

Doctoral Dissertation

**Plotinus' *Sympatheia* and Its Philosophical Foundations:
Towards a Comprehensive Approach**

By: Anastasia Theologou

Supervisor: István Perczel

Submitted to the Historical Studies Department of the
Central European University Private University, Vienna
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of

Doctor of Philosophy in Medieval Studies

and

Doctor of Philosophy in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Vienna, Austria

2024

Copyright © Anastasia Theologou, 2024. Plotinus' *Sympatheia* and Its Philosophical Foundations: Towards a Comprehensive Approach - This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (CC BY-NC-ND) 4.0 International license.

To Nikos Kanellopoulos

Contents

Abstract.....	5
Authorship Declaration (AT)	9
Authorship Declaration (US)	10
Acknowledgements	11
Abbreviations	15
Introduction.....	16
Historiography of the study of Plotinus and <i>sympatheia</i>	16
Overview of the dissertation	24
Chapter 1: Galen and Plotinus: the principle of cosmic <i>sympatheia</i>	27
Galen and Plotinus: intertextual and comparative approaches.....	27
A brief history of <i>sympatheia</i>	35
The two aspects of <i>sympatheia</i> : physiology and the demiurgic activity of the soul.....	37
Physical functions and <i>sympatheia</i>	41
Galen's theory of motion	45
The network outside the body.....	48
Galen's Theology	56
Plotinus and cosmic religion: the soul, the body and their network	66
Plotinus following Galen: the <i>arche</i> and the powers of the soul.....	69
The operation of the soul and the creation of an analogical spatiality	75
Plurality and unity in <i>sympatheia</i> : a response to Galen?	83
Conclusion.....	85
Chapter 2: Creation, Analogy and the Unity of the Souls.....	87
Introduction.....	87
The Demiurge: intellect, cosmic soul and contemplation	89
Creation in both realms.....	90
The Demiurge as the Intellect.....	94
The whole soul and the partial souls.....	104
Galen's <i>archai</i>	105
The role of analogy and the unity of the souls.....	113
Conclusions.....	119
Chapter 3: Plotinus' <i>sympatheia</i> : magic and divination	122
Introduction.....	122
Magic and divination.....	123
<i>Sympatheia</i> and the dance of the stars.....	126
The theory of opposites and the real magic of the stars	137

Perception and the soul's activity	142
Plotinus' theory of perception and the embodied souls	146
Influence from medicine: opposite powers and <i>sympatheia</i>	148
Conclusion.....	154
Chapter 4: Plotinus and Galen: sight and <i>sympatheia</i>	157
Introduction.....	157
Plotinus: <i>sympatheia</i> is the cause of sight.....	157
The theory of visual transmission.....	165
The role of sight in Plato	171
Galen's theory of sight.....	172
The Cosmic Soul and its network.....	178
Plato's <i>Theaetetus</i> and Plotinus V.3 [49], 9-11: the origin of perception and reality as the Manifold Eye of the Intellect	180
Conclusion.....	191
Conclusions.....	194
Appendix	198
Bibliography	216
Primary sources:	216
Aristotle.....	216
Galen	216
Hippocrates	218
Plato.....	218
Plotinus.....	218
Porphyry.....	219
Secondary Bibliography.....	219

Abstract

The thesis examines Plotinus' theory of *sympatheia* through the lens of Platonic principles, highlighting its deep roots in *Timaeus* while giving particular attention to Galen's connection to Plotinus. Rather than revisiting the well-explored Stoic influence, this study focuses on how Plotinus, as an authentic interpreter of Platonism, systematically integrated its principles into his concept of cosmic interconnectedness.

The case of Galen is particularly compelling, as his Platonism and its potential influence on theories of unity within the cosmos remain largely underexplored. By shedding light on this connection, the thesis aims to reveal a significant yet overlooked dialogue between Neoplatonism and ancient medical thought, especially concerning perception, the soul's unity, and the mechanisms of *sympatheia*.

The first chapter of the thesis explores the intricate connection between Plotinus and Galen, focusing on their respective views on the principles of cosmic *sympatheia*. I argue that their views on cosmic *sympatheia* have their origin in Plato's *Timaeus*, which incited a vigorous debate among the Middle Platonists concerning its interpretation. Plotinus and Galen engaged deeply with this subject, employing certain Platonic elements for their medical and philosophical purposes, targeting Peripatetic, Stoic and Epicurean perspectives. This chapter aims to delineate these elements, using a comparative and intertextual analysis of the two thinkers, particularly regarding their understanding of the principle of *sympatheia*, of the Demiurge, and of the way *sympatheia* works within the body and nature. For Galen, the complex processes of the body and the different powers of the soul constitute a network that is governed by the Demiurge, who is the very principle of *sympatheia*, but whose essence is unknown. Galen's empirical observations and his theory of the unity of the souls follow the claim, which according to Galen was first formulated by Hippocrates, that everything in the perceptible universe is in *sympatheia*. This is an idea that is absent from Middle Platonist philosophy, but is used by the Stoics who, however, did not link their theory of *sympatheia* to the idea of a Maker of the universe.

Plotinus agrees with Galen on the location of the individual soul's parts in the body and shares a certain common ground regarding the powers of the organism. For Galen, the powers are principles (*archai*) that stem from the Demiurge. Plotinus develops this idea into a broader metaphysical network, turning *sympatheia* into a theory of the soul's kinetics, which generates time and a quasi-space for the ensoulment of the body. Following A. H. Armstrong and J. Wilberding, but also critically examining their theory of a "creeping spatiality," I call this quasi-space "analogical spatiality". With this in mind, I am also addressing the question of how Plotinus, possibly considering Galen's perspective, which was part of a broader discussion among Middle Platonists on the Demiurge, rejects the view that all souls are merely parts of the demiurgic soul of the world. Instead, Plotinus, by introducing the concept of a "whole soul" (also referred to in the literature as the "hypostasis soul"), which encompasses all individual souls including the soul of the universe, offers a solution to the philosophical problems that had remained unsolved in Galen's simpler construction.

In the second chapter, I attempt to explain how this analogical spatiality accounts for the unity of the souls through a threefold demiurgic activity. This analogical spatiality explains the working of universal cosmic *sympatheia* and universal harmony as an outcome of the fundamental unity of the souls. The Demiurge is acting at three levels: as the intellect contemplating the intelligible in itself and creating the whole soul whose parts will animate the universe; as the soul of the universe setting in movement through rational activity and discursive thought both time and the body of the universe; and as the vegetative faculty of the world soul, called also "nature," entering, permeating, and animating the corporeal universe. The fundamental unity of the souls and this demiurgic process, trickling down from the intellect to the vegetative soul animating the cosmos, ensures the community of affections of the souls, even when they become individuated in the bodies.

In the third chapter, I move on to show how *sympatheia* acts within ensouled bodies. The focus is on selected texts on the stars' motions, magic and divination from *Enneads* IV.4 [28] 30-45. I examine how Plotinus' theory of *sympatheia*, deeply rooted in Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, offers a profound explanation for the interconnectedness of the cosmos, the soul's kinetic activity, and the phenomena of magic and divination. By refuting Gnostic cosmology, which misconstrues the structure of the universe as an oppressive mechanism under the rule of a malevolent Demiurge, Plotinus reaffirms the goodness, order, and intelligibility of the cosmos. His defense of the cosmic soul as an integral part of a higher

metaphysical unity reveals a system in which harmony, proportion, and causality are not accidental but the natural expressions of the One's emanation into all levels of existence.

A key argument that emerges is the role of the soul's kinetic activity in shaping cosmic order.

The movement of the heavenly bodies is not an arbitrary process, but a divinely ordered dance, reflecting the higher harmony of the intellect and the One. The dance metaphor, which Plotinus borrows from Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, illustrates how the cosmos is animated by an intelligent principle, ensuring that each celestial body moves effortlessly, harmoniously, and without deviation. This eternal motion, self-contained and self-sustained, exemplifies a perfect, non-deliberative order, where all parts of the cosmos are attuned to the unity of the whole. Furthermore, Plotinus extends the idea of *sympatheia* beyond cosmic harmony to the moral and intellectual ascent of the soul. Just as the planets align with the movement of the cosmic soul, individual souls must align themselves with the intellect to achieve union with the One. This connection between ethics and metaphysics reveals a fundamental universality in Plotinus' system: the order of the universe is mirrored in the virtuous life of the soul, and only through participation in this divine order can a soul achieve its highest potential.

In the fourth and last chapter, I analyze the treatise IV.5 [29] on vision (*Περὶ ψυχῆς ἀποριῶν τρίτον ἢ περὶ ὀψεως*). I examine selected passages regarding vision and *sympatheia* and argue that the immediate perception of the form within the living body of the universe is the outcome of the analogical spatiality. For Plotinus, vision is an unmediated sense-perception, occurring not through a physical medium but through the unity of the World-Soul. This framework, derived from Plotinus' reading of Plato's *Timaeus*, reinforces the idea that perception is not a process of transmission, but an immediate act of recognition within a unified cosmos. At the end of this chapter, I present an interpretation of the metaphysical foundation of immediate vision in the realm of the Intellect, arguing that its origins lie in the generation of perception and are deeply rooted in Plotinus' reading of the Platonic myth in *Theaetetus*. This connection reinforces the idea that vision, rather than being a mediated process, is a direct manifestation of the soul's participation in the unity of reality.

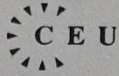
This approach demonstrates that *sympatheia* is not merely an explanatory device, but a fundamental ontological principle that underlies the unity of being. Whether approached through the lens of Galenic physiology or Plotinian metaphysics, the idea that all parts of

existence are interconnected through a higher organizing principle remains a powerful and enduring concept rooted in Platonic principles. By bridging the gap between medicine and philosophy, between empirical observation and metaphysical speculation, Galen and Plotinus offer a vision of reality that is both deeply structured and dynamically open-ended. Their insights continue to resonate in contemporary discussions on the nature of consciousness, the interrelation of mind and body, and the philosophical implications of scientific inquiry. Analogical spatiality serves as a mechanism that allows these insights to be consistently applied across different domains, ensuring that *sympatheia* functions as a binding force between knowledge, perception, and reality.

In conclusion, this dissertation has sought to illuminate the connection between the philosophical and medical traditions that shaped the concept of *sympatheia* in late antiquity. By examining the thought of Galen and Plotinus within their historical and intellectual contexts, I believe I have gained a deeper appreciation of how ancient thinkers were involved with questions of causality, unity, and divine order. Their works serve as a testament to the enduring human quest to understand the nature of existence, reminding us that the search for knowledge, whether through science or philosophy, is ultimately a pursuit of harmony and interconnectedness. Analogical spatiality emerges as a key concept in this pursuit, demonstrating how the unity of the cosmos is maintained through metaphysical continuity and relational structuring, ensuring that all levels of reality remain meaningfully connected.

Keywords: ancient philosophy, Plotinus, *sympatheia*, Plato's *Timaeus*, Galen, cosmic sympathy, world soul, ancient theories of vision.

Authorship Declaration (AT)



DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN MEDIEVAL STUDIES

CEU Doctoral School of History
Medieval Studies Department

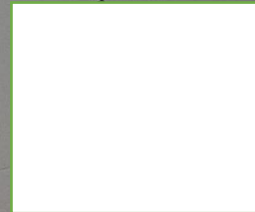


AUTHORSHIP DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Anastasia Theologou (name), doctoral candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies declare herewith that the present doctoral dissertation is exclusively my own work, based on my research and relies only on such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the doctoral dissertation infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

I also declare that no part of the doctoral dissertation has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 20/12/2024.....(dd/mm/yyyy)



Authorship Declaration (US)



DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN MEDIEVAL STUDIES

CEU Doctoral School of History
Medieval Studies Department

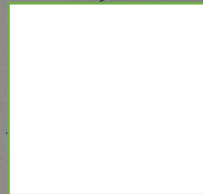


AUTHORSHIP DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Anastasia Theologou (name), doctoral candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present doctoral dissertation is exclusively my own work, based on my research and relies only on such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the doctoral dissertation infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

I also declare that no part of the doctoral dissertation has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 20.12.2024.....(dd/mm/yyyy)



re

Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation is a monumental undertaking in itself. However, for some, it signifies far more than just an academic milestone. It can represent the fulfillment of a lifelong aspiration or, in other cases, the culmination of countless interactions, influences, and shared experiences across many lives. This is how I see my own journey—a tapestry woven not only with personal dedication, but also with the wisdom, support, and encouragement of those around me.

As I move forward, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the individuals who have contributed to this journey in ways both great and small.

My deepest and most heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisor, István Perczel, whose unparalleled expertise, deep understanding of Plotinus' difficult texts, and exceptional philological mastery made this work possible. Without his guidance, I would not have been able to undertake such a challenging task. István's precision and depth in research have been truly inspiring, and he has taught me the fundamental importance of treating ancient texts as prototypes. More than that, he showed me that disagreements between a mentor and a student are not obstacles but rather opportunities for growth—both in research and in life. I will always be grateful for his unwavering support, especially during the most difficult periods of my journey.

Looking back to the very beginning of this path, I am deeply indebted to my alma mater, the University of Crete, and the professors who first believed in me and encouraged me to apply for a scholarship at CEU. My heartfelt thanks go to Chloe Balla and Kostas Koukouzelis, my supervisors, who remain always in my heart, as well as to Nikos Vafeas and Maria Venieri for their faith in me and appreciation. I would like to thank also my professors from the philology department Dimos Spatharas, Athina Kavoulaki, and Kostas Apostolakis, for their invaluable support. I am also deeply grateful to Sofia Gialadaki for her friendship, care and constant encouragement.

I extend my sincere thanks to Irini Viltanioti and the Institute for Mediterranean Studies for providing me with the opportunity to engage in the “Between Athens and Alexandria” (2022-2024) project with exceptional scholars—an experience that greatly enriched my research.

At CEU, my encounter with Gábor Betegh had a profound impact on my academic journey. Although I only had a few seminars with him, his fine soul and insightful ideas left a lasting impression. My deep appreciation also goes to István Bodnár, whose guidance and support during my MA studies were invaluable and to George Gereby for his great sense of humor witty observations and valuable comments.

I am profoundly grateful to the Medieval Studies Department and Historical Studies Department, which not only provided me with a nurturing space for research but also stood by me through difficult times. My sincere thanks to Daniel Ziemann, who has supported my studies from the very beginning and for his kindness and help during challenging moments but also to Volker Menze, head of the Historical Studies Department for his wisdom, kindness and sense of fairness. I also wish to thank Csilla Dobos, who patiently and thoughtfully and with lots of care helped me resolve the administrative hurdles of completing my dissertation.

Beyond my studies, I had the privilege of working in two different positions, and I want to express my gratitude to my wonderful colleagues, Szilvia, Anikó, Margaretha, Eda, Attila, Sasha Gyuri, and Edit. My greatest appreciation goes to Eleonora and Jessica, who supported me immensely during this difficult period, as well as to my supervisor at the Cluster of Excellence, and dear friend, Tijana Krstić. Being part of the CIVICA alliance gave me the opportunity to bridge philosophy with real-world applications, an experience for which I am truly grateful. Special thanks to the executive director and initiator of this project Aurelien Krejbich with his dream team Helene, Candice and Ellee, to my dear colleagues from WP7 group and especially Monica Jităreanu and Timea Takács.

There are certain individuals whose presence has been invaluable in my life, and to them, I owe my deepest gratitude. Chrys Margaritides has been both a great friend and a mentor, teaching me the virtues of patience, devotion, and methodical thinking. Curie Virág has been a great teacher not only in philosophy but also in life, offering guidance and encouragement when I needed it most.

To Gelina Charlaftis and Dimitris Chryssis, whose unwavering support and kindness have been a source of strength, especially during the most challenging moments—I am forever grateful. Apostolis Delis, Thomas Kalesios, and Maria Kalesiou have been shining examples of perseverance and growth through adversity.

I also want to thank my CEU friends for their loyalty and companionship: Elif, Andra, Andrei, Juan, Gaetano, Flora, Dora and Alexandros with Olga and his guitar.

A very special message of gratitude goes to my cherished friends who have stood by me through every step of this journey: Tasia and Sofia, Dimitris and Marigoula, Andrea, Christina, Sofia, Voula, Maria and Stelios, Manolis and Dora, Katerina, Eleana and Drakoulis, Sotiroula and Grigoris, Michalis and Anna, Manolis, Elsa and Christos, Anna and Michalis, Vassilis, Paraskevas and Despina and especially to my precious “compadri” Maro and Kostas, Perica and Igor, who have been supporting and loving me all along these years.

To my beloved godchildren—Giannis, Elli, Eftou, Nikolas, and Marian (watching over me from the heavens)—you hold a special place in my heart. Their presence has given me strength during challenging times.

Above all, I am deeply thankful for my family. My brother, Giannis Theologos, has been an inspiration with his love, resilience, and hardworking spirit. My mother, with her unconditional love and care, has been a constant source of support.

My sister, Dunja Milenković, is the greatest gift CEU has given me. She has been my guiding light, my role model, and my most trusted companion. Together, we have shared not only academic and personal moments, but also the grief of losing our beloved family members. I thank her for her patience, her love, and for accepting me as I am.

My deepest gratitude goes to Nikos Kanellopoulos, one of the most important people in my life. His kindness, love, and support during my darkest moments helped me find the strength to carry on. Without him, my studies would never have been completed.

My greatest admiration is reserved for my one and only niece, Adamantia Theologou, who has been the brightest light in my life for the past 18 years. Through her pure heart and courage, she has taught me never to abandon my dreams and to always hold onto the melody of the song she was singing to me as a child *“You Will Always Be My Summer”*.

Finally, I am endlessly grateful to have Kostas as my partner—words will never be enough to capture the depth of this blessing. With his wisdom, invaluable love and exceptional care, he has taught me patience and inner peace, and he has made me a better person. Without him, I would have never discovered the best version of myself and be able to accomplish my life goals.

A special tribute goes to Athanasios Theologos, Vassilis Stamopoulos, Maria Massala, Marian Kouvari, Stratos Axis, Danka and Alexa Milenković, whose love and guidance continue to watch over me from above.

As a first-generation student—not only in terms of earning a PhD but also as someone who was the first in my working-class family to complete secondary school, a BA, and an MA—I dedicate this dissertation to all first-generation students who struggle to achieve their dreams and to those who extend a hand to help them along the way.

Abbreviations

- Bruns:* I. Bruns, *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter commentaria scripta minora, consilio et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae, I-II*, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1887-1892.
- H-S¹:* P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer, *Plotini Opera: editio maior*, I-III, Paris-Bruxelles-Leiden: Desclée de Brouwer-L'Édition Universelle-Brill; 1951-1973.
- H-S²:* P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer, *Plotini Opera: editio minor*, I-III; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1982.
- LS:* A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers: Volume I, Translations of the Principle Sources, with Philosophical Commentary; Volume II, II: Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- SVF:* J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, I-III, Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1924.

Introduction

The general aim of this thesis is to show that Plotinus' concept of cosmic *sympatheia* (a term that I translate throughout this dissertation as “community of affections,” or “shared affections”) can be considered a unified ontological structure, in which all the beings within the universe are interconnected in a world arranged and ordered by the Platonic highest principles. Thus, for Plotinus, there is a community of affections between all the living beings in the cosmos, because the world has all the characteristics of a living organism. Evidently, this view is based on Plato's *Timaeus* but – as I will suggest in what follows – it is also influenced by the long reception of the texts of the Platonic corpus during the Hellenistic and early imperial periods. Galen's philosophical speculations squeezed from his experience as a physician and medical theorist offer an excellent window to this reception and are used extensively in this thesis; at the same time, Galen's work had an important impact on Plotinus' own philosophical system.

Historiography of the study of Plotinus and *sympatheia*

The link between *sympatheia* and Plotinus is the subject of a long and fruitful research tradition, on which my thesis has built extensively, while also noting its limitations and offering avenues for further exploration. In what follows, I will provide a short historiographical overview of past scholarship on Plotinus and *sympatheia*, which aims to provide the necessary background for the content and approach of my own thesis; accordingly, I will focus on the most important and relevant contributions.

Karl Reinhardt's highly influential *Kosmos und Sympathie* constitutes the first fundamental point of reference for anyone interested to study the link between Plotinus and *sympatheia*.¹ Reinhardt offered a detailed study of the ancient theory of *sympatheia*, the principle according to which the cosmos and the human beings are interconnected. His book explores the etymology, history, and philosophy of *sympatheia* in ancient philosophy. Reinhardt's reading posits *sympatheia* as a cosmic principle, which was specifically articulated as a concept by Poseidonius, Cicero and Philo. In their interpretations, *sympatheia* is not simply an abstract tie, but the connective chain of existence, an impulse that communicates life and

¹ K. Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie: neue Untersuchungen über Poseidonios*, Munich, 1926.

order throughout the cosmos, rendering it an organic whole within the context of the movements of heavenly bodies and natural laws, but also the correlation between the microcosm of man and the macrocosm of the universe.

Outside of its physical applications, Reinhardt explains how *sympatheia* is further extended to the human domain, influencing ethics, epistemology and social relations. Ancient thinkers conceived of *sympatheia* as a force that binds the human soul to both the divine and to one another. Plutarch and Hierocles very much express this perspective, regarding human cognition and divine intelligence as intimately intertwined via a cosmic sympathy. This perspective not only ensured metaphysical continuity; it also served as a moral imperative: as the universe is one, human societies ought to work towards unification and mutual understanding. Furthermore, the text articulates an epistemological dimension of *sympatheia*. Reinhardt draws on Sextus Empiricus and other ancient sources to suggest that knowledge itself was considered an extension of *sympatheia*. For example, the Stoics believed that because there is a shared divine intelligence connecting all rational beings, humans are able to perceive it in the first place. This view resonates with Plotinus' subsequent view of cosmic *sympatheia*, in which the human mind, rather than being a self-standing entity, is positioned within a vast intellectual continuum.

The most fascinating aspect of Reinhardt's account is its transference from the physical or metaphysical realm of *sympatheia* to its implications in theological thinking. The book traces the earlier impact of Neoplatonists reinterpreting sympathy as a divine force, in particular in Proclus and Plotinus. In this model, the world itself is a sensorium, a divine body in which all things, from planetary motion to human emotion, are interconnected functions of the same divine will. This interpretation is deeply resonant with ancient divination and astrology. Reinhardt explores how Poseidonios' theory of *sympatheia* was key to legitimizing astrological prediction, the idea that celestial motions and human fates were connected via a unseen, yet real, cosmic harmony.

Reinhardt was certainly correct that, in order to fully grasp the importance of *sympatheia* in the philosophy of Neoplatonic thinkers like Plotinus, it is essential to explore the intellectual debates concerning *sympatheia* that took place in the late Hellenistic and early imperial periods. In this respect, the current dissertation is heavily indebted to his pioneering work. Given the fact that Posidonius's work, the centre of Reinhardt's book, is only known fragmentarily from quotations and paraphrases in later works, Reinhardt's reconstruction is

often highly speculative and dubious. Many of his conclusions and, in particular, his method for reconstructing earlier texts, which have not been preserved, from later sources, have been the subject of serious criticisms.² As a result, I have consciously decided to throw light on the debate concerning *sympatheia* in the late Hellenistic and early imperial period through the extensive and fully preserved corpus of Galen, a key and influential thinker in this debate.³

The next important work is Graeser's dissertation on *Plotinus and the Stoics*.⁴ It is a detailed philosophical study of the points of connection between Plotinus' thought and the Stoic doctrines. *Sympatheia* / cosmic sympathy is one of the central themes of the book, and an important idea in both Stoic physics and Plotinian metaphysics. Graeser shows how Plotinus engages, reworks, and occasionally critiques the Stoic concept of *sympatheia* to serve his own Neoplatonic project. *Sympatheia*, as the Stoics understood it, was the basic interconnectedness of everything in the cosmos. They maintained that the universe is a living, unified whole animated by *pneuma* that ensures that all parts of the world remain in harmony. For the Stoics, cosmic sympathy was a dynamic, tensional motion that bound things together and maintained the coherence of the universe. It was in this fashion that one would explain celestial influences, efficacy of divination and indeed even physiological processes in living beings. Graeser argues that while heavily relying on this Stoic doctrine, Plotinus recast *sympatheia* in a non-materialist context. Unlike the Stoics, he did not believe that this soul or cosmic unity required a physical medium (*pneuma*) to bind it together. He also held that the soul itself as an incorporeal principle was sufficient to explain the sympathetic relationships given between beings. For Plotinus, sympathy was an attribute of the World-Soul, binding together all living things, not any medium of nature.

Graeser argues that *sympatheia* in Plotinus, and its relation to perception and visual transmission is an important departure from Stoic theories of perception. According to the Stoics, vision and perception were mediated through the *pneuma* extending from the

² See e.g. the classic refutation of H. Cherniss, "Galen and Posidonius' theory of vision", *American Journal of Philology*, 54, 1933, 154-161.

³ For a more methodologically sound interpretation of Posidonius' theories, see e.g. G. Reydam-Schils, "Posidonius and the *Timaeus*: off to Rhodes and back to Plato?", *Classical Quarterly*, 47.2, 1997, 455-476.

⁴ A. Graeser, *Plotinus and the Stoics*, PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1970.

perceiver to the object perceived. Through this medium, impressions were propagated, much like the tension in a body allowing its farthest component to respond to a stimulus, even if there is no direct physical interaction. Graeser claims that Plotinus adapted and criticized at the same time the Stoic tenets. Firstly, Plotinus exploited this *pneuma*-centric account of perception. Rather, he suggested visual perception happens through *sympatheia*, but without the necessitous agency of a material intermediary. In this formulation, perception operates through the immediate presentation of the object's form to the perceiving soul, as all souls ultimately participate in a primordial oneness. This challenges the Stoic claim that any sensory data needs a physical medium to travel. Plotinus' aim is to delineate the manner in which the forms of objects gravitate toward the perceiver independently of intermediate material, that is, either air or *pneuma*. This presages later theories of perception, which stress an immediate presence of the object to the soul's consciousness, rather than a sequential relay.

Graeser also draws attention to the ways Plotinus broadens the concept of *sympatheia* from the realm of physics to that of metaphysics and ethics. For Plotinus, the whole cosmos is a single organism which is guided by the One, and each individual soul is part of the unity of the World-Soul. This suggests that *sympatheia* is not a mere physical or causal relation, but an ontological given, so that all being is geometrically aligned, and proud of it. Moreover, in Plotinus, the ethics of *sympatheia* hinges on the shared relationship to the One, through which souls affect one another. For those on the path to the divine, the sympathetic bonds multiply, while those who turn away from the divine become further isolated and unconnected. Stoics understood *sympatheia* as a way of accommodating a deterministic fate, but Plotinus understood it as an expression of the harmony of the World-Soul. Thus, while Stoic *sympatheia* turned around causal interactions in a determined cosmos, Plotinian *sympatheia* was a manifestation of the unity of being itself. Graeser's study of the Stoic theory of *sympatheia* and Plotinus' reaction and reinterpretation of that theory is accordingly a fundamental foundation for the current dissertation.

Gary M. Gurtler has also explored Plotinus *sympatheia* with respect to the Stoic influence.⁵ Gurtler claims that Plotinus utilizes *sympatheia* in order to describe the unity and coherence

⁵ G. M. Gurtler, "Sympathy in Plotinus", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 24.4, 1984, 395-406.

of the cosmos. Where the Stoics located cosmic sympathy in the physical interrelation of all things through their correlation by *pneuma*, Plotinus assimilates *sympatheia* to his own metaphysical order. For Plotinus, the cosmos is an emanation of the One, and *sympatheia* occurs not through physical connections, but in the hierarchical structure of reality. The harmony of the universe is preserved not through a common material substance, but because each being partakes of the One. One of Gurtler's crucial points is that, for all the retention of the idea of *sympatheia*, Plotinus explicitly denies the materialist Stoic interpretation of it. For the Stoics, sympathy served as an explanatory mechanism for how events in one part of the universe could immediately impact another, whether through natural phenomena or astrology. But Plotinus denies that the heavenly bodies exercise direct causal influence through sympathy of matter. Rather, this connection is through the soul's participation in higher realities, like Intellect and the One. Gurtler also examines the foundations for ethical relationships made possible through *sympatheia* in Plotinus' thinking. The notion that all souls are part of an integral whole has ethical implications: the implication of natural predisposition toward virtue, love, and compassion.

A defining aspect of Plotinus' doctrine of *sympatheia*, as Gurtler emphasizes, is that it serves to explain the relation of individual souls. Contrary to the Stoic focus on *sympatheia* as a physical and causal bond, for Plotinus *sympatheia* is the effect of the inherent oneness of all souls. Gurtler's analysis also reaches Plotinus' account of perception and the role of *sympatheia* therein. In contrast to both Aristotle's requirement of a physical medium through which perception must derive, and the Stoics' perception as *pneuma* in action, Plotinus identifies perception with the participating soul, which as such is already unified with its objects and applies this same idea to visual perception making the case that the soul does not see mechanically, but directly, from within, by virtue of its intimate coupling with the intelligible forms. In this sense, sympathy becomes an alternative to the necessity of physical transmission in perception. This topic forms the subject of chapter 4 of this dissertation,

A second major contention has to do with Plotinus' treatment of astrological and magical forms of *sympatheia*. Though he admits that heavenly bodies can be taken to signify certain happenings in the sublunary world, he claims that they exercise no direct causal power over humans. Rather, he argues, the activity of ordering them, as if they were mere stuff swept up

in some kind of cosmic Dust Busters, still is more a manifestation of order and harmony existing already in the cosmos and within the human psyche, and should be interpreted as anything other than a material force coming from without and acting upon the individual. Gurtler also explains how, by rejecting the independence of will, this position puts Plotinus at odds with both a Stoic vision of determinism, as well as the popular notion of astral causation that was prevalent at his time. Plotinus' treatment of astrological and magical forms of *sympatheia* forms the subject of chapter 3 of this dissertation. It is worth pointing out that in a revised version of the above article, published in 2002, Gurtler acknowledges that certain parts of the *Enneads* regarding the soul's unity are a combination of Stoic and Platonic influences.⁶

The final important point of reference is Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson's *Plotinus on Sense-Perception*.⁷ This book is a rich study of Plotinus' views of perception, which includes a valuable investigation of the role of *sympatheia*. Plotinus provides a model of visual transmission that joins Aristotelian and Stoic theory toward an understanding of cosmic organic unity. Emilsson argues that the treatment of *sympatheia* as the cause of visual transmission originates in Stoic thought. The Stoics framed *sympatheia* in terms of a cosmic interrelatedness, whereby all parts of the cosmos act on each other through a ubiquitous *pneuma*. While Plotinus adopts the term, he recasts it through his own metaphysical lens: rather than a physicalistic account, *sympatheia* for Plotinus is a manifestation of the soul's unity with the cosmos. Emilsson points out how Plotinus uses *sympatheia* to describe visual perception even in the absence of a medium.

This is an important break from previous models, which made light dependent upon a gradual love of a medium like in Aristotle's model of light passing through the diaphanous aether to convey visual information, or the Stoic pneumatic model. Rather, for Plotinus, it is the unity of the cosmic soul that permits objects to be seen without mediation. This explains the immediacy of perception — for what is before the perceiver are objects as if they were

⁶ G. M. Gurtler, "Sympathy: Stoic materialism and the Platonic Soul", in M. F. Wagner (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Nature: Studies in Plotinus' Enneads*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2002, 241-276.

⁷ E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense Perception*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

within the soul of the perceiver. Emilsson offers an extensive treatment of the ways in which Plotinus refutes competing accounts of visual perception. One of his main criticisms with these theories is that they cannot account for how perception is direct and immediate. He makes a persuasive case for why Plotinus' criticism is forceful: the Stoic theory would lead to a delay, or mediation, in perception, while Plotinus requires that vision be unmediated. This "access" is a consequence of *sympatheia*, which guarantees the mutual union of all objects with all perceivers due to the one, equivalent cosmic soul.

A central insight of Emilsson's book is that Plotinus' notion of *sympatheia* is centered on two basic principles: (1) similarity, and (2) organic unity. The theory is that things of a similar kind are in soul naturally disposed to interact sympathically. This is the reason why one sees directly instead of with a mediator—there is already a natural love of soul to soul or man to object, because they are both part of one soul state. Additionally, Emilsson emphasizes that Plotinus' idea of the organic unity also extends beyond individual vision to that of the universe as a whole. As the cosmic soul permeates the entire universe, the soul is present entirely in each part of the body. In terms of vision, this implies that there is no perceiver separate from that which is perceived; instead, both the person seeing and what is seen are manifestations of the same underlying reality.

This interpretation lets Emilsson show an enlightening connection between Plotinus' theory of vision and the metaphysical commitments that he believes underlie – and justify – vision: the One and the unity of being. One of the most strikingly original aspects of Emilsson's analysis is his account of how Plotinus understands the mechanics of visual transmission. Unlike the Stoics and Aristotelians, who depended on the physical transmission of light, however, Plotinus regards vision as a wholly psychic event. This is particularly important, because it relates Plotinus' argument on vision to his more general metaphysical system. Just as the Forms are everywhere and do not need to be conveyed to the intellect through a medium, so visual forms become present to the perceiver without the need for physical transmission. Emilsson shows that this theory of Plotinus is internally consistent: perception is direct apprehension, because reality itself is structured in such a way that there is immediate unity possible between perceiver and perceived.

Last, but not least, the most powerful part of Emilsson's discussion is the comparison of Plotinus and Galen. According to Galen, the air that reaches to the intermediate becomes organic in the perceiver as a prolongation of the nerves. For Plotinus, however, there is no

need to posit such an intermediary due to the unity of the cosmic soul, which provides the immediacy between eye and object of vision. Although Emilsson acknowledges that Plotinus and Galen share some important intuitions (especially the view that vision is an organic process), he claims that the crucial difference between them is Plotinus' repudiation of physical intermediaries. This makes clear the radicalism of Plotinus' theory. While Galen remains within a broadly naturalistic worldview, Plotinus' theory of vision will have a wholly metaphysical character. This highlights both the novelty of Plotinus and the gravity of his investment in *sympatheia* as an explanatory principle.

This comparative exploration of Galen and Plotinus is the subject of a more recent article, in which Emilsson discusses the concept of *sympatheia* in Plotinus.⁸ In this study, Emilsson revises his earlier view that *sympatheia* is borrowed from the Stoics. He now argues that Plotinus' concept of *sympatheia* is founded on his reading of the *Timaeus*. After providing a historical overview of Stoic *sympatheia*, he explores passages from the *Enneads*, demonstrating that interconnectedness is fundamentally rooted in the unity of the soul. He then examines different theories of visual transmission, arguing that Galen and Plotinus share common ground, largely due to their interpretation of the *Timaeus*. This argument is fundamental for the purposes of this dissertation. I try to show that Galen's and Plotinus' theories of *sympatheia* are to a very important extent the consequence of their reading of and reaction to the Platonic corpus, and in particular of the *Timaeus*. While Emilsson examined this theme in a necessarily brief manner within the contours of an article, I offer a detailed comparative analysis of Galen and Plotinus that documents the significance of the Platonic reception of *Timaeus* in the debates concerning *sympatheia* in the early imperial period.

Building on these scholarly contributions, I aim to approach Plotinus' theory of *sympatheia* through the lens of Platonic principles, emphasizing its deep roots in *Timaeus*, while giving particular attention to Galen's connection to Plotinus. Rather than revisiting the well-explored Stoic influence, I will focus on how Plotinus, as an authentic interpreter of Platonism, systematically integrated its principles into his concept of cosmic interconnectedness. The case of Galen is especially intriguing, as his Platonism and its potential impact on theories of unity within the cosmos remain largely underexplored. By shedding light on this connection,

⁸ E. K. Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 36-60.

I hope to illuminate a significant yet overlooked philosophical dialogue between Neoplatonism and ancient medical thought, particularly regarding perception, the soul's unity, and the mechanisms of *sympatheia*.

Overview of the dissertation

The first chapter of the thesis explores the intricate connection between Plotinus and Galen, focusing on their respective views on the principles of cosmic *sympatheia*. I argue that their views on cosmic *sympatheia* have their origin in Plato's *Timaeus*, which incited a vigorous debate among the Middle Platonists concerning its interpretation. Plotinus and Galen engaged deeply with this subject, employing certain Platonic elements for their medical and philosophical purposes, targeting Peripatetic, Stoic and Epicurean perspectives. This chapter aims to delineate these elements, using a comparative and intertextual analysis of the two thinkers, particularly regarding their understanding of the principle of *sympatheia*, of the Demiurge, and of the way *sympatheia* works within the body and nature. For Galen, the complex processes of the body and the different powers of the soul constitute a network that is governed by the Demiurge, who is the very principle of *sympatheia*, but whose essence is unknown. Galen's empirical observations and his theory of the unity of the souls follow the claim, which according to Galen was first formulated by Hippocrates,⁹ that everything in the perceptible universe is in *sympatheia*. This is an idea that is absent from Middle Platonist philosophy, but is used by the Stoics who, however, did not link their theory of *sympatheia* to the idea of a Maker of the universe.

Plotinus agrees with Galen on the location of the individual soul's parts in the body and shares a certain common ground regarding the powers of the organism. For Galen, the powers are principles (*archai*) that stem from the Demiurge. Plotinus develops this idea into a broader metaphysical network, turning *sympatheia* into a theory of the soul's kinetics, which generates time and a quasi-space for the ensoulment of the body. Following A. H. Armstrong and Ch. Wilberding, but also critically examining their theory of a "creeping spatiality," I call this quasi-space "analogical spatiality". With this in mind, I am also addressing the question

⁹ Εὐρύοια μία, ξύμπνοια μία, ξυμπαθέα πάντα· κατὰ μὲν οὐλομελίην πάντα, κατὰ μέρος δὲ τὰ ἐν ἐκάστω μέρει μέρεια πρὸς τὸ ἔργον Hippocrates, *De alimento*, 23 in É. Littré, *Œuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*, vol. 9, Paris: Baillière, 1861 (repr. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1962): 98-120, at 106.

of how Plotinus, possibly considering Galen's perspective, which was part of a broader discussion among Middle Platonists on the Demiurge, rejects the view that all souls are merely parts of the demiurgic soul of the world. Instead, Plotinus, by introducing the concept of a "whole soul" (also referred to in the literature as the "hypostasis soul"), which encompasses all individual souls including the soul of the universe, offers a solution to the philosophical problems that had remained unsolved in Galen's simpler construction.

In the second chapter, I attempt to explain how this analogical spatiality accounts for the unity of the souls through a threefold demiurgic activity. This analogical spatiality explains the working of universal cosmic *sympatheia* and universal harmony as an outcome of the fundamental unity of the souls. The Demiurge is acting at three levels: as the intellect contemplating the intelligible in itself and creating the whole soul whose parts will animate the universe; as the soul of the universe setting in movement through rational activity and discursive thought both time and the body of the universe; and as the vegetative faculty of the world soul, called also "nature," entering, permeating, and animating the corporeal universe. The fundamental unity of the souls and this demiurgic process, trickling down from the intellect to the vegetative soul animating the cosmos, ensures the community of affections of the souls, even when they become individuated in the bodies.

In the third chapter, I move on to show how *sympatheia* acts within ensouled bodies. The focus is on selected texts on the stars' motions, magic and divination from *Enneads* IV.4 [28] 30-45. I examine how Plotinus' theory of *sympatheia*, deeply rooted in Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, offers a profound explanation for the interconnectedness of the cosmos, the soul's kinetic activity, and the phenomena of magic and divination. By refuting Gnostic cosmology, which misconstrues the structure of the universe as an oppressive mechanism under the rule of a malevolent Demiurge, Plotinus reaffirms the goodness, order, and intelligibility of the cosmos. His defense of the cosmic soul as an integral part of a higher metaphysical unity reveals a system in which harmony, proportion, and causality are not accidental but the natural expressions of the One's emanation into all levels of existence.

A key argument that emerges is the role of the soul's kinetic activity in shaping cosmic order. The movement of the heavenly bodies is not an arbitrary process, but a divinely ordered dance, reflecting the higher harmony of the intellect and the One. The dance metaphor, which Plotinus borrows from Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, illustrates how the cosmos is animated by an intelligent principle, ensuring that each celestial body moves effortlessly,

harmoniously, and without deviation. This eternal motion, self-contained and self-sustained, exemplifies a perfect, non-deliberative order, where all parts of the cosmos are attuned to the unity of the whole. Furthermore, Plotinus extends the idea of *sympatheia* beyond cosmic harmony to the moral and intellectual ascent of the soul. Just as the planets align with the movement of the cosmic soul, individual souls must align themselves with the intellect to achieve union with the One. This connection between ethics and metaphysics reveals a fundamental universality in Plotinus' system: the order of the universe is mirrored in the virtuous life of the soul, and only through participation in this divine order can a soul achieve its highest potential.

In the fourth and last chapter, I analyze treatise IV.5 [29] on vision (*Περὶ ψυχῆς ἀποριῶν τρίτον ἢ περὶ ὄψεως*). I examine selected passages regarding vision and *sympatheia* and argue that the immediate perception of the form within the living body of the universe is the outcome of the analogical spatiality. For Plotinus, vision is an unmediated sense-perception, occurring not through a physical medium but through the unity of the World-Soul. This framework, derived from Plotinus' reading of Plato's *Timaeus*, reinforces the idea that perception is not a process of transmission, but an immediate act of recognition within a unified cosmos. At the end of this chapter, I present an interpretation of the metaphysical foundation of immediate vision in the realm of the Intellect, arguing that its origins lie in the generation of perception and are deeply rooted in Plotinus' reading of the Platonic myth in *Theaetetus*. This connection reinforces the idea that vision, rather than being a mediated process, is a direct manifestation of the soul's participation in the unity of reality.

The thesis is completed by an Appendix, containing a new translation of treatise IV.5 [29]. This treatise has been translated in collaboration with my supervisor, Istvan Perczel, and provided with philological commentaries (see the Appendix). Many other fragments of the *Enneads* have also been translated anew, so that, hopefully, the analyses contained in the thesis are supported by more precise translations than those available. Often, this translation work needed emendations of the edited texts, based on the *editio maior* of Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer (*H-S^I*), in preference to the *editio minor* (*H-S²*), which contains many emendations that we have not taken into consideration. The emendations that we introduced were mostly corrections of iotacisms that have crept into the text, and syntactical changes. Incidentally we preferred readings that Henry and Schwyzer relegated to the *apparatus criticus*.

Chapter 1: Galen and Plotinus: the principle of cosmic *sympatheia*

Galen and Plotinus: intertextual and comparative approaches

The analogy between medicine and philosophy in many ancient texts was used to show the relation between microcosm and macrocosm - physics and metaphysics. The idea of the ideal human state based on the equal proportion in the elements of the body is attributed to Alcmaeon of Croton, a fifth-century BCE doctor, who was probably influenced by the Pythagoreans.¹⁰ The Hippocratic tradition also followed the same pattern, and it is claimed that Plato had probably studied these medical texts.¹¹ Similarly Galen, following Hippocratic medicine, developed his theory on the psychic diseases, while also following the Platonic philosophy of the soul, but within a scientific framework.

Apart from diverse studies on Plato's dialogues, Galen wrote a lemmatic commentary on Plato's medical doctrines in the *Timaeus*. This commentary was titled *On Medical Statements in Plato's Timaeus* (Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ Πλάτωνος Τιμαίῳ ἱατρικῶς εἰρημένων). The work, consisting of four books, is not extant in its entirety, but multiple fragments have been found and published.¹² Galen used for his medical purposes the tripartite taxonomy of the *psyche*,

¹⁰ See the chapter devoted to Alcmaeon in J. Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*, London: Routledge, 2013, 47-82.

¹¹ See e.g. E. M. Craik, "Plato and medical texts: Symposium 185c–193d1", *Classical Quarterly*, 51.1, 2001, 109-114; S. B. Levin, *Plato's Rivalry with Medicine: A Struggle and its Dissolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

¹² Concerning this fragmentarily preserved work, C. Daremberg published fragments from the third book, *Fragments du Commentaire de Galien sur le Timée de Platon en grec et en français*, Paris and Leipzig: Victor Masson/Michelsen, 1848. The same Greek fragments, with additional Arabic ones, were republished by H. O. Schröder and P. Kahle, *Galen in Platonis Timaeum commentarii fragmenta* [CMG Suppl. 1], Leipzig: Teubner, 1934. New fragments were discovered by P. Moreaux: "Unbekannte Galen Scholien", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 27, 1977, 1-66; by C. J. Larrain: "Ein unbekanntes Exzerpt aus Galens Timaios kommentar Γαλήνου περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ Πλάτωνος Τιμαίῳ ἱατρικῶς εἰρημένων. ὑπόμνημα πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 85, 1991, 9-30. Larrain also published these as part of a monograph: C. J. Larrain, *Galens Kommentar zu*

introduced in Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus*,¹³ which distinguishes the rational (ἡγεμονικόν), the emotional (θυμοειδές) and the appetitive parts (ἐπιθυμητικόν), and locates physically the three parts of the soul respectively in the head (the rational part), the heart (the emotional part) and the liver (the appetitive part).

Galen considers the human organism as part of a broader network, drawing upon the *Timaeus*, whether his source is directly Plato's work or mediated by other Platonists.¹⁴ In this respect, he considers cosmic *sympatheia* an important factor in the world, but impossible to be validated experimentally. Galen was part of a broader discussion of the philosophical tradition, which was debating the interpretation of the *Timaeus* and was raising questions regarding the eternity of the world, the demiurgic activity, the existence of the soul, and the role of the body in the microcosm and the macrocosm. Hence, I treat Galen as a major witness to this debate, which forms the background of Plotinus' philosophical theory. The

Platons Timaios, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1992, 2nd edition: Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012; and also by V. Lorusso, "Nuovi frammenti di Galeno (in Hp. Epid. VI Comm. VII; in In Plat. Tim. Comm.)", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 152, 2005, 43-56. Concerning Larrain's excerpt, Diethart Nickel expressed strong doubts: "On the authenticity of an 'excerpt' from Galen's Commentary on the *Timaeus*", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. Supplement, No. 77, *The Unknown Galen*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 73-78, but these doubts were convincingly refuted by Aileen R. Das: "Reevaluating the authenticity of the fragments from Galen's 'On the Medical Statements in Plato's *Timaeus*' (Scorialensis graec. Φ-III-11, ff. 123 R -126 V)", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 192, 2014, 93-103.

¹³ *Republic*, 437a-441c; *Timaeus*, 69d-71e; R. J. Hankinson, "Galen's anatomy of the soul", *Phronesis*, 36, 1991, 198.

¹⁴ The *Timaeus* was one of the most studied texts both by Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists. Galen was in direct contact with the texts by middle Platonists and with the Platonic works. For the relation of Galen with the middle Platonists see J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 BC to AD 220*, London and Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977; also P. L. Donini, "Galeno e la filosofia", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II*, 36.5, 1992, 3484-3504.

present chapter, therefore, aims to shed light on Galen's concept of "mutual affections" (συμπάθεια)¹⁵ and its possible influence on Plotinus.

Before I move on to showcase my assumption, let me explain shortly the reasons why this suggestion is worthy of interest. For this study, I will focus on historical evidence from Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*, and on parts of the *Enneads* concerning the Demiurge and the world soul in comparison with the way Galen used his scientific and philosophical teachings to understand the principle behind cosmic *sympatheia*.

First, there is historical evidence that Plotinus was in close relationship with physicians, and that among his closest disciples were doctors, one of whom stayed with him and cared for him until the end. This is recorded by Porphyry in his *Vita Plotini*:

Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ Ἀλεξανδρέα Εὐστόχιον ἰατρικὸν ἔσχεν ἕτερον, ὃς περὶ τὰ τελευταῖα τῆς ἡλικίας γνωρισθεὶς αὐτῷ διέμενε θεραπεύων ἄχρι τοῦ θανάτου καὶ μόνοις τοῖς Πλωτίνου σχολάζων ἕξιν περιεβάλλετο γνησίου φιλοσόφου.¹⁶

There was too another physician, Eustochius from Alexandria, who came to know Plotinus towards the end of his life and stayed with him and tended him till his death. By studying uniquely the teaching of Plotinus, he has acquired the the habit of a genuine philosopher.

Porphyry records the crucial detail that the doctor Eustochius remained with Plotinus till his very death:

Κάμοῦ μὲν παρόντος οὐδέν πω τοιοῦτον ὑπεφαίνετο· ἀποπλεύσαντος δὲ εἰς τοσοῦτον ἡγριώθη τὸ πάθος, ὥς ἔλεγεν ἐπανελθόντι Εὐστόχιος ὁ ἐταῖρος ὁ καὶ παραμείνας αὐτῷ ἄχρι θανάτου.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Sympatheia* denotes affinity or harmony between the parts, shared affection, a bond. For the discussion of the various notions of *sympatheia*, see E. Schliesser, "Introduction", in idem (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 3-4.

¹⁶ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 7.7-12.

¹⁷ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 2.10-13.

While I was with him, no symptoms of the kind [described above] appeared, but after I left on my voyage his disease increased to such an extent in violence, as Eustochius, our companion who stayed with him till his death, told me when I returned.

Porphyry also records the presence of another doctor, Zethus, among Plotinus' circle:

Ἔσχε δὲ καὶ Ζῆθον ἑταῖρον, Ἀράβιον τὸ γένος, Θεοδοσίου τοῦ Ἀμμωνίου γενομένου ἑταίρου εἰς γάμον λαβόντα θυγατέρα. Ἦν δὲ καὶ οὗτος ἰατρικὸς καὶ σφόδρα πεφίλωτο τῷ Πλωτίνῳ· πολιτικὸν δὲ ὄντα καὶ ῥοπὰς ἔχοντα πολιτικὰς ἀναστέλλειν ὁ Πλωτῖνος ἐπειρᾶτο. Ἐχρῆτο δὲ αὐτῷ οἰκείως, ὥς καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀγροὺς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀναχωρεῖν πρὸ ἑξ σημείων Μητουρνῶν ὑπάρχοντας.¹⁸

Another of his companions was Zethus, an Arab by race, who married the daughter of Theodosius, a companion of Ammonius. He was another physician and Plotinus loved him very much. As he was a social man and had political ambitions, Plotinus tried to dissuade him. Plotinus was on terms of great intimacy with him and used to go and stay at his place in the country, six miles from Minturnae. (translation by Armstrong, revised)

From these testimonies, someone could assume a) that the physicians, following Galen's saying "the best physician is a philosopher" were attending the Platonic schools and b) it was inevitable for Plotinus to discuss with them Galen's theories and perspectives.

Secondly, Galen and Plotinus were targeting the same intellectual opponents. One such example was the Peripatetic Alexander of Aphrodisias, who was an opponent of Galen, and even wrote a work entitled "Against Galen on motion" attacking the physician about his criticism of Aristotle's unmoved mover.¹⁹ Porphyry, on the other hand, records that Plotinus in his lectures was addressing the teachings of Alexander of Aphrodisias:

¹⁸ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 7.17-23.

¹⁹ C. D'Ancona & G. Serra (eds.), 'Alexander *On the Principles of the Universe, On Providence, Against Galen on Motion, and On Specific Differences*,' in *Aristotele et Alessandro di Afrodizia nella tradizione araba*, Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2002; more recently, see

Ἐν δὲ ταῖς συνουσίαις ἀνεγινώσκετο μὲν αὐτῶ τὰ ὑπομνήματα, εἴτε Σεβήρου εἴη, εἴτε Κρονίου ἢ Νουμηνίου ἢ Γαίου ἢ Ἀττικοῦ, κὰν τοῖς Περιπατητικοῖς τὰ τε Ἀσπασίου καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου Ἀδράστου τε καὶ τῶν ἐμπεσόντων.²⁰

In the meetings of the school he used to read [aloud] the commentaries, either those of Severus, or of Cronius, or Numenius, or Gaius, or Atticus and, among the Peripatetics, those of Aspasia, Alexander, Adrastus, and others, as the occurrence gave it.

Thirdly, Plotinus as a loyal Platonist rejects the Peripatetics' theory of motion and it is worth examining if, in his effort to do this, he might have used Galen's toolkit. Fourthly, according to textual evidence, Plotinus followed Galen regarding the encephalocentric view of the soul first introduced in Plato's *Republic* and the *Timaeus* (69 d7-70a7). Their view was held against the cardiocentric view developed by the Peripatetics and the Stoics. Fifthly, drawing on the *Timaeus*, both Plotinus and Galen approached *sympatheia* in a non-materialist way, expressing at the same time a different type of theology in contrast to the Stoic perception of *sympatheia*. Galen was the first to use the term *sympatheia* without attributing materialist principles to it. Here, I must point out the following: in many of his works, Galen adopts an agnostic stance regarding the essence of the Demiurge and the soul, and it is within this stance of agnosticism that his theology is established. However, evidence from Galen's embryological writings suggests that the demiurgic activity can explain the more complex processes of nature. Furthermore, Galen explicitly states that the soul, which constitutes the rational part of the individual soul, is of a different substance than the soul that creates the irrational part.

Ὅταν γὰρ ἴδω τὰ παιδιά φθεγγόμενα μὲν ἅττ' ἂν αὐτοῖς φθέγγασθαι κελεύσωμεν, οἷον, εἰ τύχοι, σμύρναν καὶ σμίλην καὶ σμήγμα, μήτε δὲ τοὺς κινοῦντας ἐπιτηδεύως τῇ τοιαύτῃ φωνῇ τὴν γλῶτταν μῦς ἐπιστάμενα, μήτε πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔτι τὰ τούτων αὐτῶν νεῦρα, πιθανώτατον μὲν ἡγοῦμαι τὸν διαπλάσαντα τὴν γλῶτταν, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, ἢ αὐτὸν ἔτι διαμένειν ἐν τοῖς διαπλασθεῖσι μορίοις ἢ ζῶντα τὰ

O. Harari, 'Alexander against Galen on Motion: a mere logical debate?,' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 50, 2016, 201-236.

²⁰ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 14.10-14.

μόρια κατεσκευακέναι, γνωρίζοντα τὸ βούλημα τοῦ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικοῦ, τοῦτο δ' ἀκόλουθον εὐρίσκων, ἄλλην μὲν εἶναι τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἡμῶν ψυχὴν, ἄλλας δὲ τὰς ἐν ἐκάστω τῶν μορίων, ἢ πάντως γε μίαν κοινήν τὴν ἅπαντα διοικοῦσαν, εἰς ἀπορίαν ἔρχομαι, μηδ' ἄχρι δυνατῆς ἐπινοίας, μήτι γε βεβαίως γνώσεως εὐρίσκων τι περὶ τοῦ διαπλάσαντος ἡμᾶς τεχνίτου. Καὶ γὰρ ὅταν ἀκούσω τινῶν φιλοσόφων λεγόντων τὴν ὕλην ἔμψυχον οὔσαν ἐξ αἰῶνος ἀποβλέπουσαν πρὸς τὰς ἰδέας, ἑαυτὴν κοσμεῖν, ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐννοῶ μίαν εἶναι δεῖν ψυχὴν, τὴν τε διαπλάσασαν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν νῦν χρωμένην ἐκάστω τῶν μορίων. Ἀνθίσταται δὲ τούτῳ πάλιν ἡ ἄγνοια τῆς διοίκουσης ἡμᾶς ψυχῆς τῶν ὑπηρετούντων ταῖς ὀρμαῖς αὐτῆς μορίων;²¹

For when we observe that children utter whatever sound we instruct them to—*smyrna* [*myrrh*], as it might be, or *smile* [*scissors*], or *smegma* [*soap*]*—without any knowledge of the way in which the muscles move the tongue in the way appropriate to that sound, still less of the relevant nerves, it seems most probable that the constructor of the tongue, whoever that may be, either himself remains in the parts he has constructed, or has made the parts as animals which recognize the wish of the leading part of the soul. When, however, I see that it is a consequence of this that the soul in the leading part is a different entity from the souls in each of the parts of the body, or alternatively that there is just one general soul which manages all the parts, I reach an impasse, unable to discover anything about the artificer who constructs us even in terms of a probable conception, let alone a firm understanding. When I hear some philosophers assert that matter has been endowed with soul from eternity, and that by contemplation of the Ideas it forms or adorns itself, I realize all the more strongly that there must be only one soul, which both constructs us and continues to employ each of the parts. But again, against this is the fact that the soul that manages us has no knowledge of the parts that obey its urges (translation by P. N. Singer, in P. N. Singer, *Galen: Selected Works*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 198-199.)*

²¹ Galen, *Foet. Form.* IV 696-97

Following Michael Frede's article on Galen's , **that is, his discourse about the divine**, I claim that Galen's perception of the origins of *sympatheia*, based on the Demiurge's activity and expressed in *On the Formation of the Foetus* and in *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, is part of a deep religious exploration of the essence of the *cosmos*. I will argue that Galen has raised philosophical problems concerning the understanding of cosmic *sympatheia* – acknowledging that he shares common concerns with other Middle Platonists – which might have influenced Plotinus in the elaboration of his own concept of *sympatheia*.

Plotinus, like Galen, interpreted the demiurgic activity in the *Timaeus* as constant and eternal, but unlike Galen, regarded *sympatheia* as a result of a non-technomorphic Demiurge, who is part of a higher metaphysical structure.

Last, but not least, scholars have highlighted significant similarities between Plotinus and Galen regarding their theories of sight and *sympatheia*. In *Kosmos und Sympathie*, Karl Reinhardt argued that the common aspects of Galen's and Plotinus' theories of sight have their origins in Posidonius' theory of vitality.²² This view considers Posidonius as an ally of Platonism, who employs the *Timaeus* to integrate Platonic elements into his own theory, thereby forming a kind of "Platonizing" Stoicism and "Stoicizing" Platonism.²³ Reinhardt's reconstruction of Posidonius' theory on the basis of passages from Plotinus and Galen has met with considerable resistance; Cherniss refuted Reinhardt's claim, arguing that Galen's theory of sight is not mediated by Posidonius' views, but represents Galen's own interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus*.²⁴ A comparative analysis of their theories of sight, taking into account the unity of the souls, individual and world soul, as the underlying cause of *sympatheia*, is worth exploring. This will be extensively elaborated in Chapter 4. The aim of this chapter is to shed light on Galen's influence on Plotinus within the broader philosophical debates concerning the interpretation of Plato's cosmological work and the functions of the body and soul—debates with which Plotinus also engages profoundly. Methodologically, I

²² K. Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie: neue Untersuchungen über Poseidonios*, Munich, 1926, 187-192.

²³ Cf. G. Reydam-Schils, "Posidonius and the *Timaeus*: off to Rhodes and back to Plato?", *Classical Quarterly*, 47.2, 1997, 455-476.

²⁴ H. Cherniss, "Galen and Posidonius' theory of vision", *American Journal of Philology*, 54.2, 1933, 154-161.

will treat Galen's physiological works as a direct influence on Plotinus, while selected passages on demiurgic activity will be analyzed comparatively. In this way I aim to shed light on the connection of the two thinkers and understand the theoretical tradition and the mechanics behind *sympatheia* in Plotinus.

Plotinus was evidently aware of Galen's thought; scholars have identified their direct connection especially with regards to the location of the soul in the body.²⁵ In view of their shared common ground, the second part of this chapter will be devoted to certain parts of the *Enneads*, showing that Plotinus and Galen are involved in a wider on-going debate on the role of *sympatheia* and its higher nature. Plotinus had his own way of reading the *Timaeus* and was reacting to the debate, part of which was Galen's perplexing query regarding the principle of *sympatheia*. While Galen repeatedly stresses his agnosticism regarding the ruler of the body's complex processes and the cause of sympathetic activity between the parts and the organism or, in a broader sense, the principle behind the relationship between a living organism and Nature, Plotinus' perception of cosmic religion, **consisting of the beliefs about the location and operations of the divine entities in the universe**, prompts him to give a concrete answer to the *aporiai* raised by Galen.²⁶

For this study, I will first make a small historical overview of the notion of *sympatheia*, before moving on to discuss the physiological works in which Galen discusses the principles of the body's functions and the teleological purpose of the organs. Moreover, I will briefly summarize the key points of Galen's agnosticism and his theory regarding the demiurge, the soul, and *sympatheia*. Then, I will proceed to treat more thoroughly the place of *sympatheia*

²⁵ For this, see T. Tieleman, "Plotinus on the seat of the soul: reverberations of Galen and Alexander in *Enn.* IV, 3 [27], 23", *Phronesis*, 43, 1998, 311-312; D. Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 187-192. For the connection of the two thinkers, see also H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology: His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*, Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1971; A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus, Enneads*, vol. IV, Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1984, 104, n. 1; E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense Perception*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 105.

²⁶ For the constitutive role of agnosticism in an ancient religious system without secure means of religious knowledge see the seminal discussion of R. Parker, *On Greek Religion*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011, 1-39.

in Plotinus' thought. First, I will explore how Plotinus, possibly inspired by Galen's philosophical queries within the broader debate on the interpretation of the *Timaeus*, incorporates the concept of cosmic religion in his metaphysics and gives an account of the connection between the body, the partial soul,²⁷ the soul of the universe, and the universal soul. Then, I will continue with selected passages related to *sympatheia* in Plotinus and will examine how this kind of union fits into a kind of *analogical spatiality*²⁸ found in his system. Finally, I will treat the question why the obscure essence of Galen's demiurge and the quest about the unity of the soul becomes transparent in Plotinus' system in the light of *sympatheia*.

A brief history of *sympatheia*

Sympatheia is a composite word from *συν-* (together) and *πάθος* (affection), denoting a fellow feeling for a passion.²⁹ In antiquity, physicians, particularly the Hippocratics, focused

²⁷ I prefer to call “μερική” partial, and not individual soul; see also F. Karfik, “Parts of the soul in Plotinus”, in K. Corcilius and D. Perler (eds.), *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 112-118.

²⁸ My term “analogical spatiality” stems from a rethinking and a critique of the concept of “creeping spatiality”, introduced by A. H. Armstrong and reworked by J. Wilberding; see A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, IV, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984, 82-3, n. 2; J. Wilberding, “Creeping spatiality: the location of the Nous in Plotinus' universe”, *Phronesis*, 50, 2005, 316. I think that Wilberding has correctly addressed the need to understand Plotinus' “spatial” expressions as being more than mere metaphors, and I agree with his interpretation that these expressions indicate an instrumentally “spatial” proximity of certain activities of the soul to special locations. However, I think that this interpretation has not addressed adequately the distinction between the activities of the divine souls, including the world soul, which are governing their bodies without descending into them even in their activities, and the non-divine rational souls that, in their activities, have partly “descended” into the bodies, while remaining “above,” in the noetic realm in their substances and their higher activities. This subject will be further elaborated in the next chapter which treats the unity of the souls.

²⁹ M. Lapidge, “Stoic cosmology”, in J. M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, 161-185; E. Schliesser, “Introduction” in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 3-4.

on identifying the interrelations between parts of the organism to explain natural phenomena such as diseases and their cures. At the same time, philosophers were already contemplating the world as an organic whole, intricately connected to the human organism. Thinkers like Democritus, and later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, used terms like *φιλία* (friendship) or *ἁρμονία* (harmony) to describe the bond between soul and body.

Over time, the concept of *sympatheia* expanded into a broader framework, denoting the connection between the macrocosm and microcosm—a view Galen embraced and which, as I will argue, Plotinus integrated into a more comprehensive theory of the soul. Scholars often attribute the full development of *sympatheia* to the Stoics, for whom the interconnection of parts with the whole became the basis of their cosmology, nature, and fate.³⁰ However, one could object to the Stoics being the originators of the theory by pointing out that Plato, in the *Timaeus*, based his entire cosmology on the holistic character of the world as a living organism.³¹ I believe that Plato’s philosophy, influenced by Hippocratic thought, showcased *sympatheia* as a crucial element in connecting the parts of the universe within themselves and to the whole, both in physics and metaphysics. This interpretation aligns with Galen’s view, who considered Hippocrates the first advocate of cosmic *sympatheia*, albeit expressed in the language of his contemporaries.³²

Galen could have adopted the Stoic or Epicurean perspectives—both physicalist in their explanations of the organism’s relationship with nature—but, instead, had deliberately chosen to remain faithful to Plato’s concept of the demiurgic creation of the world. This, despite the

³⁰ K. Ierodiakonou, “The Greek concept of *sympatheia* and its Byzantine appropriation in Michael Psellos”, in P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi (eds.), *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, Geneva: La Pomme d’or Publishing, 2006, 97-100; E. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 47; Schliesser, “Introduction”, 37.

³¹ *Timaeus* 30b-c and 37c-d.

³² Ἱπποκράτης μὲν γὰρ τὴν προτέραν ῥηθεῖσαν ἐτράπετο, καθ’ ἣν ἦνεται μὲν ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀλλοιοῦται καὶ σύμπνουν ὅλον ἐστὶ καὶ σύρρουν τὸ σῶμα... (Galen, *Nat. Fac.* 1.12): “For Hippocrates turned to the first-mentioned (view), according to which, substance is united and the whole body is animated by one spirit and fluid” (my translation). The language here is borrowed from Stoics but Galen was not committed to their materialism.

fact that Galen remained an agnostic, as far as the demiurge's essence is concerned. His view on *sympatheia*, as I would argue, relies on his theology and the way he uses Plato's *Timaeus* and its commentaries mirroring the two aspects of the same coin: on the one hand, the body as a living organism triggers the manifestation of *sympatheia*, but within the limited space of the body; on the other, the limited aspect of *sympatheia* within the body cannot account for the body's more complex functions. Accordingly, I believe that Galen simultaneously elaborates a detailed theory of the body's and the soul's connection to the Demiurge, which accounts for the unity of the world. In this way, I suggest that Galen sets the stage for Plotinus to establish a network mapping, something that I will call here, elaborating upon James Wilberding's theory of "creeping spatiality," an *analogical spatiality*, which extends beyond the domain of the body and whose principle is the soul.

The two aspects of *sympatheia*: physiology and the demiurgic activity of the soul

Following the intellectual and educational trend of his era, Galen wrote an extensive number of works dedicated primarily to medicine, but also to philosophical enquiries.³³ Galen was an advocate of the four-temper theory (hot, cold, dry, wet), based on the natural elements (fire, water, earth, and air) and their balance within the body. Any kind of unbalance between these elements is called *δυσκρασία*, while the opposite state provides the *εὐκρασία* of the body.³⁴ The two bodily states have their foundation in nature's laws; in this respect, the basis for understanding any disease and its cause lies in the understanding of nature. Human nature is part of the whole physical environment, and a good physician requires a holistic approach to the body and its rational principle, to establish the empirical diagnosis of each disease. Galen sees the ensouled body as a spatial plexus of different activities of the soul. The connection of the faculties lay in the nerves which start and end up in the brain. Motion starts from the soul. As far as the soul is concerned, Galen locates the psychic powers in the body:

ὅτι μὲν γὰρ ἀρχὴ νεύρων ἀπάντων ἐγκέφαλός τε καὶ νοτιαῖος καὶ ὡς αὐτοῦ τοῦ νοτιαίου πάλιν ἐγκέφαλος, ἀρτηριῶν δ' ἀπασῶν καρδία, φλεβῶν δ' ἥπαρ, καὶ ὡς τὰ μὲν νεῦρα παρ' ἐγκεφάλου τὴν ψυχικὴν δύναμιν, αἱ δ' ἀρτηρίαι παρὰ καρδίας

³³ Science, philosophy, rhetoric and religion were not treated as distinct fields; a proper intellectual education required insight and knowledge of all the aforementioned disciplines.

³⁴ See, e.g., Galen, *De temp.*, I, 609, 63.

τὴν σφυγμικὴν, αἱ φλέβες δ' ἐξ ἥπατος τὴν φυτικὴν λαμβάνουσιν, ἐν τοῖς Περὶ τῶν Ἱπποκράτους καὶ Πλάτωνος δογμάτων ἀποδέδεικται.³⁵

(In the treatise *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*) it was demonstrated that the source of all nerves is the brain and spinal cord and that the source of the spinal cord itself is again the brain, the source of all arteries is the heart, of all veins the liver, and that the nerves receive psychic power from the brain, the arteries the power of pulsation from the heart, and the veins the power of growth from the liver.³⁶

The source of the organism's power resides not uniquely in the heart, but has three different centers, being the seats of three different faculties, which Galen imagines as having three different essences.³⁷

Thus, the center of cognitive power is not the heart, as Aristotle and his followers thought, but the brain, which gives commands to the conscious movements of the organs via the nerves. The heart and liver serve as distinct sources, responsible for unconscious movements and growth, as well as for other vegetative functions, respectively. Galen was proving through his anatomical work that the brain is governing the nerves and with analogy he posits the center of the arteries and veins to be in the heart and the liver.³⁸ As these sources are separate and correspond to the three main faculties, which have their separate essences, their functioning is harmonized by *sympatheia*, stemming from the fact that the three faculties-

³⁵ Galen, *De usu partium*, vol III, 45.1017.

³⁶ Translation from de P. de Lacy, *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum. vol. 5.4.1.2, pts. 1-2, 3rd corrected edition, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005, 69.

³⁷ Galen, *In Timaeum*, frgms. 4, p. 18; 6.12-16, p. 19, 11.1-7, p. 21; 13A.1-3, p. 22; 15, p. 24.

³⁸ Tieleman correctly points out that Galen's anatomical sources apart from Hippocrates are: "Erasistratus, Eudemus, Herophilus as well as Marinus, "the man who after the ancients revived anatomical study which had meanwhile [i.e. following Herophilus and Erasistratus] fallen into neglect" (*PHP* 8.1.6). Apart from Hippocrates, these references have to be taken seriously and in particular that to Marinus"; Tieleman, "Plotinus on the seat of the soul: reverberations of Galen and Alexander in *Enn.* IV, 3 [27], 23", 311.

essences are part of the one world soul. As we will see this is important from the perspective of *sympatheia*, too. According to Galen, the three main faculties have their separate essences, whose functioning is harmonized by sympathies, stemming from the fact that the three faculties-essences are part of the one world soul. Thus it is the world soul that mediates between the faculties of the individual. As we will see, this is important from the perspective of *sympatheia*, too. According to Galen, the three main faculties have their separate essences, whose functioning is harmonized by sympathies, stemming from the fact that the three faculties-essences are part of the one world soul. Thus it is the world soul that mediates between the faculties of the individual.

Galen has proposed that the soul, in order to be able to engage with the body, must include two additional faculties: the emotional, which is situated in the heart, and the vegetative, which is rooted in the liver. These two faculties do not belong to the rational soul; instead, Galen offers two alternative theories without choosing one among them: they are either distinct substances created by the Demiurge and the secondary gods, or parts of the soul of the universe to enable the rational soul's connection to the corporeal world. Thus, Galen preserves Plato's cosmological framework while integrating into it his anatomical findings.

Therefore, it is the world soul that mediates between the faculties of the individual. As indicated in the fragment below, this theory is a development of the views of both Plato and Hippocrates and is used to refute Stoic materialism, prefiguring at the same time, I think, the theories of Plotinus.

Προϋκείτο μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπισκέψασθαι περὶ τῶν διοικουσῶν ἡμᾶς δυνάμεων, εἴτ' ἐκ τῆς καρδίας μόνῃς ὁρμῶνται σύμπασαι, καθάπερ Ἀριστοτέλης τε καὶ Θεόφραστος ὑπελάμβανον, εἴτε τρεῖς ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν τίθεσθαι βέλτιον, ὡς Ἴπποκράτης τε καὶ Πλάτων ἐδόξαζον. ἐπεὶ δὲ Χρύσιππος οὐ περὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν μόνον ἡμφισβήτησε πρὸς τοὺς παλαιούς, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν δυνάμεων αὐτῶν οὔτε τὴν θυμοειδῆ συγχωρήσας ὑπάρχειν οὔτε τὴν ἐπιθυμητικὴν, ἔδοξε χρῆναι τὴν τούτου πρότερον δόξαν ἐπισκεψαμένους οὕτως ἐπανέρχεσθαι πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ προκειμένον ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ὡς ἐγκέφαλός τε καὶ καρδία καὶ ἥπαρ ἀρχαὶ τῶν διοικουσῶν ἡμᾶς δυνάμεων εἰσιν...³⁹

³⁹ Galen, *PHP*, VI.1, 1-7.

It was my purpose at the beginning to inquire about the powers that govern us, whether they all have the heart as their only source, as Aristotle and Theophrastus supposed, or whether it is better to posit three sources for them, as Hippocrates and Plato believed. But since Chrysippus disputed with the ancients not only about the sources but also about the powers themselves and did not admit the existence of either the spirited or the desiderative (power), I decided that I must first examine his view and then return to my original plan, which was to show that the brain, the heart, and the liver are the sources of the powers that govern us.⁴⁰

Περὶ τῶν Ἱπποκράτους καὶ Πλάτωνος δογμάτων ἐπισκέψασθαι προθέμενοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐδιδάξαμεν ἀναγκαιότατον ὑπάρχειν ἰατρικῇ τε καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ, εἴτε πλείους εἰσὶ δυνάμεις αἱ διοικοῦσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἴτε μία, βεβαίως ἐξευρεῖν.⁴¹

When we undertook to examine the teachings of Hippocrates and Plato, we first showed that it is most necessary for medicine and philosophy to discover with certainty whether the powers that govern man are one or more than one.⁴²

These two passages are significant, as they reveal several key points:

- a) Galen claims that Plato and Hippocrates agree on the three sources that govern the human body, namely the brain, the heart and the liver. Following the *Timaeus*, Galen differentiated himself in this respect from the Middle Platonists, who did not adopt Plato's tripartite theory of the soul.
- b) Galen explicitly opposes the Peripatetics and Stoics on this matter, who both believed that the center of thinking is the heart.
- c) Medicine and philosophy are regarded as equal sciences, requesting from the scientist to enquire whether the principles behind the powers are multiple or not. This last assertion should be read while keeping in mind another part of the same work, where Galen states

⁴⁰ Translation from de P. de Lacy, *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum. vol. 5.4.1.2, pts. 1-2, 3rd corrected edition, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005, 65.

⁴¹ Galen, *PHP*, VIII.1,1-4.

⁴² Translation from de P. de Lacy, *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, 65-7.

that human bodies are the product of a higher wisdom, and he maintains that the essence of the soul is incomprehensible (*PHP* 6, 588 and 596).

Physical functions and *sympatheia*

In other physiological works, Galen mentions that it is because of *sympatheia* that a part of the brain affects other parts of the body, when it is damaged.

ἐὰν γὰρ ὅλον ποτὲ πάθῃ τὸ πρόσθιον ἐγκεφάλου, συμπάσχειν μὲν ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην αὐτοῦ κοιλίαν, βλάπτεσθαι δὲ καὶ τὰς διανοητικὰς αὐτῶν ἐνεργείας. καὶ κεῖται ἀναίσθητος μὲν καὶ ἀκίνητος ὁ οὕτως παθὼν, οὐδὲν δ' εἰς τὴν ἀναπνοὴν βλάπτεται, καὶ καλεῖται τὸ πάθος τοῦτο κάρως.⁴³

When the entire anterior part of the brain is involved, its uppermost [right or left lateral] ventricle is necessarily affected [by **sympathy**] and the activities of the mind are equally damaged. A patient stricken in this manner lies [on his bed] deprived of sense perception and movement, but his respiration remains intact. This condition is called stupor.⁴⁴

In another instance in *PHP*, Galen uses the notion of *sympatheia* in an attempt to refute one of his colleagues, Erasistratus, concerning the role of the meninx in the brain. The organism does not stop its motion and die, because the meninges are not the governors of the body, but the brain is. According to Galen, if the meninx is removed, there will be consequences later for the organism through *sympatheia*. It is interesting that *sympatheia* here is related to a process which takes time:

ὅπερ οὐχ ἥκιστα τὸν Ἐρασίστρατον ἠπάτησεν, ὥς οἰηθῆναι διὰ τὴν τῆς μήνιγγος τρωσιν ἀκίνητον αὐτίκα γίνεσθαι τὸ ζῆον· ἑώρα γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν πρῶτον σπόνδυλον τιτρωσκομένων βοῶν ἅμα τῷ διαιρεθῆναι τὴν μήνιγγα ἀκίνητον αὐτίκα τὸ ζῆον γινόμενον. ἀλλ' οὐ τῷ πάθει τῆς μήνιγγος, ἀλλὰ τῷ γυμνοῦσθαι

⁴³ *De locis affectis* VIII. 231 Kuhn.

⁴⁴ Translation from R. E. Siegel, *Galen On the Affected Parts: Translation from the Greek Text with Explanatory Notes*, Basel: S. Karger, 1976, 110.

τὴν ὀπίσω κοιλίαν γίνεται τοῦτο. δῆλον δ' ἐστὶν ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ πάντα τᾶλλα μέρη τὴν μηνίγγα μηδὲν τοιοῦτον τιτρωσκομένην ἐργάζεσθαι. περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς ὅλης φύσεως ἐγκεφάλου δι' ἐτέρων λέγεται πραγματειῶν, τὰ μὲν ἐξ ἀνατομῆς φαινόμενα κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἀνατομικῶν ἐγχειρήσεων, ἡ δὲ χρεία τῆς κατασκευῆς ἐκάστου τῶν μελῶν ἐν τῇ περὶ χρείας μορίων εἴρηται, οὐκ ὀλίγα δὲ καὶ τοῖς περὶ τῆς Ἱπποκράτους ἀνατομῆς ὑπομνήμασιν· ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι τὰ χρήσιμα μόνον πρὸς τὰ προκείμενα διέρχομαι. τῶν γάρ τοι νεύρων ἐκπεφυκότων ἐγκεφάλου τε καὶ τῶν περικειμένων αὐτῷ μηνίγγων διὰ μὲν τῆς κατὰ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ἀποφύσεως ἢ τ' αἰσθησις ἅπασιν τοῖς μέλεσιν καὶ ἡ κίνησις χορηγεῖται, ὃ δ' ἐκατέρας τῶν μηνίγγων ἐστὶν ἀποβλάστημα, τὴν αὐτὴν χρείαν παρέχει τοῖς νεύροις ἥνπερ ἐγκεφάλῳ παρεῖχον ἐκεῖναι. διὸ καὶ ἄμφω περιέλης οὐδὲν βλάπτεται τὸ μόριον εἰς ὃ τὸ νεῦρον ἀφικνεῖται, καθάπερ οὐδ' εἰ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον αὐτὸν ἀφέλοιον τὰς ἑξωθεν μηνίγγας· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὐδ' ἐπὶ ταύταις βλάπτεται τὸ ζῶον ἔν γε τῷ παραυτίκα· χρόνῳ δ' ὕστερον εἰ κατὰ συμπάθειαν ἔπεται κίνδυνος, οὐδὲν τούτων ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸ ζητούμενον.⁴⁵

Erasistratus mistakenly believed that the animal immediately becomes motionless when the meninx is cut; for he saw that oxen wounded at the first vertebra become motionless as soon as the meninx is severed. But this results not from the injury to the meninx but from the exposure of the posterior ventricle. This is evident from the fact that when any other part of the meninx is wounded no such effect is produced. The whole nature of the brain is described in other treatises, the features observed through dissection in *Anatomical Procedures*, the use of the structure of each member in *On the Use of the Parts*, and much may be found also in my work *On the Anatomy of Hippocrates*; at this time, I am explaining only what is useful for our present purpose. For as the nerves grow from the brain and from the meninges that surround it, sensation and motion are supplied to all the limbs through the part that comes from the brain; and the part that branches off from each of the meninges provides the same service to the nerves as the meninges provided to the brain. Therefore, even if you remove them both there is no injury to the part to which the nerve extends, just as there is none if you remove the outer meninges from the brain itself; for the animal is not harmed, for the moment at

⁴⁵ Galen, *PHP*, VII.3, 32.5-36.6.

least, by this removal. If at a later time danger follows by *sympatheia*, such things have no relevance to the present inquiry.⁴⁶

Scholars have noted that the notion of *sympatheia* in Galen's work bears similarities to Stoicism. However, I believe that Galen's concept of *sympatheia* is more strongly influenced by Plato's *Timaeus*. The idea that the illness of one organ can affect another is also found in Hippocratic texts, but Galen's understanding of teleology is rooted in the belief that everything in the cosmos is unified and designed to achieve the best possible outcome.⁴⁷ However, because everything is connected and there is a process of change, time is necessary. As Armelle Debru points out: "For Galen, too, 'all the parts of the body are in sympathy, that is to say all of them cooperate in producing one effect' (*UP* III 18 = i 13,7–9 Helmreich). The whole is overseen by Nature and Providence, which seek to bring about their best possible realization. Each part has a 'use' or a 'usefulness' which is the best possible: this is the upshot of his great work *On the Utility of the Parts*."

Let me now explain why I think that Galen's concept of *sympatheia* here is rooted in the *Timaeus*. The soul of the human body imitates the orbits of the world soul and, as we know,⁴⁸ the balanced state of health depends on the homoeostasis of the organism. Galen presents the *hegemonikon* (command center) as the primary governing force of bodily motion and coordination, using as its position the brain. According to Galen's mapping, the *hegemonikon* directs the body's actions through a network of nerves extending from the brain to each organ, much like a map, where each point is connected to a central source. This organized structure allows the body to function as a cohesive whole, with each part responsive to the *hegemonikon*'s commands. But because the organs' functions are

⁴⁶ Translation from de P. de Lacy, *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, 447-449.

⁴⁷ Galen's teleology is also indebted to Aristotle's views on natural philosophy. However, Galen combines the design by the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* with the best possible result that Nature could offer according to the bigger plan.

⁴⁸ A. Graeser, *Plotinus and the Stoics*, PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1970, 30. As Graeser points out "Admittedly, no Platonist, particularly one since the time of Posidonius, would doubt that the human soul and the world-soul have a common origin (d. e.g., Albinus, *Isagoge* 178, IS [H.]; much more correct from the historical point of view is the account by Galen, *In Platonis Tim.* fr. 10,8 [Schroder] in connection with 12,5 ff. [Schr.]".

interrelated and designed for the best possible outcome, therefore, the disturbance of one part affects the others as well. At the same time, the structure of the body is such that it serves the communication of all its parts and of the whole organism with the outside world.

τὸ δ' ἐκ τῶν τραχειῶν ἀρτηριῶν πνεῦμα τὸ ἔξωθεν ἐλχθὲν ἐν μὲν τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ πνεύμονος τὴν πρώτην ἐργασίαν λαμβάνει, μετὰ ταῦτα δ' ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τε καὶ ταῖς ἀρτηρίαις καὶ μάλιστα ταῖς κατὰ τὸ δικτυοειδὲς πλέγμα τὴν δευτέραν, ἔπειτα τὴν τελεωτάτην ἐν ταῖς τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου κοιλίαις, ἔνθα δὴ καὶ ψυχικὸν ἀκριβῶς γίγνεται [πρότερον].⁴⁹

From the outside air, *pneuma* is drawn in by the rough arteries and receives its first elaboration in the flesh of the lungs, its second in the heart and the arteries, especially those of the retiform plexus, and then a final elaboration in the ventricles of the brain which completes its transformation into psychic *pneuma*.⁵⁰

Here we see a very detailed description of the respiration, starting from the *pneuma* outside and ending up through a step by step process in the brain. The interrelation of the organs is indicated in many of Galen's works by the term *plegma* (πλέγμα), the plexus of the arteries around the organs.⁵¹ The same term is also met in the *Timaeus*,⁵² where the God creates this

⁴⁹ Galen, *De usu partium*, 541.15-542.3.

⁵⁰ Translation from J. Rocca, *Galen on the Brain: Anatomical Knowledge and Physiological Speculation in the Second Century AD*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, 201.

⁵¹ Galen uses the term *plegma* in many instances to explain the network of the faculties; see Galen, *In Timaeum*, frgm. 9.1-2; frgm. 10.1-16; frgm. 12.1-5; frgm. 13.17-19; frgm. 16.1-8; *De usu partium*, III, p. 305.17-306.1; p. 517.10-14; p. 541.15-542.3; p. 623.16-624.9; p. 696.17-697.2; p. 700.1-19; p. 705.2-9; p. 713.4-14; p. 749.18-750.5; IV, p. 322.20-323.10; p. 334.7-335.2; p. 344.8-345.1; *PHP* I.VIII, 37-38; I.8, 5-6; III.8, 31; VII.3, 24; VII.3, 29; VIII.7, 15-17; *De usu pulsuum*, 155.1-156.12.

⁵² *Timaeus* 78b-d: "The god accordingly made use of these (air and fire) for the water-carrying from the belly to the veins, weaving out of air and fire a network, after the fashion of a fisherman's weel. This had a pair of funnels at the entrance, one of which again he made fork into two; and from these funnels he stretched, as it were, reeds all round throughout the whole length to the extremities of the network. The whole interior of the basket he composed

wheel to explain the metabolism of the body.⁵³ This intertwined wheel shows how our body's processes are interconnected. It explains how respiration is related to support digestion to transmit energy and nutrition to the organs through the blood. Breathing contributes immensely to maintain energy, support digestion, and transport nutrients through the blood. In this way everything works mechanically for the sake of the ordered motion of the ensouled body. When a part is disturbed, through this network the other parts are affected. Though, as Galen points out, because of the complexity of the organism it needs some time for *sympatheia* to take place.

Galen's theory of motion

In the *Timaeus*, the principle of motion is the soul. This is repeated by Galen both in his physiological works, where the rational part of the soul, *the hegemonikon*,⁵⁴ functions as the center of volition and perception through the *pneuma*, while the other parts move the other faculties of the body respectively, i.e. palpitation, nutrition, and growth. Although Galen claims that the seat of the *hegemonikon* is in the brain, he does not commit himself to a material *hegemonikon*.⁵⁵ It is the *pneuma* which acts with the bodily mixture.

The topic of the soul's motion is important, as it shows again Galen's Platonism combined with his anatomical findings turning against materialism and the peripatetic cardiocentric philosophical tradition. Shlomo Pines has shown that parts of Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, whose Greek text is lost, have been preserved in Arabic.⁵⁶ In this work, Alexander attacks Galen in defense of Aristotle's theory of motion, as presented

of fire, while the funnels and the main vessel were of air". See F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: the Timaeus of Plato*, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1937, 308.

⁵³ For more on the way metabolism affects the state of the body, see G. Betegh, "Plato on illness in the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, and the *Timaeus*", in C. Jorgenson, F. Karfik and Š. Špínka (eds.), *Plato's Timaeus: Proceedings of the Tenth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, Leiden: Brill, 2020, 228-258.

⁵⁴ This is a notion that Galen borrows from the Stoics.

⁵⁵ "The exact nature of the dependence of the capacities and operations of the soul on the body is never made clear"; P. Donini, "Psychology", 200.

⁵⁶ S. Pines, "Omne quod movetur necesse est ab aliquo moveri: a refutation of Galen by Alexander of Aphrodisias and the theory of motion", *Isis* 52.1, 1961, 21-54.

in *Physics* Book VII. It seems that Galen wrote a letter addressed to Herminos, in which he refuted Aristotle's concept of the unmoved mover. Unfortunately, Galen's view is transmitted to us only indirectly, since the letter is lost, through both Alexander's work and Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* Book VII (*Phys.* VII, 1, 242a).⁵⁷ Given the limited information available, we can reasonably infer that Galen, in his defense of Plato's account, rejected the Aristotelian principle that "whatever is in motion must be moved by something else," primarily because he found the argument presented at the start of the seventh book of Aristotle's *Physics* to be flawed. That argument relies on at least three propositions: (1) something must be moved by an external force, if the cessation of that force causes it to come to rest; (2) everything that is in motion is divisible and consists of parts; and (3) a whole ceases to move when any part of it is at rest.

Galen seems to have countered this by arguing that, in entities that are in motion primarily and per se, no part of the whole could be at rest. Let me summarize the points of Galen that Pines reconstructs from the Arabic text: Galen rejected Aristotle's central principle that "everything in motion must be moved by something else," a concept fundamental to Aristotle's physics, which asserts that motion requires an external cause or mover. In contrast, Galen employed the term κινητὸν καθ' ἑαυτό, meaning "moved by itself," in a more restricted sense than Aristotle. While Aristotle applied this idea more broadly, Galen limited it to things whose motion originates entirely within themselves, independent of any external source.

However, there is ambiguity in the evidence regarding what Galen considered to be κινητὸν καθ' ἑαυτό. It remains unclear whether Galen believed that only living beings (animate), moved by their soul, are self-moved, or if he also included inanimate objects, such as light or heavy bodies, which move naturally.⁵⁸ The latter interpretation would be more consistent with Aristotle's and Alexander of Aphrodisias's usage of the term.

⁵⁷ Michael Frede, in his article "Galen's Theology," p. 78, suggests that this opposition to Aristotle's unmoved mover is founded on Galen's natural theology but he does not elaborate more on this assumption.

⁵⁸ Pines, "A refutation of Galen by Alexander of Aphrodisias and the theory of motion", 31-32. See also C. Hagen, *Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 7*, London: Bloomsbury, 105, n. 33:

Simplicius, though, sheds some light on Galen's text and intentions. According to Simplicius, Alexander is attempting to demonstrate that the soul's motion is dependent on its relationship to the body. This is because Alexander's cardiocentric view posits that the intellect must be connected to the heart, which is a part of the body. Consequently, the soul of a living being is only moved indirectly, as a result of the body's motion. Simplicius raises this issue in connection with Alexander:

“One should not admit what Alexander says, namely that the soul moves itself just as a steersman does: by moving the body in which it is, just as a steersman does a ship. One could perhaps easily admit that the local motion of the soul takes place in this way. But the volitions, the thoughts, the opinions and all the impulses [belong to] the soul which moves itself – and not through something else – and per se. For the self-moved is its substance (*ousia*).”⁵⁹

As Pines points out, this passage of Simplicius is clearly a re-statement of Galen's Platonic position opposed to Alexander's interpretation of Aristotle.⁶⁰ Let us now see how Simplicius' account could be fitted in Galen's scheme: we can assume that Galen, when he describes the

“The original Greek version of Galen's attack is not extant, but parts of it are included in the Arabic version of Alexander's reply to it, which likewise has not survived in Greek. The context in which Galen's criticism (which, like Alexander's answer to Galen, seems to have been expressed in somewhat acerbic terms) was delivered is unclear. There is evidence in Alexander's reply which suggests that Galen's strictures might have been contained in a letter Galen wrote to Alexander's (their mutual?) teacher Herminus. Whether or not it originally took the form of such a letter, Rescher and Marmura identify it with the work which appears in Galen's *De libris propriis liber* as ‘On the first unmoved mover’ (*Eis to prôton kinoun akinêton*) (Kühn's ed., vol. 19, p. 47, lines 9-10); N. Rescher and M. E. Marmura, *The Refutation by Alexander of Aphrodisias of Galen's Treatise on the Theory of Motion*, Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1965, 2-4. One tantalizing piece of information is that in the Arabic version Galen is said to have taken some of the material for his criticism from Chrysippus; see Rescher and Marmura, *The Refutation*, 36.

⁵⁹ Simplicius, *Commentary*, 268, 12ff.

⁶⁰ Pines, “A refutation of Galen by Alexander of Aphrodisias and the theory of motion”, 32, n. 56.

basic functions of the organism, means that there is local motion which moves the different organs through the nerves, the arteries and the ventricles. The rational part of the soul does the same through the psychic *pneuma*, the instrument (*organon*) of the soul's power. Volition and thought, though, depend both on the psychic *pneuma* and the *hegemonikon*, which is part of the self-moving world soul, or the Demiurge – although this part could never be proven in Galen's dissections, but has been assumed by analogy. If this is the case, then Galen's theory of the tripartite soul is consistent with his theory of motion, which explains how the powers of the soul move inside and outside the body. Moreover, it adds to the fact that Galen's refutation of *Physics* VII targets the Peripatetic view of a self-moved soul, which is based on bodily functions, and adds to Galen's defense of his encephalocentric view of the soul without leaving aside the *hegemonikon*, which is the center of volition and thought, and about which Galen never admits that it is material.

The network outside the body

We saw that all the organs communicate in the body through a network of functions which allow the parts to move and communicate and the whole organism to maintain its order and to be alive. The role of the *pneuma* is to become the instrument of the soul⁶¹ and to transmit the energy for all networks of the body. What about the soul which is the principle of motion? Is it material? Galen has difficulty to verify in his dissections the immortality of the soul and as an empiricist he cannot commit to such claims. However, in many parts of his work, he implies that the complex structure of our body denotes the work of an architect.

The text *De usu partium* is the work in which Galen fully develops the Demiurge's role as an artist in forming every part of the organism. It is particularly in this work where the teleology is proven as part of the plan of the Creator's and Nature's dynamics. The interconnection is revealed in these dynamics and the details of a plan which only a benevolent Demiurge would have thought of. Galen's Demiurge is constructed as an interpretation of the one in Plato's *Timaeus*, and carefully considers the interrelationship of each structure, while Galen defends the work of Nature to those who want to underestimate natural processes. He even claims that those who complain about nature's imperfection have not grasped yet the wisdom in her.

⁶¹ *PHP* VII.3, 443–5

τί δὴ τὸν τοιοῦτον οἶει πάσχειν ἢ δρᾶν κατὰ μόνας ἢ πῶς ἐξυβρίζειν εἰς πάντας τοῦ σώματος τοὺς πόρους ἢ πῶς λελωβῆσθαι τε καὶ διεφθάρθαι τὰ κάλλιστα τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀνάπηρον μὲν αὐτὴν καὶ τυφλὴν παντάπασιν τὴν *θείαν ἀπεργασάμενον δύναμιν*, ἥ μόνῃ πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος ἀλήθειαν θεάσασθαι, μεγάλῃ δὲ καὶ ἰσχυρὰν καὶ ἄπληστον ἡδονῶν παρὰ νόμον καὶ τυραννοῦσαν ἀδίκως τὴν χειρίστην καὶ θηριωδεστάτην ἔχοντα δύναμιν; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως εἰ τοιούτων ἐπὶ πλεον μνημονεύοιμι βοσκημάτων, οἱ σωφρονοῦντες ὀρθῶς ἂν μοι μέμφοιντο καὶ μιαίνειν φαῖεν ἱερὸν λόγον, ὃν ἐγὼ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀληθινὸν συντίθηναι, καὶ νομίζω τοῦτ' εἶναι τὴν ὄντως εὐσέβειαν, οὐκ εἰ ταύρων ἑκατόμβας αὐτῷ παμπόλλας καταθύσαιμι καὶ τάλαντα μυρία θυμιάσαιμι κασίας, ἀλλ' εἰ γνοίην μὲν αὐτὸς πρῶτος, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐξηγησαίμην, οἷος μὲν ἐστὶ τὴν σοφίαν, οἷος δὲ τὴν δύναμιν, ὁποῖος δὲ τὴν χρηστότητα. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐθέλειν κοσμεῖν ἅπαντα τὸν ἐνδεχόμενον κόσμον καὶ μηδενὶ φθονεῖν τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῆς τελεωτάτης χρηστότητος ἐγὼ δεῖγμα τίθεμαι, καὶ ταύτῃ μὲν ὥς ἀγαθὸς ἡμῖν ὑμνεῖσθω· τὸ δ', ὥς ἂν μάλιστα κοσμηθεῖν πᾶν, ἐξευρεῖν ἄκρας σοφίας· τὸ δὲ καὶ δρᾶσαι πάνθ', ὅσα προείλετο, δυνάμεως ἀητητήτου.⁶²

How do you suppose such a man feels and acts in private? How wantonly he uses all the openings of his body! How he maltreats and ruins the noblest qualities of his soul, crippling and blinding *that godlike faculty* by which alone Nature enables a man to behold the truth, and allowing his worst and most bestial faculty to grow huge, strong, and insatiable of lawless pleasures and to hold him in a wicked servitude! But if I should speak further of such fatted cattle, right-thinking men would justly censure me and say that I was desecrating the sacred discourse which I am composing as a true hymn of praise to our Creator. And I consider that I am really showing him reverence not when I offer him unnumbered hecatombs of bulls and burn incense of cassia worth ten thousand talents, but when I myself first learn to know his wisdom, power, and goodness, and then make them known to others. I regard it as proof of perfect goodness that one should will to order everything in the best possible way, not grudging benefits to any creature, and therefore we must praise him as good. But to have discovered how everything

⁶² Galen, *De usu partium*, III, 237.1-238.6.

should best be ordered is the height of wisdom, and to have accomplished his will in all things is proof of his invincible power.⁶³

Galen's admiration of the demiurgic activity is best illustrated by this text from *De usu partium*, which criticizes those who do not adhere to Plato's and Hippocrates's admiration for the Demiurge and accuses these people of damaging the noblest part of their souls. Such individuals not only damage the noblest part of their soul, but also impair and blind the divine faculty through which we perceive truth. According to Galen, true respect for the Demiurge is shown not through rituals, but by understanding, through the process of observing the details of the organism, the Demiurge's wisdom, power, and goodness. In addition, he states that the perfect arrangement of the body's components demonstrates the Demiurge's "perfect goodness," and understanding this order represents the "highest degree of wisdom".⁶⁴ And he continues with admiring the grandeur of the Demiurge in both the lunar and sublunary creatures. The order and beauty of the stars are part of the same divine craftsmanship visible on earth. The Demiurge here is like the sculptor, the Greek artist Phidias, whose work can be admired even if it's made from the humblest materials. Galen targets those who do not know how to appreciate life on earth and compare it unfavorably to celestial bodies. The most important part comes when he makes the analogy of the universe with the body, an analogy which also the Ancients (he refers to Plato and his followers) have introduced. The passage compares the universe, which everyone sees as the most grand and beautiful creation, to the body of an animal. The body is a small universe where the perfectly designed eye is its sun and emphasizes that each part of an animal's body is perfectly suited to its role, just like the sun has its place in the cosmos.⁶⁵

⁶³ Translated from M. Talladge May, *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body: Translated from the Greek with an Introduction and Commentary, I-II*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968.

⁶⁴ Galen, *De usu partium*, III, 238.1-5: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐθέλειν κοσμεῖν ἅπαντα τὸν ἐνδεχόμενον κόσμον καὶ μηδενὶ φθονεῖν τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῆς τελεωτάτης χρηστότητος ἐγὼ δεῖγμα τίθεμαι, καὶ ταύτη μὲν ὡς ἀγαθὸς ἡμῖν ὑμνεῖσθω· τὸ δ', ὡς ἂν μάλιστα κοσμηθεῖ πᾶν, ἐξευρεῖν ἄκρας σοφίας.

⁶⁵ Galen, *De usu partium*, III, 237.1-238.6

Galen here speaks like a natural philosopher with the skills of a rhetorician who, at the same time, uses his scientific observations to argue for the design of the Demiurge in the bodies of the cosmos. We could call Galen's Platonism experimental, showing how the faculties of the body are part of a broader network. Instead, he says that, if you want something within an animal that resembles the sun, look to the eye. The eye is like a small sun in the body—bright, complex, and perfectly suited for its purpose of seeing. He claims that everything about the eye's design—from its position to its shape—has been placed with such precision that it could not be better, and he will explain this later in his discourse. In another part of his work, Galen is less enthusiastic with Plato's teachings, but again confirms the Demiurgic activity inquiring about his essence, but also about the nature of the human soul:

Ἀλλὰ Πλάτων γε καὶ τὸ κατασκευάσαν ἡμᾶς αἷτιον ἀπεφάνητο τὸν τοῦ κόσμου δημιουργὸν θεὸν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ παισὶ κελεῦσαι λόγῳ διαπλάσαι τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος λαβόντας μὲν παρ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀθανάτου ψυχῆς τὴν οὐσίαν, προσθέντας δ' ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ γεννητόν. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό γε χρὴ γινώσκειν ἡμᾶς, ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν ὅμοιον εἶδος ἀποδείξεως τε καὶ θέσεως τοῦ κατὰ πρόνοιαν θεοῦ τινος ἢ θεῶν ἡμᾶς κατασκευάσθαι καὶ τοῦ γινῶναι τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ κατασκευάσαντος, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν. ὅτι μὲν ἄκρας ἐστὶ σοφίας καὶ δυνάμεως ἡ τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν κατασκευή, δι' ὧν ὀλίγον ἔμπροσθεν εἶπον ἐπιδείκνυται τὰ δὲ περὶ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τῶν διαπλασάντων ἡμᾶς θεῶν ἔτι τε μᾶλλον ὅσα περὶ τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν λέγεται παντὸς ὑπὸ τοῦ θειοτάτου Πλάτωνος ἄχρι τοῦ πιθανοῦ καὶ εἰκότος ἐκτείνεται, ὥς αὐτὸς ἐδήλωσεν ἐν Τιμαίῳ πρῶτον ἐνάρχεσθαι μέλλων τῆς φυσιολογίας, εἶτα καὶ μεταξὺ κατὰ τὴν διέξοδον τοῦ λόγου παρεντιθεὶς τὴν ἀπόφασιν.⁶⁶

Plato declared that the cause that made us, the god who is the craftsman of the universe, commanded his children by speech to fashion the human race, receiving from him the substance of the immortal soul and inserting in it the part that is generated. But we must recognize this fact, that there is no similarity in kind between proving and positing that we were made in accordance with the providence of some god or gods, and knowing the substance of the maker, or even of our own soul. My earlier remarks make it clear that the fashioning of our

⁶⁶ Galen, *PHP*, IX.9, 598.30-598.11.

bodies is a work of the highest wisdom and power; but the statements of the most divine Plato about the substance of the soul and of the gods who formed us, and still more all that he says about our whole body, extend only to the point of being plausible and reasonable, as he himself pointed out in the *Timaeus*, when first he was about to enter upon an account of the natural world, and again when he inserted the statement in the middle of the account.⁶⁷

Obviously, Galen respects Plato and accepts all the teachings of the *Timaeus*, but emphasises the mythic and, thus, unscientific character of the narrative. His view originates from his empiricism, based on medical practice.⁶⁸ In philosophical questions, such as the nature of the universe, there are no empirical means to judge about the theoretical differences between the philosophers.⁶⁹ This does not mean that the information given on the physiological construction of the body in relation to the universe was not among Galen's philosophical and medical interests. In fact, in many parts of his oeuvre, he expresses his interest and refers to the impossibility of finding out what the substance of the soul really is and remains sceptical even toward his "Platonist teachers," who had asserted the universal demiurgic activity of the soul. He thinks it even impossible to decide whether the soul is incorporeal or corporeal, eternal or corruptible.⁷⁰

However, as mentioned earlier in the fragments of his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, where

⁶⁷ Translation by P. de Lacey, *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, vol. 5.4.1.2, pts. 1-2, 3rd corrected edition, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005, 597 and 599.

⁶⁸ For Galen's scientific methodology, see T. Tieleman, "Methodology", in R. J. Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 49.

⁶⁹ Galen, *PHP*, V IX.6, 576.18-578.4.

⁷⁰ Galen, *Foet. Form.*, 6.32-34, 105-106. See also P. Donini, 'Psychology' in R. J. Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 184-209; P. N. Singer, *Galen: Psychological Writings: Avoiding Distress, Character Traits, The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Affections and Errors Peculiar to Each Person's Soul, The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 32-33 and chapter 4.

Galen adopts, and intends to comment upon, Plato's thought, he admits that the rational soul is incorporeal,⁷¹ and that it is a part of the substance of the soul of the universe.⁷² In order to save this doctrine of the consubstantiality of the human soul with that of the universe, Galen posits that the three capacities of the soul, namely the cognitive, the emotional and the sensitive, are not parts or functions of the same substance, but three different substances. Only the rational soul, whose seat is in the brain, is divine and immortal, only this is 'ourselves.' However, for the connection with the body, the other two faculties, being two different substances, located in the heart and the liver respectively, are also needed. According to Galen, while the rational soul is a part of the soul of the universe, the emotional and the vegetative faculties were added by the Demiurge and the secondary gods to the rational soul. Only the latter is immortal, while these souls are mortal.⁷³ Yet, in *PHP* 6, 598-600, he eludes this question, saying that the mortality or immortality of the lower faculties is a question not only difficult to decide, but even completely useless from the medical, the ethical, and the social perspective. It seems that, while in his commentary on the *Timaeus* Galen faithfully follows Plato's narrative, in *PHP* he permits himself more speculative liberty.

As it has been pointed out in a recent study,⁷⁴ Galen was highly interested in the question of the soul and its relation to the body. His study of the *Timaeus*, not only in the *Commentary*, but also in the *PHP* and *QAM*, provides the philosophical framework in which he could open the discussion for this kind of research. Furthermore, Galen was influenced by the Middle Platonists and their debates on the demiurgic activity and the creation of the world.

⁷¹ Galen, *In Timaeum*, MS Scor. graec. Φ-III-11, frgms. 6, 1 and 9, 11; see Larrain, "Ein unbekanntes Exzerpt aus Galens Timaioskommentar", 18 and 20.

⁷² Galen, *In Timaeum*, frgm. 4, p. 18.

⁷³ Galen, *In Timaeum*, frgms 4, p. 18; 6.12-16, p. 19, 11.1-7, p. 21; 13A.1-3, p. 22; 15, p. 24. See also MS Paris. graec. 2838, frgm. 2,53-90; H. O. Schröder and P. Kahle, *Galen in Platonis Timaeum commentarii fragmenta*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, suppl. 1. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934, 44. See also Galen, *PHP* IX.9, 598.30-598.11, cited above.

⁷⁴ R. Vinkestijn, *Philosophical Perspectives on Galen of Pergamum: Four Case-Studies on Human Nature and the Relation between Body and Soul*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022, 185-187.

Therefore, the question of how we can vindicate the *craftsman*, namely the natural faculties' activity and causality, was prominent in his work. Galen tried to find the answer in the wisdom of the Hippocratic corpus: "*There is one confluence; there is one common breathing; all things are in sympatheia; all things are according to the general nature, and the parts in each part are parts for their [appropriate] working,*"⁷⁵ proposing that the unity of the entire nature is in the key notion of *sympatheia*, while attraction and elimination are the stages of this process.⁷⁶

Ἱπποκράτης μὲν οὖν ὢν ἴσμεν ἰατρῶν τε καὶ φιλοσόφων πρῶτος ἀπάντων, ὡς ἂν καὶ πρῶτος [ἀκριβῶς] ἐπιγνοὺς τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἔργα, θαυμάζει τε καὶ διὰ παντὸς αὐτὴν ὑμνεῖ δικαίαν ὀνομάζων καὶ μόνην ἐξαρκεῖν εἰς ἅπαντα τοῖς ζῴοις φησίν, αὐτὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀδιδάκτως πράττουσαν ἅπαντα τὰ δέοντα· τοιαύτην δ' οὖσαν αὐτὴν εὐθέως καὶ δυνάμεις ὑπέλαβεν ἔχειν ἐλκτικὴν μὲν τῶν οἰκείων, ἀποκριτικὴν δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων καὶ τρέφειν τε καὶ αὔξειν αὐτὴν τὰ ζῷα καὶ κρίνειν τὰ νοσήματα· καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν ἡμῶν σύμπνοιάν τε μίαν εἶναί φησι καὶ σύρροιν καὶ πάντα συμπαθέα. κατὰ δὲ τὸν Ἀσκληπιάδην οὐδὲν οὐδενὶ συμπαθὲς ἐστὶ φύσει, διηρημένης τε καὶ κατατεθραυσμένης εἰς ἄναρμα στοιχεῖα καὶ ληρώδεις ὄγκους ἀπάσης τῆς οὐσίας. ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὖν ἄλλα τε μυρία τοῖς ἐναργῶς φαινομένοις ἐναντίως ἀπεφάνετο καὶ τῆς φύσεως ἡγνόησε τὴν τε τῶν οἰκείων ἐπισπαστικὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἀποκριτικὴν.

Now, Hippocrates, who was the first known to us of all those who have been both physicians and philosophers, inasmuch as he was the first to recognize what

⁷⁵ Ξύρροια μία, ξύμπνοια μία, ξυμπαθέα πάντα· κατὰ μὲν οὐλομελίην πάντα, κατὰ μέρος δὲ τὰ ἐν ἐκάστῳ μέρει μέρεα πρὸς τὸ ἔργον: Hippocrates, *De alimento*, 23 in É. Littré, *Œuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*, vol. 9, Paris: Baillière, 1861 (repr. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1962): 98-120, at p. 106. All translations, unless indicated otherwise, have been jointly made by A. Theologou and I. Perczel.

⁷⁶ There are two kinds of attraction within the bodily parts. One is happening when there is a void to fill and there are broad canals/roads for this; then, the increase of the attraction increases the movement and can act from afar. The other is due to the properties of some qualities, which can act only from near as the canals of this action are narrower; see Galen, *De nat. fac* III, 210.

Nature effects, expresses his admiration of her, and is constantly singing her praises and calling her “just.” Alone, he says, she suffices for the living beings in every respect, performing of her own accord and without any teaching all that is required. Being such, she has, as he supposes, certain *faculties*, one attractive of what is appropriate (ἐλκτικήν μὲν τῶν οἰκείων), and another eliminative of what is foreign (ἀποκριτικήν δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων), and she nourishes the living beings, makes them grow, and expels their diseases by secretion. Therefore, he says that “there is” in our bodies “one common breathing and confluence (σύμπνοια) and that all things are in *sympatheia* (καὶ πάντα συμπαθέα).” According to Asclepiades, however, nothing is naturally in *sympatheia* with anything else, the entire substance being divided and broken up into inharmonious elements and absurd volumes. Necessarily, then, besides making countless other statements in opposition to plain fact, he was ignorant of Nature’s faculties, both of that attracting what is appropriate, and of that eliminating what is foreign.⁷⁷

The above text, concerned with nutrition, includes the notion of *sympatheia*, denoting the unity of everything in the universe. Let us then explore what it describes: the body assimilates what is appropriate to and needed by it, while through secretion it eliminates what is harmful, the excrement and the urine. This directed movement includes two more important aspects: a) the *appropriateness in quality* of the parts, meaning that the parts are capable of receiving the transmitted affections, and b) the character of this transmission considered as an *open-space process*: the body is a spatial complex entity, a network, where different functions could take place and alter the health state of the body as a whole and in its different parts, either positively or negatively.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Galen targets the naturalists, claiming that Asklepiades, a follower of the atomist theory, is not able to explain this process. In this text about nutrition, Galen closely follows and elaborates upon *De alimento* 23 of the Hippocratic corpus.

⁷⁷ Galen, *De nat. fac.*, I, 38-39, translation A. J. Brock, *Galen on the Natural Faculties*, The Loeb Classical Library, London: Heinemann, 1928, 61-62, with small changes.

⁷⁸ B. Holmes, “Disturbing connections: sympathetic affections, mental disorder, and Galen’s elusive soul”, in W. V. Harris (ed.), *Mental Disorders in Classical Antiquity* Leiden: Brill, 2013, 148. She argues that, since we cannot grasp the nature of space where the soul and the body meet, we should understand *sympatheia* as an open-ended process.

Although Galen locates the soul's parts in the organs of the body, he does not perceive the body's dynamics as restricted to the soul's local aspect in the body. Hence, he feels it legitimate to posit a principle outside the body, responsible for the dynamics of the body without naming its essence. This is the reason for perceiving the body as an open process: the probability and uncertainty of the resulting state makes the body an unrestricted, *fertile* framework, always ready to *give birth* to any possible option, while being in *sympatheia* with its parts and itself. In this respect, Holmes correctly points out that Galen

is not only imagining a body in which different parts suffer together. Rather it seems he has in mind a more robust notion of *sympatheia*, according to which different parts of the body relate to one another and to the outside world in ways that enable the organism to perpetuate its life.⁷⁹

Human bodies are the work of a higher wisdom (ὅτι μὲν ἄκρας ἐστὶ σοφίας καὶ δυνάμεως ἡ τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν κατασκευή Galen, *PHP*, IX.9, 598.30-598.11). In the following section I will present additional examples from Galen's writings to show a) that the principle of interconnectedness and *sympatheia* envisaged as part of a higher design, and b) that Galen sees human physiology not as isolated parts working independently, but as a network of relationships that sustains the body as a cohesive whole within the design of the Demiurge for the Cosmos. In this respect, Galen does not just preserve the **Platonic cosmology**; he bridges the gap between metaphysics and practical medicine, providing a living proof to the principle of *sympatheia*.

Galen's Theology

The value of this framework about Galen's perception of *sympatheia* lies in stressing the intriguing fact that Galen, although a physician, never wrote any work about physics or made any theoretical investigation about it. As Michael Frede comments, Galen's "hesitation about theoretical philosophy and physics is related to his theology in nature."⁸⁰ Hence, I suggest that this open process of *sympatheia* originates from a) his agnostic attitude regarding the

⁷⁹ Holmes, "Reflection: Galen's sympathy", 64.

⁸⁰ M. Frede, "Galen's theology" in J. Barnes and J. Jouanna (eds.), *Galien et la philosophie: huit exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique de la Fondation Hardt: Vandoeuvres, 2003, 78.

Demiurge, b) his attempt to show that unity overpowers everything in the world and c) his theory about the world soul, which connects the demiurgic activity with the partial soul. Taking into account these three elements, *sympatheia* seems to be part of Galen's, which might have proved a source of inspiration for later philosophers, such as Plotinus. I shall explain this assumption in more detail below. It seems that Galen considers *sympatheia* as the manifestation of a higher power's activity. However, his scientific worldview is limited to accept only what can be experimentally proven and deduced from the experiments. A good example of his concerns on the issue can be found in his work *Formation of the foetuses*; there, while he makes many precautions about the precise character of Nature that has formed the bodily parts, he asserts emphatically that the ideas of the formation of the body come from the Demiurge. He claims that natural faculties are not capable of forming the embryo and that, even if we think of sympathetic relations between the parts, we are not entitled, on the one hand, to credit the rational part of the soul with the plan of such a complex process, nor, on the other, to explain it.⁸¹ Moreover he refutes any theory of a world soul which is in matter extended or the existence of a rational soul in a prerational animal, or the existence of multiple souls governing individual muscle functions (*Foet. Form.* IV, 696–701).⁸² In this respect, one could say that Galen follows the Platonist teachings, simultaneously maintaining that he remains agnostic regarding the essence of the Demiurge. More precisely, in *Foet. Form.* IV 695, he narrates his philosophical exploration regarding the Demiurge. He describes how he became the disciple of many philosophers, to learn what the essence of the Demiurge is, but their contradictions could not lead him to any definite conclusion. Even his own exploration failed in finding an answer to his philosophical quest. Emblematically, he illustrated the results of his quest with this sentence from the *Timaeus*: “To find the maker and father of this universe is hard enough, and even if one succeeded, to declare him to everyone is impossible”.⁸³ Is this not an expression of a deeply theological attitude full of concern for the origin of the things in this world?

⁸¹ Galen, *Foet. Form.* IV 683.13-702.34; see B. Holmes, “Galen on the chances of life”, in V. Wohl (ed.), *Probabilities, Hypotheticals, and Counterfactuals in Ancient Greek Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 238.

⁸² P. Singer, “Galen”, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 3.4; available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/galen/>

⁸³ *Timaeus*, 28c3-4.

Moreover, in *Foet. Form* IV 696-97, Galen expresses his conviction that the rational part of the soul and the soul that animates the bodily parts are two different things. He also mentions that the community of affections that can be observed between the rational faculty, which has the will to use the parts of the body, and the movements of these parts, testifies to the unity “of the soul that has fashioned us [that is, of the Demiurge] and of that soul, which is now using each part.”⁸⁴ Galen continues, and mentions that, seemingly, the fact that our governing soul (the rational soul) does not know how the bodily parts that it uses work, confirms this idea⁸⁵ and that, in fact, he has a solution to this problem, presented in several ones of his writings.

In addition to his theory of the soul, in this part of *De Foetuum Formatione*, Galen shows his opposition to his contemporary doctors, whether atomists or naturalists. He thinks that the sperm contains the soul of the father, which enters the womb, so that the sperm and the ovule carry the characters of the parents, and he refutes those views which want to attribute the formation of the body to either chance, or the interior movements of the body, without the plan of a soul. Those who were representing this view maintained that the first organ that is formed by the sperm is the heart and that, then, everything is formed from the heart. It is rather intriguing that Galen targets here the Peripatetic view, which asserts that the heart is the centre of the organism. That was originally Aristotle’s idea. Against this view, he posits the Platonist theory that the brain is the centre of the rational soul, without stating what he thinks is formed first. Furthermore, his opponents maintained that it is the sperm that is transformed into the heart, thus supposing an automatic process, a view which Galen refutes. He insists that there is a conscious process, attributable to the Demiurge, which is responsible for the formation of the embryo.⁸⁶

Furthermore, in *Temperaments* 1.9.229 and II.6.261, Galen suggests that the formation of the human being might be the work of a higher power. He gainsays those who deny that the human body's structure is the work of a craftsman, who formed its parts to align with the nature of the human being’s souls. Galen also notes that Aristotle was uncertain whether this creation was due to a higher power, or simply the balance of the four elements. Singler is

⁸⁴ *Foet. Form* 697, p. 100, 26-28.

⁸⁵ *Foet. Form* 697, p. 100, 28-29.

⁸⁶ *Foet. Form* 700-702.

correct when he points out that, for Galen, “material causation is adequate in some areas, while design-based causation needs to be invoked at a higher level, in particular when one needs to explain animal and in particular human structures and their operations.”⁸⁷ The demiurgic activity is necessary for the unity of the lower-level causation to the higher one, for the universal character of *sympatheia*. It seems that Galen posits a chain of different levels of causes and powers which create the conditions for appropriateness and transmission.

Galen gives manifold identifications for the Demiurge. In general, he calls every causal agent “demiurge.” Thus, the semen is δημιουργός of the foetus (*De semine* 4, 561), and physical exercise is δημιουργός of well-being (*Thrasylbulus* 5, 813). Most commonly, he calls Nature δημιουργός (*De elementis ex Hippocrate* 1, 4.95, 3, 121.4; *De usu partium* 3, 158, 277, etc.; *De methodo medendi* 10, 174). It is unclear, which principle he calls “our Demiurge” (ὁ δημιουργὸς ἡμῶν) in *De usu partium* 3, 310, 315, 367, 447, 455, 470, 481, 535, 578, 583 and 670, but at all these places Galen speaks about the Demiurge as about an intelligent, conscious actor (ibid. 3, 476), who has foreknowledge and providence (ibid. 3, 535, 780, 909, 910; 4, 21), is thinking (ibid. 3, 717), and is wise (ibid. 3, 838). Who is this Demiurge, or Craftsman?

In *De foetuum formatione* IV, 697, Galen writes:

ὅταν γὰρ θεασώμεθα τὰ παιδία φθεγγόμενα μὲν, ἅττ’ ἂν αὐτοῖς φθέγξασθαι κελεύσωμεν, οἷον, εἰ τύχη, σμύρναν, καὶ σμίλην, καὶ σμῆγμα, μήτε τοὺς κινουῦντας ἐπιτηδείως τῇ τοιαύτῃ φωνῇ τὴν γλῶτταν μῦς ἐπιστάμενα, μήτε πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔτι τὰ τούτοις αὐτῶν νεῦρα, πιθανώτατον μὲν ἡγοῦμαι, τὸν διαπλάσαντα τὴν γλῶτταν, ὅστις ποτ’ ἐστίν, ἢ αὐτὸν ἔτι διαμένειν ἐν τοῖς διαπλασθεῖσι μορίοις, ἢ ζῶα τὰ μόρια κατεσκευακέναι, γνωρίζοντα τὸ βούλημα τοῦ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικοῦ. τούτου δ’ ἀκόλουθον εὐρίσκων, ἄλλην μὲν εἶναι τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἡμῶν ψυχὴν, ἄλλας δὲ τὰς ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν μορίων, ἢ πάντως γε μίαν κοινὴν τὴν ἅπαντα διοικοῦσαν, εἰς ἀπορίαν ἔρχομαι, μηδ’ ἄχρι δυνατοῦ ἐπινοίας, μήτι γε βεβαίως γνώσεως, εὐρίσκων τι περὶ τοῦ διαπλάσαντος ἡμᾶς τεχνίτου. καὶ γὰρ ὅταν ἀκούσω τινῶν φιλοσόφων λεγόντων, τὴν ὕλην

⁸⁷ P. Singer, “Galen”, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 3.4; available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/galen/>

ἔμψυχον οὖσαν ἐξ αἰῶνος, ἀποβλέπουσαν πρὸς τὰς ιδέας, ἑαυτὴν κοσμεῖν, ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐννοῶ, μίαν εἶναι δεῖν ψυχὴν, τὴν τε διαπλάσασαν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν νῦν χρωμένην ἐκάστῳ τῶν μορίων. ἀνθίσταται δὲ τούτου πάλιν ἡ ἄγνοια τῆς διοικούσης ἡμᾶς ψυχῆς τῶν ὑπηρετούντων ταῖς ὁρμαῖς αὐτῆς μορίων.

When we are to see that the children are pronouncing whatever we tell them to pronounce, such as, for example, *smyrna* [myrrh], and *smilê* [knife, scissors], and *smêgma* [soap], while they don't know which muscles are appropriately moving the tongue to pronounce the given sounds, and even less, which of their nerves are in work, I judge it most probable that either the one who has fashioned the tongue, whoever he may be, is still staying in the fashioned parts, or he has formed the parts into living beings, which know the will of our governing soul. As I am concluding from this that one is the soul that is governing us and either other souls are in each of the parts, or the one common soul that is administering all things, I become perplexed as I am not capable to form any notion, not to say any firm knowledge, about the Craftsman who has fashioned us. In fact, when I hear certain philosophers say that matter, being animated from eternity, was looking at the ideas and ordered itself, this convinces me even more that the soul that has fashioned us is necessarily one and the same with the one that uses each part. Again, to this corresponds the fact that the soul that is administering us does not know the parts that are serving its impulses.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Our translation differs at several points from those of Kühn and of Singer (see *Galen, Selected Works: A New Translation* by P. N. Singer, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 198-199). The most important difference is in the interpretation of the last sentence of the excerpt, where both Kühn and Singer interpret ἀνθίσταται δὲ τούτου πάλιν as if the phenomenon that Galen is going to invoke, namely the ignorance of the governing part of the soul (*the hêgemonikon*) about the concrete movements of the parts (the muscles and the nerves), servicing its conscious impulses were contradicting the previous conclusions. See Kühn: “Dem stellt sich aber wiederum die Unkenntnis der uns verwaltenden Seele entgegen, die darin besteht, daß die Seele, die ihren Impulsen dienstbaren Körperteile nicht kennt” and Singer: “But again, against this is the fact that the soul that manages us has no knowledge of

While here as elsewhere Galen stresses that he does not have “even a mere notion, not to say, firm knowledge about the Craftsman (τεχνίτης) who has fashioned us” and the entire universe, he calls it a soul, while he refers to a Middle Platonist interpretation of “certain philosophers” of *Timaeus* 35a. This leads us to his lost commentary on the *Timaeus*, whose parts interpreting this part of the *Timaeus* are extant in Arabic translation.⁸⁹ Here is the first part of the passage on the world soul in the Arabic text of Galen’s *Compendium of the Timaeus*:

IV- وَجَعَلَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي فِيهِ مِنَ الْجَوْهَرِ الَّذِي لَا يَنْقَسِمُ الْبَاقِي دَائِمًا بِحَالٍ وَاجِدَةً وَمِنْ الَّذِي يَنْقَسِمُ فِي الْأَجْسَامِ ، فَجَعَلَ فِيهِ مِنْ طَبِيعَةِ الْجَوْهَرِ الْبَاقِي دَائِمًا بِحَالٍ وَاحِدَةً وَمِنْ طَبِيعَةِ الْجَوَاهِرِ الْآخَرِ . وَيَعْنِي بِقَوْلِهِ "الشَّيْءَ الَّذِي لَا يَنْقَسِمُ" وَقَوْلُهُ "الشَّيْءَ الَّذِي يَنْقَسِمُ" < فِي الْأَجْسَامِ > الْحَرَكَةَ الْغَرِيزِيَّةَ الَّتِي فِي الْمَادَّةِ وَهِيَ الَّتِي يَقُولُ فِيهَا بَعْدَ قَلِيلٍ إِنَّهَا أَزَلِيَّةٌ فِيهَا . فَإِنْ كَانَتْ النَّفْسُ ابْتِدَاءَ الْحَرَكَةِ عَلَى رَأْيِهِ وَكَانَتْ الْمَادَّةُ مَتَحَرِّكَةً مِنْ ذَاتِهَا فَالْبَيِّنُ أَنَّهَا مَتَنَفِّسَةٌ إِلَّا أَنَّ تِلْكَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي فِيهَا مُضْطَرِبَةٌ مَتَحَرِّكَةٌ عَلَى غَيْرِ نِظَامٍ مُحَدَّدٍ . وَلِذَلِكَ لَمَّا أَرَادَ الْخَالِقُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَنْ يَرُدَّهَا إِلَى التَّرْتِيبِ وَالنِّظَامِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي مِنْ طَبِيعَةِ الشَّيْءِ الْبَاقِي دَائِمًا بِحَالٍ وَاحِدَةً .

ثم إن طيماوس من بعد هذا الكلام يصف كيف تنقسم نفس العالم في جميع أجزائه على نسب كنسب التأليف، ويدل بذلك على العدد. ثم قال بعد فراغه من ذلك: إِنَّ الْخَالِقَ قَسَمَ جُمْلَةً ذَلِكَ لِقَسَمِينَ بِالطُّوْلِ وَأَلْقَى كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهَا عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ حَتَّى صَارَا شَكْلَهُمَا شَكْلَ الشَّيْنِ فِي كِتَابِ الْيُونَانِيِّينَ وَهُوَ هَذَا X وَتَنَاهَمَا جَمِيعًا حَتَّى صَارَا دَائِرَتَيْنِ مُتَصِلَتَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا بِالْآخَرَى.

IV- And He placed within the soul from the substance which is indivisible, always remaining in one and the same state, and from that which is divisible in the bodies [...] So He placed within it, from the nature of the substance, which is always remaining in one and the same state, and from the nature of [the] other substance[s].⁹⁰ By saying, “the thing which is indivisible”, he meant [...] ⁹¹ And by saying “the thing which is divisible' <in the bodies>, [he meant] the innate motion in matter; which, he says there a bit later, is eternal within it [within

the parts that obey its urges.” Yet, this phenomenon is the starting point of Galen’s reflections and perfectly supports his conclusions. Thus, here ἀνθίσταται should not be interpreted in the sense of “resists,” or “contradicts,” but as “corresponds.” See the second meaning of the word in Liddel, Scott and Jones.

⁸⁹ P. Kraus and R. Walzer, *Galen Compendium Timaei Platonis, aliorumque dialogorum synopsis*, London: Warburg Institute, 1951, chapter IV; Arabic text: p. ٦-٧, Latin translation: p. 42-45.

⁹⁰ Due to the rules of the Arabic grammar, “substances” are in the plural here, but this can also mean a single substance (note by Arash Khorashadi).

⁹¹ There is a lacuna here.

matter]. If, according to his [Plato's] view, the soul is the origin of motion and matter is self-moving, then it is evident that it is ensouled,⁹² but for the fact that that soul in which [there is] an unrest, is moved without any defined order.⁹³ Therefore, when the Creator, the Blessed and Exalted, wanted to endow it [matter] with order and arrangement, He placed within it the soul which is of the nature of the eternal thing, which always remains in one and the same state.

Then Timaeus, after this statement, described how the soul of the world is divided in all its parts according to relations (/proportions), such as the relations (proportions) of composition, and by this he indicates number. Then, after finishing that, he said: “Indeed, the Creator divided the whole of that into two parts lengthwise and placed each one over the other until their shape became the shape of the [Arabic letter] Shin – which is in the Greek book this X – and He folded them both until they became two circles, connected to one another.”

(Translation: Arash Khorashadi)⁹⁴

Here Galen interprets the creation of the soul by the Demiurge as a mixture of the immortal soul and of matter that is animated by a soul moving “a chaotic and disorderly motion” of *Tim.* 30a, combined with the “evil soul” of *Laws* X, 896d-897d. In Galen's interpretation, “the substance that becomes divisible around the bodies” is the disorderly and chaotic soul that is there from all eternity before the creation, while the part of the indivisible and unchanging substance that enters the mixture when the Demiurge is creating the world, is the rational soul, an eternal being as will be seen from the next excerpt. Thus, the rational soul is not born in the mixing bowl, but is part of the pre-cosmic intellectual substance. This is the

⁹² The root of the word means breathing, inhaling (note by Arash Khorashadi).

⁹³ See Timaeus 35a: κινούμενον πλημμελῶς καὶ ἀτάκτως.

⁹⁴ My gratefulness goes to Arash Khorashadi, doctoral candidate at CEU's Department of Historical Studies, for translating from Arabic the texts I needed from the Arabic Galen. P. Adamson's translation of the same passage in “The Universe is an Animal: The World Soul in Medieval Philosophy” in J. Wilberding (ed.), *World Soul: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 78, is inaccurate. Among others, he omits by error an important part of the text.

first creation, by the Demiurge, whose nature, as Galen repeats oft and ever, cannot be known, even conceptualized.

The idea of the two souls is borrowed from Plutarch.⁹⁵ For Galen, the creation of the world is in time as well, which means that the disorderly matter is regulated by the indivisible substance of the soul by the command of the Demiurge. The parts of the soul are divided in a harmonious way, implying that they all are in connection with each other.

However, there is also a second creation, that of the living beings in the world (or the world of the living beings), consisting of four parts: the celestial bodies, the flying beings, those that are swimming in water, and those that are walking or creeping on the surface of the earth (chapter V). About this second creation, Galen (in the translation of Hunayn ibn Ishac, who changes Plato's secondary gods to "angels," so as not to hurt the monotheist sensitivities) says the following, commenting on *Tim.* 40d-41a:

VI- ثم قال: إن الله تعالى قال للملائكة قولاً عاماً (:) إنهم إذا كانوا مكوّنين، فليس هم غير فاسدين. إلا أنهم لا يفسدون في وقت من الاوقات بمشيئته و عنايته بهم. و لأنه قد كان ينبغي أن يكون في العالم حيوان يقبل الموت جعلهم سبباً لكون ما يكون منه. و ذلك أنه لو كان تولّى خلقهم لكانوا بمنزلة الملائكة. //

ثم قال: وإن الخالق تبارك و تعالى أعطى الملائكة ابتداء الخلقة التي لا تموت، و من اليّين أنه يعني بذلك النفس الناطقة. و لهذا السبب لما مزج المزاج الأول الذي خلط فيه نفس العالم أفرغ فيه البقايا التي بقيت من الأشياء المتقدّمة و خلطها جميعاً و جعلها من جهة من الجهات باقيةً على حالها. و لم يجعلها غير فاسدة على ذلك المثال لكن ثوانى و ثوانث.

- Then [Timaeus] said: God the Exalted uttered to the angels a general discourse, saying: Even though they have come to existence, it is not so that they are uncorruptible. However, they do not decay in any time among the times, thanks to His Providence and His Care for them.

And because it was necessary that the world of the living [beings] should accept death, He made them [the angels] a cause for what comes into being from Him.

⁹⁵ Plutarch, *De animae procreatione* 6-9, 1014-16. See the notes of Kraus and Walzer to their Latin translation. See also P. Adamson, "The universe is an animal. The world soul in medieval philosophy" in J. Wilberding (ed.), *World Soul: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 79.

And that is because, had He Himself taken charge of the world of the living beings, then they would have been in equal rank to the angels.

Then he said: The Creator, Blessed and Exalted be He, gave the angels in the beginning a creation that does not die, and it is clear that by that he [Timaeus] meant the rational soul.

For this reason, when He mixed the first mixture, to which He added the soul of the world, He emptied into it the remnants that had remained of the earlier things,⁹⁶ mixed them all together and made them in some way to remain in one and the same state. And He did not make it [the world of the living beings] incorruptible in that manner, but rather seconds and thirds.⁹⁷

(Translation: Arash Khorashadi)

These passages apparently indicate that Galen distinguished two Demiurges, or rather a double demiurgic creation. First, the creation of the world soul in the mixing bowl (the motif of the mixing bowl is missing in the commentary on *Tim.* 30a, because it must have been in the lacuna in the text, but is referred to later in the commentary on *Tim.* 40d-41a),⁹⁸ and second, the creation of the individual beings by the world soul or, rather, by the gods formed by the world soul. Galen's text seems to indicate that the secondary gods, to whom the Demiurge entrusts the creation of the mortal beings, are formed from the world soul created first and, thus, the world soul is the secondary Creator of the universe. Most probably, Nature, called the Demiurge, and "our Demiurge" often invoked in *De usu partium*, is this world soul, while the one whose nature is completely inscrutable is the Creator of the world soul.

Galen's theory of cosmic *sympatheia*, and of perception being an outcome of this community of affections, is constructed upon this metaphysical framework, whose main tenets are: 1. the insertion of the rational soul by the inscrutable Creator into the mixture of the act of creation, so that its presence sets order upon the pre-creational disorderly movement, and 2. the world

⁹⁶ "The earlier things" denotes matter animated by the disorderly and chaotic soul.

⁹⁷ *Galen's Compendium*, chapter VI, Arabic text: p. 9, Latin translation: p. 50.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

soul's direct animation of all the parts of the living beings, their rational souls being different from the soul animating the bodies.

Taking also into account Galen's theory of the location of the soul and the agnosticism regarding the essence of the Demiurge, one could argue that he considers *sympatheia* to be manifested within the domain of the body, but having its origin outside the body's limits, though its ruler remains unknown. Galen sees *sympatheia* as part of the body's dynamics, which can be affected by the powers of the self-moving soul outside the body and that an empiricist cannot prove but can infer the network that these powers move from.

As I claim in this chapter, to understand Galen's concept of *sympatheia*, which is related to theology in nature, one should consider his view on the Demiurge along with his theory of the soul: the soul of the universe, which is the Demiurge, on the one hand, creates the rational soul, but on the other, creates the corporeal faculties, directly animating them. Galen proceeds by observing that the corporeal organs are constructed so that they are perfectly apt to serve the volitive moves of the rational soul, although the latter does not know how the muscles, the nerves etc. move. From this principle, Galen concludes that there should be a higher harmonising principle, and that that principle should be the Demiurge, whom he considers the soul of the universe.

τούτου δ' ἀκόλουθον εὐρίσκων, ἄλλην μὲν εἶναι τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἡμῶν ψυχὴν, ἄλλας δὲ τὰς ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν μορίων, ἢ πάντως γε μίαν κοινὴν τὴν ἅπαντα διοικοῦσαν, εἰς ἀπορίαν ἔρχομαι, μὴδ' ἄχρι δυνατοῦ ἐπινοίας, μήτι γε βεβαίως γνώσεως, εὐρίσκων τι περὶ τοῦ διαπλάσαντος ἡμᾶς τεχνίτου. καὶ γὰρ ὅταν ἀκούσω τινῶν φιλοσόφων λεγόντων, τὴν ὕλην ἔμψυχον οὔσαν ἐξ αἰῶνος, ἀποβλέπουσαν πρὸς τὰς ιδέας, ἐαυτὴν κοσμεῖν, ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐννοῶ, μίαν εἶναι δεῖν ψυχὴν, τὴν τε διαπλάσασαν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν νῦν χρωμένην ἐκάστῳ τῶν μορίων. ἀνθίσταται δὲ τούτου πάλιν ἡ ἄγνοια τῆς διοικούσης ἡμᾶς ψυχῆς τῶν ὑπηρετούντων ταῖς ὁρμαῖς αὐτῆς μορίων.⁹⁹

As I am concluding from this that one is the soul that is governing us and either other souls are in each of the parts, or the one common soul that is administering all things, I become perplexed as I am not capable to form any notion, not to say

⁹⁹ *Form.Foet.* IV 696-697.

any firm knowledge, about the Craftsman who has fashioned us. In fact, when I hear certain philosophers say that matter, being animated from eternity, was looking at the ideas and ordered itself, this convinces me even more that the soul that has fashioned us is necessarily one and the same with the one that uses each part. Again, to this corresponds the fact that the soul that is administering us does not know the parts that are serving its impulses.

Although it remains doubtful whether these parts of the body are independent animals or are animated otherwise, directly, by the soul of the universe, Galen explores these philosophical questions acknowledging as authority Plato and his theological work, the *Timaeus*.¹⁰⁰ As mentioned above, Galen's empirical spirit prevents him from stating whatever he cannot prove, and so he maintains that the essence of the soul – both that of the Demiurge and that of the human being – is unknown. These two elements, theological in nature, might have inspired the founder of the Neoplatonist school, Plotinus, and his perception of cosmic religion.

In the following section, I will show that Plotinus takes over this structure and elaborates further on cosmic religion with an explanation about the essence of the soul, its functions and the working of *sympatheia*. As I will attempt to demonstrate, Plotinus reads the *Timaeus* in a way that he also considers Galen's concerns and perceives the rational soul and the Demiurge as parts of a higher unity.

Plotinus and cosmic religion: the soul, the body and their network

In the previous section, I tried to demonstrate that Galen's agnosticism, his theory of the soul, and his theory of the cosmic *sympatheia* derive from an acknowledgment of the demiurgic

¹⁰⁰ In this chapter I am not claiming that Galen is a traditional Platonist, but rather that he has a certain respect for Platonism, or better he is a “sui generis” philosopher. As Frede has pointed out, Galen had followed four different philosophical schools and was influenced by Stoicism, but he is critical toward the Stoic teachings. At the same time, in *Foet. Form.* IV, 700-701, Galen criticizes also those Platonists who claim that the form of such harmful animals as the scorpion is made by the Demiurge. See M. Frede, “Galen's theology” in J. Barnes and J. Jouanna (eds.), *Galien et la philosophie : huit exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique de la Fondation Hardt: Vandoeuvres, 2003, 73-76.

activity, connected to a certain type of theology. In this section I will explore how the same questions are treated by Plotinus and are linked to the concept of cosmic religion - the view that Heavens do exist and are near the intelligible realm - with the unity and role of the soul in metaphysics.

The first step for this endeavour is to show the close connection between Plotinus and Galen concerning the location of the soul in the body and then, to explore the relationship of the soul to the body. One of the most important philosophical conundrums, which Plotinus wishes to solve in his treatises on the soul, united in the fourth *Ennead* by Porphyry, is how the soul “enters” the body. A body for Plotinus is a perceptible divisible mass (ὄγκος), while a living body (σῶμα) is the animated body, enlightened (πεφωτισμένον) by the soul, qualified according to its capacity and spatially extended. On the opposite pole is the soul and its essence: Plotinus states explicitly in IV.2 [4] 1, 1-5 that the soul is not material, nor a harmony or entelechy, but is of intelligible nature and of a divine *lot* (νοητῆς φύσεως καὶ θείας μοίρας). In fact, Plotinus resumes here a long argument on the immortality of the soul, which he wrote earlier, in his early treatise IV.7 [2]. Here, continuing the argument of IV.7 [2], he sets up to explain the meaning of Plato’s allegory in the *Timaeus* (35a1-4) on the substance of the soul:

μεταξὺ τῆς ἀμερίστου οὐσίας, ἣ μένει ἀεὶ ἢ αὐτὴ κατὰ ταυτόν, καὶ τῆς μεριστῆς ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν... μίξιν τρίτον εἶδος οὐσίας ἐξ ἀμφοῖν συνεκράσατο.¹⁰¹

between the indivisible substance, which always remains in the same state and the one that becomes divisible around the bodies, he [the Demiurge] mingled up a third form of substance out of the two.

According to the bottom-up epistemological method that he adopts in this treatise, Plotinus first mentions those entities that are “primarily divisible and dispersed according to their nature” (τὰ μὲν πρώτως ... μεριστὰ καὶ τῇ αὐτῶν φύσει σκεδαστά), which are “the sensible extensions and volumes” (τὰ αἰσθητὰ μεγέθη καὶ ὄγκοι). Extension and volume are the first characteristics of the corporeal world, abstracted from its formal qualities, which belong to the secondarily divisible realm and already have a share in the One. To this mere divisibility,

¹⁰¹ IV.2 [4] 1, 1-5.

he opposes the indivisible nature, which he represents as the centre of a circle, remaining in itself and non-extended, from which everything is generated.¹⁰²

One step closer to the intelligible realm is that substance which “becomes divisible in the bodies” (μεριστή μὲν οὐ πρώτως, ὡς τὰ σώματα, μεριστή δὲ γινομένη ἐν τοῖς σώμασι). This secondarily divisible realm is that of the corporeal qualities, “such as colours, qualities and every shape” (IV.2 [4] 1, 38-39). As, whatever happens to these qualities in one body does not affect the other qualities in the other bodies, Plotinus considers these secondarily divisible qualities entirely divisible too. Yet, as each form remains entire in its corporeal manifestation, they preserve an element of oneness (IV. 2 [4], 1, 32-41). The soul, the “third form of substance” is in between these two ontologically opposite realms, that is, the intelligible, indivisible nature and the secondarily divisible nature.¹⁰³ Belonging by its nature to the intelligible realm, the soul remains undivided (ἔχουσα μὲν τὸ ἀμέριστον ἀπ’ ἐκείνης), but proceeds to *become divided* not any more in the bodies, but *around / in relation to the bodies* (μεριστή δὲ γινομένη περὶ τὰ σώματα) without losing its unity (ibid, 41-57).¹⁰⁴ From this different divisibility, which does not affect the soul’s fundamental unity, there follows that, what affects one partial soul, affects all the others, too. Plotinus will further explain this phenomenon of cosmic *sympatheia* in IV. 9 [8], written not much later than IV.2 [4]. The

¹⁰² It is a common ground for researchers to call the partial (μεριστή) soul “individual soul.” Plotinus never uses the word individual (ἀτομική) in his writings on the soul. It is true that he uses the term καθ’ ἕκαστα for the intellects contained in the great Intellect, and the souls, too, but he does this in a technical sense, meaning “each,” “each one,” “most specific” (see VI.2 [43] 20, 10-13, where he speaks not only about ἕκαστος νοῦς but also uses the term καθ’ ἕκαστα; see also ἐν τούτῳ περιεχομένων νοερῶν δυνάμεων καὶ νόων τῶν καθέκαστα in IV.8 [6] 3, 9, and ψυχαὶ ἐφεξῆς καθ’ ἕκαστον νοῦν ἐξηρητημέναι in IV.3 [27] 5, 9 – I owe these references and their interpretation to Prof. László Bene, who has kindly read a previous version of this thesis). As I will show in the next chapter, the unity of all the souls does not allow us to define the position of the soul, being a part of the whole soul, as something disconnected and attached to the body. The soul becomes individual after it enters the body.

¹⁰³ See also Plato, *Phaedo* 81; P. Kalligas, “Eiskrisis, or the presence of soul in the body: a Plotinian conundrum”, *Ancient Philosophy*, 32.1, 2012, 147-150.

¹⁰⁴ One must admit that Plotinus’ language is not terminological here, but the distinction between “in the bodies” and “around/ in relation to the bodies” is clear.

soul operates everywhere and, in a sense, divides itself to animate the bodies but remains entire in every part of its body, be it the soul of the universe animating the entire sensible cosmos, or a partial soul animating a part of the universe (ibid. 57-66).

But how exactly could be understood this operation and in which way is it connected to Galen's queries about the substance of the soul and the network between the body and the Demiurge, which makes *sympatheia* possible?

Plotinus following Galen: the *arche* and the powers of the soul

As previously discussed, Galen, in his work *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato (PHP)*, elaborated a theory of the soul's tripartition within the body, drawing upon the *Timaeus*.¹⁰⁵ Teun Tieleman has observed that this interpretation, unique among the Middle Platonists, shaped Plotinus' own view, indicating a direct intellectual lineage from Galen to Plotinus in this regard. Tieleman not only argued that Plotinus was following Galen regarding the location of the soul's parts in the body, but also analysed the direct references to Galen's *PHP* in a text that apparently summarizes Plotinus' theory on the seats of the three psychic faculties, the rational, the spirited, and the appetitive faculty, IV.3 [27], 23.¹⁰⁶ He suggests that Plotinus modifies Galen's view to preserve the unity and incorporeality of the soul. Turning against the Peripatetic hylomorphism, Plotinus posits that the parts of the soul are not "in" the three main bodily organs in a literal sense, namely the brain, the body, and the liver; rather, it is only their activity that emerges there. Plotinus arrives at this conclusion through a reinterpretation of the concept of *archê* as used by Galen, and Tieleman believes that Plotinus' theory about the communication of the soul's parts is significantly influenced by Alexander's *On the Soul (De anima)*, too, without accepting Alexander's and Galen's hylomorphism.

¹⁰⁵ Hippocrates and Plato was considered as following the same *hairesis*. As Karamanolis points out: "Hippocrates and Plato can be considered as belonging to the same *hairesis* only if somebody takes their accord on a certain issue as so crucial as to outweigh other differences." See G. E. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 250.

¹⁰⁶ T. Tieleman, "Plotinus on the seat of the soul: reverberations of Galen and Alexander in *Enn.* IV, 3 [27], 23", *Phronesis*, 43, 306-325.

Tieleman considers that, for Plotinus, to describe how the brain is related to the other parts of the soul – something that Galen has difficulty to prove through dissections¹⁰⁷ – Plotinus borrows from Alexander his argument in the form of a *soretes*, i.e. a chain of interconnected arguments. Alexander links the functions of the soul in a step-by-step inferential chain: from the nutritive faculty to the power of touch, and from there to the other senses, ultimately culminating in the perceptive faculty. Alexander further argues that where the perceptive faculty resides, there too must reside the imaginative soul, the acts of assent, the impulses, desires, and finally, the theoretical intellect. While Alexander does not directly locate the theoretical intellect in the heart, he implies that it is linked to the rational faculty, which he locates in the heart, inseparable with respect to the material substrate from the other faculties.

Plotinus, on the other hand, simplifies this scheme by connecting reason directly to impulse, desire, and imagination, without the intermediate steps employed by Alexander. However, Plotinus does maintain a similar separation of the theoretical intellect from the material substrate, much like Alexander. This holds for the rational part. The similarities and differences between Galen's, Alexander's, and Plotinus' approaches suggest that Plotinus was familiar with and influenced by, both Galen's *PHP*, and Alexander's work. However, Plotinus adapts Alexander's method to support his own views, particularly by starting the inferential sequence from the brain rather than the heart, drawing on Galen's anatomical demonstrations to justify this starting point. Alexander's original procedure likely served as a response to Galen, while Plotinus' adaptation effectively turns Alexander's method against itself and becomes a defense of Plotinus' view, based on Galen.

Tieleman cites and comments upon the entire chapter of IV.3 [27], 23, in a translation based on Armstrong's, but modified. In chapter 22, Plotinus, quoting Plato's *Timaeus*, states that the body is in the soul as the fire is in the illuminated air; the powers of the fire illuminate the air, and the powers of the soul vivify the body. Then, in chapter 23, Plotinus continues to explain how these powers of the soul end up in the body. Here, I am citing the entire chapter in Greek, and in a new translation, to show that Plotinus is not only inspired by Galen, as

¹⁰⁷ As we saw in the previous section, Galen infers that respiration starts from the *pneuma* outside and ends up through the nerves in the brain where all the organs take commands. Most probably Alexander and Plotinus have read his works and applied the logical interconnection of different parts of the body to the communication of faculties as well.

previous interpreters, including Tieleman who went the farthest revealing Plotinus' dependence on Galen, suggested, but he summarises Galen's argument as found not only in *PHP*, but also in Galen's *Commentary on the Timaeus*, defends it against Alexander's criticism, and adds his commentaries. He does so without criticizing Galen and explaining that Galen himself understood the relationship between the three faculties and their corporeal seats in the way, he, Plotinus, understands this:

τοῦ σώματος πεφωτισμένου τοῦ ἐμψύχου ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄλλο ἄλλως μεταλαμβάνειν αὐτοῦ μέρος· καὶ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ὀργάνου πρὸς τὸ ἔργον ἐπιτηδεύ- τητα, δύναμιν τὴν προσήκουσαν εἰς τὸ ἔργον ἀποδιδούσαν, οὕτω τοι λέγεσθαι τὴν μὲν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς δύναμιν τὴν ὁρατικὴν εἶναι, τὴν δ' ἐν ὣσὶ τὴν ἀκουστικὴν, καὶ γευστικὴν ἐν γλώσση, ὄσφρησιν ἐν ῥίσι, τὴν δὲ ἀπτικὴν ἐν παντὶ παρεῖναι· πρὸς γὰρ ταύτην τὴν ἀντίληψιν πᾶν τὸ σῶμα ὄργανον τῇ ψυχῇ παρεῖναι. Τῶν δὲ ἀπτικῶν ὀργάνων ἐν πρώτοις τοῖς νεύροις ὄντων, ἃ δὴ καὶ πρὸς τὴν κίνησιν τοῦ ζώου τὴν δύναμιν ἔχει, ἐνταῦθα τῆς τοιαύτης δούσης ἑαυτήν, ἀρχομένων δὲ ἀπὸ ἐγκεφάλου τῶν νεύρων, τὴν τῆς αἰσθήσεως καὶ ὁρμῆς ἀρχὴν καὶ ὅλως παντὸς τοῦ ζώου ἐνταῦθα ἔθεσαν φέροντες, οὗ δηλονότι αἱ ἀρχαὶ τῶν ὀργάνων, ἐκεῖ παρεῖναι τὸ χρησόμενον τιθέμενοι—βέλτιον δὲ λέγειν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἐνεργείας τῆς δυνάμεως ἐκεῖ— ὅθεν γὰρ ἔμελλε κινεῖσθαι τὸ ὄργανον, ἐκεῖ ἔδει οἷον ἐναπερίδεσθαι τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ τεχνίτου ἐκείνην τὴν τῷ ὀργάνῳ πρόσφορον, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐ τὴν δύναμιν—πανταχοῦ γὰρ ἡ δύναμις— ἐκεῖ δὲ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἡ ἀρχή, οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ ὀργάνου. Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἡ τοῦ αἰσθάνεσθαι δύναμις καὶ ἡ τοῦ ὁρμᾶν ψυχῆς οὔσης αἰσθητικῆς καὶ φανταστικῆς φύσις¹⁰⁸ ἐπάνω ἑαυτῆς εἶχε τὸν λόγον, ὥς ἂν γειτονοῦσα πρὸς τὸ κάτω οὗ αὐτὴ ἐπάνω, ταύτῃ ἐτέθη τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἐν τοῖς ἄκροις τοῦ ζώου παντὸς ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, ὥς οὔσα οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἐγκεφάλῳ, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰσθητικῷ, ὃ ἐν τῷ ἐγκεφάλῳ ἐκείνως ἴδρυτο. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔδει σώματι διδόναι, καὶ τῷ σώματι μάλιστα τῆς ἐνεργείας δεκτικῷ, τὸ δὲ σώματι οὐδαμοῦ κοινωνοῦν πάντως

¹⁰⁸ φύσις A^{pc}x (=BRJ)UC+Creuzer/ φύσεως w (=AE) +Perna and Kirchoff; the sigla are those of Henry-Schwyzler 1; H. von Kleist, *Zu Plotinos Enn. IV 3 und 4*, Leer: D.H. Zopfs, 1888 6, claimed that φύσις was an erroneous supplement of τοῦ ὁρμᾶν, inserted at the wrong place. Kleist's suggestion was accepted by Henry and Schwyzler, as well as by Armstrong.

ἐκεῖνῳ κοινωνεῖν ἔδει, ὃ ψυχῆς εἶδος ἦν καὶ ψυχῆς δυναμένης τὰς παρὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀντιλήψεις ποιεῖσθαι. Αἰσθητικὸν γὰρ κριτικὸν πῶς, καὶ φανταστικὸν οἷον νοερόν, καὶ ὁρμὴ καὶ ὄρεξις, φαντασία καὶ λόγῳ ἐπόμενα. Ἐκεῖ οὖν τὸ λογιζόμενον οὐχ ὡς ἐν τόπῳ, ἀλλ' ὅτι τὸ ἐκεῖ ἀπολαύει αὐτοῦ. Πῶς δὲ τὸ «ἐκεῖ» ἐπὶ τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ, εἴρηται. Τοῦ δὲ φυτικοῦ αὖ καὶ αὐξητικοῦ καὶ θρεπτικοῦ μηδενὸς ἀπολειπομένου, τρέφοντος δὲ τῷ αἵματι, τοῦ δὲ αἵματος τοῦ τρέφοντος ἐν φλεψὶν ὄντος, ἀρχῆς δὲ καὶ φλεβῶν καὶ αἵματος ἐν ἥπατι, οἷον ἐναπεριειδομένης ταύτης τῆς δυνάμεως ἐνταῦθα ἢ τοῦ ἐπιθυμητικοῦ μοῖρα τῆς ψυχῆς οἰκεῖν ἀπεδόθη. Ὁ γάρ τοι καὶ γεννᾷ καὶ τρέφει καὶ αὔξει, τοῦτο καὶ τούτων ἐπιθυμεῖν ἀνάγκη. Τοῦ δὲ λεπτοῦ καὶ κούφου καὶ ὀξέος καὶ καθαροῦ αἵματος, θυμῷ προσφόρου ὀργάνου, ἢ τούτου πηγὴ —ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸ τοιοῦτον αἷμα ἀποκρίνεται τῇ τοῦ θυμοῦ ζέσει—καρδία πεποίηται οἴκησις πρέπουσα.

When the ensouled body is illuminated by the soul, one part of it participates in one way and one in another and, while the soul gives the organ the appropriate power for the task according to its aptitude for its task, we say that the sight is the power that resides in the eye, the hearing is that in the ears, the taste in the tongue, the smell in the nostrils, while the touch is in the whole body. For the whole body presents itself to the soul as an organ for this perception. Since the organs of touch are first in those nerves¹⁰⁹, which also have the power to set the living being in motion, and this power [that is, the touch] communicates itself in the nerves, while the starting point of the nerves begin in the brain, they placed here through inference¹¹⁰ the principle of perception and of impulse and in general of the whole living being. In fact, they assumed that the one who was going to use the organs would be there, where the starting point of the organs are

¹⁰⁹ By "first organs" here, Plotinus refers to the organs closest to the environment, which are part of a sequence of perceptive organs leading up to the final organ, the brain. This is something that Galen also points out when he refers to touch as being mediated by the nerves to reach the perceptive organ (brain); see C. Kuhn, *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, I-XX, reprinted, Hildesheim: Olms, 1964-1965, vol. V, 641-642.

¹¹⁰ "Placed here through inference" must be the meaning of ἐνταῦθα ἔθεσαν φέροντες. Armstrong, in his translation, leaves φέροντες untranslated.

– but it is better to say that the beginning of the activity of the power is there. For necessarily, from where the work tool is being moved, there is, so to say, the support of the power of the workman, which is useful for the tool. More precisely, it is not the power, as the power is everywhere, but the beginning of the activity is there where the work tool begins.

Since, then, the power of sensation as well as of impulsion, which is a nature of a perceptive and imaginative soul, had above itself the reason, as if it were approaching from below that, which it [the power of the workman – the rational soul] approaches from above, for this reason the ancients have placed it [that is, the power of sensation and impulsion] at the highest end of the whole being, which is the head – not as if it were in the brain but as being in that perceptive faculty which is based in the brain in the way explained above. In fact, they had to attribute the former [the power of sensation and impulsion] to the body, and particularly to that part of the body, which is receptive for its activity, while that which does not communicate in any way to the body had to communicate to that [that is, the power of sensation and impulsion], which was a kind of soul, namely of a soul capable to harbor the perceptions coming from reason. In fact, the perceptive faculty is in some way capable of judgement, and the imaginative faculty is, as if were, intelligent, while impulse and desire are obeying to imagination and reason. So, the reasoning faculty is there, not as in a place but because that which is there enjoys it. We have already explained the meaning of “there” in the case of the perceptive faculty. As the vegetative, growing, and nutritive faculty is not absent from any [part of the body] and nourishes it by means of the blood, and as the nourishing blood is in the veins, and the starting point of the veins and the blood is in the liver, as if this power was leaning upon there, so the appetitive part of the soul was assigned this place to dwell in. For that which generates and nourishes and produces growth must necessarily also have an appetite for all this. But since the thin, light, quick, pure blood is the proper organ for the emotion, the spring of this—for this is where the blood of this kind is secreted by the boiling of emotion—that is, the heart, they [the ancients] designated this to be its [that is, the emotion’s] appropriate dwelling place.

Blumenthal, followed by Armstrong and Emilsson thought that, when Plotinus employs the plural pronoun “they” and speaks about “the ancients,” who have assigned the brain as the place of the rational soul, he refers here to the doctors Herophilus of Chalcedon, and Erasistratus of Ceos, who discovered, through dissection, the nerves and the fact that the nerves are starting in the brain, as well as to Galen, who used these discoveries for refuting the Aristotelian/Peripatetic view according to which the center of perception and of intelligence is the heart, and who identified the brain as being this center.¹¹¹ Tieleman has gone much further, identifying as one of Plotinus’ sources, besides Alexander’s *De Anima*, Galen’s *PHP*, demonstrating, through a fine philological analysis, the precise parallels between *PHP*, and the chapter’s text. However, one may go even further if one reconstructs the original Greek text of IV.3 [27], 23, and gives a more precise translation thereof, which I tried to do above.

Plotinus refers here directly to someone who had drawn through inference from the discoveries of Herophilus and Erasistratus the conclusion that the brain is the center of perception, and who assigned the heart as the center for the spirited/emotional faculty, and the liver as the center for the appetitive/nutritive faculty. Moreover, he says that these “ancients” have based their theories on anatomical observations, that is, on the consideration that the nerves are starting in the brain, the veins in the liver, and the arteries in the heart, which secretes the blood. This is nothing else than Galen’s medical theory, which Plotinus accepts almost in its entirety but reinterprets so that the location of the psychic faculties/souls/natures becomes non-spatial, corresponding to the principle that I will call in the following “analogical spatiality.” Apparently, Tieleman’s outstanding philological work notwithstanding, neither Plotinus’ editors nor the scholars translating this passage have realized that here Plotinus is just summarizing Galen’s argument about the rational, the spirited (impulsive and perceptive) and the appetitive (nutritive and vegetative) powers of the soul, which Galen considered natures/substances independent of the rational soul and being handled directly by the Demiurge, whom Galen identified with the world soul (see frg. 4 of

¹¹¹ H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus’ Psychology. His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, 75, echoed by Armstrong in a footnote to his translation of the passage (p. 104, n. 1), and by E. K. Emilsson in *Plotinus on Sense Perception: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 105.

Galen's *Commentary on the Timaeus* and *De foetuum formatione* cited above). For this reason, the modern editors (Kleist, followed by Henry-Schwyzler and Armstrong) had excluded the reading φύσις, nature, from the summary of Galen's doctrine on the impulsive and perceptive faculty/soul/nature/substance. Thus, the reading φύσις is to be restored to the text and its translation.

Therefore, when Plotinus is explaining the doctrine, he entirely appropriates the doctrine of Galen, to whom he refers by the vague terms "they," "the ancients," and explains why Galen had placed the centers of the three faculties/substances/natures in concrete bodily organs, although spatially they are everywhere and nowhere in the body and although, properly speaking, the soul is the "place" of the body and not vice versa. It is, because, in an analogical way, the soul's faculties are placed by us there, from where their activities are starting. In this way, by reinterpreting Galen, Plotinus is introducing the theory, which I will call in the following "analogical spatiality."

The operation of the soul and the creation of an analogical spatiality

As I have shown above, Plotinus adopts the scheme that Galen had proposed in *On the Formation of the Foetus* about the Demiurge and the connection of the world soul to the partial soul. For Plotinus, as for Galen, the rational part is considered separate from the sensitive and vegetative parts, which are added to the partial soul later through the activity of the world soul. Thus, Plotinus is not unique in his taxonomy of the soul, as recent scholars are inclined to present,¹¹² namely perceiving the appetitive and the passionate part as part of the

¹¹² See the argument of D. M. Hutchinson: "Plotinus follows the moral psychology of Plato and Aristotle in holding that embodied human beings have both nonrational and rational motivations for action (I.1, 18-25). He follows Aristotle in dividing desire (*orexis*) into rational desire (*boulêsis*) and nonrational desires (*epithumia* and *thumos*), with rational desires being of what is good and nonrational desires being of what appears good. **Uniquely**, however, he locates appetite (*epithumia*) and passion (*thumos*) in the lower soul and willing (*boulêsis*) in the higher soul [...] The usage of the term "appetitive part" (*epithumêtikon*) in these passages echoes Plato's division of the soul into three parts, the rational (*logistikon*), the spirited (*thumoeides*), and the appetitive (*epithumêtikon*). However, Plotinus does not endorse

lower soul and the rational part of the higher, while both thinkers assume the unity of the souls through the Demiurge – whether this comes directly from him or is mediated by its operations.

Second, the network between the body and the Demiurge presumed by Galen, I think, is illustrated by Plotinus when, in chapter IV.3 [27], 17. 3-4, he states explicitly that the upper part of the heavens is neighboring the lowest part of the intelligible realm, and thus assigns a quasi-space, outside the physical space, to the intelligible realm. Following James Wilberding's article "‘Creeping spatiality’: the location of Nous in Plotinus' universe",¹¹³ which elaborates upon Armstrong's term "creeping spatiality" employed in a footnote to his translation of this passage, I suggest that the operation of the soul creates a kind of spatiality which manifests the operation of the Demiurge extended to the body of the cosmos.¹¹⁴ Therefore, although Plotinus' discourse about the soul does not locate it in a spatial framework, the actual operations of the soul imply *kinetics*, which create something that we could call an *analogical spatiality*. The activities of the soul create this *quasi-spatiality* and give birth to a variable network of relationships, resulting in the eternal creation of the physical space and time.¹¹⁵ While it is not space properly speaking, it can only be perceived *in analogy* to real space, just as the time of the philosophical myth, so frequently used by

Plato's tripartite psychology literally"; *Plotinus on Consciousness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 71.

¹¹³ J. Wilberding, "‘Creeping spatiality’: the location of the Nous in Plotinus' universe", *Phronesis*, 50, 2005, 315-334.

¹¹⁴ According to Armstrong's note in his translation in the Loeb series (1984, 88), there is here a certain "creeping spatiality". Plotinus does not really think that any part of the material universe, even the highest heaven, can be nearer to the intelligible than any other, because the intelligible is not in space at all. But here his language is influenced, perhaps not only by the "cosmic theology" of his time, but also by his favorite myth in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 246d6-247e6a. Elsewhere, Armstrong is claiming that "philosophical cosmic religion was something which Plotinus took seriously ... But it occupies a place of moderate importance in his thought, and is not easy to reconcile with other aspects to it"; Armstrong (1984): 83.

¹¹⁵ See III.7 [45] 11, where Plotinus relates the birth of time, from the very mouth of time, in a mythological time. Perfectly analogous to this narrative on time is Plotinus' narrative on the spatial activities of the souls, including the soul of the universe in II.2 [14] 2-3.

Plotinus, is not a real time, but can be perceived as an analogy to the temporal extension. Another reason for choosing “analogical spatiality” over “creeping spatiality” is that analogies or proportions align with the soul's kinetics: the order of the world is the outcome of the soul’s discursive thinking expressed in analogies.

Moreover, Wilberding’s argument is based on Plotinus’ dependence on Aristotle, who places the Prime Mover at the periphery of the universe. In this respect, Wilberding claims that cosmic religion has a central role in Plotinus’ thought and that this “creeping spatiality,” which he understands as an “instrumental spatiality,” assigns real places to certain activities of the soul, while not contradicting Plotinus’ alternative claims that the soul is nowhere and everywhere in the universe. However, two objections could be raised to his argument regarding the instrumental spatiality:

a) Wilberding explains the contradiction between the omnipresence of the soul’s activities and the localization of the discursive activity in the highest sphere by the difference of matter: the same power is everywhere, but the density of matter prevents its actualization elsewhere than in the purest sphere.¹¹⁶ But that would require that the proper explanation for the prominent role of heavens for the discursive faculty of the world soul is due to the specific kind of matter in heavens. This cannot be possible, as Plotinus rejects the Aristotelian theory of ether. The brain is the proper place of the discursive activity in humans not because it has a purer matter, but because the activity of perception and impulse begins in the brain and is transmitted through the nerves. The aptitude of certain corporeal parts is not due to the greater or lesser subtlety of their matter but to the conscious design of the Demiurge.

b) When Wilberding proposes an analogy between the role of the brain of the individual man and that of the outer heavenly sphere, “where” the discursive / opiniative activity of the soul of the universe is deployed, he apparently misunderstands the text of II.2 [14] 3, 3-4,¹¹⁷ which he interprets based on Armstrong’s translation, which distorts the meaning of the original. Plotinus does not exactly say what Armstrong translates:

τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ μὲν τις δύναμις ἡ ἐσχάτη ἀπὸ γῆς ἀρξαμένη καὶ δι’ ὅλου διαπλεκεῖσά
ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ αἰσθάνεσθαι πεφυκυῖα καὶ ἡ λόγον δοξαστικὸν δεχομένη πρὸς τὸ ἄνω

¹¹⁶ Wilberding, “Creeping spatiality”, 330-331.

¹¹⁷ Wilberding, “Creeping spatiality”, 330.

ἐν ταῖς σφαίραις ἑαυτὴν ἔχει ἐποχουμένη καὶ τῇ πρωτέρᾳ καὶ δύνανται διδοῦσα παρ' αὐτῆς εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ζωτικωτέραν.

[T]here is the ultimate power of soul, which begins at the earth and is interwoven through the whole universe, and there is the power of soul which is naturally perceptive and receives the opinative kind of reasoning; this keeps itself above in the heavenly spheres and is in contact with the other from above and gives it power from itself to make it more alive..." (Armstrong's translation)

I think the key expression here is ἐν ταῖς σφαίραις ἑαυτὴν ἔχει ἐποχουμένη (and not ἐποχουμένην, which is what Armstrong seems to translate) καὶ τῇ πρωτέρᾳ. So, this should mean that the soul's perceptive and discursive faculty "is keeping itself in the heavenly spheres, so that it is riding on the first one" (as the gods and the souls following the gods in their chariots in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 247a-c). Thus, the accurate translation of this passage would be:

There is the soul's ultimate power which, starting from the earth, is interwoven with the universe,¹¹⁸ while the power whose nature is to perceive and which is receptive of opinative reasoning, keeps itself above in the heavenly spheres, riding on the previous one,¹¹⁹ while empowering it from itself to make it most

¹¹⁸ See Plato, *Timaeus* 36d-e: "ἐπεὶ δὲ κατὰ νοῦν τῷ συνιστάντι πᾶσα ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς σύστασις ἐγγένητο, μετὰ τοῦτο πᾶν τὸ σωματοειδὲς ἐντὸς αὐτῆς ἐτεκταίνεται καὶ μέσον μέση συναγαγὼν προσήρμοσεν: ἡ δ' ἐκ μέσου πρὸς τὸν ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν πάντῃ διαπλακεῖσα κύκλῳ τε αὐτὸν ἔξωθεν περικαλύψασα, αὐτὴ ἐν αὐτῇ στρεφομένη, θεῖαν ἀρχὴν ἤρξατο ἀπαύστου καὶ ἔμφορος βίου πρὸς τὸν σύμπαντα χρόνον." "And when the construction of the Soul had all been completed to the satisfaction of its Constructor, then He fabricated within it all the Corporeal, and uniting them center to center He made them fit together. And the Soul, being woven throughout the Heaven every way from the center to the extremity, and enveloping it in a circle from without, and herself revolving within herself, began a divine beginning of unceasing and intelligent life lasting throughout all time."

¹¹⁹ Apparently, this is how Vitringa had read the text, for which reason he deleted the first καί in line 5. The same thought is repeated in the next sentence, where Plotinus says:

lively. Therefore it [that is, the ultimate power] is moved by it [that is, the perceiving and reasoning power], which is enveloping and mounting on all that part which, from it [that is from the ultimate power], has ascended to the heavenly spheres. Therefore, as that [that is, the perceiving and reasoning power] is enveloping this [that is, the ultimate power] all around, this is inclined and returning toward that, and its return turns around the body in which it is woven.¹²⁰

Apparently, the entire passage is a kind of rethinking and interpretation of *Timaeus* 36d-e, interpreted in the light of *Phaedrus* 247a-c. Plotinus starts from Plato's claim that the soul is coextensive with the body of the universe, but is stretching beyond it and is enveloping it. Thus, properly speaking, it is not the soul that is in the body, but the soul is enveloping the body, in a sense it is the space, or rather, it creates the space, in which the body is extended. Plotinus further develops Plato's spatial metaphor, claiming that it is only the last power of the soul of the universe, that is, the vegetative, or growing, or vitalizing, power, not the entire soul, which is interwoven with the body of the universe. The perceptive and discursive power – because apparently the soul of the universe has all these faculties – does not descend even in its activities into the body of the universe but is ruling it by means of its impact on that part of the vegetative power, which is extended until the highest heavenly spheres. It is in the heavens only as far as its ὄχημα, the vegetative power that animates the highest heavens, is there, but it remains ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νότῳ. Therefore, the rational faculty of the soul of the universe cannot be perceived and located, through a kind of “instrumental spatiality,” in the heavenly spheres. Not only it is not located in any part of the perceptible world, but even the human souls that have seen their own image in “Dionysus’ mirror” and “descended” toward the mirror image (that is, toward the human body), still have their “head,” that is, their intellectual faculty, “firmly fixed above the heaven” (IV.3 [27], 12.1-5). With all this, the spatial extension of the soul along the extension of the body, which is as if it were its “shadow” (IV.3[27], 10.7) νοουμένου πυρὸς σκιᾶς, and beyond deserves consideration about a kind of “analogical spatiality,” which is more than a mere metaphor.

“ἐφιδρυμένης παντὶ ὅσον αὐτῆς εἰς τὰς σφαίρας ἀνέδραμε” – “mounting on all that part which, from it [that is from the ultimate power], has ascended to the heavenly sphere.”

¹²⁰ II.2 [14] 3, 3-10.

Going back to the *Timaeus* and the way Plotinus sees the relation of the soul to the body and the connections between souls, being “around a body” reveals the kinetics of the soul. Here I bring evidence from Plotinus’ spatial view on the ontology of the *Timaeus*, verbalized as follows:¹²¹

Δεῖ ἄρα οὕτως ἓν τε καὶ πολλὰ καὶ μεμερισμένον καὶ ἀμέριστον ψυχὴν εἶναι, καὶ μὴ ἀπιστεῖν, ὥς ἀδύνατον τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ἓν πολλαχοῦ εἶναι. Εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο μὴ παραδεχοίμεθα, ἢ τὰ πάντα συνέχουσα καὶ διοικοῦσα φύσις οὐκ ἔσται, ἥτις ὁμοῦ τε πάντα περιλαβοῦσα ἔχει καὶ μετὰ φρονήσεως ἄγει, πλῆθος μὲν οὔσα, ἐπείπερ πολλὰ τὰ ὄντα, μία δέ, ἵν’ ἢ ἓν τὸ συνέχον, τῷ μὲν πολλῷ αὐτῆς ἐνὶ ζωὴν χορηγοῦσα τοῖς μέρεσι πᾶσι, τῷ δὲ ἀμερίστῳ ἐνὶ φρονίμως ἄγουσα. Ἐν οἷς δὲ μὴ φρόνησις, τὸ ἓν τὸ ἡγούμενον μιμεῖται τοῦτο. Τοῦτ’ ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ θεῖως ἡνιγμένον τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ἐχούσης καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένης μεριστῆς τρίτον ἐξ ἀμφοῖν συνεκεράσατο οὐσίας εἶδος. Ἔστιν οὖν ψυχὴ ἓν καὶ πολλὰ οὕτως· τὰ δὲ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν εἶδη πολλὰ καὶ ἓν· τὰ δὲ σώματα πολλὰ μόνον· τὸ δ’ ὑπέρτατον ἓν μόνον.

So, then the soul must be in this way both one and many, divided and indivisible, and we must not disbelieve this on the ground that it is impossible for something which is one and the same to be in many places. For if we do not accept this, then the nature which encompasses all things held together and directs them with prudence would not exist; it is a multiplicity because the beings of the universe are many, but one, so that what holds them together may be one; *by its manifold one* it dispenses life to all the parts, and *by its indivisible one* it directs them with prudence. In those beings in which there is no prudence, the governing one imitates this [that is, the prudence]. This is the meaning of the divine riddle saying. “*Between the indivisible substance, which always remains in the same state and the one that becomes divisible around the bodies, he [the Demiurge] mingled up a third form of substance out of the two*” So the soul is one and many

¹²¹ I have revised A. H. Armstrong’s Loeb translation.

in this way: the forms in the bodies are many and one; the bodies are many only; the supreme is one only (IV.2 [4] 2, 39-55).¹²²

Τὸ γὰρ δευτέρας καὶ τρίτας τῷ ἐγγύθεν καὶ τῷ πορρώτερον ὑπονοητέον εἰρῆσθαι, ὥσπερ καὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν οὐχ ὁμοίως πάσαις ψυχαῖς ὑπάρχει τὸ πρὸς τὰ ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν ἐνοῖντο ἄν, οἱ δὲ βάλλοιεν ἄν ἐγγὺς ἐφιέμενοι, οἷς δὲ ἤττον ἄν ἔχοι τοῦτο, καθὸ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν οὐ ταῖς αὐταῖς ἐνεργοῦσιν, ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν τῇ πρώτῃ, οἱ δὲ τῇ μετ’ ἐκείνῃ, οἱ δὲ τῇ τρίτῃ, ἀπάντων τὰς πάσας ἐχόντων.

[...] we must understand that souls were called “second” and “third” according to *whether they are nearer to or farther from [the higher world]*; just as among us too not all souls have the same relationship to the realities there, *but some may become united to those, others are approaching them through their desire, while others again have this [desire] to a lesser degree, in so far as they act by powers which are not the same*,¹²³ but some by the first, others by that which comes after it, others by the third, though all of them have all the powers. (IV.3 [27], 6, 28-34)¹²⁴

Plotinus understands metaphorically the demiurgic activity, namely not in time and not as an outcome of the deliberate action of the Demiurge. His language concerning the functions of the soul is spatial and not metaphorical, but I would call it analogical for the aforementioned reasons. As displayed in this fragment, the ontological degrees are expressed as degrees of proximity of the souls to their source. In his psychological treatises, Plotinus does not need to quote the whole text of *Timaeus* 34c-35, but, instead, he selects specific parts of it to bring forth the spatial relationship of the soul with the body,¹²⁵ stressing the importance of the

¹²² In his earliest writings, Plotinus does not seem to distinguish between the intelligible realm and the One, a distinction that would become prominent later.

¹²³ See Plato, *Phaedrus* 247d-248e.

¹²⁴ A. H. Armstrong’s Loeb translation emended.

¹²⁵ He repeatedly quotes in his fourth Ennead “καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῆς”.

activity inside and outside the body fitting into the scheme of the omnipresence of the soul.¹²⁶ This omnipresence becomes quite explicitly stated, when he calls “every soul” in V.1 [10] 2,1-2 to “consider this, that it made all living things itself ...” Definitively, “every soul” did not create the universe as a partial soul, but as being one with all the other souls, including the demiurgic soul of the universe.

Therefore, taking into account Wilberding’s interpretation of Plotinus’ perception of cosmic religion, which is connected to his metaphysics, I suggest that *sympatheia* in Plotinus can be explained if we consider that the soul’s operations ensure the unity of the soul in every level of existence and form a counterpart of the space in the material world outside the heavens. Already Galen had anticipated that the demiurgic activity is responsible for the parts of our individual soul and guarantees the unity of these parts, but he claimed that he had not known how this happens. Plotinus apparently takes over this scheme and elaborates on the connection of the soul with the body and, thus, on the principle of *sympatheia*: The soul is one and many in the sense of being *outside* the bodies as far as all the souls are part of the same divine substance and are, thus, numerically one; *around/ in relation to* the bodies (περὶ τὰ σώματα) as far as the partial souls are governing distinct bodies; and *in the bodies*, in the sense that they are equally and wholly present to every part of the bodies that they are governing.

Consequently, the procession of the soul from its source in the individual body is not the result of an a priori pessimistic view, of a “fall” as the Gnostics would claim. Plotinus explains that, were it not for this procession, there would not be any body, nor its form.¹²⁷ It is due to a process, started in the intelligible realm, which enables not only the dwelling of the soul everywhere inside, around and outside the bodies, but also offers the privilege to the living bodies to enjoy the operation of the soul and to understand the unlimited power of the soul.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ The passage 35a is very obscure and has raised many debates among *Timaeus*’ scholars regarding its interpretation. See already F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato*, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1937, 58-65.

¹²⁷ IV. 3 [27] 9, 21-36.

¹²⁸ See also Wilberding, “Creeping spatiality”, *ibid.*

Now, if the incorporeal contains the corporeal, and if the soul is encompassing the bodies (περὶ τὰ σώματα) and becomes the *ground* of the living bodies (ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν),¹²⁹ while it also exists outside their periphery, then, all the living bodies are connected through the soul under the criterion of the proximity to the source. And the criterion is such, because there is this *analogical spatiality*, which is not created from physically extended bodies, is not imaginary, nor a metaphor, but a space “created” from the soul’s operations with every level of existence. In this respect, all the activities, be they complex or simple, have their root in the soul. Plotinus moves on, after the definition of the soul as a manifold unity, to fill in the “void” with the unfolding relationship of the parts with the whole; this is what a living being is, according to his interpretation of the *Timaeus*; this is what accounts as a necessary condition for an encompassing living being, which fulfills its aim through the communication of every part in the cosmos.

Plurality and unity in *sympatheia*: a response to Galen?

In the previous section, I tried to demonstrate that Plotinus uses a kind of *analogical spatiality* to trace the route of the soul in between the realm of the intelligible and the realm of bodies, and this route becomes an open space in which different relationships take place. In a similar way, Galen understands the potentiality of the living body to preserve its nature and its place in the environment. Plotinus is following Galen who, in his more dubitative manner, has already set the interconnection between the souls of the individuals and the Demiurge’s activity. Plotinus adheres to the way Galen explains *sympatheia*: all parts are connected because even in their complex forms their main essence remains the same. Moreover, Plotinus follows Galen’s view regarding the sympathetic relation between the three parts of the soul. Galen argued that these parts have different substances, making their connection problematic. Plotinus expands on this by identifying the Demiurge with the soul

¹²⁹ VI.3 [44] 15.27–31. Sensible entities are not real substances; in this respect, the soul is the ground/structure of living beings. For an excellent discussion on substance and quality in Plotinus, see G. Karamanolis, “Plotinus on quality and immanent form”, in R. Chiaradonna and F. Trabatttoni (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009, 96.

of the universe and asserting the ontological unity of all souls, including the World-Soul, as parts of the "whole soul." This "whole soul" is purely intellectual and remains independent of any bodily connection. If so, the emotional and the sensitive faculties (the animal and the vegetative soul) can belong to one and the same soul and to be of one substance, even if they were given by the Demiurge and do not belong to our rational soul. This is indeed a solution for the riddle formulated by Galen.

This is why Plotinus argues for *sympatheia* between the beings and the material parts. In this respect, this is why Galen is puzzled to explain not only the way the parts are interconnected but also the principle of *sympatheia*, the manifold oneness. It is the *soul's kinetics* from and towards its source, which makes the material parts to communicate and the living bodies to find their *telos* in nature:

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἂν ἔχοι λύσεως καὶ τοῦ τῆς συμπαθείας μὴ ἐμποδίζοντος τὸν λόγον· ἐκ γὰρ τῆς αὐτῆς πᾶσαι οὔσαι, ἐξ ἧς καὶ ἡ τοῦ ὅλου, συμπαθεῖς. Καὶ γὰρ εἴρηται, ὅτι καὶ μία καὶ πολλαί. Περὶ δὲ τοῦ μέρους πρὸς τὸ ὅλον τῆς διαφορᾶς ὅπως, εἴρηται.

This then is how it is with the solution of this problem. Nor does the phenomenon of the *sympatheia* hinder our arguments: for since all souls derive from the same soul, from which the soul of the universe derives too, they have a community of feeling. For we have said already that the soul is both one and many. We have also explained how the part differs from the whole. (IV.3 [27] 8, 1-6)¹³⁰

Plotinus and Galen are following Plato's *Timaeus* in positing a sympathetic relationship among the parts of a whole living being (*Timaeus* 30b-c; 37c-d). There is a common principle, as Galen also posits without defining it, and its existence is found in the common feeling (*synaisthesis*), which all the parts recognize even if they are in distance. The distance is not a hindrance for sympathetic relations among the souls, since *sympatheia* relies on the function-created spatiality of the soul regarding the body (inside, around, outside its periphery). Yet, the awareness of this connection becomes the main content of *sympatheia*.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Translation by A. H. Armstrong in the Loeb series, revised.

¹³¹ D. M. Hutchinson, "Sympathy, awareness, and belonging to oneself in Plotinus," in R. Patterson, V. Karasmanis and A. Hermann (eds.), *Presocratics and Plato: A Festschrift in*

The parts are connected, but the fact that they are able to understand this connection shows a conscious grasp of the unity. Plotinus uses this awareness to turn against the atomists and shares the same ground with Galen: the atoms cannot make the soul of the body, because they come together randomly and their accidental unity, if it happens, cannot account for a common feeling between the parts of the unity.¹³²

As mentioned earlier, Galen's and Plotinus' opposition to the atomists and other naturalists originates from their different kind of theology and thus the higher nature of *sympatheia*. This type of theology offers the cognitive value of *sympatheia*, when it is manifested in its content and in respect to the living being's internal awareness. Plotinus agrees with Galen's initial assumption, namely that the rational soul's presence in the body might not give any information to the rational faculty – that is, to the human being itself – on the way the internal parts of the body work (ἡ ἀγνοία τῆς διοικουμένης ἡμᾶς ψυχῆς τῶν ὑπηρετούντων ταῖς ὁρμαῖς αὐτῆς μορίων).¹³³

On the other hand, the fact that we do not “see” the details of the operation of the soul in our bodies is not because we cannot account for the soul as principle of *sympatheia*. It is because in the thought of Galen and Plotinus the lower functions belong to the soul of the universe, while the rational soul is different from the great soul of the universe. Both are parts of a higher principle of unity, which Plotinus calls the universal soul. So that, what the great soul “knows,” the individual rational soul does not necessarily know, as they are different, while one.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I tried to show that the sympathetic relation among the parts of an organism posited by Galen and Plotinus can be traced back to their sense of theology, the *Timaeus* and the way they read Plato. Moreover, both thinkers are against the view that the atoms would constitute the principle of living beings and see the bodies as part of a broader network,

Honor of Professor Charles H. Kahn, Las Vegas, Zurich and Athens: Parmenides Publishing, 2012, 491-510; idem, *Plotinus on Consciousness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 46-60.

¹³² IV.7 [2] 3, 5-15.

¹³³ Galen, *Foet. Form.* Kühn, IV, 697.

whose principle is the Demiurge. Galen, because of the constitutive role of his agnosticism to his theology and his scientific world view, instead of accepting any current interpretation of the *Timaeus*, expresses in very clear terms the main problems raised by the creation myth of the *Timaeus* and rejects all the diverging interpretations that were current in his time among Platonist philosophers. While he stresses oft and ever that the substance of the Demiurge cannot be known, and even be conceived of, he attributes a secondary demiurgic activity to the soul of the world, which is constructed as a mixture of the unique and undivided rational soul and of matter ensouled by the irrational and disorderly soul. It is the combination of these two substances that creates the multiplicity of the living beings. Thus, implicitly, he posits a level above the combined world soul, the substance of the undivided and unchanging rational soul, being an eternal creature.

Galen presents a very clearly formulated problematization about the unity of the soul and the essence of the Demiurge, which was part of a broader discussion between Middle Platonists and became the occasion for Plotinus to seek and find an answer to Galen's doubts. Plotinus redefines the cosmic religion of his era, namely by grasping the symbolism of the Demiurge and by reading the ontological status of the soul as defined in a continuous process of kinetics to its source and back to the body, which can be perceived as an analogical spatiality. This degree of proximity plays a significant role in understanding the instrumentality of relation to its access to the different layers of the body and the role of the soul in all levels of existence (intelligible, astral, sublunar). Plotinus explains through the soul's function-based space the communication between the body's parts, but also between the soul's parts and the whole. In this respect, the content of *sympatheia*, the common feeling, becomes cognitively valuable, when the light of the soul reaches the appropriate proximity to its source and is able to enlighten the realm of experience, too.

Chapter 2: Creation, Analogy and the Unity of the Souls

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I tried to shed light on the connection between Plotinus and Galen and their respective views on the principle of cosmic *sympatheia*. As I argued, following Plato's *Timaeus*, in their polemics against Stoics and Epicureans, Plotinus and Galen elaborated a theory of *sympatheia* based on the demiurgic activities. The main points where Plotinus follows and complements Galen are the following:

a) For both thinkers, *sympatheia* stems from a sense of theology; for Galen the complex processes of the body, such as digestion or reproduction, and the different powers of the soul, constitute a network that is governed by the Demiurge, a god who created the universe, who is the very principle of *sympatheia* but whose essence is unknown. As I have shown, behind Galen's experimental agnosticism, there lies a sense of theology.

b) Galen distinguishes between two Demiurges: the one with an inscrutable essence, who creates the world soul in the mixing bowl of *Timaeus* 35a, and the world soul that creates the corporeal beings.

b) Galen accepts the Platonic tripartite division of the soul between rational, spirited, and appetitive parts, and proposes that the lower powers have a different substance from the rational soul. He is undecided on the question whether these powers belong directly to the demiurgic soul, or have their own separate substances. However, the following passage seems to indicate that he is leaning toward the view that the world soul is directly present in the limbs of the bodies of the rational beings:

καὶ γὰρ ὅταν ἀκούσω τινῶν φιλοσόφων λεγόντων, τὴν ὕλην ἔμψυχον οὖσαν ἐξ αἰῶνος, ἀποβλέπουσαν πρὸς τὰς ἰδέας, ἐαυτὴν κοσμεῖν, ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐννοῶ, μίαν εἶναι δεῖν ψυχὴν, τὴν τε διαπλάσασαν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν νῦν χρωμένην ἐκάστῳ τῶν μορίων.

“In fact, when I hear certain philosophers to say that matter, being animated from eternity, was looking at the ideas and ordered itself, this convinces me even

more that the soul that has fashioned us is necessarily one and the same with the one that uses each part.”¹³⁴

He thinks that the coordination between the will of the rational soul and the spirited and appetitive powers shows that all the souls and powers are parts of the demiurgic soul that animates the entire universe. Galen is part of a larger debate among Middle Platonists regarding the world, the soul and the Demiurge. As I suggested, Plotinus, influenced by Galen, introduces a new entity before and above the demiurgic soul, calling it the “whole soul,” of which both the demiurgic soul and the human rational souls are parts. He accepts Galen’s explanation of the unconscious coordination between the will of the rational soul and the working of the lower psychic powers as being the result of cosmic *sympatheia*, a consequence of the fundamental unity of all the souls, but for him the place of the unity is not the world soul but the whole, incorporeal, soul. Thus, while Galen is very cautious in positing incorporeal entities, Plotinus conceives of the soul as that part of the incorporeal noetic cosmos, which is in contact with the bodies. Therefore, he develops Galen’s experimental and fumbling Platonism into a universal Platonist theory of the soul, which tries to give theoretical and logical answers to all the arising questions.

c) Galen’s concept of the demiurgic activities is not restricted to the domain of the body. He posits a network of operations by the Demiurge or cosmic soul outside the body, which coordinate the more complex processes of the body. Plotinus, on the other hand, perceives this network as a kinetics of the soul that includes both the motions of the soul at the material level, and its kinetics at the level of the intellect. The motion of the soul is an image of the “movement” of the *nous*. This is how the soul becomes the creator of the world and of time. It is through this motion that the soul becomes temporal - not in the sense of being subjected to, but in that of being related to time; time is inseparable from the soul’s existence and creation – although the product, our cosmos, is manifested outside the inner process of thinking. To better understand the workings of *sympatheia* in the cosmos as an outcome of the unity of the souls, we should first explain how the soul becomes the creator of the world and then explain why the unity of the soul cannot be explained without positing an analogical space.

¹³⁴ *Foet. Form.* 6, 697, cited above on p.75.

The Demiurge: intellect, cosmic soul and contemplation

The cosmic soul called by Plotinus “the soul of the universe” is the very principle of cosmic *sympatheia*, that is, the manifestation of unity between the different parts of the world.¹³⁵ As developed in the previous chapter, the cosmic soul for Galen is the demiurgic actor of the world in the *Timaeus*. For the Stoics, the unity of the universe is assured by the omnipresence of a cosmic, fiery and subtle, but still material, *pneuma*,¹³⁶ which penetrates in “a complete

¹³⁵ The interpretation of the *Demiurge* becomes difficult, since Plato himself mentioned that finding the Demiurge of the cosmos is rather a complicated issue: “τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὐρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν”. For a discussion on the place of the Demiurge in Plotinus, see D. J. O’Meara, “Gnosticism and the making of the world in Plotinus”, in B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the Conference at Yale March 1978*, I, Leiden: Brill, 1980, 368-372; idem, *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 72-76; J. Opsomer, “A craftsman and his handmaiden: demiurgy according to Plotinus”, in T. Leinkauf and C. Steel (eds.), *Platons Timaios als Grundtext der Kosmologie in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Renaissance / Plato’s Timaeus and the Foundations of Cosmology in Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005, 68-69; E. Song, “Plotinus on the World-Maker”, *Horizons*, 3.1, 2012, 81-102; F. Karfik, “Parts of the soul in Plotinus”, in K. Corcilius and D. Perler (eds.), *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014, 5. On the body-soul relation upside down, see D. Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 61-66 and 86.

¹³⁶ For the role of *pneuma* as a corporeal unifying power of the cosmos and its parts, and on their mutual sympathy because of this, see Ps.-Galen, *Introductio seu Medicus* 12 (Petit 45,13–19 = K. 14.726 = SVF 2.716 = LS 47N); Sextus Empiricus, M. 9.78; Plutarch, *De Stoicorum repugnantibus* 43, 1054a-b (= SVF 2.449 = LS 47M). See also the discussion by J. E. Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of the Mind*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992, 50; T. Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 47, n. 7; A. A. Long, “Soul and body in Stoicism”, *Phronesis*, 27, 1982, 38; S. Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959, 8-9. For God as a *pneuma* see Aëtius, 1.7.33 (= SVF 2.1027 = LS 46A); Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione* 11 (Bruns 225,3-4); Clement, *Stromateis* 5.14 (= SVF 2.1035); Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes* 3.218 (= SVF 2.1037).

admixture” (καθ’ ὅλου κρᾶσις) the whole body of the universe,¹³⁷ but does not have a creative function, while, according to Galen, certain processes prove that the Demiurge has powers beyond corporeal operations. Furthermore, Galen is the first thinker who discusses *sympatheia* after the Stoics, while maintaining an agnostic attitude towards the essence of its principle.

The interpretation of the *Timaeus* by Plotinus regarding the Demiurge also seems to be mediated by Galen. Plotinus addressed the kind of concerns expressed by Galen regarding the demiurgic activities outside the body. More precisely, Galen admits that there is *sympatheia* in the world, and that it is due to the activity of the Demiurge, but remains agnostic regarding the essence both of the Demiurge and of the rational soul. Plotinus’ reply to the kind of agnosticism exhibited by Galen would formulate the following tenets:

- a) The Intellect, being “one-many,”¹³⁸ creates / is / perceives an intelligible cosmos (κόσμος νοητός), a counterpart to the sensible one, being in between the transcendent One and the sensible realm.
- b) The soul of the universe imitates this contemplation and brings about perception together with discursive reason, plus the *logoi* which set forth the universe.
- c) The vegetative power of the soul gives birth to the enmattered *logoi*, which animate the sensible world and the bodies of the beings.

Creation in both realms

For Plotinus, the Demiurgic creation narrated in the *Timaeus* should be interpreted metaphorically. Since for him the world is eternal, namely there is no deliberative actor who initiates at the very beginning of time the creative process, the process takes place constantly, because of the overflowing nature of the Demiurge, be this the Intellect or the Soul of the Universe. Here the Demiurge is not presented in a technomorphic way, as the agent who exercises his art on matter, but as the source which imitates the creative activity of its ultimate cause, the One. But for Plotinus, as I have tried to show in the previous chapter, the

¹³⁷ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione* 4 (Bruns 217,32-218,1 = SVF 2.473 = LS 48C); see also Long “Soul and body in Stoicism”, 38-39.

¹³⁸ V.1 [10]. 8, 26; V.3 [49]. 15, 22; VI.2 [43]. 15, 14-15.

cosmos is not *just* the sensible world as appears to be for other philosophers, but it is the sensible world connected to its archetype, the paradigm, as initially was suggested in the *Timaeus*.¹³⁹ Thus, for Plotinus, *sympatheia*, though manifested in physics, has its origins in metaphysics. The Demiurge creates in two realms: in the intellectual realm by producing in the “mixing bowl” the soul of the universe, and in the sensible realm, when the cosmic soul creates the universe.¹⁴⁰ In the previous chapter, I tried to show by analyzing the Arabic fragments of Galen’s *Compendium on the Timaeus* that the motif of the double creation is already there in Galen. In fact, it is a common idea of the entire commentary tradition on the *Timaeus* and is there also in Proclus, who approves of Plotinus’ solution, as it will be shown below.

Thus, in the following pages, I will propose that the Demiurge, while being in two realms, the intelligible and the sensible world, acts on three different levels: the intellectual, the deliberative / perceptive, and the vegetative level. A similar approach was expressed by Proclus, who suggested that, for Plotinus, the Demiurge, while being one, is situated in two realms. It is also interesting to see that Proclus, while understanding Plotinus correctly, also agrees with him:

Πλωτῖνος ὁ φιλόσοφος διττὸν μὲν ὑποτίθεται τὸν δημιουργόν, τὸν μὲν ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, τὸν δὲ τὸ ἡγεμονοῦν τοῦ παντός, λέγει δὲ ὁρθῶς· ἔστι γὰρ πῶς καὶ ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἐγκόσμιος δημιουργὸς τοῦ παντός.¹⁴¹

“The philosopher Plotinus hypothesizes that the Demiurge is double: on the one hand he is in the intelligible realm, on the other hand, he is the governor [soul] of the universe. And he says that correctly.”

Apparently, the Demiurge in Plotinus is the *Nous*, as it creates the soul of the cosmos. It gives its creative power to the soul of the world, which, by using this power, creates and sets in movement through ratiocination the corporeal world and time. Finally, the world soul delegates its creative power to its own vegetative faculty, called also Nature in III.8 [30],

¹³⁹ *Enn.* III 2 [47] 1.27–28.

¹⁴⁰ *Enn.* IV 4 [28] 9.1ff; cf. *Phaedrus*, 24e4-6.

¹⁴¹ *In Tim.* 305, 16-19.

which enters the cosmos and animates it.¹⁴² Consequently, the creative process is threefold, according to the powers coming from the intellectual essence of the Demiurge, acting in two different realms, though having three different roles:

- a) the creation of the soul of the universe by the intellect, while it contemplates the paradigm, that is, the intelligible realities;
- b) the creation of the universe, while the cosmic soul contemplates the intellect and translates its unitary vision into ratiocination mirroring the intellectual vision;
- c) the animation of matter coming in the last phase from the image of this last contemplation.

In the following lines, I will summarize the main recent views on the Demiurge in Plotinus' writings. Damian Caluori, in his book *Plotinus on the Soul*, dedicates lengthy analyses to this question, concluding that the Demiurge is, at variance with Numenius' views, what he calls the hypostasis Soul, identical with what Plotinus calls "whole soul" (ὅλη ψυχή). Caluori founds his argument on two main tenets: that the whole soul is the cause of the unity of all souls and that Plotinus explicitly calls it the Demiurge of the world.¹⁴³ However, a closer analysis of the passage in III.9, which is the one that Caluori uses to support his claim that the universal soul, or the hypostasis Soul as he calls it, is the Demiurge, could be questioned.

Caluori writes about this specific passage:

"In the following lines he (Plotinus) identifies this third entity, the entity that thinks discursively, with the Soul (universal soul). He explicitly says that discursive thinking is not the work of the Intellect but rather the work of the Soul

¹⁴² "τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ μὲν τις δύναμις ἡ ἐσχάτη ἀπὸ γῆς ἀρξαμένη καὶ δι' ὅλου διαπλεκεῖσά ἐστιν, ἡ δὲ αἰσθάνεσθαι πεφυκυῖα καὶ ἡ λόγον δοξαστικὸν δεχομένη πρὸς τὸ ἄνω ἐν ταῖς σφαίραις ἑαυτὴν ἔχει ἐποχουμένη καὶ τῇ προτέρᾳ καὶ δύναμιν διδοῦσα παρ' αὐτῆς εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ζωτικωτέραν." "There is the soul's ultimate power which, starting from the earth, is interwoven with the universe, while the power whose nature is to perceive and which is receptive of opinative reasoning, keeps itself above in the heavenly spheres, riding on the previous one, **while empowering it from itself to make it most lively.**" II.2 [14] 3, 3-4. The above translation revises that of Armstrong; see also chapter 1, p. xxx.

¹⁴³ D. Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 26-33.

(*Enn.* III 9, 1, 34–37). Plotinus thus follows Numenius’ view that discursive thinking is on the one hand necessary for the creation of a sensible world but on the other hand not a work of the Intellect. The Numenian insight leads Plotinus to introduce the hypostasis Soul. It is his second reason for doing so”.¹⁴⁴

The lines that Caluori refers to are the following: “ὁ οὐ νοῦ ἔργον—ἡ διάνοια—ἀλλὰ **ψυχῆς μεριστήν** ἐνέργειαν ἐχούσης ἐν μεριστῇ φύσει” (III.9 [13]. 1, 36). Caluori considers the divided soul here to be the whole soul. Yet, it seems to me that, *pace* Caluori, this soul is not the whole soul.

The first thing to point out is that the title of this treatise is “Various considerations”, meaning that Plotinus here might not have in mind a certain train of thought about the soul or the intellect, or the One, but these sections are independent notes and scattered thoughts collected by Porphyry most probably to get to the perfect number of the treatises, $6 \times 9 = 54$.¹⁴⁵ Second, if we assume that the whole soul has a distinct realm, as Caluori does, then we miss the interconnectedness of the three hypostases, which I think ensures the unity in both realms, i.e. intelligible and material. Third, the whole soul is the entity, which sets in intellection the soul of the universe, since it seems that the whole soul entirely remains in the realm of the intellect.

Thus, I think that the role of the whole soul in the demiurgic activity is that of the mediator between the two realms. It becomes the space / matter / mirror of the intellect, resting peacefully in unity, because its essence is to unify all the souls. While it rests within the intellectual realm, it mirrors the ideas in the reasons (*logoi*) and thus it mediates between *noesis* and *dianoia*, between the intellect and the world soul. It is true that, while Plotinus often speaks of the soul as a mirror, in which the ideas of the intellectual world are mirrored as reasons (*logoi*), he never calls the soul a “space” (χώρα) for the intellect. The closest expression to saying this is V.8 [31]. 4, 15-19, where Plotinus says that in the intelligible realm the substrate and the form are one, and the space (χώρα) of the ideas is identical with the ideas themselves. However, here substrate and space most probably mean the intelligible

¹⁴⁴ Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul*, 35.

¹⁴⁵ C.f. P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEADEΣ*, Athens: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, I, Introduction, and note 2, 646. Also A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, Loeb Classical Library series, “Introductory Note”, 404.

matter (νοητὴ ὕλη) and not the soul. Yet, in V.1. [10]. 3, 20-25, Plotinus defines the soul as the matter of the intellect. Similar is maybe the meaning of II.5 [25]. 3, 13-21, which justifies calling it also a “space” (χώρα) for the intellect, as Plotinus identified the χώρα of *Timaeus* with matter. Finally, in the same III.9 [13], there is a short independent note, where Plotinus says:

Τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὴν δεῖ ὥσπερ ὄψιν εἶναι, ὁρατὸν δὲ αὐτῇ τὸν νοῦν εἶναι, ἀόριστον πρὶν ἰδεῖν, πεφυκυῖαν δὲ νοεῖν· ὕλην οὖν πρὸς νοῦν.

“Soul itself must be like a sight, the visible for it must be the intellect; it is indefinite before it sees but by nature it is there to have intellectual perception. Therefore, it is a matter for the intellect.” (III.9 [13], 5)

Here, Plotinus uses for the (whole) soul precisely the same expressions that he uses generally to describe the “intelligible matter” (νοητὴ ὕλη), which he identifies with the “indefinite Dyad” (ἀόριστος δυάς), and the “unimprinted sight” (ἀτύπωτος ὄψις) of the *Theaetetus*. However, in these instances he speaks about the intelligible matter, from which the ideas/intellecets are formed, and which is responsible for the multiplication of the intellects, just as the matter of the world is responsible for the multiplication of the physical bodies. Apparently – at least in the early treatises V.1 and III.9 – Plotinus posited not two, but three matters: the intelligible matter (indefinite Dyad), the whole soul (the matter of the intellect), and the matter underlying the perceptible universe (pure privation and non-being).

Last, but not least, as I tried to demonstrate in the previous chapter, if the assumption that Plotinus is significantly influenced by Galen is correct, then, the Demiurge cannot be any other than the world soul. However, Plotinus’ doctrine, as we saw, is more complicated than any of the simple answers could express it, and he has conceived of a manifold yet unified demiurgic process, best grasped by Proclus who, however, interprets it in the light of later theories, being somewhat unjust toward Plotinus’ direct disciples, Amelius and Porphyry.

The Demiurge as the Intellect

Other scholars than Caluori claim that, for Plotinus, the Demiurge is the intellect. For instance, Victor Ilievski claims that “[a]lthough it may seem at first that no unequivocal answer can be given, on closer inspection it becomes abundantly clear that Plotinus

assimilated Plato's Demiurge to his second hypostasis, the Intellect."¹⁴⁶ The doubts arise from Proclus' words on the *Timaeus*, cited above (*In Tim.* 305, 16-19).

Ilievski quotes four Plotinian loci to prove his statement, according to which Proclus had not understood Plotinus:

II.3.18.14-16: 'and over all things is *nous*, the Demiurge, who gives also to the soul, which is after him', **V.1.8.5-6:** "For his Demiurge is the *nous*. And he mentions that the former creates the Soul in that mixing bowl," and "**II.9.6.61**, where Plotinus rebukes the Gnostics for identifying the Demiurge with the World Soul, and finally **III.9.1.1-3**, where he seems to use *ho dēmiourgos* as a synonym for *ho nous*.¹⁴⁷

Now, I will have a closer look at the demiurgic process in the texts that Ilievski had selected. Furthermore, these texts will also be used to check Caluori's argument about the role of the whole soul as the Demiurge.

- 1) **II.3 [52].18.14-16:** "and over all things is *nous*, the Demiurge, who gives also to the soul, which is after him."

II.3 [52] is one of the last treatises, so here we can see Plotinus' thought in its last phase, so to say, in its full development. Ilievski uses Armstrong's translation which, in this case, is quite misleading. First, one should see the context. Plotinus treats here the question of the role of the evil things, about which he claims – as he does everywhere – that they are not evil from the general perspective, but contribute to the perfection of the world. Here he elaborates the providential view that everything imperfect in this world is useful for the sake of unity and existence of all things.

Ἄρ' οὖν τὰ κακὰ τὰ ἐν τῷ παντὶ ἀναγκαῖα, ὅτι ἔπεται τοῖς προηγουμένοις; Ἡ ὅτι, καὶ εἰ μὴ ταῦτα ἦν, ἀτελὲς ἂν ἦν τὸ πᾶν. Καὶ γὰρ χρεῖαν τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν ἢ καὶ πάντα παρέχεται τῷ ὅλῳ, οἷον τὰ τῶν ἰοβόλων, λανθάνει δὲ τὰ πλεῖστα διὰ τί· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὴν κακίαν αὐτὴν ἔχειν πολλὰ χρήσιμα καὶ πολλῶν ποιητικὴν <εἶναι> καλῶν,

¹⁴⁶ V. Ilievski, "The Demiurge and his place in Plato's metaphysics and cosmology", in D. Vázquez and A. Ross (eds.), *Time and Cosmology in Plato and the Platonic Tradition*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022, 51, n. 35.

¹⁴⁷ V. Ilievski, "The Demiurge and his place in Plato's metaphysics and cosmology", 44-77.

οἷον κάλλους τεχνητοῦ παντός, καὶ κινεῖν εἰς φρόνησιν μὴ ἐῶσαν ἐπ’ ἀδείας εὔδειν. Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς εἴρηται, δεῖ τὴν τοῦ παντός ψυχὴν θεωρεῖν μὲν τὰ ἄριστα ἀεὶ ἰεμένην πρὸς τὴν νοητὴν φύσιν καὶ τὸν θεόν, πληρουμένης δὲ αὐτῆς καὶ πεπληρωμένης οἷον ἀπομεστούμενης αὐτῆς τὸ ἐξ αὐτῆς ἴνδαλμα καὶ τὸ ἔσχατον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸ κάτω τὸ ποιοῦν τοῦτο εἶναι. Ποιητὴς οὖν ἔσχατος οὗτος· ἐπὶ δ’ αὐτῷ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ πρῶτως πληρούμενον παρὰ νοῦ· ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ νοῦς δημιουργός, ὃς καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ μετ’ αὐτὸν δίδωσιν ὧν ἴχνη ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ. Εἰκότως οὖν λέγεται οὗτος ὁ κόσμος εἰκὼν ἀεὶ εἰκονιζόμενος, ἐστηκότων μὲν τοῦ πρώτου καὶ δευτέρου, τοῦ δὲ τρίτου ἐστηκότος μὲν καὶ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ καὶ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς κινουμένου. Ἔως γὰρ ἂν ἡ νοῦς καὶ ψυχὴ, ρεύσονται οἱ λόγοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ εἶδος ψυχῆς, ὥσπερ, ἔως ἂν ἡ ἥλιος, πάντα τὰ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ φῶτα.

Then, are the bad things in the universe necessary, given the fact that they are following on those that precede them? Yes, because, if these were not to exist, the universe would be imperfect. In fact, most of them, even all, are useful for the universe, such as the deleterious animals but, in most cases, it is unclear why. Even evil [itself] has many advantages and is the source of many good things, such as the beauty of artificial objects, and provokes [practical] wisdom, preventing us from slumbering in idleness.¹⁴⁸ Now, if what we have just said is correct, there follows that the soul of the universe, which is eternally rushing toward the intelligible nature, is contemplating the best things and the God, is filled by that nature, and being completely filled, so to say, to overflow,¹⁴⁹ the

¹⁴⁸ Armstrong’s translation is loose here and his interpretation that Plotinus would speak here of literature (tragic poetry) is misleading. I would rather think that the physical evil, such as cold, or the indigestibility of raw food has a lot of utility, because it provokes practical wisdom to invent such artificial things as clothes and fire to cook.

¹⁴⁹ The reference is to *Phaedrus* 255b-d: “ὅταν δὲ χρονίζῃ τοῦτο δρῶν καὶ πλησιάζῃ μετὰ τοῦ ἄπτεσθαι ἐν τε γυμνασίοις καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ὁμιλίαις, τότε ἤδη ἡ τοῦ ρεύματος ἐκείνου πηγὴ, ὃν ἕμερον Ζεὺς Γανυμήδους ἐρῶν ὠνόμασε, πολλὴ φερομένη πρὸς τὸν ἐραστήν, μὲν εἰς αὐτὸν ἔδω, ἡ δ’ ἀπομεστούμενου ἔξω ἀπορρεῖ· καὶ οἷον πνεῦμα ἢ τις ἡχὴ ἀπὸ λείων τε καὶ στερεῶν ἀλλομένη πάλιν ὅθεν ὠρμήθη φέρεται, οὕτω τὸ τοῦ κάλλους ρεῦμα πάλιν εἰς τὸν καλὸν διὰ τῶν ὁμμάτων ἰόν, ἡ πέφυκεν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἰέναι ἀφικόμενον καὶ ἀναπτερῶσαν, τὰς διόδους τῶν πτερῶν ἄρδει τε καὶ ὥρμησε πτεροφυεῖν τε καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου αὐτῆς ψυχὴν

faint image coming from it and its last downwards outpouring is that which creates this [that is, the “bad” things that are, however, contributing to the perfection of the universe].¹⁵⁰ Thus, this [that is, the part that is filled by the overflowing contemplation of the intellect] is the last Maker. Above this is the Demiurge that which is first filled by the intellect, and above all, the intellect, which gives to the soul that follows on it that [creative power], the traces of which are in the third entity [that is, in the part filled by the overflowing contemplation].¹⁵¹ Therefore, it is correctly said that this world is an eternally imaged image,¹⁵² so that the first and the second are in rest, while the third,

ἔρωτος ἐνέπλησεν...” “And as this intimacy continues and the lover comes near and touches the beloved in the gymnasia and in their general intercourse, then the fountain of that stream which Zeus, when he was in love with Ganymede, called “desire” flows copiously upon the lover; and some of it flows into him, and some, when he is filled, overflows outside; and just as the wind or an echo rebounds from smooth, hard surfaces and returns whence it came, so the stream of beauty passes back into the beautiful one through the eyes, the natural inlet to the soul, where it reanimates the passages of the feathers, waters them and makes the feathers begin to grow filling the soul of the loved one with love” (translation H. N. Fowler).

¹⁵⁰See *Timaeus* 39e: “ἥπερ οὖν νοῦς ἐνούσας ιδέας τῷ ὃ ἔστιν ζῶον, οἷαί τε ἐνεισι καὶ ὅσαι, καθορᾷ, τοιαύτας καὶ τοσαύτας διανοήθη δεῖν καὶ τόδε σχεῖν”. “Just as the intellect sees the ideas in the Living Being itself, of what kind and how many they are, the same kind of and that many [the Demiurge] thought of that this [universe] also should have them.”

¹⁵¹ Here, the punctuation of the Henry-Schwyzler edition is changed in a way that I believe to make perfect sense: “ποιητῆς οὖν ἔσχατος οὗτος, ἐπὶ δ’ αὐτῷ τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ πρῶτως πληρούμενον παρὰ νοῦ, ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ νοῦς δημιουργός, ὃς καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ μετ’ αὐτὸν δίδωσιν ὧν ἔχνη ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ”. This change in the punctuation is required by the double parallelism of ποιητής and δημιουργός on the one hand, and of ἐπὶ δ’ αὐτῷ and ἐπὶ πᾶσι, on the other.

¹⁵² This statement is a combined interpretation of *Timaeus* 37d: “ἡ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ζῴου φύσις ἐτύγχανεν οὕσα αἰώνιος, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν δὴ τῷ γεννητῷ παντελῶς προσάπτειν οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν· εἰκὼ δ’ ἐπενόει κινητὸν τινα αἰῶνος ποιῆσαι, καὶ διακοσμῶν ἅμα οὐρανὸν ποιεῖ μένοντος αἰῶνος ἐν ἐνὶ κατ’ ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσαν αἰώνιον εἰκόνα, τοῦτον δὲ χρόνον ὠνομάκαμεν”. “But inasmuch as the nature of the Living Creature was eternal, this quality it was impossible to attach in its entirety to what is generated; wherefore he invented to make a

although it is in rest, yet is also moved accidentally in matter. For as long as the intellect and the soul exist, the reasons [of the beings] will flow into this kind of soul, just like, as long as the sun exists, will flow all the lights that are coming from it [II.3].¹⁵³

Thus, as Euree Song also suggests in her article “Plotinus and the World-Maker”, here we have a threefold demiurgic activity. Yet, according to Song, the Demiurge unfolds his creation at three different levels, an intellectual, a practical and a poetic level, but rejects the Proclian interpretation that the Demiurge is also the intellect.¹⁵⁴ My interpretation of the three levels is different from Song’s. As we can see from this text, the first and foremost creator (ποιητής and δημιουργός) is the intellect, the second is that part of the soul of the universe that is entirely turning toward the intelligible realm and the God (I think here “God” means the One), while the third Demiurge is that part of the world soul, which receives the overflowing of the contemplation of the second, and turns toward the cosmos, thus making it

movable image of eternity, and, as he set in order the heaven, of that eternity which abides in unity he made an eternal image, moving according to number, even that which we have named time,” and of *Timaeus* 92c: “θνητὰ γὰρ καὶ ἀθάνατα ζῶα λαβὼν καὶ συμπληρωθεὶς ὁδε ὁ κόσμος οὕτω, ζῶον ὁρατὸν τὰ ὁρατὰ περιέχον, εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεὸς αἰσθητός, μέγιστος καὶ ἄριστος κάλλιστός τε καὶ τελεώτατος γέγονεν εἷς οὐρανὸς ὁδε μονογενὴς ὢν”. “For this our world, a visible living being containing the visible beings, having received both mortal and immortal living beings and having been thereby fulfilled, has become a perceptible god, most great and good and fair and perfect in its generation, made in the image of the intelligible god, being this one only-begotten heaven” (translations of W.R.M. Lamb, modified).

¹⁵³ All the passages from Plotinus’ treatises brought by Ilievski as arguments against Proclus are translated here by Anastasia Theologou and Istvan Perczel. The punctuation of the H-S¹⁻² edition is changed, while we are also indicating the Platonic references not given either in H-S¹⁻², or in Armstrong.

¹⁵⁴ “Strictly speaking, Proclus is wrong. But he seems to be on the right track. Indeed, the Plotinian World Soul, which corresponds to the encosmic ruler of the world in Proclus’ interpretation, was assigned to exercise demiurgic functions and can, therefore, be called ‘Demiurge’ in a larger sense”; E. Song, “Plotinus on the World-Maker”, *Horizons*, 3.1, 2012, 92.

its beloved, upon the pattern of *Phaedrus* 255b-d.¹⁵⁵ Here we encounter the same distinction between the vegetative part and the reasoning part of the world soul, as in II.2 [14] 3, 3-4.¹⁵⁶ However, rather than speaking about three demiurges, Plotinus speaks about one threefold demiurgic activity, originating in the intellect, and flowing into the soul of the universe, having its upper, purely noetic or dianoetic, and its lower, vegetative part.

Therefore, the intellect is properly speaking the creator of the soul, and the latter is properly speaking the creator of the perceptible cosmos. This triple craftsmanship is the standard doctrine of Plotinus, which can be found from the earliest treatises onward throughout his entire corpus. In fact, this passage is almost a calque on another, rather late, treatise, II.1 [40] 5, not analyzed here. Apparently, Proclus was quite an attentive reader of Plotinus, and his remark that the philosopher Plotinus hypothesizes that the Demiurge is double: on the one hand he is in the intelligible realm, while, on the other hand, he is the governor [soul] of the universe, holds the philological water probe. It is true that Plotinus speaks about three united actors in the creation, but the second and the third are different faculties of the same soul of the universe.

On the other hand, the problem in this passage is that Plotinus refers to the soul without specifying which soul this is, namely the universal, or the one of the universe. However, a closer reading of the treatise could lead to the assumption that since earlier the discussion is about providence and sublunary bodies, then Plotinus' focus is on the soul of the universe.

2) V.1 [10] 8.5-6: “For his Demiurge is the *nous*. And he says that the former creates the Soul in that mixing bowl.”

Although the citation is correct, it should be interpreted in the light of the threefold creative power as above, so that we can understand what Plotinus means at the beginning of the same treatise, V.1.2,1-6:

Ἐνθυμείσθω τοίνυν πρῶτον ἐκεῖνο πᾶσα ψυχή, ὡς αὐτὴ μὲν ζῶα ἐποίησε πάντα ἐμπνεύσασα αὐτοῖς ζωὴν, ἃ τε γῆ τρέφει ἃ τε θάλασσα ἃ τε ἐν ἀέρι ἃ τε ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα θεῖα, αὐτὴ δὲ ἥλιον, αὐτὴ δὲ τὸν μέγαν τοῦτον οὐρανόν, καὶ αὐτὴ

¹⁵⁵ See above my translation of II. 3 [52] 18 and note 13.

¹⁵⁶ See my translation and argument in chapter 1, p. 22.

ἐκόσμησεν, αὐτὴ δὲ ἐν τάξει περιάγει φύσις οὕσα ἑτέρα ὧν κοσμεῖ καὶ ὧν κινεῖ καὶ ἃ ζῆν ποιεῖ.

Let every soul consider that it has made all the living beings, breathing life into them, be they those that the earth feeds, or those that the sea, or the beings in the air and the divine stars in heaven. It has made the sun, it has made this great heaven, it has arranged it and leads it in order, being a nature that is different from those which it arranges, which it moves and which it makes alive.

Quite clearly the intellect is the first creator, making the soul in the mixing bowl, but the soul as such is the immediate creator of the perceptible universe.

3) II.9 [33], 6, 61, “where Plotinus rebukes the Gnostics for identifying the Demiurge with the World Soul.”

I think that this is not correct. Plotinus rebukes the Gnostics for introducing innovations in the Platonist doctrine – apparently, he considers them perverted Platonists. The whole sentence (ibid. 6, 52-62) can be translated in this way:

Ἐπεὶ τὰ γε εἰρημένα τοῖς παλαιοῖς περὶ τῶν νοητῶν πολλῶ ἀμείνω καὶ πεπαιδευμένως εἴρηται, καὶ τοῖς μὴ ἐξαπατωμένοις τὴν ἐπιθέουσιν εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἀπάτην ῥαδίως γνωσθήσεται τὰδ’ ὕστερον τούτοις παρ’ ἐκείνων ληφθέντα, προσθήκας δὲ τινὰς οὐδὲν προσηκούσας εἰληφότα, ἔν γε οἷς ἐναντιοῦσθαι θέλουσι γενέσεις καὶ φθορὰς εἰσάγοντες παντελεῖς καὶ μεμφόμενοι τῷδε τῷ παντὶ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα κοινωνίαν τῇ ψυχῇ αἰτιώμενοι καὶ τὸν διοικοῦντα τόδε τὸ πᾶν ψέγοντες καὶ εἰς ταῦτόν ἄγοντες τὸν δημιουργὸν τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ πάθη διδόντες, ἅπερ καὶ τοῖς ἐν μέρει.

What has been said on the intelligible beings by the ancient people were said much better and in a more learned way [than by the Gnostics], and anyone who is not cheated by the illusion that is tempting the humans can easily recognize these, just as those things that these people have received following upon them but adding unbecoming additions to these, and [they will also recognize] in what points they want to oppose them [that is, the ancients], introducing complete becomings and decays [in the intelligible realm], and blaming this universe, accusing the communion of the soul with the body, disparaging the governor of

this universe as well as identifying the Demiurge with the soul and attributing to it the same affections that are in the partial beings.”

Armstrong’s translation, “and identify its maker with the soul, and attribute this universal soul the same affections as those which the souls in parts of the universe have,” seems to be misleading in several respects. It gives the illusion that Plotinus is rebuking the Gnostics both for identifying the Demiurge with the soul and for attributing to the universal soul the affections of the partial souls, while Plotinus’ censure targets the Gnostics’ complete identification of the creator to the soul (without including the intellect as he does) and, moreover their attribution to this soul – which he does not call “universal,” this being an interpretative addition by Armstrong – of the same affections that are suffered by the beings in the parts of the universe (in masculine: τοῖς ἐν μέρει, without any variant), that is, by the composite beings, not simply the souls. The doctrine that Plotinus targets is that of an ignorant creator, Ialdabaoth, a passionate soul born from the passion of the universal soul, Sophia (he does identify these two entities, and probably the Gnostics did this, too). Contrary to this, Plotinus’ (second) Demiurge is the soul of the universe, as it receives the demiurgic power from its own creator, the intellect.

Finally, the most revealing pericope about Plotinus’ doctrine of the demiurgic activity is III. 9 [13].1. Ilievski only notes that much:

4) “III.9.1.1-3, where he seems to use *ho dēmiourgos* as a synonym for *ho nous*”.

In this passage, Plotinus gives a subtle interpretation of *Timaeus* 39e,¹⁵⁷ both distinguishing and identifying the “living being itself” (ὃ ἐστὶ ζῶον), the “intellect that sees the inherent ideas (ὁ νοῦς ὃς ὁρᾷ τὰς ἐνούσας ἰδέας),¹⁵⁸ and “the Demiurge who has thought of conferring to this universe all that the intellect sees in the living being itself” (ὁ δημιουργὸς ὃς διανοήθη

¹⁵⁷ Armstrong, *Plotinus Enneads*, Loeb Classical Library series, 407, comment 1.

¹⁵⁸ Armstrong correctly points out that “This view, which Plotinus here and elsewhere consistently opposes, was at one time held by Porphyry (cp. *Life of Plotinus*, 18.11, 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, l.c.)”; *Plotinus Enneads*, Loeb Classical Library series, 407, comment 2.

ἃ ὁ νοῦς ὁρᾷ ἐν τῷ ὃ ἐστι ζῶον καὶ τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἔχειν). In this respect, I agree with Caluori's subtle analysis of this passage which is much more convincing.¹⁵⁹

Thus, according to Plotinus' interpretation, the intellect sees in itself the intelligible, that is, the ideas, but the very act of the intellection (νόησις) distinguishes it from its object of intellection, which is the sight of "being" of the second hypostasis.¹⁶⁰ The key sentences here are III.9[13]1,15-37:

Ἡ τὸ μὲν νοητὸν οὐδὲν κωλύει καὶ νοῦν εἶναι ἐν στάσει καὶ ἐνότητι καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ, τὴν δὲ τοῦ νοῦ φύσιν τοῦ ὁρῶντος ἐκεῖνον τὸν νοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνέργειάν τινα ἀπ' ἐκείνου, ἢ ὁρᾷ ἐκεῖνον· ὁρῶντα δὲ ἐκεῖνον <εἶναι> οἷον [ἐκεῖνον εἶναι] νοῦν ἐκείνου, ὅτι νοεῖ ἐκεῖνον· νοοῦντα δὲ ἐκεῖνον καὶ αὐτὸν νοῦν καὶ νοητὸν ἄλλως εἶναι τῷ μεμιμησθαι. Τοῦτο οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ διανοηθέν, ἃ ἐκεῖ ὁρᾷ, ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ ποιῆσαι ζῶων γένη τέσσαρα. Δοκεῖ γε μὴν τὸ διανοούμενον ἐπικεκρυμμένως ἕτερον ἐκείνων τῶν δύο ποιεῖν. Ἄλλοις δὲ δόξει τὰ τρία ἐν εἶναι, τὸ ζῶον αὐτὸ ὃ ἐστίν, ὁ νοῦς, τὸ διανοούμενον. Ἡ, ὥσπερ ἐν πολλοῖς, προτείνων ἄλλως, ὁ δὲ ἄλλως νοεῖ τρία εἶναι. Καὶ τὰ μὲν δύο εἴρηται, τὸ δὲ τρίτον τί, ὃ διανοήθη τὰ ὁρώμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦ ἐν τῷ ζῶῳ κείμενα αὐτὸ ἐργάσασθαι καὶ ποιῆσαι καὶ μερίσαι; Ἡ δυνατόν τρόπον μὲν ἄλλον τὸν νοῦν εἶναι τὸν μερίσαντα, τρόπον δὲ ἕτερον τὸν μερίσαντα μὴ τὸν νοῦν εἶναι· ἢ μὲν γὰρ παρ' αὐτοῦ τὰ μερισθέντα, αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν μερίσαντα, ἢ δ' αὐτὸς ἀμέριστος μένει, τὰ δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ τὰ μερισθέντα—ταῦτα δὲ ἐστὶ ψυχαί—ψυχὴν εἶναι τὴν μερίσαντα εἰς πολλὰς ψυχάς. Διὸ καὶ φησι τοῦ τρίτου εἶναι τὸν μερισμὸν καὶ ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ, ὅτι διανοήθη, ὃ οὐ νοῦ ἔργον—ἢ διάνοια—ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς μεριστὴν ἐνέργειαν ἐχούσης ἐν μεριστῇ φύσει.

¹⁵⁹ The importance of this sight in relation to the demiurgic activity will be explained further in chapter 4.

¹⁶⁰ Here and elsewhere, Plotinus might anticipate the doctrine of the "one being," so prominent in later Neoplatonism. Istvan Perczel has written an innovative study on this issue: I. Perczel, "« L'intellect amoureux » et « l'un qui est ». Une doctrine mal connue de Plotin," *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 15 (1996): 223-264.

Nothing hinders the intelligible from being an intellect in rest, in unity, and in stillness, while [nothing hinders also] the nature of the intellect that sees that intellect which is in itself, from being a certain activity coming from the former, which [activity] sees it [the intellect that is in rest and unity]. And while it sees it, it is as if it were its [the unitarian intellect's] intellect, because it sees it. As it conceives of the former, itself is also intellect and intelligible in another way, by imitating it. So, this is, therefore, the meaning of “thinking of creating in this world” the same “four genera of living beings” “that he [the intellect] sees there.”¹⁶¹ However, it seems that he [Plato] makes in a hidden way “the one who thinks” a different one from the other two. Others would think that the three are the same, the living being itself, the intellect, and the thinking one. However, just as in many cases, given that he [Plato] formulates [these names] differently, he also conceives of them as different, that is, three.¹⁶² We have already said what the first two are, but what is, then, the third one, which has thought of elaborating, making, and dividing those things that are seen by the intellect as they are contained in the living being? In fact, it is possible in one way that the intellect is the one dividing but, in another way, that it is not the intellect. In fact, as far as those things that are divided are from it [the intellect], it is the one dividing, but as far as it remains undivided but from it are those divided – which are souls – then, the one who has divided into many souls is itself a soul. This is why Plato says that the division belongs to the third entity and is in the third entity, because it had thought of, which, namely reasoning, is not the work of the intellect but of a soul, whose activity is divisible in the divisible nature.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Here Plotinus combines *Timaeus* 39e with 92c.

¹⁶² This sentence is particularly obscure; everybody is only guessing its possible meaning and a number of emendations have been proposed.

¹⁶³ The question is whether, by “divisible nature,” Plotinus means that particulars come into the scene together with the bodies. Scholars have argued that individuation of the souls is possible before the embodiment of soul or better the ensoulment of the body. However, I think that Plotinus would never be committed to the view of individuating the souls in the intelligible realm because this would weaken his argument about the unity of the souls. More will follow in the next section of the present chapter.

This passage explicates Plotinus' doctrine on the Demiurge in the clearest possible manner. There is the "living being itself," which is the aspect (one) being of the intellect; then, there is the intellect which sees the ideas inherent in the intelligible (two), and finally the Demiurge, who, through its reasoning faculty, transfers the ideas perceived by the intellect and divides them in the perceptible universe (three).

A closer look at these passages shows that Proclus might have been right; Caluori is much closer to understanding this question than Ilievski is, but he is wrong in attributing the creative activity to the "whole soul," or "hypostasis Soul."¹⁶⁴ However, if the creation belongs to the Intellect as far as it creates the soul, and to the soul of the universe in regard to the material world, then is there any role for the whole soul in the demiurgic activity?

The whole soul and the partial souls

Plotinus' metaphysical framework presents a hierarchical structure, in which the One as the ultimate source of all reality emanates the intellect and the whole soul, which two, together, give rise to the multiplicity of the sensible world. This emanation is not a temporal process, but an a-temporal unfolding of ontological dependence, where each level of reality reflects and sustains the unity of the One. The Intellect, which is identified with the Platonic forms, maintains the unity of all intelligible realities, while the whole soul becomes the principle through which these intelligible realities are instantiated within the cosmos.

The whole soul occupies a unique and intermediary position between the intelligible and sensible realms, acting as a bridge that connects the immortal with the mortal, and eternity with time. This bridging function is central to Plotinus' understanding of how the divine permeates the cosmos. The whole soul is not merely a passive recipient of the forms, but is actively engaged in their contemplation and their expression in the material world.

Plotinus explores the unity of the soul in depth, questioning how this bridging between the intelligible and sensible is possible. The Demiurge in Plotinus' thought is identified with the intellect as a non-personified agency, which engages in a threefold activity: it contemplates Being, generates the intelligible realities, and orders the cosmos. This creation is a product of a non-technomorphic Demiurge, of a source that spontaneously imitates the Cause of all – the

¹⁶⁴ D. Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 26-33.

One. The whole soul, and its parts – the world soul and the individual souls—mirror this threefold activity. By maintaining its unity with all its faculties, the whole soul contemplates the Intellect, and through this contemplation, it creates the *logoi* or rational principles by which the nature of each thing is ordered.

As we have seen above, while analyzing III.9 [13] 5, 1-3, the whole soul has, in outlining the immediate blueprint of the world consisting of the *logoi* that are going to be realized in the material cosmos, the same function as the indefinite Dyad has in the making of the intelligible world.

The soul of the universe, therefore, remains in a state of perfect stillness when it contemplates the forms through the mirror of the whole soul, ensuring the health and harmony of the cosmic body. At the same time, the power of this contemplation is dynamically transformed into the organizing principles that govern the natural faculties. This dual role of this soul—contemplative and creative—reveals the deep connection between the intelligible and the sensible, and the way in which the divine order is manifested in the material world.

Galen's *archai*

This structure resembles, I think, the organization of the human organism as described by Galen, where the *archai*, or ruling principles, function as the sources of the interconnected activities within the body: the interwoven wheel of the soul's faculty in the organism. The idea of a network of faculties within both the cosmos and the organism reflects an interesting metaphysical insight: that all levels of reality, from the highest principle of the One to the lowest material forms, are connected in a harmonious and interdependent whole.

Plotinus does not have to prove empirically the way the parts residing in the body are in unity, but it is important for him to explain *sympatheia* in his respect and against Stoicism, defending what he believes to be the authentic interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus*. Thus, in continuation to another treatise, IV. 2 [4], in IV. 9 [8] he exposes the thesis of the unity of the souls, anticipating here the more elaborated discussion of both VI. 4-5 [22] and IV.3 [27]. Plotinus, after explaining a series of arguments about why being in one soul does not exclude the existence of *partial souls*, states that the reason for the effects of magic is *sympatheia* and the unity of the souls.

εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐπωδαὶ καὶ ὅλως μαγεῖται συνάγουσι καὶ συμπαθεῖς πόρρωθεν ποιοῦσι, πάντως τοι διὰ ψυχῆς μιᾶς. (IV. 9 [8], 3, 5-7)

If the spells and magic in general bring people together and make them share affections from a distance, this is certainly due to the unity of the soul.

Closeness and direct contact are not a requirement for sharing affections because of the unity of the souls. Both the soul of the universe and the human soul are in unity and able to share affections, because they are parts of the one soul. This passage should be read also together with IV.3 [27], 1, 17-18, which seeks to find how the ensoulment of the body happens. It elaborates on the views of certain philosophers, either Stoics or Middle Platonists (such as Galen), who misinterpret Plato's *Timaeus*:

νῦν δὲ πάλιν ἐπανίωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς λέγοντας ἐκ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῆς καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας εἶναι. (IV. 3 [27], 1, 17-18)

Now let us return to those who say that our souls are originating from the soul of the universe.

Plotinus critically examines the idea that the souls of the individuals would be the result of a fragmentation (*apospasmata*) of the soul of the universe. According to this view, the parts were created by their physical separation from a material source and reunited to it after death. Instead, considering that the soul of the universe and the souls of the individuals are equal and *homoeidē*,¹⁶⁵ Plotinus suggests that there is an ontological connection to a higher common source, the whole soul, ultimately attacking the notion that the partial souls are merely dependent on the cosmic Soul.

The whole soul and the other parts are *homoeidē in terms of essence* but the first is causally prior to the others and Plotinus explains this kinship as the relationship between a science and its theorems (IV.9 [8], 5, 1-19). As the theorems belong to the whole science without

¹⁶⁵ According to Numenius, the individual souls share the same essence with the Soul of the Universe; after death, the individual souls return to these spheres to regain their integrity in eternal life.

losing their wholeness, in the same way the souls of the individuals and the soul of the cosmos are parts of one whole without losing their own wholeness. In the case of the intellect, there is differentiation but not separation; however, when he speaks about the human souls that “descend” into each body, then, Plotinus uses the metaphor of the sun with the rays. Each ray is not separated from the source, but sheds its lights on different houses (IV.3 [27], 4, 18-20), meaning that the partial souls are divided and not divided at the same time. And Plotinus continues:

Καὶ τὴν μὲν τοῦ παντὸς ἀεὶ ὑπερέχειν τῷ μηδὲ εἶναι αὐτῇ τὸ κατελθεῖν, μηδὲ τὸ¹⁶⁶ κάτω, μηδὲ ἐπιστροφὴν τὰ τῆδε,¹⁶⁷ τὰς δ’ ἡμετέρας [...] ¹⁶⁸ τῷ τε εἶναι ἀφορισμένον αὐταῖς τὸ μέρος ἐν τῷδε καὶ τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ τοῦ προσδεομένου φροντίσεως. τῆς μὲν οὖν ἐοικυίας τῇ ἐν φυτῷ μεγάλῃ ψυχῇ ἢ ἀπόνως τὸ φυτὸν καὶ ἀψόφως διοικεῖ τῆς κατωτάτῃ τῆς ψυχῆς¹⁶⁹ τοῦ παντὸς, τοῦ δὲ ἡμῶν κάτω, οἷον εἰ εὐλαὶ ἐν σαπέντι μέρει τοῦ φυτοῦ γίνονται· οὕτω γὰρ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἔμψυχον ἐν τῷ παντί· τῆς δὲ ἄλλης ψυχῆς τῆς ὁμοειδοῦς τῶν ἄνω τῆς ὅλης, οἷον εἴ τις γεωργὸς ἐν φροντίδι τῶν ἐν τῷ φυτῷ εὐλῶν γίνονται καὶ ταῖς μερίμναις πρὸς τῷ φυτῷ γίνονται· ἢ εἴ τις ὑγιαίνοντα μὲν καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ὑγιαίνόντων ὄντα πρὸς ἐκείνοις εἶναι λέγοι, πρὸς οἷς ἐστὶν ἢ πράττων ἢ θεωρίας ἑαυτὸν παρέχων, νοσήσαντος δὲ καὶ πρὸς ταῖς τοῦ σώματος θεραπείαις ὄντος πρὸς τῷ σώματι εἶναι καὶ τοῦ σώματος γηγόνεναί.

The soul of the universe always remains above [the universe] as its lot is not to descend, not even that of its lower part, nor to turn toward the things here-below,

¹⁶⁶ τό Enn and H-S¹⁻²: τῷ conī. Harder, but the emendation is unnecessary.

¹⁶⁷ μηδὲ ἐπιστροφὴν τὰ τῆδε Enn: μηδὲ ἐπιστροφὴν <πρὸς> τὰ τῆδε conī. Creuzer, Müller, and H-S¹⁻². Yet, τὰ τῆδε can be understood as accusativus respectivus, thus, the emendation, although it is not distorting the meaning, is not necessary.

¹⁶⁸ As the predicate is missing, Kirchoff conjectured that there is a lacuna here. We are following his suggestion in our edition.

¹⁶⁹ τῆς κατωτάτῃ τῆς ψυχῆς: τοῦ κατωτάτῃ τῆς ψυχῆς conī. Theiler, Harder, Cilento, H-S¹⁻². However, apparently, with τῆς μὲν οὖν ἐοικυίας a new sentence begins, and τῆς μὲν οὖν ἐοικυίας and τῆς κατωτάτῃ τῆς ψυχῆς belong together.

while our souls <descend,¹⁷⁰> partly because a part has been assigned to them in this [universe], and partly because they are turning towards that, which requires their care. While the lowest part of the soul of the universe resembles the one in a great tree, which administers the tree effortlessly and without noise, our lower part is as if worms were born in a rotten part of the tree; for such is the animated body in the universe. The other soul, which is of the same kind as the parts of the whole that are above, is as if a farmer were coming to take care of the worms, and because of his worries he would be absorbed by the tree,¹⁷¹ or as if one would say that someone, as long as he is in good health and is with other healthy people, is absorbed by those people¹⁷² with whom he is, whether he is acting, or gives himself over to contemplation, but when he falls ill, and is absorbed by his cares for the body, is absorbed by the body and becomes possessed by the body. (IV.3 [27], 4, 21-37)

First, Plotinus repeats what he has already explained in *Enn.* IV 9, 5, namely that the soul remains a whole, even if it is divided around the bodies. Moreover, he uses two similes to explain the partiality of the soul of the universe. The first simile, which becomes clearer with textual restoration, compares the soul to a large tree, whose partially weakened vitality allows harmful worms to grow. The animated body of the universe is like a giant tree and the human bodies are the worm-eaten parts, the worms representing disease, weakness, and mortality. This mirrors how the rational soul, to whom the care of a part of the world had been entrusted, is entirely absorbed by bodily concerns, and forgets about the higher contemplation. The second simile compares the soul's concern for the body to a person falling ill, stressing that such concerns might turn the soul to be absorbed by the body, and imagine itself as if itself were part of the corporeal universe, which it is not. The soul of the universe remains

¹⁷⁰ There is apparently a lacuna here, identified by Kirchoff. We supplemented the text according to its obvious meaning. See also Armstrong's translation: "but our souls would come down."

¹⁷¹ Plotinus idea is that the rational soul is not in the corporeal world but outside of it, just like the above parts of the universe, its place is in the intelligible world, but all its attention is entirely absorbed by the tree, a metaphor for the corporeal universe. For this meaning of *πρός* + dative, see Liddel, Scott, and Jones, III.

¹⁷² That is, his attention is absorbed by them.

undistracted, fully immersed in the contemplation of the whole noetic world,¹⁷³ while our souls, bound to the material realm, must also attend to the care and needs of the body. To maintain a soul in harmonious movement, it is essential to balance attention between the body and the intellect. When this balance is achieved, the rational soul is with the healthy people, that is, the ideas, whether it engages in action, or entirely gives itself over to contemplation. In this sense, the rational soul *must* “descend” to address the disturbances of the body, ensuring that the soul's higher pursuits remain in balance with its physical existence and maintaining the illuminating part of the body which is akin to the great soul. There is a providential character even if we think of the soul's descent.

Plotinus here follows Galen's view in *On the Formation of the Foetuses* IV 701. 1-6. Galen turns against those Platonists who endow the soul of the universe with the act of forming the lower forms of creatures, such as scorpions, mosquitos and worms. For this would mean that they disrespect and undermine the true intelligence of the creation of the Demiurge. On the other hand, it does not make any sense to claim that the universe is the product of the soul of matter.

Εἰπόντος δέ τίνος τῶν διδασκάλων μοι τῶν Πλατωνικῶν τὴν δι' ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου ψυχὴν ἐκτεταμένην διαπλάττειν τὰ κυούμενα, τὴν μὲν τέχνην καὶ δύναμιν ἀξίαν ἐκείνης ἐνόμισα, σκορπιούς δὲ καὶ φαλάγγια καὶ μυίας καὶ κώνωπας, ἔχιδνας τε καὶ σκώληκας, ἐλμινάς τε καὶ ἀσκαρίδας ὑπ' ἐκείνης διαπλάττεσθαι νομίζειν οὐχ ὑπέμεινα, πλησίον ἀσεβείας ἦκειν ὑπολαβὼν τὴν τοιαύτην δόξαν. οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ τὴν τῆς ὕλης ψυχὴν εἰς τοσοῦτον τέχνης ἦκειν εὐλογον εἶναί μοι δοκεῖ.¹⁷⁴

When one of my Platonist teachers said that the soul, which extends throughout the entire cosmos, shapes the creatures within it, I considered the art and power attributed to it worthy of such a soul. But when he went on to say that scorpions, spiders, flies, mosquitoes, vipers, worms, and other such creatures are shaped by that same soul, I could not accept it, believing that such an opinion approaches impiety. Nor do I think it reasonable to attribute such great craftsmanship even to

¹⁷³ The world soul governs from its “lofty abode” and does not descend. See also P.Kalligas *Enneads*, volume 3 p.33.

¹⁷⁴ Galen, *Foet. Form.*, 4, 700-701.

the soul of matter.

For both Plotinus and Galen, the soul of the cosmos does not create the lower forms of life. Plotinus attributes these forms to the spontaneous generation rooted in the weak illumination / contemplation of Nature towards the intelligibles. Galen rejects the concept that the creation of obnoxious animals would be the work of the world soul, but he thinks that it cannot even be attributed to the soul animating matter. Therefore, the higher intelligence through its powers illuminates the world soul and the human souls that are in the same status, akin to each other because of their intellectual origin and because they are animating their respective bodies. The whole soul, their generator (their material cause), is incorporeal and remains in the intelligible world ensuring the unity of all the parts. In IV.8[6].4.6–10 and IV.3[27].17.8–10 Plotinus states that all souls live together in the heavens. If this is the case, how does the separation of the souls come forth?

Plotinus in the same treatise claims that the souls that dwell in each body are not differentiated by their embodiment, because in this way there would be no immortality for the soul of e.g. Socrates and the soul of the individual would depend on the body which is inferior to the soul. This cannot be the case for a Platonist. Filip Karfik in his article “Parts of the Soul in Plotinus” suggested that the souls become partial when they start *perceiving* the material body as their part¹⁷⁵ and embodiment is a gradual process.¹⁷⁶ Let’s see how we can envisage this.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the soul’s unfolding from the intellect to the heavens

¹⁷⁵ Several scholars have argued that the individuation of souls emerges when the soul start interacting with the material world and focus on particular bodily concerns weakening, because of this activity, its connection to the intelligible realm. See J. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967, 214-220; D. J. O'Meara, *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 88-91; S. Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 129-133.

¹⁷⁶ F. Karfik, “Parts of the soul in Plotinus”, in K. Corcilius and D. Perler (eds.), *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 107-149.

creates an analogical space,¹⁷⁷ based on which different *logoi*, order principles, “move”, attract, and ultimately inform the bodies.¹⁷⁸ Thus, it is not the body as such that causes the individuality, but the soul’s proximity to the source determines the overall state of the soul (embodied or not, whole or partial). I think that this analogical spatiality created by the functions of the souls serves the extension of the unity of the souls from the intelligible realm to the sensible realm and vice versa.

This would imply that Plotinus and Galen are correct not to believe that it is not the world soul that extends throughout the universe as Stoics claimed; quite the opposite; according to *Timaeus* 36d–e3, it is the body which is in the soul, and it is the body which is attracted by the world soul to be formed.¹⁷⁹ It is only unity through the *logoi* of the soul which extends and in this way a communion of the parts becomes possible in all spaces; *sympatheia* is manifested between the ensouled bodies.

In VI.4 [22] 1, 30-32 Plotinus asks the question how the soul, “being incorporeal and without size, can become extended either before the bodies or in the bodies.” To answer this question, Plotinus returns to the Platonic distinction between the “true universe,” and its imitator, “this visible world” (VI.4 [22] 2, 1-2). The “true universe” is the ultimate, all-encompassing reality that is self-sufficient, independent, and not contained within anything else, as there is nothing prior to it. This universe does not seek a place or exist in anything else but is complete within itself as a multiplicity *in* unity:

καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὴ ὡς ἐν τόπῳ τις τιθεῖτο τὸ τοιοῦτον, τὸν τόπον νοῶν ἢ πέρας

¹⁷⁷ This is not a real space as Plotinus explicitly states that the intellects are multiple. It is multiple, in virtue of *difference* but not in virtue of *place* (ἐτερότητι, οὐ τόπῳ VI.4.4.23-24).

¹⁷⁸ Kalligas' article, "Logos and the Sensible Object in Plotinus," *Ancient Philosophy*, 17.2, 1997, 397-410, explains how Plotinus' concept of logos, being a mediator between the two realms, forms the material world. The soul through its participation in the logos is able to recognize the forms within the sensible objects.

¹⁷⁹ For more on the body being attracted to the soul see F. Karfik, “The body-soul relation upside down” in W. Mesch, M. Städtler and Ch. Thein (eds.), *Einheit und Vielheit metaphysischen Denkens: Festschrift für Thomas Leinkauf*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2022, 47-54.

σώματος τοῦ περιέχοντος καθὸ περιέχει, ἢ διάστημά τι ὃ πρότερον ἦν τῆς φύσεως τοῦ κενοῦ καὶ ἔτι ἐστίν. ἀλλὰ τῷ γε οἶον εἰδέσθαι ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναπαύεσθαι πανταχοῦ ὄντος ἐκείνου καὶ συνέχοντος, τὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος ἀφείς κατηγορίαν τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸ λεγόμενον λαμβανέτω (VI 4,2,6-12).

That, which is after this [that is, after the true universe] is necessarily in the universe if it is to be and is perfectly dependent on it and is not capable either to stay in rest or to move without it. In fact, if one were not to place this entity [namely that which comes after the true universe] so to say in a space, understanding space either as the limit of the containing body as far as it contains or a kind of extension that had belonged earlier and still belongs to the nature of the void,¹⁸⁰ but [one were to place it in the true universe] by the fact that it, so to say, is supported by it and is resting in it, the latter [the true universe] being everywhere and keeping it [the visible world] together, then, leaving aside the category of the name [space] one should grasp the subject of this speech by one’s reason.¹⁸¹

Does this mean that Plotinus is not against another kind of spatiality not determined by Aristotle’s terms?

The differentiation of the intellects with respect to their intelligible aspects (*opseis*) when contemplating the Intellect are projected in another whole, the Whole Soul, the space where the powers / activities of the intellect imitate the encompassing totality of the whole true being. The activity of the whole soul is internal and external. The internal ensures the unity of the whole soul with the intellect. The external expresses this unity in the *logoi* which are the principles of order. Plotinus depicts these multiple forms as *additions* (προσθήκαι) to the former ones. In II.6. [17] 1, he claims that additions are activities of substance (προσθήκης ἐνεργειῶν) that make the substance poorer in simplicity.¹⁸² This is according to Parmenides’

¹⁸⁰ See Aristotle’s definition of space in *Physics* Δ. 4, 209 b 6, 212a 5-11, Δ. 6, 213 a 12sq.

¹⁸¹ The translation and interpretation of this difficult passage corresponds to that of Lloyd P. Gerson et al., p. 740.

¹⁸² Τὴν γὰρ οὐσίαν φήσομεν ἐκεῖ κυριώτερον καὶ ἀμιγέστερον ἔχουσιν τὸ ὄν εἶναι οὐσίαν—ὡς ἐν διαφοραῖς—ὄντως, μᾶλλον δὲ μετὰ προσθήκης ἐνεργειῶν λεγομένην οὐσίαν, τελείωσιν μὲν

ontological claim about how unity *and* multiplicity, the realm of the soul comes forth from the second one, the intelligible realm or unified multiplicity: by *adding* more powers. In this process of becoming, the *logoi* of the soul "move" its powers and intertwine, weaving a tapestry that constitutes the first qualities of existence. It is through this interweaving that the ensouled bodies come into existence.

The role of analogy and the unity of the souls

The Demiurge's creation in the *Timaeus* is considered to be the result of *logismos* (*Tim.* 30b, 34a-b), planning, and it seems that Plotinus attributes this demiurgic activity to the soul of the universe not envisaged in an agency, but in a spontaneous generation of different levels of forms. It has been argued that this *logismos* is a non-verbal process. Hence, in II.3,18 Plotinus refers to the reasons *logoi* sprung from the external activity of the Intellect and resulting in the whole soul which moves the universe's soul. The soul's kinetics create the analogical space which serves as the substrate for the unfolding of the different levels of unity displayed in an analogy with their source. This is the role of *logoi* here: the *logoi* function as transitional means of each analogy. What is the ontological value of analogy for Plotinus?

Plotinus claims that the way we can learn about the ultimate cause of every being, the One, is only through analogies.

“We are taught about it [the One] by analogies¹⁸³ and negations and the knowledges of what comes from it. (VI.7.36,6-7)

Analogy can be perceived in two different ways: the production of images by the principle of unity and multiplicity (Intellect) taking place in between two antithetical poles- in the intelligible and the material realm. Or, in another sense, the relation of the relations, i.e. my

δοκοῦσαν εἶναι ἐκείνου, τάχα δ' ἐνδεεστέραν τῇ προσθήκῃ καὶ τῷ οὐχ ἀπλῶ, ἀλλ' ἤδη ἀφισταμένην τούτου.

¹⁸³ Analogy is also used to understand the relation of the transcendent to the material world. Ontologically speaking analogies could be used furthermore not to stress the similarity but to point out the dissimilarity between *logoi* and enmattered *logoi*.

father is the governor of my life, meaning that the relation my father has to my life is similar to the relation of a governor to his city.¹⁸⁴

Plotinus' perception of creation unfolds in a series of perpetual inter-connecting analogies causally affected, proving God's effect on the Living Being. What is worth mentioning is that where contemplation halts, creation also stops. Thus, the Intellect while contemplating the One fails to see it (internal activity) and reproduces the first image of itself (external activity), then the whole soul imitating the intelligible activity of the intellect is similar to a *nous* and during this process it moves the soul of the universe, which also contemplates the image of the intellect through the whole soul and by this last contemplation and its external activity nature comes to the scene, which also sees the image of the soul through the world soul and animates the human bodies.¹⁸⁵ However, this image is very weak, and cannot set in motion another form of contemplation.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, matter is the ultimate extreme of the creative process in a series of contained analogies.¹⁸⁷

Plotinus, keeping Aristotle in mind, and the analogy that art imitates nature,¹⁸⁸ shows how nature imitates art, namely the demiurgic activity,¹⁸⁹ thus upgrading the ontology of art into a

¹⁸⁴ In mathematics, according to mathematician John Polya, two objects are analogical, if they agree in certain relations of their respective parts; see J. Polya, *How to Solve It: A New Aspect of Mathematical Method*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945, 37.

¹⁸⁵ The particular bodies being animated by Zeus, the god whose name signifies the bringing of life according to Cratylus, personifies the connection between the world soul and the particular soul. While the human soul contemplates nature and the sublunary stars, it reaches through them the intelligible.

¹⁸⁶ See also III.8 1-8.

¹⁸⁷ See A. Smith, "Colloquium 1: image and analogy in Plotinus", *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 27.1, 2012, 1. Smith suggests that Plotinus employs metaphors as analogies to "identify successive grades of reality in a sequence of images". I totally agree with his interpretation that metaphors in Plotinus do not serve only as figurative means of expression but are displaying the path of reaching immediate knowledge and unity.

¹⁸⁸ See *Physics*. 2.2.194a21-22; *Mete.* 4.3.381b6; *De mundo* (396b11-12).

¹⁸⁹ See also V.8. [31] 1, 36-37.

principle connected to *Metaphysics* XII. I think that Plotinus follows Aristotle's definition of analogy to ensure unity in terms of relation and form and not enmattered form.¹⁹⁰

At the same time, this analogical scheme of images in creation¹⁹¹ is expressed actively in a sequence of similar but of various grades of contemplative acts. Eyjólfur Emilsson calls this scheme "perceptual imagery," indicating that this scheme is accordingly applied in terms of different layers of thinking. Bringing evidence from *Ennead* V 8.6, Emilsson understands the Egyptian wisdom displayed in iconography as analogical to the Intellect's grasp of the objects;¹⁹² the Forms are not images ontologically similar to the paintings, but the stress is in the immediacy and the importance of this analogical method of reaching reality.¹⁹³ I think though that the imagery is indeed perceptual and also has an ontological value. If we look

¹⁹⁰ "τὰ μὲν κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἐστὶν ἓν, τὰ δὲ κατ' εἶδος, τὰ δὲ κατὰ γένος, τὰ δὲ κατ' ἀναλογίαν, ἀριθμῷ μὲν ὧν ἡ ὕλη μία, εἶδει δ' ὧν ὁ λόγος εἷς, γένει δ' ὧν τὸ αὐτὸ σχῆμα τῆς κατηγορίας, κατ' ἀναλογίαν δὲ ὅσα ἔχει ὡς ἄλλο πρὸς ἄλλο. αἰὲ δὲ τὰ ὕστερα τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἀκολουθεῖ, οἷον ὅσα ἀριθμῷ καὶ εἶδει ἓν, ὅσα δ' εἶδει οὐ πάντα ἀριθμῷ: ἀλλὰ γένει πάντα ἐν ὅσαπερ καὶ εἶδει, ὅσα δὲ γένει οὐ πάντα εἶδει ἀλλ' ἀναλογία: ὅσα δὲ ἀναλογία οὐ πάντα γένει" (1016b31-17a2). Again, some things are one numerically, others formally, others generically, and others analogically; numerically, those whose matter is one; formally, those whose definition is one; generically, those which belong to the same category; and analogically, those which have the same relation as something else to some third object. In every case the latter types of unity are implied in the former: e.g., all things which are one numerically are also one formally, but not all which are one formally are one numerically; and all are one generically which are one formally, but such as are one generically are not all one formally, although they are one analogically; and such as are one analogically are not all one generic-ally. Translation from H. Tredennick, *Aristotle: Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vols. 17, 18, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1933, 1989.

¹⁹¹ Analogical scheme of images in creation: the Intellect's image produced by the act of not seeing the One but seeing it self, then the Whole Soul's seeing of the Intellect and the image of the One and so one and so forth, up to the point that the particular soul having also encompassed the World Soul's activity reaches the image of the One, the Intellect.

¹⁹² This is a term that Emilsson introduces in his book *Plotinus on Intellect*.

¹⁹³ Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, 179.

closer to the analogies, we will observe that the demiurgic process at all levels becomes a multiple analogy, from simple (the Intellect seeing and producing all at once) to more complex (the world soul seeing each part in separate images and gradually all of them, creating in this way temporal and spatial conditions). The analogies from simplicity to complexity have a cumulative and emended character.

Let me explain how I understand this last sentence: we do know that the greater is the distance from the source, the less original is the creation of reality. This could be perceived as a deficit. However, Plotinus does not denounce this incompleteness. The intellect cannot grasp the One and see itself. From this deficit, an additional aspect of being is added and the analogy becomes more complex with the generation of the forms (ἐν πολλά). The soul by contemplating the intellect adds other aspects to herself, that of forms but in an accumulative way (ἐν καὶ πολλά).¹⁹⁴

The same holds for the soul of the universe which by her weaker contemplation is informed by the intelligibles and forms the *logoi* successively and discursively for creating nature and for animating the bodies. By creating the forming principles of the universe, the soul of the universe sets in motion time, which appeared from her distance from the intellect, which is also an image of eternity and becomes the condition for ordering the world.¹⁹⁵ Last, but not least, nature sees a faint image of reality, which is called a trace of contemplation in II.9, and gives life through its orders to the vegetative part of the universe. This accumulative and emended analogical process through the metaphor of seeing and unfolding of images could explain the following:

- a) The demythologization of the principles of mathematics and geometrical schemes in the *Timaeus* incorporated in analogies and manifested through different aspects of the Demiurge, namely the intellect, the universal soul, and the soul of the universe.

¹⁹⁴ Let's not forget also that the main reason that the soul starts its motion is because she wants to transfer everything she sees in the intelligible world [III.7 11. 21-22)

¹⁹⁵ Cf. F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato*. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1937, 102-103; O. Goldin, "Plato and the arrow of time", *Ancient Philosophy*, 18, 1998, 133.

- b) The reason for Plotinus' claims' in certain passages that this incompleteness acquires a *providential aspect*, which enables all levels of reality to participate in the demiurgic activity.

It seems that although there are shortcomings among the different levels of creation, these have been emended by *additional* characteristics making the process more complex, but equally important for the final outcome, the cosmos. Therefore, Plotinus perceives creation in a similar way as the product of a dynamic aesthetic process of an art. The following passage shows the analogy of art to different forms of creation and its emended character:

Εἰ δέ τις τὰς τέχνας ἀτιμάζει, ὅτι μιμούμεναι τὴν φύσιν ποιοῦσι, πρῶτον μὲν φατέον καὶ τὰς φύσεις μιμεῖσθαι ἄλλα. Ἐπειτα δεῖ εἰδέναι, ὥς οὐχ ἀπλῶς τὸ ὁρώμενον μιμοῦνται, ἀλλ' ἀνατρέχουσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους, ἐξ ὧν ἡ φύσις. Εἴτα καὶ ὅτι πολλὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ποιοῦσι καὶ προστιθέασι δέ, ὅτῳ τι ἐλλείπει, ὥς ἔχουσαι τὸ κάλλος. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ Φειδίας τὸν Δία πρὸς οὐδὲν αἰσθητὸν ποιήσας, ἀλλὰ λαβὼν οἷος ἂν γένοιτο, εἰ ἡμῖν ὁ Ζεὺς δι' ὁμμάτων ἐθέλοι φανῆναι. (V.8 [32] 1 32-40)

If someone despises the crafts because they create by imitating nature, it must be said, first, that the natures are also imitating other things. Then, one should know that the crafts are not simply imitating those seen, but they go back to the reasons [*logoi*] that are constitutive of nature. One should also consider that they are creating many things by their own invention and are complementing those things to which something is missing, because they possess the beauty. Moreover, Phidias too did not create Zeus looking at any perceptible object, but he conceived of how Zeus would be if he wanted to appear to us in a visible form.

So, creation is like art, and art is not inferior to nature. In another passage, V 9, 11, Plotinus will go further with this defense of arts, claiming that even those arts which have artificial products, do have ontological value, insofar as they make use of symmetries. Therefore, developing his own Platonic view on the role of imitations and upgrading them ontologically by making them an outcome of contemplation, though weaker ones, Plotinus suggests that imitations are not copies but connected to the original through the contemplation of the *logoi* and the discovery of analogies.

It seems that Plotinus uses analogies in any possible way to make us perceive the connection between the higher principles, between the parts and the wholes. Let us see how analogies will help us understand better the unity of the souls developed in treatise IV.9 [8]. In his early treatise IV.9 [8] "Are All Souls One", Plotinus deals with similar questions he exposed later in the treatise "On the problems of the soul" IV.3.[27], namely how the different souls are connected and in which sense they act as separate units. The character of the text in many cases seems aporetic, but, as Paul Kalligas correctly points out, this treatise is the first attempt from Plotinus to systematize some of the bigger problems in philosophy,¹⁹⁶ especially after Plato's *Timaeus* and the creation of the cosmic soul and the human souls.

The first section introduces the issues to be discussed which are the following:

- a) Is there a connection between the world soul and the partial soul and how we can explain the connective bond?
- b) How is it possible for both the cosmic soul and the partial soul, being everywhere in the bodies and even in other bodies, to be considered united under the same principle?
- c) And if we assume that the partial soul comes from the cosmic soul, in which respect are they united? Do they coincide, or is there another united force, such as another soul?
- d) And if the latter is the case, then how can we define the soul and what are the consequences for the partiality of the soul?
- e) Will this unity exclude each soul from perceiving life in a unique way?

These are all questions that have been raised in the first chapter. In the second chapter, Plotinus in his effort to reply to the question of shared experiences, uses an analogy with the organism and its parts, explaining that in the same way that an organism is a whole, but different organs act separately and without being aware of the functions of the others, in the same way the whole soul could be in all the body and the partial souls inside could act separately.¹⁹⁷ He goes further by saying that if their unity were to impose a common perception, then the souls would have to acquire also conjoint bodies. Plotinus employs his

¹⁹⁶ P. Kalligas, *The Enneads of Plotinus, Volume 2: A Commentary*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023, 215-216.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. IV 3.23.1–9.

first analogy in this treatise to be able to lead his students to understand the relation between the souls and their different activities. So, the stress here is on the independent roles of souls though belonging in a whole.

The next analogy is used to explain that the whole also does not perceive all the affections that happen in different parts of the bodies, because of its big size and magnitude. This time Plotinus uses the analogy of the whale and its different parts: the affection is not noticed, because the size of the body is also enormous. The whole soul, even if it reaches everywhere the body, due to its body's size cannot be affected by the experiences of the parts which belong to her, perceived by the partial souls. However, this is the case because Plotinus is talking about sense perception, which is based on impressions coming from the sensible realm. The *expose* is changing course, and Plotinus explains in which way the unity of the soul can be affirmed by shared common affections, *sympatheia*. *Sympatheia* is the result of the ultimate expression of unity emerging in the roughest analogical space made by the soul's kinetics, the realm of matter. In the same treatise in chapter 4, Plotinus uses the analogy of the sperm with its powers to show how all souls can be part of the whole in terms of powers (*dynameis*). However, the perfect analogy of the particular souls being whole while in the whole soul is the relation between theorems and science. Plotinus understands the particularity of the souls in qualitative and not in quantitative terms.

A theorem could signify both: a) a sight (coming from *theoria*), a complete aspect (*opsis*) of knowledge b) the a part's relation to the whole. As Kalligas correctly points out, this thinking stresses a "resolutive relation,"¹⁹⁸ namely that the analysis should include both the preconditions and the outcomes, and dissolves any imperfection.

Conclusions

In this chapter I showed that Plotinus' perception of the whole soul and partial souls are based in an analogical space, which extends unity from the intelligible realm to the earthly through the world soul. I have also explained why the whole soul cannot be the Demiurge and what the role of analogical space and thinking is in Plotinus' construction of reality. I also tried to explain that the unity of the soul is a precondition and a consequence at the same

¹⁹⁸ See P. Kalligas, *The Enneads of Plotinus, Volume 2: A Commentary*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023, 226.

time for the omnipresence of the soul and that is why we need to posit the analogical space and thinking into the gradual process of the souls' particularity. Plotinus sets up an ontological continuum between the intelligible and the material world, where the whole soul is the mediator (between Intelligence and individual souls) that is able to hold the cosmos together.

One of the most relevant arguments of this chapter shows that *sympatheia* is more than a physical or material bond; it is an expression of metaphysical unity—one that is maintained by the ontological state of the soul rather than direct corporeal contact, as the Stoics argued. Though Galen was agnostic about the exact nature of this unity, Plotinus grounds such a systematic vision, in which the soul's dynamic activity crafts an analogical space extending unity from the intelligible realm to the perceptible cosmos. In this way, it overcomes the difficulties behind the materialist readings of *sympatheia*.

Additionally, I have provided the necessary clarification that is required for the understanding of the distinction between the whole soul and the demiurge, where it is shown that while the Intellect is the cause of formation, the cosmic soul is tasked with translating the contemplation of this cause into the reality of order. Thus, the process of creation through analogy is an inherently non-mechanistic and non-deterministic process, a spontaneous process of unfolding intelligible principles on each successive level of reality, each one being a reflection and adaptation of the divine unity in a progressively differentiated manner.

Finally, I have argued that Plotinus' employment of analogy is a methodological and an ontological necessity; such analogy constitutes the means of connection between metaphysical principles and their divine manifestations in the cosmos. Through the means of perceptual imagery, analogy, and the unfolding of *logoi*, Plotinus reconciles the souls' unity with multiplicity, preserving creation as an active and ordered manifestation of the divine intellect. *Sympatheia* in this Platonist formulation (as opposed to its Stoic equivalent), does not imply the loss of unity through differentiation, but rather speaks to the retention of unity despite differentiation, through a transcending hierarchy to the whole of being that coherence of being of any and every derived substance is pursued.

This unity will be examined more closely in the next chapter: a theory of direct perception of the stars that requires the immediate engagement of the soul with the whole.

Chapter 3: Plotinus' *sympatheia*: magic and divination

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the way in which the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* is translated in a non-mythological framework in Plotinus' works, ensuring the unity between the cosmos and the intelligible realm. The intellect's power of seeing sets in motion the threefold demiurgic activity through the whole soul, the cosmic soul's contemplation, and in sequence her external activity. Furthermore, the unity and relation of the souls occupied Plotinus' and his students' thought for many years, as is evident by the treatise titled by Porphyry "On Questions Concerning the Soul", consisting of three parts – IV.3 [27], IV.4 [28], and IV.5 [29]. This work is a thorough analysis of the soul's role and activity in both the material and the intelligible worlds. Plotinus uses the analogy of a living organism with perception, emotions and mental activity, both intellectual and discursive; this living organism, conceptualized in medical terms, shows sympathetic manifestations and displays *sympatheia* with the parts and the whole.¹⁹⁹

For Plotinus, the cosmic soul and the heavenly luminaries (the sun, the moon, the planets and the fixed stars) are considered superior to the sublunary bodies. The superiority relies on the fact that their contemplation is directed towards the intelligible world and that is why, while they have sense perception (see II.2 [14] 3), they do not need any sense organs. The clarification on the perceiving faculty of the planets is needed for illuminating the cause of

¹⁹⁹ For Plotinus' view of *sympatheia*, see E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 54-62; idem, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 36-60; G. M. Gurtler, "Sympathy in Plotinus", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 24.4, 1984, 395-406; D. M. Hutchinson, "Sympathy, awareness, and belonging to oneself in Plotinus," in R. Patterson, V. Karasmanis and A. Hermann (eds.), *Presocratics and Plato: A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Charles H. Kahn*, Las Vegas, Zurich and Athens: Parmenides Publishing, 2012, 491-510; idem, *Plotinus on Consciousness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 56-63, 89-90.

divination, a phenomenon frequently practiced in his era.²⁰⁰ So, in terms of the scope of IV.4 [28] 30-45, Plotinus shows a) his objection to the view that magic, prayer and divination result from a communication between agents, b) his rejection of the ideas of the Stoics, who believed that, since the material universe is sympathetic, magic is a natural effect, c) his opposition to the Gnostics, whom he believed to have misinterpreted the essence of *sympatheia* and unity in the Platonic teachings, and to have considered the world's structure a product of a malevolent Demiurge, and d) his defense of the art of medicine and its right practice and place among the sciences. Building on the points (a-d), this chapter aims to clarify and illuminate Plotinus' defense of the cosmic soul and realm as an integral part of a higher metaphysical unity. This will be explored by examining how the soul's kinetic activity influences the planets, what kind of means Plotinus uses to depict the ontological and epistemic implications of this influence, and its connection to *sympatheia* concerning magic and divination.

Magic and divination

In *The Life of Plotinus and the Order of his Books*, Porphyry shares a story that shows Plotinus' extraordinary spiritual strength. Olympius of Alexandria, once a student of Ammonius, grew jealous of Plotinus and tried to harm him using magic. However, his efforts failed and even backfired, causing harm to himself instead. Realizing this, Olympius admitted that Plotinus' soul was so strong and connected to higher powers that it could repel any attacks.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ See Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", 44; K. Ierodiakonou, "The Greek concept of *sympatheia* and its Byzantine appropriation in Michael Psellos", in P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi (eds.), *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, Geneva: La pomme d'or Publishing, 2006, 97-117; M. Lawrence, "Hellenistic astrology", *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2005. For the Stoics, see P. T. Struck, "A world full of signs: understanding divination in ancient Stoicism", in P. Curry and A. Voss (eds.), *Seeing with Different Eyes: Essays in Astrology and Divination*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, 3-20.

²⁰¹ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 1.10-9.

Plotinus was familiar with this kind of practice due to his origins from Egypt and this becomes apparent in many instances in his work.²⁰² He often uses terms such as *magic incantations*, *charms*, and *enchantments* (μαγεία, ἐπασιδαί, γοητεία, θέλξεις) to highlight how people with misguided knowledge—like astrologers, magicians, or those who distort Platonic teachings—are misleading and distorting the truth. Through this language, he devotes specific sections of the *Enneads* to exposing why such practices are deceptive. He carefully examines and critiques them, offering philosophical arguments demonstrating their flaws.

One of the indicative parts of the *Enneads* as concerns magic is II.9 [33] 14, 1-14, which is directed against the Gnostics. Having first denounced his opponents for their deterministic and disoriented views on the creation and the stars, Plotinus draws the attention to the hierarchy of reality, with the Good being the highest principle (II.9 13, 20-33). For Plotinus, celestial bodies are not seen as having control over events on the earth, nor were they considered agents of a deterministic cosmic fate. For the Gnostics, on the contrary, the stars and planets played a much more dominant role—they were the primary tools through which the planetary Archons and the Demiurge ruled over the material world, shaping human destiny.

Μάλιστα δὲ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἄλλως ποιοῦσιν οὐκ ἀκήρατα τὰ ἐκεῖ. Ὅταν γὰρ ἐπασιδᾶς γράφωσιν ὡς πρὸς ἐκεῖνα λέγοντες, οὐ μόνον πρὸς ψυχὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐπάνω, τί ποιοῦσιν ἢ γοητείας καὶ θέλξεις καὶ πείσεις λέγουσι καὶ λόγῳ ὑπακούειν καὶ ἄγεσθαι, εἴ τις ἡμῶν τεχνικώτερος εἴπειν ταδὶ καὶ οὕτως μέλη καὶ ἦχους καὶ προσπνεύσεις καὶ σιγμοὺς τῆς φωνῆς καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσα ἐκεῖ μαγεύειν γέγραπται. Εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλονται τοῦτο λέγειν, ἀλλὰ πῶς φωναῖς τὰ ἀσώματα; Ὡστε οἷσι σεμνοτέρους αὐτῶν τοὺς λόγους

²⁰² For Plotinus and his relation to magic see P. Merlan, “Plotinus and magic”, *Isis* 44 (1943), 341-348; A. H. Armstrong, “Was Plotinus a magician?” *Phronesis* 1 (1955), 73-79, reprinted in *Plotinian and Christian Studies*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1979; M. J. Edwards, “Two episodes in Porphyry’s Life of Plotinus” *Historia* 40 (1991), 456-464; W. Elgersma-Helleman, “Plotinus as magician,” *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 4.2, 2010, 114-146. For magic as a means for unity, see Z. Mazur, “Unio Magica: Part I: on the magical origins of Plotinus’s mysticism”, *Dionysus*, 21 (2003), 23-52.

ποιοῦσι φαίνεσθαι, τούτοις λελήθασιν αὐτοὺς τὸ σεμνὸν ἐκείνων ἀφαιρούμενοι. Καθαίρεσθαι δὲ νόσων λέγοντες αὐτούς, λέγοντες μὲν ἂν σωφροσύνη καὶ κοσμία διαίτη, ἔλεγον ἂν ὀρθῶς, καθάπερ οἱ φιλόσοφοι λέγουσι·

But they themselves most of all impair the inviolate purity of the higher powers in another way too. For when they write magic chants, intending to address them to those powers, not only to the soul but to those above it as well, what are they doing except making the powers obey the word and follow the lead of people who say spells and charms and conjurations, any one of us who is well skilled in the art of saying precisely the right things in the right way, songs and cries and aspirated and hissing sounds and everything else which their writings say has magic power in the higher world? But even if they do not want to say this, how are the incorporeal beings affected by sounds? So by the sort of statements with which they give an appearance of majesty to their own words, they, without realising it, take away the majesty of the higher powers. But when they say they free themselves from diseases, if they meant that they did so by temperance and orderly living, they would speak well, just as the philosophers do. (II.9 [33] 14, 1-14, translation by Armstrong)

The passage addresses the Gnostics who undermine the sacred purity of the higher powers when they compose magical chants, intended not only for the soul, but also for the divine forces above it, claiming that these powers can be controlled by human words. They suggest their skills in the precise use of spells and other similar means, such as chants, cries, breathy or hissing noises, can influence the higher realms, as their writings assert these sounds hold magical power.

Plotinus accuses them that in their attempt to make their own words seem powerful and majestic, they undermine the true majesty of the higher powers. Furthermore, when they claim to cure themselves of diseases, they become irrational, since the cure of the body is based on its balance achieved through self-discipline. Plotinus directly challenges the core of Gnostic teachings by tracing the link between physics, metaphysics and ethics. Medical and philosophical teachings advocated that both the cure of the soul and the cure of the body rely on a well-ordered life. It is true that while the association between magical purification rituals

and healing was not new, it gained particular significance during his time. This period saw ancient scientific medicine, which had reached its peak with Galen's work, confronted by a revival of magical and theological beliefs concerning the causes and treatment of disease. However, Plotinus rejected these supernatural explanations, emphasizing that true purification (*katharsis*) was not about physical healing, but rather the soul's separation from the body through the cultivation of virtue.²⁰³ In the following section, we shall see how Plotinus depicts the causal role of well-being and order through the imagery of the soul's dance.

***Sympatheia* and the dance of the stars**

In the previous chapters, I argued that the kinetics of the soul generate a form of spatiality in which souls manifest both their unity and otherness. Through the triple demiurgic activity, these kinetic processes not only bring forth the cosmic realm but also ensure its ongoing stability and harmonious order. This continuous and self-sustaining motion upholds the intricate and interconnected structure of existence, ensuring that the cosmos remains in a state of balance and harmony. It is through this unceasing dynamic order that the universe maintains its existence and reflects the divine principles that govern its eternal existence. Plotinus, drawing back to Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, employs the metaphor of dancing to illustrate in which way the soul's kinetics reveal its intrinsic relationship with the harmonious and ordered motions of the planets.

It is useful here to revisit an important passage previously mentioned, which discusses the motion of the stars. For Plotinus, any deduction to matter and its affections would not play any ontological role in *sympatheia*, because *sympatheia* is the ultimate manifestation of a higher unity and an outcome of the unity of the souls. Starting from the cosmic soul, Plotinus states that all its functions are adjusted for the sake of being a perfect organic whole. This

²⁰³ P. Kalligas, *Enneads Commentary*, comment on 14.11-17, 4. The magical papyri contain numerous protective and exorcistic formulas, believed to cure ailments such as headaches, fevers, excessive bleeding, and pain in various parts of the body. Many of the miraculous healings described in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles would have been seen at the time as the result of exorcising evil spirits. Despite this, Greek medical theory firmly rejected magical or supernatural explanations for illness.

becomes clear, when he explains in IV.4 [28],8, why the stars do not have memory of contingent things: the motions of the heavens result in harmony due to an attentive and perfect performance.²⁰⁴ Plotinus, drawing on Plato's dialogues, defines the different relations of cosmic *sympatheia* taking place in heavens through the analogy of the performative arts: the cosmological harmony found in the *Timaeus*,²⁰⁵ and the analogy of the soul and body to the lyre and strings in the *Phaedo*:²⁰⁶

καὶ μὴ εἰ καὶ χορεία ἀπεικάσειέ τις τὴν κίνησιν αὐτῶν, εἰ μὲν ἰσταμένη ποτέ, ἢ πᾶσα ἂν εἴη τελεία ἢ συντελεσθεῖσα ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος, ἀτελὴς δὲ ἢ ἐν μέρει ἐκάστη· εἰ δὲ τοιαύτη οἷα αἰεὶ, τελεία αἰεὶ. Εἰ δὲ αἰεὶ τελεία, οὐκ ἔχει χρόνον ἐν ᾧ τελεσθήσεται οὐδὲ τόπον· ὥστε οὐδὲ ἔφεςιν ἂν ἔχοι οὕτως· ὥστε οὔτε χρονικῶς οὔτε τοπικῶς μετρήσει ἔχει οὕτως· ὥστε οὔτε χρονικῶς οὔτε τοπικῶς μετρήσει· ὥστε οὐδὲ μνήμη τούτων. Εἰ μέντοι αὐτοὶ μὲν ζωὴν ζῶσι μακαρίαν ταῖς αὐτῶν ψυχαῖς τὸ ζῆν προσεμβλέποντες, ταύτη δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς ἓν [ταύτη] τῇ νεύσει καὶ τῇ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν σύμπαντα οὐρανὸν ἐλλάμπει—ὥσπερ χορδαὶ ἐν λύρᾳ συμπαθῶς κινηθεῖσαι μέλος ἂν ᾄσειαν ἐν φυσικῇ τινι ἁρμονίᾳ—εἰ οὕτω κινεῖτο ὁ σύμπας οὐρανὸς καὶ τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ, πρὸς αὐτὸν φερόμενος καὶ αὐτός, καὶ ἄλλα ἄλλως πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ ἄλλης αὐτοῖς καὶ τῆς θέσεως οὔσης, ἔτι ἂν μᾶλλον ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν ὀρθοῖτο μιᾶς ζωῆς καὶ ὁμοίας τῆς πάντων ἔτι μᾶλλον οὔσης.

“If one were to liken their [the stars’] motion to a circle dance, if it were to stop at a moment, the whole dancing would be perfect when it had been completed from the beginning to the end, but the dance in the parts would be imperfect;²⁰⁷ but if it is an eternal one, then it is eternally perfect. If it is eternally perfect, it has no time within which it will be perfect, nor any space and, as a result, it would not have any desire. Therefore, it will not measure either in time or in space, and so, there will be no memory of all this.²⁰⁸ Now, if they [the stars] live a long life observing

²⁰⁴ C.f. Armstrong, *Enneads*, p. 153 Loeb, comment 1.

²⁰⁵ *Timaeus* 40c-d.

²⁰⁶ *Phaedo* 85e-86a.

²⁰⁷ The partial dance is here the individual dance of each star.

²⁰⁸ That is, there will be no memory of the time that has passed during the dance, or the distance to which it has come. This is the philosophical problem of the eternity of the time of

the course of their life in their souls,²⁰⁹ then, by the force²¹⁰ of this inclination of their souls towards one only thing²¹¹ and of the illumination that they are shedding on the entire heaven, just as strings of a lyre that are being moved by a common affection (συμπαθῶς), they are singing a melody in a sort of natural harmony. If the whole heaven and its parts are to move in this way, so that the heaven moves towards itself, while the others are moving toward the same goal in various ways given that their positions are different, this would further confirm our argument, showing that the life of the universe is even more united and similar.²¹²

Let me analyze step by step this rich passage. Plotinus employs two analogies, very often used also by Plato, to define the essence of *sympatheia* in the cosmos: the analogy of dancing and the analogy of the strings and lyre – together with the metaphor of seeing and desire.

the universe, with which Plotinus struggles in defending it against temporalist interpretations of some Middle Platonists (Plutarch and Atticus), the Gnostics, and the Christians who, in a factual interpretation of the *Timaeus*, assign a limited time to the universe.

²⁰⁹ I accept here the variant reading of A and E: “ζωὴν ζῶσι μακράν”, instead of the BRJUC group’s “ζωὴν ζῶσι μακαρίαν”, accepted by H-S¹⁻². “Long” seems to be here a synonym of “eternal,” or rather, “sempiternal”. The idea is that throughout their “long,” that is, “sempiternal”, lives the stars are keenly following their own lives in their souls (ταῖς αὐτῶν ψυχῇς τὸ ζῆν προσεμβλέποντες) and, as this life never stops, there is no time to store the experiences collected throughout the life in their memory. The other variant, “blessed life,” is disturbing in this context; not only μακράν is the *lectio difficillior*, but it gives the meaning to what follows. This meaning is lost in Armstrong: “If, of course, the heavenly bodies themselves live a blessed life, and contemplate this life besides with their souls...,” and in Lloyd Gerson: “If then, these beings live a blessed life, and look on this life with their own souls...”

²¹⁰ I accept here the variant τῇ δέ of the majority of the manuscripts (AEBRJC), over against the variants τῇδε of U, accepted by H-S¹⁻² and ταύτῃ δέ conjectured by Volkmann and accepted by Armstrong.

²¹¹ “τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς ἓν ταύτῃ τῇ νέυσει”: this “one only thing” is here the own life of the stars, on which they are focusing their attention.

²¹² IV.4 [28], 8.45-62; translation by A. Theologou and I. Perczel.

- 1) The motions of the heavens move harmoniously just like when, performing the dancing ensemble, each part adheres to the movements of the total performative act. Plotinus adds to this analogy a sequence of elements to explain why this movement is harmonious.
- 2) The motions of the stars are eternal. This is due to Plotinus' a priori eternalist attitude; they should be in eternal dancing because, if the performing act stops, then the parts of the performative act will not reach their *telos*, namely ceaselessly follow this eternal movement.
- 3) If the heavenly bodies are in eternal motion, this motion is perfect and there is no need for time and space, no desire for completion, since the motion is complete by its eternal character, both of the parts and of the whole.
- 4) If the heavenly bodies are in eternal, perfect motion and they do not need to remember the spatial distance they have completed, or the time that has passed, then they focus only on their course of life and accordingly live a long life.
- 5) The light of the stars emanating from the universe is a result of their internal noetic activity.

It seems that here, for Plotinus, the arts are considered superior to nature's acts, because of their route, which is in the intelligible and eternity.²¹³ The stars' motion as an analogy with the performing arts reveals a harmonious creation in eternity, which enacts a whole ritual.²¹⁴ I understand that the creation of the world here does not involve deliberation, i.e. now I have to

²¹³ "For whatever comes into contact with soul is made according to the substance of the nature of soul; and it makes not with an external goal, nor waiting upon planning or search. For art is posterior to soul, and imitates it, making dim and weak imitations, toys not worth much, bringing in many devices to help it in producing an image of nature"; IV.3. [27] 10.13-19. Moreover, Plotinus in III.8 [30] talks about human arts as inferior to nature, but he defends art when it concerns the creation of the world. For the opposite view, which I follow here, see also E. Emilsson, "Plotinus on the arts", in T. K. Johansen (ed.), *Productive Knowledge in Ancient Philosophy: The Concept of Technê*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, 255-262.

²¹⁴ For the stars dancing, see also VI.9. [8] 45-49, where the soul sees in her dance the intellect.

move my head and then my leg and so on and so forth, because creation is effortless. The act of dancing itself represents an artistic process in motion. The dancer's intention (προαίρεσις) is directed toward something beyond the physical steps—perhaps the meaning or essence of the myth—while their body responds instinctively to the rhythm and structure of the dance. Their limbs do not act independently, but work in harmony to serve and complete the dance. In a philosophical parallel, the dancer's understanding of the myth mirrors the way the soul perceives Intellect when shaping and governing the world. Just as the dancer enacts the myth through movement, the Soul enacts divine order by organizing reality.²¹⁵

The analogy becomes more elucidative when Plotinus compares the seeing activity of the stars in regards to the intelligibles and the illumination of the universe sprung from the contemplative act, as the sympathetic relation between the lyre and its strings when they naturally produce music. In this way he goes one step further to see how harmony and *sympatheia* are common in origin and thus relevant. Plotinus builds his argument by adding one element after the other, describing step by step the reason of the stars' effortless perfect motion. More importantly, he establishes the root of *sympatheia* in the intelligible realm, which, as we saw, only a perfect continuous non deliberative and undisturbed motion of the universe can ensure.

Scholars have debated whether Plotinus aligns more closely with the Pythagorean tradition, which conceives the cosmos as a manifestation of musical harmony, or whether he follows Posidonius, who employed the same analogy to articulate the doctrine of *sympatheia*—the interconnectedness of celestial bodies and the natural world.²¹⁶ While both interpretations hold merit, it makes more sense that Plotinus' ultimate allegiance lies with Plato, particularly in the *Timaeus*.²¹⁷ In *Timaeus* 40c-d, Plato uses the metaphor to explain the complicated

²¹⁵ E. Emilsson, "Plotinus on the arts", 260.

²¹⁶ See S. Gersh, "Plotinus on harmonia: musical metaphors and their uses in the *Ennead*" in J. Dillon and M. Dixsaut (eds.), *Agonistes: Essays in Honour of Denis O'Brien*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2005, 181-192.

²¹⁷ "To describe the evolutions in the dance of these same gods, their juxtapositions, the counter-revolutions of their circles relatively to one another, and their advances; to tell which of the gods come into line with one another at their conjunctions, and which in opposition, and in what order they pass in front of or behind one another, and at what periods of time

motions of the stars and their proportional relations. Plotinus, even if he had engaged with Posidonius' writings, was primarily concerned with establishing himself as the authentic interpreter of Platonic thought and with refuting Gnostic fallacies regarding the cosmic soul, the emergence of an imperfect world as an effect of Sophia's fall, and the concept of an evil Demiurge. Hence, dancing in harmony serves as a symbolic representation of the proportions and order governing the motions of the stars. Thus, the analogical quasi-space introduced in the previous chapters becomes perceptible through the interweaving of ordered movements by the finest animated bodies of their kind. This perspective is reinforced by the fact that Plotinus extends the metaphor in other parts of his work.

In the following lines, I will present all the cases where Plotinus uses the metaphor of dancing and argue that in all cases *sympatheia* and harmony, which originally stem from the soul's kinetic activity—give rise to ordered motion across all other levels of existence. The first example connected to the previous passage is from III.6 [26], “On the Impassibility of the Incorporeals”, where Plotinus states that the best life of a soul is that in perfect harmony.

Εἰ γὰρ συναρμωσθέντα μὲν κατὰ φύσιν τὰ μέρη τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀρετὴ ἐστὶ, μὴ συναρμωσθέντα δὲ κακία, ἐπακτὸν οὐδὲν ἂν οὐδὲ ἐτέρωθεν γίγνοιτο, ἀλλ' ἕκαστον ἥκοι ἂν οἷον ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν ἀρμωγὴν καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἥκοι ἐν τῇ ἀναρμωστίᾳ τοιοῦτον ὄν, οἷον καὶ χορεύται χορεύοντες καὶ συνάδοντες ἀλλήλοις, εἰ καὶ μὴ οἱ αὐτοὶ εἴσι, καὶ μόνος τις ἔδων τῶν ἄλλων μὴ ἔδόντων, καὶ ἕκαστου καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἔδοντας· οὐ γὰρ μόνον δεῖ συνάδειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕκαστον καλῶς τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔδοντα οἰκεία μουσικῇ· ὥστε κάκει ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρμονίαν εἶναι ἕκαστου μέρους τὸ αὐτῷ προσῆκον ποιοῦντος.

If it is so that when the parts of the soul are naturally joined to each other is virtue, while when they are not, this is vice, then, there would come nothing additional even from elsewhere, but each part would enter the synthesis as it is but would not enter the dissonance being such, just as the dancers who are

they are severally hidden from our sight and again reappearing, sent to men who cannot calculate panic fears and signs of things to come - to describe all this without visible models of these same would be labour spent in vain. So this much shall suffice on this head, and here let our account of the nature of the visible and generated gods come to an end.” Translation by F. M. Cornford, *Plato Timaeus*, 40 c-d.

dancing and singing together with each other, although they are not the same but one is singing while the others are not singing and each is singing on his own. In fact, not only they must sing in a quire, but each of them must sing his part according to his own musical skill. So, even there, in the case of the soul, there is harmony when each part is doing its own duty. (III.6 [26]2, 12-18)

The opening sections of the treatise explore whether virtue and vice should be regarded as passions of the soul. Drawing from Plato's dialogues, Plotinus begins by identifying the virtuous soul as one that exists in a state of harmony. In this view, virtue and vice are not merely affections of the soul, but rather functions of its cognitive power, which governs and maintains the soul's order. As in earlier discussions, Plotinus employs the metaphor of dance to illustrate the harmonious state of the soul and its various parts. Just as a well-coordinated performance depends on the harmonious singing of the dancer singers, the soul's faculties function individually yet in unity, contributing to the perfection of the whole. This order is not arbitrary, but follows the commands of a higher principle, reflecting the proportional and structured harmony of the cosmos itself. The use of the lyre and strings, found also in the *Phaedo*, when Simmias defines the soul as harmony (85e-86d), stresses also the power of the opposites in the making of order. The opposite theory in Plotinus will be discussed in the next session.

Ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ἡ σύστασις ὁμοίως τῷ παντὶ καὶ ζῶν ἐκάστῳ· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ οἷον ἐπιθεῖ κελεύσασα μένειν, ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὡς ὑπεκφεύγοντα εἰς τὴν τάξιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν δέδεται δεσμῷ δευτέρῳ· ἐκεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἔχει ὅπου φύγη. Οὕτε οὖν ἐντὸς δεῖ κατέχειν οὔτε ἔξωθεν πιέζουσιν εἰς τὸ εἶσω ὠθεῖν, ἀλλ' ὅπου ἡθέλησεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς αὐτῆς ἡ φύσις μένει. Ἐὰν δὲ πού τι αὐτῶν κατὰ φύσιν κινηθῇ, οἷς οὐκ ἔστι κατὰ φύσιν, ταῦτα πάσχει, αὐτὰ δὲ καλῶς φέρεται ὡς τοῦ ὅλου· τὰ δὲ φθείρεται οὐ δυνάμενα τὴν τοῦ ὅλου τάξιν φέρειν, οἷον εἰ χοροῦ μεγάλου ἐν τάξει φερομένου ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πορείᾳ αὐτοῦ χελώνη ληφθεῖσα πατοῖτο οὐ δυνηθεῖσα φυγεῖν τὴν τάξιν τοῦ χοροῦ· εἰ μέντοι μετ' ἐκείνης τάξειεν ἑαυτήν, οὐδὲν ἂν ὑπὸ τούτων οὐδ' αὐτὴ πάθοι.

The universe and the individual living beings do not have the same constitution. There, the soul, so to say, runs above it [the body of the universe, see *Phaedrus* 245cd] ordering [the

elements] to stay, while here, as if trying to escape to their own order, they are bound by a second binding. There, however, they don't have anywhere to escape.²¹⁸ There is no need for the soul to keep them within, nor to push them inside by external pressure, but they stay there where the nature wanted them to stay from the very beginning.²¹⁹ If some of them are moving naturally, then those for whom this is not natural, are affected, but the former are moving properly according to the movement of the whole.²²⁰ The others are destroyed not being capable to withstand the order of the whole, just as in the case of a big ensemble which is moving in an orderly manner, if a tortoise is caught in its way, it would be trumped down, not being able to withstand the order of the ensemble. However, if it were to adopt the same order, neither would it suffer from these (II.9 [33] 7, 29-40). In the cosmos as a whole, the soul flows over everything, arranging each thing in its right place naturally. In individual beings, however, the elements have a tendency to drift or separate, and move toward their natural place – fire moves upwards, earth downwards, the water has the tendency to flow away = so they require a stronger force (a second bond) to hold them together. The universe itself does not have this problem because everything within it already exists in its proper place—there is

²¹⁸ I agree with Lloyd Gerson, who, in his translation of the passage, makes it clear that this is about the elements, which are at their natural place in the universe but are bound by a second bond in the individual living beings, otherwise they would speed toward their natural place. Armstrong's translation is different.

²¹⁹ I consider ἐξ ἀρχῆς αὐτῆς as belonging together, meaning “from the very beginning” and ἡ φύσις as being the subject of ἠθέλησεν. Cf. Armstrong: “but its [that is, the soul's] nature remains where it wished to be from the beginning,” and Lloyd Gerson: “its [that is, the soul's] nature keeps them wherever it originally intended them to be.” However, the entire passage speaks here about the natural order of the physical universe, and not about the soul's nature. In III.8, nature is an intermediary quasi-hypostasis between the soul and the universe. Armstrong's translation is grammatically incorrect. The subject of μένει is the elements.

²²⁰ The meaning of this concise sentence is somewhat obscure. Cfr. Armstrong's translation: “But if any of the parts of the universe is moved according to its nature, the parts with whose nature the movement is not in accord suffer, but those which are moved go on well, as parts of the whole,” and Lloyd Gerson: “And if in some place one of its parts is subject to a natural motion, those parts for the which this motion is not natural will be affected, but qua parts of whole they are nevertheless moved properly.”

nowhere for things to escape. Plotinus depicts this difference in a metaphor of dancing: a large group of dancers moving in perfect rhythm. If everything is aligned with the dance, each dancer moves smoothly within the pattern. But if a slow-moving turtle suddenly finds itself in the middle of the dance floor, it is at risk of being trampled. The turtle is not actively attacked, but because it is out of sync with the movement, it cannot survive within the structured flow. If the turtle had adapted to the movement, it would have remained unharmed, just like beings that align themselves with the natural order of the universe.

As Kalligas points out,²²¹ the soul of the universe governs the sensible world by establishing a network of sympathetic connections and creating a system of natural laws. This psychic bond holds the universe together, regulating causal relationships and internal harmonies without requiring deliberation or effort. While the soul of the universe operates effortlessly, individual souls—which animate living beings—must align themselves with this preexisting order. For them, this results in a secondary bond, in addition to their direct connection with their respective bodies. Unlike the cosmic soul, which remains free from bodily limitation, individual souls are bound by both their embodiment and the universal structure that governs existence.

σώμασι μὲν γὰρ σώματα κωλύεται κοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις, τὰ δὲ ἀσώματα
σώμασιν οὐ διείργεται· οὐδ' ἀφέστηκε τοίνυν ἀλλήλων τόπω, ἑτερότητι δὲ καὶ
διαφορᾷ· ὅταν οὖν ἡ ἑτερότης μὴ παρῇ, ἀλλήλοις τὰ μὴ ἕτερα πάρεσθιν. ἐκεῖνο
μὲν οὖν μὴ ἔχον ἑτερότητα ἀεὶ πάρεσθιν, ἡμεῖς δ' ὅταν μὴ ἔχωμεν· κάκεῖνο μὲν
ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐφίεται, ὥστε περὶ ἡμᾶς εἶναι, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐκείνου, ὥστε ἡμεῖς περὶ
ἐκεῖνο. καὶ ἀεὶ μὲν περὶ αὐτό, οὐκ ἀεὶ δὲ εἰς αὐτὸ βλέπομεν, ἀλλ' οἷον χορὸς
ἐξάδων²²² ἐκαίπερ ἔχων περὶ τὸν κορυφαῖον τραπεῖη ἂν εἰς τὸ ἔξω τῆς θέας,

²²¹ See P. Kalligas, *The Enneads of Plotinus, Volume 1: A Commentary*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020, 388, comment 7-14.

²²² ἐξάδων is the unanimous reading of the manuscripts and is accepted by H-S¹. It means “singing out of tune,” which is perfectly at place here. However, it has caused headache for the erudites. Harder, in his letters to Henry and Schwyzer proposed the conjectures “ἐπάδων or ὑπάδων or προσάδων or ἐξάρχων.” M. Puelma (“Cicero als Platon-Übersetzer”, *Museum Helveticum*, 37.3, 137), suggested the emendation ἐξῆς ἀδων; this conjecture was accepted by

ὅταν δὲ ἐπιστρέψῃ, ἄδει τε καλῶς καὶ ὄντως περὶ αὐτὸν²²³ ἔχει, οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς
 ἀεὶ μὲν περὶ αὐτόν—καὶ ὅταν μὴ,²²⁴ λύσις ἡμῖν παντελὴς ἔσται καὶ οὐκέτι
 ἐσόμεθα—οὐκ ἀεὶ δὲ εἰς αὐτόν· ἀλλ’ ὅταν εἰς αὐτὸν ἴδωμεν, τότε ἡμῖν τέλος καὶ
 ἀνάπαυλα καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀπάδειν χορεύουσιν ὄντως περὶ αὐτὸν χορείαν ἔνθεον.

Bodies are hindered from communion with each other by bodies, but incorporeal things are not kept apart by bodies. Thus, they are not separated in space but in otherness and difference; when therefore there is no otherness, the things which are not other are present to each other. That one, therefore, since it has no otherness, is always present, while we are present when we have no otherness. That one does not desire us, so as to be around us, but we desire It, so that we are around It.²²⁵ We are always around It and do not always look to It but, just like an ensemble that is singing out of tune,²²⁶ although it is around the conductor, would have turned away from seeing him but when it turns back, it is singing beautifully and is pragmatically around him, in the same way we are always around Him²²⁷ – for if not, then we will be entirely dissolved and will

H-S² and is followed by Armstrong and Lloyd Gerson in their translations. Yet, it is not needed,

²²³ περὶ αὐτόν RJUCQ, H-S¹, H-S²: περὶ αὐτόν ABE.

²²⁴ καὶ ὅταν μὴ: Kirchhoff’s conjecture accepted by H-S¹, H-S²: καὶ ὅταν ἧ Enn.

²²⁵ See Plato, *Letter II*, 312e: “The matter stands thus: around the King of All are all things, and all are for his sake, and It is the cause of all the beautiful things. And the Second is around the second ones, while the Third is around the third ones.” In Plotinus’ interpretation of the letter, the King of All is the One, the Second is the intellect, and the Third, the soul. All things are around the One, while the Intellect (the Second) encompasses all the intellects (the second ones, and the soul (the Third) encompasses all the souls (the third ones)).

²²⁶ Our translation follows the text in the manuscripts. Cf. Armstrong, accepting Puelma’s and H-S²’s conjecture: “in the order of its singing the choir keeps round its conductor...”; Lloyd Gerson: “We are like a chorus that, singing all the while, though relating to the chorus leader...”

²²⁷ With H-S¹, and H-S², we are accepting the reading περὶ αὐτόν, “around Him,” over against the reading περὶ αὐτόν, “around our self.” Until this moment, in this passage, Plotinus

not exist anymore – but we are not always toward It. And when we look toward It, then we reach our goal and are at rest. Then we do not sing out of tune but are dancing around Him a divinely inspired dance. (VI.9 [9] 8, 30-46)

Plotinus in this part explains how the soul, while contemplating the One, experiences sameness and otherness, unity and separation. He emphasizes that our connection with the One is constant, but our attention to it is not. The One remains unchanged and always present, while we must actively turn toward It/Him to become harmonious and fulfilled. The choral dance illustrates this relationship: we are always in Its presence, but our state depends on whether we turn the gaze toward It. When we do, our existence becomes ordered, beautiful, and in harmony with divine reality.

Ἡ δὲ ἔξωθεν περὶ τοῦτον χορεύουσα ψυχὴ ἐπὶ αὐτὸν βλέπουσα καὶ τὸ εἶσω αὐτοῦ θεωμένη τὸν θεὸν δι' αὐτοῦ βλέπει.

The soul that dances round this [the intellect] outside, which looks to it, and contemplates its interior, sees God through it. (Translation Armstrong modified, I.8 [51] 2, 23-25)

Finally, in one of the last treatises of his life, Plotinus beautifully illustrates the soul's journey as a dance around the intellect. Through this movement, the soul connects with the intellect, and in turn, finds its way to the highest principle—the One. This imagery complements his earlier reflections on union with the higher hypostases, showing that true connection comes from moving in harmony with the divine.

The use of the dancing metaphor in these instances illustrates how the unity of the soul is expressed through its kinetic activity, whether in the cosmic or the intelligible realm. In the cosmic realm the stars in their finest bodies are being set in an ordered motion, which is in harmony with the cosmic soul's commands. Furthermore, the imagery of dancing bridges ethics with metaphysics. Individual souls, in their ascent toward a virtuous life, are also required to follow ordered motions, enabling their

has applied to the One neutral pronouns but apparently switches here to the masculine, to make the relation more personal.

union with the intellect and the One.²²⁸ In this respect, virtuous life acquires universality inseparable from metaphysical laws. Everyone who follows closely the order of the universe has access to a virtuous life. And this universality goes hand in hand with self-preservation: the entire universe and all its constituent parts must remain harmoniously aligned within this ordered motion, for any deviation from this cosmic rhythm threatens the very existence and stability of the parts themselves.

To conclude, although the word *sympatheia* does not appear in the passages using the imagery of dancing, all of them reveal that behind this “dancing” there is the soul’s activity; for *sympatheia* to manifest in the cosmic realm, it requires the kinetic activity of the soul, the order arising from its unity with the intellect and the One, and the capacity to perceive this harmonious structure. In the next subchapter, the perception of the stars will be explored in relation to the powers of the opposites.

The theory of opposites and the real magic of the stars

Having set in this analogy the intelligible origins of *sympatheia*, Plotinus continues to discuss the widespread view that the stars reply to magic spells, prayers, and occult practices:

Τὰς δὲ γοητείας πῶς; Ἡ τῇ συμπαθείᾳ, καὶ τῷ πεφυκέναι συμφωνίαν εἶναι ὁμοίων καὶ ἐναντίωσιν ἀνομοίων, καὶ τῇ τῶν δυνάμεων τῶν πολλῶν ποικιλία εἰς ἓν ζῶον συντελούντων. Καὶ γὰρ μηδενὸς μηχανωμένου ἄλλου πολλὰ ἔλκεται καὶ γοητεύεται· καὶ ἡ ἀληθινὴ μαγεία ἡ ἐν τῷ παντὶ φιλία καὶ τὸ νεῖκος αὐτῆς. Καὶ ὁ γόης ὁ πρῶτος καὶ φαρμακεὺς οὗτός ἐστιν, ὃν κατανοήσαντες ἄνθρωποι ἐπ’ ἀλλήλοις χρῶνται αὐτοῦ τοῖς φαρμάκοις καὶ τοῖς γοητεύμασι. Καὶ γάρ, ὅτι ἐρᾶν πεφύκασι καὶ τὰ ἐρᾶν ποιοῦντα ἔλκει πρὸς ἄλληλα, ἀλκῇ ἐρωτικῆς διὰ γοητείας τέχνης γεγένηται,

²²⁸ Scholars have debated how ethics fits into Plotinus' philosophy, especially in relation to his metaphysical focus. For a more detailed discussion regarding Plotinus' metaphysical theory as directly relevant to human ethical life, see L. Bene, “Ethics and metaphysics in Plotinus” in F. Karfík and E. Song (eds.), *Plato Revived. Essays on Ancient Platonism in Honour of Dominic J. O’Meara*, Berlin, Boston and New York, 2014, 141-161. The discussion is summarized on page 141, note 2.

προστιθέντων ἐπαφαῖς φύσεις ἄλλας τέχνης γεγένηται, προστιθέντων ἐπαφαῖς φύσεις ἄλλας ἄλλοις συναγωγοὺς καὶ ἐγκείμενον ἐχούσας ἔρωτα· καὶ συνάπτουσι δὲ ἄλλην ψυχὴν ἄλλῃ, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ φυτὰ διεστηκότα ἐξαψάμενοι πρὸς ἄλληλα. Καὶ τοῖς σχήμασι δὲ προσχρῶνται δυνάμεις ἔχουσι, καὶ αὐτοὺς σχηματίζοντες ὡδὶ ἐπάγουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς ἀποφῆτι δυνάμεις ἐν ἐνὶ ὄντες εἰς ἓν. Ἐπεὶ ἔξω γε τοῦ παντός εἴ τις ὑποθοῖτο τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐτ’ ἂν ἔλξειεν οὐτ’ ἂν καταγάγοι ἐπαγωγᾶς ἢ καταδέσμοις· ἀλλὰ νῦν, ὅτι μὴ οἶον ἀλλαχοῦ ἄγει, ἔχει ἄγειν εἰδὼς ὅπη τι ἐν τῷ ζῳῷ πρὸς ἄλλο ἄγεται. Πέφυκε δὲ καὶ ἐπαφᾶς τῷ μέλει καὶ τῇ τοιᾷδε ἡχῇ καὶ τῷ σχήματι τοῦ δρῶντος· ἔλκει γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα, οἶον τὰ ἐλεεινὰ σχήματα καὶ φθέγματα. [Ἄλλ’ ἡ ψυχὴ] Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ προαίρεσις οὐδ’ ὁ λόγος ὑπὸ μουσικῆς θέλγεται, ἀλλ’ ἡ ἄλογος ψυχὴ, καὶ οὐ θαυμάζεται ἡ γοητεία ἡ τοιαύτη· καίτοι φιλοῦσι κηλούμενοι, κἂν μὴ τοῦτο αἰτῶνται παρὰ τῶν τῇ μουσικῇ χρωμένων.

But how do magic spells work? By sympathia and by the fact that there is a natural concord of things that are alike and opposition of things that are different, and by the rich variety of the many powers which constitute one living being. In fact, many attractions and enchantments happen without anyone else’s tricks. The true magic is the “love and the strife”²²⁹ in the universe. And this is the first magician and sorcerer, whom men have recognized and whose drugs and spells they are using on each other. For, because love is natural to men and the things that cause love have a force of attraction to each other, there has come into existence a power of erotic art²³⁰ operating through magic, so that they apply by direct contact to different people different substances capable to draw them together and having in them the force to provoke love. Thus, they join one soul to another, as if they were intertwining distant plants. They also use figures that have power, and by assuming these figures themselves they are silently attracting powers upon themselves, being

²²⁹ Empedocles, Fragment B17, 19-20.

²³⁰ Together with Ficino, Creuzer, Cilento, and Armstrong, I accept here the variant of the manuscript E: “ἀλκή ἐρωτικῆς διὰ γοητείας τέχνης γεγένηται. The majority of the manuscripts gives ἀλκῇ ἐρωτικῆς διὰ γοητείας τέχνης γεγένηται”, accepted by H-S¹⁻², but then, the subject of γεγένηται is missing. The B manuscript gives here ἀλκῆς, which does not give any good meaning either. Creuzer has also suggested ὀλκή, and Kirchoff suggested ὀλκῆς.

in one [living being] and acting on one [and the same]. For if one were to place hypothetically such a person outside the universe, he would not attract or bring down [forces] by incantations or binding spells. But now, because he does not operate as if he were somewhere else, he can draw these forces, knowing by what way one thing is drawn to another in the living being. This is a natural force in the incantations²³¹ due to the melody, the particular intonation and the posture of the actor, for these things attract, as pitiable figures and voices attract. But what about the soul? In fact, neither the will nor the reason is enchanted by music but the irrational soul, and there is nothing wonderful about this kind of magic. Indeed, like to be beguiled, even if this is not exactly what they demand from the musicians. (IV.4 [28] 40,1-27: Armstrong's translation modified)

People do not need any spell apparatus for magic to happen. *Sympatheia* is found in the ruling principle of multiplicity in opposites and similar things. Plotinus here draws back to the Presocratics, and more specifically to Empedocles' theory (Frg. B17, 19-20),²³² but also to Hippocratic medicine. In both the Presocratic and the Hippocratic traditions, the relation of the parts to the whole and between parts is understood in the dynamic process of attraction and repulsion. However, for Plotinus it is the unity of the living being and the motions of the parts, which ensure order in multiplicity and harmony. *Sympatheia* emerges spontaneously, naturally. Yet, depending on the state under which the soul of the individual is considered healthy or not (irrational or rational), the enchantment could happen even from arts that do not aim at magic, such as music. This shows that this harmony coming from the higher levels of existence expressed in a form of *sympatheia* is not a deliberate action, but is based on the attraction of like for like and the repulsion of the opposites as well, causing every part of the living being, and especially the bigger ones, to perceive and react.

²³¹ Here I am following – with a slight change – Ficino's translation: *insita enim traducendi vis est in carminibus*.

²³² Plotinus has stated in many other instances that *philia* is similar to the unity with the One. "But the division which is in Intellect is not of things confused, though of things existing in unity, but this is what is called the *Philia* in the All, not the *Philia* in this All; for this is an imitation, since it is a loving of things which are separate; but the true *Philia* is all things being one and never separated. But [Empedocles] says that what is within this our sky is separated. [VI.7.14.18–23; trans. Armstrong]

But the question remains: does Plotinus explain further how these universal principles of opposites work in the sensible world? I think that although Plotinus never refers explicitly to the way of how *sympatheia* happens, the reference to the opposite powers in the aforementioned passage [IV.4 [28] 40] should be read in relation to another one, written earlier in Plotinus' life, which has perplexed many scholars, namely IV.9 [8] 3,1-9.

Καὶ μὴν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων φησὶν ὁ λόγος καὶ συμπαθεῖν ἀλλήλοις ἡμᾶς καὶ συναλγοῦντας ἐκ τοῦ ὁρᾶν καὶ διαχεομένους καὶ εἰς τὸ φιλεῖν ἐλκομένους κατὰ φύσιν· μήποτε γὰρ τὸ φιλεῖν διὰ τοῦτο. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐπωδαὶ καὶ ὅλως μαγεῖται συνάγουσι καὶ συμπαθεῖς πόρρωθεν ποιοῦσι, πάντως τοι διὰ ψυχῆς μιᾶς. Καὶ λόγος δὲ ἡρέμα λεχθεὶς διέθηκε τὸ πόρρω, καὶ κατακούειν πεποίηκε τὸ διεστῶς ἀμήχανον ὅσον τόπον· ἐξ ὧν ἐστὶ τὴν ἐνότητα μαθεῖν ἀπάντων τῆς ψυχῆς μιᾶς οὔσης.

And [my own] discourse says that it is coming from the opposites that we are sharing each other's affections,²³³ and feel their pain upon seeing, or are diffused [in joy]²³⁴ and are attracted to love according to nature. For isn't it so that it is because of this [because of the cosmic sympathy] that we love? And often, a word, which is uttered in a low voice, travels at a distance and makes itself heard in a wonderful way; from all the aforementioned things we can learn that the unity of all things is the result of the one soul.

Plotinus continues mentioning that seeing is the means by which this affection is being revealed and, as Emilsson points out, this aspect reports for the first time in history the

²³³ I understand this difficult sentence in the following way: cosmic *sympatheia* is in a way the work of the opposites. We are sharing both in the positive and the negative affections of the other, which would not be possible unless we also share the substrate in which the opposites are manifested. The examples of sharing in pain and in joy equally are proving this. And Plotinus to add that it is this sympathetic sharing in the opposites that is the foundation of love. See on this, III.2 [47] 16. 42-59.

²³⁴ See Plato, *Symposion*, 206f: εὐφραϊνόμενον διαχεῖται ... λυπούμενον συσπερᾶται., and Plotinus III. 6, 3.17: καὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς δὲ τὸ τῆς διαχύσεως τοῦτο...

preconception of empathy we find later in Hume.²³⁵ However, his interpretation follows Armstrong's translation namely "Indeed, the argument deriving from facts opposed [to the assumption of complete separation of souls] asserts that we do share each other's experiences [...]". I would like to suggest another reading, which reveals the cause of the shared affection and its origins: the power of the opposites and the unification of all souls.²³⁶

I claim that it is this text, and more generally, the treatise IV.9, which teaches us in the clearest way about the essence of *sympatheia*. It is apparent that *sympatheia* for Plotinus is founded on metaphysical principles and it cannot be sufficient to say that it is exclusively judgement that initiates this form of *sympatheia*.²³⁷ As I have tried to demonstrate earlier on the example of the occult sciences, it is the unity of the souls which enacts the perceptive powers of different ontological levels, i.e. the contact from distance between the stars and the human beings (see above: συμπαθεῖς πόρρωθεν ποιούσι, πάντως τοι διὰ ψυχῆς μιᾶς). Although the stars do not have perceptive organs, they do have the ability to communicate with human beings and respond to their prayers or spells; nevertheless this does not happen deliberately. However, apart from the soul's kinetics, which confirms the unity of the soul, there is the power of opposites, love and strife, attraction and repulsion, unity and separation, which one could say that function as perceptive powers for the stars in the absence of perceptive organs.

On the other hand, human beings, by virtue of their bodily organs and perceptive faculties, are capable of receiving and interpreting sensory responses, yet their true apprehension of reality is not confined to these faculties alone. This principle applies universally within *sympatheia*, especially within all the parts of the cosmic soul. For instance, even if one's physical vision were impaired—as was the case with Plotinus—one could still perceive and internalize the joy or suffering of another, such as his student Porphyry, even from a distance. This interpretation challenges Emilsson's assertion that Plotinus maintains two distinct

²³⁵ E. K. Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 42-3.

²³⁶ See also G. Stamatellos, *Plotinus and the Presocratics: A Philosophical Study of Presocratic Influences in Plotinus' Enneads*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2012, 51-53.

²³⁷ Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", 43.

conceptions of *sympatheia*; instead, it affirms that his understanding of interconnectedness transcends mere sensory perception, rooting it in a deeper ontological unity. Thus, cognition does not precede, but rather follows from this sympathetic attunement, which can be understood as a form of empathy grounded in the soul's intrinsic activity in the cosmos. It is for this reason, I think, that both in this passage and in *Ennead* IV.5, Plotinus asserts that the very cause of vision is *sympatheia* itself.²³⁸

Perception and the soul's activity

If the above assumption is correct, then, how would *sympatheia* be explained under the light of the theory of opposites? I think that this early treatise (IV.9 [9]) anticipates what Plotinus explains in IV.4 [28] 10, 6-26, where he discusses the life of the cosmic soul and its ruling principle. The universe is many and has parts and oppositions between the parts, which are not disorderly, because their governing rule stems from the primary principles.²³⁹ Cosmic *sympatheia* is in a way the work of the opposites; it is the effect of the unified opposites' power. We are sharing both in the positive and the negative affections of the other, which would not be possible, unless we also share the substrate in which the opposites are manifested. The examples of sharing in pain and joy equally prove this. Yet, Plotinus adds to that, that it is this sympathetic sharing in the opposites which is the foundation of love.

Ἡ δὲ διαίρεσις ἔγκειται οὐ συγκεχυμένων, καίτοι εἰς ἓν ὄντων, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἡ λεγομένη ἐν τῷ παντὶ φιλία τοῦτο, οὐχ ἡ ἐν τῷδε τῷ παντί· μιμεῖται γὰρ αὕτη ἐκ διεστηκότων οὐσα φίλη· ἡ δὲ ἀληθὴς πάντα ἐν εἶναι καὶ μήποτε διακριθῆναι. διακρίνεσθαι δε φησι τὸ ἐν τῷδε τῷ οὐρανῷ.

The division which is in it [the intellect] is that of things that are not confused, although they are united, but this is what is called [by Empedocles] the love in the universe, not in this universe. This one is an imitation of that one, collecting its love from separate entities. However, the true love consists in all

²³⁸ I will explain more about this, when I will discuss sight and *sympatheia*.

²³⁹ Here Plotinus echoes Galen's view on the usefulness of the parts in *De Usu Part*. My interpretation becomes stronger, since the next chapter starts with the analogy of medicine and the ruling of the living being with the governing principle of the cosmos. I will elaborate more on this direction a little bit further down.

things being one and never becoming separate. He says that what is in this sky [that is, in this corporeal world] is becoming separated. [VI.7 [38] 14, 18–23]

Love and the reference to the “account of opposites” hint at various theories of principles of metaphysics and cosmology. The influence of the Presocratics on Plotinus’ philosophy is well known; because the world is interconnected through sympathetic connections, a magician can manipulate one part of reality to affect another, drawing upon the organic unity of the cosmos. To illustrate this, Plotinus uses the analogy of a tense string (IV.4 [28] 41, 3)—when plucked at one end, it vibrates at the other, just as one string can resonate with another, tuning it to the same harmonic scale. Similarly, cosmic sympathy operates within the universal harmony, where even opposite parts are bound together. This idea parallels Heraclitus’ fragment 51, which describes the harmony of opposites through the metaphor of the bow and the lyre.²⁴⁰

Going back to the previous text: when a person sees another one feeling pain, the affection is shared through the eyes, not because of the eyes, but due to the different grades of the unification of the opposites: a) the living beings’ common origin, i.e. the intelligible substance of their souls opposed and akin to the ensouled matter of their bodies; b) the joint intelligible qualities in the whole soul attracting ensouled bodies; c) the immanent qualities, or enmattered *logoi*, by the intertwinement of the matter with intelligible *logoi*; and d) last, but not least, the perceptive ability of the ensouled bodies to grasp this whole process of different grades of affinities.

Moreover, for Plato, the opposites are employed in the *Phaedo* in a series of arguments to show the immortality of the soul. Important questions are raised, such as: In which respect do the forms have their opposites? Are there negative forms i.e. is there a form of evil? What does it mean for the relation between particulars and the forms to have a quality which presupposes always its opposite, i.e. Aristotle is fat - meaning that he participates also both in fatness and in slimness? In the *Republic* the answer will be defined in this way: “It is obvious that the same thing will never do or suffer opposites in the same respect in relation to the

²⁴⁰ For the influence of Empedocles in this passage see Stamatellos, *Plotinus and the Presocratics: A Philosophical Study of Presocratic Influences in Plotinus' Enneads*, 49-53.

same thing and at the same time.”²⁴¹

Aristotle would take the thread and resolve the problem: first of all, within his theory of hylomorphism, the forms are not considered outside the body; second, the opposites become accidents of one substance in *Metaphysics* and different predicates in the *Categories*; and third, particulars that are numerically one can change opposite qualities at different points of time.²⁴²

Μάλιστα δὲ ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸ ταὐτὸν καὶ ἐν ἀριθμῷ ὃν τῶν ἐναντίων εἶναι δεκτικόν· οἷον ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων οὐδενὸς ἂν ἔχοι τις προενεγκεῖν [ὅσα μὴ ἐστὶν οὐσία], ὃ ἐν ἀριθμῷ ὃν τῶν ἐναντίων δεκτικόν ἐστίν· οἷον τὸ χρῶμα, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν καὶ ταὐτὸν ἀριθμῷ, οὐκ ἔσται λευκὸν καὶ μέλαν, οὐδὲ ἡ αὐτὴ πρᾶξις καὶ μία τῷ ἀριθμῷ οὐκ ἔσται φαύλη καὶ σπουδαία, ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσα μὴ ἐστὶν οὐσία. ἡ δὲ γε οὐσία ἐν καὶ ταὐτὸν ἀριθμῷ ὃν δεκτικὸν τῶν ἐναντίων ἐστίν· οἷον ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος, εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ὢν, ὅτε μὲν λευκὸς ὅτε δὲ μέλας γίγνεται, καὶ θερμὸς καὶ ψυχρὸς, καὶ φαῦλος καὶ σπουδαῖος.

It seems most distinctive of substance that what is numerically one and the same is able to receive contraries. In no other case could one bring forward anything, numerically one, which is able to receive contraries. For example, a colour which is numerically one and the same will not be black and white, nor will numerically one and the same action be bad and good ; and similarly with everything else that is not substance. A substance, however, numerically one and the same, is able to receive contraries. For example, an individual man-one and the same-becomes pale at one time and dark at another, and hot and cold, and bad and good.²⁴³

Aristotle’s immanent form is considered to receive opposite qualities maintaining a kind of unity between them, while keeping their differences. Aristotle was against Plato’s theory of

²⁴¹ Plato, *Republic*, 436b.

²⁴² The first formulation of the law of contradiction: cf. *Phaedo* 102e; *Theaetetus* 188a. Aristotle followed Plato; see *Physics*, 188a 18-27: he refers to the doxographical tradition of philosophers who used the theory of opposites in the creation of the physical world.

²⁴³ *Categories* V, 4a 10-21: translation J. L. Ackrill, *Aristotle, Categories and De Interpretatione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 11.

forms and tried to solve the main difficulties of the Platonic theory by incorporating the forms in the body. Plotinus will not accept this solution, but will introduce the immanent form as the image of the real, intelligible form.

For Plotinus, substance is only the intelligible form, while the immanent form is a replica of the real form, and that is why it is perceived as quality.²⁴⁴ Thus, the embodied Socrates is not a species, as Aristotle would claim, but a quality of the species, namely of the partial soul. It is obvious that Plotinus intends to employ Aristotelian and Platonic means to refute both Aristotle and the Stoics, because he is against any kind of reduction of substance to materialism. His aim is to save the Platonic theory of forms and bridge the ontological value of the forms in the *Timaeus* with the theory of qualities in the *Theaetetus* and the theory of forms presented in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*.

Thus, in order to show the relation of forms to particulars, substance for him should not have any immediate contact with matter, but will be mediated through different levels of *logoi*, which are considered as the intelligible qualities of a being. These *logoi* reside within the entire soul, existing in potentiality, until they are activated by the partial souls, the cosmic soul and the individual souls. This becomes clear in *Ennead* V.7; when the body of the cosmos is attracted by the image of the intellect, it starts interweaving the *logoi* with matter, and as a result we end up with two kinds of qualities – the intelligibles and the immanent.

Now, in terms of the phenomenon of *sympatheia*, the Stoics had claimed that, because living beings have the same material substance (the *pneuma* penetrating the entire universe), they have affinity.²⁴⁵ For Plotinus, a living being in the sublunary realm becomes a quality of the real person (form of Socrates), in the sense that it can accommodate affections, such as pain and joy, in different times. His real form, though, cannot be affected and that is why the affinity of the living beings rests on the common intelligible substance, and not on the

²⁴⁴ G. Karamanolis, “Plotinus on quality and immanent form”, in R. Chiaradonna and F. Trabattini (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009, 79.

²⁴⁵ A. A. Long, “Stoicism in the philosophical tradition: Spinoza, Lipsius, Butler”, in B. Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 365-392.

material body.

Plotinus' theory of perception and the embodied souls

If *sympatheia* comes from the unity of souls, and is manifested in embodied souls, then we must explore how this relation unfolds.. How do they perceive? So far, we have taken a priori that the soul's activity is somehow involved in perceiving the common affections. However, Plotinus has a very articulated theory where he explicitly refutes Aristotle's theory of perception. Aristotle's theory of *energeia* in perception rests on the idea that if the subject of the act must have a potency to act, then the object must have a corresponding potency to be acted upon (*Phys.* 202a 13 ff.). He describes perception as a special kind of affection (*pathos*) that occurs when the sense organ receives an imprint of an external object (*De Anima* 416b 32–417b 16). The senses respond to external stimuli, and understanding is achieved by updating the innate state of potentiality.

In opposition, Plotinus completely rejects this framework, arguing that perception does not involve the soul being affected or altered in any way. In *Enn.* II.5 [25] (*On What Is Potentially and What Is Actually*), Plotinus denies the existence of passive potency, arguing that true potency belongs only to active powers—those capable of producing rather than receiving change. This rejection fundamentally alters the meaning of *energeia* in his system: whereas Aristotle sees *energeia* as the actualization of a potential state, Plotinus understands it as a self-originated activity that does not depend on external causes. In *Enn.* III.6 [26] 2, 34 sqq, he gives the example of the most prominent sense, of sight, claiming that sight does not acquire new information, but activates what is already “there”—hence why perception is an *energeia* rather than a *pathos*. As we will see in the next chapter, this idea originates in Plotinus' account of intellectual vision: Just as the intellect perceives the Forms by being directly united with them, so too does the soul perceive through an act of recognition rather than passive reception (*Enn.* V.3 [49] 8). Plotinus is again faithful to Plato's teachings (*Phaedo* and the soul's recollection activity). In this way, perception mirrors the higher activity of the Intellect, enhancing the idea that the soul remains unaffected while engaged in sensory or intellectual activity.

The intellectual activity could explain rationally the “magic” of the constellations in astrology:

Λόγω δὲ φερομένων καὶ διαφορῶν τῶν σχέσεων τοῦ ζώου γινομένων, εἴτα καὶ ἐνταῦθα τούτων τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν συμπαθῶν πρὸς τὰ ἐκεῖ γινομένων, εὐλογον ζητεῖν, πότερα συνέπεσθαι φατέον ταῦτα συμφωνοῦντα ἐκείνοις, ἢ τὰ σχήματα τὰς δυνάμεις τῶν ποιουμένων ἔχειν, καὶ τὰ σχήματα ἀπλῶς ἢ τὰ τούτων. Οὐ γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸς σχηματισμὸς ταῦτοῦ ἐπ' ἄλλου καὶ αὖ ἄλλων τὴν αὐτὴν σημασίαν ἢ ποιήσιν ἐργάζεται· ἐπεὶ καὶ καθ' αὐτὸν ἕκαστος διάφορον ἔχειν τὴν φύσιν δοκεῖ. Ἡ ὀρθῶς ἔχει λέγειν τὴν τούτων σχημάτισιν ταδὶ καὶ τοιάνδε διάθεσιν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ ἄλλων τὴν αὐτὴν οὔσαν ἐν σχηματισμῷ ἄλλην; Ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦτο, οὐκέτι τοῖς σχήμασιν, ἀλλ' αὐτοῖς τοῖς σχηματιζομένοις δώσομεν.

But since the heavenly bodies move according to reason and their relationships within the [universal] living being vary, and then here below these events occur in our own sphere in sympathy with those above, it is reasonable to enquire whether we should assert that these earthly occurrences follow on those above by correspondence, or whether the constellations have the powers which bring about what is done, and whether it is simply the constellations, or the constellations made by particular heavenly bodies. For the same arrangement of the same body in relation to another body and then again to others does not produce the same signification or action: since even by itself each appears to have a different nature. Or is it right to say that the constellation of these particular heavenly bodies is of a particular kind and this specific disposition, but the constellation of other heavenly bodies which is the same in arrangement is another? But if this is so, we shall give the power no more to the constellations but to the actual stars which are arranged in constellations. [IV.4 [28] 34, 9-21, Armstrong's translation slightly modified]

Plotinus turns against the view that constellations are able to deliberately predict the future, or that through observing them astrologers have the ability to foretell the forthcoming events. It is true that planets are the gods who do not have the same perceptive means as human beings. However, because the cause (the universe) is ontologically primary to the effect (the particular), the universe and the stars are able to perceive the higher forms, while contemplating the intellect. During this spontaneous process, they diffuse the intelligible qualities in other reasons and attract the bodies creating the enmattered forms. This attraction causes the passive affection of the latter and active reaction of the first. The grasped affection is described in different cognitive steps: First of all, the cosmic soul coordinates everything,

namely it knows everything beforehand; that is why divination is feasible. Second, through the intelligible forming principles people are able to anticipate the future through images which become judgements. Third, this kind of “magic” could be recognized as a natural process, evident everywhere in nature, i.e. the growth of the plants and animals and personal traits and environment of people.

But how does this affinity, starting from the realm of intellect, end up in the sensible realm? And what is the role of the soul’s kinetics in this respect? Filip Karfik has suggested an upside-down exegesis of the body-soul relation, and I think this view sheds light on what I am trying to explain.²⁴⁶ Karfik suggests that Plotinus in his treatises VI.4 [22] and VI.5 [23] adopts a rather different view from the one he has in IV.4 [28].⁸ The partial souls do not descend, but rather the material bodies extend towards the intelligible world, imitate the motion of the intelligible and when they cannot imitate anymore in their motion, they start moving around themselves and create replicas of forms -qualities according to Plotinus- everywhere in the body of the cosmos.

This is exactly how immanent forms come about and create the ensouled body and its extension. Moreover, we must keep in mind that the whole soul does not send “down” to the universe any reasons (*logoi*). The *logoi* are being formed because of the kinetics of the soul that attract matter to the intelligible form. After intertwining proportionally with the bodies, the *logoi* become ensouled bodies. Karfik claims that this proportion of the *logoi* is explained in additions of enmattered qualities: the more additions we have, the less intelligible the body is, i.e. human beings have additional sense organs and planets do not, for both of them to be able to perceive the other ensouled bodies. Thus, seeing through the bodily organs is the outcome of the last perceptive addition to the ensouled body to be able to see the embodied replica of the intelligible *logoi*.

Influence from medicine: opposite powers and *sympatheia*

Let us now see how experience and reason are used in medical texts to understand the complex relationship of the parts to the whole and how this approach influenced Plotinus in

²⁴⁶ F. Karfik, “The body-soul relation upside down (Plotinus, enn. IV.8 and VI.4-5)“, in W. Mesch, M. Städtler and C. Thein (eds.), *Einheit und Vielheit metaphysischen Denkens: Festschrift für Thomas Leinkauf*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2022, 47-54.

his views on *sympatheia*. Plotinus goes back to the *Timaeus* and the connection of the living being to its parts to explain the involvement of planets in occult phenomena. This connection is based on the description of the world as a living organism:

Συμπαθὲς δὴ πᾶν τοῦτο τὸ ἓν, καὶ ὡς ζῶον ἓν, καὶ τὸ πόρρω δὴ ἐγγύς, ὥσπερ ἐφ' ἐνὸς τῶν καθέκαστα ὄνυξ καὶ κέρασ καὶ δάκτυλος καὶ ἄλλο τι τῶν οὐκ ἐφεξῆς· ἀλλὰ διαλείποντος τοῦ μεταξὺ καὶ παθόντος οὐδὲν ἔπαθε τὸ οὐκ ἐγγύς. Οὐ γὰρ ἐφεξῆς τῶν ὁμοίων κειμένων, διειλημμένων δὲ ἑτέροις μεταξύ, τῇ δὲ ὁμοιότητι συμπασχόντων, καὶ εἰς τὸ πόρρω ἀφικνεῖσθαι ἀνάγκη τὸ παρὰ τοῦ μὴ παρακειμένου δρώμενον· ζῶου τε ὄντος καὶ εἰς ἓν τελούντος οὐδὲν οὕτω πόρρω τόπῳ, ὡς μὴ ἐγγύς εἶναι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ζῶου πρὸς τὸ συμπαθεῖν φύσει. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ὁμοιότητα πρὸς τὸ ποιοῦν ἔχον πεῖσιν ἔχει οὐκ ἀλλοτρίαν, ἀνομοίου δὲ ὄντος τοῦ ποιοῦντος ἀλλότριον τὸ πάθημα καὶ οὐ προσηγὲς τὸ πάσχον ἴσχει. Βλαβερὰν δὲ ποίησιν ἄλλου πρὸς ἄλλου ἐνὸς ὄντος ζῶου οὐ δεῖ τεθναυμακέναι· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐνεργείαις ταῖς ἡμετέραις βλάπτει ἂν ἄλλο πρὸς ἄλλου μέρος, ἐπεὶ καὶ χολὴ καὶ ὁ θυμὸς ἄλλο, ὡς δοκεῖ, πιέζει καὶ κεντεῖ. Καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῷ παντὶ ἔστι τι θυμῷ καὶ χολῇ ἀνάλογον καὶ ἄλλο ἄλλῳ· καὶ ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς δὲ ἐμπόδιον ἔσται ἄλλο ἄλλῳ, ὥστε καὶ ἀφαιρᾶναι. Τοῦτο δὲ οὐ μόνον ἐν ζῶον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλὰ ὄν ὁράται· ὥστε καθόσον μὲν ἓν, ἕκαστον τῷ ὅλῳ σφύζεται, καὶ καθόσον δὲ καὶ πολλά, πρὸς ἄλληλα συνιόντα πολλαχῇ τῷ διαφόρῳ ἔβλαψε· καὶ πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἄλλο ἕτερον ἔβλαψε, καὶ δὴ καὶ τροφὴν ἐποίησατο συγγενὲς ἅμα καὶ διάφορον ὑπάρχον· καὶ σπεῦδον ἕκαστον ἑαυτῷ κατὰ φύσιν, ὅσον τε οἰκεῖον τοῦ ἑτέρου, λαμβάνει εἰς αὐτό, καὶ ὅσον ἀλλότριον ἐγίνετο, ἀφανίζει εὐνοίᾳ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ. Ἔργον τε τὸ αὐτοῦ ποιοῦν ἕκαστον τὸ μὲν δυνηθὲν ἀπολαῦσαι τι τῶν αὐτοῦ ἔργων ὠφέλησεν, ὃ δ' ἀδύνατον ἦν ὑπομεῖναι τὴν ὁρμὴν τοῦ ἔργου, ἠφάνισεν ἢ ἔβλαψεν, ὥσπερ ὅσα ἀνανθεῖν ἂν παριόντος πυρός, ἢ ζῶα ἐλάττω ὑπὸ μειζόνων δρόμου παρασυρεῖν ἢ καὶ που πατηθεῖν.

All this one has shared affections (*sympatheia*) also as one living being, and what is distant is near, just as, in one individual, the nail, or the horn, or the finger, or something else that is not contiguous: the intermediate part is left out and is not affected, but that which is not near is affected. *For the like parts are not situated next to each other, but are separated by others between, but are affected together because of their likeness*, and it is necessary that the effect of what is done by a part

not situated beside it reaches the distant part; and since it is a living being and belongs together, nothing is so distant in space that it is not close enough so that the nature of the one living being may have common affection. Therefore, that part which has a likeness to that which is acting has an affection which is not alien to it, but if that which is acting is unlike, that which is affected has an experience which is alien and unpleasant. But one should not be surprised that the action of one part of the one living being on another may be harmful. In fact, in ourselves too in our activities one part can harm another, since the bile and the emotion, so it seems, oppress and sting another part. And there is certainly something in the universe, which corresponds to the emotion and the bile, and other things which correspond to others; and in the plants one part gets in the way of another, so as even to make it wither. This is visibly not only one living being, but many; so that in so far as it is one, each part is preserved by the whole, but in so far as it is many, as the many encounter each other they often injure each other because they are different; and one injures another to supply its own need, and even makes another its own food precisely because it is both akin to it and different; and each one, naturally striving to do the best for itself, takes to itself that part of the other which is akin to it, and makes away with all that is alien to itself because of its self-love. Each as it does its own work benefits that which can profit in any way from its workings but makes away with or injures that which cannot endure the impact of its activity, like the things which are withered when fire comes near them, or the smaller animals which are swept aside or even trampled underfoot by the rush of larger ones. (IV.4 [28]. 32, 13-44: Armstrong's translation somewhat revised)

Having excluded in the preceding section that the four elements or the deliberate rational action of the stars might be the cause of the fact that astrological speculation may foretell the future, Plotinus explains this phenomenon by the organic unity of the cosmos, animated by one single soul, in which every part of the visible world's body participate, some having part only in this soul, and some also having part in another, rational soul.²⁴⁷ The gist of this argument is that the rational faculty of human beings enters at the conception of the embryo a body animated by the cosmic soul, which provides the vegetative and emotive faculties animating the body and, thus, directly belong to the soul of the universe and not to the soul of

²⁴⁷ See P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEAΔΕΣ*, 111.

the individual. Particular living beings are part of the cosmos (cosmic soul and cosmic body) and not in all respects similar, but this does not hinder them from being connected. On the contrary, the fact that the rational faculty, which is the particular soul, remains in the intelligible realm, while the other is “attached” to the enmattered part, ensures the connection with the wholeness of the entire living being. Thus, being a part in a whole as a whole and acquiring sameness and otherness within it explains *sympatheia*, in so far as there is correspondence of the part affected with the part which affects.²⁴⁸ The correspondence of the two parts is initially defined by the intelligible qualities (*logoi*) of each living creature. The presence of opposites in all aspects and the perceptive power of the *logoi* manifest the unity of the soul in the material realm.

It seems that here Plotinus defines the main characteristics of *sympatheia*: a) sameness and otherness in between the parts, although the like parts are not neighbors b) correspondence and appropriateness of the part affected with the part which affects, together with the power of perception which aims to serve the best as possible for the whole (providence).²⁴⁹ The value of the passage unfolds the idea of attraction of the same qualities (likeness) and repulsion of the opposites (unlikeness), reminding us of the process of the balance of organisms in medical texts.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ *Timaeus*, 30d3-31a1.

²⁴⁹ Kalligas gives three characteristics based on which *sympatheia* emerges: a) the distance of the two phenomena, which show that *sympatheia* does not happen because of the transmission of qualities, b) any body in between would not be affected, because it does not enable the transmission of the affection-so *sympatheia* is not a mechanical process and c) the main factor for this sympathetic relation is the sameness between the two extremes. See also IV.3 [27] 11, 6-8. These factors are repeated in the theory of seeing as we will see later in IV.5.

²⁵⁰ The language here is medical, and the analogies from medicine show Galen’s influence on Plotinus. P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEADEΣ*, 112, mentions that the reference to bile is part of Galen’s *De usu part.* V.4, p. 259, 17-26: “ἔπεσθαι, τὰ χαλεπώτατα τῶν κατὰ τὴν γαστέρα παθημάτων. οὐχ οὐκ σμικρὸν οὐδὲ τὸ τυχόν ἢ φύσις εἰς ὑγίαν τοῖς ἑξοῖς ἐκ τῆς ἐπικαίρου καταφύσεως τοῦ χοληδόχου πόρου προϋνοήσατο. τί δὴ οὖν οὐκ εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν ἐνέφυσεν αὐτοῦ «τινα μοῖραν, οὐκ ὀλίγα καὶ αὐτὴν ἀποτίκτουσαν τὰ τοιαῦτα περιττώματα;

More specifically, even the parts that seem to be dysfunctional, such as the bile, serve the advantage of the whole creature: its balance. Plotinus seems to quote part of Galen's work, where Nature is praised for its wisdom of using these parts that seem to be harmful or not perfect for the best of the whole organism.

On the contrary she judges the proper mean in every case with perfect accuracy and always produces the good far in excess of the evil [...] Different materials admit of different arrangements; for certainly we are not made of the same substance as the stars. We should not, then, claim their invulnerability or censure Nature if among thousands of good and useful things we find some little fault. [Only] if we show first that this little fault could be avoided without disturbing and confusing much that has been well arranged, are we then in a position to blame Nature and accuse her of negligence. If the yellow bile caused no great pain in flowing into the stomach, Nature would be wrong to neglect the advantage which this juice would provide for the body by cleaning out daily the viscous residue. But if this advantage was so small that we could adequately compensate for its loss by external aid, while the ills resulting from our use of it were so great that the work of the stomach would be completely destroyed, I do not see how there could be anyone more ungrateful for Nature's provident care of himself or more envious of her just praises than the person who, when faced with the necessity of singing them, accuses her instead.²⁵¹

In this passage from the *De usu partium*, Galen praises Nature's wisdom and aims, which are designed for the good. There is proper balance in every case with perfect precision, ensuring that benefits far outweigh any faults. Different materials allow for different levels of perfection—for instance, humans are not made of the same substance as the stars, so we should not expect their invulnerability, or blame Nature for minor imperfections. Criticism of Nature is only justified if it can be proven that a flaw could be avoided without disrupting the larger harmonious order. For example, yellow bile, despite causing discomfort, serves a crucial cleansing function for the body. If its negative effects were far greater than its benefits, then one might reasonably question Nature's design. However, those who ignore the

ταύτη καὶ μᾶλλον αὐτῆς οἶμαί σε θαυμάσειν τὴν πρόνοιαν”.

²⁵¹ Galen, *De usu partium*, V 259-261.

broadest purpose of such arrangements and focus only on minor inconveniences fail to appreciate Nature's wisdom and providence.

Behind this praise and defense of Nature, Galen appeals to the authority of Hippocrates and his aphorism on cosmic *sympatheia*. "Taken as a whole, all the parts in sympathy, but taken severally, the parts in each part cooperate for its effect."²⁵² Galen interprets the second part of the aphorism as an explanation of the sympathy between the parts: the various parts cooperate with each other to achieve the effect for which they exist and for maintaining the harmonious order. Thus, anyone who out of ignorance accuses Nature cannot understand the laws that order the cosmic realm. And in another passage *sympatheia* is the cause of the parts coordination.

All the parts of the body are in sympathy with one another, that is to say, all cooperate in producing one effect. The large parts, main divisions of the whole animal, such as the hands, feet, eyes, and tongue, were formed for the sake of the actions of the animal as a whole and all cooperate in performing them. But the smaller parts, the components of the parts I have mentioned, have reference to the work of the whole instrument. The eye, for example, is the instrument of sight, composed of many parts which all cooperate in one work, vision; it has some parts by means of which we see, others without which sight would be impossible, others for the sake of better vision, and still others to protect all these.²⁵³

This passage from Galen's *De usu partium* echoes the main elements of Plotinus IV.4 [28], 32 regarding the *telos* of the parts in the whole and the role of the opposites in relation to shared affection and similarity. Galen turns against Aristotle and Plato, because they did not examine thoroughly the cosmic wisdom. In this part of Galen's work, we can find why Plotinus uses the example of nails and fingers in a treatise talking about *sympatheia*, and why the opposition between far and near does not play any role in the shared affection. It is the aim of the whole which defines the parts, not their position. As Galen correctly pointed out, it is the action which derives from the substance and sometimes the attributes (in the case of the

²⁵² Galen, *De usu partium*, 1.17; translation by M. Talladze May, *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, 79.

²⁵³ Galen, *De usu partium*, 1.8, 1.13.7-20 H, 2.18-19 K.

eyes, the colors) which define the usefulness of the parts. The large instruments like the hands and feet exist in order to enable particular acts (like the act of grasping for the hands), while the various parts of each instrument cooperate to enable the performance of these acts. Galen shows that the fingernails cannot be understood on their own, as Plato and Aristotle do, when they compare them with the claws of the animals, but should be understood in connection with the flesh, as flesh and fingernails through their opposition – the one is smooth and the other hard – in combination enable humans to grasp different kinds of things. On its own, neither the flesh, which is smooth, nor the fingernails, which are hard, would be able to perform the act of grasping, but their cooperation ensures the ability of human beings to grasp. The same method is also applied to the fingers and the thumb. The construction of the parts is due to the opposition between the fingers and the thumb, which is set farthest from the others. For, surely, to this construction is due also the opposition of the thumb to the other fingers, since if the hand were merely divided into fingers and the thumb were not set farthest from the others, it would not be opposable to them.

From all the aforementioned cases and passages, we can conclude that Plotinus has employed in an exceptional manner the wisdom of different schools to argue for the universal power of *sympatheia*.²⁵⁴ The universe is a living creature, where all its parts are wholes and serve with their own activity the purpose of the whole creature. *Sympatheia* makes apparent the usefulness of the parts in the whole and the usefulness of the parts in the whole is defined by two criteria: the substance and the activity of the parts as a whole both in the universe and the organism. In the next chapter I will examine how these criteria can be used to understand the connection between sight and *sympatheia*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how Plotinus' theory of *sympatheia*, deeply rooted in Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, offers a profound explanation for the interconnectedness of the cosmos, the soul's kinetic activity, and the phenomena of magic and divination. By

²⁵⁴ It is worthy to say at this point that for Aristotle *sympatheia* is only met in his biological works and then other synonyms like *philia* and *homonoia* have been found elsewhere in the *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. And this is because for Aristotle the power of opposites is expressed in the bodily substrate, whether the body is seen as an organism, or as the political body, namely the city.

refuting Gnostic cosmology, which misconstrues the structure of the universe as an oppressive mechanism under the rule of a malevolent Demiurge, Plotinus reaffirms the goodness, order, and intelligibility of the cosmos. His defense of the cosmic soul as an integral part of a higher metaphysical unity reveals a system in which harmony, proportion, and causality are not accidental but the natural expressions of the One's emanation into all levels of existence.

A key argument that emerged was the role of the soul's kinetic activity in shaping cosmic order. The movement of the heavenly bodies is not an arbitrary process, but a divinely ordered dance, reflecting the higher harmony of the intellect and the One. The dance metaphor, which Plotinus borrows from Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, illustrates how the cosmos is animated by an intelligent principle, ensuring that each celestial body moves effortlessly, harmoniously, and without deviation. This eternal motion, self-contained and self-sustained, exemplifies a perfect, non-deliberative order, where all parts of the cosmos are attuned to the unity of the whole. Furthermore, Plotinus extends the idea of *sympatheia* beyond cosmic harmony to the moral and intellectual ascent of the soul. Just as the planets align with the movement of the cosmic soul, individual souls must align themselves with the intellect to achieve union with the One. This connection between ethics and metaphysics reveals a fundamental universality in Plotinus' system: the order of the universe is mirrored in the virtuous life of the soul, and only through participation in this divine order can a soul achieve its highest potential.

Moreover, the medical analogy employed by Plotinus reinforces the organic nature of cosmic unity. Just as in Hippocratic and Galenic medicine, where the balance of opposite forces within the body ensures health, the interplay of opposites in the cosmos guarantees its stability and harmony. Magic and divination, in this light, are misinterpretations of this natural order—they arise when individuals fail to grasp that the real cause of cosmic influence lies in the soul's unity with higher principles, rather than in external manipulations.

Lastly, Plotinus' discussion on perception and the soul's activity provides a crucial framework for understanding the relationship between the physical and intelligible realms. Unlike Aristotle, who viewed perception as a passive reception of external forms, Plotinus insists that perception is an active *energeia*, a self-originated act of recognition rather than passive reception. This insight leads to a radical rethinking of *sympatheia*: it is not merely a mechanical transmission of forces but an ontological principle that binds the soul, the

cosmos, and the divine into an inseparable unity. Thus, *sympatheia* is far more than an explanatory model for astrological influences—it is the very mechanism by which the cosmos operates, uniting all beings in a web of intelligible relations. The universe, structured by the One, remains an organic whole, where each part participates in the life of the whole. It is only by understanding and aligning with this cosmic order that souls can fully realize their divine potential. In the next chapter, I will further explore the implications of *sympatheia* by examining the perceptive nature of the stars in relation to the theory of opposites, deepening our understanding of how perception and cognition unfold within the cosmic framework.

Chapter 4: Plotinus and Galen: sight and *sympatheia*

Introduction

Plotinus, having clarified that divination is not because of the stars' deliberation and decision, but due to *sympatheia*, which is based on the stars' perceptive nature and the unity of all the souls, continues along the same line by discussing *sympatheia* and the perceptive nature of human beings, focusing especially on sight. Speaking of this process schematically, it seems that, since Plotinus explained how the higher and finer bodies are perceptive of all things, he wishes to reinforce his argument about *sympatheia* by revealing the relation of sight and unity at the microcosmic level.

Two questions that are conceptually mapping my chapter are how Plotinus connects his theory of *sympatheia* with his theory of sight and what elements he draws from other theories of sight. So far, Plotinus' debate with other philosophers has been examined by other scholars, but there does not yet exist any thorough study that focuses on the influence and reason for which Plotinus intertwines *sympatheia* with immediate seeing. This is the task of this chapter, with its main focus on Galen, Plotinus, and Plato. At the end of the chapter, I show how Plotinus' theory of seeing, *sympatheia*, and the soul is analogical to and founded in the theory of seeing, unity, and Intellect and propose that, again, this theory is derived from Plotinus' interpretation of the *Timaeus* and *Theaetetus*.

Plotinus: *sympatheia* is the cause of sight

In treatise, IV.5 [29], Plotinus' major concern is to discuss the cause behind seeing and hearing, the two senses of grasping something from distance. Both senses require some kind of contact between the two extremes of perception, the subject and the object. How does this transmission happen? Do we need a medium? And if we need it, then, what kind of medium is this? If not, how can we explain the transmission of the sense stimuli to the receptor?

The treatise is composed in a dialogic manner. It is unclear whether Plotinus is asking the question and makes the counterarguments himself, or he is challenged by an interlocutor. Be this as it may, the composition seems to reflect a classroom setting. There is a precious testimony of Porphyry about precisely the creation of a part of the

“On questions about the soul,” the last part of which is the present treatise. In the *Life of Plotinus* he writes:

Τριῶν γοῦν ἡμερῶν ἐμοῦ Πορφυρίου ἐρωτήσαντος, πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ σώματι, παρέτεινεν ἀποδεικνύς, ὥστε καὶ Θαυμασίου τινὸς τοῦνομα ἐπεισελθόντος τοὺς καθόλου λόγους πράττοντος καὶ εἰς βιβλία ἀκοῦσαι αὐτοῦ λέγοντος θέλειν, Πορφυρίου δὲ ἀποκρινομένου καὶ ἐρωτῶντος μὴ ἀνασχέσθαι, ὁ δὲ ἔφη· «ἀλλὰ ἂν μὴ Πορφυρίου ἐρωτῶντος λύσωμεν τὰς ἀπορίας, εἰπεῖν τι καθάπαξ εἰς τὸ βιβλίον οὐ δυνησόμεθα».

For three days, I, Porphyry, was interrogating him about the question how the soul is united to the body, and he was so patiently demonstrating this that, to a man called Thamasius who was writing general treatises and said that he wanted Plotinus to note down his lectures in books but that he could not accept that Porphyry would respond or ask questions, he replied: “Yet, if Porphyry does not ask questions so that we may solve the problems, there would be nothing that I could say to be noted down in that book.” (*Vita Plotini* 13, 10-17).

Plotinus’ treatises are generally organized around such a question-and-answer pattern, but this is especially relevant for the entire grand treatise “On the questions about the soul” (IV.3-5). Thus, the dialogic form allows for separating the roles of the teacher (Plotinus himself) and of his interlocutor (perhaps Porphyry here as well). In this sigla, **Π/P** indicates Πλωτῖνος/“Plotinus,” and **Σ/I**, Συνομιλητής/“Interlocutor.”

The view that seeing something from a distance needs a medium was shared by Aristotle,²⁵⁵ the Peripatetics, the Stoics, but also Galen.²⁵⁶ For Aristotle and his followers seeing cannot

²⁵⁵ Aristotle, *De anima* II 7, 419a17-20.

²⁵⁶ P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEAΔΕΣ*, 132: according to Alexander of Aphrodisias’ analysis in *De an. mant.* 141.31-142.4, trans. R. W. Sharples: «οὕτως δὲ καὶ τὸ ὁρᾶν πασχούσης τῆς ὄψεως γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ ἐκπεμπούσης τι καὶ ποιούσης, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὸ πάσχειν ποιεῖν τις λέγοι. πάσχει δὲ οὐκ ἀπορρέοντά τινα ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρατῶν δεχομένη, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μεταξὺ τῆς τε ὄψεως καὶ τοῦ ὁρωμένου διαφανοῦς ἀλλοιουμένου πως ὑπὸ τοῦ ὁρατοῦ καὶ τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁρατοῦ τῇ ὄψει διαγγέλλοντος. πᾶν γὰρ τὸ διαφανές, ὅταν ᾗ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν τοιοῦτον, τουτέστιν, ὅταν ᾗ πεφωτισμένον (τὸ γὰρ φῶς ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια τοῦ διαφανοῦς, ᾗ

emerge if there is not the medium of air in between to transfer the light, or the so-called transparent substance. For the Stoics, the *pneuma* would stretch the air, form a cone, and as a continuous body would affect the object of seeing.²⁵⁷ For Galen, the luminous *pneuma* being alike with the object transmits the colour to the sense organ.²⁵⁸

Plotinus would never agree with them that seeing needs a medium, especially if this theory materializes light, which for him is pure activity (*energeia*). Thus, he develops several arguments against the view of seeing by means of a medium.²⁵⁹

- The medium can only impede, and not enable seeing.
- Even if the medium is transparent and does not impede seeing, this does not mean that

διαφανές), τὸ δὴ κατ' ἐνέργειαν διαφανές τρέπεται πως καὶ πάσχει πρὸς τῶν χρωμάτων τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ὥνπερ καὶ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν διαφανές τῇ τοῦ φωτίζειν πεφυκότος παρουσίᾳ τρεπόμενον φωτίζεται»: “seeing comes about when the sight is affected . . . and it is affected . . . when the transparent between the sight and the thing that is seen is altered in a certain way by the object of sight and reports to the sight the form of the object of sight. For everything that is transparent, whenever it is so in actuality, that is when it is illuminated . . . is in a way modified and affected by colors in the same way in which the potentially transparent is modified, when it is illuminated, by the presence of that which is of such a nature as to illuminate”.

²⁵⁷ For Galen’s views on sense perception, see H. Cherniss, “Galen and Posidonius’ theory of vision,” *American Journal of Philology*, 54, 154-161. See also Phillip de Lacy’s commentary in Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, 2nd ed., Berlin: Akademie, 1984; K. Ierodiakonou, “On Galen’s theory of vision”, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement 114: Philosophical Themes in Galen*, 2014, 238; cf. E. Emilsson “Plotinus on *sympatheia*”, in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 57-58.

²⁵⁸ Ierodiakonou, “On Galen’s theory of vision”, 241 and 242.

²⁵⁹ See also below the IV.5 [29] translation by Anastasia Theologou and Istvan Perczel with commentary. Cf. P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEADES*, 131-148; G. M. Gurtler, *Plotinus Ennead IV.4.30-45 & IV.5: Problems Concerning the Soul*, Las Vegas, Zurich and Athens: Parmenides Publishing, 2015, 230-290.

it enables sight.

- If the object of seeing provokes affection in the eye through a medium, then the first thing affected would be the material medium in between the eye and the sense object. Thus, the medium would be a hindrance for seeing. Only *sympatheia* could explain the transmission of the affection through the similarity of the subject and the object.²⁶⁰

I will cite here the relevant passages which refer to *sympatheia* and sight:

[Π.] Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὑπερεθέμεθα σκέψασθαι, εἰ μηδενὸς ὄντος μεταξὺ ἔστιν ὁρᾶν οἶον ἀέρος ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς τοῦ λεγομένου διαφανοῦς σώματος, νῦν σκεπτέον. Ὅτι μὲν οὖν διὰ σώματος τινος δεῖ τὸ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὅλως τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι γίνεσθαι, εἴρηται· ἄνευ μὲν γὰρ σώματος πάντα ἐν τῷ νοητῷ τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι, τοῦ δὲ αἰσθάνεσθαι ὄντος ἀντιλήψεως οὐ νοητῶν, ἀλλὰ αἰσθητῶν μόνον, δεῖ πως τὴν ψυχὴν συναφῇ γενομένην τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς διὰ τῶν προσομοίων κοινωνίαν τινὰ πρὸς αὐτὰ γνώσεως ἢ παθήματος ποιεῖσθαι. Διὸ καὶ δι' ὀργάνων σωματικῶν ἢ γινῶσις· διὰ γὰρ τούτων οἶον συμφυῶν ἢ συνεχῶν ὄντων οἶον εἰς ἓν πως πρὸς αὐτὰ τὰ αἰσθητὰ ἰέναι, ὁμοπαθείας τινὸς οὕτω πρὸς αὐτὰ γινομένης.

P. Since we have promised to investigate the question whether it is possible to see without any medium, such as air, or any other so-called transparent body, now we should proceed to this investigation. We have said that vision and, in general, sense-perception, should come about by means of a kind of body. In fact, without a body the soul is by all means in the intelligible [realm], while – as sense-perception is the perception not of the intelligible but of the sensible only – the soul should somehow become connected to the sensible objects and thus, create for itself a sort of communion of knowledge or affection to them. It is for this reason that the knowledge [of the sensible objects] occurs by means of corporeal organs. In fact, through these, as they are, so to say, connatural, or congruous [with the sensible objects], the soul, so to say, is united to those sensible objects, as in this way there occurs a sort of common affection [between the soul and the sensible objects]. (IV.5 [29] 1,1-13)

²⁶⁰ III.8 [30] 26.

As I mentioned earlier, the treatise starts with the question at hand, namely whether seeing is possible without a medium. There were other philosophical schools, such as the Stoics and Peripatetics, who claimed that seeing is enabled by another medium: a transparent body such as light or air. Sense perception allows for identifying the sensible things, but the principle that sense perception is not perceiving the intelligibles implies that there is another way of perceiving them, which Plotinus will not discuss here, but in V.3. Instead, he prefers to open the question of how the embodied soul is connected to the sensible objects through the eyes, and uses the expressions “connatural or congruous, so to say.” It seems that there is a common ground between the senses, the organs, and the soul of the individuals, which plays an important role in making seeing immediate.

[Π] Ἡ οὐκ ἀνάγκη τὸ μεταξὺ πάσχειν, εἰ τὸ πεφυκὸς πάσχειν – ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς – πάσχει· ἢ, εἰ πάσχοι, ἄλλο πάσχει· ἐπεὶ οὐδ’ ὁ κάλαμος ὁ μεταξὺ τῆς νάρκης καὶ τῆς χειρός, ὃ πάσχει ἢ χεῖρ.

[Σ] Καὶ μὴν κάκεῖ, εἰ μὴ μεταξὺ ὁ κάλαμος εἴη καὶ ἡ θρίξ, οὐκ ἂν πάθοι ἢ χεῖρ.

[Π] Ἡ τοῦτο μὲν καὶ αὐτὸ ἀμφισβητοῖτο ἄν· καὶ γάρ, εἰ ἐντὸς δικτύου γένοιτο, ὁ θηρευτῆς πάσχειν λέγεται τὸ ναρκᾶν. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ κινδυνεύει ὁ λόγος ἐπὶ τὰς λεγομένας συμπαθείας ἰέναι. Εἰ δὲ τοδὶ ὑπὸ τουδὶ πέφυκε πάσχειν συμπαθῶς τῷ τινα ὁμοιότητα ἔχειν πρὸς αὐτό, οὐκ ἂν τὸ μεταξὺ ἀνόμοιον ὄν πάθοι, ἢ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἂν πάθοι. Εἰ τοῦτο, πολλῶ μᾶλλον μηδενὸς ὄντος μεταξὺ πάθοι ἂν τὸ πεφυκὸς πάσχειν ἢ ἐὰν τὸ μεταξὺ τοιοῦτον ᾖ, οἷον αὐτὸ καὶ παθεῖν τι.

P. However, it is not necessary that the medium also be affected, if that which is naturally disposed to be affected, that is, the eye, is affected. Or, if it is affected, it is affected by something else, just as the fishing rod, which is in-between the torpedo fish and the hand, is not affected by the same thing as that which affects the hand.

I. However, even in this case, if the rod and the line were not in-between, the hand would not be affected.

P. Yet, this point is also open to doubt. In fact, people tell that, if the <torpedo fish> gets in the net, the fisherman [equally] suffers growing torpid. But in fact, it seems that our discourse is touching the so-called mutual affections (συμπάθειαι).

If this and this is naturally disposed to be affected through mutual affection by that and that due to the fact that it has some likeness to it, then, the medium, being unlike, would not be affected, or would not be affected by the same affection. If this is so, then, if nothing is in-between, that which naturally is disposed to be affected, would be even more affected, if there were nothing in-between, than if the medium were such that it would also be affected. (IV.5 [29] 1, 29-40)

Here, Plotinus, to refute the view that the medium is a necessary condition to transmit qualities of the object to the subject of perception, cites the observation that whatever the medium is between the fisherman and the torpedo fish – either a fishing rod or a fishing net – the fisherman's hand suffers an electroshock. Thus, according to him, the affection is directly caused by the likeness of the perceiving organ to the perceived object and thus, by the *sympatheia* between the two, without the medium being affected. Thus, *sympatheia* would allow similar things to be seen without the help of the medium, independently of the question whether or not the medium is similar to them.

[Π] Ὅσοι δὲ συμπαθεία τὸ ὁρᾶν λέγουσιν, ἥττον μὲν ὁρᾶν φήσουσιν, εἴ τι μεταξὺ εἴη, ἢ κωλύοι καὶ ἐμποδίζοι καὶ ἀμυδρὰν ποιοῖ τὴν συμπάθειαν· μᾶλλον δὲ ἀκόλουθον λέγειν ποιεῖν πάντως ἀμυδρὰν καὶ τὸ συγγενές, ἢ καὶ αὐτὸ πάσχον. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ σῶμα συνεχές ἐν βάθει ἐκ προσβολῆς πυρὸς καίοιτο, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν βάθει αὐτοῦ τῇ προσβολῇ τοῦ πρόσθεν ἥττον ἂν πάσχοι.

P. Those who say that seeing is due to a community of affections, claim that one sees less well if there is a medium, to the extent that it would impede, hinder, and make deem the shared affection. Rather, there follows [from the hypothesis of a shared affection] to say that even that which is akin [to the vision] makes the shared affection dimmer insofar as it is also affected. For if a continuous body catching fire were to burn in its depth, yet the deepest part would be affected less than the one in front of the fire. (IV.5 [29] 2,15-21)

This is a very interesting view. Most probably Plotinus targets Posidonius, who developed the theory that sight comes from *sympatheia*.²⁶¹ Stoic *sympatheia* is based on the tension of the

²⁶¹ For Posidonius and seeing because of *sympatheia*, see P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEAΔΕΣ*, 136.

pneuma, which is the essence of the material permeating power of the cosmos. The same holds for seeing. There is a continuous body from the eye to the object through the medium of air and light. As we might assume, Plotinus adopts from Posidonius only the idea of the relation of seeing with *sympatheia*, but he changes its essence. Seeing through a medium because of *sympatheia* in materialistic terms does not enable perception. Similarity here is not advantageous, because the medium, which is alike to the sense organ and its power, is also affected - because of its similarity with the object and the subject. This, then, would make the perception dimmer. For there, the medium would be affected first and before the affection of the actual perceiver.

[Σ] Εἰ δ' εἴη σῶμα ἔξω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ὅψις τις ἐντεῦθεν μηδενὸς κωλύοντος εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν, ἄρ' ἂν θεάσαιτο ὃ τι μὴ συμπαθὲς πρὸς ἐκεῖνο, εἰ τὸ συμπαθὲς νῦν διὰ τὴν ζώου ἐνὸς φύσιν;

[Π] Ἡ εἰ τὸ συμπαθὲς διὰ τὸ ἐνὸς ζώου τὰ αἰσθανόμενα καὶ τὰ αἰσθητά, καὶ αἰ αἰσθήσεις οὕτως οὐκ ἂν, εἰ μὴ τὸ σῶμα τοῦτο τὸ ἔξω μέρος τοῦδε τοῦ ζώου· εἰ γὰρ εἴη, τάχα ἂν.

I: However, if there were a body outside the heaven and there were some kind of sight from here, while nothing would hinder its vision, could that which has no common affection to that [body] see it, if in fact the common affection is due to the nature of the one living being?

P: Now if common affection is due to the fact that the perceivers, the perceived objects, and the sense-perceptions belong to a single living being, thus, this could not happen, unless this outside body is a part of this living being. For if it were so, then, perhaps. IV.5 [27] 8,1-7.

Plotinus uses the argument of unity and the connection of the parts to the whole and with each other within the whole to show that distance does not impede affections, because unity ensures continuity. Moreover, the fact that this is **one** living being that can perceive itself, adds more to the defense of the connection of beings inside it, because, even if there was a second living being outside this world, and even if this world would have an eye that has the required aptitude to see the “body outside heaven”, vision would not occur, due to the lack of *sympatheia* between the two bodies. The stress here is on the oneness of the living being that

allows for continuous contact with everything inside it. Plotinus will continue his thought by explaining the reason of the continuous contact.

[II] Ἀλλὰ τὸ ἄτοπον τοῦτο, πόθεν δὴ φαίνεται, φήσομεν. Ἦ ὅτι ἐνταῦθα ἐν ἐνὶ ὄντεσ καὶ ἐνὸς ταῦτα ποιοῦμεν καὶ πάσχομεν. Τοῦτο οὖν σκεπτέον, εἰ παρὰ τοῦτο. Καὶ εἰ μὲν αὐτάρκως, δέδεικται· εἰ δὲ μή, καὶ δι' ἄλλων δεικτέον. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ζῶον ὅτι συμπαθὲς αὐτῷ, δῆλον· καὶ εἰ εἴη ζῶον, ἀρκεῖ· ὥστε καὶ τὰ μέρη, ἧ ἐνὸς ζώου.

[Σ] Ἀλλ' εἰ δι' ὁμοιότητά τις λέγοι;

[II] Ἀλλ' ἡ ἀντίληψις κατὰ τὸ ζῶον καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις, ὅτι τοῦ ὁμοίου μετέχει τῷ αὐτῷ.²⁶² τὸ γὰρ ὄργανον ὁμοιον αὐτοῦ· ὥστε ἡ αἴσθησις ψυχῆς ἀντίληψις ἔσται δι' ὀργάνων ὁμοίων τοῖς ἀντιληπτοῖς.

P. However, let us say, what proves this absurdity. It is because we are acting these things and are affected by them being in one [living being] and belonging to one. Now, we should investigate whether there is another reason beyond this. If this reason is sufficient, this has been demonstrated, and if not, it should be demonstrated through other reasons. It is clear that the living being has the community of affection with itself and if it is a living being, this is a sufficient reason, and so also have it the parts as far as they belong to the living being.

I. But, what if someone were to say that this is because of their likeness?

P. Now, the apprehension is within the living being, while the sense-perception is because it, by the same fact [that is, by being a living being], participates in something that is alike. In fact, the organ is like that. So, the sense-perception will be the soul's apprehension through organs that are similar to the objects of apprehension. (IV.5.8,13-23)

²⁶² “ὅτι τοῦ ὁμοίου μετέχει τῷ αὐτῷ coniecimus/ ὅτι τοῦ ὁμοίου μετέχει τὸ αὐτό” MSS, H-S¹

² The text is apparently corrupted due to *iotacism*. See the parallel sentence little later: “ἐὰν οὖν ζῶον ὃν αἰσθάνηται μὲν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, τῶν δὲ ὁμοίων τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ ἧ μὲν ζῶον αἰσθάνεται”; τῷ αὐτῷ in the first sentence corresponds to ἧ μὲν ζῶον in the second.

Plotinus concludes that, as he has proved through argumentation, it is sufficient for the subject and the object seen to be affected, because of the unity in the living being originated in the hypostasis soul. In this respect, it is not just the likeness of the object and the subject, but the likeness of the cosmic soul to the soul of the individuals and its apprehension and perception of them. Moreover, all functions of the living being are based on its connection to a higher principle. Therefore, it is the unity of the soul behind likeness, and not the nature of the medium or material causes that the advocates of the other theories of sight proclaim to be.

To better understand the selected fragments, I suggest reading them alongside the reasons Plotinus provides earlier in IV.3.1–2, where he argues against the Stoic view that souls are merely *apospasmata* (fragments) of the world soul. In these chapters, Plotinus discusses the relationship between individual souls and the cosmic soul, highlighting the role of the hypostasis of the soul in ensuring unity. This idea suggests that, for Plotinus, being a soul and understanding the soul have similar ontological value. By following the principle of **Γινώθι σεαυτόν** ("Know thyself"), Plotinus applies to the soul's receptive power the ability to see and understand, as well as being seen and understood within the cosmos. This ability comes not from being a part of the cosmic Soul, but from its connection to the whole soul. This helps us understand how unity and continuity are essential for the act of seeing.

The theory of visual transmission

It is important to begin Plotinus' theory of transmission by examining the role of the senses. As we have seen, all souls inherently possess the ability to perceive and apprehend, regardless of whether they have sense organs. For instance, planetary souls, being more refined and purer than human souls, do not require sense organs. Instead, they perceive forms through contemplation and the ordered motion of their orbits.

In contrast, earthly beings, whose souls are bound to material bodies, require sense organs to engage with the external world. In IV.4 [28] 23, Plotinus explains that the sense organs process raw sensory input (stimuli) into intelligible forms, thus preparing it for the soul's perception and understanding. Perception for Plotinus is an activity (*energeia*). Scholars have pointed out that he borrowed the term from Aristotle²⁶³ but for Plotinus perception does not

²⁶³ See Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense Perception*, 127-129

have any sense of passivity. The terms *poiein* or *energein* and *paschein* have been defined as follows: In vi.1.22, 1-14

Passive affection, then, occurs by having in oneself an alternative motion of any kind; and action is either having in oneself an independent self-derived motion or one which starts from oneself and ends in another, [a motion, that is,] starting from that which is said to act. There is motion in both cases, but the difference which separates action and passive affection keeps action, in so far as it is action, unaffected, but makes passive affection consist in being disposed otherwise than it was before; the substance of what is affected gains nothing which contributes to its substantiality, but what is affected is different, when a substance comes to be. So the same is action in one relationship and passive affection in another. It is the same motion, but looked at on one side it will be action, but on the other passive affection, because this is disposed in this way; so it seems likely that both are relation, in all cases where action is related to passive affection; (Translation Armstrong)

Thus, a being is affected by virtue of having in itself a movement of alteration of whatever sort. To act (*poiein*) is either to have in oneself a free movement originating from oneself or a movement that is completed in another but originating from oneself. In both cases there is movement, but the difference that distinguishes action from affection is that action, insofar as it is action, remains unaffected, whereas what is affected is disposed in a different way than it was before, the substance (*ousia*) of the affected thing not gaining anything thereby, as it is some other thing which is affected in the generation of a substance.

The passage defines acting as the motion that is self-generated and either completed in one self or another. One should think why Plotinus would think under these terms. First he goes against Aristotle who thinks that perception is the completion of perceptive potency. Second he remains faithful to Plato's *Timaeus* where the motion of the soul is self-generated and serves its relation to the forms. Third analogical spatiality as we saw in the previous chapters requires the soul's activity ensuring the unity of reality. Last but not least, sight can only be immediate if perception is an activity of this kind.

In order to perceive Plotinus' theory of motion in relation to the unity of the souls and what I introduced as analogical spatiality, it would be of great value to explore Riccardo Chiaradonna's "Plotinus on motion as activity",²⁶⁴ which focuses on two passages that exemplify two different aspects of motion. The first aspect can be termed kinematics, and describes motion as a form and as activity. *Ennead* 6.1 is the key passage for understanding this aspect; in this passage, Plotinus' offers a critique of Aristotle's conception of motion. According to Plotinus, motion is not an incomplete process, as Aristotle claims, but a fully realized activity (*energeia*). The discussion in 6.1 concerns motion as a general concept—how it is understood in relation to form, change, and reality. This aspect of motion can be defined as kinematics, because it deals with how things move, without reference to their underlying causes or forces. To give a pertinent example, the idea that motion is a "form awake" (*eidōs egrēgoros*), meaning motion is not something waiting to be completed, but a perpetual and self-sustaining reality.

The second aspect of motion is dynamics, or the incorporeal causes of motion. The key passage for this is *Ennead* 6.3, which shifts attention to the causes of motion. Plotinus argues that motion is not only a state of being, but is also driven by incorporeal causes. Unlike *Ennead* 6.1, which is concerned with the description of motion itself, 6.3 deals with what brings about motion—a fundamentally dynamic question. The key example examined here is the role of incorporeal causes (such as the Soul) in moving bodies without themselves being in motion.

But why does the reference to incorporeal causes belong to the domain of dynamics, rather than that of kinematics, according to Chiaradonna? *Ennead* 6.1 describes motion as an eternal activity, independent of external forces; instead, *Ennead* 6.3 explains motion in terms of causal forces, particularly incorporeal principles, such as the soul's influence on bodies. The reference to incorporeal causes does not belong to *Ennead* 6.1, because 6.1 is focused on defining what motion *is*, rather than what produces it. The causal discussion belongs instead to *Ennead* 6.3, where Plotinus addresses how motion in the sensible world depends on non-physical principles. Chiaradonna's interpretation suggests that Plotinus provides a two-layered analysis of motion, based on both kinematics and dynamics. This reading underscores

²⁶⁴ R. Chiaradonna, *Ontology in Early Neoplatonism: Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus*, Berlin, Boston and New York, 2023, 64-71.

how Plotinus integrates Platonic metaphysics into an alternative theory of motion, distancing himself from Aristotle's materialist physics, by emphasizing incorporeal principles as the true causes of movement. Therefore the ensouled bodies are "forms awakened" and this is how they are perceived but because of being subjected to the higher powers of the soul's activities. In this way Plotinus ensures the interconnection of the soul's motions being embodied or not.

On the other hand affection requires an alteration of the substance and for Plotinus perception cannot be passive, because it is related to the soul which is unaffected by the passions. In the case of seeing it requires the subject, the object situated in opposition to the subject. The sense organs serve as intermediaries, transforming chaotic or disordered sensory data into meaningful and structured forms that the soul can apprehend. Material forms, according to Plotinus, are essentially "qualities" or "colourful garments" that cloak the intelligible forms. Through the work of the senses, these intelligible forms are revealed to the soul; the senses act as a bridge, unveiling the deeper, intelligible reality underlying the material world.

This leads to a critical question: if the senses already mediate between the external world and the soul by rendering intelligible forms perceptible, why would an additional medium—a material one—be necessary to enable vision? Plotinus's argument implicitly challenges the Stoic and Peripatetic view that vision requires a material medium such as air or light, emphasizing instead the sufficiency of the soul-sense relationship in revealing intelligible forms. And this view comes from his interpretation of the *Timaeus*, where Plato stresses the importance of the light in between the object and the subject of the vision. Plotinus cannot accept that seeing depends on the illumination of the intermediate space, but he admits that somehow the illumination of the object passes to the eye.²⁶⁵ It is also the case that for Plotinus, as for Plato, the likeness of the eye and the light outside plays a significant role in *sympatheia* and vision. The percipient's light being in union with an external light forms a

²⁶⁵ For the discussion on Plotinus and the role of light, see Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense Perception*, 42-47. In this work, Emilsson claims that Plotinus' theory of *sympatheia* is borrowed from the Stoics. However, this has recently been acknowledged as a mistake, with confirmation that Plotinus is, in fact, heavily indebted to Plato's *Timaeus*.

kind of pencil, where it can be considered an integral part of the percipient. This is very similar to Galen's theory of vision.²⁶⁶

Gurtler proposed that Plotinus understand light as a second activity, which follows a first one.²⁶⁷ In IV.5[29].6,13-16 Plotinus defines light as the activity which becomes apparent only when it hints a body. Gurtler's interpretation is based on Plotinus' theory of double activity, which comes from the One's internal and external activity and mimetically expands to every substance. Let's see how this activity is showcased in IV.5.7, when Plotinus explains to his interlocutor the role of light in seeing:

P: [...] Therefore, the light emanating from the bodies is the external activity of the luminous body, while the light itself, which is entirely in such bodies, is the formal substance of the primarily luminous body. When such a body becomes mingled with matter it gives the colour to it. The activity in itself does not give the colour, but only, so to say, paints the surface, since it belongs to something else and is dependent on that, so that whatever moves away from that [the luminous body] also moves away from its activity. But one must understand that the light is incorporeal, even if it is the light of a body. Therefore, neither the "it has left" or the "it has come" are used properly, but in a different way, and its reality is being an activity. In fact, also the image in a mirror should be called an activity of that which is reflected there, while it acts without an outpouring on what is capable of being affected. However, if this [that is, the object seen] is there, then that [that is, the image] also appears there [that is, in the mirror] and, in this way, it exists as a reflection of the colour that has been shaped in this way; and if it [that is, the object seen] is removed, it [the mirror] does not any more have the reflectivity that it had before, when it allowed the object seen to operate in it. However, in the case of the soul also, insofar as there is an activity of a prior one, as long as the prior one remains, the secondary activity also remains. Or rather, something that is not an activity but is the effect of an activity, as we have said about the life of the body, which is its property already, so that the light which has already become

²⁶⁶ Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense Perception*, 58

²⁶⁷ G. M. Gurtler, "Plotinus on light and vision", *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, 12 (2018), 157.

mingled with the bodies would be here that which creates the colour by the fact of being mingled [to the mirror].²⁶⁸

The passage explains in analogies that light is an activity. The light that a luminous body has is their external activity which proceeds from a source their formal substance. Colors are the effects of the intermingling of the light with the object. If the body disappears, we cannot see the colours and the objects because its activity also goes away. This is exactly as with the activity of the mirror; the projection of the mirror does not require any materiality by the presence of the object. In this respect, we can conclude that the soul's activity is like the mirror reflection: it depends on the unity of something higher, and life is an effect of the soul's activity as colour is an effect of the interaction of light and object. Therefore the body, like the mirror, cannot be alive on its own, but is dependent on the soul's activity.

This passage leaves me in agreement with Gurtler, who understands Plotinus' double activity here not only as Aristotle's influence of the theory of double activity, but as an anticipation of modern theories of light seen as energy and waves.²⁶⁹ However, Gurtler does not explain how exactly the unity of the souls is present in his scheme. In III 6.2 35-36, Plotinus claims that

²⁶⁸ Ἡ τις δὲ μὴ ἐνέργεια ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐνεργείας, οἷαν ἐλέγομεν τὴν τοῦ σώματος οἰκείαν ἥδη ζώην, ὥσπερ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀναμειγμένον ἥδη τοῖς σώμασιν ἢ ἐνταῦθα, τῷ καὶ συμμεμίχθαι, τὸ ποιοῦν τὸ χρῶμα. coniecimus / Εἰ τις δὲ μὴ ἐνέργεια, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐνεργείας, οἷαν ἐλέγομεν τὴν τοῦ σώματος οἰκείαν ἥδη ζώην, ὥσπερ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀναμειγμένον ἥδη τοῖς σώμασιν; Ἡ ἐνταῦθα τῷ καὶ συμμεμίχθαι τὸ ποιοῦν τὸ χρῶμα. H-S¹⁻². This sentence, as it stands in the manuscripts and in the edition of H-S¹⁻², seems to have been distorted by the effect of iotacism, is not grammatically correct, and cannot be interpreted as it stands. We believe that our reconstruction gives a clear sense: To the alternative that the image in the mirror is a secondary energy, which disappears as soon as the object seen in the mirror leaves space reflected by the mirror, another alternative is proposed, according to which the reflection is not a proper activity but just the effect of the activity of the object seen, just as the proper (appropriated) life of the body in Plotinus' perception. So, just as, in the case of the animation of the body, the effect of the soul's activity makes the body alive, so also here, the light mingled to the body of the mirror creates the image in the mirror. It is not the example of the mirror that is used to illustrate the animation of the body, but vice versa.

²⁶⁹ See Gurtler, "Plotinus on light and vision", 162.

the act of vision grasps what one already possesses. Previously we have said that the analogical spatiality created by the activities of the souls and expressed in different levels of *logoi* enables immediate perception of the forms. For a subject and an object are in direct contact continuously and seeing qualities is just the instantaneous mirroring of the objects in the soul. Therefore sympathies unfold within the framework of the soul's activities.

Paul Kalligas points out that Plotinus, while defending his theory of *sympatheia*, argues against five theories of transmission of the sensible stimuli to the eye through a medium.²⁷⁰ Among the various mentioned advocates of these views, he refers also very briefly to Galen. In the following lines I will explore Galen's theory of sight and his influence on Plotinus. In this way I aim to show another connection between the two thinkers, which will shed more light on their shared ground on cosmic *sympatheia* based on their interpretation of *Timaeus*.

The role of sight in Plato

In Plato's dialogues sight (ὄψις) is connected to real knowledge of the things. In the *Symposium* (219a), Socrates, in his discussion with Alcibiades about beauty and attraction, makes a distinction between intellectual and visual sight to stress the importance of the first in relation to wisdom. In the *Phaedrus* (250a-c) our intellectual sight is holy, and the disembodied soul has the power of seeing the intelligible realities which keeps record of them.²⁷¹ When the soul is embodied, the sight is still present, but difficult to clearly see the real essence of the things. The term becomes important also in the *Republic*. In book VII, Socrates presents the allegory of the cave (514a-521d) to show the connection between the Good and true knowledge and the difficult process of the human mind to grasp these realities. In this metaphor, the Good is the Sun which all the prisoners in the cave cannot; thus, they cannot recognize reality and instead they see shadows. At 507c-508b, Plato states that sight is a product of God and has two aspects, a passive and an active. This divinity is identified with the intelligible Sun, which is the Good. It has given birth to the intelligible realm, and this is why it also created the sight and the objects seen. Sight comes as an act of the Good's providence.

²⁷⁰ See P. Kalligas, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. *ENNEADEΣ*, 134.

²⁷¹ The vision of the soul: Plato, *Sym.* 219a; *Soph.* 254a; Aristotle, *Eth.* 1144 a 30; *Odyssey*, i. 115.

The providential character of the sight in the *Republic* could not be considered as non-prominent along the lines of the Platonic cosmology. In the *Timaeus* sight is defined teleologically as the cause of great benefit to human nature: without sight we would not be able to observe the stars and give an account of all things.²⁷² For Plato and his *milieu*, the question of reality was foremost, for which reason he dedicated a whole dialogue raising his epistemological concerns and especially discussing the relation between the senses and knowledge. In *Theaetetus* 156a-157c, sight acquires special epistemic importance, which later influences immensely Plotinus' epistemology and metaphysics.²⁷³ This is something that we will examine thoroughly later in this chapter.

Galen's theory of sight

It has been noted that Galen's theory of sight is an amalgam of different theories by his contemporaries. Katerina Ierodiakonou argues that Galen incorporates in his theory various elements from Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, and concludes that he does not have a coherent theory of vision.²⁷⁴ Moreover, Eyjofur Emilsson in the chapter "Plotinus on *sympatheia*" points out that Plotinus and Galen share common ground in the way they perceive the theory of vision in the *Timaeus*.²⁷⁵

For both Galen and Plato, sight (ὄψις) is understood as an activity, rather than a passive reception. Plato discusses this in the *Timaeus* (45b-d), where he describes it as the interaction

²⁷² «ὄψις δὴ κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον αἰτία τῆς μεγίστης ὠφελείας γέγονεν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τῶν νῦν λόγων περὶ τοῦ παντὸς λεγομένων οὐδεὶς ἂν ποτε ἐρρήθη μήτε ἄστρα μήτε ἥλιον μήτ' οὐρανὸν ἰδόντων».

²⁷³ Scholars have also pointed out *Theaetetus*' influence on Plotinus' philosophy, but without analyzing its importance; see E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 90-91; P. Remes, *Plotinus on the Self: The Philosophy of the "We."*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 74-75; I. Perczel, "L'intellect smoureux et l' 'Un qui est' : une doctrine mal connue de Plotin," *Revue de philosophie ancienne*, 15.2, 1997, 223-264.

²⁷⁴ Ierodiakonou, "On Galen's theory of vision", 246.

²⁷⁵ E. Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 58.

of light emanating from the eyes with external light, enabling the perception of objects. Similarly, Galen, in *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* (VII.5, 32–33), describes sight as an activity moved by the sense-object through the air. However, Galen's perspective diverges from the Stoic and Peripatetic theories, which treat air as a material medium. Instead, Galen views the air as *μόριον* (part) of this sight—homogeneous and united with its luminous essence.

Galen further elaborates that sight is to air what the brain is to the nerve. The brain is the center of the organism, and the nerve completes the activity of the brain. This analogy emphasizes the organic and unified relationship (*συμφυΐα*) between sight and air. Thus, sight, in Galen's view, involves two interconnected dynamics: the movement of sight by the object through the air, and the ability of sight to integrate with the air, thereby incorporating the object seen as part of the perceptual activity. However, it is not the element of the air or the light that determines this activity, as this would imply a certain kind of materialism. The brain, as the *hegemonikon* (the ruling principle of the body), governs the body through the *pneuma*. For Galen, *pneuma* is the instrument of the soul:²⁷⁶ in the context of sight, this luminous *pneuma* extends its influence by interacting with the surrounding air, striking and assimilating it into the visual process. This interaction facilitates the unity between sight, air, and the object of perception, highlighting the *pneuma*'s essential role in connecting the governing brain with the external sensory world.

Karl Reinhardt, in his book *Kosmos und Sympathie*, proposes that Galen's and Plotinus' theories of sight share common philosophical ground, based on Posidonius' theory of vision. Reinhardt carefully analyzes key passages from Galen's *PHP* (*On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*) and Plotinus' *Enneads* (specifically IV.5.4), highlighting their mutual emphasis on the "vitalistic" properties of light and air. In Reinhardt's interpretation, these elements are provided with an intrinsic vitality that transcends mere physicality, aligning them with the Stoic conception of *pneuma*, or the cosmic life force. Karl Reinhardt's vitalistic interpretation was rejected by Harold Cherniss,²⁷⁷ who pointed out several key issues:

²⁷⁶ *PHP* VII, 3 27-30.

²⁷⁷ H. Cherniss, "Galen and Posidonius' theory of vision", *American Journal of Philology*, 54, 1933, 154-161.

- 1) Cherniss argues that Reinhardt misrepresents Plotinus' text (IV, 5, 4), attributing to light a state of being spiritual, rather than describing a process of spiritualization. According to Cherniss, Reinhardt's translation obscures the actual meaning of the passage.
- 2) Reinhardt interprets Galen's description of light and air as evidence of a "vitalistic" theory of sight attributed to Posidonius. Cherniss disputes this, showing that Galen differentiates between the *pneuma* (spirit) that transforms air into a visual instrument and the light that merely illuminates it. Cherniss also shows that Reinhardt's argument omitted relevant passages in which Galen does not claim that the solar ray itself can perceive (*aisthetikon*).²⁷⁸ Moreover, Cherniss identifies a critical flaw in Reinhardt's analogy between the actions of the *pneuma* and the solar ray; while both influence the surrounding air, only the *pneuma* renders it a perceptive organ. Reinhardt conflates their roles, overextending the analogy.
- 3) Reinhardt connects Galen's views to Posidonius by using parallels with passages in Cicero and Sextus Empiricus. However, Cherniss argues that these parallels are speculative and fail to establish Posidonius as the source of the theory in Galen's texts.
- 4) Last and more importantly, Cherniss demonstrates that Galen's theory of vision aligns more closely with Plato's *Timaeus*, than with the alleged Posidonian framework. He

²⁷⁸ “εἴπερ οὖν ἡ ὄψις μόνη τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθήσεων αἰσθάνεται τοῦ κινουντος αὐτὴν αἰσθητοῦ διὰ μέσου τοῦ ἀέρος, οὐχ ὡς βακτηρίας τινός, ἀλλ’ ὡς ὁμοειδοῦς τε καὶ συμφυοῦς ἑαυτῇ μορίου, καὶ μόνη τοῦτ’ ἐξάιρετον αὐτῇ δέδοται, μετὰ τοῦ καὶ δι’ ἀνακλάσεως ὁρᾶν, εἰκότως ἐδεήθη. **πνεύματος ἄνωθεν ἐπιρρέοντος** αὐγοειδοῦς, ὃ προσπίπτον τῷ περίξ ἀέρι καὶ οἶον ἐπιπλήττον αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ συνεξομοιώσει” “If, then, sight alone among the senses, when it perceives the sense-object that moves it, uses air as a medium—not as a kind of walking stick, but as a homogeneous part that forms one body with itself—and if sight alone has been given this exceptional ability, along with the ability to see by reflection, one may reasonably assert that it needed luminous *pneuma* flowing in from above, which might encounter the surrounding air, strike it, as it were, and assimilate it to itself”. Translation by De Lacy, *Galen on the doctrines* VII, 461.

emphasizes the similarity in terminology and conceptualization between Galen and Plato, particularly regarding the *pneuma* and its interaction with light and air.²⁷⁹

In light of these various relations, Emilsson has argued that Plotinus' theory of vision is effectively a modification of the Platonic view. The issue of sight and its relationship to *sympatheia* offers an interesting case-study of the interconnection between the respective theories of Plato, the Stoics, Galen, and Plotinus. On the one hand, it is fairly evident that Galen's and Plotinus' theories emanate from their respective reading of Plato's *Timaeus* (45B-D). While Galen and Plotinus end up with different theories of vision, there is a deeper agreement in their respective theories which is the outcome of their respective readings of the *Timaeus*. Galen's theory of the visual ray is clearly indebted to Plato's argument that the emitted light of the eye fuses with the external light to create a continuous line of light extending from the eye to the object. In the case of Plotinus, he clearly adopts elements of the Platonic theory presented in *Timaeus*, such as the idea that there is ensouled light in the eye (45B). On the other hand, Plato's text can be plausibly read as arguing in favor of a projective theory, i.e. that light emitted through the eye reaches the object, thus enabling vision (45B-D). It can be argued, though, that Plato does not make this argument explicit, and it can equally plausibly be argued that Plotinus read Plato in such a way that Plato's view appeared consistent with his own. However, there are undoubtedly cases in which Plotinus' view clearly diverges from that of Plato: while Plato argues in favor of the crucial role of intermediate light for vision, Plotinus refuses to accord it any role in the process of vision.²⁸⁰

What makes vision possible is similarity, and in particular the similarity between the internal light of the eye and the object. At the same time, it is also true that there is cosmic unity between our individual souls and the soul that animates the cosmos: our individual eyes are parts of the same organism as the objects of vision, and this is what makes vision possible. This is a principle shared by Galen and Plotinus. The main difference between them is that As Emilsson argues, Galen considers this cosmic unity as a nonpermanent condition, but as something created intermittently by the visual *pneuma*, and this is the reason why his theory

²⁷⁹ See also A. Graeser, *Plotinus and the Stoics*, *Plotinus*, PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1970, 75-77

²⁸⁰ E. K. Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 36-60.

requires a visual ray and the role of the intermediate light. Plotinus, on the other hand, conceptualizes cosmic unity as permanent, and accordingly his theory does not require any mechanism like the visual ray for temporarily creating this unity.

My take on this is that the vitalistic interpretation of the theories of sight that Reinhardt attributes to the three thinkers—Posidonius, Galen, and Plotinus— risks undermining the non-physicalistic aspect of *sympatheia* that both Galen and Plotinus emphasize in relation to the Platonic teachings in the *Timaeus*. While Reinhardt's approach emphasizes the dynamic, life-like properties of light and air as vital carriers of cosmic interaction and perception, it arguably leans heavily on a Stoic-inspired *pneumatic* framework. This focus, while valuable, potentially obscures the metaphysical depth and immaterial resonance of *sympatheia*, as conceived by both Galen and Plotinus.

Τὸ μὲν οὖν διὰ μέσου τοῦ ἀέρος ὁρᾶν ἡμᾶς ἐναργές ἐστι καὶ πᾶσιν ὁμολογούμενον, ἡ ζήτησις δὲ ἐπὶ τῷδε γίνεταί, πότερον ὡς δι' ὁδοῦ τινος μέσης ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρωμένων ἀφικνεῖται τι πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἢ τοιοῦτον ὄργανον ὃ ἀήρ ἐστὶν ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν τῶν ὁρατῶν διάγνωσιν, οἷον περ τὸ νεῦρον εἰς τὴν τῶν ἀπτῶν. Οἷονται μὲν οὖν οἱ πλεῖστοι καὶ διὰ τοῦ νεύρου τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν προσπιπτόντων ἀλλοίωσιν ἀναδιδομένην ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικὸν εἰς διάγνωσιν ἄγειν ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν, οὐκ ἐννοοῦντες ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἡ τῆς ὁδύνης αἴσθησις ἐγίγνετο κατὰ τὸ τεμνόμενον ἢ θλώμενον ἢ καόμενον μόριον, εἰ μὴ καὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως δύναμις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς. ἔχει δὲ ἐναντίως ἢ δοξάζουσιν ἐκεῖνοι τὸ ἀληθές· αὐτὸ τε γὰρ τὸ νεῦρον ἐγκεφάλου μέρος. ἐστὶν οἷον περ ἀκρεμῶν ἢ βλάστημα δένδρου, τὸ τε μέρος εἰς ὃ τὸ μέρος ἐμφύεται τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ δεχόμενον εἰς ὅλον ἑαυτὸ διαγνωστικὸν γίνεται τῶν ψαυόντων αὐτοῦ. παραπλήσιον οὖν τι καὶ τοῦ περιέχοντος ἡμᾶς ἀέρος γίνεταί· πεφωτισμένος γὰρ ὑφ' ἡλίου, τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἤδη τὸ τῆς ὀψεως ὄργανον, οἷον τὸ παραγιγνόμενον ἐξ ἐγκεφάλου πνεῦμα· πρὶν φωτισθῆναι δέ, κατὰ τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος εἰς αὐτὸν ἐκβολὴν ἐναποτελουμένην ἀλλοίωσιν, ὁμοιοπαθὲς ὄργανον οὐ γίνεταί.

Now, it is clear and agreed to by all that we see through air as an intermediate; the problem here is to discover whether something comes to us from the objects of sight through the air as through some intermediate pathway, or the air is for us the same kind of instrument for discerning visible things as the nerve is for tangible

things. Most people think even with regard to the nerve that the alteration caused by impinging objects is transmitted through it to the governing part of the soul and so leads us to the discernment of the objects; it does not occur to them that the pain would not be felt in the part of the body that is cut or crushed or burned if the power of sensation were not also present in the parts. The truth is the opposite of the opinion that those people hold. The nerve itself is a part of the brain, like a branch or offshoot of a tree, and the member to which the part is attached receives the power of the part into the whole of itself and thus becomes capable of discerning the things that touch it. Something similar happens also in the case of the air that surrounds us. When it has been illuminated by the sun, it is already an instrument of vision of the same description as the pneuma coming to it from the brain; but until it is illuminated it does not turn into a sympathetic instrument by virtue of the change effected in it by the outflow of the pneuma. (*PHP* VII 716-19. Translation by DeLacy, 474-475)

Before analyzing the significance of this passage, it is important to note that Galen explicitly states earlier that his arguments on sight are directed against all theories except Plato's (VII 6 37, 7 p. 471). In this context, the medium of vision is not the air, as Aristotle and the Stoics propose, nor is it light alone. Galen presents sight as the power to discern different objects. Sight is activated through the psychic pneuma originating from the brain and becomes a part of the brain in order to fulfill its aim. The analogy of the sun with the air and the visibility of the world because of the pneuma denotes that *sympatheia* and sight are connected due to the pneumatic activity which is the soul's instrument. Here it seems that we have three different kinds of lights as in the *Timaeus* 45a-d: the visual ray, the sun-lighted air and the color of the object. All of them are perceived as parts of the living being, of the Cosmos.

Therefore, for Galen, *sympatheia* is not merely a function of physical contiguity but extends into the harmonious coordination of the body's parts as the manifestation of a greater cosmic order. This echoes Platonic principles wherein the soul, rather than corporeal mechanisms, serves as the primary mediator of unity and perception. Similarly, Plotinus, following the Platonic tradition, anchors *sympatheia* within the intelligible realm, emphasizing the soul's direct participation in the unity of the One, a reality fundamentally beyond material explanation.

In IV.5 [29] 4, 1-2 Plotinus seems to share the same view with Galen and the *Timaeus*. The visual ray is like an extension of the ensouled (not pneumatic) sight which is moved by the object seen. For Plotinus, sight cannot be passive and that is why he cannot agree with those who see light as an affection of air. Furthermore, light is incorporeal (IV.5[29].7,41-49) and acts on a body without being a body. Thus, it acts as a source and as a body which can be illuminated. As Gary M. Gurtler pointed out, light could be perceived as energy which has a primary and a secondary act. This would explain the analogy of the sun, which Galen gave earlier.

The Cosmic Soul and its network

As regards vision, the respective theories of Galen and Plotinus exhibit both shared elements, in particular in their common criticism of other approaches, as well as important differences in how they conceptualize vision. Plotinus' theory of vision shares conceptual similarities with Galen's theory of organic unity. Both thinkers argue that vision does not involve a mechanical transmission, but rather an organic relation between the perceiver and the perceived. Plotinus holds that the cosmic organism is unified, and within this framework, vision functions as an internal sensation, much like feeling within a single body. Furthermore, both Galen and Plotinus reject Aristotelian and Stoic theories of vision. They both criticize the Stoic "staff analogy" for vision, which suggests that perception works through a physical connection. They also reject progressive affection theories, which claim that vision occurs through the gradual alteration of an intermediate medium. Instead, they insist that the object must be perceived at the place where it actually is, not as an impression traveling through a medium.

Beyond these common themes, there are also important differences between Galen's and Plotinus' approaches to vision, which concentrate on three important issues: the visual ray theory, the role of the intermediate air in the process of vision, and vision as direct awareness. Galen, following Plato's *Timaeus*, supports a visual ray theory, where light or *pneuma* emanates from the eye, interacts with sunlight, and makes the intermediate air sensitive. Plotinus, however, rejects this model; he argues instead that perception occurs directly and immediately, without the need for rays or affected air. Furthermore, Galen proposes that the intermediate air functions as an extension of the body, analogical to how nerves connect the brain to sensory organs. Plotinus does not accept that the air plays a causal role in perception; he rather insists that vision is not an effect of alterations in a medium, but a direct

engagement between the perceiver and the object. In contrast to the indirect approach adopted by Galen, Plotinus argues that the form of the object reaches the eye directly, without undergoing a transformation in the air. The color of a peach for example, does not exist in the air in the same way that it exists in the fruit. This is because the presence of qualities in the air requires a bodily substrate, which Plotinus rejects. This explains why, in his theory, the distinction between seeing something in the air and seeing it in the object itself does not arise. While Galen and Plotinus share common ground in rejecting Stoic and Aristotelian views, their differences lie in how they understand perception. Galen, influenced by Plato's *Timaeus*, views the air as an active part of the process; Plotinus, on the other hand, takes a more immediate, metaphysical approach, treating perception as a direct relation between the soul and the object.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I have shown that Galen, while being agnostic concerning the essence of the soul, commits himself to the power of the demiurgic activity, calling it sometimes Nature, or Cosmic Soul, or Demiurge. Thus, there is a network where Galen envisages that we all are parts of this and, in this respect, the human sight corresponds to the sight of the universe. This is elucidated by the two different kinds of *pneuma* he refers to: the one in the brain and the other from above. Both can show us the colors of the objects and not the forms, but are connected sympathetically with all the “organs” to make the world visible. Furthermore Galen’s theory of powers denotes that some activities depend on powers outside of the body, perhaps divine, without defining the essence of them.²⁸¹ Galen in *PHP* refers

²⁸¹ “Another mistake is the failure to regard the natural cause of our construction as a demiurgic power (dunamis dêmiourgikê), whereby the parts are formed in a way suited to the characters of our souls. This was a point on which even Aristotle was in some doubt: should the power be attributed to some more divine cause, rather than just to hot, cold, dry, and wet? Those who rush to make simplistic statements on this greatest of issues, and explain construction purely in terms of the humoral qualities, seem to me to be in error. The latter are surely only the instruments, whereas the cause responsible for construction is something different from them. It is, however, possible even without engaging in enquiries of this kind to find out whether a mixture is wet, dry, cold, or hot, as has already been discussed. But these people ignore the specific indications, and then start talking about broader matters, which require a much longer enquiry and which have up to this day continued to baffle the best of philosophers” (24: *Temp.* I 635–6, = 79,20–80,6 Helmreich); see also R. J. Hankinson,

both to the *Timaeus* and the *Theaetetus*, when he refers to his theory of sight, but he cannot commit to any metaphysical principle. For Plotinus, the *Theaetetus* would be the dialogue where the incorporeal light and sight as activity will give rise to the first Being. In this respect, Plotinus will advance sight ontologically into a metaphysical actor of reality's origin.

Plato's *Theaetetus* and Plotinus V.3 [49], 9-11: the origin of perception and reality as the Manifold Eye of the Intellect

The myth of Plato's *Theaetetus* has been studied in relation to Plotinus' theory of consciousness. Pavlos Kalligas, in his commentary on *Ennead* V.3, has indicated that Plotinus uses an expression in the myth of the *Theaetetus* on the birth of perception (συνεκρίπτειν, 156 b1-2) as an analogy to talk about the mind's self-realization, of the mind being both an object and subject of thinking (νόησις).²⁸² Eyjólfur Emilsson and Pauliina Remes have also referred to Plotinus' theory of the self, echoing parts of the *Theaetetus*.²⁸³ Additionally, István Perczel argued for the birth of the Intellect from an incipient state of the second hypostasis, the "One Being," offering textual evidence which connects the *Theaetetus* with Plotinus' *Ennead* V.3 [49].²⁸⁴

"Galen and the ontology of powers", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 22.5 (2014), 971.

²⁸² See Kalligas' Greek edition of *Enneads* V.3: *Οι γνωριστικές υποστάσεις και το Επέκεινα*. ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ, *ΕΝΝΕΑΔΕΣ*. Αρχαίο κείμενο, Μετάφραση, Σχόλια Παύλος Καλλιγάς, Αθήνα: ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ, 2013, 303. The whole introduction to this *Ennead* in the Greek edition has contributed significantly to understand how Plotinus was engaged with other philosophers regarding the mind's intellection; see *ibid*, 275-283.

²⁸³ E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 90-91; Remes, *Plotinus on the Self: The Philosophy of the "We."*, 74-75.

²⁸⁴ See I. Perczel, "L' 'intellect amoureux' et l' 'un qui est': Une doctrine mal connue de Plotin," *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*, 15.2, 1997, 223-263.

Building on their contributions, I will make clear that Plotinus' view on reality and the origin of sight is based on the myth of the *Theaetetus*.²⁸⁵ For this endeavor, I will first need to explore the philosophical myth of the *Theaetetus*.²⁸⁶

Theaetetus is Plato's dialogue about epistemology. The protagonists of the dialogue are Socrates and Theaetetus, and the discussion evolves around the nature of knowledge. The backbone of the dialogue is the digression on midwifery. The digression appears in 148e-151d, but also sporadically all over the dialogue, and implies the role of Socrates as a midwife helping his interlocutors to bring forth knowledge. The metaphor reveals the deeper meaning of the dialogue: knowledge is like a birth process of the ideas coming from a higher level of reality, for which reason no definition of true knowledge exists.²⁸⁷

Before trying—and failing—to reach a conclusion about the question of what the nature of knowledge is, the dialogue explores the three layers of knowledge; from lower to higher, these are perception, opinion, and reasoning. Theaetetus first suggests that perception is knowledge and in this respect two connected theories should be examined: Protagoras' relativism, and its foundation in Heraclitus' theory of flux. Having agreed that knowledge is perception, Socrates goes on to explain how the theory of flux is founded on mysteries—"μέλλω σοι τὰ μυστήρια λέγειν"—which Socrates will soon reveal to Theaetetus. My interpretation is that, although by the end of the first section the hypothesis that knowledge

²⁸⁵ I will use the term "real self," which is the higher soul or intellect.

²⁸⁶ Plotinus' treatise on the virtues, I.2 [19], contains an extensive commentary on the *Theaetetus*. However, there, his interest focuses on finding a method for establishing his theory of ethics by distinguishing the virtues in two categories: the social and the contemplative virtues.

²⁸⁷ This is the way I understand the meaning of the dialogue, and it is crucial for the aim of this paper, namely, connecting Plato with Plotinus. There are numerous studies referring to the interpretations of the dialogue's inconclusive end, but the restricted aim of this paper does not permit their exploration.

is perception will be rejected, the theory of perception based on the principle of origin²⁸⁸ is introduced, but not entirely elaborated by Plato, and this is done purposefully.²⁸⁹

Οὐκοῦν οὕτω πως λέγει, ὥς οἷα μὲν ἕκαστα ἐμοὶ φαίνεται, τοιαῦτα μὲν ἔστιν ἐμοί,
οἷα δὲ σοί, τοιαῦτα δὲ αὖ σοί· ἄνθρωπος δὲ σύ τε κἀγώ;

Well, is not this about what he means, that individual things are for me such as they appear to me, and for you in turn such as they appear to you — you and I being “man”? (Translation by Harold N. Fowler)

So, Theaetetus and Socrates examine whether we, as individual parts of this world, could know the real things from within. To reply to this inquiry, Socrates needs to go back to the source of everything, on which everything depends, namely, motion (152c). To make his claim stronger, he mentions various authorities (Heraclitus, Empedocles, even Homer), who draw back to motion as the principle of the world’s generation (152d). Socrates goes on to distinguish two offspring of motion (κίνησις), locomotion and friction (φορά καὶ τρίψις), which bring about fire (153a). Fire is the material which constitutes the genus of animals (ζώων γένος), and Socrates takes the opportunity to say that even the soul is motion (153c), and that the sun’s and heaven’s motions give life to everything. After this, Socrates suggests to Theaetetus to apply the principle of motion to the theory of vision (153e), but Theaetetus, not being able to understand the correspondence, offers Socrates the opportunity to explain in detail how motion gives birth to the becoming of everything, and how everything is coming to a view in front of us.

²⁸⁸ This theory is part of the mysteries initiated by the authorities, among them that of Heraclitus. Plato’s respect for Heraclitus is acknowledged in many parts of his works. This makes stronger my suggestion that despite the refusal of the hypothesis that knowledge is perception, this part of the dialogue could reveal Plato’s views on the way we should perceive the real things.

²⁸⁹ This is not the only time that Plato leaves a question open-ended. Plato’s dialogues are playful and open to many interpretations. I believe that the theory of perception, which comes from the principle of origin, leaves hints for defining the “true knowledge” in the kingdom of forms. In the *Theaetetus*, though, nowhere does Plato refer to this. I am almost sure that this is where Plotinus takes the thread to talk about the generation of the forms in V.3.

The main point of this description is that the first motion has two kinds in infinite multitude, “πλήθει μὲν ἄπειρον ἐκάτερον” (156a): one active and one passive, “δύναμιν δὲ τὸ μὲν ποιεῖν ἔχον, τὸ δὲ πάσχειν”. It is because of the intercourse and first contact of these two motions that everything comes to be perceived (αἰσθητόν) and the process of perception (αἴσθησις) is generated. The most important point to mention is that perception *is falling out always together* with the perceived object (“ἀεὶ συνεκπίπτουσα καὶ γεννωμένη μετὰ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ”, 156b), which means that there is no condition of causality, time, place, or order to make distinct these two entities. Here, the process and the object are generated and descending as one, although they appear at the end to be two, but still retaining this oneness within their relation. This part of the flux theory, as we will see, becomes very important for Plotinus’ theory of the self, too.

Socrates is adjusting a tale, abridging the teachings of the great authorities mentioned earlier, elucidating the connection of the unity with multiplicity, and introducing in this sacred context the generation of perception and its products.

ἀρχὴ δέ, ἐξ ἧς καὶ ἄ νυν δὴ ἐλέγομεν πάντα ἥρτηται, ἥδε αὐτῶν, ὡς τὸ πᾶν κίνησις ἦν καὶ ἄλλο παρὰ τοῦτο οὐδέν, τῆς δὲ κινήσεως δύο εἶδη, πλήθει μὲν ἄπειρον ἐκάτερον, δύναμιν δὲ τὸ μὲν ποιεῖν ἔχον, τὸ δὲ πάσχειν. ἐκ δὲ τῆς τούτων ὁμιλίας τε καὶ τρίψεως πρὸς ἄλληλα γίνεταί ἕκγονα πλήθει μὲν ἄπειρα, δίδυμα δέ, τὸ μὲν αἰσθητόν, τὸ δὲ αἴσθησις, ἀεὶ συνεκπίπτουσα καὶ γεννωμένη μετὰ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ. αἱ μὲν οὖν αἰσθήσεις τὰ τοιαῦτα ἡμῖν ἔχουσιν ὀνόματα, ὄψεις τε καὶ ἀκοαὶ καὶ ὀσφρήσεις καὶ ψύξεις τε καὶ καύσεις καὶ ἡδοναί γε δὴ καὶ λύπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ φόβοι κεκλημέναι καὶ ἄλλαι, ἀπέραντοι μὲν αἱ ἀνώνυμοι, παμπληθεῖς δὲ αἱ ὀνομασμέναι· τὸ δ’ αὖ αἰσθητὸν γένος τούτων ἐκάσταις ὁμόγονον, ὄψει μὲν χρώματα παντοδαπαῖς παντοδαπά, ἀκοαῖς δὲ ὡσαύτως φωναί, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις αἰσθήσεσι τὰ ἄλλα αἰσθητὰ συγγενῇ γιγνόμενα. τί δὴ οὖν ἡμῖν βούλεται οὗτος ὁ μῦθος, ὃ Θεαίτητε, πρὸς τὰ πρότερα; ἄρα ἐννοεῖς; ΘΕΑΙ. Οὐ πάνυ, ὃ Σώκρατες. ΣΩ. Ἀλλ’ ἄθρει ἐάν πως ἀποτελεσθῇ. βούλεται γὰρ δὴ λέγειν ὡς ταῦτα πάντα μὲν ὥσπερ λέγομεν κινεῖται, τάχος δὲ καὶ βραδυτῆς ἐν τῇ κινήσει αὐτῶν. ὅσον μὲν οὖν βραδύ, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς τὰ πλησιάζοντα τὴν κίνησιν ἴσχει καὶ οὕτω δὴ γεννᾷ, τὰ δὲ γεννώμενα οὕτω δὴ θάπτω ἐστίν. φέρεται γὰρ καὶ ἐν φορᾷ αὐτῶν ἡ κίνησις πέφυκεν. ἐπειδὴν οὖν ὄμμα καὶ ἄλλο τι τῶν τούτῳ συμμέτρων πλησιάσαν γεννήσῃ τὴν λευκότητά τε καὶ αἴσθησιν αὐτῇ

σύμφυτον, ἃ οὐκ ἂν ποτε ἐγένετο ἐκατέρου ἐκείνων πρὸς ἄλλο ἐλθόντος, τότε δὴ μεταξὺ φερομένων τῆς μὲν ὄψεως πρὸς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, τῆς δὲ λευκότητος πρὸς τοῦ συναποτίκτοντος τὸ χρῶμα, ὁ μὲν ὀφθαλμὸς ἄρα ὄψεως ἔμπλεως ἐγένετο καὶ ὁρᾷ δὴ τότε καὶ ἐγένετο οὐ τι ὄψις ἀλλ' ὀφθαλμὸς ὁρῶν, τὸ δὲ συγγενῆσαν τὸ χρῶμα λευκότητος περιεπλήσθη καὶ ἐγένετο οὐ λευκότης αὖ ἀλλὰ λευκόν, εἴτε ξύλον εἴτε λίθος εἴτε ὀτφοῦν συνέβη χρῆμα χρωσθῆναι τῷ τοιούτῳ χρώματι. καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ οὕτω, σκληρὸν καὶ θερμὸν καὶ πάντα, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὑποληπτέον, αὐτὸ μὲν καθ' αὐτὸ μηδὲν εἶναι, ὃ δὴ καὶ τότε ἐλέγομεν, ἐν δὲ τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα ὁμιλίᾳ πάντα γίνεσθαι καὶ παντοῖα ἀπὸ τῆς κινήσεως, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ ποιοῦν εἶναί τι καὶ τὸ πάσχον αὐτῶν ἐπὶ ἐνὸς νοῆσαι, ὥς φασιν, οὐκ εἶναι παγίως.

The principle, on which all those things about we have just been speaking²⁹⁰ depend (from where all those things we have been speaking take their origin) is that all things were uniquely motion and nothing else, while the motion had two sorts, both in infinite multitude; one had the power to affect and the other to be affected. From the mutual intercourse and friction of the two, there are born products (children), in infinite multitude, being twins, one being perceptible, and the other being the perception, which is always *falling out* and is produced *together with* the perceived. The perceptions have the following names: *sights*, acts of hearing, of smelling, also of cooling down and warming up; there are also those called pleasures and sorrows, desires, and fears as well as yet others, those nameless, unlimited in number, and those that have got names—very many. As to the perceptible kind of these products, they are born together with each of the former: together with the *sights* of all sorts, colors of all sorts, and voices in the same way together with the acts of hearing as well as the other perceptible qualities, born as kindred to the other perceptions [...]

The myth wants to say that all these things are moving, as we are saying, and there is *speed* and *slowness* in their motion. Those which move, so to say, *slowly*, have their motion in the same place and in relation to those that are next to them, in this way they give birth and those born are, per consequent, *faster*. In fact, the

²⁹⁰ These are the distinct things they were speaking about, including qualities, etc.

latter are changing place, and, by nature, their motion consists in changing place.²⁹¹

So when the eye and something from among those which are *commensurate* to the eye meet and give birth to the whiteness and the perception connatural to this—which would never come to being if both had met something else—then, *sight* and whiteness are moving in between, namely, *sight* coming from the eye and whiteness coming from the thing that gives birth—together with the eye—to the color, then the eye had become full of *sight* and it sees by then and has become *not just some sight but a seeing eye* [οὗ τι ὄψις ἀλλ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ὁρῶν], while the thing that had given birth—together with the eye—to the color, became fully endowed with whiteness and has become, on its turn, not whiteness but white wood, or stone, or anything else to which it has happened to be colored by this color. All the other qualities, the hard, the warm, and everything else, should be understood in the same way. Taken by themselves they are nothing, as we said this earlier, but everything becomes, and becomes variegated from the motion, since it is even impossible, as they say, to stably conceive of one of them to be active or passive (156a-157a).

Socrates, after naming the different kinds of perception, focuses on the foremost of them in connection with reality: the vision and the perception of the visible objects. The principle of this vision is two kinds of first motion: a passive and an active one. Therefore, the interpretation is as follows: if perception and the perceived are born together in higher reality, analogically, the object seen and sight are becoming together as well; and in material reality, it is not just some sight which perceives the things. When the eye and the color, coming from the object seen, meet, they are affected by each other and then this sight takes its real embodied essence and becomes not *some sight*, but a complete sight, the *eye which sees* (“οὗ τι ὄψις ἀλλ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ὁρῶν”). Therefore, there is no definition of the things themselves fixed by the human beings, since this definition cannot grasp the real nature of the things, the nature which includes the oneness in multiplicity and the multiplicity in oneness.

²⁹¹ Perczel suggests that it is implied that the slower motion is alteration, while the faster is changing place. I would add to this that slower motion is friction between the seen and the one which sees, as previously mentioned, and this is why the first *seen* light/fire is generated.

The theory of flux presented in the form of a tale, which conveys the wisdom of the initiated philosophers as mentioned in the *Theaetetus*, instigates Plotinus to elaborate his own theory of the construction of reality. Plotinus' reading of the *Theaetetus* transfers the meaning of the myth from the plane of sense-perception to that of intellectual intuition and uses the myth to explain the first origins of any knowledge. In this sense, Plotinus supplements Plato's inconclusive dialogue with a solution for the problem of knowledge.

More precisely, in V.3 [49] 9-11,²⁹² after clarifying that our soul's purification comes with leaving aside the bodily dwelling, Plotinus goes on to explore the higher realm of existence, the upper part of the soul, and the intellect's meeting with the One. In this exploration, he shows that the root of the self's realization is at the level of intellect. The way he demonstrates this is illustrative: if we wish to grasp this "first soul" (V.3 [49], 9.28-29),²⁹³ we need to start ascending from the realm of *doxa*, or from the realm of sense-perception. Sense-perception becomes the means for exploring the human soul, which includes the extension of the intellectual forms and offers the place for their material manifestation. This is the primary step of the ascendance towards the primary soul, the intellectual soul, which becomes independent from sense-perception. This point shows that Plotinus' interpretation of the *Theaetetus* considers real knowledge to be a process of ascendance to the forms, while sense-perception is the gate by which we enter the higher realm.

Εἰ δέ τις ἀδυνατεῖ τὴν πρώτην τὴν τοιαύτην ψυχὴν ἔχειν καθαρῶς νοοῦσαν, δοξαστικὴν λαβέτω, εἴτα ἀπὸ ταύτης ἀναβαίνεται. Εἰ δὲ μηδὲ τοῦτο, αἰσθησὶν ἐμπλατύτερα τὰ εἶδη κοιμιζομένην, αἰσθησὶν δὲ καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς μεθ' ὧν δύναται καὶ ἤδη ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσιν οὔσαν. Εἰ δὲ βούλεται τις, καταβαίνων καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν γεννῶσαν ἴτω μέχρι καὶ ὧν ποιεῖ· εἴτα ἐντεῦθεν ἀναβαίνεται ἀπὸ ἐσχάτων εἰδῶν εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα ἀνάπαλιν εἶδη, μᾶλλον δὲ εἰς τὰ πρῶτα.

But if someone is unable to grasp this first soul, which is purely intellective, let him take the one that forms opinions, and then ascend from this. But if he cannot

²⁹² Emilsson has offered an extensive analysis of the generation of Intellect and V.3 [49]: E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007, 80-123.

²⁹³ "First" was deleted by Dodds as a gloss. However, it is important not to miss this "first" since it denotes the upper, purely intellective, part of the soul.

even do this, let him take sense-perception which acquires the forms in broader extension and sense-perception by itself, together with what it is capable to, which is already in the forms. If someone wants to, let him descend to the soul that gives birth down to those which it produces. Then, from there, let him ascend from the last forms to the last forms of the other end, more precisely to the first [V.3 [49] 9.28-35].

Another point made, which shows the parallelism with *Theaetetus*, is that the realm of sense-perception is giving birth to its products, just like the process in the intellectual realm. I assume that in this case Plotinus asserts that sense-perception imitates the intellect's perception of itself, becomes a complete sight, a sight which becomes the generative principle of forms of different levels, higher and lower, in the intellectual world.²⁹⁴

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ταύτη. Οὐδὲ τὰ ποιηθέντα μόνον· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἦν ἔσχατα. Ἐκεῖ δὲ πρῶτα τὰ ποιοῦντα, ὅθεν καὶ πρῶτα. Δεῖ οὖν ἅμα καὶ τὸ ποιοῦν εἶναι καὶ ἐν ἅμφω· εἰ δὲ μὴ, δεήσει πάλιν ἄλλου. Τί οὖν; οὐ δεήσει πάλιν <ἄλλου> ἐπέκεινα τούτου; ἢ ὁ μὲν νοῦς τοῦτο; Τί οὖν; οὐχ ὁρᾷ ἑαυτόν; Ἡ οὗτος οὐδὲν δεῖται ὀράσεως. Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο εἰς ὕστερον· νῦν δὲ πάλιν λέγωμεν—οὐ γὰρ περὶ τοῦ ἐπιτυχόντος ἢ σκέψις—λεκτέον δὲ πάλιν τοῦτον τὸν νοῦν δεηθῆναι τοῦ ὁρᾶν ἑαυτόν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἔχειν τὸ ὁρᾶν ἑαυτόν, πρῶτον μὲν τῷ πολὺν εἶναι, εἴτα καὶ τῷ ἐτέρου εἶναι, καὶ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὀρατικὸν εἶναι, καὶ ὀρατικὸν ἐκείνου, καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ ὄρασιν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ ὄντος τινὸς ἄλλου ὄρασιν δεῖ εἶναι, μὴ δὲ ὄντος μάτην ἐστί. Δεῖ τοίνυν πλείω ἐνὸς εἶναι, ἵνα ὄρασις ᾗ, καὶ συνεκπίπτειν τὴν ὄρασιν τῷ ὀρατῷ, καὶ τὸ ὀρώμενον τὸ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πλῆθος εἶναι ἐν παντί. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔχει τὸ ἐν πάντα εἰς τί ἐνεργήσῃ, ἀλλὰ μόνον καὶ ἔρημον ὃν πάντα στήσεται. Ἡ γὰρ ἐνεργεῖ, ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο· εἰ δὲ μὴ εἴη ἄλλο, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο, τί καὶ ποιήσει; ἢ ποῦ προβήσεται; Διὸ δεῖ τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ἢ περὶ ἄλλο ἐνεργεῖν, ἢ αὐτὸ πολὺ τι εἶναι, εἰ μέλλοι ἐνεργεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ. Εἰ δὲ μὴ τι προελεύσεται ἐπ' ἄλλο, στήσεται· ὅταν δὲ πᾶσαν στάσιν, οὐ νοήσῃ. Δεῖ τοίνυν τὸ νοοῦν, ὅταν νοῇ, ἐν δυσὶν εἶναι, καὶ ἡ ἕξω θάτερον ἢ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἅμφω, καὶ ἀεὶ ἐν ἐτερότητι τὴν νόησιν εἶναι καὶ ἐν ταυτότητι δὲ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· καὶ εἶναι τὰ κυρίως νοούμενα πρὸς τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ

²⁹⁴ Plotinus makes it clear in V.5 [32] that the *nous* as a whole is all the forms together and that each form in turn is the entire *nous* in potentiality.

καὶ ἕτερα. Καὶ πάλιν αὖ ἕκαστον τῶν νοουμένων συνεκφέρει τὴν ταυτότητα ταύτην καὶ τὴν ἑτερότητα· ἢ τί νοήσῃ, ὃ μὴ ἔχει ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο; Καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἕκαστον λόγος, πολλά ἐστι. Καταμανθάνει τοίνυν ἑαυτὸ τῷ ποικίλῳ ὀφθαλμὸν εἶναι ἢ ποικίλων χρωμάτων.

So much for this. If there were only the forms that are produced, they would not be the last ones. There, the first are those productive,²⁹⁵ for which reason they are first. Therefore, there should also be the productive principle and the two are one, or, if not so, it would be in need of yet another. And then? Will it not need something beyond this one? This one is the mind. And then? Does this not see itself? But That has no need of *sight*.

But this is for later. Now let us say again—for our investigation is “not about some casual matter”²⁹⁶—, so we should say again that this mind needs to see itself, first of all, because it is many,²⁹⁷ then, because it belongs to another and is, by necessity, *a seer* and a *seer* of That and its substance is *sight*.²⁹⁸ In fact, only if there is something else can there be sight, if there were none, it would be in vain.²⁹⁹ Therefore, there must be more than one, so that there may be *sight* and the *sight* must *fall out together with the object seen*,³⁰⁰ and what it sees must be a

²⁹⁵ Or: “those that are affecting.”

²⁹⁶ Plato, *Republic*, I 352d5-6.

²⁹⁷ This refers to *multitude* in the *Theaetetus*.

²⁹⁸ Cf. *Theaetetus* 156a: “These are those people who think that nothing else exists but what they can hold fast in their hand but do not accept that acts, events, or anything invisible would fall in a lot of substance.”

²⁹⁹ Cf. *Theaetetus* 157a: “So from all these things about which we were speaking from the very beginning, none is itself in itself but is always coming to being together with something else.”

³⁰⁰ Cf. *Theaetetus* 156b: “From the mutual intercourse and friction of the two there are born products (children), in infinite multitude, being twins, one being perceptible and the other being the perception, which is always *falling out* and is produced *together with* the perceived.” Armstrong’s translation is erroneous here. See Armstrong: “There must, then, be more than one, that seeing may exist, and the seeing and the seen must *coincide*.”

universal multitude. For what is absolutely One has nothing to which to direct its activity but since it is “alone isolated,”³⁰¹ it will remain absolutely at rest. For in so far as it is active, there is other and yet another. If there is no other and yet another, what would it do (what would it make/what would it affect)?³⁰² Or where would it proceed? Therefore, that which is active must either be acting on something else or must itself be many³⁰³ if it is to be active within itself. But if something is not going to go forth to something else, it will be immobile; but when it is altogether immobile it will not have intellection.³⁰⁴ The intelligent principle, then, when it perceives intellectually, must be in two parts,³⁰⁵ and either one must be external to the other or both must be the same, and the intellection must be in otherness and necessarily also in sameness, and the proper objects of perception must be the same and other in relation to the mind. And again, each one of the intellectually perceived objects *brings out together with itself* [συνεκφέρει] this sameness and otherness.³⁰⁶ For certainly, if each one is a rational principle, it is many. Therefore, it comes to know itself by being a manifold eye or consisting of manifold colours.³⁰⁷ [V.3 [49] 10.1-31]

This passage intimates that sense-perception and sight in the *Theaetetus* are indirectly connected to the role of the Intellect, the second level of reality, which perceives itself and,

³⁰¹ *Philebus*, 63b 7-8.

³⁰² “τί καὶ ποιήσει”; a reference to the active movement in the *Theaetetus*.

³⁰³ This refers, once again, to *Theaetetus* 156a. See above n. 36.

³⁰⁴ Cf. *Theaetetus* 157a: “since it is even impossible, as they say, to stably conceive of one of them to be active or passive.”

³⁰⁵ Cf. *Theaetetus* 156a: “that all (things) were uniquely motion and nothing else, while the motion had two sorts, both in infinite multitude; one had the power to affect and the other to be affected.”

³⁰⁶ This is a combination of *Sophist* 254d-e with *Theaetetus* 156d-e: “then, sight and whiteness are moving in between [μεταξὺ φερομένων], namely sight coming from the eye and whiteness coming from the thing that gives birth—together with the eye—to the colour.”

³⁰⁷ See the previous note.

by perceiving itself, the one intellectual being ends up as two and then multiple.³⁰⁸ In fact, it is in this respect that the subject becomes object and then multiple objects. Multiplicity appears because the mind seeks to find completeness, unity defined by the desire for Intellect to become a whole.³⁰⁹ This need creates the first split, the first movement. This first movement renders the intellect a manifold eye, ποικίλον ὀφθαλμόν, which unfolds all the intelligible contents due to its desire to grasp the One. At the very moment that it turns to itself, while trying to grasp the One, it produces simultaneously the seer, the seeing, and the object seen, and thus the Intellect becomes ἰδοῦσα ὄψις, a fulfilled, complete sight. This is perfectly analogical to what the myth says about the sense of sight: when the sight and the color, coming from the object seen, meet, they are affected by each other and it is then that this sight takes its real essence and becomes the *eye which sees* (“οὗ τι ὄψις ἀλλ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ὁρῶν,” 156e). According to Plotinus, before this phase the intellect is not a whole: it is just an inchoate or an “unimprinted sight” (ἀτύπωτος ὄψις).³¹⁰

At this point, a further clarification on the complete and inchoate, or unimprinted, sight is required: Perczel suggested that the two first motions, passive and active, in the *Theaetetus* correspond to the two phases of the Intellect’s movement towards its source, the One, in V.3 [49] 11. In his article “L’‘intellect amoureux’ et l’‘un qui est’” he analyzing the passage VI. 7 [38] 35, 19-25, which speaks about two powers of the mind, “one through which it sees its own content” and “one by which it sees those beyond itself [thus, in plural!] through a sort of

³⁰⁸ One may wonder whether this reuse of the *Theaetetus*’ myth on the birth of perception has also to do with Plotinus’ polemic with the Gnostics, running through his entire oeuvre. Gnostic teachings claim that the evil lies in multiplicity and generation, in a vertical, top-down creation. Also, in Plotinus’ school, Gnostics were considered a sort of schismatic school sprouting from the schools of “ancient philosophy” (see Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 16.1-2). So, it is important for Plotinus to correct what he considered a misinterpretation of Plato’s dialogues. Thus, one may suppose that Plotinus’ transposition of the philosophical myth on perception to the level of the mind is based on the anti-Gnostic conviction that sense-perception is an analogical image of intellection.

³⁰⁹ Emilsson explains, and I fully agree with him, that it is not the intellectual nature that motivates the Intellect to split into subject and object, but the desire to become a whole; E. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007, 104.

³¹⁰ V.3 [49] 11, 12.

concentration (ἐπιβολή) and reception (παραδοχή), Perczel distinguishes three states of the genesis of the mind: one in which it is entirely concentrated in the “one being” – this is the moment of concentration (ἐπιβολή) –, a second one, in which it becomes an “indefinite dyad” (ἀόριστος δυάς) corresponding to the “unimprinted sight” (ἀτύπωτος ὄψις) of the *Theaetetus* and of V. 3 – this is the moment of reception (παραδοχή) –, and a third one, in which it becomes “a vision that has seen” (ἰδοῦσα ὄψις) of the *Theaetetus* and V. 3 again, I”.³¹¹ If this is the case, then Perczel presupposes that the intellect in an eternal movement constitutes itself in the double act of concentration and reception. However, Emilsson, following Lloyd, suggests that Intellect apprehends an already contained image of the One, for Intellect needs to move forward to its self-determination.³¹² In this respect, the stress is on the Intellect’s activity from a state of potentially being fully actualized to the state of full actualization. Thus, the correspondence of the first motion’s principle in *Theaetetus* with the Intellect’s unprocessed full actualization in V.3 [49] takes this form: during the inchoate or unimprinted sight, Intellect has a pre-noetic experience of the One, and during the complete sight, it proceeds with the noetic experience of the One’s image and of itself and it becomes actualized.

Plotinus seeks to demonstrate that sight is of divine origin and plays a fundamental role in the generation of reality. As such, it possesses the capacity to perceive forms directly in any level of reality, without relying on any medium, especially not a materialistic one. By connecting human sight to the realm of intellect, *sympatheia* also is elevated to a higher level of unity, reflecting the interconnectedness of all things within a metaphysical framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Plotinus’ theory of sight in relation to *sympatheia*, placing it in dialogue with the views of Aristotle, the Stoics, Galen, and ultimately Plato. Plotinus’ fundamental argument is that sight does not require a material medium such as air or light to function; rather, it is facilitated by a direct unity between the subject and the object, rooted in

³¹¹ I. Perczel, “L’‘intellect amoureux’ et l’‘un qui est’: une doctrine mal connue de Plotin”, *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*, 15.2, 235-236.

³¹² For an excellent overview of the discussion on this, see Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, 75-76.

the activity of the soul. This rejection of intermediary transmission positions his theory in contrast to the dominant materialist accounts of perception in antiquity.

A central point in Plotinus' argument is that vision occurs through the natural affinity (οικειότης) between the eye and the object, rather than by means of a medium that transmits impressions. He systematically dismantles Aristotle's claim that a transparent body like air must be activated by light to enable sight, arguing instead that any medium would obstruct rather than facilitate perception. Similarly, he rejects Stoic and Galenic explanations that involve the stretching of the *pneuma*, or the interaction of the luminous visual ray with the surrounding air. By shifting the explanation away from physical transmission, Plotinus presents vision as an activity of the soul that is immediate and continuous with the unity of the cosmos. The chapter also highlights Plotinus' engagement with Galen, who, despite his medical materialism, shares some common ground with him regarding the connection between sight and cosmic unity. Galen's theory of the visual *pneuma*, which extends from the brain and interacts with the external air, reflects an attempt to reconcile Platonic and Stoic elements. However, for Plotinus, vision cannot depend on a bodily mechanism like the *pneuma*; instead, it is a function of the soul's activity, which, in turn, is an extension of the greater unity of the cosmic Soul.

At the heart of Plotinus' theory is the idea that perception operates according to the same principles that structure reality itself. Just as the Intellect perceives itself by producing its own multiplicity, so too does vision occur through a direct and inherent relation between the perceiver and the perceived. His use of Plato's *Theaetetus* reinforces this idea: just as perception and the perceived object come into being together, so does the Intellect generate its own contents by turning toward itself. This parallel suggests that seeing is not merely a sensory act, but a metaphysical event—an active participation in the unity of being. Plotinus' theory of sight ultimately serves a broader philosophical function: it reinforces the notion that all perception, and indeed all knowledge, depends on a deeper unity within the structure of reality. *Sympatheia*, rather than material transmission, is the true cause of perception. This means that seeing is not a process of reception, but an activity of recognition, mirroring the way in which the Intellect knows itself and generates the forms. By grounding vision in the activity of the soul rather than in physical processes, Plotinus ensures that perception remains connected to the metaphysical order of the cosmos.

In conclusion, Plotinus' critique of intermediary theories of sight is not merely a rejection of materialist explanations, but a reaffirmation of his broader philosophical system. Vision, like all forms of perception, is rooted in the unity of the soul and its connection to the cosmic order. By emphasizing the immediacy of perception and its relation to the structure of reality, Plotinus bridges the gap between epistemology and metaphysics, showing that to see is ultimately to participate in the fundamental intelligibility of the cosmos.

Conclusions

In this dissertation, I have explored the intricate philosophical and medical frameworks of Galen and Plotinus, focusing particularly on their concepts of *sympatheia*, the role of the Demiurge, and the nature of the soul's connection to the body and the cosmos. My research has demonstrated how the two thinkers, drawing on Plato's *Timaeus*, developed an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the corporeal and the intelligible, presenting a worldview in which the soul acts both as mediator and as unifier. Through a careful examination of Galen's and Plotinus texts, I have traced a lineage of thought that stresses out the coherence and interconnectedness of all levels of existence.

One of the key conclusions of this study is the centrality of *sympatheia* in both Galenic and Plotinian thought. For Galen, *sympatheia* is manifested in the intricate functional interrelations of the body, where each organ communicates within a harmonious network governed by the Demiurge's design. This perspective aligns with Galen's broader teleological view, in which natural faculties operate with purposeful causality. Plotinus, while adopting and expanding upon this framework, extends *sympatheia* beyond the corporeal realm. His theory intimates that the soul's kinetic activity generates an analogical spatiality that unifies the cosmos. In this sense, *sympatheia* serves not only as a medical or physiological concept, but as a metaphysical principle that bridges the material and the intelligible.

The role of analogical spatiality is fundamental in understanding *sympatheia*'s mechanics throughout the dissertation. Analogical spatiality, in Plotinus' framework, represents the way in which the soul's influence is extended in a non-local, metaphysical manner, ensuring that the unity of the cosmos is maintained, despite the apparent separation of individual entities. This concept explains how the soul's activities are not bound by physical locality, but rather function in a dynamic relational space, where intellectual, psychic, and corporeal realms interact.

Galen's approach, rooted in empirical observation and agnostic theology, reveals a tension between his medical empiricism, and his acknowledgment of a higher organizing principle. While he remains skeptical of the soul's immortality, his recognition of the body's complexity suggests a divine craftsmanship at work. Plotinus, in contrast, fully embraces the metaphysical implications of this order, positioning the Demiurge as an emanative principle that sustains the unity of the cosmos. His concept of analogical spatiality elucidates how the

soul, while seemingly fragmented across different faculties, remains essentially one, participating in a divine hierarchy that extends from the One to the physical world. The hierarchical structure of the higher reality is mapped through this analogical spatiality connecting the intelligible realm to the corporeal, via the discursive activity of the soul, where each level of being mirrors the higher principles that guide its formation and function.

The dissertation has also highlighted how Plotinus and Galen contribute to a broader philosophical discourse on the nature of perception and knowledge. Galen's physiological theories, particularly his views on the *pneuma*, suggest a material basis for cognition and sensory experience. However, Plotinus reinterprets these ideas to align with his non-materialist ontology, arguing that perception occurs through an innate affinity between the perceiver and the perceived, rather than through intermediary transmission. This distinction is crucial in understanding how Plotinus distances himself from Stoic materialism and Aristotelian rationalism, while still engaging with these theories. Analogical spatiality plays a significant role in this interpretation, as it suggests that perception and knowledge are functions of the soul's ability to mediate between levels of reality, bypassing material constraints.

Furthermore, my exploration of the relationship between the Demiurge and the soul of the universe has underscored the complexity of divine causality in both thinkers. In some of his works, Galen speaks about an inscrutable Demiurge, while in others he seems to identify the Demiurge with the soul of the universe, which is responsible for corporeal animation, leaving open the question of the nature of this higher soul. Sometimes he seems to identify this demiurgic soul with nature (φύσις). According to his views, the rational souls (our souls) are parts of this universal demiurgic soul. Based on his medical experiences, Galen teaches that the living bodies are not operated by the rational souls, but by another soul or souls, directly dependent on the soul of the universe. He leaves open the question whether each non-rational faculty (the sentient and the vegetative) is a separate living being depending on the soul of the universe, or is directly animated by the great soul.

Plotinus refines this framework by positing a tripartite emanation process, wherein the intellect generates the world soul, which in turn gives rise to the material cosmos and animates it through its vegetative faculty, while its rational and sentient faculties remain beyond the physical world (ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπουράνιον ἀψίδα [Plato, *Phaedrus* 247ab]). The same problem that occupied Galen (namely the unawareness of the rational soul of the processes in

its body, while the body obeys the commands of the will (a problem that will later be paramount for Descartes) also occupies Plotinus' mind. Yet, his solution, a logical consequence of his hierarchical metaphysics, is different from that of Galen. For Plotinus, the last inhabitant of the intelligible world is the "universal soul," whose parts in an equal rank, that of the "partial souls", are both the world-soul and the rational souls. Thus, all the souls are ontologically and epistemologically one, yet distinguished like the theorems in science, such as Euclidian mathematics. This unity in diversity explains the *sympatheia* between the rational soul and its body, animated by the demiurgic soul of the universe, as well as the *sympatheia* between all the parts of the world, and finally all sense-perception. This monist, yet hierarchical, model preserves both the unity and multiplicity of existence, reflecting the broader Neoplatonic vision of reality as a structured yet dynamic totality. In this hierarchical unfolding, analogical spatiality ensures the coherence of different levels of existence by providing a framework for the interaction between the intelligible and the cosmic realms, and the rational souls.

The metaphor of dance, employed by Plotinus to illustrate the ordered movement of the heavens, encapsulates the essence of *sympatheia*. Just like a well-choreographed dance maintains its harmony through coordinated motion, the cosmos sustains its unity through the kinetic activity of the soul. This imagery reinforces the connection between ethics and metaphysics in Plotinian thought: to live virtuously is to align oneself with the cosmic order, mirroring the soul's ascent toward the intellect and the One. Galen's medical analogy similarly suggests that health, both physical and spiritual, is achieved through balance and proper function within a larger system. Analogical spatiality operates within this framework by ensuring that all movements, whether cosmic or ethical, are guided by the same harmonious principles that govern the universe.

Ultimately, the analysis demonstrates that *sympatheia* is not merely an explanatory device, but a fundamental ontological principle that underlies the unity of being. Whether approached through the lens of Galenic physiology or Plotinian metaphysics, the idea that all parts of existence are interconnected through a higher organizing principle remains a powerful and enduring concept. By bridging the gap between medicine and philosophy, between empirical observation and metaphysical speculation, Galen and Plotinus offer a vision of reality that is both deeply structured and dynamically open-ended. Their insights continue to resonate in contemporary discussions on the nature of consciousness, the interrelation of mind and body, and the philosophical implications of scientific inquiry. Analogical spatiality serves as a

mechanism that allows these insights to be consistently applied across different domains, ensuring that *sympatheia* functions as a binding force between knowledge, perception, and reality.

In conclusion, this dissertation has sought to illuminate the connection between the philosophical and medical traditions that shaped the concept of *sympatheia* in late antiquity. By examining the thought of Galen and Plotinus within their historical and intellectual contexts, I believe to have gained a deeper appreciation of the ways in which ancient thinkers were involved with questions of causality, unity, and divine order. Their works serve as a testament to the enduring human quest to understand the nature of existence, reminding us that the search for knowledge, whether through science or philosophy, is ultimately a pursuit of harmony and interconnectedness. Analogical spatiality emerges as a key concept in this pursuit, demonstrating how the unity of the cosmos is maintained through metaphysical continuity and relational structuring, ensuring that all levels of reality remain meaningfully connected.

Appendix

Introduction

The chapter offers a new translation of the treatise IV.5, as I believe that this will shed light on Plotinus' arguments for *sympatheia* and its relation to sight. The translation is a joint work done together with István Perczel. Regarding the form of this translation, we have chosen to compose it in a dialogue form. Indeed, it is unclear whether Plotinus is asking the question and makes the counterarguments himself, or he is challenged by an interlocutor. Be this as it may, the composition seems to reflect a classroom or a dialogue setting.

While trying to reconstruct the precise argument of the treatise, we felt obliged to emend the edition of Henry and Schwyzer. Often, we changed the punctuation, accepted different variants from the apparatus criticus, or suggested emendations for texts suffering from iotacism. We hope that, in so doing, we were able to reconstruct the logical argument of the treatise, famous among researchers for its alleged obscurity.³¹³ Thus, we are giving a new translation and commentaries. The Greek *Lesetext* serving as basis for this translation will be published separately, together with the translation and the commentaries.

³¹³ See, for example, E. Emilsson, "Plotinus on *sympatheia*", in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 54.

IV.5 (29) Third treatise on the questions concerning the soul, or about vision

1.

P. Since we have promised to investigate the question whether it is possible to see without any medium, such as air, or any other so-called transparent body, now we should proceed to this investigation. We have said that vision and, in general, sense-perception, should come about by means of a kind of body. In fact, without a body the soul is by all means in the intelligible [realm], while – as sense-perception is the perception not of the intelligible but of the sensible only – the soul should somehow become connected to the sensible objects and thus, create for itself a sort of communion of knowledge or affection to them. It is for this reason that the knowledge [of the sensible objects] occurs by means of corporeal organs. In fact, through these, as they are, so to say, connatural, or congruous [with the sensible objects], the soul, so to say, is united to those sensible objects, as in this way there occurs a sort of common affection [between the soul and the sensible objects].

I. Now, if it is necessary that there occurs some connection to the objects of knowledge, why should one make any query about those objects that become known by means of some sort of touching?

However, about vision – let us leave for later the question of hearing – so, however, about seeing, should there be a corporeal medium between the sight and the color,³¹⁴ or the corporeal medium would accidentally impinge [upon the sight]³¹⁵ but would not contribute in any manner to the seeing for those who see?

P. However, if it is so that, if the bodies are dense, such as the earthly bodies, this prevents the vision, but the lighter are those in-between, the better we see, would one claim that those in-between are either contributing, or, if they do not contribute, at least they are not impeding? One would rather say that they are impeding.

³¹⁴ If we place the full stop after χρώματος, the sentence would have no predicate. The end of the sentence comes after ὁρῶσιν.

³¹⁵ This is a Stoic theory, mentioned by Alexander of Aphrodisias: *De anima suppl. Aristot.* II 1, p. 130, 15 = SVF II n. 864.

I. Yet is not it so that first the medium receives the affection and, so to speak, it gets imprinted? An indication thereof is that, if someone were standing in front of us,³¹⁶ looking at the [same] color, he would see it, too. If there had not occurred an affection in the medium, this would not have reached us.

P. However, it is not necessary that the medium also be affected, if that which is naturally disposed to be affected, that is, the eye, is affected. Or, if it is affected, it is affected by something else, just as the fishing rod, which is in-between the torpedo fish and the hand, is not affected by the same thing as that which affects the hand.

I. However, even in this case, if the rod and the line were not in-between, the hand would not be affected.

P. Yet, this point is also open to doubt. In fact, people tell that, if the <torpedo fish> gets in the net, the fisherman [equally] would suffer growing torpid. But in fact, it seems that our discourse is touching the so-called mutual affections (συμπάθειαι). If this and this is naturally disposed to be affected through mutual affection by that and that, because it has some likeness to it, then, the medium, being unlike, would not be affected, or would not be affected by the same affection. If this is so, then, if nothing is in-between, that which naturally is disposed to be affected, would be even more affected, if there were nothing in-between, than if the medium were such that it would also be affected.

2.

P. If seeing is such that it connects the light of the vision to the light in-between, until the perceptible object, then this medium is the light³¹⁷ and the present hypothesis enquires about this medium. However, if the colored body that is the object [of vision] brings about the

³¹⁶ “ἐμπροσθέν τις ἡμῶν ἔσται coniecimus/ ἐμπροσθέν τις ἡμῶν ἔσται ἢ” MSS/ ἐμπροσθέν τις ἡμῶν ἔσται, ἢ coniecit H-S¹⁻² / ἐμπροσθέν τις ἡμῶν ἔσται [ἢ delete] coniecit Kirchoff et Volker. The opponent’s argument seems to be that the fact that wherever one stands in the same line produces the same vision is an argument in favour of the medium being imprinted and thus transmitting the impression.

³¹⁷ δεῖ <τὸ> μεταξὺ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ φῶς coniecimus/ δεῖ μεταξὺ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ φῶς MSS, H-S¹⁻².

alteration, then, what prevents the alteration from going directly to the eye without any medium, even if it is so that now, when there is something in-between, that which is in front of the eye is altered necessarily in some way?³¹⁸

As to those who pour out the sight [from the eye], they would not conclude that, by all means, there must be something in-between, if they were not afraid that the ray would fall to the ground. However, it is a ray of light and the light spreads straight ahead.

Those who claim that the vision occurs through a collision [of the ray of sight with the object] would by all means need the medium.

Those who stand for the image theory and say that the images are passing through the void, need the space, lest the vision would be impeded. Thus, given that, if nothing is in-between, there is even less impediment, they would not doubt our hypothesis.

Those who say that seeing is due to a community of affections, claim that one sees less well if there is a medium, to the extent that it would impede, hinder, and make deem the shared affection. Rather, there follows [from the hypothesis of a shared affection] to say that even that which is akin [to the vision] makes the shared affection dimmer insofar as it is also affected. For if a continuous body catching fire were to burn in its depth, yet the deepest part would be affected less than the one in front of the fire.

I. However, if the parts of one living being share affection among them, would they be less affected because there is something between them?

P. Perhaps, they would be affected less but the affection would be in commensurate according to the will of nature, and the medium would prevent the excess, unless somehow it were to be that the medium is not affected at all.

³¹⁸ Interpunctum editorum mutavimus. Plotinus asks that, if vision happens through an alteration in the seeing organ (the eye), why would the alteration not immediately happen in the eye if there is nothing in-between. And, according to Plotinus, this observation is valid even if now, that there is a medium in-between the eye and the visible object, there is an alteration in “what is in front of the eye,” that is the air.

I. Yet, if the living being has shared affection by the fact that it is one, and if we are affected because we are in and belong to one [living being], is it not necessary that, when we perceive that which is far away, that there be a continuity?

P. If we are positing the continuity and the medium because the living being needs to be continuous, then the affection of the continuum is accidental, lest we say that everything is affected by everything. However, if now one thing is affected by one thing and another by another, and not the same affection, we would not need to have everywhere the medium.³¹⁹ Now, if someone says that it is for the sight that a medium is needed, we should ask why. In fact it does not seem to be generally true that what goes through the air creates any affection to the air apart from simply dividing it. For instance, if a stone falls from above what else happens apart from the fact the air is unable to resist?³²⁰ For it is not reasonable to say that this [that is, that the stone falls] is a result of the reciprocal resistance (ἀντιπερίστασις)³²¹ because, in this way, also the fire would ascend due to reciprocal resistance. But this is impossible,³²² for the fire by the speed of its movement overtakes (φθάνει) the reciprocal resistance of the air.³²³ However, if anyone says that the reciprocal resistance of the air is speeded up because of the speed of the fire's movement, this would happen incidentally, and would not contribute to the upward movement. In fact, in the trees also, the impulse is to go

³¹⁹ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mantissa*, 127.

³²⁰ To resist the weight of the stone / the pressure.

³²¹ *Antiperistasis*: According to Aristotle, a moving object, which is no longer in touch with the mover, is moved by the medium through which it moves. What keeps the moving object in movement is that, as it leaves a portion of the air, that portion pushes it forward. Logically, this is connected to the idea that void does not exist.

³²² There is a natural movement of the object, and the air cannot resist. There is no need of the air for *antiperistasis*. If that were true, then the fire also would ascend due to *antiperistasis*.

³²³ The fire goes up because it is faster than the pushing of the air. This is the doctrine of impetus, which demolishes the Aristotelean theory. Sorabji claimed that Philoponus was the first advocate of the impetus theory=impulse, the acceleration of the falling bodies are the same because of the impulse. Yet here, in Plotinus, maybe we have the first hints of this impetus theory; see R. Sorabji, "John Philoponus", in idem (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 49.

upwards without anything pushing them, and we cut the air while moving and it is not the reciprocal resistance that pushes us, but the air only follows our movement and fills up the void.³²⁴ If then, the air is divided by bodies like these without being affected, in the case of the forms that are reaching our sight, what would prevent us from admitting that they go through the air even without division? But if the forms do not arrive as if in a flux,³²⁵ what need is there for the air to be affected and for the affection to reach us as a result of its previous affection? ³²⁶ In fact, if our perception results from a previous affection of the air, then, we would not see the object of sight by looking at it, but we would get the perception from that which lays close to us, just like when we are warmed. In this case, apparently, it is not the remote fire that warms us, but the warmed air lying close. For warming is by contact but for acts of seeing there is no contact. For this reason, it is not by being placed upon the eye that the sensible object makes us see, but the intermediary space must be illuminated.

I. Is it not so because the air is dark? Were it not dark, perhaps it would not need light. Because darkness is an obstacle to vision, it should be dominated by the light. So, perhaps, when the object is applied to the eye, it is not seen because it brings with it the shadow of the air and its own shadow.³²⁷

³²⁴ We are splitting the air as we are moving, and the air fills the void that our movement causes. This is an effect and not a cause of what is happening. The air is not affected by the movement of the light. The light comes to our eye without the air contributing – here Plotinus goes against Aristotle’s theory of seeing.

³²⁵ The idea is that there is a flux of light going through the air but does not affect the air.

³²⁶ Probably here Plotinus refers to the Peripatetic theory, which asserts that the forms arrive like a flux.

³²⁷ Apparently, this section is an objection by the interlocutor, who is trying to save the Peripatetic theory of vision through a gradual transmission via the air. Plotinus argues that, if vision occurred through such a gradual transmission, it would not happen through our sight looking directly at the visible object, but through the immediate action of the pre-affected air transmitting the forms that it first receives. However, according to Plotinus, if this were true, the visible object would also generate vision when it is placed directly upon the eye, just like any warm object or the fire generates the sensation of heat (even burning) at direct contact with the skin. Yet this is not so: the direct contact of the eye with the visible object does not

3.

P. Now, the major evidence for the fact that we do not see the form of the sense object and its shapes³²⁸ through the pre-affected air as if in a gradual transmission, is that during the night the fire and the stars and their shapes are seen in the darkness. For certainly, nobody will claim that the forms would enter the dark air and would get in contact [with the sight] in this way.³²⁹

I. Rather, [this is because] there would be no darkness because the fire has illuminated its own form.³³⁰ In fact, when it is very dark everywhere and even the stars are hidden, and the fire and the light from them is not illuminating from the luminaries, even then, the fire is seen from the lighthouses which are giving signs to the ships.

generate vision. To this argument, the interlocutor replies that the lack of vision at direct contact may be explained otherwise and thus the Peripatetic theory might be saved: In itself, the air is dark, and this is an obstacle to the vision. Unless the air is illuminated by the light, vision is not possible. Thus, the object directly placed upon the eye cannot be seen because of the shadow it casts upon the eye, which prevents the vision. The long excursus in chapter 3 on the way distant sources of light are seen during night through the dark air is Plotinus' response to this objection.

³²⁸ καὶ τὰς τούτου μορφάς coniecimus / καὶ τὰς τούτων μορφάς MSS/ delevit Kirchoff et H-S¹⁻² ut iteratum ex linea 4. Apparently, the scribe of the Byzantine hyparchetype changed τούτου to τούτων due to contamination from what follows in the sentence. The argument says that the fact of seeing fire and the stars through dark air in the night is the main proof that there is no need of a pre-affection of the air for vision to occur. This is a direct answer to the objection of the Interlocutor concerning the shadow of the object placed directly on the eye. For the structure of the sentence, see the Arabic paraphrase in *Dicta sapientis graeci*: “The proof that vision comes to the beholder without the air’s being affected by the form of the object of vision, consists in the things which we see at night, such as fire and the stars.”

³²⁹ That is, “how could one claim that the forms of the stars are affecting the dark air?”

³³⁰ Our conjecture is that this is the objection of the interlocutor, because otherwise the argument is not logical. However, the Arabic translator of the *Dicta sapientis graeci* understood it otherwise: “If that were so, the air would not be dark...” Yet, the break in the argumentation is also visible in the Arabic.

P. Now, even if someone were to say that even in these conditions the fire passes through and hits the sense-perception, in this case the eyesight should have apprehended the dim fire that is in the air and not that fire itself, which is clear. Yet, if even there is a dark medium in-between, still what lies beyond is seen, then how much more so when there is no medium? However, to this someone might object that indeed it is impossible to see when there is no medium, yet not because there is nothing in-between but because in this case the community of affection of the living being toward the parts,³³¹ and that of the parts toward each other resulting from its [that is, the living being's] oneness, is removed. For it seems that any kind of sense-perception comes about because the living being – this universe – has a community of affection to itself. In fact, if this were not so, how would one thing share in the power of the other and especially in a power which is far away?

I. But we should consider this problem: if there was another universe that is another living being which did not belong to the life of this one and there was an eye on the back of the heaven³³² would this see that other universe at appropriate distance, or this universe would have nothing to do with this one?

P. We will discuss this later. Now, one might use another testimony to show that seeing does not happen by means of the medium which is being affected. For if the medium of the air was affected, then the affection would have to be a bodily one, by all means. But this is as an impression being in wax. Then, a part of this seen object would have to be stamped on each part (of the air), so that the part of the air in contact with the eye would perceive a part of the seen object just as large as the part which the pupil of the eye would receive according to its own size. Yet, as it is, the whole object is seen, and all those who are in the air see what is in front and sideways, what is far and near, and what is behind, without being impeded, so that each part of the air contains the whole seen object, the face for instance. Yet, this is not a corporeal affection but is brought about by higher, psychic necessities, belonging to a single living being sharing affections with itself.

4.

³³¹ πρὸς αὐτὰ Mss / πρὸς αὐτό coniecit Sleeman. However, the two statements are equivalent, so the conjecture is not necessary.

³³² See *Phaedrus* 247ab.

I. But how is the light of the vision continuous³³³ to that [light] which is around the vision and up to the sensible object?

P. First, the continuity does not need the air in-between, unless someone were to say that there is no light without the air. In this way, the air would be in-between by accident but the light itself would be the medium, without being affected. And there is no need of affection here but there is need of the medium. Yet, if the light is not a body, then, there is no need for a body.

I. However, the vision would not need another light and a medium simply for seeing, but for seeing in a distance.

P. The question whether there could be light without the air, will be discussed later. Now, we should consider the following. If this continuous light becomes ensouled and the soul is carried through this and comes to be inside it, just like it happens internally, therefore, in the perception which is the seeing there would be no need for a light as a medium, but the seeing would be similar to touching, while the faculty of vision is perceiving in the light without the medium being affected, and only the movement of the vision occurs there [that is, in the light]. Because of this, one should enquire whether because there is an extension, therefore the sight must go there, or because there is a body in the extension. And if there is an obstacle because there is a body in the extension, then, if we remove this, it [the sight/vision] will see. Yet, [if it is so] merely because there is an extension, then we must assume that the nature of the visible object is idle and does not act in any manner. However, this is not possible. In fact, the touching not only tells that something is close and that it touches it, but also announces the differences of the touchable object by being affected and, if there is no obstacle, it would perceive this even if it were at a distance. For, the air in-between and us are perceiving simultaneously, not waiting for the air to be warmed. Certainly, the solid body is warmed up more than the air. So, this happens rather through the air and not because of it. Therefore, if one has the faculty to act and another to be affected, or in either way, then, why would the sight need another medium for the object for which it has the faculty, for the action to happen? In fact, this is to need an obstacle. For when the light of the sun approaches, it does not have to approach first the air and then us, but both simultaneously, and often, before it

³³³ Συναφές / συνεχές B

comes near the sight it is somewhere else,³³⁴ so that we see without the air being affected, while the air which is not affected is in-between and the light to which we should join our sight has not arrived yet. In fact, it is difficult to explain with this hypothesis the way we see the stars, or in general the fire, during the night.³³⁵ However, if the soul remains in itself, and it needs the light as a rod to reach the object, then, the perception would be violent and of mutual pressure, while the light is extended and the object of perception, the color as color, is itself also resistant/solid. For it is so that touchings occur through a medium. Moreover, [even in this case,] first it [the light] came close [to the visible object], so that then there was nothing in-between. For it is so that later the fact of touching through a medium creates the knowledge, as if through memory or, rather, through a logical inference. But this is not the case. However, if the light that is next to the perceptible object should be affected first, and then it should transmit [the affection] to the sight, then this hypothesis becomes the same with that, which supposed that first the medium is altered, but this, we have already discussed.³³⁶

5.

I. Now the question is, whether we should admit that, given that the air which is next³³⁷ is affected first to move by the producer of the sound, then it [that is, the sound] becomes perceived because the air which reaches to the hearing also undergoes the same affection; or is it so that, while the medium is accidental by the fact of being there in-between, yet, if the medium is removed and the sound is given all of a sudden – such as that of two colliding bodies – the perception [of the sound] immediately reaches us; or, first there is need of the air

³³⁴ For example, when the sun is covered by clouds and all of a sudden it comes out, or when the sun rises from the horizon. According to Plotinus, we see the light immediately, without the need for the sunshine to illuminate first the air and then the sight.

³³⁵ That is, it would be difficult to explain this phenomenon under the hypothesis that the air should be first illuminated and only then, through its intermediary, would the eye see the stars and the fire. See above, IV.5, 3, 1-15.

³³⁶ See above, IV.5, 2, 1-15.

³³⁷ τοῦ ἀέρος ... τοῦ παρακειμένου coniect Harder/ τοῦ ἀέρος ... τὸν παρακείμενον MSS. Harder's conjecture imposes itself as otherwise it would remain impossible to give the sentence any sound meaning. In fact, the endings -ov and -ou are often confused by the scribes of minuscule manuscripts.

that is hit [by the sound], but from there, the role of the medium is different? In fact, in this case, it would seem that the air is the master of the sound. For there would be no sound from the very beginning when two bodies collide, unless the air, struck by their fast meeting and being pushed out, is to hit that which is next to it and this is being transmitted until the ear and the hearing.

P. However, if the air is the master of the sound and the strike is because the air is moved, then, for what reason are there differences of the voices and of the sounds? For the bronze has a different sound when it hits bronze or something else, or when something else hits something else. But the air is one, and so also is the strike in it, for the differences [in the sounds and the voices] consist not only in their being louder or lower. If the strike that the air has undergone gives a sound, we should not say that air gave it insofar as it is air. For the air gives a sound when it encounters the stability of a solid body and remains as if it were something solid before being poured out.³³⁸ Therefore, the clashing bodies and their clash are enough, and this strike is the sound which reaches our perception. This is proven also by the internal sounds of the animals, which are not produced in the air but because one part clashes against and strikes the other: for instance, the bending of the bones when they are rubbed against each other, or their being ground.³³⁹ However, let us ask about this, given that the issue has become similar to that which we had raised concerning the sight – as the affection of hearing is also a kind of act of consciousness as [it occurs] within a living being –, [6] whether there could be light without air – such as the light of the sun when it shines on the surface of the bodies³⁴⁰ – when the medium is void, so that now that it [the air] is there, it is illuminated accidentally.³⁴¹

³³⁸ The example is that of a current of air, such as a strong wind, encountering a solid body, from where it is repelled and is poured out, but in the moment of the encounter the air behaves as if it were a solid body clashing with another one and, thus, it gives a sound.

³³⁹ Plotinus invokes the case when one bends an elbow or knee and it gives a cracking sound, or when one is grinding one's teeth.

³⁴⁰ οἷον ἡλίου φωτὸς ἐν ἐπιφανείᾳ τῶν σωμάτων ἐπιλάμποντος coniecimus; οἷον ἡλίου ὄντος ἐν ἐπιφανείᾳ τῶν σωμάτων ἐπιλάμποντος MSS + H-S¹⁻²; οἷον ἡλίου ἐν ἐπιφανείᾳ τῶν σωμάτων ἐπιλάμποντος Müller sed ὄντος defendit Kleist, *Studien* 134. H-S¹ notat ad locum:

I. Yet, if also the others are affected through the air and the light gets its existence by it – for it is an affection of the air –, then, the affection would not exist without that thing whose affection it is.

P. First of all, the light is not primarily an affection of the air, nor as it is air, given that every fiery and shining body, and even such kind of stones have luminous surface.

I. But would that [affection], which goes to another [body] from that which has such a surface exist, if there were no air?

P. Yet, if it is only a quality, namely a quality of something, then, given that every quality is in a substrate, it is necessary to ask the question, in which body the light will exist. However, if it is an activity from something else, then, why, if there is no connecting body but there is a void in between, would it [the light] not exist and spread beyond? As it is something intense, why wouldn't it get through without riding on something? But if it were such as prone to fall, then, it would move downwards. For, by all means, the air, or, in general, the illuminated body, would not be that which drags it out from the illuminating body and compels it to go forward, given that it is not an accident, so that it should be upon something else, nor is it an affection, so that there must be the one which is affected. Otherwise, once it [the affection] had come, it should have stayed.³⁴² Yet, actually it leaves, so that it may come [to the sight].

ἐπιλάμποντος scil. τοῦ φωτός. It is possible that the putative scribal error came through the analogy of μεταξύ ὄντος in the next line.

³⁴¹ Apparently, the backbone of the structure of the sentence is ἡπορήσθω ... εἰ δὲ - 'one should ask ... whether'. Editors and translators had not understood that "However, let us ask ..." is followed by the question "whether there could be light without air." The separation of the two parts of the sentence into two different chapters obscures the meaning of the question. Plotinus has introduced the sound given within the body without the mediation of air to use it as analogy for the spread of the light in the empty space without the mediation of air – thus anticipating through pure philosophical speculation the results of modern physics.

³⁴² ἡ πάθημα ἄλλου, ὥστε δεῖ εἶναι τὸ πεισόμενον, ἡ ἔδει μένειν ἐληλυθότος. Νῦν δὲ ἄπεισιν, ὥστε καὶ ἔλθοι ἄν. interpunctum alteravimus/ ἡ ἔδει μένειν ἐληλυθότος· νῦν δὲ ἄπεισιν· ὥστε καὶ ἔλθοι ἄν. H-S¹⁻².

I. So where is it? By all means, there should be a place. Otherwise, the body of the sun will lose its activity, which comes from it. For this was the light. If this were so, the light would not be the light of something.

P. Yet, the activity is *from* a substrate, but not *into* a substrate. Otherwise, the substrate would be affected in some way if it is there.

I. However, just as life, being an activity of the soul, is also the activity of something else, for instance of the body, if it is there - although life also exists if it is not there —, then, what would prevent this being so also in the case of the light, if being bright is a kind of activity? In fact, even in this case, it is not the darkness of the air which generates the light, but rather, when it is mingled to earth,³⁴³ this makes it dark and not really pure. So, this is similar to saying that something is sweet even when it is mingled with something bitter.

P. Yet, if someone were to say that the light is an alteration of the air, one should reply that then the air itself should have been altered through this alteration and then, its darkness would have become not dark. Yet, actually now the air stays as it is, as if it were not affected at all. But an affection must belong to that, of which it is an affection. Therefore, the light is not the color of the air but is in itself, while the air is just there. This issue should be thought over in this way.³⁴⁴

7,

³⁴³ ἀλλὰ γῆ MSS + H-S¹⁻² recte!; οὐδὲ γῆ coniecit Creuzer (*neque* Ficino); ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ γῆ Müller; ἀλλὰ ἧ coniecit Kleist; ἀλλά γε suspicuit Bréhier. There is no need to emend the sentence. ‘Earth’ here means the primary matter of creation, according to the Alexandrian biblical Platonist interpretation of the first verses of the book of Genesis. Here, apparently, a creationist opponent argues for the role of the air in the transmission of the light, which argument Plotinus rejects. In an earlier treatise, which displays many parallels with the treatment of the light here, Plotinus still used this sort of creationist language (V.1[10] 2, 25-27): [ὁ οὐρανός] ὢν πρὸ ψυχῆς σῶμα νεκρόν, γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ, μάλλον δὲ σκότος ὕλης καὶ μὴ ὄν...

³⁴⁴ Here ends the section, which began with the words: ‘However, let us ask about this ...’ (ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τοῦτου ἡπορήσθω ... καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὕτως ἐπισκέπτεον).

I. Now, does it perish, or does it return? For perhaps from this also we could understand something for our previous questions.

P. In fact, if it were within [the air], so that that which is participating in it would already have its own light, perhaps one would say that it perishes.³⁴⁵ However, if it is an activity which is not in flux — for if it were, it would flow around and would be poured inside more than as much as it is imposed by the active agent³⁴⁶ — it would not perish, because it would remain in the hypostasis of the illuminating agent. But when it moves, it is in another place, not as if there had been a pouring out or a new flux but because it is the activity of that agent and becomes present insofar as there is no obstacle. Moreover, even if the distance between us and the sun were many times greater than it is, the light would extend to it if nothing hinders it and standing as an obstacle in between. The activity and so to say life of the luminous body that is in itself is fuller and so to say the principle and source of the activity, while that which is beyond the limits of the body is the image of what is inside, a second activity which does not drift apart from the first. For every being has an activity which is its likeness, so that if it exists, the other also exists, and while it remains in itself, the other reaches to a distancer, sometimes farther and sometimes nearer, and while some activities are weak and dim and others even hidden, there are beings whose activities are greater and far-reaching. And when an activity reaches far, one must think that it is there where the active and powerful agent is, but also there, where it reaches. And it is possible to see in the case of the eyesight of animals with luminous eyes that the light spreads even outside their eyes. And in the case of animals that have condensed fire inside and in their expansions, they shine to the outside while in their contractions there is no light outside, the light has not perished, just either it is outside, or it is not.

³⁴⁵ The past tense here is gnomic aorist, as often in Plotinus.

³⁴⁶ This is a difficult argument. Most probably this is an impossible condition. It can be reconstructed so: the intensity with which the light is present everywhere, with which it illuminates the surfaces of the resistant bodies, and also the interior of the transparent bodies, such as the air, is much greater than what it could produce if it were a simple flux coming out from the illuminating agent. However, it is impossible that an effect would be more intense than what is imposed by its cause. What Plotinus says here is very similar to the simile he uses for describing the way the soul gives life to the material cosmos in V.1 [10], 2.

I. What then? Has it withdrawn?

P. In fact, it is not outside because neither does the fire reach to the outside but has dived inside.

I. Then, did the light also dive inside?

P. No; only the fire. Once it has dived, the other body³⁴⁷ is in front of it, so that it does not act to the outside. Therefore, the light emanating from the bodies is the external activity of the luminous body, while the light itself, which is entirely in such bodies, is the formal substance of the primarily luminous body. When such a body becomes mingled with matter it gives the color to it. The activity in itself does not give the color, but only, so to say, paints the surface, since it belongs to something else and is dependent on that, so that whatever moves away from that [the luminous body] also moves away from its activity. But one must understand that the light is incorporeal, even if it is the light of a body. Therefore, neither the “it has left” or the “it has come” are used properly, but in a different way, and its reality is being an activity. In fact, also the image in a mirror should be called an activity of that which is reflected there, while it acts without an outpouring on what is capable of being affected. However, if this [that is, the object seen] is there, then that [that is, the image] also appears there [that is, in the mirror] and, in this way, it exists as a reflection of the color that has been shaped in this way; and if it [that is, the object seen] is removed, it [the mirror] does not any more have the reflectivity that it had before, when it allowed the object seen to operate in it. However, in the case of the soul also, insofar as there is an activity of a prior one, as long as the prior one remains, the secondary activity also remains. Or rather, something that is not an activity but is the effect of an activity, as we have said about the life of the body, which is its property already, so that the light which has already become mingled with the bodies would be here that which creates the color by the fact of being mingled [to the mirror].³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ That is, the body of the animal.

³⁴⁸ Ἡ τις δὲ μὴ ἐνέργεια ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἐνεργείας, οἷαν ἐλέγομεν τὴν τοῦ σώματος οἰκείαν ἤδη ζώην, ὥσπερ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀναμειγμένον ἤδη τοῖς σώμασιν ἢ ἐνταῦθα, τῷ καὶ συμμεμίχθαι, τὸ ποιοῦν τὸ χρῶμα. coniecimus / Εἰ τις δὲ μὴ ἐνέργεια, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἐνεργείας, οἷαν ἐλέγομεν τὴν τοῦ σώματος οἰκείαν ἤδη ζώην, ὥσπερ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀναμειγμένον ἤδη τοῖς σώμασιν; Ἡ ἐνταῦθα τῷ καὶ συμμεμίχθαι τὸ ποιοῦν τὸ χρῶμα. H-S¹⁻². This sentence, as it stands in the

I. However, what about the life of the body?

P. In fact, it has the life because there is another soul next to it.³⁴⁹ When, therefore, the body decays—for nothing can exist without a share of soul—when the body, then, decays and neither the soul which gave life to it, nor the one that is next to it is preventing it from this, how would there remain any life? Well, has then this life decayed? Not even this, for this is also a reflection of an illumination. Simply, it is not there anymore.

8.

I. If there were a body outside the heaven and there were some kind of sight from here, while nothing would hinder its vision, could that which has no common affection to that [body] see it, if in fact the common affection is due to the nature of the one living being?

P. Now if common affection is due to the fact that the perceivers, the perceived objects and the sense-perceptions belong to a single living being, thus, this could not happen, unless this outside body is a part of this living being. For if it were so, then, perhaps.

I. However, what if it were not a part, but it were a body having color and the other qualities that are here, being of the same kind as the organ [of seeing]?

manuscripts and in the edition of H-S¹⁻² seems to have been distorted by the effect of iotacism, is not grammatically correct, and cannot be interpreted as it stands. We believe that our reconstruction gives a clear sense: To the alternative that the image in the mirror is a secondary energy, which disappears as soon as the object seen in the mirror leaves space reflected by the mirror, another alternative is proposed, according to which the reflection is not a proper activity but just the effect of the activity of the object seen, just as the proper (appropriated) life of the body in Plotinus' perception. So, just as, in the case of the animation of the body, the effect of the soul's activity makes the body alive, so also here, the light mingled to the body of the mirror creates the image in the mirror. It is not the example of the mirror that is used to illustrate the animation of the body, but vice versa.

³⁴⁹ That is, the individual soul, which is not in the body, but is next to it. Originally Galen's idea!

P. Now, even so, this hypothesis would not be correct,³⁵⁰ unless someone, by this same example, wanted to refute the hypothesis, saying that it would be absurd to suppose that the sight does not see the color that is present, and that the other senses, when the perceptible objects are present to them, would not exert their activities toward them. However, let us say, what proves this absurdity. It is because we are acting these things and are affected by them being in one [living being] and belonging to one. Now, we should investigate whether there is another reason beyond this. If this reason is sufficient, this has been demonstrated, and if not, it should be demonstrated through other reasons. It is clear that the living being has the community of affection with itself and if it is a living being, this is a sufficient reason, and so also have it the parts as far as they belong to the living being.

I. However, what if someone were to say that this is because of their likeness? Now, the apprehension is within the living being, while the sense-perception is because it, by the same fact [that is, by being a living being], participates in something that is alike.³⁵¹ In fact, the organ is like that. So, the sense-perception will be the soul's apprehension through organs that are like the objects of apprehension. If then, being a living being, it were to perceive those

³⁵⁰ ἢ οὐδ' οὕτως ἢ ὁρθὴ ἢ ὑπόθεσις *coniecimus*/ ἢ οὐδ' οὕτως, εἰ ὁρθὴ ἢ ὑπόθεσις ("however, even not so, if our hypothesis is correct" A¹R^{pc}, H-S¹⁻² / ἢ οὐδ' οὕτως εἰ ὁρθὴ ἢ ὑπόθεσις ("even so, you are not a correct hypothesis") *sine sensu* BR^{ac} (acc eras.) UC / ἢ οὐδ' οὕτως ὁρθὴ ἢ ὑπόθεσις ("even so, this hypothesis is not correct" *recte* J. It seems that the εἰ reading of the majority of the manuscripts is an erroneous iotacised version of the original ἢ, which still keeps the accent at its original place and so also the syntax. The εἰ version of A¹ accepted by the editors must have come from an effort to sanitize the impossible meaning, just like in R, where the original version was εἰ, and was corrected by the erasure of the accent. Finally, by an intelligent conjecture, J seems to omit both εἰ and εἰ, thus restoring the original meaning of the sentence. In fact, the "hypothesis" that is examined in the entire 8th chapter of IV.5, is whether an eye at the back of heaven could see a body that is outside our visible universe. Plotinus proves in the chapter that the hypothesis in this formulation is absurd and contains insolvable contradictions.

³⁵¹ ὅτι τοῦ ὁμοίου μετέχει τῷ αὐτῷ *coniecimus*/ ὅτι τοῦ ὁμοίου μετέχει τὸ αὐτό MSS, H-S¹⁻². The text is apparently corrupted due to iotacism. See the parallel sentence little later: ἐὰν οὖν ζῶον ὃν αἰσθάνηται μὲν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, τῶν δὲ ὁμοίων τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ ἢ μὲν ζῶον αἰσθάνεται; τῷ αὐτῷ in the first sentence corresponds to ἢ μὲν ζῶον in the second.

things that are not in it, would it perceive those things that are like the ones in it by the fact of being a living being? In this case, these would be objects of apprehension not as belonging to it, but as being alike to those that belong to it.

P. Yet, the apprehensible objects are in this way apprehensible by being similar, because she [that is, the world soul] has made them similar, so that they may not be incompatible [with her]. Therefore, if the maker soul there is entirely different, then, those things that we hypothesized to be there similar, have nothing to do with her. Therefore, the absurdity shows that there is a contradiction within the hypothesis, which is the cause of the absurdity, because it [the contradiction: τὸ μαχόμενον] speaks at the same time about soul and not soul, about things being akin and not akin, and says that the same things are similar and dissimilar. Therefore, having the opposites in it, the hypothesis cannot be considered a hypothesis. In fact, [the apprehensible objects] are in this [contradiction]³⁵² as the soul is, so that it posits a universe and not universe, otherness and not otherness, nothing and not nothing and perfection and not perfection. Per consequent, we must abandon the hypothesis, because there is no reason to inquire about its consequence, as it removes what it hypothesizes by precisely that what it hypothesizes.

³⁵² We understand ἐν τούτῳ as referring to τὸ μαχόμενον, the contradiction.

Bibliography

Primary sources:

Aristotle

Hett, W. S., *On the Soul; Parva Naturalia; On Breath*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936.

Cook, H. and Tredennick, H., *The Categories; On Interpretation; Prior Analytics*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Galen

Kühn, C., *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, I-XX, reprinted, Hildesheim: Olms, 1964-1965.

Singer, P. N. (1997) *Galen, Selected Works: A New Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

a) On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato

de Lacy, P., *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum. vol. 5.4.1.2, pts. 1-2, 3rd corrected edition, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005. Accessible online at: http://cmg.bbaw.de/epubl/online/cmg_05_04_01_02.php. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.

b) On the Formation of the Foetuses

Diethard, N., *Galen De Foetuum formatione*, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, vol. 5.3.3, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001. Accessible online at: http://cmg.bbaw.de/epubl/online/cmg_05_03_03.html. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.

c) On the Affected Parts

Siegel, R. E., *Galen On the Affected Parts: Translation from the Greek Text with Explanatory Notes*, Basel: S. Karger, 1976.

d) On the Temperaments

Helmreich, G., *Galen de temperamentis libri iii*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1904.

e) Fragments of the Commentary on the Timaeus

Daremborg, C., *Fragments du Commentaire de Galien sur le Timée de Platon en grec et en français*, Paris and Leipzig: Victor Masson/Michelsen, 1848.

Kraus, P. and Walzer, R., *Galen Compendium Timaei Platonis*, London: Warburg Institute, 1951.

Larrain, C. J., “Ein unbekanntes Exzerpt aus Galens Timaioskommentar Γαλήνου περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ Πλάτωνος Τιμαίῳ ἱατρικῶς εἰρημένων. ὑπόμνημα πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 85 (1991): 9-30.

Larrain, C. J., *Galens Kommentar zu Platons Timaios*, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1992, 2nd edition: Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

Moreaux, P., “Unbekannte Galen Scholien”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 27 (1977): 1-66.

Schröder, H. O. and Kahle, P., *Galen in Platonis Timaeum commentarii fragmenta. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, suppl. 1. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934.

f) On the Natural Faculties

Brock, A. J., *Galen on the Natural Faculties*, The Loeb Classical Library, London: Heinemann, 1928.

Helmreich, G., Marquardt, J. and Müller, I., *Claudii Galeni Pergameni scripta minora*, vol. 3, Leipzig: Teubner, 1893, reprinted Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1967, 101-257.

g) On the Use of the Parts

Helmreich, G., *Galen de usu partium libri xvii*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1:1907; 2:1909, reprinted Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1968.

Talladage May, M., *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body: Translated from the*

Greek with an Introduction and Commentary, I-II, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968.

Hippocrates

Heiberg, I. L., *Hippocratis vol. I,1: Indices librorum, Iusiurandum, Lex, De arte, De medico, De decente habitu, Praeceptiones, De prisca medicina, De aere locis aquis, De alimento, De liquidorum usu, De flatibus*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1927. Available online at: http://cmg.bbaw.de/epubl/online/cmg_01_01.php. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.

Plato

Burnet, J., *Platonis Opera, Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900-1907.

Shorey, P., *The Republic*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Bury, R.G., *Laws*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Fowler, H. N., *The Statesman; Philebus; Ion*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Fowler, H. N., *Theaetetus; Sophist*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Plotinus

Armstrong, A. H. *Plotinus.*, I-VII, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1966-1988.

Henry, P. and Schwyzer, H.-R., *Plotini Opera: edition maior*, I-III, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951-1973.

Henry, P. and Schwyzer, H.-R., *Plotini opera: editio minor*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964-1982.

Kalligas, P., ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. ΕΝΝΕΑΔΕΣ. Αρχαίο κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχόλια Παύλος Καλλιγάς, Athens: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1994-2014.

Gerson, L. P. *Plotinus: The Enneads*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Porphyry

Armstrong, A. H., *Porphyry on the Life of Plotinus; Ennead I*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Secondary Bibliography

Adamson, P. (2021) “The universe is an animal: the world soul in medieval philosophy” in J. Wilberding (ed.), *World Soul: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 73-99.

Annas, J. E. (1992) *Hellenistic Philosophy of the Mind*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press.

Armstrong, A. H. (1955) “Was Plotinus a magician?” *Phronesis* 1, 73-79.

Bene, L. (2014) “Ethics and metaphysics in Plotinus” in F. Karfík and E. Song (eds.), *Plato Revived. Essays on Ancient Platonism in Honour of Dominic J. O’Meara*, Berlin, Boston and New York, 141-161.

Betegh, G. (2020) “Plato on illness in the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, and the *Timaeus*”, in C. Jorgenson, F. Karfík and Š. Špinka (eds.), *Plato’s Timaeus: Proceedings of the Tenth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, Leiden: Brill, 228-258.

Bielfeldt, R. (2016) “Sight and light: reified gazes and looking artefacts in the Greek cultural imagination”, in M. Squire (ed.), *Sight and the Ancient Senses*, London and New York: Routledge, 122-142.

Blumenthal, H. J. (1971) *Plotinus’ Psychology: His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*, Hague: Martinus Nijhof.

Blundell, S., Cairns, D., Craik, E. and Sorkin Rabinowitz, N. (2013) “Introduction”, *Helios, Special Issue: Vision and Viewing in Ancient Greece*, 40.2-1, 3-40.

Brennan, T. (2005) *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burnet, J. (1900-1907) *Platonis Opera, Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis*,

Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cairns, D. (2005) "Bullish looks and sidelong glances: social interaction and the eyes in ancient Greek culture", in D. Cairns (ed.), *Body Language in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 123-155.

Cairns, D. (2011) "Looks of love and loathing: cultural models of vision and emotion in ancient Greek culture", *Mètis: Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*, 9, 37-50.

Caluori, D. (2015) *Plotinus on the Soul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Caluori, D. (2018) "Review of D. M. Hutchinson, *Plotinus on Consciousness*", *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, December 13, 2018, available at <https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/plotinus-on-consciousness>. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.

Cherniss, H. (1933) "Galen and Posidonius' theory of vision," *American Journal of Philology*, 54, 154-161.

Chiaradonna, R. (2023) *Ontology in Early Neoplatonism: Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus*. Berlin, Boston and New York.

Cornford, F. M. (1937) *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato*. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul.

Craik, E. M. (2001) "Plato and medical texts: *Symposium* 185c-193d1", *Classical Quarterly*, 51.1, 109-114.

D'Ancona, C. and Serra, G. (eds.) (2002) 'Alexander *On the Principles of the Universe, On Providence, Against Galen on Motion, and On Specific Differences*,' in *Aristotele et Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*, Padova: Il Poligrafo.

Daremberg, C. (1848) *Fragments du Commentaire de Galien sur le Timée de Platon en grec et en français*, Paris and Leipzig: Victor Masson/Michelsen.

Das, A. R. (2014) "Reevaluating the authenticity of the fragments from Galen's 'On the Medical Statements in Plato's Timaeus' (Scorialensis graec. Φ-III-11, ff. 123 R-126 V)", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 192, 93-103.

de Lacy, P. (2005) *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Corpus Medicorum

- Graecorum. vol. 5.4.1.2, pts. 1-2, 3rd corrected edition, Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
Accessible online at: http://cmg.bbaw.de/epubl/online/cmg_05_04_01_02.php. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.
- Diethard, N. (2001) *Galen De Foetuum formatione*, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, vol. 5.3.3, Berlin: Akademie Verlag. Accessible online at: http://cmg.bbaw.de/epubl/online/cmg_05_03_03.html. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.
- Dillon, J. (1977) *The Middle Platonists, 80 BC to AD 220*, London and Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Donini, P. L. (1992) ‘Galeno e la filosofia’, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II*, 36.5, 3484-3504.
- Donini, P. (2008) ‘Psychology’ in R. J. Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 184-209.
- Edwards, M. J. (1991) “Two episodes in Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus*”, *Historia* 40, 456-464.
- Elgersma-Helleman, W. (2010) “Plotinus as magician”, *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, 4.2, 114-146.
- Emilsson, E. K. (1988) *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Emilsson, E. K. (2007) *Plotinus on Intellect*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Emilsson, E. K. (2015) “Plotinus on *sympatheia*”, in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 36-60.
- Emilsson, E. K. (2021) “Plotinus on the arts”, in T. K. Johansen (ed.), *Productive Knowledge in Ancient Philosophy: The Concept of Technê*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 245-262.
- Frede, M. (2003) “Galen’s ”, in J. Barnes and J. Jouanna (eds.), *Galien et la philosophie: huit exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique de la Fondation Hardt: Vandoeuvres, 73-129.

- Gersh, S. (2005) "Plotinus on harmonia: musical metaphors and their uses in the *Ennead*" in J. Dillon and M. Dixsaut (eds.), *Agonistes: Essays in Honour of Denis O'Brien*, Burlington: Ashgate, 181-192.
- Gerson, L. P. (2018) "Review of D.M. Hutchinson, *Plotinus on Consciousness*." *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, October 7, 2018, available at <https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2018/2018.10.57>. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.
- Goldin, O. (1998) "Plato and the arrow of time", *Ancient Philosophy*, 18, 125-144.
- Graeser, A. (1970) *Plotinus and the Stoics*, PhD dissertation, Princeton University.
- Guenther, C. L. and Alicke, M. D. (2013) "Psychology of the self", *Oxford Bibliographies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, February 26, 2013, available at <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199828340/obo-9780199828340-0093.xml#obo-9780199828340-0093-bibItem-0002>. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.
- Gurtler, G. M. (1984) "Sympathy in Plotinus", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 24.4, 395-406.
- Gurtler, G. M. (2002) "Sympathy: Stoic materialism and the Platonic Soul", in M. F. Wagner (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Nature: Studies in Plotinus' Enneads*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 241-276.
- Gurtler, G. M. S. (2015) *Plotinus Ennead IV.4.30-45 & IV.5: Problems Concerning the Soul*, Las Vegas, Zurich and Athens: Parmenides Publishing.
- Gurtler, G. M. (2018) "Plotinus on light and vision", *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, 12.2, 151-162.
- Hadot, P. (1998) *Plotinus on the Simplicity of Vision*, translated by M. Chase, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hagen, C. (2014) *Simplicius: On Aristotle Physics 7*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Hankinson, R. J. (1991), "Galen's anatomy of the soul", *Phronesis*, 36, 197-233.

- Hankinson, R. J. (ed.) (2008) *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hankinson, R. J. (2014) “Galen and the ontology of powers”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 22.5, 951-973.
- Harari, O. (2016) “Alexander against Galen on Motion: a mere logical debate?”, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 50, 201-236.
- Heiberg, I. L. (1927) *Hippocratis vol. I,1: Indices librorum, Iusiurandum, Lex, De arte, De medico, De decente habitu, Praeceptiones, De prisca medicina, De aere locis acquis, De alimento, De liquidorum usu, De flatibus*. Leipzig: Teubner. Available online at: http://cmg.bbaw.de/epubl/online/cmg_01_01.php. Last accessed: May 26, 2023.
- Helmreich, G. (1904) *Galen de temperamentis libri iii*, Leipzig: Teubner.
- Helmreich, G., Marquardt, J. and Müller, I. (1967) [1893] *Claudii Galeni Pergameni scripta minora*, vol. 3, reprinted Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1967.
- Henry, P. and Schwyzer, H.-R. (1951-1973) *Plotini Opera: edition maior*, I-III, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henry, P. and Schwyzer, H.-R. (1964-1983) *Plotini opera: editio minor*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Holmes, B. (2012) “Proto-sympathy in the Hippocratic Corpus”, in J. Jouana and M. Zink (eds.), *Hippocrate et les hippocratismes: médecine, religion, société. XIV e Colloque International Hippocratique*, Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 123-138.
- Holmes, B. (2013) “Disturbing connections: sympathetic affections, mental disorder, and Galen’s elusive soul”, in W. V. Harris (ed.), *Mental Disorders in Classical Antiquity* Leiden: Brill, 147-176.
- Holmes, B. (2014) “Galen on the chances of life”, in V. Wohl (ed.), *Probabilities, Hypotheticals, and Counterfactuals in Ancient Greek Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 230-250.

- Holmes, B. (2015) “Reflection: Galen’s sympathy”, in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 61-69.
- Hutchinson, D. M. (2012) “Sympathy, awareness, and belonging to oneself in Plotinus,” in R. Patterson, V. Karasmanis and A. Hermann (eds.), *Presocratics and Plato: A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Charles H. Kahn*, Las Vegas, Zurich and Athens: Parmenides Publishing, 491-510.
- Hutchinson, D. M. (2018) *Plotinus on Consciousness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ierodiakonou, K. (2006) “The Greek concept of sympatheia and its Byzantine appropriation in Michael Psellos”, in P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi (eds.), *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, Geneva: La Pomme d’or Publishing, 97-117.
- Ierodiakonou, K. (2014) “On Galen's theory of vision”, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement 114: Philosophical Themes in Galen*, 235-247.
- Ilievski, V. (2022) “The Demiurge and his place in Plato’s metaphysics and cosmology”, in D. Vázquez and A. Ross (eds.), *Time and Cosmology in Plato and the Platonic Tradition*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 44-77.
- Kalligas, P. (1994-2014) ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ. ΕΝΝΕΑΔΕΣ. Αρχαίο κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχόλια Παύλος Καλλιγιάς, Athens: Ακαδημία Αθηνών.
- Kalligas, P. (1997) “Logos and the sensible object in Plotinus”, *Ancient Philosophy*, 17.2, 397-410.
- Kalligas, P. (2012) “Eiskrisis, or the presence of soul in the body: a Plotinian conundrum”, *Ancient Philosophy*, 32.1, 147-166.
- Kalligas, P. (2020) *The Enneads of Plotinus, Volume 1: A Commentary*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kalligas, P. (2023) *The Enneads of Plotinus, Volume 2: A Commentary*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Karamanolis, G. (2009) “Plotinus on quality and immanent form”, in R. Chiaradonna and F. Trabattoni (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 79-100.
- Karamanolis, G. E. (2006) *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Karfik, F. (2014) “Parts of the soul in Plotinus”, in K. Corcilius and D. Perler (eds.), *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 107-149.
- Karfik, F. (2022) “The body-soul relation upside down (Plotinus, enn. IV.8 and VI.4-5)”, in W. Mesch, M. Städtler and C. Thein (eds.), *Einheit und Vielheit metaphysischen Denkens: Festschrift für Thomas Leinkauf*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 47-54.
- Kraus, P. and Walzer, R. (1951) *Galen Compendium Timaei Platonis*, London: Warburg Institute.
- Kühn, C. (1964-5) *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, I-XX, reprinted, Hildesheim: Olms.
- Lapidge, M. (1978) ‘Stoic cosmology’, in J. M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 161-185.
- Larrain, C. J. (1991) “Ein unbekanntes Exzerpt aus Galens Timaioskommentar Γαλήνου περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ Πλάτωνος Τιμαίῳ ἱατρικῶς εἰρημένων. ὑπόμνημα πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 85, 9-30.
- Larrain, C. J. (2012) *Galens Kommentar zu Platons Timaios*, 2nd edition: Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Lawrence, M. (2005) “Hellenistic astrology,” *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at <https://iep.utm.edu/hellenistic-astrology/#:~:text=Hellenistic%20and%20Late%20Antiquity%20astrologers,Middle%20Platonic%20and%20Neopythagorean%20thought>. Last accessed on March 3, 2024.
- Levin, S. B. (2014) *Plato's Rivalry with Medicine: A Struggle and its Dissolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Long, A. A. (1982) “Soul and body in Stoicism”, *Phronesis*, 27, 34-57.

- Long, A. A. (2003) "Stoicism in the philosophical tradition: Spinoza, Lipsius, Butler", in B. Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 365-392.
- Longrigg, J. (2013) *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*, London: Routledge.
- Lorusso, V. (2005) "Nuovi frammenti di Galeno (in Hp. Epid. VI Comm. VII; in In Plat. Tim. Comm.)", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 152, 43-56.
- Mazur, Z. (2003) "Unio Magica: Part I: on the magical origins of Plotinus's mysticism", *Dionysus*, 21, 23-52.
- Merlan, P. (1943) "Plotinus and magic", *Isis* 44, 341-348.
- Moreaux, P., (1977) "Unbekannte Galen Scholien", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 27, 1-66.
- Nickel, D. (2002) "On the authenticity of an 'excerpt' from Galen's Commentary on the Timaeus", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Supplement, 77, *The Unknown Galen*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 73-78.
- Nightingale, A. (2016) "Sight and the philosophy of vision in ancient Greece: Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle", in M. Squire (ed.), *Sight and the Ancient Senses*, London and New York: Routledge, 54-67.
- O'Meara, D. J. (1980) "Gnosticism and the making of the world in Plotinus", in B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the Conference at Yale March 1978*, I, Leiden: Brill, 365-378.
- O'Meara, D. J. (1995) *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Opsomer, J. (2005) "A craftsman and his handmaiden: demiurgy according to Plotinus", in T. Leinkauf and C. Steel (eds.), *Platons Timaios als Grundtext der Kosmologie in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Renaissance / Plato's Timaeus and the Foundations of Cosmology in Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 67-102.

- Parker, R. (2011) *On Greek Religion*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Perczel, I. (1997) “L’‘intellect amoureux’ et l’‘un qui est’: une doctrine mal connue de Plotin”, *Revue de philosophie ancienne*, 15.2, 223-264.
- Pines, S. (1961) “Omne quod movetur necesse est ab aliquo moveri: a refutation of Galen by Alexander of Aphrodisias and the theory of motion”, *Isis*, 52.1, 21-54.
- Polya, J. (1945) *How to Solve It: A New Aspect of Mathematical Method*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Puelma, M. (1980) “Cicero als Platon-Übersetzer”, *Museum Helveticum*, 37.3, 137-178.
- Rappe, S. (2000) *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reinhardt, K. (1926) *Kosmos und Sympathie: Neue Untersuchungen über Poseidonios*, Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Remes, P. (2007a) “Human action and divine power”, in A. Marmodoro and I.-F. Viltanioti (eds.), *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 38-60.
- Remes, P. (2007b) *Plotinus on the Self: The Philosophy of the “We”*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Remes, P. and Sihvola, J. (eds.) (2008) *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*, Dordrecht: Springer.
- Rescher, N. and Marmura, M. E. (1965) *The Refutation by Alexander of Aphrodisias of Galen's Treatise on the Theory of Motion*, Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute.
- Reydams-Schils, G. (1997) “Posidonius and the *Timaeus*: off to Rhodes and back to Plato?”, *Classical Quarterly*, 47.2, 455-476.
- Reydams-Schils, G. J. (2006) “Calcidius on the human and the world soul and Middle-Platonist psychology”, *Apeiron*, 39.2, 177-200.
- Rist, J. (1967) *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Rocca, J. (2003) *Galen on the Brain: Anatomical Knowledge and Physiological Speculation in the Second Century AD*, Leiden: Brill.
- Sambursky, S. (1959) *Physics of the Stoics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Schliesser, E. (ed.) (2015a) *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schliesser, E. (2015b) “Introduction” in E. Schliesser (ed.), *Sympathy: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-14.
- Schröder, H. O. and Kahle, P. (1934) *Galen in Platonis Timaeum commentarii fragmenta*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, suppl. 1. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934.
- Siegel, R. E. (1976) *Galen On the Affected Parts: Translation from the Greek Text with Explanatory Notes*, Basel: S. Karger.
- Singer, P. N. (1997) *Galen, Selected Works: A New Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Singer, P. N. (2013) *Galen: Psychological Writings: Avoiding Distress, Character Traits, The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Affections and Errors Peculiar to Each Person's Soul, The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Singer, P. (2016) “Galen”, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*; available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/galen/>. Last accessed 13th August 2024.
- Smith, A. (2012) “Colloquium 1: image and analogy in Plotinus”, *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 27.1, 1-27.
- Song, E. (2012) “Plotinus on the World-Maker”, *Horizons*, 3.1, 81-102.
- Sorabji, R. (2006) *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sorabji, R. (2010) “John Philoponus”, in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 41-82.

- Stamatellos, G. (2012) *Plotinus and the Presocratics: A Philosophical Study of Presocratic Influences in Plotinus' Enneads*, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Struck, P. T. (2007) "A world full of signs: understanding divination in ancient Stoicism", in P. Curry and A. Voss (eds.), *Seeing with Different Eyes: Essays in Astrology and Divination*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 3-20.
- Theologou, A. (2020) "Galen and Plotinus on the principle of *sympatheia*", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 26, 31-44.
- Tieleman, T. (1998) "Plotinus on the seat of the soul: reverberations of Galen and Alexander in *Enn.* IV, 3 [27], 23", *Phronesis*, 43, 306-325.
- Tieleman, T. (2003) "Galen's psychology", in J. Barnes and J. Jouana (eds.), *Galien et la philosophie: huit exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique de la Fondation Hardt: Vandoeuvres, 131-162.
- Tieleman, T. (2008) "Methodology", in R. J. Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 49-65.
- Vinkesteijn, R. (2022) *Philosophical Perspectives on Galen of Pergamum: Four Case-Studies on Human Nature and the Relation between Body and Soul*, Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- von Kleist, H. (1888) *Zu Plotinos Enn. IV 3 und 4*, Leer: D.H. Zopfs.
- Wilberding, J. (2005) "Creeping spatiality: the location of the Nous in Plotinus' universe", *Phronesis*, 50, 315-334.
- Wilberding, J. (2006) *Plotinus' Cosmology: A Study of Ennead II.1 (40): Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.