

Answer Key: Nail Neoplatonism: Notorious Numenius to Nous for College

Scholars dissect Plotinus's Enneads and Proclus's commentaries to synthesize the metaphysical bridge between Hellenistic thought and the emanations of the One.

1. In the metaphysical system of Plotinus, the concept of 'Emanation' suggests that the 'Nous' and 'Psyche' are not created ex nihilo but are overflows of the 'One'. How does this specifically challenge the traditional Greek dualism of Form and Matter?

Answer: B) It suggests all reality is a continuous, hierachal descent from a single source, rendering matter as the privation of light.

Plotinian emanationism views reality as a series of cascading levels from the One; matter is the furthest point of this overflow, characterized by the absence of the One's light (privation), rather than a separate co-eternal substance.

2. In 'The Enneads', Plotinus argues that the human soul must undergo a process of purification to return to its source. Complete the following statement: To achieve this mystical union, the philosopher must move beyond discursive reason to reach a state of _____.

Answer: C) Intellectual Henosis

Henosis constitutes the 'oneness' or mystical union with the fundamental reality (the One), which Plotinus argues transcends the step-by-step logic of discursive reasoning.

3. True or False: In Proclus's 'Elements of Theology', he introduces the principle that 'every cause is both present in its effects and remains distinct from them' to explain the stability of the divine hierarchy.

Answer: A) True

This is a core tenet of Proclus's system, often summarized as 'remaining, proceeding, and returning' (mone, proodos, epistrophe), ensuring the source is not diminished by its effects.

4. Porphyry's 'Isagoge' is historically significant primarily because of how it transformed the study of which earlier philosopher?

Answer: B) Aristotle's 'Categories' and the nature of universals.

The 'Isagoge' served as an introduction to Aristotle's 'Categories' and became the standard textbook for logic in the Middle Ages, inadvertently sparking the 'Problem of Universals' in Scholasticism.

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5. The Later Neoplatonist Iamblichus shifted the focus of philosophy toward _____, the practice of ritual acts intended to invoke the presence of the gods or achieve union with the divine, differing from Plotinus's purely intellectual approach.

Answer: A) Theurgy

Iamblichus argued that human intellect alone was insufficient for salvation and that 'Theurgy' (god-working) through ritual was necessary to bridge the gap between human and divine.

6. True or False: Hypatia of Alexandria, a prominent female Neoplatonist, focused her teachings strictly on non-mathematical, poetic interpretations of the Homeric epics.

Answer: B) False

Hypatia was renowned specifically for her contributions to mathematics and astronomy, editing Diophantus's 'Arithmetica' and teaching Neo-Platonic philosophy through a highly scientific lens.

7. Considering the Neoplatonist view of 'The One', why is it considered 'ineffable' (un-speakable)?

Answer: B) Because any description (like 'The One is good') applies a predicate, which implies a division or duality that the One transcends.

To define the One is to limit it or imply it has parts; Neoplatonists used 'Apophatic theology' (saying what it is not) to preserve its absolute simplicity.

8. Evaluate the role of 'Logoi Spermatikoi' within the Synthesis of Greek thought. This concept, while having Stoic origins, was adapted by later thinkers to explain how the _____ are disseminated throughout the material world.

Answer: B) Rational seeds/principles

Logoi Spermatikoi (Seminal Reasons) were the rational principles that governed the development of the cosmos, used by Neoplatonists to explain how divine order manifests in matter.

9. How did the Neoplatonic school in Athens under Proclus attempt to resolve the contradictions between Plato and Aristotle?

Answer: B) By viewing Aristotle's logic and physics as a necessary 'minor mystery' or preparation for Plato's higher 'divine mysteries'.

Late Antique Neoplatonists sought a 'harmony' of philosophers, using Aristotle for the physical/logical world while reserving Plato for the supra-sensible, metaphysical truths.

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Date: _____

10. True or False: The closing of the Academy in Athens by Emperor Justinian in 529 AD marked the final extinction of Neoplatonic influence on Western and Middle Eastern thought.

Answer: B) False

While it closed the school, Neoplatonism lived on through the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Islamic philosophy (as the 'Theology of Aristotle'), and the Italian Renaissance.