PLOTINUS
WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
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PROFESSOR OF GREEK, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL.
IN SIX VOLUMES
III
ENNEADS
III. 1-9
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III. 1. ON DESTINY

Introductory Note

This early treatise (No. 3 in Porphyry's chronological order) is very much a conventional Platonic school discussion of its period. After a formal scholastic statement of the question to be discussed, the views of opponents of the Platonic position, Epicureans, Stoics and astrological determinists, are stated and refuted on conventional lines, and the treatise ends with a brief statement of the Platonic doctrine, with its discrimination of the parts played in the causation of human action by universal and individual souls which leaves room for human freedom within the universal order. Brethier, in his introduction to the treatise, cites a number of parallels which show the conventional nature of the contents, and he and Harder, in the introduction to their notes on it in his second edition, have some interesting suggestions about particular opponents at whom some of the arguments may be directed. But, though the subject was well worn and the arguments here are hackneyed, the problem of reconciling human freedom with the universal divine order was an important one for Plotinus, and he treated different aspects of it more fully and originally later, in the work On Providence which comes next in the Third Ennead (III. 2 and 3), in the treatise on astrology (II. 3), and in his writings on the soul (especially IV. 3, 8 and 9).

Synopsis

Formal statement of the problem to be discussed, that of causation. All things have a cause except the first principles. The Peripatetic account of the immediate causes of events accepted as true as far as it goes (ch. 1). But it is lazy and superficial not to look for higher and remoter causes, and philosophers have in fact done so. The principal non-Platonic explanations; all things, even human thought and action are caused by (a) atoms (the Epicureans) or (b) the world-soul (Stoics or stoicising Platonists; see note to ch. 4) or (c) the stars (astrologers) or (d) the universal chain of causation (Stoics) (ch. 2). Refutation of these in the same order (a) ch. 3, (b) ch. 4, (c) chs. 5-6, (d) ch. 7. Brief statement of the true Platonic doctrine; universal soul and individual souls; freedom of rational and virtuous action (chs. 8-10).
III. 1. ON DESTINY

1. All things that come into being and all things that really exist either have a cause for their coming into being (those that come to be) or for their existence (those that really exist), or have no cause: or else, in both classes, some have a cause and some have not; or all things which come into being have a cause, but things which really exist have some of them a cause and some not, or none of them has a cause; or it is the other way round; all things that really exist have a cause, but things that come into being do so some this way, or some that way, or none of them has a cause. Well, then, among the eternal realities it is not possible to refer the first of them to other things which are responsible for their existence, just because they are first; but it must be admitted that all those which depend on the first realities have their being from them. And in giving an account of the activities of each of them one should refer them to their essences; for this is their being, the due output of a particular kind of activity. But as for things which come into being, or which always really exist but do not always act in the same way, we must say that all always have a cause for coming to be; nothing uncaused can be admitted; we must leave

1 An interesting variation and expansion of Timaeus 25A 4-5. Plato merely says that all things that come into being...

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no room for vain "slants" or the sudden movement of bodies which happens without any preceding causation, or a senseless impulse of soul when nothing has moved it to do anything which it did not do before. Because of this very absence of motive a greater compulsion would hold the soul, that of not belonging to itself but being carried about by movements of this kind which would be unwilled and causeless. For either that which it willéd—which could be within or outside it—or that which it desired moved the soul; or, if nothing which attracted it moved it, it would not have been moved at all. If all things have a cause for their happening it is easy to apprehend the causes which are immediately relevant to each happening and to trace it back to them: for instance, the cause of going to the market-place is that one thing one ought to see someone or to collect a debt: and in general the cause of choosing this or that or going after that is that it seemed good to the particular person involved to do that. And there are some things whose causes should be assigned to the arts; the cause of gettng well is the medical art and the doctor: and the cause of getting rich is a treasure which has been found or a gift from someone, or making money by labour or skill. And the cause of the child is the father, and perhaps some external influences coming from various sources which cooperate towards the production of a child; for instance, a particular kind of diet, or, slightly remoter, seed, which flows easily for begetting, or a wife well

1. Théil, 12. 4: 7, with 2.
2. Theil, 12. 4: 7, with 2.
adapted to bearing children: and in general, one traces the cause of the child back to Nature.

2. But to come to a halt when one has reached these causes and not to want to go higher is characteristic, perhaps, of a lazy person who pays no attention to those who have ascended to the first and the transcendent causes. For why in the same circumstances, for instance when the moon shines, does one man steal and another not? And when the influences which come from the environment are similar, why does one fall ill and another not? And why does one become rich, another poor from the same activities? And different ways of behaving and characters and fortunes require us to go on to the remoter causes. So philosophers have never come to a standstill [when they have discovered the immediate causes]: some of them posit corporeal principles, for instance, atoms; they make both the way individual things exist, and the fact of their existence, dependent on the movements of these, their clashings and interlockings with one another, the way in which they combine and act and are acted upon: even our own impulses and dispositions, they say, are as the atoms make them; so they introduce this compulsion which comes from the atoms into reality. And if anyone gives other bodies as principles, and says that, everything comes into being from them, he makes reality the slave of the compulsion which comes from them. Others go back to the principle of the universe and derive everything from it, saying that it is a cause which penetrates all things, and one which does not only move but also makes each single thing; they posit it as fate and the
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They say that not only the other things which come into being but also our own thoughts come from its movements, as when the individual parts of a living creature are not created by themselves but by the ruling principle in each living thing. Others claim that each and every thing comes to be from the universal circuit, which embraces everything and makes everything by its movement and by the positions and mutual aspects of the planets and fixed stars, relying upon the prediction which comes from them. Then, too, anyone who speaks of the mutual interweaving of causes and the chain of causation which reaches down from above, and the fact that consequents always follow antecedents and go back to them, since they come to be because of them and would not have done so without them, and says that what comes after is always enslaved to what is before, will obviously bring in fate by another way. But if one divided these philosophers, too, into two groups, one would be in accordance with the truth. For some of them make everything depend on a single principle, but others do not. We shall speak about these; 1 but now we must discuss those we mentioned first, and then consider the opinions of the others in order.

3. Well, then, to hand over the universe to bodies, whether to atoms or to what are called elements, and to generate order and reason and the ruling soul from the disorderly motion which they produce, is absurd and impossible on either view, but the more impossible, if one can say so, is the production from atoms. About these atoms many true arguments

1 In ch. 7.
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have been brought forward. But even if one did posit principles of this kind, they would not even so necessarily entail universal compulsion or fate of a different kind. Let us start by admitting that atoms exist. Then they will be moved, some with a downward motion—let us grant that there is really a "down"—some with a sideways, just as it chances, others in other ways. Nothing will be ordered—there is no order—but this world which comes into existence, when it has come to be, is completely ordered. So [on the atomic theory] there would be no foretelling or divination, neither that which comes from art—for how could there be an art which deals with things without order?—nor that which comes from divine possession and inspiration; for here, too, the future must be determined. And bodies will suffer, compulsorily, when they are struck by atoms, whatever the atoms may bring; but to what movements of atoms will one be able to attribute what soul does and suffers? For by what sort of atomic blow, whether the movement goes downwards or strikes against it from any direction, will the soul be engaged in reasonings or impulses of a particular kind, or any sort of reasonings or impulses or movements, necessary or not? And when the soul opposes the affections of the body? By what movements of atoms will one man be compelled to be a geometer, another study arithmetic and astronomy, and another be a philosopher? Our human activity, and our nature as living beings, will be altogether done away with if we are carried about where the [primary] bodies take.

1 This distinction between the two kinds of divination is taken from Philodorus 2440.

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This section (chs. 4-7 inc.) directed against the determinists has a good deal in common with the long discussion of fate in the commentary of Calcidius on the Timaeus (chs. 142-190), which Waszink gives quite good reasons for supposing to derive ultimately from Numenius (op. the preface to his edition pp. Iviii-lxiii). So the immediate source of Plotinus here may well be Numenius. The opponents envisaged throughout may be Stoics. There is nothing necessarily un-Stoic in this chapter, and the philosophical background of the astrological determinism criticised in 5 and 6 is Stoic. But it is odd, in this case, that Plotinus makes so clear a distinction between those who hold that all things are determined by the world-soul and those who hold that they are determined by the universal chain of causation (2. 15-26 and 31-36; 7, 6-9). There was a Platonic view which identified fate as a substantial reality with the world-soul (Pl.—Plutarch, De Fato 568e; Calcidius In Tim., ch. 144, p. 182, 16 Waszink). And it is possible that some Platonists who held this (though not Numenius) may have adopted a Stoic-type determinism, and it is against them that Plotinus is arguing here (op. Brähier in his introduction to this treatise).
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that they are moved according to fate is unreasonable: for there is not one thing which imparts the movement and another which receives it and takes its impulse from it, but the ruling principle itself is what immediately moves the leg—in the same way if in the All the All is one thing acting and being acted upon, and one thing does not come from another according to causes which always lead back to something else, it is certainly not true that everything happens according to causes but everything will be one. So, on this assumption, we are not ourselves, nor is there any act which is our own. We do not reason, but our considered decisions are the reasonings of another. Nor do we act, any more than our feet kick: it is we who kick through parts of ourselves.

5. But perhaps particular things are not brought about in this way, but the heavenly circuit, directing everything, and the movement of the planets, arranges each and every thing according to the relative positions of the planets in their aspects and rising, settings and conjunctions. The evidence for this is that by divination from the planets people foretell what is going to happen in the All and about each individual, what sort of fortune, and, in particular, what sort of thoughts he is going to have. And they say that one can see that the other animals and plants grew and diminish under the sympathetic influence of the planets, and are affected by them in other ways; and
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10. The regions of the earth differ from each other according to their position in relation to the All, and particularly to the sun; and not only do the other animals and plants correspond to the regions but also the forms and sizes and colours, the tempers and desires and ways of life and characters of human beings. So the universal circuit rules all things. In answer to this we must say, first, that this man too, in a different way, attributes to these principles what is ours, acts of will and affections, vices and impulses, but gives us nothing and leaves us to be stones set rolling, but not men who have a work to do of ourselves and from our own nature. But one must give to us what is ours (though there must come to what is ours, already something and our own, a certain amount from the All), and make a distinction between what we do ourselves and what we experience of necessity and not attribute everything to these principles. And something certainly must come to us from the regions and the difference of the surrounding atmosphere, for instance, heat or coldness in our temperaments, but something also comes from our parents; at any rate, we are generally like our parents in our appearance and some of the irrational affections of our soul. Yet all the same, even when people are alike in appearance, corresponding to their regions, the greatest difference is observed in their characters and thoughts, so that this kind would come from another principle. Our resistances, also, to our bodily temperaments and our lusts could appropriately be mentioned here. But if, because,
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looking at the position of the stars they announce
what has happened to particular people, they adduce
this as evidence that the happenings were caused
by the stars, then in the same way birds would be the
causes of what they indicate, and so would everything
at which the soothsayers look when they foretell.
Further, one could investigate these matters more
exactly starting from the following observations:
Whatever someone foretold, looking at the position
which the stars held when a particular man was born,
this, they say, was brought about by the stars, which
did not only indicate but also caused the happenings.
But when they talk about peoples' noble birth, that
is that they come of illustrious fathers and mothers,
how is it possible that the stars caused what the
parents had already before the position of the stars
came about from which they foretell? And they tell,
too, the fortunes of parents from the nativity of
their children, and what the children's dispositions
are going to be and what fortunes they will meet
with from the nativity of their parents speaking
of children who are yet unborn, and they tell of the
death of brothers from the horoscopes of their
brothers, of what concerns husbands from the horo¬
scopes of their wives and, the other way round, of
wives from the horoscopes of their husbands. How,
then, could the position of the stars over an individual
cause what is already stated as going to occur on
the evidence of the horoscope of the parents?
Either those former astrological circumstances are
the cause, or, if they are not, neither are those at the
birth of the individual. Again, too, people's likeness
in appearance to their parents declares that beauty
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and ugliness come from the family, and not from the movements of stars. It is reasonable, too, to suppose that at the same time both all sorts of living creatures and men are born together; and all of them, since they have the same position of the stars, ought to have the same destiny. How, then, are at one and the same time both men and other living creatures produced by the arrangements of the stars?

6. But, in fact, all individual things come into being according to their own natures, a horse because it comes from a horse, and a man from a man, and a being of a particular kind because it comes from a being of a particular kind. Admitted that the universal circuit co-operates (conceding the main part to the parents), and admitted that the stars contribute a great deal corporeally to the constituents of the body, heat and cooling and the consequent bodily temperament; how, then, are they responsible for characters and ways of life, and especially for what is not obviously dominated by bodily temperament—becoming a man of letters, for instance, or a geometer, or a dice-player, and a discoverer in these fields? And how could a wicked character be given by the stars, who are gods? And in general, how could all the evils be given by them which are said to give when they are brought into an evil state because they are setting and passing under the earth—as if anything extraordinary happened to them if they set from our point of view, and they were not always moving in the heavenly sphere come into being,” makes any sense at all here and is consistent with the whole argument of the preceding lines.

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1. γενομένοις: γενεμένοις Slosman: γενεμένοις cold, H. S.

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1 I read γενομένοις (Sleeman, Class. Quart. 20, 1926, 152), for the MSS γενεμένοις, because it gives a much better sense (it is difficult, indeed, to see how the things which
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Nor must it be said that, when one of the gods sees another in this or that position he becomes better or worse so that when they are in a good state they do good to us, but harm us when the opposite. We must rather say that the movement of the stars is for the preservation of the universe, but that they perform in addition another service; this is that those who know how to read this sort of writing can, by looking at them as if they were letters, read the future from their patterns, discovering what is signified by the systematic use of analogy—for instance, if one said that when the bird flies high it signifies some high heroic deeds.

It remains to look at the [theory of the] principle which interweaves and, so to speak, chains everything to everything else, and makes each individual thing be the way it is, a principle assumed to be one, from which all things come about by seminal formative principles. This opinion is close to that which says that all states and movements, both our own and all others, come from the soul of the universe, even if it does allow us, even as individuals, some room for action of our own. It certainly has in it absolute universal necessity, and when all the causes are included it is impossible for each individual thing not to happen: for there is nothing left which will hinder it or make it happen otherwise if all causes are included in fate. If they are like this, starting from a single principle, they will leave nothing for us except to move wherever they push us. For our mental images will depend on pre-existing circumstances and our impulses will follow our mental
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images, and "what is in our power" will be a mere word; it will not exist any more just because it is we who have the impulses, if the impulse is produced in accordance with those pre-existing causes; our part will be like that of animals and babies, which go on blind impulses, and madmen, for these also have impulses—yes, by Zeus, fire has impulses too, and everything which is enslaved to its structure and moves according to it. Everyone else sees this and does not dispute it: but they look for other causes of this impulse of ours, and do not step at this universal principle.

8. What other cause, then, occurs to us, besides these, which will leave nothing causeless, and will preserve sequence and order, and allow us to be something, and not do away with prophecies and divinations? Soul, surely, is another principle which we must bring into reality—not only the Soul of the All but also the individual soul along with it as a principle of no small importance; with this we must weave all things together, which does not itself come, like other things, from seeds but is a cause which initiates activity. Now when the soul is without body it is in absolute control of itself and free, and outside the causation of the physical universe; but when it is brought into body it is no longer in all ways in control, as it forms part of an order with other things.

Chances direct, for the most part, all the things round it, among which it has fallen when it comes to this middle point, so that it does some things because of these, but sometimes it masters them itself and leads them where it wishes. The better soul has power over more, the worse over less. For the soul that gives in at all to the temperament of the body, is
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compelled to feel lust or anger, either abject in poverty or puffed up by wealth or tyrannical in power; but the other soul, the one which is good by nature, holds its own in these very same circumstances, and changes them rather than is changed by them; so it alters some of them and yields to others if there is no vice in yielding.

5. So all is necessary that comes about by a mixture of choice and chance; for what else could there be besides? But when all the causes are included, everything happens with complete necessity; if anything from the universal circuit makes its contribution, that, too, is counted among the external causes. When therefore, the soul is altered by the external causes, and so does something and drives on in a sort of blind rush, neither its action nor its disposition is to be called free; this applies, too, when it is worse from itself and does not altogether have its impulses right or in control. When, however, in its impulse it has as director its own pure and untroubled reason, then this impulse alone is to be said to be in our own power and free; this is our own act, which does not come from somewhere else but from within from our soul when it is pure, from a primary principle which directs and is in control, not suffering error from ignorance or defeat from the violence of the passions, which come upon it and drive and drag it about, and do not allow any acts to come from us any more but only passive responses.

10. To sum up, the argument says that all things are indicated [by the stars and all things happen according to causes, but there are two kinds of these; and some happenings are brought about by the soul,
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Others through other causes, those round about it. And souls, in all that they do, when they do it according to right reason, act of themselves, whenever they do act, but in everything else are hindered in their own action and are passive rather than active. So other things [not the soul] are responsible for not thinking; and it is perhaps correct to say that the soul acts unthinkingly according to destiny, at least for people who think that destiny is an external cause; but the best actions come from ourselves; for this is the nature we are of, when we are alone; good and wise men do act, and do noble actions by their own will; but the others do their noble actions in so far as they have a breathing space and are allowed to do so, not getting their thinking from somewhere else, when they do think, but only not being hindered.

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III. 2 and 3. ON PROVIDENCE

Introductory Note

These treatises (Nos. 47 and 48 in the chronological order) are Porphyry's divisions of a single long work on Providence which Plotinus wrote towards the end of his life. The subject was a traditional one: many Stoics and Middle Platonists had written on Providence before him; but this austere, honest and profound work is the finest of all Greek contributions to theological. The object of Plotinus is to explain how belief in the existence and goodness of divine providence can be justified in the face of all the apparent evils in the world: the opponents he has in view are the Epicureans, who denied providence, the Peripatetics, who denied that it extended to the world below the moon, and perhaps most of all his intimate enemies the Gnostics, who held that the material universe was the work of an evil maker. Many of the arguments he uses are traditional, taken over from the Stoics, or developed from Plato's great theodicy in Book X of the Laws (cp. Brehier's introduction to the treatises). But there is much that is original in his use and elaboration of them. The work is not a systematic one: themes and arguments recur and are handled in different ways from different points of view, not always without some inconsistency. It is one of the works in which we have most vividly the impression of Plotinus thinking aloud, discussing the subject with himself as he writes.

A notable feature of the work is that Plotinus speaks in it, and it alone, of a logos, a rational forming principle, of the whole universe, which looks at first sight like a distinct hypostasis, incompatible with the normal hierarchy of three and three only, the One, Intellect and Soul, on which he insists so strongly elsewhere. But Brehier, in his introduction (pp. 18-22), is almost certainly right in understanding logos here not as a distinct hypostasis, but as a way of speaking of the living forming and directive pattern, derived from Intellect through Soul in the usual way, which keeps the material universe in the best possible order and brings it into a unity-in-diversity of contrasting and clashing forces which, though far inferior to the unity of the intelligible world, is its best possible image in the sharply divided world of space and time.

Synopsis

III. 2

It is unreasonable to suppose that the world is produced by chance, but there are difficulties about universal providence which ought to be discussed. This universe is the everlasting product of the true, eternal universe of Intellect, which is at unity and peace with itself (ch. 1). This universe is not truly one: there is separation in it, and therefore conflict. It is not the result of any kind of planning or decision, but the natural product of Intellect, necessarily inferior because of its material element but with its own kind of harmony dominating its conflicts (ch. 2). It is good as a whole, and everything in it is good and seeks the Good, each in its degree (ch. 3). The destruction of one thing by another is necessary, and leads to new life. Disorder and lawlessness result from failure to attain the good, and lead inevitably and justly to punishment (ch. 4). Evils often lead to good, for the whole or the individual (ch. 5). How can we reconcile the obvious injustices of human life with providence? (ch. 6). This is a second-rate world, after all. Individual souls, too, must take their share of responsibility. But providence does
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really extend to the earth (ch. 7). Man is not the best kind of creature in the universe, but midway between gods and beasts. Men get what they deserve at the hands of the wicked through their own slackness and folly. Divine providence must leave room for human initiative. Men cannot expect the gods to help them if they do not do what is necessary for their own well-being (chs. 8-9). Free-will and necessity (ch. 10). There must be inequalities in the All (chs. 11-12). It is important to take previous incarnations into account in estimating the justice of men's fates (ch. 13). The wonderful order of the universe, and man's place in it (chs. 13-14). The endless wars among animals and men (which do not affect man's true inner self) are part of the great game, incidents in the plot of the play, movements in the dance, notes in the melody of the universe, which must be as it is because it is necessarily secondary, imperfect, not fully unified (chs. 10-16). This universe is less one than its rational formative principle, the logos. In its clashing disunity "each man kills the thing he loves." The logos, in producing its play, gives human souls parts in it according to the characters they have already (ch. 17). But there are still difficulties. We must not think of the actors in our cosmic drama as improvising to fill in gaps in the play. If we take away responsibility for evil from the logos we shall take away responsibility for good as well. But if we give it all responsibility, even the divine souls will count for nothing in the universe (ch. 18).

III. 3

The universal logos includes the logoi of all souls, good and bad, and each of them, while remaining itself, forms part of a complex living unity, within which strife and opposition have their place (ch. 1). The logos is like a general who commands the enemy's army as well as his own (ch. 2). Man's individuality and his acts of choice are taken account of in the universal plan. It is absurd to complain because man is not better than he is; he is as good as he can be given his place in the order of things, in this universe which itself follows upon, and is less perfect than, Intellect and Soul (ch. 3). Man is not simple, but double, with a higher, free principle besides his lower self. Higher and lower providence, and higher and lower principles in man: the lower depend on and are caused by the higher. Again, we must take previous lives into account (ch. 4). The inequalities of the providential order; each individual thing in its place contributes in its own way to the single result. Fate (lower providence) and higher providence. Evil actions are not done by providence but their results are worked into the universal order. The differences in men's reactions. Their good actions are done by themselves, but according to providence (ch. 5). Divination is possible because of the universal harmony and correspondence of all things (ch. 6). Diversity, inequality and evil are necessary if there is to be any universal order at all: all things in their multiplicity grow from a single root (ch. 7).
III. 2. (47) ΠΕΡΙ ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑΣ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ

1. Τὸ μὲν τῷ αὐτομάτῳ καὶ τίχῃ διδόμενον ταῦτα τοῖς παντὶς τὴν οὐδέποτε καὶ σύστασιν ὑπὸ ἀλογίαν καὶ ἀνδρὸς οὐτε ποιῆσθαι κατηχημένοι, δηλοῦν τοιαῦτα πρὸς τὸν καὶ πολλοὶ καὶ ἱκανοὶ ὥς καταβάθμισται διεκκυωτεῖς τούτοις λόγοις: τὸ δὲ τίς ὁ πρὸτεστοῦ τοῖς πάντες γένεσιν ἡκασταὶ καὶ πεποίημαι, ἡ τὸ καὶ ὑπὸν ὅς οὐκ ἀρθῶς γεγομένως ὑποκατοικεῖ ἡ περὶ τῆς παντὸς προνοίας συμβαίνει, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐπήρθε μηδὲ εἶναι εἰπτεῖ, τῶς δὲ ὡς ὅτι κακὰς δημιουργόσε ἐστι γεγομένως, ἐπικολύφθη καὶ προσήκει ἄνωθεν καὶ ἦς ἀναλόγως τὸν λόγον λαβότας. Πρόνοοια ταῦτα τὸν μὲν ἠθ' ἐκάστοτε, ἦτοι λόγος πρὸς ἐργον ὅπως δει γενέσθαι καὶ μὴ γενέσθαι τί τῶν ὁδὸν ἐνεπεξεργασθήτω ἢ ὅπως τι εἴη, ἦς ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἤπειρα, ἀνεπιλέγον ἢ τὸ τῶν παντών λόγων πρόνοιαν. Εἶ δὲ τοιὸν ἰποβήμει τὰς ἐφεξῆς απαίτομεν. Εἶ μὲν ὅτι αὑτῷ ἀπὸ τοῦς χρόνου πρότερον οὐκ ἐπιπλήττεται τῶν κόσμων, ἔλεγομεν γεγονότα, τῷ αὐτῷ ἄν τῷ λόγῳ ἐναπόθεθα, διὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς κατὰ κέριον.

1 Κόλοσσ Ξεινία, ΙΙ. 8: χρόνου εἰς.

1 The Epicureans: cp. e.g. Cicero, De Natura Deorum I. S. 18 and 20, 54–56.
2 The Gnostics: cp. II. 9 (33), of which the title is given by.
Plotinus frequently attacks the idea that God first planned the universe and then created it, and insists that it is ever-lasting and not the result of divine deliberation and choice. 

In his treatise *On Providence*, Plotinus argues that the universe is not a product of divine planning and creation, but rather an eternal and unchanging reality. He contends that the universe is the result of the eternal Intellect, which is prior in nature to the universe and serves as its archetype and model. The universe is an image of the Intellect, existing by means of it and everlastingly coming into existence. 

Plotinus asserts that the nature of Intellect and Being is the true and first universe, which does not stand apart from itself and is not weakened by division and is not incomplete even in its parts, since each part is not cut off from the whole; but the whole life of it and the whole intellect lives and thinks all together in one, and makes the part the whole and all bound in friendship with itself, since one part is not separated from another and has not become merely other, estranged from the rest; and, therefore, one does not wrong another, even if they are opposites. And since it is everywhere one and complete at every point it stays still and knows no alteration; for it does not make as one thing acting upon another. For what reason could it have for making, since it is deficient in nothing? Why should a rational principle make another rational principle, but of a spontaneous outflow of creative power without beginning or end. For a particularly notable statement of his reasons for rejecting divine planning and subsequent creation, see V. 8 [31] 7.
or an intellect untaught: Being able to make something by itself is the characteristic of something which is not altogether in a good state but moves and makes and moves in the direction in which it is inferior. For altogether blessed beings it is alone enough to stay still in themselves and be what they are; restless activity is unsafe for those who in it violently move themselves out of themselves. But that true All is blessed in such a way: that in not making it acquires great works and in remaining in itself makes no small things.

2. For from that true universe which is not truly one, something comes into existence, which is not truly one. For it is not a realm, but the last of realities. All was not a kind and had the last of powers. Indeed all power: and this is the power to produce something else; and this is the power to produce and to make something else and to make something else. And this is the power to produce and to make something else and to make something else and to make something else.

2. For from that true universe which is one this universe comes into existence, which is truly one: for it is not a kind and has the last of powers. And this is the power to produce something else and to make something else and to make something else. And this is the power to produce something else and to make something else and to make something else.

On Providence (T)
The analogy of the seed (which in his way of thinking is superior in its concentrated unity to the full-grown plant) is a favourite one with Plotinus: cp., e.g., III. 7 [45] 11. 23-27.

1 Plato, Timaeus 48A2.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

things in unperturbed quietness; this something of itself is the rational formative principle flowing from Intellect. For that which flows out from Intellect is formative principle, and it flows out always, as long as Intellect is present among realities. But just as in the formative principle in a seed all the parts are together and in the same place, and none of them fights with any other or is at odds with it or gets in its way; then something comes to be in bulk, and the different parts are in different places, and then one really could get in another's way and even consume it; 1 so from Intellect which is one, and the formative principle which proceeds from it, this All has arisen and separated into parts, and of necessity some became friendly and gentle, others hostile and at war, and some did harm to each other willingly, some, too, unwillingly, and some by their destruction brought about the coming into being of others, and over them all as they acted and were acted upon in these kinds of ways they began a single melody, each of them uttering their own sounds, and the formative principle over them producing the melody and the single ordering of all together to the whole. This All of ours is not intellect and rational principle, like the All There, but participates in intellect and rational principle. Therefore, there was need of a concord in which "intellect and necessity" came together, in which necessity drag it down to what is worse and carries it away to reason, because it is not a rational principle itself, but, all the same, "intellect controls necessity." 2 It is the intelligible universe that is nothing but rational principle, and there could not be another which is nothing but rational
μόνον λόγος: εἰ δὲ τι ἐγένετο ἄλλο, ἐδει λαττων ἐκείνου καὶ μὴ λόγον, μηδ' αὐτὸν τιν' ἄκαμπτον γὰρ μικτὸν ἀπα. Καὶ εἰς τὸ μὲν λόγον, ἐδει καὶ λόγος, οὖν τής ἀρχής ἡ ἔφεστον τοῦ μεταγενέστερον, ἤν οὐ κακοπαθεῖν δεὶ νομίζειν βράστη διακοσμῆσει τοῦ τὰ πάν ὑπὸ τὸν πάροικον.

3. Καὶ αὕτη τισ ἐισαύτως ὀνδὲ τοῦτο μέμιστο ὑπὸ οὖ τῶν μετὰ συμματίσεις οὐκ ἀριστεί, ὀνδ' αὖ τῶν αὖτων τοῦ εἶναι αὕτη αὐτάσπαιτο πρῶτον μὲν ἐὰν ἀρχής ὄντος αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἕκας ἑκατομμυρίων, ἀλλ' ἀκατασταθεῖς γεγομένης, ἀλλά φύσεως ἀμείνονοι γεγομένων, κατὰ φύσιν ἀριστεύει ἐπίστευτον ὑπὲρ εἱπτ' ἐπὶ τοιχωμὸς, αἰνηθεῖται τῷ πονηρέτῳ. ἐπεὶ γὰρ τῆς ἐπιτυπτῆς πάραγελαν καὶ αὐταρκεῖς καὶ λογίως αὕτη καὶ τοῖς μέρεσι τοῖς αὐτοῦ τοῖς κυριαρχόσι καὶ τοῖς διάδοσιν ἀριθμήσεις προσφέροντο. ὁ τὸν πάντα τῶν μερῶν

10 τὸ δὲν αἰτίωμεν ἀστόχος αὖ εἰς τῆς αὐτῆς. το τῆς γάρ μέρος ποὺς αὐτὸ τῆς διὰ τοῦ ἐκατομμύριον, ἐπί σύμβουλον καὶ ἀρμοτοντα ἐκεῖνον, τὸ δὲν ἐκατομμύριον ἐν τῶν μέρη ἀντίλαμβαναι. Τοῦτο γὰρ σοὶ τῶν κόσμων αἰτίωμεν, ἀλλὰ τῶν τῶν αὐτοῦ χωρίς λαβόστοι, εἰνὲν παῖς ἔγινον τρίχα χ' τῶν γαμαὶ δικτυῶν 1 ἀμελήσεις τῶν πάντων ἀνθρώπου, διαμοιβῶν τινὰ διὰ δὴν βλέπειν, ἢ τῇ Διά

principle; but if something else did come into existence, it had to be less than that other universe, and not rational principle, nor yet some kind of matter, for that would be without beauty and order; so it had to be a mixture [of both]. Its terminal points are matter and rational principle; its starting-point is Soul presiding over the mixture, Soul which we must not think suffers any harm as it directs this All with the utmost ease by a sort of presence.

3. And it is not proper for anyone to speak ill of even this universe as not being beautiful or the best of all things which have body; nor to blame the cause of its existence when, first of all, it exists of necessity and not as the result of any process of reasoning, but of a better nature naturally producing a likeness of itself; then, even if it had been a process of reasoning which had produced it, there will be nothing to be ashamed of in its product; for it produced a whole, all beautiful and self-sufficient and friends with itself and with its parts, both the more important and the lesser, which are all equally well adapted to it. So be he who blamed the whole because of the parts would be quite unreasonable in his blame; one must consider the parts in relation to the whole, to see if they are harmonious and in concord with it; and when one considers the whole one must not look at a few little parts.1 This is not blaming the universe but taking some of its parts separately, as if one were to take a hair of a whole living being, or a toe, and neglect the whole man, a wonderful sight to see; or, really, to ignore the rest.

1 Cp. Plato, Laws X. 903B-0.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

of living beings and pick out the meanest; or to pass over the whole race, say, of men and bring forward Thersites. Since, then, what has come into being is the whole universe, if you contemplate this, you might hear it say, "A god made me, and I came from him perfect above all living things, and complete in myself and self-sufficient, lacking nothing, because all things are in me, plants and animals and the nature of all things that have come into being, and many gods, and populations of spirits, and good souls and men who are happy in their virtue. It is not true that the earth is adorned with all plants and every sort of animal, and the power of soul has reached to the sea, but all the air and aether and the whole heaven is without a share of soul; but up there are all good souls, giving life to the stars and to the well-ordered everlasting circuit of the heaven, which in imitation of Intellect wisely circles round the same centre for ever; for it seeks nothing outside itself. Everything in me seeks after the Good, but each attains it in proportion to its own power; for the whole heaven depends on it, and the whole of my soul, and the gods in my parts, and all animals and plants and whatever there is in me (if there is anything) which is thought to be without life. And some things appear to participate only in being, others in life, others more fully in life in that they have sense-perception, others at the next stage have reason, and others the fullness of life. One must not demand equal gifts in things which are not equal. It is not the finger's

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 business to see, but this is the eye's function, and the finger's is something else, to be essentially finger and to have what belongs to it."

4. But do not be surprised if fire is extinguished by water and something else is destroyed by fire. For something else brought it into existence; it did not bring itself and was then destroyed by something else; and it came to being by the destruction of something else, and its own corresponding destruction, if it comes, would bring nothing terrible to it, and there is another fire in place of the fire which was destroyed. For the incorporeal heaven, each individual part persists, but in this heaven here the whole lives for ever and all the noble and important parts, but the souls, changing their bodies, appear now in one form and now in another, and also, when it can, a soul takes its place outside the process of becoming and is with the universal soul. Bodies live by species, and individual bodies as far as they are wholes, if living things both come from them and are to be nourished by them; for life is in motion here, but unmoved There. Motion had to come from stillness, and from the life which remains in itself there had to come the life which proceeds from it, which is different, like a life breathing and stirring which is the respiration of that life at rest. The attacks of living beings on each other, and their destruction of each other, are necessary; they did not come into existence to live for ever. They came into existence because the formative principle took hold of the whole of matter and had in itself all structure of the earth, but to stop growing when they are cut away from it.15

3 Those individual bodies are probably the elements, earth, air, etc., which are alive and communicate their life to the living beings in them: cp. IV. 4 [25] 27, where stones are said to grow as long as they are part of the living continuous

55
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

πάντα ὅπων αὐτῶν ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ ἄνω οὐρανῷ·

20 πάθεν γὰρ ἄν ἐδεῖ μὴ ὅπων ἐκεῖ; ὅπλαστότων δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄδικα ἦσαν μὲν ἄν αὐτῶν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ ἄγαθον, ἀνυμαλά δὲ τοῦ τυχειν σφαλλόμενον ἔτ’ ἄλλους τρέπονται. Ἰσχύει δὲ ἀδικοῦντες ἀδίκα παράφυμον ταῖς ὑψηλάς ἐνεργείαις κακίας

25 τάπτονται τε εἰς τόπον χειρών: οὐ γὰρ μήπως ἐκφεύγῃ μηδὲν τὸ παχῦν ἐν τῷ παντὸς νόμῳ. "Εστι δὲ οὐ διὰ τὴν ἀταξίαν τἀξις ὀδὲ διὰ τὴν ἀνουμίαν νόμος, ὅσα τίς ῥέεται, ὅπα κένουσι ἐκεῖνα διὰ τὰ χεῖρα καὶ ἐκατ’ ἐφαύνου, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν τάξιν ἐπακόλουθον σιναν, καὶ ὅτι τάξις, ἀταξία.

30 καὶ διὰ τῶν νόμων καὶ τῶν λόγων, καὶ ὅτι λόγος, παρανομία καὶ ἄνωτα οἷς τῶν βαλτικῶν τὰ χεῖρα πεποιηκότων, ἀλλὰ τῶν δέσφοτον δεισίματον τὰ ἁμένα φύσιν τῇ ἀτακῇ ἢ συντιμῇ καὶ καθῆλθεν ἄλλων δεσφοτείον οὐ δεσφοκμένον. Τὸ γὰρ ἐπακόλουθον ἐκφεύγει τάξιν τοῦτο ἀν οὐ τύχει ή δι’ αὐτὸ παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἢ δι’ ἄλλο παρ’ ἄλλου· πολλὰ δὲ ὅτι ἄλλου σάχει καὶ ἀκόλουθον τῶν ποιούντων καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο ἁμένων. Τὰ δὲ δι’ αὐτὸ ἐγχόνοντα 1 κίνησιν ἀκτετόνων ἄργα μέσον ἄν ὅτι μὲν πρὸς τὰ δεσφωτέ, ὅτι δὲ πρὸς τὰ χεῖρα. Τὴν δὲ πρὸς τὰ χεῖρα τροπὴν παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἰδῶν ἢταν οὐκ ἀξίων. διέγη γὰρ

1 ἤγετα Θεοδορετος: ὅγετα ὄδων.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

living things, because they all exist There, in the upper heaven; for where could they have come from if they did not exist There? The cause of the wrongs men do to one another might be their effort towards the Good; when they fail through their impotence to attain it, they turn against other men. But the wrongdoers pay the penalty, being corrupted in their souls by their works of wickedness, and are set in a lower place; for nothing can ever escape that which is ordained in the law of the All. But order does not exist because of disorder or law because of lawlessness, as someone thinks,  that these good things may exist and be manifested because of the worse ones; but disorder and lawlessness exist because of order, which is imposed from outside. It is because there is order that disorder exists, and on account of the law and formative reason, just because it is reason, that there is transgression of the law and folly; nor that the better things produce the worse, but the things which ought to receive the better are unable to do so because of their own nature or because of some chance circumstance or hindrance from others. For when something has its order from outside it may fail to correspond to it either of its own accord and from itself or because of and impelled by something else; and many things are affected by others when those which act on them do not intend to do so and are aiming at something else. But living beings which have of themselves a movement under their own control might incline sometimes to what is better, sometimes to what is worse. It is probably not worth enquiring into the reason for this self caused turning towards the worse;
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

40. ἄρα γε νεμομένη προαίσθε ταύτη πλέον καὶ μεῖζον τὸ ἀμετριτέριον ἄλοι, καὶ οὕτως δὲ σίγεται καὶ ἔξωρας εἴσημας καὶ παροικοῦ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τὸ ἐξαφάμη καὶ μὴ ἀναλφάζειν ἀρίστη καὶ ἀλέσσως εἰς ὧ τις ἐξέσσαν εἴρησασθε. Ἐπεσταὶ γε μὴ δίης, καὶ οὐκ ἄδικον τούλιν

45. γενέμενων ἀκολούθως πάντως τῇ διαθέσει, οὐδὲ ἀπαιτητέον τοῦτος τὸ εἰδαμοειν ὑπάρχειν, οὐ μὴ εἰργάσται εἰσδαμος ἀξία. Οἱ δὲ ἁγάθαι μόνη εἰδαμονεῖ: διὰ τὸτέρο γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεα εἰδαμονές.

5. Εἰ τοιῶν καὶ φυγαίνεν εἰς τόμιε τῷ παντὶ ἐξαίτεν εἰδαμοειν εἶναι, εἰ τινὲς μὴ εἰδαμονεῖς, οὐκ ἁλωμένων τῶν τόσων, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἕκειν ἀδαμαίας τὸ διήνοικαι καὶ ἐκακονύμωποι,

5. αὐτὴ ἄλλη ἀρετής πρόκειται. Καὶ μὴ θεοῦ δὲ γενεμένων θεόν βλέπῃ μὴ ἔχει τὸ δεόν. Πεπληραὶ δὲ καὶ νῦν τοις μὲν ἐγκαθαρεῖ, τοῖς δὲ κακοῖς σύμφορα· καὶ ἀνάρχον τοις σώμασι ἔξονται. Καὶ οὐκ ἄφεται δὲ αὐτὴ ταύτα παντόπολος εἰς σύνταξι καὶ συμπλήρωσι τοῦ ἄλου. Ὅσε γὰρ

10. ψυχόμενον τοὺς ὧ δὲ άρχον τοῦ παντὸς κατεχόμενον τοῖς ψυχάμενοι εἰς γέννημεν ἄλαχοι—οὕτω γὰρ εὔδαμος ἐκεῖνοι τὸ ὧ ὑπὸ τοῦτον καταλαμβάνονται—όντως καὶ ταῦτας σώματος καὶ μακροομοίως δὲ φυγής τῆς τὰ τοιαῦτα παγοῦσα τὰς νόσιαι καὶ καλὰς καταλαμβάνει ὁδεγῆθη ἄλλω εἰρήμι

15. καὶ ἄλλη τάξει. Καὶ τὰς μὲν αὐτῶς συνεγείρει τοῖς παθοῦσιν, ὅπως πανί καὶ τόσος, ὃ δὲ κακά

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

for a deviation which is slight to begin with, as it goes on in this way continually makes the fault wider and graver; and the body is there too, and, necessarily, its last. And the first beginning, the sudden impulse, if it is overlooked and not immediately corrected, even produces a settled choice of that into which one has fallen. Punishment certainly follows; and it is not unjust that someone who has come to be this sort of person should suffer the consequences of his condition; people must not demand to be well off who have not done what deserves well-being. Only the good are well off; that, too, is what gives the gods their well-being.

5. If, then, it is possible for souls to be well off in this All, we must not blame the place if some are not well off, but their own incapacity, in that they have not been able to take a noble part in the contest for which the prizes of virtue are offered. Why is it disconcerting if men who have not become godlike do not have a godlike life? And poverty, too, and sickness, are nothing to the good, but advantageous to the bad; and men must fall sick if they have bodies. And even these troubles are not altogether without usefulness for the co-ordination and completion of the whole. For, just as when some things are destroyed the formative principle of the All uses them for the generation of others—for nothing anywhere escapes its grip—so, when a body is damaged, and a soul enfeebled by suffering something of this kind, what has been seized upon by sicknesses and vice is subjected to another chain of causation and another ordering. And some troubles are profitable to the sufferers themselves, poverty and sickness for
instance, and vice works something useful to the whole by becoming an example of just punishment; and also of itself it offers much that is of use. For it makes men awake and wakes up the intelligence and understanding of those who are opposed to the ways of wickedness, and makes us learn what a good virtue is by comparison with the evils of which the wicked have a share. And evils did not come into existence for these reasons, but we have explained that, when they have come into existence, the formative principle uses even them to meet a need. This belongs to the greatest power, to be able to use even the evil nobly and to be strong enough to use things which have become shapeless for making other shapes. In general, we must define evil as a falling short of good; and there must be a falling short of good here below, because the good is in something else. This something else, then, in which the good is, since it is other than good, produces the falling short; for it is not good. Therefore “evils will not be done away with,” because some things are less than others in comparison with the nature of good, and the other things which have the cause of their existence from the Good are different from the Good and have certainly become the sort of things they are because of their distance from it.

As for people getting what they do not deserve, when the good get what is bad and the bad the opposite, it is correct to say that nothing is bad for the good man and nothing, correspondingly, good for the bad one; but why do things against nature come to the good, and things according to nature to the wicked? How can this be right distribution? But
if what is according to nature brings no addition to well-being, nor, correspondingly, does that which is contrary to nature take away anything of the evil which is in the bad, what does it matter whether it is this way or that? Just as it does not matter if the bad man is beautiful in body and the other, the good man, is ugly. But that other way, which is not the way things are now, would be proper and proportionate and according to merit; and that would be the way of the best providence. Then, again, it is not proper that the good should be slaves and the others masters, and that the wicked should be rulers of cities and decent men their slaves, even if these circumstances add nothing to the possession of good or evil. Then, too, a wicked ruler might do the most lawless things; and the bad get the upper hand in wars, and what crimes they commit when they have taken prisoners! All these things cause perplexity about how they can happen if there is a providence.

For even if someone who is intending to make something must look to the whole, yet all the same it is right for him to set the parts where they ought to be, especially when they are beings with souls, and have life, or are even rational; and providence ought to reach everything, and its task ought to be just this, to leave nothing neglected. If, then, we say this All depends on Intellect, and that the power of intellect has extended to all things, we must try to show in what way each of them is excellently disposed.

7. First, then, we must understand that those who are looking for excellence in what is mixed must not demand all that excellence lies in the unmixed, nor look for things of the first order among those of the
 Plotinus: Ennead III. 2.

In the myth of Er in Republic X. 617E4-5 (the soul's choice of lives).

1 From the myth of Er in Republic X. 617E4-5 (the soul's choice of lives).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

for it and bring it into existence and direct it, and, in one way or another, to make it, either by staying above it and giving something of themselves or by coming down, or some in this way and some in that; for we are not concerned with this in our present discussion; what concerns us is that, however this may be, providence ought not to be blamed for the doings of souls. But what if one considers the comparative distribution of evils to men of opposite character, that the good are poor and the wicked are rich, and the bad have more than their share of the things which those who are human beings must have, and are masters, and peoples and cities belong to them? Is it, then, because providence does not reach as far as the earth? But the fact that the other things happen in a rational pattern is evidence that it reaches the earth too; for animals and plants share in reason and soul and life. Does it, then, reach the earth, but not have full control here? But, since the All is a single living being, this would be as if someone were to say that a man's head and face had been produced by nature and a rational forming principle in full control, but should attribute the rest of the body to other causes—chances or necessities—and should say that they were inferior productions either because of this or because of the incompetence of nature. But it is neither pious or reverent to censure the work by admitting that these lower parts are not excellently arranged.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

κεφαλή, καλλίων, τὰ δὲ μέσα καὶ κάτω οὐκ ἐσο-
ανθρωποὶ δὲ ἐν μέσῳ καὶ κάτω, ἀνω δὲ οὐρανὸς
καὶ οῖς ἐν αὐτῷ θεοῖ καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον τοῖς κόσμοι-
θεοί καὶ οὐρανός τάς κύκλους, γὰρ δὲ τὰ κέντραν
καὶ πρὸς ἐν τι τῶν ἄστρων. Θαυμάζεται δὲ ἐν
ἀνθρώπων άδικία, ὅτι ἀνθρωποὶ ἀξιόσθην ἐν τῷ
παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ εἶναι ὡς οἰδήν δεῖτος σοφότεροι.
Τὸ δὲ κέντρον ἀνθρώπος ἐν μέσῳ θεῶν καὶ θηρίων
καὶ ἔστει ἐπὶ άμφως καὶ ομοιοῦσθαι μὲν τῷ ἐστέρῳ,
οἱ δὲ τῷ ἐστέρῳ, οἱ δὲ μεταξὺ εἰσίν, οἱ
πολλοὶ. Οἱ δὲ κακολεύοντες εἰς τὸ ἐγχώς ξῷον
ἀλόγων καὶ θηρίων ἅρμα ἠλλοιοῦσα τός μέσος καὶ
βιαζόνται· οἱ δὲ βελτίων χρημάτων τοῖς τῶν βιαζ-
μένων, κρατοῦσι φιλο μὶ ό ν τῶν χειρόνων, δὲ
ἐστὶν χειρός καὶ αὐτοί καὶ οὐκ εἰσίν ἀγαθοὶ οὐχὶ
παρεσκεύασαν αὐτοὺς μὴ παθεῖν. Εἰ ὁ πορεῖς
ἀσκῆσάντες μὲν τὰ σώματα, τὰς ἐς γυναις ἐπὶ
ἀσκητικῶς ποίησιν χειρῶν γενέμενον ἐν πάλη
κρατοῦσιν τῶν μετα τὰ σώματα μήτε τὰς ψυχὰς
πεπαιδευμένων καὶ τὰ σοφά ἀρμόδιους καὶ
τὰ ἱματα αὐτῶν τὰ άξιὰ λαμβάνειν, τὰ ἐν τῷ

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

thing, the face and head, are more beautiful, and the
middle and lower parts are not equal to them; but
men are in the middle between gods and beasts, and
above and below are heaven and the gods in it; and the greatest part of
the universe is gods and all the heaven round about
it; but the earth is like a central point even in com-
parison with only one of the stars.1 Unrighteousness
in men causes surprise, because people expect man
to be the really valuable part in the All, because there
is nothing wiser. But the fact is that man has the
middle place between gods and beasts, and inclines
now one way, now the other, and some men become
like gods and others like beasts, and some, the
majority, are in between. Those, then, who are
corrupted, so that they come near to irrational
animals and wild beasts, pull down those in the middle
and do them violence; these are certainly better
than those who assault them, but all the same they are
mastered by the worse men, in so far as they are
worse themselves too, and are not [really] good, and
have not prepared themselves not to suffer wrongs.
If some boys, who have kept their bodies in good
training, but are inferior in soul to their bodily
condition because of lack of education, win a wrestle
with others who are trained neither in body or soul
and grab their food and their dainty clothes, would
parallels. Cicero Somnium Scipionis 8 and 12 may also be
compared, though the earth here is only insignificantly small,
not "a point". Geocentric cosmology did not lead the
ancient astronomers and philosophers to a man-centred
view of the universe, an exaggerated view of man's importance in
the scheme of things. It led them rather to stress his small-
ness, insignificance and lowly position in the cosmic order, as
Plotinus does here.

1 Plotinus is insisting here on the smallness and unimport-
ance of the earth in language customary among astronomers
from Aristarchus of Samos onwards: op. his On the Sizes and
Distances of the Sun and Moon Hypothesis 2 τήν γένσην αἰῶνα
τέλος καὶ κάτω οὐρανὸς ἐν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ σφαίρας. For
this use as a theme of moral and religious exhortation, to bring
home the insignificance of man and the worthlessness of fame
see Marcus Aurelius IV. 3. 3. (A. S. L. Farquharson in his
commentary, Vol. II, p. 866, has collected a number of

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PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

ON PROVIDENCE

It

The affair be anything but a joke? Or would it not be right for even the lawgiver to allow them to suffer this as a penalty for their laziness and luxury, these boys, who, though they were assigned training-grounds, because of laziness and soft and slack living allowed themselves to become fattened lambs, the prey of wolves? But those who do these things are punished, first by being wolves and ill-fated men; and then as well there lies before them what people like this are destined to suffer; it does not come to a stop when they have become bad here and die; every time the rational and natural consequences follow what has gone before, worse for the worse, but better for the better. But this sort of thing has nothing to do with wrestling schools; what happens there is play. For if both our sets of boys grew bigger with their folly, then they would have to gird themselves and take weapons, and it would be a finer sight than if one gave them wrestling exercise; but as things are, one set are unarmed, and those who are armed get the mastery. Here it would not be right for a god to fight in person for the unwarlike; the law says that those who fight bravely, not those who pray, are to come safe cut of wars; for, in just the same way, it is not those who pray but those who look after their land who are to get in a harvest, and those who do not look after their health are not to be healthy; and we are not to be vexed if the bad get larger harvests, or if their farming generally goes better. Then again, it is ridiculous for people to do everything else in life according to their own ideas, commonplace (IV. 1. 127) is, however, closer to the present passage than anything in Plato.

1 For the thought, cp. Plato, Thasaeus 176D-177A: "wolves" from Republic 560A4; Epictetus's version of this
plotinus: ennead iii. 2.

πράττοντων, ἢ θεος φίλα, συζευγάθαι δε μόνον παρὰ
45 θεῶν αὐθεντά ταῦτα ποιήσαντας, δι' ἀν κελεύονόν
αὐτοὺς οἱ θεοὶ συζεύγαθαι. Καὶ τούτων οἱ θάνατοι
αὐτῶν βελτίως ἢ τὸ οὕτως ζωτικόν εἶναι ὡς
ζην αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἠθέλουσιν οἳ ἐν τῷ παντὶ νόμῳ
ἐστι τῶν εἰκονῶν γενομένων, εἰρήνης ἐν ἀνόιας
καὶ κακίας πάσης φιλαθλιμίνης, ἁμέλειας ὡς
50 ἄχρι τὸ προνοια ἐστιν κρατεῖν ὅτι τὸ χείρῳ.
"Ἄρχουσι δὲ κακοὶ ἁγιομένων ἀναφθήναι: τοῦτο
γὰρ δύκαιν, οὐκ ἐκεῖνο.

9. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ οὕτω τὸν πρόνοιαν εἶναι δεῖ, ὡστε
μηδὲν ἡμᾶς εἶναι. Πάντα δὲ οὕτως προνοιας καὶ
μόνης αὐτῆς οὐδ' ἂν εἴπῃ τίνος γὰρ ἂν ἐπὶ εἰς;
"Αλλὰ μόνον ἂν εἴπῃ τὸ θεῖον. Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ τὸν
δ ἄντοι καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο δὲ ἐλθών, οὐκ ἂν ἀνέθη
tὸ ἄλλο, ἄλλο ἐπικότον ἀνθρώπου ἢ ἂν αὐτῷ
τροπάθος τῶν ἅρματος ὄντα; τοῦτο δὲ ἄκριτα
προνοιας εἶστα, δ' ἂν ἄπειρα πράττοντα ὅποι καὶ ἁμέλειας
ἀυτῆς λέγει. Δέχεται δὲ τῶν μὲν ἁγιοθεὶς γενομένων
ἄγαθον βίον ἐσεῖται καὶ κεῖται καὶ εἰς
10 ὅστισπρον, τοῖς δὲ κακοῖς τὰ ἀναφθήναι. Κακοὶς
dὲ γενομένων ἀξίων ἄλλοις ἁμέλειας ὅστις ὅστις
ἐστιντο ἐπροεμείναιοθ' ἡμᾶς εἰςκαὶ ποιομένων;

1 Cpr. Xenophon, Cyropædia I. 6. 6. As this comparison
suggests, this whole passage (8. 30-9. 19) should not be taken
as directed primarily against the Christians (though Plotinus
may possibly have them in mind at 9. 10-12). It is a general
condemnation of the unintelligent and cowardly religiosity of
people who expect the gods to intervene to get them out of
troubles into which they have got themselves by ignoring the
divinely established laws of nature and of human life; an
intelligent Christian would have no difficulty in agreeing with
it.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

even if they are not doing it in the way which the
gods like, and then be merely saved by the gods
without even doing the things by means of which the
gods command them to save themselves. And
certainly death is better for them than to stay living
in a way in which the universal laws do not want
them to live; so that if the opposite happened, and
peace was preserved in every sort of folly and vice,
providence would be neglecting its duty in allowing
the worse really to get the upper hand. But the
wicked rule by the cowardice of the ruled; for this is
just, and the opposite is not.

9. Providence ought not to exist in such a way as
to make us nothing. If everything was providence
and nothing but providence, then providence would
not exist; for what would it have to provide for?
There would be nothing but the divine. But the
divine exists also as things are; and has come to
something other than itself, not to destroy the other
but, when a man, for instance, comes to it, it stands
over him and sees to it that he is man; that is, that
he lives by the law of providence, which means
doing everything that its law says. But it says that
those who have become good shall have a good life,
now, and laid up for them hereafter as well, and the
wicked the opposite. But it is not lawful for those
who have become wicked to demand others to be
their saviours and to sacrifice themselves in answer to
their prayers,² nor, furthermore, to require gods to
direct their affairs in detail, laying aside their own
life, or, for that matter, good men, who live another
life better than human rule, to be their rulers: for
they themselves have never taken any trouble to see
that there should be good rulers of the rest of man-
kind. who would care that it should be well with
them, but they are envious if anyone naturally be-
comes good by himself; for more people would have
become good if they had made the good their leaders.²
Since, then, men are not the best of living creatures
but the human species occupies a middle position,
and has chosen it, yet all the same is not allowed by
providence to perish in the place where it is set but
is always being lifted up to the higher regions by all
sorts of devices which the divine uses to give virtue
the greater power, mankind has not lost its character
of being rational but is a participant, even if not to
the highest degree, in wisdom and intellect and skill,
and righteousness—each and all have a share at least
in the righteousness that governs their dealings with
each other; and those whom they wrong, they think
that they wrong rightly, because they deserve it.
In this way man is a noble creation, as far as he can
be noble, and, being woven into the All, has a part
which is better than that of other living things, of
the ideal state, where they have been carefully trained
precisely in order to be its rulers, that they have the obligation to
rule. Plotinus does not advert here to the possibility of
an ideal state but otherwise his thought here is quite in accor-
dance with Plato's and he probably has this passage of the
Republic in mind (cp. 1. 14-15. with 520E4-5, and perhaps 18,
620B2, αὐτοῦ φύσις, with 520E2, αὐτοῦ φύσις, with 520B2, αὐτοῦ φύσις, with 520B2, αὐτοῦ φύσις, with 520B2).
The reference to Plato, Laws V. 731C, given by Henry-Schwizer, Brüll, and Deutler-Theiler can be misleading here. The Laws passage is stating the familiar Socratic-Platonic doctrine, πῶς ὁ ἁρμόδιος σῶς ἦν ἄρμοδιος (C2-3): wrongdoing is error because nobody who knew what he was doing would deliberately choose the worst of evils for his most valuable part, the soul. Plotinus, no doubt, has the Platonic formula in mind here: but what he is really concerned with is not to maintain that wrongdoing is error but that the control and ordering of all things by Providence still leaves room for human moral responsibility.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

but it is because they themselves do the deed that they themselves err; if they were not themselves the doers, they would not have erred at all. But as for the necessity, this does not mean that it comes in from outside but only that it is universally so. And as for the heavenly circuit, it does not work so that nothing is in our power; for if the All was external to us, it would be just as its makers wished, so that, if it was gods who made it, men, even impious ones, would do nothing opposed to them. But as it is, this [the power of free action] originates in men. Given a first principle, it accomplishes what follows with the inclusion in the chain of causation of all the principles there are; but men, too, are principles; at any rate, they are moved to noble actions by their own nature, and this is an independent principle.

11. But are all individual things as they are by natural necessities and causal sequences, and excellently disposed in every way that can be? No, but the rational forming principle makes all these things as their sovereign, and wishes them to be as they are, and makes the things which are called bad according to reason, because it does not wish that all should be good, just like a craftsman who does not make everything eyes in his picture; in the same way the formative principle did not make everything gods but some gods, some spirits (a nature of the second rank), then men and animals after them in order, not out of grudging meanness but by a reason containing all the rich variety of the intelligible world. But we are like people who know nothing about the art of painting and criticise the painter because the colours are not beautiful everywhere, though he has
I

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

12. Εἰ μὲν οὖν αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἐνεργείος ἑαυτῷ εἰς ἅλθε πάθη εἰρήνασσα τούτῳ ὦν ὄλος ὡσπερ ἀνάμορφος τοὺς μέρες, ἐκ ταύτου πρὸ αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ὄν, καὶ τοῦτο τὸ γενέμενον οὖσα γενεμένων μὲ ὅ ἐν ἕσχε κάλλιον ἑαυτοῦ ἄλλο. Ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐκ πάσης ὁμοίως καὶ πορφυραίως ὁμοίως ὅ ἐν ἐξαντελκαί καὶ οὖσα ὁ τρόπος μεμπτός πάση διότι κατὰ μέρος ἐκατον ἄλλος. Εἰ δὲ δέχεται ἄλλα εἰσήγαγεν, οὐκ ἡγείται, καὶ ἐκαθόρισε ἀρρενωπὰ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν φύσεις ἐνεργεῖαν τῷ ποιήματι πρὸς τὸ χέριν παλλάτ, τῶν ὀρθῶν; ἅλλα φαίνει καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς οἷς μέρη αὐτὸς ἔσται καὶ μὴ χειρῶν ποιώθεν ἐναρμότειν, ἅλλα ὅπου προσήκον αὐτῶς κατασχερίζει καὶ ἀξεῖν.

13. Εἰ πελ αὐτῶν ἐκείνων ἀποβλέπειν τῶν λόγων, διὸ πρὸς τὸ παρὸν ἐκάκοτε ψεύδην βλέπει, ἅλλα

1 καὶ εἰ ὀνόμαζε Θάλοιον, Ἡ-Σ: καὶ εἰ ὀνόμαζε Ἄπεξηκόν: τὰς ὀνομάζει Ἄπεξηκόν.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

... really distributed the appropriate colours to every place; 1 and cities are not composed of citizens with equal rights, even those which have good laws and constitutions; or we are like someone who censures a play because all the characters in it are not heroes but there is a servant and a yokel who speaks in a vulgar way; but the play is not a good one if one expels the inferior characters, because they too help to complete it.

12. If, then, the rational formative principle itself has, by fitting itself into matter, done these works, being the thing that it is, unlike in its parts, and deriving its being this from the principle before it, this that has come into existence, since it has come into existence in this way, would have nothing else nobler than itself. But if the rational formative principle had been composed of parts which were all alike and equal, it would not have come into existence and if it had] this manner of construction would be worthy of blame; since it is all things, it is different in every part. But if it brought in other things outside itself, souls for instance, and forced them, against their own nature, to fit into its creation, making many of them worse in doing so, how is this rightly done? But we must say that the souls, too, are in a way parts of it, and it does not fit them in by making them worse but puts them in places appropriate to them according to their worth.

13. Then we must not discard that argument, either, which says that the rational principle does not really distribute the appropriate colours to every place; 1 and cities are not composed of citizens with equal rights, even those which have good laws and constitutions; or we are like someone who censures a play because all the characters in it are not heroes but there is a servant and a yokel who speaks in a vulgar way; but the play is not a good one if one expels the inferior characters, because they too help to complete it.

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PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

The thought here follows Plato closely. For the reincarnation of the matricide see Laws IX. 872 E.; for the "law of Adrasteia" applied to reincarnation, see Phaedrus 245 C.2.

1 The thought here follows Plato closely. For the reincarnation of the matricide see Laws IX. 872E.; for the "law of Adrasteia" applied to reincarnation, see Phaedrus 245C.2.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

look only at the present on each occasion but at the cycles of time before, and also at the future, so as to determine men's worth from these, and to change their positions, making slaves out of those who were masters before, if they were bad masters (and also because it is good for them this way); and, if men have used wealth badly, making them poor (and for the good, too, it is not without advantage to be poor); and causing those who have killed unjustly to be killed in their turn, unjustly as far as the doer of the deed is concerned, but justly as far as concerns the victim; and it brings that which is to suffer together to the same point with that which is fit and ready to execute what that unjust killer is fated to endure. There is certainly no accident in a man's becoming a slave, nor is he taken prisoner in war by chance, nor is outrage done on his body without due cause, but he was once the doer of that which he now suffers; and a man who made away with his mother will be made away with by a son when he has become a woman, and one who has raped a woman will be a woman in order to be raped. Hence comes, by divine declaration, the name Adrasteia: for this world-order is truly Adrasteia [the Inescapable] and truly Justice and wonderful wisdom.
ON PROVIDENCE (I)

and the beauty of appearance which extends to the
fruits and even the leaves of plants, and their beauty
of flower which comes so effortlessly, and their
delicacy and variety, and that all this has not been
made once and come to an end but is always being
made as the powers above move in different ways
over this world. So the things which are changing
can change and change and take new shapes without
due cause but in a way which is excellent and
appropriate to their making by divine powers. For
all that is divine makes according to its nature; but its
nature corresponds to its substance, and its substance
is that which brings forth together beauty and justice
in its workings; for if beauty and justice are not in it,
where could they be?

14. The ordering of the universe, then, corresponds
with Intellect in such a way that it exists without
rational planning; but exists so that if anyone could
plan rationally as well as possible, he would wonder
at it because planning could not have found out an¬
other way to make it; something of this is observed
even in individual natures, which come into being
continually more conformed to Intellect than they
could be by an ordering which depended on rational
planning. With each, therefore, of the kinds of
things which continually come into existence it is
not possible to blame the rational principle which
makes them, unless someone should demand that they
ought to have come into existence just like the things
which have not come into existence, but are eternal,
existing always in the same way both in the intelligible
world and in the world of sense, asking for a further

1 Op. note on ch. 1. 1. 20–21.
ON PROVIDENCE (I)

addition of good, but not thinking the form given to each thing sufficient, for instance, thinking that the form given to this particular animal is insufficient because it has not horns as well, and not considering that it was impossible for the formative principle not to reach to all things, but that there must be lesser things in the greater and parts in the whole and that they cannot be equal to the whole or they would not be parts. In the world above every thing is all things, but the things below are not each of them all things. Even man, in so far as he is a part, is an individual, not all. But if somewhere among parts there is something else which is not a part, in virtue of this that thing below, too, is all. But man in his individuality, in so far as he is an individual being, cannot be required to be perfect to the point of reaching the summit of virtue; for if he did he would no longer be a part. But there would certainly not be any grudging by the whole if the part did gain in beauty and order so as to make it of greater worth; for it makes the whole more beautiful when it has become of greater value by its gain in beauty and order. For it becomes of this kind by being made like the whole and, so to speak, being allowed to be like this and given such a place that in the region of man, too, something may shine in him as the stars shine in the heaven of the gods; a place from which there may be a perception of something like a great and beautiful image of a god—whether a living one or one made by the art of Hephaestus—in which there are stars flashing on the face, and in the
ON PROVIDENCE (I)

15. So it is, then, with individual things when they are considered separately. But the weaving together into a pattern of those things which have been and are always being produced might hold obstacles and difficulties, because the other animals eat each other, and men attack each other, and there is always war with never a pause or armistice; and this is particularly difficult if it is the rational forming principle of the world which has brought it about that this is so, and if it is said to be well that it is so. That argument is no longer any help to the people who say this which maintains that all is as well as it can be, and that it is the fault of matter when things are so disposed as to be less than good, and that "evils cannot be done away with";2 if, that is, it is really true that things had to be so, and that it is well that they should be so, and matter does not come along and dominate but was brought along so that things should be in this state, or rather is itself, too, caused to be as it is by the rational principle. The rational principle, then, is the origin, and all things are reason, both those which are brought into being according to the principle and those which, in their coming to birth, are altogether ranged in this common order. What, then, is the necessity of the undeclared war among animals and among men? It is necessary that animals should eat each other; these eatings are transformations into each other of animals which could not stay as they are for ever, even if no one

1 The familiar quotation, repeated again and again by Plotinus, from Plato, Theaetetus 176A5.

2 The thought seems to be: the physical universe is the great star-decked image of the intelligible divinity (cp. Plato, Timaeus 37C 6–7); and because man can contemplate it he gains in beauty and order: he is conformed by his contemplation to the starry heaven, and something of its splendour shines in him.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

The comparison of life to a play was a commonplace of Cynic, Stoic and Stoic-influenced moralists from Bion of Borysthenes and Teles onwards (cp. Teles 16, 4 Hense). The finest example is Marcus Aurelius X1.36.  

For Plotinus, here and in what follows, probably has Plato's description of man as God's toy, playing to please him, in mind (Laws VII. 833C-D; sxei wv mpatov (C4-5)). But there is an important difference in the thought. For Plato, in this passage at least, man is wholly and entirely God's toy, and his 'play' is the most serious and important thing in his life—though he is not really worth taking seriously at all, only

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

killed them. And if, at the time when they had to depart, they had to depart in such a way that they were useful to others, why do we have to make a grievance out of their usefulness? And what does it matter if, when they are eaten, they come alive again as different animals? It is like on the stage, when the actor who has been murdered changes his costume and comes on again in another character.1 But in real life, not on the stage, the man is really dead. If, then, death is a changing of body, like changing of clothes on the stage, or, for some of us, a putting off of body, like in the theatre the final exit, in that performance, of an actor who will on a later occasion come in again to play, what would there be that is terrible in a charge of this kind, of living beings into each other? It is far better than if they had never come into existence at all. For that way there would be a barren absence of life and no possibility of a life which exists in something else; but as it is a manifold life exists in the All and makes all things, and in its living embroiders a rich variety and does not rest from ceaselessly making beautiful and shapely living toys.2 And when men, mortal as they are, direct their weapons against each other, fighting in orderly ranks, doing what they do in sport in their God is πάντα συνέσις συνέμενον (C3-3). For Plotinus, as the rest of this chapter shows clearly, it is only man's lower, external life which is 'play.' His true, inner self is serious and important. For Plato man's best game is the religious dance, at once play, worship and education, in which he attains all the seriousness he is capable of. For Plotinus man's game is the grim one of killing and being killed, which the wise man will not take seriously and cry over like a child, because it only affects his unimportant lower self.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

war-dances, their battles show that all human concerns are children’s games, and tell us that deaths are nothing terrible, and that those who die in wars and battles anticipate only a little the death which comes in old age—they go away and come back quicker. But if their property is taken away while they are still alive, they may recognise that it was not theirs before either, and that its possession is a mockery to the robbers themselves when others take it away from them; for even to those who do not have it taken away, to have it is worse than being deprived of it. We should be spectators of murders, and all deaths, and takings and sackings of cities, as if they were on the stages of theatres, all changes of scenery and costume and acted wailings and weepings. For really here in the events of our life it is not the soul within but the outside shadow of man which cries and moans and carries on in every sort of way on a stage which is the whole earth where men have in many places set up their stages. Doings like these belong to a man who knows how to live only the lower and external life and is not aware that he is playing in his tears, even when they are serious tears. For only the seriously good part of man is capable of taking serious doings seriously; the rest of man is a toy. But toys, too, are taken seriously by those who do not know how to be serious and are toys themselves. But if anyone joins in their play and shares their sort of sufferings, he must know that he has tumbled into a children’s game and put on the play-costume in which he was dressed. And even if Socrates, too,
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

may play sometimes, it is by the outer Socrates that he plays. But we must consider this further point, too, that one must not take weeping and lamenting as evidence of the presence of evils, for children, too, weep and wail over things that are not evils.

16. But if this is well said, how can there still be wickedness? Where is injustice? Where is error? For how, if all things are well done, can the doers act unjustly or err? And how can they be ill-fated, if they do not err or act unjustly? And how can we assert that some things are according to nature, but others against nature, if all things that happen and are done are according to nature? And how could there be any blasphemy against the divine when that which is made is made like this? It is just as if a poet in his plays wrote a part for an actor insulting and depreciating the author of the play. Let us, then, again, and more clearly, explain what the rational forming principle of our universe is and that it is reasonable for it to be like this. This rational principle, then, is—let us take the risk! We might even, perhaps succeed [in describing it]—it is not pure intellect or absolute intellect; it is not even of the kind of pure soul but depends on soul, and is a sort of outshining of both; intellect and soul (that is, soul disposed according to intellect) generated this rational principle as a life which quietly contains a rationality. All life, even worthless life, is activity; activity not in the way that fire acts; but its activity, even if there is no perception there, is a movement which is not random. For with living things when there is no perception present and any one of them has any share in life, it is immediately unreasoned, that
is informed, since the activity which is proper to life is able to form it and moves it in such way that its movement is a forming. So the activity of life is an artistic activity, like the way in which one who is dancing is moved; for the dancer himself is like the life which is artistic in this way and his art moves him, and moves in such a way that the actual life is somehow of this [artistic] kind. This, then, should be enough to show how we should think of any sort of life. Now the rational forming principle of this universe, which comes from a single Intellect and a single life, both of them complete, is not a single life nor any kind of single intellect, and is not at every point complete, nor does it at every point give itself whole and entire to the things to which it does give itself. But by setting the parts against each other and making them deficient it generates and maintains war and battle, and so it is one as a whole even if it is not one single thing. For though it is at war with itself in its parts it is one thing and on good terms with itself in the same way that the plot of a play might be; the plot of the play is one though it contains in itself many battles. Of course, the play brings the conflicting elements into a kind of harmonious concordance, by composing the complete story of the persons in conflict; but in the universe the battle of conflicting elements springs from a single rational principle; so that it would be better for one to compare it to the melody which results from conflicting sounds, and one will then enquire why there are the conflicting sounds in the rational proportions [of musical scales]. If, then, in music the laws of rational proportion make high and low notes
and come together into a unity—being the proportional laws of melody they come together into the melody itself, which is another greater law of proportion, while they are lesser ones and part of it; in the universe, too, we see the opposites, for instance, white-black, hot-cold, and, too, winged-wingless, soundless-sound, rational-irrational, but all are parts of the single universal living being, and the All agrees with itself: the parts are in conflict in many places, but the All is in accordance with its rational formative pattern, and it is necessary that this one formative pattern should be one pattern made out of opposites, since it is opposition of this kind which gives it its structure, and, we might say, its existence. For certainly, if it was not many it would not be all, and would not therefore be rational pattern of the universe; but, since it is rational pattern it has distinctions in itself, and the extreme distinction is opposition; so that if in general it makes one thing different from another, it will also make them different in a lesser degree; so by making one thing different from another in the highest degree it will necessarily make the opposites, and will be complete if it makes itself not only into different things but into opposite things.

17. Since its nature corresponds to its whole productive activity, the more it is differentiated the more opposed will it make the things it makes; and the universe perceived by the senses is less of a unity than its rational formative principle, so that: It is more of a manifold and there is more opposition in it, and each individual in it has a greater urge to live, and there is a greater passion for unification.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

But those that love passionately often destroy the objects of their passion, when they are perishable, in the pursuit of their own good; and the urgent straining of the part towards the whole draws to itself what it can. So, then, there are good men and wicked men, like the opposed movements of a dancer inspired by one and the same art; and we shall call one part of his performance "good" and another "wicked," and in this way it is a good performance. But, then, the wicked are no longer wicked. No, their being wicked is not done away with, only their being like that does not originate with themselves. But there might perhaps be some sympathy for the wicked, except that it is the rational formative principle which is responsible for our sympathising or not; and the rational principle does not make us disposed to sympathise with people of this sort. But if one part of it is a good man, and another a villain—and villainous humanity forms the larger class—it is like in the production of a play: the author gives each actor a part, but makes use of their characteristics which are there already. He does not himself rank them as leading actor or second or third, but gives each man suitable words and so assigns him to the position which is proper to him. So there is a place for every man, one to fit the good and one to fit the bad. Each kind of man, then, goes according to nature and the rational principle to the place that suits him, and holds the position he has chosen. There one speaks blasphemies and does...
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

ON PROVIDENCE (I)

... crimes, the other speaks and acts the opposite; for the actors, good and bad, existed before the play and bring their own selves to it. Now in human plays the author provides the words, but the actors, each and every one of them, are responsible by themselves and from themselves for the good or bad acting of their parts—for there is action, too, which is their business, following from the speeches written by the author; but in the truer poetic creation, which men who have a poetic nature imitate in part, the soul acts, receiving the part which it sets from the poet's creation; just as the actors here get their parts and their costumes, the saffron robes and the rags, so the soul, too, itself gets its fortunes, and not by random chance; these fortunes, too, are according to the rational principle; and by fitting these into the pattern it becomes in tune itself and puts itself into its proper place in the play and the universal rational pattern: then it makes its actions sound out, we may say, and everything else that a soul might produce according to its character, like a song. And as the sound of the voice and the gestures of the actor are beautiful or ugly as he makes them, and either adorn the poet's creation further, as one might think, or by adding the badness of the actor's own voice, do not make the play other than what it was, but the actor makes a grotesque exhibition of himself, and the author of the play sends him off in deserved disgrace, behaving in this like a good judge of acting, but promotes the good actor to higher rank, and, if he has any, to finer plays, but puts the bad actor into any worse play that he has; in this way the soul, coming on the stage in this universal poetic creation and...
making itself a part of the play, supplies of itself the good or the bad in its acting; it is put in its proper place on its entrance and receives everything except itself and its own works, and so is given punishments or rewards. But the actors [in the universal drama] have something extra, in that they act in a greater space than that within the limits of a stage, and the author makes them masters of the All, and they have a greater possibility of going to many kinds of places and determining honours and dishonours, as they contribute themselves to their honours and dishonours; for each place is fitted to their characters, so as to be in tune with the rational principle of the universe, since each individual is fitted in, according to justice, in the parts of the universe designed to receive him; just as each string is set in its own proper place according to the rational proportion which governs the sounding of notes, of whatever quality its power of producing a note is. For there is fitness and beauty in the whole in the only if each individual is stationed where he ought to be—the one who utters evil sounds in darkness and Tartarus: for there to make these sounds is beautiful; and this whole is beautiful, not if each is Linus \(^1\) but if each by contributing his own sound helps towards the perfection of a single melody, himself, too, sounding the note of for \(\ell\) because it seems to fit the context better. The idea is, clearly, that the universal melody needs bad singers who make horrible noises, as well as good ones, like the mythical Linus, for its completion (contrast I. 6 [1] 1, 26-30). But, as Cilento points out (see his note ad loc.), Plotinus is fond of the image of the "dead stone" (op. VI. 3 [38] 6; VI. 6 [32] 11, 5-14) and \(\ell\) (all MSS. and ep. Aenaeas of Gaza, Theophrastus, p. 28, Boiss.) may be right.
life, but a lesser, worse, and more incomplete life; just as in a pan-pipe there is not one note only but a note which is weaker and duller contributes to the melody of the whole pan-pipe, because the melody is divided into parts which are not equal, and all the notes of the pipe are unequal, but the melody is complete, made up of all. So, too, the universal rational principle is one, but is divided into parts which are not equal; for this reason there are different regions of the universe, better and worse ones, and souls which are not equal fit in this way into unequal places; and so in the universe, too, it happens that there are places which are unlike each other and souls which are not the same but are unequal and occupy the unlike places, just like the unlikelinesses of a pan-pipe or any other instrument, and are in places which differ from each other and in each place utter their own sounds in harmony with the places and with the whole. And their evil-sounding singing will be beautifully disposed from the point of view of the All, and their unnatural sounds will be for the All according to nature, and none the less, the sound itself will be worse. But it does not make the whole worse by making a sound like this, just as (if we should use another image as well) the public executioner, who is a scourge, does not make his well governed city worse. For the executioner is needed in a city—and a man of his kind is often needed—for other purposes—and so he, too, is well placed.

18. But souls are better or worse, some from other causes and some because they were not all equal, as we may say, from the beginning; for they, too, in the same way as the rational principle, are unequal parts
as a consequence of their separation. But one must consider, too, the second and third parts of the soul, and the fact that soul itself is active in the same parts. But, again, on the other side we must say this too—the argument still needs a great deal more before it attains clearness. We ought certainly not to introduce actors of a kind who say something else besides the words of the author, as if the play was incomplete in itself and they filled in what was wanting, and the writer had left blank spaces in the middle; the actors, then, would not be just actors but a part of the author, and an author who foreknew what they were going to say, so that he might in this way be able to bring the rest of the play and the consequences of their interventions into a coherent whole. For certainly in the All the rational principles bring into a connected whole the consequences and results which follow upon those deeds which are evil, and do so rationally; for instance, from adultery, or the carrying off of a captive, children may come according to nature and better means, it may happen, and other better cities than those sacked by wicked men. If, then, it is absurd to bring in souls, some of which do the wicked deeds in the world, and some the good—for we shall deprive the rational principle of the good deeds, too, if we take the wicked ones away from it—what prevents us from making the deeds of the actors parts, as they are of the play in our example, so also of the rational principle in the universe, and attributing good performance and the opposite to it, so that in this way it comes to each individual actor from the rational principle itself—and all the more in proportion as this play is more perfect, and every-
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 2.

But what is the point of doing evil? And do the diviner souls count for nothing any more in the universe, but are all of them parts of the rational principle? And are all rational principles souls, or why are some souls and some only rational principles, when every one of them belongs to some soul?
III. 3. ON PROVIDENCE (II)

1. What, then, do we think about these questions? Now the universal rational principle includes both good and evil things; evil things are parts of it too. It is not that the universal rational principle produces them but that it is the universal principle with them included. The rational principles are an activity of an universal soul, and their parts of soul-parts; but, as the one soul has differing parts, so correspondingly do the rational principles differ, with the result that the works also differ which are their ultimate products. The souls and the works are in harmony with each other; in harmony in such a way that a unity comes from them, even if it is a unity produced from opposites. For all things sprung from a unity come together into a unity by natural necessity, so that, though they grow out different and come into being as opposites they are, all the same, drawn together into a single common order by the fact that they come from a unity. For, just as in the case of particular kinds of living creatures there is one genus of horses, even if they fight and bite each other, and are pugnacious and furiously jealous, and the same applies to all the other individual genera, so, certainly, men must be considered like this too. Then, again, all these kinds must be brought together under the one genus "living creature"; then also the things which are not living creatures must be
classed by their kinds, and then included in the one genus "non-living": then both together, if you like, must be included in being; and then in that which makes being possible. Then, having attached everything to this, go down again, dividing and seeing the one dispersed by reaching to all things and including them together in a single common order, so that it is a single multiplex living thing with distinct parts, and each of the things in it acts according to its own nature while being all the same in the whole, for instance, fire burns, a horse does the things which belong to a horse, and individual men do their own things in the way in which they have been disposed by nature, and different men different things. And what is done, and living well or badly, follows according to their natures.

2. Chance circumstances are not responsible for the good life, but they, too, follow harmoniously on the causes before them, and proceed woven into the chain of causation by so following. The ruling principle weaves all things together, while individual things co-operate on one side or the other according to their nature, as in military commands the general gives the lead and his subordinates work in unity with him. The universe is ordered by the generalship of providence which sees the actions and experiences and what must be ready to hand, food and drink, and all weapons and devices as well; everything which results from their interweaving is foreseen, in order that this result may have room to be

1 The source of this military analogy for the cosmic order is Aristotle, Metaphysics A 1075a, 13 ff.; cp. the pseudo-Aristotelian De Mundo 399b, 3 ff., for a rhetorical elaboration of it.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 3.

well placed, and all things come in a well planned way from the general—though what his enemies planned to do is out of his control. But if it was possible for him to command the enemy force as well, if he was really “the great leader” to whom all things are subject, what would be unordered, what would not be fitted into his plan?

3. Suppose you say “I have power to choose this or that”? But the things that you will choose are included in the universal order, because your part is not a mere casual interlude in the All but you are counted in as just the person you are. But for what reason is a man the sort of person he is? There are two questions which the argument seeks to settle here, one, whether the blame should rest on the maker, if there is one, who determined the moral character of the individual, or on the being which has come into existence itself; rather, we should not attribute blame at all, just as there is no blame attaching to the production of plants because they have no sense-perception, nor in the case of the other animals because they are not like men; to blame anyone for this would be the same as asking, “Why are men not what gods are?” Why then, where plants and animals are concerned, is it unreasonable for us to blame them or their creator, but reasonable in the case of the other animals because they are not like men; to blame anyone for this would be the same as asking, “Why are men not what gods are?” Why then, where plants and animals are concerned, is it unreasonable for us to blame them or their creator, but reasonable in the case of the other animals because they are not like men; to blame anyone for this would be the same as asking, “Why are men not what gods are?”

1 Plato, Phaedrus 246E4.
2 Cp. Plato’s treatment of the same question in Laws X. 904B-C. Plotinus here, at the end of the chapter, gives the same answer as Plato, that the blame should fall upon individual men, not on their Maker; but he shows himself, here as elsewhere, a good deal more conscious of the difficulties raised by the presence of bad men in a divinely ordered universe than Plato is; this is no doubt because of the centuries of debate about Providence which came between him and his master.
something to make himself better, he is responsible to himself for not doing it; but if it was not from himself that the addition had to come but it was necessary for it to come from outside, from his producer, then it is absurd to ask for more than was given, as it would be in the case of the other animals and of plants. For one ought not to enquire whether one thing is less than another but whether it is, as itself, sufficient; for all things ought not to have been equal. Is this then so, because the creator measured them out with the deliberate intention that all things ought not to be equal? Not at all; but it was according to nature for things to come about so. For the rational forming principle of this universe follows upon another soul, and this soul follows upon Intellect, and Intellect is not some one of the things here but all things; but all things means many things; but if there are many things, and not the same, some of them were going to be first, some second, and some of successive lower ranks, in value too. Then, again, the living creatures which have come into being are not only souls but diminutions of souls, a kind of fading away as the living things move on further from their origins. For the formative principle of the living thing, even if it is ensouled, is another soul, not that from which the formative principle comes, and this whole principle becomes less as it hastens to matter, and that which comes into being from it is more deficient. See how far what has come into being stands from its origin, and yet, it is a wonder! If, then, that which has come into being is of a particular kind, it does not follow that what is before it is also of that kind.
it is better than all that has come into being, and
beyond blame; one should rather wonder at it be¬
cause it has given something [to what comes] after
it and its traces are of such a quality. But if indeed
it has given more than they are able to appropriate,
it ought to be approved still more; so that it seems
likely that blame should fall upon the men who have
come into being, and that what belongs to providence
is on a higher level.

4. For if man was simple—I mean, simple in the
sense that he was nothing but what he was made and
his actions and experiences corresponded to this—
there would be no blame in the sense of moral re¬
proach, just as there is none in the case of other living
creatures. But, as it is, man, the bad man, is un¬
iquely subject to blame, perhaps reasonably. For he
is not only what he was made but has another free
principle, which is not outside providence or the
rational principle of the whole; for those higher
principles are not separated from these here but the
better illuminate the worse, and this is perfect pro¬
vidence; and there is one rational principle which
is creative, and another which connects the better
principles with the things which have come into
being, and those higher principles are providence
which acts from above, but there is another pro¬
vidence derived from that which is above, the other
rational principle connected with that higher one,
and the whole interweaving and total providence
results from both. So then, men have another
principle, but not all men use all that they have but
some use one principle, some the other, or rather a
number of others, the worse ones. But those higher
This brings out clearly an important point in the psychology of Plotinus, that the duality or cleavage in man is for him not between matter and spirit, or even body and soul, but between higher and lower self: op. I. 1 [53] 10; II. 9 [35] 2; IV. 4[28] 18; VI. 4[22]14–15. Free will can only be exercised by the true, higher self in so far as it transcends and makes itself independent of the lower "composite" self, which is part

principles are there, but not acting upon them, though certainly not inactive in themselves; for each one of them does its own work. But, someone might say, what is to blame for their not working on these men when they are present? Or are they not present? But we assert that they are present everywhere and nothing is deprived of them. Surely they are not present in those people on whom they do not act. Why, then, do they not act upon all, if these, too, are parts of them?—I mean the principle of this higher kind. As far as the other living creatures are concerned, this principle is not their own; as for men, it does not act on all of them. Is this then not the only principle which does not act on all? But why should it not be the only one? But in those in whom it is the only one, their life is conformed to it, and the other forces only enter into it as far as necessity requires. For whether the man's constitution is of a kind to plunge him, so to speak, into troubled waters, or his lusts dominate him, it is alike necessary to say that the cause lies in the substrate. But at first this would appear to mean that the cause is no more in the rational principle, but rather in the matter, and the matter, not the rational principle will be dominant, and the substrate in so far as it is formed will come second to it. In fact, the substrate to the free principle is the rational form, and that which has come into existence from the rational form and exists according to it; so that the matter will not be dominant and the formation come second.1 Further, one might refer the being

1 This brings out clearly an important point in the psychology of Plotinus, that the duality or cleavage in man is for him not between matter and spirit, or even body and soul, but between higher and lower self; op. I. 1 [53] 10; II. 9 [35] 2; IV. 4[28] 18; VI. 4[22]14–15. Free will can only be exercised by the true, higher self in so far as it transcends and makes itself independent of the lower "composite" self, which is part of and dominated by the order of the physical universe; op. II. 3 [52]15, 17 f.
this or that kind of man to the previous life, as if the rational principle became dim in comparison to that prior to it as the result of previous happenings, as if the soul had become weaker; but it will shine out again later. And the rational principle must be said to contain within itself the rational principle of the matter as well, the matter which it will make suitable for itself, either giving it qualities corresponding to itself or finding it already consonant. For the rational principle of an ox does not impose itself on any other matter than that of an ox. Hence, Plato says that the soul enters into other living beings, in the sense that the soul becomes different and the rational principle is altered, in order that what was formerly the soul of a man may become the soul of an ox: so that the worse being is justly dealt with. But how did he originally become worse, and how did he fall? It has often been said that all things are not of the first rank but all things which are second and third class have a lesser nature than those before them, and a light tilting of the balance is enough to turn them out of the right way. And the interweaving of one thing with another is like a sort of mixture; another thing results from both, and the interweaving does not diminish a thing's being; but the inferior became inferior from its beginning, and is what it became, inferior by its nature, and, if it suffers the consequences of its inferiority, it suffers what it deserves. And one must carry back the reckoning to what happened in previous lives, because what happens afterwards depends on that too.

5. Providence, then, which in its descent from above reaches from the beginning to the end, is not
This distinction between higher providence and lower fate is common in Middle Platonism; cp. Pseudo-Plutarch, De Fato § 572F-573B; Apuleius, De Flutone I. 12; and C. de Vogel, Greek Philosophy III. 1279d (p. 343).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 3.

On Providence (II)

The principle of providence is dear to the gods. Then, too, these kinds of actions [the kind which cause our difficulties about providence, i.e. evil actions] are linked up with the good ones, but they are not done by providence but the things which have happened, whether they have happened as a result of human action or of the action of anything else, living or lifeless, if anything which follows from them is good, are taken up again by providence, so that virtue has everywhere the mastery, and the things which have gone wrong are changed and corrected, as in a single body, where health is given by the providence of the living thing, when a cut or injury of any kind occurs, the directing rational principle again afterwards joins it and closes the wound and heals and sets right the suffering part. So the evil deeds are consequences, but follow from necessity; they come from us (i.e. we cause them), and we are not compelled by providence but we connect them, of our own accord, with the works of providence or works derived from providence, but are not able to link up what follows according to the will of providence but do so according to the will of the people who act or according to something else in the universe, which itself is acting or producing some effect in us in a way not according to the will of providence. For everything does not always produce the same effect when it encounters everything else, but it produces the same effect when it encounters one thing and a different effect when it encounters another; as, for instance, the beauty of Helen produced one effect on Paris, but Idomeneus was not affected in the same way; and when one thoroughly dissolute man happens upon

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1 For Idomeneus, a frequent visitor to the house of Menelaus who did not seduce Helen, see Iliad III. 290 293.

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For Proclus, H-S: 70-71.
another, and both are beautiful, the effect is different from what follows when one chaste beauty meets another; and something different again happens to the chaste beauty when he meets the dissolute man, and again something different to the dissolute one when he meets the chaste. And the action which proceeds from the dissolute man is done neither by providence nor according to providence, but what is done by the chaste man is not done by providence, because it is done by the man himself; but is done according to providence; for it is in tune with the rational principle, just as, too, what a man might do to promote his health would be his own action according to the rational plan of his doctor. For this is what the doctor prescribed, from the resources of his skill, both in health and sickness. But whatever anyone does that is unhealthy, he does it himself and it is an act which goes against the providence of the doctor.

6. What is the reason, then, that diviners foretell the worse sort of actions, and by looking at the circuit of the heavens foretell these as well as their other prophecies? Obviously because all opposites are entwined together, form and matter, for instance; as, for example, in the case of a living thing which is composite, one who in any way contemplates the form and the rational principle also contemplates the formed thing. For he does not contemplate an intelligible living thing and a composite living thing in the same way, but in the composite he contemplates the rational principle of the living thing forming what is worse. Now, since the universe is a living thing, one who contemplates the things which come to be
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10. There are two ways of life, and each of them contemplates at the same time its origins and the providence which watches over it; this certainly extends over all things, including the things which come to be; and these are both living things and their actions and mixed dispositions, "compounded of reason and necessity." So he contemplates things which are mixed and continually go on being mixed; and he cannot himself distinguish providence and what is according to providence clearly on the one side, and on the other the substrate and all that it gives to what results from it. This discrimination is not for a man, except a wise and godlike man: or one might say that "a god alone could have this privilege." In fact, it is not for the diviner to tell the "because" but only the "that"; his art is a reading of letters written in nature, declaring an order and never deviating into disorder, or rather of the heavenly circuit which proclaims and brings to light what each individual is like and all his characteristics even before they appear in the people themselves. For these things here below are carried along with those things in heaven, and those in heaven with these on earth, and both together contribute to the consistency and everlastingness of the universe, and by correspondence indicate the others to the observer; for other forms of divination, too, work by correspondence. For it would not have been right for all things to be cut off from each other but they had to be made like each other, in some way at least. Perhaps this might be the meaning of the saying that correspondence holds all things together. And

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2 Simonides, quoted by Plato Protagoras 341F3.
4 Cp. Timaeus 3.C3 and 32C2. But Plato’s analogia is mathematical proportion. As usual, Plotinus pays little attention to the mathematical side of Plato’s thought.
correspondence is of this kind, that the worse is related to the worse as the better is to the better, for instance, as eye is to eye, so is foot to foot, the one to the other; or, if you like, as virtue is to justice, so is vice to injustice. If, then, there is correspondence in the All, prediction is possible; and if the heavenly bodies act on the things here below, they act in the way in which the parts in every living thing work on each other, not that one thing produces another—they are produced together—but that each thing in accordance with what it naturally is experiences what is suitable to its own nature; because this thing is of this kind, this experience is of this kind too; for so the formative pattern remains one.

7. And because there are better things, there must be worse as well. Or how could there be anything worse in a multiform thing if there was not something better, and how could there be anything better if there was not something worse? So one should not blame the worse when one finds it in the better but approve the better because it has given something of itself to the worse. And altogether, those who make the demand to abolish evil in the All are abolishing providence itself. For what would it be providence of? Certainly not of itself or of the better; for when we speak of providence above, we are using the term of its relation to what is below. For the gathering together of all things into one is the principle, in which all are together and all make a whole. And individual things proceed from this principle while it remains within; they come from it as from a single root which remains static in itself,1 but they flower out into a divided multiplicity, each

1 For the plant-image applied to the physical universe; cp. IV. 4 (28) 12. 9-11.
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πλήθος μεμερισμένων εἰδωλον ἐκαστον ἐκείνου φέρουν, ἀλλο δὲ εἰ ἄλλω ἐνταῦθα ἥξη ἐγγένετο καὶ ἥν τα μὲν πλησίων τῆς ῥίζης, τὰ δὲ προϊόντα εἰς τὸ 16 πόρρῳ ἔσχετο καὶ μέχρις οὗν κλάδων καὶ ἄκρων καὶ καρπῶν καὶ φύλλων καὶ τὰ μὲν ἔμενεν αἰεί, τὰ δὲ ἐγένετο αἰεί, οἱ καρποὶ καὶ τὰ φύλλα· καὶ τὰ γυμνάμενα αἰεὶ εἶχε τοὺς τῶν ἐπάνω λόγους ἐν αὐτοῖς οἷον μικρὰ δένδρα βουληθέντα εἶναι, καὶ εἰ 20 ἤγείρθη τὸν δθαρήνα, τὸ ἐγχύτα ἐγένετο μόνων. Τὰ δὲ διαίκενα οἷον τῶν κλάδων ἐπληρωτῷ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης καὶ αὐτῶν ἄλλων τρόπους πεφυκότων, εἰς ὄν καὶ ἐπασχε τὰ ἄκρα τῶν κλάδων, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ πληροῦν ἐκεῖθεν τὸ πάθος λέναι μόνων· τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχήν ἀπὸ τὸ μὲν ἐπασχε, τὸ δὲ ἐποίευ, ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ ἀναφητῇ καὶ αὐτῇ. Πάροροθέν 25 μὲν γὰρ ἔθνιντα ἄλλα τὰ ποιοῦντα εἰς ἀλληλα, εἷς ἀρχῆς ἐς ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ, οἷον εἰ δέχεσθαι ἔρειν τὶς ἀλλήλων ἄμιαν γενοῦμεν εἰς τῶν αὐτῶν ἀρμηνεύτες τῶν πεπεμφθέντων.

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one bearing an image of that higher reality, but when they reach this lower world one comes to be in one place and one in another, and some are close to the root and others advance farther and split up to the point of becoming, so to speak, branches and twigs and fruits and leaves; and those that are closer to the root remain for ever, and the others come into being for ever, the fruits and the leaves; and those which come into being for ever have in them the rational forming principles of those above them, as if they wanted to be little trees; and if they produce before they pass away, they only produce what is near to them. And what are like empty spaces between the branches are filled with shoots which also grow from the root, these, too, in a different way; and the twigs on the branches are also affected by these, so that they think the effect on them is only produced by what is close to them; but in fact the acting and being acted upon are in the principle, and the principle itself, too, is dependent. The principles which act on each other are different because they come from a far-off origin, but in the beginning they come from the same source, as if brothers were to do something to each other who are alike because they originate from the same parents.

1 The imagery in this sentence is remarkably obscure, but perhaps Plotinus is thinking of apparently disorderly and unplanned shoots which grow between the spaced branches of a well-pruned fruit tree and affect them adversely; these, too, grow from the root and are produced by the growth-principle of the whole tree.
III. 1. ON OUR ALLOTTED GUARDIAN SPIRIT

Introductory Note

This treatise is No. 15 in the chronological order: it was written, therefore, before Porphyry came to Rome (Life ch. 4). Porphyry seems to think that its writing was connected (his language is, perhaps deliberately, vague) with an incident which he records in ch. 10 of the Life. An Egyptian priest offered to conjure up the guardian spirit of Plotinus; when the conjuration took place in the temple of Isis at Rome, a god appeared instead of a spirit (on this episode see E. R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational, Appendix II, iii, pp. 289-291). But, whatever the connection between this and the writing of the treatise may have been, the doctrine which Plotinus expounds here has little to do with the superstitions of his time or even with the theology of spirits which is to be found in his Platonist predecessors and successors (Proclus criticises Plotinus's interpretation of Plato in his Commentary on the Alcibiades, pp. 385-385 Cousin, paras. 75-76 Westerink). Plotinus is concerned to reconcile the various statements which Plato makes about guardian spirits in the myths of the Phaedo, Republic X and Timaeus, and to interpret them in a way which fits his own version of Platonism. He does this by means of his doctrine that each soul is a "universe" (chs. 3 and 6) containing many different levels of reality, on any one of which we may choose to live; the principle, then, on the level above that on which we choose to live, next above the principle which is dominant in us in any particular life, is our "guardian spirit"; if we live well we may rise to its level in our next life, and so have an even higher being for our "spirit." So the perfectly good and wise man, who lives entirely on the level of Intellect, will have that which is above Intellect, the Good, for his guardian (ch. 6).

Synopsis

Soul has the power of growth, present in us too, but dominant, because isolated, in plants; it gives form to body, its last expression in the world below (ch. 1). The human soul has all powers down to the lowest, and can live on the level of any one of them; its life in its next incarnation, plant, animal or man, will depend on the level it chooses to live on in this one (ch. 2). Man's spirit is the principle on the level above that on which he lives; each of us is an "intelligible universe" (ch. 3). Universal soul and body: the universe has no perceptions or sensations (ch. 4). The "choice of lives" in Republic X: the individual is responsible for choosing; the guardian spirit is "ours and not ours": explanation of Timaeus 90A (ch. 5). The good man, who lives on the level of Intellect, has the God beyond Intellect for his guardian spirit. Spirits stay with their souls during the intervals between incarnations; at their next incarnation the souls get a new spirit, bad or good according to their deserts. Some souls may ascend to the stars, and these have star-gods for their guardian spirits; we are not only an intelligible universe but have powers in us akin to those of the world-soul, and go to the star appropriate to the power which worked in us. Some go outside the visible world altogether, taking with them that lower soul which desires birth; in what sense this lower soul is divisible. When the soul comes again to the lower world it embarks in it with its spirit as in a ship, and the circuit of the universe carries it on the voyage of life; what happens to it then depends partly on the motion of the universe, partly on itself (ch. 6).
III. 4. ON OUR ALLOTTED GUARDIAN SPIRIT

1. The expressions of some realities come into existence while the realities themselves remain un­moved, but soul has been already said to be in motion when it generates the sense-perception which is its expressed form and the power of growth which extends also to plants. For soul has the power of growth when it exists in us, too, but it dominates it because it is only a part; but when it comes to be in plants, this power of growth dominates because it has, so to speak, become isolatec. Does this power of growth, then, produce nothing? It produces a thing altogether different from itself; for after it there is no more life, but what is produced is lifeless. What is it then? Just as everything which was produced before this was produced shapeless, but was formed by turning towards its producer and being, so to speak, reared to maturity by it, so, here too, that which is produced is not any more a form of soul—for it is not alive—but absolute indefiniteness. For even if there is indefiniteness in the things before it, it is nevertheless indefiniteness within form; the thing is not absolutely indefinite but only in relation to its perfection: but what we are dealing with now is absolutely indefinite. When it is perfected it becomes a body, receiving the form appropriate to its
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potentiality, a receiver for the principle which produced it and brought it to maturity. And only this form in body is the last representative of the powers above in the last depth of the world below.

2. And the text "All soul cares for that which is without soul" applies to this [the power of growth] in particular; other kinds of soul [care for the inanimate] in other ways. "It traverses the whole universe in different forms at different times," 1 either in the perceptive form or the rational or in this very growth-form. For the dominant part of it makes the thing appropriate to itself, but the other parts do nothing, for they are outside. In man, however, the inferior parts are not dominant but they are also present; and in fact the better part does not always dominate; the other parts exist and have a certain place. Therefore we also live like beings characterised by sense-perception, for we, too, have sense-organs; and in many ways we live like plants, for we have a body which grows and produces; so that all things work together, but the whole form is man in virtue of its better part. But when it goes out of the body it becomes what there was most of in it. Therefore one must "escape" 2 to the upper world, that we may not sink to the level of sense-perception by pursuing the images of sense, or to the level of the growth-principle by following the urge for generation and the "gluttonous love of good eating," 3 but may rise to the intelligible and intellect and God. Those, then, who guarded the man in them, become men again. Those who lived by sense alone become animals; but if their sense-perceptions have been accompanied by passionate

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1 These two quotations are from Plato, Phaedrus 246B6-7.
2 Again the favourite passage from Plato, Thaetetus, 176A8-B1.
3 The phrase is taken from Republic VII. 516B1-2.
ON OUR ALLOTTED GUARDIAN SPIRIT

... temper they become wild animals, and the difference in temper in them makes the differences between the animals of this kind; those whose sense-perceptions went with desires of the flesh and the delight of the desiring part of the soul become lustful and gluttonous animals. But if they did not even live by sense alone with their desires but coupled them with dullness of perception, they even turn into plants; for it was this, the growth-principle which worked in them, alone or predominantly, and they were taking care to turn themselves into trees. Those who loved music but were in other ways respectable turn into song birds; kings who ruled stupidly into eagles, if they had no other vices; astronomers who were always raising themselves to the sky without philosophical reflection turn into birds which fly high. The man who practised community virtue becomes a man again; but one who has a lesser share of it a creature that lives in community, a bcc or something of the sort.

3. Who, then, becomes a spirit? He who was one here too. And who is a god? Certainly he who was one here. For what worked in a man leads him... after death, since it was his ruler and guide here...
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 4.

On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit

too. Is this, then, "the spirit to whom he was allotted while he lived"? No, but that which is before the working principle; for this presides inactive over the man, but that which comes after it acts. If the working principle is that by which we have sense-perception, the spirit is the rational principle; but if we live by the rational principle, the spirit is what is above this, presiding inactive and giving its consent to the principle which works. So it is rightly said that "we shall choose." For we choose the principle which stands above us according to our choice of life. Why, then, does the spirit "lead" us? It is not possible for the principle which led the man in life to lead [after death], but only before, when the man lived; when he ceases to live the principle must hand over its activity to another, since he has died in the life which corresponded to that spirit's activity. This [other principle], then, wants to lead, and when it has become dominant lives itself and has itself, too, a different spirit; but if it is weighed down by the force of its bad character, this weighing down contains in itself the penalty. In this way, too, the wicked man, since the principle which worked in him during his life has pressed him down to the worse, towards what is like itself, enters into the life of a beast. But if a man is able to follow the spirit which is above him, he comes to be himself above, living that spirit's life, and giving the pre-eminence to that better part of himself to which he is being led; and after that spirit he rises to another, until he reaches the heights. For the soul is many things, and all things, both the things above and the things below down to the limits.

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1 See note on title of this treatise.
2 Republic X. 617E1.
3 Phaedo 107E7.
This sentence shows very clearly how Plotinus thinks of soul as a rich, complex unity capable of existing in many levels and operating in many ways, which can be distinguished but must not be separated. This was a way of thinking which was quite unacceptable to the later Neoplatonists, with their passion for sharp distinction and separation, and desire to put and keep man in his proper place low down in the elaborate hierarchy of being. Proclus sharply criticises this passage of Plotinus in his Commentary on Parmenides 134A (V, p. 948, 14–20; ed. Cousin 1864); see P. Henry Études du Texte de Plotin, pp. 290–291.

4. Is this lower part, then, always in body? No; if we turn, this too, turns with us to the upper world. What, then, about the soul of the universe? Will its lower part leave the body when it turns? No; it has not even inclined with its lower part to the last depth; for it did not come or come down but as it abides the body of the universe attaches itself to it and is, as it were, illumined, not annoying the soul or causing it any worries, for the universe lies in safety. What, has it then no kind of perception? Plato says that it has no sight, because it has no eyes either; nor ears nor nostrils either, obviously, nor tongue.

Well, then, has it an immanent sensation as we have of what goes on inside us? No, for things which are uniformly in accord with nature are quiet. It has no pleasure either. So the principle of growth is present in it without being present, and the principle of sense in the same way. But we deal with the universe in
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III 4.

κόσμου ἐν ἄλλως: νῦν δὲ ὡς εὐφρυστό ἡ ἀπορία αὐτὸς ἐγίνεται.

5. 'Αλλ' εἰ ἔκει αἱρέσει τὰν διάλογον καὶ εἰ τῶν βιῶν, πῶς ἐπὶ τὸν κύρος; "Ἡ καὶ ἡ αἱρέσις ἐκάθισε νὰ λεγομένη τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς προαίρεσιν καὶ διάλευκαν καθόλου καὶ παιδαχοῦ αὐτήν. 'Αλλ' εἰ ἡ προαίρεσις τῆς ψυχῆς κυρία καὶ τοῦτο πράττει, δὲ ἐν πρόκεισθαι, τὶς μέρος ἐκ τῶν προβλέψιμων, εἰκότι τὸ σοφία αὐτὸς ὀφθαλμὸς καθὼς αὐτὸς ην καθάριστος προτρέπει τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἱδρυς τῶν πᾶσιν τῶν τοῦτο ἐκεῖ, δὲ ἐπεξετάζει, καὶ τὸν διάλογον, ὑπόθεσι, αὐτὸς ἐλεύθερος, οἷδεν οὐκ ᾧδέτερον ἐν παραδόσει γίνεται

10 οὔδ' ὁ φαίλος. 'Αρ' οὖν δυνάμει ἐκάθισε νὰ κατηγορεῦεται, ἐνεργείας δὲ γίνεται; Τὰ οὖν, εἰ φαίλος σύμφωνος ἄρ' τὸ ψηλὸς ὀφθαλμὸς τιγάνη, ἡ δὲ τάνατα; "Ἡ δύναμις μᾶλλον καὶ ἤτοι τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκάθισε ἐκάθεντο σώματα παρεξεχείνει, ἐκεῖ καὶ αὐτ趵 ἔξωθεν τιγάνη τὴν ὅλην προαίρεσιν οὐκ ἐλθεῖται·

15 εὕνως. "Ὅταν δὲ λέγομαι, ὡς πρῶτον ὁ κλήροις, ἐκεῖ τὰ τῶν βιῶν παραδείγματα τὰ εἴπεται ταῖς τύχαις ταῖς τύχαις ταῖς τύχαις, οὐκ ἔστω τοὺς παρόντας τῶν βίων

1 Φρείρα (τὰ ἐν) ταῖς τύχαις Κρέουσ, νέος locus nondum sanatus.

ON OUR ALLOTTED GUARDIAN SPIRIT

other treatises; now we have said as much about it as is relevant to our problem.

5. But if the soul chooses its guardian spirit and chooses its life there in the other world, how have we still [in this world] any power of decision? The choice in the other world which Plato speaks of is really a riddling representation of the soul's universal and permanent purpose and disposition. But if the soul's purpose is decisive, and that part of it dominates which lies ready to hand as the result of its previous lives, the body is no longer responsible for any evil which may affect the man. For if the soul's character exists before the body, and has what it chose, and, Plato says, does not change its guardian spirit, then the good man does not come into existence here below, and neither does the worthless one. Is man, then, one or the other potentially [in the other world] and does he become actually good or bad [in this world]? What, then, if a man who is good in character happens to get a bad body, and a bad man meets the opposite fortune? The powers of either kind of soul can, more or less, make their bodies of either kind, since other external chances, too, cannot turn aside the whole purpose of the soul. But when it is said that first come the " lots," then " the examples of lives," then what lies in the fortunes of the lives, then what lies in the fortunes of the lives, then that they choose their lives from these mistakes in choosing made by the inexperienced and unintelligently virtuous: there does seem here a distinction implicit in Plato's text between the "examples of lives" and "what lies in the fortunes of the lives," between the general type of life and the particular fortunes or misfortunes contained in it. I have translated Creuzer's text on this assumption, but am not at all certain that this is the right solution.
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presented to them according to their characters, Plato gives the power of decision rather to the souls, which adapt what is given to them to their own characters. For that this guardian spirit is not entirely outside but only in the sense that he is not bound to us, and is not active in us but is ours, to speak in terms of soul, not but ours if we are considered as men of a particular kind who have a life which is subject to him, is shown by what is said in the Timaeus: 1 if the passage is taken in this way it will contain no contradiction, but it would have some disaccord if the spirit was understood otherwise. And the "fulfiller of what one has chosen" 2 is also in accord. For the spirit sits above us, and does not let us go down much lower into evil, but that alone acts in us which is under the spirit, not above him or on a level with him; for it is impossible for the spirit to become something else than a being appropriate to the place where he is.

6. What, then, is the nobly good man? He is the man who acts by his better part. He would not have been a good man if he had the guardian spirit as a partner in his own activity. For intellect is active in the good man. He is, then, himself a spirit or on the level of a spirit, and his guardian spirit is God. Is it, then, above intellect? If that, which is above intellect is his guardian spirit, why, then, is he not a man of noble goodness from the beginning? It is because of the "disturbance" which comes from birth. 3 But all the same, even before reason there is in him the inward movement which reaches out towards its own. Does the spirit, then, always and in every way accomplish its task successfully? Not

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1 Timaeus 90A, the passage where the daímon is identified with the highest part of our soul, the immortal reason.
2 Republic X. 620E1.
3 Cf. Timaeus 43A6–44B7.

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"II ou πάντως, εἴτε οὖσα ἢ φυσικὴ διαθέσεως ἔχει, ἢς ἐν τούτοις τοῖς τοιούτῳ τοιάδε οὖσα.

10 τούτων ἔχειν βιών καὶ παύσειν εἴρησεν. Ὡς μέντοι δαιμόνια οὖσαι, ὡς λέγομαι, ἀγαγῶν λέγεται εἰς Ἀιδοὺς συνείροντες ταῦτα μένεν, ἐὰν μὴ τὰ αὐτὰ ἐλπίζη πάλιν. Πρὸς δὲ τοῦτος: Τέ δέ ἀγαγεῖν εἰς τὴν κράτιον τὸ εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ σχῆμα ἑλθέν μετὰ τὴν ἀπογένεσιν, δέ εἶχεν πρὸς τὴν γενέσεώς εἴπαι

15 ὡσπέρ ἀπὸ ἀρχής ἄλλης τοῖς μεταξὺ τῆς ἀνθρώπου γένεσεως χρόνων ταῖς κολοσσείας πάρειται. Ἡ οὐδὲ βιων αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ δύσιν. Τί δὲ ταῖς εἰς θῇρεια σώματα εἰσφέρεια; ἔλατον ἢ δαιμόνι.;

"Ἡ ποιήσας γε ἦ εὐθύνη. Ταῖς δὲ ἀναίων; Ἡ τῶν ἀναίων ἑλὼν ἐν ἀληθῇ, ἡ δὲ ἑξωθήτῳ. Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἐν

20 ἀληθῇ, ἢ ἐν ἐλέῳ ἢ ἐν ἅλλῳ τῶν πλατωμένων, ἢ δὲ ἐν τῇ ἐπάθει, ἐκείνῃ καθὰ λογικὸς ὑπογείασθαι ἀπαθειᾷ. φοβός ὁ δὴ σωθεὶς καὶ κόμιον εἶναι εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν μὴ μόνων ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ψυχῆς τῆς κόσμου ὑμειώθης, διαθέσους γενερασίας ὧν κακεύσῃ εἰς τῇ ἐπάθει καὶ τὰς πλατωμάσεις

25 κατὰ δυνάμεις διαφόροις ὑμειώθης ταῖς δυνάμεις καὶ τὰς παρ᾽ ἑαυτῶν ἡμῖν καὶ ἐνεργείας εἰσαὶ παρ᾽ ἑκάστης καὶ ἀπαλλαγεῖσις ἐκεῖ γίνεσθαι.

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1 Cp. Timaeeus 1030E-1031A.

2 Here, and in what follows, Plotinus is basing his thought on Timaeus 41D8-42D1, where the Demiurge at his original making of souls which are to be born into this world assigns each of them to a star, and promises them that they will each return to their appropriate star if they overcome the disturbances and temptations of mortal life.

3 Cp. Timaeus 41D1 7.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 4.

Plotinus may be thinking here of Plato, *Laws* X. 898E-899A, where Plato leaves it open whether the soul which set free they come there to the star which is in harmony with the character and power which lived and worked in them; and each will have a god of this kind as its guardian spirit, either the star itself or the god set above this power; but this requires more accurate investigation.1 But those which have come to be outside have transcended the nature of spirits and the whole destiny of birth, and altogether what is in this visible world; as long as the soul is there, the substance in it which desires birth is taken up with it; if anyone should say that this substance is "the soul which has come to be among bodies and is divisible," multiplying and dividing itself with its bodies, he will speak correctly. But it is not divided quantitatively, for it is the same thing in all, a whole and again one; and since this soul is in process of division in this way, many animals are always produced from one, as happens also with plants, for this [the plant-soul], too, is also divisible among bodies. And sometimes the soul remains in the same living thing and gives [life to others], like the soul in plants; but sometimes when it goes away it gives before it goes, as with plants which have been pulled up or dead animals, when from their corruption many are generated from one. And the soul-power from the All co-operates, the particular power which is the same here too.

But if the soul comes here again, it has either the same or another guardian spirit according to the life governs the sun is related to it as our soul is to our body, or directs it in some quite different fashion.

1 *Timaeus* 33 Δ 3–5; cp. the fuller discussions of the "divisibility" of the soul, with reference to this passage of the *Timaeus* in IV. 9 [8] and IV. 3 [97] 10.

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PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 4.

ON OUR ALLOTTED GUARDIAN SPIRIT

which it is going to make for itself. It embarks, then, with this spirit first of all in this universe as if in a boat, then the nature which has the name of the "Spindle"\(^1\) takes it over and sets it, just as in a ship, in some seat of fortune. And as the circuit of heaven, like a wind, carries round the man sitting, or even moving about, on the ship, there occur many and various sights and changes and incidents, and, just as in the actual ship, \(\text{[they occur because]}\) he is moved either by the tossing of the ship or by himself, of his own impulse, whatever it may be, which he has because he is on the ship precisely in his own way. For everyone is not moved and does not will or act alike in the same circumstances. So different things happen to different people as a result of the same or different occurrences, or the same things to others even if the circumstances they encounter are different; for that is what destiny is like.

\(^1\) Cp. Republic X. 616C4 ff.
III. 5. ON LOVE

Introductory Note

This late treatise (No. 50 in Porphyry's chronological order) is concerned more than any other in the Enneads with the allegorical interpretation of myth, though with Platonic rather than traditional myth: the story to which Plotinus devotes most of his attention is that of the birth of Eros in the Symposium (203B ff.). Plotinus often alludes to details of the Platonic myths and interprets them to suit his own philosophical purposes. He explains the principles to be applied in the interpretation of myths in the last chapter of this treatise (9:24-29). But he does not seem to consider this kind of intellectual activity very interesting or important, and is extremely casual about the details of his interpretation. He does not really care whether Aphrodite is to be represented as the daughter of Ouranos, Kronos or Zeus (chs. 2 and 8), or identified with Zeus's wife Hera (chs. 6-23). He obviously finds it difficult to give an allegorical interpretation of the Symposium myth which will fit his own system, and his explanation of it (ch. 6 ff.) is sometimes obscure and confusing. Plotinus's teaching about the nature of Love in this treatise follows Plato closely in essentials (with an important variation mentioned in the notes to ch. 1). The Phaedrus and the Symposium are reconciled by distinguishing the Love who is a god from the Love who is a daimon (chs. 4, 23-25).

Synopsis

Is love a god, a spirit, or an affection of the soul? Discussion of love as an affection of the soul (ch. 1). Love as a god. Is he born from or with Aphrodite? The two Aphrodites, the heavenly one and the goddess of marriage: the heavenly Aphrodite is the most divine kind of soul and produces the appropriate Love (ch. 2). Love is a substantial reality: how he comes into existence from the soul's seeing. The lower Aphrodite is the soul of the universe, and produces her own Love (ch. 3). Each individual soul has its own love, related to the universal Love as individual souls are to universal Soul: the higher Love is a god, the lower a spirit (ch. 4). The Love who is a spirit is not the physical universe, as some think (ch. 5).

Interpretation of the myth of the birth of Love in the Symposium: first, how spirits (daimones) differ from gods, being subject to affections and passions through participating in intelligible matter (ch. 6). The parents of Love: Plenty is an intelligible reality, Poverty is intelligible matter, indefinite and so giving unbounded desire to Love. All spirits have this double origin: perverse loves, like false thoughts, are not substantial realities but passive affections of the soul (ch. 7). Zeus and Aphrodite are Intellect and Soul (ch. 8). Plenty, his drunkenness with nectar, and the "garden," all represent in different ways the glorifying outflow of Logoi from Intellect into Soul. Principles for the interpretation of myths: their application to this one (ch. 9).

ON LOVE

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III. 5. ON LOVE

1. Our enquiry concerns love, whether it is a god or a spirit or an affection of the soul, or whether one kind is a god or spirit and another also an affection, and what sort of god or spirit or affection each of these is; it is worth while considering the ideas about it which have occurred to the rest of mankind and all the teachings of philosophy on this subject, and in particular all the opinions of that godlike man Plato, who, of course, written much about love in many places in his works. He has said that love is not only an affection occurring in souls but asserts that it is also a spirit, and has described its origin, how and from what source it came to be. Now about the affection of soul for which we make love responsible, there is no one, I suppose, who does not know that it occurs in souls which desire to embrace some beauty, and that this desire has two forms, one which comes from the chaste who are akin to absolute beauty, and one which wants to find its fulfilment in the doing of some ugly act; but it is appropriate to go on from there to a philosophical consideration of the source from which each of them originates. And if someone assumed that the origin of love was the longing for beauty itself which was there before in men’s souls, and their recog-

That is Love as a substantial superhuman reality, a god or a spirit, who is responsible for producing the affection of love in the human soul.
For this thoroughly Hellenic notion of the natural affinity of the soul to beauty and its natural repulsion from ugliness; cp. T. 0· P. 1-2. Both passages derive from Plato, Symposium 206D 1-2.

The phrase is taken, with a slight but significant alteration (το ἀγαθόν singular for τῶν ἀγαθῶν plural) from Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1096b6; cp. Metaphysics A5. 986a22-26. The reference is to the columns or tables of ten pairs of basic opposites which some Pythagoreans, according to Aristotle drew up, which included ἀρρενός καὶ ἀρρενώπας (for ἀρρενός) as a Pythagorean term.

1 Symposium 206C 4-5.

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Throughout this passage Plotinus is trying closely to follow the doctrine of Plato (Symposium 206C ff.), but he has, in fact, introduced an unusual change by distinguishing sharply between the pure love of beauty which does not desire to generate that which is mixed with desire for perpetuity and so seeks to generate, which he regards as inferior. In

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beauty. If they remain chaste there is no error in their intimacy with the beauty here below, but it is error to fall away into sexual intercourse. And the man whose love of the beautiful is pure will be satisfied with beauty alone, if he recollects the archetype or even if he does not, but the man whose love is mixed with another desire of 'being immortal as far as a mortal may,' seeks the beautiful in that which is everlasting and eternal; and as he goes the way of nature he sows and generates in beauty, sowing for perpetuity, and in beauty because of the kinship of perpetuity and beauty. The eternal is certainly akin to the beautiful, and the eternal nature is that which is primarily beautiful and the things which spring from it are all beautiful too. That, therefore, which does not want to generate suffices more to itself in beauty, but that which desires to create wants to create because of a lack and is not self-sufficient; and, if it does create something of the sort, it thinks it is self-sufficient if it generates in beauty.

But those who want to generate unlawfully and against nature take their starting-point from the course which accords with nature but diverge from it and slip, as we may say, out of the way and lie fallen, having failed to recognise where love was leading them, or the impulse of generating, or the right use of an image of beauty, or what absolute beauty is. But to return to the main point; those who love beautiful bodies, also with a view to sexual intercourse, love them because they are beautiful, and so do those who love with the mixed love of which Plato all love up to the highest is essentially productive (cp. Symposium 212A). In Plotinus it is not.

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PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 5.

éρωτα, γυναικῶν μὲν, ἵνα καὶ τὸ ἀεί, μὴ τοιούτων ἐκεῖ, σφαλλόμενωι; οἱ δὲ ἀμένοις· σῳφρονοῦσα μὲν ἄμφος. Ἄλλοι οἱ δὲ καὶ τὸ τρίτο κάλλιον σύνθεσιν ἀρκοῦμενοι, οἱ δὲ κάκευοι, ὅσοι ἀνεμιζόμεθαν, καὶ ὅσοι ἀντιμάζομεν οὐδὲ τοῦτο ὡς ἐν καὶ ἀποτέλεσμα τι ὡς ἀκέφαλον καὶ παρηγόταν. Οὕτως μὲν ὅπερ τὸ καλὸν εἰσαχρῶν ἄνευ, οἱ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ καλὸν εἰς αἰσχρὸν πεσόντες· καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἀγάθος ἐφεσίς ἐγεί εἰς κακὸν τῷ ἐκτισμῷ πολλάκις. Καὶ πάντα μὲν τῆς πυχῆς τὰ παθήματα.

2. Περὶ δὲ τοῦ ἡθοῦ τίθενται οὐ μόνον οἱ ἄλλοι ἀδήμοιο, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεολόγοι καὶ Πλάτων πολλαχοὶ Ἀφροδίτης Ἐρωτα λέγων καὶ ἔργον αὐτῷ εἶναι καλὸν τὲ ἐφορον παίδων καὶ ὅσοι κυνικῶν τῶν φοινῶν πρὸς τὸ ἐκεῖ κάλλος, ἢ καὶ ἐπαίζουσι τὴν ἔρημον τῆς ἀρρήτης πρὸς τὸ ἐκεῖ ὄψιν, περὶ τῶν μάλτων φιλοσοφίστων· καὶ δὲ καὶ δόσα ἔν Συμμοσίω εἰρνάμεναι παραλήτησιν, ἀν ὅσα διὰ τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃς φύσιν αὐτῶν γενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ ἐντὸς Ἀφροδίτης γενεθλίων ἐκ τῆς Περιοδικαίω καὶ τὸν Πάρον. Ἔστω δὲ ὁ λόγος καὶ περὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀπαίτησιν τι ἐπείρω, εἰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκείνης αὐτῆς μετ' ἐκείνης γενομένη λέγεται ὁ Ἐρως. Πρώτον

1 Ἀφροδίτης... ἑνὶ Χίρχννφ. 2 Plaertr 252D9. 3 Plaertr 265C2-3. 2 Symposium 203B-C.

ON LOVE

we have spoken; they love women in order to perpetuate themselves, but the women are not beautiful they fail in their purpose [of generating in beauty]; but the first group [those who love without thought of self-perpetuation, with a pure love of beauty] are better; both are chaste. But some lovers even worship earthly beauty, and it is enough for them, but others, those who have recollected the archetype, venerate that higher beauty too, and do not treat this earthly beauty, either, with disrespect, since they see in it the creation and playing of that other. These lovers, then, are concerned about beauty without any ugliness, but there are others who fall into ugliness and they too do so because of beauty: for in fact the desire of good often involves the fall into evil. So much, then, for the affections of the soul [produced by love].

2. But the Love whom we ought to make the main object of our philosophical discourse is the one whom not only the rest of mankind but those also who give accounts of the gods, and especially Plato, make a god; Plato in many places speaks of "Love son of Aphrodite," 1 and says that his work is to be "guardian of beautiful boys" 2 and mover of the soul towards the beauty of the higher world, or also to increase the impulse towards that world which is already there; we must also take into account all that is said in the Banquet, in which he says that Love is not born of Aphrodite but "from Poverty and Plenty at Aphrodite's birthday party." 3 But our discussion seems to require us to say something about Aphrodite, whether Love is said to have been born from her or with her. First, then, who is Aphrodite?
Next, we must ask how Love is either born from her or with her, or in what way it applies to the same Love that he is at the same time from her and with her. Now we say that Aphrodite is double; one, the heavenly, we say is the "daughter of Heaven," and the other, the one "born of Zeus and Dione," takes charge of earthly marriages as their guardian; but that other is "motherless" and above marriage, because there are no marriages in heaven. The heavenly one, since she is said to be the child of Kronos, and he is Intellect, must be the most divine kind of soul, springing directly from him, pure from the pure, remaining above, as neither wanting nor being able to descend to the world here below, since it is not according to her nature to come down, since she is a separate reality and a substance without part in matter—for which reason they spoke of her riddlingly in this way, that she was "motherless"; one would be right in speaking of her as a goddess, not as a spirit, since she is unmixed and remains pure by herself. For that which derives its nature immediately from Intellect is itself, too, pure, since it is strong in itself by its nearness, since, too, Soul's desire and its abiding-place are close to its parent principle which is strong enough to hold it above; for which reason Soul which is immediately dependent on Intellect could not fall away; it is much more firmly held than the sun holds the light which shines out from himself around him, which comes from him and is closely joined to him. Now since Aphrodite follows upon Kronos—in the development of his thought about Love in the Symposium—Plotinus finds it useful because it can be made to fit his distinction between higher and lower Soul.
or, if you like, the father of Kronos, Heaven—she directed her activity to him and felt affinity with him, and filled with passionate love for him brought forth Love, and with this child of hers she looks towards him; her activity has made a real substance, and the two of them look on high, the mother who bore him and the beautiful Love who has come into existence as a reality always ordered towards something else beautiful, and having its being in this, that it is a kind of intermediary between desiring and desired, the eye of the desiring which through its power gives to the lover the sight of the object desired; but Love himself runs on ahead and, before he gives the lover the power of seeing through the organ [of bodily sight], he fills himself with gazing, seeing before the lover but certainly not in the same way, because he fixes the sight firmly in the lover, but himself plucks the fruit of the vision of beauty as it speeds past him.

3. We ought not to disbelieve that Love is a reality and a substance sprung from a substance, less than that which made it, but all the same substantially existent. For that higher soul was, certainly, a substance, which came into being from the activity which existed before it, and from the substance of the world of real beings, which also looks towards that which was the first substance, and looks towards it with great intensity. This was its first vision, and

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PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 5.

Kat πρῶτον ἤν ὁμα τοῦτο καὶ εἶναι ὡς πρὸς ἄγαθον αὐτῆς καὶ ἔγινεν ὁμα, καὶ τὸ ὁμα τοῦτο ὄν σ᾽, ὧς μὴ σάρκειαν πεἰσθήνεται τὴν ἓν ποὺ ἰ ὁμα, ὡς τῇ ὁνὴ ἡττὴν καὶ τάσι τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ σφαδρᾶτης τῆς θεᾶς γεννητῇ τι παρ᾽ αὐτῆς ἄξον αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ὁματος, ἦν οὖν τὸ εὐφυρεῖας πρῶτο τὸ ὁματος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὁνομ ἀποτελεῖται ἀπὸ τοῦ δομημένον ὁμα πληρομένη, ὧν μετ᾽ εἰδώλεις ἡμας, ἢμας ἐγένετο τάγμα που καὶ τῆς προσφυγας ἐνετέθη

15 μᾶλλον αὐτῶν γεγονεῖν ὅτι ἦν ὁμα τῆς ὑπόστασιν ἔχει· ἔπει τὸ γε πάθος ἀπὸ τοῦτο ἔχει ἃ τῆς ἐπιστημῆς,1 εἶπεν πρῶτον ὅπως ἡ ἐπιστημῆς· καὶ αὕτη τὸ γε πάθος ἢ ἐμας λέγεται· καὶ εἶπεν ἢ ἐμας αὐτῶν ἔχει τόδε· ἔποιες τε αὐτὸ ἃ δὲ δὲν λέγεται ἢμας· τὸ μὲν τῆς ὥστε ἢμας ἢμας

20 τοιοῦτος ἢν καὶ αὐτῶν ἂν, ἢ πρὸς ἀνὴρ ἐνεκέτες καὶ ἢ εὐηθνίως καὶ παρ᾽ εὐηθνίας γεγονεὶ· καὶ θεῶν ἀνεκείμενος θεός. Χαρίστην δὲ ἐκείνῃ τῇ ψυχῇ λέγεται τῇ πρῶτῳ ἀληθείᾳ τῇ αὐθαυτῇ, χαρίστην καὶ τῶν ἢμας παρ᾽ αὐτῶν λεγόμενα· εἰ καὶ σὺ μάλιστα χαρίστην τῇ ψυχῇ

25 εἴπομεν· εἴπει καὶ ἢν λέγεται τὸ ἢν ἔχει· ἢμας τῇ ἡμῶν ἐχεῖν γεγονεῖν ὁμα τοῦτον ἡμῶν τιθεῖται αὐτὴ ἡμας

The higher soul is called "Heavenly" because it luminates " (i.e. is the immediate source of the forms in) the visible heaven, but it is not immanent in heaven but transcends the material universe altogether. In the same way the highest, intellectual, element in us is not really "we" but separate and transcendent; cp. the nearly contemporary treatises V. 3 [46] 2.

ON LOVE

it looked towards it as to its own good, and rejoiced in its looking, and the vision was of a kind which made it impossible for the visionary to make its gaze a secondary activity; so that the soul by a kind of delight and intense concentration on the vision and by the passion of its gazing generates something from itself which is worthy of itself and of the vision. So from the power which is intensely active about the object of vision, and from a kind of outflow from that object, Love came to be as an eye filled with its vision, like a seeing that has its image with it; and, I suppose, his name most likely came to him from this, because he derives his real existence from seeing; 1 for the emotion of love must take its name from him, on the assumption that substance is prior to non-substance—after all it is an emotion that is called "falling in love"—and if we say "love for this particular person possesses him," but love would not be spoken of without any particular qualification. The Love which belongs to the higher soul, then, would be of this kind, himself, too, looking on high, since he is that soul's follower and has come into being from her and by her, and satisfies himself with the contemplation of the gods. But since we say that that higher soul which primarily illuminates heaven is separate, we shall also make this Love separate—however much we call this soul "heavenly"; for, though we say, too, that the best in us men is "in" us, all the same we give it a separate existence.2
So he must exist only there above, where the soul which is pure abides. But since this universe, too, had to have a soul, the other Love came to be at once along with it, and is also the eye of this soul, himself, too, produced from desire. And because this Aphrodite belongs to the universe and is not only soul or simply soul, she produced the Love in this universe, who himself, too, immediately takes charge of marriages and, in so far as he, too, possesses the desire for what is above, in the same degree moves the souls of the young, and turns the soul with which he is ranked to higher things, in so far as it, too, is naturally able to come to remembrance of them. For every soul seeks the good, the mixed soul, too, and the individual soul: since it, too, follows upon that higher soul and derives from it.

4. Does, then, each individual soul have a love like itself which has a real substantial existence? Now why should the universal soul and the soul of the All have a real love, but not the soul of each of us, and the soul in all other living things as well? And is this love the spirit which, they say, accompanies each of us, the love, that is, that belongs to each of us? For this would be the love which implants the desires appropriate to the nature of each individual soul; the individual soul longs for what corresponds to its own nature, and produces a love which accords with its value and is proportioned to its being. Let us grant, then, that the universal soul has a universal love, and each of the partial souls its own particular love. But in so far as each individual soul in its relation to the whole is not: in a state of being completely cut off, but of inclusion in it so that all souls

1 aútós Cremer: aútós codd.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 5.

For the unity of individual souls in the one soul, see IV. 3 [27], IV. 6 [8], VI. 4 [22] 14.

By this distinction Plotinus reconciles the Phaedrus, where Eros is a god, with the Symposium, where he is a common soul and also keeps Plato's insight that Eros is not just desire (which must disappear with satisfaction) but something which persists when the lover attains to full fruition and union with the beloved.

The identification of the god Eros with the whole universe is found in Cornutus (Theodolus Eunice Compendium, ed. 26 (p. 48-6-8 Long)); it may be Stein. Pintarch applies it.
ON LOVE

grows up naturally within it, contains in itself many contradictions; Plato says that the universe is a "blessed god" and self-sufficient, but he admits that this Love is not a god and not self-sufficient, but always in need. Then again it is necessary, if the universe is composed of soul and body, and Aphrodite is for Plato the soul of the universe, that Aphrodite should be the most important part of Love, or, if its soul is the universe, as man's soul is man, that Love must be Aphrodite. Then again, why should he, who is a spirit, be the universe, but the other spirits—for it is obvious that they are of the same substance—not be the universe, themselves too? And the universe then would be nothing but a conglomeration of spirits. And how could a being who is called "guardian of beautiful boys" be the universe? And how would Plato's "bedless" and "shoeless" and "houseless" fit this interpretation without being mean and inharmonious?

6. But what, then, are we to say about Love and the account of his birth? It is obvious that we must understand who Poverty is, and who Plenty is, and how they will be appropriate parents for him. It is obvious, too, that these must be appropriate for the other spirits, assuming that spirits as spirits have one single nature and substance—otherwise they will merely have the name in common. Let us, then, understand how we distinguish gods from spirits (even if we do often call spirits gods), at any rate on the occasions when we do speak of each kind of being as

1. Symposium 203b1 1-2.
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10 λέγωμεν αὐτῶν εἶναι γένος. Τὸ μὲν δὴ θεὸν ἀπάθεις λέγομεν καὶ νυμέλιον γένος, διὰ τοῦτο δὲ προστίθημι πάθη, ἀδιάκοπα λέγουσι ἐφαντάζει τοῖς θεοῖς, ἵνα πρὸς ἡμᾶς, μεταξύ θεῶν τε καὶ τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους. Πη δὴ οὐκ ἔμειναν ἀπάθεις οὕτως, πη δὲ κατέβησαν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ πρὸς τὸ χέριν;
15 Καὶ δὴ καὶ τούτῳ σκέπτοντι, πότερα δαιμόνια ἐν τῷ νοστῶ συδείς καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τρέμει δαιμόνια μόνον, θεοὶ δὲ ἐν τῷ νοστῶ ἀφορίζεται, ὡς εἰσί καὶ ἐνταῦθα θεοὶ καὶ ὁ κόσμος θεοί, ὥσπερ σώματος λέγεται, τρίτοι καὶ οἱ μέχρι σελήνης ἐκαστος θεὸς. Βέλτιον δὲ μεθόδον ἐν τῷ νοστώ
20 δαιμόνια λέγειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰ αὐτοδαιμόνια, θεῶν καὶ τούτων εἶναι, καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τοῦ μέχρι σελήνης θεοὶ τοῖς ὑπάρχοντες θεοὶ διετέρως μετ’ ἐκαστος καὶ οἱ ἐκαστος τῶν νοστῶν, ἐξημερώουσιν ἐκαστος, ὥσπερ ἀγάλην ἐπὶ ἐκαστον ἄστρων. Τοῦτο δὲ δαιμόνια εἰ; Ἀρα γε ψυχῆς ἐν κόσμῳ
25 γενόμενης τὸ ἀόρατον ἤγονε: Διὰ τὶ δὲ τῆς ἐν κόσμῳ: ὅταν ἡ καθαρὰ θεὸς γεννᾶ, καὶ θεὸν ἐφαρμούταν τῖνας ἄρσιν. Πρῶτον δὴ διὰ τὰ πάντα οἱ δαιμόνια ἔρωτες; Ἑτα πῶς ἡν καθαρὰ καὶ οἶντον ὅλης: Ἡ ἔρωτας μὲν, ὅ εἰσιν καὶ ψυχῆς ἐφεμένης τοῦ ἄγαθον καὶ καλοῦ, καὶ

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1 The use of the name δαιμόνια for supernatural beings of inferior rank to the gods goes back to Hesiod (Works and Days 122-126). But it was Plato, and still more Xenocrates and the Middle Platonists taking up and developing his ideas, who defined the characteristics of these intermediate beings and worked out a regular daemonology, whose main lines Plotinus follows in this chapter.

2 The phrase comes from Numenius (Test. 24 Leemans = Proclus, In Tim. 303, 27-304, 1).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 5.

30 γενόμενοι πάσηι τούτων τῶν δαίμων οί ἐν τοῖς οί δὲ ἄλλοι δαίμονες ἀπὸ φυσῆς μὲν καὶ ψυχῆς τῆς τοῦ μανῶς, δυνάμεις δὲ ἐκραίρας γενόμενοι κατὰ χρήμαν τῶν δεδουληθηκόν τινὰ καὶ συνδεομένοι τῷ παντὶ ἔκοστα. "Εδώ γὰρ ᾠρέων τῆς φυσῆς τοῦ μανῶς τῷ παντὶ γενόμενοι δυνάμεις δια-

35 μόνον καὶ πρωτόφοροι τῷ ἀυτῆς ὅλου. Ἀλλὰ πᾶς καὶ τῶν υἱῶν μετεχόμενοι. Ὅδε γὰρ ἡ τῆς σωματικῆς, ἡ δὲ ἡ ἀοιδὴ ἐστιν. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ σώματα προσαλέμπονται εὕρειαν ἡ περὶ αὐτὰ, ἀλλὰ δὲν γεγονέρων διάφοροι αὐτῶν τῆς φύσεως εἶναι, ἡ αὐτῷ μετάσχονται σώματοι. ὡς γὰρ εὐθὺς τὸ καθαρόν πάντη σῶματα μέγνυται καὶ ἡ πολλὰς δοκεῖ ὃς ὡς αὐτὸ τοῦ δαίμονος καὶ ὡς διὰ δαίμονι μετὰ τῶν σώματος ἡ ἀπόδειξις ἡ περὶ αὐτῶν εἶναι. Ἀλλὰ διὰ τέρμαν σώματα μέγνυται, ἡ δὲ αὐτῆς εἰ ἡ τῆς μεγενείας αὐτῆς: ἢ τις αὐτῆς ἢ αὐτῆς; "Τὰς δὲν

40 νοητὴν ὑποθέσει, ἣν τὸ κοινωνίαν ἐκεῖνος ἥκη καὶ εἰς τὰς τῶν σωμάτων δι’ αὐτῆς.

7. Διό καὶ ἐν τῇ γένεσι τοῦ Ἐρωτος ὁ Πλάτων φορὶ τὸν Πόρον τῆς μείζον ἐχειν τοῦ νέκτα-

45 ρούς φίλου οὖν οὕπω ὄντος, ἢ πρὸ τοῦ αὐθανατοῦ

1 οὐκ οἰκεῖται καὶ συνδεομένοι Κερίκλης, συμπληρούμενοι καὶ συνδεομένους οὐδενί.

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spirit. But the other spirits come, they, too, from the soul of the All, but are produced by other powers according to the need of the All; they help to complete it, and along with the All govern individual things. For the soul of the All had to provide adequately for the All by producing powers which are those of spirits and beneficial to its totality. But how do they participate in matter, of any sort at all? Obviously not in bodily matter, or they will be perceptible living creatures. Even if they do take as well bodies of air or fire, their nature must certainly have been different before, to give them any possibility of participating in body. For that which is altogether pure does not directly combine with body; though many people think that a body of air or fire is included in the substantial nature of a spirit in so far as it is a spirit. But why does one substance combine with body and another not, unless there is something responsible for the combination in the case of one that combines? What, then, is responsible? One must suppose an intelligible matter, in order that a being which has a share in it may come to this matter here of bodies by means of it. 2

7. Therefore, too, in the story of the birth of Love Plato says that Plenty was drunk with nectar, as wine did not yet exist, meaning that Love came

1 For daemon: bodies made of the very best air, see Arnekius, De Deo Socratia, ch. 11 (the whole treatise is one of the best examples of vulgar Platonic daemonology); also Por-

2 This idea that participation in "intelligible matter" is an intermediate stage between composite incorporeity and material embodiment is unparalleled in Plotinus. For his normal thought on the subject see especially II. 4 [12] 3-5 and 15.

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into existence before the world of sense, and that Poverty had intercourse with an intelligible nature, not merely with an image of the intelligible or an imagination derived from it, but she was there in the intelligible and united with it, and bore the substance of Love made from form and indefiniteness, the indefiniteness which the soul had before it attained the Good, while it was divining that there was something there by an indefinite, unlimited imagination. Therefore, since a rational principle came to be in something which was not rational, but an indefinite impulse and an obscure expression, what it produced was something not complete or sufficient, but defective, since it came into being from an indefinite impulse and a sufficient rational principle. So Love is not a pure rational principle, since he has in himself an indefinite, irrational, unbounded impulse; for he will never be satisfied, as long as he has in him the nature of the indefinite. He depends on soul in such a way that he comes from it as its origin, but is a mixture of a rational principle which did not stay in itself but was mingled with indefiniteness—it was not the rational principle itself which was mixed with it but that which came from it. And Love is like a "sting," without resources in his own nature; therefore, even when he attains his object he is without resources again; he cannot be satisfied because

1 The conception of intelligible matter here is much closer to Plotinus's normal thought than that remarked on in the last chapter. The idea that the soul's Love has a radical incompleteness, a permanent incapacity to be satisfied, because of the "material" element in it goes rather beyond anything else in the Enneads (it is, of course, unavoidable if the Symposium is to be interpreted in this way). It has, however, something in common with the account of the "restless power" in soul which produces time in III. 7 [146] 11.

6 Phaedrus 240D 1.

8 Intellect, on the other hand, "always desires and always attains"; and the One neither desires, nor attains (οὔτε ἐν μὲν τῷ τῷ ἀόρατος καὶ ἀφανίσθη οὐδὲ τὶς ἔσχε, ταύτα ἢ τὸν παχύναν, τεῦχος δὲ οὔτε ἐσχέτως—τόνοι γὰρ; ὁδινὶ τυχόνας. Π.: 8[30] 11. 23-25).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 5.

τὸ μέγα: μένον γὰρ πληροῦται ἀλήθεια, ὅτι πεπληρώθη τῇ ἑαυτῷ φύσι: ὅ ἐ δὲ διὰ τὴν συνειδήμον ἐνδεικνύει, καὶ παραχρῆμα πληρωθῇ, οὐ στέγει· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ ἀμήχανον 1 αὕτος διὰ τὴν ἐνδεικνύει, τὸ δὲ πορισμόν ποιήσαι τὴν τοῦ λόγου φύσιν.

Λει ὅ δὲ καὶ πῶς τὰ διαμόρφωσε τοιοῦτον νομίζειν καὶ ἐκ τοιούτουι καὶ γὰρ ἐκατον ἐφ’ ὅ τέτακται πορισμούν ἐκεῖνοι καὶ ἐφέμενοι ἐκεῖνοι καὶ συγγενεῖς καὶ ταῦτα τῷ Ἐρωτι καὶ ὧν πλῆρες αὐτό

30 αὐτό, ἐφέμενον δὲ τις τῶν ὑπ’ ὅμοιον ἄγαθον.

"Ὅτι καὶ τοῖς ἐνταθῆ ἄγαθοί, διὸ ἐγγυνώ ἐρωτα, τοῦ ἀπλῶς ἄγαθοι καὶ τοῦ ἄνυσε ἡν ὑπ’ ἐρωτα τῶν ἐρωταί τοῖς δὲ καὶ ἐλλοις διαμόρφωσε τεταγμέναις κατ’ ἄλλον καὶ ἄλλον διαμόρφωσα τετάγματος δὲ ἐλλοις ἐγγυνώ ἐφέμενοι, ἐνεργοῦσατο δὲ καὶ;

35 ἄλλον διαμόρφωσα, δε ἐλευθή κατὰ τὸ διαμόρφωσε μέρος τοῦ ἐνεργοῦσατο δὲ αὐτοῖς, ἄγαθοι. Οὶ δὲ κακοὶ ἐφέμενοι πᾶς κακοὶ ἐγγυνώμοις ἐνθαλάσσω καταστάσασθαι σῶσθαι τῶν ἐν ἄνυσε ἐρωτα, ἀντεις καὶ λόγῳ τὸν ὑπὲρ, διὸ κακοῖς, κακοῖς πᾶσι ἐπερώτησε διάκειται. Οἱ μὲν οὖν

40 φύσει ἑρωταὶ καὶ κατὰ φύσιν καλεῖ· καὶ οἱ μὲν


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the mixed thing cannot be; only that is truly satisfied which has already attained full satisfaction in its own nature; but Love because of his intimate deficiency is impelled to longing, and even if he is for the moment satisfied, he does not hold what he has received, since his powerlessness comes from his deficiency, but his ability to provide for himself from his rational nature.

But one must consider that the whole race of spirits is like this and comes from parents of this kind: for every spirit is able to provide himself with that to which he is ordered, and impelled by desire for it, and akin to Love in this way too, and is like him, too, in not being satisfied but impelled by desire for one of the partial things which he regards as goods. For this reason we must consider, too, that the love which good men in this world have is a love for that which is simply and really good, not just any kind of love; but that those who are ordered under other spirits are ordered under different ones at different times, leaving their love of the simply good operative, but acting under the control of other spirits, whom they chose according to the corresponding part of that which is active in them, the soul. But those who are impelled by desire for evil things have fettered all the loves in them with the evil passions that have grown up in their souls, just as they have fettered their right reason, which is inborn in them, with the evil opinions which have grown upon them. So, then, the loves which are natural and according to nature are fair and good; and the

it is Pliny who is πράγμα ἀμήχανον (I. 17). (Dr. Schwyzer now agrees.)
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loves of a lesser soul are less in worth and power, but those [of a better soul] are more; both are real substantial loves. But the loves which are against nature, these are passive affections of the perverted and are not: in any way substance or expressions of substantial realities, and are not any longer products of the soul but have come into existence together with the vice of a soul which now produces things like itself in its dispositions and states. For it is likely in general that the true goods, which are in accordance with the nature of a soul active among things defined and limited, are substance, but the others [evils] are not acts which the soul produces from itself but are nothing else but passive affections; they are like false thoughts which have no substantial realities as their bases, as really true thoughts which are everlasting and definite have thinking and object of thought and existence all together, not only in the act of thought taken simply and absolutely, but in each individual act concerned with the real object of thought and the mind in each individual; if, indeed, we are to assume that in each one of us thinking and object of thought exist in a pure state—and yet they are not together and this state [of unity of thought and object of thought] does not belong to us and our thinking is not simple—hence our love is of simple realities, for so are our thoughts; and if we love one of the partial things this is incidental, just as, if according to the theorem this particular triangle has the sum of its angles equal to two right angles, it is in so far as it is simply a triangle.  

8. But who is Zeus, whose "garden" Plato says it is "into which Pente came, and what is this
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 5.

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garden? Now Aphrodite was for us the soul, and we said that Plenty was the rational principle of all things. But what are we to make of these, Zeus and his garden? For we must not make Zeus the soul, since this is what we have made Aphrodite. Here too, certainly, we must take our understanding of Zeus from Plato, from the Phaedrus where he says that this god is a "great leader," 1 but elsewhere he says, I think, that Zeus is the third: 2 but he is clearer in the Philebus, when he says that there is in Zeus "a royal soul and a royal intellect." 3 If, then, Zeus is a great intellect and soul and is ranked among the causes, and we must rank him on the higher level, for other reasons and particularly because the epithets "royal" and "leading" mean "cause," he will be on the level of Intellect, 4 and Aphrodite, who is his daughter and comes from him and is with him, will be ranked on the level of soul, being called Aphrodile because of the beauty and brightness and innocence and delicacy of soul. And, then, if we rank the male gods on the level of Intellect, and speak of the female gods as being their souls, since each intellect is accompanied by a soul, in this way, too, Aphrodite would be the soul of Zeus; and, again, priests and theologians bear witness to this interpretation, who make Hera and Aphrodite one and the same and call the star of Aphrodite in heaven the star of Hera. 5

1 Phaedrus 246b5.
2 Letter II. 312E1 (this passage, one of the foundations of Plotinus's interpretation of Plato, is quoted in full in the next treatise in the chronological order, I. 5 [51] 2. 28-32).
3 Philebus 30D 1 2.
4 In ch. 2 of this treatise, and elsewhere, Kronos is Intellect. This passage shows again how little real importance Plotinus attaches to the interpretation of myths, and also how closely, at times, he is prepared to assimilate higher Soul to Intellect.
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9. Plenty, then, since he is a rational principle in the intelligible world and in Intellect, and since he is more diffused and, as it were, spread out, would be concerned with soul and in soul. For that which is in Intellect is contracted together, and nothing comes to it from anything else, but when Plenty was drunk his state of being filled was brought about from outside. But what could that which is filled with nectar in the higher world be except a rational principle which has fallen from a higher origin to a lesser one? So this principle is in Soul and comes from Intellect, flowing into his garden when Aphrodite is said to have been born. And every garden is a glory and decoration of wealth; and the property of Zeus is glorified by rational principle, and his decorations are the glories that come from Intellect itself into the soul. Or what could the garden of Zeus be but his images in which he takes delight and his glories? And what could his glories and adornments be but the rational principles which flow from him? The rational principles all together are Plenty, the plenitude and wealth of beauties, already manifested; and this is the being drunk with nectar. For what is nectar for the gods but that which the divinity acquires? And that which is on the level below Intellect acquires rational principle; but Intellect

2 I read here Kirchhoff's πληρωματικον (adopted by Cilento and Harder) which the sense plainly seems to require. Henry-Schwyzor retain the MSS πληρωμενον which the free paraphrase in Ambrose (De Bono Mortis 5. 19, divitis horti in quo repletur potu lacet pelineae) on the whole seems to support. It is just possible that πληρωματικον may have been a slip by Plotinus himself.
Plotinus: Ennead III. 5.

Plotinus is prepared to apply this penetrating observation of the closeness of metaphysical and mythical discourses...
And since life has appeared, and is always there, in the world of realities, the gods are said to "feast" since they are in a state of blessedness appropriate to the word. And so this being, Love, has from everlasting come into existence from the soul's aspiration towards the higher and the good, and he was there always, as long as Soul, too, existed. And he is a mixed thing, having a part of need, in that he wishes to be filled, but not without a share of plenitude, in that he seeks what is wanting to that which he already has; for certainly that which is altogether without a share in the good would not ever seek the good. So he is said to be born of Plenty and Poverty, in that the lack and the aspiration and the memory of the rational principles coming together in the soul, produced the activity directed towards the good, and this is Love. But his mother is Poverty, because aspiration belongs to that which is in need. And Poverty is matter, because matter, too, is in every way in need, and because the indefiniteness of the desire for the good—for there is no shape or rational forming principle in that which desires it—makes the aspiring thing more like matter in so far as it aspires. But the good, in relation to that which aspires to it, is form only, remaining in itself; and that which aspires to receive it prepares its receptive capacity as matter for the form which is to come upon it. So Love is a material kind of being, and he is a spirit produced from soul in so far as soul falls short of the good but aspires to it.
III. 6. ON THE IMPASSIBILITY OF THINGS WITHOUT BODY

Introductory Note

This treatise is No. 26 in Porphyry's chronological order, and so comes immediately before the great treatise On the Problems of the Soul (divided by Porphyry into two, IV. 3 [27] and IV. 4 [28].) Plotinus was, it seems, at this time much concerned with questions of psychology, and in the first part of the treatise (chs. 1-5) he sets out to show that the soul is not subject to affections or modifications. In the second part (chs. 6-10), he turns to consider a very different kind of impassibility, that of matter. The two parts of the treatise appear at first sight to have little connection with each other. But there is no doubt that Plotinus himself composed them as parts of a single work, as he refers back to the first part in the second (9. 6). And there is more connection between them than may appear at first sight. What Plotinus is primarily concerned with in this treatise is to work out and display the implications of incorporeality, to exclude from philosophy ways of speaking and thinking about incorporeal things as subject to impressions, modifications or contaminations which really imply that they are corporeal (like the Stoic God and soul). And matter, for both Platonists and Aristotelians, is, of course, incorporeal. In the first part, where Plotinus is concerned to show that soul is impassible because incorporeal, he is able to use Aristotelian ideas in combating Stoic corporeality. But in the second part he differs sharply from Aristotle and goes, as far as we can tell, well beyond any earlier Platonists (and certainly beyond his own earlier discussion of matter in II. 4 [12].) in 206

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his assertion that matter is absolutely impassible in the sense that it is not affected, modified or changed in any way by the forms which enter it, which are themselves, he maintains, mere ghosts of form, powerless to act on it. Here again there is a connection of thought with the first part of the treatise. Plotinus's assertion of the impassibility of incorporeal soul is an essential part of his general assertion of the primacy and radical independence of soul, his insistence that it is solely responsible for such reality as there is in this world, and is always active in and never passive to and affected by bodies; this is fundamental to his whole way of thinking about man and how he ought to live. And the presentation of matter as radically impassible, totally unaffected by form, carries with it the converse, that matter is utterly powerless in any way to affect or capture form. And the picture of the physical world as a world of ghosts in a vacuum, where phantoms of form flit in and out like reflections in a non-existent mirror serves to emphasise its inability to affect soul in any way. (Soul and matter are several times compared and contrasted in the second part of the treatise.) Some readers may feel, by the time they reach the end of the treatise, that Plotinus has made matter not only impassible but impossible; that is, that his elimination of even the idea of positive potency has left the concept without any content at all, has made "matter" only a meaningless word. But not only in this treatise but to the end of his life (see the treatise On What are and Whence Come Evils I. 8 [51]) he insists on the necessity of postulating matter, mainly in order that, by its utter negativity and total incapacity to receive any degree of good, it may provide an explanation of evil.

Synopsis

A. The impassibility of soul. General statement of the position to be maintained: soul, being incorporeal, cannot
be affected or modified like a body, though difficulties arise about vice and error (ch. 1). Discussion of vice: rejection of the theory that virtue and vice are just harmony and disharmony of the different parts of the soul: each part must have its own virtue, which is, essentially, seeing reason: the passage from virtue to vice and vice to virtue involves no intrinsic alteration in the soul-parts (ch. 2). Discussion of emotions: distinction between the body-element and the soul-element; the soul moves itself, but is not moved or affected by the emotions (ch. 3). The part of the soul subject to affections: relation between opinions, mental images and bodily disturbances: soul is form, and form is not affected or disturbed by what goes on in that which it informs (ch. 4). What, then, is meant by philosophical purification, freeing the soul from affections? Waking up the soul from its bad dreams, freeing it from distracting mental pictures and turning from the things below to those above (ch. 5).

B. The impassibility of matter. Matter, too, is something incorporeal. Real being is immaterial, eternal, unchanging, living intellect. Resistance, obstruction, hardness, aggressive corporeality are signs of lack of being and life, and the more a thing is a body, the more it is affected. To think that bodies are real is an illusion, a dream from which we should wake up (ch. 6). Matter is truly non-being, nothing but a ghost; and the forms which pass through it are ghosts too; they cannot act, and it is not acted on (ch. 7). Things which are affected are affected by their opposites, and affection is the way to destruction; but matter is indestructible (ch. 8). If a thing is present in or to something else it does not necessarily affect it; matter has no opposite, and is therefore not affected by anything (ch. 9). If matter was altered or affected it would no longer be able to receive all forms (ch. 10). Exegesis of Timaeus 50 b-c. How the forms are in matter without altering it and making it beautiful and good instead of ugly and bad (ch. 11). Plato's real thought, rather cursorily expressed, is that matter is not affected by form in any way at all, receives neither shape nor size nor anything else, because it is not a body (ch. 12). What is meant by saying that matter tries to escape from form, and that it is the receptacle and nurse of all becoming? The ghostly forms in the falsity of matter are like reflections in an invisible and formless mirror (ch. 13). Matter is the medium in which images of real being quasi-exist, the "Poverty" of the Symposium, always begging for what it can never really have, like a reflecting surface which concentrates rays on its outside (ch. 14). Analogy, and differences, between the mental pictures in soul and the phantoms in matter; soul is something, and has its own power to deal with its images, matter is nothing and has no power (ch. 15). Matter and size: size comes with form and is form; matter has only false size, not true size (chs. 16-18). Matter like soul contains all forms, but not all together, like soul, but divided (ch. 18). The forms do matter neither harm nor good. Matter is only a mother in a manner of speaking; for it brings forth nothing and is only a passive receptacle (as the mother is according to one theory). The ithyphallic Hermes is a symbol of the generative power of the logos; the eunuchs who accompany the Great Mother symbolise the sterility of matter (ch. 19).
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1. We say that sense-perceptions are not affections but activities and judgements concerned with affections; affections belong to something else, say, for instance, to the body qualified in a particular way, but the judgement belongs to the soul, and the judgement is not an affection—for if it was, there would have to be yet another judgement, and we should have to go back for ever to infinity. None the less we had a problem at this point, whether the judgement in so far as it is a judgement has nothing in it of what is judged. If it has an impression of it, then it has been affected. But it would, all the same, be possible to say also about what are called the impressions, that their character is quite different from what has been supposed, and is like that which is also found in acts of thought; these, too, are activities which are able to know without being affected in any way; and in general our reasoned intention is not to subject the soul to changes and alterations of the same kind as heatings and coolings of bodies. And we ought to survey the part of the soul which is said to be subject to affections, and consider whether we shall grant this, too, to be unchangeable.

1 By the Stoics: cp. e.g., Stoicorum Veteranum Fragmenta I. 141 and 494; II. 56.

2 This again is an allusion to the Stoic view: cp. Stoic Vet. Fr. I. 234 and III. 459.

The view of Plotinus on the alleged "movements" and "changes" in the soul is very close to that of Aristotle, whom he depends very much in this section of the treatise; op. De Anima I. 2. 408b1 ff. and B. 4. 408b5 f. But if the soul is a body and has magnitude, it is not easy but rather altogether impossible, to show it as unaffected and unchangeable in any one of the occurrences which are said to take place in it. But if it is a substance without magnitude and must necessarily possess incorruptibility, we must be careful not to give it affections of this kind, so as to avoid making it corruptible without noticing that we have done so. Then again, whether its substance is a number or whether it is a rational formative principle, as we say it is, how can an affection occur in a number or a rational principle? But we must rather think that irrational reasons and unaffected affections come upon it; and it must be understood that these, which are transferred from bodies, are each and all of them there...
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35 ἀντικειμένως ληφτέον ἐκαστα καὶ κατ’ ἀναλογίαν μετενομενιόν, καὶ ἔχουσιν όλῶ ἔχειν καὶ πάσχουσαν όλ’ πάσχειν. Καὶ ἄστις ὁ τρόπος τῶν τοιούτων, ἡποκεπτέον.

2. Πρῶτον δὲ περὶ κακίας καὶ ἁρετής λεκτέον, τι γίνεται τότε, ὅταν κακία λέγηται παρέχει καὶ γάρ ἄφαιρεν δεῖ γὰρ φαμέν ὅσ τινος ὅποιος ἐν αὐτῇ κακία καὶ ἐνδεχόμενα ἁρετή καὶ κοσμημέναι καὶ κάλλος ἐμποίησαν ἀντὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πρόσθεν. ἀρ όν ἐπεκτάσει ἁρετής ἁρμονίαν εἶναι, ἀναμειστὸν δὲ τὴν κακίαν, λέγομεν ἃν δέχατον δακτύλων τοὺς σαλιτραν καὶ τι πρὸ τοῦ ἔρχομενον ὁμ μερῶν ὁ λόγος ἀνάπτει. Εἰ γὰρ ἀναμειστόντα μὲν φᾶσι τὸ μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλων ἁρετής 10 ἐστιν, μὴ ἀναμειστόντα δὲ κακία, ἐπίκτων υἱόν ὁ πίθηκος ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρμονίαν καὶ χρῆς ὅποιος ἐν τῇ ἀναμειστῇ τοιοῦτον ἢν, ὁδὸν καὶ χρησιμοποιεῖν τοὺς ἀναμειστὴς καὶ συνάκιστοις ἀλλήλων, εἰ καὶ μὴ αὐτοὶ εἰσίν, καὶ μόνος τίς ἁμαρτῶν τῶν ἁμαρτῶν μὴ ἁμαρτῶν,

20 καὶ ἐκαστὸν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἁμαρτοῦν· ὁ γὰρ μόνον δεῖ ναυ-REAL, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκαστὸν κακίας τοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαιον οIODevice μνημή: ὡστε κἀκεῖ ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἁμορνίαν ἐβασθάνει μέρους τοῦ αὐτοῦ προσώπου προσώπον. Δεῖ δὴ πρὸ τῆς ἁμορνίας

1 The Pythagoreans, cp. Plato, Phædo 99c.

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in an opposed sense and are transferred in so far as something corresponds to them in the soul, and that in possessing them it does not possess and in being affected by them it is not affected. And we must consider how happenings of this sort come about.

2. First we must explain about virtue and vice, what happens at any time when vice is said to be present; for we assert that one must take away, as if there was some evil in the soul, and put in virtue, and set the soul in order and produce beauty in it instead of the ugliness which was there before. Now if we say that virtue is harmony and vice lack of harmony, should we be expressing an opinion that accords with the views of the ancients, and would the statement contribute something of no small value to our investigation? For if the natural harmony of the parts of the soul with each other is virtue, and their disharmony, vice, then there would be nothing brought in from outside, or from another source, but each part would enter into the harmony just as it is, or would not enter in, and remain in disharmony, because it was the sort of thing it was; just as dancers dance, and sing in accord with each other, even if it is not always the same ones who sing, and sometimes one sings when the others do not, and each sings in his own way, for they must not only sing together but each one, as they sing together, must also sing his own part beautifully by his own personal art of music; so there, too, in the soul there is a harmony when each part does what is proper to it. It is certainly necessary that before

2 The thought here is the same as in I. 6 [1] 19-30. Contrast III. 2 [47] 17. 64 ff. (see notes ad loc.).
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this harmony there should be another virtue of each part, and a vice of each before their disharmony with each other. What is it then, by the presence of which each part is evil? Vice. And, again, by the presence of what is it good? Virtue. Now perhaps one might say that the vice of the reasoning part was unintelligence, and unintelligence in the negative sense, and would not be asserting the presence of anything. But when false opinions are there in the soul (and this is what most of all produces vice), how will one be able to assert that they have not come in and that this part of the soul has not in this way become different? And is not the spirited part in one state when it is cowardly and in another when it is brave? And is not the desiring part when it is unrestrainedly lustful in one state, and in another when it is under control? Well, then, it has been affected. Now we shall say in answer that when each part is in a state of virtue, it is active, according to its real substantial being, by which each part listens to reason; and the reasoning part receives its reason from Intellect and the other parts from the reasoning part. Now listening to reason is like seeing, not receiving a shape but seeing and existing actually when seeing takes place. For just as sight, which has both a potential and an actual existence, remains essentially the same [when it is potential and when it is actual], and its actuality is not an alteration but it simultaneously approaches what it has, and is it in knowing it and knows without being affected; in the same way, too, the reasoning part is related to Intellect and sees, and this is the power of intellection; there is no stamp impressed on it.

Plotinus seems to be thinking here of a famous Stoic dispute about "impressions." Chrysippus had corrected the too simple-minded view of Cleanthes that a mental image was a stamp like that made by a seal in wax, and had pointed out that this would make memory impossible: see *Stoic Vet. Fragm. II. 55-66.

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internally, but it has what it sees and in another way does not have it; it has it by knowing it, but does not have it in that something is not put away in it from the seeing, like a shape in wax. And we must remember that memories too, in our account of them, do not exist because things are put away in our minds but the soul awakes the power [of memory] in such a way as to have what it does not have. Well, then, is not the soul different before it remembers in this way, and afterwards, when it remembers? Would you like to call it different? Very well, then, as long as you do not say that it is intrinsically altered, unless one is to call the passage from potentiality to actuality alteration, but nothing is added to it but it simply does what it is by nature.

For in general the actualisations of immaterial things take place without any accompanying alteration, otherwise they would perish; it is much truer to say that they remain unaltered when they become actual, and that being affected in actualisation belongs to things which have matter. But if a thing which is immaterial is going to be affected, it has no ground of permanence; just as in the case of sight, when the seeing faculty is active it is the eye which is affected, and opinions are like acts of seeing. But how is the spirited part cowardly and then again brave? It is cowardly either by not looking to the reason, or by looking to the reason when it is in a bad state, or else there will be a failure in its instruments, as when it is without its bodily weapons or they are decayed, or it is hindered from action,
or it is not really stirred to action, but as if it was only lightly touched; and it is brave when the opposite happens. In these circumstances there is no intrinsic alteration or affection. And the desiring part: when it acts by itself produces what is called unrestrained lust, for it does everything by itself and the other parts of the soul are not present to it, whose function it would be, if they were present, to master and direct it. If it saw the other parts it would be different, and would not do everything but might perhaps take a rest by looking, as far as it could, at the other parts. But perhaps must often what we call the vice of this part is a bad state of the body, and virtue the opposite, so that in either case nothing is added to the soul.

3. But what about the soul's accepting things as its own or rejecting them as alien? And, surely, feelings of grief and anger, pleasures, desires and fears, are changes and affections present in the soul and moving there. About these, too, one must certainly make a distinction, in this way. To deny that alterations in the soul, and intense perceptions of them, do occur is to contradict the obvious facts. But when we accept this we ought to enquire what it is that is changed. For we run the risk, when we say this of the soul, of understanding it, in the same sort of way as if we say that the soul blushes or turns pale again, not taking into account that these affections are brought about by the soul but occur in the other structure [the body]. But the shame is in accepting the first, but will not admit that any feeling or affection can pass from body to soul; so he makes ἄνεμον something entirely bodily.

1 The thought and language here and in what follows show some Stoic influence: e.g. especially Posidonius quoted by Tischendorf in De Libidinis et Agriculturae 8 (p. 5: 14-23 Bernatzakis). Posidonius here speaks of πολλὰ σώμα, of which he gives ἄνεμον as an example, and πολλὰ σώμαν of which one example is ἀνεμοί (ep. 1, 17 below). Plotinus

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the soul, when the idea of something disgraceful arises in it; but the body, which the soul in a way possesses—not to be led astray by words—being subject to the soul and not the same thing as a lifeless body, is changed by way of the blood, which is easy to move. As for what is called fear, the beginning is in the soul, but the paleness comes from the blood withdrawing within. So with pleasure, the happy, relaxed feeling, which penetrates to sense-perception, belongs to the body, but the part of pleasure which belongs to the soul is no longer an affection. And the same is true of pain. For with lust, too, as long as its starting-point remains in the soul, it is unperceived; it is what comes out there that sense-perception knows. In fact, when we say that the soul moves itself in lusts or reasonings or opinions, we are not saying that it does this because it is being shaken about by them, but that the movements originate from itself. For when we say that its life is movement, we do not mean that it is movement of something different, but the activity of each part is its natural life which does not go outside it. The sufficient conclusion is: if we agree that activities and lives and impulses are not alterations, and that memories are not stamps imprinted on the soul or mental pictures like impressions on wax, we must agree that everywhere, in all affections and movements, as they are called, the soul remains the same in substance and essence, and that virtue and vice do not come into being like black and white or hot and cold in the body, but in the way which has been described, in both directions and in all respects, what happens in the soul is the opposite of what happens in the body.
4. But we must now investigate that part of the soul which is said to be subject to affections. We have, of course, already discussed this, in a way, in what we have said about all the affections that occur in the spirited and desiring parts and how each of them arises; but all the same there is something still to say about it, and we must first grasp whatever sort of thing it is that the part of the soul subject to affections is said to be. It is said in any case to be that about which affections appear to gather; the affections, that is, on which pleasure and pain follow. Some of the affections arise as the result of opinions, as when someone, being of the opinion that he will die, feels fear, or, thinking that some good is going to come to him, is pleased; the opinion is in one part, and the affection is stirred up in another; but some of them are of a sort to take the lead and, without any act of choice, to produce the opinion in the part of the soul whose natural function it is to have opinions. Now it has been said that the opinion leaves the opining part unmoved; but the fear which originates from the opinion, coming down from above, in its turn, from the opinion, in a way gives a kind of understanding to the part of the soul which is said to fear. What does this fear produce? Disturbance and shock, they say, over the evil which is expected. It should, then, be obvious to anyone that the mental picture is in the soul, both the first

1 At the end of ch. 2.
2 224
3 The Stoics, op. Stoic. Vet. Fragm. III. 386. In this chapter Plotinus is critically revising Stoic doctrine in accordance with his own ideas about the nature of the soul which derive from Plato and Aristotle. He accepts the Stoic idea that emotions arise from opinions (op. Stoic. Vet. Fragm.)
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one, which we call opinion, and that which derives from it, which is no longer opinion, but an obscure quasi-opinion and an uncriticised mental picture, like the activity inherent in what is called nature in so far as it produces individual things, as they say, without a mental image. That which results from these mental images is the disturbance in the body, which has already reached the level of perception, the trembling and shaking of the body and the pallor and inability to speak. These are certainly not in the part of soul [which we are discussing]; otherwise we shall say that it is corporeal, if it was really it which was affected in these ways; and these affections would not have reached the body if that which sent them no longer worked the sending because it was in the grip of the affection and beside itself. But this part of the soul which is subject to affections is not a body but a form. Certainly the desiring part is in matter, and so, too, is the part which governs nutrition, growth and generation, which is the root and principle of the desiring and affective form. But it is not proper to any form to be disturbed or in any way affected, but it remains static itself, and its matter enters into the state of being affected, when it does so enter, and the form stirs up the affection by its presence. For, of course, the growth-principle does not grow when it causes growth, nor increase when it causes increase, nor in general, when it causes motion, is it moved by that particular kind of motion which it causes, but either it is not moved at all, or it is a

1 Plotinus is here combining the Platonic desiring part of the soul and the Aristotelian growth-principle: cp. IV, 3 [27] 40–42.


29 πρῶτη, ὃν δὴ καλοῦμεν δόξαν, ἢ τε ἀπὸ ταύτης οὐκέτι δόξα, ἀλλὰ περὶ τὸ κάτω ἀμύδρα ὅλων δόξα καὶ ἀνεπίκρατος φαντασμός, ὡς τῇ λεγομένῃ φύσει ἐνυπάρχει ἐνέργεια καθ' ἣν τοιείς ἕκαστα, ὡς φασιν, ἀφαντάσμως, δήλον ἣν τῷ γένοιτο. Τὸ δ' ἀπὸ τούτων ἥδη αἰσθηθῇ ἡ παραχθῆ περὶ τὸ σώμα

25 γινομένη δ' τε πρόσον καὶ τοὶ σειρὰς τοῦ σώματος, καὶ τὸ ὑγρόν καὶ ἡ ἀδομίμα τοῦ λέγειν. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐν τῇ φυσικῇ μέρει ταύτα· ἡ σωματικῆς φόροςαν αὐτὸ εἶναι, αὐτὸ τε εἶπεν ὃν περὶ ἡν 1 ταύτα, οὐδ' ἢ ἂν ἐτέλεσε τὸ σώμα ταύτα ἀφικέτη τοῦ πέμποντος οὐκέτι ἐνέργοιον τὸ πέμπει διὰ τὸ κατέχεσαι τὸ πάθη καὶ ἐξάσπασθαι ἑαυτῷ. 'Αλλ' ἦσστε μέν τούτῳ τῇ ψυχῇς μέρος τοῦ παθητικῶν σύ σώμα μέν, εἰδώς δὲ τι. Ἐν όλῃ μέντοι καὶ τὸ ἐπιθύμων καὶ τὸ γε θρησκευτικὸν τοῦ καὶ καὶ ἀξιώματος καὶ γεννητικῶν, ὃ ἐστὶ μένα καὶ ἐργῇ τοῦ ἐπιθύμουτος καὶ τοῦ παθητικοῦ εἴδους. Ἐνδει δὲ οὖνει δὲ παρείναι παραγωγή ἢ ὅλως πάθος, ἀλλ' ἐστηκέναι μὲν αὐτῷ, τὴν δὲ ὑλήν αἰτεῖν ἐν τῷ πάθει γίγνεσθαι, όποῖον γίγνεσθαι, ἐκεῖνου τῇ παραδόξῳ κυβοῦντο. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῷ φυσικῷ, όποῖον ὑφή, φύσις, οὐδ' ὃ χρεία, αἰσθητὰ, οὐδ' ἔλαος, όποῖο κατὰ κατακάιν νεκρών ἡ κύνη

40 τῶν κύσεως ὥς καὶ, ἀλλ' ἢ οὖν ἔλαος, ἢ ἄλλος

1 Plotinus again. Plants are called ἀφάνταστα in Stoic. Vd. Fruu/n. II. 458 (p. 150, 12).

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Plotinus is here using against the Stoics the Aristotelian doctrine that the soul is a form and as such cannot bodily move and changes while remaining itself unmoved. He does not advert to the fact that Aristotle worked out his own doctrine in conscious opposition to Plato's conception of soul as, not unmoved, but self-moved. Cp. the long discussion in De Anima A.3 4. A665 81 ff.

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Different kind of motion and activity. So, then, the actual nature of the form must be an activity, and produce by its presence, as if the melody proceeding from it plucked the strings. The part subject to affections, then, will be the cause of the affection, either because the movement starts from it, from the mental picture produced by sense-impressions, or even without a mental picture (we have to consider the question whether the affection is produced by the opinion starting from a higher level); but the part itself stays still in the manner of a melody. The causes of the movement are like the player, and the parts on which the affection makes its impact might correspond to the strings. For in the case of playing an instrument, too, it is not the tune which is affected, but the string; the string, however, would not be plucked [in tune] even if the player wished it, unless the tune said that it should be.

5. Why, then, ought we to seek to make the soul free from affections by means of philosophy when it is not affected to begin with?

Now, since the mental image (so to call it) which penetrates it at the part which is said to be subject to affections produces the consequent affection, disturbance, and the likeness of the expected evil is coupled with the disturbance, this kind of situation was called an affection and reason thought it right to do away with it altogether anthropology. Why should we be obliged to strive to attain ἀναθέτεω when the soul is ἀναθέτει by nature already (a problem which did not arise for the Stoics, or for Plato himself)? His solution, sketched in this chapter, is that the attainment of ἀναθέτει involves no real change in the soul. It is simply a matter of 'waking up' from illusion, turning one's attention from the lower and concentrating it on the higher.

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and not to allow it to occur in the soul, on the ground that if it does occur the soul is not yet in a good state, but if it does not the soul is in a state of freedom from affections since the cause of the affection, the seeing in the soul, is no longer present in it; it is as if someone who wanted to take away the mental pictures seen in dreams were to bring the soul which was picturing them to wakefulness, if he said that the soul had caused the affections, meaning that the visions as if from outside were the affections of the soul. But what could the "purification" of the soul be, if it had not been stained at all, or what its "separation" from the body? The purification would be leaving it alone, and not with others, or not looking at something else or, again, having opinions which do not belong to it—whatever is the character of the opinions, or the affections, as has been said—and not seeing the images or constructing affections out of them. But if there is turning in the other direction, to the things above, away from those below, it is surely (is it not?) purification, and separation too, when it is the act of a soul which is no longer in body as if it belonged to it, and is being like a light which is not in turbid obscurity. And yet even the light which is in obscurity remains unaffected. But the purification of the part subject to affections is the waking up from inappropriate images and not seeing them, and its separation is effected by not inclining much downwards and not having a mental picture of the things below. But separating it could also mean taking away the things from which it is separated when it is not standing over a vital breath turbid from gluttony and sated with impure meats,

but that in which it resides is so fine that it can ride on it in peace. 1

6. It has already been said that the intelligible reality, which is all of the order of form, must be thought to be free from affections. But since matter, too, is one of the things without body, 2 even if it is so in a different sense, we must enquire about this too, and see what character it has, whether it is, as it is said to be, subject to affections and pliable in every way, or whether one must think that this, too, is free from affections, and what kind of freedom from affection it has. But first, as we address ourselves to this and state what sort of a nature it has, we must grasp that the nature of being and substance and existence are not as most people think they are. For being, what one could truly call being, is real being; 3 and this is that which has nothing lacking to its existence. Since it is completely it has no need of anything for its preservation and existence but is cause to the other things, which seem to exist, of their seeming existence. If this is a correct statement, it must necessarily be in life, and in perfect life; or,

1. This is one of the few passages in which Plotinus refers to the "pneumatic" or "astral" body, in the existence of which he believed, but which he found of little philosophical importance or interest: cp. IV. 3 [27] 16. 1 4; II. 2 [14] 22. 2. For the history of the belief in astral bodies before and after Plotinus, see E. H. Dodds, Proclus, The Elements of Theology, Appendix II.

2. That matter is bodiless was contemporary Peripatetic doctrine, clearly stated by Alexander of Aphrodisias in the introductory section of his De Anima (cp. esp. p. 5 19-22 Bruns). Pre-Plotinian Platonists preferred the formula "neither body nor bodiless, but potentially body" (Albinus, Eclogae VIII, p. 160, 6-7 Hermann; Apuleius, De Platone I, V, p. 87, 11-16 Thomas). The Stoic doctrine is stated immediately below: matter for them was a body without qualities "subject to affections and pliable in every way"; cp. Stoic Vel. Fragm. II. 300, 482.

3. The real being which Plotinus briefly describes here is of course his Second Hypostasis, Nous. For the description of it as at once being, intelligence and life, cp. V. 1 [10] 4; V. 5 [32] 1. Böhler, perhaps rightly, sees this part of the chapter as a commentary on Plato, Sophist 248E, the famous passage, whose meaning is still much disputed, in which Plato insists that motion and life and soul and intelligence must be present to absolute being; the word "aoroma" occurs in Plato Parmenides 144B2, but the context is different.

Real Being or Intellect is limited for Plotinus in the sense that the number of Forms in it is finite, but unlimited in that it is eternal, its power is infinite and nothing outside to bound or measure it but is all-inclusive and so unincluded and is itself the absolute standard of measurement: cp. V. 7 [15] 1; VI. 9 [23] 12; VI. 9 [34] 18.

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if it falls short of this, it will be no more existent than non-existent. But this means that it must be intellect, and wisdom in its fullness. And it must therefore be defined and limited, and there must be nothing to which its power does not extend, nor must its power be quantitatively limited; otherwise it would be defective. And so, too, it must be eternal and always the same, and unreceptive of anything, and nothing must come into it, for if it received anything, it would have to receive something different from itself; but this would be non-existent. But real being must be being in every way; it must therefore come having everything for existence from itself: and it must be all things together, and all of them one. Now if we define being in these ways—and we must do so, or intellect and life would not come from being, but would be external additions to it and (as coming from the non-existent) will not exist, and being will be lifeless and devoid of intellect, and that which is not really being will have these life and intellect] as if these ought to exist in inferior things and those posterior to being, for that which is prior to being conducts these into being but has no need of them itself; if then being is of this kind, it necessarily cannot be a body or what underlies bodies but the being of these is the being of things which do not exist.

And how can the nature of bodies, and the matter on which they are founded, be non-existent, mountains and rocks and all the earth in its solidity? 

Plotinus may possibly be thinking here of Plato's materialism in <i>Sophist</i> 246A–B.
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Impacts the things struck by them, attest their existence. Suppose someone were to say: "How can things which exercise no pressure or force and offer no resistance, and are not even visible, be existent, and really existent? And among bodies, how can the element which moves more and has less weight be more existent than the stable earth, and the element above be more real than this? And how can fire [be the most real of all the elements] which is now at the point of escaping from bodily nature?" 1

But, I think, the bodies which are more sufficient to themselves get less in the way of the other things and cause them less pain, but the heavier, more earthly bodies, in proportion as they are defective and fall and are unable to lift themselves up, when they fall because of their weakness, by her downward movement and heavy slowness cause collisions. Then, too, it is the dead ones among bodies which are more unpleasant to fall against, and are responsible for extremely hard blows and for hurting; but ensouled bodies, which have a share in being, are more agreeable to their neighbours the more of it they have. And movement is like a kind of life in bodies, and keeps an image of it, and there is more of it in the things which have less of body, as if it was the deficiency of being which made the thing which is deficient in it more a body. And one could see this more clearly from what are called the affections; the more a thing is a body the more it is affected, earth more than other things, and the other elements in the same proportion, for the other

1 For the special status of fire among other bodies, see I. 6 11 19-26, where it is said to "hold the rank of form in
elements come together into one again when they are parted, if there is no obstacle in the way, but when every kind of earthly body is cut, each part stays separate for ever; just as with things of which the natural powers are failing, which if they receive a small blow stay in the state to which the blow has reduced them and perish, so the thing which has most completely become body, since it has approached most nearly to non-being, is too weak to collect itself again into a unity. So heavy and severe blows bring about the mutual ruin of bodies; a weak body falling against [another] weak one is strong against it, and a non-existent thing against [another] non-existent thing.

This, then, is our argument against those who place real beings in the class of bodies and find their guarantee of truth in the evidence of pushings and strikings and the apparitions which come by way of sense-perception; they act like people dreaming, who think that the things they see as real actually exist, when they are only dreams. For the activity of sense-perception is that of the soul asleep; for it is the part of the soul that is in the body that sleeps; but the true wakening is a true getting up from the body, not with the body. Getting up with the body is only getting out of one sleep into another, like getting out of one bed into another; but the true rising is a rising altogether away from bodies, which are of the opposite nature to soul and opposed in respect of reality. Their coming into being and flux and perishing, which does not belong to the nature of reality, are evidence of this.

7. But we must come back to matter, the underly-


The first of most MSS will not do here, as a " is required. Henry and Schwzyer think that the " of a marginal note in J may represent a genuine tradition and " means practically 240

The same as Volkmann's " I translate, with some slight doubt, on this assumption.

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ing substrate and the things which are said to be based upon matter, from which we shall acquire a knowledge of matter's non-existence and freedom from affections. Matter, then, is incorporeal, since body is posterior and a composite, and matter with something else produces body. In this way it has acquired the same name [as being] in respect of its incorporeality, because both body and matter are other than bodies. It is not soul or intellect or life or form or rational formative principle or limit—for it is unlimited, or power—for what does it make?—but, falling outside all these, it could not properly receive the title of being but would appropriately be called non-being, not in the sense in which motion is not being or rest not being but truly not-being; it is a ghostly image of bulk, a tendency towards substantial existence; it is static without being stable; it is invisible in itself and escapes any attempt to see it, and occurs when one is not looking, but even if you look closely you cannot see it. It always presents opposite appearances on its surface, small and great, less and more, deficient and superabundant, a phantom which does not remain and cannot get away either, for it has no strength for this, since it has not received strength from intellect but is lacking in all being. Whatever announcement it makes, therefore, is a lie, and if it

1 The first of most MSS will not do here, as a " is required. Henry and Schwzyer think that the " of a marginal note in J may represent a genuine tradition and " means practically 240

3 On matter as the unlimited, cp. II. 4 [12] 15.
4 Cp. Sophist 232D-E.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 8.

...

and produce affections in it. For it is from that which cools it that the change comes to the heat in a thing, and from that which dries it that the change comes to the moistness in it, and we say that the substrate is changed when it becomes cold instead of hot or moist instead of dry. And what is called the destruction of fire is evidence of this; there is a change into another element, for, as asserted, the fire is destroyed, not the matter; so that the affections belong to that which it belongs to be destroyed, for receiving affections is the way to destruction; and being destroyed is brought about by that which is also the cause of being affected. But it is impossible for matter to be destroyed, for into what could it be changed when it is destroyed, and how? How then, when matter receives in itself heats and coldnesses, and thousands, in fact, an infinite number, of qualities, and is divided by them and holds them, so to speak, grown together and mixed up with each other (for individual qualities are not separate in it), can it, set apart in the middle of them, not be itself affected along with them when the qualities are affected by their interaction on each other in their mixture with each other? Unless, of course, one is to put it quite outside the qualities; but everything which is present in a substrate is present in such a way as to give something from itself to the substrate.

9. One must, of course, understand first of all that there is not only one way in which one thing is present to another or in another; but there is one way in which the presence of the thing goes with an improvement or deterioration in the other which

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1 This is Aristotelian doctrine: cp. De Generatione et Corruptione A.7. 323b6 ff.

INVOLVES change; this is the kind of presence which is observed in bodies, living ones at any rate; and there is another which brings about improvement or deterioration without the other being affected; this is what we have said happens in the case of the soul. There is another way, too, which is like what happens when someone impresses a shape on wax, where there is no affection, so as to make the wax into something else when the shape is there, and there are no deficiencies when the shape is gone. And light, certainly, does not even produce an alteration of shape in the thing illuminated. And when a stone becomes cold, what does it get from the coldness, since it remains a stone? And in what way could a line be affected by colour? I do not think that even a surface could be. But, perhaps, the body underlying it could? Yet how could it be affected by colour? For one must not call presence or putting on a shape "being affected." If one said that mirrors and transparent things generally were in no way affected by the images seen in them, he would be giving a not inappropriate example. For the things in matter are images too, and matter is still less liable to affections than are mirrors. For certainly heats and coldnesses occur in it, but they do not heat it; for heating and cooling belong to quality, which brings the substrate from one state to another. (But we should consider whether coldness is not an absence and a privation.) But when the qualities come together in matter most of them will act upon each other, or, rather, those will which are opposed to

1. Diogenes Laertius 2.2: ἐνεκὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔσχεν Ἡ. 1.2: εἶλεμεν ἐκεῖνος ὑπό αὐτοῦ ἐποιήσαντο, μᾶλλον ἐὰν ἐναντίως

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...each other. For what could fragrance do to sweetness or colour to shape, or a thing which belongs to one kind to a thing of another kind? This would very much confirm one's belief that it is possible for one thing to be in the same place as another, or in another, without troubling by its presence that with which or in which it is. So then, just as a thing does not suffer injury from any and every chance encounter, so that which is changed and affected is not affected by anything and everything, but it is opposites which affect opposites, and other things remain unchanged by each other. Those, then, in which there is no opposition could not be affected by any opposite. So that, if anything is affected, it cannot be matter but must be a composite or in general a multiplicity of things all together. But that which is "single and set apart" from all other things and in every way simple would be unaffected by everything and set apart in the midst of all the things which act on each other; just as when people are hitting each other in the same house the house is unaffected, and so is the air in it. So let the things which have matter as their substrate act or each other as it is their nature to do, but let matter itself be unaffected, much more so than those qualities in it which are unaffected by each other because they are not opposed.

1 Then further, if matter is affected, it must retain something from the affection, either the affection itself, or the being in a different state from that in which it was before the affection came to it. Now, if another quality comes to it after that [first one which affected it], what receives it will no longer be matter but qualified matter. But if this quality,...

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1 The phrase comes from Plato, *Philebus* 63B6-7, but the context there is quite different.

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too, goes away leaving something of itself behind as
the result of its action, the substrate will become still
more different. And if it went on in this way the
substrate would become something other than matter,
something existing in many modes and many shapes;
so that it would not be able to receive everything
but would obstruct the entry of many of the things
which came to it—and then there is no more matter,
so it is not indestructible; so, if there must be mat¬
er, as there was from the beginning, it must con¬
sequently always be the same, so that it is not
possible to keep matter and speak of it as being
altered. Then again, if, speaking generally, every¬
thing which is altered must retain the same essential
form in the alteration, and be altered only acciden¬
tially, not intrinsically; if that which is altered must
really remain, and it is not that of it which remains
which is affected, then one of two consequences must
necessarily follow; tillier matter will be altered and
pass out of its own nature, or it will not pass out of its
own nature and will not be altered. But if anyone
should say that it is not altered in so far as it is
matter, first of all he will not be able to say in what
respect it is going to be altered, and then he will
admit, this way too, that matter itself is not altered.
For, just as other things, which are forms, cannot be
altered in their essential being, since their essential
being consists in this, since existing, for matter, is
existing precisely as matter, it is not possible for it
to be altered in so far as it is matter, but it must
stay as it is, and, just as in the case of things which
are forms the form itself must remain unaltered, so
here too matter itself must: remain unaltered.


1. On Impassibility.
11. This I think was Plato’s opinion, which led him to say, correctly, “The things that enter and leave are copies of the real things”; he spoke of entering and leaving with deliberate purpose, wishing us to understand and apply our minds to the manner of the participation; and it seems that the well-known difficulty about how matter participates in forms is not what most of our predecessors thought it was, how the forms come into matter, but rather how they are in matter. For it really does appear remarkable how, when these forms are present to it, matter remains the same and is unaffected by them, and still more so since the very forms which enter it are affected by each other. But it is remarkable, too, that the things which enter push out on each occasion the things which were there before them, and that being affected occurs in the composite thing, and not in every composite but only in that which has a need for something to come to it or go away from it, and which has a defect in its composition if something is not there, but is complete if it is present. But matter gains nothing towards its composition if anything whatever comes to it, for it does not become what it is at the time when something comes, or become less when it goes away; for it remains what it was from the beginning. But as for being beautified and set in order, there could be a need for it in those things which need decoration and ordering, and the beautifying and ordering could take place without alteration, as when we dress people up; but if someone is to be so beautified and set in order that the beauty and order are a part of his nature, there will be need of an alteration in what

...osa kalon ev aioskrioi enwos. Ei touvs aioskrious oida na ylhe kalhe 26 dgevno, ei h trtpereun tiv 1 aioskri oida evhe evset esti; wsste ev tov ouv kexosihrathai aptelei to ylhe evnai kai malisto, ei me kata swnmihtkhs aioskri: ei d ouvou aioskri ouv aioschos evnai, ouv ev metalafoi kosmos, kai ei ouv kakei ouv kakei evnai, ouv ev metalafoi agathoi wsse ouv ouvou 30 e metafhias ou idwntai paudushe, alll eiteros trpou ouv dokeiv. "Iouw de kai toutoi tow trpou loipto an to xorov, po cvous kakei efwnto an to agatho, ouv mh metalafrpe apo- lamponse 6 9: ei gar tou o xo tov trpou h leugemene metafhias, ou 9ou ouv proti mounei mh allloinsemene, 35 ou leugmei, alll eva he 9 esti ouv aket he timisparntan ginetai to 9ou ouv kakei metaallamhanei. Ou gar 5' efwntaei eauti, alll 9i mei anagkain evi metaallamhanein edrhe metaallamhan ein ouv 9, tov 9' eva he 9 esti trpou metaallamein tipevn. 40 allin ouv blapetwe iev to evi para tov ouv didwntos, kai kathwnti dia to vev ouv 9tov evnai kakei, 8i mei 9nei too 9 esti. Metaallam- banwnev gar ouv kai allloinsemene ouv 9to tov agatho ove an 9n 9n fous kakei. "Iouw e 9 sev 9n fous kakei kakei, ouvou 9v alllhenei evi

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was ugly before, and what is beautified and ordered must become beautiful and so be beautiful instead of ugly. Now, if matter was ugly and became beautiful, it is no longer what it was before by the fact of being ugly; 1 so that by being beautified and set in order in this way it will stop being matter, particularly if it is not only accidentally ugly; but if it is ugly in such a way that it is ugliness, it could have no part in beauty and order, and if it is bad in such a way that it is badness, it could have no part in good; so that its participation would not be, as people think, by being affected, but of another kind, so that it only seems to be affected. Perhaps in this way the difficulty can be resolved now, though it is evil, it can reach towards the good, in that it does not by its participation lose what it was before, for if, as we say, its so-called participation is of this kind, so that it remains the same and is not altered but is always what it is, it becomes no longer remarkable how it participates [in the good] though it is evil. For it does not abandon itself but, since it must participate, it participates in a kind of way as long as it is there; but, as the manner of participation keeps what it is, it receives no damage which extends to its being from that which gives it [form] in this way, and because of this it is, so it seems, no less evil, because it always remains what it is. For if it really participated and was really altered by the good it would not be evil by nature. So that if someone calls matter evil, he would speak the truth if he meant that it was

1 Henry-Schwyzer retains: the MSS tr here and explain that to aioskri oiva is in opposition to 9 9 to trpereun. But what matter was before was aioskri, not 9 9 aioskri oiva (this does not mean the same as 9 9 aioskri below, which in any case should not be anticipated here). I therefore print and translate Kirchhoff's correction 99.

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45 tov άγαθον άπαθή λέγει; τούτο δε ταύτων ἐστι τά ὀλος άπαθή εἶναι.

12. Ο δε τοις Πλάτων τούτω νοῦν περι αυτῆς καὶ τὴν μετάλλησιν ὧν ἦς ἐν ὑποκείμενω εἴδους γενομένου καὶ μορφῇ διδόσθω ὡστε ἐν ταύτῃς γενέσθαι συντραπέζων καὶ οἷον συγκεκριμένων καὶ συμπάθετων τιθέμενοι, ὧν μὴ ἀπήκονται παρατηρήσαμεν, καὶ πῶς ἄν αυτής άπαθής μένουσα ἴσχυν τά τε ἀπαθείας μεταλλήσεως ζητῶν το θάλασσα παραπληγία ἀλλο τρόπον διδάσκει ἡ μάλτα παράνοια σχέσις τό ὑποκείμενον ταύτων ἐίναι—ὑπόστη τοιαῦτα ἄποροις σπευδώς εἴτε δέ

10 βοηθεῖται καὶ προσέτα παραστησάς θέλων τό ἐν τοῖς ἁλθητικοῖς κεινῷ τῷ ὑποστάσεως καὶ τῇ χώρᾳ τοῦ εἰκότος οὖσαν πολλῆς. Τήν ὅλην συγκεκριμένην υποτεθέμενον τὰ πάθη ποιεῖ τοῖς ἐμφάνισις σύμμοιροι οὕτως αὐτὴν ἔχονσιν τούτοις τῶν παραθυρομάντων τὸ μένος ταύτης ταύτης ἐνδείκνυται

15 διδόσεως συλλογίζεσθαι, ὡς οὖσα παρά τῶν σχετικῶν έξει τό πάσχειν αὐτὴν καὶ ἀλλοιώσαι. Τάς μὲν γὰρ σύμμοιροι τούτοις ἐξ ἑτέρου συγκεκριμ. ἐτέρου συγκεκριμ. ἐτέρου συγκεκριμ. τάγμα ἐν τοῖς ἀλλοιώσις λέγει γίγνεσθαι τὴν τῶν σχεσικών μεταβολήν ἀρμόνων

1. Τον εννεάδας έν κτιστ. Κιρσρόου κ. Σόμπολεν. Κ. Σόμπολεν. H.−S.
2. ταυτήν del. H−S.

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unaffected by the good; but this is the same as being totally incapable of being affected.

12. This is Plato’s thought about matter; 1 he does not suppose that its participation was like that in which a form becomes present in a substrate and gives it shape so that one composite thing comes into existence, with form and substrate combined, and so to speak mixed up and mutually affected; he wants to show that he does not mean this, and how matter could remain unaffected and receive the forms, looking for an example of participation without affection 2—in any other way it would not be easy to explain what things precisely, when they are present, keep the substrate unaltered, so he raised many difficulties in hurrying on to express what he wants, and, further, wishing to show the emptiness of substantial being in the things of sense and the great area which there is of mere appearance. So when he makes it his initial supposition that matter by its shapes produces the affections in ensouled bodies, he demonstrates its persistence, and enables us to conclude that it does not itself experience any affection or alteration even from the shapes. For one might perhaps say that alteration occurs in these bodies which receive one shape after another, meaning that the equivocal term “alteration”

1 Henry-Schwyzer here keeps the MSS ζητῶν. But it does not seem to make any sort of reasonable sense to say that matter looks for an example of unaffected participation, whereas it makes excellent sense to say that Plato does; and it is easy to see how a scribe could have written ζητῶν for ζητῶν under the influence of the immediately preceding μονῆς.

256 Pictinus seems to be considering here the whole passage dealing with the “third kind” in the Timaeus (471e−530) rather than any particular part of it.

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includes the sense of "change of shape"; but, since matter has not shape or size, how could one say that any sort of presence of shape in it was alteration, even using the word in this equivocal sense? If, then, anyone at this point should quote "colour by convention and other things by convention," because the underlying nature has nothing in the way in which it is conventionally supposed to, his quotation would not be out of place. But how does it have the forms, if not even the statement that it has them as shapes satisfies us? But Plato’s supposition does at least indicate as clearly as possible the impassibility of matter and the seeming presence in it of a kind of phantasms which are not really present.

We must still make another preliminary point about its impassibility, that it is inevitable that we should be led by our customary way of speaking to suppose that it is affected, as, for instance, when we think of the same matter as being [as Plato says] set on fire and moistened, and, what follows this "receiving the shapes of air and water," 2 This phrase, too, "receiving the shapes of air and water," takes away the force of the "being set on fire" and "moistened," and makes clear that in the phrase "receiving shapes" Plato is not speaking of matter itself having been shaped but that the shapes are there in the way in which they entered it, and that "being set on fire" is not used in its proper sense, but means that matter has become fire, for it is not the same thing to become fire and to be set on fire; being set on fire is due to the agency of another thing, and this also implies being affected; but how could that which is itself a part of fire be set on fire? It

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1 ἔφοβοις del. Page, H-S.

2 Democritus, fr. DK, 189.

3 Timaeus 52D-6. [ἔφοβοις] "drying up" is a gloss on πυροσβέσθην.

would be the same sort of thing as saying that the statue took regular walks through the bronze, if one said that the fire passed through the matter and, besides that, set it on fire! Besides, if what comes to matter is a rational forming principle, how could it set it on fire? Or if it is a shape? But that which is set on fire is kindled by what is already a composite of both [matter and form]. How, then, is it kindled by both if one thing has not come into existence from both? Even if one thing has come into existence, its two components do not have reciprocal affections but a common action on other things. Do they then both act? Rather, one prevents the other from getting away. But when a body is divided, how is the matter not divided too? And when the body is affected by being divided, how is the matter, too, not affected with the very same affection? Now, what prevents us by this very same line of argument from asserting its destruction, asking how when the body is destroyed the matter is not destroyed too? Besides, it must be pointed out that body is quantitatively determined and is size, but that which is not size is not subject to the affections of size, and in general what is not body is not subject to the affections of body, so that all those who make matter subject to affections must admit also that it is a body.

13. But there is this further question which they ought to give their minds to, what they mean by saying that it tries to escape from form, for how could it escape from stones and rocks—things which their view that matter is subject to affections, not against Stoics, who were quite certain that matter was a body (cp. note to ch. 6 above).

1 The bronze and the statue provide an example which Aristotle frequently uses in his discussions of matter and its formation: cp., e.g., Physics B.3 184b2 ff. The point which Plotinus is making here is the absurdity of thinking of the relationship of form and matter in terms of one body entering and acting on another.

2 Plotinus is clearly arguing here and in the next chapter against Platonists who quote the Timaeus as an authority for
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They will not, certainly, assert that it tries to escape at some times and not at others. For if it tries to escape by its own wish, why does it not always do it? But if it remains by necessity, there is never a time when it is not in some form. But, then, we must try to find the reason why each matter does not always have the same form but is rather in the [always different] forms which enter into it. In what way, then, is it said to "try to escape"? By its own nature, and always. But what can this mean except that it never departs from itself and has the form in such a way that it never has it? On any other interpretation they will be able to do nothing with the phrase which they themselves use, "The receptacle and nurse of all becoming." For if it is receptacle and nurse, becoming is other than it; but that which is altered is in becoming, so matter would be existent before becoming, and before alteration; and the words "receptacle" and also "nurse" imply its maintenance in the state in which it is free from affections; and so does "that in which each thing appears on its entrance, and again goes out from it" and the statements that it is "space" and "seat." And the statement which has been criticised as speaking of a "place of the forms" does not mean an affection of the substrate, but is trying to find another way [of participation]. What is this way, then? Since this nature of which we are speaking must not be any real thing, but must have escaped altogether from the reality of real beings, and He altogether...

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different—for these real beings are rational principles and really real. It is necessary for it by this difference to guard its own proper self-preservation; it is necessary for it not only to be irreceptive of real beings but as well, if there is [in it] some imitation of them, to have no share in it which will really make it its own. In this way it would be altogether different; otherwise, if it took any form to itself it would in conjunction with it become something else and would cease to be different and space for all things, and the receptacle of absolutely everything. But it must remain the same when the forms come into it and stay unaffected when they leave it, so that something may always be coming into it and leaving it. So certainly what comes into it comes as a phantasm, untrue into the untrue. Does it, then, truly come? How could it, to that which is utterly forbidden to have any part in truth because it is falsehood? Does it, then, come falsely into falsehood, and is what happens very much like the way in which the images of the faces seen in a mirror are perceived there as long as people look into it? 

1 The English here is intended to represent the probable general sense: the text is obscure and uncertain. Theler wishes to delete the MSS ἐν ὁπῆ ἐν ψεύδων (H-S: ἐν ὁπῆ) and, (following E. R. Dodds, Select Passages Illustrating Neoplatonism 39) to read ἐν ὁπῆ for ἐν ὁπῆ ἐν ψεύδων; these corrections would make the text rather easier to understand, but cannot be regarded as certain.

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The air is invisible even when it is illuminated, because it was unseen without the illumination. So in this way the images in mirrors are not believed or are less believed to be real, because that in which they are seen, and it remains but they go away; but in matter, it itself is not seen either when it has the images or without them. But if it was possible for the images with which the mirrors are filled to remain, and the mirrors themselves were not seen, we should not disbelieve that the reflections seen in mirrors were real. If, then, there really is something in mirrors, let there really be objects of sense in matter in the same way; but if there is not, but only appears to be something, then we must admit, too, that things only appear on matter, and make the reason for their appearance the existence of the real beings, an existence in which the real beings always really participate, but the beings which are not real, not really; since they cannot be in the same state as they would be if real beings did not really exist and they did.

14. Well, then, if matter did not exist, would nothing come into existence? No, and there would be no image, either, if a mirror or something of the sort did not exist. For that whose nature is to come into existence in something else would not come into existence if that something else did not exist. But since these remain unmoved, if an image of them is going to appear in another thing, the other thing must exist, offering a base to

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that which does not come to it; this other thing by
its presence and its self-assertion and a kind of begg-
ing and its poverty makes a sort of violent attempt
to grasp, and is cheated by not grasping, so that its
poverty may remain and it may be always begging.
For since it is a rapacious thing, the myth makes it
a beggar woman to show its nature, that it is destitute
of the good. And the beggar does not ask for what
the giver has but is satisfied with what he gets, so
that this, too, shows that what is imaged in matter is
other [than real being]. And the name [Poverty]
shows that matter is not satisfied. And by its union
with "Resource" Plato makes clear that it is not
united with real being or with plenitude but with a
resourceful thing, that is, with the cleverness of the
apparition. For, since it is impossible for anything
whatever, which in any sort of way exists outside it,
to have altogether no share in being—for this is the
nature of being, to work on beings—and since, on the
other hand, the altogether non-existent cannot com-
bine with being, what happens is a wonder; how does
the non-participant participate, and how does it have
something as if from being next door, although by
its own nature it is incapable of being, so to speak,
stuck on to it? What it might have grasped, then,
slips away from it as if from an alien nature, like an
echo from smooth flat surfaces; because it does not
stay there, by this very fact the illusion is created that

1. The interpretation of the beggar-woman Poverty in
Plato's myth of the birth of Love (Symposium 203 E) as
matter is pre-Plotinian (see note to ch. 6 of III. 6 [50]).
Plotinus uses it differently in different places to suit his phi-
osophical purposes. In his full-length interpretation of the

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It is there and comes from there. But if matter really was participant and received being in the way one thinks it does, what came to it would be swallowed and sink into it. But as things are, it is apparent that it is not swallowed but matter remains the same and receives nothing, but checks the approach as a repellent base and a receptacle for the things which come to the same point and there mingle; it is like the polished objects which people set against the sun when they want to get fire (and they fill some of them with water), so that the ray, being hindered by the resistance within, may not pass through, but be concentrated on the outside. So matter becomes in this way the cause of coming into being, and the things that are constructed in it are constructed in this way.

15 In the case of the things which collect around them the fire from the sun, since they receive the lighting up which occurs around them from a perceptible fire, they themselves have the property of being perceptible; therefore it is clear, too, that the rays which come together on them are outside them and next and close to them, and touch them, and there are two edges; but the formative principle on matter is outside in a different way. The difference of its nature is enough, with no need of a pair of edges; but it is, rather, completely incompatible with any sort of edge, and owes its freedom from mixture with matter to the difference of its being and its having no sort of kinship with it; and this is the reason why matter remains by itself, that neither does that which by taking an analogy from the material world and “dematerialising” it; cp. the remarkable use of this method to describe spiritual omnipresence in VI. 4 [22] 7.
Enters it get anything from it, nor does it get anything from what comes into it; but it is like what happens with opinions and mental pictures in the soul, which are not blended with it, but each one goes away again, as being what it is alone, carrying nothing off with it and leaving nothing behind, because it was not mixed with soul; and being outside does not mean that the form rests upon the matter, and that upon which it is, is not visibly other, but reason declares that it is. Now in the soul the mental picture is a phantasm, while the nature of the soul is not phantasmal; and although the mental picture in many ways seems to lead the soul and take it wherever it wants to, the soul none the less uses it as if it was matter or something like it, and certainly the mental picture does not conceal it, since it is often expelled by the activities springing from it, and it does not, even if it comes with all its pictorial power, make the soul to be completely concealed and to appear in any way to be the picture itself, for the soul has in it activities and rational principles which are in opposition, with which it repels the things which attack it. But matter—for it is much weaker, as far as any exercise of power goes, than soul, and has none of the things that exist, neither a true one nor a falsity which is really its own—has nothing by means of which it can appear since it is destitution of everything, but it becomes the cause for other things of their appearing but is not even able to say “Here I am”; but if some deep research should discover it and distinguish it from other existing things [it would appear] that it is something abandoned by all existing things and by the things which come after
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 8.

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them that seem to exist, dragged into all things and corresponding to them as far as seeming goes, and again not [really] corresponding.

16. And further, when some rational formative principle comes upon it and brings it to the size which the principle itself wishes, it makes it a size by imposing the size from itself on matter, which is not the size and does not in this way become it; for [if it did] the size imposed on it would be [real] magnitude. If, then, one were to take away this form, what underlies it neither is any longer nor appears a thing of size, but if the thing of size which came to be was a man or a horse, and with the horse the size of the horse came upon the matter, when the horse goes away its size goes too. But if someone were to say that the basis of the horse is a mass of a certain size, and the size remains, our answer is that what remains in the matter is not the size of the horse but the size of the mass. If, then, this mass is fire or earth, when the fire goes away the size of fire (or of earth) goes away too. So, then, matter will not profit by either shape or size; otherwise it will not be something else after being fire, but will remain fire while becoming something which is not fire. Since, even now, when matter, as it seems, has become so great that it is the size of this universe, if the heaven and all within it had a stop, with all these the magnitude, all of it, would go away from matter and, obviously, all the other qualities as well, and matter would be left what it was and keep none of the qualifications which previously existed in it. Certainly, in the things which have the property of being affected by the presence of certain other things, even when those
other things have gone away there is something still remaining in the things which have received them; but in things which are no more affected there is nothing any more, in the air, for instance, when light has been in it and gone away. But suppose someone wondered how, without having magnitude, matter could be a size—well, how, without having heat, will it be hot? For certainly it is not the same thing for it to exist and to exist in magnitude, granted that magnitude is immaterial, just as shape is immaterial. And if we are to keep matter as matter, it will be all things only by participation; but magnitude, too, is one of all the things it will be. So, then, in composite bodies magnitude is present along with their other determinations (certainly not separated from them), since magnitude, too, is included in the definition of body; but in matter not even this non-separated magnitude is present, for it is not a body.

17. Nor, again, will it be absolute magnitude. For magnitude is a form but not something receptive; and magnitude is something which is by itself, and not magnitude in this particular relation. But since, while it is at rest in intellect or in soul, it wants to be large, it gives to the things which, in a way, want to imitate it by an aspiration for it or a movement towards it the ability to insert their affection into something else. So, then, size, running on in its image-making progression, and making the littleness of matter run with it towards this very size, has made...
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It by extension, though it is not filled, appear to be large. For this is what false size is, when, because it does not possess real size, being stretched out towards it, it is extended by the stretching out. For, since all real beings produce upon other things, or the other thing, a mirroring of themselves, as each one of the beings that act had size, in that way the totality of them had size. So the size of each individual forming principle which is the consequence of its distinctive character, of a horse, for instance, or anything else, came together, and also absolute size; and matter as a whole became a size, illumined by absolute size, and each part of it became a particular size; and all the sizes appeared together, from the whole form, to which the size belonged, and from each individual [partial] form; and it was as if extended to the whole form and all the forms, and was compelled to be this size in form and in bulk, in so far as the power [of form] made what was nothing in itself to be everything, as, then, by the very fact of appearing the colour which comes from that which is not colour, and the quality here which comes from that which is not quality, have a name which is the same as and derives from their intelligible principles, so also magnitude comes from that which is not magnitude, or [only] has the same name, since those [form-appearances in matter] present themselves to our contemplation in the middle between matter itself and form itself. They appear because they come from the higher world, but their appearance is false because that in which they appear does not exist. Individual things acquire magnitude by being drawn out by the power of the


10 κεν αὐτῷ τῇ παρατάσει οὐ πληροῦμεν δυσκέιν εἶναι μέγα. Τὸ γὰρ φεύγως μέγα τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὅταν τῷ μὴ ἔχειν τὸ μέγα εἶναι ἐκτενέσμον πρὸς ἐκεῖνον παρατάσει τῇ ἐκτάσει. Ποιούντων γὰρ πάντων ὄντων εἰς τὰ ἄλλα ἢ τὸ ἄλλο τῶν αὐτῶν ἐνδιάτημα ἐκατόν τε τῶν ποιούντων ὡς αὐτὸ ἢ μὲν μέγα, τὸ τε πάν ἢ ἐκείνως μέγα. Σαντίζει οὖν τὸ ἐκάστου λόγου μετὰ τὸ τι μέγα, οὖν ἐκποιεῖ καὶ ὅτου αὐτῷ ἀλλο, καὶ τὸ μέγα· αὐτός· καὶ ἐγέρνετο πάσα μὲν μέγα πρὸς αὐτόμεγα ἐλλαμπομένη, καὶ ἐκάστῃ δὲ μοῖρα μέγε τι· καὶ ὅμως πάντα ἐφαινετο ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ ἐδώς, οὐ τὸ μέγα, καὶ εἰς ἐκάστουν καὶ οἷον παρετέστατο καὶ πρὸς πάν καὶ πάντα, καὶ ἐν ἐκδετὸν ἐναρκομένα εἶναι καὶ
20 ἐν ἕκεν, ὅτιν ἂν δύναμις πεποίησε τὸ μηδὲν ἄν αὐτῷ πάντα εἶναι· οἷον αὐτῷ τῷ φαινεσθαι καὶ τὸ χρώμα τῷ ἐξ αὐτῷ ὑπογινομένῳ καὶ τῇ ποιικαὶ ἐκτάσει ἢ ἐξ αὐτῷ ποιικαὶ ἐδώς τὴν ἡμών ἡμῖν τὴν ἀπὸ ἐκείνων, καὶ τὸ μέγεθος ἐξ ἂν μεγεθοῦς ἡ ἡμών ἡμῖν
25 μεταξύ θεωρουμένων ἐκείνων καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς ὀλίγης καὶ τοῦ ἐδώς αὐτῷ· καὶ φαίνεται μὲν, ὅτι ἐκεῖθεν, ἢ ἐφαίνεται δὲ, ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶν τὸ εἰς ὧν φαίνεται. Μεγεθύνεται δὲ ἐκατόν ἐλκόμενα τῇ ἐνάμει τῶν 1

1 μέγα Vitringa, H-St: μὲ καὶ Eod.
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forms which are visible in matter and make a place for themselves, and they are drawn out to everything without violence because the universe exists by matter. Each form draws out by its own power which it has; and it has it from the higher world. And that which makes matter large (as it seems) comes from the imaging in it of size, and that which is imaging in it is size in this world; and the matter on which it is imaged is compelled to keep pace with it, and submits itself to it all together and everywhere, for it is matter and belongs to this size and is not this size; but what is nothing of itself can become the opposite, too, by means of something else, and when it has become the opposite is not that either, for if it was it would be static.

18. Suppose that someone had a thought of size, if his thought had power not only to exist in itself but was taken outside, so to speak, by its power, it would take hold of a nature which did not exist in the thinker, and had no form and no trace of size, or of anything else either. What, then, would it make with this power? Not a horse or an ox; others will make these. Since it comes from a father of size, the other thing cannot attain to size but will have it imaged in it. Certainly, for a thing which has not the good fortune to be so well endowed with size as to be a size itself, what is left is to appear to have size in its parts as much as is possible for it. But this means not being deficient, and not being scattered all over the place, and having related parts in itself, and not falling short in anything. For the image of size, since it is an image of size, cannot endure to be equal still in a small mass, but in proportion as it...
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aspires to the hope of reaching [real] size, it advances as far as it can with that which runs along with it and cannot be left behind, and gives size to that which has not got it and does not appear to have it, and to the size which appears in mass. But matter, all the same, keeps its own nature and makes use of this size as a kind of garment, which it put on when it ran with it as the size in its course led it along; but if what put this garment on takes it off, matter remains again the same as it is of itself, or the size which the form present to it makes it.1 Now the soul which holds the forms of real beings, and is itself, too, a form, holds them all gathered together, and each individual form is gathered together in itself; and when it sees the forms of things perceived by the senses as it were turning back towards it and approaching it, it does not endure to receive them with their multiplicity, but sees them stripped of their mass; for it cannot become anything else than what it is. But matter, which has no resistance, for it has no activity, but is a shadow, waits passively to endure whatever that which acts upon it wishes. So therefore, both that which proceeds from the rational principle in the higher world has already a trace of what is going to come into being, for when the rational principle is moved in a sort of picture-making imagination, either the movement which comes from it is a division, or, if it did remain one and the same, it would not be moved, but stay as it was; and matter, too, is not able to harbour all things gathered

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1 I adopt here with Beutler-Theiler and other editors the reading ὅ, which seems to me to give a better sense: Henry-Schwyzer prefer ὅ.

30 ἦ γὰρ ὁ διόνυσις εἰςακελασθαί: ἢ ἦν ἃν ἐκ ἐκείνων ἀυτὴν τὴν ὑπὲρ τὰ πᾶντα δέξασθαι, μὴ ἀμερῶς δὲ δέξασθαι. Δεῖ τοὺς πάντας τοποὺς ὕσσων ἐπὶ πᾶντα αὐτὴν ἔθεκαν καὶ πᾶσαν ἀπαντήσας καὶ πρὸς πᾶν διάστημα ἀρκεῖοι, ὥς καὶ κατελήσαται 40 διαστήματα αὐτῆς, ἀλλʼ ἦν ἐκκειμένη τῷ μέλλοντι.

Πῶς τόν ὄντος ἐκείνον ἣ τὸ ἐκόλλησε τὰ ἄλλα, ἃ ὑφαίσθησαν τῇ ἄυτῇ ἐπί ἀλλήλους εἰσί; "Ὡς ὄντι ἢν ὑφαίνε ἐπί τοῦ πάντος εἰσόδησε ἐπὶ πάντα μὲν ἄκα, ἐν μέρει δὲ ἑκατοντοὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀλλοιαν ἀφικνούσας ὧν τῇ ἐν τῷ ἐκομψτο χαρτίν ἡ ἀντίθετα ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀντικείμενη αὐτὸ ἐπιστεύσειν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀντικείμενος, εἰ 45 δὲ μὴ, ὄντι ἃν ἐγένετο τῇ παρῇ τῶν λόγων.

19. Ῥὰ μὲν δὴ εἰσελθόντα εἰς τῷ ἔλθεν ὠπετρ ἀνωτέρα ἀνδεκτε οὕτως οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἠφίλει. Οὐδὲ γς ἂν πληγαί ἂν τοῦτον πρὸς αὐτὴν, πρὸς ἄλληλα δὲ, ὅτι αἱ διαφόρας πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία. οὐ πρὸς τὰ 5 ὑποκείμενα, εἰ μὴ τὰς αὐτεκείμενας θεώρησεν τοὺς ἐπιστευόμενος ἄμειν πάντων ἢ τῷ πνεύματι, καὶ μέλλων τῷ λειψάνῳ ἢ συγκεκριμένον ἄλληλον ποιώσει, ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐποίησε. Ῥὰ πάθος αὐτὸ τὰ κρατήθεται, τὸ δὲ πάθων αὐτοῖς τὸ ἡ μὴ εἶναι ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῶν. ὃ καὶ

1 κρατήθεται Heracl. II-S²: κρατήτα κειλ.

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together, as soul is; if it could, it would belong to the higher world; it must certainly receive all things, but not receive them undivided. It must then, since it is a place for all things, come to all of them itself and meet them and be sufficient for every dimension, because it is not itself captured by dimension but lies open to that which is going to come to it. How, then, when one particular form enters it, does it not hinder the others, which cannot be [present in it] one upon another? The answer is that there is no first form, unless perhaps it is the form of the universe, so that all forms will be present together, and each individual one in its own part, for the matter of a living thing is divided along with the division of the living thing; otherwise, there would be nothing besides the forming principle.

19. The forms which enter into matter as their "mother" do it no wrong, nor again do they do it any good. Their blows are not for it, but for each other, because their powers are directed towards their opposites, not their substrates (unless one considers these as included with the entering forms), for cold puts a stop to heat and white to black, or they are mixed together and make another quality out of themselves. The things which are affected, then, are the things which are overcome, and their being affected consists in their not being what they

1 For the contrast here between soul which contains all forms non-spatially and so undivided and matter, which must necessarily receive them as dimensional and divided, cp. II. 4 [12] 11. 10 ff.

2 2 Op. Timaeus 50B3 and 51A4-5. Plotinus has to accept the name "mother" on the authority of Plato, but finds it an embarrassing one, as it conflicts with his conviction of the essential barrenness of matter, and does his best to explain it away; see below.

were. And in beings endowed with soul the affections are in their bodies, when alteration takes place according to their qualities and immanent powers; and when the unions of their constituent parts are dissolved, or when they come together, or are changed against their natural constitution, it is only knowledge of the more extreme changes which reaches their associated souls: if the changes are not extreme, they know nothing of them. But matter abides, for it was affected in no way when the cold went away and the heat came to it; for neither of them was in friendly association with it or alien to it. So that “receptacle” and “nurse” are more proper terms for it; but “mother” is only used in a manner of speaking, for matter itself brings forth nothing. But those people seem to call it “mother” who claim that the mother holds the position of matter in respect to her children, in that she only receives [the seed] and contributes nothing to the children, since all the body of the child which is born, too, comes from the food. But if the mother does contribute something to the child, it is not in so far as she is matter, but because she is also form, for only form can produce offspring, but the other nature is sterile. It was for this reason, I think, that the ancient sages, speaking in riddles secretly and in the mystery rites, make the ancient Hermes always have the organ of generation ready for its work, revealing that the intelligible formative principle is the generator of the things in the sense-world, but revealing, too, the

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This view was current in Greece in the 5th century B.C.; it was held by Anaxagoras and others (Aristotle De Gen. An. A 1. 726b12-54). Anaxagoras makes Apollo bring it forward in defence of Oracles (Euripides 655-661). Aristotle himself accepted it with some refinements and modifications (perhaps
PLOTinus: ENNEAD III. 6.

This allegorical interpretation of the ithyphallic Hermes is Stoic in origin, though, as always, Plotinus adapts it to his own philosophical system: for the original Stoic form, cp. Cornutus, Theologiae Graecae Compendium, p. 25, 10-22 Lang. The allegorical interpretation of the eunuchs who sur-

sterility of matter which always remains the same through the eunuchs who accompany her [the Great Mother]. For when they make matter the mother of all things, they apply this title to it taking it in the sense of the principle which has the function of substrate; they give it this name in order to declare what they wish, not wishing to make matter in every way exactly like the mother; to those who want to know more accurately in what way [it is a mother] and do not make a merely superficial investigation, they show, by a far-fetched analogy, but all the same as best they could, that matter is sterile and not in every way female but only female as far as receiving goes, but no longer when it comes to generation; they show this by making that which approaches it neither female nor able to generate, but cut off from all power of generation, which only that which remains male has.

round the Great Mother given here seems to have no parallel (Cp. Lucretius II. 614-617 and Augustine De Civitate Dei VII. chs. 24-25 for other interpretations). It is so far-fetched (as Plotinus admits, cp. I. 36 below) and so exactly adapted to Plotinus's own distinctive doctrine of the absolute sterility of matter that it may well be his own invention.
III. 7. ON ETERNITY AND TIME

Introductory Note

This treatise is No. 45 in Porphyry's chronological order. It is one of the two major discussions of time in the surviving works of ancient philosophers, the other being that by Aristotle (Physics IV. 10-14. 217b-224a) which Plotinus criticises in chs. 9 and 12-13. There do not seem to have been any changes or developments of great importance in philosophical thought about time between Aristotle and Plotinus. Though Stoic and Epicurean views are dealt with in the critical part of the treatise (chs. 7-10), Plotinus is mainly concerned with ways of thinking about time which were already current in the early Academy, which linked time very closely with the movement of the heavens, and with Aristotle's view of time as the number or measure of motion.

As a Platonist, Plotinus bases his discussion of eternity and time on the passage of the Timaeus (57D-58B) where Plato speaks of the making of time as a "moving image of eternity." It is this conception of time as the image of eternity which is the starting-point of his own thought about both. They are for him essentially two kinds of life, the life of the divine Intellect and the life of Soul. In the first part of the treatise (chs. 1-6) he develops his profound conception of eternity as "the life which belongs to that which exists and is in being, all together and full, completely without extension or interval" (ch. 3. 36-38), which deeply influenced Christian patristic and medieval thought: cp. the classical definition of Boethius, interminabilis et tota simul et perfecta possessio (De Consolatione Philosophiae V. Prosa 5). And in ch. 11, one of his
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 7.

The liveliest and most original passages of philosophical exposition, after criticising the views of his predecessors on time in the preceding chapters, he explains his own idea of it as the life of the soul in movement. This certainly influenced the thought of St. Augustine on time (cp. especially Confessions XI. 14-28), though the two differ in accordance with their different conceptions of soul. The later Neoplatonists are further removed from Plotinus than the Christians are in their conceptions of eternity and time, because of their insistence on making both into substantive principles, divine beings with their own proper places in the hierarchy of reality (cp. Proclus, Elements of Theology Prop. 53, with the commentary of E. R. Dodds).

Synopsis

The starting-point of our thought about eternity and time is our own experience of both; but when we concentrate on this and try to arrive at full understanding of it we meet difficulties which can be cleared up by a close and discriminating study of the opinions of the ancient philosophers. We will begin with eternity of which time is the image, though it would be possible also to go the other way, from image to archetype (ch. 1). What is eternity? Not the intelligible universe itself, nor the rest in it (ch. 2). It is the life of that which exists completely and simultaneously, without before and after (ch. 3). Eternity and the wholeness of real being; duration and movement in time are essential to the existence of things which come into being (ch. 4). We contemplate eternity by the eternal in ourselves; it is the self-manifestation of divinity, a total life (ch. 5). Eternity and unity; it is the life of real being around the One; "always existing" really means "truly existing"; that which exists in time is deficient in existence (ch. 6). We are in some way both in eternity and in time. What is time? Classification of the accounts of earlier philosophers:
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1. Eternity and time, we say, are two different things, the one belonging to the sphere of the nature which lasts for ever, the other to that of becoming and of this universe; and at once, and as if by a fairly continuous application of our concept of them, we think that we have a clear and distinct experience of them in our own souls, as we are always speaking of them and using their names on every occasion. Of course, when we try to concentrate on them and, so to speak, to get close to them, we find again that our thought runs into difficulties; we consider the statements of the ancient philosophers about them, who differ one from the other, and perhaps also different interpretations of the same statements, and we set our minds at rest about them and think it sufficient if we are able, when we are asked, to state the opinion of the ancients, and so we are satisfied to be freed from the need of further research about them. Now we must consider that some of the blessed philosophers of ancient times have found out the truth; but it is proper to investigate which of them have attained it most completely, and how we too could reach an understanding about these things. And first we should inquire about eternity, what sort of further reflection leading to clearer understanding. It is, of course, Plato, here and elsewhere, who has "attained the truth most completely" (1. 15).
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thing those who make it different from time consider it to be, for when we know that which holds the position of archetype, it will perhaps become clear how it is with its image, which the philosophers say time is. But if someone, before contemplating eternity, should form a picture in his mind of what time is, it would be possible for him, too, to go from this world to the other by recollection and contemplate that of which time is a likeness, if time really has a likeness to eternity.

2. What sort of thing, then, ought we to say that eternity is? Should we say that it is the intelligible substance itself, as if one were to say that time is the whole heaven and universal order? For, so people say, some philosophers have held just this opinion about time. For, since we picture and think of eternity as something most majestic, and the highest degree of majesty belongs to the intelligible nature, and it is impossible to mention anything at all which is more majestic—not even majesty can be predicated of that which lies beyond it—one could in this way come to the conclusion that eternity and the intelligible nature are one and the same. Then, again, the intelligible universe and eternity are both inclusive, and include the same things. But when we say that one set of things [the intelligible realities] lies in the other—in eternity—and when we predicate eternal existence of the intelligible realities—for, Plato says, the nature of the archetype was eternal—we are again making eternity something

with the comment of Simplicius (In Phys. IV 10, p. 706, 19-20.)

2. Timaeus 37D3.
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"The eternal is that which participates in eternity. Then, how is motion to be something eternal? For, on this assumption, it would also be at rest. Then again, how does the idea of rest contain in itself the "always"? I mean, not the "always" in time, but the kind of "always" we have in mind when we are speaking of what is eternal. But if eternity is the same as the rest which belongs to substance, then again, we shall put the other kinds of substance outside eternity. Then again, we must think of eternity not only in terms of rest but of unity; then, too, it must be thought of as without extension or interval, that it may not be the same as time; but rest in so far as it is rest, does not include in itself the idea of one nor of the unextended. Then different, but are saying that it has something to do with the intelligible nature, or is in it, or is present to it. That both are majestic does not make their identity clear, for perhaps majesty might come to one of them from the other. And as for inclusiveness, the intelligible world has it in the way in which a whole includes its parts, but eternity includes the whole all at once, not as a part, but in the sense that all things which are of such a kind as to be eternal are so by conforming to it.

But should eternity, perhaps, be said to correspond to the rest there as people say that time corresponds to motion? But one might reasonably enquire whether, when people say this, they mean that eternity is the same as rest or, not simply as rest, but as the rest which belongs to substance. Now if it is the same as rest, first of all we shall not call rest eternal, just as we do not call eternity eternal, for the eternal is that which participates in eternity. Then, how is motion to be something eternal? For, on this assumption, it would also be at rest. Then again, how does the idea of rest contain in itself the "always"? I mean, not the "always" in time, but the kind of "always" we have in mind when we are speaking of what is eternal. But if eternity is the same as the rest which belongs to substance, then again, we shall put the other kinds of substance outside eternity. Then again, we must think of eternity not only in terms of rest but of unity; then, too, it must be thought of as without extension or interval, that it may not be the same as time; but rest in so far as it is rest, does not include in itself the idea of one nor of the unextended. Then

"All" are kata tis stasis fashon tis ekei ton alonon stinai, dosper enmata thn chrwv kata tis byvryfis; "All" kathontai ev tis ton alonon. 'Episterei piteia tahton tis stasis leirontes h ovpchraptos, alla tis staisi tis tis peri tis odisean. Eis evn ypo tis staisi tahton, prostoyn evn ouc 25 eromion alonon tis staisi, oisper odhe ton alonon alonon: to ypo tahton tou metexaion alonos. "Episterei h kypsis pois alonos; Otheu ypo evn kai staisias ein. Ei x wos ekhei h tis staisias enkkos en auti tis de: Legw de ou tis en chrwv, alla oleon teleiomen, staio tis alonon legwmen. Ei de tis oukodias stai eisw palan ov tis alonon geneta tis alonon poukismen. Eita tis alonos ou mouen en staios de vonei, alla kai en eini: eita kai adiastatov, ou ma tay thriou h chrwv; h de staisi eisw tis ton en oitoi tis ton adiastatov ekhei enkkos en auti h staisia. Eita tis mou

1 alon alon for Creuzer, H-S: chrwv alon ExyQL.

1 Rest and motion here are the Platonic "categories of the intelligible world": op. V. 1 [10] 4; VI. 2 [48] 8.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 7.

35 aitónos katagraphein to ménein én én· metéchoi én oính stásin, állo oính apóstasais égh.

3. Ti én oính év tóvna, kath' én tôn kósmov pánta tôn ékei alýnon léghmein kai állynov einai, kai ti é o διανοήθη, éite tautóv kai é o ánth to alýno, étte wap' éryptón o állyn; "Apa ge' kath' én ti deh,

5 allá ék pollów sunchremàmenw tivá nóýmov, é kai fósw eit' épekouleúthousan tóds ékei énte sunnoísaan eit' énoroménn, pánta dé tauta éképhn méan mónan, polla dé dunamán vna polla mónan; Kai é tēi polllh dúnum miatnhríasas kath méni toud to ouv upokeménw léngy oulán, éteis kíneína tóso, kath' é o χωρ ύμη, éta

10 stásin tò pánta ódíasas, báteron dé kai tautóv, ò tauta órmo én. Oútov dé kai swlhèz pállw oúw éi se in ómox (swth) 2 oúia xáphi móyn, én toucous tēn értideúnta evnútheias, kai tēs éneveias tō ápataun kai tō tautón kai odhípota állo kai oúk é álloún éi állo nóúmov éi xáphi, állo tē

15 ódíasas kai déi ádíasas, tauta pánta ódión alýna eléen idión xáphi mématos én tī atóv déi parèn tò év xáphiw, álly oúv máv tōb, áuths dé évthein, álly ámba tā pánta, kai oúv

1 ἄρα ἢν Ἰχθυόν, Η-8; ἢν γάρ χωτ. cold.

2 ἄρα τ' Ἰχθυόν Theeler.

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again we predicate "abiding in one" of eternity; so, then, it would participate in rest, but not: be absolute rest.

3. What, then, would this be by reason of which we call the whole universe There eternal and everlasting, and what is everlastiness? Is it the same thing as, and identical with eternity, or is eternity in conformity with it? Should we then think of it as an idea corresponding to some one thing, but gathered together into a unity from many sources, or even a nature either consequent upon the beings of that other world or existing along with them or perceived in them? Are all these beings that nature, which is one, but has many powers and is many things? And when one looks closely into this manifold power, then according as one sees it as a subject, a kind of substance, one calls it "substance"; then one calls it "motion," according as one sees it as life; then "rest." In so far as it is always in every way unchangingly itself; "the other" and "the same" in that these [different] realities are all together one. So, too, one puts it all together again into one, so as to be only life, compressing the otherness in these intelligible realities, and seeing the unchangeableness and self-identity of their activity, and that it is never other and is not a thinking or life that goes from one thing to another but is always the selfsame without extension or interval; seeing all this one sees eternity in seeing a life that abides in the same, and always has the all present to it, not now this, and then again that, but all things at once, and not

1 Timæus 37Dc.

2 The complete list of the "Platonic categories," taken from Dióphat 2643B. For passages in which Plotinus ex-
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 7.

now some things, and then again others, but a partless completion, as if they were all together in a point, and had not yet begun to go out and flow into lines; it is something which abides in the same in itself and does not change at all but is always in the present, because nothing of it has passed away, nor again is there anything to come into being, but that which it is, it is; so that eternity is not the substrate but something which, as it were, shines out from the substrate itself in respect of what is called its sameness, in speaking about the fact that it is not going to be but is already, that it is as it is and not otherwise, for what could come to be for it afterwards, which it is not already? Nor again will it be afterwards what it is not already. For there is nothing starting from which it will arrive at the present moment, for that could be nothing else but what is [now]. Nor is it going to be what it does not now contain in itself. Necessarily there will be no “was” about it, for what is there that was for it, and has passed away? Nor any “will be,” for what will be for it? So there remains for it only to be in its being just what it is. That, then, which was not, and will not be, but is only, which has being which is static by not changing to the “will be,” nor ever having changed, this is eternity. The life, then, which belongs to that which exists and is in being, all together and full, completely without extension or interval, is that which we are looking for, eternity.

1. Ork ęxoxen de dé the sojubvkeni vaciav
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 7.

There is a verbal reminiscence here of Plato, *Philebus* 24D2, but no real connection of thought.

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intelligible nature, existing in it as originated from it, because we see all the other things, too, which we say are There existing in it, and say that they all come from its substance and are with it together with the truth. For the things which have primary existence must have a common existence with the primaries and be among them; since beauty, too, is among them and originates from them, and truth is among them. And some of these are as if in a part of the existent whole, others in the whole, just as this which is really a whole has not been put together out of its parts, but has produced its parts itself, in order that it may truly be a whole in this way too. And There the truth is not correspondence with something else, but really belongs to each individual thing of which it is the truth. Now this true whole, if it really is a whole, must not only be whole in the sense that it is all things, but it must have its wholeness in such a way that it is deficient in nothing. If this is so, there is nothing that is going to be for it, for if something is going to be, it was lacking to it before; so it was not whole. But what could happen to it contrary to its nature? For it is not affected in any way. If, then, nothing could happen to it, there is no postponement of being, and it is not going to be, nor did it come to be. Now with things which have come to be, if you take away the "will be," what happens is that they fall from the seat of being,¹ for it is clear that their being was not connatural to them, if they came to be in a state of putting off

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being and having come to be and going to be afterwards. For the substantial existence of things that have come into being seems to be their existing from their point of origin, their coming to be, until they reach the end of their time, in which they cease to exist; this is their "is," and if anyone takes this away, their life-span is lessened, and so also their being. And the universe, too, must have a future, in moving towards which it "will be" in this way. This is why it, too, hastens towards what is going to be, and does not want to stand still, as it draws being to itself in doing one thing after another and moving in a circle in a sort of aspiration to substance. So we have found, incidentally, the cause of the movement of the universe, which hastens in this way to everlasting existence by means of what is going to be. 1 But the primal, blessed beings have not even an aspiration to what is going to be, for they are already the whole, and they have all the life which is, so to speak, owed to them; so they seek nothing, because there is nothing which is going to be for them, nor, indeed, that in which what is going to be can develop. So, then, the complete and whole substance of reality, not that in the parts only but that which consists in the impossibility of any future diminution and the fact that nothing non-existent could be added to it—for the all and whole must not only have all real beings present in it, but must not have anything that is at any time non-existent—this state and nature of complete reality would be eternity: for "eternity" [aion] is derived from "always existing" [aei]. 2

1 For a fuller discussion of the circular motion of the universe and its cause, cp. II. 2 [14].

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5. But now, whenever, concentrating the attention of my soul on something, I am able to say this about it, or rather to see it as a thing of such a kind that nothing at all about it has ever come into being—for if it has, it is not always existing, or not always existing as a whole—is it, therefore, already eternal, if there is not also in it a nature of such a kind as to give an assurance about it that it will stay as it is and never become different, so that, if you look attentively at it again, you will find it as it was?

What then, if one does not depart at all from one’s contemplation of it but stays in its company, wondering at its nature, and able to do so by a natural power which never fails? Surely one would be (would one not?), oneself on the move towards eternity and never falling away from it at all, that one might be like it and eternal, contemplating eternity and the eternal by the eternal in oneself. If, then, what is in this state is eternal and always existing, that which does not fall away in any respect into another nature, which has life which it possesses already as a whole, which has not received any addition and is not now receiving any and will not receive any, then that which is in this state would be eternal, and everlastingness would be the corresponding condition of the substrate, existing from it and in it, and eternity the substrate with the corresponding condition appearing in it. Hence eternity is a majestic thing, and thought declares it identical with the god; it declares it identical with this god [whom we have been describing]. And eternity could be well described as a god proclaiming and manifesting himself as he is, that is, as being which is unshakeable and self-identical, and
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6. Now since the nature which is of this kind, altogether beautiful and everlasting in this way, is around the One and comes from it and is directed towards it, in no way going cut from it but always abiding around it and in it, and living according to it; and since this was stated by Plato, as I think finely and with deep meaning and not to no purpose, in these words of his “as eternity remains in one,” the intention of which is not merely that eternity brings itself into unity with relation to itself, but that it is the life, always the same, of real being around the One; this, then, is what we are seeking; and abiding like this is being eternity. For that which is this and abides like this and abides what it is, an activity of life abiding of itself directed to the One and in the One, with no falsehood in its being or its life, this would possess the reality of eternity. For true being is never not being, or being otherwise; and this is being

1 The sentence bracketed here is clearly a rather unintelligent gloss on the one before it.
2 Timaeus 37d B.
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always the same; and this is being without any difference. So it does not have any "this and that"; nor, therefore, will you be able to separate it out or unroll it or prolong it or stretch it; nor, then, can you apprehend anything of it as before or after. If, then, there is no before or after about it, but its "is" is the truest thing about it, and itself, and this in the sense that it is by its essence or its life, then again there has come to us what we are talking about, eternity. But when we use the word "always" and say that it does not exist at one time but not at another, we must be thought to be putting it this way for our own sake; for the "always" was perhaps not being used in its strict sense, but, taken as explaining the incorruptible, might mislead the soul into imagining an expansion of something becoming more, and again, of something which is never going to fail. It would perhaps have been better only to use the word "existing." But, as "existing" is an adequate word for substance, since, however, people thought becoming was substance, they required the addition of "always" in order to understand [what "existing" really meant]. For existing is not one thing and always existing another, just as a philosopher is not one thing and the true philosopher another, but because there was such a thing as putting on a pretence of philosophy, the addition of "true" was made. So, too, "always" is applied to "existing," that is "aei" to "on," so that we say "aei on [aion]," so the "always" must be taken as saying "truly existing." It must be included in the undivided power which in no way needs anything beyond what it already possesses; but it possesses the whole.
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The nature which is of this kind, then, is all, and existent, and not deficient in its wholeness, and not full at one point and deficient at another. For that which is in time, even if it is perfect, as it seems, in the way in which a body which is adequate for a soul is perfect, needs also time to come, being deficient in time, which it needs because it is with it, if time is present to and runs along with it, and so it is incomplete; and, existing in this way, it could only be called perfect by a mere coincidence of name. But that which has no need of time to come, which is not measured by another time or by an unlimited time which will be without end, but possesses what it ought to be, this is what our thought stretches out to, that whose being does not come from a certain extent of time, but exists before extent of time. For, since it is not of any temporal extent itself, it was not right for it to have contact in any way with anything temporally extended, so that its life might not be divided into parts and destroy its pure partlessness, but it might be partless in life and substance. But Plato’s “He was good” takes us back to the thought of the All [the physical universe]; he indicates that by virtue of the transcendent All it has no beginning in time; so that the universe, too, did not have a temporal beginning because the cause of its being provides what is prior to it. But all the same, after saying this for the sake of explanation, he objects to this expression, too, afterwards, as not being entirely correctly used about things which have a part in what we speak and think of as eternity.

1 Timaeus 30E1.
2 “The point is that the oceanus has indeed a prior (as it must have), but only in the sense of having a cause” (E. R. Dodds in a letter to H.-R. Schneider).
3 Plotinus goes back here, rather abruptly, to the description of eternal being as “always” existing, and points out that Plato, too, objected to the use of expressions implying duration in time when referring to it (op. Timaeus 37E).
The view that time was the movement of the universe (or one of its important parts) was current in the early Academy; cp. the Platonic Ὀρει 411B: χρόνος ὡς κίνεσις, μέγας ἦμών. Aristotle, Physics 10, 218bl 2: that it was the heavenly sphere (op. I. 24-25) was a Pythagorean view; cp. note or ch. 2, and Pseudo-Plutarch, Pave. 1. 884B 5. That it was something belonging to movement was held in different senses by some Academics, Aristotle, Stoics and Epicurus: see notes below.
remote from our interior awareness of time, which is never in any way the same. Now of those who say it is movement, some seem to mean that it is all movement, but others the movement of the universe; those who say that it is what is moved seem to mean that it is the sphere of the universe; those who say that it is something belonging to movement, that it is the distance covered by the movement or (others of them) the measure, or (others again) that it is in a general way a consequence of movement; and either of all movement or only of ordered movement.

It is not possible for it to be movement, whether one takes all movements together and makes a kind of single movement out of them, or whether one takes it as ordered movement, for what we call movement, of either kind, is in time; but if someone says that it is not in time, then it would be still further from being time, since that in which movement is, is something different from movement itself. And though other arguments can be brought, and have been brought, against this position, this one is enough, and also that movement can stop altogether or be interrupted, but time cannot. But, if someone says that the movement of the universe is not interrupted, this, too (if he means the circuit of the heavens), is in a period of time; and it would go round to the same point not in the time in which half its course was finished, and one would be half, the other double time; each movement would be movement of the

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1 Some Stoics: op. Stoe. Vet. Fr. II. 514.
4 Epicureans: op. Stob. Eel. T.8 [103. 8]; Wachsmuth = Usener 284).
5 Op. Stoe. Vet. Fragm. II. 509-510. It is only among Stoics that the distinction between all movement and ordered movement (the movement of the universe) appears. Zeno
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universe, one going from the same place to the same place again, and the other reaching the half-way point. And the statement: that the movement of the outermost sphere is the most vigorous and quickest is evidence for our argument that its movement is something different from time. For it is, obviously, the quickest of all the spheres because it covers a greater distance than the others, in fact, the greatest distance, in less time; the others are slower because they cover only a part of the distance [covered by the outermost sphere] in a longer time. If, then, time is not the movement of the sphere, it can hardly be the sphere itself, which was supposed to be time because it is in motion.

Is it, then, something belonging to movement? If it is the distance covered by the movement, first, this is not the same for all movement, not even uniform movement, for movement is quicker and slower, even movement in space. And both these distances covered [by the quicker and the slower movement] would be measured by some one other thing, which would more correctly be called time. Well then, of which of the two of them is the distance covered time, or rather of which of all the movements, which are infinite in number? But if it is the distance covered by the ordered movement, then not by all ordered movement, or by one particular kind of ordered movement, for there are many of these; so that there will be many times at once. But if it is the distance covered by the movement of the universe, if the distance in the movement itself is meant, what would this be other than the movement? The movement, certainly is quantitatively

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determined; but this definite quantity will either be measured by the space, because the space which it has traversed is a certain amount of space, and this will be the distance covered; but this is not time but space; or the movement itself, by its continuity and the fact that it does not stop at once but keeps on for ever, will contain the distance. But this would be the multiplicity of movement; and if one, looking at movement, shows that it is multiple (as if one were to say there was a great deal of heat), time will not appear or come into one's mind but movement which keeps on coming again and again, just like water flowing which keeps on coming again and again, and the distance observed in it. And the "again and again" will be a number, like the number two or three, but distance belongs to magnitude. So the amplitude of movement will be like the number ten or the distance from end to end which appears on what you might call the bulk of the movement, and this does not contain our idea of time, but this definite quantity will be something which came to be in time; otherwise time will not be everywhere but in movement as its substrate, and we are back again at the statement that time is movement, for the distance covered is not outside movement but is movement which does not happen all at once; but the comparison of movement which does not happen all at once with what is all at once [the instantaneous] can only be made in time. In what way will the non-instantaneous differ from the instantaneous? By being in time, so that movement which extends over a distance and the distance covered by it are not the actual thing, time, but are in time. But if someone
were to say that the distance of movement is time, not in the sense of the distance of movement itself, but that in relation to which the movement has its extension, as if it was running along with it, what this is has not been stated. For it is obvious that time is that in which the movement has occurred. But this was what our discussion was trying to find from the beginning, what time essentially is; since this is like, in fact, the same as, an answer to the question “What is time?” which says that it is distance of movement in time. What, then, is this distance which you call time and put outside the proper distance of the movement? Then, again, on the other side, the person who puts the distance in the movement itself, will be hopelessly perplexed about where to put the interval of rest. For something else could rest for the same space as something was moved, and you would say that the time in each case was the same, as being, obviously, different from both. What, then, is this distance, and what is its nature? For it cannot be spatial, since this also lies outside movement.

9. We must now enquire in what sense it is number of movement or measure— for it is better to call it measure of movement, since movement is continuous. First of all, then, a doubt must arise here, too, about its being the measure of all movement alike, just as it did with the distance of movement, if there was said to be a number or measure of all movement. For how could one number discorpered and irregular movement? What would its number or measure be, or what its scale of measurement? But if one sees the same measure for both kinds of movement

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1 Aristotle uses both terms (ἐμφασις κινήσεως, Πεζονος 11. 219b2; μέτρον κινήσεως, 12. 221a1) without distinction.
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[regular and irregular] and in general for all movement, quick and slow, the number and measure will be like the ten which counts both horses and cows, or like the same measure for liquids and solids. Now, if it is a measure of this kind, then it has been said what time is a measure of, that it is a measure of movements, but we have not yet been told what it is itself. But if, just as when one takes the ten even without the horses it is possible to think of the number, and the measure is a measure, with a certain nature, even if it is not yet measuring, so time, too, must have its own nature since it is a measure, and if it is a thing of this kind on its own like number, how can it differ from this number we were considering in the case of the ten, or from any other number made up of abstract units? But if it is a continuous measure, then it will be a measure because it is of a certain size, like a length of one cubit. It will be a magnitude, then, like a line which will obviously run along with movement. But how will this line running along measure that with which it runs? Why should one of them measure the other rather than the other the one? And it is better and more plausible to assume that it is not the measure of all movement but of the movement it runs along with. But this must be something continuous, or the line which runs with it will stop. But one ought not to take what measures as something coming from outside or separate but to consider the measured movement as a whole. And what will the measurer be? Movement will be measured, and the measurer will be magnitude. And which of them will be time? The measured movement or the measuring magnitude?
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For either the movement which is measured by the magnitude will be time, or the magnitude which measures, or what uses the magnitude, as one uses the cubit to measure how much the movement is. But in all these cases one must assume (which we said was more plausible), uniform movement, for unless there is uniformity, and, besides that, the movement is single, and a movement of the whole thing, the way of proof becomes still more obstructed for whoever holds that time is in any sense a measure. But now, if time is a measured movement, and one measured by quantity; just as the movement, if it had to be measured, could not be measured by itself but by something else, so it is necessary, if the movement is to have another measure besides itself, and this was the reason why we needed the continuous measure for measuring it—in the same way there is need of a measure for the magnitude itself, in order that the movement, by the fixing at a certain length of that by which it is measured as being a certain length, may itself be measured. And the number of the magnitude which accompanies the movement, but not the magnitude which runs along with the movement, will be that time which we were looking for. But what could this be except number made up of abstract units? And here the problem must arise of how this abstract number is going to measure. Then, even if one does discover how it can, one will not discover time measuring but a certain length of time; and this is not the same thing as time. It is movement, the circular movement of the heavens, is the standard by which in fact we measure other movements and time itself (223b).

1 Aristotle points out that only a uniform movement can be considered a single movement in *Physics* A 4, 223b15 ff.; and for him time is the measure of absolutely any kind of movement (*Physics* A 14, 223a20 ff.); though the most uniform
one thing to say "time" and another to say "a certain length of time"; for before saying "a certain length of time" one ought to say what it is that is of a certain length. But perhaps the number which measures the movement from outside the movement is time, like the ten which counted the horses taken apart from the horses. Well, then, in this version it has not been said what this number is which is what it is before it begins to measure, like the ten. Perhaps it is the number which runs beside the movement and measures it by the sequence of "before" and "after." It is not yet clear what this number which measures by the sequence of "before" and "after" is. And then, too, anyone who measures by "before" and "after," either with a point or with anything else, will in any case be measuring according to time. So, then, this time of theirs which measures movement by "before" and "after" is bound to time and in contact with time in order to measure. For one either takes "before" and "after" in a spatial sense, like "the beginning of the race-track," or else one must take them in a temporal sense. For in general, "before" and "after" mean, "before," the time which stops at the "now," and "after," the time which begins from the "now." Time, then, is something different from the number which measures by "before" and "after" not only any kind of movement but even ordered movement. Then, why, when number is added to movement, either on the measured or the measuring side—for there is the

1 Plotinus assumes here his own view that number has a separate substantial existence prior to the things which it numbers: see VI. 6 [34] 5.

2 Aristotle defines time as ἀριθμὸς κυκλῆς κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον καὶ ὠστερον (Physics Δ 4. 219b2-3).
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possibility that the same number could be both measured and measuring—why should time result from its presence, though when movement exists and, certainly, has a "before" and "after" belonging to it, there will be no time? This is like saying that a magnitude would not be the size it is unless someone understood that it was that size. But again, since time is, and is said to be, unbounded, how could it have a number? Unless, of course, someone took off a piece of it and measured it, but time would be in the piece before it was measured, too. But why can time not exist before the soul which measures it? Unless perhaps one is going to say that it originated from soul. But this is not in any way necessary because of measuring it, for it exists in its full length, even if no one measures it. One might say that the soul is what uses magnitude to measure time; but how could this help us to form the concept of time?

10. As for calling it an accompaniment of movement, this does not explain at all what it is, nor has the statement any content before it is said what this accompanying thing is, for perhaps just this might turn out to be time. But we must consider whether this accomplishment comes after movement, or at the same time as it, or before it—if there is any kind of accomplishment which comes before, for whichever may be said, it is said to be in time. If this is so, time will be an accomplishment of movement in time. But, since we are not trying to find what time is not

1 μετρήσων Kirchhoff, H-3: μετρήσων codd.
2 ἑπισκεπτόμεθα Page, H-57: ἑπισκεπτόμεθα codd.
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but what it is, and since a great deal has been said by a great many of our predecessors on every theory of its nature, and if one went through it all one would be making a historical rather than a philosophical enquiry; and since we have already made a cursory survey of some of their arguments, and it is possible from what has been said already to refute the philosopher who says that time is the measure of the movement of the All by using all our arguments about the measure of movement—for apart from the argument from irregularity all the others, which we used against them, will fit his case—it would be in order to say what one ought to think time is.

11. We must take ourselves back to the disposition which we said existed in eternity, to that quiet life, all a single whole, still unbounded, altogether without declination, resting in and directed towards eternity. Time did not yet exist, but at any rate for the beings of that world; we shall produce time by means of the form and nature of what comes after. If, then, these beings were at rest in themselves, one could hardly, perhaps, call on the Muses, who did not then yet exist, to tell us "how time first came out..." but one might perhaps (even if the Muses did exist then) ask time when it has come into being to tell us how it did come into being and appear. It might say something like this about itself; that before, when it had not yet, in fact, produced this

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1. i.e. those who say simply that time is the measure of movement.
2. One of the most curious examples of adaptation of a Homeric tag to Platonic purposes. In Iliad XVI. 112–113 we have

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In Republic VIII. (545D–E1), Plato, about to describe the advent of the ideal states, says "οὖν διὸ καὶ ὅπως ὁ λόγος ἀπὸ τῆς ὀρθοτητος εἶσαι ἐρχεται πρὶν ὁμοιὸν στὴν στοιχείωσιν:

from this, rather than directly from Homer, Plotinus's playful variation is derived.
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"before" or felt the need of the "after," it was at rest with eternity in real being; it was not yet time, but itself, too, kept quiet in that. But since there was a restlessly active nature which wanted to control itself and be on its own, and chose to seek for more than its present state, this moved, and time moved with it; and so, always moving on to the "next" and the "after," and what is not the same, but one thing after another, we made a long stretch of our journey and constructed time as an image of eternity. For because soul had an unquiet power, which wanted to keep on transferring what it saw there to something else, it did not want the whole to be present to it all together; and, as from a quiet seed the formative principle, unfolding itself, advances, as it thinks, to largeness, but does away with the largeness by division and, instead of keeping its unity in itself, squanders it outside itself and so goes forward to a weaker extension; in the same way Soul, 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 put itself into time, which it made instead of eternity, and then handed over that which came into being as a slave to time, by making the whole of it exist in time and encompassing all its ways with time. For since the world of sense moves in Soul—

significance of the first person in γενόμενον above (1. 5); but this may be simply the lecturer's "we."

One of the most vivid expressions in the Enneads of the deep and constant conviction of Plotinus that the beginning of a process of development is more perfect than the end, that simplicity, concentration, and rest is better than large-scale expansion into a multiplicity of activities.

1 "We," because it is said which moves and produces time, and we are souls, parts of universal soul and already present in it as it moves out from eternity. This may possibly be the
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there is no other place of it (this universe) \(^1\) than Soul
—It moves also in the time of Soul. For as Soul presents one activity after another, and then again another in ordered succession, it produces the succession along with activity, and goes on with another thought coming after that which it had before, to that which did not previously exist because discursive thought was not in action, and Soul's present life is not like that which came before it. So at the same time the life is different and this "different" involves a different time. So the spreading out of life involves time; life's continual progress involves continuity of time, and life which is past involves past time. So would it be sense to say that time is the life of soul in a movement of passage from one way of life to another? Yes, for if eternity is life at rest, 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 the intelligible All), then we must say that there is, instead of the life There, another life having, in a way of speaking, the same name as this power of the soul, and instead of intelligible motion that there is the motion of a part of Soul; and, instead of sameness and self-identity and abiding, that which does not abide in the same but does one act after another, and, instead of that which is one without distance or separation, an image of that life of Soul may be bracketed as a gloss. (This was tentatively suggested in H-S, and has now been done by Theiler, with Schwyzter's agreement.) But there remains the possibility that it may be a carelessly added amplification or explanation of avrov by Plotinus himself; and therefore, with Henry-Schwzyer, I print and translate the MSS text.

\(^1\) \(\eta\) \(\epsilon\iota\kappa\iota\nu\iota\sigma\iota\nu\iota\) \(\iota\kappa\iota\delta\iota\nu\iota\) \(\eta\) \(\epsilon\iota\kappa\iota\nu\iota\sigma\iota\nu\iota\) \(\epsilon\iota\kappa\iota\delta\iota\nu\iota\)
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unity, that which is one in continuity; and instead of a complete unbounded whole, a continuous unbounded succession, and instead of a whole all together a whole which is, and always will be, going to come into being part by part. For this is the way in which it will imitate that which is already a whole, already all together and unbounded, by intending to be always making an increase in its being, for this is how its being will imitate the being of the intelligible world. But one must not conceive time as outside Soul, any more than eternity There as outside real being. It is not an accompaniment of Soul nor something that comes after (any more than eternity There) but something which is seen along with it and exists in it and with it, as eternity does There [with real being].

12. We must understand, too, from this that this nature is time, the extent of life of this kind which goes forward in even and uniform changes progressing quietly, and which possesses continuity of activity. Now if in our thought we were to make this power turn back again, and put a stop to this life which it now has without stop and never-ending, because it is the activity of an always existing soul, whose activity is not directed to itself or in itself, but lies in making and production—if, then we were to suppose that it was no longer active, but stopped this activity, and that this part of the soul turned back to the intelligible world and to eternity, and rested quietly there, what would there still be except eternity? What would “one thing after another” mean when all things remained in unity? What sense would “before” still have, and what “after” or “future”? Where could the soul now fix its

1 Μᾶλλον Page, H-S: μᾶλλον odd.
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... gaze on something other than that in which it is? Rather, it could not even fix its gaze on this, for it would have to stand away from it first in order to do so. For the heavenly sphere itself would not be there, since its existence is not primary; for it exists and moves in time, and, if it comes to a stop, we shall measure the duration of its stop by the activity of soul, as long as soul is outside eternity. If, then, when soul leaves this activity and returns to unity time is abolished, it is clear that the beginning of this movement in this direction, and this form of the life of soul, generates time. This is why it is said that time came into existence simultaneously with this universe, because soul generated it along with this universe. For it is in activity of this kind that this universe has come into being; and the activity is time and the universe is in time. But if someone wants to say that Plato also calls the courses of the stars "times" he should remember that he says that they have come into existence for the declaring and "division of time," and his "there might be an obvious measure." For since it was not possible for the soul to delimit time itself, or for men by themselves to measure each part of it since it was invisible and ungraspable, particularly as they did not know how to count, the god made day and night, by means of which, in virtue of their difference, it was possible to grasp the idea of two, and from this Plato says, came the concept of number. Then, by taking the length of the interval between one sunrise and the next, since the kind of movement on which we base our calculations is even, we can have an interval of time of a certain length, and we use this kind of...
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 7.

χρούμεθα τῷ τοιούτῳ. μέτρῳ δὲ τοῦ χρόνου. οὐ γὰρ ὁ χρόνος αὐτός μέτρον. Πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ μετραὶ καὶ τῇ ἄν λέγως μετράν τοιοῦτον ἄνπολον, δουλεύές ἐγὼ τούτων; Τὸ σὲν ὁ «ἐγώ»; 'Ἡ καί ὁ ἡ κατμέτρησις.

40 Ὁδόκου ὅν, ἵνα μετρῆ, καὶ μὴ μέτρον; Ἡ σὲν κίνησις ἡ τοῦ πεντὸς μετρουμένη κατὰ χρόνον ἦσται, καὶ ὁ χρόνος ὁ μέτρον ἦσται κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ τί ἦσται, ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὅπως ἄλλο τῷ πρὸ τοῦ παρέξεις δῆλοντος τοῦ ὁπόσο ἡ κίνησις. Καὶ ἡ κίνησις δὲ ληφθένη ἢ μία ἐν τοσοῦτο χρόνῳ πολλάκις ᾠδήμουμένη εἰς ἄνωθεν ἀξει τῷ ὁπόσον

45 παραλήλυθεν ἢ πάντω τὸν κίνησιν καὶ τὸν περιφορᾶν εἰ τῇ λέγω τύποιν τινὰ μετρεῖν τὸν χρόνον, δουλεύειν οὖν, ὡς δῆλον τοῦ τῷ αὐτῆς τοσοῦτο τὸ τοσοῦτο τοῦ χρόνου, οὐκ ὅπως ὡδε συνεῖναι ἀλλὰ, οὐκ ἄντοπος τῆς δηλώσεως. Τὸ σὲν μετρουμένον ὑπὸ τῆς περιφορᾶς—τοῦτο δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ

50 δηλώσεως—ὁ χρόνος ἦσται, ὡς γεννηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῆς περιφορᾶς, ἀλλὰ δηλώθηκε: καὶ οὐκ ὁ μέτρον τῆς κινήσεως τὸ μετρηθὲν ὑπὸ κινήσεως ἀριθμοῦμεν, καὶ μετροῦμεν ὑπὸ ταύτης ἄλλο ἄν αὐτῆς: ἐτελεί καὶ εἰ μετρῶν ἄλλο ἄν, καὶ η ἡ μετροῦμεν ἄλλον ἄν, καὶ ἡ 2 μετροῦμεν ἄλλον ἄν

55 μετροῦμεν ὑπὸ κατὰ 2 συμβεβηκὸς. Καὶ οὖσιν ἃν ἐλέγετο, ὡς εἰ τὸ μετροῦμεν ὑπὸ πίγχεις λέγοι

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interval as a measure; but a measure of time, for time itself is not a measure. For how could it measure, and what could it say while it was measuring? "This is as large as such and such a part of myself?" Who, then, is the "I" here? Presumably, that by which the measuring is being done. Then surely, if it is going to measure, it is not a measure? So, then, it will be the movement of the universe which will be measured by time, and time will not be a measure of movement essentially, but it will incidentally, being something else first, afford a clear indication of how long the movement is. And by taking one movement in a certain length of time and repeating it again and again we shall arrive at an idea of how much time has passed; so that if one were to say that the movement and the heavenly circuit in a way measure time, as far as possible, in the way the circuit shows by its extent the extent of time, which it would not be possible to grasp or understand otherwise, his explanation would not be out of place. So what is measured by the circuit—that is, what is shown—will be time, which is not produced by the circuit but manifested; and so the measure of motion is that which is measured by a limited motion, and since it is measured by this, is other than it, since, even if it was measuring it would be something else, and in so far as it is measured it is different (but it is [only] measured incidentally). This would have the same meaning as if one said that what is measured

1 Here Plotinus uses some observations of Aristotle on the way in which, in fact, we measure time as the basis of an argument against Aristotle's own definition of time: cp. Physics A 19 250b18-251a9.
by a cubit was the length, not saying what length was in itself but simply determining how long it was, and if one was not able to explain what movement itself was because of its indefiniteness and said it was what is measured by space, for one could take a space through which the movement went and say that the movement was as long as the space.

13. The heavenly circuit, therefore, shows time, in which it is. But time itself cannot have something in which it is, but it must first of all be itself what it is, that in which the other things move and stand still evenly and regularly; it can be manifested to us by something set in order, and exhibited to our minds so that we form a concept of it, but it cannot be brought into existence by the ordered thing, whether it is at rest or in motion; but a thing in motion will give a better idea of it, for motion more effectively moves our minds to get to know time and to form a concept of it by analogy than rest, and it is easier to know how long something has been moving than how long it has stood still. This is why people were brought to call time the measure of movement, instead of saying that it was measured by movement and then adding what it is that is measured by movement, and not only mentioning something which applies incidentally to a part of it, and getting that the wrong way round. But perhaps they did not get it the wrong way round 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. The reason why we do not understand is that they did not make clear what it is that either measures or is measured in their...
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writings, since they were writing for those who knew and had heard their lectures. Plato, however, has neither described the essential nature of time as measuring nor as measured by something else, but has said that, to show time, the heavenly circuit has put a least part of itself in relation with a least part of time, so that from this we can come to know the quality and quantity of time. But when he wants to declare its essential nature he says that it came into existence along with heaven according to the pattern of eternity, and as its moving image, because time does not stand still since the life with which it keeps pace in its course does not stand still; it comes into existence with heaven because this kind of life makes heaven, too, and one life produces heaven and time. So when this life—if it could—turned back to unity, time would come to a stop with it, since it exists in this life, and so would heaven, if it did not have this life. But if someone were to take the "before" and "after" of this movement here and call it time—on the ground that this is something real—but though the truer movement [of soul] has a "before" and "after," were to deny this any reality, he would be quite unreasonable, in that he would be granting that soulless movement has "before" and "after" and time accompanying it, but denying this to the movement in imitation of which this [soulless] movement has come into existence, to the movement from which "before" and "after" first came into existence, since it is spontaneous and, as it generates its own individual activities,
so it generates their succession, and, along with their generation, the transition from one of them to another. Why, then, do we trace back the origin of this movement of the All to that which encompasses it, and say that it is in time, but do not say that the movement of soul, which goes on in it in everlasting progression, is in time? It is because what is before the movement of soul is eternity, which does not run along with it or stretch out with it. This movement of soul was the first to enter time, and generated time, and possesses it along with its own activity. How, then, is time everywhere? Because soul, too, is not absent from any part of the Universe, just as the soul in us is not absent from any part of us. But if someone were to say that time is in something insubstantial or unreal, it must be stated that he is telling an untruth whenever he says that he "was" or "will be" or "will be," for he "will be" and "was" in the same sense as that in which he says he "will be." But against people like this we need another style of argument.

But, besides all that has been said, one must consider this further point, that, when one observes the distance that a moving man has advanced, he also observes the quantity of his movement, and when he observes the movement, for instance, made by his legs, let him notice also that the movement of his body was of a certain quantity, on the assumption that he kept the movement of his body within certain limits. Now the body moved for a certain time will take us back to a certain extent—for this is the cause—and its time, and this to the movement of the soul, which is
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The soul's motion, as to time, occurs thus. For one will want to take back what is already without intervals. This, then, is that which exists primarily and in which the others are; but it is not any more in anything, for it will have nothing to be in. And the same is true also of the Soul of the All. Is time, then, also in us? it is in every soul of this kind, and in the same form in every one of them, and all are one. So time will not be split up, any more than eternity, which, in a different way, is in all the [eternal] beings of the same form.

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divided into equal intervals. To what, then, will the movement of soul take us back? For that to which one will want to take it back is already without intervals. This, then [the movement of soul] is that which exists primarily and in which the others are; but it is not any more in anything, for it will have nothing to be in. And the same is true also of the Soul of the All. Is time, then, also in us? It is in every soul of this kind, and in the same form in every one of them, and all are one. So time will not be split up, any more than eternity, which, in a different way, is in all the [eternal] beings of the same form.
ON NATURE AND CONTEMPLATION

III. 8. ON NATURE AND CONTEMPLATION

AND THE ONE

Introductory Note

This treatise (No. 30 in the chronological order) is in fact the first part of a major work of Plotinus, including also Nos. 31-33 (VS, V5 and I10), the four sections of which Porphyry arbitrarily separated and placed in three different Enneads according to his own too rigidly systematic principles of arrangement. The doctrine of contemplation which it contains is the very heart of the philosophy of Plotinus. He shows contemplation as the source and goal of all action and production at every level: all life for him is essentially contemplation. And in showing this he leads our minds up from the lowest level of contemplative life, that of Nature, the last phase of Soul which is the immanent principle of growth, through Soul to share in Intellect's contemplation of the One or Good, which he demonstrates must lie beyond it as source of contemplation and life. In the next two parts into which Porphyry has divided the work (V8 and V9) he develops his thought about first the beauty, and then the truth of Intellect, and again leads our minds back from it to the Good. In the first three chapters of I10 he sums up his thought about the One, Intellect and Soul; then he adds a polemical appendix, directed against Gnostic members of his circle, which occupies the rest of the treatise (cp. Introductory Note to I10).

3 See R. Harder, "Eine Neue Schrift Plotins" in Kleine Schriften (Beck, Munich, 1960), pp. 303-313.

Synopsis

Let us play with the idea that all things contemplate, even plants and the earth from which they grow (ch. 1). How Nature makes things, and how contemplation underlies its making (chs. 2-3). Plotinus makes Nature speak and comments on what it says, showing how its dreamlike contemplation is the last and weakest, and how weak contemplation leads to action (ch. 4). Contemplation, action and production on the level of Soul, and in human life (chs. 5-6). Contemplation is always the goal of action (ch. 7). The perfect identity of contemplation and object contemplated in Intellect: all life is a kind of thought and the truest life is the truest thought, that of Intellect (ch. 8). Why Intellect is many and not one, and being many cannot be the first, but must have something beyond it, the absolutely simple Good, which we know by immediate awareness of its presence to us (chs. 9-10). The Good is the one productive power of all things (ch. 10). Intellect needs the Good, always desiring it and always attaining; but the Good needs nothing (ch. 11).
III. 8. (30) ΠΕΡΙ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΩΡΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΕΝΟΣ

1. Παίζοντες δὴ τὴν πρώτην πρὶν ἐπιχειρεῖν σπουδάζειν εἰς λέγομεν πάντα θεωρίας ἐφέστηκα
καὶ εἰς τέλος τοῦτο βλέπειν, οὐ μόνον ἐλλογα
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλογα ἔρικα καὶ τὴν εἰ φιλοτικής φύσιν καὶ
tῆς ταῦτα γεννώσων γῆς, καὶ πάντα πειρατέων
καθ' ὁσον οἶδα τα αὐτῶι κατὰ φύσιν ἔχοντα, ἀλλὰ
dὲ ἀλλίως καὶ θεωρίας καὶ πειρατέως καὶ τὰ
μὲν ἐλλεῖς, τὰ δὲ μοιραία καὶ εἰκόνα τούτων λαμβά-
νοντα—ἀπ' αὐτοὶ τὰς μάθησις τῇ παράδοσεν τοῦ
lόγου; Ἡ πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτῶι γνωστόν κοῦνος
ουδεὶς ἐν τῷ παίζειν τὰ αὐτῶι γενήσεται. "Αρ'
10 οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς παίζομεν ἐν τῷ παράδοσεν θεωρώμεν.
"Ἡ καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ πάντες ὡσοι παίζουσιν τοῦτο
ποιοῦσιν ἢ τούτων στελεχοῦς γε παίζουσιν ἐφέστηκαν. Καὶ
καλοῦμεν, εἰτε τις παῖς εἰτε ἄνδρα παίζεις ἢ σπου-

1 ἢ τοῦτο Ἡ-8: ἢ τοῦτο Ἀ-:"Eξι: καὶ τοῦτο Φιλόμου, Ἀρ'.

III. 8. ON NATURE AND CONTEMPLATION AND THE ONE

1. Suppose we said, playing 1 at first before we set
out to be serious, that all things aspire to contempla-
tion, and direct their gaze to this end—not only
rational but irrational living things, 2 and the power of
growth in plants, and the earth which brings them
forth—and that all attain to it as far as possible for
them in their natural state, but different things con-
template and attain their end in different ways, some
truly, and some only having an imitation and image
of this true end—could anyone endure the oddity of
this line of thought? Well, as this discussion has
arisen among ourselves, there will be no risk in play-
ing with our own ideas. Then are we now contem-
plating as we play? Yes, we and all who play are
doing this, or at any rate this is what they aspire to
as they play. And it is likely that, whether a child
or a man is playing or being serious, one plays and
takes extremely seriously is introduced is entirely in the spirit
of Plato.

1 Cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics K.6 1172b10 (Eudoxus
thought that pleasure was the best because all things, rational
and irrational, aspired to it). Plotinus is taking Aristotle's
conception of θέωρα (K.6 and K.7) as the starting-point of his
discussion, and is perhaps deliberately indicating by this
phrase that his own conception of it is much more universal
than Aristotle's.
On Nature and Contemplation

The other is serious for the sake of contemplation, and every action is a serious effort towards contemplation; compulsory action drags contemplation more towards the outer world, and what we call voluntary, less, but, all the same, voluntary action, too, springs from the desire of contemplation. But we will discuss this later: but now let us talk about the earth itself, and trees, and plants in general, and ask what their contemplation is, and how we can relate what the earth makes and proceeds to its activity of contemplation, and how nature, which people say has no power of forming mental images or reasoning, has contemplation in itself and makes what it makes by contemplation, which it does not have.

2. Well, then, it is clear, I suppose, to everyone that there are no hands here or feet, and no instrument either acquired or of natural growth, but there is need if matter on which nature can work and which it forms. But we must also exclude levering from the operation of nature. For what kind of thrusting or levering can produce this rich variety of colours and shapes of every kind? For the wax-modellers—people have actually looked at them and thought that nature's workmanship was like 2.

1 The Stoics used the terms ὄνομας ὑπερβολής and ὑπερανάλοι to distinguish between "nature" in the sense of the Aristotelian growth-principle and in their own sense of the all-pervading divine reason; cp. Sotirc Vit. Fragm. II. 1016.

2 It is part of Plotinus's consistent effort to eliminate materialistic and spatial conceptions from our ideas of spiritual existence and activity that he insists frequently that soul and nature are not to be thought of as forming the material world with hands and tools and machines. He seems to have in mind the sort of crude Epicurean criticism of Plato which we find in Cicero De Natura Deorum I. 8.19 quae motile quae ferramenta quae machinae?
ON NATURE AND CONTEMPLATION

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χρώματα δύνανται ποιεῖν μὴ χρώματα ἀλλαξάθεν
10 ἐπάγοντες αἰς ποιεῖσιν. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἔχον ὁμοιοιοθέτησι, ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τὰς τέχνας τὰς τοιαύτας μετάντως, [ὁτι] 1 δεῖ τι ἐν αὐτοῖς μένειν, καθ’ ὅ ἐμένα διὰ χειρῶν παθόμενον ἄ κατὰ δύναμιν ἡ τοιοῦτον ἀνέλθεν τὰς φύσεως καὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ ὑπαινίζει, ὡς μένειν δεῖ καὶ ἑπτάθη τὴν δύναμιν
15 τῆς ὡς διὰ χειρῶν ποιοῦσαν καὶ τάσσειν μένειν. Οὐ γὰρ δὲ δεῖ τῶν μὲν ὡς μενότων, τῶν δὲ ὡς κινούμενον—ἡ γὰρ ἡλία τὸ κινούμενον, αὐτῆς δὲ οὐδὲν κινούμενου—ἡ ἐκεῖνη οὐκ ἔσται τὸ κινούμενον πρῶτον, οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀκόλουθον τὸ ἐν τῷ ἄλω. Ὁ μὲν δὴ λόγος, φαίη ἄν τις, ἀκόλουθος, αὕτη δὲ ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὸν λόγον καὶ
20 κινούμεν. Ἀλλ’ εἰ μὲν πάσαι φύσεις, καὶ ὁ λόγος· εἰ δὲ ταὐτὰς ἀκόλουθον, τοῦτο καὶ ὁ λόγος. Καὶ γὰρ εἴδος αὐτῆς δεῖ εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ἡ ἡλία καὶ εἰς τι γὰρ δεῖ αὐτῇ ἡ ἐπέκειται ἡ φύσις; Ἡ γὰρ ὁποιεσμένη καὶ δημιουργουμένη ἡ ἡλία ἐξαι τοῦτο φέροντα, ἡ γίνεται τοιαύτη ἢ μὴ
25 τοιαύτην ἡ φύσις λογισθείσα. Οὐ γὰρ πέρ ἐπὶ ποιοσκελεῖν, ἐν πέρ τε ἡ ἡλία γένεσθαι, ἀλλὰ λόγου ἡ καὶ σημεῖον ὁμοιῶς τοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἄφοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς φωτείς τοῖς λόγοις ἐνακαὶ τοῖς ποιοσκέλεσι καὶ τὴν φύσιν εἶναι λόγοι, δι’ τοῦτο λόγων ἄλλων

1 ἐν ᾧ Ἐμινιν. H-S.

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theirs—cannot make colours unless they bring colours from elsewhere to the things they make. But those who make this comparison ought to have considered also that even with those who practise crafts of this kind there must be something in themselves, something which stays unmoved, according to which they will make their works with their hands; they should have brought their minds back to the same kind of thing in nature, and understood that here, too, the power, all of it, which makes without hands, must stay unmoved. For it certainly has no need to have some unmoving and some moving parts—matter is what is in motion, and no part of nature is in motion—otherwise its unmoving part will not be the primary mover, nor will nature be this, but that which is unmoved in the universe as a whole. But someone might say that the rational forming principle is unmoved, but nature is different from the forming principle and is in motion. But if they are going to say that nature as a whole is in motion, then so will the forming principle be; but if any part of it is unmoved, this, too, will be the forming principle. In fact, of course, nature must be a form, and not composed of matter and form; for why should it need hot or cold matter? For matter which underlies it is worked on by it comes to it bringing this [heat or cold] or rather becomes of this quality (though it has no quality itself) by being given form by a rational principle. For it is not fire which has to come to matter in order that it may become fire, but a forming principle; and this is a strong indication that in animals and plants the forming principles are the makers and nature is a forming principle, which
This is a good example of the variety of meaning which the word λόγος can have in Plotinus. The logical subject of the sentence is λόγος in the special sense which it often bears in the Ennead, combining the ideas of intelligence, intelligibility and formative activity, which I translate by "rational principle" or "rational formative principle." It is a λόγος in this sense which does not have contemplation in the ordinary sense of "reasoning," "discursive thinking."
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δύναμις θεωρεῖ; ἂρ ὅτι τὸ ακοπεβάθαι ἐστι τὸ μέγιστον ἐχεῖν; Ὁ δὲ ἔχει, καὶ διὰ τούτου ὅτι ἔχει καὶ ποιεῖ. Τὸ ὅπι πιθανὸν ἐστὶν πρῶτο ἐστιν τὸ ποιεῖν αὐτῇ καὶ ὁπον ἐστὶν τοῦτο ἐστίν τὸ ποιεῖν. Ἑστὶ δὲ θεωρεῖ καὶ θεώρησις, λόγος γὰρ. Τὰ δὲν εἶναι θεωρεῖ καὶ θεώρησις καὶ λόγος τοῦτο καὶ ποιεῖ ἢ παντά διότι. Ἡ πολύτικη ἀρά θεωρεῖ ἡμῶν ἀνακάλυπται ἐστὶ γὰρ ἀποτέλεσμα θεωρεῖς μενοῦσθης θεωρεῖς οὐκ ἄλλῳ τι σοφάσθης, ἀλλὰ τῷ εἶναι θεωρεῖς πολυτάθης.

4. Καὶ εἰ τες δὲ αὐτῆς ἐρωτεῖς τῶν ἔνεκα τοιεμ, εἰ τοῦ ἐρωτώντας ἐθάλοι ἐπελεῖ καὶ λέγει, ἐστὶν ἄν: ἦ τε θεωροῦν μέν μὴ ἐρωτεῖ, οὕτως συνάντης καὶ αὐτόν σωφρίζει, ὅσπερ ἔχει σωφρίζει καὶ οὐκ εἰσίμασι λέγειν. Τὰ δὲν συνάντης; ὅτι τὸ γενόμενον ἐστὶ θέαμα ἐμοί, σωφρόσυνη, καὶ φύσει γενόμενον θεωρεῖς, καὶ μοι γενόμενον ἢ ἐκ θεορημάτων ὁδὴ τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν διαθεσίμως ἐπάρχει. Καὶ τὸ θεωροῦν μοι θεώρησις τοιει, ὡσπερ εἰ γενόμενον θεωροῦτο γεγονότος ἂλλ' ἐμοί μὴ γαρ δοκίμος.

10 δειπνοῦσθι δὲ, ὑπόλογει τοῖς συμμόρφοις γράμμαι ὡσπερ ἑρετούσης. Καὶ μοι τὸ τῆς μητρὸς καὶ τῶν γενόμενων ὑπάρχει πᾶλιν καὶ

1 σωφρόσυνη Colorides (secundum Dodds) et nunc Henry et Schwabere: σωφρόσυνη eodid, E-S.

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life and a rational principle and a power which makes?
Is it because research means not yet possessing?
But: nature possesses, and just because it possesses,
it also makes. Making, for it, means being what it is,
and its making power is coextensive with what it is.
But: it is contemplation and object of contemplation,
for it is a rational principle. So by being contemplation
and object of contemplation and rational principle,
it makes in so far as it is these things.
So its making has been revealed to us as contemplation,
for it is a result of contemplation, and the contemplation
stays unchanged and does not do anything else
but makes by being contemplation.

4. And if anyone were to ask nature why it makes,
if it cared to hear and answer the questioner it
would say: "You ought not to ask, but to under¬
stand 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
naturally, and that I, originating from this sort of
contemplation have a contemplative nature.
And my act of contemplation makes what it contemplates,
as the geometers draw their figures while they con¬
template. But I do not draw, but as I contemplate,
the lines which bound bodies come to be as if they fell
from my contemplation. What happens to me is
what happens to my mother and the beings that
primary bodies in Timaeus 36C–56C.
But the intuitive spontaneity of the process here, as contrasted with the careful
and deliberate mathematical planning in Plato’s symbolic
description, brings out clearly an important difference in the
mentality of the two philosophers.

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16 ἵνα μὴ γίνει τεταρτή ἢ ἀληθεία, ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ τεταρτή ἢ ἀληθεία, ὡς ἰδέα τῆς ἀληθείας. Ὑπεραιτεῖται γενεσθαι τοιαύτης ἐφαρμογῆς τῆς ἄλλης ἀληθείας. Καὶ ἐφ' ὑπακοής τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεραγοράς τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεραξίες τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεράσκος τούτου.

20 ἴδον τὴν ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας. Καὶ ἐφ' ὑπεραγοράς τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεραξίες τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεράσκος τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεράσκος τούτου, ἐφ' ὑπεράσκος τούτου.

25 ἡ ἡ τοῦ ἁπάντας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς ἡ τοῦ ἁπάντας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς ἡ τοῦ ἁπάντας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς ἡ τοῦ ἁπάντας τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας, ἐν τῇ ἁπάντησιν τῆς ἀληθείας.

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generated me, for they, too, derive from contemplation, and it is no action of theirs which brings about my birth; they are greater rational principles, and as they contemplate themselves I come to be.

What does this mean? That what is called nature is a soul, the offspring of a prior soul with a stronger life; that it quietly holds contemplation in itself, not directed upwards or even downwards, but at rest in what it is, in its own repose and a kind of self-perception, and in this consciousness and self-perception it sees what comes after it, as far as it can, and seeks other things no longer, having accomplished a vision of splendour and delight. If anyone wants to attribute to it understanding or perception, it will not be the understanding or perception we speak of in other beings; it will be like comparing the consciousness of someone fast asleep to the consciousness of someone awake. Nature is at rest in contemplation of the vision of itself, a vision which comes to it from its abiding in and with itself and being itself a vision; and its contemplation is silent but somewhat blurred. For there is another, clearer for sight, and nature is the image of another contemplation. For this reason what is produced by it is weak in every way, because a weak contemplation produces a weak object. Men, too, when their power of contemplation weakens, make action a shadow of contemplation and reasoning. Because contemplation is not enough for them, since their souls are weak and they are not able to grasp the

1 καθ' ἑαυτόν πάνω Ὑπηρετεύς καὶ Ὑπηρετεύς: τὸ πάντοτε καθ', Ὑ. Ὑ. 370

2 ἐκ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ πάντοτε καθ', Ὑ. Ὑ. 370
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... to see, they are carried into action, so as to see what they cannot see with their intellect. When they make something, then, it is because they want to see their object themselves and also because they want others to be aware of it and contemplate it, when their project is realized in practice as well as possible. Everywhere we shall find that making and action are either a weakening or a consequence of contemplation; a weakening, if the doer or maker had nothing in view beyond the thing done, a consequence if he had another prior object of contemplation better than what he made. For who, if he is able to contemplate what is truly real will deliberately go after its image? The duller children, too, are evidence of this, who are incapable of learning and contemplative studies and turn to crafts and manual work.

6. But, now that we have said, in speaking of nature, in what way coming into being is contemplation, we must go on to the soul prior to nature and say how its contemplation, its love of learning and spirit of enquiry, its birth-pangs from the knowledge it attains and its fullness, make it, when it has itself become all a vision, produce another vision; it is which is a consequence of contemplation should imply any weakness in the contemplation itself (however imperfectly it may represent it); and the activity of nature in forming the material world is an activity of this sort. But Plotinus is so deeply convinced of the inferiority of the material world that he has to represent the activity of soul in forming material things as an activity of the lowest form of soul and due to its weakness in contemplation; hence the comparison with the substitute activities of uncontemplative men.

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This distinction between the action which is a substitute for contemplation and that which naturally issues from it is a valuable one. and the description of the way in which weakness in contemplation leads through dissatisfaction to substitute activities (11. 33-30) is a good piece of psychological observation. But there is a certain confusion of thought in the passage. There is no reason why the kind of action
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like the way in which art produces; when a particular art is complete, it produces a kind of another little art in a toy which possesses a trace of everything in it. But, all the same, these visions, these objects of contemplation, are dim and helpless sorts of things. The first part of soul, then, that which is above and always filled and illuminated by the reality above, remains There; but another part, participating by the first participation of the participant goes forth, for soul goes forth always, life from life; for actuality reaches everywhere, and there is no point where it fails. But in going forth it lets its prior part remain where it left it, for if it abandoned what is before it, it would no longer be everywhere, but only at the last point it reached. But what goes forth is not equal to what remains. If, then, it must come to be everywhere, and there must be nowhere without its activity; and if the prior must always be different from what that comes after; and if activity originates from contemplation or action, and action did not exist at this stage—for it cannot come before contemplation—then all activity of soul must be contemplation, but one stage weaker than another. So what appears to be action according to contemplation is really the weaker form

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Henry-Schwyzer, seems to me irrefutable. As the text stands, it makes Plotinus say that the soul allows its higher part to remain where it left it (in the intelligible world), for if it left its higher part the soul would lose its omnipresence (which it does not do). This does not really make sense. I therefore follow Dodds in bracketing the phrase, designed to show that the priority is in the order of being, not temporal, to pote, (l. 18) can then refer, as it should, to Intellect.

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of contemplation, for that which is produced must always be of the same kind as its producer, but weaker through losing its virtue as it comes down. All goes on noiselessly, for there is no need of any obvious and external contemplation or action; it is soul which contemplates, and makes that which comes after it, that which contemplates in a more external way and not like that which precedes it: and contemplation makes contemplation. Contemplation and vision have no limits. This is why soul makes everywhere, for where does it not? Since the same vision is in every soul. For it is not spatially limited. It is, of course, not present in the same way in every soul, since it is not even in a like way in every part of the soul. That is why the charioteer gives the horses a share of what he sees; and they in taking it obviously would have desired what they saw, for they did not get it all. And if in their longing they act, they act for the sake of what they long for; and that was vision and contemplation.

6. Action, then, is for the sake of contemplation and vision, so that for men of action, too, contemplation is the goal, and what they cannot get by going straight to it, so to speak, they seek to obtain by going round about. For, again, when they reach what they want, the thing which they wished to exist, not so that they should not know it but so that they of which production is the inseparable other side: and for Plotinus, as for Plato, nothing exists which is not the product of soul's activity.

2 The ambrosia and nectar with which the charioteer feeds his horses in the Phædrus myth (347D–E) are interpreted as the share which the lower parts of the soul can receive of the divine vision of the higher.
should know it and see it present in their soul, it is, obviously, an object set there for contemplation. This is so, too, because they act for the sake of a good; but this means, not that the good arising from their action should be outside them, or that they should not have it, but that they should have it. But where do they have it? In their soul. So action bends back again to contemplation, for what someone receives in his soul, which is rational form—what can it be other than silent rational form? And more so, the more it is within the soul. For the soul keeps quiet then, and seeks nothing because it is filled, and the contemplation which is there in a state like this rests within because it is confident of possessor. And, in proportion as the confidence is clearer, the contemplation is quieter, in that it unifies more, and what knows, in so far as it knows—we must be serious now—comes into unity with what is known. For if they are two, the knower will be one thing and the known another, so that there is a sort of juxtaposition, and contemplation has not yet made this pair akin to each other, as when rational principles present in the soul do nothing. For this reason the rational principle must not be outside but must be united with the soul of the learner, until it finds that it is its own. The soul, then, when it has become akin to and disposed according to the rational principle, still, all the same, utters and propounds it—for it did not possess it primarily—and learns it thoroughly and by its proposition becomes other than it, and looks at it, considering it, like one thing looking at another; and yet soul, too, was a rational principle and a sort of intellect, but an intellect seeing
something else. For it is not full, but has something wanting in relation to what comes before it; yet it itself sees also quietly what it utters. For it does not go on uttering what it has uttered well already, but what it utters because of its deficiency, with a view to examining it, trying to learn thoroughly what it possesses. But in men of action the soul fits what it possesses to the things outside it. And because the soul possesses its content more completely it is quieter than nature, and because it has a greater content it is more contemplative; but because it does not have perfect possession it desires to learn more thoroughly what it has contemplated and gain a fuller contemplation, which comes from examining it. And when it leaves itself and comes to be among other things, and then returns again, it contemplates with the part of itself it left behind; but the soul at rest in itself does this less.

The truly good and wise man, therefore, has already finished reasoning when he declares what he has in himself to another; but in relation to himself he is vision. For he is already turned to what is one, and to the quiet which is not only of things outside but in relation to himself, all is within him.

7. That all things come from contemplation and are contemplation, both the things which truly exist and the things which come from them when they contemplate and are themselves objects of contemplation, some by sense-perception and some by knowledge or opinion; and that actions have their goal in knowledge and their driving-force is desire of knowledge; and that the products of contemplation are directed to the perfecting of another form and object.
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of contemplation; and that in general all active things, which are representations, make objects of contemplation and forms; and that the realities which have come into existence, which are representations of real beings, show that their makers had as their goal in making, not makings or actions, but the finished object of contemplation; and that this is what processes of reasoning want to see, and, even before them, acts of sense perception, whose goal is knowledge; and that before them again nature makes the object of contemplation and the rational principle in itself, perfecting another rational principle; all these points are, I suppose, clear—some of them were self-evident, and the discussion brought others to mind. What follows, too, is clear; that it was necessary, since the first principles were engaged in contemplation, for all other things to aspire to this state, granted that their originative principle is, for all things, the goal. For when living things, too, produce, it is the rational principles within which move them, and this is an activity of contemplation, the birthpain of creating many forms and many things to contemplate and filling all things with contemplation. And failures, too, both in what comes into being and what is done, are failures of contemplators who are distracted from their object of contemplation; and the bad workman is the sort of person who makes ugly

Nicomachean Ethics A.3, 1095a5; Z.2, 1139a21–b4; K.10, 1179a35 ff.), and makes the whole life, not only of man but the universe, philosophy in Aristotle’s sense.

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8. This, then, is so. But, as contemplation ascends from nature to soul, and soul to intellect, and the contemplations become always more intimate and united to the contemplators, and in the soul of the good and wise man the objects known tend to become identical with the knowing subject, since they are pressing on towards intellect, it is clear that in intellect both are one, not by becoming akin, as in the best soul, but substantially, and because "thinking and being are the same." For there is not still one thing and another, for if there is, there will be something else again, which is not any more one thing and another. So this must be something where both are really one. But this is living contemplation, not an object of contemplation like that in something else. For that which is in something else is alive because of that other, not in its own right. If, then, an object of contemplation and thought is to have life, it must be life in its own right [absolute and unqualified life], not the life of growth or sense-perception or that which belongs to the rest of the soul. For the other lives are thoughts in a way, but one is a growth-thought, one a sense-thought, and one a soul-thought. How, then, are they thoughts? Because they are rational principles. And every life is a thought, but one is dimmer than another, just as life [has degrees of clarity and strength].

1 Plotinus is here alluding to Parmenides fr. B3DK, which he quotes accurately at V. 1.159.8. 17, and uses explicitly, as he does here implicitly, in support of his doctrine that the intelligible objects are not outside intellect.

2 Like E. R. Dodds (art. cit., p. 111), I cannot make sense of μετάνοια with the received text, and therefore follow him in reading ευεργείαν for ευεργέτες, which gives a good and appropriate sense.
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But this life is clearer; this is first life and first intellect in one. So the first life is thought, and the second life thought: in the second degree, and the last life thought in the last degree. All life, then, belongs to this kind and is thought. But perhaps men may speak of different kinds of life, but do not speak of different kinds of thought but say that some are thoughts, but others not thoughts at all, because they do not investigate at all what kind of thing life is. But we must bring out this point, at any rate, that again our discussion shows that all things are a by-product of contemplation. If, then, the truest life is life by thought, and is the same thing as the truest thought, then the truest thought lives, and contemplation, and the object of contemplation at this level, is living and life, and the two together are one. So, if the two are one, how is this one many? Because what it contemplates is not one. For when it contemplates the One, it does not contemplate it as one: otherwise it would not become intellect. But beginning as one it did not stay as it began, but, without noticing it, became many, how much better it would have been for it not to want this, for it became the second! for it became like a circle unrolling itself.

1 For the doctrine that Intellect in its contemplation of the One necessarily sees it as many and so becomes a multiplicity, cp. V. 3 [49] 11; VI. 7 [38] 15. The view, however,
shape and surface and circumference and centre and radii; some parts above and some below. The better is the "whence," the worse the "whither." For the "whither" is not of the same kind as the "whence-and-whither," nor, again, the "whence-and-whither" the same kind as the "whence" by itself. And, to put it another way, Intellect is not the intellect of one individual, but is universal; and being universal, is the Intellect of all things. So, if it is universal and of all things, its part must possess everything and all things: otherwise it will have a part which is not intellect, and will be composed of non-intellects, and will be a heap casually put together waiting to become an intellect made up of all things. Therefore, too, it is unbounded in this way and, if anything comes from it, there is no diminution, neither of what comes from it, because it, too, is all things, nor of that from which it comes, because it is not something made out of pieces put together.

9. This, then, is what Intellect is like: and for this reason it is not the first, but what is beyond it¹ must exist (that to which our discussion has been leading), first of all, because multiplicity comes after unity; and Intellect is a number, but the principle of number, of this kind of number too, is that which is ready one; and it is intellect and intelligible at one, so that it is two things at once. But if it is two, one must understand what comes before the two. What is it, then? Intellect only? But with every intellect its intelligible is coupled; if, then, it must not have its intelligible coupled with it, it will not be intellect. If, then it is not intellect, and is going to get out beyond the two, that which comes before

¹ eli δ Dodds, H-S: ἀφ' δυ codd.
² nomos Kirchhoff: υ' codd.
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these two must be beyond intellect. What then, prevents it from being the intelligible? The fact that the intelligible also is coupled with intellect. If, then, it is neither intellect nor intelligible, what can it be? We shall assert: that it is that from which Intellect and the intelligible with it come. What, then, is this, and what kind of thing shall we imagine it to be? For certainly it will be either a thinking being or something unthinking. Well, if it is thinking it will be an intellect, but if it is unthinking, it will be ignorant even of itself; so what will be grand about it? For even if we say that it is the Good and absolutely simple, we shall not be saying anything clear and distinct, even though we are speaking the truth, as long as we do not have anything on which to base our reasoning when we speak. For, again, since knowledge of other things comes to us from intellect, and we are able to know intellect by intellect, by what sort of simple intuition could one grasp this which transcends the nature of intellect? We shall say to the person to whom we have to explain how this is possible, that it is by the likeness in ourselves. For there is something of it in us too; or rather there is nowhere where it is not, in the things which can participate in it. For, wherever you are, it is from this that you have that which is everywhere present, by setting to it that which can have it: just as if there was a voice filling an empty space, or with the empty space, men too, and by setting yourself to listen at any point in the empty space, you will receive the whole voice, and yet not the whole. What is it, then, which we shall receive when we set our intellect to it? Rather, the intellect

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10 δύο τούτων ἐπίκειται νοῦς εἶσαι. Τί οὖν καλίζει τὸ νοστὸν αὐτὸ εἶσαι; Ἡ δὴ καὶ τὸ νοστὸν αὐτὸ ἐπικείμενο τῷ νῷ. Εἰ ὦν μὲν νοῦς μὴ λαμβάνειν εἶσαι, τὸ ἀνεῖσαι; Ἐκ τοῦ δὲ νοστὸς καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ νοστῷ φήμης. Τί οὖν τούτῳ καὶ ποιῶν τοῖς αὐτῶς φαντασμάτων; Καί γὰρ τοῦτο νοστός ἔσται οὐκ άνώτερο τί. Νοστὸν δὲ οὖν νοστὸς, ἄνοστον δὲ

15 ἀνοσοθεῖ καὶ ἄνωτέρ έστε τα μέλη; Οὐδὲ γὰρ, εὐ λαμβάνει τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ ἀπολυτράτων εἶναι, διδόν τι καὶ σαφὲς ἐφάρμοσαι τὸ αἰλόθρητο λέγοντες. Καί γὰρ καὶ τῆς γνώσεως διὰ τοῦ τῶν ἀλλων γνωσμένης καὶ τῷ νῷ νοστῶν γνωσθένσεως

20 δύομένων ὑπερβεβηκός τοῦτο τὴν νοῦ φύσιν τιν ἀν ἀλλόκοτο ἐπιβολή ἀφοί. Πρὸς τοῦ δὲ σημαῖναι, ὅπως οὖν τῷ, τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν ὑμνῷ φήμης. Ἐστὶ γὰρ τοῦ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν αὐτῶν; οὐκ ἐστώ, ἐποίησιν, οὐτοὶ δὲ ἐστὶν, ὧδε διὰ τε μετέχειν αὐτών. Τό γὰρ παντοειδον

25 καὶ παντοειδος 1 ὑποκαλύπτω τὸ διαμενὲν ἐκεῖν ἡς εἶχεν. ἀκοῦσθην ὡστε καὶ τοῦτον κατακατάθηται ἐκεῖν ἡ καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἐρμίας καὶ ἀναλήπτουν ὡς ἐκεῖν ἠρμίας στήνειν όσδ’ ἐκεῖνην κομίζει πᾶσι καὶ αὐτὸν πᾶσαν. Τί οὖν εἶναι καὶ τοὺς νοστούς παραμικράς

Plotinus could hardly make it clearer than he does in this passage that he is not a pantheist. He is arguing here either against the Stoics, for whom the visible universe was both the totality of being and the supreme unity and divinity, or against Platonists who accepted the identification of the totality of being with Intellect, but did not see the need for the transcendent One.
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all things, in order that all things, too, may exist after it. But as for its being each one taken separately, first, any one of them will be the same as any other, then all will be confounded together and there will be no distinction [between them]. And so it is not one of all things, but is before all things.

10. What is it, then? The productive power of all things; if it did not exist, neither would all things, nor would Intellect be the first and universal life. But what is above life is cause of life; for the activity of life, which is all things, is not first, but itself flows out, so to speak, as if from a spring. For think of a spring which has no other origin, but gives the whole of itself to rivers, and not used up by the rivers but remains itself at rest, but the rivers that rise from it, before each of them flows in a different direction, remain for a while all together, though each of them knows, in a way, the direction in which it is going to let its stream flow; or of the life of a huge plant, which goes through the whole of it while its origin remains and is not dispersed over the whole, since it is, as it were, firmly settled in the root. So this origin gives to the plant its whole life in its multiplicity, but remains itself not multiple but the origin of the multiple life. And this is no wonder. Or, yes, it is a wonder how the multiplicity of life came from what is not multiplicity, and the multiplicity would not have existed, if what was not multiplicity had not existed before the multiplicity. For the origin is not divided up into the All, for if it were divided up

1 For the application of the word Sóphos to the One as principle of all things, cp. IV, 8 (8) 6, 11, and VI, 9 (9) 6, 36. It should not be misunderstood as meaning "potentiality" in the Aristotelian sense: it is rather (as translated here) "productive power," supremely active, not passive, a formlessness productive of forms, not a formlessness which submits to forms.
it would destroy the All too; and the All could not any more come into being if the origin did not remain by itself, different from it. Therefore, too, we go back everywhere to one. And in each and everything there is some one to which you will trace it back, and this in every case to the one before it, which is not simply one, until we come to the simply one; but this cannot be traced back to something else. But if we take the one of the plant—this is its abiding origin—and the one of the animal and the one of the soul and the one of the universe, we are taking in each case what is most powerful and really valuable in it; but if we take the one of the beings which truly exist, their origin and spring and productive power, shall we lose faith and think of it as nothing? It is certainly none of the things of which it is origin; it is of such a kind, though nothing can be predicated of it, not being, not substance, not life, as to be above all of these things. But if you grasp it by taking away being from it, you will be filled with wonder. And, throwing yourself upon it and coming to rest within it, understand it more and more intimately, knowing it by intuition and seeing its greatness by the things which exist after it and through it.

11. And again, consider it this way, for since Intellect is a kind of sight, and a sight which is seeing, it will be a potency which has come into act. So there will be a distinction of matter and form in it, but the matter will be [the kind that}

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1 The repeated wv- in this sentence defies translation: it suggests the intimate presence of the One both with the Forms which spring from it and the contemplating mind.
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exists in] the intelligible world; since actual seeing, too, has a doubleness in it, it was, certainly, one before seeing. So the one has become two and the two one. For seeing, then, fulfilment and a kind of completion comes from the object perceived, but it is the Good which brings fulfilment to the sight of Intellect. For if it was itself the Good, why would it have to see, or to be active at all? For other things have their activity about the Good and because of the Good, but the Good needs nothing; therefore it has nothing but itself. Therefore, when you have said “The Good” do not add anything to it in your mind, for if you add anything, you will make it deficient by whatever you have added. Therefore you must not even add thinking, in order that you may not add something other than it and make two, intellect and good. For Intellect needs the Good, but the Good does not need it; hence, too, when it attains the Good it becomes conformed to the Good and is completed by the Good, since the form which comes upon it from the Good conforms it to the Good. A trace of the Good is seen in it, and it is in the likeness of this that one should conceive its true archetype, forming an idea of it in oneself from the trace of it which plays upon Intellect. The Good, therefore has given the trace of itself on Intellect to Intellect to have by seeing, so that in Intellect there is desire, and it is always desiring and always attaining, but the Good is not desiring—for what could it desire?—or attaining, for it did not desire [to attain anything]. So it is not even Intellect.

1 For matter in the intelligible world, cp. II. 411213-5.

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oude nos. "Ephesios ydr kai en toiswv kai ospeuvxos
pros to 6idos authou. Tou de nov kalou autou kai
pantos kalllstos, en fwti katharwv kai alyg
katharwv keimewn kai tin ton auton perilaibontos
fywv, o de kai o kalos autos kosmos skia kai
Xyfrwv, kai en pase aglaia keimewn, oti moudian
30 anagiton mhde skoteinon mhde" anagwv en autw,
epistos xwirn mukarwv, thambos mev an eko tov
dyava kai tostwv kai oon xhri elin auton eidoswta
kai autw 1 genomevnon eva. 'Ode o di anaboleias
eis ton uforon kai to ton apostwv fetous idwv
25 to ton poishanta enymeretai kai zhteta, ouwv xhri kai
tov nogetow kuros de thesauro kai wvdhe kai
edwmaise ton kalwv koiwv tis ara o toioton
upostifase zhtwv, [h pev] 2 h pws, o toiotwn pайд
xenopoew tov, koro w allw kai par' authw
genomevnon koryn. Pántwv toi osste noxv ekkos
40 osste koryn, alla kai pro nov kai korwv mete ydr
autwn nos kai korys, bethvna kai kikaréthein kai
kethvna. O plhros upo epi tov anexéthein kai
tov noetov osdeu thesmwv, plhrosin de allvnu
kai voxyn ekei, evi prwtow ekei. To de pro
45 autwv osste deitei osste ekei. h oke an to agadwv
1. ather Dodds, II-S1; ather codd.
2. h evi del. Dodds, II-S1.
III. VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

Introductory Note

This odd little collection of notes (No. 13 in Porphyry's chronological order, but the numbering must be quite arbitrary: the notes are unlikely all to have been written at about the same time), which Porphyry found among his master's papers and put together to make a ninth "treatise" to complete his Third Ennead, on the whole adds little to our understanding of the thought of Plotinus. They are quite disconnected, and each of them deals with a point discussed more fully elsewhere in the Enneads. The first and longest is, however, of some interest. In it we find Plotinus reflecting on a problem much discussed in his school, that of the relationship of Intellect to the Forms, which arises in the interpretation of Timaeus 39E. 7-9. And in the course of his discussion of it (1. 15 ff.) he appears to be considering with some sympathetic interest the possibility of a subdivision of Intellect very like that which is reported to have been taught by Amelius; and which he decisively rejects in his treatise Against the Gnostics; he certainly does not, however, commit himself to this, and at the end of the note seems to be putting forward his usual view that there are three, and only three, hypostases without subdivisions.

Synopsis

The correct interpretation of Timaeus 39E. 7-9: does it require a subdivision of Intellect, or can we interpret it in terms of a single Intellect and Soul? (Note 1). We must unite ourselves as subjects of study are united in one discipline and direct our united selves to the higher world (Note 2). Universal Soul is not in place and unmoving, but individuals move and change, in a sense, and in so doing make their bodily images (Note 3). The One is everywhere and nowhere (Note 4). The soul is matter in relation to Intellect (Note 5). Intellect at rest exists before our self-thinking (Note 6). The One is beyond motion and rest, and transcends thinking (Note 7). Act and potency in compounded and uncompounded beings (Note 8). The Good does not think, and is not conscious of itself (Note 9).

III. 9. (13) ΕΙΣΙΚΕΥΣΕΙΣ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΩΝ

1. Νοος, φθον, ἄρει ἐνοσας ἑδεας ἐν τῷ θείῳ ἡ σωτικὴ φθονί τοῦ θείου, ἡ δημιούργος, ἡ δοξα ἡ ἐν τῷ ἢ ἡ σωτικὴ φθονί, καὶ τάδε τὸ πάντως ἔχειν. Ὅσον πάντως ἐδειγμάτθη λίτα ἐν θείῳ πρότερον, ἀνα τῇ ἀνίκτῳ νοοῖ, ἐπὶ πρῶτον οὐκ ἐκάντο, λέγω δὲ τῷ θείῳ, ἐν ἐπιφανείᾳ εἰ μὴ νοοῖ, ἀλλὰ ἐκακοὶ τῇ γὰρ θεωμένης νοοῖς, τῷ πάντως θείῳ αὐτῷ ὁ νοός, ἀλλὰ γνώσει αὐτὸ φθονί τοῦ νοοῦ ἔξω ἐφθασεν αὐτῷ ἄ δικα ἔρχει. Εἰ δὲ μας ἀγα καὶ ἐνενήκη ἔχει, εἰ ἢ ἐκακοὶ τῇ γαρ. Ἐκεί γὰρ καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐνενήκην ἐν τῷ ἀγα μας εἰ διδοὺ ἐκακοὐ, ἢ ἦν ἐκακοῦ ἐκακοῦ εἰ μὴν ἀλλ’ ἀλλ’ ἀλλήλου, ἀλλ’ ἐκακού ἐκακοῦ. Ἐπειτα οὖν καὶ τὴν ἀληθινὴν ἐνενήκην ἐν τῷ ἀγαμα μας εἰ διδοὺ ἐκακοὐ, ἐκακοῦ εἰ διδοὺ ἐκακοῦ ἐκακοῦ ἐν τῷ πάντως ἔχειν, ἀλλ’ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἐν ἀγα μας ἔχειν

1 Timaeus 39E, 7-9.

This view, which Porphyry here and elsewhere consistently opposes, was not one held by Porphyry (ep. 10A, ch. 16, 11, and Proclus, In Tim. I. 322. 22-4). It differs from that of Longinus, who made the Forms not only outside, but posterior to, the Demiurge (Proclus, Lo.).

III. 9. VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

1. "Intellect," Plato says, "sees the Ideas existing in the real living creature" then, he says, "the Maker planned that, what Intellect sees in the real living creature, this universe too should have."

Does he, then, say that the Forms exist already before Intellect, and that Intellect thinks them when they already exist? First of all, then, we must investigate that reality (I mean the living creature), to see if it is not Intellect, but something other than Intellect; for that which contemplates it is Intellect; so we shall say that the living creature is not Intellect, but intelligible, and that Intellect has what it sees outside itself. So, then, it has images and not true realities, if the true realities are there [in the living creature]. For there, Plato says, is truth too, in real being, where each and every thing in itself is. Now, even if the two are different from each other, they are not separate from each other except in so far as they are different. Further, there is nothing in the statement against both being one, but distinguished by thought, though only in the sense that one is intelligible object, the other intelligible subject; for Plato does not say that what it sees is in something absolutely different, but in it,
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD III. 9.

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in that it has the intelligible object in itself. Or there is nothing against [this solution]; the intelligible object is also an intellect at rest and in unity and quietness, but the nature of the intellect which sees that intellect which remains within itself is an activity proceeding from it, which sees that [static] intellect; and by seeing that intellect it is in a way the intellect of that intellect, because it thinks it; but that thinking intellect itself too is intelligent subject and intelligible object in a different way, by imitation. This, then, is that which "planned" to make in this universe the four kinds of living creatures which it sees in the intelligible. Plato seems, nevertheless, to be making, obscurely, the intending principle something other than those two. But to others it will seem that the three are one, the living creature which exists in itself, the intellect, and the planning principle. Just as in many other questions, different people understand "being three" in different ways because they formulate the problem differently. We have dealt with the two, but what is the third, which "planned" itself to construct and make and divide into parts the things seen by Intellect in the living creature? Now it is possible that in one way it may be Intellect that divides, but in another way the divider may not be Intellect; for in so far as the things divided into parts come from it, it is itself the divider, but in so far as it remains undivided itself, and it is the things which come from it which are divided—and these are souls—it is Soul which makes the division into many souls. This birds, fishes and land animals, one kind for each of the elements, fire, air, water and earth.

1 This may be a misinterpretation, or careless reading, of Timaeus 30C7-8.
2 Timaeus 39E10-40A2. The "four kinds" are gods,

1. Plotinus is here very freely interpreting Timaeus 35A. Porphry held that Soul was the Demiurge, and believed that this interpretation agreed with that of Plotinus (Proclus, In Timaeus 1 506, 32–307, 3); this passage gives him some support, and, though elsewhere (II. 3/102/18, 15, and V. 9/33/26) Plotinus identifies the Demiurgo with Intellect, he makes it clear that it is Soul which actually makes the visible universe. Intellect is only "the true demiurge and maker" in the sense that it supplies Soul with the forms according to which it makes.

2. This extremely puzzling remark may possibly be meant to exclude the literal, spatial meaning of "above" and to indicate that all parts of the universe, the lower as well as the upper, are "next" to soul.

Various Considerations

is the reason why Plato also says that the division belongs to the third and is in the third, because it "planned," this—planning—is not the work of Intellect, but of Soul, which has a divided activity in a divided nature.

2. Just as one discipline which is a whole is not scattered or broken into pieces by the division into the single subjects of study, but each of these contains potentially the whole, which has the same principle and goal; in the same way, too, a man must prepare himself so that the principles in him are also his goals, and each as a whole and all together are directed to the best of his nature; when he has become this, he is there [in the higher world]; for with this best of him, when he possesses it, he will grasp that [higher reality].

3. Universal Soul did not come to be anywhere or come to any place, for there was no place; but the body came near to it and participated in it; for this reason Plato, too, does not say anywhere that it is in the body, but that the body was put into it. But the other souls have somewhere they come from—for they come from universal Soul and somewhere to go to, and a going down and going about: consequently also a going up. But the [universal] Soul is always above, where it is natural for it to be: that which comes next to it is the All [the physical universe] both the immediately neighbouring part and that which is beneath the sun.
then, is illuminated when it goes towards that which is before it—for then it meets reality—but when it goes towards what comes after it, it goes towards non-existence. But it does this, when it goes towards itself, for, wishing to be directed towards itself it makes an image of itself, the non-existent, as if walking on emptiness and becoming more indefinite; and the indefinite image of this is every way dark: for it is altogether without reason and unintelligent and stands far removed from reality. Up to the time between it is in its own world, but when it looks at the image again, as it were directing its attention to it a second time, it forms it and goes into it rejoicing.

4. How then does multiplicity come from one? Because it is everywhere, for there is nowhere where it is not. Therefore it fills all things; so it is many, or rather it is already all. Now if it itself were only everywhere, it would itself be all things; but since it is also nowhere, all things come into being through him, because he is everywhere, but are other than him, because he is nowhere. Why, then, is he not only everywhere, and is also, besides being everywhere, nowhere? Because there must be one before all things. Therefore he must fill all things and make all things, not be all the things he makes.

5. The soul itself must be like sight, and what it sees must be Intellect; before it sees it is indeterminate, but naturally adapted to intellection: so it is matter in relation to intellect.

6. When we are thinking ourselves we are, obviously, looking at a thinking nature, or our statement that there is thinking would be false. If, then, we
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think, and think ourselves, we think a nature which is thinking; then before this thinking there is another which is, so to speak, at rest. And there is, certainly, a thinking of substance and a thinking of life; so that before this life and substance there is another substance and life. These, then, all the things which are activities saw. But if the activities engaged in thinking themselves in this way are intelligenes, then our real selves are their intelligible object. But their thinking brings [only] the image of it.

7. The First is the power which causes motion and rest, so that it is beyond them; but the Second is at rest and also in motion around the First; and Intellect is in the sphere of the Second, for it is one thing and has its thought directed to another, but the One does not have thought. So that which thinks is double, even if it thinks itself, and defective, because it has its good in its thinking, not in its being.

8. Being in act is, for everything which passes from potency to act, that which is always the same as long as the thing exists; so that completion exists for bodies too, fire, for instance; but they cannot always exist, because they are compounded with matter; but that which is uncompounded and in act always exists. But it is possible for the same thing which is in act to be in potency in another respect.

9. But the First beyond being does not think: Intellect is the real beings, and there is movement here and rest. The First itself is not related to anything, but the other things related to it, staying...
PLOTinus: Ennead III. 9.

around it in their rest, and moving around it, for movement is desire, but it desires nothing, for what could it desire, it which is the highest? Does it not, then, even think itself? Is it not said in a general way to think in that it possesses itself? It is not by possessing itself that anything is said to think, but by looking at the First. But thinking itself is also the first actuality. If, then, this is the first, there is no need of anything before it. That, then, which produces this is beyond it, so thinking is second after that. For thinking is also not the primarily venerable; all thinking is certainly not venerable, only thinking about the Good, so the Good is beyond thinking. But the Good will not be conscious of itself. What, then, would its consciousness of itself be? A consciousness of itself as being good or not? Well, then, if it is of itself as being good, the Good exists already before the consciousness; but if the consciousness makes it good, the Good would not exist before it, so that the consciousness itself would not exist, since it is of the Good. What then? Is it not alive either? No, it cannot be said to live, but if it can, [only in the sense that] it gives life. That which is conscious of itself and thinks itself comes second, for it is conscious of itself in order that in this actuality of consciousness it may understand itself. Therefore, if it becomes acquainted with itself, it must have been unacquainted with itself and deficient in its own nature, and is completed by its thinking. So, then, thinking must be excluded from the Good, for the addition causes diminution and defect.