

Platonic demonology is not a coherent theory. In the *Symposion*, Plato presents the daimon as a mediator between gods and men. The myths of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* attribute to a daimon the role of a guide of the soul or a kind of guardian spirit. In the *Phaedo*, it is said to be allotted to us and to guide the soul after death to judgment. In the *Republic*, the daimon is not allotted to the soul, but the soul chooses the daimon. In the *Timaeus*, Plato calls the highest part of the soul the daimon. This daimon is clearly a part of the soul, i.e. probably the *nous*. Clearly, no synthesis can harmonize these passages into a consistent theory. Plato's contemporary reader might have appreciated the lack of consistency as a feature of the playfulness of Plato's myth making.

My thesis springs from a realization that Plotinus was a very different reader of Plato. In treatise III 4 [15], "The daimon allotted to us", Plotinus rationalizes Platonic demonology into a theory of the soul's volition and responsibility for its own life. As Plotinus tries to reconcile his vision with the Platonic passages, some seemingly strange views about the daimon emerge, especially the idea of the daimon of a daimon or of a silly daimon.

Plotinus does not support the theory of an external guide of the soul. Nor is the daimon the *nous*. His deviation from Plato or even the strangeness of some of his remarks should not mislead: he is developing a rational theory of the soul. The daimon becomes a symbol for the soul's choice of life. The soul itself determines its course, not a guardian spirit. The daimon as a constitutive force extraneous to the psyche is simply not philosophically useful for Plotinus. He rationalizes the Platonic myth into a theory of the soul which is a responsible and conscious self that decides its own course.