SUPPLEMENTAL RESEARCH FOR
PLOTINUS THE PLATONIST: A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT
OF PLATO AND PLOTINUS’ METAPHYSICS AND
PLATO AND PLOTINUS ON MYSTICISM, EPISTEMOLOGY,
AND ETHICS

Plato (424/3 – 347/8 B.C.E.)

Plotinus (c. 204 – 270 C.E.)

by

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Introduction

This is a supplement to my two published books, *Plotinus The Platonist: A Comparative Account of Plato and Plotinus’ Metaphysics* (Bloomsbury, 2014), and *Plato and Plotinus on Mysticism, Epistemology, and Ethics* (Bloomsbury, 2017), wherein I argue that the philosophies of Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ on over 100 philosophical claims (see Appendix II for a complete list of 180 claims, and where I address them in my two books and this supplement). However, since Bloomsbury Publishing (understandably) gave me word count restrictions for each book, I needed to cut out portions of my original research in order to get the manuscripts down to size. Thus, I have decided to put the material together that I was not able to publish, in order to show even more areas in which Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ, and to cite the passages to leave the accuracy of my claims to the readers’ judgments. My initial idea was to cover as many areas, issues, and claims as I was aware of, so that if I mentioned X, Y, and Z, but was aware also of A, B, and C claims, I wanted to include the latter as well, so that no reviewer or reader could say, in effect, “Well, Yount does a nice job of showing us about X, Y, Z, but has nowhere accounted for A, B, and/or C.” Thanks to this supplemental piece, I have put all my metaphorical cards on the table and have achieved my original goal.

For simplicity’s sake, I will refer to my first work as PTP, and my second book as PPMEE. Moreover, when I refer to sections with this symbol: §, I will refer to sections in this supplemental work with just the section symbol in general, and, e.g., PTP § 1.1 or PPMEE § 2.2 to refer to sections in my books. The exception to this rule is when I need to refer to sections in one or more of my books and the supplement, in which case I will refer to them as, e.g., PTP § 1.1, PPMEE § 2.2, and SUPP § 3.3.
CHAPTER 1: THE GOOD

In this chapter, I examine the Platonic and Plotinian claims that: The Good is sufficient for, complete, desirable and satisfying to all souls, and is an absolute good, beginning with Plato (§ 1.1); The Good is self-sufficient and perfect (§ 1.2); and the Good or One is alternately referred to as the King (or Father, in Plotinus’ case) (§ 1.3).

1.1 The Good is sufficient for, complete, desirable and satisfying to all souls, and is an absolute good

Plato: Interestingly, the Philebus does contain some passages that are pertinent to the One or the Good. Though the chief question of the Philebus is indeed whether the human good consists mainly in intelligence or pleasure (as Plotinus interprets the Philebus as well),¹ there are some passages that would seem to be related to the Form of the Good.² Let us examine those passages now.

The first Philebus passage alludes to what Plato has already written in Republic VI, that every soul pursues what it does for the sake of its real good, and not the apparent good (Republic VI 505d7-e1):

As far as [the two lives, the life of pleasure and the life of intellect at 20e] are concerned … neither the one nor the other contained the good, since otherwise it would be sufficient, perfect, and worthy of choice for any of the plants and animals that can sustain them, throughout their lifetime? And if anyone among us should choose otherwise, then he would do so involuntarily, in opposition to what is by nature truly choiceworthy, from ignorance or some unfortunate necessity (Philebus 22b3-8).³

Note that Plato is including plants and animals, so this good being discussed cannot simply be the human good. And given what Plato says in the Republic VI passage (505d7-e1) about every soul desiring real goodness, the most likely Platonic entity that all living things desire would be the Good.⁴ To confirm that Plato is discussing the Good Itself at least at some points in the Philebus, see this summary:

So neither of these two would be perfect, worthy of choice for all, and the supreme good. How could they? (Philebus 61a1-2)

'Supreme good’ (τὸ πανταπανός ἄγαθον)⁵ can be translated ‘absolute good,’ and the only other obvious reference to some entity (good or otherwise) that everyone desires is the Good Itself, at Republic VI 505d-e, and right before that Socrates has denied that this good is either knowledge or pleasure (Republic VI 505b-c). Though knowledge and pleasure are certainly human goods, neither of them are the Good Itself. Therefore, we can infer that in several places in the Philebus, Plato is alluding to the Good Itself, and, in addition, that the Good for Plato is sufficient, complete, desirable and satisfying to all souls, and the absolute good. Let us now confirm these same features in the Enneads.

¹ Note that when Plato makes the claim at Philebus (65a) about the good’s being able to be held as beauty, proportion and truth (or the ranking at the end of that dialogue), he’s discussing the human (and/or living things’) good, while acknowledging that on Plato’s view every human desires the human good; since Plato and Plotinus also claim that every soul desires what is really best for themselves (that is, to know the Good and therefore be happy, as I have examined in PPMEE §§ 3.2 and 3.9), the Good Itself is involved in this claim. And it stands to reason that, on Plato’s view, beauty, proportion and truth will play a significant role in the happy life, but this claim should not be taken as some have to state that the Form of the Good (even if it appears briefly in spots elsewhere in the Philebus) is identical with beauty, proportion, and truth. See the Hampton (et al.) objection in note 14.
² Here we agree with McGinley (1977: 28), who criticizes the view that the entire Philebus contains no reference to the Good Itself.
³ See Benitez (1995: 130) for further Philebus references to these traits; see also Hitchcock (1985: 82), who claims that the crucial weakness in Plato’s conception of the Good is its incompleteness, but his argument deals with the desire for the Good, so I have dealt with this objection in PPMEE § 3.9.
⁴ See also Philebus 60a-c.
⁵ See Lachterman (1989-1990: 166n17)’s interesting note on the different locutions Plato uses for the Good.
Plotinus: Let us now demonstrate that the Plotinian Good or One is sufficient, complete, desirable and satisfying to all souls, and is an absolute good. I can confirm that Plotinus affirms these claims, as follows:

First, Plotinus claims that the Good is an absolute Good, or Good Itself.  
Second, the Good is complete, because “it desires nothing, for what could it desire” (III.9.2-5), is beyond being (PTP § 1.1), does not have parts (II.9.1.-9, the most relevant portion being quoted in the next passage, as well as the subsequent passage).

Third, Plotinus agrees that the One is self-sufficient:

... we call it the First in the sense that it is simplest, and the Self-Sufficient, because it is not composed of a number of parts ... (II.9.18-9).  

We may assume also that the characteristic “complete” expresses the idea that the entity that is complete does not need anything else and does not aspire to anything else. This next passage demonstrates that Plotinus believes that the Good is self-sufficient, complete (not needing or aspiring to anything else), as well as desirable to every being:

Now we must state what is the nature of the Good, as far as the present argument requires. It is that on which everything depends and ‘to which all beings aspire’; they have it as their principle and need it; but it is without need, sufficient to itself, lacking nothing, the measure and bound of all things, giving from itself intellect and real being and soul and life and intellectual activity (I.8.2.1-7).

Technically, Plotinus did not affirm the claim in this passage that every living thing desires the Good; he claimed that the Existents (the Forms) so desire it. In the following passage, however, Plotinus explicitly states that every Soul (every living thing) strives for the Good:

For every soul seeks the Good, the mixed soul, too, and the individual soul: since it, too, follows upon that higher soul and derives from it (III.5.3.36-38; adapted from Armstrong).

Thus, Plotinus agrees with Plato that the Good is sufficient, self-sufficient, complete, and desirable to every living thing.

1.2 The Good is self-sufficient and perfect

Plato: As I argued above, every time Plato discusses the good in the Philebus, he is certainly not intending to refer to the Good Itself. For instance, he claims that if we cannot hunt down the good under a single form, let us look for it in beauty, proportion and truth (Philebus 65a). However, a little later in the dialogue shortly before its end, Plato again summarizes what the argument was about, in terms of the Good Itself:

... both reason and pleasure had lost any claim that one or the other would be the Good Itself, since they were lacking in autonomy and in the power of self-sufficiency and perfection?

Exactly (Philebus 67a; adapted from Frede).
In the *Philebus*, the Good Itself is argued to be self-sufficient in order to be satisfying and perfect, not only for humans, but for all living things. I will show that Plotinus believes these very things about the Good as well.

Thus, Plato believes that the Good is self-sufficient and perfect.

**Plotinus**: First, we have just seen a passage in § 1.1 that demonstrates that Plotinus believes that the Good is self-sufficient. Plotinus implicitly states that the One is perfect here:

> If the First is perfect, the most perfect of all, and the primal power, it must be the most powerful of all beings and the other powers must imitate it as far as they are able. Now when anything else comes to perfection we see that it produces, and does not endure to remain by itself, but makes something else. … fire warms, snow cools, and drugs act on something else in a way corresponding to their own nature – all imitating the First Principle as far as they are able by tending to everlastingness and generosity. How then could the most perfect, the first Good, remain in itself as if it grudged to give of itself or was impotent, when it is the productive power of all things? (V.4.1.23-28, 31-36)

We have now shown that Plotinus believes that the One is self-sufficient and perfect, just as Plato argues.

However, not everyone agrees with our interpretation here. Hampton argues that:

> Here in the final pages of the *Philebus*, the Good, described earlier (at 20d) is the most perfect or complete of all entities, seems to be ultimate One. However, unlike the Neoplatonic One, which is an absolute simple, the Platonic One is a unity of interrelated parts.

Admittedly, our view is that Plato and Plotinus’ view of the human good or happiness is that it suffices for itself and needs nothing else (PPMEE § 3.2), and is as perfect as humans can live (PPMEE § 3.2). Nonetheless, I counter that Plato cannot be so inconsistent (his other paradoxes notwithstanding) between the Republic and Philebus so as to suggest that the Form of the Good exists and is not the same as Beauty Itself and is the source of (but not) truth, being, knowledge, pleasure, and many other things (Republic V-VII), but then also that it *is* beauty, proportion and truth. The most consistent explanation is that when Plato states that the Good is beauty, proportion and truth in the Philebus (65a), he is discussing the human good. Moreover, knowledge of the Good Itself manifests itself in human lives in three chief ways – beauty, proportion (temperance?), and truth.

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus hold that the Good or One is self-sufficient and perfect.

1.3 The Good or One is alternately referred to as the King (or Father, in Plotinus’ case)

**Plato**: Plato refers to the Father in the *Timaeus* 28c; but that reference refers to Nous or the Demiurge, on my interpretation, so we should not interpret Plato as referring to the Good as “Father.” However, assuming I am correct when I argued that God in Republic X (c. 596a-597e) is best interpreted as the Good (see PTP § 1.1), I can indeed confirm that he refers to the Good as King, when he states that God creates the Forms (Republic X 597a-d), here:

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12 Findlay (1976: 29) is one of the few who seem to mention the self-sufficiency of the Good outside the *Philebus*, alluding to that feature in the *Phaedo* (98ff).
13 Harris (1976: 8) holds that the Neo-Platonic One is a “still higher unifying principle than” Plato and Aristotle because, among other things, their Ultimate First Principle is “self-sufficient and creative throughout the universe without an act of will”; however, (1) we find that Plato’s (and Plotinus’) Good is self-sufficient and is the source of the Forms and other things; and (2) Plotinus’ One has a will, and Plato’s God in Republic X that creates the Forms is said to have a will as long. See also Rist (1964: 69) for “an impressive array of superlatives” that Plotinus attributes to the One.
14 Hampton 1990: 87; cf. 93. Reeve (2003: 56) and Shorey (1895: 65) seem to equate the Good of the *Philebus* with the Good of the *Republic* as Hampton does.
15 Findlay (1974: 298-299) agrees by pointing out Letter VI 323c-d as yet more evidence that for Plato “God … is the Supreme Father of the Ruling Causative Principle (Mind as Such)” (his translation). See also his 1976 (31).
… wouldn’t you call someone whose product is third from the natural one an imitator?
I most certainly would.

Then this will also be true of a tragedian, if indeed he is an imitator. He is by nature third from the king and the truth, as are all other imitators (Republic X 597e3-8).\textsuperscript{16}

God creates the Form of Bed, the carpenter makes a perceptible bed, and the painter paints an image of the bed, which is “third” (on Greek counting) from the king and the truth.

Thus, Plato refers to the Good as the King.

**Plotinus:** Here is one of Plotinus’ metaphorical uses of the expression “Father”\textsuperscript{17} of the One:

Our country from which we came is there, our Father is there (I.6.8.21).\textsuperscript{18}

Now let us confirm that he also refers to the One as King and reaffirm that he uses “Father” to refer to the One or Good, here:

This is the reason why Plato says that all things are threefold ‘about the king of all’ – he means the primary realities – and ‘the second about the second and the third about the third’. But he also says that there is a ‘father of the cause’, meaning Intellect by ‘the cause’: for Intellect is his craftsman; and he says that it makes Soul in that ‘mixing-bowl’ he speaks of. And the father of Intellect which is the cause he calls the Good and that which is beyond Intellect and ‘beyond being’. And he also often calls Being and Intellect Idea: so Plato knew that Intellect comes from the Good and Soul from Intellect (V.1.8.1-10).\textsuperscript{19}

Leaving aside the interpretation of what the second and third classes are for now,\textsuperscript{20} we see that Plotinus agrees with Plato that we can refer to the Good as the king as well.

Therefore, I have shown that Plato and Plotinus both use the expression “King” to refer to the One or Good.

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\textsuperscript{16} See also Letter II 312d-313a, which is quoted and examined in PTP § 5.1.

\textsuperscript{17} Here I agree with Rist (1964: 74).

\textsuperscript{18} For other quotations where Plotinus uses this Father or Fatherland metaphor, see II.9.2, V.8.1, V.8.12-13, and VI.7.29.

\textsuperscript{19} Cf. II.9.9.29-35.

\textsuperscript{20} Having examined Nous and the All-Soul in PTP § 3.1.1 and Ch. 4 respectively, I will be in a position to return to this passage to explain how the “second” and “third” referred to here are Nous and All-Soul (given that the “king” is the first principle, the Good, or the One) – see § 5.1.

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CHAPTER 2: BEAUTY

In this chapter, I examine the Platonic and Plotinian claims that: Perceptibly beautiful things partake of Beauty Itself; Beauty Itself causes everything that is beautiful to be beautiful (§ 2.1); and those who do not recognize that the Form of Beauty exists are dreamers and not awake (§ 2.2).

2.1 Perceptibly beautiful things partake of Beauty Itself; Beauty Itself causes everything that is beautiful to be beautiful

Plato and Plotinus, not surprisingly, both believe that beautiful sensible things partake of Beauty Itself, and the related claim that Beauty Itself causes beautiful things to be beautiful.

**Plato:** In the following passage, Plato makes two points: first, that perceptibly beautiful things partake of Beauty Itself, and second, Beauty causes everything that is beautiful to be beautiful:

… I think that, if there is anything beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it shares in that Beautiful, and I say so with everything. Do you agree to this sort of cause? – I do.

… nothing else makes it beautiful other than the presence of, or the sharing in, or however you may describe its relationship to that Beautiful we mentioned, for I will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship, but that all beautiful things are beautiful by the Beautiful. That, I think, is the safest answer I can give myself or anyone else (Phaedo 100c4-8, d4-9).22

Note that Plato declares that Beauty is present or shares in beautiful things, and he admits lack of precision about the exact nature of causation between Beauty and the many beautifuls, while still declaring that Beauty causes the many beautifuls to be beautiful—and that this is the safest answer to this question.

Thus, perceptible beautifuls partake in Beauty Itself and the latter causes everything beautiful to be beautiful, for Plato.

**Plotinus:** Let us first confirm in two passages that Plotinus also states that Beauty is beautiful, as we just saw Plato claim in the Phaedo.

Beauty is just beauty, because it is not in what is not beautiful (V.8.4.14-15).

And:

Who, then, will not call beautiful that which is beautiful primarily, and as a whole, and everywhere as a whole when no parts fail by falling short in beauty? Certainly [one would not call beautiful] that which is not as a whole beauty itself, but has a part of it, or not even any of it. Or if that is not beautiful, what else is? (V.8.8.1-5).23

Second, Plotinus posits, as Plato did in the Phaedo, that Beauty causes beautiful things:

… in general there must be a rational Form of the Large just as there is of the Beautiful, which when it is participated makes a thing large, as the Form of the Beautiful makes a thing beautiful (VI.3.12.17-19; adapted from Armstrong).

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21 Morrison (1977: 215) excellently describes this point.

22 See also this exchange between Socrates and Hippias: “Then all beautiful things, too, are beautiful by the beautiful, isn’t that so? [Yes, by the beautiful.] … by that being something? [It is. Why not?]” (Greater Hippias 287c8-d2; adapted from Woodruff). Cf. Greater Hippias 292c-e, 294b-c.

23 See also I.6.7.21-30; V.9.2.2-10; V.8.9.36-47; cf. VI.6.14.27-29 and VI.7.31.17-34.

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Third, I can show that Plotinus also believes that perceptibly beautiful things partake in the Form of Beauty.\(^{24}\) In the next passage, Plotinus states that “beauty here below” must be traced to “the intelligible Beauty”, and also adds an argument that Plato claims that the creator of the visible universe\(^{25}\) approves of his creation as being beautiful, which shows that this beautiful world is a copy of the Form of Beauty\(^{26}\):

… if [Beauty] is not beautiful, what else is? For that which is before it does not even want to be beautiful; for it is this which first presents itself to contemplation by being form and the contemplation of intellect which is also a delight to see. For this reason Plato, wishing to indicate this by reference to something which is clearer relatively to ourselves, represents the Demiurge approving his completed work, wishing to show by this how delightful is the beauty of the model, which is the Idea. For whenever someone admires a thing modeled on something else, he directs his admiration to that one which the thing is modeled. But if he does not know what is happening to him, that is no wonder: since lovers also, and in general all the admirers of beauty here below, do not know that this is because of the intelligible Beauty: for it is because of the intelligible Beauty. Plato deliberately makes it clear that he refers the ‘was delighted’ to the model by the words which follow: for he says, ‘he was delighted, and wanted to make it still more like its model’, showing what the beauty of the model is like by saying that what originates from it is itself, too, beautiful because it is an image of the intelligible Beauty: for, if That was not transcendentally beautiful with an overwhelming beauty, what would be more beautiful than this visible universe? Those who blame it, then, do not do so rightly, except perhaps in so far as it is not the intelligible world (V.8.8.4-23; adapted from Armstrong).

Thus, Plotinus believes that the beautiful universe imitates the intelligible Beauty, which is Beauty Itself.

Lastly, in another passage parallel to the Phaedo, as well as to the Cave Allegory of Republic VII, Plotinus discusses turning away from shadowy material beauty and always being wary to note that material beauty is a copy of Beauty:

Let him who can, follow and come within, and leave outside the sight of his eyes and not turn back to the bodily splendors which he saw before. When he sees the beauty in bodies he must not run after them; we must know that they are images, traces, shadows, and hurry away to that which they image. For if a man runs to the image and wants to seize it as if it was the reality (like a beautiful reflection playing on the water, which some story somewhere, I think, said riddlingly a man wanted to catch and sank down into the stream and disappeared) then this man who clings to beautiful bodies and will not let them go, will, like the man in the story, but in soul, not in body, sink down into dark depths where intellect has no delight, and stay blind in Hades, consorting with shadows there and here (I.6.8.3-16).\(^{27}\)

It is especially important to note that Plotinus holds that bodily beauty is an image of Beauty, because commentators such as Rist have seemingly missed this Plotinian passage just quoted, when he writes: “The case of mimesis [imitation] is similar [to Plotinus’ forgetting exactly what Plato said about the statue in the Phaedrus]. It is asking too much to require us to suppose that the long discussion of this subject in Republic X slipped his memory. One can only conclude that he knew it perfectly well, and chose to improve upon it.”\(^{28}\)

\(^{24}\) I agree with the following commentators on this issue: Anton (1964: 234), except for the beauty/symmetry issue (see PTP § 2.1); and Rist (1967a: 182-183), that the distinction between sensibles and intelligibles is one of three main planks of Plotinus’ philosophy. Cf., Alexandrakis (2004: 190) and Gerson (1994: 214).

\(^{25}\) That is, the Demiurge; see PTP § 3.3.

\(^{26}\) Plotinus also states at V.8.3.18-19 that the Intellectual Principle (or realm of the Forms) must be beautiful (see § 3.2 below), that the gods are ineffably beautiful and that their beauty is overwhelming [ἀμηχανον]. ἀμηχανον can also be translated “inexplicable,” which is close in meaning to ineffability (also, Plato interestingly uses this as Republic VI 509a6). See PTP § 3.2.2 and SUPP § 4.4-4.8 for more on the gods).

\(^{27}\) See also V.8.2.31-46.

However, since Plotinus states that bodily beauty is merely an image of Beauty here, then I do not need to posit that Plotinus is forgetting or even improving what Plato says about Beauty and imitation in Book X.  

Thus, Plato and Plotinus both hold that perceptibly beautiful things partake of the Form of Beauty, and that it is by Beauty that things are beautiful.

2.2 Those who do not recognize that the Form of Beauty exists are dreamers and not awake

In this section, I will show that persons who do not believe (or know) that the Form of Beauty exists can be characterized as dreamers who are not awake, because they believe that sensible beautiful things are beings, and not reflections of Beauty Itself.

**Plato:** Besides mentioning the connection between beauty, excellence, and usefulness, a major point that Socrates makes about Beauty is where he claims that the “lovers of sight and sounds”—those who do not grant the existence of abstract natures such as beauty—are dreamers and not awake; “the awake” are those who do believe or know that Beauty exists. Plotinus recognizes and agrees with this analogy, so we should look at these passages. Here is where Socrates introduces the claim that the lovers of sounds and sights are dreamers:

> What about someone who believes in beautiful things, but doesn’t believe in the Beautiful Itself and isn’t able to follow anyone who could lead him to the knowledge of it? Don’t you think he is living in a dream rather than a wakened state? Isn’t this dreaming: whether asleep or awake, to think that a likeness is not a likeness but rather the thing itself that it is like?

> I certainly think that someone who does that is dreaming.

> But someone who, to take the opposite case, believes in the Beautiful Itself, can see both it and the things that participate in it and doesn’t believe that the participants are it or that itself is the participants – is he living in a dream or is he awake?

> He’s very much awake (Republic V 476c2-d4; adapted from Grube/Reeve).

Those who believe that there are many beautiful perceptible things that just are what beauty is, are mistaking the objects that resemble the nature of beauty but are not identical to it; whereas the person who recognizes that Beauty exists and who can differentiate perceptible beautifuls from Beauty Itself is awake. In addition, Socrates claims that the mental state of the lovers of sounds and sights is opinion, and the mental state of the Beauty recognizers is knowledge; Socrates argues that many beautifuls are not beautiful always and from every perspective; rulers who are ignorant of the Beautiful, Just, and Good are essentially blind; and that philosophy is impossible for the multitude because they cannot tolerate the reality of the Beautiful Itself.

Thus, Plato believes that those who do not acknowledge the reality of Beauty Itself are dreamers.

**Plotinus:** Though Plotinus does not explicitly state that those who do not believe that Beauty is an abstract object are dreaming, he does confirm the general principle here:

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29 See also PTP § 2.4 and PPMEE § 3.8. Rist mentions V.5.12 at the beginning of this discussion about the difference between Plato and Plotinus; I am puzzled about exactly what the issue is. If it is Plotinus’ statement that the pleasure of the experience of beauty is mixed with pain, then I side with Inge (1929b: 123), who argues that this idea is found in Plato and Plotinus and cites passages there as evidence.

30 Republic X 601d-e.

31 The lovers of sounds and sights are most reasonably interpreted as nominalists; see Penner (1987), especially pp. 20-24, and cf. Shorey (1930: 516) on Republic V 476a: “Plato is merely restating the theory of Ideas to prepare for his practical distinction between minds that can and minds that cannot apprehend abstractions.”

32 Republic V 476d, and 479c-480a.

33 Republic V 479a-b.

34 Republic V 484c-d.

35 Republic VI 493c-494a.
This, then, is our argument against those who place real beings in the class of bodies and find their guarantee of truth in the evidence of pushings and strikings and the apparitions which come by way of sense-perception; they act like people dreaming, who think that the things they see as real actually exist, when they are only dreams. For the activity of sense-perception is that of the soul asleep; for it is the part of the soul that is in the body that sleeps; but the true wakening is a true getting up from the body, not with the body. Getting up with the body is only getting out of one sleep into another, like getting out of one sleep into another, like getting out of one bed to another; but the true rising is a rising altogether away from bodies, which are of the opposite nature to soul and opposed in respect to reality. Their coming into being and flux and perishing, which does not belong to the nature of reality, are evidence of this (III.6.65-77).  

Thus, Plato and Plotinus both believe that those who do not believe that Beauty exists are dreaming.

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36 Compare V.5.11.5-16. Also, Gerson (1994: 214, 290n28; see also 215n29) notes a relevant passage (III.5.1.30-36), where Plotinus diagnoses the error in mistaking bodily beauty for true beauty as a misdirection of desire of the Good.

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CHAPTER 3: NOUS/INTELLECT

In this chapter, I examine the Platonic and Plotinian claims that Nous is the ordering or containing principle of causation in the universe (§ 3.1); Nous is good and beautiful (§ 3.2); Nous is also named Kronos (and the All-Soul is also named Zeus) (§ 3.3); and Nous is the One-Many (§ 3.4).

3.1 Nous is the ordering or containing principle of causation in the universe

Let us now demonstrate that Plotinus and Plato both hold that Nous is an ordering, containing principle, and (besides itself being caused by the One or the Good), the cause of everything else, such as soul and matter. First, let us begin with passages we find in Plato’s works.

**Plato:** I can confirm that Nous is the ordering and/or containing principle of causation in the universe.37 For instance, in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, two “early to middle” dialogues according to Brandwood’s orderings, we find Plato discussing and seemingly confirming that mind is an ordering principle, a containing principle, and the cause of all things (which may only refer to Forms, but might refer to the All-Soul as well). Here is the relevant passage from the *Cratylus*:

Don’t you agree with Anaxagoras that [“the nature of everything else” at 400a8] is ordered and sustained by mind or soul?

I do (*Cratylus* 400a8-11).

Moreover, in a well-noted passage38 in the *Phaedo*, Socrates is discussing his fondness for the view of Anaxagoras, which was that:

… it is Mind that directs and is the cause of everything. I was delighted with this cause and it seemed to me good, in a way, that Mind should be the cause of all. I thought that if this were so, the directing Mind would direct everything and arrange each thing in the way that was best (*Phaedo* 97c1-6).

Here Socrates states that he was pleased by Anaxagoras’ thesis that mind was director, causer, and orderer of everything. Now someone might argue that this passage only reflects the historical Socrates’ view, because the *Phaedo* is an account of Socrates’ last day of life. However, we will see that Plato writes the same claims into his dialogues through to the last dialogue, the *Laws*, so I am warranted in at least claiming that this view seems to be held by Plato throughout the dialogues.

In a late dialogue, *Timaeus*, for instance, Plato claims that “that Living Thing comprehends within itself all intelligible living things, just as our world is made up of us and all the other visible creatures” (30c7-d1).39 The “Living Thing” here, as mentioned above, can only refer to Nous, the true realm of Being and all of the Forms, or intelligible beings, according to Plato.

In another late dialogue, *Philebus*, Plato again states that Nous (νοῦς), here translated “reason,” arranges the universe (“wonderful spectacle”). I take this passage to be an affirmation that Nous is an ordering principle:

How can you even think of a comparison here, Socrates? What you suggest now is downright impious, I would say. The only account that can do justice to the wonderful spectacle presented by the cosmic order of sun, moon, and stars and the revolution of the whole heaven, is that reason (νοῦ) arranges it all, and I for my part would never waiver in saying or believing it.

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38 See, for instance, Menn (1995: 45).

39 Cf. *Timaeus* 31a4-5, where Plato says that the model of the universe (Nous) contains all of the intelligible living things.
Is this what you want us to do, that we should not only conform to the view of earlier thinkers who professed this as the truth, repeating without any risk what others have said, but that we should share their risk and blame if some formidable opponent denies it and argues that disorder rules?

How could I fail to want it? (Philebus 28e1-29a5)\(^{48}\)

Note that Plato also confirms that Nous orders the universe with justice. In another passage, the character Socrates states: “… reason (νοῦν) belongs to that kind which is the cause of everything” (Philebus 30d10-e1). As was implied in the first Philebus passage just mentioned, Plato claims elsewhere that Nous is a cause of good and fair (beautiful) things:

… we must describe both types of causes,\(^ {41}\) distinguishing those which possess understanding [νοῦν] and thus fashion what is beautiful and good, from those which, when deserted by intelligence, produce only haphazard and disorderly effects every time (Timaeus 46c3-6).\(^ {42}\)

There remains a question as to whether all souls, possessing mind, are workers of fair and good things; however, analysis of that claim takes us away from the present aim.

Lastly, in the Laws, Plato affirms for the final time in the dialogues that he has a doctrine that Nous is an ordering principle of the perceptible universe. This is an:

… argument … based on the systematic motion of the heavenly bodies and other objects under the control of reason, which is responsible for the order in the universe (Laws XII 966e2-4).\(^ {43}\)

Thus, it is clear that Plato believes that Nous is an ordering, containing principle that is the cause of the universe. Let us now confirm these three qualities of Nous in Plotinus’ writings.

**Plotinus:** First, then, Plotinian Nous is an ordering principle\(^ {44}\):

… not even the intellect of this [individual] soul is subject to affection … it starts from the first realities and goes out to the third, the things down here, by the activity of the Intellect which remains the same and fills all things through soul with beauties and sets them in order, immortal through immortal, since Intellect will be existent for ever through its inexhaustible activity (IV.7.13.14-20).\(^ {45}\)

Plotinus here states that Nous, the immortal eternal mind, is the ultimate source of order, as it works through the World-Soul to order the universe. Plotinus elsewhere states that the World-Soul is the creator and provider of order in the universe, but this passage shows that he believes that the ultimate order comes from Nous.

Now I can confirm that Plotinus believes that Nous is a containing principle.\(^ {46}\) There are two important passages. The first is Plotinus’ agreement of a Platonic Timaeus passage (39c):

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\(^{40}\) See also Philebus 30c, as Menn (1995: 4-5) mentions; cf.: “For all the wise are agreed, in true self-exaltation, that reason [νοῦν] is our king, both over heaven and earth. And perhaps they are justified” (Philebus 28c6-8).

\(^{41}\) I.e., “primary causes … that belong to intelligent nature … and secondary [as] all those belonging to things that are moved by others and that set still others in motion by necessity”, at Timaeus 46d8-e2.

\(^{42}\) With an acknowledgment to Menn (1992: 556), see also Timaeus 37d (Nous as orderer) and Timaeus 47e-48a (mind as a ruling power).

\(^{43}\) See also Laws XII 967d-e, as Menn (1992: 556; 1995: 18) notes. Menn (1995: 7-8) also rightly points out that Plato states that God orders the world at Statesman Plato makes the same point, at 273d4 (see also 269c4-270a8, 272e4-6, 273c1-4).

\(^{44}\) On this issue, I agree with A. H. Armstrong (1947: 194-195; but I believe that everything he says on this issue there is Plato’s view as well), Corrigan (1996b: 112; that Nous does not plan or act exactly as a human craftsperson because Nous already knows what is best, and acting in such a way would be a deficiency of the intelligible world), and de Vogel (1986: 76).

\(^{45}\) For further Plotinian passages on Nous as ordering principle, see III.5.1, IV.4.39, V.8.13, and VI.7.1.


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'Intellect (νοῦς),' Plato says, 'sees the Ideas (ἰδέα) existing in the Absolute Living Creature' then, he says, 'the Demiurge planned that, what Intellect sees in the Absolute Living Creature, this universe too should have.' (III.9.1.1-3; adapted from Armstrong).47

And here is Plato's passage:

And so he determined that the living thing he was making should possess the same kinds (ἰδέα) and numbers of living things as those which, according to the discernment of Intellect (νοῦς), are contained within the real Living Thing (Timaeus 39e7-9).

We can see from the juxtaposition of these passages that Plotinus takes one (as I see it) small liberty, namely changing “he” to the Demiurge, which is clearly warranted and therefore completely plausible. In the second passage, Plotinus gives his own thought on Nous as container:

… Intellect … has each and every reason why of the things in it; but it is itself individually all the things in it, so that none of them has come to be in need of a reason why, but it has come to be along with it and has in itself the cause of its existence. But since there is nothing casual in its coming to be it would not have any of its reason why left out but in having everything it has that of its cause which makes it exist beautifully. So it also gives to the things which participate in it in such a way that they possess their reason why (VI.7.2.23-30).48

Intellect contains every cause of “the things in it” (which he states is “each individual Form,” at VI.7.2.18), Intellect is collectively each of the Ideas, and the Forms are created as causes. Plato agrees that Ideas are Nous for at least three reasons: (1) he refers to Nous as the intelligible region; (2) the Forms are created in some sense by the Good; and (3) Forms are indeed causes in their very natures (as we’ll confirm in § 5.6 below). Plotinus also holds that Nous is the cause of everything (in a sense).49 In fact, the last passage serves to prove this as well, since he states there that Nous contains every cause of the things of its content, implying that it causes the Forms, which in turn cause everything else that exist, through the creation of the universe. But I can additionally confirm briefly that Plotinus holds that there is a divine entity that causes Soul and is prior to Soul: “Grasp then the soul’s upper neighbor, more divine than this divine thing, after which and from which the soul comes. For, although it is a thing of the kind which our discussion has shown it to be, it is an image of Intellect …” (V.1.3.4-7). Admittedly, I do not have here Plotinus stating that that divine entity is Nous. I can confirm that Plotinus holds that God creates everything else, in this passage:

It is not contracting the divine into one but showing it in that multiplicity in which God himself has shown it, which is proper to those who know the power of God, inasmuch as, abiding who he is, he makes many gods, all depending upon himself and existing through him and from him. And this universe exists through him and looks to him, the whole of it and each and every one of the gods in it … (II.9.9.35-40).50

Therefore, Plotinus believes, with Plato, that Nous is an ordering principle, a containing principle, and a causal principle of everything (in a sense). Now let us examine the goodness and beauty of Intellect.

3.2 Nous is good and beautiful

47 For further Plotinian passages on Nous as containing principle or as a container, see II.9.17. We discuss the Demiurge in PTP § 3.3.
48 For another passage on Nous as cause in Plotinus, see II.3.18.
49 I disagree with A. E. Taylor (1934: 148), who argues that Plato claims that Mind (Nous) constructs the whole fabric of heaven and earth, but not the All-Soul. We have already seen that Plotinus makes this same former claim about Nous, and I have shown that both philosophers argue that Nous creates the All-Soul in PTP § 4.2.
50 See also II.9.9.39-42. Plato also designates lower gods to perform some creation tasks (see PTP §§ 3.2.1 and 4.2).
In this subsection, I will show that Plato and Plotinus do not differ on the claim that Nous is good and beautiful.

**Plato:** I can demonstrate that Plato holds that Nous is beautiful and good by looking at some claims we’ve seen him make just above, and other claims, from which we may infer our conclusion.

First, Plato states that God made the universe as fair and beautiful as possible, at *Timaeus* 46e (and other places), and he also states that Nous is the original that contains the Ideas, so Nous must be originally beautiful in order to create a beautiful universe, and if it contains Beauty Itself, it must be beautiful. I can also use an identical argument to show that Plato holds that Nous is good as well (and see *Timaeus* 37a), since he states that Nous made the universe as good as was possible. However, we also have an explicit statement, where Plato strongly implies that Nous is good in the *Philebus*, as follows:

Enough has been said, it seems to me, to prove that Philebus’ goddess and the good cannot be regarded as one.

Nor is your reason the good, Socrates, and the same complaint applies to it.

It may apply to my reason, Philebus, but certainly not to the true, the divine reason [νοῦν], I should think. It is in quite a different condition (*Philebus* 22c1-6).

Philebus’ goddess is of course pleasure, and Socrates’ is intelligence. Since the character Socrates states that it is perhaps true that his reason is not identical to the good, but that that does not accurately describe true divine reason, or Nous, Plato holds that Nous is good.

Thus, Nous is good and beautiful for Plato; now let us confirm that Nous is beautiful and good according to Plotinus.

**Plotinus:** Here is Plotinus on the beauty of Nous:

For that which is before [Beauty, i.e., the Good] does not even want to be beautiful; for it is this which first presents itself to contemplation by being Form and the contemplation of Intellect which is also a delight to see (*V*.8.8.5-7).

Lastly for Plotinus, I can easily confirm that he thinks that Nous is good by adducing this passage:

And first we must posit Beauty which is also the Good; from this immediately comes Intellect, which is Beauty; and soul is given Beauty by Intellect (*I*.6.6.25-27; adapted from Armstrong).

Therefore, both philosophers believe that Nous is good and beautiful. Let us now examine some of Plato and Plotinus’ mythological terminology used to refer to Nous.

### 3.3 Nous is also named Kronos (and the All-Soul is also named Zeus)

Interestingly enough, we can see, by examining certain passages of both philosophers’ works, that they each name Nous Kronos, and the All-Soul Zeus. Let us begin with Plato.

**Plato:** Whereas Plato only makes an allusion to Nous’ being equivalent to Kronos in the *Cratylus*, Plotinus much more frequently uses this terminology. In order to see how the Platonic quotation shows what I

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51 See also Menn (1995: 11-12) and Mohr (2005: 159), assuming that the Demiurge is Nous (see PTP § 3.3).

52 For further Plotinian passages that declare the goodness and beauty of Nous, see *I*.8.2, II.9.17, III.7.4, 6; III.8.10, V.3.16, V.8.9, 13; VI.2.11.35-37, VI.6.7, 18; and VI.7.16, 18.

53 I agree with Findlay (1974: 287-288) that Zeus is the All-Soul; I disagree with Desjardin (2004: 133), who argues that “cosmic Nous is represented as Zeus” for reasons that will become clear (unless I misunderstand what the modifier “cosmic” does to Nous).

54 For further passages in Plotinus stating that Kronos is Intellect and Zeus is All-Soul, see IV.4.9-10, V.1.4, 7 and V.8.10, 12-13. For more in Plotinus’ corpus, on the relationship among Nous and (at least one other of) the three hypostases (The One and/or the Alien...
believe it shows, we need to assume that All-Soul is the principle of life—not Life as a Form, which Nous contains, but in some other sense—that causes all life, such that “Zeus” in the passage stands for All-Soul. Here is the passage:

… the name ‘Zeus’ is exactly like a phrase that we used to divide into two parts, ‘Zēnā’ and ‘Dia’, some of us using one of them and some the other. But these two names, reunited into one, express the nature of the god—which is just what we said a name should do. Certainly, no one is more the cause of life (zēn), whether for us or for anything else, than the ruler and king of all things. Thus, ‘Zēnā’ and ‘Dia’ together correctly name the god that is always the cause of life (di’ hon zēn) for all creatures. But, as I say, his name, which is really one, is divided in two, ‘Dia’ and ‘Zēnā’. When one hears that Zeus is the son of Kronos, one might find that offensive at first, and it might seem more reasonable to say that he is the offspring of a great intellect. But in fact Kronos’ name signifies not a child (koros), but the purity and clarity of his intellect or understanding. According to legend, he was the son of Uranus (Heaven), whose name is also correctly given … (Cratylus 396a3-b7; adapted from Reeve; my emphasis).

Let me make two brief arguments concerning this passage that are aimed at showing that Kronos is best interpreted as Nous, and Zeus is best interpreted as the All-Soul (as assumed briefly above): First, Zeus here is best interpreted as All-Soul because this soul of the universe is indeed is the cause of life. If the reader wonders why I should not interpret Zeus—Zena and/or Dia—as Nous, since Nous is also a principle of life, being an essentially living thing as well and containing Life Itself as a Form, we have our answer in the underlined portion of the passage: Plato states that Kronos is the pure and clear mighty Intellect that begat Zeus, so the two are not identical. Thus, Kronos is best interpreted here as Nous. Second, we find another piece of evidence to show that Plato referred to Zeus as a royal soul—here, a “soul of a king”—in the Philebus:

You will therefore say that in the nature of Zeus there is the soul of a king, as well as a king’s reason, in virtue of this power displayed by the cause, while paying tribute for other fine qualities in the other divinities, in conformity with the names by which they like to be addressed.

Very much so (Philebus 30d1-5).

Thus, we have good reason to hold that Zeus is the World-Soul, according to Plato, and that Zeus gains its reason from a cause—which we can infer is Nous, from the Timaeus as well as from the Cratylus passage above.55

Plotinus: Here is one passage that confirms that Plotinus holds that “Kronos” is equivalent to Nous, and “Zeus” is equivalent to All-Soul56:

… as the mysteries and the myths about the gods say riddlingly that Kronos, the wisest god, before the birth of Zeus took back and kept within himself all that he begat, and in this way is full and is Intellect in satiety; and after this they say he begat Zeus who is then his Koros [that is, boy and satiety]; for Intellect generates Soul, since it is perfect Intellect (V.1.7.33-37; adapted from Armstrong).57

This passage suffices to show that Plotinus uses the same terminology as Plato first and only used in the Cratylus. Let us now briefly examine the one-many characteristic of Nous.

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55 Though not crucial for this section’s purposes, note that Plato also seems to imply that Uranus is another way of referring to the Good or the One, since it would be the Good or One that generates Nous and the Forms.
57 Plotinus also states the Intellect is a “great god” at V.5.3.2-3, and see this passage with V.5.3.21-24.
3.4 Nous is the One-Many

We can now show that Nous is the One-Many, according to both philosophers, but I will break the usual rule of beginning with Plato.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus believes that Nous is a One-Many, and beginning with his remarks thereof generates a thorny interpretive problem for Plato’s works: Plotinus states that he can find this idea from Plato’s *Parmenides,* as follows:

… Parmenides in Plato speaks more accurately, and distinguishes from each other the first One, which is more properly called One, and the second which he calls ‘One-Many’ and the third, ‘One and Many’. In this way he too agrees with the doctrine of the three natures (V.1.8.23-27).\(^{58}\)

The three kinds Plotinus is referring to here are the One (the “first One”), Intellect/Nous (a “second which he calls ‘One-Many’”) and the third, the All-Soul (a “One and Many”).

**Plato:** The question then becomes, if both philosophers do not essentially differ on this point, does Plato show that he believes that Nous is One-Many? First, let us consider two ways in which it is plausible for Plotinus (or any Platonic interpreter) to claim that Plato believes in a one-many, even if Plotinus is incorrect that the *Parmenides* Second Hypothesis shows that Nous is a One-Many\(^{59}\): (1) From the Platonic side, since Plato refers to the intelligible region, where such a region must be one,\(^{60}\) and since the intelligible region contains all of the many—possibly infinite if there are mathematical—Forms, we may conclude that Plato believes that Nous is a One-Many. (2) From the Plotinian side, we have already seen that he agrees with Plato on the major issues of Nous (see §§ 3.1-3.4, and PTP §§ 3.1.1-3.1.2). Thus, whatever Plotinus means by “One-Many,” this is not enough to claim that Plato and Plotinus have a different view about Nous’ being a

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\(^{58}\) For further passages on the one-many property of Nous, see VI.2.21, VI.4.10, and VI.5.5.

\(^{59}\) Inge (1929a: 214), and D. Jackson (1967: 322-325) mention Plotinus’ interpretation without criticizing it; Allen (1983: 195) argues that the Three Hypostases (One, Intellect, and Soul) do not occur in the *Parmenides.* A. E. Taylor (1934: 146-148) posits that, since Plotinus makes no argument for his view, Plotinus’ view was just a restatement of a popular view in Plotinus’ day, found in texts that are no longer extant. I’m inclined to believe that this is merely Plotinus’ view, but realize that Taylor’s claim is non-falsifiable.

I have three possible responses to the issue of whether the Second Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* really refers to Nous as a One-Many. (i) Take Gurtler (1992: 443)’s argument, that “Plotinus is giving a brief parallel between his three Hypostases and characteristics of unity found at specific junctures in the argument of Plato’s great dialogue. He is not, however, making the claim that Plato was actually talking about his metaphysical hierarchy.” This approach denies that Plotinus is claiming that Plato believes that Nous is the subject of the Second Hypothesis (Parmenides 142b–155e). (ii) Attempt to argue that Nous is the subject of the *Parmenides* Second Hypothesis. Reviewing every conclusion of the One there is not necessary, as there are two obvious problems with this strategy: (1) One of the Second Hypothesis’ conclusions is that the one is in time [Parmenides 151c-152a and 155c-d, and the related conclusion that it both is and is not becoming older and younger than itself (among others), at Parmenides 152b – 155d], whereas both Nous and the Forms are said (by Plato – *Timaeus* 37c-38c – and Plotinus – III.7.5) to be eternal; and (2) The one is said there to “touch” itself and the others. Thus (on this response) it is minimally necessary to account for Plato’s statement that the one (1) is in time and (2) contacts itself and others, in order to claim that the Second Hypothesis is best interpreted as Nous or Intellect. Re: (1), going back to *Sophist* 249a-b, Plato claims that “that which is perfectly real” must have life, soul, and change, among other characteristics, as I argue elsewhere. In short, if change, life and soul do have a place in the perfectly real, or Intellect, given that each of these, especially soul, implies time, then in some sense it might be said that (part of) Nous is in time. Re: (2), Plato can be asserting nothing other than immaterial contact between immaterial objects; namely, that the intelligibles are related to one another, just as he claims that our souls can “touch” the Forms, as discussed in PPMEE § 2.3; or, further, that the Forms blend, as discussed in § 5.7. Lastly, (iii) Interpret Plato and Plotinus as not necessarily disagreeing about the *Parmenides* being about Nous, which is to interpret what Plotinus says at V.1.8.23-27 (just quoted above), as not being a direct reference to Plato’s Second Hypothesis (142b-155e) and thereby stating that the One is a One-Many. Without knowing exactly which hypothesis of the *Parmenides* Plotinus is referring to (and he nowhere asserts line numbers of the *Parmenides*), we cannot know if what Plotinus says about the three Ones is compatible with Plato. However, I will not take a definite stand on which of these responses is correct, but my project does not require that I do so, since I believe I’ve shown (in the next two points in the text) that it is plausible that Nous is a One-Many on both philosophers’ views. (See also PTP Appendix for more on my overall view of the second section of *Parmenides.*)

\(^{60}\) I agree, e.g., with Findlay (1974: 374), that there is a logical unity to the Forms.
One-Many. After arguing that there are several major problems with positing Nous as the Second Hypothesis’
subject, Gerson makes the general point: “That Plotinus is drawing on a conception of intellect found widely
in the dialogues but not actually in the Parmenides seems clear enough”. Thus, the claim that Nous is a One-
Many on Plato’s view is plausible.

To conclude, I have confirmed that Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ on their views of the
nature of Nous. Here we showed that Nous can be referred to as Kronos (and World-Soul can be referred to
as Zeus), is beautiful and good, and a One-Many.

Gerson 1994: 45.
CHAPTER 4: GOD AND GODS

Plato and Plotinus both discuss characteristics of the singular God, and plural gods, as we will see. Both philosophers posit the following claims concerning God: it is possible to know God via philosophy (§ 4.1); God is good and is blameless in the choice of our lives (§ 4.2); and God creates man as a toy; we should play our role well (§ 4.3).

We will then pass on to the gods, and confirm the following claims: the stars are gods (though not all gods are stars) (§ 4.4); the universe is a perceptible god (§ 4.5); the gods follow Zeus (§ 4.6); the gods are good, beautiful, just and wise (§ 4.7); and humans are a possession or a toy for the gods (§ 4.8).

As we examine what is said about gods, we will find that both philosophers say many of the same things about the gods as were said of God, but that they still believe that there is a difference between the nature of God and the nature of the gods. Let us begin with an epistemological claim concerning God.

4.1 It is possible to know God via philosophy

Plato: Plato, in one of his letters, gives us indisputable insight to his view of God: we can come to certain knowledge of God, the ruler of all things, via the study of philosophy:

Adopt it as a just and binding law and covenant, taking a solemn oath … in the name of the divine letter of all things present and to come, and in the name of the lordly father of this governor and cause, whom we shall all some day clearly know, in so far as the blessed are able to know him, if we truly live the life of philosophy (Letter VI 323c-d).

Another way to infer this position is to remember that the goal of true philosophy according to Plato is to know the Forms and eventually the Good; the Forms are part of the intelligible region, and in general God is Nous for Plato (PTP § 3.2.1); we have seen that Nous contains or is the Forms (PTP § 3.1.1); thus, the goal of philosophy is to know God, according to Plato. Thus, Plato believes we can know God via philosophy.

Plotinus: Plotinus believes that we can come to have certain knowledge of God in two ways; first, from the following passage, and second (as was done with Plato), from an inference given other claims Plotinus makes. First, then, the passage:

… the soul must let go of all outward things and turn altogether to what is within, and not inclined to any outward thing, but ignoring all things (as it did formerly in sense-perception, but then in the realm of Forms), and even ignoring itself, come to be in contemplation of that One, and having been in its company and had, so to put it, sufficient converse with it, come and announce, if it could, to another that transcendent union. Perhaps also it was because Minos attained this kind of union that he was said in the story to be ‘the familiar friend of Zeus’, and it was in remembering this that he laid down laws in its image, being filled full of lawgiving by the divine touch. …. Plato says the One is not outside anything, but is in company with all without their knowing. For they run away outside it, or rather outside themselves. They cannot then catch the one they have run away from, nor seek for

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62 Note that Corrigan (2005: 185) and Rist (1967a: 215) both correctly argue that Plotinus’ view is not pantheist, contra Zeller (1931: 294).

63 Cf. Field (1934: 290), who claims, “There is little or nothing in [Plato’s] writings about the personal relation of man to God which is such an important element in Christian religious experience.”

64 Abhayanaanda (1994: 142-156) claims that Plotinus himself is one of the “true knowers” of God. See the following commentators who discuss a Plotinian vision of God: Inge (1948: 153; discussing Westcott); Wolfson (1952: 126; and this is Plato’s view as well); and Wolfson (1952: 128; all of God (qua the One) does not become knowable). Zeller (1931: 293; cf. Underhill 1974: 373) claims that Plotinus’s system “proceeds from the idea of God and concludes with the demand for union with God.” Given that Plotinus claims that the One is in God in places, this is true, but should be annotated with the claim that God is also Nous on Plotinus’ view. Lastly, Shorey (1938: 53-54), discussing the One, refers to it as the “unknown God”; this is technically true of the One or Good (on both philosophers’ views – see PPMEE § 2.3).
another when they have lost themselves. A child, certainly, who is outside himself in madness will not know his father; but he who has learnt to know himself will know from whence he comes (VI.9.7.16-34).

In the first sentence, Plotinus mentions the Forms, and contemplation of and transcendent union with the One, so we know that the context involves the Forms and the One; in the second sentence, he mentions Minos’ being a friend of Zeus and the divine touch, confirming that God is somehow in the realm of either communing with the One or in the realm of the Forms. The remainder of the passage relates the way in which we can come to know our self65 and our Source, which necessarily alludes, on Plato and Plotinus’ philosophies, to Intellect and the Good, both of which are referred to as “God” by Plotinus. Note that both philosophers use the father metaphor for God, in the context of knowing or recognizing God. To strengthen my claim that Plotinus holds that we can know God, keep in mind that (1) Plotinus said that we could know Nous because Nous contains or is the Forms, which are knowable (see PTP § 3.1.1 and SUPP § 5.4) and (2) Plotinus states that God is Nous (V.1.4-5, IV.7.10). From these two claims, we can reasonably infer that Plotinus believes we can know God (and thereby know ourselves, as VI.9.7 implies above).66

Thus, Plotinus and Plato believe that we can have knowledge of God.

4.2 God is good and is blameless in the choice of our lives

Plato: After stating that God is really good (Republic II 379b1), Socrates and Adeimantus have the following exchange:

The good isn’t the cause of all things, then, but only of good ones; it isn’t the cause of bad ones.

I agree entirely.

Therefore, since God is good, he is not – as most people claim – the cause of everything that happens to human beings but of only a few things, for good things are fewer than bad ones in our lives. He alone is responsible for the good things, but we must find some other cause for the bad ones, not God.

That’s very true, and I believe it (Republic II 379b1-c8; adapted from Grube/Reeve).67

Several pages later, Plato applies this principle that God is good to his laws in the ideal state and claims that no stories can be told to the effect that God causes badness to any humans (Republic II 380b-c). Lastly, in Republic X, in the Myth of Er, in a passage that Plotinus will make much of, Plato states that God is not to blame for anyone’s life: the soul chooses its fate; here is Lachesis’—the daughter of Necessity—message to the souls that are between lives:

Ephemeral souls, this is the beginning of another cycle that will end in death. Your daemon or guardian spirit will not be assigned to you by lot; you will choose a life to which he will then be bound by necessity. Virtue knows no master; each will possess it to a greater or less degree, depending on

65 See Alcibiades I 129a-134e; in that discussion, Socrates states that “if the soul … is to know itself, it must look at a soul, and especially at that region in which what makes a soul good, wisdom, occurs, and at anything else which is similar to it” (133b7-10) and “this part of it [i.e., the soul’s Reason] resembles the divine, and someone who looked at it and grasped everything divine – vision and intelligence – would have the best grasp of himself as well” (133e4-6). See also Philebus 48c, where Socrates starts the conversation by stating that the opposite of badness is what the Delphic oracle’s inscription is, and the discussion culminates in the claim that evil is believing oneself superior in virtue when one is not or to possess the virtue of wisdom when one does not (Philebus 49a). Given the Alcibiades I and Philebus passages, we can infer that Charmides 164d-165b, 167a, 169d-170a represent Plato’s view, even though Socrates fears this may not be true, at Charmides 170a, since he holds it later (leaving open the possibility that Plato developed his view later in life – this issue is not relevant to the present discussion). For a quite direct comparison on this self-knowledge point in Plotinus (besides the passages in the text), see V.3.6 and V.3.7.

66 In fact, Plotinus gives the reader advice on how to know God; see, e.g., V.8.11, V.5.11, V.8.9, and V.3.7.

67 For a passage where Plato states that if a society or government is preserved or goes well, God is the preserver, see Republic VI 492e-493a.
whether he values or disdains it. The responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; God has none (Republic X 617d6-e5; adapted from Grube/Reeve).\(^68\)

Thus, Plato holds that God is good, and that we must look for the cause of badness somewhere other than in God.\(^69\)

**Plotinus:** Curiously, Plotinus nowhere explicitly states that God is good. However, since he does state that Nous is good (VI.2.11), and that God is Nous (V.1.4-5, IV.7.10), I can safely infer this claim. Also, he states that God does not send evils to humans, and argues against the Gnostics who believe that God does send evil (implied, e.g., at II.9.4) and he states to the Gnostics that “God in his providence cares for you” (II.9.9.64), so again and in another way, I can infer that God is good.

We can, however, much more handily confirm that Plotinus holds that God is blameless in the course of our lives\(^70\) – we choose them, as he says in these two brief passages: “So it is rightly said that ‘we shall choose.’ For we choose the principle which stands above us according to our choice of life” (III.4.3.8-10).

And:

Plato gives the souls lots and choices before the circling of the Spindle, and afterwards gives them the beings on the Spindle as helpers, to bring to accomplishment in every way what they have chosen: since the guardian spirit also cooperates in the fulfillment of their choices (II.3.15.1-5).

Therefore, Plotinus agrees with Plato that God is good and that we choose our lives before we are incarnated, and thus we should not blame God for the course of our lives.

### 4.3 God creates man as a toy; we should play our role well

In Plato and Plotinus’ works, we find a view that would perhaps usually be referred to a Stoic doctrine (see below); namely, the idea that God creates humans as toys, and that we should play our role well.

**Plato:** Plato believes that God constructed humans as toys, presumably to help those who believe that they are the most superior beings come “down to earth,” and that the best thing about humans is that they are toys for God.\(^71\) For instance, Plato says: “let’s imagine that each of us living beings is a puppet of the gods. Whether we have been constructed to serve as their plaything (naiyvov),\(^72\) or for some serious reason …” (Laws I 644d7-e9).\(^73\) It is significant that he said that we may be toys with a serious purpose, because it implies by this that we are not necessarily meaningless living things though we are toys. In addition, this perspective will help us see that we are merely playing roles, as Shakespeare said many years later, so we must play our roles well:

I maintain that serious matters deserve our serious attention, but trivialities do not; that all men of good will should put God at the center of their thoughts; that man, as we said before, has been created as a toy for God; and that this is the great point in his favor. So every man and every woman should play this part and order their whole life accordingly … (Laws VII 803c2-8).\(^74\)

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\(^68\) Carone (2005: 36) argues that God/Nous (in the Timaeus) is not to blame for the imperfection of the universe because God is not omnipotent. Sharples (1994: 174n16, 176) rightly argues that the Republic X passage just quoted is concerned with the soul’s choosing its next life, while Laws X 904c is concerned with the soul’s choosing how to live so it affects its next reincarnation.

\(^69\) Also, not surprisingly, Plato claims via the Athenian that we all assign to God the state of contentment, the neutral state between pursuing pleasure and the “absolute avoidance of pain” at Laws VII 792d1.

\(^70\) I concur with de Vogel (1986: 227) on this point.

\(^71\) Graeser (1972: 80-81), trying to show Plotinus’ Stoic roots, admits that Plato at least anticipated the idea (found in Epictetus, e.g.) of humans being puppets of God.

\(^72\) Graeser (ibid) notes that “puppet” anticipated by Plato, as noted above concerning God.

\(^73\) See also Phaedo 62b, Laws X 902b and 906a-b.

\(^74\) On not taking mortal life too seriously, see Republic X 604b-604c. See Laws I 644d-645c for Plato’s initial proposal that humans might be playthings of the gods; see also Laws X 902b-9 (after the current passage), where the Athenian states that “we regard all mortal creatures as possessions of gods, like the universe as a whole,” to which Clinias agrees.

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The remainder of what Plato says about God deals with fearing God (its causes – see Laws XII 967d-968a and its effect – see Laws VIII 841b-c), laws concerning worshipping God (Republic IV 427b-c), the image of God that makes the best statue (Laws XI 931d-e), not including what is said about God in presumably inauthentic dialogues.  

Interestingly, Plato makes a claim concerning the believer’s voluntary actions: “No one who believes in gods as the law directs ever voluntarily commits an unholy act or lets any lawless word pass his lips” (Laws X 885b-6). If someone believes in god, she cannot do an impious deed or utter a lawless word. Thus, Plato believes that God creates man as a toy, and we should play our role well.  

**Plotinus:** Keeping in mind that for both philosophers, the gods properly speaking create human beings or at least their mortal parts, see:  

… as it is, a manifold life exists in the All and makes all things, and in its living embroiders a rich variety and does not rest from ceaselessly making beautiful and shapely living toys (παιήσεις) (III.2.15.31-33).  

And:  

… for the good man his acts of taking and giving and his transferences are different, since [all things] are transferred by pulls of nature as if they were drawn by lines (IV.4.45.24-26).

A. H. Armstrong states in a footnote on this sentence that it is a reminiscence of the Platonic passage where men are puppets of the gods, moved by strings (Laws I 644d-e). But the implication of the Laws VII 803c-8 passage is that since we are a toy for God, we should play our role as perfectly as possible, and this is something I can more explicitly confirm in Plotinus’ view. Plotinus discusses living things killing and eating one another, and asks:  

And what does it matter if, when they are eaten, they come alive again as different animals? It is like on the stage, when the actor who has been murdered changes his costume and comes on again in another character. But [in real life, not on the stage] the man is really dead. If, then, death is a changing of body, like changing of clothes on the stage, or, for some of us, a putting off of body, like in the theater the final exit, in that performance, of an actor who will on a later occasion come in again to play, what would there be that is terrible in a change of this kind, of living beings into each other? It is far better than if they had never came into existence at all (III.2.15.21-30).

Of course, Plato’s view that we should play our role well (probably as well as Socrates’ handling of his death) was picked up by the Stoics, and Plotinus is agreeing with Plato. This agreement has led Graeser to argue

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75 In the Epinomis, God is said to have given us the gift of number (976e1-4), which is “the greatest thing” (977b6-7) and we should use the gift of numbers to examine the heavens’ revolutions fully (977b7-8); God is the cause of the stars’ revolutions (982d-983c); and God is above both pain and pleasure, possessing all-embracing wisdom and knowledge (985a-b). It is noteworthy that each of these claims is found in authentic Platonic dialogues.

76 See also: “For only the seriously good part of man is capable of taking serious doings seriously; the rest of man is a toy” (III.2.15.53-54); and see the sentences thereafter; cf. III.5.1.60ff.


78 For instance, Epictetus said, “Remember that you are an actor in a play, the character of which is determined by the Playwright: if He wishes the play to be short, it is short; if long, it is long; if He wishes you to play the part of a beggar, remember to act even this role adroitly; and so if your role be that of a cripple, an official, or a layman. For this is your business, to play admirably the role assigned you; but the selection of that role is Another’s.” Encheiridion, Chapter 17, p. 497. Cf. Graeser (1972: 82-84).

79 Graeser 1972.
generally that Plotinus has Stoic elements in his thought, but since this view in particular occurs in Plato’s works first, tracing such a view back to Stoics but not Plato is not accurate.\(^80\)

We should be spectators of murders, and all deaths, and takings and sacking of cities, as if there were on the stages of theaters, all changes of scenery and costume and acted wailings and weepings. For really here in the events of our life it is not the soul within but the outside shadow of man which cries and moans and carries on in every sort of way on a stage which is the whole earth where men have in many places set up their stages (III.2.15.43-50).

Plotinus here shows us that he agrees with Plato’s idea that our lives are but a play that we need to realize we chose, and hopefully come to have knowledge and choose for ourselves, knowing ourselves for what we really are. In other passages related to God, Plotinus states that God is free of all bound (IV.3.8) and that God and his very members are infinites (V.8.9). The former statement is plausibly Platonic, though a passage from Plato cannot be produced to demonstrate it. Concerning the latter statement, if the number of Forms is infinite, which seems reasonable but cannot be confirmed in Plato to my knowledge, then Plotinus’ statements should not seem too controversial.

Lastly, I can confirm the “voluntary action” aspect to Plato’s claim above in *Laws* X 885b4-6 somewhat, here:

If, then, there is still any element of involuntary impulse of this sort, a man in this state will be a god or spirit who is double, or rather who has with him someone else who possesses a different kind of virtue: if there is nothing, he will be simply god, and one of those gods who follow the First (I.2.6.3-7).

The difference between the two passages is, of course, that Plotinus states that we need to suppress the involuntary in order to be godlike; but it is puzzling how Plato could really be saying that if one believes in gods—and does not know them or is not virtuous, for instance—one does voluntary actions *ipso facto*. I cannot and will not settle this issue here.

Therefore, both philosophers believe that humans are a possession or a toy for the gods, and we should play our role well. Let us proceed with the gods.

### 4.4 The stars are gods (though not all gods are stars)

Both philosophers believe that the stars are gods, though *all* gods are not stars.

**Plato:** First, Plato weighs in on this issue in the *Timaeus*, when he states that the creator created “the heavenly race of the gods” (39e10), and explicitly acknowledges that there are “everlasting and unwandering stars” (40b4-5; fixed stars; “those other than the moon, sun, and planets, which have already been created”\(^81\)) and “[t]hose that have turnings and thus wander” (namely, planets; 40b6-7),\(^82\) and that “Earth ranks as the foremost, the one with greatest seniority” (40c2-3).\(^83\)

**Plotinus:** Plotinus refers to heaven, where the stars\(^84\) are, as “immortal” and says this in addition: “We, however, are formed by the soul given from the gods in heaven and heaven itself, and this soul governs

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\(^80\) Hence A. H. Armstrong (1947: 195)’s astute comment that “… though there is a very strong Stoic element in his view of the material world and the moral law governing it, his Stoicism is always subordinated to his Platonism.”

\(^81\) Mohr (2005: 35) notes that planets are ensouled as well. Shorey (1938: 51-53) incredulously notes that some in his day took Plato to believe in star worship; it seems to stand to reason, though, that if Plato believes stars are gods, and that gods answer prayers of good persons (PPMEE § 2.6), that they would indeed be worthy of our worship.

\(^82\) Carone (2005: 54) recently notes that the heavenly bodies are gods for Plato.

\(^83\) Astrologers, according to Dodds (1951: 262n59), were happy to hear about Plotinus’ painful end because he had “blasphemous lack of respect for the stars.” It is true that Plotinus argued against the astrological influence of the stars (in II.3); nonetheless he believes that they are gods that grant prayers to good humans, as we’ve seen in PPMEE § 2.6.
our association with our bodies” (II.1.5.18-20), which implies that there are gods in heaven, and Plotinus claims nowhere else that there is anything else in heaven besides the stars (and planets and our moon).85

We can further confirm Plotinus’ view by responding to A. H. Armstrong’s unfounded assessment of Enneads III.2-3, that the Plotinian gods—unlike the Platonic ones—perform their functions in an “automatic, almost mechanical way, without trouble or conscious thought or disturbance of their life, like the organs of a plant or animal” 86

I have examined III.2 and III.3, where Armstrong makes this assessment of Plotinus’ gods, and I disagree with his assessment: Besides the passages related to the gods and prayer (see PPMEE § 2.6), I found three major passages on the gods in III.2 and III.3 on providence and the gods. The first says that all good souls live in the heavens, infusing life into the stars and into its orderly eternal circuit, making conscious movement everywhere about the one Center, seeking nothing beyond and being a faithful copy of the Divine Mind (III.2.3); nothing here seems robotic or unthinking: in fact, quite the opposite seems true. The second passage says the star-gods constitute the greater part of the Kosmos (the earth being the central point but only one among the stars), and that it is childish for us to ignore the gods’ prescriptions for our well-being and then hope that they will keep all well for us (III.2.8); again, the gods seem conscious of whether or not humans are minding them and their prescriptions. The third passage relates that all creations will act consonant with the will of the gods, and the Nous of providence is god-serving (III.3.5); nothing here suggests that the gods act automatically like animals’ organs, at least to me.87

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus believe that the stars are gods.

4.5 The universe is a perceivable god

Plato and Plotinus also state that the whole universe is a perceivable or sensible god. **Plato:** For Plato, 88 evidence is his last sentence of the *Timaeus*:

> The world of ours has received and teems with living things, mortal and immortal. A visible living thing containing visible ones, perceivable god, image of the intelligible Living Thing, its grandness, goodness, beauty and perfection are unexcelled. Our universe, indeed the only one of its kind, has come to be (*Timaeus* 92c5-9).89

Plato also claims that the sun, the planets, and our moon are gods (*Laws* X 899a7-b9), there are other divinities that are offspring of the gods (*Laws* 40d6-e4), and some gods are visible while others we set up likenesses of and gain their favors (*Laws* XI 930c7-931a4).90

85 See also III.2.3, III.2.8, and III.3.5, which I paraphrase below; and see V.8.3 (cf. II.2.2), where Plotinus endorses Plato’s view of the revolutions of the stars. I agree with J. Whittaker (1968: 139-140), that Plotinian stars are eternal or everlasting gods, that are in motion (and add that this is Plato’s view as well); with Wilberding (2006: 41), that Plotinian stars are numerically one and the same throughout time (though Wilberding claims that Plotinus does not make the same claim – it seems Platonic to me); and with Zeller (1931: 297-298), that Plotinian stars are visible gods, exalted above change and time (even though they move), and have no idea of what’s below them; excepting (and these are my comments) that they do answer prayers, and that all of this is said of or implied about Platonic stars as well. I disagree with A. H. Armstrong (1947: 194)’s view that Plotinus only believes that he is following Plato on his view of the gods; their claims seem to be parallel to me. Lastly, Wilberding (2006: 188-190) claims that Plotinus’ view differs from Plato’s because he doesn’t think that water and air could be present in the celestial region.


87 Moreover, they both believe that gods created humans’ souls and it is not clear how caringly involved the Platonic gods are said to be.

88 Carone (2005: 54) recently notes also that Plato believes that the perceivable universe is a god.

89 See also: “Applying this entire train of reasoning to the god that was yet to be” (*Timaeus* 34a8-b1) and “this world which he begat for himself is a blessed god” (*Timaeus* 34b8-9).

90 One example of a god who is not visible may be Pluto, mentioned by Plato at *Cratylus* 403c-404a, who provides blessings from under the earth. The infamous *Euthyphro* argument (10a-11b) that is usually taken to refute the Divine Command Theory shows that the gods do not create the Forms, which is compatible with the rest of the Platonic corpus on that issue. For a passage that geometric equality is important to the gods, see *Gorgias* 508a; that gods hear prayers, *Menexenus* 247c-d; that gods are nourished by reason, knowledge, truth, justice and being, see *Phaedrus* 247c-248a. In the *Laws*, Plato gives a list of some gods (II 653c-654a), states...
Plotinus: Plotinus believes that “the sun also is a god because it is ensouled …” (V.1.2.40-41), and we’ve verified his belief that stars are gods. Plotinus states that “every being down to the moon is a god” (III.5.6.18-19), and “the gods in the universe of sense down to the moon” (III.5.6.21-22). Plotinus also believes with Plato that the universe is a sensible god (V.8.9).

Thus, both thinkers believe that the universe is a perceptible god.

4.6 The gods follow Zeus

The next issue upon which both philosophers agree is that the gods follow Zeus.

Plato:

Now Zeus, the great commander in heaven, drives his winged chariot first in the procession, looking after everything and putting all things in order. Following him is an army of gods and spirits arranged in eleven sections. Hestia is the only one who remains at the home of the gods; all the rest of the twelve are lined up in formation, each god in command of the unit to which he is assigned (Phaedrus 246c4-247a4). Thus, Plato believes that the gods follow Zeus.

Plotinus:

For this reason Zeus, although the oldest among the gods whom he himself leads, advances first to the contemplation of this god, and there follow him the other gods and spirits and the souls who are capable of seeing these things. But he appears to them from some invisible place and dawning upon them from high illuminates everything and fills it with his rays, and dazzles those of them who are below, and they turn away unable to see him, as if he was the sun (V.8.10.1-8).

Thus, both philosophers believe that the gods follow Zeus.

4.7 The gods are good, beautiful, just and wise

Each philosopher holds that the gods are good, beautiful, just, and wise. Therefore, Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ on their views of God and the gods: it is possible to know God via philosophy; God is good and is blameless in the choice of our lives; God creates man as a toy; we should play our role well; the stars are gods (though not all gods are stars); the universe is a that we must give an account of our lives to the gods (XII 959a-c; cf. Apology 39c); he makes analogies to the gods (as drivers or captains, for instance; X 905e-906a); and finally details religious laws (XII 955e-956b). In the inauthentic Epinomis, the three conclusions of the Laws we began the “gods” section in the text with, are summed up again (980c-981a) and that piety itself forbids us to disregard the gods (992a-b).

91 See also II.1.1-2, II.3.9, IV.4.30 (where Plotinus says that stars including the sun hear our prayers and can answer them), IV.4.35, IV.4.40, V.1.2, and V.8.3-4.

92 Cf. II.1.5, II.3.5, and see IV.8.6 for a claim that the moon has seen God and has not forgotten it.

93 For more on Zeus’s being the leader of the gods, see Phaedrus 252c-253c and Critias 121b-c. Incidentally, both men refer to the age of Kronos: Plato at Laws IV 713c-714b, and Plotinus at V.1.4.

94 For Platonic passages, see Symposium 202e (the gods are happy and beautiful), 204a (wise), Republic I 352a-b and Theaetetus 176e (just), and compare Philebus 39e-40a (gods’ attitude to good and bad humans), Republic II 381b-d (God is immutable because change would worsen God from God’s perfect state), and 382e-383a (gods are free from deception). Moreover, for Platonic passages where poetry and music is prohibited on the premise that God/gods are good, see Republic II 378b-c, 379e-380a, and 383a-c; that gods cannot cause evil, see Republic III 391e; for his argument against those who believe that gods cause evil, see Laws X 906c-d. For Plotinus, see V.8.3.18-19, 24-26. In addition, we’ve already seen the gods are just, and will not veer from justice, in III.2.8 above; also, Plotinus confirms that gods cannot do evil at IV.4.39, so I can confirm what Plato says about the gods in Plotinus’ works.

95 Rist (1964: 29) reminds me that the gods’ horses are good in the Phaedrus, implying too that the gods do have Spirit and Appetite, though I’m not sure that that analogy holds throughout either Plato’s work or Plotinus’.

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perceptible god; the gods follow Zeus; the gods are good, beautiful, just and wise; and humans are a possession or a toy for the gods. Regarding the gods, we also found that there is a, as of yet irresolvable, discrepancy in Plato’s view that if one believes in the gods, one cannot err willingly (via impiety) and one cannot utter a lawless word; and we reviewed a related claim in Plotinus stating that if one is godlike, one’s actions are voluntary.
CHAPTER 5: FORMS OR IDEAS

Plato and Plotinus certainly agree that Forms exist, so this section will be made as short as possible, confirming only the major characteristics of the Forms. For example, I can forgo showing every passage where Plato refers to the Forms, as lists of the Forms I believe that Plato and Plotinus are definitely committed to occur in Appendices V and VI, respectively. In addition, I will not review Plato or Plotinus’ arguments for the Forms or Plato’s own criticisms of his Forms (Parmenides 128e-c134c), as my aim is to show that these philosophers believe Forms exist and have the same characteristic features.

Moreover, as I covered in PTP §§ 2.4 and 2.5, both philosophers believe that dialectic’s objects are the Forms, and that we recollect the Forms, so reviewing those practices here will not be necessary.

We will, however, demonstrate that Plato and Plotinus both hold the following claims to be true of the Forms: Forms are eternal (§ 5.1); Forms are immutable (§ 5.2); Forms are immaterial (§ 5.3); Forms are accessible by Reason/intelligence (§ 5.4); Forms are unities/each is one (§ 5.5); Forms are the cause of everything of that kind/Forms are what each thing really is (§ 5.6); The Forms “blend” (§ 5.7); our words refer to Forms (§ 5.8); Forms are originals; perceptibles are images (§ 5.9); there are Forms of things done according to nature (§ 5.10); and there are not “bad” Forms (§ 5.11). (We shall also cover other miscellaneous claims about Forms that one philosopher makes where the other does not, but show why they nonetheless do not necessarily essentially differ on those claims in § 5.12.)

5.1 Forms are eternal

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90 I believe, with Allen (1970: 28-29) that Forms occur early in Plato’s work, in the Euthyphro, where Socrates asks, “is the pious not the same and alike in every action, and the impious the opposite of all that is pious and like itself, and everything that is to be impious presents us with one form or appearance in so far as it is impious?” (Euthyphro 5d1-5) However, it is not essential to my current project to argue for this claim here. I agree with Gerson (1994: 47n22) that Plato “maximally generates Forms” from Republic 596a and Letter VII 342d-e. I also note Mohr (2005: 231, 233-234)’s claim that numbers are Forms for Plato, but am currently neutral on whether this is true for Plato: On the one hand, (1) though Forms themselves are limits or limited, the number of Forms may harmlessly be infinite; and (2) Plato himself claims that there are Forms of One, Two, and even Numbers, at least on my reading (see Appendix V for a list of references). On the other hand, (1) Plato only seems to claim that the Good or One is unlimited, so he may deny that there is also an unlimited number of Forms; and (2) Aristotle claims that Plato believed that mathematical were not themselves Forms but intermediates between sensibles and Forms (Metaphysics 1.6 987b14-18).

97 Wallis (1972: 18) curiously claims that the Neo-Platonists’ answer to the Forms’ being the solution to the logical problem of universals and fulfilling a need for ideal aesthetics and ethics standards was “to concentrate on the Forms’ aesthetic and cosmological functions at the expense of their role as universals and to jettison Forms that conflicted with these aspects of the theory.” As you can see from Appendices V and VI, Plotinus basically agrees with Plato’s list of Forms, with some minor differences. Thus, I conclude that Wallis’ statement does not apply to Plotinus’ view, whether or not it applies to any other Neo-Platonists.

98 There are at least six Platonic arguments in favor of the Forms; here is my list of where they occur and my names for them: (1) Cratylus 385e-386c (Argument from Relatives I); (2) Phaedo 74a-76a (The Argument from Recollection/Rationalism); (3) Republic V 478e-479d (Argument from Opposites); (4) Republic VI 523a-525a (The Argument from Relatives II: The “Finger” Passage); (5) Parmenides 134e-135c (The Argument from Thought/Dialectic); and (6) Parmenides 128e-c130a, 132a1-5 [cf. Republic V 507b and X 596a, 597c7-9, Sophist 243d-e, Philebus 34c3-4], (The One Over Many Argument) per Cherniss (1944: 260-272, esp. 260n170) and Gerson (2005a: 38). (Thus, I hope to have refuted Pistorius (1952: 35), who claims that Plato never argues for the Forms.) Plotinus states that the Forms’ existence has been demonstrated elsewhere at II.4.4.1-2, which is probably, as A. H. Armstrong (1966b: 110) notes, alluding to V.9.3-4.

99 Interestingly, Plotinus does discuss whether there is an Idea of filth and mud (V.9.14), and rejects that idea as the young Socrates does in the Parmenides 130c-d. Jordan (1983: 98; see also 32-33) diagnoses Plato as follows: “Plato … misunderstood the relation of context to contradiction; and that is why Plato posits Forms, but other philosophers do not.”

Plato: Plato affirms the eternity of Beauty, via Diotima in the *Symposium*, who claims that Beauty Itself:

First, it always is [ἀeil ὅν] and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes. Second, it is not beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another; nor is it beautiful here but ugly there, as it would be if it were beautiful for some people and ugly for others. Nor will the beautiful appear to him in the guise of a face or hands or anything else that belongs to the body. It will not appear to him as one idea or one kind of knowledge. It is not anywhere in another thing, as in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else, but itself by itself with itself, it is always one in form [μονοειδές αei ὅν]; and all the other beautiful things share in that, in such a way that when those others come to be or pass away, this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change (*Symposium* 210e6-b5).102

In this one quotation, we see that Beauty is not only eternal (“it always is,” “it is always one in form”), but immaterial (it’s not “anything else that belongs to the body”), and immutable (it “neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes,” and though perceptibles partake in it, it “does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change”). The reader should keep this in mind when we continue to the next two sections of this chapter.

Back to eternality, the character Socrates in the *Phaedo* states of Forms that: “It is true then … that not only the Form itself deserves its own name for all time [τὸν αei χρόνον], but there is something else that is not the Form but has its character [μορφήν αei] whenever it exists” (*Phaedo* 103e2–5). The only way in which the appellation “Beauty,” for instance, could eternally apply to Beauty Itself is if Beauty Itself exists eternally.

Thus, for Plato, the Forms are eternal.

Plotinus:

Since all things eternally come into being and eternally abide, and are in eternity comprehended in being, each of them being what it is and all again being in one, the complex and construction, as we may put it, of all in one is Intellect. And since it has the real beings in itself it is a ‘complete’ Living Being and ‘the Absolute Living Being’; but by giving itself to that which comes from it to behold, by becoming intelligible, it allows the transcendent Intellect to be rightly so called (VI.2.21.53–59).103

The eternal realm of Intellect contains the individual Forms, which are thus eternal.104

Therefore, Plotinus and Plato agree that the Forms are eternal.

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101 I agree with Lachterman (1989-1990: 156) here, as well as de Vogel (1970: 206)'s comment that “… we should not wonder too much, that in the *Timaeus* the intelligible Forms are referred to as ‘eternal Gods’. It is fitting in the style of this dialogue.” There is an issue, which J. Whittaker (1968: 131; see also 137-138, 140-141) raises: “Are the Platonic Forms eternal in the sense that they endure eternally, or is there eternity such that it transcends duration? The latter alternative is defended by H. Cherniss and is in fact the traditional interpretation of Plato’s doctrine, whereas the former view was held by F. M. Cornford. My present purpose is to show that the traditional interpretation rests upon an insecure basis.” However, contra Whittaker’s clever argument, since Plato claims that (1) the Demiurge looks to the eternal (τὸ ἀδιόν) to create the universe (29a), and this unquestionably refers to the Forms, and (2) the universe is an image of the eternal gods (τὸν ἀδιόν ὑπὸ μορφῶν – 37c), where these are Forms, and (3) that it is by moving the heavens that he created time (37d-e), which implies everlastingness, we can safely conclude that the Forms do not simply endure eternally, but exist eternally beyond time.

102 For some other references, see *Republic* V 479a1-3, where Plato implies that philosophers “believe in the Beautiful Itself … that remains always the same in all respects” (adapted from Grube/Reeve), and *Timaeus* 38a2-3, where Plato describes eternal being as “that which is always changeless and motionless”; if the Forms are Beings that are part of the eternal intelligible region, they too must be eternal.

103 See also IV.3.25 (where Plotinus claims that time does not touch the Authentically Existent and Intellectual-Principle), VI.7.2 (Man Itself and Act Itself are eternal), and VI.1.16 (Motion Itself is eternal); cf. IV.7.9, where Plotinus hypothesizes about whether White is eternal.

104 Despite this passage and the previous note that shows the eternality of Forms, A. H. Armstrong (1971: 74) claims that Plotinus is not fully consistent or coherent on his view of the “non-durational eternity” of Intellect.
5.2 Forms are immutable

Plato:

Let us then return … to that reality of whose existence we are giving an account in our questions and answers; are they ever the same and in the same state, or do they vary from one time to another; can the Equal itself, the Beautiful itself, each thing in itself, the real, ever be affected by any change whatever? Or does each of them that really is, being uniform by itself, remain the same and never in any way tolerate any change whatever?

It must remain the same, said Cebees, and in the same way, Socrates (Phaedo 78c10-d9).105

Thus, the Forms are immutable according to Plato.

Plotinus:

… for no one of the real beings is outside, or in place, but they remain always in themselves and undergo no alteration or destruction: that is why they are truly real (V.9.5.32-34).106

Thus, both Plato and Plotinus believe that the Forms are immutable.

5.3 Forms are immaterial

Plato: For evidence in Plato—besides the Symposium passage we saw above (210e6-b5, quoted in § 5.1), a passage from the Republic serves well:

We say that there are many beautiful things and many good things, and so on for each kind, and in this way we distinguish them in words.

We do.

And Beauty Itself and Good Itself and all the things that we thereby set down as many, reversing ourselves, we set down according to a single Form of each, believing that there is but one, and call it ‘the being’ of each.

That’s true.

And we say that the many beautiful things and the rest are visible but not intelligible, while the Forms are intelligible but not visible.

That’s completely true (Republic VI 507b2-11; adapted from Grube/Reeve).107

Thus, the Forms are immaterial for Plato.

Plotinus: And now I can confirm that Plotinus has the view that Forms are immaterial108 from this passage:

… the real beings are set firm on themselves and need no place: for they are not magnitudes; they have an intelligent existence sufficient to themselves (V.9.5.43-46).109

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105 For some other references to immutability of Forms (and by implication from Nous to the Forms), see Cratylus 440a-b, Symposium 210e-211b, Republic V 479a, 479c, Theaetetus 176e-177a, and Timaeus 27e-28a, 35a-b, 37b, 37e-38b, 51e-52a.

106 For further Plotinian passages, see IV.3.25 and III.7.5.

107 See also Republic VII 525d-526b, Timaeus 51e-52b, and Statesman 285e-286b; Gerson (1994: 256n2) also reminded me of Phaedo 79a5-6.

108 Harris (1976: 3) notes this feature of Plotinus’ thought as well.

109 See also VI.4.3, VI.4.8, VI.7.33, VI.1.8, and VI.3.6.
The corporeal, but not the Forms, demand magnitude; the Forms are Ideas, and therefore immaterial.
   Therefore, both philosophers hold that Forms are immaterial.

5.4 Forms are accessible by Reason/intelligence

It stands to reason that if Forms are immaterial, they will be accessed by the mind, soul, Reason, or intelligence, and not surprisingly, both philosophers agree on this point. The controversial aspects of this issue are whether Plotinus holds that Forms are thoughts of God, Nous, or the Demiurge (all of whom are the same entity on our reading of Plato and Plotinus), and whether Forms are propositions for Plato.

**Plato:** For Plato, we see confirmation that he believes that Forms are accessible by Reason or intelligence in the *Timaeus*:

... we must agree that that which keeps its own Form unchangingly, which has not been brought into being and is not destroyed .... It is invisible – it cannot be perceived by the senses at all – and it is the role of understanding [vōνης] to study it (*Timaeus* 51c6-52a4; adapted from Zeyl).\(^{111}\)

We can show, *contra* Fine and others,\(^ {112}\) that Plato does not hold that Forms are propositions, generalizing from what he says about Beauty in the *Symposium*. “Nor will the beautiful appear to him in the guise of a face or hands or anything else that belongs to the body. It will not appear to him as some word [οὐδὲ τις λόγος] ...” (*Symposium* 211a5-7; adapted from Nehamas/Woodruff).

As a sort of vaccination to the objection in the Plotinus subsection below, we should mention that Plato has the view that the Forms can be in our souls (at least for the Form-knowers);\(^ {114}\) for instance, he says, “Do you think, then, that there’s any difference between the blind and those who are really deprived of the knowledge of each thing that is? The latter have no clear model in their souls, and so they cannot – in the manner of painters – look to what is most true, make constant reference to it, and study it as exactly as possible” (*Republic* VI 484c6-d1), where the “clear model” mentioned is certainly a Form.\(^ {111}\) Moreover, since the Forms are in the Intelligible Region (§ 3.1.1), which Plato also refers to as Nous or God (§ 3.2.1), then it is plausible to claim that Forms are in the divine Mind, for Plato. Finally, if God is wise and uses the Forms as models in creating (§ 3.2.1), it is reasonable to infer that God contemplates or may contemplate the Forms, which again implies that Forms are in God’s mind, for Plato.\(^ {116}\)

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\(^{110}\) For both philosophers, Reason is the highest, best part of the soul – see § 8.2.2.

\(^{111}\) See also *Phaedo* 65b-67a, *Republic* VI 507b-c, and *Statesman* 285e-286b.

\(^{112}\) Fine (1978: 124) and White (1976: 100) take this approach; cf. Robinson (1953: 111). As an alternative reading of what it means to give a *logos* of a Form, see Mohr (2005: 227, 243-247; cf. 253-254)’s interesting analysis.

\(^{113}\) Note that Fowler translates τις λόγος “a particular description,” and another alternative translation is “some account,” both of which are consistent with the idea that Forms are not claims or propositions.

\(^{114}\) From another perspective, however, as I have examined in the Recollection section (PPMEE § 2.5), Plato believes that all of us (humans) already have knowledge of the Forms somehow (presumably not consciously) in our souls; however, in the following passage he is emphasizing the pre-recollection aspect of persons (the “subconscious” or “unconscious” nature of the knowledge, before one has recollected it), when he mentions those who are blind and lack knowledge of each being. Thus, for those who have knowledge, the Forms can be said to be consciously in their souls.

\(^{115}\) I want to thank Mohr (2005: 219) for pointing this passage out to me. Also, however, see “[Reason] resembles the divine, and someone who looked at it and grasped everything divine – vision and intelligence – would have the best grasp of himself as well” (*Alcibiades* I 133c4-6), which T. Taylor (1816: 57) brought to mind, and which implies as well that, by looking at our Reason and the Forms (the whole class of divine things – for the Forms are eternal gods at *Timaeus* 37e), we can know ourselves. T. Whittaker (1961: 41) seems to agree with me on this point, and cf. Gerson (2005b: 268). Note too that I sense a possible paradox in using Nous to refer to the Forms collectively, as well as to refer to God, as though God is something distinct from the Forms when I try to claim that the Forms are in the Intellect; however, (1) some readers may already take God to be distinct from the Forms and deny a paradox; and (2) if one accepts or sees this paradox, then I cite as my witnesses the relevant Platonic passages where Plato refers to God as Nous (PTP § 3.2.1), Nous as the Intelligible Region (PTP § 3.1.1), the Intelligible Region as collectively being or containing the Forms (PTP § 3.1.1), Nous’ having intelligence or wisdom (PTP § 3.1.2), God’s using the Forms as models to create the universe, and God’s being the Demiurge (PTP § 3.3).

\(^{116}\) See PTP § 3.1.1 for more reasons that Forms are probably “not outside” the Intellect (as Plotinus puts it) for Plato as well.
Thus, Forms are accessible by Reason or intelligence, they are not propositions, and they are in the Intellect.

**Plotinus:** To affirm that Plotinus also holds that the Forms are accessible by Reason or intelligence, we adduce this passage:

… people cannot speak about the splendor of virtue who have never even imagined how fair is the fact of justice and moral order; … But there must be those who see this beauty by that with which the soul sees things of this sort, and when they see it they must be delighted and overwhelmed … since now it is true beauty they are grasping (I.6.4.9-15).118

I have confirmed Plotinus’ view that the Forms are accessible by intelligence. Let us now consider the objection you have hopefully been inoculated against: Rist119 makes this distinction between Plato and Plotinus’ view on this issue: “Plato makes it clear in the Parmenides [132b-c] that he rejects an interpretation of the Forms as being ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ [in the soul], whereas Plotinus dedicates a whole treatise into proving a view held throughout the Enneads e.g., V.5], that οὐκ ἔσω τοῦ νοῦ τὰ νοήματα.”120

Therefore, both Plato and Plotinus believe that Forms are accessible by Reason or intelligence, and we have good reason(s) to (1) believe that Forms are in the Intellect (or the Divine Mind) and (2) reject the view that Forms are propositions.

5.5 Forms are unities/each is one

**Plato:** Plato states this most clearly121 in the Republic:

Since the Beautiful is the opposite of ugly, they are two.

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117 See Gerson (2005b: 268) for an argument as to why the soul must be as real as the Forms in order to know them.

118 See also I.4.9-10; I.6.1-3, 7; II.6.3, III.6.6, III.8.10, IV.4.25, IV.5.1, IV.7.85, V.5.1, 7, 12; V.8.1, and V.9.5, 7.

119 Rist 1964: 60.

120 Rist continues: “That Plotinus was diverging from the view of Plato on this matter [i.e., Forms being in the soul] is certain; that he was the bearer of a long line of misinterpretation is also certain” (1964: 60) and then claims that Plotinian Forms are in the Divine Mind (which is not true in Plato), but doing so provides Plotinus’ followers with a link with the Good (a link which Plato does not have; 1964: 67-68). However, if I am correct that the Forms are “in” human souls as well as in the Divine Mind, then Plato regains this allegedly lost link. I have three additional comments to make, the first two based on other commentators: (1) Sumi (1997: 409) claims that Platonic Forms are not thoughts as they are in Plotinus, and this violates Plato’s prohibition at Parmenides 132b-c that Forms cannot be thoughts. Our reply is that Plato is only prohibiting that Forms are thoughts created by humans and only exist for as long as humans think them. We obviously have contact with Forms mentally, for Plato, so this is not a meaningful distinction between Plato and Plotinus. (2) A. H. Armstrong argues that the interpretation that Plotinian Forms are thoughts of the Intellect is inadequate (1960: 395); but then that “…there is good evidence for any interpretation of the Forms as thoughts of the human mind (the suggestion made and rejected in the Parmenides) before there is evidence for an interpretation of them as thoughts in a divine mind” (1960: 399). Thus, it is more likely on Armstrong’s view that Platonic Forms are in human minds than divine minds, but Plotinian Forms are not thoughts of the Intellect [though Armstrong also claims that Plotinian was influenced by others to think that Divine Mind has Forms in it (1960: 411-412)]. But, (1) see my arguments for the view that Plotonic Forms are in the soul and in the Divine Mind; (2) based on V.5.1.40-68 (and see V.5.2), for instance, which states that Plotinian Forms are in the Intellect; as well as that Intellect contemplates them, I disagree with Armstrong here; and (3) if my argument for Plotonic Forms being inside (or not outside) the Intellect fails, the reader can imagine that I have added the issue “That the Forms are not outside the Intellect (V.5)” to Appendix IV, Issues that Plotinus Discusses that Plato Does Not; even if this is true, however, we would not have a true incompatibility but a case where Plotinus possibly extends Plato’s view.

121 Here I agree with Gerson that the Good is one thing (1989: 98) and that Plotinus follows Plato’s one-over-many principle (see VI.5.6.2-4, VI.5.8.22-23) [1994: 78]. I differ with Menn (1993: 19), who interprets Philebus 30c as saying that “Sophia-and-nous is a virtue”; I interpret that passage as stating that reason and wisdom has a soul (that is, Nous has a soul in some sense, as argued for in Sophist 248g-249d – see PTP § 3.1.2). I also disagree with Mohr (2005) that one Form can contain other Forms (24), that “… one Form is part of another just exactly because it participates in the other” (26), and that “At Phaedrus 270d1, some Forms are simple … as opposed to complex …” (247). I grant that, for instance, Forms blend and participate in one another (see § 5.7), but this is not to say that Forms contain each other or fail to thus be one. Lastly, for the same reason as mentioned with regard to Mohr, I disagree with Lachterman (1989-1990: 151), who states that “A form is … a structured assemblage or collection of parts, for which the most reliable icon is a whole number, an integer, as we nowadays say.”

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Of course.
And since they are two, each is one?
I grant that also.
And the same account is true of the Just and the unjust, the Good and the bad, and all the Forms. Each of them is itself one … (Republic V 475c9-476a6; adapted from Grube/Reeve).\(^\text{122}\)

Thus, Plato believes that the Forms are unities, and each is one.

**Plotinus:** Not controversially, we find the same claim in Plotinus:

For, again, realities must be static, and the intelligible realities must remain the same, and each must be numerically one: for this is how it is *this* definite reality (IV.3.8.22-24).\(^\text{123}\)

Thus, Plotinus believes that each Form is one.

Therefore, I can thus conclude that each philosopher holds that the Forms are unities or ones.

5.6 Forms are the cause of everything of that kind/ Forms are what each thing really is

These thinkers do not essentially disagree that Forms are the cause of everything of that kind; for instance, Horse Itself causes there to be perceptible horses; they also hold that Forms are what each thing really is; for instance, Justice Itself is the essence of what justice is.

**Plato:** First, Plato assents to these claims\(^\text{124}\) in the *Phaedo*:

… I think that, if there is anything beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it shares in that Beautiful, and I say so with everything. Do you agree to this sort of cause? – I do.

… nothing else makes it beautiful other than the presence of, or the sharing in, or however you may describe its relationship to that Beautiful we mentioned, for I will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship, but that all beautiful things are beautiful by the Beautiful. That, I think, is the safest answer I can give myself or anyone else (*Phaedo* 100c4-8, d4-9).\(^\text{125}\)

It is clear that Plato believes that Beauty causes perceptible things, and though he first describes the relation as partaking, he does not insist on that terminology in the next paragraph. Now let us confirm that Plato believes that each Form is what each thing really is, with another passage from the *Phaedo*:

Do we say that there is such a thing as the Just Itself, or not?
We do say so, by Zeus.

\(^{122}\) See also *Timaeus* 35a-b and Penner (1987: 373n29).

\(^{123}\) See also especially VI.6.13.50-51 but also IV.8.6, VI.9.1, VI.5.8, and VI.7.16; cf. V.8.7.

\(^{124}\) Here, we agree with Findlay (1978: 94-95, 209), Menn (1995: 54; Forms may cause motions in souls, from the *Sophist*), Mills (1968: 154), Mohr (2005: 31-32, Forms are standards, but see below where I reject Mohr's immanent standards view), Mohr (2005: 55; Form as exemplar), and Mohr (2005: 86-87; excellent interpretation of the “fire is a such, not a this” *Timaeus* passage). I disagree with the following commentators: Laguna (1934: 452), who believes in literal self-predication; Miller (1986: 173), who posits that Plato may no longer think of the Forms as ideals when he wrote the *Parmenides*, since the Good does not appear in the hypotheses (I disagree with his premise in PTP § 1.5); Mohr (2005)’s immanent standard view, because It is not the case that Forms possess their property to the fullest extent possible (45; see also 13ff) and that Mohr’s *Philebus* and *Timaeus* passages commit Plato to that view (53, 56); Forms are Beings that are the real nature of Beauty, though I grant that Forms have properties such as eternality, immutability, and the like; and Yonezawa (1991), who argues that the Forms are not causes (37) in part by denying that the reference to beauty, large, and small, at *Phaedo* 100e do not refer to the Forms Beauty, Large, and Small, respectively (39); it seems highly unlikely that Plato would move from “the absolute beauty” (which certainly refers to Beauty Itself) to “it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful,” and not intend to refer to Beauty Itself just a few lines later, with no precedent or equivalent elsewhere in the dialogues.

\(^{125}\) See also *Phaedo* 103a-c; cf. *Gorgias* 497d-e.
And the Beautiful, and the Good?
Of course.
And have you ever seen any of these things with your eyes?
In no way, he said.
Or have you ever grasped them with any of your bodily senses? I am speaking of all things such as Size, Health, Strength and, in a word, the reality of all other things, that which each of them essentially is (Phaedo 65d4-c1).  

For Plato, Forms are “that which each of them essentially is.” Can we find the same views in Plotinus? We can.

Plotinus: Plotinus agrees with Plato that each Form causes the perceptible instance of It to be (resemble) that thing:

A thing is one by the presence of the One [Form of Oneness] and two by the presence of the Dyad, just as it is white by the presence of White and beautiful by that of the Beautiful and just by that of the Just (VI.6.14.27-29; adapted from Armstrong).

Thus Plotinus agrees with Plato that each Form causes its instance to be the way in which it is (or becomes). And now for confirmation that Plotinus believes that Forms are what each thing really is: After discussing many types of Forms (qualities, number, mass), Plotinus states:

For each real being is actual, not potential: so that the quality of each substance (ουσίας) is not separated from it (V.9.10.14-15).

Therefore, both Plato and Plotinus believe that Forms are the cause of everything of that kind, and the essence of the name of the Form, whatever it may be.

5.7 The Forms “blend”

We will now see that both philosophers agree that the Forms blend, weave, or commune with one another both as Forms and as they combine with actions or matter.

Plato: Plato states that Forms blend in at least three dialogues: Republic, Sophist, and Timaeus, which I will examine in turn. Here is the Republic passage:

And the same account is true of the Just and the unjust, the Good and the bad, and all the Forms. Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many (Republic V 475e6-476a7; adapted from Grube/Reeve).

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126 The Greek for “the reality of all other things, that which each of them essentially is” is καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνὶ λόγῳ ἀπάντων τῆς οὔσιας ὃ τυγχάνει ἐκατόν ὄν (Phaedo 65d12-c1); Tredennick translates this passage, “the real nature of any given thing – what it actually is”. Plato not only thinks that each Form is the real nature of any given thing, but that Forms are everything that is (Philebus 62a).

127 See also I.6.2, I.3.5, and IV.7.2.
128 See also V.8.5.
129 Mohr (2005: 5n3; cf. 242) also mentions these passages: “the final argument from the Phaedo (especially 104b-105b), the discussion of dialectic in the Phaedrus (265c-266b, on the assumption that 265c9-d1 includes a backwards reference to 249b-c), and possibly the passage of the Statesman on non-sensible images (285c-286b).” I’m inclined to think that even though Forms might participate in one another in some sense (for instance, Difference participates of Being), this does not imply that Difference is a part of Being (since Being is its own Form, and one, as the other Forms), as Mohr (2005: 26, 240) claims. I believe Prior (1985: 51-167) is wrong that Plato revised his theory after the Parmenides to include blending to account for problems raised there, because on my understanding of the ordering of the dialogues, the Republic came before the Parmenides, and the former contains the theory of blending. Cf. Miller (1995: 236) and Mills 1968: 169).
Each Form is one, Plato states, but because of their communing with one another in actions and bodies, they appear to be many, leading the multitude of people to believe that Forms (or any immaterial objects) do not exist.

Next, Plato concludes his argument in the *Sophist* that the Forms must weave with one another:

To disassociate each thing from everything else is to destroy totally everything there is to say. The weaving together of Forms is what makes speech possible for us.

That’s true (*Sophist* 259e4-7; adapted from White).

This is reminiscent of Plato’s argument in the *Parmenides* that the Forms must exist or meaningful discourse cannot occur; however, here he states another necessary condition for discourse: that the Forms must weave together.

Plato also states in the *Timaeus* that the Demiurge mixed the Same and the Different as part of his process of creation, on which Plotinus will comment. Here is the passage:

In between the Being that is indivisible and always changeless, and the one that is divisible and comes to be in the corporeal realm, he mixed a third, intermediate form of being, derived from the other two. Similarly, he made a mixture of the Same, and then of the Different, in between their indivisible and their corporeal, divisible counterparts (*Timaeus* 35a1-6).

So Plato claims here that the Demiurge took the Forms (the Being that is indivisible and always changeless) and matter (the one that is divisible and comes to be in the corporeal realm), and mixed or blended Sameness and Difference and portioned it out into bodies.

Thus, Forms blend for Plato.

**Plotinus:** Here is Plotinus’ explanation of Plato’s *Timaeus* 35a1-6 passage:

So then the soul must be in this way both one and many and divided and indivisible, and we must not disbelieve this on the ground that it is impossible for something which is one and the same to be in many places, for if we do not accept this, then the nature which holds together and directs all things will not exist, which encompassing all together holds and directs them with wisdom; it is a multiplicity because the beings of the universe are many, but one, that what holds them together may be one; by its manifold oneness it dispenses life to all the parts, and by its indivisible oneness it directs them wisely. This is the meaning of the divinely inspired riddling saying, ‘He mixed a third form of being from both, from the indivisible which is always in the same state and that which becomes divisible in the sphere of bodies.’ So the soul is one and many in this way: the Forms in body are many and one; bodies are many only; the Supreme is one only (IV.2.2.42-55; adapted from Armstrong).\(^{130}\)

I will examine their views of the soul below, but for present purposes, Plotinus is claiming that bodies are many, Forms are one, but that Forms in bodies are many and one, the third kind of being Plato was discussing in *Timaeus* 35a1-6.

Now, given that I have confirmed that Plotinus believes Forms blend, I can add that he also holds that we cannot speak without Forms (and see § 5.8),\(^{131}\) which closely approaches what Plato said in the *Sophist*, above.

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus both believe that Forms blend with one another as they combine with matter to produce perceptible things.

**5.8 Our words refer to Forms**

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\(^{130}\) See also especially II.3.11.10-13; and II.4.11, III.3.4, III.6.19, IV.7.8\(^{1}\), V.8.7, VI.2.19, VI.3.10, 20, 25; and VI.9.8.

\(^{131}\) See VI.6.13.43-49.
I can confirm that Plato and Plotinus both assert that almost whatever you can name or refer to has a Form. There are certainly limits to what Forms there are; however, both philosophers state this principle in a similar way.

**Plato:** Plato states the general rule concerning the naming of Forms\(^{132}\) in the *Republic*, as follows:

> We say that there are many beautiful things and many good things, and so on for each kind, and in this way we distinguish them in words.

> We do.

> And Beauty Itself and Good Itself and all the things that we thereby set down as many, reversing ourselves, we set down according to a single Form of each, believing that there is but one, and call it ‘the being’ of each.

> That’s true (*Republic* VI 507b2-8; adapted from Grube/Reeve).\(^{133}\)

We distinguish beautiful and good things in words, but then set down that there is a single Form of each. This principle seems pretty broad, especially given how Plato, via the character young Socrates in the *Parmenides*, questions whether there are Forms of man, water, or fire (*Parmenides* 130c1-2).

Therefore, our words refer to Forms, according to Plato.

**Plotinus:** We see a similar enthusiasm for the number of Forms in a Plotinian sentence, but must caution ourselves in just the same way as we did with Plato, since Plotinus plainly states that there are not Forms of mud and filth (V.9.14), for instance, even though we have a name for it, and mud arguably has the same nature.\(^{134}\)

Here is Plotinus’ hyperbolic principle concerning naming and the Forms:

> … thinking, which is prior, turns inward to Intellect which is obviously multiple; for even if it only says this, ‘I am existent’, it says it as a discovery, and says it plausibly, for existence is multiple: since if it concentrated its gaze on itself as something simple and said, ‘I am existent’, it would not attain either itself or existence (V.3.13.22-27).

But here is a better sense of what Plotinus believes concerning the Forms and naming:

> For it is impossible to say that something does not exist of which, since it does not exist, you cannot think or say anything at all. But that which is needed everywhere for the coming into existence of every thought and statement must be there before statement and thinking: for this is how it can be brought to contribute to their coming into existence. But if it is needed for the existence of each and every substance [οὐδαίας] – for there is nothing which is not one – it would also exist before substance and as generating substance (VI.6.13.45-51; adapted from Armstrong).\(^{135}\)

If we can name it, it must exist, or at least something must exist in some sense. Plotinus also states that there are three kinds of Being (which is pretty obviously straight from *Timaeus* 35a), so a name might be a reference to a

\(^{132}\) Here I agree with Mohr (2005: 109) that a fluxing object cannot have anything whatsoever predicated of it [except becoming?], and perhaps with Mohr (2005: 205) that family resemblances might be able to be accommodated within a Platonic theory. I hesitate to agree with Findlay (1974: 29, 159) who holds that Forms are Ideal Meanings, since I reject the view that Forms are propositions (§ 5.4).

\(^{133}\) See also *Republic* X 596a-b, *Phaedo* 102b and 103a-c, and *Parmenides* 134e-135c (this latter which seems to argue that we cannot have meaningful discourse if the Forms do not exist, which I take to be an argument for the Forms existence, noted as “The Argument from Thought/Dialectic” above); and cf. *Theaetetus* 157a-b, where Socrates draws a conclusion from the proposal that knowledge is perception; namely that you cannot even use the word “this,” e.g., because there is no stable being to which it can refer if everything is in constant flux.

\(^{134}\) Mohr (2005: 49) puzzlingly (from my project’s perspective) states “Plato is a Neoplatonist to the extent that he thinks that being is sometimes a predicate; however, he fails to be a Neoplatonist in that he does not suppose that an examination of any two grades of being will always reveal some third intermediary grade”; I disagree that Plotinus has this metaphysical tendency, whether or not this is true of other Neo-Platonists.

\(^{135}\) See also I.2.2, VI.1.3, VI.2.10, and VI.7.33; cf. VI.2.11.
blend of Form copies, for example, but that can quite plausibly be interpreted as a kind of “being,” according to *Timaeus* 35a, and hence is compatible with Plato’s view.

Therefore, both philosophers believe that, in general, our words refer to Forms.

5.9 Forms are originals; perceptibles are images

Plato and Plotinus believe that Forms are original beings, whereas perceptible things are copies, resemblances, partakings, or images of Forms (see also PPMEE § 2.3).

**Plato:** Here is a representative Platonic passage that Forms are originals and perceptibles are images:³⁶

Which of the two models did the maker use when he fashioned it? Was it the one that does not change and stays the same, or the one that has come to be? Well, if this world of ours is beautiful and its craftsman good, then clearly he looked at the eternal model. But if what it’s blasphemous to even say is the case, then he looked at one that has come to be. Now surely it’s clear to all that it was the eternal model he looked at, for, of all the things that have come to be, our universe is the most beautiful, and of causes the craftsman is the most excellent (*Timaeus* 28c5-29a6).³⁷

Admittedly, this passage assumes recollection; nonetheless, it shows that Plato believes that sensible objects are imperfect copies of Forms.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus definitely agrees with Plato on this point as well, as we see from this passage:

For each and every primary reality is not what is perceived by the senses: for the form on the matter in the things of sense is an image of the real Form, and every form which is in something else comes to it from something else and is a likeness of that from which it comes (V.9.5.17-19).³⁸

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³⁶ On this issue, I disagree with A. H. Armstrong (1940: 119), who claims, “Plato was wiser in refusing to define ‘participation’”; I believe he may have done so in the *Timaeus* with the introduction of the Receptacle (PTP § 6.1); with Findlay (1974: 40), who states that instances aspire to the Form metaphorically; however, I do not believe, e.g., that a perceptible circle even metaphorically aspires to become the Circle Itself; with Inge (1929a: 73-74), who claims that “The real Plato has been obscured behind Plato-nism,” that “no system can be found in his writings,” and that “The true Platonist is he who sees the invisible, and who knows that the visible is its true shadow”; I believe we can systematize Plato as we see in this book’s sections, and that if the true Platonist is as Inge says he is, Plotinus is a true Platonist, as my work here suggests. For questions about Platonic copies and participation, see Pistorius (1952: 23, 40).

³⁷ See also, e.g., *Phaedo* 74d-e, 76d-e, *Republic* V 476c-d, VI 509d-511e, VII 531c-532b, X 596d-597b, *Timaeus* 27d-28b, 29b-c, 30c-31b, 37c-d, 39e, 48e-49b, and 50b-51b. Cf. *Phaedo* 110a7-8, where Socrates says “those things above are in their turn superior to the things we know”; *Phaedo* 65a-b, *Republic* VI 500b-d, *Statesman* 285d10-e4, and *Theaetetus* 176c-177b.

³⁸ See also III.5.1, III.6.17, VI.2.1, 7; and VI.4.10 [Gerson (1994: 89) adds VI.3.9.24-29 (1994: 47n23) and VI.3.1.21, II.3.18.17, II.9.4.25, VI.2.22.36].
The biggest controversy here is the “two-worlds” view, and whether Plato and/or Plotinus\textsuperscript{139} holds it\textsuperscript{140}; however, we can see that they both hold that the visible realm is a copy of the intelligible realm.\textsuperscript{141}

Therefore, I have confirmed that both philosophers believe that the Forms are originals, and perceptibles are copies thereof.

5.10 There are Forms of things done according to nature

\textbf{Plato:}

Can things themselves, then, possess such a nature as this, and that of their actions be different? Are not actions also a class of realities?

Certainly they are.

Then actions also are performed according to their own nature, not according to our opinion. For instance, if we undertake to cut anything, ought we to cut it as we wish, and with whatever instrument we wish, or shall we, if we are willing to cut each thing in accordance with the nature of cutting and being cut, and with the natural instrument, succeed in cutting it, and do it rightly, whereas if we try to do it contrary to nature we shall fail and accomplish nothing?

I think the way is as you suggest.

Then, too, if we undertake to burn anything, we must burn not according to every opinion, but according to the right one? And that is as each thing naturally burns or is burned and with the natural instrument?

True.

And all other actions are to be performed in like manner?

Certainly (\textit{Cratylus} 386e6-387b1; Fowler).

I can confirm that Plato believes that Cutting is a Form because they agree that actions are “a class of realities” and he mentions “things themselves,” which is a characteristic phrase for Forms. Generalizing from the rest of the passage, we find that if we perform actions in accordance with nature, we will do those actions better or more rightly, and the converse holds.

Thus, Plato believes that all actions that are done in accordance with nature are real things, or Forms.

\textbf{Plotinus:}

There are certainly [in the intelligible world] qualities which harmonize [with nature] and quantities, and numbers and dimensions and relations, and actions and experiences which are according to nature, and both universal motion and rest and the motion and rest of parts of the intelligible. But there is eternity

\textsuperscript{139} I disagree with Bréhier (1958: 101-102), who argues that (1) in VI.4.2 Plotinus has a materialistic and imaginative interpretation of participation that Plato rejects in the \textit{Parmenides’} first section, and that (2) the notion of exemplars disappears in Plotinus. Re: (1), though Plotinus alludes to intelligible nature’s extending to a vast space, this is compatible with Plato’s view of the Receptacle in the \textit{Timaeus} (PTP § 6.1). Re (2), the Plotinian quote in the text should suffice as a rebuttal.

\textsuperscript{140} Shorey (1895: 36) probably is the first to coin the phrase, and de Vogel (1970: 191) says that “the two world theory is basic Platonic doctrine” (and then argues that the Soul is actually between the two worlds and later seems to deny the two worlds view on that basis at 1986: 44); others, e.g., Gerson (1994: 89), believe Plotinus follows Plato in the two world view. Here are two brief comments against the two worlds view: First, the two worlds view does not match up with Plato and Plotinus’ claims that there are three kinds of being (Being, Becoming, and the Receptacle), let alone the beyond-being Good, the eternal Forms, the in-time World-Soul and individual souls, the in-between-gods-and-humans daemons, and matter. However, the idea that there are different realms with different properties is certainly warranted. Second, the idea that there is no connection somehow between the so-called worlds (even if their existence is granted) is silly on these philosophers’ views, given how much they discuss the creation and connection with subsequent levels and entities below the Good or One. This makes Zeller (1931: 290)’s comment highly dubious to me: “… neo-Platonism concentrates its whole efforts on deriving the sensual from the super-sensual world ….”

\textsuperscript{141} I appreciate Majumdar (2007: 6)’s assessment, which does not use the phrasing of two worlds (though she mentions the visible world), while claiming that they seem to have the same view here.
instead of time. And place there exists in the intellectual mode, the presence of one thing in another (V.9.10.6-10).

Thus, Plotinus’ statement is more explicit, but succeeds in showing his belief that actions (and experiences, among other things) that are done according to nature are members of the Intellectual Cosmos, or Forms.

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus believe that there are Forms of actions done in accordance with nature.

5.11 There are not “bad” Forms

This issue is indubitably contentious, for almost all Platonic commentators hold that Plato believed that bad, negative, or defective Forms, such as Bad/Evil, Injustice, Ugly, Pain, and others. Nonetheless, I have an argument based on a passage in the Sophist that some of these commentators seemed to have overlooked, so let us review this issue by examining the passages.

**Plato:** Just to take one representative passage, Plato argues, as we saw above, that good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and just and unjust both (in each case) are, and that each is one (Republic V 475c9-476a7), which certainly seems to suggest that Plato endorses the existence of “bad Forms” there: If “each is one” holds only of Forms, and bad is one, then badness is a Form, for instance. On the other hand, as quoted above, one can argue that Plato does not believe in a Form of Evil, because he states that “… there is one form of virtue, and an unlimited number of forms of vice” (Republic IV 445c5-6) as well as that evil does not have a place with the gods or God, but must haunt our mortal nature here (Theaetetus 176a5-9).

However, in the Sophist, Plato seems to explain at once why the not-beautiful (and the not-just and not-tall) is one thing that exists, while also not committing himself to there being a Form of Ugly Itself or the others, here:

> Is there a part of the different that’s placed over against the beautiful?

> Yes.

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142 Gerson (1994) rightly notes that Plotinus rejects Forms of natural artifacts (V.9.11.13-17) and imitative arts (V.9.11.1-6) [261n57], and Plotinus’ summary, “In general everywhere, whatever one might apprehend by reasoning as being in nature one will find existing without reasoning in Intellecut’ (VI.2.21.33-34)” (103).

143 For commentators who believe that Plato is positively committed to bad Forms such as Bad/Evil, Injustice, and Ugly, see Cherniss (1954: 253n34), Findlay (1978: 146; the “mature Plato” believed in bad Forms); for the view that up to the Theaetetus [I am unclear as to why on Rist’s view Plato gives them up at that point] Plato believed in such Forms, see Rist (1961: 159, 163, 165-166). Allen (1983: 194) argues that “both good things and evil things participate in Being,” but it is unclear that this statement ipso facto shows that or commits Plato to the view that there are bad Forms because I believe that bad souls and matter partake of Being and other Forms, but I do not believe that there is thus a Form of Bad Check Writing, for instance. For those who believe that Plato himself was not sure about this issue, see Corrigan (1996a: 182) and Fuller (1938: 304).

144 Hitchcock (1985: 72) believes that Plato believes in a Form of Pain.

145 Cherniss (1954: 253n34) cites the following: “See for ideas of diseases: Phaedo 105c [fever?] and Timaeus 89b-c ["every form of disease is in a manner akin to the living being"]; of desire, Philebus 34e … of positive vices: Euthyphro 5d [impiety], Republic 402c [intemperance, cowardice, and the opposites of liberality and high-mindedness] and 476a [bad, ugly, injustice], Theaetetus 186a8 [bad and dishonor], Sophist 251a ["we attribute to man … defects and good qualities"?], Laws XII 964c ["the characteristic quality of … vice"].” Cherniss raises this interpretive problem: If Plato holds that the Good creates the Forms (Republic VI 509b6-8), how can there be bad Forms? His response: “This would be hard to reconcile with the existence of the ideas of positive evils that Plato clearly does posit only if by it he had meant, as Chilcott and many others under Neo-Platonist influence assume, that all ideas are derived from the Good or are created by it; but this the passage does not say, and that it was not so meant is shown by the interpretative summary at 517c3-5, where it is said not that the idea of good is the source or origin of the ideas but that in the intelligible world it provides truth and intelligence ….” My reply: Plato also says that the Good is only the source of all that is right and beautiful at 517c, which Cherniss ignores and needs to account for, as well as the Theaetetus 176a-b passage that evils of necessity haunt our mortal nature here, and the claims in Books II-III of the Republic that God is not the source of evil and that we need to look elsewhere. To my knowledge, no one (among modern and later commentators) actually writes that Plato is not committed to bad Forms’ existence; Aristotle uses the existence of negative Forms as a criticism in Metaphysics I 990b11-15, which implies that Plato would believe this to be a problem for his view. Also, Findlay (1974: 24) states that (1) Aristotle himself says that “we Academics … do not admit Ideas of negations or of relative characteristics” at 990a, but I cannot find those words there; and (2) Syrianus had a list of the sorts of things of which there were not Forms. Nonetheless, I believe that the Sophist passage below shows that Plato is not committed to the existence of negative Forms.
Shall we say that it’s nameless, or does it have a name? It has a name. What we call *not beautiful* is the thing that’s different from nothing other than the nature of the beautiful.

Now go ahead and tell me this.

What?

Isn’t it in the following way that the *not beautiful* turns out to be, namely, by being both marked off within one kind of *those that are*, and also set over against one of *those that are*?

Yes.

Then it seems that the *not beautiful* is a sort of setting of a being over against a being.

That’s absolutely right.

Well then, according to this account, is the beautiful more a being than the not beautiful?

Not at all.

So we have to say that both the not large and the large equally *are*.

Yes.

So we also have to put the not just on a par with the just, in that neither *is* any more than the other.

Of course.

And we’ll speak about the others in the same way too, since the nature of the different appeared as being one of *those that are*. And because it *is*, we have to posit its parts as no less beings.

Of course.

So it seems that the setting against each other of the nature of a part of the different and the nature of *that which is* is not any less being – if we’re allowed to say such a thing – than *that which is* itself. And it does not signify something contrary to *that which is* but only something different from it.

Clearly (*Sophist* 257d7-258b5).\(^{146}\)

The hint we get about how best to interpret this passage, is at *Sophist* 260b7-8, when Plato is rewording his conclusion from the earlier argument about whether not-being exists; namely: “*That which is not* appeared to us to be one kind among others, but scattered over all *those which are.*” Plato’s saying that that which is not (non-being) is one kind accounts for his statements elsewhere that, e.g., unjust is one. The “others” that Plato is referring to, I believe, are the Forms other than Being; e.g., Difference, Sameness, Rest, Motion, Justice, and the rest. So there indeed *is* a not-being that does exist, which is everything not identical to Being. So ugly *is* one thing – it is all of the Forms together besides Beauty Itself, but there is no *additional* Form, Ugly Itself.

In addition, note that at *Theaetetus* 176a-b (quoted in § 3.4.4.11), Plato denies that badness can exist in Nous, and that evils of necessity haunt our mortal nature here.

Lastly, there is the notion that the Good only causes good and beautiful things to exist (§ 3.2.3), as well as Plato’s claims that God is not to blame for evil but that we need to look for its source elsewhere instead, in *Republic* II and III. Advocates of bad Platonic Forms need to address the *Sophist*, *Theaetetus*, and *Republic* passages.

Thus, it is plausible to suggest that Plato does not—or at least may not—believe in “bad” or defective Forms.

**Plotinus:** As for Plotinus,\(^{147}\) he explicitly rejects the notion of bad Forms:

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\(^{146}\) Note that Ross (1951: 167-169) considers this *Sophist* passage and says that Plato’s attitude toward negative Forms there is not altogether clear. See also Ambuel (2007: 161-162), Cornford (1957: 293: “… ‘the not-Beautiful’ is not a Form, but a group of Forms, negatively described, which is a part of the Real”), and Findlay (1974: 41-45).

\(^{147}\) The following commentators believe that Plotinus is not committed to negative Forms but Plato is: A. H. Armstrong (1984b: 308n2), Findlay (1974: 374-375), and Pistorius (1952: 90); Findlay (1978: 218-219) says in effect that Plotinus *should* have believed in negative Forms; and Fuller (1938: 289) asserts that Plotinus did not believe in bad Forms, but Plato was unsure.
… there is no Form of Evil; since evil here is the result of want and deprivation and failure and is a misfortune of matter and of that which becomes like matter (V.9.10.18-20).  

Findlay contendsthat Plotinus fails to commit to bad Forms because “evil arises here from privation, deficiency and need, and is a malady of unhappy Matter, and whatever resembles it.” I will show that these views are Platonic as well, so this is not a good reason to believe that Plotinus should have believed in bad Forms, as Findlay implies.

Thus, Plotinus believes that bad Forms do not exist.

Therefore, we can see that both philosophers, though not without controversy, deny the existence of bad Forms.

5.12 Other Platonic claims about Forms and why they are Plotinian, and vice versa

Now let us look at different statements that each philosopher mentions, where it is not immediately apparent that the other philosopher holds, with respect to the Forms’ characteristics.

Plato: First, on the Platonic side, each Form is said to be the same as itself and different from others (Sophist 254d-e, 225e). Plotinus must agree with these claims, because each Form is eternally the same as itself, and if there were no difference, say, between Horse and Man, e.g., they would be one and the same Form. Let us move on to Plotinus’ several other claims concerning the Forms.

Plotinus: Leaving aside the issue of Forms of individuals such as Socrates Itself, which Plotinus apparently posits (but see the Conclusion where I will address this issue), there are three Plotinian claims about the Forms I will examine here that are plausibly Platonic.

First, in at least two places, Plotinus states that Forms are informed by and possessed by the Good (VI.7.16, 18). These related claims are plausibly Platonic, because Plato believes that the Good is the cause of reason and being, as we saw above in the Divided Line Analogy and Cave Allegory analysis of the Good or One.

Second, Plotinus states that Forms “are certainly not ‘premises’ or ‘axioms’ or ‘expressions’; for then they would only say something about other things and would not be the things themselves, as when [one says] ‘Justice is beautiful’, though justice and beauty are different [from the words used]” (V.5.1.38-41). Plato would agree, as Plato believes that words refer to Forms but are not themselves Forms, and as such, e.g., “beauty” cannot be the nature of beauty. Moreover, Plato believes that words are imitations of reality, as implied in the Phaedrus (276a); indeed, Plato explicitly states there that we should not pour over his words but that, presumably, we should study reality (275c-d). Platonic Forms are not propositions (see Symposium 211a7). Lastly, Platonic Forms cannot be axioms, because as Plato states in the Divided Line Analogy, true philosophers are supposed to ascend above the hypotheses of mathematics, e.g., and progress in Ideas and through Ideas, which implies that the Ideas are prior to assumptions or axioms.

Lastly, Plotinus claims that Forms do not have memory. The Forms’ lack of memory is Platonic, because Plato nowhere declares that the Forms themselves perceive anything even immaterially; so it is highly probable, if not certain, that Plato agrees that the Forms lack memory.

In sum, I have shown that Plato and Plotinus agree that Forms are eternal, immutable, immaterial, and are accessible by Reason (intelligence, or the soul); each Form is one, the cause of everything of that kind.

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148 See also especially I.8.1.9-12; and see I.8.10, V.9.14, VI.1.9-10, VI.3.11, 19; and VI.7.9. Curiously enough, just as we saw indications of a Form of Evil in Plato, so we find evidence in Plotinus of the same, at I.8.3.22-25; cf. I.8.15.3-5.
150 See PTP § 6.2.1 and SUPP §§ 13.2-13.3.
151 Note that Plotinus explicitly agrees with Plato on the Forms of Fire, Being, Living Being, and Difference (see VI.7.11 and VI.2.1, 22).
152 Cf. Phaedrus 262a-b, 275a, and Cratylus, passim.
153 The relevant passage is IV.3.25.13-17.
154 Interestingly, Plotinus’ main argument for why Forms do not have memory seems to be that they are not receptive of change, which Plato obviously believes.
what each thing really is, and is the same as itself and different from the others; Forms blend in order to help cause physical things to become what they become; and Forms are originals, whereas perceptibles are images; words refer to Forms; Forms of actions that occur in nature exist; and, there are not Forms of badness, ugliness, and depravity, for instance I also verified and explored other Platonic and Plotinian claims in addition to these just listed.
CHAPTER 6: ALL-SOUL

In this chapter, I examine the Platonic and Plotinian claims that: the All-Soul is immaterial (§ 6.1); the All-Soul is good/not evil (§ 6.2); the All-Soul is in the center of the universe and is itself one (§ 6.3); the All-Soul has intelligence, forethought, and/or consciousness (§ 6.4); the All-Soul/Soul envelops the universal body (§ 6.5); the All-Soul is prior to body (§ 6.6); the All-Soul controls heaven itself (§ 6.7); the All-Soul governs/is sovereign over/cares for the universe (§ 6.8); the All-Soul contains love (§ 6.9); and the All-Soul is beautiful (§ 6.10).

6.1 The All-Soul is immaterial

**Plato:** For Plato, see the *Timaeus:* “Now while the body of the universe had come to be as a visible thing, the soul was invisible” (36e5-6).

**Plotinus:** And now, Plotinus: “Universal Soul did not come to be anywhere or come to any place, for there was no place; but the body came near to it and participated in it …” (III.9.3.1-2).

Thus, both philosophers believe, unsurprisingly, that the All-Soul is immaterial.

6.2 The All-Soul is good/not evil

**Plato:** Plato states that a “rationally and supremely virtuous” (*Laws* X 897b8-c1) and “the best kind of soul” governs heaven (*Laws* X 897c7).

**Plotinus:** Plotinus affirms the goodness of the All-Soul here: “that which is called the Soul of the All has not become engaged in the worst kind of work and, having no experience of evils, considers what lies below it contemplatively and remains attached to the realities before it for ever …” (IV.8.7.26-29).

Thus, the All-Soul is good or not evil.

6.3 The All-Soul is in the center of the universe and is itself one

**Plato:** Here is evidence of both of these claims in Plato:

Applying the entire train of reasoning to God that was yet to be, the eternal God made it smooth and even all over, equal from the center, a whole and complete body itself, but also made up of complete bodies. In its center he set a soul, which he extended throughout the whole body, and with which he then covered the body outside. And he set it to turn in a circle, a single solitary universe, whose very excellence enables it to keep its own company without requiring anything else. For its knowledge of

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155 Also, Plato states the soul is invisible at *Phaedo* 79b, 80d, and *Timaeus* 37a (Cf. *Phaedo* 81b-d, 82d-83c); if individual human souls, e.g., are immaterial, then it stands to reason that the soul of the universe would be immaterial as well.


157 See also II.2.1 and IV.7.10, 12; and see IV.7.6-8, IV.7.81, and IV.7.82, where Plotinus argues that the soul must be immaterial.

158 This passage is quoted below in § 6.7, cf. *Philebus* 30a-c and *Laws* X 898e. Commentators seem to raise the possibility of an evil World-Soul or soul in *Laws* X, but back away from that reading; see Cherniss (1954: 251): “The text of the *Timaeus* however, excludes the possibility of an irrational element in the world-soul there described, while the existence of an evil world-soul as its adversary and the cause of the chaotic motion is not even mentioned in the *Timaeus* and is certainly not envisaged in the text of the *Laws* to which its proponents appeal.” See also Inge (1929a: 76-77).

159 Gerson (1994: 194) also cites II.9.7.7-18, IV.8.5.1-10 to show that the soul of the universe is exempt from evil. Cf. Inge (1929a: 256-257).

160 Cf. I.8.2.

161 Mohr (2005: 181) rightly notes that the whole universe possesses a single World-Soul. Commentators [e.g., Zeyl (2000)] rarely note that the World-Soul is at the universe’s center; but see Cornford (1937: 57-58).

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and friendship with itself is enough. All this, then, explains why this world which he begat for himself is a blessed god (Timaeus 34a8-b9; adapted from Zeyl).\footnote{See also Timaeus 36e2-3, where Plato says, “The soul was woven together with the body from the center on out in every direction to the outermost limit of the universe, and covered it all around on the outside.”}

Plato claims here that the All-Soul is at the center of the universe, and also that there is only one soul of the universe (or All), because there is only one universe with one soul for that universe at the center of it. Plato also implies here God’s bringing together universal soul and body makes the universe a god.

Thus, Plato believes that the All-Soul is in the center of the universe, is itself one, and aided in making the universe a blessed god.

**Plotinus:** We find both of these claims made by Plotinus when he states that the All-Soul is one thing and analogously implies that it is in the center of the universe\footnote{A. H. Armstrong (1940: 87-88) elusively states that Plotinus holds that there must be an immanent spiritual principle in the world but also implies thereafter that Plato does not hold the same; hopefully these quotations dispel any such notion.} in this passage, he begins with discussing the individual soul and then moves to the All-Soul:

… that part of [the individual soul] which is naturally adapted to reach bodies reaches everywhere in them; it is certainly not torn away from itself when it is in the finger as in the foot. So it is also in the All, to whatever it reaches; it is in one part of the plant and also in the another, even if it is cut off; so that it is in the original plant and the part cut off from it: for body of the all is one, and soul is everywhere in it as in one thing (IV.3.8.41-47).\footnote{For another Plotinian passage on the All-Soul’s being the center of the universe, see IV.1.2 and cf. VI.9.1; for passages on the All-Soul’s oneness, see IV.1.2 and cf. VI.9.1; for passages on the All-Soul’s being the center of the universe, see II.2.2, IV.1.2 (where the soul is said to be at the center of every living thing, and the universe is a living thing for Plotinus), and IV.4.16.27-31.}

Plotinus implies that the All-Soul is at the center of the universe, since it is everywhere the physical universe is. As we’ve already illustrated, Plato and Plotinus also believe that the All-Soul circles Nous, which is equally paradoxical for each philosopher it seems, and need not be explained here.

Next, Plotinus believes that the All-Soul has made the universe a god, as he avers here: “And by [the All-Soul’s] power the heaven is one, though it is multiple with one part in one place and one in another, and our universe is a god by the agency of this soul” (V.1.2.38-40).

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus believe that the All-Soul—though also immaterial and circling Nous—is at the center of the universe, is one thing, and aids in making the universe a blessed god. We move on to the claims that the All-Soul has intelligence, forethought and/or consciousness.

### 6.4 The All-Soul has intelligence, forethought, and/or consciousness

**Plato:** Plato affirms intelligence\footnote{Mohr (2005) points out, Plato is not consistent on the rationality of the World-Soul: In the Timaeus, there is no irrationality in the World-Soul (121); there may be such irrationality at Statesman 273a, c-d (150, 182-183) even though Plato states that the World-Soul is rational at 269d1 (182-183); Sophist 265c7-9 may allude to an irrational cause (153). Mohr (2005) also notes that the Timaeus’ World-Soul has true opinion and contemplative reason, but the World-Soul is not said to deliberate or make decisions in the Philebus or Statesman (186); and details the disabilities, as it were, of the World-Soul’s ability to order the universe (194-195).} of the All-Soul in Timaeus 30b-c. Later in the Timaeus, Plato argues that the All-Soul can converse with itself: “… [God] set it to turn in a circle, a single solitary universe, whose very excellence enables it to keep its own company without requiring anything else. For its knowledge of and friendship with itself is enough” (Timaeus 34b3-8).\footnote{See also Timaeus 36e4-5, where Plato states that when the soul was conjoined with the universe, this began “a divine beginning of never-ceasing and rational life enduring throughout time.” Compare Timaeus 90c-d, where Plato states that “the motions which are naturally akin to the divine principle within us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe” (90c7-d1), and that we humans should attune ourselves to these to have the best life (90d).}
Regarding forethought, in *Laws* X, the Athenian and Clinias have an interesting conversation where they discuss whether the universe is ruled by one or more souls, and by a good or a bad soul (or souls). During that discussion, they discuss the “one good soul” option and its possible additional characteristics:

… what kind of soul may we say has gained control of the heavens and earth and their entire cycle of movement? Is it the rational and supremely virtuous kind, or that which has neither advantage? Would you like our reply to run like this?

   How?

   ‘If, my fine fellow’ (we should say) ‘the whole course and movement of the heavens and all that is in them reflect the motion and revolution and calculation of reason, and operate in a corresponding fashion, then clearly we have to admit that it is the best kind of soul that cares for the entire universe and directs it along the best path.’

   True (*Laws* X 897b7-c9).  

Plato lists prudence, goodness, calculations of wisdom, forethought and guidance as characteristics of the All-Soul if there is one, good, soul that rules the universe and not many bad ones. Now we know that Plato holds that there is only one good soul not only because what is said later in the *Laws*, but in order to give a charitable reading to Plato’s works in general. That is, as we saw in PTP § 3.3, Plato declares in the *Republic*, *Timaeus*, and *Philebus* that this universe is the fairest and best of all possible creations, and in the *Timaeus* that there is one soul of the universe (and one universe). It is not likely that a bad soul or souls produced a “fairest and best” universe. Lastly, we saw that he does claim that the All-Soul is good, in § 6.2 above.

Thus, Plato believes that the All-Soul has intelligence, forethought, and/or consciousness.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus refers to several passages in the *Timaeus* that we’ve just seen in order to show his agreement with Plato, as follows:

… in the *Timaeus* when speaking about this All he praises the universe and calls it a blessed god, and says that the soul was given by the goodness of the Demiurge, so that this All might be intelligent, because it had to be intelligent, and this could not be without soul (IV.8.1.41-46).

Plotinus confirms that the All-Soul has intellect here, alluding to *Timaeus* 30b-c, 34a-b. In addition, he states that the All-Soul has forethought for the universe (II.3.16, IV.3.10, IV.8.2; cf. VI.7.1), and is conscious (IV.4.13).

Therefore, both thinkers believe that the All-Soul has intelligence, forethought, and consciousness.

### 6.5 The All-Soul/Soul envelops the universal body

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167 See also *Laws* X 898c.
168 See also *Republic* VII 530a, *Philebus* 30a-c, and *Timaeus* 28c-29a.
169 Cf. A. H. Armstrong (1947: 190-191), who describes the Plotinian Logos that is related to the All-Soul; and O’Meara (1993: 76), who discusses Plotinian Nature’s not involving calculations, and that Nature is a form of contemplation with consciousness in some sense.
170 Plotinus very well may have also been thinking of *Philebus* 30a-c, since Plato argues there that wisdom and intelligence if present in the universe require a soul. In another related point, Plotinus interestingly states at IV.8.8.13-16 that the All-Soul effortlessly maintains the beauty and order of the universe by intellect and not as human deliberation (calculating or considering). *Contra* Corrigan (1996b: 112), the fact that Plato claims that the movement of the heavens takes after the calculations of wisdom (*Laws* X 897b-c) does not imply that the All-Soul itself calculates or deliberates about its motions; moreover, while both philosophers state or imply that the Demiurge plans (Plato: *Timaeus* 34a-b; cf. 28a-29a, 29d-30b; Plotinus: V.9.3 and V.8.7; cf. VI.7.1), they are also committed to the idea that the Demiurge did not have any choice other than to create the world according to the best patterns, the Forms (Timaeus 28c-29a, 37c-38b).
171 Plotinus also notes that the All-Soul is between Nous and matter, but perceives both, at IV.6.3.10. Though this is not explicitly stated in Plato, it is entirely likely, given that Plato does state that the All-Soul circles and contemplates Nous, the All-Soul has intelligence and forethought, and governs matter, as we see in the text.

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The claim in this section is surprising for this reason: Plato and Plotinus both say more than once that individual human souls are “in” bodies, perhaps as prisoners or oysters in a shell. So one might think that the All-Soul would be in the body of the universe. However, when a careful analysis of the passages is made, we will see that both philosophers believe that the physical universe is in the All-Soul.

**Plato:** Plato in the *Timaeus* says both that the soul is in the body, and that the soul envelops body. Let us see the relevant parts of the passages; first, the soul is in body:

… [God] put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, and so he constructed the universe (*Timaeus* 30b4-5).

And now, the soul is in the center and extended throughout the body:

In its center he set a soul, which he extended throughout the whole body, and with which he then covered the body outside (*Timaeus* 34b3-4).

Lastly, Plato states that the creator formed the corporeal universe within the soul, that soul is interwoven everywhere from center to the outermost limit of the universe, and that the soul covers the outside thereof, as we see here:

Once the whole soul had acquired a form that pleased him, he who formed it went on to fashion inside it all that is corporeal, and, joining center to center, he fitted the two together. The soul was woven together with the body from the center on out in every direction to the outermost limit of the universe, and covered it all around on the outside (*Timaeus* 36d8-e3).

If the soul envelops the universe’s body, it is difficult to see how the soul is in the body. Perhaps Plato changed his view in the space of six pages? This is not likely. The best interpretation will account for this discrepancy, and here is my best guess: I can interpret the *Timaeus* 30b passage as claiming that the All-Soul is associated with the universal body, but also—in the other passages, 34a-b and 36d-37b—beyond the universe, so that part of the All-Soul deals with the body of the universe, and part of it deals with the abstract Nous. This situation would be analogous to the way in which an immaterial human soul can think about Forms, but also perform bodily functions. This interpretation is consistent with the other Platonic passages that state that the All-Soul envelops the universe and is at the center, and is diffused throughout the body.

**Plotinus:** What Plotinus first says in his corpus on this issue is that “Plato, too, does not say anywhere that [the soul] is in the body, but that the body was put into it” (*III.9.3.2*-4), but then later, after repeating Plato’s view as he sees it, elaborates as follows:

… Plato rightly does not put the soul in the body when he is speaking of the universe, but the body in the soul, and says also that there is a part of the soul in which body is and part in which there is no body, clearly the powers of the soul of which the body has no need. And the same principle clearly applies to the other souls (*IV.3.22.8*-12).

Note that what Plotinus says here is compatible with what Plato says, since Plato does in fact state that the universal body was placed in the universal soul, and since soul envelops the body, we can interpret Plato’s statement that part of the All-Soul deals with the body and part of it is beyond the body, circling Nous, as reviewed above.

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172 For the Platonic references, see *Phaedrus* 250c, *Cratylus* 403c-404a, *Phaedo* 82d-83a, *Timaeus* 69b and *Letter* VII 334e-335b; cf. *Phaedo* 81e and 91c-92a, and *Cratylus* 400b-c; for Plotinian references, see IV.3.26 and IV.8.1; cf. IV.8.4.

173 Plato actually does say the human soul is in the body (see note above for references), but, as Plotinus notes, he does say the universe’s body is in the universe’s soul, as the text shows. Here I agree with Emilsson (1988: 34), who claims that they have the same view of All-Soul on this issue; Inge (1929a: 205), that Plotinus has the view;
Plotinus also states that soul is everywhere present to the whole universe (IV.3.8-9), as we just saw in Plato as well (Timaeus 34a-b and 36d-37b).

Though the conclusion of this subsection is a bit uncertain, we may non-controversially conclude by stating that Plato and Plotinus each think that universal soul envelops the universal body, since its body is in its soul.

6.6 The All-Soul is prior to body

Plato and Plotinus both state that the All-Soul—though sometimes only stated as “soul”—is prior to and the cause of body or matter.

Plato: For the Platonic priority of soul to body, we again turn to the Timaeus:

As for the world’s soul, even though we are now embarking on an account of it after we’ve already given an account of the body, it isn’t the case that the god devised it to be younger than the body. For God would not have united them and then allow the elder to be ruled by the younger. …. God, however, gave priority and seniority to the soul, both in its coming to be and in the degree and in the degree of its excellence, to be the body’s mistress and to rule over it as her subject (Timaeus 34b10-35a1).

Thus, Plato believes the All-Soul is prior to the universal body.

Plotinus: Plotinus affirms this view here:

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174 On this issue, I appreciate the points of Menn (1995: 37; on Laws 892e) and de Vogel (1970: 192; body is lower and dependent on soul). Cf. de Vogel (1970), who points out that the superiority of soul over the body goes back in Plato to the Apology and Crito (192) but continues in the Phaedo and Timaeus (193).

175 See also Laws X 892a-c, 893a, 894e-895b, 895c, 895e-896d; XII 966d-967a, and 967d-e. The Epinomis has the claim that the soul is older than body at 980d-981a, as well as a claim that Soul fashions ether, fire, air, and water, all living things in the universe, which is inconsistent with the account of bodily creation in Timaeus.

176 See Emilsson (1988: 5), that the Plotinian soul is distinct from body. O’Brien (1971: 136) argues: “… Bury … says that the notion that the soul generates matter is ‘bad Platonism’. Bad Platonism it may be, in the sense that it is not what Plato believed. But it is what Plotinus thought. It is true that any creation of matter in Plotinus has been explicitly denied by Pistorius. And it is true that several histories of Plotinus shy away from saying clearly that the soul produced matter. But in Ennead [III.9.3] Plotinus clearly says that the soul produces matter by its self-contemplation.” From what I can tell, O’Brien is referring to this passage: “The partial soul, then, is illuminated when it goes towards that which is before it – for then it meets reality – but when it goes towards what comes after it, it goes towards non-existence. But it does this, when it goes towards itself, for, wishing to be directed towards itself it makes an image of itself, the non-existent, as if walking on emptiness. But it does this, when it goes towards itself, for, wishing to be directed towards itself it makes an image of itself, the non-existent, as if walking on emptiness and becoming more indeterminate; and the indefinite image of this is every way dark: for it is altogether without reason and unintelligent and stands far removed from reality. Up to the time between it is in its own world, but when it looks at the image a second time, it cannot tell (up to) what time he is referring to, what that time is between, what world the soul is in (focused on the material world, presumably, but it would still have cognitive capacity and still be a soul?), how it can look at its image, why it can even metaphorically look at its image a second time when it has just created it, and how it can form its image by looking at itself (?). (ii) I do think, however, that it sounds plausible for Plotinus to say in the last phrase that the soul can rejoice in the body and focus on its corporeal nature; for this is consistent with his eschatology of bad souls (where he says that the unreasonable soul possibly can still have something of a bodily nature which attracts the soul to it – IV.3.24.4), but this is also confirmed by Plato in many places as well, where he discusses the mortal part of the soul (Timaeus 69e-70a), the tainted and impure soul that only believes physical things exist and which may hover over the earth after death (Phaedo 81b-d, 108a-c), and the soul will continue to be reincarnated until it drags the massive accretion of earth-air-fire-water “into conformity with the revolution of the Same and uniform within him, and so subdued that turbulent, irrational mass by means of reason” (Timaeus 42d1-2), all of which implies that it is Platonic to hold that a soul can get so taken with matter that the soul (or its lower parts?) somehow turns into matter or enters another state (see also Phaedrus 246b-c). (iii) O’Brien himself admits that Plotinus does not state in many other places that the soul creates the body, so he must explain those passages as well, whether or not I am correct that this III.9.3 passage is unclear. And (iv) it is pretty clear from the context too, that Plotinus is discussing the unreasonable, ignorant soul, as opposed to the All-Soul, so this passage at most
Of course [when talking about the Soul of the All] we must consider that the terms ‘entry’ and ‘ensoulment’ are used in the discussion for the sake of clear explanation. For there never was a time when this universe did not have a soul, or when body existed in the absence of soul … (IV.3.9.14-17).\textsuperscript{177}

Therefore, we can see that Plato and Plotinus agree that the All-Soul is prior to body.

6.7 The All-Soul controls heaven itself

Each philosopher declares that the All-Soul controls heaven itself or the heavens. 

**Plato:** Plato affirms this view in the *Laws*:

... surely it’s necessary to assert that as soul resides and keeps control anywhere where anything is moved, it controls the heavens as well.

Naturally (*Laws X* 896d10-e3).\textsuperscript{178}

Thus, the All-Soul controls the heavens.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus affirms the same here:

... soul itself, drawing heaven to itself, moves it continually in drawing it continually, not moving it to some other place but towards itself in the same place … (II.2.1.45-47).\textsuperscript{179}

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus both think that the All-Soul controls heaven itself.

6.8 The All-Soul governs/is sovereign over/cares for the universe

Both philosophers also hold that the All-Soul rules over, governs, is sovereign over, and cares for the universe. 

**Plato:** Plato discusses this relation of the All-Soul (here, Zeus, see § 3.3 above) to the universe in the *Phaedrus*:\textsuperscript{180}

Now Zeus, the great commander in heaven, drives his winged chariot first in the procession, looking after everything and putting all things in order. Following him is an army of gods and spirits [δαιμόνια] arranged in eleven sections (*Phaedrus* 246e4-247a1).\textsuperscript{181}

Thus, Zeus, the All-Soul orders and cares for the gods, daemons, and all things. Now, Plato does discuss the gods and daemons’ individual souls are led until each soul “sinks back inside heaven and goes home” (247e3-4), by which I believe he is alluding to the revolutions of the fixed stars. And the next passage:

All soul [ψυχὴν πᾶσα] looks after all that lacks a soul, and patrols all of heaven, taking different shapes at different times. So long as its wings are in perfect condition it flies high, and the entire universe is its dominion; but a soul that sheds its wings wanders until it lights on something solid, where it settles 

\textsuperscript{177} See also, later in the same treatise, IV.3.9.20-23 and IV.7.3-4.


\textsuperscript{179} See also II.1.4, II.9.12, IV.4.31, and V.1.2.

\textsuperscript{180} See Mohr (2005: xxiii, 151, 163-165, 181-185) for more on the issue of the governance of the All-Soul in the *Timaeus, Philebus, Statesman,* and *Laws X.*

\textsuperscript{181} See also *Phaedrus* 246b-c, *Laws X* 897b-d, 898c, XII 966d-967a, 967d-e.
and takes on an earthly body, which then, owing to the power of this soul, seems to move itself (Phaedrus 246b6-c4).\(^{182}\)

The most important thing to notice is that Plato here discusses a “perfect” soul that journeys above and controls the all of heaven, which must refer to the All-Soul. He contrasts this perfect soul with the soul that sheds its wings and sinks to relate with a body. Admittedly, ψυχὴ πᾶσα may refer to any soul – the All-Soul, divine, daemon, human or plant souls. However, since Plato believes that the All-Soul exists (see PTP § 4.1), then I can infer from this passage that the All-Soul cares for the universe as well.

Thus, Plato believes that the All-Soul orders, cares for, and controls the universe.

**Plotinus:** In this passage, Plotinus confirms the view that the All-Soul governs over the universe\(^ {183}\) and cares for it:

> For this reason Plato says that our soul as well, if it comes to be with that perfect soul, is perfected itself and ‘walks on high and directs the whole universe’; when it departs to be no longer within bodies and not to belong to any of them, then it also like the Soul of the All will share with ease in the direction of the All, since it is not evil in every way for soul to give body the ability to flourish and to exist, because not in every kind of provident care for the inferior deprives the being exercising it of its ability to remain in the highest. For there are two kinds of care of everything, the general, by the inactive command of one setting it in order with royal authority, and the particular, which involves actually doing something oneself and by contact with what is being done infects the doer with the nature of what is being done. Now, since the divine soul is always said to direct the whole heaven in the first way … (IV.8.2.19-32).\(^ {184}\)

Plotinus refers to Phaedrus 246b6-c4 in the first sentence (that we quoted above) and confirms that on his view World-Soul directs the All (or universe). In the next sentences, he details two kinds of care the All-Soul has for the universe.\(^ {185}\)

Thus, I have thus confirmed that Plato and Plotinus believe that the All-Soul controls (or directs or orders) and cares for the universe.

### 6.9 The All-Soul contains love

**Plato:** For Plato, the evidence is more circumstantial and mythical, but it is there nonetheless. In the *Symposium*, Diotima tells Socrates where Love came from, as follows:

> When Aphrodite was born, the gods held a celebration. Poros [Resource], the son of Metis [Craft], was there among them. When they had feasted, Penia [Poverty] came begging, as poverty does when there’s a party, and stayed by the gates. Now Poros got drunk on nectar (there was no wine yet, you see) and,

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\(^{182}\) See Helleman-Elgersma (1980: 135-136) for analysis of this passage.

\(^{183}\) I agree with A. H. Armstrong (1947: 193-194) and de Vogel (1970: 205), that All-Soul orders and rules over the visible universe; and with Wilberding (2006: 58), that Plato and Plotinus have the same basic view on this issue. A. H. Armstrong (1940: 87-89) says that Plotinus’ World-Soul is transcendent (vis-à-vis the perceptible universe) and has the lower soul to administer the cosmos, unlike Plato, who says that Nous, God, or the Demiurg is transcendent and has the World-Soul administer the cosmos. However, in A. H. Armstrong 1947, he then more broadly says that “In the rest of the Enneads (apart from the treatises on Providence) the higher Soul rules and orders the material world directly, and not through the intermediary of a Logos” (191), while maintaining that, “The immanent functions of Soul are performed by the lower Soul. Universal Soul is in no way confined in or bound to body” (191-192); but (i) Armstrong admits that the higher Soul rules and orders the material world directly, which seems to be all my project requires on this issue; and (ii) we’ve seen that Plato (at Phaedrus 246b-c) discusses a perfect soul that journeys above and controls the whole world, a soul which is contrasted with a soul that is not perfect, that sheds its wings to relate with a body, so there is no need to posit that for Plato, God transcends the universe but the All-Soul is not. Cf. Blumenthal (1971: 58) on the Plotinian World-Soul’s not caring for the world.

\(^{184}\) Notably, at II.3.16, Plotinus argues that the All-Soul ceaselessly labors to make the universe perfect, which implies a good amount of care for the universe; cf. V.1.2.

\(^{185}\) See also II.9.18.
feeling drowsy, went into the garden of Zeus, where he fell asleep. Then Penia schemed up a plan to relieve her lack of resources: she would get a child from Poros. So she lay beside him and got pregnant with Love. That is why Love was born to follow Aphrodite and serve her: because he was conceived on the day of her birth. And that’s why he is also by nature a lover of beauty, because Aphrodite herself is especially beautiful (Symposium 203b2-c4).

Here, Love is the daughter of Poverty and Resource and serves Aphrodite; at Symposium 180d-e, however, Pausanias distinguishes between two Aphrodites – the elder is born of the heavens themselves, and is referred to as the Uranian, or heavenly Aphrodite. The younger is the daughter of Zeus and Dione, and is referred to as Pandemos, or earthly Aphrodite. “If follows, therefore, that there is a Common as well as a Heavenly Love, depending on which goddess is Love’s partner” (Symposium 180e1-3). Here is the connection: We can infer that the earthly Aphrodite, being the daughter of Zeus, is related to or caused by Zeus, which is best interpreted as the All-Soul. As mentioned above, this is admittedly a pretty loose connection.

So let us leave the Symposium aside for a moment, and make another kind of argument in favor of the All-Soul’s possessing love. The All-Soul circles and follows Nous (see PTP § 4.3), and cares for the universe (see § 6.8); each of these actions respectively implies that the All-Soul loves Nous, and loves the universe.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus holds that the All-Soul loves as well: “Let us grant, then, that the universal soul has a universal love, and each of the partial souls its own particular love” (III.5.4.9-10).

Thus, we can see that for both philosophers, the All-Soul contains love.

6.10 The All-Soul is beautiful

**Plato:** We can infer this claim from Plato for the following reasons: First, because he argues that the universe was made as fair (beautiful) as possible. More importantly however, at Timaeus 30b1-c1, Plato states that the universal soul was created in order for the universe to be as fair as possible, which implies that the All-Soul is beautiful.

Second, in the Phaedrus, what makes individual souls unable to be at the heights that the All-Soul attains is being incarnated in a body or getting attached to the body, which is what is relatively ugly on Plato’s view (246b1-c7).

Lastly, if one needs to be a good person in order to see/know the Forms in this lifetime, then the All-Soul must already be beautiful in order to be able know and contemplate beauty.

Thus, the All-Soul is beautiful, for Plato.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus makes this claim straightforwardly at V.8.13.15-17. And, Plotinus mentions there that Aphrodite is beautiful (V.8.13.16), and if she is Zeus’ (All-Soul’s) offspring, Zeus must be beautiful.

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus hold that the All-Soul is beautiful.

To conclude this major section, I have shown and argued that Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ that: the All-Soul is immaterial; the All-Soul is good/not evil; the All-Soul is in the center of the universe and is itself one; the All-Soul has intelligence, forethought, and/or consciousness; the All-Soul/Soul envelops the universal body; the All-Soul is prior to body; the All-Soul controls heaven itself; the All-Soul governs/is sovereign over/cares for the universe; the All-Soul contains love; and the All-Soul is beautiful.

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186 At Phaedrus 242d, however, Love is the child of Aphrodite. Cf. Symposium 185b-c.
187 See also III.5.3, the rest of III.5.4, and III.5.5. Note that Plotinus also holds that Soul qua the Third Hypostasis has love as well, at III.5.3.
188 See Republic VII 530a, Philebus 30a-c, and Timaeus 28c-29a and 92c.
CHAPTER 7: ETERNITY AND TIME

Let us now look at what both Plato and Plotinus say about eternity (αἰώνιος, αἰών) and time (χρόνος).

Plato: For Plato, time, coming into being with the heavens, is an image of eternity, which is an eternal living being (Nous), and souls and the universe are in time; this issue is basically handled with a single quotation.\(^\text{109}\) Time is a Form. I note my difference with von Leyden (1964: 35), who says the whole distinction Plato is trying to make between the Forms/Being/Nous and time comes to be for ever throughout all time” (38b8).

Now when the Father who had begotten the universe observed it set in motion and alive, a thing that had come to be as a shrine for the everlasting gods, he was well pleased, and in his delight he thought of making it more like its model still. So, as the model was itself an everlasting Living Thing, he set himself to bringing this universe to completion in such a way that it, too, would have that character to the extent that was possible. Now it was the Living Thing’s nature to be eternal, but it isn’t possible to bestow eternity fully upon anything that is begotten. And so he began to think of making a moving image of eternity: at the same time as he brought order to the universe, he would make an eternal image, moving according to number, of eternity remaining unity. This number, of course, is what we now call “time.”

For before the heavens came to be, there were no days or nights, no months or years. But now, at the same time as he framed the heavens, he devised their coming to be. These all are parts of time, and was and will be are forms of time that have come to be. Such notions we unthinkingly but incorrectly apply to everlasting being. For we say that it was and is and will be, but according to the true account only is is appropriately said of it. Was and will be are properly said about the becoming that passes in time, for these two are motions. But that which is always changeless and motionless cannot become either older or younger in the course of time – it neither ever became so, nor is it now such that it has become so, nor will it ever be so in the future. And all in all, none of the characteristics that becoming has bestowed upon the things that are borne about in the realm of perception are appropriate to it. These, rather, are forms of time that have come to be – time that imitates eternity and circles according to number. And what is more, we also say things like these: that what has come to be is what has come to be, that what is coming to be is what is coming to be, and also that what will come to be is what will come to be, and that what is not is what is not. None of these expressions of ours is accurate. But I don’t suppose this is a good time right now to be too meticulous about these matters.

Time, then, came to be together with the universe so that just as they were begotten together, they might also be undone together, should there ever be an undoing of them. And it came to be after

\(^{109}\) Here I agree with Findlay (1974: 315: Nous is responsible for time; 1978: 191: Time might be a Form); Forrester (1972: 6: Plato does not agree that all being is subject to time); Kobl (1974: 137), Mohr [2005: 52-53, 65, 69: interesting view that the “Demiurge makes a clock, nothing more, nothing less”(52)]; de Vogel (1969a: 228); and J. Whittaker (1968: 135: Plato uses ae for unchanging reality in an argument for the immortality of the soul in the Phaedo). J. Whittaker (1968: 138) also raises the issue of αίων being used by Plato of time (Timaeus 37d7) as well as of the “world of Forms” (37d3); the problem is that perhaps Plato says there that time and the Forms are eternal (in the same sense). Several responses have already been made, which I will briefly mention: (1) Dillon (1989: 63) says that the second occurrence of “αἰών” [αἰὼν] was cut out of some texts – if true, of course, this solves the problem. And then Dillon mentioned that Philoponus’ interpretation that the second αἰών refers “the Universe’s present state of constant generation, without any implications for its creation or eternity.” (2) Keen (1971: 233) gave me the idea that this can be explained by simply reading on to Timaeus 38b-c, where Plato says “For the model exists for all eternity whereas [the cosmos] was and is and will be for ever throughout all time” (38b8-c3). In short, there has to be a problem with the second “αἰών” (as Dillon puts it) if the whole distinction Plato is trying to make between the Forms/Being/Nous and time comes to nothing. (3) Findlay (1978: 191) claims that Time may be a Form; I believe – assuming that the second αἰὼν actually is in the text – it is possible to read Timaeus 37d as saying that Time is a Form. I note my difference with von Leyden (1964: 35), who says “there are two meanings of the word ‘eternal’ which Plato was the first to use in the sense of a mode of existence unconditioned by time and therefore allowing no distinction between past, present, and future”; however, Plato says at Timaeus 37e-38a that “is” does apply to the realm of Being, it is only “was,” “will be,” “becoming,” etc. that do not; so at least that sense of “eternal” does not seem to apply to what Plato describes there. I am not sure I agree with J. Whittaker (1968: 137-138), who says that, though the Forms are beyond time, they may not be outside duration; on the one hand, the Forms always exist, but on the other hand, duration implies time, Whittaker’s attempted distinction between them notwithstanding.

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the model of that which is semipeternal, so that it might be as much like its model as possible. For the model is something that has being for all eternity, while it, on the other hand, has been, is, and shall be for all time, forevermore. Such was the reason, then, such the god’s design for the coming to be of time … (Timaeus 37e6-38e4).

From what we have already seen, Nous/God is eternal (in PTP § 3.2.1), and the Forms are eternal (SUPP § 5.1); for something that always is, like a Form, it makes no sense to refer to it as something that was or something that will be, but something that always is. Plato also states immediately above that time is a moving image of eternity, where the universe was put into motion and was, is, and will be, therefore, in time always.

Plotinus: Plotinus states the same things about eternity and time. Near the beginning of his treatise, “Time and Eternity,” he says:

Now we must consider that some of the blessed philosophers of ancient times have found out the truth; but it is proper to investigate which of them have attained it most completely, and how we too could reach an understanding about these things (III.7.13-16).

I agree with Armstrong who says of this sentence, “It is, of course, Plato, here and elsewhere, who has ‘attained the truth most completely’.” We find that Plotinus holds with Plato that Nous is eternal, that soul is in time, and that time is an image of eternity. Here Plotinus states that the Intellectual Principle or Nous is eternal, and that time imitates eternity and that soul is in time:

Its [Intellect’s] blessedness is not something acquired, but all things are in eternity, and the true eternity, which time copies, running round the soul, letting some things go and attending to others. For around Soul things come one after another: now Socrates, now a horse, always some one particular reality; but Intellect is all things. It has therefore everything at rest in the same place, and it only is, and its ‘is’ is for ever, and there is no place for the future for then too it is – or for the past – for nothing there has passed away – but all things remain stationary for ever, since they are the same, as if they were satisfied with themselves for being so. But each of them is Intellect and Being, and the whole is universal Intellect and Being, Intellect making Being exist in thinking and existence by being thought (V.1.4.16-28).

\[\text{190 Here I agree with Clark (1944: 352-353, 356; 1949: 130) that Plato and Plotinus basically had the same view of time and eternity; Dillon (1989: 62), that eternity (in Plotinus, and I add in Plato too) is the idea of transcending time altogether; Gerson (1994: 120), that Plotinus follows Plato (against the Stoics and Aristotle) that time is an image of eternity; Gerson (1994: 122), that there was no time apart from soul, so there was no time when soul was not; Inge (1929a: 169), that both thinkers had the essentially same view of time; A. Smith (1996: 198)’s parallels between their notions of eternity; H. Weiss (1941: 234), that, on everlastingness and eternity, “Plotinus keeps exactly in the line laid down by Plato” (and see 232-233). I disagree with: (1) A. H. Armstrong (1971: 70), who says that it’s not certain that Plato believed with Plotinus that “eternity is a nunc stans, a changeless now, a present without past or future”; I believe that Timaeus 37e-38b demonstrates his agreement; (2) Rau (1953: 514), that Plotinus developed Plato’s view of time and eternity in part because Plato never took it seriously, and the Timaeus is a myth; this is mistaken, because Plotinus seems by many to have the same view of time/eternity as Plato does, so even if the Timaeus is a myth, Plotinus agrees with its pronouncements on the subject; lastly, Rau implies that Plotinus must not be serious either (on my reading that they both have the same view); (3) Rau (1953: 515), who then claims, qua Neo-Platonist, Plotinus’ view of time and the universe’s creation is a mystico-religious notion, but not for Plato; however, given that Plato believes (as Plotinus does, see § 4.4) that stars are gods, and that time was created when God (Demiurge) set the heavens in motion (see Ch. 7 below, and PPMEE Ch. 1, where I argue they are both mystics), I fail to see the lack of religiosity in Plato’s view that somehow is definitely present in Plotinus; lastly, (4) Rau (1953: 520), who charges Plotinus with misquoting Plato’s Timaeus (38b6, 38c6, 39b2) at III.7.12; after looking at Plotinus’ interpretation; however, it is far from clear that the inaccuracies distort Plato’s meaning, from what I can see, and given the lack of an argument as to what the inaccuracy is and why it matters, this is an unfounded charge.


192 For more references that Nous is eternal, see III.7.3-4, 6; and V.9.10. Plotinus also states that the intellection of Nous is eternal (IV.4.1), eternity and intellect are equally august (III.7.2), eternity is part of the nature of Forms (III.7.2), and that Eternity embraces the content of Nous (III.7.2).\]
Plotinus also claims here that Soul deals with Forms one at a time and that Nous is and has never ceased to be, with which Plato would agree, since, as we’ve seen in §§ 2.5, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, and 3.5, Plato believes that the All-Soul contemplates the Forms, individual souls recollect the Forms, and that Nous is the region of being that always is.

I can confirm that Plotinus believes that time is an image of eternity with this passage:

And first we should enquire about eternity, what sort of thing those who make it different from time consider it to be, for when we know that which holds the position of archetype, it will perhaps become clear how it is with its image, which the philosophers say time is. But if someone, before contemplating eternity, should form a picture in his mind of what time is, it would be possible for him, too, to go from this world to the other by recollection and contemplate that of which time is a likeness, if time really has a likeness to eternity (III.7.1.16-24).\(^{193}\)

In this quotation, Plotinus also claims that we recollect eternity; Plato would agree with this view—even though he admittedly does not state this in the dialogues—, since eternity is a quality of the Forms and Nous.

Plotinus makes other claims that Plato would agree with as well: First, he claims that eternity is Life Itself\(^{194}\) and that we can know eternity by knowing Life Itself.\(^{195}\) Plato can concur with both of these claims in that eternity is Life Itself, because he states that Nous is eternal, and a Living Creature (§ 3.4.1.2), and therefore if one knows Life Itself, one knows eternity.

Second, Plotinus states that eternity and time are separate\(^{196}\); Plato would agree with this because eternal Forms and Souls that are in time are separate as well.

Plotinus makes other assertions of time and eternity that explicitly agree with Plato and others that are even less controversial than the two mentioned immediately above.\(^{197}\)

Therefore, given that I have verified that Plato and Plotinus both think that Nous is eternal (PTP § 3.3) and souls and the universe are in time (PTP § 4.5), and that time is an image of eternity (Ch. 7), we can see that these men stand together on their views of eternity and time.

\(^{193}\) I am aware of the hypothetical nature of part of this quotation concerning time’s being an image of eternity, but assures the reader that this is indeed Plotinus’ view by referring her to III.7.11.15-20. See also the remainder of III.7.11, I.5.7, III.7.13; cf. VI.5.11.

\(^{194}\) See III.7.3 and 11.

\(^{195}\) See III.7.3.

\(^{196}\) See I.5.7, III.7.1, and VI.5.11.

\(^{197}\) Plotinus interprets Plato’s work or explicitly agrees with him at III.7.6, 9, 12, and 13; IV.4.15. He concurs with Plato’s view of the creation of time at III.7.11-12 and VI.3.22. Plotinus states that the soul is in time at III.7.11 and 13. Plotinus argues that time that has past does not exist at I.5.7; discusses the numbering and measuring of time in III.7.9 and 12; argues (not controversially, Platonically) that time is omnipresent because it is everywhere in the universe at III.7.13; and gives a circular (III.7.10) and a non-circular (III.7.11) definition of time.
CHAPTER 8: THE (INDIVIDUAL, IMMORTAL) SOUL

In this section I will confirm that Plato and Plotinus have the same general conception of the individual soul, as it appears in conjunction with humans, animals, and/or plants. Generally, I will examine these claims about individual souls: soul is a self-mover (§ 8.1.1); soul is the source of life; soul uses the body as an instrument (§ 8.1.2); soul is divine (§ 8.1.3); and the number of souls remains constant (§ 8.1.4).

Next, I will cover the human soul, specifically that: the three parts of the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite) (§ 8.2.1); humans are essentially their Reason (versus the other parts of the soul, or their body); soul is the most divine thing about humans (§ 8.2.2); the soul is not an attunement or an accord with a body; the soul is affected by the body in some ways, and not in others (§ 8.2.3); soul can rise to the level of Nous, be godly, and divine (or not) (§ 8.2.4). I will not review or discuss Plato or Plotinus’ arguments in favor of the immortality of the soul.198

Plotinus: Before starting with confirming parallel claims, let us start with a puzzling (in part because of how out of character it is for him) quotation from Plotinus, in which he simultaneously seems to exalt Plato, but then accuses him of having an inconsistent position on the soul:

We are left with the godlike Plato, who said many fine things about the soul and about its coming [into this world] in his writings, so that we hope we can get something clear from him. What, then, does this philosopher say? He is obviously not saying the same thing everywhere, so that one can easily know what his intention is; but he everywhere speaks with contempt of the whole world of sense and disapproves of the soul’s fellowship with body and says that soul is fettered and buried in it, and that ‘the esoteric saying is a great one’, which asserts that the soul is ‘in custody”; and his cave, like the den of Empedocles, means, I think, this universe, where he says that the soul’s journey to the intelligible world is ‘a release from fetters’ and an ‘ascent from the cave’. And in the Phaedrus he makes ‘molting’ the cause of coming here; and he has cycles which bring here again the soul which has ascended, and judgments send others down here, and lots and chances and necessities. And, though in all these passages he disapproves of the soul’s coming to body, in the Timaeus when speaking about this All he praises the universe and calls it a blessed god, and says that the soul was given by the goodness of the Demiurge, so that this All might be intelligent, because it had to be intelligent, and this could not be without soul. The Soul of the All, then, was sent into it for this reason by the god, and the soul of each one of us was sent that the All might be perfect: since it was necessary that all the very same kinds of living things which were in the intelligible world should also exist in the world perceived by the senses (IV.8.1.23-50; adapted from Armstrong).

Let us address the inconsistency charge, beginning with the comment that “he is obviously not saying the same thing everywhere”: Plotinus apparently agrees with everything in that paragraph, and so there is no inconsistency with the soul’s being a prisoner, or with the cave’s being something we want to escape in favor of the Intellectual Realm. Then Plotinus states that when Plato describes the fall of the soul in the Phaedrus

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198 On my count, Plato gives at least these seven arguments for the soul’s immortality (with my titles for them): (1) Phaedo 70c3-72c1 (Argument from Opposites Coming from Opposites); (2) Phaedo 72c2-73c3 (Argument from Recollection); (3) Phaedo 78b5-80d3 (The Affinity Argument); (4) Phaedo 105c8-105e5 (The Non-Admitting Opposites Argument); (5) Phaedo 105e8-107a2 (The Indestructible Deathless Argument); (6) Republic X 608d3-611a2 (The Peculiar Badness Argument); and (7) Phaedrus 245c6-e9 (The Self-Mover Argument). For some of Plotinus’ statements that the soul is immortal, indestructible, and/or imperishable, see I.1.2, IV.4.10, and IV.7.9, 15, 17. Interestingly, (1) Inge (1929b: 7) argues that “Although Plato has always and justly been regarded as the great champion of human immortality, it is impossible to find any fixed and definite conviction on the subject in his writings.” I know of no other commentator who questions Plato’s commitment (or clarity, for that matter) to the immortality of the soul. And (2) Wallis (1972: 28) states that “Plotinus opposes [Plato’s] interpretation of Phaedrus 245-6 that only the World-soul is immortal (Hermias In Phdr. 102, Enn. IV.3.1.33-7, 7.12-20);” however, (1) Plato clearly claims that the individual soul is immortal, even though he admittedly claims that there are mortal parts of the soul (Timaeus 90a-d, e.g.); (2) Plotinus’ IV.3.1 raises questions and does not give Plotinian doctrine – it does not say or imply that soul is not immortal, at least on my reading; and (3) likewise, Plotinus’ IV.3.7 does not claim that individual souls are not immortal; he is merely going through Plato’s Timaeus 41d, discussing the second and third kinds of soul, created from the same stuff from which the World-Soul was made.

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and describes cycles of non-incarnate existence and judgments made there, this is consistent with the body’s being a tomb and the soul’s being a prisoner. We have no inconsistency yet.

The problem seems to be when Plato states in the *Timaeus* that the universe is a blessed god, and that the soul was given by the goodness of the creator to give them intellect, sending the All-Soul, as individual souls, into the universe in order to complete the universe, that it should have everything. Thus, it is a bad thing for the soul to be incarnated, and yet it is occupying the best of all worlds (to use Leibniz’s expression). The problem with Plotinus’ criticism, unfortunately, is that I can confirm that Plotinus makes all of these statements himself elsewhere (in fact, I have already confirmed that Plotinus believes all of these claims about the universe and the All-Soul just enumerated), and we will not see anything further in this section to cause a problem with these agreements. Unfortunately, then, I am stuck with needing to state that if Plotinus is right (that Plato is inconsistent), then Plotinus is wrong (that is, Plotinus is not being consistent either).

Let us move on to general claims that both philosophers make about individual souls—they are self-movers, the source of life, the soul uses the body as an instrument, soul is divine, and the number of souls is constant—and then humans souls—there are three parts to the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite), humans are mostly their soul or their Reason, the soul is not an attunement, the soul affects and is affected by the body, and the soul may rise to the level of Nous and be godly.

8.1 General claims about individual souls

I will show that Plato and Plotinus agree that: (1) Soul is a self-mover (§ 8.1.1); (2) Soul is the source of life; soul uses the body as an instrument (§ 8.1.2); (3) Soul is divine (§ 8.1.3); and (4) The number of souls remains constant (§ 8.1.4). Let us analyze each of these claims in turn.

8.1.1 Soul is a self-mover

First, let us begin examining what both philosophers say about the individual souls in general, before discussing human soul (see § 8.2 below). Plato and Plotinus each declare that soul is a self-mover, responsible for moving all things.

**Plato:** Plato has the character Socrates affirm that soul is a self-mover in the *Phaedrus*:

… since we have found that a self-mover is immortal, we should have no qualms about declaring that this is the very essence and principle of a soul, for every bodily object that is moved from outside has no soul, while a body whose motion comes from within, from itself, does have a soul, that being the nature of a soul; and if this is so – that whatever moves itself is essentially a soul – then it follows necessarily that soul should have neither birth nor death (*Phaedrus* 245e2-246a2).

Thus, the soul is a self-mover.

**Plotinus:**

199 I side with de Vogel (1986: 225), that Plotinus did not deviate from Plato’s view on the soul, as opposed to Blumenthal (1996: 82), who claims that Plotinus (qua Platonist of late antiquity) deceived himself in thinking that he gave an accurate exposition of Plato, especially on soul and intellect – their conception of soul was fundamentally Platonic and dualist, but its operational explanation was more Aristotelian and Middle Platonic than Platonic. However, if Plato and Plotinus believe that the same kind of soul has the same kinds of properties (as we’ll show in this section) – no matter how the explanations are given – they have the same view of soul, at least on my view. For example, using *energeia* to explain the activity of the soul does not make Plotinus an Aristotelian on the soul.

200 I agree with Menn (1992: 544)’s interpretation of soul qua self- and first-mover in *Laws* X; I cannot fully address Cherniss (1954: 248, 250) and Mohr (2005: 168, 170, 180)’s arguments concerning precosmic matter’s moving on its own without soul in the *Timaeus* (and the possible inconsistency with Plato’s claim that if something moves, it moves because of soul), except to question this idea with Plato’s own claim that soul is prior to body (see § 6.6). See Mohr (2005: 183) for another problem involving self-movement.

201 See also *Phaedrus* 245c-d and *Laws* X 895e-896b; cf. *Phaedrus* 245d-c, and *Laws* X 894, 895c.
… this All … is preserved and given its universal order and beauty by soul. For soul is the ‘origin of motion’ and is responsible for the motion of other things, and it is moved by itself, and gives life to the ensouled body, but has it of itself, and never loses it because it has it of itself (IV.7.9.6-9).

Therefore, if something can move itself, according to Plato and Plotinus, it is soul.

8.1.2 Soul is the source of life; soul uses the body as an instrument

Closely related to the claim that soul is self-moving are the claims that soul is the source of life (via the soul’s conjunction with an appropriate body), and that the soul uses the body as an instrument, with which both philosophers agree. We begin, as usual, with Plato.

**Plato**: Plato states soul is the source of life at *Phaedrus* 245c-d; he connects self-generated motion with life, here in the *Laws*:

If we ever saw this phenomenon – self-generating motion – arise in an object made of earth, water or fire (alone or in combination) how should we describe that object’s condition?

Of course, what you’re really asking me is this: when an object moves itself, are we to say that it is ‘alive’?

That’s right.
It is emphatically alive.
Well then, when we see that a thing has a soul, the situation is exactly the same, isn’t it? We have to admit that it is alive.

Yes, exactly the same (*Laws* X 895c4-13).

And Plato states that the soul uses the body as an instrument\(^{202}\) in the *Phaedo*:

Haven’t we also said some time ago that when the soul makes use of the body to investigate something, be it through hearing or seeing or some other sense – for to investigate something through the body is to do it through the senses …? (*Phaedo* 79c2-5)\(^{203}\)

Thus, Plato believes that soul is the source of life and that the soul uses the body as an instrument.

**Plotinus**: Plotinus agrees with Plato that the soul is the source of life and uses the body as an instrument.\(^{204}\) I have already confirmed that Plotinus claims that soul is the source of life in the preceding Plotinus quote: “For soul … gives life to the ensouled body …” (IV.7.9.6-8)\(^{205}\), and he states that the soul uses the body as an instrument here:

Now if soul uses body as a tool it does not have to admit the affections which comes through the body; craftsmen are not affected by the affections of their tools. …. But there can be harm in seeing,

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\(^{202}\) There is neither time nor space to review or address Plato’s wavering on the question of attributing desires to the soul (*Philebus*) or body (*Phaedo*), as mentioned by Wallis (1972: 75) and others.

\(^{203}\) See also *Alcibiades* I 129b-130c.

\(^{204}\) I agree with Emilsson (1988: 5; Plotinus believes that the soul is not a body or some sort of principle of the body, but not defined in terms of body at all); Emilsson (1988: 148; Plotinus is the founder of the mind-body problem); O’Daly (1973: 21; Plotinus basically accepts Plato’s definition of the self); O’Meara (1993: 30: Plotinus’ account of how soul acts on body “goes a good deal further” than Plato’s, but I add that Plotinus’ additions are not necessarily inconsistent with the latter’s view); Rist (1988: 402; Rist has more euphemisms about the soul and body on which Plotinus agrees with Plato); and I am inclined to agree with de Vogel (1969b: 410), that Plato and Plotinus are not dualists, though I will not defend that position here. For the purposes of this project, I will concede Emilsson (1988: 57-58)’s point that Plotinus bases his theory of vision on *Timaeus* 45b-d and Aristotle’s *De Anima* 419b29, but deviates with Plato and must be aware that he is doing so.

\(^{205}\) See also IV.3.23, 25; IV.7.2, 14; and VI.2.7.
and it can bring sadness and pain and in general anything that may happen to the whole body; and so desire, when the soul seeks the service of its tool (I.1.3.3-5, 8-11).

Therefore, both philosophers believe that soul is the source of life and uses the body as an instrument.

8.1.3 Soul is divine

Plato and Plotinus maintain that the soul is divine. After all, if every individual soul is part of the All-Soul (PTP § 4.4), and we’ve seen that they both hold that the All-Soul is divine (see Phaedrus passages in § 8.1.3, e.g.), it is prima facie plausible that they would also believe that individual souls have at least a share of the divine, which is what we find.

**Plato:** Plato states that the soul is divine, for instance, in a conditional statement (where he does not think that the antecedent is true): “If then the soul is a kind of harmony or attunement, clearly, when our body is relaxed or stretched without due measure by diseases and other evils, the soul must immediately be destroyed, even if it be most divine …” (Phaedo 86c3-6). Thus, the soul is divine for Plato.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus voices the same view: “Our soul then also is a divine thing and of a nature different [from the things of sense], like the universal nature of soul …” (V.1.10.10-12). Thus, Plotinus believes that the soul is divine as well.

Therefore, both philosophers set down the soul as being divine.

8.1.4 The number of souls remains constant

Interestingly, Plato and Plotinus both state that, due to the soul’s immortality and souls’ being one with the All-Soul, the number of souls neither increase nor decrease.

**Plato:** Plato makes his statement in the Republic:

… if [“the soul isn’t destroyed by a single evil, whether its own or something else’s then clearly it must always be” at 610e10-611a1], then you realize that there would always be the same souls, for they

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206 See also IV.7.8.

207 See also Phaedrus 246d-e; Timaeus 72d-e, where Plato says that there is a divine part of soul (presumably reason); Timaeus 41b-d, where God creates the divine, immortal soul of humans; and Laws XII 966d-967a; cf. Phaedo 79c-80b, 82b-c, 91c-e, Timaeus 44d-46c, and Epinomis 980c-981a, and 991d.

208 See also III.2.9, IV.1.1, IV.4.25, IV.7.10, IV.8.5, and V.1.3.

209 Merlan [1967: 355; cf. Leroux (1996: 299) and Rist (1967b: 416-417)] argues that in order to resolve the contradiction in Plato, that (on one hand) the soul falls and should avoid the body (Phaedrus and Phaedo), and that (on the other) the first incarnation is blameless and happens of universal necessity (Timaeus and Republic X), Plotinus “adopted a theory which he explicitly claims as his innovation (he otherwise presents himself as an orthodox Platonist). According to this theory, a true fall has never taken place. Actually, even when in a body, the soul still lives its original 'celestial' life and remains on separated from Intelligence. Only we are not aware of this 'hidden' life of the soul; in other words, we are partly unconscious of what happens in our minds [IV.8.8]. What is true of the Soul in relation to Intelligence is even truer of the relation between our embodied selves and Intelligence. Not even when present in us does Intelligence discontinue its activity [V.1.12].” My response is, despite Plotinus’ alleged claim to innovation (which I confess I cannot corroborate), we have reason to believe that Plato believes that our Reason (or at least some part of it) does not fall when we are incarnated. Evidence for this claim is threefold: (1) Our soul can be perfected and come to be with the gods, circling Nous (Phaedrus 246b-c). (2) In order to have knowledge (including the Good), we must have access to the Forms (and of the Good), so it must in theory be possible for every human soul to be in the presence of the Good and Forms. Otherwise, Plato’s urgings in the Laws (see note above for passages) that we must honor our soul because it is divine makes no sense. And (3) As I show in PTP § 4.4, both philosophers hold that individual souls are likely part of the All-Soul, so it is also plausible to argue that (on Plato’s view, just as on Plotinus’) there is a part of the higher soul that stays above, so to speak. Cf. Gerson (1997: 299), who states that “The distinction between the endowed self and the ideal self has its roots in the Platonic distinction between the incarnate composite, or tripartite soul, and the discarnate soul. For Plato, the separated soul is the ideal and the incarnate individual is its image. It is not too much to say that the development of this basic distinction is one of Plotinus’s most impressive contributions to philosophy.”
couldn’t be made fewer if none is destroyed, and they couldn’t be made more numerous either. If anything immortal is increased, you know that the increase would have to come from the mortal, and then everything would end up being immortal (*Republic* X 611a4-8).

Thus, Plato believes that the number of souls remains constant.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus states the same in his treatise entitled “On Difficulties about the Soul I’:

… things which become ensouled in this way do not make more souls: for they depend on the one soul which remains one; just as in ourselves, when some parts are cut off and others grow instead of them, soul leaves the old ones and comes to the new as long as the one soul remains. But in the All the one soul is always there; but some of the things within it take soul and some put it off, but the soul-activities remain the same (IV.3.8.54-60).

Therefore, both thinkers agree that the number of souls remains constant. I will now examine claims related to the human soul.

### 8.2 The Human Soul

Though Plato and Plotinus both discuss animal and plant souls in addition to human soul, I will confine my analysis to the human soul in this section. We find that Plato and Plotinus hold that: (1) There are three parts of the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite) (§ 8.2.1); (2) Humans are essentially their souls versus their bodies, and essentially their Reason, versus either their emotions (Spirit part) or appetites (Appetite part); and soul is the most divine thing about humans (§ 8.2.2); (3) The soul is not an attunement or an accord with a body; The soul is affected by the body in some ways and not in others (§ 8.2.3); and (4) The human soul can rise to the level of Nous, thereby being godly and divine (or fail to so rise and thereby be only mortal) (§ 8.2.4). Let us address these issues in turn.

#### 8.2.1 The three parts of the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite)

Both philosophers hold that there are three parts of the soul: Reason, Spirit, and Appetite (here and throughout this work, these words are capitalized to designate the parts of the soul as opposed to their actions or functions); they both ultimately agree that we can loosely locate the different parts of the soul in different parts of the body (though Plotinus certainly quibbles about this, and both of them still hold that the

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210 Mayhall (2004: 25-26) raises the issue of Individual Forms – the possible problem that “an infinity of individuals would result in an infinity of ideas. Here, Plotinus assumes that the sensible world is destroyed and regenerated again and in the process each new world contains the same indistinguishable individuals for which one idea would exist [V.7.1].” My reply is that if numbers are Forms, then the number of Forms is already infinite, so we do not need to worry about an infinite number of souls “causing” (philosophically) the number of Forms to be infinite. Moreover, the solution Plotinus offers is Platonic, because Plato discusses universal cycles in the *Timaeus* and *Statesman*. I will take up the issue of Forms of Individuals in the Conclusion.

211 For Platonic passages concerning animal soul, see *Timaeus* 39e-40b (creation of animals), 91d-92c (reincarnation explanation for which humans become which animals), *Laws* I 644d-645c and X 902b (all living creatures are puppets of God). For such Plotinian passages, see I.4.1, III.3.3, IV.7.13, IV.9.1, and V.2.2. For Platonic passages concerning plant soul, see *Timaeus* 76e-77c and *Sophist* 265c-d; for Plotinian passages, see I.4.1, III.3.3, IV.3.8, 23; IV.4.22, 26-28; IV.7.14, IV.9.1, V.2.1-2, and VI.7.11.

212 In his extensive research of Plotinian perception and psychology, Emilsson (1988: 5) states that, though “Plotinus’ discussion of perception and of the human soul in general has a notoriously Aristotelian air,” “On fundamental issues in psychology, however, Plotinus’ position is unquestionably platonic: he consistently maintains the immortality of the soul and an essential distinction between the soul and the body along with the doctrine about the soul’s kinship with the realm of transcendent forms.” As stated in the PTP Introduction (§§ IV: xxix), I will not be examining Aristotle’s views (here specifically his influence on Plotinus’ psychology; but see, e.g., Blumenthal 1976: 42; 1996: 91, Corrigan 2005: 228, and de Vogel 1986: 218). In general, I agree with Zeller (1931: 298), who claims that Plotinus’ “anthropology is in all essentials a repetition of Plato,” even though he described different features in more detail and in a more dogmatic tone than Plato.
soul is immaterial). Lastly, given that they both believe that the soul has these three parts and the same functions therein, they believe that souls have the same functions.

**Plato:** First, then, Plato’s commitment to three parts of the soul can easily be demonstrated; he famously argues for three divisions of the soul in *Republic IV*, first by delineating Appetite\(^{213}\) from Reason:

> We’ll call the part of the soul with which it calculates the rational part and the part with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other appetites the irrational appetitive part, companion of certain indulgences and pleasures.

> Yes. Indeed, that’s a reasonable thing to think (*Republic IV* 439d4-e1).\(^{214}\)

In order to spare some space, the whole argument for the existence of the Spirit part will not be displayed here; however, Plato answers his question “is the spirited part *thumos* by which we get angry a third part or is it of the same nature as either of the other two” (*Republic IV* 439e3-4),\(^{215}\) in the affirmative. As we saw in the previous section, in Book IX of the *Republic*, Plato represents the three parts of the soul – Reason, Spirit, and Appetite – within a human, as a Man, a Lion, and a many-headed Beast, at *Republic IX* 588b-589b, respectively; and as a Charioteer, a White (beautiful, glory-loving, well-behaved) Horse, and a Black (wanton, deaf, hard-to-control) Horse, respectively, at *Phaedrus* 246a-b, 253c-254c, and 255e-256b.

In the *Timaeus*, Plato locates the different parts of the soul in three different parts of the body: Reason in the head, Spirit in the thorax,\(^ {216}\) and Appetite just below the navel.\(^ {217}\) He refers to Spirit and Appetite as the mortal parts of the soul, presumably because when souls are not incarnated, they have no emotion, love of honor, or appetites for food, drink or sex.\(^ {218}\) Interestingly, Plato, in the late *Laws*, also warns us not to take the word “part” seriously, when it comes to the soul:

> Doubtless in the course of conversation you make at least this point to each other about the soul: one of the constituent elements (whether ‘part’ or ‘state’ is not important) to be found in it is ‘anger’, and this innate impulse, unruly and difficult to fight as it is, causes a good deal of havoc by its irrational force.

> Yes, indeed (*Laws* IX 863b1-5).

We may use “state” instead of “part,” which has more of a connotation of a function of the soul than an actual physical part of the soul (Plato’s location of the different parts in different areas of the body notwithstanding).

Lastly, Plato states that the functions of soul, besides life, reason, emotion, and desires, are management, rule, deliberation,\(^ {219}\) justice,\(^ {220}\) and wisdom.\(^ {221}\)

Thus, Plato holds that there are three parts of the soul, Reason, Spirit, and Appetite.

**Plotinus:** Let us now confirm that Plotinus believes that there are three parts of the soul as well.\(^ {222}\) He affirms this view here:

\(^{213}\) Carone (2001: 117) argues that *epithumia* is in the *Charmides*, used as Plato does in the *Republic*.

\(^{214}\) For other passages where Appetite fights with Reason, see *Phaedrus* 237d-238c and in the Chariot/Charioteer Analogy, at 253c-254c; cf. *Laches* 191c-e.

\(^{215}\) For the whole argument for the existence of Spirit, see *Republic IV* 439e-441a; Plato argues that we should not “water” our Spirit part at *Republic X* 606a-e.

\(^{216}\) For Reason and Spirit’s location, see *Timaeus* 69c-70a; cf. 89d-90d.

\(^{217}\) See *Timaeus* 70d-71b; cf. 89d-90d.

\(^{218}\) See *Timaeus* 69c-70a, 70d-71b, and 72d. See Gerson (1994: 155), for the view that Plato perhaps modified his account of the tripartite soul in the *Timaeus* to be that the lower faculties of the soul are “apportioned to the incarnate self alone”.

\(^{219}\) See *Republic I* 353d.

\(^{220}\) See *Republic I* 353d-e.

\(^{221}\) See *Philebus* 30a-c.

\(^{222}\) I agree with Bussanich (1992: 162) and Gurtler (1988: 201), that they basically have the same view of the tripartite soul. I disagree with Blumenthal (1996: 91), who argues that for Plotinus “[e]ach activity has its own faculty,” a view that is complicated because of his difficulty to keep Soul and Intellect “apart”; whereas Plato has it that the upper two sections of the Divided Line (*dianoia* and

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We should consider, then, if we ought to say that some qualities belong to the body and some to the soul, and classify the bodily ones according to the senses, allotting some to sight and some to hearing or taste, and others to smell or touch. But how are we to classify those of the soul? As belonging to the appetitive \( \epsilonπιθυμητικο\), emotional \( \thetaυμοειδο\) or rational \( \lambdaογιστικο\) part (VI.1.12.2-6).

He also refers to Plato’s Chariot/Charioteer Analogy from *Phaedrus* 247e5-6:

That is why the charioteer gives the horses a share of what he sees; and they in taking it obviously would have desired what they saw, for they did not get it all. And if in their longing they act, they act for the sake of what they long for; and that was vision and contemplation (III.8.5.34-37).

Though Plotinus does not have many passages discussing the interplay between the three parts, he does discuss Reason, Spirit, Appetite, and the relation between these parts in several places.

Concerning the locating parts of the soul in different parts of the body, Plotinus has an interesting discussion. He first asks the question at IV.3.20, and then argues that (1) since space is technically unembodied, space doesn’t need soul; (2) soul is not in the body as some substratum; nor is it present as a part in a whole; (3) it is absurd to think of the soul as a total and the body its parts; and (4) soul is not in body as Form is in Matter (IV.3.20). We might expect, then, that Plotinus does not state that the parts of the soul are located in the body, as Plato did. However, shortly after making those four points just mentioned, he agrees with Plato that Reason is located in the head, here:

Since, then, the power of sensation which is also that of impulsion, belonging to the soul which perceives and imagines, has reason above it, as it were a nature in close contact on its underside with that which is above, the ancients thus put reason at the highest point of the whole living creature at the head, supposing it to be not in the brain but in this perceptive faculty which in the way described above was situated in the brain. For one part of the soul had to give itself to body, and to the part of body most receptive of its activity, but the other part, which had no communication with body, was under the absolute necessity of communicating with the first part, which was a form of soul, and of soul capable of apprehending what came from reason. For the perceptive part of the soul can be in some way capable of judgment, and the imaging part has a sort of intelligence, and impulse and desire are there following the lead of the imaging faculty, and reason. The reasoning part therefore in there in the perceptive not as in a place but because that which is there draws upon it (IV.3.23.21-34).

And here he agrees that Spirit is located in the heart area:

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\*noesis* “are both performed by a single part of the soul, and we are given very little information about how they are performed.” However, Plotinus does not believe that Spirit can perform \*dianoia* or \*noesis*, to my knowledge, and claiming that the soul can perform different activities but these are not faculties muddles the issue – in short, Blumenthal does not show that Plotinus does not believe in three parts of the soul, but discusses more activities of the soul. I also disagree with Rist (1967b), who argues that a “series of problems” arise from “Plotinus’ apparent unwillingness to take very much notice of the tripartition of the soul” (410-411) and that “Plotinus has distinguished three aspects of the soul – though these aspects are not necessarily to be taken as Platonic parts” [416; cf. Gerson (1994: 271n43)], based on all the Plotinian passages adduced in this section.

223 For some more on the Greek words used by Plotinus, see Blumenthal (1972: 351).
224 See also V.1.10.10 (where Plotinus refers to the charioteer again, but also mentions that “Plato speaks of the ‘inner man’”, which is a reference to the Man-Lion-Beast analogy), and III.4.2; cf. I.8.12, IV.7.13, and VI.8.2.
225 See, for instance, I.1.10, III.6.2, and IV.3.23; also, de Vogel (1986: 219) notes I.1.7.18-21 as referring to the Man-Lion-Beast analogy as well.
226 For Spirit passages, see II.2.2, IV.4.28 (where Plotinus argues that Spirit must exist, and contain anger as a possible affection, and refers to Spirit again).
227 See I.1.5.
228 For a passage where Plotinus discusses Reason’s relation to Appetite, see IV.4.21; Reason’s relation to Spirit, III.6.2; Reason’s immunity or lack thereof from anger, see III.6.1; and on justice’s being the harmony between passion and Reason, see I.2.1.17-21.
And it is not absurd to say that the trace of soul which is expressed in passion is in the region of the heart; for this is not to say that the soul is there, but the starting point of the blood which has this qualification (IV.4.28.73-76).

So, in spite of his apparent protests about soul’s not being able to be in part of the body, he agrees with Plato about the location of Reason and Spirit. Admittedly, Plotinus does not locate Appetite just below the navel—as Plato did; however, since he does not discuss this issue, so we do not have an incompatibility to note.229

Plotinus notably does discuss his own metaphors for the soul’s being in the body in some sense: He has a steersman analogy (the soul is in the body as a steersman is in a ship) that he finds apt and inapt for various reasons (IV.3.20), and a light analogy (the soul is in the body as light is in the air it passes through) that he seems happy to make (IV.3.20).

In another interesting parallel with Plato, however, Plotinus actually refers to the so-called parts of the soul, just as Plato said in the Laws that we should not take the “part” word too literally, while he asks the initial question about the soul’s being in the body: “It is proper that we should pay attention to the question whether these and the other so-called parts of the soul are in place, or whether these are not in any way in place but the others are, and where they are, or whether no part of the soul is in any way in place” (IV.3.20.1-3). Lastly, Plotinus also mentions functions of the soul, virtue (I.2.3) and creative principle (VI.2.5).

Thus, we can see that Plato and Plotinus agree that there are three parts of the soul, and that they can be roughly located in the body in various places, even though they both hold that the soul is immaterial.

8.2.2 Humans are essentially their Reason (versus the other parts of the soul, or their body); soul is the most divine thing about humans

Now that I have shown agreement between Plato and Plotinus on the issue of their being three parts of the soul, I will demonstrate that the human soul is essentially what humans are (as opposed to their bodies), that Reason is the best part of the soul, and that soul is the most divine thing about humans.

Plato: I can show that Plato believes that humans are mostly their Reason in his Man-Lion-Beast analogy in Republic IX 588b10-589b6, where he asks Glaucon to mold a many-headed beast, a lion, and a man (588c7-d6), and then states:

Now join the three of them into one, so that they somehow grow together naturally.

Then, fashion around them the image of one of them, that of a human being so that anyone who sees only the outer covering and not what’s inside will think it is a single creature, a human being (Republic IX 588d7-c1).

It is clear here, given that the many-headed beast represents Appetite, the lion represents Spirit, and the man represents Reason, that Plato directly implies that man is his Reason here.230 Even more importantly, however, note the wording in the last sentence: one who sees the amalgamation “and not what’s inside will think it is a single creature, a human being” (my emphasis); the wording implies that the inner “man” in the figure is on his own and uses the body, but is not the external sheath. We will see that Plotinus uses this passage to try to show that he agrees with Plato on this issue.

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229 Blumenthal (1996: 84) holds that Plotinus “guardedly says that the activity of a faculty takes place in some part of the body, thus maintaining something of Plato’s concept by removing its materialist implications.”

230 I take this passage to be decisive against de Vogel (1986: 218), who claims, “Plato did not flatly identify man with that ‘most important part.’” De Vogel (1986: 230) then adds that Plato “did not identify man with the thinking soul or noûs; he did hold that the thinking soul was by nature superior to the body and thus had to lead and govern it. But he thought the body an extremely important thing, since it had to serve the soul.” I will address Plato’s attitude toward the body in further sections (§ 8.1.2, PPMEE §§ 3.5, 3.6, and 3.11); for now, allow me to foreshadow my disagreement with de Vogel’s contention that Plato thought the body to be an extremely important thing.
Next, Plato, while discussing parts of the soul in Book X, states that: “… the part that opposes it [Reason] is one of the inferior parts in us” (Republic X 603a7-8).

Further, shortly after this passage and a discussion involving the contradictions within the soul, Plato makes an analogy that the soul should not always be seen as essentially full of contradictions, as the crusty, seaweed-filled sea god Glaucus is seen at first.231 Plotinus will directly refer to this analogy in his works, so we should quote it here:

Then we mustn’t think … that the soul in its truest nature is full of multicolored variety and unlikeness or that it differs with itself.

What do you mean?
It isn’t easy for anything composed of many parts to be immortal if it isn’t put together in the finest way, yet this is how the soul now appeared to us.
It probably isn’t easy.
Yet our recent argument and others as well compel us to believe that the soul is immortal. But to see the soul as it is in truth, we must not study it as it is while it is maimed by its association with the body and other evils – which is what we were doing earlier – but as it is in its pure state, that’s how we should study the soul, thoroughly and by means of logical reasoning. We’ll then find that it is a much finer thing than we thought and that we can see justice and injustice as well as all the other things we’ve discussed far more clearly. What we’ve said about the soul is true of it as it appears at present. But the condition in which we’ve studied it is like that of the sea god Glaucus, whose primary nature can’t easily be made out by those who catch glimpses of him. Some of the original parts have broken off, others have been crushed, and his whole body has been maimed by the waves and by the shells, seaweeds, and stones that have attached themselves to him, so that he looks more like a wild animal than his natural self. The soul, too, is in a similar condition when we study it, beset by many evils. That, Glaucon, is why we have to look somewhere else in order to discover its true nature.

To where?
To its philosophy, or love of wisdom. We must realize what it grasps and longs to have intercourse with, because it is akin to the divine and immortal and what always is, and we must realize what it would become if it followed this longing with its whole being, and if the resulting effort lifted it out of the sea in which it now dwells, and if the many stones and shells (those which have grown all over it in a wild, earthy, and stony profusion because it feasts at those so-called happy feasting on earth) were hammered off it. Then we’d see what its true nature is and be able to determine whether it has many parts or just one and whether or in what manner it is put together. But we’ve already given a decent account, I think, of what its condition is and what parts it has when it is immersed in human life.

We certainly have (Republic X 611a10-612a7).

Here, Plato states that the soul’s true nature is its love of wisdom, that it may be one (as he implies in the Republic, with his account of justice’s being a harmony between the parts); for if we ignore the soul’s dealings with the body, as Plato urges in the fifth paragraph (“ … to see the soul as it is in truth, we must not study it as it is while it is maimed by its association with the body …”), then we must ignore bodily desires and emotions that might contradict one’s reason and make it many, as Plato might say. Moreover, Plato’s “true nature” quotation (just mentioned) also hints that the true nature of the soul when purified is something that is only Reason.

Lastly, Plato argues that the soul is the most divine thing a person has, here: “Of all the things a man can call his own, the most divine [δειοτατον] (though the gods are more divine still) is his soul, his most

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231 See also Timaeus 43a, which Menn (1995: 53) notes, where human souls are initially created by the Demiurge to be rational, but “when they descend into mortal bodies, and are assailed from all sides by the disorderly rectilinear motions of which the world-soul is free, then ‘they neither dominate nor are dominated, but carry and are carried by violence’ (43a6-7).”

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intimate possession” (*Laws* V 726a2-3; adapted from Saunders).\(^{232}\) Admittedly, it is paradoxical for Plato to claim both that we have our soul (or that our soul is one of our possessions) and that the soul is what a human is. But he says it nonetheless, and I will confirm this in Plotinus as well.

Thus, Plato believes that humans are mostly their soul or their Reason, and that soul is the most divine thing about humans.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus concurs with Plato on these same points,\(^{233}\) beginning with the claim that Reason is the most divine part of the soul:

It is probable, then, that he who intends to know what Intellect really is must know soul, and the most divine part of soul. This could happen also in this way, if you first of all separated the body from man (and, obviously, from yourself), and then the soul which forms it and, very thoroughly, sense-perception and desires and passions and all the rest of such fooleries, since they incline so very much towards the mortal. What remains of soul is this which we said was an image of Intellect preserving something of its light, like the light of the sun … (V.3.9.1-9).\(^{234}\)

Thus, part of soul is intellect, and it is the most divine part of soul; Plotinus also agrees with Plato that humans are mostly their reason:

Man, therefore, must be a rational forming principle other than soul. What is there to prevent man from being a composite, a soul in a particular kind of forming principle, the principle being a sort of particular activity, and the activity being unable to exist without that which acts? For this is how the forming principles in seeds are; for they are neither without soul nor simply souls. … But the man over this one [i.e., the composite of body and soul, using the senses] belongs to a soul already more divine which has a better man and clearer senses. And this would be the man Plato was defining, and by adding ‘using a body’ he indicated that it rides upon the one which primarily uses a body, and the one which does so secondarily is diviner (VI.7.5.1-6, 21-25; my brackets).\(^{235}\)

So, Plotinus refers back to the Man-Lion-Beast simile to show that the inner “man” uses the body, which is an amalgam of the three parts, but that Reason is more divine than the other parts of the soul.

Lastly, Plotinus discusses the “sea god Glaucus” passage of Plato, and also implies that soul is the most divine part of humans:

Let us take soul, not the soul in body which has acquired irrational desires and passions and admitted other affection, but the soul which has wiped these away and which, as far as possible, has no communion with the body. This soul does make it clear that its evils are external accretions to the soul and come from elsewhere, but that when it is purified the best things are present in it, wisdom and all the rest of virtue, and are its own. If, then, the soul is something of this kind when it goes up again to itself, it must surely belong to that nature which we assert is that of all the divine and eternal. For wisdom and true virtue are divine things, and could not occur in some trivial mortal being, but something of such a

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\(^{232}\) See also *Laws* V 728b; cf. *Republic* X 611a-612a.

\(^{233}\) Here is some related commentary, on which I will not take a side: Dodds (1960: 5) claims that Plotinus apparently was “the first to make the vital distinction between total personality … and ego-consciousness …”; and de Vogel (1986: 229) says that Plotinus identified personality simply with the thinking Soul (unlike Plato). Gerson (1994: 140) cites many Plotinian passages concerning the composite being and self, the soul’s being the self, and the soul’s being distinguished from the self. Another issue is whether the whole soul descends on Plato’s view or not, as compared with Plotinus’ view, where the accepted view is that there is an undescended (or transcendent) part of the soul; see, e.g., Gerson (1994: 182; this point distinguishes their views); Leroux (1996: 299; “Against Plato, Plotinus maintains the continuity of a nondescended part of the soul (IV.8.8)”; Rist (1967b: 417; Plato doesn’t have an undescended part of the soul); and de Vogel (1986: 225; Plotinus follows Plato on the transcendent part of the soul; cf. 217).

\(^{234}\) See also I.4.14, IV.7.1, VI.8.14; Plotinus also states that humans are the most noble living thing on earth at III.2.9, which I can verify in Plato via his view of the value of being reincarnated as a human versus an animal in the reincarnation passages (see § 9.1 below).

\(^{235}\) “Using a body” refers to *Alcibiades* I 129e-130a. See also VI.3.15; cf. I.1.10 and V.2.2. And see T. Whittaker (1961: 46)’s statement that both thinkers make “the brain central among the organs that are in special relation with mind.”
kind [as to possess them] must be divine, since it has a share of divine things through its kinship and consubstantiality. For this reason any one of us who is like this would deviate very little from the beings above as far as his soul itself was concerned and would only be inferior by that part which is in body. For this reason, if every man was like this, or there were a great number who had souls like this, no one would be so unbelieving as not to believe that what is soul in men is altogether immortal. But, as it is, they see the soul in the great majority of people damaged in many ways, and do not think of it as if it was divine or immortal (IV.7.10.7-27).\(^\text{236}\)

This passage provides a nice parallel with what Plato said in Republic X: If you view the soul from the point of view of its’ contradictions, tribulations, bodily needs and issues, it does not look divine or important; however, if one sees the love of wisdom and virtue of the soul, and what it has in common with the All-Soul or Forms, one easily can see its divinity and immortality.

Thus, I have shown that both thinkers believe that soul is what humans are (and is their most divine part), that they are mostly their reason, that human souls are best seen not in conjunction with their bodies, but in their love of wisdom.

8.2.3 The soul is not an attunement or an accord with a body; the soul is affected by the body in some ways, and not in others

In this subsection, we will see that Plato and Plotinus agree that: (1) The soul is not an attunement or an accord with a body; (2) The soul is affected by the body in some ways (pleasures and pains), and not in others (blushing or quick heartbeat).

**Plato:** First and briefly, Plato argues that the soul is not an attunement of the body in the *Phaedo;*\(^\text{237}\) Plotinus affirms this view as well at IV.7.8\(^\text{4}\).

Second, let us address the issue of the soul’s sometimes being affected by the body (and sometimes not), by first putting some of the previous sections’ points together at this point: We humans are mostly our soul, and yet even then mostly our Reason, our immortal part of our soul, in addition to our mortal parts – Spirit and Appetite. These mortal soul parts come into existence, according to both philosophers, when the soul is incarnated with a body. Keeping these points in mind will help us sort out what each philosopher is saying about the body’s effect on the soul.

For Plato, then, let us look at what he says in different dialogues, in chronological order. In the *Phaedo,* Plato states that the soul appears to rule:

… over all the elements of which one says it is composed, opposing nearly all of them throughout life, directing all their ways, inflicting harsh and painful punishment on them, at times in physical culture and medicine, at other times more gently by threats and exhortations, holding converse with desires and passions and fears as if it were one thing talking to a different one … (*Phaedo* 94c9-d6).

Shortly before this passage, Plato also included the examples of “affections of the body,” and the soul’s not drinking when thirsty or eating when hungry when the body has a fever (94b7-10).

In the *Republic,* Plato avers that the bravest, most intelligent soul is least disturbed and altered by an external affection (II 381a), which implies that such a person’s Reason soul part will be least affected by the body. In another *Republic* passage, he sets down that an excellent soul makes a body good and not vice versa (III 403d).

In the *Timaeus,* Plato argues that sensations travel through the body to the soul, as follows:

\(^{236}\) For other parallel passages to the sea god Glaucus passage, see especially I.1.12, but also IV.3.12, 32; IV.8.3; cf. IV.7.12. See Corrigan (2005: 228-229); and de Vogel (1986: 223) rightly states that Plotinus holds that “man in his essence was impeccable and could sin only by those things which secondarily were ‘added’ to him, when his originally divine soul was united with a body”; it is apparent, I add, that this is Plato’s view as well.

\(^{237}\) See *Phaedo* 85c-86d, 94c-94e, and 94e-95a.
… disturbances would occur when the body encountered and collided with external fire (i.e., fire other than the body’s own) or for that matter with a hard lump of earth or with the flow of gliding waters, or when it was caught up by a surge of air-driven winds. The motions produced by all these encounters would then be conducted through the body to the soul, and strike against it. (That is no doubt why these motions as a group came afterwards to be called ‘sensations,’ [αἰσθήσεις] as they are still called today.) (Timaeus 43b7-c7).

Plato then discusses the most important of the disturbances which concern the whole body – the cause of pleasures and pains as a result of bodily sensation (Timaeus 64a2-65b3). Plato also mentions affections of the tongue due to six different particles (Timaeus 65b4-66c7), which he says are affections of particular parts of the body, but he does not discuss the soul as being involved in these sensations, which may or may not imply that they do not affect the soul. Plato then states that the mortal soul:

… contains within it those dreadful but necessary disturbances: pleasure, first of all, evil’s most powerful lure; then pains, that make us run away from what is good; besides these, boldness also and fear, foolish counselors both; then also the spirit of anger hard to assuage, and expectation easily led astray. These they fused with unreasoning sense perception and all-venturing lust, and so, as was necessary, they constructed the mortal type of soul (Timaeus 69c8-d6).

So the mortal part(s) of soul experience pleasure, pain, rashness, fear, anger, hope, and love. Just after the last passage, Plato gets more specific about Spirit, stating that it is “the part of the mortal soul that exhibits manliness and spirit, the ambitious part …” (Timaeus 70a2-3).

In the Philebus, Plato states that some experiences only affect the body, while others affect the soul as well; he says that:

You must realize that some of the various affections of the body are extinguished within the body before they reach the soul, leaving it unaffected. Others penetrate through body and soul and provoke a kind of upheaval that is peculiar to each but also common to both of them (Philebus 33d2-6).

Plato then defines sensation as follows: “… when the soul and body are jointly affected and moved by one and the same affection, if you call this motion sensation [αἰσθήσεις], you would say nothing out of the way” (Philebus 34a3-5; adapted from Frede).239 This account of sensations is consistent with the Timaeus, because he states in both places that sensations involve bodily perceptions that reach the soul. At Philebus 35c6-7, 9-10, Plato states that “desire is not a matter of the body. … [b]ecause it shows that every living creature always strives towards the opposite of its own experience.” Namely, if I am thirsty, I have a desire for replenishment by drink, which is opposite to what the body is experiencing. He concludes his discussion about sensations as follows: “every impulse, and desire, and the rule over the whole animal is the domain of the soul” (Philebus 35d2-3) and that “our argument will, then, never allow that it is our body that experiences thirst, hunger, or anything of that sort” (Philebus 35d5-6).

Thus, on the issue of whether and in what ways the body affects the soul, Plato believes that the soul can oppose bodily needs; the mortal parts of the soul (Spirit and Appetite) experience pleasure, pain, rashness, fear, anger, hope, courage, passion and love; sensations involve both the body and the soul’s experiencing something, such as being thirsty; and all impulse and desire are functions of the soul as opposed to the body.

Plotinus: Plotinus has a great passage on the relation between the body and soul, wherein he explains how some things affect the body in one way while affecting the soul in another:

But what about the soul’s accepting things as its own or rejecting them as alien? And, surely, feelings of grief and anger, pleasures, desires and fears, are changes and affections present in the soul and

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238 This is reminiscent of Plato’s likening pleasures and pains to rivets, at Phaedo 83c-e.
239 See also Philebus 47c-d; cf. Republic IX 584c and Laws V 747c-e.

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moving there. About these, too, one must certainly make a distinction, in this way. To deny that alterations in the soul, and intense perceptions of them, do occur is to contradict the obvious facts. But when we accept this we ought to enquire what it is that is changed. For we run the risk, when we say this of the soul, of understanding it in the same sort of way as if we say that the soul blushes or turns pale again, not taking into account that these affections are brought about by the soul but occur in the other structure [the body]. But the shame is in the soul, when the idea of something disgraceful arises in it; but the body, which the soul in a way possesses - not to be led astray by words – being subject to the soul and not the same thing as a lifeless body, is changed by way of the blood, which is easy to move. As for what is called fear, the beginning is in the soul, but the paleness comes from the blood withdrawing within. So with pleasure, the happy, relaxed feeling, which penetrates to sense-perception, belongs to the body, but the part of pleasure which belongs to the soul is no longer an affection. And the same is true of pain. For with lust, too, as long as its starting-point remains in the soul, it is unperceived; it is what comes out from there that sense-perception knows. In fact, when we say that the soul moves itself in lusts or reasonings or opinions, we are not saying that it does this because it is being shaken about by them, but that the movements originate from itself (III.6.3.1-24).

After he asks the question concerning whether the soul’s accepting or rejecting “things” such as grief, anger, pleasure, desire, and fear occur in the soul, he answers that Soul or Mind is the cause, but the body receives the effects thereof. He then discusses the examples of shame, fear, pleasure, pain, and concludes that desire, reasoning and judging are movements and the soul’s own acts.

In the next passage, Plotinus echoes what Plato had said in the Phaedo and Philebus, namely that the soul can allow the body’s needs to be satisfied or not, depending on its desire:

… the whole desire is not in all cases aroused by what we call impulses and does not wish to eat or drink before consideration though the bodily desire persists to the end; this means that the desire reaches a certain point, as far as it was in the qualified body, but nature does not attach itself to the desire or associate itself with it or wish, as the desire is not according to nature, to bring it into nature, since it has to decide itself what is against nature and according to nature. But if someone answers this first argument by saying that the body in its different states is sufficient to make the desires in the desiring faculty different, he does not produce a sufficient reason to show why when one thing is affected in different ways the desiring faculty itself has various desires on behalf of this other, when what is provided to satisfy the desires is not for it. For certainly food, warmth, moisture, relief of what is emptied or satisfaction of what is filled, do not benefit the desiring faculty, but they all belong to the body (IV.4.21.7-21).

In the second paragraph, Plotinus argues that the body profits from food and liquids, and not the desiring faculty of the soul, because the body does not have changing desires (as the soul does).

Now we come to a small interpretive problem in Plotinus. In his penultimate treatise [53 on Porphyry’s arrangement], he seems to state that the soul does not experience pain, grief, joy, sense-perception or discursive thinking, inconsistent with what Plato said above. Here is the passage:

And how could [the soul] admit of mixture? Substantial being is unmixed. How could there be any sort of addition? If there was, it would be hastening to be no more what it is. Pain is far from it too; and how could it feel sad, and what about? For that which is essentially simple is sufficient for itself, inasmuch as it stays set in its own essential nature. And will it be pleased at any increase, when nothing, not even any good, can accrue to it? It is always what it is. Furthermore it will have no

240 See also III.6.3-5; IV.3.25, and VI.4.15; cf. VI.3.16.
sensations and reasoning and opinion will have no connection with it; for sensation is the reception of a form or of an affection of a body, and reasoning and opinion are based on sensation (I.1.2.19-27). 241

The context, however, is this: Plotinus has asked whether a distinction is to be made between Soul and Essential Soul (the All-Soul); if so, then human soul is composite and all affections have their seat in the soul. If the individual soul is identical with the All-Soul, then it will be an unreceptive Form, lacking sadness, joy, and the rest, because it can never change, being a Form. The only issue remaining then is which option Plotinus thinks is true: Is the individual soul distinguishable from the All-Soul, or are they identical? We have already seen that neither of these answers by themselves will work. Ultimately Plotinus seems to make like Plato’s Stranger in the Sophist and “beg for both”; namely, the human soul is indeed a composite made of three parts, as we’ve seen that Plato and Plotinus hold, but we’ve also seen that they both hold that individual souls are in some sense one with the All-Soul (see PTP § 4.3), though not identical. In sum, this passage is tricky at first glance, but if we apply the principle of charity as we look at all the passages as consistently as possible, we see that Plotinus’ view is that the human soul does have desire and reasoning (among other affections), which agrees with what Plato said in the Philebus and elsewhere.

Therefore, I have shown that Plato and Plotinus both believe that desires, passions, pleasures, pains, and other affections are faculties in the soul, but that some of them can be linked to the body and its experiences. On the other hand, they both believe as well that souls can experience things that the body does not and cannot experience – the Forms.

8.2.4 Soul can rise to the level of Nous, be godly, and divine (or not)

Now we will see that Plato and Plotinus state with conviction that the human soul can rise to the level of Nous, thereby knowing the Forms, being godlike and divine. Plato: Plato mainly makes this point in the Phaedrus, in his Chariot/Charioteer passage, after stating that the soul has wings that are fostered by goodness, wisdom, and beauty (and wasted and destroyed by ugliness and evil; see 246d-e), when he makes the following claims:

As for the other souls, one that follows a god most closely, making itself most like that god, raises the head of its charioteer up to the place outside and is carried around in the circular motion with the others. Although distracted by the horses, this soul does have a view of Reality, just barely. Another soul rises at one time and falls at another, and because its horses pull it violently in different directions, it sees some real things and misses others. The remaining souls are all eagerly straining to keep up, but are unable to rise; they are carried around below the surface, trampling and striking one another as each tries to get ahead of the others (Phaedrus 248a1-b1).

241 See also I.1.3.3-5, where Plotinus makes a less troubling (from the perspective of the present project) statement to the effect that just as craftspeople are not affected by the affections of their tools, souls that use bodies as tools are not necessarily affected by the affections that pass through the body (cf. IV.4.22). This is less troubling to the current project because Plato believes that the soul can recollect the Forms, e.g., without the body; so, this statement is mutually agreeable.

242 What is also interesting about the claim that the Soul does not have discursive reasoning is that Plotinus claims that the All-Soul does have discursive reasoning, so we can conclude that Plotinus cannot be referring to the All-Soul (and it is argued in the text that “Soul” also cannot refer to Plotinus’ understanding of the individual soul).

243 Plotinus actually uses the terminology of sister at II.9.18.14-20 and IV.3.6.10-15 to describe the relationship between individual souls, the All-Soul, and/or the Hypostasis Soul (see, besides PTP Ch. 4, SUPP § 5.1).

244 There is another way of arguing in favor of the view that our soul can rise to the level of Nous, as J. Armstrong (2004: 171) explores, that “Plato’s identification of god with [nous] or intelligence in the Timaeus, Philebus, and Laws influences his conception of assimilation to god.” To urge humans to be godlike implies that humans should rise to the level of Nous, since God is Nous, is plausibly Platonic, especially since, as Menn (1992: 557-558) notes, humans share in incorporeal nous [cf. Menn (1992: 572; the perfectly rational soul desires the Good because it participates in nous)]. We repeat our disagreement (noted above) against de Vogel (1986: 230)’s view that Plato did not identify man with soul or nous.

245 See also Phaedrus 251b-c.
The charioteer here is the Reason part of the soul; we know that Plato is discussing the individual human soul because he has made an analogy of the Charioteer and two horses and concluded his account of the souls of the gods (at least some of which are stars) at 248a1. The soul rises to Nous by, for instance, following Reason, controlling one’s passions and appetites, and being godlike (see PPMEE § 3.5).

In a related passage in the Timaeus, Plato urges us to get the revolutions in our head in tune with the revolutions of the universe in order to have the best life:

And the motions that have an affinity to the divine part within us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe. These, surely, are the ones which each of us should follow. We should redirect the revolutions in our heads that were thrown off course at our birth, by coming to learn the harmonies and revolutions of the universe, and so bring into conformity with its objects our faculty of understanding, as it was in its original condition. And when this conformity is complete, we shall have achieved our goal: that most excellent life offered to humankind by the gods, both now and forevermore (Timaeus 90c7-d7).  

Thus, it is a reasonable interpretation of the Phaedrus passage above, that Plato most likely was referring to human souls rising to the realm of Being or Nous, especially because of how often he urges us to be godlike—where the gods qua stars circle Nous—, for instance, and because of what else he says in the Phaedrus and elsewhere about knowing the Forms and having a vision of Beauty and Goodness, as I have covered in PPMEE § 2.3 and PTP § 2.3.

In the Timaeus, Plato also discusses the difference between a human’s focusing on bodily concerns versus the love of knowledge, wisdom, and the divine, which Plotinus will really emphasize as well:

… if a man has become absorbed in his appetites or his ambitions and takes great pains to further them, all his thoughts are bound to become thoroughly mortal. And so far as it is at all possible for a man to become thoroughly mortal, he cannot help but fully succeed in this, seeing that he has cultivated his mortality all along. On the other hand, if a man has seriously devoted himself to the love of learning and to true wisdom, if he has exercised these aspects of himself above all, then there is absolutely no way that his thoughts can fail to be immortal and divine, should truth come within his grasp. And to the extent that human nature can partake of immortality, he can in no way fail to achieve this: constantly caring for his divine part as he does, keeping well-ordered the guiding spirit that lives within him, he must indeed by supremely happy (Timaeus 90b1-c6).

Granting that it is strange for Plato, who argues for the immortality of the soul in more than a handful of places, and declares it in many places, to state here that by loving learning and true wisdom, one becomes immortal, he most likely is trying to convey that if we focus only on our Reason and practice philosophy, we will effectively be doing the work of Nous, contemplating, and leaving our bodily cares behind as much as possible.

Thus, Plato holds that depending on what our souls focus their attention on, we can either be godlike, focused on knowledge, wisdom, and the Forms, or we can be mortal, focused on bodily needs and issues. I will now confirm that Plotinus has the same view.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus agrees with Plato that soul can rise to the level of Nous, be godly, and divine (or fail to do so). Specifically, Plotinus echoes the Phaedrus passage in several places. In this first passage, he discusses its fall from the All-Soul as follows:

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246 Cf. Timaeus 89d.

247 Plato and Plotinus both discuss our desire to know Nous by referring to Nous as the “plain of truth.” For Platonie evidence, see: “The reason there is so much eagerness to see the plain where truth stands is that this pasture has the grass that is the right food for the best part of the soul, and it is the nature of the wings that lift up the soul to be nourished by it” (Phaedrus 248b5-c2). For Plotinus, see VI.7.13.

248 I agree here with Anton (2000: 55), that the Plotinian soul can attain identity with Nous; with Blumenthal (1996: 82-83), that Plotinus’ stance on this issue is Platonie; with Harris (1976: 6-7), that one must focus on Nous in order to ascend; with Helleman-
… the soul, though it is divine and comes from above, enters into the body and, though it is a god of the lowest rank, comes to this world by a spontaneous inclination, its own power and the setting in order of what comes after it being the cause of its descent. If it escapes quickly it takes no harm by acquiring a knowledge of evil and coming to know the nature of wickedness … (IV.8.24-29).

The “next lower” obviously alludes to the body; overall, Plotinus is certainly saying that the quicker we focus on knowledge, the better life will be for us, which is clearly Platonic (see, e.g., the *Timaeus* passage above).

We now can show a quick succession of quotations that demonstrate Plotinus’ agreement with Plato’s *Timaeus* passage, that discussed the soul’s being essential mortal if it focused on mortal thoughts, or immortal and divine if it focused on knowledge and wisdom. Plotinus concludes: “So the soul when it is purified becomes form and formative power, altogether bodiless and intellectual and entirely belonging to the divine …. Soul, then, when it is raised to the level of Intellect increases in beauty” (I.6.6.13-17); and “… is the soul beautiful of itself? No, it is not. For [if it was] one soul would not be wise and beautiful and another stupid and ugly. So beauty in the soul comes by wisdom” (V.9.2.18-20). As for the first quotation, the context is clearly the human soul, and Plotinus mentions just before it wisdom’s (ορθόνους) being “an intellectual activity which turns away from the things below and leads the soul to those above” (I.6.6.12-13). Since the human soul can attain wisdom (as we’ve seen in § 2.2.2), it too can be all Idea and Reason, and so on. Plato would agree with the second quotation, that a wise soul is a beautiful soul; he would agree with the third, because in the *Timaeus* he has just claimed that some human souls are effectively mortal, while others can be mortal.

Plotinus also discusses the possibility of humans being god, knowing and being intellect, versus being multiple: “For a god is what is linked to that center [i.e., the One], but that which stands far from it is a multiple human being or a beast” (VI.9.8.8-10; my brackets), which is again reminiscent of Plato’s *Timaeus* passage. In a related passage, Plotinus again discusses the two possibilities of being the life of intellect and the earthly life:

There the soul takes its rest and is outside evils because it has run up into the place which is clear of evils; and it thinks there, and it is not passive, and its true life is there; for our present life, the life without God, is a trace of life imitating that life. But life in that realm is the active actuality of Intellect, and the active actuality generates beauty, and generates righteousness, and generates virtue. It is these the soul conceives when filled with God, and this is its beginning and end; its beginning because it comes from thence, and its end because its good is there. And when it comes to be there it becomes itself and what it was; for

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Elgersma (1980: 457), that our souls can become unified with Nous in mystic ascent; with Rist (1967b: 422), that Plotinus’ view here is entirely Platonic, and with de Vogel (1970: 204), that Plato (citing *Phaedo* 82b-c and 114b-c) and Plotinus agree that soul exists on the level of intelligible Being in some sense. [See Bussanich (1996: 56) for Plotinian references for the soul’s becoming the intelligible world; Ciapolo (1997: 489), for the similarity between human life and the life of Nous.] I disagree with Inge (1929a: 256-257, cf. 262), who argues that Plotinus does not really identify with the fall of the soul (*Phaedrus*) attitude, but more with the “soul is divine” (*Timaeus*) passages; Plotinus holds to this aspect of the soul’s dual nature just as much as Plato does; and with Rist (1964: 89), who argues that when Plotinus says we need to become Nous, it is his conception of that and not Plato’s (even puzzlingly stating that Plotinus loses Plato’s distinction between transcendent Form and Forms in the *Phaedo*); however, I have shown in PTP §§ 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 (and SUPP §§ 3.1.3-4) that they share the same basic view of Nous.

249 See also VI.4.14, for our lives before and after our fall from the All-Soul; and V.3.6, for a statement that we were satisfied while circling Nous before birth, which is parallel to *Phaedrus* 250b-c. See III.2.4 for Plotinus’ claim that a soul can rise from the realm of birth and dwell with the All-Soul. At IV.8.5, Plotinus outlines two flaws of incarnation — one, the audacity or fate of being sent to earth, and two, the evil the soul does while incarnated. For two related passages on the goodness of soul despite the evil it might do, see III.4.3 and 1.8.10.

250 See also I.7.1.6-7, where Plotinus claims that the soul’s activity is towards “the good absolutely.”

251 See also III.3.4. In IV.2.1, Plotinus claims that to penetrate this idea, that our soul while incarnated can be most divided or mostly indivisible, depending on our will and actions, is to know the greatness of soul and its power. See V.3.8 for the statement that we can make our soul a strong likeness of Nous.
what it is here and among the things of this world is a falling away and an exile and a ‘shedding of wings’ (VI.9.9.13-24).\textsuperscript{252}

We also see a parallel here with the \textit{Phaedrus} passage, where focusing on the earth and mortal concerns is said to be a failing of the wing.

Therefore, I have now confirmed that Plato and Plotinus both believe that the soul can either achieve the heights of Nous via its intellect, and be godlike and divine, or can be mortal by thinking mortal thoughts and focusing on bodily needs.

In sum, we have found that both philosophers agree, regarding the individual, immortal (human, animal or plant) soul, that: (1) soul is a self-mover; (2) soul is the source of life, and soul uses the body as an instrument; (3) soul is divine; and (4) the number of souls remains constant. Regarding the human soul more specifically, however, we found that: (1) there are three parts of the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite); (2) humans are more their souls than their bodies, and more their reason than their emotions and appetites; (3) soul is the most divine thing about humans; (4) the soul is not an attunement or an accord with a body; (5) the soul is affected by the body in some ways (pleasures and pains), and not in others (blushing or quick heartbeat); and (6) the human soul can rise to the level of Nous, thereby being godly and divine (or fail to so rise). Therefore, Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ on these issues.

\textsuperscript{252} Plotinus is referring to \textit{Phaedrus} 248c. For similar passages, see VI.9.11 (for the higher and lower possible lives of soul) and IV.8.4 (for the failure of the soul’s wings). See IV.8.4 for another passage on the immunity of someone who lives the life of intellect and the way in which Nous calls the soul to return to its source; for other passages concerning the immunity point, see IV.8.8, VI.9.11. For one more passage that states that the soul becomes its real self when it is “in the Supreme,” see VI.9.11.
CHAPTER 9: REINCARNATION, GUARDIAN SPIRITS, AND ESCHATOLOGY

In this section, we explore what each thinker states about issues related to the afterlife and carrying out the soul’s choice before incarnation. In § 9.1, I will examine reincarnation and find that Plato and Plotinus believe that individual souls can be reincarnated into humans, animals and perhaps plants.

In § 9.2, I will show that they each believe that guardian spirits exist, ensure that we carry out our soul’s pre-incarnated choice of life, guiding us even after death. Also, wise persons are their own guardian spirit.

Lastly, in § 9.3, we review their eschatology, where will find that (1) they more or less agree on the details of the Myth of Er; (2) good souls go to God or Nous after death; (3) bad souls go to Hades to undergo punishment; (4) punishment for bad souls is justified; and (5) punishment for bad souls is necessary. We begin with reincarnation.

9.1 Reincarnation

In this subsection, I will confirm that Plato and Plotinus both assert that individual souls are judged at the end of their earthly incarnations and then sometimes reincarnated into bodily forms (human, animal, or plant) appropriate to their actions during their previous incarnations.

**Plato:** His first statement where he implies reincarnation is in the *Meno*, where he states that poets and priestesses think that the soul is immortal, dies (i.e. separates from the body), but is born again later and never perishes (81a-c).

In the *Phaedo*, Plato gives an argument that the living must come from the dead (see 71d-72a and 77c-d), but then details certain punishments that await bad humans; after hovering around the earth post-death, craving the corporeal, they are imprisoned once more into the body, as follows:

> … they are then, as is likely, bound to such characters as they have practiced in their life.
> What kind of characters do you say these are, Socrates?
> Those, for example, who have carelessly practiced gluttony, violence and drunkenness are like to join a company of donkeys or of similar animals. Do you not think so?
> Very likely.
> Those who have esteemed injustice highly, and tyranny and plunder will join the tribes of wolves and hawks and kites, or where else shall we say that they go?
> Certainly to those, said Cebes.
> And clearly, the destination of the others will conform to the way in which they have behaved?
> Clearly, of course.
> The happiest of these, who will also have the best destination, are those who have practiced popular and social virtue, which they call moderation and justice and which was developed by habit and practice, without philosophy or understanding?
> How are they the happiest?
> Because it is likely that they will again join a social and gentle group, either of bees or wasps or ants, and then again the same kind of human group, and so be moderate men.

That is likely (*Phaedo* 81c2-82b9).  

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253 To my knowledge, no commentator questions whether Plato is committed to reincarnation; however, Dillon (1988: 346-347) and Rist (1967b: 414-415) ask some good questions concerning the specifics of reincarnation; and Findlay (1978: 197) believes that on Plato’s view there is a “possibility of a final liberation from incarnation, and an ascent to a blessed existence in the soul’s own star,” based on *Timaeus* 41d-42d. I will not take a stand on that question here.

254 See Dodds (1951: 215) for his discussion of this passage.
We will see that Plotinus agrees with these kinds of assignments to different humans for their various transgressions.

In the *Republic* is Plato’s infamous Myth of Er, during which he makes the argument that souls choose their lives, which he will repeat in the *Phaedrus*. Here are two relevant passages for our present purposes:

… our messenger from the other world reported that the Speaker spoke as follows: ‘There is a satisfactory life rather than a bad one available even for the one who comes last, provided that he chooses it rationally and lives it seriously. Therefore, let not the first be careless in his choice nor the last discouraged’ (*Republic* X 619b2-6).

So even if a soul chooses last, it still can have an acceptable option to it. The second passage details some of the lives some souls chose when Er (during his after death experience) watched souls make their choices in the myth:

Er said that the way in which the souls chose their lives was a sight worth seeing, since it was pitiful, funny, and surprising to watch. For the most part, their choice depended upon the character of their former life. For example, he said that he saw the soul that had once belonged to Orpheus choosing a swan’s life, because he hated the female sex because of his death at their hands, and so was unwilling to have a woman conceive and give birth to him. Er saw the soul of Thamyris choosing the life of a nightingale, a swan choosing to change over to human life, and other musical animals doing the same thing. The twentieth soul chose the life of a lion. This was the soul of Ajax, son of Telamon. He avoided human life because he remembered the judgment about the armor. The next soul was that of Agamemnon, whose sufferings also has made him hate the human race, so he changed to the life of an eagle. Atalanta had been assigned a place near the middle, and when she saw great honors being given to a male athlete, she chose his life, unable to pass them by. After her, he saw the soul of Epipus, the son of Panopeus, taking on the nature of a craftswoman. And very close to last, he saw the soul of the ridiculous Thersites clothing itself as a monkey. Now, it chanced that the soul of Odysseus got to make its choice last of all, and since memory of its former sufferings had relieved its love of honor, it went around for a long time, looking for the life of a private individual who did his own work, and with difficulty found one lying off somewhere neglected by the others. He chose it gladly and said that he’d have made the same choice even if he’d been first. Still other souls changed from animals into human beings, or from one kind of animal into another, with unjust people changing into wild animals, and just people into tame ones, and all sorts of mixtures occurred (*Republic* X 619e6-620d5).

Thus, Plato holds that souls make their choices of their lives, and we find additional evidence of this view here in the *Phaedrus*:

… once their first life is over, they come to judgment; and, once judged, some are condemned to go to places of punishment beneath the earth and pay the full penalty of their injustice, while the others are lifted up by justice to a place in heaven where they live in the manner the life they led in human form has earned them. In the thousandth year both groups arrive at a choice and allotment of second lives, and each soul chooses the life it wants. From there, a human soul can enter a wild animal, and a soul that was once human can move from an animal to a human being again. But a soul that never saw the truth cannot take a human shape … (*Phaedrus* 249a5-b5).

Interestingly, what Plato says next in the *Phaedrus* (though it precedes the previous passage) is congruent with what Plato says in the *Timaeus*, as we’ll see; namely, the first incarnations of souls that have been circling Nous and the gods are human, and not animals. Animal incarnations seem to be a result of failed former human souls:
At that point, according to the law, the soul is not born into a wild animal in its first incarnation; but a soul that has seen the most will be planted in the seed of a man who will become a lover of wisdom or of beauty, or who will be cultivated in the arts and prone to erotic love. The second sort of soul will be put into someone who will be a lawful king or warlike commander; the third, a statesman, a manager of a household, or a financier; the fourth will be a trainer who loves exercise or a doctor who cures the body; the fifth will lead the life of a prophet or priest of the mysteries. To the sixth the life of a poet or some other representational artist is properly assigned; to the seventh the life of a manual laborer or farmer; to the eighth the career of a sophist or demagogue, and to the ninth a tyrant (Phaedrus 248c8-e3).

So, based on how much being a soul saw, and how much it pursues wisdom, the soul can be placed in different bodies of different types of humans. There are two parallel passages in the Timaeus to this passage. The first states that a man can be reincarnated into a woman if he does not conquer and control the body, and generally live well, Platonically:

But if he failed in this [i.e., to master love, pleasure, pain, and emotions, and live a good life at 42a-b], he would be born a second time, now as a woman. And if even then he still could not refrain from wickedness, he would be changed once again, this time into some wild animal that resembled the wicked character he had acquired (Timaeus 42b5-e4).

The second Timaeus passage states that animals were created from failed former human souls, as detailed here:

As for birds, as a kind they are the products of a transformation. They grow feathers instead of hair. They descended from innocent but simpleminded men, men who studied the heavenly bodies but in their naivete believed that the most reliable proofs concerning them could be based upon visual observation. Land animals in the wild, moreover, came from men who had no tincture of philosophy and who made no study of the universe whatsoever, because they no longer made use of the revolutions in their heads but instead followed the lead of the parts of the soul that reside in the chest. As a consequence of these ways of theirs they carried their forelimbs and their heads dragging towards the ground, like towards like. The tops of their heads became elongated and took all sorts of shapes, depending on the particular way the revolutions were squeezed together from lack of use. This is the reason animals of this kind have four or more feet. The god placed a greater number of supports under the more mindless beings, so that they might be drawn more closely to the ground. As for the most mindless of these animals, the ones whose entire bodies stretch out completely along the ground, the gods made them without feet, crawling along the ground, there being no need of feet anymore. The fourth kind of animal, the kind that lives in water, came from those men who were without question the most stupid and ignorant of all. The gods who brought about their transformation concluded that these no longer deserved to breathe pure air, because their souls were tainted with transgressions of every sort. Instead of letting them breathe rare and pure air, they shoved them into water to breathe its murky depths. This is the origin of fish, of all shellfish, and of every water-inhabiting animal. Their justly due reward for their extreme stupidity is their extreme dwelling place. These, then, are the conditions that govern, both then and now, how all the animals exchange their forms, one for the other, and in the process lose or gain intelligence or folly (Timaeus 91d6-92c3).

Thus, arose birds, wild pedestrian animals, snakes, and fish, according to Plato. There seems to me to be an incompatibility in Plato’s view between, on the one hand, souls choosing their lives, and being made to enter a life in accordance with the way in which they lived in the past life, on the other. However, two points can be made: First, Plato can argue that it is not incompatible for one to choose one’s life based on how one thinks about the world, so if one was naturally ravenous and aggressive as a human, for instance, it seems plausible that one might prefer and choose the life of, say, a wolf. Second, even if this view is hopelessly incompatible,
we will see that Plotinus holds both horns of this possible dilemma as well, so for this project’s purposes, there is no problem.\textsuperscript{255}

\textit{Plotinus:} Plotinus agrees with Plato on reincarnation, as we’ll see.\textsuperscript{256} Plotinus implies that he is obliged to assume the teaching of some ancient philosophers—presumably Plato and Pythagoras—about the soul is correct, even to the extent that his account needs to be the same or not be inconsistent with their account; here is the passage:

But if that nature could not become evil, and this is the way of soul’s coming and presence to the body, what are the descent at fixed periods, and again the ascent, and the judgments, and the entries into the bodies of other animals? For we have received these from those who in ancient times have philosophized best about the soul; and it is proper to try to show that our present discourse is in agreement, or at least not in disagreement, with them (VI.4.16.1-7).

So, given that he wants to show that he agrees, let us see if he achieves his goal. I will start with a passage that implicitly references the \textit{Phaedo} and \textit{Timaeus} passages above.

Those, then, who guarded the man in them, become men again. Those who lived by sense alone become animals; but if their sense perceptions have been accompanied by passionate temper they become wild animals, and the difference in temper in them makes the differences between the animals of this kind; those whose sense-perceptions went with desires of the flesh and the delight of the desiring part of the soul become lustful and gluttonous animals. But if they did not even live by sense along with their desires but coupled them with dullness of perception, they even turn into plants; for it was this, the growth-principle which worked in them, alone or predominantly, and they were taking care to turn themselves into trees. Those who loved music but were in other ways respectable turn to song-birds; kings who ruled stupidly into eagles, if they have no other vices; astronomer who were always raising themselves to the sky without philosophic reflection turn into birds which fly high. The man who practiced community virtue becomes a man again; but one who has a lesser share of it a creature that lives in a community, a bee or something of the sort (III.4.2.16-30).\textsuperscript{257}

We find nothing incompatible here with the view presented by Plato. The \textit{Timaeus} passage is echoed because Plotinus claims that one can return as a human if they act like a human, but can come back as animals if they act like animals. Plotinus alludes to the \textit{Phaedo} because he mentions humans’ having civic virtue returning as a bee.

In a parallel passage to the \textit{Republic}, where Plato discusses souls choosing their lots in life, Plotinus affirms that this is his view as well, here:

\textsuperscript{255}See III.4.5.26-29.

\textsuperscript{256}Here we briefly note that we agree with A. H. Armstrong (1977: 62), Blumenthal (1971: 60), Brehier (1958: 109), Hellemans-Eggersma (1980: 344), Rich (1957: 232-233), Tripolis (1978: 73), as against Inge (1929b: 33) and Pistorius (1952: 98-99), that Plotinus took reincarnation seriously and had the same view as Plato on this issue [cf. Gerson (1994: 201)]. A. H. Armstrong (1977: 62) and Zeller (1931: 299) note that Plotinus extends reincarnation to plants as well; the evidence is inconclusive for Plato on this point. Rich (1957: 237) adds that Plotinus does not believe in literal transmigration. I take issue with Fuller (1938) because his only basis for questioning Plotinus’ agreement with Plato on reincarnation is that Plotinus uses metaphors of successive lives – passing from dream to dream or sleeping each night in a new bed – and Fuller does not know how literally to take them (292); however, Fuller doesn’t give us any reason to think that this is not consistent with Plato’s view; Fuller also seems to assume without citing passages that Plotinus subscribes to the view that the soul can attain “release from the wheel of birth and rebirth”; it may be true, but a passage or an argument to the best explanation would be more convincing. Lastly, Gerson (1994: 181; cf. 182) claims that Plotinus believes that we do not remember anything from our discarnate state, but only previous lives’ details; since, however, Plotinus believes in recollection (PPMEE § 2.5), we somehow do or can remember our knowledge of the Forms; moreover, how can Plato and/or Plotinus give us their eschatology if it is not possible to remember anything in between incarnations?

\textsuperscript{257}For more confirmation that Plotinus is committed to reincarnation, see IV.7.8\textsuperscript{4}.
The powers of either kind of soul, can, more or less, make their bodies of either kind, since other external chances, too, cannot turn aside the whole purpose of the soul. But when it is said that first come the ‘lots,’ then ‘the examples of lives,’ then what lies in the fortunes of the lives, then that they choose their lives from those presented to them according to their characters, Plato gives the power of decision rather to the souls, which adapt what is given to them to their own characters (III.4.5.12-19).

Without showing a passage for each of these following points, let us briefly list three other points that Plotinus makes about reincarnation: First, changing lives is analogous to an actor changing costumes (III.2.15); this is compatible in theory with Plato because he believes in reincarnation, and has said (as we saw above) that we should play our role in life well (Laws VII 803c2-8).

Second, the nature of the soul must essentially change, if one goes from being a human to an ox, for instance, because it will have different functions and work with a different kind of body (III.3.4); Plato can plausibly agree to this view, because he discusses transmigration so the soul must transform or be transformed in at least some of its nature, in order to work with another body.

Lastly, Plotinus claims that it is a penalty for a soul to enter body after body, though this is a lesser penalty than suffering in between lives for all the pain has induced and bad actions one has done while incarnated (IV.8.5). We have already seen that Plato too thinks these things are true (see Phaedrus 249a-b, Timaeus 42b-c, and 91d-92c), though we will see much more of Plato’s perspective on the penalties between lives in § 3.9.3 eschatology, below.

Admittedly, there are several statements that Plotinus makes about reincarnation that we do not find in Plato. Namely, that the soul can remember many past lives (IV.3.27); that the soul’s remembrance of past lives notwithstanding, the soul does not have a memory of a personality during those lives (IV.4.2); and that, though Plotinus (and Plato) says in several places that the souls make choices about their next lives, souls do not choose under free will, but it is more like an instinctive desire of sexual union [i.e., it’s more like an irrational desire than a rational one (IV.3.13) – if one were completely rational, one would be contemplating the Forms at the level of Nous]. None of these claims is particularly anti-Platonic, even though I cannot find confirmation of these claims in Plato; indeed, they may fill in some details that make a lot of sense on Plato’s view, given everything else that he does say about reincarnation and eschatology.

In sum, we have now seen that Plato and Plotinus both believe in reincarnation, as a form of just deserts: if one is a good human, one will return as a human; if one is a human who acts like a gluttonous animal, then one will return as such a one, and similar such cases. Reincarnation is a specific part of eschatology, which I will compare below in § 9.3, but another aspect of Plato’s eschatology is the assignment of a guardian spirit, which I will review now.

9.2 Guardian Spirits

In this subsection, I will examine Plato and Plotinus’ claims concerning guardian spirits, and find that they both hold that (1) There are guardian spirits; (2) guardian spirits are assigned to ensure that a person’s chosen lot in life is carried out; (3) guardian spirits guide their assigned souls after death; and (4) wise persons are their own guardian spirit. For this subsection, keep in mind that when quotations have the words “guardian spirit” in them, the Greek word is δαιμον (or daemon), and so we’ll use “guardian spirit” and “daemon” interchangeably here.

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258 Plotinus states that souls make their choices based on their former lives, at IV.3.8; that humans can choose an animal form at VI.7.6; and that each soul descends to its condition (lower or higher depending on the way in which it lived), at IV.3.12. Gerson (1994: 76) also cites these relevant passages which I failed to mention: III.2.13.15, IV.7.4.8-14, IV.8.1, and VI.7.7.

259 The LSJ also translates δαιμον as “god or goddess” and others have rendered it “genius” or “guardian angel”; it seems that Plato is ambiguous between these meanings when he uses δαιμον. For a list of references to and information on Socrates’ divine sign, see Bussanich (1999: 35) and Rist (1963: 15); Rist (1963: 14) also rightly notes that Plotinus never mentions Socrates’ divine sign and posits explanations.
Plato: In the *Phaedo*, Plato discusses guardian spirits pretty extensively, making many points about them in this passage:

We are told that when each person dies, the guardian spirit who was allotted to him in life proceeds to lead him to a certain place, whence those who have been gathered together there must, after being judged, proceed to the underworld with the guide who has been appointed to lead them thither from here. Having there undergone what they must and stayed there the appointed time, they are led back here by another guide after long periods of time. The journey is not as Aeschylus’ Telephus describes it. He says that only one single path leads to Hades, but I think it is neither one nor simple, for then there would be no need of guides; one could not make any mistake if there were but one path. As it is, it is likely to have many forks and crossroads; and I base this judgment on the sacred rites and customs here.

The well-ordered and wise soul follows the guide and is not without familiarity with its surroundings, but the soul that is passionately attached to the body, as I said before, hovers around it and the visible world for a long time, struggling and suffering much until it is led away by force and with difficulty by its appointed spirit. When the impure soul which has performed some impure deed joins the others after being involved in unjust killings, or committed other crimes which are akin to these and are actions of souls of this kind, everybody shuns it and turns away, unwilling to be its fellow traveler or its guide, and each of them dwells in a place suited to it (*Phaedo* 107d5-108c5).260

Regarding guardian spirits in this *Phaedo* passage, Plato makes the following main points: First, guardian spirits are given charge over a person during his life; second, the guardian spirits escorts souls from this world to that one and vice versa; third, the guardian spirit does not follow the soul to the punishment area of Hades, the underworld; fourth, the way to Hades is not straight and easy, or there would not need to be a guide; fifth, wise souls easily follow their guardian spirit, but foolish souls need to be forcibly led; and lastly, some souls are left without a guide.

In the *Timaeus*, Plato implies that the guardian spirit is actually something analogous to reason or identical with our Reason, as follows:

Now we ought to think of the most sovereign part of our soul as God’s gift to us, given to be our guiding spirit. This, of course, is the type of soul that, as we maintain, resides in the top part of our bodies. It raises us up away from the earth and toward what is akin to us in heaven. In saying this, we speak absolutely correctly (*Timaeus* 90a2-7; adapted from Zeyl).

This would jibe with Plato’s saying that our Reason knows best, elsewhere (see § 4.10). We will see that Plotinus says something similar, below.

Lastly, Plato argues in the *Cratylus* that Hesiod’s writing on daemons is correct:

It is principally because daemons are wise and knowing (\textit{daēmones}), I think, that Hesiod says they are named ‘daemons’ (\textit{daimones}). In our older Attic dialect, we actually find the word ‘\textit{daēmones}’. So, Hesiod and many other poets speak well when they say that when a good man dies, he has a great destiny and a great honor and becomes a ‘daemon’, which is a name given to him because it accords with wisdom. And I myself assert, indeed, that every good man, whether alive or dead, is daemonic, and is correctly called a ‘daemon’ (*Cratylus* 398b5-c4).

His main point here seems to be that when a good man dies, he becomes a daemon, the name of which signifies wisdom.

We have now confirmed that Plato indeed holds the four claims concerning guardian spirits listed above. Now let us affirm them in Plotinus’ writing as well.

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260 See also *Phaedo* 113d-e for the guardian spirit’s guidance of the newly dead; cf. *Laws* IX 877a).
Plotinus: First, Plotinus interprets Plato’s *Phaedo* passage above, and shows his agreement with its claims, here:

Now this spirit of whom we are speaking is said, when it has led the soul to Hades, no longer to remain the same, unless the soul chooses again the same type of life. But what happens before [the choice of lives]? The leading to judgment means that the spirit comes to the same form after the soul’s departure from this life as it had before its birth; then, as if from a different starting-point, it is present to the souls which are being punished during the time which intervenes before their next birth – this is not a life for them, but an expiration. But what about the souls which enter into the bodies of brutes? Is their guardian something less than a spirit? It is a spirit, a wicked or stupid one. And what about those in the upper world? Of those in the upper world, some are in the visible region and some outside. Those, then, in the visible region are in the sun or in another of the moving stars, and some of them in the sphere of the fixed stars, each according to his rational activity here: for one must think that there is a universe in our soul, not only an intelligible one but an arrangement like in form to that of the soul of the world: so, as that, too, is distributed according to its diverse powers into the sphere of the fixed stars and those of the moving stars, the powers in our soul also are of like form to these powers, and there is an activity proceeding from each power, and when the souls are set free they come there to the star which is in harmony with the character and power which lived and worked in them; and each will have a god of this kind as its guardian spirit, either the star itself or the god set above this power … (III.4.6.10-30).

Most of what Plotinus says here is a direct parallel to the *Phaedo* passage, with these three major differences: First, Plotinus says that the same guardian spirit guides the soul after its punishment, but Plato’s passage is less clear: Plato is stating either that (1) the guardian spirit escorts the soul to other guides (non-guardian spirits) who wait for the soul to undergo its punishment, and then another guide escorts the soul to the next life; or (2) the guardian spirit escorts the soul to the place of punishment and then another guardian spirit escorts the soul to its next life. Thus, Plato’s text is underdetermined, and therefore cannot be said to contradict Plotinus’ interpretation.

Second, Plotinus says that there can be evil or foolish guardian spirits of animals, but we do not find such a claim in Plato’s work. We do, however, find that Plato says that the guardian spirits’ job is to help carry out the choices and fates of the souls once they have chosen, so whether the assigned guardian spirits are good or bad can be a matter of what happens to the soul during its incarnation. Again, without a statement from Plato claiming that daemons can only be good, we do not necessarily have an incompatibility here.

Third, Plotinus seems to claim that the guardian spirit is a star consonant with each soul that the soul inhabits after death. Now, Plato actually does make a similar claim in the *Timaeus*; he says that the Demiurge “divided the mixture into a number of souls equal to the number of the stars and assigned each soul to a star” (41d8-e1), and “And if a person lived a good life throughout the due course of his time, he would at the end return to his dwelling place in his companion star, to live a life of happiness that agreed with his character” (42b3-5). Thus, Plotinus’ interpretation is not entirely baseless, if we can interpret Plato’s claims about the native star in the *Timaeus* as being guardian spirits.

Fourth, Plotinus states that the guardian spirit becomes accessory to the accomplishment of the pre-birth lots, choices, and Spindle of Necessity’s dictates (II.3.15), which Plato states here: Lachesis, Plato says, after each soul chose its life, “[Lachesis] assigned to each the daemon it had chosen as guardian of its life and fulfiller of its choice” (*Republic* X 620d8-e1).

Fifth, Plotinus also affirms what Plato said at *Timaeus* 90a (and at *Republic* X 620d-e), as follows:

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261 For other passages referring to guardian spirits, see IV.4.45 and VI.7.6. Plotinus gives the origin of guardian spirits at III.4.3.

262 We know that Plotinus holds that there is a difference between gods and guardian spirits, based on III.5.6-7-13. Thus, we do not have to infer that he always believes that guardian spirits are gods, even if he might use that expression. Also, Armstrong (1967a: 186n1) notes that Hesiod (in *Works and Days*) was the first to have the idea that guardian spirits were inferior in rank to gods, and, more importantly, that Plotinus follows the main lines of Plato’s characteristics of guardian spirits (at least in III.5).
… Plato gives the power of decision rather to the souls, which adapt what is given to them to their own characters. For that this guardian spirit is not entirely outside but only in the sense that he is not bound to us, and is not active in us but is ours, to speak in terms of soul, but not ours if we are considered as men of a particular kind who have a life which is subject to him, is shown by what is said in the *Timaeus*; if the passage is taken in this way, it will contain no contradiction, but it would have some discord if the spirit was understood otherwise. And the ‘fulfiller of what one has chosen’ is also in accord. For the spirit sits above us, and does not let us go down much lower into evil, but that alone acts in us which is under the spirit, not above him or on a level with him; for it is impossible for the spirit to become something else than [a being appropriate to the place] where he is (III.4.5.19-29).

Plotinus goes beyond the text of *Timaeus* 90a a bit, but not too far, because Plato states that the guardian spirit is a kind of soul (analogous to reason or identical with our Reason) and Plotinus says that the guardian spirit belongs to our soul, which at least does not contradict what Plato says.²⁶³

Sixth, Plotinus affirms that a wise and good person (what he refers to as the Sage) acts according to Reason and his guardian spirit is God:

What, then, is the nobly good man? He is the man who acts by his better part. He would not have been a good man if he had the guardian spirit as a partner in his own activity. For intellect is active in the good man. He is, then, himself a spirit or on the level of a spirit, and his guardian spirit is God (III.4.6.1-4).

Again, Plotinus goes beyond the text here, but with some merit; that is, Plato had stated in the *Cratylus* that a good and wise man was his own daemon, which Plotinus confirms, but then adds that the good man also has God as his guardian spirit. Now, if a soul is already living at the level of Reason, and is just and unified, then it would, like the All-Soul, be circling Nous and being nourished by contemplation thereof. Further, Plato states in the *Phaedo* that the philosopher’s good and wise soul after death will “truly spend the rest of time with the gods” (Phaedo 81a9-10). So even though we do not have a quote from Plato to prove that the guardian spirit of a good man is God, it is interpretively plausible.

Lastly, let us examine two additional claims that Plotinus makes, which I will argue are plausibly Platonic. First, Plotinus claims in several places that guardian spirits may use speech, have memory, emotion, and hearing.²⁶⁵ This is arguably Platonic because Socrates’ divine sign told him not to do bad actions (see *Enythpro 3b, Apology 31c-d, 40a-c, Enythdemus 272c, Phaedrus 242b-d). Moreover, the daemons must have some way of determining whether its assigned soul is doing what it chose, or not, and some way to guide a soul after death. As usual in these cases, I cannot find a passage where Plato states that guardian spirits do not have senses or memory or emotions, and so we at the very least do not have an incompatibility on this issue.

Second, Plotinus states that Nous makes daemons (III.2.11), which is not controversially Platonic, because Plato states that Nous made the gods and the humans, and he believes that guardian spirits exist, so

²⁶³ This alludes to ἀποπληρωτὴν τῶν αἱρεθέντων of Republic 620e1.

²⁶⁴ Rist (1963: 13-14) claims that Plotinus’ interpretation of *Timaeus* 90a “seems very odd,” but does not sufficiently articulate a serious interpretive problem there. However, Rist (1963: 24; cf. 13) charges that “Plotinus, on the other hand, though he bases his theories of spirit-guides on the *Republic* and *Timaeus*, is far from these dialogues in his belief that the guide of the sage is the One, but perhaps less far from Plato’s attitude towards the daimonion itself.” I do not think that Plotinus is as far away as Rist thinks: Plato’s sage is the philosopher-king, whom he states will use the eternal pattern (the Good) upon which to model the ideal state (*Republic* V 452d-e, VI 484c-d, 500d; VII 540a-c; IX 592a-b; cf. 472c-d); he also urges us (and especially philosophers, if they are not already,) to be godlike in many places (see PPMEE § 3.5), which implies that they use God as their model for the way in which they should live, following God just as Socrates states at *Apology* 29d.

²⁶⁵ Plotinus claims that guardian spirits may use speech at IV.3.18; that they have memory and experiences of sense at IV.4.43; and that they have experience and emotion at III.5.6.
they were created somehow. Also, Plato says that Nous only handed over the making of humans, animals, and plants to some lower gods, and not the making of daemons. So, this statement is plausibly Platonic as well.

We have now seen that Plato and Plotinus subscribe to similar views of guardian spirits: they exist and are charged with enforcing a person’s fate (based on its pre-birth choice and nature), they guide their assigned soul after death, and wise persons become their own guardian spirits. Let us now turn to further detail of their on what happens when we die.

9.3 Eschatology

There is no question that when Plato discusses eschatology, he frequently—but not always—resorts to myth in order to disclose his view.266 My aim, however, is to determine (and hopefully soundly argue) that Plotinus agrees with Plato’s view put forth in myths, letters, and in other places in the dialogues. This subsection will assume that the reader already is familiar with guardian spirits, their nature, and their functions (see § 9.2).

We will start with Plato’s myth of Er, noting the similarities and differences between Plato and Plotinus’ accounts (§ 9.3.1). From there, I will discuss what happens to good souls after death according to both philosophers (§ 9.3.2); what happens to bad souls (§ 9.3.3); and finally, their justification for punishment (§ 9.3.4) and the necessity of punishment (§ 9.3.5).

9.3.1 The Myth of Er

In this subsection, I will review Plato’s Myth of Er and find that Plotinus makes compatible claims in his Enneads.267

**Plato:** In Book X of the *Republic*, Plato tells the tale of the after-death experience of the warrior Er (614a-618b, 619b-621b). It was claimed that Er came back to life after twelve days of apparently being dead (614b). Er claimed that his soul traveled to a mysterious region where good souls travel to the right and upward, and bad souls travel to the left and downward, based on their judges’ judgment (614b-d).268 He saw souls coming from above and below, to compare their stories, those below having spent 1000 years being appropriately punished (614d-615a).269 According to Plato, they paid for every offense to others tenfold, and reaped ten times the reward for their deeds (615a-b). Ardiaeus the tyrant and others who committed great crimes were whirling around screaming in Tartarus, unable to escape because of their incurable wickedness (615c-616a). After a week went on, the newly released souls from below were required to journey on through the heavens, past the spindle of Necessity and the whorl, to meet Lachesis and choose their lots and patterns of lives (616b-d). She said to them:

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266 See those who defend the importance and use of myths: Benitez (1995: 121); Carone (2005: 14-16; we can interpret Plato’s myths philosophically); and Inge (1936: 137), who states that in Plato, “Myth is only called in to give substance to the aspirations or intuitions of faith”; and those who argue that we should not take the myths to have any philosophical importance: Béhier (1958: 36) and A. E. Taylor (1960: 94-95; “myths can hardly be said to have any direct” philosophical significance for Plato; that myths “symbolize truths too sublime for rational comprehension, is entirely foreign to Plato”). From Plotinian scholars, we have Béhier (1958: 108-109), who claims straightly that Plotinus took his views from Plato’s myths; Hathaway (1969: 20), who seems to acknowledge that the Neo-Platonists took Plato’s myths as dogmatic teachings in need of didactic exegesis, v. Socratic elucidations of a certain skeptical kind, and Hathaway seems disparage this approach a bit; and, Katz (1950: 47), who states that Plotinus assigns an inferior function to Platonic myths, taking Plato’s symbols more literally.

267 I will heed Rist (1964: 12)’s warning that “… it is unjustifiable to assume that every time we find Plotinus, for example, citing a using ‘mythical’ passages he is bound to be going beyond the Platonic view.”

268 In the *Laws*, Plato states that our immortal soul “departs, as the ancestral law declares, to the gods below to give an account of itself. To the wicked, this is a terrifying doctrine, but a good man will welcome it” (*Laws* XII 959b4-6); cf. *Apology* 39e, where Socrates states that we must give an account of our lives as well. Plato states that souls only take their education and training with them at *Phaedo* 107d; for a brief mention of the journey to the next world, see *Phaedo* 114d-115a.

269 See also *Phaedrus* 248e-249c and *Republic* X 620d.
Ephemeral souls, this is the beginning of another cycle that will end in death. Your daemon or guardian spirit will not be assigned to you by lot; you will choose a life to which he will then by bound by necessity. Virtue knows no master; each will possess it to a greater or less degree, depending on whether he values or disdains it. The responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; God has none (Republic X 617d6-e5; adapted from Grube/Reeve).

Then the souls chose the lots, bodily conditions and professions of their future incarnations (617c-618b, 619b-620d), and Lachesis assigned each a guardian spirit who guided it to Clotho (the youngest of the Three Fates), who ratified the lot and choice, and Atropos, who made the destiny irreversible by passing it under the throne of Necessity (620d-621a). They journeyed to the Plain of Oblivion to the River of Lethe/Forgetfulness, and were required to drink therefrom, in order to forget that they chose their fates and what they chose (621a-b). At this point, Er wakes up, and the character Socrates urges us to take the myth seriously, for we will fare well in the afterlife if we do so (621b-d).

**Plotinus:** Now, while Plotinus admittedly does not confirm every one of these points (good souls traveling to the right and upward, bad souls to the left and downward, spending 1000 years in punishment, and the Plain of Oblivion), he (1) does not dispute any of these points; and (2) does affirm many details, as we’ll see.271 Thus, Plotinus apparently implicitly accepts Plato’s account of the afterlife. Let us now support claim (2) that was just made.

First, Plotinus demonstrates his agreement with Plato’s myth of Er, particularly the choice of lots, and the importance of the soul’s character in making the choice:

The powers of either kind of soul, can, more or less, make their bodies of either kind, since other external chances, too, cannot turn aside the whole purpose of the soul. But when it is said that first come the ‘lots,’ then the ‘examples of lives,’ then what lies in the fortunes of the lives, then that they choose their lives from those presented to them according to their characters, Plato gives the power of decision rather to the souls, which adapt what is given to them to their own characters (III.4.5.12-19).

He confirms the spindle of Necessity’s role in ensuring that the lots get carried out, here:

Plato gives the souls lots and choices before the circling of the Spindle, and afterwards gives them the beings on the Spindle as helpers, to bring to accomplishment in every way what they have chosen: since the guardian spirit also cooperates in the fulfillment of their choices (II.3.15.1-5).

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270 The chief issue I saw raised in the literature was one by Sharples (1994), who, citing Laws X 904c (174n16), makes this charge of inconsistency: “The Republic differs from that Laws, however, in that in the former responsibility is preserved by the mythological device of making each soul choose its life before reincarnation (in a way that is, indeed, influenced by the amount of understanding it gained or failed to gain in its previous life). In Laws 10 there is no such choice, but the assumption is that the soul has power during its earthly life to choose how to live and so affect its next reincarnation” (176). However, Plato certainly believes that we can make choices during our incarnation, by urging us to become philosophers, e.g.; the lack of a statement at that point in the Laws to the effect that a soul chooses its next life does not prove that Plato changed his mind on this issue. Also, interestingly, de Vogel (1986: 227) cites V.1.1.5-8 as evidence that “[Plotinus] also saw this as a sinful state, due to the soul’s own choice”, which shows that both philosophers held the views that souls choose their lives and can make choices during their lives.

271 One issue I will avoid here is whether the souls lower parts (Appetite and Spirit) go with Reason to the afterlife; interestingly, however, Bussanich (1988: 189) claims that in the Myth of Er Plato does hold that they do so, and Rist (1967a: 268n60) cites passages where Plotinus states the same. I contest Bréhier (1958: 193-194)’s argument that in Plato the myth of Er is “a tale added on to the rational explanation of the universe; … in Plotinus, on the contrary, the destiny of souls lies only in the rational knowledge of the order of things, and knowledge which in attaining completion in its source, in the One, brings the Soul to that complete deliverance which is the ‘end of the journey.’” Plato can still be taking the myth to express (his) philosophy, and nowhere does Plato state that we cannot rationally know the destiny of our souls by knowing the order of things; moreover, knowledge of the Platonic Good/One does completely deliver one and make one happy (see PPMEE § 3.2 with PTP § 1.4). I grant Majumdar (2007: 32-33)’s point that “Plotinus is not entirely uncritical of Plato – he admits that Plato’s thoughts on the self’s incarnate and discarnate status are far from obvious,” while noting that Plotinus follows Plato on these issues nonetheless.

272 See also II.3.9 and III.4.6.
Plotinus also refers to the River of Lethe/Forgetfulness (IV.3.26), Lachesis, “one of the Fates” (Clotho), and Atropos (II.3.15.9-12), Tartarus and the screaming souls there (III.2.17), and the punishment in the world below (I.7.3). We’ll see more detail concerning the bad souls below.

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus agree on much, if not all, of the myth of Er’s account of the interlife and eschatology.

9.3.2 What happens to good souls

We will now show that both philosophers believe that good souls – godlike, philosophical, just, virtuous, happy souls – go after their death to God or Nous in a beautiful place.

**Plato:** At first glance, Plato is inconsistent in what he says about the fate of the good soul. The good soul, for Plato, is the philosopher’s soul, that has held the body’s desires in low esteem and only satisfied necessary desires (food and drink), while contemplating the Forms as much as possible. For these good souls, Plato (in rough chronological order) states that they: (1) will head for the Isles of the Blessed (*Gorgias* 526c5); (2) will spend the rest of their time with God *(Phaedo* 80d5-8); (3) will “make their way to even more beautiful dwelling places which it is hard to describe clearly, nor do we now have the time to do so” *(Phaedrus* 249a3-5); (4) “If, after the third cycle of one thousand years, the last-mentioned souls have chosen such a life three times in a row, they grow their wings back, and they depart in the three-thousandth year” *(Phaedrus* 249a3-5); (5) “are lifted up by Justice to a place in heaven where they live in the manner the life they led in human form has earned them” *(Phaedrus* 249a7-b1; adapted from Nehamas/Woodruff); (6) “… if a person lived a good life throughout the due course of his time, he would at the end return to his dwelling place in his companion star, to live a life of happiness that agreed with his character” *(Timaeus* 42b3-5); and (7) “Take a soul that becomes particularly full of … virtue as a result of its own acts of will and the powerful influence of social intercourse. If companionship with divine virtue has made it exceptionally divine, it experiences an exceptional change of location, being conducted by a holy path to some superior place elsewhere” *(Laws* X 904d4-7).

Faced with all of these options, armed with the principle of charity, we can bring these destinations together as follows: The Isles of the Blessed must be understood as Nous, where God is, so the *Gorgias* passage is consistent with the *Phaedo;* this is consistent with the beautiful habitation of the *Phaedrus,* the region of the heavens in the *Phaedrus,* and the holy, better world of the *Laws;* this leaves the speeding away after 3000 years (*Phaedrus*) and the returning to its native star (*Timaeus*). If the soul speeds away to Nous, then the *Phaedrus* is also compatible with all the other passages, and if we interpret *Timaeus*’ returning to the native star to imply contemplation of Nous, or simply that some – but not all – good souls might return to their native star, we have a consistent overall interpretation for these passages.

Thus, Plato believes that good souls go to Nous or God after death.

**Plotinus:** Let us now have a look at Plotinus’ writings concerning what happens to good souls. First, Plotinus implies that we can be with gods—where the “All” refers to the universe in passage:

So wonderfully is this All possessed of power and order; all things go their quiet way according to a justice which nobody can escape; … the good man both knows and departs where he must, and knows before he departs where it is necessary for him to come and dwell, and has the good hope that he will be with the gods (IV.4.45.27-33).

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273 See Zeller (1931: 299)”’s comment (though he does not cite a supporting passage) that Plotinian “souls in the supersensual world cannot remember their earthly existence.”

274 Cf. *Apology* 41d, where Socrates states that the gods always care for the good man, in life and in death.

275 See J. Armstrong (2004: 182). I agree with Gerson (1994: 185; cf. Pistorius 1952: 98) that the ideal state of an individual is for Plotinus a discarnate one, with two qualifications: (1) we apply the same to Plato, only if (2) the discarnate state is not one of punishment or eternal punishment in Tartarus.

276 Cf. VI.9.9.
This passage is also consistent with Plato’s *Timaeus* passage that states that we can return to our native star, since the stars are thought to be gods, according to both philosophers (see § 4.4). In his “On Difficulties about the Soul I” treatise, Plotinus states that the pure souls will be where substance, reality and the divine are, namely in god:

… those souls which are pure and do not in any way draw anything of body to them will necessarily also have no place anywhere in body. If then they are nowhere in body – for they have no body – a soul of this kind will be where substance [οὐσία] and reality and the divine are – that is in god – there it will be with them and in him (IV.3.24.21-26).  

Plotinus implies here that the good soul goes to Nous or in God, since Nous is where substance, reality and the divine are.

Thus, Plotinus and Plato both hold that good souls go to Nous or God after death.

### 9.3.3 What happens to bad souls

Let us now analyze what each philosopher says about the fate of bad souls, by first defining briefly, as we did above for good souls, just what a bad soul is, for them (for more on bad souls, see PPMEE § 3.6).

**Plato:** Plato gives us a good sense of the bad soul’s character in the *Phaedo*:

… if the soul is polluted and impure when it leaves the body, having always been associated with it and served it, bewitched by physical desires and pleasures to the point at which nothing seems to exist for it but the physical, which one can touch and see or eat and drink or make use of for sexual enjoyment, and if that soul is accustomed to hate and fear and avoid that which is dim and invisible to the eyes but intelligible and to be grasped by philosophy – do you think such a soul will escape pure and by itself?

Impossible, he said.

It is no doubt permeated by the physical, which constant intercourse and association with the body, as well as considerable practice, has caused to become ingrained in it?

Quite so (*Phaedo* 81b1-c7).

Thus, a bad soul is one overcome by passions and bodily pleasures and concerns, and which hates and fears (Platonic) philosophy.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus confirms in this passage representative of other passages that the body can be the source of the soul’s forgetting what happened in between lives, here:

… since memory is a stable condition, the body’s nature, moving and flowing, must be a cause of forgetfulness, not of memory: this is why the ‘river of Lethe’ might be understood in this sense. So, then, let this experience [of memory] belong to the soul (IV.3.26.52-56).  

Thus, I have confirmed that Plotinus believes that body is a hindrance.  

**Plato:** Now, Plato states—and Plotinus does not—that the “average” souls go to Acheron, and that the incurable souls, those souls who have done horrible deeds, go to and stay in Tartarus (which Plotinus does confirm, in principle):  

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277 Cf. I.7.3, where Plotinus states that death is a good, even if the soul suffers punishment in the lower world.

278 The river of Lethe plays in the Myth of Er, at *Republic* X 621c (see § 9.1).

279 See also IV.3.24 for a passage about the body’s being a hindrance, but see especially §§ 13.2, 13.3, and PPMEE §§ 3.3, 3.5, and 3.11.

280 See Rist (1967b: 414-415) for some good questions concerning the bad soul’s fate in Plato.
Those who have lived an average life make their way to the Acheron and embark upon such vessels as there are for them and proceed to the lake. There they dwell and are purified by penalties for any wrongdoing they have committed; they are also suitably rewarded for their good deeds as each deserves. Those who are deemed incurable because of the enormity of their crimes, having committed many great sacrileges or wicked and unlawful murders and other such wrongs — their fitting fate is to be hurled into Tartarus never to emerge from it (Phaedo 113d4-e6).

Thus, Plato believes that average souls go to Acheron and incurable souls go to Tartarus.

Plotinus: As briefly noted directly above, and in Appendix III, Plotinus does not state that there are neutral souls or that they go to Acheron. However, in only one place in the Enneads, Plotinus does imply that souls can be put into Tartarus where dreadful sounds are being made (where the context is that souls are said to be actors), here:

For there is fitness and beauty in the whole only if each individual is stationed where he ought to be — the one who utters evil sounds in darkness and Tartarus: for there to make these sounds is beautiful … (III.2.17.64-67).

We should note several things about this passage and its implications concerning (in)curable souls: (i) Presumably it is beautiful for someone to make these sounds in the hope that it persuades “onlooking” souls to be better in their next lives; (ii) Plotinus elsewhere claims that souls can be evil and do evil things, so he implicitly believes in incurable souls; and (iii) curable souls just are souls that get reincarnated on Plato’s view, and which, say, can choose to practice philosophy in their next lives, so Plotinus believes in curable souls in principle as well.

Plato: Returning to Plato, and continuing on with the Phaedo, he discusses souls that are so attached to the body that they do not want to leave the earth, and they retain some bodily element about them and hover about the earth (Phaedo 81b-d, 108a-c).

Plato also declares that a soul that performs badly in its incarnation will be reincarnated into a woman, and gives other incarnations if the soul performs badly in that incarnation, in the Timaeus:

But if he failed in this [i.e., to master love, pleasure, pain, and emotions, and live a good life at 42a-b], he would be born a second time, now as a woman. And if even then he still could not refrain from wickedness, he would be changed once again, this time into some wild animal that resembled the wicked character he had acquired. And he would have no rest from these toilsome transformations until he had dragged that massive accretion of fire-water-air-earth into conformity with the revolution of the Same and uniform with him, and so subdued that turbulent, irrational mass by means of reason. This would return him to his original condition of excellence (Timaeus 42b5-c4).

In the Phaedrus (248e3-249b5), Plato delineates three sets of 1,000 years for the punishment of (or reward for?) the philosopher, but 10,000 years for the return to whence non-philosophical souls came, presumably because however long a soul is incarnated, it must undergo ten times that amount of time for punishments in order to prepare it for the next incarnation.

Plotinus: Admittedly, Plotinus does not affirm the aforementioned Platonic cycles of 1,000 and 10,000 years (see Appendix III), but he does not deny them either.

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281 Plato also discusses incurable and/or curable souls at Gorgias 525c-e and 526c; Plato mentions that the soul goes to Hades upon its death in Laws X 904c-d.

282 See also I.7.3.11-14.

283 See PPMEE §§ 3.6, e.g., and Gerson (1994: 115)’s Plotinian passages that it is possible for men to be corrupt beyond repair: I.8.5.29-30 and I.8.7.12-14, which is consistent with the Plotinian Tartarus passage cited in the text above.

284 See also Phaedo 81b-82c, quoted above in the Reincarnation section above, for more specific animal reincarnations; cf. Phaedrus 248e-249c.
We have already shown that Plotinus believes that the body is a cause of the soul’s forgetting its source, but I can also demonstrate his admonishment of birth in the visible world here:

… since the sin [ἀμαρτια] of the soul can refer to two things, either to the course of the descent or to doing evil when the soul has arrived here below, the punishment of the first is the very experience of descent, and of the lesser degree of the second the encounter, and a very quick one, into other bodies according to the judgment passed on its deserts – the word ‘judgment’ indicates what happens by divine decree – but the boundless kind of wickedness is judged to deserve greater punishment in charge of chastising spirits (IV.8.5.16-24).285

The mere fact that the soul comes back to earth is a defect, as Plato affirms at Phaedrus 248a-b and 250b-c, where he states that if our wings are perfect, there is no reason for souls to fall and be incarnated. Further, we find in this passage Plotinus’ affirmation that the bad soul undergoes a proportionately greater punishment in response to grievous crimes.

Plotinus also holds that the soul can hover around the earth if it is attached to the earth and not wise, as follows:

But where will the soul be when it has left the body? It will not be here below, where there is nothing capable in any way of receiving it, and it cannot stay with that which is not naturally adapted to receive it, unless, because it is unreasonable, it still has something of body which draws it to it (IV.3.24.1-4).286

Moreover, he agrees that the soul continues in its next life in a similar character and level of cognition as its last life:

We have made a general statement about the differences between souls, and now let us add briefly that besides their [different] bodies they can differ very notably in character, and in the activities of discursive reason and as a result of the lives they have lived before (IV.3.8.5-9).287

285 Cf. III.4.6.
286 Bréhier (1958: 111) unfortunately misses this passage, when he states: “Instead of the wandering and hovering being which in Plato descends from heaven to earth, the Soul, according to Plotinus, remains eternally linked to Intelligence or to the universal being, and the self which becomes isolated in the body is a passing reflection which does not impair the universality of the essence of the Soul.” My take on this issue is that, while a part of our souls “remains above,” we still can make choices and act on habits which keep us “down,” attached to earthly concerns, bodily pleasures, and so on.
287 See also III.4.6. A. H. Armstrong (1938: 194) says that Plotinus’ conception of bad souls is as such: the wicked are weak, failing to understand and act according to the laws of nature “endure the consequences of being what they are through the automatic, inevitable working out of the ordered cosmic processes. Their fate is no concern of the gods, or of good men (i.e. philosophers). Gods and philosophers form what might be called the privileged or aristocratic orders of cosmic society. They live their own exalted lives, abiding in them by virtue of their own merits, and it would be absurd and contrary to the order of things to expect them to disturb themselves to look after their inferiors. They have neither the will nor the power to come to the help of their fellow-men who are suffering, or even of those who are suffering. Plotinus, of course, at least in some moods, states that human suffering is merited by sin in a former life. The contrast between this conception of gods and good men and the gods of the Laws, or the philosophers of the Republic, is too clear to need stressing” (cf. 1947: 194-195). I have several replies: (i) Plato’s view (as seen above and below – see especially § 9.3.3) certainly seems to affirm the first part of Armstrong’s summary, since he believes that wherever a bad person does, it will be repaid to him, and he will continue to receive these consequences until he becomes a philosopher and comes to have knowledge of the Good. (ii) Again, Plato does say that gods will look out for the fate of good men (Apology 41c-d, Republic II 362e-363e, 379b-380c, X 613a-b, Laws IV 716c-717a; cf. Phaedo 63b-c, Gorgias 507a-c, Laws V 729a-d, XII 949c-950d), but never that gods care in the sense of interrupting or aiding a bad man with the idea that they will become better, unless their guardian spirit is assigned to make it their lot (which the good men chose, of course). (iii) As we’ll see in the next section, Plotinus implies that punishments are done for the sake of the punisher’s good (IV.4.45.47-52), so this does imply care on the gods’ behalves. Lastly, (iv) as far as the comment that philosophers cannot be bothered (and do not have the will or the power) to help the wicked and weak, especially as an allusion to the ideal state, we can point to Plotinus’ own school, where he (at least on his view) helped his students/attendees to understand truth and reality, as well as his desire to found the ideal state (Life, Ch. 12). Thus, Armstrong’s characterization here is a bit unfair.
This passage is reminiscent of the *Phaedo*, where Plato states that the soul takes its education and training with it. Therefore, we briefly confirmed Plato and Plotinus’ concordance on the nature of bad souls, and can conclude that they agree that bad souls (1) go to Tartarus, (2) are reincarnated on earth (which is bad relative to the experience of good souls), (3) may hover around the earth upon their death, and in general that they continue living with the same initial level of cognition or mindset after death or in their next incarnation.

### 9.3.4 Punishment is justified

Interestingly, both philosophers justify the eternal law that souls must be punished after death for bad actions they have committed.

**Plato:**

It is appropriate for everyone who is subject to punishment rightly inflicted by another either to become better and profit from it, or else to be made by example for others, so that when they see him suffering whatever it is he suffers, they may be afraid and become better. Those who are benefited, who are made to pay their due by gods and men, are the ones whose errors are curable … (*Gorgias* 525b1-6).

Thus, Plato justifies punishments, in that they are for the benefit of the punished, or for the benefit of souls to be incarnated in the future, so that they might avoid doing what the punished soul did.

**Plotinus:**

… the punishments are like [the medical treatment] of diseased parts; some have caustics applied to them, others are extracted or modified, so that the All may be healthy when every part is disposed where it should be; but the healthy state of the All comes about when one part is modified, and another extracted from the place where it is diseased and placed where it will not be diseased (*IV.4.45.47-52*).

It must be granted that Plotinus is speaking more generally, but indeed affirms the idea that punishments are designed for the aid of the soul, or of the universe, which is certainly the spirit of Plato’s statement in the *Gorgias*.

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus each justify the punishment of bad souls by providence.

### 9.3.5 Punishment is necessary

Both Plato and Plotinus implicitly discuss what Eastern philosophers refer to as bad or negative karma: Namely, they each claim that a bad soul inescapably must have done to it what it has made others undergo.

**Plato:**

Vengeance is exacted for these crimes in the after-life, and when a man returns to this world again he is ineluctably obliged to pay the penalty prescribed by the law of nature – to undergo the same treatment as he himself meted out to his victim, and to conclude his earthly existence by encountering a similar fate at the hands of someone else (*Laws* IX 870d6-e3).\(^{289}\)

\(^{288}\) And see PPMEE 3.6.

\(^{289}\) See also Plato’s *Letter VII*: “He is blind and does not see what defilement his plunderings involve, nor how great an evil attaches to each wicked act – a defilement which the evildoer necessarily drags with him as goes up and down the earth and follows his dishonorable and utterly wretched path to the world below” (*Letter VII* 335b5-c1).
Here Plato says that nature’s penalty must be infallibly paid; in Book X of the *Laws*, he vehemently affirms this view:

… to go to join worse souls as you grow worse and better souls as you grow better, and alike in life and all the deaths you suffer to do and be done by according to the standards that birds of a feather naturally apply among themselves. Neither you nor anyone else who has got into trouble will ever be able to run fast enough to boast that he has escaped this sentence – a sentence to which the judges have attached special importance, and which should take every possible care to avoid. Make yourself ever so small and hide in the depths of the earth, or soar high into the sky: this sentence will be ever at your heels, and either while you’re still alive on earth or after you’ve descended into Hades or been taken to some even more remote place, you’ll pay the proper penalty of your crimes (*Laws* X 904e5-905b2).

So, Plato believes that bad souls are inevitably and necessarily punished for the bad that they do. **Plotinus:** Plotinus affirms the view that punishment is in kind, and inevitable. The next passage confirms the former claim of punishment being in kind:

… we must not discard that argument, either, which says that the rational principle does not look only at the present on each occasion but at the cycles of time before, and also at the future, so as to determine men’s worth from these, and to change their positions, making slaves out of those who were masters before, if they were bad masters (and also because it is good for them this way); and, if men have used wealth badly, making them poor (and for the good, too, it is not without advantage to be poor); and causing those who have killed unjustly to be killed in their turn, unjustly as far as concerns the victim; and it brings that which is to suffer together to the same point with that which is fit and ready to execute what that unjust killer is fated to endure. There is certainly no accident in a man’s becoming a slave, nor is he take prisoner in a war by chance, nor is outrage done on his body without due cause, but he was once the doer of that which he now suffers; and a man who made away with his mother will be made away with by a son when he has become a woman, and one who has raped a woman will be a woman in order to be raped (III.2.13.1-15).

Plotinus definitely confirms that the bad soul’s punishment will be in kind, after death in its next reincarnation. Now let us verify that Plotinus also holds that punishment is inescapable:

For no one can ever evade what he ought to suffer for his unrighteous doings: for the divine law is inescapable and has in itself together with the judgment already pronounced its execution. He too who is to suffer punishment is carried unknowing to what he has to suffer; on his unsteady course he is tossed about everywhere in his wanderings, and in the end, as if utterly weary, by his very efforts at resistance he falls into the place which suits him, having that which he did not will for his punishment as a result of the course which he willed. But it is stated in the law how much and how long he must suffer, and again there come together the release from punishment and the ability to escape up from these regions by the power of the harmony which holds the universe together (IV.3.24.8-21).

Both philosophers argue that it is the ineluctable universal divine law that the afterlife and future incarnations of bad souls should proceed as they have outlined here.

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290 Cf. *Theaetetus* 176d8-e1, where Socrates states that one’s behaving unjustly carries “a penalty from which there is no escape”; and *Letter V/II* 335a, for Plato’s urging that we should always assent that the soul is immortal and suffers the severest punishments after death.

291 Zeller (1931: 299) states that Plotinus “developed” this Platonic view of retribution “into a repeated atonement that goes into the smallest detail”; it seems clear that Plato had already expressed this view, however.

292 See also III.2.8.26-31; cf. IV.4.45. Interestingly, Plotinus also states in IV.3.27 that souls can have memories of previous lives to some extent.
To conclude this subsection, Plato and Plotinus have similar views of the afterlife, even though I cannot positively confirm that Plotinus believes in the three 1,000-year cycles of incarnations for philosophers, or the 10,000-year cycle for the non-philosopher; and that neutral souls go to Acheron. However, these claims aside, we do find that both philosophers aver that good souls rise to God or Nous; are reincarnated based on their propensities of character and education from their last lives; bad souls go to Tartarus; punishment of souls is justified because it either better the punished soul or those who see the soul being punished; punishment is administered in kind, based on undergoing the identical harm inflicted on others; and punishment is inescapable.

Let us now conclude this entire section. We have seen that Plato and Plotinus believe that souls are reincarnated based on the character of the soul; e.g., if the soul studied philosophy and was just, it would be reincarnated as a human; if a soul was attached to bodily pleasure and bodies, it would hover around the earth and be reincarnated into an animal appropriate to its nature (§ 9.1). They also both believe that there is a guardian spirit that is assigned to each soul, who guides it to its choice of life before it is reincarnated, and guarantees the fate that the Spindle of Necessity ensures as a result of that choice (§ 9.2). Plato and Plotinus also believe that if your soul lives the philosophical life, not attached to the body and is just, you will spend your time with God in the realm of Nous (§ 9.3.2). If your soul does bad actions, it will go to Hades in order to undergo the inescapable punishment for whatever you have caused others to suffer. Plato adds that if your soul is incurable, it spends the rest of its time in Tartarus being tortured; Plotinus refers to Tartarus as well (though as noted he does not refer to incurable souls) (§ 9.3.3). Finally, in §§ 9.3.4 and 9.3.5, we saw that both philosophers argue that punishment is justified and necessary.
CHAPTER 10: TRUTH

If Plato and Plotinus essentially agree about the Good, the Forms, All-Soul, knowledge, opinion, and most if not all of the major philosophical positions mentioned in PTP, PPMEE, and this Supplement, then it should not be surprising that they would have the same view of truth.

Plato: Plato states in the *Phaedo* that the soul attains to truth through reflection, and that it can do that the best “the soul reasons best when none of these senses troubles it, neither hearing nor sight, nor pain nor pleasure, but when it is most by itself, taking leave of the body and as far as possible having no contact or association with it in its search for reality” (*Phaedo* 65c5-9).

In the *Republic*, Socrates and Glaucon agree that truth is akin to measure and proportion (*Republic* VI 486d). Further, they have the following exchange later in Book IX and agree that Forms participate in truth (and being and knowledge) as much as is possible, and that what has less truth (the “becomers” – see § 13.1) have less being or existence:

That which is related to what is always the same, immortal, and true, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind – this is more, don’t you think, than that which is related to what is never the same and mortal, is itself of that kind, and comes to be in something of that kind?

That which is related to what is always the same is far more.

And does the being of what is always the same participate more in being than in knowledge?

Not at all.

Or more than in truth?

Not that either.

And if less in truth, then less in being also?

Necessarily (*Republic* IX 585c1-13).

Shortly thereafter, Socrates and Glaucon also agree that “the kinds of filling up that are concerned with the care of the body share less in truth and being than those concerned with the care of the soul” (585d1-3) and that the same holds of the body itself in comparison with the soul (*Republic* IX 585d5).

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato contrasts the multitude’s notion of truth versus those who have knowledge thereof:

… people get the idea of what is likely through its similarity to the truth. And we just explained that in every case the person who knows the truth knows best how to determine similarities (*Phaedrus* 273d3-6).

In the *Statesman*, Plato states that a true opinion of goodness is not human but divine:

I call divine, when it comes to be in souls, that opinion about what is fine, just and good, and the opposites of these, which is really true and is guaranteed; it belongs to the class of the more than human.

That’s certainly a fitting view of take (*Statesman* 309c5-9).

In the *Laws*, Plato not surprisingly avers, “Truth heads the list of all things good, for gods and men alike” (*Laws* V 730c1-2).

Finally, in *Letter II*, Plato tells Dionysius that the truth has no variability (313c) and in *Letter VII*, Plato tells the friends and companions of Dion that there is no danger of anyone forgetting the truth, once his mind grasps it (344e).
Plotinus: Plotinus agrees with Plato that the truth does not deal with images, but with knowledge, and that the truth is something that we possess and of which we have an intimate association, as follows:

… since one must bring in knowledge and truth and watchfully preserve reality and the knowledge of what each thing is – but not [only] the knowledge of each thing’s qualities, since [if we only had that] we should have an image and a trace of realities, and not possess and live with and be fused with the realities themselves – we must attribute all [real existences] to the true Intellect (V.5.2.4-9).

Plotinus also agrees with Plato that if someone possesses the truth, that truth does not deal with anything external to the person, but with itself and with the knower of that truth. In that way, the following passage harkens back to Plato’s view in Republic IX that truth, knowledge, and being are equally related to what is always the same, immortal and true, where the soul is immortal as well and has access to being. Moreover, Plotinus confirms that the truth is directly related to existence, as Plato implied in the same Republic passage just mentioned; Plotinus says:

… the real truth is also there [in Intellect], which does not agree with something else, but with itself, and saying nothing other than itself, but it is what it says and says what it is. …… you could not find anything truer than the truth (V.5.2.18-20, 23-24).

Also, in a simple phrase, Plotinus confirms that the truth must be consistent and must itself be what it affirms: “… truth ought not to be the truth of something else, but to be what it says” (V.3.5.25-26).

As we have seen, Plotinus agrees with Plato that the truth is not variable, does not deal with perceptible things, but is actually being or an existent. In the next section, we will find, interestingly, that they both imply that something akin to meditation is a valuable method for attaining knowledge.

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293 Cf. what Rappe says about the Neo-Platonists in general on this subject: “… Neoplatonic texts exhibit a self-consciousness about the methodologies that they employ precisely because of the difficulties caused by Neoplatonic notions of truth, philosophy, and tradition. Beyond any formal criterion shaping the tradition, Neoplatonists shared the belief that wisdom could not be expressed or transmitted by rational thought or language. Yet despite this repudiation of the discursive, their texts also possess a complex doctrinal content that operates in conjunction with these reservations. In fact, for Neoplatonists, there is one central metaphysical fact that grounds this attention to the non-discursive. The identity theory of truth, the doctrine that intellect is its objects, and the self-disclosing nature of intellectual activity are at the center of Neoplatonic philosophizing and dialectic” (2000: xiii). We have seen in PPMEE §§ 1.5 and 2.2 that Plato and Plotinus have the same views of ineffability and wisdom, and will shortly see that Plotinus has the identity theory of truth, so everything that Rappe notes is compatible with Plato, whatever other difficulties there may be.

294 Republic IX 585c1-13, quoted in the Plato subsection above.
CHAPTER 11: MEDITATION

Plato and Plotinus both claim that something akin to meditation or concentration (one of the techniques honed in meditation) is an important aid to discovering reality. We will find that A. H. Armstrong argues that Plotinus does not endorse meditation and that Louth argues that Plotinus endorses a much stronger withdrawal into the self than does Plato; in effect, to respond to these authors’ points, I will argue that meditation or something close to it seems to be recommended by both philosophers approximately to the same extent.

Plato: First, let us review two passages from the *Phaedo*. In the first passage, Socrates mentions the hindrance of the body in the pursuit of knowledge of the Forms; in the second passage, as we’ll see, Socrates and Simmias link avoiding this hindrance with purification, and name this experience “to gather [the soul] and collect itself … dwell by itself”. Here is the first passage:

… he will do this [“grasp that thing itself” and “come closest to knowledge” at 65e3-4] most perfectly who approaches the object with thought alone, without associating any sight with his thought, or dragging in any sense perception with his reasoning, but who, using pure thought alone, tries to track down each reality pure and by itself, freeing himself as far as possible from eyes and ears, and in a word, from the whole body, because the body confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth and wisdom whenever it is associated with it. Will not that man reach reality, Simmias, if anyone does?

What you say, said Simmias, is indeed true (*Phaedo* 65e7-66a10).

To reach the goal of reality, or to attain knowledge of the Forms on Plato and Plotinus’ view, one must ignore the body as much as possible. In the next passage, Socrates ties this idea of using one’s unaided intellect to the notion of purification, with gathering and collecting one’s soul and dwelling by itself as much as possible:

And does purification not turn out to be what we mentioned in our argument some time ago, namely, to separate the soul as far as possible from the body and accustom it to gather itself and collect itself out of every part of the body and to dwell by itself as far as it can both now and in the future, freed, as it were, from the bonds of the body?

Certainly, he said (*Phaedo* 67c5-d3).

Given that when one meditates or concentrates (which is analogous to gathering and collecting “itself,” aside from the body), where such concentration described here by Plato only involves one’s mind and does not include one’s body, we can safely infer that Plato is referring to something akin to meditation here.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato states that “… nature requires that the soul of every human being has seen reality …” (249e4-5), which is consistent with the claims in the *Phaedo* concerning the avoidance of the body and its concerns in order for the soul to contemplate reality.

Let us now review one later passage from the *Laws*, concerning contemplation (or gazing at a soul):

… physical desire will count for very little and the lover will be content to gaze upon his beloved without lusting for him – a mature and genuine desire of soul for soul. That body should sate itself with body he’ll think outrageous; his reverence and respect for self-control, courage, high principles

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295 Cf. later in the *Phaedo*: “The lovers of learning know that when philosophy gets hold of their soul, it is imprisoned in and clinging to the body, and that it is forced to examine other things through it as though a cage an not by itself, and that it wallows in every kind of ignorance. Philosophy sees that as the worst feature of this imprisonment is that it is due to desires, so that the prisoner himself is contributing to his own incarceration most of all. As I say, the lovers of learning know that philosophy gets hold of their soul when it is in that state, then gently encourages it and tries to free it by showing them that investigation through the eyes is full of deceit, the soul to withdraw from the senses in so far as it is not compelled to use them and bids the soul to gather itself together by itself, to trust only itself and whatever reality, existing by itself, the soul by itself understands …” (*Phaedo* 82d9-83b1; my emphasis).
and wisdom \textit{[phronesis]} will make him want to live a life of purity, chaste lover with chaste beloved \textit{(Laws} VIII 837b8-d1; adapted from Saunders).

This passage is quite parallel with the points that Plato made in the \textit{Phaedo}, concerning the interference of one’s body on the goal of contemplation and the attainment of wisdom.

Before continuing on with Plotinus, Bussanich has written about the issue of Socratic meditation as well, and therefore provides an excellent supplement to the passages already mentioned by Plato:

Pure knowledge comprises ‘observing things in themselves with the soul by itself’ (\textit{Phaedo} 66b6). I see this as a spiritual exercise of concentration, the regular practice of which can assimilate the mind of the purified philosopher to pure being and truth. ‘There is likely to be something such as a path to guide us out of our confusion’ (66b2-3). Now, this path is usually construed as an intellectual enterprise which aims at rational discursive knowledge. But the Socratic path also involves the practice of meditative withdrawal and self-concentration (64e5-6, 65c7-9, 66a, c2-4, 67c1, 79d, 81bc), which is synonymous with the ‘practice of dying’ (67e, 81a1-2). Separation of soul from body can mean several things: physical death, a shamanistic out of the body event, an ecstatic experience, or intellectual detachment from sense-experience. Because Socrates presents this practice as “dying before you die,” the first alternative can be set aside. What he has in mind is an internal process in consciousness, whereby the soul is concentrated ‘itself by itself’ – the same phrase employed with respect to the forms. ‘When the soul investigates by itself it passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being akin to this, it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so; it ceases to stray and remains in the same state as it is in touch with things of the same kind, and its experience then is what is called wisdom’ (79d1-7, see 70a, 80ab). Practicing this sort of concentration has results. The episodes of Socrates’ self-absorption provide some evidence (\textit{Symp.} 174c, 220c), as do the visionary passages in the palinode and the ascent from the cave.²⁹⁶

I concur with Bussanich’s points, that this process that Plato is referring to is an internal process in consciousness, and that it has positive results in the form of wisdom and knowledge.

Thus, we are warranted in finding the notion of meditation in Plato’s dialogues.

\textbf{Plotinus:} Now for passages from Plotinus that illustrate that he too believes that meditation, or something akin to it, is a valuable tool for the attainment of knowledge. For the first passage, we can glean from a passage about the gods of heaven (presumably souls of stars) that Plotinus believes that they contemplate and are always wise, with nothing to prevent them from contemplating:

… their thinking is always right in the calm and stability and purity of Intellect, and they know all things and are acquainted, not with mortal matters, but with their own divine ones, with all which Intellect sees. The gods who are in heaven, since they are free for contemplation, continually contemplate, but as if at a distance, the things in that higher heaven into which they raise their heads … (V.8.3.25-30).²⁹⁷

Admittedly, this passage is about stars, but it is compatible with the claim that, for humans, since humans are linked with bodies, and since bodies distract one’s soul from wisdom, beneficial contemplation will of necessity occur when one is paying as little attention as possible to the body, as Plato related above in the \textit{Phaedo}.²⁹⁸ I have already discussed matter and the way in which our attitude towards it can cause unhappiness in PPMEE §§ 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.11 (see also SUPP § 13.2). Here is one representative passage, however, to convey the idea that Plotinus agreed with Plato that withdrawing from the body was a step in the direction towards knowledge and wisdom:

²⁹⁷ See also two further allusions to meditation, at V.1.2.11-17 and V.1.12.10-21.
²⁹⁸ Note that A. H. Armstrong (1984b: 248-249n1) states that “the whole of this amazing description of the intelligible world which continues through chapter 4 seems to express some kind of direct visionary experience of Plotinus himself …”.

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… what can true temperance be except not keeping company with bodily pleasures, but avoiding them as impure and belonging to something impure? …. So the soul when it is purified becomes form and formative power, altogether bodiless and intellectual and entirely belonging to the divine, whence beauty springs and all that is akin to it (I.6.6.6-8, 13-16; adapted from Armstrong).  

The wellspring of Beauty arises from the Good or the One, according to each of the philosophers, as we will see. In the last passage I wish to cite, Plotinus actually uses words for sitting silently while at a meeting in an analogy concerning a vicious and a just soul:

Now the soul which comes from the divine was quiet, standing in itself according to its character; but the body, in a tumult because of its weakness, flowing away itself and battered by the blows from outside … imparted its disturbance to the whole. It is like when in an assembly the elders of the people sit in quiet consideration [καθημένων ἐφ’ ἡσυχῳ συννοιᾳ], and the disorderly populace, demanding food and complaining of other sufferings, throws the whole assembly into an ugly tumult. Now if people like this keep quiet and a speech from a sensible man gets through to them, the multitude settles to a decent order and the worse has not gained the mastery; but if not, the worse is master and the better keeps quiet, because the tumultuous mob could not receive the word from above, and this is the vice of city and assembly (VI.4.15.18-32; my emphasis).

Plotinus, as in the previous passage, clearly makes this analogy in the context of a discussion concerning the body and its distracting effects on the seeker of knowledge. Here he portrays one’s reason as a wise elder that is at least in theory capable of quiet consultation and wise advice, but the rabble of sensual desires and emotions can prohibit this advice from being followed. In fact, Plato would and does obviously agree to this assessment of the body and soul.

As mentioned in this section’s introduction, A. H. Armstrong denies that Plotinus endorses meditation 300; since we have not seen Plotinus (or Plato) explicitly use the word, we have not necessarily proved Armstrong wrong. I encourage the reader to investigate these passages and make his or her own judgment.

After quoting I.6.8-9, Louth states that Plotinus’ encouragement for withdrawal is more intense than in Plato:

There is much that is familiar in this passage, much that reminds us of Plato: the image of flight, from the Theaetetus, then, more strikingly, the echoes of his Diotima’s speech in the Symposium; only here, significantly, it is not just human beauty that awakens the soul’s love, but also the beauty fashioned by the arts. But, despite similarities, the feel is different. The emphasis on withdrawal into oneself is much stronger; and the vivid image of making one’s soul as a sculptor does a statue is new and striking. 301

My reply is that Louth is not taking into account the Phaedo “concentrate the soul itself by itself” passages mentioned above, and, the fact that Plato only heavily refers to concentrating the soul itself by itself in one dialogue in no way implies that he does not any longer hold that view as he writes other dialogues. He may simply have felt that he made that point sufficiently there and left it alone.

In sum, we have a good sense that meditation or contemplation is valuable according to each philosopher, and that the body inhibits the attainment of knowledge via contemplation and meditation. We have

299 See also IV.3.19.24-27.
300 A. H. Armstrong 1967b: 260. Cf. A. H. Armstrong (1976: 194), where he does grant that Plotinus’ “general conception of the philosophic life is one of withdrawn solitary concentration, as the Enneads repeatedly made clear.” As I said in the section’s introduction, I am taking “withdrawn solitary concentration” to be the equivalent to meditation; perhaps my disagreement with Armstrong is only semantic?
301 Louth 1981: 41; my emphasis.
also given the reader reason to question Armstrong’s view that meditation is not found in Plotinus as well as Louth’s claim that Plotinus urges us to withdraw even more than Plato does.
CHAPTER 12: DIVINATION

Plato believes that the liver is the seat of divination; Plotinus claims that divination is possible and explains vaguely how it works, but does not include the liver in his explanation.\(^{302}\) We find here that Platonic commentators have basically ignored this feature of Plato’s thought, while Plotinian commentators (all of whom I agree with) who have mentioned this aspect of his thought mainly argue that Plotinus is not a theurgist,\(^{303}\) that magic is partially effective but not on the wise man,\(^{304}\) and that magic has nothing to do with what I refer to in PPMEE as the ultimate experience (see §§ 1.2-1.6).\(^{305}\)

Plato:

The part of the soul that has appetites for food and drink and whatever else it feels a need for, given the body’s nature, they settled in the area between the midriff and the boundary toward the navel. In the whole of this region they constructed something like a trough or the body’s nourishment. Here they tied this part of the soul down like a beast, a wild one, but one they could not avoid sustaining along with the others if a mortal race were ever to be. They assigned it is position there, to keep it ever feeding at its trough, living as far away as possible from the part that takes counsel, and making as little clamor and noise as possible, thereby letting the supreme part take its counsel in peace about what is beneficial for one and all. They knew that this part of the soul was not going to understand the deliverances of reason and that even if it were in one way or another to have some awareness of them, it would not have an innate regard for any of them, but would be much more enticed by images and phantoms night and day. Hence the god conspired with this very tendency by constructing a liver, a structure which he situated in the dwelling place of this part of the soul. He made it into something dense, smooth, bright and sweet, though also having a bitter quality, so that the force of its thoughts sent down from the mind might be stamped upon it as upon a mirror that receives the stamps and returns visible images. So whenever the force of the mind’s thoughts could avail itself of a congenial portion of the liver’s bitterness and threaten it with severe command, it could then frighten this part of the soul. And by infusing the bitterness all over the liver, it could project bilious colors onto it and shrink the whole liver, making it wrinkled and rough. It could curve and shrivel up the liver’s lobe and block up and close off its receptacles and portal fissures, thereby causing pains and bouts of nausea. And again, whenever thought’s gentle inspiration should paint quite opposite pictures, its force would bring respite from the bitterness by refusing to stir up or to make contact with a nature opposite to its own. It would instead use the liver’s own natural sweetness on it and restore the whole extent of it to be straight and smooth and free, and make that portion of the soul that inhabits the region around the liver gracious and well behaved, conducting itself with moderation during the night when, seeing that it has no share in reason and understanding, it practices divination by dreams. For our creators recalled their father’s instruction to make the mortal race as excellent as possible, and so, redeeming even the base part of ourselves in this way, they set the center of divination here, so that it might have some grasp of truth.

The claim that god gave divination as a gift to human folly has good support: while he is in his right mind no one engages in divination, however divinely inspired and true it may be, but only when his power of understanding is bound in sleep or by sickness, or when some sort of possession works a change in him. On the other hand, it takes a man who has his wits about him to recall and ponder the pronouncements produced by this state of divination or possession, whether in sleep or while awake. It takes such a man to thoroughly analyze any and all visions that are seen, to determine how and for

\(^{302}\) Note that though he does not mention the liver in connection with divination per se, Plotinus does mention the liver in several places as the seat of desire, which agrees with Plato’s view (see IV.3.19.23 and IV.4.28); Plotinus also mentions the liver in conjunction with prayer (see IV.4.41).

\(^{303}\) See Dodds (1947: 57; 1951: 285-286).


\(^{305}\) See Dodds (1951: 286).
whom they signify some future, past or present good or evil. But as long as the fit remains on him, the man is incompetent to render judgment on his own visions and voices; As the ancient proverb well puts it, ‘Only a man of sound mind may know himself and conduct his own affairs.’ This is the reason why it is customary practice to appoint interpreters to render judgment on an inspired divination. These persons are called ‘diviners’ by some who are entirely ignorant of the fact that they are expositors of utterances or visions communicated through riddles. Instead of ‘diviners,’ the correct thing to call them is, ‘interpreters of things divined.’ (Timaeus 70d7-72b5; my emphasis).

So, Plato holds that divination is possible and locates that power in the liver.

**Plotinus:**

For these things here below are carried along with those things in heaven, and those in heaven with these on earth, and both together contribute to the consistency and everlastingness of the universe, and by correspondence indicate the others to the observer; for other forms of divination, too, work by correspondence. For it would not have been right for all things to be cut off from each other but they had to be made like each other, in some way at least. Perhaps this might be the meaning of the saying that correspondence holds all things together (III.3.6.22-28).  

Plotinus actually implies that there is more than one form of divination here, but to my knowledge does not (here or elsewhere) elaborate further on its kinds.

In another interesting passage, where Plotinus is trying to argue against materialism, he uses as a point of argument that if everything is only matter, then divination is impossible, which obviously implies that he believes that divination is possible (when interpreted in light of the passage above):

Let us start by admitting that atoms exist. Then they will be moved, some with a downward motion – let us grant that there is really a ‘down’ – some with a sideways, just as it chances, others in other ways. Nothing will be ordered – there is no order – but this world which comes into existence, when it has come to be, is completely ordered. So [on the atomic theory] there would be no foretelling or divination, neither that which comes from art – for how could there be an art which deals with things without order? – nor that which comes from divine possession and inspiration … (III.1.3.9-16).

One point concerning divination cannot be confirmed in Plotinus; namely, that the liver is the seat of divination. Plotinus states that the liver is the seat of desire and passion, but does not relate divination to the liver.  

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus both assent to the claim that divination is possible.

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306 Armstrong (1967a: 132-133) says Plotinus might be referring to Timaeus 31c3 and 32c2, but that Plotinus (as usual) ignores the mathematical side of Plato’s thought.

307 See IV.3.19, IV.4.28 and IV.4.41.
CHAPTER 13: MATTER

In this chapter, I examine the Platonic and Plotinian claims that: material things are “becomers” (§ 13.1); matter is the source of badness (§ 13.2); and matter is the furthest entity away from the Good (§ 13.3).

13.1 Material things are “becomers”

Plato and Plotinus both hold that material things are copies of Forms and in a constant process of becoming, changing into contraries and other entities, unknowable from every perspective, compared with the immaterial, immutable, eternal Forms.

Plato: Plato clearly states that material things are best described not as beings but as “becomers”\textsuperscript{308} in the \textit{Theaetetus}, as follows:

\begin{quote}
I’ll tell you; and this, now, is certainly no ordinary theory – I mean the theory that there is nothing which in itself is just one thing: nothing which you could rightly call anything or any kind of thing. If you call a thing large, it will reveal itself as small, and if you call it heavy, it is liable to appear as light, and so on with everything, because nothing is one or anything or any kind of thing. What is really true, is this: the things of which we naturally say that they ‘are’, are in process of coming to be, as the result of movement and change and blending with one another. We are wrong when we say they ‘are’, since nothing ever is, but everything is coming to be.
\end{quote}

…. For when Homer talked about ‘Ocean, begetter of gods, and Tethys\textsuperscript{309} their mother’, he made all things the offspring of flux and motion. – Or don’t you think he meant that? Oh, I think he did (\textit{Theaetetus} 152d2-e1, e5-10).\textsuperscript{310}

According to Plato, perceptible things are constantly changing, and so they are not beings; they are continuously becoming other as time goes by. In the \textit{Republic}, Plato (and Plotinus agrees) that we can only have opinion of perceptible things\textsuperscript{311} because they are constantly changing and are not knowable from every perspective (see PPMEE § 2.3), and that people who believe that beauty is not one thing (i.e. materialists) are dreamers (see § 2.2).\textsuperscript{312} Further, in \textit{Republic V}, while he is arguing that we can only have opinion of perceptible things, Plato avers that perceptible things lie between being and not being (\textit{Republic V} 477a-b, 478d-479d). Let us now turn to Plotinus on becomers.

Plotinus: Let us now confirm that Plotinus has the same view of perceptible things.\textsuperscript{313} Plotinus crafted many arguments against materialists,\textsuperscript{314} but I will show here that he believes that perceptible things are constantly becoming:

Each form draws out by its own power which it has; and it has it from the higher world. And that which makes matter large (as it seems) comes from the imaging in it of size, and that which is imaged in it is size in this world; and the matter on which it is imaged is compelled to keep pace with it, and submits itself to it all together and everywhere, for it is matter and belongs to this size and is not this

\begin{footnotes}
\item[308] Here I am using Penner’s term; see 1987: 223-225, 231, and 398n12.
\item[309] Homer, \textit{Iliad}, 14.201, 302.
\item[310] See also \textit{Theaetetus} 157a-c and \textit{Timaeus} 27d-29d; cf. \textit{Phaedo} 83a-b, \textit{Cratylus} 439c-440c, \textit{Republic VII} 518c-d, \textit{Timaeus} 48e-49b, 51d-52d, \textit{Sophist} 248a-b; and see \textit{Philebus} 54a-c for Plato’s claim that becoming is done for the sake of being. See Bolton (1975) and Kolb (1974: 137; “time is the realm of becoming”).
\item[311] See also \textit{Republic VI} 508d.
\item[312] Cf. \textit{Timaeus} 51d-52d. Also, see \textit{Sophist} 246a-c for Plato’s description of the debate between the “gods” (the friends of the Forms or believers in the Forms) and “giants” (the materialists).
\item[313] Here I agree with Gerson (1994: 96; Plotinus’ putative sensible substance is a conglomeration of qualities and matter; and 111; matter is potency) and Phillips (1997: 195; they have the same view on this issue).
\item[314] See especially III.1.2-3, III.6.12, and IV.7.3-10; see VI.9.5 for the claim that materialists have strayed far from God and/or unity.
\end{footnotes}
size; but what is nothing of itself can become the opposite, too, by means of something else, and when it has become the opposite is not that either, for if it was it would be static (III.6.17.30-37).

So, Plotinus claims that while matter becomes something related to the Form-copies, matter does not become any determinate thing. Plotinus also holds that material things only have the being we ascribe to it (that is, becoming) because of their association with Forms, judging from this quotation:

The objects of sense are what they are called by participation, since their underlying nature receives its shape from elsewhere: bronze, for instance, from the art of sculpture and wood from the art of carpentry, the art passing into them through an image, but itself remaining in self-identity outside matter and possessing the true statue or bed. This is also true of [natural] bodies; and this All shows by its participation in appearances that the real beings are other than they; the real beings are unchanging, but the appearances change, the real beings are set firm on themselves and need no place: for they are not magnitudes; they have an intelligent existence sufficient to themselves. For the nature of bodies wants to be preserved by something else, but Intellect upholds by its wonderful nature the things which fall down by themselves, and does not look for a place to be set in (V.9.5.36-48).\(^{315}\)

Just as in Plato, Forms have Being, but the perceptible universe is made up of another kind of being that is not really being, which instead aspires to stable being. I will examine the question in both philosophers’ minds as to whether matter has being (see § 13.3 below).

Therefore, Plato and Plotinus both agree that material things are imitations of Forms, constantly becoming, and changing into contraries and other entities.

**13.2 Matter as the source of badness**

In this section, I will confirm that Plato and Plotinus both claim that matter, in its capacity to mislead the soul about the nature of reality and the importance of avoiding its lure, is the main source of badness or evil.\(^{316}\) Plato and Plotinus claim that matter is a source of badness, because they both claim that the body is like a prison for the soul (or the soul is in the body as an oyster is in a shell), and that the soul’s simply being incarnated is a problem.\(^{317}\)

**Plato:** Looking at Plato’s early and middle work in this area, he claims in the *Phaedo* that the body is an impediment and hindrance to serious philosophical contemplation and introspection, as well as the truth, here:

… as long as we have a body and our soul is fused with such an evil we shall never adequately attain what we desire, which we affirm to be the truth. The body keeps us busy in a thousand ways because of its need for nurture. Moreover, if certain diseases befall it, they impede our search for the truth. It fills us with wants, desires, fears, all sorts of illusions and much nonsense, so that, as it is said, in truth and in fact no thought of any kind ever comes to us from the body. …. Worst of all, if we do get some respite from it and turn to some investigation, everywhere in our investigations the body is present and makes for confusion and fear, so that it prevents us from seeing the truth.

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\(^{315}\) Note that Plotinus implies that there are different levels of being at III.6.6; he claims that matter is an outcast of being (II.5.5); that matter aspires to Matter Itself at VI.7.27; that matter “is” in a certain sense, but not in the same sense as a Form (VI.3.7); that material things are made of parts (IV.7.2, V.1.2, and VI.2.4); that bodies are composed of pseudo-substrate, quantity and quality (VI.2.4); that body is not unity, but participates in a unity (VI.9.1); and that material things are reflections of the Form-copies they receive (III.6.9).

\(^{316}\) See also PTP, Ch. 6.

\(^{317}\) Plato makes these claims at *Phaedrus* 250c, *Cratylus* 403c-404a, *Phaedo* 82d-83a, *Timaeus* 69b and Letter VII 334e-335b; cf. *Phaedo* 81e and 91e-92a, and *Cratylus* 400b-c; Plotinus: I.7.3, I.8.11-12, IV.3.26 and IV.8.1; cf. I.8.4.
It really has been shown to us that, if we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself (Phaedo 66b5-c6, d3-e1).318

And he says something quite similar in Book III of the Republic:

… excessive care for the body, over and above physical training, is pretty well the biggest obstacle of all. It’s troublesome in managing a household, in military service, and even in a sedentary public office.

Yet the most important of all, surely, is that it makes any kind of learning, thought, or private meditation difficult, for it’s always imagining some headaches and dizziness and accusing philosophy of causing them. Hence, wherever this kind of virtue is practiced and examined, excessive care of the body hinders it, for it makes a person think he’s ill and be all the time concerned about his body.

It probably does (Republic III 407b4-c6).

So, for Plato, our bodies are obstacles and provide distractions to our soul’s natural activity of contemplation, which entails that matter is a source of badness.

Plotinus: Plotinus affirms this view that bodies are obstacles and distractions to philosophers in these passages:

There must be a sort of counterpoise on the other side, towards the best, to reduce the body and make it worse, so that it may be made clear that the real man is other than his outward parts (I.4.14.11-14).

And:

Suppose, then, an ugly soul, dissolute and unjust, full of all lusts, and all disturbance, sunk in fears by its cowardice and jealousy by its pettiness, thinking mean and mortal thoughts as far as it thinks at all, altogether distorted, loving impure pleasures, living a life which consists of bodily sensations and finding delight in its ugliness. Shall we not say that its ugliness came to it as a ‘beauty’ brought in from outside, injuring it and making it impure and ‘mixed with a great deal of evil,’ with its life and perceptions no longer pure, but the admixture of evil living a dim life and diluted with a great deal of death, no longer seeing what a soul ought to see, no longer left in peace in itself because it keeps on being dragged out, and down, and to the dark? Impure, I think, and dragged in every direction towards the objects of sense, with a great deal of bodily stuff mixed into it, consorting much with matter and receiving a form other than its own it has changed by a mixture which makes it worse … (I.6.5.25-43).319

And Plotinus claims that the body hinders the soul’s pursuit of truth “There”—that is, in Nous or the Intelligible Region—here: “But we do not believe all this because of our weakness, and it is obscured by the body; but There [in the intelligible world] all and each shine out” (IV.9.5.26-28).

Thus, Plotinus and Plato agree that the body is a distraction, showing that matter is a source of badness in at least this way.

Plato: Returning to Plato, probably his best statement of matter’s entailing badness occurs in the Theaetetus:

318 See also Phaedo 65e-66a. I agree with Bussanich (2004: 12) that Plato believes that the body is the source of busyness, confusion, and fear.

319 See also I.6.5.48-50 and IV.3.19.24-27. For more on the role of matter in an evil life, see III.3.4; for a passage on the way in which Reason can be overcome by the soul’s obsession with matter, see IV.4.17; for a passage where Plotinus states that matter makes the soul weak, see I.8.11, and I.8.4, 12; and I.1.9; lastly, for a claim that the living body is the source of all evil in humans, see I.1.9. Cf. IV.4.18.
But it is not possible, Theodorus, that evil should be destroyed — for there must always be something opposed to the good; nor is it possible that it should have its seat in heaven. But it must inevitably haunt human life, and prowl about this earth. That is why a man should make all haste to escape from earth to heaven; and escape means becoming as like God as possible; and a man becomes like God when he becomes just and pure, with understanding [ἐπιστήμην ἀλογίαν ἐπιστήμην] (Theaetetus 176a5-b2).

Thus, since badness must haunt our mortal nature for Plato, this implies that matter is source of badness.

**Plotinus:** Plotinus thoroughly agrees with Plato that matter is the source of badness, as we see from these passages:

Since it is here that evils are, and ‘they must necessarily haunt this region,’ and the soul wants to escape from evils, we must escape from here. What, then, is this escape? ‘Being made like god,’ Plato says. And we become godlike ‘if we become righteous and holy with the help of wisdom,’ and are altogether in virtue (I.2.1.1-5).

And:

If, then, these are what really exists and what is beyond existence, then evil cannot be included in what really exists or in what is beyond existence; for these are good. So it remains that if evil exists, it must be among non-existent things, as a sort of form of non-existence, and pertain to one of the things that are mingled with non-being or somehow share in non-being. Non-being here does not mean absolute non-being but only something other than being; not non-being in the same way as the movement and rest which affect being, but like an image of being or something still more non-existent (I.8.3.1-9).

Plotinus is clear that when he refers to non-being, he is either alluding to the perceptible realm — the images of Being — or matter — the receptacle that receives the Form-copies. Either way, badness or evil would haunt

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320 Here I answer Mohr (2005: 152)’s question in the affirmative, as to whether matter might be the source of evil because it is always changing. We will see that Plotinus agrees, below.

321 Here we admittedly sidestep the issue raised by Cherniss (1954: 248, 250) and Mohr (2005: 121, 149-150, 165); namely, whether the soul or matter is the cause of evil in Plato. Cherniss holds that the soul causes evil, because matter cannot cause its own motion (recognizing the errant pre-cosmic matter in the Timaeus as an anomaly); Mohr argues that in the Timaeus and Statesman, matter is a positive source of evil, but in the Phaedrus, Republic and Laws X, soul is the source of all motion, and therefore must be the cause of all evil. However, since Plato gives various sources of evil, and especially since Plotinus assents to all of these statements (namely, that matter is both caused by the soul and/or Demiurge, and has always existed — see PTP § 6.1; that soul is a self-moving causing motion in bodies — PTP § 4.1; that soul is prior to body — § 6.6; and see the quotations concerning matter in this section), then we need not take a stand on the issue Cherniss and Mohr raise.

322 On this issue I agree with: (1) A. H. Armstrong (1947: 193-194; cf. 277), that matter is evil, but not the material world (for both Plato and Plotinus); (2) Findlay (1974: 374-375; cf. 1975a: 675), that “evil arises from privation, deficiency and need and is a malady of unhappy Matter”; (3) Inge (1929a: 135), contra Zeller, that Plotinus follows Plato on matter’s being evil — and not just because Plotinus sees Plato as an authority (259); (4) O’Brien (1971: 139-140; 1996: 171), that matter is evil and that matter and weakness in the soul are conjointly causes of evil in the soul; and (5) Rist (1996: 391-392), that Plotinus follows Plato in believing that “material objects in the body, far from evil in themselves in so far as they exist, are a source of temptation, perhaps of almost inevitable temptation, to the soul.” I disagree with (1) Fuller (1912: 283; cf. O’Brien 1996: 176-177), who argues that matter is not a principle of individuation in the intelligible world (because in Plotinus “[t]he cause of their variety and individuality is to be found in the category of Difference, a category which says no more than that forms and particulars are different”), while it is such in Plato. As we’ve seen, however, they both hold that the Receptacle holds contraries (PTP § 6.1), and that the Five Greatest Kinds exist (PTP § 3.4.5); in short, they both individuate objects in the same way. And (2) O’Brien (1971: 144-145), that Plotinus has the problem (but Plato does not) of answering why matter is created and intrinsically evil (see PTP § 6.1) — but I agree with him that Plotinus’ explanation (of matter as being evil and matter and soul’s weakness conjointly cause evil) is parallel to Plato’s random movements of the Receptacle and the soul’s movements in Laws X. This helps address the Cherniss-Mohr problem related in the note immediately above. Cf. Hadley (1997; 453-454).

323 See also V.9.10.
our mortal nature, which shows that he agrees with Plato on this issue. Moreover, Plotinus states in many places that matter is evil.\textsuperscript{324}

Returning to Plato, in the \textit{Phaedrus}, he states that one’s being attracted to perceptible things drags the soul from being with Nous contemplating the Forms, to losing its wings and heading for earth (\textit{Phaedrus} 248a-b and 250b-c).\textsuperscript{325} Plotinus implies that he agrees that the body is a hindrance to recollection in the passages above, and I have already discussed his view that the soul can fall from Nous when it gets attracted to the body (see § 8.2.4 above).

Therefore, we have seen that both philosophers believe that matter is the source of evil; it is what bad souls are attracted to, and can make doing philosophy very difficult. Our souls’ being linked to a body while incarnated makes evil possible, though not all souls are evil.

13.3 Matter as the furthest entity away from the Good

\textbf{Plato:} To analyze and argue for this claim in Plato’s philosophy, I will need to put several premises together from previous sections.

First, for instance, we need to assume that the argument put forth in PTP § 6.1 Matter as the Receptacle for the Platonic interpretation that the Receptacle in Plato is matter, even though he alternatively refers to it as place and/or space, at \textit{Timaeus} 52b4-5.

Second, and also from the \textit{Timaeus} (again in PTP § 6.1), the Receptacle receives Form-copies without changing its nature.

Third, as covered above, § 13.1 that perceptible things are Form-copies.

Now, given that Plato states that the Good is the source of being and the Forms, in \textit{Republic} VI and VII (see PTP § 1.1), and the Forms are next closest to the Good, Soul (the hypostasis) is next (the All-Soul and individual souls thereafter), and the perceptible universe (Form-copies) is next, the last Platonic entity left is matter—the Receptacle—which is “hardly even an object of conviction” [\textit{μόνις πιστόν}], as Plato states at \textit{Timaeus} 52b2.\textsuperscript{326}

Thus, on Plato’s view matter is plausibly interpreted as the furthest thing away from the Good.

\textbf{Plotinus:} Now let us examine how Plotinus describes that matter is the furthest entity away from the Good.\textsuperscript{327} In one passage, he states that matter is essentially evil and does not really participate in the Good:

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\textsuperscript{324} Plotinus either states that matter is evil or causes evil in these passages: I.8.3, 5, 7-8, 10-11; II.4.16, and III.6.11 (see also Gerson (1994: 192; cf. 205) and Inge (1929a: 134).

\textsuperscript{325} Plato might also imply that the soul fails to remember the Forms due to over-attention to the body, at \textit{Statesman} 273b-c.

\textsuperscript{326} On the hypothesis that the Receptacle is not the lowest entity on Plato’s view, but material things are, we can adduce evidence from \textit{Republic} V, where Plato argues that material things lie or roll around between being and not being (477a, 478c-e, 479d), where not being is once rendered as “what in every way is not” (478d7) [see also “Surely the most accurate word for that which is not isn’t ‘one thing’ but ‘nothing’” (\textit{Republic} V 478b12-c1)]. From this perspective, material things are the last things that exist (in some way) before one gets to “that which in no way exists.”

\textsuperscript{327} Here I agree with Gerson (1994: 115; cf. 192-193), that privation in the matter and sensible world means absence of essence, which only belongs to essence; and with O’Brien (1971: 144-145), that Plotinian matter is the last of the products flowing from the One; but not that for Plotinus the Receptacle is evil, but this cannot be true in Plotinus’ philosophy; especially because Plotinus attributes precisely the same qualities of matter as Plato does to the Receptacle, including the paradoxical “pre-cosmic matter always existed” v. “matter was created” points (see PTP § 6.1). I disagree with Gerson (1994: 196), that Plotinus has a more rigorous notion of unmeasuredness or absence of form than does Plato (see my Platonic subsection that makes this argument for Plato); with Katz (1950: 44), that Plotinus “wavers between ascribing deficiency of existence to the failure of form [see I.6.2, III.3.4, and V.9.10] or to the obtuseness of matter [see III.6.7, I.1.12, and II.3.16]”; the latter set of passages contain the same idea, that matter is the Receptacle and will not accept Form-copies without changing its nature, which shows that he agrees with Plato on this issue. Moreover, Plotinus states in many places that matter is evil. Therefore, we have seen that both philosophers believe that matter is the source of evil; it is what bad souls are attracted to, and can make doing philosophy very difficult. Our souls’ being linked to a body while incarnated makes evil possible, though not all souls are evil.

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[Matter’s] participation would not be, as people think, by being affected, but of another kind, so that it only seems to be affected. Perhaps in this way the difficulty can be resolved how, though it is evil, it can reach towards the Good, in that it does not by its participation lose what it was before, for if, as we say, its so-called participation is of this kind, so that it remains the same and is not altered but is always what it is, it becomes no longer remarkable how it participates [in the Good] though it is evil. …. For if it really participated and was really altered by the Good it would not be evil by nature. So that if someone calls matter evil, he would speak the truth if he meant that it was unaffected by the good; but this is the same as being totally incapable of being affected (III.6.11.34-36, 41-45; adapted from Armstrong).328

Since matter qua Receptacle does not change (see PTP § 6.1), then even if it receives a Form-copy that is good, its essential nature – accepting Form-copies, being invisible, and the rest – is not changed. If matter becomes essentially ordered, then it is no longer only matter, but something else.329 (I have also discussed the issue of matter’s being evil in PTP §§ 6.2.1.)

In another passage, Plotinus also claims that matter is and unmixed lack of Good:

… since [matter] is altogether without a share in Good and is a privation of Good and a pure lack of it, it makes everything which comes into contact with it in any way like itself (I.8.4.22-25).330

Therefore, we have seen that Plotinus holds, as Plato does, that matter is the furthest entity from the Good.

There are, however, two last interpretive issues relevant to matter’s being furthest from the Good that need to be discussed: (1) Is matter not a being, or a being? And (2) Does the Form, Matter Itself, exist? Let us discuss these issues in turn.

Plato: As to the question of whether matter is a being or not, as we’ve seen above, Plato claims that matter is “hardly even an object of conviction” at Timaeus 52b2, but seems also to state that it is one of the kinds of “things” or beings (Timaeus 50b-51b, 52b-e). We cannot take Plato’s use of “thing” (in the sense of being) too literally here, using the principle of charity to interpret the Republic and Timaeus as consistently as possible, however, for two reasons: First, because in the Republic (V 477a-b, 478d-479d), Plato states that perceptible things lie between being and not being, and so are not technically fully-fledged beings (at least not full-time). And second, in the Timaeus passages, Plato technically says that there are three “kinds” (vēn), leaving it ambiguous as to whether he is referring to beings, becomers, or something else.

As to the question of whether Matter Itself exists for Plato, the issue is not clear. Granted, I do not have any passages cited as evidence in Appendix V of Plato’s Forms. However, if we can or should interpret matter as being the Receptacle, matter would never perish (even though it is formless – see PTP § 6.1), so in this sense shares a common feature with Forms. This is a weak argument; a better tack is to say that the sensible realm is an imitation of Forms, so that if there is matter in the sense realm, then there is Matter in the Intelligible Realm.331 But, as I said, this issue is not clear on Plato’s view.

Plotinus: Plotinus clearly states that matter is non-being,332 as we’ll see, as well as implying that he agrees with Plato that matter (and becomers) is a kind of being (VI.3.2). In III.6.6, Plotinus seemingly incredulously asks:

328 Plotinus also claims that matter is essentially evil and the absence of Good at I.8.5, 7; II.4.16; cf. I.8.1, 3. Plotinus claims that evil is the absence of Good at I.8.10, III.2.5, and III.6.14. Interestingly, Plotinus also states that matter is ugly if it will not yield at all points to Form (I.6.2), and interprets Plato’s claims in the Symposium myth about Poros and Poverty as referring to claims about matter (III.6.14).
329 For a related Plotinian passage, see III.6.11.
330 See also I.8.5.
331 I develop this tack a bit more in PTP § 6.2.1.
332 Here I agree with Fuller (1912: 282), that Plotinus gets his idea of matter as non-being from Plato; O’Brien (1971: 118), that matter is non-being absolute refers to the non-being (“sense of otherness,” not “absolute non-existence”) of the Sophist; Zeller (1931: 296), that they agree on matter (or primary evil) as not-being or deficiency.
And how can the nature of bodies, and the matter on which they are founded, be non-existent, mountains and rocks and all the earth in its solidity? All things that offer resistance, and compel by their impacts the things struck by them, attest their existence. Suppose someone were to say: ‘How can things which exercise no pressure or force and offer no resistance, and are not even visible, be existent, and really existent? (III.6.6.33-38)

And in III.6.7, he responds that matter:

… is not soul or intellect or life or form or rational formative principle or limit – for it is unlimitedness – or power – for what does it make? – but, falling outside all these, it could not properly receive the title of being but would appropriately be called non-being … (III.6.7.7-11).333

Shortly after this passage he claims that matter “is lacking in all being” (III.6.7.20).

Second, on the issue of whether matter is a Form, say, Matter Itself, the issue does not seem settled by looking at the writings. Plato nowhere to my knowledge declares that Matter is a Form; however, if all matter has something in common by which we call it matter, then, using the formula given in Republic X for what Forms there are (see Republic X 596a-b; cf. VI 507b), Matter Itself is arguably a Form, according to Plato. More importantly for my thesis, however, Plotinus’ view on this issue is a bit curious prima facie, because he seems to state both that Matter Itself exists and also that it is not an Idea. In the following passage, obviously agreeing with the antecedent statement, Plotinus claims that matter must be a Form (or at least exist in the Intelligible Realm):

… if there is an intelligible universal order There, and this universe here is an imitation of it, and this is composite, and composed of matter, then there must be matter There too (II.4.4.7-9).335

But in the next passage, he states that Matter is not an Idea, as follows:

Does [the receptacle], then, come falsely into falsehood, and is what happens very much like the way in which the images of the faces seen in a mirror are perceived there as long as people look into it? … Here, certainly, the mirror itself is seen, for it, too, is a Form; but in the case of matter, since it is in no way a Form, it is not itself seen, for [if it was] it would have to be seen by itself, before the forms come to it … (III.6.13.34-36, 38-41).

We can reconcile these passages to one another by noting that he says in this latter passage “matter … is in no way a Form”. The matter I discussed in PTP § 6.1, SUPP § 13.2, and in this section, is what Plotinus’ matter qua Receptacle. I have also given a brief consideration that matter might be a Form for Plato as well. Thus, Plotinus holds that there is one kind of matter – the Form – that is in Intellect, and another kind – the Receptacle – that is invisible space where Form-copies enter and depart.

So, to conclude this subsection, Plato and Plotinus both hold that matter is the furthest entity away from the Good, and that matter is non-being.

Therefore, we’ve seen that they both believe that material things are becomers, i.e., constantly in the process of becoming or changing (§ 13.1); matter is the source of badness, in several different ways (§ 13.2), and matter is the furthest entity away from the Good (§ 13.3).

333 See also II.4.16, II.5.4, 5; cf. II.9.3, II.4.15, VI.1.26 and VI.3.7.
334 Gerson (1994: 101; citing III.8.11.1-5 and V.3.11) and Rist (1961: 163) argue that Plotinus holds that there is Intelligible matter.
335 See also more of II.4.4, as well as II.4.5, and V.8.7; cf. II.9.3.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I have given passages as evidence, and argued that Plato and Plotinus do not essentially differ on many claims related to the Good, Beauty, Nous/Intellecxt, God and gods, Forms/Ideas, the All-Soul, eternity and time, the individual soul, reincarnation, guardian spirits, eschatology, truth, meditation, divination, and matter.
## Appendix I: Plato and Plotinus’ Equivalent Expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PLATO’S EXPRESSIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>PLOTINUS’ EQUIVALENT EXPRESSIONS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Form/ Idea of Beauty, Beauty Itself, the Beautiful Itself, Absolute Beauty</td>
<td>Beauty There, The Beautiful Itself, Absolute Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nous, God (esp. in <em>Timaeus</em> and <em>Laws</em>), Demiurge, Intellectual-Principle, The All (IV.8.4, V.3.15, V.4.2), Divine-Mind, Divine Intelligence, Divine-Intellection, “There,” Intellect, All Things, Kronos (V.1.7), Saturn, Zeus (sometimes – see IV.4.10), Being, Authentic Being, the region of the Primals, the Second Hypostasis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms, Beings, the X Itself, X-ness, Absolute X</td>
<td>Forms, Beings, Existents, the X Itself, X-ness, Absolute X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Soul, Soul of the Universe, Soul of the All, Divine Soul, Zeus, the “third” of Letter II (312d-313a)</td>
<td>All-Soul, Universal Soul, Soul of the All, Cosmic Soul, World Soul, Zeus (V.1.7), Demiurge (sometimes), Jupiter (IV.4.10), the Third Hypostasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual soul, our soul</td>
<td>Individual soul, our soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universe, cosmos, the All (τὸ πᾶσαν in Greek), sensible realm or region, realm of becoming or opinion, all things, matter</td>
<td>Universe, all things (lower case), matter, “Here,” the All (II.3.16, IV.3.20, IV.4.32, and V.5.12)</td>
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Appendix II: Claims About Which Both Plato And Plotinus Concur

1. One can have an ultimate experience that gives its experiencer the ultimate answers to the most significant philosophical questions (PPMEE § 1.2).
2. The ultimate experience is everlasting and self-sustaining (PPMEE § 1.3).
3. The ultimate experience is difficult and rare (PPMEE § 1.4).
4. The ultimate experience is ineffable (PPMEE § 1.5).
5. There are certain requirements for the ultimate experience (PPMEE § 1.6).
6. Intellect/Nous/Being has wisdom (PPMEE § 2.2).
7. Humans become godlike with the aid of wisdom (PPMEE § 2.2).
8. Good humans are wise humans (PPMEE § 2.2).
9. Wisdom leads to or implies happiness (PPMEE § 2.2).
10. Wisdom implies contemplation and purity (PPMEE § 2.2).
11. Wisdom ensures the beneficial use of virtues (PPMEE § 2.2).
12. Ultimate knowledge is of the Good and the Good is the greatest thing to learn (PPMEE § 2.3.1).
13. The Good is the source of truth and knowledge (PPMEE § 2.3).
14. The Good is the unhypothesized principle or the topmost entity of the Divided Line Analogy (PPMEE § 2.3).
15. “Vision” and “touch” metaphors may be used to describe the experience of the Good (PPMEE § 2.3).
16. Knowledge of the Good is non-discursive (PPMEE § 2.3).
17. Paradoxically, knowledge of the Good may not be possible (PPMEE § 2.3).
18. (Pure or True) Knowledge has the Forms (and not perceptibles) as its objects (PPMEE § 2.3).
19. Theoretical knowledge has different objects and is more valuable than practical knowledge (PPMEE § 2.3).
20. Knowers are awake; opiners are dreamers (PPMEE § 2.3).
21. Knowledge is vastly superior to opinion (PPMEE § 2.3).
22. Dialectic is the most important part of philosophy and is the most certain way of attaining knowledge (PPMEE § 2.4).
23. The soul recollects what it already knows from the interlife (life between incarnations) and therefore rationalism is true (PPMEE § 2.5).
24. Prayer is useless without relevant action and right opinion (PPMEE § 2.6).
25. Opinion is inferior to knowledge and has perceptible objects as its cognitive object (PPMEE § 2.10).
26. Truth concerns Forms (not images), and attaining truth is valuable (SUPP Ch. 10).
27. Some activity akin to meditation is valuable to aid in gaining knowledge of the Good (SUPP Ch. 11).
28. Divination is possible (SUPP Ch. 12).
29. The (Form of the) Good is beyond being and is the source of the Forms’ existence (PTP § 1.1).
30. The Good is “in some sort” the cause of all things, seasons, years, the sun, earth, and so on (PTP § 1.2).
31. The Good is the cause of all that is right and beautiful, the authentic source of reason (PTP § 1.3).
32. The Good is the source of ethical truth (PTP § 1.4).
33. The One is interpretively equivalent to the Good [i.e., especially in Plato, the One of Parmenides’ First Hypothesis (Parmenides 137c-142b) is the Form of the Good] (PTP § 1.5).
34. The One is unlimited (PTP § 1.5.1).
35. The One will not be the same as another thing or itself, nor could it be different from itself or another thing (PTP § 1.5.2).
36. The One cannot be like or unlike itself or another (PTP § 1.5.3).
37. The One cannot have any other character distinct from being one (PTP § 1.5.4).
38. The One will not be equal or unequal to itself or to another (PTP § 1.5.5).
39. The One in no way partakes of being, and in no sense is (PTP § 1.5.6).

40. The One neither is one or is (PTP § 1.5.7).
41. The One is not named or spoken of (PTP § 1.5.8).
42. There cannot be knowledge, perception, or opinion of the One (PTP § 1.5.9).
43. The Good is sufficient for, complete, desirable and satisfying to all souls, and is an absolute good (SUPP § 1.1).
44. The Good is self-sufficient and perfect (SUPP § 1.2).
45. The Good or One is alternately referred to as the King (SUPP § 1.3).
46. Beauty is a Form (PTP § 2.1).
47. Beauty is similar to but not identical with the Good (PTP § 2.2).
48. One can have a transformative vision of Beauty (PTP § 2.3).
49. The imitator (artist, poet) of Beauty does not know how beautiful or ugly his imitations are (PTP § 2.4).
50. Perceptibly beautiful things partake of Beauty Itself; Beauty causes everything that is beautiful to be beautiful (SUPP § 2.1).
51. Those who do not recognize that the Form of Beauty exists are dreamers and not awake (SUPP § 2.2).
52. Nous is Being, the realm of the Forms, and has knowledge (PTP § 3.1.1).
53. Nous has intelligence, wisdom, life, soul and is (somehow) mutable (PTP § 3.1.2).
54. God is the creator (Nous) and is wise (PTP § 3.2.1).
55. The gods exist, are mindful of humans, and cannot be swayed from justice with prayers/sacrifices (PTP § 3.2.2).
56. There is a Demiurge (God, Nous, Creator) who created the visible universe using the Forms as paradigms (PTP § 3.3).
57. The three greatest kinds are Sameness, Difference, Being, Rest, and Motion (PTP § 3.4.5).
58. Nous is the ordering or containing principle of causation in the universe (SUPP § 3.1).
59. Nous is good and beautiful (SUPP § 3.2).
60. Nous is also named Kronos (and the All-Soul is also named Zeus) (SUPP § 3.3).
61. Nous is the One-Many (SUPP § 3.4).
62. It is possible to know God via philosophy (SUPP § 4.1).
63. God is good and is blameless in the choice of our lives (SUPP § 4.2).
64. God creates man as a toy; we should play our role well (SUPP § 4.3).
65. The stars are gods (though not all gods are stars) (SUPP § 4.4).
66. The universe is a perceptible god (SUPP § 4.5).
67. The gods follow Zeus (SUPP § 4.6).
68. The gods are good, beautiful, just and wise (SUPP § 4.7).
69. Humans are a possession or a toy for the gods (SUPP § 4.8).
70. Forms are eternal (SUPP § 5.1).
71. Forms are immutable (SUPP § 5.2).
72. Forms are immaterial (SUPP § 5.3).
73. Forms are accessible by Reason/Intelligence and are not propositions (SUPP § 5.4).
74. Forms are unities/each is one (SUPP § 5.5).
75. Forms are the cause of everything of that kind/Forms are what each thing really is (SUPP § 5.6).
76. The Forms “blend” (SUPP § 5.7).
77. Our words refer to Forms (SUPP § 5.8).
78. Forms are originals; perceptibles are images (SUPP § 5.9).
79. There are Forms of things done according to nature (SUPP § 5.10).
80. There are not “bad” Forms (SUPP § 5.11).
81. All-Soul must exist (PTP § 4.1).
82. The All-Soul’s source is Nous (PTP § 4.2).
83. The All-Soul circles, contemplates, and/or knows Nous (PTP § 4.3).
84. The All-Soul has upper and lower parts or phases; the upper circles Nous, and the lower are individual souls (PTP § 4.4).
85. The All-Soul is in time (PTP § 4.5).
86. The All-Soul is immaterial (SUPP § 6.1).
87. The All-Soul is good/not evil (SUPP § 6.2).
88. The All-Soul is in the center of the universe and is itself one (SUPP § 6.3).
89. The All-Soul has intelligence, forethought, and/or consciousness (SUPP § 6.4).
90. The All-Soul/Soul envelops the universal body (SUPP § 6.5).
91. The All-Soul is prior to body (SUPP § 6.6).
92. The All-Soul controls heaven itself (SUPP § 6.7).
93. The All-Soul governs/is sovereign over/cares for the universe (SUPP § 6.8).
94. The All-Soul contains love (SUPP § 6.9).
95. The Three Hypostases are the One, Nous, and Soul (PTP § 5.1).
96. Emanation is a metaphor for creation (PTP § 5.2).
97. Time is moving image of eternity (SUPP Ch. 7).
98. Individual souls are self-movers (SUPP § 8.1.1).
99. The individual soul is the source of life; soul uses the body as an instrument (SUPP § 8.1.2).
100. The individual soul is divine (SUPP § 8.1.3).
101. The number of souls remains constant (SUPP § 8.1.4).
102. The three parts of the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite) SUPP (§ 8.2.1).
103. Humans are mostly their soul or their reason; soul is the most divine thing about humans (SUPP § 8.2.2).
104. The soul is not an attunement or an accord with a body; the soul is affected by the body in some ways, and not in others (SUPP § 8.2.3).
105. Soul can rise to the level of Nous, be godly, and divine (or not) (SUPP § 8.2.4).
106. Reincarnation occurs; individuals can be reincarnated into animals and plants (SUPP § 9.1).
107. Guardian spirits exist and ensure that we carry out our pre-incarnation choice of life (SUPP § 9.2).
108. The Myth of Er roughly correctly describes the soul’s journey between lifetimes (SUPP § 9.3.1).
109. Good souls go to God or Nous (SUPP § 9.3.2).
110. Bad souls go to Hades to face judgment, be reincarnated, or go to Tartarus (SUPP § 9.3.3).
111. Punishment of bad souls is justified (SUPP § 9.3.4).
112. Punishment is necessary for the bad soul (SUPP § 9.3.5).
113. Matter [and/or space or place] is the Receptacle (PTP § 6.1).
114. Evil is a privation of goodness (PTP § 6.2.1).
115. Evil must always exist (PTP § 6.2.2).
116. Evil haunts our mortal nature (PTP § 6.2.3).
117. Material things are “becomers” (SUPP § 13.1).
118. Matter is the source of badness (SUPP § 13.2).
119. Matter is the furthest entity away from the Good (SUPP § 13.3).
120. Happiness is a direct result of or nothing other than wisdom and/or knowledge (PPMEE § 3.2).
121. Happiness is the possession of goodness and beauty; and the good are happy (PPMEE § 3.2).
122. Happiness is a direct result of or nothing other than possessing virtue(s) (PPMEE § 3.2).
123. Happiness occurs when Reason always guides the soul (PPMEE § 3.2).
124. Happiness is a state, disposition, or possession, as opposed to a process (PPMEE § 3.2).
125. Misfortunes do not affect the happy, good man (or the Sage) (PPMEE § 3.2).
126. Love is the child of Resource (πόρος) and Poverty (πενία) (and Love is the child of Aphrodite) (PPMEE § 3.3).
127. Love is midway between ignorance and wisdom (PPMEE § 3.3).
128. The lover of beauty wants beauty/good to be his own and gain happiness therefrom (PPMEE § 3.3).
129. The Ladder of Love details the way in which one may know beauty (PPMEE § 3.3).
130. Love can be either an irrational desire pursuing enjoyment of bodily beauty or a manifestation of the desire for the Good (PPMEE § 3.3).
131. Purification of the soul is an important requirement for one to advance on the philosophical path (PPMEE § 3.4).
132. Reverence and piety are important characteristics for us to possess (PPMEE § 3.4).
133. Philosophers are the best and happiest people (PPMEE § 3.5).
134. Philosophers are or attempt to be godlike (PPMEE § 3.5).
135. Philosophers are the best rulers (PPMEE § 3.5).
136. Philosophers have knowledge and virtue (PPMEE § 3.5).
137. Philosophers contemplate the Forms (PPMEE § 3.5).
138. Philosophers follow their Reason (PPMEE § 3.5).
139. Philosophers love learning and the truth (PPMEE § 3.5).
140. Philosophers practice asceticism and withdraw from the body (PPMEE § 3.5).
141. Philosophers experience the best pleasure (PPMEE § 3.5).
142. Philosophers care the least for wealth and reputation (PPMEE § 3.5).
143. Philosophers are rare (PPMEE § 3.5).
144. Philosophers practice the Method of Division (PPMEE § 3.5).
145. Philosophers practice pure (as opposed to merely applied) mathematics (PPMEE § 3.5).
146. Virtue is one (PPMEE § 3.5).
147. Full Virtue, or one’s possessing all virtue, is possible (PPMEE § 3.5).
148. Virtue and knowledge (PPMEE § 3.5).
149. Virtue is a good condition of the soul (PPMEE § 3.5).
150. Virtue is rare (PPMEE § 3.5).
151. Philosophic virtue is more valuable than civic virtue (PPMEE § 3.5).
152. Virtue is godlike (PPMEE § 3.5).
153. The virtuous are happy (PPMEE § 3.5).
154. We should pursue virtue (PPMEE § 3.5).
155. Justice is a Form (PPMEE § 3.5).
156. Divine and earthly providence is just (PPMEE § 3.5).
157. The just are godlike (PPMEE § 3.5).
158. Justice is a well-ordering of the soul, where one obeys Reason (PPMEE § 3.5).
159. We should be just (PPMEE § 3.5).
160. It is just for an offender to be punished (PPMEE § 3.5).
161. So-called bad things (poverty and disease) are good for the just person (PPMEE § 3.5).
162. Temperance is a mastering of oneself; i.e., not being overcome by passions and pleasures (PPMEE § 3.5).
163. Temperance is self-knowledge (PPMEE § 3.5).
164. The temperate are happy (PPMEE § 3.5).
165. Vice is a corrupt condition of the soul (a vicious soul is ignorant, seeks bodily pleasure, and lacks virtue) (PPMEE § 3.6).
166. Being vicious leads to unhappiness (PPMEE § 3.6).
167. Positive qualities may be corrupted or misused by the vicious soul (PPMEE § 3.6).
168. Ignorance is an evil condition of the soul; ignorance is being ruled/mastered by passion, pleasure, love and/or fear (PPMEE § 3.6).
169. It is impious to question the gods’ providence (PPMEE § 3.6).
170. Attachment to Self/Over-Concern for the Body is vicious (PPMEE § 3.6).
171. Music can influence the soul to appreciate the existence of abstract beings, and be a stepping-stone to gaining knowledge of the Good (PPMEE § 3.7).
172. True musicians are concerned with the Form of Harmony (PPMEE § 3.7).
173. Art (poetry, painting, sculpture) is an imitation (PPMEE § 3.8).
174. Artisans make imitations (PPMEE § 3.8).
175. Humans (within their Reason) desire the Good (PPMEE § 3.9).
176. Humans do actions (neither good nor bad things and actions, or good actions) for the sake of the Good (PPMEE § 3.9).
177. Animals and plants desire the Good to the extent possible (PPMEE § 3.9).
178. No one errs willingly (PPMEE § 3.10).
179. True pleasure is pleasure (or happiness) that results from knowing the Good (PPMEE § 3.11).
180. It is wrong to pursue bodily pleasures (i.e. bad pleasures) as the end of human life (PPMEE § 3.11).
Appendix III: Issues that Plato Discuss that Plotinus Does Not

1. Sophistry (its nature and methodology, sophistry v. philosophy, its incorrectness/viciousness, and its immorality) and sophists (Protagoras, Ion, Meno, Gorgias, and Sophist 268b-d)
2. The ideal state (Republic, Timaeus, and Laws)
3. Politics, the Statesman, and different forms of government (Republic, Statesman, Laws)
4. Neither good nor bad (“neutral”) souls go to Acheron after death (Phaedo)
5. The philosopher spends 1000 years between incarnations; the non-philosopher spends 10,000 years between incarnations (Phaedrus)
6. The Circle of the Same and of Difference (Timaeus)
7. The imitation of poetry, and poets’ lack of knowledge of the contents of their poems (Apology, Ion, Republic)
8. Friendship (Lysis)
9. Courage involves pleasures and pains (Laches and Laws I)
10. Courage is not the same thing as confidence (Protagoras and Meno)
11. Flattery uses pleasure to deceive the soul but ignores the good (Gorgias)
12. One cannot experience simultaneous pleasure and pain (Gorgias)
13. There are bad and good pleasures (and pains) (Gorgias) [but they both discuss true pleasure – see point 179 of Appendix II]
14. Pleasure follows pain (Phaedo)
15. There are three kinds of pleasure for the three parts of the Soul (Appetite – gain, wealth, profit; Spirit – honor, good reputation; Reason – wisdom) (Republic)
16. The order of truest to least true pleasure is the pleasure of Reason, Spirit, and Appetite, respectively (Republic)
17. There is a neutral state between pleasure and pain (Republic, Philebus, Laws)
18. It is not pleasant to reach the neutral state, but to go from the neutral state and reach pleasure (Republic)
19. The greatest pleasure for the mortal part of the soul is a pleasant smell (Republic, Timaeus, Philebus)
20. Pleasant odors and beautiful colors, learning are pure/true (moderate) pleasures; unlimited pleasures affect body and soul (Philebus)
21. What makes some pleasures and pains true and/or false is due to true or false hopes/expectations of attaining replenishment (Philebus)
22. In tragedies and comedies, they mix pleasure with pain (Philebus)
23. Pleasures/pains are mixed, whether the body is affected without the soul and vice versa (Philebus)
24. The cessations of all pains are not all pleasures; some are mixed with pains (Philebus)
Appendix IV: Issues that Plotinus Discusses that Plato Does Not

1. The Non-Duality of the Ultimate Experience (VI.9.3, 10, 11; VI.5.10; V.8.11; V.3.8, V.5.4, 8, 10; VI.7.34-37; and IV.4.2); addressed in PTP’s Conclusion.
2. The Good is self-love or simply love (VI.8.15); addressed in PPMEE § 3.3’s introduction.
3. The One or Good causes itself (VI.8.14); addressed in PTP § 1.1.
5. Nous is a number (III.8.9)
6. Nous thinks itself337 (II.9.1)
7. Nous knows the future (IV.4.12)
8. There are Forms of individuals (V.7); addressed in PTP’s Conclusion.
9. There is a Logos that administers to the material world and leaves the All-Soul to contemplate338 (III.2-3)
10. Gnostics and Gnosticism339 (II.9)
11. The relevance of Aristotle’s categories to the sensible realm (and their irrelevance to the intelligible realm) (VI.3)
12. The superiority of stars’ recollection over that of humans (IV.4.5)
13. The ability for humans to remember their past lives (IV.3.27, IV.3.32, and IV.4.2)
14. Guardian spirits have senses, memories, and emotions (III.5.6, IV.4.43)
15. Astrology (II.3)
16. Numbers (in some detail) (VI.6)
17. Magic’s effect on good and bad souls (IV.4)
18. Optics (Why Distant Objects Appear Small) (II.8)
19. Sight (in detail) (IV.5)
20. Potentiality versus Actuality (II.5)
21. Complete Transfusion of Material Substances (II.7)

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337 Though, note that Plato does claim that there is intelligence at the level of “real beings” (Sophist 249a-b), which can be interpreted as Nous (see PTP §§ 3.1.1, 3.1.2, and 3.2.1).


339 It is interesting to note that Plato seems to argue against the Gnostic position in the Republic and Timaeus, when he argues that we must look elsewhere other than the gods for the source of evil, and in the following passage in the Laws, where the Athenian says: “… we have to use some gentle persuasion on the man who believes the gods but thinks they are unconcerned about human affairs. ‘My splendid fellow,’ we’ll say, ‘your belief in the existence of gods probably springs from a kind of family tie between you and the gods that draws you to your natural kin and makes you honor them and recognize their existence. What drives you to impiety is the good fortune of scoundrels and criminals in private and public life – which in reality is not good fortune at all, although it is highly admired as such by popular opinion and its misplaced entusiasms: poetry and literature of every kind invest it with a pernicious glamour. Or perhaps you observe men reaching the end of their lives, full of years and honor, leaving behind them their children’s children, and your present disquiet is because you’ve discovered (either from hearsay or personal observation) a few of the many ghastly acts of impiety which (you notice) are the very means by which some of these people have risen from humble beginnings to supreme power and dictatorships. The result is that although by virtue of your kinship with the gods you’d clearly be reluctant to lay such things at their door, your mental confusion and your inability to find fault with them has brought you to your present predicament where you believe they exist, but despise and neglect human affairs. Now, we want to prevent your thoughts from becoming more impious than they are already; let’s see if argument will ward off the disease while it is still in its early stages. We must also try to make use of the original thesis we argued so exhaustively against the absolute atheist, by linking the next step in the exposition on to it.’” (Laws X 899d5-900c1; my emphasis).
Appendix V: A List of Plato’s Forms (As They Occur in the Dialogues)

Good (Cratylos 439c-d, Greater Hippias 287b-d, Phaedo 65d, 75d, 76d-77a, 100b, Republic V 476a, VI-VII 505a-b, 506d-507c, VII 517b-518a, 532a-534c, Parmenides 130b, 134c, 135c-d, Theaetetus 186a; cf., Philebus 15a, 61a)

Bad? (Republic V 475c-476a, Theaetetus 186a)

Beauty (Cratylos 416d-c, 439c-e, Euthydemus 300e-301a, Greater Hippias 286d-e, 287b-d, 289c-d, 292c-d, 295a-c, Phaedo 65d, 75d, 76d-77a, 78d-79a, 100b-c, Symposium 206c, 210e-211c, Republic V 475c-476d, 479a-b, 479c-480a, VI 493c-494a, 501b-c, 507b, Parmenides 130b, 131a, 134b-c, 135c-d, Theaetetus 186a, Phaedrus 249d-c, 254b, Sophist 258c; Statesman 293d-c; cf. Sophist 267c, Philebus 15a, 51d)

Ugly? (Euthydemus 301b, Greater Hippias 289c-d, Republic V 475c-476a, Theaetetus 186a)

Justice (Protagoras 330b-c, Greater Hippias 287c, Phaedo 65d, 75d, 76d-77a, Republic II 358c-d, V 476a, 479a, 479e, VI 501b, VII 517e, X 612a-b, Parmenides 130b, 131a, 135c-d, Phaedrus 247d, Philebus 62a; cf. Laws VI 757e)

Injustice? (Republic V 476a)

Holiness/Piety (Euthyphro 5d, 6d-c, Protagoras 330b-c, Phaedo 75d, 76d-77a, Republic V 476a)

Impiety? (Euthyphro 5d, 6d)

Temperance/Self-Control (Republic VI 501b-c, Phaedrus 247d, 254d; cf. Charmides 158cff)

Virtue (Protagoras 360e-361a, 361c, Meno 71a, 72a-73a, 74a-b, 79b-d, 87e, 100b, Laws XII 963c-d)

Health (Phaedo 65d, Meno 72d-e, in Metaph 79.11-15; cf., Philebus 15a)

Strength (Phaedo 65d, Meno 72e; cf., Philebus 15a)

Pleasure (Philebus 44c-45a)

Unity/Oneness/One Itself (Phaedo 101b-c, Republic VII 524d-525a, 525d-526b, Parmenides 129c-e, 130b, Theaetetus 185c-d)

Two Itself/Twoness (Phaedo 101b-c)

Numbers (Republic VII 525d-526a; Theaetetus 185c-d; cf. Philebus 56d-e)

Plurality (Phaedo 101b-c, Parmenides 129c-e, 130b)

Sameness/Likeness, Difference/Unlikeness (Euthydemus 301b-c, Parmenides 129a-c, 130b, 131a, 132d-133a, Theaetetus 185c-d, 186a, Timaeus 35a-b, Sophist 254d-255c, 256b-c, 258e-259b)

Motion/Change, Rest (Parmenides 129c, 130b, Sophist 252d, 254d; cf. Timaeus 57dff)

Being (Phaedrus 247c-e, Theaetetus 185c-d, 186a, Timaeus 27c-28a, 35a-b, Sophist 249d, 250b-c, 254a, 254c-d, 256d, 257a-b, 258a-b, 259a-b; cf. Cratylos 439c-d)

Knowledge (Parmenides 134a-d, Phaedrus 247d, Sophist 257c)

Truth (Parmenides 134a; cf. Cratylos 386c-e)

Equality (Phaedo 74a-75d, 78d-79a, Parmenides 131d, in Metaph 79.11-15)

Commensurate (in Metaph 79.11-15)

Oddness, Evenness (Phaedo 103c-104a; Theaetetus 185c-d)

Smallness (Republic VII 523e-524c, Parmenides 131d-e, Sophist 258c)

Smaller (Phaedo 75c)

Largeness/Greatness (Phaedo 100b, Republic V 479b, Parmenides 131a, 131c, 132a-b, Sophist 258c; cf. Republic VII 523e-524c)

Larger/Greater (Phaedo 75c)

Size (Meno 72c)

Square (Republic VI 510d)

Diagonal/Diameter [διάμετρος] (Republic VI 510d)

Heaviness, Lightness (Phaedo 75d, Republic V 479b; cf. Republic VII 523c-524c, Timaeus 62c)

Tallness, Shortness (Phaedo 65d, 100e-101b, 102a-103a; cf. 75d)

Hardness and Softness (Phaedo 75d, Republic VII 523c-524c, Theaetetus 186b; cf. Philebus 44d-e)

Thickness and Thinness (Phaedo 75d, Republic VII 523c-524c)

Heat and Cold (Phaedo 103c-e)
Earth, Fire, Air, and Water (*Timaeus* 51b-c); Fire (*Phaedo* 103c-e); Snow (*Phaedo* 103c-e)
Shape or Figure (*Meno* 74a-76a, *Philebus* 12c-13a)
Color (*Meno* 74c, *Philebus* 12c; cf. *Philebus* 51d)
Ideal State (*Republic* IX 592a-b)
Bed (*Republic* X 596a-597d)
Table (*Republic* X 596a-b)
Shuttle (*Cratylus* 389a-390b)
Cutting, Burning (*Cratylus* 387a)
Awl (and other tools) (*Cratylus* 389c)
Master, Slave (*Parmenides* 133c)
Life Itself/Living Thing (*Phaedo* 106d, *Timaeus* 37c-d, 39e, 92c)
Man and Ox (*Philebus* 15a)
All kinds of furniture, all plants that grow from the earth, all animals (including the Demiurge), the earth itself, the heavens, the gods, all the things in the heavens and in Hades beneath the earth (*Republic* X 596c)
Sounds? (*Philebus* 51d)

He implies that there are Forms of:

Courage (*Laches* 192b-c)
Doubleness and Halfness (*Republic* V 479b; cf. *Meno* 82b-86a)
Surface and Solidity (*Meno* 76a)
Appendix VI: A List of Plotinus’ Forms (As They Occur in The Enneads)

Bad? (VI.7.19, VI.1.9-10, VI.3.11, VI.3.19)
Beauty (I.3.1, I.6.2, VI.9.1, V.8.8-9, VI.6.8, VI.6.14, VI.7.33, VI.7.42, VI.1.10, VI.3.11, III.5.1)
Ugly? (VI.7.19, VI.1.9-10, VI.3.11, VI.3.19)
Justice/Rightness (I.6.4, IV.7.7, V.1.11, V.5.1, V.6.6, V.8.10, VI.6.6, VI.6.8, VI.6.14, VI.7.33, VI.2.18; cf. II.3.8)
Temperance/ Sophrosune (I.6.6, VI.7.33, VI.2.18)
Courage (I.6.6)
Magnanimity (I.6.6)
Virtue (I.2.1, I.2.6, I.6.1, I.8.8-10, VI.9.1, VI.7.27; cf. I.2.3, II.9.15)
Health (VI.9.1, VI.1.10)
Duality/Two Itself/Twoness (VI.6.14)
Quantity (V.9.10, V.1.4, II.4.13, V.5.5, VI.6.16, VI.1.4, VI.3.11)
Number(s) (V.9.10, V.1.4, V.5.5, VI.6.8, VI.6.14-15, VI.1.4)
Ideal Principle of the Universe (III.6.18)
Reality (II.6.1)
Being (VI.9.2, V.1.4, II.4.13, II.6.1, II.6.1, VI.6.4, VI.6.8, VI.6.6, VI.6.15, VI.7.6, VI.7.8, VI.1.8, VI.2.1-2, VI.2.7-8, VI.2.11, VI.2.18, VI.3.6, III.7.5)
Sameness/Identity (V.9.10, V.1.4, II.6.1, VI.6.13, VI.2.8, VI.3.2, VI.3.22)
Difference/Otherness (V.9.10, V.1.4, II.6.1, VI.6.13, VI.2.8, VI.2.22, VI.3.2, VI.3.22)
Motion/Movement (V.9.10, V.1.4, II.6.1, VI.6.6, VI.1.16, VI.2.7-8, VI.2.18, VI.3.22, VI.3.27)
Rest (V.9.10, V.1.4, II.6.1, VI.2.7-8, VI.2.18, VI.3.27)
Qualities (V.9.10, V.1.4, II.4.13, VI.1.10)
Wisdom (I.6.6)
Knowledge (VI.1.10)
Intelligence (VI.4.3)
Equality (VI.1.8)
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