

Excerpts from Plotinus *The Enneads*.

On the Animate, or Couplement or Individual Ego... 1.1.7

7. the Couplement (ego, person) subsists by the virtue of the Soul's presence.

This, however, is not to say that the Soul gives itself as it is in itself to form either the Couplement or the body.

No; from the organized body and something else, let us say a light, which the Soul gives forth from itself, it forms a distinct Principle, the Animate; and in this Principle are vested Sense-Perception and all the other experiences found to belong to the Animate.

But the `We'? How have We Sense-Perception?

By the fact that We are not separate from the Animate so constituted, even though certainly other and nobler elements go to make up the entire many-sided nature of Man.

the We is constituted by a union of the supreme, the `undivided essence of Soul--we read - and "that which is divided among bodies." say rather that it appears to be present in the bodies by the fact that it shines into them: it makes them living beings not by merging with them but by shining into body images or likenesses of itself like one face caught by many mirrors.

Soul as divisible and indivisible: and its relation to the Body. 4.1.1, 4.2.1

4.1.1

`Formed from the undivided essence and the essence divided among bodies': this description of Soul must therefore mean that it has phases above and below, that it is attached to the Supreme and yet reaches down to this sphere, like a radius from a centre.

Thus it is that, entering this realm, soul possesses still the vision inherent to that superior phase in virtue of which it unchangingly maintains its integral nature. Even here it is not exclusively the partible soul: it is still the impartible as well: what in it knows partition is parted without partibility; undivided as giving itself to the entire body, a whole to a whole, it is divided as being effective in every part.

4.2.1

In whatsoever bodies it occupies--even the vastest of all, that in which the entire universe is included--soul gives itself to the whole without abdicating its unity.

The nature, at once divisible and indivisible, which we affirm to be soul, has not the unity of an extended thing: it does not consist of separate sections; its divisibility lies in its presence at every point of the recipient, but it is indivisible as dwelling entire in the total and entire in any part.

To have penetrated this idea is to know the greatness of the Soul and its power, the divinity and wonder of its being, as a nature transcending the sphere of Things.

On Soul and Body 4.3.13, 15:

4.3.13

In that archetypal world every form of soul is near to the image (the thing in the world of copy) to which its individual constitution inclines it; there is therefore no need of a sender or leader acting at the right moment to bring it at the right moment whether into body or into a definitely appropriate body: of its own motion it descends at the precisely true time and enters where it must. To every soul its own hour; when that strikes it descends and enters the body suitable to it as at the cry of a herald; thus all is set stirring and advancing as by a magician's power or by some mighty traction; it is much as, in any living thing, the Soul itself effects the fulfilment of the natural career, stirring and bringing forth, in due season, every element--beard, horn, and all the successive stages of tendency and of output--or, as it leads a tree through its normal course within set periods.

The souls go forth neither under compulsion nor of freewill; or, at least, freedom, here, is not to be regarded as action upon preference; it is more like such a leap of the nature as moves people to the instinctive desire of sexual union, or, in the case of some, to fine conduct; the motive lies elsewhere than in the reason: like is destined unfailingly to like, and each moves here or there at its appropriate moment.

4.3.15.

The souls peering forth from the Intellectual Realm descend first to the heavens and there put on a body; this becomes at once the medium by which as they reach out more and more towards magnitude (physical extension) they proceed to bodies progressively more earthy.