

## 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" (*tés tanantia dynamenés 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), Aidónous (‘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. Iambl. *DCMS* 4, p. 15, 5ff. Festa: [Τῶν δὴ ἀριθμῶν τῶν μαθηματικῶν] δύο τὰς πρωτίστας καὶ ἀνωτάτω ὑποθετέον ἀρχάς, τὸ ἓν (ὅπερ δὴ οὐδὲ ὃ ν πω δεῖ καλεῖν, διὰ τὸ ἀπλοῦν εἶναι καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀρχὴν μὲν ὑπάρχειν τῶν ὄντων, τὴν δὲ ἀρχὴν μηδέπω εἶναι τοιαύτην οἷα ἐκεῖνα ὧν ἐστὶν ἀρχή), καὶ ἄλλην πάλιν ἀρχὴν τὴν τοῦ πλήθους, ἣν καὶ διαίρεσιν οἶόν τ' εἶναι καθ' αὐτὸ παρέχεσθαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὕγρᾱ τιμι παντάπασι καὶ εὐπλαδεῖ ὕλη, [προσηκόντως εἰς δύναμιν παραδεικνύντες, ἀποφαίνομεν ἄν 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 οὔτ' ἄνουν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ ἀκυβέρνητον αἰωρεῖται τῷ αὐτομάτῳ τὸ πᾶν, οὔθ' εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ κρατῶν καὶ κατευθύνων

<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.

ὡσπερ 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 εἰς ταμίας ὡσπερ νάματα τὰ πράγματα καπηλικῶς διανεμῶν ἀνακεράννυσιν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ δεῖν ἐναντίων ἀρχῶν καὶ δεῖν ἀντιπάλων δυνάμεων, τῆς μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ δεξιά 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 ἀνώματος καὶ ποικίλος γέγονε καὶ μεταβολὰς πάσας δεχόμενος. εἰ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀναίτιως πέφυκε γίνεσθαι, αἰτίαν δὲ κακοῦ τὰγαθὸν οὐκ ἂν παράσχοι, δεῖ γένεσιν ἰδίαν καὶ ἀρχὴν ὡσπερ 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 (*dynamis*), 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 ἐνός καὶ τῆς ἀορίστου δυάδος, ἡ μὲν ἀμορφίας πάσης στοιχεῖον οὔσα καὶ ἀταξίας ἀπειρία κέκληται· ἡ δὲ τοῦ ἐνός φύσις ὀρίζουσα καὶ καταλαμβάνουσα τῆς ἀπειρίας τὸ κενὸν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ ἀόριστον ἔμμορφον παρέχεται καὶ τὴν ἐπομένην <τῆ> 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 ἐμπληκτον 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.”