Sympathy in Plotinus

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Abstract

In this thesis, I make intelligible Plotinus’ notion of sympathy by explicating the cause of sympathy within Plotinus’ universe and the effects of sympathy. I do this by using a framework inspired by the Stoic literature on sympathy which distinguishes between three interrelated features of sympathy: Unity, global sympathy, and local sympathy. I show that for Plotinus sympathetic interactions are possible because of the numeric identity of soul with all its parts. I also show that the cause of this unity is the result of two metaphysical principles which govern a series of productions, which results in a diminishing unity from Plotinus first principle, the One, to matter which has no unity. I argue that the unity of soul is both necessary and sufficient for global sympathy (part-to-whole sympathetic interaction) but only necessary for local sympathy (part-to-part sympathetic interaction). In addition, I also explicate the underlying mechanisms of both local and global sympathy by appealing to the likeness principle (for local sympathy) and the inherent ‘Love’ and ‘Strife’ within the universe (for global sympathy).
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Sympathy in Plotinus

1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to make intelligible the notion of sympathy within Plotinus’ philosophy. To do this requires answering three questions: What is sympathy? What is the cause of sympathy? And what are the underlying mechanism of sympathy? To answer these questions, I will use a framework inspired by the Stoic literature which distinguishes between three interrelated features of sympathy.

1. Unity: the type of unity responsible for sympathy.
2. Global sympathy: sympathetic interaction between the whole and the parts of a system.
3. Local sympathy: sympathetic interaction between parts within the system.

Answering the second question requires understanding the cause of sympathy within Plotinus universe. It will be found that the type of unity which allows for both global and local sympathetic interaction is due to the diminishing unity which takes places through a series of production. To answer the third question requires understanding the forces within Plotinus universe which allows for the possibility of global and local sympathetic interaction. I will argue that the type of unity responsible for sympathy is necessary and sufficient for global sympathy but only necessary for local sympathy.

This paper will be broken up into two main parts, in first section I will present a very brief overview of the notion of sympathy to, first, get a feel for what sympathy is and what roles sympathy has played before Plotinus, and second, to motivate why making intelligible Plotinus’ notion of sympathy is both interesting and important. In the second half of the first section, I will present the Stoic notion of sympathy. I do this for three reasons, the first is that Plotinus notion of sympathy
is influenced by the Stoic doctrine (and along with certain passages from the *Timaeus*). The second reason is that Plotinus’ use of sympathy is analogous\(^1\) to the Stoic use. The final reason is that the Stoic doctrine is easier to grasp, and it will help the reader understand the use of sympathy within Plotinus’ more difficult to grasp universe. In the second part of this thesis, I will motivate applying the framework to Plotinus’ notion of sympathy and explicate the answers to the three questions above.

2. Sympathy: A General Introduction

2.1 Historical Antecedents

The notion of sympathy comes from the Greek term συμπάθεια and is composed of the prefix συν meaning together or with, and the part πάθος meaning feeling or affection. The term can be translated as feeling or being affected together. If we think about the commonsense use of the term sympathy, we say we sympathize with someone when we can relate to what that person is undergoing. It is in this sense that we are “feeling together” with the person we are sympathizing with. In fact, we see a similar use of the term the in *Enneads*. Plotinus writes “we feel sympathy with each other and share in each other’s pain through having sight of it (IV.9(8).3.1-2). Unlike the commonsense understanding, the notion of sympathy has been used in a variety of theoretical and explanatory roles throughout history. For example, in Plato’s *Charmides* (169c) the term is used in an analogy between the effects of seeing someone in a state of aporia and seeing someone yawn\(^2\), and Aristotle or pseudo-Aristotle in *Problems* asks us “[w]hy, when we stand near the fire, do we desire to urinate, and if we stand near water, for instance a river, we do urinate?” (886a). In a more cosmological use, Sextus Empiricus lists sympathies between the heavens and earth. He writes:

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\(^1\) what I mean is that the three general features above are shared by both the Stoic doctrine and Plotinus’ use of sympathy, but they differ regarding their physics and metaphysics which they employ to explain sympathetic relationships (which will become clearer below)

\(^2\) καὶ ὁ Κριτίας ἀκούσας τἀῦτα καὶ ἴδὼν μὲ ἀποροῦντα, ὥσπερ οἱ τοὺς χασμομένους καταντικώρ ὀρθῶντες ταύτων τοῦτο συμπάσχουσιν, κάκεινος ἐδοξέ μοι ὑπ’ ἐμὸν ἀποροῦντος ἀναγκισθήναι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄλοναι (169c)
The world exhibits sympathies: in accordance with the waxings and wanings of the moon many sea and land animals wane and wax, and ebb and flood occur in some parts of the sea. And in the same way, too, in accordance with certain risings and settings of the stars alterations in the surrounding atmosphere and all varieties of change in the air take place, sometimes for the better (Against the Professors 9.79 (SVF 2.1013).

Although not an exhaustive list, the impression one gets when reading these sources is that philosophers from different backgrounds were puzzled by a certain class of phenomena in which objects that are spatially distant have an invisible influence on each other. It is not until we get to the early Stoics and those after where sympathy is explicitly tied to some sort of unity (usually at the cosmic level). For example, Philo of Alexandria explains sympathetic interaction through the “invisible powers” (ἄοράτοις δυνάμεσιν) and indissoluble chains which the creator (δημιουργός) uses to hold the universe together (On the Migration of Abraham, 181). While Alexander of Aphrodisias explains sympathy with reference to the revolution of the celestial bodies and their etheric nature which contains all material substance.4

2.2 Motivation and Relevance

There are three reasons to be interested in making intelligible Plotinus’ notion of sympathy. The first reason has to do with Plotinus’ influence of the use of the term on the Platonist tradition after him. For example, Christia Mercer in her article “Seventeenth-Century Universal Sympathy: Stoicism, Platonism, Leibniz, and Conway” claims that the 17th century use of the term is “informed by many forms of Platonism” from the medieval and the scholastic tradition, emphasizing the transmission of platonic ideas from Plotinus and Proclus (Mercer 2015, p. 122). She argues that Leibniz and Conway “build their metaphysics of universal sympathy” on Platonic sources (Mercer, 2015, p.123). For example, in an early essay Leibniz “agrees with the Stoics and Plato in the Timaeus about the world soul in understanding God to be diffused through everything” (Mercer, 2015, p.129). If this turns out to be true, then understanding the role sympathy plays in

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3 This isn’t to say that we cannot find conceptual parallels or descriptive phrases which one might anachronistically label as “sympathetic” in older sources, e.g., Plato’s Timaeus 37c6-d7 and Homer’s Iliad 8.1.1-25, but rather the notion corresponding to sympathy (as far as we know) is never used in such a way until we get to the Stoics (Philo, in an interesting passage, attributes the doctrine of universal sympathy to the Chaldeans (Χαλδαῖοι) (On the Migration of Abraham,178-179) which would predate the Stoics. But who these Babylonian astrologers were is quite a mystery. But this also does not mean that the Stoics and those after were not influenced by earlier authors, it is just a question if thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle would recognize such a use of the term sympathy.

4 αὕτη δ’ ἦστιν ἢ τοῦ θείου τε καὶ κυκλοφορητικοῦ καὶ αἰθερίου σώματος φύσις, ἣς περιέχουσα πάσαν τὴν ἐνυλόν (On Mixture, 223.10-11).
Plotinus’ broader metaphysics could be useful for those who are interested in the notion in later Platonic traditions.

A second reason for focusing on Plotinus’ notion of sympathy has to do with the assumption that sympathetic relationships are unexplained and unintelligible. For example, Leibniz criticizes Newton’s account of gravity as “action at a distance” being occult and compares his view to a restricted type of sympathy which is inexplicable (Mercer 2015, p. 130). For the same reason, Descartes in Principles of Philosophy (4.187) takes the notion more generally to be occult, discarding the notion and theories based on it (Schliesser 2015, p. 5). But what does it mean for sympathy to be occult? Leibniz defined the term occult to mean a power “whose cause is unknown and one whose effect [...] can never become intelligible” (Mercer 2015, p. 111). As Mercer points out, we can view Leibniz as distinguishing between a pejorative use of sympathy which is not intelligible (and occult in nature) and a use of sympathy which is intelligible and plays substantive metaphysical role. In a similar fashion, I would like to argue that the use of sympathy in Plotinus is not occult in nature and can be made intelligible by answering the three questions above.

The final reason for focusing on Plotinus notion of sympathy has to do with the lack of literature on the subject. This does not mean that there is no literature on Plotinus’ use of sympathy, but rather the extant literature focuses on the various roles’ sympathy plays throughout the Enneads, for example, Emilsson in “Plotinus on sympatheia” (Emilsson, 2015) characterizes the importance of the principle of sympathy for astral influence, magic, prayer, and perception and focuses more on the pathos of sympathy rather than the sun of sympathy. In this thesis, I will focus more on the latter, i.e., the unity and togetherness of sympathy and the conditions which make global and local sympathy possible.

2.3 Stoic Doctrine of Sympathy

To understand the mechanism of sympathy in Plotinus, I will use a framework inspired by Holmes’ article “On Stoic Sympathy: Cosmobiology and the life of nature” (Holmes 2019). The purpose of presenting the Stoic doctrine of sympathy using this framework is to show that we can

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5 I am not sure if Holmes would endorse such a framework, but regardless these three features are what I take to be important for understanding Plotinus’ use of the notion.
understand Plotinus’ notion in a similar way. Later (in section 3), I will argue that we can generalize the framework that I apply to the Stoic notion of sympathy, to understand Plotinus’ notion of sympathy. The motivation for using this framework is to present a systematic account of Plotinus’ notion of sympathy in order to make the notion intelligible, that is, to understand the cause of sympathy and its effects.

For the Stoics, the cosmos is unified through *pneuma*, and it is through *pneuma* that sympathetic relationships are possible. But explicating the cause of sympathy is explicating the metaphysical machinery which allows *pneuma* to unify the cosmos, while explicating the effects of sympathy is understanding how the parts within the sympathetic system interact with each other. Although I won’t argue that the Stoic notion is intelligible, I would like to present three features of this framework which I take to generalize from the Stoic doctrine to Plotinus use of the notion. I will briefly introduce these three features along with examples from the Stoic doctrine of sympathy.

The first feature which I generalize from the Stoic doctrine to Plotinus’ use of sympathy is that there needs to be some kind of unity for sympathetic relationships to be possible. It is through this unity that all sympathetic relationships occur. For the Stoics (and, as we will see, for Plotinus), this unity takes place at the cosmic level. Alexander of Aphrodisias writes “he [Chrysippus] posits first, that the whole of substance is unified, a *pneuma* pervades all of it, by which the whole is held together and holds fast and is sympathetic with itself” (*On Mixture*, 216.14-17). But what is *pneuma*? For the Stoics everything in the universe is corporeal and has some sort of body.

According to Nemesius, *pneuma* is a subtle body composed of fire and air and has both an inward and outward movement and is described as having a tension. The inward movement gives bodies their unity, while the outward movement gives bodies their quality (Durand et al., 2023). Cicero in *On Ends* describes this type of system as so interconnected that if you change a letter, the whole collapses. Further, the *pneuma* is sometimes identified with the active principle (or that which shapes or acts on primal matter, which is eternal, formless, and inert) and is referred to by various

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6 To my knowledge these distinctions have only been made in discussions regarding the Stoic notion of sympathy, but, as I will argue, these distinctions can also be made for Plotinus’ use of sympathy.
7 Although Holmes attributes these features to the Stoic doctrine, I take these features to also apply to Plotinus’ use as well. It is not necessarily the case that this framework applies for other philosophers who use the term.
8 see Nemesius’ citing a syllogism by Cleanthes showing that the soul is a body SVF 1.518.
9 “quid non sic aliud ex alio nectitur ut si ullum litteram moveris labent omnia?” (3.74).
names such as “‘god’, ‘Zeus’, ‘Intelleet’, ‘fate’, ‘providence’, and ‘law’” (Durand et al., 2023). In short, the unity of the cosmos which allows for sympathetic relationships takes place through *pneuma*.

The second feature is what I call *global sympathy*. Global sympathy refers to sympathetic relationships between all the parts of the system with the whole. For both the Stoics and Plotinus it is the whole which governs the parts of the system. And it is through that which unifies the whole by which the whole governs the parts. The natural unity of the cosmos is both necessary and sufficient for global sympathy. For example, Plutarch claims that the Stoics held that “the world is governed by nature, is breathing, and is in sympathy with itself” (*On Fate*, 574D). And Diogenes claims that “Chrysippus says in the first book of his De finibus; for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe [...] the right reason which pervades all things, and is identical with this Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is” (7.87-7.88). The smaller individual natures, then, are governed by the nature of the whole universe because the smaller individual natures are connected through a single nature (*pneuma*).

The final feature is local sympathy. Local sympathy can be characterized as simultaneous interaction at a distance between two parts which are in some sense similar. For example, in *On the Nature of the Gods*, Cicero gives Stoic examples of the sympathetic relationship between the tides and the lengthening and narrowing of the straits with the rising and setting of the moon (2.19). But what sort of explanation do the Stoics give for why specific parts in local sympathy interact with each other? Although, the unity of *pneuma* is necessary for local sympathy it does not seem sufficient. It seems that, from the extant literature we have, the Stoics do not offer an account for why specific parts interact with each other from a distance besides their common unity through *pneuma*. The worry being that the Stoics need to explain what it is about the waxing and waning of the moon and the liver of a mice which allows for co-affection, rather than with, say, a horse’s liver.

Before moving on, it is important to mention how Plotinus’ notion of sympathy differs from the Stoic’s. It is likely that Plotinus’ use of sympathy is taken from the Stoic doctrine and certain passages in Plato’s dialogues.¹⁰ The use of the term appears throughout the *Enneads* and plays a

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¹⁰ In this thesis, I will not evaluate the influence of the Stoic doctrine nor Plato’s use of the notion.
variety of roles. Most of the lengthy discussions of sympathy occur in the third and fourth *Ennead* where these diverse roles become evident. For example, in *Ennead* IV.9 Plotinus describes in detail the workings of astral magic and prayer by means of sympathy. In one instance he says “[a]nd if magic spells and magical procedures in general serve to bring people together and cause them to connect sympathetically from considerable distances this must at all events result from a unity of soul” (IV.9(8).3.1-9). Further, in *Ennead* IV.5 perceptual transmission of objects at a distance is explained through sympathy (see Emilsson, 2015).

Now, there are two differences between Plotinus notion and the Stoic doctrine which are important for understanding the cause of sympathy within Plotinus’ universe. The first concerns the type of metaphysics which governs the unity of the cosmos. As was mentioned the Stoics are corporealist, that is, everything that has being is a type of body, even the *pneuma*. For Plotinus, the unity which is necessary for sympathy is through the world-soul which is not a body (IV.1.1.1-3).

The second important distinction is that for the Stoics the intelligence which orders the cosmos is not external to the cosmos. Cicero in On the Nature of the Gods writes that “[Chrysippus] says that divine power resides in reason and in the mind and intellect of universal nature. He says that ‘god is the world itself and the universal pervasiveness of its mind’” (SVF 2.1077). So, while the nature which is responsible for the ordering of the universe (which is expressed with the term “λόγοι σπερματικοί”) is corporeal for the Stoics, that which is responsible for the ordering in Plotinus is prior to the corporeal world. For example, Plotinus says: things “in this universe do not come to be due to seminal principles, but due to expressed principles which include things which are prior to those on the level of seminal principles”.11 What expressed principles are will become clearer below.

11 γίνεται τοίνυν τά ἐν τῷ παντὶ οὐ κατὰ σπερματικοὺς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ λόγους περιληπτικοὺς καὶ τῶν προτέρων ἢ κατὰ τοὺς τῶν σπερμάτων λόγους (IV.4.39.1-7).
3. Plotinus and Sympathy

The purpose of this section is to (i) motivate applying the framework above to Plotinus notion of sympathy, and (ii) to make Plotinus’ notion of sympathy intelligible. In section (3.1), I will show that Plotinus thinks it is the unity of soul which allows for cosmic sympathy. Further, I will begin making intelligible Plotinus’ notion by explicating the metaphysical principles which are the cause of the type of unity soul has. In section (3.2), I will present the different types of unity found within Plotinus universe and show that soul is numerically one in all its parts. In section (3.3) I will argue that the type of unity of soul is necessary and sufficient for global sympathy. In section (3.4), I will argue that the type of unity of soul is only necessary but not sufficient for local sympathy. I will then show that Plotinus attempts to explain why specific parts sympathetically influence each other to a greater degree, while others do not by explicating what is called the likeness principle.

3.1 Cause of Sympathy

The first step in making intelligible Plotinus’ notion of sympathy is to explicate the cause of sympathy within Plotinus’ universe. Plotinus takes the sensible cosmos to be unified like that of a living being. He claims, “this unified universe is actually in a condition of sympathy and is one in the manner of a living being (συμπαθὲς δὴ πᾶν τοῦτο τὸ ἐν, καὶ ὡς ζῶν ἐν)” (IV.4.32.13). In the same passage, Plotinus draws an analogy between a particular living being and the living being which is the ensouled cosmos. He says, “just as a single particular living being a nail, a horn, a finger or any other of the parts that are not contiguous but have something in between which is not subject to affection, are affected by what is not near to them (ἄλλα διαλείποντος τοῦ μεταξύ καὶ παθόντος οὐδὲν ἐπαθε τὸ ὡκ ἐγγύς)” (IV.4.32.15-23). In the same way, the parts of the sensible universe, although spatially distant still affect each other through the unity of soul (recall the passage on Magic above). But what is the cause of the soul’s unity? To answer this question, requires explicating certain assumptions that Plotinus makes regarding his broader metaphysical project. But before doing this, I would like to say something general and insufficient but something

12 As mentioned above, I did not argue for the intelligibility of the Stoic doctrine of sympathy. To make the Stoic notion intelligible requires explicating how it is that pneuma comes to have the unity it does and explicating the underlying mechanism of global and local sympathy.
that will hopefully help the reader orient themselves to what I have to say regarding Plotinus’
metaphysics.

In Plotinus’ universe “[a]ll beings are beings due to unity” (VI(9).9.1.1). To use an everyday
example, particular cups can maintain their existence due to a certain unity which makes up the
cup. Without this unity there wouldn’t be a cup because there is nothing which holds the material
一起. The unity which holds together the material of the cup is due to a certain form. Through
abstraction, we can image that the form is something separate from the cup and responsible for the
unity of all cups that, to use a technical phrase, participate in that form. For Plotinus these forms
are also beings, and if they are beings as well, then there is a unity responsible for their being
(given that all beings are beings due to unity). This unity originates through participation in
Plotinus’ first principle which he refers to as the One. Positing the One as a first principle might
seem strange for those who are familiar with the basics of Plato’s Forms, but Plotinus sees himself
as part of a philosophical lineage tradition reaching back to the pre-Socratic thinkers (one in which
Plato, of course, is included). He refers to this tradition when he claims:

Anaxagoras, too, in saying that “Intellect is pure and unmixed”, is himself positing a first principle as simple
and the One as separate, although he neglects to give an accurate account due to his antiquity. In addition,
Heraclitus knew the One to be everlasting and intelligible, since bodies are always coming in to being and
are in ‘flux’. And for Empedocles, ‘Strife’ divides and ‘Love’ is the One – he himself makes this incorporeal,
too – and the elements are posited as matter (V.1.9.1-30).

Regardless of whether this interpretation of these pre-Socratics is accurate, Plotinus sees Aristotle
as someone who breaks with this tradition of positing the One as the first principle. Plotinus claims,
“Aristotle later said that the first principle was ‘separate’ and ‘intelligible’, but when he says that
‘it thinks itself’, he no longer makes it the first principle” (V.1.9.8-11). Supposedly, because
thinking and the object thought are not One, but Two. Another important feature that Aristotle
breaks from this lineage is that for Plotinus being and unity are ontologically distinct, i.e., the cup
and its form, while for Aristotle being and unity are ontologically inseparable. Aristotle says in
Metaphysics “in a sense unity means the same as being is clear […] because “to be one” is “to be
a particular thing” (1054a).
For Plotinus this is not the case and in *On the Good or the One* (VI.9 (9)) he seems to be responding to such a view. Plotinus thinks that being and unity can be ontologically separated based on the following two points.

1. The being of each thing is a multiplicity, for example, the Form corresponding to a particular human contains the parts, animal, rational and so on (VI (9).9.2.18-25).
2. Further, unity cannot be a multiplicity. What he says is “if the being of each thing is a multiplicity, and unity cannot be a multiplicity, then being and unity in general will be different” (VI (9).9.2.18).

From these two points, Plotinus makes the following conclusion. He says “[a]nd indeed the whole of Being, because it contains all Being in itself, is even more many, and is different from unity, having unity by participation or partaking (μεταλήψει δὲ ἔχον καὶ μεθέξει τὸ ἕν)” (VI (9).9.2.24). That is, not only do beings depend on unity for their existence, but also Being in general (which Plotinus identifies with Intellect or Nous) depends on unity for its existence by participating in the One. But do all beings participate in unity to the same degree? No. Bowe claims that there is an indexing of unity in Plotinus’ universe where there is a “proportionate indexing of being, unity, and goodness” (Bowe, 2004, p.47). This proportionate indexing emerges due to two assumptions. The first is the *principle of perfection* which states that all beings produce according to their essence (see V.4(7).1.26-29 and V.1(10).6.27-40). The second assumption is what O’Meara calls *non-reciprocal dependence* (O’Meara, 2007, p.72) which can be summarized as beings which are produced are dependent on beings which produced them (for their being), but the beings which produced do not depend on their product (see V.4(7).2.27-28) and (V.1(10).6.31-35). To see how this works, take Plotinus’ notion of the One which is the first principle and generates the realities which come after it (see V.2(11).2.25-27); V.4(7).1.23-30; V(32).10.10-15; IV.9(9).6.5-8). Those things which come after the One are dependent on it for their existence but the One does not depend on anything for its own “being” (V.3(49).15.15). A further, element of non-reciprocal dependence is that the products are in some sense “similar” to what produced them. Take for example the product of the One which Plotinus calls the Intellect. He says:

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13 Non-reciprocal dependence seems to first appear in Speusippus where John Dillon claims “he argued that what is itself the cause of some quality in other things cannot have that quality in the same way” (Dillon, 2005, p.42)
14 I use “being” heuristically, the One has no being.
[w]e are saying that Intellect is an image of the One, first […] because that which is produced must somehow be the One and preserve many of its properties (ἀποστρέψεων πολλὰ αὐτοῦ), that is, be the same as it (ὅμοιότητα) […] [b]ut the One is not Intellect (V.1(10).7.1-5)

So, although, in this case, the One and the Intellect are ontologically distinct, the Intellect is connected to the One through similar yet distinct properties.  

Now, what it means for there to be a proportionate indexing of being is that the different levels of the hierarchy participate in the One in different degrees (where those things that participate more in the One are more unified). Plotinus claims “there is a procession, then, from the beginning to the end in which each thing is left in its own place for eternity, and each thing that is generated takes a new inferior rank” (V.2(11).2.1-5). There is here a series of beings which are differentiated based on their position in the process of generation, where those beings which are closer to the first principle have a higher degree of unity. The soul, then, is third in this chain of production produced due to Intellect and being less unified than both the Intellect and the One. Now, I take this to answer the first question, more specifically the cause of the type of unity of soul.

3.2 Unity of Soul

To explicate the first feature of the framework (and begin to answer the two other questions) requires understanding the type of unity that soul has. Although the type of unity of soul in Plotinus has been previously discussed in the literature (e.g., Karfik 2014), I hope to connect this discussion to Plotinus’ notion of sympathy. But before doing this, in this section, I want to show the different types of part-whole relationships found in Plotinus’ universe and emphasize that the unity which soul exhibits is numeric identity in all its parts (which is important for the type of unity which makes possible sympathetic interaction).

To begin with, we must look at the different types of unity found in Plotinus’ universe. In On the Substantiality of the Soul I, Plotinus distinguishes between four different types of unity:

1. The first type of unity refers to what Plotinus calls “sensible magnitudes or masses” (τὰ αἴσθητα μεγέθη καὶ ὀγκοί). Plotinus says that these bodies are “primarily divisible and by

15 Again, the One has no properties, it is just a way of speaking.
their very nature subject to dispersion” (πρώτως εἶναι μεριστὰ καὶ τῇ αὐτῶν φύσει σκεδαστά). The parts within the whole of this type of unity, are not identical to each other nor are they identical to the whole. The parts are also less than the whole and occupy a unique place at a unique time (ὅν ἐκαστὸν ἰδιὸν τόπον ἔχει, καὶ οὐχ ὁ ὅν τε ἁμα τὰυτὸν ἐν πλείοσι τόποις εἶναι) (IV.1.11-15).

2. The second type of unity can be found in the kind of being that is partless, indivisible, has no extension, does not exist in a place nor in at a time. This is the unity Intellect exhibits (although interesting, it is not relevant for this thesis).

3. The third type of unity is found in beings whose forms and body are combined in such a way that if this type of being were divided, then the parts will contain the entire form, for example, in shapes, colors, and qualities. Plotinus claims “when bodies are divided, the form in them becomes divided as well, yet exists as a whole in each of the divided parts, becoming many yet staying identical, while each of the many separates entirely from any other, inasmuch as it has become completely divided”16. In a different treaty, Plotinus uses the example of whiteness and says “the whiteness in a part of the milk is not a part of whiteness in all of the milk, but it is the whiteness of a part, not a part of whiteness; for whiteness is entirely without magnitude and not a quantity” (IV.3.2.14). So here we see that the form of whiteness is not being divided into parts, but it is rather the mass, which is divisible into parts, while the form remains identical in each of the parts.17

16 ὡς τοὺς διαρχομένους τῶν σωμάτων μερίζεσθαι μὲν καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῶς εἴδος, ὃλον γε μὴ ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν μερισθέντων εἶναι πολλά τὸ αὐτὸ γινόμενον, ὅν ἐκαστὸν πάντη ἄλλον ἀπέστη, ἓτε πάντη μεριστῶν γενόμενον (IV.1.1.34-40).
17 Now, I am less sure, but I think the same thing can be said about things which participate in quantity such as numbers that are not corporeal. The example he uses is two being a part of ten, where the part is smaller than the whole. So, although the parts are distinct as in the first type of unity, they are identical through participating in the form of Quantity (IV.3.2.20-30)
4. The fourth type of unity is the unity of soul. Plotinus claims this type of unity is not one in the way that a body is one; for a body is one by its continuity, while each of its parts is different from another and in a different place. Nor is it one in the way that a quality is. For the nature at once divisible and indivisible which we want to say that soul is […] is present in all the parts of that in which it is present, it is nonetheless indivisible, because it is present as a whole in all the parts, and in any one of them as a whole also (IV.1.1.60-65).

οὐχ οὕτως, ὡς τὸ σῶμα ἕν· τῷ γὰρ συνεχεῖ τὸ σῶμα ἕν, ἔκαστον δὲ τῶν μερῶν ἄλλο, τὸ δ´ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλαρχο. οὒδ´ ὡς ποιότης μία. ἤ δ´ ὡς μεριστή τε καὶ ἀμέριστος φύσις, ἣν δὴ ψυχὴν εἶναι φαμεν, οὐχ οὕτως ὡς τὸ συνεχές μία, μέρος 65ἄλλο, τὸ δ´ ἄλλο ἔχουσα· ἄλλα μεριστή μὲν, ὅτι ἐν πάσι μέρεσι τοῦ ἐν ὡς ἐστιν, ἀμέριστος δέ, ὅτι ὅλη ἐν πάσι καὶ ἐν ὁτιοῦν αὐτοῦ ὅλη

The soul, then, is both divisible and indivisible. It has hard to see how the unity of soul is different from the second type of unity. How I understand this distinction, is that the soul is numerically one in all the “parts”, but the parts can be distinguished from one another through the power which is active within those parts. For example, Plotinus claims

[f]or where some things have one function and some another, for example, eyes and ears, one must not say that one part of the soul is present in sight and another in the ears – division of this sort belongs to others [the second type of unity] – but rather that the identical thing is present, even if a different power is active in each, for all the powers are in both of them (ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτό, κἂν ἄλλη δύναμις ἐν ἑκατέρως ἐνεργῇ [ἴσιν γὰρ ἐν ἀμφιτέραις ἅπασαι]) (4.3.3.13-18)

Plotinus takes soul to have an intermediate position between the intelligible world and the sensible world. It is soul, which is the principle that animates bodies, but is distinct from bodies in that it is the nature of bodies to be divided and distinct both spatially and temporally. Soul, which is eternal, is not subject to this type of divisibility and because of this it must be numerically identical in all of bodies in which soul animates. This numeric identity, as we will see, is what allows for the possibility of sympathetic interaction.
3.3 Global Sympathy

In this section, I will argue that the unity of soul is both necessary and sufficient for global sympathy. In addition, I want to argue (contrary to Emilsson) that there are underlying mechanisms of sympathy, and global sympathetic interaction is possible due to the inherent ‘Love’ and ‘Strife’ within the universe.

As with the Stoics, the unity of the sensible universe through soul is necessary and sufficient for global sympathy. And the soul of the cosmos can move all the parts because, Plotinus claims,

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\text{soul is everywhere as a whole and as the soul of the universe is not divided part by part (Ἐτὶ πανταχῶθ᾽ ὁλὴ καὶ ὁ ὁλημέλημένη), it allows heaven, too, to be everywhere to the extent that it is possible, and it is possible for it by passing through or traversing all things (δύναται δὲ τῷ πάντα μετιέναι καὶ ἐπιπορεύεσθαι) (II.2(14).1.40-43)}
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To better understand this picture, we can view the world-soul as having two parts. The higher part of the world-soul looks towards the intellect and through the lower part of the soul of the cosmos (or nature), arranges the sensible universe in accordance with the rational plan which is found in Intellect (II.3(52).13.3-4). In other passages Plotinus compares the non-randomness of the revolution of the universe with the motion of a dancer. Plotinus thinks we can view the dancer as the whole while each different limb of the dancer are its parts. The dancer in dancing is not focused on each individual part while dancing, but rather is focused on the dance. In an analogous way, the soul of the sensible universe (the whole) moves everything which has been arranged by nature (the parts) not by focusing on the parts, but by looking towards intellect, and it moves the parts because the soul is not distinct from the parts but identical (numerically) in all the parts. It is, therefore, necessary and sufficient that the soul is unified in the way it is for there to be global sympathy.

What explanation does Plotinus give for global sympathy? Emilsson claims that there is no underlying mechanism for what I call global sympathy. He says:

Presumably, the reason is that there is no such mechanics: Plotinus takes sympatheia as a basic fact, which is evident in the case of ordinary organisms animated by a single soul. Given the unity of soul within the cosmos

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18 Global sympathy figures in explanations regarding the functioning of providence (III.3(48).7.5-10) and divination (III.3(48).6.5).
19 See (IV.4.33.8-42) for the analogy of the dance.
and such observations as we have seen that similar things are particularly liable to sympathetic affections, sympatheia needs no further explanation (2015, p.51)

What Emilsson might mean by there being no underlying mechanisms is that there is no corporealist explanation for sympathetic interaction (as is the case with the Stoics). But regardless of what Emilsson might mean by “mechanism”, in this section I will argue that there are underlying mechanisms for global sympathy within Plotinus universe, but these mechanisms are not corporeal. Instead, sympathetic relationships are possible because the parts have a natural impulse to be attracted to each other, and this impulse is the result of the inherent power of ‘Love’ within each part.

To see this, it would be good to recall that all beings produce due to some power which comes from that being’s essence. Certain passages which I will cite use the term “expressed principle” (λόγος), the expressed principle is the product of the activity corresponding to the essence of each being. For example, Plotinus claims “the Soul that remains above is a unique expressed principle of Intellect, and from it come individual expressed principles” (IV.3.4.5.17). And this process goes on until we get to the final expressed principle which Plotinus takes to be the matter dully qualified which he says, “is in the visible shape, which is at this stage a corpse and is unable to make another expressed principle” (Ὁ μὲν οὖν λόγος ὃ κατὰ τὴν μορφὴν τὴν ὀρωμένην ἔσχατος ἥδη καὶ νεκρὸς καὶ οὐκέτι ποιεῖν δύναται ἄλλον) (III.8.2.31-33). Now, the universe is composed of a variety diverse expressed principles and powers (Ποικιλώτατον γὰρ τὸ πᾶν καὶ λόγοι πάντες ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ δυνάμεις ἀπειροὶ καὶ ποικίλαι) (IV.4.36.1). Further, each part within the universe has a power corresponding to the form which is given to it through nature (ἔχειν μὲν οὖν ἐκαστὸν δύναμιν τινα ἄλογον φατέον ἐν τῷ παντὶ πλασθὲν καὶ μορφωθὲν καὶ μετειλῆφος πως ψυχῆς παρὰ τὸν ὄλου ὄντος ἐμψύχου καὶ περιειλημέμονον ὑπὸ τοιοῦτου καὶ μόριον ὃν ἐμψύχου) (IV.4.37.11). And, further, not all parts are the same. Plotinus says, “some parts [have] a greater capacity for action than others, both among those on earth and to a greater extant those in heaven, inasmuch as these latter are endowed with a more vivid nature” (IV.4.37.15-18).

Having all of this in the background, within the sensible universe, each part moves according to what benefits it. He says:
And since each thing by nature strives for its own advantage, whatever other thing is congenial to it, it takes to itself, while what is alien to it, it annihilates because of its ‘benevolence to itself’. And when everything performs its own function, it benefits whatever can derive any advantage from its functions but annihilates or damages what is incapable of withstanding the forward driving of the function, like things which shrivel up when fire comes close to them, or smaller animals that are swept aside or perhaps trampled underfoot, by the onrush of larger ones (IV.4.32.38-44).

καὶ σπέιδον ἐκαστὸν ἑαυτῷ κατὰ φύσιν, ὅσον τε οἰκεῖον τοῦ ἑτέρου, λαμβάνει εἰς αὐτό, καὶ ὅσον ἀλλότριον ἐγίνετο, ἀφανίζει εὐνοία τῇ ἑαυτῷ. ἔργον τε τὸ αὐτοῦ ποιοῦν ἐκαστὸν τὸ μὲν δυνηθὲν [having the power to] ἀπολαμβάνει τι τῶν αὐτοῦ ἔργων ὕφελησεν, ὥ δὲ ἀδύνατον ἦν υπομεῖναι τὴν ὀρμήν τοῦ ἔργου, ἠφάνισεν ἢ ἐβλαψεν, ὡσπερ ὅσα ἀνάληθει ἢν παριόντος πυρός, ἢ ζῴα ἐλάττω ὑπὸ μειζόνων δρόμου παρασυρεῖ ἢ καὶ ποι πατηθεῖ.

How I interpret this passage is that each part of the sensible cosmos has some sort of inborn power for “self-preservation”.20 These parts seem to have two motions (which are important for sympathetic interaction) with respect to this inborn tendency. The first motion takes in what is beneficial to the part (beneficial for the part to perform the proper function) and the second motion attempts to destroy anything which can disturb its function, or incapable of withstanding the motion of the part as it performs its function (supposedly because some parts have a greater power to act than other parts). The reason the parts “know” what is beneficial for the preservation of its function or harmful is due to whether that part is similar (in disposition) to the other part in question. Plotinus claims “[f]or what possess a sameness to what acts is acted on in a way that is not alien, but when what is acting on something is not the same, then what is acted on undergoes

20 At first this might remind one of the Stoic notion of oikeiosis, where Diogenes claims that Chrysippus in the book of ends says:

The dearest thing to every animal is its own constitution and its consciousness thereof” and Diogenes interprets this as “for it was not likely that nature should estrange the living thing from itself or that she should leave the creature she has made without either estrangement from or affection for its own constituent. We are forced then to conclude that nature in constituting the animal made it near and dear to itself; for so it comes to repel all that is injurious and give free access to all that is serviceable or akin to it (7.85))

But Cicero in book IV of On Ends seems to indicate that this position was influenced by Xenocrates and Aristotle when he says “[t]hey [Xenocrates and Aristotle] therefore describe the primary constitution of nature […] more or less in the following terms ‘Every natural organism aims at being its own preserver, so as to secure its safety and also its preservation due to its specific type’ (VII.15-16)
an affection that is alien and not pleasant” (οὖν ὁμοιότητα πρὸς τὸ ποιοῦν ἔχων πεῖσιν ἔχει οὐκ ἄλλοτρίαν, ἀνομοῖον δὲ ὄντος τοῦ ποιοῦντος ἄλλότριον τὸ πάθημα καὶ οὐ προσηνὲς τὸ πάσχον ἰσχεί) (IV.4.4.32.23-25). But what principles in the sensible universe allows for these two motions? Plotinus takes these motions to be caused by the inherent ‘Love’ and ‘Strife’ in the universe. And it is because of this ‘Love’ and ‘Strife’ within the universe which allows for interaction at a distance. To quote Plotinus

But how are we to explain the operations of magic? In fact, they are due to the operation of sympathy, and because there is by nature a concord of things that are the same and an opposition of things that are not the same, and by the variegation of many powers that contribute to the one living being. Indeed, many things are attracted and bewitched without any other person contriving it; and, in fact, the real magic is the ‘Love’ in the universe and the ‘Strife’ that accompanies it. And this is the primary ‘magician’ and ‘spell-binder’. When people have come to have a good understanding of him they use his spells and sorceries against each other. And because men naturally love, and the things that make them love attract each other, the strength of a love craft by means of magic has arisen, with the practitioners applying, by their contacts, different kinds of devices to different people which draw them together and have the power of love inherent in them.; and they bring one soul in contact with another[…] they also use figures endowed with powers, and by working themselves into certain figures effortlessly bring these powers to themselves, being part, as they are, of one living being, and working on one such […] This drawing power naturally inheres in the tune and the way the words are sung in incantations, and in the positions taken up by the practitioner. For things of this kind exert a pull, as would positions and utterances evoking pity. It is, however, neither the power of choice nor the reason that is charmed by music, but rather the non-rational part of the soul (IV.4.40.5-26).

But it is not only magicians and sorcerers who take advantage of the inherent ‘Love’ and ‘Strife’, in the universe but also nature. Plotinus claims it “is through being drawn to it, not by magic crafts, but by the crafts of nature, which generates its own mode of deceit21, connecting one thing to another, not spatially, but by means of the spells which it has provided”22. Although this passage seems obscure, one possible interpretation is that nature (the lower half of the world-soul) organizes its parts by shaping those parts in accordance with an expressed principle (IV.4.37.11). Nature, then, can be seen as connecting the parts by shaping those parts in such a way that, through

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21 I doubt Plotinus would think that Nature deceives in the ordinary sense of the term, rather I interpret this passage as indicating that Nature has a different mode of contemplation than intellectual beings have (see III.8.4).
22 ἢ ἐλκόμενος οὐ μάγων τέχναις, ἄλλα τῆς φύσεως, τὴν ἀπάτην διὸς καὶ συναγάσης ἄλλο πρὸς ἄλλο οὐ τοῖς τόποις, ἄλλα δέ ἐδοκε φίλτροις (IV.4.43.22).
the force of ‘Love’, allows those parts to sympathetically interact by participating in the same expressed principle (this is also important for local sympathy).

To conclude this section, I have shown that the unity of soul is both necessary and sufficient for global sympathy because the soul is numerically identical with all its parts. Further, I have argued that the underlying mechanisms which allow for global sympathy within Plotinus’ universe is the inherent ‘Love’ and ‘Strife’ which Nature uses to organize these parts.

3.4 Local Sympathy

In this section, I want to argue that the unity of soul is necessary but not sufficient for local sympathy. Instead, Plotinus accounts for part-to-part interaction due the parts being in some sense similar. This similarity, I will argue, comes about by the parts sharing in the same expressed principle which allows for the inherent ‘Love’ in the universe to exert the pull which is characteristic of sympathetic interaction. In addition, I will address a worry regarding Plotinus’ account of local sympathy, namely, why do some parts which are similar sympathetically interact with each other while others do not? I will show that Plotinus is aware of this issue and present his response.

As with the Stoics, Plotinus accounts for part-to-part interaction at a distance with the unity of the cosmos, but is the unity of the cosmos sufficient for local sympathy? Plotinus certainty thinks it is necessary, he says, “sympathy comes from the fact that the cosmos is a single living being, and we are affected because we are in a single living being and belong to it” (IV.5.2.27-29). But we can raise the same worry for Plotinus as we did for the Stoics, that is, why do some parts of the sympathetic system interact with each other, while others do not? Plotinus, unlike the Stoics, accounts for local sympathy with reference to the similarity between the parts (see IV.5.1.36). He says:

For when things that are the same are not located contiguously but are set at an interval by other things in between, while being affected because of their sameness (τῇ δὲ ὡμοιότητι συμπασχόντων), what is done by what is not placed alongside it necessarily reaches even to what is at a distance (IV.4.32.17-20)
Emilsson explains Plotinus account for this similarity between parts in terms of disposition or constitution, but, he thinks, Plotinus is not clear regarding what is similar between the parts in specific examples that Plotinus uses when writing about sympathy. Emilsson claims:

Plotinus’s insistence on the similarity of disposition or constitution between things that enter into a sympathetic relation is indeed quite pronounced. In practice, however, it seems that the similarity both in the case of things that are potentially in a sympathetic relation and in the case of the property sympathetically brought about is not very strict: what is really similar in the ear and the sound to the sonorous body? The effects of the stars in humans need not be evidently similar to anything in the stars nor does Plotinus make it clear what is the similarity of constitution between them or their constellations and us (2015, p.47).

Now, in this paper, I am not concerned with the empirical question regarding what exactly is similar between specific parts involved in sympathetic relationships, e.g., some constellation and the liver of a mouse. Rather, I am concerned with the more general question, that is, what does it mean for two parts to be similar in terms of disposition? The way I understand this sameness, is that the parts must share in the same expressed principle for there to be local sympathetic interaction. To support this interpretation Plotinus claims that

each thing experiences in accordance with its own nature whatever contributes to its own nature and because a thing has a particular nature, what it experiences is of this nature, too. For in this way the expressed principle, too, remains one.23

And as we saw above, the lower part of the world soul arranges the material in accordance with a form. If we want to be more specific, it is the expressed principle which is responsible for organizing the material. Plotinus claims “[f]or one does not see an intelligible living being and a composite living being in the same way, but one sees the expressed principle in the composite shaping what is inferior [matter]” (III.3.6.7-9). If local sympathetic interaction is going to work, it must be due to the sameness of expressed principle which is responsible for organizing that body, but this sameness cannot be the type of sameness which is responsible for global sympathy, i.e., this sameness cannot be explained through the unity of soul because then everything (within the sympathetic system) would be in local sympathy with everything else (which is just global

23 ἀλλ’ ὡς, ἦ πέριπεταν ἐκαστον, ὡς καὶ πάσχει τὸ πρόσφορον εἰς τὴν αὐτὸν φύσιν, καὶ ὃ τοῦτο τοιοῦτον, καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον τοῦτο- ὡς γάρ καὶ λόγος εἰς. (III.3.6.38)
sympathy). Instead, I will argue that, for Plotinus, this sameness of expressed principle can be explained by the *proportionate indexing of soul*.

To see what this means, Plotinus asks a question concerning the numeric identity of soul: “[b]ut why has the soul of the universe, though being of the same kind as ours, produced the cosmos, while the individual soul has not, though it, too, has everything in itself?”  

Briefly, there are two reasons for why the individual soul does not produce the cosmos. The first is because another soul has already produced the universe.  

Plotinus’ more serious reason regards the scaling of power within Soul. This is because there is a proportionate indexing of soul, where not all souls are equal. Plotinus says,

[s]oul is certainly managing this sensible universe in accordance with a rational plan (κατὰ λόγον); just as in the individual living being there is the internal principle [expressed principle] from which the parts of the living being are each formed and organized in relation to the whole whose parts they are – and this principle is entirely present in the whole, whereas in the parts it is present proportionately to each (τοσοῦτον μόνον, ὅσον ἐστὶν ἐκαστὸν) (II (52).3.13.3-8)

The more powerful soul, the one which is closest to the Intellect, produced the universe due to its capacity to do so, while those souls which lacked this capacity produced what they could produce due to the configuration of the material those souls find themselves (also see IV.3.3.20). We can explain sameness in local sympathy in a similar way. That is local sympathy is explained in terms of similarity of the expressed principle which is proportionally present in the parts. Continuing from the quote in III.3.6 Plotinus seems to support this inference to the explanation for local sympathy when he claims:

For all things must not be separated from each other, but they had to be assimilated to each other in some way. And this perhaps the meaning of the saying that proportionality holds everything together. And proportionality is the following sort of thing: the inferior is related to the inferior as the better is to the better; for example, as eye is to eye, so is foot to foot [...] And if heaven acts upon things here, it does so in a way

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24 Διὰ τί δὲ ἢ μὲν τῶν παντὸς ὕψιθεν ὑμωσίας οὕσα πεποίηκε κόσμον, ἢ δὲ ἕκάστου οὐ, ἔχουσα καὶ αὐτῆ πάντα ἐν ἑαυτῇ; (IV.3.6.1-8).

25 ἔστι δὲ καὶ τὴν μὲν πρὸς τὸν ὅλον νοῦν ἱδίαν, τὰς δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς αὐτῶν τοὺς ἐν μέρει. τάχα δ᾿ ἐν καὶ αὐται δύνανται ποιεῖν, τῆς δὲ ποιησάσθης οὐκέτι οἶον τε καὶ αὐτής, πρώτης ἐκείνης ἀρχάς (IV.3.6.16-19).

26 Although Plotinus is referring to an individual soul here, we have to remember that the universe is unified like a living being.
that the parts in every living being act on each other, not has one thing generating another, [...] but each thing experiences in accordance to its own nature whatever contributes to its own nature (III.3.6.28-35)

We can claim, then, that the similarity comes in degrees, where two parts in local sympathetic interaction are similar if they have the same expressed principle, e.g., a foot is related to a foot supposedly because the same power is active in each, while, for global sympathy, a foot and an eye are related through the pervasiveness of soul.

In addition, this passage reminds one of IV.4.32, and from what has been said above, it becomes clear how Plotinus connects global and local sympathy. The unity of soul is both necessary and sufficient for global sympathy, but only necessary for local sympathy. This is because, for local sympathy, there needs to be something which explains part to part interaction at a distance which requires both the unity of soul (to explain the interaction at a distance) but also requires that the parts have the same expressed principle. If the expressed principle is responsible for organizing the body and the expressed principle is the same in two distinct parts, then these parts are connected through the inherent ‘Love’ in the universe which exerts the type of ‘pull’ which is characteristic of sympathetic interaction.

Given that local sympathy can be explained through sharing in the same expressed principle, one issue seems to remain, that is, if two people partake of the same expressed principle why do I not have perceptions of every person who partakes in the form of ‘Human Being’? For example, why is someone in Florida not experiencing the same thing as someone in Germany? Plotinus in On Whether All Souls Are One (IV.9(8)) is aware of this issue when he says:

For if my soul were one with that of anyone else, absurdities would surely result; for example, if I were to perceive something, then this other person should perceive it too, and if I were good, he would have to be good also (IV.9(8).1.14-18)

Plotinus has two solutions to this absurdity. The first is to claim that saying, ‘your and my soul are identical’ and ‘you and I are the same’ are not identical statements. The first statement is true for Plotinus, as we have shown above, all souls are numerically identical. The second statement is false. He says
though it [soul] is identical in one subject and in another, it will not undergo the identical affections in each of them as in the case of ‘human being’ being present in me while I am moving; for if I am moving and you are not moving, in me it will be in motion, whereas in you it will be at rest. It is not absurd or unduly paradoxical, after all, that the identical thing should be in me and in you; there is certainly no necessity that when I perceive something, someone else should in all cases have the identical affection. For not even in the case of one body does the one hand feel what the other hand is experiencing, but it is the soul in the whole body that does so (IV.9.2.1-5)

One possible interpretation of this passage is that there is a distinction between the power in the hand and the soul in the body. The power in the hand, is dependent on the soul of the body, and the soul of the body becomes aware of the affections of the hand, but the affections of other parts of the body do not necessarily reach each other, for example, the affections of the foot and the affections of the hand. In a similar way, we can view two different people as being shaped by one soul, but the compound of soul and body as being different. In this sense, Plotinus thinks, it is not necessary that one soul-body compound experiences the same affections as the other. In fact, Plotinus thinks it is impossible to become aware of affections in another body unless they were conjoined (IV.9.2.6).

Plotinus second explanation has to do with the magnitude of the body. He says:

It is also appropriate to bear in mind the fact that many things that occur in one identical body fall beneath the notice of the whole, and so much the more accordingly as the body is possessed of a greater magnitude, as is said to be the case with great monsters of the sea, with whom, when some affection occurs in a part, no perception of that, by reason of the smallness of the motion, impinges upon the whole; so that there is no necessity, when just one part is affected, that the perception should come through clearly as an impression on the body in its entirety. But there is nothing absurd, nor is it an idea to be abandoned, that there should be a community of affection, without this necessarily resulting in a sensible impression (IV.9.2.13-22).

We can interpret this as, even if there is a community of affections within a body, this does not mean that these affections are capable of (due to the smallness of the motion) resulting in a perception of these affections. Through inference, we can make a similar claim regarding what might happen between two bodies in which there is a community of affections. That is, even if two bodies have a community of affections, it is not necessarily the case that one person becomes aware of the affections in one part of another person’s body due to the smallness of the motion of that affection. Now, whether Plotinus’ response is satisfactory is another question, but what I have tried
to show is that Plotinus is aware of this issue and seems to give an explanation for why two people do not become aware of each other’s affections.

To conclude this section, I have argued that for Plotinus the unity of soul is necessary but not sufficient for local sympathy. I have also argued that Plotinus accounts for part-to-part interaction with reference to the likeness principle, that is, the parts which are involved in local sympathetic interaction share in the same expressed principle which allows for the inherent ‘Love’ within the universe to exert the pull characteristic of sympathetic interaction.
4. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have made intelligible Plotinus notion of sympathy by answering three questions: what is sympathy? what is the cause of sympathy? and what are the underlying mechanisms of sympathy? To answer these questions, I used a framework inspired by the Stoic literature on sympathy that distinguished between three interrelated features of sympathy: the type of unity responsible for sympathy; global sympathy; and local sympathy. It was found that the type of unity responsible for sympathy is caused by the positive production and diminishing unity within Plotinus’ universe which results in the type of unity of soul. The type of unity of soul is numerical identity in all the parts which partake of soul. It is through this numeric identity by which the entire soul can govern its parts. The unity of soul, then, is necessary and sufficient for global sympathy. The unity of soul, on the other hand, is only necessary for local sympathy but not sufficient. This is because the powers of soul are limited by the material configuration which the parts of the whole find themselves in.
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