

The Origin of Evil and Subordinate Creators: Philo's Exegesis of Gen 1:26 in Context

Tyler A. Stewart

Lincoln Christian University
tastewart@lincolnchristian.edu

Introduction

Philo's complex view of evil is a case study in the creative fusion of sources and traditions that characterizes his work. In each commentary series, Philo explicitly cites the Platonic axiom that God, by definition, cannot be the cause of evil.¹ Yet Philo's strong monotheism (*Leg.* 2.2) and commitment to Jewish Scripture appear to give the Alexandrian hesitation about identifying a superhuman cause for evil or identifying matter as the source of evil.²

Philo's most direct explanation of evil's origin occurs in his exegesis of Gen 1:26–27, combining two formative influences, Moses and Plato. In both the Exposition and the Allegorical Commentary (AC), Philo draws on the creation myth of the *Timaeus* to identify the source of the human capacity for moral evil with the creative activity of divine subordinates (*Opif.* 72–75; *Conf.* 168–183; *Fug.* 68–72; *Mut.* 30–31). One of the most consistent features of Philo's interpretation is to argue that God cannot be the source of evil. But these co-creators remain a mystery. Can the divine subordinates be further

¹ See esp. *Opif.* 75; *Fug.* 63; *Mut.* 32; *Abr.* 143; *QG* 1.55, 100; *QE* 1.23 based on Plato, *Tim.* 29e–30c; *Theaet.* 176c; *Phaedr.* 242e; *Resp.* 617e; *Leg.* 907b. This assumption is also part of Plato's argument against the Poets who, he opines, falsely claim the gods dispense good and evil (*Resp.* 379c–380d [citing Homer, *Il.* 24.527–528, 530, 532]). See also *Conf.* 179; *Fug.* 66. Philo also argues that God is the cause [αἰτία] of all that is good (*Opif.* 21–23 [*Tim.* 29d–30a]; *Deus* 108 [Gen 6:8]; see also *Leg.* 3.78).

² Fritz-Peter Hager includes Philo in a doxographical analysis of Platonic views of evil from Plato to Plotinus, concluding that Philo's Judaism is the likely cause of his inability to affirm a material dualism in which matter is the cause of evil (*Gott und das Böse im antiken Platonismus*, Elementa 43 [Würzburg: Rodopi, 1987], esp. 112–115). A similar analysis is aptly summarized by Erwin R. Goodenough, "The weakness of Philo's theodicy [. . .] consists chiefly in the fact that, while Philo was convinced of the reality of evil, evil which could not have come from God, he did not actually believe in the existence of any force in the world beyond God's direct control" (*By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* [Sigel: Philo Press, 1969], 60). This appears to be George Boys-Stones' position as well (*Platonist Philosophy 80 BC to AD 250: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018], 115–16, 158–59).

identified? What exactly are they responsible for creating? How do these subordinate creators relate to human agency, embodiment, and moral evil?

In his seminal monograph analyzing Philo's use of the *Timaeus*, David Runia cautions against identifying these co-creators when, in Runia's view, Philo is intentionally vague.³ As a different approach, I compare Philo's tantalizingly obscure exegesis to his rough contemporary, Plutarch. A fellow Middle Platonist, Plutarch offers an interpretation of the *Timaeus*, which may offer new insight to Philo's interpretation.⁴ The goal of this comparison is to place Philo's exegesis in the comparative context of a contemporary interpreter of Plato. What this comparison shows is that Philo's resistance to attribute evil to a superhuman source differentiates him from Plutarch.⁵ Yet the reason Philo hesitates to identify a superhuman cause for evil is not, I would suggest, his Jewish monotheism. Rather, Philo's motive for denying a superhuman cause for evil is his overarching concern for the allegory of the soul's sojourn to God.

The only example of Philo interpreting Gen 1:26 as a primary lemma is found in the Alexandrian's most accessible commentary series, the Exposition of the Law (*Opif.* 72–75). The context of the argument is Philo's interpretation of the sixth day of creation (*Opif.* 69–88 [Gen 1:24–31]). As David Runia points out, Philo's explanation of Gen 1:26–27

³ David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, PA 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 248: "Our conviction is that Philo *deliberately avoids* making a concrete identification of God's helpers, thus preserving to a certain extent the reticence of the Biblical text."

⁴ Plutarch's corpus and especially his treatise *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* is a rare opportunity for comparison not dependent on a doxography. See the account of evil's origin in Middle Platonism from the doxographical information in Proclus backward in Jan Opsomer and Carlos Steel, "Evil Without a Cause: Proclus' Doctrine on the Origin of Evil, and its Antecedents in Hellenistic Philosophy," *Zur Rezeption der hellenistischen Philosophie in der Spätantike*, Philosophie der Antike 9. eds. Therese Fuhrer and Michael Erler (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), 229–260.

⁵ I had originally intended to include comparison with Jubilees and *Conf.* 168–183 to illustrate that other Jewish interpreters had no problem identifying the origin of evil with superhuman forces (i.e. the Watchers, Giants, and Mastemah [esp. Jub. 10:1–14]). For the sake of space, the comparison here is limited to Plutarch.

subdivides into three sections focused on specific phrases: 1) “God’s image and *likeness*” (*Opif.* 69–71), 2) “let *us* make” (72–75), and 3) “male and female” (76).⁶ Most notable for the origin and persistence of evil are the first two sections on *likeness* and the co-creators. By redeploing Platonic myth and imagery, Philo distances God from evil without introducing superhuman beings that are inherently evil (i.e. angels [Mastemah], or the maleficent world soul).

1. Intellectual “Likeness” and Embodiment (*Opif.* 69–71)

Philo identifies “likeness” to God as intellectual, offering a glimpse of how the ideal mind should function. “The human mind in the human [ὁ ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ]” is analogous to “the great director in the entire cosmos [ὁ μέγας ἡγεμῶν ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ κόσμῳ]” (*Opif.* 69).⁷ This human mind is intended to function like God in the cosmos by embarking on a five-stage ascent from knowledge of the sense-perceptible to the noetic cosmos and ultimately God. The five stages of ascent can be summarized as: 1) exploration of the earth,

⁶ David T. Runia, *On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses*, PACS 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 222.

⁷ Moses is identified as a divine mind in the Exposition (*Mos.* 1.27; 2.288). See also the place of the reasonable soul in the human in *Det.* 79–90. The title for God as the “great director [μέγας ἡγεμῶν]” is derived directly from *Phaedr.* 246e, the only occurrence of this title in the Platonic corpus and a reference to the high god Zeus. Philo only uses this title twice in his corpus (*Opif.* 69, 116). In *Opif.* 116 it refers to the sun. Philo also describes God as Charioteer of the cosmos (*Opif.* 46; see also *Abr.* 70; *Spec.* 1.17; *Praem.* 38; *Her.* 99, 228; 301; *Somn.* 1.157; 2.294; *Aet.* 83; *QG* 2.34c) and humans as the charioteers of the earth (*Opif.* 88). See the similar phrase ὁ ἡγεμῶν νοῦς (Plato, *Leg.* 631d; 963a). Anita Méasson suggests that Philo’s description of God is inspired by a Stoic notion of “la divinité suprême comme intellect du monde” (*Du char ailé de Zeus à l’Arche d’Alliance: Images et mythes platoniciens chez Philon d’Alexandrie* [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1986], 374 citing Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 7.135; see also Augustine, *Adv. Acad.* 3.17.38). She draws attention to similar coordination of the soul, intellect, and divinity in Cicero (see esp. *Tusc.* 1.66–67; *Rep.* 6.26). Peder Borgan, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for his Time*, NovT Supp 86 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 236 notes that the analogy of soul to body as God to cosmos was widespread in both rabbinic (*Lev. Rabb.* 4:8; *Midr. Ps.* 103:4–5; *b. Ber.* 10a) and Hellenistic texts (Seneca, *Ep.* 65.24; Philodemus, *Piet.* 15.14–21). Also using the language of the *Phaedrus*, Philo describes Israel as the Priests of the world, a people who “have appointed reason as charioteer over the irrational senses [ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν ἡνίοχον ἀλόγοις λόγον ἐπιστήσαντες]” (*Spec.* 2.163).

2) exploration of the air and atmosphere, 3) exploration of heavenly bodies, 4) contemplation of the world of ideas, and 5) ascent to God.⁸ This rich passage (*Opif.* 69–71) has been much discussed in Philonic scholarship, but for the present purposes it is important to note how Philo interprets Plato as it relates to embodiment.⁹

Philo's intellectual interpretation of "image and likeness" draws on the depiction of noetic ascent found in Plato's *Phaedrus* (esp. 246d–249d).¹⁰ Plato *likens* (ἔοικα) the soul to "a pair of winged horses and a charioteer" (*Phaedr.* 246a). The winged horses enable the soul to "traverse [περιπολεῖ] the whole heaven" (246b), but embodied souls have lost their wings:

The soul that has lost its wings is borne along until it gets hold of something solid, when it settles down, taking upon itself an earthly body. (*Phaedr.* 246c).

The wings of the soul are ruined by "vileness and evil [αἰσχρῶ δὲ καὶ κακῶ]," and whatever else is the opposite of the divine (*Phaedr.* 246d–e).¹¹ Zeus, "the great director in heaven [ὁ μέγας ἡγεμὼν ἐν οὐρανῶ]," and his army of gods and daemons are souls with well-behaved

⁸ See Runia, *On Creation*, 222–23; Borgen, *Philo*, 235–238. Runia also points to a striking parallel account of noetic ascent in Maximus of Tyre (*Diss.* 11.9–10).

⁹ On Philo's view of the "image of God" see esp. J. Giblet, "L'homme image de Dieu dans les commentaires littéraires de Philon d'Alexandrie," *Studia Hellenistica* 5 (1948): 93–118, esp. 97–99, 109–111; Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*, CBQMS 14 (Washington D. C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 36–44; Runia, *On Creation*, 222–33.

¹⁰ See esp. Méasson, *Du char ailé*, 369–390; Pierre Boyancé, "Sur l'exégèse hellénistique du 'Phèdre' (Phèdre, 246c)," in *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di A. Rostagni* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1963), 45–53. Runia, *On Creation*, 224 identifies *Opif.* 69–71 as "one of the clearest examples of the strong influence of Greek philosophy on Philo's thought."

¹¹ The list of divine qualities in *Phaedr.* 246e is not intended to be exhaustive: τὸ δὲ θεῖον κάλον, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν, καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι τοιοῦτον.

horses that easily traverse the cosmos (*Phaedr.* 246e–247a).¹² Other souls, however, suffer embodiment due to their evil horses:

The horse partaking of evil [ὁ τῆς κάκης ἵππος μετέχων] weighs the chariot down, making it heavy and pulling toward the earth the charioteer whose horse is not well trained. There the utmost toil and struggle await the soul. (*Phaedr.* 247b)¹³

In Plato’s mythology of the winged-horse chariot in the *Phaedrus*, embodiment is a fallen state.

Plato goes on in the *Phaedrus* to describe the fallen state of embodiment as a form of punishment in differing degrees of human existence. The soul only takes a body as an ethical failure with potentially disastrous epistemological consequences. Plato explains:

The soul which follows after God and obtains a view of any of the truths if free from *harm* [ἀπήμονα] until the next period, and if it can always attain this, is always *unharméd* [ἀβλαβῆ]; but when, through inability to follow, it fails to see, and through some mischance is filled with *forgetfulness and evil* [λήθης τε καὶ κακίας] and grows heavy, and when it has grown heavy, loses its wings and falls to the earth, then it is the law that this soul shall never pass into any beast at its *first birth* [πρώτη γενέσει] (*Phaedr.* 248c–d)¹⁴

¹² In the Allegorical Commentary Philo describes God as: “The charioteer who has mounted the winged chariot of this world” (*Somn.* 2.294; see also *Her.* 301)

¹³ Here I have augmented Fowler’s LCL translation of ὁ τῆς κάκης ἵππος μετέχων, which he renders as: “the horse of evil nature.” His translation obscures the participle μετέχων, a technical verb for participation in the forms in Platonic philosophy (see Aristotle, *Metaph.* 990b31; 991a3; 990b30; 1037b19) and is consistently used in the sense of “partake” in the *Phaedrus* (247b; 249e; 253a; 272d).

¹⁴ See also Plato’s description of the evil that wedds the soul to the body in the *Phaedo*: “The evil is that the soul of every man, when it is greatly pleased or pained by anything, is compelled to believe that the object which caused the emotion is very true; but it is not. [. . .] when this occurs, is not the soul most completely put in bondage to the body? [. . .] Because each pleasure or pain nails it as with a nail to the body and rivets it on and makes it corporeal, so that it *fancies* [δοξάζουσαν] the things are true which the body says are true. For because it has the same beliefs and pleasures as the body it is compelled to adopt also the same habits and mode of life, and can never depart in purity to the other world, but *must always go away contaminated with the body* [ἀεί τοῦ σώματος ἀναπλέα ἐξίέναι]; and so *it sinks quickly into another body again* [ταχὺ πάλιν πίπτειν εἰς ἄλλο σῶμα] and grows into it, like seed that is sown. Therefore it has no part in the communion with the divine and pure and absolute” (*Phaed.* 83c–e).

The first incarnation of the soul is a fall due to evil. Plato proceeds to list a series of nine different levels of incarnation depending on what heavenly realities the souls have seen. The highest form of embodiment is the philosopher while the lowest is the tyrant (*Phaedr.* 248d–e).¹⁵ Movement up or down this scale of human embodiment is determined by ethics (*Phaedr.* 248e).¹⁶ What is important to recognize, here, is that human embodiment is identified as a fallen state from the beginning, a departure from the idyllic heavenly region where the human soul was “without experience of evils” seeing “pure light” and “not entombed” in a body (*Phaedr.* 250b–c). The mythology of the *Phaedrus* portrays embodiment as an essentially fallen state from the first incarnation.

Philo adopts the imagery of the soul’s winged ascent from the *Phaedrus* in *Opif.* 69–71 but excludes any notion of initial embodiment as inherently problematic. While Plato repeatedly emphasizes that the soul begins in heaven, then falls, and must toil to ascend again, Philo portrays the soul incarnated for exploration from the beginning. The initial incarnation is indicated with the first stage of ascent commencing with human arts and knowledge then proceeding upward (*Opif.* 69). Similarly, when Philo interprets Gen 2:7 later in the same treatise (*Opif.* 134–147), he extols the excellence of the human body (*Opif.* 136–138). Elsewhere in the Exposition, the Alexandrian elaborates on Deuteronomic blessings that include a good, healthy body for those obedient to the Law:

For God thought it meet to grant as a privilege to the man of worth that his body, the congenital house of the soul, should be a house well built and well

¹⁵ Even though embodied, it is only the mind of the philosopher has wings (*Phaedr.* 249c)

¹⁶ All humans witness to some measure of truth (*Phaedr.* 249b, e) for souls only sink into beasts, ontologically inferior beings, when they have lost all vision or recollection of truth (*Phaedr.* 249b).

compacted from foundation to roof, to provide the many things which are necessary or useful for life and particularly for the sake of the mind.¹⁷

Obviously, Philo is not privileging the body above the soul (*Mos.* 1.29; 2.140; *Spec.* 1.289) and the body can be portrayed as a hindrance to virtue elsewhere in the Exposition (*Mos.* 1.184; 2.185; *Spec.* 4.188; see also *Praem.* 117) or at best “indifferent” (*Spec.* 2.46). Yet Philo also defends the importance of the body. For example, he criticizes the radical allegorists for neglecting the body (esp. *Spec.* 2.64–67).¹⁸ At least in the case of *Opif.* 69–71, the soul’s (initial) incarnation is not portrayed as a fall, or as an inherently problematic state, which is a departure from his Platonic intertext.

Can the soul’s incarnation-as-exploration perspective of *Opif.* 69–71 be extrapolated to the rest of the Exposition? Such a conclusion fits the portrait of chariot language in the Exposition as a whole. Interpreting the tenth commandment (Deut 5:21 || Exod 20:17) as an injunction against the passions, Philo warns:

So if a man does not set bounds to his impulses and bridle them like horses which defy the reins *he suffers an incurable passion* [πάθει χρῆται δυσιάτῳ], and then the rebellion will cause him to be carried way unwittingly like a *charioteer* [ἡνίοχος] carried by his team into ravines or impassable abysses. (*Spec.* 4.79)¹⁹

¹⁷ *Praem.* 120. See also *Mos.* 2.69; *Spec.* 1.80–81, 257; *QG* 4.200.

¹⁸ On the radical allegorists see *Migr.* 89–93; *Mut.* 61; *Spec.* 3.178; *QG* 3.53; David M. Hay, “References to Other Exegetes,” in *Both Literal and Allegorical: Studies in Philo of Alexandria’s Questions and Answers of Genesis and Exodus*, ed. David M. Hay, BJS 232 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 81–97.

¹⁹ Translation augmented from Colson LCL 8.57. Philo cites standard Stoic definitions for “passion” here as well (see also *Spec.* 4.79). Philo interprets the tenth commandment as an injunction against desire in *Decal.* 142–153 but does not employ chariot language there. Philo uses the same chariot language in the AC to describe the necessity of bridling the passions (esp. *Leg.* 1.73; *Agr.* 73–77).

While Philo's chariot lacks wings in this example, the rebellious horses are similar, and the language is nearly identical to a *Phaedrus* trope.²⁰ The soul's fate is in the hands of the mindful charioteer, the embodied mind attempting to rein the passions for noetic ascent. The embodied soul does not begin in an already incurable state, but the soul is at risk due to the passions.

The ideal of the *winged* mind taking flight from earth is described in the Exposition (*Praem* 62; *Spec.* 1.207; 2.51) with Moses as the primary model (*Praem* 80; see also *Spec.* 1.41–50).²¹ Philo even describes Moses' fingers becoming "winged" and traversing the cosmos while praying for the defeat of Amalek (*Mos.* 1.218 [Exod 17:8–13]).²² Moses is also the greatest example of this ascent in the Allegorical Commentary (*Plant.* 19–27).²³ In notable contrast to the Exposition, Philo uses "wing" language in AC to describe

²⁰ The *Phaedrus* trope is more pronounced in AC: *Agr.* 73–77; *Leg.* 1.73; see also *Leg.* 3.115–118, 128, 223–224 *Migr.* 64–67. On *Spec.* 4.79 as part of Philo's interpretation of the *Phaedrus* see Méasson, *Du char ailé*, 169. After the initial metaphor of the wing-chariot, Philo returns to the identity of the horses in *Phaedr.* 253d. While the metaphor is generally consistent, Philo uses the winged-chariot metaphor quite differently in *Somn.* 2.293–295. In this instance, God is the charioteer and the wicked are the disobedient horses that will eventually be reined by punishments. Those who yield the reins of the chariot from the charioteer of reason/mind to the passions will suffer death (*Agr.* 74). Since Cain is elsewhere explicitly described as releasing the reins (*Det.* 151), it might be inferred that *Agr.* 74 is using released reins as another way of describing soul death.

²¹ Abraham is also a model of winged ascent in *Abr.* 223. Borgen, *Philo*, 238–42 explores other examples of heavenly ascent in the Exposition including: *Spec.* 1.37–50, in which Moses is the paradigm of ascent; *Spec.* 2.164–166, in which the Jewish nation uniquely ascends (see also *Legat.* 5–6). While these ascent texts have clear parallels to *Opif.* 69–71, they do not use the *Phaedrus* language of *winged* ascent.

²² In the Allegorical Commentary the high priest who enters the tabernacle has "the *winged* and heavenly yearning for those forms of good which are incorporeal and imperishable" (*Ebr.* 136). Philo uses similar ascent language describe Abraham's faith in *Mut.* 179.

²³ *Plant.* 19–27 is a significant parallel to *Opif.* 69–71 because Philo is also interpreting Gen 1:26–27 and using "wing" language (πτερόω) to describe noetic ascent of the soul. In addition to Moses' ascent (*Plant.* 26–27 [Lev 1:1]), Philo includes Bezalel as a lesser example (*Plant.* 26–27 [Exod 31:2–11]). In the Allegorical Commentary Moses's wife Zipporah is identified as "winged and sublime virtue" (*Cher.* 47; *Mut.* 120).

embodiment as a fallen state, more closely following the *Phaedrus*.²⁴ Sami Yli-Karjanmaa argues, however, these embodiment-as-punishment texts in the AC can be understood in the context of re-incarnation rather than initial incarnation. Whatever the case, Philo draws on the “winged chariot” imagery in the Exposition but avoids portraying embodiment as inherently problematic.

Philo’s argument for intellectual likeness in *Opif.* 69–71 helps explain why the soul is initially incarnated in Philo’s cosmology. Interpreting Gen 1:26–27 in the Exposition, Philo portrays the ideal scenario for the human mind as though it was always intended to include embodiment. The initial embodiment in *Opif.* 69–71 is for the exploration of the terrestrial cosmos.²⁵ Again, it is important to point out that nowhere in the Exposition does Philo portray embodiment as inherently problematic. When Philo describes ascent elsewhere in the Exposition it involves moving beyond the bodily, sense-perceptible world (e.g. *Spec.* 1.37–40, 207; 2.44–46; 3.1–6). Initial incarnation is the proving ground of the soul in the Exposition, making souls entirely responsible for their fate.

²⁴ Only in the AC does Philo describe the soul’s embodiment as a kind of fall (*Somn.* 1.138–143; *Her.* 237–243). On embodiment as problematic in the Allegorical commentary see also *Leg.* 1.107–108; 2.77, 80; 3.69, 74; *Plant.* 46; *Congr.* 56–59; *Cher.* 2; *QG* 4.234). The absent or neglectful charioteers include: Cain (*Det.* 151) and the builders of the Tower of Babel (*Conf.* 115).

²⁵ This corresponds to the seventh of the nine different reasons for the soul’s embodiment identified by Sami Yli-Karjanmaa: 1) Body-Love (*Somn.* 1.138–139; *QG* 1.55); 2) Inability to Receive Divine Benefits (*Her.* 240); 3) Terrestrial Benefit (*QG* 4.74); 4) Appointed Numbers and Times (*Plan.* 14; *Somn.* 1.138); 5) Souls akin to created things (*QG* 4.74); 6) Law of Necessity (*QG* 4.74; 4.29; see also Plato, *Tim.* 41e–42a; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 8.14); 7) Inspection of Terrestrial Things (*QG* 4.74; *Conf.* 77–79; *Spec.* 3.191; *Somn.* 1.59–60; See also *Migr.* 195; *Opif.* 69–71); 8) Punishment (*Leg.* 1.107–108; 2.77, 80; 3.69, 74; *Plant.* 46; *Congr.* 56–59; *Cher.* 2; *QG* 4.234); 9) Corporealization of the Mind (*QG* 1.51; *Leg.* 3.252–253). See *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria*, SPhiloM 7 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 44–81.

2. Subordinate Creators (*Opif.* 72–75) and the Soul Cause of Evil

In the creation myth of the *Timaeus*, Plato explicitly distances the Demiurge from responsibility for evil by introducing divine subordinates. The Demiurge, after creating the rational soul (*Tim.* 41c–d) and demonstrating the “nature of the Universe [τὴν τοῦ παντὸς φύσιν]” (*Tim.* 41e), entrusted the creation of mortal beings to the young gods:

He delivered over to the young gods the task of moulding mortal bodies [τοῖς νέοις παρέδωκε θεοῖς σώματα πλάττειν θνητά], and of framing and controlling all the rest of the human soul which it was still necessary to add, together with all that belonged thereto, and of governing this mortal creature in the fairest and best way possible, to the utmost of their power, except in so far as it might itself become the cause of its own evils [κακῶν αὐτὸ ἐαυτῷ γίγνοιτο αἴτιον]. (*Tim.* 42d)²⁶

This passage from the *Timaeus* strongly influenced Philo’s view of evil.²⁷

Philo’s reason for including divine subordinates in the creation of humanity is to explain the plural verb in Gen 1:26, “let us make [ποιήσωμεν].” After dismissing the possibility of God requiring assistance, Philo offers a “likely conjecture [εἰκῶς στοχασμός]” (*Opif.* 72).²⁸ He briefly reviews divisions within creation (*Opif.* 73; see also *Agr.* 134–42) and suggests that it would be “unfitting [ἀνοίκειον]” for God to make creatures “of mixed

²⁶ Wolfson 1.432 points out that the commissioning of the young gods occurs after the pre-incarnational instruction to souls, which absolves the Demiurge of any causal responsibility for evil.

²⁷ See the commentary by David T. Runia, *On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, PACS 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 236–238; Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 242–249. See also Gretchen Reydam-Schils, *Demiurge and Providence: Stoic and Platonist Readings of Plato’s Timaeus*, Monothéismes et Philosophie (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 135–65.

²⁸ Philo suggests “likely conjectures” elsewhere (e.g. *Opif.* 157; *Ios.* 7, 104, 143; *Decal.* 18; *Aet.* 2). On God’s absolute autonomy in Philo see Runia, *On Creation* 239; Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.203; *Spec.* 1.177; *Leg.* 3.181; *Cher.* 44; *Conf.* 175; *Mut.* 27; *QG* 4.188.

nature [τῆς μικτῆς φύσεως], such as a human” (*Opif.* 73–74). The reason for subordinate creators is explicitly to distance God from evil.

Whenever the human being acts rightly in decisions and actions that are *beyond reproach* [ἀνεπιλήπτοις], these can be assigned to God's account as *universal Director* [ὁ πάντων ἡγεμῶν], whereas in the case of their opposite they can be attributed to *others who are subordinate to him* [ἕτεροι τῶν ὑπηκόων]. After all, it must be the case that the Father *is blameless of evil* [ἀναίτιον εἶναι κακοῦ] in his offspring, and both *wickedness* [κακία] and *wicked activities* [αἰ κατὰ κακίαν ἐνέργειαι] are certainly something *evil* [κακόν]. (*Opif.* 75)

In addition to the account of subordinate creators, Philo's language for God as “blameless” (ἀναίτιος) is drawn from the *Timaeus*.²⁹

Philo describes God as blameless (ἀναίτιος) in *Opif.* 75 based on the narrative of the *Timaeus* immediately before the Demiurge entrusts the creation of mortals to the young gods.³⁰ In the cosmological myth of the *Timaeus*, prior to the first incarnation all souls were instructed to master [κρατεῖν] sense-perception [αἴσθησις] and the passions to live a just life (*Tim.* 41d–e).³¹ Souls that live justly gain their return to a celestial life of happiness while those who fail to live virtuously face reincarnation into lesser forms corresponding to their failures (*Tim.* 42b–d). The purpose of this pre-incarnational instruction is to absolve the

²⁹ ἀναίτιος appears eight times in Philo's corpus (*Opif.* 75; *Ios.* 30; *Spec.* 3.56, 121; 4.5; *Virt.* 147; *Aet.* 78; *QG* 1.100), typically referring to innocent humans (*Spec.* 3.56, 121; 4.5; *Virt.* 147) or the fallacy of something “uncaused” (*Ios.* 30; *Aet.* 78). Only twice does Philo use the adjective to argue that evil is “not caused” by God (*Opif.* 75; *QG* 1.100). ἀναίτιος is curiously absent from the AC.

³⁰ ἀναίτιος only occurs in the LXX in the phrase “innocent blood [τὸ αἷμα ἀναίτιον/ἁθὴ ῥῆ]” (*Deut* 19:10, 13; 21:8, 9; see also *Sus* 60).

³¹ Plato's language for the first incarnation is: “first birth [γένεσις πρώτη]” (*Tim.* 41e; 90a; see also *Phaedr.* 248d; 252d; *Laws* 891e) and “implanted in bodies [σώμασιν ἐμφυτευθεῖεν] from necessity” (42a). The task of “moulding mortal bodies [σώματα πλάττειν θνητά]” is entrusted to the young gods by the Demiurge. In this passage, Plato does not use the word “passions [πάθη]” but explicitly mentions four passions in need of mastery: “pleasure [ἡδονή],” “pain [λύπη],” “fear [φόβος],” and “anger [θυμός]” (*Tim.* 42a).

Demiurge of any causal responsibility for human evil: “to the end that He might be blameless in respect of the future wickedness of any one of them [ἵνα τῆς ἔπειτα εἴη κακίας ἐκάστων ἀναίτιος]” (*Tim.* 42d).³²

Immediately after this absolving instruction, the Demiurge leaves the responsibility for fashioning mortals to the young gods (*Tim.* 42d). It is the task of the young gods to bind the soul and the body together in such a way that the mortal is responsible for her own evil (*Tim.* 42e).³³ Plato depicts two layers of causality that distance the creator from evil. First, the Demiurge is blameless because of the instruction given to pre-incarnate souls, leaving the Demiurge without any responsibility for the potential evil caused by these souls. Second, the young gods construct the most ideal cosmos possible with the material they are given, allowing souls to follow the Demiurge’s instruction and master their bodies. In this second layer of causality, however, Plato admits that the material cosmos is merely an imitation of the Demiurge’s ideal craftsmanship. The combination of soul and the elements is imperfect due to the constraints of the material itself (*Tim.* 43a–44d; see also 47e–48e).³⁴ The Demiurge is not responsible for the evil of instructed souls or the bodies constrained by imperfect material.

³² Even the young gods who form mortal bodies do so in a way that “in so far as it might itself become the cause of its own evils [ὅ τι μὴ κακῶν αὐτὸ ἐαυτῷ γίγνοιτο αἴτιον]” (*Tim.* 42e). ἀναίτιος occurs eight times in Plato (*Tim.* 42d; 88a; *Laws* 727b; *Epin.* 983d; *Resp.* 379bc; 471b; 617e) and Philo (*Opif* 75; *Ios* 30; *Spec.* 3.56, 121; 4.5; *Virt.* 147; *Aet.* 78; *QG* 1.100.1c).

³³ In Plato’s myth the young gods obeyed: “they took the immortal principle of the mortal living creature, and imitating their own Maker, they borrowed from the Cosmos portions of fire and earth and water and air, and the portions so taken they cemented together” (*Tim.* 42e–43a).

³⁴ The cosmos “was generated as a compound, from the combination of Necessity and Reason [ἐξ ἀνάγκης τε καὶ νοῦ συστάσεως ἐγεννήθη]” (*Tim.* 48a).

These two layers of causality relate to Plato's view of evil's origin. Harold Cherniss argues that Plato identifies two sources of evil.³⁵ First, there is the negative evil that results from the imperfect way the phenomenal world mirrors the ideal.³⁶ Even though the phenomenal world is created to be good (*Tim.* 30a, 92c), its goodness is limited by the necessary conditions of the chaotic materiality: "For God desired that, so far as possible, all things should be good and nothing evil" (*Tim.* 30a).³⁷ The negative evil that results from the necessary condition of imperfect matter corresponds to the second layer of causality, the construction of the body by the young gods. The Demiurge is not responsible for the material or the construction. Second, there is the positive evil originating in erratic motion, ultimately caused by ignorant souls.³⁸ Ignorant as they may be, these errant souls remain responsible for the evil they cause (Plato, *Resp.* 617e; *Tim.* 42d; *Leg.* 903a). The ignorance

³⁵ Harold Cherniss, "The Sources of Evil According to Plato," *PAPS* 98 (1954): 23–30. Also relevant are William Chase Greene, *Moirai: Fate, Good, and Evil, in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944), 277–316; Thomas H. Billings, *The Platonism of Philo Judaeus*, AP 3 (New York: Garland, 1979), 23–24, 70–71.

³⁶ Cherniss, "Sources of Evil," 24–25 citing *Theaet.* 176a; *Phaedr.* 250a–c; *Philebus* 25e–26b. On the way the phenomenal world imperfectly imitates the ideas see *Resp.* 597a; *Crat.* 432c–d; *Soph.* 240a–b; *Phaedo* 74d–75d

³⁷ βουληθεις γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὰ μὲν πάντα, πλαῦρον δὲ μηδὲν εἶναι κατὰ δύναμιν. See also *Tim.* 29a, 30b, 46c, 48a. In *Tim* 47e–48a Plato specifies the cosmos as a combination of reason and "necessity [ἀνάγκη]" and identifies necessity as "the form of the errant cause [τὸ τῆς πλανωμένης εἶδος αἰτίας]" (see also *Tim.* 46e; 56c; 68e–69a).

³⁸ Cherniss, "Sources of Evil," 26–28. Since all motion is caused by souls (*Laws* 896d) evil cannot be wholly attributed to the imperfections of the material world. Although souls can be evil (*Resp.* 353e; *Laws* 904b–e; 906b), Cherniss attributes evil souls to ignorance (citing *Laws* 860d; 896e–897b; *Phaedr.* 246b–c; 248b–c). Still, this is the motion of the soul not merely the immaterial world (see *Phaed.* 81b–d). Cherniss finds it untenable that there is an evil part of the world-soul, an interpretation found in Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 369d–371a; see also *De an. Procr.* 1014d–1015) citing Plato (*Tim.* 35a–b; *Laws* 896e). See Opsomer and Steel, "Evil Without a Cause," 235–40; Dillon, *Middle-Platonists*, 202–204.

of souls relates to the first layer of causality, namely the Demiurge's ethical instruction to all souls before incarnation.

Plutarch's interpretation of the origin of evil is, in contrast to Plato himself, an inherently dualistic metaphysics.³⁹ In his allegorical interpretation of the myth of *Isis and Osiris* Plutarch is emphatic that good and evil must have causes:

For if it is the law of Nature that nothing comes into being *without a cause* [ἀναιτίως], and if the good cannot provide a cause for evil, then it follows that Nature must have in herself *the source and origin of evil* [γένεσιν . . . καὶ ἀρχὴν . . . κακοῦ], just as she contains the source and origin of good. The great majority and the wisest of men hold this opinion: they believe that there are two gods, rivals as it were, the one the Artificer of good and the other of evil. There are also those who call the better one a god and the other a daemon.⁴⁰

Plutarch proceeds to recount various opinions about the dualistic origin of evil beginning with Zoroaster and concluding with Plato (*Is. Os.* 369d–371a).⁴¹ Then, Plutarch gives his own dualistic view of the origin of evil mapped onto the Egyptian myth:

The fact is that the creation and constitution of this world is complex, resulting, as it does, from opposing influences, which, however, are not of equal strength, but the predominance rests with the better. Yet it is impossible for *the bad* [τὴν φαύλην] to be completely eradicated, *since it is implanted, in large amount, in the body and likewise in the soul of the Universe* [πολλὴν μὲν ἐμπεφυκυῖαν τῷ

³⁹ See a summary of positions on evil in Plutarch, including the possibility of development, in Boys-Stones, *Platonist Philosophy*, 113–15.

⁴⁰ *Is. Os.* 369d: εἰ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀναιτίως πέφυκε γενέσθαι, αἰτίαν δὲ κακοῦ τὰγαθὸν οὐκ ἂν παράσχοι, δεῖ γένεσιν ἰδίαν καὶ ἀρχὴν ὥσπερ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν. Καὶ δοκεῖ τοῦτο τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ σοφωτάτοις· νομίζουσι γὰρ οἱ μὲν θεοὺς εἶναι δύο καθάπερ ἀντιτέχνους, τὸν μὲν ἀγαθῶν, τὸν δὲ φαύλων δημιουργόν. οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀμείνονα θεόν, τὸν δ' Ἐἕτερον δαίμονα καλοῦσιν·

⁴¹ In his list of opinions Plutarch includes: Zoroaster (*Is. Os.* 369d–370b), Theopompus (370b–c), Chaldeans (370c), Greek mythology (370c–d), Heraclitus (370d), Empedocles (370e), Pythagoreans (370e) and briefly mentions Anaxagoras, Aristotle and Plato (370e–f).

σώματι, πολλήν δὲ τῇ ψυχῇ τοῦ παντὸς], and is always fighting a hard fight against the better.⁴²

The good part of the World Soul, intelligence and reason [νοῦς καὶ λόγος], is identified as Osiris and the physical world properly ordered [γῆ, πνεῦμα, ὕδωρ, οὐρανός ἄστρα] is his “emanation and image [ἀπορροή καὶ εἰκῶν] (*Is. Os.* 371b). In contrast, Typhon is “that part of the soul which is impassioned, impulsive, irrational and truculent [τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ τιτανικὸν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ ἔμπληκτον].” Additionally, it is Typhon’s “outbursts [ἐκδρομαί]” and “unruly actions [ἀφηνιασμοί]” that produce the corruptions of the body and the physical world (*Is. Os.* 371b).

Plutarch believes a maleficent soul is the proper interpretation of Plato’s cosmology in the *Timaeus*.⁴³ In his treatise on the *Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus*, Plutarch cites *Tim* 29a to argue that:

The cosmos was created by God [τὸν . . . κόσμον ὑπὸ θεοῦ γεγονέναι] whereas the substance or matter [τὴν δ’ οὐσίαν καὶ ὕλην] out of which it has come into being [ἐξ ἧς γέγονεν] did not come to be but was always available to the artificer to whom it submitted itself for disposing and ordering and being made as like to him as was possible.⁴⁴

Prior to the “the generation of the cosmos [τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως]” there was “disorder [ἀκοσμία]” (*De an. Procr.* 1014b), which is “the discord of the soul that has not reason

⁴² *Is. Os.* 371a I have altered LCL translation of the perfect participle ἐμπεφυκυῖαν from “innate” to “implanted.”

⁴³ Plutarch cites Plato’s *Laws* to support his dualistic interpretation of the world soul, presumably referring to *Leg.* 896d–e. However, Opsomer and Steel argue that the basis of Plutarch’s view is his interpretation of *Tim.* 35ab in *De an. Procr.* 1014de, 1015e (Opsomer and Steel, “Evil Without a Cause,” 236).

⁴⁴ *De an. Procr.* 1014b. τὸν μὲν κόσμον ὑπὸ θεοῦ γεγονέναι . . . [citation of *Tim.* 29a] . . . τὴν δ’ οὐσίαν καὶ ὕλην, ἐξ ἧς γέγονεν, οὐ γενομένην ἀλλὰ ὑποκειμένην αἰεὶ τῷ δημιουργῷ εἰς διάθεσιν καὶ τάξιν αὐτὴν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐξομοίωσιν ὡς δυνατὸν ἦν ἐμπαρασχεῖν.

[ἀναρμοστία ψυχῆς οὐκ ἐχούσης λόγον]” (*De an. Procr.* 1014b; see also 1016c). What Plato refers to as “necessity [ἀνάγκη]” Plutarch interprets as the “disorderly and maleficent soul [ψυχὴν ἄτακτον . . . καὶ κακοποιόν]” (*De an. Procr.* 1014e; see also 1015e).⁴⁵ Plutarch admits that his interpretation of a “Necessity” as the “maleficent soul” rather than “matter [ὕλη]” is disputed (*De an. Procr.* 1014ef), but he maintains that such an interpretation is necessary for consistency in Plato’s thought (*De an. Procr.* 1015a–1017b).⁴⁶ Plutarch’s metaphysical dualism is his own interpretation of Plato, but not without parallel. Proclus, for example, attributes a doctrine of an evil soul to Atticus.⁴⁷ There are also traces of this idea in accounts of Numenius and Celsus’ philosophy.⁴⁸ Plutarch does not dwell on the identity of Plato’s “young gods” but identifies evil’s origin with the pre-existing soul from which the Demiurge forms the cosmos.

Conclusion: A Tentative Hypothesis about the Identity of the Co-Creators

Returning to Philo, there have been various opinions about the identity of the co-creators. David Winston, for example, argues that the primary role of the subordinate creators is fashioning the irrational part of the soul (esp. *Fug.* 68–72 influenced by *Tim.* 69c; see also *Conf.* 168–183; *Mut.* 30–32) and the human body (*Spec.* 1.329).⁴⁹ Winston,

⁴⁵ Plutarch references Plato’s *Laws* to support this interpretation. See also *Is. Os.* 370f. This is a misreading of Plato, but apparently one that had purchase with Atticus (active ca. 176–180 CE) and Numenius (active ca. 150–176).

⁴⁶ On necessity as matter see *Tim.* 47a–48a; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 3.75–76; Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.8.7; even Lamprias in *Def. orac.* 435f–436a and *Quaest. conv.* 720bc.

⁴⁷ Boys-Stones, *Platonist Philosophy*, 121; Proclus, *On the Timaeus* i. 391.6–12; 392.8–17. See also Jan Opsomer and Carlos Steel, *Proclus: On the Existence of Evils* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 75–7.

⁴⁸ On Numenius (Calcidius, *in Tim.* 295, 297); Celsus (Origen, *C. Cels.* 4.65; 8.55).

⁴⁹ David Winston, “Theodicy and the Creation of Man in Philo of Alexandria,” *Hellenica et Judaica: homma à Valentin Nikiprowetsky*, eds. A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel, J. Riaud (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 105–111,

then, disagrees with David Runia, who finds it untenable that Philo attributes the creation of the human body to anyone other than God as Gen 2:4 indicates.⁵⁰ Runia interprets *Opif.* 21–23 to indicate God uses unformed matter for the work of creation, inheriting some Platonic dualism that attributes negative evil to the imperfections of the material world, a world that is “unable to accommodate the fullness of God’s creative power.”⁵¹

One unexplored hypothesis is to think about the co-creators in light Plutarch’s argument that evil must be caused by a soul and in relation to the broader issue of embodiment. How might the identity of the co-creators cohere with humanity’s place on the hierarchical scale of being in Philo’s thought?⁵² As Philo argues in *On Giants* 13, humans

esp. 106–9. See also Hager, *Gott und das Böse*, 114: matter as pre-existing creation (*Opif.* 7–9; *Her.* 160) and yet God is without equal in pre-existence or creation (*Leg.* 2.2) and matter never existing apart from God who created the visible world (*Prov.* 1.8, 20–22). The issue of the origin of the cosmos and especially matter in Philo’s theology has been much debated in Philonic scholarship. See Wolfson, *Philo*, 1.300–310; *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections*, CWS (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 10–21; Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 287–89; Gregory E. Sterling, “*Creatio Temporalis, Aeterna, vel Continua?* An Analysis of the Thought of Philo of Alexandria,” *SPhiloA* 4 (1992): 15–41; John Dillon, “Cosmic Gods and Primordial Chaos in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy: The Context of Philo’s Interpretation of Plato’s *Timaeus* and the Book of Genesis,” in *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-Interpretations of Genesis 1 in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity and Modern Physics*, ed. George H. van Kooten, TBN 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 97–107.

⁵⁰ Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 246. Winston thinks Philo would have interpreted Gen 2:4 by distinguishing between God as the efficient cause (ὕπὸ θεοῦ) and an instrumental cause (δι’ ὀργάνου). Winston cites *Leg.* 1.41 to support this argument. On prepositional metaphysics see Gregory E. Sterling, “Prepositional Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christian Liturgical Texts,” *SPhiloA* 9 (1997): 219–38, esp. 220–31; Ronald Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*, BZNW 145 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 43–51, 104–111. On the Logos as ὄργανον of creation see *Migr.* 6; *Leg.* 3.96; *Cher.* 125–127. See also *Deus* 56–57, *Sacr.* 8; *Fug.* 12, 95; *Somn.* 2.45; *Spec.* 1.81. In this instance, however, it seems that Winston is advocating that subordinates other than the Logos are the instruments creating the body.

⁵¹ David T. Runia, “Theodicy in Philo of Alexandria,” in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible*, eds. Antti Laato and Johannes C. de Moor (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 576–604, here 590.

⁵² David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: HUCA, 1985), 31–36. Winston identifies similarities with Plato, *Tim.* 91–9 and later Middle-Platonist hierarchies including: Apuleius, *De Deo Socr.* 8, 13; Xenocrates in Plutarch, *Mor.* 416. Specifically, Winston identifies five stages of being: “1) the physical universe, composed of body and purely rational mind, an image of the divine Logos or intelligible cosmos; 2) the fiery stars, also composed of body and purely rational mind; 3) the aerial

are embodied souls, or angels/daemons encumbered by trappings of a fleshy body.⁵³ Not only is the body nonessential to the soul in the AC, embodiment is itself an unfortunate condition.⁵⁴ The problem of embodiment raises the crucial question of why souls enter bodies in the first place, a state that Winston summarily describes as the “soul’s fall.”⁵⁵ Sami Yli-Karjanmaa argues for the provocative thesis that Philo held a doctrine of reincarnation.⁵⁶ Collating Philo’s many descriptions of the allegory of the soul, Yli-Karjanmaa presents a clear picture of Philo’s individual eschatology as a six-stage process:⁵⁷

souls/angels/daemons, again composed of body and purely rational mind (unlike the view of most Middle-Platonists, who assign them an irrational mental component); 4) man, composed of body and a soul both rational and irrational, a being who is at home in all the four elements; 5) air, land, and last of all, sea creatures, the latter situated on the very frontier between life and non-life” (34, citing *Opif.* 65–66, 68; cf. *Tim.* 92b). On Philo’s divisions of creation by the creative Logos (see esp. *Her.* 125–145, 230–236, *Agr.* 139–140) in comparison with Antiochus of Ascalon, Maximus of Tyre, and Seneca see Ursula Früchtel, *Die kosmologischen Vorstellungen bei Philo von Alexandria: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Genesisexegese*, ALGHJ 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 41–5. Following Früchtel, Abraham Terian includes Philo’s dialogue with Alexander *On the Rationality of Animals* in his analysis (*Philonis Alexandrini de Animalibus: The Armenian Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, SHJ 1 [Chico: Scholars Press, 1981], 35–45). On the hierarchy of being concept in Plato and its general reception see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), esp. 24–66

⁵³ See also *Gig* 6–19; *Sacr.* 5; *Conf.* 176–77; *Somn.* 1.135; *Plant.* 12–14; *Spec.* 1.66; *QE* 2.13

⁵⁴ See Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*, 30–31 who notes Philo describing the soul’s body as, among other things, a “corpse” (*Leg.* 1.108; 3.74; *Migr.* 21; *Somn.* 2.237), a “garment” (*Leg.* 2.22, 55; *Cher.* 31; *Post.* 137; *Gig.* 53; *Deus* 56; *Fug.* 110; *Somn.* 1.43; *QG* 1.53; 4.1, 78), a “foreign land” (*Cher.* 120; *Agr.* 64–65; *Migr.* 28; *Conf.* 77–78; *Her.* 239–240, 274; *Mut.* 38; *Somn.* 1.46, 181; *Praem.* 117; *QG* 3.10, 11, 45; 4.74, 178), a “grave” (*Leg.* 1.108; *Deus.* 150; *Migr.* 16; *Somn.* 1.139; *Spec.* 4.188; *QG* 1.70, 2.69, 4.75, 153), and a “prison” (*Leg.* 3.42; *Ebr.* 101; *Migr.* 9; *Her.* 68, 85; *Somn.* 1.139)

⁵⁵ *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 34.

⁵⁶ *Reincarnation in Philo*, 4–6 defines what he means by doctrine of reincarnation as the idea of “a repeated process in which a fundamental, incorporeal part of the individual is thought to pass from one body to another through physical death and birth. . . . The purpose of reincarnation is the liberation, purification and restoration of the soul to its original, heavenly state.” The key passages for his argument are *Somn.* 1.137–139; *Cher.* 114; *QE* 2.40; *Frag* 7.3 Harris.

⁵⁷ *Reincarnation in Philo*, 73, 242; see also Sami Yli-Karjanmaa, “‘Call him earth’: On Philo’s Allegorization of Adam in the Legum allegoriae,” in *The Adam and Eve Story in the Hebrew Bible and in Ancient Jewish Writings Including the New Testament*, eds. Antti Laato and Lotta Valve, SRHB 7 (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University, 2016), 253–93, here 261. There are several texts with terse summaries of the scheme in Philo (*Gig.* 13; *Conf.* 77–78; *Somn.* 1.181; *Abr.* 258; *QG* 3.11). Not all souls attain each stage in the scheme, many remain stuck in stages 3–4.

1. (Pre-existent) Incorporeal Existence with God
2. Incarnation
3. Corporealization and transgression
4. Reincarnation until the prerequisites of salvation are met
5. Liberation from the life in the body
6. Eternal incorporeal existence with God

For the purposes of analyzing Philo's view of evil's origin the most important feature of Yli-Karjanmaa's study is the soul's initial incarnation.

Perhaps we should think about the co-creators as unembodied souls. In this case, Philo's vague description of the co-creators is a description of unembodied souls partnering with God to create their bodies and enter a new phase of exploratory existence. After all, Philo describes the co-creators as making humans capable of evil, a state born of the combination of body and soul.⁵⁸ So far as I know, no one else has suggested this interpretation. It may offer a plausible explanation for how Philo reads Gen 1:26 with the allegory of the soul as his primary exegetical aim. Philo, like Plutarch, does think that evil is caused by souls. Unlike Plutarch, however, Philo does not locate the origin of evil in the World Soul. Instead, evil is caused by soul's entrapment in an embodied existence, an entrapment due to the soul's love of earthly things rather than divine.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Drawing on *Tim.* 41a, 42e. Similar interpretations are found in *Conf.* 168–183; *Fug.* 68–72; *Mut.* 30–32; *QG* 1.54. See also Runia, *Philo and the Timaeus*, 242–49. Similar implications of divine subordinates as the source of evil are found in Philo elsewhere (*Abr.* 121–132, 143).

⁵⁹ Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo*, 220–226. See esp. *Somn.* 1.138–139; *QE* 2.40; *Cher.* 117; *Leg.* 3.71.