Plotinus, *Enneads* IV.3, Problems concerning the soul, pt. 1 – chapter 1
Dhananjay Jagannathan
Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy Workshop
9 October 2013

Outline of the chapter

- II. 1-4: the topic
- II. 4-8: the worth of the inquiry
- II. 8-16: some further motivation
- II. 16-18: the view of the opponents
- II. 18-22: two arguments they deny
- II. 22-23: Plato brought in for support
- II. 23-33: the first Platonic argument
- II. 33-37: a second Platonic argument

Some framing questions

1. What is the nature of the priority implied in ll. 10-12 between inquiring into other matters and inquiring into the nature of what inquires? Temporal/causal? δικαίως suggests something stronger – logical/epistemological?

2. Who are the opponents Plotinus has in mind in the second half of the chapter? What, precisely, is their view? (Note especially what the arguments contra in 18-22 aim to establish.)

SVF i.459 (beware the typo in the apparatus!): Critolaus apud Philonem περὶ ἀφθαρσίας κόσμου (248, 2): τί δῆποτ᾽ οὐχὶ καὶ τὴν τοῦ κόσμου φύσιν λεκτέον εἶναι μαχαιρίων τῆς τάξεως τῶν ἀτάκτων, τὴν ἀμοιβίαν τῶν ἀναμοίρων, τὴν συμφωνίαν τῶν ἀσυμφόρων, τὴν ἔνωσιν τῶν διεστηκότων, τὴν ξύλων μὲν καὶ λίθων ξύλων, σπαρτῶν τε καὶ δένδρων φύσιν, ψυχὴν δὲ ζώων ἀπάντων, ἀνθρώπων δὲ νοῦν καὶ λόγου, ἀρσενίκης δὲ οὐσιοδοξίων τελειοτάτην;

SVF ii.774 = DL vii.156 (Zeno): Δοξεῖ δ’ αὐτοῖς τὴν μὲν φύσιν εἶναι πῦρ τεχνικόν, ὅδε βαδιζομένοι εἰς γένεσιν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ πνεῦμα πυροειδές καὶ τεχνοειδές τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αἰσθητικὴν «φύσιν», ταύτην δ’ εἶναι τὸ συμφύες ἡμᾶς πνεῦμα διὸ καὶ σωμα εἶναι καὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἐπιμένειν· φθαρτὴν δ’ ὑπάρχειν, τὴν δὲ τῶν ὄλων ἀφθαρστῶν, ἢς μέρῃ εἰναι τὰς ἐν τοῖς ἔσωσι.

3. How many Platonic arguments are there in the second half of the chapter, three or two? The analogy mentioned in ll. 31-33 seems to fit quite closely with the initial citation of Plato at ll. 23-26, but since this passage is divided from the next quite clearly distinct argument by καὶ at l. 33, just as it is divided from the previous bit at l. 26, it’s hard to tell.

*Tim.* 30b4-c1: διὰ δὴ τὸν λογισμὸν τόνδε νοῦν μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴν δὲ ἐν σώματι συνιστάς τὸ πᾶν συνετεκαίνετο, ὡς ὁ δὲ κάλλιστον εἰς κατὰ φύσιν ἀριστόν τε ἔργον ἀπειραγμένος. οὔτως οὖν δὴ κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα δὲ λέγει τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ζῷον ἐμψυχον ἔννοιν τε τῇ ἀληθείᾳ διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεου γενέσθαι πρόνοιαν.

4. What on earth do ll. 35-36 mean, esp. the cryptic μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ὄλου [sc. ψυχῆς]?