

miss the subtler, metaphysical aspects of Plotinus' reasoning. For example, E.'s use of 'agent' is perhaps too utilitarian to depict adequately the Plotinian 'subject', for it misses the rich complexity of the unstated yet implied notion of the 'self', its relationship with the individual soul, and the overarching metaphysical context of the ascent to the One. Moreover, E.'s use of *inclusive* and *exclusive* as logically distinct categories, is perhaps inadequate, given Plotinus' distinctions between *πόλῃς* and *πρᾶξις*, and given his stipulation of different levels of reasoning and the essential relationship of the individual soul with its higher principles. Finally, E.'s claim – that it is, to him, far from clear that there is any such general issue of 'freedom' or 'free will' at stake in Plotinus, and that the assumption in prior scholarship, that there *is*, is problematic – can, without further explanation, sound gratuitous. Thus, despite its obvious scientific merit, E.'s style of argumentation and conceptualisation leaves room for further deepening.

Nevertheless, this book is worthy in its precise historical and technical approach to Plotinus, its review of secondary literature, its attention to linguistic distinctions in the original Greek, and its comparisons of specific features of Plotinus' uses of *ἐφ' ἡμῖν* and the consequences thereof, with those of relevant intellectual predecessors. E. adds to the existing discourse on the broader topic of freedom in Plotinus, already addressed by L. Westra, J.M. Rist, V. Cilento and others.

Purdue University North Central

DEEPA MAJUMDAR
dmajumdar@pnc.edu

PLOTINUS ON *EYΔAIMONIA*

MCGROARTY (K.) (ed., trans.) *Plotinus on Eudaimonia. A Commentary on Ennead 1.4*. Pp. xxiv + 236. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Cased, £50. ISBN: 978-0-19-928712-3.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X09990497

The preposition *ἐν* can be a headache. A variety of heavy-duty philosophical relations can be referred to using it: to consist in, to depend on and to occur in a subject. And then there are more diffuse phrases. The first line of Plotinus 1.4 is a case in point. We may take Plotinus to be saying that living well and *eudaimonia* are *in* the same thing or *consist in* the same thing. McG. takes the first line, and makes the original suggestion that the same thing they are in is life. But what does it mean to say that living well and *eudaimonia* are both 'in life'? Non-living things have no share of either? If that is what it means, then how can this proposition have the consequence that other animals will possess *eudaimonia* – a conclusion Plotinus wishes to use to reduce the proposition in question to absurdity. Of course Plotinus thinks that living well and being *eudaimôn* are 'in life' in the sense that they occur in living things. The important question is what *eudaimonia* consists in, not what it occurs in. So, it seems to me, we are left with the old reading: if living well and *eudaimonia* consist in the same thing, then animals will partake of them. In fact, Plotinus continues to use the turn of phrase *ἐν* + dat. to mean *consist in* in the lines that follow, referring to Stoic and Peripatetic views of *eudaimonia* (1.5, 1.7, cf. also 1.31).

Chapter 3 might offer support for McG.'s reading of the opening line, which he does not call on. There, Plotinus poses the question of defining *eudaimonia*, and explicitly makes the assumption that it is 'in life'; this turns out to mean that it is in the origin of life, *nous*. One mysterious argument Plotinus offers us in Chapter 3 touches

the same point: McG. renders: ‘... those who say that *eudaimonia* is to be found in a rational life (ἐν λογικῇ ζωῇ γίνεσθαι), not having placed it in life which is common to all, did not recognise that they were not placing *eudaimonia* in life at all’ (3.10–12). So the idea is that saying that *eudaimonein* comes about in a rational life is to deny that *eudaimonein* consists in life; rather, it is to claim that *eudaimonia* is merely a quality of life. What Plotinus maintains in contrast is that it is ‘another form of life’, namely that life which is prior to, because the original of, other forms of life. Because this life is prior, hence its good (τὸ εἶδ) is also prior. McG. comments: ‘Plotinus insists that it is only the totality of life in *Nous* which ensures *eudaimonia*. Situating *eudaimonia* in rational life, they restrict it to an inferior ontological level’ (ad loc. p. 76). The lack of logical connection between these two sentences of commentary should make the wary reader ponder the problems with this argument.

McG. makes only a very few minor alterations to Henry–Schweizer (at 10.3 he wants to read δέῖ for δοκεῖ); even if the commentary still leaves one with interpretative problems unsolved, it remains a very useful collection of sources and of suggestions for interpretation. The translation is readable, if not excessively so; aimed of course at specialists. Not all traces of the original Ph.D. thesis have been eliminated. The brief introduction does little to give systematic context to Plotinus’ views on *eudaimonia*, a term which is left transliterated (along with *nous*, *spoudaios*, *phantasma* – which also does duty for *phantasia*). The commentary sets out to be ‘essentially philosophical’ (p. xix), and considerable space is devoted to identifying Plotinus’ dialectical targets.

McG. quite rightly sees no way of reconciling the compassionate man familiar from Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus* with the view that the sage is quite without passion in 1.4 (and in 3.2); but the philosopher may well query whether Porphyry is anyway the best guide to Plotinus’ thought on ethics. Plotinian *eudaimonia* is straightforwardly intellectual; compassion may be important for our view of the good life, but not to Plotinus.

Is Plotinus so bad at counting persons that it vitiates his account of the good life? Let us assume that the question we are asking is: how should one live? Plotinus’ answer seems no longer to refer to me but, at most, to an aspect of me. Notoriously, Plotinus thinks that the reality (*hypostasis*) of wisdom (*sophia*) consists ‘in a, rather the: substance’ (*ousia*) (9.19). This is a dark saying; McG. offers the elucidation: ‘a wisdom that exists at the highest ontological level below the One’ (p. 144). For this extraordinary line, we are offered merely a well-worn phrase about *ontological levels*; but it is not clear just how we are to understand *hypostasis* here – just what is the reality being attributed to wisdom? Sure, in some sense *nous* is identical with *sophia*, and the point at issue here is that *sophia* subsists even when I am asleep, not just *sophia*, but my own *sophia*, assuming I have it. In one way, all that is being said here is that sleep does not affect intellect: the comatose sage is a sage none the less. This view of sleep is very close to that of Aristotle, as McG. knows. So the interpretation of wisdom here hardly demands *hypostasis* to be taken in the sense of one of the three fundamental independent levels of reality; ‘essential nature’ as McG.’s translation has it, is nearer the mark. But of course we are not merely confronted with *what* wisdom is, but *that* it is. The point is that this particular wisdom continues to exist even in sleep. Fundamental questions here about the relation between essence and existence remain to be addressed.

Even if I can truly be said to be *eudaimôn* when asleep, can one make any sense of the view that one can be completely unconscious of one’s *eudaimonia*? For McG. Plotinus’ position is that we can be *eudaimôn* and not know it. The thought constitutive of happiness need not be reflected in the (bodily) imagination, and so it

escapes the attention of the concrete individual. There are two concepts of consciousness here: one (Chapter 9) is awareness of what one is doing (*parakolouthen*), another (Chapter 9 and Chapter 10) the grasp that combines both *nous* and perception (*antilêpsis*). The point about these two concepts is that both are *denied* importance for thinking; consciousness plays a very modest role. Is the idea that one is so sunk in thought that one no longer knows who one is, perhaps like Heraclitus' boy playing his board-game (DK 22B52)? The crucial question, both for Plotinus and in general is: why is this thinking my thinking? Plotinus' self is plural: unlike John Locke, he thinks that consciousness does not unify the 'self'. If happiness is not built on the shifting sands of consciousness, then what is it built on? And how does this unity play a part in the *eudaimonia* of the individual?

This is a useful addition to the small collection of English commentaries on Plotinus.

University of Glasgow

R.A.H. KING

r.king@philosophy.arts.gla.ac.uk

PLOTINUS ON TIME

MAJUMDAR (D.) *Plotinus on the Appearance of Time and the World of Sense: a Pantomime*. Pp. viii + 237. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. Cased, £55, US\$99.95. ISBN: 978-0-7546-5523-7.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X09990503

This is a study of Plotinus' views on time and the appearance of the world of sense, and particularly the tractate III.7(45), chapter 11 in the context of Plotinus' thought as a whole. Because of Plotinus' holistic outlook, a scholar working on his thought often faces a danger of losing thematic focus and describing, in the end, the entirety of Plotinus' philosophy. In this study, the danger has not been avoided: it is sometimes hard to see whether M.'s study is about time, derivation, self, soul or ascent and descent. This is, however, connected to the explicit aim of the book. What M. wants to do is to reveal 'the interlacing architecture of soul, self, *poiesis*, *tolma* and emanative loss, mutely underlying Plotinus' cosmology in *Ennead* III.7(45)11', to 'decode' the 'cryptogram' (pp. 10, 225). The question becomes, then, whether the chosen themes and supporting texts help our understanding of the text that serves as the nucleus. For the most part, I am inclined to answer yes, and at the same time to regret the cost of this approach: the treatise itself is in danger of getting lost in the midst of the supporting evidence and framework.

The book opens with an introductory section which M. calls the hermeneutic scene, including methodological issues and even a sub-chapter on the legacy of Plotinus. The main text is divided into two sections, the architectonic and the cosmological scene. There is a general index and a select bibliography but no *index locorum*.

There are really two books here. One is a scholarly study of the thought of Plotinus and the theme of the derivation of the material, temporal and sensible world, through the Intellect and the Soul, from the One. This study abounds with references to the *Enneads* as well as to Anglo-American scholarly discussions. The reader of this study is in safe hands: the descriptions and interpretations are reliable, and Plotinus' system is depicted by someone who has an intimate knowledge of the sources. However, the scholarly reader is bound to be exasperated: references to Plotinus are broad and general, quotations, when given at all, short, and without Greek originals or key