisdom not appear with the rest? After the carefulness with which we have seen Plotinus enumerate the other levels of virtue, and given the assertion of mutual implication which immediately follows this enumeration (ἀντακολουθοῦσι τοίνυν ἀλλήλαις καὶ αὗται αἱ ἀρεταὶ ἐν ψυχῇ, 7.1), it is surprising that the four virtues would not appear together.

Plotinus chooses wisdom (σοφία καὶ φρόνησις) as the virtue through which to revisit the question of the difference between soul and Intellect:[1] "Wisdom, theoretical and practical (σοφία καὶ φρόνησις), consists in the contemplation of the things which Intellect possesses, but Intellect has these by immediate contact (τῇ ἐπαφῇ)." Further, wisdom is the first virtue named in its paradigmatic form, as "the act of self" (ἐνέργεια αὐτοῦ). The object of wisdom as a virtue of soul is always what belongs to another, to

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 6.12-13.

Intellect. In the final chapter of the *Treatise*, wisdom is again the virtue that prompts the distinction between soul and Intellect:[1]

> In the soul, sight directed towards intellect is wisdom, theoretical and practical (σοφία καὶ φρόνησις), these are the virtues belonging to the soul, for she is not herself they, as is the case There, and the others follow in the same way.

We saw in *Treatise 20* (I, 3) that φρόνησις was the virtue which was "more concerned with the universal." Further, with the advent of σοφία the soul reaches her perfection. Wisdom is the virtue definitive of the purified soul, in the same way that moderation defined the politically virtuous soul, and courage the soul just beginning to learn to separate herself from the body in thought.

5.1.3 The Redefinition of Justice

The nature of justice at the higher levels of virtue seems to present a particular problem for Plotinus. Its definition at the civic level as οἰκειοπραγία required the presence of several parts to be ordered and harmonized under the rule of reason. οἰκειοπραγία was not used in the purificatory definition of justice, but here at the end of the *Treatise* it reappears. What can it mean in a soul fully turned to Intellect and filled by her vision of the same? All plurality and partition have been stripped away.

Plotinus asks this explicitly (6.20ff.). His answer is that "true absolute justice is the disposition of a unity to itself" (ἡ γοῦν ἀληθῆς αὐτοδικαιοσύνη ἑνὸς πρὸς αὐτό, 6.23-24). In this answer, however, we again see how the paradigm has crept into the consideration of purified virtue. Between the description of wisdom in its purified form and the rest of the virtues appear the paradigms of wisdom and justice in *Νοῦς*. Through the quotation from the *Theaetetus,* wisdom and justice were the virtues with which we began *Treatise 19* (I, 2); here at the end of the *Treatise* we find these two virtues

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[1] *Treatise 19* (I, 2) 7.6-8.

are the cause of a kind of intertwining of the virtues of the purified soul and the

paradigms themselves. They characterize soul in her degree of likeness to *Νοῦς*.

Conclusion

Nowhere else in Plotinus do we get a more thorough-going account of virtue than in *Treatises 19* (I, 2) and *20* (I, 3). In these two early works, which might well be grouped as one under a single title, "Concerning the Upward Way", the polyvalent nature of Platonic virtue is unfolded in several stages. First, in the consideration of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, World Soul is given a small but important role that fundamentally shapes the rest of the *Treatise*: the usually glamorous civic virtues pale in comparison to the object of World Soul's desire and the wonder of her wisdom in her providential care for all that is soulless. This marks the beginning of the musician's necessary indoctrination.

Second, the mode of discourse changes to address itself to the lover, who must be led to recognize the bodiless beauty especially of the virtues. Here the civic virtues receive a more sustained treatment that culminates in their re-orientation and redefinition as lower forms of purification, marked by measure, limit and moderation. In this redefinition the civic virtues find a dignity that will be significantly intensified by the later Neoplatonists.

Third, marked by an exegetical shift from the context of the *Republic* to that of the *Phaedo*, the purificatory virtues are enumerated as a mediating step between the civic virtues and the paradigms. As virtues concerned with the stripping away of all passion and identification with the body, they may be said to be characterized by the virtue of courage. Here the *Phaedo*'s most memorable themes—the practice of philosophy as the practice of death, and the image of the true Bacchants as the philosophers—are evoked to mark the transition from the lover to the philosopher who, having already acquired the civic virtues and desirous of ascending still further in his purifications, must be led to perfect his virtues through the advent of σοφία.

Fourth, we are led to reconsider the virtues of World Soul, now understood as the fully purified virtues of the one fully turned to Intellect and filled by its vision. Here wisdom

and justice are interwoven as the virtues most definitive of World Soul's productive, providential gaze. This interweaving of justice and wisdom takes place simultaneously with an interweaving of the accounts of the virtues of soul and their paradigms in Intellect, reflecting, perhaps, the degree to which Soul may approximate by possession what Intellect is by nature.

In *Treatises 19* and *20,* therefore, guided by a series of carefully executed and juxtaposed exegeses of several Platonic dialogues, Plotinus lays out an *itinerarium* for the three kinds of human soul capable of "going the upward way". It is an *itinerarium* that dignifies the lower levels even as it subordinates them. This way of ascent owes its preservation, transmission and transformation to Porphyry's brief summary, which primarily pays attention to the fourfold enumeration of the four cardinal virtues—an anagogical strategy of Plotinus which, as we have seen, has Platonic roots in the *Phaedrus'* treatment of σωφροσύνη. Nonetheless, much of the character of Plotinus' original arduous and ardent anagogy is lost in this Porphyrian preservation. The richness which the trope of the fourfold enumeration acquires through its long and influential legacy in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages invites us to return to Plotinus' *Treatises 19* and *20* with a keener eye; with these enumerations as familiar markers now to guide us, perhaps we may better run the course which he has set, looking ever to World Soul's exemplary activity.

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