

**PLOTINUS ON MATTER AND EVIL:  
A COMMENTARY ON PLOTINUS' *ENNEADS* I.8  
"ON WHAT ARE AND WHENCE COME EVILS?"**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the  
University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by

Jia-Sheng UENG

June 1993

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## ABSTRACT of THESIS

**Title:** Plotinus on Matter and Evil: a Commentary on Plotinus' *Enneads* I.8: "On What Are and Whence Come Evils?"

**Author:** Jia-Sheng Ueng. Candidate for Ph.D. degree of the University of Liverpool.

The dissertation is composed of four essays on matter and evil in the Platonic tradition up to Plotinus and an extended commentary on *Enneads* I.8. The commentary tries to prove that Plotinus provides us with two pictures of matter and evil: (1) I.8.1-6 give us a monism with the One as the unique source of *on* and with matter defined as *mē on* or *sterēsis* of *on* and this definition entails a metaphysical concept of evil; (2) I.8.7-15, on the other hand, gives us a dualistic outlook with *nous* and *anankē* as equipollent *archai*, and a matter which is characterised by chaotic motion and is dysteleological to the divine economy, and this gives us a more concrete kind of evil. Both, however, share the same theodicy in *Theaetetus* 176ab, that good and evil must co-exist and balance out, although how they co-exist and balance out are interpreted differently in (1) and (2). It is a theodicy which sees the cosmos as a kind of global artefact with its own necessity, not an object created for individuals, and a theodicy which sees divine goodness as a bestowal of being and evil as a deprivation of it. Evil is transformed from a quality predicated of a moral agent to a kind of quasi-being, constitutive of the whole of reality; it is a highly revised and a *priori* approach to the problem of evil, with implications for a deterministic outlook because, with matter or evil being constitutive of reality, one can only try to justify, and not rectify, its existence. This approach to the problem of evil as a "me-ontology" has been very aptly called by Floyd as "an anhypostatic theory of evil" because this anhypostatic nature of evil has to imply a hypostatic reality to be significant.

The interpretative essays are meant to see this result as a consummation of a development in Platonism, beginning with Plato in his distinction in *Timaeus* between *hypodochē* (as the ultimate *heterotēs* which differentiates Being) and *ichnē* (as the material reservoir from which higher lives are worked up by the noetic *dēmiourgos*), and therefrom a distinction between the problem of existence (why there is rather than is not) and that of essence (how the cosmos is as it is). This distinction gives us two kinds of matter, one metaphysical (in the sense of *heterotēs* [than *on*]) and the other a physical matter characterised by chaotic motion. With an exegesis of the *anoiai xungenomenē* it is proved that both kinds of matter in *Timaeus* can imply the theodicy proposed in *Laws* X, which is by nature similar to that in *Theaetetus* 176 quoted in *Enneads* I.8. Despite the fact that these two kinds of matter imply the same kind of theodicy, they are separately developed, with divergent implications, by Neopythagoreanism with its stress on *hypodochē* (i.e., matter as *heterotēs*) and by Middle Platonism with its emphasis on *ichnē* (i.e., matter as entity with its own features). From the former we will see the development from matter as *heterotēs*, via Moderatus' *parallaxis*, to Plotinus' *mē on*, and from the latter a development from *ichnē* to Numenius' *anima silvae* (a Chalcidius' term), to Plotinus' lapsed soul as the cause of evil. While in Plato these two kinds of matter and evil are separated, in Plotinus they are interpreted together within his emanative scheme of reality and, because even the evil with a psychic origin is understood as *mē on*, I have decided that the Neopythagorean trend prevails in Plotinus and his evil as "meontology" is firmly established as his theory of evil.

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## **INTERPRETATIVE ESSAYS**



## 0 INTRODUCTION

0.1 This is an extended commentary on Plotinus' *Enneads* 1.8: "*On What Are and Whence Come Evils*", a treatise dedicated to relating the problem of evil to that of matter. Both evil and matter as philosophical topics were not unknown to the Greek philosophers before Plotinus but the correlation or interface of these two concepts is not an obvious one, and in fact has to await Plotinus to give it a definite articulation in his *Enneads* 1.8. However, a careful reading of the text will find out an anomaly which has persuaded Thedinga and Heinemann that *Enneads* 1.8 either contains interpolation from Numenius or is derived from three separate sources. This anomaly is the sudden change of orientation in the argument. In 1.8.1-6 Plotinus tries to present us with a theory of evil as matter and *mē on*, a kind of quasi-entity characterised by the *sterēsis* of all positive features which belong to hypostatic reality; it is a kind of "passive" evil, with its typical characteristic being what it is not rather than what it is. I will call this inquiry into the problem of evil as "meontology" and the nature of this evil as "anhypostatic" because it has to presuppose a whole metaphysical package - primarily the emanation of hypostatic reality from the One - which makes possible the thesis that evil is matter and *mē on*. On the other hand, in 1.8.7 Plotinus suddenly introduces another kind of evil, largely based on Plato's *Timaeus* and *Politicus*, which sees evil as *anankē* and as an active force with its own nature; this evil has its protagonist in *nous* or, in Plato's *mythos*, the *dēmiourgos*. The sensible universe is seen as an optimal compromise between these two *archai* and not a reality emanated from the One. After 1.8.7 (with the exception of 1.8.9) there is a string of discussions centred on the proposal that evil has a psychic origin. The impression is very clear that in the first half of *Enneads* 1.8 (1.8.1-6) Plotinus gives us an outlook which is monistic with the One as the only source of reality, while in the second half (1.8.7-15 except

1.8.9) the picture of the world is dualistic. The nature of the reasoning is also different: the first half of 1.8 is rather metaphysical and *a priori* while the second half is cosmological and psychological. The difference cannot be greater. However despite the incompatibility between 1.8.6 and 1.8.7 one finds a most vital link which suggests that these two theories of evil and two pictures of reality might be two implications one can develop from Plotinus' emanation-metaphysics: the link is the quotation from *Theaetetus* 176a which appears in both 1.8.6 and 1.8.7. The *Theaetetus* at 176a recommends a theodicy based on the concept of *enantiotēs*. This concept is developed both in 1.8.6 and 1.8.7 though in different ways. The situation seems rather confusing. It is the purpose of this dissertation to explicate this difficulty and to recommend that Plotinus did have two theories of evil which are implied in his philosophy and which can be traced back to his predecessors, Plato in particular.

0.2 The reason why there exist two kinds of evil or matter in Plotinus is that in his emanation-metaphysics there are two chains of causation, with the One responsible for the "existence" of reality and the *Nous hypostasis* in charge of its "essence". I cannot find a more illuminating example of this vital distinction than the two descents of soul: in its first descent it is said to create matter - matter is thus the last stage of emanation - and in this descent the soul continues the emanation from the One while, on the other hand, in the second descent the soul is said to work up from the pre-existent matter to create the sensible cosmos by its imposition of form upon pre-existent and disordered matter. This in my view is causation derived from *Nous* for *Nous* is a system of Forms (cp. 4.0.1). The first descent of soul in its generation of matter is a kind of absolute generation (i.e., from *to mēdamōs on* to *to mē on* which is a kind of *on* for Plotinus) while the second descent is a generation of "reconstructed intelligibility", an imposition of order upon a pre-existent disorder; the former is the topic for *Enneads* 1.8.1-6 while the latter is reserved for 1.8.7-15 (except 1.8.9). I have found this distinction is exactly what Plato tried to convey to us in his *Timaeus* in his distinction between *hypodochē* (as the

ultimate otherness which differentiates the Being) and *ichnē* (as the material reservoir which awaits the intervention *ab extra* of the noetic *dēmiourgos*), between the problem of existence and the problem of essence; this is also what happened after him in the divergent interpretations of his *Timaeus* in the Neopythagoreans and the Middle Platonists. It is therefore necessary, both for historical and philosophical reasons, to give an examination of this development, in the form of four chapters of interpretative essays, before the commentary on I.8 proper.

0.3 I begin my research with an inquiry into Plato's *Timaeus*<sup>1</sup> and argue for a necessary distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē* - with *hypodochē* as the ultimate *heterotēs* which differentiates and pluralises the unique Being<sup>2</sup>, and with *ichnē* as the consequence of this differentiation and as the material reservoir with which the *dēmiourgos* and the engendered gods (or souls) create this cosmos (1.1-1.2). My conclusion there is that one has to distinguish the problem of *genesis* (= absolute generation) from that of *diacosmēsis* (= generation of reconstructed intelligibility) with their different sets of *archai*: on the one hand, Being and the *hypodochē* (as the ultimate *heterotēs*) are responsible for *genesis* or the existence of *ichnē* and - indirectly - of the cosmos; on the other hand, the *dēmiourgos*, *ichnē* (as the material reservoir) and the ideal pattern of divine living being are responsible for *diacosmēsis*.<sup>3</sup> My purpose in distinguishing these two concepts is to argue for two kinds of matter, or rather, two perspectives on matter: one sees matter as a metaphysical concept explaining how things are as they are and the other sees it as a cosmological or physical concept, as the material reservoir from which higher lives are worked up. 1.3 introduces the thesis of psychic *autokinēsis* (as seen in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X*) and is intended to continue the *diacosmēsis* of the *dēmiourgos* (or *nous*) in its optimal compromise with *ichnē* (or *anankē*); it also introduces a very important - but strangely neglected - divine economy and theodicy in *Laws X* which is a logical inference based on 1.1-1.3. 1.4 explicitly points out that the necessary distinction

between *hypodochē* and *ichnē*, *genesis* and *diacosmēsis*, or existence and essence, will give us two kinds of evil:

(a) The *hypodochē* will give us an idea of evil which is a kind of ontological deficiency that the image (= the derived reality) has in relation to its archetype but this seems to attribute existential fecundity to the Being which the *hypodochē* as ultimate *heterotēs* differentiates and pluralises in its *genesis* of other reality, thereby a semblance of monism is maintained<sup>4</sup>. This is a tradition further developed by Speusippus of the Old Academy and, *via* Eudorus of Alexandria<sup>5</sup>, by the Neopythagoreans in the imperial age.

(b) The *ichnē* will give us a more active view of evil because *ichnē* are said to possess a chaotic motion of their own and require the imposition, *ab extra*, of form, number and *telos* to be pacified. This makes the *dēmiourgos* (or *nous*) and *ichnē* (or *anankē*) equipollent and a dualistic picture of reality is thus inevitable<sup>6</sup>. This is the tradition largely developed by the Middle Platonists, such as Plutarch, Numenius and Atticus, who adopt the theory of psychic *autokinēsis* to explain this pre-cosmic chaotic motion and create therefrom a maleficent soul for the chaotic motion in the *ichnē*; matter in this case is evil because it is dysteleological, contradictory to what is represented by noetic principle.<sup>7</sup>

My suggestion is that in *Enneads* I.8.7 the introduction of the *dēmiourgos* and *anankē* has paved the way for the discussion of the psychic origin of evil in the second half of I.8 and thus the second half of I.8 is rather Middle Platonic by inspiration. On the other hand, the first half of I.8, because of its stress on the derivation of reality - including evil - from the unique *archē*, the One, is more Neopythagorean in orientation. Happ has aptly expressed these respective inclinations to monism and dualism in saying:

*"Platons System trägt teilweise 'monistische' Züge an sich (Überhöhung des Einen u. dgl.), zeigt aber im ganzen eindeutig 'dualistischen' charakter: Es besteht ständig eine Spannung zwischen den beiden Prinzipien, die nicht aufeinander reduziert werden."<sup>8</sup>*

0.4 Such a distinction between Neopythagoreanism and Middle Platonism, based on (a) and (b) in 0.3 might sound artificial and J. Whittaker has suggested that it is barely distinguishable.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, I fully agree with J. Dillon's opinion that Neopythagoreanism is not

"an independent movement in this era, so much as an attitude that might be taken up within Platonism."<sup>10</sup>

The difference is really there although it does not amount to saying that they are two schools. One can therefore borrow a convenient distinction created by Happ and dub the derivations of reality implied in (a) as *ein Ableitungssystem* and in (b) as *eine kosmologische Seinsstufung*<sup>11</sup>, with their different sets of *archai*. While I do not deny the inherent difficulties therein, the impression is valid, inasmuch as the exegesis of *Timaeus* is concerned, that Plutarch, as a representative of Middle Platonism, gave us a more fundamentalist, immanent and anthropomorphic exegesis of *Timaeus* than that given by the more transcendent and speculative one initiated by Speusippus and, *via* Eudorus of Alexandria, developed by his Neopythagorean followers.<sup>12</sup> I have found that this can be attributed to the distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē* and their respectively related concepts. In the second half of 3.4 a very brief discussion on the Middle Platonic view on determinism and free will - a topic totally neglected by their Neopythagorean counterparts - is intended to bolster this distinction.

0.5 The future developments of these two kinds of evil in the hands of the Neopythagoreans

and the Middle Platonists will be dealt with in chapter 3, but before that one cannot forget the contributions made by Aristotle. For our present purpose, first of all, he is the first one that identified *hypodochē* with the concept of matter<sup>13</sup> and then gave us a thorough criticism of the concept of absolute matter with its claim for absolute generation as implied both in Plato's *hypodochē* and in the Neopythagorean version of it (2.1). With this criticism he proposes a hierarchical causation with material form determining the proximate matter, a top-down approach. I then in 2.2 develop Aristotle's theory of biological generation, as an example, to explain why matter can be said to be the principle of non-being. This is because the potentiality of matter to be in the higher level of reality is accidental to the matter concerned. My approach to Aristotle, which sees the primary being as individual substances, is necessary for my commentary on *Enneads* 1.8.6 but is also meant to form a contrast to the *a priori* and metaphysical nature of Plato's approach to the problem of matter and evil (2.3). In my view this individualistic and physical approach as embodied in Aristotle's theory of matter did not prevail in the Academy and the grand metaphysical speculation continued.

0.6 For the complex history after the decline of dogmatic Platonism, and its revival in the hands of Antiochus of Ascalon and Eudorus of Alexandria I refer to the work of H. Dörrie in his essays and to the *The Middle Platonists* by J. Dillon.<sup>14</sup> What interests me is a schematic sketch of the distinction first witnessed between the *hypodochē* and the *ichnē*. It is prudent not to express an attitude to the unwritten doctrines or esoteric doctrines<sup>15</sup> of Plato in this place, but one cannot deny that Speusippus proposed that the whole of reality is to be seen as ultimately derived from one *archē* or a pair of *archai*, i.e., the *Ableitungssystem*. I argue in 3.1 that this *Monad* and *Dyad* (or to *plēthos*) are identified by Speusippus with the Being and *hypodochē* of the *Timaeus*. Speusippus also attempts to construct a hierarchical picture of reality derived from this pair of *archai* but without much success, and his thesis that evil is negative is interesting but receives no philosophical support. On the other hand, I see the

Neopythagoreans, *via* Eudorus of Alexandria, as intellectual successors of Speusippus.<sup>16</sup> The culmination of this development is seen in a passage by Moderatus in which matter is explicitly said to cause the deviation (*parallaxis*) of the lower reality from its prior, and evil is defined as a *sterēsis* of ontic authenticity and is equated with matter (3.2). The importance of this passage cannot be exaggerated and its relevance to our present research topic is paramount. With this passage I would like to say that Plotinus' evil as *mē on* has largely accepted the line developed by the Neopythagoreans on the problem of matter and evil<sup>17</sup>, and this in turn indicates that in the exegesis of *Timaeus* Plotinus follows the *Ableitungssystem* with stress on the functions of *hypodochē*. It is for this reason that Porphyry in his *Vita* of Plotinus said of Plotinus that he expounded "*tas pythagoreious archas kai platonikas*" (my underlining) better than his predecessors (*Vita* 20.68ff. and 21.1ff.).<sup>18</sup>

0.7 Nevertheless, the transition from *Enneads* I.8.6 to I.8.7, or from matter as *hypodochē* to matter as *ichnē*, persuades me that matter in Plotinus is also used as a kind of material reservoir with features of its own from which the higher entities are worked up by souls. This explains why the first descent of soul in the *genesis* of matter and the second descent of soul in the *diacosmēsis* of matter into cosmos, correspond to the distinction between *genesis* and *diacosmēsis*, *hypodochē* and *ichnē*, and existence and essence in *Timaeus*. Because the kind of evil based on matter as *ichnē* will result in a more dualistic outlook this explains why *Enneads* I.8.7 is dualistic. On the other hand, this transition from I.8.6 to I.8.7 on the role of matter shows the *Zwischenstatus* of matter in Plotinus. The appearance of matter as *ichnē* in *Enneads* I.8.7 justifies the effort to give a brief account of its development in Plutarch and Numenius who do not shun its dualistic consequences (3.3-3.4). I complete this dualistic perspective with an excursus on the nature of the noetic *diacosmēsis* of matter by the *dēmiourgos*, and on the problem of free will and determinism in Middle Platonism.

0.8 With this reconstructed development of ideas among Plotinus' predecessors in the Platonic tradition, Interpretative Essay 4 will see Plotinus' speculation on the problem of evil as the culmination of these developments and his *Enneads* I.8 as a consistent treatise designed to reconcile these two divergent interpretations of evil, represented by I.8.6 and I.8.7, which are ultimately derived from Plato's distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē*. First of all, it is necessary to give a brief examination of the picture of reality Plotinus gave us in his *Enneads*, for Plotinus' theories of evil presuppose the metaphysical package which is the whole of Plotinus' philosophy. 4.1 will stress the topics of emanation, the creative freedom of the One, *heterotēs* and the equation of matter with *heterotēs*. This is to make clear that for the whole of reality to be hierarchical the emanation from the One has to presuppose the concept of *heterotēs* throughout its whole process, i.e., the genesis of reality from the One has to presuppose *heterotēs* which explains the ontological deficiency of the lower reality in relation to its prior. If matter plays the role of *heterotēs*, matter is then necessarily constitutive of the whole of reality and therefrom the necessity of evil is justified. The Prime and sensible matter (the matter assumed in I.8.7) is the consequence of the differentiation exercised by the *heterotēs* (= matter) upon the lowest reach of the *hypostasis* Soul. 4.2 will give a few reasons why the use of matter in Plotinus is always so difficult to grasp and why there is a shift between a strong sense and a weak sense of it. I attribute this to the *Zwischenzustand* of matter between *on* and *to mēdamōs on*. In 4.3 I begin to exploit the theodical implication of the theory of evil as *mē on* and suggest that there is a strong deterministic outlook implied in the theory of evil as *mē on*; in addition, I have also explained why, despite there being two theories of evil based on two kinds of matter, the approach based on "me-ontology" should prevail over the approach which sees evil originated from a psychic origin; in short, the (me-) ontology of evil over-determines the psychology of evil. I use the term "over-determine" in the sense that the former has a more comprehensive explanatory power than the latter does within Plotinus' philosophy. 4.4 tries to map out an alternative, based on Plotinus' philosophy of the



self and on the concept of *tolma*, to see evil not as an ontological problem and as a pre-given; this alternative sees evil as the quality of personal experience. 4.5 gives the rival thesis of the Gnostics on the divine dispensation and my argument there is largely based on the only explicitly polemical work of Plotinus, *Enneads* II.9, and by my explication of certain themes in II.9 I wish to throw more light on the nature of Plotinus' theodicy. 4.6 will give a brief summary of 4.1-4.5. With chapter 4 I hope I can prove that Plotinus is a great systematiser with distinctively personal contributions to this problem of evil.

0.9 With these four Interpretative Essays one can feel better equipped to deal with the commentary on *Enneads* I.8. There runs through my commentary a strategy which tries to solve the theodical paradox: why the hypostatic reality generates an anhypostatic evil which is by nature contradictory to its generator, or why the One, which is Goodness, should have generated evil if only goodness can explain goodness and evil can explain evil. The strategy, I believe, Plotinus has adopted is to see anhypostatic reality as an extension of hypostatic reality and to interpret and understand the anomaly of anhypostatic reality with borrowed concepts from hypostatic reality. Therewith Plotinus can explain that anhypostatic reality is continuous with hypostatic reality and is thus a logical consequence of the self-creation of the One. In brief, Plotinus has to try to prove that anhypostatic reality is not "non-hypostatic". Consequently, although the phenomenon of evil is saved, reality is now contaminated because evil is found to be a necessary part of reality. Therefore in regard to evil one has to justify and rationalise it, but never to rectify it. This explains why the theodicy from *Theaetetus* occupies such a prominent position in I.8 and is repeatedly quoted. I must leave the practice of this strategy and details to the commentary proper.

0.10 As has been shown, my approach to the problem of evil is to relate it to the overall outlook on reality - or cosmology in short - the philosophers claim to have<sup>19</sup> and what makes

this relation possible is matter which is a metaphysical concept.<sup>20</sup> This means that I believe all the philosophers discussed in this dissertation see evil as a metaphysical problem and this is indeed what I think Plotinus has intended in general and for *Enneads* I.8 in particular. This by no means exhausts other possible approaches towards evil although I suspect that all the discussions are over-determined by his ontological concern for evil as a kind of (quasi-) substance, or evil as *mē on*.

0.11 The interpretative essays in chapters 1-4 are meant to be a background knowledge, as I have said, for the commentary on I.8; on the other hand, the treatise, with other texts in *Enneads* and from elsewhere, are meant to support, correct and complete the theories I have sketched in those four essays. Theories and texts must be correlated to each other and therefore repeated cross-references are inevitable. The references to the interpretative essays are in arabic numbers with the first figure for the chapter, the second for the section within the chapter and third for the paragraph. Thus, e.g., **2.1.3** (printed in bold letter) means chapter 2 section 1 paragraph 3. The references to the text of *Enneads* follow the convention used in most scholarly publications and therefore, e.g., IV.3.8.5 means the text referred to is the fourth *Ennead*, treatise 3, paragraph 8, line 5; I have left out the number which represents the chronological order of composition because I cannot see that chronology is much relevant to the present inquiry. For *Enneads* I.8 I have claimed some license, for I have largely commented on a sentence (Greek) by sentence basis and thus I.8.4.[3] means the first *Ennead*, treatise 8, paragraph 4, sentence [3]. I have separated these sentences and given them numbers with brackets in the translation of I.8. In some texts or arguments from other scholars I have added my comments behind " = ". As for translation of the text of *Enneads* I.8 and other treatises in the *Enneads* I have used A.H. Armstrong's Loeb translation which in my view is reliable and where I find it difficult to agree with him I have given my opinion in the commentary. For Plato I have used *Loeb* translation; for Aristotle I have used the Revised Oxford translation (ed. J.

Barnes).

## NOTES:

1. Dörrie p.156 and p.297; Happ pp.90-1.
2. Happ pp.202-3.
3. Dörrie p.157 and p.218; Brenk p.258 and p.263.
4. Happ p.170.
5. Dörrie p.304 and p.307; Baltes pp.85-6.
6. Dörrie p.218; Happ p.108, p.110 and p.121.
7. Happ pp.172-3.
8. Ibid. p.192.
9. Whittaker 1987 p.118; Brenk p.257.
10. Dillon 1986 p.226; cp. Dorrie pp.304-8.
11. Happ p.250; cp. Bianchi 1987 p.356: "*der kosmologische Aspekt des platonische Dualismus*"; cp. Scheffel pp.104-5: "*(a) Formkraft... unabhängig von (b) der wirkenden, formenden Kraft des Demiourgen.*"
12. Brenk pp.263-4 and p.273.
13. Happ p.87.
14. cp. Frede 1987 p.1043.
15. Happ p.117.
16. Frede 1987 p.1043.
17. Dörrie p.308.
18. Whittaker 1987 pp.118-9.
19. Ibid. p.122.
20. Happ p.173.

# 1 PLATO ON MATTER AND EVIL

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0.1 The problem of theodicy in Greek philosophy has always presented itself in the attempt to reconcile two complexes of facts which seem hardly reconcilable: the apparent acosmic elements in a providential economy of the universe, i.e., the cosmos which is, by definition, supposedly free of these. It is an enterprise combining speculative cosmology and ethics. Floyd in his book on Clement of Alexandria has spoken of this Greek theodicy very pertinently:

"Any question on the problem of evil is dictated to a large extent by the contemporary cosmogony and world-view."<sup>1</sup>

Plato, in my view, is the first philosopher to have this problem fully investigated and to propose arguments which became the paradigms for the Greek philosophers - especially those in the Platonic tradition - who came after him. His *Timaeus* is the main source of this inspiration:

"[t]he interpretation of the creation myth in the *Timaeus* is intimately connected with the problem of the origin of evil in Plato."<sup>2</sup>

The interest of the present research is not to consider all the various responses - either favourable or hostile - to his arguments; this is an undertaking too great for me. Instead, I will concentrate on the Platonic tradition on this theodical issue which led right up to Plotinus who,

as arguments in the chapter on Plotinus and commentary on *Enneads* I.8 will try to prove, was a *par excellence* systematiser of this tradition with distinct and personal contributions.

1.0.2 It is not necessary to repeat what I have said in the Introduction. It suffices to say that Plato in his *Timaeus* gave us two pictures of reality and therefrom two kinds of evil. The approach, based on *Ableitungssystem*, sees reality as ultimately derived, *more geometrico*, from an *archē* (or a pair of *archai*) and regards reality as a closed system with the lower level of reality as a necessary implication of its prior; it is a very abstract picture of reality which draws its inspiration mainly from mathematics; it is more interested in whence things come than how things are as they are. On evil, it interprets it as *sterēsis* of *on* or *mē on* and sees it as constitutive of the reality derived from the *archē*; it tends to a monistic perception of reality. On the other hand, the second approach, based on *kosmologische Seinsstufung*, sees the creation of cosmos as a process from disorder to order and the necessary introduction of order *ab extra* and, in the history of exegesis on *Timaeus*, the creation of cosmos is co-extensive with the creation of time (in contrast to the other approach which sees the cosmos as logical and thus supra-temporal); in this picture of reality the existence of cosmos is seen as a generation of reconstructed intelligibility out of a more primitive and chaotic pre-given, by an external and personalised *dēmiourgos*; no interest is expressed in whence existents come but in how they are as they are now. On the problem of evil, this approach also sees evil as constitutive of reality but in a more concrete way; evil is an active entity to such an extent that cosmogony can be seen as the optimal compromise between this dysteleological given and the noetic *dēmiourgos*. By no means has the evil principle been subsumed under the good principle. It is much more dualistically oriented. Floyd's statement seems to anticipate our theses if interpreted with the same elaborations:

"There are essentially only two alternatives: either the world is eternal and God is

spared the embarrassment of cosmic evil; or the world is temporal, his creation, and he is responsible (at least indirectly) for the evil in it."<sup>3</sup>

1.0.3 I have indicated in the Introduction that these two pictures of reality, with their respective consequences for theodicy, are based on a clear distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē* in *Timaeus*. I will conduct my arguments to prove it on the following topics which are relevant to the Platonic tradition of which Plotinus' synthesis the consummation:

(1) 1.1 The cosmic *eikōs logos* (= *eikōs mythos*)<sup>4</sup> is an authentic discourse for Plato's cosmology in *Timaeus*. There had been a controversy in the Academy immediately after Plato whether the *eikōs logos* is to be read in its literal sense or interpreted metaphorically as a heuristic device (Aristotle *de Caelo* 279b32-280a10 [= Tarán *Speusippus* 61a]).<sup>5</sup> What is involved is not only the discourse itself but (a) the temporal creation of soul and cosmos, (b) the independence of the *dēmiourgos*, both as transcendent *nous* and immanent *nous*, (c) the perception of cosmos as a process from disorder to order<sup>6</sup> with the demiurgic intervention *ab extra*. On the other hand, those who see this *eikōs logos* as no more than a fiction will eliminate all these points and see the whole reality as a timeless derivation from *archē* or *archai*, a kind of *parousia* of this *archē* or these *archai*. My conclusion in 1.1 will be that it is necessary to distinguish, textually, the problem of *genesis* (or existence) of cosmos (i.e. whence it comes) from that of the *diacosmesis* (or essence) of cosmos (i.e., how it is as it is now) in the *eikōs logos*; in addition I will give a brief excursus on the semantics of *hypodochē* in terms of its *in qua* and *ex qua* functions.

(2) 1.2 This textual distinction presents itself in the philosophical distinction between Being-*hypodochē* (about existence of the universe) and *dēmiourgos-anankē* (about its essence). Being-*hypodochē* will explain why the universe is a becoming (*genesis*) rather than a full and

undivided Being or simply non-being at all; *hypodochē* in this explanation plays the role of ultimate *heterotēs* which pluralises Being and limits Being and thereby Plato answers Parmenides' challenge for a monolithic being. The *dēmiourgos-anankē* (with ideal pattern of the divine living being), on the other hand, will be about the *diacosmēsis* of this pre-given existence by the *dēmiourgos* acting as *deus mathematicus* and *deus teleologicus* and this *diacosmēsis* is posed in the form of a conflict between *nous* and *anankē* with the present cosmos as the consequence of their optimal compromise.

(3) 1.3 This section will treat the problem of psychic *autokinēsis*, which is the form of *dēmiourgos*' (and the engendered gods') *diacosmesis* of a primordial given, *ichnē* that is. The theory of psychic *autokinēsis* is found in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* but in my view it is compatible with the *dēmiourgos*' *diacosmēsis* in *Timaeus*. Because the theory of psychic *autokinēsis* is closely related to the theodicy in *Laws X* (901b8-907d3), this theodicy is thus applicable to the *kosmologische Seinsstufung* in which the *dēmiourgos* and *ichnē* play the most vital roles. However, I will argue that, according to another interpretation of this theodicy, it can be applied to the *Ableitungssystem*, governed by Being and *hypodochē*, as well. Accordingly, both kinds of *Seinsstufung* see the presence of evil as necessarily constitutive of the divine economy and thereby confirm the theodicy in *Theaetetus* 176ab that the presence of good needs the balance of evil. It goes without saying that the *Theaetetus*' passage is the cornerstone of the theodicy expounded in *Enneads* and *Enneads* I.8 in particular.

(4) 1.4 This section will be devoted to the suggestion that in Plato's cosmology one can find two kinds of evil. One kind of evil is related to *hypodochē* and its function as the ultimate *heterotēs* which differentiates and pluralises Being; the kind of evil which *hypodochē* entails is therefore concerned with the *sterēsis* of being, i.e., the ontological limitation of Becoming (*genesis*). It sees evil as a kind of quasi-being, with its future elaboration in the hands of



Neopythagorean Moderatus as *parallaxis* of *on* and with its ultimate consummation in Plotinus' evil as *mē on*. The other kind of evil is related to the imposition of essence on this existence and this evil always presents itself as a force frustrating the bestowal of essence, either by the *dēmiourgos* or by the soul "*prolabousa noun*". This kind of evil always assumes a more active presence and this entails a more dualistic outlook.

## 1.1 THE STATUS OF EIKŌS LOGOS IN TIMAEUS

1.1.1 The *eikōs logos* is an account of "that which is copied after the likeness of that Model (= ideal pattern for the cosmos), and is itself a likeness, will be analogous thereto and possess likelihood; for as Being is to Becoming, so is truth to belief" (*Tim.* 29c1-4) and, as a cosmic discourse, "is inferior to none in likelihood" (29c9). It is a discourse proper to the Becoming and is an imitation of that discourse proper to Being. Moreover, the person who pronounces this kind of discourse is a limited being who "partake[s] largely of the accidental and casual (*τὸν προστυχόντος τε καὶ εἰκῆι ταυτέϊ πᾶσι*)"; his words are inevitably restricted in validity (34c3-5). The limitation of *eikōs logos* as a discourse about the universe is not only in the subject matter and discourse but also in the knower.

1.1.2 However, these limitations can be compensated by the very special nature of *eikōs logos*. The *eikōs logos* is a discourse by a perceiver of sensibles but this perception can be enhanced in its validity by imposing on to it the strict reasoning of mathematics (53d1-2) and the *eikōs logos* can then be a combination of subjective affections with an objective analysis (*dianoia*) (*Resp.* 511a3-9; cp. *Tim.* 51e2-7, 53d7-8 and 54b2-4). This *eikōs logos*, as a discourse conducted on the level of *dianoia*, is directed and is teleological, for it is an imitation of *noēsis* and dialectic which are related to forms; it is a teleological discourse not only for an end but for the best end (cp. *Tim.* 29b4-5). These three elements in the *eikōs logos* as a cosmic discourse - perceptual, mathematical and teleological - are also constitutive of the cosmogony it serves to describe; the structure of the *eikōs logos* is a faithful reflection of the history of cosmos.

1.1.3 This is to be the case despite the various reversals and warnings which appear throughout the discourse (e.g. *Tim.* 31b5-34b11, 34b12-34c2, 47e4-48a1, 48e3-4 and 69a5-b3). I would like to see these reversals and warnings as a revelation of the fragility of human reason (cp. 52b) and of the anxiety to reinforce and to supplement what has been said. It is possible to reconstruct the order of cosmology from these literary devices. An example is the narrative order which puts the construction of world body before that of world soul (*Tim.* 35a2-36d8) and this gives support to those - the most articulate among whom is Tarán<sup>7</sup> - who adopt a metaphorical reading of *Timaeus* and thus dismiss the validity of *eikōs logos* as a faithful account of cosmology. However, in 34b12-34c2 Plato said apologetically that "regarding the soul, although we are assaying to describe it after the body, god did not likewise plan it to be younger than the body." This could only mean that the present narrative order can be reconstructed to reveal the true order of cosmology.

1.1.4 Another more important example is the reversal in *Tim.* 47e4-48a1<sup>8</sup> where Plato says that "we must also furnish an account of what comes into existence through necessity" (= the *genesis* or *ichnē*) in addition to the "foregoing part of our discourse" which is "an exposition of the operation of reason" (= the *cosmopoiēsis* of the noetic *dēmiourgos*). The true order is that what comes after 47e4-48a1 in the narrative order is before what goes before 47e4-48a1 in the true order of cosmology. If the primary mission of the *dēmiourgos*' *cosmopoiēsis* is the creation of heaven<sup>9</sup> then 52d3-5 is the key text for the distinction between the stage of *cosmopoiēsis* (29d-47e) and a pre-cosmic stage (47e-69d):

"that Being (*on*) and place (*chōran*, = *hypodochē*) and Becoming (*genesis*) were existing, three distinct things, even before the heaven comes into existence (= *via* the noetic *dēmiourgos*)." (my underlining)

This implies that before the *cosmopoiēsis* caused by the *dēmiourgos*' intervention there is a stage of *genesis* which comes as a consequence of the interaction of Being and *hypodochē* (= *chora*). Scheffel has rightly seen this as "eine tiefere Dimension des Diskurses über den *kosmos*."<sup>10</sup> This is confirmed by 69c1-6:

"He (= the *dēmiourgos*), in the first place, set all these (= 69b7-69c1, i.e., the *ichnē* or traces of the projected forms in the *hypodochē*) in order and then out of these he constructed this present universe.... He himself acts as the constructor of things divine, but the structure of the mortal things he commanded his own engendered sons to execute." (cp. 41b8-c6)

All of these texts seem to see that the *eikōs logos* in *Timaeus* consisted of three stages in the history of the cosmos: (1) *genesis* in the precosmic stage (47e-69d), (2) the *cosmopoiēsis* conducted by the *dēmiourgos* (29d-47e) and (3) the *cosmopoiēsis* delegated to the engendered and lesser gods (= probably world soul or soul in general) (69dff.). (I will take (3) as an extension of (2) because *qui facit per alium facit*.)<sup>11</sup> The reason why (1) is placed after (2) in the narrative order is related to the nature of *hypodochē* which, with Being, is responsible for *genesis* and can be known only inferentially "by a kind of bastard reason (*logismōi tini nothōi*) by the aid of non-sensation, barely an object of belief..." after the inquiry into the construction of cosmos (*Tim.* 52b2-4).

1.1.5 The reason why a distinction between *genesis* and *cosmopoiēsis* is necessary is this: an inquiry into the *genesis* of this cosmos is an *a priori* and metaphysical inquiry into why there is a Becoming rather than a full Being or simply nothing at all, and what is the cause of this Becoming; on the other hand, the *cosmopoiēsis* conducted by the *dēmiourgos* has to take this metaphysical fact as given and stress instead the ordering of this primitive stuff and such an

approach belongs to natural philosophy or, in more specific terms, to the philosophy of motion.<sup>12</sup> The inadequacy of this philosophy of motion being applied to the search for *genesis* is shown in 48c5-6 and 48e4-49a5, and this inadequacy certainly confirms the necessity for a clear distinction between these two stages with their own respective principles and mechanisms. Vlastos has supported this interpretation, saying that

"[t]he one thing he (= Plato) cannot mean... is that soul (= and the *dēmiourgos*) is the source of Heraclitean flux (= the precosmic *genesis* or *ichnē*): *genesis* must be presupposed (= inasmuch as the *cosmopoiēsis* is concerned). It must be 'there', before soul can supervene to 'rule' it."<sup>13</sup>

1.1.6 There are other pieces of evidence for one to separate these two stages in the creation of this cosmos: the invocations used at the very beginning of the section dealing with *cosmopoiēsis* (27c8) and the section dealing with *genesis* (47d4-5) are different.<sup>14</sup> The invocation in 27c8 is:

"we therefore who are prepared to deliver a discourse concerning the universe... must invoke gods and goddesses..."

while the invocation in 47d4-5 is:

"...at the commencement of our account we must call upon god the saviour to bring us safe." (my underlining)

The plurality used in the invocation in 27c8 implies the plurality of becoming, typical of the sensible world, the construction of which is the topic for *cosmopoiēsis*; on the other hand, the

singularity in 47d4-5 stresses the unity of Being in its primordial condition.<sup>15</sup> One may add another point: the dramatic time of *Timaeus* (17b4ff.) makes the *eikōs logos* in *Timaeus* linked to the analogy of the Divided Line in *Republic* (*Resp.* 509d-511d) and, as it has been said at the beginning of 1.1.2, the *eikōs logos* in its mathematical formulation has to start from some presupposition which is left unexamined. This means that the reversal at 47de is a fresh start on the examination of this presupposition which leads to the discussion on *genesis* (cp. *Resp.* 511ab). The relationship between the section of *cosmopoiēsis* and the section of *genesis* is thus comparable to the relation of *dianoia* to the *noēsis* in the analogy of Divided Line. This confirms that a clear distinction between these two stages is necessary. Solmsen has spoken in favour of this distinction:

"In the *Timaeus* there is a definite cleavage between the pre-cosmic stage and the cosmic stage - a cleavage which cannot be minimised as being inherent in the mythical form which Plato has 'chosen' for his exposé."<sup>16</sup>

1.1.7 A summary of the discussion in 1.1 so far. First, I have tried to prove that *eikōs logos* as a cosmic discourse is the best possible discourse for the creation of the sensible cosmos (31b5-6); its validity is enhanced by the introduction of mathematical and teleological reasoning; Plato in *Sophist* 160a5-6 said that "our object was to establish discourse as one class of being." Secondly, the discourse, because of its adequacy, is a revelation of the true order of creation and this includes three stages: (1) *genesis* (47e-69a), (2) demiurgic *cosmopoiēsis* (27c-47e) and (3) *cosmopoiēsis* delegated to souls (69aff.). Thirdly, the reason why the stage of *genesis* is placed after the stage of demiurgic *cosmopoiēsis* is because of the inferential nature of the causes of the *genesis*, that is, Being and *hypodochē*; this inferential nature of the *genesis* stage indicates that it requires an approach - an *a priori* and metaphysical one - which is different from that applied in the stage of demiurgic *cosmopoiēsis* - a physical

one. This is because the *genesis* is related to the problem of existence of this universe, that is, why it is rather than is not, while *cosmopoiēsis* is related to the essence of this universe, that is, why this universe exhibits such regularities and orders. For the existence and essence of this universe Plato has assigned to each of them a different pair of principles: Being and *hypodochē* for the existence and *anankē* (or *ichnē*) and *dēmiourgos* (with the ideal pattern of divine living being) for the essence of the universe. I will devote 1.2 to making this vital point clear.

1.1.8 To conclude this discussion on the formal structure of *eikōs logos* in *Timaeus* I wish to make a little excursus on the semantics of *hypodochē*, considering the great importance I have attached to this concept. The multivocal implications of *hypodochē* can be gathered under the umbrella of "breeding ground of generation", and this means it connotes two semantic groups, one being spatial container (the '*in qua*' function) and the other being physical generation (the '*ex qua*' function).<sup>17</sup> The spatial or *in qua* function of *hypodochē* includes *tithēnē* (49a7), *chora*, *hedra* (52b1), *topos* (51b6) and the adverbial *en di* (50c10); the generative or *ex qua* function includes *mētēr* (50d2) and *ex ou*. If one throws the net wider and includes similes and related expressions then one can include, in the *in qua* group winnowing basket (52e6-53a2) and the ointment base (50e6-9), both meaning the space where the generation happens; in the *ex qua* group one can include the molding stuff (*ekmageion*, 50c3), the extended gold analogy (50a7-b6), soft material (*tōn malakōn*, 50e9-51a1), all of which mean the material source for generation. Verbs used in these similes also deserve attention: *metaplattōn* (50a9), *ekdexomenon* (50e5) and *apomattein* (50e9-51a1) belong to the *ex qua* group; the *enegigneto* (50b3) belongs to the *in qua* group.<sup>18</sup> However, this distinction is hardly exact because some of these texts seem to be borderline cases. The phenomenon of an entity acting both as the material for generation and substratum to sustain the consequent generation seems typically Presocratic.<sup>19</sup> Presocratic it may sound at the first sight but Plato gives it a metaphysical

dimension which is totally innovative and crucial to his creationist metaphysics. Its metaphysical function is the topic for the next section.



## 1.2 THE PROBLEM OF CREATION

1.2.1 It has been argued in 1.1 that the existence of this universe and the essence of this universe are two different questions and require different approaches. One may well ask in what kind of condition this existence has to be before the demiurgic intervention. Plato here faces a dilemma: on the one hand, this pre-cosmic existence, in the form of *ichnē*, used as the material source for creation by the *dēmiourgos*, cannot be in the condition of a total chaos for this would mean that the *dēmiourgos* creates *ex nihilo*, i.e., creation out of a total indeterminacy; nor can these *ichnē* be highly organised for this would mean the *ichnē* can by their own devices evolve into a cosmos and this would make redundant the *dēmiourgos*. This means a very delicate balance between these two possibilities and Plato's answer is half-determined and yet determinable *ichnē*. The *ichnos* of fire, e.g., in the pre-cosmic stage is the form of fire projecting itself into the *hypodochē*, but this is not the fire in the sensible universe; it has to be raised by the *dēmiourgos*, who looks up to forms, to the level of intelligibility.<sup>20</sup> This means the stage of *genesis* is somehow continuous, and yet discontinuous, with the stage of *cosmopoiēsis*<sup>21</sup>: they are discontinuous because in the *genesis* the *ichnos* of fire is the immediate projection of the form of fire while the *dēmiourgos'* intermediacy characterises the *cosmopoiēsis*, and yet they are also continuous because throughout the creation of cosmos there underlies both stages a third entity (*triton*), that is, the *hypodochē* of all Becoming. (49a3-7) Plato illustrates this *hypodochē* by an extended simile, the gold analogy.

1.2.2 This analogy appears in "a much misread passage"<sup>22</sup> which is characterised by a strong linguistic turn, i.e., how we can name and refer to those existents and the container in which they are (49b1-e9).<sup>23</sup> It remains the main clue to our apprehension of *hypodochē*. The

interpretation of this "much misread passage" is already mined with all kinds of scholarship but the two main approaches are centered on the controversial 49d6-7:

"*mē touto (= X) alla toiouton (= Y) hekastote prosagoreuein pur (= Z).*"

It can be understood either as (a) to call not Z X but Y, or (b) to call not X Z but Y Z. I opt for (a) and this means that we can name the *hypodochē touto* ("this") and the Becoming (*genesis*) in it *toiouton* ("of such a kind"). I will argue later that this *toiouton* means a half-determined and determinable condition of *genesis* (which is *ichnē*) and *touto* indicates the independence of *hypodochē* as a separate concept (see 1.2.10). For the moment, this gold analogy has to be placed within a more philosophical context, that is, why there is Becoming (*genesis*), exemplified by the coming-into-being of elements, rather than nothing, and what is the causality of this *genesis* if any at all? To translate these two questions into the language of the middle dialogues of Plato, it can be understood this way: *genesis*, being natureless by itself, has to derive its essence from the transcendent forms and is an imitation of them; while on the other hand, *genesis* is ontologically separate from forms and nothing can be more absurd than to explain the changeable by the changeless, and therefore one has to both affirm and deny their relationship. The causal efficacy of forms cannot explain the distorted images of them in *genesis* nor can we explain why the forms have to produce these images. This is a Platonic dilemma, consisting of the "production" and "otherness" of images, that compels Plato to broach *hypodochē* to solve these problems. In a word, the *hypodochē* exists for *genesis* and for the images and it is here that we begin to realise that the Parmenidean nightmare remains potent.

1.2.3 We will see *hypodochē* in *Timaeus* fulfill two roles: (a) it entices Being (*on*) to leave its solitary presence and to become pluralised and differentiated and (b) it acts as the limiting

principle on Being and this explains the limited and imperfect embodiment of Being in *genesis* and, at the same time, the causation by *hypodochē* of *genesis*. The causal role of *hypodochē* has to be qualified here. Although *hypodochē* acts as the limiting principle of differentiation and otherness on Being, the existential fecundity remains that of Being and of it alone. Furthermore, *hypodochē*, being characterless, can receive all the *genesis* within it. *Hypodochē* is equipped, as we have said, with the *in qua* and *ex qua* functions we have suggested at the end of 1.1.7.

1.2.4 Why does Being, self-identical, ungenerated, indestructible and invisible (51e7-52b2) have to be productive and add the world of *genesis* to the world of Being? In *Parmenides* 143a5-144c2 the logical impossibility of forcing on Being a mixture with the one or unity (*auto to hen*) makes it impossible to maintain the independence and self-sufficiency of Being as such. One arm of this dilemma is that, if mixture with the one is enforced, Being would be:

"split up into the smallest and greatest and all kinds of existence; nothing else is so much divided, and in short the parts of existence are infinite." (*Parmenides* 144b6-c1)<sup>26</sup>

This uncontrollable pluralisation and differentiation of Being has to be cured by, as Eslick says dramatically, the "therapeutic healing" of *Sophist* (*Sophist* 251d8ff.)<sup>26</sup> where Being can present itself in philosophical discourse and in *genesis* only by the extrinsic limitation exercised by *heterotēs* (or *thateron*) and negation. *Hypodochē*, which is eternal and shares absolutely no communion with Being, is thus the ultimate *heterotēs* (*Tim.* 51e7-52b7) and is the cause for the Being's otherness than unity. The plurality of *genesis* can therefore be accounted for by *hypodochē*; the presence of Being to *genesis*, from where it is to where it is "not" (cp. the *mē* of *mē on* in *Enneads* I.8.3.[3]), is explained by the presence of this principle of ultimate *heterotēs*.<sup>27</sup> Being as the principle of plenitude and autarchy is forced to descend and fill up

what is not, i.e., non-being (= *hypodochē*), to create its pluralisation, and therefore non-being (= otherness than being) becomes constitutive of Being and emerges as the cause of the inner differentiation and instantiation of Being.<sup>28</sup> *Hypodochē* as the ultimate *heterotēs* guarantees this externalisation and pluralisation of Being and the result is the projection of forms into *hypodochē*, the spatial container. The result therefrom is the *ichnē* characterised with a chaotic motion.<sup>29</sup> Hahn calls this function of *hypodochē* "the principle of the Fullness of Emptiness":

"a principle which creates Non-Being at the heart of Being, a view which finds intelligibility grounded in the reality of Non-being"<sup>30</sup>

or, as I have said, in the ultimate *heterotēs*. H. Gauss seems to confirm this result:

"So wird beim späten Plato das Nichtsein ein integrierender Bestandteil der Sphäre des Seins. Analog können wir nun sagen, dass die Ethik die Disziplin vom Guten und Nicht-Guten innerhalb der Sphäre der Guten... ist."<sup>31</sup>

1.2.5 A.O. Lovejoy, too, has tried in his *The Great Chain of Being* to answer why another world of *genesis* is necessary in addition to the world of Being. He finds his answer in the goodness and generosity of the *dēmiourgos* (*Tim.* 29d8-e1) but this is about the *cosmopoiēsis*, not about the *genesis* of cosmos. The ground on which he bases his answer is his noted "principle of plenitude" (cp. 39e3-6, 41b8-c1, 42d4-7 and its derivative: "nature suffers no leap" in 31c1-2). The principle is defined by Lovejoy as "the 'fulness' of the conceptual possibility in actuality."<sup>32</sup> This implies that transcendent Being remains imperfect if without being productive and being fully realised; "by a bold inversion" the autarchic and indivisible intellectual world becomes the transcendent source of existential fecundity.<sup>33</sup> Lovejoy, without realising the role of *hypodochē* and its metaphysical function as ultimate *heterotēs*, has to

attribute this productivity to the inner logic (or "dialectical necessity")<sup>34</sup> within the Being itself and therefore implies a kind of determinism in *genesis* and a kind of rationalism which Plato expresses in his *mythopoiēsis*. It seems to me that he applies the concept of Plotinian emanation to Plato here and absorbs the function and the entity of *hypodochē* completely within Being itself; moreover, he should have attributed the "goodness and generosity" to Being and not to the *dēmiourgos* in his version of the event.

1.2.6 Therefore Plato has incorporated *hypodochē* as an independent metaphysical principle in his cosmogony. Does this place him under suspicion of dualism because both the Being and *hypodochē* seem the indispensable *archai* to the *genesis*? The answer is yes and no. Yes, because both are, as just said, eternal and indispensable to each other; no, because the *heterotēs*, symbolised by *hypodochē*, has to presuppose the sameness (*homoiotēs* or *auto to hen*) of the Being it pluralises and differentiates and, moreover, *hypodochē*, unlike Being, is never a principle of - but a catalyst for - existential fecundity. These seem to make Plato in *Timaeus* either a weak dualist or a weak monist. Hager, despite his inconsistency on this issue in general, has expressed this ambiguity adequately, anticipating Plotinus' solution in *Enneads* 1.8:

"...wäre es (= evil) einfach etwas Anders als das Gute, und nicht wie in Wirklichkeit sein pures Gegenteil."<sup>35</sup>

This difficult and delicate relationship between the *homoiotēs* of Being and the *heterotēs* of *hypodochē* became the top priority in the metaphysical research at the hands of the Academy, Neopythagoreans and Plotinus.

1.2.7 One may see the relevance of our research on *hypodochē* so far by looking at *Tim.* 91c1-

5:

"in woman again,... whenever the matrix and womb (*metrai kai husterai*), as it is called, - which is an indwelling creature desirous of child-bearing, - remains without fruit long beyond the due season, it is vexed and takes ill...."

After this comes the passage on the birth of living being (*zoōn genesis*) (91c10-d5) and this brings us back to *Tim.* 50d1-3:

"it is proper to liken the *hypodochē* to the mother, the source (= Being) to the father, and what is generated between these two to the offspring."

Therefore the pre-cosmic *genesis* is modelled on biological reproduction, with Being being given a male gender and *hypodochē* a female gender, in contrast to the craftsman model in the *cosmopoiēsis* (cp. 4.5.6). In Greek biology the debate on whether the semen alone or semen with *katamenia* is responsible for generation is a moot question and this might, in addition, account for the ambiguity which one finds in labeling Plato either a monist or a dualist.<sup>36</sup>

1.2.8 The effect of *hypodochē* on Being is to differentiate and pluralise it and create therefrom *genesis*, that is, *ichnē*; it also acts as a spatial container to contain this *genesis*: spatiality, unlike temporality, seems to be a precondition for the *ichnē*'s existence. However, there is one more function one can attribute to *hypodochē*, that is, it is the very cause of irrationality. *Hypodochē* has been said to be apprehended by a "bastard reason, by the aid of non-sensation, barely an object of belief" (52b)<sup>37</sup> but it is also responsible for the partial realisation of Being's full intelligibility and rationality in *genesis*. *Hypodochē* thus provides a double check on the ontological authenticity and epistemological rationality of Being and this double check accounts

for the partial determination of the projected forms into the spatial *hypodochē*. We will indicate later that this *genesis* with limited ontological authenticity and epistemological rationality is later assumed by the *anankē* (as in *Timaeus*) or *sōmatoeides* (as in *Politicus*) in the *cosmopoiēsis*, with which the *dēmiourgos* as embodiment of *nous* has to compromise. In this sense the *cosmopoiēsis* can be said to be a *sōteria* of intelligibility by the *dēmiourgos*.

1.2.9 These three functions of *hypodochē* - (1) as ultimate *heterotēs* to cause a split within Being and its consequent pluralisation, (2) as spatial medium to contain *genesis* (and therefore it has to be prior to *genesis*), and (3) as the principle of irrationality responsible for the partial realisation of Being's full rationality in *genesis* - complete the nature of *hypodochē*.<sup>38</sup> The question of monism or dualism is not so important as the fact that the cause of *genesis* is a split Being, made possible by the presence of *hypodochē*. Because of the necessary presence of *hypodochē* in *genesis* it means the universe is forever limited, characterised further by indeterminacy and irrationality and this seems to contradict the deterministic outlook proposed by Lovejoy who neglects *hypodochē* in his account of *genesis*. It is because of this limited nature of beings that Plato in *Theaetetus* 176ab expressed that evil, defined as the ontological deficiency of beings, can not be ameliorated, let alone eliminated, since they are constitutive of this cosmos, in the same way as *hypodochē* is constitutive of this cosmos; Hager has inferred therefrom<sup>39</sup> that this metaphysical condition of beings could imply "*die Summe der Übel müsse konstant bleiben.*"

1.2.10 With this conclusion on *hypodochē* we may return to the gold analogy.<sup>40</sup> It is an analogy attempting to refer and name the *hypodochē* and the *genesis* (or *ichnē*) within it. On the one hand, *hypodochē* as the ultimate *heterotēs*, spatial medium and source of irrationality is a distinct metaphysical concept and its philosophical consistency deserves the indicative '*tode*' and '*touto*' (49d1-2); on the other hand, the projected *ichnē*, deprived of full existential

stability and epistemological intelligibility but maintaining their link with forms as their imitations, can be allowed a limited linguistic determination, *toiouton*, "of such a kind". This half-determination of *ichnē* is not only linguistic but also existential and essential, and these half-determined *ichnē* constitute a necessary condition for demiurgic activity (see 1.2.1). If these *ichnē* are already highly organised then the *dēmiourgos* would become redundant and the pre-cosmic *genesis* on its own evolution would become *cosmopoiēsis* without intervention *ab extra*; if these *ichnē* are totally chaotic then the *dēmiourgos* would be accused of *creatio ex nihilo*, not out of nothing but out of total indeterminacy.

1.2.11 What is the condition for this half-determined primordial condition of the *ichnē*? First of all, these *ichnē* are the material source for the *dēmiourgos* to create the cosmos (32c6-7) and they are composed of the proto-types of four elements (or five according to 55c5-8); these elements are perceptible and are said to be named after and similar to Being (52a5-8) and are in turn composed of two kinds of triangles.<sup>41</sup> However, even these triangles are not the most primary components because Plato says that there are higher principles than triangles and they are only envisaged by gods and those dear to gods (53d8-e1). It is not clear what these more primary entities really are, but *Laws* X 894a1-5 might give us a clue:

"Obviously whenever an *archē* receiving increase comes to the second change, and from this to the next, and in coming to the third admits perception by percipients."

What this can probably mean, if read together with *Timaeus*, is that Plato thinks there is a progression or evolution of reality, *more geometrico*, in the pre-cosmic stage of *genesis*: a geometrical progression from point to line, then to surface (= the two basic triangles) and then to the perceptible solid (= the four or five elements) (cp. *de Anima* 404b18ff.).



1.2.12 Such a relationship, which obtains among these different kinds of geometrical entities along this progression of reality, is the ontologically more primary as the *explanans* of the ontologically inferior *explanandum*. This pre-cosmic evolution has to be presupposed for otherwise one cannot explain the "unbroken circle of birth" (49c9-d1) and the "variety of appearance" (52e1) in the *hypodochē*, nor can one explain the half-determined condition of *ichnē* before the intervention *ab extra*. I am not aware of what these principles "higher (= more primary) than these elemental triangles" really are although the temptation to see the Being and *hypodochē* as *Monad* and *Dyad* will not be missed by some determined Neopythagoreans (see 2.1.2). These clues constitute enough pieces of evidence for an *Ableitungssystem, more geometrico*, a reduction<sup>42</sup> of all reality, linear and necessary, from an *archē* (or a pair of *archai*), with lower reality as an implication<sup>43</sup> of what is prior, a *Seinsstufung* that is.<sup>44</sup> For the rest of 1.2 I will turn my attention to the so called *kosmologische Seinsstufung*.

1.2.13 If *hypodochē* is the second and "material" principle other than the Being in the pre-cosmic stage, then the result of that stage, the *ichnē*, is the material principle for the cosmopoietic stage, opposed to the noetic *dēmiourgos*. These *ichnē*, apart from the geometrical evolution we have just mentioned in 1.2.12, are accompanied by a kind of motion; this pre-cosmic motion is "mechanically disposed"<sup>45</sup> and is attributed to the disequilibrium (*anōmalōtētos*) caused by the "*dynameis*" of the elements (52e1-3) and their interaction with the *hypodochē* which "compresses them all" (*sphingei*) (58a6-b1). The most original point is that this motion is not attributed to soul or the *dēmiourgos*, and this constitutes an obstacle for the Neopythagoreans who try to assert the psychic *autokinēsis* in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* at the expense of this pre-cosmic motion in *Timaeus*. On the other hand, it is also the piece of evidence for the Middle Platonists who try to reconcile *Timaeus* with the autokinetic soul in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* and take this pre-cosmic chaotic motion as the support for the thesis of

an evil soul.<sup>46</sup> This is important because Speusippus and the Neopythagoreans tend to explain away the pre-cosmic half-determination as a structural phenomenon and deny the diachronic aspect of cosmogony in *Timaeus*.<sup>47</sup> More about this in chapter 3.

1.2.14 This pre-cosmic half-determination among the four kinds of *ichnē* with their chaotic motion in the *hypodochē* in terms of association and dissociation is said to be in a condition such as it might be "in the absence of gods", i.e., before the demiurgic intervention. Although this half-determination of *ichnē* means an achievement of a minimal order (69b4-8), this minimal order comes by accident (*tuche*) (69b8). It is the *sunaitia* (= *to tēs planōmenēs eidos aitias*, 47e4-48a9) of the *cosmopoiēsis*, a kind of cause which "is void of intelligence and produce[s] accidental and irregular effects." (48e6-7) This half-determination of *ichnē* due to accidental and irregular effects is a Platonic version of Aristotle's material necessity, a situation in which the physical features of elements and their interactions are the only activities, with the consequence of a minimal order without any imposition of providential teleology (46d4-5 and 46e1-3). These *ichnē* are the material reservoir for demiurgic creation of the cosmos. *Anankē* or *sōmatoeides* is the hypostatisation of these primordial *ichnē*.

1.2.15 I hope I have made clear the distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē*; it is a necessary distinction just like the distinction between Being and the *dēmiourgos*.<sup>48</sup> Being, differentiated by the ultimate *heterotēs* of *hypodochē*, becomes the source of existence (in the form of *ichnē*); the *dēmiourgos*, who struggles and compromises with *ichnē* or *anankē*, acts as *deus mathematicus* and *deus teleologicus* and imposes order on the disordered *ichnē* and creates therefrom the cosmos.<sup>49</sup> *Hypodochē* is a concept related to the *genesis* of the sensible cosmos because without it the ontologically limited *genesis* cannot be explained; the concept of *ichnē* or *anankē* is related to the essence of cosmos for it is characterised by disordered motions and requires the intervention of the *dēmiourgos*, the embodiment of *nous*. In short, the Being and

*hypodochē* explain the existence of cosmos (i.e., whence it comes), and the *ichnē* and the *dēmiourgos* explain the essence of the cosmos (i.e., how it is in its present condition).<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, these two kinds of material principle entail their own set of causes as *archai* for the rest of reality (i.e., *Monad* (= the Being) and *Dyad* (= *hypodochē*) for Speusippus and Neopythagoreans, and the trinity of the *dēmiourgos*, matter and ideal pattern for Middle Platonists). I have followed Happ<sup>51</sup> in naming these two visions on the progression of reality as *Ableitungssystem* and *kosmologische Seinsstufung* respectively. The distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē* is accepted by Plotinus, implicitly, in his theory of matter which combines the function of both concepts; this is seen most clearly in his *Enneads* I.8.6 and I.8.7. The easy transition from I.8.6, where a concept of matter related to *hypodochē* is presupposed, to I.8.7, where matter is seen as *ichnē*, also proves that the concept of matter for Plotinus is a flexible concept with a "Zwischen-Status".<sup>52</sup>

1.2.16 I have said that the half-determined *ichnē* is the undetermined and yet determinable material source for the *dēmiourgos* to create the universe: "die Bedingung für die Möglichkeit" of cosmos<sup>53</sup>. It is a Platonic version of Aristotle's material necessity. If this is the case then the demiurgic intervention *ab extra* can be said to be a Platonic version of hypothetical necessity. For Aristotle both material necessity and hypothetical necessity are structural features of the cosmos; Platonic hypothetical necessity, however, has to be introduced *ab extra* and this means that the *dēmiourgos* embodies a transcendent principle and therefore cannot be reduced to an element (though the noblest) in the world soul. This means that if we take the *eikōs logos* as an authentic discourse about the universe, then we cannot see the *dēmiourgos* as a literary device without philosophical substance. It also means that the half-determined *ichnē* left on their own will never be worked up to higher life, and this in turn proves the necessity for an intervention *ab extra*. How can one explain this demiurgic intervention if this intervention is *ab extra*?<sup>54</sup> This turns our attention to the "personal character" of the *dēmiourgos*, however

limited it may seem when compared with the creator of other religions:

"he was good, and in him that is good no envy arises." (*Tim.* 29d8-e1; cp. 27c3, 28c7, *Politicus* 269e6-7, 272e3-4, 273b1-2 and 273e6)

Solmsen has concluded on this limited "personal character" of the *dēmiourgos*:

"a planning and designing mind which the *Timaeus* even 'personalizes' as a creating god."<sup>65</sup>

The importance of this voluntary element on the part of the *dēmiourgos* in cosmogony cannot be exaggerated; Baltes has rightly said that this is "*mittleplatonisches Schulgut*."<sup>66</sup> This will be confirmed in 3.3-4.

1.2.17 Some interpreters, such as Speusippus, Xenocrates and most of the Neoplatonists in ancient times and Cherniss and Cornford in the present, have tried to read the *eikōs logos* as "Creation-as-a-Fiction-Hypothesis", and this means a denial of the *fiat* of the *dēmiourgos* as creator of the cosmos. In order to circumvent this controversial opinion on creation, one can go to the "golden age myth" in *Politicus* to see what functions the *dēmiourgos* can perform and to see whether this figure is to be taken as real.<sup>67</sup> To take this golden age myth as a unit for discussion will not lead us to an over-interpretation because this myth is quite independent of its immediate context.<sup>68</sup> The presupposition of this myth is that the cosmos exists diachronically in the form of cyclic evolution (which has been broached in the reincarnation of soul in *Phaedo* and in the "myth of Er" in *Republic X*), either in the cosmos' "progression" or "reversion," with their different consequences in the successive stages of cosmic history.<sup>69</sup> One can read either the reversion being followed by progression or *vice versa*. In the "from

reversion to progression" of cosmos, the demiurgic intervention marks the beginning of world-ordering:

"...the material element (*sōmatoeides*, = *ichnē* in *Timaeus*) in the composition, because of this element, which was inherent in its primeval nature (*tēs palai pote physeōs*), was infected with great disorder before the attainment of the existing orderly universe for from its composer (*tou synthetos*, = the *dēmiourgos*) the universe received only good things." (*Politicus* 273b4-8)<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, in the "from progression to reversion" of the cosmos the cosmos suffers a degeneration which is caused by the *sōmatoeides*:

"...for its previous condition it retains in itself and creates in the animals all the elements of harshness and injustice which have their origin in the heavens..."  
(*Politicus* 273b9-c2)

And Plato continues that, so long as the universe keeps in mind the guidance of its "Helmsman", it produces little evil but great good; once it is separated from him and forgets him the cosmos begins to degenerate again. Both these ways of reading cosmic history prove that the demiurgic intervention *ab extra* is the climax of cosmic history. The intermittent intervention is a reminder of the constant *epimeleia* the *dēmiourgos* has for this cosmos while the *sōmatoeides* plays the disruptive and recalcitrant force with which the *dēmiourgos* has to contend and compromise. This makes *sōmatoeides* exactly the same as *ichnē*, *sunaitia* or *anankē* in *Timaeus*. As the constant *epimeleia* of the *dēmiourgos* is needed, so is *sōmateides* permanently immanent in the universe and constitutive of the divine economy. This dualistic outlook is also explanatory of the theodicy in *Theaetetus* 176ab, that good and evil have to

be balanced out.

1.2.18 From this inquiry into the role of the *dēmiourgos* in *Politicus* - and I believe it is the same case with *Timaeus* - there are three conclusions to be drawn here:

First, those who adopt a metaphorical interpretation of the *eikōs logos* of *Timaeus* always try to explain away the figure of *dēmiourgos* because his existence would mean that the creation of soul and universe happens with the creation of time; the idea of soul being born in time is unacceptable to them and is contradictory to the ungenerated soul in *Phaedrus*. However, the golden age myth in *Politicus* involves no *fiat* of creation but the *dēmiourgos* remains an indispensable factor in the divine dispensation. This means that one has to take the *dēmiourgos* in *Timaeus* as substantial and this in turn implies that the *eikōs logos* is an authentic cosmic discourse, not to be explained away. The intervention "*ab extra*" means the noetic *dēmiourgos* is transcendent to the cosmos (42e4-5) and when he intervenes in the *cosmopoiēsis* he is the embodiment of immanent *nous* (*Tim.* 30b4-5; cp. *Philebus* 30c4-8, 30d7-8, 31a8-9 and 27b9-c1). In relation to the universe (for the "existence" of which the Being and *hypodochē* are responsible) the *dēmiourgos* in his optimal compromise with *ichnē* (or *anankē* or *sōmatoeides*) can be said to be the creator of a reconstructed existence of intelligibility, a retriever of the ontological authenticity and rationality in Being which has been compromised by *hypodochē*.<sup>81</sup> For this he is called "the supreme originating principle of Becoming and the cosmos" (*Tim.* 29e5-30a1).

1.2.19 Secondly, the *dēmiourgos* in regard to the pre-cosmic *genesis* has to face the *ichnē* which tread on the thin line between the possibility of the *dēmiourgos'* *creatio ex nihilo* and that of highly organised *ichnē* in an autarchic evolution. He, imposing his ordering in the *cosmopoiēsis*, has to steer between the Charybdis of deistic design and the Scylla of arbitrary

dispensation. The material condition he faces is determining and determinable: it is determining and so the *dēmiourgos* cannot act arbitrarily; the universe needs his constant *epimeleia* and this disproves the deistic design implied in Lovejoy's dialectical necessity within Being (1.2.5). On the other hand, an over-emphasis on his personal character will make the *dēmiourgos* inscrutable and unpredictable<sup>62</sup>; because the *dēmiourgos* is said to persuade *anankē* "τῶι λόγῳ" (48a), that is why we say his personal character is limited (1.2.6). This means the rationality of the *dēmiourgos* is exhibited in a situation full of material conditions.<sup>63</sup> This "persuasion" takes the form, as I have said, of mathematics (*Tim.* 35b45; cp. *Epinomis* 978a7-b2) and teleology (*Tim.* 30a3-6).

1.2.20 Thirdly, the fact that there is only an optimal compromise (47e4-48a9) between the *dēmiourgos* and *anankē* indicates that, because both are constitutive of the cosmos, Plato becomes dualistic here.<sup>64</sup> Since Plato denies that any final victory of the *dēmiourgos* over *anankē* is in sight, the intrinsic irrationality of *anankē* - symbolised by the pre-cosmic chaotic motion - remains somewhat opaque to the *dēmiourgos*. The Middle Platonists were sensitive to this problem and began to discuss the moral nature of this *cosmopoiēsis*. (see 3.4.4-6)

1.2.21 So far this inquiry into *Timaeus'* cosmology has its basis in the *eikōs logos* as an authentic cosmic discourse and this position sees the cosmos as a linear development: (Being + *hypodochē*) -> (*ichnē* (or *anankē*) + *dēmiourgos*) -> world soul -> world body -> others. (I use this symbol of -> to represent "proceed to".) However, I have distinguished two different pictures of reality in my previous discussion and these two pictures have their respective champions after Plato, whom I have distinguished in terms of Neopythagoreanism and Middle Platonism. On the one hand, there is a necessary and logical progression of reality, *more geometrico*, with Being and *hypodochē* - later interpreted by Speusippus as *Monad* and *Dyad* - as *archai*. On the other hand, there is another picture of reality, with the *dēmiourgos*, *ichnē*

and ideal pattern of the divine living being as *archai*, which takes *ichnē* as given and places stress on the work-up of this primitive material into a higher entity, called cosmos. The demiurgic intervention adopts the form of motion (psychic motion, to be precise) and his *cosmopoiēsis* can be seen as an imposition of a psychic, ordered and teleological motion upon an accidental, pre-cosmic and non-psychic motion of *anankē*. In the more technical language of *Timaeus*, it is an imposition of the motion of sameness upon that of otherness (36c3-7), or circular motion upon a rectilinear motion (36c5-d8 and 37b9; cp. 43a6-b3 and 40a9-b2; cp. the three kinds of motion in a human being in 89a1-6). The world soul, on the other hand, because it is generated and passable, cannot be an *archē* of motion since in *Phaedrus* the soul as *archē* of motion is by itself ungenerated and impassible. This means that those who adopt a metaphorical interpretation of *eikōs logos* and who deny that the world is a *fiat* of the *dēmiourgos* (who, for them, is only an element in soul) at a certain moment in the cosmic history, have to see the pre-cosmic accidental motion of *ichnē* as an uncontrolled and unexpected spin-off of psychic motion.

1.2.22 I do believe that these two trends of interpretation were later adopted by the Neopythagoreans and the Middle Platonists. Apart from these historical facts, I also would like to point out a very revealing fact in *Timaeus*. There is no place in *Timaeus* where the independence of the noetic *dēmiourgos* and ideal pattern of the divine living being are questioned, nor is it possible, on behalf of Plato, to incorporate these two independent factors into Being, let alone into the *hypodochē*. What can this mean but that Plato has decided to see the source of essence different from the source of existence? The distinction between the problem of existence and that of essence has to be insisted on and so does the concept of matter as *heterotēs* (than Being) and the concept of matter as disordered and amorphous *ichnē*. The development by the Neopythagoreans and the Middle Platonists perpetuated this distinction and there are signs in Plotinus that the distinction is maintained despite the



important fact that *nous* and soul as the forces for essence are now said to be generated by the One, the source of being; the concern for essence is over-determined by the concern for existence and the evil of an existent is explained as a deficiency of its being. The legacy of this distinction is seen, however, in the two descents of soul outwith the hypostatic reality. The first descent of soul is said to generate matter, that is *ichnē*, and this generation is necessary and logical, a part of the emanation from the One. The second descent is about the creation of the sensible universe, with the imposition of order by soul, in its second descent, upon these already existent *ichnē*, which were the result of soul's first descent, and this explains why the cosmos has the order and essence matter did not have before the second descent. I mention this briefly as an anticipation of my more elaborate exposition in chapter 4 but this should confirm my insistence on such a distinction, which is ultimately a distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē*.

### 1.3 PSYCHIC MOTION AND DIVINE ECONOMY

1.3.1 Those who do not agree with what has been argued in 1.2 and adopt instead a metaphorical reading of the *eikōs logos* in *Timaeus* tend to reduce the *dēmiourgos* to an immanent element in the soul and they always appeal to *Tim.* 30b2-5 and *Laws X* 892b3-4 for this reduction; this reduction cannot explain *Tim.* 42e4-5 which gives us a transcendent *nous*. For these people the *cosmopoiēsis* is not understood in a diachronic way but in a synchronic and synthetic fashion. The pre-cosmic and non-psychic motion which we have found in the stage of precosmic *genesis* is not a disorder which comes "earlier" (either logically or chronologically) and is to be put into order later by a mythical *dēmiourgos*, for there is no such *genesis* before the *cosmopoiēsis*; the pre-cosmic chaos is nothing but a part of the divine economy, a divine economy controlled by the motion initiated by soul. Soul can only initiate good motion and therefore the providential *epimeleia* exercised by soul admits of no dysteleological factor; chaotic motion is but an unexpected spin-off of good psychic motion. Evil is therefore a necessary part of the divine economy and can be explained and rationalised, but never rectified. This is an approach adopted by those who interpret *Timaeus* metaphorically, because in this interpretation there is no *dēmiourgos* and no time, but there is an ungenerated soul. I will raise objection to this interpretation because their presupposition that the cosmology in *Timaeus* and the theory of psychic *autokinēsis* in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* are completely incompatible is not correct.

1.3.2<sup>66</sup> The argument for psychic *autokinēsis* in *Phaedrus* is composed of two sub-arguments, a proto-type of ontological argument and a cosmological argument; they are related but do not constitute a rigorous proof; instead their effects are cumulative. The proto-type of ontological

argument can be seen very clearly in *Phaedrus* 245c9-d2:

"Only that which moves itself, since it does not leave itself (*hate ouk apoleipon heauto*), never ceases to move, and this is also the source and the beginning of motion for all other things which have motion."

"It does not leave itself" only proves that soul, being soul, is the source of motion and cannot abandon this defining nature and remains soul. This essential definition of soul does not warrant soul to be the "eternal" source of motion, that is, to have eternal possession of this defining feature. The former is essential to soul but the latter is external and contingent - in so far as the argument is concerned - and this inference from the defining feature to an external and contingent existent is thus a failure. This means a presupposition of a higher entity, such as the *dēmiourgos*, might be required.<sup>66</sup> The second sub-argument is cosmological and it begins with a definition of *archē* at the beginning (*Phaedrus* 245d2-5) which means to show that the ontological independence of soul is closely linked to the *autokinēsis* of soul. I will not go into the details here; it suffices to say that this cosmological argument presupposes the ontological argument which I have just refuted (245e1-4 and d10) and therefore it has to be rejected. However, 245d9 has revealed, my objectors might say, that *genesis* is merely a species of *kinēsis*, and this could imply that the precosmic *genesis* with its chaotic and mechanical motion in *Timaeus* is a species of *kinēsis*, but I wonder if this amounts to the wild assumption that it is a species of "psychic *autokinēsis*". Last but not least, the *psychē pasa* in 245c6 has to be understood as a mass term for noetic soul<sup>67</sup> or a psychic force: "a type of stuff or psychic force interpenetrating the universe."<sup>68</sup> This psychic force exerts a constant care (*epimeleia*) of the universe (246e6-7). These two features, psychic *autokinēsis* and *epimeleia*, constitute the rationale for the autonomy of the universe as a kind of organism.

1.3.3 *Prima facie* the psychology in *Phaedrus* is different from that in *Timaeus*: in *Timaeus* the soul is engendered and psychic motion is imparted *ab extra* and the cosmos under the government of noetic soul is contingent upon the goodness of the transcendent *nous*, i.e., the *dēmiourgos* (*Tim.* 41a709; cp. *Epinomis* 983b1-4). In *Phaedrus* soul is eternal and ungenerated and is the only source of motion and hence no external source is required to guarantee the sustenance of the universe. Therefore, those who read the *eikōs logos* of *Timaeus* as no more than a heuristic device have to eliminate those parts incompatible with *Phaedrus* and this means a denial of the importance of the *dēmiourgos* and a denial of pre-cosmic *genesis* with its own non-psychic motion.<sup>69</sup> This also means that both have different conceptions of cosmos. The "literal" interpreters of *Timaeus* see the cosmos as a process from disorder to order with the demiurgic intervention as its climax while the "metaphorical" interpreters have to be content with a cosmos with acosmic elements as its features.

1.3.4 Is it possible, one may ask, to reconcile these two pictures of cosmology? Vlastos has suggested that the differences between them are "not inexplicable" and that the differences are derived from the different sets of problems they are addressed to.<sup>70</sup> The possibility is that the psychology in *Phaedrus* (and *Laws X*) is consistent with the *cosmopoiēsis* in *Timaeus* after the withdrawal of the *dēmiourgos* to his "wonted habitat", that is, it is proper to *Tim.* 69dff. when the *dēmiourgos* delegated detailed administration to the engendered and lesser gods and when the precosmic chaotic motion has been eliminated "to an extent" (for *anankē* cannot be purged away *in toto*).<sup>71</sup> What I mean is this: if the constitution of the cosmos is a "reconstructed existence of intelligibility", then so is soul's *cosmopoiēsis*. I may quote an excellent statement of Atticus (des Places *Atticus* F.35) and anticipate the Middle Platonic interpretation of this issue:

"[the soul is said to be] *agenēton men kata to hypokeimenon auten einai, genētēn de*

*kata to eidos.*"

In this light whatever motion happened before this stage of *cosmopoiēsis* is not explained by the theory of psychic *autokinēsis* because this pre-cosmic motion is explicitly attributed to non-psychic motion (see 1.2.13). If this argument is correct, then there is no contradiction between the cosmology in *Timaeus* and that in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* for, as Vlastos has said, they are addressed to two different issues. One may well go further in suggesting that the cosmology as represented by the psychic *autokinēsis* in *Phaedrus* is a truncated version of the cosmology in *Timaeus*.

1.3.5 What is relevant here is that the theodicy proposed in *Laws X* is based on the thesis of psychic *autokinēsis* (*Laws X* 894e3-895a3, 895c7-8, 896e9-897a1 and 896d13-e2). The theodicy is an attempt to explain why there are acosmic elements, in the form of *ichnē*, in the divinely disposed cosmos.<sup>72</sup> Plato answers this by, first, suggesting that the psychic *epimeleia* does not exert its efficacy everywhere to the same degree and the most complete and obvious revelation is seen in the heavens (*Laws* 897c4-10; cp. *Phaedrus* 246e6-7). However, this position is interspersed with the theory of two kinds of soul: soul which is "*noun prolabousa*" and soul which is "*anoiai xungenomenē*." The soul "allied with unreason" is productive of harmful results (*Laws* 897b2-7):

"if however these things move in an unbalanced and disorganised way, we must say that the evil kind of soul is in charge of them." (897d1-2; cp. 897c4-10 and 896d8-10; cp. *Tim.* 44a9)

This seems to make a perfect case for a dualism between two competitive and confrontational kinds of souls, like the dualism between the *dēmiourgos* and *anankē* in

*Timaeus*, because the disorder, initiated by an evil soul, is realised as an indispensable part of the cosmos. Because good soul with its psychic motion has been said to administer the cosmopoietic details delegated by the *dēmiourgos*, one can say that this theodicy is also applicable to the picture of reality governed by the *dēmiourgos* and *anankē*. The only difference is that the evil principle (*ichnē* or *anankē*) in *Timaeus* is said to be characterised by a non-psychic motion while in *Laws* this evil motion is ascribed to an evil soul. This is a contradiction that Middle Platonists overcame by making the pre-cosmic motion in *Timaeus* also psychic in origin.

1.3.6 It is difficult to assess how seriously Plato holds this dualism in psychology<sup>73</sup> because of his nonchalant attitude in 896e4-7. The "*anoia*" in the "*xungenomenē anoiai*" might well be a privative of *nous* (*a-noia*) rather than an active and maleficent *anoia*. This privative reading is particularly tempting because the elaborate theodicy in 903b4-d11 does not reveal many traces of a dualistic outlook. The theodicy in 903b4-d11 describes the universe as a kind of organism with autonomy and autarchy, equipped with a mechanism able to sort out and defuse potential conflicts. This requires "one" final arbiter:

"All things are ordered systematically by him who cares for the world with a view to the preservation and excellence of the whole, whereof each part, so far as it can, does and suffers what is proper to it." (903b4-8; cp. *Epinomis* 991e1-992a2, 992b7-8; my underlining)

The ambiguous him (*tōi tou pantos epimeloumenōi*) can point to either a single master or a sort of activity within the universe. It is unlikely that it indicates a single transcendent entity because this transcendent entity is incompatible with the general immanent approach in *Laws* X and therefore it is more probably a kind of force interpenetrating the universe. However, the

presence of disorder and evil in this divine dispensation seems to make the divine wicked as well as weak.

1.3.7 This is a misunderstanding because the theodicy in *Laws X* is not interested in who is responsible for the presence of disorder and evil but how this acosmic element can be neutralised and accommodated within the divine economy and so we read:

"To each of these parts, down to the smallest fraction, rulers of their action and passion are appointed to bring about fulfillment to the utmost fraction; whereof thy portion also, O perverse man, is one, and tends therefore always in its striving towards the All, tiny though it be." (903b8-c3)

The divine economy is systematic - to the extent of regimental - in the sense that individuals have to live within the specific contexts the divine economy imposes and to recognise the limitation this imposition entails. In other words, this divine economy encourages an individual to perceive the cosmos from a global, not from a limited and individual, perspective. Perverse indeed is the man who insists on his own partial understanding:

"But thou failest to perceive that all partial generation is for the sake of the whole, in order that for the life of the world all blissful existence may be secured, - it is not generated for thy sake, but thou for its sake." (903c3-7)

The good for an individual is not good for an individual but for the All (903d1-3). This divine economy is not only a disposition; it is equipped with a coercive power to enforce the régime:

"There is left for the draughts-player no further task, - save only to shift the character

that grows better to a superior place, and worse to a worse, according to what best suits each of them, so that to each may be allotted its appropriate destiny." (903d6-11)

My suggestion is that the draughts-player here is equivalent to "*tōi tou pantos epimeloumenōi*" (903b4-8), a kind of force rather than a divine figure. It symbolises the mechanism with the capacity to make some inner adjustment to maintain the economy and the adjustment is not a reward or punishment for individuals but for the sustenance of the All. Evil is then related to the inner structure of the cosmos rather than to the moral quality of a moral agent. Although 903b7-c4 indicates that the individual is encouraged to initiate according to the "act of will," the whole cosmic map is imposed upon him *ab extra* and the dispensation of reward and punishment is more an act to balance out good and evil (cp. *Resp.* 619d6-9)<sup>74</sup> and maintain the stable condition of the economy rather than anything related to an individual's merit or culpability. Cosmology is thus closely related to eschatology and theodicy. Saunders has said that this is an eschatology based on a scientific cosmology which is "impersonal, economical and self-regulating."<sup>75</sup>

1.3.8 Nevertheless if evil becomes part of the divine economy then the dualism in psychology is not to be seen as completely incompatible with it because only evil soul can explain the presence of evils in the cosmos and evils are necessary for and constitutive of the whole outlook. *Epinomis*, which, in my view, in its pro-cosmism is an authentic book thirteen of the *Laws*, in 988d6-e4 expresses this position most admirably:

"...as the soul is the cause of the whole, and all good things are cause of like things, while on the other hand evil things are cause of other things like them, it is no marvel that soul should be the cause of all motion and stirring - that the motion and stirring towards the good are the function of the best soul, and those to the opposite are the



opposite - it must be that good things have conquered things that are not their like."

1.3.9 Under such a situation we may say that this theodicy of *discordia concors* in *Laws X* is applicable to the two pictures of reality I have distinguished in 1.2. The theodicy in *Laws X* is to explain the presence of evil in a providential cosmos and the picture of reality based on the *Ableitungssystem* can explain why this cosmos, although providentially arranged, is limited in ontological authenticity; this explanation enhances the monistic overtone of this theodicy. On the other hand, the picture of reality based on *kosmologische Seinsstufung*, because of its explicit proposal of an evil principle, can explain the presence of evil because good cannot be held responsible for evil. The *anoia* in the soul which is "*anoiai xungenomenē*" expresses these two kinds of possibility most conveniently. On the one hand, the *a-noia* is merely a *sterēsis* of *nous*; this implies that the presence of evil in the cosmos is a *sterēsis* of goodness, an undoubtedly monistic position. In this sense evil as *sterēsis* of goodness - which anticipates that the evil is *mē on* - is constitutive of the cosmos because what composes this cosmos is heterogeneous and requires different kinds, in different degrees, of existents. On the other hand, *anoia* can be interpreted in the strong sense as something antithetically opposite to the noetic principle symbolised by the *dēmiourgos* and it is thus explanatory of the presence of evil in the cosmos, for only evil can explain evil. Furthermore, from *Laws* 903b8-c7 we can see that this theodicy is global in perspective and evil is presented as a feature of the cosmos, not a personal experience; with cosmology of such a kind we can see that this evil is to be rationalised and justified and not to be rectified. This position is fully consistent with the theodicy given in *Theaetetus* 176ab, the Platonic authority for the co-existence of good and evil in the *Enneads*. I postpone its discussion to my commentary on 1.8.6-7 where the two different pictures of reality I have just distinguished are clearly delineated, of course, in a Plotinian way.

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## 1.4 CONCLUSIONS: TWO KINDS OF EVIL

1.4.1. The arguments in 1.1-3 have, I hope, delineated clearly the two kinds of constructions of reality (i.e., *Ableitungssystem* and *kosmologische Seinsstufung*) and their implications for two different kinds of evil. First, the approach based on *kosmologische Seinsstufung*. Both the *dēmiourgos* and *psychē pasa* have to conduct their cosmopoietic activity, in opposition to a recalcitrant *anankē*, in terms of motion and this cosmopoietic activity gives us a dualism which places rationality (= the *dēmiourgos* and the good soul) against irrationality (= *ichnē* or soul allied with *anoia*) and the embodiments of these rationality and irrationality are seen as real entities. The other kinds of evil, based on *Ableitungssystem*, is to see evil as somehow unreal, as a *sterēsis* - and thus a diminutive version - of its positive counterpart. This is witnessed in the *genesis* of the cosmos which is a *sterēsis* of the full Being by the ultimate *heterotēs* symbolised by *hypodochē*, and in the reading of the *a-noia* as a privative of *nous*. I have said that the distinction of these two kinds of evil are based on the distinction between *hypodochē* and *ichnē* and also based on the ambiguity of the particle "a-" of *anoia* which can be read either as "a" in the sense of *sterēsis* and "a" in the sense of antithesis.

1.4.2 *Hypodochē*, I have said, symbolises the ultimate *heterotēs* which differentiates Being and therefrom comes the *genesis*; it is an entity that is responsible for the *sterēsis* of being which the imitation has obtained in regard to its archetype. In the emanative scheme of Plotinus this *sterēsis* of being characterises the lower *hypostasis* in relation to its superior, with their relationship also defined in terms of imitation-archetype, and Plotinus unhesitatingly calls this *sterēsis* evil and thus *hypodochē*, symbolising *heterotēs*, is the conceptual source for this kind of evil. The interaction between the Being and *hypodochē* lays down the metaphysical

condition for all *genesis* that is characterised by this ontic *sterēsis*. In the chapter on Plotinus I will try to show that this thesis of evil as *sterēsis* of being (or as *mē on*) will entail the kind of theodicy I have expounded in 1.3.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, what is caused by this interaction, that is, the pre-cosmic *ichnē*, "infected with great disorder (*hoti pollēs ēn metechon ataxias*)" (*Politicus* 273b4-7; *Tim.* 42c5-d3) and awaits the imposition of order and therefore the demiurgic intervention has to assume the imposition of order upon disorder, a bestowal of essence. This will inevitably give us a more dualistic outlook with the opposition between *ichnē* (or *anankē* or *sōmatoeides*) and the *dēmiourgos* (or transcendent *nous*) or between soul *anoiai* (with the "a" interpreted in the sense of antithesis) *xungenomenē* and soul *prolabousa noun*.

1.4.3 I believe that these two lines of interpretation of evil in Plato are further developed, separately, by the Neopythagoreans and the Middle Platonists: the former by a definite mathematical turn on the interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus* and the latter by their insistence on the reality of the *dēmiourgos* as a giver of essence to an entity which frustrates this bestowal. Plotinus amalgamates these inspirations by making his concept of matter inclusive of both *hypodochē* and *ichnē* (and, correspondingly, soul as the giver of existence in its first descent and essence to matter in the second descent), i.e., matter as *heterotēs* in differentiation of being and matter as material reservoir for the creation of sensible universe; he then imaginatively equates this matter to evil and makes his evil both a *sterēsis* of the plenitude of the One and a force of disorder to be controlled by *nous*' bestowal of essence. Nowhere can this Platonic influence be witnessed more clearly than in his *Enneads* 1.8.6 and 1.8.7. We will see that properly treated in the commentary.

## NOTES:

1. Floyd p.1.
2. Tarán 1971 p.372; Hager 1963 p.3; Hume p.142.
3. Floyd p.1.
4. Scheffel p.33 note 5.
5. Ibid. pp.12-5; Baltes pp.16-7.
6. Scheffel p.35; Hager 1963 pp.238-9.
7. Tarán 1971.
8. Cp. Scheffel p.59 who places this reversal at 48c.
9. Ibid. p.29.
10. Ibid. p.59.
11. Cp. Ibid. pp.73-4.
12. Solmsen 1960\* pp.24-5 and p.30.
13. Vlastos 1965 p.382; Also Scheffel pp.74-5.
14. Scheffel p.60.
15. Hahn p.65 note 10.
16. Solmsen 1960 p.269.
17. Guthrie vol. V p.265 note 3; Ashbaugh p.173 note 27.
18. Ashbaugh pp.176-7.
19. Happ pp.127-8; Scheffel p.61; *contra* Cornford 1937 p.181.
20. Solmsen 1960 p.40 and p.45.
21. Cp. Skemp 1985 p.294: "*creation perpetua*."
22. Cherniss 1954.
23. Happ pp.100-1.

24. Eslick 1965 p.41.
25. Cp. Happ pp.131-3.
26. Eslick 1965 p.42; Happ pp.133-5.
27. Eslick 1965 p.43.
28. Hahn p.62.
29. Scheffel p.106.
30. Hahn p.55.
31. Quoted from Hager 1963 p.3; also cp. *ibid.* p.198.
32. Lovejoy p.52.
33. *Ibid.* p.49.
34. *Ibid.* p.54.
35. Hager 1963 p.208.
36. Happ p.170.
37. Hager 1963 p.238.
38. Cp. Happ pp.95-6: "*(a) als Prinzip der 'Differenz, Andersheit (thateron) bei Erschaffung der Weltseele; in Mittelteil des Dialogs (47E3-69A5), welcher ja die Elementenlehre behandelt, einmal bei Erörterung der chora (b), zum andern bei der Lehre von den Elementaren Dreicken und Körpern (c).*" Apparently no clear distinction between hypodochē and ichnē is made although the mention of "*Elementenlehre*" could have suggested *ichnē*. His mention of "*Differenz*" and "*Andersheit*" is confined to the making of world soul and heaven and this fails to relate it to Being.
39. Hager 1963 p.193.
40. Cp. Gill 1989 p.26-31; also cp. Sorabji 1988 pp.32-5.
41. Mohr 1985 pp.112-3.
42. Happ p.159.
43. See Scheffel pp.104-5 on Gaiser's *Formkarft*.

44. Happ pp.118-9 and p.144.
45. Ibid. pp.104ff. for a general survey of opinions; Ibid. 107-8: "*kausalmechanischen Zwang*"; Vlastos 1965<sup>b</sup> p.418; Hager 1963 pp.243-4.
46. Happ pp.168-9.
47. Baltes p.22.
48. Happ. p.111.
49. Ibid. p.97.
50. Scheffel p.17.
51. Happ p.250.
52. Ibid. p.114.
53. Scheffel p.59.
54. Ibid. cp. p.60.
55. Solmsen 1960 p.112; cp. Scheffel p.110.
56. Baltes p.50, p.52 and p.60.
57. Hager 1963 pp.209-16; Mohr 1978.
58. *Contra* Skemp 1985 note 4.
59. Vidal-Naquet p.137.
60. Happ p.120.
61. Scheffel p.53 and p.144,
62. Crombie vol.I p.382.
63. Ibid. vol.II pp.226-7.
64. Scheffel p.100; Herter pp.332-4.
65. Two points have to be made briefly before the discussion on the *autokinēsis* of soul. First, the textual difference between *aeikinēton* and *autokinēton* in *Phaedrus* 245c6 should be declared in favour of *aeikinēton*: the *autokinēton* means that self-initiated kinesis is the defining feature of soul but the permanent possession (*aeikinēton*) of this feature means soul's

immortality (*athanaton*). The "*to gar aeikinēton athanaton*" therefore is the correct text for me. Secondly, the chronological order of *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*. I think it more probable that *Timaeus* comes after the *Phaedrus* rather than *vice versa*. (*Contra* T.M. Robinson 1970 pp.72-3 and Owen 1953) However, this relative chronological order will not affect the present inquiry.

66. Cp. Bett pp.5-7. Also cp. the *deuteroplous* in *Phaedo* 100b1-107b10. There is no reason to believe that the argument in *Phaedrus* is more empirically based than that in *Phaedo* for *kinēsis* in Plato is not only factual but, more importantly, conceptual.

67. Bett pp.12-3.

68. T.M. Robinson 1970 p.72 and p.75; Scheffel p.91.

69. Scheffel p.91.

70. Vlastos 1965 p.392.

71. Cp. Scheffel pp.85-90 for a general survey of opinions.

72. Hager 1963 pp.257-8.

73. Cp. Scheffel p.20.

74. Annas 1982.

75. Saunders 1973 p.244.

76. Cp. Greene p.297; Hager 1963 pp.207-8.

## 2 ARISTOTLE ON MATTER AND EVIL

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.0.1 Aristotle's cosmos is a finite and hierarchical structure of form/matter and actuality/potentiality, with the top a pure form/actuality, called Unmoved Mover or God, and the bottom, allegedly, a pure matter/potentiality devoid of form/actuality, called prime matter. Between these two extremes there exist composite objects which find their places in a great chain of being because substantiality (and with it, form and unity) comes in degrees (389b25-390b20)<sup>1</sup>: these composites are arranged by degrees of perfection with the human being as the referential focus (491a19, 588a19-33 and b21, 608b4, 1256b16).<sup>2</sup> *Anthropos*, with his rationality, is not only the ultimate stage on the scale of being but also provides the condition for the intelligibility of cosmos. The cosmos is characterised by motions which are regular, coherent and never catastrophic<sup>3</sup> and the behaviours of all these composites are governed by the highest good, to which all strive to the extent of their capacity. The cosmos is thus a plenum and an organic (or instrumental) body acting as the proximate matter for the ultimate pure form, the Unmoved Mover (412b4). This pure form is thus a kind of *bios* and therefore Hegel praised Aristotle:

"Aristotle's conception of nature is, however, nobler than that of today, for with him the principal point is the determination of end as the inward determinateness of natural things. Thus he comprehended nature as life."<sup>4</sup>



This picture of reality should compel him to pursue a comprehension of Platonic form and should also prompt him in the search for the primitive stuff devoid of any relational characteristic.<sup>5</sup> However, the definite biological turn of his philosophy marks his cosmology as different from that of his predecessor: his cosmos functions like an "animate individual or biological ecosystem" and runs with a rhythm of eternal constancy and with continuity and self-sufficiency, unlike the disorderly and discontinuous evolution of Plato's cosmos needing an intervention *ab extra*; Aristotle expresses a supreme confidence in "*physis*".<sup>6</sup>

**2.0.2** With this brief *exposé* of Aristotle's picture of reality I will now turn to the two topics, by which Aristotle's view on matter and evil can, I hope, be apprehended:

(1) **2.1** Aristotle's criticism of Plato's *Timaeus*: this will include a criticism of the analogy of the divine craftsman prominent in Plato's *Timaeus*; with it I will also treat his criticism of Plato's concept of *hypodochē*. Since the *dēmiourgos* with the recalcitrant *ichnē* is responsible for the *kosmologische Seinsstufung* approach and *hypodochē* with Being for the *Ableitungssystem*, a criticism of these two concepts - the *dēmiourgos* and *hypodochē* - would mean a complete criticism of Plato's cosmology and the theory of evil it entails. I have mentioned in 1.2.16 that the concept of *ichnē* or *anankē* is a Platonic version of Aristotle's material necessity while the demiurgic intervention is hypothetical necessity with special stress on the intervention *ab extra*. On the other hand, *hypodochē* is a concept that implies absolute generation from non-being to being and a rejection of this concept means that Aristotle, unlike Plato, is not interested in creationist metaphysics, an inquiry into absolute generation. Aristotle's criticism of *ichnē* and *hypodochē* will bring us inevitably to his own theory of matter; my position on this issue is to lay stress on the proximate matter rather than on an amorphous and underlying matter which, in my view, seems a self-contradictory concept and also a concept which implies absolute generation. By a brief examination of the contradiction

inherent in the concept of prime matter we will have an opportunity to realise the difficulty facing Plotinus who identifies it with *hypodochē* and designates it as the limit of reality. Because Aristotle's theory of matter is so different from Plato's *hypodochē* I agree with Happ<sup>7</sup> that there is no evidence that Aristotle's matter is a development from Plato's *hypodochē* despite the former's energetic engagement with *Timaeus* and his explicit identification of *hypodochē* with prime matter (cp. 2.1.3).

(2) 2.2 Material necessity and hypothetical necessity are the two principles which organise Aristotle's cosmos. Hypothetical necessity is rather like the *deus teleologicus* in *Timaeus*; it imposes forms upon matter which resists and frustrates forms and from their interaction we can understand what is destruction, accident and evil and all sorts of deviations in a cosmos supposedly well run by an internal and self-regulating *physis*.

(3) 2.3 This section will be devoted to the relation between matter and evil in Aristotle and will constitute a conclusion to this chapter.

## 2.1 ARISTOTLE'S CRITICISM OF PLATO'S COSMOLOGY IN TIMAEUS AND HIS THEORY OF MATTER

2.1.1 It is impossible to make a full examination of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's cosmology in *Timaeus*. I will concentrate on two concepts which give *Timaeus* the kind of philosophical importance it so much deserves. First, the figure of *dēmiourgos* and the craftsman model in the conception of cosmogony. The importance of this model in Aristotle is its pervasive presence and "even" in *G.A.* 730b12-24, where biological reproduction is under discussion, Aristotle continues to say that

"nature uses the semen as a tool in actuality, just as tools are used in the products of any art."

The reason why I use "even" in the above sentence is because in Aristotle's picture of reality it is the medium-sized biological individual that claims primary ontological position, not bronze statue or the wall of house. With a view to this, the craftsman model has several limitations and the most important are two:

(1) The craftsman model can only explain the structure of a living object in one particular moment unrelated to what happens before and after it; this breaches the basic insight that nature is a principle of motion and is endowed with internal cause for change. This means that for Aristotle form and substantiality come in degrees and this development assumes a diachronic dimension in the life history of a living being.<sup>8</sup>

(2) The model cannot tell us clearly the hierarchical structure of matter and distinguish the correlation of the materiate form with its proximate matter and this materiate form with its remote matter<sup>9</sup> and so no difference exists, for the craftsman model, between the living body of Callias and his dead body (cp. 2.2.3). This is because the craftsman model tends to conceive form as a shape rather than the *bios* of an organism. The definition of form as *bios* makes the relation between materiate form far closer to its proximate matter (as the instrument to promote this *bios*) than the craftsman model can manage. This *bios* as the materiate form is also the *telos* for this proximate matter; on the other hand, this proximate matter in turn has implied this particular *bios* or *telos*, the materiate form, for this proximate matter, a matter with a context.

2.1.3 This criticism of the craftsman model in *Timaeus* gives us the idea that Aristotle cannot be interested in an amorphous matter devoid of all relations to form. This makes his criticism of *hypodochē* more pertinent for he seems to identify *hypodochē* with this kind of matter. After an explanation of the relationship a magnitude has with place (= space, 209b14) it occupies he says:

"This is why Plato in the *Timaeus* says that matter and space are the same; for the 'participant' (to *metalēptikon*) and space are identical." (209b11-13)

Aristotle here uses the analogy of a medium-sized object with the space it occupies to illustrate the relation between the *metalēptikon* and space. What is a metaphysical concept (i.e., *hypodochē* as ultimate *heterotēs*) in Plato is now understood by Aristotle in a purely physical sense. The *metalēptikon* seems to indicate the pre-cosmic *ichnē* floating and evolving in *hypodochē*, deprived of "boundary and attributes".<sup>10</sup>

2.1.4 It was said in 1.1.7 that *hypodochē* has an *in qua* and an *ex qua* function. The spatial

(*in qua*) nature of *hypodochē* is for Aristotle secondary because, as 212a5-7 and 20-21 have shown<sup>11</sup>, the space or place of an entity has to presuppose its existence; *hypodochē* is thus primarily understood by Aristotle in its *ex qua* function. This is confirmed by 329a5-24:

"...those thinkers are in error who postulate, besides the bodies (= four elements) we have mentioned, a single matter - and that a corporeal and separable matter.... what Plato has written in the *Timaeus* is not based on any precisely-articulated conception. For he has not stated clearly whether his 'Omnirecipient' (*hypodochē*) exists in it as a substratum (*hypokeimenon*) prior to the so called elements - underlying them, as gold underlies the things that are fashioned of gold (cp. 1.2.2 and 1.2.10)...."

*Hypodochē* here is identified with prime matter, the amorphous material reservoir from which higher forms of entities are worked up. The passage quoted, if read together with *Phys.* 1.8 and *Met.* Z.3, shows that Aristotle in his interpretation of *hypodochē* has in mind Parmenides' challenge against change (cp. "what it is" in 209b15).<sup>12</sup>

2.1.5 This prime matter is said to be devoid of all features and of all relations to forms (1028a36-37, 1029a8-12, 1029a20-29): for every feature P, this prime matter is not P. However, if this is Aristotle's response to Parmenidean anathema against change, then this will not obtain:

"For if it possesses none, but all of them potentially, the result is that a being, which is not a determinate being, is capable of separate existence: and in addition that coming-to-be proceeds out of nothing pre-existent - a thesis which more than any other, preoccupied and alarmed the earliest philosophers." (317b27-30)

This means that this prime matter cannot explain why it can underlie changes because objects which undergo change cannot be related to the underlying substratum since this featureless substratum cannot be identified.<sup>13</sup> How can one be sure that the object before change is the same object after change? That is why in 329a24-6 he insists that the matter underlying the four elements cannot exist separately but must always be bound up with a contrariety. The alleged potentiality of prime matter in 317b27-30 is directionless because potentiality is, by definition, a consequence of an actuality having constitutive properties. This amorphous matter as potentiality has to presuppose an actuality, not the other way round. The thought experiment in *Met.* Z.3 is a demonstration of the absurdity and incoherence of this approach.<sup>14</sup>

2.1.6 This absurdity in posing a bare matter is only one arm of the dilemma the concept of prime matter has to face. The other arm is this: if Aristotle bestows on matter a character of its own then this matter might become a second *archē* beside the pure form of Unmoved Mover, and therefore create a dualism and materialism. I have explained that this is why Plato has to tread the thin line between the *ichnē* which are totally undetermined and the *ichnē* over-determined, between a *creatio ex nihilo* (out of total indeterminacy, that is) and materialistic evolution (with no *actio ab extra* in the case of Aristotle). A featureless as well as an over-determined underlying matter, constitutive of composites, are thus both impossible. What can Aristotle do for those who espouse a bare and prime matter to escape from this situation?

2.1.7 There are two possibilities:

(a) to regard matter as spatial in nature, a kind of "material extension"<sup>15</sup> and

(b) to abandon this featureless matter and opt for, according to *Met.* 1029a20-29, the matter which is still characterised by quantitative category, i.e., the so called intelligible matter (*noētē*

*hylē*) or "mathematical extension".<sup>16</sup>

People who hold either of them will consent to our conclusion about the impossibility of a featureless matter but they remain committed to a general theory of matter underlying all composites. Sokolowski has expressed his option very clearly:

"For Aristotle, matter is intrinsically spatial, but when we have said this much about it, we have not said anything about what it is. Spatiality or extension does not reveal the nature of underlying matter."<sup>17</sup>

Sokolowski's purpose is to try to elucidate the dilemma of a bare matter (1) by posing matter as spatial by nature: the spatiality is the condition for other attributes but (2) by denying spatiality as an attribute of prime matter and thus matter (1a) is neither featureless (2a) nor does it become another *archē* because of its inherent attributes. If spatiality is irreducible then it is a metaphysical principle.<sup>18</sup> This is quite a piece of intellectual acrobatics. The spatiality is indeed irreducible but it is so only in so far as the particular composite it characterises is concerned. 212a5-7 and 20-1 tell us that spatiality and extension are posterior to the pre-existent entities they circumscribe<sup>19</sup> and the matter concerned here does not seem to be a general matter but a particular "boundary of the containing body" (212a5-7), implied by a particular piece of matter. This particular piece of matter implies a particular piece of space and this is rather like a proximate matter implying its materiate form; it is totally unlike the general theory of matter and space in *Timaeus*.

2.1.8 The other option is inspired by the mathematical progression: point - line - space - solid (1024a36-b4; cp. 1.2.11-12), in the pre-cosmic stage in *Timaeus*; this compels Hussey to broach the thesis that Aristotle's matter is "a reservoir of potentially existing shapes."<sup>20</sup> (my

underlining) These "potentially existing shapes" are understood as geometrical abstractions<sup>21</sup>, that is, intelligible matter (*noētē hylē*) as pure extension for geometrical figures.<sup>22</sup> From the thought-experiment in *Met. Z.3.1029a10-26* we can detect two stages in "stripping away" properties and the category of quantity seems to enjoy a privileged status (cp. 209b1-10, 1061a28-35).<sup>23</sup> This is confirmed by *Categories* 6 where the discussion on the category of quantity is right after that on substance. Philoponos makes a statement about the matter we are concerned with now:

"Prime matter, which is without body, form or figure before it is filled out, receives the three dimensions and becomes three dimensional. This Aristotle calls the second substratum, since thus it receives quality and produces the elements (cp. 1036b35-107a5, 1077b17-30 and 1078a2-30 on genus and species).<sup>24</sup>

**2.1.9** A reply to this recommendation of *noētē hylē* as substratum underlying all changes. First, this recommendation cannot escape the objection we have raised against the first option. Secondly, in 1054b27 and 1055a6. Aristotle has denied that there is anything like mathematical progression because these species are "*asymblētos*" although they can also be said to share pure extension as their *megistos genos*. It is the definite geometrical figures that define the amorphous pure extension and this defined extension in turn defines matter. It is the different systems of predication that determine the kinds of matter in question. It is forms reaching down towards matter; it is a top-down approach.

**2.1.10** This top-down approach is not an approach accepted by all scholars. Graham in his attempt to explain his alleged Two Systems Hypothesis<sup>25</sup> - there are two kinds of ontology, one "neat" and one "messy", in Aristotle - has broached an approach he dubs as One Under Many (OUM)<sup>26</sup>, that is, the insight that finds "the source of ontological stability in support or



foundation"<sup>27</sup> and the view that the world must be constructed from the foundations up.<sup>28</sup>

2.1.11 A neat ontology is what *Categories* gives us, a picture of reality where individuals, which are uniformly medium-sized and preferably biological objects, alone have existential and primary location. The peculiar point about them is that they either are or are not.<sup>29</sup> This atomic substantialism has two ties which make the individuals stable: the vertical tie is that the individuals can be placed under their natural kind and this makes it possible to identify and classify this individual; the horizontal tie is that the properties are related to the individual in an "inherent in" relation.<sup>30</sup> These two ties are confirmed further by an isomorphism between language and reality.<sup>31</sup> This neat ontology is in great contrast to the messy ontology, given in *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and the biological works, which ranges from celestial bodies (with kinetic matter or aether) down to the four elements and, if there is any such thing, what underlies them. The messy ontology is full of stratifications with matter worked up into different states and different substances; from the bottom up the continuity and commingling give way to distinctness and organisation.<sup>32</sup> The neat ontology seems a "spatiotemporally discontinuous fraction of a much wider and deeper universe."<sup>33</sup> There are many strategies that can be used in explaining this transition from neat ontology to messy ontology but for our present purpose we have to lay aside this question. We will discuss the OUM proposed by Graham who sees the messy ontology as an extension of neat ontology and who finds his pieces of evidence in *Phys.* I.7-9 and *Met.* Z.3.

2.1.12 Aristotle in 189b30 means his analysis of change in terms of "S, P & -P" to be applicable to "becoming in the widest sense," presumably including substantial and accidental change. S is what survives this process but at different times assumes opposite properties: it is one in number but two in *logos* (190b24). The P and -P (musical and un-musical, not black and white) means the "S, P & -P" analysis is conceptual and the S cannot be realised so long

as P is not given: "the underlying nature can be known by analogy." (191a8). S seems rather lacking in existential independence but merely acts as the vehicle for P and -P. However, in 190a31-33 he means to extend the "S, P & -P" to include "come to be" and "come to be so-and-so." There is no problem with "come to be so-and-so" so long as the P is known but this is not the case with "come to be." In the thought experiment in *Met. Z.3* there is a radical and explicit reduction of this "S, P & -P" to "PM, S1 & S2". This is confirmed by 1017b24-5, 1038b5-7 and 15. For Graham these two kinds of predicate-subject correlation in these two analyses mark two kinds of change, accidental and substantial, and the term *hypokeimenon*, found both in *Categories* (used as "subject for predication") and *Physics* (used as "whatever underlies"), with the strong metaphoricity of building the world from the bottom up (OUM), not from the apex down, bridge conveniently the neat ontology and the messy ontology. "S, P & -P" is now "PM, S1 & S2" and substances are predicated of prime matter (cp. 1029a23-4; cp. 1049a24-5 and 34-6).<sup>34</sup>

2.1.13 To criticise this radical reduction in full will not serve our present purpose. I just raise one point which is related to the interpretation of *Met. Z.3*. Where is the linguistic intuition in *Categories*, which supports "S, P & -P", in the "PM, S1 & S2"? The S or *hypokeimenon* in *Categories* is always identifiable and classifiable but this is not the case with PM and the subject-predicate correlation is not necessarily applicable to the form-matter correlation and the thought experiment is definitely extraneous to language.<sup>35</sup> The very fact that the thought experiment in *Met. Z.3* is abortive should have warned us about its applicability to the argument for OUM. The "stripping away" of properties is not an authentic process of analysis for Aristotle because it does not follow the hierarchical ladder, e.g., *empsychē* - living body - anomoeomerous parts - homoeomerous parts - elements; it looks like a logical exercise which is unaristotelian in its analysis of the ontological composition of a living being. This logical prime matter is perhaps ontologically most simple but ontological simplicity is not ontological

primacy for Aristotle. This in turn implies a general theory of matter as the ontological basis for all changes, including generation and corruption, is not interesting and in effect wrong to Aristotle. This rejection by Aristotle of OUM is a continuation of his rejection of Plato's *hypodochē* which seems to him no more than an attempt to construct a theory of absolute generation in order to parry Parmenides' challenge. Dancy has realised that for Aristotle the theory of prime matter is perhaps no more than an outdated physics and may not be as important to him as to those who adopt a more metaphysical approach towards reality "as a whole", like Plato, the Neopythagoreans and Plotinus.<sup>38</sup> Aristotle's vision of reality is a picture in which stable patterns of change join hand in hand with teleological integration, striving towards the Unmoved Mover or the pure form. The kind of generation that interests Aristotle is man begetting man and craftsman making a statue, not absolute generation out of nothing and destruction into nothing. The vision of reality embodied in *Categories*, in which medium-sized biological objects (preferably) are the primary existents, remains the one he prefers.

## 2.2 MATERIAL NECESSITY AND HYPOTHETICAL NECESSITY

2.2.1 Despite Aristotle's criticism of Plato's cosmology in *Timaeus*, both pose teleological cause (*aitia*) against what comes of necessity.<sup>37</sup> While Plato adopts the mythical figure of the *dēmiourgos* to symbolise *nous* in opposition to a primordial *ichnē* (or *sōmatoeides* or *anankē*), Aristotle develops the argument of hypothetical necessity to integrate the forces of both concepts. Material necessity is the necessity determined by the physical features of the elements with their interaction, and it is the necessity assumed by the Presocratics. This material necessity is the cause of accident and is the disruptive force in cosmos:

"The matter (= material necessity), therefore, which is capable of being otherwise than as it for the most part is, is the cause of the accidental." (1027a11-3; cp. *Tim.* 46de, 47e-48e and 69b4-8)

However, the "spontaneity and chance" caused by necessity is posterior to "intelligence and nature" (198a8-10). This intelligence takes the form of teleological organisation of this material necessity and thus the teleological necessity is a compromise between material necessity and transcendent intervention *ab extra* (like the *dēmiourgos* in *Timaeus* in the case of Plato), between the primitive brute force and noetic "deliberation" (in the case of Aristotle) (cp. 199b26-30). Aristotle does not deny a role for material necessity (e.g., the material necessity for "the wall of the house" in 199b34-200a4) but this has to be posed within the greater context of its purpose. Aristotle criticises the Presocratics for their total reliance on material necessity and attributes this to their ignorance of "the notion of essence... [and] any definition of substance" (642a25-7), in other words, form.

2.2.2 In contrast, everything generated by nature and produced by art is characterised by hypothetical necessity (639a25-6, 198b10-1). The reason why they are organised according to and explained by the hypothetical necessity is that *empsycha* and artefacts have essence, and essence and substance (= the essence bearer) on the one hand and final cause (= *telos*) on the other are mutually entailed. Change in the sense of teleological actualisation is thus an upgrade of being<sup>38</sup>; matter and material necessity are thus relative to the *telos* (194b8-9, 200a26). The *telos* provides a why for the how of material necessity and also a context for the material necessity which is not only determinate but also determinable. The setting-up (= *hypothesis* of the hypothetical necessity) of a goal is to make the determinable determined and restrict the open possibility of prime matter to the limited potentiality of proximate matter:

"just as earth is not yet potentiality, since it must change to become bronze."  
(1049a18; cp. 412a19-20)

Therefore a definition of hypothetical necessity is this: assuming *telos* (which is form, actuality, essence or substance) is such, it presupposes material of this kind and determines the presence of this object in this particular place and time:

"What is necessary, then, is necessary on a hypothesis, not as an end. Necessity is in the matter, while that for the sake of which is in the definition (= essence)." (200a13-4)

The independence of material necessity as a mode of explanation is not denied but it is limited because it can never dictate the end to be envisaged and to be achieved, and it has to be transformed from an open possibility to limited potentiality (which thus implies an actuality) in order to function.<sup>39</sup> This means nature is directive and defies any attempt at material

reductionism.<sup>40</sup>

**2.2.3** Therefore, hypothetical necessity, which is the principle organising the whole nature in a directive way, has two correlates within it: the *telos* and matter. The *telos* restricts the possibility of matter into potentiality and this proximate matter in turn implies this materiate form (say X) which restricts it; it is this correlation that distinguishes this proximate matter from other matter. This proximate matter (say Y) can by itself be organised in a certain degree and be, in turn, an actuality of a lesser kind and thus implies another proximate matter (say Z) related to itself. Therefore the materiate form - proximate matter pattern is repeated throughout the *scala naturae* and makes nature hierarchical. In relation to X Y is the proximate matter while Z is the remote matter<sup>41</sup>; the Y is the "matter for which" for X and Z is the "matter out of which" for X, and thereby the Y as proximate matter can be understood as the instrument which performs the *bios* which is X.<sup>42</sup> The collapse of X means the end of Y as proximate matter and this explains the difference between the living body of Callias (= Y) and his dead body (= Z) and why the death of a living organism is far more significant than the collapse of an artefact (389b31-3).<sup>43</sup> Matter thus comes in degrees and there is no absolute matter like a bare and featureless matter for it can never be related to any materiate form (cp. 2.1.6). This forms an interesting contrast to Plato who has absolute matter (in the form of *hypodochē*) and Plotinus who believes in both absolute matter (in the form of *mē on*) and relative matter (in the form of noetic matter and psychic matter).

**2.2.4** However, the necessity embodied in matter is not only an expression of the physical features of matter but also an obstacle to the achievement of the goal set up and this explains the presence of accident and indeterminacy. This in turn means nature as a system does admit failures (199a34-b1, 199b1-7). The hypothetical necessity as mode of explanation in the natural happenings is "forward-dependent"<sup>44</sup> and this means the consequence of hypothetical

necessity is future-tensed and generation and destruction are activities that imply futurity.<sup>46</sup> It is in the possibility of failures in nature in this diachronic axis that matter as the source of acosmism is found. I will use the example of sexual generation as illustration, considering the primary ontological objects in Aristotle's reality being biological existents.

**2.2.5** Sexual generation is a natural process exemplifying hypothetical necessity with semen (as the specific and materiate form) and *katamenia* (as the proximate matter) as the two correlates. Both are highly organised and are the residues (*perittomata*) of the pneumatised blood, a kind of nutritive and generative soul<sup>46</sup>, and *katamenia* is able to generate on its own because female birds are able to produce full-sized eggs without fertilisation.<sup>47</sup> It contains less heat and less *kinēsis* than semen. The semen with its materiate form is the formal cause and final cause; the *kinēsis* it possesses is the efficient cause (which is internal to semen, unlike the craftsman being external to artefact, 735a2-4) and the *katamenia* is the material (= proximate matter) cause. There are two possible situations in which the generated deviates from the specific form in the semen:

- (a) the less than total duplication of the specific form in the semen;
- (b) the production does not fall within the genetic space defined by the *katamenia*, that is, a spontaneous generation.

**2.2.6** The situation in (a) happens when the *kinēsis* in the semen cannot dominate the *kinēsis* in the *katamenia* or is simply defeated by it (766a20, 766b15 and 768a34). In what sense and to what an extent can one say that the generated is the result of an imposition of specific form upon *katamenia*? The semen is related to *katamenia* in the same way as species is related to genus and the genus is the generic enclosure which immediately defines, or is defined as, the space of "specific difference" (1055a26, 1055a29-30)<sup>48</sup>; genus, moreover, is etymologically

connected to *genesis* (1024a29-35). The range of determination in sexual generation is therefore posed between an exact replica of the specific form in the semen and the "common 'outlook' that members of the same genus conserve from one generation to the next"<sup>49</sup>, from, say, Socrates to stranger in the generation of Socrates Jr.. The failure of exact replication is always blamed on *katamenia* and the *kinēsis* in *katamenia* is said to defeat its counterpart in semen. The predominance of *katamenia* is thus the cause for "the corruption of some principle." Matter thus thwarts the progress of teleological unfolding. This is an explanation of deviations within the genetic enclosure defined by *katamenia*.

2.2.7 This *katamenia* (say K1) can in turn imply another *katamenia* (say K2); semen and K1 can be further defeated by K2's *kinēsis* with K2's own genetic enclosure and therefrom a monster is possibly created (see 2.2.3). This is the way proximate matter exerts its destructive force in thwarting the materiate form but this vertical relationship still implies that the monster is somehow classifiable, recognisable and intelligible for we still know that it is a monster. It has to be referred upwards to the materiate form, to the *telos*, of which it is a distorted embodiment.

2.2.8 The spontaneous generation in (b), unlike (a), is an assertion of material necessity to the exclusion of hypothetical necessity. In 762a18-27 the enclosure of *pneumæ* as the source of generation is said to be relative to the contingent *locale* it is in and this has nothing to do with any duplication of specific form. The generated result might be a member of a species<sup>50</sup> but the appearance cannot come too often or too regularly.<sup>51</sup> Possibility in spontaneous generation cannot become potentiality related to its actuality. Those recognisable are classified according to the framework dictated by teleological sexual generation while those unclassifiable have to be relegated to the metaphysical limbo of unintelligibility and therefore non-existence. In the generation of the deformed creature we can extend the normative framework to cover the deformed and relate them to *telos*; those, on the other hand, unable to be integrated in



spontaneous generation, caused purely by material necessity, constitute a breach of the self-sufficient system of nature:

"Now cause, in the sense of matter, for the things which are such as to come-to-be is that which can be and not be; and this is identical with that which come to be and pass away, since the latter, while it at once is, at another time is not.... Hence coming-to-be and passing-away must occur within the field of that which can be and not be. There, therefore, is cause in the sense of matter for the things which are such as come-to-be." (335a28-b6)

2.2.9 M.L. Gill has said that in this case matter tends to drag the higher object out of existence because the potentiality to be in the higher state is accidental to the proximate or generic matter and, on the other hand, the potentiality not to be in the higher but in the lower state constitutes the very nature of proximate matter.<sup>62</sup> Matter, in the sense of proximate matter, can be said to be the principle of being or non-being. On the side of form, it is better to realise its actuality or *bios* as an activity and effort to preserve the unity of substance and to resist the inroad of material influence: form is the *sōteria* of being. It is because of this that the deformed generation is blamed on the strength of *katamenia*, the generic matter, not on the weakness of semen, the specific form.

2.2.10 All of these amount to an admission of the independent influence of matter in the natural system. Matter is thus responsible for all sorts of acosmism in the cosmos which is, by definition, free of all these. On the other hand, this influence has to be subsumed under form to be intelligible and incorporated into the natural system. Residues which are of spontaneous generation and which are unclassifiable, according to the norm set down by the correlation of "materiate form - proximate matter", live perilously on the brink of reality. For

Aristotle the existence of such acosmic elements is largely a problem of knowledge although their origin is ascribed to matter.

## 2.3 MATTER AND EVIL: A CONCLUSION

2.3.1 I have explained in what sense matter can have an independent role in Aristotle's natural system and the most important points of his approach are two: (1) it is form reaching down to matter and (2) it is microcosmic, i.e., anthropocentric, in perspective (because the cosmos is designed to the specification of *anthropos*). Despite this individualist ontology we can nevertheless see that Aristotle's picture of reality is somewhat between the *Ableitungssystem* (with the main features: a. absolute *genesis* and b. the self-sufficiency of the derivation of reality) and *kosmologische Seinsstufung* (with the main features: c. *genesis* as pre-given and d. the noetic intervention *ab extra*) because one can say Aristotle's alternative is characterised by c. and b.. In 389b25-390b20 Aristotle envisages his reality as a great chain of being, characterised by plenitude, gradation and continuity, with the Unmoved Mover, the pure form, as the ultimate *telos*, providing the metaphysical support for the whole system, but there is no sign of a prime matter underlying all generation and changes. This monistic vision is confirmed by 1075a35-6:

"all things, except the one, will, on the view we are criticising, be partaking of evil, for the bad is one of the elements." (my underlining)

This is because all, with the exception of pure form and the astral bodies (enmattered by aether with no cosmic effect), are enmattered and therefore undergo generation and destruction; because there is no prime matter as such and so there is no principle of non-being *tout court*. Therefore, for Aristotle matter cannot be *kakia* but only *kakopoion*. This means matter has to take part in the natural system and to be defined by the function it serves; there is no

independent and transcendent source of evil. This is rather unlike the view of the other philosophers whose doctrines are examined in this research. All the accidents, deviations and evils are by-products of the cosmic process and prompted by the presence and interference of matter. Matter is, in this sense, *kakopoion*. There is no absolute generation and destruction - Aristotle's generation is an actuality created from potentiality by an already actuality - and so there is no *kakia* by itself, like Plato's *hypodochē* or Plotinus' *mē on*.

2.3.2 The only non-being in Aristotle is the total indeterminacy of those unclassifiables in the case of, for instance, spontaneous generation. They are therefore non-substance because of unintelligibility but they never threaten the general lucidity of the regularity and intelligibility in the natural system. Evil is apparently not a vital issue in his philosophy. Is this correct? How can one explain the gnostic tone of 1091b35-1092a5 where the world seems upside down?

"It follows, then, that all things partake of the bad except the one.... and that the bad is the space in which the good is realised, and that it partakes in and desires that which tends to destroy it; for contrary tends to destroy contrary. And if, as we said, that matter is that which is potentially each thing, e.g., that of actual fire is that which is potentially fire, the bad will be just the potentially good."

This extraordinary passage proves a (dualistic) exception rather than the norm. It moralises the cosmos and sees the cosmos from bottom up and the mood is pessimistic. The bottom-up approach should disqualify itself, considering the universal top-down approach in Aristotle's philosophy. The context of this passage seems polemical and Professor S.R.L. Clark has suggested to me that it could be a *reduction ad absurdum*. Its appearance only enhances the robust and optimistic theodicy in Aristotle's philosophy we have expounded so far.

## NOTES:

1. Furth 1978 p.645; Graham 1990 p.103 and pp.194-9.
2. Pellegrin 1986 pp.90ff., p.109 and pp.118-9; cp. Solmsen 1963 p.484 on Plato's possible anthropocentric view in *Timaeus*.
3. Irwin 1990 pp.223-4, Gill 1989 p.42 and p.108.
4. Quoted from Pellegrin 1986 p.128.
5. D.C. Williams pp.296-7.
6. Graham 1986 pp.543-4, 1990 p.327; Solmsen 1963 pp.485-6.
7. Happ p.130.
8. Furth 1978 pp.644-5; Irwin pp.235-6.
9. Irwin pp.241-2.
10. cp. Happ pp.122ff..
11. Hussey p.105.
12. cp. Sorabji 1988 p.9.
13. Graham 1986 pp.483-4; *ibid.*, 1989 p.30.
14. Gill 1989 p.26 & p.30.
15. E.g. Claghorn, Sokolowski and Cohen; Sorabji 1988 p.14.
16. E.g. Hussey; Sorabji 1988 p.15.
17. Sokolowski p.286.
18. *Ibid.* p.285 note 3.
19. cp. Hussey p.105.
20. *Ibid.* p.xxxi.
21. *Ibid.* p.105.
22. Happ pp.149ff..

23. Sorabji 1988 pp.23-4.
24. Quoted from Mueller p.102; cp. Sorabji 1988 pp.23-30 on Philoponos.
25. Graham 1990 pp.15ff..
26. Ibid. pp.274ff.
27. Ibid. p.24.
28. Ibid. p.131.
29. Furth 1988 pp.62-3.
30. Graham 1990 p.54.
31. Ibid. p.45; Furth 1978 pp.625-9.
32. Furth 1978 p.633.
33. Ibid. p.632.
34. cp. Anton 1957 pp.60-61.
35. Graham 1990 p.65; this point is strangely ignored in Sorabji 1988.
36. Dancy 1978.
37. Solmsen 1963 pp.485-6.
38. Graham 1990 p.147.
39. Cooper 1987 pp.266-7.
40. Gotthelf 1987 p.208 and p.228; Cooper 1987 p.246.
41. Irwin pp.241-2.
42. Kosman p.379.
43. See Kosman p.378 for the "ontic duplicity of accidental matter" for artefact.
44. Evans p.108.
45. For a refutation of the deterministic implication for future happenings in Tomorrow's Sea Battle, see *Categories* 19a38-9, Evans pp.109-10 and Clark 1983 p.114 and p.121.
46. Peck 1953 p.114.
47. Ibid. p.115.

48. Pellegrin 1986 p.57.

49. Ibid. p.73.

50. Lennox 1982 p.225 and p.235.

51. Ibid.

52. Gill 1989 p.221.

### 3 NEOPYTHAGOREANS AND MIDDLE PLATONISTS ON MATTER AND EVIL

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

**3.0.1** Plato is a creationist philosopher because he gives us an account of why the cosmos is rather than is not; for this he gives us his *hypodochē* as the cause for the pluralisation of Being. For Aristotle this talk of absolute generation is vacuous and he recommends that we should turn our interest to the essence of existents and the laws in nature which govern their behaviours because nature (*physis*) is a permanent and self-sufficient system. What characterises Aristotle's approach is anthropocentric and this is in great contrast to the metaphysical and macrocosmic approach of Plato. The test ground for this basic difference is the concept of prime matter which Aristotle regards as the bedrock for absolute generation and identifies with Plato's *hypodochē*. For Aristotle, on the other hand, prime matter cannot tell him anything which his proximate matter has not already told him. Aristotle's microcosmic approach did not prevail in the Academy and the grand metaphysical speculation on absolute generation continued.

**3.0.2** The very fact that Aristotle criticises the craftsman model with vehemence proves, in an indirect way, that Aristotle takes seriously, on behalf of Plato, the figure of *dēmiourgos* and its functions. This is different from Speusippus and Xenocrates who demythologise it and understand the *eikos logos* in *Timaeus* as merely heuristic. This demythologisation accompanies the search for an ultimate *archē* and a development of a derivation system therefrom, and this derivation system takes the form of logical implications inferred from this *archē*. All of this is based on a mathematical turn in the interpretation of *Timaeus* and no small amount of attention



is paid to the dimensional progression in the pre-cosmic evolution in *Timaeus* and in *Laws X* (cp. 1.2.11-12; Nicomachus II.6.3.-7.4) but the exegetical target is the intermediate status of soul as a kind of mathematical entity in *Tim.* 35-36. This mathematical turn was, furthermore, ascribed to a Pythagorean revival (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1096b5-8, = Tarán 47).

**3.0.3** This mathematical turn, however, tends to stress the structural nature of soul at the expense of its substantial nature (i.e., psychic *autokinēsis* and *epimeleia*) and this abstract thinking permeates the whole Neopythagorean approach (cp. 3.1.1). On the other hand, the Middle Platonists emphasise the substantial nature of soul as a composite from different sources (see 3.3.5) and, in addition, retain the figure of the *dēmiourgos* as the mediator between the intelligible and sensible order of reality.

**3.0.4** Although both Neopythagoreans and Middle Platonists maintain the intermediate nature of soul between the intelligible and sensible order of reality, the Neopythagoreans tend to stress the continuity between these two orders of reality and see the sensible order as the immediate *parousia* or reflection of the intelligible (Nicomachus I.2.4) while, on the other hand, the Middle Platonists, because of their interest in the substantiality of the *dēmiourgos* and soul, tend to stress the intermediacy between these two orders and, sometimes, try to find more mediators, a symptom of which is the Middle Platonic interest in daemonology.<sup>1</sup> On the problem of *archē*, the Neopythagoreans always have *Monad* and the subordinate *Dyad* as *archai* while the Middle Platonists tend to have the trinity of the *dēmiourgos*, ideal pattern of the divine living being and matter (i.e., *ichnē*). The consequence of these different sets of *archai* makes the Neopythagoreans more likely to be monists and the Middle Platonists dualists.

**3.0.5** This difference can be traced back to the Neopythagoreans' assimilation of Being and

*hypodochē* to *Monad* and *Dyad* and, because Being and *hypodochē* are used to explain the existence of the cosmos (i.e., why it is rather than not), the Neopythagorean Moderatus develops a theory of evil as non-being (*to mē on*), a *sterēsis* of being. The Middle Platonists are interested in the psychic force which makes the pre-cosmic *ichnē* move and, since this pre-cosmic motion is chaotic, this soul must be evil and the *cosmopoiēsis* of the *dēmiourgos* is his compromise with this evil soul or this animated matter; this makes Middle Platonists dualists and their evil an active and maleficent force. One can see that the difference, as known from the chapter on Plato, can be explained, on the one hand, by the Neopythagorean stress on the *heterotēs* (than being), symbolised by *hypodochē* and, on the other hand, by the Middle Platonic emphasis on *ichnē* (or *anankē*) its interest in the *cosmopoiēsis* of the *dēmiourgos*.

3.0.6 This means that the Middle Platonists still see the *ichnē* or matter in a rather physical sense but within the Neopythagoreans we begin to witness a tendency to dematerialise and, moreover, desubstantiate matter, i.e., deprive *hypodochē* of its *ex qua* and *in qua* functions, and transform it exclusively into a logical and functional postulation of *heterotēs*, and, in some cases, have this function absorbed into the *Monad* and thus abolish completely the independence which *hypodochē* has in the *Timaeus*. This anticipates Plotinus' own research on matter and evil.

3.0.7 In the following sections I wish to divide my discussion into two main parts: the (1) Neopythagoreans and (2) Middle Platonists on matter and evil. For (1) I have included Speusippus of the Old Academy (3.1) because he can be seen as a precursor, *via* Eudorus of Alexandria<sup>2</sup>, of the Neopythagoreanism of the imperial age; (3.2) is mainly a running commentary on a vital passage by the Neopythagorean Moderatus. For (2) I have included Plutarch (3.3) and Numenius (3.4) for both of them, together with Atticus, seem to me the most articulate spokespersons of the dualism allegedly derived from Plato; in 3.4. I will add in

brief an excursus on the Middle Platonic view on the nature of the *dēmiourgos*' intervention and human free will. I have seen both the Neopythagoreans and the Middle Platonists discussed in this chapter as intrinsically Platonic just as I will see Plotinus as Platonic in his approach towards matter and evil because I believe all of them derived their views on matter and evil ultimately from Plato's *Timaeus*.

### 3.1 SPEUSIPPUS

3.1.1 The Neopythagorean philosophy we are going to deal with now is a tradition from the Old Academy which equates Pythagorean philosophy with the doctrines of the *Timaeus* (Nicomachus I.2.1) and with Platonic number philosophy.<sup>3</sup> One of the most distinguished in the Old Academy is Speusippus who introduces a definite mathematical turn to the interpretation of *Timaeus* and makes the first attempt to see the structure of reality in the form of mathematical dimensional progression<sup>4</sup>, and in the tradition of whom, Krämer says, Plotinus stood if anywhere<sup>5</sup>.

3.1.2 The key to this mathematical turn or, as Whittaker says, Pythagorean character of Platonic teaching<sup>6</sup> is the description of soul in *Tim.* 35a-36d where it is seen as being between the intelligible and indivisible order of reality and the divisible and sensible order. As a result we have this ordering:

"Indivisible - Soul - Divisible."

While in the analogy of the Divided Line in Book 6 of *Republic* mathematics is said to be the very knowledge mediating these two orders of reality and therefrom we have another ordering:

"Indivisible - Mathematical - Divisible."

Speusippus unhesitatingly sees this parallel and defines soul as "all extended three-dimensionality" (Plutarch 1012d).<sup>7</sup> Nicomachus II.1.3, 2.2 and 22.1 confirm this mathematical

interpretation of psychogonic *mythopoiēsis* in *Timaeus*.<sup>9</sup> This mathematicisation of soul is accompanied by Speusippus' decision to abandon the *archai* in *Timaeus*, Being and *hypodochē*, and opt for *to hen* and *to plēthos*:

"Of mathematical numbers one must postulate two primary and highest principles, the One (*to hen*) (which one should not even call Being (*on*), by reason of its simplicity (*dia to haploun*) and its position as principle of everything else, a principle being properly not yet that which those of which it is the principle); and another principle, that of multiplicity (*allēn archēn tēn tou plēthous*), which is able of itself to initiate division (*diāresin*), and which, if we are able to describe its nature most suitably, we should liken to a completely fluid and pliable matter (*hylē*)." (DCMS<sup>9</sup> IV, p.15. II.6-13; text based on Tarán 1981 pp.90-2; trans. by Dillon 1977 p.14)

### 3.1.3 These two *archai* are generative:

"...From these are furnished the first genus (*to prōton genos*), from the One and the principle of multiplicity, from both of these numbers (*arithmōn*) combined with some persuasive necessity." (Ibid. II.15-17; trans. by Tarrant p.133)

These new *archai* with the mathematicisation of soul prove the mathematical turn in Speusippus, and this mathematicisation of the whole reality creates a kind of inner necessity which makes redundant not only the figure of the *dēmiourgos* but also the ideal pattern of the divine living being. The *hypodochē*, which is explicitly endowed with *ex qua* and *in qua* function, becomes *to plēthos* and is now said to initiate *diāresis* within the One and this - although it is still likened to "a completely fluid and pliable matter" - is in effect "dematerialised". The dematerialisation of matter is an abandonment of its physical features

and anticipates the development of the concept of intelligible matter which is widely discussed in *Enneads* II.4 and II.5. Its function is thus not to attribute to the ontic abundance of *to hen* any addition of its own; it expresses "*ein schrittweises sich-Entfalten des Prinzips*".<sup>10</sup>

3.1.4 There are several pieces of evidence to prove that Speusippus tries to stay as close as possible to Plato in his *to hen* and *to plethos*. In Tarán F.48 Speusippus introduces the Indefinite Dyad (*interminabilis dualitas*) to make the One generate - which it would not if staying alone by itself - and thereby the Indefinite Dyad is called the "first principle of beings" (cp. 1.2.5). By now it should be understood why this naming the Indefinite Dyad or *to plēthos* as the "first principle of beings" has to be qualified because the existential fecundity remains in the One and *to plēthos* has to rely on the One to serve its function in differentiation and pluralisation. This ambiguity between a monist position and a dualist position is similar to that in the Being and *hypodochē* in *Timaeus* (see 1.2.6). With this it is abundantly clear that Speusippus is interested in the problem of creation and can be called a creationist philosopher as is Plato.

3.1.5 It was mentioned that this mathematicisation of reality should give Speusippus a kind of logical necessity, as implied in mathematics, which streamlines the progression of reality and makes the lower reality an implication of its prior, and connects thereby different levels of reality. However, he is criticised by Aristotle (*Met.* 1075b37-1076a4, = Tarán F.30)<sup>11</sup> as a disjoiner who creates an episodic universe, i.e., a universe consisting of different levels of reality which are not necessarily connected. The picture of reality Speusippus envisages is given in *Met.* 1028b20-4 (= Tarán F.29a):

"Speusippus made still more kinds of substance, beginning with the One (*apo tou henos arxamenos*), and making principles for each kind of substance (*archas hekastas*)

*ousias*), one for numbers, another for spatial magnitudes, and then another for the soul; and in this way he multiplies the kinds of substance." (Cp. Tarán F.29bcd)

3.1.6 There are four kinds of substances here but *Met.* 1069a30 (= Tarán F.31) mentions the sensible in addition. We therefore have five kinds of substances: (1) *to hen* (with *to plēthos*), (2) the arithmetical, (3) geometrical, (4) soul (= all extended three-dimensionality), and (5) the sensible<sup>12</sup>. There are different opinions on this distinction but my argument will not be greatly influenced by them.<sup>13</sup> What I believe is this: if *to hen* and *to plēthos* are responsible for existence then the cosmopoietic activity, which is assumed by the *dēmiourgos* and the "lesser and engendered gods" in *Timaeus*, is now assumed by (2), (3) and (4), the mathematical entities; in other words, they are responsible for the essence of the cosmos now. Because Speusippus' intention is to make (1) generate the (2) and then the rest, the cosmopoietic activity can be said to be implied in the activity of *to hen* and *to plēthos*, unlike the *dēmiourgos* (with the ideal pattern) who is regarded as independent of the Being and *hypodochē* in *Timaeus*. In a word, by his opting for *to hen* and *to plēthos*, on the one hand, and his mathematicisation of soul, on the other, Speusippus decides to make the progression of reality neat and linear. The approach to put the problem of existence before the problem of essence anticipates Plotinus' philosophy where the One (which is responsible for existence of reality) generates *Nous* (which is in charge of essence) (see 4.1.12).

3.1.7 The performance of Speusippus, however, does not meet his intention in Aristotle's view. Aristotle in *Met.* 1075b37-a4 (= Tarán F.30) says:

"Those who say mathematical number is first and go on to generate one kind of substance after another and give different principles for each other (*archas hekastas allas*), make the substance of the universe a series of episodes (for one substance has

no influence on another by its existence or non-existence (*ouden gar hē hetera tēi heterai symballetai ousa ē mē ousa*)...."

In this passage Aristotle exploits the difference between Speusippus' quest for a linear picture of reality and Speusippus' bestowal on each sphere of reality a pair of independent principles particular to that sphere concerned (cp. Tarán F.51). In addition, we have mentioned that Aristotle regarded as *asymbliētos* the dimensional progression from point to line, to space and then to the perceptible solid (2.1.8-9). Furthermore, the ascription of goodness to (3) geometrical and beauty to (2) arithmetical (Tarán F.42; cp. *ibid.* FF.44, 45a, 46a and 47a; *DCMS IV* p.18.5) only increases the sense of Speusippus' universe as episodic. The result of Speusippus' mathematical turn is that he is not radical enough to streamline the whole of reality; he simply gives us five different spheres of reality which are analogically organised but are not necessarily connected. On the other hand, because he has ascribed to each sphere of reality a material principle, he has anticipated the thesis that there is more than one kind of matter - each kind of matter for a different formal principle in each different sphere of reality - and one can see this insight embodied in Moderatus and Plotinus<sup>16</sup>; moreover, if Speusippus thinks, *per impossible*, that the formal principles are ultimately derived from *to hen*, then this can also be said of the material principles that they are derived from *to plēthos*.<sup>16</sup>

**3.1.8** Another difference from Plato in Speusippus' mathematical turn is that Speusippus does not describe *to hen* as good and thereby he cannot describe *to plēthos* as evil either. Happ explains that this value-free description is due to the transcendence of these two principles.<sup>17</sup> Evil, Speusippus says, only appears "*en tois tetartois kai pemptois*" (*DCMS IV* p.18.9), i.e., the spheres of soul and the sensible (see 3.1.6). This presence of evil is seen as a failure of control in "nature":



"The evil appears not as a result of direct action or intention, it appears as the result of some deficiency and failure to 'tame' some things natural (*kakian genesthai ou proegoumenōs, ek de tou ekpiptein kai mē katakratein tina tou kaka physin*)."<sup>18</sup> (DCMS IV p.18.11-2; trans. Merlan 1960 p.100)<sup>18</sup>

This is a negative view of evil in the sense that it is the failure or deficiency of goodness rather than the result of an antithetical principle. If evil appears at the terminal stage of *to hen* in its progression, then this is "*Abwesenheit des Guten, Seinsdefizienz*"<sup>19</sup> and indeed is the position adopted by Moderatus and Plotinus. The problem is that Speusippus does not tell us what kind of evil it is, for evil as *Seinsdefizienz* should characterise every sphere of reality other than the fourth and fifth sphere.<sup>20</sup> However, since this linear progression initiated by *to hen* has been seen, perhaps rightly, as episodic and different spheres of reality are disjoined, this negative view of evil therefore does not obtain.<sup>21</sup>

3.1.9 A statement by Nicomachus points right at where Speusippus fails and where the Neopythagoreans try to amend:

"It must needs be, then, that scientific number, being set over such things as these, should be harmoniously constituted, in accordance with itself; not by any other but by itself." (Nicomachus 1.6.2.; my underlining)

This is an expression of a stronger belief in the self-sufficiency of mathematical progression as a mode for the construction of reality. Speusippus' dualism is also an underestimation of the potency of *to hen*. The material principle, *to plēthos* (see 3.1.3-4), is more ambiguous for it seems to perform the function that causes the differentiation of *to hen* (and so monistic) and the principle that is the consort of *to hen* (and so dualistic). On the nature of *to hen* Speusippus

does not tell us much about his *to hen*. Because of its ambiguity it is probably compatible with the two patterns of thought which define the scope of possibility on the concept of *to hen*: Gomperz' *Ableitungssystem* (which sees the derivation of reality from a source of ontic abundance)<sup>22</sup> and Merlan's *Elementen- (or Stoikeion-) Metaphysik* (which sees *to hen* as ontic simplicity and as *Baustein* for the construction of reality).<sup>23</sup> Whatever option Speusippus had in mind, *to plēthos* is responsible for the derivation of reality from *to hen* and each material principle in each sphere is supposedly responsible for the existence of the next.<sup>24</sup>

## 3.2 NEOPYTHAGOREANS

3.2.1 The Neopythagorean search for a unique *archē*, apart from the Being (*to on*) in *Timaeus*, can find its support in Plato's other works. Dodds has in his argument for the authenticity of a passage by the Neopythagorean Moderatus, I think, proved this connection between Plato and Neopythagorean in the concept of matter.<sup>26</sup> This connection also includes the first formal principle: *Philebus* places a third and higher entity above the 'limit' and 'the limited'; the Goodness in *Resp.* 509b6ff. is the first form among forms; the One in the *Parmenides* is the ultimate source of reality for it transcends reality. This search for a transcendent and unique entity beyond the noetic *dēmiourgos* is accompanied by a tendency to understand this ultimate principle in negative terms because of its transcendence. Plato in *Parmenides* describes the *archē* as "*to hen oute hen estin oute estin*", an entity which is transcendent but also acts as the source of reality because the "*oute estin*", which is used to indicate *hypodochē*, is now absorbed into *to hen*: the pluralisation of Being caused by the independent *hypodochē* in *Timaeus* becomes now an internal mechanism within *to hen*. *To hen* alone is responsible for the derivation of reality.

3.2.2 This is the "ideal type" of a complicated Neopythagorean phenomenon and more varieties are only to be expected. However, there are features which distinguish Speusippus from the Neopythagoreans. The most important are two: (1) the construction of reality is totally based on number philosophy (Nicomachus II.2.1), i.e., a complete mathematicisation of reality; (2) the derivation of 'material' principle from *archē*, i.e., a stronger monistic tendency. A typical example embodying these two tendencies is a passage by Alexander Polyhistor, preserved in Diogenes Laertius:

"The principle of all things is the *Monad* or Unit: arising from this *Monad* is the Undefined *Dyad* (*aoriston dyada*) or two which serves as the material substrate (*hōs an hylēn... hypostenai*) to the *Monad* which is the cause; from the *Monad* and the Undefined *Dyad* spring numbers (*semeia*)...." (Diogenes Laertius VIII 24-6)<sup>26</sup>

and from numbers, Alexander continues, come geometricals and from geometricals sensibles which are the four elements and these elements interact and create "a universe animate, intelligent, spherical, with the earth at its centre" (ibid.). This is a fully-fledged Neopythagorean cosmology in evolution, with the *Monad* as the only source of existence and, ultimately, 'essence for the cosmos. The *Dyad* is explicitly said to be derived from the *Monad*, no longer an independent entity, like Plato's *hypodochē* or Speusippus' *to plethos*, although the language of matter remains. Furthermore, the *dēmiourgos* and soul are totally eliminated and this means a complete streamline in the reconstruction of reality in mathematical terms. In Moderatus this mode of thinking, in terms of three Ones, is explicitly expressed (Simplicius *In Phys.* p.230.36-p.231.2). These three Ones anticipate the three *hypostases* of Plotinus. They reveal a desire to make the progression of reality a necessary and logical process. This streamlining of reality, however, seems a one-way track because no "return" process is hinted at. Moreover, there is a question which should have been asked but has not: why should *to hen*, by definition unique and simple, initiate inner differentiation and create the rest of reality? A theory of dual *archai* could well explain pluralisation of reality as the consequence of their interaction but this option is not available to those who espouse a unique *Monad*.

3.2.3 Different solutions are offered (cp. Sextus *Outline* III.153; Simplicius *In Phys.* p.231.8-9).<sup>27</sup> All of these are scoffed at by Numenius as philosophical sleight of hand used to dodge the real question because the basic fact remains that

"the *Monad* has to abandon its own nature in order to assume the configuration of *Dyad*." (des Places *Numenius* F.52.15-19; trans. Reale 1990 p.268)

This is a very pointed criticism of Neopythagoreanism as a whole and Numenius' alternative is the eternal presence of a second *archē* and a stark dualism.

3.2.4 Despite the unique position of its *Monad* in Neopythagoreanism few descriptions of its transcendent nature have been given by those who espouse it. If the *Monad* is unique and supra-existential then we should not attribute to it categorial predications proper to what comes after it. The *Monad* as the first God must be stable but this *stasis* is in effect a *symphytos kinēsis* as well, an activity without motion.<sup>28</sup> This *kinēsis* is self-referential - unlike the *kinēsis* of the second God (= the *dēmiourgos*) which is hetero-referential - and is efficacious in the cosmogonic process (des Places *Numenius* F.15). The Indefinite *Dyad* is the consequence of this self-genesis of *Monad* and therefrom is derived the rest of reality. This is a position welcomed by Plotinus who adds the feature of absolute freedom to the *physis* of the One and sees generation as the necessary and spontaneous consequence of the One's absolute freedom in self-creation (cp. 4.1,6-8).

3.2.5 With the self-genesis of the *Monad* we can now approach the problem of matter which has been said by Plato (whose *hypodochē* has been identified with prime matter by Aristotle) and Speusippus to initiate pluralisation of the unique *archē* and is itself another *archē*. The passage of Alexander Polyhistor has mentioned that this second *archē* is derived from the first *archē* and this second *archē* in turn differentiates the first *archē*. With the streamlining and stratification of reality, this function of differentiation is no longer confined to the first *archē*; it appears at every level of reality and differentiates the reality which comes from the interaction in its immediately higher level of reality and the function of differentiation is thus

constitutive of reality as a whole. Because it is this function of differentiation throughout the whole reality that explains the reality as it is now, this function of differentiation can be said to be the rule governing derivation from the *Monad* in its variety; in another word, it is matter that governs the derivation of reality from the unique *archē*. In this sense, matter or the function of differentiation matter symbolises is constitutive of reality as a whole. Moderatus in a vital passage, reported by Porphyry and preserved in Simplicius, tells us, in no doubtful terms, of this development which culminates in Plotinus (Simplicius *In Phys.* p.230.34 - p.231.27). I will explain this development by a running commentary on that passage by Moderatus.

3.2.6 After an announcement of three Ones which are similar to Plotinus' three *hypostases* and which cover what I will call "hypostatic reality," Moderatus says that the sensible world is "anhypostatic" because it is not an extension of the third One but a reflection of it on the mirror of the sensible matter. It then continues:

[Text]: "Matter in them (= the sensibles) being a shadow cast by the primary non-being (*tou mē ontos prōtos*) existing in quantity (*en tōi posōi*) and having descended still further and being derived from it (= intelligible matter in p.231.15-17)." (p.230.4-5; trans. Merlan 1967 pp.91-2)

[Comment]: This passage indicates two kinds of matter, sensible matter and intelligible matter. The sensible matter is said to be the shadow cast by the intelligible matter and turn into a mirror to receive the reflection of hypostatic reality on it while intelligible matter is called "primary non-being existing in quantity". Later, in Plotinus, we will instead see that the sensible matter is the primary non-being with the noetic matter (of which there are two kinds) as its retrojection on to the noetic reality. This description of intelligible matter as a kind of quantity

(cp. des Places' *Atticus* F.24: "*ek poiias aitias*"; Plutarch 372f)<sup>29</sup>, deprived of all ratios and ideas, reminds one of *Met. Z.3* and is thus, *prima facie*, Aristotelian (see 2.1.18). Sorabji has quoted Simplicius and suggested that this *poson* could be spatial extension and is understood by Simplicius as "an indefinite diffusion (*khusis aoristos*)"<sup>30</sup>; Simplicius in *In Phys.* 232.24-30 has said that Aristotle has the same sort of idea as the Pythagoreans about the dimension and indefinite quantity (*poson*) of matter.<sup>31</sup> What is certain is that intelligible matter has an archetype-image relationship with sensible matter and sensible matter has to, somehow, pre-exist for it to be the mirror to receive the reflection from the hypostatic reality and for the sensible world to exist. The mention of more than one kind of matter is a legacy passed down by Aristotle and Speusippus. Moderatus' thesis of three Ones should, however, lead us to expect three kinds of matter, not two.

3.2.7. [Text]: "The Unitary Logos (*ho heniaios logos*, = the First One) - as Plato somewhere says - intending to produce from himself the origin of beings, by self-privation (*kata sterēsin hautou*) left room to quantity, depriving it of all his ratios and ideas. He called this quantity (*posotēta*), shapeless, undifferentiated, and formless but receptive (*epidechomenen*) of shape, form, differentiation, quality, etc.." (p.231.7-12)

[Comment]: The intelligible matter is now located at the level of the First One in its self-privation and it is called *posotēs* because it is related to the "pluralisation". No sign of intelligible matter is seen at the level of the second One and the third One (see 3.2.2), deficiency to be made up by Plotinus. The intelligible matter as *posotēs* is created by the self-privation of the First One and, according to Numenius, this self-privation can be understood as the *symphytos kinēsis* typical of this unique One. Sextus has a passage which might further our understanding:

"This One when conceived in its self-identity is conceived as unity, but when conceived in its otherness, it is added to itself, and it is the Indefinite Dyad (*episuntetheisan d' eautei kath' eterotēta*)."

The relevance might be this: as far as the One is related to what is outwith it the creation of this intelligible matter is a *symphytos kinēsis*; because it is a *symphytos kinēsis* of the One we cannot ask why it generates (see 3.2.3). The "self-privation" is a description of its activity, not of its motivation. This anticipates the position that matter is a *sterēsis* of being, as non-being. This could justify the Neopythagorean claim for monism and this is certainly confirmed by "The Unitary Logos... intending to produce from himself the origin of beings". The '*epidechomenen*' seems, however, to mean that this Moderatus' innovation is based on *hypodochē* in *Timaeus* as his "Plato somewhere says" indicates. There is some difference because Moderatus not only opts for a definite monism instead of an ambiguous and weak dualism but also elaborates explicitly the function of intelligible matter (= *hypodochē*): it is a principle of "privation, paralysis, dispersion and severance" of Being. For this we have to see the next passage of text.

3.2.8 [Text]: "This... was called quantity by Pythagoreans and Plato, not in the sense of quantity as an idea, but in the sense of privation, paralysis, dispersion, and severance and because of its deviation from that which is (*apo tou ontos parallaxin*) - for which matter seems to be evil, as it flees that which is good (*kakon dokei hē hylē hōs to agathon apopheugousa*).... Matter is nothing else but deviation (*parallaxis*) of sensible species from intelligible ones, as the former turn away from there (*ekeithen*) and are borne down towards non-being (*pros to mē on hypopheromenon*)". (p.231 pp.15-27)

[comment]: The mention of Plato and the Pythagoreans proves that the Neopythagorean



conception of reality is based on an exegesis of the cosmology in *Timaeus* (see 3.2.7). However, the most important elaboration by Moderatus here is that matter causes the deviation (*parallaxis*) of the lower level of being from its prior and this *parallaxis* or *sterēsis* of being is called evil. Evil is thus defined as a loss of ontic authenticity. I may quote a passage from Simplicius *In Phys.* 230.23-33 to confirm this conclusion:

"[matter should be postulated] in terms of a slackening, a spreading and a removal of definiteness from the incorporeal, indivisible, intelligible reality. The second (= the sensible matter) is not given a definite form by three dimensions, but is everywhere slackened, and split, and flows from all sides away from being into non-being." (trans. by Sorabji 1988 p.22)

This expresses very well the complete dematerialisation of the concept of matter and is an advance in seeing matter as some metaphysical concept in the explanation of the expansion and weakening of reality after the departure from the One. Moderatus identifies two places where this kind of evil appears: (a.) in the deviation of sensible from intelligible and (b.) in intelligible matter from the First One (*ekeithen*). This corresponds to his two kinds of matter. Whatever is characterised by matter is said to be "borne down towards non-being"; this means that matter is, in effect, non-being and this non-being should be understood as a *sterēsis* of being - it characterises the ontic deficiency of an entity in relation to its prior -. It is not Parmenides' absolute non-being in the sense of complete non-existence. The two kinds of matter mean two kinds of non-being and therefore non-being, like matter, is a relative term parasitic on the level of reality it is a *sterēsis* of. Both matter and non-being make reality in the variegated way in which it really exists; without them the reality would be as homogeneous as the origin from which it is derived. It is in this sense that they are constitutive of reality and explanatory of the reality as it now is. Evil, under this light, can be said to be a necessary part

of the divine economy and to eliminate it means to have the reality destroyed. This is the basis for Neopythagorean and Plotinian theodicy: rationalisation of evil and no rectification of it. This definition of evil is quite *a priori* and therefore the goodness of the First One (for *ens et bonum convertuntur*) is understood as bestowal of being, not related to emotion or feeling. Floyd has very aptly called this theory of evil "an anhypostatic metaphysics of evil."<sup>32</sup> This means that such a theory of evil implies a whole package of metaphysical doctrines (= hypostatic metaphysics), without which it is insignificant. Because evil is now defined as *sterēsis* of being, it is therefore a negative view of evil and this seems to realise the insight first given in Speusippus (see 3.1.8).

3.2.9 Plotinus' theory of evil can be said to be completely anticipated by these passages of Moderatus which have just been commented on. Evil is identified with matter and this in turn is seen as a kind of *parallaxis* or *sterēsis* of being, and it relies for its own existence on the being it is a *parallaxis* from or *sterēsis* of. However, there is one point on which Moderatus should be bolder: he should give more kinds of matter. His two kinds of matter are a reflection of the distinction between sensible world and intelligible world, but this does not go well with his theory of three Ones (Simplicius *In Phys.* p.230.36-p.231.2). This situation is improved by Plotinus' three kinds of matter (noetic, psychic and sensible) with the sensible matter as the most primary because it is most differentiated and most remote from the supra-existential One. This will receive elaboration in the chapter on Plotinus.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.3 MIDDLE PLATONISM: PLUTARCH

3.3.1. R.E. Witt, hardly a friend of Albinus (or Alcinous)<sup>34</sup> and Middle Platonists in general, has pointed out the main feature characteristic of Platonists in the imperial age:

"...the orthodox Platonists of the second century, whatever refinements they introduce into their conception of God, are unable to get rid of the belief in his personality. The Good does not yet transcend alike Essence and Intellect, but remains identified with the Demiurge."<sup>35</sup>

Witt apparently thinks the preservation of the figure of the *dēmiourgos*, as a real transcendent entity external to the cosmos, is a sign of Middle Platonic intellectual feebleness because he praises the Neopythagoreans' and Plotinus' adoption of *to hen-agathon* as first cause.<sup>36</sup> Whether this appraisal is correct or not is a matter, I believe, for subjective opinion. This fact is, however, certain that there is another alternative to the Neopythagorean interpretation of psychogony and of *eikōs logos* in *Timaeus*, and the pivot in this alternative is the figure of the *dēmiourgos*. Plutarch's emphasis on this figure and its associated concept of *ichnē* or *anankē* is a determination to break away from the Neopythagorean tendency introduced, *via* Eudorus of Alexandria, to the exegesis of *Timaeus* (1013b).

3.3.2 As exegetes of *Timaeus* the Middle Platonists are, in my view, vastly superior to Neopythagoreans; their exegesis has earned them the title of "*Schulplatonismus*"<sup>38</sup> but I do find that there are merits in their efforts. No one who has tasted the abstract nature of Neopythagorean thinking will see it as an exact exegesis of *Timaeus*.<sup>39</sup> A more faithful exegesis

of *Timaeus* does not, however, condemn the Middle Platonists to the fate of intellectual parrots, and, for the present purpose, I will try to prove that the Middle Platonists propose a dualistic theodicy and that this theodicy, unlike Neopythagorean stress on the role of *hypodochē*, is based on an emphasis on the roles of the *dēmiourgos* and *ichnē* in Plato's cosmology.

3.3.3 A typical example of the Middle Platonists' strength in the exegesis of *Timaeus* is Alcinous' *Didascalicos* XII.6-24 in which we can see a "doxographical" documentation<sup>40</sup> of important elements in Plato's cosmology:

- (1) cosmos is a process from disorder to order *via* the external intervention of the *dēmiourgos*, not as a necessary process derived from the pluralisation of the *Monad* as it is in Neopythagoreanism;
- (2) the ascription of a chaotic motion to the pre-cosmic *ichnē* which, because of a certain inner evolution, is a dim prefiguration of the cosmos (cp. des Places *Atticus* FF.19, 20 and 22);
- (3) it points out meticulously the thesis of unique cosmos ("he fabricated it from the whole of matter", cp. *Didasc.* XII.41-2: "by nothing being left from without he made the World his only begotten", cp. Apuleius *Dogmata* I.8);
- (4) it mentions the trinity of the *dēmiourgos*, matter (= *ichnē*) and the ideal pattern of forms (*Didasc.* X.18-23) as the *archai* for cosmology (cp. *Didasc.* IX.14-17, cp. Apuleius *Dogmata* I.5; des Places *Atticus* FF.4, 13 and esp. F.26), instead of the *Monad* and *Dyad* (= *hypodochē*) of the Neopythagoreans<sup>42</sup>;
- (5) it stresses the divine goodness on the part of the *dēmiourgos* as the "motivation" (cp. 3.2.7 where no motivation whatsoever is given on the part of *to hen* in its generation of reality) for creation (see 1.2.16; des Places *Atticus* F.3: "For we seek a providence that has an interest for us." my underlining. see 3.4.4-6)

(6) it mentions the featureless nature of matter as a receptacle of all forms; a kind of body *in posse*.<sup>42</sup>

This important passage also mentions the *in qua* function of *hypodochē* and the *ex qua* function of the *ichnē* (in *hypodochē*); this transformation of pre-cosmic *ichnē* into cosmos by the deity is, for Middle Platonists, the gist of Plato's cosmology:

"Matter then, being fashioned into these forms by the deity, was moved at first with (indistinct) footsteps (*ichnē*), and without order, but was subsequently reduced into order by the deity, while all things were fitted together according to a proportion with each other." (*Didasc.* XIII.4-7; cp. Apuleius *Dogmata* I.7; des Places *Atticus* F.23)

This stress on *ichnē* makes Alcinous' mention of irrational soul not unexpected (*Didasc.* XXV. 178.24-32)<sup>43</sup> and in the hands of Plutarch and Numenius their connection is established.

3.3.4 One thing is missing in this very careful Middle Platonic exegesis of *Timaeus*. That is, there is no explanation why these *ichnē* should be rather than not be, and all the attention instead is devoted to the order and essence of the cosmos. The single-mindedness on this issue explains why the leitmotif in Middle Platonism, in relation to *Timaeus*, is a persistent effort to explain why these pre-cosmic *ichnē* are *ataktōs* and *plēmmeļōs*. This effort produces an evil soul because soul is the initiator of motion and only evil soul can initiate the chaotic motion characteristic of *ichnē*; the compromise between *ichnē* and the *dēmiourgos* gives us a dualism. Plutarch develops his dualistic theodicy along these suggested lines and the most important thing he has to do to prove his case is to persuade the doubters that the psychology in *Timaeus* is compatible with that in *Phaedrus* and *Laws* X.

3.3.5 Plutarch, in contrast to the mathematical nature of soul (Plutarch 1025ab, see 3.1.2; cp. Nicomachus II.22ff.), tries to analyse the different functions those different and opposite entities (of which soul is the intermediate and connector) contribute to soul. Therefore sameness and difference are said to contribute, respectively, the faculty of discernment (*to kritikon*) and of mobility (*to kinētikon*) (1024e); furthermore, the difference (*to thateron*) acts as the principle of differentiation and dissimilitude (*archē diaphoras kai anomoiotētos*) (1024d) and these are related to time (1025a). This stress on the *kinēsis* of soul is not without purpose, because this will make the soul in *Timaeus* related to the autokinetic soul in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X*, i.e., the psychology in *Timaeus* can be reconciled with (1014a) that in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* in the aspect of motion (1015f-1016a).<sup>44</sup> If the pre-cosmic *ichnē* are in chaotic motion in *Timaeus* then one can use the theory of psychic *autokinēsis* in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* to explain it, with the result that this motion is psychic, in contrast to Plato's intention to see this motion as mechanical (see 1.2.13).<sup>45</sup> By this Plutarch can see a parallel between cosmic "soul - cosmic body" and "precosmic soul - precosmic matter" (1016c-1017b)<sup>46</sup> with soul in both cases as the source of *kinēsis*.

3.3.6 This is only a part of the story. Because the chaotic motion in pre-cosmos is different from the harmonious motion initiated by soul in the cosmos, this means that there must be some difference in the kinds of soul to explain these two different kinds of motion. Plutarch says:

"The fact is that it is impossible for anything bad whatsoever to be engendered where god is the author of all, or anything good where god is the author of nothing." (369b; des Places *Atticus* FF.10 and 11)

This antinomian consequence makes it necessary to propose a psychic dualism with evil soul

responsible for such a pre-cosmic chaotic motion. It is also well said that this emphatic expression of dualism has to be seen against the background of Plutarch's aversion to Stoics - Chrysippus in particular - for the Stoics' monistic providence would make god responsible for evil (1050e).<sup>47</sup> For Plutarch this means - if there is a cosmic process from disorder to order *via* the *dēmiourgos* - the soul responsible for the precosmic motion cannot be called soul in a proper sense. The generation of soul, like the generation of cosmos, is for Plutarch not an absolute genesis; it is the "*genesis*" of a reconstructed and reformed soul because the *dēmiourgos*' intervention is an imposition of order upon an existent disorder, not a *genesis* out of what was not there.<sup>48</sup> It is in this *genesis* of a reformed soul that, on the one hand, the soul is generated due to the demiurgic intervention. On the other hand, the soul is eternal and ungenerated because its pre-existence has to be presupposed for the chaotic motion of *ichnē* (Cp. Calcidius *In Timaeum* 295).<sup>49</sup> Atticus has said that

*"phasin agenēton me kata to hypokeimenon auten einai, genētēn de kata to eidos."*  
(des Places *Atticus* F.35)

One can hardly be more accurate and succinct on this issue.

**3.3.7** This evil soul is an entity which is inferred from the behaviour detected in the *ichnē* and this means this evil soul has to express its irrationality and chaos through matter:

"What preceded the generation of the universe was disorder, disorder not incorporeal or immobile or inanimate but of corporeality amorphous and incoherent and of motivity (= or 'motion') ." (1014b)<sup>50</sup>

Matter here is presented in the neutral sense as the substratum underlying the cosmic process

(1014d, 1015a, 1025f-1026a, 374c and 382c); it is the ungenerated precosmic soul that moved matter chaotically. This animated matter in pre-cosmos is a dim prefiguration of the cosmos and it is this evil soul that is called *kakopoion* for it has to express its efficacy *via* matter:

"that disorderly and indeterminate but self-moved and motive principle which in many places he has called necessity but in the *Laws* has openly called disorderly and maleficent soul (*psychēn atakton eirēke kai kakopoion*)."<sup>51</sup> (1014de; cp. the "congenital desire" (*symphytos epithumia*) of *Politicus* 273 in Plutarch 1015a)<sup>51</sup>

**3.3.8** This "disorderly and maleficent soul" reminds us at once of the soul "*a-noiai xungenomenē*" in *Laws* X with the "*a*" interpreted in the sense of antithesis (to *nous*). If matter is neutral, one cannot but suspect that the soul as a whole is also neutral; it is the activity of "*anoiai xungenomenē*" that makes soul evil. This means that the *cosmopoiēsis* of the *dēmiourgos* in ordering matter is in fact in ordering the evil soul that animates matter and it is the activity of making the soul *prolabousa noun* instead of *anoiai xungenomenē*. Soul is the material for demiurgic intervention - just as matter is the material for soul's cosmopoietic *kinēsis* - and it is the reformation of this evil soul that accounts for demiurgic intervention. Plutarch in 1017ab puts this relationship very clearly:

"For soul is cause and principle of motion, but intelligence (*nous*) of order and consonance in motion; and the fact that god did not arouse matter from torpor but put a stop to its being disturbed by the mindless cause (*tēs anoētou tarattomenou aitias*) and did not impart to nature the origins of change and modifications of every kind and in disorderly change but from her, who was involved in modifications of every kind and in disorderly changes, removed the vast infinitude and jangle, using as tools concord



and proportion and number, the function of which is not by change and motion to impart to things the modifications of diversity and difference (*heterotēs pathē kai diaphoras*) but rather to make them inerrant and stable and similar to the entities that are invariably identical."

3.3.9 We have said that soul is a composition from sameness and difference. From the quotation we seem to see that the order is related to sameness and disorder to difference and the demiurgic activity (and psychic *kinēsis*) is to make sure the element of sameness prevails. This means that Plutarch could have delved further and seen "difference" (*to thateron*) as the ultimate cause of evil. As far as I can see no serious attempt is made on this possibility in Plutarch. The Neopythagoreans and Plotinus, on the other hand, follow this clue and introduce a negative theory of evil centred on the analysis of the concept of *to thateron* (or *hē heterotēs*). This is because Plutarch's stress is on *ichnē* to the exclusion of *hypodochē* which is, in its metaphysical function, *heterotēs*, and prior to *ichnē*. The argument for existence of an evil soul and a dualistic outlook in Plutarch is now complete. More remains about the nature of this evil soul and the *cosmopoiēsis*.

3.3.10 This precosmic evil soul is "a certain self-activated potency of imaginative and opinionative but irrational and disorderly transport and impulse" (1017b). Although it is regulated by the *dēmiourgos* "with the appropriate numbers and ratios", it retains some ingredient from its "prior discordant and irrational state" (1017c; 1015a). This means the ordering by the *dēmiourgos* of evil soul is an optimal and temporary compromise. Plutarch says that this reformed soul can become dulled and forgetful of its proper role and the primitive can therefore disrupt and unwind the cosmic progress which is already achieved (1026ef). This is a clear echo of the golden age myth in *Politicus* 273 and of the "slumbering soul" in Alcinous (*Didasc.* XIV.35-41). Cosmos, in its precarious existence, could sink again and be "dissolved

into the boundless region of dissimilitude" and this "dissimilitude" is the condition of the evil soul before the reformation (1015d; cp. *Enneads* I.8.13.[7]) This makes necessary the intermittent intervention of the *dēmiourgos* (1026f; see 1.2.17.) and also indicates that the *cosmopoiēsis* is a *creatio perpetua*. This in turn implies the permanent presence of evil in the divine economy:

"soul is not entirely the work of god, but it bears within it innately a share of evil."  
(1027a)

This passage is further elaborated by a passage from *On Isis*:

"it is impossible for the bad to be completely eradicated, since it is innate, in a large amount, in the body and likewise in the soul of the universe, and is always fighting a hard battle against the better." (371a; cp. *Theaetetus* 176ab)<sup>61</sup>

This makes the cosmos a delicate balance, full of tensions (1026a).

3.3.11 Ultimately, apart from the exegetical reason in *Timaeus*, the rationale for this rationalisation of evil is based on the antinomian principle of "good for good and bad for bad" (cp. 3.3.6):

"For if nothing comes into being without a cause, and if good could not provide the cause of evil, then Nature must contain in itself the creation and origin [of evil] as well as good."

I will say that this is a common concern shared by, implicitly, Neopythagoreans and, explicitly,

by Plotinus; it is not the only concern, however. For Plotinus, the unity of reality is another consideration for his philosophy and his theodicy is a balance between these two concerns but slightly in favour of the unity of reality. This means Plotinus would interpret his evil as a kind of (quasi-)reality - and so not a "real" evil after all - and can be generated from a good source; by this interpretation Plotinus and his Neopythagorean predecessors avoid breaching the antinomian rule. For Plutarch and Numenius, as we will see, this "good for good and bad for bad" is the driving force that makes them dualists (cp. des Places *Atticus* F.23) and they find their support in the *cosmopoiēsis* conducted by the *dēmiourgos* in its imposition of forms upon the chaotic and recalcitrant *ichnē* (des Places *Atticus* F.23).

**3.3.12** As a coda to this section on Plutarch I will mention an interesting point about matter in *On Isis*. The *mythpoiēsis* in *On Isis* mentions the debilitated ensouled matter (or evil soul), symbolised by Tryphon, and this is said to be cause of natural disaster (373d). The neutral matter, symbolised by Isis, is said to be not only the natural *tithēnē* and *pandeches* but also imbued with a love for the first and most sovereign principle of all, the Good. This innate aptitude for goodness is accompanied by a deep aversion to anything related to evil:

"she is indeed a sphere of activity (*chora*) and subject matter (*hylē*) for both of them (= goodness and evil), but she inclines always of herself to what is better, offering herself to it for reproduction, and for the sowing in herself of effluxes and likeness."  
(372e; cp. 375a)

Plutarch points out that this love of matter, symbolised by Isis, for goodness is the desire that the figure of Poverty has for Plenitude in *Symposium* (374d)<sup>52</sup>. It is not very clear how this more positive appreciation of matter as a kind of desire for goodness can be reconciled with the kind of evil matter which I have expounded so far. This desiderative element will

characterise the mutual relation between the *dēmiourgos* and matter in Numenius (see 3.4.3).

This is a *mythopoiēsis* explored by Plotinus in *Enneads* III.5 and I.8.14.[9]-[11].

### 3.4 NUMENIUS AND THE MORAL NATURE OF DEMIURGIC COSMOPOIĒSIS

3.4.1 Numenius' interpretation of *Timaeus* could be called an emphatic version of Plutarch's. A test ground is *Tim.* 28c where, it is said, to discover "the Father and Maker" of the universe is a task indeed. Plutarch interprets the Father and Maker as two different functions of the *dēmiourgos*<sup>53</sup> but in Numenius they are the first God - a hypostatisation of the ideal pattern of forms for the *dēmiourgos' theoria* - (des Places *Numenius* FF.11, 13 and 15)<sup>54</sup> and the second God respectively (des Places *Numenius* F.12.12-14; cp. F.21).<sup>55</sup> Together with the immanent world soul they constitute three Gods, in contrast to the three Ones of Moderatus. It is the second God, the *dēmiourgos* or the "creative God" (*demiourgikon theon*), that "in the process of coming into contact with matter, which is the dyad, gives unity to it, but is himself divided by it" (Ibid. F.11). The mention of *dyad* here, like the mention of the *Monad* and the *Dyad* by Plutarch in 370e, 428f and 1024d<sup>56</sup>, should cause us no alarm for there is no number philosophy derived from it.<sup>57</sup> It is a philosophical common currency with various values. Whittaker has already said that Numenius is "more Platonic than Pythagorean" in his fragments.<sup>58</sup>

3.4.2 The contact with matter is the consequence of the *dēmiourgos' cosmopoiēsis* and this is a kind of "impulsive faculty" (*hormētikon*) derived from his desire (*epheis*) (des Places *Numenius* F.18). Matter, the object for his *cosmopoiēsis*, is also said to be endowed with "a character prone to desire" with the potential to divide the second god (Ibid. F.11 and F.18).<sup>59</sup> This desire in matter reminds us of the role of Isis who has an upward surge (see 3.3.12), but here it is a surge not for good purpose. This is because Numenius' matter is never neutral but always poses itself as a maleficently animated matter: for him "matter" is equated with

"maleficiently ensouled matter".<sup>60</sup> This mutual attraction constitutes the momentum for the *cosmopoiēsis* (des Places *Numenius* F.11). This descent of the *dēmiourgos* and the elevation of matter "up to his own nature" give us a more dynamic picture of reality, a picture with a greater tension. It also reveals a kind of cosmic pessimism (because of the greater eagerness on the part of evil in its activity), unlike the linear, necessary and assured progression of reality in Neopythagoreanism.

3.4.3 The mutual desires expressed to each other have implied that the *dēmiourgos* and matter are independent of each other. This in turn means that the function of the *dēmiourgos* is limited to ordering a pre-existent matter controlled by an evil soul (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 295; = des Places *Numenius* F.52) and the cosmogony is a generation of an ordered soul out of a disordered soul, never an absolute generation (cp. 3.3.6). I have mentioned that Plutarch distinguishes a neutral matter and an evil soul (see 3.3.7) but for Numenius they are one and the same for there is never matter without harmful consequences (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 296: matter is never "indifferent") and this means matter is forever associated with evil soul:

"god is the principle and cause of all good, matter of all evil." (Ibid.)

"Plato is praised by Numenius for assuming the existence of two world souls, a beneficent one and an evil one, viz., matter. Although the latter (= matter) is moved to and fro in a disorderly fashion, it must yet, because it is moved by a force of its own and from within, have a life of its own and be moved by a soul." (Ibid. 297)<sup>61</sup>

The second passage expresses clearly that the exegetic basis for Numenius' animated matter is the pre-cosmic *ichnē* in their chaotic motion (see 1.2.13).<sup>62</sup> This exegetic basis for theodicy is shared by Plutarch. Both Numenius and Plutarch, in my view, take the existence of matter

or enmattered soul as given, without searching for a higher source. It is evil as an immanent phenomenon that has to be explained.<sup>63</sup> This animated matter is a cause of evil that "resists providence, always ready to thwart its plans through the power of its perversity." This pervasive and inherent evil in matter means that the cosmos can never be perfected, because created being, with matter as its component, is limited and finite:

"things which have come into being without defects are found nowhere." (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 296)

Numenius, like Plutarch (3.3.10), fails to say why and how this metaphysical limitation comes about because he has not inquired into the concept of *hypodochē*. In other words, Numenius like Plutarch is more interested in the phenomenology, rather than aetiology, of evil and sees evil not in terms of its ontic deficiency in relation to another level of reality but as a kind of limiting feature characteristic of this very existent. This results in a dualistic theodicy with evil as constitutive of the cosmos:

"...by its miraculous power, god adorned matter and in every way, corrected its faults, without, however, destroying them entirely, thus preventing complete destruction of the nature of matter." (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 299)

The permanent presence of animated matter and evil in the divine economy means that the *cosmopoiesis* is also a *creatio perpetua* along a diachronic axis.

3.4.4 All of these views are rather similar to Plutarch's inquiry into matter and evil except for Numenius' identification of matter with the evil soul that animates it - again, a possible polemical intent against the Stoics<sup>64</sup> - and the mutual desires between the *dēmiourgos* and

matter. Numenius as well as Atticus<sup>65</sup>, however, intimates a personal dimension of this *cosmopoiēsis* when he says that there are two souls within the individual and they are in correspondence to the good soul and evil soul in the macrocosmos (des Places *Numenius* F.41).<sup>66</sup> From some Middle Platonic materials on fate and free will, we can see that the Middle Platonists do not propose their dualism just for the sake of exegesis of *Timaeus* but also wish thereby to solve the problem of determinism which is an inevitable conclusion of the Neopythagorean construction of reality.

3.4.5 Stoics, and Chrysippus in particular, are the first to formulate the following thesis about the problem of fate and free will. The cosmos for them is a manifestation of one substance in various states and this manifestation is the *pronoia*, *physis* or *heimarmenē*.<sup>67</sup> This kind of *pronoia* presupposes a kind of God which is absolute, omniscient and omnipotent without any extrinsic condition and any further reference; with this absolute God comes a complete determinism (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 160; cp. *ibid.* 144b).<sup>68</sup> I think this is also the case with the Neopythagorean system with the necessary derivation of all reality from the absolute *Monad*. This is a picture of god that is impossible and chaotic for Middle Platonists because this implies a "divinity that is unlimited" (*ibid.* 148). For them the first and noetic principle, the *dēmiourgos*, has to work within a pre-given material condition which circumscribes its omniscience and omnipotence :

"Although events are infinite, extending infinitely into the past and future, fate, which encloses them all in a cycle, is nevertheless not infinite but finite, as neither a law nor a formula nor anything divine can be infinite." (Pseudo-Plutarch 569a)

The view that the *dēmiourgos* of Middle Platonism is limited and his prescience is not free of context is further confirmed by this passage:



"It is true that god knows all things, but that he knows everything according to its own nature: that which is subject to necessity as submissive to necessity, the contingent, however, as provided with such a nature that deliberation opens a way for it. For god does not know the nature of what is contingent in such a way as that which is certain and bound by necessity (for in that case he will be deceived and fail to know), but in such a way that he really knows the contingent according to its nature.... His knowledge of uncertain things is uncertain and their course contingent...." (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 162; cp. *ibid.* 149)

Fate here is a kind of power but in its essence it is the rational world soul (*ibid.* 143 and 149) and it is also "the 'speech' and the 'ordinance' which god (= the *dēmiourgos*) ordained to the world soul for the perpetual management of all things" (*ibid.* 150).

3.4.6 This law has an *ex hypothesi* character, a law with an "if" formula (Pseudo-Plutarch 569d, Calcidius *In Timaeum* 150)<sup>89</sup>, with a status similar to the state law (Pseudo-Plutarch 569d and 570a). This means that the engagement of the *dēmiourgos* in *cosmopoiēsis*, if it is divine, is not limitless and formless. This delimitation in divine intervention would exclude the *dēmiourgos* from the knowledge of contingents (*ibid.* 569ef) and things contingent are the consequence of the compromise between the *dēmiourgos* and matter (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 298 and 299). This limited intervention gives scope to the created human beings for their own domain for moral activity:

"the choice of things evenly contingent is in the power of man, who, being a rational animal, refers all things to reason and deliberation." (Cp. *ibid.* 180 "*logistikon*")

It is through this limitation of demiurgic activity that we can relate his prescience to personal

moral freedom. Alcinous has given a summary of the Middle Platonic view on fate and personal freedom:

"All things he says are in fate, but all things are not however fated. For Fate, while holding the rank of a law, does not, as it were, say that one person shall do this, and another suffer that; for it would proceed to infinity; since the things produced are infinite, and infinite too the accidents around them; moreover that, which is in our power, would depart, and praise too and blame, and every thing [else] that borders on them (= cp. *Enneads* I.8.15.); but (it says) that if a soul selects a life of this kind, and does some such acts, some such things will follow. The soul is then without a master and it rests with itself to do an act or not; nor is it forced to do this [or that]. But that, which follows upon the doing, will be accomplished according to Fate." (*Didasc.* XXVI; cp. Apuleius *Dogmata* I.12, a somewhat confused version)

This passage concludes that the *dēmiourgos* does not act without any further reference: his activity has to be complemented by human reason and deliberation in regard to contingents. I do not wish to say anything about the consistency of this argument; what is more important is the Middle Platonic announcement of this interest and intention, an intention that human beings by abiding by "natural law" partake in the *cosmopoiēsis*. This natural law is moral by nature:

"...the law commands in general, to all people, what has to be done, and withholds all people from unsuitable actions.... Such, to my opinion, is also the character of that heavenly law which is called fate, ordaining virtuous deeds to men and forbidding their opposites...." (Calcidius *In Timaeum* 179-80)

This moral nature in demiurgic intervention is consistent with his goodness, generosity and will in *Timaeus* (Pseudo-Plutarch 572f-573a and 573c; see 1.2.16). This moralistic nature is in direct contrast to the logical and impersonal nature in the derivation of reality from *Monad* in Neopythagoreanism. This concern for the problem of personal freedom gives an additional impetus to Middle Platonic exegesis of *Timaeus*. I have found, to the best of my knowledge, that no such concern can be found in those philosophers who espouse the necessary derivation of reality from an *archē* and explain away the *dēmiourgos*. I add this concern for determinism and free will as another proof for the necessity to tell Middle Platonism from Neopythagoreanism.

**NOTES:**

1. Filoramo p.25; Gersh 1986 pp.40-3.
2. Dörrie pp.304-8. Dillon 1986 p.226.
3. Burkert 1972 pp.64-5; Tarán 1981 p.89 note 415.
4. D.J. O'Meara 1987 p.23.
5. Meijer pp.10-1.
6. Whittaker 1987 p.119.
7. Xenocrates defines it as moving number itself (Plutarch 1012d); Poseidonius' definition is seen in 1023b. A criticism by Plutarch of this mathematicisation, see 1023b-1024b; Hershbell pp.243-4.
8. Cp. Proclus *In Timaeum* 36b, 213de; Merlan 1960 p.23.
9. *DCMS = De Communi Mathematica Scientia.*
10. Happ p.197.
11. Ibid. p.147.
12. Both (4) and (5) are mentioned in *DCMS* IV p.18.9: "*en tetartois kai pemptois*".
13. E.g., Tarán 1981 and Merlan 1960; Krämer's opinion, see Happ pp.209-212.
14. Dillon 1977 p.15.
15. Happ p.151.
16. Ibid. pp.151-2 and p.175.
17. Ibid. p.231.
18. Ibid. pp.233-4.
19. Ibid. p.168.
20. Ibid. p.171.
21. Cp. Heinze FF.15 & 18 on Xenocrates' evil as matter.

22. Happ. pp.176-84.
23. Ibid. pp.184-8.
24. Ibid. p.189.
25. Dodds 1928 pp.137-8; cp. Dillon 1977 p.334.
26. Reale 1990 p.242; cp. the dual *archai* of Sextus *Ad. Phys.* II.277.
27. Dillon 1977 p.355.
28. Reale 1990 p.267.
29. Brenk pp.298-9.
30. Sorabji 1988 p.20.
31. Ibid. p.21.
32. Floyd p.21.
33. Cp. Filoramo p.26.
34. Alcinous, according to Whittaker 1987, is the author of *Didascalicos*, an opinion I accept.
35. Witt p.124; cp. Brenk p.275, Loenen 1956 p.297.
36. Cp. Dörrie's "*ein arges Hinderniss*" of this trinity of principles for the construction of a stratified picture of reality, see his pp.219-221.
37. Brenk p.264 and p.268, *contra* Dörrie p.184.
38. Brenk p.258.
39. Ibid. pp.263-4; Baltes p.45 on the nature of Plutarch's exegesis; *contra* Cherniss 1976 (Loeb) pp.136-49.
40. Whittaker 1987 pp.101-2.
41. Cp. Whittaker 1987 p.118: "Alcinous... avoids designating his first principle as '*to hen*'"; also Brenk p.249; *contra* Baltes pp.96-100.
42. Whittaker 1987 pp.110-1.
43. Dörrie p.203.
44. Hershbell pp.240-1 and p.246.

45. Baltes p.40.
46. Ibid. p.41.
47. Brenk p.304; cp. Baltes p.43.
48. Hershbell pp.242-3, Baltes p.42.
49. Hershbell p.240; *contra* Scheffel p.18.
50. Or "motion" according to Dr. H.J. Blumenthal but it is preserved by Hershbell in p.242.
51. Brenk p.298.
52. Hager 1963 p.52.
53. Cp. Bianchi 1987 pp.354-5; Happ pp.198-208 on the "*Das Streben des unvollkommenen Seins zum Vollkommenen.*"
54. Whittaker 1981 pp.51-2; Frede 1987 p.1061 & pp.1067-8.
55. Whittaker 1981 p.53.
56. On the difficulty of three gods in Numenius, see Frede 1987 p.1057.
57. Brenk p.297.
58. Contra Reale 1990 p.268.
59. Whittaker 1987 pp.119-20; cp. Frede 1987 pp.1039-41 & pp.1045-7; Reale 1990 p.263.
60. Cp. Frede 1987 pp.1066-7 on the "*voluntativ-desiderativ Element*" of the *dēmiourgos*.
61. Ibid. p.1053.
62. Ibid. pp.1070-1.
63. Ibid. pp.1052-3.
64. *Contra* Frede 1987 p.1052.
65. Frede 1987 p.1053, p.1071 and p.1073ff..
66. Baltes pp.47-63.
67. Cp. Frede 1987 p.1073 on his reservation about this parallel.
68. Floyd p.xiv.
69. On the problem of sources related to this Middle Platonic discussion on free will and

determinism, see Den Boeft 1970.

70. Den Boeft pp.25-6.

## 4 PLOTINUS ON MATTER AND EVIL

### 4.0 RÉSUMÉ AND ANTICIPATION

4.0.1 Plato in his *Timaeus* has attempted a creationist metaphysics because he raised this existential question: why is there being rather than no being? He answers this question by positing a *hypodochē* which acts as ultimate otherness acting on the unicity of Being and therefrom comes the existence of *ichnē*. He then poses another noetic principle, the *dēmiourgos*, to explain the evident order seen in - thus the essence of - the universe, because the *ichnē*, although a kind of existent, display only minimal order. He poses this noetic ordering of the primordial *ichnē* as a kind of conflict between reason (*nous*) and necessity (*anankē*) and admits that only an optimal compromise can be achieved because *hypodochē* as the principle of irrationality is built into the limited nature of existence - thus into the divine economy of the cosmos - and its effect is constitutive of the cosmos. Plotinus, as far as we can see, accepts Plato's distinction between the problem of existence and the problem of essence by his division of labour among the One and *Nous*, with the One responsible for existence and *hypostasis Nous*, as a system of Forms, in charge of the order and essence of the emanated reality as a whole. Such a reply to the Parmenidean challenge, either in the Platonic or in the Plotinian version, would be dismissed off-hand by Aristotle who thinks that the cosmos has always been there and the problem of 'whence' should never be raised at all. Gerson says pertinently on this situation:

"To admit that there is a difference between what the man is and his existence (= commenting on *Enneads* VI.9.2.9-10) is to admit that the explanation for the latter fact



comes from outside anything contained within his nature."<sup>1</sup>

For Plotinus Aristotle's position would mean that if one can decide the essence of an object it means that one can take for granted its existence; the essence of an entity automatically implies its existence. That is why Plotinus has to surpass Aristoteleannous thinking its own thought and reaches one step further upwards to the One; henology has to replace ousiology.

4.0.2 Plotinus' philosophical piety to Plato is not unlimited. Plotinus accepts Platonic interpretation of *hypodochē* as a principle of matter in its pluralisation and differentiation of the One but he will not accept that *hypodochē* can assume the position as co-principle with Being; nor is acceptable to him the personal intervention of the *dēmiourgos* (acting as transcendental and immanent *nous*) in the *cosmopoiēsis* because this intervention entails a *praxis* and therefore an imperfect *theoria* (e.g., III.8.4.20-1). Plotinus' alternative is to accept and transform the Aristotelian concept of *nous*, in which the subject (*noēsis*) and object (*noēton*) on the one hand and the part (*ho hekastos nous*) and the whole (*ho pantos nous*) on the other are mutually implicated, and add to it the creative function of the *dēmiourgos* and thus make the *theoria* of *nous* productive of other reality. This productive *theoria* is the moving force in the emanation of reality which is ultimately derived from the One.

4.0.3 For our present purpose, the inquiry into the correlation of matter to evil, the emphasis has to be concentrated on the role of matter in Plotinus' picture of reality. *Hypodochē* as the ultimate *heterotēs*, in its pluralisation and differentiation of the One, stresses the diminution of being which its interaction with the One has brought about and this introduces the concept of evil as a problem related to being, and evil, in its Plotinian elaboration, is seen as a *sterēsis* of being, or non-being (*mē on*). Because Plotinus adopts a hierarchical picture of reality where each different kind of matter fits each different *hypostasis* of reality, this means that evil as

matter, *mē on* or *sterēsis* of *on*, has characterised the derived reality after the unique One. On the other hand, the *dēmiourgos* with its cosmopoietic struggle with *ichnē* presents us with another picture of evil, a kind of evil which is maleficently active and acts as another force in the construction of the cosmos, a force which threatens the order imposed by the *dēmiourgos*; the psychic *autokinēsis* as expounded in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X*, despite several differences, is basically a continuation of the *dēmiourgos*' *cosmopoiēsis*. These two versions of evil, evil as *sterēsis* of being and evil as a maleficent and active force, are not contradictory, because they are each related to different concerns: evil as *sterēsis* of being is related to the problem of existence in which the divine goodness is seen as the bestowal of being and a *sterēsis* of it is thus seen as evil; on the other hand, evil as maleficent force, disrupting the imposed order or existent harmony, is related to the problem of essence which is concerned with structure, organisation and order of the divine economy. Both views of evil are found in Plato and are distinguished because not only are *hypodochē* and *ichnē* distinguished but also their counterparts - Being on the one hand and the *dēmiourgos* with the ideal pattern of the divine living being on the other - are distinguished, too.

4.0.4 The history of exegesis of these two kinds of *Seinsstufung* based on the texts of *Timaeus* has been mentioned. My purpose there is to argue for the continuity and co-existence of these two approaches (if not two "traditions") in Platonism before Plotinus. I just have to give an example to prove my point. It is the alleged two moments of descent by soul in *Enneads* IV.8: the first moment is its generation of matter and the second is its organisation of matter into sensible cosmos (cp. I.8.14.[14]). It is necessary to realise that the implications of these two descents are radically different because these two descents are related to two different issues. The first descent is about the existence of matter and in this mission soul is the last stage of the emanation from the One which is ultimately responsible for existence; it is logical and necessary. The second descent is about the essence of the generated matter

(i.e., how to turn the generated and amorphous matter into cosmos) and there we begin to find that soul, because of its cosmopoietic activity, becomes involved and weakened and the problem of soul being contaminated by matter emerges, an apparently dualistic approach, reminiscent of the optimal compromise between the *dēmiourgos* and *anankē*. What is separated in Plato into *hypodochē* and *ichnē* is amalgamated into the concept of matter (*hylē*) in Plotinus; what is distinguished in Plato into Being (the source of being) and *dēmiourgos* (the source of order) is subsumed under the dual-functional soul which generates existence or matter (which makes it a part of the emanation initiated from the One) and orders the generated matter into essence or cosmos (which makes it exercise the function of *nous*). In other words, these two descents of soul have combined two kinds of generation I have already distinguished in chapters 1 and 3, i.e., the absolute generation (of matter) and the generation of a reconstructed intelligibility (which turns matter into sensible cosmos). The amalgamation of these two uses of matter in Plotinus corresponds exactly to the amalgamation of the two different functions in the soul. I take this as a broad evidence for Plotinus' awareness and application of the Platonic legacy on the problem of matter and evil. The case will be overwhelming if we take into consideration the change in the use of matter in I.8.6 and I.8.7, where matter as *mē on* - a minimal *on* deprived of all features - is turned into an entity with anti-noetic features of its own, i.e., *ichnē*.

4.0.5 I wish to give a very brief discussion of how the two vital concepts, *hypodochē* and the *dēmiourgos*, fare in the *Enneads*. Of the three functions (cp. 1.2.9) we have distinguished for the concept of *hypodochē*: (a) ultimate *heterotēs* in differentiating the Being, (b) the principle of irrationality which deflects the faithful projection of forms into the spatial *hypodochē* and (c) as the spatial container for *ichnē*, I believe that Plotinus has preserved intact (a) and (b) but seems undecided on (c). Indeed, II.4.12.12 says that "place is posterior to matter and bodies" (cp. IV.3.9.21-3) but II.4.1.1-2 seems to indicate that this *in qua* function of matter as

extension is a characteristic of body and is therefore prior, not posterior, to the amorphous matter.<sup>2</sup> My general impression is that he is rather reserved about this *in qua* function of *hypodochē* and I also suspect that this function is not very important in Plotinus. On the other hand, the concept of *dēmiourgos* is another concept Plotinus has to liquidate in order to clarify his own position on the problem of cosmogony. The *dēmiourgos* as a philosophical or theological concept had already been discussed in our discussion on Plato and Middle Platonists but it was reinterpreted in a more radical way by the Gnostics before Plotinus came to it (see 4.5.5); nevertheless, it is Plato's application of it that makes Plotinus redefine its function and purpose in the *cosmopoiēsis*. Because the *dēmiourgos*, as the noetic principle responsible for the order among the generated reality, represents a kind of intervention *ab extra* and thus symbolises the discontinuity between the intelligible order of reality and the sensible order, Plotinus proposes that *theoria* is prior to *poiēsis* (= the alleged function of the *dēmiourgos*) and makes *theoria* the "central point of Plotinian metaphysics".<sup>3</sup> Plotinus says very clearly on their relationship:

"Everywhere we shall find making and action (*ten poiēsin kai praxin*) either a weakening or a consequence of contemplation." (III.8.4.40-1; cp. II.9.12.18-9 on the priority of nature to arts; cp. the priority of arts to nature in *Laws* X 888-890; Alcinous *Didasc.* 152.30-153.2; Alexander of Aphrodisias *In Meta.* 980a21.2.3)

This is because *poiēsis* implies a kind of planning (*logismos*) and planning in turn implies deliberation ("this instead of that") and a lack of power (*aporia dynameos*) (VI.7.1.28-38). A world picture based on the mediation of the *dēmiourgos* and on the discontinuity of reality has to be replaced by a continuum of reality and chain of being, "like a long life stretched out at length" (V.2.2.26-7); intermediacy has to be replaced by immediacy. If one finds the role of the *dēmiourgos* in Plotinus rather confusing and sees it assume the role of *nous* (e.g., II.1.1.2

and 8), the world soul (e.g., III.7.11.15-33) and individual soul (e.g., IV.7.13.11) one can be reassured that the *dēmiourgos* is always found in the transition from a higher *hypostasis* to a lower one because the *dēmiourgos* continues playing the role of 'maker' and 'orderer' here but with its connotation of *poiēsis* sanitised. What I wish to stress here is that Plotinus has accepted the *dēmiourgos*' function of *diacosmēsis* but abandoned the implication of intervention *ab extra*. The language of representation, predominant in Plato, gives way to the language of reflection: the *dēmiourgos* imitating the ideal pattern of divine living being and creating therefrom the sensible cosmos is criticised and abandoned (VI.4.10.1-12) and instead the immediate mirror-reflection is in favour. (VI.4.10.12-8)<sup>4</sup>. Such a *theoria* is a creative force and therefore to create means to contemplate; creation is the consequence of *theoria*:

"My act of contemplation makes what it contemplates, as the geometers draw their figures while they contemplate. But I do not draw, but as I contemplate, the lines which bound bodies come to be as if they fell from my contemplation. What happens to me is what happens to my mother and the beings that generated me, for they, too, derive from contemplation, and it is no action of theirs which brings about my birth; they are greater rational principles, and as they contemplate themselves I come to be."  
(III.8.4.7-14)

This doctrine of productive contemplation is one of the most original contributions Plotinus has left to us because it can eliminate not only the intervention external to reality but also the Aristotelian opposition between *praxis* and *theoria*.<sup>5</sup> Cilento again stresses the central importance of *theoria* and says:

"Plotinus takes contemplation out of the shadow and hypostatizes it: *theoria* is the unique, the creative Hypostasis: the mythic Demiurge is submerged in contemplation."<sup>6</sup>

Creative *theoria* is thus common to and characteristic of all *hypostases* because *hypostases* in their *theoria* are productive of what are lower than themselves and *theoria* therefore is the necessary element in understanding the *proōdos* and *epistrophē* of reality.<sup>7</sup> It is a great advance on the mathematical necessity implied in the Neopythagorean *Seinsstufung*<sup>8</sup> and becomes the lynchpin of the Plotinian system and the guarantor of the continuum of reality. (V.2.2.2-5)

4.0.6 This endeavour to assert the continuum of reality is meant to preserve the unique position of the One as the only source of reality and, contrary to Plato's *hypodochē*, to prove the subordinate position of matter as the end- (or by-) product of the generative emanation derived from the One.

4.0.7 With this background we may now approach the role of matter in the Plotinian system and its relation to evil. We divide our exposition in this chapter into six sections:

(4.1) First of all, we will try to delineate the special features of the Plotinian system as a whole with special emphases on the One, emanation, otherness (*heterotēs*), and the different kinds of matter in the system; the purpose of it is to establish matter, in its metaphysical function, as a necessary part of the Plotinian scheme of reality and *heterotēs* - the function matter assumes - as necessary for the variety of being.

(4.2) We will explore the ambiguity of matter as *mē on*. While it is said to be the terminal stage of the emanation from the One, this means that the One generates an entity which terminates its efficacy. Matter as *mē on* and as ultimate *heterotēs* (than the One) thus has to balance itself between two possible interpretations: one has to guard it against the Parmenidean *pantelōs mē on* because matter in this interpretation is outwith the conceptual framework

defined by the reality derived from the One and, on the other hand, matter as ultimate *heterotēs*, a kind of logical postulation present in all the transitions of reality from a higher level to the lower one, has to distinguish itself from *ichnē*, a physical existence with the minimal order, which is a kind of material reservoir. Parmenidean *pantelōs mē on* (together with Platonic *mē on* as *heteron tou ontos* in *Sophist*) is an alternative definitely ruled out in I.8.3.[3] (see commentary *ad loc.*) but Plotinus preserves matter as *heterotēs* and matter as the material reservoir, and what kind of relationship they obtain to each other is the vital question that has to be decided. Suffice it to say here that these *ichnē* are the consequence of matter, as the ultimate *heterotēs*, acting on the lowest reach of the hypostatic soul, *physis*, and this material reservoir is the very hypostatisation of matter as the ultimate *heterotēs*. In other words, sensible or prime matter is both the logical postulation of ultimate *heterotēs* and the last existent with the minimal existence and essence.

(4.3) This will be about what is implied in such a picture of reality for the problem of providence and theodicy. Since the equation of matter, *mē on* and evil is based on the kind of metaphysical doctrines exposed in 4.1-4.2, a discussion on its application in providence and theodicy is therefore legitimate and in fact can help us see if there is anything unsatisfactory in the theory of evil recommended by Plotinus. 4.1-4.3 as a whole will prove that the thesis of evil as matter is a thesis implying a whole metaphysical package and it cannot be detached from this package without losing its validity.

(4.4) It is because of the deficiency expounded in 4.3 that we will try to provide a psychological alternative, based on the theme of *tolma*, to the ontological approach based on emanation, and this new alternative can explain the problem of 'whence comes evil' from a dynamic and personal perspective; it is Kristeller's (and Schwyzer's) *zwiefache* interpretation of Plotinus' philosophy<sup>9</sup> but this has rarely received the appreciation it deserves when dealing

with the problem of matter and evil. It is to inquire into the question whether this subjective approach to the Plotinian philosophy can be combined with the ontological analysis based on emanation from the One and thus constitutes "a mystical élan with metaphysical necessity."<sup>10</sup>

(4.5) The ontological approach in 4.1-4.3 and psychological alternatives in 4.4 can be seen as integral parts of Plotinus' philosophy but in *Enneads* II.9 he has given an examination of a very competitive theodicy, Gnosticism, which, unlike the logical implication in the derivation of reality and a complete rationalisation of evil as constitutive of reality in Plotinus, proposes instead a progression of reality full of crises, and recommends a rectification of evil seen in this reality. This is a very imaginative approach to the problem of evil and I believe can throw much light on Plotinus' rationalistic approach to this issue.

(4.6) I will give a brief summary of conclusions reached in 4.1-4.5.



## 4.1 THE WORLD PICTURE OF PLOTINUS

4.1.1 The world picture of Plotinus is a hierarchical structure of reality, anchored by a transcendent One and characterised by the different degrees of unity in each level or *hypostasis* of reality. The concept of unity is what keeps the different strata of emanated reality together but also keeps them apart; these strata are ordered according to the increasing (or decreasing) unity in each of them. The term *hypostasis* has some connotation of spatial metaphoricity and means a level or order of reality where entities characterised by the same degree of unity come together and, considering the noetic nature of One, *Nous* and Soul, one can almost describe *hypostasis* as a kind of noetic *topos* (V.6.6.14). However, this term is only, strictly speaking, proper to the *hypostasis* *Nous* because the One *hypostasis*, on the one hand, is such a special case and what characterises its nature, more often than not, is its difference from the two other generated *hypostases*. It is utterly apophatic and beyond all predications; this apophatic nature is indicative of the intrinsic otherness the One has in relation to the rest of reality<sup>11</sup>; for the One there is no *analogia entis* but exclusively an *analogia attributionis externa*.<sup>12</sup> Paradoxically, the One therefore needs something other than itself - I mean *nous* and the *heterotēs* (than the One) with which *nous* is characterised - to be recognised as such.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the *hypostasis* Soul seems to be so overloaded with functions that the effort to deduce more *hypostases* of, say, *logos* and *physis*, out of the *hypostasis* Soul remains a temptation.<sup>14</sup> It is an understandable confusion because the theory of three *hypostases* is basically a kind of horizontal disposition of reality but the *hypostasis* Soul is, in addition, endowed with a kind of "vertical plenitude, being associated with the various levels of reality."<sup>15</sup> The horizontal disposition of *hypostasis* Soul as the medium between the noetic world and the sensible world is hardly compatible with its vertical plenitude

because its vertical plenitude is a duplication of the whole spectrum of reality within the soul *hypostasis*, along which the individual soul, as 'floating ego,' can establish itself at any point on the spectrum - upwards within the reach of the One and downwards to the periphery of dark matter - and thus claims personal freedom and moral autonomy. The horizontal disposition of *hypostases*, permeated by emanation or creative *theoria*, provides a kind of ontological analysis of reality while the vertical plenitude of *hypostasis* of individual soul offers a subjective perspective and is the rationale underlying Plotinus' philosophy of the self.

4.1.2 Emanation or circumradiation (*perilampsis*, V.1.6.28; cp. V.3.16.6) as the creative *theoria* which connects the different *hypostases* in a hierarchical manner is only one of the many metaphors used to describe the activity originated from the One<sup>16</sup>; one can also see Plotinus use the metaphors of circle, fire, odoriferous substance, spring, tree and the very Stoic *spermatikoi logoi* (III.3.7.9-28) to describe this activity<sup>17</sup>; none of them, however, is as prominent and as appropriate as emanation. It is a particularly pertinent analogy because the anhypostatic matter in I.8 is consistently described in terms of darkness.<sup>18</sup> It describes the unique manifestation of the One, without intermediary, that brings into existence a continuous yet distinguishable chain of being, forming a descending hierarchy of spiritual entities. Filoramo points out that, despite the new appearance of this analogy of emanation, this kind of creation shares the *basso continuo* of many religious concepts before the challenge from the Jewish and Christian apologetics: it is that kind of "impersonal concept of divine power as expanding energy that penetrates the different parts of the universe... to the point where it reaches the dimension of cosmic energy pervading and animating everything"<sup>19</sup>, or in Plotinus' language, "coherent and clear and great and everywhere life, manifesting infinite wisdom" (II.9.8.14-6). It is a continuous expansion with rhythmic steps - unlike the crises-ridden and disconnected cosmology of the Gnostics - without any inner crisis and interruption.<sup>20</sup> It is at once an enrichment and an impoverishment of the One, an enrichment in that it is an articulation of the

power (*dynamis*) inherent in the One and an impoverishment in that it is a dispersal and loss of this power in its departure from the One. A definition by A.H. Armstrong, which has since then become classic, has summarised this phenomenon very succinctly:

"The lower hypostases are produced by a spontaneous and necessary efflux of power from the One, which leaves their source in itself undiminished."<sup>21</sup>

The terms 'spontaneous' and 'necessary' have to be stressed here because, if generation of reality by the One is the result of deliberation and choice, the implication would be some kind of hesitation and doubt among possible alternatives and this would limit the power of the One which is by definition the omnipotent producer; 'necessary', on the other hand, would also imply that the One is constricted (VI.7.1.18-58; V.8.7.38-49; V.8.8.8-11; IV.8.4.38-43; II.2.2.28; II.9.8.21-2). However, the terms themselves are a pair of contradictory concepts because 'spontaneous' implies a kind of volition while 'necessary' means a kind of logical inevitability. This contradiction can be solved when we come to the question why the One has to generate.

4.1.3 Before coming to that, one has to stress that this emanation analogy<sup>22</sup> has to be first dematerialised (and despatialised) because of its Stoic associations. Armstrong is worried by such an association and finally abandons this emanation analogy and opts for the doctrine "reception according to the capacity of the receiver" as a better alternative to describe the progression of reality.<sup>23</sup> This 'reception' doctrine, if seen alone, could be, wrongly, developed as the basis for the causal efficacy of matter.<sup>24</sup> The ambiguity of the emanation analogy, so Armstrong argues, is represented by the ambiguity of 'light' as the mediator between the intelligible and the sensible. Such a fear of materialistic association is unnecessary because Plotinus is aware of this and indeed attempts in VI.4.7 to dematerialise it and in V.8.9.8-14,

he asks us to "take away the mass: take away also the places, and the mental picture of matter in yourself." Armstrong's option for 'reception theory' and exclusion of emanation could not explain the persistent appearance of the emanation analogy. A rejection of this emanation analogy means at the same time the rejection of *via analogia* as a possible approach to the One. A.C. Lloyd is therefore right to say that they are merely two sides, of equal importance, of the same coin.<sup>26</sup>

4.1.4 Ph. Merlan in his contributory article to the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has followed Zeller and suggested that we might do better to substitute 'dynamic pantheism' for Armstrong's 'immanent pantheism.'<sup>26</sup> What he means is this. The emanation which flows from the One is not its substance but its power (*dynamis*) and the gradual weakening during the emanative process is a weakening of its power; the emanative process is neither a free act nor a logical necessity but flows from the nature of the One; because it is a process based on the power of the One it is in one sense a manifestation of the One but in another sense unrelated to the One.<sup>27</sup> The careful use of the term '*dynamis*' means to circumscribe the area of emanative activity to the exclusion of the One, but the concept of 'pantheism' implies the immanence of the One in the process and Gerson is therefore accurate to say that

"a real distinction between an *archē* and that of which it is an *archē* should always suffice to rebut the charge of pantheism."<sup>28</sup>

4.1.5 Apart from Armstrong's recommendation of reception theory and Merlan's 'dynamic pantheism', Reale attacks the adequacy of the concept 'emanationism' in itself. A part of his attack is the materialistic association in the form of 'physical necessity' of emanation<sup>29</sup> and on this point we can now rest assured; another part is that, if the flow from the One is not his power, the flow can only mean a flow of its 'substance' and this gradual outpouring means a

weakening of this substance but this is contradictory to the existential cornucopia of the One. Parallel to his attack on emanationism is his attack on 'creationist metaphysics,'<sup>30</sup> an attack on the interpretation of generation from the One as a kind of choice or decision made by the One with any intention of gratuitous love. His position is therefore somewhat between these two extremes, a materialistic emanation and a Jewish or Christian creationist theology. We think his search for a position between these two extremes is plausible but the criticism he nails on the emanation analogy is unnecessary because Plotinus does not, admittedly, use his emanation in any exact philosophical sense and the way reality emanates from the One cannot be known by an analysis of the analogy of emanation alone; Plotinus recognised the limitation of *via analogias*. One has to find out how Plotinus explains the generation of reality from the One to see the significance of this metaphor. Moreover, the so called "creationist philosophy" is not necessarily of the Jewish or Christian kind.

4.1.6 The way out of this dilemma is to examine the *quaestio vexata* in the philosophy of Plotinus<sup>31</sup>: why and how the One creates, and it is by answering this question that one can understand the juxtaposition by Armstrong of 'spontaneous' with 'necessary' in his definition of emanation. VI.8 gives us "the" clue (so I suppose) to an answer for this question. The generation from the One cannot be through free choice (as used by Reale) because it implies the pre-existence of different alternatives and therefore deliberation and doubt which mean a circumscription of the One's power; neither can it imply necessity because necessity comes after what it generates; neither can it be said to follow its own nature because the One is supposed to transcend existence and essence. Plotinus in VI.8.16.19ff. says that the activity of the One is always self-related ("he himself is himself from himself (*autos par' hautou autos*)", VI.8.20.19) and, while being (*ousia*) and activity (*energeia*) in *nous* are mutually implicated, in the One they are identical:

"... an inclination (*neusis*) of this kind to himself, being in a kind of way his activity and abiding in himself, makes him be what he is.... He therefore brought himself into existence, since his activity was brought out into existence along with himself, ... a wakefulness (*egrēgorsis*) and thought transcending thought (*hypernoēsis*)<sup>32</sup> which exists always, then he is as he woke himself to be.... his waking transcends substance and intellect and intelligent life; but these as himself. He then is an active actuality above intellect and life; but these are from him and not from another.... he is himself as he willed (*hōs ēthelēsen autos estin*)."  
(VI.8.16.24-39; my underlining)

"He was all will (*boulēsis*), and there is nothing in him which is not as he wills - nothing, then, before willing. So he himself is primarily his will."  
(VI.8.21.14-6; my underlining)

The reason why the One is as it is is because it is the absolute freedom itself (*eleutheros*) and this freedom is creative, either in self-creation or creation of others. Reale summarises the features of the One or its absolute freedom:

"The cause or reason of the One is liberty. The One exists because it is a free, self producing activity, a free *causa sui*, a self-creating liberty. The One is liberty in the sense that He is what He wishes to be, or in other words, He wishes to be what He is. And what he wishes to be is the highest there can be, the Absolute Positive, the Absolute Good."<sup>33</sup>

A creation of any others than itself is not related to others because "making and self are concurrent; for the being is one with the making and what we may call the eternal generation" (VI.8.20.27-9). What is other than itself is not of its purpose for its self-creation (VI.8.20.6-9). However, the creation of others than the One is not random but of what ought to be:

"what ought to be and the active actuality of what ought to be are one (*hen to deon kai hē tou deontos energeia*)." (VI.8.18.50-1)

4.1.7 In VI.8.18 Plotinus applies his emanation analogy (or Meijer's alleged 'photology') to the self-creation of and the creation from the One, which ascribes both creations to its superabundance (cp. V.II.1.8-10 and V.5.1.28-9), but the exact mechanism which describes these self-regarded and other-regarded activities of the One is the 'double act' of any *hypostasis* in the hierarchical structure. The act in question is the creative act, that is, *theoria*; the first *theoria* is directed to itself (in the case of the One, (V.1.6.18); or upwards (III.8.7.18-23)<sup>34</sup> in the case of other realities) and therefrom comes the second *theoria* directed to the inferior *hypostasis* and this second *theoria* in the form of generated *hypostasis* is the logical consequence of the prior *theoria*; it is in effect a *poiēsis* (cp. 4.0.5). H.U. von Balthasar has grasped the gist of this 'double act' quite excellently:

"... the unity of *energeia* as *actus (substantialis)* and as *actio (ad extra et infra)*. The stronger the inner act of a substance, considered as its active 'possession of its self', the more powerfully its *energeia* radiates out from it beyond itself. Thus nothing is more productive than contemplation (= *theoria*); action is only its radiation outward."<sup>35</sup>

The prior and more concentrated *theoria* is related to the posterior and more dispersed *theoria* in the way of archetype to image (VI.8.18.35). Such a relationship is repeated throughout the hierarchy and as the One is cause of the cause (*ekeino aition tou aitiou*, VI.8.18.38) so is matter phantom (*indalma* II.5.4.17) of the phantoms. The One and matter or non-being (*mē on*, e.g., II.5.4.12 and II.5.5.14) and the existents between them define the scope of reality where the emanative *theoria* is effective.

4.1.8 This account of the generation from the One is admittedly a *fiat* of definition but a very reasonable and very "Plotinian" *fiat* (see 4.4.13) for the thesis that the One is absolute freedom itself is not in conflict with any other attributes we can "speak" of it and is in fact complementary to its apophatic, complete (*on teleion*) and superabundant nature (*hyperplērēs*). Schlette says that the question why the One generates is "*freilich nicht 'bewiesen'*."<sup>36</sup> For the self-creation of the One and the creation flowing from it, we may therefore define them thus: by positing the first *theoria* the second *theoria* will necessarily follow. The self-creation of the One is self-willed because the One is the freedom itself and its activity of will is its very nature, but the generation after the One (based on the second *theoria* of the One) is a necessary consequence. From the perspective of the One the resulting generation is in fact no less willed than One's self-creation and therefore we may say that the emanation derived from the One is both necessary and willed (or spontaneous). The whole hierarchy of reality is in effect no less than the immediate *parousia* of the One. I hope this has explained Armstrong's "spontaneous and necessary" nature of emanation and proved the general adequacy of the emanation analogy.

4.1.9 The emanation from the One is only part of the metaphysical constitution because the generated *hypostasis* has to return, through the *theoria* directed upwards, to its prior to achieve a confirmation of its nature and, in order to explain this phenomenon, Plotinus invents his doctrine of inchoate *nous* (or *pre-nous*) or intelligible matter. It is the first born from the One and, because of the One's apophatic nature, the One will never be known if this inchoate *nous*, i.e., the first *heterotēs* (than the One) is not given<sup>37</sup>(see 4.1.1). Details are to be investigated later but the rationale underlying it remains the creative *theoria* which characterises the One.

4.1.10 We have mentioned that Plato's cosmology is in effect a kind of creationist metaphysics but this 'creation' is explained in terms of the interaction between the unicity of



the Being and the ultimate *heterotēs* symbolised by *hypodochē*. In the case of Plotinus, the One by itself is the cause of beings and it in itself is in fact the primary being (or supra-being if one wishes) and also the sustainer of all being.<sup>38</sup> It is in this sense, Schlette also argues that the henology is in effect a meta-ontology, a theory which explains why being is such as it is because being *in toto*, in relation to the One, is simply Not-the-One and this difference and its consequence of pluralisation can be deduced only by the presupposition of the One which supports being as such (V.3.15.37-41).<sup>39</sup> The emanation from the One itself is from the beginning characterised by *heterotēs* and *heterotēs* cannot be realised without the *homoiotēs* of the One which guarantees the continuity of being. This also means that the One on its own (that is, when unrelated to the rest of reality coming from it) transcends both *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs*.

4.1.11 The One generates *Nous* and then *Nous* generates Soul but there is some confusion on how far one can say that the One generates Soul. As far as VI.8 is concerned Plotinus seems to stress that there remains a gulf between the self-creation of the One and the consequent generation after it. In VI.8.17, which focuses on the problem of providence (*pronoia*) or the best disposition (*diathesis*) of things, Plotinus shifts our attention to *Nous* and says that "this All here is from and according to Intellect." (VI.8.17.13, my underlining) This is understandable because the creation after the One is a kind of overflow of the One's superabundance and the One, being totally self-sufficient, is in no need of what comes after it. The laws of thinking and nature, which define the best disposition of things in the All, are thus a responsibility of *Nous*; the division of labour between the One (in charge of existence) and *Nous* (in charge of essence) is thus completed. In their respective functions the One corresponds to the unique Being in *Timaeus* and the *hypostases* *Nous* and Soul in their imposition of order correspond to the *dēmiourgos* (= *nous*, transcendent and immanent) and the engendered gods or the autokinetic souls.

4.1.12 Although all the inferior generations (including evils) have to return to the One to complete their nature the One has no need of them. "It possesses and is not itself possessed, there is nothing in which it is not" (V.5.9.12-3). Westra sees this question from the perspective of the One as absolute freedom and explains the unilateral 'relation' between the One and the rest (VI.7.39.19-33):

"It is the One's freedom that keeps Him uninvolved while present and unpossessed while possessing. Just as in the case of His other 'relations' with the rest of the universe, here the relation is unilateral; indeed, we speak of a relation here only for the lack of a better term, for we do not have two *relata* involved in one relation. What the One is to the universe, the universe is not - never can be - to the One, given the difference in kind between Him and all that follows upon Him."<sup>40</sup>

If the gulf between the One and what it generates is unbridgeable this cannot be said of *Nous* and what comes after it. The reason why we have to define the 'responsibility' or 'relation' of the One or *nous* which each has in regard to the universe is because, when we come to the problem of theodicy, that is, the problem of how evil can exist in the best possible disposition of the cosmos, the One will be excluded, temporarily, from our discussion in 4.3; this falls to the *hypostasis Nous* to explain<sup>41</sup>. The One, on the other hand, will explain the quasi-existence of evil as *mē on* but not its place in the cosmos. However, this division of labour taken from Plato's *Timaeus* needs some fine-tuning, for what can disposition of reality mean in Plotinus' philosophy if it does not mean the different *hypostases* of reality in its hierarchical structure, permeated by the emanative activity from the One? And if so, what can this mean but that the determination of essence as exercised by *Nous* and by Soul in the disposition of reality is ultimately a determination of existence, from the most ontologically authentic to the least authentic? The ontological function of the One and the ontological nature of the hierarchical

structure over-determine *Nous*' and Soul's function in imposing order and essence, for order and essence mean nothing but being, and sensible matter, endowed with least order, is an expression of its lack of existence. We just have to remind ourselves that in Plato's *Timaeus* the source of essence and order - the *dēmiourgos* and ideal pattern of the divine living being - is independent of the source of existence - the Being - and, when we return to the "streamlined" procession of *Nous* and Soul from the One in Plotinus, we can realise why the issue of essence can be over-determined by the issue of existence. In short, the loss of essence (such as chaos) is a loss of ontic authenticity; the overwhelmingly ontological nature of the Plotinian One determines the whole outlook of his philosophy. That explains why Plotinus understands the problem of evil in terms of "me-ontology", intrinsically a problem related to being. If we use the terms *Ableitungssystem* and *kosmologische Seinsstufung*, we can say that the latter has been subsumed under the former, for what guarantees the independence of the latter - the *dēmiourgos* and the ideal pattern of divine living being - have been deprived of their independence in Plotinus.

4.1.13 However, though the One is in no need of what comes after it the cosmos, because of One's self-willed creation, is the only and unique universe possible for this emanation. The theory of 'unique cosmos' is also typical of Plato's *Timaeus*<sup>42</sup> and its uniqueness has to be stressed because this will be related to Plotinus' faith in the completeness and beauty of the universe in his arguments against gnostics' proposition of 'another world' in *Enneads* II.9. A possibility of another world means an impugment of the emanation and so of the One. A detailed exposition of such a theory will be seen in the relevant sections, especially in the 4.5 on Gnosticism. The point for the present moment is this: the universe (i.e., *Nous* and the rest of reality) is the necessary consequence of the self-willed One in its creative *theoria* or *hypernoēsis* (V.1.8.16) the consequent emanation is throughout characterised by a kind of inner and logical necessity that is its own justification.<sup>43</sup> This inner necessity is Plotinian

providence and the *hypostasis* responsible for its dispensation is *Nous*.

4.1.14 The *hypostasis* *Nous* in its derivation from the One leaves the One undiminished in its giving. *Nous* in itself is the *hypostasis* of essences, archetypes and forms for the sensible universe. Plotinus tells us that the archetypal forms in the noetic world "contained all the rich variety" (III.2.11.9; cp. III.2.12.5-7, III.3.3.21-5, IV.8.1.46-50, II.9.8.27-46 and 17.54) and what comes after *Nous*, as its image in the sensible world, also embodies a 'principle of plenitude':

"all things have come into being and there is nothing left."

"since it was necessary that all the very same kinds of living things which were in the intelligible should also exist in the world perceived by the senses." (cp. II.9.16.12-3, II.9.17.25-7; V.9.11, 13 and 14)

We have said that this sensible universe is the only possible exemplification based on the emanation from the One, and this unique exemplification of *Nous* with its contents in the lower order of reality is necessary for the *Nous*.<sup>44</sup> One cannot but be reminded of the mutual implication of these two orders of reality or Lovejoy's 'reverse determination' of the lower order upon the higher order of reality (1.2.5). The existence of this bilateral and reciprocal relationship between the intelligible world and the sensible world is the precondition for our understanding of the problem of providence and divine economy and also the reason why the One is excluded from our present consideration.

4.1.15 There are, however, some objections against this basic contour of providence and the most important is this. The principle of plenitude, as it is embodied in the universe governed

by *Nous* and its creative *theoria*, makes the universe contain all things and leave out nothing, but this seems *a priori* because it cannot explain why there are gaps in the cosmos as we know from our experiences of it or why the cosmos seems only a particular and actualised section from the infinite possibilities dictated by that principle.<sup>45</sup> This discrepancy between the 'ought to be' and 'is' will have strong repercussions on the theistic providence in Plotinus' theodicy. A most conspicuous comparison can be seen in the *a priori*, logical and necessary nature of the divine economy as suggested by Plotinus' total dominance by *Nous* over the sensible order of reality and Plato's 'personalised' *dēmiourgos*' optimal compromise with *ichnē* and his admission of contingents in his *cosmopoiēsis*. We will see that Plotinus, unlike Plato, has not much room for manoeuvre because his universe is not only unique but logical and necessary, and with this kind of universe he has to rationalise all the imperfections in it. The historical background is, as already mentioned, the Gnostic possibility of "another universe than this one" (II.9.8.27) because gnostics feel that there is no way out of this difficulty in reconciling a cosmos, allegedly governed by *Nous*, with the constant reminders of its imperfections and evils, and they thus recommend a 'rectification' in the form of 'another world,' that is, the cosmogony has to be restarted again in a different way and this infers that the original *dēmiourgos* of the present imperfect universe is either evil or ignorant.<sup>46</sup> What Plotinus can do then with his unique and logical universe is to justify it; an admission of the possibility of rectification, for Plotinus, would amount to an admission of the limitation of *Nous* in its imposition of essence and of the One in its bestowal of existence.

**4.1.16** Suppose the infinite possibilities of forms of life are realised somewhere but not in this universe and the principle of plenitude is exemplified in this better universe. This immediately falls into the Gnostic trap of "another world". Besides, there is logical weakness here; for Plotinus can play any game with logically coherent speculation but this *a priori* reasoning is not necessarily related to what Plotinus asserts elsewhere in his philosophy, that "this is the order

which corresponds to the nature of things" (II.9.1.16; cp. *ibid.* 41). This indicates that from "our" (as experiencers') point of view such an analysis is not relevant to "our" cosmos. It is the normative and *a priori* nature of Plotinus' view on divine dispensation that we have to be aware of whenever we wish to apply his analysis of evil on "our" problems of evils. Many unexpected consequences would then arise if we pay no attention to his *a priori* approach. We will elaborate more on the implications of Plotinus' theodicy later, in 4.3.

4.1.17 On the other hand, if Plotinus admits the imperfect nature of this universe then he will have to accept its insufficiency, an alternative we do not think Plotinus is willing to accept because this will reflect upon the insufficiency of the highest order of reality. Plotinus' defense and justification of this unique universe seems to treat his universe as a kind of global excellence or as a kind of perfect artefact, an artefact which is 'intellectually' put together, despite his liquidation of the *dēmiourgos* as the concept of *poiēsis*. Such a perspective on the universe as an artefact means that its existence is impersonal - certainly not necessarily created for us. The position of Plotinus on the existence of evils in the cosmos is thus between two extremes: on the one hand, he cannot accept that there is another cosmos, better and other than this one and, on the other hand, he cannot admit that there is any real imperfection in the divine dispensation; his position is to argue that there is a rationality for all kinds of existents in the cosmos: whatever exists exists rationally and thus necessarily. The theoretical framework for this solution is the spontaneous and necessary emanation derived from the One, in which evil is treated as deficiency of being and is placed at the lower reach of the emanation.

4.1.18 The concept of emanation lays stress on the continuous nature of reality derived from the One, but we now wish to introduce the other side of the coin, that is, the reception capacity and the dependency relationship which the generated reality has in regard to its generator. The emanation originated from the One is not enough for the formation of a

hierarchical reality because the One, in relation to the generated reality, can guarantee the continuity of being but not its variety and therefore the emanated *hypostases* have to return, in their inchoate forms, to receive confirmation from their prior *hypostases* and become distinct and different from each other. Oneness or *homoiotēs*, as it is implied in the emanation from the One, holds the hierarchy together but the fact that the hierarchy is composed of different *hypostases* implies the concept of *chōrismos* or *heterotēs*; without this implied concept the emanated reality would be no different from the One and this is unacceptable. Emanation is motivated by the double acts of a *hypostasis* and the self-directed *theoria* in its upward looking confirms its own constitution while the other-directed *theoria* is a weaker *dynamis* which generates, i.e., *poiēsis*, and this generated reality in turn has to look upwards in order to be confirmed and then generates the next order of reality. The chain of being is thus marked throughout its progress by a step-wise decrease of being; the differentiation of such a kind between different *hypostases* marks their separation but also connects them. It is the existence of this *heterotēs* that explains the variety of being and to investigate its functions is the question for us in the next few paragraphs.

4.1.19 The mechanism which explains the emanation from the One, i.e., the double act of an entity in its *theoria*, in the pattern of "*theoria - poiēsis*" is repeated throughout the hierarchy and the priority of *theoria* to *poiēsis* is logical and these two acts are simultaneous (*homōs*, V.3.7.30). As the first act is constitutive of the higher *hypostasis* the second is of the next *hypostasis* and therefore the cause is greater than the caused (VI.7.17.4-6; V.8.1.30-1).<sup>47</sup> The second act which is the trace (*ichnos*) of the first has two roles in relation to the *hypostasis* constituted by the first act:

"In one part, then, it is made like that from which it comes, in the other even in its unlikeness it is made like...." (*kata thatera men gar homoiōtai hōthen hekei, kata*

This trace, because of its likeness, can help

"conceive its true archetype, forming an idea of it in oneself from the trace of it which plays upon intellect." (III.8.11.18-22)

However, this trace is not a static reflection of its prior but is equipped with desire (*epheisis*) which motivates the *epistrophē* of the trace to the One - the trace "always desiring and always attaining (*ephiemenos aei kai aei tunchanōn*)" (III.8.11.24; cp. V.1.6.50-4). This desire implies a lack and a deficiency which differentiates these two *hypostases*.

4.1.20 In addition, the double act of a *hypostasis* in its descent and then in reascent are the two moments which constitute a *hypostasis*. Schlette expresses that this return is logically necessary for this is to stabilise the emanation which, from the perspective of the One, continues uninterrupted; without this, what Schlette calls, "*meta-ontologisches Akt der Rückwendung selbst,*" being would have never obtained in the way it now is. Therefore the *homoiotēs* of the One and the *heterotēs* (implied in the checked return of the generated *hypostasis*) are constitutive of the whole of emanated reality.<sup>48</sup> The relationship between the One and *Nous* is characterised as much by their similarity (i.e., *Nous* as the image of the One) as by their dissimilarity (i.e., *Nous* is not the One).

4.1.21 The return of the trace to the higher *hypostasis* is to receive from it illumination which makes possible the noetic 'seeing' (III.8.11.23). In the texts of Plotinus the discussion of 'seeing' is mostly confined to the seeing of the inchoate *Nous* in its return to the One although, by parity of reasoning, it is conceivable to have 'psychic seeing' in the pre-psychic condition.



The *locus classicus* of pre-noetic seeing is V.1.7.5-6:

"*pōs oun noun genna; ē hoti tei epistrophēi pros hautō (or auto) heōra. hē de horasis hautē nous.*"

This is not the place to go into the exegetical details of this controversial passage.<sup>49</sup> My conviction that the reflexive (*hautō*) is preferable is based on two principles:

- (a) the double act of metaphysical entities and the two moments in the constitution of the generated entity;
- (b) the self-directed activity of the One does not necessarily imply an inner split within itself into subject and object.

Therefore we read the II.5-6 as a description of the two moments in the formation of *Nous*: the first moment includes the sentence before *heōra* and it means the self-directed activity within the One with the accompanying consequence of amorphous pre-noetic trace; the second moment is the illumination and definition of this pre-noetic inchoate condition (cp. V.4.2.14-9). The choice of *hautō* is intended to stress the causal efficacy of the One which is said to be the cause of cause.

4.1.22 On the other hand, the choice of *auto* would lead to two conclusions both of which emphasise the self-constitution of *Nous* and thus attenuate the One's causal efficacy. The most eloquent spokesperson of this line is A.C. Lloyd and his main conclusion is:

"it is the One as object of thought, not One *simpliciter* which acts on intellect / pre-intellect which makes the One as an object of thought."<sup>60</sup> (my underlining)

This conclusion seems to overstress the self-determination of the inchoate *Nous* in its amorphous condition and deny the causal efficacy of the One in its *proōdos* and thus lay too much emphasis on the discontinuity in emanation. This over-determination of *pre-nous* seems to imply that it has achieved a high degree of autonomy which it ought not to have when in such an inchoate condition. In fact there are two moments of self-constitution in *Nous*: the first moment is directed upwards to the One and the second is directed inwards; the first is to 'cut off' the nexus it has with the One and to establish its own identity while the second is inner differentiation of this entity because *Nous* by Plotinus' definition is a system of multiple forms.<sup>61</sup> If Plotinus in II.5-6 is dealing exclusively with the second moment of self-constitution (which it is not) then A.C. Lloyd's conclusion would be acceptable. For the moment we have to stress the continuity and against this background of continuity we can then find discontinuity: *heterotēs* has to be parasitic upon *homoiotēs* guaranteed by the One in the emanated reality. The wider implication of this stress is that *heterotēs* cannot exist in a vacuum.

4.1.23 Therefore, A.C. Lloyd's overstress on the self-determination of the inchoate *Nous* would concentrate the importance of *heterotēs* within *Nous* in its inner differentiation and neglect the *heterotēs* which makes *Nous* different from the One, in other words, the *heterotēs* due to the creative freedom of the One. More about this later. In our interpretation of *Timaeus* we have said that *hypodochē* as the ultimate *heterotēs* in differentiating Being has to be 'parasitic' on its sameness and unicity to be meaningful. In the present case, the *heterotēs* by which *Nous* is differentiated from the One has also to be seen against the background of emanative continuity. Let us see a passage which is less controversial:

"... it sees him, not as separated from him, but because it comes next after him, and there is nothing between, as also there is not anything between soul and intellect.

Everything longs for its parent and loves it, especially when parent and offspring are alone; but when the parent is the highest good, the offspring is necessarily with him and separate from him only in difference (*heterotēti*).” (V.1.6.48-54)

One can see how Plotinus tries to bring us from the position of continuity and sameness (“not anything between”), almost imperceptibly, to discontinuity and differentiation (“*heterotēti*”). The perspective shifts gradually from the causal efficacy of the higher *hypostasis* to the self-constitution of the lower *hypostasis*. This is confirmed by another passage:

“... if everything which comes from the Good has a trace (*ichnos*) and an imprint (*typon*) which is his or derives from him... what is given in sameness... might become different in the things which are going to receive it.” (VI.7.18.3-12)

The balance between continuity and discontinuity, sameness and difference, between what the higher hypostasis can give and what the lower reality is able to receive, is now completely clear: *heterotēs* has to imply *homoiotēs*, not the other way round.

4.1.24 We might be able to strengthen the conclusion we have just reached by a very brief review of the Plotinian version of intelligible matter in its historical context. First, it has to be understood that Plotinus’ interest in Aristotle’s intelligible matter is mediated by his more prominent interest in *Sophist*’s solution for Parmenides’ legacy. Szlezák has said that Plato’s successors find it impossible to avoid Parmenides’ “non-being is not” and are forced to broach the thesis for the existence of non-being as a presupposition for the variety of being.<sup>62</sup> The proposed solution, either it is non-being or infinite dyad or otherness, is not meant so much as a plurality itself but a kind of condition whose unity is always more often emphasised than not. Szlezák says of Aristotle’s interpretation of Plato and Academy that in their effort the result

is always "implicitly in favour of the simplicity of matter" ("*implizit zugunsten der 'Einfachheit' der Materie*").<sup>63</sup> The "*Einheit*" of intelligible matter, as it has been used to serve as an explanation for the establishment of *Nous hypostasis*, proves its close connection with the One and this "*Einheit*" which explains the variety of forms in *Nous* is called by Szlezák a "monistic interpretation of the dyad principle" ("*monistische Umdeutung der Zweiprinzipienlehre*").<sup>64</sup> This seems to confirm my insistence on the balance between continuity and discontinuity in the relationship which obtains between the One and *Nous*.

4.1.25 Since I have mentioned pre-noetic seeing it is necessary to say something more about this inchoate condition. This inchoate condition is the so called intelligible matter (*noetic hylē*), the first product from the One and the *hypokeimenon* for the intelligible world (*noetic cosmos*), endowed with a blind "desire and unformed seeing (*ephesin monon kai atypōtos opsis*" ) V.3.11.12-13; N.B.: the choice of *opsis* and not *horasis*) to return to the One in order to be confirmed and determined, first of all, in its relation to the One and, then next, to itself. This *noetic hylē* is the consequence of this *heterotēs* in *Nous* in relation to the One. By parity of reason one can see the repetition of this pattern in the relationship between the *hypostases* *Nous* and Soul. The *heterotēs* which is constitutive of the lower reality in relation to its prior is more a function, in terms of distinction, than an entity:

"by the otherness (*tēi heterotēti*) of his severance from what is above." (V.8.13.8-11;  
cp. V.3.10.25-6)

The dative used as instrumental here should make the situation clear enough. This *heterotēs* not only makes the generated reality determined and defined in relation to the generator (the function of external differentiation, that is) but also contributes to the self-constitution of its inner contents and structure (the internal differentiation, that is):

"the intellectual being is many things by difference." (VI.4.4.26; cp. VI.7.39.5-10, VI.9.8.26-30)

*Heterotēs* is therefore necessary for the variety of being in its emanation from the One. Such a *heterotēs* could exist only in the generated and never in the One; wherever it is present it means an alienation from the One and an increase of differentiation and a tendency towards non-being (*mē on*).<sup>55</sup> It is therefore a logical inference that the emanation from the One in its progress means an increasing influence of *heterotēs* in the determination of the nature of reality and the different *heterotēs* between each transition of reality from a higher to a lower level explains the dependency relationship which characterises the variety of reality.<sup>56</sup> This differentiation initiated by *heterotēs* takes the form of external addition (*prosthēkē*) of categorial predications to the entity concerned and thus *epistrophē* is recommended as a kind of removal (*aphairesis*) of this addition. (I.8.5.[6] and I.8.9.[6])

4.1.26 It is mentioned that *heterotēs* is related to *epheis*, the desire to return, for this desire implies lack and deficiency; in VI.3.22.38-45 *heterotēs* is intimately connected with motion (*kinēsis*). So long as the *hypostasis* is not in total quietness and concentrates on its own *theoria* (cp. "hesuchian *agein eph' heautou pantachou ekeino*" in V.3.12.36-7), the motion (*kinēsis*) means "being led away to something else and its being other is not abiding in the same." The quotation continues:

"for movement perishes when there is no other; for this reason otherness is not in the having come to be in and remaining in another [state], but perpetual otherness (*aei heterotēs*)."

The introduction of *heterotēs* and *kinēsis* gives the emanation from the One a kind of

momentum which makes reality various. The choice of *kinēsis* by Plotinus is significant because this term, like the *opsis* in the *atypōtos opsis*, in Aristotle signifies an incomplete activity in reaching its target; in *Sophist* otherness and motion are features of being and they delimit being. This '*aei heterotēs*' and *kinēsis* remind us of the thesis that matter is perpetual deferral of what is to be in II.5.5.4-5: "*hoion einai autēi eis ekeino anballētai* (= which has the sense of projection into future and of deferment into the future), *ho estai*." II.4.5.29 says explicitly that "the Movement and Otherness which come from the first...." This differentiating function is thus existent as soon as the emanation from the One starts and characterises different *hypostases* in their formation. This *heterotēs* characterises the consequence of the creative freedom of the One: "*Andersheit... leistet die Selbstdifferenzierung des Eines ins Viele, den pollaplasiasmos*". It is not a chaotic force in particularisation, pluralisation, separation and alienation but a force constantly regulated by the *homoiotēs* of the One, i.e., a *Grenzbegriff*; it is *homoiotēs* in *heterotēs*.<sup>57</sup>

4.1.27 The tentative conclusion of all these discussions is this. The trinity of *heterotēs*, *kinēsis* and *epheis* describes the functions in the formation of a *hypostasis*: *heterotēs* is the formal element in the distinction between higher and lower reality; *kinēsis* describes the dynamic aspect in this descent of being and *epheis* exemplifies the urge to make up the lack and the deficiency (V.5.12.9; VI.7.31.9; VI.7.32.26; V.3.10.50) and the urge to achieve confirmation of its configuration by *epistrophē*. These three concepts all imply a concept of deficiency which the lower *hypostasis* has in relation to its superior.

4.1.28 Fielder agrees on the importance of *heterotēs* (for which he uses *chōrismos* instead) in the consequent variety of being in the emanation from the One and sees the association and separation between the different *hypostases* under the light of the Platonic "archetype - image" scheme, presumably because the Platonic scheme expresses the same kind of delicate

ambiguity when dealing with the association and separation between the archetype and its image: "the problem of *chōrismos*" is the "concept of imaging."<sup>58</sup> At every junction between two different levels of reality a *chōrismos* would appear to connect and, more importantly, to separate the archetype and image and thus plays the role of ontological distinction. Fielder reaches the conclusion that Plotinus' matter in fact does play this role by which the distinction between levels of reality and the deficiency in the emanated reality are explicated.<sup>59</sup> On I.8.14.41-4 Fielder says that the role of matter does have this function in the generation of sensible universe from soul. The same function of matter is also found in the noetic world in *Nous*' differentiation from the One (II.4.5.15-7; cp. II.4.1.14-9). The passage from II.4.5.15-7 describes noetic matter but this noetic matter in Plotinus includes the pre-psychic condition before being illuminated by *Nous* (II.4.3-6; III.9.5.; II.5.3.13-5).<sup>60</sup> Both noetic matter and psychic matter describe the inchoate and amorphous condition of *Nous* and Soul before their illumination by their respective higher principle. It is therefore very important not to see this amorphous condition as a kind of plurality of its own, i.e., not to see this pre-noetic and pre-psychic as a condition of matter. The function of this amorphous intelligible matter is not plurality itself but to pluralise the *hypostases* it characterises.<sup>61</sup> That is, one must reject the temptation to substantialise or reify noetic matter of both kinds.

4.1.29 In II.5.3 Plotinus says that intelligible matter is active *dynamis* and its determinacy does not indicate the kind of imperfection the indeterminacy of sensible matter would imply but, on the contrary, it indicates "kinship to the perfection of the transcendent being."<sup>62</sup> It is *aoriston* though, as Rist says<sup>63</sup>, it is "one aoriston" and is to some extent the principle of unity in the intelligible world where forms, paradoxically, stand for differences and differentiations:

"Intelligible Matter has a shadow of the superiority of *to epekeina* in its potential of

becoming all Real Beings."<sup>64</sup>

4.1.30 Intelligible matter as *dynamis* represents the amorphous condition of each *hypostasis* before determination and it is thus a condition that is not to be reified and this explains why Plotinus uses the image of 'pre-noetic seeing' (or 'sight unseeing'), the Neo-pythagorean 'Indefinite Dyad' (only for the inchoate *Nous* and not for inchoate soul) and intelligible matter to represent this transitional moment. This transitional moment comprises two stages: a pre-hypostatic stage with its nexus not yet cut off from its prior reality and a hypostatic stage with its inner differentiation not yet completed. To reify this intelligible matter into a *hypostasis* cannot explain why it lacks the ontological permanence which the confirmed *hypostasis Nous* or soul has. From the perspective of the One noetic matter, psychic matter and sensible matter represent different intensities of differentiation or *heterotēs* from the One and they mark the different stages of the emanative generation from the One and characterise the derived *hypostases*. Both noetic matter and psychic matter represent, respectively, *Nous* and Soul in their transitional stages before their complete confirmation; it is not a hypostatised matter in *Nous* or in Soul. If, on the other hand, we reify these intelligible matters as entities then we will see a result as strange as what Rist has found out:

"The Dyad or Matter then is a potentiality and, as 5.3.11 puts it, an *epheſis* or proclivity. This proclivity may, I believe, be compared with what Plotinus elsewhere describes as unconscious contemplation."<sup>65</sup>

To attribute contemplation to intelligible matter would be most bizarre but if we think this matter is no other than a descriptive term for the condition of inchoate *Nous* or pre-*nous*, then this would sound more reasonable, that is, this unconscious contemplation ultimately belongs to *Nous* itself when it is still developing and in its pre-noetic stage. In II.4.5, so Rist argues,



intelligible matter is said to have a life that is defined and intellectual (*hōrismenen kai noeran*), but this amounts to nothing more than that pre-*nous* can be determined and confirmed.<sup>66</sup> The contradiction, which Rist reveals in his "the Dyad, the metaphysically 'earlier' aspect of the whole hypostasis..."<sup>67</sup> (my italics) can certainly not be helpful to his case for the reification - and hypostatisation - of noetic matter. Noetic matter is an earlier aspect of *Nous*, as Rist has said; noetic matter is not a condition of matter but a condition of *Nous*. It is apparent from our arguments that this intelligible matter is "one abstract concept"<sup>68</sup> and not an entity. The concept of *heterotēs*, which matter symbolises, and the concept of *homoiotēs* are "functional" in explaining emanated reality in its hierarchical disposition and therefore are in this sense meta-ontological.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, unlike the two kinds of intelligible matter, sensible matter is hypostatized by Plotinus into a kind of substance with minimal ontic authenticity, but I will explain that this can be accounted for by my thesis that Plotinus' matter can be the abstract and logical concept of *heterotēs* (following the use of *hypodochē* in *Timaeus*) as well as a physical material reservoir (following the use of *ichnē*) from which higher entities in the cosmos are worked up; this thesis, while applicable to the sensible matter, does not sanction one to hypostatise or reify the noetic matter.<sup>70</sup>

4.1.31 Fielder thinks that emanation from the One results in such a variety of being because matter - so *heterotēs* - alone can explain this. For this he recommends the pre-existence of matter, both sensible and noetic<sup>71</sup>, which differentiates emanation. There is no textual support for his bold assertion and this in fact would bring about a dualism so blatant that Plotinus would never countenance. Nevertheless, we have to admit that the 'implication' has to be there for how can we explain the variety of reality when the One can only guarantee continuity and sameness? Rist says that "Plotinus sees the One not 'in its otherness' but as the cause of otherness, since its products are finite, whereas it itself is infinite."<sup>72</sup> But to speak it in this way does not amount to a clear explanation. Emilsson<sup>73</sup> has said that the diversity of beings has to

be grounded in the diversity of forms as well but this diversity of forms itself has to be explained first. A real difficulty seems to lie in the explanation of the appearance of *heterotēs*. However, I have suggested that the absolute creative freedom the One in its self-creation has implies a *heterotēs* in its generation and the double acts of an entity in its first and self-regarded *theoria* and in its second and other-regarded *theoria* (or *poiēsis*) is also a dialectic between *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs*, and this dialectic runs through the whole spectrum of the generated reality. To understand the nature of the One merely in terms of its absolute *homoiotēs* is too simplistic; instead I would like to suggest that the One in its absolute transcendence to the hypostatic reality, i.e., when the One is totally unrelated to the generated reality, there is no distinction between the *homoiotēs* and the *heterotēs*, i.e., the One surpasses both of them and is post-*homoiotēs* and post-*heterotēs* because this alone can explain why the One is *dynamis pantōn*.<sup>74</sup> An implied distinction between the One totally on its own and the One which is the source of existence and is related to the consequent existence will give us two kinds of the One: the One as transcending both *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs* and the One which is the source of *homoiotēs* (in contrast to the *heterotēs* symbolised by matter) and guarantees the continuity of reality in the analogy of emanation. This implied distinction can be seen in Plotinus' position on the One which seems sometimes related to the rest of reality and sometimes totally unrelated to it. This implied distinction will help us surpass the dialectic between *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs*, which has guided our argument so far<sup>75</sup>. In short, the problem of *heterotēs* does not come until the generated reality comes out of the One, and then and only then can one begin to consider the relationship between the One and the generated reality and the relationship between *heterotēs* and *homoiotēs*: *Heterotēs* is thus constitutive of the reality which is emanated from the One:

*"So ist es Grund der Einheit und mannigfaltigkeit, der Ort der Dialektik von Verharren und Hervorgang".<sup>76</sup>*

The origin of *heterotēs* is thereby located and the necessity of *heterotēs* for the Plotinian picture of reality is proved.

4.1.32 If my argument for a logical and functional sense of matter as *heterotēs* is correct then Fielder's identification of matter with *chōrismos* (or *heterotēs*) should have confirmed our conclusion. According to the texts of Plotinus, he seems, however, not justified. In II.4.5.28-33 Plotinus says:

"For Otherness There exists always, which produces intelligible matter; for this is the principle of matter (*archē hylēs*), this and primary Movement (*hē kinēsis hē protē*). For this reason Movement, too, was called Otherness, because Movement and Otherness sprang together." The Movement and Otherness which came from the First are undefined, and need the First to define them; and they are defined when they turn to it."

In II.4.16.1-5:

"Is matter, then, the same thing as otherness? No, rather it is the same thing as the part of otherness (*moriōi heterotētos*) which is opposed to (*antitattomenōi*) the things which in the full and proper sense exist, that is to say rational formative principles. Therefore, though it is non-existent (*mē on*), it has a certain sort of existence in this way, and is the same thing as privation (*sterēsis*)."

We have said that matter used as the inchoate and amorphous condition of a *hypostasis* in relation to its superior is descriptive of a transitional state while *heterotēs* not only describes the condition matter represents but also characterises the inner differentiation of the

determined *hypostasis*. From these two quoted passages we seem to see that Plotinus' matter in the noetic world represents only a section of the functions which *heterotēs* performs, especially in that section which is concerned with the *sterēsis* of being; it does not touch the internal disposition of the hypostatic reality.

4.1.33 However, I am not sure if Plotinus' opinion on this issue is as final as his texts (already quoted) have explicitly suggested. In his argument for intelligible matter in II.4.4 he enumerates two points, II.4.4.2-4 and 8-10, to justify the introduction of matter. II.4.4.2-4 says that in *Nous*, because *Nous* is a system of different forms, a *koinon* is required to underlie these forms and differentiate them. Plotinus here borrows Aristotle's idea of matter as *hypokeimenon* and matter as a principle of individuation: matter thus performs the same duty of inner differentiation as *heterotēs* does. On the other hand, this matter in its pre-noetic stage also acts as the matrix for the causal efficacy from its prior *hypostasis* and this implies the same function of external distinction as *heterotēs* does. Matter thus functions both in the distinction of the lower *hypostasis* from its prior and in its inner differentiation of the lower *hypostasis* as *heterotēs* does. Moreover, the indirect equation, in my view, stands : (i) matter = non-being (according to Plotinus); (ii) non-being = otherness (than being) (according to *Sophist* and also Plotinus in I.8.3.[1]-[3]); (iii) otherness = motion (II.4.5.28-33), and so (iv) matter = otherness and motion.<sup>78</sup> Schlette supports, after commenting on II.4.5.28-35, such an identification and says:

"he (= Plotinus) has plainly conceived the intelligible matter as metaphysical otherness and as otherness than the One and being."<sup>79</sup>

If this is the case, then matter as *heterotēs* is "that which has in particular made possible the progression of *hypostases*."<sup>80</sup>

4.1.34 The trinity of *heterotēs*, *kinēsis* and *epheis* is now proved to be, if not identified, at least very closely connected with matter. In VI.2.6.17 and VI.2.16.9-10 this trinity of concepts is said to be responsible for the plurality of being; from what we have discussed so far we could safely infer that matter is responsible for the variety of being. Matter and the One (when related to the generated reality) are two poles, those of *heterotēs* and *homoiotēs*, between which the emanated realities are characterised. One can almost envisage a retrojection of prime matter as the ultimate *heterotēs*, at the end of emanation, back to the different stages of emanation that cause the variety of being. The different kinds of *heterotēs* which distinguish *hypostases* correspond exactly to the different kinds of matter which are present at different *hypostases*. The derivation of reality from the One alone will never explain the variety of being unless this principle of *heterotēs* is presupposed in the One. Therefore Schlette is correct in saying that this One has to be "*post-positivität*" as well as "*post-negativität*". Rist, in addition, has said:

"The words 'better', 'worse', 'good', 'bad', may indicate for Plotinus not merely moral evil in the soul, but degrees of 'otherness' in comparison (ultimately) with the One. The last product of soul, namely matter, has a particular nature in that it is to be identified with something contrary to the One."<sup>81</sup>

Schlette has summarised this function of *heterotēs* in regard to the One very well: he says that the emanation originated from the One in its departure is immediately "not-the-One" or other than the One and this "other than the One" - and so "other than its prior" - expresses itself as constitutive of the second and third *hypostases*. Such a *heterotēs* is the ground of the One's "*Möglichwerden*" and is implied in the "not-the-One" for the departure of the generated reality and the presence of the One throughout the emanation:

*"die Differenziertheit und Andersheit mit zunehmender 'Entfernung' von dem einen... als die Kennzeichen der negativität, ja möglicherweise als deren eigentliches 'Wesen' zu enthüllen."*<sup>82</sup>

4.1.35 If what is generated from the One is a variety and plenitude of being then *heterotēs* or matter is constitutive of the whole picture of reality and matter, either in its reification (or hypostatisation, for Bréhier calls this matter *dernière hypostase*) in prime matter as *mē on* or in its relativised presence in *Nous* and Soul as a functional concept<sup>83</sup>, is a necessary part of the emanation scheme. It is in this identification of matter with *heterotēs* that one has found a consistent use of it in *Enneads* and this matter as ultimate *heterotēs* is not only different from the sensible but also from the noetic world.<sup>84</sup> Therefore it is the One and matter that together build up the "'boundary' of Plotinian hypostatic metaphysics" ("*Grenzen' der Plotinischen Hypostasenmetaphysik.*")<sup>85</sup>

4.1.36 In the emanation of reality, the *heterotēs* comes to be in a more intensive way in the progress of the *energeia* of the One.<sup>86</sup> All the identified *heterotētes*, in the form of noetic matter, psychic matter and prime matter, in emanation are of the same function and of the same nature (with the exception of the reification of prime matter, but I have already explained why) and their difference is not qualitative but, I should say metaphorically, "quantitative".<sup>87</sup> There seems to exist a reverse ratio between the amount of *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs* in this emanation: the *heterotēs*, in the emanation of reality from the One, acts as the "*dynamis dyopaios*" that causes constant decrease of being and constant increase of alienation from the One and finally it ends with *mē on* as evil and as prime matter.<sup>88</sup> Because this explication or unfolding of the One in emanation has been anticipated in its original position of *meta-positivität* and *meta-positivāt*, which surpasses both *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs*, Schlette has suggested that the One (in its generation), *Nous* and Soul are three facets of one Godhead and

all the dialectical relationship between *homoiotēs* and *heterotēs* in the emanation is ultimately reduced to the "innergottliche Ordnung."<sup>89</sup> This sounds an attempt at the Christian trinity, a temptation I think that has to be resisted if Schlette means that the three different *hypostases* differentiated by *heterotēs* in the progression of reality are not real, an opinion definitely rejected by Plotinus in his polemic against the Gnostics (II.9.1-3). One has to be extremely cautious if one wishes to find similar doctrine in Plotinus' philosophy.

**4.1.37** Since matter, in terms of *heterotēs*, is now realised as constitutive of emanated reality, if one is to apply the formula - "matter = evil" - then evil is also a necessary part of Plotinian philosophy and this evil will not be understood in the sense we have been used to. However, before drawing this momentous inference more elaboration of the concept of matter is required.

## 4.2 MATTER AND TO MĒ ON

4.2.1 Plotinus' philosophy, as I have said in the last section, is a hierarchical structure of reality and the productive dependencies of the various levels of reality mean that the One is not only the primary being but also the creator of being. It is a creationist philosophy and an ultimate monism. The principle of plenitude, which the generated reality embodies, means an actualisation of all the possibilities in the emanation which, in the case of Plotinus, means that the creative energy from the One has to be exhausted. Complete disappearance of this creative energy is impossible because, considering the omnipotent nature of the One, it is inconceivable; what we can have instead is the furthest limit to the progress of creative energy and this limit is prime matter or *mē on* (I.8.6.[17] and [21]). Beyond this limit is *pantelōs mē on*. *Mē on* is said to be matter and the *sterēsis* of being and is the end product of emanation and therefore a part of it:

"It is necessary (*ex anankēs*) that what comes after the First should exist, and therefore that the Last (*to eschaton*) should exist." (I.8.7.[12])

"Matter first of all by the forms of the elements, and then the other forms upon these, and then again others, so that it is difficult to find the matter hidden under so many forms. The matter, too, is a sort of ultimate form (*eidōs ti eschaton*). (V.8.7.20-3)

This positive valuation of matter, as the *eschaton eidōs* indicates, emphatically points out that prime matter as *mē on* is some sort of *on* (II.4.16.5). This minimal being of prime matter, according to the quoted V.8.7.20-3, is what underlies the four elements or what is prior to the



four elements, and this is exactly the primordial *ichnē* in *Timaeus*. After the long discussion on the function of matter in terms of the conceptual *heterotēs*, it is necessary to be reminded of the physical and disordered prime matter. Plotinus' matter is thus conceptual but is also physical in the sense of a primitive material reservoir from which higher entities are worked up. This belief of Plotinus' in physical prime matter is the evidence for his reification of matter at the end of emanation. For the sake of clarity I give a brief summary of our discussions up to now. Matter as *mē on* can be understood, following Plato's distinction in *Timaeus*, in two ways: if we understand matter in its abstract and conceptual use as *heterotēs* then when we say matter is *mē on* our stress will be on the *mē*; while when we understand matter in its existential aspect then our stress will be on the *on* of *mē on*, with the *mē* characterising what kind of *on* matter is. In the commentary on I.8.1 I will point out that there is a close association of ideas between *heterotēs* and the *mē* of *mē on*. If *heterotēs* can characterise all the different levels of generated reality from the One, so can the *mē* of *mē on* be used in a different relative sense.

4.2.2 This minimal being of matter is such an anomaly that Plotinus has to describe it carefully and try to avoid some possible confusion:

"... the underlying substrate (*hē hypokeimenē*) and the things which are said to be based upon matter, and from which we shall acquire a knowledge of its non-existence (*to mē einai*) and freedom from affections (*to tēs hylēs apathes*). Matter then is incorporeal, since body is posterior and a composite, and matter with something else (= *physis*) produces body.... it is unlimitedness (*apeiria*).... it could not properly receive the title of being but would appropriately be called non-being (*mē on d' an eikōtos legoito*), not in the sense in which motion is not being or rest not being (= cp. *megista genē* in *Sophist* and I.8.3 with commentary *ad loc.*) but truly not being (*alēthenōs mē*

on); it is ghostly image of bulk (*eidōlon kai phantasma onkou*), a tendency towards substantial existence; it is static without being stable; it is invisible itself and escapes any attempt to see it, and occurs when one is not looking, but even if you look closely you cannot see it (= cp. "*anaisthēsia*" in *Timaeus* 52b), It always presents opposite appearances on its surface, small and great, less and more, deficient and superabundant (= *Met.* 987b25; cp. Alexander *In Met.* 54.4-15), a phantom which does not remain and cannot get away either, for it has no strength for this, since it has not received strength from intellect and is lacking in all being." (III.6.7.1-21; cp. I.8.3 with commentary *ad loc.*)

The best analogy by which one can nearly grasp this fleeting concept of matter is mirror:

"...matter is still less liable to affections than are mirrors (*ta katoptra*)." (III.6.9.19-20)

The mention of *hypokeimenon* and *hypodochē* indicates that Plotinus has very much in mind the bare and featureless prime matter of Aristotle and also indicates that he takes Plato's view of matter and Aristotle's as compatible.<sup>90</sup> The impassibility of matter is based on the neutral substrate of prime matter which supports the opposing qualities which are in change (III.6.9.35-40)<sup>91</sup> and by this Plotinus means to deny hylomorphism - an ontological composition of matter and form - and takes form or soul as the only true reality, the so called hypostatic reality. This anti-hylomorphism is also aimed at the Stoic theory of matter. What kind of matter can perform this alleged function of neutral substrate? If it is totally deprived of being then there is an ontological hiatus between the substrate and what it means to support and, according to O'Brien<sup>92</sup>, this is why the Gnostics' theory of matter in II.9 is objectionable. On the other hand, if too much being (and form) is given to matter then we run the risk of reading corporeality into matter (cp. I.2.1) It is this delicate balance that makes Plotinus very careful

in his description of matter and calls it the "ghostly image of bulk," with a tendency to substance but itself always a quasi-substance. It is this borderline existence that makes matter open to all kinds (*pandechēs*) of external influence and become their substrate while it is also because its precarious balance between *pantelōs mē on* (or to *mēdamōs on*) and *on* that it cannot accept any real change of its nature. Matter thus stays as neutral and makes its participation a "participation without affection" (*apathous metalēpseōs*, III.6.12.7; cp. III.6.11.31-45). In such a circumstance matter can only be in a state of *apatheia* and, because it participates in no form in any real sense, it is also the "unlimitedness itself", for form means limitation (cp. II.4.15.32: "*apeiria*"; III.4.1.12: "*aoristia pantelēs*"). Despite all the complications Plotinus broaches his matter as *mē on*, with the various qualification carefully made.<sup>93</sup> It is therefore fair to say that this matter as *mē on* is the metaphysical condition or *aition* of the corporeal world and its "nature" (III.6.13.21) is, according to Schlette, exclusively metaphysical and non-physical<sup>94</sup> or simply as "*logische Negativität*".<sup>95</sup> On this point I think Plotinus is more flexible than Schlette thought, for otherwise the transition from I.8.6 to I.8.7, from a metaphysical use of matter to a physical or cosmological use, cannot be explained; V.8.7.20-3 proves this use of matter in the sense of physical *ichnē*.

4.2.3 Therefore Plotinus has to strike a balance, on behalf of his matter, between absolute non-being and too much being. In addition, Plotinus' matter as *mē on* is also a compromise between the position of Parmenides' *pantelōs mē on* (I.8.3.[3]) and Plato's law of communion (*via* the genus of *thateron*) among the *megista genē* in *Sophist* (cp. II.5.5.9-14). Briefly speaking, the compromise looks like this. On the one hand, Parmenides misidentifies *enantion* with *apophasis* and makes what is other than being absolute non-being; on the other hand, Plato's genus of *thateron* is neutral in its definition of the relationship which obtains among the *megista genē* because this relationship does not involve the problem of being, i.e., the *megista genē*, with their law of communion defined by *thateron*, are all *genē* on the same level and this

cannot explain the vertical and eidetic relationship between the intelligible universe and the sensible universe which is an embodiment of this law of communion. Plotinus' *heterotēs* (= the metaphysical function of matter), on the other hand, predicates a kind of hierarchical alienation or ontic deficiency of the lower *hypostasis* in regard to its superior. This is an addition to *heterotēs* as the conceptual tool which explains the inner differentiation and horizontal relationship within the generated *hypostases*. In comparison, Plotinus' *heterotēs* reduces the stark contrast of Parmenides between *on* and *to mēdamōs on* and thus rescues those kinds of reality which are other than full *on*. Plotinus' *heterotēs*, on the other hand, can give Plato's *thateron* a new conceptual dimension because *heterotēs* can define not only the inner and horizontal relationship within the same level of reality (which Plato claims for his genus of *thateron* and his law of communion) but also the vertical relationship between different levels of reality. Plotinus' *mē on* or *heterotēs* thus weakens the stark position of Parmenides and strengthens Plato's (cp. I.8.3 with commentary *ad loc.*).

4.2.4 The prime matter at the bottom of reality and its relativised presence as intelligible matters therefore make possible the hierarchical nature of reality in which different levels of reality are governed by an image-archetype relationship. It is thus correct to call prime matter a phantom of phantoms of reality and the proper analogy for this *me-ontology* is the Divided Line in Plato's *Republic* rather than the *megista genē* in *Sophist* (cp. I.8.3 with commentary *ad loc.*). VI.3.8.35-7 describes the image nature of matter very clearly:

"here what underlies is sterile and inadequate to be being, because the others do not come from it, but it is a shadow, and upon what is itself a shadow, a picture and a seeing."

The metaphors of phantom, shadow and picture and so on, used in its description of matter

is closely related to the analogy of light and this, in an indirect way, confirms the adequacy of emanation as the analogy for the *parousia* of the One in emanation (4.1.2-4) and this also supports the persistent image of darkness used of matter in I.8.4.[9], I.8.5.[1], I.8.8.[10] and I.8.9.[12].<sup>96</sup>

4.2.5 Plotinus' prime matter as *mē on* is thus something new in itself; one might well say that it is the product of a delicate compromise between *on* and *to mēdamōs on*, between Plato's genus of *thateron* in his law of communion and Parmenides' *pantelōs mē on*. The reason why he can achieve this is his clear assertion of a hierarchical structure of reality in which *on* (and *mē on*) is allowed to exist in degrees. If prime matter represents the ultimate limit of the emanated reality, then the distinction between levels of reality means a kind of relativised limit. These absolute and relative limits are the prime matter and intelligible matters. It is because of this factor that *mē on*, like matter and *heterotēs*, cannot be a term with a monolithic reference; to the contrary, this *mē* of *mē on* means a differentiation of the lower reality from its prior and higher reality; by parity of reasoning, the *sterēsis* in "matter as *sterēsis* of *on*" has to be understood in the same sense. One therefore has to speak of prime matter as "absolute" *mē on*, "absolute" *heterotēs* and "absolute" *sterēsis* of *on*, and the other two kinds of intelligible matter as its relativised versions: "absolute" in the sense that prime matter is different from and a deprivation of "all" the hypostatic reality. It is thus an hypostatic entity without its own contents.<sup>97</sup> Such a relationship is proved by II.4.15.21-6:

"...What is the difference between the two unlimiteds (= intelligible matter and sensible matter)? Is the unlimited here, then less unlimited? More, rather; for in so far as it is an image which has escaped from being and truth (= cp. *apopheugousa* in 3.2.8), it is more unlimited. For unlimitedness is present in a higher degree in that which is less defined; and less in the good is more in the bad." (my underlining)

One can see very clearly that the archetype-image pattern is not only valid in the hierarchy of reality but also in different kinds of matter. Therefore, matter can be said to exist in a reverse ratio to that in reality because the more matter an entity has, the less reality it possesses. There is a kind of "reverse symmetry" in this vision of reality between the hypostatic reality and anhypostatic reality.

4.2.6 On this version of prime matter as *heterotēs* it is very hard to see how such an abstract metaphysical concept can be generated, for it is said to be the ultimate *heterotēs* of which the noetic matters are its relativised versions. Only in the sense of physical *ichnē* - that is, the lowest reach of the hypostatic soul, or *physis* simpliciter, which is differentiated by *heterotēs* - can matter be "generated" by its former *hypostasis* Soul in its aspect of *physis*. The exegetical reason I have is that in *Timaeus hypodochē* (= *heterotēs*) is not generated while the *ichnē* are. Such a generation of matter as *ichnē* is logical and necessary, for matter as the absolute *heterotēs* means the emanation is directed, from a full and undifferentiated One, the source of being, to the ultimate dispersal of being which in this case is the *ichnē* with minimal order. One has to endorse Fielder's position that matter, in its function of *chōrismos*, has to pre-exist at each junction of hypostatic reality otherwise there would be no distinction between the generated reality and the One; however, when he says that no generation of matter can be contemplated in such a condition, he clearly makes a mistake. Matter, as was said, in its physical sense can be generated. What this means is that "matter" (in its physical sense as *ichnē* and as the terminal stage of emanation) is differentiated and characterised by "matter" (in its metaphysical sense as ultimate *heterotēs*) and therefore this matter has the least ontological authenticity and epistemological value, which bring us to the brink of reality, the *Zwischenzustand* between *on* and *to mēdamōs on* (or *pantelōs mē on*). With a grasp of the two uses of matter and their relationship and, in addition, with the distinction of two kinds of generation (that is, "absolute generation" and "generation of a reconstructed intelligibility") we

can explain those passage where the generation of matter (by soul) is mentioned: III.4.1.6-12, III.9.3.8-17, VI.2.22.21-3, IV.3.9.21-7, V.2.2.30-1, II.9.3.11-21 and I.8.14.51-3. From these passages I have reached these tentative conclusions:

(a) The absolute generation of matter happens in the emanation and is therefore necessary and eternal and is the last stage of generation from the One; it is born with a fixed nature, that is, a total deficiency of *on* and goodness, without having to turn upwards to receive definition from soul, for matter as a *sterēsis* of *on* is also a *sterēsis* of *theoria*.

(b) The generation of matter is both said to be done by *physis* (III.4.1.6; cp. III.3.1.3, II.5.3.34) which is the lowest reach of *hypostasis* Soul (N.B.: Soul is a vertical plenitude) and also by individual soul (*hē merikē* in II.9.3.8, cp. IV.3.2.42 and VI.4.16.23). This could mean that the world soul in its aspect of *physis* and the individual soul in its aspect of *physis* have different areas of operation in the generation of matter. This seems, however, to suggest that in (b) we are talking about the generation of "reconstructed intelligibility"; that is, in those pieces of evidence both kinds of generation are included.

(c) Because both soul and matter are both incorporeal and impassible there is a difficulty in explaining how soul generates matter, and, as far as I know, Plotinus has never explained this satisfactorily. I attribute this to the difficulty in a correct description of matter. However, this problem of mechanism does not constitute an obstacle to saying that soul generates matter, for neither has Plotinus told us why the unbridgeable gulf between the One and *Nous* does not prevent the One from generating *Nous*.

4.2.7 However, despite those seven passages I have already mentioned, Plotinus on the origin of matter is not saying the same thing everywhere and there is some reason to suspect that

Fielder's near obsession about the pre-existence - and so no generation - of matter is not totally unfounded. In II.9.3.18-21 Plotinus raises a possibility that matter might not be seen in a passive way as his emanation would have us expect, but, instead, as an entity which would "wall off" the progress of emanation:

"If matter is going to remain alone, the divine principle will not be everywhere but in a particular limited space. They will be, so to speak, walled off from matter; but if this is impossible matter will be illuminated by them."

Although the last clause has dismissed such a possibility, Plotinus in other places has "implied" this line of thinking, namely, the prime matter pre-exists. In the already quoted III.6.7.1-21, for instance, Plotinus says that body is posterior and a composite, and matter with something else produces body (III.6.7.4-5) and matter thus must pre-exist. The same implication can be seen in III.6.11.28-31. The explanation is this. The generation of matter and the generation of body by matter "and" soul are two different orders of reality: the generation of matter is the logical conclusion of emanation, a kind of metaphysical question why there is being rather than non-being at all, but the generation of body is a cosmological issue; in other words, the former is the result of soul's first descent while the latter is the imposition of order (or forms) by soul, in its second descent, upon a pre-existent chaotic matter created in the first descent. In other words, both descents are related to the problem of generation but the first descent of soul is about the "existence" of reality while the second descent is about the "essence" of reality because it is from this descent that cosmos is created out of a-cosmos. As far as I can see the three texts mentioned here, which are used to support Fielder's position on the no generation of matter, can be interpreted satisfactorily in this way. One therefore has to reject Fielder's opinion that only the generation of reconstructed intelligibility can count as a real generation while absolute generation of matter cannot.



4.2.8 If fact, Fielder's position was also held by other distinguished scholars. Both Bréhier<sup>98</sup> and Merlan<sup>99</sup> saw contradiction between (a) the position that matter is generated from soul and is the sterile emanation and *eschaton eidos* and (b) the position that matter seems to pre-exist and is directly opposed to noetic principle. Both of them do not try to explain exactly why such a contradiction exists but one may ask why. Apart from the important distinction between the first descent and second descent of soul and the distinction between a metaphysical use and a physical use of matter, the crux may lie in the intrinsic ambiguity of the absolute *mē on* itself. Plotinus designates matter or absolute *mē on* as the limit to the emanation from the One; beyond this limit is *pantelōs mē on*, that is, it is totally non-existent and inconceivable. The *mē on* is therefore located between *on* and *pantelōs mē on*, between what is within the system and what is outwith the system, a kind of metaphysical limbo, twilight zone or Filoramo's *Zwischenzustand*.<sup>100</sup> Its existence has to be presupposed as soon as the absolute creative freedom of the One is exercised for it defines the scope of reality (cp. I.8.7.[10]-[12] with commentary *ad loc.*). It is only in this sense that I can understand why matter must pre-exist. Nevertheless, it suffers the kind of ambiguity which is first systematically discussed in Plato's *Parmenides* 138ff., that is, the moment when the motion starts means at the same time a termination of its condition of *stasis*. With this analogy in mind we can understand the *Zwischenzustand* of matter as *mē on* for it both the end of *on* and the beginning of *pantelōs mē on*. Therefore, it is possible to read a "weak" matter in the sense that it is a passive "entity" deprived of all being if we look from the perspective of emanation; we will, on the other hand, have a "strong" matter when we look from the other side. This is an inevitable result because, when Plotinus defines matter as the limit to the emanation from the One, it is both *on* (for it is part of the process) and loss of *on* (for it is the termination of this process), which is apparently contradictory. If soul generates matter and soul, in turn, is generated by *Nous* and *Nous* by the One, then it is almost inconceivable that the One should have

engendered matter which terminates its efficacy and delimits its creative potency. I think Zeller felt exactly the same dilemma when he says that there is no middle ground for Plotinus to take; either matter has to be the positive condition for the explication of divinity or it has to be the second primordial principle beside and opposite to the divinity.<sup>101</sup>

4.2.9 Apart from the intrinsic ambiguity in *mē on* itself one can also ascribe these two different interpretations, a strong one and a weak one, of matter to Plato's *Timaeus* because even in his careful distinction between *ichnē and hypodochē* their mix-up happens now and then. In Plotinus' *Enneads* there is no better evidence for such a potential mix-up and for the necessity of their clear distinction than the change of matter as a passive *mē on* in I.8.6 to a strong, active and aggressive matter in I.8.7 where matter is characterised by features of its own. Such a transition can be accepted if one can explain how these two uses of matter are compatible. I will leave the detail to my commentary.

4.2.10 When we see matter in the weak sense as deficiency of *on*, it is identical with *causa deficiens* but when it is in the strong sense of *ichnē* it is identical with *causa efficiens*. In Aristotelian language when we see the *sterēsis* of being we see it either as the failure of form or the adverse influence from matter. If it is read in a strong sense then we have to allow matter a certain degree of independence; if we read it in the weak sense then we attribute to matter the analogy of mirror which receives with having and participates without being affected. An easy shift between these two readings explains the inconsistency one finds in Plotinus' theory of matter.<sup>102</sup>

4.2.11 A random example of this shift between these two functions can be found in II.4.15.14-7 which tells us that matter is the unlimitedness itself while unlimitedness, if predicated of other realities, is an accidental attribute. However, in II.4.16.20-1 Plotinus finds

himself in the situation of having to clarify himself further:

"...that which has nothing because it is in want (*en peniai on*), or rather (*mallon*) is want (*penia on*), must necessarily be evil."

The succession of *en peniai on* (that is, matter with poverty as an attribute) and then *penia on* (that is, matter is poverty itself) cannot but reveal Plotinus' embarrassing awareness of the thin line between these two kinds of matter: matter as absolute non-entity with no features of its own and matter as a characterised (by *penia*) material reservoir. Since he devotes his *Enneads* II.5 as a whole to the distinction between *to auto tēi energeiai* and *hē energeia* he cannot be unaware of the difference between *en peniai on* and *on penia*. The same contradiction can be seen between I.8.14.41-3 where matter is said to darken the incoming form (cp. V.8.4.21-3 and V.8.11.26-7) and III.6.7.1-21 where matter is too weak to receive any imposition of form.

4.2.12 I wonder if it would be a better policy for Plotinus to see the end of emanation as a radicalised *heterotēs* and forgo *in toto* the concept of matter as material reservoir. Rist in his comment - although in a different context - on this issue said that this association of otherness and non-being with matter is a burden of tradition which complicates the whole situation.<sup>103</sup> This recommendation is what Plotinus' Neopythagorean predecessors, such as Speusippus, tried to do, that is, to "dematerialise" and "desubstantiate" the concept of matter (3.0.6 and 3.1.3) and to transform it into a purely logical concept. As far as I can see Plotinus is quite happy to equate his matter with *mē on* and let his matter perform an abstract and metaphysical function in its differentiation of reality throughout the hierarchical emanation; he, however, is not averse to his matter being used in a physical and cosmological sense. This gives a necessary premise to his cosmology and for his inquiry into the lower reach of reality, including human beings as embodied souls. What has to be stressed here is that Plotinus sees this

physical use of matter as an extension of its metaphysical use because I have said that this physical matter is the result of the differentiation of matter in its metaphysical function upon the the lowest reach of hypostatic soul, that is, *physis*.

### 4.3 TO MĒ ON, EVIL AND THEODICY

4.3.1 Merlan's complaint that Plotinus' metaphysical monism is not compatible with his ethical dualism<sup>104</sup> cannot be dismissed off hand because, for example, we are indeed given a more dualistic divine dispensation in I.8.7 in which matter or evil is explicitly anti-noetic. This complaint is also *prima facie* true for it is rather anti-intuitive (from the perspective of ordinary language) to image that evil as *mē on* is a kind of *privatio* and not a *depravatio*. The equation by Plotinus of matter with *mē on* and *mē on* with evil should have made it clear that Plotinus' interest in ethics - his theory of evil in particular - is based on his metaphysics.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, when he discusses the problem of evil it is only to be expected that his arguments would be very similar to those I have put forward about matter in 4.1; in addition, a revisionist definition of evil, different from what is used in ordinary language, is a very likely result of this approach. For example, in I.8.3 Plotinus defines evil as a kind of "substance", "thing", or "entity" rather than the quality of moral behaviour:

"If evil exists, it must be among non-existent things as a sort of form of non-existence, and pertains to one of the things that are mingled with non-being or somehow share in non-being." (I.8.3.4-7; cp. commentary *ad loc.*)

This passage mentions "as a sort of form of non-existence" and this is reminiscent of matter as *eschaton eidos* (V.8.7.20-3) and therefore incorporates evil, like matter, into the emanative process. As matter is necessary in this emanation of reality so is evil necessarily constitutive of the divine economy. Since matter, defined as *sterēsis* of *on*, is dependent on *on* of which it is a *sterēsis*, evil likewise has to participate in the entity which shares in *on* (I.8.3.17-8). As the divine goodness of the One, from which overflows the emanation, is understood as the

fecund source of being, hypostatic reality is good because it is a full being while, on the other hand, anhypostatic reality (including the sensibles and matter) is evil because it is a deficiency of being. The absolute evil, that is prime matter, as the ultimate *mē on*, has no positive and independent existence at all; it is a pure negation of all the positive features characteristic of hypostatic reality. It is completely unintelligible if detached from the emanative process since this process defines the scope of reality and intelligibility. Schlette is perhaps correct in saying that there is no strict logic connection ("Verknüpfung") and particular argument of its own in Plotinus' theory of evil: "it merely shows forth the name of *kakon* as an additional predicate of non-being and thus of matter."<sup>106</sup> However, this rather dismissive attitude is unhealthy because it will encourage the researcher to neglect the fact that, by this ontological turn in his ethical inquiry, Plotinus has revised the notion of evil with comprehensive implications for theodicy and eschatology.

4.3.2 Evil, for Plotinus, has two dimensions: it is either inherent in a subject or in the universal order. É Gilson has very pertinently said of evil as *sterēsis* in a subject:

"The mere absence of being cannot demand a subject to support it. But we have said that evil is a *negation* in a *subject*, that is, a lack of what is normally a part of that subject; in a word, *privation*. There can be no privation, and therefore no evil, without the existence of substances in which privation can be established. Thus it is not true that all negation demands a real and positive subject, but only those particular negations called privations, because 'privation is negation in a subject'. The only true support of evil is the good."<sup>107</sup> (Gilson's italics)

The example Plotinus gives us is the person who is deprived of sight with which he should naturally be endowed (II.4.13.11). This means that evil as *sterēsis* is not an abstract concept

of negation, but a negation of the features necessarily characteristic of an existent. As for evil in the universal world order I refer, first of all, to the analogy of divine draughts-player in Plato's *Laws* 903-905; the theodicy expounded there is similar to that in *Theaetetus* 176ab, quotations from which appear in I.8.6 and I.8.7. I will discuss more about it as the argument in this section proceeds.

**4.3.3** The emanation of reality from the One is a general description of reality and therefore, according to the spirit of Plotinus, we have to see the problem of evil in a providential world from the perspective of divine goodness which is for "the production of global excellence" rather than the "goodness to" individual persons.<sup>108</sup> "Providential care is much more of wholes than of parts" (II.9.16.30-1). That is, it is a justification of a rational world order (*provideo* in the sense of "to foresee") rather than a rectification of deficiency (*provideo* in the sense of "to provide for"). This global perspective will guide our inquiry in the following research on Plotinian theodicy

**4.3.4** This global perspective of Plotinus on providence and theodicy is based on the plenitude of being and the Stoic idea of sympathy. The Stoic idea of sympathy has its physical basis in *pneuma* but in its disposition of things in the universe it is called *logos*, *heimarmenē* or *pronoia*. Reale says that Stoic providence is the "consequence of the affirmation of finality" and it has nothing to do with the providence of a personal God.<sup>109</sup> This finality is closely linked with the survival, completeness and beauty of the universe<sup>110</sup> and in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* II.xxii.58 an immanent god, in the form of Platonic *dēmiourgos* (*artifex*), exercises his *pronoia*:

"...This providence is chiefly directed and concentrated upon three objects, namely to secure for the world, first, the structure best fitted for survival; next, absolute completeness; but chiefly, consummate beauty and embellishment of all kinds." (trans.

This exercise of *pronoia* is conceived as a kind of intellectual organisation in order to make certain the survival, completeness and beauty of the universe; this kind of intellectuality and rationality constitutes the divine goodness of the cosmos. It is not goodness loaded with connotations of emotion and care. The separate independence of the ideal pattern of the divine living being, *dēmiourgos* and *anankē* in Plato's *Timaeus* are now amalgamated into one entity or force which is *logos*, *heimarmenē* or *pronoia*. The stress is on the global interest in the name of harmony; although an individual can participate in this new order, he is not treated with special interest as an individual but as a part fitting into the holistic whole. The quotation also mentions the will to exercise this kind of goodness but it is a kind of will similar to the will of the One when it self-creates<sup>111</sup> for it is unrelated to any decision. We will later see that this definition of divine freedom delimits the scope of goodness in Plotinus' philosophy.

4.3.5 This Stoic providence is one-dimensional because the *logos* which organises the universe in the way it is is of the same nature and effectiveness everywhere to the same extent. As for Plotinus he, in III.3.5.15-7, explicitly points out that fate (*heimarmenē*) governs the lower universe while "the upper is providence (*pronoia*) alone." This conforms to his vision of the basic distinction between the hypostatic reality and the anhypostatic reality. However, more often than not Plotinus does not follow this linguistic distinction and, at the start of III.3.5, providence is said to be active "from the beginning to the end." This is plausible because the whole reality is a plenitude, with no gap left (III.2.3.37-9), from the One, and is said to proceed according to the double act of *theoria*, and *poiēsis* is said to be a weaker version of *theoria* and matter as the terminally weakened stage of emanation is said to be '*eschaton eidos*', that is, the emanation has implied a *logos* which has different efficacy in each level of reality. The horizontal efficacy of Stoic sympathy is now completed with a vertical and hierarchical



dimension.

**4.3.6** Therefore, Plotinian providence is the expression of the causal efficacy in the vertical and horizontal dimensions and the variety of these beings is organised into an organic unity.<sup>112</sup> (II.3.7.16-25, a very Stoic passage as the *sumphnoia mia* and *hen zōion* show; also cp. IV.4.32.13) This emphasis on the organic unity of the whole reality means a promotion of the rational nature of the cosmos as a whole and also means a demotion of any local or particular interest.

**4.3.7** If Plotinian sympathy is defined as the intra-systemic relationship among these components and particular organisms within this global structure (III.3.6.23-32), this sympathy can then be regarded a kind of power which binds together these inherent but disparate elements:

"Sympathy exists within various parts of the universe, and it manifests its interconnected wholeness and the powers we can summon from within it - provided we do not expect anything that might run counter to the providential laws that govern and direct us."<sup>113</sup>

However, this sympathy is also the medium through which we, as the component organisms, can recognise our places within this global structure:

"If sympathy depends on one living thing, and we are affected because we are in one and belong to one." (IV.5.2.27-8)

Sympathy, apart from binding reality together, can also help one identify one's place in the

whole of reality because he can invoke the power of sympathy to know how the universe is organised so that he might not be dissolved into an anonymous whole nor the whole become composed of unrelated individuals. Sympathy is the power which sees the universe from two perspectives.

4.3.8 Plotinus' universe as a plenitude emanated from the One contains all things of all kinds and the concept of sympathy defines the internal relationship among them. I have in 4.1.14-17 analysed why Plotinus has to insist that the emanated universe is the unique and the best one. Now since all beings are derived from and referred to the One, evils as *sterēsis* of *onta* have to be referred to these derived beings and ultimately to the One as well. This means that evils by themselves are parasitic and secondary and can be reformulated, incorporated and rationalised as necessary parts constitutive of the divine economy of the universe. The Aristotelian option, *via* hypothetical necessity, that evils are unknown residues and are irreducible to intelligible patterns (defined in terms of hypothetical necessity) and have to be somehow non-existent (because of unintelligibility) is not open to Plotinus who asserts that evil is "good lessened and dwindling continuously, a continuous fading out." (II.9.13) In the Plotinian world whatever exists has its rationale. The total reduction of all kinds of existence (including evils) to all kinds of nuances of the One explains why everything is transparent and nothing is incomprehensible in the divine order which is spontaneously and necessarily derived from the One.

4.3.9 However, how far does it make one more informed when evil is defined as *sterēsis* of being and goodness? In this case, the thesis that evil is *sterēsis* of goodness can be understood as a kind of linguistic recommendation or semantic preference because the use of 'evil' can be eliminated by an alternative use of language, the language of goodness and being. This means that the use of language here is not analytical but an expression of optimistic vocabulary in a

recommendation for an optimistic perception of the universe.<sup>114</sup> The thesis of evil as *mē on* and as *sterēsis* of goodness is therefore a part of a metaphysical package and cannot retain any significance if detached from it. For our present concern in 4.3 this metaphysical package explains how evil is possible in a providential cosmos which the spontaneous and necessary overflow from the superabundant One has realised. It is impossible to accept the thesis of evil as *sterēsis* of goodness without at the same time accepting the whole package of doctrines discussed in 4.1 and 4.2 which have entailed it. The whole package of doctrines is centred around the hierarchical emanation of being and therefore it is the emanative theory that entails evil as *sterēsis* of goodness and explains why in a pre-ordained divine order evils could have existed.<sup>115</sup>

4.3.10 In 4.1.15 I reached the conclusion that emanation with its plenitude is an *a priori* reasoning and this reasoning does not necessarily have anything to do with the real world as we know it. This warns us that the application of the thesis of evil as *sterēsis* of *on* cannot be empirical. The emanative theory of reality, as it is derived from the One and is referred back to the One, encourages us to see the whole of reality from a third-person (as opposed to the first-person), detached and distant perspective on the happenings in the universe; the application of the thesis of evil is also omniscient and global in its analysis. A very illuminating statement from Plato's *Laws* X 903 tells us all about this approach: "You forget that creation is not for your benefit: *you* exist for the sake of the universe."

4.3.11 Some of the implications from this perspective are immediately obvious. Whenever Plotinus talks about the cosmodycy the analogies he employs are from theatrical performance (another Stoic favorite)<sup>116</sup> in which the person involved is the detached 'he' rather than the committed 'I':

"There is a place for every man, one to fit the good and one to fit the bad." (III.2.17.23-4)

The speaker of this short passage is the author of drama (*poiētes*) who distributes characters to actors (III.2.17.17-9), or the speaker can be a detached spectator (III.2.15.44-7). The diction also implies that the position which one occupies is given *ab extra* rather than created by one's own efforts. Plotinus is aware of this conflict of viewpoints and tries to separate them, but he finally suppresses the viewpoints which are not third-person so that he may preserve the theoretical coherence which his metaphysics dictates:

"It is just as if a poet (= the person with an omniscient view) in his plays wrote a part for an actor (= the person whose perception is limited) insulting and depreciating the author (= the poet) of the play." (III.2.16.9-10)

The implication of this passage is that the creator of this cosmos will not produce any acosmic and dysteleological elements within it, for this would be self-contradictory. If there exists anything dysteleological, it is only to be expected that there are good reasons to explain why it exists; the accusation that it is dysteleological is derived from the ignorance of the individual who cannot see the divine economy in a global and holistic way. The author is the one who is detached from and omniscient about the happenings in the universe, while the actor is the one involved and whose perception is partial, limited and subjective and therefore the admonition in III.2.16.9-10 to forbid actor to accuse author amounts to an attempt to dismiss any criticisms of the providential order prescribed to the actors living within it. This blame on the actor's partial knowledge of the providential order reminds us of a similar rebuke in *Laws* X 903; the rationale to preserve intact the providential order is because of the logical necessity inherent in the emanation from the One. The alleged double perspectives (4.3.7) which the theory of sympathy might bring out is thus vacuous because the perspective which

helps one to identify his place within the global structure cannot be a personal perspective but a global perspective imposed *ab extra* on the person concerned.

**4.3.12** This logical necessity structures the kind of universe we are supposed to be in and one of the logical rules is the existence of opposites:

"The All is in accordance with its rational formative pattern (*logos*), and it is necessary that this one formative pattern should be one pattern made out of opposites (*ex enantiōn*) since it is opposition of this kind which gives it its structure, and, we might say, its existence." (III.2.16.48-52; cp. III.2.12.5-8; I.8.6.[6]-[22] and I.8.7.[1]-[7])

It is because of this logical necessity of the co-presence of opposites in the universe that Plotinus, quoting *Theaetetus* 176a, justifies the existence of evil in I.8.6 and I.8.7. This *a priori* reasoning on the existence of evil is certainly not based on personal experience of it. It is on this ground of *a priori* logic that makes necessary the existence of such a universe, and Plotinus can thus speak of evil in this way:

"...the wicked are no longer wicked. No, their being wicked is not done away with, only their being like that does not originate with themselves." (III.2.17.12-4)

Read this passage together with III.2.7.23-4:

"there is a place for every man, one to fit the good and one to fit the bad."

Then the passage from I.8.5.[9] naturally follows:

"...we must not be assumed to be the principle of evil as being evil by and from ourselves; evils are prior to us, and those that take hold on men do not do so with their own good will...."

There is an inevitable conclusion from the fact that evil has been treated like quasi-substance in the chain of being and is structured accordingly. In other words, Plotinus treats evils as 'slots' within the structure to be filled in, without relating this divine dispensation to personal merits or culpability. This also means that those taking up these 'slots' are not voluntary but have their fates imposed upon them *ab extra*. This is an assertion of the predominance of objective order at the expense of subjective experience or choice of it; it is also an expression of a deterministic outlook. Plotinus radicalises this third-person perspective by excluding any residue of first-person reflection on such an order:

"...there might perhaps be some sympathy (*sympnomē*) for the wicked, except that it is the rational formative principle (*logos*) which is responsible for our sympathising or not." (III.2.17.14-7)

The last clause proves that this deterministic outlook includes second-order reflection on this determinism. In such circumstances individuals and chances are trivialised and are explained away and incorporated into the harmony of the universe (III.3.2.1-3).

**4.3.13** I think Plotinus is fully aware of this implication. In III.1.4.17-25 he says that with this kind of providence - which is entailed by the thesis of evil as *mē on* - the harmony of this cosmos is not a very pleasant thing to live with, and as a second thought, he unexpectedly introduces the "we" and "our own" as an escape route (III.1.4.25-8) which tries to carve out an area immune to this divine dispensation, and internal and private to the individuals

concerned. No reason can be found for this hasty introduction nor is it compatible with the divine dispensation which it means to escape from. What one can say about this sudden awareness of an alternative is that Plotinus is driven, willy-nilly, to the logical conclusion based on his premise despite his personal uneasiness at its implications.

**4.3.14** Since all happenings, either good or bad, have to be placed within the context of his *a priori* metaphysical map, this means that all of them have to be referred backwards, ultimately, to the origin of reality, the One or the Good. The whole outlook of his theodicy is thus backwards-looking and his eschatology is an eschatology which has already been realised.<sup>117</sup> A search for the supra-temporal origin of reality is translated into a search into past history or past life to account for present and future happenings: a transcendental interpretation of reality is imposed on events immanent in history and time.<sup>118</sup> A theoretical account of this realised eschatology is III.2.8.28-32:

"every time the rational and natural consequences follow what has gone before, worse for the worse but better for the better."

A 'factual' explanation of one's present predicament is found in III.2.13.11-5:

"there is certainly no accident in man's becoming slave, nor is he taken prisoner in war by chance, nor is outrage done on his body without due cause, but he was once the doer of that which he now suffers." (my underlining)

This search into past history to explain the present or the future amounts to finding the principle of sufficient reason.<sup>120</sup> This search into past history in order to explain present and future events has another purpose, that is, it is an attempt to reach moral equilibrium based on

a kind of moral calculation; it is to make present and future compensate for the past. This has the consequence of making these three temporal modes co-present and eliminates any distinctions among them; the treatise on time in III.7 is not so much a treatise on time (as we understand it in terms of clock time) but a treatise on a certain kind of life or existence.<sup>121</sup> From all of these we can derive this conclusion, that the 'amount of evil' in this universe is determined and constant because the structure of this cosmos has already been determined at the very moment of the One's self-creation. Origen has expressed most admirably this idea of fixed amount of evil:

"There were no more ills in the world formerly and no fewer than they are now; there will be no more hereafter and no fewer. The universe is always essentially the same and evils always occur in the same proportion." (*Contra Celsum* 13.60)<sup>122</sup>

To preserve the moral equilibrium it is necessary to exclude any external intervention in this divine order - thus his liquidation of the concept of *dēmiourgos* which acts *ab extra* in *Timaeus* -, the intervention including miracles and manipulations of astrology (III.2.8.36-42; II.9.7.28-40), nor would the logical and necessary nature of the universe allow it. This explains why in III.4 the daemon remains the Socratic kind of protective daemon and not a theurgic instrument to be manipulated and this accounts for Plotinus' total lack of interest in theurgy and thaumaturgy.<sup>123</sup> This attachment to the metaphysical '*status quo*' certainly excludes an individual's determination to change the divine economy and his own fate because it is ultimately futile (III.2.8.43-6). There are two reasons for this. One reason is that such a change would breach the divine order while the other is that his current choice, even of such a kind as to overturn the prevailing order, can be regarded as the consequence of an earlier choice (as I have said that the second-order reflection is also determined, III.2.17.14-7), and this ultimately goes back to the absolute and inscrutable One and becomes a 'metaphysical choice'



already made 'at the very moment when' emanation starts.<sup>124</sup> Individual choice is an illusion and an ignorance and is nothing but the cunning and indirect revelation of the One's inscrutable and absolute will.<sup>125</sup>

"In such imagining the beholder would in some sense view Reality from without, as an object external to his own existence." (VI.7.15)

After all, the universe as an excellently made global artefact is a logical conclusion from a transcendent cause, not an object created "for us" by a loving and caring divinity. Schubert has concluded that there are two main features of Plotinian theodicy: (1) the negation of the Platonic craftsman analogy (for this *actio ab extra* denies the necessity of this cosmos); (2) the negation of *epimeleia*; the *pronoia* concerned here is a kind of law, not an act. On this account Plotinus has gone further than Plato.<sup>126</sup>

4.3.15 So there is a clear deterministic outlook in Plotinus' philosophy and if determinism is understood as related to the unfolding of external circumstances, then what Plotinus says in III.2.10.16-20 is doubtful:

"...this (= the power of free action) originated in man. Given a first principle, it accomplishes what follows with the inclusion in the chain of causation of all the principles there are; but men, too, are principles; at any rate, they are moved to noble actions by their own nature, and this is an independent principle."

This passage in its attempt to detach part of reality from determinism is contradicted by III,2,17.14-7: if the first principle is given and then entails the chain of causation, then men as principles are parts of the causation and so they would not be independent of it. There is

nothing really 'internal' or 'private', such as human will, under such a divine economy. In III.3.5.34-5 Plotinus says that evil deeds come from us although we are not compelled to do them by providence and therefore providence is not to be blamed:

"they come from us and we are not compelled by providence but we connect them, of our own accord, with the works of providence or works derived from providence."

This mitigation of evils is not effective because this passage amounts to this: evils are there in the designated 'slots' because they are necessary parts of the divine order and therefore men could not commit evils on their own; they act as the missing links for these 'slots' and thus activate the chain reaction within the whole system. By the accounts of III.2.10.16-20 and III.3.5.34-5 Plotinus fails to relate evils to any personal efforts, and personal efforts are reduced to filling in the designated 'slots,' which are nothing if not pre-determined because the structure of reality is determined. If this is the case then how can one make compatible these two demands: (1) the justification of evil as necessary to the divine economy of this universe and (2) the punishment for the evil committed as a retribution? For this retribution is in itself a kind of intervention in this divine disposition and its exercise is a breach of the completeness and necessity of this cosmos.<sup>127</sup>

4.3.16 However, in III.3.5.37-40 we find some discordant echo among this generally deterministic outlook. There it is said that some human efforts are mysteriously unable to be incorporated into the divine order; it is those efforts done by people who act according to their own will, or

"according to something else in the universe (*kat' allo ti tōn en tōi panti*), which is acting and producing some effect (*pathos*) in us in a way not according to the will of

providence." (my underlining)

This is puzzling indeed. If evils are the consequence of the affirmation of finality then all the evils are supposed to be teleological in the divine order for, in a sense, they are the necessary and balancing parts of this order. Is Plotinus prepared to entertain dysteleological factors in this divine order, but how then would he explain them if only entities within the scope of emanation can be explained? This is especially interesting because these freak factors are related to persons and therefore one may wonder if Plotinus has given in, to some extent, to the personal subjectivity. Can he agree - somehow admittedly far-fetched - with Hampshire's remark:

"there is a normative element in first-person present and future tense statements about some state of mind and some type of conduct, and this normative element would not be reproduced in the descriptions which scientific observers would use."<sup>128</sup> (my underlining)

He probably would not agree as far as our present discussion is concerned. Plotinus in his cosmology is loyal to Plato because he is concerned exclusively with the "global excellence of the world as an artefact" and much less with the kind of personal relationship, the beneficence and love a personal god could have in relation to the created individuals.<sup>129</sup> The passage of III.3.5.37-40 is therefore unfathomable as far as our present mode of inquiry is concerned.

4.3.17 We have warned in our explication of Stoic doctrine on providence that providence cannot be understood in a religious sense<sup>130</sup> but has to be in the intellectual sense. The organisation of the universe after the analogy of the making of an artefact is the display of this intellectual power. This power places goods and evils in their proper place and gives them teleological functions. However, if evils are so necessary to the divine economy, it is very

tempting to hypostatise evils and fall into the trap of dualism. Only a clear grasp of the ontological nature of evil as *mē on* can rescue us from this temptation and those who believe in Plotinus' providence have to pose a balanced attitude with regard to the presence of evils in the divine order.

**4.3.18** How will Plotinus reply to all the charges we have made so far? First of all, Plotinus would agree with us that this emanation of reality is not "for us" and its purpose and structure with all kinds of implications cannot be seen from the limited perspective of "ours". Plotinus would, secondly, say that we have defined the scope of providential order too widely (or too narrowly?) because it is mainly concerned with practical activity and in the intelligible order of reality there is only *theoria* and no *poiēsis* and therefore no, say, determinism in the sense we have brought forth; even if there is, the scope in which it is efficacious is minimal if compared with the whole order of reality. Thirdly, determinism is a misnomer. *Poiēsis* is a weakened version of *theoria* and *theoria* is the proper activity of soul and the self in soul, as we have said, is co-extensive with the whole of reality in its vertical plenitude. Because of this co-extensiveness between the objective order of reality and the potential *dynameis* of the self (whose position along the spectrum of reality is decided by the intensity of his *theoria*) when the self is subject to this divine environment it entails liberty for the soul. The intelligible environment

"is a given against whose limits and confines our individually-won quest for personal liberty is to be fought out. Moreover, the 'intelligible environment' is not just limit and background but also the embodied reminder of our own intelligible beauty and of our capacity (which unfortunately is not guaranteed to succeed) to reach beyond it to freedom."<sup>131</sup>

We have said that the One is the absolute freedom, and the self as a floating ego can have *theoria* and so can have the potential freedom to be reunified with the One; providential order is what is governed by *Nous* but the self has the potential to surpass it and reach the One. It is the new dimension of freedom of the One and self that distinguishes Stoics from Plotinus because the Stoics identify themselves with this universe, a global embodiment of *logos* while Plotinus asks us to go beyond it because we have *theoria* and freedom. So *theoria* and freedom distinguish Plotinus, on the problem of providence, from the Stoics' position. This, Plotinus would say, answers our charge of determinism.

4.3.19 Is his supposed reply satisfactory?<sup>132</sup> The first thing to say is that this view of human activity is very revisionist and becomes totally self-regarding and his *eudaimonia* excludes the common concern of political, social and moral intent because these belong to the activity of the lower self while the authentic self is always looking upwards and this looking has to be 'personal,' 'personal' in the sense that everyone has to do his own *theoria* and achieve his own freedom and reunification, and no one else can help. Why does Plotinus come to this revisionist view on the providential order and human freedom? The immediate reason is that Plotinus, like the Stoics for example, sees the providential order organised intellectually and the *dēmiourgos* or the creative *theoria* of the cosmos as an embodiment of noetic power and not much else. But this could be pushed back one step further to the One. For the One is said to be absolute freedom and there is no conflict between the Good and absolute freedom, that is, the Good and absolute freedom are on the same metaphysical level. Westra has compared this situation with Christianity in which freedom is seen in its instrumental value and can have value only when it is connected with good because this freedom, defined by the good, can lead us to duty and obligation dictated by the good. To extol freedom to an absolute degree, as Plotinus has in VI.8, only narrows the conception of the Good and, equivalently, the One, and deprives it of certain normative divine attributes we normally associate with gods. This absolute nature

of freedom, as has been said, is also witnessed in the freedom of the floating self which seems to proceed without any pre-conditions whatsoever to the One, and this only makes for a very narrow definition of the self, mainly concentrating on its noetic power. Plotinus can reply that other attributes are detrimental to the One's perfection but this search for perfection lands us at perfect abstraction. That is why Plotinus remains apophatic about the One; perhaps, for him ultimately there is nothing much to be said about it. This abstract nature of absolute freedom and the One is the metaphysical foundation for the kind of personal freedom and providential order he recommends. Therefore, to accept his view on providence and freedom would compel us to accept a whole package of doctrines; parallel to this is our acceptance of the theory of evil as *sterēsis* of good, which also implies the same metaphysical package although with different stresses.<sup>133</sup> Westra is correct in saying that the attempt to see in the Plotinian One an intimation of the Christian God is not a valid thesis.<sup>134</sup>

4.3.20 We have deliberately delayed the introduction of a difficulty which every student of Plotinus has to face at one stage or another. That is a question formulated in IV.8.5 and I.8.14, that is that, in addition to an ontology (or "meontology") of evil (as mainly expounded in I.8), there is also a psychology of evil (as expounded in IV.8). However, one may ask immediately: if what we have said is true then does not ontology of evil over-determine psychology of evil and make the latter an ill-disguised version of the former (cp. 4.1.12)? The answer, I would like to say, is "yes". It is necessary to reflect, first of all, on this question: when Plotinus says matter as *mē on* is evil, what can he mean in regard to what we have ordinarily experienced, either at first or second hand? We can make the question more focused: what is the status of such a thesis after all?

4.3.21 There are, according to IV.8.5, two kinds of soul's descent in regard to matter.<sup>135</sup> The first kind is logically prior and necessary because soul in this descent generates matter and

completes the whole conceptual framework of reality (IV.8.5.10-5)<sup>136</sup>; the second descent has to presuppose this generation of matter and is mainly about the cosmopoietic management of this generated matter (IV.8.5.25-8). The first descent is necessitated and, although no motivation of this descent is mentioned except its necessity, this first descent of soul, in so far as it is a descent, is blameworthy and the descent itself constitutes a punishment for it. The second kind of descent is motivated by a "spontaneous inclination (*rhopēi autexousiōi*)" and, implicitly, a kind of curiosity about the powers it is endowed with; this is a dangerous business and runs the risk of over-involvement in its own cosmopoietic creation of order out of disorder and becoming over-indulged in its own self-image and thus failing to return to the hypostatic reality.<sup>137</sup> From these two sorts of soul's descent we have the conflict between a necessary descent and a voluntary descent and, since this first kind of descent is to create matter and matter is said to be evil itself, this conflict can be reformulated in the way that there is a conflict between matter as evil and soul's voluntary descent as evil - interpreted as a kind of soul's intrinsic weakness -. What is their relationship?

4.3.22 O'Brien<sup>138</sup> in his valuable work on this problem has given a wide-ranging review of others' opinions and his conclusion on this issue - the relationship between matter as the source of evil and the weakness in soul as the source of evil - is the most challenging (and most felicitous - that is why it is most challenging -) for anyone interested in the solution of this conflict:

"matter is a necessary cause of evil in the soul, but it is not a sufficient cause (= this refers to his discussion on I.8.5.30-4)<sup>139</sup>, nor a sufficient condition, of there being sin."<sup>140</sup>

O'Brien's second contribution is to relate this conclusion to Plato's theory of evil:

"the idea of two-part causes of evil offers a happy approximation to Plato's two explanations of evil: the random movements, of the receptacle in the *Timaeus*, and the evil, or at least the contrary, movements of a subordinate soul in the *Laws*."<sup>141</sup>

Our discussion so far will show very clearly that we cannot accept O'Brien's attractive, though, in my view, over-simplifying, solution and his over-enthusiastic approximation. First his alleged approximation. His mention of this approximation justifies our inquiry into Plato as necessary preliminary work for the present discussion but his ascription of both kinds of evil to the quality ('random', 'evil' and 'contrary') of motion, either in the *hypodochē* (that is, the motion of *ichnē*) and in evil soul, proves his mistake in neglecting evil as matter, *mē on*, and the metaphysical problem of ontic deficiency. It is the result of an apparent mix-up of *ichnē* with *hypodochē*. Admittedly, O'Brien in his 1981 has mentioned another approximation which sounds more plausible:

"In so far as Plotinus believes in the generation of matter, we tend to see his philosophy as opposed to that of Plato, and as sharing the idea of *émanation intégrale*.... By contrast, in so far as Plotinus sees matter as 'the primary evil' and as 'evil *per se*', we tend to see in his philosophy a continuation, and an extension, of the dualism of the *Timaeus*."<sup>142</sup>

We add a reservation about O'Brien's alleged "dualism" and refer it to our commentary on I.8.7.[1]. We must return to O'Brien's other conclusion.

4.3.23 His conclusion, that matter is the necessary condition for soul which acts as the sufficient cause for the existence of evil, seems to us over-exaggerating the independence of psychology of evil in Plotinus' philosophy, for it seems no more than an ill-disguised version



of Plotinus' ontology and the corruption of soul in his second descent is accounted for by its loss of *on* because of its nearness to matter, *to mē on*. In particular we have to read this psychology against the deterministic outlook we have already sketched in 4.3. Schwyzer is therefore correct in refusing to accept O'Brien's conclusion.<sup>143</sup> It is a rather shaky thing to ascribe the weakness of soul to any "internal" motivation within the soul. The ontological nature of Plotinus' evil and goodness - evil as loss of being and goodness as bestowal of being - remains paramount in his theory of evil. J. Simons has also mentioned this ontological nature of Plotinus' theory of evil:

"(quoting I.8.4.20-2)... Hence evil is located primarily in matter because matter is not only an extra-psychological condition of the soul's decline, but the very dislocation interior to the fallen soul."<sup>144</sup> (my underlining)

If psychology of evil in Plotinus is subordinate to the ontology (or "meontology") of evil, evil with a psychic origin, which is the consequence of the second descent of soul in its cosmopoietic mission and then in its over-involvement in its own creations, should not be regarded as O'Brien's "sin" (*kakia*) with a kind of internal motivation; it is instead a loss of ontological authenticity. It is a loss of the being which should belong to soul if it stays in the hypostatic reality (I.8.2.[9]). Both the first and second descent of soul should be understood ontologically (cp. 4.1.12).

**4.3.24** In the second half, or the allegedly apologetic half, of I.8 (i.e., I.8.8-15 with the exception of I.8.9), Plotinus has tried a style of writing in which an implicit interlocutor has repeatedly challenged Plotinus' thesis of matter as the ultimate source of evil and insisted instead that it should be soul alone that could be the source of evil, presumably, a Middle Platonic view on evil. In those sections (I.8.8, I.8.10-13) where soul is said to be the exclusive

source of evil Plotinus attacks the various arguments in favour of it and demolishes them by various strategies; in I.8.14 where the interlocutor pleads for peace but nonetheless insists on the coherence of soul as 'a' source of evil, Plotinus relents and leaves this attempt in peace and begins a belated (or repeated) elaboration of his whole theory on evil which, in part, has been elaborated in I.8.1-7. My interpretation of this change of tactics is this: Plotinus has accepted, with reservation, the intuition embodied in folk-psychology - evil is at least partially psychic in origin - as proposed by the interlocutor in I.8.14 and has wished to place this intuition that evil has a psychic origin within the context of his emanation philosophy. His intention, as I interpret, is to establish a meta-theory of evil, i.e., evil is matter and is *mē on*, which explains, in a logical and contextual way, not only the real nature of evil but also connects our ordinary use of this concept to its philosophical fundamental. This desire to build a meta-ethics which explains the intuition embodied in folk-psychology (including that evil has a psychic origin) explains the persistent obsession of Plotinus in asking the question: how we can trace phenomena, characterised as evil, back to matter (e.g., I.8.5.[6] and [7]). 4.3.13 has suggested that evils, allegedly caused by soul, are perhaps no more than the primary evil expressed 'via' soul, that is, it is like body or inorganic nature through which evil is revealed:

"evils are prior to us, and those that take hold on men do not do so with their good will (*katechein ouk hekantas*)." (I.8.5.[9]; my underlining)

I have always suspected that Armstrong's gratuitous addition of 'good' in the translation is an unconscious revulsion against the over-determination of Plotinus' ontology of evil. However, the arguments listed in 4.3.23-24 mean to minimise the effort of those who exaggerate that Plotinus has held a psychology of evil. Plotinus, as known from the temperament of his reasoning, in my view, cannot indulge himself too much in the possibility of evil with a psychic origin.

4.3.25 The only possible alternative to conceiving a different theory of evil with a personal perspective within Plotinus' philosophy is therefore to conceive it outwith the conceptual framework determined by the emanation which we have expounded so far. We will say that this is a *tolma* alternative, a subject reserved for 4.4.

4.3.26 A brief summary of 4.3. The existence of evil in the providential order causes one to question individual freedom and absolute freedom. The thesis of evil as *sterēsis* of being and goodness is the answer Plotinus gives to this question but this thesis is part of a more comprehensive metaphysics, the gists of which are emanation from the One, logical necessity in this emanation, and a hierarchical structure of the emanated reality. Within this metaphysics evil is not the quality of moral behaviour but becomes a kind of quasi-substance, *mē on*; it is a necessary part constitutive of the divine economy but a too strong emphasis on this aspect makes one suspect a sort of dualism, a complaint made by Merlan. Evil defined as *sterēsis* of *on* and goodness has to be parasitic on *on* and goodness, and therefore it has no independent value of its own. It cannot be said to have instrumental value either, instrumental value in the sense that it has the moral force to prompt a moral agent to change his moral outlook. As all the happenings in the universe are ultimately referred backwards to the One Plotinus' eschatology has a backwards-looking outlook, and this entails a supposition of moral equilibrium based on retributive calculation which exists for the sake of equilibrium, unrelated to the moral character of individuals. This universe is seen from the viewpoint of a distant "he", not of an engaged "I".

#### 4.4 AN ALTERNATIVE: TOLMA

4.4.1 We have seen Plotinus' metaphysical analysis of the problem of evil and we have also seen that it is a very revisionist approach towards an experience or fact open, perhaps partially and indirectly, to many of us. The whole approach seems very static and the coherence of theoretical speculation is bought at the price of a strong feeling of its unreality. However, A. Smith has pointed out, basing his position, I think, on Schwyzer's and Kristeller's *Zweifache Sicht*<sup>146</sup> in Plotinus' philosophy, that the concepts of *heterotēs* and *hylē* are proper to the description of emanation and its hierarchical structure<sup>146</sup> but they cannot explain or describe the 'transition' between different *hypostases* from a personal perspective. Therefore, he recommends a shift of attention to the mystical experience of reunion and departure (cp. II.9.15.38-40 and 16.5-10).<sup>147</sup> The subjective aspect we have of the descent from the One to *Nous* in our spiritual life, for instance, is no less authentic than the ontological analysis of it and, in fact, is independent of it.<sup>148</sup>

4.4.2 This psychological approach has its rationale in the vertical plenitude of soul, in the sense that Plotinus has designated a duplication of the whole structure of reality within the soul: "*Die innere Steigerung des Bewusstseins führt also die Seele zur völligen Selbstaufgabe*"<sup>149</sup> (cp. V.1.10.5-7) and has endowed the floating self with a freedom to establish itself at any point along the spectrum of reality (V.1.10.10). For our present interest, we have to point out that Plotinus has balanced his thesis of evil as matter and body (e.g., III.6.14-15, II.3.16, II.9.6 and 12, I.1.7. and 13) with another thesis of evil as inclination (*neusis*) of soul (e.g., III.7.11, IV.8.4 and 7, V.1.1), an experience detached from the emanation scheme of reality. The term *tolma* expresses very well this *neusis of hypostasis*, *hypostasis* now in the sense of "level of

experience or consciousness" and not "level of objective reality". Sometimes we may ask ourselves which is prior in Plotinus' eyes: the 'objective' and ontological analysis of reality or the 'subjective' and psychological experience of it. Based on these possibilities we have two ways of seeing the divine order: either we may see it as the production of "global excellence or goodness" or we may see this divine order "a goodness to an individual". The whole tendency in the *Enneads* is to stress the objective side at the expense of the subjective side, and this is understandable because the primary (super)being, the One, in Plotinus has never been meant to be like the Jewish or Christian God. The present re-orientation is therefore not to abandon what we have done in the last three sections but to extend our research into a perspective on the problem of evil which exists but is often neglected in the study of Plotinus. Someone might say that this stress on inner experience is influenced by Plotinus' interest in (or animosity to) Gnostics. I must suspend my judgement on this opinion for the evidence in *Vita* and *Enneads* II.9 is not clear-cut enough to allow us to say anything decisive; I in 4.5 assume the premise that the Gnostics, no less than Plotinus, maintained a close connection between cosmogony and theodicy. Our research into the role of *tolma* and the related thesis of evil is primarily based on Plotinus' doctrine of the individual soul as a floating ego.

#### 4.4.3 *Tolma* is mentioned in VI.9.5.27-30:

"...intellect is not dispersed in itself but is in reality altogether with itself and its nearness after the One has kept it from dividing itself though it did somehow dare to stand away from the One (*apostēnai de pōs tou henos tolmēsas*)...."

Enough has been said about the derivation of *Nous* from the One. Apart from the pre-noetic seeing, indefinite dyad and noetic matter<sup>150</sup>, Plotinus now proposes another mode of explanation for the generation of *Nous* from the One. The three kinds of explanation

enumerated above have the same character, that is, they are intellectual by their very nature, but now the *tolmatic* departure is affective. One may well question whether *tolma* might be no more than an *ad hoc* and thus unessential metaphorical expression by Plotinus. However, in the Neopythagorean tradition the association of *tolma* with the indefinite dyad is frequent and both in turn are linked to *epheisis*,<sup>161</sup> and this proves that a *tolmatic* approach is authentic. How much can we get out of VI.9.5.27-30 without being accused of under- or over-interpretation?

4.4.4 The key terms of this passage are *tolmēsas* and *apostēnai* but we have to decide, first of all, the intention of the passage. Is it about the generation of *Nous* from the One or, as Rist says, "rather its (= *Nous*) attitude after it has been generated"?<sup>162</sup> If the latter, this, says Rist, could only mean that the departed *Nous* "has to 'face up' to living apart after its generation - indeed it has no option."<sup>163</sup> This indicates that Rist lays stress on the second moment in the self-constitution of *Nous* and thus on *Nous*' self-determination; *apostēnai* here can have only a neutral sense of 'standing away' instead of the normal and stronger sense of 'apostasy,' 'rebellion' and 'revolution.' An implication of Rist's interpretation is that the departure of *Nous* from the One (and, by parity of reasoning, soul from *Nous*) is not a guilty act that brings its own downfall; it is, instead, the inevitable consequence of "the One's generosity."<sup>164</sup> The *tolma* in the quoted passage is not an impulse for independence but "courage" to face up to necessity. Meijer, however, criticises him saying that "Rist... knows too much" and, on Armstrong's denial of the presence of a paradox here ("that the ultimate responsibility for *tolma* lies with the One or the Good itself. And if it originates in the Good, it cannot be bad"), he says that this is merely explaining away the difficulty and "doing the work for Plotinus, who never suggested anything of the kind."<sup>165</sup>

4.4.5 Rist's interpretation immediately meets the difficulty in explaining III.8.8.35-6:

"how much better it would have been for it not to want this, for it becomes the second!"

Rist sees this exclamation from the perspective of the One's generosity.<sup>166</sup> However, it is undoubtedly the tone belonging to an apostatic *nous* after its voluntary departure and the language is proper to a 'repentant' *nous*.<sup>167</sup> Rist says that as indefinite dyad or noetic matter cannot be said to have will so *tolma* cannot mean anything related to that affective aspect. This seems rather trivial, for how otherwise can one explain this famous passage from VI.7:

"... that first one is the contemplation in its right mind, and the other is intellect in love, when it goes out of its mind 'drunk with the nectar'; then it falls in love, simplified into happiness by having its fill; and it is better for it to be drunk with a drunkenness like this than to be more respectably sober." (VI.7.35.23-7)

This is an apparent concern to find out the presence of an affective aspect in the ascent or descent in reality, but let us return to Rist's stress on the self-determination of *Nous* in VI.9.5.27-30. This passage has repeatedly emphasised the causal efficacy of the One on *Nous* in its integration and the sudden appearance of the last concessory clause ("though...") signifies a kind of interruption in this originally harmonious relationship. Rist's interpretation would make the change of tone in this passage much less significant. The intention of the passage, which explains the relation between the One and *nous*, would rule out Rist's "self-determination of *Nous*". Therefore, *tolmēsas* and *apostēnai* in VI.9.5.27-30 should be understood in a much stronger sense than Rist has allowed.

**4.4.6** Rist's interpretation has the consequence of seeing the whole philosophy of Plotinus as a rigid structure of different *hypostases* piling up together and denies the fluid dynamism in the

transition between different *hypostases* seen from the perspective of an experiencer. The alleged 'courage' - is it not affective? - Rist uses in explaining *tolma* would make the descent of *Nous* from the One a necessity the *Nous* has to bear rather than the quality of *Nous*' decision or determination in its departure. *Tolma*, like indefinite dyad, noetic matter and pre-noetic seeing, apart from expressing the ontological distance *nous* has in relation to the One, also has, in addition, a voluntarist connotation because it expresses an attitude to the One. A bold step in this direction can help us see soul, in its vertical plenitude, not only internalise the whole reality but the whole reality is in effect a projection of this inner experience on to the universe; the correspondence between microcosmos and macrocosmos could go either way (II.2.2.4-5). In addition, I may add this suggestion. If soul, in regard to matter, has two kinds of relationship defined by the two moments of descent, one of which is logical and necessary while the other is psychological and voluntary, then it is very possible to see that similar distinction could be implied in the relationship which *nous* has with the One.

4.4.7. Meijer in his criticisms of Rist and Armstrong (both of whom under-interpret VI.9.5.27-30) also warns us of over-interpretation; he says that to ascribe to VI.9.5.27-30 a pessimistic tone is over-interpretation.<sup>168</sup> The question is this: if that passage is the only one to indicate a possibly affective element in the descent of a *hypostasis* then the charge is more than probable; however, this is not the case. The *locus classicus* of the *tolmatic* theme which is related to pessimism is V.1.1.4-6 where evil, generation, self-assertion for independence and otherness are assembled together in a most impressive way:

*"archē men oun autais tou kakou hē tolma kai hē genesis kai hē protē heterotēs kai boulēthēnai de heautōn einai."*

This passage is about the departure of soul from *Nous* but there is no reason to doubt its



applicability to *nous* in its departure from the One. The same group of ideas associated with *tolma* is repeated again in III.7.11.9-12.8 where soul departs from *Nous* and begins its own life style and this implies time:

"there was a restless active nature (*physeōs polypragmonos*) which wanted (*boulomenēs*) to control itself and be on its own, and chose (*helomenēs*) to seek for more than its present state, this moved and time moved with it... for because soul had an unquiet power (*tis dynamis ouch hēsuchos*), which wanted to keep on transferring what it saw to something else... instead of keeping its unity in itself, squanders it outside itself and so goes forward to a weaker extension...."<sup>159</sup>

The three passages from VI.9, V.1 and III.7 are all characterised by this cluster of words ususally associated with *tolma* and we may also refer to IV.8.4.15-7 and 7.10, V.3.11.1ff., III.9.3.8-17, VI.9.3.4ff. and IV.7.13.1ff.. The evidence of texts is cumulative. *Tolma*, therefore, indicates a restless nature which cannot contain itself within fixed *hypostasis* and wishes to create by intending an image of its own; it is more interested in the first motivation of the lower *hypostasis* to leave its superior and less in the second moment of its self-constitution and preservation of its own identity and independence. Those words or phrases, associated with *tolma*, are indicative of a psychological condition of rebellion - thus an abrupt discontinuity of reality - and apparently cannot be neutralised in the way Rist has done by referring to *apostēnai* in VI.9. *Tolma* is thus a kind of desire which assumes two forms: (1) the first moment of the lower *hypostasis'* voluntary departure from its superior; (2) the second moment of the lower *hypostasis'* determination to keep the right ontological distance from its prior in order to constitute itself<sup>160</sup>: the stress on (1) is apparent.

**4.4.8** Apart from the departure of soul and that of *nous* from their superiors, the tolmatic

theme also appears in the decision of the soul to descend into body in its desire to "impart order and beauty according to the pattern which it sees in the intellect" (IV.8.13.6-7) and this is an echo of soul's moulted wings (*ptorroyēsasan psychēn*) in *Phaedrus* (II.9.4.1-2); this desire is described as "*spoudē*". The most startling piece of evidence is the narcissistic self-love of soul in its seeing its own image in "the Mirror of Dionysus" (*Dionysou en katoptrōi*, IV.3.12.2).<sup>161</sup> In III.9.3.8-17 the partial soul (*hē merikē*) descends into body and the motivation is also tolmatic. A slightly different use of it is found in the description of destitute matter in its aspiration to its prior in III.6.14.8-10; this is different because this tolmatic desire of matter is an upwards surge, unlike the downwards *neusis* we have mentioned so far.

4.4.9 Therefore the tolmatic theme seems to run through the whole gamut of reality after the One and the rebellious feature is typical of this affective experience of reality. The tolmatic theme is mainly directed downwards (i.e., *proōdos*) but has its counterpart in *erōs* or *epheis* in *epistrophē*, but this has to be understood without the emanation scheme. This psychological description of reality, centred on *tolma*, is parallel to, but independent of, the ontological analysis of reality. Since the rationale for this subjective approach is the personal freedom of a floating self, and therefore *tolma* is blameworthy, so too is the descent into lower reality. The difference is that the descent in this case is not necessitated but voluntary. The linear progression of reality in the emanation punctured by *heterotēs* is now replaced by the zigzag and for- and back-wards pro- and re-gress in the experience of reality, depending on the kinds of experience the self has undergone. The perspective on this reality is not the vantage point of an omniscient and third-person *poiētes* who sees the reality derived from the One as necessary and inevitable, but instead he begins to see these different *hypostases* as different depths of personal experience from the viewpoint of some frail and limited being.<sup>162</sup> The wide range of experience from the total darkness of matter to the brightness of the absolute One is open to him because he is the microcosmos in which is designated a duplication of the whole

of reality and along this vertical plenitude he can establish himself at any point whithersoever his effort of *theoria* carries him. From this limited and partial perspective of an individual the absolute One is not there *simpliciter* but is the highest spiritual reality to be sought after and *tolma* and *erōs* are the motivating forces which interact dialectically in this search. Both *heterotēs* and *tolma* are the operational principles that account for the departure of the lower reality from the higher but their explanatory force is different. *Tolma* happens in the decisive moment in the psychological history of an individual in his understanding of reality and it symbolises the fall, the lapse, the *apostasis* or even rebellion in his spiritual experience, that explains the diversification and pluralisation of being. It is *heterotēs* internalised and dramatised (VI.9.8.35).<sup>163</sup>

4.4.10 On this internalisation of reality we may do well to listen to what Filoramo has to say. In his opinion this internalisation of spiritual struggle is the most significant characteristic of a contemporary transformation of ideas and beliefs. The remote cosmic conflict or harmony as seen in the Gnostics or Plotinus might well be no more than an echo or reflection of this vivid and dramatic inner and personal experience (II.9.2.5-10).<sup>164</sup> Filoramo then reaches the conclusion that this inner experience constitutes the basis of Plotinian mysticism.<sup>165</sup>

4.4.11 The validity of our emphasis on the tolmatic theme being parallel to but independent of the ontological analysis can be seen in IV.8.1.27-40.<sup>166</sup> In his search for philosophical authority in Plato on the descent of soul Plotinus wavers between a line of interpretation (based on textual support from *Phaedo* 62b, *Phaedrus* 246c and *Republic* 514a) which sees the creation of this universe as "falling away" from the perfection of the One, and another line of interpretation (*Timaeus* 34b) which sees the universe as the "overflowing" from the generous One. The first line suggests that the descent of soul is blameworthy and this is because soul in this descent has made a voluntary choice; from this perspective the universe is to be seen

in a negative light. A sensitive reader of IV.8.1.27-40 and those related Platonic passages can see that this approach is man-centred and the viewpoint adopted to the constitution of this universe is first-person and an involved and engaged attitude. The other interpretation, on the other hand, is to see the universe as the inevitable and necessary pluralisation of reality: this is cosmos-centred.<sup>167</sup> The descent of soul is no more than a performance of the duty assigned to soul, which is somehow quite abstract and conceptual, and as the creation of the universe is necessary and an overflow from the One, so the attitude to the universe is positive because everything necessarily derived from the One is good.<sup>168</sup> Plotinus is caught between these two perspectives and is apparently puzzled because he shifts between them, at least in his repeated change of mood between a monistic and pro-cosmic optimism and a dualistic and anti-cosmic pessimism. If we bear in mind that there are two ways, the ontological and the *tolma*-psychological way, of seeing the whole of reality as already expounded, then his shift of attitude towards the universe has its root in the more fundamental problem on how we perceive his philosophy. If we look back to Plato, the difference between these two attitudes can be traced, based on our two theories about Plato's cosmology, to (1) our interpretation of *Timaeus* which explains the universe within the context of a creationist metaphysics with Being, *hypodochē* (= the ultimate *heterotēs*) and the *dēmiourgos* (= *nous*) playing the main roles and to (2) the thesis of psychic *autokinēsis* in *Phaedrus* and *Laws X* which makes soul(s) the only organiser(s) of universe with some suspicion of its (or their) lapses (cp. e.g., *Enneads* III.4.6.18-9, I.8.4.6-7). If this interpretation of Plato is plausible and Plotinus did see these divergent interpretations of Plato, then there is a *tolmatic* alternative acceptable - other than emanation, - to Plotinus' philosophy.

**4.4.12** With this alternative we can be freed from the view which sees evil as a kind of quasi-substance with all its implications for the providential order sketched in 4.3. Instead we begin to see evil as a kind of personal experience, or as qualities of personal experience, and the

cause of it is the personal freedom for the abuse of which man as a floating self has to take sole responsibility.

**4.4.13** Can one reconcile this subjective approach with the objective and ontological analysis defined by the emanation of reality, especially since in 4.4.1. it has been suggested that they might be more complementary than antithetical? In a sense it can. Both approaches have to presuppose the One, either the One which is the source of being or the One as absolute freedom which is the source of personal freedom; in the One this absolute freedom is identical with its supra-existential transcendence. For the One these two functions are identical and these two approaches are different ways of finding how to contact the One. The subjective approach in Plotinus' philosophy does not presuppose the One as a personal god because the kind of personal freedom, on which the subjective approach is based, is not the kind of freedom subject to the delimitation dictated by the good which freedom in the instrumental sense has to serve; it is a freedom with an affective factor but this affective factor remains directed towards a noetic goal and thus becomes a noetic impulse or desire, not the emotion or compassion the ordinary language use of it would have us expect. This means that the kind of personal freedom allowed to self is also mainly noetic by nature. Under this light this tolmatic approach becomes attached to the ontological scheme without the philosophical paraphernalia of *hylē*, *heterotēs*, *hypostasis* and so forth. In V.5.8.7-16 and VI.9.11.4-16 the individual mystical experience of the One converges with the *hypostasis* of the One in the moment of *stasis*.<sup>169</sup> Simon Weil in a different context has expressed this possible reconciliation very well:

"If the 'I', in the personal sense, fades away in proportion and in so far as man imitates God, how could it be sufficient to conceive of a personal God? The hindrance of a personal God is an hindrance to such an imitation."<sup>170</sup>

With this quotation we end this section.

## 4.5 PLOTINUS ON GNOSTICISM

4.5.1 In 4.4.13 it was suggested that in V.5.8.7-16 and VI.9.11.4-16 there is a convergence of the individual experience of the One with the *hypostasis* of the One in the moment of *stasis*. M.A. Williams has suggested that this convergence finds its echo in the Gnostic treatise *Allogenes*.<sup>171</sup> Jonas summarises further the co-existence of these two approaches in Plotinus, saying:

"...an element of personal willfulness is at this point injected into what otherwise is with Plotinus a system of rational necessity...."<sup>172</sup>

although he admits that the introduction of this totemic theme is "somewhat inorganic in this context".<sup>173</sup> However, Plotinus' psychology of the self, in my view, sanctions this introduction and it constitutes an authentic part of his whole philosophy. The more serious problem is that Gnosticism, as a cosmogony related to the problem of evil, is totally unacceptable to Plotinus and that he did devote his only explicitly polemical treatise II.9 to combating this competitive alternative. The infiltration of Gnosticism into the inner circle of Plotinus can be seen in *Vita* 16 and *Enneads* II.9.10 and this proves the effectiveness of these Gnostic doctrines. We will make a brief excursus into this intellectual alternative for a further illumination of Plotinus' views on evil.

4.5.2 It is hard to agree with Plotinus that after reading his II.9 every reader "will be able to know what the real state of the case is as regards all their other doctrines" (II.9.10.15-7). The first impression after reading his II.9, together with Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*, is that Plotinus translated all Gnostic doctrines he mentioned into Platonic language, and indeed Tertullian

spoke about "the Platonist Valentinus" and Hippolytus spoke about Valentinus and his disciples as "Platonists and Pythagoreans".<sup>174</sup> Sometimes one feels that in II.9 Plotinus was arguing with Valentinus to prove true his Platonic credentials; in one place, however, this translation into Platonic philosophy met its limits and he seemed desperate enough to admit that "another style of writing would be appropriate to repel these (= Gnostics)." (II.9.10.13)<sup>175</sup> For once again we meet the same kind of question we have met with the *eikōs logos* of Plato's *Timaeus*, that is, the very intimate relation between the genre and the message to be conveyed. In the present case, Plotinus admitted, the Gnostic *mythos* is the only kind of discourse the Gnostics can express themselves with and M. Tardieu says very well: "the mythical thought at work in Gnosticism has rationalised and systematised myth".<sup>176</sup> This means that it is a conscious manipulation of the genre and develops the *mythos* into an explicit *theo-log-ia*. This consciousness can explain the artificiality of the structures and the multiple hypostatisations of abstract concepts. H. Bloom thinks this mythical expression is an expression of freedom, a freedom composed of negation, evasion and extravagance; it is an attempt "to create freedom out of and by catastrophe"<sup>177</sup> and this sense of catastrophe and disruption is the very message the Gnostic *mythos* wishes to convey. This manipulation of genre and the outrageous parody of classics - either pagan or biblical - and anti-institutional attitude (Tertullian *De Praescriptione* 41.2-6) are in great contrast to the display of "simplicity and straightforwardness of character along with clear thinking," recommended features for true philosophical discourse (II.9.14.37-45; cp. Irenaeus *A.H.* B.1. Preface 3), and the circumspect respect for the Greek philosophical tradition (II.9.6.42-63). The *mythos* is thus the *gnōsis*, a *gnōsis* based on the "consubstantiality" (*homoousia*) between humanity and divinity; the fate of the Gnostic individual is the divine history of cosmos. The vehicle (the *mythos*), the knower (the Gnostic or *pneumatic*) and the message (the *gnōsis*) are therefore one and the same:

"The knowledge of truth, however, is freedom which existed before ignorance came



into being... it is something good and it is salvation... and it is an escape from the nature of slavery."<sup>178</sup>

**4.5.3** The cosmology given in this Gnostic *mythos* is the reverse of the Platonic perspective. In Plato and Plotinus we find a progression from chaos to cosmos and the progression is continuous, either through benevolent intervention *ab extra* or the logical necessity implied in emanation, while in Gnosticism we see a "fall" from *plerōma* to *kenōma* and the change is revolutionary and catastrophic. Since the consubstantiality between human and divine is asserted and there is no difference between cosmology and anthropology, the *apokatastasis* of the cosmos is thus the same as the *sōteria* of the individual. Therefore the *mythos* or *gnōsis* is predicated of the 'called' or pneumatics by being aetiological<sup>179</sup>; it is eschatological by being explanatory and it is instrumental by being soteriological. *Logos* can tell a coherent story about the continuum of reality but one needs the genre of *mythos* to explain the disruption of reality, in which crisis punctures the unfolding of divinity; *logos* means to analyse while *mythos* means to act and change, and this might be the reason for the practice of "magic chants" among the Gnostics in order to intimidate the *archōns* (II.9.14.1-11). Both Plotinian *logos* and the Gnostic *mythos* share the "Alexandrian world-scheme"<sup>180</sup> in the sense that the story of creation is an unfolding of the divinity, either the One or the *Bythos*, an inevitable downward emanation or devolution but the rules governing the devolution cannot be more different:

"It must be noted... that gnostic emanation... has a catastrophic character... the form of its progress is crisis, and there occur failure and miscarriage, a disturbance in the heights starts off the downward motion which continues as a drama of fall and alienation. The corporeal world is the terminal product of this epic of decline.... The Plotinian descensus of Being, in some respects an analogy to the gnostic one, proceeds through the autonomous movement of impersonal concept, by an inner necessity that

is its own justification. The Gnostic descensus cannot do without the contingency of subjective affect and will."<sup>181</sup>

4.5.4 One can further accentuate the rational necessity implied in the Plotinian emanation by presenting it as an immediate *parousia* of the One (II.9.17.41-2 and 16.40-8). The hierarchical structure of reality and the *modus operandi*, emanation, is both atemporal and non-spatial; it cannot tolerate any idea involving growth or development within this world picture:

"... it never happened to the All to be incomplete like a child, nor does any kind of addition come to it and add anything to its body." (II.9.17.52-3; cp. II.9.9.14; my underlining)

On the other hand, the *archē* and *telos* of the Gnostic cosmology is neither synchronic in the Plotinian sense nor the end (if there be one) of a temporal progression of Plato's time as a moving image of eternity. Since the origin of Gnostic creation is an unfortunate fall from *plerōma* and the return is a restoration of it, and its seeds for *apokatastasis* have been sown and only wait to be awakened, Gnostic history is thus an unfolding between the moment of a realised 'already' and that of an apocalyptic 'yet'.<sup>182</sup> With regard to this cosmic make-up Plotinus could ask two questions in his II.9 in relation to the problem of evil: (1) Why there is devolution from the One and why the nature of this devolution is in terms of disruption and crisis; (2) what are their implications for theodicy.

4.5.5 To the first question. Despite the Sethian elements mentioned in Porphyry's *Vita* and II.9.5.20-3<sup>183</sup>, our inquiry will be confined to the Valentinian version of the "Sophia myth" because of its elaborate nature and its similar structure to Plotinus' emanation; the attack of Plotinus in II.9 is, in general, directed to this Valentinian version of Gnosticism.<sup>184</sup> Plotinus in

II.9.11.3-7 speaks of Sophia's fall in a language strongly reminiscent of emanation:

"For if something like light streamed from it, it is not proper to say that it declined when that happened; unless the darkness lay somewhere below it and it moved spatially towards it and illumined it when it came close to it."

There are two points to be noted: one is the emanation analogy for the progression of reality and the other the implied pre-existence of darkness and dualism.<sup>186</sup> Plotinus did not attack these two points; instead the focus is to liquidate the concept of 'making' - and hence the *dēmiourgos* - as the principle in *cosmopoiēsis*. The starting point is *Timaeus* 28c where it is said that

"to discover the Maker and the Father of this universe were a task indeed." (my underlining)

We have seen that for Plato and Plutarch these two terms underlined represent two separate functions the *dēmiourgos* assumes; for Numenius, the Father represents the transcendent first God and the Maker represents the second god, and Father and Maker are now two distinct entities: the Maker is subordinate to, but continuous with, the Father. For Plotinus his theory of productive *theoria* denigrated the concept of the *dēmiourgos* as *poiēsis* but restored it at once to a kind of weaker *theoria* and thus preserves the continuum of reality. For the Gnostics, on the other hand, the Father and the Maker are antithetical to the point of exclusion because the birth of the *dēmiourgos* (or Iadabaoth) from the fallen *Sophia* and the consequent creation of the universe constitutes the moment of crisis in the unfolding from the One; it stresses the discontinuity of reality ('make him revolt from his mother' II.9.10.31)<sup>186</sup>. This discontinuity is the result of an excessive stress on the transcendence of *plerōma* and the complete

depreciation of the *kenōma* which is the consequence of *dēmiourgos*' revolt. Schlette is thus right to say that Plotinus and his Platonic predecessors are trying to strike a balance between the position of Gnostics and Stoics, the Stoics whose first principle is totally immanent and the Gnostics whose first principle, *Bythus* (= Father), is completely transcendent.<sup>187</sup> If Plotinus shares the same 'Alexandrian world-scheme' with the Gnostics in relation to the *plerōma*, then the creation after the fall of Sophia follows the rule of 'making' (= *poiēsis*), i.e. discontinuity, rather than emanation (= *theoria*), i.e., continuity:

"For it made the world in every way after the manner of nature rather than as the arts make; for the arts are later than nature and the world." (II.9.12.18-9; cp. II.22-3)

The type of creation based on the immediate contact between form and its proximate matter without the intermediary of *poiēsis* is recommended because the *dēmiourgos* as *poiēsis* implies deliberation and this implies an ignorance; this would further introduce temporality and arbitrariness:

"To ask why soul made the universe is like asking why there is a soul and why its Maker makes (*ho dēmiourgos epoiēsen*). First, it is the question of people who assumed a beginning of that which always is: then they think that the cause of the making was a being who turned from one thing to another and changed." (II.9.8.1-5)

On the other hand, the existence of the cosmos for Plotinus is an immediate *parousia* of the *on*:

"The image has to exist necessarily, not as the result of thought and contrivance (*ouk ek dianōias kai epitechneōs*)." (II.9.8.21-2)

4.5.6 Why the creation of the sensible world or *kenōma* has suddenly changed into a different rule of 'making' and failed to continue the emanation in the *plerōma* (II.9.11.3-7, already quoted) is difficult: "Die Welt ist so durch ihren Werkcharakter als etwas Andersgeartetes und Geringeres von den eigentlichen Emanation Producten abgehoben"<sup>188</sup>. However, the 'making' and the revolt of the *dēmiourgos* and his consequent arrogance and ignorance do characterise the inferiority of this sensible creation. The economy of this sensible universe is under the spell of the 'tyrannical rule' of *archōns* and the *dēmiourgos* (= *monothētes*)<sup>189</sup>, and *heimarmenē*, in the form of astrology, is conceived as a weapon for the suppression of *anthrōpoi*. This anti-cosmism consists in the negation of the cosmos and in the abolition of the *nomos* imposed *ab extra* on this universe, i.e., an encouragement of antinomianism ("their indifference to virtue" II.9.15.27-8; cp. Irenaeus' *A.H.* B.1.XXIII.3 & XXV4-5) The Gnostics base their antinomian 'ethics' on the lack of ontic authenticity in the universe and, as the universe is not a real reflection of the pleromatic world but a *kenōma* and a caricature of it, the topic of how to escape the evils in the universe is thus paramount.<sup>190</sup>

4.5.7 The *gnōsis* of salvation as the aetiology of human history, however, is not "the fact of me in search of self" as alleged by Puech<sup>191</sup> because there is no search for it but an endowment in the form of *pneuma* or, in the heresiography, as 'a spark of life' (*A.H.* B.1.XXIV.1)<sup>192</sup>; the *gnōsis* of salvation is therefore a kind of substance and this could be the meaning for Gnostics' salvation by nature, that is, the Gnostic mythology becomes salvation-physics.<sup>193</sup> Like Plotinus' equation of goodness with being, this implies a determinism because this pneumatic substance is the only link between the *anthrōpoi* in a corrupt universe and the *plerōma*, and only those who are given it can be saved while those who are born as *hylics* or *choics* are doomed to perish.<sup>194</sup> It is because of this unexplained and partial endowment of *pneuma* that Floyd has said that "determinism was a logical complement to the pessimistic world-view postulated by Gnostics."<sup>194</sup> On the other hand, the profound mistrust of the

sensible universe forms a contrast to the awakened desire to strive for a return to the *plerōma* where the *pneumatikoi* originally had their habitat before the crisis in the *plerōma*: they are victims of the crisis and its consequence. Such a contrast between these two levels of reality - *plerōma* and *kenōma* - should be a common subject in the Platonic tradition; however, a very accentuated form of it, as in Gnosticism, constitutes a 'vertical dualism', a "rigorous affirmation of transcendence".<sup>196</sup> This vertical dualism entails an utter condemnation of the mundane nature of the *kenōma* and a strong anti-cosmism and dualism. This 'vigorous affirmation' explains why the Gnostics like to multiply the intermediates between the *Bythus* and *kenōma*, a practice condemned by the metaphysical economy of Plotinus (II.9.6.28-32). Pétrement questions if we should after all call the Gnostics' vertical dualism a dualism at all because it can never be balanced:

"there is no equality or perfect analogy between realities of different levels. It cannot truly be a system; on the contrary, it renders all systems imperfect."<sup>197</sup>

The proposal given in the Messina conference on Gnosticism has phrased this situation in a most happy way:

"a dualistic conception on a monistic background."<sup>198</sup>

4.5.8 With this very rigorous affirmation of transcendence Plotinus' Gnostics can explain the *dēmiourgos*' creation "as a result of moral failure" (*toū sphalmatos legetōsan tēn aitian*) (II.9.4.4-5) and "out of ignorance and rash assertion" (*alazoneian kai tolman poien*) (II.9.11.23) and the Gnostics can see this universe as "the strange land" (*hē gē... hē xenē*) and espouse the eschatological wish "that a new earth has come into existence for them, to which... they will go away from this one." (II.9.5.25-6) This eschatology is, on the one hand, already realised

(for those already endowed with *gnōsis* or *pneuma* can be and have in fact already been saved) but is also orientated toward the future and this could answer the question made by Plotinus, that is, why the Gnostics tarry here and complain.<sup>199</sup> On the other hand, the Plotinian eschatology is backward-looking and this can only mean a resigned acceptance of the existent arrangement, a kind of fatalism if we may say so (e.g., II.9.9.73-6).

4.5.9 As far as Gnosticism is concerned, the disruption between the *plerōma* and *kenōma* and between the emanation and its very weak substitute, "making", can be ascribed to the ignorance of the *dēmiourgos* in regard to the higher world.<sup>200</sup> This ignorance of the *dēmiourgos* thus creates one moment of crisis in the cosmogonic history. However, Plotinus has mentioned the revolt of the *dēmiourgos* from a fallen mother, Sophia, and therefore the cause of degeneration can be pushed further backwards. In II.9.10.19-22 Plotinus mentioned her fall and, as Sophia is one of the thirty *aeons* in the pleromatic world, this means that a crisis had already happened within the *plerōma* before the crisis created by the ignorance of the *dēmiourgos*. What causes this crisis in the *plerōma* is Sophia's "inquisitive searching after the Father" (Irenaeus *A.H.* B.1.III.1; cp. IV.8.7.15-7) and it is the fact that the Father's nature is utterly incomprehensible that "the rest of the *aeons* possess perpetual existence." (*A.H.* B.1.II.5) This can only mean the exposition of *Bythus'* or the Father's nature would eliminate the existence of the *plerōma*. Sophia's search is thus a self-destruction and her expulsion from the *plerōma* is necessary accordingly.

4.5.10 She, after her lapse, is barred from the *plerōma* by '*horos*', and the collection of her passions constitutes the matter from which the *dēmiourgos* created the universe. These constitute the Gnostics' creationist metaphysics for the condemned universe. This is very interesting. The lapsed Sophia is differentiated from the *plerōma* by *horos* (which is of course hypostatized by the Gnostics) and her fall became the material source for creation and these

two functions suggest, if not exactly, that Sophia is related to ontological *heterotēs* (from the *plerōma* by *horos* and from *dēmiourgos* and *kenōma* by a "cosmic veil", presumably a version of *horos*) and also the source of the material reservoir for the *dēmiourgos*' creation. As the *dēmiourgos* is characterised by his ignorance of the pleromatic history, so is Sophia by her ignorance of the *Bythus*. There can, moreover, be a development along this line of interpretation. According to G.C. Stead Sophia in different versions is seen as the last *aeon* and also as the perfect consort of the *Bythus*.<sup>201</sup> Quispel takes the search for the cause of this youngest *aeon*'s lapse right back to the *aeons* around *Nous* and *Alētheia*, "like a sort of 'focal infection' which became an abscess and burst out in Sophia."<sup>202</sup> A.H. B.1.XI.1 supports this view and says:

"He (= Valentinus) also supposed two beings of the nature of *Horos*, the one of whom has his place between *Bythus* and the rest of the *plerōma*, and divides the created aeons from the uncreated Father (= *Bythos*) while the other separates their mother (= the fallen Sophia) from the *plerōma*." (my underlining)

If we take all of these as reliable data then we have a structure of reality in Valentinus similar to that in Plotinus. The first *horos* sets apart the *Bythus* (= the Plotinian One) from *aeons* (= Plotinus' *nous*) and the second *horos* which separates *aeons* from the lapsed Sophia (= soul); this lapsed Sophia is originally part of *nous*, therefore her various features in its vertical plenitude resemble the soul *hypostasis*, an intermediate between the noetic world and the sensible world. The gnostic *dēmiourgos* in a sense resembles Plotinus' *physis* in his creation of the sensibles or *kenōma*. The important *hypostasis* of *horos* plays exactly the role that the concept of *heterotēs* does in Plotinus' emanation. The revolt of the *dēmiourgos* against his mother is a dramatic version of this *heterotēs* or *horos*. Quispel therefore comes to the conclusion that



"evil is the result of a process, a moment in the 'explication' and 'explicitation' of the Divinity into its different aspects."<sup>203</sup>

We can thereby identify three places where the alleged crises happened: (1) the first *horos* indicates the inner differentiation of the *Bythus* which is, by definition, against differentiation and pluralisation, and this crisis separates the *plerōma* (except the *Monogenes* or *Nous*) from the *Bythus*; (2) the second *horos* separates the fallen *Sophia* from the *plerōma* and this makes her an intermediate between the *plerōma* and *kenōma*; before her return to the *plerōma* she was located in the *ogdoas*; (3) the revolt of the *dēmiourgos* from the fallen *Sophia*, which results in the *hebdomas*, that is, the sensible universe. What characterises these three crises in common is the ignorance of their prior entities and ultimately of the *Bythus*. These three moments accentuate the catastrophic discontinuity of reality because the inferior level of reality cannot trace its source back to a higher level of reality. In reality, the ultimate reference, the *Bythus*, has to assume the ultimate responsibility for evils.

4.5.11 Plotinus reaches exactly this conclusion. He asks himself: if the created cosmos is so abhorrent to Gnostics, then the origin of corruption, for Gnostics, should be in the higher level of reality:

"If, on the other hand, it was against its nature, then there will be a place for what is against nature in the higher world, and will exist before the universe, and the universe will not be responsible for evil, but the higher world will be the cause of evil for this world, and evil will not come from the world here to the soul, but from the soul to the world here; and the course of the argument will lead to the attribution of responsibility for the universe to the first principle: and if the universe, then also the matter, from which the universe on this hypothesis would have emerged." (II.9.12.34-40)

Such an analysis is full of insight and points right at the very weakness of the monism developed by the Valentinian Gnostics, the Neopythagoreans and, in effect, by Plotinus himself, because the ultimate One, as the source of emanation, is the cause for all the consequences, good or bad and being or non-being. We may well ask ourselves again what the difference is between Plotinus' view on evil and the Gnostics'? As far as the law of emanation is concerned we could say that Plotinus lays more stress on its continuity and sees the hierarchy of reality as a series of reflections and the *eidōlon* as an intimation of the reality above it; what governs this emanation is a kind of rational necessity; furthermore, considering the interrupted progress of reality in Gnosticism, my repeated stress on reading the concept of *heterotēs* against the continuum and *homoiotēs* guaranteed by the One in the emanation is also vindicated. For the Gnostics, on the other hand, the emanation is characterised by ignorance, rebellion, catastrophes and disruptions, and these crises in transition always assume the form of subjective willing, either as 'inquisitive searching' into the incomprehensible by Sophia or as the arrogance and ignorance typical of the *dēmiourgos*; the *hypostasis* of *horos* in the *plerōma* and the cosmic veil between the *hebdomas* and *ogdoas* indicate the discontinuity of reality and this disruption means an eternal deferral in the reunification with *Bythus*. The highest principle in both systems is responsible for the emanated reality, and the present cosmos is the last of reality derived from it and is the least authentic in its existence: why then should Plotinus seem far more positive than the Gnostics about this last and least reality? Plotinus seems aware of this problem and begins, immediately after the present quotation, to wonder loudly if a certain form of dualism might be more plausible in exonerating the One from this charge of causing evils. Plotinus says that either there might be a pre-existent darkness (*skotos*) for the soul to decline into and darkness might thus assume the responsibility for evil or that the darkness is the product of the declining soul. In the pre-existence of *to skotos* we have the alternative of dualism but in monism he is brought to face a One which is responsible for evils:

"this is the same as attributing the responsibility to the pre-existing necessity; so the responsibility goes back to the first principle." (II.9.12.44-5)<sup>204</sup>

Both, monism and dualism, seem to be rather unacceptable to Plotinus. In our discussion of Plotinus' theory of matter and evil we have argued that they are essential to the make-up of the hierarchical structure of reality but this, as we have already hinted, would inevitably lead Plotinus to a weaker form of dualism, or shall we say, a weaker form of monism.<sup>205</sup> When Plotinus launches his metaphysical discourse in terms of emanation he reaches an anhypostatic matter (but substantiates it as the generated product of soul) and when he looks at the question of evil he has to assume a 'pre-existent darkness' to explain evil because the One can only be responsible for things good. This inconsistent position on the part of Plotinus between a monism (based on matter as derived from the One) and a dualism (based on the pre-existence of matter or *to skotos*) indicates the difficulty he faced.

4.5.12 To return to Gnosticism. I have suggested (cp. 4.5.5), with Doresse<sup>206</sup>, that there might have been a belief in dualism lurking behind the Valentinian myth of Sophia which, according to our interpretation, is basically monistic and emanative. The implied dualism as seen in Sethian Gnosticism seems an alternative to the monistic thesis the myth of Sophia wishes to convey. The tentative conclusion for our consideration of Plotinus' criticism of Gnosticism is that both Plotinus and the Valentinian Gnostics, described in his II.9, are in fact facing the same kind of dilemma. Plotinus' assertion that he is fully aware of his emanation from the One being "an order of firsts, seconds and thirds in regular succession, and so on to the last" (II.9.13.3-5) does not guarantee that he can thereby hold a pro-cosmic, rather than an anti-cosmic, attitude because he ultimately does not tell us why the One has to emanate except by means of a definitory *fiat*. It is more probably the result of his personal belief than the persuasion of rational argument.<sup>207</sup> The 'originality' of the Gnostics is that they accepted the

incomplete nature of the cosmos and saw this as a result of a series of ignorance and mistake; their anti-cosmism corresponds to their pessimistic assessment of this imperfect cosmos and their perpetual nostalgia for another better world .

4.5.13 It is said that the Gnostic cosmogony proceeds within the tension between the moment of 'already' and the moment of 'yet' and the *apokatastasis* is to roll history back to the First One, or God, or *Bythus*. We can therefore ask if this cosmogonic process, which is composed of a succession of ignorance and error on different levels of reality, is after all a futile one and the moment of inner differentiation within the first principle is unnecessary. (This kind of question cannot be applied to Plotinus.) However, one may well ask, what is the point of 'repentings' and 'exiles' (II.9.6.2), or of the final return of Sophia to the *plerōma* and the occupation of the *ogdoas* by a reformed *dēmiourgos* in some versions of the myth? What is the justification for the repeated suggestions made by Plotinus that the Gnostics are welcome to opt out if they wish? As the unfolding of the *Bythus* has proved that the cause of evil arises ultimately within the *Bythus* and, if the *Bythus* remains withdrawn, this could only mean that the *Bythus* will remain imperfect and that the ultimate cause of evil is therefore never to be removed. The *apokatastasis*, we may suggest, is not merely a return to the original *Bythus* but a kind of renewal and growth. Remember the analogy of children which Plotinus ascribes to Gnosticism but he himself rejects, because its connotation of immaturity and future development is against the *parousia* of Plotinus' One which is immediately and completely present to the emanated reality. Such an *apokatastasis* in Gnosticism therefore assumes both a cosmological and an anthropological dimension and constitutes a justification of evil and a need for rectification of it, and evil is thus endowed with an instrumental significance. Filoramo expresses this perspective very imaginatively:

"... Was it not perhaps aiming at the elimination of that potential deficiency and

congenital incontinence in the very life of the *plerōma*, expressed in the sin of Sophia? And in fact, in its trials of exile, crossing the frightful threshold of evil, experiencing and suffering the pangs of spiritual birth, the Gnostic Church matures individually and collectively. Evil can be defeated finally only if it is objectified in the work of creation. And when the *plerōma* is renewed internally, it will know the repose."<sup>208</sup>

4.5.14 Evil in Gnosticism is thus instrumental as a *paideusis* and so not necessarily constitutive of reality; evil is a sort of ontic deficiency to be defeated and eliminated. Although this is the case, if one views the Gnostic view of evil with the redemption-of-the-Cross philosophy of St. Paul, one cannot but feel that the instrumental value of evil as *paideusis* in Gnosticism remains limited because this *paideusis* is not guided by a clear *pronoia* of an omniscient God. The will of the first God or *Bythus* in Gnosticism is always distorted and caricatured and the role of saviour, in the case of Jesus Christ for example, is characterised by a very strong docetism which stresses the transcendence of the saviour and the eternal perdition of *kenōma* and thus the permanent difference between the mundane and the divine, that is to say, there is no 'progress' for the fallen *psychoi* to make in order to return to the Father and so the analogy of "immature children" does not apply to the Gnostics, either. What we have in mind can be illustrated by *A.H.* B.IV.XXXVIII.1 and XLI.2 together. In the case of Gnosticism the *pneumatikoi* are destined to be saved disregarding any personal merits and the *cholics* are doomed to perdition without moral culpability, with the *psychoi* nowhere to go to.<sup>209</sup> The first moment of 'already', furthermore, in its original condition is in fact not a moment of perfection and no one knows if the future moment of 'yet' will reach *unum et bonum*. This means a possible *creatio perpetua* and knows no end of travail. Although this could not be the intention of the Gnostics, their cosmogony and soteriology do imply such a conclusion.

4.5.15 On the other hand, evil for Plotinus is, like matter, very much constitutive of the cosmic

economy and is a permanent feature of it. What Plotinus does is not to eliminate - neither can the Gnostics - but to rationalise it so that he may be able to live with it. Nowhere is this shown more clearly than in Plotinus' repetition and reaffirmation (in I.2 and twice in I.8) of the theodicy in *Theaetetus* 176a which says:

"when the answering speaker in the dialogue says that there would be an end of evils 'if he convinced men of the truth of his words'. Socrates answers that 'this cannot be; evils must exist of necessity, since the good must have its contrary.'" (I.8.6.14-17)

One may well ask why one cannot defeat it by some means if one takes exception to the alleged logic that the good must have its contrary in evil. This is the consequence of Plotinus' treatment of cosmology as a kind of artefact organised by a pure intellectuality (such as the logical rule that good must have evil as its counterpart to be viable), a sort of "global excellence", which in turn is deeply rooted in his personal belief in the beauty, divinity and rationality of the cosmos.<sup>210</sup> On this Origen gives us the necessary endorsement:

"Greeks, it is clear, say that the world in reality is god, Stoics say that it is the first god, Platonists that it is the second and certain others that it is the third." (*Contra Celsum* V.7)

## 4.6 CONCLUSIONS

4.6.1 What is given in the above discussion is a broad picture of the complex of matter, evil and providence. If I have elaborated somehow on the contextual background for this complex of questions this is meant to put us in the right perspective because Plotinus' theory of matter and evil is part and parcel of his whole metaphysical package and cannot be detached therefrom without losing all its rationale and interest. The language of morals automatically presupposes (and recommends) a metaphysical package. Such a contextual discussion provides a background knowledge for our commentary on I.8. More discussions on matter and evil and their relationship are apparently necessary but we have to leave this present deficiency to be reconsidered in the commentary wherever necessary and proper. The commentary, hopefully, will provide discussions of points I have made simple statements about but without getting involved in the details; on the other hand, my commentary will sometimes have to refer to the discussions already made here.

4.6.2 In my discussions it is clear that the existential order is imposed on the axiological order of reality and matter is equated with evil because Plotinus sees the divine goodness of the One as the provider of being and the *sterēsis* of it is therefore regarded as evil. This makes evil a kind of quasi-substance (based on Plotinus' *mē on*), a kind of ontic *privatio*, and therefore the moral quality of a human agent in his activity is lost sight of. This doctrine of evil as *sterēsis* of *on* is not analytical but has to presuppose a whole package of metaphysical doctrines, the most important of which is the emanation of reality which implies a plenitude of being and its hierarchical structure. Hick criticises this deployment as a semantic preference or linguistic recommendation based on an optimistic picture of the universe; it is *a priori* reasoning on a

very empirical happening. However, in 4.3.24 I have tried to mitigate this *a priori* and revisionist nature of Plotinus' theory of evil by arguing that Plotinus' intention is, perhaps, to build up a meta-ethics for the intuitions embodied in folk-psychology (such as, evil is psychic) and dig into the "real nature" of evil - evil as the quality of a moral being in his behaviour is after all a diminution of his total being. By this mitigation Plotinus might wish to preserve the phenomena but claim an insight into the real nature behind (or underlying) them. On this reasoning evil, nonetheless, is parasitic on goodness and being and its presence is explained as necessary and complementary to the good in the divine economy. We have argued that this entails a kind of moral equilibrium and a realised eschatology. The whole outlook is backwards-looking, looking back to the One.

4.6.3 The tolmatic theme brings us a new perspective for seeing the universe and the evil present in it. The definition of evil is now a definition of his spiritual lapse, a kind of moral *depravatio*, and his unification with the One is the ultimate expansion, not extinction, of his personality and freedom. Neither is evil a given *simpliciter*, nor is the One. They are the *omega* and *alpha* for the range of his psychological possibilities. However, such a re-orientation still sees evil and the One in noetic terms because of the noetic nature of personal freedom. The rationale which supports this alternative, i.e., the personal freedom, is decided according to the relationship between the Good and the absolute freedom on the metaphysical level; as the One is mainly conceived in noetic terms so the personal freedom remains noetic by nature. The ontological analysis and the psychological experience are thereby complementary, not antithetical, to each other in Plotinus' henology.



## [NOTES]

1. Gerson p.205. Aristotle in *Met.* 1003b26-32 has said this: "for one man and a man are the same thing and existent man and a man are the same thing, and the doubling of the words in 'one man' and 'one existent man' does not give any new meaning... unity is nothing apart from being...." See Guariglia pp.64-5.
2. O'Daly p.153 of *Plotins Schriften* (Harder) VI 106; Schlette p.118. Cp. VI.8.11.27., VI.5.8.33, VI.5.9.48.
3. A quotation from Cilento, see Westra p.19 and p.55.
4. F.M. Schroeder 1980.
5. J.S. Lee 1982 p.97.
6. quoted from Reale 1990 p.396.
7. Ibid.
8. W. Theiler in his 1976 pp.478 says: "*Plotin... keine Neigung hat, sie durch die abstrakte Zahl zu ersetzen.*"
9. Schwyzer 1944.
10. Kolakowski p.145.
11. Schlette p.64 and p.68; also Beierwaltes pp.91-2 and p.96: "*Aus sich herausgehend manifestiert es Anderes und Zugleich sich selbst im Anderen.*"
12. Schlette p.74.
13. Beierwaltes 1961 p.91: "*das Eine erkennt sich in der Dimension des nous dadurch dass dieser seiner selbst inne wird, sich selbst erkennt.*"
14. A.H. Armstrong is typical of this tendency and in his early work, '*The Architecture*' p.102, he has derived five *hypostases* in total from his analysis. He later retracted this opinion in his 1967.

15. Katz 1954 p.296 note 49. cp. e.g., II.9.2.5-10 and VI.7.6 as a whole.
16. See Schiette pp.71-2 on its Platonic allusions.
17. cp. Beierwaltes 1961 pp.78-82, Schwyzer 1944 pp.92-3 and Zandee pp.31-3.
18. Beierwaltes 1961 p.102 and pp.106-7.
19. Filoramo p.59; cp. Jonas 1967 p.93; in regard to the "naturalism" in this concept, see Ratzinger col. 1223.
20. Filoramo p.59.
21. Armstrong 1937 p.61. A more elaborate definition of *Seinsstufung* can be seen in Ph. Merlan's *Beiträge zur Geschichte des antiken Platonismus. Philologus* 89 (1934) p.202.
22. For a very comprehensive survey of this concept, both in patrology and Greek philosophy, see Ratzinger's *Emanation* in R.A.C..
23. Armstrong 1937 p.66; cp. Schiette p.59.
24. Lee's argument (J.S. Lee 1979) on the causal efficacy of matter is based on Armstrong's veto of emanation and an alternative option for the reception doctrine. (e.g., III.2.3.32-4; V.5.12.39-40; VI.4.3.11; VI.4.11.3-8; VI.4.15.1-6 and 13; III.2.4.31-7; III.2.7.6-7; II.9.3.4-5; II.9.17.15-21; V.5.9.36-9; VI.4.5.11; VI.4.14.5; VI.5.3.13-6; VI.5.11.28-31; VI.7.15.21-3; VI.7.16.11-4) The reception doctrine is to look at reality from the receiver (*epitedeideti tou dexomenou*) and thus is a bottom-up approach. The text on which Lee bases his argument for matter's causal efficacy is VI.5.8.15-22. The implication of this approach is Lee's alleged connection between emanation doctrine (a top-down approach) and eidetic causation on the one hand and connection between reception doctrine (bottom-up approach) and material causation on the other.
25. A.C. Lloyd 1987 p.165 note 10.
26. Armstrong 1937 p.64, Merlan p.354 (in his *Plotinus* in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), Kolalowski pp.146-7 and Reale 1990 pp.393-4.
27. Reale 1990 p.393.

28. Gerson p.205; cp. Reale 1990 p.394.
29. Reale 1990 p.393.
30. Ibid. p.394.
31. Schwyzer 1944 p.92.
32. Beierwaltes 1961 pp.95-6.
33. Reale 1990 p.395. Beierwaltes in his 1961 pp.95-6 had stressed the difference between the *hypernoēsis* of the One (V.1.8.16) and the *noēsis* of *Nous* and thus the difference between the One and *Nous*. The absolute freedom of the One in its creation is "*nicht intentionale*" in its *hypernoēsis* in contrast to the intentionality of the *nous* in its *noēsis*; "*Gerade durch die im hyper angezeigte Negativität des Begriffes hypernoēsis wird die alles Seiende und Denkende übersteigende Positivität des Einen offenkundig.*" cp. Bussanich p.215 and p.218.
34. The self-directed *theoria* and the upwards directed *theoria* are in fact the same according to VI.7.30.35-9, VI.9.2.35-6 and VI.9.11.39-41.
35. Balthasar p.298; also *ibid.* p.299.
36. Schlette p.73. It seems to me necessary to add a reference to H.U. von Balthasar pp.287-90 in regard to the generation from the One, which is quite similar to what was said in 4.1.6-8,
37. *Ibid.* p.68.
38. Gerson p.210. cp. VI.8.14.29: "the being and the cause are one and the same."
39. Schlette p.78 and note 82.
40. Westra 1990 p.49. There is a concern about the unilateral relation obtaining between the One and the rest because this could mean that Plotinus' admonition that we should trace, *via* the generated reality, back to the One through its effect is therefore invalid. II.9.17.26: "*ei oun mā tauta, oude ekeina*" seems to destroy the non-reciprocal relationship but I admit that this is the only piece of evidence I have been able to find so far; more prominent in Plotinus' philosophy is his persistent stress on the transcendent nature of the One but this stress on the One's transcendence is also unfavourable to the attempt to find out about the One through its

effect. A mutual relation would inevitably degrade the ontological superiority of the One but a unilateral one might give Gnostics the excuse that the universe is in fact fictitious or simply mischievous because the ignorant and arrogant Gnostic *dēmiourgos* just proves the disconnection between the *mundus sensibilis* and *mundus intelligibilis* and therefore it needs a second creation and thus their argument for 'another world'. (see 4.5)

41. Schubert p.39.

42. Parry 1979 and Patterson 1981.

43. Jonas 1967 p.93. For *hypernoēsis*, see note 33.

44. Cp. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* XII.xiii.19: "I no longer wished individual things to be better, because I considered the totality. Superior things are self-evidently better than inferior. Yet with a sounder judgement I held that all things taken together are better than superior things by themselves." Also cp. Spinoza's *Ethics* prop. XXXIII. note 2: "... it follows solely from the perfection of God, that God never can decree, or never could have decreed anything but what it is; that God did not exist before he decrees, and could not exist without them." cp. Helm p.184.

45. Hick 1985 pp.79-80.

46. *Contra* Alt pp.48-50; it is nevertheless a credit to Alt that she raises the question of "an other world" but her attempt to give an explanation is filled with inconsistencies.

47. A.C. Lloyd 1976.

48. Schlette pp.80-1.

49. I refer for a detailed discussion of it to Atkinson pp.157-60 and Bussanich pp.37-43 where different opinions are collected and compared.

50. A.C. Lloyd 1987 pp.175-6.

51. Hadot 1986 pp.242-3.

52. Szlezák has pointed out the contradiction of the concept of intelligible matter or pre-noetic "seeing" because in the intelligible world the intelligible "matter" can never be intelligible

"potentiality" (Szlezák p.79) since all entities there are fully realised at once. The concept of a progress from pre-noetic "seeing" to *Nous hypostasis*, however, seems to require just this concept of "potentiality": *dynamis eis energeian elthousa (contra, e.g., II.5.3.25ff.)*, a dynamic progress from pre-*nous* to *nous*: "Wenn es aber keinen Übergang zur Aktualität gibt, so wird es auch sinnlos, nach dem Zustand 'vor' der Begrenzung zu fragen." (Szlezák p.81) Plotinus is aware of this problem because he says "something like matter There is form" (II.5.3.14) but this awareness does not provide a solution because we cannot see what he really means here and so the contradiction must remain in the formation of *Nous hypostasis* and this applies to the formation of *Soul hypostasis* as well: "since the soul too, which is form, can be matter to something else." (Ibid.) It is realised that Plotinus has rejected the Aristotelian concept of *sumbebēkos* - and the concept of *dynamis* - (see II.5 and the commentary on I.8.1.[2]) but the "process" for the formation of *Nous* and *Soul hypostases* seem to require this Aristotelian concept of potentiality.

53. Szlezák p.84.

54. Ibid, p.85.

55. Rist 1971 p.83; cp. Beierwaltes 1961 p.85.

56. Beierwaltes 1961 p.85.

57. Beierwaltes 1961 p.85 and 1971 p.368 and p.371.

58. Fielder 1976 pp.101-2.

59. Ibid. pp.112-3.

60. Fielder says that the anomaly of soul is because there is no so called psychic matter for soul but this is clearly wrong. The term, 'noetic matter,' is a genus; soul has always been included in the noetic world with nous. See Hancock p.133. The anomaly of soul in Plotinus' philosophy is due to the confusing functions it is expected to perform and this has to be ascribed to the vertical plenitude of soul apart from its horizontal plenitude in the hierarchy of *hypostases*.

61. Rist 1962 p.100.

62. Hancock p.133; cp. Rist 1962 p.105.

63. Rist 1962 pp.104-5

64. Hancock p.133.

65. Rist 1962 p.101.

66. Ibid. pp.101-102.

67. Ibid. p.102.

68. Schlette p.125.

69. Schlette p.86, p.125 and p.130; see Beierwaltes 1971 p.368 for a definite formulation of this approach: *"Apeiria - auch hierin zeigt sich das retardierende Moment in Übergang - ist noch nicht konkretes apeiron, sondern dessen Grund; dyas ist noch nicht konkrete Vielheit, sondern Prinzip von Vielheit; ebenso ist heterotēs erst Bedingung der Möglichkeit von Anderem, nicht schon selbst Anderes. Andersheit hat... die aktive Funktion der Differenzierung... dass heterotēs als ein inneres und als ausseres, hervorgehendes Moment von apeiria oder dyas begriffen werden kann."* (my underlining)

70. Schlette p.95 and p.130.

71. Fielder 1976 p.118.

72. Rist 1965 pp.338-40 and p.341.

73. Emilsson p.16.

74. Schlette p.87; cp. ibid. p.86 and p.145.

75. Beierwaltes 1961 p.105 and 1971 pp.368-9.

76. Ibid. 1961 p.104.

77. See Szelzák p.76 for Plotinus' innovation in relation to his predecessors.

78. Szelzák p.77; *contra* his p.76.

79. Schlette p.124: *"er die noetische Materie as die metaphysische Andersheit, als das heteron zum einen und zum Seienden schlechthin denkt."*

80. Ibid. p.125: "*die Ermöglichung des Hervorgehens der Hypostasen überhaupt.*"
81. Rist 1974 p.498.
82. Schlette pp.60-1.
83. Ibid. p.120.
84. Ibid. p.130.
85. Ibid. p.150.
86. Ibid. p.91 and p.93: "*Intensivierung der Negativität.*"
87. Ibid. p.93 and p.96.
88. Beierwaltes 1971 p.369: "*Durch Entgrenzung schafft heterotēs Bewegung (Veränderung) als dynamis duopoios verursacht ständige Seinsminderung und damit immer grösseren Entzug des Eines aus dem Vielen (hyphesis), letztlich mē on als kakon und hylē.*"
89. Schlette p.109.
90. Ibid. p.111 and p.117; Zandee p.18.
91. It is my belief that the existence of prime matter does not contribute anything to Aristotle's metaphysics which his proximate matter cannot have already done. Evidence on the (non-) existence of prime matter in Aristotle on both sides is equipollent and therefore it is difficult to make a decision purely from the philological point of view. (see, e.g., W. Charlton's Appendix (= pp.129-45) to his *Aristotle's Physics I, II* [OUP 1983] and chapters 1 and 2 of Gill 1989, both of whom are against the existence of prime matter; also see, e.g., Solmsen 1958, a very eloquent defense for its existence.) From the philosophical point of view the assumption of prime matter seems to mean a kind of absolute generation for Aristotle and for him generation is always a generation of a particular individual by an already realised individual. This is to see Aristotle's philosophy from the perspective of *anthrōpoi* who are the highest development of *physis* and *physis* is specified according to *anthropoi*. (see chapter 2 on Aristotle) This does not mean that Plotinus had the same perception of Aristotle as I do here. Plotinus' philosophy, on the other hand, does not admit much of Aristotelian individuals and

the conceptual categories applied to analyse them (see I.8.6 and commentary *ad loc.*); Plotinus' general direction is to give a broad plan on the structure of reality and for this prime matter can explain why they are things rather than not. In II.4, II.5 and III.6.7ff. he has unambiguously presupposed or argued for the existence of prime matter (in a physical sense, that is, the substrate underlying sensible changes) and grafts this on to his emanative theory of reality as its ultimately sterile stage.

92. O'Brien 1981.

93. Cp. Schlette p.118.

94. Ibid. p.128.

95. Ibid. p.132; cp. Pistorius' "logical postulation" and my criticism of it at the end of commentary on I.8.3.

96. Schlette p.107.

97. Ibid. p.106: *"es mit Notwendigkeit keine inhaltlichkeit mehr aufweisen und also auch nicht inhaltlich-kategorial beschreiben werden kann."*

98. Bréhier p.180.

99. Merlan 1960 p.123 note.

100. Filoramo p.138.

101. Zeller p.603: *"aber für Plotin gab es kein Mittel, diesem Widerspruch zu entgehen, da er die Material auf seinem Standpunkt weder als positive Bedingung für die Verwicklichung des Gottlichen aus diesem ableiten, noch als ein zweites gleich ursprunliches Princip neben Gottliche stellen konnte."*

102. Cp. Katz 1950 pp.44-5.

103. Rist 1974 p.504.

104. Cp. Rist 1965 p.338.

105. Schlette p.135 and p.137.

106. Ibid. p.137: *"führt nur den Titel kakon als ein weiteres Prädikat des Nichtseienden und*



*damit auch der hylē ein."*

107. Gilson p.156.

108. Adams and Adams p.22.

109. Reale 1985 p.248-9; Westra p.150.

110. Reale 1985 p.250; Westra p.151

111. Westra pp.151-3.

112. This operative side of hypostases is the so called *logos*. See Früchtel 1970.

113. Westra p.170.

114. Hick p.54.

115. Cp. Schubert p.44.

116. Schubert pp.89ff..

117. Pétrement pp.156-70.

118. Pétrement p.158.

119. Cp. Origen's *de princ.* 1.8.1: "If it were not so, and if the soul had no previous existence, how is it that we find men blind from birth, before they could possibly have sinned, and why do others go blind although they have done nothing wrong?" See also Daniélou pp.214-5.

120. Schubert p.97; Alt p.43; Manchester 1986 p.384: "Where the past is dominant, temporality is experienced as fate or destiny, as that larger pattern in life that one does not see as it unfolds but which appears under an aspect of inevitability as the course of events finally brings it into view."

121. Pétrement says that Greeks "scarcely placed any hope in time and history." See Pétrement p.160. Note, however, the background of her discussion is the Christian idea of time and salvation. cp. Manchester 1986 p.394 and p.396.: "eternity and time are two manifestations of one life, bound to each other like a presence and its image in a mirror." cp. J. Simons 1985 on matter and time.

122. See Chadwick p.28 and P.136 note 110; also Danielou pp.116-7 and Schubert p.111.

123. Filoramo p.30.

124. Pétrement p.196.

125. Cp. Crouzel p.185; also Armstrong 1976 p.192: "living organic unity of the universe of which men are not very important parts...." Origen, again, expresses this view with the kind of lucidity one can expect from him: "The rest of the universe was not made for man, Man was so created that as a work of God he should be perfect in whole and in part. Everything was created as it is with a view to the perfection of cosmos; the cosmos was not created as it is with a view to man's perfection. God's care is for the whole." (*Contra Celsum* 13.26) Cp. Daniélou pp.111-3.

126. Schubert p.29 and p.64.

127. Schubert pp.120-1.

128. From Hampshire's "*What Means This Freedom?*" quoted from Westra p.181.

129. Adams and Adams p.10.

130. Schubert p.30.

131. Westra p.183.

132. Schubert (Schubert p.100) accuses Plotinus of rushing, too often unnecessarily, upwards to the One for any explanation but this accusation is not fair because this accusation reveals his failure to see that Plotinus' approach is *a priori* and speculative.

133. Westra p.149.

134. This paragraph on the revisionist nature of Plotinus' providence and freedom is based on Westra pp.147-95. It has to be realised that Westra bases her argument largely on VI.8. and therefore her conclusion cannot be comprehensive but I agree with her conclusion as far as the scope of her discussion is concerned.

135. Cp. Schlette pp.99-100.

136. Schlette p.129 and p.146.

137. Alt p.54.

138. O'Brien 1971.
139. O'Brien 1971 p.129-30.
140. Ibid. p.133 and p.143. Rist in his 1974 p.496 has suggested that the matter with which the star souls come into contact is not the same as that which may meet the human soul and corrupt it. This is admittedly correct according to Aristotle but it is not clear if it is relevant here. If Rist is to be consistent in his position he has to ascribe the corruption of astral soul (*per impossibile*) and individual souls to the weakness of soul itself.
141. O'Brien 1971 p.145.
142. O'Brien 1981 p.118.
143. Schwyzer 1973 p.274.
144. J. Simons p.66.
145. Schwyzer 1944 p.89 at the *gegenständliche* and *aktuale Sicht*. Schwyzer explains the *gegenständliche Sicht* at p.89 and the *aktuale Sicht* at p.90.
146. Schwyzer reaches his conclusion on the *gegenständliche Sicht* in p.93 where he says that the *mundus sensibilis*, despite its diminished ontological authenticity, maintains a certain positive value and so does matter. It is a picture which is both "monistisch und statisch." (my underlining)
147. Schwyzer gives his conclusion on the *aktuale Sicht* in p.99 where matter is perceived in a negative light and its related concepts, such as *mē on* or *sterēsis of on*, are blameworthy. The world picture presented is "aktual gesehen, dualistisch und, da sie vom Leben des ständigen Auf- und Ab- stieges durchpulst ist, dynamisch." Also Smith 1974 pp.46-7.
148. For the difference between these two approaches, see Schwyzer 1944 p.99 and Hadot 1986 p.234. cp. Smith 1974 p.35; Reale 1990 p.319 and p.322.
149. Schwyzer 1944 p.96; also p.94.
150. Apart from the pre-noetic seeing Plotinus uses noetic matter and indefinite dyad to describe this inchoate condition. Both Atkinson and Bussanich (Atkinson p.110 and Bussanich

p.16 and p.120) have raised doubts about this plethora of terms referring to this inchoate condition of *Nous*. They think Plotinus is not serious about the Neo-pythagorean indefinite dyad and number theory in general despite Plotinus' VI.6. On this point we think they are right, but we cannot agree with them that Plotinus is not interested in noetic matter but sees it as another variant of pre-noetic seeing. His lack of interest in number theory is understandable because an indefinite dyad (*aoristos dyas*, V.4.2.4-7 and V.1.5.6-9) will imply a kind of dualism and therefore a deficiency in the Monad while for Plotinus the One is totally self-sufficient. Strangely enough the treatise VI.6 does not have much to say on the indefinite dyad and this constitutes another piece of evidence for Plotinus' negative attitude. As for noetic matter, II.4 and II.5 should constitute enough evidence for its importance and my exposition of noetic matter presupposes this.

151. Atkinson p.4; Rist 1962 pp.99-107 and 1965 p.340.

152. Rist 1962 p.341.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid. pp.341-2.

155. Meijer pp.175-6 note 514.

156. Rist 1962 p.342.

157. Merlan 1960 p.124.

158. Meijer pp.175-6 note 514.

159. See Beierwaltes' commentary on this passage in his 1967 pp.248-52

160. Torchia p.94.

161. About Gnostic narcissism, see Pétrement p.119 and Filoramo pp.108-9.

162. Hick p.174.

163. Origen has mentioned *koros* or *satietas* as the cause for the descent of angels, see Crouzel pp.55-6. Jonas thinks that Gnostic influence on Plotinus is most clear in the injection of personal wilfulness into the "system of rational necessity." See Jonas 1967 p.106.

164. Filoramo p.31.
165. Filoramo p.32. Jonas denies this to Gnostics, see Jonas 1967 p.107.
166. Cp. Reale p.374.
167. Schwyzer 1944 p.93 and pp.98-9.
168. Ibid. p.93.
169. M.A. Williams p.823.
170. Quoted from Clark 1991 p.100.
171. M.A. Williams p.823.
172. Jonas 1967 p.106.
173. Ibid.
174. Zandee pp.2-4; Dr. Blumenthal has suggested to me that this "translation" of foreign concepts into Platonic language also appears in IV.7 where the opponents are Stoics.
175. Karin Alt in her p.63 has emphatically pointed out the Greek character of the Gnostics' philosophy: *"Platons Philosophie bildet in Plotins Sicht die Quelle und den Bezugspunkt für die Konzeption der Gnostiker; dass sie sich gründlich mit Platon beschäftigt haben, setzt er voraus."* Moreover, Alt has also denied the trace of oriental influence (*"orientalische Gedankengut"*) which I think it is correct to emphasize. However, both assumptions have to be qualified by the polemical context because the provision of information in this situation is not as important as the refutation of the opposing world picture recommended by the Gnostics. (Ibid.)
176. Quoted from Stroumsa p.1.
177. Bloom p.62.
178. 4th Treatise of *Jung's Codex* 117, 28-35; quoted from Zandee p.39.
179. Markus has said: "the pattern of salvation for the individual gnostic elect follows exactly the pattern of the unity and wholeness of the Plermoa." (Markus p.204) For a definition of *Plerōma*, see Markus pp.200-1.

180. Nygren p.296; Jonas 1967 p.92.
181. Jonas 1967 pp.92-3.
182. Filoramo p.135; Manchester 1986 pp.404-5.
183. J.M. Robinson 1973.
184. Zandee p.1.
185. Doresse p.561; e.g. Haardt p.102.
186. Alt p.19; Whittaker 1981.
187. Schlette p.102.
188. Ratzinger col. 1221.
189. Zandee p.24.
190. See Zandee pp.24-6 on the role of the *dēmiourgos* in Gnosticism.
191. Quoted from Pétrement p.136.
192. Clement of Alexandria, in *Stromateis* V.1., says of this substantial nature of faith: "If one (= a Gnostic) knows God by nature... then he calls faith an existence, not a freedom, a nature and substance." (my underlining)
193. See Markus pp.205-8 and p.219. In pp.210-1 Markus has said very revealingly that salvation for the gnostic elect is a matter of nature but this endowed pneuma is nevertheless distinct from but seems quite unrelated to the "man" who receives it: "The one thing is clear is that we cannot here speak of a 'man', a being with sufficient degree of wholeness and unity, to allow us to speak of him as the recipient of a gift. There is no giving as receiving, but a superimposition of strata on substrata. The cost of possessing the 'gift' - if we can speak of a 'gift' at all - is to disown all that we should call human... The only thing that is saved is the 'gift' itself, the inner or 'spiritual' man - and saved by its spiritual nature. All that goes to make up the 'recipient' of the 'gift', is in the last resort foreign to it and incapable of assimilating it...."
194. Zandee p.6 and pp.30-1.

195. Floyd p.24.

196. Pétrement p.180.

197. Ibid.

198. J.M. Robinson 1967 p.XXVII.

199. See Manchester 1986 pp.384-5 for the past-oriented conception of time and pp.404-5 for the future-oriented conception of time.

200. Alt p.20.

201. Stead 1969 p.93.

202. Quispel p.38.

203. Ibid.

204. Alt p.59.

205. Merlan 1960 pp.123-6.

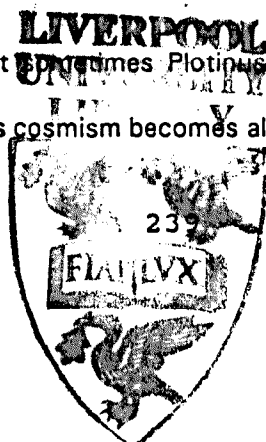
206. Alt p.60.

207. Dr. Blumenthal has suggested to me a probably similar situation in the case of Parmenides who had much to say about the changeable phenomena in his "the way of opinion" despite his other attempts to abolish this "*pantelōs mē on*". This is interesting though I think its relevance to my present topic is limited.

208. Filoramo p.135. Part of my argument on the Gnostic *apokatastasis* is indebted to Filoramo but somehow there is deficiency in his discourse. I would therefore recommend a much neglected article by Meijering 1974 who has given a very pertinent interpretation of the metaphor of "immature child" in II.9.9.14 and II.9.17.52-3. Also see Markus pp.213-6. It is certainly not my intention to get involved in any Christian theology any attempt to understand this metaphor in greater details would inevitably incur.

209. cp. Markus p.209.

210. Reale has pointed out that sometimes Plotinus stresses so much the intelligibles (or Reale's "supersensibles") that his cosmism becomes almost acosmism. See Reale 1990 p.313



and pp.370-1.