

# Problems of the lower soul in Plotinus: Defining its powers and its origin

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Although there is no real distinction in the soul in the metaphysics of Plotinus, discussing the activities of the individual souls, he does distinguish between higher and lower soul. Reading the Enneads, however, we face at least two major problems concerning the two kinds of soul. (i) Given that Plotinus uses the faculty psychology as well, how can we establish the border between the two kinds of soul in respect of the psychic powers? (ii) Some texts tell us that the lower soul stems from the higher soul, while others trace back to the World Soul. Does Plotinus necessarily have an inconsistent view on the lower soul's origin, or can we reconcile the two views somehow? First, I will present these two issues in more detail and their two main interpretations. Then, I am going to analyse passages of various topics, such as the emergence of desire (IV. 4 [28] 20), the possible extent of purification (I. 2 [19] 5), and the effect of magic on the soul (IV. 4 [28] 43–44). I shall argue that the crucial difference between the two kinds of soul is the ability to make free choices, which allows us to distinguish them in terms of psychic activities. On the basis of this, I intend to show that the lower soul does not originate from the World Soul strictly speaking. Instead, Plotinus uses this claim to demonstrate that certain aspects of us, including some psychic activities as well as moral character and practical life in general, cannot be under our rational control entirely, but they are subjected to the necessity of the cosmos.

### KEYWORDS

Plotinus, lower soul, higher soul, World Soul, powers of the soul, free choice, necessity, magic, practical life

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## INTRODUCTION

In Plotinus' multi-layered metaphysics, each ontological level presents its own set of problems. Among them, the soul may be the most difficult case due to its 'amphibious' nature (IV 8. 4. 32) as both an inhabitant of the sensible and intelligible worlds, and the abundance of different types of souls found in the *Enneads*. I will address two main problems. Firstly, I will examine how to connect the different descriptions of the soul in Plotinus, as presented by the faculty psychology, and the distinction between the higher and lower soul. In addition, the paper will also explain how we can establish the border between the two kinds of soul in respect of the psychic powers. Secondly, Plotinus appears to hold conflicting views on the origin of the lower soul: some texts suggest that it originates from the World Soul, while others trace it back to the higher rational soul. I shall argue that the crucial difference between the two kinds of soul in the embodied life is the ability to make free choices, which allows us to distinguish them in terms of psychic activities. I assume that this distinction can resolve the problem of the lower soul's origin as well: the lower soul does not originate from the World Soul strictly speaking; instead, Plotinus uses this claim to demonstrate that our certain aspects, including some psychic activities as well as moral character and practical life in general, cannot be under our rational control entirely, but they are subjected to the necessity of the cosmos.

Chapter I will give an overview of the problems related to the lower soul and present two major directions of the interpretation of Plotinus' philosophy of the soul and their associated problems. Chapter II discusses the relevant facets of Plotinus' theory of desire and purification in order to show how the two souls relate to and differ from each other. Chapter III will examine Plotinus' claim in IV 4 that we 'participate in the soul of All', taking into account his ideas on magic and practical life. Chapter IV will present my solution based on the earlier discussed passages to the aforementioned problems and deals with some possible objections.

Before proceeding, a few restrictions must be imposed due to the ramifications of the topic. As the primary focus is on the cooperation and conflicts of the higher and lower soul, I shall not dwell on Plotinus' notorious 'undescended soul'. Furthermore, I am going to use 'lower soul' and 'irrational soul', like 'higher soul' and 'rational soul', interchangeably throughout since I see no significant difference in meaning between them. Although free choice will play a central role in this discussion, it will only be referred to in so far as it is relevant to the topic at hand due to the fact that freedom and human autonomy is a vast and rather complex issue in the *Enneads*.

### I.

First of all, it is worth outlining the main and firmly established points of Plotinus' philosophy of the soul. Speaking about the soul, he does not concentrate on some set of individual souls, instead, he supposes that the soul, following the Intellect as the paradigm, has to be regarded as a general realm in metaphysics. It is called in the literature 'hypostasis soul' or simply 'Soul'. The relationship between the individual souls and the Soul, following the Intellect as the paradigm again, is described with reference to the relationship between genus and species (IV 8. 3. 6–21; VI 2. 22. 23–29). Two things follow from this special kind of relationship. First, the individual souls conceived as species actually can be regarded as one in the Soul as genus: it is Plotinus'



astounding view of the unity of all souls.<sup>1</sup> Plotinus explains this special unity and part-whole relationship by the analogy of science and its theorems (IV 9. 5). Even if parts derive from the whole, the whole will not be diminished, unlike bodily entities, and although every theorem as a part is just one item, they contain potentially all the other parts.<sup>2</sup> Second, because the World Soul is also just one individual soul among the others and not the genus itself, the individual souls cannot be derived from the World Soul and are not the part of it in any sense.<sup>3</sup> In the early treatise entitled *On Destiny*, the primary motivation for rendering our individual souls independent of the World Soul is to preserve the human autonomy (III 1. 4). According to Plotinus, if the World Soul accomplished everything in the world, as ‘everything is moved as a part in the way in which the whole directs it’ (ἐκάστου τὰυτη κινουμένου ὡς μέρος, ἢ τὸ ὅλον ἄγει), this situation would be similar to a plant. The plant has the principle in its root that directs the growth of the other parts of the plant. The greatest problem with this theory is that ‘this excess of necessity’ (τοῦτο τὸ σφοδρὸν τῆς ἀνάγκης) eliminates even the chain of causes, and thus we would be directed by the World Soul in such an immediate way as we direct our parts of body. Moreover, as another consequence of this theory, even our decisions would not be our own, but they would be the reasonings of ‘another’ (ἐτέρου λογισμοὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα βουλευόμενα). Thus, our agency would only be equivalent to the action of our feet kicking. (As another corollary of this theory, bad actions would have to be attributed to the All, too.)<sup>4</sup> If we turn to the individual souls, it becomes apparent that Plotinus divides both the World Soul and the human souls into a lower and a higher soul, but it would be misleading to assume that the distinction signifies two really independent entities. Rather, Plotinus sees the soul as a ‘continuous’ entity due to the assumption that the lower soul is unable to exist without the higher soul. However, it is important to recognize that Plotinus does not only make a distinction between the lower and the higher soul, but he also relies on it in his psychology and metaphysics. I think there are at least two major problems to be faced concerning the lower soul: how to define exactly its boundary from the higher soul and specify its origin. To elucidate these two problems, I would like to outline the two major approaches to Plotinus’ psychology.

H. J. Blumenthal argued influentially that Plotinus refers to the Platonic tripartition only in ethical context, but when he deals with scientific psychology, he adopts the Aristotelian faculty psychology rather.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the bulk of Blumenthal’s analysis consists in the identification of the various faculties that is the leading principle of his presentation of Plotinus’ psychology. Although Blumenthal notices the duality of the higher and the lower soul,<sup>6</sup> it is an unavoidable consequence of his approach that this distinction is pushed into the background. He also argues

<sup>1</sup>Plotinus defends this view already in his early *If all souls are one* (IV 9). Although this question is not discussed specifically later, there is no evidence to suggest that Plotinus rejected this view over time. For the unity of all souls, see KARFIK (2014) 110–112. For Platonists, the genus has ontological priority over the species, see CALUORI (2015) 70–78.

<sup>2</sup>For a thorough analysis of this analogy, see TORNAU (1998) 95–104.

<sup>3</sup>Plotinus’ most elaborate argumentation for this position is in IV 3. 1–8.

<sup>4</sup>For this passage, see CALUORI (2015) 22–25.

<sup>5</sup>BLUMENTHAL (1971a) 21–25.

<sup>6</sup>Blumenthal rightly stresses that the lower soul is only the image of the higher soul that indicates its subordination to the higher soul, see BLUMENTHAL (1971a) 15.



that despite the independence of the individual souls of the World Soul, the vegetative soul, the desiring power in humans, still comes from it.<sup>7</sup> The view that the lower soul comes from the World Soul is more strongly supported by F. Karfik, who not only maintains that the vegetative soul originates from the World Soul in the *Enneads*, but also that Plotinus had this view throughout his *oeuvre*. Accordingly, Karfik describes the human soul as the cooperation of the World Soul and the individual soul the ‘border’ of which is sense perception as judgement.<sup>8</sup>

The other approach is presented by D. Caluori, who published recently a comprehensive work on Plotinus’ philosophy of the soul.<sup>9</sup> Caluori asserts that the lower soul exclusively originates from the higher soul and, furthermore, dedicates an entire chapter in his book to tackle a challenging passage (IV 3. 27 ff.) in order to prove that the lower soul does not stem from the World Soul. At the same time, he does not find proper the exposition of Plotinus’ psychology that is based on the division by faculties. Instead, he thinks that the Stoic ruling part was the model for Plotinus in his psychology which he transformed into his ‘faculty of presentation’. Taking it as a starting point, he also argues that the lower soul is actually identifiable with this faculty.<sup>10</sup> In my view, Caluori offers, similarly to Blumenthal, a one-sided interpretation by identifying the lower soul with the faculty of representation (φαντασία). Even if we do not consider the role of the faculty psychology as dominant as Blumenthal does, it is hard to deny its presence in Plotinus. The clearest example is Chapter 23 in IV 3, where Plotinus, in a specific Platonic manner, makes a connection between the different bodily parts and the different powers of the soul. Thus, the question at hand is how to relate the faculty psychology and the distinction between the rational and irrational soul to each other. Putting it another way, what is the answer to the question of which capacity can be attributed to the lower soul and which one to the higher.

More importantly, the *Enneads* seem to contain contradictory views on the origin of the lower soul. In his early and late period alike, Plotinus tells us that the soul creates its image (εἰδωλον) – that is, the lower soul – and he also defines the limits of this image in the terms of psychic powers, marking sense perception and the vegetative power as its highest and lowest boundaries respectively (I 1. 8. 9–23; V 2. 1. 18–2. 10).<sup>11</sup> An unbiased reading of these texts suggests that ‘soul’ here is used in a general sense, although I think that most probably it refers to the individual rational soul. The problems arise when Plotinus specifies which soul is the source of this image. On the one hand, some texts state that the lower soul is produced by the higher soul and describe their relationship with the language of the double activity: the lower soul proceeds from the higher soul and, being the external activity of the higher soul, depends on its

<sup>7</sup>BLUMENTHAL (1971b) 62–63.

<sup>8</sup>KARFIK (2014) 124–127.

<sup>9</sup>CALUORI (2015).

<sup>10</sup>CALUORI (2015) 163–171.

<sup>11</sup>There are more images (εἰδωλα) mentioned in I 1.8. 17–18, but I do not believe that this wording has any importance.



source (III 4. 3. 21–4. 2; IV 5. 7. 49–62).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, *pace* Caluori, there are other passages in which the origin of the lower soul goes back to the World Soul, as Plotinus clearly claims that ‘we stated that, since we are in the All, we have something from the soul of the whole’ (IV 3. 7. 25–26).<sup>13</sup> The passage which most explicitly discusses it is the following:

**T1** “Why, then, does not the nutritive power also come from our soul? Because what is nourished is a part of the whole, that which also is passively perceptive, but the perception which judges with reason belongs to the individual, and there was no need for this to shape that which had its shaping from the whole.” (IV 9. 3. 24–28)<sup>14</sup>

Although the vegetative power is the most obvious way to understand the nourishing part here, I think that these two cannot be so easily equated, rather, the nourishing part seems to be a more complex psychic component which somehow also involves sense perception. Given this, the boundaries of the nourishing part appear to overlap the image of the soul mentioned above, and therefore both of them refer probably to the same thing. I return to this text later in Chapter IV.

The *crux interpretum* for both interpretations is Plotinus’ allegory of the two Heracles, which further complicates this blatant contradiction. In his *On Difficulties about the Soul* (IV 3–IV. 5), after arguing that memory does not belong to the composite but only to the soul, Plotinus goes on to examine whether memory belongs to the soul ‘which we call the more divine, by which we are ourselves’, or to ‘the other which comes from the Whole’ (IV 3. 27. 1–3).<sup>15</sup> Plotinus illustrates the two types of soul with the two Heracles of the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 11. 601–602) and notes that while the image (εἶδωλον) of Heracles in the Hades remembers ‘all that has been done in life’, we do not know what Heracles himself would say without the image (IV 3. 27. 7–14) when, as the *Odyssey* told us, ‘he is among the immortal gods’. Much later, Plotinus returns to the question of the memory of Heracles himself after death, and it becomes clear that Heracles himself is the rational soul in disembodied state, contemplating the Intellect (IV 3. 32. 24 – IV 4. 1. 4). Nevertheless, Plotinus, in examining the memory of the embodied soul, pays attention to the distinction between the two souls all the time, which is shown by the fact that both possess

<sup>12</sup>The theory of the double activity is the fundamental explanatory model in Plotinus’ metaphysics. In a nutshell, a thing’s very essence consists in its internal activity from which proceeds an external activity. The latter is merely an imperfect imitation of the former and is entirely dependent on its source. Plotinus’ most illuminating example of the double activity is the relationship between light and luminous body (IV 5. 6. 1–7. 44). The most detailed philosophical analysis of this theory is offered by EMILSSON (2007) 22–68.

<sup>13</sup>Καί τι ἔφαμεν ἔχειν ἐν τῷ παντί ὄντες τῆς τοῦ ὅλου ψυχῆς [...].

<sup>14</sup>Διὰ τί οὖν οὐ καὶ παρὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς τὸ θρεπτικόν; ὅτι τὸ τρεφόμενον μέρος τοῦ ὅλου, ὃ καὶ παθητικῶς αἰσθητικόν, ἢ δὲ αἰσθησις ἢ κρίνουσα μετὰ νοῦ ἐκάστου, ἢ οὐδὲν ἔδει πλάττειν τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὅλου τὴν πλάσιν ἔχον. All translations are based on ARMSTRONG (1966–1988). I also consulted with GERSON (2018) and GÜRTLER (2015).

<sup>15</sup>Ἀλλὰ τίνας ψυχῆς, τῆς μὲν λεγομένης ὑφ’ ἡμῶν θειοτέρας, καθ’ ἣν ἡμεῖς, τῆς δὲ ἄλλης τῆς παρὰ τοῦ ὅλου;



somehow the power of representation (IV 3. 31. 1–2).<sup>16</sup> As it turns out later in the treatise, the simile of the image quite exactly depicts what kind of memories the lower soul has. Plotinus claims that it is the best for the higher soul to be freed from the memories of the lower soul, even from those as noble as friends, family or one's own country (IV 3. 32. 1–2). Similarly to the earlier remark on the memory of the image of Heracles, it implies that the lower soul's memory is actually autobiographical. The other occurrence of the image of the two Heracles is in Chapter 12 in the *What is Living Being and What is Man?* (I 1). Plotinus here, with Plato's eschatological myths in mind, poses the question of how the soul can be judged and punished in any sense at all, if it is faultless. He offers the solution by saying that the subject of the punishment is not the soul as a completely simple thing (ἐν ἀπλοῦν πάντη) but the soul that becomes compound (σύνθετος) by the addition of the other form of the soul (τὸ ἄλλο ψυχῆς εἶδος) to the original rational one. Plotinus spells out their connection in the compound differently by referring to the other form of the soul as an image (εἶδωλον) and also says that the inclination of the rational soul is nothing but the illumination towards the bodily world (ἡ νεῦσις ἔλλαμψις πρὸς τὸ κάτω). Plotinus uses the language of the double activity to show also that the existence of the image depends on the rational soul: when the latter as a whole looks to the intelligible world instead of the sensible world, the image simply does not exist any longer. After that Plotinus turns to the passage in the *Odyssey* and tries to explain why the poet portrayed Heracles in such a way. What really matters to us now is that, despite the philosophical problem in Homer's description, Plotinus assumes that the image of Heracles illustrates the image of the rational soul. Comparing these passages, we see that even in describing the image of Heracles in the *Odyssey* Plotinus speaks of two different origins in the same manner: in IV 3 this soul stems from the World Soul, while in the later I 1 it is the external activity of the rational soul.<sup>17</sup>

However, one may argue that the allegory of Heracles and the notion of lower soul as the image of the soul or the external activity of the rational soul are not necessarily interchangeable due to their differing contexts: they intend to grasp something very different, that is, the image of the soul is connected to the 'scientific' faculty-psychology, while the image of Heracles has an ethical relevance only. Although they certainly emphasize different aspects, I am not sure that making such a strict distinction is appropriate. Plotinus uses the terminology of the 'image' in both cases and there are also other significant points that connect them. In IV 3, the soul represented by the image of Heracles has memories, and therefore it necessarily has power of

<sup>16</sup>I used the expression 'somehow' intentionally above because it is not obvious whether we should speak of two really distinct faculties or whether some other, less literal, interpretation is preferable. I cite just a few examples. One part of the scholars accepts the literal interpretation of the texts by supposing that there are actually two faculties of representation. For example, this view is held by BLUMENTHAL (1971a) 87–95, who also attempts to solve the philosophical problems arising from the duplicity and to give an account for Plotinus' motivations. Nyvlt also presents the view of the two faculties with less explanations, see NYVLT (2009) 142–147. Other scholars, in turn, assume that there is only one single faculty of representation and its duplicity should be understood differently. Gritti suggests that there are not two distinct faculties but rather two different approaches to the same faculty, see GRITTI (2005) 257–258. Perdikouri states that there is only one faculty of representation but distinguishes two types of representations: representation in the proper sense and a quasi-representation (cf. III 6. 4. 20–23), see PERDIKOURI (2016) 220–224. The limitations of space do not allow me to expand further this issue.

<sup>17</sup>Plotinus mentions, without referring explicitly to the two Heracles, the image and the Hades also in VI 4. 16. 36–47. However, since this passage is even more obscure than we see in Plotinus usually, we cannot make too much use of it. For the double Heracles in Plotinus see also PÉPIN (1971) 174–178.



representation as well, because this power is responsible for memories. The power of representation is defined as ‘where sense perception ends’ (εἰς ὃ λήγει ἡ αἴσθησις, IV 3. 29. 25), which means that representation presupposes sense perception. On the other hand, sense perception cannot be present in a living being without vegetative power. Moreover, in I 1, the image of Heracles shares the same name as the earlier mentioned ‘images’ that start from sense perception: ‘the other form of the soul’ (I 1. 8. 19–20).<sup>18</sup>

Thus, we can see that the two main lines of interpretation encounter further problems, added to those already presents. Accepting Blumenthal’s approach, even if we suppose that desires should always be accompanied by representation, it is still necessary to explain how the vegetative power can possess autobiographical memory if we identify the vegetative power (or, in a more complex living being, desiring power) with the soul that stems from the World Soul.<sup>19</sup> Accepting Caluori’s interpretation, we are faced with other challenges. To explain the lower soul’s derivation from the World Soul in IV 3. 27, he identifies the ‘more divine soul’, i.e. Heracles himself, with the lower soul and assumes that the image of Heracles illustrates another type of soul, which he calls the ‘inferior soul’, in contrast to the ‘lower soul’ used so far.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned neglect of the texts in which the lower soul is clearly derived from the World Soul, Caluori unexpectedly introduces here a completely new type of soul that, being without parallel, does not fit into any description of the human soul found in the *Enneads*.

After all these, it is evident that there are many difficulties and at least one obvious contradiction in Plotinus’ view on the lower soul. First, given their points of connection, how can we relate the faculty psychology to the distinction between the higher soul and the lower soul, represented by the two Heracles? Second, related to this, how can we demarcate the two souls in the terms of the psychic powers? Third, why is the lower soul, which covers both psychic activities and the image of Heracles, derived from the World Soul in some passages, while in others it is the external activity of the rational soul that is in fact inseparable from its source? Is Plotinus inconsistent at this point or are the two views still compatible somehow? It would be a valid but simplified answer to say that the soul as one entity makes everything in Plotinus, and

<sup>18</sup>The phrase is borrowed from the *Timaeus* (69c5–d6), where the lesser gods give ‘the other form of the soul’ (ἄλλο τε εἶδος [...] ψυχῆς [...] τὸ θνητόν) to the vehicle of ‘the immortal principle of the soul’ (ἀρχὴν ψυχῆς ἀθάνατον). This form of the soul is the mortal one that has ‘terrible and necessary affections in itself’ (δεινὰ καὶ ἀναγκαῖα ἐν ἑαυτῷ παθήματα ἔχον) such as pleasure, pain, and anger. The lesser gods also blended the ‘irrational sense perception and desire that is ready to attempt everything’ (αἰσθήσει δὲ ἀλόγῳ καὶ ἐπιχειρητῇ παντὸς ἐρωτὶ συγκερασάμενοι ταῦτα) to accomplish this mortal part. Plotinus explains the philosophical meaning of this Platonic text in the late *On whether the Stars are causes* (II 3. 9. 6 ff.) by saying that ‘these statements bind us to the stars, from which we get a soul, and subject us to necessity when we come down here; from them we get our characters, our characteristic actions, and our emotions, coming from a disposition which is liable to emotion [...]’ (Οὗτοι γὰρ οἱ λόγοι συνδέουσι ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἄστροις παρ’ αὐτῶν ψυχὴν κομιζομένους καὶ ὑποτάττουσι τῇ ἀνάγκῃ ἐνταῦθα ἰόντας· καὶ ἦθη τοίνυν παρ’ αὐτῶν καὶ κατὰ τὰ ἦθη πράξεις καὶ πάθη ἀπὸ ἕξεως παθητικῆς οὐσίας [...]). Interestingly enough, here Plotinus traces back ‘the other form of the soul’ to the stars and connects it with the necessity in the world, suggesting a causal relationship between the two. I think that my interpretation will be able to account for this passage as well.

<sup>19</sup>For example, King, in line with Blumenthal’s approach, identifies unhesitatingly the image of Heracles with the vegetative/desiring power. King believes that due to the inseparability of the two souls the distinction between them is only ethical: throughout life, the vegetative soul is driven by the desire for food and so, the care of the body. Later, King also notes that the memory of the image is autobiographical. See KING (2009) 157–162. I think that this way of understanding still faces the problem about how the vegetative soul can possess autobiographical memory.

<sup>20</sup>See CALUORI (2015) 171–179.



so these contradictory claims only emphasize the different aspects of its work;<sup>21</sup> instead, I prefer to take this contradiction seriously and try to find a solution to it. Since the conflicting texts listed above do not provide answer to these problems by themselves, I will focus on other passages from the *Enneads*. Some of these passages deal with the communication and differences between the two types of the soul from ethical and moral psychological perspectives (Chapter II), while others explain in greater detail what it means to be the part of the World Soul (Chapter III). I aim to demonstrate that these various contexts enable us to develop an interpretation that sheds more light on the link between Plotinus' different approaches to the lower soul. This interpretation will assist in resolving, at least to some extent, the contradiction in its origin.

## II.

I think that the best starting point for our investigation is the Plotinus' theory of desire since it shows very clearly how the body and the different powers of the soul work together. Speaking of body in desire, however, he refers to a special kind of body, namely the so-qualified body. According to Plotinus, the body of a living being receives the trace of soul from nature thanks to which it becomes able to undergo states that the lifeless body cannot: pleasure and pain (IV 4. 18 – 19. 4). When analysing the pain thoroughly, Plotinus lays great emphasis on the impassibility of the power of sense perception. He claims that exclusively the body suffers the affection, while the knowledge of this affection belongs to the perceptive soul which reports (*ἀπαγγέλλει*) the condition of the body 'to that in which the perceptions ends' (IV 4. 19. 4–7).<sup>22</sup> If we attributed the pain to the perceptive soul as well, we would be unable to localise the pain due to the omnipresence of the soul in the body, and, therefore, as a messenger (*ἄγγελος*), sense perception would not report it or would be an unsound messenger (IV 4. 19. 12–29). Moving on to desire, Plotinus distinguishes four steps in its emergence (IV 4. 20. 3–20): (i) the so-qualified body as the subject of bodily affection reaches a state of lack which is painful to itself, and strives for the opposite state; (ii) nature comes to know the full-fledged desire (*τὴν τρανὴν ἐπιθυμίαν*); (iii) sense perception comes to know the representation; (iv) finally, starting from this representation, the rational soul, whose task is to provide what is desired, decides whether to provide or resist (*ἢ πορίζει ἢ ψυχὴ [...] ἢ ἀντιτείνει*) without paying attention to what started the desire and to that which is desired afterwards. As for (ii) and (iii), I suppose there are two possible interpretations. Emilsson presents the first one by saying that nature has a kind of awareness of the state of the body that involves a formation of representation and that sense perception has consciousness of this representation. Answering the question why the role of sense perception is not superfluous here, Emilsson differentiates nature's quasi-conscious representation from the real consciousness of sense perception: we become conscious of our bodily desires only by

<sup>21</sup>For example, this strategy employed by Blumenthal later in his book, when he exposes the problem of the lower soul's origin in a different form than I have presented it, see BLUMENTHAL (1971a) 27–30. Tornau distinguishes clearly between the works of the individual soul and the World Soul (which will be referred to in Chapter IV), but he, too, ultimately reaches the above-mentioned conclusion, see TORNAU (2016) 157.

<sup>22</sup>As a parallel text shows (IV 3. 29. 25), this term refers to the faculty of representation. At this point, I suppose, the whole soul, including both the lower and the higher soul, become conscious of the bodily pain, because representation serves as their connecting point. I will return to its explanation at a later point.



the latter type.<sup>23</sup> The other option, as I see it, is that (ii) and (iii) are the two aspects of the same process: the articulation of the body's unarticulated defective state into a full-fledged desire, on the one hand, and becoming conscious of the desire, on the other. This approach is supported by the argument that it is unreasonable to speak of desire without sense perception, like in the case of anger (IV 4. 28. 59–64), since otherwise nature would be similar to the vegetative power in plants; thus the activity of nature and that of sense perception are in fact inseparable.<sup>24</sup> I think the reason why sense perception was mentioned here separately is that representation is the connecting point between the lower soul, represented here by nature, and the rational soul.

To the question of why we should assume two desires instead of just the one which belongs to the so-qualified body, Plotinus answers that if nature and so-qualified body are different and the nature makes the so-qualified body, then

T2 “[...] it is necessary that nature should not begin desire; but it must be the so-qualified body which is affected in particular ways and feels pain in desiring the opposite of what it experiences, pleasure instead of suffering and sufficiency instead of want; but nature is like a mother, trying to make out the wishes of the sufferer, and attempting to set it right and bring it back to herself; and, searching for the remedy, she attaches herself by her search to the desire of the sufferer, and the consummation of the desire passes from the body to nature. So one might say, perhaps, that the desiring comes from the body itself – one might call it proto-desire and pre-desire – but that nature desires from and through something else, and it is another soul which provides what is desired or does not.”<sup>25</sup> (IV 4. 20. 26–36)

What is affected and needs acquiring the opposite state is the so-qualified body, but this would be impossible without the help of nature. The simile of the mother intends to illuminate what role nature plays in the satisfaction of the need of the body. Although it was not actually the mother who had the desire as result of affection, she identifies herself with her child's need through empathy, and the mother's reaction is necessary to relieve her child from suffering. Nature's desire, then, has second-order character, which consists in articulating the unspecified desire of the body by finding its remedy; however, nature's desire is necessary in order to speak of real desire at all since the state of the body is only considered a proto-desire (προεπιθυμία or προθυμία). Although neither sense perception nor representation is mentioned in T2, we can suppose with good reason that these activities are at play here, given that nature is said to be in

<sup>23</sup>EMILSSON (1998) 346–347.

<sup>24</sup>Pace EMILSSON (1998) 347, if we separate the nature's consciousness of a lower kind from the ordinary consciousness of sense perception, it is difficult to imagine a situation where nature in us becomes conscious of the defective bodily state and starts caring of the body (IV 4. 20. 29–33) without the rational soul becoming conscious of this action. A further problem with Emilsson's reconstruction is that φαντασία in IV 4. 20. 17 is associated with sense perception rather than nature because the rational soul makes its decision out of this representation (ἀφ' ἧς). I assume, in agreement with Noble, that the full-fledged desire belongs to nature and stands in opposition to the proto-desire of the body, see NOBLE (2016) 270–271. In my view, what transforms the proto-desire of the body into full-fledged desire is nature's selection among the different, always changing bodily dispositions (IV 4. 21. 10–14).

<sup>25</sup>[...] ἀνάγκη μῆτε ἄρχειν αὐτὴν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοιόνδε σῶμα τὸ πεπονθὸς ταδί καὶ ἀλγυνόμενον τῶν ἐναντίων ἢ πάσχει [*Phileb.* 35a2–4] ἐφιέμενον, ἡδονῆς ἐκ τοῦ πονεῖν καὶ πληρώσεως ἐκ τῆς ἐνδείας· τὴν δὲ φύσιν ὡς μητέρα, ὡσπερ στοχαζομένην τῶν τοῦ πεπονθότος βουλημάτων, διορθοῦν τε πειράσθαι καὶ ἐπανάγειν εἰς αὐτὴν καὶ ζητήσιν τοῦ ἀκεσομένου ποιουμένην συνάψασθαι τῇ ζητήσῃ τῇ τοῦ πεπονθότος ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ τὴν περάτωσιν ἀπ' ἐκείνου πρὸς αὐτὴν ἦκειν. ὥστε τὸ μὲν ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐξ αὐτοῦ – εἴποι ἂν τις προεπιθυμίαν ἴσως καὶ προθυμίαν – τὴν δὲ ἐξ ἄλλου καὶ δι' ἄλλου ἐπιθυμεῖν, τὴν δὲ πορίζομένην ἢ μὴ ἄλλην εἶναι.



search of remedy (ζήτησιν τοῦ ἀκεσομένου ποιουμένην). The process of the ‘search of remedy’ is most plausibly understood as nature’s attempt to find some external thing (such as food) by which it will be able to satisfy the body’s need. However, it is hardly possible to imagine this search without assuming, in addition to the use of bodily parts, the involvement of sense perception and representation since nature has to rely on these powers in order to find the external remedy. The result is a triadic structure of the genesis of desire and its satisfaction: (i) the proto-desire of the so-qualified body, (ii) the second-order desire of nature, which is ‘from and through something else’ (ἐξ ἄλλου καὶ δι’ ἄλλου), namely the body and (iii) there is another soul which provides or not (τὴν δὲ πορίζομένην ἢ μὴ) what is desired, but it seemingly does not have any further desire – this latter, as wording suggests, is the earlier mentioned rational soul.<sup>26</sup> Thus, desire is not ascribed to all members of the triadic structure.

Nevertheless, there is another difference among them which, to my knowledge, has not received proper attention yet. The emergence of harmful bodily condition and the caring response to it on behalf of nature occur in an entirely determined way: even the ‘search’ in the case of the latter can mean hardly other than an instinctive seeking after what is able to restore the optimal state of the body.<sup>27</sup> Although it is less obvious and less relevant in the field of the moral psychology, the same must be true of sense perception and representation, whichever of the above interpretations we prefer, since they must occur automatically in order to ‘report’ the defective state of the body to the rational soul.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the rational soul is able to respond freely to the desire of both nature and the body, and it also has the final word on whether the desire will be satisfied or not. So, Plotinus draws a line between the rational soul and the lower soul that includes the power of sense perception and representation as well, on the basis of whether the given kind of power is capable of autonomy in responding to the needs of the body.

From an ethical viewpoint, the *On Virtues* (I 2) presents the same idea of distinguishing between determined and free psychic activities. In this treatise, Plotinus’ main point is that there is difference between the civic and the cathartic virtues. Although possessing the former is a prerequisite for acquiring the latter, it is only through the cathartic virtues that we can free ourselves from the bonds of the incarnate state in order to contemplate the Intellect, or in Plato’s

<sup>26</sup>For this passage, also see KARFIK (2014) 121–122 and HUTCHINSON (2018) 74–75. I think Hutchinson’s questions here simply arise from a misinterpretation of the text. It is more plausible and appropriate in the context that the phrase ‘from and through something else’ (ἐξ ἄλλου καὶ δι’ ἄλλου) refers to the so-qualified body rather than the ‘lower soul’.

<sup>27</sup>Later in the text, nature seems to have some capacity of deliberation (IV 4. 21. 10–14). In certain cases the proto-desire in the body does not turn into full-fledged desire because nature does not attach to it and ‘does not want to bring it to nature either, as the proto-desire is not according to nature, as if it would be in charge of what is against nature and what is according to nature’ (μηδὲ βούλεσθαι, ὡσπερ οὐδὲ κατὰ φύσιν ἐχούσης, ἀγειν εἰς φύσιν, ὡς ἂν αὐτὴν τῷ παρὰ φύσιν καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἐπιστατούσαν). However, despite the phrasing, it does not indicate deliberation. Instead, it signifies that nature must select from among the different dispositions of the body which is always in flux (IV 4. 21. 4–6), but this process occurs automatically as well.

<sup>28</sup>However, another text explicitly states that representation should be excluded from the sphere of things that are up to us. According to Plotinus, autonomy (τὸ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς τι εἶναι) cannot be attributed to those persons who are caught by suddenly arising representations over which they have no mastery (ἀλοῦσι καὶ ταῖς προσπιπτούσας φαντασίας, ὧν οὐ κύριοι, VI 8. 2. 6–8). Since representation is not said to be within our power (τὴν φαντασίαν οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν εἶναι λέγοντες), self-determination (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) cannot be granted to persons who act based on their representation – the reason for this is that representation is stirred up from bodily dispositions (IV 8. 3. 8–17).



terms, to escape from this world in order to be made like god (*Theaet.* 176a8–b2). At the beginning of Chapter 5, Plotinus turns to the question of to what extent the cathartic process is possible (ἐπὶ πόσον ἢ κάθαρσις λεκτέον). As it immediately gets clear, Plotinus' investigation focuses on the emotions, such as desire, anger, fear, especially on how far the separation of the soul from the body is possible in the incarnated life. The soul, being absolutely unaffected (πάντως μὴν ἀπαθῶς ἔχουσαν), should make itself aware of the pleasures which are necessary not to be impeded; Plotinus does not go into details, but we can assume that he thinks of pleasures which could be characterized, in an Epicurean way, as necessary for life, e.g. eating or drinking.<sup>29</sup> The soul, as Plotinus goes on, should get rid of pains or, if that is not impossible, bear them quietly and lessen them by not suffering together with the body.<sup>30</sup> Discussing anger, Plotinus introduces something new into the investigation, namely the involuntary or non-deliberate trait (τὸ ἀπροαίρετον) in emotions:

T3 “It gets rid of anger as much as possible, if it is possible, entirely, but if not, at least it does not share its emotional excitement; the non-deliberate trait belongs to something else and is small and weak as well. It does away with fear altogether, for it has nothing to be afraid of—though the non-deliberate trait is present here too—except, that is, where fear has a corrective function. What about desire? It will obviously not desire anything bad; it will not itself have the desire of food and drink for the relief, and certainly not of sexual pleasures either. But if it does have desire, it will be for natural things, I think, and they do not possess the non-deliberate trait either. But if it does have [the non-deliberate trait], only as far as [the non-deliberate trait] goes along with the imagination, which is also prone to desire.”<sup>31</sup> (I 2. 5. 11–21.)

I think that the appearance of the non-deliberate trait is not a matter of secondary importance, it signifies rather that the emotions have a different character from pleasure and even more so from pain. Desire, anger, and fear are more complex than pain and pleasure since, in addition to sense perception, they presuppose a pursuit or avoidance towards an object, the accomplishment of which is decided by the rational soul. The rational soul, which is the proper subject of the purification, does not share the non-deliberate trait, but it belongs to something else (ἄλλου

<sup>29</sup> O'Meara also suggests an Epicurean background to this part, see O'MEARA (2018) 101.

<sup>30</sup> πρῶως φέρουσαν καὶ ἐλάττους τιθεῖσαν τῷ μὴ συμπάσχειν (I 2. 5. 10–11). Although ‘the body’ is not in the text, if we keep in mind that the original question was about the separation from the body, and only the body can have pain in Plotinus, we can take it as a completion of the last infinitive without problem, as for example ARMSTRONG (1966–1988) I and GERSON (2018) do. As it turned out earlier, Plotinus does not think that pain as suffering is a mental activity that belongs to the soul. It is rather about the awareness (‘knowledge’, γνῶσις) of painful impacts that the soul should get rid of.

<sup>31</sup> τὸν δὲ θυμὸν ὅσον οἷον τε ἀφαιροῦσαν καί, εἰ δυνατόν, πάντη, εἰ δὲ μὴ, μὴ γοῦν αὐτὴν συνοργιζομένην, ἀλλ’ ἄλλου εἶναι τὸ ἀπροαίρετον, τὸ δὲ ἀπροαίρετον ὀλίγον εἶναι καὶ ἀσθενές· τὸν δὲ φόβον πάντη· περὶ οὐδενὸς γὰρ φοβήσεται – τὸ δὲ ἀπροαίρετον καὶ ἐνταῦθα – πλὴν γ’ ἐν νοουθετήσει· ἐπιθυμίαν δέ; ὅτι μὲν μηδενὸς φαύλου, δῆλον· σίτων δὲ καὶ ποτῶν πρὸς ἄνεσιν οὐκ αὐτὴ ἔξει· οὐδὲ τῶν ἀφροδισίων δέ· εἰ δ’ ἄρα, φυσικῶν, οἶμα, καὶ οὐδὲ τὸ ἀπροαίρετον ἔχουσαν [Heintz: ἐχουσῶν Enn. HS<sup>1</sup>]· εἰ δ’ ἄρα, ὅσον μετὰ [Enn. HS<sup>2</sup>: μέχρι Porphyrius, Marinus] φαντασίας προτυποῦς [HS<sup>2</sup>: προπετοῦς Porphyrius, Marinus] καὶ ταύτης.



εἶναι τὸ ἀπροαίρετον). However, any impulse is already not a simple bodily state reported by sense perception but has always a psychic aspect as well, and precisely this is why it is important to define the limits of the non-deliberate trait; in other words, which of the psychic functions escape our control.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, at this point the text becomes even more difficult to understand partly because of the textual uncertainties.<sup>33</sup> What seems to be clear is that the soul itself does not have the non-deliberate trait even in natural desires, such as that of drinking or eating. Finally, Plotinus finds the upper limit of the non-deliberate trait in the psychic powers: even if we accept that there is a non-deliberate trait in all previous cases, the soul has a share in it on the basis of representation, which is prone to these desires. However, even if the mere appearance of the representation to the rational soul happens without deliberation and, thus, in this respect, it is not the rational soul's activity properly speaking, this circumstance does not hinder the soul to relate and react to representation freely. To summarise, in spite of its obscurity and textual problems the passage seems to draw the limit of the non-deliberate trait at representation. To answer the opening question, the non-deliberate trait delimits the scope of the purification but does not affect the rational soul's freedom and ability to purify itself.

The remainder of Chapter 5 (I 2. 5. 21–31) deals with the way the soul can purify the irrational part (τὸ ἄλογον). As we have seen, the purification of the soul involved not only separation from the body but also separation from some psychic powers that work without deliberation, so the 'other' to which the non-deliberate trait belongs refers to those powers (passionate power, desiring power, representation), rather than to the body simply. Plotinus now turns the direction of the original question which was to what extent the soul can separate itself from the body and these psychic powers. How can the rational soul have an effect on this irrational part, or more precisely, on the body and the irrational part of the soul combined?<sup>34</sup> Even if the complete purification is not in its power, the rational soul can at least mitigate its shocks. The purified irrational part is illustrated by a simile of a person living in the neighbourhood of a wise man: the presence of the wise man is enough for the neighbour not to dare do anything that the wise man does not want. At the end of the passage, Plotinus says that 'the worse part' (τὸ χεῖρον) respects the presence of the reason at best, and therefore 'the worse part' is displeased, if it moves at all

<sup>32</sup>According to O'Meara, the soul should purify itself just from the body, more precisely from the so-qualified body with the soul-trace, see O'MEARA (2018) 98–109. The section's introduction does suggest this, but considering Plotinus' just presented explanation of desire, we cannot label the bodily state as desire in itself without the corresponding psychic activities. This criterion must also be applied to other cases where there is an impulse. Therefore, we have sufficient grounds to assume that the process of purification in this passage includes the activities of the irrational soul as well.

<sup>33</sup>See the Greek text with the most significant critical notes in n. 31. I translate here together with Armstrong the reading of the manuscripts (ἐχουσῶν): Plotinus might mean the natural desire for marriage and family that does not resemble the simple sexual desire. In any case, both readings mean that the non-deliberate trait does not affect the (rational) soul. For the emendation of the last part of the sentence, see SCHWYZER (1963) 190–193.

<sup>34</sup>Pace again O'Meara, who supposes that τὸ ἄλογον refers only to the so-qualified body, we have more reasons to think rather that Plotinus is referring to the irrational soul or the both to the so-qualified body and the irrational soul by the 'irrational part'. The topic here is linked to Plato (e.g. *Resp.* 441d12 ff.) and Aristotle (*NE* 1102a26 ff.) who speak of the regulation of the irrational part of the soul; moreover, it seems to me that Plotinus follows the *Nicomachean Ethics* quite closely in his wording here. Plotinus also refers to the irrational soul with τὸ ἄλογον elsewhere (IV 4. 28. 64), and, in interpreting the localization of the soul's parts in the *Timaeus*, he uses the image of neighbourhood to show the relations among the different powers of the soul: here what is immediately 'below' reason is impulse, sense perception and representation (IV 3. 21. 21–25).



(ἐάν τι ὄλωσ κινηθῆ), like a slave who does not keep quiet in the presence of his master. There are two implications of these similes worthy of note. First, the simile of the person neighbouring the sage describes an ideal situation that cannot be applied to any cases, since it presupposes that the rational soul has this purifying effect on the irrational part by its being already perfectly purified. Second, the neighbour or the slave behaves properly primarily because he feels ashamed of himself in front of the better person, so his original inclinations remain the same, just no longer cause conflict. It does not imply in itself that the rational soul cannot have any effect on the irrational part, since even Plotinus tells us here that such an effect is possible (I 2. 5. 21–24). Nevertheless, the scope of this ‘top-down’ effect is very restricted, as it lies solely in the mitigation of the irrational part. The maximum that the rational soul can achieve is that the irrational part will not be shocked (ὥστε μηδὲ πλῆττεσθαι), that is to say, the irrational part will not react too vehemently to a stimulus (e.g. the body can suffer the lack of food better, and the desiring part does not need very quickly and intensely providing food by searching it).<sup>35</sup> But mitigating the reaction of the irrational part, on the other hand, is not tantamount to eradicating the non-deliberate trait from its activities and, even less, to changing its original inclination.<sup>36</sup>

### III.

As we have seen, the emergence of desire proceeds in a settled way up to representation, and I argued that the idea of purification from the powers of irrational soul appeared in another context as well; emphasizing that the non-deliberate trait could be found up to representation. It means that the irrational powers do not have the freedom of choice in their activity; the best condition we can acquire as a result of the purification of our rational soul is that they are regulated somehow by the reason, but their original inclinations still remain. Let us return to the IV 4. The last major part of the treatise is devoted to causal connections and determinations in the sensible world; an issue that Plotinus wants to explain by the means of the cosmic sympathy. Starting from the *Timaeus* (*Tim.* 30d3–31a1), he claims that the whole universe is one living being which encompasses all other living beings. Nevertheless, Plotinus’ explanation of the original idea shows some remarkable new elements:

<sup>35</sup>Plotinus, citing Plato (*Resp.* 518d9–e2), mentions too in passing the habituation of non-rational dispositions showing the possibility of an indirect control coming from the rational soul (I 1. 10. 7–14; VI 8. 6. 22–25). It might be conceived that the rational soul keeps the body under discipline with the help of given exercises (e.g. fasting, physical trainings), and the condition of the disciplined body reacts upon the activities of the irrational soul in a way. This is supported by the fact that while Plato discusses the dispositions of the soul and refers to the body just as an analogy, Plotinus says that the dispositions as virtues belong to the compound (αἱ δ’ ἀρεταὶ αἱ μὴ φρονήσει, ἔθεισι δὲ ἐγγινόμενα καὶ ἀσκήσει, τοῦ κοινοῦ, I 1. 11–13). However, as I see it, it does not contradict what is presented in I 2. 5, either. Plotinus expresses the very same idea by the use of a similar image when claiming that ‘passions are limited and enslaved by the reason’ (τὰ πάθη τὰ δουλωθέντα ἢ μετρηθέντα τῷ λόγῳ, VI 8. 6. 23–24) – virtues in this context are just the repression of the excess of the irrational part.

<sup>36</sup>The interpretation above is on the same track as that of Remes in many respects. Discussing the Plotinian understanding of the conflict between the different parts of the soul in the *Republic*, she argues that Plotinus endorses the view that the rational soul should oppress the other parts due to their irrationality and inclination to excess by their nature. Furthermore, Plotinus suggests more radically that our ultimate goal is to completely disregard the other parts of the soul. See REMES (2007) 187–191, 196. From this reading it also follows that it is impossible to change the natural inclinations of the soul’s irrational parts because they work always in the same way.



T4 “[...] it [viz. the cosmic living being] has one soul which extends to all its parts, in so far as each individual thing is a part of it; and each thing in the perceptible All is a part of it, and completely a part of it as regards its body; and in so far as it participates in the soul of the All, it is to this extent a part of it in this way too; and those things which participate in the soul of the All alone are altogether parts, but all those which also participate in another soul are in this way not altogether parts, but none the less are affected by the other parts in so far as they have something of the All, and in accordance with what they have.”<sup>37</sup> (IV 4. 32. 6–13)

Plotinus introduces the distinction of the body and the soul in order to define more precisely what it means to be part of this cosmic Living Being. Everything in the cosmos is completely a part of the living being as regards its body, but as regards the soul, something is part only to the extent that it participates in the soul of the All (ψυχῆς τοῦ παντός μετέχει). The partial living being participating also in another soul in addition to that of the All cannot be regarded as the part of the All completely, because it is influenced by other things as well (πάσχει δὲ οὐδὲν ἦττον παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων). As it will turn out later, the ‘another soul’ is the rational soul, and humans are the special parts of the All insofar as they are not entirely subjected to the affection coming from there. The affections in the cosmos are possible precisely because the parts belong to the same living being: non-adjacent parts, like in a partial living being, can affect each other due to their similarity, without affecting the parts in between (IV 4. 32. 13–22). The phenomenon is called sympathy, as it means that two things share the same affection (συμπαθεῖν). T4 is of an utmost importance because it presents the core idea on which everything that follows in the treatise is built. What is more, we must see that the theory presented in the passage strongly supports the thesis represented by Blumenthal and Karfik, according to which a part of our soul stems from the World Soul. The primary question is whether only a literal interpretation can be developed, which would result in the aforementioned inexorable contradiction, or if there is another way to understand T4. In order to provide an elaborated answer in the next chapter, we first need to examine a basic type of the sympathetic relationships particularly pertinent to our topic – this is magic.

Plotinus starts from establishing the meaning of ‘magic’ by claiming that the wizard uses sympathy and ‘the true magic is the Love and Strife in the All’ (IV 4. 40. 1 ff.).<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it would be misleading to think that by ‘magic’ Plotinus means exactly what we commonly think of it (i.e. a conscious and occult manipulation of natural forces in order to achieve some goal) since its use in the *Enneads* includes cases that we would not label by that term. A good example for the broader use is that Plotinus considers also music a manifestation of magic by saying that ‘the irrational soul, not choice or reason, is charmed by music and this kind of magic causes no surprise’ (IV 4. 40. 23–25).<sup>39</sup> Here it becomes manifest through an example what Plotinus meant

<sup>37</sup>[...] ψυχὴν μίαν ἔχον εἰς πάντα αὐτοῦ μέρη, καθόσον ἐστὶν ἕκαστον αὐτοῦ μέρος· μέρος δὲ ἕκαστόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν τῷ παντὶ αἰσθητῷ, κατὰ μὲν τὸ σῶμα καὶ πάντη, ὅσον δὲ καὶ ψυχῆς τοῦ παντός μετέχει, κατὰ τοσοῦτον καὶ ταύτη· καὶ τὰ μὲν μόνης ταύτης μετέχοντα κατὰ πᾶν ἐστὶ μέρη, ὅσα δὲ καὶ ἄλλης, ταύτη ἔχει τὸ μὴ μέρη πάντη εἶναι, πάσχει δὲ οὐδὲν ἦττον παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων, καθόσον αὐτοῦ τι ἔχει, καὶ κατ’ ἐκεῖνα, ἃ ἔχει.

<sup>38</sup>I will deal only with the aspects of magic relevant for our present topic. For a comprehensive discussion of magic in Plotinus, see HELLEMAN (2010) and for comparing Plotinus’ conception of magic with that of Iamblichus, see FINAMORE (1999) 83–86.

<sup>39</sup>Ἄλλ’ ἢ <ἄλογος> ψυχῆ· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἢ προαίρεσις οὐδ’ ὁ λόγος ὑπὸ μουσικῆς θέλγεται [ἀλλ’ ἢ ἄλογος ψυχῆ], καὶ οὐ θαυμάζεται ἢ γοητεία ἢ τοιαύτη [...].



when he was speaking of belonging to the cosmic Living Being. The magic of music hits only the irrational soul, while our choice (προαίρεσις) and reason (λόγος) remain untouched by this effect. In other words, the irrational psychic powers, such as the passionate power or the desiring power, are totally exposed to the effect of music in a way that we are unable to override the affection of the irrational soul and to make a free choice in our action. The picture becomes more nuanced later when Plotinus comes to discuss a case of magic in the ordinary sense of the word:

T5 “But how is the sage affected by magic and drugs? He is incapable of being affected in his soul with respect to enchantment, and his rational part would not be affected, nor would he change his mind; but he would be affected in whatever irrational part of the All there is in him, or rather this part would be affected; but he will feel no love provoked by drugs, if falling in love happens when one soul accedes to the affection of the other. But, just as the irrational part is affected by incantations, so he himself by counter-chants and counter-incantations will dissolve the powers on the other side. But he might suffer death or illnesses or anything bodily from such incantations; for the part of the All [in him] would be affected by another part or by the All, but he himself would be unharmed.”<sup>40</sup> (IV 4. 43. 1–11)

Firstly, we should consider that the appearance of the sage (σπουδαῖος) in the text is more than a special situation. The sage provides the normative model of the human being, that is to say, one should strive for such a state, which is the peak the soul can reach during its stay in the sensible world. Plotinus distinguishes two cases of how magic can affect the sage. The theoretical framework for their difference corresponds entirely to what we have seen in the description of desire. Furthermore, upon analysing the language used in T5, it can be compared well to that used in I 2 regarding the possible extent of purification. In chapter 5 in I 2 we are told that the subject of purification, i.e. the rational soul is absolutely unaffected (πάντως μὴν ἀπαθῶς ἔχουσιν), while the irrational part is the subject of affection. According to the present text the rational soul of the sage cannot be affected (οὐκ ἂν τὸ λογικὸν αὐτοῦ πάθῃ), but the irrational part that belongs to the All is affected. When the impulse produced by magic requires the assent of the rational soul in order to be accomplished, the sage always will be able to resist the effect. The wizard attempts to kindle love in another person, but the effect of his magic is limited, for although he can change the bodily disposition and provoke nature’s care for that disposition, we can only speak of love when one gives in to the impulse and collapses into the arms of the loved one. Actually, the example of love magic can be generalized to all cases of impulse since every impulse of the lower soul must be assented by the rational soul, so none of them happens without free choice. On the other hand, if the wizard casts spell on the functions

<sup>40</sup>Ὁ δὲ σπουδαῖος πῶς ὑπὸ γοητείας καὶ φαρμάκων; ἢ τῆ μὲν ψυχῇ ἀπαθῆς εἰς γοήτευσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν τὸ λογικὸν αὐτοῦ πάθῃ, οὐδ’ ἂν μεταδοξάσειε· τὸ δὲ ὅσον τοῦ παντὸς ἐν αὐτῷ ἄλογον, κατὰ τοῦτο πάθῃ ἂν, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦτο πάθῃ ἂν· ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔρωτας ἐκ φαρμάκων, εἴπερ τὸ ἐρᾶν ἐπινευούσης καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἄλλης τῷ τῆς ἄλλης παθήματι. ὡσπερ δὲ ἐπιφοδαῖς τὸ ἄλογον πάσχει, οὕτω καὶ αὐτὸς ἀντάδων καὶ ἀντεπάδων τὰς ἐκεῖ δυνάμεις ἀναλύσει. θάνατον δὲ ἐκ τοιούτων ἢ νόσους ἢ ὅσα σωματικά πάθῃ ἂν· τὸ γὰρ μέρος τοῦ παντὸς ὑπὸ μέρους ἄλλου ἢ τοῦ παντὸς πάθῃ ἂν, αὐτὸς δὲ ἀβλαβῆς.



in which the rational soul has no role, the magical effect occurs in a completely determined way. As a result, the sage will have no choice to defend himself but to manipulate the cosmic sympathy through counter-spells.<sup>41</sup> As for illness and death, the wizard can readily achieve his goal, as magic produces a harmful bodily disposition that occurs without any involvement of the rational soul.

Since Plotinus' image of the sage builds on Stoic foundations, it is also reasonable to ask how the sage would react to the hallucinations induced by magic. In this instance, sense perception and the faculty of representation are affected by sympathy that the wizard has manipulated: magic produces a representation of something in the representational faculty which has no corresponding object in the external world. Every rational soul will know this representation, but only the sage or the purified soul is able to recognize it as a false representation and to abstain from affirming it. As we follow Plotinus in his investigation, we will see that the assumption of the bewitched sense perception and representation was not foreign to him. Plotinus claims that even the daemons are not unaffected in their irrational part (οὐκ ἀπαθείς οὐδ' αὐτοὶ τῷ ἀλόγῳ) and it is not absurd to attribute memory and sense perception to them. The daemons that are closer to 'the things here below' can be bewitched to the extent that they pay attention to these things (IV 4. 43. 12–16). The text suggests that daemons possess sense perception and representation<sup>42</sup> due to their turning to the earthly things and they are susceptible to enchantment through these faculties. This indicates that these psychic powers belong to the All in the same way as the desiring power, given that the cosmic sympathy among the parts of the All enables someone to use magic.

The short discussion of this very special topic leads Plotinus to say that 'everything is enchanted by something else which is directed to something else' and 'only that is free from enchantment which is directed to itself' (IV 4. 43. 16–18).<sup>43</sup> That is the reason why every action and the whole life of the practical man can be enchanted by the things moving him (IV 4. 43. 18–21)<sup>44</sup> and only the contemplation directed to itself cannot be exposed to enchantment. As Plotinus emphasises, what enchants the practical man is not the art of the magicians but that of Nature (IV 4. 44. 22–24): Nature, in addition to the World Soul's eternally contemplating transcendental part, is its lower and immanent part that permeates the entire sensible world. In practical life 'it is not the reason which produces the impulse, but the starting point belongs to the irrational part and its premises for action are derived from affection' (IV 4. 44. 5–6)<sup>45</sup> which means that every action is ultimately traced back to emotions. For instance, desire motivates the care for children or the concern for marriage (IV 4. 44. 6–9) or to possess more (IV 4. 44. 13). Plotinus also mentions anger, fear, and the fulfilment of natural desires (IV 4. 44. 9–16), all of

<sup>41</sup>Referring to Plato (*Charm.* 156–157), Armstrong and Gurtler suggest that counter-spells, in addition to their concrete meaning, here can point to the philosophical way of life. See ARMSTRONG (1966–1988) IV 268–269, n. 1. and GURTLE (2015) 205. This suggestion is particularly noteworthy when compared to the effect of the sage on the lower soul that we saw in I 2. 5. 21–31.

<sup>42</sup>Plotinus mentions 'memories' (μνήμας) in the text, but because the faculty of representation is responsible for memories, it should be attributed to the daemons as well.

<sup>43</sup>Πᾶν γὰρ τὸ πρὸς ἄλλο γοητεύεται ὑπ' ἄλλου· πρὸς δὲ γὰρ ἔστιν, ἐκεῖνο γοητεύει καὶ ἄγει αὐτό· μόνον δὲ τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἀγοητεύεται.

<sup>44</sup>Διὸ καὶ πᾶσα πράξις γεγοήτευται καὶ πᾶς ὁ τοῦ πρακτικοῦ βίος· κινεῖται γὰρ πρὸς ταῦτα, ἃ θέλγει αὐτόν.

<sup>45</sup>Ἐκεῖ δὲ οὐ τὸ αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐχ ὁ λόγος τὴν ὁρμήν, ἀλλ' ἀρχὴ καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου αἰ τοῦ πάθους προτάσεις.



which are linked to the body and the irrational soul.<sup>46</sup> However, it should be noted that the main point here is not restricted to considering every action negative because of their inferiority to contemplation, but rather that these actions are necessary in the earthly life of the soul.<sup>47</sup> Plotinus presents the necessity of practical activities through his comparison of enchanted and unenchanted persons (IV 4. 44. 16–27). This comparison serves to answer the objection that the actions related to noble pursuits cannot be enchanted, since if that was the case contemplation, which is also concerned with noble things, could be the subject to enchantment as well:

**T6** “[...] if one carries out even the so-called noble activities as necessary ones, holding that what is really noble is something else, one has not been enchanted – for one knows the necessity, and does not look to this world, and one’s life is not directed to other things – but one has been enchanted in this way by the force of human nature and by the concern for the life of others, or even for his own [...] But if one is delighted with the nobility in practical activities, and chooses practical activities because one is deluded by the vestiges of nobility, one has been enchanted in one’s pursuit of the nobility in the lower world; for, in general, to be actively occupied with the semblance of truth and drawn towards it in any way is characteristic of someone who has been deceived by the those things which draw one to themselves: this is what the magic of nature does [...]” (IV 4. 44. 18–30)<sup>48</sup>

The fundamental difference between the enchanted person and the unenchanted one is not that the former is engaged in practical activity, while the latter is not. Instead, it lays in their dissimilar attitude towards practical activities.<sup>49</sup> The enchanted person believes that the noble (τὸ καλόν) in practical activities is the real noble, whereas its manifestations are just the vestiges of the real noble. The unenchanted person, by contrast, realizes that mundane actions are not the ultimate source of noble character; it is something else that is found in the intelligible world. This knowledge or lack of knowledge leads one to direct his life towards contemplative or practical activities. If someone chooses the inferior option due to the mistaken belief that practical actions are genuinely noble, he will pursuit the noble in the sensible world, deceived by the drawing power of things in the sensible world (ἐξ ἐκείνων τῶν ἐπ’ αὐτὰ ἐλκόντων) – and ‘this is what the magic of Nature does’ (τοῦτο δὲ ἡ τῆς φύσεως γοητεία ποιεῖ). Plotinus mentioned that this drawing power (ὄλκη) is manifested also in the pursuit of marriage and

<sup>46</sup>Some translators might have intended to accent this feature of emotions by rendering the most frequently occurring ἐπιθυμία as ‘carnal desire’ ARMSTRONG (1966–1988) IV or ‘appetite’ (GERSON [2018]). It seems to me that from Plotinus’ list only political actions do not relate exclusively to the body, because they ‘have the desire of power in us provoking them’ (τὸ φίλαρχον τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν ἔχουσι προκαλούμενον, IV 4. 44. 11–12). Plotinus discusses the kind of emotions that originate ‘from above’, meaning that they are based on the opinion of the rational soul in III 6. 4. 8 ff. For this, see also EMILSSON (1998) 353–354. However, since the rational soul can change its opinion regarding the state of affairs, political activity is not as subject to necessity as we shall see in the other types of practical activity.

<sup>47</sup>Gurtler also stresses the necessity of the practical activities, see GURTLE (2015) 210.

<sup>48</sup>[...] εἰ μὲν ὡς ἀναγκαίως καὶ τὰς καλὰς λεγομένας πράξεις πράττει ἄλλο τὸ ὄντως καλὸν ἔχων, οὐ γεγοήτευται – οἶδε γὰρ τὴν ἀνάγκην καὶ οὐ πρὸς τὸ τῆδε βλέπει, οὐδὲ πρὸς ἄλλα ὁ βίος – ἀλλὰ τῆ τῆς φύσεως τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης βίᾳ καὶ τῆ πρὸς τὸ ζῆν τῶν ἄλλων ἢ καὶ αὐτοῦ οἰκειώσει [...] [ὅτι] οὕτως ἐγοητεύθη. εἰ δὲ τὸ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ἀγαπήσας καλὸν τὰς πράξεις αἰρεῖται ἀπατηθεὶς τοῖς ἴχνεσι τοῦ καλοῦ, γεγοήτευται τὸ περὶ τὰ κάτω καλὸν διώκων ὄλως γὰρ ἡ περὶ τὸ εὐκὸς τῶ ἀληθεῖ πραγματεία καὶ ὄλκη εἰς αὐτὸ πᾶσα ἠπατημένου ἐξ ἐκείνων τῶν ἐπ’ αὐτὰ ἐλκόντων. τοῦτο δὲ ἡ τῆς φύσεως γοητεία ποιεῖ[...].

<sup>49</sup>See GURTLE (2015) 211. Gurtler assumes that the person who is not enchanted is the sage. Even though it is a plausible supposition, the passage does not explicitly mention the sage.



the care for children (IV 4. 44. 7–8). Nevertheless, the unenchanted person, in spite of their knowledge what is really noble, performs practical acts, even noble ones, as necessary (ὡς ἀναγκαιῶς) since he knows how necessity works (οἶδε γὰρ τὴν ἀνάγκην). But what is this necessity exactly? It is important to note that the whole discussion of all kinds of magic is found in the major section on the cosmic sympathy that determines unintentionally everything in the universe. One of Plotinus' main philosophical concerns is to address the extent to which we are subject to this determining power, defined by our participation in the body and the soul of the All. In the light of this, the unenchanted person is the one who recognises that practical activities are necessary as long as one lives in the sensible world, and therefore he gives in to natural impulses in certain cases, as opposed to impulses caused by artificial magic. Yet, he knows that even noble actions cannot be identified with what is really noble, and therefore turns to contemplating what is free from any influence of the All. In other words, one becomes free from the magic of Nature by acknowledging that some natural impulses and affections serve as the basis for practical life that is necessary, but these impulses and affections cannot induce him to pursue 'what is not good as if it was good' (IV 4. 44. 30). Thus, according to Plotinus, not only certain powers of the soul are determined, but in a sense, our practical life in general as well. This can be viewed from many aspects. Practical activities derive from the bodily needs and from the irrational soul, which are under the influence of the necessity in the world. Besides, generally speaking, practical life is necessary also in the sense of being an inevitable consequence of the earthly life of the soul. Moreover, Plotinus also maintains that we acquire our character from the circuit of the All, and he enumerates determinant factors, such as habitation, climate and bodily blends (II 3. 9. 12–14; IV 4. 7. 20–25). All of these are the essential components of practical life and, at the same time, are beyond our choice. It should be noted that Plotinus does not suggest that the whole of it belongs to the sphere of heteronomy by underlying these aspects of practical life. As we are told in the analysis of desire, the rational soul is the source proper of an act insofar as it decides whether to allow or to resist to the given impulse that in itself makes room for the autonomy of human action. Secondly, although it is not an option even for the sage to escape completely from participation in mundane activities, he can still offer the normative paradigm of the attainable autonomy in the sensible world, grounded in his turn to the Intellect.<sup>50</sup>

#### IV.

Let us to summarise first what we have already seen. Despite the different contexts of the passages analysed above, all of them focus on the contact and difference between the rational and irrational soul, albeit from various perspectives. Their essential difference is that the rational soul, unlike the irrational, is not exposed to any external effect but has the ability to maintain an autonomous relationship with the given external effect, even if it comes from the body. In the case of desire, the rational soul can accept or reject the demands of the body that nature articulates and communicates to it through representation. Furthermore, the rational soul has

<sup>50</sup>Investigating the sage as normative model and the connection between ethics and metaphysics go far beyond the scope of the present study. For this topic see REMES (2006); BENE (2013); NOBLE (2021). For the sage's relation to the two kinds of virtue, see especially KOVÁCS (2024), in this issue.



the ability to get separated both from the body and the irrational soul through the process of purification. In contrast, psychic powers, from the vegetative power up to representation, possess an inherent non-deliberate trait and their activities fall out of our control. In addition, the effects of cosmic sympathy, as observed in magic, can influence the very same powers, while the rational soul does not lose its capability of free reaction even in such manipulated circumstances. Plotinus sometimes emphasizes the aspect of the free choice also by using a specific terminology. For instance, he asserts that the non-deliberate trait (τὸ ἀπροαίρετον) belongs to the body and the irrational soul and that our choice (προαίρεσις), together with reason, remains unaffected by the magic of music.<sup>51</sup>

In Chapter III I raised a question about the explanation of Plotinus' thesis that our soul 'participates in the soul of the All'. Shall we take it literally or not? Now I think that the rational soul's capability of free choice and the irrational soul's determined character open the way to a non-literal interpretation. After we have examined the passages on magic and compared them with those quoted in Chapter II, it becomes clear that in speaking of the participation in the body and the soul of the cosmos Plotinus aims to present what is beyond our control in the earthly life. As I mentioned in Chapter I, Plotinus' principal purpose already in the early III 1 was to save the autonomy of the human soul by arguing that our souls do not originate from the World Soul. Thus, when Plotinus asserts that a part of our soul is 'from the World Soul' or that our soul 'participates in the soul of the All', it does not mean that any part of our soul stems from the World Soul *stricto sensu*. Instead, this claim signifies that certain psychological functions (to put it simply, the irrational soul) belong to our soul, but they are not under our control due to their being subject to the necessity of the cosmos. To rephrase it, Plotinus does not suggest that the capacities of the lower soul were produced by the World Soul instead of being the external activities of the rational soul. In accordance with the sharp ontological difference between soul and body, we participate both in the body and the soul of the All, which displays a different kind of necessity. The powers of the irrational soul are determined through cosmic sympathy in an immaterial and psychological manner.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Plotinus concentrates on what is beyond our free choice, and this is why he speaks of the partial origin of our soul from the World Soul. It makes him use 'World Soul' and 'All' interchangeably, with reference to the source of certain parts of our soul for the difference in wording does not alter the core concept of the cosmos' determinative effect on us. Therefore, the *Enneads* employ the expression that the lower soul 'comes from' or 'belongs to' the World Soul in order to stress that some of our activities are not in our power.

<sup>51</sup>There is another remarkable terminology that deserves attention, namely words relating to 'affection' (πάθος, πάσχειν). Plotinus seemingly applies it to both the body and irrational soul at the same time, while claiming that the rational soul is absolutely unaffected (πάντως μὴν ἀπαθῶς ἔχουσιν, I 2. 5. 7). At first sight, this terminology can refer to emotions in general from its bodily and psychic aspects (i.e. a certain bodily state and nature's caring reaction to it). Nevertheless, supposing only this meaning of the word does not seem to be satisfying in other passages, especially in IV 4. 43 that we discussed. Thus, I think that Plotinus intends also to represent with the vocabulary relating to affection which parts of us are not under our control, that is, which can be affected by the cosmic sympathy of the All.

<sup>52</sup>When explaining vision through sympathy and rejecting the causal role of the medium in IV 5, Plotinus argues that the object of seeing is not physically present in the medium, but 'it happens according to greater and psychological necessities [ψυχικὰς ... ἀνάγκας] of the single living being in sympathy with itself' (IV 5. 3. 34–36). I think this expression shows that there are 'psychical necessities' in the cosmos.



I assume the non-literal interpretation has the important advantage of being able to resolve the problem that the soul, as illustrated by the image of Heracles, stems ‘from the Whole’ and to establish a closer connection between the ethical aspect of the two Heracles and the faculty-psychology. The image of Heracles here, like in I 1. 12, depicts the practical life and, correspondingly, this soul has an autobiographical memory. Given that this soul has memories, it must possess a faculty of representation as well. However, it would sound very strange that our practical life and the faculty of representation with the autobiographical memories are produced by the Whole or the World Soul. As we have seen in Chapter III, Plotinus thinks that the practical life as such is a necessary commitment of living in the sensible world, and it is exposed to the ‘magic of Nature’. When we took a closer look at mundane activities, we have seen that Plotinus traced them back to the irrational soul’s emotions, which have to be regarded as necessary as far as they arise automatically. By contrast, the rational soul cannot change the direction of their impulse. Plotinus presents this root of the practical life in I 1. 12 by connecting the image of Heracles with ‘the other form of the soul’ that possesses terrible emotions. Similarly, we acquire the circumstances of our life, our character, and our basic bodily disposition from the ‘circuit of the All’ or ‘from the stars’, which are named also as the source of the lower soul.

The determination of the cosmos influences also the formation and the content of the autobiographical memory. First, we acquire these memories exclusively through sense perception and they remain within the faculty of representation: both of them are out of our control. Second, the content of autobiographical memory is derived from things, such as the course of our life, our homeland and family, which are predominantly determined by external factors. Since we can only have limited impact on the events of our lives due to the ordinances of our fate, it is best to consider these memories as belonging primarily to the lower soul ‘from the Whole’. After death, however, the rational soul benefits from forgetting as many of them as possible (IV 3. 32. 12–24.). The reason for supposing two faculties of representation might be that the irrational soul comprising the powers necessary for embodied existence and the rational soul communicate with each other through representation. The faculty of representation is the interface between the two souls.

Finally, I must deal with two difficulties that particularly challenge the interpretation presented above. However, it may not be possible to provide a fully satisfactory answer to these questions. As I mentioned in Chapter I, T1 seems to state most explicitly that the lower soul (more precisely, the vegetative/desiring soul) originates from the World Soul. It is important to note that IV 9 is a very early treatise, being the eighth in Porphyry’s chronological list. This fact can explain the somewhat obscure use of certain concepts that Plotinus articulates in his later treatises. Although I have argued earlier that the lower soul does not originate from the World Soul, the World Soul does contribute to the individual living being by what Plotinus calls ‘previous sketch’ (προϋπογραφή, IV 7. 5. 8–17). It consists in shaping the body of the living being so that it acquires the suitability (ἐπιτηδειότης) to receive the soul and thus the soul trace.<sup>53</sup> My suggestion is that in T1 Plotinus did not make a sharp distinction between the

<sup>53</sup>This interpretation follows Tornau, who argues convincingly that the previous sketch and the soul-trace cannot be identified in Plotinus. The former is produced by the World Soul and makes the body suitable to receive the powers of the soul, while the latter is produced by the individual soul and just completes the World Soul’s work, see [TORNAU \(2016\) 150–153](#).



previous sketch, the soul-trace and the lower soul. Even though T1 suggests that some part of the soul stems from the World Soul, Plotinus qualifies the work of the World Soul as ‘shaping’ (πλάσις): the term refers more aptly to the bodily disposition that the previous sketch signifies.

A similar problem arises concerning the expression of τὸ τρεφόμενον. Given that it can refer back to ‘the nourishing part’ (τὸ θρεπτικόν) mentioned in the previous sentence, τὸ τρεφόμενον can be identified with a power of the soul. Yet, Plotinus uses this expression in this passage only, and the probably passive voice (‘what is nourished’) is more likely to be understood as something corporeal. I believe the suggestion is also supported by the Plotinian view that the so-qualified body is what is ‘perceptive in the passive way’. Hence, it is once again questionable whether it is the part from the whole that refers to a body with a certain disposition, or a power of the soul. Moreover, later texts in the *Enneads* do not state that it is specifically the vegetative soul that is derived from the World Soul. Thus, we cannot conclude that T1 alone proves the origin of the lower soul (or the vegetative soul) from the World Soul. Even if this is Plotinus’ claim in T1, it cannot be extended to the whole *oeuvre* because of the uncertainties in T1 and the absence of such claim in the later treatises.

The more crucial problem is rooted in the memory of the two souls after death. In IV 3 it appears that although we cannot be aware of the double character of our soul in the earthly life, death makes their memories separate from each other (e.g. IV 3. 27. 3–6; IV 3. 31. 2–4).<sup>54</sup> Plotinus’ way of expressing intimates that the two souls are able to live separately, indicating that the lower soul is not merely the second activity of the higher soul, but it actually belongs to the All. Nevertheless, the idea found here is absolutely unclear in its details, and thus these passages can be hardly used as a basis for a counter-argument. Moreover, taking them literally causes even more philosophical and interpretational problems. If we accept that the two souls become actually separated after death, it will lead us to come up with the thesis that the two souls are genuinely separable; and this is what Plotinus certainly wants to avoid.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, there are clues in IV 3 and elsewhere showing that, even here, Plotinus does not maintain the independence of the lower soul from the higher one. His primary focus is on what Heracles is talking about among the gods, i.e. what the higher soul remembers once it is in the Intellect in its absolutely pure form. The ascension of the higher soul to the intelligible world after the death of the compound seems to last until it reaches its final aim across the heaven (IV 3. 32. 9 ff.), during which the lower soul supposedly still exists thanks to the higher soul’s being in the sensible world. However, when the higher soul’s activity is exclusively noetic, the lower soul, connected to the life in the sensible world, ceases to be active. We can suppose it because from this point on Plotinus no longer mentions the lower soul in the section on memory. As for the simile of Heracles and his image, it points also to a causal relationship: Heracles himself is the original and the source of his image. At the same time, it implies that the higher soul is the source of the lower soul. It seems to me that Plotinus later realized his failure to delve into the matter more deeply here for he discusses the lower soul’s dependence on the higher soul at greater length in I 1, where he finds Heracles’ division in the *Odyssey* as an exegetical problem (I 1. 12. 31–39). Therefore, it can be inferred that Plotinus employs a kind of mythological language to illustrate

<sup>54</sup>Blumenthal argues that the memory of the soul after death can be explained by Plotinus’ belief in reincarnation, see BLUMENTHAL (1971a) 94–95.

<sup>55</sup>CALUORI (2015) 176.



that there are additional stages of purification waiting for the rational soul even after death: the depiction of the two souls' separability serves ethical rather than metaphysical purposes.

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