38. ch. 14,42.
39. ch. 10,44. As has already been remarked (p. 398) in considering the Stoic God, to *be* necessity is something very different from being *bound* by necessity.
40. *Corpus Apologetorum Christianorum Saeculi Secundi* ed. J.C.Th. von Otto (Jena 1848) Vol. III 2 *Quaestiones Christianorum ad Gentiles* III pp. 282-305 (*P.G.* 6.1427C-1444B). The Christian question alleges that the pagan God creates τῷ εἶναι καὶ οὐ τῷ βουλέσθαι οἷον θερμαίνει τὸ πῦρ τῷ εἶναι. The Hellenic reply seems to be based on VI 8. The Christian refutation insists that God's βούλησις must be separated from his οὐσία (οὐσία being πρὸς ὑπάρξιν and βούλησις, πρὸς ποιήσιν) if God is not to be said to create by necessity of nature.

2. Dualism Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian

There are a number of terms whose use or abuse in a large, vague, fluctuating way can confuse our understanding of the history of thought and sometimes our own theological and philosophical thinking: this has often been true of 'dualism', as also of 'pantheism', 'Platonism', 'Gnosticism' and 'Christianity'. It seems to me an important part of the task of historians of thought to give such terms the precise and varied contents which they should have in varied contexts and environments. I see our work rather as Cézanne saw his painting when he said that he wanted to 'do Poussin over again from nature'. In this paper I shall try to give precision and variety to some senses in which 'dualism' can legitimately be used when we are discussing the thought of the early centuries of our era, with particular reference to the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition, Gnosticism, and Christianity. I shall consider mainly one of the ways of thinking which can properly be described as dualist: cosmic dualism, which sees the whole nature of things as constituted by the meeting and interaction of two opposite principles: though I shall also briefly discuss two-world dualism, in which there are two kosmoi or levels of reality, that of our normal experience and a higher one (which may itself be conceived as complex and many-levelled).

Cosmic dualism, the dualism of two opposite principles, can take, and in the period which we are considering did take, a number of different forms. We may begin with a suspiciously tidy-looking scheme, which, as we shall see, will require some qualification and modification.

1. The two principles may be thought of as both unoriginated,

independent and everlastingly operative in the nature of things. They may be perceived as (a) intrinsically opposed and in perpetual conflict (or conflict as long as this world lasts). This gives a conflict-dualism of what may be called the Iranian pattern. In this case one principle must be qualified as 'good' and the other as 'evil', and one is expected to take the good's side. Or (b) they may be conceived as equally independent, but working together in harmony. This seems to be prevalent in Chinese thought, and is certainly very well expressed by the Yang-Yin symbol. Its most radical and fiercely original expression in the Greek world is in the thought of Heraclitus: here it takes a very dynamic form, and the conflict and tension, which any doctrine of cosmic harmony which is sufficiently attentive to experience must recognize, is powerfully emphasized.

2. Or the second principle may be thought of as derived from and dependent on the first. (I shall refer to this second principle as the 'dark other', to avoid prejudging various questions about it which will arise.) This derived and dependent 'dark other' may be thought of as either (a) in revolt against, or at least opposed to, the first principle or (b) working in accord and co-operation, at least passive, with it.

This very neat generalized classification of four possible forms of cosmic dualism is a useful starting-point for thinking about the subject. But when we begin to apply it to the dualisms with which we are here concerned, we shall find that it has to be used with a good deal of caution and qualification. This is particularly true when we are considering the various forms which cosmic dualism takes in the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition. The thinkers of this tradition range over all the four varieties of cosmic dualism listed above, but profess them, for the most part, in distinctive ways and with important modifications. When they think of the two principles as independent they do not maintain an absolute and unqualified conflict-dualism: and even when the 'dark other' is thought of as dependent for its existence on its opposite it is not, through most of the history of Platonism, accepted and qualified as 'good': though at the very end, in the final and most fully and carefully thought out form of Platonic dualism which we find in Syrianus and Proclus, we do arrive at a dualism of cosmic harmony which can be very well symbolized by

the Chinese Yang-Yin circle. As we shall see, a great deal depends on what one means in various contexts of thought by classifying the 'dark other' as 'evil'.

In the earliest form (or forms) of Pythagorean dualism known to us the two principles (or groups of principles) seem to be independent and everlastingly coexistent. This is clearly brought out in the Pythagorean Table of Opposites.[1] And we learn from this that the light, male, limiting, ordering principle is qualified as 'good' and the dark, female, indefinite principle as 'evil'. But we need to consider carefully the sense in which the 'dark other' seems to be thought of as principle of evil in early Pythagoreanism. As the principle of indefinite multiplicity it is (or can be) the principle of formlessness, disorder and irrationality, and so opposed to the good principle of light and musical order. But both principles are absolutely necessary if there is to be a cosmos at all. They are the parents of the numbers which are the very stuff of reality; without both, number and the great musical order of the whole cannot exist. And the necessity and goodness of the cosmos is something which early Pythagoreanism may be held to affirm with less qualification than later Platonism and Pythagoreanism, in that for pre-Platonic Pythagoreans there was only one cosmos, not two, a higher and a lower. This very qualified and, from the viewpoint of darker and more passionate dualisms, attenuated understanding of the sense in which the 'dark other' is evil persists, with varying feeling-tones and shades of emphasis, throughout the later Platonic-Pythagorean tradition.

In Plato we find two forms of cosmic or two-opposite-principles dualism which were influential later. (I do not believe that in Laws X 896e-897d Plato is talking about a cosmic evil soul, though later Platonists interpreted the passage in this way.) These two forms are, first, that contained in our reports of his discussions in the Academy about the generation of the Ideal Numbers from the One and the Indefinite Dyad. I do not

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1. Aristotle Metaphysics A 5 986a22-26. I accept the view that Aristotle is much our best and most reliable source of evidence for pre-Platonic Pythagoreanism.

propose to say much about this because I do not think we know very much.[2] But I do not think that there is any sufficient evidence to suggest that the Dyad is derived from the One; the two principles seem to be independent. And it seems clear that, if the Dyad is one of the principles from which the Ideas or Forms are generated, Plato can only have thought of it as a principle of evil in some very peculiar sense, even more attenuated than the Pythagorean. Aristotle does say that the principles are respectively τὴν τοῦ εὖ καὶ τοῦ κάκως αἰτίαν,[3] of things being in a good state or going well or of being in a bad state or going badly, but this should not be pressed too far.

The dualism of the One and the Dyad influenced later Pythagorean thought and is very important for the Neoplatonists, as we shall see. But much the most influential form of Platonic dualism is that symbolically presented in the great myth of the Timaeus. Here the material universe (there is nothing in the Timaeus about the genesis of the eternal world of Forms which is its paradigm) comes to be through the encounter of two independent principles or powers: that of the Craftsman looking to his Paradigm, Divine Reason active in the formation of the visible cosmos, and that strange, not properly knowable, turbulence of place, which is the receptacle, mother and nurse of becoming and accounts for the element of irrational necessity or brute fact which we find in the world. Of the innumerable questions which have arisen through the centuries about this powerful symbolic presentation of the world-forming activity of the divine, two concern us here. One is, what exactly is there about the other principle which is really 'dark', which we (or later Platonists) might want to call 'evil' even if Plato does not do so? It is certainly responsible for the fact that, though this is the best of all possible material worlds, everything is not absolutely for the best in it, but only as good as possible: it is responsible for all those faults and failings which make it lower and worse than its paradigm, the World of Forms, and which it would be blasphemous to attribute to

2. I agree on the whole with the sceptical assessment of the evidence for Plato's oral teachings given by Gregory Vlastos in his review of H.J.Krämer Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles, Gnomon 41(1963)641-655, reprinted in Platonic Studies (Princeton 1973) 379-403.

3. Aristotle Metaphysics A 6 988a14.

the Divine Craftsman; in this sense we can, if we like, call it, in a rather abstract and uninformative sense, a 'principle of evil'. But of course the Timaeus insists most strongly both that there ought to be a material universe, that its existence is an inevitable consequence of the generous goodness of the divine (29e-30a): and that it is itself as divinely good as it is possible to be on its own level, a 'visible god' (92b7). The element of turbulent, disorderly irrationality in our world, the fact that it is not perfect and absolute cosmos, seems to be a necessary condition for the existence of any material cosmos at all. And it is surely rather inadequate, and may be misleading, to describe this as a 'principle of evil'.

The other question which we need to ask for our purposes is, how does the good divine power deal with this element the opposition of which it has to overcome? Plato's answer is famous, and deserves continual meditation. Divine intelligence works in the world by persuasion: it persuades necessity to co-operate with it (48a). To bring out the full force of this and show how central it is to Plato's thought I should like to quote the conclusion of Cornford's Epilogue to his running commentary on the Timaeus, Plato's Cosmology. Cornford is here comparing the trilogy of dialogues which he supposes Plato intended to write, Timaeus, Critias and Hermocrates with the Oresteia of Aeschylus. His suppositions about how Plato planned his trilogy are speculative and may be wrong, but this does not affect the force and rightness of the understanding of Plato which he derives from the comparison.[4]

> The philosophic poet and the poet philosopher are both consciously concerned with the enthronement of wisdom and justice in human society. For each there lies, beyond and beneath this problem, the antithesis of cosmos and chaos, alike in the constitution of the world and within the confines of the individual soul. On all these planes they see a conflict of powers, whose unreconciled opposition entails disaster. Apollo and the Furies between them can only tear the soul of Orestes in pieces. The city of uncompromised ideals, the prehistoric Athens of Critias' legend, in the death-grapple with the lawless violence of Atlantis, goes down in a general destruction of mankind. The unwritten Hermocrates, we conjectured, would have described the rebirth of civilized society and the institution of a State in which the ideal would condescend to compromise with the given facts of man's nature. So humanity might find peace at the last. And the way to peace, for Plato as for Aeschylus, lies through reconcilement of the rational and the irrational, of Zeus and Fate, of Reason and Necessity, not by force but by persuasion.

4. F.M.Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London 1937) 363-364.

It makes a great difference, both in theory and practice, which of the privileged images of divine action in the world available to them cosmic dualists adopt. They may, as we shall see, image the divine as a redeemer liberating the children of light from this dark world, or as a general leading the armies of light against the forces of darkness.[5] But Plato in his great cosmic story chose, and by choosing bequeathed to later generations, the image of the craftsman working on his rather awkward and recalcitrant material, humouring it and persuading it to take as well as it can the form of the unchanging goodness and beauty which is his model. It is an image the contemplation of which produces a very different attitude to the world from a passionate longing to escape from its miseries or the partisan pugnacity of the conflict-dualist.

In post-Platonic Pythagoreanism we find that, probably for the first time in the history of the tradition, the 'dark other' is generally held to be derived from the One. The most interesting form of the doctrine for our purposes is to be found in a well-known account of the teaching of Moderatus of Gades given by Simplicius on the authority of Porphyry.[6] In spite of recurring doubts as to whether Moderatus has not been somewhat Neoplatonized in transmission, I think his account of the generation and nature of the other principle must be accepted as genuine pre-Neoplatonic Pythagoreanism. It is criticized by Numenius,[7] and there is nothing quite like it in the Neoplatonists. Moderatus says that the Unitary Logos, intending to produce from himself the genesis of beings, by self-privation made room for quantity. This quantity is identified with the disorderly, irrational, formless principle of the Timaeus, and probably with the Dyad. It is the principle of evil in the material world in so far as it

5. In the third part of the great theodicy of Laws X, in 906, the gods are compared to generals, as they are to skippers, charioteers, doctors, farmers - and sheepdogs, and the everlasting war against evil in which gods and spirits are our allies is mentioned (906a5-7); but this is very incidental, and the main point of the comparisons is to show how unlikely it is that the gods are corruptible.

6. Simplicius In Phys.230.34-231.27 Diels. See P.Merlan in A.H.Armstrong (ed.), The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Mediaeval Philosophy (Cambridge 1967) 90-94.

7. Numenius fr.52 Des Places (test.30 Leemans) 15-24.

is the principle of avoidance of and deviation from form. But it is produced by the Unitary Logos as the first stage in its creative activity and it is clear that without it there can be no ordered multiplicity, at least of material beings, no cosmos at all. And at the end of the passage it seems that the 'dark other', in spite of its persistent tendency away from form and towards non-being, is pretty thoroughly overcome by the formative power of the divine numbers (231.20-27). Moderatus remains in this way in the tradition of early Pythagoreanism and the Timaeus. His dualism is a qualified and mitigated dualism, compatible with a good deal of cosmic optimism.

The Platonists of the first two centuries A.D. whom we need to consider carefully in the present context are those represented for us by Plutarch and Atticus, who are grouped together by later commentators because of their very emphatic dualism as well as on account of their insistence on taking the Timaeus literally as an account of creation in time. Both belong to my first group of dualists, those who hold that the two cosmic principles are both unoriginated, independent, and everlastingly opposed. At first sight they may appear as rather uncompromising conflict-dualists of Iranian type. Plutarch in his treatise On Isis and Osiris does speak with approval of Iranian dualism;[8] and is led to use a good deal of conflict-dualist language elsewhere in the treatise by his identification of the evil soul which he finds in Plato with the enemy of Osiris, Typhon or Set. But when we come to look at him and Atticus more closely we shall find that their positions are rather interestingly different from straightforward conflict-dualism. Like some Gnostics, they think in terms of three principles, not two. There is the principle of light, form and order, the dark, disorderly evil soul, and between them matter, which is sharply distinguished from the evil soul. In Isis and Osiris Plutarch makes clear that matter, which is identified with the goddess Isis, is not just neutral but divinely good, with an innate passionate love for the Good himself, who is Osiris. This is very finely stated in chapter 53. And the evil soul which is Typhon can disturb and damage, but cannot intrinsically effect, the beauty and goodness of the cosmos which results from

8. Chapters 46 and 47, 369D-370C.

the union of these great divine male and female principles. And when we turn to the very interesting accounts of the doctrine of Atticus about the disorderly motion and time which existed before the making of the world which are given by Proclus,[9] we find that Proclus does not distinguish his doctrine on the point which concerns us from that of Plutarch. The evil soul for Atticus is, as throughout the tradition, evil as principle of irrational disorder. But it is clearly distinguished from matter and seems in the process of world-making to be as totally dominated and transformed by the power of the good, intelligent formative principle as matter itself[10] (this seems likely to come from Atticus rather than Plutarch). As Dillon remarks, 'This [the Maleficent Soul], in terms of Plutarch's Isis and Osiris is an Isis-figure rather than a Typhon-figure'.[11]

Though the dualism of Numenius sometimes seems to have a darker and more pessimistic colour, especially when he is thinking about the nature and embodiment of man, his way of thinking is really not so far removed from that of Plutarch and Atticus. As already mentioned (p.34), he rejects the Pythagorean view represented by Moderatus of the derivation of the second principle from the One and returns to the two independent and opposed principles which he finds in the earlier Pythagoreans and Plato. He seems to associate the evil soul more closely with matter than Plutarch, and regards its malign influence as extending even to the heavens.[12] But by the end of the passage on Pythagorean teaching which derives from him in Calcidius, the victory of the good principle over the evil of animate matter is strikingly complete: it is not so complete that the evils of this our world are done away with (no Platonist could ever accept this), but it is complete enough for matter reformed by divine providential activity to be spoken of not as the adversary but as the consort of god, the mother of the universe and even mother of 'the corporeal and generated gods'.[13] And the universe of which matter with its

9. In Tim.1.276-277 and 381-382 Diehl.
10. 382.7-12 Diehl.
11. J.Dillon, The Middle Platonists (London 1977) 254.
12. Calcidius In Timaeum 296-297; fr.52.65-70,82-87 Des Places).
13. Ibid.298 (fr.52.101-102 Des Places).

bad soul is the disorderly and irresponsible mother is, as Numenius says elsewhere,[14] 'this beautiful cosmos, beautified by participation in the beautiful'. For all these philosophers of the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition who were so troubled by the problem of evil and anxious to find a solution to it, the Timaeus was naturally of central importance. And in the end it was the spirit of the Timaeus which triumphed in them over whatever tendencies they may have had to darker and more passionate forms of cosmic dualism.

In the great final rethinking and development of Hellenic Platonism which begins with Plotinus, which we call Neoplatonism the view that the 'dark other' derives from the Good itself is finally accepted as against the dualism of two independent principles. But this leaves room for some variation, within the Platonic limits which should by now have become clear, in the way in which the second principle is thought of and valued. For Plotinus the matter of this lower world derives from the higher principles, and so ultimately from the Good, and there is a 'dyadic' or 'hylic' element in the intelligible realm. But in his treatise On the Two Kinds of Matter (II 4 (12)) he attempts to separate the two matters more sharply than is done anywhere else in the tradition where there is any question of matter at the higher level; and the relationship of the two matters never seems to be made perfectly clear. In II 4 and I 8 (51), and incidentally elsewhere, he speaks of the matter of this world as principle of evil in very strong terms, while in III 6 (26) he gives a most remarkable account of its phantasmal and sterile quality, which makes this our world a kind of ghost-world, incapable of further productivity. Yet there is no Platonist who more passionately insists on and defends the divine goodness and holiness of the material cosmos. And it is intrinsic to his whole way of thinking about the Good that its creative self-diffusion will go on till the ultimate limit is reached and everything that can have any, even the smallest, measure of being and goodness has been called into existence. And this means going on down to the material cosmos, where its matter operates, in a very strange way, as the principle of evil. The creative process, in proceeding to

14. Fr.16 Des Places (25 Leemans) 16-17.

the ultimate limit in the generation of positive goodness, evokes the utter negativity which is that limit. For it is as total negativity that matter in Plotinus' universe is the principle of evil. It is perfectly true, in a sense, to say that for Plotinus the dark ὕλη which is absolute and principial evil does not exist. But it is the inevitable cosmogonic approach, which is necessarily a movement away from being and form, to its absolute non-existence which makes ὕλη the principle of cosmic evil, and the approach, closer than is needed, by weaker individual lower souls not perfectly under the command of their higher souls, which enables it to become the principle of moral evil. Its effects in the universe of Plotinus are very limited. They do not extend to the Upper Cosmos, the region of the heavenly bodies, where matter is perfectly obedient and subdued to form.[15] The great embodied gods, including the earth-goddess,[16] are in no way affected for the worse by the 'dark other'. Even in individuals their higher souls are in no way affected by evil and even their lower souls are not intrinsically affected; there can be no substantial change for the worse in them, only a change of direction due to a failure to attend to the higher. In Plotinus' great theodicy, the work On Providence, matter is certainly included as a cause of the evils in this world of ours.[17] But the part which it plays in the justification of divine providence is modest, and a great deal of the work gives an account of cosmic harmony in conflict and tension which is not only in the spirit of Plato but not far removed from the cosmic optimism of the Stoics.

Plotinus has clearly moved a considerable distance from that much more substantial and lively evil principle, the evil soul of the Middle Platonists: and he is moving in a direction which leads towards the final rehabilitation of the 'dark other' by the Athenian Neoplatonists. But I now think that it may be a mistake to dismiss his account of matter as principle of evil by its very negativity as a rather unsatisfactory transition stage in the evolution of Platonic dualism. Plotinus, like the Middle Platonists we considered earlier, does take the evils we experience here below very seriously, and this may be to his credit. The 'classical' solution worked out by his successors is most coherent and impressive and has much to recommend it. But can it not sometimes become a little too smoothly complacent in its cosmic optimism? There is perhaps a way of looking at the doctrine of Plotinus which is not in the end incompatible with the later Neoplatonist position but which gives a more vivid sense of the reality and seriousness of evil, though I do not wish to suggest that Plotinus himself always understood it in this way. We are often inclined, I think, to solidify and reify rather too much what the ancients are talking about: the language which they use, of course, encourages this distortion: in the present case the words ὕλη, silva or materia do rather strongly suggest lumps of stuff, and as long as there is even the faintest trace of unconscious tendency to look at ὕλη in this way it is very difficult to understand how what is being talked about can be a principle of evil precisely as absolute non-existence. But if we suppose that Plotinus is trying to speak of a kind of necessary condition if what must be there if the Good is to diffuse itself freely, a world of bodies in space and time, is to exist at all, it may become easier to make sense of his position. We can see that if the productivity, the generative power, of divine goodness, is to go on to its furthest limit, as, since it is absolute goodness, it is inevitable that it should; if it is to produce not only the complete and self-contained beauty of the archetype but the imperfect but real beauty of the image which is all that is left to produce, since the archetypal world contains all that can exist on its level of real being and perfect beauty and goodness; then a world must come into being which has a built-in element of negativity, sterility and unreality simply by not being the World of Forms, just as its harmony must be a harmony of separate beings in clash and conflict because it is a world of space and time (this last characteristic is not for Plotinus, any more than for Heraclitus and the Stoics, necessarily evil).[18] In the end

15. II 1 (40) 4.12-13; II 9 (33) 8.35-36; IV 4 (28) 42.25-26.

16. For the Earth as a goddess see IV 4 (28) 22.26-27.

17. III 2 (47) 2.

18. Pierre Hadot's exposition of Plotinus' allegorical interpretation of the myth of Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus in his great anti-Gnostic work brings out very well how and why Plotinus thinks it necessary that the diffusion of the Good should go on beyond the self-contained, inward-looking perfection of the world of Nous; see P.Hadot,'Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus in Plotinus' treatise

Plotinus remains close to the spirit of the Timaeus, on which he meditated so continually.

In the Athenian Neoplatonists the 'dark other' at last attains full equality of esteem with its opposite principle of light, form and order. The mother of all reality is honoured equally with the father. This first becomes clear in Syrianus, for whom the primal Monad and Dyad which proceed immediately from the One are prior even to the world of real being. They are the co-equal and equally necessary principles of all multiple, that is to say of all derived, reality, of all that comes from and diffuses the Good from the highest gods to the lowest bodies.[19] And they are not only equally necessary but equally valued. Syrianus strongly denies that the Dyad is the principle of evil.[20] He seems to be the originator of the 'classical' account of evil in which it is a παρυπόστασις a by-product, with no existence or principle of its own. As Anne Sheppard puts it:[21]

> The dyad is only indirectly responsible for evil in so far as it is responsible for otherness and plurality, and it is because of these that evil παρυφίστανται in the world. Another way of putting this would be to say that evil is unavoidable because the world is as it is, that it is inevitably involved in the partial and divided condition of the lower realms of the universe.

When the Athenian doctrine is stated like this, it is easy to see that it is not too far removed from that of Plotinus, or, for that matter, of the Pythagoreans and Plato whose teachings Syrianus thought he was expounding. Proclus develops the teaching of his master very powerfully. He shows[22] how the two principles operate at every level of his vast and complex universe, and both in a positive way, and how the 'dark other', the Infinite, is the principle of life, fecundity and creative expansion without which the great diffusion of the Good through all the levels of multi-

against the Gnostics' in Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought (London 1981) 124-137.

19. The doctrine of Syrianus is very well expounded by Anne Sheppard in her contribution 'Monad and Dyad as Cosmic Principles in Syrianus' to Soul and the Structure of Being in Late Neoplatonism (Liverpool 1982) 1-17. Very difficult problems arise, in Syrianus and still more in Proclus, about the place of the primal pair (Monad and Dyad in Syrianus, Limit and Infinity in Proclus) in relation to the Divine Henads, as Sheppard indicates (p.11-12).

20. In Metaph.184.1ff.; 185.15ff. Kroll.

21. Art.cit.10.

22. In Tim.1.54, 176 Diehl; In Parm. VI 1119.4-1123.21; El.Theol. prop.89-92; Plat.Theol. III 7-9.

plicity cannot occur. Jean Trouillard sums up this final development of Platonic dualism very well when he says:[23]

> Chaque être est fait de mesure et d'infinité, d'un et de multiple, de clarté et de ténèbres. L'ordre a toujours besoin de s'opposer le désordre et de le maîtriser, parce qu'il est une mise en ordre active et parce qu'il est soutenu par une puissance de dépassement. Et du moment que l'origine est ineffable, elle s'exprime aussi bien par la dyade multiplicatrice que par la monade unifiante... Puisque il [le dualisme] traverse tous les niveaux et exprime une origine unique, il est pour ainsi dire exorcisé. L'abîme symbolise le sanctuaire. Ni le Chaos ni la Nuit ne sont le mal. Ils figurent l'Ineffable au même titre que l'ordre et la clarté.

One can see very well, if one reads the passages in Proclus on which Trouillard's account is so solidly based, how this doctrine, though it corrects and clarifies earlier language and thought, remains faithful to the essentials of that thought, and even perhaps leaves room for understanding how the 'dark other', though of the very highest status in the universe after the Good, and herself wholly good, can be the necessary condition for the existence of evils here below and in this way a 'principle of evil' in the restricted and peculiar Platonic sense; so that this intense cosmic optimism need not be too fancifully and inhumanely roseate.

We must now turn to the Gnostics more or less contemporary with the later Platonists whom we have been discussing. I shall confine myself here to those represented in the Nag Hammadi Library, and I must apologize for the superficiality of my treatment. I do not know this literature really well; I must read it in translation because of my ignorance of Coptic, and I am not at all sure whether my mental limitations as a Hellenist do not preclude me from any deep understanding of it. However, I will offer such tentative observations as I can. The first, and the most important from my point of view, is that it seems to me a mistake to read the Gnostics as if they were bad philosophers. Whatever elements in their stories may seem to derive in some way from their acquaintance with Greek philosophy, they are not doing the same thing as philosophers. They are not giving explanations of why things are as they are and accounts of the nature of the divine powers in terms of concept and system. They are telling

23. Jean Trouillard, La Mystagogie de Proclos (Paris 1982) 247.

exciting stories about the often vividly imagined doings and sufferings of spiritual beings, and it is the stories as told which give their explanation of the universe. To reduce them to abstract terms of principles and concepts will do them a greater injustice than will be done if we do the same thing to those greatest of Greek philosophers, Plato and Plotinus, who frequently use the language of poetry and religion. To try to turn their stories into abstract schemes, as it is so convenient for the comparative historian to do, is likely to be as unsatisfactory as the attempts which have been made to give an account of Beethoven's symphonies, especially the Fifth, in similar terms. I shall not therefore make any systematic effort to place the Gnostic stories precisely in my original scheme of cosmic dualisms.

Another reason for not attempting to do this is that I find it difficult to discover in the Nag Hammadi literature anyone or anything which corresponds closely to the 'dark other' as a major force in the development of things to their present state. In other forms of Gnosticism, of course, we do meet with a darkness and powers of darkness which seem to be in ultimate opposition to the powers of light in the Iranian manner, though they are generally rather inert and passive by Iranian standards. But in the Nag Hammadi treatises which I have read the part played by any ultimate darkness seems decidedly modest. We meet with the important Gnostic idea of darkness as a mirror, the reflection in which of a higher power is a stage in the genesis of the lower world.[24] In Zostrianos the darkness is considerably more important, but it seems to denote not a cosmic principle but the whole lower cosmos from which the Gnostic is being shown the way and passionately exhorted to escape.[25] It is notable in our present context that the darkness here is feminine: the message of the whole treatise is summed up in the exhortation 'Flee from the madness and the bondage of femininity and choose for yourself the salvation of masculinity'.[26] (In other treatises, of course, the feminine is viewed with a good deal more favour: a great deal seems to depend on how the Genesis story of the fall of man is

24. Hypostasis of the Archons (II 4) 11-14; cf. Poimandres (Corp.Herm.I) 14 Nock-Festugière.

25. Zostrianos (VIII 1) 1.

26. Ibid.131.

interpreted and on how the ambiguous and androgynous figure of Barbelo is understood.) In the Tripartite Tractate the 'Outer Darkness', 'Chaos', 'Hades' or the 'Abyss' seems to be just the place which rightly belongs to the turbulent 'beings of the likeness', and to which they fall down.[27] In the Apocryphon of John the basic darkness which causes all other evil and darkness seems to be identified with the ignorant archon and Demiurge Yaltabaoth, who of course like all Gnostic Demiurges appears late in the story: he *is* 'ignorant darkness'.[28] The position seems to be much the same in the Trimorphic Protennoia, but here the demonic, aggressive evil of Yaltabaoth is more strongly stressed.

My next observation is, I hope, fairly uncontroversial, but important in our present context. It is that the form in which the Gnostics apprehend the action of the divine power of good and light in this world is predominantly that of a Redeemer, Enlightener and Liberator. The down-grading of the favoured image of the Platonists, the Demiurge, by the Gnostics is of course well-known. (I shall say something soon about how it continues to operate even in Gnostics who insist that the creation of the lower world is part of a great divine salvific plan.) But it is worth remarking that even though in the end this bad and unhappy world will be done away and the power of light will then finally defeat and triumph over the forces of darkness, the image of champion and war-leader for the great divine power who will bring this about is not generally favoured. It is the liberation of the Gnostic children of light from the darkness through the saving enlightenment brought by the Redeemer which is in the centre of the picture, not the cosmic defeat of the armies of the darkness. This marks a difference, as we shall see, between Gnostics and non-Gnostic Christians, which is important in practice as well as in thought. During the centuries of the Christian domination of Europe those who can in some extended sense be called Gnostics have been decidedly more crusaded against than crusading.

The stories told by Gnostics of this kind have a common feature which seems to me useful in determining their position in relation both to the Platonist tradition and to non-Gnostic

27. Tripartite Tractate (I 5) 78.

28. Apocryphon of John 11.

Christianity. This is the importance given to a fall or failure in the spiritual world, a break in the middle of the great process of outgoing which determines the character of the subsequent process and leads in the end to the creation of this lower world. It is of course a very good kind of plot for a story which sets out to explain why things are so unsatisfactory here below in terms of the adventures of higher beings. This picture of some kind of fall or failure occurs even in stories which stress that the whole outgoing, including the creation of the lower world, is part of the great divine plan and which give a comparatively favourable account of the creator. This is particularly noticeable in the Tripartite Tractate. Here the Logos, the creative power, acts throughout in accordance with the will of the Father. It is stressed that his aspiration to ascend to the Father and desire to create on his own is intended by the Father. 'Therefore it is not right to criticize the movement which is the Logos, but it is fitting that we should say about the movement of the Logos that it is cause of a system which has been destined to come about.'[29] There is certainly something here which is comparable (with due caution) with Plotinus' idea of tolma.[30] But as we read on we find that the Logos 'was not able to bear the sight of the light, but he looked into the depth and he doubted. Therefore it was an extremely painful division, a turning away because of his self-doubt and division, forgetfulness and ignorance of himself and of that which is'.[31] This goes beyond the most Gnostic-like idea in any Platonist, Numenius' concept of the 'splitting' of the Demiurge.[32] And in what follows in the Tripartite Tractate we discover that all the unreality, disturbance, and trouble of this lower world, the defects and dissensions of the cosmic powers, the Archons, and the conflict between the powers

29. Tripartite Tractate 77 (translation by Harold Attridge and Dieter Mueller in The Nag Hammadi Library in English (Leiden 1977).

30. On this see Naguib Baladi, La Pensée de Plotin (Paris 1970) and my own treatment in 'Gnosis and Greek Philosophy' 116ff. (in Gnosis: Festschrift für H.Jonas (Göttingen 1978) 87-124, reprinted as no.XXI in A.H.Armstrong, Plotinian and Christian Studies (London 1979).

31. Tripartite Tractate (I 5) 77.

32. Numenius fr.11 Des Places (20 Leemans).

of light and darkness which dominates the present state of things, are due to the weakness and sickness of the Logos which comes from his attempt to attain to the Father. Here we have a real 'break in the middle', a real fault and failing in the spiritual world accounting for the origin of an on the whole bad, and transitory material cosmos, which is not compatible with the thought of Plotinus or with any kind of genuine Platonism.

It is not easy to fit the Gnostic stories which we have just been considering into any tidy scheme of cosmic or two-principle dualism. But of course the Gnostics, like the Platonists and the non-Gnostic Christians, are dualists in another perfectly legitimate sense of 'dualism', that of belief in a duality of worlds, a higher and a lower cosmos. Something must be said here about some possible variations of this. We need to look rather carefully at the variants of two-world dualism which we encounter in the first centuries of our era in order to determine the degree of 'otherworldliness', that is of hostility to, alienation from, and desire to escape from this lower cosmos which appears in them. This seems to depend to a great extent on the way in which the relationship between the two worlds is conceived or imagined. It is perfectly correct to say that the Nag Hammadi literature has shown that not all Gnostics were totally alienated from this world and committed to a darkly pessimistic view of the cosmos and its maker. But it must be admitted that a rather dark pessimism does predominate; and even in those treatises where a comparatively favourable view is taken of the creator and his creation, the estimate of the material cosmos does not seem to be high. There is not very much to be said for it as it appears in the latter part of the Tripartite Tractate. The sentence in Marsanes '<I have come to know> when <I> was deliberating that in every respect the sense-perceptible world is [worthy] of being saved entirely' certainly deserves to be quoted to show that not all Gnostics were utterly alienated and anti-cosmic. But if we also quote what remains of what comes immediately before, 'Finally the entire defilement was saved, together with the immortality of that one [feminine] ...', it does not look as if the material world, presumably identical with or part of the 'entire defilement', is very much esteemed after all.[33] The most deeply and

33. Marsanes (X 1) 5.

strongly world-affirming of the treatises which I have read is the Writing Without Title,[34] with its loving descriptions of the paradises of the cosmic Erōs and the symbolic animals of the land of Egypt.[35] Tardieu describes the spirit and mood of the treatise (and of the closely related Hypostasis of the Archons) beautifully and accurately:[36]

> Tous les trois [the myths of Adam and Eve, Erōs, and the animals of Egypt] expriment la même nostalgie d'une intimité chaleureuse, d'une fusion originaire et vital entre l'homme et la femme (cycle d'Adam), l'homme et les plantes (jardins d'Erōs), entre l'homme et l'animal (cycle des animaux d'Egypte), nostalgie analogue à celle qui préside à la genèse des mythes de la bisexualité, de l'age d'or et de la régeneration.

It is important to remark that here the female and the androgynous (Erōs is androgynous) are very highly regarded: in the telling of the story of Genesis the values are reversed and Eve and the serpent are good saving powers. This is certainly not a spirit of mere cosmic pessimism and alienation from this world. But it is a spirit of nostalgia, and nostalgia is generally understood as a passionate longing for something far away and long ago, and generally implies that one is fairly miserable about the state in which one finds oneself. Here we can see an important reason why it is very easy for Gnostics to be very hostile to and alienated from this present world. In the Gnostic stories the higher cosmos is remote and we cannot return to it, except in vision and revelation, till after bodily death. The material cosmos is not only remote from the world of light but itself a transitory phenomenon; there is no reason to care about it very much.

For Platonists the relationship of the two worlds is very different. From the Timaeus onwards the essential truth about the material cosmos is that it is an image, divinely made, of the eternal world of Forms. (The idea that things in this world are in some sense images of things in a higher world does of course occur in some Gnostic writings,[37] as Plotinus notes with hostil-

34. II 5.

35. As M.Tardieu observes, this praise of Egypt brings the treatise close to the Hermetic Asclepius (see Trois Mythes Gnostiques (Paris 1974) 269-272).

36. Ibid.269.

37. E.g. Zostrianus 48,55,113 (a treatise which Plotinus may have known).

ity.[38] But the archetypes of the images do not usually seem to be on a very high level or to come into existence very early in the story and the stress seems to be very much, as a rule, on the shadowy, phantasmal, and generally unsatisfactory character of the material image. In some Gnostics the valuation of body and the material world may not be very far from the Phaedo or from the nostalgia for the higher world of Phaedrus 250C, but it never seems to come very near to the Timaeus. The idea of the world as image does not seem to be really central for the Gnostics and, at their most cosmically optimistic, they are very far from regarding it as the everlasting icon of the eternal glory.) I have for some time found it useful, in considering the attitudes of Platonists to body and the material universe, to observe that the concept of 'image' allows, and indeed demands, a sliding scale of valuation. At the lower end of the scale one says, 'How poor, trivial and inadequate a thing the image is compared with the original'; at the higher end 'How beautiful and venerable is this icon of the eternal glory not made by human hands'. And many intermediate stages are possible, according to mood, temperament and context. We have seen how even in the more dualistic and pessimistically inclined Middle Platonists, the influence of the Timaeus prevented the higher valuation of the cosmos as image from ever being forgotten. And it is particularly clearly and strongly evident in Plotinus, in spite of a considerable number of pessimistically other-worldly utterances. We can see very well in him how the beauty of the everlasting image depends on the continual presence in it of the invisible and eternal archetype; indeed, not only its beauty but its very existence, for it is a 'natural' image, like a shadow or reflection, which cannot exist without the archetype's presence.[39] The two worlds are very close to each other in Plotinus; so close that many good modern interpreters of the Enneads find it better and less misleading to understand his thought in terms of one world, one set of entities,

38. II 9 (33) 26-27. 'Why do they feel the need to be there in the archetype of the universe which they hate?' A great deal of II 9 is devoted to severe criticism of the Gnostics' perverse use of the concept of image and the false other-worldliness which springs from it.

39. On the distinction between 'natural' and 'artificial' images see VI 4 (22) 9-10. A text which well brings out the closeness of the two worlds is V 8 (31) 7.

apprehended in different ways at different levels, rather than two.[40] In terms of comparison with Gnostics, and non-Gnostic Christians, this means that for Plotinus heaven, or the Pleroma, or the World of Light, is not remote and our sojourn there is not something which belongs to the past or the future. The eternal is here and now present in its everlasting image. The only Parousia there will ever be is here and now. And those who are capable and prepared to make the great moral and intellectual efforts to do so can live in heaven and rise beyond it to God here and now. Porphyry was, it seems, more inclined than his master to follow Numenius in regarding this world as a place to escape from. But the Athenian Neoplatonists incline even more strongly than Plotinus to the highest valuation of the image; for them too the One and the Henads and the Forms are intimately and immediately present at every level of their vast hierarchy of being, the highest more intimately and immediately present in this lower cosmos of ours than those of lower rank. And through the sacred rites their presence may be experienced by at least some of those who cannot rise to the austere contemplation of the sage.

I have left myself little room to discuss the formidably complex subject of the forms of cosmic dualism which are to be found in the thought of non-Gnostic Christians. But it will already be apparent that a good deal which has been said in the earlier parts of this paper about both Platonists and Gnostics can be applied to mainstream Christians. The best thing I can do here is to suggest at least a partial explanation for the remarkable variations in Christian theory and practice in terms of the different solutions adopted by Christians to the problems of the evils and imperfections apparent in the world and human beings. Non-Gnostic Christians have generally rejected with great passion and emphasis interpretations of the Jewish and Christian stories which made the creator of the world other than and inferior to the one God and Father of Jesus Christ. They have rejected the kind of 'break in the middle' which figures so prominently in the Gnostic stories. As a result they affirm very strongly the goodness of the creation as well as of the creator, and eventually classical Christian theology came to accept the later Neoplatonist view of evil as having no real existence, as a parhypostasis. On this side of Christian thinking Platonic influence has been strong and deep. In the West as well as in the East Christians have often arrived at a theophanic view of the material creation in which it appears as the God-made icon of the eternal glory. I was myself brought up in an English Christian tradition which saw no fundamental difference between Platonism and Christianity, and instinctively and unselfconsciously accepted God's self-revelation in nature as equal in honour to his self-revelation in scripture and church, a way of faith admirably summed up in St.Maximus Confessor's discussion of the proper interpretation of the white garments of the Transfiguration in which he concludes, '... the two laws, of nature and of scripture, are equal in honour and teach the same as each other, and neither is greater or less than the other...'[41] But there are of course important differences between the normal Christian creationist position and that of the later Platonists. The Christians lay much greater stress on God's will and have a more unbridled and absolute conception of divine creative power than Plato and his followers; as a result they not only reject the independent principle of evil of the Middle Platonists but have little room in their thought for the 'dark other', still so important in the last Neoplatonists, and in general, at least till quite recently, reject any limitation on God's omnipotence which would mean that he works by persuasion rather than force. This can result in leading those Christians, like Augustine in his later years, who incline to a gloomy view of the present state of affairs, not only to a pessimism about the world as great as that of the Manichees but to a way of thinking about God darker and more terrifying than that of any thorough-going cosmic dualists.[42]

The darker view of this world is strongly assisted by the older and more popular Christian way of explaining its evils. This is a story-explanation, in terms of persons rather than principles, about the fall of angels and men, and in this way

40. Cf. two recent articles in Dionysius: K.Corrigan, 'The Internal Dimensions of the Sensible Object in the Thought of Plotinus and Aristotle' 5(1981) 98-126; M.F.Wagner, 'Plotinus' World' 6(1982)13-42.

41. Maximus Ambigua VI, PG 91 1128C-D.

42. Peter Brown brings this out very well in his Augustine of Hippo (London 1967) in ch.32 on the controversy with Julian of Eclanum.

resembles the Gnostic stories. In Patristic thought, and sometimes in later Christian thought, the fall of the angels plays an important part in the explanation of cosmic or physical evil; though no other Christian thinker goes as far as Origen in making the whole creation depend on the fall of the spirits who, according to the depth of their fall, became angels, men or devils; a doctrine which he is enabled to reconcile with his firm anti-Gnostic faith that the creation is essentially good (because it is the work of the perfectly good and wise Father working through the Logos in whom there is no fault or failing) by his vision of the whole creative process as one of redemption, education and purification which will bring all the spirits back to that original state from which they, freely and of their own motion, in no way impelled by God chose to fall. The vital difference between the way of thinking of the Peri Archōn and the at first sight not entirely dissimilar one of the Tripartite Tractate is that for Origen there is no element of fault and failing, no falling below the best, in the divine creative act itself. Origen's view was of course generally rejected by non-Gnostic Christians; but in less wholesale forms the explanation of cosmic evils by the fall of the angels has not, perhaps, been uncommon. My father, who was an Anglican clergyman, reconciled his passionate belief in the goodness of the creation with the undoubted existence of evils in it by an interesting Christian adaptation of what is said in the Timaeus about the part taken by the 'younger gods' in the formation of the world, which he regarded as perfectly orthodox and traditional. He held that the angels had had bestowed on them by God limited powers of creation which the devils were not deprived of, and continued to exercise after their fall by creatingall the things in the world of which my father disapproved, notably slugs and snails, to which, being an enthusiastic gardener, he had the strongest objection.[42a]

But it is when the doctrine of the fall of the angels is combined with that of the fall of mankind to provide an explanation of the evils which beset humanity here below that we may find the foundations in Christian thought for a world-view as dark as that of the Manichaeans or a conflict-dualism fiercer than that of the Mazdaeans. J.H.W.G.Liebeschütz, in his excellent book on Roman religion, has shown very well how the passion-

42a My father said that he found this doctrine in William Law, I believe correctly. Law took it, as he took so much, from Boehme.

ate early Christian belief in devils and the identification of the pagan gods with devils darkened the late antique world-view, by strengthening the tendency which had already appeared in it to believe in supernatural personifications of evil:[43]

> The transformation of the gods into demons had a significant psychological consequence. The gods had sometimes been cruel or arbitrary, but they could be placated by offerings in quite the same way as arbitrary or tyrannous humans. They were not essentially hostile or spiteful. Christianity offered man enormously powerful assistance, but it also proclaimed the existence of powerful and totally evil adversaries. Life became a battle in which men must fight for God against 'the enemy'.

In a footnote he adds:

> There had been a tendency to believe in supernatural personifications of absolute evil, especially in connection with magic, in later Greek or Roman paganism... But it was left to Christianity to fill the world with evil spirits.

Peter Brown has unforgettably described the consequences in Augustine's latest thought of combining this devil-dualism with the anti-dualist insistence on the omnipotence and sovereign will of God:[44]

> God had plainly allowed the human race to be swept by his wrath: and this human race, as Augustine presents it in his works against Julian, is very like the invaded universe of Mani. Augustine had always believed in the vast power of the Devil... Now this Devil will cast his shadow over mankind: the human race is 'the Devil's fruit-tree, his own property, from which he may pick his fruit', it is 'the plaything of demons'. This is evil, thought of much as the Manichees had done, as a persecutory force. The demons may now have been enrolled as the unwitting agents of a superior justice: but it is they who are seen as active and man as merely passive.

Here, as Brown shows, we are very close to the Gnostic view of the world at its darkest, and, though the figure of God is invested with a transcendent and absolute horror exceeding that of any Gnostic demiurge or even the Manichaean evil principle, his most eminent activity in the world in its present state is seen as the redemption and deliverance of the small number of the elect from its darkness. For the rest of humanity, of course, there is no hope at all, as God simultaneously with his work of redemption pursues his 'awesome blood-feud against the family of Adam'.[45]

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43. J.H.W.G.Liebeschütz, Continuity and Change in Roman Religion (Oxford 1979) 269 and n.2.

44. Peter Brown, loc.cit. (n.42) 395. The quotations are from Augustine De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia I xxiii,26 and Contra Julianum VI xxi,67.

45. Brown loc.cit.393; I have referred to this chapter because in it Brown has said, with great precision and sympathy for Augustine, whatever can decently be said in defence of his later doctrine. For Manichaean influence on Augustine's doctrine of the massa damnata see Th. G. Sinnige, "Gnostic Influences in the Early Works of Plotinus and in Augustine", in *Plotinus amid Gnostics and Christians* (the volume in which this paper was originally published), ed. D.T. Runia (Free University Press, Amsterdam 1984) pp. 93-97.

But those Christians who have not the tormented genius of Augustine for drawing out the full horror of the consequences implicit in some traditional Christian doctrines, and who do not see the world as so totally devil-ridden as Augustine did in his later years (and many of his Christian contemporaries did not) have often come to attach much importance to the third image which I mentioned (p.34) as available to cosmic dualists, that of the war-leader, commanding the armies of light against the forces of darkness. They have found that the qualified conflict-dualism of the belief that all the evils of this world are due to the sins of the fallen angels and the men and women whom they have seduced into following them provides admirable support for the ferocious, though sometimes quite cheerful, pugnacity, exceeding that of mainstream Iranian conflict-dualists, which has been a distinguishing characteristic of historic Christianity. The belief that those whom one regards, at any place or time, as enemies of authentic Christian faith, civilization, or interests are of the Devil's party is a powerful stimulus to crusading: that is, of course, if one does not pay too much attention, as Christians in this sort of context have generally quite successfully avoided doing, to where and how Christ chose to overcome evil, and so is not inhibited by the reflection that the Cross is a singularly inappropriate symbol for a Crusader.

Those of course who do attend to the meaning of the Cross, as the best of those who have used the language of 'spiritual combat' have done, will come to use that language in a very different way and understand the overcoming of evil in very different terms to the polemists and crusaders. In their thought and practice this strange triumph will be achieved by accepting and carrying evil and requiting it with good and with love. Most of us have not got nearly as far as this. But, as we contemplate the overcoming of evil by the way of the Cross, we may be permitted to observe that the language of conflict-dualism is not really appropriate to it, except in a most violently paradoxical sense; so that we may come to prefer other images, including the great Platonic image of the Craftsman, for our struggle in this imperfect, but good and lovable world.

XIII

THE WAY AND THE WAYS: RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY A.D.

The subject I propose may seem to my present audience excessively well-worn. None the less it seems to me of such historical interest and contemporary importance that it is still worth looking carefully again at least at selected themes and moments in the controversies and policies of the period between the recognition of Christianity by Constantine and the final establishment of Christian intolerance under Theodosius. The choice of the way of intolerance by the authorities of Church and Empire in the late fourth century has had some very serious and lasting consequences. The last vestiges of its practical effects, in the form of the imposition of at least petty and vexatious disabilities on forms of religion not approved by the local ecclesiastical establishment, lasted in some European countries well into my lifetime. And theoretical approval of this sort of intolerance has often long outlasted the power to apply it in practice. After all, as late as 1945 many approved Roman Catholic theologians in England, and the Roman authorities, objected to a statement on religious freedom very close to Vatican II's declaration on that subject.[1] In general, I do not think that any Christian body has ever abandoned the power to persecute and repress while it actually had it. The acceptance of religious tolerance and freedom as good in themselves has normally been the belated, though sometimes sincere and whole-hearted, recognition and acceptance of a *fait accompli*. This long persistence of Theodosian intolerance in practice and its still longer persistence in theory has certainly been a cause, though not the only cause, of that unique phenomenon of our time, the decline not only of Christianity but of all forms of religious belief and the growth of a totally irreligious and unspiritual materialism. This is something which many people, by no means only committed Christians, continually and rightly lament. But I am more and more convinced that a principal cause of it has been the general experience of Church teaching and practice and of