IBN GABIROL'S THEOLOGY OF DESIRE

Matter and Method in Jewish Medieval Neoplatonism

SARAH PESSIN

CAMBRIDGE

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Drawing on Arabic passages from Ibn Gabirol's original *Fons Vitae* text and highlighting philosophical insights from his Hebrew poetry, Sarah Pessin develops a Theology of Desire at the heart of Ibn Gabirol's eleventh-century cosmo-ontology. She challenges centuries of received scholarship on his work, including his so-called Doctrine of Divine Will. Pessin rejects voluntarist readings of the *Fons Vitae* as opposing divine emanation. She also emphasizes Pseudo-Empedoclean notions of Divine Desire and Grounding Element alongside Ibn Gabirol's use of a particularly Neoplatonic method with apophatic (and what she terms "doubly apophatic") implications. In this way, Pessin reads claims about matter as insights about love, desire, the human relation to goodness, wisdom and God, and the receptive, dependent, and fragile nature of human being. Pessin reenvisions the entire spirit of Ibn Gabirol's philosophy, moving us from a set of doctrines to a fluid inquiry into the nature of God and human being – and the bond between God and human being in desire.

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חסד ודעת

This book is dedicated to my father (זצ'ל) and grandfather (זצ'ל)

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Introduction

1.1 DISCOVERING IBN GABIROL: THE AIMS AND GOALS OF THIS PROJECT

Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire is a new approach to the *Fons Vitae* and to the Jewish medieval Neoplatonism of an often misunderstood eleventh-century thinker. My project's main goal is to convey the living, philosophically and theologically vibrant voice of a thinker whose teachings have been rendered mute by the histories of philosophy and theology in two ways: (1) Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* has been overlaid by centuries of Augustinian and Kabbalistic readings and Aristotelian and Thomistic critiques, making it hard to hear what Ibn Gabirol is himself trying to say. (2) Under the weight of a particular set of scholastic lenses, the *Fons Vitae* has been boiled down to and recorded into the history of ideas in terms of two rather narrow ideas: The Doctrine of Divine Will and The Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism. In addition to at best misrepresenting Ibn Gabirol (as a misreader of Aristotle, as I explain in Chapter 7) and at worst getting Ibn Gabirol wrong (as I argue in Chapter 5 is the case for scholarly treatments of his so-called Doctrine of Divine Will), this calcified canonization has also helped readers fail to engage Ibn Gabirol in broader and deeper terms. The history of ideas has all but missed the expansive spiritual-ethical vision of this Neoplatonic theologian-poet-philosopher.

I put this project forth as a first corrective step. Toward the goal of conveying Ibn Gabirol's teachings and underlying spirit, I advance a number of theses. I argue for reading Ibn Gabirol in terms of a Theology of Desire, which apophatically envisions God's entry into the world of being in terms of a Divine Desire that gives rise, first and foremost, to desire at the core of being – and, as such, at the core of all beings, including human beings. I show, furthermore, how this God-born desire is manifest for Ibn Gabirol in a principle of pure matter that permeates the entirety of existence. I trace the

Pseudo-Empedoclean roots of this pure matter and explain how this matter, which I call Grounding Element, refigures the Great Chain of Being from a downpouring of light to a complex downpouring of a "shadowed light" (with the further sense of "shadow" as a most positive image, beckoning to the hiddenness of God's own hidden Essence).[1] For Ibn Gabirol, God's entry into the world is marked not only by a flow of being, but by a concomitant God-born (and God-directed) Desire-to-Be, Desire-to-Know, and Desire-for-Goodness manifest in the folds of matter. In this way, Ibn Gabirol's universe is shown to be a pulsing dual field of shadows and lights in which, born of God's own Desire, matter (not form) – and, as such, shadow (not light) – emerges as the highest, most essential aspect of reality. Arisen from God's own Essence, matter emerges as the ground of being and as that which most fully manifests (in an utterly hidden way) God's own desire to move from His ownmost sameness to an embrace of other.

In this light, I show that one of the main goals of Ibn Gabirol's project is to understand (or, as I explain, to apophatically engage) the mystery of God and the mystery in particular of the entry of a unified One into the diversities of being. In this context, I argue that the *Fons Vitae* is best understood as an attempt to understand God, but also human being. In the course of the project, I explain how Ibn Gabirol's entire endeavor of cosmo-ontology – including his talk of God and including his talk of cosmic layers and a Grounding Element – is a complex apophatic (and, as I explain, "doubly apophatic") reflection on God that itself immediately gives way to a prescriptive vision for human being. In this way, I show how the *Fons Vitae*'s descriptive investigation of "cosmic layers of matter" at once reveals a subtly apophatic encounter with God and a subtly prescriptive investigation of human life, as I show how Ibn Gabirol's teaching of the "rootedness of all things (including human being) in matter" is a teaching about the importance of a human subject experiencing herself "qua matter" – that is, qua dependent, receptive, and fragile desirer after wisdom, goodness, and God. In his cosmo-ontological investigation of a strange material Grounding Element and a cosmos filled with "layers of matter," Ibn Gabirol is shown to explore the very core of human life and the virtues that ground us.

In the spirit of this ethical point, I begin my study by emphasizing the *Fons Vitae*'s overarching concern with the ends of human being. My study in this way frames Ibn Gabirol in ethical terms: I begin by laying out Ibn Gabirol's sense of the ends of human being in terms of a tripart quest for wisdom, goodness, and God, and I arrive eventually at the insight that "living qua matter" – namely in a spirit of a dependency, receptivity, and fragility born of desire – is, for Ibn Gabirol, the very orientation that sets us on our tripart

quest. It is this set of teachings that I show to be at the heart of the *Fons Vitae* notion that "all being, and even human being, is rooted in matter," and it is this set of teachings that I show to be at the heart of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire.

In addition to laying out this ethical framework, my project provides a thoroughgoing reappraisal of Ibn Gabirol's entire philosophical theology. In Chapter 8, I explain the particularly tripart nature of Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic apophasis in way of making sense of his "triune" sense of God. In Chapter 5, I argue vigorously against traditions of scholars (including Wiesheipl, Gilson, and Husik) who have presented Ibn Gabirol's Divine Will as a theological teaching that opposes emanation. In fact, so misdirected is this most popular reading that I completely reject the use of the term "Divine Will" in my study; referring to the term at play in the original Arabic text, I speak instead of the Divine *Irāda* (which I translate as Divine Desire) and I show how – *pace* the received scholarship – this divine reality not only does not oppose emanation, but actually demarcates the very downward flow of emanation itself. My new emanationist reading of the Divine *Irāda* allows me to highlight the role of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis at the core of Ibn Gabirol's thinking about reality (in tripart terms of "matter," "matter+form," and "form"), as it at once leads me to a thoroughgoingly emanationist rereading of the *Fons Vitae*'s metaphysics of matter, which I present in Chapter 7. My analysis in Chapter 7 includes a treatment of matter as Divine Throne, a rejection of Schlanger's treatment of matter's status as "per se existent," a critique of the popular summary of Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics of matter in terms of a "Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism," and a set of reflections on Ibn Gabirol's description of creation (in his *Keter Malk̲hūt* poem) in terms of God's "splitting open the nothing."

In all of the aforementioned ways, and by pointing in Chapter 8 to how the term "doctrine" obscures the apophatic nature of Ibn Gabirol's teachings, my project asks us to thoroughly rethink the history of philosophy's standard picture of Ibn Gabirol in terms of a "Doctrine of Divine Will" and a "Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism." Approaching the *Fons Vitae* in terms of these two doctrines at worst gets Ibn Gabirol's main teachings wrong, and at best highlights aspects of his view that obscure his ethical-spiritual Theology of Desire, including his emanationist Divine *Irāda*, his Pseudo-Empedoclean material Grounding Element, his commitment to the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, and his apophatic investigation of God's own entry into being that, together with all of these cosmo-ontological details, reveals a prescriptive encounter with human being "qua matter" as a call to human desire, dependence, receptivity, and fragility.

In addition to providing a thorough rereading of the *Fons Vitae* philosophy, my project also makes a methodological contribution. As such, this project can be seen in two parts: in Chapters 2–7, I explore the details and content of key claims in the *Fons Vitae*; in Chapters 8–9, I turn to a methodological set of considerations about what Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – in all of its talk of cosmic thises and thats – is actually up to. Along these lines, in Chapter 8 I explore the uniquely apophatic (and what I call the "doubly apophatic") nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, and in Chapter 9 I suggest how we might see cosmo-ontological texts as "transformative" writing; there I explore my own transcendental-phenomenological suggestion, as well as a range of mythopoetic and symbolic approaches. In Chapter 9, I also overtly address various pitfalls that can set us back in our approach to texts of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, such as approaching its talk of levels and layers as some kind of outdated science or odd cosmic cartography. I additionally highlight how such pitfalls have arguably led to a number of misdirected readings of the actual details of the *Fons Vitae* in the history of philosophy. Following on these considerations of the "transformational" nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, I also draw our attention to Ibn Gabirol's own identification of writing with creation.

The first full-length treatment in English of the philosophy of the *Fons Vitae*, my study aims to reveal Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire while recovering his proper place within the history of philosophy and theology as a Jewish Neoplatonist with a uniquely Pseudo-Empedoclean voice.

1.2 CHAPTER GUIDE

Reading the *Fons Vitae* within its own Arabic Neoplatonic and Pseudo-Empedoclean contexts and in conversation with Ibn Gabirol's Hebrew poetry, I exposit Ibn Gabirol's teachings on the Divine Essence, Divine *Irāda*, matter, and form in terms of what I call a Theology of Desire – a theological, ethical, and existential picture of Ibn Gabirol insufficiently explored in popular classifications of his thinking.

Toward this goal, in Chapter 2, I provide an overview of Ibn Gabirol's context and some details about the *Fons Vitae*, as well as a critical starting preamble about the use of the terms "desire" and "love" at play in this study and at the core of the Theology of Desire. I then offer two additional critical points of terminology: I explain why I replace the more common term "Divine Will" with the term "Divine *Irāda*" (as "Divine Desire") in my study, and I explain why I replace the term "prime matter" with the term "Grounding Element." As I explain, my terminological shifts from "Divine Will" and "prime

matter" to "Divine *Irāda*" (as "Divine Desire") and "Grounding Element" directly help us leave behind a range of unhelpful (and often misleading) starting caricatures of Ibn Gabirol, in this way allowing us easier entry into the subtle folds of his Theology of Desire.

Further orienting us toward Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire in Chapter 3, I highlight the epistemological, ethical, and theological spirit of Ibn Gabirol's project. In his strong identification of human being in terms of a desire for "something of the goodness of God" (itself a trifold desire for wisdom, goodness, and God), Ibn Gabirol reveals the central role of desire in his project, as he also reveals his core teaching about the grounding of human being in matter (a point explained in fuller detail in Chapter 8). Starting with a focus on the human tripart quest in Chapter 3 helps us better appreciate Ibn Gabirol's overarching concern for human being, which in turn allows us to approach the cosmo-ontological details of his project with a better sense of direction: Because Ibn Gabirol is driven by a sense of the human's desire for something of the goodness of God, we ought approach his cosmo-ontological project in that light. With this in mind, we will be able to better understand Ibn Gabirol's teaching of "the root of all things (including human being) in matter" as a teaching about "the root of all things (including human being) in desire" – itself an emphasis on human being's groundedness in her desire after wisdom, goodness, and God. For, as we will see, it is precisely matter that stands as the marker of this critical God-born and God-directed desire at the root of all things, including at the root of the human spirit. By emphasizing the God-born and God-directed desire at the core of all things – in and through the activity of Divine *Irāda* and the Grounding Element, as we will see in greater detail in Chapters 4–7 – we will be able to see the prescriptive sense of human being's root in a desire for wisdom and goodness, as we will also be able to better understand the special significance of matter in Ibn Gabirol's worldview. In this light, we will consider, in Chapter 3, how matter (the kind of pure grounding matter that Ibn Gabirol has in mind) emerges in a decidedly positive light in the *Fons Vitae* and how Ibn Gabirol in this way reverses some of our more standard negative intuitions about matter across a range of Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Neoplatonic contexts.

In Chapter 4, I explore desire at the root of Ibn Gabirol's cosmos, and its role in grounding human beings, the fabric of reality, and even God. Following this theme through, I explore Ibn Gabirol's Pseudo-Empedoclean heritage, and I show how an appreciation of that heritage can further help us see in his technical claims about matter an exploration of the presence of love-desire at the foundation of being. In this chapter I also explore Greek and Islamic contexts for Ibn Gabirol's sense that "love makes the world go round" in

Aristotle, the *Theology of Aristotle*, and Avicenna's "*Risālah fi'l-'ishq*," as well as in traditions of Neoplatonized Aristotelian angelology in Islamic and Jewish thought. I end Chapter 4 by showing how Ibn Gabirol's particular treatment of Neoplatonic Return in terms of an "illuminated shadow" precisely reveals his uniquely Pseudo-Empedoclean worldview.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I invite us to thoroughly rethink extant scholarly treatments of Ibn Gabirol's so-called Doctrine of Divine Will. In the course of this treatment, I reject the conclusion – shared across Weisheipl's, Gilson's, and Husik's respective works – that Ibn Gabirol's "Divine Will" marks a rejection of emanation. After attempting to even make sense of what one might mean in claiming that "will rejects emanation" (including a consideration of Brunner's horizontal sense of "Divine Will" in occasionalist terms), I go on to show in Chapter 6 how a careful reading of Ibn Gabirol reveals full Plotinian emanationism (alongside a Pseudo-Empedoclean emphasis on spiritual hylomorphism). Drawing inspiration from Stephen Gersh's work on Greek and Christian Neoplatonism, I emphasize the importance and centrality of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis within Ibn Gabirol's worldview, and I show how this helps us understand the deeply Neoplatonic resonances of his analysis of individual realities in terms of "matter," "matter+form," and "form." Advancing a thoroughly emanationist reading of Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* project, I conclude, *pace* much received scholarship on the *Fons Vitae*, not only that Ibn Gabirol is a thoroughgoing emanationist, but that his Divine *Irāda* itself signifies the very downward flow of emanation. In this way, I completely reverse the more common reading of his "Doctrine of Divine Will" as rejecting emanation. In support of my new reading, in Section 6.5 I provide a detailed diagram (followed by detailed explanations) of the emanationist cosmo-ontology at play in Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire, including a treatment of the roles of Divine *Irāda*, a pure material Grounding Element, and additional "layers of matter" throughout Ibn Gabirol's cosmos. In all of these ways, I show how Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic project is best interpreted as ordinary Plotinian Neoplatonism laid out with a sensitivity to Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis and understood through a uniquely Pseudo-Empedoclean (that is, matter-centric) lens.

In Chapter 7, I draw out the implications of my new emanationist reading of Ibn Gabirol and I show in particular how a number of Ibn Gabirol's claims about matter can now be better understood in that light. As part of this chapter, I address the limits of describing Ibn Gabirol's unique theology in simple terms as a "Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism," as well as the limits of Augustinian and Kabbalistic allegiances to and Thomistic critiques of the *Fons Vitae*. I also turn in Chapter 7 to explaining and defending the idea of

matter as "existing per se" in Ibn Gabirol, and in so doing I reject aspects of the thirteenth-century Latin translation of the text as well as Schlanger's more Philonic reading of matter in Ibn Gabirol. In Chapter 7, I also consider how Ibn Gabirol's unique description of creation (in his *Keter Malkhūt* poem) in terms of God's "splitting open the nothing" fits well with our emanationist reading of the *Fons Vitae*.

Having in Chapters 2–7 thoroughly reworked the received scholarship on Ibn Gabirol from a picture of Divine Will and Universal Hylomorphism to a Theology of Desire, I turn in Chapters 8 and 9 to a methodological set of considerations about the kind of endeavor that Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology really is. In Chapter 8, I explore Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as an apophatic (and, as I explain, "doubly apophatic") project that reveals a deep affinity for and use of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. By highlighting Ibn Gabirol's use of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, I am able to make sense of the oft-misunderstood description in the *Fons Vitae* of a "triune" God (in terms of Divine Essence, Divine *Irāda*, and Divine Wisdom). In this chapter, I also bring things full circle, showing how Ibn Gabirol's apophatic project directly opens onto the prescriptive human project with which we began in Chapter 3. Having unpacked the details of the *Fons Vitae* cosmo-ontology in Chapters 4–7, I am here able to lay out the prescriptive nature of Ibn Gabirol's vision for human being in a way that directly draws on his teaching of the self's rootedness in matter. Emphasizing an experience of the self in terms of "self qua matter," I explore the self's orientation in particular terms of dependency, receptivity, and fragility, and I show how this grounding orientation arises from the very contours of Ibn Gabirol's uniquely "matter-centric" cosmo-ontology.

In Chapter 9, I explore the pitfalls of misreading Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as if it were some kind of archaic and arcane pseudoscientific cosmic topography, and I further explore the subtle theological, ethical, and existential nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as an exploration of God, human being, and the transformation of human life. After advancing my own reading of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as a transcendental ground for human living, I explore a number of other ways to consider Neoplatonic writing as transformative, including a range of scholarly perspectives on mythopoetic and symbolic texts and their capacity to enact new paths for living. I end Chapter 9 with a consideration of Ibn Gabirol's own self-reflective correlation of the acts of writing and creation.

Drawing on Ibn Gabirol's conception of matter and form in terms of "hiddenness" and "embroidery," in Chapter 10 I explore the phrase "embroidering the hidden" in way of capturing three core elements of Ibn Gabirol's unique

project, namely the teaching that the cosmos unfolds from matter to form, the teaching that God unfolds from Essence to being, and the fact that qua cosmo-ontologist, Ibn Gabirol creates new worlds of meaning in which his readers may live anew.

I end the project with an appendix exploring further historical and textual contexts for Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* philosophy and its positive valuation of matter.

2

Text in Context

kī ʿimkha meqōr ḥayyīm, be-ōrkha nirʾeh ōr

For with You is the fountain of life; by Your light we will see light

– *Psalms* 36:10

2.1 FIRST UNFOLDINGS

Drawing on the poetry of *Psalms* 36:10, Solomon Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* (*Fountain of Life*) explores God's creative revelation as a nourishing downpour that sparks the human spirit. With this image of unbounded flow, we enter Ibn Gabirol's universe, a symphony of being in three manifestations – the reality of a divine First Essence as ultimate cause, His presence in being through the gentle unfolding of a Divine *Irāda* (often translated as Divine Will), and the entirety of being as itself revealing an inescapably dual matter-with-form complexity:

> *ajzāʾ al-ʿilm bil-kull jīm, wa-hiya: ʿilm al-ʿunṣur waṣ-ṣūra, wal-ʿilm bil-irāda, wal-ʿilm biḏh-ḏhāt al-ʾūlā; wa-laysa fīl-mawjūd ġhayr hāḏhihi al-jīm. fal-ʿilla al-ʾūlā aḏh-ḏhāt wal-maʿalūl al-ʿunṣur waṣ-ṣura wal-irāda mutawassiṭa bayna aṭ-ṭarafayn . . .*
>
> There are three parts of knowledge in all:[1] (1) the knowledge of matter (*al-ʿunṣur*) and form (*aṣ-ṣūra*); (2) the knowledge of Will (*al-irāda*); and (3) the knowledge of the First Essence. In existence, there is nothing other than these three. First Essence is cause;[2] matter and form, effect; and Will (*al-irāda*) is the intermediary between the two extremes.[3]

So unfolds Ibn Gabirol's cosmic drama, a dance of dual realities in which the unity of the divine "two" (God's Essence and His *al-Irāda*) gives way to

the "two" of being – the binary nature of all reality in terms of matter and form.

In its further unfolding, Ibn Gabirol's cosmic drama features Neoplatonic layers of being: a Universal Intellect, followed upon by three World Souls, down through the realm of Nature. Against this backdrop, Ibn Gabirol (here prima facie deviating from Neoplatonic – as well as from Platonic and Aristotelian – tradition)[4] further details various levels of forms and matters that make up reality, including a pure grade of matter at the root of the Great Chain of Being and present in all things – a sublime, pure, universal matter that he likens to the Divine Throne. Reading across his *Fons Vitae* and his vast corpus of Hebrew poetry, we find many additional – and oftentimes confounding (because seemingly contradictory) – details: he tells us of the existence of matter only with form, as well as of the existence of matter before form; he tells us of the existence of Divine Will over Divine Wisdom, of Divine Wisdom over Divine Will, and of the identity of Divine Wisdom and Divine Will; and he tells us of the emergence of matter from the Divine Will, as well as of the emergence of matter from the Divine Essence itself. In addition to these ambiguities, the sheer complexity of Ibn Gabirol's cosmic drama invites various characterizations and varied foci of attention: in his doctrine that all things (including intellects) are composed of form and matter (a doctrine to which later Christian Latin authors give the name Universal Hylomorphism; see Section 7.6), he is criticized by some as a misreader of Aristotle (for whom intellects are, rather, pure forms devoid of matter) and hailed by others as a champion of Augustinian metaphysics;[5] in his doctrine of forms and matters, he is characterized (by later Christian Latin authors) as advancing a doctrine of "the plurality of forms," and is seen in this way in metaphysically charged opposition to Aristotelian views of substance;[6] and in his reflections on forms' relationship to pure matter's existence per se, he is seen by some as a follower of Avicenna's idea that existence is added to preexistent essences,[7] and by others as a Philonic advocate of a Divine-Mind-as-repository-for-Ideas.[8] And while Ibn Gabirol's "Doctrine of Divine Will" is most often seen as a firm rejection of emanation,[9] it is at other times seen as championing the emanationism of Jewish Kabbalistic theosophy.[10]

In an attempt to best recover the spirit of Ibn Gabirol's philosophy, the current study puts aside later scholastic and Kabbalistic lenses and attempts to approach Ibn Gabirol's work on its own eleventh-century Jewish and Islamic Neoplatonic terms. In this way, we aim to avoid muting Ibn Gabirol's voice under the weight of other philosophies and theologies. The picture of Ibn Gabirol that emerges will hopefully give readers a fresh starting place from which to reread and rethink Ibn Gabirol's vast corpus of poetry and philosophy.

2.2 BACKGROUND

Solomon Ibn Gabirol is an eleventh-century Jewish Neoplatonic philosopher and poet writing in an Arabic philosophical milieu. Although we are not certain of what traditions most influenced his work, we might certainly see in the pages of his philosophy and poetry a unique blend of Jewish, Islamic, Neoplatonic, Pythagorean, philosophical, Biblical, and mystical source materials. Additionally circulating in the background of his writing is a philosophical tradition (or traditions) that scholars have described as "Pseudo-Empedoclean," and to which we will return later. Among Ibn Gabirol's writings is his expansive philosophical treatise, the *Fons Vitae* (*The Fountain of Life – yanbūʿ al-ḥayāh* in Arabic,[11] and *meqōr ḥayyīm* in its later Hebrew translation). Originally written in Arabic (in particular, Judeo-Arabic) in the eleventh century in the form of a dialogue between a teacher and his student (we will refer to this throughout as the Arabic text), the *Fons Vitae* was translated into Latin in the twelfth century by the translation team of Dominicus Gundissalinus and John of Spain, and an abridged Hebrew version (one that loses the dialogue format) was made by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera in the thirteenth century. The original Arabic text is lost to us, although we do have some extant fragments in the form of citations of the original Judeo-Arabic version in the Judeo-Arabic language texts of other Jewish medieval philosophers. Because the Arabic fragments are sparse, the main version of the text is the twelfth-century Latin translation; it is considered more true to the original than the later, thirteenth-century translation because it is an earlier translation, but also because unlike the Hebrew translation, the Latin edition is (ostensibly) a complete translation, maintaining – as the Hebrew summary does not – the original dialogue format of Ibn Gabirol's text. It might be additionally noted, however, that because of the greater affinity – linguistically and conceptually – between Hebrew and Arabic, sometimes the Hebrew translation is able to better capture the nuance of a translated term than the Latin text. Along these lines too, sometimes the thirteenth-century Hebrew translation is more helpful than the Latin one because it resonates with various Hebrew terms at play in Ibn Gabirol's own vast corpus of Hebrew poetry; this is often helpful in shedding light on the nature of a given philosophical point in the *Fons Vitae*.

In way of background introduction, we might add that Ibn Gabirol is most well known within a range of medieval and modern Jewish traditions not for his philosophical tract, the *Fons Vitae*, but for his Hebrew poetry, including his very popular *Keter Malkhūt* (variously translated as the *Crown of the King*, *Kingdom's Crown*, or *The Royal Crown*), a long devotional poem exploring the ineffable splendor of the divine and tracing God's presence throughout the cosmos. In fact, this poem is included even today in many Jewish prayer books

for recitation on *Yōm Kippūr*, the highest of Jewish holy days. Philosophically speaking, Ibn Gabirol's strongest impact was arguably in the Christian world: Translated into Latin in the twelfth century, and circulating no longer under Ibn Gabirol's name, but rather under the Latinized version of his name (as Avicebron, Avicembron, Avicenbrol, or Avencebrol), the *Fons Vitae* came to exert a great influence on centuries of medieval Christian opponents and supporters, who variously assumed the author to be a Muslim or a Christian, none suspecting the author to be the accomplished medieval Jewish poet, Solomon Ibn Gabirol. The Latin translation itself ends with Gundissalinus, the translator, declaring:

> *libro perscripto sit laus et gloria Christo,*
> *per quem finitur quod ad euis nomen initur . . .*
>
> May the completion of this project bring praise and glory to Christ through whom is now finished that which for [the glory of] his name is begun . . . [12]

Gundissalinus is referring to the completion of his own task of translation (he goes on to cite himself and John of Spain as the translators), but the sentiment certainly can be said to have spilled over to cover "Avencebrol" the author of the work as evidenced by the popularity of the book as a repository of Christian Augustinianism for so many centuries of readers.

Taken up in just this way by many Christian philosophers, Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* text became a cornerstone in many theologically charged debates between Franciscans and Dominicans, with the Franciscans pointing to many of the *Fons Vitae* doctrines in support of what they took to be true, untainted Christian ideas as laid out by Augustine, in contrast to the more heavily Aristotelianized ideas of Thomas Aquinas and other Dominicans. It was not until the nineteenth century that the process of returning the *Fons Vitae* to its Jewish roots began with Solomon Munk's uncovering of the thirteenth-century Hebrew summary attributed to Solomon Ibn Gabirol, leading to Munk's recognition that the *Fons Vitae* had in fact been penned by the eleventh-century Jewish poet.

Turning to a brief starting overview of Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*,[13] we may note that Ibn Gabirol sets out throughout the course of five treatises to explain how all things are composed of a series of matters and forms, mediated in some way by a central divine force, namely the Divine *Irāda* (generally translated as Divine Will). Across his five treatises, Ibn Gabirol sets out to address the topics of (1) corporeal matter, (2) spiritual matter as a substrate for corporeal matter, (3) simple spirituals, (4) the hylomorphic composition of substance, and (5) the highest principles of universal matter, universal form, and Will.

In the course of the project, Ibn Gabirol delineates four simple substances in a way that at once illustrates his Plotinian heritage as well as his unique emphasis on matter and form:

1. Universal Matter and Universal Form
2. Universal Intellect
3. Universal Soul (itself presented by Ibn Gabirol as three separate cosmic hypostases corresponding to three aspects of individual human souls; in this regard, he speaks of Universal Rational Soul, Universal Sensitive Soul, and Universal Nutritive Soul)
4. Nature

At *Fons Vitae* 2.14, Ibn Gabirol also delineates "nine orders of substance," the first three of which give us a good insight into the aspects of his system that are most difficult to understand (and that we will set out to explain in the course of this project):

1. the substance of all things in the knowledge of the Creator
2. the substance of universal form in universal matter
3. the substance of the simple substances one in the next

He also demarcates five grades of matter that constitute the fabric of existence, a hierarchy of types of material "substance" or "essence" he describes in turn as:

1. universal spiritual matter
2. universal corporeal matter
3. universal celestial matter
4. universal natural matter
5. particular matter (natural and artificial)

Associated with matching grades of form, these "levels of matter" further illustrate Ibn Gabirol's matter-centric approach to his cosmo-ontology. (In Chapters 6 and 7, we will see how these "grades of matter," or "levels of matter," are Ibn Gabirol's uniquely hylomorphic way of describing the ordinary Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being through a Pseudo-Empedoclean lens.)

Ibn Gabirol also goes on (as we will treat in great detail in Chapter 8) to speak of God in tripart terms of Divine Essence, "Divine Will" (a term we will replace in this project with "Divine Desire" for reasons to be addressed later in the chapter, in Section 2.4), and Divine Wisdom (itself sometimes in terms of Divine Word). We might add by way of introduction that Ibn Gabirol's claims about the presence of matter in all things (including souls and intellects) come along with the idea of a grade of pure, unformed matter

that lies at the core of reality (about which we will say much more in this project). And in all of this, there emerges too in Ibn Gabirol a sense in which matter is conceptually prior to and even superior to form:

> Matter is the sustainer and the form is what is sustained . . . Which of them is superior? The sustainer. . . . The sustainer is superior to what is sustained because the thing sustained needs it for its existence . . . [14]

Here, matter emerges as more foundational than form. In fact, going so far as to suggest that matter is more sublime than form, Ibn Gabirol remarks that:

> . . . *materia est creata ab essentia, et forma est a proprietate essentiae, id est sapientia et unitate* . . .
>
> . . . matter is created from Essence, and form is from the property of Essence, that is to say, from Wisdom and unity . . . [15]

As we will see later on in Sections 6.5 and 7.2, here "Essence" refers to the Divine Essence (that we have seen in the quote at the start of Section 2.1). Taken as the claim that "matter is created from Divine Essence," this passage highlights an express link between matter and God in His most essential reality – a link more intimate than even the one between God and form. In these, and in a number of other ways we explore in the course of this study, Ibn Gabirol shows the primacy of pure matter as something directly manifesting the essential preexistent unity of the divine nature itself (in particular, as we will see, as a reflection of God's own Desire-to-Be in matter's own desire-to-be). Conceptually, this deviates from the history of Pythagorean, Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Aristotelian systems in which material principles are seen as at best secondary to formal principles and at worst (as in Pythagorean, Platonic, and Neoplatonic contexts) the chaotic source of evil. On the contrary, in Ibn Gabirol there emerges a notion of pure matter that is not only *not secondary* to form, and not only *not a chaotic source of evil*, but that, in its passive expectancy, is the aspect of reality most like unto the deepest nature of the Divine Essence itself (see Section 3.3). As we will see, pure matter in Ibn Gabirol mirrors God's ownmost desire for knowledge, goodness, and being at the core of all reality – a desire at the core of physical bodies, souls, and intellects alike.

Clearly Ibn Gabirol's system is complex and difficult. As such, it is notable (and, as we will see, worrisome) that in its reception by medieval scholastics, all of these *Fons Vitae* teachings are primarily boiled down to a Doctrine of Divine Will and a Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism (along with a concomitant Doctrine of the Plurality of Forms). It is part of the goal of the current study to supplement – if not to replace entirely – the resulting picture

of the *Fons Vitae* as it is still known to most scholars and students of the history of ideas, and as it has become calcified into the history of philosophy. We will discuss the so-called Doctrine of Divine Will and our rejection of it as a valid approach to Ibn Gabirol in Chapter 5, and we will talk more about the pitfalls of summarily characterizing Ibn Gabirol in terms of Universal Hylomorphism in Chapter 7. For here, we might summarize the popular ways that these views have classified Ibn Gabirol. In emphasizing a Doctrine of Divine Will, scholars (including medieval scholastics and contemporary thinkers) have highlighted in Ibn Gabirol a powerful, freely choosing Creator God who intermediates in the universe in a way that opposes the divine emanation of other Neoplatonic thinkers (and in a way that has much in common with the *voluntas* of Augustine's God). With the Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism, scholars (including medieval scholastics and contemporary thinkers) have emphasized Ibn Gabirol's claim that *all* things – including souls and intellects – are made up of matter (Greek: *hūlē*) and form (Greek: *morphē*). This doctrine has been seen as philosophically significant for its standing in sharp opposition to Aristotelian hylomorphism according to which only bodies are made up of matter and form; whereas universal hylomorphism describes even souls and intellects in terms of matter and form, Aristotelian hylomorphism describes souls and intellects in terms of form only. The universal hylomorphism of the *Fons Vitae* comes up in a variety of later medieval metaphysical contexts in the claim that even angels (the separate intellects) are made up of matter as well as form, and is seen by some as advancing an Augustinian notion of spiritual matter. Signaling a departure from Aristotelian hylomorphism and an affinity for Augustinian teachings on God and substance, the *Fons Vitae* Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism (and its related Doctrine of the Plurality of Forms) emerges as a particular point of contention between Augustinian Franciscans and Aristotelian Dominicans. In light of its particularly strong role in the history of Christian thought, the *Fons Vitae* has earned a rather summary (and, as this study will show, importantly misleading) reputation in the history of ideas as a text with pro-Augustinian, anti-Aristotelian, and anti-emanationist resonances. We will return to the problems with summarizing Ibn Gabirol in this way (as well as to the even graver problems of summarizing Ibn Gabirol in terms of a Doctrine of Divine Will) toward the end of this chapter, as well as in Chapters 5–7.

2.3 DESIRE AND LOVE: TERMINOLOGICAL PREAMBLE I

Moving away from the more popular descriptions of Ibn Gabirol in terms of a Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism and a Doctrine of Divine Will,

throughout the course of this project I develop a picture of Ibn Gabirol in terms of a Theology of Desire. In way of introduction, it is important to make two points of clarification about the use of the terms "love" and "desire" in Ibn Gabirol, and in the current project.

2.3.1 Desire as God-Born and God-Directed

In his Theology of Desire, Ibn Gabirol teaches of a God-born and God-directed desire found in this world first and foremost in a purest grade of matter at the core of all things. This project is about that God-born and God-directed desire. Therefore, the reader is advised to bear in mind that when I speak of "desire" in this project, it is to that God-born and God-directed desire that I am referring. As we will see, it is a desire-to-be that emerges as a trifold desire for wisdom, for goodness, and for God (a desire that I often refer to in the project as a desire for something of the goodness of God, for reasons that will become clear in Chapter 3). I sometimes speak too in this same regard of *érōs* or the "erotic" (see Section 6.6 on the "erotic/*irādic*"). At no point throughout this project do I use the terms "desire" or "*érōs*/erotic" to refer to corporeal desires of the flesh, the "*al-hawā*" (lust, passion) of which Ibn Gabirol writes disparagingly in his *Improvement of the Moral Qualities*:

> It is almost impossible for any man to be secure from this accident *(al-ʿāraḍ)* O God, save he whose intellect is master over his nature. . . . Lust (*al-hawā*) is a constituent element in the nature of man . . . let him cast away lust (passion) (*al-hawā*), make no use of it whatever, ignore it and do without it, for it is one of the baser qualities.[16]

Given that the current project speaks only of desire in the sense of Ibn Gabirol's exalted and grounding God-born and God-directed desire, readers are urged not only to avoid tacitly misconstruing my talk of desire in this project in negative corporeal terms related to lust, but also to avoid a tacitly Christian lens through which the notion of desire, heard in connection with *érōs*, might be construed as inferior to a spiritual notion of *agápē*. It is important to keep in mind that in Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire, a variety of Arabic and Hebrew terms for love *and* desire can be used interchangeably to refer to the highest human and theological reality.

2.3.2 Desire as Love

In the course of this project, I mostly use the term "desire" (to refer to the God-born and God-directed desire just described), but I also speak interchangeably – and synonymously – of "love." Engaging with terms for "love"

(Arabic, *al-ḥubb*, *al-maḥabbah*, and others) in his Pseudo-Empedoclean and Neoplatonic contexts, Ibn Gabirol speaks interchangeably of "love and desire" when describing the God-born, God-directed yearning that is the subject of the current study and that is directly linked to matter's desire for form:

> *. . . intentio appetitus et amoris non est nisi inquisitio applicationis ad amatum et unitionis cum illo, et materia inquirit applicari formae: oportet ut eius motus sit propter amorum et desiderium quod habet ad formam. similiter dicendum est de omni re, quod movetur ad inquirendum formam.*[17]
>
> . . . the aim [or: meaning] of desire and love is to strive to join and to unite with the beloved, and matter strives to be joined to form. And so it is necessary that the motion [of matter] is in accordance with the love and desire that it has for form. Similarly, it ought to be said of everything that it is moved to strive for form.

AS WE ARE MISSING MOST OF IBN GABIROL'S ARABIC ORIGINAL, IT IS difficult to know precisely which terms he uses where. In particular, we have no Arabic fragments corresponding to his many claims throughout the *Fons Vitae* about matter's desire for form – and, as we will show throughout this study, it is precisely matter's desire for form (in connection, as we will see later, to the activity of the Divine *Irāda*) that marks the Theology of Desire's grounding of all being and human being in the God-born and God-directed desire for something of the goodness of God. Looking to the Latin, there are a number of terms used to demarcate this positive desire of matter for form, including (as we have just seen) *appetitus*, *desiderium*, *amor*, as well as others. Looking to Ibn Gabirol's Hebrew poetry, there are also a number of terms, including *nikhsaf* (to desire) and *ahavah* (love) in his poem *ahavtīkha* (*I Love You*, a poem we will address throughout this study). Variously interpreted as describing matter's desire for form, God's desire to connect matter to form, or (in one particular medieval context) the separate angelic intellect's desire for God, Ibn Gabirol's talk of desire (in terms of *nikhsaf*) in this particular philosophical poem (about *ahavah*, love) describes a most positive relation of yearning and connection by engaging Hebrew terms for desire and love.

Turning in particular to the yearning relation of matter to form, even though we lack direct Arabic confirmation of what kinds of terms Ibn Gabirol uses to describe matter's desire for form, we can make three important points:

1. We have good reason to think that at least one of the terms at play in Ibn Gabirol's Arabic to describe this positive relation of desire or love is related to '*ishq* (from the Arabic '*ashiqa*), the Ṣūfī term for passion (used

too by Maimonides to demarcate the human soul's highest engagement with God).[18] In fact, the one Arabic fragment we have corresponding to a *Fons Vitae* claim about desire reveals the Arabic language of '*ashiqa*. In that context (at *Fons Vitae* 5.35, p. 322, line 3), the verb in the Latin is from *desiderare*, and the verb in the Arabic is from '*ashiqa*. Even though the claim at *Fons Vitae* 5.35 is about soul's desire for understanding, not matter's desire for form,[19] the link at *Fons Vitae* 5.35 between *desiderare* and '*ashiqa* supports the likelihood that '*ashiqa* is one of the Arabic roots used by Ibn Gabirol when the Latin text describes matter's desire for form in terms of *desiderium* and other *desiderare*-based terms. In fact, just a few lines away from the *desiderare*-rooted – and '*ashiqa*-rooted – claim about "soul's desire," we have the Latin description of the relation between matter and form in terms of "*desiderant convenientiam*" (*Fons Vitae* 5.35, p. 321, lines 12–13). It is reasonable to conclude that the Arabic '*ashiqa*/'*ishq* is at least one of the ways that Ibn Gabirol describes the positive relation of matter to form (which, again, we will generally translate as "desire," but which we will synonymously also talk of as "love").

We may suggest, then, that in our use of "desire" and "love" throughout this study of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire, we are referring to a relation that Ibn Gabirol most likely describes at least sometimes in terms of '*ashiqa*/'*ishq* (a set of terms that, through the various grammatical forms of '*ashiqa*, also conceptually relate to the idea of "connection," a notion that we address in Chapters 5 and 6). On the resonance of '*ishq* in this context, we might also note that Avicenna's own treatise on love-desire in this period employs that term. We will address Avicenna's "*Risālah fi'l-'ishq*" (as well as its resonance with the Brethren of Purity and the *Theology of Aristotle*) later in Section 4.2.

2. Given that the Latin text uses a wide range of terms to describe matter's relation to form (including terms of desire and of love), we may suggest that Ibn Gabirol is likely using a number of Arabic terms interchangeably to describe the positive notion of a God-born, God-directed desire-love at the core of being.

In fact, in addition to the '*ishq* terminology, we find a decidedly positive sense of *al-ḥubb* (love) in Ibn Gabirol's *Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, as we also find (as we will see in Chapter 4) the terms *al-ḥubb* and *al-maḥabbah* at play in a decidedly positive way in the *Theology of Aristotle* as well as in the Pseudo-Empedoclean tradition in whose spirit Ibn Gabirol constructs his Theology of Desire.[20]

In Section 2.4, we will also see how Ibn Gabirol's emphasis on God's *al-irāda* (generally translated as Divine Will, but translated in the current volume as Divine Desire) points throughout his *Fons Vitae* project to the positive variety of love-desire at play in his Theology of Desire.

3. We also have evidence that Ibn Gabirol uses terms for love and desire in a number of different ways. Unlike a theology of *érōs* versus *agápē*, Ibn Gabirol's theology does not adopt a rigid terminology on the topic of desire-love, but is, rather, quite flexible in making a range of positive and negative associations with individual terms (e.g., *al-ḥubb*, which he treats in his *Improvement of the Moral Qualities* as denoting both a negative and a positive relation). Ibn Gabirol is not only using a range of love-desire terms (as we suggested in 2), but is also using individual love-desire terms in a range of ways (and even in opposing ways).

In support of the claim that Ibn Gabirol uses individual love-desire terms in a range of ways, consider Ibn Gabirol's treatment in his *Improvement of the Moral Qualities* of the "quality (in the sense of disposition) of love" (*khulq al-ḥubb*) in both an extremely negative and extremely positive sense. Returning to Subsection 2.3.1, we have seen Ibn Gabirol lambast "*hawan*" (or, *al-hawā*). However, doing so as he does in a section on the "quality of love" (*khulq al-ḥubb*), it is clear that in his critique of *hawan* he is critiquing love (*al-ḥubb*) in its negative capacity as *hawan* (or, *al-hawā*) – a term for "desire" there used in the negative sense of "lust," and with resonances of "fancy," "whim," and "caprice" (in relation, we might note, to the Arabic root sense of "*hawā*" as "to drop, fall, sink, or collapse"). As Ibn Gabirol makes clear, what he is lambasting is love as "preferred by foolish men only because of the imminence of its delight and for the sake of the amusement and merriment and the hearing of mirthful songs which they get through it."[21] The love being criticized is described further as "present pleasure," and as that which inspires hopeless pursuits of flight-of-fancy wishes. It is clear that what is being criticized here is the same range of human weaknesses that Maimonides lambasts in his own critique of bodily delight and carnal pleasure, as, for example, in his critique of Adam's having been "inclined toward his desires of the imagination and the pleasures of the corporeal senses."[22]

But, after unpacking *al-ḥubb* in this extremely negative way, Ibn Gabirol goes on to show *al-ḥubb* in a decidedly exalted sense as he enumerates a list of necessary loves, even emphasizing a Biblical prescription for each:

> [M]an must devote this quality of love to God, exalted may He be, as it is written (*Deut.* 11:1) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; and to his soul, as

> it is written (*I Sam.* 20:17), "For he loved him as he loved his own soul"; to his relative, as it is written (*Gen.* 29:18), "And Jacob loved Rachel"; to his offspring, as it is written (*Gen.* 37:3) "Israel loved Joseph"; to his country, as it is written (*Num.* 10:30), "But I will depart to my own land and to my kindred"; to his companion, as spake David to Jonathan (*II Sam.* 1:26), "Very pleasant hast thou been unto me"; to his wife (*Prov.* 5:19), "Let her be as the loving hind and the pleasant roe"; to wisdom, as it is written (*Prov.* 29:3), "The man that loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father."[23]

Ibn Gabirol concludes the list with this reflection:

> The moral application of this quality is [that] man must evince it (in his dealings) with all men.[24]

Addressing positive senses of love, Ibn Gabirol mentions love of God, soul, and wisdom, as well as the love of family, country, the love of a man for his wife, and the love of a man for his friend.

And so we find that in his *Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, Ibn Gabirol uses the single term *al-ḥubb* to refer to two very different realities, one that he lambasts and another one that he champions. Love can refer to something negative; love can refer to something God-born, God-directed, and positive.

IT OUGHT BE CLEAR FROM OUR AFOREMENTIONED CONSIDERATIONS THAT Ibn Gabirol does not employ only one special Arabic (or Hebrew) term for the sublime God-born love-desire that is our topic in this volume. On the contrary, he uses a range of love-desire terms in a range of senses. Reflecting on this point, as well as on the various Hebrew and Arabic terms used to refer to a positive relationship of yearning within Ibn Gabirol's context, I will talk interchangeably in this volume of "love" and "desire" (and of "desire-love" or "love-desire") to refer to the positive God-born and God-directed spiritual-ethical energy at the core of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire.

2.4 FROM DIVINE WILL TO DIVINE-*IRĀDA*-AS-DESIRE: TERMINOLOGICAL PREAMBLE II

Marking a sharp departure from extant scholarship on Ibn Gabirol, this study completely does away with the proliferating language of "Divine Will." Recall our opening quotation from Ibn Gabirol's original eleventh-century Arabic text of the *Fons Vitae*:

> *ajzā' al-'ilm bil-kull jīm, wa-hiya: 'ilm al-'unṣur waṣ-ṣūra, wal-'ilm bil-irāda, wal-'ilm bidh-dhāt al-'ūlā; wa-laysa fīl-mawjūd ghayr hādhihi al-jīm. fal-'illa al-'ūlā: adh-dhāt; wal-ma'alūl: al-'unṣur waṣ-ṣura; wal-irāda mutawassiṭa bayna aṭ-ṭarafayn . . .*
>
> There are three parts of knowledge in all: (1) the knowledge of matter (*al-'unṣur*) and form (*aṣ-ṣūra*), (2) the knowledge of Will (*al-irāda*), and (3) the knowledge of the First Essence. In existence, there is nothing other than these three. First Essence is cause; matter and form, effect; and Will (*al-irāda*) is the intermediary between the two extremes.[25]

Looking to the description here of a divine reality described as "the intermediary between the two extremes,"[26] I have so far translated this along with other scholars as "Divine Will," in this way following the Latin text's use of the term "*voluntas*" (will) in this passage and passages like it. However, I will henceforth avoid the term "Divine Will," alternatively leaving it untranslated as "Divine *Irāda*" and sometimes talking of it as the "Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire" or just as "Divine Desire."

My reason for avoiding the term "Divine Will" is twofold. First, "Divine Will" carries an overly Augustinian ring to it, especially in its *Fons Vitae* connection to the Latin "*voluntas*." I worry in this regard that the term overdetermines how at least some readers understand Ibn Gabirol's project. In fact (as I address in a fuller context in Chapter 5), I worry that scholars have been led to (or at least encouraged in) various non-emanationist readings of Ibn Gabirol simply by the undue Augustinian resonances of the terms "*voluntas*" and "Will" (a point perhaps poignantly underscored by Weisheipl's description of his own project – essentially a study of Christian medieval philosophy – as one in which "there is little point in calling Avicebron by his real Jewish name"[27]). In this spirit, I have chosen to avoid the term "Will" altogether.[28]

My second reason for avoiding the term "Divine Will" is that, although there is nothing technically wrong with translating "*al-irāda*" as "Will," the Arabic term may just as readily be rendered "desire." The term "*al-irāda*" is expressly used in the sense of "desire" in Ibn Gabirol's immediate Islamic philosophico-mystical context – for example, in the eleventh-century Ṣūfī writings of al-Qushayrī where the term is used to demarcate the twenty-seventh level of mystical ascent to God (out of forty-five), a "*hāl*" state of mystical being (viz. a state brought upon the soul by God) in which one desires to desire only what God desires. In this Ṣūfī context it would be misleading to translate "*al-irāda*" as "will," because it is precisely the absence of any real will on the part of the practitioner that demarcates al-Qushayrī's distinction between "*hāl*" mystical states of being and mere "*maqām*" (lit. "station") stages of

ascent in which the practitioner's will is still part of the formula. Here, "*al-irāda*" is arguably best translated "desire," a point supported by A. J. Arberry's own translation of Ṣūfī writings.[29]

In this spirit – and regardless of whether Ibn Gabirol is himself influenced by Ṣūfī or other mystical texts – I use the term "Divine Desire" in this study not only because it avoids Augustinian resonance, and not only because it is a reasonable translation of the Arabic "*al-irāda*," but because it is a translation that better resonates with the Theology of Desire at the heart of Ibn Gabirol's thinking. I approach the Hebrew Divine "*Raẓōn*" of the *Keter Malḵhūt* with precisely the same sensitivity to highlighting the idea of desire. In this regard, we may note Peter Cole's speaking interchangeably of "will" and "desire" in his own translations of and commentaries on Ibn Gabirol's Hebrew poetry, including identifying will or *voluntas* as a desire "emanating from God" – a point that will have special resonance in my fuller thesis about the Divine *Irāda* in Chapters 5 and 6.[30]

Moving from "will" to "desire," my project replaces a God of Power with a yearning God who longs for his beloved creation, a God who, at His core, reveals His own fragile and receptive nature, and with it the fragile and receptive nature of being (and human being) itself. This, as we will see throughout Chapters 6–8, is what Ibn Gabirol has in mind by Divine *Irāda* in the context of his Theology of Desire.

And so, in this project, I will avoid the term "Divine Will" and will instead alternate between the untranslated "Divine *Irāda*," "Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire," and "Divine Desire."

2.5 FROM PRIME MATTER TO GROUNDING ELEMENT: TERMINOLOGICAL PREAMBLE III

A third terminological point that helps foreshadow the spirit of this project relates to the word "matter."

2.5.1 Matter Terminology in Ibn Gabirol's Milieu

In Ibn Gabirol's Arabic-language Neoplatonic context, we find a variety of terms for matter. While *hayūlā* and *mādda* are perhaps the most common (the first being a transliteration into Arabic of the Greek term for matter, *hūlē*, and the second coming from the Arabic verb *madda*, to extend or to spread),[31] Vajda points to the following Arabic terms for this period of Jewish thought: *'ab, 'umm,'aṣl, ṭīn(a), hayūlā, 'unṣur*, and *'usṭuquss*.[32] In the *Physics* of his *al-Shifā'*, in the context of a Neoplatonized Aristotelian project, Avicenna lays

out the following terms related to materiality: *hayūlā*, *mawḍūʿ*, *mādda*, *ṭīna*, *ʿunṣur*, and *ʾusṭuquss*.[33]

Turning to Ibn Gabirol, an extant Arabic fragment of the *Fons Vitae* reveals his use of the term "*hayūlā*" to describe the decidedly corporeal "*locus formarum naturalium*."[34] In recounting matter in his list of basic supernal principles of reality, however, Ibn Gabirol uses the term "*al-ʿunṣur*" (literally "the element").[35] As we will see in Subsection 2.5.2 and in Section 4.3, this term has specific resonances with the Pseudo-Empedoclean tradition critical for understanding Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology. Revealing his Pseudo-Empedoclean heritage further, Ibn Gabirol also speaks in particular of *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal* (literally "the first element"), the first originary pure matter that we will call "Grounding Element." (We will discuss this translation in Subsection 2.5.2; we will further address Ibn Gabirol's Pseudo-Empedoclean context in Section 4.3, and we will address the fuller implications of Ibn Gabirol's material principle in Chapters 6–7.)

As far as the Hebrew terms, in his summary translation of the *Fons Vitae* Ibn Falaquera generally uses the Hebrew "*ḥōmer*" to translate the Greek "*hūlē*" corresponding to both the Arabic "*hayūlā*" and "*mādda*."[36] As for the Arabic "*al-ʿunṣur*," Ibn Falaquera translates "*yesōd*," a Hebrew term (meaning "foundation") that is also used by Ibn Gabirol to refer to matter throughout his poetic corpus. (In Subsection 2.5.2, we address this Hebrew term's [misleading] connection to Kabbalah, and in Section 7.3, we talk more about Ibn Gabirol's Hebrew poetic rendering of form and matter in terms of "*sōd ve-yesōd*" ["secret and foundation"].)

(On Arabic-into-Latin renderings of the terms for form and matter during this period, Richard Taylor addresses a Latin mistranslation of the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* in which an Arabic term related to form was translated into Latin as a term for matter; see Section A6 of the Appendix.)

2.5.2 Ibn Gabirol's al-ʿunṣur al-awwal

As we have seen, Ibn Gabirol speaks of Divine Essence, Divine *Irāda*, and the binary pairing of, as we find in the Latin rendering, "*materia et forma*" (matter and form). Here again, the Latin translator – and in his wake, many commentaries on Ibn Gabirol's philosophy – winds up *hiding* something important about Ibn Gabirol in his choice of terms. For, turning once again to the original Arabic fragment with which we began this chapter, we find for the Latin "*materia et forma*" ("matter and form") the Arabic phrase "*al-ʿunṣur waṣ-ṣūra*." While "*aṣ-ṣūra*" can straightforwardly be translated as "form," we lose something important if we simply and without further explanation

translate the term "*al-ʿunṣur*" as "matter." What is particularly noteworthy about this choice of Arabic terminology on Ibn Gabirol's part – a point hidden by the Latin translation – is its resonance with Arabic traditions of Pseudo-Empedoclean thought. We address this more fully in Chapter 4; for now it is sufficient to note that in these so-called Empedoclean traditions (described as "Pseudo-Empedoclean" by S. M. Stern and others), there emerges a notion of "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" (lit. first element or prime element), a notion that carries with it, as I will show, decidedly Neoplatonic sensitivities crucial to understanding Ibn Gabirol's cosmos. While we do not have the entire original Arabic of Ibn Gabirol's text, we can conclude, on the basis of the aforementioned translation of "*al-ʿunṣur*" as "*materia*," that where the Latin speaks elsewhere of a "*materia prima*," it is precisely this very notion of *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal* that is being translated. In fact, the extant Arabic fragment for the Latin text at *Fons Vitae* 5.22 bears this out explicitly: For the Latin,

> *. . . descriptio materiae primae . . . quod est existens per se, sustentatrix diversitatis, una numero . . .*
>
> . . . the description of prime matter (*materia prima*) . . . is that it is existent in and of itself, the sustainer of diversity, one in number . . .

we find the corresponding Arabic,

> *. . . rasm al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*[37] *. . . jawhar qāʿim bi-dhātihi, ḥāmil lil-ikhtilāf, wa-aḥad bil-ʿadad . . .*
>
> . . . the [distinctive] marking of the First *ʿUnṣur* (*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*) . . . is that it is a self-standing substance, sustaining diversity, and one in number . . .

While there is nothing wrong with translating "*al-ʿunṣur*" as "matter" (I myself do so when speaking of all but the highest pure material principle), and while there is, as such, nothing technically wrong with translating "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" as "prime matter," I worry in this latter case, as in the case of "Will" earlier in the chapter, about misleading readers. Not only does the term "*materia prima*" (prime matter) hide that it is a Pseudo-Empedoclean notion of "first element" (central to various Pseudo-Empedoclean Arabic textual traditions) at play in Ibn Gabirol's text, but in conjuring up images of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics the term "prime matter" might serve as an invitation to some to misread Ibn Gabirol as himself a misreader of Aristotle. Arguably, this is one way to see Aquinas' own approach to Ibn Gabirol (see Section 7.6); in his critique of Ibn Gabirol, Aquinas seems to assume that Ibn Gabirol is attempting something vaguely Aristotelian and

is simply getting it wrong. We might characterize this sort of accusation as follows: Aristotle's text (according to some commentators) evidences a prime matter common to all physical bodies (in virtue of which, for example, we can understand changes among elements; when something goes from being a piece of ice to being a drop of water to being a cloud of air vapor, we can say that different combinations of hot, cold, moist, and dry have occurred in the prime matter); Ibn Gabirol misconstrues this and erroneously concludes that all things – even the incorporeal spiritual simples, namely souls and intellects – share a prime matter; ergo, Ibn Gabirol is a misreader of Aristotle. Such a reading primarily makes of Ibn Gabirol a bad reader of Aristotle as opposed to a theologically astute proponent of a Theology of Desire and, in that light, of a host of Neoplatonic and Pseudo-Empedoclean ideas. In order to prevent uncharitable approaches to Ibn Gabirol as "Aristotle-gone-bad," it seems wise to steer clear of the term "prime matter" when what we are trying to translate is Ibn Gabirol's decidedly Pseudo-Empedoclean idea of "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*." In fact, in Chapter 4 I argue that, in carrying with them direct overtures of Pseudo-Empedoclean cosmology, Ibn Gabirol's Arabic terms "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" and "*al-ʿunṣur*" carry with them associations of Divine Love and Desire, a theological resonance notably absent in the term "prime matter."

And so, while I readily talk of Ibn Gabirol's ideas about "matter and form," when speaking in particular of the purest and most universal of Ibn Gabirol's grades of matter ("*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*"), I replace the Greek- and Latin-inspired "prime matter" with a new term: "Grounding Element." In way of reminding us of its reality as a pure grade of matter, I generally refer to it as the material Grounding Element. (I do not translate "Prime Origin" or "First Element," even though these are more literal translations of the Arabic than "Grounding Element," because out of context, these might sound like they are referring to God; I use the term "Element" [a central definition of *al-ʿunṣur*] as it conjures up the idea of constitutive structure, and I use the term "Grounding" as it conjures up the idea of a rooting foundation, both of which are useful images within the context of Ibn Gabirol's complex hylomorphic vision, as we will see in Chapters 4–7.)

Thinking of Ibn Gabirol's own *Psalms*-based description of God's relation to the universe in terms of a "fountain of life," we may think of this material primal origin as a "grounding element" in the same way that water is a "grounding element" for life itself. In fact, along these very lines, Ibn Gabirol himself allegorically links this material origin to the Genesis 2:10 river of Eden.[38]

In light of the Pseudo-Empedoclean resonances of the term "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" in Ibn Gabirol, care must also be taken to avoid overly quick

Kabbalistic inferences. As we will see in Section 7.3, Ibn Gabirol does use the Hebrew term "*yesōd*" ("foundation") to refer to matter (coupled with "*sōd*" ["secret"] for form) in his poetry. In like spirit, Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, the thirteenth-century Hebrew translator of the *Fons Vitae*, uses the term "*yesōd*" to translate "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" (the term that in the Latin is, as we have seen, translated as *materia prima*). To be sure, the term "*yesōd*" does play a key role in Zoharic theosophy and other Jewish mystical writings; that said, it is simply the Hebrew word for "foundation," which, in Ibn Gabirol's context, ought prima facie to be understood not in proto-Zoharic terms, but as referring to the Pseudo-Empedoclean *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*. Indeed, my own translation of "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" as "Grounding Element" helps conceptually highlight the idea of pure matter as a "foundation"; as we will see more clearly in Chapters 4 and 6, Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element is a thoroughly Pseudo-Empedoclean and Neoplatonic *emanating foundation* at the heart of the Great Chain of Being. As such, there no need to presume any Jewish Kabbalistic resonance in the terminology of "*yesōd*" in Ibn Gabirol. In fact, moving too quickly to Kabbalistic ideas based simply on surface similarities (e.g., Ibn Gabirol's use of the term "*yesōd*") helps obscure Ibn Gabirol's actual Neoplatonic and Pseudo-Empedoclean Theology of Desire.[39]

AND SO, IN PLACE OF THE TWELFTH-CENTURY LATIN TRANSLATION OF "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" as Prime Matter (with Aristotelian overtones) and "Divine *Irāda*" as Divine Will (with Augustinian anti-emanationist overtones of Creation-as-Power), and in place of translating "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" as Foundation (with Kabbalistic overtones), I translate "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" as Grounding Element with (as we will see) Pseudo-Empedoclean overtones of God's emanating love-desire, and I translate "Divine *Irāda*" as Divine Desire, also with overtones of God's emanating love-desire. In these two terminological shifts, I aim to better capture Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire, a vision in which a longing for wisdom, goodness, and God emerges at the core of reality. In this way, a change in terminology marks a change in the spirit through which Ibn Gabirol's work may be encountered: Whereas Avicebron (as he is called in Latin traditions of scholarship) teaches of a Divine Will through which the Divine Essence succeeds in enforming Prime Matter and holding the matter and form of things together, the Ibn Gabirol of this study teaches of a Divine Desire through which the Divine Essence, exposed in all of His need, yearns for relation to the world and to the human soul, manifesting, in His yearning, the core of His desire at the core of being in and through the Grounding Element of Love. In this spirit, we enter here upon Ibn Gabirol's

vision of the real, a pulsing field of life where split unities are poured through with the breath of sacred yearning, where elemental groundings and forms give voice to God's own whispered need as if branches of a tree rooted in the fountain of life itself:

wal-ʿunṣur waṣ-ṣūra farʿān lil-irāda[40]

and the element and the form
are the dual branches
of [his] desire.

3

From Human Being to Discourse on Matter? The Threefold Quest for Wisdom, Goodness, and God – and the Root of Life in Desire

le-mī tarūẓ . . .
le-'ēl ḥayyay teshūqath ma'avayay
ve-nafshī 'im besarī lō khemēhim . . .
. . . ve-'ahīm . . . [1]

to whom shall my soul run?
to the god of my life, the desire of my desire
and all my soul and all my flesh pine for him . . .
. . . and I palpitate . . .

– Ibn Gabirol

3.1 THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL, ETHICAL, AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

In order to arrive at proper conclusions about Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* – and especially about his metaphysics of matter – we must begin with a sense of the overarching goals and animating spirit of his project.

At the heart of Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic project is an inquiry into the nature of human being and human transformation through the pursuit of wisdom, goodness, and God. In this sense, we may speak of the *Fons Vitae* as a tripart epistemological, ethical, and theological quest. It is precisely in this spirit that we find at the very start of the *Fons Vitae* – before the details of his metaphysics of matter – Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic consideration of the ends of human being:

STUDENT: What is the final cause of the generation of man?
TEACHER: The devotion (*applicatio*) of his soul to the higher world, such that everyone might return to his likeness (*simile*).[2]

It is here that Ibn Gabirol's metaphysical study begins, in the quest for human being: "Who am I?" "What is the goal of my being?" "What is my final cause?"

And in his answer to these questions in terms of the "*applicatio*" of souls we find the prescriptive call to knowledge, goodness, and God.

3.1.1 The Epistemological Call

The first way to understand Ibn Gabirol's claim that the ends of human being are to be found in "the devotion of soul to the higher world" is as a call to knowledge. In this spirit, we may retranslate "*applicatio*" from "devotion" to the more technical term, "conjunction," beckoning to the Arabic notion of "*ittiṣāl*," a particular version of the Neoplatonic Return in Ibn Gabirol's Arabic Neoplatonic milieu describing the return of the human soul in terms of a special unifying connection with the cosmic Intellect.[3] The broader Neoplatonic idea of this epistemological end goal is elaborated upon by Ibn Gabirol at *Fons Vitae* 3.56:

> TEACHER: . . . And in general, when you want to imagine[4] the simple substances (*al-jawāhir al-basīṭa*),[5] and how your essence (*tua essentia*, Ar. *dhātika*) spreads though them[6] and encompasses them,[7] you must lift up your intellect to the furthest intelligible,[8] and purge and purify it of every stain of the sensible, and free it from the captivity of nature, and through the power of your intellect approach the extreme limit that is possible for you to apprehend regarding the truth of intelligible substance, until you are as if stripped of sensible substance and become as if ignorant of it. Then it will be as if you contain the entire corporeal world in your essence, placing it as if in a corner of your soul . . .
>
> STUDENT: I have already done your bidding, and have elevated myself through the levels of intelligible substances, and have strolled in their gardens . . . And I have seen the whole corporeal world swimming in them, just like a boat in the sea and a bird in the air.
>
> TEACHER: You have observed and understood well. But if you should lift yourself to the first universal matter and [are] illumined by its shadow, you will then see the most wondrous of wonders. Devote yourself to this and be filled with love for it, since here lies the meaning for which the human soul exists, and here lies too amazing delight and utmost happiness.[9]

The teacher in Ibn Gabirol's dialogue here asks the human seeker to open herself to her own inmost reality of intellect – the very presence within her of the intelligible, spiritual realm of truth and goodness. In this context, Ibn Gabirol likens this higher spiritual and intelligible reality to a garden, the very same image he uses to describe the World-to-Come in a *tōkhaḥah* for the

Day of Atonement: "And then his chamber angels will bring you into your garden at last with the Lord."[10] In the imagery of our entry into a garden, Ibn Gabirol also helps emphasize that the corporeal realm is grounded in the spiritual realm – a sense in which our body is "in the soul" more so than our soul is "in the body." In way of emphasizing this dependence of body on spirit (including the realities, we might say, of wisdom, goodness, and God), Ibn Gabirol further allegorically depicts the relation of corporeal reality to its spiritual source in terms of a boat surrounded by and kept afloat by the sea, and in terms of a bird surrounded by and kept afloat by the air. Symbolizing the microcosm of finite being, the bird can be seen to symbolize the human soul-in-body; and yet, like a bird in the air, that very same soul is able to spread itself into the spiritual world as home. Along these lines, Ibn Gabirol expressly depicts the soul as a bird in his *tōkhaḥah* for the Day of Atonement: "When you return to the dust of your birth, you'll take with you none of your honor and wealth, which will drive you on like a bird to its nest, on to your Lord."[11]

Aside from these particular references to gardens and birds (and aside from the idea of an "illuminating shadow" in the last few lines of the teacher's closing retort that we will address in Section 4.4), the overall idea of "upward return to Intellect" is, of course, a commonplace Neoplatonic theme rooted in Plotinus' own account at *Enneads* 4.8.1:

> Often I have woken up out of the body to my self and have entered into myself, going out from all other things; I have seen a beauty wonderfully great and felt assurance that then most of all I belonged to the better part; I have actually lived the best life and come to identity with the divine; and set firm in it I have come to that supreme actuality, setting myself above all else in the realm of Intellect. Then, after that rest in the divine, when I have come down from Intellect to discursive reasoning, I am puzzled how I ever came down, and how my soul has come to be in the body when it is what it has shown itself to be by itself, even when it is in the body.[12]

Preserved (with some changes) in the Arabic Plotinus materials, we find the following passage in the *Theology of Aristotle* (to which we might expect Ibn Gabirol to have had access):

> Sometimes, I was as it were alone with my soul: I divested myself of my body, put it aside, and was as it were a simple substance without a body. Then I entered into my essence by returning into it free from all things. I was knowledge, knowing and known at the same time. I saw in my essence so much of beauty, loveliness, and splendour that I remained astonished and confused, and I knew that I was a part of the exalted, splendid, divine upper world, and that I was endowed with an active life. When this became clear to

> myself, I rose in my essence from this world to the divine world, and I was as it were placed there and attached (*muta'alliq*) to it. I was above the whole intelligible world and saw myself as if I stood in that exalted divine position, and beheld there such light and splendour as tongues are unable to describe and ears are impotent to hear.[13]

In this "return to Intellect" we find the first key meaning of "the devotion" – here in the sense of "conjunction" – of soul to its higher reality. Here, the final end of human being and with it the promise of transformation is to be found in the quest for wisdom.

3.1.2 The Ethico-Theological Call

But Ibn Gabirol's claim that the ends of human being are to be found in "the devotion of soul to the higher world" also carries with it immediate ethical and theological import. For in learning that human being finds his end in an Intellect-directed inclination, we also learn of this inclination that it is an inclination toward God:

> *. . . inquirere factorum primum et moveri ad illum inditum est omnibus . . .* [14]
>
> . . . to strive after the First Cause and to be moved towards Him is instilled within all things . . .

Here we find the second key meaning of "the devotion of soul to the higher world." The final end of human being and with it the promise of transformation is to be found in the quest for God. In this respect, the epistemological quest goes hand in hand with a theological quest. And the theological quest goes hand in hand with an ethical one. For, in learning that human being finds her end in an upward inclination, we learn not only of this inclination that it is an inclination toward God, but we learn too that it is an inclination toward her "likeness." Looking for further elaboration of this idea, we turn to the very end of the *Fons Vitae*:

> *omne quod est appetit moveri, ut assequatur aliquid bonitatis primi esse.*[15]
>
> Everything which exists desires (*appetit*) to be moved in order that it may attain (*assequatur*) something of the goodness of the Prime Being.

Related in Ibn Gabirol's Jewish context to traditions of "*devēqūth*" as an ethical and theological calling to cleave to God through right action, we here find the third key meaning of "the devotion of soul to the higher world": The final end of human being, and with it the promise of transformation, is to be found in the quest for goodness – in the quest after something of the goodness of God.

Because Ibn Gabirol – in proper Neoplatonic spirit – so directly identifies the human's central quest after wisdom and God with her ethical quest for the good, the defining reality of human being for Ibn Gabirol is found in a tripart search for epistemological, spiritual, and ethical wholeness. It is in this sense that a return to God is found in and through a return to one's ownmost capacity for knowledge and works:

> . . . knowledge and works liberate the soul from the captivity of nature and purge it of its darkness and obscurity, and in this way the soul returns to its higher world.[16]

3.2 METAPHYSICS OF MATTER AND DESIRE AT THE CORE OF ALL

While Ibn Gabirol often expresses the *search for God* in terms of desire, it is clear that for Ibn Gabirol desire fuels each of the three human quests – the quest for God as well as the quests for wisdom and goodness. In the entirety of the tripart epistemological, ethical, and theological quest, there emerges a common thread: As humans, we are grounded in desire – we desire (and ought to desire) after wisdom; we desire (and ought to desire) after goodness; we desire (and ought to desire) after God.

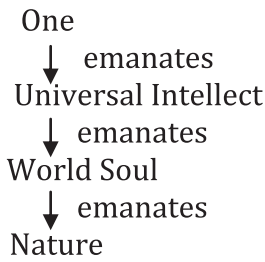
That human desire for God is the subject under consideration in poems like the one at the start of this chapter is fairly straightforward to see. What has been less straightforward to see – as evidenced across a range of scholarship on Ibn Gabirol – is that human desire for God (as a desire too for wisdom and goodness) is also the subject under consideration in even the most technical claims of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology, including (1) his claims about matter (what we call his "metaphysics of matter") and (2) his claims about God – and in particular, his descriptions of the activity of the Divine *Irāda*. A key part of being sensitive to Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire is being sensitive to discerning across all of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontological claims his root concern with a God-born and God-directed desire at the core of all being and human being. We must, that is, be guided by Ibn Gabirol's root concern about desire at the core of being and human being in our readings of his cosmo-ontological teachings even when a given cosmo-ontological teaching makes no overt mention of desire or human being (such as the claim that intellects contain matter, or the claim that there are many layers of matter in the cosmos). In the remainder of this chapter and through Chapter 7, we will explore this insight by seeing desire at the core of all existence, by seeing

matter as the locus of this grounding desire, and by seeing how this desire is directly related to God's relation to the world as Divine *Irāda*. In Chapter 8, we will also see the particular implications of all of this for Ibn Gabirol's vision of human being in terms of dependence, receptivity, and fragility.

In way of getting started, it is useful to orient ourselves to Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics of matter and theology of *Irāda* by considering five main ideas at play in Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* cosmo-ontology:[17]

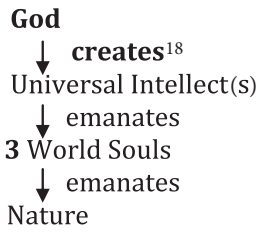
1. All beings other than God are composed of matter and form. This includes all corporeal bodies, as well as all spiritual simples (viz. souls and intellects).
2. There are various "layers" of matters+forms at the core of each existing thing.
3. Matter is in some sense rooted in the Divine Essence and is in some sense rooted in the Divine *Irāda*; form is in some sense rooted in the Divine *Irāda*, and is in some sense rooted in the Divine Wisdom (itself sometimes described as Divine Word).
4. There is a pure universal first matter or "Grounding Element" (prior to form) at the core of a great chain of "matter+form" layers.
5. Finally, in the "layers" of matter+form in reality, "matters" are "connected" to forms through the "intermediation" of the Divine *Irāda*.

In all of these teachings, Ibn Gabirol can be characterized as a Neoplatonist with an unusual emphasis on an "intermediating Divine *Irāda*" and on (1) a pure material Grounding Element at the core of all being, (2) a "form+matter" composition to all things (including intellects – a claim for which Ibn Gabirol's view earns the label "Universal Hylomorphism" by later Christian scholastics; see Chapter 7), and (3) various "form+matter" layers throughout the Great Chain of Being. In this respect, we may speak of Ibn Gabirol's having revised the "standard" Plotinian schema. First, consider the common rendering of standard Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology (Figure 3.1):



3.1. Plotinus' Cosmo-Ontology

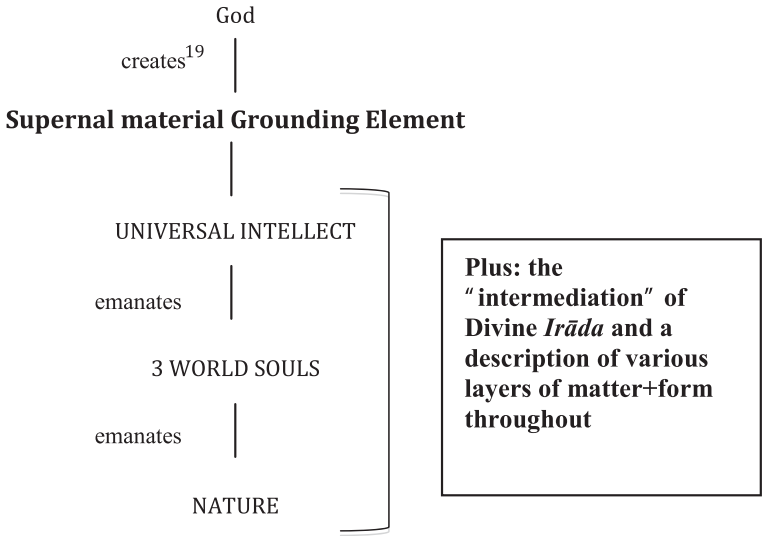
Next, consider that Jewish Neoplatonisms are often illustrated as modifying Plotinus as follows (Figure 3.2):



3.2. Jewish Neoplatonic Modification of Plotinian Cosmo-Ontology

Ibn Gabirol's revision of standard Neoplatonism, however, may be seen as going even further (Figure 3.3).

In the chapters that follow, we will set out to expand upon and better understand these unusual-sounding claims about matters and divine intermediations. Here, however, we must reemphasize our earlier observation about how to read Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology: We can only understand Ibn Gabirol's claims about God and matter (as well as the diagrams we use to illustrate these claims) when we understand them as deeply interrelated with the inquiry into the root of being and human being in a God-born and God-directed desire for goodness. This idea is brought to its fullest conclusion in Chapter 8 when we exposit these claims finally as subtly apophatic reflections on the paradox of God's reality, which give way to prescriptions for human living.



3.3. Ibn Gabirol's Revised Neoplatonic Cosmo-Ontology

I have already explained (Section 2.4) why I translate "Divine *Irāda*" as "Divine Desire." That God's intermediating presence for Ibn Gabirol is directly tied to considerations of desire becomes even clearer in the coming chapters. For now, we can initially see that Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics of matter is a reflection on desire once we reflect on his description of matter throughout the *Fons Vitae* in terms of desire – in particular, its desire for form.

> *. . . intentio appetitus et amoris non est nisi inquisitio applicationis ad amatum et unitionis cum illo, et materia inquirit applicari formae: oportet ut eius motus sit propter amorum et desiderium quod habet ad formam. similiter dicendum est de omni re, quod movetur ad inquirendum formam.*[20]
>
> . . . the aim [or: meaning] of desire and love is to strive to join and to unite with the beloved, and matter strives to be joined to form. And so it is necessary that the motion [of matter] is in accordance with the love and desire that it has for form. Similarly, it ought to be said of everything that it is moved to strive for form.

Expressing the fullness of this desire, Ibn Gabirol likens it to the motion of a lover seeking after his beloved:

> The aim [or: meaning] of desire and of love is to strive to join[21] and unite with the beloved and to unite . . .

We can see this mirrored in the following line from one of his most metaphysically engaged poems, *ahavtīkha* ("I Love You"):[22]

> *ve-hū nikhsaf le-sūmō yēsh kemō yēsh*
> *kemō ḥōshēq 'asher nikhsaf le-dōdō*
>
> and he / it longs to make existence (*yēsh*) like existence (*yēsh*),
> like a lover longs for his beloved

While some have read this line as describing God's own desire to have matter seek after form (God's desire, we might say, that matter desire after form), we may emphasize (with Kaufmann)[23] that Ibn Gabirol is here describing matter's own desire to engage form, a reading that fits precisely with Ibn Gabirol's description of matter's desire after form in the *Fons Vitae* in terms of a love between a lover and a beloved.

In addition to emphasizing matter in terms of desire per se, Ibn Gabirol also emphasizes that in this "desiring after form," matter-as-locus-of-desire is a positive driving force toward the good:

> D: *Quae est causa compellens moveri materiam ad formam?*

M: *Causa in hoc est appetitus materiae ad recipiendum bonitatem and delectationem* . . . [24]

STUDENT: What compels matter to be moved towards form?

TEACHER: It is matter's appetite for receiving goodness and delight . . .

In the context of the *Fons Vitae*, matter (rooted in the pure material Grounding Element that, as we will see in Chapters 6–7, permeates through all existence and is itself arisen from God's own Essence) is the locus of the most positive, grounding desire at the core of being. As such, at the very start of our study (before even going into further details about Ibn Gabirol's unique cosmo-ontology), we can appreciate how in his emphasis on matter at the core of all things, Ibn Gabirol is emphasizing that reality – and with it human being – is grounded first and foremost in a desire-to-be that itself directly manifests the trifold desire for wisdom, goodness, and God (a trifold desire that throughout this project we will refer to as the "desire for goodness," or as the "desire for something of the goodness of God"). It is in this sense that it is so important for Ibn Gabirol to emphasize that there is matter – and a series of matters arisen from that matter – at the core of all things, including at the core of the human intellect: In this descriptive emphasis, there emerges Ibn Gabirol's spiritual-ethical prescriptive call to wisdom, goodness, and God, and with it his call to human transformation.

3.3 POSITIVE VALUATIONS OF MATTER: A REVERSAL OF INTUITIONS

In his highlighting a most positive sense of matter as the marker in all things of the desire for goodness, Ibn Gabirol can be seen as reversing some of the more "standard" negative intuitions about matter within the history of philosophy.[25] In a range of Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Neoplatonic contexts, matter emerges at best as a locus of privation secondary to form, and at worst as the chaotic source of evil. In line with this more standard approach to matter, Ibn Gabirol does indeed have a decidedly negative sense of ordinary matter, which he calls the "corporeal" (or "lower") matter and which he describes as the kind of matter that admits of Aristotle's nine categories. As T. M. Rudavsky rightly emphasizes,[26] Ibn Gabirol indeed couples his positive sense of matter with more standard negative talk about matter and corporeality alongside a host of positive valuations of form. This ought come as no surprise given Ibn Gabirol's own clear sense that there are two opposing principles of matter – one principle associated with pure matter's becoming bound up with the corporeal forms associated with Aristotle's categories (viz.

the "lower matter" with which we are mostly familiar in the history of philosophy) and one principle associated with pure matter arisen from God's own Essence at the very ontological core of reality (viz. the unique material Grounding Element with which we concern ourselves in the current study):

> *Intellige materiam quasi habeat duo extrema, unum ascendens ad terminum creationis, scilicet principium unitionis materiae et formae, aliud descendens ad finem quietis.*[27]
>
> Know that it is as if matter has two extremes, one ascending to the limit of creation, namely the principle of the unity of matter and form, the other descending to the end of rest.

As the goal of my thesis is to highlight certain unique aspects of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire (and the metaphysics of matter and Divine *Irāda*, which comprise that theology), I focus in this study exclusively on the positive valuations of matter in Ibn Gabirol's texts associated with the higher material extreme, namely the material Grounding Element. As we will note later, the positive associations with this purest matter extend even to analyses of lower corporeal realities (inasmuch as even corporeal beings manifest a trace of the pure material Grounding Element). This results in an overall framework in which matter is prior to form, and in which entire sets of conceptual associations with matter are more sublime than entire sets of conceptual associations with form.

In this respect, we find a "conceptual reversal" in which the hidden unlimited expanse of pre-being marks a more essential sort of stage than the manifest limits of being. Consider the following summary chart (Figure 3.4):

Matter: Unlimited / Infinite / Pre-Existence (or Unspecified Being)/ Purity / Unity / Sameness / Essence / Kernel / Shadow/ Hiddenness

v.

Form: Limited / Finite / Existence (or Specified Being)/ Division / Plurality / Difference / Act / Shell / Light / Manifestness

3.4. Reversing Intuitions: Matter's Purity, Form's Divisions

Note how in this context, existence itself is a secondary principle. In fact, one of the key insights about desire that we will pursue in this study can be described as the primacy of the "desire-to-be" (itself as a desire for goodness) over being. Related to the aforementioned chart, this further insight may be summarized as follows (Figure 3.5):

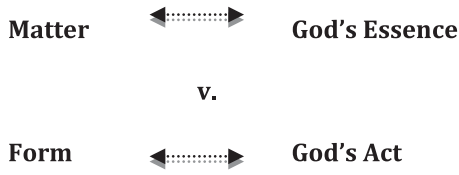
Matter: Desire-to-Be (as a desire for wisdom, goodness, and God)

v.

Form: Being

3.5. Matter over Form: Desire Precedes Existence

As we will see in Chapters 6 and 7 (see Sections 6.5 and 7.2), these sets of associations will be further supplemented by the arresting claim that matter arises from God's innermost reality as Essence, whereas form arises from Wisdom – which, in that context, describes God's "second" moment qua active creator. We may chart this correlation as follows (Figure 3.6):



3.6. On the "Divine Essence–Matter" Link

Given that matter and form are both linked to God, my point in highlighting matter's supremacy in Ibn Gabirol is not to suggest that form is bad simpliciter; rather, my goal is to emphasize that for Ibn Gabirol, not only is there a principle of pure matter prior to form, but that it is this principle of matter (and not form) that correlates to the hidden purity of God's ownmost "first" moment qua Essence. It is in this sense that, as we will see, matter – found first and foremost in a pure material Grounding Element at the root of the entire cosmos and stemming directly from God's own Essence – demarcates the most essential and pure aspect of each and every existent, linking each reality to the hidden core of God Himself.

It is worth offering a few more points of clarification about matter's positive and negative senses before moving on:

1. How can Ibn Gabirol have such a positive sense of matter? It is only because Ibn Gabirol is talking about a unique kind of supernal, pure matter (and its trace throughout even corporeal matter) that he describes matter in exalted terms. By highlighting a grade of pure materiality, Ibn Gabirol is able to highlight a most positive sense of matter – absent from most accounts in the history of philosophy – as a sublimely essential grounding force of love-desire in the world and at the core of human being. As the force of love at the core of being,

matter is for Ibn Gabirol the driving force behind our tripart quest for wisdom, goodness, and God.

2. Does Ibn Gabirol's positive sense of pure materiality sometimes extend to his sense of corporeal reality? Yes, and this is directly related to appreciating the role of emanation in Ibn Gabirol's worldview (a topic that we take up in great detail in Chapters 5–7). Because the pure matter of the material Grounding Element permeates through even "lower" corporeal matter by way of emanation, there will often arise a positive sense of matter even in relation to ordinary corporeal objects. In such cases, the positive sense does not refer to corporeal matter per se, but rather to the presence deep within corporeal objects of the pure supernal matter. For Ibn Gabirol, just as Intellect emanates into all things (a common Neoplatonic idea), so too does the pure material Grounding Element emanate into all things. This will at once lead to what for many will feel like two deeply counterintuitive points in the *Fons Vitae*, specifically the claim that even intellects and souls reveal the presence of matter (Ibn Gabirol's so-called Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism) and the fact that even "lower" corporeal matter can be described in exalted material terms right alongside a host of negative material descriptions. We will revisit the Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism in Chapter 7. As for the counterintuitive positive and negative descriptions of corporeal matter: Because corporeality is fallen away from the source of being, it is subject in Ibn Gabirol to all of the "ordinary" negative associations with matter that we find in the history of philosophy; but given that, for Ibn Gabirol, corporeality also manifests a vestige of the pure Grounding Element, it can also be described in positive matter terms.

Along these lines and for clarity moving forward, it ought to be kept in mind that when I use the term "matter" or "material" throughout the remainder of this project, I mean either the pure material Grounding Element itself or the vestige of that pure matter within lower corporeal or incorporeal realities.

3. Why is it so counterintuitive to so many readers to hear such nice things about matter? This is because, with some small exceptions, texts in the history of philosophy do not posit the sort of pure materiality that is under discussion in Ibn Gabirol. In talking about matter, most textual traditions are talking about some "lower" reality – either corporeal matter or Aristotelian "prime matter" (itself variously understood across the history of philosophy but infrequently put forth as carrying any sort of exalted connotations).

AS HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR IN THIS CHAPTER, ONE OF IBN GABIROL'S MAIN insights in all of his positive talk of matter is that there is, at the core of all existence and at the core of human being, a God-born and God-directed desire for goodness. As we will see, this desire enters into all things by the emanating presence in all things of the pure material Grounding Element. This love – rooted in the purity of matter – sets us on our path toward epistemological and ethical transformation. In the next chapter, we will see how this love at the core of being makes the world go round.

4

Root Desire and the Pseudo-Empedoclean Grounding Element as Love

. . . ve-tagīd kī be-qīrbī 'at nefaḥtah . . .
le-kha tōdeh 'alē 'avdūth be-'ēdūth, 'emeth kī la-'asōth ḥefẓakh shelaḥtah
le-kha 'amah be-'ōdah be-'adamah, ve-yōm tashūv le-kha ka-'asher nithatah . . . [1]
. . . ve-tithhapēkh ve-tishtapēkh be-ga'atah [2]

. . . and my soul shall testify: you breathed her forth to my core
she praises you for that work in witness, for verily you have sent her to fill your desire[3]
living in her clay, your maidservant – soon she will return[4] . . .
. . . turning to you, she pours forth[5] in her cries . . .

– Ibn Gabirol

In Chapter 3, we saw the direct connection between Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics of matter and the prescriptive sense of human being rooted in a grounding desire for something of the goodness of God: As locus of desire, matter is that which first moves us on our tripart human quest for wisdom, goodness, and God. In this sense, it is matter that grounds our ownmost human quest for epistemological, ethical, and spiritual transformation. We have also seen desire's grounding place at the core of human being in our consideration of the Neoplatonic Return in which the seeker yearns to find her home in Intellect, an idea at once tied to the jointly epistemological, ethical, and theological quest for something of the goodness of God.

But while the idea of desire at the core of human transformation can be found quite broadly in any Neoplatonic tradition of Return (and quite broadly in any Platonic context in which philosophy takes its start in a desire for wisdom), it is emphasized in a unique way in Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology: It is emphasized in his sense of a material Grounding Element that permeates all things with a desire for goodness, in his related sense of a series of matters

at the core of being, and, as we will see too, in his unique theory of the Divine *Irāda*-as-Desire. In emphasizing a cosmic picture in which a pure emanating matter (as source of desire) spreads far and wide, Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire invites us into a reality rooted in and permeated through with the pulse of love. While we will reserve a fuller discussion of the material Grounding Element, "layers of matter," and the Divine *Irāda* for later chapters, we turn in the current chapter to a further exploration of the pulsing motion of desire at the root of all beings, and the unique way in which God Himself emerges, for Ibn Gabirol, as the root of matter, and as such, as the root of all desire.

4.1 DESIRE AT THE CORE OF BEING

> You are wise, and your wisdom gave rise
> to an endless desire in the world . . . [6]

In his *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingly Crown*), Ibn Gabirol depicts God as having woven the fabric of existence with endless desire at its core. This very same idea is highlighted in uniquely hylomorphic terms in the *Fons Vitae* in the teaching that all things are composed of matter and form, and (as we have seen in Chapter 3) that:

> . . . *intentio appetitus et amoris non est nisi inquisitio applicationis ad amatum et unitionis cum illo, et materia inquirit applicari formae: oportet ut eius motus sit propter amorum et desiderium quod habet ad formam. similiter dicendum est de omni re, quod movetur ad inquirendum formam.*[7]
>
> . . . the aim [or: meaning] of desire and love is to strive to join and to unite with the beloved, and matter strives to be joined to form. And so it is necessary that the motion [of matter] is in accordance with the love and desire that it has for form. Similarly, it ought to be said of everything that it is moved to strive for form.

For Ibn Gabirol, the very fabric of existence itself is alive with love and desire, a point further reflected in the reminder that:

> *Omne quod est appetit moveri, ut assequatur aliquid bonitatis primi esse*[8]
>
> Everything which exists desires to be moved in order that it might attain something of the good of the Prime Being.

It is clear that the grounding desire at the core of all things is a desire for something of the goodness of God, as it is clear too that it is precisely matter that functions as the locus of this desire: Matter's own key role is described in terms of desire (it desires after form as a lover seeks its beloved), and given

that it is present in all things, matter in this way introduces desire into all existents. But more than just a "desire for form," the desire in question (as a desire for form) must be understood more broadly in terms of a complex desire for being, itself as a tripart desire for wisdom, goodness, and God. In addition to its being a desire for (among other things) God, we learn further that matter – the locus of this love – is itself born of God:

> . . . *materia est creata ab essentia* . . .
>
> . . . matter is created from Essence . . . [9]

Here describing God as the Divine Essence, Ibn Gabirol highlights matter's – and with it, desire's – own divine source. We will return to the further implications of this important passage in Chapters 6 and 7.

4.2 LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND: SOME GREEK AND ARABIC SOURCES

While unusual in its emphasis on matter and in its overall approach, Ibn Gabirol's idea that desire plays a critical role in the universe can of course be found in a range of Greek and Islamic traditions. In this section, we consider four such traditions.

4.2.1 Aristotle

At *Metaphysics* XII (Book Lambda), Aristotle describes God qua final cause as the ultimate object of desire. As First Unmoved Mover, God emerges as the final cause of all motion and change in the world precisely to the extent that He is desired. In this context, we may say that for Aristotle "love makes the world go round."

4.2.2 The Theology of Aristotle

In chapter 8 of the *Theology of Aristotle*,[10] God emerges as the locus, source, and end of love. After showing that the "true love (*maḥabbah*), which is intellectual, unites all things . . . in an intellectual bond and makes them one so as never to be severed"[11] and that "the whole of that entire world is pure love (*maḥabbah*), containing no variance or antagonism in its being,"[12] the *Theology of Aristotle* concludes that:

> The upper world is love (*maḥabbah*) and life alone, whence are sent forth every life . . . and union that is not severed . . . [13]

For the *Theology of Aristotle*, love is invested (through the very fact of being) at the core of all beings, and this love is at once born of and directed to God's Pure Goodness.

4.2.3 Avicenna's "Risālah fi'l-'ishq"

Avicenna dedicates an entire treatise to the topic of love, the "*Risālah fi'l-'ishq*" (*Treatise on Love*). In this work, Avicenna theorizes God, qua the Pure Good that is the highest Essence and origin of all beings, as both the ultimate subject and object of love.[14] Avicenna understands God's goodness as identical to love and to being, as he understands God's origination of all beings as the investment into all things of being-qua-love:

> [I]t is a necessary outcome of His wisdom and the excellence of His governance to plant into everything the general principle of love. The effect is that He thus indirectly preserves the perfections which He gave by emanation, and that He thus expresses His desire to bring them into being when they are absent, the purpose being that the administration [of the universe] should run according to a wise order. The never-ceasing existence of this love in all beings determined by a design is, therefore, a necessity . . . the existence of every being determined by a design is invariably accompanied by inborn love.[15]

Reflecting in like spirit on God's desire to share his Goodness-as-Being-as-Love forward, Avicenna continues:

> Because It, by Its very nature, loves the being of what is caused by It, It desires to manifest Itself. And since the love of the Most Perfect for Its own perfection is the most excellent love, it has as its true object the reception by others of Its manifestation, and this is most properly Its reception by those divine souls which have reached the highest degree of assimilation to It. In this way it is possible that they become the object of Its love.[16]

In his reflections on love and being, Avicenna concludes:

> In all beings, therefore, love is either the cause of their being, or being and love are identical in them. It is thus evident that no being is devoid of love.[17]

In his translation and study of Avicenna's treatise, Fackenheim points to the traces of similar reflections in Islamic thought in a non-extant treatise by Al-Kindī, in a few passages in al-Fārābī, and in the Brethren of Purity's 36th treatise on the topic of love.

4.2.4 Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonized Aristotelianism

We may also look to a range of Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonic Aristotelian traditions of angelic power – the power, that is, of the separate intellects – including views found in al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Maimonides. In such traditions, the heavenly angels are identified as a hierarchy of separate intelligible substances responsible for the existence and motion of the heavens, and ultimately for the existence and motion of the sublunar realm. Across a range of Neoplatonized Aristotelian cosmologies, individual celestial spheres are associated with individual governing angelic intellects, and the sublunar world is governed in particular by the lowest of these intellects, namely the Active Intellect.[18] This set of ideas is rooted in a synthesis of various texts, including Aristotle's *De Anima* 3.5 and *De Caelo*, as well as the *Theology of Aristotle*, and can be seen, for example, in al-Fārābī's elaboration on the emanation of the heavens in which each separate angelic intellect is described in terms of a dual intellection[19] – on the one hand, an inward intellection of its own essence (which gives rise to a heaven or celestial sphere), and on the other hand an upward intellection of God (in this way giving rise to the separate intellect that follows after it). In this overall tradition of cosmology we may say that the desire for God (seen in the upward intellection and arguably tied too to *Metaphysics* XII's sense of God as the ultimate object of desire) is the fundamental cause of the procession of intellects downward one to the next, as it is also the fundamental cause of existence itself (differing in this latter respect from Aristotle's own teachings).

While Ibn Gabirol does not speak of an "Active" Intellect, he does talk of the upward desire of the cosmic universal Intellect (and by extension of the desire had by each human intellect) for God. In *Keter Malkhūt*, we read of the "sphere of Intellect" that

> . . . its reality derives from your vitality;
> its longing is from you and for you,
> and towards you ascends its desire.[20]

This idea of cosmic Intellect yearning after God in Ibn Gabirol is also highlighted when we turn to Abraham Ibn Daud (1110–80). While Ibn Daud is a critic of Ibn Gabirol's philosophy (with Aquinas and others, he seems to see Ibn Gabirol's matter discussion as a failed attempt at Aristotelian metaphysics),[21] there is one aspect of Ibn Gabirol's thought that he would in fact deem correct,[22] specifically the view that the angels – or separate intellects – constantly strive after God. Returning to Ibn Gabirol's reflection in his poem *ahavtīkha* ("I Love You") on the desire that issues forth as if from a lover,[23]

Ibn Daud's context can be seen as offering us a different way of interpreting the poem than the one we explored at 3.2:

> *ve-hū nikhsaf le-sūmō yēsh kemō yēsh*
> *kemō ḥōshēq 'asher nikhsaf le-dōdō*
>
> and he / it longs to make existence (*yēsh*) like existence (*yēsh*),
> like a lover longs for his beloved

Approaching the poem with Ibn Daud's and Ibn Gabirol's shared Neoplatonized Aristotelian angelology in mind, we can read in these lines an expression on Ibn Gabirol's part of how a separate intellectual substance (an angel) desires to make its own existence as much as possible like the existence of God the First and Final Cause. Read in this spirit, we find in Ibn Gabirol's poem a sensitivity to the Neoplatonized Aristotelian idea of a cosmic upward desire for God, a desire responsible for all motion and even for the existence of all lower realities (including all celestial and terrestrial bodies).

In his overall sense of the cosmic relation of Intellects and God, Ibn Gabirol shares – with so many of the thinkers in his milieu – a strong sense that love makes the world go round.

4.3 A PSEUDO-EMPEDOCLEAN LOVE STORY: UNSPECIFIED BEING, MATTER OVER FORM, AND THE KERNEL OF DESIRE

We have seen not only the general prevalence of love and desire in Ibn Gabirol's cosmos (see Section 2.3 for a reminder of why we are using these terms interchangeably), but their particular manifestation through matter:

> *. . . oportet ut eius motus sit propter amorum et desiderium quod habet ad formam.*[24]
>
> . . . it is necessary that the motion [of matter] is in accordance with the love and desire that it has for form . . .

As the emanating source of all being for Ibn Gabirol, the pure material Grounding Element (in its downward unfolding into being and form, as we will see in Chapter 6) invests love and desire into the core of all things. In his emphasis on this pure matter (including his emphasis on a series of descending matters) at the heart of all things, Ibn Gabirol is alerting us to the presence of a God-born and God-directed love and desire at the core of being and human being.

Upon closer consideration, it becomes clear that the matter–love link of which we have been speaking evidences Ibn Gabirol's encounter with what

scholars have called the Pseudo-Empedoclean (henceforth, Ps. Empedoclean) tradition(s). An Empedocles–Ibn Gabirol link is first suggested by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera who, in the introduction to his thirteenth-century Hebrew summary version of the *Fons Vitae*, writes:

> *. . . ʿīyyantī ba-sēfer she-ḥībēr ha-ḥakham R' [Rav] Shlomo z"l [zikhrōnō le-brakhah] ben Gevirōl ha-niqra Meqōr Ḥayyīm veha-nir'eh lī kī hū nimshakh be-ʾōtan ha-dēʿōt aḥar daʿat ha-qadmōnīm mē-ḥakhmē ha-meḥqar kemō she-nizkar ba-sēfer she-ḥībēr Bandaklīs [= Empedocles] ba-ʿAẓamīm ha-Ḥamīshah . . .*[25]
>
> . . . I examined the book compiled by the sage, Rabbi Solomon, may his memory be blessed, Ibn Gabirol, [the book] that is called *The Fountain of Life*, and it seems to me that it followed in the same tradition as that of the ancient sages as mentioned in Empedocles' book, *[The Book of] the Five Substances* . . .[26]

We remain unclear on what this *Book of Five Substances* refers to, as we also remain unclear on the origins and precise nature of an Empedoclean tradition (or traditions) in Ibn Gabirol's milieu.[27] While some point to Ibn Masarra (883–931) as having imported this tradition from the East (with al-Madjrīṭī [ca. 1005/6], al-Kirmānī, and the *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* [The Brethren of Purity] having disseminated it further),[28] others shed doubt on there ever having been a single such tradition to speak of.[29] It is not clear whether this work was itself based on an original Greek text (as in the cases of the *Theology of Aristotle* and the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* ["Discourse on the Pure Good"] known in its later Latin reception as the "*Liber de Causis*" ["Book of Causes"]), nor is it clear whether the extant Arabic and Hebrew evidence of an Empedoclean tradition are themselves directly descendent from a particular Greek source. It is also unclear whether references to Empedocles' *Book of Five Substances* refer to one book from which all – or any – of the Ps. Empedocles traditions are derived, as it is likewise unclear whether the actual name of the book should be *The Book of the Fifth Substance*. And while some go so far as to suggest that Ibn Gabirol was himself the source of the Ps. Empedoclean *Book of Five Substances*,[30] others not only deny this, but additionally doubt if Ibn Gabirol even ever had access to such a text at all.[31]

Leaving these questions aside, when we turn directly to the doctrines circulating under the name of Empedocles in Ibn Gabirol's milieu (doctrines that have been called, and that we will call, Ps. Empedoclean), we do find important conceptual affinities to Ibn Gabirol's thought. In particular, we find a predecessor to Ibn Gabirol's idea of a pure material Grounding Element. In his introduction of the material Grounding Element (*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*), we

have described Ibn Gabirol as having supplemented the ordinary Neoplatonic idea of a universal Intellect with the addition of a reality prior even to Intellect. Recalling our diagrams in Chapter 3 (see Figures 3.1 and 3.3), we might summarize as follows (Figure 4.1):

Plotinus:	One
	Intellect
	World Soul
	Nature
Ibn Gabirol:	Divine Essence and Divine *Irāda* (and as we will see, Divine Wisdom and Divine Word)
	Grounding Element (*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*)
	Intellect
	Three World Souls[32]
	Nature

4.1. Comparing the Hierarchies of Plotinus and Ibn Gabirol

In the emanating procession of the pure material Grounding Element to Intellect, Ibn Gabirol further envisions the Grounding Element in partnership with a fundamental spiritual form, the form of Wisdom, itself described as the form of light,[33] and itself signifying, we might add – along with all other forms – the realities of unity and goodness.[34] Here, in the joining of matter to form (a "joining" relation that we will address in Chapter 6), we arrive at Intellect.

It is undoubtedly the insertion on Ibn Gabirol's part of this *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal* that leads Falaquera to reference Ps. Empedoclean doctrine. One can trace *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal* into other textual contexts, including "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist" (as hypothesized by S. M. Stern in his reading of textual strains in Isaac Israeli and Ibn Ḥasday), as well as a range of Islamic and Jewish traditions.[35] Here, however, let us turn to one preserved version of the Ps. Empedoclean tradition recounted for us by Shahrastānī (Abū'l-Fath Mūḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad ash-Shahrastānī; 1076/86–1153). Shahrastānī presents under the name of Empedocles a view of a material Grounding Element (*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*) in his *Kitāb Al-Milal wal-niḥal* (*Book of Religions and Sects*, II, Book 2, Ch. 1)[36] in the encyclopedic context of recounting the teachings of great philosophers, including the great Empedocles. Enumerating some of Shahrastānī's most central remarks about the "Empedoclean" Grounding Element, we learn that "according to Empedocles":

1. God, the Creator (*mubdiʿ*) created (*'abda'a*) the Grounding Element (*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*), which is

2. a simple thing (*ash-shay al-basīṭ*),
3. and the principle of the intelligible simple (*hūwa awwal al-basīṭ al-ma'aqūl*)[37]
4. and the first single simple kind (*naw'*)
5. from which the Creator compounds (*kaththara*) extended things (*al-ashyā' al-mabsūṭa*);
6. it is the first effect (*al-ma'lūl al-awwal*) (with the "second effect" being Intellect, and the "third effect" being Soul);
7. it is simple (*basīṭ*), but it is not an "absolute simple" (*basīṭan muṭliqan*) or a "pure unity" (*wāḥidan baḥtan*). For:
8. it is simple "with respect to the essence of Intellect" (*min naḥwa dhāt al-'aql*),
9. but it is itself composite in comparison to the purity and simplicity of the Divine Essence (*dhāt al-'illa*, lit. "the Essence of the Cause"), for:
10. as we know, Grounding Element (*al-'unṣur al-awwal)* is an effect, and, after all: "[something] can only be an effect if it is composed of an intelligible or sensible composition."[38]

In light of these ideas alone, it seems clear that Ibn Gabirol's own analysis of a material reality – denoted by the very same term, "*al-'unṣur al-awwal*" – between God and Intellect is linked to this tradition.

In this Ps. Empedoclean context, the material Grounding Element emerges as a simple reality[39] at the core of even Intellect from which God extracts all being. Returning to Figure 3.4, we might draw this idea out in Ibn Gabirol's context as the demarcation of a pure form of Unspecified Being at the core of even Being. Understood in this way, the material Grounding Element is the highest cause (just beneath God, the even higher highest cause), and can in this sense be described as "the All."[40] It is in the context of seeing the material Grounding Element as the "first cosmic moment" that we must work to understand Ibn Gabirol's own sense that pure matter is "*existens per se*" right alongside his sense that it is preexistent (as seen in his strong correlation of being with form/s – a point emphasized too in his description of the pure material Grounding Element as "the nothing" in his *Keter Malkhūt* poem; see Section 7.7). It is "*existens per se*" in the sense that it demarcates the first reality outside of God (as clearly seen in the Ps. Empedoclean tradition just recounted). It is preexistent, however, in the sense that it is a principle of not-yet-being – the genus (or we might say, in Platonic fashion, form) of Unspecified Being. In this respect, we may think of the material Grounding Element as the most generic of all genera. In fact, it is precisely in this sense that we may make sense of Ibn Gabirol's description of the pure universal matter

as the "*genus generalissimum*" (see Section 7.4). We might also here note a possible link between aspects of this tradition and Aristotle's own description in *Metaphysics* Z of genus as matter (see Section A4 of the Appendix, and for a general sense of the modified approaches to Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of form, matter, and substance at play here, see Sections A1, A3, and A4 of the Appendix). In all of this, we might say (contra Brunner and Schlanger)[41] that the pure matter of the Grounding Element emerges as an hypostasized marker of Unspecified Being Per Se between God and Intellect (with Intellect – and its forms – understood in the ordinary Neoplatonic way as the first marker in the universe of being). It is precisely this hypostasized treatment of a material Grounding Element in a Ps. Empedoclean context that leads me (in Section 7.5) to defend against readings that de-emphasize pure matter's existence in Ibn Gabirol. (And as we will see in Chapters 8 and 9, the meaning of "hypostasized reality" in the context of Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic apopathic-spiritual-ethical method itself operates much more subtly than as a simple reference to some "big invisible thing floating around out there".)

Further beckoning to Ibn Gabirol's familiarity with the aforementioned Ps. Empedoclean tradition, compare his own hierarchical claim (to be addressed in more detail in Chapters 5–7) that

> among substances, the matter to the lower is the form to the higher . . . the more subtle of substances is the subject to (i.e., carrier of) the coarser of them, [and] all are forms sustained in First Matter[42]

and that

> the lower of the substances is form to the higher of them, and the higher of them is matter sustaining the lower, until the first truly simple matter is reached.[43]

These hierarchical notions structurally mirror Shahrastānī's recounting of Empedocles' idea that

> *mā hūwa 'asfal fa-hūwa qishr li-mā hūwa 'a'lā, wa-'a'lā lubbuhu*[44]
>
> What is lower is shell to what is higher, and the higher is its kernel

In addition to the structural similarity, it is clear that the principle of *al-'unṣur al-awwal* is the ultimate kernel in Ibn Gabirol and in the Ps. Empedoclean tradition recounted by Shahrastānī, because both accounts envision it as highest up on the Great Chain of Being, just below God. This idea prepares the way for Ibn Gabirol's further prioritization of materiality over form more generally (as we have seen in Section 3.3), a prioritization according to which matter is the "kernel" and form is the outer external "shell" (recall Figure 3.4).

In fact, it is precisely here, in the correspondence between Ibn Gabirol's conception of matter and the Ps. Empedoclean idea of a "kernel" (found too in Jewish mystical sources),[45] that we can uncover further grounding for what we have already seen to be Ibn Gabirol's matter–love link. For, looking further at Shahrastānī's account, we find the Empedoclean ideas of Love (*maḥabbah*) and Strife, presented along with the following correlations (Figure 4.2):

spirit (*rūḥ*) / kernel (*lubb*) / love (*maḥabbah*)
vs.
shell (*qishr*) / strife[46]

4.2. Ps. Empedoclean Love as Kernel and Strife as Shell

Because it is quite plausible to suggest a familiarity on Ibn Gabirol's part with the Ps. Empedoclean link between kernel and love, it is quite plausible for us to suggest here, in this Ibn Gabirol–Ps. Empedocles matrix, further support for Ibn Gabirol's own link between matter and love, and with it the idea of the material Grounding Element investing being with the love and desire for something of the goodness of God. (See Section A12 of the Appendix, however, for some points of dissimilarity between Ibn Gabirol's and Shahrastānī's version of Ps. Empedoclean teachings about the Grounding Element, including a clearer correlation in Ibn Gabirol than in the Islamic Ps. Empedoclean tradition between the Grounding Element and Love.)

4.4 IN THE ILLUMINATING SHADOW: IBN GABIROL'S PSEUDO-EMPEDOCLEAN REVISION OF THE NEOPLATONIC RETURN

We have seen Ibn Gabirol's emphasis on love and desire at the core of being, including the teaching that matter is the marker of this desire in all things. We have also seen that the Ps. Empedoclean tradition (1) places a material Grounding Element into the Great Chain of Being and (2) expressly correlates that material principle with the force of love.[47] In both of these claims, the Ps. Empedoclean tradition supports and mirrors Ibn Gabirol's own revised vision of the Neoplatonic cosmos.

To begin to appreciate the implications of Ibn Gabirol's revising the standard Neoplatonic cosmos to accommodate a Ps. Empedoclean material Grounding Element, consider how that addition plays out in Ibn Gabirol's unique revised version of the Neoplatonic Return in terms of "matter's illuminating shadow":

> But if you should lift yourself to[wards] the first universal matter and [are] illumined by its shadow, you will then see the most wondrous of wonders . . .

We have already seen this passage in Section 3.1 in our discussion of the human quest for wisdom as a Return to Intellect. Here, however, we might further note the unique trace of Ps. Empedocles in his description of this Return: Given Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean insertion of a material reality prior even to Intellect, it would of course make sense for him to speak of the Neoplatonic Return-to-Intellect as a shadowed state – a state in which the returning soul comes to bask, as it were, in the illuminating[48] shadow of the first Grounding Element. In this image, Ibn Gabirol envisions a person's soul returning to the level of Intellect and, as such, basking not only in the light of Intellect but in the shadow of the pure matter (the Grounding Element) outside of God and prior to Intellect. With the Ps. Empedoclean addition of Grounding Element in place, Ibn Gabirol suitably adjusts the imagery of the Neoplatonic Return to include the Grounding Element's casting its shadow on the soul of the seeker.

In Chapters 5–7, we will see the further implications of Ibn Gabirol's Grounding Element for his revised Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being.

5

From Divine Will to Divine *Irāda*: On the Mistaken Scholarly Rejection of Ibn Gabirol's Emanationism

> . . . when you think him, think whatever you remember about him,
> that he is the Good – for he is the productive power . . .
> from whom life comes . . .
>
> – Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.5.10

5.0 "Divine Will" and the Mistaken Scholarly Rejection of Ibn Gabirol's Emanationism

Ibn Gabirol approaches reality through an emanationist lens. We will unpack the extent of his emanationism in this chapter and the next, but we can note for starters that he speaks of a cosmic Intellect, of three world souls, and of cosmic layers and levels all in line with Neoplatonic emanationist impulses. He embraces a full-blown doctrine of Neoplatonic Return (modified, as we have seen, to accommodate his Ps. Empedoclean addition of the material Grounding Element), which further beckons to his upholding a Neoplatonic emanationist worldview. He embraces a Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean sense that love is the core of being. He provides sixty-three proofs that corporeal substances arise from spiritual substances, a general idea clearly rooted in Neoplatonic emanationist impulses.[1] And he employs overtly emanationist imagery when he speaks in his project of the *yanbūʿ al-ḥayāh* (the Fountain of Life) as when he allegorically likens the cosmic landscape to the flowing river of the Garden of Eden.

While Schlanger,[2] Dillon,[3] McGinn,[4] Cole,[5] Scheindlin,[6] and others help highlight the Neoplatonic and emanationist spirit of Ibn Gabirol's worldview, consider the very different emphasis in a great deal of authoritative scholarship on Ibn Gabirol's so-called Doctrine of Divine Will. In spite of the clearly emanationist spirit of Ibn Gabirol's work, we find a number of scholars concluding that in his Doctrine of Divine Will, Ibn Gabirol firmly rejects

emanation. In this regard, consider such erudite scholars as Gilson, Husik, and Weisheipl, each of whom (along with many others) reads a Doctrine of Divine Will in the *Fons Vitae* as signifying a *renunciation* on Ibn Gabirol's part of emanation. Gilson identifies the *Fons Vitae* notion of Will along these lines as that which clearly separates between Ibn Gabirol's and Greek systems of thought;[7] Husik assumes that "but for the introduction of the Will in the *Fons Vitae* we should be forced to understand Ibn Gabirol [as a follower of the emanation taught by Plotinus]";[8] and Weisheipl follows suit:

> As for . . . the primacy of God's creative Will (*Voluntas creatrix*), Avicebron clearly wishes to eliminate philosophical emanationism as proposed by Alfarabi, Alkindi, Avicenna, Algazel, and *Liber de causis*, by making the Divine Will the supreme cause in the production of the universe. [9]

Weisheipl, Husik, and Gilson (along with many others) sense in Ibn Gabirol's notion of a Divine *Irāda* – interpreted by them as a Doctrine of Divine Will – a firm rejection of emanationism. In this respect, they discern in Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* a voluntaristic theology signaling a unique departure from the doctrines of Neoplatonic emanation championed by the rest of his Arabic Neoplatonic milieu. Sharing this sense that a Doctrine of Divine Will marks a renunciation of emanation in Ibn Gabirol, Munk claims that the "intermeddling of the [divine] will is a concession made to the religious demands by which Avicebron paid a faithful homage to the dogma of Creation announced by Judaism."[10]

I reject this widespread reading of Ibn Gabirol as opposing emanation on the basis of a so-called Doctrine of Divine Will (or otherwise), as I relatedly reject Munk's sense that Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* is a marker of a "Jewish dogma of creation."[11] In this chapter, I expose problems with voluntarist interpretations of Ibn Gabirol in way of motivating a new reading of Divine *Irāda*. In Chapter 6, I lay out my own new reading of the Divine *Irāda* as part of what I show to be Ibn Gabirol's thoroughgoingly emanationist Theology of Desire.

5.1 Trying to Make Sense of Scholarship on Ibn Gabirol's So-Called Anti-Emanation Voluntarism: The Rejection of Divine Emanation in a Limited Emanation Framework?

We began this chapter with examples of Ibn Gabirol's emanationist approach to the cosmos, including the animating roles played by "fountain of life" and "return" images in his philosophical theology. Are advocates of Ibn Gabirol's so-called voluntarism asking us to ignore these aspects of Ibn Gabirol when they ask us to believe that there is a Doctrine of Divine Will in Ibn Gabirol

that marks his rejection of emanation? How can scholars say that Ibn Gabirol rejects emanation when he clearly uses the language of emanation throughout his work?

One alternative for someone who reads in Ibn Gabirol a Divine Will that rejects emanation is to read away Ibn Gabirol's emanationist-sounding claims as simply that, namely, emanationist-*sounding* claims that are not really committed to emanation. I do not see any justification for taking this approach. Another alternative would involve limiting one's claim about Ibn Gabirol's rejection of emanation to just divine emanation. This approach would involve distinguishing between claiming that (1) Ibn Gabirol has a Doctrine of Divine Will that rejects *all kinds* of emanation (divine and other), and (2) Ibn Gabirol has a Doctrine of Divine Will that rejects *only* divine emanation. This second option would at least make it possible to make sense of all of the clearly emanationist talk throughout Ibn Gabirol's work. Embracing this picture of Ibn Gabirol would amount to attributing to him a "Limited Emanation Framework." Along these lines, consider the following two very different kinds of "Emanation Frameworks":

1. *Unlimited Emanation Framework: God Overflows.* This describes a purely Plotinian framework including a commitment to divine emanation. Here, God Himself overflows, flowing forth into Universal Intellect, which itself flows forth to World Soul, and so forth.
2. *Limited Emanation Framework: God Does Not Overflow.* Contrary to the unlimited Plotinian framework, here God is seen as "willfully creating" (not emanating) the single cosmic reality of Universal Intellect, but *then willingly stepping aside*, which is to say, willfully appointing Intellect to itself emanate as part of the overall process of creation. Here, God's own "first moment of creation" (viz. the creation of Intellect) is not a case of emanation, but there is ordinary Plotinian emanation from the level of Intellect downward. The scope of the emanation is in this sense "limited," and the framework in this sense can be said to accommodate a non-emanating Divine Will alongside ordinary Plotinian emanation for the level of Intellect downward. Here the claim that "God wills" or "God creates" can be made consistent with ordinary Plotinian emanation from the level of Intellect downward: God Himself does not emanate, but there is an emanating Great Chain of Being that He willfully sets in motion through the creation (not emanation) of an emanating Intellect.

Attributing to Ibn Gabirol a Limited Emanation Framework would allow us to reconcile the scholarly claim that Ibn Gabirol "rejects emanation" with Ibn Gabirol's clear commitment to emanation throughout his work. It is not clear whether this is what scholars have in mind in categorizing Ibn Gabirol as a

voluntarist. That said, reading Ibn Gabirol in terms of a Doctrine of Divine Will that operates according to a Limited Emanation Framework does allow one to take Ibn Gabirol's commitment to emanation seriously, while allowing one at the same time to argue that Divine Will limits the *scope* of emanation.[12]

It would seem that A. Altmann, S. M. Stern, and H. A. Wolfson rely precisely on this sense of a Limited Emanation Framework in their analyses of Isaac Israeli's position on creation. Whereas Israeli clearly espouses emanation from the level of Intellect downward, Altmann, Stern, and Wolfson all read his Doctrine of Divine Creation as opposing Greek emanation. In line with our reflections on the Limited Emanation Framework, we may charitably read them as suggesting not that Israeli's Doctrine of Divine Creation rules out emanation per se, but that it rules out non-voluntaristic *divine* emanation in particular.[13] In other words, Israeli's Doctrine of Creation is seen as consistent with an emanating Great Chain of Being while at the same time ruling out Plotinian divine emanation: While God Himself does not emanate in Plotinian fashion, God creates (or, according to Wolfson, consciously emanates) a world that *includes* processes of emanation.

WE HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE LIMITED EMANATION FRAMEWORK IN AN attempt to reconcile the popular scholarly claim that Ibn Gabirol has a Doctrine of Divine Will that rejects emanation with what appears to be a robust set of emanationist commitments on Ibn Gabirol's part. The Limited Emanation Framework allows us to simultaneously accommodate voluntarism and emanation by allowing us to say that (1) Ibn Gabirol is committed to all kinds of emanation, but that (2) his voluntarism limits his emanation to exclude Plotinian divine emanation. (It might be noted that in this discussion, as in the entire project, by "divine emanation" I refer to the emanation of God into the cosmos; I do not refer to the intra-divine kinds of emanation one can find in a number of Kabbalistic as well as Augustinian and other Christian Trinitarian theologies.)

However, as we will see in the sections that follow, it is not at all clear that we can even accept a Limited Emanation Framework version of voluntarism as part of a careful consideration of Ibn Gabirol.

5.2 PROBLEMS WITH THE LIMITED EMANATION FRAMEWORK READING: FREE CHOICE, MEDIATED VERSUS UNMEDIATED WILL, AND THREE VARIETIES OF VOLUNTARISM

In thinking about voluntarism, there appear to be two separate criteria for distinguishing a Willing God from other conceptions of God. On the one

hand, a Willing God might be distinguished from other conceptions of God in terms of His freedom of choice; on the other hand, a Willing God might be distinguished from other conceptions of God in terms of the directness of His relationships to individual beings. Thinking through these categories, we arrive at three discrete voluntarist conceptions of God:

1. *Voluntarism 1: Freely Choosing between Alternatives.* In this view, a Willing God must have freely chosen between alternatives; He cannot, for example, be said to pour forth goodness by the very fact of His being, as we find in the *Theology of Aristotle* (see Subsection 5.4.1). We might add that this view allows for two possibilities vis-à-vis emanation. On the one hand, this view is consistent with the complete rejection of emanation; the description of God's having freely chosen to create can be seen as incompatible with emanation of any sort. On the other hand, this view is also consistent with a Limited Emanation Framework according to which God can be said to have freely chosen to create an emanating Intellect that He willfully set up in such a way that it then emanates forward the remainder of reality. In this version of the view, the idea of an emanating Great Chain of Being can be made consistent with the idea of a Freely Choosing God inasmuch as the emanating Intellect can be seen as freely created by God (by God's own freely willed choice) to assist God in the process of bringing reality into being.

Augustine and al-Ghazālī are examples of thinkers who advance voluntaristic theologies that envision God's Will in terms of a freedom to choose between alternatives. In spite of their different worldviews, Augustine and al-Ghazālī (along with many others) have in common an overt concern to ensure that God's freedom is the kind of freedom that allows Him to choose between competing options. For such thinkers, God's freedom involves *proairesis* (an act of deliberate choice), and not just the kind of *boulēsis* mentioned in Plotinus (see Subsection 5.4.1). In this respect, one might consider Augustine's *De Libero Arbitrio* and al-Ghazālī's particular emphasis on the notion of *al-ikhtiyār* (a choice-based free will).[14] When interpreting thinkers who envision this kind of freedom for God, we might indeed speak of a genuinely non-emanating sense of Divine Will. It would be correct to categorize as non-emanating any God whose free choice is such that He could have chosen to do things differently; this kind of God would indeed contrast, for example, with Plotinus' One or with the *Theology of Aristotle*'s God who emanates in the way that He emanates by the very fact of His being (see Subsection 5.4.1). Given Augustine's and al-Ghazālī's interests in ensuring for God a freedom to choose between alternatives, it would be fair to ascribe to them a voluntaristic sense of Divine Will that in fact rejects Neoplatonic divine emanation.

2. *Voluntarism 2: God without Intermediation.* In this view, a Willing God must have created each being directly, without the intermediation of any non-God reality (obviously in an Ibn Gabirol context, the Divine *Irāda* [translated as Divine Will or otherwise] will serve as an intermediary in creation, so we are only emphasizing here the lack of intermediation by anything non-divine). Unlike the first variety of voluntarism, this second variety is necessarily inconsistent with any possibility of emanation – even the emanation of a Limited Emanation Framework. In this second variety of voluntarism, God cannot be said to create an emanating Intellect as any such Intellect would "mediate" between Him and individual beings beneath that Intellect, and thus violate the main criterion that God relate directly to each individual being.
3. *Voluntarism 3: Combination Free Choice and No Intermediation.* In this view, a Willing God must have freely chosen to create each being, and must have freely chosen to do so directly (i.e., with no intermediation). As in the case of the second variety of voluntarism, this third variety of voluntarism (precisely because of its inclusion of the "without intermediation" requirement of the second variety) is necessarily inconsistent with any possibility of emanation. As in the case of the second variety of voluntarism, God cannot here be said to create an emanating Intellect as this would violate the criterion that God relate to each individual being directly, without intermediation.

What is important to note for our purposes is that the criteria that one winds up privileging in one's voluntarism will dictate whether or not embracing the Limited Emanation Framework is even a possibility. In other words, two of our three flavors of voluntarism preclude our reading the claim that "Ibn Gabirol has a Doctrine of Divine Will that rejects emanation" as a claim about the Limited Emanation Framework. It is unclear which flavor of voluntarism various scholars have in mind when they so definitively claim that Ibn Gabirol rejects emanation; it is also unclear (as such) whether we can even use the Limited Emanation Framework as a charitable way of trying to reconcile various scholars' claims that Ibn Gabirol rejects emanation with the clear fact that Ibn Gabirol talks of emanation throughout his work.

5.3 Divine Will versus Divine Emanation? Casting More Doubt on the Canonical Voluntarist Reading of Ibn Gabirol

Emphasizing the problem with much of the extant scholarship on Ibn Gabirol, we may go further: Why should one even be tempted to classify Ibn Gabirol's

Divine *Irāda* (translated as Divine Will or otherwise) as rejecting the divine emanation ruled out by the Limited Emanation Framework? In other words, why not approach Ibn Gabirol – in his idea of Divine *Irāda* – as a proponent of divine emanation? On what grounds have scholars been led to even suspect that the Divine *Irāda* of the *Fons Vitae* (translated as Divine Will or otherwise) stands in contrast to divine emanation?

We will pursue this question – by considering some key distinctions and interrelated points of concern – in the sections that follow. For starters, we might note that even Husik – who claims that Divine Will in Ibn Gabirol opposes emanation – admits that there is divine emanation in Ibn Gabirol. While he describes Divine Will as opposing emanation, Husik states the exact opposite just a few pages earlier when he describes matter as "emanat[ing] from the essence of the Creator, forming the basis of all subsequent emanations."[15] Husik winds up in the course of a few pages telling us that Ibn Gabirol embraces divine emanation and that Ibn Gabirol rejects divine emanation, concluding that "[t]he nature of this [viz. Ibn Gabirol's] divine Will is ambiguous."[16] Even in his own declaration of Ibn Gabirol's apparent rejection of divine emanation, Husik points to the failure of that position, noting that Ibn Gabirol does indeed speak not only of emanation, but of the precise kind of divine emanation that the voluntarist interpretation sets out to deny.

Husik's unsatisfying approach aside, the main reason to question the popular voluntarist classification of Ibn Gabirol as holding a theory of Divine Will that opposes emanation stems from a more careful consideration of Ibn Gabirol's Islamic Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts. In this spirit, we will explore the idea of will in Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic context, the notion of Divine *Irāda* as "intermediary between the two extremes" in Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean context, and the notion of Divine *Irāda*-as-Love in Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts. Through a careful initial consideration of Ibn Gabirol's contexts, we will arrive at a picture of Ibn Gabirol quite different from what we find in so much voluntarist scholarship to date, and, thus, we will have further grounds for seriously doubting the popular scholarly miconception that Ibn Gabirol embraces a theory of Divine Will that marks the rejection of emanation in the *Fons Vitae*.

5.4 RETHINKING WILL AND EMANATION

One main reason to reject the overwhelming scholarly sense that Ibn Gabirol rejects divine emanation comes from a consideration of the notion of will within Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic context. In fact, what we find in both Greek

and Islamic Neoplatonic contexts is that divine emanation goes perfectly well together with a notion of a Divine Will. Thus, we ought to be, at the very least, highly suspicious of popular voluntarist readings of Ibn Gabirol, which claim that "will" and "emanation" are opposing ideas in the *Fons Vitae*.

5.4.1 Emanation and Will I: Since When Does "Divine Will" Mean "No Divine Emanation" in a Neoplatonic Context? (Considering Divine Will in Plotinus and the Theology of Aristotle*)*

Even a quick look at Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic context shows that there is nothing in the terminology of "Creator" or "Divine Will" to suggest any rejection of divine emanation. For example, in the *Theology of Aristotle*, creation, will, and emanation all go hand in hand in hand. The *Theology of Aristotle* proudly speaks of God's creation as an eternal emanation that takes place without thought or effort, and as such without the sense of "freedom of choice" found in theologies of *proairesis* or *al-ikhtiyār* that we previously mentioned in the cases of Augustine and al-Ghazālī. In Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonist context, the eternally emanating Creator God gifts the world with being not through deliberation or thought,[17] but rather "by the mere fact of his being"[18] – a description that is directly related to this tradition's sense of God's infinite goodness and infinite generosity.[19] At one point, the *Theology of Aristotle* overtly describes this emanating Creator God in terms of Will,[20] a move that can be found too in Plotinus' own description of the One in terms of *boulēsis*.[21] In such a context, it seems eminently reasonable to presume that whatever Ibn Gabirol's precise sense of Divine Will might be, it would be consistent with divine emanation.

5.4.2 Emanation and Will II: Is the Term "Will" Leading Some to Mistaken Conclusions? (Considering the Possibility of Augustinian Overtones)

Ibn Gabirol's Islamic Neoplatonic context – including the *Theology of Aristotle* – makes it *so* reasonable to read a notion of Divine Will as consistent with divine emanation that we ought to be deeply perplexed as to why so many scholars have even considered (and in fact insisted on) the incompatibility of Divine Will and emanation in Ibn Gabirol. It is this bewildering scholarly trend that has led me to suggest that perhaps it is the term "Divine Will" that is creating the confusion (see my "Terminological Preamble" in Section 2.4). Perhaps it is the strong Augustinian resonance of the term "Divine Will" – especially translated as it is from "*voluntas*" in the canonical Latin text of

the *Fons Vitae* – which has tacitly (or, in the case of centuries of Franciscans, overtly) led scholars to read the *Fons Vitae* through Augustinian lenses, in terms of an Augustinian voluntarism that rejects God's emanating into the world. Perhaps it is the strongly anti-emanationist voluntaristic theology at play in Augustine's Doctrine of Divine Will that has led so many scholars to conclude – especially in light of the term "*voluntas*" in the Latin translation of the *Fons Vitae* – that Ibn Gabirol rejects divine emanation.

However, as we have seen, Ibn Gabirol's Arabic Neoplatonic context does not support this Augustinian approach. Neoplatonic texts like the *Theology of Aristotle* easily support a notion of Divine Will going hand in hand with a notion of divine emanation. Furthermore, as we have discussed in Section 2.4, the term Ibn Gabirol uses to describe God is of course not "Will" or "*voluntas*," but the Arabic "*al-irāda*," which bears no relationship to a Latin tradition of "*voluntas*" (a point I try to drive home by leaving "Divine *Irāda*" untranslated throughout most of my project, or by translating it as "Divine Desire" as opposed to "Divine Will").

Aside from applying a tacitly Augustinian lens to one's reading of Ibn Gabirol, there really appears to be no reason for reading "Divine *Irāda*" (translated as "Divine Desire," "Divine Will," or otherwise) in opposition to divine emanation. In fact, on my own reading of Ibn Gabirol, I will argue that Divine *Irāda* precisely demarcates divine emanation. But first, a few more considerations about the shortcomings of extant scholarship on Ibn Gabirol's so-called Doctrine of Divine Will.

5.5 RETHINKING "INTERMEDIATING BETWEEN THE EXTREMES": TWO COMPETING VIEWS

In claiming that Ibn Gabirol advances a Doctrine of Divine Will that opposes emanation, scholars have ignored a robust set of associations in Ibn Gabirol's Islamic Neoplatonic context between creation, will, and divine emanation. In this light, we might even speak of a tacit privileging of Augustine over the *Theology of Aristotle* in scholarly interpretations of the *Fons Vitae*.

But, it would seem that scholarship on Ibn Gabirol has missed another key point as well – a second oversight that is also related to a failure to fully consider Ibn Gabirol's textual context. Recall Ibn Gabirol's overarching cosmic intuition:

> *ajzā' al-'ilm bil-kull jīm, wa-hiya: 'ilm al-'unṣur waṣ-ṣūra, wal-'ilm bil-irāda, wal-'ilm bidh-dhāt al-'ūlā; wa-laysa fīl-mawjūd ghayr hādhihi al-jīm. fal-'illa al-'ūlā adh-dhāt wal-ma'alūl al-'unṣur waṣ-ṣura wal-irāda mutawassiṭa bayna aṭ-ṭarafayn . . .*

> There are three parts of knowledge in all: (1) the knowledge of matter (*al-'unṣur*) and form (*aṣ-ṣūra*), (2) the knowledge of Divine *Irāda*, and (3) the knowledge of the First Essence. In existence, there is nothing other than these three. First Essence is cause; matter and form, effect; and Divine *Irāda* is the intermediary between the two extremes.[22]

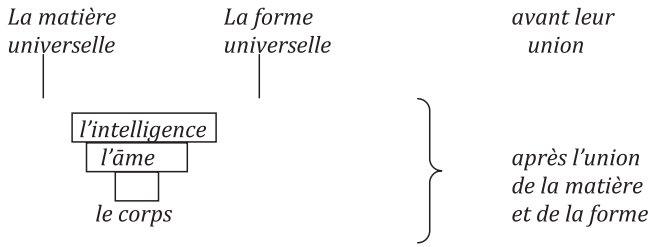
For Ibn Gabirol, the key description of the Divine *Irāda* is that it is "the intermediary between the two extremes" (an idea, it might be noted, whose emphasis is somewhat missed in the Latin text; while the Arabic uses the dual form "two extremes," the Latin text speaks only of an intermediation between "the extremes"). The intermediation "between the two extremes" arguably refers to Divine *Irāda*'s role vis-à-vis matter and form. In my own interpretation of Ibn Gabirol in Chapter 6, I argue that "extremes" carries with it a vertical connotation, suggesting that Divine *Irāda* is the "vertical flow" of emanation connecting higher reality to lower reality. Before turning to this reading, it is important to note the very different approach to Divine *Irāda*'s intermediation found in other readings of the *Fons Vitae*. Whereas some scholars do not even place emphasis on Ibn Gabirol's most central concept of "intermediation between the two extremes" when discussing Ibn Gabirol's views on God, other scholars wrongly take a "horizontal" perspective on this intermediation relation between matter and form. In what follows, I consider an example of this in the work of Fernand Brunner, and I show how my "vertical reading" of the Divine *Irāda* not only differs from Brunner's "horizontal sense" of matter's relation to form, but serves as my key to identifying Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* with divine emanation.

5.5.1 Intermediation I: Brunner's Horizontal Intuitions, Divine Will in Opposition to Divine Emanation, and an Occasionalist God?

In reading Divine Will as the rejection of emanation in the *Fons Vitae*, scholars appear to envision Ibn Gabirol's Creator God as a God of Power, free to make choices and directly responsible for the existence of things (or – if we abide by the Limited Emanation Framework – directly responsible at least for the existence of Intellect, and responsible for the existence of all other things indirectly through the intermediation of the emanating Intellect). In such a context, the idea that the Divine Will "intermediates" between matter and form emerges most logically in horizontal terms: God is not merely the cosmogonical source; He is, qua intermediating Divine Will, even responsible for "connecting together" the form and matter within each existent. In this picture, God – in his activity as Divine Will – is responsible for the actual internal wholeness of each and every existent. In this respect, He functions

as a "horizontal glue" (and "horizontal gluer") of sorts, holding together and sustaining the unity of each composite reality. Given Ibn Gabirol's sense that all things – including spiritual simples – are matter+form composites, this would mean that God is the "horizontal glue/gluer" not only of bodies, but also of souls and intellects. According to this picture of the Divine Will, the universe and every existing thing in the universe manifests God's active power and control. This picture of God as "willing horizontal gluer of each reality's matter to its form/s" stands in sharp contrast to a Neoplatonic emanating God inasmuch as the vertical image of an emanating God precisely lacks the kind of mindful engagement with each and every particular that the "horizontal connector" picture of God seems to want to convey. In this sense, the image of a "horizontal gluer of each existent's matter to its form/s" seems to go hand in hand with the divine-emanation-rejecting instincts of voluntarist readings of Ibn Gabirol that we have critiqued in Section 5.4.1.

For an example of a horizontal depiction of matter's relation to form (and as such, a horizontal sense of Divine Will as the force that intermediates between matter and form within individual existents), consider Brunner's description of the uniting of matter and form: "*La matière et la forme sont toutes deux unes en tant qu'universelles et toutes deux multiples dans les ētres qui procèdent de leur composition* . . . ."[23] a description which Brunner accompanies with the following diagram (focusing on the joining of first universal matter and its form in particular) (Figure 5.1):



5.1. Brunner's "Horizontal Joining" of Matter to Form in the *Fons Vitae*

Brunner's diagram illustrates precisely the kind of "horizontal" cosmic uniting activity that we have just described, in which the matter and form of each thing are bound together by God (like horizontal puzzle pieces) to form the unity of each substance. In this picture, the Divine Will – as the "connector" of matter and form – emerges as a kind of "horizontal glue" (and "horizontal gluer") that actively and with each passing moment holds the entire universe together by actively uniting (and actively continuing to unite) the matter+form of each and every individual reality, starting with the

universal form and universal matter of Intellect. In this spirit, Wedeck describes "the divine power making matter and form and binding them together."[24] Seen in this way as the glue and gluer of each reality, the Divine Will emerges as an active intermediating "Power of God,"[25] in this sense pointing to a powerful – in the particular sense of mindfully micromanaging – God in contrast to the God of emanation who either (1) emanates "automatically," as it were, "by the very fact of His being" (in line with the Unlimited Emanation Framework addressed previously), or (2) willfully creates an emanating Intellect that intermediates in the creation of the remainder of reality (in line with the Limited Emanation Framework), but who in neither case is depicted as actively and mindfully relating to individual beings, much less actively and mindfully "holding together" the form and matter of each existing thing.

In this sense, it seems that we may categorize much of the extant voluntaristic scholarship on Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Divine Will in occasionalist theological terms. Like Kalām's atomistic varieties of occasionalism according to which God's Will literally holds reality together at each and every moment (a doctrine that in Ashʿarite theology entails the absence of nature or natural laws of any kind),[26] voluntarist scholarship on Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Divine Will seems to envision a God who, in his reality qua Divine Will, actively intervenes in every stitch of being, holding the form and matter of each existent together in contrast to the comparatively "hands off" emanating God of Neoplatonism.

5.5.2 Intermediation II: On the Vertical Image of Intermediation in Ibn Gabirol – Toward a New Reading of Divine Irāda *as Divine Emanation*

However, the "horizontal glue" (or "horizontal gluer") sense of Divine *Irāda*'s intermediating role between matter and form is incorrect. As I explain in what follows, a careful reading of the *Fons Vitae* in its Ps. Empedoclean context reveals that in its "intermediating" and "connecting" role, the Divine *Irāda* is precisely a *vertical* relation between higher causes (called, as we will see, "matter") and lower effects (called, as we will see, "form") in the Great Chain of Being. Signifying a vertical sensibility, the Divine *Irāda* in no way beckons to the kind of "horizontal" dynamic suggested earlier, in which God's Divine Will holds each and every substance together. In fact, understanding the Divine *Irāda* as a vertical relation, I show that the Divine *Irāda* emerges *as the very operation of emanation itself*. In contrast to the aforementioned readings, I show (in Chapters 6–8) that the Divine *Irāda* in Ibn Gabirol (1) signifies the vertical unfolding of emanation itself, (2) portrays emanation as the unfolding of God's own Essence into being, (3) marks, as such,

the embrace (not the rejection) of Plotinian emanation (including divine emanation), and (4) opens us onto a very unique Ps. Empedoclean-with-Neoplatonic apophatic theology (expressed, as I show in Chapter 8, in the use of a Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis) that has not been appreciated by the many scholars who have claimed that Ibn Gabirol advances a Doctrine of Divine Will that marks the rejection of emanation.

6

Irādic Unfoldings: Ibn Gabirol's Hylomorphic Emanationism and the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis

. . . from the light of His garment He fashioned His world . . .

– Ibn Gabirol[1]

6.0 Rereading Ibn Gabirol: Divine *Irāda* as Emanation and the Theology of Desire

Having considered and critiqued the widespread scholarly claim that Ibn Gabirol rejects emanation, we are finally ready to launch into our new reading of the Divine *Irāda*, and with it a new appreciation for Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire. Mindful of Ibn Gabirol's own effusive use of emanationist images, and paying careful attention to his own Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts, we set out to interpret Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* committed to ensuring that our interpretation not only does not ignore, but actually strongly accommodates, (1) his general embrace of emanationism, (2) his emphatic description of Divine *Irāda* as "the intermediary between the two extremes" (along with what we will see to be his vertical sense of intermediation), and (3) his robust sense that love and desire lie at the core of being. In other words, we reapproach Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* in light of his actual Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts to reveal something entirely different than the picture of "Avicebron, the Voluntarist" that has been so frequently painted.

In Chapter 5, we have seen Neoplatonic insights about Divine Will going hand in hand with divine emanation, and in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3) we have seen Ps. Empedoclean insights on matter and form as signifying vertical (as opposed to horizontal) relata. Approaching Ibn Gabirol with these guiding insights in mind (and putting aside any of our Augustinian or other voluntarist lenses), we can reread the *Fons Vitae* cosmo-ontology as a Theology of Desire – a teaching of the Divine *Irāda* emanating forth by the very fact of God's being and investing all things with a God-born and God-directed

desire for something of God's goodness. In this picture, Divine *Irāda* is divine emanation of a sort fully consistent with the *Theology of Aristotle*'s teaching of the outpouring of goodness from the very bounty of God's essential being. Also in this picture, Divine *Irāda* gives rise first and foremost to a pure material Grounding Element as a marker of love at the core of being. This latter teaching is fully consistent with the Ps. Empedoclean teaching about a material Grounding Element created by God at the core of Intellect and at the heart of the Great Chain of Being, as it is also fully consistent with Ps. Empedoclean as well as broader Islamic Neoplatonic (including Neoplatonized Aristotelian) teachings on love-desire at the root of all being.

6.1 THE VERTICAL IMAGERY OF MATTER AND FORM IN THE THEOLOGY OF DESIRE: ON THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF THE DIVINE *IRĀDA*'S "CONNECTING" INTERMEDIATION

The misunderstanding of Divine Will that we have seen in Chapter 5 relies in part on the conception of God's role as a "horizontal glue/r" connecting together the matters and forms internal to each thing like puzzle pieces in a way entirely at odds with (or at the very least, disconnected from) the spirit of emanation. But this (and the illustration of this as seen, for example, in Brunner's diagram; see Figure 5.1) is entirely incorrect in the actual context of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology in which the matters and forms that Divine *Irāda* is described as "intermediating between" and "connecting" must be taken as referring to *vertically* related causes and effects – a vertical orientation that is very much part of an ordinary downward emanation scheme.

To begin to see Ibn Gabirol's own deeply emanationist emphasis on verticality, we must consider his identification of matter and form with higher and lower causes (perhaps unexpectedly, for some readers but in accordance with the Ps. Empedoclean view addressed in Section 4.3):

> [T]he lower of the substances is form to the higher of them, and the higher of them is matter sustaining the lower, until the first truly simple matter [viz. Grounding Element] is reached.[2]

Ibn Gabirol clearly labels vertically descending levels of being in terms of matter and form, with matter referring to higher planes of reality and form referring to lower effects. Ibn Gabirol uses the term "form" to demarcate a substance in its role as "lower substance" (as vertically lower effect) and "matter" to demarcate a substance in its role as "higher substance" (as vertically higher cause). To be sure, Ibn Gabirol's use of "matter" and "form" terminology is unusual. Within a range of Platonic traditions, not only do we

not expect a first pure matter at the heights of the cosmos, but – familiar as we are with Platonic texts that identify the highest realities as forms – many of us come to intuitively associate that which is "higher" with form and that which is "lower" with matter. In this very respect, we find – in Ibn Gabirol's own Islamic Neoplatonic milieu – that the *Ikẖwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* (The Brethren of Purity) describe something as the "matter" with respect to something else only if it is *lower* – not, as for Ibn Gabirol, if it is higher. In contrast to what we see in Ibn Gabirol in the quote just mentioned (directly related to the Ps. Empedoclean teaching in Section 4.3), the *Ikẖwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* write, on the contrary (and in more standard Platonic spirit), that the World Soul may be called "matter" with respect to Universal Intellect precisely because the World Soul is *lower than* the Universal Intellect, and is its "receiver."[3]

Within the unique confines of Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean cosmo-ontology, however, not only is there a pure supernal material Grounding Element, but as such intuitions are reversed and he comes to intuitively associate that which is higher with matter and that which is lower with form (recall Section 4.3, as well as Section 3.3 with Figures 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6). And so, he describes a higher reality as *matter* vis-à-vis the lower reality, and the lower reality as form vis-à-vis what is above it. As we will see in Chapter 7, this set of insights will also help us better understand a number of Ibn Gabirol's claims about matter – including his use of the term "essence" to refer to matter and his description of matter as the "*genus generalissimum*." Here, however, we must see in this set of insights the guidelines for how – and how not – to understand Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda*. For in this set of insights, it becomes clear that for Ibn Gabirol, Divine *Irāda*'s "intermediating" and "connecting" role between matter and form is – *pace* extant scholarly treatments of his so-called Doctrine of Divine Will – clearly a vertical relation, one that in its verticality is at home with (not, *pace* the received scholarship, in opposition to) an emanation framework of higher realities giving way to lower ones. As such, Divine *Irāda*'s role as "connecting" matter and form can no longer be understood as a kind of occasionalist glue that, in horizontally binding the matter and form of a thing together, emerges as the cause of an existent's unity and wholeness; on the contrary, in "intermediating between matter and form" (understood now in terms of the vertical emanation of a higher cause to its lower effect), Divine *Irāda* marks the very reality of cosmic division, marking the fact of upper realities giving way to lower ones. Here, once again, the activity of Divine *Irāda does not* (*pace* the received scholarship) mark the rejection of emanation; on the contrary, it marks the very downward flow of emanation per se. Returning to Chapter 5, we may thus conclude not only that Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* is consistent with a Limited Emanation Framework,

but that it is consistent with – and even indicative of – a full Plotinian Unlimited Emanation Framework in which God himself emanates.

In what follows, I provide further textual support for interpreting Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda* as functioning vertically in way of further supporting my claim that Ibn Gabirol's notion of Divine *Irāda* very much supports emanation, including the divine emanation of Plotinian Neoplatonism. I address this latter point more fully in Chapter 8, where I explain how Divine *Irāda* precisely describes God in His processive emanating unfolding.

6.2 "INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE EXTREMES" AS JOINING, AND JOINING AS THE VERTICAL EMANATION COUNTERPART OF NEOPLATONIC RETURN

> There are three parts of knowledge in all: (1) the knowledge of matter (*al-ʿunṣur*) and form (*aṣ-ṣūra*), (2) the knowledge of *al-Irāda* (Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire), and (3) the knowledge of the First Essence. In existence, there is nothing other than these three. First Essence is cause; matter and form, effect; and Divine *Irāda* is the intermediary between the two extremes.[4]

We have already seen this important passage describing Divine *Irāda* as "the intermediary between the two extremes."[5] Reflecting further on this dynamic, Ibn Gabirol goes on to describe Divine *Irāda*'s intermediating role between matter and form in terms of its "joining" or "connecting" (*ligans*) them.[6] In further support of the verticality of Divine *Irāda*'s dynamic, then, we consider the extent to which Ibn Gabirol's general understanding of the "joining" or "connecting" relation is undeniably vertical. Starting with the Neoplatonic Return, we have already seen the following:

> Student: What is the final cause of the generation of man?
> Teacher: The devotion/conjunction (*applicatio*) of his soul with the higher world, such that everyone might return to his likeness.[7]

We have already addressed this passage in Chapter 3, where we suggested translating the Latin "*applicatio*" in the technical epistemological (and vertical) sense of "*ittiṣāl*" (lit. conjunction), describing the soul's upward return to Intellect. Confirming this correlation of *applicatio* and the technical, vertical notion of *ittiṣāl*, the extant Arabic fragment clearly shows that "*applicatio*" is here indeed translating the Arabic "*ittiṣāl*."[8] This correlation between *applicatio* and the technical, vertical notion of *ittiṣāl* is confirmed too further along at *Fons Vitae* 5.43, where the notion of an upward turn from mundane sensation to the higher truths is described as "*applicatio ad originem vitae*" (cleaving to

the source of life), the translation for the *ittiṣāl*-rooted Arabic claim, "*tattaṣilu bi-yanbūʿ al-ḥayāh*" ("you cleave to the fountain of life").[9]

While in the context of medieval Aristotelian matter metaphysics (as can be seen in discussions of Aristotelian prime matter in Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, and others), the term *ittiṣāl* is commonly used to refer to the "cohesion" – or "cohesiveness" – of prime matter with respect to the form of corporeity and the taking on of three dimensions,[10] in the context of the Neoplatonic Return to Intellect, the term "*ittiṣāl*" brings with it a very clear vertical implication, picking out as it does the "conjunction" between the human soul and Universal Intellect. In this latter respect, the "connection" relation clearly carries vertical associations in Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic context. And so, when we learn of Divine *Irāda* that it is a "connector," there is reason (within an Arabic Neoplatonic context) to think that we are talking about something vertical (albeit in the case of *al-Irāda*, with a downward-directed, not upward-directed, connotation).

To help further draw out the verticality – including the downward-directed verticality – of "connection" for Ibn Gabirol, we might note that Ibn Gabirol uses the idea of connection to describe matter's relation to form, and – as we have already seen – Ibn Gabirol emphasizes that the relation of matter to form signifies (in his Ps. Empedoclean context) a vertical, downward relation. Ibn Gabirol uses the language of "conjunction" to describe matter's relation to form, and he goes on to emphasize that this relation signifies in particular the downward-vertical relation between a higher cause and a lower effect. Using the language of "conjunction" to describe matter's relation to form, Ibn Gabirol notes that

> *Intentio appetitus et amoris est inquisitio applicationis cum amato et unitionis cum illo*[11]
>
> The aim of desire and of love is striving to conjoin with the beloved and to unite with it . . .

That this signifies something "vertically downward-directed" can be seen when we remind ourselves that Ibn Gabirol's sense of "matter and form" is a vertical one:

> . . . the lower of the substances is form to the higher of them, and the higher of them is matter sustaining the lower . . . [12]

Reading these two passages together, we come to realize that the "conjoining" activity of matter to form is a vertical relation, and with this realization we are given further support for reading Divine *Irāda*'s own intermediating "connecting" role (moreover, its own intermediating "connecting" role as the

connector of matter to form) as vertical, and as downward-directed in particular. Not only do the claims about Neoplatonic Return and about matter's downward relation to form give us a context in which to see the concept of connection – and with it, the connecting activity of Divine *Irāda* – as a vertical relation, but we find further support for Divine *Irāda*'s downward orientation in the fact that Divine *Irāda*'s primary connecting activity (as the "intermediary between the two extremes") is the connecting of matter to form, and the connection of matter to form in Ibn Gabirol signifies a downward relation. We have strong evidence to conclude that in the context of Ibn Gabirol, Divine *Irāda* signifies not only a vertical process, but a downward-directed one.

In effect, we find in Ibn Gabirol a conception of joinings, connections, and conjunctions as vertical processes – some upward-directed (as in the case of the "*applicatio*" of soul to Intellect) and some downward-directed (as in the case of matter's "*applicatio*" to form, and – as such – Divine *Irāda*'s intermediating joining of matter and form). In all of this we have found further support for reading the Divine *Irāda* (the core cosmic "connecting" force) as a downward cosmic activity – the downward flow of emanative procession itself mirroring the upward revertive cosmic force of Return within the Great Chain of Being.

Divine *Irāda* – as an "intermediary between the two extremes" that "joins" matter and form – emerges finally as the vertical process of God's cosmic unfolding through the emanative disclosure of each higher level of reality (described as matter) into each lower level of reality (described as form). In further support of thus seeing in the Divine *Irāda* the vertical emanative procession into greater plurality (seen in particular in Ibn Gabirol as the manifesting of more and more forms – recall Figure 3.4), we might consider Ibn Gabirol's own overt identification of *al-Irāda* as the herald of diversity in the universe,[13] and, relatedly, his description of *al-Irāda* as manifesting its activity through forms,[14] themselves the cosmic markers of that diversity and, as such, markers of the downward procession of the Great Chain of Being. As cosmic en-form-er, Divine *Irāda* signifies (as we will see in more detail in Chapter 8) the downward processive motion of the divine in His opening onto the fullness of being. That Divine *Irāda* is the downward flow of reality can be seen further in Ibn Gabirol's own metaphorical depiction of Divine *Irāda* as the "*lumen primum*," the streaming first light of being,[15] and his related description of Divine *Irāda* in terms of a "diffusion" of God; it is

> *. . . virtus divina, faciens materiam et formam et ligans illas, et diffusa a summo usque ad imum, sicut diffusio animae in corpore; et ipsa est movens omnia et disponens omnia . . .*

> . . . divine vitality,[16] making and joining matter and form, diffused throughout from the highest to the lowest, just as the diffusion of soul in body; it moves and orders all things . . . [17]

Read now in its vertical role, Divine *Irāda* – as streaming light and as cosmic diffusion "from the highest to the lowest" – emerges precisely as the mark – not the rejection – of the emanative unfolding of reality.

6.3 RETHINKING "MATTER+FORM COMPOSITION" AND THE INTERMEDIATION OF DIVINE *IRĀDA* AS THE DOWNWARD PROCESSION OF EMANATION

With a better understanding of Divine *Irāda* as consistent with – and as in fact referring directly to – the downward process of emanation, we can deepen our appreciation for the vertical overtones of "matter+form composition" in Ibn Gabirol. Given that emanation is the process of increasing manifestness, Ibn Gabirol uses the term "matter" to refer to the higher causal moment in a vertical process of emanation, and the term "form" to refer to lower effects in that emanating downward chain. In other words, following the common imagery of matter as that which is less manifest and form as that which is more manifest and diverse, Ibn Gabirol makes an uncommon (and Ps. Empedoclean) observation (in line with Figures 3.4 and 3.5): The emanation of the Great Chain of Being is a motion from the pure material (the hidden and more unified) to the formal (the manifest and more diverse). Starting first and foremost with the pure material Grounding Element derived from the very core of the Divine Essence itself, the process of emanation is theorized by Ibn Gabirol as God's investing each and every thing (spiritual and corporeal) with a vestige of the material Grounding Element's purity side by side with the vestige of Intellect – the reality of the pure material Grounding Element together with the unfolding manifestation of the form of Wisdom that contains all forms. As we trace the flow of being downward from Grounding Element to Intellect, and from Intellect to a series of World Souls, and ultimately to the realm of bodies, we may speak of an ever-increasing manifesting of forms: From the unity of Grounding Element, we move to a more plural unity of all forms in Intellect (a plurality-in-unity that Plotinus describes as a telescoping of forms one inside the next), and from here we arrive at an even more emphatic outward manifesting – a proliferation, we may say, of the plurality-in-unity of all forms in Intellect (qua form of Wisdom) to the plurality-in-plurality of all forms in bodies.

Emphasizing that "matter" refers to the higher causal moment in the vertical emanative unfolding of the Great Chain of Being, recall our discussion in Section 4.3 of the following passages in Ibn Gabirol:

> . . . the matter to the lower is the form to the higher . . . the more subtle of substances is the subject to (i.e., carrier of) the coarser of them, [and] all are forms sustained in First Matter,[18]

and

> . . . the lower of the substances is form to the higher of them, and the higher of them is matter sustaining the lower, until the first truly simple matter is reached.[19]

As we also noted in Section 4.3, these hierarchical notions structurally mirror the Ps. Empedoclean idea (recounted in Shahrastānī) that:

> *mā hūwa 'asfal fa-hūwa qishr li-mā hūwa 'a'lā, wa-'a'lā lubbuhu*[20]
>
> What is lower is shell to what is higher, and the higher is its kernel

Following on the common image of matter as more hidden and form as more manifest, the Ps. Empedoclean tradition – including Ibn Gabirol – speaks in relatively uncommon terms of the Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being as the disclosure of lower, more manifest form from higher, more unified matter (linked to the sense that Unspecified Being gives way to specified beings).

It is precisely in this context – as we have noted in Subsection 5.5.2 and in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 – that for Ibn Gabirol, the Divine *Irāda*, in its mediating role as the "connector" of matter to form, refers to the vertical emanative unfolding of the Great Chain of Being. This is the true heart of Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic sense of the "composition" of all things in terms of "matter+form": Far from a horizontal reflection on each thing being made of "two parts" (as if interlocking puzzle pieces), the claim that each thing is composed of matter and form is, rather, a vertical reflection on God's unfolding of each reality from the pure material Grounding Element into greater and greater plurality through the onset of more and more forms. As we discuss more in Chapter 7, "universal hylomorphism" is here replaced with the observation that all non-God things – including, of course, souls and intellects as well as bodies – show their emanated lineage from the purity of not-yet-being (signifying the pure material ground at the very top of the Great Chain of Being) through the manifestness of being (viz. the state of things – as they manifest a greater and greater number of separate forms – as lower effects

within the Great Chain of Being). This purity of not-yet-being (as a genus of Unspecified Being) is the "higher material" moment of ourselves and of all things, and it is identified with the pure material Grounding Element at the core of being (as it is also the locus of the desire for something of the goodness of God at the core of ourselves and of each thing; see Chapters 3 and 8, and Sections 6.5–6.7). (As we will revisit in Section 7.6, this revised understanding of the "matter+form composition" of each thing makes entirely lucid and reasonable [from a Neoplatonic point of view] the commonly misunderstood – yet relentlessly criticized – idea in Ibn Gabirol of "universal hylomorphism" – the claim that all things, including souls and intellects, are "matter+form composites".)

6.4 "MATTER," "MATTER+FORM," AND "FORM": IBN GABIROL'S TRIPART HYLOMORPHIC METHOD AND NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS

With our appreciation of the vertical resonance in Ibn Gabirol of the terms "matter" and "form" (including the implications for the intermediating and joining function of Divine *Irāda* as the downward unfolding of emanation from higher to lower realities), we are ready to appreciate Ibn Gabirol's unique approach to Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. Without going into too much detail here,[21] we might note that Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis is a common Neoplatonic approach to conveying (and, as we will emphasize in Chapter 8, apophatically conveying) the fullness of each emanating reality through three interrelated perspectives: Remaining, Procession, and Reversion. As Stephen Gersh notes, this tripart approach engages the structure of reality

> as a continuous series of causes and effects in which each term relates dynamically to the previous one: it "remains" in its prior (manifests an element of identity with it), it "proceeds" (manifests an element of difference), and it "reverts" (strives to re-establish the identity).[22]

Gersh goes on to note that this schematic gives way to various complex applications through which the Neoplatonist encounters reality. In this sense, the preceding descriptions are only a start; each stage can be described in terms of each other stage depending on the parameters of the analysis at hand.

In the simplest sense, we may say that "remaining," "procession," and "reversion" are terms used to describe the overall unfolding of the Great Chain of Being, signifying the "remaining" of a higher cause in itself (and of a lower cause in a higher cause, as Gersh notes, although we will focus on

the former sense in what follows), the "procession" of reality from the source downward, and the "reversion" (or "return") of each being to its source. In another, deeper sense, however, the three terms are tools (or perspectives) for analyzing each and every reality within the Great Chain of Being in tripart terms: by analyzing a being through the perspective of "remaining," we glimpse its reality as a higher cause in the Great Chain; by analyzing a being through the perspective of "procession," we glimpse its reality as a compresence of difference from and sameness with its higher cause in the Great Chain; by analyzing a being through the perspective of "reversion," we glimpse its reality within the Great Chain in two ways – first we glimpse the extent to which the being (qua effect) is itself related in sameness to its own higher cause, and second, we glimpse the extent to which the being (qua cause) exerts a force of "sameness-with-cause" onto its lower effect, in this way inducing its effect to revert (through sameness) to itself qua final cause.

Following this idea a bit further, we may note that at the heart of this complex Neoplatonic mode of analysis is the sense that each emanating and/or emanated reality (including ourselves) is a compresence of *otherness from* our source (i.e., "we have proceeded from a higher cause") with *sameness to* our source (i.e., "we are ultimately infused with – and must strive to better manifest, which is to say, revert to – the reality of our source," an idea that grounds the Neoplatonic teaching of Return that we have explored in Chapter 3). In this context, a lower reality is seen as sharing with its higher cause a "sameness" and as deviating from its higher cause through its (i.e., the lower reality's) manifesting of "difference." In various Pythagorean and Neoplatonic contexts, this is expressed in evocative geometric terms that liken the higher cause (qua remaining-in-itself) to the circle (or the point), the processive move from higher cause to lower effect (qua emanating outward to a lower effect) to the line, and the lower cause's revertive relation to its cause to the spiral, the dynamic convergence of "the self-remaining of circle with the processive outward motion of line" signifying the compresence (in a lower effect) of a sameness with and a difference from its higher emanating cause.[23]

Whereas the main evidence for ascribing the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis to Ibn Gabirol is the extent to which it makes good sense (as we will see here and in Chapter 8) of what are otherwise very hard-to-understand moves within Ibn Gabirol's texts, there are other reasons for presuming something like this approach within Ibn Gabirol's worldview. In particular, one can find a strong "perspectival" methodology in a range of Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean texts in Ibn Gabirol's milieu, which mirrors the core "perspectival" sensibility in the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. Consider, for example, Shahrastānī's recounting of the Ps. Empedoclean tradition. As we have seen in Chapter 4,

the view of Empedocles is described in terms of an overtly perspectival approach. Speaking of the pure material Grounding Element, the text uses a perspectival method to explain why we may say that it is simple (*basīṭ*), but why we may not say that it is an "absolute simple" (*basīṭan muṭliqan*): It is only simple "with respect to the essence of Intellect" (*min naḥwa dhāt al-ʿaql*), but it is itself composite with respect to the simplicity of the Divine Essence.

This analysis of something "with respect to" one thing and then another reveals a deeply perspectival method according to which a given reality is explored primarily vis-à-vis its relation to its higher cause and vis-à-vis its relation to its lower effect. This is precisely the motivating spirit of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. We may also consider the methodological connection in this regard to Ibn Gabirol's self-awareness about the imaginative activity of "adopting perspectives" in refrains (common throughout the *Fons Vitae*) such as "If you want to imagine matter without form . . . ,"[24] and (from his Return passage that we addressed in Chapter 3) " . . . when you want to imagine the simple substances and how your essence spreads though them and encompasses them . . . " Here, as in a range of other contexts, Ibn Gabirol shows a clear appreciation for the imaginative capacity to envision one thing as another, and the capacity of language to help us approach one thing from various perspectives. We find these methodological underpinnings throughout Ibn Gabirol (and across a range of Islamic Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts), and we find these same methodological underpinnings at the very heart of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis.

While we cannot here treat the complexity and beauty of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in depth (though we will explore it some more in our theological reflections in Chapter 8), we must set out to understand this method if we hope to gain a fuller appreciation for Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*. Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphism reveals a deep affinity for Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. In fact, the tripart dynamic of that method helps fuel Ibn Gabirol's unique hylomorphic claims about "levels" of matters and forms throughout the cosmos. A full appreciation of Ibn Gabirol includes recognizing his Neoplatonic tripart sensibility, which is to say, his desire to analyze any given reality through the interlocking perspectives of Remaining, Procession, and Reversion. A full appreciation of Ibn Gabirol also includes recognizing that he gives voice to this Neoplatonic tripart sensibility in uniquely hylomorphic terms, analyzing each reality through the interlocking perspectives of "matter" (corresponding to "remaining"), "matter+form" (corresponding to "procession"), and "form" (corresponding to "reversion").

In Ibn Gabirol's uniquely matter-centric mode of expression, we might correlate the "circle moment of remaining" with a perspective on a substance

in its reality qua higher cause as its reality "qua matter," the "line moment of procession" with a perspective on a substance in its move away from its cause as its reality "qua matter+form," and the "spiral moment of reversion" with a perspective on a substance in its revertive relationship to its own cause and/or in its revertive relationship (qua final cause) to its own effect as its reality "qua form." Seen in this way, we may speak of a uniquely hylomorphic mode of expressing the Great Chain of Being in Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire according to which a higher cause is described as the matter to its lower effect (and, as we discuss in Section 7.4, as its genus – its very mark of broader sameness with its lower effect alongside the introduction of difference [form, specification] in the downward move from cause to effect).

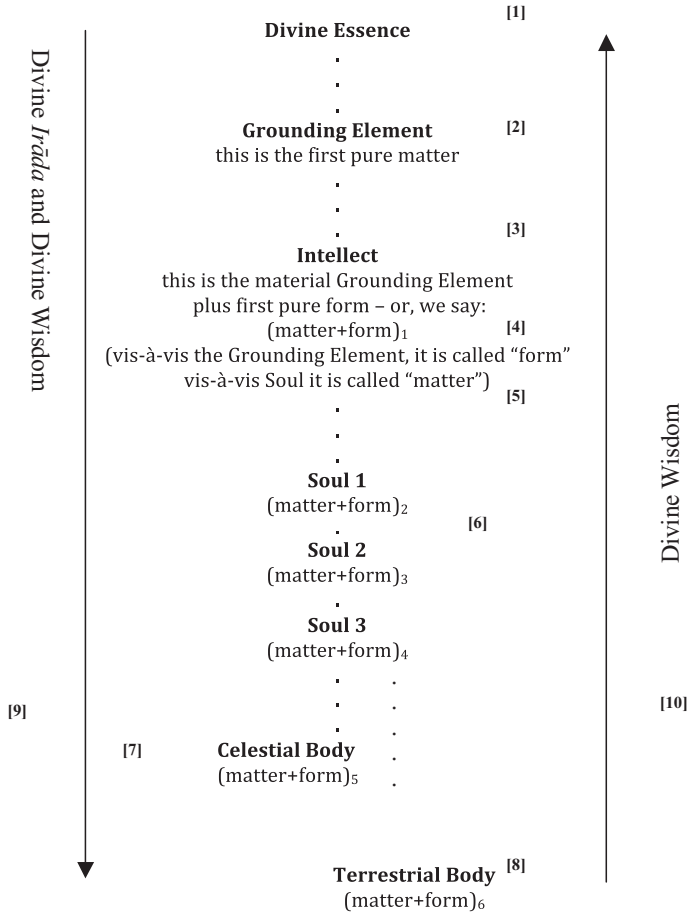
Mindful of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, we are able to better appreciate Ibn Gabirol's encounter with the Great Chain of Being, but also with each and every reality, through three perspectives, namely "matter," "matter+form," and "form." Within the context of a Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, Ibn Gabirol engages three hylomorphic perspectives on each emanating/emanated reality. (1) A higher cause, qua substance in its own right, does not lose itself in the process of emanation; this is an analysis in terms of "Remaining," which – for reasons that become clearer in Section 6.7 – we might correlate to Ibn Gabirol's describing a given reality "qua matter." (2) A higher cause gives way from its own self-sameness to the otherness and difference of an effect; this is an analysis in terms of "Procession," which – for reasons that become clearer in Section 6.7 – we might correlate to Ibn Gabirol's describing a given reality "qua matter+form." Finally (3) a higher cause is both itself related in sameness to its own cause (in its role as effect), as it at once pulls its own effect back to a sameness with itself (in its role as final cause); these are two separate but related analyses in terms of "Reversion," which – for reasons that become clearer in Section 6.7 – we might correlate to Ibn Gabirol's describing a given reality "qua form."

In what follows, I revisit Ibn Gabirol's Great Chain of Being in light of his hylomorphic version of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis.

6.5 THE THEOLOGY OF DESIRE REVISITED: IBN GABIROL'S REVISED GREAT CHAIN OF BEING AND NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS

In Chapter 8, I explore Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonically apophatic approach to God in ways that even further ground my reading of Divine *Irāda* as part and parcel of a Plotinian emanationist framework. Here, however, let us explore what Ibn Gabirol's worldview looks like in light of our new sense of his vertical

hylomorphic imagery, and in light of our related new sense of Divine *Irāda* as marking the downward flow of emanation. Replacing Brunner's diagram in light of our findings (see Figure 5.1), we arrive at the following new depiction (Figure 6.1):



6.1. Ibn Gabirol's Hylomorphic Great Chain of Being

In what follows, I exposit the various parts of this diagram in way of explaining the overall structure of Ibn Gabrirol's Theology of Desire. In so doing, I tie together a number of our findings throughout this study so far, including the implications of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in Ibn Gabirol's thought. (In what follows, I use the square-bracketed numbers 1–10 in Figure 6.1 as reference points for my analysis.)

[**1**] It is under the description of "Essence" or "First Essence" (*adh-dhāt*, or *adh-dhāt al-'ūlā*) that God emerges as the emanating source of the pure material Grounding Element and, as such, as the source of matter in all things. Ibn Gabirol here points to the utter pure unity of the ultimate source of the Great Chain of Being. Reflecting on the use of this same term in Ṣūfī contexts, Sells speaks of "the absolute unity beyond the dualistic structures of language and thought, beyond all relation . . . ,"[25] and goes on to conceptually link this term to "the Plotinian One and Eckhart's Godhead (*Gottheit*) in the sense that it is beyond all dualism, all name, and all quiddity."[26] (See Section 7.2, with note 3, for the use of the term "Divine Essence" in other Islamic theological contexts.)

It is under this description as "Divine Essence" that God emerges in the claim (to be addressed in more detail in Chapter 7) that:

> . . . *materia est creata ab essentia, et forma est a prorprietate essentiae, id est sapientia et unitate* . . . [27]
>
> . . . matter is created from Essence, and form is from the property of Essence, that is to say, from Wisdom and unity . . .

It is also under this description as "Divine Essence" that God emerges in the third part of Ibn Gabirol's claim that:

> There are three parts of knowledge in all: (1) the knowledge of matter (*al-'unṣur*) and form (*aṣ-ṣūra*), (2) the knowledge of [Divine] *Irāda* and (3) the knowledge of the First Essence (*adh-dhāt al-'ūlā*) . . .

We will talk in more detail in Chapter 8 about Ibn Gabirol's apophatic vision of God as Essence giving rise to matter in and through the Divine *Irāda*, with the invocation too of the Divine Wisdom. For here, we might simply note the relationship between matter and God qua Essence for Ibn Gabirol. Thinking of the material Grounding Element in terms of Unspecified Being, we might note that God emerges in a host of Islamic Neoplatonic traditions as Pure Being, which is to say, as the absolutely indeterminate being that is prior to any limited or determinate being. In this respect, we can appreciate the link between God's own pureness of (pre-)being and the pureness of (pre-)being in the Grounding Element. In a sense, we must think of multiple manifestations of purity (or unity) in this regard: God's Essence is the most hidden and pure (and in this sense, unspecified), and gives way to another version of pure unity in God's own reality qua act (variously seen as *Irāda*, Wisdom, and Word, as we discuss in Chapter 8); this in turn gives way to the purity of Grounding Element (which we might describe as a Pure Being or Unspecified Being, but not in the same sense as God Himself is a Pure Being or Unspecified Being);

and finally, we arrive at Intellect, itself the first marker of plurality (given that it hosts all forms), but yet itself a pure unity of unspecified being (in the sense that all the forms are in Intellect as a plurality-in-unity). It is only once we enter the realm of bodies (and especially once we enter the realm of terrestrial bodies) that we may speak of the specification of being and the plurality of being in truly non-unified senses.

We might also note that God and matter are tied together in Ibn Gabirol by his use of the term "essence" for both, and through his reliance on metaphors of hiddenness and desire to describe both.[28]

[2] The first pure material reality that Divine *Irāda* manifests (as the first emanated manifestation of God's own hidden Essence) is the material Grounding Element. In Chapter 4 we have shown this to be the Ps. Empedoclean opening of love-desire at the core of all being. In this respect we may speak of love-desire at the core of the Great Chain of Being for Ibn Gabirol – the very idea that he repeatedly emphasizes in such reminders as:

> . . . *intentio appetitus et amoris non est nisi inquisitio applicationis ad amatum et unitionis cum illo, et materia inquirit applicari formae: oportet ut eius motus sit propter amorum et desiderium quod habet ad formam. similiter dicendum est de omni re, quod movetur ad inquirendum formam* . . . [29]

> . . . the aim [or: meaning] of desire and love is to strive to join and to unite with the beloved, and matter strives to be joined to form. And so it is necessary that the motion [of matter] is in accordance with the love and desire that it has for form. Similarly, it ought to be said of everything that it is moved to strive for form.

Recalling our discussion in Chapter 3, we might also remind ourselves that the love-desire in question relates to the comportment of all beings toward wisdom, goodness, and God (or, as we have been summarizing this idea, a comportment toward "something of the goodness of God"). We will expand on this set of ethical-existential insights in Chapter 8.

In addition to seeing Ibn Gabirol's teaching of love-desire at the core of the Great Chain of Being (seen first and foremost in the pureness of the material Grounding Element born of God's own Essence and present at the core of all things), once we understand the emanating framework of his project, we also come to understand why for Ibn Gabirol love-desire is also present in all things: Just as in an ordinary Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being we can say that Intellect (as the emanating source) not only roots but permeates through all things, so too in the case of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology we can say that the pure material Grounding Element (the core locus of love-desire in this world) not only roots but permeates through all things. Following this idea

through, we may additionally note that whereas in the regular Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being we speak of Intellect as a light that shines down and casts its light onto/into all else, here, in the context of Ibn Gabirol's revised Great Chain of Being, we may speak instead of a "shadowed light" pouring down onto/into all else. This "shadowed light" of course is the shadow of the pure material Grounding Element emanating forward, as it were, together with Intellect's light.

In this respect, recall the correlations of "shadow" and "light" in Figure 3.4, as well as our analysis of Ibn Gabirol's own overt talk of the Neoplatonic "Return to Intellect" in terms of an illuminating shadow: As we discussed in Section 4.4, given that he emphasizes a pure material ground at the core of (or "prior to") even Intellect, we will in our Return to Intellect of course find not only light, but shadow as well. (It might be noted that this theme of "shadowed light" – or "illuminating shadow" – can be found too in other traditions, including in the Ps. Empedoclean aspects of Isaac Israeli's work.[30])

In light of all of this, we can also better appreciate why Ibn Gabirol would choose to use the term "matter" to refer to a vertically higher emanating cause vis-à-vis what is lower than it, and the term "form" to refer to a vertically lower emanated effect vis-à-vis its higher emanating cause: Because the pure material Grounding Element is the ultimate sustaining root and cause, it is appropriate to talk of anything in its role qua "sustaining root and cause" in terms of its being the "matter" to that which it sustains (viz. its lower effects). In this context, the introduction of form is seen as secondary (or at least as second, though of course not in a temporal sense): Through the downward emanation from God (described as the Divine *Irāda*'s "intermediation" between matter and form), the Divine Essence is manifest first in the purity of material Grounding Element, and only after that in the further and further enforming of pure matter. In this context "matter" is prior to "form" and is, as such, the term that describes something in its causal, sustaining role vis-à-vis its lower effects. In like spirit, we will see in Chapter 7 why Ibn Gabirol talks of matter as "essence" and as "*genus generalissimum*."

We might here emphasize again the sense for Ibn Gabirol in which the material purity of the Grounding Element permeates throughout all things (other than God) in the Great Chain of Being: Whereas in ordinary Neoplatonisms (as here too) Universal Intellect permeates through the entire Great Chain as the "bringer of being" to all things, here we must additionally speak of the pure materiality of Grounding Element permeating through the entire Great Chain (and even through Intellect) as the "bringer of 'pre-being'" (or as the "bringer of the desire-to-be" – itself the tripart desire for wisdom, goodness, and God of which we have spoken in Chapter 3). The material purity of the

Grounding Element permeates downward as the "desire-to-be" (what we have described earlier as the "desire for something of the goodness of God") at the heart of all things. Furthermore (in light of God's essential relationship to the Grounding Element about which we will say more in Chapter 7), in bringing to all things the desire-to-be (as a desire for something of God's goodness), Grounding Element brings God's most essential reality to all things. (The Divine Wisdom in turn, as we will see in Chapter 8, brings to all things Being, Knowledge, and God's Goodness, that which in the space of God's own reality comes "second" to God's own essential hiddenness – His Desire-to-Be, itself a prior (yet eternal) desire for relation to a world of Being, Knowledge, and Goodness.)

[3] In line with the regular Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being, we find the Universal Intellect – the reality Ibn Gabirol refers to as "the sphere of Intellect" in his *Keter Malkhūt* poem. However, here departing from the ordinary emphasis of Neoplatonism, Ibn Gabirol emphasizes (in Ps. Empedoclean fashion) the reality of a pure material Grounding Element at the heart of even Intellect. As we are in a space of metaphors (as we address in Chapter 8), we should not be surprised to find a number of different ways of emphasizing the grounding of Intellect in matter: Sometimes Ibn Gabirol emphasizes that this pure matter is "existent per se." In such an emphasis, the pure material Grounding Element is depicted as a self-standing reality – as a kind of preexistent existent of sorts. We address this issue of matter's "per se existence" and "preexistent existence" in more detail in Chapter 7. Here, however, it is key to underscore that to the extent that Ibn Gabirol emphasizes the self-standing subsistence of a pure material core, we might speak in interchangeable terms of Intellect being *rooted in* matter, or (in light of the emanative framework) of matter being *prior to* Intellect and even of Intellect *flowing from* matter (in the move from the unity of hidden formlessness to the unity of all forms one in the next). It is in all of these senses that we have spoken in Chapter 4 of Ibn Gabirol's having supplemented the ordinary Neoplatonic emanation schema with the "insertion" as it were of a material reality "between" God and Intellect. This "insertion" of course is, as we have seen from our earlier discussion, also why Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic Return to Intellect is described in terms of shadow.

[4] ***Intellect as "(matter+form)$_1$"***

As a lower effect of Grounding Element, we can describe Intellect as "matter+form": As pure matter "plus" the form of Wisdom, Intellect marks the first unfolding of Grounding Element and in this way marks the first manifesting of the plurality of forms (albeit in a rather unified way given that the form of Wisdom contains all forms as one). This unfolding can be described

as the "joining" of matter to form in the sense that in the downward flow from the pure material Grounding Element, we arrive at the greater manifesting of plurality, which is to say, the onset of form. Marking the first move from pure material Grounding Element to Intellect (itself as a marker of the downward motion of emanation from higher, purer reality to lower being), Intellect marks the onset of the "first form," namely the form of Wisdom that itself contains all other forms (as a plurality-in-unity). With a robust Neoplatonic sensibility alongside a Ps. Empedoclean proclivity for pure matter, Ibn Gabirol sees Intellect *as* the matter of Grounding Element "plus form" in the sense that the Grounding Element is Intellect's (and, by extension, all things') emanating higher cause. Intellect in this regard is the Grounding Element "plus the addition of form," in the same way that Soul is Intellect "plus the addition of form."

The sense of form's "addition" (or, in Ibn Gabirol's overall lexicon, the "connection" or "joining" of matter to form, as well as the "intermediation" between matter and form) refers to the downward procession of emanation; it is a reflection (in hylomorphic terms) of the emanative unfolding of higher causes to lower effects.

With the structure of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in mind (see Section 6.4), we may approach Intellect through three perspectives. (1) In our analysis of Intellect, we may describe it qua matter, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as higher cause. In this respect, we emphasize Intellect qua self-subsistent higher cause as considered from the perspective of Remaining. (2) In our analysis of Intellect, we may describe it qua matter+form. In this respect, we emphasize Intellect in its downward unfolding to its lower effect – which is to say, we consider it from the perspective of Procession. (3) In our analysis of Intellect, we may describe it qua form, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as lower effect, and which we may expand now – in light of our Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis – to an emphasis on a reality in its capacity as lower effect *or* in its capacity to impact on its own lower effect. In this respect, we emphasize Intellect either in its relation to its own higher cause, or in its role as final cause to its own effect – which is to say, in its own ability to turn its effect back to itself (its own ability as cause, that is, to bring out in its effect not only a difference from itself, but a sameness with itself). In this regard, we consider Intellect (or Intellect's effect) from the perspective of Reversion.

In all of this, we might note too that on the one hand (through the perspective of Remaining), we emphasize Intellect in its role as a self-standing reality different from any of the realities above it and different from any of the realities below it. On the other hand (through the perspective of

Reversion understood in the first of its two senses), we emphasize Intellect qua "dependent upon what is above it," an emphasis through which Intellect is highlighted *as* Grounding Element plus additional forms (i.e., its "matter" is Grounding Element; in this regard it *is* Grounding Element plus the addition of the form of Wisdom [which contains all other forms]). In this respect, we emphasize the permeation of Grounding Element through the lower reality of Intellect, and with the further emanation of Intellect, through all lower realities. Additionally, through the perspective of Procession, we emphasize Intellect in its role as cause of the next level of reality, specifically World Soul.

[5] We have just seen the sense in which Intellect is the first "matter+form" reality. It can as such be analyzed qua "matter+form." However, in light of our considerations of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis (and in light of our conversation earlier about Ibn Gabirol's use of the term "matter" to refer to a higher level of reality and "form" to refer to a lower level of reality), we can additionally describe Intellect as "form" vis-à-vis the pure Grounding Element (and God), and as "matter" vis-à-vis the realities that come after Intellect.

[6] Ibn Gabirol speaks of three World Souls (corresponding to the rational, animal, and nutritive aspects of soul). With the structure of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in mind, we may approach each World Soul through three perspectives. (1) In our analysis of each World Soul, we may describe it qua matter, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as higher cause. In this respect, we emphasize each World Soul qua self-subsistent higher cause as considered from the perspective of Remaining. (2) In our analysis of each World Soul, we may describe it qua matter+form. In this respect, we emphasize each World Soul in its downward unfolding to its lower effect – which is to say, we consider it from the perspective of Procession. (3) In our analysis of each World Soul, we may describe it qua form, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as lower effect, and which we may expand now – in light of our Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis – to an emphasis on a reality in its capacity as lower effect *or* in its capacity to impact on its own lower effect. In this respect, we emphasize each World Soul either in its relation to its own higher cause, or in its role as final cause to its own effect – which is to say, in its own ability to turn its effect back to itself (its own ability as cause, that is, to bring out in its effect not only a difference from itself, but a sameness with itself as cause). In this regard, we consider a reality from the perspective of Reversion.

In all of this, we might note too that on the one hand (through the perspective of Remaining), we emphasize each World Soul in its role as a self-standing

reality different from any of the realities above it and different from any of the realities below it. On the other hand (through the perspective of Reversion understood in the first of its two senses), we emphasize each World Soul qua "dependent upon what is above it," an emphasis through which each World Soul is highlighted (1) as Intellect plus additional form and (2) as Grounding Element plus additional forms. In this respect, we emphasize the permeation of Grounding Element and of Intellect through the lower realities of World Soul, and with the further emanations of World Souls, through all lower realities. Additionally, through the perspective of Procession, we emphasize each World Soul in its role as cause of the next levels of reality, specifically Body (of the Celestial and Terrestrial varieties).

[7] With the structure of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in mind, we may approach Celestial Body through three perspectives. (1) In our analysis of Celestial Body we may describe it qua matter, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as higher cause. In this respect, we emphasize Celestial Body qua self-subsistent higher cause as considered from the perspective of Remaining. (2) In our analysis of Celestial Body, we may describe it qua matter+form. In this respect, we emphasize Celestial Body in its downward unfolding to any lower effect – which is to say, we consider it from the perspective of Procession. (3) In our analysis of Celestial Body, we may describe it qua form, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as lower effect, and which we may expand now – in light of our Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis – to an emphasis on a reality in its capacity as lower effect *or* in its capacity to impact on its own lower effect. In this respect, we emphasize Celestial Body either in its relation to its own higher cause, or in its role as final cause to its own effects (viz. individual celestial bodies) – which is to say, in its own ability to turn its effects (viz. individual celestial bodies) back to itself (its own ability as cause, that is, to bring out in its effect not only a difference from itself, but a sameness with itself as cause). In this regard, we consider a reality from the perspective of Reversion.

In all of this, we might note too that on the one hand (through the perspective of Remaining), we emphasize Celestial Body in its role as a self-standing reality different from any of the realities above it. On the other hand (through the perspective of Reversion understood in the first of its two senses), we emphasize Celestial Body qua "dependent upon what is above it," an emphasis through which Celestial Body is highlighted (1) as World Soul plus an additional form (of quintessence),[31] (2) as Intellect plus additional forms, as well as (3) as Grounding Element plus additional forms. In this respect, we emphasize the permeation of Grounding Element and of Intellect and of World Souls through the lower realities of the heavens.

[8] With the structure of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in mind, we may approach Terrestrial Body through three perspectives. (1) In our analysis of Terrestrial Body, we may describe it qua matter, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as higher cause. In this respect, we emphasize Terrestrial Body qua self-subsistent higher cause as considered from the perspective of Remaining. (2) In our analysis of Terrestrial Body, we may describe it qua matter+form. In this respect, we emphasize Terrestrial Body in its downward unfolding to any lower effect – which is to say, we consider it from the perspective of Procession. (3) In our analysis of Terrestrial Body, we may describe it qua form, which, as we have seen, directly emphasizes a reality in its role as lower effect, and which we may expand now – in light of our Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis – to an emphasis on a reality in its capacity as lower effect *or* in its capacity to impact on its own lower effect. In this respect, we emphasize Terrestrial Body either in its relation to its own higher cause, or in its role as final cause to its own effects (viz. individual terrestrial bodies) – which is to say, in its own ability to turn its effects (viz. individual terrestrial bodies) back to itself (its own ability as cause, that is, to bring out in its effect not only a difference from itself, but a sameness with itself as cause). In this regard, we consider a reality from the perspective of Reversion.

In all of this, we might note too that on the one hand (through the perspective of Remaining), we emphasize Terrestrial Body in its role as a self-standing reality different from any of the realities above it. On the other hand (through the perspective of Reversion understood in the first of its two senses), we emphasize Terrestrial Body qua "dependent upon what is above it," an emphasis through which Terrestrial Body is highlighted (1) as World Soul plus additional forms (of earth, air, fire, and water), (2) as Intellect plus additional forms, as well as (3) as Grounding Element plus additional forms. In this respect, we emphasize the permeation of Grounding Element and of Intellect and of World Souls through the lower realities of sensory three-dimensional bodies.

[9], [10] In our diagram, we have highlighted Divine *Irāda* and Divine Wisdom in connection with the "downward procession" (represented by the downward-pointing arrow on the left-hand side of Figure 6.1), as we have highlighted Divine Wisdom in connection with the "upward reversion" (represented by the upward-pointing arrow on the right-hand side of Figure 6.1). The reason for this will become clearer in Chapter 8 in our discussion of Ibn Gabirol's theology in terms of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, according to which the mystery of God is apophatically given to voice in the description of (1) the unfolding processions of Divine *Irāda* and Divine Wisdom, and (2) the revertive return of the Divine Wisdom.

6.6 THE *IRĀDIC*/EROTIC UNFOLDING: LOVE AT THE ROOT OF BEING

We have arrived at a thoroughly reworked notion of Divine *Irāda* as the downward procession of God into the folds of being in and through the first pure material Grounding Element. In Ibn Gabirol's unique Theology of Desire we have found a revised Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being with a special emphasis on the presence – in the guise of a pure material principle that invests all of being with a grounding desire – of a God-born and God-directed desire for wisdom, goodness, and God at the core of all being, corporeal and spiritual alike.

We may, in this spirit, use the term "*Irādic*" to describe the downward flow of emanation in the context of Ibn Gabirol. This term coincidentally (and helpfully) resonates across our Arabic and Greek frameworks with the term "erotic," another apt description of the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire as the entry of God into the world through the grounding pulse of desire at the very core of the Great Chain of Being and, by extension, at the very core of all things. Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire marks God's own desire to enter the world, and this desire is itself enacted through the introduction of the material Grounding Element, a marker in all things of a desire (as we have seen, for wisdom, goodness, and God) born of God's own desire for relation. In all of these senses (and drawing too on our starting discussion in Chapter 2 about translating "*al-irāda*" as Divine Desire),[32] the Divine *Irāda* is desire, marks desire, and grounds desire. And it is in all of these senses that we may speak of the unfolding of the Great Chain of Being as a uniquely *irādic*/erotic unfolding in the context of Ibn Gabirol.

We have replaced a Doctrine of Divine Will with a delicate Theology of Desire in which God desires to enter into the folds of being and does so first and foremost in an *irādic*/erotic expression into a pure material Grounding Element, a pure material marker of desire in all things born of God's own Desire. We will return to this Theology of Desire in Chapter 8, where we will further consider its unique apophatic resonances and its further implications for orienting human living.

6.7 IBN GABIROL'S COSMO-ONTOLOGY (INITIAL CONCLUSIONS): GREAT CHAIN OF BEING + PSEUDO-EMPEDOCLES + NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS

Through our work in Chapters 5 and 6, we have a new way of understanding Ibn Gabirol's unique hylomorphic project. Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology

reveals two ordinary Plotinian insights: Like Plotinus, Ibn Gabirol is committed to an emanating Great Chain of Being (including an emanating divine source), and like Plotinus, Ibn Gabirol is drawn to a uniquely tripart method of analysis. Reflecting on the further Neoplatonic resonances of his work, we might note that, like the *Theology of Aristotle* (and other Islamic Neoplatonic traditions of his time), Ibn Gabirol uses the language of "creation" to describe the emanating divinity, for, like the *Theology of Aristotle*, Ibn Gabirol's commitment to God's absolute sovereignty is not bound up with a sense of "creation in time" or even to "*proairesis*" (the "freedom to choose between alternatives," which we have addressed in Sections 5.2–5.4). Rather, for Ibn Gabirol – as for the *Theology of Aristotle* – God's sovereignty is revealed in the purity of His being-qua-goodness which demands that He pour forth, essentially moving His ownmost hiddenness into manifest being in a moment "devoid of jealousy."[33] We have seen both Plotinus and the *Theology of Aristotle* advert to this divine unfolding through the language of Divine Will (see Subsection 5.4.1); in like fashion, Ibn Gabirol engages the emanating creativity of God's fullness through the language of Divine *Irāda* (as Divine Desire) throughout the *Fons Vitae*.[34] Alongside his talk of Divine *Irāda*, Ibn Gabirol also engages the divine through the language of Essence and Wisdom. We will address the apophatic aspect of his tripart theological language (his talk, that is, of Divine Essence, *Irāda*, and Wisdom [itself often as Word]) in Chapter 8. For now, we must simply note that each description of God is for Ibn Gabirol a description of the Neoplatonic emanative unfolding of the All from the One (itself, as we will see in Chapter 8, as a Neoplatonic apophatic engagement with the Paradox of Divine Unity). In his emanationist context, Ibn Gabirol envisions (without departing very far from) the Plotinian Great Chain of Being as God's giving way to Grounding Element, Grounding Element's giving way to Intellect, and Intellect's giving way to the remainder of being. As we have seen in Section 4.3, Ibn Gabirol in this way paints a picture of "descending unities" with the downward force of emanation seen as a move from less specified pure beings to more specified (and less pure) beings. Returning to Section 2.2, we might also recall the second and third of the substances laid out by Ibn Gabirol in his "order of substances": the substance of universal form in universal matter and the substance of the simple substances one in the next. In light of our analysis in this chapter, we can now appreciate the special significance – and Neoplatonic emphasis – of his description of form being "in" matter and of all the simple substances being "one in the next."[35] Just as we would find in any Neoplatonic account of emanation, lower substances are here being described as being "in" higher ones in that lower effects are rooted in and sustained by their higher causes. In this very sense Neoplatonists speak of body being "in" soul (not, as is more common in a range of contemporary

religious contexts, which seem to have something vaguely spatial in mind, of soul being "in" body). So too for Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic approach to the Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being: In describing both a material Grounding Element at the start of the Great Chain, but also in describing any higher cause as "matter" vis-à-vis its lower effect, Ibn Gabirol speaks of the form (viz. the lower effect) being "in" the matter (viz. the higher cause) – which is to say, the lower effect is rooted in and sustained by its higher cause. In the particular claim about the highest universal form being in the highest universal matter, we might hear in particular Ibn Gabirol's application of this standard Neoplatonic idea to the relationship of the First Form (viz. the Form of Wisdom found in Intellect) and the First Matter (viz. the material Grounding Element that roots and sustains Intellect, and in this sense, roots and sustains the Form of Wisdom).

Aside from Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean-inspired hylomorphic lexicon, and his emphasis on a material Grounding Element (though see Section A5 of the Appendix on intelligible matter in Plotinus playing an arguably identical role to Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element), there is no essential conceptual divide between Plotinus and Ibn Gabirol, and so too vis-à-vis the role in both thinkers of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. Stemming from a Plotinian method that one can find in a variety of guises across a wide range of Greek, Islamic, and Jewish traditions of Neoplatonism, Ibn Gabirol approaches individual realities (e.g., Intellect) from within three perspectives: Remaining, Procession, and Reversion. Even though Ibn Gabirol does not use these terms per se, this strongly Neoplatonic approach is revealed in his own simultaneous analysis of individual realities qua "matter," qua "matter+form," and qua "form." Understanding Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic method (namely, his employment of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis) helps us make better sense of his description of the Great Chain of Being in terms of a series of "matters" and "matters+forms." Linking "matter" to the "remaining" perspective of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis also helps us make sense of his use of the term "matter" to describe something in its capacity as higher cause to a lower effect.

But, of course, his use of the term "matter" (including his talk of layers of "matter" and of "matters+forms," as well as his "universal hylomorphic" claim that even souls and intellects reveal matter) also reveals his Ps. Empedoclean heritage. Thinking in the context of Ps. Empedoclean teachings about a material Grounding Element at the core of being (associated with love and envisioned between God and Intellect in the more ordinary Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being), Ibn Gabirol is helped to a most positive sense of materiality. Ibn Gabirol speaks in this regard of the material Grounding Element arising from God's ownmost Essence, as he speaks too in a most positive voice

about the material aspects of all things. We may understand two related senses in which Ibn Gabirol speaks in a positive voice about the material aspect of all things. First, based on the Ps. Empedoclean association of the material Grounding Element and love, Ibn Gabirol envisions the emanating unfolding of being not only (as in standard Neoplatonic contexts) as the downpouring into all things of Intellect's light, but as the downpouring into all things of the material Grounding Element's shadow-of-desire – a desire-to-be that is born of God's own Essence, and that permeates the core of all things with a grounding desire for wisdom, goodness, and God. Second, in light of this most positive sense of the material Grounding Element, we ought not be surprised to see the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis take on a hylomorphic voice in the context of Ibn Gabirol – just as we ought not be surprised to see the highest perspective identified through the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis (viz. Remaining) presented in Ibn Gabirol as the analysis of reality "qua matter." Given that matter is the most positive and highest non-God reality within a Ps. Empedoclean context, we ought not be surprised to find Ibn Gabirol reflecting on the Great Chain of Being as a series of "matters" (i.e., each hypostasis in the Great Chain of Being is "matter" inasmuch as it "remains" qua higher cause), and as a series of "matter+form" realities (i.e., each hypostasis in the Great Chain of Being is "matter+form" inasmuch as it "proceeds," relating to its higher cause and to its lower effect through a complex compresence of sameness and difference). Ibn Gabirol is not suggesting that there are many layers of matters and forms *in addition* to the Great Chain of Being; rather, he is approaching the Great Chain of Being through the method of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, and is expressing that tripart set of perspectives in a uniquely matter-centric (because Ps. Empedoclean-inspired) way such that Intellect itself and with it other realities in the Great Chain of Being are approached sometimes as matter, sometimes as matter+form, and sometimes as form.

Returning to our charts from Chapter 3 (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5), we can now better appreciate how the terminology of matter trumps the terminology of form for Ibn Gabirol. Keeping the Ps. Empedoclean link between matter and love in mind, we can also understand how the claim that "even intellects contain matter" is a reflection on the ground of being and human being in a God-born and God-directed desire for goodness. We will return to the ethical (as well as transcendental and phenomenological) implications of this idea in Chapters 8 and 9. First, however, we turn in our next chapter to seeing how this new reading of Divine *Irāda*, the material Grounding Element, and Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis – and with these, the entire Theology of Desire – can help us better understand a number of Ibn Gabirol's often misunderstood claims about matter.

7

Matter Revisited

> Everything that exists desires to be moved.
>
> – Ibn Gabirol, *Fons Vitae*, 5.32

We have found a new way to think of Divine *Irāda* and of Ibn Gabirol's uniquely hylomorphic approach to the Great Chain of Being – including his notion of a material Grounding Element. Marking a revision of more standard emanationist frameworks, the Grounding Element roots Intellect – and, by extension, all things – in a pure material source. The idea of Grounding Element also helps foster a thoroughly unexpected set of "matter intuitions" according to which the term "matter" refers to higher emanating causes, and according to which "matter," "matter+form," and "form" are terms through which individual emanating realities are considered along Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis lines. Grounding Element is also a Ps. Empedoclean mark in Ibn Gabirol's universe of pure love and desire at the core of all being – including human being – for something of the goodness of God.

In this chapter, we use what we have learned so far to shed light on a number of Ibn Gabirol's additional insights about matter, including Ibn Gabirol's unique description of creation in terms of the "splitting open of the nothing."

7.1 MATTER AS RIVER

Complementing the emanationist approach we have taken to Ibn Gabirol in our previous chapter, we might point to Ibn Gabirol's likening of matter to a river in what appears to be part of a commentary on *Genesis*.[1] Allegorically correlating the Garden of Eden waters with the pure matter that sits at the root of the unfolding cosmos, Ibn Gabirol envisions the pulse of existence as a River of Life – a vibrant outpouring that links all of existence to a single overflowing source.

In light of our discussions so far, we can see in this idea Ibn Gabirol's teaching of the pure material Grounding Element permeating the entirety of existence. Grounding even the cosmic Intellect of other Neoplatonic systems (symbolized, as we have seen, as a kind of shadowed light), the pure material ground emanates forth as a primordial river.

7.2 MATTER AS BORN OF GOD'S ESSENCE

> *. . . materia est creata ab essentia, et forma est a prorprietate essentiae, id est sapientia et unitate . . .* [2]
>
> . . . matter is created from Essence, and form is from the property of Essence, that is to say, from Wisdom and unity . . .

In an important – and difficult – passage Ibn Gabirol refers to God in terms of "Essence," a term for God that we find in a host of Islamic Neoplatonic contexts as well as in Mu'tazilite and Ṣūfī traditions that describe God as *adh-dhāt al-'ūlā* (the First Essence).[3] What is unusual here, however, is that Ibn Gabirol is not simply calling God "First Essence," but is providing a kind of dual depiction of the unified God in which "Essence" picks out God's most hidden, essential, and primary aspect. What is even more unusual is that Ibn Gabirol carries this metaphor of God's "two aspects" even further, making each individual "aspect" responsible for different aspects of existence: God's Essence is the cause of matter and God's Wisdom is the cause of form. Where the absolute unity of God is here metaphorically conceived in terms of "2 moments" – an essential moment, and an active one – it is to the more essential moment of divine reality that Ibn Gabirol links materiality, with form being related, rather, to God's "second" – or we might say active – moment. To be sure, *pace* David of Dinant, God is not here himself being identified in any way *as* matter (or as in any way *having* matter);[4] that said, God's essential hiddenness (what we have seen to be His Desire-to-Be as a desire to enter into relation with being) is here described in special relation to pure matter – the presence of the material Grounding Element before it is given to the multiplicities of form. It is God's most essential aspect (here identified as prior to Wisdom),[5] which is identified as the source of matter.

Reflecting on the mystery of God's own reality (about which we will say more in Chapter 8), Ibn Gabirol emphasizes God's own "first essential moment" – God's essential pre-being that desires after being and that is expressed (through the unfolding of Divine *Irāda*) in the pure material Grounding Element and its permeating presence in all things. Ibn Gabirol here also envisions God's "second active moment" – His entering the folds of

being itself (through Divine *Irāda* and Wisdom about which we will say more in Chapter 8). In his claim that God's Essence is the source of pure matter (as a pure grounding desire at the root of the cosmos and at the root of all beings), Ibn Gabirol reflects the mystery of God into the core of existence: All things are at once grounded in (1) a desire-to-be (rooted in God's own pre-being Essence, which is to say, God's own Desire-To-Be as desire for relationship with the world) and in (2) being (rooted in God's own entry into being through the introduction of forms in and through Divine *Irāda* and Wisdom). In fact, mirroring this entry of God's own desire into the world through the purity of matter (the first entry of this desire into the world), Ibn Gabirol (as we will see later in the chapter) describes matter itself in terms of "essence." From God's Essence arises the material essence – the core of all being in the desire-to-be (itself the desire for something of the goodness of God).

Pointing to the root of matter in God's own Essence, the aforementioned passage helps us to the further idea that, according to Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire, it is God's own Essence that – as source of matter – is the source of desire in all things. In emphasizing matter's root in God's own Essence, the passage also poignantly emphasizes the priority that Ibn Gabirol gives to matter over form (recall Section 3.3 with Figures 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6).

Ibn Gabirol's claim that matter arises from God's Essence is clearly central to his Theology of Desire. In this respect, I disagree with Schlanger's suggestion that we downplay Ibn Gabirol's claim that matter arises from God's Essence.[6]

7.3 MATTER AS FOUNDATION AND DIVINE THRONE

Ibn Gabirol further gives voice to his hylomorphism – his teaching of the constitution of all existents in terms of matter (Greek: *hūlē*) and form (Greek: *morphē*), understood now (in light of Chapter 6) as a reflection on the emanating structure of reality – in terms of the foundation (Hebrew: *yesōd*) and its secret (Hebrew: *sōd*):

> . . . yours is the hidden place of strength, the secret (*sōd*)
> and the foundation (*yesōd*) . . .[7]

And in like manner:

> . . . few have discovered the source (*meqōr*),[8]
> its secret (*sōd*) and how wondrous is its foundation (*yesōd*) . . .[9]

We also find this language of *sōd* and *yesōd* in his poem *ahavtīkha* ("I Love You"), where in the context of addressing matter's desire for form,[10] Ibn

Gabirol speaks expressly of the "*sōd*" of existence and adds this:

> So very deep and distant is our subject;
> Who will know it? Who will uncover its *yesōd*?[11]

That "secret and foundation" in this poem refer to the philosophical dyad of "form and matter"[12] seems especially clear when we compare *Fons Vitae* 5.42 with canto 26 of his *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*). Starting with the *Fons Vitae*, we find that Ibn Gabirol likens matter to a throne:

> . . . Matter is as if the throne [*cathedra*] of unity . . . [13]

Turning further to *Keter Malkhūt*, we find that Ibn Gabirol describes the cosmic Intellect ("*galgal ha-sēkhel*," lit. "the sphere of Intellect") as occupying a space right beneath the "*kīsē ha-kavōd*" – the Divine "Throne of Glory."[14] Precisely in that context, Ibn Gabirol once again adverts to *sōd* and *yesōd*:

> who will enter your palace, in your raising above the sphere of Intellect (*galgal ha-sēkhel*) a Throne of Glory . . . there, the place of the secret (*sōd*) and the foundation (*yesōd*) . . . [15]

With the invitation at *Fons Vitae* 5.42 to describe matter as a throne, we are invited to read in the above poetic verses a description of Ibn Gabirol's Great Chain of Being precisely as we have portrayed it: There is a pure matter (the material Grounding Element, now as Throne), followed by the Universal Intellect (here described as "the sphere of Intellect"), all rooting the pulsing dual reality of matter (correlated to *yesōd*) and form (correlated to *sōd*). (For a rendering of the pure universal matter as the Throne of Glory and its role at the very core of Ibn Gabirol's cosmos just beneath God, see Loewe.[16])

We might here also recall Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's own use of the term "*yesōd*" for "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" in his Hebrew summary translation of the *Fons Vitae*, as we might also remind ourselves to avoid reading Kabbalistic overtones into Ibn Gabirol based simply on his (and his Hebrew translator's) use of the term "*yesōd*" (in this regard, see Sections 2.5 and 7.6).[17]

7.4 MATTER AS ESSENCE AND UNIFIER: LAYERS OF MATTER, *GENUS GENERALISSIMUM*, SUSTAINER OF DIVERSITY, AND GIVER OF NAME

Following in line with the throne imagery just presented, we learn in the *Fons Vitae* of matter's "receiver" relation to form, "the received":

> *Materia differt a form in eo quod altera est sustinens et altera sustentatum.*[18]
>
> Matter differs from form in that the one is the sustainer, the other the sustained.

We also find that the universal pure grade of matter is

> *. . . unius autem essentiae, ideo quia non quaesivimus nisi unam materiam omnium rerum.*[19]
>
> . . . of a single essence, since we find only one matter for all things.

We additionally learn of pure matter that it is

> *. . . per se existens, unius essentiae, sustinens diversitatem, dans omnibus essentiam suam et nomen,*[20]
>
> . . . existent in and of itself, of a single essence, sustaining diversity, and giving to everything its essence and name.

We learn in similar spirit that it is

> *. . . substantia existens per se, sustentatrix diversitatis, una numero; et . . . est substantia receptibilis omnium formarum.*[21]
>
> . . . a substance existent in and of itself, the sustainer of diversity, one in number; . . . it is a substance receptive to all forms.

In what follows, we turn to unpacking the meaning of these various descriptions in light of the Theology of Desire that we have been exploring.

7.4.1 Layers of Matter

In Chapters 4–6 we have spoken of a material Grounding Element at the core of the Great Chain of Being, which unfolds – in and through cosmic Intellect – as a kind of "shadowed light" and source of desire among all existents. It is in the context of this revised emanationist framework that we have also been able to understand Ibn Gabirol's sense of matter as prior to form, and – as we have seen – even as closer to God's own Essence than form. In like manner, we have come to appreciate Ibn Gabirol's sense that in the Great Chain of Being we may call a higher vertical cause the "matter" to the lower vertical effect. It is in the context of all of these details that we can begin to make sense of Ibn Gabirol's further sense that there are "layers of matter" throughout the cosmos.

One way to approach Ibn Gabirol's sense that there are "layers of matter" throughout the cosmos comes from revisiting his notion of the Grounding

Element at the very core of the emanating Great Chain of Being. Ibn Gabirol envisions a material Grounding Element that unfolds into more and more formed iterations; but as we have seen, this results in a picture of the Great Chain of Being as a series of unfolding "matter+form layers." Recall Figure 6.1 in Chapter 6. There we have seen that Intellect is the first matter+form layer, the three World Souls are themselves additional matter+form layers (viz. layers 2–5), and Celestial and Terrestrial Body are themselves additional matter+form layers of reality (the former is the spiritual matter of the World Soul with the addition of the quintessential form, while the latter is the spiritual matter of the World Soul with the addition of one or more of the forms of earth, air, fire, and water). And so, within Ibn Gabirol's unique approach to the Great Chain of Being, we might speak of the material Grounding Element (as a marker of unspecified being) giving way to a variety of "matter+form layers" (the increasing specification of being down through the Great Chain). All things are the pure matter of Grounding Element plus the manifestation of various forms.

Another related way to approach Ibn Gabirol's sense that there are "layers of matter" throughout the cosmos comes from revisiting the sense in which he uses the term "matter" to refer to any higher reality in relation to its lower effect. As we have seen in our investigation in Chapter 6 of Ibn Gabirol's uniquely hylomorphic version of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, Ibn Gabirol engages each reality in tripart terms as "matter," as "matter+form," and as "form." Thinking of the first of these categorizations in particular, we can understand the sense in which Ibn Gabirol sees the Great Chain of Being *as* a series of "matters" (and *as* a series of "matters+forms" and *as* a series of "forms"). In this respect, his claim that the cosmos is made up of "layers of matter" need not lead us to imagine the addition on Ibn Gabirol's part of any extra details to the more standard picture of Plotinian emanation. While Ibn Gabirol can be seen as modifying the Plotinian universe through his introduction of a material Grounding Element (though see Section A5 of the Appendix for a consideration of Plotinus' own "intelligible matter"), in his further talk of "layers of matter," Ibn Gabirol should not be seen as modifying the Plotinian universe with a number of additional layers of matter. Rather, in light of Ibn Gabirol's uniquely hylomorphic version of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, we ought understand him as describing the ordinary Plotinian Great Chain of Being (of Intellect, Soul, etc.) *as* a series of "matters" (and *as* a series "matters+forms" and *as* a series of "forms"). Aside from the Grounding Element, Ibn Gabirol is not adding matter to the Great Chain of Being; he is simply conceptualizing the Great Chain of Being *as* a series of matters.

In all of this, we might also recall our discussion in Section 4.3 about the unfolding from matter to form (as the unfolding from "higher cause" to "lower effect," which we might also describe as the unfolding of one "material layer" to the next) as the move from less specified being to more specified being, as well as our discussion in Section 6.7 of Ibn Gabirol's "nesting" description of first form's being "in" first matter in this regard.

7.4.2 Essence

It is precisely in this context that we can understand Ibn Gabirol's further description of matter in terms of "essence." For within the context of a revised Great Chain of Being, it is true both that (aside from God) the material Grounding Element is the first essence of all things, just as in ordinary Neoplatonism, the Intellect is [aside from God] the first essence of all things: Pure matter is the essence of all in that it is the shadow-casting foundation that grounds even the emanating light of Intellect. Born of God's own essence, it is a desire-to-be that lies at the very heart of all beings. Whereas Intellect permeates all things with the light of form and Wisdom (and, thus, with being itself), the pure matter of Grounding Element flows forth (like the river of the Garden of Eden) as a marker in all things of the desire-to-be (and as such, as the desire for something of the goodness of God). Matter is in this sense the essence of all things in desire. That matter is the essence of all things is underscored even further by Ibn Gabirol's directly linking matter to God's own Essence. In effect, as God-born marker of desire in all things, matter mirrors God's own primal Desire-to-Be, His own essential *irādic*/erotic desire to enter into relation with the world of being.

Given the role of Grounding Element as the first essence (other than God) at the core of all existence, it also follows that any of the many "matters" (i.e., any of the "higher causes" in their roles vis-à-vis their lower effects) might also be called "essence" vis-à-vis the realities below it. And so, in addition to saying of Grounding Element that it is the matter – as essence – of all things (including the Intellect that follows immediately below it), we may say that Intellect (as higher cause) is the matter – as essence – of the realities beneath it (i.e., Soul, Celestial Body, and Terrestrial Body), as we may say that Soul is the matter – as essence – of the realities beneath it (i.e., Celestial and Terrestrial Body).

Recalling our analysis in Sections 4.3 and 6.5 of the higher-to-lower cosmic relationship in general – and of the material Grounding Element's relation to the rest of being in particular – in terms of unspecified being giving way to more and more specified being, we may here correlate "essence" with

lesser specification. In other words, as we have seen in Figures 3.4–3.6, for Ibn Gabirol the more essential something is the less specified its reality will be, culminating antepenultimately in the purity of Intellect's plurality-in-unity, penultimately in the purity of the Material Grounding Element, and ultimately in the purity of the Divine Essence itself.

7.4.3 Genus, Genus Generalissimum, *and Name-Giver*

In like spirit, we may also speak of matter interchangeably with "genus" as we may in related fashion understand why Ibn Gabirol describes the pure universal matter as the "*genus generalissium.*" In a Platonic context, we expect "genus" to refer to form. However, in light of Ibn Gabirol's emphasis on a pure material Grounding Element and the related sense in which each higher reality is described as "matter" vis-à-vis its lower effects, we can fully see why the terms "matter," "essence," and "genus" would be used interchangeably: Matter (both the first material Grounding Element, but also each higher cause vis-à-vis its lower effects) is the essence of what comes below it, as it is also the genus of what comes below it.[22]

Here, it is useful to point to the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis that we have already engaged in Chapter 6 (and whose further apophatic resonances we will see in Chapter 8). According to this vertical causal analysis of higher and lower realities, a lower reality is seen as sharing with its higher cause a sameness and as deviating from its higher cause through the introduction of difference – a point expressed in various Pythagorean and Neoplatonic contexts (as we have seen in Section 6.4) in terms of "the remaining of circle," "the procession of line," and the complex motion of spiral, the dynamic convergence of "the self-remaining of circle with the processive outward motion of line" that signifies the compresence in each lower effect of a sameness with and a difference from its cause. In Chapter 6, we have correlated this tripart analysis to Ibn Gabirol's own sense of each emanating reality in terms of "matter," "matter+form," and "form." Seen in this context, the special hylomorphic Great Chain of Being in Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire readily gives way to the description of a higher cause not only as the matter of the lower cause, but as its genus – its very mark of broader sameness with its lower effect, before the introduction of difference (form, specification) in the downward move from cause to effect (or from matter to form).

To better understand matter (here signifying a reality in its role as higher cause) as a genus, consider how within a Platonic context we may talk of Goodness and Being as the forms that are the broadest genera. In this spirit,

we may talk in a regular Neoplatonic context of Intellect (the repository of God's Goodness mixed with Being) as the highest genus that is itself the downward flow of Goodness and Being. Moving into the hylomorphic folds of Ibn Gabirol's unique Theology of Desire, we may speak instead (but with similar intuitive pull) of the material Grounding Element (and in similar fashion, of each higher cause – as matter – vis-à-vis its lower effect) as the genus that itself grounds the goodness and being of each of its lower causes. It is in this precise sense that, for Ibn Gabirol, the pure material Grounding Element is itself the *genus generalissimum*.

Understood in this way, matter certainly is an "essence" in the sense that it is the generic underpinning that roots each substance. In this light, matter is also a "name-giver": Because a substance's genera signify its essential ways of being, we may say that the genera (the "matters") ontologically name the subject in question; Terrestrial Body, for example, is "Grounding Element" (its core matter) enformed in such and so ways, as it is Intellect and Soul (its lower matters) enformed in such and so ways.

7.4.4 Unifier

It is along precisely these lines that we may further unpack Ibn Gabirol's sense of matter as the locus of unity. For, returning to the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, a higher cause is essence or genus precisely to the extent that it is the marker of Sameness-with-effect: Intellect as cause of Soul marks a Sameness-with-Intellect in Soul, and in anything lower than Soul. In this sense, Intellect (as being) is a marker of an existential Sameness across all things in a Neoplatonic context – and in this sense is a marker of a unity across all things. Along similar lines, for Ibn Gabirol matter emerges as an even deeper marker of Sameness – and unity – in all things: All things come together not only in being (which is causally linked to Universal Intellect as in the ordinary Neoplatonic context), but all things come together too first and foremost in the desire-to-be (as a desire for something of God's goodness), which is causally rooted in the pure material Grounding Element.[23]

IN ALL THESE WAYS, THE PURE MATERIAL GROUNDING ELEMENT – BUT also each of the higher causes (or "matters") – is a sustainer of diversity, standing at the core of the ever-blossoming fullnesses (which is to say, the growing enformations) of the ever-descending Great Chain of Being. In this

sense, matter (marking each higher cause) is the sustainer, and form (marking each lower effect) is the sustained:

> [The essence of universal being is indeed] multiple and diverse, but . . . nevertheless it comes together into two [principles], [the first] by which it is sustained, and [the second by which it] has being . . . [These two are] universal matter and universal form . . . the root (*radix*) of all things and from them whatever is is generated.[24]

All things are rooted in a host of matters – a hierarchy of sustaining essences that serve as the basis for the manifold diversities of existence. And at the core of the hierarchy, there is a single material core – the pure Grounding Element that we might describe as the preexistent *'ayīn* (Nothing) split open onto being in the *irādic*/erotic unfolding of divine creativity, as the foundational throne upon which creation itself rests, or as the kernel within the shell of diversity, which links us most closely to the Divine Essence itself.

7.5 MATTER AS THE PREEXISTENT *PER SE EXISTENS*: CONTRA GUNDISSALINUS, CONTRA SCHLANGER

From all that we have already seen, matter (as the vestige in all things of the pure material Grounding Element) marks the desire for being – as the desire for something of the goodness of God – in all things. It marks the precondition for being, with being itself entering the picture through the unfolding of form. It is the critical grounding desire – born of God's own Essence – that lies at the heart of being and that, in the case of human being, roots our tripart epistemological, ethical, and theological quest.

Emphasizing matter as the marker of "preexistence" in these senses, consider once again Ibn Gabirol's *ahavtīkha*:

> *ve-hū nikhsaf le-sūmō yēsh kemō yēsh*
> *kemō ḥōshēq 'asher nikhsaf le-dōdō*
>
> and he / it longs to make existence (*yēsh*) like existence (*kemō yēsh*),
> like a lover longs for his beloved[25]

In interpreting this line of verse, many take Ibn Gabirol to be describing matter as the "*kemō-yēsh*" – the "like existence," or, we might say "proto-existence" or simply, "preexistence." Read in this light, we may reorder the above translation (a move that is easier to sense in the Hebrew) to something like this:

and [matter] longs to make [its] "like-existence" (*kemō-yēsh*) into existence (*yēsh*)
like a lover longs for his beloved

In light of what we have seen, we can easily see why matter would be so described: It is the marker of the desire-to-be (itself, as we have seen, born of God's own Essence and, as we will see in greater detail in Chapter 8, of God's own essential desire to enter into the realm of being), and it sets the stage for being (introduced through the reception of various forms – starting with the "universal form," which is the form of Wisdom).

It is here, however, that we encounter a problem. For alongside the idea that matter precedes existence and that form is the mark of existence, we also find – in Ibn Gabirol's list of key defining characteristics of matter – the claim that matter exists on its own "per se" – which is to say that it exists "in and of itself" in some sense without (and before) the introduction of form: On the one hand, Ibn Gabirol describes matter as the principle of "not-yet-existing" (with form as the herald of being); on the other hand, he describes matter as "*per se existens*" – as existing in and of itself.[26]

There are two broad strategies for approaching this problem. (1) On the one hand, we can dissolve the problem by simply downplaying Ibn Gabirol's claim that matter exists per se: If we do not take that claim seriously (or if we read it away or even translate it away), then we no longer have a problem – we are simply able to conclude that Ibn Gabirol holds only that existence is related to forms, and that he does not *really* mean that matter exists per se without form. This approach, in different ways, has been taken up by the medieval translator of the *Fons Vitae* (Dominicus Gundissalinus), as well as by Jacques Schlanger in his more recent reading. (2) On the other hand, we can conclude – as I do – that Ibn Gabirol does indeed mean to say that matter exists per se: Not only does he repeatedly say this, but it is also clear that in its role as "existing per se before form," pure matter marks the Ps. Empedoclean Grounding Element that, as we have elaborated on in Chapters 4–6, is so central to his entire worldview. In further support of the claim that matter has a genuine per se existence in the *Fons Vitae*, we might also consider the nature and tone of the teacher's replies to the student's queries about matter:[27] In response to the student's wanting to know how matter can exist on its own, the teacher does not say that matter has no existence on its own (which is what we would expect him to do if this were the *Fons Vitae* view); rather, the teacher simply notes that this will be addressed later (in Book 5). Similarly, on another occasion when the student asks if matter is able to exist on its own,[28] the teacher replies not by simply saying "no," but by asking "what is your intention in this

question." He then goes on to tell the student, "Just now [*modo*] know that matter is not able to exist without form, since a thing's existence [*esse*] is only from form."[29] In conjunction with his pushing off dealing with the question of matter's per se existence until Book 5, and in conjunction with his overt descriptions of matter as "*existens per se*" without form,[30] this tone of "*modo*" seems to have the force of "*Just hold on* till we get to the issue in Book 5; f*or now, let's just say* that matter has existence only from form." In none of these exchanges does the teacher simply deny matter any self-standing reality on its own, which we would expect to find much more clearly if this were indeed Ibn Gabirol's view. And again, all this is in the context of his repeated descriptions of matter as indeed having per se existence, and all this is also in the context of his Ps. Empedoclean emphasis on a material Grounding Element prior to form at the core of the Great Chain of Being.

In what follows, I offer a critique of each of Gundissalinus' and Schlanger's decisions to nonetheless deny matter any per se existence in the *Fons Vitae*.

7.5.1 Gundissalinus' Erasure of "Matter Per Se": Obscuring Matter as Per Se Existens *from the Arabic Text to the Latin Translation*

The *Fons Vitae* was translated from Arabic into Latin in the twelfth century by a translation team: John of Spain verbally translated the Arabic text into Spanish, with Dominicus Gundissalinus in turn writing out his Latin translation. In addition to Latinizing Ibn Gabirol's name (the Latinization has been variously recorded as Avicebron, Avicembron, Avicenbrol, and Avencebrol), which resulted in centuries of readers not realizing that the author of the *Fons Vitae* was Solomon Ibn Gabirol, there is at least one point in the text where Gundissalinus (or perhaps a later editor) goes so far as to alter the text to make it read as if Ibn Gabirol denies existence to preexistent matter in a passage that in the Arabic prima facie does *not* deny existence to matter.[31] This alteration of Ibn Gabirol's teaching can be seen when one compares Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's later Hebrew translation of the original Arabic text with the Latin translation. Beginning with the Latin corruption (at *Fons Vitae* 1.13), we find:

> *non dicimus materiam habere esse nisi cum conferimus ei formam spiritualem. in se autem non habet esse, quod habet cum adiungitur ei forma; et hoc est esse in effectu.*[32]
>
> We don't say that matter has existence unless we confer spiritual form upon it. In and of itself, it does not have existence, which it does have when form is adjoined to it; this is actual existence.

Comparing this Latin translation with Ibn Falaquera's Hebrew version, we find:

> *Ve-'amnam amrēnū she-ha-yesōd nimẓa ki-she-tiẓōraf 'ēylav ha-ẓūrah ha-rūḥanīt 'aval be-'aẓmō 'ēynō hagūn la-meẓī'ūt she-hū hagūn lō ki-she-tidbaq bō ha-ẓūrah, ki-lōmar, ha-meẓī'ūt bi-fō'al . . .* [33]
>
> Indeed, our claim that matter exists when spiritual form joins with it, but that matter is not in and of itself disposed to receive the kind of existence that it is disposed to receive when form cleaves to it [i.e. to matter], this means to say [i.e. by this claim we mean to refer only to] actual [as opposed to potential] existence . . .

The Hebrew text, but not the Latin one, preserves Ibn Gabirol's commitment to matter as "existing per se," a commitment made clear in a number of places throughout the text – as in the defining descriptions of matter that we have seen earlier. As Goheen (recounting a personal correspondence with H. A. Wolfson) points out,[34] Ibn Falaquera's Hebrew text – translated directly from the Arabic – replaces the idea of "*in se autem non habet esse*" with something better captured in Latin by "*in se autem non adapta ad existentia*": What we are being told according to Ibn Falaquera's version is not that matter on its own does not have (*non habet*) any kind of existence to speak of, but that matter on its own is not disposed (*non adapta*) to receive a certain kind of existence when it lacks form. In this way, Falaquera's Hebrew text of *Fons Vitae* 1.13 remains consistent with matter's preexistent existence, introducing as it does a distinction between two kinds of existence: actual and potential. Read in the context of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire and his Ps. Empedoclean conception of a material Grounding Element at the core of being, "potential existence" would, of course, point to the God-born and God-directed grounding desire-to-be that we have been exploring in Chapters 4–6. (While I hope to show in a future study why the medieval scholastic distinction between "real" versus "formal" versus "conceptual" cannot be applied easily to Ibn Gabirol's highly apophatic Neoplatonic context [about which we will say more in Chapter 8], we might here suggest that the material Grounding Element – as a preexistent but per se existent matter – is real in the Ps. Empedoclean tradition, and as such, so is the desire [as itself a kind of potency prior to being] that is revealed in the vestige of that pure material Grounding Element in all things.)

We might note that in a similar passage at *Fons Vitae* 5.9, even the Latin text lends support to Ibn Falaquera's Hebrew version of the *Fons Vitae* 1.13 text:

> . . . If you imagine [*aestimaveris*] matter without form, it will not be disposed to having the property of existence [*non erit apta habendi proprietatem esse*] in the way it is disposed when it is composed of form [*cum componitur formae*] . . .[35]

Here it is made clear that matter per se – on its own and in isolation from form – can be seen as "disposed to existence," just that it is not disposed *in the same way* as it is when it is enformed. As above, Ibn Gabirol is not contradicting his sense that matter per se has a kind of existence; he is simply denying it the *kind* of existence it has when it has forms. In fact, as we have seen in Chapter 6, there emerges in Ibn Gabirol a strong sense in which the "preexistent" moment of desire – hypostasized in his vision of a material Grounding Element at the core of being – is even more exalted (and, as we have seen, closer to the Divine Essence) than even the mode of being associated with form.

Reading away (or translating away) Ibn Gabirol's claims about matter's per se existence simply obscures what Ibn Gabirol is actually trying to say.

7.5.2 Schlanger's Erasure of "Matter Per Se": Losing Pseudo-Empedocles to Philo?

We must here also consider Schlanger's reading of the *Fons Vitae*. Wrestling with the apparent paradox of Ibn Gabirol's notion of matter as a "preexistent existent," and ultimately deciding to downplay any sense of matter's per se existence in the *Fons Vitae*, Schlanger seems to ignore Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean-inspired vision of a pure matter at the core of the cosmos, as he seems in like manner not to take seriously Ibn Gabirol's repeated description of pure matter as existing *in and of itself*. In this way, Schlanger provides an account in which Ibn Gabirol's pure formless matter subsists only as an idea in God's knowledge:

> *La matière n'est pas un ētre, elle est le substrat de l'ētre; elle n'est pas Dieu, elle existe dans la connaissance de Dieu.*[36]

Here matter is denied a true per se existence, and the problem of a preexistent matter that is "existent in and of itself" is dissolved. Although not expressly covering up Ibn Gabirol's claim that matter is per se existent in the way we have seen in the case of the Latin translation, Schlanger's reading does downplay the idea of matter's per se existence by interpreting away "existent per se" to mean something Philonic like "is present as an idea in the mind of God."

In support of Schlanger's reading, Ibn Gabirol does indeed claim that the existence (*esse*) of matter is in the wisdom of God.[37] But this on its own does

not support Schlanger's rejection of the possibility that matter can additionally "exist per se" in Ibn Gabirol. While Ibn Gabirol does describe matter as being "in God's wisdom," he also describes matter as existent per se in the context of a Ps. Empedoclean tradition that envisions a material Grounding Element (outside of God and absent any forms) at the core of existence. So instead of claiming with Schlanger that matter does not exist per se and that it only exists in God's mind, we ought to try to make Ibn Gabirol's two descriptions consistent. The Theology of Desire allows us to put the two claims together while emphasizing – not downplaying – Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean sense of pure matter's per se existence at the very core of the Great Chain of Being. As we have seen, Ibn Gabirol thinks that being in its fullest sense attaches itself to matter through form, as he also associates form (and all forms) with the Divine Wisdom. In this light, the claim that the existence of matter is in the wisdom of God need not be taken as backtracking on his other repeated claim that matter without form enjoys a kind of existence *per se*; we need only to take his claim about matter's existing in Divine Wisdom as the insight that the manifest being that attaches itself to the hiddenness of matter will come through forms that themselves come from the Divine Wisdom. This does not challenge the notion that matter alone (i.e., without form) is put forth by Ibn Gabirol – as part of his Ps. Empedoclean vision – as having some kind of preexistent existence outside of God (a point that will become even clearer once we turn in Chapter 8 to the apophatic nature of Ibn Gabirol's entire cosmo-ontology).

Schlanger's Philonic reading entirely misses and entirely obscures the link between Ibn Gabirol's claim about matter's per se existence and Ibn Gabirol's commitment to a pure material Grounding Element. Schlanger fails to highlight the link between Ibn Gabirol's description of matter's per se existence and his Ps. Empedoclean sense of a material Grounding Element that, born of God's own Essence, is the first manifestation of God into the world and is, as such, precisely a reality *outside* of God's mind.

In addition to missing the key Ps. Empedoclean piece of Ibn Gabirol's worldview, Schlanger's reading also misses what we will show to be the deeper apophatic nature of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology. As we will see in Chapter 8, Ibn Gabirol precisely emphasizes the image of a matter *outside* of God as part of an apophatic strategy for engaging the mystery of God's entry into being. The entire point of Ibn Gabirol's emphasis on the Grounding Element as a self-standing pure matter (namely, a preexistent per se existent) will be shown to be an exploration of the *boundary* between God-with-Himself on the one hand and God-in-the-World on the other. In such a context, Ibn Gabirol is not helped by emphasizing an image of matter as an idea inside of God's

mind; rather, the image of pure matter works toward Ibn Gabirol's larger end only to the extent that it emphasizes the boundary *between* God and world. In other words, the image of the pure matter works (in ways that we address in Chapter 8) precisely to the extent that it describes something *outside* of God's mind. Thus, Schlanger's image of matter as a divine idea completely de-emphasizes what for Ibn Gabirol is the key point of the image of pure formless matter, namely that it makes us think about the very first hint of a preexisting something *outside* of God.

In this way, Schlanger's reading away of matter's per se existence not only obscures the resonance of Ibn Gabirol's key Ps. Empedoclean teaching of a self-standing material Grounding Element between God and Intellect at the core of the Great Chain of Being; in so doing, it also obscures the very point of the image of pure matter within Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology, as it obscures more broadly the sense in which Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology is part of an apophatic strategy for exploring the nature of God and human being. In Chapter 8, we will address the apophatic nature of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology, as we will address the particular importance within that context of Ibn Gabirol's emphasizing an image of a pure matter outside of God, between God's own essential hiddenness and the plurality of the world of being.

7.6 REVISITING "UNIVERSAL HYLOMORPHISM" AND A CALL TO CHARITABLE READING: ON THE LIMITING LENSES OF AUGUSTINE AND AQUINAS

Heralded by Franciscans and denounced by Aquinas and other Dominicans, Ibn Gabirol's teachings about matter and form were called Universal Hylomorphism by centuries of Christian scholastics.[38] While I cannot here offer a full consideration of Ibn Gabirol's Christian receptions and the various ways that this view was understood, I would like to briefly consider some of the problems that arise from this popular way of classifying Ibn Gabirol's philosophy. Seen in contrast to Aristotelian hylomorphism – in which all substances *other* than souls and intellects are said to be composed of matter (Greek: *hūlē*) and form (Greek: *morphē*) – Ibn Gabirol's teaching is seen as going a step further in its claim that all things – including souls and intellects (though not God) – are matter+form composites. This view is often taken up as the doctrine that angels (the separate intellects) are themselves made up of form and matter.

My main concern with this popular way of summarizing Ibn Gabirol's work – together with the so-called Doctrine of Divine Will that is often made to accompany it in standard tellings of the history of philosophy – is the

tendency to use these quick descriptions (of Divine Will and of Universal Hylomorphism) to miss just about every point raised in the current study. Some make of the *Fons Vitae* a version of Augustine, reading the Divine Will (as we have seen, for example, in Weisheipl, Gilson, and Husik) as a complete rejection of emanation. Some follow Aquinas in seeing Ibn Gabirol's Universal Hylomorphism as some kind of mistaken attempt to understand Plato or Aristotle; in *De Substantiis Separatis*, Aquinas goes so far as to describe Ibn Gabirol as "twice deceived."[39]

We have already seen the problem of approaching Ibn Gabirol through the lens of Augustinian voluntarism; Ibn Gabirol is a thoroughgoing emanationist, and Augustinian resonances of Divine Will and "spiritual matter" simply occlude the actual Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean nature of Ibn Gabirol's project. It is equally problematic to approach a Neoplatonic Ps. Empedoclean theologian primarily through the lens of Plato or Aristotle. Approached through the lens of Plato and Platonic forms, Ibn Gabirol's talk of matter at the core of souls and intellects at best looks like an unmotivated claim about the Platonic realm of forms ("I'm going to add matter to the Platonic realm of forms for no good reason"), and at worst looks like a mistaken understanding of the Platonic realm of forms ("I'm going to add matter to the Platonic realm of forms because clearly that is what Plato has in mind"). Approached through the lens of Aristotle and Aristotelian hylomorphism, Ibn Gabirol's talk of matter at the core of souls and intellects at best looks like an unmotivated claim about Aristotelian hylomorphism ("I'm going to talk of matter at the core of corporeal realities just like Aristotle does, and then I'm going to do him one better and also talk of matter at the core of spiritual realities for no good reason"), and at worst looks like a mistaken understanding of Aristotelian hylomorphism ("I'm going to apply hylomorphism not only to corporeal realities but also to spiritual realities, because clearly that is what Aristotle has in mind").

On the contrary, my own reading of a pure material Grounding Element with a Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire in Ibn Gabirol aims to uncover a unique Theology of Desire with insights into God's own Essence unfolding through a Divine Desire into a material Grounding Element that places a desire for wisdom and goodness at the core of all things. Ibn Gabirol's teaching that Intellect itself is "composed of matter and form" – his so-called Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism (if we are even best served to call it that given all the undue Augustinian and Thomistic implications and critiques that this label has carried) – is, in this respect, not Augustinian, Platonic, or Aristotelian. It is, rather, a Neoplatonic Ps. Empedoclean consideration of a material Grounding Element as the emanating God-born source of desire in the

universe that gives way to a series of descending realities, each of which shows a vestige of the material Grounding element (its matter) and a downward manifesting through forms (its form/s). The claim that intellects and bodies alike are "matter plus form" in this context means that intellects and bodies alike are emanated from the material Grounding Element (in this sense, they "have matter") and are manifest through a series of forms (in this sense, they "have form"). This view at heart is rooted deeply in Plotinian Neoplatonic intuitions about the emanation of all things from a single source, with the added Ps. Empedoclean emphasis on that source as a pure material locus of desire born of God's own Essence. As none of these elements are highlighted in standard accounts of Univeral Hylomorphism, the classification can unwittingly help to obcure Ibn Gabirol's actual worldview.

Another way to emphasize the limits of classifying Ibn Gabirol in medieval scholastic terms of Universal Hylomorphism is to note that in his claim that even intellects have matter, Ibn Gabirol is not best understood as primarily setting out to engage in a debate about how many angels can fit on the head of a pin. He is, rather, giving voice to a powerful Theology of Desire rooted – as we will see in Chapter 8 – in his own strongly Neoplatonic sense of the paradoxes of Divine Reality, Human Being, and existence. It is in this spirit – completely missed in Augustinian and Thomistic treatments of the *Fons Vitae* – that Ibn Gabirol speaks of a material underpinning to existence, a pulsing God-born and God-directed desire-to-be at the heart of all things, and it is in this Ps. Empedoclean-with-Neoplatonic spirit that he emphasizes that even spiritual "simples" like Intellect – are "matter plus form." Approaching Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology as a Neoplatonic vision of the Great Chain of Being along with a special Ps. Empedoclean emphasis on being's root in love and desire (along with our observations in Sections 6.4–6.7 about the further hylomorphic resonances of Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis), we are best served to approach Ibn Gabirol's so-called Universal Hylomorphism as an awareness on Ibn Gabirol's part that all things – including the cosmic Intellect and human souls – are first and foremost grounded in a fundamental core of desire for something of the goodness of God. (In this regard, recall Section 6.3.)

To drive home the lack of fit between scholastic discussions of Universal Hylomorphism and Ibn Gabirol's emphasis on matter at the core of even intellects, consider our emphasis on the ethical nature of Ibn Gabirols' project in Chapter 3. Ibn Gabirol is best understood as *primarily concerned with the nature and ends of human being* (and, as we will see in Chapter 8, the nature of God as it relates to that ethical question) – not with the nature of angels. In other words, even though his teachings do indeed have implications for the

nature of angels, it seems odd to highlight that particular point (as scholastics do) as the key point of entry into Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic thinking. As we have shown, Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic Theology of Desire is not only about the rooting of the cosmic Intellect (and with it the cosmic angelic separate intellects) in the pure material Grounding Element; as such, it is also about the rooting of human being in the Grounding Element, which is to say, in desire – and in particular, in a desire for something of the goodness of God. To boil down the fullness of (and motivations behind) Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic Theology of Desire to the claim that "angels contain matter" helps the history of philosophy entirely miss the motivating spirit and overarching goals of Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphism. Imagine if Descartes were not even known in the history of philosophy for his claim (as well as the philosophical motivations behind his claim) that "I think therefore I am," and was instead calcified into the history of philosophy in summary fashion as having taught that the pineal gland is important for metaphysics. This would "get Descartes wrong" not in the simple sense of stating something false about him (after all, it would not be stating something false about him); it would, rather, "get Descartes wrong" in a much deeper sense, obscuring the motivations and goals of his claim about the pineal gland, and as such, opening his thought to a host of unfair summaries – and resulting critiques. One might turn to Hesse's *Steppenwolf* in an effort to talk about preserving wildlife, but that would certainly miss the point of the text.

In this regard, the teaching that "even intellects are rooted in matter" is best understood as a reflection on the root of being and human being in the desire for something of God's goodness. The hylomorphic Theology of Desire describes God's own revelation (in and through Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire) into a material Grounding Element that stands as a marker of desire in existence, and, as such, as the marker of desire in the human soul, grounding the human soul's own reality first and foremost (as we have seen in Chapter 3 and as we will see in greater detail in Chapters 8 and 9) in the tripart quest for wisdom, goodness, and God – itself, as we will see in Chapter 8, as a reorienting call to dependence, receptivity, and fragility.

We might add that the teaching that souls and intellects are "matter+form" is also itself part of what we have seen to be Ibn Gabirol's emanationist Neoplatonic Tripart Method according to which individual realities – such as intellects and souls – are described in terms of "matter," "matter+form," and "form." Taken with our insights from Chapter 6 in mind, we may also approach the claim that "intellect is matter+form" as a reflection on the extent to which universal Intellect, separate angelic intellects, and human intellects all reveal a revertive sameness with their higher cause alongside a processive

difference from their higher cause. In other words, in addition to pointing us to the root of all being in the desire of Grounding Element, the emphasis on intellect qua "matter+form" is, as we have seen, Ibn Gabirol's uniquely hylomorphic version of a standard Neoplatonic strategy for reflecting on the compresence of sameness with and difference from a higher cause in a lower effect. Understood as part of a Neoplatonic method of engagement, the claim that intellect is "matter+form" does not reveal (as Aquinas suggests) conceptual confusion on Ibn Gabirol's part; rather, it reveals Ibn Gabirol's accutely Neoplatonic (and, as we will see in Chapter 8, apophatic) mode of expression and analysis. And even further, it reveals Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean sensibility about the grounding of all being and human being in a desire for something of the goodness of God.

Notice how far we are from a sense of Ibn Gabirol as Aristotle or Plato "gone bad," and how far we are too from a sense of Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic impulse as unmotivated or erroneous. While at the end of the day, some might not like Ibn Gabirol's unique brand of emanationist theology, care must be taken to address Ibn Gabirol on his own actual terms – with a deep understanding of his own actual goals and motivations – before purporting to "disprove," or even reveal problems with, his thinking.

We might note in this regard that the only English translation of the *Fons Vitae* currently in print is Wedeck's translation of book 3. Book 3 was important for scholastics interested in certain Universal Hylomorphism debates, but as the middle book of a five-book project, it cannot, of course, give a reader a sense of the overall spirit of Ibn Gabirol's thought – or, as such, the overall spirit of his hylomorphism. In fact, as McGinn notes,[40] even reading the entire *Fons Vitae* does not give us a full picture of Ibn Gabirol's project: Of the "three parts of knowledge" that we learn (at *Fons Vitae* 5.36) are the key to reality (viz. matter and form, Divine *Irāda*, and First Essence), the *Fons Vitae* itself only covers the first part, namely the knowledge of matter and form. Understanding Ibn Gabirol's aims and goals – and even the overall spirit of the *Fons Vitae* project including the overall spirit of his hylomorphism – requires a much broader consideration of the Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean context of Ibn Gabirol's thinking. It is precisely this context – along with insights from his Hebrew poetry – on which I draw in this study in an effort to provide a fuller picture of this most subtle (and misunderstood) theologian.

In thinking about the limits of approaching Ibn Gabirol through a narrow lens absent any real appreciation for his overarching Theology of Desire (including its goals and motivations), consider Aquinas' critique of Ibn Gabirol at *Summa Theologiae* 1.50.2.[41] In the express context of considering

whether angels are composed of matter and form, Aquinas describes Ibn Gabirol as thinking that we need to posit a "common matter" with different forms (an incorporeal form and a corporeal form) to conceptually make sense of the difference between incorporeal and corporeal substance. Aquinas goes on to show how the idea of a "common matter" shared by both incorporeal and corporeal substances is philosophically flawed. In our current context, providing a line-by-line analysis of Aquinas' critique and a line-by-line defense of Ibn Gabirol is beside the point. For our current purposes, it is simply critical to emphasize that Aquinas' critique – as good a critique as it might be of scholastic Universal Hylomorphism – is not an appropriate critique of Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean Neoplatonic emanationism (which is, after all, what Ibn Gabirol's actual hylomorphic sensibility is all about). As such, while Aquinas' critique might indeed be a good critique of various universal hylomorphic medieval scholastics (for whom the question of universal hylomorphism might indeed be entirely based on – and even motivated by – flawed reasoning), it is not a fitting critique of Ibn Gabirol's actual claim that "even intellects have matter," which, as we have seen, is deeply motivated by a host of Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean insights. In other words, Aquinas' critique ultimately "talks past" the real meaning of Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic teaching as we have analyzed it in this study. We might suggest that the very fact that Aquinas addresses Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphism through the lens of the debate about angelic composition already raises a red flag, as such an approach entirely occludes the ethical-spiritual spirit of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire (in the context of which his hylomorphism arises), as it also occludes the emanationist context of his hylomorphism and the Ps. Empedoclean correlation in his thinking between matter, Grounding Element, and love. The "Avicebron" featured in medieval scholastic debates about the composition of angels does not ultimately provide us with the key to understanding Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean Neoplatonic hylomorphic vision of the Great Chain of Being rooted in the God-born and God-directed shadow of matter-as-desire.

THE REAL CONCERN IN ALL OF THIS IS A CONCERN FOR INTERPRETIVE charity, and in particular for the failures of interpretive charity that arise when we approach the *Fons Vitae* through various Augustinian or Thomistic readings of a so-called Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism with its concomitant Doctrine of Divine Will: Such approaches make it hard to hear Ibn Gabirol's own voice, as they fail to capture anything of the spirit of the Theology of Desire that we have worked to unpack throughout this study.

Neither approach uncovers Ibn Gabirol's Ps. Empedoclean sense of a material Grounding Element as marker of love and desire at the core of being and human being; neither one contextualizes Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphism within a spiritual-ethical search for goodness; neither one appreciates the Neoplatonic spirit of Ibn Gabirol's overall method, and, thus, neither one is sensitive to what we will see in Chapter 8 to be the subtle apophasis that animates Ibn Gabirol's entire cosmo-ontology. In brief, it is not helpful to make of Ibn Gabirol either "Augustine with some extras" (as centuries of Franciscans did and as apparently so many modern-day voluntarist readers do) or "Plato or Aristotle with some errors" (which seems to capture Aquinas' overall approach to Ibn Gabirol). It is likewise unhelpful to read Ibn Gabirol's description of matter as "*yesōd*" as suggesting Kabbalism (as sometimes happens too quickly),[42] or (with Schlanger) to turn his talk of matter existing per se into a Philonic claim that matter per se exists only as an idea in the mind of God.

Focusing in particular on the various Augustinian and Thomistic overtones at play (tacitly or otherwise) in so much of the scholarship on Ibn Gabirol, we are presented with a choice. On the one hand, we can speak of an Avicebron who develops a Divine Will in opposition to emanation and who develops a "universal" version of Aristotelian hylomorphism. This thinker is construed in purely reactive terms (he opposes emanation and he modifies hylomorphism). Partly for this reason, his overarching goals and underlying motivations are entirely unclear – in fact, he seems to have no reasonable motivation for his claims whatsoever. Of this Avicebron scholars note likenesses to Augustine (both teach of a Divine Will and spiritual matter, and both reject emanation); of this Avicebron, scholars also note likenesses to Aristotle (both offer a "matter+form" analysis intended to reveal the internal structure of individual existents, although, alas, in trying to follow Aristotle, Avicebron errs and oddly – which is in part to say, without any seemingly good motivation [and possibly even out of a simple misunderstanding of Aristotle] – extends his hylomorphism to intellects and souls). On the other hand, we can approach Ibn Gabirol as a Neoplatonic Ps. Empedoclean thinker with a positive (as opposed to merely reactive) set of motivations and insights. Unlike Avicenbron, this thinker develops a Theology of Desire whose main point of emphasis is a God-born and God-directed love that grounds all things – a set of teachings with deep and extensive epistemological, ethical, and theological implications and motivations. Unlike Avicebron, this thinker also develops a matter-centric set of images and descriptions of the Great Chain of Being, which helps him highlight the rootedness of all things in a desire for "something of the goodness of God." Unlike Avicebron, this thinker

delicately engages a hylomorphic version of a Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in way of addressing God's own paradoxical relation to the world, and with it the deepest nature, grounds, and ends of human being.[43]

The history of philosophy presents a rather calcified and summary version of Avicebron in terms of the Doctrine of Divine Will and the Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism. In this study I have tried, in contrast, to read Ibn Gabirol on his own terms – and in express conversation with his Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts – as giving to voice a unique Theology of Desire with Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean overtones. While I cannot promise to have gotten Ibn Gabirol exactly right, in actively engaging Ibn Gabirol's own Neoplatonic and Ps. Empedoclean contexts, I can at least promise to have avoided the predominating tendency to allow surface terminology (such terms as "*materia prima*," "*voluntas*," "Divine Will," and "*yesōd*" in the Latin, English, and Hebrew translations of Ibn Gabirol's Arabic text) to lead too quickly to a set of interpretations informed by Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Avicenna,[44] and Kabbalah. Principles of fairness and charity demand that we put aside these lenses and work to hear Ibn Gabirol's own voice. The principle of charity also demands that we work to hear Ibn Gabirol's voice in the most vibrant and relevant philosophical and theological terms possible (a methodological point about which I will say more in Chapters 8 and 9).

7.7 CREATION AS THE SPLITTING OF THE NOTHING

It is precisely in the spirit of highlighting the vibrant theological resonance of Ibn Gabirol's voice – entirely absent in most accounts of Avicebron's Doctrines of Divine Will and Universal Hylomorphism – that I turn to a consideration of Ibn Gabirol's evocative description of creation as a "splitting open of the nothing." In his own poetic reflections on creation, Ibn Gabirol precisely engages the imagery of his hylomorphic Theology of Desire:

> . . . *ve-qara el ha-'ayīn ve-nivqa* . . . [45]
>
> . . . and He called out to the nothing and it split open . . .

Ibn Gabirol here extends his metaphorical identifications of the pure material Grounding Element (as throne, as river, as foundation, as shadow, as kernel) to include also the description of "the nothing" (*ha-'ayīn*).[46] Clearly mirroring what we have already seen to be his emphasis on the preexistent nature of pure matter, "nothingness" here points to matter as the essential locus of the desire-to-be at the core of existence; it is a "not-yet" in the sense that it is not yet an enformed "something."

But in this reference to the nothing, we are in no way back in the ordinary folds of a non-emanative "creation *ex nihilo*" account. Whereas the "*nihil*" ("nothing") of ordinary "creation *ex nihilo*" accounts refers to a kind of nothingness in contrast to matter (with matter seen, on the contrary, as the "*aliquid*" ["something"] of "creation *ex aliquo*"),[47] in Ibn Gabirol's account "the nothing" refers specifically to matter – and in particular, to the preexistent (and in this sense "nothing" in the sense of "not yet something") expanse of the pure material Grounding Element born of God's own essential desire. Emphasizing that we are most certainly not in an ordinary non-emanative creation framework, Ibn Gabirol immediately goes on to further describe the creation event in overtly emanative terms:

> . . . you are wise; your wisdom is a fountain of life flowing from you . . . [48]

Laying bare God's desire in the overflow of creation, Ibn Gabirol – referencing *Psalms* 36:10 – describes God in terms of a Divine Wisdom that is a Fountain of Life. In this way, Ibn Gabirol envisions God in precisely emanative terms as a Divine Wisdom that pulses forward from the hiddenness of God to the fullness of being. (On the differences in this regard between the Divine Essence, Divine *Irāda*, and Divine Wisdom, see Chapter 8.)

> . . . *ve-qara el ha-'ayīn ve-nivqa* . . .
>
> . . . and He called out to the nothing and it split open . . .

In the splitting open of *'ayīn* ("the nothing"), we have the unfolding of pure matter through God's own voice. Mirroring Ibn Gabirol's *ahavtīkha* description of the material "proto-existence" (*kemō-yēsh*) awaiting fulfillment through form, this creative downpour precisely matches the *Fons Vitae* depiction of the pure material Grounding Element that, born of God's own Essence, goes on to unfold through a series of enformations through the Divine Wisdom – itself linked by Ibn Gabirol to the idea of a "Divine Word," an idea that fits well with his poetic depiction of the creation event in terms of God's "calling out." The material Grounding Element – here as the nothing itself – is the ground of existence in desire; and it is this pure material nothing that (via Divine Wisdom/Word – but also, as we will see in Chapter 8, via Divine *Irāda*) unfolds through a series of growing enformations onto the fullness of existence itself. It is precisely this process of cosmic unfolding/enforming/manifestation-of-nothing-to-something that is the mark of Divine Desire in its own creative disclosure (a point we will see more

fully in our Chapter 8 discussion of the Divine *Irāda* in its dual processive function as "bringer of matter" and "bringer of form"). Herein lies the divine revelation as the unity of God Himself enters into relation with the world of being.

Linking the account of creation (as a "splitting open of the nothing") to the *Fons Vitae* Theology of Desire, the overtones of love are heightened. We may here say that God in his creative moment is like a lover who loves his beloved,[49] a locus of desire desiring to enter into relation with the world through the Great Chain of Being. It is the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire that we will identify in Chapter 8 as the description of God in his processive unfolding into the world (first in matter and then in form), and it is this Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire that we may connect up to the *Keter Malkhūt*'s sense of God's desire to "split apart the nothingness" – His desire, that is, to enter the world of being through a downward flow from the purity of the material Grounding Element, through myriad added forms, into more and more plurality. It is in this sense that God splits open the nothing of pure matter onto the something of all existence.[50] "It's He who brought forth being from nothing, and then from chaos substance was formed."[51]

This divine "splitting open" of the pure material Grounding Element as a manifestation of God's desire to enter into relation with the world is itself mirrored in matter's own motion of desire at the heart of being. For in his vision of this creative unfolding as the manifesting of Divine *Irāda*, Ibn Gabirol places desire not only in God, but in his very description of the nothing – the very underlying material starting point of being:

> *. . . oportet ut eius motus sit propter amorum et desiderium quod habet ad formam. similiter dicendum est de omni re, quod movetur ad inquirendum formam.*[52]
>
> . . . it is necessary that the motion [of matter] is in accordance with the love and desire that it has for form. Similarly, it ought to be said of everything that it is moved to strive for form.

Here, in his *Fons Vitae* account, Ibn Gabirol gives unambiguous voice to the very identity of matter through the language of love and desire – an idea we have seen too in his *ahavtīkha* description of the material "*kemō-yēsh*" (like-existence, proto-existence, or preexistence) in its desire after the "*yēsh*" (existence) of form.[53] Mirroring God's own desire to enter the world of being, the pure material Grounding Element longs to embrace the ever-descending multiplicities of form, like an attentive lover in the cosmic dance of being. And, as we have seen, it is in this desire for form – in this "desire-to-be" – that

we find the desire for "something of the goodness of God" at the heart of all things.

> . . . *ve-qara el ha-'ayīn ve-nivqa* . . .
>
> . . . and He called out to the nothing and it split open . . .

Reflecting on the *Keter Malkhūt* notion of God's "splitting open the nothing" in the context of the *Fons Vitae*'s Theology of Desire, we are met with a material Grounding Element born of God's Essence at the core of the real, which is split forth to reveal lower and lower levels of being – itself (as we will explain in Chapter 8) through Divine *Irāda*'s and Divine Wisdom's active enformations. Here we find the material reality of Grounding Element at the source of Ibn Gabirol's Great Chain of Being, as we at once encounter the Divine Desire for relation to being. It is the *irādic*/erotic unfolding procession of the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire, which first manifests God's Essence in the pure material Grounding Element at the core of the Great Chain of Being; and it is the further processive unfolding of Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire and Divine Wisdom (or Word) that further manifests God in the flow from Grounding Element to Intellect, from Intellect to Souls, and from Souls to Nature. Here, it is precisely God's own essential desire – His own opening onto and invitation to the multiplicities of Otherness – that is reflected in the splitting open of matter's hiddenness into manifest being as it becomes further and further enformed, displaying greater and greater diversity down through the Great Chain of Being.

With this poetic reflection on creation as the opening of "the nothing," we find Ibn Gabirol's teaching of the desire that lies at the core of all – found first and foremost in the pure material Grounding Element (the primordial "nothing") born of God's own essential desire to enter the world and to relate to Other.

We might note here that – *pace* Pines's concern – it is easy to see that the *Fons Vitae* and *Keter Malkhūt* – and their respective claims about creation, splitting, *Irāda*, and Grounding Element – fit together coherently into a single philosophical system.[54]

7.8 CALL TO SELFHOOD

Envisioning this emanative unfolding, Ibn Gabirol sees his own being in the flow of God's disclosure:

li-kha nafshī tisapēr kī yeẓartah,
ve-tagīd kī be-yadakh 'ēl pe'altah
li-kha be-dvar "yehī" 'az nimtzi'ah hī,
ū-mē-'ayīn ke-ōr 'ayīn mishakhtah[55]

my soul will declare you are her maker, and will speak, lord,
of having been made by your hand
to you with whose "be" she became, as you poured her out
from nothing (*'ayīn*, אין) as in the flow of eye's *('ayīn*, עין) light

Playing on the sounds of "nothing" (*'ayīn*, אין) and eye *('ayīn*, עין), Ibn Gabirol here speaks of his own unfolding in and through the flow of a nothingness. Here we find once again the idea of a material Grounding Element as the "flowing nothing" (earlier described as the downpour of "shadowed light" and as a river) at the core of all things. And, returning us now once again to Chapter 3, we are here reminded that in the entire Theology of Desire, we are not merely learning about the structure of existence but of the very nature and ends of human being: It is not simply "existence" in some third-person sense that is permeated through with the unfolding of the first pure matter, but also the very core of the human soul that is so constituted. This, as we have emphasized, is the real teaching of Ibn Gabirol's so-called Universal Hylomorphism: Even Intellects – and as such, even the human intellect – is grounded in the purity of matter, which is to say, in the desire for something of the goodness of God. It is precisely in microcosmically mirroring the cosmos's own groundedness in desire that human being finds direction in her own root in desire – a desire that grounds and fuels her own defining tripart quest for wisdom, goodness, and God.

8

Neoplatonic Cosmo-Ontology as Apophatic Response and as Prescription for Human Living (Methodological Reappraisal I)

shimshī ʿalēh na zōrēʾaḥ, ve-haʾēr ḥashkhī ka-yarēʾaḥ . . .

arise streaming, O Lord, for you are my Sun;
illumine me in my darkness as if I were the moon . . . [1]

– Ibn Gabirol

8.0 Moving to Questions of Method: An Overview

In Chapters 2–7, we have developed a new reading of Ibn Gabirol: From the Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism and the Doctrine of Divine Will, we have moved to a hylomorphic Theology of Desire featuring a Ps. Empedoclean material Grounding Element, a thoroughly emanationist Divine *Irāda*, and a jointly descriptive-prescriptive philosophical theology about a God-born and God-directed desire-to-be – as a desire for something of God's goodness – at the core of all being, including at the core of human being. In Chapters 8 and 9, we turn from this reappraisal of the content of Ibn Gabirol's thought to a reappraisal of what Neoplatonic thinking – and in particular, what Neoplatonic cosmo-ontological thinking – is and how to best approach it. We may speak of this closing part of our study as a methodological reappraisal of Ibn Gabirol in two related senses related to each of the following two considerations:

1. *What is Neoplatonic method?* In Chapters 8 and 9, we aim to overtly think through the very nature of Neoplatonic method, including asking ourselves to consider the aims and goals of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, and – as such – how we ought best to think of Neoplatonic emanation and the very notion of "layers" and "levels" in Ibn Gabirol and beyond.
2. *Implications for our own methods*: In Chapters 8 and 9, we also aim to consider how the answer to this first question must lead us, as scholars and students of the history of philosophy, to reevaluate how we read,

represent, and critique works of Neoplatonism, including Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*.

In this chapter, I explain the sense in which Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology is an apophatic – and in particular, a "doubly apophatic" – endeavor. In addition to helping us methodologically rethink how we approach his text (because clearly we need to approach apophatic writing with different questions and expectations than we would bring to non-apophatic writing), this insight will allow us to return full circle to what we have seen in Chapter 3 to be the Theology of Desire's concern with human being. In particular, we will see how an apophatic theology opens onto a prescriptive call to human being, as we will see in this light how Ibn Gabirol's entire cosmo-ontological enterprise (including his teachings on matter and the Divine *Irāda*) help reveal a tripart grounding orientation for living through dependence, receptivity, and fragility.

In these ways, I turn in this chapter to a number of important concepts for the study of Ibn Gabirol, but also for the study of Neoplatonisms (and other cosmo-ontological systems) more broadly: I emphasize how Neoplatonic talk of "emanation" and "layers" is not best understood as "doctrine," but as a kind of apophatic response to what I will call the "Paradox of Divine Unity."[2] I also develop a sense in which Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – including Ibn Gabirol's talk of "levels of mater" and a pure material Grounding Element – is a "doubly apophatic" response to that same paradox. In this way I introduce a new category of apophasis to the literature[3] with implications for how we ought to more charitably read a whole range of texts across a whole range of philosophical, theological, and religious traditions. Finally, I show how qua apophatic and "doubly apophatic" response to the Paradox of Divine Unity, Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology (including Ibn Gabirol's system) is inherently related to the ethical ends of human being with which we began in Chapter 3.

8.1 EMANATION RECONSIDERED: FROM "DOCTRINE" TO APOPHATIC RESPONSE (ON THE PARADOX OF DIVINE UNITY AND THE NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS)

In his classic study of Neoplatonism, Stephen Gersh reminds us to approach emanationist writings with care:

> The metaphor of emanation is a prominent feature of Neoplatonic thought and describes the way in which spiritual principles . . . exercise causality. The crucial role often played by this metaphor . . . has led to some disparagement on the part of modern writers who equate analogical with confused

> thinking. However, for the Neoplatonists themselves its use was conscious and carefully regulated by strictly philosophical canons. It represents no last refuge for thinkers who cannot express their ideas directly but reflects the epistemological conviction that the finite must ascend to the infinite through intermediaries which only partially capture its essence.[4]

In setting out to understand Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology in this light, it is important to pay attention to the underlying sensibilities and motivating issues that move the project – sensibilities and issues that help illuminate a particular *method* at play in the entire project of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology. At the heart of Neoplatonism, beneath all the talk of "layers" and "levels," we may speak of two particular sensitivies: (1) a sensitivity to the paradoxical nature of reality, and (2) an apophatic sensibility about language's inability to address subjects of paradox. Starting with the first point, the Neoplatonist sees a number of paradoxes at the core of being, the most important of which is a divine mystery that we will call the Paradox of Divine Unity. Briefly put, the Paradox of Divine Unity describes an insoluble tension between God's pure unity and his entry into relation with existence: As pure unity, God is related only to Himself in an "inward-directed" consciousness; however, as Cause of Existence, God – even in his utter unity – is also somehow "outward-directed" (or "downward-directed") to the multiplicity of the world of beings. More than a collection of beliefs or doctrines, Neoplatonism is best understood as a deep awareness of – and comportment to all of existence through – this Paradox of Divine Unity.

In his comportment to the entirety of existence through the Paradox of Divine Unity, the Neoplatonist feels the paradoxical nature of the divine mystery at every turn. For starters, the Neoplatonist sees the Paradox of Divine Unity microcosmically mirrored in the human condition in terms of what we might call a "Paradox of Self's Compresence" (related to what A. H. Armstrong has described as the "Double Selfhood" view in Plotinus): On the one hand, the human being is filled with the fullness of Intellect and connected to her cosmic source of perfection; on the other hand, she is fallen and in need of return. Attentive to the permeation of the Paradox of Divine Unity into the conflicted condition of human being, the Neoplatonist is also attentive to the permeation of the Paradox of Divine Unity into the very nature of existence itself. In this sense, we might view the Neoplatonist's entire Great Chain of Being – including his core images of emanation and cosmic layers – as a response of sorts to the Paradox of Divine Unity. By "response" I do not mean a solution or even at attempt at a solution; for the Neoplatonist, the Paradox of Divine Unity is an insoluble mystery. The Great Chain of Being is a response, rather, in the sense of an engaged reflection on the entirety of reality (and

with it, human being) in terms that are informed by the Paradox of Divine Unity. In particular, it is a metaphorical – and in this sense, an apophatic – response. Because of the paradoxical nature of God's own reality, the Neoplatonist is sensitive to the limits of language for describing God; this awareness leads the Neoplatonist to an apophatic "negative theology" (including various apophatic linguistic and textual strategies).[5] Most readers can identify this kind of apophatic talk about God right away. However, there also emerges a second layer of apophasis, which we often miss: Following on the apophatic sensitivity to the limits of language when talking about God, there arises, by extension, a sensitivity to the limits of language when talking about being itself, as being is (in light of the Paradox of Divine Unity) nothing less than God's own manifestation from unity into plurality. Once taken in the context of this "second layer" of apophatic sensitivity, descriptions of "emanation" and "cosmic layers" are no longer best thought of as "Neoplatonic doctrines" (as if they were describing some kind of invisible cosmic topography; we will say more about this kind of uncharitable misconstrual in Chapter 9). Rather, "emanation" and "cosmic layers" are best thought of as a kind of metaphorical – and in this sense, apophatic – response (but not in the sense of a solution) to the Paradox of Divine Unity. How is it the case that God's unity can also give rise to the plurality of existence, and – as such – what is the nature of God-born being? "Emanation" and "cosmic layers" are part of the response (not in the sense of answer) to this insoluble mystery. While the response does not answer (and is not designed to answer) the mystery, it does comport the Neoplatonist in a certain way, bringing her to a heightened awareness of the divine mystery in even her reflections on the nature of being and beings (including her own being).

Seen in this way, the Great Chain of Being – including the ideas (now as apophatic metaphors) of "emanation" and "cosmic layers" – becomes part of an apophatic response to the divine mystery (a mystery extended now into the folds of being itself). In such a context, we can see the Great Chain of Being less as a doctrine with odd content (viz. claims about emanation, layers, etc.) and more as a part of a particularly Neoplatonic way of thinking about being and beings (in the light of the Paradox of Divine Unity) as themselves beyond ordinary analysis. Informed by this sensitivity to the paradoxical nature not only of God but, by extension, of being itself, the Neoplatonist gives voice to being in terms of an "emanating Great Chain of Being" and introduces the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis as a further apophatically sensitive way of reflecting on even the metaphor of the "emanating Great Chain of Being" – all, again, in reverence to the mystery of God's entry into being, a mystery that extends into the nature of being itself. Understood as an apophatic response

(though not in the sense of a solution) to the Paradox of Divine Unity, the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis reveals the properly sensitive (in the sense of properly apophatic) approach to the way we conceptualize not only God as cause, but, as such, any "vertical cause" in the Great Chain of Being. Because language and ordinary conception cannot possibly hope to encompass the fullness of the paradox of God's relation to being – and with it, the very nature of being now metaphorically envisioned as a series of higher causes in relation to lower effects – the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis emerges as a special apophatic mode of engagement with the apophatic metaphor of a Great Chain of Being: Instead of trying to describe (within the Great Chain of Being) a higher cause with a static definition (as if it were an ordinary subject open to ordinary conception), we instead (in apophatic fashion) approach a higher cause through the metaphor of emanation, and furthermore – as we have seen in Chapter 6 – in terms of three interrelated "perspectives." In approaching any "higher reality" in the Great Chain of Being, we speak of it not directly, but metaphorically in terms of three perspectives. (1) Through the "remaining" perspective, we analyze a higher cause qua cause in relation to itself – which is to say, qua undiminishing cause whose own subsistence is essentially undiminished by the downward causal process. (2) Next, we speak of a higher cause through a "processive" perspective – which is to say, in terms of its emanation from cause to effect. From the "processive" perspective, we consider the extent to which the lower effect shares a sameness with and a difference from its cause. (3) Through the "revertive" perspective we do one of two things: (3a) Either we analyze a higher cause qua effect in relation to its own higher final cause, or (3b) we analyze a higher cause in its role as final cause to its own lower effect. We might say that whereas the processive perspective emphasizes the *difference* between cause and effect, the revertive perspective emphasizes the *sameness* between cause and effect.

While a fuller consideration of these details would take us beyond the scope of this study,[6] what is key to note for our purposes is that it is only in the context of the Paradox of Divine Unity that we can properly understand the Neoplatonic talk of emanation; taken in that context, that is, emanation emerges not as a doctrine or set of doctrines, but as part of an apophatic response to the paradox. Part of an apophatic response, emanation is a tripart strategy of analysis in terms of Remaining, Procession, and Reversion; the strategy does not aim to solve the paradox but to mindfully engage it in way of mindfully orienting us to existence in a certain way. Emanation is, as the Neoplatonists themselves remind us, a metaphor; in particular, it is a metaphor that marks an orientation to existence itself in the grips of the very insolubility of the mystery of God's relation to being.

8.2 IBN GABIROL'S NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS: MAKING SENSE OF THE "TRIUNE" THEOLOGY OF DIVINE ESSENCE, DIVINE *IRĀDA*, AND DIVINE WISDOM

In Chapter 6 we have already discerned the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis as the method behind Ibn Gabirol's approach to individual realities from three perspectives, namely "matter," "matter+form," and "form." Precisely illustrating the Neoplatonic Tripart Analytical spirit in Ibn Gabirol's thinking, we saw how Intellect is "matter" from the perspective of remaining (i.e., qua undiminished cause), how it is "matter+form" from the perspective of procession (i.e., in relation to its cause through sameness and difference), and how it is "form" from the perspective of reversion (i.e., in its own role as final cause, but also in its role as effect that is revertively related to its own higher final cause). Appreciating the structure and flow of this tripart method also allows us to make sense of another particularly difficult aspect of Ibn Gabirol's thought, namely his tripart description of God in terms of (1) a Divine Essence, (2) a Divine *Irāda*, and a (3) Divine Wisdom (or Word). Absent an appreciation for Ibn Gabirol's use of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, this aspect of his theology seems particularly vexing. In what follows, however, I show how with the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in view, we can easily reconcile Ibn Gabirol's apparently triune theological claims with his commitment to God's pure unity.

Approaching the *Fons Vitae* with a sensitivity to its reliance on the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis also means approaching the *Fons Vitae* with a further sensitivity to its reliance on the metaphor of emanation, given that emanation is the operative metaphor at play behind any use of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. This is yet further support for reading Ibn Gabirol (and his notion of a Divine *Irāda*) in an expressly emanationist key.

READING ACROSS THE *FONS VITAE*, WE FIND A NUMBER OF VEXING – and prima facie disconnected (or even competing) – claims about God: In addition to the description of God in tripart terms of Essence, *al-Irāda*, and Wisdom (or Word), we find the claim that Divine Will is the cause of matter and Divine Wisdom the cause of form, as we likewise find claims that Divine *Irāda* is the source of form, as well as the claim that Divine *Irāda* is the source of both matter and form. Adding to the confusion, we have also seen the additional claim about Divine *Irāda* that it is the "intermediary between the two extremes" – a claim that highlights yet another kind of relation between this divine reality, matter, and form. Adding to the confusion still further, we also

find Ibn Gabirol at times emphasizing the discrete reality of these descriptions of God (as when he emphasizes the difference between Divine Essence and Divine Wisdom by making each responsible for a different aspect of reality), and at other times emphasizing that these different descriptions are not really different realities (as when he claims that Divine *Irāda* and Divine Wisdom are one, and – in like spirit – that Divine *Irāda* and Divine Word are one).[7]

Out of context, this might suggest all sorts of possible problems. On the one hand, it might suggest that Ibn Gabirol is confused and that he has no coherent view in mind. On the other hand, it might suggest that Ibn Gabirol has a trinitarian view of God. However, once we remind ourselves of the apophatic sensitivity at the heart of Neoplatonism, all these difficulties dissolve: Given that Ibn Gabirol is sensitive to the limits of language as it relates to God, we should not be alarmed or surprised to hear him talk about God in varied ways. Taken as an apophatic reflection (in three parts), we need not worry that Ibn Gabirol forgot to connect the dots (considering that apophatic descriptions do not need to fit together like ordinary descriptions do); we also need not worry about any *actual* sense in Ibn Gabirol of three divine realities, for – taken apophatically – talk of God in tripart terms does not suggest that there are three Gods, three parts of God, or even three aspects of God in any literal sense. (We might here note that the apophatic nature of Neoplatonic texts in this way differs dramatically from any degree of apophasis in a range of Christan contexts where the Trinity is taken to be three in a way that is different than just the three of a metaphorical triad.)

Highlighting apophasis in this way, we could opt to make sense of all of Ibn Gabirol's disconnected claims about God by simply noting that they are all apophatic engagements with the divine mystery, and therefore anything goes. In other words, we might reason as follows: Because Ibn Gabirol's theology is apophatic, and because apophatic claims need not fit together in the way ordinary claims need to, we ought not expect to – and ought not try to – tie together Ibn Gabirol's diverse claims about God. However, a careful consideration of the precise apophatic mechanism at play in the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis allows us to engage Ibn Gabirol's apophasis well beyond the mere concession that "anything goes." Appreciating the contours of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in Ibn Gabirol allows us, rather, to traverse the mystery with Ibn Gabirol in three dialectical moves related to the perspectives of Remaining, Procession, and Reversion. Looking at Ibn Gabirol's theology through the apophatic method of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, we are able to capture a dynamic – and quite detailed – sense of what Ibn Gabirol wishes to express (albeit apophatically) with each of the three different descriptions of God. As we will see, this approach also gives us a fuller sense of (what we

have in Chapter 6 seen to be) Divine *Irāda*'s own emanative role in the Great Chain of Being.

THE NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS IS, AS WE HAVE SEEN, AN APPROACH to the Paradox of Divine Unity, which apophatically analyzes any higher cause in terms of three perspectives. Applying this analysis to God, we enter into a threefold dialectic as follows. In the first perspective (the perspective of Remaining), we are encouraged to consider God in His ownmost essence qua undiminishing cause. In the second perspective (the perspective of Procession), we are encouraged to consider God in His downward unfolding, in relation to the lower effects to which He gives rise. In the third perspective (the perspective of Reversion), we are encouraged to consider God in His capacity to draw His effects back to Himself – His role, we might say, as final cause of being.

Viewed within the context of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, we can discern a clear rationale and pattern to Ibn Gabirol's theology in three parts; in what follows, we consider each part in turn.

8.2.1 Divine Essence: God as Apophatically Seen from the Perspective of Remaining

Viewed in His ownmost being as a cause undiminished by His activity as cause, God is apophatically envisioned as pure Essence. He is in this regard seen as hidden (and shares, with Plotinus' own One, the feature of being prior to – or beyond – limited being of any kind). While in some sense beckoning to a pre-active state of pre-being, the hidden Divine Essence is also depicted by Ibn Gabirol as the locus, source, and final cause of desire: In His relation to being, He is envisioned as desiring to enter into relation with the world; He is the hidden source of the Desire-to-Be as a Desire-for-Other. It is also in His description as Essence that God is (apophatically) identified as the source (and undiminishing cause) of the pure material Grounding Element, the primordial God-born and God-directed fount of desire at the core of all things.

8.2.2 Divine Irāda*: God as Apophatically Seen from the Perspective of Procession*

Viewed from the "processive" perspective, God is highlighted in His move from hiddenness to relation, or from God-with-God to God-with-World.

This is God's move from the Desire-to-Be to being that, as we have seen, marks the insoluble mystery at the very core of the Paradox of Divine Unity. It is in thinking now apophatically of God's presence in the world that we meet the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire. Marking the emanative flow of God's "motion" into the world (where emanation is itself a metaphor highlighting God's utter mystery in this regard), the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire apophatically describes the "moment" of the hidden Divine Essence's entry into the fullness of being. In particular, the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire apophatically beckons to God's entry into being first and foremost in the pure material Grounding Element (the marker in the world of the desire which precedes being).

Understood as a metaphorical exploration of God's processive moment, the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire first and foremost marks the paradoxical motion of God's pure Essence giving way to the presence of pure matter in the universe. It is in this context that we can understand why Ibn Gabirol speaks of matter both as the product of the Divine Essence and (at other times) as the product of Divine *Irāda*: It is both, inasmuch as Divine *Irāda* is nothing more than the Divine Essence (itself a metaphorical, apophatic description of God's utter mystery) described through the perspective of Procession. It is precisely in this sense that we find Ibn Gabirol's perspectival reminder that Divine *Irāda* is one with the Divine Essence when it is considered in and of itself apart from action, and that it is something different than the Divine Essence when it is considered with respect to action.[8] As "bringer of matter," Divine *Irāda* is an apophatic description of God in terms of a downward motion from a Divine Essence to the presence in the world of a material Grounding Element. In this sense, the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Divine-Desire marks the (paradoxical) move from God to world, and in so doing marks God's own desire for relation.

But, in addition to its function as "bringer of matter," Divine *Irāda* also marks the entire downward procession of reality from the Grounding Element, through "the sphere of Intellect," and down through the entire Great Chain of Being. In this respect, we may also identify Divine *Irāda* as the "bringer of form" and as marking the downward force of emanation as the unfolding of higher causes to lower effects in and through the introduction of more and more forms:

> . . . Matter is as if the throne [*cathedra*] of unity, and *Irāda*, the giver [*donatrix*] of form sits [*sedet*] in it and reposes [*quiescit*] above it . . .[9]

Here, the Divine *Irāda* emerges too as the bringer of form to matter. Taken together with Ibn Gabirol's additional description of the Divine *Irāda*

as "intermediating between the two extremes," Divine *Irāda*'s bringing of form marks the downward unfolding from higher realities (which, we have seen in Chapters 5–7, are called matter) to lower realities (which, we have seen in Chapters 5–7, are called form). Thinking of the Divine *Irāda*'s unfolding in these ways as God's creation of the universe (which we have already seen in terms of the "splitting open of the nothing" in Chapter 7), we might note in particular Ibn Gabirol's description of creation as

> the procession [*exitus*] of form from the first origin, viz. from *voluntas* [i.e. Divine *Irāda*] and its inflowing [*influxio*] over matter . . . just like the procession of something emanating from its source and its outflowing [*effluxio*] . . . [10]

As the "bringer of matter" and the "bringer of form," the Divine *Irāda* marks the emanative flowing forth of the Great Chain of Being.

In all of this, Ibn Gabirol's talk of the Divine *Irāda* emerges as a response (though, again, not in the sense of a solution) to the Paradox of Divine Unity by offering a description of God in terms of not one but two processive perspectives. On the one hand, Divine *Irāda* is a processive way of describing God in terms of His "first entry" into the cosmos in and through the pure material Grounding Element. On the other hand, Divine *Irāda* is a processive way of describing God in terms of His "second entry" into the cosmos in and through form (starting with the "first universal form" of Wisdom). In both respects, the Divine *Irāda* marks God's own desire to relate to – and enter into – the realm of being. The Divine *Irāda* eternally (and atemporally) moves God into the fabric of existence first in the introduction into reality of a cosmic "desire-to-be" (itself a desire for goodness signified by the creation of the Grounding Element), and second in the introduction into reality of the manifestation, diversification, and fulfillment of being (the completion of the preexistent material desire-to-be signified by the introduction of forms).

In marking the processive unfolding from God's Essence to the first presence of God in and through the pure material Grounding Element, the Divine *Irāda* both marks God's own Desire-to-Be (a desire, that is, to enter the world of being), as it at once also invests the world with its own desire-to-be (a desire related to what we have in Chapter 3 seen to be the matter-based God-born and God-directed desire in all things for something of the goodness of God). For, as we have seen, it is through matter – specifically through the unfolding and permeating flow of the Grounding Element into all things – that desire enters the world. In the processive unfolding (from Grounding Element downward), the Divine-*Irāda*-as-Desire brings desire

with it into lower and lower layers of being as the pure material Grounding Element gives way to the Great Chain of Being. Born of God's own desire for relation, the Divine *Irāda* – in its description as "bringer of matter" – is the bringer of desire from God's own Essence, through Grounding Element, to all beings. It is for this reason (as well as for other reasons already addressed in Chapter 2) that we are well served to identify the Divine *Irāda* as the Divine Desire.

In apophatically considering God through the perspective of Divine *Irāda*'s dual processions, we can also begin to make better sense of Ibn Gabirol's unexpected *Keter Malkhūt* description of God in the dual terms of "*sōd*" (secret) and "*yesōd*" (foundation), Hebrew terms that, as we have seen, refer to form and matter:

> you are one, the start of all number and the foundation (*yesōd*) of all structure; you are one – those wise of heart marvel in the secret (*sōd*) of your oneness . . . [11]

Seen through the apophatic sensibilities of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, Ibn Gabirol – in his use of the language of *yesōd* and *sōd* to describe God's own reality – apophatically points to God through the dual perspective of the downward processions. As *irādic*ally unfolding, God is revealed in form and in matter in all things – and is here even identified through those very terms.

8.2.3 Divine Wisdom (or Word): God as Apophatically Seen from the Perspective of Reversion

The third description of God highlights the extent to which His processive reality directs itself, in the end, right back to his Essence. Here, we may speak once again of God through the perspective of Procession, but unlike in the earlier discussion (in which Procession was seen in terms of the downward unfolding of matter and form), here we focus in particular on Procession in its upward-directed revertive return to its source. It is in this respect that Ibn Gabirol speaks of the Divine Wisdom – itself sometimes in terms of the Divine Word – as the presence of forms in the world, but in particular, with the "revertive" (or we might say "upward") sense that these forms link all of being back to its divine source.

As it relates to God's causal relation to human being, we may speak in this regard of God qua Final Cause, drawing us back through our own pursuit of the Neoplatonic Return: In the processive relation to the human intellect, God – through the processive motion of the Divine *Irāda* – first manifests the material Grounding Element that itself marks a desire at the core of all things,

including a desire at the core of human being for wisdom, goodness, and God. In the "first motion," we move from God's hidden Essence through the Divine *Irāda* to the planting of desire (in the guise of matter) at the core of human intellect (and in turn, to the Divine *Irāda*'s further processive introduction of more and more forms as we move down the Great Chain of Being from higher vertical causes ["matters"] to lower vertical effects ["forms"] – a move described by Ibn Gabirol as the Divine *Irāda*'s "intermediation between the two extremes"). In the "second motion," we move from the "desire to know" to wisdom and from "the desire to be good" to goodness – a move in us that may be described (in the third analytic move of the tripart Neoplatonic analysis of God) as the reality of God qua Wisdom. Qua Wisdom, God is the "revertive" final cause of human being, pulling us back to Himself through our own enactments of wisdom and goodness.

> . . . *materia est creata ab essentia, et forma est a proprietate essentiae, id est sapientia et unitate* . . . [12]
>
> . . . matter is created from Essence, and form is from the property of Essence, that is to say, from Wisdom and unity . . .

It is precisely in light of this analytic approach that Ibn Gabirol describes Wisdom as a modification of God's Essence. Seen as Wisdom, God's Essence is highlighted not only from the perspective of its ultimate procession into being (an emphasis seen too in the description of God's *irādic* unfolding), but also from the perspective of the flowering culmination of that procession. In the case of human intellect, this flowering culmination is seen in the enactment (or fulfillment) of the desire for knowledge and goodness. More generally in the case of being itself, this flowering culmination is seen in the actualization of form in matter (or, we might say, in the culmination of the desire-to-be in actual beings). In all of these contexts, God emerges qua Widsom, namely qua final revertive cause of being, knowledge, and goodness.

In the folds of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, God emerges as the cause of the Great Chain of Being with desire at its core; this is His activity qua processive Divine *Irāda* as bringer of matter, as bringer of form, and as vertical "intermediary" marking their downward unfolding. God also emerges as the final cause who ensures that said desire is so constituted in its overall relation to the Divine Essence as to be able to find its way back (and, as such, turn all things back) to God. It is in precisely this sense that Ibn Gabirol speaks of God's Wisdom as the source of form (and as such, we might add, as the source of being).

8.2.4 From Confusion to Tripart Apophasis: Conclusions

Understanding Ibn Gabirol's unusual tripart theology (of a Divine Essence, a Divine *Irāda*, and a Divine Wisdom) in terms of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis provides us with a coherent account of what can otherwise appear to be a series of disconnected and contradictory ideas in the *Fons Vitae*. Both the evidence of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis in Ibn Gabirol's own tripart description of the Great Chain of Being (in terms of "matter," "matter+form," and "form") and the principle of charity (reading Ibn Gabirol so as to make sense of seemingly disconnected claims) would suggest that we approach Ibn Gabirol's thinking along these lines.

We might add that in its emphasis on an apophatic strategy, the preceding analysis also helps explain Ibn Gabirol's sense (adverted to briefly in Section 2.1) that Divine *Irāda* is above Wisdom, that Wisdom is above Divine *Irāda*, and that Divine *Irāda* and Wisdom are one: Taken in the context of a Neoplatonic method stemming from an apophatic response to the Paradox of Divine Unity, we recognize that Ibn Gabirol's theological claims are not "descriptive" in any ordinary sense. As such, we ought not be surprised to find all three of the aforementioned claims about the relationship of Divine *Irāda* and Wisdom.[13] In this regard, we may save Ibn Gabirol from scholastic critiques claiming that he is confused about the relationship between Divine Essence, "Will," Wisdom, matter, and form (a critique summarized by McGinn as a scholastic concern over Ibn Gabirol's wanting to "have his cake and eat it too").[14] In light of our consideration of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, we may simply note that Ibn Gabirol's multiple opposing claims about God's Essence, *al-Irāda*, and Wisdom (and the resulting competing claims about the relationship of matter and form to these divine moments) point to a tripart mode of apophasis, not to confusion.

In like regard, our analysis helps move beyond Husik's conclusion that Ibn Gabirol's view on Divine Will is "ambiguous."[15] Ibn Gabirol's view is not "ambiguous"; rather, it is steeped in a tripart method of Neoplatonic apophatic analysis.

It might be further noted that all of these considerations (in addition to Ibn Gabirol's talk of fountains of life, cosmic intellects, world souls, and Eden's river) help us further reject scholarly claims that Ibn Gabirol has a theory of Divine Will that marks his departure from emanationism. In the reading I have suggested, Ibn Gabirol's very theology pulses through with an emanationist sensibility that is part of a sustained apophatic reaction to (in the form of a tripart analysis of) theological mystery and the extension of that mystery into being itself. It is in the context of this tripart analysis that the

processive, emanative nature of the Divine *Irāda* (as Divine Desire) becomes even more apparent.

8.3 ON THE "DOUBLY APOPHATIC": NEOPLATONIC COSMO-ONTOLOGY AS DUAL DISCOURSE ON GOD AND HUMAN BEING

Seen as a response to the Paradox of Divine Unity, Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire emerges now as a variety of apophasis – and in particular, an apophasis that explores God's own entry into being in terms of an emanating Great Chain of Being, each of whose emanating hypostases are themselves approached in further apophatic terms of a tripart causal analysis. In this light, "emanation," "layers," "hypostases," and the tripart description of God are less "doctrines" than apophatic responses to a divine mystery that extends into the very nature of being itself. Becoming sensitive to Neoplatonic apophatic method helps us reclassify the entire endeavor of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, and in this way helps us revise our own methodological approach to the content of these texts: Instead of simplistically reading views of "emanating layers" as some kind of outdated cosmic topography (more on this in Chapter 9), we can approach the texts as delicate apophatic engagements with the mystery of God's own reality and the extension of that mystery into the folds of being itself.

We may in this respect reclassify Ibn Gabirol's Divine *Irāda*, his material Grounding Element, and all of his talk of "layers of matter." For, taken in this context, they are not "things" (or doctrines about things) but apophatic ways of engaging the Paradox of Divine Unity through metaphorical constructions that engage (in accordance with Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis) God and reality through a play of multiple perspectives.

In this sense, we might speak of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – including Ibn Gabirol's own hylomorphic Theology of Desire – as apophatic, but also as what I call "doubly apophatic." Apophasis is a well-rehearsed category of language when it comes to interpreting texts about God where language is itself used to express the inability of language to describe an unknowable God who is essentially beyond description.[16] In this sense, apophasis signals an "un-saying" of sorts, signaling, through the very use of the words themselves, the very breakdown of language: Words cannot succeed in referring us to the source beyond all conception – and so, in the saying itself the subject (God) is unsaid. Generally, we describe a text as apophatic if (1) it is a text about God, and (2) it is apophatically constructed to express awareness of the limits of describing God. However, it is also worth considering a new category, namely the category of the "doubly apophatic." We may consider as "doubly

apophatic" a text that is apophatically constructed to express awareness of the limits of describing God, but that does so through explorations and constructions that *do not even have God as their purported subject*. Looking at Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, we may say that the various direct claims about God (e.g., Ibn Gabirol's tripart analysis of the Divine Essence, Divine *Irāda*, and Divine Wisdom presented earlier) are apophatic. But, we may add that claims about emanation, hypostasized levels, and, in the case of Ibn Gabirol, a material Grounding Element and layers of matter throughout the cosmos, are "doubly apophatic." This is to say that they are in fact engagements with God, but "twice removed" from God (or one full step more removed from God than in regular apophasis) in that God is not even overtly under discussion. As a metaphorical response to the Paradox of Divine Unity, a claim about the Divine *Irāda* (an overt "God claim" in its content) is apophatic; as a metaphorical response to the Paradox of Divine Unity, claims about emanation, or hypostases, or the material Grounding Element (not overt "God claims" in their content) are "doubly apophatic": Both a claim about the Divine *Irāda* and a claim about the material Grounding Element are responses to the Paradox of Divine Unity; in fact, both are "God claims" even though only the first claim looks that way in content. It is in this sense that the first claim is "apophatic" and the second claim is "doubly apopathic."

In this sense, we may take Ibn Gabirol's entire cosmo-ontology to be a subtle exploration of the unknowable God and His presence in and through the entirety of existence. In the direct claims about God, the project proceeds apophatically, and in the remainder (in its claims about levels and layers and the material Grounding Element) the project is "doubly apophatic," reflecting on the mystery of God's relation to being through a rich metaphorical conception of the realm of being itself. In both of these ways, the project is an engagement with the unknowable God.

TAKEN IN THIS LIGHT, HOWEVER, IBN GABIROL'S COSMO-ONTOLOGY CAN also be seen as a subtle encounter with human being. For, the Paradox of Divine Unity is not only a lens through which the Neoplatonist views the entirety of existence, but also through which she views the experience of human being. This can be seen most readily in the "Paradox of Self's Compresence" (see Section 8.1), which is a microcosmic view of human being in light of God's own paradox. However, it can also, in related fashion, be seen in the apophatic engagement with God's own mystery in terms of the Divine Wisdom – for, as we have seen, the description of the Divine Wisdom (in

processive, revertive terms) is directly tied up with a sense of human being's own "return" to wisdom and goodness (or, as we have seen, to something of the goodness of God). Part of the beauty of the Neoplatonic apophatic (and "doubly apophatic") sensibility is that a reflection on God itself relies on a concomitant reflection on being and on human being. In this sense, the higher cause (God) is in part revealed through a perspective (that of Reversion) that views the effect (being and human being) in its relation to itself as higher cause. God is in this way – qua Wisdom as higher final cause – partially revealed through a consideration of human being – and, in particular, of human being in her upward return to wisdom and goodness. A study of human being and of our own nature as seekers after wisdom, goodness, and God is in this way a "doubly apophatic" engagement with the mystery of God's own reality: We can come to apophatically glimpse God (through the perspective of Wisdom, and as final cause) only in reflecting on the human desire for epistemological and ethical transformation. And in his emphasis on the core of all being – and human being – in desire (rooted in the material Grounding Element), Ibn Gabirol further highlights the "revertive" aspect of all effects (and not just human being), in this way "doubly apophatically" throwing light (or, we might say – to borrow from Ibn Gabirol's own imagery – shadowed light) on God's own nature through a consideration of being's own root in desire.

In this sense, Ibn Gabirol's detailed technical cosmo-ontology becomes at once a subtle exploration of being, human being, and God. Thus, whereas we arrived in Chapters 2–7 at a new understanding of many of the details of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology, we have here additionally arrived at a new understanding of the very method of cosmo-ontological discourse and, as such, the deeper motivating force behind and implications of said cosmo-ontological details: In writings about the Divine *Irāda*, we have found in Ibn Gabirol an apophatic response to divine mystery, and in writings about emanation, levels (including "layers of matter"), and a material Grounding Element, we have found in Ibn Gabirol a "doubly apophatic" response to the divine mystery, and with it a subtle exploration into the intertwined realities of God, being, and human being.

8.4 FROM APOPHASIS TO HUMAN PRESCRIPTION

In the ways just described, apophatic theology gives way to a consideration of the nature of human being. Reflecting back on our reminder in Chapter 3 that Ibn Gabirol's project is rooted in a consideration of human being and of the

tripart human quest, we might here expand that claim: Ibn Gabirol's project is rooted in a consideration of human being as part of a broader apophatic theology (a set of apophatic and "doubly apophatic" responses, we have seen, to the Paradox of Divine Unity). In thinking about the mystery of God's entry into the folds of being, Ibn Gabirol apophatically thinks of God in tripart terms that directly involve his thinking too about the nature of being and of human being. For beyond the mere structure of a "macrocosm/microcosm" dynamic (and, in like spirit, the idea of "*imitatio dei*") that quickly brings us from thinking about God to thinking about being and human being, there are also the details of the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis according to which God's own reality is apophatically engaged through processive and revertive perspectives – which is to say, through perspectives that immediately involve God's lower effects in a consideration of God. In the Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis, a cause is engaged in and through a consideration of its effect. It is in this sense that we move directly from a theological exploration to a consideration of being and human being.

Turning in particular to human being, we might note the particularly prescriptive sense that emerges from the apophatic framework. For, returning to our analysis of the Divine Wisdom, we have seen that it is a revertive perspective on God that puts particular focus on the human being in her own upward-directed desire for something of the goodness of God. God is highlighted as final cause in this perspective, a point expressed by highlighting the revertive nature of God's effect (here, human intellect) toward His own reality qua Wisdom. As upward-directed effect, the human being – in his desire for knowledge, goodness, and God – is part of what we speak of when we speak of God-qua-Wisdom, or of God as final cause (in his role, that is, as a reality seen in His effects' upward reversions). The directing of human being toward something of the goodness of God is the key guiding impulse in the *Fons Vitae* (as we have seen in Chapter 3) for a good reason: It not only speaks to the nature of human being, but, as such, is a critical part of the apophatic consideration of God Himself (here as final, or revertive, cause). Apophatically engaging God and prescriptively specifying the ends of human being are here inextricably part of a single project.

It is in this light that we might speak of the *Fons Vitae* project – in its elaboration of all of its various layers and levels, and in its emphasis on matter at the root of all being – not only as a "doubly apophatic" engagement with God, but – in laying out the upward-directed relation of human being (as effect) to God (her source) – as prescriptively laying out the parameters for correct living.

8.5 DEPENDENCE, RECEPTIVITY, AND FRAGILITY: ORIENTATIONS FOR HUMAN BEING (FROM DESCRIPTIONS OF MATTER TO PRESCRIPTIONS FOR LIVING, AND EXPERIENCING THE SELF QUA MATTER)

Given what we have seen in our previous discussion, and returning too to our starting insights in Chapter 3, we may identify in the Theology of Desire a core concern for human being and for the ends of human being. It is in this light that we may begin to better hear in all of the *Fons Vitae*'s cosmo-ontology – in its emphasis on the presence of matter at the core of all being and in its emphasis on "layers of matter" – a particular set of implications (and directives) for human being: Born of God's own essential desire, the pure material Grounding Element (emphasized through Ibn Gabirol's further description of "layers of matter") roots the human being in a God-born and God-directed desire, a descriptive insight that prescriptively opens us onto our tripart quest for wisdom, goodness, and God.

In this context, we might even emphasize a call to – and even reliance on – the Other: As God in this picture desires to complete Himself through relation to Other (as we have seen, He desires to enter into relation with being), we might here reflect too on the human's own prescriptive root in a desire for Other. (For the possibilities of bringing Ibn Gabirol in this way into conversation with Levinasian ethics, see Chapter 9.)

In his description of all things – and even the human soul – as rooted in matter, Ibn Gabirol prescriptively opens onto a complex vision of selfhood (a point pretty much obscured by standard descriptions of Ibn Gabirol's teaching on matter in terms of a Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism). With this prescriptive human call in mind, we can appreciate the details of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology in a new light, not only as "doubly apophatic" reflections on God, but as reflections on how a human ought to live. In this regard, we may discern in the details of all the cosmic thises and thats the clues to a "prescriptive orientation," which is to say, a call to a certain way of living in the world – and in particular, a call to living in the world in a "material" kind of way: From a description of matter at the core of the human soul, we move to a prescription about living in the world in a "matter-rooted way" – which is to say, rooted in an experience of the self most able to turn us toward wisdom, goodness, God, and Other. We may speak in this regard of a "material orientation," which is to say, an experience of one's ownmost *self qua matter* as an experience of self in and through dependence, receptivity, and fragility.

8.5.1 From Layers of Matter to Human Dependence

Let us turn first to the orientation of "self *qua* matter" in terms of a feeling of self as dependent. Consider in this regard Ibn Gabirol's emphasis on cosmic layers. The emphasis on layers can be seen in all Neoplatonic Great Chains of Being – and with special added emphasis in Ibn Gabirol's addition of a pure material Grounding Element and his description of the Great Chain of Being in terms of a number of "layers of matter." Seen in the context of the call to human being, however, we may see all of this descriptive emphasis on all the various cosmic layers as part of a prescriptive orientation of self to a lived experience of dependence. In and through the description of various layers nested one inside the next, we can now read the prescriptive call to experience oneself qua dependent self. Conceptualized by Ibn Gabirol through a series of higher and higher matters, the human being emerges as dependent – as himself nested within a series of higher and higher causes. Through each iteration of cosmic levels – including Ibn Gabirol's own unique added emphasis on a pure material Grounding Element – we find the human in his ownmost dependence.

As an orientation to living, the description-as-prescription of dependency is a call to feel dependent in one's being; it is a call to a *way of living* in the world. We are being called to *feel dependent* – and *to live in the world in and through the feeling of dependence*. Thus, from a descriptive doctrine of cosmic layers, we arrive at a prescriptive call to dependence as a call to living in the world in a way that is most able to set us on our journey toward wisdom, goodness, God, and Other.

We might note that seen in its particular emphasis on the dependence of human being on God, we may relate Ibn Gabirol's talk of cosmic layers to a range of ideas in the history of philosophy, which in their own ways set out to emphasize the dependence of all things on God. Here we may include Boethius' "*quo est* vs. *quod est*" distinction,[17] Avicenna's account of the relation of existence to essence[18] as well as his distinction between the Necessary of Existence and contingent beings, and even Ibn Gabirol's own reminder that of God one can ask only "whether" he exists ("*an est*"), and not, as for all dependent beings, the further questions of "what," "how," and "why."[19] It is precisely this dependence relation that emerges too from Ibn Gabirol's talk of layers of matter.

8.5.2 From Matter to Human Receptivity and Fragility

We may here further emphasize the orientation of "self qua matter" in terms of a phenomenological experience of self-as-receptive-and-fragile. In using

the image of matter to emphasize human being's utter dependency, and in emphasizing that image of matter in terms of fragile receptivity, Ibn Gabirol's unique cosmo-ontology places a particular emphasis on the receptive and fragile nature of dependent human being. Embarking on a hylomorphic construction of reality in terms of a material Grounding Element and "layers of matter," Ibn Gabirol emphasizes the dependency of matter – itself described throughout the *Fons Vitae* as "the receiver." Described in this way, matter highlights a particularly fragile receptivity through which the human is exposed in her utter need – on par with the image of matter-the-receiver waiting (as can be seen in matter's relation to form) for its ownmost completion. In his call to experience the self qua matter, Ibn Gabirol invites us to a way of living in the world receptively and with a sense of human fragility. As a call to receptivity-with-fragility, Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire can be seen as urging from us a responsive and seeking human comportment – a point with considerable ethical, social, and political consequences.[20] While I cannot consider the implications of these ideas in this study, I suggest in Chapter 9 what a further study of these ideas might include.

We end this set of considerations with an especially poignant poem in which Ibn Gabirol gives voice to the fragility of the human condition (here particularly in relation to God) while emphasizing in particular the relation between matter and humility:

> *terem heyōtī ḥasdikha bi-'anī, ha-sam li-yēsh 'ayīn ve-himẓīanī*
> *mī hū asher rīqēm temūnatī*[21] *ū-mī ʿaẓmī bi-khūr yaẓaq ve-hiqbīanī*[22]
> . . .
> *'amnam 'anī ḥōmer bi-qerev yadkha; 'atah ʿasītanī, 'emet, lō 'anī*[23] . . .[24]
>
> before the very being of me i held the grace of you
> you who have brought void (*'ayīn*, אין) to reality (*yēsh*),
> and me in its fold
> who embroidered (*rīqēm*) my likeness
> and forged dry my furnaced core
> . . .
> verily, I am matter (*ḥōmer*) in your hands, and you, not I, my maker . . .

Here, Ibn Gabirol is struck by the receptive-with-fragile nature of human subject: Until I have been filled by the divine unfolding, I am not yet human being. In fact, in this poetic outpouring, Ibn Gabirol employs the Hebrew term for lower matter (*ḥōmer*) explicitly in the last line: "Verily, I am matter . . . and you, not I my maker . . . " Here, in the identification of self in relation to God, Ibn Gabirol has identified the very core of human being as a receptive expectancy – a chasm of need that seeks out its essential fulfillment through relation, through a revertive turn to its source in the divine Other. Put together

with what we have seen to be the conceptual link between matter, love, and desire in Ibn Gabirol, we have, in visiting Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic cosmos, struck upon the *irādic*/erotic core of human being, the expectant ground of human being through which the self arises only in encounter with her Divine source, in her upward-directed search not only for God but for something of the goodness of God – for the wisdom and goodness that mark the final end of human being.

Reminding ourselves of the link between matter and the "*'ayīn*" (the idea of pre-creation nothingness addressed in the *Keter Malkhūt*; see Section 7.7), we find in Ibn Gabirol's description of his coming into being from "*'ayīn*" (nothing) to "*yēsh*" (existence, something, reality) a heartfelt elaboration of the human's need for relation (here, in particular terms of divine encounter). Here, we have uncovered the fragile nature of human being, the *in itself nothing*: On her own, the human being is not-yet-being; at its core, human being is an expectant desire to-be-filled, a yearning to become-by-becoming met through encounter with something of the goodness of God: I-exist-not-yet-but-for-the-turn-to-God; "verily, I am matter (*ḥōmer*) in your hands, and you, not I, my maker . . . "

Emphasizing the theme of human fragility in this poem, we might note too that Ibn Gabirol plays masterfully with the words "self" (אני, *'anī*, lit. "I") and "nothing" (אין, *'ayīn*), both of which are composed of the same three Hebrew letters, variously arranged.[25] Before I am filled, I wait expectantly; before I turn to God's goodness, I am nothing. We might also note in this regard the perhaps intentional employment on Ibn Gabirol's part of the Hebrew letters *tet*, *mem*, *'alef* (in that order) as the first letters of the lines of his poem: Taken as an acrostic (a popular medieval poetic technique – generally used by Ibn Gabirol, and others, to spell out the letters of the poet's name), we get the word "*tamē*," or "impure." Playing on the self-as-on-its-own-nothing theme of the poem (seen both in its content, as well as in its play on *'anī* and *'ayīn*), we might see in this acrostic a further reflection on the fragile dependency of the receptive self: Where the poet normally places his name, here he places the word "impure." On my own, I am naught but the impure; it is only in relation that I am made human. I am matter the receiver.

small in my awe
and fear
in my own
eyes like an inchworm . . . [26]

IN ALL OF THESE WAYS, IBN GABIROL'S COSMO-ONTOLOGY – IN ALL OF its particular details of pure matter and material layers – is not only an

engagement with God, but a prescriptive reflection on the nature of human being. In particular it is a prescriptive reflection on the nature of human being rooted in matter. Through an experience of self qua matter, the human being is reoriented; she embraces a dependent, receptive, and fragile self, and in this way is set free on her quest for wisdom, goodness, and God.

9

Transcendental Grounding, Mythopoetic and Symbolic Transformation, and the Creation of New Worlds with Words (Methodological Reappraisal II)

> . . . In time, those Unconscionable Maps
> no longer satisfied . . .
>
> – Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," in *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley

We have seen in Chapters 6 and 8 how Ibn Gabirol reflectively engages his craft of writing – at once self-consciously asking the reader to "imagine" (see Section 6.4) and in this spirit of self-reflective awareness of language's creative potential, embarking – in the very details of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology and through the self-conscious method of Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis – on a delicate apophatic (and, as we have seen too, "doubly apophatic") project that at once responds to the Paradox of Divine Unity while opening a prescriptive invitation to ways of living.

Reflecting on Ibn Gabirol's own self-reflective understanding of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, Chapter 8 provided a methodological reappraisal of the very nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology: Far from a set of writings about layers and levels, Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – and with it, Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic Theology of Desire – emerges as a living engagement with God and with human being.

In this chapter, we extend this methodological consideration in four parts. (1) First, we will look at the various ways that – contrary to the spirit of this project – so many readers have methodologically failed to charitably read (and hence have failed to properly understand) texts of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology. Reminding ourselves that "map is not territory," we suggest the importance of leaving such failed attempts behind. (2) Returning in particular to my own thesis in Chapter 8 about Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology's providing prescriptive orientations for living, I explain how Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology can be understood as a kind of transcendental-phenomenological

project, and, in that very sense, as a "transformational" set of writings (aimed, that is, at transforming human lives). (3) Having laid out my own view of how Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology can be understood as an inquiry into human being aimed at human transformation, I explore other scholarly treatments of (a) Neoplatonism and (b) the phenomenology of religious experience, which variously support – through different theories of textual exercises, mythopoesis, and symbol – *other ways* of seeing Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as an inquiry into human being aimed at human transformation. I end by (4) considering Ibn Gabirol's own self-reflective thoughts on writing as an act of creation.

9.1 On what not to do: failures in methodological approaches to Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology (or, finding invisible Kansas)

We have seen that Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is a set of apophatic theological explorations alongside explorations of human being. But consider the ways that we can obscure (and in which the history of philosophy has so often obscured) these points when we start out with a wrong-headed sense about the kind of thing Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is. When we go into a text of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology tacitly (or overtly) presuming its method to be that of a crude science book or a strange cartography of sorts, we will inevitably miss all of the points raised in the previous chapter, and likely most of the points raised throughout this entire study.

In considering ways we might fail to see the actual spirit of Neoplatonism, it is instructive to consider Rosenzweig's critique of modernity's critique of revelation: Rosenzweig faults his modern reader with having completely missed the vibrant notion of Revelation at play in the Bible by having herself uncharitably obscured the Biblical notion by reading into the Bible a cartoonish sense of God that she then summarily rejects as cartoonish. In similar methodological spirit, we must be wary of paving over Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology's subtle theological and existential concerns by reading it as if it were something archaic and arcane with little philosophical or theological relevance, which we then summarily reject as archaic and arcane and as having little philosophical or theological relevance. When we approach Neoplatonic method through our own methodologically erroneous lenses, we ensure that we get the Neoplatonic method – and with it, all or most of its content – wrong.

In what follows, I offer five considerations to help us reflect more overtly about what Neoplatonism is (and is not).

1. *Cosmic Science, Outdated Science.* Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is often approached as if it were some kind of "cosmic science" that seeks to explain the heavens the way botany seeks to explain the plant kingdom and the way geography seeks to explain the terrestrial landscape. Once its method is seen on the "information-gathering" or "information-giving" model of a science like botany or geography, Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology quickly moves from being seen as a kind of "cosmic science" to its being caricatured as a kind of "outdated science." But, as we have seen, Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is better understood on the model of apophasis and prescriptive ethics – and, as we will see later in this chapter, as a kind of transcendental exploration of phenomenologically grounding principles. Or, as others suggest (as we will see later in the chapter as well), perhaps it is best seen as a kind of meditative or imaginatively transformational literature. "Fact-finding" is, in any case, not the right way to think of the Neoplatonic method, and thinking of it in this way (tacitly or otherwise) will all but ensure that one will misunderstand the content of the text. We must be methodologically careful to not tacitly approach the Neoplatonic method on the model of fact-finding, informational science. (We might suggest in this regard that we must move, in our attempt to best capture its method, from descriptive to prescriptive models, and from informational to transformational models.)

Here it might be noted that the approach to Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as a kind of science – which immediately makes of it a kind of outdated science – helps remove Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology from serious consideration in a range of contemporary philosophical and theological contexts.

2. *Invisible Floating Kansases.* In line with the aforementioned, and absent a correct understanding of the nature of the method of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, readers encounter a strangely archaic and arcane cosmic topography of invisible realities and reified realms. Readers in this way may tacitly approach the Neoplatonic layers with a vaguely spatiotemporal sense that they are "floating realms," or at best with a vaguely spatiotemporal-but-not-exactly-spatiotemporal sense that "they are *not really* floating realms." In effect, this makes of Neoplatonic reality a series of invisible floating Kansases – or at best, a series of realms that are not exactly like invisible floating Kansases. In either case, we are left with no real sense of what Neoplatonic layers and levels are and with no real sense of what Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is about, and we can once again see why (1) this is – in light of all we have already

said – an incorrect evaluation of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, and why such an evaluation will (2) remove Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology from serious consideration in a whole range of vibrant philosophical and theological conversations.

3. *Calcified, Meaningless Debates.* The aforementioned misunderstandings are arguably contributed to (and are certainly, in any case, not alleviated) by scholars who write about the details of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology without overtly addressing the method of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – scholars who write, that is, about the content and details of Neoplatonism without overtly wrestling with what this form of writing is trying to do. For, in so doing, not only do scholars fail to explain why Neoplatonic layers should *not be thought of* as "[outdated] cosmic science," or as "the study of invisible floating things," but their subsequent investigation of the details of Neoplatonism often – when not accompanied by a serious methodological assessment – strengthens the misperception that Neoplatonists are odd cosmic cartographers. In this regard, consider the scholarly willingness to present Ibn Gabirol to readers (without any accompanying meta-analysis of his method) through such calcified and philosophico-theologically opaque questions as "Which level of reality is higher for Ibn Gabirol: Wisdom or Will?" Without a serious methodological analysis of what Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is really all about (a consideration of the nature of its method, that is, over just a consideration of the details of its content), arguing that Will is a level of reality higher than the level of Wisdom for Ibn Gabirol or that Wisdom is a level of reality higher than the level of Will makes Ibn Gabirol irrelevant; it leaves the reader hopelessly stuck in spatiotemporal metaphors with no real sense of what Ibn Gabirol is trying to do – and with no sense of what could possibly be at stake in (or relevant about) such a debate. In such a context, regardless of which reading wins, Ibn Gabirol loses: He is robbed of a living philosophical voice and is made to sound like an archaic cosmo-topographer interested primarily in some kind of arcane literal (albeit invisible) spheres, layers, levels, and overflows. Left without a starting sense of what Neoplatonic thought really is about (found only through a serious consideration of the apophatic-with-prescriptive method and aims of Neoplatonic writing), we are left with a very uncharitable sense of Ibn Gabirol's project as a deeply unphilosophical attempt at some kind of outdated science, or invisible cosmic cartography.
4. *Saying "Yes" to Plato, Saying "Yes" to Neoplatonism: On Adding Neoplatonic Cosmo-Ontology to Current Scholarly Conversation.* Arguably, all

> of this has contributed to Neoplatonism's occupying a less than flattering position in so many standard histories of philosophy, resulting in its mostly being left out of contemporary philosophical conversation. We might consider Plato as a point of contrast in this regard: While neither Plato nor the Neoplatonists mean anything spatiotemporal in their respective talk of "realms" and "levels," I would submit that this finer point is taken to heart significantly less in the study of Neoplatonism than in the study of Plato. While Plato has certainly had his philosophical detractors throughout the history of ideas, many contemporary scholars of epistemology (and other areas of metaphysics) actively engage Plato as a living philosophical interlocutor: In such cases, clearly contemporary philosophers are not captive to a picture of Plato's theory of knowledge as primarily concerned with a mysterious see-through realm of forms. Plato's epistemology – including his theory of "the realm of forms" – is, rather, engaged in its capacity to address a host of pressing philosophical problems, and it is clear that many scholars of philosophy (in a host of contemporary philosophical contexts) are able to appreciate that aspect of his theory of forms. However, this degree of charity does not seem as forthcoming in various philosophical reactions to – and classifications of – Neoplatonism. Neoplatonic writings about "levels" and "emanations" are simply disregarded by many contemporary philosophers as a philosophical side note (or a nonphilosophical side note) with little or no relevance to contemporary philosophical inquiry.

Although I would agree that Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology would not fit into contemporary analytic philosophical metaphysics or epistemology discussions the way Plato does, I do think it presents ideas worth actively engaging in a number of contemporary scholarly contexts, including virtue theory (inasmuch as we can view Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – and certainly Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic Theology of Desire – as highlighting the possibility of dependency, receptivity, fragility, and desire as foundational human virtues); feminist philosophy and feminist ethics of care;[1] Kantian transcendental philosophies of religion in which Gods and souls are posited in the service of broader human concerns (given that, as I explain later in this chapter, we may view Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology's talk of levels and layers – when taken apophatically as teachings on God and human being – as transcendentally grounding meaningful human living); phenomenological, existential, and transcendental conversations about the nature of human subjectivity; hermeneutical considerations of methodology, meaning, and

the nature of the relationship between text and reader; "meta-metaphysical" reflections on the meaning of metaphysics and the nature of theory-building; and contemporary theological and literary considerations about the nature of the sacred, the nature of religious, mythopoetic and symbolic language, and the transformative capacity of texts.

5. *Wrong Picture, Wrong Results.* Failure to properly understand the nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology has resulted not only in the general miscategorization of Neoplatonism as nonphilosophical outdated science or cosmic cartography, and has, in this way, not only obscured the many ways that Neoplatonism ought to be actively engaged across a range of contemporary scholarly conversations, but it has also arguably resulted in scholarly blunders in interpretation within the history of philosophy. In the course of this study, I have argued against (1) scholars (such as Weisheipl, Gilson, and Husik) who have read Ibn Gabirol's Divine Will as being at odds with Plotinian emanation; (2) scholars (such as Schlanger) who have argued against the idea of a per se existent matter in Ibn Gabirol; and (3) scholars who have had arguably misdirected allegiances with the *Fons Vitae* (such as traditions of Franciscans and Kabbalists), as well as scholars who have launched arguably misdirected critiques of the *Fons Vitae* (such as Aquinas). While I have already addressed these misreadings in previous chapters, I would here suggest that it is arguably a failed understanding of the nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology that has led to each of these erroneous readings.

For example, if Weisheipl, Gilson, or Husik had properly understood Neoplatonic emanation as an apophatic response to the Paradox of Divine Unity (as I have explained in Chapter 8), then they probably would not have felt compelled to place it at odds with Ibn Gabirol's own discourse on the Divine *Irāda*. In like spirit, if they had understood the apophatic Neoplatonic nature of Ibn Gabirol's project, they might have arrived at a very different sense of his Divine *Irāda* and of his overall project (as would Brunner perhaps have drawn a "vertical" depiction of Divine *Irāda*'s activity in Ibn Gabirol's framework).

Along similar lines, it is clear that the jointly apophatic and prescriptive nature of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire is either unfairly downplayed or missed entirely when centuries of readers classify Ibn Gabirol's work primarily in terms of a Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism and a concomitant Doctrine of the Plurality of Forms. While these readings might offer important insights, they illustrate (and help calcify) a misguided sense of the text's

method, taking its value to lie primarily in its function as some kind of response (an incorrect one, some would add) to Aristotle. This gives the text an entirely different feel, one that really misses the import of the Theology of Desire and the theological and existential import of the claim that "matter is in all things." As I have mentioned, this can be seen in one medieval Christian sense of the *Fons Vitae*'s power lying in its ability to help us take a side on the question of how many angels can fit on the head of a pin. My point is not that the *Fons Vitae* cannot be used to help with such a debate; my point is that the history of readings of the *Fons Vitae* seems to have missed entirely its main theological and existential spirit. As we have noted in Chapter 7, one might use Hesse's *Steppenwolf* to talk about preserving wildlife, but that would most grossly miss the point of the text.

In like fashion, had Schlanger understood the apophatic nature of Ibn Gabirol's project and the role of the material Grounding Element in that project (as a God-born and God-directed desire at the heart of being that is itself an apophatic response to the paradox of God's manifestation into being), he would likely not have insisted that matter per se can only exist in God's knowledge. Schlanger's suggestion simply does not make sense if we take Ibn Gabirol's project as a response to the Paradox of Divine Unity whose main point is to engage (albeit apophatically) with the "manifesting of God" into plurality. Schlanger's emphasis focuses on what is going on "inside God," whereas a proper methodological sensitivity to Ibn Gabirol's project as a response to the Paradox of Divine Unity demands that we focus instead (as Ibn Gabirol's own description of matter's per se existence does) on that which is "outside of God" at the very boundary between God-in-God and God-in-World: Put forth metaphorically as part of an apophatic strategy by Ibn Gabirol, the point of the discussion of matter per se – as a metaphor – is precisely to bring our thoughts to a space *outside* of God in way of engaging us in the utter paradox of God's ownmost self-directed unity *and* His relation to the world.

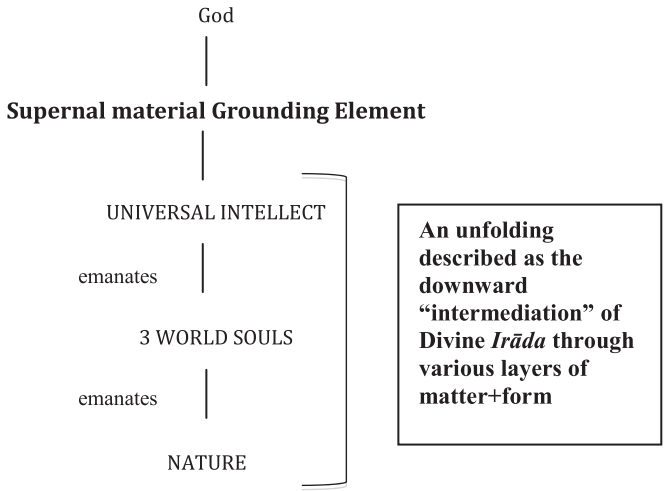
Similarly, Augustinians, Kabbalists, and Thomists alike all seem to be missing the methodological nature of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire when they variously argue that Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Universal Hylomorphism and Doctrine of Divine Will are simply Augustinian, that his notion of a "*yesōd*" (the "foundation," which, as we have seen, points in Ibn Gabirol to the Ps. Empedoclean material Grounding Element) is simply Zoharic, or that Ibn Gabirol's Universal Hylomorphism and notion of "prime matter" are simply clumsy attempts at Aristotle gone wrong.

9.2 MAP IS NOT TERRITORY: A DOUBLE INSIGHT FOR INTERPRETING NEOPLATONIC COSMO-ONTOLOGY (OR, THERE IS NO INVISIBLE KANSAS)

In Chapters 2–7, we analyzed – and visually mapped – Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology: Through careful considerations, we found a Ps. Empedoclean revision of the standard Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being to include a pure material Grounding Element (as God-born root of desire at the core of being), as we found too that the Divine *Irāda* – *pace* scholarly presumptions to the contrary – is not a unifying horizontal occasionalist glue that marks a departure from emanationism, but is rather a vertical relation of diversification that itself refers us precisely to the Plotinian flow of emanation downward from the divine source.

In this regard, we have seen how Ibn Gabirol provides his own Ps. Empedoclean revision of the Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, emphasizing two elements that are not emphasized in Plotinus, namely (1) the material Grounding Element (referred to in the Latin as "*materia prima*" and in the original Arabic as "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*") that sits, as it were, between the standard Plotinian hypostases of God and Intellect, and in related fashion (2) "layers of matter" throughout reality. And while one might have also pointed – before reading the current study – to the Doctrine of Divine Will as a third massive point of departure from Plotinus, we have found that Ibn Gabirol's talk of the Divine *Irāda* is not at all a departure from Plotinus as much as it is a rhetorically unique way of describing the downward flow of the Great Chain of Being – itself in apophatic response to the Paradox of Divine Unity – now in terms of a Divine *Desire* that "intermediates between" and "connects together" matter and form in the sense of marking the vertical unfolding from higher to lower layers of reality. Looking to the fuller map we have presented of Ibn Gabirol's revised Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology in Chapter 6, we might summarily illustrate his view (Figure 9.1).

In moving to a meta-reflection on the nature and method of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, we need to turn away from merely considering the cosmic details themselves to considering too *how we need to read* those cosmic details. In trying to understand what Neoplatonic "levels" are and are not, we are well served to recall that "map is not territory" – as we are well served to note that this is doubly true in the case of Neoplatonic cosmic mapping. Consider, in this regard, the similarities and dissimilarities between the illustration in Figure 9.1 and a map of the United States. The initial idea that "map is not territory" leads us to a shared insight across our two maps: Clearly it is equally true that a map of the United States is not the actual United States and that a



9.1. Ibn Gabirol's "Cosmic Map"

Neoplatonic map of cosmic layers is not the actual cosmos. But, it is here that the cartological comparison between our two maps breaks down. For while the map of the United States does indeed map the territory of the United States (and is in this sense "about" the United States), the same *should not* be said of the Neoplatonic cosmic map's relationship to the cosmos: While a U.S. map is best understood when it is understood as being "about" the United States, a Neoplatonic map of "cosmic levels" is not best understood – as our investigation in Chapter 8 has shown – as being "about" cosmic levels. For while it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that a map of Kansas refers (in some way) to Kansas, we run into troubles when we aim to say in like terms that the map of "World Soul" refers to World Soul, as if World Soul were some kind of invisible floating thing (like Kansas, but only bigger, more see-through, and more floaty). Kansas exists in the ordinary spatiotemporal sense, so we run into no troubles when we speak of the map "mapping" Kansas; but we do ourselves an interpretive disservice as we additionally rob ourselves of access to the richness of the Neoplatonic philosphico-theological project when we content ourselves with concluding that the aforementioned picture of "World Soul" (1) refers to some invisible realm that the Neoplatonist calls the World Soul (this makes of World Soul some kind of big, invisible Kansas), or when we content ourselves with concluding (paying actual heed to the Neoplatonic reminder about the non-spatiotemporal nature of their endeavor) that "World Soul" (2) refers to nothing even vaguely spatial or temporal (which makes of World Soul a complete mystery). While this second approach is far better

than the first (in that it pays proper heed to what the Neoplatonists urge us to keep in mind as we read their texts), it is not helpful at interpretively orienting us to Neoplatonism, as it proceeds entirely negatively: It states what the levels are not (viz. they are not "invisible spatiotemporal things") without giving us a sense of what this talk of "levels" might actually be about.

Instead, then, of describing the aforementioned picture of cosmic levels as "referring to cosmic levels, but not in the spatiotemporal sense," we are – in light of what we have already seen in Chapter 8 – better served to say that the aforementioned picture of "cosmic levels" is actually not best thought of as referring to (or being "about") cosmic levels at all. I have argued in particular that these "cosmic levels" are apophatic responses to divine paradox, and that they expressly open onto prescriptions for human living. In this respect, we may say that "cosmic levels" are about God and human being.

9.3 ON HUMAN BEING: NEOPLATONIC COSMO-ONTOLOGY AS TRANSCENDENTAL GROUNDING

We have provided a methodological reappraisal of the very nature of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology from a set of writings about layers and levels, to a living engagement with God and with human being. Turning to human being, we might perhaps view the entire Neoplatonic endeavor of cosmo-ontology as a transcendental project designed to ground the very possibility for living a meaningful human life. Consider, that is, seeing Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – in all its talk of levels, layers, emanations, and the like – as a twin *transcendental reflection* on theology and human subjectivity, aiming to discern what must be true of God and of human being if we are to be able to live in the world with meaning – a sense of "meaning" that of course depends on further Neoplatonic sensibilities about the importance of cultivating ethical and epistemological perfection (the prescriptive end goal of the Neoplatonic Return addressed in Chapters 3 and 8). Understood as "transcendental reflections," the Neoplatonic "cosmic maps" of layers and levels are best understood as engaging what must be true about God and ourselves if we are to live meaningfully toward virtue and knowledge. We may in this sense describe the Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as "transformative" in much the same sense that we may say Kant's philosophy of religion (in his teachings on God and soul) is "transformative," namely that it transforms readers' starting philosophico-theological orientations and opens up transformed (in the sense of previously unavailable) possibilities for living, laying out some of the ways we must think in order to live a meaningful human life.[2]

We might speak too of what I have in mind in phenomenological terms: The Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology highlights (and in this sense encourages) a basic set of phenomenological "feels" or orientations – some basic new starting ways of experiencing one's own being-in-the-world so as to enable meaningful (i.e., ethical and wise) living. As a structural point of reference for a phenomenology that transcendentally lays out a condition for human life, we might consider Levinas' phenomenological experience of self as "self given through the Other" as a key transcendental ground for human subjectivity (and as such, we might say, for meaningful human living).[3] While the details and implications of these systems are different, it is important to consider the possibility that in aiming to provide grounds for living, they are both rooted in transcendental and phenomenological motivations with implications for questions of human subjectivity.

Seen as an exploration of divine and human preconditions for the very possibility of meaningful living, Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology – and in particular, his metaphysics of matter and teachings on Divine *Irāda* – can be understood primarily as exploring and encouraging basic phenomenological "feels" for being in the world – basic theological and existential orientations (we might say, "felt relations to God and self"), which are, for Ibn Gabirol, preconditions for living a meaningful human life. It is here that we may point precisely to the human orientations of dependency, receptivity, fragility, and desire that we have seen in Chapter 8 to arise from the very contours of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontological picture. In her comportment to reality, the human being is to experience herself in and through the interwoven orientations of dependency, receptivity (as fragility), and desire. There are clearly strong ethical implications in this Neoplatonic insight that deserve fuller attention: It is worth thinking very carefully about what it would mean – personally, socially, and politically – for us to treat "receptivity and fragility" as grounding human virtues, or, alternatively, as grounding phenomenological orientations. (I hope in future work to explore Ibn Gabirol's unique emphasis on "receptivity and fragility" both in connection with Aristotelian virtue theory and along different lines, in connection with the receptive nature of Levinasian ethics-as-first-philosophy.)

9.4 HUMAN BEING, HUMAN TRANSFORMATION: PERSPECTIVES ON IMAGINATION, MYTH, EXEGESIS, SOUND-MEANING, MEDITATION, AND BEYOND

We have seen that a radical methodological shift in how we approach Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is needed if we are to do justice to the Neoplatonic project – and if we are to find Ibn Gabirol's voice. We cannot simply go

about talking of Ibn Gabirol's "layers" and "levels" without a thoroughgoing reappraisal of what these terms are about, if not strange see-through realms (invisible Kansases in the sky-above-the-sky). In this respect, I have shown how we might move from invisible Kansases to a set of explorations about God and human being that, furthermore, can be seen as transcendentally grounding meaningful living.

In this section, I wish to provide a broader set of considerations for how we might see – even aside from the particular details of my apophatic-prescriptive-transcendental recommendation – the clear concern with human being and human transformation at the core of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology.

In the broadest sense, consider the prominence within a range of Pythagorean, Platonic, and Neoplatonic contexts of the idea that the microcosm mirrors the macrocosm. A quick look to the *Timaeus* reveals the sense in which the human being is – for whole traditions of Pythagoreans, Platonists, and Neoplatonists – a miniature reflection of her cosmic home. A quick look to Genesis 1 further reveals the *imitatio dei* sense of that teaching undoubtedly at play in a thinker like Ibn Gabirol. Not only does Ibn Gabirol view himself qua writer as a miniature creator (as we will see later in this chapter), but in the spirit of broader Pythagorean, Platonic, and Jewish traditions, he also sees all humans as at once reflections of broader cosmic and divine realities – and, in the spirit of Neoplatonic Return – as prescriptively charged to more and more fully live up to our truest roots through right action and through perfected knowing (a set of ideas presented in Ibn Gabirol through a unique call to living in the world dependently, receptively, and as always moved in and through a desire for something of the goodness of God). In this sense, we may say that talk about cosmic thises and thats is a call to ethical and epistemological transformation – it is a call to our tripart quest for wisdom, goodness, and God.

Supporting further the sense that a Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology speaks to the nature of human being and to the space of human transformation, consider Pierre Hadot's reflection on Plotinus:

> . . . the spiritual world was not for him . . . a supercosmic place from which he was separated. . . . Neither was it an original state . . . lost. . . . Rather [it] was nothing other than the self at its deepest level. . . . It could be reached immediately, by returning within oneself.[4]

Here, as in his corpus of writings more broadly, Hadot teaches us about the spiritual exercise at the heart of Neoplatonic (and other ancient) writings. For Hadot, the Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology is part of a self-reflective journey probing the depths of human selfhood. In this regard, it is not insignificant to note that whereas many texts on Plotinus have chapter headings like

"Intellect," "Soul," "cosmos," "hypostases," and the like, Hadot's treatment of Plotinus is divided into chapters with titles like "love" and "gentleness."[5] In this spirit, we can begin to appreciate Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontological writings as primarily giving to voice a quest for self-transformation – a quest for ethical and epistemological wholeness. We may speak in this regard of the transformational capacity of Ibn Gabirol's texts.

Thinking about Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology along these lines, we may also broadly consider a range of symbolic, mythopoetic, and other transformational analyses of the text–reader relation. Highlighting the transformational capacity of texts in his study of the *Qur'ān*, Michael Sells, emphasizing the unique nature of the *Qur'ān* as a recited text, shifts our focus from information to transformation and directs us to the actual sounds of the Quranic recitations.[6] Drawing our attention to the lyrical power of the recited Quranic "sound visions,"[7] Sells elucidates the *Qur'ān* as enacting a lived *dhikr* (remembrance): Embedded in the flow of the text, the reader (listener) enacts a "lyrical meditation and existential confrontation"[8] in which the content of the text (e.g., claims about past or future times, revelations, promises, rewards, and/or punishments) takes on a present immediacy with transformative impact.[9] Illustrating a similar sentiment – though linked less to hearing and more to vision and thought – Sara Rappe describes the "Neoplatonic hermeneutic" as "the use of specific kinds of language – traditional narratives, mathematical symbolism, visionary exercises, divine names and aporetic discourses" in order "to entice" the reader into a new reality,[10] as Aaron Hughes writes in like spirit of the transformational aspect of texts enacting transformation through the power of dialogue[11] and mimesis.[12] In his study of Biblical and Rabbinic writings, Michael Fishbane reflects on the transformative nature of scriptural, midrashic, and mystical writings, emphasizing the overall mythic space enacted by these texts and the creation of transformational spaces for their readers.[13] In like spirit, reflecting on *ta'wīl* – the Arabic term for "interpretation" rooted in the idea of origins – Henry Corbin also explores the existentially transformational impact that is possible in certain kinds of textual encounter. Looking at the symbolic literary writings of Avicenna, Corbin reflects on the transformative power of cosmology. Reminding us of the link between exegetically engaging with words and acts of self-awakening transformation, Corbin draws attention to what is key to him about Avicenna's cosmological imagery:

> . . . the *truth* of the *ta'wīl* rests upon the simultaneous *reality* of the mental operation in which it consists and of the psychic Event that gives rise to it. The *ta'wīl* of texts supposes the *ta'wīl* of the soul: the soul cannot restore, return the text to its truth, unless it too returns it *its* truth (*ḥaqīqat*). . . . Reciprocally,

> the soul takes its departure, accomplishes the *ta'wīl* of its true being, by basing itself on a text – text of a book or cosmic text . . . [14]

For Corbin, an analysis of Avicenna's "visionary recitals" yields the insight that "the soul takes its departure, accomplishes the [transformation] of its true being . . . basing itself on a text . . . "[15] Following on this sensitivity to the power of text, it is important – when reading certain texts, including texts of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology – to not miss the transformational resonance of seemingly temporal claims about the distant past or distant future. As Abraham Joshua Heschel reminds us in his reflections on the timeless transformational value of the Sabbath,

> Creation, we are taught, is not an act that happened once upon a time, once and forever. The act of bringing the world into existence is a continuous process . . . Every instant is an act of creation . . . ,[16]

a point drawn open in Elliot Wolfson's consideration of the "timeswerve" and "hermeneutics of reversibility."[17] In Heschel's reminder that teachings on the cosmic event of creation are actually more than claims about a cosmic event, in Wolfson's reminder of the "telescopic collapsibility" and "panoramic opening" of time, and in Corbin's reminder that Avicenna's texts about a cosmic landscape are actually more than texts about a cosmic landscape, we find a tacit invitation to a rather bold methodological approach to cosmology seen too in Rappe's insight that Neoplatonic hermeneutics "is the ability to read not into the past but into the present."[18] In all of these considerations, we find an invitation to boldly analyze the meaning of texts of Neoplatonic cosmology so that they are more than just a story of a cosmic origin from a faraway time and more than just a story about cosmic space in a faraway place: They are about our own capacity for transformational awakening with creativity, through understanding, and into virtue.

Emphasizing the blurring between the merely informational and actively transformational nature of texts, we might turn too to Elliot Wolfson's extensive work on the nature and role of imagination – a key faculty at play (alongside intellect) in the Neoplatonic cosmo-ontological vision of cosmic layers and levels. Turning to just a single insight, we learn the following:

> The function of the imagination is to say one thing in terms of another and thereby conjoin that which is inarticulate and that which is verbally circumscribed within a semantic field. Imagination is the faculty through which one opens the boundaries of the phenomenological horizon by producing symbols that express the inexpressible in such ways that there is perfect agreement between the symbol and what is symbolized. The image

> is a diaphanous symbol through which the opaque reality shines. Hence it is appropriate to characterize the imagination hermeneutically, as it is first and foremost an agent of meaning in the production of symbols. Not only is the imagination not to be seen as subordinate to reason, as the medieval Aristotelians would have it, but it is elevated to a position of utmost supremacy; it is, in effect, the divine element of the soul that enables one to gain access to the realm of incorporeality through a process of symbolization, that is, a process of understanding that transcends – by hermeneutically transmuting – sensory data and rational concepts.[19]

Throughout a range of extensive and groundbreaking studies, Wolfson illuminates the nature and texture of imagination within Jewish mysticism and across a wide range of philosophical texts.[20] Bringing us to further insights about the imagination in the Neoplatonic context, Kevin Corrigan emphasizes the Plotinian awareness that

> what the mind cannot conceive, the imagination attempts to penetrate by image-experiment, exercise, and prayer,[21]

resulting in a situation at Enneads 5.8.9 in which

> the sensible cosmos is literally offered up, through a discursive thought infused with the light of imagination to be transformed from "a shining imagination of a sphere" into an all-inclusive intelligible cosmos.[22]

Helping us see the blur between symbolic referring and mythic transformation that arises from such imaginal contexts, Wolfson notes, in his study of Menachem Mendel Schneerson, that,

> In Schneerson's worldview, the meaning of events that transpire in history is to be ascertained through the prism of theosophic symbolism,[23]

a point that he draws out further by noting that in Schneerson's worldview, "there is no justification to impose a distinction between the "real" and "symbolic" worlds."[24] Deepening this insight through a reflection on the nature of metaphor, and reflecting too further on the telescoping notion of a place-beyond-place within the contours of the Kabbalistic imaginal, Wolfson offers this reflection:

> The blurring of the ontological distinction that ensues from crossing the bridge that turns out not to have been a bridge, entering a gate that is no gate, is the task of poetic metaphor. According to the enigmatic comment from a section of zoharic literature marked as belonging to the *Tosefta* stratum, "the bond of the pure bond [*quṭra de-quṭra dakhya*] ascends within

> [*saliq le-go le-go*] until the place [*atar*], the house of dwelling [*beit motva*], is not found. This place is no place [*ha-hu atar law atar*], it is not found above or below" . . . [25]

Expressly noting the blur between the poetic elaboration on a cosmic map of something "out there" and the subjective reality of human being (as an "inner" experience), Wolfson notes that "on the mystical path, contemplative ascent [through emanating theosophic layers] is at the same time turning inward."[26]

Returning to our current context of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology (in Ibn Gabirol and beyond) in terms of the vivid space of layers and levels it creates, we might say that we are met here too with an imaginal space that blurs the "real and symbolic" worlds. In this sense, the Neoplatonist is not describing a distant time or a distant realm as much as she is opening onto a new capacity for lived human experience. Seen in this respect, the transformational nature of Neoplatonism might be seen too on analogy with the space created through religious myth and ritual. Reflecting in particular on religion – and on the difference between map and territory in that context – Jonathan Z. Smith notes the following:

> What we study when we study religion is one mode of constructing worlds of meaning, worlds within which men find themselves and in which they choose to dwell. What we study is the passion and drama of man discovering the truth of what it is to be human. . . . Religion is the quest, within the bounds of the human, historical condition, for the power to manipulate and negotiate ones [sic] "situation" so as to have "space" in which to meaningfully dwell. It is the power to relate ones [sic] domain to the plurality of environmental and social spheres in such a way as to guarantee the conviction that ones [sic] existence "matters." Religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence. What we study when we study religion is the variety of attempts to map, construct and inhabit such positions of power through the use of myths, rituals and experiences of transformation.[27]

Smith invites us to consider that religion is about the construction of meaningful spaces for human living. We may say, in this respect, that when we encounter religious details of, say, anthropomorphized moons, we are uncharitable readers if we do not treat those details in terms of "man discovering the truth of what it is to be human." Turning to our case of Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology, we can say in like fashion that when we encounter the details of Neoplatonic layers and levels, we are uncharitable readers if we do not treat

those details in terms of the Neoplatonist's "discovering the truth of what it is to be human."[28]

BY DRAWING IN THIS SECTION ON A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT THEORIES of myth, symbol, meditation, mimesis, imagination, exegesis, and transformation, we have arrived at a number of reasons (beyond just the particular details of my apophatic reading in Chapter 8 or my transcendental analysis earlier in this chapter) to resist describing Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology as mere "cosmic cartography," and to see it instead as a living engagement with – and attempt to create a transformational space for – human being.

Returning to our reminder that "map is not territory," we may conclude not only that the "cosmic map" is not itself the cosmos, but that the "cosmic map" is not so much *about cosmic layers* as it is *about human being*. And returning to my own particular apophatic-prescriptive-transcendental reading in Chapters 8 and 9, we may say in particular that it is *about God and human being* in the service of grounding the possibility for meaningful human living.

In all of these explorations, we may say too that, in his very construction of the cosmo-ontological space, the Neoplatonist "creates new worlds" with words.

9.5 WRITING AS CREATION: COSMO-ONTOLOGY AS CREATING WORLDS WITH WORDS

> . . . by means of the twenty-two letters,
> He stretched out fire at the uppermost border . . .
> It's He who brought forth Being from Nothing . . . [29]

> A poem of glory and power I'll offer my Maker
> who set the heavens on high with his span,
> because he created the language and mouth of man
> and gave them the crown of honor and splendor . . . [30]

> Truth seekers, turn to my poems
> and you who are ignorant, learn:
> they'll teach you hidden wisdom . . . [31]

Reflecting overtly on the linguistic aspect of God's relation to the world, on the sacred nature of human language as a gift from God, and on the importance

of his own poems, Ibn Gabirol envisions a strong link between the act of writing and the act of creation. Emphasizing the Creator God as Himself a wordsmith, Ibn Gabirol draws our attention to the *Sēfer Yeẓīrah*[32] imagery of God's creating the world through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as he goes on in the *Fons Vitae* to highlight God's creation-by-word in a way that conforms to the spirit of that work's focus on matter and the Divine *Irāda*:

> . . . *al-Irāda* is the agent, viz. the scribe (*al-kātib*), and form the act, viz. the script (*al-kẖaṭṭ*), and matter is their subject, viz. the paper (*aṣ-ṣaḥīfa*) and tablet (*wal-lawḥ*) . . . [33]

Given all we've seen so far, Ibn Gabirol is here describing the downward unfolding of reality into more and more manifest enformation in terms of the writing of more and more words onto "paper and tablet." (While the image of the tablet might be seen in connection with the Islamic *lawḥ al-maḥfūz*,[34] the image of paper might perhaps be thought of as a downward-unfurling scroll if we want to connect the image of paper and writing to our earlier emphasis on matter's referring to a higher cause in relation to lower reality.) Further elaborating on this idea in the *Fons Vitae* in a way that incorporates the unique details of his cosmo-ontology of matter and form, Ibn Gabirol speaks of God's Word[35] and goes on to correlate the pure grounding universal matter with voice (*vox*),[36] noting too that God's Word marks the coming together of voice, sound, and meaning – three elements that Ibn Gabirol correlates to "universal matter," "manifest forms," and "the hidden universal form which contains and sustains all other forms."[37]

Reflecting then on his own act of writing in the third poem at the start of this section, Ibn Gabirol as wordsmith sees himself as nothing less than a creator of worlds in the manner of God's own creation. Looking to Ibn Gabirol's own Neoplatonic sense that the world of humans microcosmically reflects the macrocosmic structure of reality,[38] we can say that Ibn Gabirol mirrors the Divine Creator: Ibn Gabirol's own noun+verb phrases are to his creative act as the matter+form unfoldings are to God's cosmic composition, and the meaning that flows from Ibn Gabirol's own verbal craft can be said to parallel the mystery of the Divine *Irāda*, the source of cosmic meaning writ large.[39]

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HOW WE MIGHT TALK ABOUT IBN Gabirol's *poetic voice* as exerting a creative – and, in the sense of the preceding discussion, divine – power to "create worlds with words"; there are many discussions within the history of ideas on which we might draw to

highlight poetry in this sacred and creative light (including other poems by Ibn Gabirol in which he precisely highlights the divinely creative act of writing poetry per se).

But in light of what we have seen in our earlier discussion, we can also see why Ibn Gabirol in his role as metaphysician – in putting forth the most technical details of a complex cosmo-ontology – can be said to "create new worlds." Thinking in a variety of ways across the variety of different views we have seen in this chapter, we may say that Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology "creates a new world with words" for its reader by transcendentally grounding a meaningful human life, or by creating a mythic, imaginative, or mimetic space of transformation, conveying to the reader a microcosmic sense of herself as "imitation of the macrocosm" (or as "created in the image of God"), and, in so doing, transforming the reader through a prescriptive call to wisdom and goodness (and with it, as we have seen in the case of Ibn Gabirol, receptivity and fragility). We may say that cosmo-ontology "creates a new world" for its reader through its depiction of an ordered cosmos, which the reader must mindfully – or imaginatively – ascend layer by layer toward her own goal of self-ordering, arriving, as we have seen in Chapter 8, at a sense of dependency that leads to virtue. We may also say that in all of this, cosmo-ontology "creates a new world" for its reader by creating a reality in which (a la Heschel) "every instant is an act of creation" and in which the boundaries between symbolic and real dissolve. As for the nature of the transformation, we may envision its actual dynamic in a variety of ways: perhaps the transformation is brought about by the imagery per se of the symbolic or mythic space (in the spirit, as we have seen earlier, of what Corrigan calls "image-experiment," in the spirit of what Rappe describes as the "visionary exercises," in the mimetic sense described by Hughes, the mythic sense described by Fishbane, or the transformational space of imagination and "storytelling" described by Bland[40]); perhaps it is brought about by the repetitions per se of that imagery (if not, a la Sells, the sound of the words themselves – or with Bruckstein[41] the shape of the writing on the page, or with Wasserstrom[42] some secretive manner of conveying the teachings in question); or perhaps (a la Corbin) it is brought about by the text's imagery pulling the reader into repeated acts of exegesis. And perhaps in all of this we must reflect, with E. R. Wolfson, on the sense in which language becomes an "end in itself by no longer designating anything or giving voice to anyone."[43] These are all different insights (each deserving more in-depth consideration), and they range from the more physiological/psychological/meditative sense that the text precipitates an auditory or visual act that can transform the reader; to the mythopoetic sense that the text creates a space for phenomenological transformation (perhaps exclusively as a function of imagination, and perhaps as a function of

imagination-with-intellect); to the apophatic sense that a kind of human seeing (through language) is only possible when language is used to express its own limits (and that, as such, it is only in a "gaze whose center is a blindness" that we can see);[44] to at least five senses overtly linked to discursive (and as such, non-apophatic) acts of intellect. With Hadot, we might speak of the discursive activity of philosophy as itself a "spiritual exercise" able to change lives;[45] with Rappe, we might speak of the text transforming us through a particular hermeneutic including an exercise of mind through aporetic discourse; with Corbin, we might speak of the text transforming us by engaging our minds in acts of exegesis; with my own apophatic-prescriptive view we might speak of the text transforming our orientation by transcendentally specifying grounds for living;[46] and in all of these, we may speak of the text transforming us intellectually by prescriptively inviting us to aspire toward wisdom – and with it, toward goodness.[47]

In any or all of these senses, we may speak of the Neoplatonic cosmo-ontologist – in his very act of transforming self through the imaginative and intellectual acts of space-making – as a creator. It is in this sense that we may return to Ibn Gabirol's own emergence as a "creator of worlds with words." While Ibn Gabirol's identity as a microcosmic creator can be seen in his role as poet, we can now go a step further and see how it is qua cosmo-ontologist – in the very crafting of the most minute and technical details of the *Fons Vitae*'s metaphysics of matter and Divine *Irāda* – that Ibn Gabirol emerges as the creator par excellence. It is in his *Fons Vitae* cosmo-ontology and its Theology of Desire most of all that Ibn Gabirol "creates a new world" in the manner of God's own creation.

> When the roots [of love] are deeply set in the heart, the branches manifest themselves upon the tongue . . . [48]

10

Embroidering the Hidden

. . . rīqēm temūnatī . . .
. . . he embroidered my likeness . . .
– Ibn Gabirol[1]

We end this initial inquiry into Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire with a reflection on the ever-descending enformation of matter within Ibn Gabirol's Great Chain of Being as a delicate embroidering of the hidden. We have seen the conceptual link between matter and nothingness in our discussions of matter as a marker of preexistence, in our analysis in Section 7.7 of creation as a "splitting" of the material Grounding Element to reveal manifest being, and in our emphasis on pure matter's stemming from and mirroring the hiddenness of God's ownmost Essence. Matter is "the hidden." As for the image of embroidery, returning to an earlier poetic ode to the divine source (see Subsection 8.5.2) we find that:

terem heyōtī ḥasdikha bi-'anī, ha-sam li-yēsh 'ayīn ve-himẓīanī
mī hū asher rīqēm temūnatī ū-mī 'aẓmī bi-khūr yaẓaq ve-hiqbīanī
. . .
'amnam 'anī ḥōmer bi-qerev yadkha; 'atah 'asītanī, 'emet, lō 'anī . . . [2]

before the very being of me i held the grace of you
you who have brought void (*'ayīn*, אין) to reality (*yēsh*),
and me in its fold
who embroidered (*rīqēm*) my likeness
and forged dry my furnaced core
. . .
verily, I am matter (*ḥōmer*) in your hands, and you, not I, my maker . . .

Pointing to the pure material source through the language of *'ayin* (אין, the term for "the nothing" in his *Keter Malkhūt* poem; see Section 7.7), and to

lower corporeal matter through the language of *ḥōmer*, Ibn Gabirol describes the process of enformation with the Hebrew term "*rīqēm*," the emphatic form of the Hebrew verb *raqam*, with the meanings of "to form," "to shape," "to create," but also "to embroider."[3] In its Hebrew root (RQM), the very idea of formation is brought into immediate play with the image of embroidery (*riqmah*). In his vision of the thundering opening of divine creativity – the "splitting open of the nothing" – Ibn Gabirol is helped through the contours of Hebrew language to an act of divine embroidering. In this spirit, we may say that God, in the creation, comes now to adorn the expectancy of the as-of-yet nothing with delicate handmade vestments, vestments that, as it were, bring the hidden subject into manifest light.[4] This embroidery, like any other, starts from a point that is itself an essential nothingness and then, gaining ever more complexity with each entwining of thread against thread, manifests itself as a panorama of vivid texture and breathtaking design. It is the emergence of the finite real from within the limitless expectancies of the desire-to-be – itself the desire for something of God's goodness in which existence itself is grounded.

In his creative disclosure, God is Ibn Gabirol's "*yesōkhēkh ha-ʿaẓamīm*" (the one who layers over essences).[5] Considering God through our image of embroidery, we may say that He is, as a creative embroidering source, the master manifester, the He who unveils manifest being from its concealed pre-manifest hiddenness (*ha-sam li-yēsh 'ayīn*),[6] the He who sets forth His own Desire-to-Be into the world, leading Him to break forth from His own Essence to the preexistent Grounding Element, and from the preexistent Grounding Element to the unfolding of the myriad "somethings" of actual being.

. . . he embroidered my likeness . . .

In all of this, Ibn Gabirol's God emerges as the He who threads forth my very likeness, and with it the entirety of being from its not-yet-existent desire-to-be. Coaxing the anticipatory expectancy of matter into formation, He emerges – in the guise of Divine *Irāda* and in the guise of Divine Wisdom as Word – as the fountain of life.

It is in this sense that we may envision the very act of creation, as well as the very fact of createdness, as *riqmah*, or embroidery: In the opening of God onto matter, and matter onto form, we have the very unfolding of the nothing into the tapestry of the actual, the giving way of an expectant desire-to-be toward the fullness and texture of the real found most fully in the human actualization of wisdom and goodness. The creative moment of divine

creation here emerges as a delicate threading through in which an expectant nothingness (as a desire-to-be, which is itself a desire for something of God's goodness) gives rise to the manifest. Thus, we may speak of Ibn Gabirol's vision in terms of a cosmic embroidery, a delicate enthreading of God into being, of matter into form, and of human reality toward wisdom, goodness, and God.

10.1 EMBROIDERING THE HIDDEN I: RETHINKING CREATION

We may speak of creation in the context of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire as an *embroidering of the hidden* in two interrelated senses.

On the one hand, we may envision God bringing to manifest life His own hiddenness, giving voice (or thread, as it were) to His own expectant Desire-to-Be, as a Desire-for-Otherness. In this sense, God's creative process is an embroidering of His own hiddenness, in His own entry into Otherness. Here "the hidden" is God and the "embroidering" is the Divine *irādic*/erotic unfolding-as-enforming of God's pre-being (His essential Desire-to-Be) into being. Recalling Ibn Gabirol's own identification of God's own "first moment" qua hidden Essence and "second moment" qua active enformer (variously through the images of Divine Wisdom and Divine *Irāda*), we encounter the Paradox of Divine Unity (God's essential hidden unity alongside His active encounter with being) in terms of a complex "embroidering of the hidden."

On the other hand, we may also speak of the Great Chain of Being itself as an "embroidering of the hidden." Here, the "hidden" refers not to God but to the Grounding Element, the preexistent and per se existent material ground of being born of God's own Essence. Here "the hidden" is the Grounding Element (the pure material kernel), and the "embroidery" is, as above, the Divine *Irādic* enforming of being into increasing plurality and growing otherness.

In either case, we may speak of creation itself as *the embroidering into manifest being of that hidden desire-to-be* by the delicate unfolding of the Divine *Irāda*, inviting Otherness as He threads open the nothing into the manifest field of reality as we know it, bringing us in like spirit to manifest our own grounding desire through our own pursuit of wisdom and goodness.

10.2 EMBROIDERING THE HIDDEN II: RETHINKING METAPHYSICS (CREATION OF WORLDS WITH WORDS): A CLOSING WORD ON COSMO-ONTOLOGY

In Section 9.5, we have emphasized Ibn Gabirol's own creative identification of writing and creation. Here we may simply end by reflecting on how in his "creation of new worlds" through his works of cosmo-ontology, Ibn Gabirol, in the

very method and aims of his craft of metaphysics, "embroiders the hidden": By threading noun to verb in a delicate act of apophatic disclosure, Ibn Gabirol the philosophical wordsmith sets the stage for living with direction. Taking the reader from her starting expectancy (the hidden nothing), Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* masterfully crafts open an "embroidery" of meaningful human living, a textured picture through which we are invited to live only and always with a desire for wisdom, goodness, and God, and only and always through a spirit of a fragile and dependent receptivity.

Appendix
Matter as God-Born Cradle of Life: A Sampling of Matter Imagery in Ibn Gabirol's Milieu

What follows is not intended to be comprehensive in scope or in detail. It is intended, rather, to give a sense of some of the traditions that might have had some bearing on Ibn Gabirol's unique Theology of Desire and his sense of a supernal material core to all existence born of God's own Essence that marks (albeit, as we have seen, apophatically) a material preexistence as the veritable cradle of life.

A1. Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic Hylomorphism: Plato's Participation Revised[1]

One way to think of Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic levels of reality (although Ibn Gabirol does not himself theorize it in this way overtly) is in terms of his Neoplatonizing the Platonic notion of participation. For Plato, participation is in a form, and one especially high form – participated in by all – is the form of Being. For the Neoplatonist, as for Ibn Gabirol, the focus on the form is replaced (or amplified) by the focus on a Universal Intellect that contains all forms (theorized as a "plurality-in-unity" in which the forms are telescoped one inside the next as one). Imagine the conceptual implication of this Neoplatonic focus on Intellect (versus a Platonic focus on the form of Being) for a participation theory. If we think of it along these lines carefully, we will find that the Neoplatonic model can quite organically give rise to the kind of hylomorphic focus we find in Ibn Gabirol: In a Neoplatonic Intellect, all the forms are "in" Intellect, a notion that can easily be seen as emphasizing Intellect's material role as sustainer. This would mean that the move from Platonic talk of forms to Neoplatonic talk of Intellect organically invites a new focus on the role of a pure supernal matter (viz. the matter of Intellect by which it receives or holds all the forms). This immediately transforms the

Platonic concept of participating in form/s to the concept of participating in matter (the receiver) (or, we might say, participating in matter as the means to participating in forms). And so, whereas for Plato all things participate in the form of Being, for Ibn Gabirol all things are grounded in – or have as their underlying "true substrate" – the substance of Intellect, which is to say they participate in matter (viz. the spiritual matter of pure intellect) plus forms. (See A6 on "intelligible matter" in Plotinus, and see Chapter 6 for a treatment of how Ibn Gabirol further envisions the Great Chain of Being in terms of "layers of matter," including Universal Intellect's emergence as the material Grounding Element plus the form of Wisdom that itself contains all forms.)

A2. PLATO AND PYTHAGOREANISM: FROM TIMAEAN RECEPTACLE AS CHAOS TO NICOMACHUS' RECEPTACLE AS DIVINE GROUND AND SOURCE

In contrast to the previously discussed sense of Intellect as a receptacle for forms (itself, in the case of Ibn Gabirol, pointing to the material Grounding Element as sustaining source of the form of Wisdom), the Pythagorean-inspired *Timaeus* speaks of the Receptacle as the chaotic foil to reason, with reason – and with it being, wisdom, and goodness – associated with the Demiurge–Paradigm partnership. Imposing reasoned order onto the inherently disordered and recalcitrant Receptacle, the Demiurge aligns with the intelligible truths of the Paradigm (and, in this way, with being), while the Receptacle aligns with disorder (and, in this way, with the lowly realm of becoming, not being). While one ought to be wary of simplistically identifying the Receptacle with matter per se,[2] it is clear that the Receptacle – taken as matter or otherwise – demarcates something completely at odds with the sense of matter in Ibn Gabirol. Marking the lowest – not the highest – mode of (non-)being in the Timaean universe, the Receptacle stands in polar opposition to Ibn Gabirol's exalted God-born pure material Grounding Element at the core of all being – itself the marker of love born of the hidden Divine Essence and drawn forward into all things by the Divine Desire.

There is, however, neo-Pythagorean precedent for associating Receptacle imagery with sublime reality in a way that does conceptually mirror Ibn Gabirol's sense of a material Grounding Element closest to God's own essence. Turning to Nicomachus of Gerasa's *Arithmetica Theologoumena* as well as his *Introduction to Arithmetic*, we find an express connection between God and matter as Receptacle of all reality, and an express sense too of matter's priority to, and supremacy over, form.

Playing with the image of the Timaean Receptacle, but envisioning it now as the divine repository of all reality, Nicomachus associates God with matter in his *Arithmetica Theologoumena*[3]:

> There is a certain plausibility in their also calling [the Monad] "matter" and even "receptacle of all" (*pandoxea*), since . . . it is capable of containing all principles; for it is in fact productive and disposed to share itself with everything.[4]

And, reminding us that God is the monad, we learn additionally that:

> God coincides with the monad since he is seminally everything which exists.[5]

In Nichomachus' association of the Monad with matter, and God with Monad, we find a direct link between God and matter. God, in his monadic capacity, emerges as the matter-as-Receptacle of all reality – the source and container of the infinite forms. In this context, matter is the divine Receptacle that – contra the *Timaeus* Receptacle – marks a moment of unity and sameness in all being, whereas forms (which in the *Timaeus* context mark the unity and order of reason) mark the chaos and recalcitrance of Otherness and Difference. (See Chapter 7 for a reminder of Ibn Gabirol's own sense of the material Grounding Element as the unifying force and source of sameness – not difference – in all things.)

Turning to the less overtly theological context of the *Introduction to Arithmetic*, we find Nicomachus identifying the Monadic source not only as limiting form, but as a material receptacle for form. In this latter sense, the Monad emerges ontologically and functionally prior to form as the repository (or receptacle) for form. Here the divine principle of Monad may be likened to the Divine Nous as "divine Receptacle" for all forms (themselves understood as Divine *Logoi*, or seminal ideas).[6] In this respect, the Divinity is the matter that underlies – and gives rise to – all reality.

While Ibn Gabirol does not identify God as matter, he does speak of the material Grounding Element as that which arises from God's own Essence and, as we have seen too, as that which – in its hidden fullness and motion of desire – marks that which is most divine in all things. (We also might note a God–matter link in the Stoic notion of a divine *pneuma*, as well as in Plotinus' notion of intelligible matter to which we turn later in this Appendix.)

Mirroring the receptacle imagery (as a description of higher – not lower – reality, although in the case of Ibn Gabirol not God per se), Ibn Gabirol directly describes the pure matter as the "*sustentatrix diversitatis*" that is "*receptibilis omnium formarum.*"[7] Further mirroring this talk of matter in his talk of Intellect (see Chapter 6 for a reminder of how Intellect is the

material Grounding Element plus the form of Wisdom), Ibn Gabirol goes on to describe the unity of Intellect in receptacle-like terms as well: "*et in hoc est firmior ratio, quod unitas est retentrix omnia et sustinens omnia.*"[8]

While we cannot know for certain the extent of Ibn Gabirol's Pythagorean influence, we know that Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic* was translated into Arabic as early as the ninth century and then again later by Thābit ibn Qurra,[9] and that it seems to have exerted influence on the *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā'*[10] and Saadya Gaōn.[11] We find suggestions of Pythagorean influence evidenced in Ibn Gabirol's use of numbers within his cosmology, including his use of the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in interplay with the ideas of Limit and Limitlessness.[12] Furthermore, at *Fons Vitae* 4.11 Ibn Gabirol treats 3 as the "*radix*" of all things – a claim that perhaps relates to Nicomachus' own identification of 3 as the first "limited multitude" – and hence, the first number (as opposed, for example, to the *Ikhwān*'s identification of 2 as the first number).[13]

A3. Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic Hylomorphism: Aristotelian Substance Revised (and the Possibility of a Pseudo-Empedocles–Aristotle Link)[14]

Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics are obviously influenced by Aristotle's talk of substance and its nine categories. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think of Ibn Gabirol as an Aristotelian in much of his use of the term "substance."

To confuse things, Ibn Gabirol does use the term "substance" in an at least somewhat Aristotelian sense when he talks of corporeal substance – the substance that, a la Aristotle, receives the nine categories. Ibn Gabirol argues that this substance is first enformed by the form of corporeity, or quantity (one approach among many ancient and medieval interpretations of Aristotle, even if not actually Aristotle's view).[15] Already moving away, however, from anything even loosely Aristotelian and manifesting a more Platonic impulse, this substance is seen by Ibn Gabirol as "lower substance" marking the lowest extremity of reality. Continuing on this Platonic move away from Aristotle, Ibn Gabirol's main talk of substance refers, contra Aristotle, to "simple substances," by which he means the Ps. Empedoclean Grounding Element, and the Neoplatonic Universal Intellect and Soul(s), understood by Ibn Gabirol as the joining of supernal material Grounding Element to spiritual forms (a "joining" that is itself understood by Ibn Gabirol, as we have seen, as the manifesting of pure matter downward into greater manifestation within the Great Chain of Being). Theorized as the intermediaries between God and lower substance, each of these "simple spiritual substances" is devoid of any of the nine categories plaguing "lower" corporeal (i.e., Aristotelian) substance.

We may begin to understand this sense of substance by noting that with other Platonists and Neoplatonists, and deviating from Aristotelian sensibilities, Ibn Gabirol envisions a "higher realm" as that which is most real. However, whereas standard Platonisms identify forms as the truest realities within that realm, Ibn Gabirol adopts a hylomorphic (but by no means Aristotelian) sensibility in his conception of the higher realities: unlike Aristotle, for whom only items in the corporeal realm are form+matter composites, for Ibn Gabirol the realities in the "higher realm" (a Platonic idea avoided by Aristotle) are also described in terms of form+matter (itself, as we have seen, a unique way of theorizing the ordinary downward flow of Neoplatonic emanation). Ibn Gabirol's use of hylomorphic language to describe a "higher realm" turns a number of standard Aristotelian, Platonic, and Neoplatonic sensibilities on their heads, including the notion of substance.

Speaking of substance in the sense of "true substance" separate from (and higher than) corporeal substance, Ibn Gabirol, in line with other Platonisms and contra Aristotle, is referring to a "higher realm." However, unlike Plato, Ibn Gabirol focuses (with Ps. Empedoclean tradition) on a material Grouding Element, and (with Neoplatonists) on the substances of Intellect and Soul(s). This in turn leads to a focus on the reality of all forms "in" the simple spiritual substances (of Grounding Element, Intellect, and Soul), as opposed to a Platonic focus on forms per se (see Section A1 of this Appendix). In this sense, the spiritual simples are primarily not the forms (as we might expect in Plato), but (in Ps. Empedoclean and Neoplatonic spirit) the Grounding Element, the Universal Intellect, and Soul(s). Relatedly, unlike other Platonisms, Ibn Gabirol's higher realm is not theorized as a realm of forms but as a realm of form and matter (again see the treatment in Section A1 of this Appendix on how the talk of Intellect leads us to the talk of forms "in" matter). This also means that with Aristotle, Ibn Gabirol employs a lot more hylomorphic talk than Platonists (albeit applied to a completely non-Aristotelian "higher realm").

In relating Aristotle's substance to themes in Ibn Gabirol, we might also note a possible Aristotelian tie-in to the elusive "Book of Five Substances" that Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera (the Hebrew translator of the *Fons Vitae*) mentions as part of the so-called Empedoclean tradition at play in Ibn Gabirol (see Section 4.3). As we noted (see Chapter 4, notes 26–31), the exact nature and authorship of such a text is unclear – even the name of the treatise is debated (it might be "Book of the Five Substances" or "Book of the Fifth Substance"). In this context we might consider Michael Frede's hypothesis that Book Lambda (XII) of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* existed for a time as a separate treatise, possibly under the title "On Substance."[16] Even though Frede

in no sense addresses the Ps. Empedoclean tradition, it seems worth thinking more about the possible impact of *Metaphysics* Lambda (XII) – circulating as a separate treatise called "On Substance" – as we continue to piece together what kind of Greek works might have been at play in a Ps. Empedoclean "Book of the Five Substances/Fifth Substance." After all, in *Metaphysics* Lambda, Aristotle not only mentions Empedocles by name but engages in a host of explorations in which Ps. Empedoclean Neoplatonists would definitely have been interested, such as the claim that God is the ultimate object of desire, as well as claims about the "topical" matter of eternal bodies. In speaking of matter vis-à-vis eternal and perfect celestial realities, *Metaphysics* Lambda might be seen as having opened a door for Ps. Empedoclean theorizing about grades of pure matter.

A4. MATTER IN ARISTOTLE

Aristotle talks of a variety of different sorts of matter – and talks of these matters in a variety of different ways – throughout his physical and metaphysical studies. It is hard enough to know exactly what Aristotle has in mind with all of his analyses of matter (as well as his analyses of substances, which rely on his analyses of matter), so it is difficult to evaluate what impact Aristotelian ideas of matter might have had on Ibn Gabirol.

The difficulty is that Aristotle seems to mean a lot of things by matter. Sometimes he talks of matter in terms of a material cause versus a formal cause – which seems to be more a reflection on a way of thinking about hylomorphic substances than the identification of any kind of underlying material substrate. Sometimes he does seem to be referring to a prime matter as a kind of underlying material substrate – as, for example, in his analysis at *Physics* I (a discussion that Simplicius – and traditions of other late ancient thinkers as well as medieval Muslim and Jewish philosophers – identify in terms of a pure material reality ["prime matter"] at the core of physical nature, and sometimes in terms of a first pure material reality itself followed upon by a second material reality of "body" at the core of physical nature).[17] And, while sometimes talking in ways that suggest the reality of a prime matter, Aristotle also seems to argue against the idea of prime matter as any kind of real "stuff," as can be seen, for example, in his taking earlier philosophers to task for thinking that matter needs to be a kind of stuff at the origin of all else.[18] Sometimes he suggests something like a prime matter as the ultimate substrate, sometimes he speaks of the proximate matter as the only relevant substrate, and other times still he speaks only of an individual hylomorphic reality, for example Socrates, as the only true substrate.[19] Sometimes he focuses on

matter as substance,[20] sometimes he focuses on form as substance,[21] and sometimes he focuses on form+matter as substance. Sometimes he talks of matter as a potency, sometimes as a something, and sometimes as a principle that constitutes a something. While it seems that genus is best identified with a formal cause, sometimes he talks of matter as genus. Sometimes he speaks of "genetic" matter (or matter for generation and corruption) and sometimes of "topical" matter (or matter for motion from one place to another), and this leads to one sense in which only physical, terrestrial bodies have matter (i.e., only terrestrial bodies have "genetic" matter, which is to say the potential to be or not be), and to another sense in which even some eternal realities have matter (i.e., even eternal celestial beings are spoken of in terms of "topical" matter, which is to say the potential to be in one place versus another place).[22] Sometimes in a conversation of matter, the operative distinction is between terrestrial matter (viz. "genetic" matter) and celestial matter (viz. "topical" matter), sometimes the operative distinction is between terrestrial and celestial matter on the one hand and prime matter on the other, sometimes the operative distinction is between prime and proximate matter, and sometimes the distinction is between any of those matters and "intelligible" (or "noetic") matter – an additional kind (or conceptual category) of matter that is perceptible only to intuition, and that Aristotle introduces in seemingly conflicting terms, once as a kind of matter that we need to bear in mind when we analyze number, and once as a kind of matter that plays a part in all definitions.[23] And sometimes, Aristotle talks of the material or potential intellect – a notion elaborated upon in great detail by commentary traditions, including Jewish and Muslim interpreters of *De Anima* 3.5 (in connection with the idea of "Active Intellect" and the relation of human being to material and active intellection).

And so, when Aristotle speaks of matter, we might be embarking on an analysis of constitution or causation or potency, in a real or conceptual sense, in a sense related to the stuff out of which something is composed or in a sense related to that by which something is caused, in a sense related to either prime matter or proximate matter, and in a sense related to substance, genus, or neither. Or we might be embarking on an analysis of the potential of something to be or not be; or we might be embarking on an analysis of the potential of something to be in one place or another;[24] or we might be embarking on an analysis of intelligible matter; or we might be embarking on an analysis of material intellect.

To be sure, in all of these (and more) ways of discussing matter, Aristotle at no point and in no way embraces anything like a principle of pure materiality at the core of even souls and intellects (as is the case for Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element). Nevertheless, it is plausible to conceive of any number of

his matter-analyses as having given way in later thinkers to reflections on a pure spiritual matter – not as a misunderstanding of Aristotle (it is worth emphasizing that on the topic of matter, Aristotle is himself far from clear), but as a springboarding off of one or more isolated matter claims in Aristotle. While a detailed consideration of this would take us beyond the scope of the current project, we might here note that (1) a discussion of "intelligible matter" – regardless of Aristotle's actual intent – can give rise to a consideration of a matter at the core of Intellect (as we will see is the case for Plotinus); (2) a discussion of "material intellect" – regardless of Aristotle's actual intent – can in like spirit give rise to a consideration of a matter at the core of Intellect; and (3) a discussion of "matter as genus"[25] – regardless of Aristotle's actual intent – can give rise to a sense of an "unspecified being" (as a material principle of sameness) at the heart of all things. While Aristotle is not the primary impulse behind Ibn Gabirol's apophatic-ethical commitment to a pure material Grounding Element at the core of the Great Chain of Being and at the core of the Theology of Desire, it is plausible to imagine how any number of Aristotle's claims about matter might be picked up and utilized (in utterly non-Aristotelian ways) as part of Ibn Gabirol's unique theological project.

That said, I return to my reminder in Chapter 2 that Aristotle's "prime matter" (if he indeed holds to such a notion) certainly is not a spiritual matter; it is simply a substrate underlying physical changes at the elemental level. Hence my decision to avoid translating Ibn Gabirol's material reality as "prime matter" (in spite of the use of "*materia prima*" throughout the twelfth-century Latin translation of his text). I return too to my reminder in Chapters 2, 8, and 9 that we are misreaders of the *Fons Vitae* cosmo-ontology if we primarily make of Ibn Gabirol a bad reader of Aristotle. (Relatedly, see Section A3 in this Appendix on Ibn Gabirol's use of the term "substance" in an entirely non-Aristotelian sense.)

A5. PLOTINUS AND INTELLIGIBLE MATTER

While we have presented the material Grounding Element as marking a point of departure between Ibn Gabirol and ordinary Neoplatonism, a closer look at Plotinus suggests that even ordinary Neoplatonism embraces a supernal principle of matter. Looking to Plotinus, we find a sense of "intelligible matter"[26] that conceptually converges with the Ps. Emepdoclean focus on a grade of pure matter between God and Intellect. In a few limited instances, Plotinus (wrestling, I would argue, with the Paradox of Divine Unity; see Chapter 8) moves away from his ordinary discourse on the One giving way to Intellect, and instead highlights the various "moments" within that move from One

to Intellect in part by speaking of "intelligible matter" (see *Enneads* 2.4.1–5, 5.4.2 and 5.5.4; see too 3.8.11 and 5.3.11).[27] In this context, Plotinus describes the "first moments" out of the One (i.e., the "first moments" of Intellect) in terms of a turning inward and upward – a material receptivity in Intellect to receive the overflow from the One, followed by a material grounding in Intellect for all forms (and for the subsequent overflow of all reality). Identifying this intelligible matter with Plotinus' talk of the "Dyad" (see Section A15 of this Appendix for related ideas in Greek thinking on *péras*/*ápeiron*), Rist outlines its role in two parts: (1) it is the effluence from the One whose return to the One generates the Second Hypostasis (Intellect); (2) it is the foundation (and source) of the Realm of Forms, and as such constitutes (with Forms) a Matter+Form reality. Rist also emphasizes that in its role as Dyad, the intelligible matter does not mark plurality, but rather the potency for plurality – a point that fits well with our own analysis (see Chapters 6 and 7) of Ibn Gabirol's sense of the material Grounding Element as the ground and emanating source for the Great Chain of Being.

Also mirroring our description of Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element's close relationship to God's Essence, Rist speaks of the "kinship" between Plotinus' "intelligible matter" and the One.[28]

Although the sections of the *Enneads* in which Plotinus addresses the intelligible matter are not included in the *Theology of Aristotle* or other Arabic Plotinian traditions that we believe to have been available to Ibn Gabirol, there is clearly a conceptual mirroring (if not an historical link) between Plotinus and Ibn Gabirol in this sensitivity to a "material moment" at the core of even Intellect. John Dillon speaks in this regard of a case of great minds thinking alike.[29] Reflecting on Chapter 8, we might here add that both thinkers also share a strong Neoplatonic sensitivity to the Paradox of Divine Unity and a sense that the appropriate response to that paradox is the construction of cosmo-ontology that apophatically (and, as I have shown in Section 8.3, "doubly apophatically") elaborates on the ineffable mystery of God's disclosure (in this case, through the description of a "material moment" between God and being).

A6. PROCLUS' *ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY*, THE *KALĀM FĪ MAḤḌ AL-KHAIR*, AND THE *LIBER DE CAUSIS*

Circulating in the Arab world under the name of Aristotle, the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* (*The Discourse on the Pure Good*) – known in its later Latin version as *The Liber de Causis* (*The Book of Causes*) – was eventually identified as a collection of excerpts from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.[30] Prima facie, the

Liber does not emphasize a material reality at the core of intellect or at the core of reality. That said, Dillon addresses possible roots for Ibn Gabirol's notion of various levels of matter in the 23rd Proposition of the *Liber*,[31] and (looking beyond the parts of Proclus' work that survived in the Arabic *Liber* tradition) some identify an apparent statement of universal hylomorphism in the 72nd proposition of the *Elements of Theology*; while not corresponding to any of the propositions in the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair*, this proposition was shown by Gerhart Endress to be available in Arabic manuscripts[32] (albeit, as Dillon describes it, in a "rather truncated form").[33] While we do not know whether Ibn Gabirol had access to any such Arabic text, Dillon nonetheless refers us to the relevant Arabic passage as relating to Ibn Gabirol's notion of a matter that is the first entity after God, the First Principle:

> Every substratum which has the capacity to underlie a great number of things proceeds from a more universal and perfect cause. Every cause which is a cause of more things is more universal, stronger and nearer to the ultimate Cause than a cause which causes less and less important things. If this is as we have set out, and if the first substratum can underlie all things, and the first agent can effect all things, then the first agent must actualize and produce the first substratum, namely matter, which embraces all things. It is clearly proved, then, that the first substratum, that is, matter, underlies all things and that it is an intelligible substratum, even as the first agent actualizes it, because it is the agent of all things.[34]

This can be seen to suggest that even intellects and souls would be composed of matter plus form, just as we find at the heart of Ibn Gabirol's view.

Looking for currents of universal hylomorphism in the Arabic tradition of the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair*, we might also take note of a possible misreading of the text pointed out by Richard C. Taylor in the context of his work on the text's Latin reception. In reading the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair*'s claim that intellects are composed of *ḥilyah*, Taylor explains that some Latin readers mistakenly misread the Arabic term *ḥilyah* (meaning "quality," "state," or "appearance" – pointing to the idea of form) as related to the term *hūlē* (the term for matter). Looking to the Latin *Liber* tradition, we in fact find that the Arabic term *ḥilyah* (meaning something like form) makes its way into Latin as *helyatin*, a term that might be taken as referring to *hūlē* (matter). As Taylor explains, we find the Latin transliteration of *ḥilyah* sometimes as *helyatin*, and sometimes (as in the Latin translation to which Aquinas had access) as *yliatim*, a term that Aquinas and others indeed took as a reference to the Greek *hūlē*.[35] This misreading results in seeing a claim about intellect's form as a hylomorphic claim about intellect's being composed of matter (*hūlē*).

Although Taylor raises this point solely in connection with the transmission of the Arabic text into Latin, it seems possible to imagine that even some Islamic and Jewish readers of the Arabic text might have read *ḥilyah* as *hūlē*. Such a mistake would allow someone (even a Muslim or Jewish Neoplatonist reading the original text in Arabic) to find support in the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* for the Ps. Empedoclean idea of matter at the core of Intellect.

A7. First Matter: "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," Isaac Israeli, and the *Longer Theology of Aristotle*

S. M. Stern gives the name "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist" to what he suggests is a (non-extant) common source of an identifiably unique strain of thought found in Ibn Ḥasday's thirteenth-century work *The Prince and the Ascetic*, as well as in the writings of Isaac Israeli[36] and in the *Longer Theology of Aristotle* (henceforth *Longer Th.*).[37] Looking solely to the theme of matter in these texts, we find an important difference between the writings of Ibn Ḥasday and Israeli on the one hand and *Longer Th.* on the other: While the former authors reveal a doctrine of First Matter, the *Longer Th.* instead talks only of a First Intellect. Looking explicitly at this difference in the texts, a number of other points of similarity (and difference) might be highlighted as we consider Ibn Gabirol's own analysis of a pure material Grounding Element at the core of all reality.

Israeli:

> Aristotle the philosopher and master of the wisdom of the Greeks said: The beginning of all roots is two simple substances: one of them is first matter, which receives form and is known to the philosophers as the root of roots. It is the first substance which subsists in itself and is the substratum of diversity. The other is substantial form, which is ready to impregnate matter. It is perfect wisdom, pure radiance, and clear splendour, by the conjunction of which with first matter the nature and form of intellect came into being, because it [intellect] is composed of them [matter and form]. [38]

Reading through this text, we might note the following points of similarity with and difference from Ibn Gabirol:

1. First Matter is here described as a substance. We have already seen the extent to which Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element is presented as existing per se, as well as Ibn Gabirol's own use of the term "matter" to describe the substantial (higher) cause (or essence) of each lower

effect in the Great Chain of Being. In this latter regard, Grounding Element is for Ibn Gabirol the substance (or essence) of Intellect.

2. First Matter is here said to subsist "in itself." This sits quite well what we have already said about the "*per se existens*" characterization of the material Grounding Element in Ibn Gabirol.
3. Though First Matter is treated before First Form in the aforementioned text, it seems that First Form nonetheless emerges as ontologically superior: Described as "perfect wisdom, pure radiance, and clear splendour," form is here given the active role of male impregnator of the feminine material receptacle – a sense of matter that brings with it all the negative associations of the Timaean (not Nicomachean) Receptacle (see discussion of Platonic and Pythagorean contexts in Section A2 of this Appendix). Thus, while Israeli addresses a "First Matter," it seems to lack the kind of ontological priority that we have suggested is the case for Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element (born, as it is, of God's own Essence and representing, as we have seen in the Ps. Empedoclean tradition, a most positive and grounding love at the heart of being).
4. Indicating, however, some possible sense of matter's ontological superiority, the text does seem to identify form – not matter – as the source of diversity in its description of matter as the "substratum of diversity," that is, presumably that which *receives* – but is not per se responsible for – diversity. (In this regard, see Rist's treatment in Section A5 of this Appendix of Plotinus' intelligible matter/Dyad as the source of plurality, but not plurality per se.) This would conform to Ibn Gabirol's own sense of pure matter's inactivity, preexistence, desire, hiddenness, and its role as a unifying force within the Great Chain of Being that is ontologically superior to form (with form, born of God's "2nd moment," emerging as the herald of diversity).

Ibn Ḥasday:

> The first of created things were two simple substances: the first matter which is the substratum for everything, i.e., the first hylic matter which is the substratum for all forms, and is called by the philosophers the genus of genera; and the form which precedes that which is found with it, i.e., the perfect wisdom, by the conjunction of which with matter the nature of the intellect came into being, so that the intellect, being composed of it and matter, is a species of it.[39]

Reading through this text, we might note the following points of similarity with and difference from Ibn Gabirol:

1. Ibn Ḥasday here seems to give First Form the superior role: First Form – as perfect wisdom – is described as "preced[ing] that which is found with it."[40] The tradition at play in this text does not seem to see matter as ontologically superior to form – a point that conforms with matter's negative receptacle imagery in Israeli, but not with the Ps. Empedoclean tradition of Matter-as-Love, and not with Ibn Gabirol's sense of the material Grounding Element being linked to God's own Essence.
2. Highlighting, however, a somewhat more positive sense of matter's supremacy, First Matter is here identified as the "genus of genera," (similar to "the root of roots" described in Israeli). This, of course, resonates with what we have seen to be Ibn Gabirol's own clear identification of the pure matter as the essence of all things, and as the most general of all genera (see Chapter 7) in its particular role as the "desire-to-be" and the "desire-for-goodness" at the core of the Great Chain of Being, and prior to being itself.

Longer Theology of Aristotle ("Longer Th."):

> The first of created things is the first intellect, which is united with the word of the Creator, (may He be exalted), which is the first substratum of the first form, the genus of genera which comprises all substance, and which possesses pure brilliance and unmixed light. Then follows the second intellect, which is like the species of the first, because out of it was composed its substratum and its form, which is united to the essence of that in which it is.[41]

Mirroring the overall structure of the texts in Israeli and Ibn Ḥasday, the *Longer Th.* replaces talk of a First Matter with a more common sense of a cosmic Intellect, here described as the "first of created things" and as "the first substratum of the first form." While clearly discrete from a First Matter tradition per se, the text does seem to reveal some connection to that tradition: Like First Matter in Ibn Ḥasday's (but not Israeli's) text, *Longer Th.*'s First Intellect is called the "genus of genera," and – as the "first substratum of the first form" – it seems related to the description of First Matter in the Israeli and Ibn Ḥasday texts. In its description as "first created thing," Intellect in *Longer Th.* resonates with similar talk in the *Ikẖwān*,[42] in Sijistānī's Ismāʿīlī tradition,[43] and in the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-kẖair*.[44]

A First Intellect tradition, however, lacks the main unique teaching of a First Matter tradition, focusing simply on a cosmic Intellect and not emphasizing any spiritual sense of matter at all.

A8. THE ISMĀʿĪLĪ CONTEXT: *KŪNĪ* AND *QADAR*

Looking to Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, we find a particular Ismāʿīlī teaching of two cosmic principles out of which all else is created. These dual principles, *kūnī* and *qadar*, are seen as extensions – in the form of two effects – of God's creative force:

> He [God] existed when there was no space, no eternity, no time, no things occupying space and no minute of time. When He conceived a will and a wish, He created a light and produced out of this light a creature. This light remained for some length of its eternity not knowing whether it was a creator or a created thing. Then God breathed into it a spirit and directed at it a voice: "Be!" (*kun*), thus it came into being with God's permission. All things were made by God through creating them from the letters *kāf* and *nūn* [i.e. the two consonants in the words "kun" and "*kūnī*"]. There is bringing-into-being, one who brings-into-being, and a thing which is brought-into-being. Then there is Allah. Then through the *waw* and the *yā*' [i.e. the letters that serve as the two vowels – ū and ī – in the word "*kūnī*"], which became a name for what is above it, calling it therefore *kūnī*.
>
> Then the command of the Creator of all things went to *kūnī*: "Create for yourself out of your own light a creature to act for you as vizier and helper and to carry out our command." Thus it created a creature out of its light and gave it a name, calling it *qadar*. Through *kūnī* God brought into being all things, and through *qadar* He determined them.[45]

While in Sijistānī, the two principles in question are aligned with the hypostases Intellect and Soul, we might note that, outside of the particulars of any given Ismāʿīlī text, these two principles (as well as the supernal light that precedes these two principles) might certainly be seen as conceptually germane to Ibn Gabirol's own thoughts on a pure supernal matter coupled with the form of Wisdom. Consider the conceptual play of the aforementioned teaching with what we have seen in Ibn Gabirol's view:

1. While this account of the first moment of creation is theorized by Sijistānī as representing the creation of Intellect and Soul, we may note the extent to which the account highlights the first moment of creation in terms of *two* first principles, or the *aṣlān* (viz. the "*two* roots/principles").[46] With this strong notion of *aṣlān*, it seems plausible to imagine some interplay between this tradition and traditions of "First Matter and First Form."
2. The possible point of conceptual intersection with a tradition of "First Matter and First Form" is only heightened when one considers the

meaning of *kūnī* and *qadar*: *kūnī* is derived from the verb *kāna* (to be), with *qadar* denoting a power or determining capacity (with its original sense associated with the notion of measuring). We have here, then, a principle of pure unspecified being coupled (and followed upon) by a principle of measure. Highlighted in this way, we certainly can hear a conceptual resonance with Ibn Gabirol's sense of a pure material Grounding Element as a pure (pre)existence, coupled with (and followed upon) by form, the principle of measure, delineation, and specification. In the Ismāʿīlī account of God's first call of "*kūnī*" followed by the call to "*qadar*," we also can hear a resonance with Ibn Gabirol's own sense of matter's being created first from the Divine Essence, with form arising second from God's Wisdom (see discussion of this idea in Chapter 7).

In looking for an affinity between the principle of *kūnī* and an exalted existential state of matter, we might further note that *kūnī* is morphologically also the feminine form of the imperative of *kāna* (to be). While this is not the treatment of *kūnī* given in the aforementioned Ismāʿīlī account (in which it is simply presented as the masculine imperative, *kun*, *substantiated* through the addition of the letters *waw* [ū] and *yāʾ* [ī]), we might nonetheless note that one might well see in "*kūnī*" a feminine imperative and as such a beckoning to matter, itself seen as a feminine principle in a range of Platonic and Pythagorean traditions (as can be seen in the association of the Receptacle with the "nurse of becoming" in the *Timaeus* tradition).

3. Consider Sijistānī's analysis of the inception of Soul from Intellect:

> Primary intellect which is perfect in both potentiality and actuality . . . was the cause of its mate at the moment of regarding its own essence. There generated out of it the form of its essence at the moment it regarded that essence.[47]

There is a striking conceptual affinity between this talk of Soul's emergence from Intellect and Plotinus' description of the emergence of Intellect from the One via intelligible matter (see Section A5 of this Appendix) – a theme that resonates too in al-Fārābī's own description of the emergence of the chain of cosmic intellects (as well as celestial spheres) from the first intellect's "upward-and-inward" reflections on God and on its own essence.[48] In all of these cases, it is Intellect's recognition of self – or of its essence – that gives way to the further proliferation of the Great Chain of Being, form, and plurality.

A9. MATTER IN THE *IKHWĀN* TRADITION

The *Ikẖwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* (Brethren of Purity) use the term "matter" in the more expected "lower sense" to refer to what hierarchically comes *after* (not, as in Ibn Gabirol, before). As we have mentioned at Section 6.1, they refer to Soul as the matter of Intellect, as they likewise use the term "matter" to refer to that which comes after – and is produced by – the motion of Soul. The *Ikẖwān* include various grades of matter *below* the level of Soul within the context of the following cosmic hierarchy:[49]

1. Creator
2. Intellect
3. Soul
4. First Matter
5. Nature
6. Second Matter/Absolute Body
7. Sphere
8. the four elements
9. being of this world[50]

As is the case for Sijistānī – and as we have seen too in the *Longer Theology of Aristotle* tradition – the "First Created Being" is Intellect, not matter.

In addition to treating grades of matter beneath the level of Soul, the *Ikẖwān* interpret cosmic talk of "form and matter" in other thinkers in a way that refers to their own cosmological ordering of "Intellect and Soul." Remarking on the various views of other thinkers, the *Ikẖwān* offer this reflection:[51]

> Various people have said that the world is made of form and matter, others light and darkness, substance and accident, spirit and body, Guarded Tablet and Pen, expansion and contraction, love and hate, this world and the next, cause and effect, beginning and end, exterior and interior, high and low, heavy and light . . .

adding that,

> . . . in principle, all these views are the same; they disagree only in secondary aspects and in expression.

Turning to Nasr's expansion of these remarks, we learn that for the *Ikẖwān*, "[i]n all these cases the duality refers to the Intellect and Soul which contain in themselves the active and passive principles through which the life and activity of the Universe can be understood."[52] In other words, focusing as they do on the interplay of active and passive forces to explain the world, the

Ikhwān are sensitive to the possibility of speaking of the ultimate constituents of the world in terms of "form and matter." However, within their system, the "form and matter" description is only true inasmuch as it reduces to their own teaching, namely that the ultimate constituents of the world are Intellect and Soul – the 2nd and 3rd hypostases after God. As such, consider the extent to which Ibn Gabirol's own First Matter tradition is different:

1. The Ismāʿīlī tradition – as seen in Sijistānī, and in the aforementioned remarks of the *Ikhwān* – does not use the language of "form and matter" but the language of "Intellect and Soul" to describe the ultimate constituents of the universe. Matter, properly speaking, is used to describe Soul's relation to Intellect, and is also seen as a kind of reality that comes *after* Soul. Even the *Ikhwān* who demarcate grades of matter – with the highest two referred to as "Original Matter" and "Universal Matter" – place these *after Soul*.
2. Furthermore, in their suggestion that "form and matter" be taken as equivalent to "Intellect and Soul," the *Ikhwān* reveal an ordinary sensibility about matter: The correlation of "form" with Intellect and "matter" with the lower reality Soul simply sees form as a higher principle and matter as a lower principle. The *Ikhwān* themselves liken Soul to matter precisely because in its relation to Intellect (as lower effect to a higher cause), it is the "receiver."[53] There emerges here no sublime principle of matter above Intellect, and no reversal of intuitions about matter.

To the extent, then, that the *Ikhwān* align the terms "form" and "matter" with Intellect and Soul, we find the ordinary sense of matter as signifying what is lower.[54] As such, Ibn Gabirol's system – in which there is an exalted material Grounding Element above Intellect (not below it) and in which the term "matter" is used to refer to a higher cause in relation to its lower effect (not vice versa; see Chapters 6–7 and Figure 3.4) – reflects a different sensibility.

But even with these points in place, we might certainly suggest some similarities between the *Ikhwān* and Ibn Gabirol. For example, in connection with Ibn Gabirol's own five-part division of matter,[55] we might consider the *Ikhwān*'s four grades of matter – Original, Universal, Natural, and Artefactual – together with their commitment to "beings of this world" [*al-muwalladāt*][56] (perhaps reflecting their logical category of "the individual" [*ash-shakhṣ*], which they add as a sixth category over Porphyry's five).[57] However, as seems clear from what we have seen earlier, the notions of matter in the *Ikhwān* and in Ibn Gabirol diverge: While similar sounding to Ibn Gabirol's sense of a universal pure material Grounding Element, the *Ikhwān*'s "Original" and

"Universal" matters each refer to a level of reality beneath Intellect, and even beneath Soul, and not as in Ibn Gabirol to a most exalted level of reality born of God's own Essence and higher even than Intellect.

A10. Mu'tazilites: *al-ma'dūm* as a something

We must also consider what interplay – if any – there might be between Ps. Empedoclean traditions of First Matter, and Mu'tazilite teachings on creation from *al-ma'dūm* (privation, or nonexistence): In contrast to Muslim thinkers who emphasize the creation of the world "*lā min shay'*" ("not from a thing") (as opposed to the more possibly ambiguous expression of a creation *ex nihilo* in terms of "*min lā shay'*" ["from [a] no thing"]),[58] the Mu'tazilites describe creation[59] as God's formation of "*al-ma'dūm.*" Understood as that upon which God acts, the "*al-ma'dūm*" hence emerges as a nothing that can be theorized as some kind of preexistent something.[60]

The complexities of Mu'tazilite doctrine aside, we may imagine a conceptual interplay across traditions between a notion of a "nothing which is a something" out of which God creates, and the First Matter at play in the Ps. Empedoclean traditions of "*al-'unṣur al-awwal*" (the pure material Grounding Element at the core of Ibn Gabirol's universe). The possibility of a Mu'tazilite link requires further study.

A11. Subtle material prophetic intermediaries: Saadya's "2nd air," Judah Halevi's *amr ilāhī*

Ibn Gabirol views the material Grounding Element as a rarified ground of being. In this respect, we have seen Ibn Gabirol liken matter to the Divine Throne as well as to the River of the Garden of Eden. Ibn Gabirol also likens this reality to air.[61] In considering this suggestive link to air – but also to the Divine Throne as seat of the Divine Glory – it is worth considering the possible connection between Ibn Gabirol's pure material Grounding Element and the notion of "2nd Air" in Saadya Gaon's prophetology. While a full consideration of this possible link (as well as its resonances with Stoic traditions of *pneuma*) would take us beyond the scope of the current project, it is worth noting that Saadya directly links the 2nd Air – described by him as "the subtle second air" (*al-hawā' ath-thānī al-laṭīf*)[62] or as "the second subtle air" (*al-hawā' al-laṭīf ath-thānī*)[63] – to the Divine Throne in the context of his own consideration of a "Divine *Irāda*" in his commentary on the *Sēfer Yeẓīrah.*[64] Emphasizing the supernal reality of this variety of air, and describing it as a "spiritual substance that conveys prophecy,"[65] Saadya also correlates it to the Divine

Glory (*Kavōd*), to the Spirit of the Living God (*Rūʾaḥ Elōhīm Ḥayyīm*), and to the Holy Spirit (*Rūʾaḥ ha-Qōdesh*).[66]

While in the context of Ibn Gabirol the Grounding Element is likened to the seat of the Divine Glory and neither likened to nor identified with the Divine Glory per se, it is still worth considering what interplay – if any – might be found between Saadya's notion of a sublime air (which he correlates with the Divine Throne), and the emergence in Ibn Gabirol of a sublime matter, which he likens to both air and the Divine Throne.

Supporting in general the link between Saadya and Ibn Gabirol, Pines[67] and Freudenthal[68] highlight the impact of Saadya's theory of Divine Immanence and Omnipresence on Ibn Gabirol. Whereas Pines highlights Ibn Gabirol's treatment of the all-pervasive nature of "God's Will" in the cosmos, Freudenthal – in his work on the Stoic elements in Saadya's thought, and in his notion of 2nd Air in particular[69] – suggests vestiges of Saadya's Stoicism in Ibn Gabirol. Considering in particular Freudenthal's thesis regarding the Stoic elements in Saadya, we might quite generally note the plausibility within a Stoically influenced philosophical context of moving easily between the ideas of matter and air – for while technically the matter in Stoic thought is seen as the passive receptor of the pneumatic Logos, that latter supreme air principle is itself entirely immanent in matter, and so might quite easily be spoken of in terms of its material host.

Thinking of Saadya's 2nd Air in connection with Ibn Gabirol's pure material Grounding Element, we might note too Judah HaLevi's *amr ilāhī*, a divine intermediary (operative in prophecy and in a host of related communal, historical, and personal contexts) variously translated across secondary literature as "Divine Power," "Divine Command," "Divine Influence," and "Divine Order,"[70] and translated by Kreisel as "Divine Matter."[71] In his study, Kreisel emphasizes the link here with Saadya, going so far as to describe Saadya's view of the subtle spiritual intermediary (what we have seen earlier to be his 2nd Air) as "materialistic." Kreisel's emphasis on matter in his description of Saadya's prophetology and in his translation of HaLevi's *amr ilāhī* perhaps further points to a possible link between a rarified prophetic intermediary in Saadya and/or HaLevi, and Ibn Gabirol's sense of a material Grounding Element that intermediates between God and the world.

A12. ISLAMIC AND JEWISH PSEUDO-EMPEDOCLEAN TRENDS

Throughout the project, we have been highlighting the Ps. Empedoclean sensibility at the heart of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology, and in Chapter 4 we considered another version of the Ps. Empedoclean tradition recounted by

Shahrastānī. While we do not know the precise details of this tradition (or traditions), we do find some interesting differences between the version found in Shahrastānī (what we may call the Arabic Empedocles)[72] and the version found in the fourteenth-century Kabbalistic *Yesōd ʿŌlam* by Elḥonan ben Avrohom[73] (what we may call the Hebrew Empedocles).[74]

In looking at these two traditions, we find some noteworthy points of difference between them, as well as between them and Ibn Gabirol. One important difference between them and Ibn Gabirol is that neither the Arabic nor the Hebrew Empedocles in their doctrines of First Matter highlights, in the way that Ibn Gabirol does, the coupling of the First Matter with a First Form. As for differences between the Hebrew and Arabic Empedocles traditions, whereas the Hebrew Empedocles treats First Matter – called "*Yesōd*," or "foundation" (akin to the Arabic *al-ʿunṣur*) – as the first hypostasis out of the Godhead that is entirely simple (as we find in Ibn Gabirol), the Arabic Empedocles instead focuses on this First Matter's own composition in terms of the dual principles of Love and Strife (the historical Empedocles' own two principles). We can see this latter idea at play in the Ps. Empedocles material in Section 4.3, in the claim that the Grounding Element is simple, but only simple "with respect to the essence of Intellect"; when compared with God, however, Grounding Element is composite and "composed of an intelligible . . . composition." Extending our discussion from Section 4.3, we might note that the text goes on to describe that composition in terms of Love and Strife as two key principles of being through which a prophet guides the world.

It would appear that in some traditions (viz. the Hebrew Empedocles), first matter emerges as the *first component* of the world (this is the view that we find in Ibn Gabirol), and in other traditions (viz. the Arabic Empedocles), first matter emerges as the world's *first composite*. A fuller study is needed of the various Arabic and Hebrew Empedoclean traditions, including their interplay with Jewish (including Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew) Ps. Empedoclean traditions in Ibn Gabirol, Isaac Israeli, and Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist, and with various Platonic, Pythagorean, Stoic, *Ikẖwān*, Ismāʿīlī, and other traditions explored throughout this Appendix.

We might also note that in Ibn Gabirol's own emphasis on the simplicity of pure matter (here mirroring the Hebrew Empedocles tradition), there emerges a somewhat stronger link between the Grounding Element and love-desire. Although the Arabic Empedocles tradition recounted in Shahrastānī does, as we have seen, correlate love with kernel and spirit, and while this does suggest a clear correlation between the highest spiritual creation, *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*, and love (a correlation, moreover, that we have suggested was influential on

Ibn Gabirol), there is also an emphasis in the Arabic Empedocles tradition (though not in Ibn Gabirol) on the composition of that pure material principle itself not only through Love, but also through Strife.

A13. SUHRAWARDĪ: LOVE VERSUS DOMINANCE, LOVE AS HUMILITY

We might also consider the dual emphasis on "love and dominance" in Suhrawardī's illuminationist philosophy. Speaking of love throughout his work in terms of *'ishq*, *shawq*, and *maḥabbah*, we find an arguably Ps. Empedoclean sensibility in the context of his illuminationism in his sense that lower lights are related to higher lights by love and desire, whereas higher lights are related to lower lights by "dominance" (*al-qahr*).[75]

In this respect, we might certainly note a correlation between "dominance" and the sense of "strife" (*al-ghilāb*) that we find in the Islamic Ps. Empedoclean tradition where it is identified with the prophet's need to oversee (and, when needed, to dominate) the people.[76] Going on to explore themes of human receptivity in the very context of such claims, Suhrawardī seems also to mirror key aspects of the ethical-theological Theology of Desire that we have developed in our reading of Ibn Gabirol (especially our emphasis on humility, fragility, and receptivity in Section 8.5):

> Know that in relation to its effect every luminous cause possesses love and dominance, and that its effect possesses a love whose concomitant is humility (*adh-dhull*).[77]

A study of Suhrawardī's possible relation to the Ps. Empedoclean tradition (as well as the extent of his similarities to ideas advanced in the *Fons Vitae*) requires further study.

A14. KERNELS AND SHELLS

In Chapter 4, we have seen the pure material Grounding Element (*al-'unṣur al-awwal*) correlated with "*lubb*" (or "kernel") (versus the "*qishr*," or shell) in our exploration of the Ps. Empedoclean tradition relayed by Shahrastānī.

The imagery of kernel and shells can be found in Jewish mystical texts, which might suggest some common source behind at least some Jewish mystical writings and Ps. Empedoclean tradition. Bearing in mind our starting methodological warning about too quickly reading Ibn Gabirol through overly Kabbalistic lenses,[78] we do find talk of "kernel and shells" in the *Zōhar*. In this regard, consider *Zōhar* I, 19b–20a:[79]

> All consists of an inner kernel, with several shells covering the kernel; and the whole world [is constructed] according to this pattern, above and below: from the mysterious beginning of the highest point down to the lowest to all levels, it is all one within the other, and one within the other, so that we find that the one [level] is the shell of another, and this other the shell of another.[80]

As Tishby explains, the meaning of this Kabbalistic verse relates to the sefirotic theory of God's ownmost being. In this context, the "inner kernel" refers to the primordial root and source of all things (including God's own sefirotic fullness) in the *Ein-Sōf* (lit. "The Infinite"), the limitless aspect of God beyond even His reality qua sefirotic pleroma. Here, the "shells" refer to the unfolding divine sefirot themselves, one following upon the next in the "creation of God by God" – or, we might say, in the unfolding of God's ownmost fullness from His ownmost hiddenness.[81]

While the Zoharic account of a sefirotic divine pleroma (in which various levels of God are described) does not correspond to anything in Ibn Gabirol or in the Ps. Empedoclean tradition (in which various levels of the cosmos *outside of God* are described), the overall dynamic of "levels" along with the language of "kernel and shell" in the aforementioned Zoharic account does resonate with Ibn Gabirol's descriptions of a layered cosmos informed by Ps. Empedoclean conceptions of "kernel" as that which is higher, and "shell" as that which is lower. (The similarity I mean to draw here between *Zōhar* and Ps. Empedoclean tradition [including Ibn Gabirol] is in structure only, not in content: Whereas "kernel" refers in the *Zōhar* text just cited to God's reality as *Ein-Sōf*, it refers in Ps. Empedoclean contexts to any higher cause in the Great Chain of Being; and whereas "shell" refers in the *Zōhar* text just cited to God's own pleromatic fullness, it refers in Ps. Empedoclean contexts to any lower reality in the Great Chain of Being vis-à-vis its higher effects.)

The shared structural sense in the *Zōhar* and the Ps. Empedocles tradition that the terms "kernel and shell" refer to "higher and lower" realities, respectively, can also be seen in the Zoharic correlation of "kernel and shell" with "soul and body" just a few lines later.[82]

A15. "From one must come two" as "from one must come one" (considering Ibn Gabirol in the context of Greek limit/limitlessness philosophies)

We have emphasized Ibn Gabirol's view as the emergence of a pure material reality from God. That said, his view of a First Matter and First Form is

sometimes seen as violating the Neoplatonic emanationist insight that "from one comes only one"[83] – a principle that we can find, for example, in Avicenna's Neoplatonic account.[84] To sidestep this problem, we must simply recall our reading in Chapters 5–7 and the sense in which Ibn Gabirol does not teach of "First Matter and First Form" as two principles coming from one. As we have seen, for Ibn Gabirol the pure material Grounding Element arises from God (this is a case of "from one comes only one"), and from this first moment of preexistence there follows the "First Form" (the form of Wisdom that contains all forms; this is another case of "from one comes only one"). Based on the thoroughly emanationist reading of Ibn Gabirol that we have developed, "First Matter and First Form" for Ibn Gabirol are not two "horizontal" realities (as per Brunner's diagram in Chapter 5); rather, "First Matter" signifies the first moment of the emanative unfolding from God, and "First Form" signifies the further unfolding of the Grounding Element's preexistent desire to the manifest diversities of being (seen first in the "plurality-in-unity" of Intellect's Form of Wisdom).

All this said, we can defend Ibn Gabirol's cosmic picture even if we do take it as emphasizing a kind of "from one comes two" sensibility. One need look no further than the Neopythagorean teachings of Nicomachus for a way to conceptually reconcile Ibn Gabirol's "from one comes two" sensibility with the more common Neoplatonic demand that "from one comes only one." Looking to the Neopythagorean characterization of the cosmic hypostases in terms of number, we find a description of the first moment of reality's unfolding in terms of a 1 giving way to a 2. In this context, "1" represents the highest hypostasis (God or Limit itself) with "2" representing the "infinite flow of otherness," which stands in need of God's limitation, and upon which God (as principle of Limit) is said to act (and impose limit) in the way that "rennet curdles flowing milk."[85] In this Pythagorean teaching, we precisely find a conceptual blur between the insights that "from one comes one" and "from one comes two" in that the number 2 is at once a one (it is a single reality that follows from the 1), but it is also a two.

Additionally, unlike systems (such as the ones associated with Iamblichus and Proclus) where Limit and Limitlessness, in their association with Monad ("1") and Dyad ("2"), are seen as ontologically parallel (both occupying the same hierarchical level, as it were), the picture that emerges in Nicomachus (in line with the picture that I have suggested for Ibn Gabirol, in which matter is "vertically above" – and not "parallel with" – form) treats the Monad (Limit) as prior to, and ontologically superior to, the Dyad (Limitlessness). As such, more so than in other Monad/Dyad systems, Nicomachus' system reflects the sense in which the 1 and the 2 in question occur in hierarchical succession,

and are not "ontologically parallel." This dynamic is seen too in Ibn Gabirol in the relationship between God and whatever follows after Him, and also in the relation of First Matter (the pure material Grounding Element) and First Form (as we have seen in Chapters 5–7).

Care must be taken, however, when drawing a parallel between Ibn Gabirol and Nicomachus (or between Ibn Gabirol and the Proclean or Iamblichean discussions of Limit and Limitlessness): Whereas Ibn Gabirol's correlation of Limit with the existence and act of form can be found in range of Pythagorean and Neoplatonic contexts, such a correlation is generally (but not in Ibn Gabirol) associated with that which is most sublime. In other words, in the discourse of pure matter at the heart of his Theology of Desire, Ibn Gabirol correlates Limit with the existence and act of form but in that very respect sees Limit as that which is less sublime, correlating Limitlessness with that which is most exalted, namely the unlimited, infinite preexistent purity of the material Grounding Element born of God's own unlimited, infinite Essence (recall Section 3.3 and Figure 3.4). That said, we may note that Nicomachus also sometimes privileges Limitlessness over Limit, as when he highlights the Monad not qua Limiting principle of form, but qua infinite Limitlessness of the receptacle (as we have seen above; see Section A2 of this Appendix).

For a consideration of Limit (*péras*)/Limitlessness (*ápeiron*) philosophies in Proclus and Iamblichus as philosophies of Form/Matter, see Trouillard's analysis of Proclus,[86] Dodds', Shaw's, and Finamore's treatments of Iamblichus,[87] and Mathis II's discussion of Iamblichus in relation to Ibn Gabirol.[88] We must also consider Dillon's discussion of the manifestation of matter and form at different levels of reality, which he attributes to Speusippus, his discussion of "Love and Strife" as correlates of Limit and Limitlessness in Proclus, and his overview of other possible Greek sources for Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphism.[89]

Notes

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1 Ibn Gabirol uses the language of hiddenness both vis-à-vis God and vis-à-vis matter; consider the following: Matter is "*occulta*" (*Fons Vitae* 5.23, p. 299, line 17); matter is the "*summum occultum*" (*Fons Vitae* 1.15, p. 19, line 19; 4.8, p. 230, line 12); matter is the "*finis occultus*" (*Fons Vitae* 1.11, p. 14, lines 23–6); and, pointing to the language of essence and hiddenness (both terms used overtly in relation to God), Ibn Gabirol speaks too of matter as the "*essentia occulta*" (*Fons Vitae* 1.12, p. 15, line 22). The link between God's innermost essence and pure matter becomes clear throughout this study. In this study, all Latin references (with treatise number followed by section number, page, and line) are to the 1892 Latin Baeumker edition. See bibliography for a list of Arabic, Latin, Hebrew, French, English, and other editions of the *Fons Vitae.* Unless otherwise specified, English translations are my own.

CHAPTER 2: TEXT IN CONTEXT

1 Or we might translate, "Among all things, there are three parts of knowledge." In support of this approach, we might note too the additional Arabic phrase that Ibn Gabirol uses in this regard: "*laysa fī-l-mawjūd ghayr hadha-l-jīm*" ("Among substance(s), there are only these three . . . ").

2 The Arabic also supports "Essence is First Cause"; conceptually the point would be the same on either rendering: God is First Essence and First Cause. Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's Hebrew summary translates "Cause is First Essence" (see Ibn Falaquera Hebrew summary, 1.3 in Abraham Sifroni [ed.], *Ōẓar Ha-Maḥshavah shel Ha-Yahadūt* [Israel: Mosad Ha-Rav Kuk, 1962], 436); in his Hebrew translation from the Latin, Blovstein also translates "Cause is First Essence" (see Blovstein in Sifroni, *Ōẓar Ha-Maḥshavah*, 16).

3 This is one of the passages for which we have an Arabic text cited in Moses Ibn Ezra's *al-ḥadīqa fī ma'na al-majāz wal- ḥaqīqa* (or, *Arūgat ha-Bōsem*); cf. Shlomo Pines, "*Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem: ha-Qeta'im mi-tōkh Sēfer 'Meqōr Ḥayyīm',*" *Tarbiẓ* 27 (1958), 218–233 (reprinted – with a renumbering of notes from note 22 ff. – in Shlomo Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael le-Maḥshevet ha-'Amīm: Meḥqarīm be-Tōldōt ha-Fīlōsōfiya ha-Yehūdit* [Jerusalem: Bialik, 1977], 44–60). For the comparison of the entire passage (and surrounding sentences) in the Arabic and in the Latin versions, see

Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 225–226 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 52), where the Judeo-Arabic is compared with the Latin of *Fons Vitae* 1.7, p. 9, line 25–p. 10, line 4. In this study, all Latin references (with treatise number followed by section number, page, and line) are to the 1892 Latin Baeumker edition. See bibliography for a list of Arabic, Latin, Hebrew, French, English, and other editions of the *Fons Vitae*. Unless otherwise specified, English translations are my own.

4 But see Sections A2, A5, A6, and A15 of the Appendix for related themes in Plotinus, Proclus, Iamblichus, and Pythagorean contexts (and also Sections A1, A3, and A4 for how the theme of a supernal material reality can be seen as a modification of a range of Platonic and Aristotelian views).

5 See Chapter 7 (Section 7.6) for more on Aquinas' critique; for a sense of the *Fons Vitae*'s Augustinian readings, see Section 2.2, as well as Section 7.6.

6 The "plurality of forms" idea takes on a new resonance in my own treatment of Ibn Gabirol; see my analysis of the flow from matter to forms in Chapter 6; see too section 5.3 ("Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic Hylomorphism 3: Plurality of Forms") in my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2010 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta; http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-gabirol. For a sense of Ibn Gabirol's revision of the Aristotelian notion of substance, see the current volume, Section A3 of the Appendix.

7 See Pines, "*Ve-qara el ha-Ayin ve-Nivqa,*" *Meḥqōr Keter Malkhūt le-Shlomo Ibn-Gevirol,*" *Tarbiẓ* 50 (1981), 339–347. (For a reminder about why Avicenna does not really think of existence as a "super-added accident," see Fazlur Rahman, "Essence and Existence in Avicenna," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* IV [1958]: 1–16, and Parviz Morewedge, "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92:3 [1972]: 425–435.)

8 We address Schlanger's Philonic reading in Chapter 7 (see Subsection 7.5.2).

9 In this regard, see the discussion of Weisheipl, Gilson, and Husik in Chapter 5.

10 For a reading of Ibn Gabirol in conversation with various Jewish esoteric traditions, see Israel Levin, *Ha-sōd ve-ha-Yesōd: Megamōt Mistōrīn bi-Shīratō shel Ibn Gabirol* (Lod, 1986). For a sense of prima facie resonances of Ibn Gabirol in later Kabbalism, albeit with a warning about reading Ibn Gabirol into these later sources, see Gershom Scholem, "*ʿIqvatov shel Gevirol ba-Qabbalah*," in *Meʿasēf Sōfrei Ereẓ Yisrael*, ed. E. Steiman and A. A. Kovak (Tel Aviv: [n.p.], 1939), 160–178. See also "Kabbalistic Lenses in the Study of Ibn Gabirol" in the "Opening Word on Method" in my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol."

11 An extant Arabic fragment for the Latin *Fons Vitae* text at 5.43 (p. 338, lines 21–25) reveals this Arabic phrase (though translated in Latin not as "*fons vitae*" but as "*origo vitae*"). For Arabic, see Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 233 (reprinted in Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 59).

12 See *Fons Vitae*, 339.

13 For a more complete starting overview, see section 1 ("Bio, Works, Sources and Influences") in my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol."

14 *Fons Vitae* 5.23, p. 299, lines 15 ff.

15 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 333, lines 4–5.

16 See text edition with translation by Stephen S. Wise (tr.), *The Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, Columbia University Oriental Studies, Vol. I (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 68.

17 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 15–20.

18 See Moses Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, 3.51 (see Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, tr. Shlomo Pines, Volume 2 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], 627); for Arabic, see *Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn*, ed. Salomon Munk (Jerusalem, 1931), 462, lines 16–17. Maimonides there engages the term '*ishq* in connection with *ḥēsheq*, as opposed to what he there describes as the lower and less intense relation of *ahavah* (Arabic *maḥabbah*). While some have read this passage in a mystical way, it is clear from a fuller study of Maimonides that he is referring not to some union of human being with God, but to the intellectual moment of conjunction between the human intellect and the Active Intellect. The resonances with Sufism are in terminology, not in content.

19 The text in question describes the soul in terms of one's "*essentia*"; in light of what we will see throughout the course of this study, arguably this refers to soul precisely in its capacity as matter (or, as we will see, in its reality as rooted first and foremost in the material Grounding Element). So, in spite of the surface sense that the text in question is not about matter's desire, I would argue that it actually is. As it would be too complicated to explain this so early on in the study, I have decided to treat the passage as if it were not describing matter's relationship to form. (Explaining how this passage can be seen as describing matter's relationship to form would require all of the details of Chapters 3–6.)

20 On Judeo-Arabic terms for love, see Steven Harvey's "The Meaning of Terms Designating Love in Judaeo-Arabic Thought and Some Remarks on the Judaeo-Arabic Interpretation of Maimonides," *Judaeo-Arabic Studies* (1997): 175–196.

21 See Wise (tr.), *The Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, 69.

22 Maimonides is here commenting on Genesis 3.6. See Maimonides, *Guide* 1:2 (see Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, 25). One might also note here the thematic similarities to Philo's own discussion of passion in his allegorical interpretation of Genesis. For a fuller treatment of this issue in both Maimonides and Philo, see my "Loss, Presence, and Gabirol's Desire: Medieval Jewish Philosophy and the Possibility of a Feminist Ground," in *Women and Gender in Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 27–50. For more on this thematic in Maimonides, also see my "Matter, Metaphor, and Privative Pointing: Maimonides on the Complexity of Human Being," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76:1 (2002): 75–88.

23 See Wise (tr.), *The Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, 69.

24 See Wise (tr.), *The Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, 69.

25 Pines, "*Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem*," 225–226 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 52). See Latin at *Fons Vitae* 1.7, p. 9, line 25–p. 10, line 4.

26 The notion of "two extremes" captured by the Arabic dual form is absent in the Latin; the Latin speaks simply of Divine *Irāda* as the "intermediary between the extremes" ("*media extremorum*").

27 James A. Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicebron," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 10 (1979): 245.

28 For another discussion of this methodological concern with Augustinian lenses, along with concerns with Aristotlian and Kabbalistic lenses, see "A Word on Method," section 2 of my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol."

29 For this translation, as well as an overview of the Ṣūfī thought of al-Qushayrī, see A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (Mineola, NY: Denver Publications, 1950/2002), 74 ff. For the level of "*al-irāda*" as "desire," see p. 77.

30 See, for example, Peter Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 296, notes to lines 20–22.

31 For an overview of Arabic terms for matter, see too s.v. "*hayūlā*" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

32 Vajda points to these terms (some of them more decidedly esoteric) in the context of his treatment of Saadya's commentary on the *Sēfer Yeẓīrah*; see G. Vajda, "*Saʿadya commentateur du 'Livre de la création',*" *École pratique des hautes études, section des sciences religieuses, extrait de l'annuaire* 1959–1960 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1960); reprinted in *Saadiah Gaon*, ed. Steven T. Katz (New York: Arno Press, 1980). For the list of terms in question, see Vajda's appendix, 31 ff.

33 See the *Physics* of Avicenna's *Al-Shifāʾ*, Book One, chapter 2, sections 4–6, in *The Physics of the Healing: A Parallel English-Arabic Text (Al-Shifāʾ; Al-Samāʿ Al-Tabīʿī)*, 2 volumes, tr. Jon McGinnis, Islamic Translation Series (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009), 14–15.

34 *Fons Vitae* 5.18, p. 291, lines 18–20 (where we find the term "*hyle*" in the Latin text); cf. Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 225, section 7 (or Pines, *Bēyn Mahshevet Yisrael*, 51). Ibn Gabirol is here clearly contrasting the spiritual reality of Intellect as home to the intelligible forms with the mundane role of corporeal matter as home to the "natural forms" ("*et hyle est locus formarum naturalium*"; "*wal-hayūlā makān aṣ-ṣuwar aṭ-ṭabīʿīya*").

35 Looking to the broader Jewish medieval context, Pines notes that Moses Ibn Ezra indiscriminately swaps the terms "*al-ʿunṣur*" and "*al-hayūlā*" (and the term "*al-ʿunṣur al-awwal*" for the term "*al-hayūlā al-awwal*"); see Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 227, note 30 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 53, note 31). Reflecting his particular Pseudo-Empedoclean Theology of Desire, we might note that Ibn Gabirol uses these terms more precisely.

36 See S. Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie Juive et Arabe* (Paris: Chez A. Franck, Libraire, 1859), 81, fn. 2.

37 I am here correcting for the actual Judeo-Arabic text that has the grammatically incorrect "*al-ʿunṣur al-ūlā*," using the feminine form of "first" (*al-ūlā*) instead of the correct form, "*al-awwal*." See Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 227, section 9.2 with note 28 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 53, section 9.2 with note 29). I would note that this scribal error might be understood in light of the fact that the other main "first" construct in Ibn Gabirol's text, namely the notion of a "First Essence" (referring to God), takes the feminine *al-ūlā* (viz. *adh-dhāt al-ūlā*).

38 We do not have any extant Genesis commentaries by Ibn Gabirol, but such a commentary – as well as this particular correlation between the river and matter – is reported by Ibn Ezra. See M. Friedlaender, *Essays on the Writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra* (London; reprinted Jerusalem, 1877/1964), 40. See too Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985/1996), 79 for relevant excerpt of the text in question. See Chapter 7 (Section 7.1) in this study for a treatment of matter as river in the context of Ibn Gabirol's emanationist cosmo-ontology.

39 For a short overview of Kabbalistic readings of Ibn Gabirol – including Scholem's warning about moving too quickly from surface similarities to claims of real identity – see my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol" (section 2.3). A good example of an overly simplistic connection between Ibn Gabirol and Jewish mysticism can be found in F. E. Peters's "Avicebron" entry in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, where he boldly (and, I would argue, erroneously) states "The true philosophical home of Avicebron is in the Zohar and in the speculative sections of the Cabala" (see F. E. Peters, "Avicebron (Ibn Gabirol, Solomon ben Judah)," s.v. *New Catholic Encyclopedia* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967], Volume 1, 1130). For more methodologically sensitive approaches to the question of Jewish mystical resonances in Ibn Gabirol, see, for example, Gershom Scholem, "*'Iqvatov shel Gevīrōl ba-Qabbalah*," in *Me'asēf Sōfrei Ereẓ Yisrael*, ed. E. Steiman and A. A. Kovak (Tel Aviv, 1939), 160–78; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994; for a list of references to Ibn Gabirol, see index, 444); Shlomo Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: The Implications of this Resemblance," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, 7:3 (1989): 63–141; Israel Levin, *Ha-sōd veha-Yesōd: Megamōt Mistōrīn bi-Shīratō shel Ibn Gevīrōl* (Lod, 1986); Moshe Idel, "*Hasefīrōt she-me'al ha-sefīrōt: laḥqōr meqōrōtēhem shel rīshōnē he-meqūbalīm*," *Tarbiẓ* 51 (1982): 239–280; Moshe Idel, "Jewish Kabbalah and Platonism in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. L. E. Goodman (Albany: State University of New York (SUNY) Press, 1992), 319–351; Yehuda Liebes, "*Sēfer Yeẓīrah ēẓel R. Shlōmo Ibn Gevirōl ū-pērūsh ha-shīr 'Ahavtīkha*'," in *The Beginnings of Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Europe*, ed. Joseph Dan (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1987; also in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6: 73–123); Sara Heller-Wilensky, "Isaac Ibn Latif – Philosopher or Kabbalist," in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

40 From the Arabic text of the *Fons Vitae*; see Pines, "*Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem*," 227 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 53), section 9.1. For the corresponding Latin, see *Fons Vitae* 1.7, p. 10, line 20: "*materia et forma sunt rami voluntatis.*"

CHAPTER 3: FROM HUMAN BEING TO DISCOURSE ON MATTER?: THE THREEFOLD QUEST FOR WISDOM, GOODNESS, AND GOD – AND THE ROOT OF LIFE IN DESIRE

1 From Ibn Gabirol's *reshūt le-nishmath*; my translation. For Hebrew text and another translation, see Israel Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1923/44), 15. I have included Zangwill's "palpitate" for "*ve-'ahīm.*" See too Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 121 with notes at 274–275.

2 *Fons Vitae* 1.2; p. 4, lines 23–25; for Arabic text, cf. Pines, "*Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem*," 231–232 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 58), section 13:1; "*applicatio*" translates for "*ittiṣāl*," a technical Arabic epistemological term (lit. "conjunction") that we address in this chapter.

3 While the conjunction described in Neoplatonized Aristotelian contexts is between the human intellect and the cosmic Active Intellect (one of many cosmic intellects, and in particular that cosmic intellect furthest from God and closest to humans), Ibn Gabirol does not speak of an Active Intellect, but rather of the soul's cleaving to the cosmic or universal Intellect – the uppermost "*galgal ha-sēkheℓ*" ("the sphere of Intellect," as it is referred to in canto 26 of his *Keter Malkhūt*), which is God's first creation, closest to God and separated from Him only by the "Throne of Glory" (see Chapter 7 for discussion of the *Fons Vitae* 5.42 association of this throne with pure matter [the material Grounding Element]). For an extensive treatment of Active Intellect and conjunction in medieval Arabic Neoplatonized philosophies, see Herbert Davidson, "Alfarabi and Avicenna on the Active Intellect," *Viator*, 3 (1973): 109–178, and Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect and Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); also see Alfred L. Ivry, "Conjunction in and of Maimonides and Averroes," *Averroes et les averroïsmes juif et latin: actes du colloque international, Paris, 16–18 juin 2005*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Brenet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007): 231–247, and "Getting to Know Thee: Conjunction and Conformity in Averroes' and Maimonides' Philosophy," in *Adaptations and Innovations: Studies on the Interaction Between Jewish and Islamic Thought and Literature from the Early Middle Ages to the Late Twentieth Century, Dedicated to Professor Joel L. Kraemer*, ed. Y. T. Langermann and Josef Stern (Paris: Peeters, 2007), 143–156. For a sense of its resonances in Islamic mysticism carried through into the pietistic phenomenology of HaLevi, see Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000). For a general overview of *ittiṣāl* in the epistemology of Maimonides (and its relation to al-Fārābī, Aristotle, and the *Theology of Aristotle*), see my "The Influence of Islamic Thought on Maimonides," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2005). See too note 18 in Chapter 2 about the implications of '*ishq* in Maimonides in this regard.

4 For the Latin *imaginari*, the Arabic version reads *'an tataṣawwara*; cf. Pines, "*Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem*," 221 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 47), section 2, line 2.

5 Where the Latin version reads "*has substantias*" ("these substances"), the Arabic version has the more descriptive "*al-jawāhir al-basīṭa*" ("the simple substances"). It might be noted that we find reference to the simple (*basīṭ*) nature of the spiritual substance in the Pseudo-Empedoclean tradition, as we will see in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.4).

6 Whereas the Latin version speaks of "*has substantias*" (these substances) and how "*tua essentia est diffusa in illis*" (your essence is spread out in them), the Arabic text plays more intimately on the sharing of roots between the notion of "the simple substances" ("*al-jawāhir al-basīṭa*"; see previous note) and, following on this "simplicity" (from the Arabic root BSṬ), the notion of one's essence spreading in them ("*tanbasiṭu dhātika fīhā*"), with the main verb here (to spread) also from the same Arabic root BSṬ. Here, the spreading of the soul's essence into the simple substances is linguistically mirrored as the "spreading" is itself absorbed into the "simplicity" of the substances in question (or vice versa).

7 For the Latin "*comprehendens illas*," the Arabic version uses the root ḤWY meaning "to encompass," "to embrace," "to contain," "to hold," or "to enclose." For translation

as "comprehends them," see Henry E. Wedeck (tr.), *The Fountain of Life* (Book 3) (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), 127 (reprinted as *Solomon Ibn Gabirol, The Fountain of Life* [Bibliobazaar, 2008]).

8 In the Arabic version, "*aqṣā al-maʿaqūl*," the furthest intelligible (cf. Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 221–2, section 2, line 4 [or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 47, section 2, lines 4–5]). Falaquera renders "*ha-aḥarōn*" ("the last"); cf. Sifroni, *Ōẓar Ha-Maḥshavah shel Ha-Yahadūt*, 473, section 37, line 3. In the Latin we find "*ultimum*" (*Fons Vitae* 3.56, p. 204, line 15), which Wedeck renders "the supreme intelligible"; the idea here is of the final, or highest intelligible (see Wedeck [tr.], *The Fountain of Life*, 127).

9 For the entire exchange, see *Fons Vitae* 3.56, p. 204, line 13–3.57, p. 205, line 18 ff. For Falaquera's Hebrew rendering, see section 37 of his summary to Book 3 (pp. 458–477), and pp. 473–474 (cf. Sifroni [ed.], *Ōẓar Ha-Maḥshavah shel Ha-Yahadūt*). For the Arabic text, see Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 221–222 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 47–48), section 2. For another English rendering, see Wedeck (tr.), *The Fountain of Life*, 127–128. It should be noted that this last set of ideas expressed by the teacher are not included in the extant Arabic fragments. We will return to the notion of an "illuminating shadow" at the end of Chapter 4 (Section 4.4). For a related description of the "diffusion" (*diffusio*) and "devotion" (*applicatio*) of soul, see *Fons Vitae* 3.49, p. 188, lines 13–22, with corresponding Arabic at Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 228 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 54–55), section 10, and *Fons Vitae* 3.49, p. 189, line 24–p. 190, line 10, with corresponding Arabic at Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 229–230 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 55–56), section 12.1. As already mentioned, it is the language of *ittiṣāl* behind the Latin *applicatio* verbs.

10 As translated in Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 116, lines 75–78 (and see notes at 269–271). For the Hebrew text, another translation, and additional commentary, see too Raphael Loewe, *Ibn Gabirol* (London: Peter Halban, 1989), 92–95. For a poem by Ibn Gabirol in which the glories of an actual garden are recounted in a way that all but reveals the face of God in its beauty, see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 67 with commentary at 222–226.

11 As translated in Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 114. In his notes to this poem (269–271), Cole references *Psalms* 11:1 and *Proverbs* 27:8.

12 Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.8.1, as translated by Armstrong; cf. *The Enneads*, translated with notes by A. H. Armstrong (The Loeb Classical Library) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), Volume IV, 397.

13 *Theology of Aristotle* (see *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles: aus arabischen Handschriften [Theology of Aristotle]*, ed. F. Dieterici [Leipzig, 1882] [reprint: Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1965], 8, as translated in Alexander Altmann and S. M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958], 191 [reprinted in 2009 by University of Chicago Press]).

14 *Fons Vitae* 5.34, p. 319, lines 16–17.

15 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 316, line 22.

16 *Fons Vitae* 1.2, p.5, lines 2–4.

17 While Ibn Gabirol does not lay out this five-point summary, it is a helpful way of approaching the text. (I do not mean these five points to correspond to the five treatises of the text.)

18 The relation of this sense of "creation" to Plotinian emanation is debated; I have argued against the majority of extant scholarship for reading Jewish Neoplatonic "creation" as entirely consistent with Plotinian emanation; see my "Jewish Neoplatonism: Being Above Being and Divine Emanation in Solomon Ibn Gabirol and Isaac Israeli," in *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Dan Frank and Oliver Leaman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91–110, and my "Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonisms," in *Handbook of Neoplatonism*, ed. Paulina Remes and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin (Durham, UK: Acumen Press, forthcoming). At Subsection 5.4.1, I will address the compatability of "Will," "creation," and "divine emanation" in Plotinus and the *Theology of Aristotle*.

19 As we will see, in Ibn Gabirol "creation" refers to Plotinian emanation; see previous note.

20 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 15–20.

21 Here as in our earlier passage at *Fons Vitae* 1.2, the notion of "joining" uses the Latin "*applicatio*"; see our discussion earlier in this chapter on the resonances of this "joining" imagery and terminology with "*ittiṣāl*," the technical "conjunction" of Neoplatonized Aristotelianism. We elaborate on this "joining" idea in relation to the Divine *Irāda*'s "intermediation between the two extremes" in Chapter 6.

22 Or, "I Have Loved You." For Hebrew text, see Bialik and Ravnitsky (eds.), *Shīrei Shlōmō ben Yehūdah Ibn Gevīrōl*, Vol. I (*Shīrei Ḥōl*) (Tel Aviv; Berlin: Dwir-Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1924), 112, poem 48; also, in Dov Yarden (ed.) *Shīrei ha-ḥōl le-Rabbi Shlōmō Ibn Gevīrōl* (Jerusalem: *Kiryat Noar*, 1975). For some treatments of this poem (including different readings of the line that we will treat here and at various points throughout the project), see David Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol (Jahresberichte der Landes-Rabbinerschule zu Budapest für das Schuljahr 1898/99)* (Budapest, 1899) in *David Kaufmann, Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsi's, Studien Über Salomon ibn Gabirol and Die Sinne* (with an Introduction by Louis Jacobs) (London: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1972); for a reprint, see *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); for the material in question translated into Hebrew, see David Kaufmann, "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*," *Meḥqarīm ba-Sifrūt ha-Ivrīt* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kuk, 1964), 78–164. See too Liebes, "*Sēfer Yeẓīrah ēẓel R. Shlōmo Ibn Gevirōl ū-pērūsh ha-shīr 'Ahavtīkha*"; Pines, "*Ve-qara el ha-Ayin ve-Nivqa*"; Jacques Schlanger, "*Sur le role du 'tout' dans la création selon Ibn Gabirol*," *Revue des Études Juives*, Vol. IV (1965): 125–135; Ibn Daud, *Emūnah Ramah*, translated into Hebrew (from the non-extant Arabic) by Solomon Ibn Labi in S. Weil, *Das Buch Emunah Ramah* (with a German translation) (Berlin: L. Lamm), 61 (for the English translation, see *Emunah ha-Ramah*, translated into English with commentary by Norbert M. Samuelson, ed. Gershon Weiss [Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses], 1986); Reuven Tzur, "*Ahavtīkha ki-ahavat īsh yeḥīdō' li-Ibn Gevīrōl – Shīr Philōsōphī ō Philōsōphīa be-ḥarūzīm?*," in *Meḥqarīm bi-Yeẓīrat Shlōmō Ibn Gevīrōl*, ed. Tzvi Malachi (Tel-Aviv: Mekhōn Kats le-ḥēqer ha-sifrūt ha-'ivrit, Ūniversitat Tel-Aviv, 1985), 23–46; Adi Tzemah, "*Yēsh bemō Yēsh*," in *Meḥqarīm bi-Yeẓīrat Shlōmō Ibn Gevīrōl*, ed. Zvi Malachi (Tel-Aviv: Mekhōn Kats le-ḥēqer ha-sifrūt ha-'ivrit, Ūniversitat Tel-Aviv), 9–22; Sara Katz, "*Shīrah ū-mistōrīn be-yeẓīratō shel Shlōmō Ibn Gevīrōl*," in *Poetry and Mysticism: Collected Papers in Honor of the Poet Shin Shalom* [in Hebrew], ed. Y. Elstein and H. Shoham (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan

University, 1985), 31–54; Frederick P. Bargebuhr, *Salomo Ibn Gabirol, Ostwestliches Dichtertum* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976); and Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 108 (with commentary at 261–264).

23 See Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol.*

24 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 316, lines 16–19.

25 For an overview of various negative, neutral, and positive valuations of matter in the history of Jewish philosophy, see my "Matter, Form and the Corporeal World," in *The Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: From Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Tamar Rudavsky and Steven Nadler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 269–301.

26 See T. M. Rudavsky, "Conflicting Motifs: Ibn Gabirol on Matter and Evil," *The New Scholasticism*, 52:1 (1978), 54–71.

27 *Fons Vitae* 5.29, p. 310, lines 14–17.

CHAPTER 4: ROOT DESIRE AND THE PSEUDO-EMPEDOCLEAN GROUNDING ELEMENT AS LOVE

1 For Hebrew poem ("*Baqasha*," A Request), see Israel Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1923/1944), 3; poem 2, lines 6–10 (canto 3, line 2 through canto 5).

2 This line is from later in the poem; see Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems*, 4, line 28.

3 Lit. "to do as you desire."

4 Lit. the soul will return to God just as He has "given to her" or "given her."

5 Of interest is the phonic/auditory resonance in Hebrew between outpouring (Sh-F-Kh) and servitude seen in the word "*shifḥah*" (maidservant), a link on which Ibn Gabirol seizes by using the word "*shifḥah*" (Sh-F-Ḥ) in this same poem a few lines earlier (see Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems*, 4, line 26).

6 From Ibn Gabirol's *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kindgom's Crown*), canto 9; translation from Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 149.

7 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 15–20.

8 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 316, line 22.

9 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 333, line 4.

10 The *Theology of Aristotle*, with which Ibn Gabirol was most likely familiar, is an edited Arabic version of books 4 through 6 of Plotinus' *Enneads*. For an overview of this textual tradition, see Maroun Aouad, "La Théologie d'Aristote et autres textes du Plotinus arabus," in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1989), 541–590; Kraye, Jill, Ryan, W. F., and Schmitt, C. B. (eds.), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986); Christina D'Ancona, "Pseudo 'Theology of Aristotle,' Chapter I: Structure and Composition," *Oriens* 36 (2001): 78–112; Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London: Duckworth, 2002); and for a discussion of the longer and shorter versions (as well as the impact of these materials on Jewish Neoplatonism), see Stern, "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist;" Shlomo Pines, "*La longue recension de la Théologie d'Aristote dans ses rapports avec la doctrine ismaélienne*," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 22 (1954): 8–20; Paul Fenton, "The Arabic and Hebrew

Versions of the Theology of Aristotle," in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jill Kraye et al. (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1986); and Y. Tzvi Langermann, "A New Hebrew Passage from the *Theology of Aristotle* and its Significance," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999): 247–259. On the longer and shorter versions of the *Theology of Aristotle*, see also Section A7 and note 37 in the Appendix.

11 *Theology of Aristotle*, Chapter 8; for Lewis's English version, see G. L. Lewis (tr.) *Plotiniana Arabica (including the Theology of Aristotle)*, in *Plotini Opera*, Vol. II, ed. Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer (Paris and Bruxelles: Éd. Universelle, 1959), 473; for the Arabic text, see *Plotinus Apud Arabes, Theologia Aristotelis et fragmena quae supersunt*, ed. A. Badawi (Cairo, 1955), 99, lines 2–4.

12 *Theology of Aristotle*, Chapter 8; English at Lewis, *Plotiniana Arabica*, 473; Arabic at Badawi (ed.), *Plotinus Apud Arabes*, 99, line 5.

13 *Theology of Aristotle*, Chapter 8; English at Lewis, *Plotiniana Arabica*, 473; Arabic at Badawi (ed.), *Plotinus Apud Arabes*, 99, lines 7–8.

14 Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah fi'l-'ishq*; see Emil Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love by Ibn Sina," *Mediaeval Studies* 7 (1945): 214.

15 Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah fi'l-'ishq*; see Fackenheim, "Treatise on Love," 213.

16 Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah fi'l-'ishq*; see Fackenheim, "Treatise on Love," 228.

17 Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah fi'l-'ishq*; see Fackenheim, "Treatise on Love," 214.

18 On the "conjunction" with Active Intellect, see my discussion of the epistemological notion of "devotion" (*applicatio*/*ittiṣāl*) in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.1 and Chapter 3, note 3). For a discussion of this "cosmic love" at play in Ibn Gabirol's Aristotelianized Neoplatonic context (including insights from Ibn Ghiyāth and Abraham Ibn Ezra), see Raymond P. Scheindlin, *The Gazelle: Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel, and the Soul* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 49–51.

19 See al-Fārābī, *Perfect State*, I, 2, 1; see Richard Walzer (ed., tr.) *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr Al-Fārābī's Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl Al-Madīnat Al-Fāḍilah: A Revised Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: Clarendon Press, 1985), 89–91; 101, ff.

20 From Ibn Gabirol's *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*) as translated by Cole with my switching out Cole's "power" with "vitality" [for *kō'aḥ*] (see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 166; for full poem and commentary, see 138–195 with extensive notes at 289–316). See my "Terminological Preamble II" in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) for a reminder of the concern with the notion of Ibn Gabirol's God as a "God of Power"; see Subsection 5.5.1 with note 25 and Section 6.2 with note 16. For corresponding Hebrew text, see Jefim Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-'ivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans: Mivḥar Shīrīm Ve-Sīpūrīm Meḥūrazīm Be-Ẓērūf Mevō'ōt, Maftēḥōt Ve-Ẓīyūrīm* (Yerushalayim: Mosad Byalik, 1954), 271, lines 227–228 (for full poem, see 257–285, poem 108). See too Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 82–123, poem 50; Bernard Lewis, *Solomon Ibn Gabirol: The Kingly Crown* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1961); and for a more recent edition with Lewis' translation and notes, see Andrew Gluck, *The Kingly Crown, Keter Malkhut* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); this volume includes extensive commentary and a bibliography of secondary materials. See too Loewe, *Ibn Gabirol*, 105–162 (including an introduction, a translation, and the Hebrew text); David Slavitt, *A Crown for the King* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998). For

an account of a Judeo-Arabic paraphrase of this poem, see Y. Tzvi Langermann, "A Judeo-Arabic Paraphrase of Ibn Gabirol's *Ketter Malkhut*," *Zutot* 3 (2003): 28–33. To help locate Ibn Gabirol's poetry within a context of medieval Jewish verse, see Raymond Scheindlin, *Wine, Women and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986), and Scheindlin, *The Gazelle* (esp. 12, 21–22, 44–45); Schirmann-Fleischer, *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain* (Jerusalem: Magnes and Ben-Zvi, 1995); see too Peter Cole's *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain, 950–1492* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Lockert Library of Poetry in Translation, 2007).

21 Launching into a critique of Ibn Gabirol's general idea that all things are composed of matter and form, Ibn Daud begins "Thus [Ibn Gabirol] committed six errors at the beginning of his discourse . . . ," and immediately goes on to cite Aristotle as an authority, showing how Ibn Gabirol fails to abide by proper Aristotelian teachings (see *Emūnah Ramah*, 26b and 27b; in *The Exalted Faith, Abraham Ibn Daud*, translated by Norbert M. Samuelson, ed. Gershon Weiss (East Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1986), 62, column 2; see too 4b:15–5b:11, where Ibn Daud further lambasts Ibn Gabirol as weak philosopher and blind windbag of a thinker; for additional critiques, see too 153a6–10; 158a2 ff.). For Aquinas' critique of Ibn Gabirol, and my own critique of these sorts of critiques of Ibn Gabirol as uncharitable and misguided, see Chapter 7.

22 After critiquing Ibn Gabirol for an erroneous view of intellects having multiplicity in their essences (see 158a2–10), he goes on to address the angelic intellects' essential focus on God, and concludes that what thinkers have said about this seems true and in accordance with the Torah (see 159a2–5). While not mentioning Ibn Gabirol per se as one of the ones who got this right, we might add Ibn Gabirol to this camp, evidenced in part by Ibn Daud's own description of one part of this set of correct theories in terms of "The Essence of the Throne" (see 159a1). Samuelson notes that this is the only occurrence of this phrase in *Emūnah Ramah*, and that Ibn Daud neglects to explain it; I would suggest that perhaps Ibn Daud is here referring to the *Fons Vitae*, which, as we will see, describes the height of the cosmos in terms of a Throne and a Divine Essence (see Samuelson, *The Exalted Faith*, 172, note 1; on the Throne in Ibn Gabirol, see Chapter 7 of this study; on Divine Essence in Ibn Gabirol, see Chapters 6–8 of this study).

23 For information on this poem, see Chapter 3, note 22.

24 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 17–18.

25 Falaquera, *Qeta'im*; see Sifroni, *Ōẓar Ha-Maḥshavah shel Ha-Yahadūt*, 435.

26 We might also note that the work, referred to by Ibn Falaquera as the *'Aẓamīm ha-Ḥamīshah*, may be translated, as some scholars have suggested, as the "Book of the Fifth Substance" (or "Fifth Element" in the sense of the aetherial realm of celestial matter and the spiritual realities that occupy that realm). Paying close heed to the wording of this introductory remark, some scholars have additionally pointed out that Ibn Falaquera might have only meant to suggest that Ibn Gabirol's work seems *similar* to some Empedoclean works, and not necessarily that Ibn Gabirol's text was in fact influenced by those works.

27 On the possibility of an Aristotelian link to this tradition, see my treatment of Frede's hypothesis about Book Lambda of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Section A3 of

the Appendix. On the theme of an Empedoclean heritage, see Miguel Asín-Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra and His Followers* (Leiden: Brill 1978), and Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 371–391. See also "Anbaduḳlīs" in *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New Edition), ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1954), Volume I, 483–484, and "Empedocles," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Encyclopedia Judaica Press). For some of the relevant Arabic Ps. Empedocles texts, see Muhammad al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb Al-Milal* in *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects (Kitāb Al-Milal wal-niḥal)*, ed. William Cureton (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 260–265; Abū Sulaimān as-Sijistānī, *The Muntakhab Ṣiwān Al-Ḥikmah of Abū Sulaimān As-Sijistānī: Arabic Text, Introduction, and Indices*, ed. D. M. Dunlop (Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), 5 ff.; Pseudo Ammonius, in *Die Doxographie Des Pseudo-Ammonios: Ein Beitrag Zur Neuplatonischen Überlieferung Im Islam*, ed. Ulrich Rudolph (Stuttgart: Kommissionsverlag Franz Steiner Wiesbaden, 1989); Shahrazūrī, in *Kitāb Nuzhat Al-Arwāḥ Wa-Rawḍat Al-Afrāḥ: Tawārīkh Al-Ḥukamā'*, ed. Muhammad Ali Abu-Rayyan (Alexandria: The Centre of National Heritage and Manuscripts, University of Alexandria, 1993), 95 ff.; al-Qifṭī, in *Ibn Al-Qifṭī's Ta'rīkh Al-Ḥukamā', Auf Grund Der Vorarbeiten Aug. Müller's Hrsg*, ed. Julius Lippert (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903), 15–16. For discussion of Ps. Empedoclean tradition, see too Kaufmann, "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*"; Schlanger, *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 76 ff.; for a discussion of Empedocles in Islamic traditions, see Miguel Asín-Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra and His Followers*, 40 ff.; see too S. M. Stern, "Ibn Masarra – A Myth?," reprinted in *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought*, ed. F. W. Zimmerman (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983); Salomon Munk, *Extraits de la source de vie de Salomon Ibn Gebirol*, in his *Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe* (Paris: Chez A. Franck, Libraire, 1859); French translation, and discussion of Ps. Empedocles tradition in Jacques Schlanger, *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 76 ff.; see too Gad Freudenthal and Rémi Brague, "*Ni Empédocle, ni Plotin. Pour le dossier du Pseudo-Empédocle arabe*," in *Agonistes: Essays in Honour of Denis O'Brien*, ed. John Dillon and Monique Dixsaut (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 267–283.

28 See Asín-Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra*, and Kaufmann, "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*," 84. For a link between Ibn Masarra and Ibn Gabirol on matter as throne, see S. Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie Juive et Arabe*, 144, note 2.

29 See Stern, "Ibn Masarra – A Myth?"

30 Kaufmann refers to Zachs's having made this suggestion (and Kaufmann deems the idea indefensible); see Kaufmann, "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*," 122.

31 See Munk, *Extraits de la source de vie de Salomon Ibn Gebirol*. Munk points out that Falaquera, in noting the similarity of Ibn Gabirol's ideas to the Empedoclean *Book of Five Substances*, does not specifically claim that this book was actually read by Ibn Gabirol. However, Kaufmann points to Falaquera's having cited this one particular Empedoclean tradition as worthy of note; see Kaufmann, "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*," 79.

32 As mentioned earlier, for Ibn Gabirol, there are three World Souls, corresponding macrocosmically to the human soul's tripart structure.

33 Wisdom and forms are associated with light in a number of contexts; for example, on matter's acquisition of form as an acquisition of light, see *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, line 25–p. 318, line 2; on form in matter being like light in the air, see *Fons Vitae* 5.11, p. 276, line 15; on Divine *Irāda* as first light, and form (which is related to Wisdom) as second light, see *Fons Vitae* 4.20, p. 255, lines 7 ff.; on the light of the higher substances and of God, see *Fons Vitae* 3.45, p. 181, lines 6 ff.; on the Divine Word (also related to form and Divine Wisdom) as light, see *Fons Vitae* 5.30, p. 13, line 15; et al. Form, associated with light, is also directly described as born of the Divine Wisdom (and in this sense, Wisdom becomes the source, root, and place of light); see, for example, *Fons Vitae*, 5.42, p. 333, line 5.

34 At *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 4–12 we learn that every moving thing moves to receive form, and that "form is nothing if not the impression of unity" (which is, moreover, the good). Note too that matter is also described as unifying all of being; see Chapter 7 (Subsection 7.4.4).

35 For an overview of connections with Islamic mystical strains in Ibn Masarra, see Asín-Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra*, and see too other references in note 27 to this chapter. For an overview of the different ideas of a Grounding Element (variously as *al-ʿunṣur al-awwal* and as *yesōd*) in a variety of Islamic and Jewish texts (including "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist" and a variety of Jewish mystical traditions), see Sections A7–A15 in the Appendix. For a comparison of Avicenna's Aristotelian hylomorphism with the Ps. Empedoclean hylomorphism recounted in Shahrastānī, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism," in *Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Richard Taylor and Luis X. López-Farjeat (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

36 See Shahrastānī, *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects*, 260–265; for other references, see note 27 to this chapter.

37 This likely refers to Intellect; the idea here is that the Grounding Element is the principle of Intellect.

38 Presumably, the Grounding Element in this context admits of the former "intelligible" composition in its essence, even while it is also described as the principle of Intellect, and as that which comes before Intellect; this emphasis on the composition of Grounding Element is not found in Ibn Gabirol's treatment. For more on the similarities and differences between Islamic and Jewish Ps. Empedoclean materials, see Section A12 of the Appendix.

39 Of course, it is not simple when viewed in comparison with God's simplicity. In Chapter 6, I connect this perspectival mode of analysis (the sense in which something is simple in one respect but complex in another) to Neoplatonic Tripart Analysis. Also, see notes 46–47 to this chapter on the "composition" of this simple out of "love and strife" within some Ps. Empedoclean contexts.

40 On the term "the All" as referring to universal matter in Ibn Gabirol's Hebrew poetry, see Schlanger, "*Sur le role du 'tout' dans la création selon Ibn Gabirol.*" For a different Jewish medieval context of "the All" as a reference to universal intellect, see Elliot R. Wolfson, "God, the Demiurge and the Intellect: On the Usage of the Word 'Kol' in Abraham Ibn Ezra," *Revue des Études Juives* 149 (1990), 77–111, and Howard Kreisel, "On the Term 'Kol' in Abraham Ibn Ezra: A Reappraisal," *Revue des Études Juives* 153:1–2 (1994): 29–66. (It might be noted that Schlanger ultimately locates Ibn Gabirol's pure matter in God's knowledge, so the idea of "the All" referring to universal matter for Schlanger ultimately is identical to its referring to

a kind of universal Intellect, namely God's mind; I critique this idea in Schlanger in Subsection 7.5.2.)

41 We will treat Schlanger's rejection of matter's per se existence in Ibn Gabirol in Subsection 7.5.2. Brunner notes, "*il est exact qu'Ibn Gabirol donne une porté réele aux ētres logiques et que le genre de las substance est pour lui la matière universelle. Mais il ne s'ensuit nullement que pour lui la matière universelle soit un substrat neutre comme on concoit d'ordinarie le genre . . . Le genre n'est pas ici un fond commun indifférent, mais le terme supérieur enveloppe tous les autres*" (Fernand Brunner, *Platonisme et Aristotélisme: la critique d'Ibn Gabirol par Saint Thomas D'Aquin* [Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1965], 54). While sensitive to pure matter's role in Ibn Gabirol as a genus, Brunner – as we will see too is the case for Schlanger (see Subsection 7.5.2) – emphasizes that universal matter is not some kind of a common substrate in Ibn Gabirol. He further emphasizes that point elsewhere, claiming that universal matter refers, in Ibn Gabirol, to the indeterminate essence of each substance, but not to some kind of "*fondement existentiel*" ("existential foundation"; see Fernand Brunner, "*La doctrine de la matière chez Avicébron*," *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, trois. série, 6 (1956): 261–279 (reprinted in *Métaphysique d'Ibn Gabirol et la tradition platonicienne*, ed. Daniel Schulthess, Variorum Collected Studies Series [Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997], essay IV, 278–279). In this respect, he seems to be trying to have Ibn Gabirol avoid Aquinas' critique of universal hylomorphism as hypostasizing genera and species (as matter and form); Aquinas emphasizes (mirrored it would seem by Brunner's comments above) that genus is only logically representative of an essence in an indeterminate way. On Aquinas' position against universal hylomorphism in this regard, see *Summa Theologiae*, I. q. 50, a. 2, and James Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels* (dissertation), The Catholic University of America, Philosophical Studies, v. 89 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 70. Given the Ps. Empedoclean context of a material Grounding Element between God and Intellect in the Great Chain of Being, I disagree with Brunner on this point and emphasize on the contrary that it is precisely an "existential foundation" for Ibn Gabirol. (Though through my apophatic analysis in Chapters 8 and 9, I help us rethink what a hypostasized foundation of this sort is – and is not – in a Neoplatonic context. [In this latter regard, see Chapter 8, note 2 on Scotus' formal distinction; my own apophatic treatment of the "per se existence" of material Grounding Element in Ibn Gabirol ultimately differs from Scotus' "formal reality" approach; I plan to explore the fuller details of my project's relationship to Scotus in a future study].)

42 *Fons Vitae* 4.9, p. 231, lines 4 ff.

43 *Fons Vitae* 4.9, p. 230, lines 19–23.

44 See Shahrastānī, *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects*, 262, line 3.

45 See Section A14 of the Appendix for a brief overview of "kernels and shells" in Jewish mystical sources.

46 While we might expect "*ghilāb*" for "strife," the Arabic in the Ps. Empedoclean source (as recounted by Shahrastānī) has the Arabic "*ghalabah*" in the sense of a domination or subduing; I translate "strife" to better emphasize the "Empedoclean" nature of this pairing of love (as a force of unification and harmony) and "*ghalabah*" (as a force of domination and discord). On the notion of "love and dominance" in other Islamic

philosophical contexts, see Section A13 of the Appendix on Suhrawardī. We might also note the link between the Arabic root *ghalaba* (and the construction *ghalabah*) and the notion of "idle talk," or "chatter"; we might in this context consider Ibn Gabirol's sense of the activity of form (and enformation) itself as a kind of "chatter" in that form is the manifesting of differentiation – it is the "noisy breaking apart" as it were of unity's pureness (itself found in the hiddenness of the material Grounding Element). In this regard, we might consider the Proclean description of emanation through the metaphor of buzzing bees leaving their hive; see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 24.

47 See Section A12 of the Appendix on the Jewish versus Islamic texts in this regard: While the account presented in Shahrastānī emphasizes the Grounding Element as itself composed of love and strife, the account in Ibn Gabirol emphasizes, rather, the Grounding Element in relation to love and as the first component of being. For more on the composition of the Grounding Element in terms of love and strife in Islamic contexts, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism."

48 It might be noted that Falaquera's Hebrew text leaves out the notion of "being illumined" by the shadow, and instead speaks of taking refuge in the shadow: "... *ve-ḥasita bi-ẓēlō*..." (see Sifroni, *Oẓar Ha-Maḥshavah shel Ha-Yahadūt*, 474, line 14). See, however, Altmann and Stern, *Isaac Israeli* (e.g., 177) for the clear occurrence in the Jewish Neoplatonic materials of this notion of illumination by shadows. See too my discussion of shadow and light in my "Divine Presence, Divine Absence and the Plotinian Apophatic Dialectic: Reinterpreting 'Creation and Emanation' in Isaac Israeli," in *Religion and Philosophy in the Platonic and Neoplatonic Traditions: From Antiquity to the Early Medieval Period*, ed. Kevin Corrigan, John D. Turner, and Peter Wakefield (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2012), 133–149.

CHAPTER 5: FROM DIVINE WILL TO DIVINE *IRĀDA*: ON THE MISTAKEN SCHOLARLY REJECTION OF IBN GABIROL'S EMANATIONISM

1 *Fons Vitae* 3.17–24, 114–138; McGinn reads in these sections "no less than sixty-three proofs that corporeal substances come from and depend upon spiritual ones" (Bernard McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol: The Sage among the Schoolmen," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman [Albany: SUNY Press, 1992], 83).

2 See his *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, as well as Jacques Schlanger, "*Sur le role du 'tout' dans la création selon Ibn Gabirol*," *Revue des Études Juives* IV (1965): 125–135.

3 John M. Dillon, "Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 43–59.

4 Bernard McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol: The Sage among the Schoolmen."

5 As noted in Section 2.4, Cole describes Divine Will in terms of energy and desire, and he speaks of *voluntas* in Ibn Gabirol as a desire "emanating from God" (Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 296, notes to lines 20–22). More broadly, the spirit of an emanating desire (and the overall backdrop of emanationism) is tangible across Cole's translation of Ibn Gabirol's poetry.

6 See, for example, his discussion of "cosmic love" as a particularly Neoplatonic element of Ibn Gabirol's thought; Raymond P. Scheindlin, *The Gazelle*, 49–51.
7 Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 227.
8 Isaac Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916/1958), 70 (and for the entire treatment of Ibn Gabirol, see 59–79).
9 Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus," 249.
10 S. Munk, *Philosophy and Philosophical Authors of the Jews: A Historical Sketch*, tr. Isidor Kalisch (Cincinnati, OH: Bloch and Co., 1881), 23.
11 Not only is it not at all clear that Judaism has dogmas (see my "Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith," in *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. 2, ed. Robert Pasnau [Cambridge University Press, 2009], 790–792), but it is also not clear that there is any obvious or orthodox sense of "creation" in the Jewish tradition (as a quick survey of midrashic and kabbalistic interpretations of the opening line of Genesis reveals). What is also clear is that Ibn Gabirol is working in a Neoplatonic context in which various Arabic terms for "creation" are used (for example in the *Theology of Aristotle*) to refer to a divine sovereignty that goes hand in hand with emanation. We address this in more detail in Section 5.4.
12 In this respect, we might contrast this *quantitative* emphasis on *scope* with H. A. Wolfson's emphasis – in the context of Isaac Israeli – on a *qualitatively* different *kind* of emanation (a non-Plotinian grade of emanation) in his attempt to reconcile creation with emanation in the context of Jewish Neoplatonism. See H. A. Wolfson, "The meaning of *ex nihilo* in Isaac Israeli," reprinted in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion, Harry Austryn Wolfson*, Vol. I, ed. Isadore Twersky and George H. Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 222–233. While I support his openness to linking creation and emanation, I instead opt to fully identify Jewish Neoplatonic "creation" with Plotinian emanation; see next note.
13 For an overview of how Wolfson and Altmann differ in their readings of Israeli on creation, and for my critique of both of their views, see my "Jewish Neoplatonism: Being Above Being and Divine Emanation," and for a somewhat different approach, see my "On the Possibility of a Hidden Christian Will: Methodological Pitfalls in the Study of Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in *Encountering the Medieval in Modern Jewish Thought*, ed. Aaron Hughes and James Diamond (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 52–94. In his opening essay to the 2009 re-release of the classic Altmann and Stern text, *Isaac Israeli*, Alfred Ivry cites my reading of creation as full-blown Plotinian emanation in Israeli as a third alternative to Altmann and H. A. Wolfson; see 2009 re-release of Altmann and Stern, *Isaac Israeli*, with a foreword by Alfred Ivry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), x, note 6. For my own more in-depth analysis of Israeli, see my "Divine Presence, Divine Absence and the Plotinian Apophatic Dialectic."
14 I am thankful to Richard Taylor for asking me to consider *al-ikhtiyār* and "*proairesis*" versus "*boulēsis*" as part of my treatment.
15 Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 64–65.
16 Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 71.
17 *Theology of Aristotle*; see Lewis, *Plotiniana Arabica*, 391, 393, 395, 453.
18 *Theology of Aristotle*; see Lewis, *Plotiniana Arabica*, 437, 391, 393, 395.

19 For the connection between a God who acts "without thought" and the idea of God's generosity and acting "without jealousy," see my "Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonisms," in *Handbook of Neoplatonism*, ed. Paulina Remes and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin (Durham, UK: Acumen Press, forthcoming), sections 4.0 and 2.1. In that essay, I also explain the implications in this regard of God as pure goodness.

20 *Theology of Aristotle*; see Lewis, *Plotiniana Arabica*, 359.

21 For a consideration of will in Plotinus and other reasons to read Jewish Neoplatonism in conceptual alignment with (as opposed to in opposition to) Greek Neoplatonism, see my "Jewish Neoplatonism: Being Above Being and Divine Emanation."

22 Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 225–226 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 52). See Latin at *Fons Vitae* 1.7, p. 9, line 25–p. 10, line 4.

23 Fernand Brunner, "*La doctrine de la matière chez Avicébron*," 271.

24 Wedeck discusses this in his introduction to his translation of Book 3 of the *Fons Vitae*; Wedeck [tr.], *The Fountain of Life*, Introduction, v.

25 To be sure, Ibn Gabirol himself (or at least his Latin translator) uses the language of "*virtus*" (power) to describe the divine: The Divine *Irāda* is expressly described as "*virtus divina*" (cf. *Fons Vitae* 1.2, p. 4, line 14; 3.16, p. 113, line 13; 3.38, p. 326, line 3 ff.; 3.57, p. 205, line 23; 5.38, p. 327, line 5; 5.43, p. 337, line 7; and for a description of *Irāda* as "*virtus unitate*," cf. 5.39, p. 327, line 26; and 5.37, p. 325, line 15). This said, I do not think the notion of "power" (at least given its resonances in English, and especially in light of the predominating voluntaristic readings of Ibn Gabirol) appropriately captures the spirit of Ibn Gabirol's theological sentiments in the *Fons Vitae* as I hope to lay them out in this project. (See also Chapter 4, note 20, and Section 6.2 with note 16.)

26 For an overview of Islamic occasionalism, see Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism, and Its Critique by Averroës and Aquinas* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958); see too Richard M. Frank, "Bodies and Atoms: The Ashʿarite Analysis," in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. Michael E. Marmura (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), 39–53 (notes 287–293). In this regard one might also consider the Muʿtazilite view of bodies as accidental collections of atoms in which created accidents inhere; see Richard M. Frank, "The Divine Attributes According to the Teaching of Abū 'l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf," *Le Muséon: Revue des études orientales* 82 (1969): 451–506; see also the discussion in Peter Adamson, "Al-Kindī and the Muʿtazila: Divine Attributes, Creation and Freedom," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 13 (2003): 45–77.

CHAPTER 6: *IRĀDIC* UNFOLDINGS: IBN GABIROL'S HYLOMORPHIC EMANATIONISM AND THE NEOPLATONIC TRIPART ANALYSIS

1 From Ibn Gabirol's poem, "He Dwells Forever," as translated by Peter Cole; see Cole, *The Dream of the Poem*, 95.

2 *Fons Vitae* 4.9, p. 230, lines 19–23.

3 *Ikẖwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ*, *Rasāʾil* (Cairo: ʿArabīyah Press, 1928), *Rasāʾil* III, 235. See too Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 56.

4 Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 225–226 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 52). See Latin text at *Fons Vitae* 1.7, p. 9, line 25–p. 10, line 4.

5 The notion of "two extremes" captured by the Arabic dual form is absent in the Latin; the Latin speaks simply of Divine *Irāda* as the "intermediary between the extremes" ("*media extremorum*").
6 *Fons Vitae* 5.38, p. 326, lines 4–5.
7 *Fons Vitae* 1.2, p. 4, lines 23–5.
8 See Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 231 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 58), section 13.1, line 2.
9 See Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 233 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 59), section 13.2, where Pines compares the text at *Fons Vitae* 5.43, p. 338, lines 21–25 with the corresponding Judeo-Arabic text.
10 For a treatment of this idea in Avicenna's account of Aristotelian prime matter, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism."
11 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, line 15; and see also a few lines later: "*desiderium enim et applicatio non est nisi similium*" ("desire and conjunction are only for likes"; *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 23–24).
12 *Fons Vitae* 4.9, p. 230, lines 19–23.
13 For example, we learn that "*. . . diversitas quae est inter materiam et formam significat esse voluntatem . . .* " ("the diversity between matter and form signifies the existence of *al-Irāda*"); *Fons Vitae*, 5.25, p. 304, line 5.
14 At *Fons Vitae* 4.9 (p. 253, line 1), form is described as "*defluxa est a voluntate*" (emanated from *al-Irāda*); furthermore, forms are identified as themselves the markers of "*esse*" (existence) (see for example *Fons Vitae* 5.8, p. 271, lines 22–26), and *al-Irāda* (the source of forms as we have just seen) is, in its own role as en-form-er (a role that marks its own intimate relation to forms), described too as the herald of *esse*: "*. . . nihil est sine ea, quoniam ex ea est esse omnium et constitutio eorum*" ("*. . .* nothing exists without it [viz. *al-Irāda*], since the existence and constitution of all things are from it . . . "), cf. *Fons Vitae* 5.39, p. 327, lines 16–17.
15 *Fons Vitae* 4.20, p. 255, line 8. Along these lines too, *Irāda* is described as "*lumen quod est in essentia virtutis*" (*Fons Vitae* 4.20, p. 254, line 20). See too Chapter 4, note 33 on the notion of light also in connection with Wisdom. Helping make sense of why both Divine *Irāda* and Divine Will can be linked to the diffusing light of form, in Chapter 8 we will see how the Divine *Irāda* and Divine Wisdom are two ways of apophatically beckoning to God's single reality in terms of a processive unfolding into the diversities of being.
16 I am translating "*virtus*" as "vitality" instead of "power" because the English connotations of "power" are misleading in an attempt to understand Ibn Gabirol's emanationist, desiring vision of God. See my "Terminological Preamble II" (Section 2.4) for a reminder of the concern with the notion of Ibn Gabirol's God as a "God of Power" – a concern that is emphasized in light of the emanationist reading of the Divine *Irāda* in this chapter, and in light of the additional theological details that we will uncover in Chapter 8. (See too Chapter 4, note 20, and Subsection 5.5.1 with note 25.)
17 *Fons Vitae* 5.38, p. 326, lines 4–7.
18 *Fons Vitae* 4.9, p. 231, lines 4 ff.
19 *Fons Vitae* 4.9, p. 230, lines 19–23.
20 See Shahrastānī, *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects*, 262, line 3.
21 See another overview in my "Through a Platonist Lens: Unity, Goodness, Intellect and Return," in *The Blackwell History of Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. John

Inglis, Dan Frank, and Taneli Kukkonen (Blackwell, forthcoming). In Chapter 8 of the current study, I address the role of this method in Ibn Gabirol's theology.

22 Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 125.

23 Gersh addresses this, as well as a number of different geometrical images, in this regard; see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 74, and for a range of images, 72–76.

24 *Fons Vitae* 5.9, p. 272, line 8.

25 Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 64.

26 Sells, *Mystical Languages*, 244, note 7.

27 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 333, lines 4–5.

28 In this regard, see Chapter 1, note 1.

29 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 15–20.

30 On illumination by shadow, see Section 4.4 with note 48.

31 Or perhaps a rarified form of fire; for these different conceptions of the celestial realm, see Gad Freudenthal, *Aristotle's Theory of Material Substance: Heat and Pneuma, Form and Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

32 Recall too Peter Cole's own sense, from within the contours of Ibn Gabirol's poetry, of a divine emanating desire (see Section 2.4 and Chapter 5, note 5). While Cole does not address his reason for "desire" over "will" (he speaks too of an "emanation of divine energy" in Ibn Gabirol; see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 27), it is notable that Cole, himself a poet, so strongly feels the emanating nuance of Ibn Gabirol's theology from within his poems. It is precisely this emanating nuance that I hope to have identified throughout the technical details of the *Fons Vitae* – *pace* so many scholarly readings of "Divine Will" to the contrary.

33 For a treatment of this idea from Greek into Islamic thought (also related to the description of God's generosity), see section 2.1 of my "Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonisms."

34 As noted earlier, there is nothing inherently wrong with translating this as "Divine Will," but see Section 2.4 for why I strongly prefer "Divine Desire." I would generally prefer using "Divine Desire" over "Divine Will" in *all* Neoplatonic contexts.

35 In this regard, see Tzemah's treatment of "*yēsh bemō yēsh*" – being within being ("*bemō*" is the Hebrew term for "within") – as his suggested emendation of the *Ahavtīkha* line "*yēsh kemō yēsh*" ("*kemō*" is the Hebrew term for "like"), a line that we have treated in Sections 3.2 and 4.2, and which in Section 7.5 we will treat – contra Tzemah – as describing matter precisely as "*kemō-yēsh*" ("like-existence"); see Tzemah, "*Yēsh bemō Yēsh*."

CHAPTER 7: MATTER REVISITED

1 On this possible commentary on Genesis 2:10, see Friedlaender, *Essays on the Writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, 40, and discussion in Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy*, 79.

2 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 333, lines 4–5.

3 Turning to the surrounding Kalām debates in Ibn Gabirol's context, Essence – *adh-dhāt* – is a characteristic term used to describe God, and in particular as part of a debate about the nature or absence of Divine Attributes, which most vigorously stresses God's complete unity and utter transcendence. For Sells's sense of this term in Sufism, see the discussion of the Divine Essence in Section 6.5.

4 A later Christian account that identifies God and matter can be found in the writings of David of Dinant, a view arguably rooted in his own reading of *Fons Vitae* materials (and a view for which he was condemned by the Church). (For Aquinas on Dinant on God as "*materiam primam*," see *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 3, a. 8.) Some other resonances of a God–matter link can be seen in the Stoic notion of a divine *pneuma*, as well as in Plotinus' notion of intelligible matter and in Nicomachus of Gerasa's Neopythagorean notion of the divine mind as a material receptacle (see Sections A2 and A5 of the Appendix).

5 On the complex relation between Essence, Wisdom, and *al-Irāda* in Ibn Gabirol, see Chapter 8 (and see also note 13 to that chapter).

6 Schlanger concludes that Ibn Gabirol cannot really think matter arises from the First Essence, because that would both suggest the emergence of the imperfect from the perfect and also risk religious impiety in suggesting that God and matter are co-eternal. In this regard, he notes that "*. . . l'affirmation – la matière est créée par l'essence première – ne peut être prise a lettre, et cela, nous l'avons vu, pour deux raisons: il n'y a de création que par la volonté, le parfait ne peut être créateur de l'imparfait. Cette affirmation désigne essentiellement la coéternité de l'essence première et de la matière. Ce sont peut-être des raisons de prudence religieuse qui ont empêché Ibn Gabirol d'être plus clair et d'affirmer plus nettement que la matière coexists de toute éternité avec l'essence première*" (Schlanger, *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 293). In this second regard, we might also note S. Munk's claim (addressed earlier in Section 5.0) that the "intermeddling of the [divine] will is a concession made to the religious demands by which Avicebron paid a faithful homage to the dogma of Creation announced by Judaism" (Munk, *Philosophy and Philosophical Authors of the Jews*, 23). My own approach to Ibn Gabirol is far more Neoplatonic. First of all, as we will see in Chapter 8, the Neoplatonist is deeply animated by the Paradox of Divine Unity according to which he precisely notes – and is everlastingly perplexed by the fact that – God's unity (perfection) is the source of plurality (imperfection); a Neoplatonist does not deny that this is the case – he is just moved into perplexity (and praise of God) based on its being the case. Second, within a Neoplatonic context, co-eternity is not religiously impious; it is, rather, the fundamental reality of the gift of being (directly related to the Paradox of Divine Unity). On my own Neoplatonic reading, Ibn Gabirol would not identify with either of Schlanger's two concerns. Relatedly, as we have seen in our treatment of the *Theology of Aristotle* in Section 5.4, Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic context does not, *pace* Munk, view "creation" as a "dogma announced by Judaism"; rather, for Ibn Gabirol – as for the *Theology of Aristotle* and a host of other Islamic Neoplatonic traditions – "creation" is a way of Neoplatonically describing the mystery of God's sovereign (and eternally emanating) relationship to being.

7 In *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*), canto 1, line 7; see Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-'ivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 257, poem 108; see too his footnote on that line (258, lines 6–7 in the notes), in which he identifies Ibn Gabirol's *sōd* with form and his *yesōd* with matter (258). For information on editions and commentaries on this poem, see Chapter 4, note 20.

8 This is the same term used in the Hebrew title of the *Fons Vitae*: *Meqōr Ḥayyīm* (the *Source of Life*).

9 In "*reshūt le-birkhō*"; see Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-'ivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 255, poem 107, line 6.

10 For interpretations of this poem that highlight this point, see Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol* (and "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*"); Schlanger, "*Sur le role du 'tout' dans la création selon Ibn Gabirol*"; Tzemah, "*Yēsh bemō Yēsh.*"

11 See couplets 3 and 5. For the Hebrew text, see Bialik and Ravnitsky (eds.), *Shīrei Shlōmō ben Yehūdah Ibn Gevīrōl*, Vol. I, 112, poem 48; also, in *Shirei ha-ḥol le-Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gevirol*, ed. Dov Yarden (Jerusalem: *Kiryat Noar*, 1975). English translation is my own. For another translation, see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 108 (with notes and relevant scriptural references, 261–264). For a longer list of commentary and edition references for this poem, see Chapter 3, note 22.

12 For a different reading of what might be meant by "*yesōd*" in the *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*), see Tzvi Langermann's treatment of a much later Judeo-Arabic version of the poem in which the author translates "*ha-sōd ve-ha-yesōd*" as "the secrets whose roots are hidden," a reference in the context of that translation to the endurance of the soul through the perfection of intellect (see Langermann, "A Judeo-Arabic Paraphrase," 6).

13 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 335, lines 23–24.

14 See too the reference to this throne as "higher than all height" in canto 1 of *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*) (Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-'ivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 258, line 12). For more on Ibn Gabirol's unique notion of a *galgal he-sēkhel* ("the sphere of Intellect") as an unusual mix of astronomical with cosmo-theological ideas (it is a "sphere" but also an "intellect"), see Adena Tanenbaum, "Nine Spheres or Ten? A Medieval Gloss on Moses Ibn Ezra's '*Be-Shem El Asher Amar*'," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 47:2 (1996): 294–310; see too Raphael Loewe, "Ibn Gabirol's Treatment of Sources in the *Kether Malkhuth*," in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History (Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday)*, ed. S. Stein and R. Loewe (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1979), 183–194; and Joseph L. Blau, "On the Supposedly Aristotelian Character of Gabirol's Keter Malkut," *Salo Wittmayer Baron, Jubilee Volume*, English Section (Jerusalem, 1974), Vol. I, 219–228. For the concept of Throne in various theological contexts, see "Throne" in *Encylopaedia Judaica* and "*Kursī*" and "'*Arsh*" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. For the throne in Islam, see too *Qur'ān* 7.54 and 20.5, and see, for example, Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2nd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 277 and 244 for Islamic correlations of Throne to Divine Glory. See too Plotinus on the "throne beside Intellect" and the symbolic teaching of justice being "throned" beside Zeus (Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5.8; see *Enneads*, trans. A. H. Armstrong [The Loeb Classical Library] [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966], Vol. 5, 252–253 [with note 1]).

15 See Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-'ivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 272, poem 108, canto 26, lines 253–254.

16 Loewe, *Ibn Gabirol*, 114.

17 See also Subsection 2.5.1 for an overview of Arabic terms for matter in Ibn Gabirol's Jewish and Islamic milieu.

18 *Fons Vitae* 5.2, p. 259, lines 25–26.

19 *Fons Vitae* 1.10, p. 13, lines 26–27.

20 *Fons Vitae* 1.10, p. 13, lines 15–17.

21 *Fons Vitae* 5.22, p. 298, lines 13–17; compare with facing Arabic text at Pines, "*Sefer ʿArūgat ha-Bōsem*," 227 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 53), section 9.2.

22 Reflecting on Ibn Gabirol's talk in this regard of a "universal matter," Brunner notes "*. . . il est exact qu'Ibn Gabirol donne une portée réelle aux ētres logiques* [viz., genus and difference] *et que le genre de la substance est pour lui la matière universelle. Mais il ne s'ensuit nullement que pour lui la matière universelle soit un substrat neutre comme on conçoit d'ordinaire le genre . . . Le genre n'est pas ici un fond commun indifférent, mais le terme supérieur enveloppe tous les autres . . .* " (Brunner, *Platonisme et Aristotélisme*, 54).

23 It must also be noted that Ibn Gabirol envisions a kind of unity in the presence of form as well; this can be seen, for example, in the description of the Divine *Irāda* – the herald of form – as a "*virtus unitatis*" (see *Fons Vitae* 5.39, p. 327, line 26; and see similarly, 5.37, p. 325, line 15; and 5.40, p. 329, line 27). Associating a kind of unity with enformation does not contradict the sense in which unity is found in matter because they refer to different kinds of unity: While the unity of form found in *al-Irāda* beckons to the substantial integrity of created thises-and-thats in all their differentiation and limitation (it highlights that all individuals are members of a single species, as it highlights too that all things partake of being), the unity of matter beckons, rather, to a hidden core of all being linked, through the material Grounding Element, to the simple and undifferentiated expanse of Divine Essence. We will say more in Chapter 8 about how the Divine Essence – as a Desire-to-Be whose trace is found in a pure matter at the core of all things – beckons to the human's groundedness in receptivity and response (see Sections 8.4–8.5).

24 *Fons Vitae* 1.5, p. 7, lines 16 ff.

25 See Bialik and Ravnitsky (eds.), *Shīrei Shlōmō ben Yehūdah Ibn Gevīrōl*, Vol. I, 112, poem 48; also, in *Shirei ha-ḥol le-Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gevirol*, ed. Dov Yarden (Jerusalem: *Kiryat Noar*, 1975); for a longer list of commentary and edition references for this poem, see Chapter 3, note 22.

26 We might note that Augustine describes the unformed matter out of which the world is created as not absolutely nothing, but midway between nothingness and formed matter (Augustine, *Confessions*, XII, Cap. XII, lines 14–18), as he likewise describes it as "*est non est*" (Augustine, *Confessions*, XII, Cap. VI, 6, line 38). For a further sense of Augustine's sensitivity to creation as a "bringing pre-being into being," we might consider too his theory of "seminal reasons" (*rationes causalis* or *rationes seminales*; see *De Genesi ad Litteram* 6.14.25–6.17.29 and 917.32). All this said, Augustine's doctrine of creation is ultimately quite different from the thoroughgoingly emanationist and apophatic view of Ibn Gabirol that I develop in this study.

27 *Fons Vitae* 4.4, p. 218, line 25–p. 219, line 1 ff.

28 *Fons Vitae* 4.5, p. 221, line 8.

29 *Fons Vitae* 4.5, p. 221, lines 11–12.

30 See *Fons Vitae* 1.10, et al.

31 This textual corruption is reported by Goheen to have been pointed out to him by H. A. Wolfson in personal correspondence (see John Goheen, *The Problem of Matter and Form in the De Ente et Essentia of Thomas Aquinas* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940], 18, note 39).

32 *Fons Vitae* 1.13, p. 16, lines 21–23.

33 Falaquera, *Sēfer Meqōr Ḥayyīm, Qetaʿīm*, Book 1, section 8; cf. Sifroni, *Ōẓar Ha-Maḥshavah shel Ha-Yahadūt*, 438–439. My thanks to Tzvi Langermann for help with this sentence.

34 See Goheen, *The Problem of Matter and Form*, 18.

35 *Fons Vitae* 5.9, p. 272, lines 8–10.

36 Schlanger, *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 294.

37 See *Fons Vitae* 5.10, p. 275. In this regard recall also (in Section 2.2) the first of the items on Ibn Gabirol's list of the "nine orders of substance," namely the substance of all things in the knowledge of the Creator.

38 For an overview of Ibn Gabirol's scholastic reception (with references for further reading), see Bernard McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 92–99. On Albertus Magnus's especially in-depth and extensive critique of Ibn Gabirol, see McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 96–99. For an overview of some of the Christian philosophers – such as St. Bonaventure, Roger Bacon, William of Auvergne, Thomas of York, David of Dinant, and others – interested in *Fons Vitae* themes (either themselves having read the *Fons Vitae*, or having read other works by Gundissalinus – the translator of the text into Latin – that incorporate *Fons Vitae* themes), see O. Lottin, "*La composition hylémorphique des substances spirituelles: Les débuts de la controverse, Revue néo-scholastique de des substances spirituelles: Les débuts de la controverse," Revue néo-scholastique de Philosophie* 34 (1932); Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus," 252 ff.; Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955; in particular, follow the "Ibn Gabirol" citations listed in the "Index of Authors" on p. 808); Goheen, *The Problem of Matter and Form*; D. E. Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930); Kevin J. Caster, "William of Auvergne's Adaptation of Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of the Divine Will," *The Modern Schoolman* LXXIV (1996).

39 *De Substantiis Separatis*; see Aquinas' *Treatise on Separate Substances*, tr. Rev. F. J. Lescoe (West Hartford, CT: Saint Joseph College, 1959), 35. For a sense of Aquinas' general reaction against universal hylomorphism, recall note 41 to Chapter 4: Aquinas views universal hylomorphism as erroneously hypostasizing genus and species (as matter and form); with respect to this error, Aquinas emphasizes that genera and species do not demarcate a real distinction – genus, for example, is only logically representative of an essence in an indeterminate way; see *Summa Theologiae* I. q. 50, a. 2, and see Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels*, 70. McGinn lists the following key critiques of universal hylomorphism in Aquinas (see McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 108, note 125): *In II Sent.* d. 3, q. 1, a. 1; *De ente et essentia* 5; *De Substantiis Separatis* 5–8; *De spiritualibus creaturis* a. 3; *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 50, a.2, ad 2, and q. 66, a. 2; and *Summa Contra Gentiles* II, 50. On the related issue of the plurality of forms, McGinn lists *In II Sent.* d. 12, q. 1, a. 4; *De sub. sep.* 6; *De spir. creat.* A. 1, and a. 3; *Quodlibet* XI, q. 5, a. 5; *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 66, a. 2; *De Anima* q. 6; *In II de anima*, lect. 1; and *In I de generatione et corruptione*, lect. 10.8.

40 McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 79.

41 See too his *Quaestio disp. De Anima* (a.6): "Some say that the soul and absolutely every substance besides God is composed of matter and form; indeed the first author to hold this position is Avicebron, the author of the *Liber fontis vitae*"; cf. James A. Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicebron," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 10 (1979), 250. It is interesting to note Aquinas'

charitable reading of what he takes to be a universal hylomorphic claim in the *Liber de Causis*; in the context of his treatment of the *Liber*, he charitably reads what he takes to be universal hylomorphic claim as a misleading way of expressing something true about the contingent nature of all non-God beings (for the claim in question and why Aquinas read it as a claim about the presence of matter in intellects, see Section A6 of the Appendix). For whatever reason, however, Aquinas does not extend a similar charity to Ibn Gabirol's talk of intellects in terms of matter and instead goes on to criticize Ibn Gabirol's view. I leave a fuller consideration of Aquinas' readings and critiques – and a consideration of his choosing criticism over charity in some cases, but charity over criticism in others – to another study. For a sense of Aquinas' general critique of universal hylomorphism, see note 39 to this chapter (and note 41 to Chapter 4).

42 On the use of the Hebrew term "*yesōd*" ("foundation") in Ibn Gabirol, see Sections 2.5, 7.3, and A12; on the sense in which that term has too quickly suggested links between Ibn Gabirol and Kabbalah, see Section 2.5; on the relationship between Ibn Gabirol and Kabbalah more broadly (including warnings about making such a connection), see note 39 to Chapter 2.

43 For a related consideration of the motivations behind Ps. Empedoclean hylomorphism, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism," where I outline two related philosophical sensibilities: Pure Unspecified Being as the Potency for All Things, and Neoplatonic Descent and the Dependence of All Things Upon God.

44 See Pines, "*Ve-qara el ha-Ayin ve-Nivqa*" for the link to Avicenna. For my own distinction between Avicennian hylomorphism and Ps. Empedoclean hylomorphism, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism."

45 In Ibn Gabirol's poem, *Keter Malk̲hūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*), canto 9; see Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 262, line 82. For a treatment of this line, see Pines, "*Ve-qara el ha-Ayin ve-Nivqa*"; see too Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 149 and notes 20–22 (296–297). For information on editions and commentaries on this poem, see note 20 to Chapter 4.

46 Whereas this idea in Ibn Gabirol refers to the material Grounding Element outside of God, there are many Jewish mystical contexts in which this idea refers to a particular sefirotic aspect of God. For an overview of *'ayīn* in Jewish mystical contexts, see Daniel C. Matt, "*Ayin*: The Concept of Nothingness in Jewish Mysticism," in *Essential Papers on Kabbalah*, ed. Lawrence Fine (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 67-108.

47 For an overview of some of these views of creation – and the different implications of "nothingness" and matter across a range of views – see my "Matter, Form and the Corporeal World." For the Muʿtazilite sense of creation from nothing as a creation from something, see Section A10 of the Appendix.

48 From canto 9 of Gabirol's *Keter Malk̲hūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*); translation taken from Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 149. For information on editions and commentaries on this poem, see note 20 to Chapter 4.

49 In this regard, consider Schlanger's reading of *ahavtīk̲ha*; see Schlanger, "*Sur le role du 'tout' dans la création selon Ibn Gabir*ol."

50 Here, consider Tzemah's reading of *ahavtīk̲ha*: We may speak of the Divine *Irāda*'s opening the folds of being from one level of matter onto the next, each unfolding onto the next in an intimate process of formation. See Tzemah, "*Yēsh bemō Yēsh*."

51 From Ibn Gabirol's "He Dwells Forever"; see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 126, lines 26–27 (notes at 279–281).
52 *Fons Vitae* 5.32, p. 317, lines 17–20.
53 In this regard, see Kaufmann's commentary on *Ahavtīkha*; see Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn* Gabirol (and "*Ha-Pseudo Empedocles ka-Meqōr le-R' Shlōmō ibn Gavīrōl*").
54 See Pines "*Ve-qara el ha-Ayin ve-Nivqa*," note 3, where he warns against assuming that the *Fons Vitae* and the *Keter Malkhūt* advance a single philosophical vision.
55 Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 3, poem 2, canto 1; my translation. (Lines from this same "*Baqasha*" poem are also included at the very start of Chapter 4.)

CHAPTER 8: NEOPLATONIC COSMO-ONTOLOGY AS APOPHATIC RESPONSE AND AS PRESCRIPTION FOR HUMAN LIVING (METHODOLOGICAL REAPPRAISAL I)

1 From Ibn Gabirol's "*me'ōrah le-yōm shēnī shel shavū'ōt*"; Hebrew text in Zangwill, *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 78, poem 48, lines 1–2; my translation. Whereas most translations – including Zangwill's – see God in the role of both sun and moon in these lines, I have opted in my translation to emphasize the human seeker in the receptive, but also illuminating, role as a moon that receives the light of God-as-sun. The importance of the self as receiver of God's light will become clear in this chapter. (My thesis, of course, does not rely on this novel translation; I offer it simply as a suggestion given the overall theme of self-as-receptive in the overall Theology of Desire that I have been developing in this project; the standard translation – which emphasizes God as sun and moon – fits with the other theme we have been emphasizing, namely God's role in Ibn Gabirol as an emanating source.)
2 My project in this regard provides a fifth alternative to metaphysical categories of "realism," "conceptualism," "nominalism," and Scotus' "formalism" when it comes to interpreting Neoplatonic metaphysics. When analyzing "hypostases" or "layers," I share with Duns Scotus (in his introduction of the "formal distinction") a sense that we need a category beyond just "real" and "conceptual" – in this respect, Scotus' and my own view can both be seen as pushing back at Aquinas' sense that Universal Hylomorphism is overly realist (see note 41 to Chapter 4, note 41 to Chapter 7, and Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels*, 70). That said, in emphasizing that, for Ibn Gabirol, the pure material Grounding Element (and its vestige in all things) is *real*, I do not rely on Scotus' own intermediate mode of "formal existence." My approach is based, rather, on a sense of "reality under apophasis," and so does not carve out a different mode of existence as much as a different way of understanding Neoplatonic language's relation to reality. One must also consider similarities with – but also, ultimately, differences from – Siger of Brabant's own emphasis on prime matter's extra-formal reality; see Andrew LaZella, "On the Non-Identity Between Prime Matter and Potency in Siger of Brabant's Metaphysics," *Tópicos* 39 (2010): 9–44. My approach to Ibn Gabirol shares with Siger a sense of the extra-formal reality of "prime matter," but (1) for Ibn Gabirol, this, of course, is the material Grounding Element at the core of the Great Chain of Being; and (2) the reality of the material Grounding Element is approached as "reality under apophasis," a concept not at play in Siger. I hope in a future study to better outline the details of "reality

under apophasis" (perhaps usefully in contrast to both Scotus and Siger) as a new category for understanding Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology (and with it Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*).

3 For a sense of various modes of apophasis referred to in scholarly conversations across texts (to which I view my notion of the "doubly apophatic" as an original contribution), see Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. In the case of Ibn Gabirol, we might note, for example, Brunner's identification of an apophatic sensibility in the *Fons Vitae*'s hylomorphic project; noting the link between God's Essence and matter in Ibn Gabirol (as hidden realities, both in contrast to the manifestness of form), and sensing an apophatic sensibility in Ibn Gabirol, Brunner speaks of Ibn Gabirol's project as a Semitic investigation of the pure reality of God, in contrast to a Greek project centering on knowledge; as should be clear from this study, I do not view Ibn Gabirol's apophasis as contrasting with Greek thought; I view it as entirely rooted in Greek Neoplatonism. For Brunner's discussion, see "*Sur l'hylémorphisme d'Ibn Gabirol*," *Lés Études Philosophiques, nouv. série*, 8.1 (1953), 28–38, reprinted in *Métaphysique d'Ibn Gabirol et la tradition platonicienne*, ed. Daniel Schulthess, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot: Ashgate), essay II. We might here too note Elliot R. Wolfson's extensive work on apophasis in a range of medieval Jewish textual traditions. Wolfson illuminates a particular sensitivity to the dynamic of concealment and revelation in a range of Jewish apophatic theologies, helping elaborate the idea that in apophatic concealment of God through language, we reveal Him – but that in the verbal revealing itself, we have at once concealed Him. For an overview of this dynamic (which Wolfson engages throughout his corpus), see, for example, Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 17–19; on the Kabbalah's "ontological esotericism" in this regard see Wolfson, *Abulafia–Kabbalist and Prophet: Hermeneutics, Theosophy, Theurgy* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2000), 52; see too Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). On this theme of concealment as revelation and vice versa, see too Moses Cordovero's *Pardēs Rīmōnīm*, 5:4, 25d; for translation, see Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 91 (first excerpt). While I do connect to this idea in Chapter 10 in talking about the process of emanative unfolding, the apophasis and "double apophasis" that I explore in the context of Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics and cosmo-ontology later in this chapter highlights a somewhat different element: In my treatment of the *Fons Vitae* text as apophatic, I do not emphasize the nature of the apophatic revelation-as-concealment itself, but the sense in which Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics – understood as an apophatic (and "doubly apophatic") response to the Paradox of Divine Unity – ties directly to his ethical framework.

4 Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 17.

5 For an overview of apophatic strategies, see Sells, *Mystical Languages*; see also note 3 to this chapter.

6 See too my discussion in "Through a Platonist Lens: Unity, Goodness, Intellect and Return." I hope to devote a longer study to this particular issue.

7 For the former, see, for example, *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 335, lines 4–5. For the latter, see, for example, *Fons Vitae* 5.36, p. 323, lines 17–20, and *Fons Vitae* 5.36, p. 322, line 23 on

al-Irāda as the "*verbum agens*." For a more extensive treatment of this point, see note 13 to this chapter.

8 This point can be seen in claims that emphasize the identity in one respect, and the difference in another respect, of Divine Essence and Divine *Irāda*; consider, for example: "*remota actione voluntate, voluntas et essentia sunt unum; considerate cum actione est alia ab essentia*" (*Fons Vitae* 5.37, p. 325, line 23).

9 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 335, lines 23–24.

10 *Fons Vitae* 5.41, p. 330, lines 17–21. (Parts of this sentence appear to be corrupt in the Latin text.) My thanks to Bob Pasnau for help with this line.

11 From *Keter Malkhūt* (*Kingdom's Crown*); see Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-'ivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 258, poem 108, canto 2, lines 20–21.

12 *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 333, lines 4–5.

13 Along these lines, we might note that the *Fons Vitae* talks in various ways about Divine Essence, *al-Irāda*, Wisdom, and Word: Ibn Gabirol emphasizes the priority of Divine Essence (as, for example, in his claim that Wisdom [*sapientia*] is a property of – and as such, secondary to – the Divine Essence; see *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 333, line 5); in this respect, we have seen Ibn Gabirol emphasize the relation of matter to Divine Essence and form to Divine Will – but at times (e.g., *Fons Vitae* 5.28) he emphasizes the relation between form and *al-Irāda*, and at times (e.g., *Fons Vitae* 2.13) he emphasizes that *al-Irāda* is the creator and mover of matter and form. His description of the relationship between Divine *Irāda* and Divine Wisdom also reveals a range of emphases. While at times Ibn Gabirol seems to emphasize the priority of Divine *Irāda* over Divine Wisdom, we find at other times that he identifies Divine *Irāda* with Wisdom (see, for example, *Fons Vitae* 5.42, p. 335, line 5). In this regard we also might note his *Fons Vitae* identification of the Divine *Irāda* with the Divine Word (itself identified with the Divine Wisdom; *Fons Vitae* 5.36, p. 323, lines 17–20); along these lines too, cf. *Fons Vitae* 5.36, p. 322, line 23 on *Irāda* as the "*verbum agens*." Looking to his Hebrew poetry, Scholem and Liebes each address his sense of the priority of Divine Wisdom (see Gershom Scholem, "*Iqvatov shel Gevirol ba-Qabbalah*," in *Me'asēf Sōfrei Ereẓ Yisrael*, ed. E. Steiman and A.A. Kovak [Tel Aviv, 1939], 160–178; see too Liebes "*Sēfer Yeẓīrah ēẓel R. Shlōmo Ibn Gevirōl ū-pērūsh ha-shīr 'Ahavtīkha*"). On the virtual interchangeability of "Divine Will" with "Word" in Ibn Gabirol, see too Pines's analysis of the impact on Ibn Gabirol of Saadya Gaōn (Shlomo Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies," 126). And yet, for the suggestion that Divine Word is decidedly absent in Ibn Gabirol (perhaps representing a polemic with Kalām), see Goldziher's treament of the *amr ilāhī* in HaLevi (see Ignaz Goldziher, "Mélanges Judéo-Arabes," *Revue des Études Juives* 50 [1905]: 182-190); (complicating Goldziher's comparison of HaLevi and Ibn Gabirol, see too Altmann's suggestion that the *amr* in HaLevi is not a genuine hypostasis but rather the reception of divine revelation in the heart of a prophet; see Alexander Altmann, "Saadya's Theory of Revelation: Its Origin and Background," in A. Altmann *Studies in Religion, Philosophy and Mysticism* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969], 140–160).

It might be additionally noted that in the *Fons Vitae*, sometimes the Divine *Irāda* seems to be a self-standing hypostasis, but at other times it seems to be one with the Divine Essence; in this regard compare *Fons Vitae* 4.19, p. 253, line 3, and *Fons*

Vitae 5.37, p. 325, line 23. And at *Fons Vitae* 5.38, p. 326, line 3 Ibn Gabirol simply states that it is impossible to definitively describe the Divine *Irāda*. We might also note that whereas Ibn Gabirol links matter to the Divine Essence at *Fons Vitae* 5.42, at *Fons Vitae* 5:36–38 he suggests that matter (along with form) derives from the Divine *Irāda*. See too Arthur Hyman's list of Ibn Gabirol's various competing claims about "Will" and Wisdom; Arthur Hyman, "From What Is One and Simple," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 120–121.

14 McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 91; for an overview of scholastic receptions (embraces and critiques) of Ibn Gabirol, see 92–99.

15 For this claim in Husik, see Section 5.3.

16 For an overview of apophatic strategies, see Sells, *Mystical Languages*; see too note 3 to this chapter.

17 See Boethius' short treatise the "*Quomodo Substantiae*" (also known as the *De Hebdomadibus*). For references, see my "Hebdomads: Boethius Meets the Neopythagoreans," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 37 (1999): 29–48. For the suggestion of decidedly Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean resonances in Boethius, see too my "Boethius and the Neoplatonic Good: Hebdomads and the Nature of God in the *Quomodo Substantiae*," *Carmina Philosophiae: Journal of the International Boethius Society* 10 (2001): 57–71.

18 As mentioned in an earlier note, it is not charitable to read Ibn Sīnā as having literally thought of existence as a "super-added accident"; in this regard, see Rahman, "Essence and Existence in Avicenna," and Morewedge, "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction." For an exploration of how this thesis in Avicenna is, at its core, a reflection on his part on the dependency of all things on God (and not a mistaken bit of ontology as is often claimed), see my "Proclean 'Remaining' and Avicenna on Existence as Accident: Neoplatonic Methodology and a Defense of 'Pre-Existing' Essences," in *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. John Inglis (Richmond, VA: Curzon Press, 2002), 151–168.

19 This "whether" question is based on Aristotle's "*to hoti*" classification at *Posterior Analytics* 2.1. See *Fons Vitae* 5.24, p. 301, lines 16 ff. where these four questions – and their relevance, or lack thereof to God – are addressed. For a discussion of this passage, including a consideration of its notion of divine unity in a Neoplatonic context, see my "Jewish Neoplatonism: Being Above Being and Divine Emanation in Solomon Ibn Gabirol and Isaac Israeli."

20 We might also note a different way that a medieval Jewish analysis of matter can give way to a reflection on humility and human conduct. In this regard, consider David Shatz's essay "Is Matter All That Matters?: Judaism, Free Will, and the Genetic and Neuroscientific Revolutions," in *Jewish Thought in Dialogue: Essays on Thinkers, Theologies, and Moral Theories*, ed. David Shatz (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2009), 224–256 (reprinted from *Judaism, Science, and Moral Responsibility*, ed. Yitzhak Berger and David Shatz [Baltimore: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006], 54–103). While directed to the question of human free will in a context of materialism (i.e., *not* the view of matter that we are addressing in the current project, but a view about matter nonetheless), Shatz highlights a link between questions of materialism and the "question of arrogance" (Shatz, "Is Matter All That Matters?," 229). He considers, that is, the extent to which a materialist metaphysics

(in which a human has no freedom of choice between competing possibilities) can be seen in dialogue with Hassidic literature about humility. While the link in Shatz's study is between "matter and materialism," "materialism and lack of free will," and "lack of free will and humility" (and not directly, as in our case, between a special cosmo-ontological teaching on matter and humility), Shatz's essay can be seen as helping further highlight how a "discourse on matter" can give way to questions of human subjectivity (though to be sure, the sense of "discourse on matter" at play in the current chapter is quite different from the discourse of contemporary metaphysics, materialist or otherwise). It might also be noted that in the case of a materialist worldview, the reality of matter might foster a feeling of humility, but it also might foster an opposite feeling of human power over nature (see Shatz, "Is Matter All That Matters?," 244–245). On the virtue of humility in some medieval Jewish contexts, see, for example, James Diamond, "Maimonides on Kingship: The Ethics of Imperial Humility," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 34:1 (2006): 89–114, and Daniel Frank, "Humility as a Virtue: A Maimonidean Critique of Aristotle's Ethics," in *Moses Maimonides and His Time*, ed. Eric L. Ormsby (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 89–99.

21 *Psalms* 139:15. Cf. Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 236, poem 96, note 2.

22 On the term "*ve-hiqbīanī*" see *Psalms* 139, *Job* 10:10; cf. Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 236, poem 96, note 2.

23 Schirmann here contrasts Pharoah's words "I made myself" at *Ezekiel* 29:3; see Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 236, poem 96, note 5.

24 Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 236, poem 96 ("*Terem Heyōtī*"); my English translation. For a different English rendering and commentary notes, see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 111 (with notes at 265–267), and Scheindlin, *The Gazelle*, 209–213.

25 I am thankful to Joel Kraemer for this insight. In addition to the term "*ʾanī*" ("I") itself, every line of poetry ends with an "*-ʾanī*" suffix.

26 This is Cole's moving rendering of an excerpt from Ibn Gabirol's *reshūt* for the New Year, which itself presents the poet's first name as an acrostic ("Shlomoh"). See Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 119 ("Small in My Awe") with notes at 273 referencing *Proverbs* 16:19, *Taʿanit* 16a, *Ezekiel* 17:6, and *Psalms* 22:7.

CHAPTER 9: TRANSCENDENTAL GROUNDING, MYTHOPOETIC AND SYMBOLIC TRANSFORMATION, AND THE CREATION OF NEW WORLDS WITH WORDS (METHODOLOGICAL REAPPRAISAL II)

1 Following further on the implications for receptivity of Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontological emphasis on matter, see my "Loss, Presence, and Gabirol's Desire" for a sense of how Ibn Gabirol's text can be seen as providing a feminist opening in the history of philosophy. For a sense of the link between another Jewish philosopher of "receptivity" and a feminist ethics of care in particular, see James W. Walters, *Martin Buber & Feminist Ethics: The Priority of the Personal* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

2 To be sure, there are a number of disanalogies with Kant's view that are beyond the scope of the current study to consider. The complications with this analogy to Kant aside, I do think it is instructive to consider Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology

as transcendentally grounding the possibility of a meaningful human life (where again, as I have noted in the text, "meaningful" is circularly defined in terms of the Neoplatonists' own perspective). In support of reading pre-Kantian materials as engaged in transcendental projects, one might consider Jonathan Lear's treatment of Aristotle; see Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 307–309.

3 Here one might consider the view of substitution in Levinas as explaining what the subject must be like for ethics to be possible; see Simon Critchley, "The Original Traumatism: Levinas and Psychoanalysis," in his *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought* (London: Verso, 1999), 183–197. For a description of Critchley's view along these lines, as well as for a sense of alternative views of substitution (and the limits of the transcendental reading of Levinas), see Robert Bernasconi, "What Is the Question to Which 'Substitution' Is the Answer?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 234–251; see too note 1 on Derrida's own transcendental reading of Levinas (followed by his concern with such a reading; 250, note 1). See too Theodore De Boer's "An Ethical Transcendental Philosophy," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), 83–158. For a helpful overview of the phenomenological and counter-phenomenological aspects of Levinas in this regard, see Richard A. Cohen, *Elevations: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 223–240.

4 Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus, Or, the Simplicity of Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 25.

5 Hadot, *Plotinus*.

6 Michael A. Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1999).

7 Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*, 16; he also refers to "sound figures" – see 25, 27, et al.

8 Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*, 19.

9 Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*, 27.

10 See Sara Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 240.

11 Hughes focuses on texts with dialogical force in his *The Art of Dialogue in Jewish Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). Hughes himself notes (see 44–46) that the dialogue format of the *Fons Vitae* is thinner than the kind of dialogical structure he treats in his book across a number of Jewish thinkers.

12 Hughes focuses on the power of narrative or symbolic accounts and the mimetic role of imagination in this context; see Aaron W. Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine: Imagination in Medieval Jewish and Islamic Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). For his discussion of how allegory makes the reader "an active participant" (37), and for his sense of the "performative" nature of the text (39) and its relation to religious ritual, see his analysis of the initiatory tale (chapter 1, "Reading the Divine: A User's Guide to the Initiatory Tale"), and his sense of "ritual poetics" (chapter 4, "The Initiation of the Philosopher: Ritual Poetics and the Quest for Meaning"). Hughes also provides a translation and analysis of Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Ḥay ben Mēqiẓ*, an allegorical journey that features a protagonist with whom readers can journey (189–207).

13 See Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
14 Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 32.
15 Corbin, *Avicenna*, 32.
16 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951), 100.
17 Elliot R. Wolfson addresses the transformational capacity of time throughout his extensive works; see, for example, his prologue "Timeswerve/Hermeneutic Reversibility" in his *Language, Eros, Being*, xv–xxxi; see too an in-depth set of elaborations in his *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). In *Language, Eros, Being*, in addition to helping lay out the phenomenology of time (through a consideration of Merleau-Ponty), Wolfson defends his methodology against the charge of "anachronism" with an insight that is critical to keep in mind when approaching all exegetical work: The charge that an engagement with later critical theoretical systems is "anachronistic" to a study of a medieval Jewish tradition is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of time (for Wolfson's argument, see pages referenced earlier in this note).
18 Ahbel-Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism*, 240–241.
19 Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 62–63.
20 Wolfson has also shown a range of critical theoretical feminist, religious, and hermeneutic implications of this phenomenon throughout a rich set of textual histories. It is important to consider Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire in its relation to the history and implications of Jewish imaginal texts and *érōs* addressed in Wolfson's work. I hope to be able to address this more fully in future work.
21 Kevin Corrigan, *Reading Plotinus: A Practical Introduction to Neoplatonism* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005), 232.
22 Corrigan, *Reading Plotinus*, 232.
23 Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menachem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 29.
24 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 315, chapter 1, note 1.
25 Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 233.
26 Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 234.
27 *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, by Jonathan Z. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 290–291.
28 It might be noted that, unlike religious texts, Neoplatonic texts overtly invite readers to look beyond their details as can be seen, for example, in their reminder that their cosmo-ontological claims do not refer in any literally spatiotemporal sense. This is all the more reason to take Smith's insight to heart when reading Neoplatonic cosmo-ontology.
29 From Ibn Gabirol's poem "He Dwells Forever," as translated in Cole, *The Dream of the Poem*, 95.
30 From Ibn Gabirol's "Prologue to the *Book of Grammar*," as translated in Cole, *The Dream of the Poem*, 76.
31 From Ibn Gabirol's poem "Truth Seekers Turn," as translated in Cole, *The Dream of the Poem*, 75.

32 The *Sēfer Yeẓīrah* (*Book of Creation* or *Book of Formation*) is a Hebrew text whose origins are subject to scholarly debate. Suggested dates of composition range from the first to the ninth centuries, with just as much disagreement about the nature of the text. For an analysis of the text that argues for the first-century dating, see Yehudah Liebes, *Tōrat ha-Yeẓīrah shel Sēfer Yeẓīrah* (Tel Aviv, 2001). For a defense of the ninth-century dating, see Steven M. Wasserstrom, "Sefer Yesira and Early Islam: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 3 (1993): 1–30. For a discussion of *Sēfer Yeẓīrah*'s impact on Ibn Gabirol, see S. Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies"; see too Liebes, "*Sēfer Yeẓīrah ēẓel R. Shlōmo Ibn Gevirōl*"; Levin, *Ha-sōd ve-ha-Yesōd*; Katz, "*Shīrah ū-mistōrīn*." For more on the *Sēfer Yeẓīrah* and its impact in this period (including references to more extensive bibliographies), see Haggai Ben-Shammai, "Saadya's Goal in His *Commentary on Sefer Yezira*," in *A Straight Path*, ed. R. Link-Salinger et al. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 1–9; Raphael Jospe, "Early Philosophical Commentaries on the *Sefer Yezirah*: Some Comments," *Revue des Études Juives*, CXLIX:4 (1990): 369–415; Elliot R. Wolfson, "The Theosophy of Shabbetai Donnolo, with Special Emphasis on the Doctrine of Sefirot in His Sefer Ḥakhmoni," *Jewish History* 6:1–2 (1992): 281–316.

33 *Fons Vitae* 5.38, p. 326, lines 23–5; for the corresponding Arabic text, see Pines, "*Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem*," 228 (or Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 54), section 9:4.

34 On the "Guarded Tablet" or "Preserved Tablet," see Quran 85:22; see too "*lawḥ*" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb (Leiden: Brill, 1954).

35 See, for example, *Fons Vitae* 5.36, p. 323, lines 17–20, and *Fons Vitae* 5.36, p. 322, line 23 on *al-Irāda* as the "*verbum agens*." On possible links between Word in Ibn Gabirol and the *Longer Theology of Aristotle*, see Schlanger, *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 65. It might also be noted that Proclus equates his henads with "the word"; Proclus, *De Philosophia Chaldaica* 210, 27; see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 25. On the theological notion of "word" in Ibn Gabirol's context, it is also useful to consider the *Longer Theology of Aristotle*'s emphasis on the *kalimah* (word). (See note 10 to Chapter 4 for references on the *Theology of Aristotle*, including its longer and shorter versions and its impact on Jewish Neoplatonism.)

36 And so, "*vox est similes materiae universali, quia vox est materia universalis sustinens omnes voces particulares . . .* " (*Fons Vitae* 5.43, p. 336, lines 12–13). Ibn Gabirol in similar spirit also describes the connection between form and matter as akin to the connection between light and air, as well as between tone and voice: " . . . *applicationis formae cum materia est sicut applicatio luminis cum äere, et sicut applicatio toni, id est motus, cum voce . . .* " (*Fons Vitae* 5.6, p. 267, lines 6–8).

37 *Fons Vitae* 5.43, p. 336, lines 12–13.

38 For a more general introduction to the "macrocosm/microcosm" analysis in Ibn Gabirol (as well as for an analysis of four distinct varieties of analogy employed by Ibn Gabirol), see Schlanger, *Le philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 141–157, and Appendix, 313–316.

39 In this regard, see too "The Language of Existence," lines 60–3 in Katz, "*Shīrah ū-mistōrīn be-yeẓīratō shel Shlōmō Ibn Gevīrōl*."

40 See Kalman Bland, "Idols of the Cave and Theater: A Verbal or Visual Judaism," in *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Intertext*, ed. Anita Norich and Yaron Z.

Eliav (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008), 155–176; see too discussions of the importance of imagination in his *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

41 See Almut Sh. Bruckstein, "Textual Body Landscapes and the Artist's Geometry of Talmud: *Atelier*-Work with the Materiality of Scripture," in *New Directions in Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Aaron W. Hughes and Elliot R. Wolfson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 149–171.

42 See Steven M. Wasserstrom, "Sharing Secrets: Inter-Confessional Philosophy as Dialogical Practice," in *New Directions in Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Aaron W. Hughes and Elliot R. Wolfson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 205–228.

43 Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 293. On the related apophatic dynamic of revelation-as-concealment and concealment-as-revelation at play in linguistic attempts to describe God, see note 3 to Chapter 8.

44 See Wolfson's consideration of Blanchot and his reflections on how it is only in the act of limiting language that the unspoken can be heard; *Language, Eros, Being*, 293. See too his reflections on silence in this regard (294–295).

45 See Hadot, *Philosophy As a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995); in this regard, see too Diana Lobel, *The Quest for God and the Good: World Philosophy As a Living Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) and Mohammad Azadpur, *Reason Unbound: On Spiritual Practice in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011).

46 I might here note that my apophatic-prescriptive-transcendental approach relies on a different sense of "transformation" than the psychological, mimetic, and meditative senses at play in many of the theories considered in this chapter. In my reading, Ibn Gabirol's cosmo-ontology, in its apophatic response to the Paradox of Divine Unity, prescriptively identifies human orientations necessary for living a meaningful human life. This is the "transcendental" force of my reading, and it draws in particular on the prescriptive orientations that emerge from the text's particular apophatic enterprise. Thus, in contrast to some of the aforementioned theories, my reading does not locate the *Fons Vitae*'s transformational capacity in allegorical imagery or creative narrative (including narrative whose efficacy relates to a journeying protagonist): Unlike Corbin's reading of the transformational power of Avicenna's "visual recitals," my reading does not locate the *Fons Vitae*'s transformational capacity in any *ta'wīl* practice related to engaging *allegorical* constructions per se; unlike Ibn Gabirol's material Grounding Element, "allegorical constructs" have clear realities to which they refer – for example, in a certain allegory, a bird might refer to the human soul; but as we have seen in our earlier discussion of maps and territories, the cosmo-ontological details of the *Fons Vitae* do not refer in this way at all. In like spirit, my reading of the *Fons Vitae* does not root the text's transformational capacity in its capacity to transform readers through the meditative or dialogical power of its words (see Rappe and Corrigan on dialectical exercises; see Hughes on the power of dialogue format [see too notes 11–12 to this chapter]). My reading of the *Fons Vitae* also does not root the text's transformational capacity in its words' (or imagery's) being in some other way able to induce acts of meditation, or to in some other way directly transform the psychological or physiological state of the reader. Taking a different approach to the efficacy of the maps and images, I see in these maps and images (and in the cosmo-ontological claims that lead to them) an

apophatic theological enterprise that leads to a set of epistemological and ethical prescriptions for living, and that transcendentally ground a way of living in the world with meaning. I hope to write in more detail about this in future work.

47 On this ethical emphasis, see Chapters 3 and 8 of this volume; see too Hadot's sense of philosophy as a "way of life," and Rappe's description of the "Neoplatonic hermeneutic" as "practicing philosophy in the imperative mode" (Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism*, 243).

48 From *Choice of Pearls*, aphorism 279 from section on love; see *Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Choice of Pearls*, ed./tr. A. Cohen (Library of Jewish Classics, Volume IV) (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1925), 69. Whether or not this is a genuine work by Ibn Gabirol is subject to debate; I use it in any case as, regardless of who wrote it, it is a fitting ending for a discussion of Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire.

CHAPTER 10: EMBROIDERING THE HIDDEN

1 Part of a phrase from the "*Terem Heyōtī*" poem by Ibn Gabirol that we treated in Subsection 8.5.2 (and that we treat again in this final chapter); see Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 236, poem 96.

2 Schirmann, *Ha-shīrah Ha-ʿivrīt Bi-Sefarad ū-be-Prōvans*, 236, poem 96; my translation. For a different English rendering and commentary notes, see Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, 111 (with notes at 265–267), and Scheindlin, *The Gazelle*, 209–213.

3 Scheindlin translates "*riqēm*" in this poem as "weaves," and discusses the RQM root in rabbinic sources at *Yōma* 72b and *Mishna Ḥūlin* 9:6, citing too Maimonides' own reference to Psalms 139:15. See Scheindlin, *The Gazelle*, 263, note 8 (in his commentary to poem 27 from 208–209). We might here additionally note the occurrence of this verbal root in the Qumran description of the supernal chariot-throne in terms of a light refracted through the "*rōqemet rūʾaḥ qōdesh qedashīm*" (4Q403 1 II,1); discussed by Elliot R. Wolfson under the translation of "the *variegated* spirit of the holy of holies," the image of *riqmah* suggests an experience of the highest reality in terms of something woven and multicolored (Elliot R. Wolfson, "'Seven Mysteries of Knowledge: Qumran E/sotericism Reconsidered'," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. H. Najman [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 204, with note 93). This notion of variegation is of particular interest in our consideration of Ibn Gabirol given the sense of formation-as-increasing-manifestation in his vision of the Divine *Irāda*'s unfolding (a "variegated" unfolding, we might say) from the purity of matter to the plurality of diverse beings through form.

4 A similar elaboration on God's covering of hiddenness as a concealment by clothing can be seen in the mystical teachings of Moses Cordovero's *Pardēs Rīmōnīm*, 5:4, 25d; for translation, see Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, 91 (first excerpt). In this regard, we might also consider Ibn Gabirol's reflection on God's creation of the world by the light of His garment; see the poetic excerpt at start of Chapter 6.

5 See Ibn Gabirol's poem "*Shōkhēn ad mē-az*," in Bialik and Ravitksy, *Shīrei Shlōmō ben Yehūdah Ibn Gevīrōl*, Volume 3, 57 (poem 58, line 33). The particular image here is that of thatching – the process of layering straw or the like to yield a substantial structure.

6 "The He who brings nothingness into existence"; I am here paraphrasing a notion based on line 6 from *Ahavtīkha* as treated earlier (. . . *ve-hū nikhsaf le-sūmō yēsh kemō yēsh; kemō ḥōshēq asher nikhsaf le-dōdō* . . .), in conversation with the *ve-qara el ha-'ayīn ve-nivqa* notion from *Keter Malkhūt* (as treated in Section 7.7).

APPENDIX: MATTER AS GOD-BORN CRADLE OF LIFE: A SAMPLING OF MATTER IMAGERY IN IBN GABIROL'S MILIEU

1 This point about Platonic participation appears, with some small differences, as section 5.1 in my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol."

2 See Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1937), 181; for overall analysis of the Receptacle, see 177–210. For the view that the receptacle ought not to be seen as matter, see too Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Presss, 1944), 83–96.

3 This work is extant in a summary by Photius, as well as in an anonymous compilation of a similar name – the *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* – sometimes attributed to Iamblichus; for Greek text, see [*Iamblichi] Theologoumena Arithmeticae*, ed. Victorius De Falco, in *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1922); for English translation, see Robin Waterfield, *The Theology of Arithmetic, Attributed to Iamblichus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1988).

4 De Falco, *[Iamblichi] Theologoumena Arithmeticae*, 5, lines 12–16; Waterfield, *Theology of Arithmetic*, 39.

5 De Falco, *[Iamblichi] Theologoumena Arithmeticae*, 3, lines 2–3; Waterfield, *Theology of Arithmetic*, 37.

6 For this association of Matter with God in Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*, see *Nicomachus of Gerasa, Introduction to Arithmetic*, tr. M. L. Dooge (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926), and especially the introductory material by Louis Charles Karpinski, 88–124.

7 *Fons Vitae* 5.22, p. 298, 13–17. For the Arabic fragment – which describes matter as "*ḥāmil lil-ikhtilāf*," and for Pines' replacement of "*qā'im*" with "*qābil*" in this regard – see Pines, *Bēyn Maḥshevet Yisrael*, 53, note 30.

8 *Fons Vitae* 5.31, p. 315, 20–21.

9 Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 30 and 140.

10 For a tracing of the writings of Nicomachus into the hands of the *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* in the Arabic Neoplatonic tradition, cf. Bernard R. Goldstein, "A Treatise on Number Theory from a Tenth-Century Arabic Source," *Centaurus* 10 (1965): 129–160. In this article, Goldstein also provides an English translation of the first of the *Rasā'il* on number; see 135–160.

11 See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 141, for a discussion of the impact of Nicomachean ideas on Saadya, Dunash (a student of Ibn Gabirol), and Donnolo. For references to the impact of Neopythagorean ideas on Ibn Ezra – related conceptually to Ibn Gabirol in many ways – see Wolfson, "God, the Demiurge and the Intellect," 93, n. 63.

12 *Fons Vitae* 4.11, p. 237, 15–17; though in that specific context Ibn Gabirol emphasizes Limit and form as the unity prior to the Limitlessness of matter as duality, namely an association that privileges Limit and form over Limitlessness and matter. As such, the *Fons Vitae* does not here reflect the Nicomachean privileging of matter over form that, as we have emphasized throughout this study, can be found throughout the *Fons Vitae*. (See too Section A15 in this Appendix.)

13 See Goldstein, "Number Theory," 136, where the *Ikhwān* identify "2" as the first number, and also 141, where they describe "3" as merely the first odd number. See also Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 49.

14 Much of this section about Aristotelian substance appears, with some differences, as section 5.2 of my "Solomon Ibn Gabirol." Among other changes, I have here added a hypothesis about Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (and a possible Ps. Empedocles–Aristotle link).

15 For the start of this kind of interpretation of Aristotle in the Greek tradition, see Simplicius' analysis of two matters in Aristotle, a prime matter and a subsequent corporeal matter; see Simplicius on Aristotle's *Physics: Simplicii in Aristotelis Physicorum libros quattuor priores commentaria*, ed. Herman Diels (Berlin 1882), 229. See note 17 in this Appendix for different scholarly treatments of Simplicius on this issue.

16 See Frede, "Introduction" to *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda*, ed. M. Frede and David Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 1–52. For helpful insights on Aristotle relevant to Aristotle's writings on matter addressed in Section A4 of this Appendix, as well as for a sense of Aristotle's claims about God that might have certainly influenced medieval Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonists, see too in that volume: David Charles on "topical matter" in his "*Metaphysics* L 2: Matter and Change" (81–110); and on God in *Met.* XII, see Enrico Berti, "Unmoved Mover(s) as Efficient Cause(s) in *Metaphysics* L 6" (181–206); André Laks on "*Metaphysics* L 7" (207–43); Aryeh Kosman, "*Metaphysics* L 9: Divine Thought" (307–26).

17 On Simplicius' own debated theory of corporeity see Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space, and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and Their Sequel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 3–43, and his *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200–600 AD: A Sourcebook*, Volume 2 (Physics) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1–31, 253–73; see too H. A. Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 99–113, 579–602, and Abraham D. Stone, "Simplicius and Avicenna on the Essential Corporeity of Material Substance," in *Aspects of Avicenna*, ed. Robert Wisnovsky (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 73–130. For a comparison and critique of Wolfson and Sorabji, see Abraham D. Stone, "Simplicius and Avicenna on the Nature of Body," unpublished paper available for download online at people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/papers/corpsamp.pdf, 1999, 11 ff. For a fuller treatment of the implications of this view in Avicenna as compared with Islamic Ps. Empedoclean views, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism." For a modern defense of the thesis of prime matter in Aristotle, see E. Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics*, tr. Costelloe and Muirhead (London, 1897), 342–345. For an argument against reading a prime matter in Aristotle, see W. Charlton, "Did Aristotle Believe in Prime Matter," appendix to *Aristotle's Physics*, Books I and II, tr. W. Charlton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 129–145; my thanks to Naomi Reshotko for bringing this essay to my attention. It might be noted that whichever view one settles on, no

one seems to be suggesting that Aristotle thinks of prime matter as something that ever exists "on its own" without form; looking to *De Gen. et Corr.* 2.1. 329a24–26, we learn of the prime matter: "Our own doctrine is that although there is a matter of the perceptible bodies (a matter of which the so-called 'elements' come-to-be) it has no separate existence, but is always bound up with a contrariety."

18 See David Charles, "Metaphysics L 2: Matter and Change," in *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda: Symposium Aristotelicum*, ed. Michael Frede and David Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 97.

19 On two senses of the *hypomenei*, see *Physics* 1.7 (190a11); see Charles, "*Metaphysics* L 2," 85.

20 See *Met.* V/D8 1017b13–14; *Met.* VII/Z 3 1029a10–12; *Met.* VIII/H1 1042a32–4; for a treatment of this thematic in Aristotle, see H. A. Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 573.

21 In the sense that form is the cause of the existence of a thing; see Wolfson, *Crescas'*, 573 with references too to this idea in al-Ghazālī.

22 Whereas David Charles speaks of "genetic" and "topical" matters, Ross translates "matter for generation" and "matter for motion from one place to another." See Charles, "*Metaphysics* L 2"; see W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924/1997).

23 On intelligible matter in Aristotle, see *Metaphysics* Z 10.1036a2–12, Z 11.1036b32–1037a5, and H 1045a34–36. Whereas *Metaphysics* Z gives only mathematical examples, *Metaphysics* H presents it as "the generic element in a definition" (see Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 199). Ross emphasizes the possible inconsistency between (or at least apparent unrelatedness of) Aristotle's two very different descriptions of the intelligible matter (in Z and H); Gaukroger presents a reading of how intelligible matter plays a role in both geometry and arithmetic (where he addresses too *Metaphysics* K 1059b14–16, 20–21, and a number of claims throughout *Met.* E, *Physics*, et al.); see Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 199–200 (where he also lists two categories and four subcategories of matter referred to by Aristotle); see Stephen Gaukroger, "Aristotle on Intelligible Matter," *Phronesis* 25:2 (1980): 187–197. It might be added that Alexander of Aphrodisias opts to define intelligible matter as extension, a reading of Aristotle that most agree is incorrect when read in light of all the claims in Z *and* H. It might be noted too that intelligible matter is neither prime matter, nor is it related to the terrestrial or celestial matter (which point to "ways of being" – the constitution and/or the potency to be X, or to be located at place Y); while both "genetic" and "topical" matter manifest in actual physical realities (e.g., the corruption of a material reality, or the motion of stars in the heavens), the noetic matter (e.g., that takes on circularity in geometry) does not really change or move. For this discussion, see Charles, "*Metaphysics* L 2," 94.

24 On topical matter versus constitutive matter, see Charles, "*Metaphysics* L 2," 94.

25 At *Metaphysics* Z (1038a6), Aristotle likens genus to matter; Rorty takes this as suggesting that in a definition, the genus marks out the material cause of the analysandum. That said, we might certainly see how a correlation of matter and genus in Aristotle might be taken out of context in support of the Ps. Empedoclean idea of a material Grounding Element as a kind of "unspecified being" genus at the heart of all beings. For Rorty's treatment of genus as matter in *Metaphysics*, see Richard Rorty, "Genus as Matter: A Reading of Metaphysics Z-H," in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies*

in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos, ed. E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), 393–420.

26 Plotinus' "intelligible matter" is not the same as the concept addressed in Aristotle (for Aristotle's "intelligible matter," see Section A4 and note 23 in this Appendix).

27 See Rist's analysis of *Enneads* 3.8.11 and 5.3.11 and their relation to Plotinus' more overt descriptions of "intelligible matter"; John M. Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 12:1 (1962): 99–107 (see p. 102, et al.). See too Dillon, "Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter"; and for Iamblichean resonances, see Mathis II, "Parallel Structures in the Metaphysics of Iamblichus and Ibn Gabirol." See too Kevin Corrigan, *Plotinus' Theory of Matter-Evil and the Question of Substance: Plato, Aristotle, and Alexander of Aphrodisias* (Leuven: Peeters, 1996).

28 See Rist, "Indefinite Dyad," 105.

29 See Dillon, "Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," 56.

30 For details of the texts and possible authors, see Richard C. Taylor, "The *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* (*Liber de causis*) in the Islamic Philosophical Milieu," in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye, W. F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1986), 37–52; see too Taylor, "A Critical Analysis of the Structure of the *Kalam fi mahd al-khair* (*Liber de causis*)," in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parviz Morewedge [Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern vol. 5] (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 11–40. Generally, a terminus a quo is given as early as the ninth century, and a terminus ad quem of 992 AD. The first edition of the Arabic text is Bardenhewer's 1882 version (see *Die pseudo-aristotelische Schrift, Ueber das reine Gute, bekannt unter dem Namen, Liber de causis*, ed. O. Bardenhewer [Freiberg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1882]), with a 1955 version by Badawi (see *Liber [Pseudo-Aristotelis] de expositione bonitatis purae*, ed. A. Badawi, in *Neoplatonici apud Arabes, Islamica* 19 [Cairo, 1955], 1–33); both worked from a single manuscript; a critical edition is found in Taylor, *The Liber de Causis (Kalām fī mahd al-khair): A Study of Medieval Neoplatonism* (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1981), 43–104; see too C. D'Ancona and R. C. Taylor, "*Le Liber de Causis*," in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques, publié sous la direction de R. Goulet avec une préface de P. Hadot* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2003) (*Supplément*), 599–647.

31 Dillon, "Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," 55. This proposition corresponds to proposition 142 in the *Elements of Theology*. For a list of the parallels between the two texts, cf. Taylor, "The *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* (*Liber de causis*) in the Islamic Philosophical Milieu," 50; or Taylor "A Critical Analysis of the Structure of the *Kalam fi mahd al-khair* (*Liber de causis*)," 39–40.

32 G. Endress, *Proclus Arabus. Zwanzig Abschnitte aus der Institutio Theologica in arabischer Übersetzung* (Wiesbaden-Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1973).

33 Dillon, "Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," 55.

34 As cited in Dillon, "Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," 55.

35 For an analysis of this issue (including how it plays out in Aquinas' commentary on the *Liber* text), see Richard C. Taylor, "St. Thomas and the *Liber de causis* on the Hylomorphic Composition of Separate Substances," *Mediaeval Studies* XLI (1979), 506–513. For a further discussion of the term *ḥilya*, as well as a broader placement of Aquinas in the context of the *Plotiniana Arabica*, see Richard C. Taylor, "Aquinas,

the *Plotiniana Arabica*, and the Metaphysics of Being and Actuality," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1998), 217–239; see too Taylor, "St. Thomas and the *Liber de Causis* on the Hylomorphic Composition of Separate Substances," *Mediaeval Studies* XLI (1979): 506–513. For a treatment of the Arabic original of the *Liber de Causis*, the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair*, see Taylor, *The Liber de causis (the Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair): A Study of Medieval Neoplatonism*; Taylor, "The Liber de Causis: A Preliminary List of Extant MSS," *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 25 (1983), 63–84; Taylor, "The *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair* (*Liber de causis*) in the Islamic Philosophical Milieu: A Critical Analysis of the Structure of the *Kalam fi mahd al-khair* (*Liber de causis*)," and Taylor, "Remarks on the Latin Text and the Translator of the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair/Liber de causis*," *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 31 (1989), 75–102.

36 Guttman holds a different view; unlike Stern, who posits a common source for Israeli, Ibn Gabirol, and Ibn Ḥasday, Guttman suggests that Ibn Ḥasday was influenced directly by Ibn Gabirol; see Jacob Guttmann, *Die Philosophie des Salomon ibn Gabirol* (Göttingen, 1889).

37 Unlike Borisov – who first discovered the *Longer Theology of Aristotle* – who argues that the Longer text was in fact the original, with the Shorter ("vulgate") *Theology of Aristotle* being the work of a later editor, Stern – in agreement here with Pines – instead views the Shorter version as having been written first, with the Longer version representing the work of a later editor. Borisov argues that the later editor, faced with the Longer version, extracted – among other things – all references to the Divine Will because he thought this doctrine was Christian in nature (and Borisov points to this notion of Divine Will getting picked back up by Ibn Gabirol). Pines maintains that, faced with the Shorter version, the later editor added in – among other things – a doctrine of the Divine Word, wherein the "First Intellect" is said to be in union with the Word, arguing furthermore that the addition of this doctrine reveals Ismāʿīlī influence. Although agreeing that the Shorter version comes first, Stern does not necessarily think that the Longer version reveals the editorship of someone under the influence of Ismāʿīlism, pointing out (as had Pines) that both the Ismāʿīlīs and the editor who produced the Longer version may have been mutually influenced by a common source. This issue aside, Stern argues that the editor who produced the Longer version was in fact influenced by "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," and he argues for this by providing side-by-side comparisons of very closely related passages from Ibn Ḥasday's *The Prince and the Ascetic* and passages from the *Longer Theology of Aristotle* (which do not appear in the Shorter version); since these passages (a) reveal shared threads, (b) also match up with the same threads in Israeli, and (c) represent, (i) in the case of Ibn Ḥasday's *The Prince and the Ascetic*, material that is "added on" to that work's well-entrenched Persian heritage, and (ii) in the case of the Longer version of the *Theology of Aristotle*, material that is "added on" to the Shorter version, Stern concludes that there was a common Neoplatonic text – "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist" – which was a common source for all of these works. See A. Borisov. "The Arabic Original of the Work Called 'Theology of Aristotle'" (in Russian), *Zapiski Kollegii Vostokovedov*, V (1929): 83–98, and his "On the Point of Departure of Solomon ibn Gabirol's Voluntarism" (in Russian), *Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences de l'U.R.S.S.* (1933): 755–768. See too S. Pines, "*La longue recension de la Théologie d'Aristote dans ses rapports avec la doctrine ismaélienne,*" *Revue des Études Islamiques* 22 (1954): 8–20; and S. M. Stern, "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," reprinted in *Medieval Arabic*

and Hebrew Thought, ed. F. W. Zimmerman (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983), 79 ff.

38 Isaac Israeli, *Mantua Text*, § I; cited in Stern, "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," 66; see too Altmann and Stern, *Isaac Israeli*, 119.

39 Ibn Ḥasday, *The Prince and the Ascetic*, Ch. XXXIII, lines 9–15; Stern, "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," 104.

40 Stern notes that "the form which precedes that which is found with it" in the above text is a mistranslation on Ibn Ḥasday's part, and should read, "the form which is united to the essence of that which it is"; see Stern, "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," 66, fn. 1 and 104, in his critical apparatus.

41 Stern, "Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonist," 91.

42 See Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists* (London; Boston; Syndey: George Allen & Unwin, 1982). As in more standard systems of Neoplatonism, Intellect is the first reality outside of God (with the *Ikhwān*'s four grades of matter emerging below the level of Soul).

43 See Paul E. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 83 ff.

44 See *Liber*, Prop. 4, where while the first created thing is initially called "*anniyya*" (i.e., Being), it is soon described as "*'aql kulluhā*" (i.e., wholly intellect). For Arabic text, see Bardenhewer 1882, 65 ff. For English text, see Guagliardo, Hess, and Taylor 1996; (for Prop. 4, see pp. 28–29). See too D'Ancona and Taylor, "*Le Liber de Causis.*"

45 See S. M. Stern, *Studies in Early Isma'ilism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University; Leiden: Brill, 1983), 18.

46 Sijistānī also refers to the two founding principles (which, again, he associates with Intellect and Soul) as "*Asāsān*," (the "two foundations"); see Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 18.

47 Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-maqālīd* (*The Keys*), Ms. Hamdani Library, p. 32; as quoted (and translated) in Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 97.

48 See al-Fārābī, *Perfect State*, I, 2, 1; (see Walzer [ed., tr.], *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect* State, 89–91; 101 ff.). See discussion in the current study, Chapter 3.

49 See Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, 35; see also Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 51–52.

50 This latter category seems to indicate a category beyond Porphyry's five; see Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, 46–48.

51 *Jāmi'ah*, II, 7–9; cited in Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 56.

52 Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 56.

53 *Rasā'il* III, 235; see Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 56.

54 Although, it should be noted that some of the other pairs seem out of order – for example, "Tablet and Pen" should be in the order "Pen and Tablet" if they are to match with the "active and passive" order, and so too for some of the other pairs. As such, the mere ordering of "form and matter" does not on its own rule out that it is actually "matter and form" that the *Ikhwān* are correlating with "Intellect and Soul." It is clear, however, from a broader analysis of the *Ikhwān*'s treatment of matter that it is indeed form that is being associated with Intellect and matter with Soul (the lower of the two hypostases).

55 See the list in Section 2.2.

56 See Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, 35.

57 Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, 30.

58 An early – possibly tenth century – occurrence of this "*lā min shay'*" terminology can be found in the *Fiqh Akbar II*. See A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 94, and H. A. Wolfson, *Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 367.

59 See, for example, H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 138 and 359 ff.

60 Contrast in this regard between (1) an Aristotelian "*to mē on*" (a nothing which is *not* a "something" [*ti*]) (see Aristotle, *De Gen. et Corr.*, i, 3, 318a15 where the "not-existent" [*to mē on*] is identified as "nothing" [*mēden*]), and (2) "nothing" in some Platonic contexts as referring – as does "privation" for the Mu'tazilites – to a kind of something (Aristotle attributes this meaning to the Platonists; cf. *Physics*, i, 9, 192a6–7); cf. H. A. Wolfson, "The Meaning of *Ex Nihilo* in the Church Fathers, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophy, and St. Thomas" (reprinted in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion, Harry Austryn Wolfson*, Vol. I, ed. Isadore Twerksy and George H. Williams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 213–214.

61 *Fons Vitae* 5.11, p. 276, line 15; Ibn Gabirol speaks of form in matter being like light in the air.

62 Saadya, *Sefer Yeẓirah [Kitab al-Mabadi'] 'im perush ha-gaon rabbenu Se'adya*, ed. Joseph Kafiḥ (Jerusalem, 1972), 108, lines 9–10.

63 Saadya, *Sefer Yeẓirah [Kitab al-Mabadi']*, 108, line 19.

64 Saadya discusses 2nd Air in his *Sharḥ* ("exposition") section of his *Sēfer Yeẓīrah* commentary. See Saadya's *Commentary on the Sefer Yezirah: Commentaire sur le Séfer Yesira ou Livre de la Création par le Gaon Saadya de Fayyoum*, ed. Mayer Lambert (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole pratiques des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Philosophiques et Historiques, 85) (Paris: E. Bouillon, 1891), and *Ma'ānī al-Nafs*; see Efros 1941, 39 for references. (For the identification with the Throne, see Saadya, *Commentaire sur le Séfer Yesira*, 72; and *Ma'ānī*, 10.)

65 Israel Efros, "Some Aspects of Yehudah HaLevi's Mysticism," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 11 (1941): 39.

66 Saadya emphasizes that his 2nd Air does *not* correspond to anything explicitly mentioned in the *Sēfer Yeẓīrah* text itself; he notes that the *Sēfer Yeẓīrah*'s reference to the "Spirit from the first Spirit" refers only to an "external" or "perceived" air entirely different from – and posterior to – the 2nd Air.

67 See Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies." While he does highlight a link between Ibn Gabirol and Saadya, it might be noted that Pines does not see a link – as I am suggesting here – between Saadya's sublime Air and Ibn Gabirol's sublime matter; on the contrary, Pines notes, "Ibn Gabirol's philosophical work does not refer to the theory concerning the three kinds of Air" (Pines, "Points of Similarity," Appendix III, 126).

68 Gad Freudenthal, "Stoic Physics in the Writings of R. Saadia Ga'on al-Fayyumi and Its Aftermath in Medieval Jewish Mysticism," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, vol. 6 (1996): 113–136; see 134.

69 Freudenthal, "Stoic Physics in the Writings of R. Saadia Ga'on," 113–136; and "'The air blessed be He and blessed be His name' in *Sefer ha-Maskil* by R. Shlomo Simḥa of

Troyes: Some characteristics of a Stoically inspired midrashic-scientific cosmology of the thirteenth century," (in Hebrew) Part One: *Da'at* no. 32–33 (1994), 187–234; Part Two: *Da'at* no. 34 (1995): 87–129.

70 For a full consideration of the various resonances of the Arabic terminology at play in HaLevi's project, see Shlomo Pines, "Shīʿite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, II (1980): 165–251; see too Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000; and on the terminology of *amr ilāhī*, see 29–30, and 82). See too Kogan's review of Shear on the Kuzari; Kogan expresses concern that Shear's translation as "Divine Substance" is overly Aristotelian; see Barry Kogan, "Review of Adam Shear's *The Kuzari and the Shaping of Jewish Identity*, 1167–1900," H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews (June 2011). While I agree with Kogan's criticism in the context (as Kogan points out, Shear does not explain why he uses the term "substance"), it is, of course, worth noting that "substance" can be used in entirely non-Aristotelian ways (as, for example, I have shown to be the case in Ibn Gabirol in Chapter 7, as well as in my treatment of his notion of substance earlier in this Appendix).

71 See, for example, Howard Kreisel's *Prophecy: The History of an Idea in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 123. For a sense of the material/substantive nature of this divine principle, see p. 113.

72 Played out in a variety of Arabic Islamic materials, we arguably find the Ps. Empedoclean tradition at play in the mystical vision of Ibn Masarra, as we find it too at least encyclopedically recounted in, among others, Ps. Ammonius, Shahrastānī, al-Qifṭī, and Shahrazūrī; for Arabic texts, see Chapter 4, note 27.

73 Manuscript Ginsberg 607; manuscript from Baron Ginsberg's library in Leningrad; see Kaufmann *Studien über Salomon ibn Gabirol*, 85 and 88 ff.

74 There are two Kabbalistic texts that give us fragmentary evidence of the Ps. Empedoclean "Book of Five Substances." The first is anonymous with no date (Manuscript: cod. Paris 301, Bibliotheque National; see David Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol* [*Jahresberichte der Landes-Rabbinerschule zu Budapest für das Schuljahr* 1898/99; Budapest, 1898–99]; see *Die Spuren al-Batlajūsi's, Studien über Salomon ibn Gabirol and Die Sinne*, Budapest, 1880 [reprint with an introduction by Louis Jacobs: London: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1972], 86). The second is the fourteenth-century "*Yesōd ʿŌlam*" by Elḥonan ben Avrohom (Manuscript Ginsberg 607; Manuscript from Baron Ginsberg's library in Leningrad; see Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 85 and 88 ff). For text and discussion, see Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 85 and 88 ff. Kaufmann also notes that in the fifteenth century, this Ps. Empedoclean tradition seems to have been quite well known; one example (which text Kaufmann cites) is the work of Yoḥanan Alemanno (the teacher of Pico della Mirandola); cf. Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 87, n. 36 for references to location of manuscript in Steinschneider's Bodleian Catalogue; the manuscript is Oxford 2234; see Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon ibn* Gabirol, 112.

75 See his *Philosophy of Illumination*, Part Two, Second Discourse, section 6; see Walbridge, John and Ziai, Hossein (tr.) *Suhrawardī, The Philosophy of Illumination: A New Critical Edition of the Text of Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 97–98, et al.

76 For a treatment of "love and strife" in Islamic Neoplatonic contexts as related to the prophet's need to lead sometimes by kindness and sometimes by force, see my "Forms of Hylomorphism."

77 Suhrawardī, *Philosophy of Illumination*, Part 2, Discourse 2, section 157; Walbridge and Ziai, *Suhrawardī, The Philosophy of Illumination*, 103.

78 For some treatments of Ibn Gabirol in relation to Jewish mystical traditions, see Chapter 2, note 39.

79 See Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, 3 volumes (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994), Vol. II, 494–496.

80 Tishby, *Zohar*, 495.

81 The *Zōhar* reads *Genesis* 1:1 as the creation of God by God – in other words, an account of the emanative unfolding of God's sefirotic pleroma from his ownmost essential hiddenness. See *Zōhar* 1:15a; see Daniel C. Matt (ed.) *The Zohar* (Pritzker Edition) (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1: 107–109; or see his *Zohar, Annotated and Explained* (Woodstock, VT: Sky-Light Paths, 2002), 10–13.

82 Tishby, *Zohar*, 496. See too *Zōhar* II, 108b (Tishby, *Zohar*, 496), and *Zōhar* II, 140b–141a (Tishby, *Zohar*, 496–498); *Zōhar Ḥadash, Yitrō*, 38a–b (Tishby, *Zohar*, 492–493); *Zōhar* III, 227a–227b, *Raya Mehemna* (Tishby, *Zohar*, 493–494).

83 For an overview of this Neoplatonic idea with further references, see Hyman, "From What Is One"; see too Alexander Altmann, "Creation and Emanation in Isaac Israeli," 20. For discussion of the resonances of this idea in scholastic critiques of Ibn Gabirol, see McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 85–89. While Bertola reads Ibn Gabirol as upholding the view that "from one comes only one," McGinn disagrees (see McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol," 86; Ermenegildo Bertola, *Salomon Ibn Gabirol [Avicebron]: Vita, Opere e Pensiero* [Padua: Cedam, 1953], 100).

84 See Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā': Al-lIāhīyāt,* cf. *Avicenna, The Metaphysics of the Healing: A Parallel English-Arabic Text (Al-Shifā': Al-lIāhīyāt)*, (tr.) Michael E. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 9.4.5–6: 328; 9.4.19: 333.

85 *Theologoumena Arithmeticae*, Ast (Leipzig 1817), 8 (this is a work attributed to Iamblichus; for its link to Nicomachus, see Robin A. H. Waterfield, "Emendations of [Iamblichus] *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* (De Falco)," *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 38:1 [1988]: 215–227; see 215). For more information about this text and the overall framework of Nicomachus' ontology, see *Nicomachus of Gerasa, Introduction to Arithmetic*, and for this idea, see p. 117; also see my "Hebdomads: Boethius Meets the Neopythagoreans," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 37 (1999): 29–48.

86 Jean Trouillard, "*La Genèse de l'Hylémorphisme selon Proclus,*" *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* VI (1967), 1–17.

87 Dodds addresses Iamblichus' sense of Limit expressing God's unity and Limitlessness as expressing God's infinity; see E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For further consideration of Iamblichus, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); John Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

88 C. K. Mathis II, "Parallel Structures in the Metaphysics of Iamblichus and Ibn Gabirol."

89 As mentioned at Section A5 of this Appendix, Dillon also highlights an important methodological point at the very end of his essay, namely that "great minds think alike" is perhaps the best way to respond to the many shared sentiments and cross-currents surrounding these issues across a range of texts, including the relationship between Plotinus and Ibn Gabirol in particular. See John Dillon, "Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter," 56.

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4. *The Choice of Pearls* (*Mivḥar ha-Penīnīm*)
5. *Book of the Improvement of the Moral Qualities of the Soul*
6. Hebrew Poetry Editions

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