The Anagogy of Virtue in *Enneads* I, 2 [19] and its Legacy

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Introduction

Plotinus' *Enneads* I, 2 [19], entitled "On Virtue" by Porphyry, takes the exhortation to seek 'likeness to god' (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ) from Plato's *Theaetetus* as its opening text. Plotinus unfolds a fourfold scale of the four cardinal virtues that moves from civic virtue, through purificatory and fully purified virtue, to the paradigms of virtue in Intellect. From the opening lines of the treatise, these integrative, ascending motions draw the soul beyond the realm of the political and the human, so that ultimately it must be said that Plotinus leaves political life behind. The sage "will not live the life of the good man which civic virtue requires. He will leave that behind, and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like" (I, 2 [19], 7.24–27).[1]

This push beyond the political receives a perhaps necessary correction in later Neoplatonists, such that the value of human community, and particularly the role of the ruler, is significantly elevated.[2] The fourfold scale also receives an expansion on either side, becoming an ordering principle for the Neoplatonic

1 All subsequence references to I, 2 [19] will be made in-line. References to other treatises will be footnoted.

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

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curriculum, deeply influencing its pedagogy and articulating the relation between texts Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic.[3] Particularly through the mediating influence of Macrobius's *Commentarium in somnium Scipionis*, the schematizing trope of the four grades becomes pervasive throughout medieval thought. Yet in relation to their source, these developments conceal more than they reveal, betraying only a trace of the fundamentally anagogical character which *Enneads* I, 2 possesses in its own right.

In *Enneads* I, 2 Plotinus lays out an *itinerarium* that dignifies the lower modes of virtue, even as it subordinates them. The upward way moves through different Platonic texts. Ultimately, all virtues, no matter the mode, are purifications (καθάρσεις). All virtue leads to a god-likeness that excludes virtue itself. It is World Soul's virtue, exhibited in the cosmic order, that provides the human with the means of recognizing this purgative and self-negating character of virtue.

1. THE ANAGOGIC STRUCTURE OF ENNEADS I, 2 [19]

How does this *itinerarium* or anagogy play itself out in *Enneads* I, 2? What divinity, or divinities, plays the part of Hermes, leader of souls? From the treatise's opening consideration of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, World Soul is given this quiet but crucial role. The civic virtues pale in comparison to World Soul's desire for the intelligible and its wondrous wisdom, demonstrated in the providential care for all that is soulless (1.7–21).

a. World Soul's mediation and the place of the civic virtues

The Soul of the World appears in the first chapter of the treatise. It is the divinity to whom we should seek likeness because we find ourselves in its universe. "Wonder" (θαῦμα) in Plotinus is the human's characteristic response to the evident φρόνησις (1.13), σοφία[4] and non-discursive τέχνη[5], as well as the providence

3 e.g. Ilsetraut Hadot, *Simplicius : Commentaire sur le* Manuel *d'Epictète : Introduction et édition critique du texte grec.* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 59.

4 *Enn.* V, 8 [31], 6.13–16; cf. σοφίαν ἀμήχανον, II, 9 [33], 8.15.

5 *Enn.* III, 2 [47], 13.16–21.

(πρόνοια)[6] and power (δύναμις)[7] of World Soul. We are drawn beyond human political life to the cosmic by looking to "the one that appears to be particularly characterised by the possession of virtue," turned as it is towards the principle of both the visible world's order and ours (1.8–10). Guided by the traces of World Soul's φρόνησις, the individual soul finds itself reoriented to its proper objects, the possession of which amounts to none other than the exercise of its own highest activity. Only these noetic objects, actively possessed, can provide the soul with an enduring satisfaction.[8]

Having established that for Soul both virtue and the direction of its desire lie properly in its principle, Intellect, Plotinus asks whether Νοῦς itself has the virtues (1.15–16). The answer here in chapter one is as yet incomplete. What is certain is that the virtues "called political," at least these (τάς γε πολιτικὰς λεγομένας ἀρετὰς), do not belong to Intellect. This qualified answer produces the first explicit, complete enumeration and definition of the four 'cardinal' virtues familiar from the Republic, φρόνησις, ἀνδρία, σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη as they relate to the tripartite structure of both city and soul and the overarching right order of ruler to ruled within each.[9] As it was debatable (ἀμφισβητήσιμον, 1.11) whether World Soul possessed the virtues according to this same tripartite structure, given that it is the All and nothing can come to it from outside that it might either desire or fear, it is also unlikely (οὐκ εὔλογον, 1.16) that tripartition and the virtues which pertain to a logic of internal agreement and harmony would adequately describe the excellence of Intellect. So the first description of each virtue in its political mode requires its immediate exclusion from the dignity of Intellect.

6 Ibid., 7.14–15.

7 *Enn.* IV, 4 [28], 45.27–30; II, 9 [33], 2.15; II, 1 [40], 4.15.

8 Cf. *Enn.* I, 4 [46], 6.17–18; V, 8 [31], 7.33–35: "[man] has ceased to be the All now that he has become man; but when he ceases to be man he 'walks on high and directs the whole universe'; for when he comes to belong to the whole he makes the whole" (γενόμενος γὰρ τοῦ ὅλου τὸ ὅλον ποιεῖ).

9 *Republic* IV, 427e10–11.

This initial, qualified denial of virtue in Νοῦς completes the movement by which the negation of desire and fear relative to exterior objects in World Soul led us to consider it as turned inward, desiring what is within and above it in its principle (ἡγούμενος, 1,11). What Émile Bréhier pointed out about the aim of the treatise as a whole is evident here in its first twenty lines: the definition of virtue as a) an acquired (ἐπακτόν) state of soul and b) what belongs to the composite (συναμφότερον) of soul and body requires its exclusion from the very higher modes of being to which the *Theaetetus* exhorts us.[10] Virtue, then, is the means to a likeness within which it itself has no place.

At this point in the treatise, two kinds of virtue present themselves: the civic ones and "the greater virtues which have the same name" (τὰς μείζους τῷ αὐτῷ ὀνόματι χρωμένας, 1.22–23). Given the negative context in which political virtue has been introduced, a certain effort to "save the appearances" is required, as tradition (φήμη) calls men who possess political virtue 'godlike' (θείους), even if this is not properly, in Plotinus' eyes, the Platonic position (3.9–10). Here we find hints of other mediators. The civic virtues' role in the human soul's divinisation is affirmed through the examples of men of high political/practical virtue, who in other treatises are singled out in particular for their law-making activity.

The tradition of calling statesmen, kings and law-makers ʻgodlikeʼ by reason of their various actions to and for the city is long and well established on the authority of the likes of Homer and Hesiod. In fact, Plotinus' consideration of the πολιτικός-πρακτικός in general throughout the *Enneads* is consistently shaped by Homer, almost always mediated through Plato. Homer gives the clearest testimony of the practical man's godlike nature: because of his law-making King Minos is said in the Odyssey to be "the familiar friend of Zeus."[11] And yet, following the lead of

10 Émile Bréhier, "ΑΡΕΤΑΙ ΚΑΘΑΡΣΕΙΣ," in *Études de Philosophie Antique* (Paris: P.U.F., 1955), 238–239.

11 Μίνως ὀαριστὴς τοῦ Διός, *Enn.* VI, 9 [9] 7.23–24. Cf. *Odyssey* 19.178–9; *Laws* I, 624b, and the pseudo-Platonic *Minos*, 318e–320d. See Pierre Hadot, trans.

the *Alcibiades Major*, Plotinus also engages Homer, allegorically interpreted, to warn of the dangerous charms of the πρακτικός: "the citizen body of great-hearted Erectheus is fair-faced."[12] In other places, the danger and the derivative glory of πρᾶξις are brought together in Homer's Heracles, the archetypal practical man whose shade stalks Hades while the hero himself resides among the gods.[13]

It is only after a brief consideration of World Soul's relation to virtue in *Enneads* I, 2 that the civic virtues then receive a treatment which culminates in their re-orientation and redefinition as lower forms of purification, marked by measure, limit and moderation. In this redefinition the civic virtues in fact find something of that dignity that will be significantly intensified by the later Neoplatonists. Nonetheless, the 'purificatory' work of the civic virtues within the context of the treatise is to bring us to consider the possibility that the human soul's pursuit and acquisition of virtue might lead it to a likeness to a god that himself does not possess virtue (1.28–30).

Interpreting the subject of lines 1.26–27 as the ἐκεῖνο of line 15—Intellect— so that the virtues which are said to be "greater" than the civic ones are understood to be the paradigms in Intellect,[14]

Traité 9 (VI, 9) (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 98n.143, 180–182.

12 τὸ εὐπρόσωπος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ μεγαλήτορος Ἐρεχθέως δῆμος, *Enn.* IV, 4 [28] 43.19–22. Cf. *Iliad* 2.547; *Alcibiades I*, 132a5.

13 *Enn.* I, 1 [53] 12.32–40; cf. *Odyssey* 11.601–602. Cf. also *Enn.* IV, 3 [27], 14.16; 27.7, 13; 32.24–27; Jean-Marie Flamand, trans., "Traité 19 (I, 2): Sur les vertus," in *Plotin: Traités 27-29: Sur les difficultés rélatives à l'âme: trois livres,* ed. Luc Brisson and Jean-François Pradeau (Paris: GF Flammarion, 2005), 448 n.28; John Dillon, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue," in *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity* (Aldershot: Routledge, 1991), 94. On Plotinus' use and development of the duality of Heracles in *Enn.* I, 1 [53] and elsewhere, see Gwenaëlle Aubry, *Traité 53 (I, 1)* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 327–332. On the use of Heracles more generally in Neoplatonism, see Jean Pépin, "Héraclès et Son Reflet dans le Néoplatonisme," in *Le Néoplatonisme: Colloque International sur le Néoplatonisme*, Royaumont, France, 1969 (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971), 167–192.

14 Armstrong interprets this passage differently, as an anticipation of the division in chapter three between civic and 'purificatory' virtues: "it is possible to have virtues on both levels, even if not the same kind of virtues." Flamand's French translation follows Henry-Schwyzer here: see Brisson-Pradeau, 432 and

we are then taken through a series of analogies (heat to what is heated, fire to what it heats, and intelligible house to perceptible house, 1.31–45). The analogies discursively[15] give way to each other as an appropriate model for the soul's divinisation through civic virtue is sought.[16] The first analogy, suggesting that the relation is like that between what is heated and the presence of heat, which itself does not need to be heated, does not work because while heat may be acquired (ἐπακτόν) by the thing that is heated, it is also a natural quality (συναμφότερον) inherent in the source (i.e. fire); civic virtue, however, has already been denied of Intellect. The second analogy, that fire makes something other than itself hot, but does not itself need fire to be hot, would elevate virtue to the level of god, which is also not desirable.[17] What is necessary is to demonstrate that what civic virtue gives to soul—its measure and order and harmony—is itself essentially predicable of that virtue, but not of the principle whence virtue comes. This is where the analogy of the perceptible to the intelligible house comes in.

The arrangement, order, and proportion (τάξις, κόσμος, συμμετρία, 1.45–46; cf. ὁμολογία, συμφωνία, 1.18–19) characteristic of the perceptible house do not exist in the intelligible archetype. Plotinus is emphatic on this point, enumerating the trio of τάξις, κόσμος, and συμμετρία/ὁμολογία no fewer than three times, each time in a different order (1.45, 46–47, 47–48).[18] The transition

448n30; so does John Dillon's English translation, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen," 95.

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

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

17 John Dillon rightly points out that Plotinus could push this particular analogy further by distinguishing between 'hot' as an acquired quality and as a causative one, "Plotinus, Philo and Origen", 95. However, it may be argued that Plotinus in fact implicitly makes this distinction in chapter two of the treatise, where the civic virtues are called "themselves measured" (αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι, 2.18) as well as the measure of soul's matter: they are like the "measure" in Intellect to the extent that they cause measure to be in the soul, but Intellect is only measure in the causative, and not in the qualitative sense.

18 1.45: ἐν τῷ λόγῳ οὐκ ἔστι τάξις οὐδὲ κόσμος οὐδὲ συμμετρία. 1.46–47:

from συμμετρία to ὁμολογία –from the language of "proportion" to that of "agreement"—marks the addition of a further degree of precision to the analogy, a movement from the visible participation of the house to the invisible participation of the soul. Plotinus had already in an earlier treatise rejected the Stoic attribution of the beauty of virtue to a kind of "mechanistic and extrinsic"[19] symmetry in the soul—a theory which verges too closely on a corporeal conception of virtue and of soul.[20] Ὡμολογία, on the other hand, is a word that more closely approximates the beauty proper to what is simple and one, and therefore more appropriately describes the unifying power of civic virtue in the soul governed by reason, as another early treatise attests: "the soul has virtue when it is unified into one thing and one agreement" (καὶ ἀρετὴ δὲ ψυχῆς, ὅταν εἰς ἓν καὶ εἰς μίαν ὁμολογίαν ἑνωθῇ).[21] The analogy of the perceptible to the intelligible house, discursively unveiled, and the small change in the wording by which the analogy's application to virtue and the soul is made more appropriate, thus make virtue's unifying power in the soul more evident than the initial articulation of the four virtues' roles given at 1.17–21.

This movement through analogy is a carefully articulated line of questioning designed to draw the interlocutor away from a Stoic, unitary understanding of virtue that would make it the same for both god and man.[22] Chapter one is thus a dialectical prologue that is also a preparation for the spiritual ascent which comprises the rest of the treatise. Through World Soul as intermediary, we are led as far as to admit that the god to

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οὕτως οὖν κόσμου καὶ τάξεως καὶ ὁμολογίας μεταλαμβάνοντες ἐκεῖθεν καὶ τούτων ὄντων τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐνθάδε. 1.47–48: οὐ δεομένων δὲ τῶν ἐκεῖ ὁμολογίας οὐδὲ κόσμου οὐδὲ τάξεως, οὐδ'ἂν ἀρετῆς εἴη χρεία.

19 Martin Achard and Jean-Marc Narbonne, *Plotin: Œuvres Complètes. Tome I, Volume I. Introduction et Traité 1 (I, 6), Sur Le Beau* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012), cccx.

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

21 *Enn.* VI, 9 [9], 1.16–17. See also I, 6 [1], 2.19–20. See Achard-Narbonne, ccxi; *Enn.* III, 6 [26], 2.1–33.

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

whom we may hope to be likened is not simply the "good men" whom tradition has taught us to call "divine", but Intellect, from whom the good men of the city also derive their virtue.[23]

b. Second consideration of civic virtue, purificatory virtue and the soul

In chapter two we see civic virtue as if from the inside, considering how in forming soulish matter the civic virtues bring it into a greater likeness to the formless Good.

The first kind of likeness is the kind that is reciprocal, between two things that share a common principle. This, as the last lines of the treatise characterise it, is the likeness two images (εἰκόνες) of the same subject share in regard to each other (7.29–30). This kind of likeness pertains to civic virtue's operation in two ways.

On the level of civic life, the man who is seeking perfection in this kind of virtue may look to his betters in the polis for a standard by which to measure himself. To look to them is to look as if in a (perhaps distorted) mirror; any difference between reality and reflection is one of degree, not of kind. To the extent that two good people are both equally virtuous, their actions will be mirror images of one another. At the level of the soul, the civic virtues "set us in order" (κατακοσμοῦσι), and "make us better by limiting and measuring desires and altogether measuring the passions and taking away false opinions" (ἀμείνους ποιοῦσιν ὁρίζουσαι καὶ μετροῦσαι τὰς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ὅλως τὰ πάθη μετροῦσαι καὶ ψευδεῖς δόξας ἀφαιροῦσαι), which make exterior to us what is "unmeasured and unbounded" (τῶν ἀμέτρων καὶ ἀορίστων ἔξω εἶναι). They do this while being themselves limited (αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι), and therefore they impart to the soul what they themselves also possess.

The second kind of likeness is non-reciprocal (οὐκ ἀντιστρέφον), by which an image participates in its model (πρὸς παράδειγμα, 7.30). This kind of likeness also applies to civic virtue in two ways. At the level of the individual soul, in the measuring effect it has in soul's matter (ἐν ὕλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ), civic virtue imitates and

23 See 6.3; 7.24–28.

participates in the measuring activity of Intellect. Civic virtue's higher participation in Intellect possesses the character of being not only what is measured, but also measure for another.[24]

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

Marked by an exegetical shift from the context of the *Republic* to that of the *Phaedo*, the purificatory virtues are now enumerated as the intermediate step between the civic virtues and the paradigms (I, 2 (19), 3.1–11).[25] As virtues concerned with the stripping away of all passion and identification with the body, the purificatory virtues may be said to be characterized by the virtue of courage. Here the *Phaedo*'s memorable theme of the practice of philosophy as the practice of death, and the image of the true Bacchants as the philosophers are evoked to mark the transition to a consideration of the philosopher who, having already acquired the civic virtues and desirous of ascending still further in his purifications,

24 The importance of virtue's being both caused and causing is better conveyed by Henry-Schwyzer's punctuation at line 18 (not followed by Armstrong), whereby καὶ αὐταὶ ὁρισθεῖσαι begins a new sentence as a concessive aorist rendering lines 18–20 as follows: "And while they are themselves limited, by which fact they are measures in matter for the soul, they are made like to that measure There and have a trace (ἴχνος) of the Best There." See also Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2) Sur les Vertus," in Brisson-Pradeau, 435, 452n51.

25 Again, this discussion involves an aphaeretic consideration of the civic virtues that leads to the further articulation of the difference between virtue in

must be led to perfect his virtues through the advent of σοφία.

The relation of the purificatory virtues to the civic ones is not altogether clear, however:

> Plato, when he speaks of "likeness" as a "flight to God" from existence here below, and does not give the virtues in citizenship only the name virtue, but adds "political," and when he elsewhere calls them all together (ἁπάσας) "purifications," is clear, positing that there are two [kinds of virtue], and that likeness [to god] is not according to civic virtue (3.5–10).

What is of note is the small, but important word "all together" (ἁπάσας) of line 9. This word seems to make "purifications" a word which encompasses all the virtues, including the civic ones.[26] If this is the case, then the virtues proper to the city are being included as a sub-group of a larger category, the whole of virtue, and under this larger denomination, the civic virtues are more properly understood as "purifications". This was in fact already hinted at in the more detailed description of the civic virtues which we received in chapter two: as well as being the soul's acquisition of measure and order, the civic virtues also *abolish* false opinions (ψευδεῖς δόξας ἀφαιροῦσαι, 2.15–16). This aphaeretic quality which civic virtue possesses in relation to the purification of opinion anticipates the independent activity of purificatory νοεῖν τε καὶ φρονεῖν, which drives out all opinion held in common with the body (εἰ μήτε συνδοξάζοι, ἀλλὰ μόνη ἐνεργοῖ, 3.14–15). So while there are indeed "two kinds of virtues" on the Platonic reading, there is considerable evidence here that they are not to be understood as mutually exclusive categories; rather, the civic kind of virtue should be considered a species of purificatory virtue. This does not prevent the civic virtues from being understood as purificatory in a lower sense than other virtues within the genus, and this is in fact what is meant by saying that "likeness [to god] is not according to the civic kind" (3.9– 10).

soul (a state (διάθεσις)) and the Divine (τὸ θεῖον) (3.19–25).

26 See also ibid., 7.8–10.

One of the most important aspects of Plotinus' *Enneads* I, 2, as well as of the entire first *Ennead* in Porphyry's rearrangement, is the guide it provides for the correct reading of Plato's political and ethical thought by later Neoplatonists.[27] This reading of civic virtue as a lower kind of purificatory virtue, as itself a purification, is in fact taken up more explicitly by Plotinus' inheritors. Marinus' description of the political virtues in the *Vita Procli*, for example, as those that "govern and moderate anger, desire, all the affections, they scatter false opinions" closely resembles Plotinus' in chapter one of *Enneads* I, 2, and Marinus adds that these political virtues too are "certain purifications" (καὶ αἱ πολιτικαὶ καθάρσεις τινές εἰσιν).[28] Further, in their subdivisions of their extended ladder of virtue, both Olympiodorus and Marinus place political virtue and purificatory virtue together on the same intermediate level, as both being concerned with the "integration of the inferior powers."[29] This indicates further the extent to which civic virtue belongs with the purificatory virtues and may be considered a lesser species of purification. Olympiodorus also makes even the virtues lower than the civic correspond to a certain kind of purification. The ethical virtues are defined as the virtues of well-raised children and domestic animals. Both these virtues and the civic ones which surpass them belong to public rites of purification (πάνδημοι καθάρσεις). On our reading of chapters one through three of *Enneads* I, 2, then, in the mode of his argumentation Plotinus is more in concord with, and perhaps directly the inspiration for, these later more elevated views of political virtue as a kind of purification corresponding to the rites and divinities of public religion.

To sum up the origin and worth of civic virtue in *Enneads* I, 2: having swiftly established that our desire to achieve likeness to god through virtue is directed to Intellect, as the direction of the desire of that lesser divinity, World Soul, indicates, Plotinus

27 O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 68.

28 Marinus, *Vita Procli* 18; see Jean Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne* (Paris: P.U.F, 1955), 190.

29 Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 192.

introduces and describes the four civic virtues of the Republic by first denying them of Intellect (1.16–21). He then proceeds to "save the phenomena," separating what is true in the common δόξον that politically virtuous men are 'godlike' from what is illusory and deceptive. Up to this point the primary distinction at work is that between civic virtue and the paradigms in Intellect, such as they appear, for example, in the *Phaedrus*, and the distance between imitation and paradigm is great. As Plotinus himself indicates, however (3.3), civic virtue's real nature attains to a greater clarity with the consideration of what is directly above it: through another look to Plato, this time to the *Phaedo*, the nature of purificatory virtue is described, and civic virtue finds itself encompassed as well as subordinated by the advent of this term.

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

The whole drive (ἡ σπουδή) of Treatise 19 is against this possibility, not toward "right action for man (κατόρθωσις ἀνθρώπῳ)," by which he may keep himself "out of sin" (ἔξω ἁμαρτίας), but rather toward divinisation (19 (I, 2) 6.1–3). In this search for godlikeness, the life that is defined, measured and governed by political virtue is to be practised only until, with the advent of "higher principles and different measures" (μείζους δὲ ἀρχὰς...καὶ ἄλλα μέτρα, 7.21–22), the agent is freed to leave it behind for another, "that of the gods" (ἄλλον δὲ ἑλόμενος τὸν τῶν θεῶν, 7.26–27). This drive is evident in the way civic virtue is introduced and transcended. Plotinus first situates civic virtue relative to World Soul's virtue, next to which it immediately pales in comparison. Then he subordinates it further by comparing it to "the greater virtues," understood initially as the paradigms of virtue in Νοῦς. This comparison expresses the very great distance that lies between the human and

the divine. Finally, through a consideration of the two kinds of likeness, and an exegetical turn to the *Phaedo*, Plotinus introduces another kind of virtue, unfolding it from the distinction between paradigm and civic manifestation. This new form of "greater virtue" in fact makes the nature of civic virtue clearer and elevates it, revealing it also as a kind of lower purification, the first step in the journey. Civic virtue thus receives both its proper subordination and its due dignity in light of World Soul and the fully purified example which that divinity sets. It remains now to be seen how this newly unveiled purificatory virtue stands relative to World Soul's perfect contemplation in chapter four.

c. The purified virtue of World Soul

In chapter four of E*nneads* I, 2 it becomes necessary to establish the proper relation of three terms in regard to ἀρετή: purification (κάθαρσις), perfection (τέλος) and conversion (ἐπιστροφή). The ritual undertone of this chapter is striking, and reflects the fact that Plotinus is continuing to draw from the *Phaedo* here, especially 69a–d.[30]

We are then led to reconsider the virtues of World Soul, now understood as the fully purified virtues of the one fully turned to Intellect and filled by its vision. Wisdom and justice are interwoven as the virtues most definitive of World Soul's productive, providential gaze. This interweaving of justice and wisdom takes place simultaneously with an interweaving of the accounts of the virtues of soul and their paradigms in Intellect, reflecting, perhaps, the degree to which Soul may approximate by possession what Intellect is by nature.

This chapter's discussion of purified virtue and its ritual relation to World Soul is clearer when juxtaposed with the following passage from *Enneads* V,1 [10]:[31]

> Let [the individual soul] look at the great soul, being itself another soul which is no small one, who has become worthy to look by being

30 Cf. Flamand, "Traité 19 (I, 2)," in Brisson-Pradeau, 455–457, esp. n. 82, 84, 89, 95, 99, 100.

31 *Enn.* V, 1 [10], 2; Cf. Augustine, *Confessions* IX. 10.

> freed from deceit, and the things that have bewitched the other souls, and is established in quietude. Let not only her encompassing body and the body's raging sea be quiet, but all her environment: the earth quiet, and the sea and air quiet, and the heaven itself at peace. Into this heaven at rest let her imagine soul as if flowing in from outside, pouring in and entering it everywhere and illuminating it…

Plotinus emphatically silences the visible world. This inner quietude is the pre-requisite for further ascent. The individual soul prepares itself for the coming of Soul in a generous flow of intellectual light.

Though there is no such exercise enacted in *Enneads* I, 2, nonetheless the interiorization of the mysteries is evoked[32] in the consideration of the relation of perfection to conversion, as well as the soul's union and conjunction with World Soul in the phrase τὸ συνεῖναι τῷ συγγενεῖ (4.14). This continues in chapter five of the Treatise, which pushes the investigation towards a clearer articulation of "the extent of the purification" (πόσον κάθαρσις, 5.1). With this push we have now decidedly left the life of human virtue behind. The question of "likeness" thus becomes also a question of "identity": "in this way it will become clear to which [god] there is likeness, as well as to which god there is identity" (οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἡ ὁμοίωσις τίνι φανερὰ καὶ ἡ ταυτότης τίνι θεῷ, 5.1–2). This consideration of both likeness and identity leads us to the gradations of divinity which Porphyry will pick up on and systematize further in his summary in *Sentence 32*: the man who is not yet fully purified, who because of the trace of the involuntary in him is double, may be considered a double kind of god or spirit (θεὸς ἂν εἴη ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ δαίμων, 6.4–5); the fully purified one is no longer a man, but "simply god, and one of those gods who follow the First" (θεὸς μόνον· θεὸς δὲ τῶν ἑπομένων τῷ πρώτῳ, 6.6–7). Here, then, the Platonic background reveals itself once more as the *Phaedrus*, and the exemplary role which World Soul plays in *Enneads* I, 2 is still more in evidence.

In *Enneads* I, 2, guided by a series of carefully executed and juxtaposed exegeses of several Platonic dialogues, Plotinus lays out

32 Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 195.

an *itinerarium* for those human souls capable of "going the upward way." This way of ascent owes its preservation, transmission and transformation to Porphyry's brief summary, which primarily pays attention to the fourfold enumeration of the four cardinal virtues—an anagogical strategy of Plotinus. Nonetheless, something of the character of Plotinus' original arduous and ardent anagogy is lost in this Porphyrian preservation. The richness which the trope of the fourfold enumeration acquires through its long and influential legacy in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages invites us to return to Plotinus' *Enneads* I, 2 with a keener eye on World Soul's exemplary activity.