

Time and the Soul in Plotinus, III 7 [45], 11

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Platonist treatments of time can be oddly disturbing. It often seems that something other than time is really of interest in them, in Plotinus for example the soul as conveyor of intelligibility to nature. The historian of philosophy, using what he supposes are well-identified and well-controlled intuitions about time, reads a treatise like Plotinus "On Eternity and Time," *Ennead* III 7 [45] mainly for evidence about the doctrine of soul, and too often misses the reverse opportunity it affords him for criticizing 'psychologically' (better, phenomenologically) his own intuitions about time. Time is an area of thought where philosophy itself behaves as though it had answers before it even began to have questions, as Plotinus observes originally, not Augustine, and so it is no wonder that interpretation of this treatise, and above all of its pivotal chapter 11, has produced a wealth of fruitful discussion about soul, while leaving the distinctively Neoplatonic conception of time that makes its appearance here unnoted.

Actually the phrase "conception of time" may lead again in the wrong direction. No one has failed to notice the novel Plotinian formulation about time as "the life of soul in a movement of passage from one way-of-life to another" (11:45). But the tendency has been to examine this proposition only as bearing on the 'existence' of time, how there comes to be time, whereas the real question ought to be, what is the phenomenon for which this might be the definition? How does one specify the timelikeness of time? It is the *identification* of 'time' as a phenomenon calling for conception to which the historian must devote his first effort, in the history of Greek philosophy of time in general as much as in Plotinus in particular.¹

1. The discussion to which I hope to contribute by making explicit this deeper problem is conveniently begun with Hans Jonas' 1962 study of the text of III 7, "Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit," in *Politische Ordnung und Menschliches Existenz* (Festgabe für Eric Voegelin), herausg. Alois Dempf et al., München: Beck, 1962. A full scale treatment under the same title, responding to issues raised by Jonas and providing complete text, apparatus and commentary more completely cohering with other Plotinus texts followed from Werner Beierwaltes, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1967. Very valuable work in later Neoplatonism has appeared since then, though the results have not yet been integrated into our view of Plotinus: a very important and provocative edition of texts has been assembled by S. Sambursky and S. Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism*, Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1971, and I have profited from S. E. Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΣ: *A Study of Spiritual*

This paper occupies a small place in an interchange about historical method between Hans Jonas and A. H. Armstrong in which Jonas' interpretation of III 7, 11 looms large.² At issue are the grounds on which Jonas intends to bring Plotinus, as already he has brought Origen and less directly Philo, into company with radical religious gnosticism.

Briefly (see Section 1 below), Jonas finds Plotinus participating in a "general pattern of speculation" with Origen and the gnostics in which the descent into sensible life in time of intelligible and eternal being is connected with the 'fault' of the entity 'soul', and is therefore presented in the form of a 'myth of the fall', in which through boldness and the desire to be self-causing pre-existent 'Mind' lapsed into the condition of souliness. The myth brings with it a specific religious problem, the discovery of the fault for the defects of life in time by (and within) *individual souls*, who therefore have need for recollection of the fall, instruction toward knowledgeable confession of it, and exhortation and empowerment to ascend — to all of which the *gnosis* speaks.

Plotinus seems to Jonas to fit this pattern on two key points, the philosophical thematizing of inwardness as 'soul', and a religious concern with the faulty individual, which both receive important attention in III 7. As evidence for the religious concern he cites especially the resort to symbolic expressive means in chapter 11, the text before us. Even if indirectly in relation to conscious

Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus, Leiden: Brill, 1973 and from the excellent recent paper by Paul C. Plass, "Timeless Time in Neoplatonism," *Modern Schoolman* 55 (November, 1977), pp. 1-19. Meantime two radically revisionist communications from A. H. Armstrong changed the situation concerning our understanding of eternity in Plotinus, though the consequences for understanding time were not yet seen: "Eternity, Life and Movement in Plotinus' Accounts of NOUS," (Royaumont, 1969), in *Le Néoplatonisme*, Editions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris, 1971, pp. 6-74, and "Elements of the Thought of Plotinus at Variance with Classical Intellectualism," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973), pp. 13-22. Among older studies I have found that of John F. Callahan uniquely valuable, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, 1948, as much for its account of *Timaeus* on time as its Plotinus. For a full bibliography on the philology of this text through 1967, consult Beierwaltes.

2. At the same 1969 Royaumont conference at which Armstrong presented "Eternity, Life and Movement," Jonas read "The Soul in Gnosticism and Plotinus," published in *Le Néoplatonisme* Paris, 1971 and now available as Essay 17 of *Philosophical Essays*, 1974. Armstrong has now rejoined, "Gnosis and Greek Philosophy," in Barbara Aland, ed., *Gnosis* (Festschrift für Hans Jonas), Göttingen, pp. 87-124. For the larger context into which Jonas' paper fits and the complete reference for *Philosophical Essays* see note 13 below.

intentions, the presence of this telling symptom completes a *pattern* that belongs also to gnosticism.

It is this pattern which Plotinus shared with the same gnostics he opposed, and the very proximity in basic conceptions explains the strength of feeling which his polemic [against the gnostics in II 9] displays: it is a protest against a caricature of his own cause.³

Armstrong's recent rejoinder to these claims expands the issue to "Gnosis and Greek Philosophy." He denies that Plotinus was even unconsciously gnosticizing in his psychology, and on the larger scale, insists that he began the final decisive move away from its brief high tide of influence, Numenius.⁴ Through his essay there plays a note of Cambridge historical suspicion of Marburg hermeneutical constructions like 'the gnostic religion' and '*spätantiker Geist*', especially when Jonas sets them forth as "general patterns of speculation" whose "compelling intellectual force in those times" brought them to expression across ideological boundaries.⁵

I do not believe in a general spirit or characteristic of the thought of late antiquity which expresses itself equally in gnosticism, orthodox Christianity and late antique philosophy. I regard generalizations about the thought of late antiquity which try to get everything and everybody in, about a *Zeitgeist* which in some way determines all thought in the period, with very great suspicion. My long studies of the period have led me to recognize in it (as I probably should in any other period which I studied as closely, and certainly do in our contemporary world) considerable and irreducible diversities.⁶

This is really a methodological objection to the *question*, "Do Plotinus and the cults of knowledge share common ground on the problem of time and the soul, within a general pattern of a speculation prevalent in the early Christian era?" But even allowing that such a question were properly historical, Armstrong is uncertain about the role of III 7, 11 in Jonas' *answer*.

Chapter 11 of the treatise seems to be rather light-hearted to bear so much weight (I believe that Plotinus could be light-hearted, and was not always as wholly serious as Porphyry would have liked him to be and believed him to be).

3. Essay 17, p. 325

4. "Gnosis and Greek Philosophy," pp. 109-113

5. Essay 17, p. 325.

6. "Gnosis and Greek Philosophy," p. 112

Of course he knew that he must give a philosophically respectable explanation of the obstinate fact of the temporality of this world which was in perfect accordance with the *Timaeus*. But there is something a little casual about the chapter, in spite of its importance in the history of the philosophy of time, and the suspicion has crossed my mind that perhaps he was not overwhelmingly interested in the philosophy of time (incredible as that must seem to a Heideggerian).⁷

This brings Armstrong's more general methodological objection to hermeneutical constructions and typologies into closer focus on the actual architectonical idea of the post-neo-Kantian philosophical revival at Marburg in the 20's and the hermeneutics that accompanied it (for which the name 'Heidegger' serves as a convenient shorthand, though 'Bultmann' would do as well and for Jonas, the model remains Kant): *being and time*, seen as one problem (the key word as Heidegger says is the 'and'), or what I have called temporal problematic.⁸

Strongly encouraged by Jonas' work in my belief that Heidegger had not meant to usurp or exhaust the theme 'being and time' with the fragmentary program he executed under that title, especially not to close the question of its historical bearing, I have been reading the Augustinian and more recently the Plotinian (I include here Iamblichus) phenomenology of 'time and the soul', the *topos* that more recent philosophy calls 'time-consciousness' (Husserl).⁹ Myself importing any 'Heideggerian' fixation on the philosophy of time to Plotinus, I undertook collaborative study of the text of III 7 with Armstrong in 1975.¹⁰ I have come to find the evidence

7. *Ibid.* p. 120

8. "Kinds of Eternity: Temporal Problematic and Historical Horizons," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45 (1977), Supplement, G: 933-61.

9. E. Husserl, *Zür Phänomenologie des Inneren Zeit-Bewusstseins*, ed. M. Heidegger, Halle: Niemeyer, 1928, from which the translation *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, by James S. Churchill, Indiana University Press, 1964. A critical edition of the German text, enlarged, is *Husserliana X*, edited R. Boehm, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966. It should be noted that the entire program of M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 1927, of which only two-thirds of the first half saw print, is only one of several possible executions of the thematic proposal itself. An entire alternate execution of a "Sein und Zeit" based on 1927 Marburg lectures is now available under the title *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe 24, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975.

10. My thanks to the Dean of the Graduate Faculty and the Department of Classics, Dalhousie University, Halifax, for support of this collaboration, and to Professor Armstrong for his quick interest in the strange kinds of questions I was asking and generosity in focusing his learning and insight

overwhelming that Jonas has as Armstrong charges been led away from the actual philosophical interests of this text by his interpretive program, and something like Armstrong's objection that one must not take the gestures toward mythical style in chapter 11 too seriously is definitely part of the problem.

And yet at the same time, I have come to see more reason than ever to champion Jonas' application of 'being and time' as a hermeneutical leading idea illuminating the history of the philosophical religion of late antiquity. I subscribe whole-heartedly to his insistence on reading speculative philosophy and the revelation-religions as part of one story, and I still find the 'typological' telling of such stories compelling and instructive.¹¹

My own work in III 7 and background study of the theme 'time and eternity' in Greek philosophy at large seems to have involved me in some emerging methodological and substantive synthesis, of historical principles themselves only beginning to be in conversation. It is this synthesis which I mean to explore in the following discussions.

I propose to develop my position in three steps: demonstrate in detail the central role played by temporal problematic in Jonas' hermeneutic of late classical philosophical religion (Section I); produce an interpretation of III 7, 11 controlled by what are shown to be its own philosophical interests and context (Section II); and conclude with a brief methodological reflection of my own on the history of 'time', attempting to place Plotinus in relation to Jonas' questions while at the same time accepting Armstrong's cautions (Section III).

I

Time in Jonas' Hermeneutic of Gnosticism

Because it is methodologically the most explicit of Plotinus' treatises,¹² it is especially appropriate to begin our approach to "On Eternity and Time" by engaging the modern author whose

upon them. Except in places I identify where the work has led in other directions than we expected in 1975, this paper is the fruit of that collaboration.

11. I am particularly taken with the balance between methodological construction and historical application in Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. E. Buchanen, New York: Harper and Row, 1967. cf. pp. 171-174.

12. See III 7, 1, Armstrong's notes *ad loc.* and Introduction in the Loeb edition. Also, A. H. Armstrong, "Tradition, Reason and Experience in the Thought of Plotinus," in *Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente*, Roma: Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei, 1974, pp. 176-7.

reasons for appealing to that text have themselves received the most formal methodological exposition, Hans Jonas. More than that, I see certain important and apparently unnoticed affinities between the transcendental reflection on time which lies at the heart of Jonas' method and that of Plotinus himself, so this beginning moves us toward the text with a double suitability.

Plotinus occupies a prominent place in Jonas' great hermeneutical program *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*. Specifically, he is one of four writers (Philo, Origen, Euagrius Ponticus and Plotinus) taken up in Part II of that work. The division of the program into two phases, which I shall refer to as Gnosis I and Gnosis II, reflects its deepest methodological ambitions, and has not always been given enough consideration by those who have objected to the presence of Plotinus (or Origen) in it.

Gnosis I (1934, 3. verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage 1964) has become standard, particularly for its circumscription of the literature to be considered the gnostic religion proper (e.g. Marcion but not Paul, the Hermetic literature but not the Qumran texts, the "Hymn of the Pearl" but not Christian apocrypha in general, etc.). These same decisions have been expressed and kept up-to-date in an English re-execution of Gnosis I, *The Gnostic Religion* (1958, expanded 1963).

English Gnosis I is not really Gnosis I, however, since in it Jonas has suspended the methodological discussions of the German original and with them the whole sense of radical religious gnosis as the first phase of a large development. Meanwhile Gnosis II itself has experienced delays, only some of which are due to external factors. The demand for action of the late 30's and 40's kept the scholarly project on ice until 1954. But what then appeared was Gnosis II "Erste Hälfte" (1954, 2¹⁹⁶⁶), containing Philo and Origen but not monastic mysticism and not Plotinus. Gnosis II *Zweite Hälfte* is still to appear, and one senses from preliminary studies now conveniently collected in English,¹³ that internal complications at the methodological level are contributing to this additional delay. For one thing, Jonas' work in philosophy of nature and the organism has placed a new kind of critical distance between him and the philosophical anthropology implied in the existential hermeneutic on whose basis the whole Gnosis program

13. *Philosophical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974. References to Jonas giving essay number and page in what follows are to this collection. *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*: Ester Teil, Die Mythologische Gnosis, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934, 3te. verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage, 1964. Zweiter Teil, Von der Mythologie zur Mystischen Philosophie; Erste Hälfte, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966.

was originally projected.¹⁴ But it would not be at all surprising to find that new difficulties specifically with the philosopher Plotinus have arisen, provoking a *philosophical* development in what was from the start a professedly philosophical and not a philological-historical undertaking. Such an assumption at any rate guides the exposition of Jonas' philosophical hermeneutic which follows.

'Gnosticism' for Jonas is in the first place a typological construction, a "syndrome"¹⁵ or a "general pattern of speculation" and not a fixed body of doctrine or a geographically, linguistically or chronologically circumscribable number of writings. This is Jonas' great break with the earlier studies of gnosticism, which had produced "a portrait of gnosticism in which the salient feature seems to be the absence of a unifying character."¹⁶ Gnosticism for Jonas is a "*Daseinshaltung*"¹⁷ or an "existential ground"¹⁸ which constellates an epoch around itself and comes to expression in widely divergent, even mutually resistant contexts, as though it had a life of its own (a "compelling intellectual force"). Gnosticism in this sense subsists in itself as an interconnected group of images and symbols, expressive of a "*Grundmythos*" which is not just a product of syncretistic synthesis but an intrinsically coherent "primal objectivation,"¹⁹ specifically, a dramatization using mythological techniques of the existential situation of finite individual human freedom, as this first came to reflection in European experience during a period of political alienation, extreme religious transcendentalism, and a pervasive fascination with 'new revelation' and individual mystical attainment as against ancient wisdom.

In its own frame of reference, the primary challenge for Jonas' account of the ground-myth is not its success in epitomizing any particular gnostic writing, which it does only partially and approximately, coming closest with certain Mandaen material, but its coherence as an expression of a "gnostic spirit" whose pervasive presence throughout the period strikes the experienced reader, on Jonas' testimony, as an amply palpable proper object of historical hypothesis.²⁰

14. See "Gnosticism, Nihilism and Existentialism," Appendix to *The Gnostic Religion*, second edition enlarged, Boston: Beacon Press, 1963. For the intervening work see *The Phenomenon of Life*, New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

15. Title of Essay 13, "The Gnostic Syndrome."

16. *Gnostic Religion*, preface p. xvi.

17. *Gnosis I*, p. 140 ff.

18. E.g. Essay 13, p. 267, Essay 15, p. 291. Cf. *Gnosis I*, Ss. 9 and 25.

19. Essay 15, p. 303.

20. See Essay 13, pp. 275-6. It is interesting that both Jonas and

The ground-myth must therefore succeed in expressing the gnostic existential attitude globally and with symbolic coherence. My concern in this paper, however, is with an additional complication Jonas adds to its methodological role: it must take a form which is capable of undergoing *transformation*, from "*die mythologische Gnosis*" proper (sub-title of Gnosis I) to "*die mystische Philosophie*" (subtitle of Gnosis II). *Time* plays a key role in Jonas' exhibition of the ground-myth on both sides of this transformation, and more important, it is the pivotal concept illuminating the possibility of the transformation itself.

Let us look first at the abbreviated but extremely clearly organized summary of the gnostic principle as a "general pattern of speculation" which Jonas has supplied as background in English essays on both Origen and Plotinus.²¹ In the course of this general account he makes six key points.

i) As expressions of the gnostic ground-myth, both the radical religious revelations and the mystical philosophical speculations of the Second and Third Centuries C. E.

definitely wanted to offer speculative *systems*. The meaning of 'system' here requires explanation. What is aimed at throughout is a deductive whole where everything hangs together and one chain of reasoning or imagining leads from first principles to last consequences.

In one way this is an unexceptionable principle, since it is a hermeneutical self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, Jonas' existential interpretation of the gnostic literature differs from familiar doxography precisely in seeking to exhibit the seeming riot of images and personages and engenderings as a meaningfully connected system. Plotinus' work, as an example, certainly invites and even provides resources for such systematic reconstruction, as can be seen from the degree to which later Neoplatonists were seduced in exactly that direction — completing schematic threesomes, conceptual symmetries, etc. But the doubt is worth expressing whether Plotinus himself made any conscious effort to be systematic in a formal sense. From the evidence of his writings,

Armstrong are quite forthright in arguing from the wisdom of experience, the 'ear' for the material. Compare Armstrong, 'Gnosis and Greek Philosophy,' p. 112

21. "Origen's Metaphysics of Freewill, Fall and Salvation: A 'Divine Comedy' of the Universe" contained this material in its first appearance, in *Journal of the Universalist Historical Society* 8 (1969-70), pp. 5-7, but in the *Philosophical Essays* it has been excised from the Origen piece and placed in the Plotinus, Essay 17, pp. 325-27. All of the following quotations come from Essay 17, these pages.

in which areas of incoherence or at best of incomplete coherence are many,²² and from Porphyry's account of his teaching, it seems clear that to the contrary Plotinus worked topically, treating particular questions that arose in particular discussions or were posed by particular members of his circle. Thus while individual treatises could be very embracing and tightly argued indeed (e. g. V 1 "On the three primary hypostases"), and while there are pervasive themes that are identifiably Plotinian, the extent to which his actual production as a whole fails to be systematic can be judged from the clumsiness of Porphyry's attempt so to arrange it, the *Enneads* themselves. System, especially in the form of deductive coherence, was a methodological constraint to which Plotinus could indeed submit in particular treatises, but overestimation of the coherence of his work as a whole was a common fault of older study of it.²³

ii) The tendency toward system "was rooted in an axiomatic conviction of the time, namely, that there is a *chain of being*, which the chain of reasoning does no more than reproduce."

iii) Moreover, "the directional sense of the deductive context is *vertical*" and its "grades are a diminishing extension from above, not a structure reared up from and supported by the ground."

Subject to the qualification mentioned about 'system', points (ii) and (iii) are in fact broadly applicable in the Second and Third Centuries, since as formulated they abstract from (ii) the *character of the linkages* in the chain and (iii) the *intentionality* that may be expressed in the vertical ordering of its stages. But of course this very ambiguity may let important distinctions slip through uninterrogated. One motive for gnostic multiplication of ranks of

22. The most important of these problems from our point of view is discussed by Armstrong under the title, "Form, Individual and Person in Plotinus," *Dionysius*, I (1977), pp. 49-68.

To find inconsistency and irresolvable conflicts at precisely the point where the peculiar individuation of the human self is the question is the very symptom that leads Jonas to diagnose gnosticism. The situation is however more complex typologically than Jonas has seen. See S. 3 of this paper.

23. Since the 'systematic' character of his constructions belongs more to the rigor and detail of his own typology than to an alleged intention of the author under study, Jonas has to some degree broken clear of older oversimplifications. But their effect is still felt; in the Origen paper, Essay 16 for example, Origen has had foisted upon him through Jonas a consistency due more to the single-mindedness of his opponents (Jonas accepts all the Koetschau placements of texts from the anathemas at Second Constantinople into the *Peri Archon*, and then pivots his reading of that treatise around those passages), more than to the clarity of his own intention.

reality, for example, is to keep the transcendent divinity from 'touching' or having any presence to worlds below it, while the Plotinian series is shot through with epiphanies and interpenetrations of all sorts from top to bottom.²⁴

iv) Jonas goes on to make the general notion of a vertical chain of being more specific, however, moving the typology in the direction of concern in this paper. He proposes, on philosophical grounds I shall be able to identify, that the key dimension in which 'chain of being' expositions are significant is not space but *time*. They are what he calls "transcendental histories." The systematic hierarchies are not static;

the vertical order of things means necessarily the *descent* of all things, in that order, from a highest source down — and this involves the idea of one definite, linear *movement* of becoming by which everything in the hierarchy of being is produced.

This movement is "conceived as twofold and unfolding in a definite two-beat rhythm," a movement down and away from origins followed by a movement of restoration.²⁵

v) Now in the accounts given of this movement, the unity of the original situation was characteristically identified with perfection, the plurality that eventuated from it with deficiency, "from which it followed that the general nature of the fall was loss of unity and movement into diversity, and the correlative rise must mean unification." With this observation the static hierarchy is given not only movement and orientation, but is horizoned in such a way that it can support an eschatological or moral *drama*.

24. This remains true even, or perhaps especially, in the later Neoplatonists when they multiply hypostases. As A. C. Lloyd remarks in the *Cambridge History of Late Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, 1967, p. 282, "to double the rungs of a ladder is from one point of view to increase the separation of the highest rung from the lowest, but it also makes it easier to reach from one to the other." This seems to me to provide a quick answer, as against Rist's uncertainty on the point (*The Road to Reality*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 84f.), to the question whether logos is Plotonic in Plotinus — i. e. a disjoining principle. It is the very opposite.

25. Essay 17, p. 326. On the same page Jonas adds two further elaborations that need rejoinder: "The rise to higher levels of being is not creative but 'decreative', an undoing of what has been done in the creative descent." Since it is instead the moment of 'halt' and 'turning back to the higher' in each hypostasis that is the creative moment, Jonas' statement needs to be exactly reversed for Plotinus. Again, "None of these explanatory constructions took interest in the 'horizontal' map of reality, in the *coordinated* manifold of things, their spread and interrelation on one and the same plane of being." Once again, this principle specifically fails for Plotinus; for a representative statement of the principle which commits him to explore the coordinated manifold see III 2, 3 and 11ff.

vi) And so the final feature of the general pattern, "the extreme polarization between the two ends of the scale of being," poses a fundamental problem which is at once ontological-cosmological and moral-eschatological:

How can something so low, so questionable and mixed as our world is, and as human existence in it is, have sprung from a source so pure, so perfect, so free from all admixture and ambiguity? What could have led from the perfection of absolute, eternal, spiritual being to the imperfection of temporal, material, terrestrial being? What accounts for the paradox of such a rift between the divine and the nondivine?

There is a conflation of the metaphysical and the moral in the terms Jonas uses to formulate this problem, a recurring feature of Jonas' reading of late classical literature, and one of the things that makes his efforts in contemporary philosophical anthropology so provocative. It is no accident arising from a comparativism with no time for nuances, but is a deliberated element of his hermeneutical hypothesis, rooted in basic philosophical commitments. Jonas refuses to seal off the ontology of the free historical subject from the ontology of nature,²⁶ and is able therefore to engage without disorientation the extreme insensibility of gnostic systems to any such division.

Now since time is the key dimension in which the hierarchicalizing 'logic' of reality coheres systematically, time must be able to carry both the ontological and the dramatic intentions of the thought.

As the record of such a generation, the vertical axis of being, notwithstanding its spatial connotations, is primarily a time axis whose progression as it were deposits the spatial stratification of the universe as a by-product along its course. 'Time' in this sense, as the dimension of process and change, is the paramount dimension of reality. But it is a curious, metaphysical 'time' of causal *prius* and *posterius* which could easily be transformed — from the mythological conception of events preceding those of the world and continued by the latter on the same plane of succession — into the philosophical conception of a timeless movement *behind*, and coextensive with, our world on a different plane. Even in the latter case, which Plotinus represents in its purity, an aspect of dynamics or inner event adheres to the sequence of ontological derivations.²⁷

26. See Essay 12, "Change and Permanence: On Understanding History."

27. Essay 17, p. 327.

Jonas wants time, the "paramount dimension" of the gnostic reality, to lie at the center of its pattern of thought not just structurally, schematically, but as a principle of the *transformability* of the schematism from a mythological to a philosophical intention. That time functions as the unifying element in the single *grundmythos* underlying all the gnostic phenomena anticipates its deeper methodological function, where time allows us interpretively to schematize the transformation of the 'objectified' soul-mythology and soul-metaphysics into an interiorized, reflective canon of spiritual discipline for mystical philosophy.

In the essay "Myth and Mysticism: A Study of Objectification and Interiorization in Religious Thought" Jonas meets this deeper problem in English.²⁸ There he recapitulates the theory of "primal objectivation" which founds his German exposition of the problem of the "analogy" or "connexion" (*Zusammenhang*) between radical gnosticism and its "secondary formations" or "pseudomorphisms" in the later Second and Third Century philosophical religions, in short the move from Gnosis I to Gnosis II.²⁹ But the English essay goes farther than published Gnosis II, I, illustrating its methodological principles with the application of Origen's metaphysics of the soul by Euagrius Ponticus to early theoretical needs of monastic mysticism. This sketch provides one of the two missing elements of Gnosis II, II, the other of which is placing Plotinus properly with respect to mythology, metaphysics and mysticism.

Jonas' thesis is that an interiorized, mystical doctrine of the soul's descent and ascent necessarily first expresses itself in the "projected," "objective" (*gegenständlich*), concretely imaged and comprehensively "worlded" form of spontaneous cosmogonical and anthropogonical religious myths; and comes to itself reflectively only after the seeming detour of such a first manifestation. A mystical canon of spiritual self-discipline and an experience of freedom as spiritual self-movement cannot validly come to expression directly, but only as a hermeneutical event within a previously objectified world of ideas.³⁰

The moments of this hermeneutical event comprise the problematic of Gnosis II. First of all, the radical gnosticism itself was already mythological rather than mythical: that is to say, it allegorized the symbolic elements and systematized them in the direction of metaphysics, allowing speculative motives to come into play. Then, among metaphysical systems, some were "*ab initio*

28. Essay 15.

29. Cf. Gnosis I, p. 86f.

30. Cf. Essay 15, pp. 303-4.

closer to possible 'subjectivization' and mystical transposition'' than others, those namely which began to cohere around the themes surveyed here, in which a transcendental time schematizes a "geneology of alienation and reintegration" and horizons it as an eschatological drama whose best-known players are falling and rising human souls.³¹

At this point the schema was ready for transformation. Speaking of Euagrius' adaptation of Origenism, but formulating with an eye on more general problems, Jonas describes the final step this way:

In Euagrius' articulation of the inner life, in his instructions for the spiritual ascent, all of the metaphysical terms of Origen are indeed converted into mystical ones, and his metaphysical system is thereby converted into a mystical canon. For this it was first necessary to make the movement of the metaphysical stages neutral with respect to world time, so as to make them purely a function of 'inner time', which in principle is at the disposal of each subject at all times. Then the objective hierarchy of being has become transformable into spiritual self-movement, and its paradigmatic articulation can act as a phenomenology (more than a mere allegory) of the order of inner ascent.³²

From this we see that the "curious, metaphysical time" of the general speculative pattern is in fact a *transcendental* time, at once mythico-objective (narrative, dramatic), logical (structured relationships, order), and reflective (phenomenological). It actively gathers images and metaphysical objectifications of spiritual reality into a threshold-mythology, composing a *muthologoumenon* which is distinctively ready for interiorizing transformation. In terminology hard to reproduce in English, the epochal emergence of such a *grundmythos* first in an objective (*gegenständlich*) and then in a subjective or interiorized expressive context is called 'objectivation' (*Objektivation*). Expressive of an underlying "*Daseinshaltung*," the two phases of its emergence are "*Schicksal für den Grund*" and not simply chronological accident.³³ Only as conditioning this transformation do we properly understand its objectified first moment.

I call this the primal 'objectivation', by which I mean something with transcendental validity. It furnishes the horizon for its evidential experiences and specifies them in advance. It inspires the search for them, fosters them, and legitimates them.

31. Essay 15, p. 301.

32. Essay 15, p. 303.

33. See *Gnosis I*, S. 25, esp. pp. 88-9, and *Gnosis II*, I Einleitung, S. 1-13.

Without an antecedent dogmatics there would be no valid mysticism.³⁴

That whatever may remain in Plotinus of gnostic mythological drama has been incorporated into a radically antipathetic universe of discourse, philosophy, is therefore no embarrassment to Jonas but instruction concerning the *range of impact* which the gnostic 'primal objectivation' can have, given the transcendental function of its themes and images. And because transcendental genealogies involving "curious, metaphysical time" are the central, pivotal symptom of the presence of a gnostic principle, it is not happenstance or opportunism that leads Jonas preferentially to Plotinus "On Eternity and Time" but an extremely carefully founded methodological premise.

Against this background, the apparent allusion in chapter 11 to the 'fall of soul' motif, where soul is motivated as in the radical gnosis by an audacious ambition toward self-constitution and self-rule, counts for Jonas not as datum *toward* some historical hypothesis, but as *confirmation* of one — confirmation perhaps more exact in tone, style, expressive means and subject-matter than might have been hoped for. Indeed it is the almost unnerving precision with which III 7, 11 seems to meet Jonas' expectations about a gnostic principle in transition from myth to philosophy that awakens my doubts about his reading of that text. Might not Plotinus have had the transcendental time suggested by the narrative-mythical features of that chapter under just as much methodological control as we think we do in our criticism? Is it likely that Plotinus was any less well-informed about Second and Third Century mythologico-speculative clichés than we are, or any less self-conscious about their place in a phenomenologically grounded contribution to the history of philosophy?

The fact that *time*, taken as providing the pivotal schematism for historical transcendental imagination, should function in Jonas as the dynamic link between intellectual, metaphysically objectified ideal being and reflective, phenomenologically interiorized existence, shows that there is a communion of substance between his and Plotinus' reflections on time, one which can be made to react back upon Jonas' own hermeneutical principles and in fact to support them. For rescued from the reading it receives as an *object* of Jonas' program, Plotinus' text coheres with the underlying *premises* of that program in a striking way.

To show this, we need to develop Plotinus' treatment of time from that text and orient it within his approach to the third

34. Essay 15, pp. 303-4.

hypostasis in general. Soul is responsible in Plotinus for the being of time; but what this says about soul is firmly counter-gnostic.

II

Time and Soul in III 7, 11

Except for stylistic devices of controversial purport, chapter 11 "on eternity and time" would not deserve to be treated as a complete text. The smallest natural subunit of the treatise that contains it is chapters 11-13, the positive account of time.³⁵ The eleventh is only the first of three steps in the full 'demonstration' of time, describing its production in the transcendental logic. Chapter 12 goes on to detail its actual production in the sensible world, where *dēlōsis* (manifestation) not genesis is the problem and the heavenly movements have special importance, which leads to the problem of the numbers of time and time as a 'measure'. Chapter 13 continues this problem, spelling out the qualifications one must add about the originality of the soul's time when one says that time 'measures motion', illustrating this with a concluding reflection on the image of a man taking a walk.

Taken together as this natural unit, chapters 11, 12, 13 are really more interesting for their almost modern scholarly relation to the peripatetic lectures on time and to the *Timaeus* at 37D ff. than for the stylistic devices with which chapter 11 begins.³⁶ And yet it is those devices which have contributed so much to giving chapter 11 a history of its own.

If the chapter is to be read mythologically, then the subjects of the narrative become abstract nouns functioning in a peculiar way sometimes called 'personification'. What is really involved is a need to be consistent in distinguishing among these various 'names', not just when they are used expressly, but also when they are carried along by pronouns. Here of course Plotinus has the

35. III 7 is structured as follows. Chapter 1 is methodological. The treatment of eternity in chapters 2-6 has two phases, the analytic of the concept, chapters 2-4, and the discussion of our experience of it, chapters 3-4. The treatment of time in the remainder of the treatise has two parts also, a critical discussion of earlier treatments, chapters 7-10, and Plotinus' own constructive position, chapters 11-13.

36. Plotinus' interest in gaining insight into the intentions of Plato and Aristotle in chapters 12 and 13, and especially the concession he makes 13: 14-16, is noteworthy: "But perhaps they did not get it the wrong way round [the peripatetics, the relation between the *arithmos* and the *kinēsis* in time] but we do not understand them, but, when they clearly meant 'measure' in the sense of 'what is measured' we missed the point of their thought."

advantage of a gendered language, hence the economy of continuing a particular distinction in the form of 'he' and 'she'. I have reflected what there is of a mythological style in the text in the translation which follows by using these 'personal' pronouns. Certain important ambiguities of antecedent depend for their correct solution on careful consistency in this regard: oddly enough, in French and German where the parallel is more natural, no one has attempted to leave the ambiguities unsettled in the translation.³⁷

For our purposes, I will adapt the translation of A. H. Armstrong in the direction of increased literal-mindedness (invariably decreased fluency), reading the Greek the same way as his Loeb edition except in a few identified places, and in general restoring ambiguities. I have set the text into sense-blocks, and supplied sub-titles for two distinct 'derivations of time' in anticipation of discussion to follow:

- III 7, 11: 1 We must take ourselves back to that disposition, which we said existed in eternity, to that quiet life, altogether total, already infinite,³⁸ altogether without declination, resting in one and toward one.³⁹
- 5 Time did not yet exist, not at any rate for the beings of that world; we shall produce Time by the Logos and Nature of what comes afterward.
- 7 If, then, these beings were at rest in themselves, one could hardly, perhaps, call on the Muses, who did not then exist, to tell "how Time first fell out": but one might perhaps (even if the Muses did then exist after all) ask the come-to-be Time to tell how he is something showing forth and come-to-be.

37. Beierwaltes and Bréhier are close to methodical in this regard, as against MacKenna, who supplies nouns wholesale, but all fail with the *autē* of line 27, which is not the soul but a particular power (*dunamis*, feminine) of the soul. In my translation I will use nouns where Plotinus uses nouns, and keep to pronouns where he uses pronouns. The introduction of gender this way is unnatural in English, but is perhaps softened in this text by the 'personification' of the antecedent concept-nouns, which I will reflect by capitalization.

38. As against Armstrong, "still unbounded." Eternity is not "still" unbounded as though later to lapse from it, but *already* infinite as against time's always-on-the-way-toward it. The *ēdē* at 5: 14 and 13: 63 has the same sense as here.

39. Here Armstrong overtranslates, "resting in and directed toward eternity," but the point he enforces is correct: the 'one' here is not the transcendent One but the noetic one.

[Argument 1: emergence of soul's own natural time]

- 11 He might say something like this about himself; that before, when he had not yet, in fact, produced the 'before' or felt need of the 'afterward', together with eternity and in real being he was at rest;⁴⁰ not being Time (of course); but nevertheless, he was in that being, and he was himself, kept quiet in that.
- 14 Now there was a busy Nature, wanting to control herself and be on her own, and choosing to seek for more than the present: she moved, and so did he.⁴¹
- 17 And so, moving on to the always 'next' and what is 'afterward' and not the same, but different into different, by making a kind of stretch of our journey we have constructed Time as an image of eternity.

[Argument 2: emergence of time in the nature soul has power over]

- 20 For because there was a certain Power of the Soul, not at rest, who wanted to be always transferring what she saw there to something else, she did not want the whole to be present to her all together; and, as from a resting seed the Logos, unfolding himself, advances, as he thinks, to largeness, but does away with the largeness by division and, instead of keeping his unity in himself, squanders it outside himself and so goes forward to a weaker extension; in the same way she, making the world of sense in imitation of that other world, moving with a motion which is not that which exists there but like it, and intending to be an image of it, first of all temporalized herself, instead of eternity making there to be Time, and thereupon handed over to what comes into being a being in service to Time, by making the whole of it

40. *Aion* seems to be the only antecedent for the "*sun autōi*" of this line, but I am not entirely satisfied with this reading. Though it is probably indefensibly irregular, I would prefer to read "*sun autōi en tōi ontī*" as "together with *itself* in real being". This seems to me to make the *autos* of line 13 less stark.

41. It is irregular to make line 14's *phusis* the antecedent of this 'she' and hence the subject of this argument, since it is there in the genitive absolute which would ordinarily exclude it from the main clause. I am completely convinced that this is Plotinus' sense here, however, on the evidence of line 6, and the first lines of chapter 12, as they will be explained in what follows. Moreover, 'soul' is not used in this chapter until line 20.

exist in Time and encompassing all its ways with Time.

[*Summary, definition and conclusions*]

- 34 For since the world of sense moves in Soul — there is no other place of it (this universe) than Soul — it moves also in the Time of Soul.
- 36 For as she presents her activity as other after other, and then again another in succession, she produces the succession along with the activity, and goes forth with another dianoia after that one, the one that did not previously exist, because dianoia was not in action, nor is the life now like the one before it.
- 41 So at once the life is different and the 'different' involves a different Time.
- 42 So the diastasis of life involves Time; and the always forward of life involves Time always; and the passing of life involves Time which has come to pass.
- 43 So if one should say that Time is the life of Soul in a movement of passage from one way-of-life into another, would this make any sense?
- 46 Yes, for if eternity is life in stasis, unchanging and identical and already unbounded, and Time must exist as an image of eternity (in the same relation as that in which this All stands to that one), then it must be said that there is, instead of the life there, another life having, in a manner of speaking, the same name as this Power of the Soul, and that

instead of:

the intelligent motion of Soul
 sameness and self-identity and
 abiding
 the a-diastatic and one
 the already unbounded and whole
 a simple whole

there is:

the motion of some part
 that which does not abide in the
 same but does one act and another
 an imitation of unity, one in
 continuity
 an always-in-succession, without
 limit
 that which is going to be and
 is always going to be whole.

- 57 For this is the way in which he will imitate that which is already a whole, already all together and unbounded, by intending always to be something making an increase in its being, for this is how this being will imitate that one.
- 59 But one must not conceive Time as outside Soul, any more than eternity there outside real being. He is not an accompaniment of Soul nor something that comes after (any more than eternity there) but something which is seen in her and exists in her and with her, as eternity does there.

Time, we see already on first reading, is another of the many areas of Plotinus' treatment of Soul where it is necessary to deal with a strange double functioning that needs to be united. Throughout Plotinus the problems of the unity of Soul (here I speak only of hypostasis Soul, of Soul at large, *pasa psuchē*, not of the subordinate problem of individual souls and among them the soul of the All, *hai psuchai* and *hē tou pantos psuchē*) threatens to dissolve Soul as a theme of its own into its hypostatic neighbors, Mind (*nous*) and sensible Nature, as P. C. Plass has recently observed in a related discussion:

Plotinus distinguishes between a transcendent phase of soul ('all-soul') and an immanent phase attached to body. The life of the former is timeless being, that of the [latter] temporal becoming. Soul is thus ambivalent; we might even say that it is in danger of not being anything by itself insofar as it is defined in terms of what lies above it and below it. Its higher part is often scarcely distinguishable from Mind, its lower part from temporal process.⁴²

The consequences of this problem for understanding the 'definition of time' advanced in line 43 have not yet been clearly seen by commentators, although no one can miss the repeated reflections of Soul's two-directedness in this passage as a whole (and in chapters 12 and 13). I argue that Plotinus' explication of his two-lives psychology in the form here of a two-phased constitution of Time is more than a mere reflection of this pervasive complication, but is intended to make a major contribution to resolving it.

Before explicating my construction of two stages in the derivation of time (lines 11-33), it is necessary to settle a

42. Paul C. Plass, "Timeless Time in Neoplatonism," *Modern Schoolman* 55 (1977), p. 1.

preliminary matter which has so far eluded fully satisfactory resolution: who are "we" in lines 1, 6 and 19 of this chapter?⁴³

This 'we' is invoked in the very first line, and then line 6 promises that "we shall produce" Time. Sure enough, after what turns out to be the first phase of my asserted double derivation, line 19 announces that "we have constructed" it. Does this mean that 'we' are somehow the time-producing subjects, the key *dramatis personae* in what there is here of a 'story' about this production?

To answer this question, it seems to me necessary first of all to reject the assumption sometimes made that the 'we' translates systematically as *hai psuchai*, individual souls (among whom we must remember to rank the soul of the All, whatever special role she may play among them). In chapter 13 Plotinus emphasizes that there is time in us and Time in the soul of the All "*homoeidōs*," in the same form, because it is not as individuals that souls bring about Time, but simply as Soul, as instances of *pasa psuchē*, 'soul at large'.⁴⁴ The *Timaeus* does commit Plotinus to facing the problem of the relation of human souls to the soul of the All and to her heavenly movements; but such issues arise in connection with the manifestation (*dēlōsis*) of Time and are treated in chapter 12. Only hypostasis Soul figures in the *constitution* of Time in chapter 11, and even then not as a whole, but only certain 'parts': Busy Nature and Restless Power.⁴⁵

Who then in chapter 11 are 'we'?

We are first of all the editorial we, the lecturer and presumed sympathetic audience. When line 1 says that we must take ourselves back to a certain *diathesis* (disposition), the reference is to the summarizing definition given for eternity at the end of chapter 4 (line 43): *hē diathesis [tou ontos] kai phusis*, "the disposition and nature [of essential being]." Our movement in being 'taken back there again' is therefore first of all a movement within the text of the treatise, i. e. back to where we were before the psychological applications of chapters 5-6 and the critical excursion of chapters

43. Cf. Jonas "Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit" p. 309, Beierwaltes *Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit* pp. 241-4.

44. *Ar' oun kai en hēmīn chronos; ē en psuchēi tēi toiautēi pasēi kai homoeidōs en pasēi kai hai pasai mia.* 13: 66-68.

45. Cf. Armstrong, "Gnosis and Greek Philosophy" p. 120. Here however Armstrong still reflects the position we took in 1975 that the Soul in chapter 11 was 'cosmic soul', who does indeed figure in chapter 12's consideration of the *dēlōsis* of time. My present position is that the Soul in chapter 11 is hypostatic soul; but this only strengthens the underlying point on which we are agreed, that only 'parts' of Soul belong to Time.

7-10. It is therefore a movement within the time of the text, which is an intellectual time.

Still, we are more importantly involved in text than this. After the Muses are dismissed in line 7 (in such a way that they are also surreptitiously invoked!), as having any testimony about what happened 'when' time first came forth, the Time himself who has come to be seems the only party available to talk about those 'events'. And at first it seems that Time is going to accept that role, is going to speak and explain himself. But remarkably, *we* wind up speaking for him instead in lines 11 ff., which are not in first-person discourse as promised but refer to him in the third person. Our final statement on his behalf, "we have constructed Time," is on this account a surrogate for "I have constructed myself" — which is just what the ambitious, busy Nature of line 14 would like to be able to say, and Time in fact does say. Only *silently*.

It is not our speaking, but Time's silence that is the significant observation. Whether something must 'speak' in order to carry out an activity, or instead executes it silently and spontaneously (hence 'naturally'), is a consideration in which Plotinus is often very careful. The whole course of development in work leading up to III 7 [45] of his theme that Time is an activity of Soul shows that this problem is central to his interest here.⁴⁶

An especially illuminating earlier passage comes from III 8 [30]. In chapter 4, where sensible Nature is asked why she makes things, she actually answers in the first person, showing that Plotinus is plainly willing to follow through on the expository device of asking some element of his subject-matter to speak up for itself. And Nature's answer in that related treatise helps us with our problem here:

"you ought not to ask, but to understand in silence, you, too, just as I am silent and not in the habit of talking. Understand what, then? That what comes into being is what I see in my silence, an object of contemplation, which comes to be

46. That there is development in Plotinus' thinking about time is most easily seen by contrasting V 1 [10], 4 with III 7. In the early passage he says of Nous, "all things are in eternity, and the true eternity, which time copies, running round the soul (*peritheōn psuchēn*), letting some things go, attending to others;" (lines 18-19, trans. Armstrong). The image here seems to place time outside of the soul, or at least at the outermost edge of its spread into sensible particularity ("now Socrates, now a horse" line 20). In the later III 7 [45] it is emphasized that time is not something outside of soul or accompanying it, but is an *enorōmenon* of soul, something "seen in it" (11: 61).

naturally, and that I, originating from this sort of contemplation, have a comtemplative nature" (trans. Armstrong).

Soul's silent, contemplative production is the context in which the discussion of Time must be placed. In the midst of one of his earliest major discussions of Time, IV 4 [28], 15-17, he follows exactly this line, and in chapter 16 he makes a distinction in regard to the *taxis* of time that shows him moving already toward his final position and highlights the role of silence.

In the previous chapter 15 he had established that souls, which are eternal, rank higher than Time, which in turn ranks higher than the things which are in Time, namely the affections and doings of souls. In this three-layered series, Time is 'within' Soul in the direct and simple sense that something of Soul is on either side of it, that it reaches from Soul's eternal and intellectual life to Soul's time-ordered and sensible productions. Chapter 16 then goes on to focus on 'order' as the essential feature of Time to explore in Soul. If sensible things, things 'in Time', are the showing and making of Soul, the question arises, in what way is the 'one thing after another' of their *order* in Soul? If order is here with its separateness (*to choris*), how does that not destroy the intellectual simultaneity (*to hama*) which Soul has as eternal? And yet if order is here in simultaneity and togetherness as against sensible succession, then there are two orders, "and if the ordering principle (*to tatton*) is other than the order (*hē taxis*), it will be of such a kind *as to speak*, in a way" (lines 13-14).

But this is just what is unacceptable, as we saw from III 8, 4. *Silently* realized power is expressed in the makings of Soul; the time-order of natural process is an immediate manifestation of that power, not the result of what he here calls 'giving of orders' (*epistatein*), as between one thing made external to another. So the distinction we made between the active ordering and the resultant order has to be withdrawn — even if this might seem tantamount to withdrawing the distinction between eternity and time. The key argument of IV 4, 16:

If that which gives orders (*to epistatoun*) is the primary arrangement (*hē taxis*), it no longer says, but only makes this after that (*ouketi legei, alla poiei monon tode meta tode*). For if it says, it does so with its eye on the arrangement [i. e. stands clear of it, back from it to see]. How then is it the same?

Because the arranging principle is not form and matter, but only form and power, and Soul is the second active actuality after Intellect: but the "this after that" is in the things, which are

powerless to be all simultaneous (trans. Armstrong, slightly adapted).

As Plotinus moves from this earlier work toward III 7, he comes more and more to associate Time with the *power* of the Soul, and to withdraw the name from the constellated powerlessness which is pure sensible "this after that."⁴⁷ Ordering activity itself grows away in his thought from simple succession, and is conceived as the power for constant *arrival in* succession which belongs to *logoi*, to intellectual unities, through the intervention of Soul. Time (and with it ordering activity) becomes finally twofold within itself, or better, comes to nest precisely at the node of hypostasis Soul's basic twofoldness. And somehow the fact of Time's *silence* ("*ouketi legei, alla poiei monon*") seems to suit it for this role.

In sum, the fact that somehow Plotinus supposes in III 7, 11 that 'our' talk can stand in for Time's declarative silence is markedly less important than the theme of that silence itself. For this has led us through related texts to the most significant feature of the text before us, the *double* derivation I claim to find in lines 11-33.

In my reading, the key formal features of the two arguments are announced already in the introductory paragraphs of the chapter. In line 6, the acting subjects of the central actions are named, in reverse order from the sequence of the arguments themselves: Logos will be the subject of argument 2, and Nature the subject of argument 1. In line 10 then, the explanatory bearing of the actions is previewed, again in reverse order: Time is asked to tell how he is something showing forth (*ekphaneis*), which is to be explained in argument 2, and how he is something come-to-be, which is what we wind up telling for him in argument 1.

As stating formally what the ensuing argumentation will be demonstrating, I believe it is important to emphasize line 10 over the "playful Homeric tag" as Armstrong calls it in line 7, "how time first fell out." The aorist used there, *exepese*, comes from *ekpiptō*, literally 'fall down', 'collapse'. On this single term great weight is placed in the interpretations of this chapter that find a quasi-moral 'downfall' involved in the origination of Time. But while *piptō* alone might support such connotations, *ekpiptō* is much lighter and more various in force. It serves in Greek as our phrase 'fall out' can serve, for a whole range of everyday affairs involving outcomes: how a vote comes out, military dismissal as 'falling out', the tidings or 'fall out' from consultation with an oracle, and the

47. V 1, 4; 20 "*pote gar Sokratēs, pote hippos*" is delightfully evocative of this 'scatter time', as Armstrong calls it, suggesting the empty juxtaposition of appearances united by no intentionality at all.

like. Some of the more colorful uses would make a lovely sense for our line 7: the medical use for example, of a limb, 'to be dislocated', or the dramatic use, of an actor, 'to be gonged' (or as Liddell and Scott have it, 'to be hissed off the stage').

Luckily, there need be no doubt about which special usage Plotinus has in mind for the 'fall out' of Time — so far as he expects what is basically a playful and informal remark to be suggestive. Directly continuing the lines cited earlier from sensible Nature's grudging discourse in III 8, 4, she goes on to say:

"My act of contemplation makes what it contemplates, as the geometers draw their figures while they contemplate. But I do not draw, but as I contemplate, the lines which bound bodies come to be as if they fell (*hōsper ekipptousai*) from my contemplation."

It appears the term occurs to Plotinus with a *geometrical* association. A geometrical use of *ekiptō* is familiar since Archimedes (Spirals 14), having the passive sense 'to be produced' (said of an extended ray). The expressly geometrical context in III 8 has so much in common with the situation in which the same term is used in III 7 that there is good reason to require the same sense on both occasions. Even though III 7 engages the production of sensible Nature at a higher level, III 8 has sensible Nature herself allude to that higher context in concluding her speech:

"What happens to me is what happens to my mother and the beings that generated me, for they, too, derive from contemplation, and it is no action (*praxis*) of theirs which brings about my birth; they are greater rational principles, and as they contemplate themselves, I come to be."

In both places we see *ekiptō* used for a productive, ordering outflow which is an activity (*energeia*) but not an action or a deed (*praxis*). The specific geometrical image Plotinus has in mind is probably a favourite: a central point radiating in all directions into lines.⁴⁸

Let us inquire further into this productive activity. Sensible Nature's mother is Soul, as Armstrong remarks in his notes to this text, and the generative beings are "the *logoi* in soul which are the immediate expressions of the Forms in Intellect." Sensible Nature contemplatively creates bounded bodies which, as 'materialized' *logoi*, are powerless for any further production. Her mother Soul, however, contemplatively creates sensible Nature, and in Soul the *logoi* are still powerful and are generative principles, not of course

48. Cf. III 7, 3: 18-20 and VI 5, 5.

with the infinite power of *Nous*, but with hypostatic self-centering of a psychic kind none the less. So III 8 already confronts us in an echo at a lower level with III 7's double consideration of hypostasis Soul in regard to her productivity: we consider her first 'in herself', with a stability of her own in the transcendental outflow (i. e. with a 'nature'), and second, as harboring the power of *logos*, as 'demiurgic' toward what is below her.

In discussing III 8, 4 so far, I have been taking pains to specify *sensible* Nature whenever I have used the term 'nature' (*phusis*), referring thereby to a final stage of life capable of being thematized for discussion, but not a fourth hypostasis (since in her, *logos* has no further power). But the Nature talking in argument 1 of III 7, to which we must now turn, is different. I make the assumption, with which it seems to me that everything else in chapter 11 coheres, that the busy Nature of line 14 is the 'higher' nature of the Soul, the nature Soul sustains as receiving hypostasis from *Nous*. Since sensible or 'lower' Nature is so expressly a bound product of Soul for Plotinus, without hypostasis of her own, it would be thoroughly out of character for her to have taken the initiative as it were in coming forth from intellectual presence into temporal motion, to bring Time into motion with her. It is psychic, not sensible Nature who takes this step.⁴⁹

And what she moves into, "*mēkos ti*," some sort of stretch or expanse, bringing Time with her, constructs Time *not* as a sensible form of externality (succession, *ephexēs*), but as the image of eternity, that is to say, as an intelligible form of perfection which, when added to the sensible universe, makes it a *better* image of its paradigm, not a worse one (*Timaeus* 37).⁵⁰ Interpretation of Neoplatonist treatments of Time must be guided by this fundamental difference between Platonic and modern physical identifications of the time-phenomenon. Time in *Timaeus*-commentary is not the pure succession in sensible motions, but a 'numbersomeness', a harmonic structure, imposed upon sensible succession by a purposive Nature. The stretchedness of time-order, what the Stoics mean by 'interval' (*diastēma*) and Plotinus by "spreading out" (*diastasis*), is an openness for the

49. Plotinus uses *phusis* on all hypostatic levels after the first. He does of course often specialize the term 'nature' as the name for the sensible realm in particular, acknowledging both the history of the topic in treatises "*peri phuseōs*" and the connection between *phusis* and *phuta*, plants (cf. III 8, 1). But he will use 'nature' equally happily for the higher nature of soul in itself (e. g. VI 9, 8) and even for *Nous* (e. g. 4: 44 and 5: 6 in III 7).

50. Only Callahan in my experience brings this out emphatically enough. *Four Views*, chapter 1, especially pp. 22-26.

deployment of intellectual unities *before* it is a successiveness participated by sensible dispersal. Time as the image of eternity is psychological time, not physical time. That is, the image is somehow coincident with Soul's own natural self-origination and self-arrival, which time makes possible.

If as these preliminary remarks suggest my alleged argument 1 in chapter 11 deals with the production of Time the image of eternity, what would still remain for argument 2 — why indeed do I harp on the presence of two arguments? Let us look more closely at the text and I will point out the structure of the arguments and the relations they bear to each other. In the interest of efficiency, I will be highly schematic to start with.

The key activities in each argument are given an event-character by being cited in verbal aorist, the narrative past tense. But there is a second, continuous activity in each case too, and in argument 1 it is presented first: "he was resting" (*anepaueto*, imperfect). As a past tense, this refers to "before the 'before' (*prin to proteron*)," before the productive activity to be narrated. It only sets the stage for the story proper. That story is very brief and tantalizing indeed: "*ekinethē men autē, ekinethē de autos*," she moved, and he did too. 'He' here is Time, 'she' the Nature of the Soul. He is on stage first and sets the scene (he was resting), but then she takes the lead in the central activity, the originary motion (she moved).

In argument 2, the continuative activity comes last, and it is the first, scene-setting activity that is aorist: "she didn't want the whole to be present to her all together." This is again followed by a story in which two subjects distinguished by grammatical gender act somehow together: "in the manner that he (*hōsper auton*, line 22)," "in like manner also she (*houpō dē kai autē*, line 27)." But the association of the two subjects seems looser in this argument than in the first. What he does, here the Logos, makes an advance into muchness (seemingly), is put in the simple and continuative present tense (*poiēi*, line 24); what she does, the unquiet Power of the Soul, is expressed in the aorist, and is in fact a double act, its phases separated by the fundamental order-structure of Time:

"*PROTON men hautēn echronōsen*," first of all she temporalized herself.

"*EPEITA de kai tōi genomenōi edōke douleuein chronōi*," and thereupon she handed over to what comes-to-be a being-in-service to Time.

Despite this additional complication, argument 2 preserves argument 1's basic story-line. Two subjects figure in each, one on stage first setting the scene, the second taking the lead in the key activity with the other following. In argument 1 the agents are

Nature (feminine) and Time (masculine), in argument 2 Logos (masculine) and Power (feminine).

'Nature' for any hypostasis is a name for the self-referential unity and stability it sustains as hypostasis, as something to be considered on its own. Argument 1 is concerned with Time as a concomitant and requisite of Soul's own Nature and hence of her 'ownness' itself, her "*archein autēs*" and "*einai autēs*," her supporting herself and being on her own. These arise in the overflow of noetic power beyond itself when that motion 'takes hold of itself' as it were, comes to life on its own terms, which in this case are 'psychological'.

But each hypostasis not only receives from above the capacity to sustain its own Nature, but it is productive toward the below. In this direction the issue is precisely what we find in argument 2, Logos and Power. It is only because the Logos of sensible Nature is no longer power but powerlessness that we have grounds for refusing to consider sensible Nature a fourth hypostasis, since her very name conveys that she has a nature and 'selfhood' and in a sense 'half a hypostasis'. In Soul however the Logos remains powerful, and the actual 'substance' of that Power seems to be Time. It seems to be Soul's temporalizing herself that gives her Power, so that the making of Time as an image of eternity that attended the establishment of Soul as a Nature in argument 1 is the very thing that gives her Power here in argument 2.

We know that this Power is exercised toward and expressed in "what comes to be," this sensible universe, and so it is worth emphasizing once more at the risk of belaboring the point that Time is not in or among the things of this universe, but instead they are in service to him, they are wholly within him and encompassed by him (just as they are all within Soul, as lines 34f. go on to develop).

The basic functions of arguments 1 and 2 have now been sketched, but not the additional complication that the key activity in the second is twofold. Why does argument 2 recapitulate the self-temporalization of Soul which was the theme of 1 before going on with its own proper concern, the expression of Logos and Power in what Soul makes?

I believe that line 12 back in the introduction suggests the answer, in that it seems to show Plotinus distinguishing between the ways in which 'before' and 'after' arise for Time. We are used to thinking of *proteron/husteron* as a pair completely entailed by one another, as making sense only in comparison to one another. But in Greek each term can be itself comparative: *proteron* means 'beforehand' as determined from some 'here and now'; *husteron*

means 'afterward', again from here and now. Line 12 says that Time "has produced" (*gennēsai*) the beforehand, but it has "felt need of" (*deēthēnai*) the afterward. The one event, the "fall out" of Time, can be given horizon in two separate respects.

Assuming once more that these two formulations foreshadow the two ensuing arguments but in reverse order, then the 'feeling need' is involved in argument 1, the 'producing' in argument 2.

From the point of view of pure eternal presence, the sort of life that Soul wants is 'in need of' the afterward for its very being (compare chapter 4: 17-31). So argument 1, which follows Soul in her movement into such a Nature, is also the origination of Time's 'afterward'.

But since 'beforehand' must be given an origin of its own and does not automatically attend the 'afterward', argument 2 must recapitulate the initial Time-constituting movement (Soul's "temporalizing herself") in a way that sets up a 'beforehand'. And this it does, by specifying that the self-temporalization "produces Time *instead of* eternity (*anti tou aiōnos*, line 31), establishing as argument 1 does not that Time 'leaves eternity behind' in at least one respect. This respect is then identified in the second stage of her twofold activity, sensible production.

In general, the order-structure of Time is something much more complex in Plotinus than the one-dimensional binary distinction that we represent to ourselves intuitively with directed lines or monotonic number series. Order comes to pass for Soul 'vertically' within the transcendental logic, as an expression of the peculiar two-sided self-sustainance that Soul comes up with as posterior to Nous but prior to sensible becoming. But order is also a feature of the 'horizontal' opening within each of the various levels of Soul's life, conferring upon intelligible unity a kind of 'pure' *taxis* without succession, which is 'simultaneously' mapped into the purposive arrangements of sensible succession by Soul's demiurgic descent.

Speaking schematically, Time is an opening or a disclosure space which is *two-dimensional*, giving Soul both *vertical* relations and *horizontal* structures across them. The remainder of chapter 11 after the two principal derivations is an effort to come to grips with this complicated, perniciously confusing two-dimensionality.

The confusion which threatens is pernicious because language itself seems constantly to twist distinctions in one dimension through 90° into the other dimension. Verbal aorist for example, wanted philosophically for its aspect of singularity of event, creating a *Jenseits* and a *Diesseits* and hence able to suggest the vertical priority of Nous in the transcendental logic,⁵¹ brings with it

51. Note III 5, 9: 24 f. and VI 7, 35: 27-30.

the horizontal narrative priority of 'once upon a time' and puts us in conversation with the theogonic and cosmogonic myths and the gnostic allegory. In coming to grips with this twisting away of language when it is pressed to thematize time, Plotinus prefigures in the remainder of the chapter all the formal distinctions later made explicit in Iamblichus, Proclus and Simplicius.⁵²

His basic step is to abandon the attempt for a perfectly univocal use of the name 'Time'. Beginning with line 36, a series of difficult counterpositions involving key concepts leads to a hint that there are *two* 'Times'. The presentation lends itself to tabular summary, with each concept characterized in a higher and in a lower condition:

higher

lower

energeia (1. 36): other after other/ /into another succession again

dianoia (1. 38): that one, not beforehand in being/ /a different one

zōē (1. 40): the one beforehand/ /the one now

After the reference to two kinds of life, line 41 then concludes: "So at once the life is different and the 'different' involves a *different Time*".

To the degree that Plotinus ever actually proposes names for the two 'different Times' that this remark would seem to promise, he has already given them to us earlier in the chapter. He referred in line 10 to Time come-to-be, showing forth, and in line 13 to Time "himself" (*autos*), not (yet) being Time (*chronos ouk ōn*). Iamblichus will later supply several pairs of terms for this hesitantly advanced distinction, which then becomes a late Platonic commonplace.⁵³

Here in line 41, Plotinus holds back from naming two 'Times' and makes do with the notion of a 'differentness' within Time.

52. So I cannot agree with Sambursky-Pines that "with Iamblichus there began a radically new conception, substantializing time as a hypostatic entity of its own in a way that differed from anything said before of the nature of time," and in particular making a break with Plotinus. *Concept of Time* p. 12.

53. E.g. *ho genesiourgos chronos* as against *ho genomenos*, in parallel with *hē proūparchousa taxis tes kinēseōs* as against *hē tōn praxeōn*, Sambursky-Pines p. 26; also to *amerēs* as against *to anūpostaton*, *ibid.*; also this partless time as against *ho rheontos kai genētos chronos*, *ibid.* p. 28; also to *chōriston kai kath' heauto nun* as against *to en tēi phusei metechomenon*, *ibid.* p. 30. The terms in which it becomes a commonplace are *ho psuchikos chronos* and *ho phusikos chronos*, *ibid.* p. 34, i. e. psychological time and physical time. I am unable to find any language in the material Sambursky and Pines assemble that one would translate as 'intellectual time' versus 'sensible time', but so long as one remembers that Soul has an intellectual life and refers the higher time to this, such language is not misleading.

When he then comes to the informally advanced 'definition of Time' in line 43, where the vertical twofold is traversed by a life (*zōē*) which is in a movement of transition between two levels, instead of two Times he names two 'ways-of-life' (*bioi*), and it is under this title that he goes on to discuss the twofold and its possible reversion into eternity in the first lines of chapter 12.⁵⁴ But the later Neoplatonic development of a two-times talk, which emphasizes that the two must be "taken into one" if the full nature of time is to be grasped,⁵⁵ is not without basis in Plotinus and is not out of place here. It allows us to recast the definition in a way that brings its peculiar force home clearly: Time is the life of Soul in a movement of transition from one Time (psychic time) into another (physical, sensible time). Since taken without reference to Soul's demiurgic motion of outflow psychic Time is 'itself' but not yet Time, the strange involution in the definition can even be intensified: Time is in a movement of transition from a somehow subsistent nonbeing of itself into its existence. It arrives vertically into its own horizontality.

The time-defining motion is certainly not 'along' the horizontal *allo kai allo* of sensible succession, which would make it one or another sort of accompaniment (*parakalouthēma*) of sensible motion as in the rejected Stoic and peripatetic theories. Nor does it move in respect to sensible motion. As Iamblichus properly points out, Time is said to 'move' *only with respect to eternity*,⁵⁶ giving Soul that form of order or of 'coming after' which I have been calling *vertical*.

Sensible motion is not of course outside of Time, and sensible motion is in fact needed, once Time is *genētos*, come-to-be, for it to be *ekphaneis*, shown forth. But the sensible is "in service to Time," not the reverse. Time belongs to the Soul's power to *produce* the sensible order, to effect a transition between intellectual and sensible logos. The Nature which has the Power to make this transition is not *in* Time, but *is* Time: "Now it must be understood from this [the whole of chapter 11] that the Nature is herself Time" (*hōs hē phusis hautē chronos*, chapter 12: 1).

Chapter 12 goes on in a way which gives my vertical interpretation of the defining motion of Time an even stronger

54. It seems to me that *bios* here must mean way-of-life or perhaps lifespan, referring to a totality, as against "Lebensphase" in Beierwaltes (commentary ad loc.), which he chooses in order to construe the 'motion of transition' in the definition horizontally. This seems to be the sense required in chapter 4: 28, and again in the references in chapter 12 to "this life" (as against implied 'that one'), lines 5 and 22, where again the vertical sense I find in the definition is strongly suggested.

55. Iamblichus in Sambursky-Pines, p. 26.

56. *Ibid.* p. 44, and also in *Timaeum* fragment 64: 7 (Dillon).

basis, confirming for example the distinction I have insisted on between the roles of *phusis* and of *dunamis* in the Soul's constitution of Time.⁵⁷ But evidence for it has not been absent in chapter 11, as I have shown. Why has such an interpretation not become widespread?

I suspect that it simply hasn't seemed to scholars to make any sense to consider that time is a constant 'vertical' arrival into its own opened extendedness, that it is a two-dimensional disclosure space. The history and philology of Greek philosophy of time still seem wedded to the identification of the phenomenon of time required in Seventeenth Century empiricism (Newton, Hume), where time is only a dimension of sensible motion, and no phenomenon is recognized to which the old two-dimensional talk, which may go back as far as Archytas, might apply, despite the fact that recent fundamental analyses by E. Husserl and A. N. Whitehead identify time as two-dimensional and not identical with sensible succession.⁵⁸

In this paper we cannot explore what congruence there may be between old and new phenomenology of time, since we have to climb back out of the analysis of our text to the larger historical problems we met in the work of Hans Jonas. The reader who has gotten into this with me will not let me out of this section, however, until I say something about line 42, which was passed over in silence. Sandwiched between a series of two-sided distinctions and the two-lives definition, line 42 makes *three* distinctions and thus sets us to make temporal distinctions, i.e. to schematise according to the three temporal horizons rather than the twofold schema of order:

- 42 the diastasis of life involves time (present);
 the always-forward of life involves time always (future);
 the passing of life involves time which has come to pass (past).

57. Chapter 12 begins by asserting *hōs hē phusis hautē chronos*, that the nature is herself time, summarizing argument 1, and then goes on to consider whether the development of *dunamis* recounted in argument 2 could not be reversed, i. e. whether by logos we could make the *dunamis* turn back to that life it had before 'this one', line 6 restoring time to eternity.

58. The need for a two-dimensional diagram of time is discussed, and a diagram suggested by Iamblichus is drawn, in Sambursky-Pines, p. 15f. See also E. Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 49. For a version of the two-dimensional diagram based on Whiteheadian notions, see Lewis S. Ford, "Boethius and Whitehead on Time and Eternity," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1968) p. 46.

Present, future and past are not "parts of time" like day, month, year, which take on order, but "forms of time" (*eidē chronou*, Timaeus 37E), two of which are named in *Timaeus* as "generated" (gegonota), namely future and past, leaving room for the assumption that the third, the present, is ungenerated — which coheres with its applicability to eternal true being.

So perhaps Plotinus' "diastasis" which names the present of time therefore names also the being of time, time in the horizon of (properly eternal) presence,⁵⁹ while the "always forward" and the "passing" name compromises which time makes with nonbeing, forms under which time is 'participable' by what comes-to-be.⁶⁰ The always-forward gives what comes-to-be a seeming being, an "aspiration to substance" (chapter 4: 31); the passing gives it a seeming origin and rootedness, a station in the outflow of the *archē*.

In fact all being and all origination take place, so far as time is concerned, in the diastasis, the spreading-out of life — what some modern writing calls the lived or specious present. Here what comes-to-be is reached directly and with power by life and given the capacity to participate in life, even if only as life always-still-coming and as life passing away. Such a way of contrasting the present as diastasis with the future and the past is supported verbally by the term Iamblichus chooses for the latter two: he calls them *ekstaseis*, ways in which the 'nows' "proceed outwards" (*proïonta exo*).⁶¹

Whether this line of thought actually suits Plotinus' intentions, and if it does, whether diastasis might not itself be a form of ecstasis, along perhaps with its paradigm the eternal diathesis of life, are questions leading away from our inquiry here and must be postponed.

But even if we have not exhausted the interpretation of our text, it seems fair to claim that I have shown how virtually all of its formal features are under the control of a philosophical problema-

59. In agreement with what Hans Jonas says, "Plotin über Ewigkeit und Zeit," p. 298, distinguishing between "die Zukunft das eigentlich Zeitliche an der Zeit, die Weise ihrer Zeitigung" and "das Wesentliche an ihr als Modalität das Seins, worin ihrer Ähnlichkeit mit der Ewigkeit besteht, die Gegenwart." Properly speaking however, one should not call the future the authentically temporal *in time*, but in the *things* which have continually to be arriving from the future in order to be; cf. 4: 17ff.

60. "And where has one to conceive the flux and ecstasis of time? The answer is: in the things participating in time." Sambursky-Pines, p. 35. It is from the rest of this passage that their diagram in the Introduction is derived.

61. *Ibid.* p. 28 and p. 34. *ta nun ta proïonta exo*, p. 32.

tic whose complications are organized and rooted in fundamental systematic questions. Even if it is wrong-headed or fantastic, chapter 11 is not offhand, and we are not forced outside of philosophy to account for its vagaries.

What it might tell us if we willingly took a larger view now becomes our topic.

III

Concluding Reflections

Time in Plotinus — Plotinus in time.

In these two phases now completed, I have begun a polemic in favor of a proper identification of time in the history of Greek philosophy.

Time in Plotinus is a matter we met in his written text, most radically and explicitly in III 7, 11, and we have now given that text a detailed reading. Plotinus in time is a matter we met in the dispute between A. H. Armstrong and Hans Jonas about the structure of time as the matrix for traditions, influences, the evolution of ideas. To prepare ourselves on that level, we thematized the transcendental time that comes into play at the heart of Hans Jonas' hermeneutics of the 'gnostic principle': time as a schematism for historical imagination which illuminates the mode and direction of the transformation of ideas, not just gives them passive placement in an empty serial order. At the end of that first section I alerted us to a peculiar situation in this regard: as I see it, Hans Jonas could cite Plotinus' treatment of time against Armstrong's historiographical empiricism and in support of his own typological, transcendently schematizing time, but in fact Jonas meets Plotinus only as a subordinate moment in his typological construction, in so doing depending on what I agree with Armstrong is a misreading of the text.

This last charge is now easily illustrated. In order to have it that the time-producing movement of the soul in III 7, 11 has kinship with Orphic or gnostic myths of the 'fall of the soul into time', Jonas had to read time as a condition of alienation from eternity and the soul's movement into it as a defection which degrades it in essence and power. We have seen to the contrary how Timaeus' doctrine that time is an image of eternity and a form of perfection added to sensible process to help it better image its paradigm makes time pertain to the continuity of life in its hierarchical arrangements, not to discontinuity and alienation. In the same way, the time-producing movement of the soul is not defection into powerlessness but the constituting act of the soul's charac-

teristic power sensibly to enact intelligible patterns. The being-produced-from-eternity of time (the life of the soul) is no external standing away from it, across some sort of distance which would be neither time nor eternity, but an internal structure of soul-time itself. Time itself reaches from eternity to time; it has *as time* an eternal aspect.

The opening passage of the critical treatment of time in chapter 7 of III 7 confirms this assessment and the reading of chapter 11 I have been developing with particular clarity. Using the device already explained of letting the rhetorical 'we' speak for the time-producing soul, Plotinus makes the transition from the earlier chapters on eternity to those on time as follows:

Are we, then, saying this if we were giving evidence on others' behalf and talking about what is not our own? How could we be? For what understanding could there be if we were not in contact with it? But how could we be in contact with what was not our own? We too, then, must have a share in eternity. But how can we when we are in time? But what it means to be in time and what it means to be in eternity may become known to us when we have discovered time.

So, then, we must go down from eternity to the enquiry into time, and to time; for there our way led us upwards, but now we must come down in our discourse, *not altogether, but in the way in which time came down* (lines 1-11, trans. Armstrong, my italics).

This says that we know neither eternity nor time except in so far as we know our being *in both*. In Greek philosophy only Aristotle and the Stoics seem to have attempted a treatment of time alone, taken as a complete subject matter apart from eternity. In Plotinus as in the entire Platonic tradition, the subject matter is eternity-and-time embraced within a single problematic. When after Iamblichus the later Neoplatonists break the hypostases apart for more separate, individualized treatment, this two-phased structure of the problem is replicated within time itself, in the distinction between psychical time (proper or 'eternal' time) and physical time (sensible, flowing time). Against what Hans Jonas has so far made available of his reading of Plotinus, neither the philosophical substance of Plotinus' argument in III 7, 11 nor even the actual force of those stylistic devices which echo and may even parody gnostic mythology (the 'we', our 'coming down' etc.) support the diagnosis of a gnostic concept of being-in-time as downfall and alienation.

Are Armstrong's objections to Jonas' historical typology therefore vindicated? Are Jonas' misapprehensions about time and the

soul in Plotinus evidence of intrinsic wrong-headedness in his larger effort to situate Plotinus in relation to the internal transformations of the speculative spirit of late antiquity, above all its movement from mythical objectivism to mystical reflection and the beginnings of phenomenology? I think not.

Appropriately employed, I think Plotinus on eternity and time is Jonas' strongest support for penetrating beyond historical positivism about author's intentions and influences to movements in ideas themselves.

It should first be observed that Jonas does not, as Armstrong's rejoinder supposes, make any claims about gnostic *influence* on Plotinus and he would have no trouble agreeing with Armstrong that Plotinus was hostile to and consciously critical of the alienated and world-denying impulses of the gnostics. Nor does Jonas plan on tying Plotinus into an evolving gnostic principle at the level of unconscious influences and sympathies, against which Armstrong's testimony, based on profound knowledge of the man, would again be decisive. Jonas' questions about the soul, about the emerging reflection on psychological individuality and its religious meaning which we see in the Third Century, are addressed to the logic of ideas themselves, to relations of precondition and consequence, projection and appropriation, disclosure and reflection which inhere in a subject which is *transcendental* but historical *nonetheless*. Armstrong's dispute with Jonas about Plotinus is therefore not head-to-head over 'influences', but has the deeper and properly philosophical sense of a dispute over the existence of such transcendental history as an object of research.

Though it may not serve as Jonas has expected, as a moment within the transcendental history of the gnostic principle, it seems to me that Plotinus' conception of time is directly supportive of the methodological validity of attempting such an account of gnosticism. Time, says Plotinus, is not *just* time — serial succession, quasi-spatial distance and order in a sensible metric space — but the arrival into that series and order of eternal intelligible relations.

A philosophical text itself crystalizes time in both these dimensions. It sets forth the time or a particular, humanly concrete train of thought, expressing literary influences, stylistic gifts, unconscious elements of biographical personality. But it also speaks from the font of language and thought itself, what Platonists call eternity and see figured in the archetypal authority of the Platonic text and the verbal coherence they assure for their tradition by proceeding by commentary upon it. Their disdain for the compositional time of the Platonic writing (even for its dialectical time), so that they raid it for aphorisms wrested from

context and freighted with transcendental meaning, is evidence for this assumption. Plotinus is so aware of this 'transcendental' aspect of the time of tradition that it is absolutely to be expected that his most fundamental reflection on the intersection of tradition and experience would preface the treatise on eternity and time.

Because our familiar reading of the history of Greek philosophy misidentifies eternity as static, changeless and lifeless, in the same measure as it misidentifies time as the matrix of pure changeability and flux, it is difficult to recognize the transcendental relation between typological and empirical history in that opening between eternity and time which is 'soul-time' in Plotinus. In this paper I have tried to take some steps toward a re-identification of time in that doctrine, showing that it is a productive power and not a scattering powerlessness. In fact, a further step is required, beyond the scope of this paper: the richer identification of time must rebound upon the identification of its paradigm. Eternity is not abstract timelessness, but the paradigm for the timeliness of time — i.e. productive power, intelligible disclosedness.⁶²

Recovered in its imaginative vitality and intuitive power, Greek thinking about eternity-and-time is much closer to post-Hegelian convictions about 'history' and much more supportive of the hermeneutical phenomenologies than we imagine. At the level of method, as against empirical assertion, Jonas' hermeneutics of the gnostic principle and its transformations is deeply coherent with Greek philosophical insight, above all with the voice it finds in Plotinus. Armstrong's cautions do not in my judgment deny Plotinus to Jonas' program: made fruitful by the closer study of the text that they call for, and which I have here attempted to provide, they make Plotinus even more intimately supportive of Jonas' work than he has seen. We discover that a transcendental view of historical motion, of what takes place in 'time and the soul', puts Jonas on common ground with Plotinus, giving him and us a closer colleague than his published work has so far allowed.

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62. For a preliminary step in the 'archeology' of the Greek notion of eternity so considered, see my "Parmenides and the Need for Eternity," *Monist* 62: 1 (January, 1979). That study and this one are part of an ongoing program I call *The Syntax of Time*, in which among other studies of Anaximander, Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics will be required.