

impetus from the results and perspectives of research offered by this very thorough and convincing piece of scholarship.

*Outi Merisalo*

*Eyjólfur E. Emilsson: Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study.* Cambridge University Press, 1988. IX, 179 p. GBP 25.00.

Plotinian scholarship has during the last two decades been very active (see K. Corrigan's and P. O'Cleirigh's article in ANRW II 36:1 [1987] 571-623). Because Plotinus was a neoplatonist, the problems of his metaphysics have been approached in most treatises by the philosophical tradition preceding him. Thus there has been a danger that "Plotinus is being dissolved into his sources" as J.M. Rist has written. Although Emilsson emphasizes in his Introduction the value of tradition to the full understanding of Plotinus' views, his method in regard to especially Plotinus' system as a whole seems refreshingly "phenomenological". This book is a revised version (e.g. he has dropped 'and Historical' from the subtitle) of Emilsson's Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton University in 1984. In his concise first chapter on Plotinus' metaphysics, he starts from the preconceptions of Plotinus himself and especially of his time, for example the notions of 'unity' and 'living being'. These presuppositions partly explain why Plotinus formulated his ideas into a system which in many respects seems so strange to us. Instead of mere description Emilsson succeeds in creating a personal and coherent interpretation of Plotinus' sense-perception theory.

For what specific reasons is this aspect of Plotinus' philosophy – except for the sake of the sheer delight of knowledge – relevant to raise as the subject of a whole monograph? The sensible world represents in Plotinus' system the second last grade. From an epistemological point of view – which Emilsson does not deal with at all – sense-perception does not seem to be essential in Plotinus' thinking. Emilsson justifies his work by claiming that previous studies are characterized chiefly by theological or religious interest (which is true in respect of earlier but not of modern studies), and on the other hand the theory of sense-perception contains as an integral part Plotinus' theory of Forms. But according to Plotinus' view the sensible world by its beauty guides us to contemplate Forms and finally the One. This is an aspect which Emilsson does not pay attention to, although the very core of Plotinus' philosophy could be the protreptic function.

Emilsson opposes Blumenthal's view that Plotinus was an antirealist. Different essays exhibit a clear disagreement: Essay IV.6.[41] 1. are in

favour of realism and Essays I.1.[53] 7. and V.5.[32] 1. of antirealism. (N.B. Emilsson does not find it necessary to mark with brackets the chronological number of essays except in a very few cases.) Plotinus was not a representationalist so that we perceive only the appearances of objects. Our soul in a sense reaches or contacts the external object itself ('das Ding an sich'!).

Emilsson handles with commendable accuracy the contests of central notions: perception (αἴσθησις), affection (πάθος), judgement (κρίσις) and representation (φαντασία). Plotinus separates distinctly the acts of sense organs and that of the soul. Affection is connected to the former and judgement to the latter. As the knowledge in a sense has what is known, soul to be able to know sensibles must first acquire them. Affection can be defined as an assimilation to the external object or more accurately to the quality of it. And this very quality can be seen as an image of a form, namely the internal productive principle, which on its behalf is an image of real Form. We possess in our souls the unfolded Forms. The quality of external body is so to say "ontologically transformed so as to be accessible to our souls" (p. 143). Thus perception is receiving the Form of the object perceived. Transformation of Forms Plotinus explains by two notions: συμπάθεια and the omnipresence of Forms. However, perceiving is essentially judgement. When we have got the quality of an external object non-materially in our soul (as a kind of Form) we connect it with notions we already possess. This judgement leaves an intelligible representation of perception in the soul.

According to Emilsson the unity of sense-perception is the most original part of Plotinus' sense-perception theory, specifically for the sake of its justifications. Although we have many senses, the subject of perception is one, which means that this subject cannot be body but soul. Plotinus is also the first in western philosophy according to Emilsson who thinks that perception is an act which can go beyond the ontological boundary between mental and physical. Emilsson completes his work with an interesting discussion of Plotinus' dualism which was more sharp than that of previous thinkers. Why then was it possible for Plotinus to make that "category mistake" (G. Ryle's famous concept), and not his predecessors? Emilsson quotes M.F. Burnyeat: "One's own body has not yet become for philosophy a part of the external world". The pairs mind-body and internal-external were not analogical before Plotinus.

On the whole Emilsson's book gives stimulus by its good philosophical attitude. Finally a small critical note about the index: could it have been more comprehensive, and why have the crucial notions 'judgement' and 'dualism' not been elaborated?

*Tuula Korhonen*