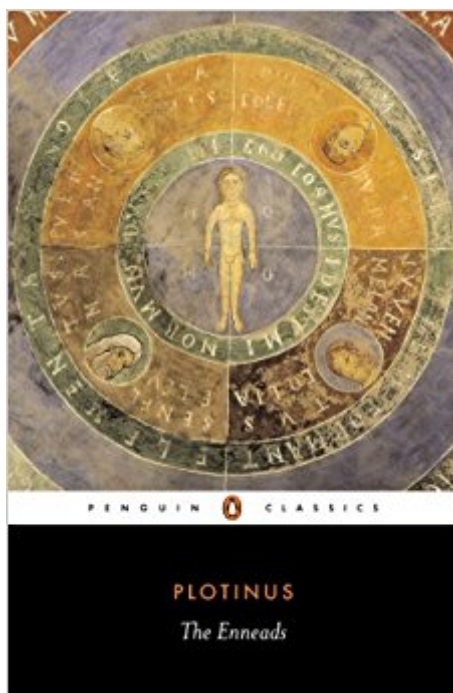


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The Enneads: Abridged Edition (Classics S)



Synopsis

Here is a highly original synthesis of Platonism, mystic passion, ideas from Greek philosophy, and variants of the Trinity and other central tenets of Christian doctrine by the brilliant thinker who has had an immense influence on mystics and religious writers. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Greek

John Dillon is Regius Professor of Greek at Trinity College in Dublin.

I had heard of Plotinus' "Enneads" for years and always thought they'd be too obtuse to understand. This seemed to be the opinion of references to it. But, I finally ordered the book, which came in good condition. I was pulled through the reading but had to do it in stages. The world explored by Plotinus is glorious, multilayered and has none of the limiting of "modernity." There are wide open spaces in his exploration of the nature of matter for it is a simple, very basic question only a child

would ask. His answers to his self-put questions are valuable in that the answers restore a sense of the innate majesty of the universe.

The Enneads: Abridged Edition (Penguin Classics) translated by Stephen MacKenna (ISBN 014044520X). The Penguin edition of Stephen MacKenna's translation Of Plotinus' 'Enneads' is printed on newsprint in a miniscule font, is sadly and inexplicably incomplete, and has a lengthy and condescending 40-page introduction by the Jesuit Paul Henry followed by a more interesting though much shorter one of 18 pages by editor John Dillon. If it's the MacKenna translation you want - and there are some who feel it is one of the truly great translations of the age - skip this Penguin travesty of a book and treat yourself instead to a copy of the freshly edited Larson Publications 'Plotinus: The Enneads': Plotinus: The Enneads (LP Classic Reprint Series) An important feature of the Larson edition is that it has been annotated, not as the Penguin with mere references to Plato's dialogues (as if we didn't know that Plotinus had read Plato), but with useful and interesting alternate translations of many passages. Also, unlike the Penguin which with its glued spine that cracks when opened and seems to have been designed to self-destruct after minimal use, the LP Classic Reprint is a PERMANENT BOOK, well-printed in a readable font on excellent paper, sewn in the traditional manner so that it opens flat, and is both clothbound and COMPLETE.

What an amazing book.....as I am not a scholar per say this is a book I have read slowly and carefully and will probably take many years to grasp and fathom the thinking of such an amazing mind. But I am enjoying the treads of his thinking so far. If you want to read Plotinus don't expect it to be a cracking good read. It isn't. It is a book for those who want deep philosophy and theology.

The source book for much of the ancient Greek interpretation of the Egyptian mysteries. Schwaller de Lubitz must have been very familiar with this work and the Hermetica as he analyzed the mystic architecture of the Temple at Luxor.

Excellent read!

The Enneads is a staggering vision of unity. The concept of the soul plays a central part. Here's my take at a very brief summation: 1. The source of the soul ... and of everything else lies in a oneness (the One) that can be inferred but never contacted. So the One isn't a personal God. It isn't aware of

us, so it doesn't intervene in our affairs.² What the soul receives ... are the goodness and intelligence that emanated from the source and are the principal characteristics of our cosmos. We exist in a cosmos that is fundamentally good and intelligent and we can sense and see that.³ The mixed blessing for the soul ... is embodiment in matter, which, on the positive side, provides a context for helping and for personal growth. In a world of many, the one soul appears as many souls.⁴ The downside of that blessing ... are pain, isolation, and the suffering and distraction caused by attachment to material things. Evil is real but we're created in a fundamentally good and intelligent place and with powers to deal with it.⁵ The way to live ... includes recognizing that the many souls are in fact one. Individuality is the reward and the price the soul paid to become embodied. Just as the One gives richly via its emanations, so we should give to the cosmos. Enjoy and feel awed by the beauty around and within you.⁶ We're no small things ... but a product of the One, of its Intelligence and Soul... each of our souls linked to each other via that one soul.⁷ Soul and body go well together. The individual body being material isn't permanent. But the soul and the cosmos are, so the soul re-enters material life via a new body. Unlike some religious positions that may seem similar, all of this and more can be demonstrated in a rational presentation that begins with just a few stated assumptions. That's what you'll find in *The Enneads*, a culmination of centuries of ancient Greek philosophy. As much a treasure as a book can be.

It is a book of philosophy, very important in the history of ideas, but underappreciated. Add it to your list to be truly well-read.

Plotinus was a deep thinker who gained great spiritual insight into many of the issues that are timeless in this great world of ours--just as relevant today as they were then, 17 centuries ago. *Enneads* cuts through the distractions of ritual that detract from true spirituality, and gives timeless messages, often in beautiful language, that are quite memorable.

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