

V. 9. (5) ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ  
ΙΔΕΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΟΝΤΟΣ

1. Πάντες ἄνθρωποι ἐξαρχῆς γενόμενοι αἰσθήσει  
πρὸ νοῦ χρησάμενοι καὶ τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς προσβαλόν-  
τες πρώτους ἐξανάγκης οἱ μὲν ἐνταυτοῖ καταμείναν-  
τες διέζησαν ταῦτα πρῶτα καὶ ἔσχατα νομίσαντες,  
5 καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς λυπηρόν τε καὶ ἡδὺ τὸ μὲν κακόν,  
τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ὑπολαβόντες ἀρκεῖν ἐνόμισαν, καὶ τὸ  
μὲν διώκοντες, τὸ δ' ἀποικονομοῦμενοι διεγένοντο.  
καὶ σοφίαν ταύτην οἷ γε λόγου μεταποιούμενοι  
αὐτῶν ἔθεντο, οἷα οἱ βαρεῖς τῶν ὀρνίθων, οἱ πολλὰ  
ἐκ γῆς λαβόντες καὶ βαρυνθέντες ὑψοῦ πτῆναι  
10 ἀδυνατοῦσι καίπερ πτερά παρὰ τῆς φύσεως λαβόν-  
τες. οἱ δὲ ἤρθησαν μὲν ὀλίγον ἐκ τῶν κάτω κιν-  
οῦντος αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ κάλλιον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡδέος τοῦ  
τῆς ψυχῆς κρείττονος, ἀδυνατήσαντες δὲ ἰδεῖν τὸ  
ἄνω, ὡς οὐκ ἔχοντες ἄλλο, ὅπου στήσονται, κατ-  
ηρέχθησαν σὺν τῷ τῆς ἀρετῆς ὀνόματι ἐπὶ πράξεις  
15 καὶ ἐκλογὰς τῶν κάτω, ἀφ' ὧν ἐπεχείρησαν τὸ  
πρῶτον αἰρεσθαι. τρίτον δὲ γένος θεῶν ἀνθρώπων  
δυνάμει τε κρείττονι καὶ δξύτητι ὀμμάτων εἶδέ τε

<sup>1</sup> This is a piece of stock Platonic school-polemic against Epicureans and Stoics, those lumpish fowl the Epicureans being as usual dismissed casually and scornfully, and the Stoics treated rather more respectfully. The "greater beauty" to which the Stoics have been urged on is of course

V. 9. ON INTELLECT, THE FORMS,  
AND BEING

1. All men from the beginning, as soon as they are born, employ sense-perception before intellect and sense-objects are necessarily the first which they encounter. Some of them stay here and live through their lives considering these to be primary and ultimate, and since they consider what is painful and pleasant in them to be evil and good respectively, they think this is enough, and pass their lives pursuing the one and contriving to get rid of the other. And those of them who claim rationality make this their philosophy, like the heavy sort of birds who have taken much from the earth and are weighed down by it and so are unable to fly high although nature has given them wings. Others have risen a little from the things below because the better part of their soul has urged them on from the pleasant to a greater beauty; but since they were unable to see what is above, as they have no other ground to stand on they are brought down, with the name of virtue, to practical actions and choices of the things below from which they tried to raise themselves at first.<sup>1</sup> But there is a third kind of godlike men who by their greater power and the sharpness of their eyes as if by a special keen-

virtue. For the Stoic doctrines of choice referred to here cp. *SVF* III 64 and 118.

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD V. 9.

ὥσπερ ὑπὸ δξυδορκίας τὴν ἄνω αἴγλην καὶ ἤρθη τε  
ἐκεῖ ὄον ὑπὲρ νεφῶν καὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα ἀχλύος καὶ  
20 ἔμεινε ἐκεῖ τὰ τῆδε ὑπεριδὸν πάντα ἡσθὲν τῷ τόπῳ  
ἀληθινῶ καὶ οἰκείῳ ὄντι, ὥσπερ ἐκ πολλῆς πλάνης  
εἰς πατρίδα εὔνομον ἀφικόμενος ἄνθρωπος.

2. Τίς οὖν οὗτος ὁ τόπος; καὶ πῶς ἂν τις εἰς  
αὐτὸν ἀφίκοιτο; ἀφίκοιτο μὲν ἂν ὁ φύσει ἔρωτικός  
καὶ ὄντως τὴν διάθεσιν ἐξαρχῆς φιλόσοφος, ὠδίνων  
μὲν, ἅτε ἔρωτικός, περὶ τὸ καλόν, οὐκ ἀνασχόμενος  
5 δὲ τοῦ ἐν σώματι κάλλους, ἀλλ' ἔνθεν ἀναφυ-  
γῶν ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς κάλλη, ἀρετὰς καὶ  
ἐπιστήμας καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ νόμους,  
πάλιν αὖ ἐπαναβαίνει ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἐν ψυχῇ καλῶν  
αἰτίαν, καὶ εἴ τι πάλιν αὖ πρὸ τούτου, ἕως ἐπ' ἔσχα-  
τον ἦκη τὸ πρῶτον, ὃ παρ' αὐτοῦ καλόν. ἔνθα καὶ  
10 ἔλθων ὠδίνος παύσεται, πρότερον δὲ οὔ. ἀλλὰ  
πῶς ἀναβήσεται, καὶ πόθεν ἡ δύναμις αὐτῷ, καὶ τίς  
λόγος τοῦτον τὸν ἔρωτα παιδαγωγήσεται; ἢ ὅδε  
τοῦτο τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασι ἐπακτόν  
ἐστι τοῖς σώμασι μορφαὶ γὰρ αὐταὶ σωματίων ὡς  
15 ἐπὶ ὕλη αὐτοῖς. μεταβάλλει γοῦν τὸ ὑποκείμενον  
καὶ ἐκ καλοῦ αἰσχρὸν γίνεται. μεθέξει ἄρα, φησὶν  
ὁ λόγος. τί οὖν τὸ ποιῆσων σῶμα καλόν; ἄλλως  
μὲν κάλλους παρουσία, ἄλλως δὲ ψυχῆ, ἢ ἐπλασέ τε  
καὶ μορφὴν τοιάνδε ἐνήκε. τί οὖν; ψυχὴ παρ'  
αὐτῆς καλόν; ἢ οὔ. οὐ γὰρ ἡ μὲν ἦν φρόνιμός τε

<sup>1</sup> For the Homeric allusions here and their significance see I. 6. 8, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* are here, as often, combined: cp. *Phaedrus* 248D3-4 and *Symposium* 210B3-C6. For the possible passage from musician to lover and lover to

ON INTELLECT, THE FORMS, AND BEING

sightedness see the glory above and are raised to it as if above the clouds and the mist of this lower world and remain there, overlooking all things here below and delighting in the true region which is their own, like a man who has come home after long wandering to his own well-ordered country.<sup>1</sup>

2. What, then, is this region? And how could one reach it? The man could reach it who is by nature a lover and truly disposed to philosophy from the beginning, in travail over beauty, since he is a lover, not enduring the "beauty of body" but escaping from it up to the "beauties of soul, virtues and kinds of knowledge and ways of life and laws"<sup>2</sup>; and again he ascends to the cause of the beauties in soul, and again to anything there may be beyond this, till he comes to the ultimate which is the first, which is beautiful of itself. When he has arrived there he ceases from his travail, but not before. But how will he ascend, and where will his power come from, and what reasoning will guide this Love on his way? This one: this beauty which rests on bodies comes to the bodies from elsewhere; for these beauties are forms of bodies which rest upon them as if on their matter. At any rate what underlies them changes, and becomes ugly instead of beautiful. Its beauty comes by participation, then, our reasoning says. What then is it which makes a body beautiful? In one way it is the presence of beauty, in another the soul, which moulded it and put this particular form in it. Well, then, is the soul beautiful of itself? No, it is not. For [if it was] one soul would

philosopher in Plotinus ep. I. 3. 1-2 (Plotinus in these chapters does not simply identify the lover and the philosopher as he does in this earlier treatise).

20 καὶ καλή, ἢ δὲ ἄφρων τε καὶ αἰσχρά. φρονήσει  
 ἄρα τὸ καλὸν περὶ ψυχῆν. καὶ τίς οὖν ὁ φρόνησι  
 δούς ψυχῆ; ἢ νοῦς ἐξανάγκης, νοῦς δὲ οὐ ποτὲ  
 μὲν νοῦς, ποτὲ δὲ ἄνους, ὃ γε ἀληθινός. παρ'  
 αὐτοῦ ἄρα καλός. καὶ πότερον δὴ ἐνταῦθα δεῖ  
 στήναι ὡς πρῶτον, ἢ καὶ νοῦ ἐπέκεινα δεῖ ἰέναι,  
 25 νοῦς δὲ προέστηκε μὲν ἀρχῆς τῆς πρώτης ὡς πρὸς  
 ἡμᾶς, ὡσπερ ἐν προθύροις τὰ γαθοῦ ἀπαγγέλ-  
 λων ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ὡσπερ ἐκείνου τύπος μαλ-  
 λον ἐν πλήθει ἐκείνου πάντη μένοντος ἐν ἐνί;

3. Ἐπισκεπτέον δὲ ταύτην τὴν νοῦ φύσιν, ἣν  
 ἐπαγγέλλεται ὁ λόγος εἶναι τὸ ὄν ὄντως καὶ τὴν  
 ἀληθῆ οὐσίαν, πρότερον βεβαιωσαμένους κατ'  
 ἄλλην ὁδὸν ἰόντας, ὅτι δεῖ εἶναι τινα τοιαύτην.  
 5 ἴσως μὲν οὖν γελοῖον ζητεῖν, εἰ νοῦς ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς  
 οὔσι· τάχα δ' ἂν τινες καὶ περὶ τούτου διαμφισ-  
 βητοῖεν. μᾶλλον δέ, εἰ τοιοῦτος, οἷόν φαμεν, καὶ εἰ  
 χωριστός τις, καὶ εἰ οὗτος τὰ ὄντα καὶ ἡ τῶν  
 εἰδῶν φύσις ἐνταῦθα, περὶ οὗ καὶ τὰ νῦν εἰπεῖν  
 πρόκειται. ὁρῶμεν δὴ τὰ λεγόμενα εἶναι πάντα  
 10 σύνθετα καὶ ἀπλοῦν αὐτῶν οὐδὲ ἓν, ἃ τε τέχνη  
 ἐργάζεται ἕκαστα, ἃ τε συνέστηκε φύσει· τά τε  
 γὰρ τεχνητὰ ἔχει χαλκὸν ἢ ξύλον ἢ λίθον καὶ παρὰ  
 τούτων οὐπω τετέλεσται, πρὶν ἂν ἡ τέχνη ἐκάστη  
 ἢ μὲν ἀνδριάντα, ἢ δὲ κλίνην, ἢ δὲ οἰκίαν ἐργάσθαι  
 εἶδος τοῦ παρ' αὐτῆ ἐνθέσει. καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰ φύσει  
 290

not be wise and beautiful and another stupid and ugly. So beauty in the soul comes by wisdom. And what is it, then, which gives wisdom to the soul? Intellect, necessarily, an intellect which is not sometimes intellect and sometimes unintelligent, but the true Intellect. This, then, is beautiful of itself. Should we then stop at Intellect as the First, or must we go beyond Intellect, and does Intellect stand from our point of view in front of the first principle, as if in the porch of the Good,<sup>1</sup> proclaiming to us all that is in it, like an impression of it in greater multiplicity while the Good remains altogether in one?

3. We must consider the nature of this Intellect, which our reasoning tells us is the genuine reality and true substance, when we have first confirmed by following a different course that something of the sort must exist. It is perhaps ridiculous to enquire whether there is intellect in the world; though there are, it may be, people who would dispute even this. But it is more disputable if it is the sort of Intellect we say it is, and if it is a separate one, and if it is the real beings and if the nature of the Forms is there: this is our present subject. We certainly see that all the things that are said to exist are compounds, and not a single one of them is simple; [this applies to] each and every work of art, and all things compounded by nature. For the works of art have bronze or wood or stone, and they are not brought to completion from these until each art makes one a statue, another a bed, and another a house by putting the form which it has in them.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Plato *Philebus* 64C1.

## PLOTINUS: ENNEAD V. 9.

## ON INTELLECT, THE FORMS, AND BEING

15 συνεστῶτα τὰ μὲν πολυσύνθετα αὐτῶν καὶ συγκρί-  
 ματα καλούμενα ἀναλύσεις εἰς τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς  
 συγκριθεῖσιν εἶδος· οἷον ἄνθρωπον εἰς ψυχῆν καὶ  
 σῶμα, καὶ τὸ σῶμα εἰς τὰ τέσσαρα. ἕκαστον δὲ  
 τούτων σύνθετον εὐρῶν ἐξ ὕλης καὶ τοῦ μορφοῦντος  
 20 —ὕλη γὰρ παρ' αὐτῆς ἢ τῶν στοιχείων ἄμορφος—  
 ζητήσεις τὸ εἶδος ὅθεν τῆ ὕλη. ζητήσεις δ' αὐ καὶ  
 τὴν ψυχῆν πότερα τῶν ἀπλῶν ἤδη, ἢ ἐνι τι ἐν αὐτῇ  
 τὸ μὲν ὡς ὕλη, τὸ δὲ εἶδος, ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ μὲν  
 ὡς ἢ ἐπὶ τῷ χαλκῷ μορφῆ, ὁ δὲ οἶδος ὁ τὴν μορφὴν  
 ἐν τῷ χαλκῷ ποιήσας. τὰ αὐτὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ  
 25 τοῦ παντὸς μεταφέρων τις ἀναβήσεται καὶ ἐνταῦθα  
 ἐπὶ νοῦν ποιητὴν ὄντως καὶ δημιουργὸν τιθέμενος,  
 καὶ φήσει τὸ ὑποκείμενον δεξάμενον μορφὰς τὸ  
 μὲν πῦρ, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ, τὸ δὲ ἀέρα καὶ γῆν γενέσθαι,  
 τὰς δὲ μορφὰς ταύτας παρ' ἄλλου ἤκειν. τοῦτο  
 30 δὲ εἶναι ψυχῆν· ψυχῆν δὲ αὐ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς τέτρασι  
 τὴν κόσμου μορφὴν δοῦναι· ταύτη δὲ νοῦν χορηγὸν  
 τῶν λόγων γεγονέναι, ὡσπερ καὶ ταῖς τῶν τεχνιτῶν  
 ψυχαῖς παρὰ τῶν τεχνῶν τοὺς εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν  
 λόγους· νοῦν δὲ τὸν μὲν ὡς εἶδος τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸν  
 κατὰ τὴν μορφὴν, τὸν δὲ τὸν τὴν μορφὴν παρέχοντα  
 35 ὡς τὸν ποιητὴν τοῦ ἀνδριάντος, ὃ πάντα ἐνυπάρχει,  
 ἃ δίδωσιν. ἐγγὺς μὲν ἀληθείας, ἃ δίδωσι ψυχῆ· ἃ  
 δὲ τὸ σῶμα δέχεται, εἶδωλα ἤδη καὶ μιμήματα.

<sup>1</sup> Plotinus seems to have left out the matter which is informed or the elements brought together under the form in this phrase, though they appear in the example which follows.

And again you will be able to resolve the things put together by nature, those of them which are multiple compounds and are called compositions, into the form imposed on all the elements of the composition<sup>1</sup>: man, for instance, into soul and body, and the body into the four elements. And when you have found that each of the elements is a compound of matter and what forms it—for the matter of the elements is in itself formless—you will enquire from where the form comes to the matter. And then again you will enquire whether the soul is one of the simple entities, or whether there is something in it like matter and something like form, the intellect in it, one intellect being like the shape on the bronze, and the other like the man who makes the shape in the bronze. And one will transfer these same observations to the whole universe, and will ascend there also to Intellect and suppose it to be the true maker and craftsman, and will say that the underlying matter receives the forms, and part of it becomes fire, and part water, and part air and earth, but that these forms come from another: and this other is soul; then again that soul gives to the four elements the form of the universe, but Intellect provides it with the forming principles, as in the souls of artists the forming principles for their activities come from their arts; and that one intellect is like the form of the soul, the one which pertains to its shape, but the other is the one which provides the shape, like the maker of the statue in whom everything that he gives exists. The things which Intellect gives to the soul are near to truth; but those which body receives are already images and imitations.

Some editors supply a phrase to make up the deficiency, but Plotinus is quite capable of such an omission.

4. Διὰ τί οὖν δεῖ ἐπὶ ψυχῇ ἀνιέναι, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτὴν εἶναι τίθεσθαι τὸ πρῶτον; ἢ πρῶτον μὲν νοῦς ψυχῆς ἕτερον καὶ κρεῖττον· τὸ δὲ κρεῖττον φύσει πρῶτον. οὐ γὰρ δὴ, ὡς οἴονται, ψυχὴ νοῦν  
 5 τελεωθεῖσα γεννᾷ· πόθεν γὰρ τὸ δυνάμει ἐνεργεῖα ἔσται, μὴ τοῦ εἰς ἐνεργεῖαν ἄγοντος αἰτίου ὄντος; εἰ γὰρ κατὰ τύχην, ἐνδέχεται μὴ ἔλθειν εἰς ἐνεργεῖαν. διὸ δεῖ τὰ πρῶτα ἐνεργεῖα τίθεσθαι καὶ ἀπροσδεᾶ καὶ τέλεια· τὰ δὲ ἀτελῆ ὕστερα ἀπ' ἐκεῖνων, τελειούμενα δὲ παρ' αὐτῶν τῶν  
 10 γεγεννηκότων δίκην πατέρων τελειούντων, ἃ καταρχὰς ἀτελῆ ἐγέννησαν· καὶ εἶναι μὲν ὕλην πρὸς τὸ ποιῆσαν τὸ πρῶτον, εἴτ' αὐτὴν ἔμμορφον ἀποτελεῖσθαι. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ ἐμπαθὲς ψυχῆ, δεῖ δέ τι ἀπαθὲς εἶναι—ἢ πάντα τῷ χρόνῳ ἀπολείται—δεῖ τι πρὸ  
 15 ψυχῆς εἶναι. καὶ εἰ ἐν κόσμῳ ψυχῆ, ἐκτὸς δὲ δεῖ τι κόσμου εἶναι, καὶ ταύτη πρὸ ψυχῆς δεῖ τι εἶναι. εἰ γὰρ τὸ ἐν κόσμῳ τὸ ἐν σώματι καὶ ὕλη, οὐδὲν ταῦτόν μενεῖ.<sup>1</sup> ὥστε ἄνθρωπος καὶ πάντες λόγοι οὐκ αἰδίοι οὐδὲ οἱ αὐτοί. καὶ ὅτι μὲν νοῦν πρὸ ψυχῆς εἶναι δεῖ, ἐκ τούτων καὶ ἐξ ἄλλων πολλῶν ἂν τις θεωρήσειε.

<sup>1</sup> Dodds (Select Passages 15), Harder: μένει Enn.\*

4. Why, then, must we go on up when we have reached the level of soul, and not suppose that it is the first reality? First of all, Intellect is other and better than soul: but the better is naturally the first. For certainly soul does not when it is made perfect generate intellect, as they think<sup>1</sup>; for in what way will the potential become actual, if there is no cause to bring it to actuality? For if it happens by chance, there is a possibility of its not coming to actuality. So we must assume that the first realities are actual and without deficiencies and perfect; but the imperfect ones come after and derive from the first, being perfected by their begetters as fathers perfect their originally imperfect offspring; and we must assume that soul is matter to the first reality which makes it and is afterwards given shape and perfected. But certainly if soul is a thing subject to affections, but there must be something not subject to being affected—otherwise everything will be destroyed by time—there must be something before soul. And if soul is in the universe, but there must be something outside the universe, in this way too there must be something before soul. For if what is in the universe is what is in body and matter, nothing will remain the same: so that man and the other rational forming principles will not be eternal or the same. One can see then from these and many other arguments that there must be an intellect before soul.

<sup>1</sup> "They" are the Stoics: cp. IV. 7. 8<sup>3</sup>. 8-9 and for the Stoic doctrine attacked here *SVF* I, 374, 377; II, 835-7, 839.

# PLOTINUS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY  
 A. H. ARMSTRONG

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK  
 UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

V

ENNEADS  
 V. 1-9



CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS  
 HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON  
 WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD

MCMLXXXIV