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PAPER’S WORKING TITLE: A Juxtaposition of Levinas and Plotinus on Justice

ABSTRACT:

      In *Totality and Infinity*, Otherwise*than Being*, and other works, Levinas cites Plotinus along with Plato in conveying his fundamental doctrine of goodness beyond being. In this paper I would like to pursue the overlap between Levinas’ thought and the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus as it has come down to us in the *Enneads*. I will especially focus on the accordances regarding justice.

   The resonances between the two thinkers are legion: both insist on the active infinity of transcendent goodness; both understand it is made manifest epiphanically; both understand that infinite goodness proceeds as an overflowing (French: *débordant*; Greek: δοὺς ἐξ αὐτοῦ); both characterize the relation of the everyday world to the transcendent as a ‘trace.’ (Plotinus  relies on  the Greek, ῖχνον, meaning trace or footprint, no less than fifty times in the *Enneads*.)

    Plotinus’s account of absolute justice as the transcendent reflecting upon itself also correlates with Levinas on justice. Just how and how far that comparison may be drawn will be the topic of this paper.