

The One and the Many: Part II: The Many

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0.1 INDIVIDUATION AND NUMBER

Part I of this study ventured to explain how the Plotinian One can be conceived as an efficient cause without placing any sort of multiplicity into it. To this end, two hypernoetic triads of the One were presented. The first triad presented only what can be said of the One according to strict necessity while the second, following upon the first, permitted us to apply something of our discursive thinking upon the One so as to conceive of it within the limits of our capacity.¹ The first moment of the first triad regarded the One as pure Identity and the key term was not so much “ἰδιότης” as “αὐτός”: the One is that which is *simply and purely itself*.² The final moment of the second triad argued that the first/internal act of the One must already be *other* than the One itself and that this “act” was essential number.³ The two major sections comprising the present paper will discuss the “Many” by way of a further development of these two moments.

In developing the first moment of the One, that of Identity, we shall first argue that if the One is the first cause of all things then it the cause of *each thing itself*; that is to say, the One will be the principle of *individuation prior to form or essence*. In developing the final moment of the One, that of number, it will be possible to discern the Many themselves as unitary identities prior to substance. In this way it will be shown that, while ontology/metaphysics studies Being itself along with the *kinds/forms* of things, henology studies the ordered unfolding of the *things themselves* prior to all forms.

1. See Labecki, “The One and the Many: Part One: The One,” 78–80 and 84–87 for our distinction between arguments from necessity and arguments from persuasion in the writings of Plotinus. The mostly negative results from necessity apply to the One itself with certainty and we called this the “simple aspect” of the One because it does not project any temporal duration upon the One. The more positive but relative results from persuasion produce a psychic approximation of the One within ourselves and we called this the “progressive aspect” of the One because it projects some kind of temporal duration upon the One.

2. See O’Daly, *Plotinus’ Philosophy of the Self*, 90–94 for a presentation of the One as “Self.” For textual references in Plotinus see: V.6 [24] 4–9; VI.8 [39] 16.42, 21.32–33.

3. This implies that the “second act” of the One would generate intelligible matter.

0.2 THE PROBLEMATIC OF IDENTITY AND NUMBER AT THE BEGINNING OF VI.6 [34]

Ennead VI.6 [34], “On Numbers,” begins with the problem of the multiple (πολὸν) as a falling away (ἀπόστασις) and outpouring “unable to tend to itself.”⁴ When it has lost all unity it becomes the infinite or “multiplicity” (πληθος) in which there is no “one.” In Part I of our study, the second moment of the One according to strict necessity was remaining (μένειν) as that which “tends to itself” and does not depart from itself. Thus pure multiplicity is the exact inverse of the One and Plotinus will ascribe to this infinity the characteristics Plato gives to the fifth and ninth hypotheses in the *Parmenides*,⁵ which are typically interpreted by Neoplatonists to denote the hypostasis of matter.⁶ We think it safe, then, to identify this multiplicity/infinity with matter.

Plotinus contrasts the complete disparity of infinite multiplicity with “magnitude,” which results from that “which abides (μένον) in its outpouring.”⁷ Evidently some part remains “in place” while another “goes off,”⁸ yielding an extensive greatness “far away from itself.”⁹ Finally, regarding that which is composed of several parts, Plotinus writes:

If it is going to be itself, all its parts must tend to one: so it is itself when it is one in some way (ἀμυγέπη ἔν), not large. So through magnitude and as far as it depends on magnitude it loses itself; but as far as it possesses a one (τι δὲ ἔχει ἔν), it possesses itself (ἔχει ἑαυτό).¹⁰

In order for the composite to be itself, there must be “some one” (τι ἔν) such that in the same degree that it possesses this, it also possesses itself. Conversely, to the same extent that it is in magnitude it is in another and thereby loses itself. From this we adduce that this “some one” *is* itself—it is that through which it is itself in some way one. Magnitude here is a qualified matter for a qualified identity. We shall argue that, just as pure multiplicity

4. VI.6 [34] 1.5. All citations from Plotinus, both English and Greek, unless otherwise indicated, will be from Armstrong’s translation of the works of Plotinus.

5. VI.6 [34] 3.33–38. *Parm.* 159b5–160d1 and 165e1–166b2.

6. The introduction to the French critical edition of VI.6 [34], “*Traité sur les Nombres*,” relates the discussion of infinity in the third chapter of VI.6 [34] to the χώρα of the *Timeaus* and to prime matter in Aristotle 38. Moreover, we are also reminded that, in II. 4 [12] 7.21–22, Plotinus identifies the unlimited/infinite (ἄπειρον) with matter (ύλη).

7. VI.6 [34] 1.8.

8. Cf. VI.7 [38] 13.18–20, in which the progressive aspect of Intellect is described in this way.

9. VI.6 [34] 1.10.

10. VI.6 [34] 1.20–23. Cf. VI.9 [9] 1.1–5 and V.3 [49] 15.10–15, where Plotinus also speaks of the “one” by which each thing is some one existent.

is the inverse of the One, magnitude, in designating the continuous, will turn out to be the inverse of number. The opening chapter of VI.6 [34] has thereby established the central problematic of that treatise:

1. How do the many ones come about and what is their hypostatic status?
2. How are the ones differentiated from each other if each is a bare unity?
3. What difference does it make to trace individuation back to the First Principle?

We shall address the last of these questions relative to the One as identity/itself and then the first two relative to number itself.

1.1 THE ONE IS THE PRINCIPLE OF EACH THING ITSELF

We claim that the fundamental characteristic of *positive henology* arises when Plotinus addresses the Aristotelian claim that it is no different to say “one man” than to say “man” alone.¹¹ If such is the case, then the many ways in which something can be “one” could be reduced to the many ways in which things are said to “be” and thus the One, as opposed to Being, will not make any difference to that of which it is the Principle. In *Metaphysics* B it is said that “There is no difference of meaning between ‘numerically one’ and ‘individual’; for this is just what we mean by the individual—the numerically one.”¹² Aristotle goes on to argue that if unity is not a separate substance, then nor is number separable; “for number is units, and the unit is precisely a certain kind of one.”¹³ Therefore, in denying that “one” is separable, Aristotle *also* rejects the possibility of separable individuals. How, then, does Plotinus respond to all this?

For what can anyone say that it is besides being and intellect? For it is either the same as being—for “man” and “one man” are the same thing—or is it like a kind of number of the individual (οἷον ἀριθμός τις ἐκάστου); you say “one” of a thing alone just as you say “two things.” Now if number belongs to real beings, it is clear that so does the one.¹⁴

It is argued that either the Aristotelian critique of the primacy of unity is true, or the One is *the principle of the individuation* of the others. It is a principle of individuation in its likeness to number, or rather, we must say that number individuates in its likeness to the One as Identity itself. Positive henology seek to answer the question: “if there is a one, then what about the

11. *Metaphysics* Γ 1003^b 25–35.

12. *Metaphysics* B 999^b 33–34.

13. *Metaphysics* B 1001^a 26–27.

14. VI.9 [9] 2.9–13.

others?”¹⁵ It will follow that the individuation of the beings is not accidental and that they will come forth as numbers.

In *Metaphysics Z* it is clear that, for Aristotle, *matter* is the principle of individuation. A “father begets, a ‘such’ out of a ‘this’; and when it has been begotten, it is a ‘this such.’”¹⁶ In this way the “such” denotes form while “this” denotes some particular matter.¹⁷ Aristotle explains that Callias and Socrates, for example, “are different in virtue of their matter (for that is different), but the same in form; for their form is indivisible.”¹⁸

In V.7 [18] Plotinus rejects this view since, first of all, if matter provides anything it provides ugliness¹⁹ and, moreover, he affirms that, between individuals, “the difference must be linked with the form;”²⁰ for “if it is precisely determined how many there are (ὅπόσα τινὰ εἶη), the quantity will be defined by the unrolling and the unfolding of all the forming principles.”²¹ It is evident that Plotinus believes that the “how many” must be measured as he is in fact willing, at the end of the treatise, to accept the notion that there is an infinite number of forming principles in both Soul and Intellect.²²

Contrary to the conviction of most commentators on V.7 [18], Plotinus’ concern with individuation is not simply with respect to the human soul.²³ To be sure, the treatise opens by expressing concern for the immortality of the human soul and it is obvious that personal immortality requires that each such soul be essentially individuated. This is not, however, the exclusive or even the primary concern of the treatise, since, in the end, the “how many” of *all things* must be measured by the unfolding of the forming principles.

Plotinus will not, of course, maintain that there are an infinite number of intelligible and psychic principles. For example, in VI.5 [23] he will write: “It would be absurd to introduce many Ideas in order that each individual fire might be formed by a different one; for in this way the Ideas will be infinite

15. See *Parmenides* 136a–d.

16. *Metaphysics Z* 1033^b 23–24.

17. A similar move will be made by Hegel in the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “Sense-Certainty: Or the ‘This’ and ‘Meaning,’” wherein the possibility of signifying a specific “this,” as given in sense certainty, is rendered problematic. The difficulty is insurmountable by means of the resources of Idealism alone because individuation neither is, or results from, any kind of thinking or determination of essence. But Plotinus, while speaking of the one number, will affirm that “the ‘this’ is not an empty word.” (VI.6. 13.55).

18. *Metaphysics Z* 1034^a 7–8.

19. V.7 [18] 2.17. In II.4 [12] 11 and III.6 [26] 17. In II.4 [12] 4, the intelligible beings are divided into “each” one by shapes while intelligible matter is in fact what is *common* to them all.

20. V.7 [18] 3.11.

21. V.7 [18] 3.15–16.

22. V.7 [18] 3.21–22.

23. See Paul Kalligas, “Forms of Individuals in Plotinus: A Re-Examination.”

in number.”²⁴ If individuation can come from neither matter nor form, then from what does it come? Despite these difficulties, Plotinus does not abandon the thesis that individuation is transcendently determined. In IV.3 [27], for example, Plotinus reaffirms that souls are individuated and explains that this is so on the basis of the many intellects:

Since the Intellects There too are not dissolved into a unity because they are not corporally divided, but each remains distinct in otherness (μένει ἕκαστον ἐν ἑτερότητι) having the same essential being. So too it is with souls, which depend in order on each several intellect (ἐφεξῆς καθ' ἕκαστον νοῦν), and are expressions of intellects, further unfolded than they are, having passed, we may say from brevity to multiplicity.²⁵

The souls are each individuated in order (ἐφεξῆς) upon the basis of the severally distinct intellects²⁶ in a further “unfolding” into multiplicity. These intellects, since they are all the same with respect to their *kind* of being (they are all equally intellects), must be distinct by way of “otherness” or difference.²⁷ What then is this otherness within Being? Plotinus indicates the source of this individuating difference later in the same treatise:

There is structural organization (σύνταξις) and the realities are not completely cut off from each other, and there is nothing random among the realities (as there is not even among bodies), and it follows that there must be a [definite]²⁸ number (καὶ ἀριθμὸν τινα ἀκόλουθόν). For, again, realities must be static, and the intelligible realities must remain the same, and each must be numerically one (καὶ ἕκαστον ἐν ἀριθμῷ): for this is how it is *this* definite reality (οὕτω γὰρ τὸ τὸδε ...) The existence of each is in that which it is, numerically one (τὸ εἶναί ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ἀριθμῷ ἓν), which is there from the beginning (ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑπάρχει).²⁹

All things are individuated *precisely* in their being “ordered together” (σύνταξις). Ordered hierarchy is *not* the oppression of difference and individuation—it is precisely the way in which there can be many kinds and grades of singularity. Plotinus again begins with the question of the human soul, but ultimately affirms that individuation must be determined on *all levels, even the bodily*, such that nothing in the order of things might be

24. VI.5 [23] 8.40–42. Cf. VI.6 [34] 18.1–2.

25. IV.3 [27] 5.8–11.

26. Algebraically this can be expressed as a functional mapping from Intellect to Soul: $f: S \rightarrow S$ such that for each $i_n \in S$ there is some $s_n \in S$ and $f(i_n) = s_n$. This means that the function f (Intellect's external act) between I and S is such that for any given intellect, i_n , in Intellect there is also some soul, s_n , in Soul such that the functional relation f between I and S combined with some i_n composes some s_n .

27. Cf. II. [12] 4.2–8 and II.6 [17] 3.5–7.

28. Armstrong's insertion, emphasizing “τινα.”

29. IV.3 [27] 8.20–29.

by chance.³⁰ This is because the One is not only or primarily the Principle of the *kinds* of things but the principle of *each thing itself*: “it makes each individual thing exist.”³¹ If the One is the Principle, then the specific others which exist, at least to some limit within the bodily, are not random but providentially ordered.

If nothing is by chance, then, Plotinus argues, there must be *a specific number* to which all these pluralities can be traced.³² The whole of this number, then, provides a basis for the “how many” of Intellect, while each element of that number is the “one” by which each is “numerically one” and thus a specific entity.

1.2 Positive Plotinian Henology and its Precedents

The refusal of Being as First Principle in favour of the One does not result in negative theology and mysticism alone; its *positive* side consists in the study of *each one itself*. The presence of such a “positive henology” in the thought of Plotinus is, however, generally overlooked by scholars but flashes of it appear in the literature from time to time. Trouillard, for example, will say that the Plotinian universe “est le lien des singularités, non une forme abstrait.”³³ While he does not pursue this line of thought very far, he points us in the right direction with respect to the role of number in the philosophy of Plotinus, affirming that “la participation à l’Un, dès qu’elle s’exprime, est le nombre.”³⁴

Wilberding has noticed the particular attention with which Plotinus treats of the discrete identity and individuation of the heavenly bodies.³⁵ It is argued that Plotinus differs from Plato and Aristotle in maintaining that “the heavenly bodies all remain numerically the same individuals for all time. This keener focus on individual identity forces Plotinus to examine factors previously left untouched.”³⁶

Collette, in *Dialectique et Hénologie chez Plotin*, has drawn attention to the presence, in Plotinus’ philosophy, of “la *suntaxis*, régie par l’Un, divise

30. Cf. V.3 [49] 12.9–15, where the One is both compared with number (presumably quantitative) and, on this basis, that which guarantees that all things are not merely by chance.

31. V.3 [49] 17.11.

32. This requirement was also noticed in VI.4 [22]: “But how are there many souls and many intellects and many beings? And, furthermore, since they come from what is before them as numbers (καὶ προϊόντα ἐκ τῶν προτέρων ἀριθμοὶ οὐτα), not magnitudes, they will cause a difficulty in a similar way about how to fill the All.” VI.4 [22] 4.18–21.

33. Trouillard, *La Procession Plotinienne* 68.

34. *Ibid.* 58.

35. This is perhaps what Plotinus primarily has in mind when saying that even the individual bodies must not be without plan.

36. James Wilberding *Plotinus’ Cosmology: A Study of Ennead II.1 (40) 41*. See II.1 [40] 2.1–2.

la réalité qui en procède en différent niveaux topologiques dont chacun conserve sa singularité (et ce au sein de chaque niveau, de chaque être, de chaque âme).³⁷ Collette, however, does not follow up on this observation by investigating the role of number in Plotinus; rather he conducts a close reading of much of VI.2 [43], “On the Kinds of Being,” with a view to seeing how individuation arises both in the kinds themselves and in their dialectical interrelation. Indeed, much of VI.2 [43] indicates that the kinds or *genres* of being are sufficient to explain the multiplicity of beings but serious doubts are raised in the final chapter and, once again, the notion of number is introduced in order to explain the many individuals.³⁸ Collette, at the end of his study, does not shy away from this passage and even concludes that the distinctive character of each intellect “a besoin d’un détermination préalable de son objet.”³⁹ This determining object is premised upon a difference “inscrit au cœur de l’être”⁴⁰ and, since its source is evidently beyond being, it cannot be directly investigated. His book ends, however, relative to a citation from VI.2 [43] 11.14–19, in which Plotinus says that each thing, in being “more or less one,” is not “more or less being” but “more or less good.” “More or less one” is taken to be the multiplicity/difference “inscribed in the heart of being.” This difference can, however, be investigated since the “more or less one” is made manifest in the number series.

Corrigan has also noticed the presence of the source of individuation relative to the One but, unlike Collette, he connects this principle, if only in passing, to number in VI.6 [34], which he suggests prefigures the divine henads of Proclus.⁴¹ This occurs in the context of a close reading of III.8 [30] 10.1–26,⁴² where Plotinus speaks of the *levels of ones* through which each thing can be traced back to the One itself. He writes that “Plotinus bites the bullet on the hyperdeterminate multiplicity issue [...]; even in the unity of all things with their source, there is still a kind of individual identity in each.”⁴³

37. B. Collette, *Dialectique et Hénologie chez Plotin* 123.

38. VI.2 [43] 22.10–12. Number comes up in the solution at lines 20–22.

39. B. Collette, *Dialectique et Hénologie chez Plotin* 209.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Just as there are many souls after Soul and many intellects from Intellect, Proclus argues that there are many “henads” or “ones” from the One itself (See: Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* Prop. 113). For the a reading of the henads as pure identities see Butler, “Polytheism and Individuality in the Henadic Manifold.”

42. K. Corrigan, *Reading Plotinus: A Practical Introduction to Neoplatonism* 181–82. Corrigan has also argued that in the different levels of matter discernable in the writings of Plotinus one finds the “direct forerunners” of Proclus’ teachings of distinct kinds of unlimitedness on each level of reality (See K. Corrigan, *Plotinus’ Theory of Matter-Evil and the Question of Substance: Plato, Aristotle, and Alexander of Aphrodisias*, 291). The necessary correlate to these different kinds of infinity, we shall see, are different kinds of limits *qua* number.

43. *Ibid.* 180.

The only other instance we have witnessed in the literature in which the theory of number in VI.6 [34] is directly compared with the henads of Proclus, again in passing, is at the end of *Traité sur les Nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])*.⁴⁴ It arises at the end of a list of possible ways in which one might interpret the treatise:

Or le néoplatonisme a été conscient de l'insuffisance de l'Un s'il s'agit d'assurer la structure de tout. Entre l'Un et le tout, un intermédiaire doit fonder la normativité de passage. Cet intermédiaire s'appelle «nombre» chez Plotin; il s'appellera «hénades» chez Proclus.⁴⁵

This same commentary up to that point (being the penultimate paragraph) is almost completely dedicated to making this sort of interpretation unthinkable. We, on the other hand, shall maintain that this so-called “mediation” is required not because the One is insufficient, but because henadic numbers really do follow from the One if the One is the cause of each individual thing.

2.0 NUMBER IS THE FIRST ACT OF THE ONE

In the previous instalment of this study we developed a model for the causation of the One based on what has been called “the doctrine of the two acts.”⁴⁶ Relative to our distinction between simple necessity and progressive persuasion, such a doctrine falls into the latter. First of all, strictly speaking, the One does not have an internal act⁴⁷ and, second, because even the first act of each hypostasis entails a *progressive* determination of that nature, while the second act, following from the first, is an outward *procession* of a new nature. Thus, in the case of Intellect, Plotinus writes: “when it is active in itself the products of its activity are the other intellects, but when it acts outside itself, the product is Soul.”⁴⁸ Therefore it is clear that the “how many” comes about in the first act while the next “common kind” comes about in the second act. As we saw above, the first act of Intellect, in establishing its “how many” will be dependent upon there already being some number and it is evident that the One alone must be responsible for this number.

44. On account of the great number of co-authors (see bibliography), we shall refer to this text by title rather than by author.

45. Plotin, *Traité sur les Nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])* 84.

46. This doctrine was first made into a theme of scholarly discussion by Rutten in his paper “La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin.” It has since been employed by nearly every scholar to have grappled with the problem of the causality of the Plotinian One. The paradigmatic instance of it is to be found in V.4 [7] 2.

47. See: V.6 [24] 6.3–4; VI.7 [38] 21.5&40.30; V.3 [49] 12.26–28.

48. VI.2 [43] 22.27–28.

The first act of the One differs from that of Intellect in that it does not serve as the common substrate within which all the determinations are successively made. This is necessary because “there could be no differentiations in the one (ἐν τῷ ἑνί), as there are of substance.”⁴⁹ We think that Armstrong is correct in translating “one” here in the lower case. This is because it seems that Plotinus is speaking of “one” as a kind of *nature* rather than as the Principle and, as we hope will become evident, because such a “one” is identical to the progressive aspect of the One in its first “first act.”

If it is going to be a genus, it will be the genus of the particular ‘ones’ [...] For, just as being is not the genus of all things but of the specific forms which ‘are,’ so the one will be the genus of the particular specific forms which ‘are one.’⁵⁰

If the nature of the One were a genus it would be the substance whose internal divisions would make up many *beings* which are each specifically one. These ones would be beings precisely because they would be determinations of some *common* nature. For each genus, the “kind” of the genus provides what is common to all that is within it, just as being is what is common to the beings as beings. The one is not some common nature in which there are differences. The nature of the One is *both more common and more specific than being*. It must be more common in that it is present to *every genus* and it must be more specific in that it is the basis of the “how many” and “more or less” which divides any given genus into “each thing itself.”

Thus, just as the Principle *qua* Good does not keep the good to itself but lets the others have the good,⁵¹ the Principle *qua* One does not keep the ones within itself but lets each of the others be themselves as numbers. As Chrétien has rightly observed, is because the Good gives that which it does not have⁵² that it “peut donner toutes choses à elle-mêmes.”⁵³ This principle (that the One gives what it does not have) is not, however, one of discontinuity⁵⁴ because what is given is *every degree* (more or less) of unity. Since the One is identity understood as αὐτός, it must not only keep itself undivided but, the progression of its nature must be the progression of each thing itself.

49. VI.2 [43] 9.14–20.

50. VI.2 [43] 10.24–27.

51. See: VI.9 [9] 6.41; V.5 [32] 13.2–3; VI.7 [38] 41.28–29; V.3 [49] 13.17–18&17.12–14.

52. VI.7 [38] 15.18–20.

53. Chrétien, *La Voix Nue: Phénoménologie de la Promesse*, 259. He believes, however, that this principle is primarily for the sake of defending the immutability of the Good, 263.

54. Narbonne fears that this notion denies continuity and so he claims that this kind of giving “est sans cesse contredite dans l’œuvre de Plotin.” (Narbonne, *La métaphysique de Plotin*, 84). Pigler shares the same reservations as Narbonne (Pigler, *Plotin—un métaphysique de l’amour*, 62).

This is only possible if it causes them by *giving them to themselves*. Since they will arise as *given over to themselves* they will be themselves prior to any kind of substrate or reflexivity and thus prior to Being and to Intellect. Such a number will not be a genus because there is no common substrate to which each belongs, but what is common to each is that each belongs to itself.⁵⁵ This progression of ones given over to themselves will be the first act *from* the One itself and this act is the one number.

2.1 The “Standard” Plotinian View of Separable Number

In *Ennead* V.4 [7] forms and numbers are together identified with Intellect.⁵⁶ In V.1 [10] some details are given with respect to the production of number within a discussion of the kinds of being: “the fact that there are several of these primaries makes number and quantity; and the particularity of each (ἡ ἐκάστου ἰδιότης) makes quality.”⁵⁷ In this case the numbers would be incidental to the existence of the “great kinds” and the identity of each becomes a principle of quality, no doubt to avoid bare numerical difference without discernable difference. In the following chapter of that treatise number is said to emerge from the combination of the indefinite dyad and the One, each such number, again, being a form. This is generally considered to be Plotinus’ “normal” understanding of Platonic number. According to such a view, the notion of number is a sometimes useful but ultimately analogical or metaphorical means by which Plotinus will often express things that are really intended to be beyond any kind of number.

2.2 On Quantitative and Essential Number relative to the One in V.5 [32]

The widespread belief that the notion of number in both the Pythagorean and Platonic traditions is an analogical means to apply *sensible mathematical number* to supersensible things is largely due to an implicit acceptance of Aristotle’s polemical attacks against both schools in *Metaphysics* M and N. As demonstrated in Syrianus’ commentary on M and N, Aristotle consistently examines the various kinds of numbers as if they were all mathematical/quantitative; such numbers being composed of units (i.e., the dyad being made up of two units, and so on).⁵⁸ Moreover, the history of ontology has convinced

55. In this sense there is, strictly speaking, no “whole of parts” of number since there is no whole in which they all participate qua number.

56. V.4 [7] 2.8.

57. V.1 [10] 4.41–42.

58. See Syrianus, *On Aristotle’s Metaphysics* 13–14, 74, 85–85, and 132 for some of his many criticisms of Aristotle. In this same treatise, the link is made between “number” and divine henads: “there are numbers prior to forms, to wit, the henadic and really-existent, and these manifest themselves in all the orders of divine entities,” 92. Iamblichus will have already conceived of divine numbers in his commentary on Nichomachus’ *Theologoumena Arithmeticae*

itself that notions like “form,” “substance” and “activity” are known by pure intuition independently of their physical counterparts (image, body, and motion).⁵⁹ It is thus considered legitimate to speak of supersensible qualities by way of dialectical logic but not so to speak of supersensible quantities by way of any kind of arithmetic. The result is that Being alone necessarily exists while each and every entity is contingent. When taken to its logical conclusions, ontology without henology must lead either to pantheism, in which only the one God necessarily exists, or nihilism, in which only Being as the topological condition of appearance necessarily exists. We shall find that contemporary Plotinian scholarship has yet to wrestle henology free from ontology and, thus, has yet to discover how henology can avoid the disastrous ends of ontology in which philosophy has become ensnared.

In *Ennead* V.5 [32]⁶⁰ Plotinus makes a strong distinction between the quantitative or monadic numbers, with which we count sensible things and measure magnitudes, and separable essential number. While discussing the One and explaining how it is not included in the count of the things that come after it, he writes:

It does not even belong to the category of essential number (ὁ οὐσιώδης ἀριθμὸς), and so certainly not that which is posterior to it of quantitative number (substantial number is that which continually gives existence, quantitative number is that which gives quantity when it is with other numbers. [...] Since the nature which belongs to the numbers in the class of quantitative numbers, imitating in relation to the one which is their principle the relationship of the nature in the prior [substantial]⁶¹ numbers to the real One (πρὸς τὸ ὄντως ἓν), does not exist by expending or breaking up its one, but when a dyad comes to be, the monad before the dyad exists, neither each of the two units in the dyad nor one of them is the monad in the dyad.⁶²

The comparison between the One and essential number leads to a comparison between essential number and quantitative number. Even though it is said that the One does not count among the essential numbers, it is said that the quantitative numbers imitate their relative one *just as* the essential numbers imitate the One itself.

and this view probably goes back to Nicomachus himself (See O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics in Late Antiquity*, 22–23).

59. Ontology has paid a price for this claim in that it has rendered it vulnerable to the criticisms made by the likes of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida. Heidegger, for example, will say that metaphysics never ceases to speak about physics (See Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 19 and 149).

60. Since treatises 30–33 (III.8 [30], V.8 [31], V.5 [32] and II.9 [33]) were all a single work divided by Porphyry in his division of the writings of Plotinus into the *Enneads*, this treatise was part of the work written just prior to VI.6 [34].

61. Armstrong’s insertion.

62. V.5 [32] 4.19–25.

Each quantitative number is, again, a multiplicity of units taken together as one. The “one” of quantity would consist of a single unit alone and is thus, strictly speaking, not a quantitative number (a set of units) at all but the principle of such numbers. As indicated at the end of the passage above, Plotinus maintains that the units belonging to each several number are numerically distinct⁶³ and, moreover, that they are so in each participating the monad differently.⁶⁴ Having established these distinctions between quantitative number and its monad, Plotinus is able to transpose this to the relation between the essential numbers and the One.

The First remains the same even if other beings come into being from it. In the case of numbers, then, the one remains unchanged, [...]; but in the case of that which truly exists, here the One still more remains unchanged before the real beings. [...] And, as there is in the case of numbers, the form of the first, the monad, was in all of them primarily or secondarily, and each of the numbers which come after the monad did not participate it equally, so here too each of the beings which come after the First has in itself a kind of form of it. Their participation made the quantity of numbers exist, but here it gives beings substantial existence, so that being is a trace of the One.⁶⁵

The essential numbers here are synonymous with the real beings and their “one” is precisely the One itself such that the One is the “monad” relative to the essential numbers.⁶⁶ In understanding the real beings numerically, one can designate them in terms of ordinal inequalities such that *every individuation is an ordinal inequality*. If, however, quantitative numbers differ from one another in that they each have a different *amount* of severally different *units*, how will the essential numbers be different from one another and thus, as a whole, different from quantitative number?

3.1 THERE IS NUMBER BY ITSELF

In VI.6 [34] Plotinus sets out to prove that true numbers are not merely properties of the things which are numbered but that number exists of itself (αὐτὸς ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ὁ ἀριθμὸς).⁶⁷ This number itself will not, in fact, be identical to the essential number of V.5 [32] but will be *henadic number* beyond beings and Being. He argues that “the incidental must be something before incidentally occurring.”⁶⁸ That is to say, for anything to be incidental to others there must first be the nature of that thing itself:

63. Cf. VI.2 [43] 11.44–45.

64. V.5 [34] 4.26–38.

65. V.5 [32] 5.1–14. Cf. V.2 [11] 2.25–29.

66. The analysis of this text in *Traité sur les Nombres* also reads this connection between the One and the essential numbers to carry over from the fourth chapter but also tries to pass it off as only an analogy (See *Traité sur les Nombres*, 22).

67. VI.6 [34] 4.23.

So that, if “one” applies to each individual thing and “one man” is not the same as “man,” but the “one” is other than the “man” and the “one” is common and belongs to all the other individual things, the “one” would be prior to “man” and all the other individual things so that man and each of the others might succeed in being one. And so it is prior to movement, since movement also is one thing, and prior to being so that being itself may succeed in being one; but I mean not that One which we say is “beyond being” but this other one which is predicated of each individual form. So the decad also is prior to that of which decad is predicated; and this will be decad itself.⁶⁹

Plotinus has here identified “the one” as the *nature* of the One and the one of number itself. In our view, the passage from V.5 [32] identifies the one number and the One because it is treating the One specifically as *cause* but, strictly speaking, the One is *more* than the cause of all things.⁷⁰ He has here refined the views expressed in the previous treatise. On the one hand, this refinement protects the transcendence of the One itself and, on the other hand, in making the nature of the One into the one number, it opens up the conceptual space in which the *many numbers themselves will be prior to all things that are incidentally one*, including motion and being.

Just as the number one is needed prior to all that is one, so too is the decad prior to that of which the decad can be predicated. *The Traité sur les Nombres* contests **the consistency of this juxtaposition**: “*Cette confusion du nombre et de la qualité est en outre facilitée par le parallèle déjà mentionné entre l’un et le nombre [...] Donc l’un attribué signifie non une unité numérique mais une qualité, celle de la cohésion interne de l’être dit «un».*”⁷¹ Thus it is supposed that Plotinus simply regards the monad, dyad, triad etc. as qualities in which various things may partake. Here we witness the Aristotelian privileging of quality over quantity which assumes that there cannot be supersensible numerical unity the way that there can be supersensible substance and structure.

The itinerary of the reading of VI.6 [34] provided in *Traité sur les Nombres* is made clear from the very beginning:

Il s’agit du problème de la place des nombres dans l’ontologie plotinienne. Je dis ontologie parce qu’il est bien évident que pour Plotin le nombre est inférieur à l’Un premier. Il sera donc de l’ordre de l’être, ou plus précisément de l’ordre de l’intellect. Cette position est affirmée dès les 7^e traité.⁷²

68. VI. [34] 5.27.

69. VI.6 [34] 5.29–39.

70. Relative to the distinction we made, in Part I, between the simple and progressive aspect of each hypothesis, the One as such is beyond even the one of number itself, but the progressive aspect is the first act from the One, and this is the one of number itself.

71. Plotin, *Traité sur les Nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])*, 61–62.

72. Ibid. 23. This is despite the fact that it will be recognized on page 45 that the forms themselves are said to *participate* in number in VI.6 [34].

It is decided that the *passing comments* about number in V.4 [7] “affirms” the supposition that number itself belongs to the order of Intellect. If, however VI.6 [34], which is later, larger, and, moreover, *specifically on the subject of number*, should directly contradict this supposition, why should V.4 [7] be granted the greater authority? Or rather, it is not so much that VI.6 [34] contradicts V.4 [7] as much as it *adds* henadic number beyond essential number as *number itself*.

Plotinus will ask whether substance generated number in its own division or if it was rather number that divided substance:

For if it could exist by itself without the things numbered, it could exist before beings. Then also before being? Well, let us leave this and assume for the present that the one is before number and grant that number comes to exist from being. But if being is one being, and two beings are two beings, the one will precede being and number will precede beings (προηγῆσεται τοῦ τε ὄντος τὸ ἓν καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν).⁷³

Plotinus explains that if being is “one being” then there must be a one before being. The introduction to *Traité sur les Nombres* decides on this basis to create a very sharp distinction between the first number and the numbers. The one number “n’est pas au niveau de la pluralité qu’elle engendre, elle lui est antérieure.”⁷⁴ In fact, the very same text had already complained about how Plotinus frequently “généralise et accorde à la décade les mêmes privilèges de l’existence préalable par soi”⁷⁵ as he gives to the “one.” *Just as* the one must be before all things that attain one, *so too* must the decad be before all things which attain the decad.⁷⁶ Thus, if “one is the cause of being and numbers of the beings” entails the series: one, being, numbers, beings,⁷⁷ then “Intellect is the cause of Soul and intellects of souls” would entail the series: Intellect, Soul, intellects, souls.” That is to say, it would imply that Intellect produces Soul prior to the production of intellects within itself. As we have already observed, the first act of Intellect is productive of the many intellects while the second act, upon the perfection of the first, begets Soul. The true series, then, is: one, numbers, Being, beings.

Perczel also makes a radical distinction between the one number and the plurality of numbers. He concludes that the one essential number is the one-in-being, that the power of number is intelligible-matter conditioned by number traces,⁷⁸ and that the actual plurality of numbers arose only when the

73. VI.6 [34] 9.8–14.

74. Plotin, *Traité sur les Nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])*, 54.

75. *Ibid.* 45.

76. Cf. VI.6 [34] 9 41–43, 10 36–37, 14 49–50.

77. Plotin, *Traité sur les Nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])*, 186.

78. See: VI.6 [34] 10.1–4 for the passage that he has in mind. Here it is evident that number

traces are actualized in Intellect. One conclusion he draws from this is that that “the One in us,” or any other being for that matter, is “formellement identique avec l’*un*’ de l’être total.”⁷⁹

Perczel essentially has two arguments which are intended to support this conclusion. The first argument consists in simply pointing out that the one number does not divide itself in the production of number. Just like the One itself, the number one “abides” and is not *divided* in what it produces. As we have already seen, however, this is even true of quantitative number and yet that one is on the same ontological level as the many numbers, even if it is the “monad” on that level. This only proves that henology, in speaking of that which is beyond substance, is structurally different from ontology, which thinks upon the basis of determinable substance.

The second argument against the individuation of the one-in-being/number is that, in VI.6 [34] 15.24-36, *only* the *first* number unites Being to the One but the numbers do not unite the beings to the One. We say that this is because each intellect/being is related to and participates in the One *by way of its own number* and this mediation provides the very difference *required* for discernable individuation. Plotinus is not even ambivalent regarding the need for an actual numerical plurality prior to the division of being:

And in Intellect, in so far as it is Intellect, all the parts exist individually as parts; but then there is a number of these also. Not even in Intellect then does number exist primarily.⁸⁰

If there must be a number for each part of Intellect, then there must already be a plurality of numbers.

Narbonne maintains that the one number is prior to Being and duly notes that the role of number in VI.6 [34] produces a kind of mediation that “est le plus souvent *laisse vide* par Plotin.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, he too wants to argue that the actual plurality of numbers is posterior to Being and his analysis produces the following schema:

- Level 1: The One
- Level 2: one (essential number)
- Level 3: Being (number unified)
- Level 4: essential numbers
- Level 5: unfolded numbers⁸²

forms the basis of pre-prepared intelligible matter and this is, indeed, very important but in no way precludes the existence of an actual multiplicity of numbers prior to intelligible matter.

79. Perczel, “L’*intellect amoureux*’ et l’*un que est*,” 256.

80. VI.6 [34] 15.14–16.

81. J.M. Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie, et Ereignis*, 79.

82. *Ibid.* 78.

In this way the one number is prior to being while the numbers come after being. His argument is that in V.5 [32] 4 we find essential number relative to the One and then “*déjà dans le chapitre qui suit celui que nous venons d’examiner, Plotin avertit qu’il n’y a pas comme tel d’intermédiaire entre le Premier lui-même, et les êtres qui sont produits après lui.*”⁸³ First of all, as we have already observed, the One in V.5 [32] 5 is sufficient to generate Being because the One is there *identified* with what will be the one number in VI.6 [34]. Secondly, we think it must be observed that Plotinus hardly speaks of “essential number” as such in VI.6 [34] and this is because, in separating the act of the One from the One itself, he must introduce number itself beyond beings.

Nikulin does *not* draw this sort of sharp distinction between the one number and the plurality of numbers but this is no doubt because he also assimilates the one number to monadic being⁸⁴ and thus his interpretation is altogether ontological. He will only be able to do this, as we shall see, by sometimes interpreting the one number as the One itself.

3.2 THE ONE NUMBER GENERATES THE NUMBERS OF ITSELF

In the eleventh chapter of VI.6 [34] we return to some of the themes that we witnessed in V.5 [32] 4&5. It begins with the objection of an imagined interlocutor (perhaps with Aristotle in mind) asking whether or not “the decad is not just so many henads.”⁸⁵ This leads into a dialectic which maintains that if there are going to be many unities, that which is most one (τὸ μάλιστᾶ ἓν) must not be counted among them.

There must be a one which is nothing else but bare one, isolated in its essential nature, before each individual one is spoken and thought. If, then, the one without the thing which is called one is going to exist also there in the intelligible⁸⁶ why should not another one as well come into existence? And each individual taken separately will be many unities, that is, many “ones”. But if that nature generates a kind of succession (εἰ δ’ ἐφεξῆς οἶον γεννῶν ἢ φύσις), or rather has generated, or does not stand still at one thing of those which it has generated, but makes a kind of continuous one (οἶον συνεχῆ ἓνα), when it draws a line and stops more quickly (στᾶσα θάπτον) in its outpouring it generated the lesser numbers, but when it moves further, not in other things but in its very own movements, it brings the greater numbers into existence.⁸⁷

83. Ibid.

84. Nikulin, “Foundations of Arithmetic in Plotinus,” 89.

85. VI.6 [34] 11.1.

86. “ἐν κἀκεῖ ἔσται.” κἀκεῖ in Plotinus usually denotes the intelligible region of νοῦς but Armstrong himself makes a few exceptions when he feels that the meaning demands it. The French translation simply says that is it “there” with no definite place attached.

87. VI.6 [34] 11.21–29.

The fact that Plotinus asks “why should not another one as well come into existence?” makes it clear that something would have to prevent it from generating the plurality of pure numbers. *As soon as there is one number* there will follow the succession and generation of the numbers, because that is what “the one” does as the first act of the One itself.

In *Traité sur les Nombres*, the disjunction δὲ is *not* read as indicating a contrary line of thought relative to what precedes it.⁸⁸ If this is the case, then “each” number will be “many unities” taken as a one such that these numbers will have the same structure as quantitative numbers. Furthermore, it will follow that they cannot exist without the units or henads of which they are composed: “*Plotin adapte à l’intelligible les exigences ordinairement requise pour la constitution d’un nombre arithmétique.*”⁸⁹ Thus we are led to believe that the attempt to speak of separate numbers amounts to naively treating sensible quantities as if they could be applied to the supersensible.

Nikulin, while failing to grasp the presence of hypernoetic number, is at least clear that “each number is to be considered not as a set or collection of so many henads. Rather it is the successor of the previous essential number, through performing another step within the intelligible movement.”⁹⁰ Nikulin differs from the other interpreters we have met in that he identifies the “bare one” in the citation above as the One itself⁹¹ despite the fact that this same one will be that which generates all of the other numbers. Later in the same paper, however, he reads “that nature generates a kind of succession” as “the nature of being.”⁹² There can only be a change in subject if the nature (ἡ φύσις) of the One is other than the One itself. As a matter of fact, we have argued that there is a difference but that nature of the One is not Being, in which case there is no positive henology and the One is redundant, but number itself.

Returning to the passage cited above, Plotinus speaks of the one number as “drawing a line.” On the one hand, it does not stop at any of the numbers produced but, on the other hand, it is said to stop more or less quickly in generating the smaller or greater numbers. Nikulin succinctly describes this as a series of “consecutive stops.”⁹³ In this way it appears to have a motion that both *progresses and stops at the same time*. Now we must inquire as to whether or not such a progression, which we have just defined in the form of a self-contradiction, is at all possible.

88. Plotin. *Traité sur les Nombres (Ennéade VI.6 [34])*, 65.

89. *Ibid.* 64.

90. Nikulin, “Foundations of Arithmetic in Plotinus,” 99.

91. *Ibid.* 89.

92. *Ibid.* 97.

93. *Ibid.* 98.

Before we proceed, however, let us be clear concerning the hierarchy of numbers as laid out in the fifteenth chapter of VI.6 [34]:

But we must affirm that the decad is observed in one way in things that are discrete and in another in things that are continuous, and in other ways in the many unified powers of this particular number; and that we have already ascended among the intelligibles; and that there are the true numbers (ἀληθεστάτους ἀριθμούς), no longer observed in other things but existing themselves on their own (ἀλλ' αὐτοὺς ἐφ' αὐτῶν ὄντας), the absolute decad (ἀυτοδεκάδα), not the decad of some intelligibles.⁹⁴

The decad is observed in sensible things by way of discrete measure (ten fingered) and by way of magnitude (ten meters). Next, with the “many unified powers” of the decad we have *already* ascended into the intelligible. These are the essential numbers we saw in V.4 [7], V.1 [10] and V.5 [32], being the objective aspect of the various intellects. Recalling the first chapter of VI.6 [34], these are also the compounds which tend to themselves insofar as they tend to their one. Moreover, beyond these, there are the *true numbers*, which are not in some other but existing of themselves such that we have the *decad itself* prior to the intellects. This is the multiplicity to which the “how many” of each level is traced and the basis of the “one” to which each intellect must tend in order to be itself. These numbers must be generated by the first act of the one and we have suggested that they be named “henadic.” It is still necessary, however, to come to a better conception of the production of these numbers and the way in which they are discernable from one another.

3.3 NUMBER IN ITSELF

The latest treatise to discuss number in any detail is “On the Kinds of Being,” comprising *Enneads* VI.1–3 [42–44]. These discussions are specifically concerned with quantitative number but, as such, they provide the means by which we may proceed with our reconstruction. In VI.3 [44], Plotinus contrasts the generally discrete nature of number with the continuous/extensive nature of magnitude:

So there is a quantum when the unit (τὸ ἓν) moves forward, and also when the point does. But if either of them comes to a stop more quickly, one is few and the other small; but if the advance does not halt quickly in its progress, one is many and the other large.⁹⁵

A refinement is made here over the progression of number in VI.6 [34], for in this schema of number there is no “going away” entailed at all, but magnitude goes away. It is better, then, to conceive of number’s progression as the

94. VI.6 [32] 14.44–50.

95. VI.3 [44] 12.13–15.

repetition of the one than as the drawing of a line by extending a point. What does it mean, then, for “one” to progressively repeat itself? Before we answer that question, let us view a second passage, this time from VI.2 [43]:

Number consists altogether in a mixture of movement and rest but magnitude is a movement or derives from movement; movement goes forward into the indefinite but rest in holding back what is going forward makes the unit (τῆς δὲ στόσεως ἐν τῇ ἐποχῇ τοῦ προϊόντος μονάδα ποιούσης).⁹⁶

Plotinus begins with quantitative number and magnitude in mind but, by the end, he suggests that perhaps number really does count among the first kinds.⁹⁷ We think this is because the above definition is in fact pointing beyond quantitative number and toward henadic number. Number is again contrasted with magnitude, which, as we recall from the first chapter of VI.6 [34], is a kind of matter relative to number. Magnitude simply goes forward (from itself) into disparate infinity. Number, on the other hand, arises from the holding back or “checking” of what goes forward; or rather, what *would* go forward were it not so checked. The checking of motion prevents the immediate procession into indefinite magnitude (the spatial continuum) but it does not altogether negate the “force” of this motion, since it still presses against that which checks it such that it is pressed out as a “unit.”

One might object and say: “even if this definition ‘points beyond’ quantitative number, it would provide, at best, a model for numbers *within* Being (essential number) and dependent upon two kinds of Being, namely motion and rest. How can we understand the production of your so-called “henadic” numbers relative to the above passage?” Plotinus does, however, speak of there being some sort of Difference/Otherness and Motion that must be prior to Being: “For Otherness (ἑτερότης) There exists always, which produces intelligible matter; for this is the principle of matter, this and the primary Movement.”⁹⁸ If otherness and motion are prior to intelligible matter, of which Intellect is composed, there is nothing preventing them from being prior to the kinds of being as well. In our schema Otherness is not yet permitted to move away and so we shall speak of it alone, while motion will be what gets away from the checking so as to become intelligible matter. Now that which checks this primal Difference is not the genus “rest,” but for the one number it is the presence of the One itself. While we do not call

96. VI.2 [43] 13.24–27.

97. VI.2 [43] 13.28–30.

98. II.4 [12] 5.29. Bréhier and Narbonne (*Les deux matières*, 323) assimilate otherness and intelligible matter here while Trouillard and Breton take this primal otherness/motion to be prior to intelligible matter (J. Trouillard, *La Procession Plotinienne*, 17–18 and S. Breton, *Matière et dispersion*, 156).

the One's remaining "rest," *relative to Difference/Otherness*, it may indeed be the source of *holding back*; for the One's "holding himself together must be understood, if one is to say it correctly, as meaning that all other things that exist are held together by this."⁹⁹ Again, "that which comes after the origin is, somehow, under the pressure (ἐπιβρίσσαντος) of the One."¹⁰⁰ Finally, concerning indefinite infinitude, it is said "as soon as they are comprehended by the one they arrive at number."¹⁰¹

The emergence of this first Otherness/Difference was in fact the main problem with which Part I of this study dealt. There is a first Difference in that the One excludes the progression of its inward power from itself;¹⁰² it emerges because from the One's abiding as intensity (inward power) there follows the inward progression of that which is *pressed into itself* and this is precisely the sense in which it is "given over to itself." In being pressed into itself it is, like the One, a simple intensity but it is different from the One in that it is derivative, in that it does not transcend activity, and, moreover, in that its intensity must be of a lesser *degree*. Thus we can understand "more or less one" as more or less intensity (remaining/abiding), for this is how each thing abides as "some one." The progressions of these intensities, in which each presses-out the next in order, is productive of the whole of henadic number.

These intensive quantities provide the basis of the extensive quantities, which will be the intelligible compounds that must each tend to their respective one. The real beings only have their "one" reflexively (intellectually) because some motion will have already "gotten away" (i.e., intelligible matter) but it is wholly able to return to its proximate number with the whole of itself. Each such intellect, in turn, is the essential number and proximate "one" of some given soul, to which a soul must tend if it is going to be itself.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS: TOWARD A DIVINE ARITHMETIC

In investigating the problematic of the One and the Many in terms of intensive power and number, we have presented both an alternative reading of Plotinus and a new direction in which to pursue Neoplatonic henology. If conceiving of the One's abiding as "intensive power" is vitalistic, we are in no danger of the traditional trappings of vitalism, since this intensity is precisely the principle of number as degrees of derived intensity; that is to say, it is a *thoroughly mediated vitalism*. Conversely, placing number beyond being is not a reduction to "dead points" but to the abiding act by which a series of supra-personal agents are given over to themselves in a discrete and distributive manner. As the cause of each thing itself, the One is *more*

99. VI.8 [39] 21.21.

100. V.3 [49] 15.25.

intimate than a personal deity, since unicity is prior to personality, and *more universal*, since *all things* are in some way one.

There is, indeed, a “dissimilar similarity” between henology and empiricism, for both approaches insist that individuals are prior to universals¹⁰³ but henology insists that *supersensible reality itself* is grounded in the primal series of henadic numbers/individuals. The intelligible agents, in turn, will be “universals” only relative to the multiplicities which proceed from and depend upon them.

If the “Pythagorean turn” implied in our exposition remains a *possible* reading of Plotinus (although we hope to have presented it as the most promising such reading), in the thought of Iamblichus it becomes a determined agenda involving a ten volume work *On Pythagoreanism*, which O’Meara claims “played a decisive role in the history of late Greek philosophy.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Iamblichus believes that it is through the Pythagoreans that the Greeks acquired a conception of gods, heroes, and daemons.¹⁰⁵ We suggest that it is by way of the individuating function of number that the mathematical approach to theology produces divine hierarchies descriptive of a *scientific theogony*.¹⁰⁶ The working out of scientific theogony, already present in the

101. VI.2 [43] 22.20.

102. Labecki, “The One and the Many: Part One: The One,” 93.

103. In this respect Deleuze is, surprisingly enough, the most henological of contemporary philosophers in pursuing a “transcendental empiricism” (See *Difference and Repetition*, 56) which investigates virtual singularities and individuations of which the sensible actualizations are derivatives (*Ibid.* 208–11). Moreover, he even affirms that “the essential process of intensive quantities is individuation” and that all “individuation is intensive, and therefore serial” (*Ibid.* 245).

104. O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, 30.

105. *Ibid.* 40.

106. Contemporary mathematics has also argued that individuation must be present and determinate prior to all predication. In reference to Von Neumann’s solution to the paradoxes of set theory, Gödel explains that “In order to speak of classes at all, it is required that first a system of things (called individuals) be given (you may, for instance, regard the integers as individuals); then you can form the notion of a class of those individuals” (K. Gödel, “The Present Situation in the Foundations of Mathematics,” 46). The paradox was that the “set of all sets” is formally unthinkable since it would have to include *itself* as a proper sub-set. It was only possible to save set theory, and thus mathematics as such, from Russell’s Paradox by making a strong distinction between numerical individuation and the formal predication that makes some number or subset thereof into a class or species.

J.P. Mayberry recognises that the modern notion of “set” is in fact identical to the ancient notion of *arithmos* (Mayberry, *The Foundations of Mathematics in the Theory of Sets* xiv) and that the underlying notion of set is “limit” as understood by the Greeks (*Ibid.* 87). He differs from Von Neumann and Gödel, however, by re-opening the question of foundations in maintaining that the natural integers should not only be accepted as *given* but as something to be *proven*: “If we should decide to do this we should be going back to the very roots of our mathematical culture, back before Euclid and Eudoxus to its earliest Pythagorean origins.” (*Ibid.* xvii). In this Mayberry moves from mathematics to philosophy (even in his profession) but his basic position is declaratively Aristotelian rather than Platonic-Pythagorean.

writings of Plotinus, comes to its full antique development in the *Platonic Theology* of Proclus.

Positive henology, in thinking identities or singularities beyond Being, effects the freeing of theology from what Heidegger calls “onto-theology,” since it permits us to think the unfolding of the divine One without restricting this expression to the conditions of Being. Contrary to Heidegger and the whole of the “religious turn” in contemporary thought, positive henology does not seek to confront modern global technology by way of a ludditic turn toward the poetic gesture (as if this were a confrontation at all) but by grounding the mathematical itself, being the principle of technological structure, within its divine origin. That is to say, henology, in uniting theology and pure mathematics, enacts an *inverted* onto-theology whereby being is permitted to appear according to the unfolding of the *theoi*. Just as it might be said that Peripatetic onto-theology, in its indifference to individuation, permitted the decline of spiritual hierarchies, it is due to its corresponding *qualitative metaphysics* that philosophy has become increasingly irrelevant to Modern science and technology. It is not that technology turns us and our world away from the gods, it is rather that *philosophy and theology have slowly abandoned the technical*, leaving it “altogether in such a condition as one would expect to find wherever God is absent.”¹⁰⁷ Technology is not the problem, the problem is the absence of positive henology or, to use a more beautiful expression, *divine arithmetic*.

107. *Timeaus* 53b.

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