

Daemons, Cups of Forgetfulness and Eternity of the Soul in Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* 2.33-34: The Influence of Strato of Lampsacus in his View of Participation



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Abstract

In *Adversus haereses* 2.33-34, Irenaeus rejects the Platonic view of the pre-existence of the soul, and his tale of a daemon who serves up the drink from the Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. Irenaeus' argument appears in the context of a larger polemic against the Carpocratian view of education and recollection, so it appropriately draws from philosophical discussions on education and recollection. When Irenaeus' opposes the Platonic myth, his argument reflects Strato of Lampsacus, a Peripatetic philosopher. I will highlight the parallels between them, particularly in their description of the soul as participating in life rather than being life itself, an affirmation that has created some contention within studies of Irenaeus' theology. Finally, I suggest that this dependence in Book 2 of *Adversus haereses* continues in one of Irenaeus's most famous descriptions of participation in *haer.* 4.20.5, for Irenaeus uses the same metaphor of light and the same verb that Strato uses. In addition to studying the parallels between Irenaeus and Strato, which has not been done yet, my main contribution is to suggest that Strato's influence should be recognized in the famous Irenaeus's view of participation.

KEYWORDS: PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL, PARTICIPATION, PLATO, IRENAEUS OF LYON, STRATO OF LAMPSACUS

***Daemones, pocillos del olvido y eternidad del alma en Adversus haereses* 2.33-34 de Ireneo: la influencia de Estratón de Lámpsaco en su perspectiva de la participación**

Resumen

En *Adversus haereses* 2.33-34, Ireneo rechaza la perspectiva platónica de la preexistencia del alma, y su relato de un demonio que sirve la bebida del Leteo, el río del olvido. El argumento de Ireneo aparece en el contexto de una polémica más amplia contra la perspectiva carpocraciana de la educación y el recuerdo, de allí que recurra a a discusiones filosóficas sobre la educación y el recuerdo. Cuando Ireneo se opone a este mito



platónico, refleja los argumentos de Estratón de Lámpsaco, un filósofo peripatético, por lo que subrayaré paralelos entre ellos. En particular, ambos hablan del alma como si participara en la vida en lugar de ser ella misma la vida, una afirmación que ha generado algunos desacuerdos en los estudios de la teología de Ireneo. Finalmente, sugiero que esta dependencia, presente en el libro 2 de *Adversus haereses*, continúa en una de las más famosas descripciones de la participación de Ireneo en *haer.* 4.20.5, pues Ireneo usa la misma metáfora de la luz y el mismo verbo que Estratón. Además de estudiar los paralelos entre Ireneo y Estratón, algo que no se ha hecho, mi aporte principal es sugerir que se debe reconocer la influencia de Estratón en la famosa perspectiva de la participación de Ireneo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: PREEXISTENCIA DEL ALMA, PARTICIPACIÓN, PLATÓN, IRENEO DE LYON, ESTRATÓN DE LÁMPASCO

Introduction

In *Adversus haereses* 2.33 (from now on *haer.*), Irenaeus rejects the Platonic view of the pre-existence of the soul. He refers to Plato's tale of a daemon who serves up a drink from the river of forgetfulness. This argument appears in the context of a larger polemic against the Carpocratian view of education and recollection. Therefore, in the first part of this paper, I indicate that this argument about souls is properly located within philosophical discussions on education and recollection. Then, in the second part, we read about Irenaeus' opposition to this Platonic myth from *haer.* 2.33-34. In the third part, I build on the work of scholars who have noted that Irenaeus' rejection of Plato's pre-existent souls reflects the arguments of Strato of Lampsacus, a Peripatetic philosopher, and I highlight the parallels between Strato and Irenaeus, particularly in their description of the soul as participating in life rather than being life itself, an affirmation that has created some contention within studies of Irenaeus' theology (Behr, 2013: 152). Finally, I compare this argument from Book 2 of *Adversus haereses* with one of Irenaeus's most famous descriptions of participation in *haer.* 4.20.5, arguing for a continued parallel with Strato. Participation in life is described as participation in God, using the same metaphor of light and the same verb that Strato uses. I argue that Irenaeus' view of participation may draw from Strato's differentiation between soul and life, even in his more developed theology.

1. The Literary Context of *haer.* 2.33

Irenaeus' argument exploring the Platonic myth behind the doctrine of pre-existence of souls appears at the end of Book 2 of *haer.*, amidst a steady stream of references to philosophical arguments. Both Schoedel and Briggman have noted various philosophical and literary sources in Irenaeus' argument in *haer.* 2.27-28 28 (Briggman, 2012: 142-145; Schoedel, 1984; Simons, 2023: 41), and I have argued that *haer.* 2.30 depends philosophically on Xenophanes (Simons, 2023: 174-179).¹ Finally, Grant has argued that a large section of *haer.* 2.32 reflects philosophical views on education (1986). Irenaeus refers to education because, throughout *haer.* 2.31-32, he is opposing two Carpocratian claims: (1) that they can perform miracles (a learned art) because their pre-existent souls were from the same realm as Jesus; and (2) that they have experienced every kind of deed (presumably through constant soul transmigration). In response to the second claim, Irenaeus provides a comprehensive list of experiences which is founded on the basic theoretical and practical arts and sciences listed by Aristotle, and later

¹ I argue that Book 2 is primarily focusing on Irenaeus's view of God, particularly based on the theological affirmations throughout the largely negative polemic. The final theological affirmation happens in *haer.* 2.30, in which Irenaeus summarizes his view of God, echoing the language of the Rule of Truth from *haer.* 1.10, and affirming that God's will for creation was not separated from God's power in its execution.

cited by Galen and Philostratus (Grant, 1986).² According to Irenaeus, if one ought to experience every kind of work or activity –as the Carpocratians claim–, then they should learn all the theoretical and practical arts, however, despite all this study, they do not actually *learn* from them.³ Then, in *haer.* 2.33, he takes on another philosophical theme when he opposes the Carpocratian claim regarding the realm of pre-existent souls, which challenge the Platonic myth.

2. A Summary of the Argument against the Platonic Myth in *haer.* 2.33-34

In the context of the polemic against the Carpocratians, Irenaeus begins his opposition to the view of pre-existent and transmigrating souls.

De corpore autem in corpus transmigrationem ipsorum subvertamus ex eo quo nihil omnino eorum quae ante fuerint meminerint animae. Si enim ob hoc emittebantur uti in omni fierent operatione, oportebat eas meminisse eorum quae ante facta sunt, uti ea quae deerant adimplerent et non circa eadem semper volutantes continuatim miserabiliter laborarent. (*haer.* 2.33.1: 344)

Τὴν δὲ μετενσωμάτων ἰσχυρῶν αὐτῶν ἀνατρέπομεν ἐκ τοῦ μηδὲν ὅλως τῶν προτέρων μεμνησθαι τὰς ψυχὰς. Εἰ γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο κατεπέμποντο ἵνα ἐν πάσῃ καταγένοιται πράξι, ἐχρῆν αὐτὰς μεμνησθαι τῶν πρότερον πεπραγμένων, ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἀναπληρώσωσι καὶ μὴ περὶ τὰ αὐτὰ ἀεὶ κυλινοῦμεναι διηνεκῶς ταλαιπωρῶσι. (*haer.* 2.33.1: 344)⁴

We can overthrow their [view] regarding the transmigration [of souls] because souls remember nothing, at all, of former things. For if they [the souls] were sent down on account of this [transmigration], namely in order to experience every deed, it is necessary that they remember their former deeds so that they might fulfil what was lacking, and not always strive about in this unbroken cycle. (*haer.* 2.33.1)⁵

In the introduction to this section, Irenaeus refers to two different moments in this doctrine of souls, which I will take in reverse order to capture their chronological order. First is the moment prior to embodiment when he refers to the souls being initially “sent down” (*emittebantur*; κατεπέμποντο) for the purpose of this transmigration. Irenaeus, then, is opposing the view that souls pre-exist in such a way that Carpocratian souls could be from the same realm as Jesus. Second, he also opposes transmigration (*transmigrationem*; μετενσωμάτων) and the reference to the continuous cycle (*semper volutantes continuatim*; κυλινοῦμεναι διηνεκῶς), both of which refer to a constant reincarnation to fulfill the requirement of experiencing everything.

Before introducing the Platonic myth, Irenaeus appeals to the common experience of dreams. He held to the prevalent view that the soul does not sleep, so the “separation” between the sleeping body and the soul that is awake was comparable to death. He insists that just as a body at rest has a soul that recollects a memory of a dream or

² Irenaeus list includes music, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and medicine.

³ Grant suggests that the argument of Clement of Alexandria is stronger: “If Clement is right, Irenaeus should have argued not that the Carpocratians knew nothing about the subjects he listed but that they knew only part of them, the theoretical studies” (1986:131).

⁴ The text of Book 2 of *Against Heresies* exists today entirely in Latin, with some fragments in Greek, Syriac, and Armenian. As will be discussed below, the Greek of this section comes from an 8th century Greek anti-Origenist manuscript, dubbed *Vatopedi* 236. For more information on the extant manuscripts for *haer.* 2.33-34, see the edition with notes (Rousseau, 1982b). Irenaeus wrote in Greek, but the text was translated into Latin less than twenty years later, so scholars tend to prefer the Greek when it is available, but it has been shown that the Latin is trustworthy, and even, on occasions, follows the word order of the Greek original (Hort, 1923).

⁵ Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

vision, so too the soul should be able to recollect the whole span of a past life. Then, Irenaeus explicitly opposes Plato's myth regarding the pre-existence of souls prior to mixture with a body.

Ad haec Plato vetus ille Atheniensis, qui et primus sententiam hanc introduxit, cum excusare non posset, oblivionis induxit poculum, putans se per hoc aporiam huiusmodi effugere, ostensionem quidem nullam faciens, dogmatice autem respondens quoniam introeuntes animae in hanc vitam ab eo qui est super introitum daemone, priusquam in corpora intrent, potantur oblivionem. Et latuit semetipsum in alteram maiorem incidens aporiam. Si enim oblivionis poculum potest, posteaquam ebibitum est, omnium factorum obliterare memoriam, hoc ipsum unde scis, o Plato, cum sit nunc in corpore anima tua, quoniam, priusquam in corpus introeat, a daemone potata est oblivionis medicamentum? Si enim daemonem et poculum et introitum reminisceris, et reliqua oportet cognoscas; si autem illa ignoras, neque daemon verus neque artificiose compositum oblivionis poculum. (*haer.* 2.33.2: 346-349)

Πρὸς ταῦτα Πλάτων ὁ παλαιὸς ἐκεῖνος <Ἀθηναῖος> ὁ καὶ πρῶτος τὴν γνώμην ταύτην εἰσηγησάμενος ἀπολογήσασθαι μὴ δυναθεὶς τὸ τῆς λήθης ἐπιγάγε πόμα, οἰόμενος δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἄπορον ἐκφυγεῖν, ἀπόδειξιν μὲν μηδεμίαν ποιησάμενος, δογματικῶς <δε> ἀποφηνάμενος ὅτι εἰσιῶσαι αἱ ψυχαὶ εἰς τόνδε τὸν βίον ὑπὸ τοῦ εἰσοδίου δαίμονος πρὸ τοῦ εἰς τὰ σώματα εἰσελεθεῖν ποτίζονται τὴν λήθην. Καὶ ἔλαθεν ἑαυτὸν εἰς ἄλλην μείζονα ἐμπεισὼν ἀπορίαν. Εἰ γάρ τὸ τῆς λήθης πόμα ἱκανὸν μετὰ τὸ ποθῆναι τῶν προγεγονότων πάντων ἐξαλείψαι, τὴν αὐτὸ τοῦτο πόθεν οἶδας, ὦ Πλάτων, ἐν σώματι νῦν οὔσης τῆς ψυχῆς <σου> ὅτι πρὶν εἰς τὸ σῶμα εἰσελεθεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ δαίμονος ἐποτίσθη τὸ τῆς λήθης φάρμακον; Εἰ γάρ τὸν δαίμονα καὶ τὸ πόμα καὶ τὴν εἴσοδον μνημονεύεις, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ δεῖ σε γινώσκειν, εἰ δὲ ἐκεῖνα ἀγνοεῖς, οὔτε ὁ δαίμων ἀληθής οὔτε ἡ λοιπὴ τεχνολογία τοῦ τῆς λήθης πόματος. (*haer.* 2.33.2: 346-349)

Regarding this [topic], Plato, that ancient Athenian who first introduced this opinion, when he was not able to defend it, then proposed this forgetfulness, supposing to thus get rid of the difficulty. Although not proving it, he set forth as doctrine that souls entering into this life are made to drink forgetfulness by the “entrance daemon” before entering the body. He fails to notice that he is falling into another greater difficulty. For if this drink of forgetfulness, after having drunk it, is sufficient to erase everything that happened before, then how did you know this, oh Plato, now that your soul is in your body, that before entering the body [your soul] was made to drink the drug of forgetfulness by the daemon? For if you remember the daemon and the drink and the entrance, it is necessary that you know the rest, but if you do not know those things, then neither [do you know] the true daemon nor the rest of the systemic argument of the drink of forgetfulness. (*haer.* 2.33.2)

Up to this point, Irenaeus challenges both pre-existent and transmigrating souls by appealing to common experience.

Due to this assertion, that Irenaeus opposes both pre-existent and transmigrating souls, depends on two Greek terms, I should mention their provenance. Several manuscripts from different families provide the Latin of *Adversus haereses* and permit critical comparisons, and these are complemented by fragments in Greek, Syriac, and Armenian (Rousseau - Doutreleau, 1982: 51-115). Since the work was originally written in Greek, these fragments are often preferred (Hort, 1923). The fragment in *haer.* 2.33 does not come to us from Epiphanius or John of Damascus, as so much of the extant Greek from Book 2. Rather, it is from an 8th century Greek anti-Origenist manuscript, dubbed *Vatopedi* 236, which uses the text of Irenaeus as its first line of proof to support the anathemas against those who hold to the pre-existence of souls. Otero has argued, and Rousseau agrees, that in one key place, the Greek text was adapted to better support the argument of the anti-Origenist polemic. At the opening

of Irenaeus' argument against Plato (which is second in the text from our editor, switching the order of 33.1 and 33.2), the editor dropped, "le terme μετενσωμάτωσιν, qui évoquait que le 'passage d'un corps dans un autre corps', et à lui substituer le terme ἐγκατάπτωσιν, qui évoquait la 'chute dans (un corps)'," preferring a term (κατάπτωσις) which is present in the 7th anti-Origenist anathema of the Council of 553 (Rousseau - Doutreleau, 1982: 99). Apart from the fact that the Latin supports a preference for μετενσωμάτωσιν (*transmigrationem*) (*haer.* 2.33.1, 1982: 344), κατάπτωσις would have been a *hapax legomena* in the Patristic period (Otero de Santos, 1973: 487). As Rousseau says, we have caught "l'excerpteur [of *Vatopedi* 236] en flagrant délit de [...] falsification textuelle" (1982b: 97-99). However, apart from this emendation, Rousseau argues, and I agree, that the Greek and the extant Latin are consistent, and very likely reflective of the original Greek (*ibid.*: 91-100). Therefore, while Irenaeus cannot be anachronistically aligned with the anti-Origenist preference for the term κατάπτωσις, he does explicitly oppose both transmigration (μετενσωμάτωσιν; *transmigrationem*) and the descent from another realm (κατεπέμποντο; *emittebantur*) in the context of his argument against the Carpocratians; however, to do so, he appeals to an increasingly popular philosophical discussion of this issue.

3. Philosophical Parallels between Strato and Irenaeus: Differentiating Soul and Life

In *haer.* 2.33, Irenaeus engages a web of philosophical traditions. Firstly, and at its most basic level, he utilizes Plato, criticising the claim that Plato could *remember* the process whereby the daemon provided the drink of forgetfulness, if indeed it caused one to forget everything prior to being embodied.⁶ Secondly, as argued recently by Briggman, Irenaeus depends on the Stoic view of corporeal soul: he uses a language of mixture in relation to the soul and body in *haer.* 2.33, particularly "ἀνακερανύω as the term used to speak of the 'blending again' of the body and the soul" and "the notion that this blending involved the dispersal of the soul through all the members of the body" (2019: 156). This passage includes distinctive elements from different philosophical positions.

However, I focus on a third philosophical dependence, that of the Peripatetic Strato of Lampsacus.⁷ Each Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian use Strato's basic criticism of Plato's view regarding the soul, though Tertullian is the only one to mention Strato by name. Schoedel believes Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian use the argument of Strato by way of the same intermediary source, but notes that it is impossible to identify (Schoedel, 1959: 25-26). I seek to build on the work of Schoedel and explore the pieces of Strato's argument present in Irenaeus, as has been done for the texts of Justin and Tertullian, to mark his influence on this early Christian appropriation (Grant, 1956; Waszink, 2010).

Strato of Lampsacus was the third heard of the Peripatetic school, from c. 287-269, after Aristotle and Theophrastus. Even though all that remains of Strato is based on secondary sources that cite him, several of these sources record the difficulties he had detected in Plato's *Phaedo* regarding recollection and the soul. For example, in one series of seven difficulties, preserved by Damascius, Strato argues that the death

⁶ Plato does provide viable excuse in the *Republic*: Er never drank but he saw others drinking, and brings back this story (*Rep.* 10, 621). In the *Republic*, the text refers to this water which no vessel can contain. Though he usually refers to the drink of forgetfulness, Irenaeus also mentions the *cup* of forgetfulness (*haer.* 2.33.2). However, this reference can be found later in philosophy, as for example Marinus of Neapolis in *Life of Proclus* 5. I am grateful to one of the readers of this journal, who also pointed out the discussion of the "cup of pleasure" in Ps-Heraclitus, *Cuest. Hom.* 72, and some parallel arguments regarding transmigration from Homer, Empedocles and Plato in Porphyry, *ap. Stobaeus* 1.49.60.

⁷ For more information, see Schneider, 2016.

of a person does not suggest a transmigration or resurrection any more than a finger would regrow after being cut off (*frag.76: 167*). The soul and its life are not circular, but rather, using his own metaphor, they are like wood that becomes charcoal and cannot return to its original state. Strato also explores recollection and learning, and asks whether souls gained knowledge before time and always possessed that knowledge, or whether they come to have knowledge at a certain time, which is learning for the first time (*frag.78: 169*). In its own context, Strato was redefining pedagogical processes (recollection and learning) and challenging the Platonic view of the soul (Desclos - Fortenbaugh, 2011).

In particular, and more relevant to this paper, Strato examines the relationship between life, death, and the soul. Strato challenges the view that souls are deathless, for the living compound of soul and body, or any other living compound, would not be able to admit its opposite, death (*frag.80: 171-175*). To do so, he differentiates between “deathless” (ἀθάνατος) and “imperishable” (ἀνώλεθρος). If something has soul, it is alive, and logically life and death cannot coexist. So, while Plato infers that the deathless soul must also be imperishable, for Strato, as Gertz has noted, “the term ‘deathless’ is ambiguous between ‘incapable of receiving death’ and ‘having inextinguishable life.’” Strato demonstrates that, according to Plato’s view, every individual living nature would be imperishable since it cannot admit its opposite, the death. So Plato has proven too much (Gertz, 2015: 244-245). Instead, Strato suggests that the soul is imparted (συνεπιφέρω; ἐπιφέρω) with life, and consequently life is something added to soul (*frag.80: 172-173*); hence, he redefines death as simply the loss of life (instead of “receiving death”). Therefore, for Strato, just as fire cannot be cooled, but imparts heat until it dies, so too the soul is limited, and while it imparts life as long as it exists, it can grow weary and die (*frag.80: 174-175*). It is given that the compound of body and soul can experience death, but Strato poses the question: even if the soul imparts life and is opposite to death, is it not distinct from life? (*frag.80: 172-175*). The soul may impart life, but is it life? Can the soul cease to exist? Throughout these thirteen difficulties preserved by Damascius, Strato repeatedly and clearly differentiates between soul and life.

Some parts of Strato’s argument are present in Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. For example, these three relatively contemporaneous Christian authors agree that the soul would not forget the knowledge it once held, particularly concerning the vision of divine things, such as prophecy or dreams.⁸ However, in other ways, Irenaeus’ adaptation of Strato is unique among these other authors.⁹ For example, Tertullian, the only author to refer to Strato by name, very clearly states that, for him, the soul is immortal (*de anima 22*), a position which differentiates him from Strato. As already noted, Strato pushes against the Platonic view that soul *is* life. Fortenbaugh argues that the idea of a higher and immortal principle imparting life onto the soul did not appear until the Neoplatonists, so one ought not to assume that Strato viewed life as being given to soul by a divine being (*frag.81: 176*). In contrast to Tertullian, and

⁸ According to the record of Damascius, Strato argues that all knowledge requires demonstration (illustrated by the need to be taught how to play a musical instruments), and so, learning cannot simply be recollection (*frag. 77A-78*, Desclos - Fortenbaugh: 167-169). Note that, for Strato, sleep is the separation of the “connate pneuma” (*segregationem consati spiritus*) (*frag. 67:155*). In *dial. 4: 196-197*, Justin argues that a human, made of soul and body, should be able to recollect what it has seen (Grant, 1956). In *de anima 23-24: 203-204*, Tertullian argues that the soul cannot be forgetful of divine things because it possesses divine qualities, as demonstrated by the divining faculty and prophecy. Irenaeus makes his argument on experiential and exegetical grounds. He notes that humans remember dreams after they are awakened. Similarly, in Scripture, Paul remembered his heavenly visions after returning from the third layer of heaven and the rich man, on the other side of the afterlife chasm from Lazarus, remembered his life and relations from earth (*haer. 2.33.1-2.34.1*, Unger - Steenberg: 106-109).

⁹ Strato will argue that some souls are keener or more sluggish than others (*frag. 78:169*). Irenaeus, who is unique in engaging this aspect of his argument, claims that the body does indeed carry out the souls’ desires, though in a sluggish manner, unable to keep up with the pace of the soul and mind, like the struggle an artisan must express the image in her with her tool (*haer. 2.33.4*, Unger - Steenberg: 107-108).

more similar to this later Neoplatonist view, Irenaeus describes the body as participating in the soul, just as the soul participates (*participare*) in life, and explicitly states that “the soul itself is not life, but partakes of life bestowed on it by God” (*haer.* 2.34.4, Unger - Steenberg: 110). He then goes on to argue that *being and existence* (*esse et subsistere*) are gifts of God. Then, in the same way that souls are not eternal, but have a beginning and a life which is gifted by God, so too souls can be made to participate in life eternally as a gift from God.¹⁰ Like Strato, but with his Christian overtone, Irenaeus distinguishes between the soul and life, and like later Neoplatonists, he considers life as given by God and not innate to the soul. As I will argue in the final section of this paper, for Irenaeus God allows the body and soul to participate in life and in the divine.

4. The Soul Participating in Life and God, throughout *Adversus haereses*

The argument against the pre-existence of souls is theologically similar to his famous argument against pre-existent matter in his defense of *creatio ex nihilo*, beginning with the premise of the creator/creature distinction (May, 2004). Due to his Rule of Truth, Irenaeus also needs to support the possibility of souls living eternally, but in *haer.* 2.33-34 he counters those who claim that souls must be pre-existent and ingenerated (*innascibiles*) to be immortal (*immortales*). So, to retain his creator/creature distinction, Irenaeus views souls as sempiternal.

... discant quoniam sine initio et sine fine, [...] solus est Deus, qui est omnium Dominus. Quae autem sunt ab illo omnia, quaecumque facta sunt et fiunt, initium quidem suum accipiunt generationis, et per hoc inferiora sunt ab eo qui ea fecit, quoniam non sunt ingenita; perseverant autem et extenduntur in longitudinem saeculorum secundum voluntatem Factoris Dei: ita ut sic initio fierent, et postea ut sint eis donat. (*haer.* 2.34.2: 356)

God alone, who is Lord of all things, is without beginning and without end [...] all things that came from him—namely whatever things have been made and are being made—have their beginning through being made and on this account are inferior to him who made them, because they are not ingenerate. Still, by the will of God the Creator, they continue to exist and extend themselves through the long course of the ages. He thus bestows on them the beginning of existence, and thereafter, continued existence. (*haer.* 2.34.2, Unger - Steenberg, 2012: 109)

This phrasing in *haer.* 2.34 echoes later language of *haer.* 4.38.3, where Irenaeus will describe God as unmade, giving to what is made “sempiternal endurance” (*donante eis sempiternam perseverationem*; δωρουμένου την εἰς αἰεὶ παραμονήν) (*haer.* 4.38.3: 952). In both places, the argument depends on the same concept of soul as seen in Strato: that souls are not eternal by nature. Much like Strato’s differentiation between “deathless” and “imperishable,” Irenaeus differentiates between souls being ingenerate (*innascibiles*) and immortal (*immortales*). As Strato hypothesizes that the soul could be destroyed, for Irenaeus a soul is not eternal because it is created, but is granted eternity by that which is uncreated, namely, God.

Irenaeus also differentiates between soul and life, and he views life as a divine quality *imparted* by God. As it has been already noted, Strato differentiates between soul and life, stating that the soul is imparted (ἐπιφέρω) with life (*frag.* 80: 172). For Irenaeus, the soul is not life itself, but rather, *participates* in the gift of life, an affirmation supported by explicit exegesis.

¹⁰ In *dial.* 5-6: 197-198, Justin denies that the soul is immortal, but claims that the soul partakes of life until the harmony between body and soul is broken, after which it ceases to exist.

Sicut autem corpus animale ipsum quidem non est anima, participatur autem animam quoadusque Deus vult, sic et anima ipsa quidem non est vita, participatur autem a Deo sibi praestitam vitam. Unde et propheticus sermo de protoplasto ait: *Factus est in animam vivam*, docens nos quoniam secundum participationem vitae vivens facta est anima, ita ut separatim quidem anima intellegatur, separatim autem quae erga eam est vita. Deo itaque et vitam et perpetuam perseverantiam donante, capit et animas primum non existentes dehinc perseverare, cum eas Deus et esse et subsistere voluerit. Principari enim debet in omnibus et dominari voluntas Dei [...]. Et de factura quidem et perseverantia animae hucusque dictum sit. (*haer.* 2.34.4: 360)

Just as the ensouled body is itself not the soul but partakes in the soul as long as God wills, so too the soul itself is not life but partakes of life bestowed by God. Hence also the prophetic word said to the first-formed Man that *he became a living being* (Gn. 2:7). By that he taught us that the ‘soul’ became living by sharing in life, so that the ‘soul’ is understood as distinct from life that exists in its behalf. If, then, God bestows the gift of life and perpetual existence, it is possible that the ‘souls’ that first did not exist will continue to exist since God willed them to have being and existence [...]. Let this much, then, be said about the creation and continuation of the soul. (*haer.* 2.34.4, Unger - Steenberg: 110)

Irenaeus denies the pre-existence and innate eternity of souls, but in order to affirm a resurrection with eternal implications (see Rule of Truth of *haer.* 1.10), he describes life as something in which the body must participate, and supports this description of participation with exegetical evidence. He cites Lk. 16:19-31 and the parable of Lazarus and the rich man to demonstrate a resurrected soul remembering its past life. He also cites Ps. 20 (21):5 (and alludes to Ps. 32(33):9 and 148:5-6) to support his view that God grants continuity, or life, to souls forever. In *haer.* 2.34.4, eternity is not part of a soul’s nature; rather, a body participates in the soul as the soul participates in life, and this life is given by God. Although the extant Greek for this section is unavailable, the concept of participation, as introduced in this section of *haer.* 2.33-34, remains consistent throughout the work.

This differentiation between life and soul was a matter of some contention for some scholars, based on *haer.* 5.7.1, where Irenaeus states, following Briggman’s translation “But [death] happens neither to the soul, for it is the breath of life, nor to the Spirit, for uncompounded and simple is the Spirit, which cannot be decomposed and is itself the life of those who receive it.” (Briggman, 2019: 159-160). Scholars like Rousseau read this passage in light of what Irenaeus will say in Book 5, and as a consequence, they conclude that in *haer.* 2.34 the soul is immortal (Rousseau, 1977: 841-852). But, in agreement with Behr and Briggman, I think this is a mistake (Behr, 2000: 94-96; Briggman, 2019: 159-160). First of all, in *haer.* 5.7.1 life is described as something that is received, despite the previous statement that seems to equate soul and life. Secondly, in his recent work, Briggman has noted that Irenaeus is depending on a Stoic view of a corporeal soul (2019: 156).¹¹ So, Briggman concludes that, for Irenaeus, the “characteristics ascribed to created beings—corruptible, earthly, compound, circumscribed—indicate that by ‘created’ Irenaeus means ‘material’.” Included among the characteristics that he ascribes to created, material, things is *figuratio*—having a figure or shape” (ibid.: 159).¹²

Irenaeus affirms a creator/creature distinction by describing soul as corporeal. As noted recently by Briggman and previously by Behr, Irenaeus only refers to the soul

¹¹ The language of mixture in relation to the soul and body is prevalent throughout *haer.* 2.33, particularly, “ἀνακεραυνώσας the term used to speak of the ‘blending again’ of the body and the soul” and “the notion that this blending involved the dispersal of the soul through all the members of the body.”

¹² Note, thus, that even here, life is received, despite the previous statement regarding the relationship between soul and life. Read alongside *haer.* 2.34, Irenaeus still holds to a distinction between soul and life.

as “incorporeal when put in comparison to mortal bodies,” (Behr, 2013: 152) but “Irenaeus does not think of the incorporeality of the soul absolutely but relatively: the soul is incorporeal when compared to the corporeality of the body.” (Briggman, 2019: 160). Just as he uses the Stoic conception of corporeal soul to emphasize that soul is created, so too he uses Strato’s differentiation between soul and life, even in a passage like *haer.* 5.7.1, to retain the distinction between soul and life, for even here, he notes that life is something that soul must receive.

Finally, just as Strato explains the soul participating in life through the metaphor of light, Irenaeus’ does the same in his famous description of participation in *haer.* 4.20.

Quemadmodum enim videntes lumen intra lumen sunt et claritatem ejus percipiunt, sic et qui vident Deum intra Deum sunt, percipientes ejus claritatem. Vivificat autem Dei claritas: percipiunt ergo vitam qui vident Deum...

quoniam vivere sine vita impossibile est, subsistentia autem vitae de Dei participatione evenit, participatio autem Dei est videre Deum et frui benignitate ejus. (*haer.* 4.20.5: 640-643)

Ὅσπερ οἱ βλέποντες τὸ φῶς ἐντός εἰσι τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ τῆς λαμπρότητος αὐτοῦ μετέχουσιν, οὕτως οἱ βλέποντες τὸν Θεὸν ἐντός εἰσι τοῦ Θεοῦ, μετέχοντες αὐτοῦ τῆς λαμπρότητος· ζωῆς οὖν μετέξουσιν οἱ ὁρῶντες Θεόν...

Ἐπει ζῆσαι ἄνευ ζωῆς οὐκ οἶόν τε ἦν, ἡ δὲ ὑπαρξίς τῆς ζωῆς ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ περιγίνεται μετοχῆς, μετοχὴ 13 δὲ Θεοῦ ἐστι τὸ γινώσκειν Θεὸν καὶ ἀπολαύειν τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ. (*haer.* 4.20.5: 640-643)

For in whatever way they see light they are within the light and they participate of his brightness, and thus those who see God are within God, and participate of his brightness. The brightness of God gives them life, therefore those who see God are participating of life...

Since it is impossible to live without life, and the substance of life comes from participating of God, and participating of God is to see God and to enjoy his goodness. (*haer.* 4.20.5)

Just as in *haer.* 2.33-34, where Irenaeus parallels the body’s participation in soul with the soul’s participation in life, here in *haer.* 4.20 he parallels the participation in life with participation in the divine, using the metaphor of light to illustrate this participation. Strato uses the same metaphor and the same verb when he argues that the soul is separable from life.

... ὅς γὰρ πάθος ἦν τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ἀλλ’ οὐσία συγκριθεῖσα αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ὡς πάθος ζωὴν ἐν αὐτῷ γεννήσασα, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ φωτιζομένῳ οὐκ αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ’ ἡ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ μέθεξις. (*frag.* 81: 172-173)

[Life] is not something the subject undergoes, but a substance combined with it and producing in it the life which is affections, just as what is illuminated by light is not the light itself, but participation that comes from it. (*frag.* 81)

Both Irenaeus and Strato use the metaphor of light to explain their conception of the soul participating in life, though to different ends.

13 Note the difference between verb and noun translations of μετέχω and μετοχή, being translated as *percipio* and *participationem* respectively. See discussion in Long and Sedley on knowledge vs. opinion, particularly concerning Plutarch (1987: 256).

5. Conclusion

Firstly, I sought to demonstrate that Irenaeus's argument is unique in his adaptation of one key element from Strato. Unlike Tertullian, who references Strato by name, both Irenaeus and Strato differentiate between soul and life, a differentiation which remains consistent throughout Irenaeus' argument. Irenaeus' reception of Strato included elements not shared by other early Christian receptions, even if, as Schoedel claims, they shared a secondary source. Secondly, if the discussion regarding life and participation in *haer.* 2.33-34 depends on Strato, it is not out of the question that in *haer.* 4.20.5, when he illustrates participation in life and God with the metaphor of light, there is a similar, albeit unconscious dependence. The influence of Strato's argument may remain even beyond Irenaeus' opposition to the Platonic view of the pre-existence of souls, remaining useful in Irenaeus' conception of the soul's participation in life... and the divine.¹⁴

¹⁴ I have not found any scholar who considers the influence of Strato outside of *haer.* 2.33, or referring particularly to *haer.* 4.20. In Briggman's chapter on *haer.* 4.20, Strato is not mentioned (2012). Part IV of Osborn's book focuses on participation, but in Chapter 10, regarding participation in life, while Osborn connects *haer.* 5.1.3 with 2.34 (2001: 221-222), and notes that the soul participates in the life given by God, no possible connection with Strato is mentioned. On two occasions, Osborn states that "the soul is life" and initially seems to affirm that the soul has a natural immortality (*ibid.*: 222); however, in the explanation that follows, life is shown to be something in which a human participates and that is given by God, and not innate to soul. For his comparison for between *haer.* 5.1 and 2.34, he pulls from Rousseau (1977). I also looked at arguments from Fantino (1994), Canlis (2005), Bacq (1987: 169-172), Orbe (1996: 289-291) and de Andia (1986), whether in relation to their arguments on participation or regarding *haer.* 4.20, but found no reference to Strato's influence.

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