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one could also try to punctuate after *arte* and to continue with an object—but which?—governed by *miratur*.[12]

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doi:10.1017/S0009838820000233

AN UNNOTICED REFERENCE TO THE *CRITO* IN PLOTINUS?

εἰ δ' ἑκοῦσαι, τί μέμφεσθε εἰς ὃν ἑκόντες ἤλθετε διδόντος καὶ ἀπαλλάττεσθαι, εἴ τις μὴ ἀρέσκοιτο; εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τόδε τὸ πᾶν, ὡς ἐξεῖναι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ σοφίαν ἔχειν καὶ ἐνταῦθα ὄντας βιοῦν κατ' ἐκεῖνα, πῶς οὐ μαρτυρεῖ ἐξηρτῆσθαι τῶν ἐκεῖ;

And if they descend willingly, why do you blame the cosmos that you willingly entered and that allows *anyone who is not satisfied* to escape from it? But if this universe is actually such that we can be in it and have wisdom and while being here live according to those intelligible principles, why wouldn't this bear witness to its dependence on those intelligible principles?[1]

καὶ οὐδεὶς ἡμῶν τῶν νόμων ἐμποδών ἐστιν οὐδ' ἀπαγορεύει, ἐάντε τις βούληται ὑμῶν εἰς ἀποικίαν ἰέναι, εἰ μὴ ἀρέσκοιμεν ἡμεῖς τε καὶ ἡ πόλις, ἐάντε μετοικεῖν ἄλλοσέ ποι ἐλθών, ἰέναι ἐκεῖσε ὅποι ἂν βούληται, ἔχοντα τὰ αὑτοῦ. ὃς δ' ἂν ὑμῶν παραμείνῃ, ὁρῶν ὃν τρόπον ἡμεῖς τάς τε δίκας δικάζομεν καὶ τἆλλα τὴν πόλιν διοικοῦμεν, ἤδη φαμὲν τοῦτον ὡμολογηκέναι ἔργῳ ἡμῖν ἃ ἂν ἡμεῖς κελεύωμεν ποιήσειν ταῦτα.

Not one of our laws raises any obstacle or forbids him, *if he is not satisfied* with us or the city, if one of you wants to go and live in a colony or wants to go anywhere else, and keep his property. We say, however, that whoever of you remains, when he sees how we conduct our trials and manage the city in other ways, has in fact come to an agreement with us to obey our instructions.[2]

At first glance, these two extracts have little in common: this explains why (as far as I know) none of the editors or translators of Plotinus' *Enneads*[3] mentions the *Crito* as a possible influence for this section of the treatise *Against the Gnostic*s. There is, however, an interesting similarity between Plotinus' expression εἴ τις μὴ ἀρέσκοιτο and Plato's εἰ μὴ ἀρέσκοιμεν (the first-person plural stands for the laws of Athens). It may still look like an unremarkable coincidence, until we note that these are the only two occurrences of the combination εἰ + μή + ἀρέσκω in the optative passive for the whole TLG corpus.[4] Would it be possible that the expression was carrying, for a third-century philosopher

[12] For such strong caesurae κατὰ τρίτον τροχαῖον, see *Met.* 2.33, 6.572, 9.500, 13.175 (cf. R.-E. Fuchs, *Hexametertypen in Ovids* Metamorphosen [Diss., Vienna, 1980], 448–52). The object should not be *suam*, which would leave the reader wondering whether *artem* or *puellam* is the implied noun.

[1] Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9 [33].8.42–6, transl. L.P. Gerson et al., *Plotinus:* The Enneads (Cambridge, 2018).
[2] Pl. *Cri*. 51d5–e4, transl. G.M.A. Grube, *Plato: Five Dialogues* (Indianapolis, 1981).
[3] Including Gerson et al. (n. 1), 219.
[4] The closest parallels are εἰ οὐκ ἀρέσκοιντο in Plutarch (*Tim.* 11.1.3) and οἷς μὴ ἀρέσκοιτο in Josephus (*AJ* 19.179.1).

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schooled in Platonic texts, an implicit reference to this specific part of the *Crito*? To answer that question, let us look at the context of Plotinus' argument.

Here it is: the 'Gnostics'[5] claim that the world is poorly made, and in any case that it is worse than themselves; they therefore ask the reason why it was created.[6] Plotinus thus aims to show that the world is harmonious, that it is a good copy of the intelligible realm, with just enough difference to be distinct from it,[7] and that every part of it, from the earth to the stars (especially the latter, since their perfect and incorporeal order manifests perfect virtue), is a testimony to this very harmony.[8] From here, when it comes to our souls, three possibilities arise. The first is rather straightforward: if our souls are coerced to descend into this world (for example by the World Soul), they are inferior to at least one part of it, namely the stars, which are free from such coercion.[9] If this path is chosen, the starting point of the 'Gnostics' (that is, that they are better than the world) is invalidated.

Then comes the above-mentioned extract, exposing briefly the remaining two possibilities before Plotinus moves on to another topic in §9. Both assume that our souls have descended freely. From here, they may or may not be satisfied with their choice. If they are not, Plotinus suggests that they should leave (that is, commit suicide). The third case, in which they are satisfied, is not made explicit by Plotinus, who only concludes that, if we can stay in this world while being virtuous, it implies that this world depends on the intelligible realm, and is therefore good. Although the general argument is understandable, there seems to be a missing step here: how do we get from the possibility of leaving the world to the conclusion of its goodness, let alone to its dependency on the intelligible realm?

Our second extract, from the *Crito*, might help to fill this gap. Through the mouth of Socrates, the laws of Athens are arguing that it would be unjust for him to escape from his prison, since he had the opportunity to leave the city at any point of his adult life if he was not satisfied with its rules. By choosing not to leave the city, one implicitly agrees with the way in which it is organized, and gives one's consent to any order given by its laws. In other words, if one has decided to stay somewhere, with full knowledge of how things work in this place, it means that one is satisfied with it, and has therefore no right to feel wronged or to complain about it.

If we suppose this passage as background knowledge, Plotinus' line of thought becomes easier to follow: the 'Gnostics' are free to stay in the world or to leave it; they are still alive and, as long as they are, they are thereby showing their continuous agreement and satisfaction with this world. Moreover, if there is any virtuous individual in it (and the 'Gnostics' probably claim to be such), the mere fact that he stays here is proof that it is possible for such a being to be satisfied with the world, which therefore must be in close dependency on its intelligible principles.

The general argument is thus parallel, but we have to emphasize some differences. First, while the scope of Plato's argument pertains only to one's behaviour towards the city, its laws and decisions, Plotinus is making a point about cosmodicy. Second, as a matter of consequence, the suggested behaviour cannot be the same, as Plato's

[5] For the adversaries targeted in this text, see P. Kalligas, 'Plotinus against the Gnostics', *Hermathena* 169 (2000), 115–28.
[6] Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9 [33].8.1–8.
[7] Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9 [33].8.8–30.
[8] Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9 [33].8.30–9.
[9] Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9 [33].8.39–41.

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point concerns agreement with the laws of the city, in this case Athens: an unsatisfied citizen may choose to go to live in another city, which is not possible if the 'city' in question is the whole world.[10] Third, since the possibility of leaving the world mentioned here obviously means suicide, the pragmatic correlate of satisfaction for Plotinus (staying alive) is the opposite of what is going to happen to Socrates because of his acceptance of the laws of his city (following the city's injunction to commit suicide).

It should be stressed that, if we keep in mind the whole point of the treatise 1.9 [16], this invitation to suicide is unexpected, since such a violent solution is supposed to aggravate the attachment of the soul to the body. Admittedly, Plotinus is not always as categorical and did consider suicide as a valid option in specific desperate situations, such as being a war prisoner.[11] This being said, the only prisoner who might profit from killing himself (or at least avoid worsening his situation) is the σοφός (or σπουδαῖος).[12] Therefore, either the 'Gnostics' are effectively wise, and in this case they should probably have already figured out that they ought to leave this wicked world, or they are not, and suicide would therefore be of no use to them. Is Plotinus here being unusually ironic, polemical and even aggressive? This certainly might be the case, since, when it comes to 'Gnostics', he does allow himself some sarcasm, but there is another reasonable explanation: could he be using an authoritative text (the *Crito*) which is not completely convergent with his own views?

The latter possibility need not necessarily lead us to conclude that by using this text (if he really does) Plotinus is inconsistent. Plato's argument might be used as an implicit premise for an argument of the following form: any being choosing to stay alive shows by this very choice its agreement with the way in which the world works; every suicide except the wise man's (who usually decides to stay here anyway) is misguided; therefore, any opposition to the way in which the world works is misguided. The 'Gnostics' may or may not be wise: they are mistaken either way. In the former case, they claim to despise the world while at the same time staying in it: as wise men, they should have left or decided to consider the world as well organized. In the latter case, as non-wise men, they have no right to judge the world as a whole, and even if they did walk the path consistent with their discontent, their violent death would bring them no good.

I cannot claim to have proven that Plotinus had the *Crito* in mind when writing this passage. But I hope to have shown that postulating such a reference, as suggested by the language Plotinus uses, can shed light on an argument which would otherwise remain quite obscure.

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[10] An important consequence of this widening of the scope is that it solves one of the main problems of the *Crito*, namely that the implicit acceptance of the law only concerns that of one's own city or community (see e.g. C.H. Kahn, 'Problems in the argument of Plato's *Crito*', *Apeiron* 22 [1989], 29–43, at 35).

[11] Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.4 [46].7.31–2; see also 1.7 [54].3.18–22.

[12] As is made clear in 1.4 [46].16.13–20; see J. Dillon, 'Singing without an instrument: Plotinus on suicide', *ICS* 19 (1994), 231–8.

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