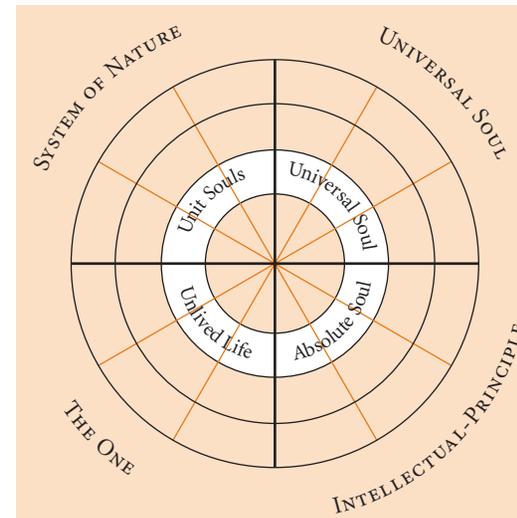


Diagrams of Levels of Soul

SOUL MUST FIRST BE UNDERSTOOD as an aspect of the Indivisible, as one of the forms of the formless First; then as Absolute, i.e., as having an intellect of its own; then as hypostasis, or as principle in its own right. Finally we must see Soul's relation to the effects it produces through its own activity; that is, we have to understand that Soul is an eternal principle *sui generis* in juxtaposition to its temporal activity, which latter is not properly speaking hypostasis.

A summary with accompanying diagrams may help us to make clear the variety of contexts in which Plotinus uses the term Soul. [fig. 73]



EDITORS: Soul as the outflowing of life intelligence, one essence with divisible aspects, can be symbolized by the detriment (Soul) ring. In each quadrant, Soul expresses its life and is reciprocally determined in accordance with that level of reality.

FIG. 73

SOUL IN THE ONE

The meaning of Soul must first be understood in the context of the One. Plotinus indicates that “it has its source in the First and thence, along an unhindered path, it [Soul] flows into a total of things, conferring grace.” (IV. 4.10) This indivisible aspect of the One is the unvarying fountain of life excluding all process and change. [fig. 74] ▼

Conceiving of the One as having a fourfold nature (and of course this is an obviously incorrect usage of words, for there is no heterogeneity in the One), its infinite and operational nature is referred to as Soul, which is Unity, the root principle. The continuing identity of this essence can be identified regardless of the usage the term is put to. The entire ring suspended from the Absolute Life of the One represents one view of this multiple unity. Figure 74 illustrates our foregoing remarks on [how] the essence of Soul, as it traverses the hierarchy of Being, provides for the possibility of conceiving the Supreme Identity. That is, the life of any individual creature is ultimately rooted in the One. The life

▼ PLOTINUS, VI. 9. 8–9: Thus the Supreme as containing no otherness is ever present with us; we with it when we put otherness away. It is not that the Supreme reaches out to us seeking our communion: we reach towards the Supreme; it is we that become present. We are always before it: but we do not always look: thus a choir, singing set in due order about the conductor, may turn away from that centre to which all should attend; let it but face aright and it sings with beauty, present effectively. We are ever before the Supreme—cut off is utter dissolution; we can no longer be—but we do not always attend: when we look, our Term is attained; this is rest; this is the end of singing ill; effectively before Him, we lift a choral song full of God.

In this choring, the soul looks upon the well-spring of Life, wellspring also of Intellect, beginning of Being, fount of Good, root of Soul. It is not that these are poured out from the Supreme, lessening it as if it were a thing of mass. At that the emanants would be perishable; but they are eternal; they spring from an eternal principle, which produces them not by its fragmentation but in virtue of its intact identity: therefore they too hold firm; so long as the sun shines, so long there will be light.

EDITORS: Soul is rooted in the One by virtue of the unities symbolized by ♀ γ ♂ ♂ 4 II.

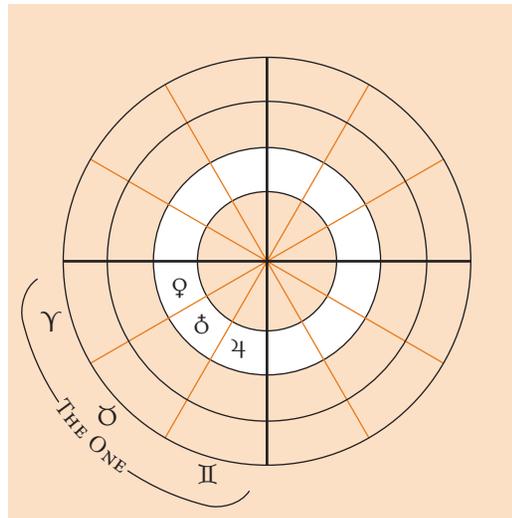


FIG. 74

of the One is unsullied, uncontaminated, pure, “unlived life.” Plotinus speaks about this life as the undivided power of the One which radiates forth. That is, it is to be conceived of as the double act itself, and the principle of divisibility which remains indivisible regardless of its station. [36, p. 331]

ABSOLUTE SOUL

Flowing from the Life Supreme—the Source and Principle—is Absolute Soul, life emanated and simultaneously determined by and as Intellectual-Principle. We have this important distinction to consider at the onset—Soul as an aspect of the transcendent Nature of the One, and Soul as the Absolute Life of the Intellectual-Principle. Life essence is thus required by the One, and goes forth from it just as the Intellectual-Principle does. There is a reciprocal and mutual determination on the part of each.

In the Nous, Soul essence is the recipient of the eternal Ideas and is the Life Absolute of the Divine Mind. In the Intellectual-Principle this essence receives into itself the Ideas, which makes of it a living and abiding wisdom. ▼ Considered most precisely as the Intellect of the Soul, Absolute Soul is an eternal Presence—totally and unextendedly present in the Now—Life instantaneously infinite. It does not descend, for as descending it would annul its own Perfection. Yet the super-abundance of Soul gives of itself ceaselessly. It is “the entire stream of life sent forth by that Principle.” (Plotinus, v.1.3) + Intellectual-Principle remains abiding as the Kingdom of Being; Soul proceeds. [*fig. 75*]

The principle of Life or Soul is self-motive; that is, it springs into activity of itself. The paradox is that this essence is the one principle of divisibility—a single essence, a self-identical nature, even though it divides itself endlessly. This brief amplification of Plotinus’ terse definition of Soul as One-and-Many can be contrasted to his reference to Intellectual-Principle as a One-Many.

This principle, Life Essence, *is*—eternally self-begotten. Its determination by Intellectual-Principle is to be kept distinct from it in order for us to understand this essence in itself.

▼ EDITORS: Anthony writes further of the inseparability of Soul and Nous: “We treat Soul as essence, that is, isolating its definition from the Ideas in order to conceive its Being as other than the Being of the Nous—to trace it from its origin as it winds its way through the various levels of reality, carrying with it the paradigm of the double act which we will find operative at each level. Of course this isolation cannot in fact be achieved because of the eternal interrelationship between Nous and Soul.” (Notes and Papers, p. S76)

+ PLOTINUS, v.1.3: Soul . . . is yet a secondary, an image of the Intellectual-Principle: reason uttered is an image of the reason stored within the Soul, and in the same way soul is an utterance of the Intellectual-Principle: it is even the total of its activity, the entire stream of life sent forth by that Principle to the production of further being . . .

Being is not added to it to comprise it as Life Essence. Being, so fundamentally comprehensive and all-encompassing, prevents the necessary refinement required to distinguish its complementary—Life—so that we are always mistakenly reducing Soul’s distinctive aseity to this type of isness [i.e., that of Intellectual-Principle]. Nevertheless, Plotinus clearly indicates the distinction between Soul Being and Intellectual Being. (cf. VI.2.5)

Self-identical in each manifestation, the Intellectual-Principle contains all possible manifestations of itself within itself. The Ideas remain indivisible, eternally abiding and immutable. They are participated entire and cannot be divided without losing their proper aseity. Soul is the very means by which the Ideas in the Mind of God, which are permanent possibilities, become actualized and expressed. Consequently, Soul or Life divides or duplicates itself endlessly, remaining one self-identical essence, a principle *sui generis* in each of its offspring.

Soul in the Nous is recipient of all the Ideas simultaneously, so that the whole of its life is totally present and complete in the Now. [36B, p. 333; 37, p. 333]

EDITORS: Soul as the absolute receptor of all the Idea-intelligences in the Intellectual-Principle is termed Absolute Soul and represented as ἡ ὅλη ψυχή. As the life of the Intellectual-Principle, Soul is an abiding Contemplation. Anthony says of this relation that Soul is in the Nous and Nous is in the Soul. Based on its source in the Nous (Intellectual-Principle), every individual soul is an inviolable unit of consciousness and power.

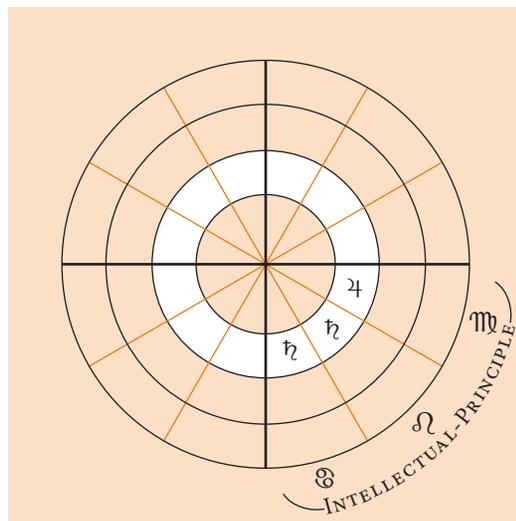


FIG. 75

UNIVERSAL SOUL

The Universal Soul is the Providence presiding over the universe, the principle of universal manifestation. It is the one life of the cosmos, the logos or transmitter of Forms to the universe. The name Zeus, used in Greek theology, signifies that through which life is imparted. Zeus is linked in his inner vision to an unchangeable abiding wisdom.

Two aspects of Demiurgic activity have to be considered in producing the ground-plan or sketch of universal manifestation: the Ideas and the power necessary to actualize them. The former [the Ideas] are associated with the third quadrant, the Ideas which will be developed and evolved into the system of Nature or the fourth quadrant. The latter [the power to actualize them] is associated with the third ring or dynamic aspect of Soul.

In the fourfold diagram, the third quadrant represents one view of the Universal Soul as a self-subsisting hypostasis. The third-ring view represents another. [fig. 76]

EDITORS: Anthony identifies the Universal Soul with the third quadrant, and particularly associates the Demiurge with Jupiter in Sagittarius ♐. The Demiurge tentatively illumines the universal matter, providing the ground and receptacle for the self-actuating system of Nature. The Demiurge is Providence. By receiving (or envisioning) the Ideas in the Intellectual-Principle, and transforming them into an Idea of the universe, the Demiurge provides what all souls need to be nourished in manifestation.

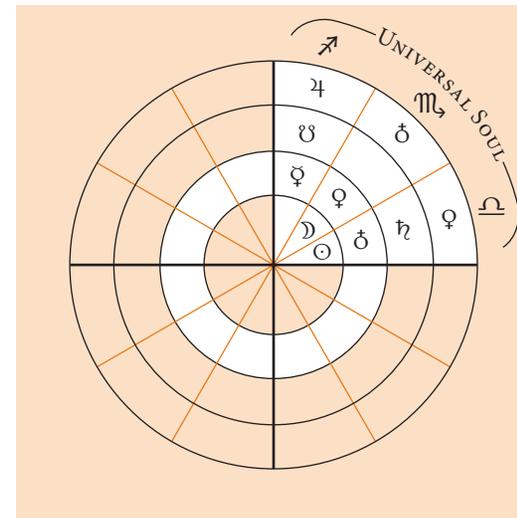


FIG. 76

The perfection inherent in Absolute Soul—Soul in Intellect—has as its out-going act the Universal Soul, or the Demiurge. The more revealing appellation of twofold Zeus refers again to a version of the double act at a lower level of reality. It must be clearly stated that the term “twofold Zeus” does not apply to a combination of Absolute Soul and Universal Soul. Rather the term applies to the double nature of Soul as hypostasis, that is, both to its inner contemplation of the Ideas* intellect in Soul—and its perpetual creativity, the Royal Intellect productive of the ground-plan of universal manifestation (fourth quadrant). These two aspects are the Demiurge, Soul considered as a distinct hypostasis. [fig. 77] [38, p. 333]

Zeus—ordering all, governor, guardian, and disposer, possessor for ever of the ‘kingly soul’ and the ‘kingly intellect’, bringing all into being by his providence . . . (Plotinus, IV. 4.9)

The ordering principle is twofold; there is the principle known to us as the Demiurge and there is the Soul of the All [universal manifestation]; we apply the appellation Zeus sometimes to the Demiurge [Ζϛ] and sometimes to the principle conducting the universe [Ζϙ].

When under the name of Zeus we are considering the Demiurge we must leave out all notions of stage and progress, and recognize one unchanging and timeless life.

But the life in the Cosmos, the life which carries the leading principle of the universe, still needs elucidation; does it operate without calculation, without searching into what ought to be done?

Yes: for what must be stands shaped before the Cosmos, and is ordered without any setting in order: the ordered things are merely the things that come to be; and the principle that brings them into being is Order itself; this production is an act of a soul linked with an unchangeably established wisdom whose reflection in that soul is Order. It is an unchanging wisdom, and there can therefore be no changing in the soul which mirrors it, not sometimes turned towards it and sometimes away from it—and in doubt because it has turned away—but an unremitting soul performing an unvarying task. (Plotinus, IV. 4.10)

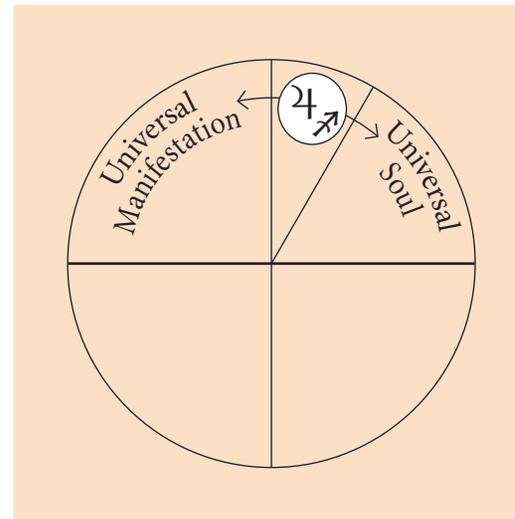


FIG. 77

INDIVIDUAL OR UNIT SOULS

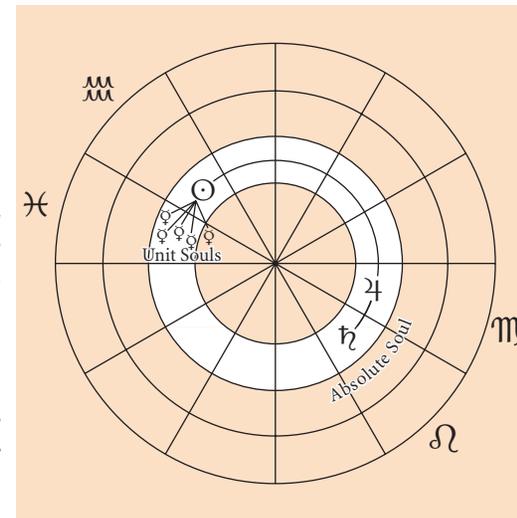
The highest phase of the individual soul has its eternal residence in and vision of the Divine Mind. ▼ From that indivisible Soul remaining in the Nous is emanated an eternal offspring. This, its “issuing phase,” is the Mercurial or *Asmita* aspect of individual soul, whether cosmic, planetary, or human.

▼ EDITORS: The highest phase of individual soul is represented by Saturn in Leo Υ_{Ω} . Here, each soul has a unique vision of the Nous; “the whole of its life is totally present and complete in the Now.” (*Astronoesis*, p. 181) The following papers “Powers Intrinsic to Soul” and “Cosmic Soul” develop the relationship between individual soul and its root in the Nous.

⊕ EDITORS: Individual souls enjoy all of the characteristics of soul essence. For most of us these are “merely” potential, but they all are *inherent* in what Soul is. Individual characteristics are emphasized only in soul’s relations to and within the evolving World-Idea. In the system of Nature, souls determine and exhibit different levels and powers; yet the unity of Soul is the inviolable un-lived life of the One, its intellect is the presence of Ideas, and its rational powers participate fully in the manifesting energy of the Demiurge.

As this principle exists in the Nous, it gives rise to the many I AMs which are of the essence of Soul. [fig. 78] Thus each soul retains eternally its aseity as an indivisible and individual emanant which includes the principle of divisibility. This individual unit of life is the principle of manifestation for every individual soul. ⊕

No doubt the task of the Soul, in its more emphatically reasoning phase, is intellection: but it must have another as well, or it would be undistinguishable from the Intellectual-Principle. To its quality of being intellective it adds the quality by which it attains its particular manner of



EDITORS: Individual soul is rooted in the Nous, in Υ_{Ω} and Υ_{M} , and has a continuity through all the Soul ring planets. Finally, in Pisces are the many individual principles of manifestation, ♋ , which produce their own worlds; each is “a self-identical, undivided individual mind without beginning or end.” (Anthony Damiani, Notes and Papers, p. S81)

FIG. 78

being: it ceases to be an Intellectual-Principle, and has thenceforth its own task, as everything must that exists in the Intellectual Realm. (Plotinus, iv.8.3)

Whether we consider cosmic soul or individual human souls, ▼ the I AM principle—remaining an indivisible unit of soul essence—is in inward contemplation of the Ideas, the logos principle within it. As the principle of manifestation, its outward act is the projection and production of its universe.

Each soul is permanently a unity (a self) . . .

Thus the gist of the matter is established: one soul the source of all; the many founded in that one, on the analogy of the Intellectual-Principle; those many are at once divided and undivided; that Soul which abides in the Supreme is the one expression or Logos of the Intellectual-Principle, and from it spring other Reason-Principles, partial but immaterial, exactly as in the differentiation of the Supreme. (Plotinus, iv.3.5)

The universality of the “I” is qualified by an immaterial “AM,” and each one of these “I AMs” is linked to a reason-principle in the Intellectual which it will manifest. [fig. 79]

In tractate iv.2.2, Plotinus establishes the canons of a higher logic of Soul. He has already pointed out what is required in order to understand Soul; his words will appear paradoxical if we have decided

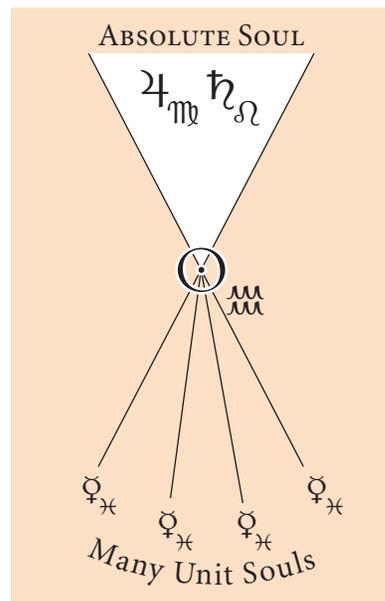


FIG. 79

▼ EDITORS: Anthony uses the term “individual soul” for a wide variety of souls that emanate from Absolute Soul:

When you speak about Absolute Soul, it’s not the soul of anything. But as soon as you start speaking about life in the sense that it’s in manifestation, then you’re speaking about either the soul of the cosmos or the soul of this plant, this animal, whatever. You’re speaking about a unit soul. And if you have a unit soul, the World-Idea is inevitably associated with it; it has to be. There isn’t an undetermined life anywhere. — transcript, 2/15/84

Individual or unit souls are not “parts” of soul, but ways of seeing (experiencing) the whole of Soul as a principle of individuation. We may think of souls as rays which continually pour out from the Supreme. We cannot completely separate individual unit soul from Absolute Soul, nor separate the notion of individuality from the system of Nature.

“Cosmic soul” refers to a variety of “individual” souls, but usually means the Sun soul. Cosmic means that it is participant with the Universal Soul in manifesting a cosmos, providing a habitation for other individual souls. There is an uncountable nested hierarchy of cosmic souls, when considered in terms of their manifestations. However, all cosmic souls are also essentially of the nature of individual soul, having an individuality connected with the cosmos, and an inviolable essence.

beforehand that Soul cannot be both a one or unity and “multipresent” in its graded powers. This descriptive definition of Soul is an absolute prerequisite to his theory of knowledge.

It can be demonstrated that soul must necessarily be of just this nature, and that there can be no other soul than such a being, one neither wholly impartible nor wholly partible but both at once. (IV.2.2)

In the extraordinary revelatory passage, VI.2.6, Plotinus refers to the soul’s tendency to be divisible about body, while retaining its individual essence. He is here referring to individual soul as an eternal offspring of the Absolute Soul.

A single Existent, it [Soul] makes itself many by what we may call its motion: it is one entire, but by its striving, so to speak, to contemplate itself, it is a plurality. . . . The cause of its appearing as many is this contemplation, and its purpose is the Act of the Intellect; if it were manifested as a bare unity, it could have no intellection, since in that simplicity it would already be identical with the object of its thought. (VI.2.6)

The quality and the grandeur of each individual unit of life is specifically related in tractate V.1.2.

Let every soul recall, then, at the outset the truth that soul is the author of all living things . . . but soul, since it can never abandon itself, is of eternal being.

. . . each separate life lives by the Soul entire, omnipresent in the likeness of the engendering father, entire in unity and entire in diffused variety.

Exceeding the bounds of belief, he describes each individual “I AM” as omnipresent and as indivisible in its unity. As indivisible, it manifests the entire heavenly system as a unit within itself.

If this point is not seized, any interpretation of Plotinus’ epistemology will go astray. The life of each unit soul is the medium in which this reality is being manifested. The grandeur and sublimity of this principle cannot be retold but must be experienced.