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ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΟ ΑΝΤΙΚΟΛΛΕΔΕΝΙΕ  
Ι ΚΛΑССИЧЕСКАЯ ΤΡΑΔΙЦΙЯ

ΤΟΜ Ι

ΒΥΠΥΣΚ Ι

2007

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## ПРИГЛАШЕНИЕ К СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ

На прошедшей 15–17 мая 2007 г. в Новосибирском научном центре конференции «Перечитывая Доддса. Рационализм и иррационализм в античной философской традиции»<sup>1</sup>, организованной сектором истории философии Института философии и права СО РАН и философским факультетом Новосибирского государственного университета, была озвучена идея создания в рамках Российского философского общества *Историко-философской ассоциации*, которая способствовала бы консолидации усилий отечественных специалистов, профессионально работающих в этой области.

В практическом плане это, прежде всего, означает регулярное проведение специализированных историко-философских конференций. Следующую конференцию планируется провести весной 2008 г. (конкретные сроки проведения мы объявим дополнительно). Тема этой конференции: «Диалог и диалектика»<sup>2</sup>. Затем, мы очень рассчитываем на то, что Ассоциация сможет собраться в расширенном составе во время Всероссийского философского конгресса, который состоится в 2009 г. в Новосибирске. Таковы планы на ближайшие два года.

Кроме того, представляется целесообразным учреждение специализированного издания, посвященного философскому антиковедению и классической традиции, ведь, как известно, нормальное развитие науки возможно лишь в ситуации профессионального обмена мнениями между специалистами, причем не только в книжном, что типично для философов, но и в журнальном формате. В отличие от книг и тем более учебников, журнальная статья – это, в идеале, представление новых и еще не устоявшихся оригинальных идей, которые, прежде чем перебраться на страницы книг и учебных изданий, должны пройти проверку на прочность путем обсуждения в научном сообществе. Именно поэтому журнальным публикациям в мировой науке придается такое большое значение и именно по ним определяют различного рода *impact-factors*, хотя в гуманитарных науках этот подход и вызывает обоснованные возражения. Кроме оригинальных исследований и публикаций, специализированный журнал по антиковедению, по нашему представлению, также должен включать в себя планомерно развиваемый раздел рецензий и дискуссий. Опять же, следуя практике ведущих научных журналов, обсуждению публикаций и результатов выступлений на конференциях следует уделить гораздо больший объем, нежели это обычно принято в отечественных изданиях.

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<sup>1</sup> Тексты выступлений на конференции и дополнительные материалы см. <http://www.nsu.ru/classics/dodds/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Предлагается рассмотреть «диалог» в самых различных аспектах античной культуры и философии, начиная с «диалога внутри традиции» и «диалога между философскими школами» и заканчивая «диалогом как жанром» и «диалогом через века».

Теперь кратко скажу о том, что стало непосредственным поводом для подготовки этого выпуска. В течение 2007–2009 г. в НГУ будет проходить семинар «Преподавая Античность. Фундаментальные ценности в изменяющемся мире»<sup>3</sup>, в котором в качестве приглашенных лекторов примут участие известные антиковеды Джон Диллон (Дублин), Катерина Иеродиакону (Афины), Леонидас Баргелиотис (Афины–Древняя Олимпия), Габор Бетег (Будапешт) и Мостафа Юнеси (Иран), а также группа молодых преподавателей и исследователей античности из университетов стран Восточной Европы и Евразии. В течение трех лет будет организована серия летних и зимних сессий. В этом году семинары пройдут на базе Новосибирского государственного университета в Академгородке – крупном научном центре, в котором образование традиционно сочетается с научными исследованиями. Мы рассчитываем коллективными усилиями не только начать работу над рядом исследовательских и образовательных проектов, но и подготовить новые материалы, все еще недоступные для преподавателей гуманитарных дисциплин, а также помочь молодым преподавателям из региональных вузов наладить контакты друг с другом и с западными коллегами. Для успешной работы этой группы принципиально важно, чтобы все участники семинара были настроены на длительное сотрудничество и имели четкое представление о своих задачах и миссии в качестве преподавателей. Очень важно, чтобы они могли сформулировать свои стратегии и подходы в преподавании антиковедческих и философских дисциплин. Мы рассчитываем рассмотреть наши проблемы с различных точек зрения и в ходе междисциплинарного диалога достичь лучшего понимания классической традиции в ее связи с такими важными современными проблемами, как проблема изменяющихся ценностей и культурного разнообразия.

Мы приглашаем историков философии, стремящихся к интенсификации профессионального общения, войти в состав Ассоциации, а также, более специально, заинтересованных исследователей, профессионально занимающихся античной, средневековой и византийской философией, и философов, чьи работы связаны с историей классической традиции, принять участие в семинаре по антиковедению и, в срок до 15 сентября 2007, выслать на адрес редакции ([afonasin@post.nsu](mailto:afonasin@post.nsu)) оригинальные исследования или рецензии по антиковедению для последующего опубликования в журнале «ΣΧΟΛΗ: Философское антиковедение и классическая традиция», который будет выходить дважды в год как в электронном, так и печатном виде.

*Е. А.*

*июнь 2007*

*Академгородок, Россия*

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<sup>3</sup> См. <http://www.nsu.ru/classics/reset/index.htm>.

# PLATONISM AND THE WORLD CRISIS

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## PREFACE

I am conscious of employing here a somewhat portentous title for what I am about to say, a title which may promise rather more than is actually going to be delivered; but it is in fact my deeply-held conviction that Plato, and the tradition deriving from him, has a number of important things to say to the modern world, to which the modern world would do well to listen. Of course, Plato had no conception of the nature or complexity of the issues with which modern civilisation is currently faced, but nonetheless, it seems to me, there are many useful insights which we may derive both from his own works – in particular his last great work, *The Laws* – and from those of certain of his followers, in particular Plotinus.

The topics on which I would like to focus my attention on this occasion are just three, but they seem to me to be such as, between them, to represent the great bulk of what is wrong with modern western society, and what is inexorably putting intelligent life on this planet under mortal threat. They are the following:

- (1) *The problem of the destruction of the environment and of waste disposal.*
- (2) *The problem of religious conflict and mutual intolerance.*
- (3) *The problem of the legitimization of authority and the limits of personal freedom.*

On each of these questions it will be found, I think, that Plato has things of importance to say. I will address them in turn.

## I

Let us start with the question of the radical imbalance currently prevailing between us and our environment. This is not, of course, just a problem of advanced Western civilisation, though it is a problem primarily caused by it. We are being joined in our aspiration for an affluent and wasteful lifestyle, in particular, by two enormous members of the emergent world, China and India, who, between them, have the capacity to sink the planet simply by seeking, as they have a perfect right to do, to emulate the material achievements of the chief Western powers, in particular the United States; while at the same time much of the so-called ‘third world’, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, is

engaged in a reckless proliferation of its population without exhibiting the slightest ability to support even its existing numbers.

At the root of our problems in this area over the last two hundred years or so is quite simply the modern concept of progress – that is to say, linear development upwards and outwards in all areas of society. We must build ever more roads, more houses, more public facilities; we must increase wealth – the Gross National Product – increase trade, exploit ever more fully all natural resources, vegetable, animal, and mineral. The inevitable increase in population consequent on that then necessitates further such development. And all this is naively viewed as progress towards a happy and glorious future.

This concept of progress is so deeply ingrained in our psyches that it is hard for modern man to comprehend a culture in which no such concept is present. But such was the situation prevailing, so far as I know, in all pre-modern (let us say, pre-1600 A.D.) societies, and notably in the high civilisations of Greece and Rome, which, along with the Judaeo-Christian tradition, are our own direct ancestors. Among Greek and Roman intellectuals, it was fully recognised that nations and societies had their ups and down, that empires rose and fell – and there may even be discerned, in the period of the high Roman Empire (notably the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) the notion that political arrangements, in the form of the *Pax Romana*, had attained a sort of apex, if not of perfection, then at least of satisfactoriness – but nowhere can we discern any trace of the modern obsession with ‘progress’. On the contrary, it was universally accepted that change in the physical world was cyclical: some new inventions were made from time to time, predominantly in the area of warfare, populations might increase locally, and cities, such as Alexandria, Rome or Constantinople, grow to great size, communications, in the form of roads or safe passage on the sea, might improve marginally; but all this would be balanced by a decline somewhere else – none of these local developments was thought to be such as to disturb the overall cyclical nature of sublunar existence, especially as the life of the physical world, as it ceaselessly unrolled itself, was seen merely as a temporal projection of the eternal life of a higher, intelligible world, in which, of course, there was no question of change or development.

The nearest thing, I suppose, to an exception to this world-view was provided by thinkers in the early Christian tradition, who did indeed look forward to an end-time, the second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgement, towards which all human life was working, a progression upon which Christ’s first coming was an important milestone. This Christian scenario does indeed involve a concept of linear progress, albeit of a distinctly other-worldly variety, but it has been argued, and I think not without some plausibility, that it is this Christian concept, duly secularized and truncated of its

culmination in a Last Judgement that has spawned the modern concept of endless material progress.

For it is, after all, endless, and herein surely lies its inherent contradiction, and much of its perniciousness. Although all our material progress is notionally working towards some goal, this goal can logically never be attained. It must always be receding over the horizon, as it is an essential part of the dogma of modern capitalist development that a slow-down in the rate of growth is a disaster, as that is to be equated with *stagnation*, and stagnation is a very bad thing indeed, being next of kin to the ultimate misfortune, which is *recession*. So the Gross National Product has to keep on rising, and World Trade has got to keep on increasing, and the under-privileged hundreds of millions of China, India and elsewhere must continue to aspire to the ownership of motor-cars, second homes, computers, refrigerators, and video-recorders.

Most importantly, there can be no 'steady state' at the end of this rainbow. Every aspect of the economy must go on increasing exponentially. And herein lays the root of the crisis. Already we are seeing the disastrous results of global warming – a phenomenon in face of which the greatest polluter on the planet, the United States, is quite simply in a state of denial – most dramatically on sub-Saharan Africa, where desertification is spreading relentlessly, and at the two poles, where the icecaps are melting fast, but everywhere in recent years extremes of weather have been manifesting themselves, not least in the United States itself, with a succession of notable hurricanes. We are also seeing the initial steps in what is going to become an increasingly frantic battle for ever-shrinking oil resources – the preposterous and disastrous efforts to bring 'freedom and democracy', first to Afghanistan, and then to Iraq, being the opening shots, soon to be followed by devious intrigues among the corrupt regimes of Central Asia. And all this because our civilisation is, it seems, hopelessly hooked on the ever-increasing consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels.

At the same time as all this exponentially growing consumption is going on, we are faced also with the ever-increasing problem of the disposal of the waste matter generated by our life-style, some of it very toxic indeed, and all of it troublesome in one degree or another. Some years ago, a widely disseminated calculation estimated that the average middle-class American generates up to twenty-five times as much garbage as the average Indian or African villager, the average European not being far behind and of course much more of that garbage is non-biodegradable. Admittedly, efforts are being made, much more seriously on the continent of Europe than either here in Ireland or in the U.S., to recycle as much of this as possible, but in this country in particular more or less every effort to re-process waste materials productively is met by ignorant or vexatious objections, and those by people who are generally every bit as productive of garbage as anyone else.

And that is only in relation to household rubbish. There is also the problem of commercial and medical waste, and beyond that the problem of the

reckless pollution of rivers and lakes by farmers either ignorantly applying too much fertiliser to their fields, in search of ever-higher yields, or carelessly or dishonestly disposing of farmyard slurry. Everywhere one turns these days, one comes upon one aspect or another of the detritus of a culture expanding out of control.

So what does Plato, and the Platonist tradition, have to say about all this? What, one might wonder, could he possibly have to say? In fact, I want to propose to you that he has a great deal to say, and that we would do well to listen to him. I will take my examples primarily from his last work, *The Laws*, in which he presents us with his most serious sketch of an ideal state, but I will start from a passage in his more famous work, *The Republic* – also a sketch of an ideal state, but a far more peculiar one than that of *The Laws*, and one, I am convinced, that is not to be taken literally.

However, in Book II of *The Republic*, where he is engaged in a schematic account of the genesis of the state, he makes a particularly significant point when describing the transition from a primitive stage of society – which he portrays, with more than a touch of satire, as a kind of Golden Age utopia, in which small communities are living in complete harmony with their environments – to a more advanced stage, which he terms the ‘pampered’ or ‘luxury-loving’ state (*tryphōsa polis*) – or, more pointedly, the ‘fevered’ state (*phlegmainousa polis*). This is, of course, the situation in which all existing societies find themselves, and it comes about, he proposes (II 372E<sub>ff</sub>), as a result of the incessant desire to add luxuries to the necessities of life. To quote him:

“There are some people, it appears, who will not be content with this sort of fare, or this sort of life-style (sc. of the primitive state); couches will have to be added, and tables and other furniture, yes, and relishes and myrrh and incense and courtesans and cakes – all sorts of all of them! And the items we first mentioned, houses and clothes and shoes, will no longer be confined to the level of the necessary, but we must introduce painting and embroidery, and procure gold and ivory and similar adornments, must we not?”

The consequence of this process of elaboration, as he goes on to point out, will be that the state will have to become bigger, and thus encroach on its neighbours (who will simultaneously be driven to encroach upon it), and the inevitable result of that will be that wars will break out, in the struggle to acquire more land and resources, or to protect trade routes – as ever-increasing foreign trade will follow necessarily from the demand for luxuries.

Is this not all, I would ask, though written in the middle of the fourth century B.C., depressingly relevant to our present situation? We flatter ourselves that we have attained to a high degree of rationality and orderliness in our international relations, after the excesses of the past century in particular, but we must face the unpalatable fact that this thin façade of reasonableness will quickly break down if anyone dares to try to part us from our oil – as I say, the attempted ‘liberation’ of Iraq is only the first step in such a break-down; and

such interventions as this will inevitably provoke ever more desperate and extreme responses from those who feel that they are being ruthlessly exploited, and have nothing to lose. And in the midst of all this mayhem, the oil itself, even making allowances for dramatic new discoveries in Central Asia and in Asiatic Russia, will inevitably run out in considerably less than a century from now. It is a limited, and non-renewable, resource.

So is there any solution to this problem? I am not at all sure that there is, but if there is, it has to be along the lines sketched out by Plato in his *Laws*. Now Plato is of course operating at a much simpler level than is appropriate for us, but, *mutatis mutandis*, I think that he can provide us with much food for thought. One of the first conditions that he establishes for his ideal state, in Book V of the work, is that its membership is to be strictly limited. This is easier to do, of course, when one is establishing a new colony, as he is, but the principle can be applied, broadly, to any state.

Let us take Ireland, for example. We in this country are in a rather interesting position in the modern world. We are a nation that, something over 150 years ago, had really far too many inhabitants for the resources available to support them – something over 8 million – and a dreadful famine was the result. I would not wish here to deny that British laissez-faire capitalism and plain indifference to Irish misery contributed to the dreadfulness, but the fact remains that the famine occurred because there were too many people for the available resources – and this is a situation being repeated in many parts of Africa, India and China today. However, in Ireland at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the situation is very different. After an initial halving of the population in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and many decades of stagnation after that, our numbers are now rising, in response to the stimulus of unprecedented prosperity in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, towards the 5 million mark. The question now arises, is there somewhere in here an ideal number of people to inhabit this green and pleasant land?

I have seen it stated, by responsible economists and demographers, that we probably could now support a population of something like the 8 million that pullulated here in misery in the early 1840s, and I don't doubt that they have a reasonable case. But, even if we granted that, the question arises, where do we stop? Are we to look forward then to 10 million? 15 million? After all, Holland, for instance, among our European neighbours, is about the size of Munster, and is now home to 16 million, and rising. Admittedly, they are Dutch – highly organised, very disciplined, used to living cheek-by-jowl – and we are... who we are, and used to a somewhat more chaotic and less crowded lifestyle; but still, the question may be raised.

I would like to answer the question, baldly and controversially, by proposing that an ideal population for us on this island would be just 5, 040, 000 – and I will now reveal why. Plato, in *Laws V* (737Dff.), declares that his ideal state, Magnesia, should consist of just 5040 households – that is to say, 5040 heads of

household, with their wives and offspring, for a total citizen population of something like 20,000 – 25,000. This number – which is arrived at for amusing numerological reasons (it is divisible by all the numbers up to ten, and 59 ways in all!) – is truly tiny by modern standards, and need not be taken seriously in itself. What is significant about it is the ideological position that it represents. It lays down the principle of a ‘steady-state’ economy, of balance with the environment, and as such should be taken very seriously indeed. What Plato specifies is that the legislator should study the territory available very carefully, and determine as exactly as possible what number of people it could support ‘in modest comfort’, and then stick to that. It is central to his system that every citizen should have a basic stake in society, a land-holding that is inalienable and may not be subdivided: “the number of hearths established by the initial distribution must always remain the same; it must neither increase nor decrease. The best way for every state to ensure this will be as follows: the recipient of a holding should always leave from among his children only *one* heir to inherit his establishment.<sup>4</sup> This will be his favourite son, who will succeed him and give due worship to the ancestors... of the family and state” (740B). The other children will be married off, if girls, or given out for adoption by childless households, if required – or else simply required to emigrate.

This is a stern arrangement – though something like that in fact prevailed unofficially in this country for many generations, God knows! – but there is a more positive aspect to it. Plato is above all concerned that no one in his society should fall below a certain level of modest prosperity; if they were to prove quite unable to run their allotment, they would simply be asked to leave the country (though every sort of advice and encouragement would be offered to them before that happened). Conversely, although Plato recognises the desirability of acknowledging different degrees of industriousness among the citizenry, and therefore allows some gradations in wealth, he is adamant that no one may be allowed to accumulate more than five times the basic property-valuation. Ancient Greeks did not think in terms of income, but rather of property, but if we were to transpose this principle into modern terms, we could say, as a rule of thumb, that, if the basic wage were fixed at, say, E 20, 000, then no one – doctor, lawyer, property speculator, or IT whiz-kid – for whatever reason, could be allowed to earn more than E 100, 000 per annum. If they wished to go beyond that, they would, once again, be asked to leave the country. As Plato puts it (744E-745A):<sup>5</sup>

“The legislator will use the holding as his unit of measure and allow a man to possess twice, thrice, and up to four times its value. If anyone acquires more than this,

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<sup>4</sup> This goes against normal Athenian practice, according to which a man’s property is divided equally among his sons. Plato is not advocating the custom of primogeniture, however, as will be seen in a moment.

<sup>5</sup> In my quotations from the *Laws*, I adopt in general the excellent Penguin translation of Trevor Saunders.

by finding treasure-trove or by gift or by a good stroke of business or some other similar lucky chance which presents him with more than he's allowed, he should hand over the surplus to the state and its patron deities, thereby escaping punishment and gaining a good name for himself."

This, I must say, seems to me an excellent provision, much as it would disgust the contemporary neo-conservative ideologists of capitalism. In modern terms, one would simply have to prescribe that anyone earning over five times the minimum wage would have the choice, and privilege, of donating his surplus to one of a number of approved public or private enterprises – I would naturally favour third-level education, but I recognise that there are many other very worthy causes out there! – or have the money removed from him by 100% taxation. It seems to me that society as a whole would be immensely the better for this, despite the frustration caused to a few. After all, as Plato remarks in the *Republic*, it is not our purpose to make any one class in the state happy, but rather the state as a whole.

I would certainly not wish to claim that Plato's vision of Magnesia is without flaws or defects. In particular, Plato exhibits a truly aristocratic disdain for anything approximating to 'trade' or industrial production, other than agriculture, in which we need not follow him. However, in his insistence on limiting such production (which in his ideal state would actually be performed by resident foreigners and/or slaves) to necessities rather than luxuries, and his insistence that, though there could be, no doubt, improvements in efficiency and effectiveness, there should be at all events no overall *growth*, I think that we should pay very serious attention to him. If his vision of a modest sufficiency of material goods sounds a little like that of Mr. De Valera, in his famous St. Patrick's Day address of 1943, that is no accident; as political thinkers Plato and Dev had actually quite a lot in common. Let us take a passage of the *Laws* on the question of the possession of material wealth, and then append to that a portion of Dev's address. First Plato (743C-744A):

"The whole point of our legislation was to allow the citizens to live supremely happy lives in the greatest possible mutual friendship. However, they will never be friends if injuries and lawsuits arise amongst them on a grand scale, but only if they are trivial and rare. That is why we maintain that neither gold or silver should exist in the state, and there should not be much money made out of menial trades and charging interest... The citizens' wealth should be limited to the products of farming, and even here... a man should not be able to make so much that he can't help forgetting the real reason why money was invented (I mean for the care of the soul and body, which without physical and cultural education respectively will never develop into anything worth mentioning). That's what has made us say more than once that the pursuit of money should come last in the scale of value. Every man directs his efforts to three things in all, and if his efforts are directed with a correct sense of priorities he will give money the third and lowest place, and his soul the highest, with his body coming somewhere between the two."

Now, as I say, we do not have to follow him in imposing a total ban on gold or silver money; let us focus rather on his scale of priorities.

And now here is Dev:

“Let us turn aside for a moment to that ideal Ireland that we would have. That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis for right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit – a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths and the laughter of comely maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age. It would, in a word, be the home of a people living the life that God desires that man should live.”

It has in recent years become sadly customary, among the forward-thinking sophisticates of modern Ireland, to mock this speech – particularly, I suppose, the rompings of sturdy children, contests of athletic youths and the laughter of comely maidens (with which we may, I suppose, aptly contrast the proceedings every weekend nowadays in such venues as Temple Bar and elsewhere) – but I am inclined to salute it as an approximation to a noble vision. It is, at any rate, entirely in line with the vision of Plato.

What Plato, then, is presenting for our scrutiny is a strictly regulated ‘steady-state’ society, designed to secure both internal harmony by reason of the justice of its political and sociological arrangements, and harmony with its natural environment by ensuring that the demands it puts upon it do not exhaust or distort that environment. I should specify, in connexion with the former aim, that Plato placed enormous stress on education for citizenship (*paideia*), beginning from infancy,<sup>6</sup> with the purpose of ensuring the full understanding of, and assent to, the principles on which the state was founded, on the part of the whole citizen body. In modern times, the United States goes some way towards this ideal – and of course the former Soviet Union and its satellites strove unsuccessfully to do so, as does China even now – but we in Europe have largely abdicated from any effort along these lines. Plato wanted above all, as did Benjamin Franklin and the other founders of the American Republic, an educated citizenry, any of whom could take on administrative responsibilities if necessary, but all of whom could at least make an informed judgement as to who among them was best qualified to rule, and vote accordingly. Indeed, so strongly did he feel on this point that anyone who proved unable or unwilling to exercise his citizenship was to be asked to leave the state altogether. There was no place in Magnesia for the ‘Don’t knows’!

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<sup>6</sup> Indeed, from the womb, since he even presents regulations for harmonious exercises on the part of pregnant women, to ensure that their offspring get off to a good start (VII 788E ff)!

To turn briefly to the problem of waste disposal: this is something on which Plato has really nothing to say, for the good reason that in the world, as he knew it, it was not a problem. The Classical Greeks were not necessarily a particularly tidy people – standards of hygiene in ancient cities would leave much to be desired from a modern perspective – but the fact was that most waste was thoroughly biodegradable and non-toxic, and did not pile up in such amounts as to constitute a crisis – dogs and birds could deal with most of it. What is left over is mostly the potsherds and metal utensils that give such delight to modern archaeologists; there were no indestructible plastics or radio-active residues to worry about. I think, however, that we can reasonably extrapolate from our knowledge of his philosophy in general so far as to say that he would have required that all the waste products of his ideal state should be recycled in one way or another – any pile-up of unusable garbage would inevitably indicate that society was no longer in harmony with its environment.

A further question might well occur to you, and it is one that I find a little awkward to answer, but answered it must be. It is all very well for Plato, you might say, to specify a fixed population of 5040 homesteads, and then say that all superfluous persons must simply leave; but how, in a modern democratic state, can one presume to set any sort of cap on population growth? The first reply I would make to that is to observe that it is in fact a feature of advanced western societies to limit their population growth spontaneously, to the extent that in Western Europe generally the indigenous population has attained something like steady state (with countries like Italy and Greece, – rather surprisingly – exhibiting a net decline); but nevertheless one must make provision for worst-case scenarios! If, as I feel would not be the case, population increase continued relentlessly, it would be necessary to take certain steps. One simple one would be to limit children's allowances to the first three children of any couple, instead of actually increasing them, as is currently the case. This would send out a pretty clear signal, I should think – though of course stirring up indignation in certain quarters. A more extreme procedure would be – along Plato's own lines, but also borrowing a feature from the Kyoto Protocol on the production of greenhouse gases – that any children over the number of three produced by a given couple – or indeed a single mother – would have to be presented for adoption by childless couples, or at least those who had less than the maximum permitted number; or else the errant couple would actually have to 'buy' the variance to keep another child from some couple who had less than the specified number – very much as Ireland is currently having to pay up for generating too much carbon dioxide! And of course, parallel with all this, possibilities of immigration would have to be very strictly limited.

I realise, of course, that such provisions will strike many decent people as deeply shocking, but I would suggest to them in response that the situation

that the human race as a whole currently faces is so serious that a seismic shift in our ethical consciousness will be necessary. It must come to seem (as I believe it is) deeply selfish and irresponsible, and hence positively *immoral*, to have more children than the environment can support, and such legislative provisions as I have outlined will only be expressing this sense of general disapproval. Morality, after all, is not a fixed quantity, much as religiously-minded people might like to think that it is; ethical positions shift in answer to changing societal circumstances – and it is quite reasonable that they should.

## II

But that is, perhaps, enough about that for the moment! The second issue that I want to deal with is that of the clash of religious traditions, and religious intolerance in general. On the world stage, what we currently find ourselves faced with is the disastrous fact that, even as irrational and violent differences between the various Christian sects have either faded away or are steadily lessening (except in such odd corners of the world as Northern Ireland!), the old antagonism between Christianity and Islam has taken on new and deadly forms. Of course, as we are constantly and correctly being reminded, this antagonism is not primarily fueled by theological concerns – it is rather a response to the beastly treatment by the *Christian* United States' protégé Israel of its Palestinian neighbours, and more generally to the shock to Islamic morality inflicted by the gross vulgarity of Western (and again, largely American) popular culture, which floods in upon traditional Muslim societies through films, TV, music and glossy magazines. This is not to deny that Muslim society could do with some serious shocks, particularly in respect of its attitude to women, and to the treatment of criminals, but that does not lessen the force of the shocks inflicted, and this provokes a strong reaction, of some of the results of which we are all too aware.. We must add to these provocations the economic pressures of Western consumer society, which are also afflicting the majority of the inhabitants of Muslim nations, those who are not so fortunate as to belong to the Westernized elites who can enjoy the more positive aspects of consumerism. We saw, back in 1979, what could happen in a state such as Iran, and what in recent years has brought an (admittedly most moderate and circumspect) Islamist party to power in secular Turkey; and we should take due note of the pressures which are building up in such a society as Saudi Arabia.

However, all that said, the fact remains that this reaction is expressed in a distinctly *religious* mode, and it is the intransigent attitudes of both Christianity and Judaism that lends fuel to it. I speak with some feeling, as I have been recently browsing extensively in the Qur'an, and have come to see that, despite a good deal of polemic, Mohammed's revelation is deeply rooted in

both Jewish and Christian thought. I myself would have considerable difficulty with the Prophet's prohibition on wine (which I believe was actually the result of rather local concerns, in the form of his objection to the use of wine in rituals honouring pagan goddesses in the region of Mecca), but in many other areas I feel that he has a lot to teach us. Primarily, though, Islam is traditionally much more tolerant of Judaism and Christianity than they have been of it. It sees itself, after all, as merely the culmination of a series of revelations which were made in earlier times to Abraham, to Moses, and to Jesus, and it incorporates much of what they had to say in its sacred text. The chief scandal and absurdity, from their point of view, is the claim by later Christians (though, they feel, not by Jesus himself) that he was, in some physical way, the *son* of God – and I must confess I find myself very much in agreement with them on that point. If the Christians could see their way to reformulating Jesus' status to that simply of a major prophet, and a man specially chosen and inspired by God, then, I think, the three great 'religions of the Book' could largely agree to differ on who delivered the most perfect and *final* revelation. The political and social pressures and sources of aggravation would continue, of course, but they would not be fueled to the same extent by theological tensions.

But where, you may ask, does Plato and Platonism come into all this? Very significantly, I feel. Plato has an interesting attitude to established religion. On the one hand, as a legislator, he is most particular that the gods should be worshipped by the citizens of his state in the most conventional and traditional way. Atheism or irreverence he is prepared to punish most severely, as being profoundly subversive of morality. But he himself does not believe in the gods in their traditional forms, nor does he expect the wisest and most senior citizens in his ideal state to do so; and this attitude of his (which was in fact, it must be admitted, by no means unique to him among the intellectuals of Classical Athens) communicated itself to his successors, in the form of a tradition of allegorizing religious symbols and myths.

In his early dialogue *Euthyphro*, Plato makes his mentor Socrates probe mercilessly the theological assumptions of the pompous Euthyphro, who is actually representing, albeit in an extreme form, the beliefs of the Athenian people in general. It is plain from Socrates' questions that he does not accept the traditional myths about the gods, their amours, their other interventions in the human world, and their quarrels among themselves. Later, in Book II of the *Republic* (378Aff.), Plato makes Socrates lay down a set of rules about how to talk about the gods, which once again indicates Plato's rejection of traditional mythology. The gods, or God – Plato is quite happy to talk about 'God' (*ho theos*) in the singular – must not be described as doing any harm to, or perpetrating any deception upon, men; God is entirely good, and eternally unchanging. This effectively takes care of the great bulk of Greek traditional theology, which Socrates proceeds to take apart.

And yet in the *Republic*, and more clearly still in the *Laws*, Plato insists on scrupulous religious observance in his ideal state. The traditional gods of the Olympian pantheon, though stripped of all unsuitable stories about them, are to be worshipped in the traditional manner, and so are a host of lesser divinities, daemons, heroes and even nymphs. In Book V of the *Laws* (738Cf.), he insists that all traditional ceremonies and sacrifices should be performed, and that all the citizens should attend the festivals. There is to be a full set of temples on the acropolis of the central town, and other precincts of the gods in each of the twelve divisions into which the state is divided (745Bff.).

How are we to reconcile these positions? Is Plato being simply disingenuous, and promoting traditional religion as something like an 'opium of the people? Well, I think that one would have to admit that he is not being entirely straightforward, but he is not being hypocritical either. He would reconcile these two positions by the application of allegorical exegesis. In Book X of the same *Laws*, after all, in the course of an attack on atheism (which, as I have said, is a serious crime in his state), he launches into an exposition of the real nature of the divine power in the world. This, it turns out, is nothing other than a rational World-Soul, and the traditional gods are merely manifestations of various aspects of this entity at work in the world. This truth, however, is only to be imparted to a very limited group of the wisest and most experienced of the citizens, who form a rather peculiar Council of State, known as the Nocturnal Council, from their custom of meeting just before dawn to consider basic issues connected with the smooth running of the state.

So for Plato the world was created – though timelessly – and is administered by an impersonal, though benign and intelligent, entity, which is best worshipped, however, by the observance of traditional rituals – and this would be true of all well-run states, whatever their particular traditions about the gods. There was absolutely no proselytizing tendency among the ancient Greeks, despite their firm conviction of their superiority to all other peoples. They were interested in other people's gods, but only to the extent of trying to assimilate them in their own minds to their indigenous gods, and occasionally – as in the case of interesting deities like the Egyptian Isis, or the Anatolian Cybele or Adonis – adopting them into their own religious system.

There are surely a number of important lessons here for us in the modern world. First of all, we must, I would maintain, divest ourselves finally of any nagging concern that we still may have that the whole human race should come to believe exactly what we believe – if only we could decide exactly what that was! Christians and Muslims are particularly guilty of this dangerous obsession – other religions, such as Judaism, Buddhism or Confucianism, are blessedly free of it. We must come to see other religious traditions as simply pursuing other paths – not better or worse ones – to the same goal, of paying due respect to the one positive divine force in the universe.

But secondly, we must learn to allegorize our beliefs, rather than rejecting them outright in a fit of misplaced rationality – to see our particular ceremonies and myths as bodying forth hidden symbolic representations of a higher truth, all of them ultimately reconcilable with one another. Within the two most troublesome faiths that I have picked out, I would commend, respectively, the positions of such Christian Platonists as Marsilio Ficino or Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in Renaissance Italy, and the Sufi tradition within Islam. No adherent of either of these tendencies ever started a religious war, or burned anyone at the stake – though they occasionally suffered such a fate themselves. And it is to Plato, and in particular his later followers, the Neoplatonists Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus, that both these traditions owe the degree of enlightenment that they possess. By all means let us continue to observe our respective traditions, but let us also refine and mellow them by resolving to see them henceforth as symbols of a higher truth, a truth that is ultimately mutually reconcilable – and on such details as whether or not to take a glass of wine, or to indulge in a loin of pork, let us just agree to differ.

### III

The last issue on which I wish to dwell is one that I would expect that many would find considerably less urgent than the other two areas of crisis that I have touched on, but one that seems to me just as important in its way, and that is the problem of the legitimation of authority in the context of advanced liberal democracy.

It may be that I am becoming just a little cranky in my old age, but it seems to me that one great problem that we in the West are facing is a progressive breakdown in the legitimation of authority. By that I mean an ever-increasing unwillingness on the part of citizens to accept the credentials of any authority, religious or secular, to prescribe what they shall do or not do; and this goes together with an avid enthusiasm for criticising the public and private conduct of those in public life, and for ascribing the worst possible motives to their actions.

Now of course one might say that in all too many cases, sadly, such an attitude is not unjustified, and that a healthy disrespect for the great and good is the hallmark of an advanced and highly educated democracy. I would just like to enter a plea for the proposition that this sort of thing can go to far, and lead inevitably to such phenomena as disregard of one's duties as a citizen (even to the extent of denying that there is such a thing as civic duty), a toleration of anti-social behaviour, and an unwillingness to make use of one's franchise in elections (the attitude of 'Ah sure what's the use? Aren't they all the same?').

It should be clear that no society can flourish very long when such attitudes prevail; but the question may well be asked in response, "Just what do

you propose to do about it?" It is here again, I think, that Plato can be of some help.

Admittedly, it is by no means obvious at first sight that Plato has anything much to offer to a modern liberal democracy. He was himself an unashamed totalitarian, who repeatedly expressed his disdain for contemporary Athenian democracy, which was in many ways – despite its direct participatory nature – more restrictive than our own. But we should look more closely, I would suggest, at just what Plato's position was.

His main objection to the contemporary democratic dogma, after all, is that it is held that citizenship is something that just comes naturally. There is no art or learning attached to being a good citizen, nor is there any expertise proper to good government. In theory, any Athenian was as capable of ruling as any other – provided that he was male and legitimate! – and any other citizen was entitled to challenge his credentials. For Plato, and for his master Socrates before him (if we can trust Plato's testimony), this is an absurd and thoroughly dangerous position to hold. It is his basic claim, in the area of political theory, that ruling is an art (*tekhnê*) or science (*epistêmê*), which must be acquired by a long and arduous process of self-discipline and study – study, indeed, of various rather abstract topics, chiefly mathematical in nature; and even to be a good citizen a process of self-examination ('know thyself' – *gnôthi seauton*) and moral training (*paideia*) is necessary.

He encapsulates his criticism of the democratic dogma in Book VI of the *Republic* (488A-E), with the striking image of the 'Ship of Fools':

"Imagine the following situation on a fleet of ships, or on one. The owner has the edge over everyone else on board by virtue of his size and strength, but he's rather deaf and short-sighted, and his knowledge of naval matters is just as limited. The sailors are wrangling with one another because each of them thinks that he ought to be captain, despite the fact that he's never learned how, and can't name his teacher or specify the period of his apprenticeship. In any case, they all maintain that it isn't something that can be taught, and are ready to butcher anyone who says it is. They're for ever crowding closely around the owner, pleading with him and stopping at nothing to get him to entrust the rudder to them. Sometimes, if their pleas are unsuccessful, but others get the job, they kill those others or throw them off the ship, subdue their worthy owner by drugging him or getting him drunk or something, take control of the ship, help themselves to its cargo, and have the kind of drunken and indulgent voyage you'd expect from people like that. And that's not all: they think highly of anyone who contributes towards their gaining power by showing skill at winning over or subduing the owner, and describe him as an accomplished seaman, a true captain, a naval expert; but they criticise anyone different as useless. They completely fail to understand that any genuine sea-captain has to study the yearly cycle, the seasons, the heavens, the stars and winds, and everything relevant to the job, if he's to be properly equipped to hold a position of authority in a ship. In fact, they think it's impossible to study and acquire expertise at how to

steer a ship (leaving aside the question of whether or not people want you to) and at the same time be a good captain.” (trans. Robin Waterfield).

Well, we get the message, I think. The ship-owner is the State, or the Sovereign People, and the crew members are the democratic politicians and ideologues. Much of his criticism, I feel, is applicable to our own situation, as much as to that of Classical Athens. We too hold in theory to the democratic creed that any citizen is *ipso facto* capable of rule, and that that requires no particular degree of expertise – though in practice we recognise that the details of government now have become so abstruse that there is need of a highly-trained civil service and a host of (highly-paid) advisers and consultants on top of that, to manage the politicians and set them right.

Plato, on the contrary, maintains that ruling is a science, and indeed the master science, and that perfection in it requires years of training. In the ideal state portrayed in the *Republic*, which is what is familiar to most people who know anything about him, this results in the rule of a small elite of so-called ‘philosopher-kings’, presiding over a large standing army-cum-police force, and a much larger proletariat of artisans and farmers, who constitute the productive element in the state, but who wield no power whatsoever.

I am always surprised, though, that this arrangement is taken seriously as a political blueprint by so many scholars who should know better, as well as by the general public. For me, the problem with it is this. It runs counter to one principle which was basic to Plato’s political philosophy, and which he inherited from Socrates (it features in the *Apology*, which is Socrates’ speech from the dock, as well as in the *Laws*), so that it cannot be dismissed as just something that he developed in his old age: the principle that any well-run state requires the *educated assent* of all the citizens, and this in turn requires that they *all* undergo the same *paideia*, or moral and intellectual training. This training is something that the lowest and largest class in the *Republic* conspicuously lacks – indeed, if the scenario presented is pressed to its logical conclusion, they do not even possess the brain to absorb such a training. In fact, what Plato is doing in the *Republic* is taking the opportunity to air a number of his cherished political ideas, while primarily presenting a schema of the well-ordered human soul, in which the reasoning element corresponds to the philosopher-kings, the spirited element to the soldiery, and the passionate element to the artisan class. The passionate element in the soul is essentially irrational, and must be subdued initially by force, though in a well-ordered soul it can come, like a well-trained and obedient dog, to assent to its being ruled, though without ever attaining full understanding of the whys and wherefores of that.

In the *Laws* – where he *is* being serious about constructing a state – we find a very different situation. Every citizen of the state, male and (to some extent, at least) female, is assumed to have been subjected to the same comprehensive education – beginning not just in infancy, but even in the womb

(Plato was a great believer in ante-natal exercises [cf. VII 788A-790A], to instil a sense of harmony into the unborn infant!) – which, while covering the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, is primarily concerned with instilling right attitudes – young people are to learn, from their earliest years, to love and hate the right things (653A-C):

“I maintain that the earliest sensations that a child feels in infancy are of pleasure and pain, and this is the route by which virtue and vice first enter the soul... I call ‘education’ the initial acquisition of virtue by the child, when the feelings of pleasure and affection, pain and hatred, that well up in his soul are channelled in the right courses before he can understand the reason why. Then when he does understand, his reason and his emotions agree in telling him that he has been properly trained by inculcation of appropriate habits. Virtue is this general concord of reason and emotion. But there is one element you could isolate in any account you give, and this is the correct formation of our feelings of pleasure and pain, which makes us hate what we ought to hate from first to last, and love what we ought to love. Call this ‘education’, and I, at any rate, think you would be giving it its proper name.”

Now this, we might say, is outright ‘brain-washing’, and we might appear at first sight to have a point, but I think that we should be less free than we are in the use of that term. The aim of ‘brain-washing’ techniques, after all, is to scrub from the brain a set of existing beliefs, and to produce a sort of zombie in place of a reasoning being. Plato is concerned to inculcate right beliefs in brains which have not yet acquired any, and he would make no apology for that. It was his view that young persons should be set firmly on the right road, morally and intellectually, by their elders – and when they in turn come into the full possession of their reason, they will reflect rationally on their education, and see that it was the right one, and be duly grateful.

Now we in the western world are, not unreasonably, pretty uncomfortable these days about the inculcation of ‘values’ into the young – the whole process smacks of authoritarianism of one sort or another, religious or secular – and yet we do, I think, often wish that they had some values. Our position, I would argue, is in fact deeply incoherent, where Plato’s is coherent. We feel that there should be *some* instruction in schools concerning ethical principles and the duties of citizenship, but we have great difficulty in deciding just what that should be like. Is one, for instance, to have totally value-free, ‘non-judgemental’, sex education, or should one throw in some recommendations against reckless promiscuity and in favour of treating people as whole persons, rather than as mere sex-objects? And how about standards of honesty and public-spiritedness, when dealing with one another or with the state? Then, we are most uncomfortable in general about censorship of books and films, but we draw the line at child pornography and the stirring-up of racial hatred. And then we get very hot under the collar, and enact strict regulations, about smoking and drug-taking, but we simply wring our hands when faced with excessive drinking of alcohol or ingestion of junk foods. A censorious outsider, such as Plato – or indeed some relic from the former so-

cialist countries – might conclude that we have simply lost our nerve, and are floundering around from case to case.

I must confess that I have come to the conclusion, in my old age, that modern western society is going to have to tighten itself up, on various fronts, if we are to avert a serious breakdown of civil society. If we do not take the proper steps voluntarily, I would predict a series of outrages in the areas of morality and public order, which, like '9-11', will produce a convulsive over-reaction, and we will wake up one morning to find ourselves under a dictatorship far more unpleasant than anything that I am advocating.

So what am I advocating? Well, the single biggest innovation that I would propose is a system of National Service, and by that I mean something truly worthy of that name – not just a euphemism for military service (though I would have no objection to the imposition of military discipline during such a period!). It seems to me that our greatest failure as a society in modern times is to develop a mechanism for initiating young persons into adult life, a life of responsible citizenship, such as is more or less universal in more traditional societies, and was in place even in democratic Athens. The period from eighteen to twenty is one of great stress in most young people's lives, and it here that a regime of strict, though rational, order might most advantageously be imposed. This would, of course, involve considerable initial cost, but the savings in the avoidance of anti-social behaviour and blighted lives, as well as the various worthy FAS-style projects that the young people would be set to work on, would amply compensate for this in the long run.

Should such an institution be compulsory? Probably, but one alternative that occurs to me would be simply to make it clear that, if one refused to take part, one would henceforth no longer be considered a citizen of the state, for the purpose of receiving any benefits, such as health services, higher education, unemployment benefit or old age pension. That should settle the matter for most people. During the eighteen months or two years of service, young people, besides experiencing strict discipline and order, and performing useful physical labour, would attend lectures on the history and structure of the state, and on ethical and political theory. This sounds pretty heavy stuff for many young persons, but these subjects could be made lively and attractive with some thought and suitable packaging.

Not only would I prescribe this basic period of National Service: I would advocate that, as is the practice in Switzerland, for instance, at the present time, all adults should be encouraged to return to the system for a period of a week or two every year up to at least the age of sixty, and that they should be given time off from their work to do this, over and above their normal holiday allowance. I think that this would prove a very salutary 'topping-up' of the good practices that they had developed during their original service. It would be a tonic for both body and mind!

This, then, I would see as one key development, if one wished to restructure the state along more Platonic lines. I say *more* Platonic, as I would not for a moment advocate a full dose of Platonism for a modern state, even if there were any prospect of a modern state being prepared to take it. The degree of planning and control of citizens' lives which Plato advocates is something that I for one would find quite intolerable, and I am sure that this would be the general reaction. It is only the basic premise of Plato's political philosophy that I feel we have something to learn from, and that is that it is the right and duty of a state, not only to provide a life for its citizens, but a *good* life, in the sense of a virtuous and purposeful life. And since states cannot do their own providing, being abstract entities, this has to translate into a consensus, however arrived at, of the citizens over thirty – that is to say, the dominant generation. It is they, I should say, who have the right, and the duty, to prescribe codes of conduct, and subjects of study, for the younger generation, including, of course, their own children. If this dominant generation loses its nerve – as I must say I saw it doing in the America of the 1960's – then society as a whole begins to fall apart. When I arrived in Berkeley, California, in 1966, the slogan going around was 'Don't trust anyone over thirty!' In a well-run society, I would suggest, this slogan should be virtually reversed: 'Don't entrust any decision-making to anyone under thirty!'

If the principle of a period of National Service were accepted, I think that all else that is necessary would follow from that. Firstly, a sense of discipline and purposiveness would be projected downwards, throughout the school system; and secondly, the influence of the institution would progressively filter upwards throughout the state, as cohort after cohort graduated, and took their place in society. A spin-off of this would, I hope, be an enhanced respect – duly earned, one hopes! – for those in public office or other positions of authority, and a willingness to attribute the highest motives rather than the lowest to them, unless proved otherwise.

That is all I have to say on my third chosen topic. I realise that, on all three of these topics, which seem to me more or less the salient features of the crisis which is facing western civilisation in particular, but also the world in general, I have been driven to utter many hard sayings, and some things that may appear shocking to some sensibilities. What I have tried to do, though, is to apply principles that I discern in Plato, and the tradition that originates with him, to the world in which we live, to see if he might have anything to offer us. I have deliberately confined myself on this occasion to his political thought. Another discourse, on another occasion, might concern itself rather with his metaphysics, his belief in another realm of existence superior to this physical one, a realm of the spirit, where the purified soul may contemplate eternal truths without the interference of the body. But Plato himself is first of all a deeply political philosopher. His first priority is to get the *environment* right, to establish a state in which rational life and discourse can flourish. And that is what I have been concerned with on this occasion.

# THE ORIGINS OF PLATONISTS DOGMATISM

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The philosopher Plato, as all his friends would agree was a man of strong views on most subjects, but it is a notable fact that, in his published works, he chooses to present these views in a distinctly devious way. The Platonic dialogue, after all, is a literary form designed to advance philosophical positions *aporetically* and *dialectically*, not dogmatically. If we derive doctrines from them, it is, so to speak, at our own risk.

Nonetheless there is indubitably a body of doctrine associated with the Platonic School. Even within Plato's own lifetime, we have the (admittedly tendentious) testimony of Aristotle as to the existence of certain philosophical principles of Plato which he on occasion<sup>1</sup> terms *agrapha dogmata*, and which have come to be known as the 'unwritten doctrines'. I have taken up a certain position on these myself,<sup>2</sup> seeking to strike a judicious balance between what I would regard as the extreme views of Harold Cherniss and his followers, such as Leonardo Tarán, on the one hand, and the 'Tübingen School' of Konrad Gaiser, Hans-Joachim Krämer, and *their* followers (such as Giovanni Reale), on the other. To summarize my position here, I see no problem about there being a body of doctrines, or at least working hypotheses, which do not find their way into the dialogues, except in devious and allusive forms, and that these doctrines, such as that of the derivation of all things from a pair of first principles, a One and an Indefinite Dyad, should be of basic importance to Plato's system; but I see no need, on the other hand, to hypothesise a full body of secret lore, present in the Academy from its inception, which is preserved as a sort of 'mystery' for the initiated.

Short of this, however, it seems to me entirely probable that a great deal of philosophical speculation went on in the Academy which does not find its way into a dialogue. After all, Plato never promises to reveal his whole mind in writing – very much the opposite, indeed, if one bears in mind such a text as *Phaedrus* 275DE, or the following notable passage of the *Seventh Letter* (341C-E):<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Met*, A 6, 987b29ff. A useful collection both of Aristotelian passages and of Neoplatonic commentaries on them is to be found in H.-J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik*, Amsterdam, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> *The Heirs of Plato* (Oxford, 2003), Ch. 1: 'The Riddle of the Academy'.

<sup>3</sup> Which I would certainly regard as authoritative (that is to say, emanating from sources in the Old Academy who knew what they were talking about), even if its provenance from the hand of Plato himself is disputed.

“But this much I can certainly declare concerning all these writers, or prospective writers, who claim to know the subjects which I seriously study (*peri hón egó spoudazó*), whether as having heard them from me or from others, or as having discovered them themselves; it is impossible, in my judgement at least, that these men should understand anything about this subject. *There does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith.* For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and actually living with it, it is brought to birth in the soul all of a sudden (*exaiphnés*), as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself.”

Even if this not Plato himself talking, as I say – though I believe it is – it is surely someone who was well acquainted with the situation obtaining in the school. Plato never really gave up on the Socratic idea that philosophy must always be a primarily oral activity, and also an open-ended process. So talk and argumentation prevailed in the groves of the Academy. And the members of the Academy of whom we have any knowledge – figures such as Speusippus, Xenocrates, Aristotle, Eudoxus of Cnidus, or Heraclides of Pontus – were a pretty talkative and argumentative bunch; not the sort of people to sit around as mute as cigar-store Indians until Plato had completed another dialogue!

At any rate, whatever the status of these ‘unwritten doctrines’, we are, it seems to me, left with the interesting problem that, from the perspective of the later Platonist tradition, beginning with Antiochus of Ascalon in the first century B.C.E., a firm conviction arose that Plato and the Old Academy had put forth a consistent and comprehensive body of doctrine on all aspects of philosophy, and this belief continued throughout later antiquity. Not that Platonism was ever seen to be a monolithic structure; there was room for a fairly wide spectrum of positions on most ethical and physical questions. But there was a solid consensus that Plato *did* dogmatize, and did not, as the New Academicians, from Arcesilaus to Carneades, maintained, simply raise problems and suspend judgement.<sup>4</sup> What I would like to enquire into on this occasion is (a) whether there might be any justification for this belief, and (b), if there is, at what stage might this dogmatism have arisen.

It seems to me best, in approaching this question, to start at the end, so to speak – that is, with the evidence of Antiochus – and work back. What we find with Antiochus – or rather, in a number of significant texts of Cicero, in

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. the discussion of the question at the beginning of the *Anonymous Theaetetus Commentary*, a work emanating possibly from the late 1<sup>st</sup>. cent. B.C.E., but more probably from the following century. As regards the New Academy, indeed, an interesting belief arose in later times (doubtless a pious fiction) that the New Academics did not believe this themselves, but only maintained this position in public to combat the Stoics, while dogmatizing in private! Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *PH* I 234, and Aug. *C. Acad.* 3. 20, 43 (quoting a lost section of Cicero’s *Academica*).

which his spokespersons are expounding Platonic doctrine along Antiochian lines<sup>5</sup> – is, first of all, a clear division of the subject-matter of philosophy into the three domains of ethics, physics (including what we would consider rather ‘metaphysics’, or the discussion of first principles), and logic, and then a set of confidently proclaimed doctrines, under each of those heads. It has long been assumed, without much dissent that this construction is very largely a fantasy of Antiochus’, concocted by dint of extrapolating back onto his heroes in the Old Academy a body of doctrine largely gleaned from the Stoics, by whose teachings he was deeply influenced.

I entered a plea against this assumption in *The Middle Platonists*, some thirty years ago now, arguing on the one hand that there was little point in Antiochus’ trying to put over on a fairly sceptical and well-informed public a claim for which there was no justification whatever,<sup>6</sup> and on the other hand recalling how little we really know of doctrinal developments within the Old Academy, especially under the leadership of Xenocrates and Polemon. I was still, however, in that work pretty wary of attributing too much in the way of doctrine to Polemon in particular, since we seemed to know so little about him, despite his forty-year tenure of the headship. But since then I have been much encouraged by a most perceptive article of David Sedley’s, ‘The Origins of Stoic God’, published in 2002,<sup>7</sup> which, it seems to me, opens the way to recovering much of Polemon’s doctrinal position, and I have rather taken this ball and run with it, I’m afraid, in Ch. 4 of *The Heirs of Plato*.

I will return to David Sedley’s article presently, but for the moment I want to concentrate rather on the topic of ethics, and even before that to focus on the question of the formal division of philosophy into topics at all, which seems to me to be bound up with the establishment of a philosophical *system*. We learn from Sextus Empiricus, in fact (*Adv. Log.* I 16), that the first phi-

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<sup>5</sup> We are concerned chiefly with such works as *De Finibus* IV and V (for ethics), and the *Academica Priora* and *Posteriora* (for ‘physics’), but there are a number of other significant passages also. For a fairly comprehensive treatment of Antiochus, see *The Middle Platonists*, Ch. 2; but also, in a more sceptical mode, Jonathan Barnes, ‘Antiochus of Ascalon’, in *Philosophia Togata*, eds. M. Griffin & J. Barnes, Oxford, 1989, 51-96.

<sup>6</sup> He is never, as I pointed out, accused of anything like this by Cicero, who himself, despite his great personal affection and respect for Antiochus, maintains a position loyal to the New Academy. All that Cicero accuses him of is being himself too close to the Stoics (*si perpauca mutavisset, germanissus Stoicus, Acad. Post.* 132; *a Chrysippo pedem nusquam, Acad. Post.* 143; and cf. also *Acad. Pr.* 135, where Cicero seeks to nail him on the particular point of virtue being sufficient for happiness, which he declares was *not* the view of the Old Academy). All this, I maintain, does not amount to a dismissal of Antiochus’ overall project – and it is, in any case, inter-school polemic.

<sup>7</sup> In *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath*, eds. D. Frede and A. Laks, Leiden, 2002, 41-83.

osopher formally to distinguish the three main areas or topics of philosophy, which Sextus names in the order 'Physics – Ethics – Logic', but which can occur in virtually any order, was Xenocrates.<sup>8</sup> However – and, I think, significantly – Sextus precedes this announcement by saying that Plato himself had already made this division 'virtually' (*dynamēi*), since he discussed many problems in all these fields.<sup>9</sup> The true significance of this statement, I think, is that Xenocrates himself, in making this formal division, sought to father the concept on Plato himself, possibly in his attested work *On Philosophy* (DL IV 13). He could, after all, without difficulty have adduced various passages from the dialogues, and indeed whole dialogues, such as the *Timaeus*, for physics, *Republic IV* for ethics, or the *Theaetetus* for epistemology (as part of logic) – or indeed the second part of the *Parmenides* in the same connexion – which would support his contention, very much as is done by later composers of Platonist handbooks, such as Alcinous or Apuleius.

If this be so, it can be seen as the tip of a rather large iceberg. First of all, in order to make appeal to the works of Plato, one needed to have a definitive edition of them. It was the suggestion long ago of Henri Alline<sup>10</sup> that the first edition of the works of Plato was instituted in the Academy under Xenocrates, and although this has been much impugned over the years as unproven, I must say that it seems to me an entirely probable conjecture. Such an early edition was certainly made, since we have what appears to be Plato's entire oeuvre surviving to us – something that cannot be claimed for any other ancient philosophic author, except perhaps Plotinus (and we know how *that* happened) – and I feel it to be unlikely that Speusippus ever got around to such an enterprise. It would most effectively underpin what seems to have been Xenocrates' main project, which is that of defending the tradition of Platonism against the attacks of Aristotle and his associates, such as Theophrastus, since to perform this duty plausibly he needed to have the Master's works to hand in a definitive format.

Once he had an authoritative corpus, he could proceed – though I think also that he had no hesitation in appealing to 'unwritten doctrines' when required, relying not only on his personal experience of what went on in the Academy, but on such a text as that from the *Seventh Letter* quoted above (if he did not actually compose that himself!). His purpose will have been to hammer out something like a coherent body of doctrine from this rather unpromising material.

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<sup>8</sup> Actually, if Antiochus is following Xenocrates in this, Xenocrates' order will have been 'Ethics – Physics – Logic', and Sextus is merely following the preferred Stoic order.

<sup>9</sup> He might also have added that Aristotle seems to recognise a tripartition of philosophy at *Topics I* 14 (105b19 ff.).

<sup>10</sup> In *Histoire du text de Platon*, Paris, 1915.

If we take the sphere of ethics for a start, the sort of issues that were arising, in the wake of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (in whatever form that might have been available), would have been the relative importance of the virtues and the lesser goods, those of the body and external circumstances, in the achieving of happiness, or *eudaimonia*, and the overall purpose of life, whether *theoria* or *praxis*. From Plato himself, one might derive rather mixed signals, after all. From the *Phaedo*, for instance, one might conclude that the concerns of the body are simply a distraction for the philosopher, and should be unhitched from as far as possible, even before death (the philosopher should, precisely, practice death!), whereas from the *Republic*, particularly Book IX (cf. esp. 580D-592B), one might deduce that the lesser goods, desired by the spirited element (*thymos*) and the passionate element (*epithymia*), though far inferior to the goods of the soul, are to be accorded a limited status, in a suitably controlled and moderated form. This ambiguity continues in the *Laws*, where, in Book I, 631BC, we learn that "goods are of two kinds, human and divine; and the human goods are dependent on the divine, and he who receives the greater acquires also the less, or else he is bereft of both." These 'human' goods, such as health, beauty, strength and wealth, Plato goes on to say, are far inferior to the 'divine' goods of the soul, which are the four virtues, but they are not to be dismissed from consideration. He goes on to characterize them, however, somewhat later (II 661A-D), as 'conditional goods', which are really good only for the virtuous man, and actually evils for the bad man, who will be liable to misuse them.<sup>11</sup>

In face of all this, let us consider the definitions of happiness put forth by Xenocrates and Polemon respectively, as relayed to us by the Alexandrian Church Father Clement (*Strom.* II 22). First that of Xenocrates, presumably derived from his treatise *On Happiness*:

"Xenocrates of Chalcedon defines happiness as the acquisition of the excellence (or virtue, *aretê*) proper to us, and of the resources with which to service it. Then as regards the proper seat (*to en hōi*) of this, he plainly says the soul; as the motive causes of it (*hyph' hōn*) he identifies the virtues; as the material causes (*ex hōn*), in the sense of parts, noble actions and good habits and attitudes (*hexeis kai diatheseis*); and as indispensable accompaniments (*hōn ouk aneu*), bodily and external goods."

There is much of interest here, if we can trust the basic fidelity of Clement. First of all, can we conclude from this that the distinctive 'metaphysics of prepositions', presumed by such an authority as Willy Theiler to be a product of the scholasticism of the first century B.C.E. or later, is already being utilized by Xenocrates at the end of the fourth century? I'm not sure why not, really. There is nothing inherent in the formulation, I think, that could

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<sup>11</sup> This topic has recently been discussed, in rather exhausting detail, by Christopher Bobonich, in Ch. 2 of his vast work, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (Oxford, 2002).

not have been derived by a scholastically-minded man from the existing, somewhat less systematic usage of prepositions for this purpose by Plato and Aristotle, and I am not sure how or why Clement would have arrived at this application of the prepositional terms, had he not had some stimulus to it from Xenocrates.

More important, however, is the content of the doctrine. We can deduce from this, I think, that *eudaimonia* is for Xenocrates not solely a matter of the acquisition or possession of *aretê*, but "the resources with which to service it," that is to say, the bodily and external goods which are its *hôn ouk aneu*, which I have rendered its 'indispensable accompaniments.'<sup>12</sup>

This in turn may be connected with evidence that can be derived from Cicero in *De Finibus* IV 15-18, where, in confutation of the Stoics, he is presenting the Antiochian view of the doctrine of the Old Academy and Peripatos, or more specifically, of Xenocrates and Aristotle. After declaring that these two start out from the same ethical first principles as do the Stoics later, the 'first things according to nature', or *prôta kata physin* (*prima naturae*, in Cicero's Latin), he proceeds to give a summary of their position. As this account does not accord particularly well with Aristotle's surviving views (though it may have accorded better with early works of his available to Cicero, but not to us), it seems reasonable to claim it, broadly, for Xenocrates:<sup>13</sup>

"Every natural organism aims at being its own preserver, so as to secure its safety and also its preservation true to its specific type.<sup>14</sup> With this object, they declare, man has called in the aid of the arts to assist nature; and chief among them is counted the art of living, which helps him to guard the gifts that nature has bestowed and to obtain those that are lacking. They further divided the nature of man into soul and body. Each of these parts they pronounced to be desirable for its own sake, and consequently they said that the virtues (or excellences) also of each were desirable for their own sakes; at the same time they extolled the soul as infinitely surpassing the body in worth, and accordingly placed the virtues also of the mind above the goods of the body. But they held that wisdom is the guardian and protectress of the whole man, as being the comrade and helper of nature, and so they said that the function of wisdom, as protecting a being that consisted of a mind and body, was to assist and preserve him in respect of both."

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<sup>12</sup> The issue of the role of the *hexeis kai diatheseis* as the 'parts' out of which happiness is constructed is also of interest, as it seems to embody a doctrine, also expressed by Aristotle at the beginning of Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1.1103a14-b25), that *ethical* virtue arises from *ethos*, from good training and from the *practice* of noble deeds.

<sup>13</sup> I borrow the Loeb translation of H. Rackham.

<sup>14</sup> *Omnis natura vult esse conservatrix sui, ut et salva sit et in genere conservetur suo.*

The principle with which this passage begins does not, admittedly, seem to reflect closely anything appearing in the Platonic dialogues; but it could well be a development of a principle enunciated by Plato's companion Eudoxus of Cnidus, who was noted for maintaining that pleasure was the highest good, on the grounds that the maximization of pleasure was the first thing sought by any sentient organism from its birth on.<sup>15</sup> If so, Xenocrates has adapted it to a rather different purpose, to establish a justification for maintaining a concern for physical survival and comfort as a base on which to build. On the other hand, the sentiments expressed in the rest of the text are readily derivable from the passages of the *Laws* mentioned above.

The establishing of 'the things primary according to Nature' as the basis for an ethical theory is attributed by Antiochus also to Polemon (e.g. *De Fin.* IV 50-1), but we may discern from reports of his position a slight increase in austerity, in comparison with his master Xenocrates. It can only have been slight, as they are consistently lumped together in the doxography, but it is significant that Polemon was the teacher of the future Stoic founder Zeno, and he plainly transmitted to him an austere ethical stance, which Zeno then developed further.

Clement reports Polemon's position, immediately following that of Xenocrates (*Strom.* II 22):

"Polemon, the associate of Xenocrates, seems to wish happiness (*eudaimonia*) to consist in self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) in respect of all good things, or at least the most and greatest of them. For he lays it down that happiness can never be achieved apart from virtue, *while virtue is sufficient for happiness even if bereft of bodily and external goods.*"

It is in this last specification, if in anything, that Polemon is distinctive. One can see here, I think, traces of an on-going argument within the Academy as to the precise status of the so-called 'mortal' goods. Nevertheless, it would seem from Antiochus' evidence that Polemon did not entirely dismiss these lower goods. Here is the passage alluded to above (IV 50-1). Cicero is in the process of criticizing Cato for indulging in various specious Stoic arguments:

"As for your other argument, it is by no means 'consequential', but actually dull-witted to a degree – though, of course the Stoics, and not you yourself, are responsible for that. 'Happiness is a thing to be proud of; but it cannot be the case that anyone should have good reason to be proud without virtue.' The former proposition Polemon will concede to Zeno, and so will his Master (sc. Xenocrates) and the whole of their school, as well as all the other philosophers who, while ranking virtue far above all else, yet couple some other thing with it in

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *EN* I 12, 1101b27-31; X 2, 1172b9-18. Aristotle remarks, in the second passage, that Eudoxus' views gained considerably in credibility because of his own high personal standards of morality.

defining the highest good; since if virtue is a thing to be proud of, as it is, and excels everything else to a degree hardly to be expressed in words, Polemon will be able to be happy if endowed solely with virtue, and destitute of all besides, and yet he will not grant you that nothing except virtue is to be reckoned as a good.”

We have here, then, the lineaments of a Platonist doctrine on the first principles of ethics and the components of happiness, which, while allowing for variations of emphasis, yet can form the basis for a coherent position. In later times, it rather depended on whether you were more concerned to combat Stoics (as, for example, was Plutarch) or Peripatetics (as was the later Athenian Platonist Atticus) that you took a more or less austere line in ethics – that you favoured, for example, *metriopatheia* over *apatheia* or the reverse – but in either case there was a deposit of Platonist doctrine to fall back on, and that doctrine, I would maintain, was laid down by Xenocrates and Polemon, not immediately by Plato.

The case is similar in the area of the first principles of physics. Plato had left a rather confusing legacy to his successors – or so it must seem to us. We have, on the one hand, the Good of the *Republic*, a first principle which is in some way ‘beyond’ (*epekeina*) the rest of existence, of which it is the generative ground, as well as an object of desire; but then there is the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*, who is described as an Intellect, but who is represented as contemplating a Model in some way above and beyond himself, in his creation of Soul and of the world (unless the Demiurge and his creation are a myth, and to be deconstructed, as was stoutly maintained, against the criticisms of Aristotle, by both Speusippus and Xenocrates); then there is the One of the hypotheses of the second part of the *Parmenides*, which may or may not have been intended by Plato as a first principle, but which was certainly taken as such in later times; further, there are the first principles set out in the *Philebus* (26Cff.), Limit, the Unlimited, and the Cause of the Mixture, which seem to have a fairly close relationship to the One and Indefinite Dyad of the Unwritten Doctrines; and then, last but not least, we seem to have the doctrine, firmly enunciated first in the *Phaedrus* (245Cff.), but also dominant in Book X of the *Laws*, of a rational World Soul as the first principle of all motion, and therefore of all creation. What are we to do with this embarrassment of riches?

It is fairly plain what Xenocrates did with it; it is less plain in the case of Polemon, but I think that his position is recoverable, if certain minimal clues are probed closely. In either case, the result is interesting. In the case of Xenocrates, what is attested (though only by the doxographer Aetius, who is a rather doubtful witness)<sup>16</sup> is a pair of Monad and Dyad, the former being characterized as ‘Zeus and Odd and Intellect’, and spoken of in addition as “having the role of Father, reigning in the heavens” – which latter descrip-

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<sup>16</sup> *Placita*, I 7, 30, p. 304 Diels = Fr. 15 Heinze / 213 Isnardi Parente.

tion seems to connect him, remarkably, with the Zeus of the *Phaedrus* Myth (246E), and to place him, not in any transcendent relation to the physical cosmos, but rather as resident in the topmost sphere of it. In respect of his consort, however, there is what seems to me a serious difficulty in the text, which I have had various stabs at solving over the years, but which still bothers me. Here is the text as it appears in the *Placita*:

“Xenocrates, son of Agathenor, of Chalcedon [holds] as gods the Monad and the Dyad, the former as male, having the role of Father, reigning in the heavens (*en ouranôi basileuousan*), which he terms ‘Zeus’ and ‘odd’ (*perittos*, sc. numerically) and ‘Intellect’, which is for him the primary god; the other as female, in the manner of the Mother of the Gods (*mêtros theôn dikên*), ruling over the realm below the heavens, who is for him the Soul of the Universe (*psychê tou pantos*).”

Here, on the face of it, it seems that the female principle which is the counterpart of the Monad, while being characterized as ‘the mother of the gods’, is also presented as a World Soul, whose realm of operations is ‘below the heavens’. Now I am on record as declaring that either Aetius has gone seriously astray here, or the manuscript tradition has suffered corruption.<sup>17</sup> My reason for maintaining that is that we learn also, from the rather more reliable source that is Plutarch (*Proc. An.* 1012D-1013B = Fr. 68 H/188 IP), that, when Xenocrates is interpreting the creation of the soul in the *Timaeus* (35AB), he takes the ‘indivisible substance’ (*ameristos ousia*) as being in fact the Monad, and ‘that which is divided about bodies’ (*hê peri ta sômata meristê*) as Multiplicity (*plêthos*),<sup>18</sup> or the Indefinite Dyad, while the Soul, characterized as a ‘self-moving number’ is the product of these two. So the Indefinite Dyad cannot itself be the World-Soul.

I would like to think that what is happened is that a line has fallen out of the Aetius passage, between *metros theôn* and *dikên*, in which we learned that the Dyad was female, “holding the rank of Mother of the Gods, which he terms ‘Rhea’ and ‘even’ and ‘Matter’”, while *dikên* actually is to be taken as a proper name, Dikê – the assessor of Zeus in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (256-7), and his ‘follower’ in *Laws* IV 716A – characterizing the World Soul as the offspring of these two entities, rather like Athene (who may also have been mentioned). This would, at any rate, provide us with a coherent account of Xenocrates’ system of first principles, which in turn can be seen as an attempt to bring some order into the Platonic *testimonia*.

If we can take this as being the position, we can see, I think, Xenocrates going to work to create a coherent Platonist doctrine to counter the attacks

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Xenocrates’ Metaphysics: Fr. 15 (Heinze) Re-examined’, *Ancient Philosophy* 5, 47-52 (repr. in *The Golden Chain*, Aldershot, 1990). I have set out my arguments at more length in *The Heirs of Plato*, Oxford, 2003, 98-107.

<sup>18</sup> This is actually Speusippus’ preferred term for the female principle, but Xenocrates doubtless employed it as well.

of Aristotle (e.g. in the *De Caelo* I 12). An important part of his strategy is insisting on a non-literal interpretation of the *Timaeus*, since a literal interpretation creates various major embarrassments, which indeed Aristotle picked on. The first problem is the inconsistency of postulating something, to wit, the physical cosmos, that has a beginning but (by arbitrary decree of the Demiurge) no end. That is a logical absurdity, but there is also the difficulty of the Demiurge, though he appears to be a supreme deity, nonetheless contemplating a *paradeigma*, or 'model', in accordance with which he performs his creative work, which is independent of, and co-ordinate with, himself; and there is also the oddity (though it is explained away by ingenious feats of modern exegesis) that, although Timaeus has stated that an intellect cannot be present in anything without a soul (30b2-3), the Demiurge is precisely that – an intellect without a soul.<sup>19</sup>

However, once one has postulated that the account of demiurgic creation is a myth, all these problems dissolve satisfactorily. What the Demiurge then becomes, it seems to me, is nothing other than a divine Intellect, contemplating its own contents, which are the totality of the Forms, conceived by this stage as numbers, or at least numerical formulae of some sort, and projecting them, eternally, onto a substratum – which Plato himself, notoriously, does not present as matter, but which Aristotle, and very probably both Speusippus and Xenocrates also, did. This is also the Zeus of the *Phaedrus* myth, and perhaps also the Good of the *Republic*.

What, however, of the World Soul of *Laws* X, which would seem to be Plato's last word on the subject of supreme principles? It is not entirely clear to me what is going on here, and I am not sure that Polemon may not have had a slightly different take on it from Xenocrates, but I would suggest that, for Plato in the *Laws*, the supreme principles are indeed still the One and the Indefinite Dyad, but that they are seen as somehow, when considered separately, only *potential* principles, which must come together to be actualized, and the result of their coming together is the generation, first of the whole system of Form-Numbers, and then, with the addition of the principle of mobility, of Soul. Since this whole process must be conceived of as being eternal, and indeed timeless, the actively cosmogonic principle, and the cause of motion to everything else, is in fact the World Soul.

At any rate, that is one version of a system of first principles that is bequeathed to later generations of Platonists, in the form of the triad of God – Forms, or even Form (*Idea*) – Matter, and this goes back, I suggest, primarily to Xenocrates, who, however, was assiduous in fathering it on Plato, and

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<sup>19</sup> The ingenuity I refer to is to make a distinction between *having* an intellect, which would require something to have a soul, and *being* an intellect, which need not involve having or being anything else. That is all well and good, but, in the myth, the Demiurge is more than just a disembodied intellect; he is presented as a divine personage who *has* an intellect, and thus must also have a soul.

was able to quote a number of proof texts in support of this. That is not, however, the only system that emerges from the Old Academy, and this brings me back to Polemon, and to David Sedley.

We had long had the problem, and it was one that bothered me when I was surveying the Old Academy in the first chapter of *The Middle Platonists*, and for a long time after that, that, although Polemon presided over the Academy for fully forty years, and was a deeply respected figure, all we seemed to know of him, apart from a cluster of anecdotes and sayings, was a modicum of ethical theory; he did not seem to have had any view on physics or logic at all. And yet could that be true? How could one profess to be a Platonist, after all, and disregard the whole metaphysical structure that underlay Plato's ethical theories? Certainly, Antiochus' spokesman Varro, in a passage of Cicero's *Academica*, I 24-9, gives us what purports to be a survey of Old Academic physics, but it comes across as so palpably Stoic in content that no one gave it a second thought.

However, one small clue does exist to Polemon's doctrine in this area which, if properly pressed, can yield interesting results, and it was this that David Sedley fastened on in his article, 'The Origins of Stoic God'. Immediately following on Aetius' rather extensive report of Xenocrates' theology, he appends a single line: "Polemon declared that the cosmos is God (*Polemôn ton kosmon theon apephênato*)."

There were some who noted this doxographic snippet without finding it very interesting, as they felt that it could be rendered, "Polemon declared that the cosmos is a god"—which would be a fairly uninteresting piece of information. But, in the context, it cannot mean that; Aetius is presenting various philosophers' views about the supreme deity, not about any old god. So we are faced with the testimony, albeit baldly doxographic, that, for Polemon, Platonist though he was, the supreme principle is none other than the cosmos. How can that be so?

We must first of all, I suggest, think back to Plato's last thoughts on the subject in *Laws X* – and, more particularly, to his faithful amanuensis, Philip of Opus', appendix to that work, the *Epinomis*.<sup>20</sup> Philip, in the *Epinomis* (e.g. 976Dff.; 981B-E), comes out unequivocally in support of the position that the supreme principle is a rational World Soul immanent in the cosmos, and indeed that the study of astronomy is the highest science, since one is in fact thereby studying the motions of the divine mind. Philip had presumably convinced himself that this was indeed Plato's final view on the question, but he is actually presenting a rather radical take on Plato's thought, which was plainly not shared by his colleagues Speusippus or Xenocrates. Polemon, however, I would suggest, may have been attracted by it. But if in-

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<sup>20</sup> I must say that I am entirely convinced by the arguments of Leonardo Tarán in his fine edition of this work, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus and the Pseudo-Platonic Epinomis* (Philadelphia, 1975), that this work is by Philip.

deed one adopts this view of the active first principle, what follows for one's doctrine of the dynamic structure of the cosmos as a whole? Let us consider Antiochus' account of the Old Academy's physical theory:

“The topic of Nature, which they treated next (sc. after ethics), they approached by dividing it into two principles, the one the creative (*efficiens = poiêtikê*), the other at this one's disposal, as it were, out of which something might be created. In the creative one they considered that there inhered power (*vis = dynamis*), in the one acted upon, a sort of 'matter' (*materia = hyle*); yet they held that each of the two inhered in the other, for neither would matter have been able to cohere if it were not held together by any power, nor yet would power without some matter (for nothing exists without being necessarily somewhere).<sup>21</sup> But that which was the product of both they called 'body' (*corpus = sôma*), and, so to speak, a sort of 'quality' (*qualitas = poiôtês*).”

What we have here is a two-principle universe admittedly very similar to that of the Stoics – but it is also, interestingly, similar to that attributed to Plato himself by Theophrastus in his curious little work, the *Metaphysics* (6a24-5). These two principles can, after all, be taken as the One and the Indefinite Dyad, or Limit and the Unlimited, neither of which can exist without the other, and the union of which generates, first Number and Soul, but ultimately the cosmos. Even the denominating of the active principle as a *dynamis*, and the formal principle (for that is what is being referred to) as *poiôtês*, could be seen as deriving from a scholastic exegesis of the *Theaetetus*, first of 156A, where Socrates refers to active and passive principles in the cosmos as *dynameis*, and then to 182A, where he coins the term *poiôtês*. So even if we are driven to admit that Antiochus is giving something of a Stoic gloss to the material here, it seems reasonable to argue that he cannot have done so without some warrant from the Old Academic sources available to him.

A little further on, in ss. 27-8, the active principle is identified as a rational World Soul, residing primarily in the heavens, but pervading all parts of the cosmos (it is in this sense that the cosmos as a whole can be described as God). It is “perfect intelligence and wisdom (*mens sapientiaque perfecta*), which they call God, and is a sort of providence, presiding over all things that fall under its control.” There is nothing here, I think, that cannot be derived from a non-literal interpretation of the *Timaeus*.

We can see, then, I think, as in the case of ethical theory, something of a difference of emphasis between the doctrinal positions of Xenocrates and Polemon, though without constituting anything like a contradiction. The first beneficiaries of Polemon's doctrinal stance were the Stoics, but he then became available to such later figures as Eudorus of Alexandria, Nero's court philosopher Thrasyllus, and even the Platonizing Jewish philosopher Philo,

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<sup>21</sup> An interesting reference, this, to a passage of the *Timaeus*, 52B: “Everything that exists must necessarily be in some place (*en tini topôi*).”

all of whom adopted a rather Stoicizing logos-theology; while other philosophers, such as Plutarch and Atticus, will have been more influenced by Xenocrates. Between the two of them, however, they provided the basis for a body of Platonist dogma.

I will pass lightly over the topic of logical theory and epistemology, since really most later Platonists adopted as Platonic the whole Aristotelian system of logic, together with such innovations as were added by Theophrastus and his successors. The Old Academic system of division of all things into categories of Absolute and Relative was not entirely forgotten, but relegated rather to the background. The section of the *Academica* (I 30-2) devoted to logic, though, is not without interest, and indicates that Polemon was not oblivious to that either.

I could also have gone in considerably more detail into the areas of ethics and physics, but I hope that enough have been said here to make my point, which is that the exigencies of inter-school rivalry, initially between the Academy and the Peripatos, but then between later Platonists and both Stoics and Aristotelians, demanded that Platonism become more formalized than it was left by Plato himself, and that it was primarily Xenocrates, in a vast array of treatises, both general and particular, who provided the bones of this organized corpus of doctrine. Not that the Platonists were ever subject to anything like a monolithic orthodoxy. Platonic doctrine was not anything handed down centrally, from above; it was rather a self-regulating system, in which everyone knew what it meant, broadly, to be a Platonist (which could, in later times, embrace being a Pythagorean as well), and managed to stay within those parameters, while squabbling vigorously with each other, as well as with the other schools.

# MONIST AND DUALIST TENDENCIES IN PLATONISM BEFORE PLOTINUS

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Plutarch of Chaeroneia, as he looked back at the legacy of his master Plato, had no doubt that Plato, having as he did a vivid sense of the power of evil in the world, was a dualist. In his most important surviving philosophical treatise, *On the Creation of the Soul in the Timaeus* (*De Proc. An.*), he argues vigorously for Plato's postulation in that dialogue of a pre-cosmic disorderly soul which is ultimately responsible for the imperfections in the universe, despite being brought to a measure of order by the Demiurge, and he connects this up with a number of other key passages which seem to him to bear witness to the same sort of entity, such as *Theaetetus* 176A, where we are told that evil is endemic in this sphere of existence;<sup>1</sup> *Republic* II 379C, where Socrates lays it down that God cannot be responsible for more than a small proportion of what happens to us,<sup>2</sup> *Politicus* 273B-D, where, in the context of the myth of the two world cycles, mention is made of the world's 'previous state' (*emprosthēn hexis*) and 'ancient disharmony' (*palaia anharmostia*), which is always ready to reassert itself; and, last but not least, *Laws* X 896D-898C, where indeed we find a most interesting, and not a little troubling, postulate that the world is ruled not just by one, good soul, but by another as well, "of the opposite capacity" (*tēs tanantia dynamenēs exergazesthai*).

This last passage in particular has led to much discussion,<sup>3</sup> but it seems fair to say that the modern scholarly consensus, following Cherniss, is that, despite appearances, Plato does not intend to postulate a 'maleficent' soul (*kakergetis psyche*) as any sort of positive evil force in the world antithetical to God on the cosmic level. But if not, then what on earth, one may well ask, does he mean, both in this and the other passages mentioned?

In order to get a clearer perspective on this, we need, I think, to bring into the discussion Plato's system of first principles, according to accounts of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Evil cannot be eliminated, Theodorus; there must always be some force ranged against Good'

<sup>2</sup> "Then God, being good, cannot be responsible for everything, as it is commonly said, but only for a small part of human life, for the greater part of which he has no responsibility. For we have a far smaller share of good than of evil, and while we can attribute the good to God, we must find something else to account for the evil."

<sup>3</sup> E. g. Cherniss 1954; Görgemanns 1960: 193-207.

the so-called ‘Unwritten Doctrines’: the One and the Indefinite Dyad.<sup>4</sup> The Dyad – or as Plato may indeed have termed it on occasion, the ‘Great-and-Small’ – is certainly in a sense antithetical to the One, but it is not to be viewed as in any way a positively evil principle. It is to be seen, rather, as simply the condition of there being a world at all – anything at all other than the absolute and barren simplicity of the One. Whether or not the temporal creation of the world by the Demiurge is to be taken literally (and I think that it is not), the role of the Receptacle, though portrayed by Plato at *Tim.* 30A, and later at 52E-53A, as a source of disorderly motion, is really no more than the minimum postulate necessary to explain the diversity of a cosmos worthy of a name, that is, a system exhibiting all the whole spectrum of possible varieties of being – even if some of them are not convenient to us, and therefore ‘evil’.<sup>5</sup> The same opposition may be seen as being envisaged also in the other passages mentioned, even in that in *Laws X* – the soul ‘of the opposite tendency’ need only be the element in the world that is responsible for multiplicity and diversity.

It is certainly in that way that the opposition between the two principles is understood by Plato’s nephew and successor Speusippus. He terms his two first principles One and Multiplicity (*plethos*), and presents the relationship between them as follows:<sup>6</sup>

“...one must postulate two primary and highest principles, the One – which one should not even call existent (*on*), by reason of its simplicity and its position as principle of everything else, a principle being properly not yet that of which it is a principle – and another principle, that of Multiplicity, which is able of itself to facilitate division (*diairesin parekhesthai*) and which, if we are able to describe its nature most suitably, we would liken to a completely fluid and pliable matter.” (ap. Iambl. *DCMS* 4, p. 15, 5ff. Festa).

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<sup>4</sup> In fact, however, once one recognizes that these are indeed Plato’s first principles (however mischievously presented by Aristotle at *Met.* A 6, 927a29ff., and elsewhere), it is not difficult to discern them as lying behind the Limit and Unlimitedness of *Philebus* 26Aff., as well as being alluded to at *Timaeus* 48a ff, 53b, etc. Cf. Dillon 2003: 16 ff.

<sup>5</sup> A confirmation of the essential monism of Plato’s position comes to us from the testimony of his follower Hermodorus of Syracuse, relayed by Simplicius, via Porphyry and Dercyllides (*In Phys.* p. 247, 30ff. = Hermodorus, Fr. 7 Isnardi Parente), where he declares, at the end of an extended account of Plato’s first principles, that “Matter (with which he identifies the Indefinite Dyad) is not a principle; and that is why it is said by Plato and his followers (*hoi peri Platona*) that there is only a single first principle.” See Dillon 2003: 200–204.

<sup>6</sup> Following Philip Merlan (1960), I take the contents of ch. 4 of Iamblichus’ *De communi mathematica scientia* as substantially Speusippian, for reasons I have set out in Dillon 1984.

We may note that Speusippus presents Multiplicity here, not really as an active principle in opposition to the One, but rather as cooperating with the One in producing ‘division’, by which we must understand the diversity and individuation of the world – something that the One could not do by itself. As such, it is a partner rather than an opponent of the One. Indeed, in what follows Speusippus is concerned to deny the One the epithet ‘good’ (in opposition to his uncle Plato), as that would necessitate characterizing Multiplicity as ‘evil’, which it is not – how, he asks, would something intrinsically evil want to act against its own interests, and indeed in favour of its own dissolution, by helping to create something essentially good, i.e. the world?

This line of thought is manifested again in another interesting passage from Speusippus preserved by Proclus in his *Parmenides Commentary* (VII pp. 38, 32-40 Klibansky), where, in some unknown context, Speusippus seems to be giving an ‘ontological’ interpretation of the first two hypotheses of Plato’s *Parmenides*, according to which what is being portrayed in the second hypothesis is nothing other than the interaction between the One and the Indefinite Dyad, or Multiplicity, which is necessary for the generation of a world of individual beings. Proclus purports to quote him as follows, attributing his doctrine, for strategic reasons, to the Pythagoreans:

“For they (sc. the Pythagoreans) held that the One is higher than Being and is the source of Being; and they delivered it even from the status of a principle. For they held that, given the One, in itself, conceived as separated and alone, without other things,<sup>7</sup> with no additional element, nothing else would come into existence. And so they introduced the Indefinite Dyad as the principle of beings.”

What the Indefinite Dyad contributes, of course, is a process of division, leading initially to the generation of the series of natural numbers, as set out in *Parm.* 143A-144A, but ultimately of everything else. Thus, for Speusippus, there are indeed two principles in the universe, but they are not opposed to one another; the second, or ‘material’<sup>8</sup> one offers itself to the first as the facilitator of division and individuation, in order to bring a world into being. If the two principles are to be regarded as opposed at all, it is rather as

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<sup>7</sup> This phrase may indeed be an intentional reminiscence of *Parm.* 143a6-8: “Now take just this ‘One’ which we are saying has being, and conceive it just by itself alone, apart from the being which we say it has..”. If this be accepted, it would support my contention that Speusippus is actually engaged on an exegesis of the second hypothesis.

<sup>8</sup> The use of the term *hyle* to characterize Multiplicity in the earlier passage from Iamblichus has raised some eyebrows, as the first use of the word in its technical sense is normally attributed to Aristotle (as opposed to Plato); but we do not need to suppose that Aristotle was the exclusive initiator of this terminology – and even if he was, there is no reason to deny that his older contemporary Speusippus could not have borrowed it. Speusippus is actually using the term here rather tentatively.

active to passive – though the ‘passive’ principle yet serves as the facilitator of an essential cosmic process.

Speusippus, then, comes across as a pretty unequivocal monist.<sup>9</sup> With Xenocrates, on the other hand, we might be forgiven for discerning certain tendencies to dualism. He, like his predecessors, adopts a pair of first principles, the Monad and the Indefinite Dyad,<sup>10</sup> who between them generate, first, Number, then Soul, and then the rest of creation, very much in the manner of Speusippus (though no doubt with variations that would be clearer to us if we had more, or indeed any, of their respective works), so that on that level he is no more dualist than they are; but he exhibits other features that seem to reveal some tendency to dualism at a lower level – a sort of modified dualism.

What we learn, chiefly from Plutarch,<sup>11</sup> but also from elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> is that Xenocrates, in the course of making an interesting three-way division of the physical world, places the sublunar realm under the rule of a ‘lower Zeus’, who is also to be identified as Hades. This Hades may be a far cry from a Gnostic-style ignorant or wicked Demiurge, but he may on the other hand have some connection with an entity that Plutarch produces in the essay *On the E in Delphi* (393B-C), and identifies with Pluto/Hades, who rules the sublunar realm. This figure, which is contrasted with a transcendent deity, identified here, not with Zeus, but with Apollo,<sup>13</sup> presides over the changeableness of our world, and regulates it in the interests of the higher deity. They are contrasted, then,<sup>14</sup> but not radically opposed. What we have here,

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<sup>9</sup> On the subject of evil, we may note, at the end of the *DCMS* IV passage (p. 18, 9-12 Festa), that Speusippus is reported as declaring that there is nothing either ugly or bad (*aiskhron oude kakon*) in the higher reaches of reality – the realm of the One, of Number, or of Figure, “but only at the lowest level, among the fourths and fifths, which are combined from the lowest elements, does evil come into being – and even then not principally (*proégoumenós*), but as a result of falling-away and failure of control what is in accordance with nature.” The ‘fourths and fifths’ are rather obscure categories, but are probably meant to represent animate and inanimate physical objects respectively. At any rate, here we have evil presented as very much an *incidental* product of the cosmic system.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Fr. 15 Heinze / 213 Isnardi Parente – a doxographic report from Aetius, which is not, unfortunately, without problems. See Dillon 1986 and 2003:102 ff.

<sup>11</sup> In *Platonic Questions* 9, 1007F = Fr. 18H / 216IP.

<sup>12</sup> E. g. the Aetius fragment mentioned earlier, and Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* V 14 = Fr. 18 H / 217 IP.

<sup>13</sup> For the sake of the word-play, ‘*a-polla*’, ‘not-many’, highlighting the unitary nature of the supreme deity.

<sup>14</sup> As indicated by the epithets bestowed upon each – Apollo (‘not-many’), Délios (interpreted as ‘clear’), Phoibos (‘bright’), and so on; while the lower divinity is Plouton (in the sense of ‘abounding in wealth’, and so in multiplicity and variety), Aidóneus (‘unseen’), and Skotios (‘dark’).

rather, is a contrast between a primary and a secondary deity, the latter being immediately responsible for the multiplicity, changeability, and illusoriness characteristic of the physical, sublunar world. It is interesting, finally, that, just a little earlier in the dialogue (388E-389B), Plutarch makes a similar contrast, but this time between Apollo and Dionysus – but we have to bear in mind that, at least as far back as Heraclitus (cf. Fr. B15 D-K), the figures of Hades and Dionysus are, in a curious way, linked. It must be admitted that the authority of Xenocrates is nowhere appealed to in this context, but the fact remains that he had originally set up the contrast between a supreme being and a secondary divinity, identified with Hades, who rules below the Moon.

At any rate, apart from this, Xenocrates also – again, according to Plutarch<sup>15</sup> – entertained the concept of evil or malevolent daemons, “great and strong natures (*physeis*) in the atmosphere, malevolent and morose, who rejoice in gloomy sacrifices, and after gaining them as their lot, they turn to nothing worse.” These beings, in fact, constitute Xenocrates’ explanation of the existence of unpleasant or obscene religious rituals, which he feels would be inappropriate to the goodness of God or the gods, but which serve to propitiate these evil forces in the universe.

This seems a radical departure from Plato’s concept of the daemonic nature, as set out, above all, in *Symp.* 202E, in the direction of some form of popular belief, but when tied in with Xenocrates’ postulation of a ‘lower Zeus’ on the one hand, and a curious report in Damascius<sup>16</sup> that Xenocrates understood Socrates’ reference at *Phaedo* 62B to our being in mortal bodies as ‘on a kind of guard-duty’ as being a reference to our ‘Titanic’ nature, which ‘culminates in Dionysus’ (*eis Dionyson koryphoutai*), it takes on a deeper significance. This latter reference in Damascius is most obscure and compressed, but behind it there does seem to lurk a belief in an Orphic-style ‘sinful’ human nature, arising from, in mythical terms, our descent from the ashes of the Titans who devoured Dionysus. Allegorized and demythologized, this could be seen to identify Dionysus with Hades, or the ‘lower Zeus’, as ruler of our sublunar world, and thus tie in with the passages from the *De E* discussed above. One seems here to get glimpses of dimensions to Xenocrates’ thought-world of which we know very little, but which point in the direction of at least a modified dualism. The notion that our realm of existence is presided over by a divinity that is distinct from, and even antithetical to, the supreme deity, is one that was to have quite a lively future in the first few centuries A.D.

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<sup>15</sup> At *On Isis and Osiris* 361B

<sup>16</sup> *In Phaedonem* I p. 85 Norvin = Fr. 20 H / 219 IP.

This, I think, is the furthest extent to which dualism could be imputed to the Old Academy.<sup>17</sup> The New Academy we may pass over, as not believing much in anything, but when we come down to the revived dogmatism of Antiochus of Ascalon in the first century B.C.E. we find a very much Stoicized system, featuring an active principle and a passive, material one (cf. Cic. *Acad. Post.* 27ff.). Matter is a substance ‘formless and devoid of all quality’, so that it is not in any position to offer any sort of resistance to the operations of the active principle. We may not have the whole story on Antiochus, of course, but there is certainly no sign of dualism in what remains to us of him.

The same may be said of Eudorus of Alexandria, in the next generation, despite a strong infusion of Neopythagoreanism into his philosophical position. However, Eudorus, while adopting the pair of Monad and Indefinite Dyad, postulates a supreme One above both of these, which forms an absolute ground of all existence, even matter. Eudorus may here be drawing creatively on the system set out in Plato’s *Philebus* (26E-30E), where the Cause of the Mixture is postulated over and above the pair of Limit and Unlimitedness, but this innovation of his is clear indication of a monistic tendency.

Only when we reach Plutarch, in the late first century C.E., do we find an unequivocal onset of dualism. We have seen already his adoption, and possible development, of the modified dualism of Xenocrates, but that is only part of the story. Besides this subordinate sublunar deity, Plutarch postulates a much more radically evil power in the universe.<sup>18</sup> This emerges, in mythological form, in his essay *On Isis and Osiris*, in the person of Typhon, or alternatively, in terms of Persian religion, Ahriman (Areimanios). There is an enlightening statement of his position at 369E:

“There has, therefore, come down from the theologians and lawgivers to both poets and philosophers<sup>19</sup> this ancient belief, which is of anonymous origin, but is given strong and tenacious evidence – that the universe is not kept on high of itself without mind and reason and guidance, nor is it only one principle that rules and directs it as it were by rudders and curbing reins, but that many powers do so who are a mixture of evil and good. Rather, since Nature, to be plain, contains nothing unmixed, it is not one steward that dispenses our affairs for us,

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<sup>17</sup> We know very little about the metaphysics of Polemon, the last head of the Old Academy, but, if I am right in supposing that it was primarily his synthesis of Platonic doctrine on which Antiochus of Ascalon is building later, we may conclude that there is not much sign of dualism in his thought, despite his loyalty to his master Xenocrates.

<sup>18</sup> I have discussed this topic more fully in Dillon 2000.

<sup>19</sup> He has just quoted Heraclitus and Euripides.

as though mixing drinks from two jars in a hotel.<sup>20</sup> Life and the cosmos, on the contrary – if not the whole of the cosmos, at least the earthly one below the moon, which is heterogeneous, variegated and subject to all manner of changes<sup>21</sup> – are compounded of two opposite principles (*arkhai*) and of two antithetic powers (*dynameis*), one of which leads by a straight path and to the right, while the other reverses and bends back. For if nothing comes into being without a cause, and if good could not provide the cause of evil, then Nature must contain in itself the creation and origin of evil, as well as of good.”

These two ‘antithetic powers’, structured rather like the two circles of the soul in the *Timaeus* 36b–d, are presented as constituting a sort of tension of opposites, by virtue of which the world is preserved in being. In the essay *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 428F ff., it is the Indefinite Dyad which takes on the role of the ‘evil’ principle, showing how differently it is viewed in Plutarch’s thought from its role in that of Plato or Speusippus.

“Of the supreme principles, by which I mean the One and the Indefinite Dyad, the latter, being the element underlying all formlessness and disorder, has been called Unlimitedness (*apeiria*); but the nature of the One limits and contains what is void and irrational and indeterminate in Unlimitedness, gives its shape, and renders it in some way tolerant and receptive of definition...”

We note that it is ‘the element underlying all formlessness and disorder’. Number, and the cosmos, is created by the One ‘slicing off’ greater or smaller sections of multiplicity (429A). “If the One is done away with,” says Plutarch, “once more the Indefinite Dyad throws all into confusion, and makes it to be without rhythm, bound or measure.”

An aspect of the Dyad is the disorderly World Soul which Plutarch discerns as animating the pre-cosmic state of things in the *Timaeus*, and which he equates with the ‘maleficent’ soul of *Laws* X. Here is what he has to say in his essay *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* (1014B):

“For creation does not take place out of what does not exist at all but rather out of what is in an improper or unfulfilled state, as in the case of a house or a garment or a statue. For the state that things were in before the creation of the ordered world (*kosmos*) may be characterized as ‘lack of order’ (*akosmia*); and this lack of order was not something incorporeal or immobile or soulless, but rather it possessed a corporeal nature which was formless and inconstant, and a power of motion which was frantic and irrational. This was the disorderly state of a soul which did not yet possess reason (*logos*).”

The disorderly element, then, which Plato in the *Timaeus* (48A, 56C, 68E) calls Necessity (*ananké*), cannot be taken as something simply negative and characterless, such as matter, but must be a positive force, the disorderly

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<sup>20</sup> This is a rather creative allusion to the Homeric image of the two jars standing in the hall of Zeus, out of which he dispenses good and evil to men (*Iliad* 24, 527-8).

<sup>21</sup> This may be a devious allusion to his other, ‘modified dualist’, theory.

or ‘maleficent’ soul. Even this entity, however, is at least open to being brought to order by the Demiurge – and in the case of Isis in the *Isis and Osiris*, positively desirous of it. Behind this again, as I have said, there seems to lurk, in Plutarch’s system, a more absolutely evil force, and here it is hard not to see some influence from Persian sources.

It would appear, after all, that there is a degree of dualism in the air of the second century C.E. Later in the century, the Neopythagorean Numenius of Apamea is attested as propounding a relatively dualistic version of Pythagoreanism, as compared, say, to that set out in the account given by Alexander Polyhistor (*ap.* Diogenes Laertius, VIII 24-33) in the first century B.C.E, in which the Dyad is produced as ‘matter’ for itself by the Monad, resulting in an essentially monistic system, which seems to represent the earlier strand of Pythagorean thinking. Numenius’ more immediate predecessors in the tradition, Moderatus of Gades and Nicomachus of Gerasa, do not show their hand very clearly on the matter of relations between Monad and Dyad, but, on the basis of what survives to us, appear to take a relatively monistic stance. Numenius, however, in his account of the nature of Matter, preserved to us by Calcidius,<sup>22</sup> comes across as firmly dualist. He identifies it with the Indefinite Dyad, and the Maleficent Soul as propounded by Plutarch, and actually criticizes those Pythagoreans (perhaps including Moderatus), who think that

“...indefinite and immeasurable Dyad was produced by the Monad withdrawing from its own nature and departing into the form of the Dyad – an absurd situation, that that which had no existence should come to subsist, and that thus Matter should come to be out of God, and out of unity immeasurable and limitless duality.”

He goes on (ll. 33ff.) to describe Matter as fluid and without quality, but yet a positively evil force, criticizing the Stoics for postulating it as ‘indifferent, and of a median nature.’ For Plato, he says, it is rather the compound of Form and Matter that has this quality, not Matter itself – and, like Plutarch, he appeals to Plato’s doctrine in *Laws X*.

This dualism that Numenius propounds holds equally well for the composition of the individual human being. Our lower, irrational soul derives from the evil, material Soul in the cosmos, and here Numenius plainly went further than other Platonists, in postulating in us a separate soul emanating from matter, with, presumably, its own set of ‘evil’ faculties. Porphyry, in reporting Numenius’ distinctive doctrine,<sup>23</sup> does, admittedly, characterize this soul as ‘irrational’ (*alogos*), but he may be using this term somewhat loosely, by contrast with the rational soul descending from above. This second soul is a distinctively dualistic element in Numenius’ thought, reminis-

<sup>22</sup> *In Tim.* chs. 295-9 = Fr. 52,16-23 Des Places.

<sup>23</sup> Porphyry, *De potentiis animae*, *ap.* Stob., *Anthol.*, I 49, 25a = Fr. 44 Des Places.

cent of what St. Paul talks of (e.g. *Romans* 7:23; 8: 7-8) as “the law of sin which dwells in my members” and wars against the spirit, a source of psychic energy which is not so much irrational as downright perverse. It also seems to relate to an interesting report of Origen’s, in Book III, ch. 4 of his *De principiis*, where he discusses the postulate that we have within us, not just a Platonic tripartite or bipartite soul, but two distinct souls. The immediate target here seems to be Gnostics of some sort (since they quote Scripture—notably St. Paul—to their purpose), but Origen also knew Numenius perfectly well, and probably has him in mind too. In any case, this seems to be here an instance of cross-fertilization between Numenius and the Gnostic tradition.

To sum up, then, the Platonism that Plotinus inherits – setting aside Ammonius Saccas, of whom we know all too little – is by the later second century distinctly dualist in tendency, and is able, especially in the case of Plutarch, to quote Plato to its purpose. Plato himself, though, I would maintain, is, despite appearances to the contrary, what one might term a ‘modified monist’. That is to say, he fully recognizes the degree of imperfection and evil in the world, and holds it to be ineradicable, but he does not in the last resort believe in a positive countervailing force to the Good or the One. What we have is simply a negative force, whether Indefinite Dyad, disorderly World-Soul, or Receptacle, which is an inevitable condition of their being a world at all, but which, as a side-effect of introducing diversity, generates various sorts of imperfection. It is this scenario that justifies his follower Hermodorus, as we have seen, in declaring that Plato recognizes only a single first principle, and it to this sort of monism – if anything, in a more pronounced form – that Plotinus returns.

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## MONISM AND DUALISM ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES

1. Speusippus, ap. Iambli. *DCMS* 4, p. 15, 5ff. Festa: [Τῶν δὴ ἀριθμῶν τῶν μαθηματικῶν] δύο τὰς πρωτίστας καὶ ἀνωτάτω ὑποθετέον ἀρχάς, τὸ ἓν (ὅπερ δὴ οὐδὲ ὄν πω δεῖ καλεῖν, διὰ τὸ ἀπλοῦν εἶναι καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀρχὴν μὲν ὑπάρχειν τῶν ὄντων, τὴν δὲ ἀρχὴν μηδέπω εἶναι τοιαύτην οἷα ἐκεῖνα ὧν ἔστιν ἀρχή), καὶ ἄλλην πάλιν ἀρχὴν τὴν τοῦ πλήθους, ἣν καὶ διαίρεσιν οἶόν τ' εἶναι καθ' αὐτὸ παρέχεσθαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑγρᾶ τιμι παντάπασι καὶ εὐπλαδεῖ ὕλη, [προσηκόντως εἰς δύναμιν παραδεικνύντες, ἀποφαίνομεν ἂν ὁμοίαν εἶναι· ἐξ ὧν ἀποτελεῖσθαι, τοῦ τε ἑνὸς καὶ τῆς τοῦ πλήθους ἀρχῆς, τὸ πρῶτον γένος, ἀριθμῶν ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων μετὰ τινος πιθανῆς ἀνάγκης συντιθεμένων.]

“...one must postulate two primary and highest principles, the One – which one should not even call existent (*on*), by reason of its simplicity and its position as principle of everything else, a principle being properly not yet that of which it is a principle – and another principle, that of Multiplicity, which is able of itself to facilitate division (*diairesin parekhesthai*) and which, if we are able to describe its nature most suitably, we would liken to a completely fluid and pliable matter”.

2. Speusippus, ap. Proclus, *In Parm.* VII pp. 38, 32-40 Klibansky; p. 485-486 (introduction), p. 583 (translation) Morrow-Dillon:

“For they (sc. the Pythagoreans) held that the One is higher than Being and is the source of Being; and they delivered it even from the status of a principle. For they held that, given the One, in itself, conceived as separated and alone, without other things,<sup>24</sup> with no additional element, nothing else would come into existence. And so they introduced the Indefinite Dyad as the principle of beings.”

3. Plutarchus, *On Isis and Osiris* 369 E: διὸ καὶ παμπάλαιος αὕτη κάτεισιν ἐκ θεολόγων καὶ νομοθετῶν εἷς τε ποιητὰς καὶ φιλοσόφους δόξα, τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀδέσποτον ἔχουσα, τὴν δὲ πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν καὶ δυσεξάλειπτον, οὐκ ἐν λόγοις μόνον οὐδ' ἐν φήμαις, ἀλλ' ἐν τε τελεταῖς ἐν τε θυσίαις καὶ βαρβάροις καὶ Ἑλλησι πολλαχοῦ περιφερομένη, ὡς οὐτ' ἄνουν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ ἀκυβέρνητον αἰωρεῖται τῷ αὐτομάτῳ τὸ πᾶν, οὐθ' εἷς ἔστιν ὁ κρατῶν καὶ κατευθύνων

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<sup>24</sup> This phrase may indeed be an intentional reminiscence of *Parm.* 143a6-8: “Now take just this ‘One’ which we are saying has being, and conceive it just by itself alone, apart from the being which we say it has...”. If this be accepted, it would support my contention that Speusippus is actually engaged on an exegesis of the second hypothesis.

ὥσπερ οἶαξιν ἢ τισι πειθηνίοις χαλινοῖς λόγος, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ μεμιγμένα κακοῖς καὶ ἀγαθοῖς μᾶλλον δὲ μηδὲν ὡς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν ἄκρατον ἐνταῦθα τῆς φύσεως φερούσης οὐ δεῖν πίθων εἷς ταμίας ὥσπερ νάματα τὰ πράγματα καπηλικῶς διανέμων ἀνακεράννυσιν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ δεῖν ἐναντίων ἀρχῶν καὶ δεῖν ἀντιπάλων δυνάμεων, τῆς μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ κατ' εὐθείαν ὑψηλομένης, τῆς δ' ἔμπαλιν ἀναστρεφούσης καὶ ἀνακλώσης ὃ τε βίος μικτὸς ὃ τε κόσμος, εἰ καὶ μὴ πᾶς, ἀλλ' ὁ περίγειος οὗτος καὶ μετὰ σελήνην ἀνώμαλος καὶ ποικίλος γέγονε καὶ μεταβολὰς πάσας δεχόμενος. εἰ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀναιτίως πέφυκε γίνεσθαι, αἰτίαν δὲ κακοῦ τὰγαθὸν οὐκ ἂν παράσχοι, δεῖ γένεσιν ἰδίαν καὶ ἀρχὴν ὥσπερ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν.

“There has, therefore, come down from the theologians and lawgivers to both poets and philosophers<sup>25</sup> this ancient belief, which is of anonymous origin, but is given strong and tenacious evidence – that the universe is not kept on high of itself without mind and reason and guidance, nor is it only one principle that rules and directs it as it were by rudders and curbing reins, but that many powers do so who are a mixture of evil and good. Rather, since Nature, to be plain, contains nothing unmixed, it is not one steward that dispenses our affairs for us, as though mixing drinks from two jars in a hotel.<sup>26</sup> Life and the cosmos, on the contrary – if not the whole of the cosmos, at least the earthly one below the moon, which is heterogeneous, variegated and subject to all manner of changes – are compounded of two opposite principles (*arkhai*) and of two antithetic powers (*dynameis*), one of which leads by a straight path and to the right, while the other reverses and bends back. For if nothing comes into being without a cause, and if good could not provide the cause of evil, then Nature must contain in itself the creation and origin of evil, as well as of good”.

4. Plutarchus, *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 428 F: τῶν ἀνωτάτων ἀρχῶν, λέγω δὲ τοῦ ἐνὸς καὶ τῆς ἀορίστου δυάδος, ἡ μὲν ἀμορφίας πάσης στοιχεῖον οὔσα καὶ ἀταξίας ἀπειρία κέκληται· ἡ δὲ τοῦ ἐνὸς φύσις ὀρίζουσα καὶ καταλαμβάνουσα τῆς ἀπειρίας τὸ κενὸν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ ἀόριστον ἔμμορφον παρέχεται καὶ τὴν ἐπομένην <τῇ> περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ δόξη καταγόρευσιν ἀμωσγέπως ὑπομένον καὶ δεχόμενον.

“Of the supreme principles, by which I mean the One and the Indefinite Dyad, the latter, being the element underlying all formlessness and disorder, has been called Unlimitedness (*apeiria*); but the nature of the One limits and contains what is void and irrational and indeterminate in Unlimitedness, gives its shape, and renders it in some way tolerant and receptive of definition, which is the next step after demonstration regarding things perceptible”.

<sup>25</sup> He has just quoted Heraclitus and Euripides.

<sup>26</sup> This is a rather creative allusion to the Homeric image of the two jars standing in the hall of Zeus, out of which he dispenses good and evil to men (*Iliad* 24, 527-8).

5. Plutarchus, *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* 1014 B: οὐ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἢ γένεσις ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ μὴ καλῶς μηδ' ἰκανῶς ἔχοντος, ὡς οἰκίας καὶ ἱματίου καὶ ἀνδριάντος. ἀκοσμία γὰρ ἦν τὰ πρὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως· ἀκοσμία δ' οὐκ ἀσώματος οὐδ' ἀκίνητος οὐδ' ἄψυχος ἀλλ' ἄμορφον μὲν καὶ ἀσύστατον τὸ σωματικὸν ἔμπληκτον δὲ καὶ ἄλογον τὸ κινήτικὸν ἔχουσα· τοῦτο δ' ἦν ἀναρμοστία ψυχῆς οὐκ ἐχούσης λόγον.

“For creation does not take place out of what does not exist at all but rather out of what is in an improper or unfulfilled state, as in the case of a house or a garment or a statue. For the state that things were in before the creation of the ordered world (*kosmos*) may be characterized as ‘lack of order’ (*akosmia*); and this lack of order was not something incorporeal or immobile or soulless, but rather it possessed a corporeal nature which was formless and inconstant, and a power of motion which was frantic and irrational. This was the disorderly state of a soul which did not yet possess reason (*logos*).”

6. Numenius, ap. Calcidius *In Tim.* chs. 295-9 = Fr. 52, 16-23 Des Places: ...indeterminatam et immensam duitatem ab unica singularitate institutam recedente a natura sua singularitate et in duitatis habitum migrante – non recte, ut quae erat singularitas esse desineret, quae non erat duitas subsisteret, atque ex deo silva et ex singularitate immense et indeterminata duitas converteretur.

“...indefinite and immeasurable Dyad was produced by the Monad withdrawing from its own nature and departing into the form of the Dyad – an absurd situation, that that which had no existence should come to subsist, and that thus Matter should come to be out of God, and out of unity immeasurable and limitless duality.”

## АННОТАЦИИ

*Джон Диллон*

### **Платонизм и мировой кризис**

Язык: английский

ΣΧΟΛΗ Vol. I. 1 (2007), страницы: 7-24

Ключевые слова: мировой кризис, платонизм, идеальное государство

Джон Диллон (Тринити колледж, Дублин) рассматривает важнейшие проблемы современности (такие, как разрушение окружающей среды, религиозная нетерпимость и кризис легитимации публичной власти) в контексте философии Платона и предлагает в поисках решений этих проблем еще раз обратиться к наследию великого мыслителя прошлого.

*Джон Диллон*

### **Истоки платонического догматизма**

Язык: английский

ΣΧΟΛΗ Vol. I. 1 (2007), страницы: 25-37

Ключевые слова: Древняя академия, Спевсипп, Ксенократ, догматизм

Джон Диллон (Тринити колледж, Дублин) вновь обращается к проблеме истоков платонического догматизма в Древней Академии. См. также рус. пер. его книг *Наследники Платона* (СПб., 2003) и *Средние платоники* (СПб., 2001). Школьная полемика и соперничество между школами, изначально между Академией и Перипатом, а затем между платониками, стоиками и аристотеликами, привела к тому, что платонизм со временем стал более формальным, нежели он был во времена Платона, причем за это развитие прежде всего ответственен Ксенократ, который, в ряде трактатов общего и частного характера заложил основу новой цельной доктрины. Нельзя утверждать, что платоники были склонны к монолитной ортодоксии. Учение Платона не представлялась им как нечто, снизошедшее свыше. Скорее всего, школа представляла собой саморегулирующуюся систему, в рамках которой каждый в целом понимал, что значить быть платоником (а впоследствии и пифагорейцем) и, со своей точки зрения, страстно полемизировал как со своими коллегами, так и с представителями других школ.

*Джон Диллон*

### **Монистическая и дуалистическая тенденции в платонизме до Плотина**

Язык: английский

ΣΧΟΛΗ Vol. I. 1 (2007), страницы: 37-50

Ключевые слова: монизм, дуализм, Древняя академия, средний платонизм

Статья Джона Диллона (Тринити колледж, Дублин) посвящена интересной странице в истории приключения идей. В ней прослеживается путь, проделанный метафизикой платонического толка от «умеренного монизма» Платона и Древней Академии, через дуализм Плутарха и Нумения, к монистической позиции Плотина. Рус. пер. этой статьи см. ΣΧΟΛΗ II. 1 (2008) 11–20.

## SUMMARIES

*John Dillon*

### **Platonism and the World Crisis**

Language: English

ΣΧΟΛΗ Vol. I. 1 (2007), pages: 7-24

Key words: world crisis, Platonism, ideal state

John Dillon (Trinity College, Dublin) argues, that Plato, and the tradition deriving from him, has a number of important things to say to the modern world, to which the modern world would do well to listen. Of course, Plato had no conception of the nature or complexity of the issues with which modern civilisation is currently faced, but nonetheless there are many useful insights which we may derive both from his own works – in particular his last great work, *The Laws* – and from those of certain of his followers, in particular Plotinus. The topics on which the paper focuses are just three, but they seem to represent the great bulk of what is wrong with modern western society, and what is inexorably putting intelligent life on this planet under mortal threat. They are the following: 1) The problem of the destruction of the environment and of waste disposal; 2) The problem of religious conflict and mutual intolerance and 3) The problem of the legitimation of authority and the limits of personal freedom.

*John Dillon*

### **The Origins of Platonists' Dogmatism**

Language: English

ΣΧΟΛΗ Vol. I. 1 (2007), pages: 25-37

Key words: Old Academy, Speusippus, Xenocrates, dogmatism

John Dillon (Trinity College, Dublin) argues, that the exigencies of inter-school rivalry, initially between the Academy and the Peripatos, but then between later Platonists and both Stoics and Aristotelians, demanded that Platonism become more formalized than it was left by Plato himself, and that it was primarily Xenocrates, in a vast array of treatises, both general and particular, who provided the bones of this organized corpus of doctrine. Not that the Platonists were ever subject to anything like a monolithic orthodoxy. Platonic doctrine was not anything handed down centrally, from above; it was rather a self-regulating system, in which everyone knew what it meant, broadly, to be a Platonist (which could, in later times, embrace being a Pythagorean as well), and managed to stay within those parameters, while squabbling vigorously with each other, as well as with the other schools.

*John Dillon*

### **Monist and Dualist Tendencies in Platonism before Plotinus**

Language: English

ΣΧΟΛΗ Vol. I. 1 (2007), pages: 38-50

Key words: monism, dualism, Old Academy, Middle Platonism

An article by John Dillon (Trinity College, Dublin) argues that the Platonism that Plotinus inherits – setting aside Ammonius Saccas, of whom we know all too little – is by the later second century distinctly dualist in tendency, and is able, especially in the case of Plutarch, to quote Plato to its purpose. Plato himself, though, as the author maintains, is, despite appearances to the contrary, what one might term a 'modified monist'. That is to say, he fully recognizes the degree of imperfection and evil in the world, and holds it to be ineradicable, but he does not in the last resort believe in a positive countervailing force to the Good or the One. What we have is simply a negative force, whether Indefinite Dyad, disorderly World-Soul, or Receptacle, which is an inevitable condition of their being a world at all, but which, as a side-effect of introducing diversity, generates various sorts of imperfection. It is this scenario that justifies his follower Hermodorus in declaring that Plato recognizes only a single first principle, and it to this sort of monism – if anything, in a more pronounced form – that Plotinus returns.

A Russian translation of this article is published in ΣΧΟΛΗ II. 1 (2008) 11-20.

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### ПРИМЕЧАНИЕ РЕДАКТОРА

Данное электронное издание отличается от печатной версии журнала: опубликованные в ней переводы статьи Эрика Доддса «Парменид Платона и происхождение неоплатонического Единого» и фрагментов Нумения из Апамеи в исправленном и дополненном виде переизданы в специальном выпуске, посвященном Неопифагореизму (Том III, выпуск 1, 2009). В то же время электронная версия дополнена оригинальным английским вариантом статьи Джона Диллона «Монистические и дуалистические тенденции в платонизме до Плотина», опубликованной в русском переводе в ΣΧΟΛΗ II. 1 (2008) 11–20.

### EDITORIAL NOTE

This electronic edition of the issue differs from the printed copy: a classical article by Eric R. Dodds, “The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One'” (*Classical Quarterly* 22 [1928]) in a Russian translation and the Fragments of Numenius of Apamea are now corrected and republished in the special issue of the journal (Vol. III, issue 1, 2009) dedicated to the Neopythagoreans. At the same time the issue is supplemented by an article by John Dillon, “Monist and Dualist Tendencies in Platonism before Plotinus”. A Russian translation of this article is published in ΣΧΟΛΗ II. 1 (2008) 11–20.

## ΣΧΟΛΗ

ФИЛОСОФСКОЕ АНТИКОВЕДЕНИЕ И КЛАССИЧЕСКАЯ ТРАДИЦИЯ  
2007. Том 1. Выпуск 1

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Первый выпуск нового журнала, посвященного изучению античности и классической традиции во всех ее разнообразных аспектах, подготовлен специально для участников первого семинара долгосрочного проекта «Преподавая античность. Фундаментальные ценности в изменяющемся мире», проведение которого оказалось возможным благодаря Программе поддержки высшего образования Института «Открытое общество» (Будапешт). Первый летний семинар (август 2007 г., Новосибирский научный центр) посвящен изучению классической философской традиции и традиции гуманитарного образования в контексте современных представлений о ценностях. Адрес электронной версии журнала: [www.nsu.ru/classics/schole/](http://www.nsu.ru/classics/schole/) и [www.elibraru.ru](http://www.elibraru.ru)

## ΣΧΟΛΗ

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY AND THE CLASSICAL TRADITION  
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