Plotinus on Consciousness

D. M. Hutchinson

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Plotinus is the first Greek philosopher to hold a systematic theory of consciousness. The key feature of his theory is that it involves multiple layers of experience: different layers of consciousness occur in different levels of self. This layering of higher modes of consciousness on lower ones provides human beings with a rich experiential world and enables them to draw on their own experience to investigate their true self and the nature of reality. This involves a robust notion of subjectivity. However, it is a notion of subjectivity that is unique to Plotinus, and remarkably different from the post-Cartesian tradition. Behind the plurality of terms Plotinus uses to express consciousness, and behind the plurality of entities to which Plotinus attributes consciousness (such as the divine souls and the hypostases), lies a theory of human consciousness. It is a Platonist theory shaped by engagement with rival schools of ancient thought.

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To Charles H. Kahn

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Acknowledgments

This book began as a doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Charles H. Kahn at the University of Pennsylvania. In writing the book, I decided not to revise my thesis but to restructure and rewrite it altogether. Although this has delayed its completion, I believe it has resulted in a better book.

I owe gratitude to many people, societies, and institutions for supporting me since I began working on the original manuscript. First and foremost, I would like to thank Charles H. Kahn for suggesting the topic of consciousness in Plotinus to me, and guiding my doctoral research. He was an excellent advisor, and he remains an excellent mentor. I would like to thank Pavlos Kalligas for co-advising my thesis and spending countless hours discussing Plotinus with me during a research trip to Athens. I would also like to thank Susan Sauvé-Meyer and James Ross for serving on my committee, as well as Peter Struck for being an outside reader. The present book owes a great deal to their helpful comments, especially those of Susan Sauvé-Meyer. I would like to thank several Plotinus scholars in particular, whose scholarship has been very influential on my book: Pavlos Kalligas, Eyjólfur Emilsson, Riccardo Chiaradonna, John Dillon, Lloyd Gerson, Pauliina Remes, James Wilberding, Damian Caluori, Gary Gurtler, and Suzanne Stern-Gillet. I would also like to thank my editor, Michael Sharp, for his patience and guidance throughout the lengthy editorial process.

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Notes on the Text

We are fortunate today to have a variety of excellent translations into English of Plotinus' *Enneads.* In addition to A.H. Armstrong's uniform translation in the Loeb Classical Library, Hackett Publishing Company has produced a fine volume containing selections from the *Enneads*, and Parmenides Publishing is in the lengthy process of producing superb translations and commentaries on individual treatises of the *Enneads*. So, rather than translating all Greek passages myself, I have made use of these existing translations. I have adopted the following policy concerning translations. I have made A.H. Armstrong's translation the default translation for all intra-paragraph quotations, where I am quoting the text to support my claims. I have made my own translations the default translation for all inter-paragraph block quotations, where I am analyzing passages that are crucial for my argument. In the instances where I deviate from this policy, I flag clearly the translators who are responsible for the translations.

Introduction

The problem of consciousness is arguably the central problem in the philosophy of mind, and the interdisciplinary field of consciousness studies is rapidly emerging as the space wherein neuroscientists, computer scientists, cognitive scientists, psychologists, and philosophers collectively investigate the phenomenon of conscious experience. Unfortunately, the history of philosophy has not fared so well among this prestigious group of researchers. It is a dogma in the philosophy of mind that the systematic investigation of consciousness began in the seventeenth century with René Descartes and that previous philosophers either were unconcerned with consciousness or lacked the linguistic and conceptual tools to explain consciousness, or did not mean what "we" mean by consciousness.

An example of this can be found in the opening lines of the introductory chapter to *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*: "[t]he attempt to develop a systematic approach to the study of consciousness begins with René Descartes (1595–1650) and his ideas still have a major influence today" (Frith and Rees 2007: 9). This introductory chapter attributes the origin of consciousness studies to Descartes on the grounds that he is the first philosopher to distinguish between mind and body, to locate consciousness in the mind, and to think seriously about the neural correlates of consciousness. Furthermore, it claims that Descartes provides the framework within which consciousness studies have developed in the past several hundred years. The purpose of this book is to dispel this dogma by examining the theory of consciousness belonging to the late ancient Greek philosopher Plotinus.

Modern scholars regard Plotinus as the founder of Neoplatonism. Although he considered himself an interpreter of Plato, his unique synthesis of Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic thought introduced the framework for the emergence of a new phase of Platonism in late antiquity. Beginning with Plotinus in the mid-third century CE and ending a generation after the closure of the Platonic Academy in Athens

in the early-sixth century CE, Neoplatonism had become the dominant school of philosophy throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

My reason for studying Plotinus' theory of consciousness is both historical and philosophical. The assumption that Descartes is the first philosopher to investigate consciousness has become so matter-of-fact that it has prevented us from noticing the achievement of late ancient philosophy of mind, and it has narrowed our conception of what consciousness is, and what it is for. My concern is to show that Plotinus prefigures Descartes in developing a theory of consciousness. Recognition of this permits us to analyze the phenomenon of consciousness from a perspective outside the Cartesian framework and enables us to clarify the concept of consciousness we have inherited from the post-Cartesian tradition.

The framework I have in mind is what is sometimes called the "Inner Theatre" or "Cartesian Theatre" model of consciousness. According to this model, the mind perceives its mental states in the way an observer perceives actors on a stage. In the case of the theater, there exists an observer that watches actors enter and exit the stage. In the case of the mind, there exists a self that observes its thoughts (*cogitatio*) in a kind of internal theater. Thoughts that make it onto the stage are conscious, thoughts that do not make it onto the stage are unconscious. The key features of this model are that the internal theater is one's own subjective experience and that we have a unique epistemic authority over the contents of our subjective experience. The advantage to studying Plotinus is that he offers a significantly richer model of consciousness than this model.

Plotinus holds (in modern parlance) a dualist theory of consciousness. In the most general sense, a dualist theory of consciousness claims that at least some aspects of consciousness fall outside the realm of the physical. As a late ancient Platonist, Plotinus makes the stronger claim that all aspects of consciousness fall outside the realm of the physical. Plotinus agrees with Descartes that consciousness inheres only in minds (or mental states) and cannot be reduced to bodies (or bodily states). However, he does not agree with the post-Cartesian tradition that mental states are transparent, infallible, incorrigible, or take place in something like a private, inner theater. The inner space of the Plotinian soul is a place very different from the inner space of the Cartesian mind.

The key feature of Plotinus' theory is that it involves multiple layers of experience: different layers of consciousness occur in different levels of self. The first layer takes place in the *physical* self, which is the subject of affections in the sensible world. It constitutes the body as a subject and provides us with ownership of our bodily and psychic activities. The second layer takes place in the *dianoetic* self, which is the subject of imagination and discursive reasoning in the sensible world. It provides us

with apprehension of our bodily affections and our intentional activities, such as sense-perception, discursive reasonings, and thoughts. The third layer takes place in the *noetic* self, which is the subject of contemplation in the intelligible world. It provides us with awareness of our contemplative activity, integrates us into the intelligible world, and unites us with the divine intellect. The layering of higher modes of consciousness on lower ones provides the human being with a rich experiential world.

I regard the layeredness of Plotinus' theory of consciousness as its chief strength. Switching into contemporary terminology for a moment, it shows that to understand a conscious mental state one needs to understand more than a physical substrate (say, neural correlates) or a cognitive mechanism (say, a Turing machine that can perform computations). Rather, one needs to understand the entire cognitive architecture of the mind, and that in order to understand a given cognitive activity one needs to take into account the lower layers of consciousness that it is completing and the higher layers of consciousness that it is drawing on for its own completion. For Plotinus, this means taking into account not only the higher layers of consciousness within our own soul, but also those contained in divine souls (soul of the earth, soul of the planets and stars, and the soul of the world) and in the hypostases or principles of reality (Soul, Intellect, and the One). A modern reader may have little patience for divine souls and hypostases, but they are part of Plotinus' explanatory system and his theory of consciousness is unintelligible without them. I will have much to say about these other entities as they relate to consciousness, especially Intellect.

Consciousness is widely distributed throughout Plotinus' ontology. It occurs in Nature, animals, human beings, divine souls, and the hypostases. The basis for this pan-psychism is his theory of contemplation, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. Suffice it to say for now that Plotinus regards Intellect as the paradigmatic form of life and thought. As a paradigm, Intellect stands in a model–image relation to all forms of life and thought, from Soul down to plants. This model–image relation is an adaptation of Plato's theory of Forms. In Plato's metaphysics sensible individuals acquire properties by "participating" or "sharing" in the sources of those properties, the Forms. A metaphor that Plato often uses to describe participation is that sensibles are like images and the Forms are like patterns (*paradeigmata*) on which the images are modeled.[1] For example, a citizen of *kallipolis* becomes just by sharing in the form of

[1] The model–image metaphor occurs frequently throughout the Platonic dialogues. For example, see *Republic* 484c6–d2, *Parmenides* 132c12–d4, and *Timaeus* 29b1–4. Compare with *Phaedo* 74a–75a for the idea that properties in sensible individuals strive to be like the Forms.

Justice and modeling his soul on Justice itself.[2] As the model, then, all forms of life and thought are ultimately images of Intellect's contemplation and strive to contemplate in the manner of Intellect. Since Intellect's contemplation essentially involves consciousness, the model–image relation also extends to consciousness. Hence, all living beings with the possible exception of plants have some form of consciousness. However, as we might expect from the diversity of living beings, different kinds of entities have different degrees of the same type of consciousness, and different types of consciousness.

The Structure of the Book

The book contains six chapters plus an appendix, and is organized around the core chapters concerned with consciousness (Chapters 3 through 5). In Chapter 1, I discuss the self. Central to my argument in this chapter is that there are three levels of self and that the highest level is an intellect in the intelligible world. It has become commonplace in secondary literature on Plotinus to note a distinction between the soul-trace that informs the body, the lower soul that cares for the body, and the higher soul that remains in the intelligible world. Despite the recognition that three phases of soul constitute a human being, many scholars are still wedded to a dualistic structure of selfhood, according to which a human being is composed of a higher and a lower self corresponding to a higher and lower soul. However, if we adhere to this conception, we collapse two layers of consciousness and blur together different activities that are layered on top of each other. To understand the nature and role of consciousness, we must divide the lower self in two and regard the soul-trace that animates the body as a level of self in its own right.

Since our intellect comes into unity with Intellect in the recovery of our true self, I spend the bulk of this chapter explaining individuation. Drawing on IV.4.1 I argue that intellects have a perspective or point of view on the intelligible world, which individuates them from one another and Intellect. Connecting with the science-theorem analogy in IV.3.2 and VI.2.20, I argue that having a perspective individuates our intellects from one another similar to the way that theorems or specific sciences are individuated from one another in the soul of the scientist. Importantly, having a perspective not only individuates our intellect, but also highlights

[2] See *Republic* 472bc, 484d, 500b, and 585c.

a key difference between how our intellects contemplate the Forms and how Intellect does.

In Chapter 2 and the Appendix, I discuss the consciousness terms (*antilêpsis*, *parakolouthêsis*, *sunaisthêsis*, and *sunesis*). Central to my interpretation of Plotinus is that he uses different terms to refer to different modes of consciousness and, in particular, that *antilêpsis* is a bona fide consciousness term that picks out a unique mode of consciousness. In Chapter 2, I explain how Plotinus uses each of these terms, and I propose a translation scheme to capture their unique meanings. In the Appendix, I give a brief semantic history of the development of these terms from the time of Homer to Plotinus.

In the core chapters, I discuss consciousness. Central to my argument is that each layer of consciousness has unique capacities, that the higher the layer the more unifying the capacity, and that the more unifying the capacity the closer together are thought and being. The first layer unifies the qualified body into a structured and coherent whole, which enables it to function as a unity despite being composed of a multitude of parts. The second layer unifies the lower soul with the *logoi* present within it, which enables it to dissolve the duality inherent in discursive reasoning between reasoning subject and object reasoned-about, or reasoning subject and external action performed. The third layer unites the higher soul with Intellect, which enables it to return to a state of identity with Intellect and the intelligibles. The turn inward and ascent upward culminates in this layer of consciousness, which enables us to assimilate to the rationality of Intellect and the self-sufficiency of the One. Unity is the governing principle in Plotinus' theory. The more unified we are, the less we are in need of being completed by things that are external to ourselves and beyond our control. The inward turn and upward ascent is expressed vividly in the cover illustration, "Head of a Young Man," 400–420.

In Chapter 6, I discuss self-determination. I argue that in order to be free, in a world governed by destiny, we must establish right reason in charge of our embodied lives and be the sole efficient causal source of our actions. This involves living according to a higher code of laws derived from the intelligible world and obtaining the premises for our actions from Intellect. Central to my argument is that to be self-determining we must become consciously aware of our intellects, and the freedom and authority belonging to our intellects. Consciousness thus plays a critical role in Plotinus' theory of agency. I conclude with this chapter to bring together Plotinus' theoretical and practical philosophy and to illustrate the central role that consciousness plays in Plotinus' writings.

CHAPTER 1

Self

The topic of the self in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy has been a popular subject of scholarly debate in the past decade. This is particularly so with respect to the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic eras, due to the (in my opinion, correct) view that an inward turn occurs in the Roman Stoics and is developed by the Neoplatonists, which results in a new conception of selfhood based on individuality and subjectivity. Plotinus has emerged as a major figure in this development thanks to the writings of Pauliina Remes. In a series of influential books and articles, Remes has argued that Plotinus holds a theory of two selves in which the self is identified either with embodied, discursive reasoning or with the pure intellect.[1] The two-dimensional discussion of selfhood she attributes to Plotinus is firmly built on a metaphysical distinction Plotinus draws between the higher and lower souls, and an epistemological distinction Plotinus draws between intellect and discursive reasoning. I have learned a great deal about Plotinus from her writings and from discussions with her; however, my examination of Plotinus' theory of consciousness has led me to conclude that the two-dimensional discussion of selfhood is insufficient to capture his unique philosophy of mind.[2] Central to my interpretation of Plotinus' philosophy of mind is that there are three layers of consciousness, which correspond to three levels of self.

I have two aims in this preliminary chapter. The first is to discuss the features of Plotinus' theory of self, which are necessary to set up my discussion of his theory of consciousness. These are (1) the levels of selfhood, (2) the true self as intellect, and (3) the individuation of intellect in the intelligible world. The second is to discuss the conception of

[1] See Remes (2007a: 10, 30, 157), (2008a: 106, 124, 182, 206–207), and more recently (2017: 80).

[2] To be fair, Remes does acknowledge that Plotinus' theory of self is actually many-dimensional insofar as Plotinus thinks the self can identify itself with whatever level of reality it focuses its attention on (2007a: 173, 245) and (2008a: 124–125). However, the basic framework she attributes to Plotinus throughout her works is two-dimensional.

subjectivity I am attributing to Plotinus and to disentangle it from the conception associated with the post-Cartesian tradition. By "post-Cartesian tradition" I do not simply mean philosophers who thought and wrote after René Descartes, but rather philosophers who developed philosophical theories within the framework that Descartes introduced into philosophy of mind. The two post-Cartesian philosophers I contrast Plotinus' views with are John Locke and Jean-Paul Sartre.

1.1 Levels of Selfhood

Plotinus follows Plato in identifying the human being with the soul, since the soul rules the body and uses it as a tool.[3] Moreover, he follows Plato in identifying the self with the rational soul, since this is the region of soul that possesses knowledge of what is good and enables us to pursue the good of the soul.[4] However, Plotinus complicates the Platonic self by introducing levels of selfhood.[5] By "level" I mean a discrete stage in the actualization of the true self. The important characteristic of these levels is that they exist along a continuum that extends from the sensible to the intelligible world. The self is a seat of awareness that fluctuates[6] along these levels, belonging to the level of reality on which it focuses its attention.[7] The most salient example of this occurs at IV.8.1.1–11. Plotinus writes,

> Often I wake up from the body into myself (*eis emauton*), and since I come to be outside of other things and within myself (*emautou de eisô*), I have a vision of extraordinary beauty. [1] I feel supremely confident then that

[3] See *Phaedo* 80a1–10 and 94b2–4, and *Alcibiades* 129d1–130c2; cf. IV.7.1.20–25, and I.1.3.1–17. For a discussion of Plotinus and the *Alcibiades*, see Aubry (2007).

[4] See *Republic* 441e2–44a and *Alcibiades* 132c1–133c6: cf. I.1.7.18–24 and I.10.6–15.

[5] My multilevel interpretation bears some similarities to Gerard O'Daly's interpretation. However, my analysis of each level differs considerably, especially as it pertains to the highest level. He identifies the higher soul and true self with discursive reasoning (*logismos*, *dianoia*), and regards our intellect (*nous*) as an aspect of Intellect, in which the soul participates insofar as it intelligizes (1973: 40–51). This leads him to hold "one cannot conclude that when Plotinus says that *each one of us* was transcendental man, [VI.4.14] 25, he wishes to say that we exist as individual intelligences: for as souls we are already in the transcendent, and can be so as individual souls. Plotinus probably does not want to say more than this" (1973: 61). I will argue below that Plotinus does want to say more than this and that the *noetic* self is an individual intelligence.

[6] This is an echo of E.R. Dodds' famous characterization of the Plotinian self as a "fluctuating spotlight of consciousness." See Dodds (1960: 5). However, since I think he mistakenly conflates different types of consciousness and distorts Plotinus' view on consciousness, I think this characterization is misleading. See my comments in Chapter 2.

[7] I am in agreement with Dodds (1960) and, more recently, Aubry (2014) that since the self can fluctuate along this psychic continuum it cannot be reduced to the rational soul in the composite. For instance, it can include one's higher, undescended soul or intellect that remains in the intelligible world.

> I belong to a higher realm, having lived the best life and having come to identity with the divine; and being established in it I have come to that actuality, setting myself above all the rest of the intelligible world. [2] After that rest in the divine, when I have come down from Intellect to discursive reasoning, I am puzzled how in the world even now I am coming down, and [3] how in the world my soul has come to be in the body, since it has been revealed to be what it is in itself,[8] despite being in the body.[9]

The Plotinian intelligible realm is not a supracosmic place from which one is separated during one's life, and to which one hopes to return in the afterlife, as it is for Plato. Rather, it is also "in us" and can be reached by turning inward and ascending upward (III.4.3.21–24). This autobiographical passage contains a reflection on what it is like to ascend upward to the intelligible world and become unified with Intellect [1], and descend into a body in the sensible world [2 and 3]. Importantly for my purposes, the reflection is cast from the first-person perspective ("I"), takes place in an inner psychological space ("into myself"), and involves a phenomenology ("I have a vision of extraordinary beauty. I feel supremely confident then that I belong to a higher realm").[10] To appreciate the first-personal character of this passage, one need only contrast it with other passages in which Plotinus investigates the self from a third-person perspective, such as when he discusses the "we" in treatise I.1. When discussing the selves that reside in the soul–body composite Plotinus often addresses the issue from a third-person perspective and answers it in third-personal terms, such as when he writes, "So 'we' is used in two senses, either including the beast or referring to that which even in our present life transcends it" (I.1.10.6–8). However, the first-personal approach in the above passage highlights the role experience plays in his theory of self. He follows Plato in identifying the self with the rational soul. However, his acceptance of Plato's doctrine is based not just on authority or rational argumentation, but also on an inward experience of the truths contained in the doctrines.[11] Experience is thus crucial to the discoveries realized and the claims made regarding the self.

[8] I follow Fleet's translation of lines 10–11. His translation of ἐφάνη as "has been revealed" captures nicely the religious dimension of this passage.

[9] πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ γινόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἐμαυτοῦ δὲ εἴσω, θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον ὁρῶν κάλλος, καὶ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας πιστεύσας τότε μάλιστα εἶναι, ζωήν τε ἀρίστην ἐνεργήσας καὶ τῷ θείῳ εἰς ταὐτὸν γεγενημένος καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἱδρυθεὶς εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἐλθὼν ἐκείνην ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν ἐμαυτὸν ἱδρύσας, μετὰ ταύτην τὴν ἐν τῷ θειῳ στασίν εἰς λογισμὸν ἐκ νοῦ καταβὰς ἀπορῶ, πῶς ποτε καὶ νῦν καταβαίνω, καὶ ὅπως ποτέ μοι ἔνδον ἡ ψυχὴ γεγένηται τοῦ σώματος τοῦτο οὖσα, οἷον ἐφάνη καθ' ἑαυτήν, καίπερ οὖσα ἐν σώματι.

[10] By phenomenology I mean the qualitative experience that is tied to the first-person perspective.

[11] On the importance of experience in Plotinus' methodology, see Armstrong (1974).

Plotinus speaks of the "I" at three different levels in this passage. It might seem that there are two levels of selfhood, namely, the level associated with one's intellect and the level associated with embodied, discursive reasoning. However, if we keep in mind that discursive reasoning is the principal faculty of the lower soul, which is *present to* the body without being *in* the body and that the soul-trace is *in* the body (note the *endon tou sômatos* at lines 9–10 and the *en sômati* at line 11), then it becomes clear that he is distinguishing between two embodied selves. This is why he mentions, first, coming down to discursive reasoning (lines 7–9) and, second, being in body (lines 9–11). Moreover, counting three selves has the advantage of enabling us to analyze the different roles that consciousness plays in the first layer (qualified body) and in the second layer (embodied, discursive reasoning), and thereby capture Plotinus' unique philosophy of mind.

First, he speaks of the "I" as coming to identity with the divine, set above all the rest of the intelligible world [1]; second, he speaks of the "I" as coming down to discursive reasoning [2]; and third, he speaks of the "I" as coming to be in the body [3]. These are the three basic levels on which the self operates. The first is the *noetic* self, which is the subject of intellection (*noêsis*)[12] and contemplation (*theoria*), and is experienced when we pursue the goods of intellect in the intelligible world.[13] The second is the *dianoetic* self, which is the subject of discursive reasoning (*dianoia*, *logismos*) and practical action (*praxis*), and is experienced when we pursue the goods of the soul in the sensible world.[14] The *dianoetic* self corresponds to Plato's "human being within," namely, the rational soul that is in charge of the many-headed beast.[15] The third is the *physical* self, which is the subject of affections (*pathê*), and is experienced when we pursue the goods of the body in the sensible world.[16] The physical self corresponds to Plato's "human being within plus the beast," namely the qualified body that includes the many-headed beast. Though the soul–body composite remains at the level of nature, the person can self-identify with the *physical* self, the *dianoetic* self, or the *noetic* self depending on the way of life he leads.

The criterion for determining which level the self operates on is closely related to the Pythagorean-Platonic theory of transmigration. For instance,

[12] Depending on context, I will translate *noêsis* throughout the book as either intellection or thought.
[13] See I.2.6.2–12, I.4.9.29–30, I.6.6.16–18, IV.7.10.30–37, V.1.10.11–32, V.3.9.3–10, VI.3.3–4, VI.4.14.17–32, VI.7.35.4ff., and VI.9.9.55–60.
[14] See I.1.7.15–24, I.1.10.6–15, IV.4.18.11–21, and V.3.3.
[15] See *Republic* 589a–b and I.1.10.6–15.
[16] See I.1.10.6–15 and IV.4.18.11–21, II.3.9.31–34.

in both places where Plotinus discusses this, it is embedded in a larger discussion regarding the transmigration of souls. The basic idea is that just as the kind of life a person leads can affect his manner of reincarnation in the next life, so too can the dominant pursuits and choices he makes affect the level of the self on which he operates in his current life. Plotinus writes that "the dominant part of it makes a thing appropriate to itself" (III.4.2.3–5) and that "each is the human being according to whom he is active" (VI.7.6.18: trans. mine). In other words, we determine what the self is by the beliefs we commit ourselves to, the value judgments we make, and the actions we perform. Self-identification with a level of reality is an act of will for which we are responsible (*boulêsis*: I.4.4.16–17).[17] The fact that there is a volition involved is crucial, for it is what provides the psychological motivation to identify with a higher level of self and to remain identified against the temptations of the nonrational impulses, which drag us downward to lower levels of selfhood.[18]

In this respect, Plotinus continues a deeply embedded ancient philosophical view of the self as something that evolves through time and undergoes constant improvement toward an ideal end.[19] It is not something given, but something we sculpt and fashion along the way to becoming beautiful and experiencing the beauty of the intelligible realm. This is reflected in the famous passage in which Plotinus exhorts us never to stop working on our own statue (I.6.9.13–14). Just as a craftsman sculpts a statue by carving a figure with a hammer and chisel and smoothing it out with a rasp until it becomes beautiful, so too do we sculpt the self by carving the soul and smoothing it out until we become beautiful as intellects. Sculpting the true self is the ultimate goal of one's embodied actions, since it is only as intellect that we can establish right reason in charge of our lives and derive the premises for our activities from Intellect, thereby achieving freedom (*to eph hêmin*) and self-determination (*autexousios*).

1.2 True Self as Intellect

Plotinus identifies the true self as the *noetic* self, namely, the intellect that is in a state of identity with the hypostasis Intellect. To appreciate why this is so, a brief outline of Plotinus' psychology is needed. I will fill in the details

[17] I am in agreement with Christian Tournau, who writes "l'anthroplogie est en même temps une éthique. Ce que 'nous' sommes n'est pas donné ontologiquement, mais dépend d'une décision éthique" (2009: 334).

[18] I discuss this in further detail in Chapter 6.

[19] See Long (2001a) and Nehamas (1998).

in the core chapters. Embodied human beings are a mixture of body and soul, which Plotinus refers to as a compound (*to sunamphoteron*), composite (*to suntheton*), or common entity (*to koinon*).[20] It functions similar to an Aristotelian form–matter composite, but with a crucial difference: the soul that is present to the composite, which provides it with cognitive capacities, is an image (*eidos*) of a higher soul. The higher soul is our intellect that makes the form in the form–matter composite, but is itself separate from the composite. Also, the form in the form–matter composite is composed by the activity of two souls, a soul-trace and a lower soul. The soul-trace is an image of the lowest capacities of the world soul. The lower soul is an image of one's higher soul. Plotinus is not always clear which capacities the world soul and the lower soul contribute to the body. However, it is in virtue of the former that embodied human beings have the capacities associated with plant life (nourishment, reproduction, growth, and the passive power of perception), and in virtue of the latter that that they have the capacities associated with animal life (pleasure and pain, appetite and passion, sense-perception, imagination, and memory) and a uniquely human life (discursive reasoning, belief, and language).

Embodied human beings lie in between two sources of input. On the one hand, we are capable of receiving impressions "coming down" from Intellect in virtue of the higher soul. On the other hand, we are capable of receiving the impression "coming up" from sense-perception in virtue of the lower soul. Together with the imagination, which is responsible for integrating these two sources of input and producing unitary experiences, discursive reasoning processes, evaluates, and judges these impressions and expresses them through language. For example, he says that "it is we ourselves who reason and we ourselves who make the acts of intelligence in discursive reasoning; for this is what we ourselves are . . . we are this, the principal part of the soul in the middle between two powers, a worse and a better, the worse that of sense-perception, the better that of Intellect" (V.3.3.35–40). One can thus speak of two rational selves, namely, a higher-level one in the intelligible world and a lower-level one present in the sensible world. But it is the higher-level rational self that is the true self, since this is the part of us that remains in Intellect (IV.8.8.1–4) and makes it possible for the lower-level rational self to reason (V.1.10.11–32).

[20] I am well aware that Plotinus ultimately views human beings as compounds of a rational soul and a *logos* (VI.7.4–5), which is different from Aristotle's hylomorphism in a number of key respects. Nevertheless, I begin with the notion of a soul–body compound because Plotinus does characterize human beings in this manner, and it is a more familiar starting point for readers new to Plotinus.

The higher-level rational self enables the lower-level rational self to reason by being in a state of identity with Intellect. The Forms are a holistic system in which each Form is interconnected with all the others, and all is transparent to all. Intellect has infallible knowledge of the eternal truths contained in this system. The certainty of its knowledge is self-evident, because the Forms are internal to it and share one and the same actuality with it. In a well-known passage, Plotinus claims that our intellect has something like Intellect's writing written in us like laws (V.3.4.1–5). What he means by this is that the principles of judgment (*kriseôs arkhai*: V.5.1.31) that Intellect derives from the Forms and by which it grasps the eternal truths are present in our intellect, which in turn provides the *dianoetic* self with the ability to reason discursively (V.1.11.5–9, V.3.2.6–13, and V.3.3.7–13).[21] In other words, Plotinus thinks that is in virtue of Intellect thinking eternal truths, such as "justice is beautiful," that the *dianoetic* self can reason discursively whether or not a particular instance of justice is beautiful. In effect, the laws that are written into our intellects provide us with the principles for the correct application of concepts.

It is easy to imagine a craftsman sculpting a statue from a block of marble, since the statue is an external object and the tools with which the craftsman sculpts are also external objects. However, it is much more difficult to imagine how an embodied human being sculpts the self, since this is an inward affair. The statue is one's own soul, and the tools with which one sculpts are one's own psychic activities. Fortunately, Socrates' comparison between the soul and the sea God, Glaucus, in *Republic* X provides an illustration of how this self-sculpting occurs (611c6–612a8).[22] In this passage, Socrates informs Glaucon that the condition under which they are considering the soul resembles the sea god, whose true nature is difficult to see because the parts of his original body have been broken off, mutilated by waves, and replaced by shells, barnacles, and other such accretions. Socrates suggests that in order to see the soul's true nature, one must consider what it would be like if it were raised from the depths of the sea and scraped free of the rocks and barnacles that have become attached to it. Analogously, the sculpting of the self involves raising oneself from the depths of the sensible world and

[21] It also provides the *dianoetic* self with the basis for the science of dialectic. See I.3.4 and V.5.1.65–70.

[22] Plotinus mentions this passage explicitly in I.1.12 and implicitly in IV.7.14.

separating oneself both from one's body and from the accretions that have resulted from embodiment.

The tools with which we sculpt the self are the virtues; however, the virtuous life does not consist in simply moderating the nonrational desires and bodily affections, as it does in Plato and Aristotle. Rather, it consists in completely detaching oneself from them and experiencing their emotional excitement only when necessary. This is because the nonrational desires originate in the soul-trace that informs the body and the bodily affections belong to the body, which is external to the soul and not a constituent of the true self. The process of detachment involves three degrees of virtue, which are arranged hierarchically. The civic virtues impose limit and measure on our nonrational desires of appetite and passion, and abolish false opinions arising in the compound (I.2.2.14–20); the purificatory virtues separate the soul from the body by stripping away everything alien to it, thereby enabling it to act independently of the nonrational desires and opinions arising in the compound (I.2.2.11–23); and the intellectual virtues are possessed by a soul, which on being purified from its involvement with the body, realizes its nature as an intellect and fully absorbs itself in contemplation of the Forms (I.2.6.7–27; cf. I.6.6.1–21). The practice of virtue thus scrapes away the nonrational desires and opinions originating in the compound and culminates in the ultimate insight that the authentic self is our intellect, in which true virtue is present (I.6.9.8–25, IV.7.10.7–17). As Plotinus says, "So the soul when it is purified (*kathartheisa*) becomes form and formative power, altogether bodiless and intellectual and belonging wholly to the divine" (I.6.6.13–15).

Sculpting the self is a form of purification (*katharsis*), which is a removal of everything foreign (I.2.4.6–7). Purification corresponds to what Pierre Hadot calls a "spiritual exercise."[23] According to Hadot, "ces exercices . . . correspondent à une transformation de la vision du monde et à une metamorphose de la personalité. Le mot 'spirituel' permet bien de faire

[23] Spiritual exercises are ubiquitous throughout the *Enneads.* In fact, one way of viewing the *Enneads* is to see them as a set of spiritual exercises designed to reorient the reader toward the One. One gets the impression from reading the *Enneads* that Porphyry intends for the reader to be fully prepared for a mystical vision of the One by the time he reaches the final treatise. It is likely for this reason that Porphyry abandons the chronological order of the treatises, and instead arranges them thematically beginning with I.1 *What Is the Human Being* and ending with VI.9 *On the Good or the One.* Following Porphyry's ordering, we begin with ethical questions at the level of nature (*Ennead* I), then move upward through physical questions pertaining to the cosmos (*Enneads* II and III), questions pertaining to Soul (*Ennead* IV), Intellect (*Ennead* V), and finally we arrive at the One (*Ennead* VI).

entendre que ces exercices sont l'oeuvre, non seulement de la pensée, mais de tout le psychisme de l'individu et surtout il révèle les vraies dimensions de ces exercices: grace à eux, l'individu s'élève à la vie de l'Espirit objectif, c'est à dire se replace dans la perspective du Tout."[24] Purifications are spiritual exercises because they elevate the lower selves from the sensible world to the higher self in the intelligible world, with the result that the higher self becomes unified with Intellect and it cognizes the whole of reality similar to the mode of Intellect. Let us look at a passage in detail that shows how this is accomplished:

> Consider it by removing, or rather let the one who is removing see himself and he will feel confident that he is immortal, when he beholds himself as one who has come to be in the intelligible and the pure. For he will see an intellect (*nous*), which sees no sensible thing nor any of these mortal things, but which grasps the eternal by the eternal, and all the things in the intelligible world, having become himself an intelligible universe (*kosmon noêton*) and shining, illuminated by the truth from the Good, which makes truth shine upon all the intelligibles. (IV.7.10.30–37)[25]

The context of this passage is a demonstration of the immortality of the soul via its kinship with intelligible being. Similar to Socrates' suggestion regarding the proper way to grasp the true nature of the soul in *Republic* X, Plotinus claims that to grasp the immortality of the soul one must concentrate on the soul in its pure form and not in connection with what has been added, namely, the soul-trace that informs the body, because examining it while embodied has led many to think that the soul is damaged, and therefore neither divine nor immortal. In the first part of this passage (lines 30–32), Plotinus exhorts his interlocutor to remove the accretions that have resulted from embodiment until he has come to be in the intelligible and pure. This corresponds to the process of self-sculpting that I mentioned above in connection with the virtues. In the second part (lines 33–36), Plotinus claims that the interlocutor will recognize himself as a pure intellect that thinks, exists, and has awareness on a higher level. This corresponds to the transformation of one's vision of the world and metamorphosis of personality that Hadot emphasizes in connection with spiritual exercises. Crucial to this demonstration is the role that the

[24] See Hadot (1987: 14).

[25] σκόπει δὴ ἀφελών, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ ἀφελὼν ἑαυτὸν ἰδέτω καὶ πιστεύσει ἀθάνατος εἶναι, ὅταν ἑαυτὸν θεάσηται ἐν τῷ νοητῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ καθαρῷ γεγενημένον. ὄψεται γὰρ νοῦν ὁρῶντα οὐκ αἰσθητόν τι οὐδὲ τῶν θνητῶν τούτων, ἀλλὰ ἀιδίῳ τὸ ἀίδιον κατανοοῦντα, πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, κόσμον καὶ αὐτὸν νοητὸν καὶ φωτεινὸν γεγενημένον, ἀληθείᾳ καταλαμπόμενον τῇ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὅ πᾶσιν ἐπιλάμπει τοῖς νοητοῖς ἀλήθειαν·

experience of the self-sculptor plays. The demonstration proceeds not by rational argumentation alone, but also by the self-sculptor reflecting on himself in the intelligible world and experiencing the truths contained in Intellect.[26]

The first truth the self-sculptor experiences is epistemological. As a pure intellect, he grasps the eternal and all things in the intelligible world. By this Plotinus means that he grasps only eternal truths and the Forms in Intellect. Moreover, since Intellect possesses the Forms internally and the contents of Intellect are all part of a unified, integrated, and interconnected whole, he grasps the Forms and their interrelations directly.[27] An implication of this is that once we have sculpted the true self, our cognition no longer includes discursive reasoning or the concerns and anxieties associated with the pursuit of external objects, but only the contemplation of the truths we possess internally.[28]

The second truth the self-sculptor experiences is metaphysical. As a pure intellect, he is himself the intelligible universe. By this Plotinus means that he not only contemplates the Forms and their interrelations, but he himself becomes the intelligible world.[29] Plotinus combines the Aristotelian view that the intellect and object of thought are identical with the Platonic view that the entire world of forms is an intelligible object, in order to ground his radical view that when the embodied human being has ascended to Intellect and is engaged in contemplation of the Forms, he becomes cognitively identical to the intelligible structure he contemplates. Yet Plotinus' view is even more radical than this, since he characterizes each individual intellect as *an* intelligible universe as opposed to merely being identical to *the* intelligible universe (III.4.3.22–23). By this Plotinus means that he comes to possess the totality of knowledge concerning the Forms and acquires the power to instantiate bodies with formative-principles (*logoi*), and thus take part in the providential ordering of the sensible world.

A third and final truth the self-sculptor experiences, though not mentioned explicitly in this passage, is psychological. As a pure intellect, he is

[26] Chapter nine contains an argument that the intelligible world has being through itself, and is therefore immortal. Chapter eleven contains an argument that since the soul has a kinship with intelligible being, it also has being through itself, and is therefore immortal. Chapter ten contains the experiential link that connects these two arguments together.

[27] See IV.4.2.10–12, V.1.4.11–33, V.9.7.8–20, V.8.4.7–12, V.8.6.1–9, V.8.9.15–25, VI.6.7.1–11, and VI.7.2.29–38. Compare III.7.5.11–12 for a phrase similar to "grasps the eternal by the eternal."

[28] See IV.3.18 and IV.4.2.22–30. Compare VI.5.7 and VI.7.9.30–35.

[29] See III.4.3.18–23, III.4.6.22–23, and VI.5.7. See also Runia (1999: 165–169).

simultaneously aware of his identity with Intellect and of his integration with Being and the Forms. By this Plotinus means that his awareness does not take place in time and involve transitioning temporally from one Form to the next, but rather it takes place in the eternal present and involves the compresence of the contents of Intellect in his act of awareness.[30] An implication of this is that once we have sculpted the true self, our cognition does not include memories of past experiences, or any memories at all, but only the timeless awareness of our intellectual activity.[31] Which is to say, memory of past experiences does not play a role in constituting the true self. Memories do play a constitutive role in determining the *dianoetic* self (IV.3.26.42–47). However, since the intelligible world is timeless and intelligible realities are not subject to change, psychic operations that involve time and change, such as discursive reasoning and memory, are not included in the constitution of the *noetic* self.

In the ancient and modern world alike, philosophers have recognized that memory of past experiences is a vital component of the self and personal identity. In a general sense, memories provide us with a treasure trove of experience that enriches our life and shapes our personality (think of Proust's petites madeleines). In a philosophical sense, memories provide us with a form of mental continuity that provides a basis for identity through time, ownership of our past experiences, and concern for our future experiences. Plotinus does recognize these functions of memory in the life of the embodied individual, noting that an urbane man (*asteios*) would of course have fond memories of his friends, wife, and children (IV.3.32.1–3). However, due to his view that memory plays a role in determining the self, memories of past experiences prevent us from realizing the true self in the life of the embodied individual. Memory does not consist solely in recalling what one has experienced in the past, but also consists in "being disposed according to what [one] has previously experienced or contemplated" (IV.4.4.8–10). We are disposed by what we remember because the act of remembering past experiences concentrates our attention on the sensible world and encourages us to judge that the external objects and circumstances with which our memories are concerned are good, resulting in us turning away from the intelligible world and self-identifying with the soul–body compound.[32]

My exegesis of IV.7.10.30–37 makes it clear that the true self lies in the intelligible world and does not include one's own body. We should

[30] See IV.4.1.12–16, IV.4.2.23–33, and VI.7.31.31–35.
[31] See IV.3.25 14–17 and IV.3.32–4.4.3. [32] See IV.3.32 and IV.4.3–4.

exercise caution in attributing to Plotinus a view according to which the embodied self is the authentic self. This is the view of Raoul Mortley, who writes, "Plotinus does not separate 'us,' or the essence of the self, and 'ours.' He treats it as a whole. In this sense Plotinus corrects the Platonic tradition, as he is wedded to the idea of reality lying within what belongs to us . . . Plotinus salvages the whole person, body and higher self: in his treatment 'ours' is an extension of 'us'" (2013: 69).[33] Mortley arrives at this view through a fascinating analysis of the notion of "having," which involves possessing what is one's own or what is proper to oneself (*to oikeion*). I agree with Mortley that we must not write off the embodied self too quickly, lest we overlook the positive attitude Plotinus displays toward the body and the natural world. Mortley is surely correct that the natural world (including one's own body) is an image of the intelligible world, and therefore possesses beauty and value. However, I disagree that what is primarily *oikeion* is one's own body in the sensible world. This is not to say that the *physical* self is not an integral component of selfhood. Although Plotinus does characterize body as being merely a tool that belongs to us and the soul as related to body as user to a tool (IV.7.1.20–25 and I.1.3.1–17), nonetheless he holds that body is ours and ours to care for providentially (IV.4.18.11–21 and II.3.13–15). So, identifying with the body and pursuing the goods of the body is a genuine level of selfhood. However, the body is not who we really are and, hence, is not our authentic self. We will see in the remainder of this chapter, and in Chapter 5, that what is primarily *oikeion* is one's higher soul or intellect. Seen in this light, Plotinus does not correct the Platonic tradition of identifying the self with the soul or intellect. He develops it further.

1.3 Individuation of Intellect

In the previous sections, I have claimed that we elevate the lower selves into the higher self once we have ascended to the intelligible world and come to identity with the divine (*tô theiô eis tauton gegenêmenos*). It would seem that when the self-sculptor scrapes off the individuating characteristics that constitute the lower selves and comes to identity with the divine, he would lose his individuality and no longer be a unique person. This would be correct if the relation of identity in this context corresponded to the modern notion of identity associated with Leibniz's Law, namely, that if x is identical with y then x and y have all the same properties, and

[33] See also Mortley (2013: 69, 99, 108–109, 127, 132–137, and 139–141).

whatever is true of *x* is true of *y*, and vice versa. However, although it is true that the self-sculptor comes to identity with the divine when he has ascended to the intelligible world, it is not true that our intellect has the same properties as the divine or that everything true of our intellect is true of the divine, or vice versa. The self-sculptor remains an individual.[34] So, what kind of notion of identity is Plotinus operating with?

The term that I am translating as identity (*tauton*) is the contracted form of the adjective *autos*, which, when used with the article or when placed in the attributive position, means "the same." Used with the dative, *autos* has the connotation of "becoming the same with" or "identical to." Plotinus employs *tauton* to express the relation of sameness that holds between two things and between a thing and itself. His usage of the term is influenced by both Plato and Aristotle, but it is Aristotle's usage of the term that is most relevant in this context. Aristotle discusses multiple ways two things can be the same or, relatedly, one.[35] Hence, it does not follow from the fact that two things are the same, or relatedly are one, that they are strictly identical in the modern sense. In *Topics* I.7, Aristotle claims that we use the term "same" (*tautou*) in three different ways, namely, to express sameness (1) in number, (2) in species, or (3) in genus. Sameness in species or in genus are relationships between two different things and are used in contexts where we say that two different things are the same when they fall under the same species or genus, e.g., Socrates and Callias are the same or man and horse are the same (both are animals). However, as Robin Smith notes "'same in number' amounts to 'identical'; thus, if two things are the same in number there is only one thing, not two" (1997: 69). Same in number is used in contexts where we use more than one expression to refer to the same thing. The primary way to do this is when we use expressions that designate the same thing and have the same meaning (as with a definition), e.g., cloak and doublet. However, we can also do this by using expressions that designate the same thing but do not have the same meaning (as with properties or accidents), e.g., Socrates and

[34] The topic of the individuation of intellect is connected to the topics of individuality and of Forms of individuals. For individuality, see Aubry (2008) and Tournau (2009). For Forms of Individuals, see Rist (1963), Blumenthal (1966), Mamo (1969), Rist (1970), Armstrong (1977), Kalligas (1997b), O'Meara (1999), Nikulin (2005), Remes (2007a: ch. 1), Sikkema (2009), Wolfe (2010) and Wilberding (2011a). My concern in this section is limited to showing that the human intellect is individuated at the level of Intellect. I will not discuss my position on Forms of individuals and how they are related to sensible human beings. That is a topic for another occasion.

[35] See Aristotle's discussion of sameness and unity in *Metaphysics* Δ 6 and 9.

the man who is sitting.[36] Regardless, for Aristotle each of these expressions signifies numerical unity (*to hen arithmô*).

In *Physics* III Aristotle expands this logical notion of numerical unity to cover natural-philosophical cases in which a mover and that which is moved, or more generally, an agent and a patient, come to have the same actuality, and become one and the same though their definitions are different (202a12–20). For example, teaching and learning are one and the same insofar as they have the same actualization, but are different insofar as their meanings differ (III. 202b19–22). And in the *De Anima* Aristotle expands this natural-philosophical claim to cover psychological cases in which sense and the sensible object, or intellect and the intelligible object, become one and the same though their being is different.[37] The act of sensing or the act of thinking are one and the same with their object insofar as they have the same actuality with the object, but are different insofar as their natures differ. For example, the definition of a cognitive faculty involves reference to the human being in which it inheres, while a definition of the greenness of an apple involves reference to the apple in which the color inheres. In this expanded sense of sameness, we can say that sense and sensible object, or intellect and intelligible object, are numerically identical insofar as they can be counted as one thing by having the same actuality, without implying that they have the same set of properties or that everything true of one is also true of the other.[38]

Plotinus maintains that intellect and object of thought are identical in this sense of sameness in number (VI.5.7.1–17). The self-sculptor comes to identity with the divine by having one and the same actuality with the Forms, but what it is to be an individual intellect and the Forms differ. The distinction between the two is much more difficult to discern in Plotinus, since it is not merely the act of thinking that becomes identical with the Forms but the thinker. Relatedly, it is not merely the form of an intelligible object that becomes identical to intellect but the internal activity of the Forms. The distinction is subtle, but it is a distinction with a substantial enough difference to individuate intellect from the Forms. I will return to the notion of identity in Chapter 5 when I discuss the relation between Intellect and the Forms, which is closely related to the

[36] This case corresponds to being coincidentally one. See *Metaphysics* Δ 6 1015b16–35.

[37] See *DA* II.12 424a17–27, III.2 425b26–426a19, III.4 429a13–429b9, III.7 431a1–3, and III.8 431b20–432a2.

[38] This interpretation of Aristotle can also be found in Sorabji (1982: 301–302) and (2005: vol. 1: 123–124). However, I use this interpretation to set up the possibility of intentionality in Plotinus, which Sorabji denies. See Chapter 5, Section 5.3.

doctrine that the intelligibles are internal to Intellect. Plotinus also holds that Intellect is identical to the Forms. However, since Plotinus holds that Intellect generates the Forms in its gaze upon the One and that it encompasses the Forms and individual intellects, similar to the way a whole contains its parts or a genus contains its species, the relation of identity between intellect and the Forms is considerably more complex. For now, let us return to the individuation of our intellect in the intelligible world.

Plotinus holds that souls are individuated in the intelligible world prior to descending into bodies. He writes that "nor ought one to think that the multitude of souls came into existence because of bodily magnitude, but souls were both many and one before the bodies" (VI.4.4.37–40). Individual souls and the world soul are one insofar as they are similar in form and equal parts of Soul, and partake in Soul's activity of instantiating *logoi* into matter and organizing the sensible world (IV.3.2.57–59). Individual souls are many insofar as they have unique cognitive experiences and unique moral characters.[39] Each soul has perceptions, desires, or thoughts that are experienced from each's perspective, and each soul has a character that is good or bad depending on the degree of virtue or vice present. It is important to keep in mind that, for Plotinus, souls have characters before descending into bodies and that providence makes use of one's preexisting character in determining the role it plays in the cosmos.[40]

The hypostasis Soul is a whole (*holos*), and the individual souls and the world soul are its parts (*merê*). In his most detailed discussion of the part/whole relation at the level of soul, Plotinus considers four possibilities: that of (1) bodies, (2) qualities, (3) numbers and figures, or (4) theorems (IV.3.2.11–59). Individual souls and the world soul are not parts of Soul on the model of bodies, since bodies are spatially extended and primarily divisible and the whole of which they are parts is a spatially extended magnitude; e.g., strips of oak are parts of a wine barrel (12–16; cf. IV.2.1.12–17). They are not parts of Soul on the model of qualities, since qualities become divisible in bodies and although they are present as a whole in each of the divided parts, each portion of a quality is separate from the other portions and from the whole of which they are parts; e.g., redness in a portion of wine is the redness of the portion not the redness of the entire barrel (16–20; cf. IV.2.1.32–41 and 46–53). They are not parts on the model of numbers and figures either, since numerical or geometrical parts are less than the whole of which they are parts, and the whole

[39] See VI.4.4.37–46, IV.4.5.11–31, IV.9.1.15–23, and IV.9.2.22–29; cf. Porphyry, *Sentences* 37.
[40] See III.2.7 and 17–18.

becomes less by division into parts; e.g., two is a part of ten and ten becomes less when divided into numerical units. And in the case of geometrical figures, the parts can be unlike the whole of which they are parts; e.g., a line is a part of a circle but it is different in form from a circle (20–50). The part/whole relation Plotinus is looking for, therefore, is one in which the whole remains undiminished by differentiation into parts, and the parts are related to one another and the whole.

The remaining option is that souls are parts of Soul on the model of theorems belonging to a science.[41] Plotinus asks,

> Is it not then a part in the way that a scientific theorem is said to be a part of a particular science? The science is in no way diminished, and each division is a sort of expression (*prophora*) and actualization (*energeia*). In such a case, each part potentially contains the whole science, which is thereby nonetheless a whole. To apply this analogy to the soul as a whole and parts: the whole whose parts are of this kind would not be the soul of something, but soul pure and simple; so it would not be the soul of the universe, but that too will be one of the partial souls. Therefore all souls are parts of a single soul and are uniform. (IV.3.2.50–58: trans. Fleet)[42]

Plotinus responds to this question in the affirmative, since he thinks a particular science remains a whole when differentiated into its theorems and each theorem potentially contains the whole. The key to understanding this relation is that theorems are parts of a science by being constituents of the science and by being derived from the science. Let us use Plotinus' example of the geometer to illustrate this (IV.9.5.23–39). The geometer is a person who has mastered the science of geometry and contains scientific knowledge of geometry in his soul. To have mastered the science of geometry is to know all the propositions of geometry, all of which are actual in the soul of the geometer (in the sense of a first actuality) but any one of which can be actualized (in the sense of a second actuality) through the analysis of an individual theorem. When a geometer analyzes a theorem, he shows how the theorem derives from higher principles of the science, and these higher principles are thought

[41] My discussion of the science-theorem analogy is indebted to Emilsson (2007: 202–207). Translations of IV.3.2.49–58 and VI 2. 20.4–23 are taken from Sorabji (2005: vol. 3: 372–374).

[42] ἆρ' οὖν ὅυτω μέρος ὡς θεώρημα τὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης λέγεται τῆς ὅλης ἐπιστήμης, αὐτῆς μὲν μενούσης οὐδὲν ἧττον, τοῦ δὲ μερισμοῦ οἷον προφορᾶς καὶ ἐνεργείας ἑκάστου οὔσης; ἐν δὴ τῷ τοιούτῳ ἕκαστον μὲν δυνάμει ἔχει τὴν ὅλην ἐπιστήμην, ἡ δέ ἐστιν οὐδὲν ἧττον ὅλη. εἰ δὴ οὕτως ἐπὶ ψυχῆς τῆς τε ὅλης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, οὐκ ἄν ἡ ὅλη, ἧς τὰ τοιαῦτα μέρη, ἔσται τινός, ἀλλὰ αὐτὴ ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς· οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλά τις καὶ αὕτη τῶν ἐν μέρει. μέρη ἄρα πᾶσαι μιᾶς ὁμοειδεῖς οὖσαι.

of as being present in the analyzed theorem. Moreover, he shows how the analyzed theorem generates other theorems and propositions of the science. Having scientific knowledge of a theorem thus requires seeing its place in the overall system of which it is a part. What does this have to do with individuation? When a geometer analyzes a theorem, he "brings it forward for use," which constitutes an expression (*prophora*) and actualization (*energeia*) of the theorem. This bringing forward gives the theorem prominence in relation to the other theorems, and thereby individuates it. However, since the higher principles from which the theorem derive are present in it potentially, the theorem is individuated without becoming separate from the whole and without the whole becoming diminished.

Plotinus also employs the science-theorem analogy to explain the part/whole relation between individual intellects and Intellect.[43] However, there is a significant difference between the two employments. In the example of soul, the analogy is between theorems and a particular science. In the example of intellect, the analogy is between particular sciences and Science in general. Due to the significance of this passage for my interpretation, I quote the passage in full.

> Each [science] is the potentiality of all its parts, although it is itself none of them. But each part is itself in actuality and all the other parts in potentiality [lines 5–6]. This is true of sciences in general. The specific sciences lie within the whole in potentiality; they take in what is specific, and are the whole science in potentiality, since the whole, and not just part of the whole, is predicated of them. Yet the science itself must remain pure within itself [lines 6–9]. In just this way Intellect as a whole – the Intellect which is prior to the individual actualized intellects – is spoken of in one sense, and the individual intellects – the intellects that are partial and are brought to completion by the totality of things – in another; the Intellect which lies above all things supplies the individual intellects; it is their potentiality and embraces them within its universality, while they in turn, being partial within themselves, embrace the universal Intellect just as a particular Science embraces Science in general [lines 9–16]. Furthermore, the great Intellect exists *per se*, as do the partial intellects which exist within themselves; and the partial intellects are included within the whole, and the whole within the partial; the partial intellects exist on their own and in another, and universal Intellect exists on its own and in them; all intellects exist within that one, which exists on its own in potentiality and is "all

[43] See V.9.6.8–12, V.9.8.5–8, VI.2.20.4–23, and VI.7.17.25–32.

> things together" in actuality and each thing separately in potentiality; the partial intellects are what they are in actuality, and are the whole in potentiality [lines 16–23]. (VI 2. 20.4–23: trans. Fleet)[44]

In the opening lines of VI.2.20, Plotinus distinguishes between two kinds of intellect and three levels of a science. In the case of intellects, there is the universal Intellect, which is not active about anything in particular, and there are particular intellects, which are active about things in particular. Based on his opening comments in the next chapter (VI.2.21), it appears that Plotinus identifies universal Intellect with the thought that constitutes the five highest kinds – Being, Motion, Rest, Same, and Different – and he identifies particular intellects with the thought that constitutes particular Forms. Moreover, given that he treats the question "how does the Universal Intellect produce the particular intellects?" analogous to the question "how does the world of Forms unfold from the highest kinds?," it is evident that he treats the universal Intellect as more general than, and naturally prior to, the particular intellects. In the case of the sciences, first, there is Science in general, which is not concerned with anything in particular, e.g., scientific knowledge in general; second, there are the specific sciences, which are concerned with particular branches of scientific knowledge, e.g., geometry; third, there are the theorems that belong to a specific science, e.g., the square of a hypotenuse is equal to the square of the two sides of a right triangle. After making this threefold distinction, he then draws an elaborate analogy between specific sciences and Science in general, and universal Intellect and particular intellects.

In lines 5–9 of the quoted passage he discusses the science side of the analogy. Lines 5–6 are concerned with levels two and three. Plotinus claims that a particular science is the potentiality of all its theorems without itself being any one of them, and each theorem is itself in actuality, but is all the others in potentiality. In other words, a scientist

[44] πᾶσα μὲν οὐδὲν τῶν ἐν μέρει δύναμις πάντων, ἕκαστον δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ ἐκεῖνο, καὶ δυνάμει δὲ πάντα, καὶ ἐπι τῆς καθόλου ὡσαύτως· αἱ μὲν ἐν εἴδει, αἳ ἐν τῇ ὅλῃ δυνάμει κεῖνται, αἱ δὴ τὸ ἐν εἴδει λαβοῦσαι, δυνάμει εἰσὶν ἡ ὅλη· κατηγορεῖται γὰρ ἡ πᾶσα, οὐ μόριον τῆς πάσης· αὐτήν γε μὴν δεῖ ἀκέραιον ἐφ' αὑτῆς εἶναι. οὕτω δὴ ἄλλως μὲν νοῦν τὸν ξύμπαντα εἰπεῖν εἶναι, τὸν πρὸ τῶν καθέκαστον ἐνεργείᾳ ὄντων, ἄλλως δὲ νοῦς ἑκάστους, τοὺς μὲν ἐν μέρει ἐκ πάντων πληρωθέντας, τὸν δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι νοῦν χορηγὸν μὲν τοῖς καθέκαστα, δύναμιν δὲ αὐτῶν εἶναι καὶ ἔχειν ἐν τῷ καθόλου ἐκείνους, ἐκείνους τε αὖ ἐν αὑτοῖς ἐν μέρει οὖσιν ἔχειν τὸν καθόλου, ὡς ἡ τις ἐπιστήμη τὴν ἐπιστήμην. καὶ εἶναι καὶ καθ' αὑτὸν τὸν μέγαν νοῦν καὶ ἑκάστους αὖ ἐν αὐτοῖς ὄντας, καὶ ἐμπεριέχεσθαι αὖ τοὺς ἐν μέρει τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ τὸν ὅλον τοῖς ἐν μέρει, ἑκάστους ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐκεῖνον καὶ ἐν ἐκείνοις, καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῳ μὲν πάντας ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὄντι δυνάμει, ἐνεργείᾳ ὄντι τὰ πάντα ἅμα, δυνάμει δὲ ἕκαστον χωρίς, τοὺς δ' αὖ ἐνεργείᾳ μὲν ὅ εἰσι, δυνάμει δὲ τὸ ὅλον.

who has mastered a specific science contains each of the theorems belonging to the science in his soul and is capable of producing each one of them during analysis. When he does produce a theorem he actualizes it, but it remains the other theorems potentially since they "are in attendance, lurking in potentiality" (IV.9.5.14–16: trans. Fleet). By remaining the others potentially, Plotinus does not mean that the actualized theorem can become the other theorems, but rather that the actualized theorem remains an integral part of the science while being actualized. Lines 6–9 are concerned with levels one and two. Plotinus claims that Science in general contains each of the specific sciences the way that specific sciences contain their theorems, but he adds that Science in general is predicated (*katêgoreitai*) of each of the specific sciences. What does he mean by predication here? As Eyjolfur Emilsson notes, Plotinus is not making the point that specific sciences are science or a science, but rather that mastery of a specific science involves mastery of scientific knowledge in general (2007: 205). In other words, in order for a geometer to analyze a theorem, he must possess not only knowledge of geometry, but also knowledge of Science in general. Otherwise the analysis of the theorem is isolated from the overall scientific system of which it is a part, and it would not count as knowledge, but as a "child talking" (IV.9.5.22). So, just as understanding a theorem requires understanding the specific science of which it is a part, so too does understanding a specific science require understanding of Science in general of which it is a part.

In lines 9–23 he discusses the intellect side of the analogy. Plotinus claims that although "all things are together" in the intelligible world insofar as Intellect, Being, and the Forms share the same actuality, nonetheless Universal Intellect and particular intellects are spoken of in different ways (lines 9–16) and exist in different ways (lines 16–23). Similar to Science in general, universal Intellect contains the particular intellects and is the potentiality of them without itself being any one of them in particular. And similar to the particular sciences, particular intellects contain the universal Intellect. However, each contains the other in different ways. Universal intellect contains the particular intellects by supplying them with their essences and producing them, whereas particular intellects contain the universal Intellect by having it predicated of them. To appreciate this, it is helpful to keep in mind that Intellect generates its own content[45] (namely, the world of Forms) through turning toward and seeing the One, and that its content is hierarchically structured, beginning

[45] See V.2.1 10–14, V.1.7.24–27, and VI.7.15.14–20.

with the five highest kinds and followed by subordinate genera and species.[46] Thus, insofar as the world of Forms derives from the five highest kinds, Plotinus regards the universal Intellect as their cause, and insofar as each Form is a differentiation of being within higher genera, the universal Intellect is predicated of them. Furthermore, although each particular intellect is contained in the universal Intellect and remains potentially the whole, each possess its own actuality. Again, by remaining potentially the whole, Plotinus does not mean that particular intellects can become the whole, but rather that they remain integral parts of the whole while possessing their own actuality.

The point of the discussion of the science-theorem analogy is to set up my view that intellects are individuated in the intelligible world similar to the way that theorems or specific sciences are individuated in the soul of the scientist. However, in the case of our intellects there are no geometers around to bring us forward and thereby individuate us from the other intellects. So how are we brought forward? My view is that self-identifying with one's intellect and grasping the contents of Intellect involves having a perspective on the intelligible world, and that having this perspective individuates us from other parts (intellects and the Forms), and from the whole (Intellect).[47]

To support this, I shall borrow the description of a perspective from Tim Crane. According to Crane, minded creatures differ from nonminded creatures by having a point of view on things, or a perspective.[48] Minded creatures are creatures for which the world is a certain way, and their having a perspective consists in them having a world. For example, a human being has a perspective and therefore has a world; a rock lacks a perspective and therefore does not. Rocks and minded creatures are both parts of the world, but only the latter can be said to *have* a world. To put it metaphorically, what the human being has, and the rock lacks, is a place or viewpoint from which it sees the world. This viewpoint is a condition for

[46] See V.1.4.35–45 and VI.2.18–19. See also Emilsson (2007: 160–163) and Lavaud (2014: 378–382).

[47] A.H. Armstrong (1977: 63–64) and Paul Kalligas (1997b: 223–226) have both argued that intellects grasp the intelligible world from a particular point of view, which represents the intelligible world under a certain aspect and differentiates it from other intellects and Forms. It should be noted that Armstrong and Kalligas agree that there are Forms of Individuals and that these Form-Intellects (Armstrong) or soul-forms (Kalligas) grasp the intelligible world from a point of view. However, they disagree on the relation between the individual Form and the higher soul. Armstrong argues that the individual Form is a transcendent principle on which the higher soul depends (57–58), whereas Kalligas argues that the individual Form is the higher soul (214–217). I am in agreement with Kalligas on this point.

[48] See Crane (2001: 4).

being in a state of mind. Two additional features of perspectives that Crane lists are (1) that perspectives are *of things* and (2) that perspectives present things *under a certain aspect*. The first feature highlights the idea that states of mind have intentionality or are directed toward objects, and the second feature highlights the idea that states of mind present their objects in a certain way. Crane labels the first "directedness" and the second "aspectual shape." Thus, a minded creature is a creature whose mental states have directedness (they are directed toward objects) and aspectual shape (they present those objects under a certain aspect).

Although the term "minded creature" is not applicable in the context of intellect, since it is the subject of intellection or thought (*noêsis*) and is experienced when we pursue the goods of intellect in the intelligible world, the attribution of a perspective to intellect and the characterization of perspectives in terms of directedness and aspectual shape is applicable. Directedness is the idea that in states of mind such as thinking (*noein*) there is something the mind is directed at, namely, the object of thought (*noêma*). Mental states that are directed toward objects are intentional states, and the objects toward which the states are directed are intentional objects. The intentional object is what the state is *of* or *about*. When operating at the levels of the *physical* and *dianoetic* self the objects are things, persons, or events about which we perceive, imagine, remember, desire, feel emotion, or reason. For example, Socrates could be the intentional object of any of these aforementioned states. Similarly, when operating at the level of the *noetic* self the objects are the Forms about which we think or contemplate. For example, the Form Human Being could be the intentional object of the aforementioned states.

However, a problem emerges at the level of the *noetic* self due to Plotinus' doctrine of the identity between intellect and the object of thought. If acts of thinking are identical to objects of thought, in what sense are they directed toward objects? If the thought of Human Being is identical to the Form Human Being, how can the thought be directed toward that to which it is already identical? It is important to remember that the relation of identity between intellect and the object of thought is the Aristotelian notion, not the modern notion based on Leibniz's Law. Once it is recalled that intellect and object of thought are identical in the restricted sense of sameness in number, i.e., having the same actuality without having the same set of properties, or without it being the case that everything true of one is also true of the other, then it becomes clear that acts of thinking can be directed toward the Forms. Although intellect is identical to the objects of thought when the "we" ascends to the intelligible

world and self-identifies with one's intellect, there is a sufficient degree of otherness between the thinker and the object of thought for the one to be directed toward the other.[49] As Plotinus writes, "[o]ne must then know and understand that all thinking comes from something and is of something" (VI.7.40.6).[50] What about aspectual shape?

We have seen above that the self-sculptor who comes to identity with Intellect comes to think the eternal truths and the Forms directly, and becomes simultaneously aware of this identity and direct form of cognition. The passage I introduced above (IV.7.10.30–37) suggests that the self-sculptor becomes fully integrated into the intelligible world and thinks the intelligibles in the mode of Intellect. However, this is misleading. Despite coming to identity with the divine and realizing that one is an intelligible universe, we are only partially integrated into the intelligible world, and this partial integration narrows our mode of cognition. Due to this narrowing, our intellect cognizes the intelligible world from a point of view and we represent it under a certain aspect. Having this point of view on the intelligible world individuates our intellect from other intellects similar to the way a theorem that has been brought forward for analysis is individuated from other theorems.

Plotinus underscores the difference between our intellect's grasp of the intelligible world from Intellect's grasp in *Ennead* IV.4.1. In this chapter, Plotinus claims that the higher soul lacks memory and discursivity in the intelligible world due to the absence of time, and he explores implications of this for the higher soul's contemplation of the intelligibles. He begins by highlighting a similarity between the higher soul and Intellect:

> What then? Will there not be a division from above into kinds, or [an ascent] from below to the universal and what is above? Let it be granted that it does not happen in Intellect since it is all together in actuality (*energeia homou*), but why will it not happen in soul when it is there? But what prevents even this soul from coming to have immediate intuition of things all at once (*epibolên athroan athroôn*)? Well, would that be intuition of something all together (*hôs tinos homou*)? No,[51] in the way that all intellections of many things are all together (*ê hôs pollôn homou pasas noêseis*). Since

[49] See IV.3.5.6–9, VI.2.8.34–50, VI.4.4.24–27, VI.9.8.30–34, VI.7.39.5–10, V.1.7.23–27, and II.4.4.2–6.

[50] On the topic of intentionality in Intellect, see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.

[51] Dillon and Blumenthal regard line 21 as an affirmative response to the questions posed in line 19–20 and translate the eta as a "yes." However, I regard this as a negative response and translate the eta as a "no." Armstrong (1984: vol. IV: 139), Fleet (Sorabji 2005, vol. III: 374), Brisson (2005: vol. IV: 116), and Harder, Beutler, and Theiler (1962, vol. IIa: 245) translate the line similarly to my own.

> the object of contemplation is varied, its intellection of it too is varied and complex, and the acts of intellection are multiple, like many perceptions of a face with the eyes, the nose and the other features being seen at the same time. (IV.4.1.16–25)[52]

Plotinus begins this passage by denying that Intellect employs the method of division to distinguish the Forms. Due to the identity between Intellect and the intelligibles, the contents of Intellect are fully actualized, and it is all together in actuality (V.3.5). Intellect grasps the entirety of its contents without any process of reasoning that takes time to complete, or inference that involves isolating one or more of its contents from the whole. Consequently, it is an immediate intuition of things all at once (*epibolên athroan athroôn*).[53] Elsewhere, Plotinus employs the term *epibolê athroa* to describe the cognitive state that Intellect, or our intellect, is in when it gazes at the One (III.8.9.21–22 and VI.7.35.19–23). It is a hypernoetic state that involves an immediate grasp of that which transcends the intelligible world. However, in IV.4.1 he uses it to describe contemplation of the intelligible world and to contrast it with discursive reasoning. Although Intellect is all together in actuality (*energeia homou*), nonetheless the immediate intuition it has of its contents is not of some one thing that is all-together, but rather of some many things that are all-together. Plotinus poses the clarificatory question concerning our intellect's grasp – "well, would that be intuition of something all together (*homou*)?" – in order to ensure that contemplation of the Forms is not to be misunderstood with the hypernoetic gaze upon the One. Since the Forms have logical parts and logical relations with one another, and are therefore varied (*poikilos*), contemplation of the Forms is similarly varied and multiform. Thus, contemplation is of something complex with internal variation, but which is nonetheless all-together.

To make sense of this, we need to reflect on the analogy between perception of a face and contemplation of the intelligible world. Plotinus holds that a face is a complex object due to having multiple features, e.g., eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, and that the visual perception of a face involves multiple perceptions of these features, e.g., the perception of the

[52] τί οὖν; οὐκ ἔσται διαίρεσις ἄνωθεν εἰς εἴδη, ἢ κάτωθεν ἐπὶ τὸ καθόλου καὶ τὸ ἄνω; τῷ μὲν γὰρ νῷ μὴ ἔστω ἐνεργείᾳ ὁμοῦ ὄντι, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ ἐκεῖ οὔσῃ διὰ τί οὐκ ἔσται; τί οὖν κωλύει καὶ ταύτην τήν ἐπιβολὴν ἀθρόαν ἀθρόων γίγνεσθαι; ἆρ' οὖν ὡς τινος ὁμοῦ; ἢ ὡς πολλῶν ὁμοῦ πάσας νοήσεις. τοῦ γαρ θεάματος ὄντος ποικίλου ποικίλην καὶ πολλὴν τὴν νόησιν ἅμα γίγνεσθαι καὶ πολλὰς τὰς νοήσεις, οἷον αἰσθήσεις πολλὰς προσώπου ὀφθαλμῶν ἅμα ὁρωμένων καὶ ῥινὸς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων.

[53] John Rist shows that the term *epibolê* is of Epicurean origin and refers to the immediate, comprehensive, and reflexive grasp of sense-impressions. Moreover, he holds that Plotinus uses this term to refer to "knowing" the One and to intellection of the intelligibles. See Rist (1967: 49–52).

eyes, nose, mouth, and ears. However, the phenomenology of visual perception suggests that seeing a face presents itself not as multiple different perceptions, but rather as one and the same perception of a complex object: "for there is not one perception of the nose and another of the eyes, but one and the same perception of all together" (IV.7.6.8–9). Alexander of Aphrodisias held that the unity of perception is made possible by there being an incorporeal power located in the ultimate sense-organ, whose job it is to recognize and discriminate differences between the proper objects of the senses (*DA*, 62.18–20). This power is the common sense (*koinê aisthêsis*), which functions as a center through which all the proper objects of the senses converge and which produces a unitary experience. Similarly, Plotinus holds that there must be a center through which different perceptions converge to produce a unitary experience. However, he identifies this center with the entire sensitive soul (*aisthêtikê psukhê*), which he argues is present as a whole in all the parts of body (VI.7.6–7, IV.4.19). By being whole or self-same in all the parts of the body, the sensitive soul experiences multiple perceptions belonging to the same power as unified (e.g., numerous visual perceptions of a face) or multiple perceptions belonging to different powers as unified (e.g., numerous visual and tactile perceptions of a face). Moreover, visual perception grasps a face immediately without having to engage in inferential reasoning by proceeding stepwise from premises to conclusion (IV.5.4.36–44). Thus, although we have as many visual perceptions as there are facial features, we nonetheless have an immediate and unified visual experience of a face.

The visual perception of a face is introduced as a model for contemplation of the intelligibles because the intelligible world is complex; contemplation of the intelligibles is multiform; the phenomenology of contemplation presents itself not as multiple acts of thought but as one and the same act of a complex object; and contemplation is immediate. Let us use the Form Human Being as an example, which has for its logical parts living being (*zôon*) and rationality (*logikon*).[54] The self-sculptor who contemplates this Form would have two acts of thought corresponding to each of its parts. Moreover, since the contemplation of this Form involves the recognition that it is nested in a logical hierarchy, he would be drawn toward Forms that are prior or subsequent to it in order and, consequently, would perform additional acts of intelligence corresponding to these Forms and their logical parts. Thus, contemplation of Human Being is a complex act of a complex object, but is nonetheless of something all-together.

[54] See VI.9.2.19 and VI.7.10.15–16.

After highlighting this similarity between Intellect and our intellect, Plotinus addresses a unique feature of our contemplation of the Forms. Whereas Intellect grasps the Forms all-at-once (*athroa*) and all-together (*homou*), our intellect grasps the Forms analogously but in its own manner:

> But what happens when it divides and unfolds (*diairê kai anaptussê*) some one [intelligible]? It is already divided in Intellect. This sort of thing is more like a focusing of attention (*enapereisis*). The before and after in Forms does not consist in time, and it [soul] will not produce its intellection of the before and after in time either. But there is before and after in arrangement (*taxis*), just as in a plant there is an arrangement beginning from the roots up until what is above, which for the person who looks at it does not have the before and after in any other way than arrangement, as he looks at the whole simultaneously. (IV.4.1.25–31)[55]

The mention of soul dividing and unfolding (*diairê kai anaptussê*) might suggest that Plotinus is concerned with the descended soul, and therefore discursive thinking. For Plotinus employs the verb "to divide" (*diareô*) in the context of dialectic, which discursive reasoning carries out and involves the method of collection and division (I.3.4). And he employs the term "to unfold" (*anaptussô*) in the context of remembering thoughts, which involves *logoi* unfolding the content of thoughts into the imagination and rendering thoughts available for recall and discursive processing (IV.3.30). This has led some commentators to suppose that the subject of dividing and unfolding is discursive thinking.[56] However, it should be pointed out that the entire chapter is concerned with the higher soul, and it continues a discussion begun in the preceding treatise concerning memory of the soul after it has departed from the body.[57] Moreover, Plotinus treats subordinate Forms as differentiations within overarching

[55] ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν ἕν τι διαρῇ καὶ ἀναπτύσσῃ; ἢ ἐν τῷ νῷ διῄρηται· καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον οἷον ἐναπέρεισις μᾶλλον. τὸ δὲ πρότερον καὶ τὸ ὕστερον ἐν τοῖς εἴδεσιν οὐ χρόνῳ ὄν οὐδὲ τὴν νόησιν τοῦ προτέρου καὶ ὑστέρου χρόνῳ ποιήσει· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τάξει, οἱονεὶ φυτοῦ ἡ τάξις ἐκ ῥιζῶν ἀρξαμένη ἕως εἰς τὸ ἄνω τῷ θεωμένῳ οὐκ ἔχει ἄλλως ἢ τάξει τὸ πρότερον καὶ τὸ ὕστερον ἅμα τὸ πᾶν θεωμένῳ.

[56] Eyjólfur Emilsson claims that there is a kind of discursive reasoning that belongs to Soul (and to the world-soul and human soul when operating at the level of Soul) that involves temporal succession, but not inference, searching, and deliberation. He likens the successive and partial activation of the contents of Intellect to the *enapereisis*. See Emilsson (2007: 183). Caluori makes a similar distinction between discursive reasoning and discursive thinking, but he does not comment on the *enapereisis*. See Caluori (2015: 50–61). Pauliina Remes claims that the subject of dividing and unfolding is discursive thought and that it is discursive thought that involves the *enapereisis*. See Remes (2007a: 142). However, I am in agreement with King (2009: 194–200) and Dillon and Blumenthal (2015: 321–327) that the intellect remains the subject of this treatise throughout.

[57] In fact, as commentators have noted, it is Porphyry who divides IV.3.39 and IV.4.1 into two separate chapters belonging to two different treatises.

Forms and he uses the language of dividing and unfolding (or their synonyms) to refer to the procession of subordinate Forms from higher Forms within Intellect.[58] So we can be confident that this passage is still concerned with the undescended soul, and therefore intellect. But what does he mean by divide and unfold? Why does our intellect do this in the intelligible world? How could it do this if there is no "discursivity or passing from one thing to another" (IV.4.1.15–16)?[59]

Dividing and unfolding refers to the activity of distinguishing one intellection from another in the contemplation of an intelligible, similar to how we distinguish the perception of a person's light-bearing eyes from the perception of their other facial features, even though the experience of a face is of the features all-together (VI.7.22.24–36). When this occurs, we focus our attention on the perception of the eyes, and the perception of the other features fades to the periphery of our visual field. This is the phenomenon Plotinus is addressing when he asks, "but what happens when it divides and unfolds some one [intelligible]?" The self-sculptor comes to grasp the intelligible world all-at-once and all-together, but, similar to the perception of a face, he cannot help concentrating his attention on a particular Form, or grouping of Forms. This is because when he looks at the intelligible world he experiences it in succession, transitioning from one Form, or groupings of Forms, to another (IV.4.1.31–33). When this occurs, he isolates the Form, or grouping of Forms, from the whole and the contemplation of the other Forms fades to the periphery of his intellectual field. But since the intelligible world is timeless and all-together in actuality, the intellect does not discursively divide and unfold, but rather it focuses its attention (*enapereisis*) on the Form in its place in the logical hierarchy. This narrowing of focus on an individual Form, or groupings of Forms, is the point of view or perspective from which we contemplate the intelligible world. The higher soul is like a citizen of a living city or an individual fire of a universal fire:

> For there, in Intellect, there is one thing – Intellect including everything else by its power like a great living creature; and there are too the beings that Intellect included by its power, each one existing in actuality. It is just as if a living city included other living beings; the life of the city would be more

[58] See III.8.8.34–38, V.3.8.52, and VI.2.19.4–5. See also Emilsson (2007: 161–163) and Lavaud (2014: 378–382).

[59] It is important to point out that although intellection does not involve *diexodos* or *metabasis* due to the absence of time, it does involve *kinêsis*, since it is a self-directed activity (VI.2.6–8).

> complete and powerful, but nothing would stop the other lives from sharing the same nature. Or it is as if both a great fire and small fires stemmed from a universal fire. (IV.8.3.13–20: trans. Fleet)[60]

Citizens share the same nature (or internal activity) with the living city, but they live in different locations and perform different tasks. Similarly, small fires share the same nature (or internal activity) with universal fire, but they cover different areas and burn with differing degrees of intensity. Thus, both individual citizens and individual fires activate their powers in particular regions in the whole of which they are a part (cf. VI.4.16.30–35). Although spatiality does not exist in the intelligible world, analogies such as these suggest that narrowing one's focus on a Form, or grouping of Forms, is similar to being active in a particular region of the intelligible world.

To illustrate the meaning of ordered succession, Plotinus offers another analogy. This time, the observation of a plant.[61] Just as a person who observes a mature plant recognizes that its growth begins from the roots and extends to the uppermost parts, so too does an intellect who contemplates the intelligible world recognize that the Forms process from the highest kinds and are nested in a logical hierarchy. In the case of the plant, the observer recognizes that the sprouting of the seed is "before" the blooming of the flower; in the case of the intelligible world, the contemplator recognizes that Animal is "before" Human Being. However, in both cases the before and after is not in time, but in arrangement, and is grasped simultaneously with the whole. What this example suggests is that the contents of Intellect are ordered logically and are ordered in a way that parallels temporal succession without being temporal. Given the identity between intellect and the intelligibles, our acts of thought are similarly ordered without being temporal.

Let me drive this point home by drawing a comparison between a painting and the self-sculptor. A painting represents a scene from a particular time and place, and thereby includes some features of a scene but excludes others; e.g., Edward Hopper's *Excursion into Philosophy* depicts only the backside of the female and obscures her identity. Thus, a painting represents a scene under a certain aspect. Similarly, the

[60] καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ νῷ τὸ μὲν νοῦς περιέχων δυνάμει τἆλλα οἷον ζῷον μέγα, τὰ δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ ἕκαστον, ἃ δυνάμει περιεῖχε θάτερον· οἷον εἰ πόλις ἔμψυχος ἦν περιεκτικὴ ἐμψύχων ἄλλων, τελειοτέρα μὲν ⟨ἡ⟩ πόλεως καὶ δυνατωτέρα, οὐδὲν μὴν ἐκώλυε τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως εἶναι καὶ τὰς ἄλλας. ἢ ὡς ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς πυρὸς τὸ μὲν μέγα, τὸ δὲ μικρὰ πυρὰ εἴη·

[61] Commentators have noted that he is likely drawing on Aristotle's discussion of prior in *taxis*. See *Metaphysics* Δ 11, 1018b26–29.

self-sculptor contemplates the intelligible world from a particular point of view and thereby includes some features of the world (e.g., those related to Human Being) and excludes others (e.g., those unrelated to Human Being). Thus, the self-sculptor represents the intelligible world under a certain aspect. Having aspectual shape is what accounts for the fact that the painting represents its scene or the thinker presents its intentional object partially. Self-identifying with our intellect and representing the world of Forms under a certain aspect is analogous to a geometer bringing forward a theorem for analysis. Both the intellect and the theorem are individuated, but in each case what is excluded remains lurking in potentiality.

The comparison I am making between intellect contemplating the intelligible world under a certain aspect and a geometer bringing forward a theorem for analysis may appear to be a stretch. However, I believe this comparison can be strengthened by reflecting on the concept of power (*dunamis*). For both intellects and bodies of knowledge are individuated by their respective powers. In II.5 *On What Exists Potentially*, Plotinus distinguishes between power (*dunamis*) and potential being (*to dunamei einai*). Power is a capacity to act through one's own agency, whereas potential being is a capacity to become something through the agency of something else.[62] Correspondingly, he distinguishes between actualizing a potentiality and activating a power. The former involves a material substrate acquiring a form, the passage of time, and the imposition of form through the efficacy of a craftsman (in the case of artifacts) or the intelligible realities (in the case of natural kinds). The latter involves the capacity belonging to an intelligible reality to make or do something through itself, which is ultimately grounded in the creative power of the One. The higher soul is characterized in terms of power (II.5.3).

Since Intellect is timeless and its contents are fully actualized, there is no room for potential being in the intelligible world. However, there is room for power. Plotinus states explicitly that individual intellects have unique powers and that their activities are activations of powers contained in Intellect (IV.8.3.7–22, V.9.6.4–9). But what does possession of this power dispose the higher soul to do? The higher soul's power consists in contemplating the intelligible realities and contributing to the providential ordering through caring for a body. However, Plotinus clearly denies that intellects can be individuated from one another in the intelligible world by the bodies they inform in the sensible world (IV.3.5.1–15). After all, the lower soul is a power the higher soul sends into the sensible world to care

[62] Cf. II.5.1.28–35, II.5.2.27–36, and VI.1.8.10–14.

for a body, and is itself a product of the higher soul's contemplation. So, it must be the act of contemplating that individuates intellects from one another. Thus, we can regard the focusing of our attention on a particular Form, or grouping of Forms, as the activation of a power that our intellect possesses to think the Forms in the intelligible world. Moreover, just as specific sciences are individuated from one another by their powers and individual theorems by their clarity in the soul of the scientist, so too are intellects individuated from one another by their powers in Intellect, and the brilliance and clarity of their thoughts by their proximity to the highest kinds (VI.3.17.25–32, V.9.6.5–9, VI.7.9.15–20).[63]

Recently, Damian Caluori (2015: 78–86) has argued that intellects are individuated from one another in the intelligible world by focusing on different aspects of the world of Forms. At first glance, the view I have argued for looks similar to his. After all, we both rely on focusing to individuate intellects. However, the intellects about which he writes are Forms, and from what I can tell he is agnostic about the intellects of individual souls. He writes, "Note that an individual intellect is not necessarily an intellect of an individual (an intellect of an individual being, for example, the intellect of Socrates). While the existence of individual intellects is generally accepted, the existence of intellects of individuals is

[63] In a paper that has sparked debate, A.C. Lloyd (1969–1970) has argued that Intellect's thinking is nonpropositional. Propositions are abstract entities that sentences express in that-clauses, e.g., *that justice is beautiful*. By "nonpropositional thinking," Lloyd means grasping a simple object of thought, without any transition between concepts of the sort that are found in the subject and predicate positions of a sentence, without involving a distinction between thinker and object of thought, and without being accompanied by consciousness (or at least the ordinary consciousness that accompanies discursive reasoning, which Lloyd characterizes as consciousness of self or subject). My argument that Intellect's thought is a conscious, complex act of a complex object that involves a distinction between the thinker and object of thought places me in disagreement with Lloyd. Also, my argument that our intellect thinks the Forms analogously but in its own manner, which involves the nontemporal transition between a Form, or groupings of Forms, to another Form, or grouping of Forms, in ordered succession, places me in further disagreement with Lloyd. In his defense of his position against Sorabji (1982), Lloyd attempts to clarify what he means by nonpropositional thinking being unaccompanied by consciousness (Lloyd: 1986). However, the passages he cites as evidence (VI.5.7.14–15 and VI.5.12) and the exegesis he provides do not do justice to the abundant evidence that consciousness in the second hypostasis involves an intellect, which is individuated and which does have awareness of its thinking and of its integration into the world of Forms. For additional evidence beyond this chapter, see my account in Chapter 5, Section 5.4. Furthermore, I agree with Sorabji's criticism of Lloyd on the issue of simplicity. However, I do not agree with Sorabji's view that because Intellect's thought is complex it is thereby propositional. In my view, Emilsson (2007: 185–191) shows convincingly that complexity does not entail propositionality. I agree with Emilsson (2007: 185–191) and Caluori (2015: 44–51) that passages, such as V.8.6 and V.5.3, contain a denial that Intellect thinks propositionally. Ultimately, I do agree with Lloyd that Intellect thinks nonpropositionally, but not for the reasons Lloyd gives. I find no evidence that suggests the world of Forms consists of propositions or states of affairs. This seems to me to be a modern notion.

disputed ... For our purposes only individual intellects (but not in particular intellects of individuals) need to be considered" (2015: 69, n. 1). On Caluori's view, the higher soul is a soul at the level of Soul and its activity consists in timeless discursive thinking about the world of Forms (2015: 50). On my view, the higher soul is an intellect at the level of Intellect and its activity consists in timeless *noêsis* or *theoria* about the world of Forms. If my analysis of IV.7.10 and IV.4.1 is correct, the self-sculptor undergoes a shift in the structure of his thinking when he recovers his true self and nondiscursively contemplates the world of Forms from a point of view.

1.4 Subjectivity

I have argued in this chapter that reflection on one's own experience plays a critical role in discoveries made about one's true self. I have shown in my exegesis of IV.8.1.1–11 and IV.7.10.30–37 that reflection on one's own experience descending to the sensible world and ascending to the intelligible world is first-personal, takes place in an inner psychological space, and involves a phenomenology. Moreover, I have shown in my exegesis of IV.4.1.18–27 that intellects have a perspective on the intelligible world, which causes them to represent the intelligible world under a certain aspect and individuate them from one another. The guiding thread behind these three passages is subjectivity. To reflect on one's own experience presupposes a type of inwardness that is accessible only from the point of view of the person undergoing the experience. Similarly, to represent the intelligible world under a certain aspect presupposes a perspective that is accessible only from the point of view of the person contemplating. A lively debate has emerged in recent years regarding whether or not there is a notion of subjectivity tied to a first-person perspective in ancient philosophy.[64] My interpretation of Plotinus places me in the camp of those who think there is such a notion, but, at the same time, I hope to show that one can attribute a notion of subjectivity to Plotinus without attributing a post-Cartesian theory of consciousness to him. So, what conception of subjectivity am I attributing to Plotinus?

To answer this, let us distinguish – in true Plotinian spirit! – between three levels of subjectivity. On the first level, subjectivity refers to a subject. To have subjectivity in this sense is to be the kind of being to whom psychic states can be correctly ascribed. On the second level, subjectivity

[64] See Gill (2006), Everson (1991), Rappe (1996), Fine (2003), and Remes (2007b) and (2008b).

refers to a first-person perspective. To have subjectivity in this sense is to experience the world from the standpoint of one's own beliefs and desires, and to reflect on one's own experience from this standpoint. On the third level, subjectivity refers to self-consciousness. To have subjectivity in this sense is to be a conscious thinking thing that stands in certain relations to its own conscious states and whose relation to one's own conscious states, or the conscious states themselves, plays a foundational role in shaping one's metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical world-views. As representatives of the third level I have in mind a group of modern continental philosophers, from René Descartes to Jean Paul Sartre, who treat one's own subjectivity as authoritative for knowledge of self and world, and a group of contemporary analytic philosophers who characterize the mind in terms of a cluster of notions ultimately derived from the Cartesian tradition such as immediacy, transparency, and authority.

Descartes provided the basis for the third level of subjectivity in his famous *cogito* reasoning of the *Second Meditation.* After concluding that the "I" is a thinking thing, he asks,

> But what then am I? A thing that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions. (AT VII 28)

In the *Principles of Philosophy,* he sheds light on why these attributes belong to the thinking thing:

> By the term "thought," I understand everything which we are aware of as happening within us, insofar as we have awareness of it. Hence thinking is to be identified here not merely with understanding, willing, and imagining, but also with sensory awareness. (AT VIII A 7)

In these passages, Descartes introduces the idea that the essential feature of thought is consciousness and that thoughts are states of consciousness. In the first passage, he states what a thinking thing is and lists the attributes that belong to it, whereas in the second passage he states that being conscious is what makes each of these attributes belong to the thinking thing. Crucial to both passages is the inclusion of imagination and sense-perception as thoughts, on the grounds that we cannot be deceived that we *seem* to imagine or *seem* to perceive (AT VII 29). The Aristotelian tradition regarded these potentialities of soul as requiring the body for their operation and being among those potentialities that discriminated the true from the false. However, the truth claims belonging to sense-perception and imagination depended on correctly representing objects in the external world. What Descartes has done in these passages is to sever the

connection between these potentialities, and their external objects, but retain their claim to truth. In doing so, he introduces the idea of the contents of consciousness as immediately given and about which we have certain knowledge.[65] Moreover, by extracting a truth criterion from the *cogito* reasoning, which enables him to recover certain knowledge of the external world, he introduces the related idea that one's own consciousness can serve as the basis for certain knowledge of the external world.

John Locke's account of personal identity in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* develops further the Cartesian insight that mind is a conscious thinking thing by defining a person in terms of self-consciousness. In the section *Of Identity and Diversity* Locke defines a "person" as

> a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it. (XXVII, §9)

Locke takes for granted the Cartesian thesis that consciousness accompanies all acts of thinking, and claims that it is by means of consciousness that one's sensations and thoughts are presented *to oneself* and that one is able to consider oneself *as the same self* through time. This sets up his account of personal identity that sameness of consciousness ensures personal identity through time. In other words, it is the fact that a person can be conscious of, and have concern for, his past states and can be conscious of, and have expectation for, his future states, that ensures it is the same self that exists in the past, in the present, and in the future. Taken together, this post-Cartesian picture portrays self-consciousness as essential to being a person, and it portrays the first-personal relation to our conscious states as being authoritative for both knowledge of our selves and knowledge of the external world.

Modern philosophers have developed the post-Cartesian notion of self-consciousness in different directions. However, the philosopher who develops this notion to the extreme is Jean-Paul Sartre.[66] In his famous

[65] See Kahn (2005).

[66] In "On Plotinus and the Togetherness of Consciousness," Richard Aquila claims that Plotinus anticipates Sartre's theory of consciousness by holding that consciousness of objects involves self-consciousness and that self-consciousness is included in the same act as consciousness of objects. Although I agree broadly that self-consciousness is included in the consciousness of objects in Plotinus, I prefer to see Plotinus developing a psychological discovery first articulated in the Stoic Hierocles, rather than anticipating what Aquila calls "the Sartrean development of the Cartesian conception" (1992: 9). I think the differences between Plotinus and Sartre outweigh this similarity they share.

defense of existentialism in *Existentialism Is a Humanism* Sartre claims that the *cogito* is the starting-point of his philosophy and he connects it explicitly with subjectivity: "As our point of departure there can be no other truth to take off from than this: *I think, therefore I am*. This is the absolute truth of consciousness confronting itself" (2007: 40).[67] I say "extreme" because Sartre holds that individuals are free to become whatever they choose due to not having an essence that precedes their existence. However, when an individual chooses an action that he thinks is good for himself, he cannot avoid choosing what he thinks should be good for man, since each one of our choices creates an image of man as we think he ought to be. This results in anguish, the feeling of total responsibility for determining mankind.

Important for our purposes, the individual's basis for choosing what is good for himself and for all mankind is his own subjectivity. This is the point of the example Sartre gives of the boy who is forced to decide whether to go to war and avenge his brother's death or to remain home with his mother and help her carry on. No general system of ethics can help him decide a priori, Sartre tells us. Rather, he is obliged to devise a law for himself from his own first-personal feeling, and the value of this feeling is determined in nothing other than the performance of the action itself (2007: 32–33, 46). Consequently, for Sartre the individual formulates standards for action and expresses values for kinds of lives that hold for all mankind from his own self-consciousness.

Christopher Gill has argued that the use of subjectivity as a criterion of selfhood in Classical Greek and Hellenistic-Roman thought is anachronistic, because it involves importing modern European notions of selfhood, which have been shaped by individualist and subjectivist strands of European thought since Descartes.[68] Gill is critical of scholars – Charles H. Kahn, A.A. Long, and Michel Foucault in particular – who argue that in the Hellenistic period there is a heightened focus on self-awareness, which involves a uniquely individual or first-personal viewpoint (Gill 2006: 334). I disagree with his interpretation of Hellenistic theories of selfhood and

[67] Sartre's views on the Cartesian *cogito* are considerably more complex than I am presenting in the concluding remarks to this chapter. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre criticizes the Cartesian *cogito* and claims that it is the prereflective *cogito* that is the point of departure for his philosophy, which is an immediate consciousness that involves consciousness of something, and consciousness of being conscious of something without reflecting on one's consciousness and without positing the Ego as object of consciousness. However, this distinction does not affect my interpretation of his philosophy as taking subjectivity as its starting point since the prereflective *cogito* is still a form of self-consciousness, and it treats the relation one bears to one's own conscious states as authoritative.

[68] See Gill (2006: ch. 6).

with his criticism of the aforementioned scholars. However, I agree with Gill that we must be careful in attributing modern theories of selfhood to ancient philosophers, both to avoid distorting their theories and to avoid preventing them from shedding light on perennial philosophical problems by investigating said problems from a different conceptual framework than our own. Consciousness is one such perennial problem.

Gill dismisses the relevancy of subjectivity to ancient thought of any period, except in a very weak sense of subject (Gill 2006: 370). This is ultimately because he views subjectivity in the loaded sense of self-consciousness, which features prominently in post-Cartesian thought. However, the *Enneads* contain a theory of consciousness that shows one can have a strong sense of subjectivity without the trappings of the modern notion of self-consciousness. There are three main reasons for this, which I will develop throughout the core chapters. First, a significant amount of practical reasoning and practical action occurs without self-consciousness. Second, the regulative ideals for correct reasoning (*orthos logos*) and correct acting (*katorthôsis*) are derived from Intellect. Third, the type of consciousness we possess when we are progressing toward the rationality of Intellect and the self-sufficiency of the One is a unique mode of awareness that does not map onto the modern notion of self-consciousness. The philosophical merit of studying the Plotinian theory of consciousness is that it enables us to analyze the nature of consciousness outside the framework of post-Cartesian thought and to shed light on some contemporary problems of consciousness that stem from this framework.

CHAPTER 2

Consciousness Terms

Contemporary philosophers of mind often cite the fact that ancient Greek lacks a term that corresponds to the English term "consciousness" as evidence that Greek philosophers have little interest in what "we" call consciousness. In an influential article, K.V. Wilkes writes, "In ancient Greek there is nothing corresponding to either 'mind' or 'consciousness'" (1988a: 17) and "there is no term that *even roughly* translates either 'mind' or 'consciousness'" (1988a: 19). Wilkes holds that it is Descartes who introduces the terms "mind" and "consciousness," and the Greeks (especially Aristotle) are innocent of the problems associated with both terms. I fully agree with Wilkes that the modern notion of consciousness is entangled with the Cartesian notion of mind, and it needs to be disentangled in hopes of becoming a coherent explanandum. However, I disagree that the absence of a single Greek term that corresponds to "consciousness" is a sign that the Greeks paid little attention to the phenomenon.

"Consciousness" is not a univocal term that refers to a single, isolated cognitive phenomenon; rather, it is an umbrella term that refers to a group of heterogenous cognitive phenomena.[1] Plotinus employs four terms to refer to cognitive activities that fall under the extension of consciousness: *antilêpsis*, *parakolouthêsis*, *sunaisthêsis*, and *sunesis*. Each of these terms expresses a different mode of consciousness, and in many places, could be directly translated as "consciousness" (contra Wilkes). However, I will resist translating all the terms by "consciousness" and related expressions to avoid blurring distinctions between different types of consciousness that Plotinus intends to keep separate.

In the twentieth century, there have been a few studies of the consciousness terms in Greek, the most important of which is Hans Rudolf Schwyzer's "Bewusst und Unbewusst bei Plotin."[2] However, Schwyzer

[1] In fairness, Wilkes recognizes this in another work (1988b: ch. 6).

[2] In addition to Schwyzer, see Warren (1964), Graeser (1972), and Gurtler (1988). Sorabji (2005: vol. 1) also briefly mentions the consciousness terms.

did not recognize that *antilêpsis* is a consciousness term. This can be seen from his preliminary remark that "[v]ier Wörter sind es vor allem, mit denen auf Griechisch das Bewusstsein bezeichnet werden konnte: σύνεσις, συνείδησις, συναίσθησις und παρακολούθησις" (1960a: 349) and a later remark he makes in connection with IV.5.1.7 that "ἀντίληψις ist hier der Sammelname für geistiges und sinnliches Erfassen," and "[v]ielmehr ist ἀντίληψις ein Obergriff für jede Art Erfassen" (1960a: 367). Schwyzer is correct that *antilêpsis* refers to "a generic form of grasping" in Plotinus' predecessors, but he is mistaken that Plotinus uses it in this restricted sense only. This is not a philological quibble. Failure to recognize that *antilêpsis* is a consciousness term narrows what we take embodied consciousness to be and restricts the role we take it to play in Plotinus' philosophy. For example, the one issue I have with Emilsson's groundbreaking study of Plotinus' theory of sense-perception is his remark, "In fact no previous Greek thinker was as much or as clearly concerned with [consciousness], even though Plotinus does not say much about consciousness in connection with perception as such" (1988: 112). I will show in Chapter 5 that the reason why consciousness does not feature prominently in Emilsson's study is that he does not regard *antilêpsis* as a mode of consciousness.

Due to the influence of Schwyzer's article, I have included a brief study of the history of consciousness terms in this monograph. I have placed this study in the Appendix since I recognize that this may be of interest only to a subset of philosophers who are interested in philology. However, philosophers and philologists alike will need to know how Plotinus understands these terms and how he employs them in the *Enneads* before venturing into the core chapters on consciousness. In what follows, I offer a summary of how Plotinus uses the terms based on my analysis of consciousness in the core chapters and in the Appendix.

Sunaisthêsis is the most ubiquitous type of consciousness in Plotinus' psychology. It is a type of consciousness that occurs in each level of Plotinus' ontology and in each level of the human self. At the level of the *physical* self it refers to the internal awareness of our bodily parts and embodied activities. Together with sympathy (*sumpatheia)* its function at this level is to unify the body into a subject and enable the subject to recognize that its parts and activities belong to it. At the level of the *dianoetic* and *noetic* selves it refers to the internal awareness of our psychic and noetic activities. Its function at these levels is to draw thought and being closer together, and ultimately to integrate our intellect into the world of Forms. The fundamental role of *sunaisthêsis* is to produce unity by constituting the subject as a coherent and structured whole.

Antilêpsis is a type of consciousness that occurs in the *dianoetic* self. The imagination (*to phantastikon*) is one of two principal powers of the *dianoetic* self, which is responsible for the embodied consciousness of sensible and intelligible objects. In contrast to *sunaisthêsis*, *antilêpsis* is indirect and mediated since the *dianoetic* self becomes conscious of sensible and intelligible objects *by means of* images. Images have the properties of being interior to one's soul (internal), lacking spatial extension (intelligible), being directed toward objects (intentional), and announcing their presence to the whole soul (self-intimating). The fundamental role of *antilêpsis* is to bring activities that occur in the soul–body compound, or in parts of the soul, to the attention of the whole soul through grasping these images.

Parakolouthêsis is a type of consciousness that occurs in the *dianoetic* and *noetic* selves, as well as in Intellect. It is a higher-order consciousness, which involves a second-order state directed toward a first-order state. The second-order state "follows along" with the first-order state (the original meaning of *parakoloutheô* is "to follow"). At the level of Intellect, the second-order state (thinking that one is thinking) is included in the first-order state (thinking). This goes for the *noetic* self and Intellect. However, at the level of discursive reasoning the second-order state is not included in the first-order state (whether this be thinking or any other psychic or physical activity). Plotinus acknowledges that embodied human beings can think or act without being conscious that they are thinking or acting, and he even draws attention to the fact that being conscious of our thoughts and actions can be an impediment to thinking and acting.

Parakolouthêsis is the only type of consciousness that Plotinus disparages. Many scholars have come to the mistaken conclusion that Plotinus does not value consciousness *in general* because of what he says about a *specific type* of consciousness. In two oft-quoted passages, he writes:

> One could find many fine activities while we are awake, theoretical and practical, which we engage in during contemplation and action, which are not conscious (*to parakolouthein*) for us. The reader is not necessarily conscious that (*parakolouthein hoti*) he is reading, least of all when he is reading with intensity. Nor is the brave man [conscious that] he is being brave and that he acts according to [the virtue of] bravery insofar as he acts. And there are countless other cases. With the result that conscious states (*tas parakolouthêseis*) run the risk of making dimmer the very activities of which there is consciousness (*hais parakolouthousi*). (I.4.10.21–29)[3]

[3] πολλὰς δ' ἄν τις εὕροι καὶ ἐγρηγορότων καλὰς ἐνεργείας καὶ θεωρίας καὶ πράξεις, ὅτε θεωροῦμεν καὶ ὅτε πράττομεν, τὸ παρακολουθεῖν ἡμᾶς ἀυταῖς οὐκ ἐχούσας. οὐ γὰρ τὸν ἀναγινώσκοντα ἀνάγκη παρακολουθεῖν ὅτι ἀναγινώσκει καὶ τότε μάλιστα, ὅτε μετὰ τοῦ συντόνου ἀναγινώσκοι· οὐδὲ ὁ

> For it could be that, even when one is not conscious that (*mê parakolouthounta hoti*) one has [a memory], one holds it to oneself more forcefully than if one knew. (IV.4.4.10–11)[4]

It is important to recognize that in these two passages Plotinus is speaking of *parakolouthêsis* only. In the first passage, Plotinus claims that second-order consciousness can interfere with our first-order thoughts and activities. In the second passage, he claims that just because our souls are not always conscious of our kinship with the intelligible world, it does not follow that we are any less akin to the divine realities. It could be that we are just as akin while not being conscious, or that consciousness does nothing to increase our kinship. What Plotinus does *not* claim is that all types of consciousness can impede our thoughts and activities, or that all types of consciousness serve no purpose in increasing our kinship with intelligible being.

We must be cautious of E.R. Dodds' influential comments on these passages in his oft-cited paper, "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus." In connection with these passages he writes, "Plotinus is also, with Alexander of Aphrodisias, the first writer to formulate clearly the general idea of self-consciousness (συναίσθησις or παρακολούθησις ἑαυτῷ), the ego's awareness of its own activity. Such awareness is not the same as self-knowledge, and Plotinus doesn't rate it very highly" (1960: 6). What exactly does Plotinus not rate highly here? Self-consciousness? Is there any reason to think that the ego's awareness of its activities is the same thing as what we mean by self-consciousness? Is there any reason to think that *sunaisthêsis* and *parakolouthêsis heautô* are the same type of consciousness?

The answer to these questions will become clear in Chapters 3–5. I will show that it is a mistake to lump together *sunaisthêsis* and *parakolouthêsis heautô* because they are different types of consciousness, which refer to different psychic activities. Both types refer to the consciousness of one's own psychic and physical activities, and both appear to fall under what we call "self-consciousness." However, there are two major differences between *sunaisthêsis* and *parakolouthêsis.* First, *sunaisthêsis* is a unifying consciousness that draws together one's parts and activities, whereas *parakolouthêsis* is a pluralizing consciousness that splits one into a subject and object. Second, *sunaisthêsis* is a consciousness that seeks to restore and maintain contact with objective being, whereas *parakolouthêsis* is a consciousness that is self-enclosed in its own experience. The second difference

ἀνδριζόμενος ὅτι ανδρίζεται καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀνδρίαν ἐνεργεῖ ὅσῳ ἐνεργεῖ· καὶ ἄλλα μυρία· ὥστε τὰς παρακολουθήσεις κινδυνεύειν ἀμυδροτέρας αὐτὰς τὰς ἐνεργείας ἅις παρακολουθοῦσι ποιεῖν . . .

[4] γένοιτο γὰρ ἄν, καὶ μὴ παρακολουθοῦντα ὅτι ἔχει, ἔχειν παρ' αὑτῷ ἰσχυροτέρως ἢ εἰ εἰδείη.

is difficult to notice, since Plotinus does use *parakolouthêsis* to describe the consciousness by which Intellect thinks that it thinks, and Intellect is the realm of objective being. However, a close examination of *parakolouthêsis* in embodied cognition will bring out this contrast.

Sunesis is a type of consciousness that occurs in the *dianoetic* and *noetic* selves, and in Intellect. Plotinus uses this as a consciousness term the least out of the four terms, but it appears to be the most honorific of the terms. He often uses it while discussing love or beauty. He writes, "[primary beauty] is something which we become perceptive of even at first glance; the soul speaks of it as if it were aware (*hôsper suneisa*) of it, recognizes it and welcomes it and, as it were, adapts itself to it" (I.6.2.2–5). The joy that one experiences in the recognition of true beauty stems from the fact that we recognize something akin to our higher nature, namely, the intelligible form of beauty present in beautiful things. Such a recognition is a non-discursive awareness of one's own (*oikeiotêtos alogon sunesin*) (III.5.1.18). Plotinus also uses this term to describe our awareness of the One. He writes, "The perplexity arises especially because our awareness (*sunesis*) of that One is not by way of reasoned knowledge (*epistemê*) or of intellectual perception (*noêsin*), as with other intelligible things, but by way of a presence superior to knowledge" (VI.9.4.1–4). Further down the lines in the same chapter Plotinus likens our awareness of the One to the passionate experience a lover feels in the arms of the beloved (VI.9.4.16–21).

In sum, there is no single notion of consciousness for Plotinus. Consequently, I will resist translating all four terms with the word "consciousness" and propose the following translation scheme instead. I shall translate *antilambanô* as "to apprehend" and *antilêpsis* as "apprehension." I shall translate *parakoloutheô* as "to be conscious" and *parakolouthêsis* as "consciousness." Furthermore, whenever either the verb or noun is accompanied by the reflexive pronoun, I shall translate it as "to be conscious of oneself" or "self-consciousness." I am deliberately reserving the term "consciousness" as a translation of *parakolouthêsis* because I want to highlight the differences between Plotinus' and post-Cartesian theories of consciousness. I shall translate *sunaisthanomai* as "to be aware" and *sunaisthêsis* as "awareness" or "self-awareness." And last, I shall translate *suniêmi* as "to be aware" and *sunesis* as "awareness." It is my hope that this translation scheme will project the fewest modern presuppositions on Plotinus' theory of consciousness, and avoid blurring any distinctions between different types of consciousness that Plotinus intends to keep separate.

CHAPTER 3

First Layer
The Soul-Trace

In Chapter 1, I argued that there are three levels of self and three layers of consciousness. In Chapter 2, I argued that there are four types of consciousness, each of which is expressed by a different consciousness term. In the next three chapters, I provide a philosophical analysis of Plotinus' theory of consciousness, with a view to showing that his layered theory is significantly richer than the dualist theory we have inherited from the post-Cartesian tradition. I begin with the layer of consciousness belonging to the *physical* self, which we share with animals.

Living beings possess a unique type of consciousness in the sensible world that enables them to function as structured and coherent wholes.[1] This type of consciousness is awareness (*sunaisthêsis*), which differs from sense-perception (*aisthêsis*) by being directed toward one's own internal parts and activities,[2] and differs from apprehension (*antilêpsis*) by being immediate.[3] It is an intimate awareness of ourselves in a body that enables us to activate specific bodily parts and organs over others in order to accomplish specific tasks, such as extending our hands in order to grab, rolling on our stomachs in order to crawl, and standing on our feet in order

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[1] "Living being" is a translation of *to zoôn*. It refers to both animals and humans. Plotinus holds that awareness is a kind – in fact, the only kind – of consciousness that humans share with animals. I discuss awareness in animals below.

[2] See V.8.11.32, III.4.4.11, IV.4.24.21–22, and V.3.2.4–5.

[3] By "immediate" I mean taking place without images. Briefly, Plotinus holds that apprehension occurs in the lower soul at the level above the qualified body and involves images that present psychic activities that occur in parts of the soul to the attention of the whole soul and present bodily states to the attention of the soul. For example, see IV.4.17.11–14, IV.8.8.9–12, IV.4.28.36–43, and V.3.2.3–6. For a similar view on *sunaisthêsis*, see Remes (2007a: 92–105). Remes provides a stimulating analysis of *sunaisthêsis*; however, she does not focus on the close relationship between *sunaisthêsis* and *sumpatheia.*

to walk. Plotinus uses the first-personal and reflexive pronoun "we" to refer to both discursive reasoning and the qualified body (*to toionde sôma*). This is the ensouled body that is integrated with living things in the sensible world and is subject to bodily affections.[4] But the qualified body is not who "we" really are. "We" *are* discursive reasoning; the qualified body merely *belongs* to "us."[5] Nonetheless, "we" can sink to this level of selfhood by adopting a way of life that indulges in bodily affections, since the dominant pursuits of our life-activities dictate the level of self at which we live and act.

I will argue that the first layer of consciousness unifies the qualified body and provides it with ownership of its bodily and psychic activities. It accomplishes this by two features stemming from the world soul, *sumpatheia* and *sunaisthêsis*.[6] *Sumpatheia* is an objective feature of a living being, which is responsible for constituting it as a structured and coherent whole. *Sunaisthêsis* is a subjective feature of a living being, which recognizes that the parts and activities that constitute this whole belong to oneself or are one's own. The notion of subjectivity that I will attribute to Plotinus at this level is related to being a subject and having ownership. To have subjectivity in this sense is to be the kind of being to whom psychic states can be correctly ascribed and to whom psychic states belong.[7]

3.1 The Qualified Body

The qualified body is a technical notion, which requires a brief excursus into Plotinus' natural-philosophy. An embodied human being is composed of three phases of soul: a higher soul that remains in the intelligible world, a lower soul that descends into the sensible world and cares for its qualified body, and a soul-trace that animates its body and equips it with certain life-capacities. The animation of the body by the soul-trace is what makes it "qualified" or "this sort" (*toionde*). Why is the third phase of soul needed?[8] Why doesn't the lower soul simply animate the body and provide it with all of its life-capacities? The reason for the third phase is to prepare

[4] See IV.4.20.22–36 and IV.4.28. [5] See I.1.10.6–15, II.3.9.31–32, and IV.4.18.11–21.

[6] Gary Gurtler provides an excellent discussion of how *sumpatheia* produces unity, and how unity provides the basis for perceptual awareness. However, his discussion focuses primarily on the world soul and the unification of the cosmos, whereas my discussion focuses primarily on the individual soul and the unification of the body. My concern is with how the individual soul unifies the body and how the sympathetic relation of its parts provides the basis for cognition and action. See Gurtler (1988: 67–73 and 94–101).

[7] For an excellent discussion of ownership, see Remes (2007b).

[8] For an excellent discussion of this, see Kalligas (2012).

the body for the descent of the lower soul, to place the body in sympathy with the rest of the world, and to enable the lower soul to care for a body without undergoing affection.

The notion of a trace is central to Plotinus' theory of double activity, which I will discuss in Chapter 5. Suffice it to say for now that every being possesses two activities, an internal activity that constitutes its essence and an external activity that transmits features belonging to its essence on a lower level, and in a dimmer form. The external activity is an image (*eidôlon*) or trace (*ikhnos*) of the internal activity. Confusingly, Plotinus attributes the source of the soul-trace in the human body to different souls, e.g., the world soul, the earth soul, the individual soul, and the hypostasis Soul. It can be maddening to figure out which soul he is talking about, and why he attributes the trace to one soul in one context and another soul in another context. However, the theory becomes clearer if we keep in mind the following. The ultimate source of the soul-trace is the hypostasis Soul. Soul thinks about how best to organize the sensible world and this results in an image or trace being projected onto matter. Plotinus refers to this trace as "sensation and the nature in plants (*aisthêsin kai phusin tên en tois phutois*)" or simply "nature (*phusis*)."[9] As a trace it is the external activity of Soul; it is dependent on Soul for its existence and for its properties; and its properties are dimmer copies of those found in Soul.[10] However, since Soul accomplishes the providential ordering of the sensible world with the assistance of divine souls (the world soul, the earth soul, and the souls of the planets and stars) and human souls,[11] he also attributes the soul-trace to one of these souls depending on the kind of body being animated.

The animation of the body provides it with the vegetative power (*to phutikon*), the lowest power of soul that we share with plants and animals. The vegetative power gives the body life, holds the body together, and provides it with the capacities of nourishment (*to threptikon*), growth (*to auxêtikon*), generation (*to gennêtikon*), and the passive power of perception (*pathêtikôs aisthêtikon*).[12] In other words, this power enables humans to digest food, to use food to grow their organic structure, to give birth to

[9] See V.2.1.19–22, III.4.1.1–4, II.2.1.39–40, II.3.18, and IV.4.13.

[10] Plotinus arrives at this notion of a trace by way of an analogy with the emission of light from a luminous source. Compare V.1.7.42–48 and V.3.9.7–18 with his discussion of light in IV.5.6–7.

[11] For an excellent discussion of the divine individual souls, see Caluori (2015: ch. 5).

[12] It is commonplace in secondary literature to note that Plotinus' terminology varies when referring to the lowest capacities of soul. However, I believe it is his settled view that the capacities of nourishment, growth, and generation are species of the vegetative power. See III.6.4.32–41, IV.3.23.36–41, and IV.9.3.24–28.

offspring, and to receive stimuli from the external environment. This set of capacities renders the body suitable (*epitêdeiotês*) to receive higher cognitive powers and ready (*hetoimon*) to receive care from the lower soul.[13] The trace of soul that animates animal and human bodies comes from nature (*phusis*) or the vegetative power (*to phutikon*), belonging to the lowest capacities of the world soul.[14] The trace of soul that animates plant bodies comes from the lowest capacities of the earth soul.[15]

Plotinus does not make explicit when the soul-trace animates the body or when the lower soul descends into the qualified body. However, Plotinus' student, Porphyry, does so in his *To Gaurus on How Embryos Are Ensouled.* According to Porphyry, the lowest power of the parent's souls provides the embryo with the vegetative power and they jointly contribute to the development of the embryo, with the mother's womb contributing to the embryo the way a rootstock does to a scion (*To Gaurus*, 10.1–16.9).[16] Central to Porphyry's view is that the embryo possesses vegetative capacities similar to a plant, and only on exiting the womb at birth does the newborn acquire higher capacities stemming from the descended soul. Plotinus holds a similar view regarding the capacities of the embryo and the descent of the lower soul into the newborn,[17] but he makes the world soul the primary agent of the formation of the embryo, not the soul of the parents.

One possible reconstruction of Plotinus' view is as follows. The qualified body is the embryo in the womb of the mother. At conception, the sperm of the father transmits the *phusis* of the world soul through its seed into the mother's womb and provides it with the vegetative power. The father's sperm is the vehicle, but the agent is the world soul or its lowest power (*to phutikon*). Together the mother and father jointly contribute to the formation of the embryo,[18] with the mother's womb contributing to the embryo the way the soul of the earth contributes to plants.[19] At birth,

[13] See IV.3.12.35–40, VI.4.15.8–17, and VI.7.7.6–15.

[14] See III.8.2.27–35, IV.3.6.14–15, IV.3.12.35–40, IV.9.3.24–28, and VI.7.7.5–17. For an alternative interpretation of the origin of the soul-trace, see Noble (2013).

[15] See IV.4.20, 22, and 27.

[16] For a detailed explanation of this process, see Wilberding (2008b) and (2011a: 10–24).

[17] I am thankful to Luc Brisson for bringing this to my attention at the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies conference in Buenos Aires. See also Brisson (2012: 103–119).

[18] See II.6.1.10–13, IV.3.10.12–13, V.1.5.12–13, 8.4–8, 7.2, 9.6.10–25, and VI.7.5.3–8.

[19] Plotinus' discussion of plants follows the outlines of Plato's *Timaeus* (40b–c, 70e, and 77b–c). He regards earth as an ensouled god, which adorns the heavens and which nurtures living things. Also, he regards plants as living things that partake in the lowest capacities of soul and are created for the protection and nourishment of human beings. However, Plotinus fills in the outline by explaining how earth contributes to the providential ordering by caring for the earth body and by providing the

the lower soul descends into the newborn that the world soul prepares for it according to the providential ordering.[20] Importantly, the same type of soul descends into animal and human bodies, going to whichever type of body the decrees of providence dictate (IV.3.12.35–40). Plotinus follows the school tradition of characterizing the lower soul as descending *into* the body. However, the lower soul is not actually *in* the body. Strictly speaking, the lower soul is a power that the higher soul sends into the sensible world to care *for* a body.[21] Since this power is incorporeal, it cares for the body without descending into the body and without undergoing bodily affection.

While in the womb of the mother the qualified body is similar to a plant and exercises only vegetative capacities, but on the leaving the mother's womb the qualified body becomes the subject of pleasure and pain, feelings and desires (I.1.10.6–15, IV.4.18.11–21). Plotinus arrives at this view by reasoning that whatever experiences the satisfaction of exercising one or more of its vegetative capacities – say, eating – must be capable of feeling pleasure or pain, desiring what produces pleasure and avoids pain, and experiencing emotive states associated with fulfilling bodily desires. Importantly, affections take place in the qualified body, but not the lower soul. Plotinus' discussion of pleasure and pain in IV.4.18–21, and his discussion of anger in IV.4.28, reveals that he distinguishes between, on the one hand, feelings of pleasure, pain, and desire and, on the other hand, the conscious awareness and judgment of these feelings. The former occurs in the qualified body and involves alteration (*alloiôsis*). The latter occur in the lower soul and involve not affection, but actualization (*energeia*). But what makes any of this possible in the first place is the unification of the qualified body, to which I now turn.

3.2 Unification of the Qualified Body

Sympathy is difficult to understand from a modern point of view because it relies on a cluster of ancient ideas that modern science no longer shares, such as the cosmos being ensouled, being ordered rationally, and having

generative soul to plants. Earth possesses a rational soul by means of which it contemplates the Forms and thinks about how best to govern the earth body, but it also possesses lower capacities of soul by means of which it carries out its governance of the earth body, such as the generative soul (*hê gennêtikê*). The earth's generative soul is the cause of life in plants. See III.6.19.17–41, IV.4.22.1–5, and IV.4.27.1–7.

[20] See IV.3.9.1–11, 10.10–13, and 3.13.

[21] See Aubry (2014: 314–316) and Caluori (2015: 144–145).

psychic activities that animals and human beings possess. Plotinus inherits these ideas from Plato and the Stoics, who conceive of the cosmos as a living being and explain cosmic events on the model of individual organisms. This is evident in a passage that echoes *Timaeus* 30c5–d1: "this All is a single living being that encompasses all the living beings within it; it has one soul which extends to all its parts, insofar as each individual thing is a part of it; and each thing in the perceptible All is a part of it, and completely a part of it as regards its body" (IV.4.32.5–8).[22] Plotinus holds that the world soul furnishes all living beings with the capacity to eat, reproduce, grow, and receive external stimuli from the environment.[23] These vegetative capacities render bodies organic, place them into a physical network subject to laws, and provide a suitable structure on which individual souls can supervene.[24] Human beings are fully integrated into this network insofar as the world soul animates their lower nature. However, human beings are also capable of transcending this network insofar as the individual soul supervenes on their organic body and furnishes it with higher forms of cognition, such as discursive reasoning.[25] In the language of the quoted passage, we are parts of the All insofar as the world soul animates our lower nature and structures our qualified bodies.

The Stoics maintain that soul (*pneuma*) and body (*sôma*) are both corporeal and are totally blended with one another.[26] Total blending (*krasis di holôn*) is a species of mixture in which each constituent element thoroughly interpenetrates the others, but each retains its own essential qualities and can be separated out again.[27] Due to its unstable nature as what has threefold extension together with resistance, the body requires a sustaining cause for its structure and coherence.[28] Soul sustains the body by means of the tensile movement of the components of *pneuma*, air and fire. This tensile movement is characterized by simultaneous activity in

[22] Plato writes, "Rather let us lay it down that the universe resembles more closely than anything else that Living Thing of which other living things are parts, both individually and by kinds. For that Living Thing comprehends within itself all intelligible living things, just as our world is made up of us and all the other visible creatures" (*Timaeus,* 30c5–d1).

[23] See IV.7.3.14–35, IV.9.3.24–28, and V.2.1.18–29; cf. IV.3.23.36–42, IV.4.20.22–36, and IV.4.28.

[24] See IV.4.45.28–30, II.9.7.28–33, IV.3.12.32–39, VI.4.15.1–29, and VI.7.7.6–17.

[25] See II.1.5.21–24; cf. I.1.7.14–18 and V.3.3.

[26] References to the Stoics and Epicureans are taken from A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[27] See Alexander, *On Mixture* 216,14–218,6 (*SVF* 2.473; *LS* 48C).

[28] See Galen, *On Incorporeal Qualities* 19.483,13–16 (*SVF* 2.381; *LS* 45F), and Galen, *On Bodily Mass* 7.525, 9–14 (*SVF* 2.439; *LS* 47F).

opposite directions, inward and outward. The expansive character of fire produces quantity and quality outward and the stabilizing character of air produces unity and substance inward.[29] Thus, the Stoics appeal to tensile movement to explain the stability and coherence of ordinary objects and living beings, and they even distinguish different kinds of organic bodies on the basis of their differing degrees of tension.[30]

More importantly for my purposes, the Stoics also appeal to tensile movement to explain how the soul and body share each other's affections. The term they use to describe the shared affection that results from the change in tensile movement is *sumpatheia*.[31] Hierocles, the second-century CE Stoic philosopher, puts this point as follows:

> one must consider that the soul is not enclosed in the body as in a bucket, [5] like liquids surrounded by jars, but is wondrously blended and wholly intermingled, so that not even the least part of the mixture fails to have a share in either of them. For the mixture is most similar to those that occur in the case of red-hot iron. For there, just like here, [10] the juxtaposition is by wholes. Thus, too, what pertains to shared affect (*sumpatheia*) is total for both. For each shares the affects (*sumpathes*) of the other, and neither is the soul heedless of bodily affects, nor is the body completely deaf to the torments of the soul. (*Elements* IV.4–14: trans. Konstan)[32]

The immediate context of this passage is an argument to establish that animals continuously perceive themselves. Hierocles argues that since (1) soul and body are corporeal, (2) soul and body are totally blended with one another, (3) soul is a perceptive faculty, and (4) soul is a cohesive force that extends throughout the entire body and sustains it by means of tensile movement, it follows that animals continuously perceive themselves. On the basis of this, Hierocles develops the view that perception involves self-perception; namely, animals perceive that they are the subject of their own perceptions or represent themselves as the subject of their own experience

[29] See Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man* 70,6–71,4 (*LS* 47J), and Galen, *On Muscular Movement* 4.402,12–403,10 (*SVF* 2.450; *LS* 47K).

[30] See Philo, *Allegories of the Laws* 2.22–3 (*SVF* 2.458; *LS* 47P), and Philo, *God's Immutability* 35–36 (*SVF* 2.458; *LS* 47Q).

[31] See Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man* 78,7–79,2 (*SVF* 2.790; *LS* 45C), and Alexander, *On Mixture* 216,14–218,6 (*SVF* 2.473; *LS* 48C).

[32] προσενθυμητέον ὡς οὐχὶ καθάπερ ἐν ἀγγείῳ τῷ σώματι περιείργεται ἡ ψυχὴ κατὰ τὰ περιισχόμενα ταῖς πιθάκναις ὑγρά, συμπεφύραται δὲ δαιμονίως καὶ συγκέκραται κατὰ πᾶν, ὡς μηδὲ τοὐλάχιστον τοῦ μίγματος μέρος τῆς ὁποτέρου αὐτῶν ἀμοιρεῖν μετοχῆς· προσφερεστάτη γὰρ ἡ κρᾶσις τοῖς ἐπί τοῦ διαπύρου σιδήρου γινομένοις· ἐχεῖ τε γὰρ ὁμοίως κἀνταῦθα δι' ὅλων ἐστίν ἡ παράθεσις. ταύτῃ καὶ τὰ τῆς συμπαθίας ἐστὶν ἀμφοῖν κατακορῆ. θάτερον γὰρ τῷ ἑτέρῳ συμπαθὲς καὶ οὔτε τῶν σωματικῶν παθῶν ἀνήκοος ἡ ψυχὴ οὔτε αὖ τέλεον ἐκκεκώφηται πρὸς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς δεινὰ το σῶμα.

(*Elements* VI.1–9).[33] He offers the quoted passage as support for the second premise. He begins by dismissing the Epicurean view that soul is enclosed in the body as in a bucket,[34] like liquids surrounded by jars, then advances the orthodox Stoic view that soul and body are totally blended like in the case of a red-hot iron.[35] In a red-hot iron, the fire and the iron pervade the whole of one another in the sense that fire thoroughly penetrates the iron and is not simply present at the surface or in any one part. Analogously, in a soul–body composite, the soul and the body pervade the whole of each other in the sense that soul thoroughly penetrates the body and is not merely present at the surface or in any one part. Here the emphasis is on the complete interpenetration of each constituent element and not on the other features of total blending, such as each element retaining its own essential qualities and being able to be separated out again, because Hierocles is setting up the idea of shared affection.[36] His further claim that soul and body share one another's affections is a result of his view that tensile movement consists in a series of pressures and counterpressures, or strikings and counterstrikings, such that every time the soul extends outward and strikes parts of the body, the body strikes it back in return.[37] This produces shared affections.[38]

Plotinus significantly modifies the Stoic notion of sympathy. He agrees with the Stoics that soul unifies the body and provides stability and coherence; however, he disagrees that soul sustains the body by means of the tensile movement of air and fire (or anything physical for that matter) and that sympathy is a shared affection between soul and body. Plotinus does admit that soul shares affections with the body. However, the soul that does this is the soul-trace that is *in* the body not the lower soul that cares *for* the qualified body.[39] The basis for his disagreement is his view that soul is incorporeal and, therefore, neither possesses any spatial properties[40] nor undergoes affection.[41] Interestingly, Plotinus assigns to sympathy the role of unifying the body, but he does so without specifying a mechanism such as tensile movement. This may appear to be a flaw in Plotinus' view, but it makes perfect sense in the context of his "top-down"

[33] For an excellent discussion of this, see A.A. Long (1991) and (1993).
[34] This is the Epicurean view. See Annas (1992: 47 and 147).
[35] See Alexander, *On Mixture* 216,14–218,6 (*SVF* 2.473; *LS* 48C).
[36] I am thankful to Susan Sauvé-Meyer for pointing this out to me in an email.
[37] Hierocles makes this point clear at *Elements* IV.32–53.
[38] Breath, tensile movement, and sympathy function similarly on a cosmic scale since the Stoics hold that the cosmos is a living being modeled on an organism.
[39] See I.2.3.12–15 and I.2.6.23–27. [40] See IV.2.2 and IV.7.6–7. [41] See III.6.1–5.

metaphysics. Insofar as he holds that souls are more unified than bodies due to their place in the hierarchical ordering of reality, that souls organize bodies by delivering formative-principles into matter, and that bodies would not even exist without souls, whatever unity, structure, and coherence bodies possess must come from a higher level.[42]

Plotinus draws on sympathy to explain a wide range of phenomena from sense-perception to magic and prayer,[43] but the phenomenon I want to highlight is the unification of bodily parts. This is a crucial phenomenon because it enables him to explain how the All and individual living beings function as unities despite being composed of a multitude of bodily parts, and how they can have bodily self-awareness. We will see below that the sympathetic relation the All has toward its parts and the sympathetic relation individual living beings have toward their parts provides the basis for awareness. Only entities that are united in sympathy can have awareness of their parts and activities. Let us see how this works.

Plotinus holds that sympathy unites the parts of the All in the same way it unites the parts of living beings. He writes that "this one universe is all bound together in shared experience (*sumpathes*) and is like one living creature, and that which is far is really near, just as, in one of the individual living things, a nail or horn or finger or one of the other limbs which is not contiguous: the intermediate part leaves a gap in the experience and is not affected, but that which is not near is affected" (IV.4.32.14–19).[44] In other words, the cosmos as a whole can share the experience of one of its distant parts (trees, animals, heavenly bodies, etc.) in the same way that a living being can share the experience of one of its distant parts (feet, hands, head, etc.). As strange as it might sound to a modern reader, the All feels what happens in the heavenly bodies in the same way a living being feels what happens in its toes and fingers. Each is sympathetic to itself (*sumpathes heautô*). Similarly, Plotinus holds that awareness unites the parts of the All in the same way it unites the parts of living beings. In other words, the All is aware of its bodily parts and activities just like we are aware of ours. He writes that " we must grant [the All] self-awareness (*sunaisthêsin*), just as we are aware (*sunaisthanometha*) of ourselves, but not sense-perception (*aisthêsin*), which is of something different" (IV.4.24.21–24).[45] Sense-perception

[42] See IV.2.1 and IV.7.3. It should be noted that the world soul is a transcendent organizing principle. The image it projects onto matter, i.e., Nature, is the immanent principle involved in the formation of bodies. See IV.3.4.22–30, IV.3.11.8–13, IV.4.13, II.2.1.39–40, II.3.1.8–25, and III.8.1–5.

[43] See IV.5.1, IV.5.3, IV.5.5.28–31, IV.4.40–41, and IV.9.3.1–9. For the relation between sympathy and sense-perception, see Emilsson (1988: ch. 3) and Gurtler (1988: ch. 3).

[44] Cf. IV.4.35.8–10 and IV.5.8.17–19.

[45] Cf. III.8.4.14–22.

requires a sense organ capable of being affected by an external object different from the organ. Since the All is a whole that contains all living beings within it and nothing exists outside it, it cannot perceive external objects. However, the All can perceive itself or be aware of itself because it is united in sympathy.

Sunaisthêsis and *sumpatheia* are so closely related that Plotinus occasionally uses them in a nearly indistinguishable manner. This occurs patently in a discussion of magic and prayer at IV.4.40–45. In chapters 40–44, Plotinus claims that the efficacy of magic and prayer lies in the natural agreement between like things and natural disagreement between unlike things brought on by the sympathy of the All. For example, magicians can join one soul to another due to the fact that souls are like, love is a force that naturally binds souls together, and spells and charms are naturally suited to attracting souls to one another due to the forces of attraction present in them. Were the magician outside the All, the spells and charms of his magical art would no longer work due to its exclusion from the attraction between parts of the All. In chapter 45, Plotinus draws an analogy between the All and individual living beings and states that each part of the All contributes to the whole according to its nature and disposition in the same way that each part of an individual living being contributes to the whole according to its nature and disposition. Then instead of saying something like "all is sympathetic to all," which is what we would expect Plotinus to say, he says, "and [there is] a kind of awareness of all towards all" (8).[46] Why would Plotinus suddenly mention *sunaisthêsis* in a context where we would expect *sumpatheia*?

In order to answer this question, I must first explain the grammar of the statement and propose a translation. Let us begin by noticing that this statement is a clause without a finite verb and specified subject for *sunaisthêsis* (lines 8–9). Let us then notice that the two finite verbs (*didôsi* at line 7, *dekhetai* at line 8) in the preceding clause also lack a specified subject (lines 7–9). This leaves us with two options for a subject from the main clause of the sentence (lines 1–7). Either it could be the All and individual living beings, respectively, or it could be each part of the All and each part of individual living beings, respectively. The first option would be consistent with Plotinus' psychology, since, as we have seen, he thinks both the All and individual living beings have awareness. However, the context makes it clear that the second option is to be preferred since the subject of the two finite verbs at lines seven and eight, as well as the subject

[46] καὶ οἷον συναίσθησις παντὸς πρὸς πᾶν·

of *sunaisthêsis* at line eight, is *hekaston* from lines two and five. Thus, the subject of *sunaisthêsis* is each part of the All and each part of individual beings, respectively. Armstrong translates the passage as "and all has a kind of common awareness of all." The problem with this translation is that it leaves ambiguous what *pantos* is referring to. Therefore, I propose the translation "and [there is] a kind of awareness of all towards all," with the interpretation that *pantos* refers to each part of the All and each part of the individual living beings, respectively. My interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the immediately following clause returns to "each of the parts" (lines 9–11).

With this translation and interpretation in mind, we are now in a position to address why Plotinus uses *sunaisthêsis* instead of *sumpatheia* in the above passage. Let us begin by briefly reviewing two other interpretations before I propose my own. The interpretations of H.R. Schwyzer and Andreas Graeser are similar enough that they may be treated together. Schwyzer proposes that *sunaisthêsis* is used "almost as a synonym with *sumpatheia* "[47] and Graeser proposes that "*sunaisthêsis* approximates the meaning of *sumpatheia*."[48] I fully agree that Plotinus uses these terms in a way that supports their view in other contexts. For example, in IV.5.1–5 Plotinus explains how sight and hearing depend on the universal sympathy of the All. Neither vision nor hearing depend on a physical medium for their occurrence because the world soul constructs the sense organs in such a way that they are in a community of affection (*homopatheia*) with sense objects (IV.5.1.4–12). In the context of sight, Plotinus says that "it looks as if any kind of perception depends upon this, that the living being – this All – is in sympathy (*sumpathes*) with itself" (IV.5.3.19–21; cf. 36–38). In the context of hearing, Plotinus says that "the line of enquiry has been much the same here as in the case of sight, since the experience of hearing is a kind of common awareness (*sunaisthêseôs tinos*) of the sort which occurs in a living being" (IV.5.5.27–31). Plotinus is clearly using *sunaisthêsis* interchangeably with *sumpatheia* here, since there is no substantial difference between seeing and hearing that would require him to use *sunaisthêsis* with respect to the latter and *sumpatheia* with respect to the former. However, I disagree that Plotinus is doing this in IV.4.45.8–10.

F.M. Schroeder disagrees with Schwyzer and Graeser and proposes an alternative view. He claims that Plotinus employs two vocabularies to explain the relationship between sensible and intelligible reality, an ontological one characterized by *sunousia* and an epistemological one

[47] See Schwyzer (1960a). [48] See Andreas Graeser (1972).

characterized by *sunaisthêsis* and *sunesis*. In the context of the passages I have commented on, such as IV.4.24.21–24 and IV.4.45.8–10, Schroeder states "*sunaisthêsis* is the cognitive equivalent of *sumpatheia*."[49] It appears that he means two things by "cognitive equivalent": (1) that the *sunaisthêsis* of individual living beings is grounded in the *sumpatheia* of the cosmos and (2) that *sunaisthêsis* does in individual living beings what *sumpatheia* does in the cosmos, i.e., provides unity and coherence. I fully agree that the awareness living beings have is grounded in the sympathy of the cosmos. However, I disagree that *sunaisthêsis* does, in individual living beings, what *sumpatheia* does in the cosmos, because *sumpatheia* and *sunaisthêsis* both play an analogous role in individual living beings and the cosmos.

I propose that we take Plotinus literally and interpret him to say that each part of the All and each part of individual living beings have awareness, with careful attention to the restrictive meaning of the adverb *hoion*. Plotinus cannot say without contradiction that each part of the All or each part of individual living beings has awareness, since he holds that awareness inheres only in qualified bodies whose soul is present as a whole throughout all the parts of the body.[50] However, insofar as the world soul constructs living bodies in such a way that each part plays a particular role in the organic life of the organism according to its nature and disposition, and all the parts are in sympathy with one another, he can say that each part has a "kind of" awareness of its role and the role of other parts. In other words, Plotinus is saying it is *as if* each part were aware of its role, and aware of the role of other parts that each works in such wonderful concert with the others.[51] Graeser and Schroeder both miss this because they appear to take *pantos* at IV.4.45.9 to refer to the All, and interpret the passage to be concerned with the All, instead of recognizing that it refers to each of the parts pertaining to both the All and individual living beings. On my view, what explains the close relationship between the terms is not that one is a "cognitive equivalent" of the other or that one "approximates the meaning" of the other. Rather, they both play an integral role in unifying ensouled bodies, the cosmic body in the case of the All, and the qualified body in the case of individual living beings. However, there is a key difference between the two: *sumpatheia* is an objective feature that structures a multitude of bodily parts and activities into a unified whole,

[49] See F.M. Schroeder (1987). [50] This will become evident below.

[51] Plotinus qualifies the meaning of *sunaisthêsis* with *hoion* in at least two other passages. See III.8.4.14–25 in connection with Nature and V.4.2.16–19 in connection with the One.

whereas *sunaisthêsis* is a subjective feature that recognizes that the bodily parts and activities that constitute this whole are one's own or belong to oneself.

It is important to recognize that even though awareness is directed toward the body, the activity belongs to the soul. Plotinus prefigures modern nonreductive theories by maintaining that consciousness is purely psychic and can neither be reduced to nor explained by bodily states. He writes, "If this is so [that soul has a nature and function of its own], it will have desire and memory of its desire, and of attaining or not attaining, since its nature is not one of those which are flowing. For if this is not so, we shall not grant it awareness (*sunaisthêsin*) or consciousness (*parakolouthêsin*) or any sort of combination (*sunthesin*) or understanding (*sunesin*)" (IV.3.26.42–47: trans. mine). Plotinus maintains that the subject of consciousness and cognition must be stable, because embodied modes of consciousness and discursive understanding both require a unified subject that retains information through time, e.g., the conscious judgment that a human being is a rational animal involves combining two *logoi*, "rationality" and "animal," and the awareness that the judgment belongs to oneself. Consciousness cannot inhere in bodies because they are composed of separate and divisible parts, which are unrelated to one another and are in flux.[52] Whatever is conscious must be unified and continuous from one state to the next.[53]

Plotinus is not as concerned with providing a direct argument against physicalism in the way that contemporary dualists are. For instance, one cannot open the *Enneads* and locate the "argument from awareness" in the way that one can open *The Conscious Mind* and locate "the argument from metaphysical zombies."[54] However, this does not mean that we cannot piece together an argument that lays his cards on the table. Given his top-down metaphysics and his general distaste of ancient forms of physicalism, it should come as no surprise that he thinks awareness is purely a psychic activity.

In the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus provides an argument that points us in the right direction for piecing together such an argument. In proposition 15, Proclus argues that the soul is incorporeal based on its capacity for reversion toward itself (*epistrophê pros heauton*). Reversion toward oneself is

[52] This will become evident below.

[53] It is the soul-trace that animates the body and provides it with the vegetative power, which enables the human being to persist through time (II.1.5.5–14). See also Wilberding (2006: 177–180).

[54] See David Chalmers (1996).

a reflexive form of consciousness in which the soul turns inward and recognizes itself and its source. It is a specific application of the general concept of reversion (*epistrophê*), so dear to the Neoplatonists, according to which all things that have proceeded from the One desire to return to it as their source (Prop. 31). Proclus' argument is brief. First, he claims that reversion toward oneself requires a subject that is conjoined (*sunaptetai*) with that on which it reverts, meaning the subject as a whole is reflexively aware of the whole of itself. The basis for this is his view that the subject of reversion and that on which it reverts become identical when the subject reverts toward itself. Second, he claims that bodies are not constituted in such a way that each part is conjoined with every other part, meaning the parts of bodies do not form a unity that is located in a singular, self-identical position in space. The basis for this is his view that bodies are divisible into separate and unrelated parts, which are located in different positions in space. From these two premises, he concludes that the subject of reversion is incorporeal. Only something that is unified and everywhere identical to itself could revert on itself. In this argument, Proclus makes explicit the connection between two Plotinian ideas, reversion toward oneself and soul as that which is conjoined with the whole of itself.[55] It is the latter idea that will help us understand why for Plotinus awareness is a purely psychic activity.

The three passages on which I base my interpretation are as follows:

> [soul is] not [present] in whatever way color and every quality is the same in many places and many bodily masses, but [the quality] in each is completely separate from the other, just as much as one mass is separate from another; and even if the magnitude is one, what is the same in each part has no community with respect to common feeling (*koinônian oudemian eis homopatheian*), because this "same" is one thing here, and a different thing there: for the affection is what is the same, not the same substance. (IV.1.1.48–53)[56]

> But if someone should say this is not so [that formative principle could not come from anywhere but soul], but that atoms or partless things produce

[55] Key passages concerning *epistrophê pros heauton* are IV.8.4.1–4, V.3.8.30–31, V.3.6.5–6 and 40–41, and VI.9.2.35–36.

[56] οὐχ ὅντινα τρόπον χρόα καὶ ποιότης πᾶσα πολλαχοῦ μέν ἐστιν ἡ αὐτὴ ἐν πολλοῖς σωμάτων ὄγκοις, ἀλλ' ἔστι τὸ ἐν ἑκαστῳ ἀφεστὼς τοῦ ἑτέρου πάντη, καθόσον καὶ ὁ ὄγκος τοῦ ὄγκου ἀπέστη· κἂν τὸ μέγεθος δὲ ἕν ᾖ, ἀλλὰ τό γε ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ μέρει ταὐτὸν κοινωνίαν οὐδεμίαν εἰς ὁμοπάθειαν ἔχει, ὅτι τὸ ταὐτον τοῦτο ἕτερον, τὸ δ' ἑτερόν ἐστι· πάθημα γὰρ τὸ ταὐτόν, οὐκ οὐσία ἡ αὐτή.

> the soul upon coming together by unity (*enôsei*) and common feeling (*homopatheia*),[57] he would be refuted by their juxtaposition (*parathesei*), it not being a total one (*di holou*), since nothing which is one and in sympathy (*sumpathous*) can come to be from bodies which are without feeling and unable to be unified, but soul is in sympathy (*sumpathês*) with itself. (IV.7.3.1–5)[58]

> Then if there is a different power belonging to each part, there will be nothing remaining for awareness (*sunaisthêsin*). (VI.4.9.36)[59]

These passages show that awareness inheres in soul because souls possess unity and common feeling, whereas bodies do not. Plotinus lays the framework for this view in IV.2.1, where he introduces a metaphysical hierarchy that extends from bodies to intelligible being. Let us begin at the bottom with the perceptible sizes and masses, i.e., bodies. Bodies are extended in space, are primarily divisible, and are by their very nature subject to being scattered (12–17). Bordering on the perceptible, and present in all bodies, are the inherent forms or qualities (such as color or shape), which, though not primarily divisible like bodies, nonetheless become divided in bodies (32–41). Immediately above inherent forms and bordering on the intelligible are souls, which, though not primarily divisible like bodies, nonetheless happen to become divisible in bodies (42–77). At the summit of this hierarchy is intelligible being, which is completely indivisible and unextended, even in our thought about it, and always remains in the same state (17–29).

The difficulty with this hierarchy is determining how souls differ from inherent forms. Plotinus says of both in this treatise that though they are not primarily divisible, nevertheless they come to be divisible in the sphere of bodies (*meriston peri ta sômata*). The key difference between them is that the soul *happens* to become divisible in the sphere of bodies, whereas the inherent forms *are* divisible in the sphere of bodies. Plotinus' usage of *sumbainei* at IV.2.1.56 suggests that becoming divisible in bodies is accidental to the soul's nature. Insofar as soul receives its indivisibility from intelligible being, it is unitary. However, since the bodies to which soul comes to be present are incapable of receiving it indivisibly due to

[57] I treat *homopatheia* synonymously with *sumpatheia* in this passage. For a similar view, see Gerson (1994: 129–130) and Graeser (1972: 77–78).

[58] Εἰ δέ τις μὴ ὄυτως, ἀλλὰ ἀτόμους ἢ ἀμερῆ συνελθόντα ψυχὴν ποιεῖν τῇ ἑνώσει λέγοι καὶ ὁμοπαθείᾳ, ἐλέγχοιτ' ἂν καὶ τῇ παραθέσει μὴ δι' ὅλου δέ, οὐ γιγνομένου ἑνὸς οὐδὲ συμπαθοῦς ἐξ ἀπαθῶν καὶ μὴ ἑνοῦσθαι δυναμένων σωμάτων· ψυχὴ δὲ αὑτῇ συμπαθής.

[59] ἔπειτα ἄλλη κατ' ἄλλο οὖσα οὐ καταλείψει συναίσθησιν.

their peculiar constitution, it comes to be divisible in bodies. In this unique case, the division is an affection of bodies, not of soul (76–77).[60]

Inherent forms lack the intrinsic unity that soul has because they are not substances; rather, they are images of the formative principles (*logoi*) in Soul. For this reason, inherent forms are divided into as many parts as bodies are. Though they are present as a whole in each of the divided parts, in the sense that the greenness of one tree branch is the same in kind as the greenness in another tree branch, each form is totally separate and is affected differently. In this case, Plotinus tells us that "what is the same in each part has no community with respect to common feeling, because this 'same' is one thing here, another there: for the affection is what is the same, not the same substance" (51–53). This is why Plotinus calls soul "one and many" and inherent forms "many and one." On the scale of divisibility both soul and inherent forms lie between intelligible being and bodies; souls, however, are more unified than inherent forms. What does this have to do with the quoted passages?[61]

The significance of the first passage lies in its denial that common feeling can belong to inherent forms and bodies. As I outlined above, Plotinus holds that both souls and inherent qualities are "divisible in the sphere of bodies" (IV.1.1). The key difference, for our purposes, is that souls are present as a whole in all the parts of bodies because souls are unitary substances, whereas inherent qualities are divided into as many parts as bodies because inherent qualities are mere images of the formative principles (*logoi*) in Soul. Consequently, souls have a "community with respect to common feeling" because they are present as a whole in all the parts of the body, whereas colors and shapes lack a "community with respect to a common feeling" because they differ in each part of the body in which they are present. For example, the soul that is present in all five of my sense organs is the same in form and one in number. This explains why I can have a common feeling that involves all the sense organs. By contrast, the color brown that is present in all my hair is the same in form, but not in number. Each instantiation of brown is distinct and is as unrelated to the other instantiations as the individual hairs are to each other. This explains why the browns in each hair lack a "common feeling" with each other (VI.4.1.18–29). This deficiency of inherent qualities holds for bodies, too, since they are even lower on the scale of divisibility (IV.1.1).

[60] Cf. VI.4.2.18–20 and VI.4.4.22–32.

[61] I am thankful to Pavlos Kalligas for helping me understand *Ennead* IV.2.1.

So, bodies lack a "community with respect to common feeling" even more so than inherent qualities.

The significance of the second passage lies in its denial that common feeling could be explained bottom-up. Plotinus is considering an objection to his view that soul delivers formative principles into matter, which organizes it into qualified bodies.[62] The imaginary objector is an Epicurean philosopher. The Epicureans maintain that the soul is corporeal and is constituted by a blend of the types of atoms that are constitutive of heat, air, wind, and a fourth type that is ultrafine and responsible for sensation, the nameless. The notion of blending in this context differs from the Stoic notion of "total blending" in that each of the individual atoms that constitute heat, air, wind, and the nameless is reorganized and transformed into a new substance, namely, the soul.[63] Important for our purposes, they maintain that these atoms are neither alive nor united in common feeling, but they nonetheless produce a soul that is alive and united in common feeling.[64] As Epicurus writes, "the soul is a fine structured body diffused through the whole aggregate (*par holon to athroisma paresparmenon*), most strongly resembling wind with a certain blending of heat, and resembling wind in some respects but heat in others. But there is a part which differs greatly also from wind and heat themselves in its fineness of structure, a fact that makes it the more liable to co-affection (*sumpathes*) with the rest of the aggregate."[65]

Plotinus denies that the blending of atoms could produce a unitary soul in possession of common feeling. Unfortunately, he does not offer much support for his denial beyond the puzzling claim in lines 3–4 that "he could be refuted by their juxtaposition (*parathesei*), it not being a total one (*di holou*)." However, the usage of the terms *parathesei* and *di holou* suggest he is relying on his argument against the Stoic theory of total blending (*krasis di holou*) later in IV.7.8[2] and possibly in II.7.[66] Thus, the point Plotinus is trying to make in the second passage is that when (contrary to fact) soul atoms come together, they do not blend through and through (*di holou*) and form a unity; rather, they become set alongside one another or juxtaposed (*parathesis*). And as we know from the commentary on the first passage, being set alongside one another or being juxtaposed is not sufficient to possess common feeling. Hence, the community of feeling the

[62] See IV.7.2.16–26 and IV.7.3.13–35.
[63] See Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 3.262–322 (*LS* 14D).
[64] See Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 2.865–990.
[65] See Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus* 63–67 (*LS* 14A1).
[66] Lloyd Gerson also notices this. See Gerson (1994: 129).

soul has with itself neither comes from body nor can be reduced to body. It is an irreducible feature of soul.

The significance of the third passage lies in its denial of awareness to the true All, on the supposition that its powers are present to the sensible world like rays of light (VI.4.7–9). In this context, the "true All" refers to intelligible being, whereas "the All" refers to the image of intelligible being, "the nature of this visible universe" (VI.4.2.2). Plotinus often uses light as a metaphor to describe the presence of intelligible being to the sensible world or the presence of soul to body. This is because he views light as an incorporeal activity, which is present as a whole in all the parts of a given space of air without itself being divisible or affected, and illumines bodies without taking on bodily affections.[67] However, he rejects the idea that intelligible being is present to the sensible world along the lines of individual powers being present to individual bodies, like rays of light. The problem with the analogy between powers and rays of light, for Plotinus, is that it implies (1) that the powers in the sensible world are weaker than their source in the way that rays of light are weaker than their source, (2) that intelligible being is not present in all the powers everywhere as a whole, and consequently (3) that the powers are subject to divisibility. On this supposition, there would be nothing remaining for awareness, since the powers would be subject to divisibility and therefore not united in common feeling. Although this passage specifically concerns the true All, there is no harm in applying its central claim to the case of living beings given the numerous analogies he draws between living beings and the All. These three passages enable us to conclude that awareness can only inhere in living beings, whose parts display a community with respect to common feeling. Without *sumpatheia* there would not be a unified subject in which *sunaisthêsis* could occur; without *sunaisthêsis* there would not be the recognition that the bodily parts and activities that constitute this subject are one's own or belong to oneself.

All living beings strive toward the One and even strive to be the One, rather than what they are.[68] The One is primarily self-sufficient because it does not stand in need of being completed by anything external to itself.[69] What living beings strive toward and strive to become is self-sufficient, which they approximate by acting as unified wholes.[70] *Sunaisthêsis* is the

[67] See I.1.4.13–18 and IV.5.6–7.
[68] See VI.2.11.21–29, VI.6.1, and VI.8.13.12–15.
[69] See VI.8.13.12–13, VI.9.6.16–26, V.4.1.11–15, V.6.2.15–17, V.3.17.6–14, V.4.1.12–25, and VI.7.38.23–25.
[70] See IV.4.18.21–22 and V.3.13.19–22.

cognitive means by which living beings that are composed of a multitude of parts, from qualified bodies in the sensible world to pure intellects in the intelligible world, unify themselves into structured and coherent wholes.[71] It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the most basic form of consciousness in the sensible world is an awareness of the bodily parts that belong to oneself. As Plotinus tells us, "[e]verything seeks not another, but itself, and the journey to the exterior is foolish or compulsory. A thing exists more, not when it comes to be many or large, but when it belongs to itself; and it belongs to itself in tending to itself" (VI.6.1.10–14).

I claimed at the beginning of this chapter that *sumpatheia* is an objective phenomenon because it involves a multitude of bodily parts and activities becoming a unified whole, whereas *sunaisthêsis* is a subjective phenomenon because it involves recognizing that the bodily parts and activities that constitute this whole are one's own, or belong to oneself. The distinction is subtle but important. What I mean by this is that being a unified whole is something that can be understood by appealing to the facts of living beings (Plotinian "facts," of course): A living being is a compound of soul and body; an ensouled body is unified due to the unity of soul; the soul that informs the body is an image of a higher soul that exists in the intelligible world; the causal process by which the higher soul casts an image of itself onto body is double activity, where double activity means that for every being there is an internal activity that belongs to the being and constitutes its nature, and an external activity that flows from the being and communicates its properties on a lower level in the form of an image; and so forth.

However, being aware that the bodily parts and activities that constitute this whole belong to oneself, or are one's own, is not something that can be understood by simply appealing to the facts of living beings. Nothing from the above list of facts will help one understand why the bodily parts and activities of which I am aware are *mine*, or why the cosmic parts and activities of which the world soul is aware are *its*. These are experiences that necessarily belong to the world soul and to me, respectively, and can be understood only by undergoing its and my experiences.

3.3 Animal Awareness

Now that I have explained what the qualified body is and how the first layer of consciousness unifies the qualified body in human beings, I want to discuss the sole passage in which Plotinus attributes awareness to

[71] See V.6.5.1–2, V.3.13.12–22, and VI.7.41.22–29.

animals. Moreover, since this passage involves reincarnation I also want to discuss briefly Plotinus' views on reincarnation. Plotinus inherits his belief in reincarnation from Plato, who held that the lowest living thing into which a human being can reincarnate is a shellfish.[72] Plotinus expands the kinds of living things into which human beings can transmigrate to include plants. In treatise III.4 *On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit*, he claims that human beings whose way of life involves following the urge to eat and generate without any reflection turn into plants (ch. 2). One gets the impression on reading this treatise that Plotinus is less interested in the actual metaphysics of reincarnation and more interested in the ethics. It may even be that he is writing playfully.[73] Be that as it may, it is a cornerstone of his ethics that the kind of life a person leads determines the level of self at which he operates in this life and the kind of living thing into which he transmigrates in the next life. Thus, he commits himself to the genuine possibility of a human soul being present to a plant or animal body in one or more of its incarnations.[74]

Animals have the capacities associated with the vegetative power, but also pleasure and pain, desire, feeling, sense-perception, imagination, memory, and impulse. Animals can desire to pursue what is pleasant and avoid what is painful, can experience feelings, can perceive their own bodies and external objects, can form images based on their sense-perceptions, store them, and recall them for later processing, and can move themselves on acquiring an impulse to act. The power in virtue of which animals possess these capacities is the sensitive soul (*aisthetikê psukhê*), which the world soul provides. Animals share these capacities with human beings. However, since the higher rational soul either is not present to the animal body or is present but its powers are inactive with respect to the animal body, the exercise of these capacities does not draw on reason or the higher imagination.

The awareness of animals is attested in a passage from the late treatise I.1 [53] W*hat Is the Living Being and What Is the Human Being*. In I.1.10, Plotinus makes the familiar distinction between the *physical* and *dianoetic*

[72] See *Phaedo* 81b–82b, *Phaedrus* 249b–c, *Republic* X 620a–d, and *Timaeus* 42b–d and 91a–92c.

[73] Kalligas writes that "the playfulness running through the whole passage – something quite unusual for P. – suggests that the reader is perhaps not meant to take literally the entire sequence of details" (2014: 491).

[74] Damian Caluori provides a compelling interpretation of IV.4.28.60–65, according to which the capacity for spirit can be present to a tree even though the tree is unable to exercise this capacity due to its limited organic structure. This can serve as a model for how capacities of the human soul could be present to a plant. Higher capacities such as imagination and discursive reason could be present to a plant, but they would lie dormant because the plant body is not suitably structured (*epitêdeios*) to exercise them. See Caluori (2015: 192–197).

selves with which I began this chapter, referring to the former as that which includes the beast and the latter as that which is at the same time above the beast. Then, in I.1.11 he poses the question, How do beasts (*thêria*) have life? He responds with the following:

> If as it is said [by Plato] there are human souls in them which have erred, the separable part of soul does not belong to beasts but is present without being present to them. Rather, the awareness [belonging to the soul of each beast] is an image that it has along with the body. Such a body has been in a way made by an image of soul. But if the soul of a human being has not entered it, it becomes the kind of living being it is by an illumination from the whole. (I.1.11.8–15)[75]

Plotinus acknowledges two possible sources for the soul present in animals. Either it comes from an individual human soul, which has erred and receives as punishment for its error incarnation into an animal body, or it comes from the world soul (IV.7.14.1–5). In the case of the former, the powers associated with the separable soul (i.e., higher soul or intellect) are directed to the animal body, but in such a way as they do not belong to the animal and are present without being present. The meaning of this can be understood by contrasting animals with human beings. Due to ultimately being a higher soul and the unique mode of presence of a higher soul to the qualified body, an embodied human being is continuous with the intelligible world and remains in contact with the intelligibles. If it fails to self-identify with its intellect or its activity of thinking, it retains possession of the intelligibles, but without having them at hand (9.15–16). In other words, it stops exercising its power of thinking in its care for the body and acts without the guidance of reason. But all it takes is a concerted act of will to deactivate the powers of the soul–body compound and reactivate the powers of the higher soul (I.1.11.1–8). This is not the case with animals. The individual soul belonging to a human being is directed toward the qualified body belonging to an animal. However, the powers that are activated to care for the animal body are those belonging to the sensitive and vegetative souls only. The power of thinking is deactivated, for which reason the higher soul does not belong to them and is present without being present. In other words, they fulfill their bodily needs impulsively without the guidance of reason (III.1.7.14–22). This account

[75] ἢ εἰ μὲν ψυχαὶ εἶεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀνθρώπειοι, ὥσπερ λέγεται, ἁμαρτοῦσαι, οὐ τῶν θηρίων γίνεται τοῦτο, ὅσον χωριστόν, ἀλλὰ παρὸν οὐ πάρεστιν αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ συναίσθησις τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς εἴδωλον μετὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔχει· σῶμα δὴ τοιόνδε οἷον ποιωθὲν ψυχῆς εἰδώλῳ· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ εἰσέδυ, ἐλλάμψει ἀπὸ τῆς ὅλης τὸ τοιοῦτον ζῷον γενόμενόν ἐστιν.

is consistent with Plotinus' theory of the descent of souls into bodies, since the same type of soul descends into animal and human bodies, going to whichever kind of body that has been prepared for it according to the decrees of providence (IV.3.12–13). In the case of the latter, there are no powers associated with the higher soul directed toward the body. All the powers the animal body has derive from the world soul.

Regardless of whether the sensitive capacities derive from the individual human soul or the world soul, animals have a sophisticated enough psychology to share the first layer of consciousness with humans. They are not unconscious automata. In virtue of the capacities that the world soul provides to animals, they are united in sympathy with other living things in the cosmos and with themselves. By being united in sympathy with themselves, animals are aware of their bodily parts and functions and are aware that they are the subjects of their own experiences. In the terminology of Hierocles, animal perception involves self-perception (*Elements*, VI. 1–9). Unfortunately, what Plotinus means by "the awareness [belonging to the soul of each beast] is an image that it has along with the body" (*all' hê sunaisthêsis to tês psukhês eidôlon meta tou sômatos ekhei*) is not clear. Could he be saying, in reference to animals, that awareness derives from the image or trace that animates their bodies? Or that awareness is an image that they have along with their bodies? Or that animal awareness is limited to the image of soul with the body? I believe the point he is trying to make is closer to the second and third options. Animal awareness is an image of higher forms of awareness ultimately deriving from Intellect, such as those belonging to individual souls, divine souls, and the hypostasis Soul (I.1.8.2–14, II.8.8.1–29). However, since it is the lowest image of Intellect capable of awareness, its mode of consciousness occurs in the soul–body compound and is limited to activities of the soul–body compound. Unlike human beings who can become conscious of their higher powers by redirecting their middle region toward the intelligible principles (I.1.11.1–8), animal consciousness is limited to their own bodies and what they perceive through their own bodies. Because of this, animals lack the interiority that humans possess and the capacity to reflect first-personally on their experiences. Due to Plotinus' belief in reincarnation, plants and animals may have higher capacities present to them, but are not able to actualize them due to their limited organic structure.

CHAPTER 4

Second Layer
The Lower Soul

In Chapter 3, I examined the layer of consciousness that occurs in the *physical* self. This is the qualified body that merely "belongs" to us. In this chapter I examine the layer of consciousness that occurs in the *dianoetic* self. This is the level of self where the "we" is primarily located. This layer contains types of consciousness that we do not share with animals, since it involves psychic activities that are independent of the soul–body compound. The *dianoetic* self is the "human being within," which engages in the discursive reasoning that governs the practical affairs of daily life in the sensible world. It is the self whose messenger is sense-perception and whose king is Intellect (V.3.3.45–46). Plotinus writes,

> [I]t is we ourselves who reason and we ourselves think thoughts in discursive reasoning (*tê dianoia*); this is who we are. The activities of Intellect are also from above just as those of sense-perception are from below; we are this, the dominant part of the soul, intermediate between two powers, an inferior and a superior, the inferior that of sense-perception, the superior that of Intellect. (V.3.3.35–40)[1]

"We" are in between two sources of input, for Plotinus. On the one hand, we are capable of receiving the imprints "coming down" from Intellect in virtue of our higher soul or intellect; on the other hand, we are capable of receiving the imprints "coming up" from sense-perception in virtue of our lower soul. However, how does the input from both sources converge to produce a conscious, unitary experience if the reasoning part of the soul has only the "understanding of imprints that it receives from both sides" (V.3.2.25–26)? This is the role that the imagination plays.

I will argue that the imagination (*to phantastikon*) is the power responsible for embodied consciousness of sensible and intelligible objects.

[1] ἢ αὐτοὶ μὲν οἱ λογιζόμενοι καὶ νοοῦμεν τὰ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ νοήματα αὐτοί· τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμεῖς. τὰ δὲ τοῦ νοῦ ἐνεργήματα ἄνωθεν οὕτως, ὡς τὰ ἐκ τῆς αἰσθήσεως κάτωθεν, τοῦτο ὄντες τὸ κύριον τῆς ψυχῆς, μέσον δυνάμεως διττῆς, χείρονος καὶ βελτίονος, χείρονος μὲν τῆς αἰσθήσεως, Βελτίονος δὲ τοῦ νοῦ.

It plays three basic roles. First, it provides the soul with apprehension of affective states of its qualified body, such as pleasure and pain and desires. Second, it provides the soul with apprehension of its intentional[2] activities such as sense-perceptions, reasonings, and thoughts. Third, it provides the soul with apprehension of the hypostasis Intellect. I use the term "intentional" to mean the feature of psychic states in virtue of which they are *of* or *about* something. I characterize the activities of which there is apprehension as intentional so as to avoid suggesting that apprehension is of activities only. When we apprehend a sense-perception or a discursive thought, we apprehend not simply the activity, but also the object the activity is *of* or *about.* In other words, we apprehend the state's content. Moreover, I will argue that apprehension involves subjectivity. The notion of subjectivity I am attributing to Plotinus at this level is related to having a first-person perspective. To have subjectivity in this sense is to experience the world from the standpoint of one's own beliefs and desires, and to reflect on one's own experience from this standpoint. However, having this first-person perspective does not commit Plotinus to subjectivity in the modern sense of self-consciousness.

The second layer of consciousness involves two types of consciousness, which build on the first layer. The primary type is apprehension (*antilêpsis*). In contrast to *sunaisthêsis*, *antilêpsis* is indirect and mediated since the soul becomes conscious of sensible and intelligible objects *by means of* images. Images have the properties of being interior to one's soul (internal), lacking spatial extension (intelligible), being directed toward objects (intentional), and announcing their presence to the whole soul (self-intimating). The fundamental role of *antilêpsis* is to announce activities that occur in the soul–body compound or in parts of the soul, throughout the whole soul, by grasping these images. The secondary type is consciousness (*parakolouthêsis*). *Parakolouthêsis* is a second-order consciousness that "follows along" with first-order states. It is the type of consciousness Plotinus is least interested in, and the only type he disparages.

4.1 The Role of the Imagination

Plotinus recognizes that certain forms of cognition can occur subconsciously and that subconscious activities can affect behavior.[3]

[2] For a discussion of intentionality in Neoplatonism, see R. Sorabji (2001) and D. O'Meara (2001). See also Chapter 5, Section 5.3.

[3] For a discussion of the unconscious in Plotinus, see Mortley (2014: ch. 2).

By "subconscious" I do not mean activities that are inaccessible to consciousness like, for example, the unconscious inferences that the visual system makes to calculate depth. Rather, I mean activities that are not occurrent during cognition but that can be made occurrent through attention or introspection. The activities that can occur subconsciously are wide-ranging, from desire, sense-perception, memory, and reason to intellection. Importantly, Plotinus has a theory that explains how cognitive activities occur subconsciously and how they can be brought to conscious apprehension.

Because the theories of Sigmund Freud have been so influential on the modern notion of the unconscious, it is worth pointing out a significant similarity and dissimilarity between Plotinus and Freud. Plotinus shares with Freud the idea that subconscious states can affect our personality and our behavior. For example, Plotinus holds that subconscious memories of the sensible world pull us downward and encourage us to self-identify with the lower selves and act heteronomously (IV.4.14). However, Plotinus does not share the idea that subconscious states are characterized primarily by repressed sexual desires that become occurrent through slips of the tongue or the analysis of dreams. The kinds of subconscious activities that Plotinus is interested in range from proto-desires that are hidden in the qualified body to intellections that are buried deeply within one's soul. But in either case, the activities can be brought to consciousness through first-personal methods of attention or introspection.

Plotinus discusses two types of subconsciousness. The first type includes activities that occur on a higher level of self, but that escape the notice of the person who is self-identifying with a lower level of self. For example, the *noetic* self eternally contemplates the Forms in the intelligible world, but the person is unaware due to self-identifying with the *dianoetic* self and caring for its qualified body in the sensible world. The second type includes activities that occur on the same level of self as the level with which the person is self-identifying, but that escape the notice of the person due to facts about the person, the environment, or both. The first type is peculiar to Plotinus, since intellection involves awareness and thinking that one is thinking, and is therefore conscious. However, it is not conscious *to* the lower soul while the person self-identifies with discursive reasoning, and can therefore be classified as a type of subconscious activity. I will have much more to say about this in Chapter 5. It is the second type I will discuss in this chapter.

The key feature of cognitive activities that fall under the second type of subconsciousness is that they escape the attention of the soul due to being

confined to the soul–body compound or being localized in "parts" of the soul. Such activities remain hidden to the soul until they have reached the imagination. This is because the imagination "gives to the one who has the image the power to know what he has experienced" (IV.4.13.15–16). Let's begin with the following passage concerning subconscious sense-perceptions:

> When the perception of something is unimportant or is of no concern to oneself at all, and the sense-power is moved unintentionally by the difference in the things seen, only sense-perception is affected and the soul does not receive [the affection] into its interior (*to eisô*) . . . Then again, one might understand the point that things that happen altogether incidentally do not necessarily come to be present in the imagination (*phantasia*), and even if they did it would not necessarily be there in such a way that it would guard and observe them. But an imprint of a thing like this does not produce awareness (*sunaisthêsis*). (IV.4.8.9–20)[4]

Take the following example as an illustration of this passage. When I order a cappuccino in a busy café, I perceive and apprehend the barista preparing the coffee. I also perceive countless other things, such as the paintings on the walls, the conversations taking place, or the music being played, but I do not apprehend them. This is because these perceptions are incidental to me ordering a cappuccino. They serve no need or provide no benefit to the ordering of the cappuccino. We would say that I am not conscious of these other perceptions because I am not attending to them; Plotinus would say I do not apprehend them because they have not reached the imagination, or they are so faint and inconsequential that even if they did reach the imagination, the image they produce would not cause awareness. In this case, the visual perception of the paintings and the auditory perception of the music remain in the soul–body compound. They are not apprehended in the soul's interior. This is what Plotinus is driving at when he says that "only sense-perception is affected and the soul does not receive [the affection] into its interior."

The imagination plays a similar role in the apprehension of our desiderative activities. Let's look at the following two passages concerning subconscious desires:

> for we do not recognize everything that happens in any one part of the soul before it reaches the whole soul; for example, appetite (*epithumia*) that

[4] ὅταν γὰρ μηδὲν διαφέρῃ, ἢ μὴ πρὸς αὐτὸν ᾖ ὅλως ἡ αἴσθησις ἀπροαιρέτως τῇ διαφορᾷ τῶν ὁρωμένων κινηθεῖσα, τοῦτο αὐτὴ ἔπαθε μόνη τῆς ψυχῆς οὐ δεξαμένης εἰς τὸ εἴσω. . . καὶ μὴν ὅτι τῶν πάντη κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς γινομένων οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἐν φαντασίᾳ γίνεσθαι, εἰ δὲ καὶ γίνοιτο, οὐχ ὥστε καὶ φυλάξαι καὶ παρατηρῆσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ τύπος τοῦ τοιούτου οὐ δίδωσι συναίσθησιν . . .

> remains in the appetitive part (*epithumêtikô*), is not recognized by us, but only when we apprehend (*antilabômetha*) it by the power of inner perception (*tê aisthêtikê tê endon dunamei*) or discursive reason (*dianoêtikê*), or both. (IV.8.8.7–11)[5]

> For when the appetitive part (*to epithumêtikon*) is moved, the image (*phantasia*) of its object arrives like a perception which reports and provides information about the affection. (IV.4.17.11–13)[6]

Plotinus follows the moral psychology of Plato and Aristotle in holding that embodied human beings have both nonrational and rational motivations for action (I.1.7.18–25). He follows Aristotle in dividing desire (*orexis*) into rational desire (*boulêsis*) and nonrational desires (*epithumia* and *thumos*), with rational desires being of what is good and nonrational desires being of what appears good.[7] Uniquely, however, he locates appetite (*epithumia*) and passion (*thumos*) in the lower soul[8] and willing (*boulêsis*) in the higher soul.[9] The former desires are concerned with goods of the soul–body compound, but the latter desire is concerned with the good of the soul or intellect. In particular, *epithumia* is concerned with the bodily pleasures resulting from food, drink, or sex (IV.4.28). The usage of the term "appetitive part" (*epithumêtikon*) in these passages echoes Plato's division of the soul into three parts, the rational (*logistikon*), the spirited (*thumoeides*), and the appetitive (*epithumêtikon*).[10] However, Plotinus does not endorse Plato's tripartite psychology literally. As I explained above, he holds that the soul is present as a whole in all the parts of the body and that its powers are not subject to divisibility.[11] Even when the soul "happens" to become divisible in the sphere of bodies, this is due to the body's inability to receive the unitary power of soul. For this reason, he regards *epithumia* and *thumos* not as "parts" of the soul, but rather as nonrational impulses (*orektika*) rooted in the vegetative power (IV.4.28.65–67).

The first passage makes it clear that nonrational desires remain in the appetitive part of the soul unless we apprehend them. Let us return to the example above to illustrate the meaning of this. My desire for a cappuccino

[5] οὐ γὰρ πᾶν, ὅ γίγνεται περὶ ὁτιοῦν μέρος ψυχῆς, γινώσκομεν, πρὶν ἄν εἰς ὅλην τὴν ψυχὴν ἥκῃ· οἷον καὶ ἐπιθυμία ἐν τῷ ἐπιθυμητικῷ μένουσα 〈οὐ〉 γιγνώσκεται ἡμῖν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν τῇ αἰσθητικῇ τῇ ἔνδον δυνάμει ἢ καὶ διανοητικῇ ἀντιλαβώμεθα ἢ ἄμφω.

[6] ὅταν γὰρ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν κινηθῇ, ἦλθεν ἡ φαντασία τούτου οἷον αἴσθησις ἀπαγγελτικὴ καὶ μηνυτικὴ τοῦ πάθους. . .

[7] See *De Anima*, 413b23–24, 414b1–2, 432b5–7, 433a17–25; *De Motu Animalium*, 700b21–29.

[8] See I.1.4.6–10, I.1.5.22–29, I.I.7.18–25, IV.4.18.9–21, IV.4.28, and IV.8.8.17–25.

[9] See I.4.6.9–19, I.6.7.1–6, IV.8.4.1–3, VI.8.6.37–38, and VI.1.21.16–23.

[10] See *Republic*, 437a–441c and *Timaeus*, 69d–71e.

[11] For a discussion of the parts of soul in Plotinus, see Blumenthal (1971: ch. 3) and Karfik (2014).

takes place in the desiring part of my lower soul, and it either remains in the appetitive part and occurs unconsciously or is presented to the whole soul and occurs consciously. In either case, though, it can continue to motivate me to search out a café and order a cappuccino. Plotinus does not make this last point explicit. However, it is consistent with his treatment of subconscious memories in IV.4.4 that a person can acquire a disposition and that that disposition can influence his behavior, regardless of whether his memory of the experience that formed the disposition is conscious or subconscious. As he says, "[f]or it could happen that even when one is not conscious (*mê parakolouthounta*) that one has something, one holds it to oneself more strongly than if one knew" (IV.4.4.10–11).

The powers that are responsible for apprehending the nonrational desire are the powers of inner perception or discursive reasoning. What do these have to do with the imagination? I will explain this later. Suffice it to say for now that Plotinus identifies the imagination with the power of inner perception and that there is adequate overlap between imagination and discursive reasoning to attribute the role of apprehension to discursive reason. The powers in virtue of which the lower soul cares for the qualified body, without undergoing affection, are imagination and discursive reasoning. The imagination coordinates images from above and below and binds them into a unitary experience, and discursive reasoning processes, evaluates, and judges the images, as well as expresses them through language. Plotinus describes both sets of activities as a "contemplation of forms" partly due to the fact they both grasp internal images (I.I.7.9–14, I.I.9.19–24). However, my discussion of IV.3.29–30 will show that the power that apprehends images and presents activities to the whole soul belongs to the imagination.

The second passage provides a key element to Plotinus' notion of images – they are self-intimating. I am borrowing and adapting the meaning of this term from Sydney Shoemaker. In "First-Person Access," Shoemaker defines a self-intimating state as one for which "it belongs to their very nature that having them leads to the belief, and knowledge, that one has them, or at any rate, that it normally does so under certain circumstances" (1996: 50–51). Shoemaker uses this term to characterize the privileged access that Cartesians claim to have with respect to their mental states in connection with the special authority they claim to have over their mental states. Naturally, since I am arguing that Plotinus' theory of consciousness does *not* commit him to privileged access or infallible knowledge of our mental states, I am not using it in this sense. Rather, I am using "self-intimating" in a restricted sense to mean that "it belongs

to the very nature of an image that having an image leads to the apprehension of it and the external object of which it is an image under normal circumstances." By "normal circumstances," I mean when we are not totally absorbed in one task in such a way that incidental perceptions occur unnoticed, such as the person ordering a cappuccino in the busy café. This is what Plotinus is driving at when he says, "the image . . . arrives like a perception which reports and provides information about the affection."

The background to this view is Stoic. Aëtius writes, "An impression (*phantasia*) is an affection occurring in the soul, which reveals itself and its cause" (*LS*, 39 B: *SVF* 2.54). Though Plotinus would disagree that an impression is an affection due to his view that the soul is impassible, I see no reason why he would not agree that an image reveals itself and its cause. If we take both of the above quoted passages together, we can say that the imagination or discursive reason apprehends the nonrational desire by virtue of grasping the image, which in turns reveals itself (the desire) and its cause (namely, the object of desire) to the whole soul. An excellent example of this occurs in Plotinus' discussion of spirit (*thumos*) at IV.4.28.36–43, where he describes how the image puts the soul in touch with the state of the qualified body and the cause of its condition.

In the examples above, the exercise of the imagination involves presenting to oneself one's own perceptions and desires and, in so doing, apprehending the objects of perception and desire. I would like to make two final points before moving on to the next section. The first point is that apprehension is reflexive, since it involves a subject presenting one of its activities to itself. Plotinus makes this point explicit in an important passage concerning the apprehension of thinking (*noein*): "It seems as if apprehension (*antilêpsis*) exists and is produced when thought bends back, and the activity according to the life of the [higher] soul is projected back (*apôsthentos*), just as in a mirror when there is a smooth, bright, and calm surface" (I.4.10.6–10). In other words, apprehension occurs when the embodied subject presents one's thoughts to oneself by projecting back the activity of thinking occurring in the higher soul to the whole soul. The same holds true for the apprehension of perceptions and desires.

The second point is that apprehension involves subjectivity, since the constitution of one's bodily states or the development of one's psychic powers shapes the content of the activity presented to oneself.[12] Plotinus

[12] Pauliina Remes holds a similar view. See Remes (2008b: 165–166).

makes this point implicit in two passages concerning the operation of the lower imagination in connection with memory and action:

> Memory, then, belongs to the imaginative power and remembering will be of these sorts of things [i.e., images produced by sense-perception]. We shall say that people differ with respect to memory either because their powers differ, or because they are paying attention or not, or because of the presence of bodily temperaments or not, and because these alter or do not, and, as it were, create disturbances. (IV.3.29.31–36)[13]

> But we do say this about the imagination which one could strictly call imagination, that which is stirred up by the affections from the body. For being empty of food and drink, and in turn being full, molds (*anaplattousi*) the imaginations in a way, and one who is full of semen imagines differently, and [the imaginations differ] according to each of the qualities of fluids in the body; we shall not assign those who are active according to such sorts of imaginations to the class of those whose principle is self-determined. (VI.8.3. 10–17)[14]

The first passage lists several reasons why some people remember better than others, two of which are that their powers of imagination are differently developed and their bodily temperaments are differently disposed. The second passage lists a reason why those whose actions are prompted by the imagination are not self-determining, namely, that the constitution of the body molds the imaginations and this molding or giving shape influences our evaluative judgment of the objects perceived or desired. By "molding," he is referring to the fact that the imagination stores images derived from sense-perception and desire with emotion (*pathos*), and presents the perceived or desired objects to the soul in a tantalizing way (IV.3.32.1–4).[15] Taken together, this suggests that facts about a person's physiology or psychology shape the content of the activity presented to the soul, and the content of one and the same object or event can differ between two or more persons. Given we form beliefs and desires concerning external objects on the basis of images (I.1.7.14–17, III.6.4.8–26), this suggests that we experience the world from the standpoint of our own beliefs and desires and, thus, from our own first-person perspective.

[13] τοῦ φανταστικοῦ ἄρα ἡ μνήμη καὶ τὸ μνημονεύειν τῶν τοιούτων ἔσται. διαφόρως δ' ἔχειν πρὸς μνήμας φήσομεν ἢ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν αὐτῆς διαφόρως ἐχούσαις ἢ ταῖς προσέξεσιν ἢ μή, ἢ καὶ σωματικαῖς κράσεσιν ἐνούσαις καὶ μή, καὶ ἀλλοιούσαις καὶ μή, καὶ οἷον θορυβούσαις.

[14] ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἡμεῖς τὴν μὲν φαντασίαν, ἥν ἄν τις καὶ φαντασίαν κυρίως εἴποι, τὴν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τῶν παθημάτων ἐγειρομένην (καὶ γὰρ κενώσεις σίτων καὶ ποτῶν φαντασίας οἷον ἀναπλάττουσι καὶ πληρώσεις αὖ καὶ μεστός τις σπέρματος ἄλλα φαντάζεται καὶ καθ' ἑκάστας ποιότητας ὑγρῶν τῶν ἐν σώματι) τοὺς κατὰ τὰς τοιαύτας φαντασίας ἐνεργοῦντας εἰς ἀρχὴν αὐτεξούσιον οὐ τάξομεν·

[15] Compare IV.4.3–4 and IV.4.17.

4.2 Apprehension of Pleasures and Pains

We saw in Chapter 1 that Plotinus identifies the self with the soul, since it governs the body and uses it as a tool. In doing so, Plotinus is following Plato closely.[16] We saw in Chapter 3 that the world soul equips the body with the vegetative power, and the lower soul cares for the body without descending into it and undergoing its affections. Nonetheless, because the qualified body is one's own, we are aware of its affections and we are concerned with its needs. In doing so, Plotinus is developing Plato's view further than can be found in the dialogues. The point I wish to discuss in this section is that one's own body is external to the soul and that apprehension of one's bodily affections is similar to the apprehension of external objects and events.

In his influential article "Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed," Myles Burnyeat criticizes Berkeley for claiming in *Siris* that Plato and Aristotle anticipate his idealistic philosophy. After showing that Berkeley misinterprets Plato and Aristotle, Burnyeat surveys the whole of Greek philosophy to establish the claim that idealism – the general view that all reality is, in some sense, mental – did not originate in antiquity. Related to this conclusion, he claims, "One's own body has not yet become for philosophy a part of the external world" (1982: 30) and "that the dualism which makes one's own body a part of the external world" (1982: 39) begins with Descartes.

According to Burnyeat, the ancient Skeptics refrained from denying the existence of the external world because they, like all other Greek philosophers, had the practical aim of attaining happiness. Furthermore, it would not have occurred to the ancient Skeptics to doubt the existence of their own bodies because they did not consider their bodies as part of the external world. Burnyeat argues that though many Greek philosophers viewed the body as part of the *sensible* world, especially those in the Platonic school, no one viewed the body as part of the *external* world. To appreciate Burnyeat's point it is important to distinguish one's own body being in the *sensible* world from one's own body being in the *external* world. The latter differs from the former in that it places an epistemological barrier between soul and body by viewing the body as something belonging to the external world whose nature or existence, in principle, is subject to doubt.

I disagree with Burnyeat that no Greek philosopher viewed the body as part of the external world. For better or worse, Plotinus held this view. However, in disagreeing with Burnyeat I am not simply drawing attention to a historical inaccuracy. The history of philosophy is far more complicated than it is

[16] See *Phaedo* 80a1–10 and 94b2–4, and *Alcibiades* 129d1–130c2; cf. IV. 7.1.20–25 and I.1.3.1–17.

sometimes presented as, namely, quibbling over who said what first. I am setting up a substantive philosophical point. The externality of body frames Plotinus' entire approach to the second layer of consciousness, and it provides a radically different account of what it is like to feel pleasure and pain, experience emotion, or perceive the world. Commentators have criticized Burnyeat's article from different fronts.[17] I do not wish to restate their criticisms but, rather, call attention to the terminology Plotinus employs in discussing the externality of body. Close attention to the consciousness terms will further reinforce the externality of the body and will set up the apprehension of pleasures and pains and the emotions. Plotinus writes,

> We could say at once that its sensitive power is perceptive only of what is external (*tou exô*); for even then if there is an awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) of what goes on inside the body, yet even here the apprehension (*antilêpsis*) is of something outside the perceptive part. (V.3.2.2–5)[18]

and

> but we must grant [the whole heaven and universe] awareness (*sunaisthêsin*), just as we are aware of ourselves (*sunaisthanometha*), but not perception which is of other objects; since we too, when we apprehend (*antilambanômetha*) something in our body which differs from its permanent state, we apprehend (*antilambanometha*) it as something coming externally (*exôthen*). (IV.4.24.21–25)[19]

The point Plotinus is making in these passages is that consciousness of an affection is achieved through apprehension and that the affection occurs in the body, which is external to the soul. Moreover, he is establishing this by explicitly contrasting two modes of perception, sense-perception (*aisthêsis*) and self-perception (*sunaisthêsis*), and implicitly contrasting two modes of consciousness, awareness (*sunaisthêsis*), and apprehension (*antilêpsis*).

The first passage comes from a discussion of whether the embodied soul is capable of self-knowledge. He claims it is not because it is incapable of reverting on itself and knowing the whole of itself with the whole of itself, which is a necessary condition for self-knowledge. Rather, the principal

[17] For example, John Dillon (1990) and Pauliina Remes (2007a: 106–107) have argued against Burnyeat's claim that Descartes is the first to introduce the idea of the externality of body. And Gail Fine (2003) has argued against Burnyeat's claim that Descartes is the first to introduce the idea of truth and knowledge pertaining to one's own subjective experience.

[18] τὸ μὲν οὖν αἰσθητικὸν αὐτῆς αὐτόθεν ἄν φαῖμεν τοῦ ἔξω εἶναι μόνον· καὶ γὰρ εἰ τῶν ἔνδον ἐν τῷ σώματι γινομένων συναίσθησις εἴη, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἔξω ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἡ ἀντίληψις·

[19] ἀλλὰ συναίσθησιν μὲν αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἡμῶν συναισθανόμεθα, δοτέον, αἴσθησιν δὲ ἀεὶ ἑτέρου οὖσαν οὐ δοτέον· ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν ἡμεῖς παρὰ τὸ καθεστὼς ἀεί τινος τῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι ἀντιλαμβανώμεθα, ἔξωθεν προσελθόντος ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα.

power of the lower soul is limited to judging impressions it receives from sense-perception and Intellect accordingly. Being aware of an affection occurring in the body does not even come close to self-knowledge, since the sensitive power is confined to the perception of external objects, and the apprehension of the affection, which is produced during sense-perception, is external to the sensitive power. The second passage comes from a discussion of whether or not the All (the whole heaven and cosmos) has sense-perception. He claims that the All cannot have sense-perception because it lacks an organ distinct from a perceived object, and because it is incapable of being affected by an external object, which are necessary conditions for sense-perception. The All does have self-perception or awareness, though, since the world soul animates the All and places it in a sympathetic relation to its own internal parts. So just as we have self-awareness due to the sympathetic relation we have to our internal parts, so too must the whole heaven and cosmos. Uniquely, we are capable of being affected by external objects, and our consciousness of these affections is an apprehension of something external to the soul. The switch from *sunaisthêsis* to *antilêpsis* (or their verb forms) serves to reinforce that one's own body is a part of the external world. Plotinus' discussion of pain will reinforce this by showing that the apprehension of our bodily states is similar to the apprehension of external objects and events.[20]

How does the soul apprehend the pain occurring in its body? What does it feel like for the soul to be in pain? These are difficult questions for any Platonist to answer who views the body as a tool, but especially tough for Plotinus since he also holds that one's own body is part of the external world and that the soul does not undergo affection with its body. Close attention to IV.4.18–21 reveals that the soul apprehends its bodily pains similar to the way it apprehends its perceptions of external objects, and that its apprehension of pain does not involve the feeling of pain.[21] To feel pain means to undergo an affection (IV.4.19.8). So, I begin with the notion of affection (*pathos*).

An affection is an alteration (*alloiôsis*), which involves being changed or being acted on. For example, experiencing pain and getting angry are affections. Central to Plotinus' notion of being affected (*to paskhein*) is that of a substrate persisting throughout a change while undergoing a

[20] My concern in this section is with pain, which Plotinus considers to be a bodily affection. For a discussion of bodily affections in the broader context of Plotinus' theory of emotions, see Emilsson (1998) and Caluori (2008).

[21] For an excellent discussion of the medical-scientific background of Plotinus' theory of pain, see Slaveva-Griffin (forthcoming).

change in qualities, which leaves the substrate in a different condition than it was in prior to the change and contributes nothing to the substrate's essential nature (VI.1.22.1–10). This requires that the substrate be a composite of matter and form (IV.7.12.18–20). Since Plotinus holds that the soul is simple, unitary, and self-same in its essential nature, affections must take place in the qualified body.

For my purposes, one interesting fact about the affections is that they are perceptible (*aisthêtê*). Plotinus makes this point twice in III.6.1–5, his most detailed discussion of the affections.[22] Some affections have their origin in the body and come to the attention of the soul by way of the imagination; e.g., the body undergoes an increase in temperature and the soul recognizes it is heated. Others have their origin in the soul but occur in the body – e.g., the soul experiences shame on thinking something disgraceful, or it experiences fear on realizing one's mortality – but the body undergoes change by way of the blood. The examples he gives in this context suggest he is thinking about involuntary physiological changes, such as pallor resulting from blood drawing within. However, he notes that unless shame or fear manifests itself in the body, it escapes our attention, but that when it does manifest itself in the body, it becomes perceptible. The context suggests that "perceptible" means the agent undergoing the affection is capable of perceiving it. But, given the affection takes place in the body and the body is as much a part of the external world as external objects, this suggests to me we can extend the meaning of "perceptible" to include others who observe the affection without undergoing it themselves. This implies that affections are physical states of the qualified body and are capable of being perceived by two or more persons.

By contrast, apprehensions of our affections and judgments concerning our affections are actualizations of the soul's powers, which are states of the soul (VI.4.6). Since the body cannot act on the soul, affections that begin in the body and appear to reach the soul do not *cause* the soul to be in a particular state but merely stimulate the soul to actualize one of its powers in its care for the body (III.6.2.47–52). Combined with the above claim that the content of apprehension or judgment is shaped by the presentation of the imagination, this suggests that they can be grasped only from the point of view of the one making the judgment or exercising the apprehension. For this reason, apprehensions also involve subjectivity.

[22] See III.6.3.19–22 and 4.23–26.

Plotinus makes implicit reference to Plato's *Philebus* in his discussion of pleasure and pain in IV.4.18–21.[23] So it is helpful to begin with Plato's view. At *Philebus* 31d–32b, Plato characterizes pains and pleasures in terms of opposed processes that destroy or restore the body's natural state. The natural state is the right mixture of the limit and the unlimited, which produces bodily harmony. For example, hunger is a disintegration of the right mixture, and is therefore a pain, while eating is a restoration, and is therefore a pleasure. Plotinus adapts this framework by holding that the state that is destroyed or restored is the unity of the body with the soul. Where Plato sees a "horizontal" process of the body being emptied of, and being filled with, the ingredients of a mixture, Plotinus sees a "vertical" process of the body being deprived of, and being restored with, its connection with the soul. Plotinus writes,

> This, then, is what is called pleasure and pain. We say that pain is cognition (*gnôsis*) of the body's withdrawal as it is being deprived of the image (*indalmatos*) of soul, and pleasure the living being's cognition that the image of soul is once again taking its place in the body. (IV.4.19.1–5: trans. Dillon and Blumenthal)[24]

This passage is as close to a definition of pleasure and pain as one can find in the *Enneads*. Herein Plotinus is drawing attention to two features of pleasure and pain. I will focus exclusively on pain (*algêdôn*). First, pain involves the body being deprived of its image (*indalma*). What he means by this is that the body is being deprived of the soul-trace, which animates it and provides it with the organic structure. Although it is difficult to see how pleasure and pain could involve dissolution and restoration of the body's connection with its soul-trace, it is clear from this passage that it does. Sadly, Plotinus does not elaborate on this point, but it could be that restoration of the right connection ensures fuller coverage of the soul's presence to body and proper functioning of psychic activities, which in turn enables the soul to remain unified and stay connected with the intelligible realities (III.6.6.58–62). Second, pain involves cognition (*gnôsis*) of the body's withdrawal from its soul-trace. The choice of the term "cognition" (*gnôsis*) reflects the fact that the lower soul is not caused to be in a state of pain, but rather the presence of the affection stimulates

[23] Henry and Schwyzer note in the apparatus criticus that IV.4.20.27 is a quotation from *Philebus* 35a2–4. Indeed, Plotinus' characterization of pain as involving a desire for the opposite of what one is experiencing is taken directly from Socrates' conversation with Protarchus at *Philebus* 31b–36c.

[24] Τοῦτο δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον ἡδονήν τε εἶναι καὶ ἀλγηδόνα, εἶναι μὲν ἀλγηδόνα γνῶσιν ἀπαγωγῆς σώματος ἰνδάλματος ψυχῆς στερισκομένου, ἡδονὴν δὲ γνῶσιν ζῴου ἰνδάλματος ψυχῆς ἐν σώματι ἐναρμοζομένου πάλιν αὖ.

the soul's rational power to care for its body. Plotinus speaks of the affection "teaching" (*didaskô*) the soul and the soul "learning" (*mathein*) by the contraction in the body. What he means by this is that the lower soul not only notices the pain occurring in the qualified body, but also begins to process and evaluate its content.

Let us use hunger as an example of how the soul apprehends pains in its body.[25] When the body is hungry, it feels pain in desiring the opposite of what it experiences. In this case, being filled with food. However, the desire the body forms is only a proto-desire (*proepithumia*)[26] since the body lacks a clear conception of what will produce the opposite experience. The body knows it needs to be filled. But filled with what? It is the soul "nearby," nature or the vegetative power, which begins to form a clear desire (*tranên epithumian*) of what object will produce the opposite experience. The body needs to be filled with food. However, nature cannot complete this desire on its own without the image of what is needed and an impulse to acquire it. So, nature draws on the phase of soul immediately above it, namely, the lower soul tasked with care of the qualified body, and completes the formation of the clear desire.

In the final stage of this process nature desires "from and through" the lower soul, which suggests that the lower soul is needed to complete the desire. It is the rational capacities of the lower soul that enable it to form a clear desire and a correct belief about how best to eliminate the hunger.[27] Importantly, the fact that pain involves a proto-desire for the opposite of what one is experiencing shows that the content of bodily pain includes more than a raw feeling of discomfort, but also some degree of conceptualization and striving. Likewise, the cognition of pain includes this content. This suggests that Plotinus does not sharply distinguish between awareness of the occurrence of pain and inspection of the content of pain.

Once we take into account that the lower soul is an incorporeal power and the qualified body is spatially extended, how the soul-trace present in the body desires from and through the lower soul becomes problematic.

[25] I am drawing on IV.4.20.21–36 for this example.

[26] For the origins of the *propatheiai* in Stoicism, see Graver (1999).

[27] Christopher Noble has recently interpreted this passage to suggest that it is nature (i.e., the nutritive soul) that forms the fully fledged appetitive desire of what the body needs (2016: 270–271). However, I interpret lines 35–36 of this passage to suggest that nature draws on the lower soul to complete the fully fledged desire: "but that nature desires from and through something else, and it is another soul which provides what is desired or not." The phrase "through something else" (δι' ἄλλου) refers to the lower soul.

For how could an impassible soul form a clear desire for an opposite experience without experiencing the content of the pain? Plotinus' answer is consistent with his analysis of apprehension of desiderative and perceptual activities: sense-perception perceives the image (*phantasian*) and consequently the lower soul either provides what is desired or does not provide what is desired (IV.4.20.18–20). By "sense-perception" he is referring to the activity of the sensitive soul (*aisthêtikê psukhê*), which is responsible for perceiving affections and reporting them to the imagination. By "image" he is referring to the intelligible form that is produced within the soul, which reveals itself (the event of being in pain) and its cause (depletion of food). In other words, the image informs the lower soul of the occurrence and the content of its pain, thereby providing the lower soul with content to form a clear desire concerning what the body needs to be filled with.

Since pain is an affection and affections can take place only in the qualified body, the lower soul does not "feel" the pain. Rather, the qualified body "feels" the pain. In support of this, Plotinus argues that since the soul is present as a whole in all the parts of body, if it felt the pain then the pain would be felt everywhere, and it would not be able to report reliably where the pain is taking place. However, since pain is localized in parts of the body, the affection must take place in the qualified body (IV.4.19.13–19). This should come as no surprise given the juxtaposition of Plotinus' psychology with Stoic psychology in the previous chapter. By viewing the soul and body as totally blended with one another and the body being sustained through tensile movement, Hierocles holds that the soul and the body share affections. By contrast, by viewing the soul as incorporeal and impassible Plotinus holds that soul and body do not share affections. He makes this clear in an important passage:

> So, it is the part that is affected that hurts (*to peponthos algei*), unless one takes "hurts" as including the succeeding perception. If one does take it together, though, one clearly means this, that "pain" is to be taken along with the pain's not failing to come to the attention of sense-perception. In fact, though, we must call the sensation itself not pain, but rather cognition (*gnôsis*) of pain, and say that since it is cognition it is free from affection (*apathê*), so that it can cognize and give a sound report. (IV.4.19.23–29: trans. Dillon and Blumenthal)[28]

[28] ἐκεῖνο μὲν οὖν τὸ πεπονθὸς ἀλγεῖ, εἰ μή τις τὸ "ἀλγεῖ" μετὰ τὸ ἐφεξῆς αἰσθήσεως περιλαμβάνοι· περιλαμβάνων δὲ δηλονότι τοῦτο σημαίνει, ὡς ὀδύνη μετά τοῦ μὴ λαθεῖν τὴν ὀδύνην τὴν αἴσθησιν. ἀλλ' οὖν τὴν αἴσθησιν αὐτὴν οὐκ ὀδύνην λεκτέον, ἀλλὰ γνῶσιν ὀδύνης· γνῶσιν δὲ οὖσαν ἀπαθῆ εἶναι, ἵνα γνῷ καὶ ὑγιῶς ἀπαγγείλῃ.

Plotinus does not state this explicitly to my knowledge, but he appears to follow Plato's view that there are no purely physical pains. In order for an affection to count as a pain, it has to be "felt," and in order to be "felt," it has to be experienced by some psychic capacity.[29] But Plotinus complicates Plato's view by having two phases of soul involved, the soul-trace in the body and the lower soul caring for the body. This explains why he addresses the issue in this passage whether the lower soul also "hurts" when it perceives the image, which, as we saw above, reveals the pain event and its cause. This is what he means by the clause "unless one takes hurts as including the succeeding perception." Plotinus' response is that when we say that feeling pain includes the subsequent perception of the pain, we do not mean that the lower soul feels the pain. This would commit us to the lower soul undergoing affection, which is impossible. Rather, what we mean is that we are considering the pain along with the fact that the lower soul notices it. In other words, Plotinus is reminding us not to confuse the physical event of being in pain with the psychic perception of the pain. The former is a felt pain, the latter is a cognition of the pain, a kind of higher level processing that does not include its phenomenal component. Thus, Plotinus begins IV.4.19 with a characterization of pain that includes the lower soul's cognition of it ("pain is cognition of the body's withdrawal as it is being deprived of the image of soul"), but he ends by carefully distinguishing between the physical event of being in pain and the psychic event of perceiving and/or processing the pain ("If one does take it together, though, one clearly means this, that 'pain' is to be taken along with the pain's not failing to come to the attention of sense-perception").

It is tempting to suppose that my analysis of IV.4.19.22–28 applies exclusively to the Sage, since only the Sage adopts a calm stance toward his own pains and sets virtue against his affections (I.4.8). However, it is important to note that there is no mention of the Sage in IV.4.18–21, and these chapters lack the normative tone that treatises such as I.4 *On Well Being* and III.2 *On Providence* (especially chapters 15–18) have. So, it is for the Sage and for non-Sages alike that the feeling of pain and the apprehension/cognition of pain are separate events. The former has phenomenal or qualitative properties, the latter does not. In my view, Plotinus' supporting argument for why the soul does not feel pain at IV.4.19.13–19 is decisive on this point.[30]

[29] See *Philebus*, 33d–34a, 35c–d, and 43b–c. See also Dorothea Frede (1992: 441)

[30] For an alternative view, see Caluori (2008: 132–134). Caluori holds that there is a phenomenal counterpart in the soul that corresponds to the phenomenal aspect of the affection in the qualified

Plotinus' theory of the apprehension of pleasures and pains is consistent with his metaphysics. However, one cannot help notice the alienation from one's own body that it suggests despite Plotinus' insistence that the body is not alien or foreign (*allotrios*). Ultimately, our bodies are tools in which the feelings of pleasure and pain occur, but our lower souls are the "we" that cognizes the feelings of pleasure and pain. The tools are ours since we own them (recall the first layer of consciousness provides ownership of physical and psychic states). But one cannot help notice that the "we," on Plotinus' view, is more of a spectator of its own pleasures and pains, rather than a participant. This is not a problem for Plotinus since he ultimately views the higher soul as a spectator toward its own embodied life, likening one's living body to a character one plays in a theatrical production and exhorting us to treat our crying and moaning like playing (III.2.15)! However, it is illustrative just how different Plotinus' theory of consciousness is from modern and contemporary theories. In many contemporary theories of consciousness, the felt qualities of pleasure and/or pain are often introduced as the qualities of mental states with which we are most familiar, and the ones that are most immediate. By contrast, in Plotinus' theory, it is not the phenomenology of pleasure and pain that is the most familiar and the most immediate, but rather the phenomenology of intellection due to the kinship (*suggeneia*) and consubstantiality (*homoousia*) of our intellects with intelligible being (IV.7.10). The latter takes a significant amount of self-sculpting, of course, but once accomplished the phenomenology of intellection is immediately given.

The fact that we are spectators of our pleasures and pains raises an important epistemic implication that has not been appreciated by Plotinus scholars. Images put me in touch with the states of my body. But who is to say that I couldn't be mistaken about what is going on in my body? Couldn't one or more of my cognitive powers be functioning poorly when I grasp the image? Couldn't one of my sense-organs be functioning poorly when I produce the image? In which case, couldn't the content of the image be more of a reflection of the constitution of the organ of touch, rather than the actual state of my body?[31] I believe the answer to this is "yes," and I believe the arguments Plotinus gives against externalism in V.5.1–2 can be used to support this. I will explain this in detail in Chapter 5. Suffice it to say that if we cognize external objects by means of images, including states or events of

body. I think this may work for emotions such as fear or shame, which on Caluori's view involve emotive representations with phenomenal content, but I do not think this works for bodily pain.

[31] Plotinus views the organ of touch to be present in the nerves, which are distributed throughout the entire body, and the power of touch to be present as a whole in every part of the body. See IV.3.23.3–17.

our external bodies, then we do not have truth and, therefore, do not have knowledge of them. What we have is something closer to true belief, which is epistemically inferior to knowledge due to lacking conviction in what is believed to be the case, being mediated and being fallible. As Plotinus writes, "[t]his is the reason, I think, that in acts of sense-perception, too, truth is not found, but only belief (*doxa*), because belief is receptive, and for this reason, being belief, it receives something other than that from which it receives what it has" (V.5.1.63–67: trans. Gerson). Since the "we" cognizes pain but does not experience the pain, the belief that the "we" forms about the pain occurring in its body could be mistaken. I doubt Plotinus thinks that, under normal circumstances, we could be mistaken about being in pain. I suspect he would view it as an error in providence, if we were related to our own bodies in such a way that we could believe we are in pain, when we are not. However, I see no reason why he wouldn't think, under normal circumstances, we could be mistaken about our identification or discrimination of a particular pain we are experiencing. If I am right that we perceive pain the way we perceive external objects, and that perceiving via images introduces the possibility of error, it follows that the same holds for the perception of pain.

We may find it difficult to attribute this view to Plotinus, or perhaps even to regard it as a defensible philosophical view. This is because there is a deeply ingrained belief among many contemporary philosophers that pain reports such as "I have an aching pain in my left knee" are incorrigible (incapable of being corrected) and infallible (incapable of being mistaken). Behind this lies the view that there is no appearance/reality distinction in the case of pain. In the case of perception, it is always possible that the way an object appears to us differs from the way the object actually is. This has to do with the fact that objects are mind-independent, public, and objective. In the case of pain (so the story goes), it is not possible that the way we appear to be in pain could differ from the way we actually are in pain. This has to do with the fact that pains are mind-dependent, private, and subjective. In the case of pains, the appearance is the reality. This gives us a special kind of epistemic authority with respect to our pains, such that if we believe we are in pain, then necessarily we are in pain. Therefore, if we appear to be in pain, then we are in pain, and we are incorrigible and/or infallible in our discrimination and identification of pain.[32] Regardless of whether this is a correct philosophical view, this is not Plotinus' view. As I argued above, pains are affections; affections are physical states of the

[32] See M. Aydede, "Pain," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/pain/.

qualified body; and the lower soul forms beliefs about the pains that are occurring in the qualified body via images, which are subject to the possibility of error. The locus of infallible awareness lies not with the epistemic relation we bear to our bodily sensations, but with the relation we bear toward our noetic states.

If the above analysis is correct, Plotinus neither distinguishes between awareness of the feeling of pain and awareness of the conceptualized pain state (because pain involves a proto-desire for the opposite of what one is experiencing) nor does he regard awareness of pain as being either immediate or infallible (because images put me in touch with my affective states and whatever I cognize via images I can be mistaken about). The externality of body and the interplay of the two phases of soul provide a radically different view of what it is like to be embodied and experience pain. Therefore, we should exercise caution in ascribing the following influential view to Plotinus:

> On Plotinus' view, the sensitive soul's ability to inform the commanding centre of the soul about the pain in the body is infallible. The soul can mistake the pain only in the sense that it can give too much significance or attention, but there is no failure in the way the bodily state is reported to the soul itself. A soul's knowledge of pain in the particular body it ensouls is in that sense immediate. (Remes 2007: 97)
>
> Self-awareness of one's pain is immediate and infallible in the self-reflexive sense, a mere feeling behind the expressive ouch whereas introspective – or reflective – awareness of the pain already interprets it as something, conceptualizes it as "pain." (Remes 2007: 98)[33]

4.3 Apprehension of Sense-Perception

Plotinus' most extensive discussion of the imagination occurs in three short chapters of the *Enneads*, IV.3.29–31. These three chapters, in turn, are embedded in a larger discussion of memory, IV.3.25–4.4.12. The first chapter establishes that memory belongs to the imagination, and explains the role that the imagination plays in the memory of sense-perceptions; the

[33] In a recent article, Remes makes a claim that may make her position immune from my criticism: "The activities of an infallible thinker are as immediately given to itself as its objects of thinking. It enjoys a privileged access to them, because its own essence, the thinking activity, reveals itself to itself. Ordinary thinkers are not related to all of their own mental states or activities equally infallibly [as Intellect is], but can access them with more or less effort, as testified by ordinary life experiences" (2017: 85). However, this commits Plotinus to something like degrees of infallibility. I am skeptical of this.

second chapter establishes that the imagination is responsible for the memory of thoughts, and explains the role that the imagination plays in the memory of thoughts; the third chapter explains how we experience ourselves as unified agents despite having two imaginative faculties. These are the primary chapters, particularly 29–30, that contain Plotinus' views on the apprehension of our perceptual and noetic activities. Much of what I say henceforth is an extended commentary and analysis of IV.3.29–31.

The reason why Plotinus posits two imaginative faculties is because he wants to retain memories for both the higher and lower souls. He draws on a passage from the *Odyssey* in which Homer recounts Odysseus' encounter with the shade of Heracles in the underworld to illustrate this.[34] Plotinus likens the higher soul to Heracles himself, who resides with the immortal gods on Mount Olympus, and the lower soul to the shade of Heracles, whom Odysseus encounters in the underworld. The point of this literary comparison is to suggest that the higher soul has memories of its own, just as Heracles himself does, as well as memories it has in common with the body, just as the shade of Heracles does in the underworld. Two faculties of imagination are required for this since Plotinus holds that memory belongs to the imagination (IV.3.29.31–32).

Plotinus recognizes the difficulty involved with positing two imaginative faculties. If both the higher and lower soul have imaginative faculties, each of which is responsible for its own memories, it seems unlikely that the two souls would have anything in common with each other during our embodied life. In answer to this, he claims that we experience ourselves as unities when the two souls are in harmony with each other. When the stronger soul (i.e., the higher soul) exerts its influence over the weaker soul (i.e., the lower soul) and brings the two souls into harmony, "the image (*to phantasma*) becomes one, as if a shadow followed the other and as if a little light slipped under a greater one" (IV.3.31.11–13). In other words, the image of the lower soul follows the image of the higher soul the way a shadow follows light, or the way a bright light consumes a dimmer light. When the two souls are in disharmony, the image of the lower soul becomes dominant and draws the attention of the soul outward to things contrary to its nature (IV.8.8.15–25). In neither case does Plotinus think we experience ourselves as two different, unrelated souls inhabiting a body. Let us now turn to the apprehension of our perceptual states.

Plotinus begins IV.3.29 by returning to a question he poses in IV.3.25, namely, "[T]o which faculty of the soul does memory belong?" His initial

[34] Plotinus draws on *Odyssey* 11.601ff. at IV.3.27 and I.1.12.

proposal is that memory belongs to the sensitive power (*to aisthêtikon*),[35] but he quickly realizes this initial proposal results in an inconsistency. If memory belongs to the sensitive power, then the sensitive power will remember both sense objects and intelligible objects, since we frequently have memories of both perceptions and thoughts. However, this cannot be the case since it conflicts with his view that "sense-perception is the soul's apprehension of the objects of sense by making use of the body" (IV.7.8.2–4). The sensitive soul can grasp spatially extended objects because the sense-organs by means of which it grasps them are also spatially extended. Thoughts and reasonings are not spatially extended; hence they cannot be grasped by the body. On pain of inconsistency, Plotinus jettisons this proposal.

In place of the sensitive part, Plotinus proposes the imagination in the following dense passage:

> But still, if it is going to be necessary for each of the two [the power of sense-perception and the power of memory] to be different, and a different thing will perceive what sense-perception perceived earlier, is it even necessary that this different thing perceive what it is going to remember? Now nothing will prevent the object of the remembering power's perception (*to aisthêma*) from being an image (*phantasma*) for that which is going to remember it, and [nothing will prevent] the memory and the retention of it from belonging to the imagination (*tô phantastikô*), which is something different. For the imagination is that into which sense-perception terminates, and when the sensible object is no longer there what is seen is present in this. (IV.3.29.19–26)[36]

In this proposal, Plotinus distinguishes between the remembering power and the sensitive power, and attributes the remembering power to the imagination. At first glance, this may not seem like an improvement on his initial proposal since the imagination has a long history of being dependent on the body. For example, Aristotle maintains that the imagination belongs to the sensitive power of soul and is dependent on the body for its operation (*De Anima* 403a8–10, 428b10ff.; cf. *De Memoria* 449b31ff.). If this were Plotinus' view, he would still be faced with the above inconsistency since the imagination would be dependent on the body for its

[35] This is Aristotle's view. See *De Memoria* 450a1–14 and 451a14–17.

[36] ἀλλὰ πάλιν αὖ, εἰ ἄλλο ἑκάτερον δεήσει εἶναι, καὶ ἄλλο μνημονεύσει ὧν ἡ αἴσθησις ᾔσθετο πρότερον, κἀκεῖνο δεῖ αἰσθέσθαι οὗπερ μελλήσει μνημονεύσειν; ἢ οὐδὲν κωλύσει τῷ μνημονεύσοντι τὸ αἴσθημα φάντασμα εἶναι, καὶ τῷ φανταστικῷ ἄλλῳ ὄντι τὴν μνήμην καὶ κατοχὴν ὑπάρχειν· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν, εἰς ὃ λήγει ἡ αἴσθησις, καὶ μηκέτι οὔσης τούτῳ πάρεστι τὸ ὅραμα.

operation and, as such, unable to grasp unextended thoughts. This is not Plotinus' view, however. The capacities belonging to the soul-trace – nourishment, reproduction, growth, and the passive power of perception – require the body for their operation. The capacities belonging the lower soul – from the active power of perception to discursive reasoning – do not require the body for their operation. Although the imagination is concerned with functions that are dependent on the body, it is not dependent on the body for its operation. So, the imagination is able to remember both sensible objects and intelligible objects.

There are two points of this passage that I want to focus on. The first is the distinction between the objects of sense-perception and the imagination. The object of the power of sense-perception is an *external* object, e.g., a blue book. The object of the imagination is the *internal* image of the sense-object, e.g., a psychic representation of a blue book. The imagination is thus likened to a perception of internal images. This is what Plotinus means by saying "nothing will prevent the object of the remembering power's perception (*to aisthêma*) from being an image (*phantasma*) for that which is going to remember it" (21–22).[37] Since Plotinus disagrees with Aristotle that the imagination is dependent on the body and concerned primarily with residua of sense-perception, we should expect an alternative explanation of what images are and how they are produced in the soul.

The second point is the doctrine that sense-perception terminates in the imaginative faculty. This might seem unnecessary given the broad role that Plotinus assigns to the sensitive soul. In his argument for the incorporeality of soul in IV.7.6, he claims that the sensitive soul is responsible for the unity of perception, which involves both the coordination of various perceptions from the same power and the coordination of perceptions from different powers. Imagination does not play an explicit role in that context. So, what other role could the imagination play in an ordinary act of sense-perception?

In order to explain these two points – the distinction between the sensible object and the image of it in the soul and the termination of sense-perceptions in the imagination – I will give a brief outline of Plotinus' theory of sense-perception. The three doctrines of his theory

[37] This distinction is easily missed in Armstrong's translation of *to aisthêma* at line 24 as "perception." The preceding lines make it clear that what Plotinus is talking about is not perception as such, but the object of the remembering power's perception. Emilsson (1988: 109) also translates it in the manner I proposed above.

that I will elaborate on are: (1) that sense-organs are in sympathy with external objects, (2) that sense-perceptions are judgments, and (3) that the soul's power of perception is of internal images. Once these topics are in full view, we'll be in a better position to understand the apprehension of our perceptual activities.

4.3.1 Sense-Organs Are in Sympathy with External Objects

Plotinus holds that sense-perception depends on the All being in a state of sympathy with itself (*sumpathês heautô*: IV.5.3.19–21). What produces the state of being in sympathy with itself is the fact that the All is ensouled by the world soul. Recall that the world soul unites the disparate parts of the All into a single living thing; it coordinates the roles of each of its parts and integrates their functions into the maintenance of the All; and it places the parts into a community with respect to common feeling. Recall also that we are among the parts of the All insofar as the world soul animates our bodies with the soul-trace, providing us with vegetative power and the passive power of perception (*pathêtikôs aisthêtikon*). This latter power equips our bodily sense organs with the capacity to receive stimuli from the environment. The fact that it is the world soul that provides us with the passive power of perception plays a key role in this theory of sense-perception, since this places our bodies into a harmonious network with sensible objects and enables our sense organs to take on their affections.[38]

During an ordinary act of sense-perception the soul grasps spatially extended objects in the external world without undergoing affection and without an intervening physical medium, such as the transparent.[39] How it accomplishes this is problematic due to the sharp distinction Plotinus draws between soul and body. For instance, how can soul grasp a spatially extended object located in physical space if soul itself is incorporeal and impassible? The answer lies with the bodily sense organs, which occupy an intermediate position between the soul and body and inform the soul of the characteristics of body. On the one hand, they are capable of receiving the quality of a sensible object and consequently undergoing affection; on the other hand, they are capable of communicating this affection as form

[38] See II.3.7.14–28, IV.4.32.4–26, and IV.4.37.12–19.

[39] In treatise IV.5.1, Plotinus develops his theory of sense-perception against the Aristotelian view, which holds that sense-perception requires a medium through which sense faculties perceive their perceptible objects. For example, in Aristotle's perceptual psychology the medium for sight, sound, and smell is the transparent (*diaphanes*), which is composed of some combination of air and water. See *De Anima* II.7–11.

to the soul. The form that enters the soul is stripped of its mass (*ogkos*) and extension (*megethos*), and is therefore intelligible (*noêton*). Importantly, the sensory affection that is transmitted as form just is the quality of an object transformed in a different mode.[40] In this capacity, the sense organs enable the soul to grasp the spatial features of external objects without being affected due to the fact that soul perceives the qualities of an object in an intelligible mode. What enables the sense-organs to play this bridging role is the fact that the world soul assimilates (*homoiôthei*) them to both soul and sensible objects, making them "like" sensible objects by retaining certain characteristics of that which produces the affection and making them "like" soul by the fact that their affection becomes form (IV.4.23.22–33, IV.5.1.10–13). Thus, the sense organs are naturally disposed to receive affections from sensible objects in virtue of cosmic sympathy.

4.3.2 Sense-Perceptions Are Judgments

On his reading of the Aristotelians and the Stoics, sensible objects impress themselves upon the soul in the way a signet ring impresses itself upon a ball of wax and provides the soul with sensory content. Just as the ball of wax receives the spatial imprint of the signet ring and undergoes an alteration, so too does the soul receive the spatial imprint of the sensible object and become altered. Plotinus opposes the Aristotelian and Stoic view that the soul is affected and undergoes alteration during sense-perception. In place of this view, he proposes "sense perceptions are not affections, but activities concerning affections and judgments" (III.6.1.1–2: trans. mine).[41]

There is disagreement over the translation of this passage, so I want to begin by justifying my translation. Armstrong translates this passage as "sense-perceptions are not affections, but activities and judgments concerned with affections." Though grammatically correct, this translation is misleading. It implies that judgments are concerned with affections in the sense-organs, not qualities of the sensible objects. This makes Plotinus sound as if he is saying that perceptual judgments are concerned with how our bodies are affected, not with how objects are constituted. However, this would be inconsistent with his theory of sense-perception, since he holds that what we perceive are the *qualities* of physical objects, not the

[40] See Emilsson (1988: 143) and Chiaradonna (2012: 194).

[41] Τὰς αἰσθήσεις οὐ πάθη λέγοντες εἶναι, ἐνεργείας δὲ περί παθήματα καὶ κρίσεις . . .

affections caused by them.[42] I agree with Emilsson that "there is no need to understand 'concerning affections' as an implied complement to *kriseis*" (1998: 75).

Barrie Fleet has challenged Emilsson's interpretation and proposed instead the translation, "We stated that sense-perceptions were not affections, but activities and judgments to do with impressions" (1995: 73). Fleet maintains that we can take *kriseis* as parallel with *energeias* and supply a second *peri pathêmata* after it without implying that judgments are concerned with the affections due to a distinction he draws between affection (*pathos*) and impression (*pathêma*). According to Fleet, Plotinus uses *pathêma* not in the technical sense of "affection" in III.6.1–5 but in the sense of "impression." However, I do not think the textual evidence supports the distinction that Fleet is attempting to draw. Plotinus uses *pathêma* three times in III.6.1–5, and only one of the instances of *pathêma* can be understood in the sense of impression (1.2), while the other two are used in the standard sense of affection (5.4 and 5.12). I remain unconvinced by Fleet's explanation of this passage, so I stand with Emilsson in translating *kriseis* without the implied complement.

By "activities concerning affections," Plotinus is calling attention to the fact that sense-perception is a power and that the exercise of this power is an actualization that does not involve alteration (III.6.2.46–52). Recall that Plotinus distinguishes between power and potential being. Power (*dunamis*) is a capacity to act through one's own agency, whereas potential being (*to dunamei einai*) is a capacity to become something through the agency of something else. The actualization of what has power is its own activation, whereas the actualization of what has potential being is the action of an agent on a patient, which alters the patient and leaves it in a different state than it was prior to the actualization. Applied to sense-perception, this means that the affection in the sense-organ does not *cause* the soul to actualize its potentiality to perceive, but merely "stimulates" the soul to activate its sensitive power in its care for the body (IV.6.2.1–19). Importantly, this involves activating a priori content the soul possesses within itself (III.6.2.34–36, IV.6.3.16–19, and V.3.4. 15–19).[43]

By "judgments," Plotinus is calling attention to the fact that sense-perception is not a passive reception of the qualities of an object, but a

[42] See IV.4.23.1–4.

[43] Riccardo Chiaradonna (2012) and Sara Magrin (2010) both discuss the discursive soul's a priori content and its role in sense-perception, but they reach very different conclusions. I am in agreement with Chiaradonna and I will draw on his analysis below. I share his criticism of Magrin's position, and I defer to his article for a criticism of her position.

critical and discriminatory act. The judgments that constitute sense-perception include low-level discriminations such as color and shape and higher-level discriminations such as human being or face. Perceiving an external object is a matter of receiving the form (*eidos*) or quality (*poiotês*) of the special sensible. However, the truth claims that sense-perception makes exceed the scope of the special sensibles. Though Plotinus thinks that the special sensibles are in some sense the primary objects of sense-perception,[44] several passages warrant the inference that perceptual judgments are not confined to the special sensibles. For example, Plotinus does not limit sight to the perception of color, but thinks that sight can also perceive *a human being*. He says, "Sense-perception sees a human being and gives its imprint (*tupon*) to discursive reason" (V.3.3.1–2). The immediate context of this passage suggests that sense-perception sees a human being and gives its imprint to discursive reason, then discursive reason evaluates this judgment further in connection with imagination and memory by conversing with itself, asking such questions as "Who is this?" and answering, "This is Socrates."

The initial sense-perception, "I see a human being" or "I judge that what I see is a human being," bears truth or falsity prior to the evaluation of discursive reasoning. For example, Plotinus says that "it happens that the perception of the joint entity sees falsely before the reasoning faculty passes an evaluation (*epikrinai*)" (I.1.9. 11–13). I take it that the addition of the prefix *epi* reinforces the idea that sense-perception passes an initial judgment like "the object approaching me is a human being," and discursive reason passes additional judgments like "this human being is Socrates." Taken together, these two passages suggest that sense-perception judges that something is the case concerning a sense object, e.g., that a human being is in front of me, but that the reasoning faculty evaluates anything further, such as who the human being is or whether he is good.

Plotinus does not share our interest in perceptual phenomenology, regarding activities such as tasting flavor as an encumbrance and distraction of the soul (IV.4.25.12–14)! However, he is concerned to show that his theory that sense-perceptions are judgments can preserve the different phenomenologies that each sense organ reports. For Plotinus, the reason why sight has a different phenomenology than hearing is because each sense-organ activates the sensitive soul in a peculiar manner. The same power of soul is present in each sense organ since the soul is present as a whole throughout the body; nonetheless, each sense organ possesses a

[44] For example, see II.8.1.

unique manner of activation.[45] So, the qualitative features of sight differ from the qualitative features of hearing because affections come to differ according to the organs (IV.3.3.23). Moreover, just as the experiential qualities of pain belong to the qualified body, so too do the experiential qualities of sense-perception belong to the qualified body. The "what it's like" of how the organ is affected occurs in the qualified body, but the cognition of it and the qualities of the object that cause it occur in the soul. However, although experiences differ widely, the judgment that constitutes sense-perception comes from one and the same principle that remains uniform throughout different experiences, namely, the sensitive soul.

4.3.3 Soul's Power of Perception Is of Internal Images

The active power of perception – what Plotinus calls "the perception which judges with intelligence" (*hê de aisthêsis hê krinousa meta nou*)[46] – comes from the lower soul tasked with the care of the qualified body. Hitherto I have used the term "sense-perception" (*aisthêsis*) to refer to the entire process of perception: from the affection in the organ to the judgment in the soul. However, the fact that in the construction of a living body the world soul provides the passive power of perception and the lower soul provides the active power of perception should alert us to the possibility that this term is ambiguous. In fact, Plotinus distinguishes between two types of *aisthêsis.* He writes,

> It is not necessary that the soul's power of perceiving (*aisthanesthai*) be of sense-objects, but rather it must be apprehensive (*antilêptikên*) of the impressions produced by sense-perception (*tês aisthêseôs*) on the living being; for these are already intelligible (*noêta*). So external sense-perception is the image of this [namely, the soul's power of perceiving], the one that is, in reality, truer and is a contemplation of forms alone without being affected. (I.1.7.9–14)[47]

This passage highlights a distinction between the soul's power of perception and sense-perception. The former belongs to the soul and has an intelligible entity as its intentional object; the latter belongs to the qualified

[45] See IV.3.3.13–16 and IV.3.23.10–20. [46] See IV.9.3.23–28. Compare II.1.5.22–24.

[47] τὴν δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ αἰσθάνεσθαι δύναμιν οὐ τῶν αἰσθητῶν εἶναι δεῖ, τῶν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἐγγιγνομένων τῷ ζώῳ τύπων ἀντιληπτικὴν εἶναι μᾶλλον· νοητὰ γὰρ ἤδη ταῦτα· ὡς τὴν αἴσθησιν τὴν ἔξω εἴδωλον εἶναι ταύτης, ἐκείνην δὲ ἀληθεστέραν τῇ οὐσίᾳ οὖσαν εἰδῶν μόνων ἀπαθῶς εἶναι θεωρίαν.

body and has a sensible object in the external world as its intentional object. Plotinus does not mention the object of sense-perception in this passage, but it is clearly implied and consistent with his views elsewhere. Plotinus refers to such intelligible entities by several different terms throughout the *Enneads*, e.g., form (*eidos*),[48] image (*phantasia, phantasma*),[49] or impression (*tupos*, *tupôsis*).[50] I shall refer to them collectively as "images" to call attention to the relationship they have with the imagination. The important characteristics of these images are that they are (1) internal, i.e., they take place within the lower soul; (2) intelligible, i.e., they lack mass and extension; (3) intentional, i.e., they represent external objects and events; and (4) self-intimating, i.e., they announce their presence to the soul.[51] Thus, when Plotinus explains an ordinary act of sense-perception along the following lines, "cognition belongs to the sensitive soul, which perceives in the neighborhood of the affection and reports to that in which the sense-perceptions terminate" (IV.4.19.6–8), we can understand him to be saying that the image that sense-perception delivers to the imagination is an intelligible representation of the external object perceived. It is from these images that we form true beliefs concerning the external world.

It is important to note that although Plotinus utilizes Stoic terminology, namely, impression (*tupos*, *tupôsis*) and image (*phantasia*, *phantasma*) to describe the entities from which the soul derives perceptual content, the reference of the terms is not the same. Plotinus reminds us throughout the *Enneads* that "impressions are not magnitudes; nor are they like seal impressions or counter pressures or stamps, because there is no pushing and it is not like what happens in wax, but the way of it is like thinking even in the case of sense-objects" (IV.3.26.29–33; cf. III.6.1.7–12). The intelligible entities that sense-perception produces in the soul are as free from spatial extension as thoughts. These are same type of entity we encountered earlier in this chapter in connection with pain and desire, namely, images that put the soul in touch with the affective states of its own body. These are the images that serve as the basis for memory, imagination, and discursive reasoning.

This distinction between the soul's power of perception and external sense-perception is difficult to see, since Plotinus uses the verb *aisthanesthai* to refer to the former, and *aisthêsis* to refer to the latter. In order to preserve this distinction, I use the term "apprehension" to refer to the soul,

[48] See I.1.7.15. [49] See IV.3.29.24–27. [50] See III.6.1.8–10 and IV.3.26.30.
[51] See I.1.7.9–14, III.6.1.6–12, and IV.3.26.30–33.

and "sense-perception" to refer to the compound. So, sense-perception belongs to the compound and involves the body; apprehension belongs to the soul and does not involve the body. The point that Plotinus is making in this passage is that the soul's power of perception differs from external sense-perception in that it is an internal apprehension (*antilêpsis*) of images. Moreover, the soul's power of perception and the power of inner perception at IV.8.8.9–12 and IV.4.17.11–14 belong to the imagination.[52] Both involve the soul functioning through itself and grasping images, which are internal, intelligible, intentional, and self-intimating.

Plotinus claims that the soul's power of perception is truer (*alêthesteran*) than external sense-perception and is a contemplation of forms (*eidôn theôrian*). How could the apprehension of an image within the soul be truer than the sense-perception of the qualities of an object? How could this be a form of contemplation? What could the connection between truth and contemplation be for a descended soul? The answer to these questions illustrates an important link between sensory and noetic consciousness. A modern reader influenced by the post-Cartesian tradition might be tempted to read this passage along the following lines: The image functions like a sense-datum, a private object of consciousness that possesses sensible qualities, and our perception of it is truer because we have a unique first-person authority over the contents of our own consciousness. However, this is anachronistic. The image present in one's soul is indeed something of which we are conscious and does indeed possess sensible qualities (though in an intelligible mode); however, it is not private and it is not something over which we have unique authority.

To appreciate this, we must take into account that perceptual judgments are ultimately grounded in the soul's possession of *logoi*. Hitherto, I have treated sense-perception as that which is responsible for judging both low-level (colors, shapes etc.) and higher-level objects (human beings). However, properly speaking, sense-perception is not a distinct power from discursive reasoning. It is the lowest cognitive capacity belonging to the lower soul, and derives its ability to judge by drawing on discursive reason: "The reasoning part therefore is there in the perceptive not as in a place but because that which is there draws upon it" (IV.3.23.34–35). When discursive reason forms judgments concerning sensible objects, such as "the human being in front of me is Socrates," it does so by "fitting" the qualities of objects contained in the image with the

[52] Blumenthal (1971: 42–43) states that imagination and inner sense merely "coincide." I think the evidence points in favor of my stronger claim that inner sense belongs to the imagination.

logoi it possesses within itself. *Logoi* are unfolded images of Forms, which the soul possesses a priori and are activated during sense-perception.[53] Plotinus refers to this process at V.3.2.11–14 as recollection (*anamnêsis*).[54]

When we perceive a beautiful body, we fit the beauty in body with the form present in us and use the form in us to judge beauty (I.6.3.4–6). When we declare a perceived person to be good, we draw on the form of goodness present in us (V.3.3.6–10). In both cases, the forms in us – which elsewhere Plotinus refers to as *logoi* – are described as *kanones*, which can be variously translated as "rulers," "measures," or "standards." The reflections of Forms in us ultimately provide rules for the application of normative/aesthetic concepts to persons. Although Plotinus does not provide an exhaustive list of which concepts we possess a priori, textual evidence suggests the soul is equipped with a wide array of a priori concepts necessary for making judgments concerning natural kinds and possibly artificial kinds.[55] Thus, the beliefs we form about sensible objects involve the coherence of the image of an object with the *logoi* in our soul. This suggests that true beliefs require us to go beyond the contents of our own consciousness, and ultimately draw on our connection with Forms.

What makes the soul's power of perception truer than external sense-perception is that it is of intelligible images, which are recognized as akin to the *logoi* in soul and to the soul's own nature, recognition of which motivates the soul to appropriate the images as its own. This brings the soul into a

[53] Emilsson's discussion of this is foundational (1988: 136–137). For recent developments of this view, see Chiaradonna (2012) and Helmig (2012: 184–204). Christopher Noble has recently argued against this "innatist" view on the grounds that Intellect is external to the soul's rational faculty, and, hence, it cannot acquire knowledge by actualizing latent concepts it already possesses (2016: 240–242). However, to my mind the principal passage he cites as evidence, V.9.5.1–10, does not imply that souls lose and reacquire knowledge from an "external" Intellect. Furthermore, to my mind the additional passages he cites as evidence, in connection with V.9.5.1–10, do not make the externality of Intellect explicit. If we keep in mind, as I argue above in Chapter 1, Sections 1.1 and 1.2, that Intellect is also "in us" and its laws are written "in us" like laws and, as I argue below in Chapter 5, Section 5.1, that we can reacquire lost knowledge by self-identifying with our higher soul and appropriating the intelligible objects with which our higher soul is identical, then the soul can acquire knowledge by actualizing latent concepts.

[54] There is tension between the usage of *anamnêsis* at V.3.2.11–14 and his usage of *anamnêsis* at IV.3.25.30–35. The former suggests that recollection involves the activation of latent concepts triggered by sense-perception, whereas the latter suggests recollection involves the activation of latent concepts through the power of memory. In fact, there is considerable debate among Plotinus scholars whether Plotinus has a theory of recollection, and whether it is consistent throughout the *Enneads*. This is not the space for me to enter this debate. For a view that coheres with, and indeed draws on, my analysis of *Ennead* IV.3.30 in an earlier article (Hutchinson 2011), see Chiaradonna (2018). For an approach different from Chiaradonna's, see Nikulin (2014). For a thorough discussion of recollection in the Platonic tradition, see Helming (2012).

[55] I am following Chiaradonna's excellent discussion of this point in (2012: 203–204). Passages he cites as support are V.3.2.8–14, IV.6.3. 5–6, and V.3.4.1–19.

closer state of unity with itself. Although apprehension is of a perceptual activity that is directed toward sensible objects and is causally connected to the external world (IV.6.1.14–19), nonetheless the soul strives to internalize the images of those qualities in order to become more unified. The reason why the soul does this is because the soul's power of perception is an image of Intellect's contemplation. Since Intellect's contemplation is constituted by an identity relation between Intellect and the intelligibles and it is in virtue of this identity relation that Intellect is in harmony with itself and possesses truth, the soul's power of perception aims at unity with its object to approximate the divine mind.[56] The sensitive soul is not a private sensory realm over which we have special authority; it is an inner space that is filled with reflections of Forms, with which we strive to unite in our attempt to embrace the whole of objective reality.

We are now in a position to understand why sense-perceptions terminate in the imagination. One way of interpreting Plotinus is to hold that sense-perceptions terminate in the imagination because that is where images are produced, and in order to remember or think about sense objects that are no longer present to the sensitive soul, the imagination must furnish an image to provide the memory or thought with content. This is the interpretation of Emilsson, who claims, "The most important function of *phantasia* is to be the 'locus' of these unextended entities that are involved in memory and discursive reasoning" (1988: 109). I think Emilsson is partly correct insofar as his interpretation fits key passages where Plotinus discusses sense-perception in connection with imagination, memory, and reasoning (most notably V.3.3.1–18). However, I think Emilsson runs the risk of Aristotelianizing Plotinus' theory of the imagination and overlooking the role it plays with respect to consciousness. If the sole responsibility of the Plotinian imagination was to provide perceptual content for memories, dreams, and thoughts, this would be a correct interpretation. However, since it is also responsible for the apprehension of our bodily and psychic activities, it goes far beyond the Aristotelian imagination.

On my interpretation, sense-perceptions terminate in the imagination for two reasons. First, the imagination stores images and furnishes them for higher psychic activities when an object is not present. And second, the imagination presents sense-perceptions to apprehension, whether we think of this along the line of presenting activities that occur in "parts" of the soul to the whole soul, as in the case of desires, or presenting activities that

[56] I explain this in detail in Chapter 5.

occur in the qualified body to the soul proper, as in the case of sense-perceptions.

It is easy to overlook the second role of the imagination to which I am calling attention because the judgment that constitutes sense-perception occurs simultaneously with the internal apprehension of the image that sense-perception produces. Recall that the passage from IV.3.29 quoted above says that the power responsible for memory (namely, the imagination) must have previously perceived what it is going to remember. The only time at which the power responsible for memory could have perceived what it is going to remember is during the initial sense-perception. So, imagination and sense-perception overlap. Or to be more precise, the imagination and sense-perception meet in the act of a conscious sense-perception. By conscious sense-perception, I mean a judgment that occurs simultaneously with the apprehension of an internal image. By contrast, a subconscious sense-perception is a judgment that either does not occur simultaneously with the apprehension of an internal image or does occur simultaneously with the apprehension of the internal image, but it is so faint that it does not become conscious.

The line between consciousness and subconsciousness is as slippery in late antiquity as it is in modern times. However, if we broaden the scope of our inquiry into Plotinus' theory of sense-perception to include consciousness, the imagination emerges as the obvious line between consciousness and subconsciousness. I think the reason why Emilsson does not take into account the role imagination plays with respect to consciousness is that he does not think Plotinus' interest in consciousness is connected to sense-perception. In the single page where he mentions consciousness in his book *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*, he says that "no previous Greek thinker was as much or as clearly concerned with it, even though Plotinus does not say much about consciousness in connection with sense-perception as such" (1988: 112).[57]

I think our disagreement is rooted in H.R. Schwyzer's classic article, "Bewusst und Unbewusst bei Plotin." As I mentioned above, in this article Schwyzer gives a historical analysis of consciousness terms in Greek with a view to explaining their role in Plotinus, but he does not count *antilêpsis* as a consciousness term. On top of this, several prominent scholars who have

[57] In a private correspondence, Emilsson has informed me that the impetus behind this quote is that Plotinus rarely uses "pure" consciousness terms such as *parakolouthêsis*, *sunaisthêsis*, and *sunesis* in connection with ordinary sense-perception. Emilsson agrees with me that *antilêpsis* often implies consciousness, but he thinks Plotinus rarely makes this explicit. I hope to have shown in the foregoing just how explicit is the role that imagination plays vis-à-vis consciousness in the apprehension of our perceptual activities.

written on Plotinus' psychology since 1960 have taken Schwyzer's article for granted. However, the historical analysis I have given on *antilêpsis* in the Appendix shows that it is just as much a "pure" consciousness term in Plotinus as *parakolouthêsis*, *sunaisthêsis*, and *sunesis*. Plotinus does use the term as a "generic form of grasping" along the lines of his predecessors, but he broadens the meaning of this term to include the internal apprehension of intelligible images. This broader meaning is not attested in the extant literature before Plotinus.

4.4 Apprehension of Thought

Plotinus' account of the memory of thoughts in IV.3.30 is significantly more complex than his account of the memory of sense-perceptions in IV.3.29. The reason for this added complexity is that IV.3.29 deals with sensible objects, whereas IV.3.30 deals with intelligible objects (*noêmata*, *dianoêmata*). The type of thoughts Plotinus is concerned with in this passage are those that belong to our intellects and are of the Forms. Borrowing an analogy from Plato, these are the kind of thoughts that would be located in the highest portion of the divided line (*Republic*, 509d–511c). I quote the chapter in full:

> But what is that remembers thoughts? Does the memory of these also belong to the imagination? [1] But if an image accompanies every thought, perhaps if this image remains, being a picture of the thought, in this way there would be memory of what is known. [2] But if not, we must search for another explanation. Perhaps the reception into the imagination would be of the *logos* that accompanies the thought. For the thought is without parts and has not come out into the open as it were, but escapes our notice lying within. But the *logos* unfolds its content and draws it out of the thought into the imagination and shows the thought as if in a mirror, and this is how there is apprehension (*antilêpsis*) of it, and memory and persistence. For this reason also, even though the soul is always moved towards thinking it is when it comes to be in the imagination that there is apprehension (*antilêpsis*) for us. For thinking is one thing, the apprehension (*antilêpsis*) of thinking another, and we are always thinking, but we do not always apprehend (*antilambanometha*) it. This is because what receives thoughts not only receives thoughts, but also sense-perceptions from the other side.[58]

[58] Τὸ δὲ τῶν διανοήσεων τί; ἆρα γε καὶ τούτων τὸ φανταστικόν; ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν πάσῃ νοήσει παρακολουθεῖ φαντασία, τάχα ἂν ταύτης τῆς φαντασίας, οἷον εἰκόνος οὔσης τοῦ διανοήματος, μενούσης οὕτως ἄν εἴη τοῦ γνωσθέντος ἡ μνήμη· εἰ δὲ μή, ἄλλο τι ζητητέον. ἴσως δ᾽ ἂν εἴη τοῦ λόγου τοῦ τῷ νοήματι παρακολουθοῦντος ἡ παραδοχὴ εἰς τὸ φανταστικόν. τὸ μὲν γὰρ νόημα

In [1] Plotinus presents an Aristotelian account of the memory of thoughts. Aristotle holds that memory is a function of the sensitive power of the soul and that we remember objects we formerly perceived or thought about by retaining the images that were impressed on the soul during the initial act of perceiving or thinking (*De Memoria* 449b9–450a32, 451a14–17). This involves the imagination since it is "that in virtue of which we say an image occurs to us" (*De Anima*, 428a1–2). Moreover, Aristotle makes no fundamental distinction between the memory of sense-objects and thought-objects because he holds that the objects of thought do not have separate existence apart from the magnitudes encountered in sense-perception (*De Anima*, 432a3–10). This is the basis for Aristotle's view that thinking requires images because the content of thought is ultimately derived from sense-perception, and "images serve as sense-perceptions to the thinking soul" (*De Anima*, 431a14–15).

Plotinus rejects Aristotle's view because it holds that the imagination is dependent on the sensitive power of the soul and that sensory images provide thought with the sole source of content. Plotinus retains the general framework of Aristotelian psychology because it helps him explain how a unitary soul can operate through different powers, but he rejects the Aristotelian soul–body relation to preserve the soul's autonomy as an independent substance.[59] This approach results in key differences between, on the one hand, the relation between the soul's faculties and the body and, on the other hand, the source of thought content.

Although imagination and memory are often concerned with information the sense-organs deliver, they neither belong to the sensitive power of the soul nor are they dependent on the body for their operation. The sensitive power operates through bodily sense organs that are spatially extended to perceive spatially extended objects. Plotinus denies that the memory of thoughts belongs to the sensitive power because of his views that thoughts are not spatially extended and that faculties that are responsible for grasping thoughts cannot be spatially extended (IV.3.29.6–8, IV.7.8.1–18). Moreover, Plotinus holds that our intellects think the Forms without images and that the Forms provide our *noetic* thoughts with

ἀμερὲς καὶ οὔπω οἷον προεληλυθὸς εἰς τὸ ἔξω ἔνδον ὂν λανθάνει, ὁ δὲ λόγος ἀναπτύξας καὶ ἐπάγων ἐκ τοῦ νοήματος εἰς τὸ φανταστικὸν ἔδειξε τὸ νόημα οἷον ἐν κατόπτρῳ, καὶ ἡ ἀντίληψις αὐτοῦ οὕτω καὶ ἡ μονὴ καὶ ἡ μνήμη. διὸ καὶ ἀεὶ κινουμένης πρὸς νόησιν τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅταν ἐν τούτῳ γένηται, ἡμῖν ἡ ἀντίληψις. ἄλλο γὰρ ἡ νόησις, καὶ ἄλλο ἡ τῆς νοήσεως ἀντίληψις, καὶ νοοῦμεν μὲν ἀεί, ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα δὲ οὐκ ἀεί· τοῦτο δέ, ὅτι τὸ δεχόμενον οὐ μόνον δέχεται νοήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰσθήσεις κατὰ θάτερα.

[59] See IV.7.8[5].

content.[60] In fact, Plotinus develops this view even further with his doctrine of the undescended soul – not only do our intellects think the Forms directly, but our intellects are partially integrated with the Forms in the intelligible world.[61] Only an up-to-date Platonic psychology can explain the memory of such thoughts.

In [2] Plotinus presents his own account of the memory of thoughts. Plotinus holds that we remember thoughts once we have apprehended the *logoi* that unfold the content of thoughts and show them in the imagination like a mirror. The presence of *logoi* in the imagination results in an apprehension because Plotinus holds that the intelligible entities that enter the imagination – whether these are images produced in sense-perception or *logoi* produced in discursive thinking – have the property of being self-intimating. In other words, it belongs to the very nature of a *logos* that having it in the imagination leads to the conscious apprehension of it and the object of thought it unfolds, under normal circumstances. Recall above that I developed the restricted view of self-intimation on the basis of IV.4.17.11–14 and defined it as "it belongs to the very nature of an image that having the image leads to the apprehension of it and the external object of which it is an image under normal circumstances." By "normal circumstances" in this context, I mean when the imagination is calm and properly reflecting the *noetic* thoughts as in a mirror.

Surprisingly, scholars who have commented on IV.3.30 have neglected to provide a detailed explanation of why *logoi* accompany thoughts and how *logoi* unfold thoughts.[62] Failure to explain this obscures *what* we apprehend and *how* we apprehend it. So, I will briefly discuss the relevant features of Plotinus' theory of cognition in order to clarify the precise role that *logoi* play in the apprehension of thoughts. The three topics I want to focus on are (1) the meaning of *logos* in IV.3.30, (2) the relation between intellect (*nous*) and discursive reasoning (*dianoia*), and (3) the relation between discursive reasoning and language (*logos*). Once these topics are fully explained, we will be in a better position to understand the apprehension of our thoughts.

[60] See I.4.10.17–22 and V.1.10.24–28. Compare Plato's *Republic* 509d–511e and 532a–534b.

[61] See IV.8.3.8–30, V.8.4.7–12, V.8.9.15–25, V.9.6, VI.4.16.32–36, VI.5.7, VI.6.7.1–11, VI.7.2.29–38, and VI.7.17.25–32.

[62] Clark (1942: 306–307), Warren (1966: 282), Blumenthal (1971: 88), Hadot (1980: 249), Dillon (1986: 55–56), and Stern-Gillet (2006: 155) do not explain this. Gerson (1994: 171–173) provides an explanation in a different context, but I think it is mistaken. I will return to Gerson's explanation below.

4.4.1 *The Meaning of Logos in IV.3.30*

There are two basic roles that *logoi* play in Plotinus' philosophy. The first is metaphysical: *Logoi* provide structure and organization to the sensible world.[63] Soul transmits the *logoi* that it receives from Intellect into matter, via the agency of the world soul and individual souls, to create a well-ordered cosmos.[64] The second is psychological: *Logoi* unfold thoughts into definitional statements with predicative structure. It is important to point out that these roles are not distinct. Both roles involve the unfolding of something unified in Intellect into multiplicity at a lower level. The only difference is that the metaphysical role takes place in the cosmos, whereas the psychological role takes place in the human soul.[65] It is the psychological role that pertains to the apprehension of thought.

I have left *logos* untranslated in IV.3.30 to avoid blurring its meaning. It is tempting to translate *logos* by a term that implies some sort of linguistic utterance. After all, *logos* is the verbal noun of *legein*, "to speak."[66] However, I think this temptation is misleading because it implies that uttered speech unfolds the thought and delivers it to the imagination. What exactly could this mean? Does the uttered statement "I am thinking of a circle" unfold my thought about a circle, deliver it to the imagination, and thereby render it conscious? No. This cannot be the case since one cannot verbally report on a thought unless it is already conscious, i.e., unless it is already unfolded into the imagination and reflected like a mirror image to the whole soul. This is precisely what *logos* is supposed to explain, so it cannot refer to uttered speech. The remaining alternative is that *logos* refers to unuttered speech, a kind of internal utterance that has all the features of language except sound.[67]

It is useful to view IV.3.30 against the backdrop of Plato's formulation of thought as silent speech.[68] In the *Theaetetus*, Plato introduces thinking (*dianoeisthai*) as an internal dialogue the soul has with itself, which involves

[63] Plotinus deals with this role at length in his treatises *On Providence*, III.2 and III.3. For an excellent discussion of *logoi* in Plotinus, see Brisson (1999).

[64] For example, see IV.9.3.24–28, V.2.1.23–25, and II.1.5.18–24.

[65] On this point, see van den Berg (2014: 253).

[66] For example, Brehier uses "formule verbale" for the first occurrence and "langage" for the second occurrence; Harder et al. use "Begriff (*Wort*)" for both; Armstrong uses "verbal expression" for both; and Brisson uses "discours" for both.

[67] See *logos siôpôn* at III.8.6.12.

[68] Heiser (1991: 8–9) also thinks Plotinus has Plato in mind in IV.3.30. He cites VI.9.10.6–7 and V.3.3.3–4 as possible signs of evidence that Plotinus adheres to Plato's idea that thought is silent speech.

assertion and denial and results in judgment (189c7–190a7). In the *Sophist*, Plato develops this further by claiming that thought (*dianoia*) and speech (*logos*) are the same, except that thought is speech that occurs without the voice when the soul converses with itself, whereas speech is the stream of sound that travels from the soul through the mouth (263e3–8). In these passages, Plato defines thinking in terms of the structure of language because language has a predicative structure, and this enables him to show that judgment differs from sensation in having propositional content. I think it is helpful to understand the *logoi* that accompany thoughts and unfold their content along the lines of the soul conversing with itself, because *logos* plays a similar role in Plotinus' theory of embodied cognition.

4.4.2 *The Relation between Intellect and Discursive Reasoning*

The fundamental difference between the *noetic* self and the *dianoetic* self is that the former is undescended, whereas the latter fully descends into the temporal sensible world. As a result of this descent, the cognitive capacities of the *dianoetic* self lessen in proportion to the amount of being and unity it retains during the descent. Whereas the *noetic* self grasps the Forms all at once (*athroa*), all together (*homou*), and experiences the Forms in ordered succession, the *dianoetic* self grasps the Forms step-by-step, unfolded into parts, and experiences the Forms in temporal succession.[69] This is easy to miss because Plotinus often uses the term *noein* (a term we might expect to be reserved for the activity of *nous*) for both soul and intellect! However, when Plotinus is speaking carefully he distinguishes the soul from intellect by calling it discursive reasoning (*dianoia*), or a dividing intellect (*merizôn nous*).[70] Plotinus calls the soul a dividing intellect because its mode of cognition involves dividing the Forms into definitional statements (*logoi*) that have predicative structure. The reason why the soul divides the Forms into definitional statements has to do with Plotinus' epistemology and his philosophy of language. I will elucidate this by focusing on the relevant aspects of the relationship between intellect and discursive reasoning, on the one hand, and the relationship between discursive reasoning and language, on the other hand.

[69] For the difference between discursive reasoning and intellect, see V.8.6.1–15; cf. V.5.1.38–42, I.8.2.8–15, V.3.17.21–40, and above all IV.4.1.

[70] For dividing intellect, see V.9.8.21–23 and VI.5.2.1–7. For discursive reasoning, see V.3.6.18–23 and V.1.3.13–15.

At the level of the hypostasis Intellect – where the *noetic* self resides – the objects of thought are the Forms. At the level of discursive reasoning – where the *dianoetic* self resides – the objects of discursive reasoning are *logoi*. The reason for the difference in object is that the *dianoetic* self is not fit to grasp the Forms directly since they are not internal to our dividing intellects. Plotinus holds that only faculties that possess their object can know the Forms directly and have true knowledge (V.5.1, V.3.5). This is only true of Intellect since it shares the same activity with the Forms (V.9.8.15–16, V.3.5.36–39). Moreover, Plotinus seems to hold as a general principle that cognitive powers that do not internally possess the internal activities of their objects are acted on by the object's external activities, i.e., its images or traces. Consequently, such cognitive powers grasp only images or traces, not the real things. Insofar as discursive reasoning does not possess the Forms internally as Intellect does, it is acted on by the external activity of the Forms.[71] These are *logoi* (III.2.2.15–18, III.5.9.18–23).

The primary role of discursive reasoning is to process, evaluate, and judge the images it receives from sense-perception and intellect (V.3.2–3). It does this by forming concepts, making inferences, and reasoning from premises to conclusions, all of which presuppose time. Furthermore, unlike most contemporary philosophers Plotinus thinks that expressing our thoughts through words is a sign of deficiency. "What [the soul] utters," he writes, "it utters because of its deficiency, with a view to examining it, trying to learn what it possesses" (III.8.6.26–29). Though language is essential for functioning in the sensible world, it reflects the fact that the *dianoetic* self functions in time and no longer possesses the Forms directly. However, since discursive reasoning is an image of Intellect's contemplation, it strives to possess the Forms to the extent that it can. It accomplishes this by unifying itself with the *logoi* and recognizing them as its own (*oikeion*), which brings it to a closer state of identity with its objects of thought (III.8.6). For this reason, similar to the soul's power of perception, discursive reasoning is also likened to a contemplation of forms (I.1.9.19–21).

4.4.3 The Relationship between Discursive Reasoning and Language

The feature of discursive reasoning and language that I want to draw attention to is their common structure. I am using the term "common

[71] My view is influenced by Emilsson (2007: 77–78, 125, and 135).

structure" to mean roughly what Ludwig Wittgenstein means by "logical form."[72] The propositions that discursive reasoning produces and the meaningful utterances that language produces are predicationally structured, e.g., "man is a rational animal." Moreover, Plotinus thinks that linguistic utterances reflect the constitution of discursive thoughts. The linguistic utterance "man is a rational animal" reflects the discursive thought "man is a rational animal" as something that is unfolded and separated into parts, namely, "man," "rationality," and "animal." I think it is helpful to understand how linguistic utterances reflect thoughts along the lines of how pictures depict facts in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. For Wittgenstein, pictures are models of reality that present objects and states of affairs in logical space (2.1, 2.11, 2.12). Furthermore, pictures depict reality in virtue of the fact that the elements of a picture stand to each other in the same determinate ways that the elements of an object stand to each other (2.1.31, 2.14, 2.15). Logical form is the determinate way that the elements stand to one another (2.18). The parallel in Plotinus can be seen from the following passage:[73]

> Just as the spoken *logos* is an imitation of the *logos* in soul, so the *logos* in soul is an imitation of that in the other. Moreover, just as the uttered *logos* is broken up into parts in relation to the *logos* in soul, so the *logos* in soul, which is an interpreter of that, is in relation to that which is before it. (I.2.3.27–30; cf. V.1.3.8–10)[74]

In this passage, Plotinus draws a threefold distinction between *logoi*. The first *logos* refers to linguistic utterances, the second refers to the forms in soul, and the third refers to the Forms in Intellect. The relation among them is that of imitation: The first imitates the second and the second imitates the third.[75] Of particular importance is Plotinus' claim that spoken *logoi* are "broken up into parts" in relation to the *logos* in soul. This coheres with Plotinus' comments elsewhere that the forms in soul are

[72] In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein defines logical form in the following manner: "What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to depict it – correctly or incorrectly in any way at all, is logical form, i.e., the form of reality" (2.18).

[73] The background to this passage is likely Stoic. As many commentators have noted, Plotinus appears to be echoing the Stoic distinction between uttered speech (*logos prophorikos*) and speech in the soul (*logos endiathetos*). See *SVF* II, 135.

[74] ὡς γὰρ ὁ ἐν φωνῇ λόγος μίμημα τοῦ ἐν ψυχῇ, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἐν ψυχῇ μίμημα τοῦ ἐν ἑτέρῳ. ὡς οὖν μεμερισμένος ὁ ἐν προφορᾷ πρὸς τὸν ἐν ψυχῇ, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἐν ψυχῇ ἑρμηνεὺς ὢν ἐκείνου πρὸς τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ.

[75] I do not think that Plotinus' choice of term here is significant. In the related passage referred to in the previous footnote Plotinus uses "image." The basic idea is that the spoken *logos* is a copy of the *logos* in soul insofar as it preserves the same predicative structure.

unfolded and separated. For example, he says that "we also possess the forms in two ways, in our soul, as it were unfolded (*aneiligmena*)[76] and separated (*kekhôrismena*), and in Intellect all together (*homou ta panta*)" (I.1.8.7–9). The unfolded and separated forms that "we" possess in our souls are the same entities we encountered as *logoi* in IV.3.30. Taken together with I.2.3.27–31, we can say that linguistic utterances are images of the unfolded and separated forms in soul, and the unfolded and separated forms in soul are images of the "all-together" Forms in Intellect. Linguistic utterances are images of the unfolded and separated forms in soul in virtue of possessing the same "logical form." However, it is important to note that the *logoi* in soul are "interpreters" of the Forms in Intellect. It is significant that Plotinus includes this parenthetical comment. For the *logoi* in soul are not merely copies of the Forms in the way spoken *logoi* are copies of the *logoi* in soul, since the *logoi* in soul are unfolded and the Forms in Intellect are unitary. This is what I suspect Plotinus is hinting at with his usage of the term "interpreter" (*hermêneus*).[77]

The best explanation of how the soul unfolds Forms into definitions is that of Damian Caluori.[78] I will use one of his examples from Plotinus' metaphysics to illustrate this. The Form *Human Being* exists as a unified whole in Intellect. Though it has relations to other Forms insofar as it is interconnected with them, nonetheless all of its properties remain fundamentally unitary. When the soul attempts to understand *Human Being*, it cannot grasp it as a unified whole for the reasons adumbrated above. Rather, it defines it as a rational living being (*zôon logikon*).[79] Insofar as we grasp it as a rational living being, we grasp it as a definition consisting of two parts. As Plotinus says, "the *logos* is living being plus something else, which is not the same as living being" (VI.7.10.15). Plotinus probably has in mind the specific difference of rationality that distinguishes man from other animals. Thus, the *logos* that unfolds the Form *Human Being* into the definition "rational living being" expresses an essential predication. Caluori's view that "λόγος represents the content of the world of Forms in a predicational structure" (2005: 83) complements my view that language and discursive reasoning share a predicative structure.

[76] In addition to IV.3.30 and I.1.8, Plotinus mentions the unfolded forms in our souls in V.8.6 and IV.4.1.

[77] John Rist (1967: 100–103) points out that Philo also refers to *logos* as *hermêneus*. However, the *logoi* to which Philo refers are the spoken *logoi*, whereas the *logoi* to which Plotinus refers are the *logoi* in soul. Regrettably, Rist does not address why Plotinus calls the *logos* in soul a *hermêneus*.

[78] I am summarizing his view. See Caluori (2005: 79–83).

[79] See VI.7.4.11–12.

We are now in a better position to understand how the imagination apprehends thoughts in IV.3.30. I want to begin explaining this by first answering the two questions I posed above. The first question was functional, *why* do *logoi* accompany thoughts? The second question was explanatory, *how* do *logoi* unfold thoughts? As to the first, we can say that *logoi* accompany thoughts because the level of self at which the imagination operates – the *dianoetic* self – thinks the Forms through *logoi*. As to the second, we can say that *logoi* unfold the content of thoughts by dividing and separating the Forms into definitional statements, which represent the Forms in a predicational structure on the level of discursive reasoning and language. How does this help us understand apprehension?

One way to interpret the theory of apprehension in IV.3.30 is to take *logos* as a word or statement standing for a thought; e.g., "circle" and "the area of a circle is πr^2," treat *logoi* as effects of thought, then apply an argument from effect to cause to explain our apprehension of the thought. This is the view of Lloyd Gerson (1994: 171–173). He says, "This awareness [that thinking is occurring] is apparently owing to an inference from the existence of *logoi* in us to their cause" (1994: 173). However, we must take caution in ascribing Gerson's view to Plotinus for two reasons. First, Plotinus nowhere mentions that inference is involved in the apprehension of sense-perceptions or thoughts. It is true that apprehension is indirect and mediated insofar as we apprehend via *logoi*, but this neither entails nor involves inference. Second, treating the *logoi* in IV.3.30 as mere stand-ins for thoughts does not explain how *logoi* unfold the content of thoughts and show them in the imagination as if in a mirror. It is true that *logoi* in soul stand for thoughts insofar as they are imitations of the Forms (recall the threefold division of *logoi* at I.2.3.27–31 and V.1.3.8–10), but this is not their role in IV.3.30. Gerson does recognize that the Forms are unfolded and separated in soul and that the dividing intellect is responsible for this, but he does not recognize the role that *logoi* play in apprehension. This is likely the reason why he opts for the "inference from cause to effect" explanation of apprehension.

As I mentioned above, the imagination is the primary power involved in the second layer of consciousness, and the primary type of consciousness in the second layer requires images. In the case of our lower psychic faculties, Plotinus thinks we become conscious of our sense-perceptions and desires by apprehending the images that are formed in the imagination. Here the intentional object of apprehension is an image. In the case of our higher psychic faculties, Plotinus thinks we become conscious of our noetic thoughts once *logoi* have unfolded their content and shown them in the

imagination like a mirror. Here the intentional object is a *logos*. What are we to make of this difference? I think it is helpful to keep in mind that the *logoi* that discursive reasoning grasps are the external acts of the Forms in Intellect. Insofar as they are the external acts of the Forms, they are images or traces. Hence, the *logoi* that unfold thoughts into the imagination are image-like. This explains why Plotinus likens the imagination to a mirror in IV.3.30 – mirrors reflect images. Plotinus develops the mirror metaphor further at I.4.10.6–16. There he writes the following:

> It seems as if apprehension (*antilêpsis*) exists and is produced when thought bends back, and the activity according to the life of the [higher] soul is projected back, just as in a mirror when there is a smooth, bright, and calm surface. When the mirror is present in these circumstances, the image is produced. When it [the mirror] is not present or when it is not in the right state, the object of which the image would have been is [still] present in actuality; in the same way regarding the soul, when that sort of thing in us which reflects the images of reasoning and thought (*hô emphainetai ta tês dianoias kai tou nou eikonismata*) is untroubled, it sees and knows them similar to the case of sense-perception, along with the prior knowledge that intellect and discursive reasoning are active.[80]

In this passage, Plotinus describes how the *dianoetic* self becomes conscious of our intellectual activity by likening the imagination to a mirror.[81] The term "calm" (*hêsukhazon*) suggests Plotinus is probably thinking of a reflection in a pool of water rather than the surface of a mirror. Plotinus does not mention the imagination explicitly here, but we know from IV.3.30 that he likens the imagination to a mirror and the "sort of thing in us which reflects the images of reasoning and thought" can only

[80] καὶ ἔοικεν ἡ ἀντίληψις εἶναι καὶ γίνεσθαι ἀνακάμπτοντος τοῦ νοήματος καὶ τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος τοῦ κατὰ τὸ ζῆν τῆς ψυχῆς οἷον ἀπωσθέντος πάλιν, ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ περὶ τὸ λεῖον καὶ λαμπρὸν ἡσυχάζον. ὡς οὖν ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις παρόντος μὲν τοῦ κατόπτρου ἐγένετο τὸ εἴδωλον, μὴ παρόντος δὲ ἢ μὴ οὕτως ἔχοντος ἐνεργείᾳ πάρεστιν οὗ τὸ εἴδωλον ἦν ἄν, οὕτω καὶ περὶ ψυχὴν ἡσυχίαν μὲν ἄγοντος τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τοιούτου, ᾧ ἐμφαίνεται τὰ τῆς διανοίας καὶ τοῦ νοῦ εἰκονίσματα, ἑνορᾶται ταῦτα καὶ οἷον αἰσθητῶς γινώσκεται μετὰ τῆς προτέρας γνώσεως, ὅτι ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ διάνοια ἐνεργεῖ.

[81] Scholars have long noted that *Timaeus* 70eff. is a likely source for Plotinus' description of the imagination as a mirror. In this passage, the younger gods situate the liver in the lowest part of the soul to assist the rational part in controlling the appetites. Plato writes that "the god conspired with this very tendency by constructing a liver, a structure which he situated in the dwelling place of this part of the soul. He made it into something dense, smooth, bright, and sweet, though also having a bitter quality, so that the force of the thoughts sent down from the mind might be stamped upon it as upon a mirror that receives the stamps and returns visible images" (71a6–71b3). However, the usage of the term *hêsukhazon* suggests to me that he also has in mind *Republic* 510a1 where Plato includes reflections in water as types of images. For a discussion of these passages and others related to *Timaeus* 70eff., see A. Sheppard (2003).

be the imagination. So, we can be confident that Plotinus is talking about the imagination.

The idea is that when a pool of water is calm, it reflects an image of the object in front of it. However, when a pool of water is disturbed, it does not reflect an image of the object. The object is still there; the mirror just does not reflect it. Similarly, when the imagination is calm, it reflects an image of the thought to the whole soul. When it is not calm, the imagination does not reflect an image. The activity of intellect is still going on in the higher undescended soul. The imagination just does not reflect it. Though Plotinus does not mention the conditions under which the imagination is calm, he is likely referring to the state in which the lower imagination is harmonized with the higher imagination (IV.3.31.9–21). This occurs when the lower imagination is not distracted by the perception of external objects and does not orient the attention of the soul to the goods afforded by sensible objects. As we saw above, when the higher imagination exerts its influence over the lower imagination, "the image (*to phantasma*) becomes one, as if a shadow followed the other and as if a little light slipped under a greater one" (IV.3.31.11–13). In other words, the lower imagination follows the higher imagination the way one shadow follows another, or the way a bright light consumes a dimmer light. When the two souls are in disharmony, the lower imagination becomes dominant and draws the attention of the soul outward to things contrary to its nature (IV.8.8.15–25). The pool of water becomes choppy, as it were.

Plotinus offers the mirror as a metaphor to understand the apprehension of thoughts. The key to unlocking the meaning of this metaphor lies in Plotinus' description of apprehension in lines 6–9 as thought "bending back (*anakamptontos*)" and the activity of the higher soul "projecting back (*apôsthentos*)." This is the closest Plotinus ever comes to a definition of apprehension in the *Enneads*. So, what is it supposed to mean? Let us begin with Armstrong's translation of lines 6–9: "It seems as if awareness exists and is produced when intellectual activity is reflexive, and when that in the life of the soul which is active in thinking is in a way projected back." This translation is misleading because it makes it sound as if our intellect is the subject of apprehension, e.g., as if intellect has a second-order consciousness of first-order thoughts. This cannot be the case since Plotinus makes it clear in lines 4–7 that intellect and the higher soul exist prior to apprehension. Our intellect cannot be "that which reflects the images of reasoning and thought" if it exists prior to that which reflects. It would be like saying intellect is both the mirror and the source of the images in the mirror. So, how are we to understand these lines?

The point Plotinus is trying to make is that the imagination "projects back" thoughts to the *dianoetic* self the way a mirror projects back images to the source of the images. What makes this difficult to see is that the mirror metaphor is faulty. When an object is placed in front of a mirror, the mirror reflects the image back to the object in front of it. When the content of a thought is unfolded into the imagination, the imagination does *not* reflect the content of the thought back to the thought. Rather, it reflects the content of the thought on a lower level. The subject of a thought is the *noetic* self; the subject of the apprehension of the thought is the *dianoetic* self. The metaphor breaks down because ultimately that which reflects exists on a lower level than that which is reflected. Thus, it is incorrect to suppose, as Edward Warren does, that "*antilêpsis* arises when the concept is thrown back on itself, as if in mirror" (1964: 283).

The important thing to notice is that Plotinus thinks the apprehension of thoughts occurs similar to the case of sense-perception. I take this to mean that just as we apprehend sense-perceptions once the image is produced in the imagination, so too do we apprehend thoughts once *logoi* have unfolded their content into the imagination. There is an important difference, however. Unlike sense-perceptions, thoughts do not terminate in the imagination.[82] This is because thoughts – or more generally, the activity of our intellects – take place without images (I.4.10.18–22). The *noetic* self remains ever active in the intelligible world and is not in need of images to contemplate reality. It is "we" – the *dianoetic* self – who need *logoi* to think the Forms and apprehend our thoughts concerning them.

It should now be obvious that the imagination plays a critical role in the life of the embodied individual, with respect to both cognition in general and consciousness in particular. Even if we were to discount the role the imagination plays with respect to the lower psychic powers, because it draws the soul outward toward multiplicity, apprehends things contrary to the soul's nature, and is a strike of something irrational from outside,[83] we cannot discount the role the imagination plays with respect to the higher psychic faculties.[84] But does it really matter? Are "we" any better off because of the apprehension of our thoughts? On the one hand, no, we are not better off with apprehended thoughts since our thoughts take place

[82] For the idea that sense-perceptions terminate in the imagination, see IV.3.29.23–25 and IV.4.19.4–8.

[83] This is the view of Stern-Gillet (2006). The passages that she mentions in connection with this point are I.8.15.18–19, IV.8.8.16–24, and VI.8.3.10–18. However, it is not sufficiently appreciated that in these passages Plotinus is talking about the lower imagination.

[84] For a similar appreciation of the role of imagination in Plotinus, see Nyvlt (2012: 174, 179).

anyway regardless of whether or not we apprehend them.[85] On the other hand, yes, we are better off with apprehended thoughts because this brings us closer to recovering the *noetic* self. As Plotinus says, "[b]ut does not the 'we' include what comes before the middle? Yes, but there must be apprehension (*antilêpsin*) of it. We do not always use all that we have, but only when we direct our middle region (*to meson*) towards the higher principles" (I.1.11.5–7). I take this to mean that in order for our intellect – "what comes before the middle"[86] – to begin to play a constitutive role in the "we," the *dianoetic* self must apprehend it. Once we apprehend our intellectual activity and realize that we are this activity (I.4.9. 29–30), the recovery of the *noetic* self begins.

In order to highlight the uniqueness of Plotinus' account of the apprehension of thought, I want to conclude with a passage in which Plotinus broadens the scope of apprehension to include the activity of the hypostases. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Plotinus does not solely locate the intelligible world somewhere "out there" in a transcendent realm. Rather, he also locates the intelligible world *within the soul* and maintains that we can reach it by turning inward and ascending upward through a process of purification.[87] He begins the chapter in which this passage occurs by asking, "Why, then, if we have such great things [i.e., One, Intellect, and Soul] do we not apprehend them?" (V.1.12.1–2: trans. mine). He responds with the following:

> For not everything which is in the soul is immediately capable of being perceived, but it reaches us when it enters into perception (*aisthêsin*). But when each thing that is active does not give a share of [its activity] to that which perceives, it [the activity] has not yet pervaded the whole soul. Therefore, we do not recognize it yet since we are with the perceptive power, and are not a part of soul but the entire soul. And further, since each part of the soul is always living it always exercises the activity belonging to it on its own. But we recognize it when there is sharing [of its activity with that which perceives] and apprehension (*antilêpsis*) happens. Moreover, if there will be apprehension (*antilêpsis*) of the activities that are present in this way, we must turn that which apprehends inwards (*to antilambanomen eis to eisô epistrephein*) and make it pay attention to what is there, just as if someone expecting to hear a voice that he wanted to hear withdrew from other voices, and awakened his power of hearing to catch what, when it comes, is the best of all sounds that can be heard; in this way we must let

[85] This is especially evident in I.4.9–10 where Plotinus explains why the Sage is happy even though he is not conscious of his happiness.
[86] The phrase "what comes before the middle" refers to intellect.
[87] See V.1.10.5–9 and IV.7.10.30–36.

> perceptible sounds go here, except insofar as it is necessary, and keep the soul's power for apprehending (*tên tês psuchês eis to antilambanesthai dunamin*) pure and ready to hear the sounds from above. (V.1.12.5–21)[88]

In this passage, Plotinus claims that *aisthêsis* presents activities to consciousness by bringing activities that occur in parts of the soul to the attention of the whole soul. This might seem incompatible with my claim that the subject of apprehension is the imagination. However, it is important to note two things. First, Plotinus does not restrict the verb *aisthanesthai* to the qualified body's perception of external objects; rather, he uses it broadly to include the soul's perception of internal images. We can be confident that this belongs to the imagination,[89] since the passage in which Plotinus distinguishes between the qualified body's perception of external objects and the soul's perception of internal images coheres with other passages in which Plotinus attributes the apprehension of internal images to the imagination.[90] Second, Plotinus holds that the imagination is the power that is responsible for presenting activities that occur in parts of the soul to the attention of the whole soul.[91] On my view, then, Plotinus is claiming that the activity of the hypostases escapes the attention of the whole soul unless the imagination apprehends their activity. That the higher imagination can purify itself by turning inward and listening to the voices from above is distinctively unique in Greek philosophical thought.

4.5 Consciousness of Thought

The other type of consciousness involved in the second layer is *parakolouthêsis* or *parakolouthêsis heautô*. I translate both as "consciousness," but on occasion I translate the latter as self-consciousness when the context

[88] οὐ γὰρ πᾶν, ὁ ἐν ψυχῇ, ἤδη αἰσθητόν, ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται εἰς ἡμᾶς, ὅταν εἰς αἴσθησιν ἴῃ· ὅταν δὲ ἐνεργοῦν ἕκαστον μὴ μεταδιδῷ τῷ αἰσθανομένῳ, οὕπω δι' ὅλης ψυχῆς ἐλήλυθεν. οὕπω οὖν γιγνώσκομεν ἅτε μετὰ τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ ὄντες καὶ οὐ μόριον ψυχῆς ἀλλ' ἡ ἅπασα ψυχὴ ὄντες. καὶ ἔτι ἕκαστον τῶν ψυχικῶν ζῶν ἀεί ἐνεργεῖ ἀεί καθ' αὑτὸ τὸ αὑτου· τὸ δὲ γνωρίζειν, ὅταν μετάδοσις γένηται καὶ ἀντίληψις. δεῖ τοίνυν, εἰ τῶν οὕτω παρόντων ἀντίληψις ἔσται, καὶ τὸ ἀντιλαμβανόμενον εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἐπιστρέφειν, κἀκεῖ ποιεῖν τὴν προσοχὴν ἔχειν. ὥσπερ εἴ τις ἀκοῦσαι ἀναμένων ἧν ἐθέλει φωνήν, τῶν ἄλλων φωνῶν ἀποστὰς τὸ οὗς ἐγείροι πρὸς τὸ ἄμεινον τῶν ἀκουστῶν, ὁπότε ἐκεῖνο προσέλθοι, οὕτω τοι καὶ ἐνταῦθα δεῖ τὰς μὲν αἰσθητὰς ἀκούσεις ἀφέντα, εἰ μὴ καθόσον ἀνάγκη, τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς εἰς τὸ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι δύναμιν φυλάττειν καθαρὰν καὶ ἕτοιμον ἀκούειν φθόγγων τῶν ἄνω.

[89] Emilsson (1988: 114–117 and 133–134) and Fronterotta (2003: 208) hold similar views.

[90] Compare I.1.7.9–14 with III.6.1.6–15, IV.3.26.30–33, IV.3.29–30, IV.4.8.9–21, IV.4.13.15–16, IV.4.17.11–14, IV.4.28.36–43, and IV.8.8.9–12.

[91] See IV.4.8.9–21 and IV.8.8.9–12.

warrants it.[92] As I mentioned in Chapter 2, *parakolouthêsis* refers to a second-order consciousness that "follows along" with first-order states. At the level of the *dianoetic* self, Plotinus regards *parakolouthêsis* as a pluralizing consciousness that splits the subject in two and a consciousness that is self-enclosed in its own activity. *Antilêpsis* is directed toward objects, sensible and intelligible. *Parakolouthêsis* is directed toward our own activities. In an important contrast with modern philosophy, this is the type of consciousness in which Plotinus is least interested.

The passage that most scholars focus on to explain consciousness is I.4.10.22–33.[93] This passage immediately follows the mirror metaphor that Plotinus uses to explain the apprehension of our thoughts. I think it is a mistake to interpret this passage in isolation from other occurrences of *parakolouthêsis*, so I want to consider another passage that occurs in a different context to shed light on I.4.10.21–33. The passage I have in mind is III.9.9.12–22, where Plotinus discusses whether or not the One or Good has *parakolouthêsis*. He says,

> But it will not be conscious of itself (*parakolouthêsei autô*). What then would its consciousness of itself (*parakolouthêsis autô*) consist of? Of it being good or not? For if it is [of it being good], the Good is already prior to the consciousness (*parakolouthêseôs*); but if it is the consciousness (*parakolouthêsis*) that makes [it good], the Good would not be prior to it, with the result that consciousness itself would not be, since it is of the Good ... That which is conscious of itself (*to de parakolouthoun heautô*) and thinks itself is second; for it is conscious (*parakolouthei*) in order that in this actuality it may understand itself. Therefore, if it learns about itself, it must have been unfamiliar with itself and defective in its own nature, and perfected by its thinking. (III.9.9.12–22; cf. V.3.13.7–12)[94]

This is one of two passages where Plotinus discusses modes of consciousness in connection with the One. Whereas V.4.2.17–19 contains an assertion that the One has *sunaisthêsis*, III.9.9.13–25 contains a denial that the One has *parakolouthêsis*. The reason why Plotinus thinks the Good lacks *parakolouthêsis* is that self-consciousness violates the simplicity of the One. This can be seen from the implications Plotinus draws out in this

[92] I will translate *parakolouthêsis* as "consciousness" throughout this section.

[93] IV.4.4.10–13 is also often cited in support of I.4.10.21–33.

[94] ἀλλ᾽ οὐ παρακολουθήσει αὐτῷ. τί οὖν ἡ παρακολούθησις αὐτῷ; ἀγαθοῦ ὄντος ἢ οὔ; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὄντος, ἤδη ἐστὶ πρὸ τῆς παρακολουθήσεως τἀγαθόν· εἰ δ᾽ ἡ παρακολούθησις ποιεῖ, οὐκ ἂν εἴη πρὸ ταύτης τὸ ἀγαθόν. ὥστε οὐδ᾽ αὐτὴ ἔσται μὴ οὖσα ἀγαθοῦ. τί οὖν; οὐδὲ ζῇ; ἢ ζῆν μὲν οὔ λεκτέον, εἴπερ δέ, ζωὴν δίδωσι. τὸ δὲ παρακολοθοῦν ἑαυτῷ καὶ τὸ νοοῦν αὐτὸ δεύτερον· παρακολουθεῖ γάρ, ἵνα τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ ταύτῃ συνῇ αὑτό. δεῖ οὖν, εἰ καταμανθάνει αὑτό, ἀκαταμάθητον τετυχηκέναι εἶναι αὐτοῦ καὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ φύσει ἐλλιπὲς εἶναι, τῇ δὲ νοήσει τελειοῦσθαι.

passage: (1) If the Good were conscious of itself as good, the Good would exist before consciousness, or (2) if consciousness of itself as good makes the Good good, then consciousness would exist before the Good. Both (1) and (2) result in introducing plurality into the nature of the One.

To appreciate this, we must keep in mind that the One is "beyond Being." Insofar as the One is beyond Being, it transcends the predicative structure of entities whose mode of being (and our description of them) involves plurality.[95] By predicative I mean the subject/attribute relation in which a property or attribute is predicated of a subject. Both (1) and (2) presuppose a predicative structure insofar as they divide the Good into both a subject (that which is conscious) and an attribute (being good), which is inconsistent with the simplicity of the One (V.3.13.7–12). Hence, the good cannot be conscious in the sense of *parakolouthêsis*. What can be conscious in the sense of *parakolouthêsis* comes at a lower level, i.e., what is second. As the external activity of the One, Intellect becomes fully active as a unity-in-multiplicity only when it turns toward itself and thinks itself. Insofar as Intellect is both "what thinks" (subject) and "what is thought" (object), it has the requisite predicational structure for consciousness to inhere in. Thus, it is incorrect to suppose, as Mark V. Nyvlt does, that "the immediate apprehension of nous of itself, which renders nous *unconscious* to its object, surpasses the dual condition of consciousness, within which consciousness is born" (2012: 172).[96]

It is a peculiar feature of *parakolouthêsis* at the level of Intellect that thinking has both first- and second-order content. In other words, Plotinus does not hold there is a first-order state that thinks and a second-order state directed toward the first that thinks that it thinks. Rather, he holds that Intellect's thinking includes, in the same act, the higher order thought that it is thinking. This is ultimately because of his view that Intellect, intellection, and the intelligible are one and the same thing (V.3.5.44–50).[97] Insofar as our intellect is partially integrated into Intellect, this is also true for our intellects. However, at the level of discursive reasoning the first- and second-order content come apart. In other words, the first-order states can occur without the second-order states, and the second order state is directed toward the first-order state like an object in its own right.

[95] For example, see VI.9.5.30–32 and II.9.1.5–8.

[96] Throughout his chapter on the imagination, Nyvlt argues that Intellect's activity is unconscious and that when the human being contemplates the Forms in Intellect, it becomes unconscious (2012: 165, 166, 172–173, and 179). This is mistaken. See my review of his book in Hutchinson (2013).

[97] I will elaborate on Intellect's mode of consciousness in much greater detail in Chapter 5.

We are now in a better position to examine I.4.10.22–33, the locus classicus for *parakolouthêsis*. It is important to note that this passage completes a discussion regarding the Sage that Plotinus begins in the preceding chapter. Accordingly, we must read I.4.9–10 as a continuous argument to understand why Plotinus speaks disparagingly about *parakolouthêsis*. In I.4.9 Plotinus argues that the Sage is happy despite the fact that he is not conscious (*mê parakolouthei*) of his happiness.[98] For Plotinus, it does not matter if the Sage is overcome by magic, is asleep, or is simply unconscious, because happiness occurs at a higher level. The Sage is always active at the level of Intellect, and therefore happy, even if the *dianoetic* self is not conscious of this. In the first half of I.4.10 (lines 1–22), Plotinus addresses why we do not always notice that we are happy on the level of Intellect. It is here that he likens the imagination to a mirror and explains how the object of apprehension remains active without being apprehended. When the imagination is "broken" because the harmony of the body is disrupted, intellection occurs without images unfolded into the lower soul and, therefore, without the lower soul apprehending its activity. In the second half of I.4.10 (lines 22–34), he offers two examples of how activities can remain active without us being conscious of them and introduces an additional claim that consciousness can actually weaken the activities. He writes,

> One could find many great activities while we are awake, theoretical and practical, which we engage in during contemplation and action, which are not conscious (*to parakolouthein*) for us. The reader is not necessarily conscious that (*parakolouthein hoti*) he is reading, least of all when he is reading with intensity. Nor is the brave man [conscious that] he is being brave and that he acts according to [the virtue of] bravery insofar as he acts. And there are countless other cases. With the result that conscious states (*tas parakolouthêseis*) run the risk of making dimmer the very activities of which there is consciousness (*hais parakolouthousi*); but when these [activities] are alone then they are pure, more active, and more alive; in fact, when the good men have come to be in this state they have more life, when it is not being spilled out into sense-perception but gathered together in the same thing in itself. (I.4.10.21–33)[99]

[98] As McGroarty (2006: 139–149) notes in his commentary on *Ennead* I.4, this argument is directed against Aristotle and the Stoics. For Aristotle, see *NE* 1176a33–35; for the Stoics, see Diogenes Laertius, 7.127.

[99] πολλὰς δ' ἄν τις εὕροι καὶ ἐγρηγορότων καλὰς ἐνεργείας καὶ θεωρίας καὶ πράξεις, ὅτε θεωροῦμεν καὶ ὅτε πράττομεν, τὸ παρακολουθεῖν ἡμᾶς αὐταῖς οὐκ ἐχούσας. οὐ γὰρ τὸν ἀναγινώσκοντα ἀνάγκη παρακολουθεῖν ὅτι ἀναγινώσκει καὶ τότε μάλιστα, ὅτε μετὰ τοῦ συντόνου ἀναγινώσκοι· οὐδὲ ὁ ἀνδριζόμενος ὅτι ἀνδρίζεται καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀνδρίαν ἐνεργεῖ ὅσῳ ἐνεργεῖ· καὶ ἄλλα μυρία· ὥστε τὰς παρακολουθήσεις κινδυνεύειν ἀμυδροτέρας αὐτὰς τὰς ἐνεργείας αἷς παρακολουθοῦσι ποιεῖν, μόνας δὲ αὐτὰς οὔσας καθαρὰς τότε εἶναι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐνεργεῖν καὶ μᾶλλον ζῆν καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν

Many scholars have interpreted this passage to reflect Plotinus' attitude toward consciousness in general. Recall Dodds' famous and influential comment that Plotinus does not rate self-consciousness highly. However, a careful reading of this passage reveals that Plotinus' comments are restricted to embodied consciousness and, in particular, to one type of embodied consciousness. His claim that "conscious states (*tas parakolouthêseis*) run the risk of making dimmer the very activities of which there is consciousness (*hais parakolouthousi*)" does *not* apply to the activity of our higher soul. The structure of Intellect and the activity of intellection guarantees that Intellect thinks that it thinks and is conscious that it thinks. What it is to be "pure, more active, and more alive" at the level of Intellect includes a higher mode of consciousness. The same holds for us when we turn inward, ascend upward, and self-identify with our intellects. So, what exactly is Plotinus claiming here? Let's turn to the examples.

When we read intensely, we focus our attention on the meanings expressed in the words. If we are reading a good novel, say, we immerse ourselves in the narrative and experience the world depicted through one or more of its characters. But when we become conscious that we are reading, we direct our attention away from the narrative and toward our own cognitive activity. When we are acting bravely, we focus our attention on our circumstances and the action we are performing. If we are on the battlefield, say, we fully commit to performing an action that endangers ourselves in order to save others. But when we become conscious that we are acting bravely, we direct our attention away from the action and toward our own somatic and ethical activity. In both of these examples the intentional object of consciousness is our own activity, which occurs at the level of discursive reasoning and practical action. Being conscious that we are engaged in either of these activities can weaken them by shifting attention to the second-order act instead of the first-order act. For example, the moment one becomes conscious that one is acting bravely, feelings of doubt and fear can begin to creep in and affect the outcome of the action.

These examples suggest that we are to understand intellection that occurs without apprehension along the lines of reading and/or acting bravely without consciousness that we are reading and/or acting bravely. In a related passage concerned with memory, Plotinus claims, "For it could happen that, even when one is not conscious that (*mê parakolouthounta hoti*) one has something, one holds it to oneself more strongly than if one

τῷ τοιούτῳ πάθει τῶν σπουδαίων γενομένων μᾶλλον τὸ ζῆν εἶναι, οὐ κεχυμένον εἰς αἴσθησιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἐν ἑαυτῷ συνηγμένον.

knew" (IV.4.4.10–11). Combined with this passage, the message seems to be that the activities of reading and acting bravely are intensified if they are not accompanied by consciousness. But what does this amount to? Is Plotinus suggesting that reading intensely and acting bravely is best performed *sub*consciously? And that, similarly, intellection is best performed *sub*consciously? No, this cannot be the case since reading or acting bravely clearly involve a form of consciousness. To use a modern example, when one intensely reads Proust's description of petites madeleines in *Swann's Way*, one does not read the passage subconsciously but becomes immersed in the rich conscious experience of the narrator's memory.

These examples are problematic for two reasons. First, reading/acting bravely and consciousness of reading/acting bravely are on the same level, whereas intellection is on a higher level than the soul's apprehension. Second, intellection involves a higher mode of consciousness, whereas reading and acting bravely are characterized in opposition to a mode of consciousness. The usage of these lower-level activities to illustrate higher-level activities appears to commit Plotinus to a position he ultimately does not endorse, namely, that consciousness weakens the activity of our intellects. Rather than ensnare Plotinus in a deep contradiction, I propose we read these examples as having a very limited scope. They refer to when the lower soul is conscious of the activity of its higher soul's activity in a very particular manner, namely, when the imagination is not functioning properly (recall it is described as being "broken") and the lower soul focuses its attention on its own cognitive activity and splits itself into a subject and an object. It becomes self-enclosed in its own experience, instead of immersing itself into the act of thinking and coming into a greater unity with the objects of thought. When the imagination is working properly and we apprehend the contents of Intellect, as I.1.11.5–7 and I.4.9.29–30 made clear, our attention is focused on the objects of intellection, not our own cognitive activity.

It is important to note that apprehension *can* affect the purity of our intellectual activities. Plotinus does not say that it always does; rather, he only says that it *runs the risk* of doing so. Nonapprehended activities have greater life and activity by being more fully unified at the level of Intellect; apprehended activities *can* have lesser life and activity by being spilled out into sense-perception. When the Sage is alone and pure in Intellect, he lives and acts to a greater degree, which includes a higher mode of consciousness. When the *dianoetic* self apprehends this activity in Intellect, it *runs the risk* of diminishing his life and activity by spilling it out into sense-perception. How so?

Stern-Gillet proposes that since the imagination is naturally anchored in the sensible world, it drags the higher soul down and forces it to apprehend things

contrary to the higher soul's nature (2006: 156). If the Sage were apprehending his happiness in Intellect, he would run the risk not only of weakening the activity that constitutes his happiness, but also spilling it out into sense-perception by dragging the higher soul outward. When we read I.4.10 in conjunction with IV.8.8.16–21 and I.8.5.18–19 (additional passages she cites as evidence), a view of this sort emerges. However, Stern-Gillet overlooks the role the higher imagination plays in the apprehension of thoughts and the activity of Intellect. When we read I.4.10 in conjunction with IV.3.30 and V.1.12, we see that Plotinus does not anchor the imagination in the sensible world any more than he confines the imagination to objects contrary to the soul's nature. Rather, he assigns it the important task of turning inward and hearing the voices from on high, and he makes no mention of it downgrading the activities it apprehends. So, I propose that we approach the last few lines of I.4.10 with a much broader notion of consciousness in mind than what Stern-Gillet and others have called embodied consciousness, namely, the consciousness of the soul–body composite.

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the first layer of consciousness occurs at the level of the *physical* self, and one of the functions it provides us with is the unification of our bodily selves. Bodily awareness at this level is the first step in gathering ourselves into a unity and acting as a unified agent. As we will see in Chapter 5, the third layer of consciousness occurs at the level of the *noetic* self, and one of the functions it performs is integrating the true self with Intellect. Self-awareness at this level is the final step in gathering ourselves into a unity, in order to achieve the rationality of Intellect and prepare for the self-sufficiency of the One. If Armstrong is right (and I think he is) that Plotinus reaches his doctrine of the undescended soul via experience, as opposed to reason or tradition solely,[100] then there has to be some power of the soul by which the *dianoetic* self turns inward and is drawn upward to the intelligible world. This power is the imagination. Though *parakolouthêsis* affords us consciousness (narrowly construed) of our own discursive activities in the sensible world, *antilêpsis* affords us consciousness (broadly construed) of input coming from the sensible and intelligible world, including the activity of Intellect. The second layer is the channel between the first and third layers, and apprehension is the boat that delivers us across when the waters are smooth.

[100] See Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 5

Third Layer
The Higher Soul

In Chapters 3 and 4, I examined the layers of consciousness that occur in the embodied human being. The embodied human being has two selves, the *physical* self, which is experienced when we self-identify with the "human being within plus the beast" and pursue the goods of the body, and the *dianoetic* self, which is experienced when we self-identify with the "human being within" and pursue the goods of the embodied soul. The modes of awareness I attributed to these selves are those that accompany ordinary cognitive activities, such as pleasure and pain, desire, sense-perception, and discursive reasoning.

In this chapter, I examine the layer of consciousness that occurs in the pure intellect. The pure intellect is the *noetic* self, which is experienced when we self-identify with our intellect and pursue the goods of our intellect. The modes of awareness I will attribute to this self are those which accompany extra-ordinary cognitive activities, such as intellection (*noêsis*) or contemplation (*theoria*). As I mentioned in Chapter 1, when we ascend to the intelligible world and come to identity with the divine, we contemplate the intelligibles in the manner of Intellect. However, owing to our partial integration into the intelligible world, we contemplate it from a point of view and present it under a certain aspect. This chapter completes my interpretation of human intellection by discussing the mode of consciousness associated with having a perspective in the intelligible world. The notion of subjectivity I am attributing to Plotinus at this level is related to having this point of view or perspective on the intelligible world.

The primary type of consciousness involved in the third layer is awareness (*sunaisthêsis*, *sunesis*). Awareness is a mode of consciousness that animals, humans, and the hypostases possess. Regardless of the type of entity one is or the level of reality one occupies, the subject of awareness is a whole consisting of a multitude of parts, and the intentional object of awareness is one's own internal parts and activities. In the case of animals and embodied humans, awareness is directed toward one's own bodily

parts and psychic activities. In the case of the pure intellect and the hypostasis Intellect, awareness is directed toward one's own noetic activities. Importantly, the subject of awareness is not self-enclosed in his own subjectivity but embraces objective reality due to its identity with Being and the Forms. Awareness is the experiential means by which living things unify themselves into structured wholes and assimilate to the rationality of Intellect and the simplicity of the One.

5.1 Intellect as Primary Thinker

In III.8 [30] *On Nature and Contemplation and on the One*, Plotinus entertains the idea that all living things contemplate and strive to contemplate in the manner of Intellect. This holds not only for obvious candidates, such as Soul, the divine souls, and individual souls, but also for less obvious ones such as Nature, animals, and plants. It is an implicit feature of his metaphysics that all living things contemplate, since the natural world and its inhabitants are ultimately traces of the intelligibles in Intellect and Intellect is identical with the intelligibles. Therefore, living things are also distant traces of Intellect, and the activities of living things are also distant traces of its activity. However, it is not until III.8 that Plotinus makes this feature explicit and attempts to explain how it could even be possible that Nature contemplates and that the creation of the spatiotemporal world results from its contemplative activity and, similarly, how it could even be possible that plants, animals, and humans contemplate and that their actions and productions result from their contemplative activity.

In this treatise, Plotinus characterizes Intellect as the "primary" thinker and the "primary" life (III.8.8.19–20). One thing that Plotinus means by "primary" is that Intellect provides embodied human beings with the capacity to reason. However, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, it does not provide us with the capacity to reason by simply endowing us with the faculty of reason, which is up to us to use, or not use, depending on our beliefs and desires. Rather, its timeless activity of contemplation or self-intellection makes it possible for us to reason discursively, to organize our beliefs and desires, and to achieve knowledge. Another thing he means by "primary" is that Intellect is paradigmatic. Along with Lloyd Gerson and Eric Perl, I take this to mean that Intellect stands in a model–image relation to all forms of thinking and life below itself. In the case of human beings, this means that all forms of embodied cognition are ultimately images of Intellect's contemplation and can be evaluated owing to their

proximity to Intellect's contemplation (V.3.7.16–25).[1] Plotinus addresses what makes Intellect's thinking paradigmatic in III.8.8. There he writes,

> But as contemplation ascends from nature to soul and from soul to Intellect, the acts of contemplation become ever more personal (*oikeioterôn*) and produce unity within the contemplators. In the soul of the virtuous person, the objects known are verging towards identity with the subject, since they are hastening towards Intellect. In Intellect it is already clear that both are already one, not by appropriation (*oikeiôsei*), as in the case of the best soul, but by essence (*ousia*) and owing to the fact that "being is the same as thinking (*tauton to einai kai to noein einai*)," for here there is no longer one thing different from another. (III.8.8.1–8: trans. Dillon and Gerson)[2]

This passage is interesting for two reasons. First, it shows that as the contemplator ascends to the intelligible world, the objects of intellection become closer to being identical with the subject of intellection. Second, it shows that in Intellect there is identity between intellection and the objects of intellection and that this is a result of its essence and of the fact that, for it, being and thinking are the same. The contrast between identity by appropriation (*oikeiôsei*) and identity by essence (*ousia*) is significant. The contemplator *becomes* identical with the objects of intellection by appropriation, since she comes to self-identify with her higher soul and return to a state that is her natural condition. The usage of the Stoic term *oikeiôsis* is important. It suggests that verging toward identity with the intelligibles involves recovering a state that is naturally ours and is authentic to our higher soul (I.6.2.7–11, III.5.1.17–19).[3] By contrast, Intellect *is* identical with the objects of intellection by essence, since the intelligibles are internal to Intellect and they share one and the same internal activity with Intellect. It is the identity between Intellect and the objects of intellection

[1] Lloyd Gerson argued for this in a series of studies from the mid-1990s ((1994), (1997a), and (1997b)). More recently, Eric Perl (2006) has taken up a similar line of interpretation and applied it to consciousness. However, as I point out below there is a major difference between Perl's interpretation and mine.

[2] τῆς δὲ θεωρίας ἀναβαινούσης ἐκ τῆς φύσεως ἐπὶ ψυχὴν καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἰς νοῦν καὶ ἀεί οἰκειοτέρων τῶν θεωριῶν γιγνομένων καὶ ἑνουμένων τοῖς θεωροῦσι καὶ ἐπί τῆς σπουδαίας ψυχῆς πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ ἰόντων τῶν ἐγνωσμένων ἅτε εἰς νοῦν σπευδόντων, ἐπί τούτου δηλονότι ἤδη ἓν ἄμφω οὐκ οἰκειώσει, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἀρίστης, ἀλλ' οὐσίᾳ καὶ τῷ ταὐτὸν τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ νοεῖν εἶναι. οὐ γὰρ ἔτι ἄλλο, τὸ δ' ἄλλο.

[3] Raoul Mortley provides an excellent discussion of *oikeiôsis* in Plotinus. He writes that "the term *oikeiôsis* comes very close to meaning 'authentic' and it gives us a glimpse of the way in which Neoplatonic ontology operates, in that there appears to be assumed a reliable sense of what is appropriate, real and authentic to any being" (2013: 88).

that makes Intellect's contemplative activity paradigmatic, since it is in virtue of this identity that Intellect grasps certain truth, possesses infallible knowledge, and is in harmony with itself.

Although neither mentioned in the above passage nor stressed in III.8, Intellect's contemplative activity is conscious. It contemplates the Forms in a transparent and holistic manner. Since Intellect stands in a model–image relation to all forms of embodied cognition, what holds for levels of cognition holds for layers of consciousness. The highest layer of consciousness involves identity of thought and Being. Due to being images of this layer, lower layers of consciousness possess lessening degrees of identity of thought and Being and can be evaluated owing to their proximity to the highest layer. What this means is that the closer our conscious states are to Intellect, the more unified are thought and Being (e.g., during acts of intellection or contemplation), and, conversely, the further away our conscious states are from Intellect, the less unified are thought and being (e.g., during acts of sense-perception or proprioception). The role of awareness in unifying the qualified body, at the level of Nature, to produce a subject of experience culminates with unifying thought and being, at the level of Intellect, to produce an ideal contemplator.

My account of the third layer of consciousness shares similarities with Eric Perl's account. However, there is a major difference between Perls' view and mine. I have argued in Chapter 1 that there is a significant difference between the way our intellect contemplates the Forms and the way Intellect contemplates them. However, Perl maintains that we can attain and *be* Intellect's consciousness. He writes that "the translation of *nous* as 'Intellect' with a capital 'I' tends to obscure precisely the point that is being made here [namely, that Intellect is not only a supreme being but a mode of consciousness that we ourselves can attain and be]; hence I translate it simply as intellect" (2006: 9). He develops his interpretation of the togetherness of thought and being with no distinction between our intellect's contemplation and Intellect's. I think this approach blurs crucial distinctions between the human intellect and the divine intellect. So, a fresh look at the passages is needed. My aim in the next two sections is to show the precise manner in which awareness is built into the constitution of Intellect and the structure of its thinking. Some of the territory I cover is well trodden in the secondary literature, but the exposition is necessary to understand clearly the final section of this chapter concerned with awareness in human intellection, as well as the final section of Chapter 6 on self-determination.

5.2 Awareness in the Formation of Intellect

The causal model that underlies the procession of Intellect from the One is the theory of double activity.[4] According to this theory, every being has two activities, an internal one that belongs to the being and an external one that processes from the being, which transmits its properties on a lower ontological level. The internal activity constitutes the essence of the being, whereas the external activity is an image or trace of the internal activity. Plotinus employs a number of metaphors to illustrate this doctrine, such as fire. Fire has an internal act that constitutes it as fire, and it has an external act by means of which it communicates its properties to matter in the form of heat (V. 4.2.21–38). In other contexts, Plotinus uses snow and its coldness, perfume and its scent, walking and its footprints, or the effects of drugs on a patient to illustrate this process.[5]

Plotinus uses the traditional Greek terms for causation in the context of double activity, but he generally prefers "to make or produce" (*poieô*), "to give" (*didômi*), or "to overflow" (*huperreô*). For example, he writes: "The One . . . overflows, as it were, and its superabundance makes something other than itself" (V.2.1.7–10). The One necessarily overflows and produces a surrounding reality directed toward it. Intellect, in turn, overflows and produces Soul, and so on until we reach matter, whose causal efficacy is so diminished due to its distance from the One that it is incapable of generating an external act (II.9.8.22–26). The reason why anything processes from the One is to realize the hidden possibilities that are present in it (IV.8.6.1–17, V.4.1.27–39). This is the principle that has come to be known in modern philosophy as the principle of plenitude. The One contains the power to produce levels of reality beneath it, and it is possible for it to do so. Therefore, it is necessary that levels of reality beneath it come into being, otherwise the possibility would never be realized and it would not be a genuine possibility (III. 2.2.8–14, IV. 8.3.28–30).

The reason why Intellect is the first to proceed, and not any other entity, is that the One abides as an intelligible. Therefore, the first thing to process from it is something capable of intellecting it. In an early treatise, Plotinus attributes a superior mode of intellection and mode of being an intelligible to the One, in order to explain how the one abides while lower levels of reality proceed. He reasons that since the One has a superior form

[4] See Bradshaw (2007: ch. 4) and Emilsson (2007: ch. 1).
[5] See V.1.6.35–37, VI.1.22.27–35, and V.4.1.32–33.

of intellection and intelligibility, the properties it transmits to the level of reality beneath it must be intellectual in character (V.4.2).

Intellect proceeds from the One in two moments or stages: first, an inchoate Intellect emerges in the form of a "sight not yet seeing"; second, the inchoate Intellect becomes Intellect by halting, turning toward its source, and seeing the One.[6] Plotinus writes, "This, when it has come into being, turns back upon the One and is filled, and becomes Intellect by looking towards it. Its halt and turning towards the One constitutes being, its gaze upon the One, Intellect. Since it halts and turns towards the One that it may see, it becomes at once Intellect and being" (V.2.1.10–14). The inchoate Intellect is a formless, indefinite activity that lacks the subject–object structure necessary for thinking. It is simply a desire and unformed sight (V.3.11.13–14). By contrast, Intellect is a definite being that does have or, rather, is the subject–object structure of thinking. It is a "seeing sight" (V.3.11.12). The inchoate Intellect becomes Intellect once the One defines it. Echoing Parmenides,[7] Plotinus holds that a definite being must have limits and bounds. Intellect acquires limits and bounds by being filled with the Forms, since each Form is a being with its own shape and it is through possessing the Forms that it actualizes its ability to think (III.8.11). Plotinus views shape (*morphê*) as an individuating characteristic that each Form possesses owing to its internal activity, which distinguishes one Form from another.[8]

Although the inchoate Intellect is the first to proceed from the One, nonetheless it is incapable of grasping the One directly. Due to being an image that possesses the features of the One on a lower ontological level, it is unable to grasp directly the internal activity that constitutes the nature of the One. Instead, what it grasps is a trace of the One, which it discovers in itself on reverting toward its source (V.3.11.1–10, III.8.11.20–25). Furthermore, the inchoate Intellect is incapable of grasping the One directly as one. Due to being an indefinite activity directed toward something else and dependent on something else for its completion, its vision of the One divides it into parts and pluralizes it, even though the One remains one (V.1.7.1–27; cf. III.8.8.30–38). Nowhere to my knowledge does Plotinus give a detailed account of the generation of Forms. Perhaps this is because there is little – if anything! – to say about a process that takes place before space, time, and Being are introduced. However, he does

[6] The principal passages that describe the two moments of the generation of Intellect from the One are II.4.5.32–34, III.8.11, V.1.6.47–48, V.2.1.10–14, V.3.11.1–18, V.1.7.1–7, V.4.2.24–25, VI.7.15–17, and VI.7.37.18–22.

[7] See fragment 8.30–34.

[8] See V.1.7.24–27, VI.7.17.14–25, II.4.4.4–6, and V.9.8.17–20.

seem to hold that the inchoate Intellect introduces distinctions into the *seeing of* the One and these distinctions generate the multiplicity of Forms. This process begins "at the top" with the *megista genê* and continues "downward" with natural kinds such as earth, sky, and living beings; ethical kinds such as beauty or justice; and mathematical kinds such as number and quantity (V.1.4.35–45, VI.7.12). Although there is no "top" or "bottom" in Intellect since it lacks spatiality, nonetheless there are relations of priority and posteriority within the Forms (VI.7.9.16–21). Genera, such as Animal, are naturally prior to their subordinate species, such as Horse.

Crucial to the procession of Intellect is that the One gives to Intellect what itself does not have, namely, the Forms. The one is the power of all things (*dunamis pantôn*), namely, the principle that produces all things through the realization of its possibilities. What it imparts to Intellect is not the Forms, but rather the power to produce the Forms through Intellect's own act of seeing. The One accomplishes this by giving Intellect an image of itself and giving it the power to produce being (VI.7.15.14–20). Important for my purposes, once Intellect generates the Forms, it acquires awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) of this power it receives from the One, and its own power to produce an external activity (V.1.7.12–14, VI. 7.16.11–24).

Awareness is thus involved at the moment the One fills the inchoate Intellect with the Forms and the "sight not yet seeing" becomes a "seeing sight." He writes that "thereupon it became all things, and knew this in its own awareness (*sunaisthêsei*) and was now at this point Intellect, filled full that it might have what it was going to see" (VI.7.16.19–21). Furthermore, Intellect is aware of the fact that it generates the Forms by seeing the One. He writes that "when it saw him [the Good] it had offspring and was aware (*sunêstheto*) of their generation and existence within it; and when it sees these it is said to think" (VI.7.35.31–33). Thus, the process of becoming a "seeing sight" involves Intellect becoming aware of itself as a definite being, becoming aware of the power it receives from the One to produce the Forms, and becoming aware of itself as an Intellect with intelligible content. With this we can witness a crucial feature of Plotinus' ontology; namely, the constitution of Intellect results from procession and reversion, but, significantly, this reversion takes place with awareness. This mode of consciousness is built into the constitution of reality.

Before turning to self-intellection, it will be helpful to discuss further the constitution of Intellect. The Forms that Intellect generates, which provide it with content and actualize its ability to think, are internal to

Intellect. Beginning in the Old Academy and continuing up to the time of Plotinus, Platonists differed on how to interpret correctly the relation between the Demiurge and the Forms in the *Timaeus*. The Demiurge imposes order on the disorderly pre-cosmos by fashioning the sensible world according to the Living Animal, an intelligible model that contains within itself all intelligible entities (*Timaeus*, 30c6–31a2 and 39e2–9). The interpretive question that confronted Platonists was whether the Living Animal is external to, and therefore different from, the Demiurge, or whether the Living Animal is internal to, and therefore the same as, the Demiurge. Even Porphyry, Plotinus' pupil and editor of the *Enneads*, held that the Forms are external to the Intellect until Amelius set him straight.[9]

Plotinus offers several objections to "externalism" in the opening chapter of V. 5 *That the Intelligibles Are Not External to the Intellect, and on the Good*. The one he considers to be the greatest occurs at V.5.1.51–58: If the Forms are external to Intellect and Intellect contemplates them as external, then it does not "have" the truth of them, and it is deceived in all that it contemplates. This objection is reminiscent of the final argument of the first half of Plato's *Parmenides*, which Parmenides interestingly refers to as the greatest difficulty. At 133a–134c, Parmenides argues that if the Forms are separate themselves by themselves and we possess only likeness of the Forms, then we do not "have" the Forms, and, consequently, we do not "have" knowledge of them. This is because the likenesses in us acquire their features by reference to other likenesses, and our knowledge is limited to the likenesses in us. Without a participation relation between sensible objects and the Forms, we are cognitively closed from grasping the truth of the Forms. In the *Theaetetus* Plato develops the notion of "having" knowledge further by distinguishing between the possession (*ktêsis*) of knowledge and the having (*hexis*) of knowledge in the aviary metaphor (197b–d).[10] Just as there is a distinction between a bird being present in one's aviary and having the bird in hand, so too is there a distinction between a piece of knowledge being present in one's soul and exercising this knowledge. "Having" knowledge counts as knowledge in the strict sense because we can imagine cases in which we "possess" knowledge, but because it is not exercised or it is forgotten, we judge falsely (199b–c).

To illustrate what he means by Intellect "having" the Forms, Plotinus contrasts Intellect with sense-perception in V.5.1. This is somewhat

[9] See *Life of Plotinus*, ch. 18.

[10] Lloyd Gerson also recognizes the background of the *Theaetetus* in his recent translation and commentary of treatise V.5. See Gerson (2013: 71).

puzzling since in IV.4.1 Plotinus introduces the visual perception of a face as a model for Intellect's contemplation of the intelligible world. So, how can visual perception be both the model for contemplation and the psychic capacity against which contemplation is contrasted? It is important to keep in mind that in IV.4.1 Plotinus is making a psychological point about how Intellect can grasp a multiplicity of objects as one thing all-together (*homou*) without the passage of time. For this reason, he compares contemplation with the visual perception of a face, since the latter is multiform, is of a complex object, is of one thing all-together, and is immediate. However, in V.5.1 Plotinus is making an epistemological point about how Intellect has infallible knowledge. For this reason, he contrasts Intellect with sense-perception since sense-perception does not "have" its objects and, consequently, has only opinion (*doxa*) concerning them.

Sight is a power of the sensitive soul that perceives external objects, specifically the color of external objects. During visual perception, the eye undergoes an affection and communicates this affection to the soul in the form of an intelligible image, which the soul then apprehends (I.1.7.9–14). Moreover, the perception of color involves grasping the visual qualities of an object without grasping the object itself (IV.4.23.1–4, VI.3.15.26–37).[11] Plotinus refers to these qualities in V.5.1–2 as images (*eidôla)* or traces (*ikhnê*) of the object. Evidently, Plotinus thinks that a power that has an external object is acted on by the object and receives only an image of that object. The problem with grasping images is two-fold: First, sight perceives images of a sensible object and, consequently, does not perceive the underlying object itself; second, sight can be mistaken by images and, consequently, can never be certain that the image belongs to the underlying object itself (V.5.1.12–20). There could be something faulty in the production of the image, or there could be something faulty in our apprehension of the image. For this reason, perceptual judgments do not produce conviction in the soul regarding their truth and have the status of belief (V.5.1.62–66). Plotinus thinks that externalists are committed to this kind of picture of Intellect.

[11] The claim that sense-perception grasps images and not objects themselves is problematic, since elsewhere Plotinus claims that sense-perception does grasp objects themselves (IV.6.1.29–32). The issue can be resolved, however, if we take into account that Plotinus thinks sensible objects are collections of qualities and matter (VI.3.8.20). So, when he says we grasp the quality of an object, he is not making the antirealist point that we grasp representations and not things themselves. Rather, he is making the point that the qualities sense-perception grasps are the structures of sensible objects, since these are ultimately images of *logoi* in Soul that are in turn images of Forms in Intellect. For a discussion of perceptual realism, see Emilsson (1988: 114–121) and (2007: 129–141), Kalligas (2004: 68–69), and Magrin (2010). For a discussion of the constitution of sensible objects, see Kalligas (2011: 763–773) and Karamanolis (2009).

We can now appreciate the argument contained in Plotinus' greatest objection to externalism. If the Forms were external, Intellect would not have the truth of the Forms because it would grasp images of the Forms, not the Forms themselves, and it could be mistaken about the Forms. Moreover, it would be deceived in everything it contemplates because it would possess nothing but falsities (i.e., the images), and if it were unaware of its possession of falsities and presumed to have the truth, then it would be doubly deceived. Either way, externalism deprives Intellect of truth and knowledge. The success of this argument depends on Intellect having infallible knowledge. Otherwise, there would be less worry about the possibility of Intellect being mistaken or deceived. Plotinus does not provide much of an argument for Intellect having certain knowledge beyond claiming, in the opening lines of V.5.1, that if it were capable of being mistaken or holding false beliefs, then it would not be the true and real Intellect. Instead, he appears to assume that a paradigmatic knower does have infallible knowledge, and on the basis of this assumption, he argues that what makes this possible is the internality of the intelligibles.

With this in mind, Plotinus develops "internalism" by reflecting on the demands of paradigmatic knowing. He reasons that if Intellect has certain knowledge, then it must grasp the Forms themselves; it must grasp them in such a way that it could not be mistaken about them or hold false beliefs concerning them; the self-evidence of its knowledge must come from within itself; and the Forms themselves must be varied and interwoven. Internalism meets these demands by locating the intelligibles within Intellect. To be internal to Intellect means more than just Intellect containing the Forms, e.g., the way that a jug contains olives. Rather, it means that Intellect and the Forms share the same internal activity (*energeia*) and, consequently, are identical. However, as we saw in Chapter 1 the relation of identity between intellect and the intelligibles is not strict identity, but sameness in number. Intellect has one and same actuality with the Forms, but what it is to be an Intellect and the Forms differs.

"Having" the Forms ensures that Intellect grasps the truth of the Forms and ensures that it grasps their truth in such a way that it could not be mistaken, since what it grasps is their internal activity. Moreover, Intellect's knowledge of the Forms is self-evident (*enargê*) because it shares one and the same internal activity with them. By being identical with the Forms it is what it knows, and what it is is self-evident to it.[12] Furthermore, by sharing an actuality with one another the Forms make

[12] Although I am not quoting directly, my view is influenced by Emilsson (2007: ch. 3).

up a holistic system in which each Form is connected with the others, and all are transparent to all.[13] This makes possible the internal variation and interweaving of the Forms, which enables Intellect to think and say what it is.

Internalism presents a different picture of the divine Intellect in the Platonic tradition. Intellect is a composite (*sunthesis*) that is constituted by the Forms (V.4.2.9–10) and that contains the Forms, the way that a genus does its species or a whole contains its parts (V.9.6.10–11). Moreover, the structural relations between the parts of which Intellect is composed matter to its composition, and the identity of each part is determined in the context of the whole of which it is a part (V.8.4.22–23). Furthermore, the intelligible world is hierarchically organized and individual Forms stand in relations of priority and posteriority according to their nearness to the primary genera, namely, the *megista genê* (VI.7.9.16–21). Relatedly, individual Forms cannot exist in isolation outside intellect, since then the world of Forms would not be a unity and would not be fully interwoven, which would result in Intellect not being a unity and having incomplete knowledge of the Forms (V.5.1.40–50). It is important to keep in mind, however, that the Forms are not mere nodes of a network that have only structural properties. Rather, each Form has an internal activity that constitutes its essence and endows it with individuating features. Intellect is thus a unified and integrated whole, the structure of which is essential to being what it is. In short, it is a structured whole.[14]

5.3 Awareness in Self-Intellection

Porphyry tells us in the *Life of Plotinus* (ch. 14) that Plotinus' writings are replete with Peripatetic material, and that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* features prominently in them. This is especially true in the case of the second hypostasis, since Plotinus' theory of Intellect is clearly influenced by Aristotle's theory of intellect in *De Anima* III.4–5 and his theory of the Unmoved Mover in *Metaphysics* XII.7–9, as well as by Alexander of Aphrodisias' identification of the two in his *De Anima* 89, 7ff. Both Aristotle and Alexander hold that intellect is identical to its objects of thought and that, in the case of the divine intellect, it has itself for its own object. This leads to the famous description of the divine intellect as

[13] See V.8.4.5–12, VI.7.1, and VI.6.7.2.29–38.

[14] Although I am not quoting directly, my interpretation of Plotinus' mereology is influenced by Verity Harte's excellent book *Plato on Parts and Wholes*. See Harte (2002).

thought thinking thought (*noêsis noêseôs noêsis*: *Metaphysics* XII 1074b34–35). However, as several prominent scholars have noted, the divine intellect is not reflexively aware of its identity with its object of thought.[15] In other words, it eternally thinks the intelligible structures of the universe, but it is not reflexively aware of itself as the subject of its own thinking.[16] The line of argumentation leading up to the famous description of the divine intellect is concerned entirely with the reasons for which it must be the activity of thinking and it must have itself for its own object. But it makes no mention of consciousness.

Of course, Aristotle does have an understanding of the phenomenon of consciousness and he does have a framework for exploring how we are conscious of our cognitive activities (or, in Aristotle's terminology, perceiving that we perceive and perceiving that we think), but he does not have a fully worked-out theory that applies to the noetic realm.[17] In Aristotle's hylomorphic psychology, it is the sensitive soul that is responsible for awareness of our cognitive activities, such as sense-perception and thinking.[18] Aristotle views the sensitive soul as numerically one and the same but different in being, due to the fact that it perceives a different genus of sensibles through different sense faculties. The five senses each perceive their own proper sensible, but the common power (*koinê dunamis*) of the sensitive soul distinguishes proper sensibles from one another and perceives that we perceive and think. The common power is not an additional faculty over and above the five senses, but rather the entire sensitive soul functioning as a unity. However, since the divine intellect does not possess a sensitive soul, this framework does not apply. It may be for this reason that Aristotle does not attribute reflexive awareness to the divine intellect. Plotinus' argument for why Intellect has itself for its own object in V.3.5 shares similarities with Aristotle's argument for the same conclusion in *Metaphysics* XII 9. However, Plotinus builds consciousness into his theory of self-intellection in much the same way he builds consciousness into the constitution of reality.

[15] See Norman (1979: 100–101), Sorabji (1983: 147), Kosman (2000: 318–319), and more recently Emilsson (2007: ch. 2).

[16] Compare Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b18–21 with Alexander, *Supplement to on the Soul* 109, 3–6 and 2.109, 15–17 and 2.109, 23–24.

[17] The primary passages in which Aristotle discusses consciousness are *DA* III.2; *Parva Naturalia* 448a25–30, 455a12–22, 437a26–29, and 452b26–28; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a29–b1; *Physics* 244b12–245a2; and *Metaphysics* XII 1074b33–36. For an excellent discussion of consciousness in Aristotle, see Johansen (2005).

[18] See *Sense and Sensibilia* 449a5–20 and *On Sleep* 455a12–20.

Plotinus begins his argument concerning self-thinking in V.3.5 by drawing on the internalist thesis from V. 5.1, namely, that if Intellect grasps truth, it must "have" the Forms themselves, and that the only way for Intellect to "have" the Forms is for it to be identical to them.[19] Although the context is self-knowledge, nonetheless Plotinus begins by stressing that even self-knowledge is of the Forms. This reflects his insistence in V.6.1–2 that thinking requires an object of thought, and because Intellect's thinking is primary thinking, it requires an internal object of thought. Moreover, without an object of thought and comprehension of this object, Intellect's thinking is empty. This should serve as a reminder that the identity between Intellect and the intelligible does not preclude intentionality in Intellect.[20] For intentionality provides thought with content. Plotinus recognizes that his doctrine of identity runs the risk of blurring the distinction between Intellect and object of thought and undermining the role the object plays in furnishing thought with content. However, this is more a problem for us than it is for Plotinus. Intellect and the object of thought are identical not in the modern sense of strict identity, but in the restricted sense of sameness in number. Therefore, the act of thinking does not wholly encompass the object of thinking, and there is thus a sufficient degree of otherness between the thinker and the object of thought for the one to be directed toward the other.

Richard Sorabji has argued that, for Plotinus and for the Neoplatonists, intellectual thought (*noêsis*) does not have intentional objects.[21] The basis for his argument is that the identity between intellect and object of thought does not draw attention to aboutness, and that the intelligibles are not thought-dependent in a way that makes them intentional. However, Plotinus' comments that "all thinking comes from something and is of something" (VI.7.40.6) and that "the intellect has its intellectual effort empty of content if it does not grasp and comprehend the object which it thinks; for it does not have thinking without its object of thought" (V.6.2.11–14) suggest to me that he is drawing attention to the fact that thinking is *of* something, and what it is *of* provides thinking with content. The passage I discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.3, IV.4.1.16–31, is an excellent example of intentionality in Intellect, since it involves the higher soul, which has assimilated to Intellect, directing itself onto its noetic

[19] Treatise V.5 [32] occurs earlier than treatise V.3 [49] in the chronological order.
[20] Compare Plotinus' comments on intentionality in V.6.2 with VI.7.39.12–13, VI.7.40.6, and VI.7.41.12–13.
[21] See Sorabji (2001: 105–112) and (2005: vol. 3: 317–323).

content and individuating one content from another. Without objects of thought, the higher soul would have nothing to think.[22]

Plotinus' argument in V.3.5.20–50 concerning self-thinking is dense and compressed. It can be summarized as follows:

1. Intellect is identical to the intelligibles (20–29).
2. Intellect is a primary being whose substance is actuality (33–39).
3. A primary being whose substance is actuality contains no potentiality (39–42).
4. A primary being that contains no potentiality is identical to its activity, namely, intellection (42–43).
5. The intelligibles are also identical to Intellect's intellection (43–44).
6. Therefore, Intellect thinks with intellection, which is itself and it thinks the intelligible, which is itself (44–50).
7. Therefore, Intellect thinks itself.

As we have seen above, Plotinus supports premise (1) by reflecting on the requirements of knowledge: If Intellect's self-knowledge counts as genuine knowledge, then it must have the intelligibles, not images of them, and the only way it can have the intelligibles is by being identical to them. He supports premise (2) by reflecting on the nature of the intelligibles as a whole: The intelligible with which Intellect is identical is a certain kind of actuality, which contains no potentiality and possesses life and intelligibility through itself.[23] For this reason, the intelligible is the primary substance and the primary actuality. By being the primary actuality, it has to be substantial thinking that involves truth and such thinking could only belong to the primary Intellect.[24] He supports premises (3) and (4) by reflecting on Intellect as primary actuality: Intellect neither is in potentiality in relation to something else nor is it one thing and its thought another. If it were, it would have to pass from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge and would thus be unintellectual. Moreover, it would be in potentiality toward its intellection and it could be that it not exercise its intellection and that its intellection not be a part of its nature. For this reason, Intellect is identical to its activity of intellection.[25]

However, it is a puzzle how Intellect *could* think itself in the manner that paradigmatic knowing requires, since self-intellection appears to

[22] Sorabji does not provide any reasons for believing that intentionality requires thought-dependence. The issue of the priority or posteriority of the intelligible seems to me to be beside the point.
[23] See IV.7.9.11–30, V.9.8.16–20, and VI.7.2.40–56.
[24] See III.8.8.26–29, V.4.2, V.5.1–2, and V.6.1–2.
[25] See II.5.1.29–35, II.5.2.33–36, II.5.3.28–30, V.9.5.1–9, and V.9.8.1–20.

involve a subject (Intellect), an act (intellection), and an object (the intelligibles). This subject–act–object structure portrays intellection as an act that Intellect performs, suggesting that Intellect and its intellection are different and that performing the act of intellection involves actualizing a potentiality that Intellect possesses. Expressed in the language of the aviary metaphor, it portrays self-intellection along the lines of reaching into the aviary and grabbing a bird one possesses, thereby transitioning from a potentiality to an actuality or a first actuality to a second actuality. However, we saw in Chapter 1 that Intellect grasps the intelligible world all-together and all-at-once in a timeless intuition.[26] Furthermore, we saw in the previous section of this chapter that Intellect's knowledge depends on "having" the Forms, and this, in turn, depends on grasping their internal activities. Therefore, self-intellection cannot involve the actualization of either a potentiality or a first actuality (II.5.1.6–10). Plotinus supports premise (6) by thinking through the implications of (1)–(5): Since Intellect is identical to the intelligibles and to the activity of intellection, the intelligibles must be identical to the activity of intellection. By being internal to Intellect and sharing one and the same actuality with Intellect, the intelligibles are of necessity identical to that which contains them. Due to the identity of Intellect, intellection, and the intelligibles, Plotinus is able to conclude in (6) and (7) that intellect thinks itself.

There are three features of Plotinus' theory of self-intellection that I want to comment on. First, Intellect's self is the structured whole that comprises the realm of objective reality. The embodied self or the "we" is a personal, inner self that is identified with reasoning (*dianoetic* self) or reasoning plus the qualified body (*physical* self). Moreover, the embodied self includes personal experiences that are unique to the one's undergoing them and memories of past experiences that shape one's personality and behavioral dispositions. In short, the embodied self is a self that belongs to a person. However, Intellect is not a person. It is a conceptually structured living totality. Consequently, self-thinking is just this structured whole becoming cognizant of itself.

Second, Intellect's self-thinking coincides with self-knowledge due to its mereological constitution and the internality of the intelligibles. However, Plotinus takes seriously a skeptical objection that his mereological theory of Intellect faces. Ian Crystal has claimed that the notion of parts is *entirely* misplaced in the noetic context. This is due to his concern that a mereological account of Intellect would prevent Plotinus from answering

[26] See IV.4.1.16–27.

Sextus Empiricus' objection that genuine self-knowledge is impossible, because in knowing oneself, one part, the subject, knows another part, the object, and therefore the subject would not know the whole of itself (2002: 193).[27] However, Crystal neglects to take fully into account that the mereological account of Intellect in Plotinus is sui generis. Although Plotinus does conceive of the Forms as parts that compose Intellect, this does not prevent him from answering Sextus' objection, since he thinks the whole is constituted by the structural organization of its parts and the parts form a holistic, transparent system. This enables Plotinus to conclude that "it thinks as a whole with the whole of itself, not one part of itself with another" (V.3.6.7–8).

In the passage where Plotinus says explicitly that Intellect contains the Forms the way a whole contains its parts, he offers a helpful analogy with seeds (V.9.6.10–15). A seed (*sperma*) is a composite of immaterial formative-principles (*logoi*) and moist matter. The generative soul (*hê gennêtikê*), the lowest capacities of the world soul responsible for the production of the sensible world, implants formative-principles into seeds that serve as the blueprint for embryonic development.[28] The formative-principles possess powers to produce particular bodily parts and functions in the living being. Due to being immaterial, each formative-principle is present as a whole in all the parts of the seed and collectively they are all-together (*homou panta*) and undifferentiated (*adiakrita*) in the seed, but nonetheless each power belonging to a formative-principle corresponds to the development of particular bodily parts or functions and is actualized during specific stages of the gestation period. What this illustrates, I think, is that a multiplicity of formative-principles is compresent in a seed, and in such a way that each formative-principle retains its own unique power, but the seed remains a unity. Analogously, a multiplicity of Forms is compresent in Intellect, and in such a way that each Form retains its own unique power, but Intellect remains a unity. Hence, Plotinus can hold a mereological account of Intellect and answer the skeptical objection, since Intellect remains a unified whole throughout self-thinking.

Third, Intellect's self-thinking includes the thinking that it is thinking. One possibility of construing the relation between thinking and thinking that one is thinking is to hold that thinking that one is thinking is a

[27] See Sextus Empiricus AL I.283–286 and I.310–313.

[28] See V.9.6.10–25, II.6.1.10–12, IV.3.10.10–13, IV.9.3.16–18, V.1.5.11–13, V.3.8.4–9, and IV.4.27.1–7. For a discussion of Plotinus' embryology, see Wilberding (2008b) and Brisson (2012: 103–119).

distinct, higher-order state than thinking, and to hold that what makes thinking a conscious state is the fact that it is the object of the higher-order state. For example, I perceive my bookshelf, and what makes my perception a conscious state is the fact that I have a higher-order perception (HOP), or higher-order thought (HOT) about my perception. Another possibility of construing the relation is to hold that thinking that one is thinking is a second-order state that is included in the act of thinking, and to hold that what makes thinking a conscious state is a property, or collection of properties, belonging to the first-order state. Plotinus argues against the first possibility in the opening chapter of II.9.1 *Against the Gnostics*. Certain Gnostics or Middle Platonists held that thinking that one thinks and thinking are distinct states, and employed this distinction to multiply the number of intellects in the intelligible world. His criticism of this Gnostic-Middle Platonic position reveals that he holds a version of the second possibility.

Plotinus offers two *reductios* for why the second-order state must be included in the first. The first is directed toward the claim that the first- and second-order states are distinct activities. He claims that if the opposite is true, then the subject of thinking that one is thinking and the subject of thinking will be different (38–40). He does not develop this objection beyond stating it, but he presumably finds this absurd because the identity of Intellect, intellection, and the intelligibles guarantees that the subject of the second-order state and the first-order state remains the same throughout self-thinking. Since Intellect thinks with intellection, which is itself, and thinks the intelligible, which is itself, it is one and the same Intellect that thinks itself and thinks that it thinks itself. The second is directed toward the related claim that there is an Intellect that possesses only the first-order state, namely, one that thinks but is not conscious that it thinks (*mê parakolouthounta de heautô hoti noei*). He claims that if the opposite is true, then Intellect will be unintelligent and not truly see itself in its activity of self-thinking. He finds this absurd because the structure of Intellect (recall it is a complete, structured whole) and the activity of intellection (recall it grasps the intelligible world all-together and all-at-once) guarantees that Intellect sees itself as thinking and, therefore, thinks that it thinks (47–50). Because both of these claims result in absurdity, Plotinus concludes that primary thinking necessarily includes thinking that one thinks (50–52). At the level of Intellect, then, thinking entails thinking that one thinks.

Ordinarily, Plotinus reserves *sunaisthêsis* or *sunêsis* to describe Intellect's mode of consciousness to emphasize unity and identity with the

intelligibles. However, in II.9.1.34–47 and III.9.9.13–25 he uses *parakolouthêsis*, which I have characterized in the previous chapter as a mode of consciousness that emphasizes duality and self-enclosure. Is this to say, then, that Intellect's self-thinking is self-enclosed and isolated from Being? Of course not. The first *reductio* makes it clear that the second-order state is included in the first, and the first is identical with Being and the Forms. Plotinus employs *parakolouthêsis* in these two passages because he is contrasting Intellect with the One by showing that thinking that one is thinking involves a duality, which is absent from the One. As he says, "that which is conscious of itself (*to de parakolouthoun heautô*) and thinks itself comes second, for it is conscious (*parakolouthei*) in order that in this actuality it may understand itself" (III.9.9.18–20: trans. mine). He is using the term in a restricted sense.

We saw in Chapter 1 that the absence of time results in Intellect grasping the intelligible world all-together and all-at-once. To this we can now add that the absence of time also results in the Forms possessing their causes, and their reason why in themselves, and correspondingly Intellect grasping what each Form is and why it is simultaneously. Here is what I mean. When an embodied human being looks at a statue, it grasps what it is without simultaneously grasping why it is, namely, its causes and its reason for being, which in this case have to do with the sculptor and her reasons for sculpting the statue. This is because objects and events are diffused and separated in space and time, which results in effects being separate from their causes and effects being grasped independently of their causes. By contrast, when Intellect looks at Human Being, it grasps what it is but also simultaneously grasps its causes and its reason for being, namely, the features that make it Human Being, the reason for its position in the hierarchy of Forms, and the reason for its existence in the intelligible world. This is because each Form, as a primary actuality that contains no potentiality, possess its own causes and its own reason for being (VI.7.2.16–38). Thus, what shines through (*diaphanê* is derived from *diaphainô*, to shine through) each individual Form to the other Forms, and to Intellect, are the explanatory causes and innermost nature belonging to each Form. It is no wonder Plotinus characterizes Intellect in terms of light: "for all things there are transparent, and there is nothing dark or opaque; everything and all things are clear to the inmost part to everything; for light is transparent to light" (V.8.4. 5–7).

What makes self-thinking a conscious state is two-fold. First, the metaphysics of procession and reversion. We saw above that lower levels of reality that process from higher levels are aware of the higher levels on

which they depend, and constitute themselves when they revert toward their source. In the case of Intellect, its desire for the One prompted it to revert toward its source, and, once filled with the Forms, it became aware of its contents. Second, the transparency and holism of the Forms. Each Form, and its interconnections with other Forms, is transparent (*diaphanê*) to one another and to Intellect (V.8.4.5–12). Awareness is thus a first-order property of self-thinking, since Intellect's activity essentially involves awareness and the intelligible objects with which it is identical are transparent. In contrast with the Aristotelian divine intellect, the Plotinian Intellect is reflexively aware of itself as the subject of its own thinking. However, it is important to note that although Intellect's awareness is ultimately self-awareness, it is nonetheless directed at objects *other than itself*, namely, the One, in its reversion upward, and the intelligibles, in its reversion inward. Intellect's awareness is not an awareness of a private, inner self but an awareness of objective reality.

I view Plotinus as a rationalist, who is continuous with the Greek philosophical tradition on the importance of reason and argumentation for investigation into truth. Correspondingly, I view his theory of Intellect as a critical engagement with Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic theories of divine intellection. However, in the case of Intellect's awareness I think it is limiting to ask, "What is self-thinking and is it accompanied by reflexive awareness?" This reflects an interpretive bias of treating thinking as basic and treating reflexive awareness as something that can or cannot inhere in thinking. This is limiting not for the obvious reason that Intellect's thinking necessarily includes thinking that it is thinking and its objects are transparent, but because in one key passage Plotinus actually characterizes Intellect's thinking *as* awareness. This suggests to me that Intellect is as much a primary awareness as it is a primary thinker. Moreover, by beginning with a specific notion of consciousness in mind it restricts the question we pose and it limits the answer we discover. Consequently, we miss out on an important feature of Intellect's awareness that contrasts it with the post-Cartesian tradition. Due to the importance of this passage for my interpretation, I quote it in full.

> For in general thinking (*to noein*) seems to be an awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) of the whole when many [parts] come together into the same thing. This occurs when something thinks itself, which in fact is thinking in the primary sense. Each is itself one thing, and seeks nothing. However, if thought will be of what is external it will be deficient and not be thinking in the primary sense. That which is entirely simple and truly self-sufficient needs nothing. That which is secondarily self-sufficient, that which needs

> itself, this is what needs to think itself; and that which is deficient in relation to itself produces self-sufficiency by being a whole, with a sufficiency deriving from all its [parts], being with itself and inclining towards itself. Since indeed awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) is a perception of something that is many: even the name bears witness to this. And thinking, which is prior, turns inward to it [Intellect] which is clearly multiple. For even if it says only this, "I am being," it says it as a discovery and it says it plausibly, for being is multiple. Since, if it had an immediate intuition (*epibalê*) of itself as something simple and said, "I am being," it would not attain itself or being. (V.3.13.12–27)[29]

The aim of the chapter in which this passage occurs is to demonstrate that primary thinking is self-thinking, and self-thinking, due to being multiple, does not belong to the One. Our interest lies in three related claims: First, self-thinking seems to be the awareness of a whole when many parts come together into the same thing (12–17); second, Intellect is deficient in relation to itself and achieves self-sufficiency by being a unified whole (17–23); third, Intellect's statements concerning itself are identity statements and involve a discovery (23–27).

Plotinus' choice of *sunaisthêsis* in his description of thinking as "the awareness of a whole when many parts come together into the same thing" is intentional and is more than a mere replacement for self-thinking.[30] I argued in Chapter 2 that living beings possess a unique type of consciousness in the sensible world that enables them to function as coherent wholes. This is *sunaisthêsis*, which differs from *aisthêsis* by being directed toward one's own internal parts and activities. It is an intimate awareness of ourselves in a body that enables us to activate specific body parts and functions in order to accomplish specific tasks. Moreover, in the sensible world *sunaisthêsis* works closely together with *sumpatheia* in its role in the unification of the qualified body. *Sumpatheia* constitutes a living body as a

[29] κινδυνεύει γὰρ ὅλως τὸ νοεῖν πολλῶν εἰς ταὐτὸ συνελθόντων συναίθησις εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου, ὅταν αὐτό τι ἑαυτὸ νοῇ, ὃ δὴ καὶ κυρίως ἐστὶ νοεῖν· ἕν δὲ ἕκαστον αὐτό τί ἐστι καὶ οὐδὲν ζητεῖ· εἰ δὲ τοῦ ἕξω ἔσται ἡ νόησις, ἐνδεές τε ἔσται καὶ οὐ κυρίως τὸ νοεῖν. τὸ δὲ πάντη ἁπλοῦν καὶ αὔταρκες ὄντως οὐδὲν δεῖται· τὸ δὲ δευτέρως αὔταρκες, δεόμενον δὲ ἑαυτοῦ, τοῦτο δεῖται τοῦ νοεῖν ἑαυτό· καὶ τὸ ἐνδεὲς πρὸς αὐτὸ ὂν τῷ ὅλῳ πεποίηκε τὸ αὔταρκες ἱκανὸν ἐξ ἁπάντων γενόμενον, συνὸν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ νεῦον. ἐπεῖ καὶ ἡ συναίσθησις πολλοῦ τινος αἴσθησίς ἐστι· καὶ μαρτυρεῖ καὶ τοὔνομα. καὶ ἡ νόησις προτέρα οὖσα εἴσω εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπιστρέφει δηλονότι πολὺν ὄντα· καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν αὐτὸ τοῦτο μόνον εἴπῃ "ὄν εἰμι," ὡς ἐξευρὼν λέγει καὶ εἰκότως λέγει, τὸ γὰρ ὂν πολύ ἐστιν· ἐπεί, ὅταν ὡς εἰς ἁπλοῦν ἐπιβάλῃ καὶ εἴπῃ "ὄν εἰμι," οὐκ ἔτυχεν οὔτε αὑτοῦ οὔτε τοῦ ὄντος.

[30] Although I am largely in agreement with Emilsson's interpretation of this passage, I disagree with his claim that "from the preceding lines it is clear that the word *sunaisthêsis* ('consciousness') here replaces self-thinking" (2007: 112). Although self-thinking and self-awareness coincide in Intellect and he could use the latter to replace the former, I think Plotinus is deliberately calling attention to the role *sunaisthêsis* plays in the production of unity and self-sufficiency in Intellect.

coherent whole by uniting all the parts of the body through common feeling. *Sunaisthêsis* recognizes that the parts and activities that constitute this whole are one's own or belong to oneself. If we think of awareness in V.3.13 solely as reflexive awareness that accompanies self-thinking, we are bound to miss the fact that the passage is presenting us with the intelligible counterpart to this type of consciousness.

Plotinus holds that a living being is sufficient to itself when it is one and that all living beings strive to attain the self-sufficiency belonging to the One.[31] In fact, this is what makes the One the Good: It is the completeness or perfection that all living beings strive to attain. The One is truly self-sufficient because it does not stand in need of being completed by anything external to itself.[32] It depends on nothing other than itself to be what it is, and it is precisely what it willed itself to be. Intellect also does not stand in need of being completed by anything external to itself. However, it does stand in need of being completed by the One.[33] The inchoate Intellect does not become Intellect until it gazes at a trace of the One, is filled with the Forms, and thinks itself. Moreover, Intellect does not remain Intellect or continue to "have" the intelligibles without an eternal desire and movement toward the One. Therefore, it requires the One to become and be what it is. Consequently, Intellect is secondarily self-sufficient.

The closest a living being gets to being one is to be a structured whole. In the case of rational beings, the closer thought and being are brought together the more unified the structured whole is. This goes for Intellect, too, since it is a "one-many." Intellect is a one, insofar as it is a self-directed activity that proceeds from the One. But it is also a many, insofar as it is constituted by the Forms, and its intellection of the Forms is varied and multiform. Even though the contents of Intellect and the acts of intellection are not separated from one another in space or time, Intellect runs the risk of not knowing the number and kinds of things that it is. Hence, the primary thinker must unify itself into a structured whole by gathering its parts together into a unity through the activity of self-thinking (VI.7.41.17–21). There is a need for *sumpatheia* in the sensible world, since bodies are divisible into parts and in order to think, speak, and act human beings must be united in common feeling. However, there is no

[31] See IV.4.18.21–22, VI.2.11.21–29, and VI.8.13.12–15.
[32] See V.4.1.11–15, V.6.2.15–17, V.3.17.6–14, V.4.1.12–25, VI.7.38.23–25, VI.8.13.55–60, VI.8.16.30–40, and VI.9.6.16–26.
[33] See III.8.11.12–19, V.1.6.42–43, V.3.17.6–14, VI.7.2.40–43, and VI.7.9.45–VI.7.10.10.

need for *sumpatheia* in the intelligible world, since Intellect is altogether in actuality (*energeia homou*). Consequently, it is already coherent enough to think, speak, and act (in the sense of *energein*, not *prattein*). Nevertheless, there is a need for *sunaisthêsis* since Intellect is composed of many parts and performs many activities, and what is multiform stands in need of being self-aware.

The analogy between the perception of a face and contemplation of the intelligible world in IV.4.1 revealed that individual Forms are varied, the intelligible world is complex, and intellection of the intelligibles is correspondingly varied and complex. Consequently, when Intellect turns inward and thinks itself it is multiple, and were it to express its self-thoughts linguistically, the statements, too, would be multiple. I use the counterfactual because, to be precise, Intellect does not speak. Speaking presupposes time, which is absent in the intelligible world. However, Plotinus often imagines what Intellect would say were it to speak in order to contrast Intellect from the One. The statement "I am Being" is multiple because Being is multiple due to its interrelations with the other *megista genê*, and the proposition expressed by the statement is multiple due to its predicating Being of Intellect. Plotinus is relying on the Greek view that the "is" of predication involves plurality, namely, the conceptual distinction between the subject and what is predicated of the subject.[34]

Interestingly, Plotinus' claim that "if it had an immediate intuition (*epibalê*) of itself as something simple and said, 'I am being,' it would not attain itself or being" (26–28) echoes his characterization of Intellect's manner of grasping the Forms in IV.4.1.[35] There he develops the view that Intellect, in contrast to discursive reasoning, has an immediate intuition of things all at once (*epibolên athroan athroôn*). However, he is careful to point out that Intellect's immediate intuition of the Forms is not of some one thing all-together (i.e., the One) but of a manifold that is all-together (i.e., the intelligible world). The former is its manner of hypernoetically grasping the One; the latter is its manner of grasping itself. Hence, were it to have an immediate grasp of itself as something simple and say "I am Being," it would not attain itself or Being because the object of self-thinking would be simple and the thought and the statement would be multiple. It would, in effect, be a form of mistaken

[34] See Kahn (2009: 116–117).

[35] *Epibalê* (V.3.13.27) is a verbal form of *epiballô*, and *epibolê* (IV.4.1.20) is a noun derived from *epiballô*.

self-identification. Such a mistake would be inconsistent with Intellect's paradigmatic self-knowledge.

Emilsson has convincingly shown that Intellect's self-thinking consists in first-personal identity statements, e.g., "I am F," where F refers to whatever Form Intellect is self-identifying with in an act of thinking, and that such statements reflect a discovery. Ordinarily, Plotinus does not use the language of discovery when referring to Intellect. When Plotinus contrasts Intellect with sensible particulars, such as Socrates, the language of discovery is not fitting. The life of a sensible particular is temporally bounded. It comes into being at a time, proceeds through temporal stages, and ends at a time. Due to being temporally bounded, what it is for a sensible particular to be involves continually acquiring being and always being deficient with respect to what it is going to be (III.7.4.18–28, III.7.6. 38–42). Unlike a sensible particular, Intellect is eternal. What it is for it to be always involves possessing the fullness of its being and never being deficient in relation to its being (III.7.3.28–40, III.7.11.48–62). Due to possessing the intelligibles internally and sharing in their actuality, Intellect does not have to search them out (V.5.1–2); in fact, searching out is a sign of deficiency and is often used in reference to discursive reasoning. When so described, Intellect is a complete whole. The circumstances are different when Plotinus contrasts Intellect with the One. We saw in V.3.13.12–27 that Intellect is deficient in relation to itself and in need of self-awareness. In a related passage, he claims that Intellect is deficient in its nature, and it becomes acquainted with itself through self-thinking (III.9.9.18–25). When so described, Intellect is an incomplete whole. So, the language of discovery is fitting. But what does Intellect discover?

Intellect discovers each of the Forms with which it is identical and each of the truths contained in the Forms. By discovering these aspects of itself, Intellect learns new things about itself. As Plotinus says in reference to Intellect, "know thyself is said to those who because of their selves' multiplicity have the business of counting themselves up and learning that they do not know all of the number and kind of things they are" (VI. 7. 41.23–25). This suggests that Intellect is not simply identical to the intelligibles but is also aware that it is identical and discovers itself through being aware of this identity. Due to being eternal, this act of discovery takes place nontemporally.

Closer reflection on Plotinus' concept of truth reveals that what Intellect is aware of is not just its identity with the Forms, but also that it itself is the truths contained within the Forms. In other words, it does not just recognize the eternal truth "justice is beautiful," but rather that it itself is the eternal truth "justice is beautiful." Intellect has truth and self-evidence

regarding what it knows to be true by possessing the Forms internally. The Forms are not propositions that express truths about something other than themselves, but rather each Form is the truth that belongs to it, and each truth is interconnected with the truths belonging to the other Forms (III.7.4.6–13, V.8.4.1–12). For which reason, Intellect is the same as the truths it thinks (V.3.6.29–31) and real truth is what it says and says what it is (V.3.5.25–26, V.5.2.18–21). Due to internalism, truth in Intellect is not a matter of the correspondence of thought with reality but rather of coherence with itself.[36] Thus when Intellect thinks "I am Justice," it is aware of its identity with Justice, but it is also simultaneously aware of its identity with the conceptual interrelations with Beauty, which render the statement "justice is beautiful" an eternal truth. It is precisely these sorts of aspects of itself that Intellect collects together into a unity during self-awareness.

Admittedly, it is somewhat strange to think of Intellect as thinking in the first person since Intellect is the realm of objective reality, and the first person, at least in the modern era, is tied to subjectivity and sharply contrasted with objectivity. However, it is important to keep in mind that there is subjectivity in the intelligible world since each individual intellect grasps the intelligible world from a perspective. Does this mean Intellect also has a perspective? Yes and no. On the one hand, Intellect has a perspective insofar as its activities are conscious and they can only be understood from its point of view. The fact that individual intellects cannot grasp the intelligible world in the precise manner of Intellect confirms this. On the other hand, Intellect lacks a perspective since it does not present the intelligible world under a certain aspect but grasps the whole of it with the whole of itself. Thus, if having a perspective is at all appropriate to Intellect, it is owing to its status as the primary thinker and its possession of a superior form of intellection, rather than its status as one intellect among several in the intelligible world.

Let us now sum up the results of this exposition. Intellect is the primary thinker whose activity consists in self-thinking. Thinking that it is thinking is a first-order property of Intellect's self-thinking, which essentially involves awareness. Intellect's awareness is of the Forms and their interconnections, but, because of its identity with the Forms, its awareness is ultimately of its identity with the Forms and their interconnections. Moreover, Intellect's awareness collects its parts together into a unity and constitutes it as a self-sufficient whole. By being so constituted,

[36] See Kalligas (2004) and Emilsson (2007: 165–169).

Intellect grasps certain truth, possesses infallible knowledge, and is in harmony with itself. We are now in a position to understand awareness in human intellection.

5.4 Awareness in Human Intellection

The main passage on which I will build my interpretation of intellect's awareness occurs in IV.4.2. This chapter is a continuation of the discussion began in IV.4.1 regarding how the higher soul contemplates the intelligibles without the use of memory or discursivity. It will be helpful to review the main findings of my interpretation of IV.4.1 before discussing awareness in the human intellect. In Chapter 1, I argued that when the self-sculptor has stripped away the accretions that result from embodiment and has assimilated to Intellect, he experiences the higher form of Being, thinking, and awareness belonging to the intellect; that self-identifying with one's intellect and contemplating the Forms involves having a perspective on the intelligible world, which individuates our intellect from other intellects and from Intellect; that our intellect grasps the intelligible world all-at-once (*athroa*) and all-together (*homou*) similar to Intellect, but in its own manner; that the manner of intellect's grasp involves ordered succession, transitioning from one Form or grouping of Forms to another Form or grouping of Forms, but in a way that is compatible with simultaneity and compresence; and that focusing one's attention on a Form or grouping of Forms involves the actualization of a power to contemplate the Forms.

In IV.4.2 Plotinus claims that while contemplating "there" the lack of memory extends to oneself, noting that even Socrates would not remember that he himself is contemplating. He provides an analogy with contemplation "here" to support this claim, noting that during intense contemplation one does not turn toward oneself (*epistrophê pros heauton*) in the intellection but toward Intellect. The point he is making is that during contemplation "here" our activity is entirely directed toward Intellect and that we are so absorbed with Intellect we do not retain memory of our *dianoetic* self. We remain the *dianoetic* self in potentiality only. Ordinarily, Plotinus uses the phrase *epistrophê pros heauton* to refer to the inward process of self-constitution that is prompted by recognizing the higher reality on which one depends.[37] However, in IV.4.2 he is not using *epistrophê pros heauton* in this technical sense. He is using it in the sense of *parakolouthêsis heautô*, namely, following along with one's activities or

[37] See I.8.14.39, III.4.1.8–12, IV.8.4.1–4, V.3.6.40–41, IV.8.4.1–4, and V.3.8.30–31.

self-consciousness. In other words, during contemplation the intellect does not direct its attention away from the Forms and toward its inward activity, in the way that the reader directs his attention away from what he is reading to that he is reading, or the courageous man directs his attention away from what action he is performing to that he is performing it, and to his recognition that his action conforms to the virtue of courage (I.4.10.24–34). Rather, he fully absorbs himself in contemplation to the point of removing all duality and forgetting his embodied identity. This suggests that it is not just memory that is absent from contemplation, but also a certain mode of self-consciousness.

Since we exhibit the metaphysical, epistemological, and psychological properties of Intellect when we assimilate to it, our intellect becomes identical to the object of thought and it thinks the Forms in a transparent and holistic manner. Consequently, our intellect grasps each Form in its place in the hierarchy of Forms and, on grasping one, it grasps them all. However, due to intellect experiencing the intelligibles in logical succession, Plotinus makes a point of stressing that our intellect transitions from one Form to another, or from itself to Forms, without undergoing change (*metabolê*). He does not give a compelling reason in IV.4.2 beyond stating that since Intellect remains in the same state, so too does the higher soul due to its assimilation. However, the closing lines of IV.4.1 suggest a more interesting reason. At lines 33–38 he claims that the power of intellection is a unified power, which is actualized when our intellect is contemplating the Forms. However, this power becomes many by performing multiple acts of intellection. Despite being many, the activities remain together by belonging to the same power and by being actualized together as a whole. The text is corrupt, so it is difficult to be certain. But it seems that the actualization of the unified power activates the multiplicity of dispositions intellect has to contemplate the Forms at once, even though intellect experiences them in ordered succession. This coheres with the description of our intellects as intelligible universes, which are both all and one (VI.5.7.9).

After addressing how intellect contemplates without memory of self and without undergoing change, he makes a final point about awareness. Plotinus writes,

> For when it is in that place it must necessarily come to union with Intellect, since it has been turned to it. And having been turned to it, it has nothing in between, and when it has come to Intellect, it is fitted to it. And having been fitted to it, it is united with it while not being dissolved, but both are one, while still being two. When it is in this state it would not change, but

> would be in an unchanging state in relation to intellection, while having at the same time awareness of itself (*sunaisthêsin hautês*), as having become simultaneously one and identical with the intelligible. (IV.4.2.25–34: trans. Dillon and Blumenthal)[38]

This passage begins by noting that when intellect has turned toward Intellect and has been fitted (*hêrmostai*), it has nothing in between itself and Intellect. What he means by this is that turning toward Intellect results in appropriation (*oikeiôsis*) of intelligible being. Through appropriation we remove the barriers between our intellects and intelligible being that result in fallible knowledge, such as the *logoi* that mediate between our discursive intellects and the Forms or the representations that mediate between our sense organs and sensible objects. As the passage with which we started this chapter made clear (III.8.8.1–8), the higher we ascend, or the more inward we turn, the closer together thought and being become until the point at which identity is reached and we contemplate with the eternal paradigm.

The passage then notes that being fitted results in being united to Intellect without being destroyed. What he means by this is that intellect becomes identical with Intellect without either of the two losing their identity. The relation of identity between our intellect and the divine intellect is the same notion of identity we discussed above, namely, the restricted notion of numerical sameness. The actuality that we come to share is the primary actuality, which is constituted by the togetherness of Intellect, intellection, and the intelligibles (V.3.5.41–44). However, when we are united to Intellect we do *not* become the primary actuality. We become integrated into the primary actuality as a part, which contains within itself the totality of intelligible being, similar to the way one Form contains the rest. This is what it means to be an intelligible universe (*kosmos noêtos*). Plotinus' choice of the verb *harmozô*, "to fit," is significant, since it can also be translated as "to tune," as in tuning a musical instrument. This calls to mind the description of truth in Intellect in musical terms: "So, the real truth is also not its being in harmony (*sumphônousa*) with something else, but with itself" (V.5.2.18–19). Harmony is central to Plotinus' notion of truth because he thinks of truth in terms of the holism of the intelligible world, and the eternal interconnection between individual Forms. By being aware of all its parts and thinking

[38] ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν ἐν ἐκείνῳ ᾖ τῷ τόπῳ, εἰς ἕνωσιν ἐλθεῖν τῷ νῷ ἀνάγκη, εἴπερ ἐπεστράφη· στραφεῖσα γὰρ οὐδὲν μεταξὺ ἔχει, εἷς τε νοῦν ἐλθοῦσα ἥρμοσται, καὶ ἁρμοσθεῖσα ἥνωται οὐκ ἀπολλυμένη, ἀλλ' ἕν ἐστιν ἄμφω καὶ δύο. οὕτως οὖν ἔχουσα οὐκ ἄν μεταβάλλοι, ἀλλὰ ἔχοι ἄν ἀτρέπτως πρὸς νόησιν ὁμοῦ ἔχουσα τὴν συναίσθησιν αὑτῆς, ὡς ἕν ἅμα τῷ νοητῷ ταὐτὸν γενομένη.

their interrelations in its act of self-thinking, Intellect harmonizes itself. We become tuned into this harmony on uniting to Intellect, almost as if we have joined a perfectly tuned orchestra.

The passage concludes by noting that while united to Intellect we are in an unchanging state toward intellection, and, at the same time, we are aware of ourselves as being one and the same with the intelligible object. I believe Plotinus is making two points here, one concerning the relation of our intellect to Intellect and the other the relation of our intellect to the intelligibles. First, becoming united to Intellect does not involve ordinary change. Since our intellect is an activated power, when we ascend to the intelligible world and self-identify with it we appropriate this activated power and recognize its identity with Intellect. Second, thinking a Form and transitioning from one Form to a related grouping of Forms does not involve ordinary change. Since the actualization of this power activates the multiplicity of dispositions intellect has to contemplate the Forms at once, we do not undergo a change when we transition from one Form to another. Appropriation of an activated power does not involve the temporal process of actualizing a potentiality.

The awareness we have of ourselves applies to both cases, namely, as one and the same with Intellect and as one and the same with whatever intelligible we think. In other words, we are aware that we are partially integrated into the whole and that we are identical to each of the parts we think. Similar to Intellect, our awareness is a first-order property of thinking since our intellect's activity essentially involves awareness and the intelligible objects with which it is identical are transparent. Also, similar to Intellect, our awareness collects the multiplicity of our intellections into a unity and constitutes us as self-sufficient wholes (V.3.6.12–14). However, since our contemplation of individual Forms involves a focusing of attention (*enapereisis*) and this narrowing of focus provides our intellect with a point of view, our contemplation is tied to individualized perspectives. And since a perspective is accessible only from the point of view of the person contemplating, our contemplation involves subjectivity.

I claimed in Chapter 1 that pace Christopher Gill we can attribute a notion of subjectivity to Plotinus without committing him to a post-Cartesian theory of consciousness. Recall that the guiding thread behind post-Cartesian theories is the view that self-consciousness is essential to being a person, and the first-personal relation we bear toward our conscious states is authoritative for knowledge of self and world. Plotinus makes two sets of distinctions in IV.4.2 that show why he is

not committed to this view. The first is a distinction between a self (*autos*) and a self of the sort that is all things (*autos toioutos hoios panta einai*) (lines 9–14). After claiming that the contemplator remains the *dianoetic* self in potentiality only, Plotinus raises the *aporia* whether the contemplator would be anything in actuality if he thinks nothing in the intelligible world. In answering this, he claims that if one is simply an *autos* and thinks nothing, he is empty of all things. All things refer to the Forms and their interconnections. But if one is an *autos toioutos hoios panta einai*, one has all things included in the self and vice versa. So, the answer to the *aporia* is that it could not be the case that the contemplator thinks nothing in the intelligible world, and, therefore, he would always remain an actuality while contemplating. This response suggests that he conceives the *autos* along the lines of a private, inner self that has turned inward toward its own experience and has become self-enclosed in its own pure subjectivity, but he conceives the *autos toioutos hoios panta einai* as the intellect that is integrated into intelligible being and interconnected with the Forms.

The second is a distinction between *epistrophê pros heauton* and *sunaisthêsis* (lines 5 and 31, respectively). When we are aware of our identity with Intellect or one of the intelligibles during contemplation, the object of our awareness is ourselves in a state of identity with the Forms, and the knowledge claims we make are grounded in the Forms. Moreover, awareness is a unifying act that collects together thought and being and brings us as close as possible to paradigmatic knowledge. By contrast, were we turned toward ourselves during contemplation, the object of our inward turn would be our own activities and the claims we make would be grounded in our own activities. Moreover, the monitoring of our own activities would be a pluralizing act that splits the self in two by shifting attention away from the intelligible object to the activity of contemplation. This would bring us further away from paradigmatic knowledge.

In my view, Plotinus views the private, inner self as the subject of *epistrophê pros heauton* and the intellect as the subject of *sunaisthêsis*, and he imagines this contrary-to-fact person turned toward himself in the intelligible world to highlight the unique nature of noetic awareness. If I am right, this suggests a notion of subjectivity different from the one belonging to the post-Cartesian tradition. It is not because our intellects are self-conscious and stand in certain relations to our inner, conscious states that we can make truth claims about ourselves and the world. Rather, it is because our intellect is integrated into the intelligible world

and contemplates the Forms in a holistic and transparent manner.[39] Correct reason, certain truth, and infallible knowledge all require contact with objective reality. This goes for knowledge and for action.[40] Nevertheless, there is still an important sense in which awareness is of our inner parts and activities. For Intellect is found within us and assimilation to Intellect involves sculpting the self through practicing virtue, which is an inward affair. But the sense in which we are aware of our inner activities in the intelligible world pertains to the unique sense of inner associated with *in*ternalism. That is to say, it is a notion of inner that includes contact – or better yet, identification – with objective reality.

The foregoing makes clear that awareness enables human beings to assimilate to the rationality of Intellect. It does not stop "there," however. Awareness also enables human beings to assimilate to the simplicity of the One. Although the One completely transcends our intellect, we can still have awareness of it since it also lies within us (V.1.10.5–9). As Plotinus writes, "It saw, as if in utter amazement, and, since it had something of it [the One] in itself, it had an awareness (*sunêstheto*) of it" (VI.7.31.8–9). Nevertheless, the awareness of the One presents some difficulties. As we saw above, the intelligibles are real, alive, and varied, and our conscious intellections of the intelligible are similarly constituted. However, the One is beyond being and is therefore simple. So how can our intellect even be aware of the One? The answer to this is that the awareness our intellect has of the One transcends the awareness we have of ourselves in Intellect. Plotinus writes, "The perplexity arises especially because our awareness (*sunesis*) of that One is not by way of reasoned knowledge (*epistêmê*) or of intellectual perception (*noêsin*), as with other intelligible things, but by way of a presence superior to knowledge" (VI.9.4.1–4).

This transcendent form of awareness occurs only when we have eliminated otherness (*heterotês*) from our intellects and risen beyond the intelligible world. Otherness is a feature that each intellect and Form possesses, which, along with shape, individuates them from other intelligible realities.[41] The self-sculptor must eliminate otherness from itself since the One lacks internal differentiation, and hence otherness. Plotinus writes

[39] I believe Remes and I are in agreement on this important point (2017: 92). Her claim that self-knowledge does not provide basic beliefs from which one could infer other beliefs and that there is no self-knowledge without knowledge of Forms complements my approach.

[40] I discuss Plotinus' theory of action in Chapter 6 and I show that self-determination requires acting from right reason (*orthos logos*), and this, in turn, requires deriving the premises for one's action from Intellect.

[41] See IV.3.5.6–9 VI.4.4.24–27, and VI.9.8.30–34; cf. VI.2.8.25–50 and VI.7.39.4–10.

moreover that "[the One], which has no otherness is always present, and we are present to it when we have no otherness" (VI.9.8.34–35). Plotinus does not explain how the self-sculptor can remove otherness, nor should we expect him to do so since an explanation of an activity that takes place at the frontier of being (Intellect) and what is beyond being (the One) is not one that can be expressed discursively through speech (VI.9.4.11–13), but can only be confirmed through one's own experience. For this reason, Plotinus tells us that the self-sculptor "is carried out of it [beauty in the intelligible world] by the surge of the wave of Intellect itself and lifted on high by a kind of swell and sees suddenly, not seeing how, but the vision fills his eyes with light and does not make him see something by it, but the light itself is what he sees" (VI.7.36.18–22).

5.5 The One's Awareness

One might expect that since the One lacks plurality and since all forms of cognition presuppose plurality, that the One would not have awareness. However, in one passage of the *Enneads* Plotinus attributes awareness to the One. What are we to make of this? It is important to realize that Plotinus does not restrict psychological vocabulary from the One *tout court*. What he restricts from the One are psychological activities, which presuppose features that are incompatible with the One. Accordingly, Plotinus does on occasion attribute psychological activities to the One, provided that they transcend the psychological activities of living beings. For example, at VI.8.16.32 he attributes a *hupernoêsis* to the One. With this in mind let us look at this contentious passage. He writes,

> It [the One] is completely able to discern itself; it has life in itself and all things in itself, and its introspection (*katanoêsis*) of itself is itself being in a kind of awareness (*hoionei sunaisthêsei*) in eternal rest and thought other than the thought of intellect. (V.4.2.16–19)[42]

This passage comes a few lines before the passage I mentioned above (V.4.2.23–24) in which Plotinus states that Intellect (and not any other entity) is the first to proceed from the One because the One is an intelligible. In this passage, Plotinus is explaining what he means by his claim that the intelligible "remains by itself" while Intellect proceeds from it. For Plotinus, the One is not bothered by Intellect's procession; it simply

[42] . . .πάντη διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ, ζωὴ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἡ κατανόησις αὐτοῦ αὐτὸ οἱονεὶ συναισθήσει οὖσα ἐν στάσει ἀιδίῳ καὶ νοήσει ἑτέρως ἢ κατὰ τὴν νοῦ νόησιν.

"abides in its own proper way of life."[43] His explanation of what this means makes it clear that the psychology of the One involves thought and awareness, albeit a different kind of thought and awareness than is found in Intellect. Furthermore, the attribution of psychological attributes to explain how the One "abides" coheres with other passages in which Plotinus claims, for example, that abiding involves having an inclination toward itself that makes the One what it is (VI.8.16.24–28).

This passage is not an isolated discussion of whether or not the One is conscious. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, at III.9.9.13–25 Plotinus denies that the One has *parakolouthêsis* on the grounds that it introduces plurality to the One, and at V.6.5.1–5 and VI.7.41.26–27 Plotinus denies that the One has *sunaisthêsis* on the grounds that the One does not need awareness, because it is not multiple. So why would Plotinus directly contradict himself and attribute *sunaisthêsis* to the One in chapter 2 of V.4 [7] *How That Which Is after the First Comes from the First, and on the One*? One possibility treats this passage as belonging to an earlier phase of Plotinus' thought regarding the highest principle, which he rejects in later treatises.[44] This so-called early phase is characterized by a Numenian approach to the Good.[45] Numenius of Apamea, a second-century CE Platonist, distinguished between two Intellects, the Good that thinks itself and the divine demiurge that thinks the Forms and creates the natural world by imposing order on matter.[46] Although the Good is higher than the divine demiurge, Numenius characterizes them both as Intellects and therefore ascribes psychological activities to both. However, I do not find this possibility convincing because Plotinus attributes psychological vocabulary to the One in later treatises too. For example, in treatise VI.8 [39] *On Free Will and the Will of the One*[47] he revolutionizes the Greek understanding of the highest principle by characterizing the One as a will that determines itself through its own act of choice, and this conception of the One as a self-determining will undergirds his theory of the human freedom.[48]

[43] This is one of Plotinus' favorite quotes from Plato. See *Timaeus* 42e5–6.
[44] Treatise V.4 is the seventh treatise in chronological order and belongs to the earliest phase of Plotinus' writings. See *Life of Plotinus*, ch. 4.
[45] I am thankful to the anonymous referee from Cambridge University Press for this suggestion. See also Dodds (1957: 20–21).
[46] See fragments 16–17 and 19–21.
[47] Treatise VI.8 is the 39th treatise in the chronological order and belongs to a later phase of Plotinus' writings. See *Life of Plotinus*, ch. 5.
[48] See Frede (2011: ch. 8).

The possibility I favor treats the ascription of awareness as intentional but takes into account the qualification "kind of" (*hoionei*). The One has self-awareness but it transcends the kind of self-awareness that Intellect and living beings have.[49] I think the reason why Plotinus ascribes *sunaisthêsis* to the One in this passage is that he needs to attribute some kind of psychology to explain how and why the One abides while Intellect proceeds from it. In other words, the One abides because it needs nothing external to itself, and it realizes this because it exists in a "kind of awareness" in eternal rest. Moreover, I think it is fitting that the mode of consciousness that Plotinus ascribes to "the most self-sufficient" is the very one that enables living things to achieve self-sufficiency.

[49] For a similar approach to this passage, see Bussanich (1987: 164–168) and (1988: 18–27).

CHAPTER 6

Self-Determination

In the previous chapter, I examined the layer of consciousness that occurs in our intellect, which is the true and authentic self of a human being. Moreover, I showed that our intellect contemplates the Forms in a transparent and holistic manner and that its contemplation essentially involves a unique mode of awareness. What does this have to do with self-determination? Plotinus develops his theory of self-determination by reference to an ideal. He describes what a perfectly rational soul is and how it acts, as a way of saying what we ought to be and how we ought to act. A perfectly rational soul, for Plotinus, is an intellect that has ascended to the intelligible world, contemplates the Forms, and wills the Good. I will argue that realizing this ideal and achieving self-determination involves establishing right reason in charge of our embodied lives and deriving the premises for our actions from Intellect.

This chapter links up with the previous chapters in two important ways. First, it reveals that Plotinus' solution to the problem of determinism and his positive account of freedom draws on the third layer of consciousness. Second, it delivers on a claim that I made at the end of Chapter 1. There I claimed that one of the reasons we can attribute a notion of subjectivity to Plotinus, without committing him to the modern notion of self-consciousness, is that the regulative ideals for correct reasoning (*orthos logos*) and correct action (*katorthôsis*) are ultimately derived from Intellect. In the case of action, they cannot be derived from one's own subjective experience, like Sartre's example of the boy who has to decide whether to go to war or remain at home. This chapter is thus the capstone for how subjectivity fits into Plotinus' theory of consciousness.

Plotinus holds an important position in the history of late ancient philosophy on the topic of human agency. On the one hand, he follows Plato in regarding an autonomous agent as one who self-identifies with the rational soul, becomes one from many, and acts from reason (*Republic*, 443d–e). On the other hand, due to the view characteristic of the second

century CE that destiny causally determines the sensible world and sophisticated debates concerning freedom and determinism up to, and during, the second century CE, Plotinus develops Plato's view further in an effort to meet the challenges posed by earlier determinists. The position he develops in the *Enneads* is a dynamic synthesis of Platonic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Middle Platonic theorizing on human causation that shows how one can be a self-determining agent even while living in a world governed by destiny.

An agent is one who acts, or more precisely, one who initiates one's own actions. This notion of agency had been treated with sophistication long before Plotinus wrote the *Enneads*. In dialogues such as the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*, Plato develops a view according to which soul is essentially a self-mover and is the source of motion to all things that move and change in the cosmos, and in the *Republic* and the *Philebus*, he develops a view according to which soul is the source of motion to one's actions.[1] In treatises such as the *Eudemian Ethics*, *Magna Moralia*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Physics*, Aristotle develops a view according to which human beings are principles of action and stand in efficient causal relations toward their voluntary actions.[2] In the extant fragments and select treatises the Stoics develop a view according to which adult human beings initiate their action by rationally assenting to their impulsive impressions, which is "up to them."[3] Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics influence Plotinus' theory of agency each in their own respective way. However, Plotinus' theory of agency is unique in that it requires a mode of awareness and degree of inwardness that Plato, Aristotle, and even the Stoics lacked due to the fact that he locates the three principles of reality – One, Intellect, and Soul – also in us.[4] Since it is also located in us, the intelligible realm is "the self at its deepest level"[5] and can be reached by turning inward and ascending upward (III.4.3.21–24, IV.8.1.1–11).

[1] See *Republic* 437b1–444a1, *Phaedrus* 245c5–e7, *Philebus* 34c7–d3, and *Laws* 892a–896a.

[2] See *Eudemian Ethics* II 6, 1222b15–1223a20; *Magna Moralia* I 10, 1187a30–I 11, 1187b8; *Nicomachean Ethics* III 1, 1110a15–18 and V 8, 1135a17–28; and *Physics* II 3, 194b30–33, VIII 5, 256a3–13, and 257a27–30. See Meyer (2011: chs. 4 and 6)

[3] See Diogenes Laertius 7.49–51 (*SVF* 2.52, 55, 61; *LS* 39A), Origen *On Principles* 3.1.2–3 (*SVF* 2.988, part; *LS* 53A), Stobaeus 2.86,17–87,6 (*SVF* 3.169, part; *LS* 53Q), Plutarch *On Stoic Self Contradictions* 1037F (*SVF* 3.177, part: *LS* 53S), and Alexander of Aphrodisias *De Fato* XIII 182.6–19.

[4] I am not claiming that the Stoics lacked inwardness, but rather that Plotinus has a richer notion of inwardness than the Stoics. On the development of inwardness in Stoicism, particularly Epictetus, see Kahn (1988), Long (1991), and more recently Remes (2008b).

[5] See Hadot (1993: 25).

Before I begin, I want to stress that although consciousness is required for us to become autonomous agents, conscious deliberation is not required for all our embodied actions. In III 8 *On Nature and Contemplation and on the One*, Plotinus develops the view that Nature, the final phase of the procession of the intelligible realities (IV.4.13.17–26), contemplates and that the production of bodies in the spatiotemporal world results from its contemplative activity. This is connected to his view that all things in the natural world, insofar as they are distant traces of the intelligibles in Intellect, strive to contemplate. Peculiar to Nature's production is that its contemplation involves only a "kind of awareness" (*hoion sunaisthêsei*) of what comes after it, which is unlike the awareness attributed to other beings and is likened to being asleep (III.8.4.1–24). This creates the impression that Nature produces bodies unconsciously. However, this is mistaken. Like any whole composed of parts, Nature needs self-awareness to function as a structured and coherent whole. And like any level in the procession of realities from the One, Nature needs self-awareness to contemplate itself and in order to become what it is.[6] The point Plotinus is making is that since Nature is the last phase of intelligible realities, the awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) it has is less clear than those belonging to the levels above it, namely, the rational capacities of the world soul and the hypostasis Soul. Plotinus qualifies Nature's awareness with "kind of" to distinguish its awareness from higher levels of awareness.[7] Furthermore, he adds that to attribute unqualifiedly awareness to Nature would be like comparing someone who is asleep with someone who is awake. The point is not that Nature produces without wakefulness, but rather, compared with higher souls whose awareness is clearer due to their proximity toward Intellect, its awareness is murkier and darker.

Relatedly, Nature directs its contemplation exclusively on the *logoi* it contains, and it produces bodies spontaneously, without any conscious reflection on, or deliberation over, what it is doing. "I do not draw," Nature says, "but as I contemplate, the lines which bound bodies come to be as if they fell from my contemplation" (III.8.4.9–11). Crucial for my purposes is that Plotinus treats this aspect of nature's contemplative activity as an ideal for human action. Further down in the same passage, he distinguishes between two types of action, productive action (*poiêsis*)

[6] On this see Wildberg (2006: 125–126).

[7] As we saw above in connection with the One, Plotinus is using *hoion* to distinguish degrees of awareness. In V.4.2.16–19 he uses it to distinguish the One's unique awareness from all other forms of awareness below it. At III.8.4.18–22 he uses it to distinguish Nature's awareness from the forms of awareness above it.

and practical action (*praxis*). The former is a by-product of contemplation that flows automatically from one's contemplation, but the latter is a substitute for contemplation that occurs when human beings are too weak to contemplate and, instead, have to resort to practical action "in order that they might see [with their eyes] what they were not able to see with their intellect" (III.8.4.35: trans. Dillon and Gerson).[8] According to Plotinus, we engage in practical action in order to figure out what we do not understand, with the exercise of practical reasoning being a sign of perplexity and a "lessening of intellect in respect of its self-sufficiency" (IV.3.18.4–5). The practical agent is like a mechanic who fiddles around with the engine until he can figure out why the car won't start, engaging in practical reasoning and action in order to understand what his intellect knows, but what his soul is confused about. However, he strives to be like a master-mechanic who can take one look at the engine, recognize what is wrong, and fix it without having to deliberate consciously over his action. The actions that a perfectly virtuous person, the Sage, performs are productive actions.[9] The Sage's deep insight into the Forms guides his decisions and prompts him to act without having to consciously deliberate over his actions. Of course, this need not mean that all forms of deliberation are off limits to the Sage.[10] If he finds himself in a moral dilemma, he will not deliberate in the sense of puzzling over whether he should or should not perform a virtuous action, or figuring out which is the right virtuous action to perform. However, it is consistent with the line of interpretation I am following that the Sage can deliberate in the sense of reasoning briefly how best to apply his mastery of virtue to a given situation, similar to the way a master mechanic can reason briefly how best to fix the same engine problem in two different cars. Therefore, insofar as we strive to be like the Sage, we strive to act without having to deliberate consciously over our actions. This does not mean we act like unconscious automata or we act instinctively. Rather, it means that we act on the basis of our being "tuned in" to the harmony of Intellect, and our

[8] My interpretation of the distinction between *poiêsis* and *praxis* owes much to Wilberding (2008a: 375–379). In particular, in contrast to O'Meara (1999: 133) and Remes (2017: 49–51, 57–58), who hold that practical action can be divided into either *poiêsis* or *praxis*, I follow Wilberding in holding that practical action conforms to *praxis* only. In my view, the discussion of crafts he cites in support of his thesis is decisive (2008a: 383–389).

[9] See Schniewind (2003: 90) and Wilberding (2008a).

[10] Although my interpretation is closer to Wilberding (2008a), I think Remes is quite right to point out that "effortless determination within action need not be entirely opposite to deliberation" (2017: 56). However, I think this can be accommodated within Wilberding's framework in the manner I suggest above.

partaking in its higher mode of consciousness. In order for us to achieve this idealized state, we must first become aware of the authority of our intellect and place it in charge of our embodied lives.

6.1 Providence, Destiny, and Human Action

Stoic compatibilism was a topic of lively debate amongst philosophers of late antiquity,[11] and Plotinus' early treatise III.1 [2] *On Destiny* show an eagerness to stake out his position in the debate. So, let us begin with a brief outline of the Stoic theory. The Stoics identified the active principle that governs and sustains the cosmos as Zeus, providence, reason, fire, or fate.[12] Due to this identification, the Stoics viewed the active principle as an immanent rational plan that contains the seminal principles of all things and the causes of all past, present, and future events. For which reason, they regarded fate as an inescapable sequence and ordering of causes that employs the individual natures of things for the best organization of the whole.[13] At the beginning of each cosmic cycle, fate predetermines everything that is going to happen in the cosmos, including human impulse and assent. This means that every human action is predetermined by antecedent causes stretching back to the origin of the cosmic cycle and that for every action there is one and only one pathway genuinely open. Nonetheless, the Stoics rigorously maintained that impulse and assent remain "up to us," and, therefore, human beings remain free and responsible for their actions. This view played a formative role in the development of Plotinus' own view.

Plotinus develops the concept of agency throughout the *Enneads*. The most detailed analysis occurs in VI 8 [39] *On Free Will and the Will of the One*. However, the setup for this treatise occurs in the natural-philosophical treatises devoted to providence and destiny, namely, II 3 [52] *On Whether the Stars Are Causes*, III.1 [3] *On Destiny*, and III.2–3 [47–48] *On Providence* (I–II). The main problem that Plotinus addresses in these treatises is reconciling universal causal determinism with autonomous agency, since he holds both that destiny causally determines the sensible world and that human beings are the sole causal source of their voluntary actions and activities. He attempts to solve this problem by

[11] See Bobzien (1998: 358).

[12] See Aetius 1.7.33 (*SVF* 2.1027/*LS* 46A), Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 7.135–136 (*SVF* 1.102/*LS* 46 B), and Eusebius *Evangelical Preparation* 15.14.2 (*SVF* 1.98/*LS* 46 G).

[13] See Cicero *On Divination* 1.125–126 (*SVF* 2.921/*LS* 55L) and Alexander *On Fate* 191,30–192,28 (*SVF* 2.945/*LS* 55N).

introducing his view that the higher soul is a principle (*archê*), which is capable of initiating its own actions. Moreover, he sets up his conception of autonomous agency by distinguishing between actions based on non-rational sources of motivation deriving from the lower soul and actions based on rational sources of motivation deriving from the higher soul, and establishing that the former actions are subject to destiny but the latter are outside the causation of the physical universe (*kosmikês aitias exô*). Plotinus identifies Intellect with the Platonic Demiurge since it is ultimately responsible for the generation and organization of the sensible world, being prior in nature and the model on which it is based. However, he often includes the activities of Soul and the world soul within the demiurgic activity, since they are needed to carry out the activities of Intellect, on a lower level, by delivering formative principles into matter and establishing the ordering in the All.[14] Unlike the creation story of the *Timaeus* (at least on the literal interpretation), the All does not come into being as the result of rational planning.[15] Rather, it is an eternal image of Intellect that emerges due to the principle of plenitude (III.2.1.20–27). As an image, the All possesses the features found in Intellect but in a dimmer, less pure form due to its diffusion into space and time and proximity to matter (V.8.7.17–18). For this reason, Plotinus tells us, "providence for the All is its being according to Intellect" (III.2.1.22–23).

What he means by this is that providence sees to it that the sensible world reflects the beauty of the intelligible realm by producing a universe that is in sympathy with itself, by linking individual causes into a network that is ordered toward the good of the whole, by employing the individual natures of living beings for the organization of the whole and equipping them with the parts and capacities they need to flourish, and, last, by instituting an inescapable system of karmic justice whereby wrongdoers are punished for their actions in this life or the next. Although providence (*pronoia*) reaches the sublunary world and even extends toward individuals,[16] it is actually destiny (*heimarmenê*) that carries out the activities of providence in the sensible world (III.3.5.15–17).

Soul contains the formative principles with which the "sister-souls" individuate and structure matter into an organized physical world. With respect to destiny, Soul directs the All according to a rational order (*logos*)

[14] Compare V.1.8.1–14 with IV.4.10.1–5, IV.3.10.10–42, IV.3.12.31–35, and II.3.17.15–18. See also Gurtler (2002: 100) and Chiaradonna (2015: 32).
[15] See III.2.14.1–5 and V.8.7. See also Noble and Powers (2015).
[16] See III.2.6.23–26 and III.2.13.18–20.

by establishing that all events in the realm of becoming happen according to causes, that individual causes are woven together into a network, and that the network is ordered to the good of the whole. The precise nature of Soul's direction is brought out clearly in chapter 16 of II.3. [52] *On Whether the Stars Are Causes*.[17] Herein he develops his own view through critically engaging with three Stoic-inspired determinist positions. The first holds that Soul creates the natural kinds, and lets the interweaving and succession of consequences that follow from their interaction with each other occur, without playing any additional causal role (lines 6–13); the second holds that Soul creates the natural kinds, but effectively causes the interweaving and succession of all consequences that follow (lines 13–15); the third is a middle path between the first two, holding that Soul creates the natural kinds and knows the interweaving and succession of consequences that follow through its possession of formative principles (*logoi*), but that it is not the efficient cause of everything that ensues. Crucial to the third option is the following idea:

> The forming principles certainly exist, but not as causing (*poiountôn*) but as knowing (*eidotôn*) – or rather the soul which contains the generative rational principles (*tous logous tous gennêtikous*) knows the consequences which come from all its works; when the same things come together, the same circumstances arise, then it is altogether appropriate that the same results should follow. Soul takes over or foresees these antecedent conditions and taking account of them accomplishes what follows and links up the chain of consequences, bringing antecedents and consequents into complete connection, and again linking to the antecedents the causes which precede them in order, as far as it can in the existing circumstances. (II.3.16.18–26: trans. Armstrong)[18]

In other words, Soul causes animate beings to come into existence and furnishes them with capacities associated with their nature, such as impulse and assent, to engage in impulse-directed movements (antecedents); animate beings interact with each other in ways associated with their natures from their own impulses (consequences); and Soul, in virtue of containing the formative principles derived from Intellect, foresees

[17] Pavlos Kalligas' introduction to II.3 and his commentary on II.3.16 is extremely helpful. See Kalligas (2014: 277–282 and 300–302).

[18] ἢ ὄντων μὲν τῶν λόγων, οὐχ ὡς ποιούντων δὲ, ἀλλ' ὡς εἰδότων, μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς τοὺς λόγους τοὺς γεννητικοὺς ἐχούσης εἰδυίας τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἔργων συμβαίνοντα αὐτῆς ἁπάντων· τῶν γὰρ αὐτῶν συμπιπτόντων καὶ περιεστηκότων τὰ αὐτὰ πάντως προσήκει ἀποτελεῖσθαι· ἅ δὴ παραλαβοῦσα ἡ προιδοῦσα ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπί τούτοις τὰ ἑφεξῆς περαίνει καὶ συνείρει, προηγούμενα οὖν καὶ ἐπακολουθοῦντα πάντως καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τούτοις τὰ ἑφεξῆς προηγούμενα, ὡς ἐκ τῶν παρόντων·

these events and links the consequences with the antecedents and places them into a harmonious network (IV.4.39.6–18). This holds both for human actions that are according to providence (*kata pronoian*), namely, virtuous actions that are in tune with the rational order, and for actions that are against providence (*para pronoian*), namely, vicious actions that are out of sync with the rational order (III.3.5.24–55). So great is Soul's administration that it even weaves together into the network of causes evil actions, which result from immoral agents without causing them and without imputing corruption into the formative principles (II.3.16.36–55).[19]

Plotinus finds the first view unappealing since he holds that the providential ordering extends to particulars in the realm of becoming, and, as such, Soul could not be indifferent to the consequences that follow. He finds the second view unappealing since it entails that Soul is the efficient causal source of everything that happens. This is a view, perhaps belonging to a Stoic or a Middle Platonist, he argues against in his early treatise III.1 [3] *On Destiny*, on the grounds that a single animating principle that permeates and sustains the cosmos leaves no room for animate beings to act from their own impulses or for human beings to have actions that are their own (III.1.4.21–30, III.1.7.13–24).[20] However, he does find the third option appealing since it entails that Soul knows the consequences that follow but does not cause them, which leaves open the possibility that animate parts of the whole contribute to the good of the whole from their own impulses (II.3.13.11–13). This is the view Plotinus endorses, with some important modifications in this treatise and the next in the chronological order, because it enables him to preserve the idea that although animate parts are subject to destiny, they are not restricted to reacting mechanically to external causes, but are conscious of the effect external causes have on their bodies and respond in ways that give rise to bodily movements through appetites and desires and, in the case of human beings, voluntary actions through reasoning.

The basis for this view is that the higher soul, and not just Soul or the world soul, is a principle (*arkhê*). After claiming that embodied human

[19] Cf. III.2.15.1–14, III.2.16.32–60, III.2.18.14–16, and III.3.5.33–34.

[20] Plotinus discusses this view in chapters 2, 4, and 7–10. Brehier and Armstrong identify it as belonging to a Stoic or possibly to a Stoicizing Middle Platonist. More recently, Kalligas has strengthened the case that it belongs to a Middle Platonist by showing the similarities it has with Atticus' theory according to which destiny is treated as a substance identified with the cosmic Soul. See Kalligas (2014: 413–419 and 427–429).

beings can rise above the powers coming from the whole and preserve the ancient part[21] of the soul, Plotinus writes:

> For we must not think of the soul as of such a kind that the nature which it has is just whatever affection it receives from outside, and that alone of all things it has no nature of its own; but it, far before anything else, since it has the status of a principle, must have many powers of its own for its natural activities. It is certainly not possible for it, since it is a substance, not to possess along with its being desires and actions and the tendency toward its good. (II.3.15.17–24: trans. Armstrong)[22]

Due to viewing the soul as a self-subsisting and self-moving entity, with a permanent residence in the intelligible world (IV.7.9–10), Plotinus regards the individual soul as a principle in its own right. By this he means that soul has a nature of its own, has the capacities to engage in its own activities, and is the efficient causal source of its own voluntary actions. Plotinus reiterates this point several times throughout III.1–3 and II.3, but it is not until the next treatise in the chronological order after II.3, I.1 [53] *What Is the Living Being and What Is the Human Being*, that he explains which capacities he means.[23] These are rational desire for the good, and the capacities of imagination and discursive reasoning in virtue of which we pursue the good of the soul, namely, virtue. Due to possessing these capacities, human beings are able not only to act on the basis of their own impulses in the way that animals do, but also to deliberate about whether or not it is good to act from certain impulses, and decide whether or not to carry their impulses through to action on the basis of their deliberations (III.1.1.14–24, III.1.7.13–25).

Although Plotinus does not subscribe to (his interpretation of) Stoic determinism due to the restrictions he thinks it places on agency, it is worth pointing out how close his view comes to universal causal determinism. For he holds the general causal principle that nothing happens in the sensible world without a cause: "as for things which come into being, or which always really exist but do not always act in the same way, we must say that all always have a cause for coming to be; nothing uncaused can be admitted" (III.1.1.14–17). The second clause refers to individual souls,

[21] Plotinus uses the adjective *arkhaios* in reference to the higher soul at II.3.15.16–17, II.3.8.13–15, and IV.7.9.28–30. Cf. Plato's *Republic* 547b6–7.

[22] οὐ γὰρ δὴ νομιστέον τοιοῦτον εἶναι ψυχήν, οἷον, ὅ τι ἂν ἔξωθεν πάθῃ, ταύτην φύσιν ἴσχειν, μόνην τῶν πάντων οἰκείαν φύσιν οὐκ ἔχουσαν· ἀλλὰ χρὴ πολὺ πρότερον αὐτὴν ἢ τὰ ἄλλα, ἅτε ἀρχῆς λόγον ἔχουσαν, πολλὰς οἰκείας δυνάμεις πρὸς ἐνεργείας τὰς κατὰ φύσιν ἔχειν· οὐ γὰρ δὴ οἷόν τε οὐσίαν οὖσαν μὴ μετὰ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ὀρέξεις καὶ πράξεις καὶ τὸ πρὸς τὸ εὖ κεκτῆσθαι.

[23] See I.1 [53], chs. 5–13.

who always exist but whose activities change, and the lines that follow make it clear that this principle applies not just to coming into being but to human action in the realm of becoming (lines 16–24). Moreover, he holds the specified causal principle that ensures regularity or uniformity between types of causes and types of effects: "when the same things come together, the same circumstances arise, then it is altogether appropriate that the same results should follow" (II.3.16.21–23). [24] Although the occurrence of this principle occurs in an aporetic context, related comments he makes elsewhere in his writings on providence and destiny suggests he endorses this principle. In particular, Plotinus' interpretation of the Myth of Er (*Rep*. 614b–621d) suggests our actions are predetermined by antecedent causes and circumstances.[25]

The Myth of Er is a foundational Platonic text for Plotinus' views on destiny and necessity. Before turning to the manner in which Soul directs the All in the passage above from chapter 16, he incorporates the myth into his cosmology in chapters 9 and 15 as a part of his response to astral determinism.[26] Here he interprets the myth literally, locating the spindle that sits on the lap of necessity as the wandering and fixed parts of the heavenly circuit (*Rep*. 616c, 617b), allocating each of the Fates a role in the dispensation of lots (*Rep*. 620d–e), and assigning a guardian spirit to assist us in the fulfillment of our choices (*Rep*. 617d–e, 620d–e). The underlying idea is that each individual soul chooses its lot based on the character it has developed in a previous life, and this choice determines the circumstances in which he is born and the role he plays in the cosmic drama (III.2.16–18). However, I do not believe that Plotinus endorses a literal interpretation of this myth, since it conflicts with his claim that the voluntariness of the soul's descent is not a result of choice (IV.3.13.17–33); therefore, there is no conflict between the necessity of the soul's descent and its voluntariness (IV.8.5.1–4), and, accordingly, there is no conflict between the soul's descent and the punishment it receives (IV.8.5.8–24). Rather, I believe he endorses an allegorical interpretation of this myth and interprets it as "really a riddling representation of the soul's universal and permanent purpose and disposition" (III.4.5.2–4). Regardless of how best to interpret Plotinus' interpretation of the Myth of Er, the crucial point for our purposes is that destiny or

[24] I am borrowing the terms "general causal principle" and "specified causal principle" from Susanne Bobzien. See Bobzien (1998: 38–44).
[25] See II.3.9 and 15, III.2.7.15–28, III.2.17.24–90, and III.4.5. Cf. *Republic* 617c–618b.
[26] Peter Adamson provides an excellent discussion of II.3.9 and 15. See Adamson (2008: 283–286).

causal determinism holds only for those who self-identify with their lower part and adopt a way of life that involves acting on the basis of nonrational sources of motivation. By contrast, those who self-identify with their higher part and adopt a way of life that involves acting on purely rational sources of motivation are exempt from natural necessity and causal sequences.[27] Importantly, each of these sources of desire is a motivation for action. Consistent with Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, Plotinus viewed reason as a motivating force for action.[28]

In virtue of being informed by the lower soul, the embodied human being is subject to destiny in the sensible world. The reason for this is that the soul acquires a vehicle in the heavens in the course of its descent from the intelligible world, which transports it downward through the celestial regions until it reaches earthly bodies. On acquiring the soul-vehicle and descending through lower regions of the cosmos, the lower soul acquires the capacity to undergo affections and act on the basis of nonrational impulses, and thus becomes a part belonging to the powers of the whole.[29] Consequently, Plotinus is willing to grant that "more remote causes" such as the stars do play a limited causal role in our lives, since they contribute to our bodily constitution, bring about changes in our temperaments, and can even be used to foretell our fortunes. However, neither the position of the stars nor the motion of the planets is responsible for our character or our way of life. This is *our* responsibility.[30] But what does it mean for our actions to be subject to destiny?

As I mentioned above, Plotinus holds that all living beings act on the basis of their own impulses (*hormai*), but that human beings also deliberate about whether or not it is good to act from certain impulses, and decide whether or not to carry their impulses through to action on the basis of their deliberations (III.1.1.14–24, III.1.7.13–25). In the case of human beings, impulses can be rational and come from the higher soul, or they can be nonrational and come from the lower soul. Actions that are subject to destiny are those committed on the basis of impulses deriving from the lower soul and can be based either on the soul–body composite or even on a mixture of the soul and the soul–body composite. Take the following example. Suppose I walk into a patisserie and purchase a croissant. The basis for eating the croissant could be either

[27] See also Adamson (2008: 284).
[28] See Frede (1986: 100–101) and Cooper (2012: 11–16).
[29] See II.3.9.7–31, II.3.10.4–8, II.3.15.13–15, III.1.8.4–21, and IV.3.15.1–12.
[30] See III.2.4.37–47, III.2.7.15–28, III.2.10, III.3.3.1–17 and 35–37, and III.3.4.5–8.

1. indulging my craving

or

2. indulging my craving, but doing so because I know that maintaining a healthy body requires providing it with sustenance

In the case of impulses deriving from solely from the composite (case 1), the source of the impulse lies in some preexisting circumstance in the external world. In the case of impulses deriving from the mixture of soul and the soul–body composite (case 2), the source of the impulse still lies in a preexisting circumstance in the external world, but it also involves making a choice (*prohairesis*) to act on the impulse, which requires reason. The difference between case 1 and case 2 is that in case 1 I am compelled to act and not in charge of my action, whereas in case 2 I am still compelled to act, but I exercise some authority over my action (III.1.8.11–18). However, in both cases the efficient cause of my action is ultimately the desired food item, and the premises (*protaseis*) on which my action is based originate in the soul–body compound, since the motivating psychological impulse originates with the nonrational desire. My actions can thus be traced back to external causes that fully or partially determine them and, consequently, remain subject to destiny.[31] While engaged in mixed actions we are agents to the extent that we are *a* causal source of our actions, but we are not autonomous agents engaged in self-determination since we are not the *sole* causal source of our actions.[32]

In virtue of possessing the higher soul, the embodied human being can avoid living under destiny. Plotinus writes that "now when the soul is without body it is absolutely in charge of itself and free (*kuriôtatê te autês kai eleuthera*), and outside the causation of the physical universe (*kosmikês aitias exô*); but when it is brought into body it is no longer in all ways in charge, as it forms part of an order with other things" (III.1.8.9–12). The "causation of the physical universe" refers to the deterministic network of causes in the sensible world, which results from destiny and takes place according to natural necessity. Since the higher soul is outside the realm of becoming it is naturally outside the causation of the physical universe, and therefore absolutely in charge of its actions, free, and self-determining. However, embodiment subjects it to natural necessity and forces it to lose complete authority over its actions, which can result in error or vice

[31] See III.1.9.1–2, IV.4.43.19–22, IV.4.44.5–7, and VI.8.2.36–37.
[32] See III.1.9.1–2, IV.4.43.19–22, IV.4.44.5–7, and VI.8.2.36–37. Cf. O'Meara (2003: 133).

(I.1.9.5–16). Being "without body" can refer either to the separation of soul from body after death or to the separation of soul from body during life through exercising the virtues and establishing right reason in charge of one's impulses.[33] The latter is the process of self-sculpting I mentioned in Chapter 1. Related passages make it clear that we achieve this state of being "without body" by turning inward, ascending upward, and identifying with our higher soul or intellect (II.3.15.15–18, II.3.9.24–32). Thus, when the embodied human being acts on the basis of rational impulses, it is fully in charge of its actions, free, and outside the causation of the physical universe. It is no longer a part that belongs to the powers coming from the whole, but an autonomous agent that belongs to itself.

Being outside the causation of the physical universe does not mean that our actions are causeless, that we are outside providence, or that we are not involved in the ordering of the All. Plotinus denies the indeterminist view that actions could occur without causes, on the grounds that acting without causes would render us more compelled than acting on the basis of antecedent causes that determine our actions, since we would be carried around by movements that are uncaused, unwilled, and, as a result, would not belong to ourselves (III.1.1.16–24; cf. III.1.8.2). Moreover, he claims that providence and the ordering of the whole includes us "as the person we are," by which he means as the embodied human being who is capable of acting freely and being in charge of her actions (III.2.10.16–20, III.3.3.1–4, III.3.4.6–8).[34] Rather, being outside the causation of the physical universe means that we cause our own activities, that our activities belong to us, and that we contribute to the interweaving of causes in the physical universe as coauthors of the providential ordering.[35]

When we act on the basis of nonrational impulses originating in the composite, we are dragged around and contribute to the life of the whole passively; when we act (in the sense of *praxis*) on the basis of rational impulses originating in the higher soul/intellect, we cause our own actions and contribute to the life of the whole actively; however, since the higher soul/intellect is itself a principle[36] and is a part of the rational principles that order the All,[37] when we act (in the sense of *energeia*) on the basis of premises derived from Intellect we contribute to the

[33] See III.1.9.5–17 and III.1.10.4–15.
[34] Laura Westra also notes this. See Westra (2002: 132, 135).
[35] See also Dillon (1996: 330) and Leroux (1996: 310–311).
[36] See III.1.8.4–9, III.1.9.10–17, III.2.10.16–20, II.3.13.18–27, and II.3.15.18–23.
[37] See III.2.12.10–11, III.3.4.1–13, and IV.3.15.11–24.

interweaving of causes that orders the sensible world.[38] Plotinus makes this explicit in IV.3.15.10–19:

> And some [souls] have become totally subject to the destiny (*heimarmenê*) here, but others are sometimes in this state and sometimes belong to themselves; and others agree to undergo as much as is necessary, but they have the power of belonging to themselves with respect to as many functions that belong to them, living according to another code of laws governing the whole of reality, and binding themselves to this other ordinance. This [code of laws] is woven[39] from all the rational principles (*logôn*) and causes (*aitiôn*) here, and the movement of souls and the laws which come from there; it harmonizes with these, and takes its principles from there and weaves together what comes after with those (*kai sunuphainousa ta hexês ekeinois*) . . .[40]

The key point of this passage is that those who belong to themselves or are self-possessed (namely, human beings who have assimilated to Intellect and derive their premises from Intellect's activity) are no longer subject to destiny, live according to a higher code of laws that governs the whole of reality, and weave together what comes after (namely, the network of causes that promote the good of the All) with the intelligible principles.[41] As John Dillon notes, "if Plotinus is not a Stoic determinist, it is only, I think, because of a daring conception of his which sees the highest element in us, the 'undescended' intellect, as in fact the autonomous component of the hypostasis Intellect, and thus in its own right (since every intellect in Intellect is in a way coextensive with the whole) a guiding principle of the universe" (1996: 330).

Plotinus offers us a helpful analogy for understanding how an individual intellect can coauthor the providential ordering: He likens life to a play (IV.3.15–18). Just as an author composes a script, assigns roles to actors,

[38] I explain the distinction between *praxis* and *energeia* and the meaning of deriving premises from Intellect below.

[39] Plotinus is drawing from the archaic vocabulary of weaving in this passage, which he, like many ancient writers, used as a metaphor for destiny. I follow Armstrong in translating both πλέκω "to plait" and συνυφαίνω "to weave" as "to weave." Although weaving is a specialized form of plaiting, πλέκω can be used synonymously with ὑφαίνω. See the excellent discussion of the vocabulary of weaving in Nagy (2002: 76–79).

[40] καὶ αἱ μὲν τὰ πάντα ὑποπεπτώκασιν εἱμαρμένῃ τῇ ἐνταῦθα, αἱ δὲ ὁτὲ μὲν οὕτως, ὁτὲ δὲ αὑτῶν, αἱ δὲ ὅσα μὲν ἀναγκαῖα ὑπομεῖναι συγχωροῦσι, δύνανται δὲ ὅσα ἐστὶν αὐτῶν ἔργα αὑτῶν εἶναι, ζῶσαι κατ' ἄλλην τὴν τῶν συμπάντων τῶν ὄντων νομοθεσίαν ἄλλῳ ἑαυτὰς θεσμῷ δοῦσαι. πέπλεκται δὲ αὖτη ἔκ τε τῶν τῇδε λόγων τε καὶ αἰτίων πάντων καὶ ψυχικῶν κινήσεων καὶ νόμων τῶν ἐκεῖθεν, συμφωνοῦσα ἐκείνοις καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐκεῖθεν παραλαβοῦσα καὶ συνυφαίνουσα τὰ ἑξῆς ἐκείνοις . . .

[41] Cf. III.2.7.24–27 and III.2.4.10–11.

and makes use of their already-existing characters in assigning each their part, so too does the *Logos* order the All, assign roles to individual human beings, and make use of their already-existing characters in assigning each their part. Moreover, like actors in a play, individual human beings are responsible for the good or bad acting of their parts. However, unlike actors in a play, the *Logos* makes us masters of the All (*pantos kurios:* III.2.17.55–57). By this he means that once we identify with our intellect and transcend the causation of the physical universe, we no longer merely play the role assigned to us by the playwright, but we help write the script!

6.2 Self-Determination

In the early treatise on destiny and the late treatises on providence, Plotinus does not explain what he means by being in charge of one's actions or being free. His primary concern in III.1 [3] is to show that destiny does not exclude human agency, and his primary concern in III.2–3 [47–48] is to show that providence is not responsible for evil and that human beings are morally responsible for their actions. The discussion of these issues occurs in the opening chapters of VI.8 [39] *On Free Will and the Will of the One*, which I turn to next.

Plotinus departs from Plato and Aristotle by holding that the virtuous life does not simply consist in moderating the appetites and passions, but in completely detaching oneself from them and attending to them only when necessary without experiencing their emotional excitement. For the appetites and passions produce an involuntary impulse (*to aproaireton*), which is compulsive and leads us away from the Good (VI.8.4.15–17).[42] We are led away from the Good because, when an external object moves the appetitive or passionate powers, an image (*phantasia*) is produced in the lower imagination, which informs the soul of the experience the body is undergoing and which demands we should follow along with the image and obtain the desired object. When this occurs, false opinions concerning what should be pursued or avoided and what is good or bad are produced, resulting in "us" falling into a state of perplexity and becoming increasingly ignorant of the Good (IV.4.17.12–20). Moreover, the lower imagination stores images in an emotionally laden way, and when the images "come

[42] Plotinus distinguishes between natural impulses and involuntary impulses. The former are concerned with bodily desires related to survival and can be satisfied without interfering with the good of the higher soul. The latter are not, and fit the above description. See I.2.5.6–22, I.4.4.26–32, I.4.6.11–33, I.4.15.17–25, and IV.4.44.

like a perception and announce and inform us of the experience," they do so in an emotionally triggering way, which has the effect of making demands on the soul (IV.3.32.3–7). For this reason, the autonomous agent aims to satisfy the needs of the body without sharing in the emotional excitement of the lower impulses since, in doing so, he runs the risk of evaluating the pleasures that result from satisfying the lower impulses as good (I.8.4.8–13) and self-identifying with the soul–body compound (I.4.4.13–18, IV.4.18.16–19).

This is the background Plotinus has in mind when he asks in VI.8.2 how our actions can be said to be "up to us" if impression and nonrational desires compel us to act. Were we merely to react automatically to our nonrational impulses we would be no different from children, animals, or madmen, who are carried every which way their impulses lead with nothing under their authority (VI.8.2.5–9, III.1.7.13–25). However, following the Stoics, Plotinus holds that in between impression and impulse there occurs a rational assent, which governs our response to nonrational impulses and ensures us ownership of our actions.[43] Moreover, this assent of reason constitutes the motivating psychological impulse that impels us to act and carries us through to action (VI.8.2.30–37).[44] For this reason, acting on the basis of a rational impulse is a *willing*. Plotinus employs the Stoic term for assent (*sunkatathesis*) only once in the *Enneads*,[45] probably because of its association with their physicalist theory of soul. However, it is clear from his discussion of the relationship between the will and nonrational impressions in VI.8 that he holds this view.[46]

Central to Plotinus' discussion of self-determination is the notion of the "up to us,"[47] which he claims belongs not to actions but to the will outside the sphere of action. The "up to us" cannot belong to actions for two main reasons: First, actions are ultimately based on nonrational impulses, which serve as the efficient cause and have authority over us. Second, actions take place in circumstances that constrain us from acting the way we rationally desire to act (VI.8.1.22–31). The features of the will that lend it to being the subject of the "up to us," then, is that it is the efficient cause of our

[43] See Plutarch *On Self Contradictions* 1057a (*SVF* 3.177, part; *LS* 53S).
[44] See Stobaeus 2.86,17–87,6 (*SVF* 3.169, part; *LS* 53Q).
[45] See I.8.14.4–5. However, compare similar usage of *epineuô* at IV.4.43.7.
[46] Michael Frede and John Cooper have argued convincingly that Plotinus is heavily influenced by the Stoic theory of adult human agency. See Cooper (2012: 363–381) and Frede (2011: 57–59, 62–63, and 125–152).
[47] On this notion, see Erik Eliasson's important study (2008: ch. 6). The view I argue for in this section is largely in agreement with his findings.

activities, and its volitions are unconstrained by circumstances that prevent it from acting the way we wish to act and accomplishing what we set out to will. Plotinus writes that "what is up to us is enslaved to the will (*tê boulêsei*) and would occur or not depending upon whether [or not] we willed it, for everything is voluntary (*hekousion*) that is done without force but with knowledge, whereas what is 'up to us' is, in addition, what we are in charge (*kurioi*) of doing" (VI.8.1.31–34: trans. Dillon and Gerson). However, as this passage expresses, in order for the will to cause an action it must be more than voluntary in the Aristotelian sense. It must also be one that we are in charge of doing or have authority over doing, which, as we will see, requires us to act solely from reason.

Plotinus' characterization of the voluntary as an action that is "done without force but with knowledge" is an obvious reference to Aristotle, who defines voluntary actions as those that are not forced but originate in the agent and are performed with knowledge of the particulars of a given situation (*EN* 1111a21–24). However, the Aristotelian notion of voluntariness is insufficient for Plotinus since one could act voluntarily without being in charge of what one is doing. For example, if while walking in front of my favorite café and noticing a flaky croissant I suddenly experience an appetitive desire to eat the croissant, and I act on this appetitive desire, I am doing so voluntarily. No one is forcing me to do it, and I am doing it with full knowledge of the particulars of the situation. However, the premises (*protaseis*) on which my practical action is based originate in the soul–body compound, since the motivating psychological impulse is coming from the nonrational desire.

By "premises for action" Plotinus has in mind the kind of reasoning employed in the Aristotelian practical syllogism in which the universal premise identifies some good or apparent good (e.g., flaky croissants should be eaten); the particular premise spots the good to be achieved in some present situation (e.g., this is a flaky croissant); and the conclusion results in action (e.g., eat this).[48] Even though I am using reason in conjunction with appetite to enter the café and eat, it is ultimately the nonrational desire that serves as the efficient cause and sets the reasoning in motion. As Plotinus writes, "[b]ut in practical life there is no self-possession, and the reason does not produce the impulse, but the irrational also has an origin in the premises derived from the affection"

[48] See *Nicomachean Ethics* 1147a25–32, *De Anima* 434a17–22, and *On Movement of Animals* 701a7–701b1.

(IV.4.44.5–7). It is only when reason serves as the efficient cause and sets the desire in motion that I am fully in charge of my actions.

The notion of reason Plotinus has in mind is not simply any act of discursive reasoning, but rather right reason (*orthos logos*) that belongs to the understanding (*epistêmê*) (VI.8.3.3–6). The immediate context of VI.8.3 suggests that by right reason he means correct reasoning concerning a course of action as being good for oneself, and by understanding he means the epistemic state that results from knowing that the course of action is good for oneself and why it is good for oneself.[49] This underlies his claim that acting on the basis of a right belief, without knowing why one's belief is right, would not count as truly self-determining, since the basis for the belief could be chance or the imagination, which are beyond our control and which can lead us away from the Good (VI.8.3.6–17). However, the larger context of the *Enneads* suggests that by right reason he means a principle that is inborn, belongs to the purest and most untroubled part of us, namely, our higher soul or intellect, and is oriented toward the Good, and that when we act according to it we are free and active, but that it becomes weakened and fettered when the appetitive and passionate parts of the soul are in control and impel the person to action.[50] This usage of right reason is similar to the Stoic usage, according to which right reason is the common law (or the will of Zeus) that pervades all things, which commands what is to be done and to be avoided, and by reference to which the Sage performs all of his virtuous actions (DL VII.87–88, Stobaeus, 5b10,11d–f). Taken with VI.8.3.2–17, we can infer that we know why what we are doing is right and act on right reason, as opposed to right belief, due to the fact our intellects are activated and in touch with ethical Forms in Intellect. This is consistent with Plotinus' view that practical wisdom (*phronêsis*), the intellectual virtue responsible for deliberating well concerning what is good or bad for a human being and for prescribing right action, derives its principles from dialectic and is a superior form of reasoning concerned with grasping the universal.[51]

Plotinus' usage of right reason highlights a crucial feature of his notion of voluntariness; namely, voluntary actions are those that are naturally inclined toward the Good (VI.8.4.13–20). Hence, for Plotinus voluntary

[49] The opening lines of chapter 3 clearly refer to the immediately preceding chapter in which he discusses locating the will in *orthos logismos* (lines 10–11) and the *logos* that arrests nonrational desires and produces another desire that acts contrary to them (lines 30–37).

[50] See III.1.9.5–17, III.1.10.4–15, III.5.7.31–39, IV.4.17.21–24, and IV.4.35.32–34.

[51] See I.3.6.6–14. Cf. I.2.1.17, I.2.3.15, I.2.6.13–15, I.2.7.7 and 14–31, I.8.9.2–3, and I.8.15.7–9. See also Bene (2013: 154–156).

actions stem from within and not only with knowledge of the particulars, but also with knowledge of the universal (VI.8.1.36–45). Plotinus inserts orientation toward the Good into the notion of voluntariness due to the close relation he sees between voluntariness and self-determination. The more our actions are inclined toward the Good, the more they derive from within ourselves and the less they depend on external factors that are beyond our control and that constrain us from acting the way we rationally desire to act. This can only occur when we are operating at the level of our intellect and engaged in the intellectual virtues.

For my purposes, the crucial feature of the intellectual virtues is that they enable us to establish right reason as the guiding force in our embodied lives and derive our premises for action from Intellect, since these are activated after we have separated the soul from the body through purification, and involve assimilating to Intellect (I.2.6.7–27; cf. I.6.6.1–21). The significance of deriving one's premises from Intellect is made explicit in chapter 3 of VI.8 [39] *On Free Will and the Volition of the One.* After claiming that embodied human beings who act on the basis of imagination (by which he means those who assent to impressions stemming from nonrational desire) are not self-determining, Plotinus focuses his attention on the gods (by which he means pure intellects), who are active according to the activities of Intellect, and claims that only they are self-determining:

> [W]e will designate those as self-determining (*to autexousion*) who, owing to the activities of Intellect, are free from the affections of the body. Referring "up to us" to the most noble principle, the activity of Intellect, we will designate as really free the premises that come from there and claim that desires that arise from thinking are not involuntary (*ouk akousious*), and we will say that [self-determination] is found among the gods who live in this manner. (VI.8.3.19–25: trans. Dillon and Gerson)[52]

The activities of Intellect are "up to it" because, through self-thinking, it voluntarily strives toward the Good, and although it could not act otherwise than its nature compels it to, nonetheless it is fully in charge of its activity, since acting according to its own nature directs itself toward its own good. This explains why the premises that come from Intellect are

[52] τῷ δὲ διὰ νοῦ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἐλευθέρῳ τῶν παθημάτων τοῦ σώματος τὸ αὐτεξούσιον δώσομεν - εἰς ἀρχὴν τὸ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν καλλίστην ἀνάγοντες τὴν τοῦ νοῦ ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὰς ἐντεῦθεν προτάσεις ἐλευθέρας ὄντως ⟨εἶναι⟩ δώσομεν, καὶ τὰς ὀρέξεις τὰς ἐκ τοῦ νοεῖν ἐγειρομένας οὐκ ἀκουσίους ⟨εἶναι δώσομεν⟩, καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς τοῦτον ζῶσι τὸν τρόπον [ὅσοι νῷ καὶ ὀρέξει τῇ κατὰ νοῦν ζῶσι] φήσομεν παρεῖναι.

"really free" and why the desires that result from thinking are "not involuntary," namely, because the premises result from a rational source of motivation acting on which involves no constraints that prevent one's pursuit of the Good, and the desire is a rational desire for the true good. Thus, pure intellects, who derive their premises from its activity and form desires from thinking, are similarly free and in charge of their actions or activities.

I say "actions or activities" because Plotinus distinguishes between being active (*energousê*) according to Intellect and acting (*prattousê*) according to virtue (VI.8.5.1–3). In the former case the intellect is engaged in theoretical thinking, the premises constitute reasons for thinking, and the "up to us" is referred to the activity of thinking. In the latter case, the embodied human being is engaged in practical action, the premises constitute reasons for acting virtuously, and the "up to us" is referred neither to the action nor to its consequences, but to the volition that is internal and prior to the actions (VI.8.5–6). Although self-determination is reserved primarily for those who act according to intellect, it is granted secondarily to those who act according to virtue, since it is a state that intellectualizes the soul and prepares it for theoretical thinking (VI.8.5.35–36).

The common thread in both cases is that thinking produces the rational desire, which ensures that the activities or actions that result are "up to us." Along with Lloyd Gerson (1994: 161) and László Bene (2013: 157), I take the thinking to be of universal truths in Intellect and to consist in the intellection of universal premises involved in practical reasoning. For example, in the case of the embodied human being this amounts to intellecting a universal truth (e.g., preserving life is good), recognizing that the universal truth preserving life is good is good for oneself and, when faced with a situation that calls for acting to preserve another's life, acting with the conformity of our good to the Good in mind. In this case, thinking produces the rational desire and our volition serves as the efficient cause of the action. Under these conditions, we are in charge of our actions to the extent that this is possible in practical circumstances (VI.8.2.30–37).

Deriving our premises from Intellect requires more than the correct use of impressions in the Stoic sense, however. Importantly and uniquely, it also requires practicing the civic, the purificatory, and the intellectual virtues. It is only when we have realized our nature as intellects, through purification, that we can derive our premises from Intellect and establish reason as the guiding force in our embodied lives. This process of self-sculpting involves turning inward, ascending upward, and consciously shaping ourselves toward our ideal selves (I.6.9.7–16). In virtue of having a conscious,

first-person perspective (which I defined in terms of experiencing the world from the standpoint of one's own beliefs and desires, and being able to reflect on one's own experience from this standpoint), the self-sculptor can reflect on herself as she ascends upward, self-identifies with the highest level of self, and activates the highest layer of consciousness.

This spiritualization of the virtues has profound implications for Plotinus' concept of agency. We are fully in charge of our actions, free, and self-determining only when we are operating at the level of our intellects and the third layer of consciousness. This can be seen from his discussion of the civic virtues. These are the virtues that result from habit and training as opposed to thought (I.1.10.12–14) and correspond roughly to what Plato and Aristotle refer to as the moral virtues. When we act in circumstances that require performance of these virtues, for Plotinus, we are not truly free or in charge of our actions. In order to be brave there must be a war; in order to be just there must be injustice; in order to be liberal there must be poverty. In each of these circumstances the virtuous person's actions are constrained by circumstances that he himself would not choose. A truly virtuous person would prefer rather that there not be wars, injustice, or poverty in the first place, just as a physician would prefer that her patients not be sick and in need of medical treatment (VI.8.5.7–20). Of course, this is not to say that we are predetermined to perform virtuous actions, just that we are constrained from acting the way we wish to act under ideal circumstances. To drive home the point that virtue knows no master,[53] Plotinus writes:

> But when the force of passions and actions (*praxeis*) befell it, virtue was watching over the soul, and it did not want these things to occur. Still even in these conditions, it would preserve what is "up to it" in itself and keep it there, for it will not be led by circumstances – for example, in saving the one who is in danger, if it thinks proper, it will sacrifice him or command him to sacrifice his life and property and children and even his fatherland, having as his aim its own nobility and not the being of things that are subordinate to it. (VI.8.6.10–18: trans. Dillon and Gerson)[54]

This is a difficult passage for anyone who wishes to maintain that Plotinus holds an ethical theory, which essentially involves acting out of concern or

[53] See Plato *Republic* 617e3.

[54] προσπιπτόντων δὲ τῶν ἀναγκαίων παθημάτων τε καὶ πράξεων ἐφεστῶσαν ταῦτα μὲν μὴ βεβουλῆσθαι γενέσθαι, ὅμως γε μὴν καὶ ἐν τούτοις διασώσειν τὸ ἐφ' αὑτῇ εἰς αὑτὴν καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἀναφέρουσαν· οὐ γὰρ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐφέψεσθαι, οἷον σῴζουσα τὸν κινδυνεύοντα, ἀλλ' εἰ δοκοῖ αὐτῇ, καὶ προϊεμένην τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ζῆν κελεύουσαν προΐεσθαι καὶ χρήματα καὶ τέκνα καὶ αὐτὴν πατρίδα, σκοπὸν τὸ καλὸν αὑτῆς ἔχουσαν, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸ εἶναι τῶν ὑπ' αὐτήν.

obligation for others.[55] Leaving this thorny issue aside, let us observe three things: First, actions are spoken of as occurring in such a way and at such a time that the soul would wish to be otherwise; second, the soul can choose not to perform the civic virtue that the circumstance calls for in order to preserve its autonomy; and third, the preservation of its own nobility is regarded as the goal. This suggests that maintaining continuity with the intelligible realm and pursuing the good of the higher soul through contemplation is the ultimate concern of Plotinus' ethics.[56] Thus, to be fully in charge of our actions, not only must reason produce the impulse to act, but the circumstances in which I act must result from my own choice and be consistent with rational desire, which is for the Good. This can occur only when we are operating at the level of intellect, "leaving behind in actuality" the civic virtues and engaging in the intellectual virtues. However, should the circumstances arise, we can perform the civic virtues guided by right reason since we retain them potentially (I.6.9.11–31).[57]

With this framework of virtue in mind, we can see why Plotinus holds that self-determination is not principally attributed to the "we" engaged in practical reasoning or practical actions, but to our intellects that have assimilated to Intellect and are contemplating its contents. He writes: "So, also in actions, that which is self-determining and 'up to us' is referred neither to the acting nor to what is external but to the activity of the interior, that is, thinking or the contemplation of virtue itself" (VI.8.6.20–22: trans. Dillon and Gerson).[58] This passage highlights a crucial point about theoretical thinking, namely, that it is an inward activity in contrast to the outward activity of action. To see why self-determination is applied principally to the inward activity of contemplation, we need to delve further into the distinction between the outwardness of action and inwardness of contemplation.

As I mentioned above, Plotinus regards practical action as something we engage in when we are too weak to contemplate, with action being a mere shadow (*skia*) of contemplation and reasoning (III.8.4.30–32). Moreover, he holds that a virtuous agent engages in practical action for the sake of contemplation or, more specifically, for the sake of the good resulting from

[55] See Dillon (1996). The literature on Plotinus' ethics is growing rapidly. For an excellent state of the question, see the introduction to section VI in Remes and Slaveva-Griffin (2014).

[56] However, Porphyry tells us that on a practical level Plotinus demonstrated a compassionate awareness and concern for others, which included caring for orphans, acting as an arbitrator in countless disputes, and preventing Porphyry from committing suicide. See *Life of Plotinus*, chs. 9 and 11.

[57] On the question whether we perform virtuous actions via deliberation or automatically, see Wilberding (2008a), Emilsson (2012), and Remes (2017).

[58] For the Platonic basis of this passage, see Emilsson (2012).

contemplation (III.8.6.1–9). When a virtuous agent deliberates over the best course of action and wills a particular action to occur, the ultimate aim is not the action itself or its consequences, but to see, and have present in her soul, the good for the sake of which she is acting, namely, unity. She accomplishes this by fitting the external action with the internal *logos* present in her soul that guides her action. She thereby dissolves the duality inherent in practical reasoning between the knowing subject and the known object and becomes unified with the *logos*. An inner tranquility arises from recognizing what is her own and coming closer to the unity exhibited by Intellect, and more remotely the One (III.8.6).

The *logoi* internal to the soul in III.8.6 are the same *logoi* we encountered in IV.3.30. These are images of Forms whose function is to unfold the Forms into definitional statements with predicative structure, so that our noetic thoughts can be apprehended by the imagination, used by discursive reasoning, and communicated through language. For example, in the case of an agent who is too weak to act on the model of productive actions, the ultimate aim of liberality is not sharing resources or improving another person's impoverished circumstances. Rather, it is to come into unity with the image of Liberality, which is unfolded into the imagination and guiding our embodied actions, and use this self-identification with the *logos* to produce further objects of contemplation by cognizing other Forms with which it is related (III.8.7.1–13). "In the soul of the virtuous person," Plotinus writes, "the objects known are verging towards identity with the subject, since they are hastening towards Intellect" (III.8.8.4–6: trans. Dillon and Gerson). The identity between Intellect and the intelligible functions as a regulative ideal not only for how we should reason, but also for how we should act.

Since the body is external to the soul and action is concerned with external objects and events, acting places our activities and concerns in the external world. Moreover, practical reasoning and practical action render us multiple by splitting our attention in multiple directions and enticing us with the false judgment that the plurality of objects toward which our attention is directed is good and that we are in need of them to flourish. Plotinus characterizes this as a form of magical enchantment (*goêteusis*), a process by which the lower soul is charmed by external objects and the nonrational desires begin to dominate a person's value judgments and entire way of life. He writes, "For this reason all practical action (*pasa praxis*) is under enchantment, and the whole life of the practical man (*pas ho tou praktikou bios*): for he is moved to that which charms him" (IV.4.43.19–21; cf. V.3.6.35–37). It is only when we have purified

ourselves of the nonrational desires and opinions stemming from the compound and engage in inward contemplation that our activity is entirely self-directed; our attention is purely focused in the singular direction of what is truly good; and we are completely self-sufficient (IV.4.44). At this level, our will and our intellect coincide and what we know to be good we will to accomplish.[59] Moreover, we know from the previous chapter that this inward activity of contemplation is accompanied by the mode of consciousness found in the third layer.

Paradoxically, it turns out that in order to be the *sole* causal source of our actions we must engage not in actions based on the nonrational impulses or even actions associated with the civic virtues, but rather in activities associated with the intellectual virtues. In what sense then is this a theory of agency? Like much of Plotinus' philosophy his notion of agency is worked out at the ideal level. However, this should not distract us from seeing the effects of the ideal on the mundane realities of daily life. What Plotinus has shown, I think, is that even in a world governed by destiny human beings can initiate their own activity, in varying degrees, depending on the extent to which they are free and in charge of their actions. However, in order to do this, we must strive to attain the freedom and authority belonging to the best part of ourselves, namely, our intellects. Although most of our actions are "mixed" due to the demands of the nonrational desires serving the needs of the body, we nonetheless should strive to establish reason as the guiding force in our life. Doing so results in us achieving self-determination and self-sufficiency and, to the best of our abilities while embodied, approximating the One. Importantly for my purposes, establishing right reason involves adhering to a regulative ideal that ultimately derives from Intellect's contemplative activity.

[59] See Rist (1967: 136–137).

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

I made two claims in the Introduction that I wish to return to briefly. First, Plotinus' theory of consciousness provides us with a richer notion of consciousness than the one we have inherited from the post-Cartesian tradition; second, analyzing the concept of consciousness outside the Cartesian framework will help us clarify the concept of consciousness.

Let us begin by reviewing the main features of Plotinus' theory of consciousness. It addresses how we are subjects of experience (*sumpatheia* structures a multitude of bodily parts and activities into a unified whole); how experiences belong to us (*sunaisthêsi*s recognizes that the bodily parts and activities that constitute this whole are one's own); how we have particular kinds of experience, and how we process them (the qualified body "feels" pain, but the lower soul cognizes the occurrence of pain without its felt quality); how we integrate information, which takes place at different levels of processing (the imagination converges input from sense-perception and intellect and produces an image, which the soul draws on for reasoning, speech, and action); how we access our internal states ("self-intimating" images put the soul in touch with its psychic activities); how we access the hypostases internally (One, Intellect, and Soul are also "in us," and they can be reached by turning inward and ascending upward through purification); why dianoetic consciousness involves a first-person perspective (the constitution of one's body or the development of one's soul shapes the content of the activity presented to oneself in an image, and the soul forms beliefs and desires on the basis of images); why noetic consciousness involves a point of view (our intellect contemplates the intelligibles with a focusing of attention, and this gives it a point of view on the intelligible world); and how human awareness differs from the awareness belonging to animals (animal awareness lacks interiority due to being limited to the body and what is perceived through the body). If I am right, pace Christoper Gill, it addresses these features without importing modern European notions of individuality and subjectivity.

It is commonplace to use the term "dualist" to describe Plotinus' psychology, since he sharply distinguishes the soul from the body, and he locates cognition and consciousness exclusively in the soul. However, we must be careful in attributing to Plotinus a dualist theory since his view does not correspond to Cartesian dualism (substance dualism) or any of the other varieties of dualism that arose in the early modern or contemporary period (parallelism, occasionalism, epiphenomenalism, property dualism etc.). The fact that a human being is composed of three phases of soul (the higher soul, the lower soul, and the soul-trace), and that affections occur in the qualified body, but awareness occurs in the lower soul without their phenomenal component, shows that Plotinus' theory of the relation between the soul and the body is sui generis. A more appropriate term to characterize his theory of consciousness is "multilayered."

The concept of consciousness that we have inherited from the post-Cartesian tradition is closely connected to the "Inner Theater" model. Recall that, on this model, the mind perceives its mental states in the way an observer perceives actors on a stage. Thoughts that make it onto the stage are conscious; thoughts that do not make it onto the stage are unconscious; and the theater is one's own subjective experience. The layer of consciousness in Plotinus' model that comes closest to this model is the second layer, in which the imagination announces activities that occur in "parts" of the soul, or in the soul–body compound, to the whole soul. However, there are two important differences between these models. First, there exist layers of consciousness below and above the second layer that are integral for the imagination's functioning. The first layer constitutes human beings as subjects of experience and provides them with ownership of their cognitive activities. The third layer enables human beings to make discursive judgments about the world, by inscribing rules for the application of concepts into our lower souls in the form of *logoi*. Second, the judgments the *dianoetic* self makes about external objects, and the beliefs it forms concerning them, are rooted in the soul's possession of *logoi.* Thus, to understand fully the nature of a dianoetic state, such as a conscious perception or discursive thought, we must understand the modes of consciousness that are layered on top of each other. Plotinus' multilayered model shows that there is more to being a conscious, mental state than we find in ordinary introspection.

Consciousness is widely distributed throughout Plotinus' ontology due to his theory of contemplation. Each layer of reality (Nature, Soul, Intellect, and possibly the One) and each type of soul (animal, human, divine) exhibits some form of consciousness. Moreover, since Intellect's

contemplative activity is paradigmatic, the structure of human cognition and action is modeled on Intellect. Recall that the aim of discursive reasoning is to unify itself with the *logoi* unfolded into the imagination and recognize them as one's own, in order to bring itself into a closer state of unity with its objects of thought. Similarly, the aim of a practical agent is to come into unity with the image of an ethical Form, which is unfolded into the imagination and guiding embodied action. In both cases, it is ultimately the nature of Intellect that explains how we ought to reason and act. Thus, to understand fully the nature of an embodied human being, we must understand the layer of consciousness belonging to the primary thinker. Plotinus' multilayered model shows that there is more to being a conscious human being than we find in the operations of the natural world.

Appendix

The core chapters (Chapters 3 through 5) have shown that Plotinus employs four terms to refer to different modes of consciousness: *antilêpsis*, *parakolouthêsis*, *sunaisthêsis*, and *sunesis.* Each of these terms underwent a substantial semantic development in the centuries leading up to Plotinus. In this section, I offer a brief study of the history of these terms in order to appreciate their usage in the *Enneads*. I begin with *antilêpsis*, the term that has been least appreciated as a consciousness term in Plotinus.

The earliest recorded usage of *antilambanô*, the finite verb from which the abstract noun *antilêpsis* is derived, occurs in the sixth-century elegiac poet Theognis. While speaking of the reasons why one should not befriend a base man, Theognis says that "you cannot reap a tall crop by sowing the sea and you cannot get anything good in return (*palin antilabois*) by doing good to the base" (*Theognis*, 107–108). In this poetic usage, the verb has the literal meaning of "getting in return," which is what we should expect from the compound *anti* (against, instead of, in return for) and *lambanô* (to take or lay hold of). Similar usages can be found a century later in Euripides, the fifth-century playwright. While singing of the advantages of youth, the chorus sings, "May I not have the wealth of Asian potentates, nor houses filled with gold to take the place (*antilabein*) of youth" (*Heracles*, 643–646).[1] In both of these early poetic instances the prefix *anti* is active, and the verb is used in the literal sense of "getting in return" or "receiving instead of." After these instances the verb is absorbed into prose, and the prefix *anti* tends to lose its force.

Prose usages of *antilambanô* occur as early as Thucydides, a contemporary of Euripides. While speaking of how the Plataeans planned to scale the walls of their enemy and flee to safety, Thucydides writes, "[F]or one of the Plataeans in laying hold of (*antilambanomenos*) the battlements threw

[1] A similar usage can be found at *Andromache*, 741.

down a tile, which fell with a thud" (*Histories*, 3.22.4–5).[2] In this early prose usage, the prefix *anti* is no longer active, and the verb acquires the meaning "to lay or take hold of," which is just a stronger meaning of the original root verb, *lambanô*. Similar usages can be found in Plato. While speaking of how Thrasymachus was eager to take over the discussion of justice, Socrates says, "While we were speaking, Thrasymachus had tried many times to take hold of (*antilambanesthai*) the discussion but was restrained by those sitting near him, who wanted to hear our argument until the end" (*Republic*, 336a10–b5).[3] This usage of *antilambanô* as "taking or laying hold of" becomes standard for subsequent writers[4] until the cognitive meaning appears in the late Hellenistic period.

First attested with Philo of Alexandria,[5] a Jewish Platonist born in the late first century BCE, *antilambanô* acquires the meaning of "taking hold of with the soul," "grasping," or "apprehending." At this point, the literal meaning of the verb "to receive in turn" has become a dead metaphor, and the verb is used in the way that Schwyzer describes it above, i.e., a generic term for each kind of grasping. While speaking of the difference between knowledge and art, Philo concludes with the following illustration: "The nostrils smell, but the soul through the nose smells more vividly than the nose, and while the other senses apprehend (*antilambanontai*) the objects proper to them, the understanding apprehends with more purity and clarity" (*Preliminary Studies*, 143.4–7). Here the subject of the verb is no longer the entire person "laying hold of" something with his hand. Rather,

[2] Similar usages can be found at *Histories*, 2.61.4, 2.62.3, and 8.106.5.

[3] Similar usages can be found at *Phaedo*, 88d4, *Gorgias*, 506a2, and *Parmenides*, 130e2.

[4] See, for example, Aristotle (*Parts of Animals*, 685a31) and Theophrastus (*On the Causes of Plants*, 3.5.1).

[5] There is some evidence to indicate that the cognitive usage of the verb takes place much earlier than Philo. However, after careful review of the passages, I do not think it is likely. Let us take just two examples. In the first, a cognitive usage can be found in the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus* 370a, where Socrates says, "What distresses someone who is deprived of good things is having them replaced by bad things, and someone who doesn't exist cannot even apprehend (*antilambanetai*) the deprivation" (*Axiochus*, 370a2–3). Though the author clearly uses *antilambanô* in the cognitive sense here, the author is surely not Plato. The *Axiochus* is a spurious Platonic dialogue. According to John Cooper, "the author [is] probably a Platonist writing between 100 BC and 50 AD" (1997: 1735). In the second, a cognitive usage can be found in a fragment of Chrysippus, the third-century BCE Stoic philosopher. The fragment begins, 'Hence, too, it is pointless to say that thought, or the soul in general, cannot grasp (*antilambanesthai*) the other category amongst these different objects; for since the constitution that it has is diverse, it will right away be capable of grasping (*antilêptikê*) both of them' (*SVF* 849, 16–19; Sextus, *Against the Logicians*, 360–361). Here again, the author clearly uses *antilambanô* in the cognitive sense, but the author of these words is likely Sextus Empiricus, the second-century CE skeptical philosopher, who is reporting on Chrysippus's doctrines in this passage. In both cases, then, the actual usage of the term probably comes from an author who lived in the time of Philo or later, which would explain why the term is being used in the cognitive sense.

it is the soul that lays hold of – i.e., "apprehends" – objects of perception and understanding. Similar usages can be found in Sextus Empiricus,[6] Plutarch,[7] and Alexander of Aphrodisias, the great commentator of Aristotle, who was appointed chair of Aristotelian philosophy in Athens between 198 and 209 CE.

Due to the enormous influence that Alexander's commentaries had on Plotinus, it is worth looking at some passages from them. While commenting on 436b7–8 of Aristotle's *On Sense-Perception*, Alexander says: "For to perceive is to apprehend (*antilambanesthai*) perceptibles by means of sense-organs, which are bodies" (*On Aristotle's Sense-Perception*, 8,13–14). This formulation parallels his comments elsewhere, to the effect that sense-perception is the soul's power to apprehend external objects. In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he says, "For sense-perception is the apprehension (*antilêpsis*) of sensibles that are present and external to the sense-organs" (*On Aristotle's Metaphysics* 4, 312,1–3). By the time of Alexander, then, *antilambanô* has become a commonly used term to describe the soul's apprehension of sensible objects.

The earliest recorded usage of *antilêpsis*, the abstract noun derived from *antilambanô*, occurs in Thucydides, and its usage parallels that of the verb form. That is to say, it starts out meaning "laying hold of," then acquires the cognitive meaning "apprehension." While describing the effect of the outbreak of plague in Athens, Thucydides writes, "For the malady, starting from the head where it was first seated, passed down until it spread through the whole body, and if one got over the worst, it seized (*antilêpsis*) upon the extremities at least and left its marks there" (*Histories*, 2.49, 7–8). In a similar vein, while speaking of how a rider ought to rub down his horse, Xenophon, a fourth-century BCE historian, writes, "He should also wash the tail and the mane, for growth of the tail is to be encouraged in order that the horse may be able to reach as far as possible and drive away anything that worries him, and growth of the mane in order to give the rider as good a hold (*antilêpsis*) as possible" (*Art of Horsemanship*, 5.7–8). In both instances, the abstract noun closely parallels the verbal meaning, "to take or lay hold of."

It is not until Plutarch of Chaeroneia, the biographer and moral philosopher of the first century CE, that a cognitive meaning of *antilêpsis* is attested. While speaking of why old men are fond of strong wine, Plutarch writes, "For the same thing occurs in regard to an old man's perception of other stimuli: They are hard to stir and hard to rouse in

[6] E.g., *Against the Logicians*, 210. [7] E.g., *Platonic Questions*, 1000b9.

regards to apprehensions (*tas antilêpseis*) of qualities, unless they strike him with excessive strength" (*Table-Talk*, 625a–b). This usage then becomes commonplace in subsequent philosophers, such as Hierocles,[8] Sextus Empiricus,[9] and Alexander of Aphrodisias.[10]

Central to the development of the cognitive meaning of *antilêpsis* is the idea that it can function as either a sensory or an intellectual apprehension. This notion preceded Plutarch by at least a century and can be found in a fragment preserved by Plotinus' pupil, Porphyry.[11] He says of Aristo of Alexandria, a first-century BCE middle Platonist turned Peripatetic, that he postulated an "apprehensive power of the soul (*antilêptikên dunamin tês psukhês*), which he divided into two, saying that one of the parts is moved, for the most part, together with the sense organs, and this is called the sensory part, while the other is always with itself and operates without organs . . . and this is called intellect."[12]

The earliest recorded usage of *parakoloutheô*, the finite verb from which *parakolouthêsis* is derived, occurs in Aristophanes, the fifth-century BCE playwright, who uses the verb in the literal sense of "to follow." He says, "Lead on and I will follow (*parakolouthô*) you closely" (*Ecclesiazusae*, 725). Related prose usages can be found in subsequent philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus.[13] While speaking of the criteria by which to judge music, Plato says, "An element of attractiveness – the pleasure we feel – accompanies (*parakolouthein*) the process of learning, too" (*Laws*, 667c4–5).[14] Similarly, while speaking of the things relevant to choice, Aristotle says, "the bad person tends to get things wrong, and especially in relation to pleasure; for pleasure is both something shared with the animals, and accompanies (*parakolouthei*) all things falling under the heading of choice" (*NE*, 1104b33–35).[15] And last, while speaking of properties predicated of bodies, Epicurus says that "it often happens that some impermanent properties, which are neither invisible or incorporeal, accompany (*parakolouthein*) bodies" (*Letter to Herodotus*, 70.1).[16] As the

[8] For example, see *Elements of Ethics*, I. 5–33, 4. 38–53 (*LS*, 53B).
[9] For example, see *Outlines*, 1.65, 1.44, and 3.264.
[10] For example, see *On Aristotle's Sense-Perception*, 10.19, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 316.4.
[11] I am thankful to Pavlos Kalligas for bringing this passage to my attention. See his discussion of this passage in Kalligas (2004: 67–68).
[12] This passage is preserved by Johannes Stobaeus, *Anthology* I. 49, 24, 828–830.
[13] The term also occurs frequently in Attic Oratory. See, e.g., Isocrates' *Archidamus*, 80.3 and *Panathenaicus*, 21.2.
[14] Plato uses *parakoloutheô* in two other passages with similar meanings. See *Theaetetus*, 158c, and *Sophist*, 266c.
[15] See *NE* 1112a11 for a similar usage.
[16] For similar usages, see *Letter to Herodotus*, 70.6, 71.2, 71.9, and *Letter to Menoeceus*, 129.8.

above passages attest, early prose usages stick close to the original meaning of "to follow." There is, however, one exception.

While speaking of a physical trainer who postponed death by mixing physical training with medicine, Plato says, "Always attending to (*parakolouthôn*) his mortal illness, he was nonetheless, it seems, unable to cure it, so he lived out his life under medical treatment, with no leisure for anything else" (*Republic*, 406b2–4). This usage, though related to the literal sense of "to follow," points ahead to later cognitive usages such as "to attend" and, ultimately, "to understand." Such a development in meaning from "to follow" to "to follow with the mind, i.e., understand" is commonplace even today. For in modern English one often hears the locution "I follow what you are saying," in the sense of "I understand you."

Cognitive usages of *parakoloutheô* are attested as early as Polybius, the second-century BCE historian. While speaking of early Roman conquests, Polybius writes, "It seemed necessary to me for anyone who hopes to gain a proper understanding (*parakolouthêsai*) of their present supremacy" (*Histories*, 1.12.7). In this passage, Polybius uses the verb almost synonymously with *manthanein*, "to understand," which prefigures common usages in the first and second centuries CE in the writings of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. This can be seen in Epictetus' pairing of *parakoloutheô* with *manthanô* in the *Discourses*, 1.9.4–6: *parakolouthêkôs kai memathêkôs*. Schwyzer even goes so far as to say, "es mag schon in der alten Stoa ein Terminus technicus geworden sein" (1960: 369). Schwyzer's remark can easily be confirmed in the case of Epictetus, who maintains that human beings differ from animals through the possession of the faculty of understanding (*tên parakolouthêtikên dunamin*),[17] as well as Marcus Aurelius, who often praises the faculties of understanding and knowledge (*tês parakolouthêtikês kai epistêmonikês dunameôs*).[18]

In addition to using *parakoloutheô* in the sense of "to understand," Epictetus greatly expands the meaning of the verb to include self-consciousness, i.e., attending to one's own states and activities, by adding the reflexive pronoun *heautô*. According to Schwyzer, "Der erste, der es mit dem reflexivpronomen verwendet, ist Epiktet, und hier bekommt es die Bedeutung 'sich bewusst werden'" (1960: 369). For example, Epictetus says, "But if you are conscious (*parakoloutheis sautô*) that you are ridding yourself of some of your bad judgments . . . why take any further account of illness" (*Discourses*, 3.5.4–5)? A few lines later at 14–15 he says, "I rejoice day by day in attending to my own improvement" (*khairô*

[17] See *Discourses*, 1.6.12–23. [18] See *Meditations*, 5.9.18–19

parakolouthôn emautô beltioni ginomenô).[19] It is significant that Epictetus – i.e., not any other philosopher – is the first to use the verb in this manner. For the foundation of his ethics and moral psychology, i.e., that we should concern ourselves only with "what is up to us," presupposes a theory of self-consciousness, which includes the ability to introspect, to analyze the content of our impressions, and to be conscious of the decisions that we make with respect to these impressions. Without self-consciousness, there would be no means by which to focus entirely on "what is up to us," and thereby no means to attain freedom and happiness.

The earliest recorded usage of *parakolouthêsis*, the abstract noun derived from *parakoloutheô*, occurs in Aristotle, and its usage parallels that of the verb form. While speaking of the relations between explanations, Aristotle says, "for those seeking the connections (*tên parakolouthêsin*) between an explanation and the feature of which it is explanatory, the matter will be exhibited in the following way" (*PA*, 99a30). I have opted for the translation "connection" here, since it captures the logical character of Aristotle's discussion. Nevertheless, one can see that Aristotle is using the noun very closely to its literal meaning, i.e., how an explanation "follows closely" to the feature of which it is explanatory.

It is not until Plutarch of Chaeroneia, once again, that cognitive usages of the noun are attested. After speaking of the three components – note, time, and sound – that strike the ear while listening to music, by means of which we can follow a musical score, Plutarch concludes his discussion by saying, "So much for the subject of following (*parakolouthêseôs*)" (*On Music*, 1144c2). Here, the noun means something like "following with the mind," which is what we might expect given the development of the verb around the same time. Furthermore, just as we saw above with *parakoloutheô*, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius both use *parakolouthêsis* in the sense of "attention" and "understanding." While continuing his discussion of how animals differ from humans, Epictetus says, "do they also understand (*parakolouthei*) what happens? No! For use is one thing, and understanding (*parakolouthêsis*) another" (*Discourses*, 1.6.13–14). And Marcus Aurelius says that "we should press onwards, not only because we come each moment closer to death, but also because our insight into facts and our understanding (*tên parakolouthêsin*) of them is gradually ceasing even before we die" (*Meditations*, 3.1.17– 19).

[19] It should be noted that the second of these two passages is a paraphrase of Socrates, the closest parallels to which can be found in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 1.6.8.14ff. and Plato's *Protagoras*, 318a17ff. In neither instance, though, is there any hint of self-consciousness as there is in Epictetus.

By the time of the mid-third century CE, then, when Plotinus first begins to write,[20] cognitive usages of *parakoloutheô* are well attested in the late Roman Stoics. Epictetus, in particular, has laid the framework for expressing self-consciousness through the addition of the reflexive pronoun *heautô* with this cognitive usage. Thus, on semantic grounds, when we find Plotinus posing a question such as "Can a human being achieve happiness without being self-conscious (*heautô parakolouthoi*)?"[21] we can see that his usage of this term is informed by his predecessors.

The earliest recorded usage of *suniêmi*, the verb from which the abstract noun *sunesis* is derived, occurs in Homer. While speaking of the enmity between Agamemnon and Achilles, Homer asks, "What god brought them together (*xuneêke*)[22] to fight with such a fury"? (*Iliad*. I.8). Here in the opening lines of the poem Homer uses the verb in its literal sense of "to bring together." In contrast to the examples of *antilambanô* and *parakoloutheô*, however, where the initial authors stick to the literal senses of the verb and subsequent authors utilize the metaphorical senses, Homer also uses the verb in its metaphorical sense of "to hear," "to perceive," or even "to take notice." A few examples will suffice. Homer says, "Come now, listen (*xuniei*) closely. Take my words to heart" (*Odyssey*, 1.271), and "[b]ut the red-haired warlord overheard (*xuneto*) his guest" (*Odyssey*, 4.76), and "Antinous, that grand prince, noticing (*xuneêkh'*) them wrangle, broke out into gloating laughter, and called out to the suitors" (*Odyssey*, 18.34). In the above three cases, Homer exploits the literal meaning of the verb to include the metaphorical "bringing together" of, say, complex auditory dins and visual images into a unified perceptual experience. It is this metaphorical usage in Homer that paves the way for the cognitive usage, "to understand," which becomes commonplace from Herodotus onward.

The cognitive sense of "to understand" is well attested in classical prose. While speaking of how the Scythians suited the Amazon women, Herodotus writes, "[n]ow the men could not learn the women's language, but the women mastered the speech of the men; and when they understood (*sunêkan*) each other, the men said to the Amazons . . ." (*Histories*, 4.114). Similarly, while speaking of the conversation between Socrates and Zeno during the Great Panathenaia, Plato writes, "[n]o, Zeno replied. 'On the contrary, you understood (*sunêkan*) the general point of the book splendidly'" (*Parmenides*, 128a1–2). In both cases, Herodotus and Plato

[20] According to Porphyry, Plotinus had written twenty-one treatises by the time Porphyry arrived in Rome during the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus, c. 263 CE (*Life*, ch. 4).
[21] See I.4.9. [22] The prefix "*xun*" is the Ionic form of "*sun*."

have drawn on the literal meaning of *suniêmi* as "bringing together" to capture the "bringing together" of different sounds into intelligible speech, in the case of Herodotus, or, in the case of Plato, the "bringing together" of seemingly distinct logical arguments to the Parmenidean conclusion that the many are, in fact, one. The result of such "bringing together" produces understanding. This usage remains commonplace throughout antiquity and can be found in many later authors. Several centuries later, for instance, Plutarch writes, "What you said at the beginning I do not remember; for that reason I do not understand (*suniêmi*) the middle part" (*Sayings of Spartans*, 223d).

The earliest recorded usage of *sunesis*, the abstract noun derived from *suniêmi*, occurs in Homer, and its usage parallels that of the verb. While speaking of the two rivers that flow into Acheron, the torrent River of Fire and the Wailing River of Tears, Circe says to Odysseus, "and the stark crag looms where the two rivers thunder down and unite" (*xunesis*). Here Homer exploits the literal meaning of the components of the noun, *sun* (with) and *hiêmi* (to bring or send), to produce the meaning "uniting" or "union."

The cognitive usage of *sunesis* is not attested until its use by verse writers of the late fifth century BCE, beginning with the lyric poet, Pindar. While speaking of the gift that Fate has given to Thearion, he says, "and although you have won boldness for noble deeds, she does not harm your mind's understanding (*sunesin ouk apoblaptei phrenôn*)" (*Nemean*, 7.60). The most significant verse passage, however, occurs in the exchange between Menelaus and Orestes in Euripides' *Orestes*. Menelaus, having returned from Troy only to hear the awful news that Clytemnestra has slain her husband, Agamemnon, and that Agamemnon's son, Orestes, has slain his mother out of revenge for his father, stumbles upon a grief-stricken Orestes, and asks, "What are you suffering from? What sickness destroys you?" to which Orestes responds, "*hê sunesis hoti sunoida dein' eirgasmenos* " (*Orestes*, 396).

The fact that Euripides uses *sunesis* and *sunoida*, the verb from which *suneidêsis* is derived, also a term to express consciousness, makes this a difficult sentence to translate. For my purposes, I propose the following translation: "The understanding[23] that I am aware of having committed dreadful deeds." After committing matricide, Orestes returns to a lucid state and realizes the severity of his act. We can see from his response that his actions weigh heavily on what we might call his conscience. Yet despite the fact that both *sunesis* and *sunoida* come to acquire "conscience" as a

[23] Alternatively, one could translate *hê sunesis* as "realization."

secondary meaning in later authors, neither can be translated as such here. As H. Osborne notes, "the notion of conscience is undoubtedly present in this passage. But it does not follow that it is located in a single word; rather it belongs to the whole sentence" (1931: 9). Euripides' usage of *sunesis* is clearly meant to denote a state of the soul brought about by critical reflection on his actions. It is this sense that serves as a backdrop for philosophical authors of subsequent generations.

Among the philosophers of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, *sunesis* is used to describe a state of the soul concerned with knowledge and is often used either synonymously with or alongside *epistêmê*. This philosophical usage is first attested in Democritus, who says, "There is understanding (*xunesis*) among the young and lack of understanding (*axunesiê*) among the old; for it is not time that teaches one to think (*phronein*), but mature development and nature" (B 183), and "Therefore he who acts rightly from understanding (*sunesei*) and knowledge (*epistêmê*) proves to be at the same time courageous and right-minded" (B 181). Similar usages can be found in Plato and Aristotle. While speaking of Socrates' proposal for the best life, Protarchus says, "You claim, it seems, that the good that should rightly be called superior to pleasure, at least, is reason (*noun*), as well as knowledge (*epistêmên*), understanding (*sunesin*), science (*technên*), and everything that is akin to them" (*Philebus*, 19d3–5). It falls to Aristotle, however, to delineate clearly *sunesis* from the above-mentioned faculties of which Plato and Democritus speak somewhat loosely. For Aristotle, *sunesis* is a distinct faculty of judgment, which differs from *phronêsis* insofar as "understanding (*sunesis*) is applicable to the exercise of the faculty of judgment for the purpose of judging what someone else says about matters with which practical wisdom (*phronêsis*) is concerned" (*NE* 1143a13–15). Aristotle also uses *sunesis* in juxtaposition with *agnoia* (*De Anima*, 410b3). By the time of Aristotle, then, *sunesis* has become a quasi-technical term to denote knowledge, which results from critical judgment and produces understanding.

As I mentioned above in connection with the passage from the *Orestes*, *sunesis* acquires a secondary meaning of "conscience" in later authors. The first author in which such a meaning occurs explicitly is Polybius, the second-century BCE Greek historian.[24] While speaking of the Boeotians'

[24] I say "explicit" here because, in contrast with Liddell and Scott, I do not think there is sufficient evidence to warrant "conscience" as a translation of *sunesis* at *Orestes*, 396 or, in a passage I have not mentioned, Menander, fr. 632. In the case of the latter there is simply not enough evidence to determine whether it means "conscience."

request to Titus Flaminius to have Brachylles assassinated, he says, "[f]or no one is such a terrible witness or such a dread accuser as the conscience (*sunesis*) that dwells in all our hearts" (*Histories*, 18.43.13). Though it is slightly ambiguous whom Polybius is speaking of here, i.e., Titus Flaminius or his general Alexemenus, the meaning is clear: The decision to murder someone weighs heavily on one's moral conscience. A much later author in which this usage is attested is Herodian, the third-century CE Roman historian. While speaking of the atrocities that Emperor Caracalla commits, Herodian says, "[b]ecause he commits such actions, the Emperor is struck by the conscience (*suneseôs*) of his deeds" (*History of the Roman Empire*, 4.7.1–2). In both cases, *sunesis* covers both the understanding of the impetus behind one's actions and the implications of those actions, as well as the understanding of the ethical import of those actions accompanied by a certain emotional response (recall Orestes' grief-stricken state).

Before moving on to *sunaisthêsis*, I want to return to the Euripides passage (*Orestes*, 396a) in order to comment briefly on the verb *sunoida* and the abstract noun derived from it, *suneidêsis*. Surprisingly, Plotinus does not use either of these terms.[25] Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the significance of *suneidêsis* since it is likely the Greek term from which the modern English term "consciousness" is derived. For example, "consciousness" is derived from *conscientia* (from "cum" and "scire," literally "to know with"), which is the Latin loan translation of the Greek *suneidêsis* (from "*sun*" and "*oida*," also literally "to know with").[26]

Once again, then, Orestes says: "*hê sunesis hoti sunoida dein' eirgasmenos*" (*Orestes*, 396a), which I translate as "the understanding that I am aware of having committed dreadful deeds." Whereas *sunesis* covers the understanding Orestes acquires after realizing the implications and consequences of his actions, *sunoida* covers the awareness that he has of his own actions, i.e., of the fact that he is the author of those actions. Similar usages can be found in both Plato and Aristotle. In the famous passage from the *Apology* where Socrates proclaims that his wisdom consists in knowing that he does not know, he says, "I am aware (*sunoida emautô*) that I am wise neither in great things nor in small things" (*Apology*, 21b4–5). Similarly, while surveying the *endoxa* regarding happiness, Aristotle says, "[a]nd

[25] As Schwyzer states it, "[a]uch Plotin verwendet συνείδησις nicht, und überdies fehlt bei ihm auch das Verbum συνειδέναι, was im Hinblick auf sein häufiges Vorkommen bei Platon immerhin aufffällt" (1960: 355).

[26] Already by the time of the mid-first century BCE, Cicero uses *conscientia* in parallel ways with *suneidêsis*. See *De Finibus*, 1.16.51 and 2.22.71.

when they are aware of their own ignorance (*suneidotes d' heautois agnoian*), they admire anyone who speaks of some thing grand and beyond them" (*NE* I 1095a23–25). As early as the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, then, the Greeks utilized the verb *sunoida* to express the awareness of one's internal states. It isn't until Chrysippus, the third-century BCE Stoic philosopher, that the abstract noun *suneidêsis* is first attested.

The role of *suneidêsis* in the Stoic tradition is closely related to the doctrine of appropriation (*oikeiôsis*). Diogenes Laertius preserves a fragment of Chrysippus that makes this connection clear. While introducing the doctrine of appropriation, Diogenes quotes a passage from Chrysippus' book *On Ends*: "the dearest thing to every animal is its constitution and its awareness (*suneidêsin*) of this" (*SVF* III 178; *Diog. Laert*. VII 85).[27] This is an expansion of a key premise in the Stoic cradle argument. This is an argument that is directed toward refuting the Epicurean argument that an animal's primary impulse is pleasure. The Stoic argument states (1) the *telos* of a thing is whatever its primary impulse is toward, and (2) an animal's primary impulse is for self-preservation, from which it follows that (3) an animal's *telos* is to preserve itself. Chrysippus' fragment provides additional information to premise (2), namely, that awareness of this primary impulse is somehow key in attaining the *telos*. It will fall to later Stoics, such as Hierocles and Seneca, to articulate this more clearly by saying that an animal's primary impulse toward self-preservation is determined by its innate awareness of its physical constituents and their functions (*LS*, 57 B and C). Thus, *suneidêsis* plays a key role early on in Greek philosophy. Nonetheless, the term is conspicuously absent in Plotinus.

The earliest recorded usage of *sunaisthanomai*, the finite verb from which *sunaisthêsis* is derived, occurs in Aristotle. While speaking of the reasons why the blessed man needs friends, Aristotle says, "and if being alive is desirable, and especially so for the good, because for them existing is good, and pleasant (for concurrent perception (*sunaisthanomenoi*) of what is in itself good, in themselves, gives them pleasure); and if, as the good person is to himself, so he is to his friend (since the friend is another self): then just as for each his own existence is desirable, so his friend's is too, or to a similar degree" (*NE* IX 1170b3–9). In this passage, the addition of the prefix "sun" to "*aisthanomenoi*" denotes the act of

[27] I follow Graeser (1972: 127) and Long and Sedley (1987: vol. 2: 57A) in maintaining *suneidêsis* against Pohlenz's proposed emendation in favor of *sunaisthêsis*. See M. Pohlenz, "Grundfragen der Stoischen Philosophie," *Abh. Gött. Gess. [phil-hist Klasse]* III, xxvi (1940), p. 7.

concurrently perceiving one thing along with another. So, in this case, the blessed man, while perceiving that he exists, concurrently perceives that he is also good, which results in pleasure.[28]

The metaphorical meaning of "being aware" is first attested in the first century BCE with the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus. He says that "some are neither aware of their mistakes (*sunaisthanesthai tas hamartias*) nor do they discern what is beneficial" (*On Freedom of Speech*, fr. 1). Whereas in previous philosophers, especially Aristotle, *aisthanomai* covered both the subjective perception of one's internal states and the objective perception of the external world, Philodemus' addition of "*sun*" to "*aisthanesthai*" here captures the subjective perception of what goes on within oneself, as opposed to the objective perception of external objects in ordinary *aisthêsis*.[29] As Charles H. Kahn puts it, "in post-classical Greek (as in modern Greek), the subjective element in αἴσθησις is emphasized by the prefix συν: συναίσθησις" (1966: 73). Philodemus' usage becomes commonplace in subsequent philosophers, such as Galen, Philo, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and even Plotinus.[30] For example, Philo says, "When he had ended his anthems, a blend we may call them of religion and humanity, he began to pass over from mortal existence to life immortal and gradually became aware (*sunêsthaneto*) of the disuniting of the elements of which he was composted" (*On the Virtues*, 12.76). It is fitting that Philo uses *sunaisthanomai* here, since the separation of the soul from the body in the Platonic tradition is brought about by purifying the soul from the accretions of the body through a life of virtue. Such a purification is an inward affair.

The earliest recorded usage of *sunaisthêsis*, the abstract noun derived from *sunaisthanomai*, also occurs in Aristotle. While speaking of the difficulty of having many friends, Aristotle says, "[f]or it is possible to live with and share the perceptions (*sunaisthanesthai*) of many at the same time ... but since this is difficult, the activity of joint perception (*sunaisthêseôs*) must exist among fewer" (*EE*, 1245b21–24). Unlike the above usage, where "sun" denotes the act of perceiving one thing concurrently with another, here the addition of the prefix denotes the act of sharing perceptions with another person; e.g., those who are genuine

[28] J. O. Urmson's revised W.D. Ross translation translates *sunaisthanomenoi* as "consciousness." Not only is this anachronistic, since, as I will show, the verb does not express consciousness until at least a century later, but it also fails to capture the meaning of the passage. I much prefer Christopher Rowe's translation of *sunaisthanomenoi* as "concurrent perception."

[29] See, e.g., *NE* 1170a29–b1 and *De Anima*, 425b11–13.

[30] In Plotinus' case, see IV.4.24.21–23 and V.8.11.32.

friends share the same perceptions and perhaps the same viewpoints, as in the modern English phrase, "seeing eye to eye." Such a usage can still be found 500 years later in Alexander's Commentary on the *De sensu*, where he says, "[B]ut if this were the case there would not be any joint perception coming about" (*Comm.* 36,12).

In the period between Aristotle and Alexander the metaphorical meaning of "awareness" becomes commonplace. The development of these metaphorical meanings runs along two poles in the first few centuries CE. One pertains to the inner perception or feeling of one's bodily parts and their corresponding activities; the other pertains broadly to self-awareness, i.e., the awareness of one's psychic faculties and their corresponding activities, and of one's moral transgressions as they relate to the attainment of virtue. In either case, *sunaisthêsis* undergoes an internalization; i.e., it is used in reference to a subject synthesizing its own internal activities, whether they be perceptions, thoughts, or decisions resulting from the will.

The first pole begins in the late first century CE with the Stoic philosopher Hierocles. While speaking of the importance of sense-perception to the doctrine of *oikeiôsis*, he says, "the first proof of every animal's perceiving itself is the awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) of its parts and the functions for which they were given" (*El. Eth.* Col. 2,3; LS, 57 C). As I mentioned above, Hierocles maintains that the awareness of one's bodily parts and functions is the starting point of an animal's primary impulse toward self-preservation. In this passage, he offers the awareness that animals have of their parts and functions as proof that animals perceive themselves. It is the fact that animals instinctively utilize their "parts and functions" to preserve themselves – e.g., bulls fight with their horns and humans form friendships – that suggests that they have an immediate, intimate awareness of them.

Similar uses can be found in the medical writings of the second century CE. For example, Galen, the court physician to Marcus Aurelius, states that the tension that accompanies an inflamed limb becomes clear to the doctor, since he can feel it, as well as to the patient on account of his own "so-called awareness (*onomazomenês sunaisthêseôs*)" (*Therapeutic Methods*, XIII, 1). According to Schwyzer, "mit ὀνομαζομένης wird darauf hingewiesen, dass der Ausdruck schon ein Terminus technicus geworden war" (1960: 356). In other words, Galen's usage of *sunaisthêsis* to cover the internal perception of what is going on within one's body reflects the standard usage of his time. Other writers of this genre also use the term to describe the intimate perception that a person

has of her own body, such as the perception that a pregnant woman has of her pregnancy-related pains.[31]

The second pole begins earlier in the first century CE with Plutarch. He asks, "What argument, dear Sossius Seneco, will keep alive in a man the awareness (*sunaisthêsin*) that he is growing better in regard to virtue"? (*Progress in Virtue*, 2.75b). In this passage, Plutarch introduces the standard usage of the term found in middle Platonic and Stoic circles before Plotinus, namely, being aware of the subjective states that are relevant to the development of one's character. This usage finds its fullest, most systematic expression in the moral psychology of Epictetus. While speaking of the origin of philosophy, Epictetus writes, "[t]he beginning of philosophy, at least for those who enter upon it in the proper way and by the front door, is an awareness (*sunaisthêsis*) of our own weakness and incapacity with regard to necessary things" (*Discourses*, 2.11). That such a remark should come from Epictetus should not be surprising, since, for him, we should only concern ourselves with "what is up to us," namely, the judgments we make in relation to our impressions, desires etc., and not the external circumstances or goods that follow from them. Being aware of our errors, moral defects, and, in general, our ignorance of what is important is a preliminary step in the attainment of freedom and happiness.

[31] See Schwyzer (1960: 356).

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