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BEAUTY AS UNITY IN MULTIPLICITY IN PLOTINUS

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BEAUTY AS UNITY IN MULTIPLICITY IN PLOTINUS

KRÁSA JAKO UNITAS MULTIPLEX U PLÓTÍNA

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Statement of originality of the thesis:

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and that I wrote it independently, using only duly listed and properly cited sources and references; and that it has been submitted only to Faculty of Arts, Charles University and to Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Fribourg as agreed by both institutions in the Agreement on Bi-national Supervision of a Doctoral Thesis.

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Abstract

The thesis investigates Plotinus' concept of beauty. Chapter 1 focuses on two methodological issues: development in Plotinus' thought and topics of the concerned *Enneads*. Since Plotinus wrote two *Enneads* directly devoted to this topic which were numbered and named by Porphyry I.6 *On beauty* and V.8 *On intellectual beauty*, these two treatises are addressed first in the context of other relevant *Enneads* (chapters 2 and 3). The outcome of these chapters is that beauty is primarily to be found in Intellect and that it is closely linked with unity in multiplicity, so this topic is further investigated in more detail. Five mutually interconnected perspectives Plotinus assumes to describe the unity in multiplicity specific to the Intellect, are outlined. Two of them that are related to the nature of intellection and intelligible objects are discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The one related to Intellect's genesis is analysed throughout the thesis. Therefore, most of chapter 4 focuses on the remaining two perspectives which are connected with Intellect's hierarchical (*Ennead* VI.2) and structural (Ennead VI.6) unity in multiplicity. In chapter 5, *Ennead* VI.7 is analysed in order to deepen the concept of beauty and refine its relation to the Good, life and other predicates. The last chapter presents a systematic summary of the use of the predicate beauty on various ontological levels. Beauty is in the end understood as illuminated unity in multiplicity of the Intellect, i.e. primarily a characteristic of Intellect as a whole. The beauty of Intellect has its source in the Good and both the soul and the sensible participate in it, although each in its unique way. Since the Good is manifest in beauty of the Intellect and derivatively in that of soul and the sensible, it ennables the soul to ascend to the Good, but may simultaneously seduce it and cause it to erroneously understand beauty as the ultimate object of its desire.

Key words:

Plotinus, beauty, unity in multiplicity, ancient aesthetics, ancient philosophy

Abstrakt

Práce zkoumá Plótínovo pojetí krásy. První kapitola se zabývá dvěma metodologickými otázkami: vývoji v Plótínově myšlení a nastíněním problémů, kterým se věnují pojednávané *Enneady*. Jelikož Plótínos napsal dvě *Enneady* o kráse, které Porfyrios očísloval a pojmenoval I.6 *O kráse* a V.8 *O inteligibilní kráse*, věnují se kapitoly 2 a 3 těmto dvěma pojednáním v kontextu dalších relevantních *Ennead*. Výsledkem tohoto zkoumání je, že krása se primárně vypovídá o Intelektu a že je úzce spjata s jednotou v mnohosti. Tato problematika je proto dále prozkoumávána. Práce načrtává pět vzájemně se prolínajících perspektiv, z nichž se Plótínos snaží myslet jednotu mnohosti, která je vlastní Intelektu. Dvě z nich, které se týkají povahy intelekce a inteligibilií, jsou představeny v kapitolách 2 a 3. Perspektiva geneze Intelektu se prolíná napříč jednotlivými kapitolami. Většina kapitoly 4 se proto soustředí na zbývající dvě perspektivy spojené s hierarchicnkou (*Enneada* VI.2) a strukturální (*Enneada* VI.6) jednotou v mnohosti vlastní Intelektu. Za účelem prohloubení Plótínova pojetí krásy a zpřesnění jejího vztahu k Dobru, životu a některým dalším predikátům, pojednává kapitola 5 o *Enneadě* VI.7. Poslední kapitola představuje systematické shrnutí použití predikátu krásy na jednotlivých ontologických rovinách. Krása je nakonec pochopena jako osvícená jednota v mnohosti Intelektu, tj. primárně charakteristika Intelektu jako celku. Krása Intelektu má svůj zdroj v Dobru a jak duše, tak smyslově vnímatelné na ní každé svým způsobem participuje. Vzhledem k tomu, že se skrze krásu v Intelektu a odvozeně i v duši a smyslově vnímatelném manifestuje Dobro, představuje krása pro duši příležitost pro výstup k Dobru. Na druhou stranu ji ale také může svést a zapříčinit, že ji duše mylně považuje za to, po čem v posledku touží.

Klíčová slova:

Plótínos, krása, jednota v mnohosti, antická estetika, antická filozofie

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O.G.

Contents

1 Introduction

It is well known that Plotinus wrote two treatises on beauty. The first one I.6 *On Beauty*, is also the very first of the *Enneads* and belongs to the group of the first twenty-one treatises written before Porphyry's arrival to Rome. The second *Ennead* V.8 *On Intellectual Beauty*, belongs rather to his middle period (it is the 31st in chronological order) and it was very probably a part of a larger treatise, which Harder calls *die Großschrift* and which consists of *Enneads* III.8(30) *On Contemplation*, V.8(31) *On Intellectual Beauty*, V.5(32) *That the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellect and on the Good* and approaches its climax in II.9(33) *Against the Gnostics*.[1,2]

There does not seem to be a serious reason to presuppose any significant development in Plotinus' philosophy. Even if we leave aside the problematic nature of developmental theories from a hermeneutical perspective, we actually have evidence for Plotinus' consistency. Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus*, gives at least four reasons for adopting a unitary perspective. The first two arguments are rather indirect. Plotinus began to write in his fifties, i.e. in the time of his relative philosophical maturity. Second, "he worked out his train of thought from beginning to end in his own mind, and then, when he wrote it down, since he had set it all in order in his mind, he wrote as continuously as if he was copying from a book" and when he "had written anything he could never bear to go over it twice, even to read it through once was too much for him" (*VP* VIII.8-11 and 1-4, transl. Armstrong). This can easily cause incoherence in expression, although if true, it is testimony of an extremely concentrated mind. In my opinion, it indicates that when we encounter potentially conflicting passages, our first attempt to solve such

[1] Cf. Harder 1936. The considerable connection of the four concerned treatises has since been widely accepted, although some have raised worthy objections (cf. Wolters 1981). For a summary of the debate on this topic see Dufour 2006. The solution of this peculiar question is irrelevant for the purposes of this essay. I do not need to prove the unity of the *Großschrift*, since I focus only on the continuity of Plotinus' thought with regard to the problems he deals with in those treatises (see further below).

[2] An interesting supplement to the *Großschrift* is *Ennead* VI.6(34) *On numbers*. For the discussion of its connection with the *Großschrift* and its relevance for the concept of beauty, see further below and chapter 4.3.

controversy, should be to try to find the specific perspective from which both A and non-A are predicated. This can be further supported by the fact that the majority of what Plotinus writes about, cannot be expressed in a strict sense. That holds not only for the Good, which is beyond any predication, but also for Intellect, which is the intelligible structure our language only imitates, and for matter, since we can only have a sort of image of it that is already an image of an indefinite mass or a void, as Plotinus puts it in II.4 *On matter* (cf. II.4.11-12). This however, does not hinder Plotinus in his attempt to talk about them, and his terminological vagueness does not imply vagueness of his thinking, but rather the opposite. As such, Plotinus' writing is to a considerable extent the embodiment of the ideal of modern hermeneutics: the flow of his ideas is a constant attempt to express *verbum interius* and he is merciless towards his laboriously constructed images, constantly seeking to express himself more precisely.[3]

Third, the idea of development is not foreign to Porphyry, for he thinks that Plotinus' power (*dynamis*) varied in the *Enneads*: "The power of the treatises varies according to the period in which he wrote them, in early life, in his prime, or in his illness. The first twenty-one show a slighter capacity, not yet attaining to the dimensions of his full vigour. Those produced in his middle period reveal his power at its height: these twenty-four, except for the short ones, are of the highest perfection. The last nine were written when his power was already failing, and this is more apparent in the last four than in the five which precede them" (Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* VI.27-37, transl. Armstrong). Porphyry's judgement on the fluctuating strength of Plotinus' expression may be controversial, since for example, one of the consensually most highly regarded treatises VI.9 *On the One or the Good*, should belong to the period of his slight capacities. This however, is not my point here. Porphyry thinks that some things have changed during the sixteen years of Plotinus' production, i.e. his powers, but not his teachings. And finally the last argument, is the fact that Porphyry thought it possible to divide and rearrange his treatises in a rather brutal, and to some extent artificial way to the six *Enneads* ordered according to their topic – ethics, physics and metaphysics (the latter dealing with soul,

[3] Cf. e.g. Grondin 1991.

Intellect and the One).[4] This implies that although each *Ennead* contains treatises from different time periods, this should not cause any difficulties in Porphyry's view.

Is it then at all necessary to read both the *Enneads* on beauty separately? Yes and no. For reasons I have already at least partly discussed, we should on the one hand not be afraid to illuminate some passages with help of other *Enneads* even from different time periods, especially when we face problems that cannot be solved on the basis of the studied *Ennead* alone. On the other hand, we should take into consideration the following point of view. Porphyry also says that: "He took their subjects (scil. of his treatises; O.G.) from problems which came up from time to time in the meetings of the school" (*Vita Plotini* V.61-62, transl. Armstrong). This means that some *Enneads* may treat different problems, whereas other *Enneads* perhaps the same. We can thus use Porphyry's chronological ordering and try to see the *Enneads* from the perspective of the discussed problems.[5] What I mean by this, is that there are groups of *Enneads* in different time periods which deal with common or related topics. In this sense, there is indeed a development. It would be quite odd to suppose that Plotinus dealt with the same problems when writing his first and his thirty-first treatises.[6]

What are then the questions Plotinus poses in our two *Enneads* on beauty, and what did he aim for when writing them? It is relatively easy to define such context in the case of V.8, which (as already mentioned) is quite probably an integral part of the *Großschrift* culminating in II.9 *Against the Gnostics*, and supplemented by VI.6 *On numbers*, which completes the discussion of problems associated with Plotinus' concept of number started in V.5.4. In order to attack the Gnostics, Plotinus needs a firm ground, which *Enneads* III.8, V.8 and V.5 present with their conception of contemplation, beauty, Intellect and the Good. Note the way Plotinus poses

[4] See the critical comments on Porphyry's arrangement of the *Enneads* of for example, Armstrong, Gerson or O'Meara (Armstrong 1967, Gerson 2010, O'Meara 1993). On the other hand, cf. an interesting attempt by Slaveva-Griffin (2008) to explain Porphyry's course of action as expressing an intrinsic tendency of Plotinus' philosophy. She argues that "just as the substantial number organises the intelligible realm as many-in-one, so does its material image, the monadic number, arrange the multiplicity of the treatises into *kosmos*, which is turned inward towards its intelligible essence" (p. 282).

[5] Cf. a similar observation by Hadot (1986, p. 232).

[6] Cf. similar statements by Armstrong (in the *Preface* to his translation of the *Enneads*, p. VII), Bussanich (1985, p. 12-14) or Atkinson (1983, p. X).

questions and introduces the themes of these treatises. *Ennead* III.8 *On contemplation* starts like this: "Suppose we said, playing at first before we set out to be serious, that all things aspire to contemplation, and direct their gaze to this end – not only rational but irrational living things, and the power of growth in plants, and the earth which brings them forth – and that all attain to it as far as possible for them in their natural state, but different things contemplate and attain their end in different ways, some truly, and some only having an imitation and image of this true end – could anyone endure the oddity of this line of thought?" (III.8.1.1-8, transl. Armstrong). Similarly in V.8 the topic is presented in the following way: "Since we maintain that the man who has entered into contemplation of the intelligible world and understood the beauty of the true Intellect will be able also to bring into his mind its Father which is beyond Intellect, let us try to see and to say to ourselves, as far as it is possible to say such things, how it is possible for anyone to contemplate the beauty of Intellect and of that higher world" (V.8.1.1-6, transl. Armstrong). And V.5, which follows immediately after V.8 and represents another way to "clear understanding of the intelligible region" (V.8.13.22-24, transl. Armstrong) starts with the question as to know whether anyone could say "that Intellect, the true and real Intellect, will ever be in error and believe the unreal?" (V.5.1.1-2, transl. Armstrong).

We can see that in all these cases Plotinus tries to elaborate what is implied by premises like "everything aspires to contemplation", "contemplation of Intellect is the contemplation of beauty", "Intellect can never be in error" or "Intellect is a second god". What he is aiming at, is the elaboration of the continuity of different ontological levels (particularly in III.8), their corresponding continuous beauty (particularly in V.8) and a proper understanding of Intellect, not only with respect to its own object of thought but also to its source, the Good (particularly in V.5).[7] He then uses the concept of continuity, beauty and a definite and defined number of hypostases to attack the Gnostics who are wrong (besides other things) precisely about these. They despise the bodily world since they do not understand that it is an image of the intelligible (cf. II.9.3-4, II.9.8, II.9.13). Accordingly, they do not

[7] Cf. Kalligas 2000.

understand its beauty (II.9.5, II.9.7-8, II.9.16-17), and they also pointlessly multiply the number of ontological levels, induce evil in Intellect because they do not understand what it is and how it generates (cf. II.9.1-4, II.9.11-12).

Accordingly, Plotinus' tone changes in II.9 which swarms with derisory questions[8] like these, to name at least some: "…if (…) it (scil. the soul; O.G.) made the world as the result of a moral failure (…) when did it fail? (…) If it began to fail, why did it not begin before? (…) If it forgot them (scil. the intelligible realities; O.G.), how is it the craftsman of the world? (…) Why, if it had any memory at all, did it not want to ascend there? For whatever advantage did it think was going to result for it from making the universe? (…) And when, too, is it going to destroy it? For if it was sorry it had made it, what was it waiting for? (…) What other fairer image of the intelligible world could there be? (…) What sphere could be more exact or more dignified or better ordered in this circuit [than the sphere of this universe] after the self-enclosed circle there of the intelligible universe?" (II.9.4.1-32, transl. Armstrong).

His many questions can be summarised into: How could they bring forward proofs and not only make arbitrary, arrogant assertions? (cf. II.9.10) or even better: Who, if he has not gone out of his mind, could tolerate such ideas? (cf. II.9.8). We can see that Plotinus' strategy here is to point out impossible alterations of the Gnostic teachings as compared to his own conception developed in *Enneads* III.8, V.8 and V.5. This can be demonstrated even in the case of beauty, my primary concern, since Plotinus raises questions like this: "If someone who sees beauty excellently represented in a face is carried to that higher world, will anyone be so sluggish in his mind and so immovable that when he sees all the beauties in the world of sense, all its good proportion and the mighty excellence of its order, and the splendour of forms which is manifested in the stars, for all their remoteness, he will not thereupon think, seized with reverence, ´What wonders, and from what

[8] Armstrong aptly summarises Plotinus' probable attitude towards the Gnostics as follows: "They despise and revile the ancient Platonic teaching and claim to have a new and superior wisdom of their own: but in fact anything that is true in their teaching comes from Plato, and all they have done themselves is to add senseless complications and pervert the true traditional doctrine into a melodramatic, superstitious fantasy designed to feed their own delusions of grandeur." See his *Introductory Note* to *Ennead* II.9 in his translation of Plotinus.

source?´" (II.9.16.48-55, transl. Armstrong). Plotinus pushes forward two crucial points, i.e. the fact, that beauty may inspire an enquiry into its own source (that is an ascent to a higher ontological level), and that this world is beautiful because it is an image of the intelligible cosmos, the Intellect. The point of course, is to demonstrate that the sensible world is dominated by one principle, the Good, manifesting itself on different levels as beauty, and that it is not created by and imbued with evil forces (like the demiurge Yaldabaoth or some other in other versions of Gnosticism). In this sense Plotinus proceeds from Intellect downwards to its image, since it is only beautiful in as much as it is precisely an image of Intellect.

The bundle of the first twenty-one treatises is different both in tone and in aim, and asks different questions. Ontological considerations which are presupposed and elaborated in their implications in the *Großschrift* are presented here as something which our soul must first reach and comprehend. Plotinus concentrates on persuading his reader about the existence of the basic principles of his universe and on introducing his or her soul to the different ontological levels. Moreover, he explicitly poses the question how to aspire to these. Let us listen again to some of the questions of these treatises (all in Armstrong's translation and ordered by me in an ascending manner): “What is this one matter which is also continuous and without quality?” (II.4.8.1-2), “What is it which makes us imagine that bodies are beautiful and attracts our hearing to sounds because of their beauty?” (I.6.1.18-19), “And how are all the things which depend on soul beautiful?” (I.6.1.10-11), “What nature does this (scil. the soul; O.G.) have?” (IV.7.2.1), “How could one reach it (scil. the realm of the intelligible; O.G.)?” (V.9.2.1-2), “How will he (scil. someone who is by nature a lover and truly disposed to philosophy from the beginning; O.G.) ascend to it, and where will his power come from?” (V.9.2.10-11), “Why, then, must we go on up when we have reached the level of soul, and not suppose that it is the first reality?” (V.9.4.1-2), “Has the intelligible, then, virtues?” (I.2.1.15-16), “What is virtue?” (I.2.2.10-11), “How does the Intellect see, and whom does it see? And how did it come into existence at all and arise from the One so as to be able to see?” (V.1.6.1-2), “What then are the things in the one Intellect?” (V.9.9.1), “Where did the intelligible matter come from, from where did it get its being?” (II.4.2.9-10),

“Whence, then, does this (scil. Intellect; O.G.) come?” (V.4.1.22), “How does it come from the First?” (V.4.1.24), “What could the One be, and what nature could it have?” (VI.9.3.1), “But why is the generator not Intellect?” (V.4.2.4), “In what sense, then, do we call it one, and how are we to fit it into our thought?” (VI.9.6.1-2), “How then do all things come from the One?” (V.2.1.3-5).

Of course one may rightly point out that the unifying principle of the first twenty-one treatises is absolutely arbitrary. They were written before Porphyry's arrival to Rome. In this sense, Hadot proposes six subgroups in them, the first dealing with soul, the second with problems of Platonic theory of forms and Aristotle's conception of the Intellect, the third dealing with the Good and the ascent to it, the fourth consisting of sole *Ennead* II.4 devoted to matter, and the sixth group actually comprises of what is left, *Enneads* III.1 and II.6.[9] I have no substantial objections to that and I do not want to press my point too hard and try to find a unique characteristic of precisely the first twenty-one treatises and no other. However, it does seem to make sense to presuppose, and the questions quoted above may support this, that when one starts to record one's doctrines, one begins with some sort of introduction to its keystones. In case of Plotinus this mainly means to the three hypostases. However, the hypostases are not lifeless presuppositions in our minds we derive from reality, which so to say must exist so that we can explain our experience. On the contrary, they are something real and living which our soul may encounter and only when we experience this contact, can we truly understand what Plotinus is trying to say, or at least that is his own vision. For this reason the question of ascent, its motivation and its range or scope plays a crucial role in such introductory writings. Plotinus himself says where we should start: “We ought to consider this first. What is this principle which is present in bodies (scil. that makes them beautiful; O.G.)? What is it that attracts the gaze of those who look at something and turns and draws them to it and makes them enjoy the sight? If we find this, perhaps we can use it as a stepping-stone and get a sight of the rest” (I.6.1.17-21, transl. Armstrong, my modification of the word order).

[9] Cf. Hadot 1993, section *Analytic bibliography*.

I think that this is precisely the context of *Ennead* I.6. Beauty constitutes in fact a perfect stepping-stone to get a sight of the rest. It is something one knows from the sensible world, something which can move our soul and which with a certain guidance can be used to heave us to its source and perhaps even to *the Source*. Of course Plotinus knew all of this already from Plato and perhaps that is the reason why *Ennead* I.6 was written as the very first. To put it simply, if in the *Großschrift* Plotinus proceeds downwards from the intelligible in order to demonstrate the beauty of the sensible world as its image, in *Ennead* I.6 and the surrounding introductory treatises, the course is the other way around. We should therefore in our enquiry take a lesson from this and concentrate first on *Ennead* I.6 because we too need first to get a sight of the rest while *Ennead* V.8 is addressed to a "man who has entered into contemplation of the intelligible world and understood the beauty of the true Intellect" (V.8.1.1-3, transl. Armstrong).

Accordingly, I shall start in chapter 2 with *Ennead* I.6 where I will be looking for the outlines of the doctrine. Chapter 3 deals then with *Ennead* V.8, which is of use to specify Plotinus' concept of beauty in more detail. In these two chapters I investigate the basic outlines of Plotinus' doctrine, which seems natural because these two *Enneads* are consensually considered to enquire into this topic and in fact entitled (by Porphyry of course) *On (Intellectual) beauty*. Since the outcome of both these chapters is that beauty is primarily to be found in the Intellect and that it is closely linked with unity in multiplicity, this topic will have to be investigated in more detail. Therefore, by the end of chapter 3, I sketch five mutually interconnected perspectives I was able to find in the *Enneads*, which Plotinus assumes to describe the unity in multiplicity specific to the Intellect. Two of them that are related to the nature of intellection and intelligible objects are at least partially sketched out in chapters 2 and 3. The one related to Intellect's genesis is analysed throughout chapters 3, 4 and 5. Therefore, most of the chapter 4 focuses on the remaining two perspectives, which are connected with Intellect's hierarchical and structural unity in multiplicity.

The first perspective, dealt with in part 4.1, is that of the highest kinds as presented in *Ennead* VI.2 *On the kinds of being II*, where Plotinus also considers the

one in Intellect and beauty as candidates for the highest kinds. *Ennead* VI.2 belongs to the same period as the *Großschrift*, and is itself also a part of a larger treatise devoted to the highest kinds, i.e. of *Enneads* VI.1(42), VI.2(43) and VI.3(44). *Ennead* VI.1 engages in a polemic against Peripatetic (VI.1.1-24) and Stoic (VI.1.25-30) conception of categories and Plotinus' attitude here is to a certain extent similar to that of *Ennead* II.9. In both cases he attacks a rival conception, in II.9 various claims of the Gnostics, and in VI.1 that of the highest kinds or categories as advocated by Aristotle and his school or by the Stoa. Consequently, the questions he asks here are not used as means to explore an unknown field or to give precision to preliminary accounts, but are raised to point out ambiguities of the opposed theories or even their nonsensicality.[10] And similarly to II.9, Plotinus does this in a more (in case of Stoic doctrines) or less (mainly in case of Peripatetic ones) derisory way. Surprisingly, the ground from which he attacks them lacks his otherwise usual open-mindedness and sense of the author's intention, and for this reason *Ennead* VI.1 has been depreciated by some.[11] In VI.2, Plotinus' attitude is different. He himself declares that "…the next thing would be to say how these things look to us, trying to lead back our own thoughts to the thought of Plato" (VI.2.1.4-5, transl. Armstrong). We encounter here Plotinus the exegete, developing a genuinely Platonic conception of the highest kinds.[12] This *Ennead* contains nearly three times less questions than VI.1 and nearly two times less than VI.3[13] and their tone is again an exploratory one, where asking questions assists in being more specific and in advancing the argument. *Ennead* VI.3 stands then somewhere in between the two previous: it does to some extent attack Aristotle's doctrine of categories, but only in order to adapt it for the sensible world as an image of the intelligible one. Both the tone and the questions raised are in this sense less hostile as compared to VI.1.

[10] Cf. for example VI.1.20-21 on affection, which consist almost solely of such questions.

[11] E.g. Armstrong (cf. his *Introductory note* to *Enneads* VI.1-3 in his translation of Plotinus) or Atkinson (1983).

[12] As Atkinson points out with reference to other places in the *Enneads* and Plato's *Soph*. 254d4ff and *Parm*. 145e7ff. See Atkinson 1983, p. 96.

[13] Or to be more precise, one has to take into account the length of each treatise, so that number of questions per line is more accurate. There are nearly two times less questions per line in VI.2 than VI.1 and around one fifth less questions per line in VI.2 as compared to VI.3.

Part 4.2 develops the second important perspective for the descriprion of unity and multiplicity of Intellect: that of number dealt with particularly in VI.6(34) *On numbers*, a sort of appendix to the *Großschrift*. As already noted, in *Ennead* V.5.4 Plotinus postpones a thorough discussion of different problems associated with his concept of number until later, i.e. until *Ennead* VI.6. Here he introduces his notion of substantial number (*ūsiōdēs arithmos*) and thoroughly discusses its relation to Intellect and to the primary kinds. Plotinus presents a systematic defence of the Platonic concept of *true numbers* especially against Aristotle's criticism, but at the same time he develops his own original version of it in dialogue with the Middle Platonists and Neopythagoreans.[14]

Correspondingly, his way of raising questions and determining the problems to be discussed, changes in VI.6 once again. Having discussed the question "Is multiplicity a falling away from the One, and infinity a total falling away because it is an innumerable multiplicity and for this reason is evil in so far as it is infinity, and are we evil when we are multiplicity?" (VI.6.1.1-4, transl. Armstrong) Plotinus turns to the main topic of the treatise: "…we must now consider how the numbers are in the intelligible…" (VI.6.4.1-2, transl. Armstrong) and a swarm of exploratory questions follow (all in Armstrong's translation): "What then is the nature of numbers?" (VI.6.5.1), "Is it an accompaniment of each substance and something observed in it?" (VI.6.5.1-4), "But how is there a dyad and a triad, and how are all unified, and how could such and such number be brought together into one?" (VI.6.5.4-6), "But if the one itself and the decad itself exist without the things, and then the intelligible things, after being what they are, are going to be, some of them henads and some of them dyads or triads, what would be their nature, and how would it come into existence?" (VI.6.6.1-4), "The starting-point of our investigation is: can number exist by itself, or must the two be observed in two things, and the three likewise? And indeed, also the one which is among numbers?" (VI.6.9.5-8), "Is not Being, then, unified number, and the beings number unfolded, and Intellect number moving in itself, and the Living Being inclusive number?" (VI.6.9.29-32), "What, then, is the proper cause of number?" (VI.6.14.27-28), "But in what way is

[14] Cf. Slaveva-Griffin 2009.

the number in you?" (VI.6.16.37), "What then is the line there in the intelligible, and where?" (VI.6.17.16).

In this sense, the reader again assumes the role of an explorer, as in the bundle of the first twenty-one treatises. However, *Ennead* VI.6 differs from these earlier treatises in the sense of not ascending from bodies up to the Good. It is rather already situated on the intricate roads of reflections on unity, number and multiplicity in the intelligible. In this sense, although *Ennead* VI.6 is mentioned in the *Großschrift* as a treatise to follow, it inquires to a considerable extent into its own subject matter and abandons the focus on the controversy with the Gnostics, which is intrinsic to the *Enneads* of the *Großschrift* (cf. Corrigan 2005, p. 202). Nevertheless, a proper understanding of unity and multiplicity is necessary for grasping beauty in the Platonic way, and that is certainly why relatively a lot of space is more or less explicitly devoted to this topic here.

Having considered Intellect's hierarchical and structural unity in multiplicity and its relation to the question of beauty, I then turn in chapter 5 to *Ennead* VI.7(38) *How the Multitude of the Forms came into Being and on the Good.* This treatise is relevant to the question of beauty not only because of the famous chapters 32 and 33 which deal with the relation of beauty to the Good. *Ennead* VI.7 also develops several motives encountered already in previous chapters of this thesis in a more complex manner, like that of life, light, genetic unity and multiplicity of Intellect and of the impact of beauty on the soul. However, this treatise is a very complex one consisting of several only loosely connected parts.[15] Pierre Hadot (cf. 1987, p. 20-26 and 76-81) divides the treatise into six parts each dealing with a Platonic question and commenting on Plato's dialogues: the first one (VI.7.1-7) is devoted to the interpretation of *Tim.* 45b3, the second (VI.7.8-14) elaborates on the contents of Intellect taking into account the relevant passages from *Parm.* (esp. 130a-d), the third part (VI.7.15-24.4) develops the question of the resemblance to the Good on the grounds of *Rep.* 509a, the fourth (VI.7.24.4-30.30) considers different accounts of the good in the perspective of *Phileb.* and *Rep.*, the fifth part (VI.7.30.29-35.45)

[15] Siegmann's interpretation (cf. 1990) of the treatise as being simply on the Good (reflected in his original translation of the title of VI.7: Wie kam die Vielheit der Ideen zustande? Vom Guten!) is in this sense not persuasive. For at least chapters 1-14 do not fit in this scheme very well.

elaborates on the relation of beauty and the Good as sketched out in *Phileb.* (64e), *Phdr.* (250c-256e) and *Symp.* (211b-212c), and the last part (VI.7.36-42) proves that the Good does not think, which is according to Plotinus ushered in *Rep.* 505a, 519c and *Parm.* 142a. The composition of the treatise, as Hadot puts it (1987, p. 21), is a kind of musical, where these themes reappear in slightly different forms throughout the whole work. Nevertheless, this is not to say that there is a preexisting composition of such a musical piece, because as Plotinus himself admits (cf. VI.7.7.17-18), he gets sometimes carried away by some of the discussed topics (cf. also Hadot 1987, p 16). The main tone of VI.7 is therefore exegetical (as in VI.2) but the multilayered nature of the treatise accounts for the fact that Plotinus shows different faces in different parts, e.g. that of a teacher lending an ear to his doubting students in the first two parts (VI.7.1-14, cf. also similar observation by Armstrong in his *Introductory Note* to *Ennead* VI.7 in his translation of Plotinus), or that of a rutheless opponent in the fouth and sixth, where he enters the discussion with Aristotle and other schools.

The function of the questions Plotinus raises in the text changes accordingly, so that to use the same examples, most of those of the first two parts sound rather like the questions of a doubting student, e.g. these (all in Armstrong's translation): “For why should there be horns for defence there?” (VI.7.10.1-2), “Does then the world there have everything that is here?” (VI.7.11.3-4), “How then are there plants there?” (VI.7.11.6), “And how does fire live?” (VI.7.11.6-7), “And how does earth?” (VI.7.11.7), “And how in general can these things here be there in the intelligible?” (VI.7.11.8).[16] On the other hand, the questions of the fourth and sixth part are rather sharp, e.g. these (both in Armstrong's translation): “Well then, if evil acquired a perception of itself, would it be satisfied with itself?” (VI.7.28.17-18), “Then, if it is going to think, it will not presumably think itself alone, if it is going to think at all; for why will it not think all things? Will it not be able to?” (VI.7.39.10-12).[17] Consequently, different parts of *Ennead* VI.7 seem to address different questions with different purposes, and it therefore requires a specifically close

[16] Similar questions also occur in VI.7.1.25-27, VI.7.3.14-15, VI.7.3.22-29, VI.7.4.37-38, VI.7.8.4-5, VI.7.9.4-5, VI.7.9.15-16, and VI.7.11.18.

[17] Similar questions also occur in VI.7.28.16-17, VI.7.28.18-19, VI.7.29.24-25, and VI.7.37.7-8.

reading with respect to the changing context in order to be able to understand its claims correctly.

The last part of my thesis then summarises and relates the outcomes of previous chapters and tries to answer the question what is the status of beauty on the level of sensually perceptibles (chapter 6.1), that of soul (chapter 6.2), in Intellect (chapter 6.3) and in what sense can the Good be said to be beautiful (chapter 6.4). Chapter 6.3 also tries to distinguish beauty from several other predicates that characterize the Intellect such as life, being and the rest of the highest kinds, the one in Intellect, multiplicity, number, intellection, active actuality and eternity, knowledge and wisdom, and the virtues. The last part (chapter 6.5) derives several characteristics of beauty that permeate its use on different ontological levels.

2 Beauty as a stepping stone (*Ennead* I.6)

2.1 The phenomenal field of beauty and the theory of symmetry (I.6.1)

Plotinus begins with the examination of the field of the beautiful, i.e. what beauty is predicated about. Many call things perceived by sight (*en opsei*) or hearing (*en akoais*) beautiful but those who advance upwards, i.e. to soul, also call ways of life (*epitēdeumata*), actions (*praxeis*), character (*hexeis*), intellectual activities (*epistēmai*) and virtue beautiful (*to tōn aretōn*; cf. I.6.1.1-6).[18] If there is an even higher beauty it will reveal itself later (cf. I.6.1.6). With regard to the reader-beginner (cf. a similar observation by Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.6.7.1), Plotinus wants to stay at the sensual level a bit longer. Two possibly distinct fields of predication, sensible world and soul, also allow Plotinus to consider different options for the sought beauty. There may be either a common or a distinct cause in the case of sensually perceptibles and in that of the soul, we shall see later about that, but what is clear is that it itself must be some sort of beauty which beautiful things participate in (cf. I.6.1.12-14). In passing, Plotinus also sketches a distinction between two types of beings, those that only participate in beauty and those that are themselves beautiful like virtue (*aretēs hē physis*[19]; cf. I.6.1.14). The difference should lie in the fact that in the case of participating things, we can distinguish their being bodies on the one hand, and their being beautiful on the other, i.e. something can for example be a table but it does not have to be beautiful (cf. I.6.1.14-16). We can surmise that in the case of things beautiful by themselves, one could not find a non-beautiful specimen since the very being of the thing is linked with beauty.

In order to keep the question open, Plotinus also attacks the answer which a contemporary reader probably had in mind. Beauty is not a good proportion of the parts to each other and to the whole (*symmetria tōn merōn pros allēla kai pros to holon*) with the addition of good colour (*euchroia*), i.e. being well-proportioned (*symmetros*) and measured (*memetrēmenos*), as perhaps the Stoics say (cf. I.6.1.20-

[18] An obvious reference to Plato's *Symp.* 209e6-212a8.
[19] Cf. Kalligas' commentary (2014) to the translation of *physis* ad. loc.

25).[20] Plotinus argues against this on different levels and suggests that symmetry is rather an epiphenomenon of beauty than its cause (cf. Smith 2016, com. ad I.6.1.21-54 and Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.6.1.20-25). First, he points out phenomena that are not explained by this theory because they are simple and do not consist of visible, well-proportioned parts, like a beautiful colour, light, gold,[21] lightning, sound or rather surprisingly, the stars[22] (cf. I.6.1.30-36). Moreover, the same thing may sometimes appear beautiful and sometimes not, even though it has the same proportion, like a beautiful face (cf. I.6.1.37-40) that is in the *Ennead* VI.7.22 said to be ugly as a corpse (cf. part. 5.4). The advocates of the symmetry conception also encounter problems in case of psychic or rather more generally intelligible phenomena, where it is not obvious what parts should be well proportioned with respect to which whole, for example in the case of beautiful ways of life (cf. I.6.1.40-45). But most important here is Plotinus' refusal of beauty as an attribute of the whole which consists of not beautiful parts (cf. I.6.1.26-30). Even in this case we see that he draws inspiration from Plato, who explicitly considers this question by the end of *Hipp. Maj.* where Socrates proposes the definition *pleasure through sight and hearing*.[23] Similarly to Plato, Plotinus too advocates a distributive notion of beauty, i.e. he thinks that if the whole is beautiful, so must be its parts.[24] Therefore, it is absurd to call beautiful two bad statements which are in accord, because a beautiful thing cannot consist of ugly parts (cf. I.6.1.45-49).

It seems to me that this is in fact the most imporatnt point for Plotinus because it is precisely distributive nature of beauty that accounts for the fact that symmetry cannot be the cause of beauty, and rather only accompanies it. The notion of symmetry assumes that the parts can constitute a higher whole, that is, a structure

[20] Cf. Johannes Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.62.15-63.5 (=*SVF* III.278), Galen, *PHP* 5.2.49-3.1 (=*SVF* II.841), DL 7.99-100, Cicero *N.D.* 2.15. However, Plotinus might also refer to Plato's *Tim*. 87c4-d8, *Phlb*. 64e5-7, *Symp*. 196a4-8 and Aristotle's *Met*. M 3, 1078a36-b1 or *Top*. III 1, 116b21-22. For the historical background of the notion of beauty as symmetry see Schmitt 2007.

[21] The references might be again to Plato's *Phlb*. 51b-d, *Leg*. VII 812d and *Hipp. Maj*. 289e.

[22] An interesting interpretation is suggested by Smith (2016, com. ad I.6.1.34), who claims that Plotinus might be referring to Venus which appears at first alone in the sky. Otherwise, this example makes little sense. Iozzia (2015, p. 59-60) correctly notices that all the examples share the connection with light, which will play a crucial role in Plotinus' understanding of beauty (cf. chapter 5), but even so, stars are all but simple, so this does not explain the role of this example in the argument.

[23] Cf. Plato, *Hipp. Maj*. 297d9-304a4.

[24] Cf. Gál 2012.

possessing a quality which the parts do not have. Plotinus, on the contrary, will put forward a notion of beauty as a unifying form, which must unite existing parts, that is, parts that participate in a form and are therefore beautiful.[25] As we shall see, Plotinus will identify the extent to which such distribution is successful within a given body, with domination of the form over matter in a body (cf. chapter 2.2). The paradigm of the completely successful distribution of form and beauty of the whole to each part, is of course the Intellect itself, and therefore Plotinus asks how the symmetry theory could explain its beauty (cf. I.6.1.54).

2.2 Beauty as participation in form, distributive notion of beauty (I.6.2)

The question of the beauty of Intellect is nevertheless too far away. Plotinus still wants to remain on the level of sensually perceptibles. What is the beauty here? It is something that our soul recognizes at first glance as something akin to it (*syngenēs*; cf. also the discussion of good as *oikeion* in VI.7.27 in chapter 5.5) since they both come from the same source, the higher kind of reality or Intellect, which the soul is reminded of by beauty.[26] This allows Plotinus to recall once again *Symp.* (206d): the soul recognises and welcomes beauty and adapts itself to it, but when it encounters ugliness, it shrinks back and rejects it and turns away from it and is out of tune and alienated from it (cf. I.6.2.1-11). Plotinus also uses the tension between beauty and ugliness for a closer description of participation. Beautiful is in fact that which receives form, or to speak more accurately that which shares in a formative principle (*logos*) coming from the divine forms. By participating in a form, a thing becomes united and ordered in as much as the formative principle dominates in matter (cf. I.6.2.13-18).[27] Or as Plotinus puts it in VI.9, beauty is there, "where the nature of the one holds the parts together" (VI.9.1.15-16, transl. Armstrong). Ugly

[25] That is why I consider Anton's (1964), Smith's (2016) and Kalligas' (2014) reconstructions of Plotinus' argument and the assessment of its validity to be wanting, because they focus on the simplicity argument and fail to see the point of the distributive account of beauty. The point of Plotinus' argument has been well noted by Vassilopolou (2014, p. 492) and to a certain extent also by Kuisma (2003, p. 163-165).

[26] The soul is in fact rather reminded of its own origin in Intellect, because it is reminded of beauty itself, i.e of Intellect, as we shall see later. For the discussion of Plotinus' understanding of *anamnēsis* in relation to that of Plato and Saint Augustine cf. Karfíková 2015, esp. p. 32-42.

[27] As Beierwaltes (1986, p. 299) rightly points out, the form at stake here is not an external one, the shape of the object so to say, but form as an inner structural and intelligible principle of a thing.

on the other hand, is what does not share in form or formative principle at all (the matter itself), or what is not completely dominated by it (cf. I.6.2.13-18). Such definition of beauty also explains the former rejection of the non-distributive notion of beauty. If beauty equals participation in a form which makes a thing one, it must consist of beautiful parts as far as they are parts, i.e. as far as each of them is one. As Plotinus puts it again in VI.9 "it is by the one that all beings are beings" (VI.9.1.1, transl. Armstrong). If a formative principle dominates in a body, it unites its parts and in order to do so, those parts must themselves become united. Beauty is in this sense distributed from the whole of a body to its parts, if a formative principle seizes this body (cf. I.6.2.18-27).

At the same time we come to a better understanding of the distinction between things beautiful by participation and those by nature. The latter must be the forms themselves which are beautiful simply by their being what they are, i.e. by being unified multiplicity (cf. chapter 3.5). However, it is not yet clear how the forms are unified multiplicity.[28] Moreover, it is important to notice that Plotinus does not say here that beauty is caused by the form of beauty as Plato does, but just by a form.[29] Both these issues relate to Plotinus' specific notion of the Intellect where each form is all the others and the whole of them.[30]

It seems to be useful at this moment to outline this concept here, although only with respect to the problem we have just encountered, i.e. how a formative principle is present in a body so that it can either dominate it and make it beautiful, or fail to do so. The most elaborated text on this topic is *Ennead* VI.5(23) *On the presence of being, one and the same, everywhere as a whole II*. Plotinus here

[28] The identification of beauty with participation in form, i.e. with being unified multiplicity has been noticed by Lee 2004, p. 79, Kuisma 2003, p. 65-73, Leinkauf 2007, p. 89-90, Halfwassen 2003, p. 88-89 and 2007, p. 46.

[29] But there are passages in the *Enneads* (cf. VI.6.1, VI.6.8, VI.6.14 and VI.3.12), which suggest that beauty is a particular form or which even explicitly say so. For a discussion of this topic see chapter 4.2.2. I consider those interpreters that claim that there is a form of beauty in Plotinus wrong, especially if they base their claim on I.6, which simply does not say so. It is nevertheless a widespread error: cf. Rist (1967, p. 62-63), Anton (1967/68, p. 92), D'Ancona Costa (1996), Alexandrakis (1997) and Klitenic Wear (2017, p. 1-2, but cf. her com. ad I.6.5.10 and even more oddly her com. ad I.6.6.23-24). Also some of Beierwaltes' expressions (2013, p. 8) seem to suggest this, although in other texts, he is more careful (cf. 2011, p. 244-245). The opposite is maintained by Smith (2016, p. 24-25), Tomulet (2014), Kalligas (2014, p. 194), Karfík (2014a), Omtzigt (2012, p. 78-79), Gerson (2010, p. 183, footnote 22), O'Meara (1993, o. 91) or Schubert (1973, p. 69).

[30] For a detailed analysis of Intellect in Plotinus see especially Emilsson 2007.

criticizes the illumination simile he himself often uses, as empty words if we think it means that the forms are "placed separately on one side and matter a long way off on the other and then illumination comes to matter from somewhere up there (…) and the Idea is reflected in matter as if in water" (VI.5.8.4-6 … 16-17, transl. Armstrong). The correct interpretation of illumination should lie in two points. That which illuminates abides like an archetype in itself, and the illuminated which is an image of the archetype is held separate from it by illumination (cf. VI.5.8.12-15). Whatever participates, loves the archetype as something beautiful that it cannot assimilate as such, but is able only to lay with it (*parakeimai*), i.e. to be in its presence, and so gets a share in it (cf. VI.5.10.1-11). Plotinus compares this presence of the one in many (without this one becoming many) to sharing a thought which is not one for me and other for others, but the same for everyone (cf. VI.5.10.11-23). And this comparison is further illustrated with another brilliant simile: to think that people sharing a thought have different thoughts, is similar to thinking that if we touch the same thing one finger after the other, every finger touches a different thing (cf. VI.5.10.24-26). Moreover, we must understand that a form is not only present in many, abiding in itself, but it is present as a whole for all. Such is the case of life in a living being and in the same way all souls are one (cf. VI.5.9.10-13). The forms themselves are a whole, nevertheless not one composed of parts: the Intellect is many by its powers (*dynameis*; cf. VI.5.9 and 12).

Why then is there not everything everywhere? Plotinus answers this question on two levels. First, this is caused by the incapacity of the recipient (*adynamia tū hypokeimenū*; cf. VI.5.11.31). It means that not all matter is equally disposed to receive a certain form, depending on what forms it has already received (cf. VI.5.11.35-36). Even the prime matter is primarily adapted for the primary kinds of bodily forms (cf. V.5.11.36-38). It is a kind of spatial indefiniteness which we always imagine as void. This void receives certain size (*megethos*) and quality (*poiotēs*) and so becomes a mass (*onkos*). It may receive other forms only afterwards (cf. II.4.11-12). The second reason why everything is not everywhere is that not every matter participates in all forms, but different powers of the whole of the forms become active in different bodies (cf. VI.5.11.36).

How then is this specification useful for our purposes? We should now be able to have a better understanding of how a thing is ugly, i.e. how a formative principle may not dominate its matter. It can happen in cases where a formative principle tries to dominate a body that previously received some other formative principle which is not (in a body) compatible with the new one. But this is perhaps not the only possibility. We have already encountered the reference to a face, which is ugly as a corpse (cf. I.6.1 and VI.7.22). Here, it is more likely that something is missing, i.e. life, which the soul formerly brought, and does not do so anymore. A third possibility might be the case of an excess of a form, like in polydactyly or other deformities known very well to the Greeks (cf. also Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.6.2.13-18). Although we should now have a better understanding of what participation in a form means, we have encountered an interesting circle in Plotinus' thought. Beautiful is what participates in a form and participation in a form is explained as an attraction of the participating thing to the beautiful form. Therefore, what we explain beauty with, is itself explained by beauty. But that should probably not bother us too much because we have seen that Plotinus has other means of explaining participation, i.e. the archetype-image model which is the true point of illumination.

2.3 Extrapolation of forms in the soul (I.6.3)

But let us get back to *Ennead* I.6. Plotinus now tries to specify the psychic process which recognizes a body as beautiful, i.e. which extrapolates the uniting formative principle from it. He says that there are some parts of the soul which fit the beautiful body to the form present in soul, and it is subsequently evaluated by a special power of the soul. Plotinus likens this ability to using a ruler to judge straightness (cf. I.6.3.1-5). This requires an explanation. E. K. Emilsson presents Plotinus' conception of sense perception on the grounds of various parts of *Enneads* IV.4, V.3, I.1 in the following way (cf. Emilsson 1998): Bodies do not directly leave an impression on the soul. Rather, what the soul receives is a certain translation of such impressions perceived by the living body into a specific intelligible form. However, such form somehow preserves the spatial features of the bodies. The

special judging power of the soul is the discoursive reasoning (*logismos*). It is able to compare such hybrid intelligible images with the forms themselves, because the soul has access to them through its highest part in Intellect. In this way, the soul remembers on the grounds of sense perception what it always already knew. It even recognizes the sensually perceptible as akin to itself or more precisely, that part of the sensually perceptible that is real, i.e. its form.

Plotinus also elaborates here how a form is present in matter so that it becomes a beautiful body, or that the darkness of matter is illuminated by the presence of a formative principle (cf. I.6.3.17-19). We have already discussed the true meaning of the illumination model, but what is new here is the comparison of the rule of form with the impact of fire on other bodies. It warms them without becoming cold and shines and glitters giving colour to everything else, while it itself has colour primarily (cf. I.6.3.19-28). In other words it acts like an abiding archetype.

By the end of the third chapter (cf. I.6.3.28-36), Plotinus considers so to say the highest form of sensually perceptible beauty: the imperceptible harmonies which make perceptible ones and show themselves through these (cf. Heraclitus DK 22 B 54 and Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.6.3.28-33). Furthermore, in the case of sensible melodies, we can measure them by number which, in a way, helps us see the dominating formative principle. This however, already brings us to the doorstep of the intelligible.

2.4 Preparation for the ascent to intelligible beauty (I.6.4)

But before we enter, we have to change our attitude. The beauties we are about to contemplate cannot be perceived by senses and we must direct our attention upwards, leaving all that is sensually perceptible behind, or we shall not see any of the intelligible beauties just like the blind do not see the sensually perceptible ones (cf. I.6.4.1-12). If we succeed in this transformation we will be delighted, excited and overwhelmed by those beauties much more than by the sensually perceptible ones since these are true (*alēthinos*; cf. I.6.4.12-17). The extent of our excitement with invisible beauties depends on our disposition. However, Plotinus does not talk

simply about excitement, but rather about "wonder (*thambos*) and a shock of delight (*ekplēxis hēdeian*) and longing (*pothos*) and passion (*erōs*) and a happy excitement (*ptoēsis meth' hēdonēs*)" (I.6.4.16-18, transl. Armstrong), alluding to *Phaedrus* (253e-256a) and perhaps to other texts (cf. Iozza 2015, p. 81-84). In any case, just as the lovers are more disposed to be excited by bodily beauties than other people, so do only some have the disposition to be excited by the invisible (cf. I.6.4.18-22).

This brief account of internal transformation of the disposed raises many questions. Who are the disposed and what is their disposition? And how are we to understand the transformation they undergo? A whole treatise from the group of the first 21 *Enneads*, I.3 *On dialectics*, is devoted to this topic. Its leading question is to know, who are those that may proceed upwards from the beauty of the bodies, and what kind of guidance do they need (cf. I.3.1.5-6 and 10-12). Plotinus says that a person may ascend to the intelligible and perhaps even further to the Good, who has seen all or most things, i.e. he who was born a philosopher, musician or lover (cf. I.3.1.6-9).[31] A philosopher goes upwards by nature, but the other two must be guided on their path (cf. I.3.1.9-10). When leading a musician one must start with what excites him, i.e. harmony and unity in songs and verses and everything rhythmical and shapely. However, he must be taught to make abstraction from the material of these bodily images of beauty, and to understand that it was an intelligible harmony (*noētē harmonia*) and universal beauty that excited him. Then he must be trained in philosophy (cf. I.3.1.21-35). A lover (who may be a transformed musician) is characterized by a memory of beauty which he cannot grasp in its separateness, but is fascinated by beauty through sight. He must be shown that the beauty of one body is the same in all bodies and is itself not of bodily nature, and that it can be better manifested in other things like in beautiful ways of life, laws, arts, sciences or virtues. And then he must be shown even their common source (cf. I.3.2.).[32] The philosopher proceeds upwards naturally, he only

[31] The relevant background here is of course to Plato's *Phdr*. For a brief comparison of Plato's and Plotinus' account, see Kalligas 2014, com ad I.3.1.6-9.

[32] As previous commentators already noticed (cf. Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.3.2.5-12), these passages echo the ascent to the form of beauty from Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symp*.

needs to be shown the way which leads through training in mathematical studies, perfecting his virtue and being instructed in dialectics (cf. I.3.3).[33]

What can we draw for our purposes from this? It seems that in order to be able to see the intelligible beauty, one has to be a musician, a lover or a philosopher and needs guidance, be it only in showing the right way. On this path upwards one needs to learn the art of abstraction, which means to start to see the forms as causing the beauty of beautiful things. However, one also needs to understand that these causes are common to many beautiful things and that they manifest differently on different ontological levels. Furthermore, to better comprehend the immaterial nature of the forms, one has to be trained in mathematical sciences that also deal with entities of non-bodily nature. Also, one must perfect his virtue because, as Plotinus puts it, "people cannot speak about the splendour of virtue who have never even imagined how fair is the face of justice and moral order" (I.6.4.10-12, transl. Armstrong). And eventually one has to be trained in philosophy or dialectics, i.e. in the valuable part of philosophy (cf. I.3.5.9), so that one may grasp the common cause of beauty on the level of soul and ascend to the Intellect.

2.5 Beauty and ugliness in the soul (I.6.5)

Such an ascent to the Intellect is still too far ahead. Plotinus wants first to consider beauty on the level of soul and he does so again by contrasting it with ugliness. A soul sees itself as beautiful "possessing a moral order (…) and (…) all the other light of virtues (…) [with – added by O.G.] the godlike light of the Intellect shining upon all this" (I.6.5.11-17, transl. Armstrong). This is according to Plotinus the case of a soul "…separated from the lusts which it has through the body with which it consorted too much, and freed from its other affections, purged of what it gets from being embodied" (I.6.5.54-57, transl. Armstrong). This is where the ugliness comes in, because it is understood as blemish in analogy with getting one's body dirty with mud (cf. I.6.5.43-48). In both cases we have something that is originally

[33] The reference here is naturally to Plato's *Rep*. II and VII. Cf. also Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.3.3.5-7, I.3.3.8-10 and I.3.4.1.

beautiful but becomes mixed with something external, which causes that this beauty cannot be seen anymore unless one wipes off all the filth.

What is then this mud which may cover our soul? Plotinus says here with explicit reference to Plato's *Phd.* that it is our inclination towards the body and matter (cf. I.6.5.48-50).[34] Like in Plato, we may distinguish two causes of such behaviour. In a sense it is caused by matter, in another sense by the soul itself which incorrectly understands itself as being part of the bodily world and is accordingly too much concerned with bodies. The preoccupation with bodies fills the soul with lusts, disturbances and fears so that it becomes cowardly and jealous, enjoys impure pleasures and finds delight in ugliness (cf. I.6.5.26-32). This is precisely what we must purge ourselves from. Our soul will then become beautiful automatically for it is originally such.[35] Plotinus even says here that those things that really exist, exist as beauties, but we will have to say more about it when we deal with the Intellect (cf. I.6.5.20-21). We have indeed already noted that soul has its root in Intellect when we discussed the activity by which the soul recognizes a beautiful body. While bodies become beautiful by participating in forms, soul itself is beautiful in as much as it abides alone, purged from the mud of the sensible world (cf. I.6.5.50-58). It is as if gold had soul and could see its true beauty after being purged, Plotinus says in the *Ennead* IV.7.10. But is it the full truth? Does becoming virtuous mean that we should withdraw from the world as completely as possible?

In order to answer these questions we have to make another digression, this time to the *Ennead* I.2(19) *On virtue*.[36] There too we find the idea of escaping all that is of bodily nature, but such an escape is here understood as what makes us godlike by becoming righteous and holy (*dikaios kai hosios*) and altogether in virtue (*en aretē*) with the help of wisdom (*phronēsis*; cf. I.2.1.4-5). This is again identified with purification since the point is to purge ourselves from our entanglement with

[34] Cf. Plato, *Phd*. 66a-67b and 80e-84b. See the discussion of this concept in Špinka 2009.

[35] An interesting interpretation of this process is proposed by Tomulet (2014, p. 55). He distinguishes two steps: 1) washing of soul, i.e. separation from things foreign to it, and 2) purification, which refers to repairing the soul's inner damage caused by the mixture with matter. However, this damage cannot be of course caused by matter as such, but by the soul's erroneous understanding of itself.

[36] For a general outline of Plotinus' ethics cf. Stern-Gillet 2014, Bene 2013, Smith 1999 and Dillon 1996.

the bodies. In this sense a soul „will be good and possess virtue when it no longer has the same opinions but acts alone – this is intelligence and wisdom – and does not share the body's experiences – this is self-control – and is not afraid of departing from the body – this is courage – and is ruled by reason and intellect, without opposition – and this is justice“ (I.2.3.15-19, transl. Armstrong). Once again, this presupposes that the nature of soul is itself beautiful and may again become such when purged. However, Plotinus is more specific here. Yes, the soul is of a good nature but at the same time it is unable to remain in the real good, and so it has a natural tendency to incline in both directions. For this reason, it must become a fellow of what is akin to it (*syneinai tō syngenei*) and this is achieved through conversion (*epistraphō*), which runs parallel to purification and culminates in virtue, now understood as “sight and the impression of what is seen, implanted and working in” the soul (I.2.4.19-20, transl. Armstrong). In other words, the more the soul frees itself from its enchantment with bodies, the more it focuses its attention on the intelligible and becomes like it. It becomes sight that sees itself and this unity of seing and the object seen is imprinted on and becomes active in the soul, i.e. it dominates the soul in analogy with a form dominating matter.

But a purged, virtuous soul does not withdraw from the body it ensouls in the sense that this body would cease to exist, and man as a soul-body compound would die. It only has to try to escape into the intelligible world *as far as possible* in order to become virtuous (cf. I.2.5). Or, to put it from the perspective of the Intellect, the soul must not revert to the Intellect fully, because virtue belongs to the soul (cf. I.2.6.13-19). When Plotinus tries to describe this paradoxical intermediate stage between utter exemption from all bodies and remaining embodied soul, he speaks about changing the way we perceive that which comes from the bodies. The soul “only makes itself aware of pleasures when it has to, using them as remedies and reliefs to prevent its activity being impeded [and – added by O.G.] it gets rid of pains or if it cannot, bears them quietly and makes them less by not suffering with the body” (I.2.5.7-12, transl. Armstrong). And even the lesser parts of the soul that are as such unable to directly share in the Intellect may change: as if a person lives next

door to a sage, he becomes like him or at least he treats him with such respect as not to dare to do anything he would not approve of (cf. I.2.5.25-27).

But as said, the soul does not fully disembark from the bodily world and does not fully revert to the Intellect since virtue belongs to the soul (cf. I.2.6.13-19). Plotinus even says that the Intellect is not itself virtuous (cf. I.2.1.5-6), in a similar way as Intellect cannot be said to entail arrangement and order in a spatial sense. Nevertheless, soul becomes like the Intellect by becoming virtuous and we may build a well arranged and ordered house with respect to Intellect. In other words, archetypes of virtues as well as those of order and arrangement are to be found in Intellect. There is an asymmetrical resemblance between an archetype and its image: the archetype is not similar to its image, although the image is like its archetype and does resemble it (cf. I.2.2.4-10). Plotinus tries to specify how Intellect contains or rather is such an archetype of virtues: "intuitive thought *There* is knowledge and wisdom, self-concentration is self-control, its own proper activity is ´minding its own business´; its equivalent courage is immateriality and abiding pure by itself" (I.2.7.3-7, transl. Armstrong). Virtue as we understand it in soul is virtue in the sense of Intellect's activity just described in something else, i.e. in the soul (cf. I.2.6.13-19).

What does it mean for our original question as to know whether becoming virtuous means to withdraw from the world as completely as possible? We see that it is in fact so. We should withdraw from it as much as possible, but it does not mean to cease to exist as bodies. Rather, it means to change our attitude towards the bodily nature, focus on the intelligible and ultimately receive an imprint from Intellect which unifies our soul and dominates it. Yet, if we are to maintain at the same time that the soul is in its own nature a beauty, we have to understand this process as a reunion with what it has always been and at the moment only becomes aware of. Now this is certainly linked with the fact that the soul has its root in the Intellect, but it nevertheless entails a serious systemic ambiguity. It is as if soul became aware of itself as a part of Intellect because after the purification it becomes a true reality which exists as beauty. At the same time however, there must still be a certain distance between the soul and Intellect, because there is no

virtue *there* but only in the soul. Plotinus is obviously aware of this since in VI.8(39).5 he says that "virtue is *a kind of* other intellect (*hoion nūs tis allos*), a state which *in a way* intellectualises the soul (*hoion noōthēnai*; italics by O.G.)" (VI.8.5.34-35, transl. Armstrong). But what it means exactly remains a mystery, at least for now, but we shall discuss it in the next chapter (cf. part 2.6).

To sum up, even in the case of the soul, there is some sort of partaking in the Intellect which unifies the soul. This partaking differs from that of the bodies. First of all, bodies partake in the soul and only through it in the Intellect, whereas the soul partakes directly in the Intellect. Moreover, in case of bodies we do not actually purge them from their bodily being, but do so only in our soul when we judge them as beautiful, because they are beautiful precisely only as much as they are forms. In the process of their creation and subsequent existence, Plotinus only speaks about domination of a form and not of having to get to the form first by purging the body. As we have seen, this domination of a form in body can be hindered by other forms, or perhaps by inadequate participation in a form (both in the sense of its excess and the lack thereof). In the case of the soul, the emphasis is layed on the related processes of purification, conversion and likening to god. This process restores the soul to its original virtuous and beautiful state that does not have its archetype in a singular form, but rather in the very life of the Intellect, i.e. in its "itself-thinking that it itself is" (cf. Emilsson 2007, p. 109).

2.6 Intellect as the cause of beauty and beauty itself (I.6.6)

Plotinus further escalates his formulations concerning the purification when he says that he "who has not been purified will lie in mud (…) just as pigs, with their unclean bodies" (I.6.6.4-6, transl. Armstrong), or when he notes that the "greatness of soul is despising (*hyperopsia*) things here" (I.6.6.11-12, transl. Armstrong). The outcome of the purification is here explicitly identified with the soul's becoming a form in the Intellect. At the same time however, soul becomes a formative power (*logos*), i.e. that which emanates from the Intellect and imprints itself in the soul (cf. I.6.6.13-16). This may be a clue to understanding how Plotinus can suggest that there remains a certain distance between a virtuous soul and Intellect, and

simultaneously claim that the soul becomes truly beautiful after purification. When the highest part of the soul becomes aware of itself as a part of the Intellect,[37] it also becomes a formative principle which imprints itself in those parts of the soul that are not united with the Intellect. These parts of the soul become virtuous and get a share in the beauty that the highest part becomes, or rather always was.

Plotinus says here that the soul which becomes a form becomes even more beautiful than it was. We should perhaps even say that it becomes beauty itself, because Plotinus immediately identifies Intellect with the source of beauty or beauty itself (cf. I.6.6.16-21).[38] Even on this level Plotinus briefly contrasts the beauty of Intellect with the ugliness of matter which is called here the first evil (cf. I.6.6.21-24). By outlining this contrast, he draws our attention to the ultimate goal of our ascent, to the Good. This ultimate principle is here called the source of beauty and the beauteous (*kallonē*) which is also the good (cf. I.6.6.25-27). First from the Good comes the Intellect as beauty itself, second, from the Intellect comes the soul which is given beauty by the Intellect, and last, everything else gets beauty from the soul (cf. I.6.6.26-32). This may surprise us at first glance, since it was previously said that bodies are beautiful by the presence of a form or a formative principle and not by soul. However Plotinus discusses this issue in the 5th *Ennead* V.9.2 *On Intellect, the forms and being* where again he is concerned with the question from where does the soul take the power for its ascent (cf. V.9.2.1-2). We already understand that he who ascends must be a lover disposed for true

[37] It is of course problematic to call an individual intellect (within the Intellect) the highest part of soul without any qualification. From the perspective of soul, its individual intellect (within the Intellect) is its principle and core. From a top-down perspective however, soul is distinct from Intellect and from individual intellects in it. Their relationship is rather that of an archetype and its image. Therefore, it is a difficult question to decide whether uniting with the Intellect means for a soul to fully transcend itself and become Intellect, or if it can still be in some sense called soul. It seems to me that if we disconnect a soul's individual intellect from the rest of soul and if we deny that individual intellect is something like "the highest part of soul", it becomes very difficult (if not impossible) to explain the union with Intellect, let alone with the Good. For the discussion of Plotinus' enigmatic account of soul and its parts, see Caluori 2015, Karfík 2014b and Blumenthal 1996, 1974, 1971.

[38] I remain sceptical about the identification of beauty and being here (as stressed out by Smith 2016, com. ad I.6.6.21), although, as we shall see (part 3.10 and 4.1.4), Plotinus does indeed advocate it. However, what is identified with beings (*ta onta*) here, is the beauteous (*kallonē*), i.e. the Good (see below and chapters 5.6 and 6.4), so that I rather think that Plotinus speaks very loosely here and merely contrasts what is evil, ugly and non-existent on the one hand and what is good, beautiful and truly existent on the other.

philosophy, and we are also not surprised that it is beauty which drags him upwards (cf. V.9.2.2-10). However, the crucial point for us here is Plotinus' explanation of what makes a body beautiful. He says that in one way it is the presence of a form, in another the soul that moulded it and put this particular form in it (cf. V.9.2.16-17). All that is bodily is created by a soul, be it a particular soul in the case of artefacts (and perhaps at least partially our bodies[39]) or the world soul in everything else. However, both types of soul create bodies precisely with the help of forms, in analogy with the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* who thinks the intelligible archetypes and shapes the world according to them.[40] For this reason it can both be said that the bodily gets its beauty from Intellect and from the soul. The former expression is in a sense more precise since the soul is not beautiful of itself, as opposed to Intellect.[41] Otherwise, Plotinus explains, we could not say that some souls are wise and beautiful and others stupid and ugly (cf. V.9.2.19-20). The beauty of a soul lies in its wisdom which comes from the Intellect, the beauty itself (cf. V.9.2.20-23). Similarly, in *Ennead* IV.7(2) *On the immortality of the soul* Plotinus explains that "a part of the soul always remains in the Intellect and a lower part enters the bodily world and imparts order and beauty according to the pattern which it sees in Intellect, is as if pregnant by the intelligibles and labouring to give birth" (IV.7.13.5-8, transl. Armstrong). In this way, "the Intellect which remains the same (…) fills all things through soul with beauties and sets them in order" (IV.7.13.18-19, transl. Armstrong).

If Plotinus in the first chapter of our *Ennead* left open whether there are two distinct sources of beauty, one for bodies and the other for souls, or whether there is one common cause, we now know the answer. There is only one source, Intellect, but souls and bodies share in its beauty differently. In Intellect there is no longer any distinction between the predicate *beauty* and its subject, so that all is the beautiful *there*. Further above, the predicative structure of our language falls apart

[39] It seems that some parts of our bodies are ruled by the world soul, whereas others by individual souls. For the discussion of this topic, see Blumenthal 1971 and in a more general context Blumenthal 1996.

[40] Cf. Plato's *Tim*. 27d-29d, 30a-b, 53b, and 69b-c. See also the discussion of these passages in Karfík 2004.

[41] In a very specific sense even the Intellect can be said not to be beautiful of itself. See further below and chapters 5.6 and 6.4.

completely. At this stage, Plotinus chooses to point out the entireness of the Good, i.e. he makes a positive statement about it using the *via eminentiae*. As compared to Intellect which may seem both good and beautiful only from a certain perspective (e.g. when compared with the first evil), there is a true identity of beauty and goodness in the Good, while Intellect is in this sense "only" beauty itself (cf. I.6.6.21-27). However, we should be careful here since the identity of the beautiful and the good in the first principle does not mean that Intellect is not the first beautiful, because the Good can be said to be beautiful in some other sense, like for instance as the source of the beautiful (cf. a similar observation by Kalligas 2014, com ad I.6.6.21-32). Similarly in V.9, Plotinus makes use of Plato's *Philebus* (64e) and says that beauty is an impression of the Good in multiplicity, while the Good itself remains altogether in one (cf. V.9.2.26-27). In this sense, beauty stands in front of the Good as if it was a porch of it (cf. V.9.2.25-26). The possible identity of the good and the beautiful in I.6.6 should therefore not be overestimated. Rather, it seems to be required by the symmetry of the argument which on the one hand identifies ugliness with evil, and on the other hand beauty and the good (cf. Smith 2016, com. ad I.6.6.26 and Tornau 2011, com. ad I.6.6.21-24). Moreover, as we shall see later (parts 2.7, 3.9 and 5.6), there are passages in other *Enneads* that contradict this identification (VI.9.4 VI.9.11, V.8.8, V.5.12, VI.7.32-33).

2.7 The ascent of the soul to the Good (I.6.7)

When ascending above the Intellect to the Good, we must again prepare ourselves in the sense of purifying and stripping off all we put on in our descent. This is to be understood in connection with *aphairesis*, i.e. abstraction or taking away (cf. I.6.7.1-12). Only when guided by the negative theology, we may ascend even above Intellect to the Good, which Plotinus with reference to his own experience, calls beautiful (cf. I.6.7.2-3) walking a thin line between a positive and negative statement. It is a positive statement as far as he does predicate something about the Good. However, he calls it beautiful and beauty is precisely that, which the Good as such transcends. Since however, the Good is the ultimate object of our erotic desire, it makes good sense by the way of *via eminentiae* to call the Good

beautiful, and it is also of use here since we connect desire and pleasure with beauty. To correct this statement however, Plotinus adds, that we desire such beauty as good (cf. I.6.7.2-5). As a matter of fact, Plotinus now turns to the pleasure we experience in the ascent to the Good and he speaks of a shock of delight (*ekplēssō meth' hēdonēs*)[42] which causes no hurt (*ablabēs*), fullness of wonder and delight (*agasthai te kai thambūs pimplasthai*), loving with true passion and piercing longing (*eran alēthē erōta kai drimeis pothūs*). As opposed to this kind of beauty, all else seems utterly useless and worthy of being despised (cf. I.6.7.12-21).

When Plotinus describes the preliminary measures we must take before uniting with the Good, he describes the Good in a variety of ways. It is simple (*eilikrinēs*), single (*haploos*) and pure (*katharos*) and uncontamined by flesh or body (*mē sarkōn mē sōmatos anapleōn*; cf. I.6.7.21-24). These are all ways to express the absolute unity and transcendence of the Good. Plotinus further marks the Good as the source and goal of everything when he says that it is that "from which all depends and to which all look and are and live and think" (I.6.7.10-12, transl. Armstrong) or when he says that all except the Good itself "are external additions and mixtures and not primary, but derived from it" (I.6.7.24-25, transl. Armstrong). An extremely stressed expression of this can be found by the very end of the seventh chapter, where Plotinus says that for the vision of the Good we "should give up the attainment of kingship and of rule over all earth and sea and sky" (I.6.7.37-39, transl. Armstrong). He also tries to approach the Good on the basis of things which come from it: all that is, looks, exists, lives and thinks because of the Good, "for it is cause of life and mind and being" (I.6.7.12, transl. Armstrong). Finally, he makes use of analogies: someone who met appearances of gods and spirits despises bodily beauty similarly to a soul which, united with the Good, despises everything else. Plotinus in other words uses all systematic means of language to try to describe the Good, in this case, in the context of beauty.[43] The Good is said to be beauty itself despite the fact that formerly, beauty was identified primarily with the Intellect. If we find such expression in the context of other ways of speaking about the highest principle, it seems reasonable to understand it in analogy with the standard

[42] Cf. Plato's *Phdr*. 250a and also the discussion of this in chapter 5.6.
[43] Cf. *Ennead* VI.7.36 discussed in chapter 5.6 and also Alcinoos, *The handbook of Platonism*.

statement that the Good both is and is not everything. It is the source of beauty and as such it cannot be short of it. However, it is not beauty since it is even more than beauty or above it. From the perspective of negative theology the primary beauty is the Intellect.

More will be said about the relation of the Good and the beautiful in *Enneads* V.8, V.5 (part of the *Großschrift*) and VI.7 (a treatise from the same creative period). Large parts of these treatises are devoted to this topic. To support our claim for the time being however, we may draw our attention at least to VI.9.11 where the union with the Good is described. Plotinus says there that he who has united with the Good "had no thought of beauties, but had already run up beyond beauty (…) like a man who enters into the sanctuary and leaves behind the statues in the outer shrine; these become again the first things he looks at when he comes out of the sanctuary" (VI.9.11.16-21, transl. Armstrong). This means that beauty is again identified primarily with Intellect and one even has to abandon it when uniting with the Good. In this sense, even though it may seem in some passages of *Ennead* I.6 that not Intellect but the Good is the primary beauty, we have to understand this as a part of a context dependent approach to the first principle. It sometimes makes better sense to say that the Good is beautiful and sometimes to set it apart from beauty, depending on the intention of the passage. As Plotinus puts it in VI.9.3, when trying to express his experience of the union with the Good, "we run round it outside, in a way, and want to explain our own experiences of it, sometimes near it and sometimes falling away in our perplexities about it" (VI.9.3.53-55, transl. Armstrong). In our case, where the ascent to the highest principle is described using beauty as a stepping stone, it is of use to show that it leads all the way up to the Good and specifications may come later. And they indeed do in the last chapter of I.6 (cf. chapter 2.9).

2.8 The ascent of soul described with the help of literary heritage (I.6.8)

Plotinus now tries to approach the beauty *there* anew. Theses we already know are repeated, that the beauty *there* is not sensually perceptible, is enormous (*amēchanos*) and beauty of the bodies is but an image (*eikōn*), trace (*ichnos*) or

shadow (*skia*) of it (cf. I.6.8.1-8). The possibility of seeing such a beauty is described in religious language as entering a sanctuary where one has to leave outside the sight of his eyes (cf. I.6.8.1-6). Plotinus also tries to make use of the literary or cultural heritage to achieve his goal. He briefly recounts the story of Narcissus, who in one version of the story drowned when trying to reach for his own reflection in water (cf. I.6.8.8-16).[44] Plotinus parallels this story with the blindness of a soul caused by bodily beauties which will sink the soul into Hades "where intellect has no delight" (I.6.8.15, transl. Armstrong). Bodily beauty which is as much a reflection as was the image of Narcissus in water, may thus not only motivate the ascent to a higher beauty but also bind us because it is so impressive. The error that the soul makes in confusing an image with its original, may have fatal consequences be it the literal drowning, as in the case of Narcissus, or the metaphorical drowning of a soul into Hades.

Yet Plotinus immediately confronts this dark vision with a different literary heritage. He quotes Homer's appeal "let us fly to our dear country" from the *Iliad* 2.140 and combines it with the story of Odysseus' stay on Calypso's island and in Circe's mansion (cf. I.6.8.16-21).[45] In this story, Odysseus leaves places full of beauties and pleasures with one purpose only, to return back home. Similarly in our ascent, we too must resist the temptations of the bodily world, and devote our effort to the ascent to our own source. However, Plotinus corrects these similes: of course we cannot travel such a road by foot, carriage or boat. To go the way up, we have to exchange our sight for a different, more original one, the sight of Intellect. Only through the Intellect can we get to the Good (cf. I.6.8.22-28 and also chapter 5.6).

We may ask whether the ambiguity of beauty we encountered – its ability to deceive or rather its spectacular nature that clears the way for the soul's error – is caused by the bodily nature of such beautiful things, or rather by beauty itself so that it stimulates an enquiry into its origin and at the same time impedes it? And if the latter is the case, we may further ask whether even the beauty of the Intellect

[44] Cf. esp. Ov. *Met*. 3.341. For other sources see Kalligas 2014, com. ad I.6.8.9-16 and Smith 2016, com. ad I.6.8.8-16.
[45] Cf. Hom. *Od.* 5 and 10.

can impede our ascent to the Good? To answer this question, we may consider again VI.9(9) *On the Good or the One.* In the fourth chapter, Plotinus discusses, besides other things, that the soul which ascends through Intellect to the Good must also run up above knowledge, all that is known, and every object of vision even if it was beautiful. The reason is that all beautiful things come only after the Good like the light of the day comes from the sun. Plotinus' formulation "even beautiful" (*pantos allū kai kallū theamatos dei apostēnai*; cf. VI.9.4.7-10) seems to suggest that there is some special peril in beauty. However, more will be said about this in chapters 3.3, 5.4 and 5.6 since the warning about the beauty of Intellect becomes more explicit in later *Enneads*.

2.9 Intelligible beauty and the Good (I.6.9)

The last part of our *Ennead* represents a sort of synoptic view of what an ascending lover or of course a musician and philosopher has to go through. Plotinus asks what our awakened inner sight sees (cf. I.6.9.1). With implicit reference to Plato's *Republic* (515e-516a) he proceeds step by step so that we may get accustomed to all the light. The first step is seeing the beauty of ways of life, next are virtuous deeds and the third the beauty of the souls of virtuous people (cf. I.6.9.1-6). In order to see their soul, we must turn inwards to our own soul (since all souls are one soul)[46] and we see their beauty only if we see ours, i.e. if we too are virtuous (cf. I.6.9.6-15). In order to achieve this seeing, Plotinus instructs his readers in one of the most famous passages in the *Enneads*: "never stop working on your statue till the divine glory of virtue shines out on you" (I.6.9.13-15, transl. Armstrong). However, a virtuous, purified soul, as we know, is one that already in a sense becomes aware of itself as a part of the Intellect, and so as Plotinus puts it here, it becomes true light (*phōs alēthinon*; cf. I.6.9.18). But if only a soul that becomes like Intellect may see the beauty that is Intellect, it ultimately means that the soul becomes a part of the Intellect. This however, also always means that the soul becomes the whole of Intellect, and as such it contemplates itself, beauty contemplating beauty, i.e. it merges with the inner life of Intellect (cf. I.6.9.30-34).

[46] Cf. *Ennead* IV.9.

Or we should probably not say that the soul becomes a part of Intellect, but it rather becomes aware of itself as a part of Intellect, which it always has been. In the same sense we should not say that it merges with the inner life of Intellect, but rather it becomes aware of itself as always already merged with it.[47]

Plotinus is however ready again to go beyond Intellect up to the Good and specifies what we have already dealt with, its simultaneous being beauty and being beyond it. He says that "the nature of the Good (…) holds beauty as a screen before it" (I.6.9.37-39, transl. Armstrong). This means that beauty is to be identified primarily with the Intellect, which is before the Good from the perspective of the ascending soul and which is in this passage again said to be beauty because all things are beautiful by it (cf. I.6.9.36-37). At the same time however, Plotinus insists that it is possible to say that the Good is the primary beauty. And he explains this contradiction: it depends on whether in a discussion we need to distinguish the Good from the Intellect. If we do so, then it is the Intellect which is the seat of beauty and the Good is beyond it and is the spring and origin of it. If we do not distinguish them, it is possible to interchange the beautiful and the good in a loose way of speaking (*holoscherēs logos*; cf. I.6.9.40-43). But why should we not make this distinction? Because what is primarily important for Plotinus at this point, i.e. in the very first *Ennead* paving the way to the intelligible, is that beauty comes from *there* and the details of the concept may come later: in V.8 *On intelligible beauty*.[48]

[47] Cf. footnote 37 sbove.

[48] Cf. similar comments by Harder (com. ad I.6.9.39-43), Kalligas (2014, com. ad I.6.9.39-40 and I.6.9.43-44) and O'Meara (1993, p. 94). For a brief overview of Plotinus' sources for the disjunction of the Good and beauty, see Edwards 1991.

3 Intelligible beauty (*Ennead* V.8)

If I am right in my assumption that the *Enneads* of the *Großschrift* are united by the focus on the controversy with the Gnostics,[49] it is necessary to examine V.8 in the context of the other three *Enneads*, the preceding III.8 and following V.5 and II.9. Since V.8 comes after III.8 which is devoted to Plotinus' concept of contemplation, I will first very briefly summarise its outcomes, because it plays an important role in the discussion with the Gnostics. I shall also try to sketch out Plotinus' notion of contemplation with regard to other treatises. A properly established notion of productive contemplation enables Plotinus to maintain simultaneous continuity and hierarchy[50] of the different levels of his universe, which is of importance even for the question of beauty. If Intellect is beautiful, which the Gnostics would probably consent to, and the universe is continuous albeit hierarchically ordered, it necessarily follows that even the sensible world is, within its own limits, beautiful. Afterwards, I will discuss the treatise *On Intelligible Beauty* and relevant passages from *Enneads* V.5 and II.9.[51]

3.1 Productive contemplation

According to *Ennead* III.8, everything stems from contemplation, participates in contemplation, and aims towards it whenever possible (cf. III.8.7). After all, Intellect, the structure of intelligible forms and the paradigm of everything below, is also a self-relating movement of contemplation. Consequently, everything that participates in Intellect also participates in contemplation. The being of every thing becomes, on the model of Intellect, the active performance of self-relation. There is thus a continuity of productive contemplation (cf. III.8.8) or as Plotinus puts it, “that which is produced must always be of the same kind as its producer, but weaker through losing its virtue as it comes down” (III.8.5.23-24, transl. Armstrong). Specifically, there is Intellect which contemplates itself as contemplation, so that

[49] See chapter 1.

[50] I use the word hierarchy here and in the following as a shortcut for the relationship of prior and posterior. Cf. O'Meara 1996.

[51] Parts of this chapter (3.2-3.14) are to a certain degree based on my paper Gál 2011.

there is a unity of contemplation and that which is contemplated. Next, there is soul whose upper part contemplates Intellect, but as something in soul, i.e. as *logoi*, and in this sense, what it tries to reach remains external. The lower part of soul, nature, contemplates these *logoi* according to which it creates, but they are external to it because they reside in the upper soul (cf. Rolof 1970, p. 17-22).[52] As we can see, the difference in these various levels of knowledge is caused by gradually increasing disintegration of the unity of contemplation and its object, such as found in Intellect (cf. III.8.8). Moreover, this disintegration causes decreasing clarity of contemplation on each individual level (cf. III.8.8 and VI.7.7).

In this sense, it is also possible to say, although in a specific sense, that there is a supreme kind of contemplation in the Good which is marked by utmost unity. However, we must not understand this unique contemplation as implying any form of duality. We must neither differentiate the Good and its knowledge, nor distinguish the subject of knowing in the Good related to the object known (cf. V.6.6). On the other hand, concluding simply that the Good does not know itself is at least as erroneous as the opposite. Not knowing implies the same duality but furthermore a deficiency. For this reason, one can say neither that the Good does, nor that it does not know itself (cf. VI.9.6, VI.7.37), for it is beyond knowing (cf. V.3.12, VI.7.40). The contemplation of the Good must be understood in the form of touching or a sort of contact with itself (*thixis kai hoion epaphē*; V.3.10.43-45), simple concentration (*haplē epibolē*; VI.7.39.1-2) or immediate self-consciousness (*synaisthēsis*; V.4.2.18). All these are ways Plotinus tries to express the absolute transcendence of the Good, which at the same time implies excessive possession of every predicate in the sense of being its source. When not speaking correctly (*ūk*

[52] The details of this conception are not very clear. Plotinus divides soul into its lower part, nature, and upper part which is said to search and love learning (cf. III.8.5). When Plotinus discusses it, he also considers how action is contemplation (cf. III.8.5-6). But whereas nature refers probably to the lower part of the world soul, the things said about the upper part seem rather to relate to individual soul. This raises many questions, especially about the hierarchy of different parts of individual soul as compared to those of the world soul. It seems reasonable to differentiate various aspects of contemplation, in which a part of a soul can be said to be superior to another. For example, the contemplation of nature is probably superior to that of the lower part of an individual soul in respect of having its object of contemplation without having to search for it. On the other hand, it contemplates as if it is sleeping and its contemplation is dim. For the discussion of this problem see Deck 1967, p. 68-72. Nevertheless, all parts of individual soul and of the world soul must be contemplation.

orthōs; cf. VI.8.13), Plotinus even dares to say that the Good, in a way, generates itself by looking at itself (cf. VI.8.16). In this way, we may conclude that there is a continuity of contemplation even between the Good and the Intellect, although it is at the same time accompanied by insurmountable transcendence of the first principle. [53]

This very brief summary may give us a rough idea of how contemplation is knowledge. Plotinus however, advances a further idea: all contemplation is of a creative nature or is fruitful. The Good is creative in the sense of overflowing since it is perfectly complete (cf. V.2.1, V.1.6, V.3.12, IV.8.6, V.5.12) or emanating (cf. V.1.6), while remaining in itself (cf. V.5.12) in a similar fashion as the sun shines. In its overflowing, Intellect comes to be that which emanates from the Good, turns back to it, receives an imprint from it, and becomes constituted (cf. III.4.1, VI.7.16).

In a different context, Plotinus systematically grasps his concept of productive contemplation also as a double activity, internal, *energeia tēs ūsias*, and external, *energeia ek tēs ūsias* (cf. V.2.1 and especially V.4).[54] Internal activity denotes the act of self-relation or contemplation by which everything is what it is. The internal activity is completed by the external activity, which Plotinus expresses with the help of the metaphors of pregnancy and begetting (cf. V.1.6, V.2.1, V.4.1), emanative overflowing (cf. V.1.6, V.2.1) and illumination (cf. V.1.6, V.3.12). In all these cases, the external activity is said to be an image of the internal one (cf. IV.5.7, V.1.6, V.2.1, V.3.7). As the similes of a spring and a source of light suggest, the external activity is fully dependent on the internal one: should the internal activity stop, so would the external one. On the contrary, the external activity in no way diminishes or changes the internal. One should therefore more likely conceive these activities not as two but as one double activity (cf. II.9.8), in the sense of Plotinus' notion of absolute motions (*apolytoi kynēseis*, cf. VI.1 and VI.3). By that he means that a motion does not have to be completed by its end, as Aristotle thinks.[55] It only seems

[53] For all these reasons, also mentioned by Deck, I side with him as compared to Rolof, who thinks that contemplation only applies to Intellect and what is below. On his position cf. Rolof 1970, p. 16-17 and 23-27. For Deck's discussion of the topic see Deck 1967, p. 17-21.

[54] The following passages on double activity and complete motions are fully indebted to Emilsson's analyses. Cf. Emilsson 2007, chapter 1, Emilsson 2017, p. 48-57 and Emilsson 1999.

[55] Cf. *Phys*. VIII.

so when we qualify it with some kind of quality or extent (cf. VI.1.16). An example of an absolute motion is for Plotinus walking, talking, dancing (cf. VI.3.22), writing (cf. VI.1.19), thinking (cf. VI.1.22), burning or the acting of a drug in a body (cf. VI.1.22, V.4.1). All these are activities directed to themselves and not to an outer end. Nevertheless, in all such cases there is something external that these activities produce but only incidentally, e.g. a fire, a drug or walking produce heat, health or a trace respectively. The external act is but an expression of the internal: it is not an independent act but something produced incidentally albeit necessarily. The inner activity of the Good described above with reference to *Ennead* VI.8, is in this sense called absolute (VI.8.20.4-8). Correspondingly, Intellect is said either to be or to contain a trace (*ichnos*) of the Good (cf. III.8.11, V.5.5, VI.7.17, VI.8.18) and its generation is in this sense the external activity of the Good.

Since the concept of internal and external activity is a systematic tool, we may apply it also in case of other hypostases. The internal activity of the Intellect is its unique way of thinking itself as the plurality of ideas. What makes it unique is the complete identity of contemplation and its object (cf. III.8.8), a topic Plotinus describes also in *Ennead* V.8.4 which I shall address in chapter 3.5. However, what is the external activity of the Intellect? In *Ennead* III.2.1-2, Plotinus says that Intellect, remaining in itself, gives something of itself to matter, i.e. *logoi*, with the help of which it creates everything. At the same time however, the starting point of the sensible universe, which is in this sense a mixture of matter and *logoi*, is soul (cf. III.2.2). As we have already seen in chapter 2.6, sensually perceptibles may be said to be caused both by the soul and by the Intellect. The former explanation is to be understood as more advanced or detailed as compared to the latter. It is through *logoi* that soul organizes the universe (cf. III.5.9). Every soul has all the *logoi* as one *logos* but it, so to say, divides and distributes this *logos* into the world (cf. III.2.17, IV.4.16). But is not the soul then the real product of Intellect? Yes, because *logos* is but an image of Intellect in the soul and in this sense it is soul itself, i.e. a soul which received an imprint of Intellect after turning back to it (cf. Deck 1967, p. 61). In this sense, soul is also said to be a trace (*ichnos*) of Intellect, i.e. its external activity (cf. V.1.7, VI.7.20) and also a *logos* and *eikōn* of it (cf. III.8.2 and V.1.3).

Of course there is some sort of creativity even in the contemplation of soul, or rather in both its parts (in the upper and the lower), and also in both kinds of soul (in the world soul and in individual souls).[56] Nature is said to be an unmoved *logos* silently contemplating itself which gives share of itself to the substrate of the sensible world (cf. III.8.2-3), and eternally gives rise to it (cf. III.4.4, IV.3.6, IV.3.9). However, nature itself is a product of contemplation of the higher part of soul, which Plotinus says to be clearer and always illuminated by the Intellect, as compared to the blurred and weak contemplation of nature (cf. III.8.4-5). J. Deck (1967, p. 42-46) interprets these passages as loosening the meaning of *poiēsis* as compared to its use in Intellect. The higher part of the soul creates by projecting itself into its product, i.e. into nature. In this sense, there is a combination of mobility and immobility since the higher part of the soul both remains in itself and projects itself downwards (cf. V.2.1). The same applies to nature but even to a higher degree, because it creates matter and then turns to it again in order to form it (cf. III.9.3, IV.3.9, III.4.1).

With this conception of creative contemplation, Plotinus is able to maintain both continuity and hierarchy in his universe. This will be needed in order to defend the beauty of the sensible world not only in *Ennead* V.8, but especially in II.9. After all Plotinus begins V.8 with a clear reference to his notion of contemplation.

3.2 The way to spiritual beauty, beauty in *technē* (V.8.1)

Whereas in *Ennead* I.6, Plotinus asks what beauty is in general and develops a preliminary answer, in V.8 he turns to an advanced reader, who has already managed to *contemplate* the spiritual cosmos. Together with the advanced reader, Plotinus wishes to examine how to attain the beauty of the Intellect (cf. Smith 2018, com. ad V.8.1.1-4). He assumes that a person who beholds the beauty of Intellect will also be capable of a spiritual relationship with the Good (cf. V.8.1.1-6). We may understand this as follows: to behold the beauty of Intellect means to truly understand Intellect, and, for Plotinus, to understand something means to be able to articulate its causes (cf. Wagner 1996). Then again, this also means to be able to

[56] However, cf. again footnote 52, as the details of the whole concept are not fully clear.

establish it as an emerging activity, as constituted in itself and as returning back to its source (cf. Gatti 1996), or as an internal and external activity (cf. Emilsson 2007). In the case of Intellect, this means being able to contemplate it in relation to the Good. As Rolof (1970, p. 36) puts it, one of the organising principles of the *Großschrift* is the question of attaining the Good. Beauty of the Intellect is in this sense to be understood as a means of a run-up (*hormē*) to the Good.

Plotinus starts again on the level of sensually perceptibles. He urges his reader to compare an unworked stone with a statue whose beauty is caused by spiritual beauty. However, the statue that he has in mind must not be made as a portrait of a specific person, but instead, on the basis of all beautiful people, which means according to a form. Such a statue, brought to this mode of beauty, will be beautiful. More precisely, it will be only as beautiful as the sculptor has succeeded in giving form to the matter of the stone. The comparison with unworked stone provides Plotinus with an argument for identifying the form and cause of beauty, because if matter itself were the cause of the beauty of the statue, the unworked stone would have to be equally beautiful.[57] Matter itself is not even the mediated cause of the beauty of the statue in the sense that the pertinent form would already be in it and the matter would, so to speak, yield to the statue. Rather, according to Plotinus, the one who spiritually contemplates, that is the craftsman (*technitēs* or, here, *dēmiūrgos*), invests the matter with form (cf. V.8.1.1-16).[58] We have to

[57] Armstrong suggests in a comment ad loc. a contradiction with *Ennead* I.6.2, where it is said that nature sometimes gives beauty to a single stone. I do not see the supposed contradiction. Plotinus says here only that if the matter were the cause of the beauty, then an unworked stone would have to be *equally* beautiful as one invested with form by a sculptor. This does not hinder in any way a single stone to be beautiful. On the contrary, if the matter were the cause of a stone's beauty, all stones would have to be beautiful and nature would not give it beauty only sometimes.

[58] I leave untranslated the Greek words *technitēs* and *technē* because the English equivalents, "artist" and "art", may in this case be misleading. The Greeks understood the term *technē* as the "ability to produce things so long as it was a regular production based on rules" (Tatarkiewicz 1980, p. 50; cf. also the definition of Pseudo-Galenus in his *Intro.* 14.685.3-4). Consequently, *technē* was by definition an intellectual activity and was linked to knowledge, not to inspiration, intuition or imagination. For such an area of work, the Greeks reserved the term *mūsikē*, in which the *mūsikos* communicated with the gods and was inspired by them. That is also attested by the fact that *mūsikē* arose from the traditional ritual purification, which used imitation to represent order, and the Greeks called it *choreia*. See Parker 1986, p. 254-274. *Technē* was therefore something definitely learnable, which is in direct contradiction to later theories of the artist-genius. Nor was *technē* primarily linked with beauty. The definition of beauty as the common denominator of most kinds of art, as we understand it today, was not settled on until after many debates in the late 18th century. See Kristeller 1951, p. 19-20.

understand this identification in connection with Plotinus' notion of productive contemplation as elaborated in *Ennead* III.8.

The unity of the two aspects, the noetic and the creative, is well captured in Greek by the word *technē*. *Technē* is one of the human's form of participation in Intellect; it is the spiritual means of knowing, but lacks the quality of being immediately all-encompassing, unlike its model. It is through his productive knowledge, his participation in *technē*, that the *technitēs* is able to form the matter and portray a person at all. Beauty in *technē*, which Plotinus talks about further in the text, is therefore beauty in contemplation, and what is contemplated through *logoi* are the forms themselves, that is, Intellect. With his participation in *technē*, the *technitēs* makes himself similar to the Intellect, to productive self-contemplation. That is why Plotinus can say that beauty in *technē* is a higher beauty, while only a lower beauty enters the sculpture. Furthermore, it does so only to the extent to which the matter of such mixture, body, submits to what is being created. In other words, to the extent to which the sculpture participates in the form that it makes present in the world. A form is present in the world, however, as a reason-principle (*logos*), which the *technitēs* invests in the thing (cf. Rist 1967, p. 84–102). *Technē* as the cause of the beauty of its products, allowing them participation in what it itself has, in beauty, is more beautiful than its products. According to Plotinus, being more beautiful also implies a higher degree of unification, and to illustrate his point, he uses analogies such as decreasing body strength, heat, and potency while they diffuse into space. One could also formulate his idea by saying that the cause is always homogenous with what is caused, in the sense that the cause lends the caused what the former itself has. The latter however, can only accept this character of its cause in a weakened form. Plotinus wishes to apply this principle of the superiority of the cause universally (cf. Emilsson 2017, p. 367), and illustrates it here with the example of *mūsikē* as the cause of the one who is a *mūsikos*. Indeed, he even mentions a kind of other-worldly *mūsikē* which is the cause of worldly *mūsikē* (cf. V.8.1.15-32). This example is not, however, fully analogical to the previous causal order in *technē*. We have here an other-worldly *mūsikē* as the cause of its worldly counterpart. This however, could be

interpreted as the aforementioned distinction between the knowledge of Intellect and its image, human knowledge. Nevertheless, the causality of the *mūsikē* and of the man of the muses is not analogical to *technē* and its product. However, Plotinus maybe only wishes to illustrate the superiority of the cause, as we saw above, and was not concerned too much with finding a precise analogy.[59]

That is why Plotinus opposes those who do not sufficiently appreciate art for its imitative nature.[60] He presents two objections against such a view. First, nature too is an imitation of something higher, i.e. the Intellect. Second, he believes that the object of art's imitation is the same as that of nature.[61] To make a statue means not to portray a specific person in the way he or she is accessible to our senses (cf. V.8.1.32-38). Nevertheless it is, I believe, conceivable that a sculptor creates a statue of a specific person. Plotinus, for that matter, admits this in the immediately following lines, when he talks about a statue of Zeus that has not been made by Pheidias according to having perceived something with the senses, but according to how it would be if Zeus appeared to the sculptor's eyes (cf. V.8.1.38-40; for the

[59] Moreover, *technē* is the cause, for example, of a statue mediated through a sculptor. Therefore, he could be called the cause of the sculpture, and sculpting itself, that is, the *technē*, could be called the cause of his sculptural nature.

[60] According to Rist (1967, p. 184), this concerns Plato himself, whose negative attitude to depicting *technē* appears particularly in *Rep*. X. This is a wide spread cliché: cf. Smith 2018, com. ad V.8.1.20 and V.8.1.32-40, Emislsson 2017, p. 368, Beierwaltes 2013, p. 15-20, Scott 2011, Büttner 2006, p. 80-81, O'Meara 1993, p. 95, Armstrong 1975, Tatarkiewicz 1970-75, Rich 1960, de Keyser 1955, Freeman 1940, Gilbert and Kuhn 1939, or Svoboda 1926. For my disagreement with this interpretation of Plato, see Gál 2014 and cf. also Jinek 2009. Plato condemns only that subtype of art which imitates the sensible world. But that does not mean that different type of art could not exist, which would imitate the paradigm. If nothing else, art does play a crucial role in the proposed education system of *Kallipolis* (cf. *Rep*. II and III), but has to be carefully supervised by philosophers (cf. *Leg*. VII 801d) because it mixes truth with falsehood, or beauty with ugliness (cf. *Rep*. II,377a, 383a, *Apol*. 22a-e and *Men*. 99c-d). Corrigan (2005, p. 210) consensually notes that at least Plotinus must have understood Plato somehow in this fashion.

[61] Consequently, I cannot agree with Schubert (1973, p. 67) who claims that Plotinus appreciates the beauty of nature more than that of *technē*. According to him, the soul, or the life that the soul gives to things, should be the distinguishing criterion. There is, however, no reason to assume that the *technitēs* could not in principle be equal to the abilities of nature. It is surely true that Plotinus sometimes praises the world soul for ordering bodies without being impeded by them in any way (cf. IV.3.9), and without having to plan or consider its product (cf. IV.3.10) or a need to correct it (cf. II.9.2). In this sense, nature creates better images than *technai* (cf. IV.3.10). On the other hand, both nature and a *technitēs* are on the same level as far as the aspect of *mimēsis* is concerned. If we follow Plotinus' line of thought in III.8.5-6, it is obvious that the contemplation of an individual soul may be raised even above the contemplation of nature. For a discussion of this, see Rolof (1970, p. 36-44), and Deck (1967, p. 64-72). The same objections apply also to the interpretation of Kuisma (2003). His position is convincingly attacked by Omtzigt (2012, p. 60-66). A well balanced discussion of the topic is to be found in Vassilopoulou 2014, p. 493-498.

context of this example see Kalligas 2013, com. ad V.8.1.32-40). The statue of Zeus is thus his ideal portrait, which means that it has been created according to an individual form.[62]

The whole proof that it is a form and not matter which is the cause of beauty in a thing is thus performed in four steps: 1) As the comparison of an unworked stone and a statue shows, matter is not the sufficient condition for concluding that a thing is beautiful. 2) A form is not already in matter (e.g. in a stone). It has to be first invested in it by a *technitēs*. 3) The beauty which enters a stone is inferior to that in *technē*. 4) The *logos* entering matter does not stay pure, but is actualised only in as much as the matter submits to *technē*. Matter is used here in the Aristotelian sense with regard to the forming principle, that is, not in the technical sense of *hylē* as the most remote emanation of the Good. For in a stone, *hylē* is already formed by the form of stone by the agency of the world soul.

3.3 Beauty in nature and soul (V.8.2)

Plotinus, however, now wants to leave the field of art and turns to perceptible nature itself, which the art was incorrectly supposed to imitate. Here too, he inquires into the cause of beauty and, as in *technē*, he rejects that it is matter represented here by menstrual fluid (cf. Smith 2018, com. ad V.8.2.7, Kalligas 2013, com. ad V.8.2.1-9 and Corrigan 2005, p. 207). Nor is a physical property, like colour or shape, the true cause of the beauty of an object of nature (cf. Beutler-Theiler's com. ad V.8.2.6). Also, with regard to objects of nature, the true source of their beauty is therefore the form in which the relevant thing participates. Plotinus supports his premise by the means of a brief debate with an imaginary opponent, whom he first grants that mass (*onkos*) can be beauty, but only in order to entangle

[62] The question of individual forms or ideas is of course a peculiar one. Personally, I am convinced that individual forms could be kinds of *logoi* of universal ideas, into which these develop in the movement of unfolding, and which, however, remain at the level of Intellect because they are immediately 'rolled back up into' the general structures of relations. I imagine the mechanism as analogous to that described in the case of species and genera in *Enneads* III.8.8 and V.3.10 as unfolding (*exelissō*), as movement (*kinēsis*), process (*prohodos*) or activity (*energeia*) in VI.7.13. For an overview of this topic, see the classical discussion between Rist (1963, 1970) and Blumenthal (1966) and the re-examination by Kalligas (1997).

him immediately in an aporia.[63] For in such a case, the reason-principle (*logos*) which the opponent acknowledges as the productive principle in contrast to mass, would not, as the opposite of mass, be beautiful. Considering the principle of the superiority of the cause, however, this implication is completely unacceptable to Plotinus. Moreover, the same form may make both the small and the great beautiful, so it does not depend on the size of mass.[64] Another argument that Plotinus brings in to support his position, is that it is not the mass of sensible objects that enters the soul through the eyes, but only the forms of these objects. If mass entered the soul, it would be difficult to explain how it would be able to pass through such a small organ as the eye.[65] Ultimately, Plotinus again discusses the principle of the superiority of the cause, but this time only with regard to homogeneity. For, according to him, if the cause of beauty were ugly, it could not create its opposite. If it were neither beautiful nor ugly, it would not be comprehensible why it begets the beautiful rather than the ugly. If however, we look at nature in the right way, that is, if we look into its core, as it were, and not at its outer expression, that is to say, if we look at the reason-principle (*logos*) rather than at the motion that it causes, then we understand that nature is actually beautiful and more so is its cause. Plotinus then compares the confusion of the ordinary person who does not see spiritual beauty behind the outer façade of nature, to Narcissus' fatal misunderstanding (cf. Miles 1999, p. 44). We have already encountered the ambiguity of beauty in *Enneads* I.6 and VI.9 (cf. chapter 2.8) and we do not learn much more in V.8.2. However, *Ennead* V.5, the next in chronological order, which is also a part of the *Großschrift*, does explicitly associate this ambiguity with beauty as such, even on the level of Intellect. Plotinus says there that beauty “even draws those who do not know what is happening away from the Good, as the beloved draws a child away from its father; for Beauty is younger”

[63] For the relation of matter and mass see II.4.11. Mass is the indefinite (*aoristos*) matter defined as extension (*megethos*).

[64] This is perhaps a reference to Aristotle's definition of beauty in *Poet*. 1450b.

[65] It must be added however, that Plotinus' own position raises far more difficult questions. For example, how can something that is not spatial be present in the physical, that is, how can the soul be present in the body? Plotinus repeatedly struggles with questions of this kind in *Enneads* IV.3, IV.9 and VI.4-5. For the discussion of Plotinus' theory of sense perception, see Emilsson 1988. In IV.7.6.19-24, Plotinus deals with the same problem of how sensualy perceptibles can enter the soul through a small organ such as the eye. There however, he says that all perceived objects gather into unity in the pupils.

(V.5.12.36-38, transl. Armstrong). Obviously our hesitation whether it is in the nature of beauty both to stimulate the ascent and to impede it, or if matter is to be charged, can now be decided in favour of the former option. Even the beauty of Intellect poses this kind of threat to the soul.

But the view inside the area of *logos*, also serves Plotinus as a stepping stone to a higher path, to the beauty of the soul. The beauty of spiritual virtues, the sciences, actions, and souls in general, he considers incomparably higher than the beauty of bodies, regardless of how large. According to Plotinus, the view of the spiritual beauty of an ugly person (like Socrates; cf. Kalligas 2013, com. ad V.8.2.35-41) is a sufficient reason to call him or her beautiful. Anyone who would not want to do so, would not even be able to see himself or herself as beautiful. Such a person would therefore remain on the sensible level and would deceive himself or herself just like Narcissus. Plotinus again emphasizes that in this work he will not turn to such a reader, but to the kind of reader who sees spiritual beauty or has seen it at least once. In such a case, Plotinus makes an appeal to recall the experience that can kindle the required insight from the sensible to the spiritual.

3.4 Beauty of soul (V.8.3)

Plotinus offers a brief summary: nature too, not just *technē*, contains the reason-principle (*logos*) through which the physical thing is beautiful. In both cases it comes from the soul. What must be meant here is that nature as the lower part of soul has its *logos* from the upper part, which has a clearer contemplation as opposed to that of nature, and is always illuminated by the Intellect (cf. III.8.4-5). Beauty in the upper part of the soul is necessarily then, more beautiful according to the principle of the superiority of cause. Beauty of the soul is evident especially in virtuous souls, for they approach beauty itself or primary beauty, i.e. Intellect by means of purification. Plotinus again repeats his standpoint from the beginning of the *Ennead*: beauty inspires one to contemplate its cause (cf. V.8.3.1-8).

Here, however, we must expand on our interpretation of this standpoint. It is no longer possible, as it had been with Intellect, to identify the understanding of the beauty of the soul with the understanding of the soul as such. For the soul, unlike

Intellect, can also be ugly, that is, when it mixes with the body and imitates it.[66] As Plotinus said in *Ennead* I.2.4, soul is of a good nature but is at the same time unable to remain in the real good, and so it has a natural tendency in both directions. Rather then, the reference to the cause must be based here on the character of beauty itself. This also corresponds to the way how Plotinus speaks about that which inspires us to ascend: "…by adorning (*kosmeō*) the soul and giving it light from a greater light which is primarily beauty it makes us deduce *by its very presence* in the soul (*en psychē ōn*) what that before it is like…" (V.8.3.5-7, transl. Armstrong, italics O.G.). When adorned, i.e. made beautiful, the soul becomes an image of or a reference to the Intellect. In chapters 2.5 and 2.6 we have already discussed what it means for a soul to become beautiful. It must be purified, conversed and become like the god, which will restore it to its original state that has its archetype in the activity of the Intellect. When the soul becomes aware of itself as a part of the Intellect in this sense, it also becomes a *logos* which imprints itself in those parts of the soul that are not united with it. Those parts become virtuous and get a share in the beauty that the highest part becomes.

At this stage, the beauty of the soul serves Plotinus as a stepping stone to a description of Intellect. He first of all, however, mentions the difficulty of every such description. Intellect is by nature on the boundary of speech by which it is, and yet is not graspable. Intellect is not graspable because it is a model of speech. In this sense it is beyond speech. However, it is graspable to the extent to which speech reflects the immanent structure of Intellect. To catch sight of Intellect is, according to Plotinus, possible by one's own inner purification and understanding of one's own partial nature. We are but parts of a larger whole and in need of purification, like a found piece of gold that we must wash and also understand that we do not have all gold, just some of it. Intellect can therefore be a starting point within oneself, which one must imitate with all one's soul. Plotinus suggests, however, that one should begin by investigating Intellect in the gods. Intellect in them is more active and is more visible. This also means, however, that they are more beautiful.

[66] Never entirely, of course; not by its highest part which is part of Intellect. Cf. however footnote 37.

Nevertheless, the gods also draw their beauty from participation in the Intellect and not from a beautiful body (cf. V.8.3.12-23).

Plotinus differentiates between two kinds of gods, both of whom have in common superiority over the human soul, that is to say, greater proximity to the Intellect (V.8.3.27-31).[67] The gods of the first kind live in heaven, and raise their heads above the outer edge of heaven in order to catch sight of the content of Intellect. The clear reference to *Phdr.* 246d-249d (cf. Heitsch 1997, p. 101) suggests that Plotinus may mean heavenly bodies, which imitate Intellect with their regular circular movements. Indeed in *Ennead* II.9.8, we find questions addressed to the Gnostics who consider heavenly bodies to be evil archons trying to avert them from attaining the intelligible universe. If what Plotinus showed is true, i.e. if the intelligible universe is beautiful and everything is creative contemplation and the sensually perceptible universe is a beautiful image of Intellect, "why then are not the stars, both those in the lower spheres and those in the highest, gods moving in order, circling in well-arranged beauty?" (II.9.8.31-33, transl. Armstrong).

The gods of the second kind, merge with the forms themselves (cf. Rolof 1970, p. 46-47), and, as Plotinus figuratively states, live in another heaven. They do not have to look anywhere, because they immediately see all the contents of Intellect which they themselves are, since Intellect is of the nature of self-thinking which it itself is. Plotinus describes this situation to great effect by showing that the individual forms of earthly beings are the same: everything is everything in Intellect; man is an animal, a plant, the sea, the earth, and the heavens, and vice versa (cf. V.8.3.32-34). However, he also gives a reason why these gods and also the former ones who have bodies, are beautiful. In both cases, it is not because of their bodies, which the upper gods do not even have, but simply because they are gods, i.e. because they are or have a share in the Intellect. Plotinus is even more specific on this point. Being Intellect is said not only to be an immediate ordered givenness of everything in everything (i.e. wisdom – see below), but also intellection which is "always right in the calm and stability and purity of Intellect" (V.8.3.25-26, transl. Armstrong).

[67] However, cf. the discussion of the topic both in footnote 52 and my comments below in this chapter.

This intellection is directed at divine matters which Intellect sees, i.e. the forms (cf. V.8.3.23-27).

At the current level, i.e. that of the soul, let us examine even in more detail what it means to have a share in the Intellect. Why are the lesser gods beautiful? *Ennead* II.2(14) *On the movement of heaven*, raises with reference to Plato's *Tim.* 34a the question as to why the cosmos moves in a circle. This is also what the lesser gods do as we have seen in *Ennead* II.9.8. The universe moves so because it imitates the Intellect in this fashion (cf. II.2.1). “The soul's power is movement round its centre” (II.2.2.7, transl. Armstrong) but this centre must be understood as referring to God, i.e. Intellect as the soul's source (cf. II.2.2). Because the soul “cannot go to him (scil. to the God; O.G.), it goes round him” (II.2.2.15-16, transl. Armstrong) and it “embraces him lovingly and keeps round him as far as it can” (II.2.2.13-14, transl. Armstrong). Since the intelligible is not in place and is in this sense everywhere, the universe tries to get to it by performing circular movements because the soul “moves it continually in drawing it continually, not moving to some other place but towards itself in the same place (…) and so gives it possession of soul at every stage in its progress” (II.2.1.46-49, transl. Armstrong). Heavenly bodies perform not only spherical motion with the whole universe but each of them also an individual motion around its own centre, imitating Intellect according to their nature (cf. II.2.2).

All this obviously applies to the world soul which governs the heavens and individual souls of heavenly bodies, but how are things with individual souls below the level of celestial bodies? Plotinus says only that there is a natural tendency in us too to perform circular movements, but as the part of our soul in question is earthly, it does not circulate easily. Additionally, there is a further constituent in us which moves in straight lines (cf. II.2.2) as bodies do (cf. II.2.1). This is parallel to what Plotinus says in *Ennead* IV.8[6] *On the descent of the soul into bodies*, where he recognizes two reasons why the soul's fellowship with the body is treacherous. The body becomes a hindrance to thought and it fills the soul with pleasures, desires and grieves (cf. IV.8.2). Both the earthly character of the lower part of our soul and the natural tendency of our body to move in straight lines, refer to the

peculiar involvement of our soul with particular bodies. This involvement distorts the circular movement of soul and creates the difficulty for such souls to govern bodies.[68] As Plotinus puts it in *Ennead* IV.8.2, our souls control much worse bodies than the world soul does. They had to sink deep into the world because of those bodies, which would otherwise disintegrate since their elements would be carried to their own places. This causes a need for constant taking care of our particular bodies. "There are two kinds of care of everything, the general, by the inactive command of one setting it in order with royal authority, and the particular, which involves actually doing something oneself and by contact with what is being done infects the doer with the nature of what is being done" (IV.8.2.27-31, transl. Armstrong).

If in *Ennead* V.8 Plotinus said that the lesser gods are beautiful because they are gods, i.e. because they have a share in Intellect, it means that they are beautiful because they perform circular movements. By doing so, they imitate the stability and purity of Intellect and direct themselves at it. It seems that we may combine this partial outcome with what has been said in chapters 2.5 and 2.6 about the participation of the soul in Intellect. What has been discussed there is the attainment of virtue by an individual soul which had to be purified, conversed and become like Intellect. The latter restored it to its original and beautiful state that had its archetype in the activity of Intellect. We know that an individual soul becomes aware of itself as a part of Intellect when it accomplishes the purification, and it also becomes a *logos* which imprints itself in those parts that are not united with Intellect and restores them in their original orderly form. If we consider that the world soul has actually never lost its original orderly form, and that the individual souls may be influenced by their involvement with particular bodies which causes the loss of the global perspective of the world soul, it seems to follow that the *logos* which an individual virtuous soul receives, restores the movements of the soul precisely into a circular form. This claim may be supported by passages from *Ennead* I.2 where Plotinus says that the world soul desires Intellect in a similar way as we do, and that this is why our good order *also* comes from Intellect (cf.

[68] Cf. *Enneads* II.1.4; IV.8.8; II.9.2, 4; IV.4.12; III.2.2; V.8.12. And also Smith 2011.

I.2.1). Therefore, both the world soul and the individual souls receive good order from the Intellect.

Does the ordered state of an individual soul and that of the world soul differ in any way? I believe so, because restoring an individual soul into circular motion surely does not cause our bodies to start rotating on the spot and revolve in an orbit (I am sure that Porphyry would record such an entertaining event during one of Plotinus' four henoses). Rather, it means that our thinking is set into such motion while our bodily movements still differ from those of the heavenly bodies, because being virtuous still means being an individual whose role differs from that of the gods.[69] Indeed, as we have seen during the analyses of this chapter of *Ennead* V.8, becoming virtuous means among other things, to understand that one is but a part of a larger whole. Similarly in *Ennead* IV.8, Plotinus admits that individual souls may share in the rule of the world soul "like those who live with a universal monarch and share in the government of his empire" (IV.8.4.7-8, transl. Armstrong). The restoration of circular movement of our soul is then perhaps the strange transformation we undergo when we become virtuous, which causes that linear movements of perceived bodies do not disrupt the movements of our soul and, as quoted in chapter 3.2, the soul "only makes itself aware of pleasures when it has to, using them as remedies and reliefs to prevent its activity being impeded [and – added by O.G.] it gets rid of pains or if it cannot, bears them quietly and makes them less by not suffering with the body" (I.2.5.7-12, transl. Armstrong). This was for Plotinus obviously one of the points of the relevant passages from Plato's *Timaeus* (34b-37c and 42e-44d).

But let me add, that while it may seem at the moment that an individual soul is in this sense never as great and dignified as the world soul, it is only half the truth. An individual soul may shift through different levels of the universe, including becoming aware of itself as Intellect and even uniting with the Good, which is something the world soul never does. This is probably also why Plotinus in the beginning of the present chapter of *Ennead* V.8 says that beauty of the soul is especially evident in virtuous souls, for they approach primary beauty. On the other

[69] Cf. Plotinus' hesitation in ascribing virtue to the world soul in *Ennead* I.2.1.

hand, he says a bit later that Intellect is more active and visible in gods, i.e. they are also more beautiful. This again shows the ambiguous nature of our individual souls. They are both inferior to individual astral souls and to the world soul, and superior to them because our souls may ascend above their level. Much more often however, our souls are sunk below their level. It seems to me that Plotinus especially lays emphasis on the superiority of the world soul when he addresses people like the Gnostics (cf. II.9.7-9).

3.5 Unity and multiplicity in Intellect (V.8.4)

Plotinus devotes the next passages to the kind of *unitas multiplex* which is specific to Intellect. First of all, he describes it with reference to Homer's *Illiad* 6.138 as the easy life of the gods, for whom the truth is a mother and a nurse, existence and sustenance. He then adds the characteristic predicates of Intellect – true being, intuition, transparency, the total absence of darkness, clearness to the core without resistance, which he eventually summarizes as "light is transparent to light" (V.8.4.6, transl. Armstrong). The following passages relate to the inner linkage of Intellect with itself, to each of its parts being a whole, which emphasizes the paradoxical nature of Intellect compared to the relationship between a scientific theorem and science as a whole (cf. V.8.4.47-50).[70] He is convinced that each individual axiom contains the whole science, because it is causally bound to the other scientific axioms with which it creates the whole system of science. In this sense, each part of the whole of science is itself the whole of it and vice versa: the whole is also each of its parts, because they are its contents. Intellect is therefore a strongly unified unity in multiplicity and each worldly *unitas multiplex* is but an imitation of this original. In naming the second hypostasis the *one-many* (*hen polla*), as compared to *the One* (*hen*), and *the one and the many* (*hen kai polla*), the first and the third hypostasis respectively, Plotinus has inventively captured the intensity of the unity of Intellect (cf. V.1.8.23-26).

[70] This comparison is a standard one in relation to the Intellect. Cf. for example III.9.2, IV.3.2, IV.9.5, V.9.8, or VI.2.20. Plotinus nevertheless, does not hesitate to go beyond this comparison. Cf. V.8.5 in chapter 3.6.

Plotinus illustrates the substantial characteristic of Intellect with the example of the Sun and the stars, the great and the small, which he makes identical to each other (V.8.4.8-10). On the other hand, he insists that all parts of Intellect are distinct from each other since they are fully determined (cf. more explicitly in V.8.9 – see the discussion in chapter 3.10 – and also in VI.9.8.29-33, V.1.4.39-41, V.9.6.7-9, VI.6.7.7-10). He therefore characterizes Intellect as a differentiated unity of everything. In order to better understand the immense unity of Intellect, it is necessary to understand its diversity and the way it is unified. Plotinus offers two explanations for the diversity of Intellect. First, Intellect is essentially double, as the subject-object relation (cf. e.g. V.4.2 or V.3.10). Second, Plotinus repeatedly emphasizes the plurality of the objects of its intellection, that is, the plurality of ideas or forms (cf. e.g. V.3.10 and VI.7.39). As Emilsson puts it, these two answers may be understood as essentially united: we only have to assume that the difference of the subject-object relation somehow implies a difference in the object of the thinking of Intellect itself (cf. Emilsson 2007, p. 103). Intellect needs to be understood as "itself thinking that it itself is" (Emilsson 2007, p. 109). It means that it is essentially a composite in the sense that the subject's self-reflecting comprises the reflecting subject itself, and that the subject is part of the reflected object. It is therefore the same diversity that distinguishes the subject from the object and the object as such. It is of course the Good that is the intended object of the intellection of Intellect, its desire and final cause, but Intellect cannot truly think it because of the absolute transcendence of the Good. In its desire for the Good, Intellect therefore tries to think the Good in dividing itself into the thinking subject and an image of the Good, which it contains and is also itself. By means of the act of thinking, it therefore does not reach the desired object itself, but reaches itself as the subject-object (cf. Emilsson 2007, p. 108, and chapter 5.3). Therefore, it is no contradiction when Plotinus states that Intellect desires the Good and also itself. The desire of the inchoate Intellect, i.e. Intellect not yet established in itself, is therefore one and only has two aspects. Although it is the desire for the Good, it is articulated as the desire for its own self-sufficiency. Intellect can, however, achieve it only insofar as its own nature allows. It can only be sub-maximally unified or true *unitas multiplex*. Plotinus' conception of reflexivity as "thinking thinking about

itself" contains this special loop or rolling up into itself, which enables us to conceive of the two above mentioned differences within reflexivity as being one and the same (cf. further chapters 4.1-4.2).

Intellect itself as the whole of all individual forms is therefore the content of Intellect. Plotinus also expresses this by talking about forms as individual Intellects. As we have seen, he endeavours to think about the relations between forms using the analogy of science in relation to the individual theorems of science. In this sense, his premise in *Ennead* VI.2.19 according to which the lower genera emerge by the differentiation of the higher ones (cf. chapter 4.1.1), is well understandable. This differentiation is described more precisely in *Ennead* III.8.8 and also in V.3.10 as unfolding (*exelissō*), as movement (*kinēsis*), procession (*prohodos*) or activity (*energeia*) in VI.7.13 (cf. chapter 5.2). The activity of self-thinking therefore unfolds in proceeding towards the lowest species and returning to the highest genera. Consequently, Intellect thinks everything at once but as being differentiated. Intellect is therefore completely transparent to itself; individual forms or thoughts have self-awareness and each of them is both itself and the whole. This means that each form is completely without reference to anything external. Otherwise, it would comport with as its image. Forms are not true like an image may be true; they are the truth. This is why Intellect is situated on the boundary of language. It is not discursive in the manner of the psychic *logos*. Rather, it is an intelligible structure of mutual relations which are reflected by language.

With such a notion of the Intellect in mind, Plotinus stresses in V.8.4.11-14 that all parts of Intellect are pure (*katharotēs*) since they are not disturbed by their opposites as it were, like the rest by motion. Interestingly, Plotinus mentions in this context beauty, and explains that it is not mixed with something not beautiful, but is everywhere in beauty (V.8.4.14-15). This may mean two things. First, since everything is everything else in the Intellect, everything is also beauty. In this sense, beauty is everywhere in beauty (cf. Rolof 1970, p. 50). Second, it could be interpreted as implying that there cannot be matter in Intellect, since Plotinus so far related beauty to form as opposed to ugly matter. Therefore, if there was matter in

the Intellect, beauty would be in something not beautiful. However, things are more complicated here and Plotinus addresses them in *Ennead* II.4 *On matter*.

Matter can surely not be a part of Intellect if we understand it as something undefined (*aoriston*) and shapeless (*amorphon*), while claiming that the forms are simple and cannot contain anything of the sort (cf. II.4.2). However, Intellect is not only simple but also diverse. Therefore, this question requires an intrinsic enquiry. Plotinus first urges us not to despise automatically everything that is undefined and implies shapelessness. In some cases, something of the sort might give itself to what is above it, like a soul gives itself to Intellect in order to receive form from it, and become perfected by it. If the matter in the sensible world is a substrate (*hypokeimenon*) of incessant change, this cannot be the case of intelligible matter because in Intellect everything always has and has had the same form. It cannot change to anything else since everything is already everything else. Intelligible matter is never something shapeless (cf. II.4.3). It is only in our minds that we separate all form from a substrate and claim that the residual substrate is something undefined and shapeless. Nevertheless, it is necessary to presuppose a substratum even in Intellect since there must be something which all the forms share, intelligible matter, as well as something else which differentiates them, their individual forms. We should therefore imagine this unique unity of Intellect as varied and of many shapes (cf. II.4.4). The intelligible matter receives an intelligible and defined life when formed, whereas the matter in the bodies is but a decorated corpse. In this sense, intelligible matter is something true (*alēthinos*) and substantial or, as Plotinus corrects himself, the whole of the formed matter is an illuminated substance (*pefōtismenē ūsia*). The principle (*archē*) of such matter is Otherness (*heterotēs*) and first movement (*prōtē kinēsis*) which create it, and which one might try to identify with the highest genera (cf. II.4.5 and my chapters 4.1 and 5.3-5.4). Thus, it seems to be reasonable to conclude that the intelligible matter is something ugly only when we in our minds separate it from the forms and contrast it with them, while in reality there is always a formed and living substance. In this sense, the intelligible matter should not be considered something that could cause beauty

in Intellect not to be in beauty, for it is itself beautiful because it is simple (*haplē*) and has the form of Intellect (*nooeidēs*; cf. V.1.3.22-25).

If we now return to *Ennead* V.8.4, we should be able to better understand the following passages where Plotinus endeavours to think that both the constitutive moments of Intellect, i.e. its differentiation and its unity, are in a sense parts of the same process, or better to say its wisdom which precisely expresses the immediate orderly immanence of everything in everything (cf. V.8.5 and my analysis in chapter 3.6). Plotinus inventively expresses this with the parable of walking over ground that is itself the walker, and perhaps even better by comparing the simultaneity to an ascent during which the person ascending is followed all the way, step by step, by his or her own starting point. Consequently, the beauty of Intellect is not relative in any sense, but is truly beautiful, for it is not in anything that would itself not be beautiful (cf. V.8.4.14-19).[71] Plotinus further describes contemplation proper to Intellect with reference to the mythical figure of Lynceus,[72] who had the ability to see through solid objects. Not only are the objects of Intellect's contemplation absolutely transparent, but the very act of contemplation is a penetrating seeing.[73] Moreover, Plotinus adds that this is not a look that could satiate itself with its object, since the term 'to satiate' implies a previous emptiness, but *there* everything is eternal and inexhaustible and lives the best life. Because of the immediate accessibility and uncoveredness of everything to everything, Intellect may legitimately be called true wisdom. Wisdom is not an accidental characteristic of Intellect but Intellect itself. Plotinus illustrates the fact that Intellect is always, so to say, accompanied by wisdom[74] by comparing it with Sophocles' statement from *OC*

[71] The meaning of beauty being everywhere in beauty will be further refined in chapter 5.4.

[72] One of the Argonauts. See Hornblower, Spawforth 1999, s.v. 'Argonauts'. Cf. of course *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes.

[73] Perhaps Rolof (1970, p. 52-53) is right to claim that this is the reason why the life of the Intellect is called easy in the beginning of V.8.4.

[74] Interestingly, Plotinus uses the word *autoepistēmē* in V.8.4.40. This absolute knowledge must however be understood as a reference to Plato's *Phdr*. 247d-e and thus synonymous with wisdom. What is much stranger here, is Plotinus' specification of this *autoepistēmē* as *entautha*, which Armstrong surprisingly does not translate at all. Accordingly, there are two possible readings of this passage. Either we emphasize *entautha* (cf. H-S in apparatu: Ficino) and interpret *autoepistēmē* as only a human way of achieving wisdom, and the point of the comparison with Zeus and Justice as saying precisely that they are different (I adhered to this reading in my paper *Gál 2011*). Or we emphasize *autoepistēmē*, do not pay attention to *entautha* (which may be a mistaken attempt to emendate the original text), and interpret the comparison as saying that wisdom always

1381-1382 that Justice sits beside the throne of Zeus in their common revelation. Plotinus even considers the correct understanding of wisdom to be central to remaining faithful to Plato's legacy, which is based on understanding knowledge that is not different from that which it itself is in (cf. V.8.4.23-55). Therefore, it has to be further explored.

3.6. Intellect and wisdom (V.8.5)

In order to do that, Plotinus undertakes a journey to self-relating contemplation or self-thinking intrinsic to Intellect. His starting point is the claim that all creation takes place in accordance with some wisdom, in other words according to some plan, with a certain intention or aim. An example of such a creation are the individual *technai* whose knowledge Plotinus describes as diversity composed into unity. This is why craftsmen skilled in their field turn to the wisdom of nature which is one, and which they take apart into diversity for their purposes. However, Plotinus distinguishes between the reason-principle (*logos*) in nature and nature itself. Therefore, he inquires into the source of the *logos* which is the very plan (and therefore wisdom), according to which nature realizes its potential as productive. The reason-principle must come from Intellect and even there we have to ask where Intellect got it from. The answer, according to Plotinus, is that Intellect got wisdom from itself since Intellect is wisdom itself. Then however, wisdom is all beings and all beings are wisdom, from which their worth and substantiality originates. Consequently, those beings that are not identical with wisdom itself cannot, according to Plotinus, even be called true substances. At the end of the chapter, Plotinus endeavours to describe wisdom, which is Intellect, and resides in Intellect's immediate inclusiveness of everything in everything using a contrast between scientific theorems and beautiful images. He now turns away from his otherwise standard parable involving science and its axioms and believes he can express the *unitas multiplex* of Intellect even better by comparing it to a beautiful image, because it better captures the immediateness of the view of the whole

accompanies Intellect. The latter reading seems to me now more probable because *autoepistēmē* is for a Platonist too loaded, and this reading also better fits the context.

together with the ordered nature of diversity. However, he corrects this parable too, when he seeks to understand images quite paradoxically not as painted, but as real or true (*onta*) ones.

3.7 Wisdom and beauty (V.8.6)

Plotinus further develops his comparison of wisdom to a beautiful image by referring to the practices of the Egyptian sages. To convey wisdom, they did not use letters imitating the successive nature of uttered speech, but pictures.[75] These enable an overall insight and do not engage the dianoetic and bouletic parts of the soul. The successive thinking of speech can, however, be derived from these images for the specific purposes of explaining individual phenomena, as was the case with *technai* derived from the wisdom of nature. According to Plotinus, if we wish to glimpse the beauty of things, we must look at the wisdom in them which endows them with beauty.

3.8 The correct notion of the creation of the cosmos (V.8.7)

With such a notion of Intellect, it is impossible to imagine the creation of the cosmos as if its plan had been gradually developed, and afterwards executed similarly to the way *technitai* produce various objects (cf. Plato's *Tim*. and the interpretation of Plotinus' understanding of it in chapter 5.1). There are two reasons why this is impossible. First, because this kind of plan could not be used to create the cosmos because discursive thought *(logismos*), which would develop the plan for its construction, exists only in the world and operates with images from experience, comparing them to the forms in Intellect. Second, the idea of creating the cosmos according to a plan entails a false notion of the process of creation. Artisanal work implies a kind of shaping for which one needs hands, feet, and so forth, in other words, everything that has yet to be created.[76] Such a creation is

[75] For a discussion of this understanding of Egyptian writing or temple drawings cf. de Keyser 1955 and Kalligas 2013, com. ad V.8.6.1-9.

[76] Moreover such a notion of creation is derived from human fashion of creation, which is not primary. Cf. *Ennead* III.8.2. This way of imagining the creation of the cosmos is according to Plotinus characteristic of the Gnostics and must be abandoned. Cf. *Ennead* II.9.4 and 12.

derived from primary creation, and it would seem more fitting to think about comparing the former to the latter rather than the other way round. For these two reasons, Plotinus thinks that although the cosmos was created, and done so as an image of Intellect by the agency of the soul, it was created suddenly, as it were (*hoion exaiphnēs*), all at once. Matter in the cosmos is therefore bound up with the forms that are projected into it. Plotinus deduces several consequences from this: Foremost among these consequences is that worldly things are a mixture of forms and matter. This mixture is multi-layered because matter is first shaped by the forms of the elements, which are then organized into higher wholes of objects. Since things perceptible to the senses are mixed with matter, they are no longer pure like forms in Intellect. This also means that they are not as beautiful as the latter (cf. V.8.7.1-22).

Plotinus, however, immediately changes his perspective from the view of matter (*hylē*) as a purely negative element to the one that emphasizes its kinship with beings because it is not the absolute opposite of true being, but only different from it.[77] In this sense it is a kind of last form (*eidos ti eschaton*), and Plotinus can therefore understand the cosmos as a whole as the sum of forms. Through this prism, Plotinus can also repeat his premise about creation without resistance, effort, and noise. For there is nothing that could resist the forms and would have to be surmounted because everything is of the same spiritual essence. As Plotinus notes at this point, man, before creation, was merely a form of himself, so that Plotinus can even say about him that he was a creator but moved away from this state when he separated from Intellect and became but a part of the whole. If, however, he succeeds in reuniting with the whole, then he too will run the whole of the cosmos, as Plotinus states, referring to Plato's *Phdr.* 246c (cf. V.8.7.22-35).

Similarly to how he sought to demonstrate that it was necessary to look at *technē* through the prism of the creation of the universe and at human knowledge through wisdom, which is Intellect, Plotinus now also states that we must look at

[77] He thus touches upon the difficult question of the status of matter (*hylē*). It seems to me that Plotinus eventually holds two contradictory views and considers matter as being simultaneously the absolute opposite and the relative opposite of the Good. Evidence of both conceptions appears in *Enneads* II.4.16 and II.5.5. For interesting interpretations of this topic, see O'Meara 1997, O'Brien 1996, Corrigan 1996 and Narbonne 1992.

the world and the mutual arrangement of all of its content from the perspective of the structure of Intellect. According to him, the Earth is, for example, round solely because this arrangement of things is determined by the Intellect. Any truthful conclusion that we could make in our assumptions thus precedes each of our considerations in the following respect: sensible reality is as it is because of Intellect, and Intellect is the self-grounding unity of being and of wisdom, and excludes the question of establishing its arrangement (cf. V.8.7.36-47 and chapter 5.1).

3.9 Beauty and the Good, bodily world as a beautiful image (V.8.8)

Plotinus now takes advantage of the results of the enquiry he has made so far, in order to be fully justified in calling Intellect beautiful. It is, according to him, primarily beautiful (*kalon prōtōs*) and beautiful as a whole, and, considering that it is everything, each of its parts is beautiful, being at the same time the whole. Plotinus also for the first time in this treatise, though briefly, brings the Good into play, saying that because it precedes Intellect, it does not at all want to be beautiful (*ūde kalon ethelei einai*; cf. V.8.8.1-5). In this sense, the Good transcends beauty. We have already encountered the question whether the primary beauty is Intellect or the Good itself. *Ennead* V.8 is quite explicit in this matter, but other *Enneads* from the same period such as V.5 (the following part of the *Großschrift*) or VI.7[38] have more to say on this topic. Since *Ennead* VI.7 will be analysed in chapter 5 (for the relevant passages see chapter 5.6), I will now focus only on chapter twelve from *Ennead* V.5 on which Pierre Hadot (1993, p. 74) bases his distinction between the gentle nature of the Good and the shocking beauty of Intellect.

In this passage, Plotinus states that the beautiful (Intellect) needs the Good but the Good does not need beauty (cf. V.5.12.31-33). Compared to Intellect, the Good "is gentle (*ēpios*) and kindly (*prosēnēs*) and gracious (*habros*)" whereas "Beauty brings wonder (*thambos*) and shock (*ekplēxis*) and pleasure (*hēdonē*) mingled with pain (*algos*)" (V.5.12.34-35, transl. Armstrong). This distinction obviously refers to the desire of the ascending soul. However astonishing Intellect may be, we still feel pain, so to say, because we have not yet achieved the ultimate goal of our desire,

the Good. This distinction is already implied in the preceding passages of *Ennead* V.5 where the Good is compared to a king sitting on a beautiful pedestal, which actually rather hangs from him, and ruling over the inconceivable beauty of the procession going on before him. One may observe an increasing royal dignity in this procession but when the king himself is suddenly revealed, all prostrate before him and pray. Or actually not all, because some have already left because they thought they had seen enough (cf. V.5.3.3-15), or they only stuffed themselves by their gluttony with unlawful things, because they considered these more real than the god which they came to celebrate (cf. V.5.11.12-16).[78] Plotinus also stresses in V.5.3.15-21 that such a king rules over his own kind and is not alien to it. In V.5.12, Plotinus gives three more reasons for differentiating the Good and the beautiful. First, the Good is longed for by everybody as if by a divine instinct (*apomanteuomai*) and it is something without which nothing can exist. It is present even to those who are asleep, although such people are of course not unaware of it. However, when they become aware, they recognize the Good as something always already present, so that it is never shocking. Beauty, on the other hand, is something that has to be seen first in order to arouse longing, *erōs*, and when we behold it, it shocks us and causes pain. Therefore, as Gerson (2013, com. ad V.5.12.15-17) points out, love of beauty is always conscious (*syniēmi*) and thus implies differentiation of subject and object, which further shows that beauty cannot be the First. Moreover, Plotinus implies here that beauty makes us remember that which is above it as its cause, whereas the Good does not because it is recognized as always already present, i.e. in fact never forgotten. Therefore, Plotinus concludes, the fact that the desire for the Good is more ancient than that for beauty also shows that the Good is prior to beauty (cf. V.5.12.7-19). Second, whereas the Good is good for others, so that if one attains it, it suffices, beauty is beautiful for itself and not for the one who sees it. Therefore, it belongs only to the one who has it (cf. V.5.12.19-23). In other words, there is ultimately a difference in that the Good is good for others and not for itself (cf. VI.7.27 discussed in chapter 5.5 and Tornau 2011, com. ad V.5.12.19-24) whereas beauty is beautiful only for itself. As Kalligas (2013, com. ad V.5.12.14-33)

[78] The simile is of course slightly different as compared to V.5.3. Here, people do not see the god at a festival, whereas in V.5.3 they do not see a king. The point is however the same.

suggests, this could also be read as connecting the Good with what is general (for all) and beauty with particular (for itself). Third, it never suffices to have the Good only in seeming, whereas this is for people enough in the case of beauty (cf. V.5.12.23-24).

Having investigated these passages from *Ennead* V.5, we now understand the relationship of beauty and the Good in a more complex fashion. Even though it may seem in some passages of the *Enneads* that the primary beauty is not Intellect but the Good, we have to understand this as a part of a context dependent approach to the first principle which shows the Good as simultaneously beautiful and not beautiful (cf. chapter 5.6). The primary seat of beauty is Intellect which received it from the Good, and this in turn is beyond being beautiful. We can thus say that there are two reasons why Intellect is said to be primarily beautiful: First, there is nothing that would not be beautiful in Intellect since every part of it is the whole and all the other parts, so that beauty is in this sense everywhere in beauty (cf. V.8.8.1-4). As we have seen, even the intelligible matter, offspring of Otherness and first movement, as always formed and living a defined and intelligible life, can be said to be beautiful and does not hinder beauty in Intellect to be everywhere in beauty. Second, Intellect lies precisely between what can be called deficiently beautiful and that which is more than beautiful (cf. V.8.8.5 and 13-15).

Back in *Ennead* V.8, Plotinus returns to his thesis about the beauty of the cosmos originating in Intellect which is beauty itself, and he presents the thesis as an interpretation of Plato's propositions. In Plotinus' interpretation, Plato seeks to show through the beauty of the sensible world the beauty of the intelligible model on which it was created, and he does so particularly in *Tim.* 37c-d.[79] For it is generally true, Plotinus says, that an image is beautiful whose model is beautiful. As a proof of this Plotinus mentions that those who admire (*thaumazō*) a thing modelled on something else, actually admire or direct their admiration (*thauma*) to the model itself even if they do not know what is happening to them (cf. *Phdr*. 250f), as is the case of most lovers (*hoi erōntes*) and generally admirers of the

[79] For the analysis of Plato's conception of the world as an image of the divine paradigm cf. Karfík 1995.

beauty here (*hoi to tēde kallos tethaumakontes*). The cosmos, according to him, must therefore be considered beautiful and unique. One can reproach the cosmos only for not being beauty itself, i.e. for not being Intellect. In this sense, Plotinus even calls the Intellect here more than beautiful (*hyperkalon*) as compared to the beauty of the sensible world, but more than beautiful with an overwhelming beauty (*kallei amēchanō*; cf. V.8.8.11-23).

This line of thought is precisely the one Plotinus further develops in many passages of *Ennead* II.9. For example, in the fourth chapter he says that we should not judge the bodily world too strictly, and conclude that its source is evil because there are unpleasant things in it (cf. II.9.4.22-24). Such a view confuses the intelligible world with its mere image. We should not despise the sensible world because "what other fire could be a better image of the intelligible fire than the fire here?" (II.9.4.26, transl. Armstrong). In an even more stressed fashion, Plotinus asks in the eighth chapter how one should not call the sensible world a clear (*enargēs*) and beautiful (*kalon*) image (*agalma*) of the intelligible gods, if "it has come into life in such a way that its life is not a disjointed one (…) but coherent (*synechēs*) and clear (*enargēs*) and great (*pollē*) and everywhere life (*pantachū zōē*), manifesting overwhelming wisdom (*sofia amēchanos*)?" (II.9.8.10-16, transl. Armstrong, modified; cf. also *Tim*. 37c). Plotinus repeats that we could only belittle the bodily world if we judged it by the standards of its paradigm, but that would mean not to see that it manifests its paradigm in as much as a beautiful natural image can (cf. II.9.8.16-20 and Gertz 2017, com. ad II.9.8.16-19). In the spirit of this argument, Plotinus demurs at the Gnostic scorn for the sensible world further in the thirteenth chapter. If one does not understand that an image of something only imitates it as far as it can, one would have to despise even Intellect as compared to the Good (cf. II.9.13.13-33). A more superior conception is then to understand the continuous decline of what is imitated throughout the hypostases, and accordingly "one should rather meekly (*praōs*) accept the nature of all things" (II.9.13.5-6, transl. Armstrong, modified). Assuming the contrary position even makes a person altogether wicked (*pankakos*) and shows that he does not understand either the bodily world or its intelligible archetype (cf. II.9.16.1-5 and 12-14). The behaviour of the Gnostics

however, actually shows that they recognize bodily beauty because they are proud to despise even it (cf. II.9.17.27-31 and Gertz 2017, com. ad I.9.17.21-31). Plotinus illustrates this point with a comparison of living in a beautiful house built for us by the world soul (cf. II.9.18.3-17). We can either despise it but live in it anyway as the Gnostics do, or recognize the skill with which it was created and wait for the time when we will not be in need of a house anymore. The climax of this line of reasoning is approached in the thesis that if there is no beauty in the sensible world, there cannot be any beauty in the Intelligible either, which is a consequence of the notion of productive contemplation (cf. Fattal 2010). All of this however, does not mean that everything is beautiful in the bodily world. Since in bodies, the beauty in a part is not the same as beauty in the whole (cf. chapter 2.2), we have to distinguish between beauty of the whole universe and of its parts too. This however, probably permits the existence of ugliness of parts when considered on their own (cf. II.9.17.25-33 and Rolof 1970, p. 217). Nevertheless, in relation to the whole, these parts must be considered beautiful if the whole itself is beautiful becuase its beauty is distributed to all of its parts (cf. chapter 2.2).

3.10 The unity of being and beauty (V.8.9)

Plotinus now undertakes his famous thought experiment, with which he endeavours to familiarize his reader with his concept of Intellect. He appeals to the reader to try using discursive thought (*dianoia*) to grasp the cosmos as a whole, by preserving the distinctness of its parts, while thinking about it as one, that means as a network of relations of the individual parts and the whole. From this thought, according to Plotinus, it is then still necessary to remove all matter (but not in a way that would somehow reduce the size of the sphere in our imagination) and call upon God, who is the creator of the cosmos, in the hope that he appears. If he does appear, we shall contemplate his immensely strong unity, which, however, retains the differences of the parts, which are at once all the other parts and the whole (*homū eisi kai hekastos chōris au en stasei adiastatō*). Plotinus then, with new force, describes the kind of *unitas multiplex* proper to Intellect. He again emphasizes the same factors as in the preceding chapters, such as unity, distinctness, inaccessibility

to the senses, inexhaustibility, unlimitedness, the character of being whole at once, the absence of corporeal substance, and the absence of the parts in the sense in which bodies have parts. Even though the firmament is great, it pales in comparison with the immensity of Intellect. Its power (*dynamis*) is then particularly incomparable with the power of the corporeal substances, for example, fire, which, although it burns, destroys, propels, and helps to bring various animals into existence, is also exposed to these kinds of change. In other words, it is ontologically characterized as coming into existence and vanishing, unlike Intellect, to which Plotinus ascribes being and beauty, and accentuates their mutual conditionality, even identity. Plotinus explicitly states that they are of one nature (*physis*) and that deficiency in beauty (*en tō apoleiphthēnai tū kallū*) implies deficiency in being (*elleipei kai tē ūsia*) and vice versa. Moreover, as beauty is the object of erotic desire, so is being, and beauty is such because it is being. Plotinus demonstrates the identity of being and beauty in case of things perceptible by the senses. These things become more beautiful the more they participate in a form – for beauty was identified with the reign of form – which also means the more they *exist* (cf. V.8.9.1-47).

The identification of beauty and being that Plotinus introduces here is of great importance. If we consider what it means for a thing to be, we should be able to conclude what it means to be beautiful. Plotinus considers this question in *Ennead* VI.9 *On the Good or the One*. Everything that can in any sense be said to be (*panta ta onta /…/ kai hosa hopōsūn legetai en tois ūsin einani*), exists according to the first chapter of this treatise by one (*tō heni esti onta*; cf. VI.9.1.1-2). Plotinus illustrates this thesis by showing that it applies to different kinds of beings.[80] Discrete entities (*diestēkos*) as an army, a choir or a flock are what they are only as unities (cf. VI.9.1.4-5). The same can be said about things having a continuous magnitude (*synechē megethē*), i.e. a continuous body, like a house or a ship. These, if dissolved into parts, i.e. if they lose the one they had (they are called *hen echonta*), are no longer what they were (cf. VI.9.1.5-10). The last example from bodily entities are organisms of plants or animals, which are also said to exist by one (they are called

[80] Plotinus adopts here distinctions made by the Stoics. Cf. SVF II, 366-368 and 1013 and the discussion of Meijer (1992, p. 68-97).

hen onta) on the same grounds as before, i.e. that they cease to exist as plants or animals when broken into multiplicity (cf. VI.9.1.10-14). Plotinus claims however, that even such things as the health of a body, the beauty of a soul or virtue[81] are something because they possess one. "There is health when the body is brought together into one order, and beauty when the nature of the one (*hē tū henos physis*) holds the parts together; and the soul has virtue when it is unified into one thing (*eis hen*) and one agreement (*eis mian homologian*)" (VI.9.1.14-17, transl. Armstrong).

We have indeed already encountered these passages in chapter 2.2 when analysing similar statements from *Ennead* I.6. It was said there that a bodily thing becomes united and ordered by participating in a form in as much as the formative principle dominates in matter. Moreover, these theses were connected with Plotinus' rejection of a non-distributive notion of beauty, i.e. he insisted that if a formative principle dominates in a body, it unites its parts and in order to do that, those parts must themselves become united. Beauty is in this sense distributed from the whole of a body to its parts if a formative principle seizes this body. The present identification of beauty and being supports these conclusions because: 1) a united thing becomes what it is by the domination of a form that unites all the parts of the constituted whole, 2) this same form simultaneously makes the whole beautiful and 3) both the being and the beauty is distributed to all the parts because a whole cannot consist of non-existing, i.e. non-beautiful parts.[82] The identification of being and beauty is therefore enabled here by the fact that both are primarily Intellect and that both are connected with being unified multiplicity (cf. Halfwassen 2003, p. 88-89). The distinction of beauty from being will thus have to be inquired into on the level of Intellect (cf. chapters 4.1.4 and 6.3).

As it was already the case with the beauty of soul and virtue, Plotinus maintains the connection of beauty, being and unity even above the level of bodies. Further in

[81] These examples are also of Stoic origin. Cf. SVF III 278 and Meijer's discussion (1992, p. 68-97).

[82] On the other hand, if we take into account the above mentioned parts of Ennead II.9 (cf. chapter 3.9), Plotinus does admit that some parts of bodies are less beautiful or even ugly, but only if these are taken on their own, i.e. not as parts of a whole but as wholes themselves. In such a case, it is possible to concieve of less beautiful or even ugly bodily parts because they do not in fact exist on their own (e.g. an ugly nose), but only as parts of a larger whole, and as such they are indeed beautiful.

Ennead VI.9, he goes on to ask whether it is the soul that provides the one and whether it is the one that is sought. His answer is of course negative. The soul rather gives what it itself does not have or *is* not. It does so by looking to the one that is above it, i.e. to Intellect (cf. VI.9.1.17-26). The different degrees of being, and consequently also of beauty, therefore correspond to the degree of unity of a thing. A soul exists more than bodies, is more beautiful than they are, and correspondingly it has a different unity – it is not composed of parts as bodies, but still "there are very many powers in it, reasoning, desiring, apprehending, which are held together by the one as by a bond" (VI.9.1.40-42, transl. Armstrong). Intellect, being and beauty itself, is a unity in multiplicity of an even higher grade. Different beings in Intellect differ by their powers (*dynameis*), but are at the same time one manifold power (*mia dynamis pollē*; V.8.9.17-18), a universal power (*dynamis pasa*) extending to infinity and powerful to infinity (*eis apeiron iūsa, eis apeiron dynamenē*; V.8.9.25-26). It is in other words, a unity where all the parts are all the other parts and the whole. The identification of being and beauty and their connection with unity also supports the thesis that the primary seat of beauty is in Intellect. The One which not only "has" the one but *is* the one,[83] is at the same time repeatedly said to transcend beauty and to be beautiful only in the sense of the source of beauty. "For every beautiful thing is posterior to that One, and comes from it, as all the light of day comes from the sun" (VI.9.4.10-12, transl. Armstrong). But as already noted, the relation of beauty and being will be further discussed in chapters 4.1.4 and 6.3.

3.11 Assimilation and unitas multiplex (V.8.10)

In the following passages, Plotinus allows Intellect to stand out in its greatness through the prism of a myth. With reference to Plato's *Phdr.* 246d–249d, he describes the brightness and beauty of Intellect, as it appears to souls, daemons, the gods, and Zeus, their ruler. Above them all, it rises glowing like the sun and illuminates and fills everything, turning away everything inferior from itself. Plotinus thus ranks Intellect above divine figures that were well known to the Greek reader

[83] Since the One also transcends being, it cannot even be said *to be* one. Cf. chapter 5.6.

and expresses in this way again the majesty of Intellect. He claims, in the spirit of Plato, that each individual sees Intellect in the perspective of his or her own nature – one person may see it as justice, another as temperance. Only the best – the ones who have glimpsed much of Intellect, the gods themselves, Zeus, and the souls who dwell in Intellect, those souls who are in Zeus' retinue – ultimately manage to see the beauty of Intellect as such. That is why they do not behold Intellect as one part of it, but as the unity of the parts and the whole, seen all at once, in itself, everywhere. Again, Plotinus emphasizes assimilation to the beautiful. It develops in correlation with beholding Intellect like in the case of the being of the soul and its unity. He chooses an opposite parable, which preserves the verticality of spiritual motion: assimilating itself to Intellect, the soul becomes beautiful like people who, when they climb mountains, take on the colour of the soil there. Plotinus, however, as usual immediately corrects his comparison – beauty is the colour of Intellect, that is, everything in Intellect is colour and also beauty. Beauty permeates everything, it is not a surface of things (cf. V.8.10.1-31).

Having corrected his comparison, Plotinus uses it for a better description of the unity of seeing beauty and becoming it. This distinction no longer exists in Intellect because beauty can only be seen if one becomes it and because Intellect is of the nature of self-thinking which it itself is. We must therefore internalize the beauty we see and become one with it. Plotinus compares this unity of seeing beauty and being beatiful to being possessed by one of the Muses, when a person is controlled by a divine force, which communicates through him or her, that is, when the person is, and at the same time is not, this force (cf. V.8.10.31-43). He or she is to the extent to which the person is one with the force. However, he or she is not to the extent to which this force communicates only through him or her. Similarly, in Intellect one cannot talk about looking at an object, because the beheld object is itself the beholding subject, but one can, in so far as each thing in Intellect is distinct.

3.12 The inwardness of the relationship to Intellect (V.8.11)

Plotinus now further develops the motive of inwardness. He describes uniting with Intellect as leading oneself before one's spiritual gaze so that the difference between the beholder and the beheld ultimately disappears and the two poles become one.[84] The beholder becomes the object for other beholders, in other words, they unite one with the other in their own aspiration, and they do so with the whole Intellect. Plotinus here repeatedly emphasizes that the state of unity with Intellect is the true inwardness of each aspiring soul and that, by contrast, separation from Intellect may well be described as stepping out of itself (cf. V.8.11.1-24).

He explicitly also considers the suitability of understanding the state of unity with Intellect as beholding (*horasis*): he points out that no matter how much beholding implies a relationship to what is external, the activity of Intellect cannot be described in this way. It may be called *horasis* only if it means non-physical self-perception (*synesis*, *synaisthēsis*; cf. V.8.11.19-24). Intellect is the model of beholding and as such it both beholds and transcends beholding. Uniting with Intellect or beauty is in this sense not an act of knowing. Rather, it is a return to one's own being. The unified being of the knower and the known is, however, knowledge *par excellence*, even though it may not seem so to the senses, as Plotinus suggests with his example of illness and health. Illness, according to him, is something external to man and this difference allows for a clear distinction, i.e. determination and knowledge. Health, on the other hand, is something that essentially belongs to our being, something which we ourselves are, and we therefore often do not perceive it and are unable to grasp it firmly. However, it is clear that this parable is largely unsuitable, because it implies a clearer knowledge of the exterior than of the interior, whereas in fact it must be the other way round. Plotinus makes clear that the knowledge Intellect has and is, can be seen as dubious only from the perspective of sense perception which is directed to external objects. In other words, sense perception cannot rightly be considered a judge in questions of being, which is anyway, according to Plotinus, evident from the fact that we can

[84] In this context, Hadot (1993, p. 42-44) talks about reaching self-contemplation of beauty by means of contemplation.

never look at ourselves entirely from outside, though we do not doubt that we exist (cf. V.8.11.24-40).

3.13 Intellect and its descendants (V.8.12)

Plotinus further provides a résumé of what has so far been learnt. He asks what is actually seen by one who achieves the beholding of Intellect, in which there is identity of subject and object, of being and knowledge. Such a person sees a god (*theos*) who painlessly gave birth to everything, holds it in himself, manages and enjoys his beautiful descendants (*tokos kallos*) with whom he is identical and with whom he creates a unique glow. This god who is further in the text called Cronus, is Intellect. Like the mythical character, it is satiated or full of its children, the forms.[85] Of all Cronus' descendants who are said to be brothers (*adelfoi*), Zeus, the youngest son (*hystatos pais*), necessarily emerges, and is here clearly identified with soul (cf. Kalligas 2013, com. ad V.8.12.7-15 and Beutler-Theiler's com. ad V.8.12.1). Zeus resembles his father as a picture resembles its model, and himself causes the creation of another cosmos, that is, the sensible one, which he rules. This cosmos too emerges like a picture of a beautiful model and it is itself beautiful. Through Zeus, it participates in the beauty, being and life of Intellect and has therefore life, exists as an image and is beautiful as being derived from what is above. Like its predecessors, it is as a whole also eternal, despite being created, because Intellect and the soul are naturally, necessarily, and always characterized by their external activity. However, the created nature of the cosmos, according to Plotinus, should not imply that there was a time when the cosmos did not exist, because time emerged together with it. In this sense, it has always existed and will continue to exist forever (cf. V.8.12.2-20). Both the claim that the world is a beautiful image and that as such it is eternal, derived as they are from Plotinus' notion of productive contemplation and beauty of Intellect, should again be understood as an attack on the Gnostics who not only misunderstand the notion of image[86] but dare to talk

[85] According to V.1.7.36 (and previously of course already according to Plato's *Crat.* 396b), it is even etymologically derived from the state of fullness of Intellect because it is *koros nūs*. Cf. also the analysis with respect to Hesiod's *Theogony* by Němec 2004 and Hadot 1981.

[86] A more detailed discussion of this is to be found in Fatal 2010.

about the creation and destruction of the world as if it happened in time (cf. this recurring theme in II.9.4, 7-8 and 12).

3.14 The middle position of Cronus between Uranus and Zeus (V.8.13)

In the final chapter, Plotinus uses his now firmly built-up position of beauty as Intellect itself, together with mythological vocabulary, in order to ultimately refer to the Good itself. First of all, he repeats that Intellect transfers rule over the sensible world to the soul, speaking about Intellect as Cronus, in accordance with his earlier identification of the soul with Zeus. It would be improper for so distinguished a god to be concerned with anything lower, and so he "only" remains calmly in himself, looking at his own beauty. Above him, however, there is still Uranus, the Good, which is explicitly called the thing that does not belong to Cronus and is too great to be beautiful, again confirming our previous conclusions about Intellect as the primary seat of beauty. Here, Intellect is explicitly said to have remained the primarily beautiful (*prōtōs emeine kalos*). The position of Cronus is therefore in the middle, between Uranus and Zeus, the Good and the soul. Plotinus explains this middle position on the one hand, by differentiation from the One (*tē te heterotēti tēs pros to anō apotomēs*), and on the other hand, by the tie that binds it (*tō anechonti apo tū met' auton pros to katō desmō*) and makes it more supreme as compared to soul (cf. V.8.13.1-12). Its middle position resides therefore in its being a specific kind of *unitas multiplex*.[87]

Intellect also provides beauty to the soul over which, in this respect too, it excels, or to say it the other way around, the soul has a trace of Intellect (*ichnos autū,* scil. *tū theū*) and is naturally beautiful precisely for this reason (*tūtō esti kalē tēn physin*). Aphrodite, now identified with the world-soul in place of Zeus,[88] continues in her intensive participation in Intellect and is accordingly beautiful. Individual souls, on

[87] See also the analysis of Hadot (1981), who shows how Plotinus merges the motives of binding in chains, castration and swallowing of Cronus' children, and how he transforms them to weaken the violent impression of the myth.

[88] However sudden the exchange of the mythical persons appears, it is Aphrodite who is in the *Enneads* typically associated with soul. Cf. *Enneads* VI.9.9, III.5 and the interpretations of Němec 2004, Karfík 2003 and Hadot 1981. Smith (2018, com. ad V.8.13.15) identifies Zeus with the hypostasis Soul and Aphodite with world-soul.

the other hand, can both increase and decrease their degree of participation in Intellect and can thus become more or less beautiful. Plotinus understands this movement of increasing participation in the Intellect as immersing oneself in one's innermost self, a movement synonymous with knowledge. Its culmination is unification with Intellect, a higher form of knowledge – the identity of the knower and the known. In conclusion, Plotinus (as in *Ennead* I.6) emphasizes that beauty is *there* (in that higher world) and comes *from there* (cf. V.8.13.12-22).

Only now does Plotinus feel that he has already answered the key question of the whole treatise, the question of the means of attaining the beauty of Intellect. The way to beauty is a turn to inwardness, understood as the movement of uniting, knowledge, and virtue, the return to the basis itself and the intensifying of one's being. However, it is no surprise that in his considerations Plotinus, always on the move, is still not fully satisfied and wishes to consider the attainability of Intellect from yet another side. Consequently, at the end of the treatise we find an appeal to make a new attempt to grasp Intellect, which is undertaken in *Ennead* V.5 (cf. V.8.13.22-24).

3.15 How is Intellect one and many?

If I am right in linking beauty with unity in multiplicity (cf. chapters 2.2 and 3.10) and in recognizing Intellect as its primary seat (cf. chapters 2.7, 2.9, 3.10 and 3.14), it is necessary to investigate the question of unity and multiplicity of Intellect itself. There are several interconnected reasons for calling Intellect united and multiple or even the most unified multiplicity of all that is:[89]

1) There is a specific connectedness of different forms with each other and with the whole of Intellect. All the forms are to be thought similar to theorems of science, which each contain all other axioms and the whole of the science. Since each part in Intellect is all the other parts and the whole of it, everything is in a sense one in Intellect, although it is at the same time many (cf. chapters 3.5 and 3.6 for

[89] For a general discussion of this topic and of the analogies Plotinus utilizes for the description of Intellect's unity and multiplicity, see Smith 1981.

more detail). This reason for the Intellect's unity is given from the perspective of the nature of intelligible objects.

2) Some of the forms are not only united with all the others, but unite other forms in the sense of being superordinate to them, i.e. they are genera. However, some forms are not only genera (*genē*), but also principles (*archai*), i.e. the primary kinds (*prōta genē*). This means that all the other forms necessarily partake in them in order to exist at all, and to exist as what they are, as opposed to what they are not. They even constitute all the forms in the sense that the latter can be viewed as the highest genera unfolded[90] and their constitution as the procession from the highest kinds.[91] In this sense, the highest kinds contain the whole of Intellect and unite it. Moreover, Plotinus himself raises the question if "the one" but also if beauty is to be counted among the highest kinds. I will address this perspective in the following chapter (4.1).
3) Intellect is a specific subject-object relation in that it also implies the plurality of forms. It is, in Emilsson's words, itself thinking that it itself is (cf. Emilsson 2007, p. 109). Intellection is in this sense not only the source of Intellect's multiplicity, but also unites it, since all its objects of thought are based on its own intellective self-relation (cf. chapter 3.5). Plotinus develops this argument from the perspective of the nature of the act of intellection itself.
4) Intellect is united by its underlying "structure" which it brings into life with its intellective activity. Plotinus investigates this in *Ennead* VI.6. As we shall see, forms will be said to be beautiful because they are numbers. Their characteristic as numbers refers precisely to their structural delimitation. I shall address this in chapter 4.2.
5) Finally, a genetic perspective may be added to these reasons. Intellect is born as a desire for the One which is actualized in an attempt to think of the One, resulting in thinking an image of it, which Intellect contains and is. In other words, the One is present in Intellect as an image or a trace and Intellect does the second best thing with it, it thinks it. Intellect is thus unified also by the fact

[90] The verb *exelittein* is used for the constitution of the whole Intellect in III.8.8.37 and implicitly used in the context of the highest kinds also in V.3.10.52.

[91] Cf. the use of *kinēsis*, *energeia* and the verbs *proerchomai* and *planaō* in this sense in VI.7.13 where these are moreover explicitly related to the highest kinds.

that it contains and is an image of the One, which it breaks into multiplicity because it is posterior to the One (cf. chapters 3.1 and 3.5, but for more details see chapters 4.2.3 and 5.3).

As indicated, these reasons are interconnected. In its genesis, Intellect receives an imprint of the One (cf. V.3.11.1–18 and point 5 above), which is itself one, but one in being and according to its being one, it becomes number and can be said to be a preliminary sketch of all the forms (cf. VI.6.10.1-4 and point 4 above). In this process, Intellect is constituted precisely as Intellect, i.e. it thinks itself, and unfolds gradually (cf. III.8.8.34-8, V.3.10.52 and points 2 and 3 above) into the complete living being, i.e. into all forms, starting from the highest kinds, which were always already present with Being (cf. VI.7.13 and point 2 above). In the language of *Ennead* VI.6, Intellect becomes number unfolded and all forms as substantial numbers are born on the model of the one (cf. VI.6.9.30-38 and V.5.5.1-4). However, the contents of Intellect are themselves intelligible. Therefore, they have to be one, or rather one-many, distinct by their powers or otherness (cf. VI.9.8.29-33, V.1.4.39-41, V.9.6.7-9) and cannot differ by being in a different place (cf. VI.4.4.26, VI.9.8.31, V.8.9; cf. point 1 above and Rist 1985, p. 79-80). In the following chapters (4.1 and 4.2), I explore this topic in more detail in order to specify the meaning of beauty as unity in multiplicity, which is to be connected primarily with Intellect.

4. Unity and multiplicity of Intellect (*Enneads* VI.2 and VI.6)

4.1 Unity, multiplicity and the highest kinds (*Ennead* VI.2)

4.1.1 Focus of *Enneads* VI.1-3 and the quest for the highest kinds (VI.2.1-3)

The topic of *Enneads* VI.1-3 is the determination of how many kinds there are, into which the one-being, the Intellect, is divided (VI.1.1.6-7). *Ennead* VI.1 is devoted to refuting the Peripatetic and Stoic doctrines of categories. The Stoic one is basically considered to be completely wrong (cf. VI.1.25-30), while Peripatetic teachings are adapted to the sensible world, where they have their place in a modified and reduced form (cf. VI.3). As Plotinus clearly states in the very beginning of the treatise, the Peripatetics do not use categories for intelligible being, i.e. for that which truly exists (cf. VI.1.1.19-30). Therefore, kinds of the intelligible being, i.e. the highest genera, must be examined in their own right. As Plotinus indicates, it will be of importance whether these genera are to be considered principles, *archai*, or simply beings, *onta* (VI.1.1.13-14). This examination is performed in VI.2, which presents the richest account of Plotinus' adaptation of Plato's *megista genē* doctrine from his *Sophist*.

Plotinus' starting point is that being is not one (as shown by Plato and others), and therefore it must be determined how many kinds we have to posit and how. This enquiry is to be carried out in what is called being as opposed to becoming, i.e. in the realm of intelligible forms (cf. VI.2.1.14-20). This formulation of the scope of the treatise brings us directly into the centre of our topic, i.e. into the enquiry about the unity and multiplicity of Intellect. The thesis that being is not simply one means that Intellect does not possess complete unity or, speaking more precisely, is not as thoroughly one as the One is. It is also always multiple. Asking about the number of the kinds of being is in this sense a question about the essential multiplicity of Intellect, but as we shall see, its unity will also come into consideration. That Plotinus himself understands his enquiry in this fashion may be demonstrated by the way he specifies the meaning of the claim “being is not one”. It does not mean that being is infinite, *apeiron*, but that it is number, *arithmos* (cf. VI.2.2.1-3), i.e. at

the same time one and many or "a richly variegated one keeping its many together in one" (VI.2.2.3, transl. Armstrong). As such, it must in some way be united by a limited number of highest kinds that are something like elements[92] out of which the intelligible cosmos is constructed.[93] In other words, the kinds Plotinus is looking for cannot be just genera (*genē*), i.e. that which has lesser genera, species and individuals under itself (cf. VI.2.2.12-13), but they must simultaneously be principles (*archai*), out of which the being is composed and the whole of being derived (*ek tūtōn to holon hyparchei*; cf. VI.2.2.13-14).[94] The question about the number of kinds and the manner in which they are posited or in which they (co)exist, is thus specified as an enquiry into the number and mutual differences of genera that are at the same time principles (cf. VI.2.2.27-31).

Moreover, the enquiry about such a richly variegated one is to be understood as an enquiry into a plurality of kinds that are from one, or rather from the One (*hyph' hen*; cf. VI.2.2.5-6). The unity and multiplicity of Intellect is in this sense not only determined by the highest kinds, but is to be found in these genera themselves, i.e. one must ask how these kinds are one and many. Plurality of the highest kinds is considered necessary besides other reasons because of the fact that one genus could not create plurality by itself, i.e. give rise to all the forms of Intellect (cf. VI.2.2.34-46). On the other hand, it is not by chance (*kata tychēn*) that there are several such kinds. Therefore, they are somehow derived from one (*aph' henos*), but from one which is transcendent (*epekeina*), i.e. from the One (cf. VI.2.3.1-9). If we are to consider the relation of the kinds to one-being, i.e. to Intellect itself, Plotinus explains, we must take them as something like its parts (*hoion merē*) or something like its elements (*hoion stoicheia*), but only something like these because they appear as parts or elements to us only in our thinking (*epinoia*). In themselves however, they are one nature (*mia physis*; cf. VI.2.3.20-31 and also VI.2.8.30-38).

[92] In VI.2.2.17 referred to only as *tessares* (four) but later explicitly *stoicheia*; cf. VI.2.3.22.
[93] Cf. the use of *systasis* in VI.2.2.10 and *synthesis* in VI.2.2.29.
[94] Hereto, see Horn's discussion (1995, p. 136-143) of the alternative options and the defence of the *genera-archai* model against Wurm's objections (1973, p. 221-233).

4.1.2 Establishing the five highest kinds (VI.2.4-8)

Having specified the question, Plotinus begins in VI.2.4 the enquiry into the highest kinds themselves. He draws an opposition between bodies which are multiform, composite and various, and soul where there is no spatial separation of parts and no magnitude. Consequently, if one correctly understands what soul is, one should reverse the question and ask how it can be many at all, instead of how it is one. The question about the unity and multiplicity of soul specified as an enquiry into one nature that is many (*mia physis polla*), should also reveal the truth about the genera we are looking for (cf. VI.2.4.1-35). The one from which bodies come (soul) is itself more one than the bodies, and this means also more existent (cf. VI.2.5.7-8). Nevertheless, it is not the absolute One but some kind of plurality which is one (*plēthos hen*, cf. VI.2.5.9 and 10). The plurality of soul is based, on the one hand, on its activity towards other things (cf. VI.2.5.14-15), and on the other hand, on its contemplative activity towards itself. This activity so to say breaks down its unity and presents it as many. In the description of the being of soul, Plotinus says that it is life as opposed to the being of a stone, and that life and being are one in soul. Also, the act of soul's self-contemplation may be described as its movement (cf. VI.2.6.6-20). Or more precisely, its being as life is movement because Being (and life) in Intellect is also Movement (cf. VI.2.7.1-8).[95]

Plotinus then subsumes life (of all soul but also of Intellect) under the genus of Movement, which he claims to be necessary to posit in Intellect along with Being (*meta tū ontos*), i.e. not under it (*hypo to on*) or over it (*epi tō onti*; cf. VI.2.7.1-18). Plotinus again reminds his readers that it is our understanding that separates these two kinds, Being and Movement, although they are actually one in Intellect (cf. VI.2.7.7-9, or one nature, *physis*, in VI.2.7.18-20). Movement is the Being's life and actuality (*zōē*, *energeia*; cf. VI.2.7.18, VI.2.7.34-36), the being of Being (*autū tū einai*, scil. *tū ontos*; O.G.; cf. VI.2.7.36) and it makes it perfect (*teleion*; cf. VI.2.7.25-27). On

[95] The claim that there is movement, life and intellection in the Intellect is of course derived from Plotinus' understanding of Plato's *Sophist* (248e-249d). It is said there that it would be a dreadful thing to say that motion, life, soul and thought are not present in that which completely is. For the discussion of Plato's *Soph*., see de Rijk 1986; for its place in the trilogy *Theaeteus* – *Sophistes* – *Politicus* see Klein 1977; for a systematic discussion cf. Sayre 2005; and for its influence on Plotinus cf. Gerson 2013 and Perl 2014.

the other hand, their separation by our thought is not arbitrary because they may in fact be separated in what comes after them, like in a portrait of a man (cf. VI.2.7.9-14). Moreover, the attempt to separate them in our reasoning is never really possible, because Being always appears when we think Movement and vice versa. Consequently, we should rather say that both the form of Movement and that of Being are a double one (*diplūn hen*) in our thought (cf. VI.2.7.20-24). Plotinus now claims, with reference to Plato's *Sophist* (248a12), that it would be even stranger not to posit Rest along with Being, than to not introduce Movement into Being because Being exists in the same state and in the same way (cf. VI.2.7.25-28). Rest as the third genus, is to be separated from Being and Movement, although they are actually one or rather one-many and Intellect thinks them at once (*hama*; cf. VI.2.8.2-3). Otherwise, Rest would be the same as Being and even as Movement (cf. VI.2.7.31-45). Furthermore, Intellect in fact thinks all three of them separately (*chōris*; cf. VI.2.8.1-2 and VI.2.8.2-3). There is, on the one hand, activity (*energeia*) and Movement (*kinēsis*) in Intellect's thinking, and on the other hand, substance (*ūsia*) and Being (*to on*) since it thinks itself as that from which this activity comes and to which it is directed. Being as that which is most firmly established (*edraiotaton*) among all beings, made Rest exist and became that from which the thinking starts and where it ends (cf. VI.2.8.12-23). In this sense, Plotinus concludes, "the Form (*idea*) at rest is the defining limit (*peras*) of Intellect, and Intellect is the movement of the Form" (VI.2.8.23-24, transl. Armstrong).

If one tries to think these genera, one distinguishes them as three different kinds. On the contrary, if one tries to posit them as they are in Intellect, one collects them into unity or sameness. Distinguishing and mingling the three kinds is according to Plotinus based on two other genera that must be posited along with the three. These two are the Same and the Other (cf. VI.2.8.28-44). So in the end, there are five genera: Being, Motion, Rest, the Same and the Other,[96] which mutually condition each other and which are all-pervading in the sense that all other forms are their particular instantiation (cf. VI.2.8.42-50). It is not possible to think any of the kinds without the other ones because each of them has to exist, i.e.

[96] For the discussion of the strange passages VI.2.8.39, VI.2.15. 1, VI.2.19.1, VI.2.19.7 and VI.2.21.2 which speak of less kinds, see Hoppe 1965, p. 78-80.

partake in Being, exist as itself different from the other kinds, i.e. partake in the Same and the Other, and think and be thought, i.e. partake in Movement and Rest. Similarly, all other forms in Intellect have to partake in them. Each individual form's being, sameness, otherness, motion and rest are particular in the sense of being each individual form in relation to all the others.

As might be noticed, Plotinus tries to simultaneously claim that on the one hand, the highest kinds are by its own nature *one*, divided only by our thought and on the other hand, that Intellect thinks all of them separately and their difference is substantial to them since the Other is one of the highest kinds. This ambiguity reflects the extent of their unity. As compared to the Good however, they are many (see chapter 4.1.3).

4.1.3 Is the one to be counted among the highest kinds (VI.2.9-11)

Having established the five highest kinds, Plotinus raises a crucial question: how do we know that there are only these five genera and not some other, like one (*to hen*), quantum (*to poson*), quale (*to poion*), the relative (*to pros ti*) or other, as proposed by former philosophers such as Aristotle and his followers, the most of the considered kinds being Aristotelian categories (cf. VI.2.9.2-6 and later a complete list of categories in VI.2.13-16). Plotinus first addresses the one as a candidate for an additional kind in VI.2.9. These passages are of utmost importance for us because they inquire into the relation of the highest kinds and the whole of Intellect to the one.

As a first step, one must distinguish between on the one hand, the One, which is absolutely one (*pantōs hen*), is added to nothing (*mēden allo prosesti*), and therefore cannot be a genus, and on the other hand, between one-being (*to hen on*), which is added to being (*to proson tō onti*; cf. VI.2.9.5-10). Nevertheless, it cannot be a genus either for the following reasons, which explore different options how it would be possible to rank the one among the highest kinds.

First, the one as a potential genus would not be one primarily, since each highest kind must be primarily what it is, like Being is the primarily existent. The One is the

primarily one, so that the one as a genus cannot fulfil this requirement (cf. VI.2.9.8-10).

Second, the one is not and cannot be differentiated in itself (*adiaphoron on hautū*). A genus however, is differentiated because it creates species. In this sense, the one as a genus would destroy itself because it would also be many. As Plotinus mentions in this passage, Intellect allows differentiations in Being but not in the one. Or perhaps we should strengthen this statement and say that Being is necessarily many since it is essentially linked with all the other primary kinds, whereas the one is not (cf. VI.2.9.10-18).

Third, Plotinus addresses a potential opponent who might object that the one is a common term among the genera since all of them are one. Moreover, according to this unknown opponent, perhaps an Aristotelizing Platonist (cf. Aristotle *Met*. 1003b22-27), such a common one is to be identified with being. Being however, Plotinus objects, cannot be a common term in the sense of a superordinate genus. Being *exists* primarily, while all the other kinds *exist* differently from it. The same is true for the one (cf. VI.2.9.18-23).

Fourth, if the opponent introduces the one as one of the kinds not superordinate to them, but still identical with being, then the one is nothing but a different name for being (cf. VI.2.9.23-25).

Fifth, if the opponent insists that each of the kinds is one, then he designates a nature with it. It is either a particular one (*physis tis*) or if he understands the one as a nature generally, he must refer to the One itself, which is not a genus. And if it is the one which is with being (*to tō onti synon*, scil. *to hen*; O.G.), it cannot be one primarily (cf. VI.2.9.25-29) as was explained in the very beginning (see the first reason above) and as Plotinus now again reminds us (cf. VI.2.9.29-33).

Sixth, Plotinus performs a rather confusing experiment in which we separate the one from being in our mind and try to think it as either prior to, simultaneous with or posterior to being. If it is prior, it is a principle of being and neither the genus of being, nor of the other kinds. If it is simultaneous with being, it is simultaneous with everything, but a genus is not. And if it is posterior to being, it cannot be a genus

either, because a genus is prior (cf. VI.2.9.33-39). In the refutation of all three proposed options, Plotinus seems to make use of his unusual conception of the highest kinds that are simultaneously genera and principles. Genera as such are posterior to principles, by themselves prior to species while at the same time simultaneous with all species since they exist in them (cf. VI.2.12.11-15 and VI.2.19.13-18). Principles themselves are prior to all as the source of all, but as that from which all is constructed (cf. the simile with elements above), they are at the same time simultaneous with everything. The highest kinds that are both genera and principles are a combination of the designation "prior" and "simultaneous". Plotinus uses an interesting strategy in the discussion with his partner here, in which he objects that the opponent either only thinks the one as a principle (in cases of the one as prior to and simultaneous with being) or only as a genus (in the case of the one as posterior to being). In his refutation, Plotinus always lays a perhaps exaggerated emphasis on the lacking designation (prior or simultaneous) in each particular case.

Plotinus now concludes his enquiry with highlighting the important similarities and differences of the one and Being. The one in being did as if fall out (*hoion synekpipton*) of the One together with Being, and Being is one since it is near to the One. On the other hand, Being is posterior to the One, and therefore can be and is many (*polla*). This is why the one in being remains itself one and cannot be divided into parts and consequently cannot be a genus (cf. VI.2.9.39-43). Being, on the other hand, is a genus, can be divided and is many. It is important to notice, however, that 1) the one is somehow present in Intellect, i.e. not as a genus but remaining itself, that 2) this one in being is produced by the One along with Being and that 3) they are closely connected.

A closer specification of the way the one in being is in Intellect is given in the next chapter (i.e. VI.2.10). Each particular form in Intellect as particular is not only one but also many, and each of them is one equivocally (cf. chapter 4.2.3). This is the seventh reason why the one cannot be a genus, because it is not a common term and is predicated differently of different forms (cf. VI.2.10.1-6). The eighth reason is that truly predicating a genus of a thing prevents us from truly predicating

its opposite of it. However, we can truly predicate both one and many of all forms and thus the one cannot be predicated of them as their genus.[97] This is true not only of all forms, which in contrast to the highest kinds are here called in every way many (*pantōs polla*), but also of the five highest kinds themselves. Plotinus even says that they are all one to the same degree as they are many (cf. VI.2.10.6-13).

In this sense, Plotinus again reminds us that the one as a genus would destroy itself (see the second reason above). This time however, he reformulates the same argument and says that the one is not a number, but a genus is. A genus cannot be properly (*kyriōs*) one since it is many. The one in being is one in number (cf. VI.2.10.13-16). Plotinus immediately explains this claim with a simile of the relation of the one to the numbers. On the one hand, the one is present in them, on the other, it is not present as their genus but as their principle (in VI.2.10.35-38 this simile is extended to the relation of a point to lines). In this sense, the one in being is present in all the kinds but only as their principle and not as their genus (cf. VI.2.10.16-23). The difference between the one and the other kinds is that the latter are both genera and principles while the former is just a principle.

In the last passage of the tenth chapter, Plotinus sketches some other problems that would have to be dealt with if the one was a genus, e.g. how would its species differ from each other (cf. VI.2.10.23-29). He concludes that it is neither necessary, nor possible for the one to be a genus because it is a principle. An attempt to incorporate it into the highest kinds leads to identifying it with Being, so that the former becomes only a different name for the latter (cf. VI.2.10.29-43).

Dwelling a bit further on the topic of how the one in being is in Intellect, Plotinus adds a new scope to it when he asks how division (*merismos*) in Intellect works. First, he claims that the one is different in sensible and intelligible things, and that it

[97] It must be noted, however, that Plotinus does not have the same problem with the rest of the highest genera: the Same and the Other, and with Movement and Rest. He probably does not consider them opposites, as already Plato suggests (cf. *Soph*. 256b), but in that case a question could be raised why do the one and many have to be considered opposites. Plotinus does not give an answer, but the tension between what is one and what is multiple is for him in fact the primary opposition, although one would have to distinguish defined multiplicity, which is born from the One and interacts with unity, and utter multiplicity, which is conceived of as *sterēsis*. Cf. also chapter 4.2. Similarly, the oneness of the One does not mingle with any kind of multiplicity, but only the one in being does. Cf. also chapters 5.6 and 5.7. Moreover, the one in being has several subtypes. See my analyses of VI.2.11 below.

is different even among individual sensibles or intelligibles (cf. VI.2.11.1-9). All things nevertheless imitate (*mimeitai*) the One as far as they can. Their resemblance to the One depends on their distance from it. In this sense, being and Intellect are more one or more truly (*alēthesteron*) one than soul (cf. VI.2.11.9-12). Plotinus now claims however, that it is not the same to be and to be one, or that this is the same only accidentally. An army and a chorus exist to the same extent as a house although they are less one. To what extent a thing is one depends on how that thing's one looks to the Good (*pros agathon blepein*) and to what extent it attains the Good (*kathoson tygchanei agathū*). Each thing in this sense wants not only to be, but to be with the good (*meta tū agathū*; cf. VI.2.11.12-21). The One is for this matter on both sides of all things: it is their source (*to aph' hū*; all things *archetai apo tū hen*) and goal (*to eis hō*; all things *speudei eis to hen*) and it even maintains everything in being (cf. VI.2.11.21-29). Being itself attains the one the most, since it is nearest to the Good. We call it one-being to indicate its very close being with and towards the One (*sphodra synūsia pros to agathon*; cf. VI.2.11.31-38). Being has the one as its principle and goal (*archē kai telos*). It is, however, one in a different sense as compared to the One. The one in being allows for prior and posterior and simple (*hapla*) and composite (*syntheta*) beings to exist as different unities, similarly to the one which is different in itself, in a unit and in various numbers (cf. VI.2.11.38-49).

4.1.4 Tentative summary: unity and multiplicity of Intellect in VI.2

To summarize what we have learned so far, unity of Intellect may be based on the highest kinds but they themselves are at the same time multiple. Being is always multiple, so that Intellect in itself is the most unified multiplicity, i.e. it is "a richly variegated one keeping its many together in one" (VI.2.2.3, transl. Armstrong) or a number (cf. VI.2.2.1-3). The highest kinds, Being, Motion, Rest, the Same and the Other which are themselves termed numbers (cf. VI.2.10.13-16), unite Intellect both as genera and as principles. This means that they are not only superordinate to all species which they produce (cf. VI.2.21), but also something like elements out of which all intelligibles are composed and the whole of being is derived. The highest

kinds themselves are united not only by the fact that all of them imply all the others but also by being derived from the One (cf. VI.2.2.5-6 and VI.2.3.1-9). The one is not one of the highest kinds for several reasons among which Plotinus repeatedly highlights two: it would not be one primarily (since the primarily one is the One; cf. VI.2.9.8-10) and the one cannot be differentiated in itself (but a genus is because it creates species; cf. VI.2.9.10-18). This brings us to the important difference between the one that remains itself one and cannot be divided, and being which is necessarily many. Plotinus even says that a thing may be more or less one even if it has the same share in being, so that the overlap of both is only incidental (cf. VI.2.11.12-21). Nevertheless, the one and being did as if fall out of the One together, the one is present in the Intellect, and being is one because it is near to the One (cf. VI.2.9.39-43). The presence of the one in Intellect is described as the presence of a principle (cf. VI.2.10.16-23) as opposed to the highest kinds which are both principles and genera (VI.2.2.12-14). Each intelligible (and even each sensible thing) is one differently according to its closeness to the One and to its abilitiy to imitate it (cf. VI.2.11.5-12 and 40-49). Being, as the closest intelligible, attains the one the most and is consequently one-being (cf. VI.2.11.31-38).

How then is Intellect one and many, to get back to our main question? It is one as one-many and as the mutual interconnectedness of the highest kinds. The latter qua genera contain the rest of the intelligible forms and qua principles constitute the intelligible forms. At the same time, Intellect is one-many as Intellect, i.e. because it thinks, and moreover because it thinks itself or because it is an itself thinking that it itself is. Being, the most firmly established among all beings, thinks itself, and as thinking it is Motion, but motion that comes to a stop in Rest and that originates in Rest (cf. VI.2.8.21-23). These three highest kinds, Being, Motion and Rest, are to be distinguished from each other through the Other and they build unity through the Same. The unity of the two descriptions of Intellect's plurality can be observed in this formulation. What Intellect thinks is Being, while the act of

thinking is Motion, but Motion that has its Rest, and all three are based on the Same and on the Other.[98]

Why then, does Intellect think itself and is constituted as one-many in the plurality of the highest kinds which all refer to each other? Because it tries to imitate the One in the way it can, which is thinking. This thinking however, does not reach the One itself but is directed at the trace of it in being, the one in being, which is a principle different from the One. If it holds that the closer a thing is to the One, the more it is one, and if beauty was correctly identified with unity in multiplicity, then the highest kinds might be said to be the most beautiful "part" of Intellect. Given that Plotinus sometimes uses Being as a representative for the other kinds[99] and designates it as the most firmly established among all beings, Being is the beauty we sought in Intellect. It cannot be the one in being since this does not allow for multiplicity but remains in itself. This might serve as a more developed explanation of Plotinus' identification of being and beauty that we have observed elsewhere (cf. the discussion of V.8.9 in chapter 3.10).[100]

4.1.5 Is beauty to be counted among the highest kinds? (VI.2.17-18)

If beauty is to be so closely connected with Being and through it to all the other highest kinds, one could ask whether beauty itself is to be counted among these kinds. This is precisely what Plotinus shortly considers in VI.2.18. After rejecting Aristotelian categories as candidates for additional highest kinds (quantum, quale, relation, place, time, acting, being affected, having and being in a position in VI.2.13-16), Plotinus turns to other, this time more platonic candidates: the beautiful (*to kalon*), the good (*to agathon*), virtues (*aretai*), knowledge (*epistēmē*) and intellect (*nūs*; cf. VI.2.17.1-2).

Plotinus considers several options of how to deal with beauty. First, if what we mean by it is *kallonē*, i.e. the One itself (cf. VI.7.33.20-22 and my commentary

[98] But Plotinus tries to describe this unity also from a different perspective in V.1.4. Hereto, cf. Atkinson 1983, p. 96-98.

[99] Cf. also the discussion of the problem of two different notions of being in Horn 1995, p. 119-120 and 127-128.

[100] But see chapter 4.2.4, where I discuss this question further.

thereto in chapter 5.6), it cannot be a genus for reasons already mentioned (cf. VI.2.18.1-3). Plotinus herewith refers probably primarily to the previous chapter, which rejected the Good as a primary kind because it is not predicated of anything (cf. VI.2.17.2-7) and because it is before being (*ūsia*, cf. VI.2.17.7-8). Then again, he may also refer to the passages where one of the considered options was also that the One is a genus. However, this option was rejected for the same reason, i.e. that the One is added to nothing (cf. VI.2.9.5-10).

A second option would be to take beauty as referring to that which shines, as it were (*hoion apostilbon*), upon the forms (cf. again my commentary thereto in chapter 5.6). But even so beauty could not be one of the highest kinds because it shines differently on different forms[101] and because shining presupposes the forms on which it shines (cf. VI.2.18.3-5). The third option would be to identify beauty with being (*ūsia*). Then however, it is already included in it, i.e. in the highest kind Being (cf. VI.2.18.5-6). The fourth option Plotinus considers, is to understand beauty as existing in relation to the observer and affecting him or her (*pathos poiein*; cf. VI.2.18.6-7). It seems that we must distinguish two perspectives here: there is the observer directed towards the beautiful and the beautiful affecting him. This affecting however, Plotinus says, is an activity (*to energein*) and therefore motion, and even the activity of the observer, his or her being directed towards the beautiful, is an activity (*energeia*) and therefore motion (cf. VI.2.17.7-8). As such, beauty would be included in the highest kind Motion.

However brief this passage may be, it shows interesting things about beauty. The obvious thing is that beauty is not one of the highest kinds. We should however, perhaps also notice what options of the meaning of beauty Plotinus considers, or rather what this can indicate for the reconstruction of his own notion of beauty. As we shall see (cf. chapter 5.6), under the name of *kallonē*, beauty may in a sense refer to the Good itself. It may also be identified with Being for the reasons given above. Furthermore, it is something that shines, as it were, upon the forms, i.e.

[101] This part of the argument seems, with respect to the analysis performed in *Ennead* VI.7, to be weak. The fact that light shines on different forms does not, according to these passages, prevent us from being able to say that it is the same in each of these, although it enables each of these forms to be seen as different. Cf. chapters 5.3, 5.4 and 5.6. The point here must therefore lie in the next mentioned reason, i.e. that shining presupposes forms.

something which comes from the Good and stands for it, so to speak, in what comes after the Good. It does so in such a way that it affects all who see it and awakens motion in them (cf. chapters 5.4 and 5.6).[102] The impact which beauty has on the observer is something we know very well. It arouses erotic desire, which is ambiguous: if not understood properly, it may bind the lover to the beautiful object, but if understood correctly, it motivates him or her to search for the true source of beauty. What the shining of beauty means is less clear here, but it will be discussed in more detail in *Ennead* VI.7 (see chapter 5.4 and 5.6). We may speculate here that it perhaps captures the mentioned aspect of correct understanding of a beloved object. Only when the lover understands it as an expression of a higher beauty or perhaps even of the Good, i.e. when the lover sees it in the light of its source, does he or she avoid the fate of Narcissus and loves truly. In this sense, true beauty comes from what is above and the light of the source enables a beautiful object to be seen as truly beautiful. The various meanings of beauty which Plotinus considers here might therefore be read as relevant in some sense, but by themselves they are inadequate. They have to be integrated into a broader concept of beauty which eventually will be Plotinus' own.

4.2 Unity, multiplicity and the numbers (*Ennead* VI.6)

4.2.1 The context of the quest for the notion of number (V.5.4-5 and VI.6.1)

Plotinus deals with the topic of unity and multiplicity also in *Ennead* VI.6 *On numbers*, which is, as mentioned in the *Introduction* (see chapter 1), a sort of supplement to the *Großschrift* elaborating on the discussion of number started in *Ennead* V.5.4-5. The main topic of *Ennead* V.5 is the correct understanding of Intellect, its contents and its relation to the Good. However, its focus is explicitly connected with the question of unity and multiplicity. In V.5.1, Plotinus states that "…we shall proceed to investigate how truth and the intelligible and Intellect are related [in this unity-in-duality]: are they together in one and the same reality, but also two and diverse, or how are they related?" (V.5.1.35-38, transl. and brackets

[102] The notion of beauty as shining and awakening love is of course derived from Plato's *Phaedrus* (249d-252c).

Armstrong). In chapter four then, he is concerned with the specification of the goal of the ascent to the One, which has to be truly one (*ontōs hen*) and not one to the same degree as it is many, or one by participation. However, this is also the case of Intellect, as we have seen in VI.2.10 (cf. chapter 4.1.3). Even the slightest departure from the stillness of the union with the One is progress towards two (*duo*) derived from the One, i.e. towards multiplicity. But prior to it, also the monad comes to existence. Since what comes after the One is Intellect, these two principles, the monad and the dyad, must somehow be related to it but we do not learn how in this passage. Plotinus rather briefly sketches some of the problems that he will deal with in *Ennead* VI.6. What is the relation of the monad to the dyad? It is not present in the dyad as a unit, nor is it an essential number (*ūsiōdēs arithmos*) which continually gives existence (*hō to einai aei parechōn*, scil. *arithmos*), nor a quantitative number (*hō tū posū*, scil. *arithmos),* which under certain circumstances gives quantity (*hō to poson*, scil. *arithmos parechōn*). The relation of the quantitative numbers, essential numbers and the One is described as well, but only briefly and enigmatically. Plotinus says that the nature which belongs to the quantitative numbers imitates the relation of the essential number to the One. But how then, is the dyad one and how are its units one? Plotinus' short answer here is that they are one by participation in the first monad (*metechein tēs prōtēs*, scil. *monados*). They participate in it in another way as compared to the dyad itself, like different sensible things (e.g. an army or a house) are one in different ways. But are then the units in various numbers one in the same or in a different way? And what about different numbers (cf. V.5.4.1-35)?

Plotinus has even more to say on the topic of the generation of numbers and beings in *Ennead* V.5.5. The One, he claims, remains the same (*menei to prōton to auto*) even if other things come into being from it. All beings participate (*metalambanō*, *metalēpsis*) in the One, though differently, and it gives them being (*ūsia*) and makes them a sort of trace of itself in being (*ichnos tū henos*; cf. V.5.5.12-14).[103] Analogically to the generation of beings from the One, there is another one

[103] A different interpretation of these passages is held by Slaveva-Griffin (2009, p. 97-100), Horn (1995, p. 250-251) and Nikulin (2002, p. 88-89). They claim that there is monad generated by the

which makes number (*poiūntos de allū*, scil. *tū henos*; H-S). Number comes into existence on the model of such one (*kat' auto*; cf. V.5.5.1-4). This other one is a few lines later specified as the form (*eidos*) of number and called the monad (*monas*; cf. V.5.5.7-12). Plotinus himself however, corrects this analogy. As opposed to the case of numbers, the One is sufficient to create beings, so that there is no need for the other one (cf. V.5.5.6-8), i.e. for the monad.[104] However, since V.5 preceeds VI.6 and since in VI.6.5.35-38 Plotinus does say that there is such other one prior to forms and that it is not the One, the direct participation model of the beings in the One might be challenged. Do they not rather participate in the One through the monad? One way of resolving this ambiguity might be to highlight the different contexts of these claims from *Enneads* V.1, V.5 and VI.6, and to stress the fact that Plotinus does not want to multiply the number of hypostases as the Gnostics do. Consequently, the direct participation model would be the only possibility. On the other hand, one could question the context argument at least in case of V.5 and VI.6, which are directly related both by their topic and chronological order. Moreover, the addition of a participated aspect of the One (like the monad) has its own tradition in later Neoplatonism.[105] But is then the monad a new hypostasis? Probably not. Rather, it has to have some specific function within Intellect, like that of a principle as we already know from *Ennead* VI.2. Does it then connect all beings to the One? We shall see about that later (cf. chapter 4.2.3).

At this point, we might only speculate: the problem whether all beings participate in the One directly or through a monad, seems analogue to the problem of participation of sensually perceptibles in forms of Intellect. As we have seen (cf. the chapter 2.6), there are passages in the *Enneads* which support the model of direct participation, and others that situate soul in the place of an intermediary between Intellect and sensually perceptibles. In discussing this topic, I tried to

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One through which all beings participate in the One. Plotinus' thought does indeed advance in this direction further in VI.6 but the present passage does not say this. Cf. chapter 4.2.3.

[104] Similarly, in V.1[10].5 Plotinus describes the One as the maker of number (*hō ton arithmon poiōn*) and specifies this genesis as defining of the indefinite dyad by the One itself.

[105] Cf. the discussion of this topic in Plotinus in Gerson 2013, p.120-121 and 134-135. Later Neoplatonists like Iamblichus (Proclus, *In Tim.* II 240.4-9) and Proclus (*In Parm*. 707.8-18) developed the distinction between participated aspects and the unparticipated monad. Hereto, see Chlup 2012, p. 99-111.

present both versions as compatible, so that placing soul as an agent of participation represents a more developed version of the direct participation model, which on the other hand better captures the derivation of everything beneath Intellect from it. Furthermore, if discussed in the context of other topics, the direct model may simply be shorter. Consequently, I would suggest to assume a similar attitude, i.e. to understand the version favouring the monad as a more developed one, but at the same time one must understand that the expressions supporting a direct activity of the One upon the indefinite dyad, better depicts the derivation of Intellect from the One, or may be used simply as a shortcut.

From these introductory notes, we can see that much is at stake here: the question of unity of different entities as well as the clarification of the yet cryptic notion of substantial number, which should somehow be the giver of existence, but also the question of its relation to the One, to the monad and to the quantitative number. *Ennead* VI.6 deals with these topics but approaches them in a new context. It starts with a more general question as to know how multiplicity (*plēthos*) is to be understood and whether innumerable multiplicity (*plēthos anarithmon*) or infinity (*apeiria*) is a total falling away from the One (*apostasis pantelēs*, scil. *tū henos*; O.G.) and evil (*to kakon*) and what consequences this has for the value of ourselves. Are we evil as multiple (cf. VI.6.1.1-4)? Plotinus' answer is the distinction between: 1) multiplicity (*plēthos*) which designates the pouring of a thing out of itself, its extension in scattering, inability to tend to itself and utter deprivation of the one, and 2) magnitude (*megethos*) which refers to the abiding of a thing in its outpouring (cf. VI.6.1.4-8). Magnitude might be in a sense considered dreadful (*deinon*) because it is the product of a misguided seeking itself outside itself or, as Plotinus puts it, of a desire (*ephesis*) to be great (*mega*; cf. VI.6.1.8-16). Plotinus illustrates this with the dispersion of a whole, which gives rise to autonomous existence of its parts, but the whole itself perishes when its parts stop to tend towards its one. In losing its one, a thing loses itself (cf. VI.6.1.17-23).

4.2.2 Defined multiplicity, form of beauty and the indefinite dyad (VI.6.1-3)

An example of a defined multiplicity is the universe (*to pan*) which is both beautiful and large (*mega kai kalon*), due to the fact that it has been circumscribed by one (*perielēphthē heni*) and not dispersed into infinity (cf. VI.6.1.23-25). It is at the same time said to be beautiful by beauty (*tō kalō*) and not due to the fact that it is large. On the contrary, its largeness on its own would be the source of its ugliness and is itself rather lacking order and rather ugly (*mallon akosmon*, *mallon aischron*). It is in need of beauty because it is large and its largeness is, as Plotinus puts it, the matter of beauty which brings order (*kosmos*) into what is many (*poly*; cf. VI.6.1.25-29). Plotinus finishes this line of thought a bit later when he says that multiplicity is not allowed to be altogether multiple (*pantē plēthos*), but is always unified (*hēnōtai*) and as such both one and many (*hen on plēthos*). It is worse than the One when compared to it, but because it turned back to the One and has one in itself, it keeps its majesty (*semnon*; cf. VI.6.3.1-10).

These passages explicitly confirm what we have inquired about beauty so far. The universe is said to be beautiful by being circumscribed by one, while its largeness, representing its multiplicity, is rather the source of its ugliness. Beauty is thus connected with the presence of unity in multiplicity, which is itself worse than the One but has its value or majesty as compared to utter multiplicity. On the other hand, it is rather surprising that Plotinus at the same time uses beauty in a dative construction (*tō kalō*), standard in Plato for the causation of an attribute of a sensible thing by a form (cf. locus classicus *Phd*. 100c-e). The feeling that Plotinus refers to the form of beauty is even strengthened by the expression in which largeness is called matter of beauty, which again implies that beauty is a form. Furthermore, later in VI.6.8, Plotinus speaks in the same spirit about the absolutely righteous, beautiful and all other such things (*dikaion auto kai kalon kai hosa alla toiauta*; cf. VI.6.8.4-5), and in VI.6.14 he claims explicitly, that a beautiful thing is beautiful by the presence of beauty (*kalon kalū parūsia*, scil. *esti kalon*; O.G.) exactly as a white/one/two/just thing is white/one/two/just by the presence of whiteness/the one/dyad/the just (cf. VI.6.14.28-30).

To be able to evaluate these expressions for our purposes, i.e. for the reconstruction of Plotinus' notion of beauty, let me first lay out the possibilities for the explanation of these statements: 1) Plotinus changed his mind and in *Ennead* VI.6 he considered beauty to be a form among other forms, like that of whiteness, justice, the one, or the dyad; 2) He did not change his mind and what is said here is the same as in *Enneads* I.6 and V.8; 3) Plotinus does not speak properly here and the presupposition of the existence of the form of beauty serves only dialectic purposes and he does not in fact advocate it.

It seems to me that the first option can be dismissed right away because even if we accepted a developmental theory of Plotinus' thought in some form, it would still remain bizarre that the existence of the form of beauty is not mentioned in *Ennead* V.8, which is a treatise very closely connected to VI.6. I do not see how the elaboration of the doctrine of numbers would lead to such a substantial shift in Plotinus' notion of beauty, so that one could advocate a development between *Enneads* V.8 and VI.6. Moreover, many of Plotinus' brief comments on the topic of number from much earlier treatises (like V.1[10] or V.4[7]) are compatible with those from *Ennead* VI.6, which seems to suggest that Plotinus had in mind at least the contours of the doctrine of number when writing *Ennead* V.8. In addition, the listed “forms” from VI.6.14 should attract our attention even if we put beauty aside for a moment. First, what we know about the one in Intellect and what we will learn about it also later in VI.6, is not compatible with enlisting it along with whiteness and the just as if they functioned the same in Intellect. It seems rather, that Plotinus, as elsewhere, attacks opposing conceptions and uses whatever argument comes into his mind or allows himself to speak imprecisely for the sake of the argument (see further below). Second, at least the just and the beautiful are typical Platonic examples of forms and Plotinus perhaps “quotes” Plato from his memory to consider his ideas.

The second option, to interpret the discussed statements about the form of beauty as identical with the two *Enneads* on beauty, does not seem convincing either. Plotinus clearly evades talking about the existence of the form of beauty in *Enneads* I.6.2 and V.8.1 and connects beauty just to the presence of *a* form (cf. part

2.2 and 3.2). I can hardly believe in Plotinus' imprecise formulations about the existence of the form of beauty in *Enneads* devoted to the very topic of beauty. However, one could perhaps try to avoid the conflict between *Enneads* VI.6 on the one hand, and I.6 and V.8 on the other, by saying that in the end, all the forms are all the other forms in Intellect. In this sense, it would be possible to say that a thing becomes beautiful by partaking in whatever form but through it the thing participates in the form of beauty. However, even this is to a great extent non-persuasive. Why does then a thing not become all things of the Intellect if these are so easily interchangeable? The intelligibles do not form complete, indistinguishable unity but are "a richly variegated one keeping its many together in one" (VI.2.2.3, transl. Armstrong), i.e. they are at the same time *same* and *other*, or as Proclus puts it, they are *auto kai allo* (*Elem. Theol.*, Prop. 176). It is therefore impossible to deal with the problem of the existence of the form of beauty by laying emphasis on the interchangeability of the forms, as it is not absolute. And even if this reasoning were correct, why would Plotinus keep silent on this in the two *Enneads* devoted to beauty?

It seems to me that we are left with the third choice. However, it is perhaps not only a leftover option, but has its own rationale. None of the three passages that imply the existence of the form of beauty deals with this very topic, but mentions it only in passing. In VI.6.1, Plotinus focuses on the elaboration of the opposition of defined multiplicity (*megethos*) and infinite multiplicity (*plēthos*) in order to emphasize the ethical dimension of his enquiry. In VI.6.8, he is trying to express the fact that Intellect as the living being contains all that is, and beauty is something existent. Moreover, this testimony for the existence of a form of beauty might be weakened, because Plotinus immediately adds that it is to be considered how all the named contents of Intellect exist and what they are (cf. VI.6.8.6-7 and my comments in chapter 4.2.3). Finally, in VI.6.14, Plotinus is interested in freeing the notion of number from being understood as relation, and treats here number (the one and the dyad) as forms similar to that of white, beautiful or just for the sake of the argument. As we shall see however, numbers are in fact not simply forms but designate rather the very limited nature of each form. Number is in this sense the

structural principle of the whole Intellect (see chapter 4.2.3). The three passages from VI.6 that seem to suggest the existence of the form of beauty might each be interpreted as advocating it only for dialectical purposes. It seems reasonable therefore to ignore these implications and refuse to posit the form of beauty.[106]

But let us return to our reading of *Ennead* VI.6. In what follows, Plotinus turns to the problem of the number of the infinite (*arithmos tēs apairias*; cf. VI.6.2) and the existence of the infinite as such (*to apeiron*; cf. VI.6.3), and expounds it as great and small (*mega kai smikron*, VI.6.3.29), i.e. as what is known in the Platonic tradition as the indefinite dyad (*aoristos dyas*).[107] As Slaveva-Griffin points out, Plotinus needs to "address Aristotle's misconception of Plato's reference to the Indefinite Dyad and infinite number," which he does in chapters VI.6.2-3 in order to show "how multiplicity, as number, unfolds into the universe," because "numbers originate from the Indefinite Dyad" (Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 56). The notion of the infinite is from the very beginning contrasted to that which is limited (*horizō*) and as something which requires limit from outside, it is uncovered as precisely unlimited or infinite (cf. VI.6.3.10-15). In itself, it could be depicted as an escape (*pheugei*, scil. *to apeiron*; O.G.) from limit, but this run is "caught by being surrounded externally" (VI.6.3.16-17, transl. Armstrong). In trying to delimit it, we always miss its evasive nature (cf. VI.6.3.33-35 and the use of the verb *hypekpheugō*) and it always emerges as the opposite, so that it is to be understood as the simultaneity of opposites and again not as opposites (cf. VI.6.3.28-29), i.e. precisely as the indefinite dyad. As such, it has the role of the principle of multiplicity which receives limit and is defined by number, and thus becomes all the forms of the Intellect (cf. the above mentioned V.1.5, Nikulin 1998a, p. 92, and Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 71).

4.2.3 Number in the intelligible (VI.6.4-8)

[106] I consider *Ennead* VI.3.12 which is to my knowledge the only other place implying the existence of a form of beauty, to be a similar case. It seems to me that Plotinus simply picks up common examples of forms there (cf. *Phd*. 100c-e) to show his point and he does not care at that moment if these examples fit into his own doctrine.

[107] For a thorough argument for the interpretation of these passages as referring to *aoristos dyas* see Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 54-70. For the connection of the notion of *aoristos dyas* to intelligible matter see Nikulin 1998a. See of course also *Met.* A6.

Plotinus then turns to the main topic of the treatise which is how the numbers are in the intelligible. Basically he considers three options: 1) either the number is posterior to the forms (*hōs epiginomenōn tois allois eidesin*; cf. VI.6.4.1-2), 2) number is simultaneous with the forms (*synegennēthē*; *parakolūthūntōn*; cf. VI.6.4.1-3 and 6-9), or 3) it is possible to think number itself by itself (*autos eph' heautū*; cf. VI.6.4.9-11). Plotinus dismisses the hypothesis of the posteriority of numbers on the grounds of what Plato says about true numbers (*en tō alēthinō arithmō*; cf. *Rep*. 529c-530c) or number in substance (*arithmon en ūsia*; cf. VI.6.4.20-25), and also due to the fact that number itself has substantial unity and not the unity of numbered quantity, as already the Pythagoreans noted (cf. VI.6.5.1-16). Simultaneity of number and forms is also rejected because all forms, including being and movement which Plotinus mentions here, are one so that one must be prior to each form and number (here represented by a decad) to all forms. This one however, is not the One itself but the other one (cf. VI.6.5.16-52) we touched upon in V.5.5 (cf. chapter 4.2). Therefore, number is to be found in the Intellect where all is intellect (*nūs*) and knowledge (*epistēmē*; cf. VI.6.6.18-27).

Nevertheless, all forms in the Intellect are one nature (*mia physis*) and are not separated (*chōris*) from each other. Rather one must think of them, as Plotinus says paraphrasing Anaxagoras, as being all things together in one (*homū en heni panta*; cf. VI.6.7.1-5). On the other hand, Intellect thinks them as already separated forever (*kechōristai en autō aei*) because it thinks them as defined forms distinct from each other (cf. VI.6.7.7-10). In thinking them as separate, Intellect unwinds into multiplicity. In thinking them as one nature, this multiplicity is circumscribed by one (cf. VI.6.1.25). Plotinus presents a very interesting argument for this specific nature of Intellect, i.e. for the fact that it is the paradigm of unified multiplicity. He says that this can be confirmed from the participants who are attracted by the beauty (*to kallos*) and greatness (*to megethos*) of Intellect, i.e. who fall in love with it (*erōti pros auto*, scil. *nūn*; O.G.). As far as soul is similar to Intellect, the same can be seen in other things' love for soul (cf. VI.6.7.10-14). If there is a beautiful living being here, there must be the absolute living being of wonderful and inexplicable beauty there (*thaumastū to kallos kai aphaustū ontos*, scil. *autozōū*; O.G.). Or rather,

Intellect is this complete living being (*pantelēs zōon*) encompassing (*periechon*) all beings in itself (cf. VI.6.7.14-19).

Plotinus then turns to the enquiry about the absolute or complete living being. It is called the primary living being (*zōon prōtōs esti*) and identified with Intellect (*nūs*) and real being (*ūsia hē ontōs*), and it is said to contain not only all living things, but also the whole number (*arithmos sympas*), righteousness itself, beauty ("itself" is here implied by the context: *dikaion auto kai kalon kai hossa alla toiauta*) and all other such things (cf. VI.6.8.1-7). However, how each of these things exist and what they are, is yet to be discovered says Plotinus as an afterthought, signifying perhaps that he has not spoken quite precisely (cf. VI.6.8.6-7). The implied surprising presence of beauty itself may thus be weakened in this passage. If then, he continues, one assumes a succession of being (*to on*), intellect (*nūs*) and living being (*zōon*), number is prior to all of them. It must be prior to the living being and to intellect since they are the third and the second respectively, and consequently they presuppose number. However, number is also prior to being (*ūsia*) because being is itself one and many as we know from *Ennead* VI.2 (cf. VI.6.8.17-24).

4.2.3 The role of number in the generation of beings (VI.6.9-10)

We then come to the crucial chapter of *Ennead* VI.6 where Plotinus considers "if being generated number by its own division, or number divided being" (*potera hē ūsia ton arithmon egennēse tō hautēs merismō, ē ho arithmos emerise tēn ūsian*; VI.6.9.1-3, transl. Armstrong, modified). This question, he explains, does not relate only to being but is also connected with the rest of the highest kinds, Movement, Rest, the Same and the Other, which either generated number or number generated them (cf. VI.6.9.3-5). From what comes next, it is obvious that the question actually relates to all forms or, as Plotinus says in this chapter, to all beings (*onta*; cf. VI.6.9.9, 14, 22-24 and 36-39). Plotinus now again recalls his question from VI.6.4 whether number exists by itself (*eph' heautū*) or is only observed in a number of things. This time however, he supplements this question with an additional one:

is this true also for the one among numbers (*to hen to en tois arithmois*)? Is this one also prior to beings, and if so, is it also prior to being (cf. VI.6.9.5-10)?

Plotinus sketches two possible answers: 1) that being[108] is before number (*tūto pro arithmū*, scil. *to on*; O.G.) and number comes to exist from being (*doteon arithmon ex ontos ginesthai*; cf. VI.6.9.10-12), or 2) that one is before being (*proēgēsetai tū ontos to hen*) and number before beings (*ho arithmos tōn ontōn*, scil. *proēgēsetai*; O.G.; cf. VI.6.9.12-14). We know the first option from our experience when counting things (cf. VI.6.9.15-18). However, Plotinus objects that in the process of the very generation of things, it must have been clear how many there had to be if they were not generated arbitrarily (*kata to epelthon*; cf. VI.6.9.15-23). Thus, he concludes, the whole number (or "every number" as one could also translate *pas hō arithmos*) existed before the beings (*pro autōn tōn ontōn*) and as such number itself is not any of the beings (cf. VI.6.9.23-24).

What is it then and how is it related to being and to beings? Plotinus' answer is that number existed in being (*en tō onti*) but not as its number (*ūk arithmos ōn tū ontos*) because in the beginning of the generation of beings, which is of course not to be understood temporally, being was still one (*hen gar ēn eti to on*; cf. VI.6.9.24-26). Rather, he says, the power of number (*hē tū arithmū dynamis*) divided being (*emerise to on*) and "made it, so to speak, in labour to give birth to multiplicity" (*hoion ōdinein epoiēsen auton to plēthos*; VI.6.9.27, transl. Armstrong). Obviously, the *dynamis* here is not to be understood as potentiality but rather as productive power, since it was able to produce multiplicity (cf. Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 86). Number itself is said to be either the very being of being (*hē ūsia autū*, scil. *tū ontos*; O.G.) or its actuality (*energeia*). Consequently, the absolute living being (*to zōon auto*) and Intellect (*nūs*) are number (cf. VI.6.9.27-29). In the most enigmatic passage of this *Ennead*, Plotinus explains that Being is to be understood as unified number (*arithmos hēnōmenos*), beings as unfolded number (*arithmos exelēligmenos*), Intellect as number moving in itself (*arithmos en heautō kinūmenos*) and the living being as inclusive number (*arithmos periechōn*; cf. VI.6.9.29-32).

[108] Contrary to Armstrong and Harder and with MacKenna, Brisson, Bréhier, Bertier and the latest translation edited by Gerson, I take *tūto* as referring to being and not the one.

Because it comes from the One, Being must be number, and forms are henads and numbers (cf. VI.6.9.32-34). Without the One, Being itself would be scattered (cf. VI.6.9.39-44). This number, which is in Being (*en tō onti*) and with Being (*meta tū ontos*) but before beings (*pro tōn ontōn*), and which can be contemplated in the forms (*epitheōrūmenos tois eidesi*) and has a share in their generation (*syggennōn auta*), is to be called substantial (*ūsiōdēs*; cf. VI.6.9.36-38). Beings are based on substantial number (*basin echei ta onta en autō*) and have their source (*pēgē*), root (*rhiza*) and principle (*archē*) in it (cf. VI.6.9.38-39). On the other hand, monadic number with which we count, is but an image of the substantial number (cf. VI.6.9.35-36). Plotinus concludes his exposition in the beginning of the 10th chapter with the following: "Being, therefore, standing firm in multiplicity (*en plēthei*) was number, when it woke as many (*poly*), and was a kind of preparation for the beings (*paraskeuē pros ta onta*) and a preliminary sketch (*protypōsis*), and like unities (*henades*) keeping a place (*topon echūsai*) for the beings which are going to be founded on them (*tois ep' autas hidrythēsomenois*)" (VI.6.10.1-4, transl. Armstrong).

These passages require commentary. Let me start by paraphrasing what Plotinus says here. Number is to be found in Being as its limit, i.e. as that which defines it as if it was its form. Being is unified number because Being entails, as it were, all the other highest kinds or rather they unfold from it, and because all other forms are derived from these (cf. chapter 3.15, point 2). In this sense, in the very beginning of the process of generation of Intellect (again not to be thought temporally) when Being was still one, it was *unified* number (cf. chapter 3.15, point 5). However, it never really is one, since being is always to be thought among the other highest kinds and together, they "afterwards" unroll to all the other forms. For this reason, it is unified *number* because it must be thought as multiple or rather as limited or defined multiplicity (cf. chapter 3.15, point 2). Plotinus tries to capture this moment in the process of generation of Intellect by comparing it to waking up to multiplicity, but from a sleep that always already stands in multiplicity. Intellect, which is Being, becomes aware, as it were, of its multiplicity by grasping it with the act of intellection. However, multiplicity, i.e. the rest of the highest kinds as well as the whole of the forms of Intellect, were already there during this sleep. Plotinus again

tries to express this inchoate "state of being" of all the forms and highest kinds before they became thought by Intellect. They were in Being or rather they were Being but only as preparations or preliminary sketches, keeping a place for themselves until they become conscious or intellectually grasped. And when they do, they can be called unfolded number, where *unfolded* refers to the process of their generation, while *number* refers to their defined or limited multiplicity (cf. chapter 3.15, point 5).[109]

The designation of Intellect as number moving in itself (cf. *DA* 408b32–33) combines again several features of the second hypostasis. As *moving* number, it is thinking or intelligible activity, and this activity implies multiplicity because thinking is self-relation and because Intellect thinks a variety of intelligible objects (cf. chapter 3.15, point 3). Intellect is therefore moving *number*. Moreover, this intelligible activity is directed to itself because the intelligibles are not outside the Intellect (cf. *Ennead* V.5), so that it is number moving *in itself*. From a different perspective, the self-containedness of Intellect is alluded to in the denomination of the Living being as inclusive number. As we know from VI.6.7-8, the complete or primary Living being refers to Intellect and its contents, i.e. all the intelligible forms. The Living being may therefore also be called inclusive *number* but this time with the emphasis laid on *inclusive* since it contains *all* the forms. Therefore, the entire multiplicity is circumscribed by one, as Plotinus claims in the very first chapter of VI.6. The contents of Intellect are, as we know (cf. chapter 3.15, point 1), of such a kind that all the forms are all the other forms and the whole of them. For this reason, inclusive number brings limit to all forms and to the whole of them, i.e. to the Living being, and may therefore be identified with it.

As Slaveva-Griffin (2009, p. 109) aptly summarizes, "the absolute unified number in Being, when contemplated by Intellect (the number moving in itself), divides substance and becomes the unfolded number of beings, enclosed by the finite number of the Complete Living Being." As can be observed, the identification of different aspects of Intellect with number (unified, unfolded, moving in itself and

[109] Cf. Maggi 2013, p. 85-86, who also links unfolded number and inclusive number with unified multiplicity.

inclusive) functions as a shortcut for the different perspectives from which Plotinus describes the utmost unified multiplicity of Intellect.[110] Designating different aspects of Intellect as unified and unfolded number captures its unity and multiplicity in the process of its generation (cf. chapter 3.15, point 5) including the unifying role of the highest kinds (cf. chapter 3.15, point 2). Referring to an aspect of Intellect as number moving in itself reminds us of the unifying and multiplying role of its intelligible activity (cf. chapter 3.15, point 3). The fact that from a different perspective Intellect is also inclusive number, can be read as a reference to the interconnectedness of all intelligible forms with each other and with the whole of them, which expresses at the same time their unity and multiplicity (cf. chapter 3.15, point 1). Finally, in all these cases Plotinus identifies aspects of Intellect with *number*. By doing so, he highlights the very results of the enquiry performed in VI.6 according to which Intellect is a limited multiplicity on the grounds of its "arithmetic structure", understood as the activity of number in Intellect (cf. chapter 3.15, point 4). In this sense, Plotinus later claims that number "is in Intellect as the sum of the active actualities of Intellect" (VI.6.15.16, transl. Armstrong).

A rather difficult question, entailed in what I discussed so far, is the exact relation of the highest kinds interpreted in VI.2 to the doctrine of numbers in VI.6.9-10. First of all, let me say that one has to be very careful here. Slaveva-Griffin for example, connects Rest to unified number, Motion to number moving in itself, unfolded number to the Other and the Same to encompassing number (cf. Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 109, and 2014, p.205). The obvious problem is that there are five highest kinds but only four numbers mentioned in VI.6.9, so that if one tries to identify the highest kinds with these numbers, one has to come up with a solution for the missing one. In Slaveva-Griffin's case, it is Being which has to be grafted onto the numbers: "When put together, all activities of substantial number bring together the different aspects of the same whole. This same whole, in turn, corresponds to the fifth primary kind of being" (Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 109). But in fact, things are even more complicated since for example the assumed correspondence of Rest to unified number, is mediated through Being because "the

[110] Of course Plotinus has exegetical reasons here too, especially the correct explication of the doctrines of Plato and his followers, as recorded by Aristotle. Cf. Šíma 2016.

unified substantial number simply defines Being as stasis" (Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 102).

A different option, advocated by Nikulin is to split the highest kinds into two groups and connect (Nikulin 2002, p. 78-79) or even identify (Nikulin 1998b, p. 331-332) the Same and Rest with the monad, and the Other and Movement with the dyad. The interaction of the monad and the dyad could then be understood as the very constitution of beings from Being, so that unified number, number moving in itself, unfolded number and encompassing number are descriptions of such genesis of beings (Nikulin 2002, p. 80), i.e. genesis of being as Intellect (Nikulin 2002, p. 76 and 80).

These speculations may in fact be based on reasonable assumptions, nevertheless they remain speculations. On the other hand, we should not do the opposite mistake and deny the relation of the two topics, since Plotinus explicitly identifies the highest kinds with numbers in VI.2.10 and brings them into play in the very beginning of VI.6.9. The solution I propose, is not to try to connect individual kinds to particular types of number or to the monad and the dyad, but to understand them as related through the mediation of the problem of unity and multiplicity. As indicated above, I read the crucial passage VI.6.9.29-32 as a means of capturing the utmost unified multiplicity of Intellect otherwise described from several different perspectives (cf. chapter 3.15). The highest kinds are only a part of this topic, albeit an important one. I believe that apart from the repeated statement that the highest kinds are numbers (cf. VI.2.2 and 10), one cannot really say much more on the topic based on the textual evidence and perhaps there is not more to be said anyway. The designation *number* indicates that a thing is a limited multiplicity, which is precisely the case of the highest kinds. I see no urge to specify what kind of number that is because it is only a matter of expression. Plotinus has a lot to say about what kind of unified multiplicity the highest kinds are without having to use a parable from the realm of numbers.

Another controversial topic related to the discussion of VI.6.9 is the answer to Plotinus' question from VI.6.9.8-10, whether number (including the one among numbers) is before beings or even before Being itself. As we have seen, Plotinus

suggested two options: 1) being is before number and number comes from being, or 2) that one is before being and number before beings (see above). The answer of Slaveva-Griffin is ambivalent. She claims first that number and being are "ontologically equal and inseparable" (Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 90). However, later she asserts that "number has priority even over Being and if number is prior to Being, then the unified substantial number is the closest to the source of all" (p. 100). In my reading, Plotinus argues for the second option (which corresponds rather to Slaveva-Griffin's former statement): one is before Being and number before beings, so that number as such is in Being and with Being (cf. VI.6.9.24-26 and 36-38). Beings on the other hand, are clearly derived from number (cf. VI.6.9.38-39). But how does number itself come into existence and what is the one which is, according to VI.6.9.12-14, before Being?

As we have seen, even the slightest departure from the One is a progress towards multiplicity, which is the indefinite dyad[111] (cf. V.5.1.8-11), or infinite, manifold, unbounded (*polys kai apeiros*; cf. VI.7.17.20) and unlimited (*aoristos*; cf. VI.7.17.15) life (*zōē*; cf. VI.7.17.11ff and my discussion of these passages in chapter 5.3).[112] But with it or rather prior to it, the monad comes to existence (cf. V.5.1.8-11). These two principles interact, i.e. the monad limits the dyad and Intellect is born (cf. V.1.5.7-9, V.4.2.8-8). Their interaction is from one perspective described as an attempt of Intellect not yet seeing (*opsis ūpō idūsa*; cf. V.3.11.5-6 and also V.4.2.7) or as Emilsson (2007, p. 70) puts it, of the inchoate Intellect to attain the One in its simplicity (*epiballein hōs haplō*; cf. V.3.11.3). Similarly, Plotinus sometimes speaks of an unintellectual look at the One (*eblepen anoētōs*) that in fact never saw the One (cf. VI.7.16.13-19 and my discussion of these passages in chapter 5.3). From a correlative perspective, the interaction of the monad and the dyad results in a vague (*aoristōs*; cf. V.3.11.7) presence of an image (*phantasma ti*; cf

[111] Slaveva-Griffin (2009, p. 87) calls the indefinite dyad the principle of potentiality as opposed to number which is the principle of actuality.

[112] However, Plotinus sometimes also approaches the constitution of Intellect from the perspective of otherness and movement (e.g. V.1.1.4, V.1.6.53, II.4.5.29-34). As it was the case with the exact relation of numbers to the highest kinds, I incline towards a very cautious attitude and prefer to approach these passages as descriptions of the same process from different perspectives, rather than to supplement the system with additional elements that have only scarce textual evidence. For a discussion of these topics see Nikulin 1998a, Rist 1985 and Beierwaltes 1972. Cf. also my comment in chapter 5.3, footnote 139.

V.3.11.4) or a trace (*ichnos*; cf. V.5.5.12-14, III.8.11.22–24, VI.7.17.39, VI.8.18.16) of the One in Intellect.

Monad itself is not essential number (cf. V.5.5 but also VI.2.10.13-16) but rather makes number which comes into existence on the model of it and through it on the model of the One (cf. V.5.5.1-4). The one in being (i.e. the monad) as if falls out of the One with Being (VI.2.9.39-43), so that they always come together. However, the "coming together" of Being and the monad does not refer to the generative process of Being itself. Rather, it shows that in Intellect, Being and the one are closely connected or even connected to the highest degree possible in multiplicity. The monad and Being are connected in the sense that number is the very being or actuality of Being (cf. VI.6.9.27-29), or again that Being is unified number. Therefore, there is always number in Being or with Being (cf. VI.6.9.36-38). Since the monad is a trace of the One in Being, it functions in turn as a connecting element with the One (*synaptō* in VI.6.15), whereas numbers are said not to do this because it suffices that Being is linked to it via the monad (cf. VI.6.15.24-29 and Horn 1995, p. 257-261). Nevertheless, because all numbers participate in the monad in some way, all that is shaped by number can be said to be a sort of trace of the One in Being too (cf. V.5.5.12-14).

Since what unfolds from Being and the rest of the highest kinds are all the forms of Intellect (cf. VI.6.11.24-34), and since they all participate in the unity of the principle, which is the monad, they are all henads. Slaveva-Griffin (2009, p. 102) summarizes aptly the role of henads in the constitution of Intellect: "…the henads represent the multiplicity of beings that retain a trace of the unified number of Being in themselves to impart onto their beings. Thus, each henad, as a holding place for being, is an individual version of the unified number of Being." However, the use of the words henad and monad is to a certain extent confusing in VI.6 and Plotinus does not seem to stick to their systematic meanings I try to use here (cf. a similar observation by Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 92-93).

The designation substantial number was also newly developed by Plotinus, although it is partially derived from what is said about true numbers (*alēthinos arithmos*) in Plato's *Republic* (529c-530c) and about true being (*ūsia ontōs ūsa*) in

Phaedrus. (247a-248a). Because various forms are different multiplicities that are differently unified (i.e. they participate differently in the monad), or in other words, because each of them is a particular henad, they all have their source, root and principle in substantial number (cf. VI.6.9.38-39). As again Slaveva-Griffin accurately paraphrases Plotinus, "substantial number is the mold into which the Forms slip to exist" (Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 87) and also "the rational principle (*logos*), described in V.1.5.13, which orders substance (*ousia*) and constitutes being (*to on*)" (Slaveva-Griffin 2009, p. 89). As such, substantial number is not only the limit imposed through the monad on every single form by the One but the structuring principle of the whole Intellect. Substantial number is the product of the interaction of the indefinite dyad and the monad, i.e. it is the very limited nature of the intelligible forms and of the whole of Intellect. Therefore, it is a term depicting both the fact that they are a defined *multiplicity*, and that the monad rules over this multiplicity, i.e. that it is a *unified* multiplicity.

4.2.4 Number and beauty (VI.6.18)

A crucial question remains to be answered: what does all this have to do with beauty? First, the enquiry into the highest kinds and into the account of number was elicited by the connection of beauty to Intellect on the grounds of its utmoust unity in multiplicity. My investigation was led by the desire to specify this unity from two important perspectives: the generic and principal role of the highest kinds, and the structural role of number in the intelligible. We have already been able to specify the unity of the Intellect by determining the one as a principle in Intellect, we have discussed why beauty is not one of the highest kinds and have been able to identify Being as the most beautiful "part" of Intellect. A closer reading of the *Ennead* VI.6 *On numbers* was of great importance for our topic. We have seen how number may function as a shortcut for the utmost unified multiplicity of Intellect, derived from the nature of its intelligible activity and from the nature of its objects of thought, from the atemporal process of Intellect's genesis including the role of the highest kinds in it, and finally from the structural unity and multiplicity of each of its parts and the whole of it. Also, multiplicity of Intellect was identified as a

limited one, because as inclusive number it was circumscribed by one, both as a whole and as each of its parts. Further implications of this account of number for the question of beauty are summarized by Plotinus himself in the last chapter of the treatise. These passages explicitly address the relationship of beauty and number and may further deepen our previous findings.

In VI.6.18, Plotinus describes how number is in Intellect from the perspective of limit. All numbers *there* are limited (*hōristai*) and in no way deficient in the sense that they cannot be in any way greater than they are. One could say that they are unlimited (*apeiron*) only in the sense that they cannot be measured by something else, because they themselves are measures (*metra*; cf. VI.6.18.1-12). What requires an external limit is precisely something that is not limited in itself but needs to be measured in order to be prevented from running on into indefiniteness. Real beings, i.e. intelligible forms, since they are numbers, do not need such an external limit. They are bound by their own agency being what they are. Additionally, Plotinus claims that these forms or numbers are beautiful, because they are such measures limited by themselves but also because they are living beings, or rather because they constitute one Living being living a divine life (i.e. the first, clearest and best one, in no way deficient or weak, unmixed with death and having the pure essence of living). Moreover this life, which is derived from the One and directed to it, is an intelligent life or, as Plotinus puts it, is accompanied by thought of all (*hē pantōn phronēsis*) and by universal Intellect (*hō pas nūs*). By mixing thought (*sygkerasamenos phronēsin*) into this divine life and by giving it a colour of greater goodness (*agathōteron auto epichrōsas*), the beauty (*to kallos*) of Intellect becomes more majestic (*semnoteron*), for even here below a thoughtful life is majesty and beauty in truth (*to semnon jak to kalon kata alētheian*; cf. VI.6.18.7-25). The more it is true of Intellect where life flashes out of everything, where there is no contradiction and nothing external to it, but only eternal being of and by itself everywhere, i.e. where being is one. Because Intellect eternally gives being to everything, it is great in power and in beauty (*en dynameis kai kallei mega*) and as such charming (*thelgō*), so that all seek (*zēteō*) the Good with it (*met' autū to agathon*; cf. VI.6.18.25-53).

The relevance of the treatise *On numbers* for the enquiry into the beautiful should now be much more patent. Beauty is identified with being a measure, i.e. something limited or number but also something that does not have its limit from something external being limited by itself. Because number was identified previously with the actuality of each form, it is precisely the very being of a form which is number. Number therefore is a suitable notion to capture both required aspects of beauty: the fact that it is limited and that this limit is not external. Otherwise, such a beautiful thing would be but a decorated corpse, because Plotinus understands the external limitation of a thing as in a way emphasizing its own unlimited nature (cf. II.4.16). Moreover, the fact that Plotinus connects number and beauty supports what we have already observed in V.8.13 (cf. chapter 3.14): Intellect is beautiful as being the primarily differentiated and tied, i.e. differentiated and tied to the maximum degree possible. Number stands precisely for these two aspects. As number, Intellect is multiple, but limited. *Ennead* VI.6 therefore from a structural perspective supports the claim that beauty is *unitas multiplex*, and it even more vigorously lays emphasis on the self-determination of beauty, i.e. on the fact that a thing is beautiful when it is bound by its *own* limit. In this sense, the existence of the form of beauty (cf. chapter 4.2.2) makes even less sense than it would seem, because what makes a form beautiful is precisely something that is characteristic of each form, or rather of the whole of Intellect.

A more complicated case is a further reason given for the beauty of Intellect: the fact that it is a living being. It seems that there are several motives that come together here. The first one is again the connection of beauty to unity in multiplicity because the life of Intellect is specific precisely in being a life of and by itself everywhere, such that life flashes out of everything, i.e. in being one life that is many (cf. VI.6.18.25-44).

Second, life was previously in VI.6.9 associated with the completeness of Intellect unfolded, i.e. with the fact that it encompasses every form. This connection of life with such unfolded multiplicity might not be understood only from “arithmetical” perspective as encompassing number. It could also have “biological” connotations with generative or reproductive power. As we know from III.8, the life of Intellect is

productive contemplation. As living or contemplating, Intellect unfolds itself. The connection of beauty to life in the sense of unfolded but defined multiplicity has implications for our interpretation of Being as the most beautiful "part" of Intellect, which was derived from parts of *Ennead* VI.2 (cf. chapter 4.1.4). It seems that Plotinus adopts here a much more positive attitude towards defined multiplicity when he makes life one of the causes of beauty. It seems even from these passages that if Intellect was not all forms but only some of them, it would be less beautiful (cf. VI.6.18.20-25 and see further below). In this sense, Intellect as unified number is not as beautiful as encompassing number because it is "not yet" the fullness of its contents. On the other hand, this enriching role of multiplicity is not to be overestimated as Plotinus himself points out in VI.6.1.8-22, but also because the reason why it may have such positive function is the fact that Intellect does not lose any of its unity by unfolding. In the stage of Intellect's constitution "when" it is the highest genera, it is one to the same degree as "after" it unfolded to the last of the forms. Moreover, because Intellect never was and never is in an undeveloped state, this topic is in fact only a matter of inaccurate description. Nevertheless, the motivation to designate the highest kinds, Being or unified number as the most beautiful "part" of Intellect, was based on the fact that these are the closest to the One and in this sense more one. Perhaps however, the passages from VI.6 currently under discussion show that the metaphor of closeness does not function here anymore.[113]

But let us return to Plotinus' motivations for making life the cause of beauty. There might be a third motive, which in a way comprises both the previous ones.[114] To quote A. H. Armstrong (1960, p. 403), "It seems to me most unlikely that a philosopher who knew something about Aristotelian theology could have written this without intending an explicit reference to the discussion of divine thought in

[113] In chapter 4.1.4 I also hesitated to designate the one in Intellect (the monad) as the most beautiful part of it, even if this could be claimed on the grounds of its greatest closeness to the One. However, Plotinus repeated several times that it does not allow multiplicity. The metaphor of closeness did not function there either.

[114] As before, Plotinus might also have exegetical reasons: to show the compatibility of the claims of various dialogues of Plato with his own doctrine. In this case, especially those of *Timaeus* (30a-31b), about the beauty of the noetic paradigm and about the paradigm being an intelligent living being.

Metaphysics" (cf. 1074b15-1075a11).[115] I too think that Plotinus is actually trying to correct Aristotle's account of *noēsis noēseōs* here. Aristotle devotes the mentioned passages to specifying the object of god's thought and he does so besides other things in the context of the god's necessary majesty (*to semnon*; cf. *Met*. 1074b17-18). The god must think that which is most divine (*to theiotaton*) and precious (*timiōtaton*; cf. *Met*. 1074b25-26) in order to be beautiful (*to kalon*; cf. *Met*. 1074b23-24) and so it is a thinking of its own thinking (*estin hē noēsis noēseōs noēsis*; cf. *Met*. 1074b33-35). This activity of the god was moreover previously identified with the god's life (cf. *Met*. 1072b28-31). It is striking that not only beauty but also majesty come into play when Aristotle specifies the divine life of the god, which is the thinking of its own thinking. Plotinus obviously alludes to these passages and to some extent presents a similar picture. The life of the god which is Intellect is also intelligent life accompanied by thought of all (*hē pantōn phronēsis*) and universal Intellect (*ho pas nūs*; cf. VI.6.18.20-23) and it lives a divine life (cf. VI.6.18.12-18). Also, Intellect's thought is reflexive but it does not think just its thinking. Rather, it thinks itself as the plurality of all the forms. From Aristotle's perspective, this could threaten the beauty and majesty of god, but Plotinus avoids this objection from two sides: 1) Intellect does not think something external but it thinks itself as all the forms; and 2) the object of thought is beautiful because all the forms are measures or numbers. As noted before, the connection of Intellect with plurality of forms seems even to potentiate its beauty, for it does not become more majestic until the life of Intellect is mixed with thought and until it is given the colour of greater goodness (cf. VI.6.18.20-25).

After connecting beauty with unified multiplicity which is one by its own agency, with such vindicated multiplicity and with life, Plotinus specifies beauty with respect to both what is before and what is after Intellect. Intellect is said to give being to everything (cf. VI.6.18.46-47) and with it, to give beauty. Even soul is number, if it is a substance (cf. VI.6.16.44-45), and all that comes into being is in the end determined by the first numbers (cf. VI.6.15.35-42 and Magi 2013). In an earlier

[115] The quotation refers originaly to *Ennead* V.5 (and not VI.6), but I believe the point to be the same here. The general connection of Plotinus' notion of the life of Intellect with *Met*. XII has been also noted by Beierwaltes 1974, p. 20.

passage however, multiplicity of the sensible world was not considered as positive as the multiplicity of Intellect. It was said to be the source of its ugliness, or more precisely, the world would be ugly if it was not circumscribed by one as if from something external (cf. VI.6.1.23-29). Plotinus describes the productive and paradigmatic status of Intellect with respect to what comes after it as its being great in power and beauty (*en dynameis kai kallei mega*; cf. VI.6.18.47-50). In power, because it has the ability to do so and indeed it does so. In beauty, because it is the primarily beautiful, the paradigm of beauty. For that reason, Plotinus even calls the Intellect charming and places it as an intermediary between all beings and the One, through which they all seek the One (cf. VI.6.18.46-53). This ability of the beautiful Intellect is of course based on the fact that it is derived from and directed to the One (cf. VI.6.18.18-20). Nevertheless, as charming, or precisely because of its majesty (cf. VI.6.3.1-10), its wonderful and inexplicable beauty and its greatness (cf. VI.6.7.10-16), it may also hinder the ascent to the One and tie its admirer to itself. All these features are well known to us from *Enneads* I.6 and V.8.

5 Beauty as the manifestation of the Good (*Ennead* VI.7)

In the previous chapter, we encountered an interesting statement that Intellect becomes more majestic when life is mixed with thought and when it is given the colour of greater goodness (cf. VI.6.18.20-25). I have tried to explain tentatively the relation of the notion of life to that of beauty, but it has to be further explored. This enquiry is performed in parts of *Ennead* VI.7 (cf. chapters 5.1 and 5.4). Furthermore, it remains unclear what Plotinus means by the colour of greater goodness. The answer, I think, may be found again in *Ennead* VI.7 (cf. chapters 5.2, 5.4 and 5.6). In this treatise, I shall also further investigate the genetic unity and multiplicity of Intellect (cf. chapter 5.3), Plotinus' conception of *erōs* (cf. chapter 5.6) and the relation of beauty and the Good (cf. chapters 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7). As noted in the *Introduction* (cf. chapter 1), *Ennead* VI.7 is one of Plotinus' longest treatises and covers a variety of topics which makes it a rich source for reconstructing Plotinus' understanding of beauty.

5.1 The ascent to Intellect as life (VI.7.1-12)

Plotinus opens his treatise with a paraphrase of the creation of man from Plato's *Timaeus* (44c-47e; VI.7.1.1-5). He focuses on the fact that God or one of the gods gave man organs of sense-perception, foreseeing (*prooraō* and *proeidon*) that this will ensure man's safety. This opens a vast field of questions which Plotinus discusses in chapters 1-12 and, in a sense, throughout the whole treatise (cf. the final derivation of sight from the Good in VI.7.41.1-3). It must be clarified how the creator (i.e. for Plotinus the Intellect) can plan and have foresight (cf. VI.7.1), how can sense-perception, i.e. something belonging to the sensible world, be derived from Intellect (cf. VI.7.1-7), what are the contents of Intellect (cf. VI.7.8-11) and how do they exist in it (cf. VI.7.11-12). In trying to answer these questions, Plotinus engages in discussion with Aristotle's biology and teleology and develops his own theory of causation (cf. esp. VI.7.1-2). Plotinus' accounts are of course, where appropriate, presented as a correct interpretation of Plato (cf. VI.7.3.5-6; VI.7.4.10-11; VI.7.5.23-26; VI.7.8.23-32).

Plotinus' answer to the question whether Intellect has foresight (*proorasis*) and planning (*logismos*) is quite straightforward:[116] No, it does not. It is just a matter of speaking trying to capture that Intellect has eternal and complete knowledge of itself (*epistēmē*). Foreseeing and planning presuppose a stepwise progression of thought (i.e. change and time) and deciding between different options, which are both absent from Intellect. Since however, the sensible world imitates the intelligible, its perfection is reflected in the sensible world, giving the impression as if it was planned and as if all beings' needs were foreseen (cf. VI.7.1.24-58).

To answer the second question, how sense-perception is derived from Intellect, Plotinus first needs to elaborate on a non-Aristotelian theory of causality. The point is to be able to show that it is Intellect which is the cause of living beings' organs of sense-perception and in this sense also the cause of sense-perception itself.[117] As Rappe (2002, p. 71) points out, one could think on the grounds of Aristotle's teleology from his *Physics* and *De partibus animalium*, that man has all his parts because of the actualization of his form in matter. Different bodily organs are in this sense a part of the form of man due to different reasons, e.g. safeguard (cf. VI.7.3.16-20). For Plotinus however, this is impossible since a form cannot in fact be fully actualized in matter, and some organs are present rather as a substitution for such incomplete actualization of form (cf. VI.7.9 and Rappe 2002, p. 83). Instead, Plotinus presents a theory of *coordinate arising of everything* as Rappe (2002, p. 74 and 77-78) aptly formulates it, i.e. of coordinate arising of all parts of the sensible world, of all parts of individual beings and of mutual causality of all these parts. Consequently, the true cause of each thing is the fact that it is a part of a totality and that there are no substances existing in themselves in the sensible world, but only relative images of such substances or forms (cf. VI.7.2.31-38 and the

[116] I do not present the whole refutation of foresight and planning in Intellect but only those parts I consider most important for my purposes here. As usual, Plotinus discusses different versions of the theory and highlights their contradictory implications. For a thorough discussion, cf. the commentary of Hadot (1987).

[117] I do not follow Plotinus' line of thought here precisely. Again, there are many digressions to different positions and counter positions. Rather, I try to extract the position Plotinus advocates in facing numerous objections. Especially interesting in these passages is the transformation of Aristotle's terminology to serve Plotinus' own purposes, as well as the attack on the distinction of essence and accidents. However, the analysis of these passages is beyond the scope of the present chapter. An interesting discussion of them is to be found in Rappe 2002.

commentary of Rappe, 2002, p. 77-79). Plotinus illustrates this counterintuitive theory of causation later in the treatise by saying that it is not friction that causes fire in the sensible world, because fire has to exist already in Intellect and bodies being rubbed together have to participate in it (VI.7.11.39-41).

Such notion of cause is based once again on Plotinus' understanding of Intellect as a specific unity in multiplicity where all parts are all the other parts and the whole (see chapter 3.15). He formulates this in *Ennead* VI.7 in Aristotelian terminology by saying that in Intellect, the essence of a thing (*to ti ēn einai*) and its cause (*to dia ti*) coincide (cf. VI.7.2.13-16 and VI.7.3.20-22). By saying this however, Plotinus does not want to imply that the cause of everything is form, which is nevertheless true (cf. VI.7.2.16-18). Rather, he means that if we unfold each and every form back upon itself, we shall discover its cause in it (cf. VI.7.2.19). Plotinus paradoxically uses the verb *anaptyssō* with *pros auto* (scil. *to eidos*; O.G.) here: "unfolding" corresponds to relating each form to the rest of the intelligibles and to Intellect as a whole, and "back upon itself" corresponds to still focusing on getting to know that very form.[118] If understanding the cause of a thing means to understand it as a part of a totality where everything is related to everything else, then in Intellect the cause is the same as what a thing is because it is all the other things and the whole (cf. Rappe 2002, p. 85).

It does not come as a surprise that Plotinus repeatedly remarks in this context that Intellect is beautiful by having all the causes in itself (*echei kai to kalōs homū tēs aitias*; cf. VI.7.2.29), that its beauty is with the cause and in the cause (*to kalōs meta tēs aitias kai en tē aitia*; cf. VI.7.3.20-22), that each form in Intellect is beautiful by being with its cause (*meta tēs aitias*) and by being a form, i.e. everything (cf. VI.7.3.9-11). This is to be understood as highlighting once again two points: the specific *unitas multiplex* of Intellect (cf. VI.7.2.31-38, VI.7.3.10-11 and VI.7.3.20-21) and the fact that there must not be any external causation in order for a thing to be truly beautiful (cf. VI.7.2.40-45 and VI.7.3.20-22), a motif known to us from VI.6.18.7-8 (see chapter 4.2.4). Furthermore, Plotinus expands on this

[118] A detailed analysis of these parts with respect to its Aristotelian and Platonic origins is to be found in Schiaparelli 2010.

comment when he adds that there is another condition of a thing's beauty, the control of the form over matter (cf. VI.7.3.11-12), known to us from *Enneads* I.6 (see chapter 2.2). However, it is not quite clear in this passage whether Plotinus refers to the specific characteristics of intelligible matter which allows beauty in Intellect to be everywhere in beauty (cf. II.4.4-5 and part 3.5) or rather widens his scope and posits this condition with respect to the beauty of the sensibles. The latter seems more probable considering the passages that follow immediately, where Plotinus explains that the domination of form over matter is apparent if no part of a thing is left unshaped, i.e. if a living organism is not short of any of its organs, e.g. of an eye. This example is immediately transformed into a universal Plotinian causal explanation of a sensible object and all its parts: they all exist so that "there shall be everything" (*hina panta*; VI.7.3.12-18, transl. Armstrong).

The next step, then, is to specify what is meant by "man" when we say that "man has sense-perception".[119] The distinction of three different kinds of man, one on the level of Intellect (cf. VI.7.4.21-31 and VI.7.6.12-14), the second on the level of soul (cf. VI.7.4.11-13 and VI.7.6.9-11) and the third in embodiment (cf. VI.7.4.13-21 and VI.7.6.11-12),[120] allows Plotinus to outline how worldly sense-perception imitates the activity of the man in Intellect (cf. VI.7.6.1-19 and more explicitly VI.7.7.19-32), i.e. intellection. Plotinus is even ready here to lay such a strong emphasis on the continuity of the three men that he not only calls sense-perception dim intellection (*amydras noēseis*) but intellection is said to be clear sense-perception (*enargeis aisthēseis*; cf. VI.7.7.30-32).[121] In conclusion, not only is the true cause of the

[119] The target of Plotinus' criticism is once again Aristotle and his account of man as a hylemorphic compound of body and soul from the 2nd book of *DA*. Plotinus uses here Aristotle's own rules of definition (cf. *Met.* Z 4-5. 1029b1-1030a14) against him (cf. VI.7.4.21-28). The correct account of man is to be found in Plato, though it has to be properly interpreted. The reference in VI.7.4.10-11 and VI.7.5.23-26 is to *Alc. Mai.* 129e-130a.

[120] The precise meaning of these difficult passages is not particularly clear. Together with Siegmann (1990, p. 47) I prefer a rather simple interpretation which connects the three men with Intellect, soul and embodied soul. Thaler (2011, p. 170) suggests the correspondence of the first man with a form in Intellect, the second with the form's intelligible *logos* actualized in soul, and the third with a compound of body and the lowest part of soul. Similarly, Hadot (1987, p. 210-211) connects the first man with intelligible form in Intellect, the second with rational and more divine soul defined by logos of the rational man, and the third man with sensitive soul defined by *logos* of the sensitive man. Since however, *logoi* which make man are at the same time said to be the activity of soul (cf. VI.7.5.8-9), there seems to be little if any difference between all these formulations.

[121] It seems to me that the identification of intellection with clear sense-perception goes rather too far. The relation of sense-perception to intellection has to be asymmetrical: sense-perception

presence of an organ of sense-perception (a form in) Intellect, but sense-perception itself imitates intellection, i.e. the activity of Intellect.

Plotinus then turns to the discussion of the origin of irrational animals (*zōa aloga*) and of such body parts which serve as defence (e.g. horns and claws). How can the irrational be a part of Intellect (cf. VI.7.8.17 and VI.7.9.1-5) and how can there be organs of defence if there is no threat *there* (cf. VI.7.10.1-2)? To answer these questions, Plotinus shifts his scope to a certain extent[122] and he begins to discuss whether we are to posit Intellect as containing everything or only as being multiple in the least possible way, i.e. as being two, a dyad (cf. VI.7.8.23-29). The correct answer is of course that Intellect is everything because division in the dyad is infinite since nothing below the One can truly be one so that "each of the ones in the dyad … must again be at least two, and again it is the same with each of those" (*hekateron tōn en tē duadi ūch hoion te ēn hen pantelōs einai, alla palin au duo tūlachiston einai, kai ekeinōn au hōsautōs*; VI.7.8.23-25, transl. Armstrong). Moreover, there must be movement and rest in the dyad as well as intellect and life, it becomes everything, it truly lives and it is the complete living being (*zōon panteles*; cf. VI.7.8.26-32). The reasoning here is presented in an exegetic manner because the infinite division of the dyad is taken from Plato's *Parmenides* (cf. 142b–143a), movement and rest as well as intellection and life from *Sophistes* (cf. 248e-249c; 254b) and the complete living being from *Timaeus* (cf. 31b). With such support from three great works of Plato, Plotinus is able to create the proper background for the two above mentioned questions. How are we to understand that Intellect contains everything? Does it contain also the irrational (cf. VI.7.9.1-2), i.e. something of no value (*eutelēs* or not having *to timion*), and bodily organs like horns and claws (cf. VI.7.10.1-2), which are connected with deficiency (*elleipō*)?[123]

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might be called dim intellection since it is an image of intellection. Saying however that intellection is clear sense-perception suggests that there is only a quantitative difference between both, whereas the difference is from the perspective of sense-perception qualitative. As I pointed out in my brief summary of III.8 (cf. part. 3.1), Plotinus wants to simultaneously present the universe as a continuum (from a top-down perspective) and as a hierarchy (from a bottom-up perspective).

[122] There is probably also an exegetic motif here: a commentary to Plato's *Parmenides* (143a-145a).

[123] I rephrase the question in this way in order to emphasize the link to one of the crucial questions for Platonists formulated in Plato's *Parm.* 130c5-7: „Are you also puzzled, Socrates, about cases that might be thought absurd, such as hair or mud or dirt or any other trivial (*atimotaton*) and undignified (*faulotaton*) objects?" (transl. Cornford).

Plotinus addresses the first question by pointing out that a form in Intellect exists differently from its image in the sensible world so that even rational beings do not reason in Intellect because there is no reasoning there (cf. VI.7.9.5-10). In this sense, the distinction of rational and irrational animals only imitates the difference between intelligible causes of both, a difference based on the proximity to the first principles in Intellect. Consequently, there are three groups of beings: gods, rational beings in the sensible world and irrational beings (cf. VI.7.9.16-23). Plotinus' answer to the question of the contents of Intellect linked with deficiency (horns and claws) is based on an expansion of the proximity simile: it is the source that goes out or unfolds (*proeimi* and *exelissō*; cf. VI.7.9.34-39). In the descent however, something always gets lost and the living beings become less and less perfect. In order to compensate for this loss, the nature of nails, claws, fangs or horns appeared (cf. VI.7.9.38-46). So why are they there in Intellect? For the self-sufficiency (*pros to autarkes*) and completeness (*kai to teleon*) of Intellect (cf. VI.7.10.2-3), which is everything in a variegated unity (cf. VI.7.10.7-12 and the commentary of Thaler 2011, p. 176-7). In order for Intellect to be everything, each of its individual forms must be different and itself perfect, so that each contains all the necessary causes of all the parts of an animal as we know them from the sensible world (cf. VI.7.10.5-16).[124] Moreover, an idea known to us from VI.6.18 (cf. chapter 4.2.4) emerges here, again in the context of Intellect as life or living being: the all-containing

[124] In Thaler's interpretation (cf. 2011, p. 178-9), Plotinus induces here a revised teleological explanation, which Thaler relates to the whole Intellect including the highest kinds on the basis of VI.7.13. Consequently, everything in Intellect, including *megista genē*, is there in order for Intellect to be alive. This statement seems to be quite exaggerated and is based on two assumptions I consider wrong: 1) Thaler says that Plotinus "specifies the reason why it is good that Intellect stay in motion—that if it were to stop, it would cease from thought and life—is again an idea that presupposes the notion of a beneficial end" (p. 177). However, I do not see this claim in VI.7.13 and Thaler gives no precise reference. In lines 38-41 Plotinus indeed considers the option that Intellect would not move but rejects it because of the consequence that it would cease to think and *exist* (*hōste kai, ei estē, ū nenoēken. Ei de tūto, ūd estin*), not to live. Of course, the Intellect would also cease to live in such a case, but in order to support his strong claim about subordination of *megista gene* to life, Thaler would indeed need the text to say "live" and not "exist". 2) Thaler assumes that the final answer of *Ennead* VI.7 to the presence of Good in Intellect is life (cf. p. 179). This however, is explicitly questioned in VI.7.18 and 21 and is not considered to be a completely satisfactory answer because it is true only from a genetic perspective. Phenomenologically, Intellect is *agathoeidēs* as beautiful. See my discussion of this topic in chapter 5.4.

multiplicity of Intellect is not something that makes Intellect worse but on the contrary better (cf. VI.7.10.15).[125]

After dealing with these two difficulties, Plotinus thinks it is possible to draw a general conclusion about the contents of Intellect. It contains "everything that is made by forming principle, i.e. according to form" (*hosa logo pepoiētai kai kat' eidos*; VI.7.11.4-5, transl. Armstrong, modified[126]). But how (*pōs*) does it contain all things (cf. VI.7.11.8), e.g. plants (cf. VI.7.11.6), the elements (cf. VI.7.11.6-7, VI.7.12.7 and VI.7.12.10-13), heavens and stars (cf. VI.7.12.4-6) and all living beings (cf. VI.7.12.8 and VI.7.12.14-15)? They are there as living (cf. VI.7.11.15-18) so that Intellect is a complete living being (cf. VI.7.12.1-19). In order to demonstrate his claim, Plotinus first turns to plants in the sensible world, which are unquestionably alive. Since there is a rational forming principle active in them (*logos*) which accounts for their existence, this *logos* must itself be alive and *a fortiori* that from which this *logos* is derived, i.e. Intellect (cf. VI.7.11.10-18). But why should we suppose that the earth lives there if it does not live here? Plotinus tries to show that even earth in the sensible world is alive on the account of the activity of its rational forming principle (VI.7.11.20-22 and VI.7.11.33-36). Luckily, he is more specific here about what the activity of *logos* in a thing means. It accounts not only for its existence (cf. above) but also for its generation (*gennaō*) and growth (*auxēsis*), shaping (*plassō*), external shape (*plasis*) and inner pattering (*morphōsis*; cf. VI.7.11.22-27). All of this can be seen in mountains and stones which are like wood chopped from a tree. Again, earth in Intellect must be even more alive and correspondingly it must be earth primarily. Similarly, as shape-giving (*morphoō*) the rational forming principle in fire is alive and its paradigm in Intellect even more so. Since Plotinus emphasizes primarily here that *logos* gives form and shape, it is not particularly clear how can water and air be alive because they have no obvious

[125] Interestingly, the last sentence of the chapter might be read as linking this variegated unity to beauty: *„Kai aretē de to koinon kai to idion kai to holon kalon adiaphorū tū koinū ontos"* (VI.7.10.16-18). This reading is suggested by Armstrong's and to a certain extent also by Harder's translation. Nevertheless, I consider Hadot's translation and explanation better. Consequently, this sentence is not a general statement about beauty, but rather an example of how to define moral beauty (*la beauté morale*) by something general (like disposition or habit) and particular (like "which chooses good" or "which makes man good"). Cf. Hadot 1987, com. ad loc.

[126] I consider *kai* in this sentence to have explicative rather than connective function.

external shape. Although Plotinus claims that even in them the shaping activity of *logos* is present (cf. VI.7.11.29-49), he gives three additional reasons for the presence of life in them. First, living beings are generated in them (especially in water, but Plotinus mentions also air and even fire) and consequently they have to be alive (cf. VI.7.11.53-55). Second, the fact that they are in constant flow (as is also fire) hides the presence of life or soul in them and interestingly, if they were fixed, their life would be more obvious (cf. VI.7.11.56-60). And third, one could say that they resemble the fluids in our body, like blood, whose life is also not apparent, but which obviously contributes to the constitution of a living being and ensouls flesh (cf. VI.7.11.60-71), just as water and air contribute to the constitution of universal living being, i.e. the whole sensible world (VI.7.11.50-52). And indeed, the whole cosmos is there in Intellect, containing all living beings. Intellect is in fact the paradigm of such life because all there is in Intellect, including intelligible sky and stars, is a living being, and as a whole, Intellect is complete living being boiling with life (cf. VI.7.12.1-25).

What can we draw about life of the Intellect from these passages? If what ensouls and enlivens all things in the sensible world is the above described activity of *logos*, and if what is before *logos* is even more alive or primarily alive, how does Intellect live? I would dare to infer that life in Intellect does not primarily mean to form something but to be form itself, that it does not primarily mean to account for existence and generation but for true being, that it does not primarily mean to be soul but to be Intellect, and that it does not primarily mean to enable the generation of beings in it but to contain all beings as intelligibles in itself and in identity with itself. This last formulation also refers to a further meaning of life in Intellect, i.e. to the fact that it is a living being or rather the complete living being and as such a paradigm of all organisms and organisation in general. How is it such a paradigm? Again by being a unique unified multiplicity, i.e. by each part of it being all the other parts and the whole.

It is precisely in this context of Intellect as paradigm of everything and life itself that Plotinus begins to draw our attention to its source (*pothen*), to this “single spring” (*mia pēgē*) from which all flows (cf. VI.7.12.19-25) in such a way “as if there

was one quality which held and kept intact all the qualities in itself" (*hoion ei tis ēn poiotēs mia pasas en hautē echūsa kai sōzūsa tas poiotētas*; VI.7.12.26-27, transl. Armstrong). To be sure, Plotinus will now add another important explanation of what it means to be life, perhaps the most basic one, which is to be the first *energeia* coming from the Good (cf. VI.7.18.41). He sets up the proper background for raising the central question of the treatise: how is the Good present in Intellect? One of the answers will be that it is present "as life" (cf. VI.7.17-18). But in order to be able to ask this question, he first needs to describe in more detail that one quality holding all in itself, i.e. Intellect.

5.2 The context of the question of the presence of the Good in Intellect (VI.7.13-14)

Plotinus' starting point is the simultaneous simplicity and multiplicity (or even entireness; cf. VI.7.13.3-5) of Intellect. Intellect is said to be a principle (*archē*) and activity (*energeia*). The activity of Intellect is further specified as movement on an eternally identical course but a course which is not to be understood as homogeneous (*homoiomerēs*) and unvaried (*apoikilon*). There would be no majesty (*semnon*) in being like that because there would be no variation (*exallagē*) and no otherness (*heterotēs*), and consequently also no life (*to zēn*) and activity (*energeia*).[127] But because there is otherness (i.e. universal otherness or the Other as one of the highest kinds) and life, there must be everything and all life must be there (cf. VI.7.13.1-28). The activity of Intellect refers to the fact that it is "eternally actualizing one thing after the other" (*energēsantos de aei allo met' allo*; cf. VI.7.13.29, transl. Armstrong, modified) and that it is as if "wandering down every way and wandering in itself" (*hoion planēthentos pasan planēn kai en hautō planēthentos*; cf. VI.7.13.29-30, transl. Armstrong), i.e. "among substances while the substances run along with its wanderings" (*en ūsiais planasthai syntheūsōn tōn ūsiōn tais autū planais*; cf. VI.7.13.29, transl. Armstrong). I quote these passages in order to show that Plotinus is willing to go quite far with his expression and to risk

[127] And in VI.7.14 Plotinus also adds that a forming principle (*logos*) derived from such homogeneous Intellect, or at least from Intellect that would not be everything, would not be able to form the whole matter so that some parts of sensible things would be nothing but unformed bulks of matter (*onkos*). Since however, this is not the case, Intellect must be everything.

being misunderstood because of all the implied succession in Intellect's doing. Nevertheless, when one pays close attention, Plotinus tries to avoid these implications by highlighting that it is an eternal process[128] and that in the implied succession, that which is left behind moves along with the wandering Intellect. It means that there is no succession because nothing is left behind but is always present with everything else. Rather, there is a certain hierarchy of forms in Intellect. It is no coincidence that at least some of the highest kinds appear in this context[129] because these are as *genē* on the very top of this intelligible hierarchy and as *archai* its constitutive elements (cf. the discussion of *Ennead* VI.2 in chapter 4.1). The interplay of the highest kinds make it possible for Intellect to exist as every being (cf. VI.7.13.24-28 and VI.7.13.52-58), to think (cf. VI.7.13.39-44) and to be alive (cf. VI.7.13.11-16). But although Plotinus does mention the whole triad (being, intellection, life), he puts here a greater emphasis on life in the context of previous chapters and of what is to come (cf. VI.7.15-18). He underlines that the whole activity of Intellect is through life (*dia zōēs*) and all through beings that are alive (*dia zōōn*; cf. VI.7.13.44-46).[130] As such, it is both one and many (cf. VI.7.14.11-12) because this is what being an organism means: to have "parts" that are connected to all the other parts and to the whole. Plotinus again illustrates this specific unity and multiplicity of Intellect by saying that it is held together by true love (*alēthēs filia*; cf. VI.7.14.19-21). Such love means "all things being one and never separated" (*panta hen einai kai mēpote diakrithēnai*; VI.7.14.22, transl. Armstrong).[131] But where does the movement of Intellect through life and through beings that are alive originate (*apo tinos*) and where is it directed to (*epi ti hōs eschaton*; cf. VI.7.13.8)?

[128] Cf. Plotinus' claim in VI.7.3 that Plato indicates that there is no reasoning, i.e. succession in Intellect, by saying that generation is eternal.

[129] Obviously Movement, the Other and the Same are mentioned, but abiding and standing still (*menō* in VI.7.13.33 and *histēmi* in VI.7.13.39-40) as well as being (cf. VI.7.13.40-41), substance (*ūsia*; cf. VI.7.13.42) or actuality and activity (*to energeia* and *hē energeia*; cf. VI.7.13.51), do play a role here. One might incline to identify these with Rest and Being respectively.

[130] Cf. my comment to Thaler's interpretation of these passages in footnote 124.

[131] The reference is, as Plotinus exceptionally says himself, to Empedocles (cf. DK 31 B 17 and B 26).

5.3 The presence of the Good in Intellect: genetic answer (VI.7.15-17)

However, the question has to be slightly modified since Intellect has its life (*to zēn*) in the contemplation (*theōreō*) of all its contents, i.e. the forms, and by being so, it is good (cf. VI.7.15.11-12). The search for the *archē* of such a life is consequently a quest for the origin of contemplation and forms. But what does Intellect contemplate? It contemplates itself as all the forms and it has the Good in them because they are *agathoeidēs*, i.e. have the form of the Good (cf. VI.7.15.9-11) as Plato says (*Rep*. 509a3).[132] Moreover, all these forms came to be in Intellect when it contemplated the nature (*physis*) of the Good. However, they did not come to Intellect from the Good as if they were previously there, but rather when Intellect looked to the Good (*bleponta eis ekeinon*, scil. *agathon*; O.G.) it generated them itself so that they are derived from the Good as from a principle (*archē*). In other words, Intellect received the power (*dynamis*) to generate forms as its offspring and to be filled full of them.[133] In this sense, the Good gave Intellect what it itself did not have.[134] Every *dynamis* was one in the Good but Intellect was unable to hold it as one and broke it up (*synthrauō*) to many powers in order to bear it part by part (cf. VI.7.15.11-23).[135] This "holding" was not an act of contemplation because Intellect was not yet Intellect when it first looked to the Good. Rather, it was an unintellectual look (*eblepen anoētōs*, scil. *nūs*; O.G.) that never sees the Good but lives towards the Good (*ezē pros auto*, scil. *nūs pros to agathon*; O.G.), depends on it (*anērtēto autū*, scil. *nūs tū agathū*; O.G.) and turns to it (*epestrapto pros auto*, scil. *nūs pros to agathon*; O.G.). Or it is a movement around it (*kinēsis peri ekeino*, scil. *peri to agathon*; O.G.), as Plotinus corrects himself a bit later (cf. VI.7.16.11-19). In any case, the multiplicity which came to be in Intellect was derived from the Good and as such it had its form, it was *agathoeides* (cf. VI.7.15.23-24). As Hadot points

[132] For a brief discussion of the term *agathoeidēs* and its use in Plotinus, see Baierwaltes 1991 (p. 243-244) and Montet 1999 (p. 131-149). The answer that Intellect is *agathoeidēs* because it has the good (*agathon*) in the forms (*en tois eidesi*) is of course a play on words (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 259).

[133] An obvious allusion to the name of Intellect which Plotinus sometimes uses, i.e. Cronus (cf. V.8.12-13 and chapters 3.13 and 3.14). The allusion was already noticed by Hadot (1987, p. 263) and Tornau (2011, com. ad VI.7.15.18-20).

[134] On the topic of intelligible causality and the causality of the Good, see D'Ancona Costa 1996.

[135] I agree with Hadot (1987, p. 265-266) that it was in fact not the power to generate forms that was broken but rather the forms born in Intellect.

out (1987, p. 265), this actually means that Intellect becomes fully constituted, i.e. unwound and in this sense many, paradoxically, by looking to the Good from which it receives limit. Therefore, not only its unity but also its defined multiplicity is precisely that which makes it *agathoeidēs*.

Plotinus illustrates it by saying that the one *dynamis* of the Good became a good richly varied in Intellect (*agathon poikilion*) which one may imagine as a living richly varied sphere, as a thing shining with living faces[136] or as a summit of pure souls illuminated by Intellect (cf. VI.7.15.23-33). By mentioning the living richly varied sphere, and also by the previous implicit allusion to Cronus, Plotinus probably refers to his discussion of intelligible beauty in V.8.12-13, where a similar simile is presented. The reference is further strengthened by the first sentence in chapter 16, where Plotinus suddenly appeals to us to leave "this manifold beauty" and "go on still darting upwards, leaving even this behind" (VI.7.16.1-3, transl. Armstrong; cf. VI.9.4, VI.9.11, V.8.8, V.5.12). However, if leaving beauty means leaving this *good richly varied* (*agathon poikilion*), then beauty is this *good richly varied* which reflects the Good. If I were to press my point even further, I would add that since the Good is also the One, it is present in Intellect not only as *good richly varied* but also as *richly varied one* (*hen poikilion*), i.e. as unity in multiplicity, which I so far identified with beauty.

In any case, Plotinus leads us once again on the very border of the Good and Intellect and wants to explore their relation anew. He is at first interested in the generation of Intellect from the Good (cf. VI.7.16.3-4) because he wants to know what all of the forms "have in common that runs over them all" (*koinon to epitheon epi pasi panta echei*; VI.7.16.5-6, transl. Armstrong). Moreover, he says that there are more such common features that run over all contents of Intellect, like being (*to on*), common life (*zōē koinē*) and some others. However, not all of these features are that "according to which and by which they (scil. the contents of Intellect; O.G.) are good" (*kath' hoson agatha kai di' hoti agatha*; VI.7.16.9, transl. Armstrong). Unfortunately, Plotinus does not specify these other features, but since he

[136] As Hadot (1987, p. 260) aptly comments, one is to imagine these faces as individual intellects contemplating each other.

mentions being, other *migista genē* could be considered, and since he mentions life, intellection might be a further candidate. If we remember that Plotinus considers the one in Intellect as a principle different from the highest kinds while present in all forms without being superordinate to them as a genus (cf. VI.2.9-11 and chapter 4.1.3), he might have in mind also this monad (cf. V.5.4-5 and chapters 4.2.1 and 4.2.3). If this was the case however, would he add also the multiple, the dyad? And should we also include number? And how do all these potentially common features relate to each other and how do they differ? Is beauty to be considered one of them? Not much can be deduced from this passage. We will have to keep these questions in mind for the time being and follow Plotinus' line of thought further. But one thing might probably be said already at this stage, as Siegmann points out (1990, p. 77): Plotinus looks for the common feature of the whole Intellect in so far as it is the *good richly varied* so that the one and the multiple can probably not be the answer. The one does not account for Intellect being multiple and the multiple for it being one. Rather, Plotinus is looking for something that makes Intellect *agathoeidēs*, i.e. both one and many.

Consequently, Plotinus sketches the birth of Intellect from the Good. First, as already mentioned, he elaborates on his claim from VI.7.15, that Intellect broke the one *dynamis* of the Good into many by looking to the Good, and adds that this first look to it was unintellectual and never really reached as far as the Good (cf. above). Moreover, the Good is not only the donor of all the forms, i.e. of being, but enables intellection itself, because intellection is possible only in the light of the Good (cf. VI.7.16.19-23). Plotinus refers to Plato's analogy of the sun from the *Republic* (509b) and infers from it that the Good is the cause of thinking and being thought, while it is not itself being or Intellect. Consequently, Intellect has a double source as it were: 1) itself as it was before being filled with forms, and 2) the Good (cf. VI.7.16.23-36) which gave it the power to be filled from within itself (cf. VI.7.15.14-18). By shining on it the Good created the proper environment in which Intellect can see and its sight can be filled (cf. VI.7.16.23-33).

However, this description of the generation of Intellect still raises doubts (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 271). For where do the contents of Intellect come from if they are

neither in the unintellectual look, in what is filled, nor in the Good, in that which fills it? Plotinus tries to answer this question by pointing out that the giver does not need to possess what he gives, because the giver is greater (*meizon*) and stronger (*kreitton*). Consequently, the Good as the giver transcends the gift, or actuality and life. Moreover, Plotinus identifies this transcendence with being more beautiful (*kalliōn*) and worth more (*temiōteros*) than actuality and life. He then calls the not yet constituted Intellect unlimited life (*aoristos zōē*) and says that life in Intellect is a trace of the Good (*ichnos ti ekeinū*, scil. *tū didontos*; O.G.). It is not clear however, whether he refers here to the life which is inchoate Intellect or rather to the life of the fully constituted Intellect. In any case, this manifold and unbound life (*zōē pollē kai apeiros*) looks to the Good (*blepūsa pros ekeino*) and immediately becomes delimited (*horos*), receives limit (*peras*) and form (*eidos*) and is shaped (*morphoō*) by the Good but not from outside. Consequently, it becomes life of one manifold thing (cf. VI.7.17.1-23).

However, the problem of how Intellect could receive something from the Good which does not have what it gives, reoccurs even in this formulation since the Good itself is shapeless (cf. VI.7.17.17-18) and has no delimitation (cf. VI.7.17.15-16), no form (cf. VI.7.17.36) or as we might infer, no limit. Nevertheless, in the constitution of Intellect, the multiplicity of its life (*to poly tēs zōēs*) is that which accounts for it being many (*polla*), while the defining limit (*horos*) is that which causes its unity (*hen*). Furthermore, Plotinus identifies the life as defined and limited with Intellect and its being multiple with many intellects that are both same and different. Summing up, he tells us that the life from the Good is all power (*dynamis pasa*), the sight from the Good is the power to become all (*dynamis pantōn*), Intellect is the actualized totality of things (*ta panta*), and the Good "sits enthroned upon them, not that it may have a base but that it may base the 'Form' of the first 'Forms'" (*hō de epikathētai autois, ūch hina hidruthē, alla hina hidrusē eidos eidōn tōn prōtōn*; VI.7.17.24-36, transl. Armstrong).

To understand these passages properly, let me first extract how Intellect is said to be derived from the Good here. It enabled the constitution of Intellect by 1) emanating life (as first *energeia*) which was an unintellectual look to the Good and

life towards it, 2) by enabling this sight to see due to emanating light, and 3) by limiting this living sight (enabled by the light) as all beings of which the Good is the source. As Siegmann (1990, p. 86-87) points out, these reasons correspond to the triad life-intellection-being.

How does it then fit the other descriptions of Intellect's genesis, especially those from *Ennead* VI.6? To a certain extent, I have tried to answer this question already when discussing VI.6 (see chapter 4.2.3) where I pointed out that the interaction of the monad with the dyad may be described from two perspectives: 1) from that of the inchoate Intellect, i.e. indefinite dyad or unlimited life, as an attempt of it to attain the One, which is impossible. Or 2) it may be depicted from the opposite point of view as a vague presence of the One in Intellect in the form of an image or a trace. A similar structure of the genesis may be found also in *Ennead* VI.7. First, there is a look to the Good (cf. VI.7.15.11-14), later specified as unintellectual and not being able to reach as far as the Good (cf. VI.7.16.11-19). Due to the light emanated from the Good, this sight which sees nothing becomes true sight. However, it still does not see the Good directly (which is impossible), but it sees only its reflection in itself. By doing so, this look receives limit, and this limit comes to it both from itself and from the Good as from its principle (cf. VI.7.15.14-18). Finally, even here Plotinus now and then refers to the highest kinds (cf. VI.7.13.10-13, 24-28 and VI.7.16.6-8), but it is not explicitly stated how they fit into the generation.

This description is not so far from that of *Ennead* VI.6. One might speculate that if the unintellectual look does not reach as far as the Good while still becoming limited by it, but in such a way that this limit comes from Intellect itself, it is possible that this is enabled by the presence of the monad in Intellect. After all, this defining limit is what is said to be the cause of Intellect's unity (cf. VI.7.17.24-25). Moreover, the notion of unlimited life here is not far from the description of the activity of the indefinite dyad in the genesis of Intellect, especially if we take into account that life is said to be in the dyad (cf. VI.7.8.27) and that Otherness, whose activity is again described in a very similar fashion, is said to wake Intellect to life (cf. VI.7.13.11-12). But how does the monad get to Intellect? In a sense from the Good,

because the monad would not come to be if the unlimited life was not in the presence of the Good, since this life would not be able to turn to the Good in its desire to attain it. In another sense, from the unlimited life itself because its limitation is a product of the conversion based the desire of the unlimited life for the Good (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 271-278). Even in this optimistic synthetic interpretation however, we might notice that the role of the light emanated from the Good is a new element, or at least becomes particularly emphasized in *Ennead* VI.7.

If we were to look for inconsistencies, we should consider the central parts of *Ennead* VI.6 where the division of Intellect is described by means of the notion of number or the power of number. Here, the correspondence with *Ennead* VI.7 becomes more blurred. How do they fit together if they do? Again, one has to distinguish different perspectives. In *Ennead* VI.7, Plotinus describes how the emanated unlimited life became limited, whereas in *Ennead* VI.6 on the contrary, he describes how being, which was still one, became many by division (cf. VI.6.9.24-26).[137] It seems probable that both are to be understood as a description of the same process albeit from different perspectives: in *Ennead* VI.7 from the perspective of life, multiplicity or the dyad, and in *Ennead* VI.6 from the perspective of limit, unity or the monad. If so, we could perhaps point out Plotinus' own notice in V.5.1.8-11 that the monad comes to existence prior to the dyad. Consequently, if this *prior* signifies an ontological priority of the monad over the dyad, then the Platonic-Pythagorean perspective in *Ennead* VI.6 might be said to be superior to the description in *Ennead* VI.7.[138] Why then, does Plotinus use an inferior explanation

[137] It is to be noted however, as Bussanich points out, that the unlimited life is also said to be one prior to being limited and formed, i.e. prior to becoming many (cf. VI.7.16.13-16 and Bussanich 1988, com. ad loc.). This might then in a way connect both perspectives, but as it seems to me, at a cost. The notion of "unlimited life" which is one becomes quite incomprehensible and the connection of life and dyad becomes significantly obscured. Nevertheless, Plotinus does mention that the unlimited life is one. He does so however only in a question about one possible way to think of Intellect's constitution. Since this possibility is later rejected, the option that unlimited life could be one is probably rejected as well.

[138] Cf. a similar comment by Bussanich (1988, comment ad VI.7.17.26-34) who complements the ontological priority of limit by chronological priority of unlimited life. It is not quite clear however, what this chronological priority means since there is no time. Therefore, I prefer to talk about genetic priority, which would refer to the necessary condition of what follows. In this sense, although limit ontologically preceeds unlimited life, the latter has to be there in order for the former to limit it.

here? Probably precisely because of the context. We should not forget that the question of the Good's presence in Intellect was provoked by the description of Intellect as a complex living being having its life in contemplation. Consequently, Plotinus started to look for the trace of the Good in Intellect in its genesis and from this perspective it is precisely life, i.e. the very first emanation from the Good, which is itself formless and shapeless similarly to the Good, the giver of all form and shape (cf. VI.7.32-33 and the comments of Hadot 1987, p. 288-289).

As it was the case also in *Ennead* VI.6, it is difficult to determine how the highest kinds fit in this picture, especially because Plotinus sometimes uses Otherness and Movement to describe the generation of Intellect (cf. V.1.1.4, V.1.6.53, II.4.5.29-34) and also because he subsumes life under the genus of Movement (cf. VI.2.7.1-6). If we leave this aside,[139] it seems that they fit in as soon as limit and life, or monad and dyad, start to interact, i.e. as soon as we are able to talk about Being and beings in Intellect. These all can be thought only if we simultaneously posit all the *megista genē*.

In conclusion: what have we learned about the *agathoeides* in Intellect? What is it that all its contents have in common, that runs over them all and gives them the form of the Good? It is their origin so that they are *agathoeidē* as being derived from the Good. Plotinus presented this derivation as a three-phase process in which life is 1) emanated as an unintellectual look to the Good, 2) enabled to see by the light from the Good and finally, 3) limited so that it becomes intellection directed at itself and in seeing itself, Intellect unwinds and gives rise to the totality of beings. This answer however is not satisfactory. Although we may now have a clue about

[139] Cf. my comment on this topic in chapter 4.2.3, footnote 112. It seems to me that Plotinus is trying to make use of different inherited philosophical conceptions (*migista genē*, the Good as *megiston mathēma* etc.) without taking too much care about their compatibility. He probably does so, not because of lack of precision, but because of the fact that all this is but an attempt to express something which cannot in the end be expressed. It might be only experienced when we become one with Intellect (in this case) or the Good. We may find support for such a claim in a different context even in Plotinus. In *Ennead* VI.7.39 he interprets Plato's remark that being thinks and does not stand still in majesty for that reason as suggesting that the Good does not think. According to Plotinus, Plato speaks in this manner "because he could not explain what he meant in any other way" (VI.7.39.33-34, transl. Armstrong). Similarly, philosophers are said to express the fact that all activity, state and life requires something more, only metaphorically, because "they cannot find an appropriate way of speaking about it" (VI.7.30.26, transl. Armstrong).

how Intellect comes from the Good, we still do not know how the Good is present in it (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 89-91).

5.4 The presence of the Good in Intellect: phenomenological answer (VI.7.18-23)

Consequently, the question has to be raised once again (cf. VI.7.18.1) and Plotinus reminds us that we are looking for a unique feature that is both common to all the contents of the Intellect and at the same time intrinsic to each intelligible (cf. VI.7.18.9-12; and the comments of Siegmann 1990, p. 92). It does not suffice in this sense to say that each thing in Intellect is *agathoeides* by being from the Good. This is true but they are all from the Good as different and not as the same (cf. VI.7.18.2-9). Is it then their being form (*idea*) that makes them *agathoeidē*, or their being beautiful (*kalos*), alive (*zōē*) or Intellect (*nūs*; cf. VI.7.18.1-2 and VI.7.18.8)?

However, life is not good as such. Rather, it is good as coming from the Good, i.e. being the first and true life which has something from the Good in itself (cf. VI.7.18.16-23). The case of Intellect and Form is the same so that they are good only as true Intellect and true Form (cf. VI.7.18.23-27), i.e. as Intellect and Form derived from the Good.[140] In this case however, there are three candidates for the reason why Intellect is *agathoeidēs* – life, intellection and form. Nevertheless, each of them is good differently: life, or the first activity (*prōtē energeia*; cf. VI.7.18.41),[141] as being brought into being by the Good (cf. VI.7.18.43), intellection, or what is defined upon the first activity (cf. VI.7.18.42), as an ordered world which comes from the Good (cf. VI.7.18.43-44) and Form, or the pair of them together (cf. VI.7.18.42) as being both of them together (cf. VI.7.18.44).[142] But are we to take these explanations for the good in life, intellection and form as constituent parts of the way how Intellect is *agathoeidēs* or is there a succession of goods so that life is

[140] Siegmann (1990, p. 92) accurately illustrates this argument by comparing it to pictures which are good not as pictures, but as containing something essential of its paradigm.

[141] As Hadot points out however (1987, p. 274), this first *energeia* rather corresponds to the second or external *energeia* according to the double activity model. For the double activity model see chapter 3.1.

[142] Contrary to Hadot (1987, cf. p. 279-283), but with Siegmann (1990, cf. p. 91-94), I understand *to men* (VI.7.18.43) to refer to life, the first *to de* (VI.7.18.43) to intellection and the second *to de* (VI.7.18.44) to form. Although Hadot's reading makes good sense, I find it difficult to believe that Plotinus would suddenly change the order of life-intellection-form after repeating it in this sequence three times in this very chapter.

good primarily, intellection secondarily and form tertiarily (cf. VI.7.18.14-16 and VI.7.18.26-41)? Moreover, have we really found that good in Intellect we were looking for, i.e. that which is both common and intrinsic to all intelligibles? We have in a way, but we are still unable to provide another reason (*dia ti* and *kata ti*) for all intelligible's being good than their origin from the Good (cf. VI.7.18.49-52).

Consequently, Plotinus will start his enquiry anew, but before we follow him, let us first summarize what we have learned so far in *Ennead* VI.7 about life because Plotinus will to a certain extent shift his attention away from it. We have encountered life in two meanings:[143]

1) Life referred to the movement around the Good (cf. VI.7.16.11-19) and the first *energeia* from it (cf. VI.7.18.41) which was manifold, unlimited and unintellectual (cf. VI.7.16.11-19 and VI.7.17.20). Life was in this sense a trace of the Good (cf. VI.7.17.13-14), something from the Good entered it (cf. VI.7.18.16-23), and it was genetically the primary *agathoeidēs* (cf. VI.7. 18.14-16 and VI.7.18.26-41). However, when it became illuminated, it constituted itself as Intellect and became delimited and as such both one and many (cf. VI.7. VI.7.17.13-23). Life as the first *energeia* accounted for Intellect's multiplicity and the defining limit for its unity (cf. VI.7.17.24-25).

2) Life denoted the complete living being which is Intellect that contains all forms as individual living beings (cf. VI.7.11.15-18 and VI.7.12.1-19). Its life lies in contemplation of this boiling life (cf. VI.7.15.11-12 and VI.7.12.24-25). I attempted to infer what this life of Intellect is like from Plotinus' description of what it means to be alive below the level of Intellect (cf. VI.7.11-12). For Intellect to live means to be form itself, true being, true intellection, and to contain all beings as intelligibles in itself and in identity with itself. Life as this living being was consequently the

[143] Cf. Ciapalo 1987, p. 213-218 who distinguishes life as *prohodos* and as *epistrophē*, which corresponds to my observation. Nevertheless, Ciapalo does not comment on the fact that life as *prohodos* is called *prōtē energeia* by Plotinus and not *dynamis*, although I would agree that life in this sense is in fact *dynamis* of intellection. Also, I find Ciapalo's explanation of the relation of life to the *megista genē* perhaps too quick. A more careful interpretation of the relation of the highest kinds and life is to be found in Lo Casto 2017. However, not even Lo Casto gives a clear answer, perhaps because Plotinus does not express himself clearly enough to be able to synthetize his various claims. An interesting account of life in the sense of a complete living being is also to be found in Nikulin 2002, p. 152-157. However, even Nikulin does not explicitly reflect here on life as *protē energeia*.

paradigm of all organisms and organisation in general. Plotinus' later description of the life in Intellect connected it with a variegated movement of thinking which comprises change and otherness (cf. VI.7.13.5-28), and which proceeds through life, i.e. through forms as living beings (cf. VI.7.13.44-46). In other words, life in this sense describes the fully constituted Intellect in its very activity of self-contemplation, which differentiates all forms and unites them again, and it also describes all the contents of such Intellect.

However, these two meanings of life are probably not to be understood as two distinct conceptions of life. Rather, the same life in Intellect is described as the first moment in the genesis of Intellect and as a distinctive feature of the fully constituted Intellect. The latter is derived from the former meaning and in a way completes it. To be life in this sense means both to be something begotten (which corresponds to the first meaning) and to be able to beget (which corresponds to the second meaning). In Plotinus however, only a fully constituted activity is productive and begets what will further become a lower image of this fully constituted activity. We can see the closeness to beauty which in a way depicts the same fully constituted activity but rather as derived from and referring to what is above than as itself begetting. However, where there is life, there is beauty (cf. Vassilopoulou 2014). As such, life was also mentioned by Plotinus as a common feature in Intellect which connects it with other such predicates (cf. VI.7.16.5-9), like being and intellection, the highest kinds, and probably also other ones, e.g. the monad and the dyad. Plotinus enigmatically commented on the relation of life to such predicates only in the case of dyad, otherness and movement. Life was said to be in the dyad (cf. VI.7.8.27), to be woken up by otherness (cf. VI.7.13.11-12) and to be (at least one type of) movement (cf. VI.7.13.5-28, VI.7.16.11-19 and also VI.2.7.1-6). As the life of fully constituted Intellect lies in its self-contemplation, which presupposes *megista genē*, one might relate them to life precisely as highest kinds, i.e. as genera and principles which make it possible for Intellect to think all forms. On the other hand, their relation to life is likely more complicated, because some of the mentioned expressions of Plotinus seem to imply that the highest kinds play a role in the very birth of Intellect. Life as the first *energeia* is in a sense a movement from

the Good and around it. Also, since something other than the Good comes to be from the Good, there has to be otherness present. Similarly, as something different from the Good which is the One, this life is unlimited, the absolute otherness or a dyad. However, Plotinus is not particularly clear on the point of the compatibility of these claims. Are we to simply identify life, the dyad, otherness and movement? Are we to identify them only relatively because they depict the same phenomenon but from different perspectives? Or do they rather capture different features of Intellect and relate only loosely?

But let us return back to the enquiry about the form of the Good in Intellect. Since the genetic answer represents but one type of explanation and a different one is sought, Plotinus suggests two basic ways how to proceed. Either we identify the good in Intellect with the object of the soul's desire (cf. VI.7.19.1-3), or we identify the Good with Intellect itself (cf. VI.7.20.1-13). Both ways are of course *per se* incorrect (cf. VI.7.19.5-6 and VI.7.20.16-19). In the first case, the good would become but an aspect of soul (cf. VI.7.6-7 and the comments of Wiitala 2013, p. 658) and we would be unable to distinguish better and worse. If the good is understood according to each thing's excellence (*aretē*), it could not signify that which is prior to form and *logos* (cf. VI.7.19.9-13). In the second case, we would not be able to explain what we desire when we are in Intellect, the Good (cf. VI.7.20.19-22). This option is also not correct because we do not desire life (*zōē*), eternal existence (*to aei einai*) and activity (*to energein*) as Intellect. Rather, we desire all of them as something good derived from the Good (cf. VI.7.20.22-24). However unsatisfactory these attempts might seem, they show us that the good in Intellect cannot be simply what is desired, or that which is simply thought (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 97).

Hence, Plotinus asks once again what is that one common thing that makes each and every thing in Intellect good so that they have the form of good (cf. VI.7.21.1-2). This time however, he dares to answer (*tolmaō*). Intellect and its life have the form of the Good as the first activity from the Good (*ek tagathū energeia*) in the case of life and as this activity defined (*horistheisa energeia*; cf. VI.7.21.2-6) in the case of Intellect. They are themselves full of glory (*aglaia*) but this does not suffice to

attract the soul (cf. VI.7.21.6-9). They attract it as *good-looking* or as related to the Good (*oikeia*)[144] so that they awaken intense love (*erōs syntonos*) in the soul not simply as themselves, but as receiving something more from the Good (cf. VI.7.21.12-13). Plotinus illustrates this enigmatic claim by comparing the intelligibles to sensible objects which require another light so that their colour might be seen, although they themselves possess light. Similarly, the intelligibles possess much light, but need the light of the Good to be seen in their glory (cf. VI.7.21.15-17). As Siegmann points out (1990, p. 99-101), the simile is extremely appropriate since light comes from something else but allows for the illuminated thing to show its own colour, which is itself of a luminous nature, i.e. akin to light. Moreover, light is precisely that which is one and the same everywhere, but still allows everything illuminated to appear as different. From a phenomenological perspective, this simile is in other words precisely that which brings us to how is Intellect *agathoeidēs*, because we were looking for a common feature that runs over all the intelligibles and the whole Intellect, and according to which and by which they are all good (cf. VI.7.16.5-6 and VI.7.16.9). Moreover, this common feature had to be intrinsic to each thing (cf. VI.7.18.9-12, VI.7.21.1-2).[145] The new clue here is a more explicit proclamation of the fact that this form of the Good in Intellect is something extra, something in addition to Intellect given by the Good. This however also means something which allows us to see to the Good as it were, which opens our eyes for it (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 98-99).

What does then this light of the Good show, what is this glory which is seen only in the light of the Good, this colour of all the intelligibles which attracts soul and through which the Good is manifest in Intellect? Plotinus' answer is indirect: it is the light of the Good (*phōs*) which moves us (*kineitai*) to the forms and makes us long

[144] This may be read as an allusion to Plato's *Lysis* 159e–223a.

[145] Hadot (1987, p. 286-287) correctly summarizes the features of the sought reason for Intellect being *agathoeidēs*. However he does not clearly distinguish the genetic and phenomenological answer as advocated by Siegmann (1990, 70-107). Rather, Hadot talks about a shift in the perspective from the genesis of Intellect to the point of view of the soul discovering Intellect and the Good. In this sense, he is close to Siegmann's phenomenological answer, but despite this shift of perspective he still advocates one single explanation for Intellect having the form of good: life as the first *energeia*. Consequently, he is unable to distinguish between life, beauty and light and identifies them, which I think clouds important distinctions and forces him to interpret the language of *Phaedrus* used in VI.7.22 in a considerably un-Platonic manner (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 289-293).

(*glichomai*) for the light which plays upon them (*epitheontos*) and which makes us delight in it (*euphrainetai*), just as what we desire in bodies is not the underlying matter (*hypokeimenon*) but beauty imagined upon them (*emphantazomai*; cf. VI.7.22.1-5). In this analogy, beauty corresponds to the light playing upon the forms, which are not the object of the soul's erotic desire but account here for the *hypokeimenon*. Plotinus' expression seems to suggest that what the light of the Good allows us to see, i.e. the colour of the forms, which is itself luminous, is beauty.[146] It is interesting however that he does not say so directly and concludes instead that this light arousing desire is grace (*charis*). It is by grace that the Good colours the forms (*epichrōnnumi*; cf. VI.7.22.5-8) and makes them *agathoeidē* (cf. VI.7.22.33). Consequently, we may conceptually distinguish two possible states of Intellect, one not illuminated and one illuminated. It is worth noticing that Plotinus calls Intellect explicitly beautiful only in the former case (cf. VI.7.22.10-11 and VI.7.22.21-23) where its beauty is said to be inactive (*argos*), where the soul's interest is not aroused (*nōthēs*) and where it does not move (cf. VI.7.22.10-14). Nevertheless, what it sees is still something beautiful and majestic (*kala kai semna*; cf. VI.7.22.21-23). In the latter case Plotinus rather talks about warmth from the Good (*thermasia*) or its grace (*charis*) which strengthen the soul (*rhōnnutai*), wake it (*egeiretai*) so that it becomes winged (*pterūtai*) and naturally (*physei*) raises both to Intellect which attracts it and to what is greater (*meizon*). When this happens, the soul remembers and is lifted by the giver of love (cf. VI.7.22.14-25). As is obvious, the impact of grace on the soul is described in the language of Plato's *Phaedrus* (246a-252c).[147] However, Plato's simile of a soul in love from this dialogue is at the same time utilized in a quite unusual way: the description of the amazement of soul when it sees true beauty, its falling flat on its back (*Phdr.* 254b8), is used rather to express its lack of interest and boredom as it were when encountering non-illuminated Intellect (cf. VI.7.22.10-14).

The fact that Plotinus does not use the word beauty to denote the illuminated Intellect can be interpreted in two ways. Either it is insignificant and we are free to

[146] This interpretation is held by Siegmann (1990, p. 101-105), Tornau (2011, com. ad VI.7.24.1-4) and implied also in the interpretations of Halfwassen (2003), Narbonne (2002), and Beierwaltes (2011, p. 347).

[147] For more exact references to the *Phaedrus* see Tornau 2011, com. ad VI.7.22.7-17.

supplement beauty, or Plotinus wants to reserve the notion of beauty for non-illuminated Intellect and avoids it on purpose. It is quite difficult to choose among these options because there are good reasons for both of them. The first one (insignificance of the fact that Plotinus does not use the term beauty for illuminated Intellect) could be supported by the following: 1) such understanding is suggested by the context of the whole chapter, 2) by the references to Plato's *Phaedrus* and 3) by other passages on beauty from different *Enneads*. One the other hand, one could try to weaken these reasons and argue, that: add 2) the references to *Phaedrus* are not used properly (cf. soul's boredom above and the interpretation of Hadot 1987, p. 292-293), and add 3) there are also other passages in the *Enneads* which seem to suggest the insignificance of Intellect's beauty as compared to the Good (cf. VI.9.4, VI.9.11, V.8.8, V.5.12 and VI.7.32-33). Most importantly however, one might object that it is not wise to risk missing an important distinction between beauty and something more, perhaps grace. This is a good reason in favour of the other interpretation which says that Plotinus intentionally avoids the term beauty here in order to emphasize the substantial contribution of the Good to beauty, the fact that without the Good, there is no (erotic) longing. One might support this claim by referring to Plato's *Symposium* (204d-206a). To this position we might object that 1) Plato does not avoid the notion of beauty in his description of love and it is precisely through it that the desire for good is fulfilled as procreating and giving birth in the beautiful (cf. *Symp.* 206e), that 2) avoiding the term beauty for illuminated Intellect seems to be in contradiction to Plotinus' standard claims about beauty in other *Enneads* and that 3) even in VI.7.22 this position represents to a certain extent counterintuitive reading (cf. point 1 of the contrary position above).

I would therefore suggest to choose a middle position which would claim that Plotinus does indeed avoid the term beauty here to emphasize the substantial contribution of the Good to beauty. This however does not mean that on a different occasion, he would not call the illuminated Intellect beautiful. The crucial point here is again the context of the claim: to find that which is given to Intellect by the Good as something so to say extra, and which makes it *agathoeidēs*. Therefore in this context, it makes sense that Plotinus tries to accentuate such an added value.

The examples Plotinus uses to illustrate his point can be read as supporting this interpretation because they are oriented precisely at highlighting this "something extra" added by illumination. The first example is that of a beautiful face which has no grace (*charis*) if one cannot catch the eye (cf. VI.7.22.23-25). The second one is related to symmetry in the sensible world which is beautiful only if beauty shines upon it (cf. VI.7.22.25-27).[148] The third one is the well-known case of a still fresh face of a corpse as opposed to that of a living person (cf. VI.7.22.27-29). The fourth is that of a more lifelike statue as opposed to a more symmetrical one (cf. VI.7.22.29-31). And the last example compares a beautiful statue with an ugly living man who is more beautiful because he has soul which shares in what it means to be *agathoeidēs* (cf. VI.7.22.31-36). As can be seen, all these examples show that there is something added to sensible things, which has to be granted to them from above, i.e. beauty. Similarly, there is something extra, grace, which has to be added to the beauty of the non-illuminated Intellect.

These examples however seem to counter my choice of the middle position. The second example with symmetry seems at first sight to reopen the question of the beauty of illuminated Intellect because it is beauty that shines on symmetry. Consequently, illuminated Intellect could be said to be beautiful *per analogiam*. However, as Plotinus explicitly states, we are talking about things here below (*entautha*) whereas in my interpretation the point of the discussed passage (VI.7.22) was to highlight the uniqueness of the illumination by the Good in the case of Intellect, as opposed to all other illuminations below. Therefore, this would be a relatively weak support for claiming that the illuminated Intellect is beautiful, although along with all the other reasons mentioned above (context of the passage, references to the *Phaedrus* and the claims of other *Enneads*), it is difficult to simply dismiss this option.

Then again, the third example with a living face as opposed to the face of a dead person might be more persuasive. It is an example that we have already

[148] Siegmann (1990, p. 104) infers from this that beauty always has to break the rule, i.e. symmetry. This is a wrong deduction from the example. It also contradicts what Plotinus says about beauty and symmetry (cf. I.6.1 and chapter 2.1). Moreover, it makes no sense in the case of simple beautiful objects (like colour, light or gold) which Plotinus uses to attack the symmetry theory.

encountered in connection with beauty or rather ugliness.[149] Moreover in the last two examples, beauty is predicated about both the lifelike and the symmetrical statue, or the statue and the ugly living man. So in the end, why should we not say that illuminated Intellect is beautiful? Because the risk that we might miss an important distinction by simply supplementing VI.7.22 with the term beauty still seems too high to me. Let us rather deepen or refine the middle position.

As we have seen in the previous discussion of VI.2.17-18 (cf. part 4.1.5), the idea that beauty might be identified with something which as if shines upon the form, i.e. with the light of the Good, was present in Plotinus' thought (along with the identification of beauty with the Good as *kallonē*, with being, and with what affects all who see it and what awakens motion in them). However, his previous ways of capturing beauty rather presented it as unity in multiplicity, and in this sense it would be inappropriate to use beauty in VI.7.22 to capture this "something extra" that needs to be added to non-illuminated Intellect which is already one-many. Beauty as unified multiplicity is rather intrinsic to Intellect and is consequently not suitable for depicting this "something extra". Therefore, I would again suggest maintaining that Plotinus is deliberately avoiding this term here and rather introduces a deepened concept of beauty.

According to it, beauty would be that as what the Good shows itself in Intellect, that which makes Intellect *agathoeidēs* or good-looking. Plotinus might in this sense find support for this also in Plato's *Philebus* (64e) where the power of the good is said to have taken refuge in the nature of the beautiful. Intellect might consequently be said to be *agathoeidēs* in at least two senses, a genetic and a phenomenological one. According to the first, Intellect is *agathoeidēs* as derived from the Good and this derivation has different phases: the emanation of life as *prōtē energeia*, the formation of this life into intellection by conversion, and its becoming constituted as being. The *triad* life – intellection – being is used by Plotinus to describe Intellects' genesis and reflects a genetic hierarchy of what it means to be *agathoeidēs*. Intellect has the form of the Good as life, intellection and

[149] We have encountered Plotinus talking about a corpse with respect to ugliness in chapter 3.5 when discussing *Ennead* II.4.5.18 (hereto cf. II.4.16.3-16 and II.9.17.18-21, and indirectly also V.1.2.17-28).

being. This answer is correct in so far as we are looking for a common feature that runs over all intelligibles and which makes them *agathoeidēs* as each of them different (cf. VI.7.18.2-9).

But what makes them *agathoeidēs* also as the same? This is where the phenomenological perspective enters the discussion. From this perspective, the question is rather the following: how is this intelligent life which is being, i.e. life formed by itself and simultaneously by the Good in the light of the Good, *agathoeidēs*? The answer is: as beautiful. Consequently, the primary beauty in Intellect is the contemplating life which is being, i.e. a unity in multiplicity *illuminated by the Good*. This intimate connection with the Good is precisely what makes beauty the object of desire, which is in fact always a desire for the Good through beauty or in beauty, as Plato would put it (cf. *Symp.* 206a-e). Both the genetic perspective, which identifies the form of Good in Intellect primarily with life (secondarily with intellection and tertiarily with being) and the phenomenological answer, which concludes that the common feature which runs over all in Intellect (including its life, intellection and being), is beauty *referring back to its source*,[150] thus establishes the relation of Intellect and the Good vertically: life in a descending manner and beauty in an ascending one. Being and the highest kinds are on the contrary rather used for a "horizontal" description of the inner differentiation of Intellect, although I use quotation marks here because there is indeed a vertical differentiation of Intellect in the sense of establishing of genera and species. Nevertheless, it is still a "horizontal" differentiation as far as it takes place so to say inside Intellect.

In conclusion, this deepened concept of beauty does not reject the former one, beauty as unity in multiplicity, but places it into a new, broader perspective, which enriches it in two ways. First, it better depicts the referential character of beauty to the Good because it presents it as the way how the Good itself can be seen in Intellect as a unique feature common to everything in Intellect which has a different status than the highest kinds. Second, since life accounts for Intellect's multiplicity

[150] Even Hadot (1987, p. 284) admits that there is a new perspective in play and a new solution to the problem of *agathoeidēs*. According to him, these passages show that the Intellect as *agathoeidēs* refers to the Good.

and is genetically primarily *agathoeidēs*, the enriching role of multiplicity for Intellect is once again pointed out here. This has consequences for multiplicity also in beauty. The explanation of Intellect's beauty in *Ennead* V.8.4 and V.8.8 (cf. chapters 3.5 and 3.9) still holds: beauty is that which is in between what is more than beautiful and what is deficiently beautiful. Beauty in Intellect is everywhere in beauty because illuminated beauty was identified as a common feature that runs over all intelligibles and the whole Intellect, and by which all is *agathoeidēs* both as the same and as different.

Moreover, in the description of Intellect's genesis, the inchoate Intellect became a defined multiplicity when it was enabled by the Good to see, so that not only its limit but also such multiplicity is what makes it *agathoeidēs*. There is beauty in Intellect only when it is constituted, and therefore the beauty comes up first in the phenomenological perspective. Since however, the life of Intellect, its intellection and their combination, being, are *agathoeidēs*, both its multiplicity and its unity are beautiful when combined. So whereas from the genetic perspective there is a descending hierarchy of derivation from the Good and in this sense also of the use of *agathoeidēs* for life, intellection and being, from the phenomenological perspective there is an opposite ascending hierarchy. Multiplicity in Intellect is enriching for its beauty as boiling with life but this multiplicity is still subordinate to the role of limit and unity. Their combination, beauty itself, is that in which the Good manifests itself in Intellect and through which it attracts all to itself.

How then is this still a middle position? The proposed interpretation enables us to be sensitive to what is new in VI.7.22, i.e. it allows us to suppose that Plotinus intentionally avoids the term beauty for illuminated Intellect while not dismissing the possibility to use the term beauty for illuminated Intellect, although this beauty has to be correctly (newly) understood.

However, there seems to be another serious problem in this interpretation or rather in the very text of *Ennead* VI.7. The Good seems to have more than one external activity. It emanates life, “then” it emanates limit to bind the multiplicity of life and “then” it allows these two to interact by emanating light. Even if we abstract from any temporal sequence of events (there is none of course), we are

left with life, limit and light as three different emanations from the Good. As was already noted by Emilsson in the case of pre-Intellect or the subject of thinking (= life) and in that of imbuing or the object of thinking (= limit), "…there is every reason to suppose that there is just one external act of the One, which somehow contains both a subject and object aspect" (Emilsson 1999, p. 287 and cf. also Emilsson 2017, p. 94-100). Similarly, there is every reason to suppose that there is just one external act of the Good, which somehow contains life, limit and light. But how? Is everything life because life is the first *energeia* from the Good? No, because life would not only have to be manifold and unbound, but also one and bound or rather "the bind" since it would have to bind itself. However, this role is attributed in *Ennead* VI.7 to limit as something different from life. Are at least life and light the same as Hadot has a tendency to say (cf. 1987, p. 290-291; cf. also Vassilopoulou 2014)? The answer has to be negative again because Plotinus does distinguish between the genetic and phenomenological answer by pointing out that the former explains how all is *agathoeidēs* as different, whereas the latter also as same. Or do all three (life, limit and light) coincide with limit? No, because this limit would have nothing to bind so that there would be no multiplicity. Are they then rather all light as that which manifests the Good in Intellect? One could perhaps say so in so far as both life and limit emanate from the Good. I propose therefore to posit one external activity of the Good which is simultaneously life (or multiplicity or the dyad) and limit (or unity or the monad). These two always already interact one with the other. Moreover, this external activity comprises the fact that life and limit come from the Good (as light does) and in this sense they become its manifestation (beauty).[151] Plotinus' description of the generation of Intellect is to a certain extent inaccurate since every genesis is a process which presupposes some type of sequence: something is to be formed first, then it is formed and as such it becomes visible as similar to its paradigm. However, as Plotinus himself repeatedly points

[151] In the same vein, Nikulin (1998b) talks of Intellect as being simultaneously otherness and sameness (with reference to V.3.15.40) and stable movement (with reference to VI.9.5.14-15). The unity of thinking and thought as light is also advocated by Beierwaltes (1961, p. 359) who also notices that light not only allows everything else to be seen but is itself manifest through it (p. 349). This idea is to be found of course already in Plato (cf. *Rep.* 507b-509c) where the light of the sun is said to account for the ability to see and to be seen by the eye and the light of the Good for the power of knowing and for the truth (cf. Beierwaltes 1961, p. 350). Plotinus in fact refers to these passages in VI.7.16.21-31 (see chapter 5.3 and the commentary of Smith 2012, p. 16-19).

out, the birth of Intellect is to be understood as atemporal, i.e. as comprising all its moments simultaneously.

Also, we have already noticed that the reason for Intellect's being *agathoeidēs* had to be a common feature of the whole richly varied Intellect, so that the one and the multiple alone could not be the answer. What is *agathoeidēs* is both one and many (cf. chapter 5.3). It should not come as a surprise that defined multiplicity is derived from the Good, because Intellect became many precisely by looking to the Good from where it received limit (cf. chapter 5.3). The point of the whole (genetic and phenomenological) answer would therefore be that the Good emanates interacting unity (limit, the monad) and multiplicity (life, the dyad), i.e. beauty as used with respect to non-illuminated Intellect (cf. above). Since however they come from the Good, such beauty becomes illuminated and refers to the Good, i.e. it becomes grace or beauty in the deepened sense (cf. above). The addition of light highlights the importance of the referential character of beauty and the fact that there is something more beyond unity in multiplicity by which the good-looking (*agathoeidēs*) Intellect refers to the Good.

This however, will be even more explicit in VI.7.32-33. We should therefore advance in the analysis of *Ennead* VI.7 which from now on starts to focus on the Good itself. The Good which emanates Intellect and leaves a trace of itself in it is at the same time that which attracts everything to itself. The Good, itself absolutely self-sufficient above which there is nothing superior, is the condition of all that is, of all the middle goods, and there is a stepwise decrement of resemblance to the Good up to that, which has no share in it, up to the evil. The fact that there is evil is in this sense a proof of the Good, because without the Good, all would be indifferent. The Good is the giver of Intellect and life, and through them of soul and everything that has a share in *logos*, intellection (*nūs*) and life (*zōē*). This process is not a one-time creation but a constant maintenance of thinking in thinking, of being in being, of life in life and of inspiring (*empneō*) thinking, life and being (cf. VI.7.23.1-25).

5.5 Alternative notions of the good and the true meaning of Plato's doctrine (VI.7.24-30)

Since the very question about the form of the Good in Intellect presupposes that there is the Good from which Intellect is born as life, intellection and being (genetic answer) and which presents itself in Intellect as beauty (phenomenological answer), it is necessary to explain how we are to understand this Good. Plotinus presents a series of serious questions about the Good which make use of the previous philosophical tradition and obviously allude to some alternative doctrines of what is to be considered as good:

1) The first dilemma (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 112-116, and Hadot 1987, p. 296 and 301-303), consisting of two opposite possibilities how to relate the good and desire, asks if the former has its own nature (*physis*; VI.7.24.8) which attracts our desire or if on the contrary the latter defines what the good is (cf. VI.7.24.4-10). Plotinus' answer is of course that the good is desirable because it is good and not vice versa (cf. VI.7.25.17-18 and VI.7.27.26-27). The opposite would make the good a relative notion, i.e. relative to a subject feeling pleasure. Consequently, Plotinus' answer might be interpreted as a rejection of the Sophistic concept of the good (cf. Anonymous, *Dissoi logoi* and Siegmann 1990, p. 113).

2) Similarly, the second dilemma (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 112-113 and 117-120, and Hadot 1987, p. 296 and 303-305) draws opposition between pleasure derived from the good and something else which one receives from it. Do we desire the good because of the former as perhaps Epicurus would say (cf. DL 10.127-130), or the latter? And if because of the former, why do we find pleasure in this and not in something else? And if because of the latter, what do we acquire from the good (cf. VI.7.24.10-13)? Plotinus answers again quite clearly that pleasure, since it is a *pathos* (cf. VI.7.26.16), is not the reason why we desire the good. Pleasure is rather an epiphenomenon of the acquisition of the good (cf. VI.7.27.27 and Siegmann 1990, p. 119) which is by definition self-sufficient (cf. VI.7.26.14, VI.7.34.21-38 and *Phileb.* 20c-e and 22b). Pleasure, on the contrary, requires constant input of new arousals and we feel pleasure only in the presence of something that arouses us (cf.

VI.7.26.14-16).[152] When the soul acquires the good, it knows, because it stops to look for anything else (*mē allo zētē*), does not regret (*ametanoētos*), is filled (*peplērōsthai autō gignētai*) and stays with the good (*ep' ekeinū menē*; cf, VI.7.26.1-2 and VI.7.26.12-14). Moreover, since this good does not come to the soul from something external (like for a corpse the good is the burial), it itself becomes something better (*beltion ti ginētai*; cf. VI.7.26.12-13), i.e. more *agathoeidēs* (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 304). This is enabled by the fact, that we do indeed receive something from the good (cf. VI.7.25.28-29). There is a hierarchy of goods, form for matter, virtue for soul and the Good for Intellect (cf. VI.7.25.25-28), and each being receives something from that which is above it (cf. VI.7.25.18-24). Inanimate objects receive order (*taxis*) and arrangement (*kosmos*), living beings also life (*zōē*), rational beings thought (*phronein*) and living well (*zēn eu*), and Intellect actuality (*energeia*) and light (*phōs*; cf. VI.7.25.29-33). And since there is a hierarchy of goods derived from the Good and the Good manifests in the lesser as beauty, this hierarchy is in fact the *scala amoris*.

3) The hierarchic perspective is also important for the third question (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 120-123, and Hadot 1987, p. 305-306): is the good to be understood as what is proper to everything or one's own (*oikeion*), as the Stoics advocate (cf. VI.7.24.13-14 and SVF I.197, III.178, III.183)? It seems to me that Plotinus' answer is ambivalent. On the one hand, he denies the concept of *oikeion* because the good for each thing lies in what is superior, whereas its own is on the same level (cf. VI.7.27.3-9). On the other hand, he who desires this good, which is superior to him, directs himself to it as to his own potentiality, because not possessing it actually is precisely what arouses the desire (cf. VI.7.27.8-17). In this sense, after one has reached this superior good and actualizes it in oneself, it is present as something which is one's own. That might be the reason why Plotinus in a different context does admit that the good is *oikeion* (cf. VI.5.1). Then again, as Siegmann points out (1990, p. 121), saying this is imprecise because as soon as one has reached one's good, one finds out that this good has withdrawn one level

[152] Plotinus even strengthens his argument here by using an interesting mind experiment in which we would be able to enjoy erotic pleasure without the desired person or feel the joy from a tasty food but without actually eating the food. We would not accept such pleasures, claims Plotinus (cf. VI.7.26.20-24).

above. Consequently, it is not the good that participates in the *oikeion* but vice versa (Hadot, 1987, p. 306).

4) However, this raises a series of further questions (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 123-127 and Hadot 1987, p. 307-311): is the good good for itself or for another and if for another, what is it, if it is not good, and is there in fact any such nature for which there is no good (cf. VI.7.24.14-17)? Plotinus' answer is again somewhat complicated. Every good is good for itself and since the lesser is potentially that which is its own good (the superior), the good is good also for the lesser through being good for itself (cf. VI.7.27.13-18). And Plotinus even specifies here what it means to be good for itself: to be some part of the good (*tis agathū moira*; VI.7.27.18). Then again, there is an exception from this, the Good itself, which cannot be good for itself, because this expression presupposes a distinction in the Good between it being the Good and itself for which it is the good. Since however, there is no such distinction in the Good, it cannot be good for itself "as if it would have as regards itself to get out of its own nature and not be joyful with itself as good" (VI.7.27.21-23, transl. Armstrong, modified). As can be seen from this formulation, the denial of being good for itself in case of the Good is not simply a rejection. Plotinus rather posits more than identity of the Good with itself: *being joyful with itself* (*agapaō*). Nevertheless, in a standard way of speaking, the Good is good only for others (cf. also VI.7.41.28-29), i.e. for that which is lower. But does it mean also for the lowest, i.e. matter, which is evil (cf. VI.7.28.1-4)? Plotinus tries to answer this question in two steps. First, he points out that the problem appears only from one perspective, from that of the matter: for how could it desire form, i.e. its own destruction (cf. VI.7.28.4-6)? However, Plotinus reminds us, we might turn the problem upside down and formulate the desire of matter which is evil and non-being as a desire for form, i.e. for being (cf. VI.7.28.6-7). Consequently, matter does not desire its own destruction, because it does not exist and in this sense cannot be destroyed. On the other hand, if desire for the good could also be formulated in terms of a desire for what a thing is potentially, then matter cannot desire the good,

because it is nothing potentially but only absolute privacy.[153] Therefore, the question remains and Plotinus offers a second implicit answer, expressed rather in the form of rhetorical questions. Matter as pure evil does not desire. Only matter which has perception (*aisthēsis*) desires (cf. VI.7.28.8-10). However, such matter is not matter as such, but only something that became bad, i.e. something originally good (cf. VI.7.28.11-20). Forms are present in matter rather as opinions or mental pictures in soul, i.e. matter and form do not mix or interact in any fashion that would make it possible to say that one gets anything from the other (cf. III.6.15).

In any case, the whole polemic about the desire of matter is probably directed against Aristotle (cf. *Phys.* 192a19, *Met.* 1075a28) and the Gnostics (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 126), and Plotinus will be able to draw some more important characteristics of the Good from it later. Since he has established the opposition between matter as evil and form as good and since there is a hierarchy of goods, he is able to say that the higher the ascent, the more there is form. Consequently, it would seem that the Good should be form itself. However, Plotinus has a different concept in mind. The Good, which has never come anywhere close to matter has rather taken refuge in its formless nature (*aneideos physis*), because it is even beyond the first form and is the giver of the first form (cf. VI.7.28.27-29). Moreover, since pleasure is caused by the acquisition of good, it is as such a symptom of previous privation of it (cf. VI.7.29.10). However, such privation diminishes in the ascent because the higher we go, the more there is form and simultaneously the less need we find. In this sense, there is a continuous decrease of pleasure in the ascent and when united with the Good, one does not feel pleasure anymore, because one is beyond pleasure (cf. VI.7.29.1-10).[154]

5) Plotinus then turns to a further question (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 129-132 and Hadot 1987, p. 314-316) he considers particularly grave and important, because it is a question of a troublesome or peevish (*dyscherantikos*) person. As Siegmann points out (1990, p. 129, footnote 136), such a person is described in Plato's *Philebus* (44b-

[153] For matter as absolute privacy, see II.4.16. However, Plotinus says here also that matter is in need or in fact that it is need itself (*penia*) which lacks everything.

[154] These parts (VI.7.29.1-10) should be also read as a brief discussion with Aristotle's claim that we would choose seeing, remembering, knowing and possessing virtues even if they were not accompanied by pleasure (cf. *EN* 1174a).

c) where it is said that he should be taken seriously as someone who divines the truth. This Cynic considers the debate on the Good just “pompous language up and down and all around” (VI.7.24.18-20, transl. Armstrong), does not understand what good someone who thinks could have from contemplation of forms (cf. VI.7.24.21-22) because he looks for the good in some property (*en chrēmasin*; cf. VI.7.29.16-17), his own, so that in the end he despises all and does not see the difference between existence and non-existence unless “one makes selfish love the reason for all this” (*ei mē tis tēn pros hauton filian aitian tūtōn theito*; VI.7.24.27-28, transl. Armstrong, modified). Plotinus first responds to this person that he too posits something good which directs his claims, probably himself in some sense, but since he does not understand what Plotinus is saying about the good, he cannot simply deny it. To explain his position, Plotinus tries to show this Cynic what is in common sense evil: unintelligence (*anoia*). Moreover, he brings to his attention that in despising being and life he actually contradicts all experience and implicitly claims that there is just earthly intelligence, being and life, whereas there is in fact also true intelligence, being and life in Intellect (cf. VI.7.29.17-32). But what is so prophetic about the claims of this Cynic? In despising everything, he prophesies the radical worthlessness of everything as compared to the Good (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 131), he “has a prophetic intuition of what is above Intellect” (VI.7.29.21-22, transl. Armstrong).

6) The last dilemma (cf. Siegmann 1990, p. 132-141 and Hadot 1987, p. 316-319) deals with the heritage of Plato and Aristotle and their conceptions of the good and Intellect. How could Plotinus' conception be consistent with *Philebus* (61b-c), where the good is said to be a mixture of intellect and pleasure? In dealing with this difficulty, Plotinus proposes two ways to interpret this mixture. Either the good is intellect and pleasure is mixed with it in the sense of an experience of soul when possessing it (cf. *EN* 1174b), or the good is one thing made of intellect and pleasure (cf. VI.7.30.4-12). Plotinus seems to choose the former interpretation (cf. VI.7.30.14-18) but in a modified version. He avoids the use of the word pleasure, which he considers to be a metaphorical attempt to express something more or

extra that runs over all as it were,[155] that is needed for every activity (*energeia*), state (*diathesis*) and life (*zōē*; cf. VI.7.30.18-26). Similarly, we should interpret the notion of pure and unmixed activity (*katharon kai eilikrines to energēma*; cf. *Phileb.* 52d) where there is no opposition and hindrance (cf. *Met.* 1072b) as a sign of the state which the soul experiences, when it is in Intellect and illuminated by the Good (cf. VI.7.30.30-33). As again Plato and also Homer express it metaphorically, it is an experience of drunkenness with nectar (cf. *Symp.* 203b), feast and entertainment (cf. *Phdr.* 247a) or a smile of Zeus (cf. *Iliad* 5.426 and 15.47; cf. VI.7.30.26-30). Therefore, concludes Plotinus, Plato also adds truth to the mixture and says that there is a measure before this mixture, and it is because of this measure that the symmetry and beauty of the mixture become beautiful (cf. VI.7.30.33-35 and *Phileb.* 64b-65a). These claims should be obviously interpreted in the context of previous chapters, where this something extra running over all forms was light which made Intellect beautiful in the sense of having the form of Good (*agathoeidēs*), and therefore pointing behind or above to the Good itself (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 324).

This is exactly what Plotinus will now focus on: to establish the relation of beauty and the Good more precisely. However, before we follow him, let me briefly summarize the outcomes of the reviewed polemic with different notions of the good.[156] The Good was said to be a nature which is desired because it is the good and not vice versa (cf. point 1 above). Therefore, it is not desired because of pleasure but because of what it gives, i.e. perfection in being, which comes from the superior level (cf. point 2 above). In this sense, it could not be what is one's own (*oikeion*) but rather what is ontologically superior, or what has more form (cf. point 3 above). The Good is an exception from this increasing presence of form, because it is itself formless as the giver of form (cf. point 4 above). Below the Good, there is a scale of goods or perhaps beauties with Intellect on top, and matter as evil on the bottom (cf. point 4 above). The Good is that which enables this scale and compared

[155] There is a dispute among translators about the script here. Sleeman, Henry and Schwyzer read in line 19 *ti epitheon*, and Armstrong and Siegmann *to epitheon*, Harder *to epi pleon*, Beutler, Theiler and Hadot *ti epitheton*. I consider all possible and if taken in the context of the whole treatise the difference seems to me marginal. Therefore, I speak about "something more or extra that as if runs over all" to cover all these possibilities.

[156] I closely follow Hadot's precise summary (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 319).

to it, all is in a sense worthless (cf. point 5 above). Similarly, the Good is exceptional in not being good for itself but only for everything else, whereas the other goods were said to be good for itself and as such also for what is inferior (cf. point 4 above). Finally, Plotinus interpreted Plato's (and Aristotle's) claims about the good as compatible with his own, and said that there is something extra in Intellect which the soul experienced (metaphorically indeed as pleasure). This something extra is Intellect's beauty aroused by the light of the Good as a reference to the Good itself (cf. point 6 above).

5.6 The Good from the perspective of beauty and love (VI.7.31-36)

Plotinus now returns to what he wanted to discuss already before he digressed to the alternative notions of the good (cf. VI.7.24.1-3): the light of the Good. And since we so far inferred that this light is what makes Intellect truly beautiful, these passages will be of utmost importance.

Plotinus begins by reminding us what the light of the Good does. This time however, he widens his scope so that not only Intellect but also soul comes in to play. Everything that is becomes itself and beautiful because of what is above it and by being illuminated by it (cf. VI.7.31.1-2).[157] This becoming itself means for Intellect to think and for soul to give life (cf. VI.7.31.2-4). But a part of Intellect was raised (*aeirō*) to the Good and was joyful (*agapaō*) around it (cf. VI.7.31.5-6) and similarly that soul, which could turn to it "when it knew and saw, rejoiced in the vision and, in so far as it was able to see, was utterly amazed" (*hōs egnō kai eiden, hēsthē te thea kai hoson hoi ate ēn idein exeplagē*; VI.7.31.6-8, transl. Armstrong). And since soul had something from it also in itself, it knew it intimately (*synaisthanomai*) and started to desire it as lovers desire the beloved, when they see an image of him and want to see him in person (cf. VI.7.31.8-11). And as lovers make themselves like the beloved so does the soul make itself as *agathoeidēs* as possible (cf. VI.7.31.11-17).

These passages require commentary. First of all, Plotinus is obviously ready to describe the hierarchy of ontological levels as a hierarchy of resemblance to the

[157] This could be also read as a supporting claim for the unity of the external activity of the Good as discussed above (cf. chapter 5.4).

Good, where each superior level illuminates the inferior as it were in a similar fashion as the Good illuminates Intellect. Consequently, there is a continuous hierarchy of beauty based on the Good and the light it gives. Second, Plotinus seems to suggest that a part of Intellect is elevated by the Good. The concept of a part of Intellect being lifted up to the Good (and through it also a part of the soul) raises several controversial questions.[158]

1) Does it mean that Intellect is sometimes raised up and sometimes not? It seems probable, that we should interpret Plotinus' formulations here similarly to the way he himself interpreted foreseeing and planning in Plato's *Timaeus* in the very beginning of *Ennead* VI.7 (cf. chapter 5.1). Consequently, we should claim that everything that suggests time events in Intellect is but a mythical expression as Hadot puts it (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 325-326). Since there is no time in Intellect, part of it has to be raised up eternally, similarly to the way a part of it is always descending from the Good.

2) This brings us to the second problem, i.e. the relationship of the descending and the ascending part of Intellect. Are they the same or are they different, so that we should rather distinguish three phases of Intellect: Intellect coming into existence, Intellect thinking itself and Intellect raised up? Most of the scholars agree that the first and the third are the same and that Intellect experiences its birth when elevated to the Good (cf. Hadot 1987, p. 57-67; Rist 1989 or O'Daly 1970; for the contrary position cf. Bussanich 1988, p. 2-3).

3) Moreover it is not exactly clear whether *henōsis* actually means becoming the Good or "only" uniting with the nascent Intellect. Plotinus sometimes (e.g. VI.9.10.17-18) uses the simile of merging the centres of two circles which would suggest the former,[159] but sometimes (e.g. VI.8.18.8) that of a touch of radii with the centre of a circle which rather corresponds to the latter.[160] I will restrict myself

[158] A recent and original interpretation of *henōsis* is to be found in Ho 2015. I do however adhere to more traditional accounts of *henōsis* as advocated by the the authors cited in this paragraph.

[159] This position is held e.g. by Emilsson (cf. 2017, p. 335-347), Bussanich (1988, p. 180-181) or Armstrong (2013, p. 44-47 and 110).

[160] This interpretation is advocated by Hadot (cf. 1985, p. 27).

here only to agreeing with O'Daly's observation (cf. 1970) that Plotinus' expressions may support both.

4) Also, there has been a dispute about how the elevated and/or nascent Intellect relates to the thinking Intellect, i.e. if the relation of the former to the Good is hyper-noetic (cf. Beierwaltes 1974 and 1987) or pre-noetic (cf. Hadot 1985).[161] Without getting involved into this debate that transcends *Ennead* VI.7, let me just comment here that Plotinus' description of the raised Intellect echoes that of the nascent to a certain extent. Both are said either to move (i.e. the nascent Intellect in VI.7.16.16-18) or to be (the raised Intellect in VI.7.31.5-6) *around* the Good. Similarly, as we shall see later in VI.7.35.23-24, Plotinus will identify Intellect drunk with love with nascent Intellect. Therefore, at least in *Ennead* VI.7, Hadot's position seems to me to be better supported by textual evidence.[162]

Returning to my commentary of the discussed passages of *Ennead* VI.7, there is a third point besides 1) Plotinus' willingness to describe the hierarchy of ontological levels as a hierarchy of resemblance to the Good, and 2) his claim that a part of Intellect is elevated by the Good. The part of the soul that can turn to the Good must be the one which is in Intellect and Plotinus may hardly mean its lower parts. This can be supported by the fact that its love for the Good is described here as having three phases: 1) knowing, 2) seeing and 3) wanting to see. The first phase is probably to be identified with Intellect's contemplation of itself, the second with spotting the trace of the Good in it, i.e. with realizing that Intellect is *agathoeidēs* or beautiful in the sense of grace. This then, arouses love (= third phase), i.e. longing for the beloved, which a part of Intellect wants to "see", although it cannot be seen. This is the Good itself. If so, Plotinus' comparison with lovers in the sensible world which are reminded by an image of their beloved, makes perfect sense.

Fourth, these passages are strongly influenced by Plato's *Phaedrus*. He who loves tries to be more like the beloved, which is ultimately the Good in Plotinus' case. Therefore, the lover becomes more and more *agatohoeidēs* and by this fact, he diminishes the distance between himself and the beloved, as Siegmann points out

[161] For a comparison of both see Karfík 2007, p. 162-164 and Karfík 2002, p. 206-220.

[162] This should not come as a surprise, because the interpretation of Beierwaltes is based rather on *Enneads* V.4.2 and VI.8.18. Cf. Beierwaltes 1961, p. 349.

(1990, p. 147), which is the point of *erōs* and a useful tool for the description of *henōsis*. On the other hand, there are also important differences between *Ennead* VI.7.31 and *Phdr.* 250c-256e.[163] The soul in Intellect which is in love does not need sensually perceptible beauty as a reminder. It rather distrusts bodily beauty because it sees that this is polluted by bodies, disintegrated by magnitudes and understands that bodies are not truly beautiful in themselves (cf. VI.7.31.19-27). Consequently, soul in love aspires beyond because it understands that bodily beauty has its light from something superior, and when it is raised to the level of Intellect where all things are beautiful and true (*kala panta kai alēthē onta*), it becomes stronger because it lives true life (*ontos zōē*) and has true awareness (*synesis ontōs*) of the ultimate object of its desire, the Good, which it is near (cf. VI.7.31.27-34).

From this perspective of an ascent on the *scala amoris*, Plotinus turns to the source of the beauty, life and substance in Intellect. As a source, it is different from beauty which "rests upon the very Forms, all of them richly varied" (VI.7.32.2-3, transl. Armstrong). When contemplating them one has to ask where they derive their beauty from. This source cannot have any of the characteristics of Intellect: it must not be any of the forms or have shape (*morphē*) or size (*megethos*) and must be without any specific power (*dynamis*), but not in the sense it would need them, but as being beyond these and as being their source (cf. VI.7.32.1-10). However, being such a transcendent source means that it is at the same time none of the things that come from it (as far as they are posterior to it), and all of them (as they come from it; cf. VI.7.32.13-14). Then again, one has to specify in what sense the Source can be said to have what comes from it. Plotinus gives an example in case of size. It may come from it but the Good cannot be said to be great in a spatial sense but its greatness lies in its unmatched power (cf. VI.7.32.14-22). Its being beyond all such predicates is then stressed out in the case of measure (*metron*) because it is said to transcend both measure and measurelessness (cf. VI.7.32.22-24). In this sense we must understand what it means for the Good to transcend both form and

[163] Hadot aptly depicts the main difference in saying that „la dimension de l'amour humain disparaît complètement" (Hadot 1987, p. 328). The ascent to the Good rather resembles the *scala amoris* in the *Symp.* 209e-212a.

formlessness (cf. VI.7.32.24).[164] It makes our love unlimited (*apeiros*) and immeasurable (*ametros*) as there is nothing we could so to say reach for and so we reach further and further (cf. VI.7.32.24-28).

The case of beauty is similar. Its beauty "is of another kind and beauty above beauty" (*allon tropū kai kallos hyper kallos*; VI.7.32.29-30, transl. Armstrong). Plotinus even says here that such "productive power of all is the flower (*anthos*) of beauty,[165] a beauty that makes beauty (*kallos kallopoion*) (…) and makes it more beautiful by the excess of beauty which comes from it, so that it is the principle (*archē*) of beauty and the term (*peras*) of beauty" (VI.7.32.31-34, transl. Armstrong). He is even prepared to make a further step and says that the Good as the source of beauty and forms, i.e. itself shapeless, creates beauty as shapeless as it itself is, but in shape in another way (*allon de tropon en morphē*; cf. VI.7.32.34-39).[166] This very complicated statement should be interpreted in the following way. Suppose the Source of beauty is the primary beauty. It is also shapeless. If it thus creates a form that is beauty, its original shapelessness which is the primary beauty so to say receives form or becomes in shape and starts to exist differently. In this sense the primary beauty is not shaped and only that which participates in it, as Plotinus puts it here, i.e. the forms themselves, is shaped.[167] But we have to bear in mind that

[164] Hadot (1987, p. 330-331) connects these claims with the notion of measure from *Phileb.* 64e and the fact that the Good is without limit, measure and shape with the characteristics of the one from *Parm.* 137d-e.

[165] Siegmann (1990, p. 154) thinks that *anthos* is to be identified with the very blooming of a flower, i.e. what is present in the whole flower and allows each part of it to be variegated and beautiful. I would incline to understand it as a sudden and brief shift of perspective from an up-down to a bottom-up one where the Good might be indeed seen as a flower of beauty from the perspective of a rising soul, because it as if flowers from the beauty which is Intellect, and this flower is the actual *telos* of it.

[166] Siegmann (1990, p. 154) understands these passages as positing an intermediary beauty between the Good as *hyperkalon* and the beauty of Intellect. I find this unnecessary and would wonder about the status of such intermediary beauty.

[167] Hadot (1987, p. 332-336) interprets these passages as referring to the shapelessness of life as the first *energeia* from the Good and simultaneously as a characteristic of a fully constituted Intellect which is formless in the sense of forming itself. Hadot understands the claim that what gives form is formless as a general ontological statement valid not only for the Good but also for all lower levels, i.e. as far as they give form, they are formless. As that which gives form, Intellect is in this sense also formless. However, I do not see a good reason for reading these passages as a general ontological statement. It would also imply that Intellect as a source of all things is none of these. It seems to me that Plotinus rather wants Intellect to be in the truest sense what it gives to lower levels. In my reading, Hadot's claims are to be applied only to the Good. But even here, I remain sceptical about the connection of shapelessness to life as the first *energeia* from the One because this would mean that life as *aoristos* is *agathoeidēs* the most. But does Plotinus, this powerful

Plotinus is here using the predicate beauty (as he did also in *Ennead* I.6) to lead our soul to the Good and we should thus be very careful in deducing conclusions from it. From a different perspective one could try to describe the Good by saying precisely the opposite (see below) since it transcends both positive and negative statements.

The intention to lead our soul to the Good can further be seen in the passages that follow. Plotinus here addresses the soul that tries to ascend to the shapeless from Intellect and states that the shapeless form, i.e. the beautiful Intellect, is in proportion to the length the soul goes when trying to strip all shape from it (cf. VI.7.33.4-8). As shapeless, the Good cannot be seen, so that one needs to avoid every shape (cf. VI.7.33.1-2) or otherwise one falls out of the Good, here called the beautiful (*to kalon*; VI.7.33.3), to a different beauty (*kalon*; VI.7.33.3) which is called so by "obscure participation" (*amydra metochē*; VI.7.33.3). Intellect thinks itself, i.e. everything at once and at the same time distinguished, and by both these intellective acts (that are one in Intellect), it is diminished and pulled away from the Good since it only sees either a single form or a variety of them (cf. VI.7.33.8-10). However, the Good which is here called the all-beautiful (*pankallos*) is both variegated and not variegated (cf. VI.7.33.11-12). Intellect as form is measured and limited (*memetrēmenon*) and therefore not self-sufficient (*ūde autarkes*) and not beautiful of itself (*ūde par autū kalon*), and we desire to transcend to its source, the super-beautiful (*hyperkalon*; cf. VI.7.33.16-20). Intellect as the form is also said to be a trace (*ichnos*) of the shapeless (cf. VI.7.33.30-31). In this very special sense of being the ultimate shapeless object of desire, it can be said that beauty is the nature of the Good, or as Plotinus puts it a bit later, the first nature of the beautiful is formless (cf. VI.7.33.38-39).

Let me summarize what Plotinus says here. First of all, from the perspective of form and shape, we should distinguish *archē* (the Good) which is both *aneideon* (cf. VI.7.32.9, VI.7.33.13, VI.7.33.21, VI.7.33.38) and *amorphon* (cf. VI.7.32.6-7, VI.7.33.20-21, VI.7.33.28). Then there is the beauty of Intellect, which is *amorphon*

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advocate of forms, really think this? And why is matter then also not more like the Good than Intellect? However tempting Hadot's interpretation may be, it seems to me substantially un-Plotinian in the end.

eidos (cf. VI.7.33.4). Finally, all the forms are *eidē* and *morphai*. The notion of *amorphon eidos* is apt for describing beauty because it nicely captures its intermediary character, and sheds some light on the passages about the shapeless source of beauty which creates beauty as shapeless as it itself is, but in shape in another way (cf. VI.7.32.34-39). Beauty leads to the Good, i.e. the *aneideon*, because it is itself *amorphon*, but is still an *eidos*, i.e. a visible or rather intelligible manifestation of the shapeless. Therefore it allows a better understanding of the reaching above which is connected with beauty, because it entails and actually draws its power from the presence of the shapeless in itself. As *amorphon eidos*, it is precisely the shapeless beauty in shape, the Good in another, the form of Good in Intellect, i.e. what makes it *agathoeidēs*.

If we now focus on the Good itself in these passages, then we may extract the following negative statements about it:

1) It does not have shape (*morphē*; VI.7.32.6-7, VI.7.33.20-21, VI.7.33.28),
2) figure (*schēma*; VI.7.32.25),
3) or form (*eidos*; VI.7.32.9, VI.7.33.20-21, VI.7.33.38; and it does not have it altogether; VI.7.33.13),
4) and is none of those which have come to be and exist here above, i.e. forms or shapes (*pasai hai gegenēmenai kai ūsai entautha*; VI.7.32.7-8; and it has none of these shapes, not even the last and lowest ones; VI.7.33.33-34),
5) it has no size (*megethos*; VI.7.32.16),
6) no specific power (*tis dynamis*; VI.7.32.7),
7) and no limit (*peras*; VI.7.32.15-16),
8) it transcends both measure (*metron*; VI.7.32.22-23),
9) and measurelessness (*ametria*; VI.7.32.22-23),
10) as well as variety (*poikilon*; VI.7.33.12)
11) and non-variety (*ū poikilon*; VI.7.33.12),
12) it cannot be compared to anything (VI.7.32.19-21) and is in this sense great (*to mega*; VI.7.32.19, cf. also point 20 below),
13) has nothing the same with anything (VI.7.32.22),
14) was not made by anyone (VI.7.32.12-13),

15) was not made anything specific (VI.7.32.12-13),

16) is in fact nothing (*ūden*; VI.7.32.30),

17) and it is implied that it has no parts (*merē*; VI.7.32.5-6).

The positive statements could be divided into four groups. The first one follows after the negative statements, supplements them and presents the Good as the ultimate generative principle. The Good is:

18) beyond all powers and shapes (*hyper pasas dynameis … kai … morphas*; VI.7.32.8-9),

19) and this "beyond" means that the Good is the power of everything (*dynamis pantos*; VI.7.32.31) and has the power to create everything (*panta poiein dynamenon*; VI.7.32.14-15),

20) or is even said to be the most powerful of all (*mēden autū dynatōteron*; VI.7.32.19-21) and is in this sense great (*to mega*; VI.7.32.19, cf. also point 12 above),

21) it is the creator of such beauty, such life, and generator of substance (*ho poiēsas to tosūton kalloskaitēn tosautēn zōēn kai gennēsas ūsian*; VI.7.32.1-2),

22) and it is that from which all intelligible forms come (*aph' hū pasa morphē noera*; VI.7.32.10),

23) it generates form (*tūto genna tēn morphēn*; VI.7.33.31)

24) and is the source of everything and every form (*archē*; VI.7.32.9-12, VI.7.32.14),

25) and as their source it is all of these things (VI.7.32.13),

26) and it measures them (*metreō*; VI.7.32.23-24).

The second group of predicates relates directly to beauty. The Good is called:

27) beauty, the beautiful or the beauteous (*kalon;* VI.7.33.3, VI.7.33.38, *kallos*; VI.7.32.29-30, VI.7.32.39, VI.7.33.1, *kallonē*; VI.7.32.22, VI.7.33.23),

28) but this beauty is of another kind (*kallos autū allon tropon*; VI.7.32.29),

29) beauty above beauty (*kallos hyper kallos*; VI.7.32.29-30),

30) the all-beautiful (*pankalon*; VI.7.33.12),

31) the really beautiful (*ontōs*; VI.7.33.19),

32) the super-beautiful (*hyperkalon*; VI.7.33.20),

33) beauty which makes beauty (*kallos kallopoiōn*; VI.7.32.32),

34) and the generator of beauty (*to gennōn to kallos*; VI.7.32.30-31)

35) the flower of beauty (*anthos kalū*; VI.7.32.31-32),

36) the principle of beauty (*archē kalūs*; VI.7.32.34, VI.7.32.35),

37) and term of beauty (*peras kalūs*; VI.7.32.34).

38) As such, it is desired by soul (VI.7.33.12).

39) Moreover, the beauty it generates (i.e. Intellect) is made more beautiful by the excess of beauty which comes from it (*genna auto kai kallion poiei tē par' hautū periūsia tū kallūs*; VI.7.32.32-34), i.e. by the light of the Good (cf. VI.7.33.29-30).

The third group of predicates relates neither to the fact that the One is a generative principle, nor to beauty, but presents it as a superlative. It is:

40) the best (*to ariston*; VI.7.33.14),

41) the most lovable (*erasmiōtaton*; VI.7.33.14)

42) and the real thing (*to ontōs*; VI.7.33.13).

And the last group comprises of what is implied about the Good. It is:

43) self-sufficient (*autarkes*; VI.7.33.18),

44) beautiful of itself (*par autū kalon*; VI.7.33.18),

45) and not mixed (VI.7.33.19).

Plotinus is using all these predicates to present the Good as a superlative all-powerful source and principle of everything, which is beyond everything, i.e. different from it and also independent of it. As Siegmann (1990, p. 155-156) aptly comments, Plotinus uses negative (e.g. *amorphon*), paradox (*amorphon eidos*), superlative (*ariston*, *erasmiōtaton*), absolute (*autarkes*) and hyperbolic formulations (*hyperkalon*) to ascend to the Good. The predicates that relate to beauty are to be interpreted in this context. After all, Stern-Gillet (2000, p. 55) makes a comment about Plotinus' language with respect to beauty which is very similar to Siegmann's more general one. She says that Plotinus uses rare terms (*kallonē*), neologisms

(*kallopoion*, *hyperkalos*) and metaphors (*kalū anthos*) to describe the Good or the Beautiful.

Interpreting these statements about beauty in the context of predication about the Good means the following: 1) We should not overestimate them, because all positive statements (e.g. that beauty is the nature of the Good) are ultimately to be transcended as well as their opposites. In our particular case it means that we should remain sceptical about the identification of the Good and the beautiful. It still seems to me to be a safe starting point to claim that the primary beautiful is the Intellect and that the Good may be said to be the primary beautiful as the source of beauty, although it is in fact beyond beauty.[168]

But as I said, this is just a starting point, because only now are we able to ask the crucial question with which Plotinus in fact struggles since at least chapter 18: why is the Good manifest as beauty? And I do not mean here that it is the source of beauty because the Good is in the end the source of everything.[169] What is important in saying that the Good is manifest as beauty is rather that this beauty is the form of the Good in another and that everything below the Good is *agathoeidēs*, i.e. beautiful. Therefore, we should 2) not underestimate these claims. If the point of the use of language in the ascent to the Good is to continuously point beyond what is being said, then beauty is perhaps an ideal tool for this because it is in its very nature to refer to something above and to arouse *erōs*, which is in the end a desire to become one with the beloved, i.e. a desire for *henōsis*. However, this claim might be further strengthened because beauty is not only a useful tool in

[168] Omtzigt (2012, p. 85-90) also claims that the Good is to be differentiated from beauty, which is primarily to be connected with Intellect. However, she claims that Plotinus identifies the Good with beauty in VI.7.32-33 only from a subjective perspective, that of *erōs*. This is only partially true and it clouds important exegetic and systematic meanings of this identification as described below. Rist (1967, p. 53-65) also argues for the distinction of the Good and beautiful. Their identification is on the contrary advocated by Stern-Gillet (2000). However, my reading of *Enneads* VI.7 and VI.2 differs to some extent from hers (cf. chapters 4.1 and 5) and I take Plotinus' refusal to identify the Good and the beautiful in other *Enneads* (cf. VI.9.4, VI.9.11, V.8.8, V.5.12, VI.7.32-33) more seriously than she does.

[169] Rist (1967, p. 63) seems to understand the identification of the Good and beauty here in the sense that the Good is the source of beauty, and points out that the Good is in this sense the source of everything else. However, this precisely misses the uniqueness of beauty, the fact that it is to be identified with being *agathoeidēs*. Emilsson's observation (2017, p. 114) is more precise: "…it is noteworthy that Plotinus does not in general suggest that the very prototype of any Form is to be identified with the One. There must be something special about beauty."

a language play, but the Good is in fact manifest through it. If all desire is directed to some good and ultimately to the Good, then it must show itself as beauty, which is precisely that which arouses desire and refers to what is above it, and ultimately to the Good. Therefore, that the Good is manifest as beauty means that it is the Good in another, i.e. in a way diminished, but what is preserved in this diminishing is precisely what is needed to attain the Good: the energy required for the ascent (*erōs*) and the direction (reference above).[170] And since we so far maintained that beauty is unity in multiplicity referring to the Good, we might add an additional feature of the Good preserved in beauty, its oneness. Since however, it cannot exist in another as such, it is preserved in this other (in multiplicity) as unity. As already Plato says, beauty is *monoeidēs* (*Symp.* 211b1 and 211e4).[171]

Then again, we should refine our claim that in the end all predicates are to be transcended as well as their opposites. This implies that each predicate and each of their opposites are equally inappropriate for the Good. This might *in the end* be true, but it seems to me that if one does try to use the language to talk about the Good, there is an asymmetry in the appropriateness of at least some predicates and their opposites. If we take as an example two predicates discussed in VI.7.32-33, greatness (*to mega*) and beauty, we might notice that Plotinus never uses the opposites to describe the Good. One might argue that in the end the Good could be said to be small in the sense of having no size, or even ugly in the sense of not being intelligible beauty. As is obvious however, it would be strange to say this and one could perhaps think of different cases where it would be utterly inconceivable to predicate the opposites, like in the case of the one (i.e. many) and the good (i.e. evil). I cannot think of a context in which it would make sense to call the Good evil or the One many.[172] Plotinus himself comments on this asymmetry in VI.7.20.1-11 when trying to discover what *agathoeidēs* means. The appropriateness of the predicate of beauty for the Good seems again to be caused by the fact that beauty is the manifestation of the Good, or to put it the other way around, that the Good is

[170] As far as I understand it, this is exactly the point of Tornau (2006, p. 203) who claims that the Good is beyond beauty but manifest through it, and that it accounts for the *erōs* which beauty arouses.

[171] Cf. Halfwassen 2003, who traces this motive back to Plato.

[172] D'Ancona Costa (1992, p. 98-109) makes a similar observation.

the final cause of the ascent on *scala amoris*. This close connection of beauty and the Good is also something that seems to disrupt the previous repeated identification of beauty and being (cf. V.8.9, VI.2.17-18 and chapters 3.10 and 4.1.4-5) at least above the level of Intellect. Whereas it is in the sense just outlined possible to say that the Good is beautiful, I cannot see how this would be possible for being. On the contrary, beyond being is with beyond intellection one of the most common epithets of the Good (cf. I.7.1.19, I.8.6.28, III.8.9.9, III.9.9.1, V.1.8.7, V.3.11.28, V.3.12.47, V.3.17.13, V.4.1.10, V.4.2.2, V.4.2.38-39, V.4.2.42, V.6.6.30, V.8.1.3, V.9.2.24, VI.7.35.21, VI.7.40.26, VI.8.16.34, VI.8.19.13, VI.9.11.42). However, as we shall see in the next chapter, things are more complicated at least in case of intellection. In summary, if beauty is a useful predicate for the ascent to the Good because the beautiful is *agathoeidēs* (cf. point 2 above), it is perhaps also a predicate, whose appropriateness for the Good is asymmetrical when compared to its opposite, ugliness, and when compared to other predicates designating Intellect, like being or intellection.

Moreover, Plotinus has yet another reason for calling the Good the primary beauty here and it is an exegetical one.[173] He tries to merge several claims of Plato from the *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Philebus*, *Parmenides* and the *Republic* together. As we have seen, beauty was interpreted as a reference to the Good because it was its image or its trace, or again because the Good can be seen in all beings since they have the form of the Good, i.e. they are *agathoeidē*. For Plotinus, this referential character of beauty together with the description of the ascending movement caused by *erōs* is the main lesson which is to be taken from the *Phaedrus.* Moreover, Plotinus combines the claims that 1) all desire is according to *Symposium* (204d-206a) ultimately directed to the Good, that 2) the good has taken refuge in the nature of the beautiful from *Philebus* (64e), 3) with the passage from *Republic* (509a) where Socrates is said to speak of an overwhelming beauty that provides knowledge and truth but is itself beyond them in beauty. Plotinus concludes from this that beauty is the medium through which the ascent of soul advances to the Good. The Good has the characteristics of the one from *Parmenides* (137d-e), i.e. it

[173] The texts Plotinus may have in mind might not be only those of Plato but he might also allude to Numenius of Apamea and Alcinous. Cf. Edwards 1991.

is unlimited and without shape, and of the Good from the *Republic* (509b), i.e. it provides being and intelligibility to everything while it is itself beyond being which it exceeds in dignity and power. Then again, since Plato puts true beauty in *Symposium* (211b-212c) on the top of the *scala amoris*, Plotinus has this supplementary exegetic reason for understanding the Good as beauty, in order to show his own theory as compatible with Plato.

The discussed chapters VI.7.32-33 may further be enlightened by the previously discussed *Ennead* V.5.12 (cf. chapter 3.9). The beautiful (Intellect) is said there to need the Good but not vice versa (cf. V.5.12.33). This claim is very close to the opposite statement I earlier said was possible when using language to approach the Good. Moreover, the gentle (*ēpios*), kindly (*prosēnēs*) and gracious (*habros*) Good was contrasted to the beautiful, which brought rather "wonder (*thambos*) and shock (*ekplēxis*) and pleasure (*hēdonē*) mingled with pain (*algos*)" (V.5.12.33-36, transl. Armstrong). Perhaps it would be from a systematic point more accurate to single out a different word than *kallos* but with the same erotic connotations for the Good. Perhaps it could be *kallonē*, which is only used four times in the *Enneads* (I.6.6.21, I.6.6.26, VI.2.18.1, VI.7.33.22) and in all cases for the Good as beauty.[174] Also, *kallonē* has the advantage of being used similarly by Plato (cf. *Symp.* 206d). A different candidate would perhaps be *aglaia* used about the Good in VI.9.4.18 where Plotinus also compares the erotic relation to the Good with resting in the beloved (*en hō era anapauō*).[175] But as we know Plotinus did not care too much for such trifles.

[174] This has been noticed by Rist (1967, p. 53-65) who interprets *kallonē* as *dynamis tū kalū*. I agree with such definition but it should be noted that he gives an incorrect reference to VI.7.33.30, where this phrase is not used and I was not able to find it anywhere else in the *Enneads*. The closest formulation is *dynamis ūn pantos kalū anthos esti, kallos kallopoion* in VI.7.32.31-32 but even there it makes more sense to connect *dynamis* with *pantos* and *kalū* with *anthos*. However, cf. also Halfawassen's reading, translation and interpretation (2007, p. 51-52).

[175] Nevertheless, the word *aglaia* is probably a less fitting candidate than *kallonē* because it also occurs with respect to the beauty of Intellect in V.8.12.7, VI.2.21.12 and VI.7.21.6, with that of body as compared to intelligible beauty in I.6.8.5, with that of virtue in I.6.9.14, with the beauty of all in III.8.11.30, and also in contexts not directly related to beauty (cf. IV.3.17.21, V.3.8.31).

What is also interesting both in VI.7 and in V.5 is what might be called the shaping of the notion of the sublime which has its own history in aesthetics.[176] The Good is here said to be *mega* and *hyperkalon* and our attitude towards it is erotic desire which is *apeiros* and *ametros*. Simultaneously, the relation of soul to the Good was distinguished from the relation to the beauty of Intellect. This might suggest a preliminary distinction of the sublime (in the case of the Good) from the beautiful (in the case of Intellect), but there are also grave differences as compared to the traditional distinction. Plotinus connects gentleness, kindness and grace with the Good (which is traditionally connected rather with beauty), whereas the beauty of Intellect is said to arouse wonder, shock and pleasure mixed with pain (which traditionally corresponds rather to the sublime). Consequently, both the required distinctions, 1) between beauty and something more, something *mega*, and 2) between a gentle and a shocking nature, seem to be present in Plotinus but they are mismatched as compared to the tradition.

Moreover, Plotinus is ready to talk about amazement (*plēssō* and *ekplēssō*) in the case of the Good in VI.7.31. This may again be interesting for the history of the concept of the sublime, but is disturbing from a systematic point, because it seemed in the interpretation of *Ennead* V.5.12 that he uses this for the beauty of Intellect. Then again, one might argue that Plotinus in both cases of the use of *(ek)plēssō* in VI.7.31 adds "in so far as it was able to see" (*hoson hoi ate ēn idein*; VI.7.31.7) or "it saw" (*eide*; VI.7.31.8), which is of course impossible in the case of the Good, so that he might be still talking about the beauty of Intellect. However, this does not fit in the context of the passage and even if it did, it would still mean that the beauty of Intellect when illuminated by the Good would have to be shocking, which is probably not the case. I would therefore rather incline to explain Plotinus' choice of words here by the obvious context, which are again Plato's dialogues. Plotinus alludes to them repeatedly and *(ek)plēssō* is used many times in connection with

[176] This claim would be especially interesting if we date Pseudo-Longinus' treatise *On the Sublime* after Plotinus, like if we attribute it to Cassius Longinus (cf. Heath 1999, Grube 1991). However, the arguments against his authorship are strong (cf. Fyfe and Russel 1995, p. 145-148) and the shared opinion is rather that it was written earlier, like in the 1st century AD (rather by an unknown person than by Dionysius of Halicarnassus). For the history of the concept see Shaw 2006, Costelloe 2012, or Doran 2015.

beauty both in *Phaedrus* (250a6, 255b4 and partly also 259b8) and in *Symposium* (192b7, 198b5, 211d5, 215d6, 216d3, 218a4). Therefore, I would not overestimate the occurrence of amazement here.

In any case, these passages (VI.7.32-33 and V.5.12) might also be read as describing two possible reactions of the soul to the beauty of Intellect taken as such, i.e. to the beauty of the non-illuminated Intellect. As it does not provide what the soul ultimately seeks (the Good), it might be either conceived as still mixed with pain, i.e. in the end repelling, or as not providing enough, i.e. in the end boring.

Also we could enrich the encountered conception of *erōs* by digressing to one of Plotinus' latest treatise, *Ennead* III.5 *On love*. The majority of it is devoted to the interpretation of Plato's myth of the birth of *erōs* in *Symposium* (203b-d and 180d-185c). To summarize it briefly, *erōs* is born from Aphrodite, but there are at least two such goddesses (cf. III.5.2.14-15). The first one is to be identified with soul in Intellect (*holē psychē*; cf. III.5.4.2) and it is the motherless daughter of Zeus or Intellect (cf. III.5.2.15-25). *Erōs* was born from her but there are two moments in this birth that could be distinguished: the plenitude of *logoi* emanating from Intellect or Poros (cf. III.5.9.1-8), and the need of the intelligible matter which corresponds to Penia (cf. III.5.6.44-7.12).[177] This *erōs*, child of the heavenly Aphrodite, refers to the desire for Intellect and for the Good, i.e. it is the love of a daughter to her father and grandfather respectively (cf. III.5.2.33-40). The second Aphrodite, born from Zeus and Dione, corresponds to the world soul (*psychē tū pantos*; cf. III.5.3.27-38), i.e. soul which descends to the sensible world and governs it. As far as it has descended, its *erōs* accounts for marriages, but as far as it is derived from the soul in Intellect, it gives a share in what the heavenly *erōs* does, i.e. it leads souls to Intellect and to the Good (cf. III.5.3.31-37). Individual souls may also be called Aphrodites and they give birth to individual *erōtes*, but Plotinus only says that these are comprised by the *erōs* of the world soul similarly, since individual souls are immersed in the world soul (cf. III.5.4.10-24 and IV.9). Also, both the individual *erōtes* and the *erōs* born from the world soul are said to be daemons as opposed to the heavenly *erōs* which is a god (cf. III.5.2.25-27 and III.5.4.23-25).

[177] For further details, see Karfík 2003, p. 166-168.

One of the basic characteristics of Plato's *erōs*, that it is ultimately a desire for the Good, is thus preserved in Plotinus along with several others (cf. Armstrong 1961, p. 113 and see further below).

The first chapter of the *Ennead* which is more important for our purposes here enquires into the *pathos* caused by *erōs* in the soul (cf. III.5.1.10-12). There are two types of *pathē* caused by *erōs*, one among those who are temperate (*sōfrōn*) and akin to beauty, and a second one of those who desire sexual intercourse with bodily beauty (cf. III.5.1.12-14). Both however, have a common source which is the desire for beauty itself with which we have an intimate relationship (*oikeiotēs*; cf. III.5.1.16-19). This desire may be interpreted differently by different souls (cf. III.5.1.59-65). Those who desire bodily beauty do not understand that it is but an image of higher beauty and therefore desire at least these images of it because they think it is what they seek (cf. III.5.1.30-36 and III.5.1.50-55). However, as Plotinus surprisingly accommodatingly says, even those who remember the paradigm are satisfied with these images as images (cf. III.5.1.34-35), which are even said to be the completion (*apotelesma ti*) of the paradigm (cf. III.5.1.61) and as far as such lovers remain temperate (*sōfrōn*) and do not engage in unnatural sexual intercourse, there is nothing wrong with desiring bodily beauty (cf. III.5.1.36-38 and Kalligas 2014, com. ad III.5.1.10-14). To direct the love to what is above, one needs not only to desire beauty but also eternity because one wants to procreate in beauty and become immortal as far as possible (cf. III.5.1.36-43). This is enabled by the kinship (*syngeneia*) of beauty and eternity (cf. III.5.1.43-44), i.e. by the fact that both characterize Intellect. As Armstrong (1961, p. 113) again puts it, the second basic characteristics of Plato's *erōs* is maintained in Plotinus: when one attains what one desires, this desire remains and does not vanish.

When compared to *Ennead* VI.7, the fundamental parts of the account of *erōs* seem to correspond and are slightly more elaborated in the interpretation of the *Symposium* myth. The only difference seems to be Plotinus' accommodating attitude towards bodily beauty known to us from *Ennead* II.9. Similarly as I emphasized the need of perspective reading there (cf. chapter 3.9), I would also suggest to understand these claims as trying to capture the continuity of beauty

throughout Plotinus' whole universe here. In other words, it is predicated from a top-down perspective and does not necessarily contradict Plotinus' claims from a bottom-up one, which rather highlights a qualitative difference of a predicate on each level. In my reading, when Plotinus talks about despising beauty, he simply means that superior beauty is much better. However, if one truly understands this superior beauty, one comprehends that it necessarily emanates, and is thus manifest in what is below as far as possible. The engagement of *Ennead* III.5 in the discussion with the Gnostics has been for that matter noted in the scholarly literature (cf. Kalligas 2014, *Introduction* to III.5).

Continuing in *Ennead* VI.7, Plotinus will now focus on the description of the union with the Good against the background of the whole ascent on the *scala amoris* (cf. especially VI.7.34) and a widened conception of Intellect (cf. especially VI.7.35). He starts by summarizing the previous account of the Good as *kallonē*. It has no intelligible form (*morphē noētē*) and causes a powerful longing (*deinos pathos*) that makes the soul strip all form, even the intelligible one (cf. VI.7.34.1-4). This allows the soul to be adapted to or fitted in (*enarmozō*) the One because it alone, i.e. without anything so to say attached to it, is able to receive the One alone (*dexētai monē monon*; cf. VI.7.34.5-8). The process of disposing of every evil or even good attached to the soul is described as becoming as beautiful as possible, i.e. as similar to the Good as possible (cf. VI.7.34.6-7, VI.7.34.10-11), which confirms our former identification of being beautiful and being *agathoeidēs*. If these preparations are made and if the soul has good fortune (*eutycheō*) and the Good suddenly (*exaiphnēs*; cf. *Symp.* 210e) appears in it (*phainō*) because it was always there, the soul becomes one with the beloved and fulfils its erotic desire (cf. VI.7.34.13-16). Such soul ceases to perceive itself as being in a body, it stops speaking about itself as being a human or any kind of living being, or even as a being (*on*) or being all (*pan*; cf. VI.7.34.16-18). All this would disturb it and it has no need of all this including itself, because it is already happy (*eupatheō*), which it can reflect afterwards, i.e. after it has disengaged from the Good (cf. VI.7.34.18-31). This experience of happiness is an ultimate experience above which there can be no other and which does not allow deceit (cf. VI.7.34.22-29), and the absolute focus on

the Good or rather the identity with it means to cease to care about all the rest to such an extent that "if all the other things about it perished, it would even be pleased, that it might be alone with this" (VI.7.34.36-38, transl. Armstrong). However, when it does disengage from the Good, this experience has an impact on the embodied soul. It now knows that the true good is the Good and it despises (*hypereidō*) all other things, bodily pleasures, offices, powers, riches, or even beauties and sciences (cf. VI.7.34.31-35).

Plotinus now focuses on explaining how soul can ascend to the Good, i.e. ascend beyond Intellect. Since soul is able to become aware of itself as a part of Intellect, its ascent to the Good is in fact an ascent of the part of Intellect that the soul has become. Plotinus begins by drawing a contrast between Intellect and the Good from a double perspective, that of an ascending soul and that of a soul which has already ascended to the Good. The latter despises (*kataphronein*) intellection for the Good is beyond it. Plotinus puts it here in terms of movement and rest: when united with the Good the soul "looks" at that which does not move and since intellection is movement, it does not want it, although it welcomed (*aspazomai*) it before, i.e. in the ascent (cf. VI.7.35.1-4). It even had to become this movement and contemplation first but when it "sees" the Good it leaves everything behind (cf. VI.7.35.4-7). Plotinus illustrates such ascent by using a simile of a guest who enters a wonderfully decorated and beautiful house (*hoion ei tis eiselthōn eis oikon poikilon kai hūtō kalon*) which he contemplates. However, when the master of the house appears, he pays attention only to him as to someone worthy of genuine contemplation (*axion tēs ontōs theas*), someone admirable (*agamai*) and someone who is not of the nature of the images in the house (*ū kata tēn agalmatōn physin onta*; cf. VI.7.35.7-12). When looking at the master, the contemplation starts to transform so that the guest does not see a sight, "but mingles his seeing with what he contemplates, so that what was seen before has now become sight in him" (*alla tēn opsin hautū synkerasaito tō theamati, hōste en auto ēdē to horaton proteron opsin gegonenai*; VI.7.35.14-16, transl. Armstrong). And as Plotinus further refines the simile, the master should be taken rather as a god who does not appear to the sight but in the guest's soul (cf. VI.7.35.17-20).

These passages show that the ascent of the soul to the Good happens necessarily through Intellect, whose beauty is worth admiring as long as the master is not present. And perhaps this simile is also useful to shed some more light on the previously described boredom of the soul ascended to non-illuminated Intellect. As a matter of fact, one could easily imagine that a beautiful house becomes boring after a while if there is no other living being present. After all it was quite clearly stated in the simile that the guest did not come to the house to see its decorations, but to see its master.

The appearance of the Good was also previously (cf. VI.7.34.13-16) described as if it acted deliberately when the soul merged with it. This motive is similarly present here because the master as a living being decides when to appear. However, both these passages (i.e. VI.7.34.13-16 and VI.7.35.7-12) should be interpreted with caution because the Good does not act in this manner as if it would sometimes be present and sometimes not. Furthermore, it does not decide when to appear. It is rather always present and the guest is the one who needs to realize this. The choice of the master of the house in the simile is more likely to be understood as illustrating qualitative difference between Intellect and the Good and also the rule of the latter over the former.

The transformation which the contemplation of the master undergoes, has led P. Hadot (1987, p. 341-342) to understand the master as Intellect which created the forms, the decorations of the house as these individual forms and the vision without object as the Good. However, I would prefer to keep things simple, i.e. to identify Intellect with the household and the master with the Good. This “simplest interpretation” (Hadot 1987, p. 341) has according to Hadot two difficulties. It identifies the Good with an object of vision, whereas the Good cannot be seen, and it has difficulties explaining why the visitor forgets all objects of vision when his sight merges with the sight it sees (VI.7.35.16). However, I do not think that these are serious difficulties, since Plotinus often corrects his own similes already during their description as he in fact also does here: the master is to be considered a god and he does not appear to the sight (cf. VI.7.35.17-20). Similarly, the description of the transformation of the contemplation of the master can be read as such

correction of the simile. On the contrary, Hadot weakens to a certain extent the very point of the simile, which is to show the radical difference between Intellect (household) and the Good (master) and to illustrate the shift of the soul's focus when it encounters the Good (master). In Hadot's interpretation there would be a more pronounced difference between individual forms (decorations) and Intellect as their creator (master) as opposed to Intellect (master) and the Good (vision without object).

In any case, Plotinus now returns to the necessary pre-requirements of such an ascent. He distinguishes two powers (*dynameis*) in Intellect, one for contemplating itself as all its contents and another one for looking to the Good (cf. VI.7.35.20-23) in the sense of "direct awareness and reception" (*epibolē kai paradochē*; VI.7.35.22-23, transl. Armstrong). Moreover, the latter power is identified with the look of the nascent Intellect to the Good described in VI.7.16 by the means of which it acquired the one and intellection (cf. VI.7.35.23-24) and is said to be a different look (cf. VI.7.35.30-31). Intellect using the former power is called *nūs emphrōn*, whereas the one using the latter is said to be drunk with nectar as it were and called *nūs erōn* (cf. VI.7.35.24-25, an obvious allusion to *Symp.* 203b). The drunk Intellect is the one that eternally returns to the Good (cf. VI.7.35.29-31) and is in this sense simplified into happiness by being filled (*ginetai haplōtheis eis eupatheian tō korō*; cf. VI.7.35.25-26). Since the erotic Intellect is closer to the Good, Plotinus does not hesitate to say that it is for Intellect better to be drunk in this fashion than to be more dignified (*semnōteros*) but sober (cf. VI.7.35.26-28; a possible allusion to *Phdr.* 244d). Plotinus again reminds us about the generation of Intellect and says that when the nascent Intellect looked to the Good, it generated its offspring (i.e. forms) in itself and his awareness of them is its intellection (cf. VI.7.35.31-34). The ascending soul, then, has first to unite with this contemplating Intellect and only through it can it be lifted up (*aeirō*) as *nūs erōn* beyond itself by the Good (cf. VI.7.35.37-41). It acquires blessed perception and vision (*makaria aisthēsis kai thea*; again a possible allusion to *Phdr.* 250b) from the Good and they are displaced from place itself, so that soul is not soul anymore because it is beyond life and it is not even Intellect anymore since it is beyond intellection (cf. VI.7.35.39-44).

In the last chapter of this section of the *Ennead* VI.7, Plotinus presents a systematic summary of the soul's ascent to the Good and a reflection of our abilities to get to know it by rational discourse (*logismos*). He distinguishes knowledge (*gnōsis*) or touching (*epaphē*) of the Good, which is the greatest kind of knowledge (*megiston*), and learning about the Good beforehand (*peri autū mathein ti proteron*), which is what Plato (cf. *Rep.* 504e, 505a, *Ep.* VII 341c and *Symp.* 211c) according to Plotinus calls *megiston mathēma* (cf. VI.7.36.4-6). This learning about the Good beforehand proceeds by analogies (*analogiai*), negations (*aphaireseis*), by getting to know what is from the Good (*gnōseis tōn ex autū*), and by gradually ascending (*anabasmoi tines*; cf. VI.7.36.6-9 and *Symp*. 210a-212b). The knowledge or touch of the Good also proceeds gradually, as Plotinus explained in previous chapters. It begins by purification (*katharsis*) of the soul, acquiring virtues (*aretai*) and adornings (*kosmēseis*), i.e. by settling down in Intellect, becoming one with its contemplation and thus becoming Intellect itself or being, intellection and complete living being (*zōon panteles*; cf. VI.7.36.9-13). In doing so, the soul gets close to the Good which already shines at it (cf. VI.7.36.13-15). At this stage, the soul must let go of all knowledge (*pan mathēma*) which led it to Intellect or to beauty (*kalos*). It might be carried away from intellection as if by a wave (*kyma*) or a swell (*oideō*) of the erotic Intellect. Then it suddenly (*exaiphnēs*) beholds its light which fills its sight, so that it sees this light only and itself becomes this light from which Intellect is born (cf. VI.7.36.18-27).

Let me now summarize what we have learned about beauty in *Ennead* VI.7.31-36 which was announced to deal with the light of the Good, and it in a way did so because it focused on the ascension of soul through Intellect to the Good which is enabled by light. It is the light as the one threefold emanation from the Good (cf. above, page 136-137) which allows everything to become itself, i.e. to be constituted as unified multiplicity referring back to its source or as beauty. Beauty in this sense is the manifestation of the Good in all lower levels so that there is a hierarchy of beauties or levels that are *agathoeidēs,* where each superior level as if illuminates the inferior in a similar fashion as the Good illuminates the Intellect. As opposed to the conception in Plato's *Phaedrus*, the ascending soul did not need

sensible beauty as a reminder. Rather, it was described as distrusting bodily beauty and after it became one with the Good, it even in a way started to despise all other things including beauty and knowledge which characterize the Intellect.

In dealing with these passages I have encountered several controversies about *henōsis* which go beyond *Ennead* VI.7 and I have tried to briefly and carefully side with some interpretations of this process. Both the birth of Intellect and its return to the Good, which are probably to be identified, are eternal processes, although some of Plotinus' formulations might seem to suggest succession in time. In any case, based on VI.7, it seemed to me more probable that the ascending Intellect has a pre-intellectual relation to the Good rather than a hyper-intellectual one. In the end however, I remained undecided about the outcome of *henōsis* because Plotinus' expressions might support both that the soul merges with the Good itself and that it unites "only" with the nascent Intellect.

The process of ascension of the soul was said to have several phases. It begins by purification, acquiring virtues and adornings. Then the soul merges with the contemplating Intellect, starts to see the form of the Good in it and consequently wants to see the Good, i.e. become more than Intellect. For that to happen it needs to let go of all knowledge. This is possible because a part of Intellect (drunk Intellect or Intellect in love) is always ascending back to the Good or returns to the state when it was born and looks to the Good unintellectually. This type of knowledge of the Good was distinguished from learning about it beforehand which proceeds by analogies, negations, by getting to know what is from the Good, and by gradual ascensions, which is what Plotinus is doing in the *Enneads*.

I have also analysed the famous chapters VI.7.32-33 where Plotinus distinguishes the Good as *archē* which was said to be both *aneideon* and *amorphon*, the beauty of Intellect which was called *amorphon eidos* and all the forms as *eidē* and *morphai*. I have proposed to interpret the notion of *amorphon eidos* as capturing the intermediary character of beauty since it is *amorphon* as the Good is, but at the same time it is an *eidos*, i.e. an intelligible manifestation of the Good. As shapeless it draws its power from the Good, the power by which it arouses an erotic ascent. I have also distinguished negative and positive statements about the Good which

present it as a superlative all-powerful source and principle of everything which is beyond everything, i.e. as different from all and also independent of all. In this sense the Good was also said to be the source of beauty but it was simultaneously itself named *kallonē*, *kallos hyper kallos, pankalon*, *hyperkalon* or *kallos kallopoiōn*. Despite this, I thought it still possible not to overestimate these claims and maintain that the primary beautiful is Intellect. Nevertheless, I advocated that these claims should not be underestimated. Beauty allows this unusual predication because it is in its very nature to refer to something above and to arouse *erōs* which is in the end a desire for *henōsis*. Moreover, it is the very manifestation of the Good and several of its characteristics are preserved in it: the already mentioned energy required for the ascent, the direction or reference above, and as far as it is possible also its oneness as unity (in multiplicity). I have also tried to point out an interesting asymmetry in the use of at least some opposite predicates, which enables Plotinus to call the Good beauteous (*kallonē*) and not ugly, and which might also distinguish beauty from being since the former might in a sense be applied to the Good, whereas the latter barely. Finally, I have tried to briefly sketch some exegetical reasons for calling the Good beautiful. I then turned to a comparison of parts VI.7.32-33 with *Ennead* V.5.12, where Plotinus also tries to distinguish beauty of Intellect from the Good but he uses different means to this effect, which are also interesting for the history of the concept of the sublime. As opposed to the boredom of soul in Intellect and the shocking nature of the Good in VI.7, *Ennead* V.5 associates excitement with beauty of Intellect and gentleness with the grace of the Good.

5.7 The Good and intellection (VI.7.37-42)

The last parts of *Ennead* VI.7 are devoted to the discussion of Aristotle's account of *noēsis noēseōs* as the ultimate principle. Plotinus explains here why and in what sense the Good does not think. As these parts are less important for our purposes, I will only briefly summarize the most important arguments which indirectly shed some light also on the question of beauty. These arguments exemplify in what sense a predicate (intellection) can or cannot be used for the Good. This discussion

has consequences for a better understanding of predication of beauty about the Good.

Plotinus first draws our attention to one of the controversies between the advocates of the idea that the first principle thinks. For it is not clear, he says, what it actually thinks (cf. VI.7.37.1-3). Only itself as is the case of Aristotle's unmoved mover (cf. *Met.* 1074b17-35) or everything, i.e. also the things after it, as the Stoics claim (cf. e.g. SVF I.172, SVF II.1106, SVF I.537 and Hadot 1987, p. 252)? In any case, Plotinus wants to focus especially on Aristotle's account of *noēsis noēseōs*. He attacks it from several perspectives.

First, he questions the value (*semnon*) of the unmoved mover because Aristotle attributes thinking to it in order for it to be the most valuable (cf. chapter 4.2.4), which Plotinus interprets as a sign of its lack of value if taken by itself. Consequently, he outlines two possibilities. Either the unmoved mover is valuable as thinking, but then it has less or no value itself, or it has value itself, but then it does not need thinking (cf. VI.7.37.3-10).

Second, Plotinus exposes the fact that Aristotle speaks about the first principle both as of a substance (*ūsia*) and as of active actuality (*energeia*). Then however, it is double, i.e. not simple (*haplūs*), which the first principle has to be. Or if it is pure thinking without anything added, it does not think since there is no subject of thinking, nor is there any object which could be thought because, as already said, nothing is added to such pure thinking (cf. VI.7.37.10-19 and the commentary of Siegmann 1990, p. 169). Consequently, the first principle is correctly said by Plato to be above Intellect (*hyper nūn*; cf. *Rep.* 508c1) and thinking can be attributed only to Intellect, which is many (cf. VI.7.37.18-34). If Intellect did not think, it would be unintelligent (*anoētos*). Saying however, that the Good does not think cannot mean the same because its nature does not involve thinking. If we thus say that the Good does not think, we cannot mean this negative statement as indicating privation. In such a case, we would arbitrarily attribute to the Good some work to do, and then predicate its absence. Plotinus illustrates the absurdity of this by saying that the Good could in this sense be said to be unmedical (*aniatron*). What a negative statement such as “the Good does not think” rather means, is that it is prior to

thinking, so that it does not need to do anything but is completely self-sufficient by being what it is (cf. VI.7.37.24-31). However, as Plotinus continues, it cannot in fact *be* anything: we cannot use *being* as a copula when predicating of it because it is no substrate of which one could predicate. The copula we use has to be interpreted as a mere reference (*sēmainō*) to what it is (cf. VI.7.38.1-4).

Third, Plotinus challenges the object of the potential knowledge of the first principle, which here designates rather the Plotinian Good than Aristotle's unmoved mover. What would it know? It cannot know that it is or what it is since it *is* not. The content of its thinking cannot be solely "the Good" because it would as such not be connected with the Good as thinking. Moreover, there would be at least a duality between it as thinking and the Good as what is thought (cf. VI.7.38.10-20). Consequently, as Plotinus puts it, "if the thought of the Good is different from the Good, the Good is there already before the thought of it" (VI.7.38.21-22, transl. Armstrong). As such, it does not need to think (cf. VI.7.38.22-25). Rather, there is something like a simple concentration with respect to itself (*haplē tis epibolē autō pros auton*). However, it must be thought of as involving no difference of any kind because difference exists in Intellect along with all the other highest kinds, and in fact along with everything (cf. VI.7.39.1-16).[178] Any relation to the Good must therefore be non-intelligent (*ūden noeron echei*) because intelligibility is necessarily linked with multiplicity. Therefore, it is rather something like a touch (*hoion epaphē*), or like a "movement, simple and all the same" (*haplūn kai to auto pan hoion kinēma*, VI.7.39.19, transl. Armstrong). The quasi self-relation of the Good is to be understood as standing still in majesty (*semnon hestēxetai*) which is Plotinus' interpretation of Plato's words from *Sophistes* (248d-249a).

Fourth, to change the mind of someone who is still not convinced, Plotinus claims that it is necessary to add persuasion (*peithō*) to necessity (*anankē*) and to encourage (*paramythia*) such a person. He begins the persuasion by a general statement that one must distinguish between the origin of thought (*noēsis pasa ek*

[178] I agree with Hadot (1987, p. 358) that Plotinus does not posit self-consciousness of the Good here. It is an attempt to show a more intimate self-relation than that of Intellect. However, the denial of such self-relation is rather to be interpreted as positing more than self-relation, i.e. simple identitiy of the Good with itself, which is even above the identity provided by the Same as one of the highest kinds.

tinos esti) and its object (*noēsis tinos*). Whereas then, the thinking intrinsic to soul is an actualization of pre-existing intelligible forms, the thinking in Intellect is not similarly derived from the Good, which does not contain the intelligibles coming to be in Intellect. The Good is rather the very power to generate (*dynamis tū gennan eph' hautēs*), so that it created substance and thinking as one and many. It is in fact another meaning of the predicate *megas* (cf. chapter 5.6): to be so powerful to generate being itself. Since however, Intellect is the first actuality and the first thought, that which generated it cannot itself be actuality and thought, but has to be something wonderful (*ti thaumaston*) above these. So that it is not the first principle that needs thinking to have value as it is in Aristotle. On the contrary, Intellect derives its value from the Good which is pure (*katharon*) from thought and from everything else remaining one in itself (cf. VI.7.40.4-49). In this way, Intellect has an object to "think" when it is born, because "when it thinks itself it is in a way comprehending what it had from the vision of another in itself" (VI.7.40.50-51, transl. Armstrong). Then again, the Good does not think since it has nothing to think and does not need to think itself because it is one with itself so that it seeks nothing (cf. VI.7.40.51-56).

Fifth, Plotinus demonstrates that the Good does not think by pointing out the fact that thinking is an aid for those who are in need. It is the ability to find light in darkness, but light itself does not need this. As thinking always presupposes multiplicity, the Good must be simple and whatever is added to it in fact diminishes it because it needs nothing. If this Good is something, says Plotinus, it is so in a greater way than by knowledge (*kata gnōsin*), thought (*noēsin*) or self-perception (*synaisthēsin hautū*). Nor is it in need in the sense that it does not provide anything to itself, but suffices. Therefore, it is not even good for itself but only for others, it does not need to look at itself and nothing can be said to be present with it (cf. VI.7.41.1-38).

Therefore, concludes Plotinus, one must respect the natural order of things and posit values (*semna*) of the second order (like thinking) around the Good and those of the third around them. This is the proper interpretation of what Plato says (cf. *Ep.* II 312e) about the King, the source of everything beautiful, around whom everything

is set and for the sake of whom all are, while the King remains other than everyone else. In this sense also, when Plato says that the Good is the cause of all beauty (*aitia pantōn kalōn*), beauty itself (*to kalon*) is to be posited among the intelligible forms (*en tois eidesi*), while the Good is above beauty (*hyper to kalon pan tūto*). So that there is the Good as a centre around which there is Intellect, and around this soul and around it the sensible world. The point of this simile is that everything depends on the first radically different centre, and is either closer to it or more distant from it (cf. VI.7.42.1-24).

In summary, these chapters of *Ennead* VI.7 exemplify how it is possible to predicate something about the Good. Denying a predicate about the Good, like that of intelligence, cannot indicate privation but rather priority in respect to the predicate. Plotinus also makes an attempt to positively describe this priority or the fact that the Good is the source of the predicate. He does so by attributing simple concentration with respect to itself to the Good. This concentration however, is to be thought as involving no difference. Or again he says that it is standing still in majesty. Similarly, the relation to the Good must be non-intelligent, which can positively be likened to touching it or moving to it without any change. By using these paradoxical expressions and similes, Plotinus tries to simultaneously maintain continuity of a predicate from the Good to the lower levels and the transcendence of the Good, which necessitates a radical shift in the meaning of the predicate when applied to the Good. The very last chapter of *Ennead* VI.7 claims that beauty is to be posited in Intellect and that the Good is above beauty as its source. Therefore, saying that the Good is not beautiful should not indicate privation of beauty. Rather, the Good is to be understood as being more than beauty or the source of it similarly to the case of intellection. As we have seen when analysing chapters 32-33 (see chapter 5.6), this is precisely what Plotinus is trying to express positively by saying that the Good is the beauteous, beauty above beauty, the super-beautiful, beauty which makes beauty etc. The identification of the Good and beauty (or rather the beauteous, *kallonē*) in *Ennead* VI.7.32-33 should therefore be read in the context of the whole treatise. Their identification is not Plotinus' final word here.

6 Beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity

6.1 Beauty on the level of sensible things

As I have pointed out throughout the analyses of *Enneads* I.6 and V.8, the cause of beauty in the sensible world must itself be some sort of beauty which beautiful things participate in (cf. chapter 2.1). Beautiful bodies receive forms as *logoi* that come from Intellect and which are images of forms beautiful in themselves (cf. chapter 2.1 and 3.2). These formative principles unite and order the underlying matter or mass and make bodies what they are (cf. chapter 2.2). Formative principles are in this sense relatively *one* and hold the parts of the formed body together, i.e. they are at the same time the being of such bodies and their beauty. Moreover, if a *logos* is to dominate in matter, it must distribute its *one* to the parts of the united body and thus also distribute being and beauty to them (cf. chapter 2.2). Plotinus explicitly says that the being of a thing depends on its being one and identifies being and beauty (cf. chapter 3.10). Therefore, a united body becomes what it is by the domination of a form that unites all the parts of the constituted whole. The same form simultaneously makes the whole beautiful and the form's one, being and beauty are distributed to all the parts because a whole cannot consist of non-united, i.e. non-existing or non-beautiful parts.

We have also encountered the question of transmitting these *logoi* to matter by soul. Plotinus claims that it is possible to say both that bodies get their beauty from Intellect and from soul. The former expression is in a sense more precise since soul is not beautiful of itself as opposed to Intellect (cf. chapter 2.6). Both these ways of putting it can be reconciled since Plotinus ultimately thinks that all bodies are created by a soul, be it a particular soul in case of artefacts (and perhaps partially our bodies) or the world soul in everything else. Both types of soul create bodies with the help of forms in analogy with the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* who thinks the intelligible archetypes and shapes the world according to them. In this sense soul mediates *logoi* to bodies but they nevertheless come from Intellect (cf. chapter 2.6). In the brief discussion of productive contemplation in chapter 3.1 we were also able to specify this mechanism to some extent. The upper part of the world soul

contemplates Intellect but as *logoi* in soul and by projecting itself into its product, i.e. into nature, it creates. The lower part of soul, nature, silently contemplating these *logoi*, creates matter and then turns to it again in order to form it. In this way it gives a share of itself to matter and eternally gives rise to the sensible world. In the case of individual souls Plotinus discussed *technē* as the human form of participation in Intellect. A *technitēs* is able to form matter, i.e. to invest it with a *logos*, through his productive knowledge, his participation in *technē*, by which he makes himself similar to the productive self-contemplation of Intellect. Such a beautiful artefact is nonetheless beautiful only to the extent to which the matter of such mixture, body, submits to what is being created, i.e. to which it participates in the invested form (cf. chapter 3.2).

Plotinus most frequently explains the participation of bodies in forms with the metaphor of illumination where he emphasizes two points. That which illuminates abides like an archetype in itself, and the illuminated which is an image of the archetype is held separate from it by illumination (cf. chapter 2.2). We must not conclude from the illumination simile however, that everything is everywhere since different powers of the whole of the forms become active in different bodies. Moreover, not all matters are equally disposed to receive all forms depending on what forms they already received. Bodies are mixtures of forms and matter, and this mixture is many-layered because matter is first shaped by the forms of the elements, which are then organized into higher wholes, i.e. into objects. Even matter in the strict sense of the furthest emanation from the Good, is primarily adapted for the primary kinds of bodily forms. This also explains what it means for a *logos* to dominate in matter since not every form is compatible with all the others in a body. This is why Plotinus repeatedly contrasts his notion of beauty with that of ugliness, understood as a deficiency in participation or, as he puts it, a deficiency in domination of a form in matter (cf. chapter 2.2 and 3.3). However, I have also suggested other possibilities like that of missing life which is normally present in a body with other forms but not in a corpse anymore (cf. chapter 2.2). This case seems to be also supported by Plotinus' claim in VI.7.3 (cf. chapter 5.1) that the domination of form in matter is apparent if no part of a thing is left unshaped. A

further possibility would be the opposite excess of a form like in the case of polydactyly or other deformities.

Beauty of bodies was often contrasted with ugliness of matter which Plotinus identified with the *apeiron* itself and the *aoriston* itself, or with that which runs through a mass as the movement of contraction of the great to the small, and expansion of the small to the great (cf. chapter 2.2). Therefore, the presence of a formative principle in matter makes it only a sort of decorated corpse because it does not overcome the undefined "nature". Rather a *logos* makes matter more manifest as what it is, the undefined itself, or precisely a dead corpse (cf. chapter 3.5). In this sense what is beautiful in bodies is *logos* itself, i.e. the intelligible, and bodies as far as they are matter cannot be beautiful, or only to the extent to which they are a *decorated* corpse. From this perspective, the distribution of one, being and beauty takes place only on the level of the decorating *logoi*, i.e. on the level of their coherence and appropriate fullness: no *logos* must be missing or be excessively present. In his polemic with the Gnostics however, i.e. from the perspective of productive contemplation and beauty of the intelligible archetype, divine Intellect, Plotinus simultaneously promotes his concept of a beautiful bodily world which one has to gently accept as an image imitating its paradigm as far as it can (cf. chapter 3.9).

In order to see that which is of bodily nature as a beautiful image, one has to understand it in relation to its archetype. This is not something everyone is capable of, although the desire for beauty and through it for the Good is the common denominator of all kinds of erotic desires (cf. chapter 5.6). As we have seen Plotinus says about musicians, lovers and philosophers that they are disposed to ascend to Intellect (cf. chapter 2.4), and with a certain guidance grasp its beauty and subsequently correctly understand the beauty of the sensible world. Beauty of the sensible plays a double role in such an ascent. Plotinus warned his readers in both *Enneads* on beauty (cf. chapter 2.8 and 3.3) about the fate of Narcissus who mistook his image for himself. Beauty may thus not only motivate the ascent to a higher beauty but it also in a sense binds us to itself because it is so impressive. The error the soul makes in confusing an image with its original may have fatal

consequences. Plotinus urges us to understand beauty on the level of sensible things as a mere image of a higher beauty but, as I have already stressed, we must simultaneously not despise it because it is still an image imitating its paradigm as far as it can. The concept of bodily beauty as a beautiful image of intelligible forms is thus comprised of a double warning: 1) We should always bear in mind that it is but an image of a higher beauty and in this sense use it to ascend to its paradigm. 2) We should praise it as a necessary manifestation of this higher beauty in a weaker form and not despise it. In *Ennead* III.5 we have even noted an unusually accommodating attitude towards bodily beauty. Plotinus claims that beauty of bodies is the completion of their paradigm, and as far as those lovers who understand such beauty as a mere image remain temperate and do not engage in unnatural sexual intercourse, there is nothing wrong with desiring bodily beauty (cf. chapter 5.6).

6.2 Beauty on the level of soul

In the case of the soul it is also possible to say that it becomes beautiful by partaking in Intellect which unifies it (cf. chapter 2.6). Part of both individual souls and of the world soul, the soul in Intellect, in fact never leaves Intellect. This core of each soul is consequently always beautiful. The rest of the world soul also eternally remains in the state of best possible contemplation below Intellect, and is therefore as beautiful as a soul can be. In case of individual souls, their loss of the global perspective causes their individual perspective and opens the door to forgetting their true nature. Such souls must restore proper partaking in Intellect and through it they may become beautiful again. As opposed to the partaking of bodies, however, individual souls become beautiful by purification, conversion and likening to god, which restore them to their original virtuous and beautiful state (cf. chapter 2.5). This purification implies a change in the attitude of the soul towards bodily nature, a focus on the intelligible, and ultimately leads to receiving an imprint from Intellect which unifies such soul and dominates it (cf. chapter 2.5). The archetype of this likening may be found in the very life of Intellect, i.e. in its itself-thinking that it itself is (cf. chapter 2.5). The outcome of the purification is the merging of the soul with Intellect, i.e. the soul becomes aware of itself as a part of Intellect. At the same

time, however, it becomes a formative power (*logos*) which imprints itself in the parts of the soul that are not united with Intellect. These become virtuous and get a share in the beauty that the highest part has always been (cf. chapter 2.6). Such an explanation of the outcome of purification, was led by an effort to explain how Plotinus could at the same time suggest that there remains a certain distance between a virtuous soul and Intellect (because, properly speaking, there is virtue only in soul), and simultaneously claim that after purification the soul becomes truly beautiful, i.e. a form (in Intellect).

In the analyses of *Enneads* V.8, II.2 and parts of II.9 we were also able to specify the change a soul undergoes when becoming virtuous (cf. chapter 3.4). The starting point of this reconstruction of Plotinus' thought was the case of heavenly bodies, which eternally perform circular movements in an attempt to imitate the stability and purity of Intellect and direct themselves at it. Heavenly bodies and heavens as such are directed by the world soul and individual souls of heavenly bodies respectively which have never lost their original orderly form, as opposed to individual souls here below. In this sense they always remain equally beautiful and their beauty is manifest in heavens. Furthermore, if individual souls below the level of celestial bodies lose their original orderly state because of their involvement with particular bodies or due to the loss of the world soul's global perspective, it seems to follow that the *logos* which an individual virtuous soul receives, restores the circular movement of the soul (cf. chapter 3.4). The circulatory movement of such an individual soul however still differs from that of the world soul, because being virtuous still means being an individual whose role differs from that of the gods. More likely, the circulatory movement of an individual soul is the underlying mechanism of the transformation of the attitude towards bodies, which Plotinus describes in virtuous souls.

As opposed to the beauty of world soul and individual souls of heavenly bodies, beauty of an individual soul below the level of celestial bodies may vary according to its pollution or purification. However, Plotinus describes the process of purification also as immersing in one's innermost self, i.e. as a form of knowledge, and he even expresses it relatively on a scale of increasing beauty. Its culmination is

unification with Intellect, where there is identity of the knower and the known or beauty itself (cf. chapter 3.14). This also means that, as in the case of bodies, beauty of souls equals their being and unity (cf. chapter 3.9). Soul as such possesses the *one* more than bodies do, and is consequently more beautiful. As opposed to Intellect where everything is everything else, a soul has many different powers which make it only a *hen kai polla* (cf. chapter. 3.5) or, as Plotinus says in VI.2, one nature that is many. Moreover, it is also many, being the contemplative activity towards itself, which cannot be simple (cf. chapter 4.1.2).

From a different perspective however, individual souls below the level of celestial bodies may exceed the world soul and those of celestial bodies because the former have the ability to ascend even above Intellect. Nevertheless, this path always leads through Intellect, since part of it (drunk Intellect or Intellect in love) eternally ascends to the Good (cf. chapter 5.6). The ascent of individual souls is enabled by the fact that *erōs* (the son of heavenly Aphrodite who corresponds to the soul in Intellect) is the desire for Intellect's beauty and through it for the Good (cf. chapter 5.6). In individual souls, *erōs* causes powerful *pathē*, which either bind such souls to the bodily beauty they see, or which enables them to ascend to the paradigm of the beauty which really turned them on (but cf. chapter 6.5). These different reactions of individual souls are based on their correct or incorrect understanding of bodily beauty as a mere image of intelligible beauty, and also on their desire to procreate eternally (cf. chapter 5.6). In ascending above, the soul follows the light which shines on what is below from what is above, i.e. in the end from the Good on Intellect. In this final ascent towards the Good, *erōs* never really vanishes because the Good, transcending both form and formlessness, cannot be reached. In this sense the love for the Good is unlimited (cf. chapter 5.6).

6.3 Beauty on the level of Intellect

Divine Intellect is repeatedly identified as the primary seat of beauty (cf. chapters 2.7, 2.9, 3.4, 3.9 and 3.14). Plotinus gives two reasons for this. There is nothing that would not be beautiful in Intellect since every part of it is the whole and all the other parts, so that beauty is in this sense everywhere in beauty (cf. chapter 3.9).

Even the intelligible matter, as simple, always formed and living a defined and intelligible life, can be said to be beautiful, and does not hinder beauty to be everywhere in beauty (cf. chapter 3.5). The second reason lies in the middle position of Intellect between what can be called deficiently beautiful, soul and bodies, and that which is more than beautiful, the Good (cf. chapter 3.9). However, Plotinus specifies this middle position as being at the same time differentiated and tied in a more firm fashion as compared to soul (cf. chapter 3.14). The middle position of Intellect lies therefore in its being a specific unity in multiplicity, of such sort that all its parts are all the other parts and the whole. In this sense such unique *unitas multiplex* of Intellect explains both the reasons for making it the primary seat of beauty, the fact that beauty *there* is everywhere in beauty, and its middle position between the Good and soul.

We were also able to confirm this observation later in *Ennead* VI.6. Plotinus identifies here beauty with being a measure, i.e. something limited, or a number, and with something that is not limited externally but by its very being itself. This is precisely the case of number which refers to the actuality of each form. Number therefore is a further suitable notion to capture both the required aspects of beauty, the fact that it is limited, and that this limit is not external (cf. chapter 4.2.4). Anything externally limited is in fact for Plotinus but a decorated corpse (cf. chapter 3.5). As number, Intellect is multiple, but limited. These findings were also confirmed by parts of *Ennead* VI.7 (cf. chapter 5.1).

Let me also try to briefly summarise what we have so far learned about the unity in multiplicity of Intellect which we identified with beauty. I have identified five mutually interconnected perspectives Plotinus uses to describe it. The first one related to the nature of intelligible objects which all contain each other and the whole of Intellect (cf. chapters 3.15, 3.5 and 3.6). The second one concerned the hierarchy within the intelligibles including the unifying and multiplying role of the highest kinds (cf. chapters 3.15 and 4.1). The third one was connected with the nature of the act of intellection proper to Intellect (cf. chapters 3.15 and 3.5). The fourth one related to the inner “arithmetic” structure of Intellect (cf. chapters 3.15 and 4.2). And the last one focused on how Intellect acquired its unity and

multiplicity in its genesis (cf. chapters 3.15, 4.2.3 and 5.3). Also, I have outlined some of the overlaps of these perspectives (cf. chapter 3.15) which all aim to show that Intellect thinks everything at once, but differentiated.

If anything is to be called beautiful, it has to be unified, which was in the highest possible degree true for everything in Intellect and for the whole of it. From this perspective it would seem that the more a thing is multiple, the less beautiful it is, but it does not seem to be the case, at least in Intellect. Its limited entireness was on the contrary that which made it more beautiful as compared to a theoretical state of Intellect where it would be unwound. Only when it has become everything and wanders through everything in itself, it achieves its true majesty and beauty (cf. chapters 4.2.4 and 5.1). After all, not only its unity, but also the multiplicity which came to be in Intellect is derived from the Good and Intellect is perhaps surprisingly *agathoeidēs* also as multiple (cf. chapter 5.3).

However, beauty of Intellect is not only derived from the Good in the same sense as everything else in Intellect, but it is in fact its manifestation (cf. chapter 5.4). The Good shines on Intellect and its light is what allows Intellect to be seen as truly beautiful, and it shines on all the intelligibles and on the whole of Intellect and allows everything in it to be seen in its own beauty (cf. chapter. 5.4 and 5.6). This illumination is however something extra on top of Intellect's own characteristics, even on top of its unity and multiplicity. I have tried to interpret the crucial passages in VI.7.22 as distinguishing between two hypothetical types of beauty, depending on whether Intellect is illuminated or not. In the latter case, its beauty is said to be inactive and it does not arouse the soul's interest (cf. chapter 5.4). In the former case, Plotinus rather talks about warmth from the Good or its grace which wakes the soul, and it naturally rises both to Intellect and to the Good (cf. chapter 5.4). Although Plotinus does not directly say that the state of Intellect in which it is illuminated may be identified with beauty here (i.e. in VI.7.22), I have tried to show that this is a wise choice between two extremes. Among other reasons, if we simply supplement these passages with beauty, we might lose an important distinction between two types of beauty. On the other hand, if we refuse to call illuminated Intellect beautiful, we will face various difficulties. In fact, *Ennead* VI.7 calls the

Good beautiful and other *Enneads* also attribute to beauty the ability to arouse erotic desire and also to make the soul ascend to the Good. Also, I have tried to show that Plotinus might have a good reason to avoid the notion of beauty in VI.7.22, because he wants to stress the added value of illumination and to explain how the Good is manifest in Intellect (cf. chapter 5.4). The true and primary beauty in Intellect is consequently unity in multiplicity *illuminated* by the Good. Only when the Good shines on it, beauty becomes the object of desire, which is in fact always a desire for the Good through beauty. This deepened concept of beauty does not reject the identification of beauty with unity in multiplicity, but places it into a broader perspective. This better depicts the referential character of beauty to the Good and again stresses the enriching role of multiplicity in Intellect, since Intellect is genetically primarily *agathoeidēs* as life (cf. chapter 5.4).

The fact that illuminated Intellect is said to be the primary seat of beauty however, raises a further crucial question. Are we to posit a form of beauty in Intellect, as Plato does, or does beauty rather somehow characterize Intellect as such? As we have seen, there are several passages in the *Enneads* that seem to suggest that there is in fact a form of beauty (cf. chapter 2.2 and 4.2.2). On the other hand, in all these cases Plotinus discusses other topics than beauty and the context of these claims might suggest their dialectic purpose, which is to make a point in an independent argument. Taken together with the fact that Plotinus clearly evades talking about the existence of the form of beauty in both *Ennead* I.6 and V.8 and connects beauty just with the presence of *a* form (cf. chapter 2.2 and 3.2-3.3), it seems to follow that he does not in fact advocate it. Furthermore, the identification of beauty with being on the one hand (cf. chapter 3.10 and 4.1.4-4.1.5), and considering it as a candidate for one of the highest kinds on the other (cf. chapter 4.1.5), might be read as suggesting that beauty is somehow special, that even if it were a form, it would not be simply one form among others. Similarly, my identification of beauty with (illuminated) unity in multiplicity of Intellect implies that it is not just a form, because unity in multiplicity characterizes each form and Intellect as a whole. Rather, it seems to be a predicate that primarily characterizes Intellect as such because Intellect is always one and many or one-many, even as

unified number (cf. chapter 4.1 and 4.2). Also, it can be said to be one and many from various perspectives (cf. chapter 3.15). Therefore, its unity and multiplicity is rather distributed from Intellect as a whole to its "parts", i.e. to individual forms, and its beauty with it. I would consequently argue that Intellect is primarily beautiful as a whole and the beauty of each individual form in it is derived from it (cf. Corrigan 2005, p. 216-217). This however, to a certain extent changes the participation model discussed previously. It is not directly by participating in *a* form that a thing becomes beautiful, but by participating through this form in the unity and multiplicity of the whole Intellect, which is reflected in the participated form.

This would indeed make beauty a special characteristic of Intellect, although not the only one of such a sort. We have encountered several other predicates that could be considered to be primarily applied to Intellect as a whole and only secondarily to its parts. These are the virtues (*aretai*), knowledge (*epistēmē*) and the very name Intellect (*nūs*) discussed in *Ennead* VI.2 as potential candidates for the highest kinds (cf. chapter 4.1.5), and they might be supplemented with the designation active actuality (*energeia*). Also, in a different sense, the highest kinds themselves (cf. chapter 4.1.1) including the aforementioned being which Plotinus identifies with beauty, characterize Intellect as such among other reasons because they are principles. Moreover, the one in Intellect or the monad was also said to be a principle. However, each part of Intellect including the highest kinds was said to be in every way many (cf. chapter 4.1.3). As one and many, Intellect is number (cf. chapter 4.2.3) and as encompassing number, Intellect is a complete living being and it lives as a whole and each of its parts is alive. Finally, its activity and its life are eternal and eternity characterizes Intellect again as a whole. Therefore, we should try to shed some light on the differences and potential overlaps between beauty and these general predicates, i.e. life, being and the rest of the highest kinds, the one in Intellect, multiplicity, number, intellection, active actuality and eternity, knowledge and wisdom, and the virtues.

When one reflects on the notion of life in the *Enneads*, one encounters various uses of it (cf. chapter 5.4). I have proposed to understand *being alive* as referring to a fully constituted activity (i.e. to be the complete living being or encompassing

number). As such however, this activity is always productive and begets what is ontologically lower. If we for now leave aside whether the Good itself could be said to be such fully constituted and productive activity then life seems to refer primarily to the effluent activity of the Good which becomes Intellect. However, this activity also continues within Intellect as the movement of its inner differentiation, making it the complete living being. And being complete, it is further the productive component of its contemplation, i.e. its outpouring resulting in the constitution of its lower image. In this sense, life is not simply a content of Intellect, a form in it, but rather depicts Intellect genetically, i.e. both in its birth and in its birth giving. Precisely on the boundary between these two poles, is Intellect as life the fully constituted complete living being, and life denotes here Intellect as a whole. As noted (cf. chapter 5.4), life in this sense is close to beauty which depicts the same fully constituted activity, but as referring to its source and in this sense in an ascent, whereas life presents it in its outpouring, and thus in its descent. Therefore, beauty was rather focused on *unity* of a multiplicity, whereas life on its *multiplicity* and *multiplying* character. However, the main focus in both cases is vertical in the sense of relating two ontological grades. Nevertheless, the close connection of life and beauty makes it possible for Plotinus to say that there is no beauty in a corpse, or even that where there is life, there is beauty, because beauty and life presuppose a constituted activity of contemplation, which is produced from what is above and which is itself productive.

The highest kinds are said to be both genera and principles out of which Intellect is composed and the whole of it derived (cf. chapter 4.1.1). There are five highest kinds: Being, the most firmly set among all; Movement or what makes Being perfect, its life, actuality and very being; Rest or what makes Being exist in the same state and in the same way; and the Same and the Other which on the one hand allow distinctions between all the highest kinds, and on the other their union. These kinds mutually condition each other and are all-pervading in the sense that all other forms necessarily partake in them, and are as if composed out of them. The highest kinds however, are also numbers because they are one and many, and number is

even said to be the very being of Being. In the beginning of the genesis of Intellect Being was unified number and in the end it became encompassing number.

The highest kinds also seem to primarily refer to Intellect as a whole because 1) they are the *highest* kinds, i.e. kinds that unite the whole of Intellect, because 2) they are principles or constitutive components of Intellect, and because 3) they are numbers. Intellect as such is the primary Being, is Movement itself and Rest itself and is what is both the Same and Other. Individual forms on the other hand are such only derivatively, i.e. by partaking in the highest kinds or by being composed out of these as it were. In this way again, where there is being as the representative of all the highest kinds, there is always unity in multiplicity and therefore beauty at least in the narrower sense of non-illuminated *unitas multiplex*. Therefore, Plotinus was able to identify being and beauty.

Then again, beauty does differ from being and all the other kinds. It would not be identical with being even if it were the sixth highest kind, but it is not even one of them as Plotinus makes quite clear (cf. chapter 4.1.5). As noted above (cf. chapter 5.4), the highest kinds are mostly used by Plotinus to explain structural relations within Intellect, and in this sense are a part of a horizontally oriented view of Intellect,[179] whereas life and beauty (in the broader sense of the word as illuminated *unitas multiplex*) belonged rather to a vertically oriented description. Life in a descending manner and beauty in an ascending. The vertical description where Intellect becomes illuminated, which arouses erotic desire and brings about epistrophic movement, does in this sense indeed presuppose the horizontal one, which was in fact the point of Plotinus' argument against beauty being one of the highest kinds, if one understands it as that which shines upon the forms as it were (cf. chapter 4.1.5). It seems in the end that from the horizontal perspective, Intellect can only be beautiful in the narrow sense of the word, i.e. as non-illuminated, because this illumination already implies verticality. As we have seen however, such beauty is either painful and shocking, or perhaps in the end boring (cf. chapter 5.6).

[179] Then again there are the already discussed passages in the *Enneads* where Plotinus describes the genesis of Intellect with the help of movement and otherness. As noted before (cf. footnotes 112 and 139), these claims are quite enigmatic and their reconciliation with a more standard (horizontal) role of the highest kinds, if possible, would be a difficult task.

On the contrary, the fact that beauty is the manifestation of the Good and that the Good is the final cause of the ascent on *scala amoris*, is something that establishes a close connection between the Good and beauty (see chapter 6.4). But their closeness in fact disrupts the identification of beauty and being at least above the level of Intellect, because whereas it is in a sense possible to say that the Good is beautiful (see chapter 6.4), Plotinus rather avoids saying that the Good exists and always highlights that it is beyond being.

In conclusion, as opposed to the highest kinds, beauty is not a kind, not even a principle, and belongs to the group of predicates that do not focus on the horizontal description of Intellect, but rather to a vertical (ascending) one, which approximates it to the Good. Nevertheless, such predicate does presuppose what the horizontal perspective shows, i.e. that Intellect is a specific unity in multiplicity. Beauty in the broader sense of the word does therefore comprise unity and multiplicity, and can be connected with the notion of number which it shares with the highest kinds (cf. chapter 4.2.4). However, one should in the end conclude that even numbers are beautiful in the broader sense of the word as derived from the Good through the monad, i.e. as illuminated.

However, we should consider the similarities and differences of the notion of beauty and that of number in more detail. And in this context, two further predicates, the one in Intellect or the monad and its multiplicity should be addressed. As we have seen, the monad is probably not to be called beautiful because (as opposed to being and the rest of the highest kinds) it is not number, is not many (except for allowing prior and posterior) and is not a genus for many reasons (cf. chapter 4.1.3). Two reasons for this which were probably most important for Plotinus were the fact that the one in Intellect would as one of the highest kinds not be one primarily, and that the one cannot be differentiated in itself, but a genus needs to be so because it creates species (cf. chapter 4.1.3). Therefore, the one in Intellect is only a principle. However, if it does not allow for multiplicity, it cannot be beautiful if we identify beauty with (illuminated) unity in multiplicity. Moreover, it would probably not be correct to simply call Intellect as a whole the monad, which is together with the dyad rather the generative principle of

Intellect. However, as far as the one is present in Intellect with being and as far as this being is one, it would be possible to say that Intellect is such one: the one-that-is. Therefore, if the monad itself is relatively clearly different from beauty, how does this one-that-is differ from beauty? However, as far as one distinguishes this one-that-is from the monad, it is in fact not different from being itself, so that the same differences from and similarities with beauty could be found (see the discussion of being above). Moreover, such one-that-is is not simply one anymore, but becomes multiple, i.e. it becomes number (see below).

Similarly, one could raise doubts whether multiplicity is to be counted among the characteristics of Intellect as a whole. It would be strange to call Intellect simply multiple without any qualification. It seems that multiplicity might be considered to be such a predicate in two possible senses. The first one would be that of the dyad, but similarly as the monad could not qualify for a holistic attribute of Intellect, the dyad as such should be rejected. Moreover, Plotinus does not consider it as a potential candidate for one of the highest kinds, so that we do not find a clear statement about the dyad being a principle in Intellect in the same sense as the monad is. Its role was moreover obscured by its enigmatic relation to the notion of life, but also to otherness (cf. chapter 5.3). Nevertheless, it is different from beauty in all of these possible senses. If it is a principle, the reverse should be applied to it as opposed to the case of the monad, i.e. it cannot be beautiful because it is not one. If it is life or otherness, then its relation to beauty is the one already described (cf. the discussion of life and the highest kinds above). The second possible qualification of multiplicity that could be considered an attribute of Intellect primarily referring to it as to a whole, might be a defined and intelligible multiplicity or rather (to exclude the case of soul), the most unified multiplicity. In that case however, such multiplicity is again number.

With these two specifications regarding the one in Intellect and its multiplicity we should turn to the predicate of number, which is precisely that which is born from the interaction of the monad and the dyad. As such, it was said to be the limit of being and its very actuality, and I have interpreted the very notion of number as denoting the specific unified multiplicity of Intellect from a structural perspective

(cf. chapter 4.2.3). In this sense the notion of number and of substantial number as well, describe Intellect horizontally in the sense of focusing on its inner structure, which relates them to beauty and differentiates them simultaneously from it in the same way as it was the case with the highest kinds. As I have tried to show, the four qualified uses of number (unified, unfolded, moving in itself and inclusive) all work as a shortcut for the different perspectives from which Plotinus describes the utmost unified multiplicity of Intellect (cf. chapter 4.2.3). In this sense they could be understood as expanding this horizontal description but still within the Intellect itself. The designations of Intellect as unified and unfolded number focus on the generation of Intellect in the sense of its inner structuring, number moving in itself on its intelligible activity, and encompassing number on its interconnected entireness. Nevertheless, none of these designations captures the ascending verticality implied by the notion of beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity.

The last bundle of predicates, intellection, active actuality and eternity, knowledge and wisdom, and virtues, focus neither on the inner structure of Intellect like the highest kinds or the notion of number, nor on the relation of Intellect to what is above or below as beauty and life do. Rather, they try to capture *how* Intellect is what it is. It is what it is by being *nūs*, i.e. intellective self-relation, and as such it becomes structured and all the differentiated contents emerge in it as individual intellects. However, this inner constitution of Intellect is in fact no process but eternal active actuality of everything, so that Intellect as a whole is *energeia* and *aiōn* (cf. III.7.3) and each of its contents is secondarily such. In this sense, it does not need to get to know its contents but always already knows them, and each of its contents knows itself. Therefore, Intellect and individual intellects in it are *epistēmē*. However, it is not even a conglomerate of discrete self-related knowing intellects, but each part contains all the other parts and the whole, so that Intellect can be called *sofia*, because wisdom was identified with the immediate ordered givenness of everything in everything (cf. chapter 3.6). The focus of all these predicates on the *how* of Intellect is perhaps most obvious in the case of *aretai*, which Plotinus describes in the following way: "…intuitive thought *There* is knowledge and wisdom, self-concentration is self-control, its own proper activity is

´minding its own business´; its equivalent courage is immateriality and abiding pure by itself" (I.2.7.3-7, transl. Armstrong). Therefore, neither of these holistic attributes of Intellect comprises the reference above as beauty does. They share with beauty at most the field of unified multiplicity where they describe how it exists. Their focus is in this sense simply different.

6.4 Beauty and the Good

When dealing with the question of the primary seat of beauty, we have encountered contradicting expressions with respect to the beauty of the Good. As we have seen, Plotinus says in some cases that it is the Good that is the primary beautiful (cf. chapter 2.9 and 5.6), in another that it is Intellect (cf. chapter 2.9 and 3.9), and sometimes he remains ambiguous (cf. chapter 2.7). My basic strategy in dealing with these contradictory statements was to contextualize them and try to fit them in the general outline of Plotinus' philosophy, where the Good is beyond predication but at the same time all the predicates can be applied to it because it is the source of all.

We found the most striking theses about the beauty of the Good in *Ennead* VI.7.32-33. Even there however, things are more complicated. Plotinus distinguishes between *archē* (the Good) which is both *aneideon* and *amorphon*, the beauty of Intellect, which is called *amorphon eidos*, and finally all the forms which are simply *eidē* and *morphai* (cf. chapter 5.6). As I have noted, the notion of *amorphon eidos* is very apt for describing beauty, because it captures its intermediary character, and points to the fact that beauty leads to the Good because it is its intelligible manifestation (cf. chapter 5.4). In this sense, beauty of Intellect is indeed differentiated from the Good. On the other hand, Plotinus does claim in these passages that the Good possesses beauty of another kind, that it is beauty above beauty, beauty that makes beauty, its principle and term, and he calls it the all-beautiful or super-beautiful (cf. chapter 5.6). He even escalates these expressions when he says that the Good creates beauty as shapeless as it itself is, but in shape in another way, so that the first nature of the beautiful is to be understood as formless (cf. chapter 5.6). Nevertheless, I have tried to show that these and other

predications about the Good in *Ennead* VI.7 are first of all means to present the Good as a superlative all-powerful source and principle of everything which is beyond everything, i.e. different from it and also independent of it.

This however, cannot be the complete explanation, because it is one thing to say that the Good both is and is not all predicates, and another to repeatedly connect it with one predicate, like that of beauty, and moreover to present beauty as the very manifestation of the Good (cf. chapter 5.4). Therefore, I have pointed out some characteristics of beauty that make it suitable to be used in the ascent to the Good, that in fact reflect it in some way, and that make the notion of beauty so close to that of the Good that they may easily be confused. One of them was the referential character of beauty to what is above and its ability to arouse *erōs*, i.e. the desire to become one with the beloved which in the end is the Good (cf. chapter 5.6). Moreover, since beauty is the manifestation of the Good, it is the Good in another (cf. chapter 5.4 and 5.6). The Good becomes in this sense diminished, but beauty preserves the energy required for the ascent back, and by referring to its source it shows us the direction of this ascent (cf. chapter 5.6). Along with these characteristics, beauty preserves the Good's oneness as far as it can, i.e. as unity in multiplicity (cf. chapter 5.6). A further reason was an exegetical one: to combine Plato's claims from various dialogues (cf. chapter 5.6).

Such closeness of beauty and the Good is probably also the reason why beauty belongs rather to the group of predicates about the Good which share asymmetrical appropriateness as compared to their opposites. An example of such predicate is the designation “Good” or “One”, whose opposites cannot be predicated about the Good in any sense. Similarly, it would be extremely odd to call the Good ugly, or perhaps only in the sense of not being intelligible beauty, which would however still be very inappropriate because this could be better expressed by attributing to the Good all the names that Plotinus actually ascribes to it in VI.7.32-33 like the super-beautiful, beauty above beauty, beauty that makes beauty etc. (cf. chapter 5.6).

Beauty as a suitable predicate for the ascent to the Good can indeed often be found there, where Plotinus tries to make use of all the different means of language to express the inexpressible nature of the Good (cf. chapters 2.7 and 5.6), and it is

also often connected with an attempt to express the infinite love we feel for it (cf. chapters 2.7, 3.9 and 5.6). However, in some of these passages Plotinus also clearly distinguishes them like in V.5.12 (cf. chapters 3.9 and 5.6) where he differentiates between the gentleness, kindness and grace of the Good, and the shocking and wondrous nature of the beautiful that brings pleasure mingled with pain. As I have tried to briefly show, this distinction reminds us of the difference between the beautiful and the sublime from the history of aesthetics, because there is beauty and something more, which is *mega*, and both have a different impact on soul: one is gentle and the other shocking. As opposed to the tradition however, the impacts of both are mismatched to their causes in Plotinus (cf. chapter 5.6).

More importantly, there are more reasons given in *Ennead* V.5 for distinguishing beauty and the Good (cf. chapter 3.9). The beautiful needs the Good but the Good does not need beauty. Nothing can exist without the Good and everyone longs for it by a divine instinct as it were, so that it is present even to those who are asleep, and when one becomes aware of it, it is recognized as something always already present. On the contrary, beauty has to be seen first to arouse longing and again, as something unfamiliar it is shocking and causes pain. Beauty makes us remember what is above, whereas the Good does not because as always already present it cannot be forgotten and consequently also remembered, and because there is nothing above it to refer to. Furthermore, the Good is good for others and not for itself (cf. chapter 5.5) whereas beauty is beautiful only for itself. And finally, none is satisfied with having the Good only in seeming, whereas this suffices for many in the case of beauty (cf. chapter 3.9).

Other passages from the *Enneads* support the thesis that the Good not only is beauty (as it is its source), but also transcends it. In VI.9.11, Plotinus claims that he who unites with the Good has already run up beyond beauty and leaves it behind like statues in the outer shrine of a temple (cf. chapter 2.7). Precisely in this spirit, he also says in *Ennead* I.6.9 that the nature of the Good holds beauty as a screen before it (cf. chapter 2.9). One reason that Plotinus mentions as an explanation for his ambiguous expressions, is a context dependent need to distinguish the Good from Intellect. If we do discriminate them, then the primary seat of beauty is

identified in Intellect. If we do not, it is possible, loosely speaking, to interchange the beautiful and the Good (cf. chapter 2.9). We know however that in the end it is necessary to distinguish them since Intellect is not absolutely simple (cf. chapter 5.7). Similarly, the last chapter of VI.7 claims that beauty is to be posited in Intellect and that the Good is above beauty as its source (cf. chapter 5.7).

In conclusion, the relation of beauty and the Good is ambiguous. On the one hand, the Good is not beautiful as absolutely transcendent, and as opposed to beauty not multiple (but one), not referring above (but being the ultimate referential point), and not illuminated (but being that which illuminates all). On the other hand, it is the source of beauty and is manifest in it and beauty preserves several of its characteristics as far as it can. Through beauty, the Good reaches to the very border of that which is and attracts all back to itself.[180] As Siegmann (1990, p. 148) appositely says with appropriate erotic connotations, beauty is this manifest promise which allows us to glimpse what we are looking for, but immediately retreats to its purer form which is above and which is in the end the Good. As I have suggested, it would be from a systematic viewpoint more apt to reserve a special term for the beauty of the Good in this sense, like that of the beauteous (*kallonē*), which Plotinus seems to use only about the beauty of the Good, but he does not stick to this terminological nuance.

6.5 Beauty as such

To conclude this summary, let us look at common features of beauty throughout all the levels of reality considered above. As we have seen in the case of bodies, soul and Intellect, Plotinus warns its admirer about the fate of Narcissus (cf. chapters 2.8 and 3.4). When discussing beauty of soul, we had to conclude that the reference to the cause of beauty must be based on the character of beauty itself, and not on its being in soul (in this case) since the soul can also be ugly (cf. chapters 2.5 and 3.4). Plotinus even explicitly connects the referential character to beauty when he says that the very presence of beauty in soul makes us deduce what that before it is like, i.e. in this case the Intellect (cf. chapter 3.4). It is consequently a feature of beauty

[180] There is of course no intentionality in this on the side of the Good and it does so only incidentally.

itself to be ambiguous in this sense, i.e. both to refer to its cause and to bind its admirer to itself. It should also be clear that this is caused by the fact that beauty is the manifestation of the Good which preserves several of its characteristics (cf. chapters 5.4, 5.6 and 6.3-6.4). Therefore, it is specifically predisposed to be confused with the Good and to bind its admirer to itself. On that account, it should also be clear why this does not apply to the Good because it does not have any further cause and is the ultimate principle. Even in this sense, its beauty or beauteousness, if one uses this predicate, is different from the beauty of everything else. Much more disputable is whether such impressiveness of the Good does bind its admirer to it. One could read the passages from *Ennead* VI.9.7 in this fashion. Plotinus talks here about the union of Minos with the Good and adds that afterwards „he may think civic matters unworthy of him and want to remain always above (*anō*); this is liable to happen to one who has seen much (*tō poly idonti*)" (VI.9.7.26-28, transl. Armstrong). I personally incline to understand this *anō* as referring to Intellect. It would be odd for Plotinus to say that a person who has experienced the union with the Good has seen much (*poly*), especially without any qualification. Moreover, it is in the very nature of the Good to give rise to everything: it is *the Good* itself after all (cf. V.4.1, V.1.6). Uniting with it, i.e. becoming it, can in this sense only hardly cause someone to want to do the opposite to what is the nature of the Good. I read these passages consequently as referring to the beauty of Intellect. Nevertheless we see again, that the Good can be called beautiful only in a qualified sense (cf. chapters 5.6 and 6.4).

Another characteristic of beauty which is noteworthy, is the fact that it pervades the whole ontological system of Plotinus. It can in a sense be predicated of the Good as its source, it characterizes Intellect, soul is originally beautiful and should strive for attaining beauty again, and as for bodies, Plotinus devotes the whole *Ennead* II.9 to stress their beauty. This implies that one of the specific features of beauty as compared to other predicates (e.g. freedom) is that it can address human beings even on the basic level of the senses. When we combine this basic accessibility with the referential character, we may better understand why Plotinus says that beauty can be used as a stepping-stone to get a sight of the rest (cf.

chapter 2.1), and perhaps even why he devoted his very first treatise to this topic (cf. chapter 1). But again, one must bear in mind that even the disposed ones need guidance since beauty is ambiguous, which is something Plotinus calls attention to already in his earlier treatises (cf. chapters 2.4 and 2.6). The only truly non-beautiful in the whole system is matter (*hylē*), which is repeatedly called ugly as something completely lacking form or unity, i.e. as pure diversity. On the other hand, as such it also lacks being and in this sense beauty indeed pervades Plotinus' whole *onto*logical system.

A further important feature however, connected to the previous ones, is the identification of beauty and being (cf. chapters 3.10 and 4.1.4-4.1.5) and moreover with being one (cf. chapters 2.2 and 3.14). Although I have already showed that this identity is not absolute since being is both different from the one in Intellect and from beauty (cf. chapter 6.3), let us for the moment follow this line of thought further in order to deepen the notion of beauty as (non-illuminated) unity in multiplicity. If at the same time Intellect is identified as the primary seat of beauty (cf. chapters 2.9, 3.9. and 3.14) and being (cf. chapter 4.1), and is the greatest possible unity in multiplicity (cf. chapters 3.15 and 4), such that it allows beauty to be everywhere in beauty (cf. chapter 3.9), it follows that beauty is precisely unity in multiplicity. It was the unique *unitas multiplex* of Intellect that both makes beauty be itself by itself in Intellect and explains the middle position of Intellect between Uranus and Zeus since different levels of reality differ in the degree to which they have or are one. Plotinus expressed this clearly in *Ennead* V.8.13, by joining the characteristics of being bound and being different (cf. chapter 3.14). Moreover, if Plotinus puts unified multiplicity, beauty, and being on the same level, it means that the two components of *unitas multiplex* (unity and multiplicity) each have a different weight. Although multiplicity is a condition for meaningfully calling something beautiful, it is only a necessary condition. Not everything multiple is beautiful: multiplicity itself, matter, is ugly. Multiplicity is, however, a condition for us to be able to consider attributing the predicate of beauty. Unity, which has to control this multiplicity, is then a sufficient condition, that is to say, everything that is unified multiplicity is beautiful (in the narrow sense of the word; cf. chapter 5.6).

Multiplicity as such rather qualifies a thing as ugly (cf. chapter 4.2.1). In other words, we have to understand it as a condition of the possibility of the predication of both beauty and ugliness.

As we have seen however, non-illuminated unity in multiplicity is either shocking and painful or boring (cf. chapter 5.6). Unity in multiplicity represents a precondition for the ability to predicate beauty about anything because a thing exists only as unified multiplicity. However, in order for everything to be truly beautiful, it has to be illuminated by what is above on top of being a unified multiplicity. In the case of bodies, this means to relate them to their intelligible paradigms through soul with the help of *logoi* (cf. chapter 6.1). For soul, it means to become virtuous, i.e. to become aware of the intelligible activity of Intellect itself and become illuminated by it and in this sense to receive an impression of it (cf. chapter 6.2). And for Intellect, it means to get a glimpse of that which enables its intellection, i.e. the light of the Good itself (cf. chapter 6.3).

If formulated in this fashion, it becomes obvious that illumination as a condition for true beauty is implicitly present in both *Enneads* on beauty. In *Ennead* VI.7, it only becomes more pronounced. Since however, in Plotinus each thing has its unity from what is above, understanding a thing as unified multiplicity in fact always implies seeing it as illuminated. Only a puzzled and erroneous soul may not understand this and think that what it admires has its unity somehow from itself. The conception of beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity is in this sense no substantial shift from the non-illuminated one, but rather the same theory thought out thoroughly.

The characteristic of beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity should explain not only why it refers primarily to Intellect, but also both the other features of beauty, its pervasiveness and referential character. Since all that is united is beautiful precisely as far as it is united, everything that *is* can be said to be beautiful, although different unities proportionally more or less so. Also, those who do not understand how the intelligible is united, can mistake some very beautiful body for the highest possible *unitas multiplex* (cf. again Narcissus), or even those who see beauty in soul may be tempted to think that it is already the ultimate (cf. Plotinus'

question if soul is already the sought one in VI.9.1 or his statement that it might seem that one could stop at the level of soul in VI.2.4.25-27). This danger is imminent to the highest degree in the case of the inconceivable unity of Intellect, which was said to draw a child away from its father as the young beloved do (cf. chapter 3.3), and to cause some of the spectators of the royal court's procession to leave before the king himself appears, thinking to have seen enough (cf. chapter 3.9). The higher the beauty, the more impressive is its unity, and therefore also the danger of mistaking it for its source.

Abbreviations

Apol.	Plato, *Apology*
Alc. Mai.	Plato, *Alcibiades Maior*
Crat.	Plato, *Cratylus*
DA	Aristotle, *De anima*
DK	Diels, Kranz
DL	Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*
Ecl.	Johannes Stobaeus, *Eclogae*
Elem. Theol.	Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*
EN	Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Ep.	Plato, *Epistulae*
Hipp. Maj.	Plato, *Hippias Major*
Hom. Od.	Homer, *Odyssey*
H-S	P. Henry, H.-R. Schwyzer, *Plotini opera*
Intro.	Pseudo-Galenus*, Introductio seu medicus*
In Tim.	Proclus, *Commentary on the Timaeus*
In Parm.	Proclus, *Commentary on the Parmenides*
Leg.	Plato, *Laws*
Men.	Plato, *Meno*
Met.	Aristotle, *Metaphysics*
N.D.	Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*
OC	Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*
Ov. Met.	Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
Parm.	Plato, *Parmenides*
Phd.	Plato, *Phaedo*
Phdr.	Plato, *Phaedrus*
Phileb.	Plato, *Philebus*
PHP	Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*
Phys.	Aristotle, *Physics*

Poet.	Aristotle, *Poetics*
Rep.	Plato, *Republic*
Soph.	Plato, *Sophist*
SVF	Hans von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*
Symp.	Plato, *Symposium*
Tim.	Plato, *Timaeus*
Top.	Aristotle, *Topics*
VP	Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*

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