

This electronic theses or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>



Neoplatonic Love

The Metaphysics of Eros in Plotinus, Proclus and the Pseudo-Dionysius

Vasilakis, Dimitrios

Awarding institution:
King's College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

END USER LICENSE AGREEMENT



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

You are free to:

- Share: to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>

Title: Neoplatonic Love: The Metaphysics of Eros in Plotinus, Proclus and the Pseudo-Dionysius

Author: Dimitrios Vasilakis

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

END USER LICENSE AGREEMENT



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

You are free to:

- Share: to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Dimitrios A. Vasilakis

*Neoplatonic Love:
The Metaphysics of Eros in
Plotinus, Proclus and the Pseudo-Dionysius*

PhD Thesis in Philosophy

Primary Supervisor:
Professor Peter Adamson

King's College London

July 2014

Abstract

This thesis examines the notion of Love (Eros) in key texts of the Neoplatonic philosophers Plotinus (204/5–270 C.E), Proclus (c.412–485 C.E.) and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (late 5th-early 6th cent.). In the first chapter I discuss Plotinus' treatise devoted to Love (*Enneads*, III.5) and I attempt to show the ontological importance of Eros within the Plotinian system. For Plotinus for an entity (say Soul) to be/exist is to be erotic, i.e. be directed to the intelligible realm. Hence, one of the conclusions is that Love implies deficiency, and, thus, it takes place in a vertical scheme, where an inferior entity has eros for its higher progenitor.

If this is so, then Proclus apparently diverges greatly from Plotinus, because in his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* Proclus clearly states that inferior entities have reversive (/upwards) eros for their superiors, whereas the latter have providential (/downwards) eros for their inferiors. Thus, the project of my second chapter is to analyze Proclus' position and show that in fact he does not diverge much from Plotinus; the former only explicates something that is already implicit in the latter. The first part of my discussion emphasizes the ethical aspect, whereas the second deals with the metaphysical aspect.

Finally, in the third chapter I examine pseudo-Dionysius' treatment of God as Eros in his work *On the Divine Names*. One motivation was the verdict of a number of old scholars that the Areopagite is a

plagiarizer of Proclus. Still, the examination of Eros is a characteristic case, where one can ascertain Dionysius' similarities and divergences from Proclus. Supported by recent literature, we can suggest that Dionysius uses more of a Proclean language (cf. providential and reversive eros), rather than Proclean positions, owing to ontological presuppositions that differentiate the Neoplatonic philosopher from the Church Father. Proclus forms the bridge between pagan Neoplatonism (Plotinus) and Christian philosophy (pseudo-Dionysius).

To my father

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	7
1. Plotinus and <i>Enneads</i> III.5.[50]: “On Love”	13
1.1. The ontological status of Soul’s Eros.....	13
1.1.1. Synopsis of III.5.....	13
1.1.2. The main issue.....	16
1.1.3. Eros and Myth.....	21
1.1.4. Eros and Vision.....	33
1.1.5. Eros and Tragedy.....	40
1.1.6. Eros and vision, again.....	48
1.2. Potential objections and answers.....	53
1.2.1. Unity of theme.....	53
1.2.2. On daimonology.....	57
1.2.3. A daimonic counter-objection from within III.5?.....	62
1.2.4. Eros and Soul: who is first?	64
1.3. Nous and Eros.....	69
1.4. Conclusions.....	78
2. Proclus on the <i>First Alcibiades</i>	91
2.1. Providential and Reversive eros: Proclus versus Plotinus?.....	94

2.1.1. From Alcibiades' reversive eros to Socratic love.....	94
2.1.2. From eros to the Demiurge and the statesman.....	104
2.1.3. From Platonic eros to Aristotelian friendship.....	114
2.1.4. Limiting the scope: from eros to providential eros...	123
2.1.5. Qualifying love: from manic eros to undefiled eros..	136
2.2. Locating Eros in the intelligible hierarchy.....	155
2.2.1. Divine Eros and its function.....	155
2.2.2. Eros as a mediator.....	167
2.2.3. After Eros.....	173
2.2.4. Before Eros.....	179
2.2.5. Eros and Friendship.....	192
3. Pseudo-Dionysius and the <i>Divine Names</i>	200
3.1. Divine Eros and its function.....	206
3.1.1. God and Eros: causally or existentially?.....	207
3.1.2. After God: Eros by participation.....	228
3.2. The Christianization of Eros?	240
Conclusion.....	255
Bibliography.....	258

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays many people talk about Platonic Love; in this thesis I present how the Neoplatonists understood it. Given that Eros plays a central role in Plato's thought,¹ it is not surprising that the same is true for Neoplatonic philosophy. My treatment attempts to show this significance. I will be focusing on three key figures: Plotinus, the acknowledged founder of Neoplatonism, Proclus, a great systematizer of Platonic philosophy, and pseudo-Dionysius, who has affinities with Neoplatonism even if (in my view at least) he is fundamentally a Christian thinker. By juxtaposing Dionysius the Areopagite with the two earlier Neoplatonists, I will be able to explore the question of how Platonic love interacted with Christian love and how ancient Greek and pagan conceptions of eros survived in the Christian and especially Byzantine tradition, of which Dionysius is a cornerstone.

Love has of course attracted attention not only in contemporary systematic philosophy,² but also in the field of the history of philosophy.³ There have been several studies examining love

¹ Apart from works to be referred to in the following chapters two classic studies about Platonic love are Robin [1933] and Gould [1963], while for more recently see Price [1989], pp.1-102 and 207-235. See also O'Connell [1981], esp. pp.11-17, Halperin [1985], Rhodes [2003] and the introductory piece by Κάλφας [2008]. Platonic love is related to death by Maraguanou [1990], pp.3-26 and 49-69, and compared to Freud by Χριστοδουλίδη-Μαζαράκη [1983] and Santas [1988], as well as Kahn [1987], pp.95-102, from a wider perspective.

² See for instance the relevant entry and its Bibliography in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP).

³ See May [2011], Rist [1964], Osborne [1994] and Düsing [2009].

especially in Plotinus,⁴ but also in Proclus⁵ and in the pseudo-Dionysius.⁶ There have been also some short treatments which make a comparison between them.⁷ However, to my knowledge there do not

⁴ On the one hand, there are studies which examine specifically *Enn.III.5*: Wolters [1984], Dillon [1969] and Smith [2007]. On the other hand, there are discussions with wider scope in Plotinus' metaphysics: Lacrosse [1994], Pigler [2002], Δαμάσκος [2003] and Rist [1964], pp.56-112. See also Romano [1984], Kelessidou-Galanos [1972], pp.98-100 and Ucciani [1998], each of them with more specific focus.

⁵ See Τερέζης [2002]. Prof. P. Hoffmann has informed me that the subject of D'Andres [2010] is very close to the thematic of my Proclus-chapter. (This PhD thesis, written under the supervision of A. Longo, has private on-line access and I have not examined it.) What is more, M. Martijn has told me that she intends to turn a lecture of her entitled "The Demon Lover. Inspired love in Proclus' In Alc." (read at the 9th ISNS 2011 Conference in Atlanta and at the International Conference "Ἀρχαί: Proclus Diadochus of Constantinople and his Abrahamic Interpreters", Istanbul, Dec. 2012) into an article.

⁶ See the old study of Horn [1925], Rist [1966] and recently Riggs [2009], comparing closely Proclus and ps.-Dionysius in pp.82-87, and Perl [2013]. See also the entries in Aertsen [2009], p.193, n.11, and Rist [1999], having modified some of his earlier views.

⁷ Armstrong [1961] gives a brief portrait of love in Plato, Plotinus and Proclus (including the Neoplatonist Hierocles), as well as Christianity (without specifically referring to any Christian author, save for passing mentions of Origen), and my approach is similar to his spirit. On the other hand, Vogel [1963], treats also Dionysius and Boethius, but avoids specific references to Plato (at least the *Phaedrus*), while she presents some Hellenistic and Middle Platonic dimensions, too (pp.4-10). McGinn [1996] has the scope of both aforementioned papers adding to the list engagement with Origen (pp.189 and 195-197) and Thomas Aquinas (pp.204ff. I am afraid though that in n.25, p.198, where Nygren's procrustean attitude, to be seen, is criticized, the criticism against Armstrong [1961], p.113 is unfair.). Quispel [1979] begins with the same grounds as Vogel [1963] (pp.189-195, with some criticism of her in p.194), but then he departs to other fields: apart from curious speculations about the author and the content of the Fourth Gospel (of love, pp.201-205, which invert Nygren's thesis, as we will see), he stresses Proclus' indebtedness to the *Chaldean Oracles* for the role of Eros in cosmogony, tracing this back to the Orphic cosmogonies (pp.196-201), although he, too, neglects to mention Plato (save for some passing mentions of the *Symposium* in pp.194 and 203), and especially the *Phaedrus*. Vogel [1981] answered to the challenges of Quispel by elaborating on the topics she had touched in [1963], and especially on the ontological position of eros in Proclus' hierarchy (pp.64-69. This fact explains the loose structure of that paper). In his

exist treatments that present both a detailed discussion of love in each of these philosophers and a comparative treatment that can give us a basis for understanding how from Plato we can get to, say, Yannaras, a contemporary thinker who grounds his philosophy on the Patristic notion of Eros.⁸

The first chapter discusses a treatise of Plotinus that is devoted to Love. Given the importance ascribed to Love throughout the *Enneads*, various interpreters have been dissatisfied by the discussion Plotinus offers in III.5. However, the critics have neglected the narrower scope of the treatise's exegetical character. One of Plotinus' main aims is the defense of genuine Platonic love against the interpretations that other philosophical circles, e.g. the Gnostics, had given for key Platonic passages, such as the myth of the genealogy of Eros in the *Symposium* (203b1-c6).⁹ Despite its dialectical character, though, III.5 does provide

condensed presentation of Plato, Plotinus, Proclus and pseudo-Dionysius, Beierwaltes [1986] examines primarily the status of Beauty in relation to the Good, god and the divine, and secondarily the complement of Eros, while in my treatment I do the reverse. Tornau [2006], too, is concerned with the relation of Beauty to Goodness (e.g. p.203), albeit in a lesser degree, while mainly he compares Proclus with Plotinus, but only in terms of ascending eros. Finally, Esposito Buckley [1992] gives a comparison only of Dionysius and Plotinus on the issue of God as Eros. She leaves aside Proclus (referring to him only in n.57,p.55 and p.60 with n.64) and with regard to Plotinus she focuses on procession (pp.35ff., although we should bear in mind that the 'self-contemplation' of the One is applied 'as if' to it) and his conception of the One as Eros, (hence the absence of references to *Enn.*,III.5, apart from a passing ref. to §4 in n.3,p.44).

⁸ His seminal work is Yannaras [2007], whose first Modern-Greek version dates back to 1970. See also in my Conclusion.

⁹ Cf. Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.408 with n.6. In *ibid.*,n.12 (p.410) he rightly criticizes Miller [1992],pp.232-234, because, apart from parallels in erotic imagery, she fails to note Plotinus' distance from Gnosticism with regard to the positive value of eros.

us with insights into the function of Eros within Plotinus' system as a whole. My main thesis here will be that eros is identified with reversion, because it implies deficiency in need of fulfillment. For an entity (say Soul) to be/exist is to be erotic, i.e. be directed to the intelligible realm. If, then, reversion is necessary for the constitution of an entity qua entity, then Plotinus' entire ontology is erotic.

The second chapter deals with Proclus' *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*. The *Alcibiades* is not a straightforwardly erotic dialogue.¹⁰ Yet its opening lines give Proclus the occasion to say so many things about love that this Commentary¹¹ winds up as the principal source for Proclus' ideas on love.¹² With Proclus we have a new association of love with procession and/or providence. In various sections I explain how this is the case. In the first part I examine the ethical aspects, whereas in the second I deal more with metaphysics. Although already in the conclusion of the first part I note that Proclus' divergence from Plotinus is much more verbal than substantial, I give the final answer of how Proclus can consistently combine ascending (-upwards) and descending (-downwards) eros in the second part. A by-product of my overall treatment is that Proclus emerges as an interpreter of

¹⁰ Still, it is included in the anthology of Reeve [2006], and Belfiore [2012] devotes her first chapter (pp.31-67) to the *Alcibiades I*, focusing on the relation between love and self-knowledge. See also Dillon [1994], p.390 (and p.391 with n.14).

¹¹ Its extant part finishes with incomplete comments on *Alc. I*, 116a3-b1.

¹² Another source, but not treated in the thesis, is within the Essay (IA') of the *Republic Commentaries*, (ibid., 2, 28-31), as: «Τί αινίττεται ἡ τοῦ Διὸς πρὸς τὴν Ἥραν συνουσία, καὶ τίς ὁ τῆς Ἥρας κόσμος, καὶ τίς ὁ τόπος, ἐν ᾧ ἡ συνουσία, καὶ τίς ὁ ἔρωσ τοῦ Διός, καὶ τίς ὁ θεῖος ὕπνος, καὶ ἀπλῶς πάσης ἐκείνης τῆς μυθολογίας ἐξήγησις.»

Plato who has affinities with modern scholars, and who should be consulted especially in defense of Plato against his modern critics. On the one hand, I show the way in which Proclus could answer to Vlastos' famous accusation that Plato's erotic theory fails to capture genuine concern for others,¹³ even if I also emphasize the negative aspects and limitations of the Proclean lover. On the other hand, my discussion of Proclus' dependence on Platonic texts can do away with A. Nygren's proposal about Christian influences.¹⁴

Because I do not accept Nygren's portrayal of (pagan) «ἔρωτες» and (Christian) «ἀγάπη» as two rigid categories that are in absolute conflict,¹⁵ I also cannot accept the statement that these two are confused

¹³ See Vlastos [1973] (which is a revised form of a talk given in 1969). Vlastos generated a host of articles and books by other scholars as a response. Some of them have already been referred to in n.1, while others are to be found in ch.2 (:nn.69 and 70 in chs.2.1.2. and 2.1.3. respectively). For now, as an example of the criticism Vlastos has received see Osborne [1994],pp.223-226 (with n.17 in p.57), whose book contains an abundance of pertinent remarks to my project.

¹⁴ See Nygren [1953],p.569. This is even accepted by Rist [1964],p.214, who however criticizes Nygren's presentation of Proclus' Platonic (and Plotinian) interpretation in *ibid.*,pp.215-216; cf. also *ibid.*,p.219 and McGinn [1996],p.198,n.27. Rist retracted his former concession to Nygren already in Rist [1966],p.243; cf. also Rist [1970],p.168 and n.37 in p.407.

¹⁵ To be sure, Nygren's discussion is learned and has some merits, but it is too oversimplified and driven by an objectionable agenda. A useful synopsis of Nygren's overall project is given in: Πάμφορος [1999],pp.128-134, who criticizes it in *ibid.*,134-138; Rist [1970],pp.156-161, 169, and n.53 in p.408, (especially the two columns of pp.160-161), presenting his Platonic and Scriptural counter-arguments in pp.161-173; (although Vogel [1981],pp.61-62 talks about the disagreement with Nygren, I am afraid she is too harsh with Rist's approach in *ibid.*,pp.63-65 and n.28 in pp.77-78); Düsing [2009], pp.30-38, who dwells much on Augustine (pp.34-38) and presents a Roman-Catholic response (pp.38-40). Osborne (now Rowett) conceives her whole book as a counter-argument against Nygren; see Osborne [1994],p.222; cf. also *ibid.*, e.g. pp.3, 5, 6, 10ff. (not always mentioning Nygren by name), 29 (with n.18), 52-55,

in pseudo-Dionysius' treatment,¹⁶ with the further suggestion that ps.-Dionysius is a plagiarizer of Proclus. My last chapter, which draws mostly on the *Divine Names*, defies the old suggestion about ps.-Dionysius' uncritical reception of Neoplatonism and concludes the thesis by showing how the Proclean language can be transformed in light of Christianity. The main difference stems from a different conception of ecstasy, which neglects the (upwards or downwards) direction. I have structured the chapter following the metaphysical scheme I discussed in the second part of the treatment of Proclus. I show that Dionysius' system is as erotic as the Proclean, though I emphasize the differences between them as well by drawing a contrast between the Neoplatonic hero Socrates, an embodied soul, and Christ, the incarnated person of the Holy Trinity.

57, 60-61, 65-66, 69, 71, 76, 85, 164-165 and 221. Another classic response has been given by Armstrong [1961], esp. pp.119-120, (with the complement of Armstrong [1964] against W.J. Verdenius' accusations of egocentricity found in the divine lover of the *Phaedrus* and the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*). For a prudent critique from an Orthodox Christian point of view see, apart from Πάμφορς, Florovsky [1987],pp.20-25, taking issue with Nygren's general stance in many other places: see e.g. *ibid.*,pp.29; 120-121 (on St Antony), 145-148 (on St Gregory of Nyssa), and 249-252 (on St John Climacus). Even Vlastos [1973],p.6,n.13, p.20,n.56 and p.30 is critical to Nygren. An interesting criticism of both Socratic-Platonic justice and Christian love as ethical conducts has been launched by Williams [2007], although I am afraid that his, like Nygren's, knowledge of versions of Christianity is limited. The same may be said about Συκουτρης [1949],pp.230*-246* but for chronological rather than geographical reasons. Still, he includes some excellent observations, e.g. his point (5) in *ibid.*,pp.238*-239*. Writing almost contemporaneously with Nygren, he gives a brief exposition of the differences between "Platonic Love and Christian Agape", which in many places is similar to Nygren's approach; see e.g. pp.237*-240* and 243*-245*. However, he does think that there are similarities between the two phenomena that enable one to compare them (cf. pp.232* and 246*).

¹⁶ See Nygren [1953], p.563; cf. also pp.566, 577 and 589.

CHAPTER 1

PLOTINUS AND *ENNEADS* III.5.[50]: “ON LOVE”

1.1. The ontological status of Soul’s Eros

1.1.1. Synopsis of III.5

Plotinus starts his enquiry concerning Eros,¹ posing the following question: “is it a divinity (god or daimon) or is it an affection of the soul?”² The formulation of this problem foreshadows the structure of the whole treatise; hence, III.5 can be divided into two parts. In the first section (§1) Plotinus examines Eros as affection («πάθος») of the human soul. He distinguishes three types: a) a pure («καθαρός») eros of Beauty without any connection to bodily affairs. People having such appreciation of the beautiful in the world may, or may not, recollect the true intelligible Beauty. b) Mixed («μικτός») eros is love which embodies the veneration of Beauty via sexual affairs, the aim of which

¹ The Plotinian text used is by Henry-Schwyzler [1964-1983] (:H-S₂), along with the “Addenda et Corrigenda” of Henry-Schwyzler [1983],pp.304-325 (:H-S₄), and the “Corrigenda ad Plotini textum” of Schwyzler [1987] (:H-S₅; H-S₁ and H-S₃ stand for the “editio maior” and its “Addenda et...” respectively). The references to Plotinus’ text indicate the numbers: of the *Enneads*, of the specific treatise, (of the place in the chronological order within square-brackets, when needed), of the paragraph and the lines (e.g.: III.5.[50].8,16-19). Concerning English translations of Plotinus’ text, I use the Loeb edition of Armstrong [1966-1988], unless otherwise stated. Specifically for *Enneads* III.5 I cite Wolters’ translation, which accompanies his commentary, in Wolters [1984],pp.xxxv-lii.

² III.5.1,1-2: «Περὶ ἔρωτος, πότερα θεός τις ἢ δαίμων ἢ πάθος τι τῆς ψυχῆς,....».

is the generation of offspring, as a path towards immortality. It is noteworthy that for Plotinus *both* instances of love are legitimate, although pure Love, as more self-sufficient, is ranked higher than the mixed. c) It is the third instance that represents a deviation, since, in this category, eros is a desire contrary to nature («παρὰ φύσιν»³).

The remaining chapters (§§2-9) constitute the second section of the treatise, the 'theology' of love. Plotinus has to reconcile two traditions: a) the idea that Eros is a *god*, son and follower of Aphrodite, a view found not only in "divine" Plato's *Phaedrus*,⁴ but also in "theologians" such as Hesiod. b) The other fundamental text is, of course, the *Symposium*, in which Diotima proclaims the *daimonic* nature of Eros. Plotinus succeeds in combining these two notions by exploiting the distinction that Pausanias [sic] makes in the *Symposium* between Heavenly («Οὐρανία») and Common («Πάνδημος») Aphrodite.⁵ Thus, in his interpretation, Eros-god is the offspring of Heavenly Aphrodite, i.e. of the Undescended Soul, which is pure and free from the interfusion with matter⁶ (cf. §2), whereas Eros-daimon is descendant of the World-Soul, which is represented by Common Aphrodite(cf. §3).

³ Apparently, Plotinus condemns homosexuality and, generally, every expression of intemperate sexual desire, which does not aim at the generation of a new entity.

⁴ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*,243d9.

⁵ Cf. idem, *Symposium*,180d7-8. Plotinus does not mention the name «Πάνδημος» explicitly, although he had done so in his early treatise VI.9.[9].9,30. Cf. also Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.433.

⁶ Hence, in the mythological language Heavenly Aphrodite, daughter of Ouranos, is «ἀμήτωρ». Cf. III.5.2,17.

In other words, both of the divine instances of Eros correspond to the first section's legitimate affections of human souls:⁷ pure and mixed eros.

There is, however, another problem. The reconciliation of the two Platonic versions of love is not yet complete, since Plotinus has to account for the different mythical genealogies, too. Whereas according to the tradition expressed in the *Phaedrus* Eros is son of Aphrodite («ἐξ ἀντῆς»),⁸ in the *Symposium* he is said to be borne by Poverty's («Πενία») intercourse with Plenty («Πόρος») on the day of Aphrodite's birth («σὺν ἀντῆ»).⁹ Hence, from §5 and onwards Plotinus' comes to his main exegetical task. This part, which deals with the interpretation of the *Symposium's* myth, forms the second subdivision of the general theological section. In §5 the Neoplatonist rebuts Plutarch's cosmological interpretation of the same myth, although, interestingly enough, Plotinus himself had subscribed to a similar cosmological allegory in his earlier treatise "On the impassibility of things without body".¹⁰ In §6 Plotinus relates Eros' genealogy with a general survey on the nature of daimons. According to §7 what differentiates Eros

⁷ What is more, Plotinus mentions the daimonic loves of individual souls in §4.

⁸ Cf. III.5.2,13.

⁹ Ibid.; see *Symposium*,203b1-c6: the famous myth of the genealogy of Eros enunciated by Diotima in the early stages of her discussion with Socrates.

¹⁰ Cf. III.6.[26].14,7-18. Except for a clerical mistake, this is perhaps a reason why Συκουτρῆς [1949] in his monumental modern-Greek edition of the *Symposium* (p.199*,n.1) ascribes to Plotinus' treatise III.5 the view that Eros is equated with the (physical) cosmos.

from the rest of the daimons is that Eros is the desire for the absolute Good, whereas the others crave partial goods.¹¹ So, after an explanation of Eros' insatiability due to his parents' traits, in §8 Plotinus figures out what 'Zeus' stands for in the myth, and in the first half of the concluding §9 the Neoplatonist elaborates on the identity of Poros with other elements of the myth. Finally, after some succinct, but crucial, methodological remarks on the interpretation of myths (and rational discourses), Plotinus gives us a synopsis of his interpretation, according to which the different mythical elements (e.g. Poros and Penia) are reduced to aspects of Soul. In that way, Plotinus completes his survey by showing the continuity of the aforementioned two parts of his erotic theology: as in the first part Soul was said to be Eros' mother, so too in the second one, since Penia, as well as Poros represent Soul.

1.1.2. The main issue

As can be seen from the above brief account of III.5, this treatise raises a host of interesting subjects which have preoccupied the commentators. The vindication of sexual love, the complicated psychology depicted in the two Aphrodites, Plotinus' version of 'daimonology' and, most importantly, his attitude towards the interpretation of myths are only some aspects that deserve the reader's

¹¹ Further, these distinctions account for the specific desires that human beings develop.

attention. I would like, however, to focus on the most crucial issue that arises from this tractate, namely the question of the ontological status of Eros, as depicted in the 'theological' part of the treatise. In §2 Plotinus states that (Heavenly) Aphrodite's, i.e. Soul's, intellectual activity towards her progenitor, Nous,¹² produced «ὑπόστασιν καὶ οὐσίαν»,¹³ which is none other than "the beautiful Eros, he who is born as an ὑπόστασις that is eternally set towards Another that is beautiful".¹⁴ Ascribing «ὑπόστασιν» and/or «οὐσίαν» to Eros is something frequently met in both parts of the theological section.¹⁵ This fact seems to suggest that Plotinus sees Eros as an entity in its own right, which despite being dependent upon Soul as source of its existence, is external to Soul, just as Soul is generated but still different

¹² Usually, the mythical equivalents for Plotinus' system of three Hypostases are the gods of the Hesiodic *Theogony*: Ouranos (-One), Kronos (-Intellect), Zeus (-Soul). Yet, according to the interpretative strand followed in this treatise, Aphrodite, not Zeus, stands for Soul. Hence, there is a complication as to Aphrodite's superior principle, since, according to Hesiod, Aphrodite sprung from the foam of Ouranos', not Kronos', mutilated genitals. Granted that for Plotinus Soul's superior principle is undoubtedly Nous, in III.5.2,33-34 he concedes that for the purposes of his enquiry either Kronos or Ouranos can be conceived as Aphrodite-Soul's progenitor. Proclus solved the aforementioned problem in his own way in the *Commentary on the Cratylus*,183,(1-54) and 110,5-111,16 (Pasquali).

¹³ Cf. III.5.2,36. (Armstrong translates "real substance"; Wolters: "Existence or Substance".)

¹⁴ Ibid.,§2,37-38: «ὁ καλὸς Ἔρως ὁ γεγεννημένος ὑπόστασις (Existence with Wolters) πρὸς ἄλλο καλὸν ἀεὶ τεταγμένη». [Every emphasis in the ancient Greek texts is mine.]

¹⁵ Apart from the references to come, see *ibid.*,§3,15 («...ὑπόστασιν ἔχει» sc. ὁ Ἔρως); §4,2 (ἐν οὐσίᾳ καὶ ὑποστάσει) and 3 (ὑποστατὸν ἔρωτα); §7,9 (ὑπόστασιν), 42 (ἐν οὐσίᾳ) and 43 (ὑποστάσεις οὐσιώδεις); §9,40 (ὑπέστη). Cf. also §9,42, where Eros is called «μικτόν τι χρῆμα». In §9,20 «ὑπόστασις» is ascribed to λόγος.

to Intellect (Nous). Further, Plotinus ascribes these very substantives to Heavenly Aphrodite-Soul itself, calling her "a kind of separate *ὑπόστασιν*, that is *οὐσίαν* not participating in matter".¹⁶ Thus, since Heavenly Aphrodite stands for the proper "Hypostasis" of Undescended Soul, it seems that Plotinus suggests that its offspring is itself a Hypostasis, although a degraded one, just as Soul, being an offspring of Nous, is an "ousia", albeit inferior to Nous' «ὄντως ὄντα».¹⁷ Indeed, in §3 Plotinus writes: "That Eros is an *ὑπόστασιν*, however – *οὐσίαν* sprung *ἐξ οὐσίας* – there is no reason to doubt. It may be inferior to the one that produced it, but *οὐσαν* nevertheless".¹⁸ Finally, in the following lines he compares Eros' generation with Soul's emanation from Nous.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.,§2,II.23-24: «χωριστήν οὐσάν τινα *ὑπόστασιν* (Existence) καὶ ἀμέτοχον ὕλης *οὐσίαν* (substance)». (Armstrong renders «τινα *ὑπόστασιν*» as "separate reality".) Cf. also *ibid.*,§9,23 («ἡ Ἀφροδίτη ἐν τοῖς οὐσιν ὑποστῆναι λέγεται») and §9,30 (ψυχῆ... παρὰ νοῦ ὑποστᾶσα).

¹⁷ It is a fundamental Plotinian tenet that Nous *is* the world of Forms.

¹⁸ III.5.3,1-2: «*ὑπόστασιν* (Existence) δὲ εἶναι καὶ *οὐσίαν* (Substance) *ἐξ οὐσίας* (from Substance) ἐλάττω μὲν τῆς ποιησαμένης, *οὐσαν* δὲ ὁμως (but it *exists* nevertheless), ἀπιστεῖν οὐ προσήκει». The «*ἐξ οὐσίας*» may refer to Aphrodite-Soul, but there is an alternative: Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.428 ad loc. ingeniously proposes Nous. His interpretation has the merit of a) breaking the analogy with Soul's emanation of Nous that suggests 'hypostatization', and b) the fact that 'ousia' does sound like Nous. Although this view could be helpful for the interpretation I will put forward, it might also complicate things: even from this point of view Eros seems to remain external to Soul, although it 'emanates' not from Soul but from Nous, something that is even more difficult to explain in terms of Plotinus' system.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*,§3,3-5. (Wolters' translation needs to be emended in view of Igal's addition of <ζῶσα> adopted by H-Ss.) That Plotinus refers to two Aphrodites, a goddess and a daimonic one, complicates the story even more, but I want to refrain from further confusion.

Do these straightforward statements suggest "the emergence of Eros as a separate Hypostasis"²⁰ and the "the incipient break-up of the 'traditional' Plotinian system of hypostases into something more elaborate and scholastic", as some commentators have suggested?²¹ If so, we would seem to be faced by two serious difficulties: a) Plotinus does not seem to embrace such a "more elaborate" view of reality in his remaining four treatises, written after III.5; b) in previous treatises, Plotinus has ardently condemned any attempt to introduce more entities outside the austere "numerus clausus" of the three Principal Hypostases, i.e. One, Nous, Soul.²² A relatively easy way out of this problem is to emphasize, with many commentators, that, although Plotinus uses in his writings the term "hypostasis", it never has the technical meaning that was ascribed to it by Porphyry, when the latter was giving the titles to Plotinus' treatises.²³ Hence, when the term

²⁰ Dillon [1969],p.42. Dillon adds "the emergence... indeed of Logos as another [sc. separate hypostasis]" (p.42; cf. *ibid.*,p.40).

²¹ *Ibid.*,p.43.

²² See Plotinus' anti-Gnostic polemic: II.9.[33].1,12-16;30-33;57-63. Cf. also Lacrosse [1994],pp.124-125. NB that in III.5 Plotinus most probably tries to rebut other overly ascetical interpretations of Platonic myths, put forward by various Gnostic sects. Cf. Καλλιγᾶς [2004],pp.407-410. We have already seen that in §1 Plotinus tries to defend the sexual desire as a legitimate kind of appreciating the beautiful, contra to Gnostic outright condemnations of everything pertaining to our sensible world. The same can be said about the *Symposium*-myth.

²³ Cf. Καλλιγᾶς [1998],p.146 (:comment on I.8.3,20), Dörrie [1976],p.45, Wolters [1984],pp.27 and 247, Hadot [1990],pp.24-25, Lacrosse [1994],p.124, Δαμάσκος [2003],p.212,n.112 and p.213,n.120. If we want to do justice to Porphyry though, he does not use the term unqualifiedly in the titles. *Enneads* V.1 is entitled: «Περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων» ("On the three primary hypostases", «ἀρχή» being a term usually used by Plotinus to denote his principal hypostases -cf. Wolters,*ibid.*); V.3: "On the knowing hypostases and that which is beyond". See also Καλλιγᾶς

«ὑπόστασις» is used by Plotinus, it does not denote any of his three principles («ἀρχαί»), but merely "existence", i.e. something that exists.²⁴ An equivalent story could be said about «οὐσία». Strictly speaking it applies to the realm of «ὄντως ὄντα», i.e. the world of Forms. However, Plotinus can speak qualifiedly about an 'ousia' in the physical world, as a degradation of the 'noetic ousia'.²⁵ In this flexible use, 'ousia' can have an equivalent meaning to hypostasis.²⁶

Still, although this response saves us from the insertion of more Principal Hypostases in the Plotinian system, it leaves Eros as a substantial entity²⁷ which is distinct from and external to Soul.²⁸ I think

[2013],pp.221-222 (: comment on the title of V.1.); in p.221 he stresses an additional sense of the word (: 'being a product'). In a paper I attended at the ISNS-2012 Xth Conference (in Cagliari), Ilaria Ramelli, "The Philosophical Roots and Impact of Origen's Notion of Hypostasis", suggested that Porphyry was influenced by Origen, the church-father.

²⁴ See Wolters' already cited translations. Dillon,p.40 seems to be aware of this modification and in n.16,p.44 he refers to the above-mentioned §1 of *Enn.*,II.9.

²⁵ See also the notion of «λόγου» found e.g. in III.8,§§2-3 and 7-8.

²⁶ See also Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, 7.1.22,1-23,6 (De Lacy), esp.§23,6 (:«ἀκουόντων ἡμῶν τοῦ τῆς οὐσίας ὀνόματος, ὅπερ ἐστὶν οἶον ὑπαρξίς.»), cited by Chiaradonna [2009],p.64 and n.92. For another Plotinian example where the compound of «ὑπόστασις and οὐσία» clearly suggests 'existence' in its context see VI.4.9,24-25: «Ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐκεῖ [sc. in the true All] ὑπόστασις καὶ οὐσία...». For another use of "ousia" that denotes only the nature of a thing –in that case: time-, see III.7.13,23 (with Armstrong's trnsl.: "essential nature").

²⁷ Moreover, it ascribes desire to what is the personification of desire.

²⁸ Hence, Δαμάσκος [2003],p.306, referring to Plotinus' innovations against the Platonic interpretation of the *Symposium* myth, states that "[i]n the Plotinian treatment, Eros arises as a separate entity [/hypostasis: «ὑπόσταση»], in the sense that it is something [:κάτι]...". [Every translation from Modern-Greek is mine.] He makes this statement although elsewhere he emphasizes that we cannot speak about a new "hypostasis" in the narrower-technical sense of the term. (Cf. supra,n.23,

on the contrary that a closer reading of III.5 gets us further than that, in making Eros internal to Soul. I am going to argue that eros is the activity that constitutes Soul as a proper entity. In another formulation, eros is Soul itself, seen from the perspective of its upwards orientation. I will defend my proposal by drawing on representative passages from both theological sections of III.5, but in an inverse order, starting from the end, as Plotinus would urge us to do.

1.1.3. Eros and myth

The first passage that will concern us is in §9, the final synopsis of Plotinus' interpretation of the *Symposium*-myth. To this Plotinus applies the hermeneutical principles he has laid down earlier in the same chapter, hence I need to begin with them:²⁹

"Now myths, if they really are such, must do two things: split up temporally the things they refer to, and divide from one another many of the Entities' aspects which, while existing as a unity, are yet distinct as regards rank and functions. After all, even reasoned discourses, like myths, on the one hand assume 'births' of things which are unbegotten,³⁰ and, on the other, divide things which exist as

where I refer to Δαμάσκοϋ, pp.212 and 213, nn.112 and 120; cf. also *ibid.*, p.177, n.10, where he cites a passage by V. Cilento.) In these assertions Δαμάσκοϋ faithfully follows Dillon's aforementioned conclusions (in their moderate sense), especially if one considers Δαμάσκοϋ's whole statement: "...Eros arises as a separate entity..., and Logos [sc. arises] as another entity." Cf. also Vogel [1963], p.23 (but contrast p.24).

²⁹ III.5.9, 24-29. See also Brisson [2004], pp.74-75 and 80.

³⁰ Καλλιγᾶς [2004], p.451, seeing an allusion to the *Timaeus*' problem concerning the eternity of the world, follows the minority of the MSS' printing «ἀγενήτων» with one

a unity. When the myths have fulfilled their didactic function to the best of their ability, they make it possible for the perceptive learner to come to a re-integration."³¹

According to our Neoplatonist, two elements are present in the interpretative process. The first one is that of "διαρεῖν/διαίρεσις",³² and has two aspects: a temporal and a systematic. That is, myth and rational discourse describe in a linear-temporal fashion realities that are atemporal and eternal. In fact, division into temporal parts denotes onto-logical relations. This is also what the second aspect tries to elucidate by discriminating things that are not in fact distinct from each other. Such distinctions help discursive thought to see the same reality from different points of view. The hermeneutical approach is completed by the act of "συναιρεῖν/συναιρέσις":³³ what the mythological narrations have split in terms of time and structure, the 'synairetic' act of the philosopher-interpreter comes to re-unify, so that

'ν'. NB that all over the treatise Eros is said to be born (γενητός) from Aphrodite or Penia, and the very last word of the treatise is «γεγεννημένος», although the spelling with two "vv" is also present, e.g. in. §5,3-4: «γεγεννημένος». According to Liddell-Scott-Jones [1940] (henceforth LSJ), the verb «γεννάω» (beget) is the causal of «γίγνομαι» (: to be born/produced/come to pass), whose cognates are written with one 'ν'. Hence, Wolters,p.30, remarks that, as the critical apparatus of our treatise attests, the confusion between the right spelling of their cognates is reasonable.

³¹ «Δεῖ δὲ τοὺς μύθους, εἴπερ τοῦτο ἔσσονται, καὶ μερίζειν χρόνοις ἃ λέγουσι, καὶ διαρεῖν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων πολλὰ τῶν ὄντων ὁμοῦ μὲν ὄντα, τάξει δὲ ἢ δυνάμει διεστῶτα, ὅπου καὶ οἱ λόγοι καὶ γενέσεις τῶν ἀγεννήτων ποιούσι, καὶ τὰ ὁμοῦ ὄντα καὶ αὐτοὶ διαιροῦσι, καὶ διδάξαντες ὡς δύνανται τῷ νοήσαντι ἤδη συγχωροῦσι συναιρεῖν.»

³² I.e. pulling apart/disassociating/dividing/decomposing/disintegrating.

³³ I.e. pulling together/associating/(re)composing/contracting/synthesizing/re-integrating.

we can contemplate the depicted reality in its genuine, pure and complete state, i.e. as a part of the non-discursive, atemporal realm of ὄντως ὄντα, the kingdom of Nous.³⁴ In other words, mythical allegories and philosophical illustrations come to life in the stage of «διαίρεσις». These narrations analyze a unified reality into various kinds of parts, and take place "for the sake of exposition (/teaching) and clarity".³⁵ Still, since every allegory calls for de-allegorization, the crucial hermeneutical step is that of the second level of interpretation, «συναίρεσις», where the philosophical mind brings the separated elements into their primary unity again.³⁶ Take as an example the issue of *Timaeus'* cosmogony.³⁷ In Plato's 'diairesis' which depicts the ordering of the cosmos taking place in time, due to a Demiurge who

³⁴ For Nous' unity see in III.5.9,3: «Τὸ γὰρ ἐν νῶ συνεσπειραμένον,...» ("For that which is in Intellect is *contracted together*,..."; Armstrong's transl.), with Armstrong's n.1 ad loc.,p.198 (vol.III), and the references of Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.451.

³⁵ IV.3.9,14-15: "...διδασκαλίας καὶ τοῦ σαφοῦς χάριν..." [my translation]. See also the following lines,ibid,18-20: "...in discussing these things [e.g. the ordering of matter by soul] one can consider them apart from each other. [When one is reasoning about] any kind of composition, it is always legitimate to analyse it in thought into its parts. ("ἐπινοῆσαι ταῦτα χωρίζοντας αὐτὰ ἀπ' ἀλλήλων τῷ λόγῳ οἷον τε. ἔξεστι γὰρ ἀναλύειν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ πᾶσαν σύνθεσιν." [Armstrong's transl.]. Cf. also VI.7.35,28-29: "ὁ δὲ λόγος διδάσκων γινόμενα ποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ [sc. Nous] ἔχει τὸ νοεῖν αἰεὶ,...". In this last case the succinct methodological remark is preceded by a reference to Poros' drunkenness ("μεθυσθεὶς τοῦ νέκταρος"), i.e. a familiar to us reference to the *Symposium* myth (203b5) present in *Enn.*,III.5, but this time with reference to Nous' relation to the One, expressed in the formula "νοῦς ἐρῶν"; cf. VI.7.35,24-27.

³⁶ In another paper (work in progress) I examine the issue of Plotinus' methodological remarks in greater length and present a more detailed story about how they relate with the form and content of III.5 and in which Platonic texts Plotinus finds this approach.

³⁷ Cf. also Pépin [1976],p.504.

contemplates the Forms, Plotinus responds 'synairetically': the function of the Demiurge (efficient cause) is to be contracted/identified with that of the Forms (formal cause), while this procedure is eternal; that the cosmos has a beginning in time means only that it depends ontologically upon its intelligible pattern.

Let us see now Plotinus' application of this methodology in the synopsis of his mythical exegesis.³⁸ He synairetically reduces to aspects of the soul all the different elements that the myth has depicted as separated, since in the myth the events of Eros' conception take place contemporaneously with Aphrodite's birth. From this point of view, Πενία comes to represent Soul's indefiniteness, a kind of psychic substrate, before it is informed by the emanated λόγοι from Nous. In an analogous way intelligible matter reverts upon the One, and becomes proper Nous,³⁹ who has been identified with Zeus in §8, contrary to Plotinus' standard identification of it with Kronos. These emanated λόγοι/rational principles are 'extended unfoldings' of the Forms, i.e. the Forms discursively perceived by Soul, which in their subsequent degradation at the level of Nature, Soul's lowest part, are going to form the physical world. Πόρος represents these logoi, in so far as Plotinus calls him also a λόγος (in the singular),⁴⁰ which stands for the totality of logoi that fulfill Soul. In other words, Poros is soul's

³⁸ See III.5.9,30ff. and an exposition in Pépin [1976],pp.192-198, although I do not accept the negative part of his assessment of Plotinus' practice in *ibid.*,p.197.

³⁹ Cf. e.g. III.5.5,(1-3): "The soul itself... is matter (ὕλην) in relation to intellect".

⁴⁰ See III.5.9,1.

discursive apprehension of Nous. Now, before Penia and Poros are reduced to aspects of Soul, Plotinus has already associated other key-features of the myth with the main protagonists. So, Zeus' garden is identified by Plotinus with the "adornments" (κοσμήματα)⁴¹ that are in the garden, and it is these adornments that form a single representation of Πόρος' plenitude. Furthermore, this plenitude is manifested more properly in Poros' *drunkenness* with nectar, which overflows from Nous' satiety. Thus, we are presented with many subsequent and gradual levels of contraction, before we come to the final identification of Πόρος and Πενία as two (constituting) characteristics of Soul: to the extent that Soul has a desire for the good, this represents its 'Poros-aspect';⁴² yet in so far as it desires, it falls short of the good,⁴³ "because desire goes with being needy",⁴⁴ and this is its 'Penia-aspect'. In this sense Eros becomes again directly dependent on Soul, as his progenitor. But is this the end of the synairetic procedure?

We still have to see what Plotinus says about Eros, but before that I want to elaborate a bit further on each partner of the Poros-Penia pair. I begin from the top with Logos, who in §9 is called "νοῦ γέννημα καὶ ὑπόστασις μετὰ νοῦν".⁴⁵ When formulating the problem of Eros'

⁴¹ Ibid.,§9,14. See the context of ll.8-14, where other synonyms for κοσμήματα are: «καλλωπίσματα» ("showpieces"), ἀγλαΐσματα (glories), ἀγάλματα (images).

⁴² See also *ibid.*,§9,44-45.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*,§9,56-57: «... ἐκ ψυχῆς, καθόσον ἐλλείπει τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἐφίεται δέ,...

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*,l.49: «ὅτι ἀεὶ ἢ ἔφεσις ἐνδεοῦς». An exploration of Plotinus' vocabulary of (erotic) desire is offered by Arnou [1967],pp.59-64.

⁴⁵ III.5.9,19-20.

ontological status, I omitted to mention that this question might arise for Poros, i.e. Logos, too, which is ascribed a "hypostasis",⁴⁶ like Eros. Of course, we have just seen that Poros is reduced to an aspect of Soul, representing Soul's discursive apprehension of Nous' Forms. In this way the 'reality' of Logos is not denied, but is internalized, as a part of Soul's existence, in a way that paves the path for Eros' internalization and synaeresis with Soul that is to come.⁴⁷

I turn to the bottom both in terms of ontological structure, because Penia is lower than Poros-logos, and in terms of narrative structure, since Plotinus chooses to conclude his treatise, and more specifically the *Symposium*-myth exegesis, not with the polarity of Soul's Poros and Penia, but solely with its feminine member. Let us see, then, what remained for Plotinus to state about Penia, in order to extol its importance: "Its [sc. Eros'] mother is Penia, because desire goes with

⁴⁶ Sole occurrence within III.5, whereas the conjunction of "hypostasis and ousia", so strongly put forwards in the first part of the theology of Eros, never appears with respect to logos.

⁴⁷ Dillon [1969],p.40, is once more vacillating between a diairetic and a synaeretic reading when he states with respect to Logos that it "is being made in some way an hypostasis between Nous and Soul. It cannot be regarded as any hypostasis in the same way as the basic three... but it is being accorded Real Existence, as was Eros, child of Aphrodite Urania." Dillon's general stance is that these 'innovative' Plotinian theses foreshadow the elaborations of the hierarchical scheme of reality in the later Neoplatonists, notably Iamblichus and Proclus (cf. e.g. p.24 and passim.). Such an 'anticipating' attitude is criticized by Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.426, as having misled Dillon. See also the fair criticism of Δαμάσκος [2003],p.269 (and cf. *ibid.*,pp.268 and 270), against Dillon's far-fetched interpretation (cf. Dillon,p.40) of Poros as a kind of Nous' 'part', which receives Logos instantiated by the 'nectar', and which, then, is 'participated' by Soul-Penia, all this conceived by Dillon as foreshadowing Iamblichus' doctrine of «μετεχόμενος νοῦς». After all, what we want to find is a coherent view in Plotinus not just an anticipation of Iamblichus.

being needy."⁴⁸ This assertion is familiar from above. But whereas in the treatise's context the maxim "desire goes with being needy" refers to Eros from a certain point of view, we have already seen Plotinus ascribing desire, and hence 'need' to Soul. It is actually Soul that is in need and, thus, produces the activity towards the good, which is Eros, as we will see shortly. Hence, Penia is Soul both before its reversion towards Nous and after its self-constitution: the fact that it cannot become the Good, but only good-like makes it remain forever an erotic entity.⁴⁹ Further, I have already noted the relational sense of Penia and of its correspondent, 'matter'. They can denote a relational indefiniteness; thus, when Plotinus states that "Penia is Matter, because matter is completely needy",⁵⁰ this need not refer to prime matter, although Plotinus is categorical about the 'complete poverty'. That he need not mean prime matter follows immediately from his next phrase, where he speaks about the "indetermination of the desire for the good".⁵¹ As he had formerly stressed, "that which is utterly without part in the good would never seek the good",⁵² and this is indeed prime matter. But, since in our case Penia has the possibility of reversion in

⁴⁸ III.5.9,48-49, cited partly above (in n.44). The fundamental idea in that eros implies deficiency is initially introduced in Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* (e.g. 191a5-6 and d3-5). See also Mortley [1980], pp.45 and 49.

⁴⁹ See *infra*, ch.1.3.

⁵⁰ III.5.9,49-50: «ὕλη δὲ ἡ Πενία, ὅτι καὶ ἡ ὕλη ἐνδεῆς τὰ πάντα».

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, §9,50-51: «τὸ ἀόριστον τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐπιθυμίας».

⁵² *Ibid.*, ll.44-45: «οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὸ πάμπαν ἄμοιρον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἂν ποτε ζητήσειεν.»

itself, it means that we are higher in the hierarchy of being, where the Poros-aspect is much stronger.⁵³ Nor should the phrase "for there is no determinate form or Reason in something which desires this [sc. the good]"⁵⁴ worry us, if seen from a relational point of view. For the desirer to be in a condition to desire (presumably the good), it must already have the traces of the good. Hence, its indeterminateness is relational to that of its principle of formation.⁵⁵ Again this aspect of relationality is stressed further in a following phrase: "But that which is directed to itself⁵⁶ is Form, remaining solitary within itself, but when

⁵³ Hence, I cannot understand why at this point Δαμάσκος, e.g. p.304 changes his mind and thinks that Plotinus' treatise concludes with reference to the matter of the sensible world. (Compare his stance in *ibid.*, pp.276–277 and 296, and cf. Arnou [1967], pp.70–79.) Even if we assume that Plotinus is specifically speaking about the World-Soul, with the restrictions that the kinship with matter might impose on it, 'Penia-matter' could have only an indirect relation to sensible matter, as expressing the increased level of Soul's indefiniteness that enables the interfusion with matter. However, we are not obliged to read in the context only the World-Soul.

⁵⁴ III.5.9,51-52: «οὐ γὰρ μορφή τις οὐδὲ λόγος ἐν τῷ ἐφιεμένῳ τούτου».

⁵⁵ The whole surrounding phrase may seem paradoxical: Plotinus states that "the Indetermination of the desire for the good... makes the desirer more matter-like the more he desires" (III.5.9,50-51 and 52-53: «τὸ ἀόριστον τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐπιθυμίας... ὑλικώτερον τὸ ἐφιέμενον καθόσον ἐφίεται ποιεῖ.»). We are still talking about Soul, not about Eros, which personifies and is the necessary outcome of Soul's desire, and we would expect Plotinus to state that the desire leads to the subsequent formation/self-constitution of the desirer; hence it leads to a decrease of indefiniteness, not the opposite. Nonetheless, here he wants to emphasize the crucial aspect of Penia. Thus, Plotinus may mean that the realization of an entity that is Penia in relation to its progenitor, awakes its desire to get formed by its source; hence, it is disposed as «ὑλικώτερον» towards its progenitor, which makes its desire to be self-constituted as enformed even more ardent.

⁵⁶ Ad loc. Καλλιγᾶς [2004] agrees with Wolters in that we should read «αὐτὸ» instead of «αὐτῷ». This is also the reason why Wolters prefers printing «ἐν αὐτῷ» in the same line. Although in this second instance Καλλιγᾶς does not think necessary to alter the text, he translates following Wolters' proposal.

it also desires to receive, it causes the would-be recipient to be Matter for that which comes upon it."⁵⁷ Here, we are reminded of Nous' case where, as we will see (in chapter 1.3.), Nous is fulfilled in respect of his nature, but when compared to the One becomes 'needy', hence 'drunk' Nous. As I have repeated, there must already be Poros-traces in Penia-Soul so that it reverts to its progenitor. Consequently, whereas Soul-Penia could be said to be Form, i.e. have a certain level of definiteness, with respect to itself, the realization of its divine origin allows the entity to realize its Penia state in relation to its source, and therefore it is like a 'receptacle' for the reception of higher-level form.⁵⁸

I can return, now, to what Plotinus has to say about Love: "Thus Eros is eternally and necessarily come into existence out of the longing of Soul for the higher and good, and from the moment there was Soul, there was eternally Eros."⁵⁹ Does Plotinus mean that, although necessarily dependent on Soul, Eros is an external entity to Soul? The tendency towards internalization regarding Plenty and Poverty in the preceding discussion would not favour this reading. Plotinus responds: "It is therefore out of Poros and Penia that Eros is said to be

⁵⁷ III.5.9,53-55: «τὸ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ εἶδος ἐστὶ μόνον ἐν αὐτῷ μένον· καὶ δέξασθαι δὲ ἐφιέμενον ὕλην τῷ ἐπιόντι τὸ δεξόμενον παρασκευάζει.»

⁵⁸ As I have noted, the form does not actually 'mix' with this receptacle, but rather it is the Penia-receptacle that is transformed into this higher-level Poros.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,§9,39-41: «ἀεὶ δὲ οὕτως ὑπέστη ὅδε ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐφέσεως πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον καὶ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ἦν αἰεὶ, ἐξ οὐπερ καὶ ψυχῆ, Ἔρως.» In this pivotal passage both a) the necessity (cf. «ἐξ ἀνάγκης») of eros/reversion and b) its taking place in an ascending hierarchy (cf. «πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον») are mentioned.

born, in that Soul's⁶⁰ lack and desire, and the memory that constitutes the Reasons,⁶¹ come together into a unity in soul and produce an active orientation (τὴν ἐνέργειαν) towards the good, and this is Eros."⁶² Plotinus does not claim here that the activity of Soul gives rise to another substantial entity. Soul is not mother of Eros in the sense that Nous is father of Soul. Rather, Eros represents Soul's own activity towards the intelligible. Furthermore, this activity, i.e. Eros, is self-constituting of Soul in that it expresses the formation of Soul's inherent Penia by Poros, in other words Soul's discursive apprehension of Nous, in the way that inchoate Intellect erotically reverts upon the One and constitutes itself as the proper Hypostasis of Nous. This is the way to understand how "Eros is eternally and necessarily come into existence out of the longing of Soul for the higher and good, and from the moment there was Soul, there was eternally Eros."⁶³

If Eros forms a substantial and internal aspect of Soul's being,⁶⁴ we can also understand why in his other reference to the myth of the birth

⁶⁰ The subjective genitive 'ψυχῆς' is absent from Plotinus' text, but the context supports Wolters' insertion, which is for the sake of clarity of the translation.

⁶¹ Καλλιγᾶς and Armstrong take the genitive «τῶν λόγων» as objective ("and the memory of the rational principles..."), while Wolters as appositive. Although I favour Wolters' rendering, in both cases there are clear overtones of the theory of recollection.

⁶² §9,45-48: «ἐκ Πόρου οὖν καὶ Πενίας λέγεται εἶναι, ἧ ἢ ἔλλειψις καὶ ἢ ἔφεσις καὶ τῶν λόγων ἢ μνήμη ὁμοῦ συνελθόντα ἐν ψυχῇ ἐγέννησε τὴν ἐνέργειαν τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἔρωτα τοῦτον ὄντα.» Cf. §4,21-23, (: penultimate period of the first theological section).

⁶³ Passage cited again supra (n.59).

⁶⁴ Cf. also Smith [2007],p.238.

of love, in VI.9.[9], Plotinus speaks about Soul's innate («σύμφυτος») love, which explains "why Eros is coupled with the Psyche in pictures and stories. ... every soul is Aphrodite; and this is symbolized in the story of the birthday of Aphrodite and Eros who is born with her (μετ' αὐτῆς). The soul in her natural state is in love with God and wants to be united with him; it is like the noble love of a girl for her noble father."⁶⁵ A soul can be a proper entity only via the erotic orientation of its activity towards the intelligible, and this bond is exemplified by Eros. Hence, Eros is actually Soul itself seen from the point of view of its self-constitution, via its orientation towards the higher levels of reality. This is the radical synairesis to which Plotinus invites us, his readers. It is the synairesis that he himself had done, when in *Ennead* VI.7.[38] he had declared that "the soul, receiving into itself an outflow from thence [i.e. from the Good], is moved and dances wildly and is all stung with longing and *becomes love* (ἔρωσ)."⁶⁶ In III.5, after the final exegetical stage, Plotinus urges us to go back and read again the treatise under this synairetic point of view. Upon a second reading we will be prepared to understand that when Soul is said to give birth to the οὐσία and ὑπόστασις of Eros, this substance is nothing else but

⁶⁵ VI.9.9,24-34: «... ἐρᾷ οὖν κατὰ φύσιν ἔχουσα ψυχὴ θεοῦ ἐνωθῆναι θέλουσα, ὡσπερ παρθένος καλοῦ πατρὸς καλὸν ἔρωτα.» Here Plotinus speaks of Soul's love for the One, without the explicit mediation of Nous. This is why Καλλιγᾶς, p.441 objects to Wolters' stubborn remarks that Plotinus in III.5 speaks about love towards Nous, not the Good. If Nous has/is the trace(s) of the One, it follows that an aspiration for Nous is also an aspiration for the One, the ultimate source of everything.

⁶⁶ VI.7.22,8-10: «καὶ τοίνυν ψυχὴ λαβοῦσα εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἀπορροὴν κινεῖται καὶ ἀναβακχεύεται καὶ οἷστρον πίμπλαται καὶ ἔρωσ γίνεται.»

Soul, as fulfilled by its orientation to the intelligible. By generating this erotic self-constituting activity, Soul generates its authentic self: it is an erotic entity.

I close with a final comment. My synairetic reading of Soul's Eros is supported by a parallel that can be drawn to another, more frequently discussed issue: time's relation to Soul. In some parts of III.7.[45] Plotinus seems to be speaking of time as an entity alongside Soul.⁶⁷ However, the whole view of III.7 does not leave any doubt about time's ontological status, as an aspect of Soul's discursive life. Thus, Plotinus underlines that "one must not conceive time as outside Soul, any more than eternity There as outside real being. It is not an accompaniment of Soul nor something that comes after (any more than eternity There) but something which is seen along with it and exists in it and with it, as eternity does There [with real being]."⁶⁸ Even in that formulation one could assume that time is a hypostasis within Soul, but this is just not the case. Time can be "seen" along with Soul because it is an expression of Soul's discursive life. What I aim to achieve with my present reflections is to show that this is an example of the

⁶⁷ See e.g. III.7.11,17: «ἐκινήθη μὲν αὐτή [sc. Soul], ἐκινήθη δὲ καὶ αὐτός [sc. time]».

⁶⁸ Ibid.,§11,59-62: «Δεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἔξωθεν τῆς ψυχῆς λαμβάνειν τὸν χρόνον, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκεῖ ἔξω τοῦ ὄντος, οὐδ' αὖ παρακολούθημα οὐδ' ὕστερον, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ' ἐνορώμενον καὶ ἐνόητα καὶ συνόητα [sc. with Soul], ὥσπερ καὶ ἐκεῖ ὁ αἰών.»

interpretative attitude that we should hold towards Plotinus' treatment of Eros in III.5, too.⁶⁹

1.1.4. Eros and Vision

I now return to §2 of III.5, where Eros is compared to the eye of a lover;⁷⁰ an eye that, like the Eros of the *Symposium*, mediates between («μεταξύ»)⁷¹ the lover, that is Soul, and the beloved, that is Nous.⁷² I will attempt to show how the first theological part of the treatise facilitates a syncretic reading as was suggested above. I do so because Plotinus' hermeneutical remarks apply to both myths and rational discourses,⁷³ the *Enneads* falling under the latter genre. Moreover, the old idiom of vision can help us identify philosophical, not only hermeneutical, reasons for the syncretism I propose. Finally, in this way the two basic claims I pursue will become clearer, i.e.: a) the syncretic interpretive proposal, whereby soul is identified with eros, or her eyes; b) a further ontological claim, supported by the previous one, according to which an entity, soul in the particular case, constitutes itself via its erotic orientation towards its higher principles.

⁶⁹ See also a passing remark by Armstrong, p.190, n.1 (on III.5.7.12-15), who connects Soul's Eros and Time.

⁷⁰ For a pre-history of the simile see Bartsch [2006], pp.57-114, esp. pp.58-84.

⁷¹ The precise reference is to Eros-god, while the *Symposium* speaks of Eros-daimon

⁷² And through Nous the Good, as remarked in n.65.

⁷³ See *supra*, in ch.1.1.3.

So, what does the lover's eye precisely do? "[T]o the lover it provides a medium through which to see his beloved, while the eye itself precedes vision, that is: prior to making possible this instrument-mediated vision (τὴν τοῦ ὁρᾶν δι' ὀργάνου δύναμιν), the instrument itself is filled with the image seen. It sees earlier, to be sure, but not in the same way, since the eye does impress the visual image on the seer, but itself only enjoys the vision of the beautiful one as it runs past."⁷⁴ Plotinus has moved from the mythical to the metaphorical language of this double simile,⁷⁵ and his 'synairetic' view is notable: Eros is internalized; it is no longer a separate entity, but a substantial aspect of Soul, since the seer cannot see without his eyes. Just as vision is the defining capacity of the seer, so eros is the defining capacity of an entity, like soul.

Yet, the problem is that this eye seems to have some desire of its own, independent from that of its bearer because it "sees earlier" than the lover. True, Plotinus qualifies by adding "but not in the same way", since the eye's function is instrumental for the enabling of the lover's seeing, and, hence, in metaphorical terms, what remains for the eye-Eros is the appreciation of "the vision of the beautiful one as it runs past".⁷⁶ But is it that eros can be specifically located somewhere within soul, and thus be differentiated from it, as an eye or an arm is distinct

⁷⁴ III.5.2,39-46. The last remark reminds us of Eros' insatiability expounded *ibid.*,§7 in the context of the Poros-Penia myth. See *infra*, ch.1.1.5.

⁷⁵ Cf. Wolters,p.83.

⁷⁶ III.5.2,45-46: «τὴν θέαν τοῦ καλοῦ αὐτὸν παραθέουσιν.»

from the body, although an integral part of it? How can we respond to this diairetic challenge?

For one thing, we have the antecedent of Plato's various statements. Our Neoplatonist must be certainly aware of the *Theaetetus*' claim that the eyes are that "'through which' (δι' ὧν) we perceive in each case, rather than 'with which' (οἷς)... It would be a very strange thing... if there were a number of perceptions sitting inside us as if we were Wooden horses, and there were not some single form, soul or whatever one ought to call it, to which all these converge—something *with* which, *through* those things [sc. eyes and ears], as if they were instruments (οἶον ὀργάνων), we perceive all that is perceptible."⁷⁷ So, it is clear that «νοῦς ὁρᾷ καὶ νοῦς ἀκούει»,⁷⁸ as Epicharmus could put it, too. Nevertheless, it is again Plato who states that "dialectic gently pulls... out and leads...upwards" not soul in abstracto, but the eye of the soul («τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα»), when it is "really buried in a sort of barbaric bog".⁷⁹ If the intellectual vision plays the fundamental role in the apprehension of the Good and the Beauty of the intelligible realm, depicted either in the Sun and Cave-analogy of the *Republic* or the ascent of the *Symposium*, then in cases like our last citation the eye cannot be differentiated from its bearer's

⁷⁷ Plato, *Theaetetus*,184c10-d6. (All translations of Plato come from Cooper [1997], unless otherwise stated.)

⁷⁸ (Ps-)Epicharmus, *Carmen Physicum*, 249.1 (Kaibel): "The mind sees and hears; the rest is deaf and blind". Cf. idem, *Ἀξιόπιστον γινῶμαι*, 12DK.

⁷⁹ *Republic*,VII,533d1-3.

actual identity: a soul is a proper, i.e. philosophical soul in so far as it envisages the Good, viz. in so far as it has eyes, or rather, as long as it is an eye. On this Platonic antecedent one can base Plotinus' propensity to 'contract' the seer, i.e. Soul, with her eye, i.e. Eros, and thus support my first interpretive claim.

Going on further to base my ontological claim upon the previous one, as is clear from above, it is not only the eye, but the vision that self-constitutes Soul as such.⁸⁰ There are two issues in need of clarification here. Starting with the first: could it be that an unactualized capacity is enough? No, Plotinus is ready to connect the eye, i.e. the agent who has the eye, with the ("image-mediated") vision,⁸¹ emphasizing thus the Aristotelian idea of 'second actuality'. For our Neoplatonist an eye is a 'filled' eye, i.e. an entity is fulfilled, in so far as it actualizes its capacity to see. This is the reason why in the context of his first beautiful ascent towards the Good Plotinus assures us that, when one has "already ascended", he "has already become sight... For this eye alone sees the great beauty."⁸² Thus, from the initial stage of the synairesis between the eye and the agent we get to the next stage of the intimate connection between the seer-eye and the actuality/activity of seeing.

⁸⁰ Cf. also Καλλιγᾶς' excellent notes on §2,32-38 and 39-46, pp.426-427.

⁸¹ See for example the close proximity of «ὄμμα...ὄρασις, ἕρωσ...» in III.5.3,13.

⁸² Cf. I.6.[1].9,22-25: «εἰ τοῦτο γινόμενον σαυτὸν ἴδοις, ὄψις ἤδη γινόμενος θαρσήσας περὶ σαυτῶ καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἤδη ἀναβεβηκῶς μηκέτι τοῦ δευκύντος δεηθεὶς ἀτενίσας ἴδε· οὗτος γὰρ μόνος ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς τὸ μέγα κάλλος βλέπει.» (Armstrong's trnsl. heavily modified.)

But now we may move to the second issue in need of clarification: why and how does 'second actuality' tell us anything regarding the fulfillment of the agent (or the eye) itself? It is the time for Aristotle's theory of perception to come to the forefront, since for Plotinus, too, the (vision of the) seer in a way becomes assimilated to the object to which he directs his vision.⁸³ Plotinus evokes this idea clearly in the second recurrence of the eye-simile in §3, when he states that "[i]t is... out of that which is strenuously active towards the visual object, and out of that which 'streams off,'⁸⁴ so to speak, from the object, that Eros is born, an eye that is filled: like image-mediated vision."⁸⁵ From this fundamental assertion it follows that, in order for the eye to become filled with the images that emanate from the object of its vision, it is the eye, i.e. the agent, that must act first. Hence, although the *Cratylus*' (folk-)etymology relates Eros to the passive aspect of vision -viz. "because it flows in from outside (ὅτι <εἰσρεῖ ἔξωθεν>), that is to say, the flow doesn't belong to the person who has it, but is introduced into him through his eyes... it [sc. Eros] was called 'eros' ('influx')"⁸⁶-,

⁸³ This is how the «ὀφθαλμός» which looks at the sun becomes «ἡλιοειδής». (Cf. also Plato, *Phaedrus*, 253a1-5.) Cf. Emilsson [1988], pp.70-71, and Καλλιγᾶς [2004], p.429.

⁸⁴ According to Wolters, p.99, "[i]t is probably no coincidence either that ἀπορρέοντος is similar in sound to πόρος, since both refer to the same 'parent' of eros, and especially since Πόρος is identified in chapter 9 with the 'images' (9.12 ἀγάλματα, 9.33 εἰκόνας; cf. ὀύέντες, 9.35 ὀύέντος) down from intellect (the beloved object of vision) to Soul."

⁸⁵ III.5.3,11-13: «ἔξ οὖν τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος συντόνως περὶ τὸ ὀρώμενον καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἷον ἀπορρέοντος ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀρωμένου ὄμμα πληρωθέν, οἷον μετ' εἰδώλου ὄρασις, Ἔρωσ ἐγένετο».

⁸⁶ Plato, *Cratylus*, 420a9-b2.

Plotinus here emphasizes the active element of the actuality of seeing, stating that "it is perhaps rather from this that Eros gets its name, because it comes to Existence out of vision, *horasis*."⁸⁷ In this last citation we get a summary of my proposals so far; starting reversely: a) being an eye implies the activity of seeing, since it is the latter that literally shapes the form of the former. b) Plotinus calls this eye/vision Eros, but we have seen how we can move to a synairesis of the eye with(in) the seer. If so, then Eros himself can be contracted with its bearer, Soul. He is only the persona of the entity that is self-constituted by the activity of seeing, or in metaphorical terms, the "eye that is filled" itself. Moreover, this fact explains why in the end of the first theological part (§4), as with the second one, Plotinus arrives at the same conclusion: "Eros is Soul's activity as it strains toward good",⁸⁸ by which the 'Poros'-principles of Nous come to form Soul's 'Penia'.

To conclude, from this 'synoptic-synairetic' point of view, the eye-simile combines and unifies the two seemingly conflicting notions of Eros: the internalization of Eros as eye of Soul shows us that a) the activity of contemplating the intelligible, being an erotic act, stems from and instantiates the passionate love with which Soul is filled for her progenitor "in the way a girl feels noble⁸⁹ love for her noble

⁸⁷ III.5.3,14-15. Cf. also *Etymologicum Magnum*,379.50 (Gaisford).

⁸⁸ III.5.4,22-23: «...ἔρωσ δὲ ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς ἀγαθοῦ ὀριγνωμένης.» Cf. *ibid.*,§9,45-48 and *supra*,n.62.

⁸⁹ Thus we avoid potentially negative ramifications of the type "Oedipus-Electra" relation.

father".⁹⁰ b) The actual result (the 'offspring') of this erotic intentionality, however, is again to be found 'within' this subject: soul constitutes itself as a proper Hypostasis by eternally gazing at the intelligible realm, that is by being in constant erotic reference to its progenitor. In other words, Soul, and every inferior being in relation to its superior, is an erotic entity; it is what it is only with actual reference to the immediate source of its existence, and ultimately to the Good. Furthermore, the expression of this erotic intentionality is the activity of contemplation. This is why Plotinus under the mythological veil states that, after Eros' generation, "the two of them look upward: both the mother and the beautiful Eros, he who is born as an Existence (ὑπόστασις) that is eternally set towards Another that is beautiful".⁹¹ It turns out that Eros is like a mirror of the Soul: it reflects Soul after the orientation of her intellectual activity towards the intelligible; or the mirror represents how Soul apprehends the reflection of the intelligible in its eyes/itself, in her ceaseless struggle to be(come) good-like.⁹² In either case, this substantial Eros is actually nothing else but Soul itself, seen from the point of view of its upwards orientation towards the intelligible (cf. my ontological claim).⁹³ This is the radical 'synairesis' that Plotinus invites us to do once more (cf. my interpretive claim). It is

⁹⁰ VI.9.[9].9,34. (Armstrong's transl. modified.)

⁹¹ III.5.2,37-38.

⁹² Both images invoke the picture of a lover seeing himself in the eyes and soul of the beloved, for which see *Alcibiades I*,132e8-133b11, esp.133b2-10 and *Phaedrus*,255d5-6. Cf. Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, 2.15. esp. 1213a8-27 or 7,4-8,1 (Susemihl-Armstrong).

⁹³ Cf. also Καλλιγᾶς [2004],esp.p.426.

the ceaseless intentional activity of contemplation (cf. eros as ἐνέργεια) that self-constitutes Soul as a proper entity (cf. Eros as ὑπόστασις and οὐσία).⁹⁴

1.1.5. Eros and Tragedy

Finally, I return to the myth of Poros and Penia once more. One of A.M. Wolters' most insightful remarks concerns the identification of a relation between the eye-simile in §3 and the treatment of Eros as son of Poros-Penia in §7.⁹⁵ This relation consists not only of verbal affinities,⁹⁶ but also of structural analogies, as will be shown later. The synairetic reading of the myth presented in §9 prompted us to read in this way the eye-similes of the first theological part. Now I will close the (hopefully not vicious) circle by coming back to the *Symposium*-myth in §7, which, on the one hand, presents similarities with the first part of the theology, and on the other paves the way towards the final synairesis expounded in the last section (§9) of the second theological part. For a final time, I will try to show how Eros can be contracted

⁹⁴ Thus, my account supersedes that of Wolters', which suggests that Plotinus is simply equivocal with respect to the identity of Eros, calling it either activity or the result of the activity. Cf. Wolters' note on §4,22, p.137; his explanation "is probably that Soul's ἐνέργεια 'constitutes' Eros, the way 'acting' constitutes an 'act.' Eros is, as it were, the 'internal object' of Soul's activity. In the same way, Eros, the desire of Soul, is also said to *result* from that desire; see on 9.40."

⁹⁵ See Wolters [1984],p.97. For Wolters the eye-simile, applying to both Eros-god and daimon, is to be understood better under the light of the Poros and Penia exegesis of the last part of the treatise.

⁹⁶ See supra,n.84.

with Soul. After all, the methodological principles of diairesis and synairesis in §9 are meant to apply to this myth, even if it precedes them.

In §7 Plotinus chooses to stress the tragic nature of Eros, although the context of the picturesque myth of the *Symposium* would suggest a more cheerful atmosphere.⁹⁷ We have already seen (ch.1.1.3.) that in §9 Poros, in being logos, represents the totality of logoi that emanate from Nous to Soul. On the other hand, Penia represents the indefinite desire of the intelligible, before it gets the logoi. According to the account of §7, "[s]ince Reason, then, entered that which was not Reason, but an indeterminate desire and attenuated Existence (ὑποστάσει), it caused the resulting offspring to be neither perfect nor self-sufficient, but deficient, being born out of indeterminate desire and self-sufficient reason."⁹⁸ Thus, Love "is not a pure rational principle, since he has in himself an indefinite, irrational, unbounded impulse; for he will never be satisfied, as he has in him the nature of the indefinite."⁹⁹ So, we see again that for Plotinus the characteristic of Penia is fundamental; what

⁹⁷ According to *Symposium*,223d3-6, "authors should be able to write both comedy and tragedy: the skillful tragic dramatist should also be a comic poet".

⁹⁸ III.5.7,9-12: «λόγος οὖν γενόμενος ἐν οὐ λόγῳ, ἀορίστῳ δὲ ἐφέσει καὶ ὑποστάσει ἀμυδρᾷ, ἐποίησε τὸ γινόμενον οὐ τέλος οὐδὲ ἰκανόν, ἐλλιπὲς δέ, ἅτε ἐξ ἐφέσεως ἀορίστου καὶ λόγου ἰκανοῦ γεγεννημένον.»

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*,§7,12-15: «καὶ ἔστι λόγος οὗτος οὐ καθαρὸς, ἅτε ἔχων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔφεισιν ἀορίστον καὶ ἄλογον καὶ ἄπειρον· οὐ γὰρ μήποτε πληρώσεται, ἕως ἂν ἔχη ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν τοῦ ἀορίστου φύσιν.» Here I choose Armstrong's translation, because Wolters,p.179 thinks that the «λόγος οὐ καθαρὸς», being identified with the λόγος of 1.9, does not refer to Eros, as the rest of the interpreters take it.

is more, even after the coming of Poros the Penia-element remains. As I will note in the next section (1.1.6.), Poros' is in a sense Penia in relation to its higher principle, if we are not to ascribe dualities that can be found only in the sensible world. The upshot of Plotinus' description is that "Eros is like a craving¹⁰⁰ which is by its nature aporos: needy and without means or resources. Therefore, even in the act of achieving its goal, it is again needy. For it cannot be fulfilled, because its mixed nature forbids it. For only that truly achieves fulfillment, which also constitutionally possesses fulfillment. But that which craves on account of its inherent deficiency is like a leaky vessel; even if it does achieve fulfillment momentarily, it does not retain it, since its powerlessness¹⁰¹ is on account of his deficiency, whereas its 'efficiency' [*poristikon*] is due to the Reason-side of its nature."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Wolters, p.183 renders «οἷστρος» as "craving", and not as "gadfly" or "sting" (so Armstrong), as the rest of the translators do. He evokes Creuzer's note ad loc. (in his Parisien edition of Plotinus from 1855; in this note, inter alia, we find a reference to VI.7.22,9), adding that the sense of 'gadfly' "is rare after Aristotle, being supplanted by μύωψ (so already in Plato)". But if Eros bears characteristics of Socrates both in the *Symposium* and in III.5, why not stick with the *Apology's* 'gadfly'? Cf. also Osborne [1994], p.114 and n.112.

¹⁰¹ I altered Wolters' "cleverness" into "powerlessness", since Wolters wants to retain the MSS' reading «εὐμήχανον» (followed by H-S₂) instead of «ἀμήχανον», proposed by Kirchhoff (followed by H-S₄). Although Wolters' long justification (pp.187-192) has influenced me, I follow H-S₄ and Καλλιγᾶς' choice (p.444) in retaining Kirchhoff's emendation. The parallel text from Plutarch, *De Is.*, 57.374d, given in H-S₄, makes the case stronger for the «ἀμήχανον» option. Further, in their "Fontes Addendi" H-S₄ ascribe to our present III.5-passage a reference to Aristophanes, *Ranae*, 1429, regarding the opposition of «ἀμήχανον» with «ποριστικόν». Καλλιγᾶς, p.444 supplies more references in order to show the commonplace of the aforementioned opposition. In another paper I will pursue the consequences of

A part of Eros' aforementioned tragic nature consists in the fundamental insatiability of his desire, which in fact recalls the eye-simile of the first theological part. In that case, we saw that the eye is not fulfilled "but itself only enjoys the vision of the beautiful one as it runs past", while it "does impress the visual image on the seer". Nonetheless, Plotinus' elaboration of this image in terms of the Penia-Poros myth sharpens even more the tragic aspect of ceaseless desire, and actually brings in our mind the behaviour of the incontinent man, who is compared to a leaky jar in Plato's *Gorgias*.¹⁰³ However, while such an incontinent man presumably has desires for bodily pleasures, Eros is confined in insatiableness, whereas he pursues the loftiest object of desire.¹⁰⁴

Still, the central problem that arises from the description of this tragic figure is its actual identity, while we are confronted with another aforementioned problem, that of ascribing desires to that which is only the instantiation of desire itself. Now, let us not forget that Plotinus' agenda is to capture Eros as activity of Soul, at least in chs.9 and 4.

Plotinus' affinity with the passages from playwrights in respect of Plotinus' literary engagement with the characters of the *Symposium*.

¹⁰² III.5.7.19-25: «καὶ ἔστιν ὁ ἔρως οἶον οἷστρος ἄπορος τῇ ἑαυτοῦ φύσει· διὸ καὶ τυγχάνων ἄπορος πάλιν· οὐ γὰρ ἔχει πληροῦσθαι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν τὸ μίγμα· μόνον γὰρ πληροῦται ἀληθῶς, ὅτιπερ καὶ πεπλήρωται τῇ ἑαυτοῦ φύσει· ὁ δὲ διὰ τὴν συνοῦσαν ἔνδειαν ἐφίεται, κἂν παραχορῆμα πληρωθῆ, οὐ στέγει· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ εὐμήχανον αὐτῷ διὰ τὴν ἔνδειαν, τὸ δὲ ποριστικὸν διὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου φύσιν.» Cf. also *ibid.*, §9,42-44.

¹⁰³ See *Gorgias*, 493a5-b3.

¹⁰⁴ This can be an apt example of tragic irony, or indeed of Socratic one: the gadfly pursues knowledge constantly without being able to possess it...

Further, the affinity of Eros' tragic description in the present context with the eye-simile of the first part can be a useful guide in our interpretation. To be more precise, the picture of Eros as 'mixture' of Reason-Poros and indefiniteness-Penia is analogous to the image of the filled eye. In the second eye-simile Plotinus spoke of that which is active towards the beloved visual object, and of the latter as 'streaming off' images that fill the eye, which is compared to Eros. This 'streaming off' clearly corresponds to the logoi emanating from Nous, i.e. to logos-Poros, while the active orientation to the visual object is analogous to Penia's indefinite desire for Poros. In the eye-case I proposed that Plotinus, making Eros the eye of a lover/desirer, that is of Soul, on the one hand he internalizes Eros, and on the other he identifies the medium of vision with the activity of seeing itself. The result is that if a seer is seer qua actualizing his capacity to see, then the fulfilled eye of the seer stands for the erotic self-constitution of an entity (lover-Soul) as always being in constant erotic reference to its desired object. Hence, in our present case, too, we can diagnose under the veil of Eros' persona the *self*-constituting activity and desire not of Eros, but of Soul itself. In other words, we are confronted with the radical synairesis of Soul with Eros, the latter being a necessary aspect of the former's (way of) being.

However, it is not only the analogy with the eye-simile, but also other elements from §7 alone that lead us towards this synairetic view. As we saw in the last cited passage, Eros is called «μῖγμα» ("mixture"),

a word that has been repeatedly used for Eros since the beginning of §7.¹⁰⁵ We can then wonder regardless of the eye-analogy: who is really the "mixture"? For one thing, Wolters aptly remarks that "Plotinus interprets Eros as being not so much the independent offspring of Poros and Penia as their *fusion*..."¹⁰⁶ As a result, the nature of Penia (insatiability) and the nature of Poros (resourcefulness) are presented in the sequel as simply *ingredients* of the ambivalent nature of Eros."¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, according to the descriptions that I gave by using the terms of Poros-Penia myth, we could suggest that the actual fusion of these two "ingredients" is not Eros, but a substantial entity, e.g. Soul, which in fact, due to its constitution, exists as erotic entity. This point can be made with reference to Plotinus' assertions in §7, too. There, he states that Eros' birth from Penia due to her intercourse with Poros denotes that "it [sc. Eros' generation] is out of Form and Indetermination –an *Indetermination characterizing Soul* when it has not yet achieved the good, but 'presages that there is Something' in an indeterminate and indefinite mental image".¹⁰⁸ From this it follows that Eros and Soul have many things in common, since, if Eros is a "mixture" of Penia-Poros, these two ingredients are actually reduced to

¹⁰⁵ See I.16; cf. I.17.

¹⁰⁶ Wolters, p.181 adds that Plotinus "can do this by exploiting two peculiarities of the Greek word μείγνυμι (and its compounds): the connotation of sexual intercourse which it has (LSJ B 4) alluding thus to the union of Poros and Penia..., and the possibility of construing it with ἐκ (LSJ I),...".

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ III.5.7,6-9.

aspects of Soul itself. It is the Penia-state that makes Soul gaze at the intelligible, by which activity it gets formed by Poros-logoi, that is by the 'unfolding version' of Nous' forms, i.e. the Forms under the mode of Soul's discursive reasoning. Thus, the result of this procedure is not any other substantial entity, apart from proper Soul itself; it is Soul *qua* constantly related to its intelligible source of formation. Further, as I had briefly noted during the course of the exegesis of §9 (ch.1.1.3.), the roles of Penia and Poros are not so stable. Penia can revert towards Nous, because it already contains traces of Poros; what is more, the fact that after the advent of Poros Soul is said to be able to orientate its activity towards the source of Poros means that there is always an aspect of Penia in Soul that causes to be ceaselessly desiring the intelligible, as if Soul were insatiable.

Therefore, if the real and substantial 'mixture' is Soul, Eros must be mixture in another sense. The contrast is sharp when Plotinus makes the following joint reference: "and it [sc. Eros] depends on Soul in the sense of [sc. Soul being his] principle, since it has been generated by Soul, although it [sc. Eros] is [sc. at the same time] a mixture...".¹⁰⁹ If Poros and Penia are already reduced to aspect/states of Soul, then their mixture cannot be an independent substantial entity within Soul, as also the eye-simile would suggest *prima facie*, but a certain state of Soul, being the outcome of the dialectical synthesis of Poros and Penia: exactly this dialectical state is expressed by the upwards orientation of

¹⁰⁹ III.5.7,15-17. My translation following Καλλιγᾶς' choices.

Soul, since it desires (Penia-aspect) the intelligible (Poros-aspect). Finally, the image suggested by the last Plotinian citation is exactly equivalent to the image we have seen him using in the end of §2, where he speaks about the generation of Eros from Aphrodite's activity towards her progenitor Kronos, both of them gazing at Aphrodite's progenitor. There (ch.1.1.3.), I proposed that the Eros-offspring is nothing else but Soul itself seen as self-constituted by its eternally gazing at its progenitor, i.e. by ceaselessly being an erotic entity. In the same way, here we can propose that what depends on Soul as its principle of generation is Soul's activity, instantiated in its upwards orientation, which, however self-constitutes Soul as such, that is as an erotic entity which always strives towards its source. The synairesis of Eros with Soul is again at the forefront.

Consequently, if this is so, the real tragic figure is actually Soul,¹¹⁰ which cannot be fulfilled, because "its mixed nature forbids it", with the result of its ceaseless aspiration of the intelligible. If we take this reference in that sense, i.e. as describing Soul's erotic way of being,¹¹¹ then the immediately following comparison in Plotinus' text becomes more intelligible; Plotinus states: "For only that truly achieves fulfilment, which also constitutionally possesses fulfilment."¹¹² This reference seems to be to Nous, who "always desires and always

¹¹⁰ It seems that instead of tragedy we are confronted with a tragic monologue.

¹¹¹ Cf. my approach on the eye simile (ch.1.1.4.): seer is a seer qua actualizing his capacity to see, instantiated in his eyes.

¹¹² Cited supra within n.102.

attains". Hence, if we establish this,¹¹³ then there would be something quite odd in a comparison between the ontology of Eros and Nous. For example, where would Soul fit into that scheme? What is more, if Eros can be conceived as the instantiation of an activity, why contrast it with a Hypostasis such as Nous?¹¹⁴ However, we have seen that both Soul and Nous are erotic *entities*. Hence, a comparison between Soul's and Nous' way of being becomes more reasonable.

1.1.6. Eros and vision, again

I want to conclude this chapter by clarifying two aspects concerning the importance and convergence of the Poros-Penia image and the eye-simile. I begin with the issue of the necessity of the (erotic) reversion, or why the eye is to see. In a previous section (1.1.4.), in the treatment of the second eye-simile, I noted that contra *Cratylus'* etymology, Plotinus emphasizes the active element of the activity of

¹¹³ We should do so due to the parallel and unmistakable reference to Nous from §9: III.5.9,18-19: "Intellect, however, possesses itself in satiety and it is not 'drunk' in its self-possession for it does not possess anything extraneous". Cf. also Armstrong's n.3,p.191 (on III.5.7.20). Lacrosse [1994],pp.125-127, esp. p.126 neglects this evidence and proposes that in the passage from §7,20-22 we should read Soul, qua bearer of Eros, and her Eros. Hence, the contrast he draws is between a fulfilled hypostasis, i.e. Soul (or Nous for that matter) and its Eros, which is unfulfilled. Despite this hermeneutical discrepancy Lacrosse's overall interpretation of the significance of Eros does not really diverge from mine.

¹¹⁴ Of course, in Nous' complete unity in multiplicity the activity of thinking is identified with Nous' essence, viz. the Forms. However, we have seen that Eros is the orientation to what is higher, which in the case of Nous results in Intellect's thinking of himself.

seeing. Nonetheless, one may justly retort that, contrary to what this image suggests, as well as its apparent differentiation from the *Cratylus*, for Plotinus the reversion of an entity, and its subsequent self-constitution, are both necessary aspects stemming from the very first emanation of that entity.¹¹⁵ In other words, the active and the passive elements are just two sides of the same coin: if there is to be direction of the vision towards an object, the latter is going to emanate its images to fill the vision of the eye; conversely, if there is any emanation of images from an object to any eye, this means that the latter has directed its vision upon that object. This is one reason I think that the Penia-Poros interpretation serves better to clarify Plotinus' concrete attitude, since it explains why we have the reversion of an entity in the first place. In other words, it gives us an answer as to why Aphrodite can be «ἐρασθεῖσα» before it gives birth to Eros,¹¹⁶ i.e. before it is fulfilled by the limit that Poros imposes.

As Plotinus states in §9, "clearly that which is utterly without part in the good would never seek the good".¹¹⁷ This description fits only prime matter, which is the source of evil in the world. Contrary to that, intelligible (or 'psychic') matter apparently has already traces («ἵχνη») of the Good. It is the presence of these good-like elements that enable e.g. inchoate Intellect to 'feel' its need-'poverty' in relation to the Good.

¹¹⁵ It is not up to Nous not to be(come) Nous, and so forth.

¹¹⁶ See III.5.2,34-35.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,9,44-45.

Thus, what is potentially good in intelligible matter, Nous tries to actualize it, although it ends up with the best possible image (cf. «εἶδωλον») of the Good, which is the Forms. In this process we see, indeed, that the reversion towards the superior principle is necessary, since the offspring of an entity carries within it the traces of its progenitor.

Moreover, we have already seen (ch.1.1.4.) that the activity of vision/contemplation assimilates the vision with what is seen, although the result within the seer is not the actual object of vision duplicated, but the image of the latter. From that point of view, we can understand why the idea of 'second actuality' has such an importance for Plotinus. In his view, an eye is the potential receptacle of the images of vision, i.e. it is a 'not yet filled eye', as intelligible matter is the potentiality of the World of Forms. For Plotinus, an eye can be actual eye, i.e. 'filled', only qua seeing. From this whole procedure, we can really perceive why an eye, representing Penia, strives to see, and why, since it sees, it receives the "glories" of Poros, i.e. the images of the object seen.

The above description leads us to the issue of the actual 'intercourse' of Poros and Penia, or the nature of the "filled eye". All these images could suggest a view close to the Aristotelian notion of physical substance, whereby Penia and eye are the passive elements, and Poros and the fulfillment of the eye are the active-formal elements. However, we have seen that Penia-eye are active in that they do not just receive Form, but this reception is the outcome, even if necessary,

of their actuality of seeing. This comes to a strong opposition to the paradigm of sensible world, where matter is really inert, unable for contemplation, and just receives form from Soul-Nature.¹¹⁸ Hence, whereas in the sensible world we can speak about Aristotelian composites, although for Plotinus matter never fully takes on form, in the intelligible world we do not have such dualities. Rather, Penia-intelligible matter, via the actuality of contemplation, transforms itself becoming Poros(-Nous), viz. Good-like. The same holds in the case of the eye which is filled by the images of the object of contemplation, actually becoming like it, in Aristotelian terms.

Such a synaeresis of Poros and Penia is not explicitly suggested by Plotinus in his exegesis, as we saw, but it underlies many of his assertions. However, the aforementioned synaeresis is not the only possible interpretation. For, as we have stressed, the offspring remains always inferior to its progenitor, although it is the best possible image. Even if Poros is what makes e.g. Nous Good-like, it is still not the Good. Poros represents the constant relation of Nous to the One, yet it is still inferior to its source. Hence, in a way Poros is always Penia in relation to the One, and this fact explains why the gazing at the One is eternal. Besides, in Plotinus' flexible use of several notions, every level of reality is said to be 'matter' (hence, Penia) in relation to its superior,

¹¹⁸ And hence we have all the complications that arise from Soul's second/downwards reversion.

i.e. more infinite in relation to its principle of limit.¹¹⁹ This is why the eye in order to be filled must be (/is) always in the state of second actuality, i.e. gazing at its object.

In a nutshell, Penia can denote the 'first' moment of the generation of an entity, and hence explain the reversion in the first instance, but it can also denote that the result of the reversion remains always inferior to ('in need of') its higher principle, and thus in constant relation to its progenitor: this is why a self-constituted entity always remains an erotic entity being orientated to the intelligible. This, then, is the gist of Plotinus' view on the nature of love: for an entity to be(come) erotic must be inferior to another one. In this view eros, as in the *Symposium*, is the force that leads us only upwards. Most importantly, it has been clear throughout our above discussions that this ascending erotic force cannot be a substantial entity, external and/or independent of the erotic entity to which it corresponds. In other words, the synairesis of Penia with Poros, or the eye itself actually corresponded to an entity, (e.g. Soul), whose nature is erotic; that is, an entity which has an erotic intentionality, i.e. an intellectual activity towards its beloved object (Nous/One).

¹¹⁹ Hence, I diverge from Smith [2007],p.241, who sees in Poros and Penia the polarity of our undescended and embodied self. In my view the 'duality' of these principles can describe a single entity, e.g. either the Undescended or the embodied soul. For Smith's approach see also *ibid.*,p.236, but compare also the end in *ibid.*,p.242, which comes closer to my 'unitary' reading. Finally, the relevant note of Gerson [2006],p.60,n.48 is too short to be evaluated.

1.2. Potential objections and answers

I will now consider some potential objections to my proposals. My aim is to strengthen even more the solution I put forward by answering to the challenges. Issues that will concern us in this section are the unity of Plotinus' treatise, its daimonology and a specification regarding the relation of Eros to Soul.

1.2.1. Unity of theme

I start with a note on my methodology. One might object that I gave an answer to our problem by collecting evidence from both theological sections of III.5, although they do not refer to the same entity. The passages from the first theological part I evoked (§§2-3) speak about god Eros, son of Heavenly Aphrodite, whereas the *Symposium*-myth relates to daimonic Eros. To this challenge I respond thus: the first part of Eros' theology does not exclusively refer the Eros-god, but also to daimonic Love.¹²⁰ Further, in that very section the characteristics ascribed to Eros-god, e.g. the eye-simile, are explicitly attributed to Eros-daimon, too.¹²¹ Hence, even if the *Symposium*-

¹²⁰ See III.5.3,27ff. and my Synopsis above (ch.1.1.1.).

¹²¹ Cf. e.g. *ibid.*,§3,29. Hence, my diversion from Brisson [2004],p.79, who suggests that Heavenly Aphrodite gives birth to an Eros identified with the higher Soul, (because he is a god?), whereas the Soul of the sensible world engenders a daimonic Eros, who is her vision. But why such a 'diairetic'-fragmentary reading? Although Brisson comes partly close to my response, he ignores the aforementioned equivalence between god and daimon Eros. More specifically, how can the Eros of

exegesis analyzes only the daimonic Eros, this does not preclude the interpreter from drawing conclusions about the phenomenon of eros in general. Such a view is also corroborated by Wolters' aforementioned insightful remark, according to which the eye-simile, which applies to both Eros-god and daimon, is to be understood better under the light of the Poros and Penia exegesis of the last part of the treatise.

Further, in a treatise which aims at extolling the importance of "synairesis" and the unity incurred by love the Plotinian interpreter needs to respond with the corresponding gesture.¹²² For example, it might be the case that the exegesis of the myth comes as an answer to the enquiry into the nature of daimons generally, and specifically daimon-Eros, as proclaimed in §5 and started in §6. Still, one might wonder what connects the two theological parts, not the potential differentiations of Eros-daimon from Eros-god. For this reason I have not stressed the aspect of the mother of daimon-Eros, World-Soul's proximity to matter, and the ramifications that this has for the various daimonic powers employed for the administration of this whole.¹²³ Nor have I inferred that Penia denotes only the indefiniteness that

Undescended Soul be a Soul, whereas that of the World-one is not? What does the latter imply about the ontological status of daimonic Eros? Further, if indeed Heavenly Aphrodite is to be identified with Undescended Soul, and Commonly one with the World-Soul, what is the actual identity of this "higher soul"?

¹²² This aspect is nicely brought out by Smith [2007], *passim*, e.g. pp.236 and 242, although I do not agree with all of his conclusions.

¹²³ As Kalligas [2004], p.433 points out, these partial "powers" neglect sometimes the overall planning of Soul's administration, being in conflict with it and with each other.

characterizes the level of being of World-Soul, as being close to matter. In conclusion, for the purposes of my enquiry and for the above reasons I view the accounts of Love given in the two parts of the theological section of III.5 as complementary.¹²⁴

I am not the only interpreter who takes this syncretic stance, although I do not always agree with the syncretic fruits of other scholars. The following is a good example: if we turn to §7, we find a reference to a «λόγος... οὐ καθαρός».¹²⁵ Here, I assumed that Plotinus refers to Eros qua the offspring of Poros and Penia. We saw that the Neoplatonist reduces the relation of Eros with his parents to a sort of fusion of Poros and Penia-traits, which characterize Soul. If we can speak about such a fusion, then the straightforward interpretation of "impure logos" concerns the Soul's Eros, not either of Eros' mythological parents. Although this is the option of the majority of translators-commentators, Wolters disagrees.¹²⁶ The latter suggests that this¹²⁷ «λόγος οὐ καθαρός», which is identified with the λόγος of I.9, does not refer to Eros, but solely to Poros-logos, which has emanated from Nous, and which contrasts with another "λόγος which *does* remain pure: the one which is self-contained (17) and does not mix

¹²⁴ In another paper (work in progress) I examine the structure of Plotinus' treatise into more depth, I relate it with the theme of III.5 and will show in greater length why a more synoptic view of the different parts of the treatise is preferable.

¹²⁵ III.5.7,12-13: "So Love is not a pure rational principle..." (Armstrong's transl.).

¹²⁶ Cf. Wolters [1984],p.179.

¹²⁷ Cf. III.5.7,13: «οὐτός».

with ἀοριστία (18). This pure λόγος belongs to the 'pure' Soul which is situated above the 'mixed' Soul." Thus, for Wolters this impure logos gives rise to Eros-daimon, aspect of World-Soul, and is juxtaposed to a pure logos, which emanates from Nous and informs the Pure Soul (-Penia?), which respectively gives birth to the Eros-god, mentioned only in the first theological part, but not in the part of the *Symposium* exegesis.

The asset of Wolters' interpretation is that it leaves open the possibility that the *Symposium* myth can refer directly, albeit implicitly, to the Heavenly Aphrodite (/pure Soul). In this way, Wolters could once more support my reading, because I have noted my propensity to view the two parts of Plotinus' theology synairectically, i.e. as complementary. However, a problematic implication of Wolters' proposal is that with respect to pure Soul there would be apparently no indefiniteness/Penia element, since its logos does not mix with indefiniteness. How could we, then, explain the desire of Undescended Soul for Nous? In previous sections I explained how by speaking of a synairesis of Poros with Penia, every ontological level can be seen as Poros in relation to its inferiors, but Penia in relation to its superiors. In that way, even if pure Soul did not share in the indefiniteness/Penia referred to in the *Symposium* myth, its Poros aspect would still be Penia in relation to Nous, and hence we can account for Heavenly Aphrodite's longing of its progenitor.

Consequently, although I endorse Wolters' general syncretic stance, due to the aforementioned problem I disagree with the details of his approach,¹²⁸ a substantial part of which is his thesis on the referent of "impure logos" in I.13. Thus, I will stay with the traditional view: "impure logos" already refers to Eros.¹²⁹ Besides, the abrupt change of the subject (of «ἐξήρηται δὲ ψυχῆς») in the immediately following passage,¹³⁰ where the reference is undoubtedly to Eros, as is acknowledged by Wolters, too, would make very difficult the explanation as to how these consequent passages relate to each other.

1.2.2. On daimonology

The reference to the daimonic or divine status of Eros brings me to a second potential objection. Save for the aforementioned ascriptions

¹²⁸ See also the case of Dillon [1969], whose attitude is to read the whole treatise, or at least the theology section, as being an exegesis of the *Symposium* myth. Although I am sympathetic to this view, his conflation of the data given in the second section of the theology (logos) with that of the first one (ousia) leads him to results I cannot follow. For instance, when commenting on the second section of the theology, §7,15ff., Dillon, p.36, states the following: "Eros itself is a *logos*, proceeding from Soul. What seems to be stated here is that it is also a mixture produced from another *logos* (Poros) *proceeding from Nous*, (which is not mentioned), this *logos* descending from Nous to mingle with the soul (as unboundedness)". Yet, the statement that "Eros itself is a *logos*, proceeding from Soul" does not appear in the passage he comments on, and actually it is not stated, at least explicitly, anywhere in the treatise. See also Καλλιγᾶς [2004], p.428, (: note on §3,1-11), who underlines that the reference to «λόγος» is made only in the second part of the theology; hence, another reason to see Dillon's overall conclusion as illegitimate.

¹²⁹ See e.g. Καλλιγᾶς' relevant comments and translation ad loc.

¹³⁰ See III.5.7,15ff.

of 'substance' and 'activity' to Eros, Plotinus underlines Love's divine status throughout the treatise. Especially in the end of both theological parts, after he has made the bold statement about Eros' being Soul's activity, Plotinus concludes that "the Eros of the upper Soul may be considered a god, which keeps Soul eternally attached to that higher reality, but the daimon is the Eros of mixed Soul".¹³¹ Regarding this second instance of Eros, in the end of the treatise Plotinus adds that it "is something matter-like... which is born from Soul, insofar as Soul lacks the good, yet desires it."¹³² Furthermore, in §6 he gives us an extensive discussion of the nature of daimons in general and of the criteria of their distinction from gods.¹³³ Does not this material build in the view that Eros can be seen as a specific divine entity,¹³⁴ which, although related to Soul, is external to it?

My retort is that if Eros-daimon is an instance within a larger group of daimons and deities, then my previous presentation about Eros' ontological status should modify our conception of Plotinian daimonology on the whole. We should not see daimons as substantial entities on their own right, but rather as powers whose exercise fulfills the being of an entity like World-Soul. This syncretic point of view is

¹³¹ Ibid.,§4,23-25.

¹³² Ibid.,§9,55-57: «οὕτω τοι ὁ Ἔρως ὑλικός τις ἐστὶ, καὶ δαίμων οὗτός ἐστιν ἐκ ψυχῆς, καθόσον ἐλλείπει τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἐφίεται δέ, γεγενημένος.»

¹³³ In this Plotinian context Osborne [1994],p.113 notes a literary inversion of the Platonic theme of lack, because now the daimons are said to have «πάθη» whereas the gods lack them; (they are ἀπαθεῖς). See III.5,6,10-11).

¹³⁴ Cf. also ibid.,§9,42: "This Eros is a mixed thing («μικτόν τι χρῆμα»)..."

verified by Plotinus' various statements in §6 itself. First of all, although he ascribes daimonic status to both World-Soul and the rest of the daimons, including her Eros,¹³⁵ Plotinus is not unequivocal. World-Soul is the proper substance/entity from which several activities with respect to the administration of the world emanate. Now, in ll.30-32 he refers to "...the other daimons...being brought forth from Soul...but by different powers" («δυνάμεσι δὲ ἑτέροις γεννώμενοι»), whereas two lines below (ll.33-35) he remarks that "it was necessary for the World-soul to be adequate for the world by bringing forth daimon-powers («γεννήσασαν δυνάμεις δαιμόνων»)..." That is, on the one hand Plotinus declares that daimons are generated by powers, whereas, on the other, he claims that they are powers themselves.¹³⁶ But then the case is as with Eros: we have seen that in chs.4 and 9 Eros is the activity that result from Soul's erotic disposition. We concluded that this activity is also self-constitutional of Soul. The same applies to the daimons: in so far as they serve in the administration of the world,¹³⁷ daimons self-constitute World-Soul (the proper entity) as the ruling principle of the world. Hence, we can come to a synaeresis of the daimons with World-Soul, asserting that they are necessary aspects of

¹³⁵ Since we are closer to matter, the multiplication-indefiniteness-division increases, thus Plotinus speaks about daimons in the plural, whereas so far he has referred to only 'one' god: Aphrodite and the necessary aspect of her being: god Eros. This is not to suggest that he does not accept the existence of a plurality of deities, e.g. the stars, the visible gods. It is interesting however, what he is willing to refer to in this treatise and what not to.

¹³⁶ Cf. also Wolters, p.164.

¹³⁷ Cf. III.5.6,31-33.

World-Soul's being. It turns out that Plotinus' concept of daimons (and equivalently of gods) is more nuanced than expected, and that Eros' ontological status can help us in clarifying these ontological questions.¹³⁸

Moreover, my de-mythologizing reading of Plotinus can be verified by Plotinus' stance in other treatises. When, nowadays, we read the *Symposium*, we do not need to take the references to the daimonic nature of Love as fundamental tenets which reveal the complicated structure of reality between the sensible and the intelligible realm. Instead, such mythological references just pave the way for an understanding of Diotima's "greatest mysteries".¹³⁹ However, every historical phase sees the past from its own eyes. That we, or Plato, do not seem to ascribe much importance to this kind of

¹³⁸ Hence, I believe that my approach is more adequate than Hadot's one, when he relates the answer to the problem of the ontological status of Eros with Plotinus' principles of classification concerning a) intelligences and souls within the intelligible realm and b) gods, daimons and humans within the realm of Soul. See Hadot [1990], pp.24-25: "L'Âme représente... un ensemble, lui aussi hiérarchisé et unifié... A l'intérieur..., la moindre distinction réelle est elle-même essence et substance. Si donc..., l'Amour est désigné comme une *hypostasis*, cela signifie, selon le sens habituel du terme chez Plotin, une 'production substantielle'. Pour situer exactement l'Amour dans le système plotinien des réalités, il faut remarquer..., que, chez Plotin, on constate une interférence entre le principe de classification qui distingue les Esprits et les âmes et un autre principe de classification qui distingue les vivants raisonnables en dieux, démons et hommes (par exemple 38 (VI, 7), 6, 26-34)... Vouloir insister fortement sur le caractère substantiel, et donc sur la bonté de l'Amour, comme désir naturel de l'âme, Plotin n'a donc aucune difficulté à le concevoir comme un dieu ou un démon, comme un être vivant et éternel du même type que l'âme elle-même... Mais ce n'est évidemment pas une quatrième hypostase."

¹³⁹ Perhaps Plato would seem more committed to the existence of daimons in *Laws*, 713c5-e3. Cf. also Καλλιγᾶς [2004], p.376, n.1 (:Introduction to *Enn.* III.4).

reference need not reflect the attitude of other historical periods. The example of the perception of the idea of our "allotted guardian spirit" in conjunction with Socrates' 'guardian spirit' (δαιμόνιον) is characteristic. Philosophers have been always ready to read allegorical references to human psychology under these ascriptions.¹⁴⁰ However, within the course of time, complications were not avoided.¹⁴¹ The Middle Platonists seem to have made a lot from such references in their elaborate accounts of daimonologies.¹⁴² Such attitudes led to the elaborate religious-pagan hierarchies of later Neoplatonists.¹⁴³ Hence, the position of Plotinus within such a historical context¹⁴⁴ would seem to justify why one could take him as suggesting a hypostatization of Eros. But is Plotinus really committed to that view?

The above mention of "our allotted guardian spirit" becomes an ally of mine, since it testifies to Plotinus' calm and rational engagement with popular-superstitious beliefs and the various pagan-religious

¹⁴⁰ See the references of Καλλιγᾶς, pp.379-380, to Xenocrates and the Stoics, notably Chrysippus. From the Pre-Socratic reflections on the theme of 'daimon' let us not forget Heraclitus, B119DK: «ἦθος ἀνθρώπων δαίμων», and Democritus, B170 and 171DK.

¹⁴¹ Cf. also Συκουτρῆς [1949], p.193*, n.7.

¹⁴² See Plutarch, *Περὶ τοῦ Σωκράτους δαιμονίου*, (e.g. 580d-e); Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*, (e.g. 11.145); Μάξιμος Τύριος, *Τὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον Σωκράτους α* (e.g. VII 5, 90.17-92.4 Hobein) *καὶ β*'. Cf. Καλλιγᾶς, pp.381-382 with notes.

¹⁴³ See e.g. Proclus' *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, 67,19-83,16, and cf. infra my discussion in 2.2.3. At *ibid.*, 75,11-15, Proclus refers to and criticizes Plotinus' relevant view of the 'guardian-spirit', for which see infra in the next paragraph of my text. (This is also acknowledged by Armstrong's Introductory Note to III.4 [vol.3], p.140.)

¹⁴⁴ See also the informative survey of Timotin [2012].

elements found in the philosophical works of his past. That is, according to Plotinus' early treatise III.4.[15], entitled "On our allotted guardian spirit", the Neoplatonic founder is ready to internalize this belief, and incorporate it in his psychological theory. For Plotinus this guardian spirit may not be the leading-reasoning part of our soul, but actually it is identified with the ontological level above that which is dominant in our conscious life. In such a view, even the One can be said to be the guardian spirit of a philosopher, who has attained to the level of Intellect.¹⁴⁵ We should approach other references to gods and daimons throughout the Plotinian corpus in a similar way.¹⁴⁶ Under the veil of such 'traditional' references Plotinus may be entertaining innovative views, absolutely compatible with his whole system, and also crucial for a better understanding of his rational stance towards reality.

1.2.3. A daimonic counter-objection from within III.5?

One might claim, however, that there is a serious argument within Plotinus' text which undercuts my proposal of the synairesis of Eros with Soul, i.e. the synairetic view of Eros as an internal and necessary aspect of Soul's being. When Plotinus in §5 rebuts Plutarch's interpretation of the *Symposium*-myth which identified Eros with

¹⁴⁵ See especially III.4.§6, passim.

¹⁴⁶ In III.5 Plotinus refers to the specific issue of the 'guardian spirit' in §4,4-6.

cosmos, the Neo-Platonist gives several arguments against the Middle-Platonist. One of them is that "if the world is equivalent to its Soul, just as man is equivalent to man's Soul, then it necessarily follows that Aphrodite is Eros."¹⁴⁷ Nonetheless, this statement leads to many absurdities according to Plotinus, since e.g. if the cosmos would be a daimon, then we would not be able to account for the rest of the daimons: since they have the same substance as each other, therefore they, too, should be (parts of) the world, and then the world would be the mishmash of daimons, something unbearable for Plotinus.¹⁴⁸

What is more important, though, is his thesis concerning the avoidance of identifying Aphrodite, that is Soul, with its off-spring, i.e. Eros. Such an attitude shows why the 'synairesis' I propose is not an unqualified identification, and hence it can clarify my views. It is true that talking about Penia and Poros I came close to the point of identifying them with Soul; Soul is Penia in relation to Nous, but Poros in relation to the physical cosmos. In any case, the myth talked about Eros as the offspring of this pair, hence I diagnosed the derivative sense in which Eros is connected to Soul. Eros depends on Soul, because it is the outcome of her ontological status; we saw that it was the self-constituting activity that brings Soul in contact with the intelligible. Hence, Eros was an activity stemming from within Soul's own nature, not something external. What is more, a Soul without erotic activity

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., §5, 13-15.

¹⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, §5, 15-18.

cannot be considered as existent entity, at all. Hence, my 'synairesis' does not simply identify Soul with Eros. It is as if we claimed that a music conductor is the activity of conducting. However, it is true that in so far as he conducts, he is a conductor; thus, the (intentional) activity gives one his proper identity. It is in this way why Eros is an internal and inseparable aspect of Soul; it stems from Soul's own nature as the aspiration of its self-completion. Hence, the real problem that Plotinus has with Plutarch's interpretation is that Eros is not any more the self-constituting *activity* of an entity, but an independent entity itself. This is what could enable one to identify Aphrodite with Eros. Contrary to that, Plotinus' interpretation preserves the derivative sense between Aphrodite and her Eros; for Plotinus an Aphrodite that has not given birth to an Eros, is not a real Aphrodite.¹⁴⁹

1.2.4. Eros and Soul: who is first?

I will conclude this chapter with an important detail of Plotinus' account of the generation of Eros that completes the synairetic picture I gave. We have seen that eros is the activity of Soul that constitutes it as a substantial entity. In this formulation eros is at once contemporaneous and posterior to its mother. As Καλλιγᾶς aptly

¹⁴⁹ Cf. the beginning of Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium*, 180d4: «...οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνευ Ἐρωτος Ἀφροδίτη». What this discussion brings out is that there is an inseparable unity between the entity and its (intentional) activity, between what an entity is and how it exists.

remarks,¹⁵⁰ Aphrodite's Eros is both «ἐξ αὐτῆς», as causally dependent on Soul, and «σὺν αὐτῇ»,¹⁵¹ because it is Soul's self-constituting activity. This is what Plotinus wants to bring to the forefront when in §2 he states that "since Aphrodite [sc. Soul] follows upon Kronos [sc. Nous]... she directed her activity towards him and felt affinity¹⁵² with him, and filled with passionate love for him brought forth Love, and with this child of hers she looks towards him".¹⁵³ Here, the 'loving passion' found in the activity of Aphrodite to her progenitor is distinct from the Love-Eros, the result of her activity. Hence, one could complain: if Soul can be filled with eros prior to its generation, why do we really need a hypostatized Eros-offspring? My syncretic interpretation has already given an answer to this: the erotic activity of Soul gives rise to its authentic self, i.e. an erotic entity.

Now, if we turn to the description of Eros' birth in the second theological part of the treatise, one might note an inconsistency with the previous citation. I refer to our well-known passage: "...lack and desire, and the memory that constitutes the Reasons, come together

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.426.

¹⁵¹ Remember Plotinus' initial questions in III.5.2,11 and 13-14, which I included in my Synopsis (ch.1.1.1.).

¹⁵² The notion of «οἰκειώσις» is Stoic in origin and its cognates are used more than once in our treatise; (see §1: ll.13,18,25,38; §2,34). Cf. Wolters,p.10.

¹⁵³ III.5.2,32-35: «ἐφεπομένη δὴ τῷ Κρόνῳ... ἐνήργησέ τε πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ὠκειώθη καὶ ἐρασθεῖσα Ἐρωτα ἐγέννησε καὶ μετὰ τούτου πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπει». Armstrong's transl.; Wolters translates as follows: "being intent... upon Kronos ...Soul has conceived toward him both an activity and an affinity, and in her passion for him has given birth to Eros, together with whom she now looks toward him."

into a unity in soul and produce (ἐγέννησε) an active orientation (τὴν ἐνέργειαν) towards the good, and this is Eros."¹⁵⁴ The «ἔλλειψις» corresponds to the Penia-aspect of Soul; but «ἔλλειψις» of what? Of the Poros-aspect of Soul, which is «τῶν λόγων ἢ μνήμη». Actually, the Poros-aspect is the "logoi", whereas their memory denotes again the upwards orientation towards them. Now, «ἔφεις» being in the middle has an ambivalent position, since it clearly corresponds to the Penia-aspect of Soul, but the orientation of the desire is determined by the recollection of the logoi. However, in the previous citation from the first theological part it seems that the erotic activity is prior to the constitution of Soul's erotic substance/entity. On the other hand, in the passage from §9 it is the fulfilled substance of Soul that generates a posterior erotic activity. In other words, whereas in the passage from §2 Aphrodite would act towards her progenitor filled with erotic passion for him and then generate Eros, in §9 the erotic activity seems to follow the self-constitution of Soul, which is the result of her separate and unqualified "desire". Is Plotinus contradicting himself? Or is he just careless with the details? Neither. To this challenge I have a twofold answer: a) in his methodological remarks Plotinus has warned us about the distortion that a discursive/diairetic grasp of reality can yield. b) Eros is the *self-conscious* desire of the intelligible, since, as I have stressed, it is through eros that Soul constitutes itself as

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., §9, 46-48.

a proper entity, which means being orientated towards its source/principle.

Let me now elaborate a bit on these two remarks. My first point, although preliminary, reminds us that all these complications, which relate to the temporal sequences, denote complicated ontological structures. Further, our language is restricted by various aspects of our discursive apprehension of reality. Hence, the fact that sometimes Plotinus mentions things happening prior to others, whereas at other times he makes them posterior, may denote the higher degree of unity within the fundamental function of Hypostasis-Soul. When this reality is put to words, the interpreter must not stop at the diairetic elements which discriminate various accounts of the same thing, but he should proceed to a synairesis that sees these accounts as complementary. Besides, as I just noted with respect to the passages in §2, Plotinus aims at showing that Eros is not only derivative, but also contemporaneous with Soul.

I proceed to my second point which is the most vital. In discussing the eye-simile, I suggested that the constitution of Soul is that of an erotic entity, always being in constant reference to the intelligible. This is why in §9 Plotinus separates the «ἔφεις» from Eros, qua the result of ἔφεις, since exactly this former desire represents the first moment of inchoate Soul's/Penia's reversion which fills it with logoi. This prior ἔφεις of §9 clearly corresponds to the prior "erotic passion" of §2. Yet, as we have seen, the orientation of Soul is ceaseless, because there

is the element of insatiability, as was emphasized in the section on §7's tragedy (ch.1.1.5.).¹⁵⁵ Soul can sempiternally be what it is, only with constant reference to the intelligible. This is why it is an erotic entity. What is more, I do not contradict myself, either, having stated that the offspring of Aphrodite, which gazes at the noeton with its mother, is actually Soul itself from the aspect of its self-constituting orientation towards Nous. I have repeatedly stressed that for an entity to be what it is, it must exist orientating its activity towards the higher realms. This is what the «ἐνέργεια» in the last passage from §9 denotes; it is this eternally self-constituting activity. Furthermore, we can propose that: a) ἔφεις is this ἐνέργεια that self-constitutes Soul at its first moment of reversion. Thus, the element of Penia prevails here. b) On the other hand, ἐνέργεια is also the eternal self-constituting activity of the 'already' fulfilled Soul. Hence, at that time the Poros-aspect is more prominent. But in both cases we have both elements working. In this first reversion/activity, Soul must already have the Poros-traces to be "filled with passion" and generate Eros. Yet, when it generates Eros, that is, when Soul is self-constituted, it stays forever gazing at Nous, hence the Penia-aspect is always present. This is why "Eros is eternally and necessarily come into existence out of the longing of Soul for the

¹⁵⁵ Compare also the view of Rist [1964],p.98: "Desire gives way to adoration, though the word used... is still... Ἐρωζ".

higher and good, and from the moment there was Soul, there was eternally Eros."¹⁵⁶

Finally, I need to close this section with an additional point on the substantial result of Soul's erotic activity and desire for what lies above it. Although not stressed by Plotinus in III.5, a distinction should be drawn between an (internal) product and an (external) by-product. The former is what I have been showing so far: Soul's self-constitution as a proper entity, i.e. Eros. The latter is the subsequent generation of Soul's lower parts, which -via the ultimate generation of matter- leads to the formation of the physical cosmos.¹⁵⁷ Hence, the substantial, derivative and external result of Soul's erotic activity is not Eros, but what lies beneath Soul,¹⁵⁸ as is the case with Soul's generation from Nous' contemplation of the One.¹⁵⁹

1.3. Nous and Eros

¹⁵⁶ See supra (nn.59 and 63) on this passage.

¹⁵⁷ The procedure of the (de-)generation of logoi, which Soul projects to matter, is described in III.8. §§1-7. Ibid., §4,39-40, Plotinus states that "[e]verywhere we shall find that making and action are either a weakening or a consequence (παρακολούθημα) of contemplation". My 'by-product' captures the sense of «παρακολούθημα».

¹⁵⁸ This aspect is stressed by Stathopoulou [1999], e.g. p.87. In view of the Neoplatonic thesis that the world is eternal we could paraphrase the aforementioned phrase from III.5 in the following way: 'Cosmos is eternally and necessarily come into existence out of the longing of Soul for the higher and good, and from the moment there was Soul, there was eternally cosmos.'

¹⁵⁹ See also III.5.3,3-4.

What I have been showing so far is that the erotic generation of Soul from Nous is equivalent to the erotic relation that Nous has with the One.¹⁶⁰ The reason I am now tackling specifically with Nous is twofold: a) its erotic generation verifies the synairetic reading I proposed with respect to Soul's Eros in III.5. b) More generally, it illuminates once more the importance that Eros has in Plotinus' ontology. Let me begin by drawing a general scheme drawn from other treatises, where Plotinus gives a more detailed description of the emanation of Nous from the external activity of the One.¹⁶¹ There, he speaks of two 'moments':¹⁶² first, we have the emanation of an "inchoate Intellect", or "intelligible matter", which is simple, but in a degraded-potential sense compared with the One's actual simplicity, and hence can be compared to Penia from III.5's *Symposium*-myth.

¹⁶⁰ However, a complication in the analogy comes from the notion of Undescended Soul. Whereas the One is ungraspable in its hyper-being by the lower hypostases, Soul, qua Undescended, partakes in Nous, having the same content as he. However, qua Soul, it is external to Nous, as a different Hypostasis, which implies that it reasons on the same content in a different mode than Nous. Thus, what differentiates Soul from Nous is the former's "discursion" («διά-voια»); Soul's reasoning is not an intuitive "all-at-once" procedure as Nous, but it moves in distinct steps, e.g. by separating the cause from its result. As we will see, this is an aspect of what Poros as Logos stands for in the *Symposium* myth. Hence, the reason why Soul might feel in need of Nous and revert to it is less a matter of lack in respect of content; it is, rather, a matter of lack with respect to the mode of apprehension of the same content.

¹⁶¹ For specific references see in the following notes. On the whole, I follow Emilsson's excellent account [2007], especially pp.80-90, where he gives a detailed commentary of the passage concerning Nous' generation from V.3.10,8-11 and 16.

¹⁶² No need to repeat that the discursivity of our human language imposes 'diairetic' restrictions to the description of such a procedure that transcends time, being eternal. If there seems to be any 'splitting' in different 'moments' and temporal relationships, all these are ways to denote only 'synairetic' onto-logical relations.

After this first emanation, inchoate Intellect reverts upon the One. However, this gazing at the One has as immediate effect Intellect's thinking of itself,¹⁶³ with the further result of Nous' *self*-constitution as the World of Forms (cf. its Poros-aspect), i.e. as the proper second Hypostasis. Nous' being the best possible image of the One's unity-simplicity, has introduced unity in multiplicity. It is notable that in this picture, Nous' activity towards the One, expressing again an erotic intentionality, self-constitutes Nous' being, that is, as a self-thinking that produces the «ὄντως ὄντα». Hence, it is this eternal erotic reversion that constitutes Nous' proper being, making Nous an erotic being.¹⁶⁴ Of course, in this 'erotic' description of Nous' generation there arises no question concerning any potential postulation of a separate Eros-entity. Finally, although it is true that Plotinus does not usually describe the dependence of Soul to Nous in terms of Nous' relation to the One, in the erotic-'synairetic' treatise III.5 he urges us to do so; since the present focus is on what it is to be an erotic entity, I hope that the analogies of the erotic reversions-activities and self-constitutions between the two lower Hypostases have become clear enough.¹⁶⁵

Nonetheless, even if I we can couch Intellect's generation in terms of III.5's Poros-Penia myth, in VI.7.[38], when Plotinus explicitly connects Nous' being in relation to the One with the *Symposium*-myth,

¹⁶³ See also Vernant [1990],pp.475 and 477.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. IV.7.[38].35,24: «νοῦς ἐρῶν».

¹⁶⁵ For a support of the idea that there is an analogy between Soul and Nous despite the fact that Nous is not Undescended as Soul is see Emilsson [2007],p.78 and n.9.

he does not mention Penia at all. A reason might be that in *Enneads*, III.6.[26] Plotinus uses again the same mythical material with respect to the formation of the sensible world, where Penia is prime matter, and, as stated (already in 1.1.3.), for Plotinus sensible matter never fully gets form. Hence, perhaps to avoid negative connotations, he chooses not to speak in terms of Penia, although he does so with respect to Soul in our treatise, which is later than the other two. The III.5-case may be an indication that in the mediating level of Soul, between sensible and intelligible world, we can speak of an increase of indefiniteness, and hence the symbol of Penia is more apt. It is also notable that Penia in our treatise does have intercourse with Poros, and not with an image of it as in the Plotinian interpretation given in III.6.¹⁶⁶ Of course, the fact that Plotinus is ready to give multiple interpretations of a single source of mythological material in various treatises need not imply any inconsistency. It reveals Plotinus' dynamic way of de-allegorization, where the myths serve as useful tools of the presentation that Plotinus wants to give.

Returning to how he treats the same myth in VI.7, Plotinus implicitly identifies Poros with Nous, and stresses the role of Poros' drunkenness, which has already been mentioned. It is worth citing the passage:

"Intellect also, then, has one power for thinking, by which it looks at the things in itself, and one by which it looks at what

¹⁶⁶ See III.6.14,7-18.

transcends it by direct awareness and reception, by which also before it saw only, and by seeing acquired intellect and is one. And that first one is the contemplation of Intellect in its right mind, and the other is Intellect in love, when it goes out of its mind 'drunk with the nectar'; then it falls in love, simplified into contentment¹⁶⁷ by having its fill; and it is better for it to be drunk with a drunkenness like this than to be more respectably sober."¹⁶⁸

We see once more that what constitutes Intellect qua Intellect is this passionate-loving gazing at the One, as if the result of a divine drunkenness. If we can identify Poros with Nous here, then we have again a duality of mythological elements: Poros and the nectar that has made him drunk. This pair can correspond to the pair of Penia- (drunken) Poros in the III.5-case. Poros has the traces of the One and reverts upon its source in a way that he becomes mad from love, because he is constituted as an erotic entity, as being in constant relation to the source of his divine madness. Further, as we have seen, (again in 1.1.3.), in the *Symposium* exegesis of III.5, the temporal distinctions are not so clear-cut: it seems that the result of Poros' contemplation is his being drunk with the nectar, but we can also claim that the nectar that has filled him is the traces of the One which make

¹⁶⁷ Instead of Armstrong's "happiness", since it is too strong a rendering of «εὐπάθεια». An alternative translation is also "satisfaction".

¹⁶⁸ VI.7.35.19-27: «Καὶ τὸν νοῦν τοίνυν τὴν μὲν ἔχειν δύναμιν εἰς τὸ νοεῖν, ἢ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ βλέπει, τὴν δέ, ἢ τὰ ἐπέκεινα αὐτοῦ ἐπιβολῇ τινὶ καὶ παραδοχῇ, καθ' ἣν καὶ πρότερον ἑώρα μόνον καὶ ὄρων ὕστερον καὶ νοῦν ἔσχε καὶ ἔν ἐστι. Καὶ ἔστιν ἐκείνη μὲν ἡ θέα νοῦ ἔμφρονος, αὕτη δὲ νοῦς ἐρῶν, ὅταν ἄφρων γένηται μεθυσθεὶς τοῦ νέκταρος· τότε ἐρῶν γίνεται ἀπλωθεὶς εἰς εὐπάθειαν τῷ κόρῳ· καὶ ἔστιν αὐτῷ μεθύειν βέλτιον ἢ σεμνοτέρῳ εἶναι τοιαύτης μέθης.»

Poros eternally revert upon its source and constitute itself. What is more, if we take the drunkenness to be the result of Poros' reversion, then we can see why sober Poros can be the equivalent of Penia in our case.¹⁶⁹ Neither of them are yet filled with the divine traces/limits which are imposed by the (drunken) Poros in the III.5-case, and solely by the nectar in VI.7-case. Finally, it is important to note that what emanates from the One, and any other ontological level in general, transfers the ceaseless ardent passion for reversion towards it. Thus, since in III.5 this overflowing nectar is compared to the Logos- (Drunken) Poros inseminating Penia, Dillon aptly remarks that "[t]he Way Down and the Way Up, in fact, spring together from this drunkenness...".¹⁷⁰

A further problem, though, with my approach is how to account for Nous' fulfillment contrary to Soul's insatiability, while both entities are erotic. Remember that in §7 Plotinus states that "only that truly achieves fulfillment, which also constitutionally possesses fulfillment. But that which craves on account of its inherent deficiency is like a leaky vessel".¹⁷¹ Further, as the other abovementioned passages above

¹⁶⁹ I have already remarked that Plotinus tries to avoid this straightforward connection. This can be also a reason why in VI.7 he does not use the name of Poros, but he restricts himself to using one element from the myth only.

¹⁷⁰ Dillon [1969],p.38. Cf. an analogous remark (but said of the One and the soul) e.g. in Rist [1970],pp.168 and 172; cf. also Rist [1999],p.382 (on Nous' relation to the One. In *ibid.*,p.386 there is connection with the pseudo-Dionysian ecstasy, for which see *infra*, ch.3.1.2).

¹⁷¹ III.5.7,21-24. Lacrosse avoids the problem by contrasting things in different categories: Soul and her erotic activity. See *supra*,n.113.

suggest, if Nous is already fulfilled then, how can he have desire for the Good? To these legitimate questions I have two points in response. The first element I would like to exploit here is the eternity of Nous. One aspect of Nous' way of being is eternity; i.e. a constant now, without any temporal extension/succession that characterizes the sensible realm. This erotic-self-constituting reversion is an eternal now. This is an alternative way to understand the seemingly contradictory idea from *Enneads*, III.8, according to which Nous "always desires [cf. Penia aspect] and always attains [cf. Poros aspect]",¹⁷² where the "always" denotes atemporal eternity. Further, I have already mentioned (e.g. in n.160) that an element that distinguishes Soul from Nous, is the former's discursivity in contrast to the 'concentrated' unity of Nous. Temporality, however, implies extension and succession of different time-units. Besides, this is why time is the "moving image of eternity". Within this temporal realm, the realm of Soul, we have seen that Soul, too, is an erotic unity, always being in reference to its intelligible source. Nonetheless, in this case the "always" must be conceived not as eternal now, but as denoting sempiternity, that is the totality of time (-units). Within this temporal framework, for an entity to be 'always desiring and always attaining' would be a stronger contradiction, since, if at one distinct moment Soul is fulfilled, why should it keep desiring its fulfillment? True, we are not obliged to view Soul's generation from a temporal perspective, although Plotinus'

¹⁷² Cf. III.8.11,23-24: «ὥστε ἐν μὲν τῷ νῶ ἡ ἔφεσις καὶ ἐφιέμενος ἀεὶ καὶ ἀεὶ τυγχάνων, ...»

elaboration of the issue is not quite clear.¹⁷³ On the other hand, a mild failure of one to attain what he strives for can make him pursue further and further to fully attain his object of desire. Hence, in stressing the insatiability of Soul('s Eros), in contrast to Nous' satiety, Plotinus perhaps focuses on the different way of being for his two entities,¹⁷⁴ and at the same time he tries to block a counter-argument that would attempt to obliterate the position that Soul is sempiternally an erotic entity. It is true that Soul is fulfilled by gazing at the intelligible; but, after its fulfillment, why does it not stop its seeing? If it stopped at some points in time, and then it realized that it must revert again, then there would be times that the sensible realm would be really bereft of its ultimate source, which of course would be quite unacceptable for Plotinus and his anti-Gnostic polemic. Consequently, if we are to account for Soul as desiring the noeton for the totality of time, perhaps the best solution is to emphasize the tragic nature of its existence, i.e. that it is (always) orientated towards its source, however never fully attaining it, and hence always desiring it.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ See also Μουτσόπουλος [1978], pp.170-171.

¹⁷⁴ Hence, my train of thought here perhaps is the same with Armstrong, although coming from the opposite direction; see Armstrong, p.190, n.1: "...The idea that the soul's Love has a radical incompleteness, a permanent incapacity to be satisfied... has... something in common with the account of the 'restless power' in soul which produces time in III.7 [45] 11."

¹⁷⁵ This is another reason why I believe that the *Symposium*-account in III.5 is more adequate of that of the first part, since seen from a certain perspective it can be applied to Soul's specific way of being in contrast to Nous' one.

Finally, my second point exploits the connection of parallel passages from chs.7 and 9. Apart from the above citation from §7, in §9 Plotinus states that "Intellect... possesses itself in satiety and it is not 'drunk' in its self-possession, for it does not possess anything extraneous."¹⁷⁶ Moreover, as Καλλιγᾶς has crucially pointed out, this passage suggests that Nous does not get drunk *from itself*.¹⁷⁷ Nous is instead filled from something higher. As the world of Forms, Nous is complete in relation to itself, not with respect to its source, viz. the Good. From that point of view, then, the §9 passage is perfectly compatible with that from VI.7 on Nous' having love for the One. As that passage had stressed, Nous indeed is sober when it thinks itself, i.e. with respect to its own nature. However, as the same passage makes clear in the following lines, in order for this completeness to exist, Nous must be drunk from the power which stems from the One, and arouses his manic love for its source of being. It is because Nous has a manic-loving aspiration for the One, that he can constitute itself and, hence, be filled (with respect to himself). Consequently, Nous, seen from its erotic point of view, is analogically as insatiable as Soul is, and this is why he eternally exists as this erotic intentionality, which enables him to have himself in this complete state. On the other hand, from a bird-eye view Nous is 'more' fulfilled than Soul, since Nous is the proper "ousia", whereas Soul is a further degradation of that

¹⁷⁶ III.5.9,18-19: «νοῦς δὲ ἑαυτὸν ἔχει ἐν κόρῳ καὶ οὐ μεθύει ἔχων. οὐ γὰρ ἐπακτόν τι ἔχει.»

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.450,n.ad loc.

"ousia". Hence, in a contrast between Nous and Soul we could hold that Nous is fulfilled relatively to the unfulfilled Soul. This is also how we are to understand the phrase from III.8 where is stated that "Nous always desires and always attains". Nous always desires because it is inferior to the One, but always attains what it is to be Nous, that is the best possible image of the One. In this sense, we can see again why when I was using the Poros-Penia terms I claimed that there is flexibility in the use of the various elements of the myths. Nous as the world of Forms is the (drunken) Poros; however, because it is inferior to the One, it can be said to be Penia in relation to its principle of form, and hence desiring it. Alternatively, as we have already seen, we can express the same idea in terms of the two moments of Nous' generation: intelligible matter-Penia gets its formation-Poros (-proper Nous) by eternally gazing at the One.

1.4. Conclusions

Although Plotinus' treatise is entitled "On Love", our pre-occupation in my former discussion has been with the ontology of Soul along with extensive references to the other levels of the Plotinian system. With the proposal of the radical 'synairesis' of Eros with Soul or Nous it turns out that an inquiry into the ontology of Eros cannot be conducted without reference to the entity to which Eros belongs, and vice-versa. In that way we have come to realize the quintessential role

that Eros plays in the constitution of an entity as such. In a nutshell, approaching the problem of the ontological status of Eros, we have ended up with a better understanding of the ontological structure of Plotinus' system in general, and more precisely, we have come to an answer to the problem 'what is it to be an entity?': being erotic. It is as if Plotinus were telling us that there is no way in which to address the problem of Eros without connecting it with the substantial entities; or even stronger: there is no way in which to speak about the ontology of an entity without addressing the aspect of Eros.

Hence, having completed the above discussion, if we were to give an answer to Plotinus' opening question of the treatise, i.e. whether Eros is an affection of soul, god or daimon, I would respond that, first and foremost, Eros' deepest essence is none of these alternatives: Eros is a self-constituting activity of Soul, or every inferior entity for what transcends it, expressed in its contemplation of the intelligible. Hence, the issue of Eros cannot be examined separately from the fact that it is Eros *of* an entity. This is also the reason why if we were obliged to select one of Plotinus' alternatives, initially, we would be inclined towards the 'affection' one, qualified as a 'substantial' affection. By that we would show the 'erotic passion' with which Aphrodite is filled so that she gives birth to Eros. However, although there is no pejorative sense in the notion of 'affection' qua 'affection' in §1 of our treatise,¹⁷⁸ we had better be more cautious since the 'passivity' of the

¹⁷⁸ Although a negative sense arises in §7 as we will see.

affection is most of the times related to the interfusion of soul with matter, i.e. to the composite («συναμφότερον»¹⁷⁹). Instead, as Plotinus will declare in III.6 the immaterial world, as also prime matter are totally impassive. Thus, Flamand comes much closer to Plotinus' thought when he states that

“[s]ans doute le propos essentiel de Plotin est-il plutôt de montrer qu'Éros, loin de se réduire à une passion, bonne ou mauvaise, est un dieu ou un démon, une réalité vivante étroitement apparentée à l'âme, capable d'en suivre ou d'en inspirer tous les mouvements, capable de l'orienter vers la beauté qui pour elle ouvre la voie au bien et au bonheur véritable.”¹⁸⁰

Flamand's remark reminds us that III.5.[50] precedes treatise I.8.[51]:“On what are and whence come evils”, in which Plotinus encounters one of the most difficult problems posed against systems like the Neoplatonic one:¹⁸¹ how to account for the existence of evil in the world. Part of Plotinus' answer to the problem is that vice, connected to matter, is complete opposition to being, the total otherness, i.e. non-being.¹⁸² Contrary to this 'non-real', but existing in a

¹⁷⁹ Hence, it has also the pejorative sense of something being external to an entity, i.e. not stemming by the entity's own nature.

¹⁸⁰ Flamand [2009],p.418.

¹⁸¹ Flamand (ibid.) reminds us also the difficult conditions under which Plotinus spent the last years of his life, i.e. the time when he wrote the aforementioned treatises (cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*,2,10-23). It is notable that the aforementioned treatises are followed by II.3.[52]:“On whether the stars are causes”, which tackles again with the problem of evil from its particular point of view.

¹⁸² Plotinus' symmetrical system is really a masterpiece: also the One is beyond being, hence non-being, albeit in the opposite direction.

sense, aspect of the world, then, in III.5 we see that Plotinus wants to stress so much the crucial reality-existence of Eros, that he comes to the point of referring to it as a divine entity in its own right. As we saw, Plotinus does so in order to account for the substantial self-constitution of an entity as such. Further, then, if Eros corresponds to the self-constituting reversion of an entity, then it is the antidote to the vicious «τόλμα» ("audacity"), which corresponds to the procession. As it seems, Plotinus wants to stress that for an entity to be an entity, i.e. to *exist*, it is not enough to speak about its 'audacity', the 'vicious' will of an entity to belong only to itself.¹⁸³ It must strive to come back to its progenitor and be self-constituted as an entity. Hence, by realizing the impossibility of being on its own, the entity becomes erotic. Of course, I, like Plotinus, use here anthropomorphic language. I have already stressed the necessary aspect of Penia' reversion due to her Poros-traces,¹⁸⁴ and respectively I have mentioned that the formation of the lower levels of reality is the necessary outcome of One's majestic

¹⁸³ The anthropomorphic language used by Plotinus is conspicuous. We should not forget, however, that according to the principles of his system both procession and reversion are necessary aspects of every entity. Exceptions are the first term of the series, the One, which has no prior, and the last term, prime matter, which proceeds from Soul, but is totally unable to revert; hence, matter, the necessary source of evil, and non-being is non-erotic. This is why it does not have real "existence". On the other hand, as we will see *infra* (e.g. n.191), in his positive assertions about the One Plotinus will be in a position to ascribe Eros to the One.

¹⁸⁴ In that context I stressed the notion of non-deliberation. Hence, from such a point of view, a substantial view of Eros –«ψυχοπομπός», who does not deliberate in his upwards striving, and by doing so he spurs "souls on to the Beauty on high" (III.5.2,4-5), could be a justification for how to account for Plotinus' image of entities 'deliberating' to proceed out of their 'fathers'.

power, expressed in its unintended over-flowing. But even within this scheme Plotinus wants to elevate the erotic-‘synairetic’ element of the generation of reality, not the ‘diaretic’ one.¹⁸⁵ What is more, if, after my whole argument, we can assert that beneath the references to the substantial Eros lies Soul’s erotic way of being, we could follow Plotinus’ language and propose the following: if every level of reality has its specific name due to its ‘audacious’ procession,¹⁸⁶ from the point of view of reversion there is a sole name for every entity: Eros. Everything is Eros in relation to the One,¹⁸⁷ which «κινεῖ δὴ ὡς ἐρώμενον».¹⁸⁸

Indeed, Plotinus in VI.8.[39] will call even the One as “lovable and love and love of himself”.¹⁸⁹ In this notable assertion we see Plotinus’ flexible language, as with the case of the meaning of “matter”. One of the pivotal conclusions of III.5 is that love implies deficiency (Penia), hence it can have meaning only for an inferior in relation to its superior. Further, Plotinus declares that “the Good is not desiring –for

¹⁸⁵ Further, it is true that what each entity achieves after its procession is to become the best possible, but still inferior, image of its progenitor. Additionally, the parallel with Empedocles’ principles-*forces* of Love and Strife is tempting. However, Plotinus’ version is vertical, not horizontal, and eternal. In contrast, in Empedocles we have the circular succession of periods when Love or Strife prevail, the latter being quite unacceptable to Plotinus as a view. See *infra* in my main text.

¹⁸⁶ According to one thesis put forward in the *Cratylus* there is a substantive connection between the name and the nature/essence of a thing...

¹⁸⁷ Lacrosse [1994],p.129ff. in his Conclusion speaks of “the omnipresence of love”, but he follows different, though not opposing, paths from mine.

¹⁸⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Λ.7,1072b3: “it moves by being loved”.

¹⁸⁹ VI.8.15,1. Cf. also *ibid.*,§16,12-16.

what could it desire?- or attaining, for it did not desire [to attain anything]."¹⁹⁰ Thus, if there is no Penia in the One, Plotinus, in his optimistic view of Eros, is willing to ascribe to the One Eros, but Eros of itself. Another reason why Plotinus reaches this conclusion is that in this treatise he chooses to be cataphatic regarding the One, hence he transposes language he usually uses for Nous to the case of the One, but in a more extolled way.¹⁹¹ Hence, from Aristotle's god who loves himself and forms a basis for Plotinus' doctrine of Nous, we have ended up with a rather Aristotelian picture, like the One-god of VI.8.¹⁹²

Furthermore, the fact that Plotinus chooses in the late III.5 to adopt an optimistic (-erotic) view of the generation of reality, rather than a

¹⁹⁰ III.8.11,24-25.

¹⁹¹ See e.g. VI.8.7,46-54; *ibid.*,§13,6-8 and §16,27-33, esp. l.32: «...οἶον... ἐγρηγόρως καὶ ὑπερνόησις...». These are my answers against Pigler [2002], who structures her whole approach on VI.8. §§15 and 16 (i.e. top-down) rather than III.5 (i.e. from bottom-up). However, I am in agreement with much of what she says and this will be revealed in the next chapter: 2.(1.), where I discuss Plotinus' lack of incongruity with Proclus regarding the issue of providential eros. See also the discussion of Rist [1964],pp.76-85, 96-97, 99, (with Rist [1970],p.166), Vogel [1963],p.22, with some not very transparent but pertinent remarks in p.24, Vogel [1981],pp.69-70, 74 (and n.49 in p.79), and Esposito Buckley [1992],pp.(42), 44-47 and 56, esp. p.45.

¹⁹² Let us not forget that an indication of the power of an entity is the extent and importance of entities dependent on it. We have seen that the by-product of the erotic constitution of an entity is the generation of further entities. Within this framework it is natural that the One, being the ultimate source of reality, would be said to be an erotic entity, too. Still, because it is ultimate, the erotic intentionality cannot be but self-directed... Aspects of this idea are treated by Gerson [2006],p.55ff. esp.p.66. In Gerson's argumentation the Plotinian relation of Beauty to Goodness plays a central role. For another Neoplatonizing interpretation of the relation of Beauty to the Good in Diotima's speech see Beierwaltes [1986],pp.298-299; cf. *ibid.*,p.305.

pessimistic ("audacious") one,¹⁹³ is very important if one considers the significance that the notion of «τόλμα» had among the Gnostics and the Neo-Pythagoreans. Hence, as various interpreters point out, although Plotinus "uses it in his early treatise *On the three principle Hypostases* (V 1 [10].1.4), and, somewhat more reluctantly, a bit later (see III 6 [26].14.8), ... he seems to avoid it after his anti-Gnostic polemic".¹⁹⁴ This reference becomes even more relevant if one takes into account that Plotinus in his exegesis of the *Symposium* myth is quite possibly offering his 'authentic' reading of Plato contra the overly ascetic interpretations of Gnostics, who, as Καλλιγᾶς notes, conceived Eros "as a cosmogonical power responsible for the imprisonment of the divine light in matter".¹⁹⁵ With respect to the cosmological aspect, I have already noted that the erotic activity of Soul, apart from its self-constitution, has as a by-product the further emanation of the logoi until the level of Nature forms the sensible world. For the anti-Gnostic Plotinus the generation of the sensible world, this visible god, is not in itself the vicious outcome of the failure due to the weakness of higher

¹⁹³ Although, as we saw, they are two sides of the same coin. Besides, this is another aspect of Eros' tragic nature.

¹⁹⁴ Καλλιγᾶς [1998],p.323, note on II.9:"Against the Gnostics",[33].11,20-23. This interpretive attitude stems from Dodds [1965],pp.24-26, esp. pp.25-26; cf. also Atkinson [1983],p.5. In his more recent and elaborate note on V.1.1,3-9, Καλλιγᾶς [2013],p.223-224, does not stress this aspect. In any case, Plotinus' erotic dialogue seems to be a part of his 'recantation'...

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Καλλιγᾶς [2004],p.408. It is also interesting that for Καλλιγᾶς,ibid., this is a basic reason why Plotinus offers us the exegesis of a myth, a procedure that he perhaps was not very fond of. In any case, Καλλιγᾶς' remark gives an answer to why the scope of our treatise would appear to be narrower than many interpreters would expect.

entities.¹⁹⁶ However, in the initial remarks of our exploration I noted that the daimonic Aphrodite-World-Soul corresponded to the human beings characterized by 'mixed love', and we also saw that Plotinus appreciated them, too, contra to any sort of Gnostic asceticism.¹⁹⁷

Now, this reference to the ethical point of view of the individual souls' love, which was the central topic of Plotinus' §1, is crucial. It can show us why Plotinus stresses the divine existence of Eros and the important position it occupies in the Plotinian structure of reality. We should not forget that Plotinus' penultimate treatise¹⁹⁸ considers the individual souls and in what sense our true self is not the composite, but is identified with the Undescended Soul. However, if we are in fact Undescended Soul(s) how is it possible that people develop desires/loves 'contrary to nature', as we saw in Plotinus' §1? For one thing, we have stressed the necessity that underlies Soul's, and also Nous' erotic reversion towards what is beyond, and their subsequent

¹⁹⁶ It is true, however, that sometimes Plotinus' language reminds of the Gnostics. In any case, we have to stress that the generation of the inferior levels of reality in unintended according to Plotinus. As the myth depicts, Penia has intercourse with Poros when the latter is sleeping, i.e. without his choice to come into contact with Penia. Yet, to be more precise, the Neopythagorean and Gnostic uses of «τόλμα» are not identical. See Atkinson's [1983] lengthy note, pp.4-6, esp. pp.4-5. One of the most important differences is that although in both systems the notion is negatively coloured, in the Gnostics (at least the Valentinians) τόλμα represents the *upwards* movement of Sophia, who tries to unite itself with Nous, the "abortive" result of which is the generation of the demiurge and the material world. Thus, although the product of τόλμα eventually refers to our familiar downwards movement, its cause is found in the opposite direction, something that forms an upright disagreement with the Neoplatonic world-view.

¹⁹⁷ See in the "Synopsis" (ch.1.1.1.) and nn.7 and 22.

¹⁹⁸ I.1.[53]: "What is the living being, and what is man?".

self-constitution. How is it, then, that particular souls¹⁹⁹ deviate from the natural course of this vertical necessity? Plotinus has given the answer very clearly in his relevant treatises (e.g. *Enn.*, I.8. and I.1.): it is the interfusion with matter that impedes the function of our true-self and distances him from its genuine source. Then, in terms of our treatise the exaggerated engagement with our bodily needs and for the sake of our bodily constitution makes us forget our true self, and hence its deep erotic constitution, as looking towards what is higher, not the opposite direction. These 'contrary to nature', bodily desires cannot form expressions of our erotic aspiration towards the intelligible, but only perverted results of an individual that has 'separated' himself from his erotic constitution.

Now, perhaps it is already apparent that in these observations we are doing nothing else than paraphrasing Plotinus' remarks in §7. It is only now that we have had an onto-logical training that we can appreciate why Plotinus after his first exegesis of the *Symposium* myth in §7 chooses to refer back to the issue of eros as "affection" of individual souls. His statements can be also revealing as to the way Eros exists. Hence, Plotinus declares that

"the good men of this world direct the Eros which they have to the non-particular and truly worthwhile good, and do not have a particular Eros. But those who identify with other daimons, identify with one daimon after another, leaving the

¹⁹⁹ An important exception is World-Soul which is never dragged by matter; cf. e.g. IV.3.9,29-34, esp. ll.33-34.

Eros which they simply 'have' inactive, and instead developing their activity along the lines of another daimon, the one they have 'chosen,' in accordance with the harmonizing part of the activity-principle in them, namely Soul. Those, however, whose longing goes out to evil things, have repressed, by the evil desires which develop within, all the Eroses within them, just as they repress, by the bad opinion which they acquire, their innate right reasons. Now the Eroses which are natural and in accordance with Nature are fair and good: those which belong to an inferior Soul are inferior as far as their worth and power goes; others are superior; all consist in Substance (πάντες ἐν οὐσίᾳ). But the unnatural loves of those who have gone wrong –these are affections, and are in no way Substance or substantial Existences (οἱ δὲ παρὰ φύσιν σφαλέντων πάθη ταῦτα καὶ οὐδαμῆ οὐσία οὐδὲ ὑποστάσεις οὐσιώδεις). They are no longer brought forth by Soul, but come into existence as concomitants of vice, whereas Soul, for its part, only brings forth – in disposition and attitudes – things similar to itself. For it would seem to be generally true that the true goods are Substance (οὐσία) as long as the Soul acts in accordance with Nature, in limits. The alternatives to the good, however, do not derive their activity from Substance, but are nothing but affections (πάθη)."²⁰⁰

This crucial passage shows why we should not be justified to see Eros as primarily an affection of Soul. However, it is true that as Wolters notes, here Plotinus seems 'confusingly' to switch the sense of "affection" from a neutral one in §1 to a pejorative one. However, according to our approach the problem with affection even in this passage is not that it is a «πάθος», but that it is an affection *without*

²⁰⁰ III.5.7,30-49.

ontological grounding.²⁰¹ This is the reason why in §1 Plotinus begins his discussion talking about the "affection which we ascribe to Eros".²⁰² Of course, after all our discussion it turns out that Soul is in fact responsible, a necessary aspect of Soul being its erotic activity. Hence, the souls that achieve in being co-ordinate with the Undescended Soul, i.e. their true self, have true-substantial erotic desires, which bring them in relation to Nous. However, souls that are dragged by matter have forgotten who they truly are, hence their desires do not stem from Soul's erotic desire for Nous. This is why a perverted soul-composite, then, gives rise to perverted desires which lead soul deeper in the 'underworld'. It is also very important that Plotinus has used here the baffling substantial vocabulary about Eros. In so doing, he shows us the real incentives of speaking of Eros' existence as a divine entity. In so far as the perverted people remain remote from this self-constituting activity, they stop existing in a proper sense, hence, in a vicious circle, their diverse activities do not relate them with the realm above. On the other hand, the loves produced according to nature converge in the function of getting us higher; let us not forget that as Plotinus will state in §4, "the All-soul has an All-Eros, and... the partial Souls each have their own Eros. But just as the relation of the microcosmic Soul to the All-soul is not one of separation, but of inclusion, so that all Souls constitute a unity, in the same way each microcosmic Eros stands in

²⁰¹ Hence also my complement to the brief remarks of Osborne [1994],p.115.

²⁰² III.5.1,10-11.

this relation to the All-Eros."²⁰³ In so far as our eros is co-ordinate with Soul's self-constituting, and hence divine, Eros, then we have become true beings, erotic entities, Undescended Souls.²⁰⁴

Now, since I have been giving some reasons as to why Plotinus wants to emphasize so much the importance of the existence of Eros, in a way that called for our careful reading, I want to give a final reason: in speaking about Eros as if it were an entity, Plotinus faithfully follows Plato's example in the *Symposium*, where after Diotima's encomium of love in the abstract, Alcibiades comes to complete it by his encomium to the instantiation of love, Socrates.²⁰⁵ Socrates personifies exactly the power of love that leads one towards the intelligible. What is more, Diotima's account is surrounded by the references to its particular instantiation, since in the description of the daimonic Eros, the offspring of Poros and Penia, one can find direct allusions to Socrates.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Ibid.,§4,9-13. Cf. also ibid.,ll.13-18.

²⁰⁴ Of course, there are two side issues here, which could complicate the picture: a) the existence of individual Souls in Nous; b) the great flexibility of individual souls not only to move deep down to matter, contrary to World-Soul, but also ascend even to the Union with the One, again in contrast with the rest of stable Hypostases-levels of reality.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Συκουτσης [1949],pp.145*-146*. It is interesting that Συκουτσης (see e.g. pp.159*-180*) much before Nussbaum's relevant approach [2001], ch.6:pp.166-199, was aware of the importance of Alcibiades' speech. However, he never saw the problem of the individual as object of love in Plato, as Vlastos [1973],e.g. pp.28,32,34, famously did, exactly because the modern Greek philologist thought that Alcibiades' speech completes Diotima's account (cf. e.g. pp.151*,154* and 180*).

²⁰⁶ This identification had already been observed in Antiquity, as Συκουτσης notes (p.142,n.1). See also Osborne [1994],pp.93ff., esp. pp.94-95. What is more, Plotinus in our treatise refers to some of these characteristically Socratic features of daimonic Eros in §5,20-21: «ἄστροτον, ἀνυπόδητον, ἄουκον». Wolters in his comments

Hence, Socrates can claim to know particularly the 'erotic' issues because he is an erotic entity. At the same time, according to a potential Plotinian reading, his classic saying that 'he does know that he does not know anything' can show exactly Socrates' realization that he is *Penia* in relation to the intelligible.²⁰⁷ Moreover, it is exactly this realization that Socrates tries to generate in his interlocutors, so that they try to convert their *Penia* into *Poros*. Far from numbing them, then, Socrates wants to orientate them towards the intelligible; that is, he wants to make them erotic entities, too. It is, then, perhaps for this reason why from lover, Socrates, the real lover of wisdom, can become the beloved; in making the others to feel *Penia* in relation to him, he «κινεῖ δὴ [sc. them] ὡς ἐρώμενον». Divine Plotinus' erotic (Neo-)Platonism might turn out to be more (Neo-)Socratic than the interpreters would allow him to be... Let us now turn to an ancient interpreter, Proclus, to see what he makes of all these issues: is *eros* identified only with an ascending power? Is its paradigmatic instantiation Socrates? Does Socrates' relation with other people, and in particular Alcibiades, tell us anything about *Eros* in the intelligible realm?

(e.g.p.147 and especially p.189,n.73) seems to ignore the possibility of such a perspective.

²⁰⁷ If Socratic ignorance was supportive of the Academic Sceptics' view of Plato, I believe that it still survives in the Neoplatonic system, i.e. a dogmatic-positive view of Plato, under the guise of the ineffability and unknowability of the One. See also Monrad [1888],pp.163ff., esp.pp.174-176 and 184-186. Again, of course, it is via Plato's realization (e.g. of the restrictions of language), and by way of Middle Platonists like Plutarch, that Socrates can be connected to Plotinus.

CHAPTER 2

PROCLUS ON THE *FIRST ALCIBIADES*

In the Introduction to his magisterial edition of the *Elements of Theology*, E.R. Dodds cites the following passage from Proclus' *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* as evidence of pseudo-Dionysius' "slavish" imitation of the Platonic Successor:¹ «καὶ θεοὶ τοίνυν θεῶν ἐρῶσιν, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν καταδεεστέρων, ἀλλὰ προνοητικῶς, καὶ οἱ καταδεέστεροι τῶν ὑπερτέρων, ἀλλ' ἐπιστρεπτικῶς.»² For my present purposes I want to suspend any judgement concerning the relation between the acknowledged Church Father and Proclus.³ Instead, I will go backwards in order to contrast the penultimate Head of the Academy with the official founder of Neoplatonism. One central element in my previous discussion of Plotinus was that Love implies deficiency («Πενία»); hence, only an inferior being would aspire to its erotic union with the superior ontological levels, not the other way

¹ Dodds [21963], p.xxviii; here Dodds follows Koch [1900].

² Proclus, *Comm. on Alc. I*, p.56, ll.2-4 Westerink [21962]; (henceforth, the citation of this work will be in the following form: *On Alc.*,56,2-4, where the first number denotes the pagination of Westerink's edition, and the rest the lineation): "So gods too love gods, the superior their inferiors providentially, and the inferior their superiors, reflexively." (The translation used throughout, although sometimes modified, is by O'Neill [1965]).

³ See ch.3. For presentations of Proclus' system, apart from Siorvanes [1996], see more recently Μάνοσ [2006], esp. pp.101-251 and Chlup [2012]. See also Τερέζης [2005], which consists of studies occasioned by *on Alc.*,174,1-186,18, of which he gives a modern Greek translation, too (in pp.17-53).

round. Eros was identified with the self-constituting reversion («ἐπιστροφή») of an entity towards its progenitor.

Now, Proclus in the aforementioned passage seems to violate this fundamental principle glaringly; it is not only the inferior beings (/gods) that can have (reversive) eros towards the superior ones, but also the other way round: eros can also be the descending (-providential) love of the superior orders for the inferior ontological ranks. Does this mean, then, following the Plotinian analysis, that apart from the standard relation of the lower for the higher beings, the superior beings are deficient, too, because in need of their inferiors? However, in that case the boundaries between 'superiority' and 'inferiority' are completely blurred. In what sense is an entity higher in the ontological rank if it needs its descendants? And in that case, why do the 'inferiors' desire the 'superiors'? In response to this difficulty, I have to state from the very beginning that Proclus does not approve of any such compromise.⁴ It is a characteristic of all Neoplatonists that they give a hierarchical picture of reality: the existence of each ontological level depends solely upon its superior.

If, then, we cannot accuse Proclus of any blatant inconsistency, does this mean that by his time we have had a fundamental shift in the notion of Eros? Is it that Eros does not imply deficiency anymore, and that he has become, like Aphrodite, «ἀμήτωρ», i.e. the offspring of Πόρος alone, due to his love/provision for Πενία? But how one can

⁴ Cf. also Μάνος [2006],p.230.

really square the notion of ascending eros with that of descending eros? Does Proclus have two completely separate stories about these opposing instances of love? Moreover, is the gap between Proclus' and Plotinus' conception of Eros really unbridgeable? In the following sections I will try to show not only the unity of Proclus' highly systematic thought and the complementarity of his accounts, but also his real attitude towards Plotinus concerning our specific matter: although at first sight it might seem implausible, Proclus in fact explicates what is only implicit in Plotinus.⁵ My main focus will be on Proclus' *Alcibiades Commentary* with the aid of the *Elements of Theology*. More specifically, my basic point is that the model of descending and ascending eros maps onto the familiar Neoplatonic scheme of procession and reversion. Descending or providential eros is a species of providence and a by-product of reversive eros.

My discussion of Proclus is divided into two parts. In the first part (ch.2.1.) I emphasize the ethical aspect of Proclus' views, while in the second part (ch.2.2.) I will dwell on metaphysical questions. Hence, since in the chapter on Plotinus I was basically speaking about reversive eros, in the first part of the chapter on Proclus I will draw more on the nature of providential love. I will give various examples of descending eros, whose illustration will help us understand the complementary relation of ascending and descending eros in Proclus,

⁵ Hence I disagree with Mávoç [2006], pp.230 and 225.

although for a definite and more elaborate answer the reader needs to wait until the second metaphysical part of my treatment.

2.1. Providential and Reversive Eros:

Proclus versus Plotinus?

2.1.1. From Alcibiades' reversive eros to Socratic love

In this section I will establish the existence of reversive eros in Proclus and I will introduce us to Socratic love: although not to be identified with Alcibiades' reversive love for Socrates, Socrates' care for Alcibiades is erotic. Thus, I begin with a passage where Proclus employs a trio known to us: Penia, Poros and Eros, who appear in the Platonic *Symposium* and reappear in Plotinus' exegesis in *Enn.III.5*.⁶

“...asking the right questions (τὸ... καλῶς ἀπορῆσαι) is the cause of facility in solution (εὐπορίας). The poverty (πενία) within us is cause of our lack of resource (ἀπορίας), and love (ἔρως) arouses us to the search for perfect knowledge; but resource (πόρος) lies in the being and <intelligent substance> of the soul, since it is the son of Counsel (Μήτιδος⁷). Our substance proceeds from above, from the divine intellect, but

⁶ These two parallels are noted by O'Neill ad loc. (n.438, although the reference to Plotinus should rather be to III.5.§§7 and 9, not 8 and 9). O'Neill notes in the 'Preface' to his transl.-comm. ([1965], p.vii of the Prometheus Trust's edition) that he is indebted for his Plotinian references to A.H. Armstrong.

⁷ The 'personal' reference of πόρος here as the son of Μήτιδος shows clearly that at least the previous mentions of πενία, πόρος and ἔρως could have been printed with their first letter as capital, so that they more clearly denote the literary/mythological allusion. (On the other hand, the second round of mentions to come in ll.8-10, being a sort of interpretation, would rather be kept as it is.)

what is potential within us is the poverty and indeterminacy of life. Now when we are aroused to the love of the knowledge of ourselves, we behold the resource within us and the whole ordering of the soul.”⁸

This excerpt is not concerned with the genealogy of eros per se, and hence it does not give an account of what eros is. Instead, it is posed within the more restrained context of illustrating the form of enquiry («εὔρεσις» on our own) as opposed to learning («μάθησις» by someone else).⁹ However, immediately there follows a second round of ‘de-allegorizing’ references¹⁰ which become much more reminiscent of Plotinus, since poros is associated with our intellectual substance, itself derived from Intellect, as are the λόγοι/λόγος in Plotinus’ case. What is more, penia’s relation to our intellectual ‘potentialities’, as well as indefiniteness, recalls the Plotinian approach. Penia is related to the (generation of our) eros for the knowledge (of ourselves), which is equated with contemplation of our own “poros”, i.e. with the (recollection of the) inherent λόγοι in us. All these elements are very close to Plotinus’ spirit and we could apply analogous remarks to those I made above concerning Plotinus.¹¹

⁸ On Alc.,236,3-10.

⁹ For Proclus’ views on these matters, the supremacy of enquiry against learning, and hence the superiority of those who “behold the truth of themselves,... while the weaker characters need in addition both instruction and reminders from others who possess perfection...” see On Alc.,176,18-177,18.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*,236,6-10.

¹¹ Proclus had also composed a now lost *Commentary on the Enneads*. For some extant information see Bidez [1937] and Westerink [1959].

Thus, although the above excerpt does not primarily intend to clarify the nature of love, it does associate the notion of *penia* (-deficiency) with *eros*, and it is certainly a deficiency that characterizes Alcibiades, who falls short of Socratic self-knowledge. Although he didn't, Proclus could have used this very simile also in more metaphysically-loaded passages, given the preeminent position he ascribes to *ἔνδεια* in relation to *ἔρως/ἔφεις* in both the *Alcibiades' Commentary* and the *Elements of Theology*. Starting with the former, Proclus is crystal-clear when stating that «ἔστι... ὁ ἔρως ἔφεις τινος ἔρρωμένη καὶ σύντονος,¹² καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἐρῶν ἐφίεται τινος οὗ ἔστιν ἔνδεός».¹³ These lines could have been written by Plotinus, as well as Plato.¹⁴ Granting the intimate relation between desire and love, the same idea is recapitulated in the *Elements*, although the word «ἔρως» and its cognates are absent from this introductory work:¹⁵ «τὸ γὰρ

¹² Cf. On Alc.,336,23: «σύντονος γὰρ ἔστιν ἔφεις ὁ ἔρως», and *ibid.*,329,19-21: «τοῦ γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἔστιν ὁ ἔρως καὶ ἡ ἔφεις, διαφέρει δὲ ἀλλήλων κατὰ τὴν ἄνεσιν ἢ τὴν συντονίαν τῆς ἐφέσεως».

¹³ *Ibid.*,328,15-329,1: "...love is a powerful and intense desire for something, and everything that loves desires something it lacks".

¹⁴ Cf. Plato, *Symposium*,199e6-200b2: «...ὁ ἔρως ἔρως ἔστιν οὐδενὸς ἢ τινός; - Πάνυ μὲν οὖν ἔστι. -...τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν ἐπιθυμεῖν οὗ ἔνδεός ἔστιν, ἢ μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ ἔνδεός ἦ; ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ θαυμαστῶς δοκεῖ, ὡς Ἀγάθων, ὡς ἀνάγκη εἶναι». Cf. also *idem*, *Lysis*,221d3-e2: «ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς φιλίας αἰτία, καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν φίλον ἔστιν τούτῳ οὗ ἐπιθυμεῖ... τό γε ἐπιθυμοῦν, οὗ ἂν ἔνδεός ἦ, τούτου ἐπιθυμεῖ... Τὸ δ' ἔνδεός ἄρα φίλον ἐκείνου οὗ ἂν ἔνδεός ἦ». (Further, cf. *Philebus*,34e13-35a4, although admittedly the context and the purpose of the argumentation are different; cf. the thesis 'pleasure as process [of restoration]'.)

¹⁵ Cf. also Vogel [1963],pp.29 and 31. NB that the formula *ἔρως προνοητικός* is said to be absent from Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, too.

ὀρεγόμενον του ἐνδεές ἐστιν οὐ ὀρέγεται».¹⁶ Consequently, we see that for Proclus, as for Plotinus, the notion of eros does imply deficiency-penia with reference to the object desired, and the hierarchy still exists: the lover is inferior to the beloved to which it aspires, as in the case of Alcibiades' inferiority to Socrates. Thus, eros is related to the reversion of the lower entity to its higher principle.¹⁷ As Proclus puts it in the *Alcibiades Commentary*, "the whole order of love is for all beings the cause of reversion to the divine beauty".¹⁸

If then we can establish that ἔνδεια/πενία (of the inferior for the superior) continues to play a fundamental role in Proclus' conception of ἔρως, is it not a pleonasm to speak about «ἐπιστρεπτικός ἔρως», as in the passage cited in the beginning of the chapter (2.)? Presumably, the qualification means to distinguish "reversive" from «προνοητικός» eros, i.e. love of the superior for the inferior. But in light of the Plotinian background this idea appears hard to understand. Could Proclus ever think that there is any kind of 'penia' in superior entities

¹⁶ *The Elements of Theology*, (henceforth El.Th.),8,1: "... all appetite implies a lack of... the object craved". (The reference's first number denotes the proposition and the second Dodds' lineation. The translation used throughout, sometimes modified, is by Dodds [1963].) Cf. his note ad loc.,p.195 with cross-references to Plato, *Phil.*,20D and Aristotle, *E.N.*,1094a1.

¹⁷ Cf. Dodds' note on prop.31,p.218, which could have been illustrated with the Plotinian-Platonic simile of Poros and Penia.

¹⁸ On Alc.,30,14-15. Cf. *ibid.*,29,1: «διὰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ἀναγόμεθα», and 129,22-24: "The phrase 'my good friend (ὠγαθὲ), speak on' makes Socrates an object of desire (ἐφετόν) to the young man, and turns the lover (ἐραστήν) into the beloved (ἐρώμενον); for the good is the object of desire and love (ἔρως) leads lovers (ἐρώντας) towards the good, according to the account of Diotima [cf.*Symp.*204e-206a]." Finally, see On Alc.,53,5-6.

with respect to the lower ones? I have already shown in the introduction that this is not the case. For Proclus «αὐτάρκεια» ('self-sufficiency'), viz. not being in need of anything else external to oneself,¹⁹ is a divine ideal.²⁰ For example, when speaking about the Good in the *Elements*, he states that "[t]he unqualified Good lacks nothing, since it has not desire towards another (for desire in it would be a failure of goodness)."²¹ Hence, the nearer an entity is to the Good on the ontological scale, the more self-sufficient it is;²² and, thus, the more distanced it is from its inferior orders of reality.²³ The same ideas are to be found in the *Alc. Comm.*, too.²⁴

¹⁹ Cf. *On Alc.*,107,4-6: «τὸ γὰρ μὴ ἑαυτῷ ἀρκούμενον, ἀλλ' ἑτέρων ἐξηρημένον, καὶ τούτων παντοδαπῶν καὶ ἀσάτων, οὐκ ἂν εἶη τῆς αὐτάρκουσ φύσεως.»

²⁰ Cf. *El.Th.*,9,18-24 with Dodds' n. ad loc.,p.196.

²¹ *Ibid.*,10,4-5. Cf. Dodds' note ad loc.,p.197, with various references as evidence to the traditional Greek idea "that God is not ἐνδεής". Compare also *Plot.,Enn.*,III.8.11,9-11 and 23-25. Of course, since the One/Good transcends everything, it is also beyond self-sufficiency, "for so it would be a principle fulfilled with goodness, not the primal Good" (: *El.Th.*,10,6-7; cf. *Plot.*,V.3.17,14). See also *El.Th.*8,9-13 and 115,5: «ἀδύνατον, εἶναι τὰγαθὸν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἐνδεές.»

²² Cf. *ibid.*,9,24: «ὁμοιότερόν ἐστιν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ αὐτάρκες» and *ibid.*,40,14: «τῷ δὲ ἀγαθῷ συγγενέστερον τὸ αὐτάρκες». See also *ibid.*,28,(10-11: «Πᾶν τὸ παράγον τὰ ὅμοια πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πρὸ τῶν ἀνομοίων ὑφίστησιν.») in conjunction with 26,22 (: «ἀνελαττώτων ἄρα τῶν παραγόντων μενόντων, τὰ δεύτερα παράγεται ὑπ' αὐτῶν»). Consequently, with respect e.g. to the Henads, placed immediately below the One in the hierarchy, Proclus, *ibid.*,127,25-26 and 33-34 declares that "(a)ll that is divine is primordially and supremely simple, and for this reason completely self-sufficient (αὐτάρκέστατον)... Being a pure excellence (prop.119), deity needs nothing extraneous (οὔτε οὖν τῶν ἄλλων δεῖται); being unitary, it is not dependent upon its own elements." See also Dodds,p.268 (: n. on prop.127 regarding the issue of degrees of self-sufficiency).

²³ However, as Dodds,p.196 puts it, "'self-sufficiency' does not exclude a timeless causal dependence on a higher principle.... This is a particular application of the general doctrine that immanence is unintelligible without transcendence". Cf. also

Therefore, it seems that the Plotinian notion of ἐπιστροφικὸς ἔρως is incompatible with that of a descending love. Does this mean that, if Proclus wants to be consistent, he must totally divorce the providential eros from the reversive one? Or is there any possibility of accommodating the two within his system? The answer is yes and it is well featured in the loving pair of Socrates and Alcibiades, since the complement of Alcibiades' reversive eros is Socrates' erotic care or providential eros. While Socrates does fall short of higher entities, like his guardian-spirit, for which he must have reversive eros, he is not in need of Alcibiades.

Let us see then what providential eros exactly is according to Proclus, because only then will we be able to make a fair comparison with Plotinus. A good place to start is one of the initial substantial

his note on prop.40(ff.), pp.223ff. on the notion of "self-constituted" (αὐθυπόστατον); on the notion of «αὐτοτελῆς ὑπόστασις» ("substance complete in itself") see El.Th.64,29-31: «τέλειαι γὰρ οὖσαι [sc. αἱ αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις] πληροῦσι μὲν ἑαυτῶν ἐκεῖνα [sc. τὰ μετέχοντα] καὶ ἐδράζουσιν ἐν ἑαυταῖς, δέονται δὲ οὐδὲν τῶν καταδεεστέρων εἰς τὴν ὑπόστασιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν», with Dodds' n. in p.235: "...In Proclus its meaning [sc. of the term αὐτοτελής] seems to coincide with that of ἀνάρκης and αὐθυπόστατος."

²⁴ See On Alc.,103,22-104,10 revolving around the basic idea that «...τὸ αὐταρκες πρῶτως ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς θεοῖς...», whereas the rest of the entities below are «κατὰ μέθεξιν ἀνάρκης». Cf. *ibid.*,182,7-8 (: «τὸ αὐταρκες... τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ στοιχείον ἐστι») and *ibid.*153,10-11. Another motif of the first passage is the intimate relation between εὐδαιμονία and self-sufficiency/«ἀνευδής» found also in 109,15-16 and 102,22. In 107,13-18 and 152,15-153,1 one can ascertain that «ἀνάρκεια... περὶ τὰ ἔνυλα... οὐκ ἔστιν». Finally, in 35,10 Socrates, being a true lover of Alcibiades, is characterized as «ἀνάρκης», contra the common lovers; see *infra* on the connection between Socrates-Alcibiades' relation and the ontological hierarchy. On the contrast between divine and common lovers see also Τερέζης [2002],pp.58-68 and 69.

references to Eros in the Commentary. The Successor, commenting on the opening phrase of the dialogue,²⁵ states:

“[T]he form of the discussion is most suited to the business of love. For it is the property of divine lovers to turn (ἐπιστρέφειν), recall and rally the beloved to himself; since, positively instituting a middle rank between divine beauty and those who have need of their forethought, these persons, inasmuch as they model themselves on the divine love, gather unto and unite with themselves the lives of their loved ones, and lead them up with themselves to intelligible beauty, pouring, as Socrates in the *Phaedrus*²⁶ says ‘into their souls’ whatever they ‘draw’ from that source. *If, then, the lover is inspired by love, he would be the sort of person who turns back and recalls noble natures to the good, like love itself.*”²⁷

As becomes clear from the continuation of the excerpt, the “divine lover” described here is Socrates.²⁸ What is more, this «ἔνθεος ἔραστής» is said to be possessed by the god of Love, i.e. a higher entity in the ontological realm. Further, it is assumed that Socrates patterns

²⁵ See [Plato?], *Alc.I*,103a1-3: “I was the first man to fall in love with you, son of Cleinias, and now that the others have stopped pursuing you I suppose you ‘re wondering why I’m the only one who hasn’t given up”. Regarding the authorship of *Alcibiades I*, I am in agreement with D.S. Hutchinson (see his Introductory note to the dialogue in Cooper [1997],p.558), pace the Neoplatonists, whose late curriculum ascribed an introductory position to the dialogue. Cf. *on Alc.*, e.g.1,3-5, Dillon-Gerson [2004],pp.xiv-xv and Dillon [1994],p.391. For a background to the Platonic *Alcibiades I* and its readings in antiquity see Johnson-Tarrant [2012].

²⁶ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 253a6-7.

²⁷ On *Alc.*,26,10-27,3: «...Εἰ τοίνυν ὁ ἐρωτικός τῷ ἔρωτι κάτοχος ἐστίν, ἐπιστρεπτικός τις ἂν εἴη τῶν εὖ πεφυκότων εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ ὁ ἔρως, καὶ ἀνακλητικός.»

²⁸ On this and with regard to many of my following points see relevant essays in Layne-Tarrant [forthcoming].

himself upon the characteristic activity of that deity, which is to elevate the inferior beings of its rank towards the divine beauty. Consequently, a first conclusion one could draw from this comparison is that for Proclus, Socrates' relationship to Alcibiades allegorically represents the relation between the higher and the lower entities of the ontological realm.²⁹ By examining aspects of the way Socrates is associated with Alcibiades, we actually deal with the way the ontological hierarchy is structured, as reflected in our intra-mundane reality, and vice versa.³⁰

But the connection between ethics and metaphysics³¹ is deeper than that. Indeed, Proclus holds that Socrates' relationship to Alcibiades is no mere accidental reflection or 'analogical' mirroring of the intelligible world's hierarchy. He states that Socrates actually bestows divine providence on the young boy, owing to the bestowals of his guardian spirit, which partakes of the erotic order.³² Consequently, Socrates' relation to Alcibiades is actually an expression of the divine within our intra-mundane reality. The passage cited above also suggests to assume that there is a specific ontological relation between the divine

²⁹ Cf. also Whittaker [1928],p.243.

³⁰ One can also suggest that Proclus is faithfully following the *Symposium*, in whose ultimate speech Alcibiades, in giving an encomium of Socrates, concludes the feast of speeches with a last praise to the god of love, as is embodied in Socrates. This is the view of Συκουτρής [1949] e.g. pp.145*-146*. For another more emphatic and elaborate example of Proclus' strategy see On Alc., 37,16-39,5.

³¹ See also Τερέζης [2002],pp.64, 66 and Baltzly [forthcoming],(p.1).

³² See for instance on Alc.,63,12-67,18 (in conjunction with e.g. 28,18-29,1 and 50,22-52,2). More on this in the next part (ch.2.2.3.).

lover and Eros, since the lover receives bestowals which are ultimately derived from that very entity.

As with Plotinus, we will be able to appreciate better what Proclus says about love if we try to locate this entity within the ontological scheme and try to understand its function.³³ Here we may confine ourselves to the following rough sketch:³⁴ as in the *Symposium*, Eros is a medium/mediator between the beloved, which is the Beautiful, and the lovers of it. Love, due to its aspiration, is the first to try to unite itself with Beauty (reversive love), and constitutes the bond for the lower entities to arrive at that divine level (providential love). What Eros actually does is to bestow on the inferior members of its rank its characteristic property, which is erotic aspiration. In that way Proclus combines the two notions of ascending and descending love into one: it is in so far as Eros has an ascending love that it also enables the inferiors to be elevated, too. If we insist on asking why Eros ever has this descending attitude at all, then the ultimate answer is that he is providential. In other words Alcibiades can have reversive-ascending eros for Socrates and Socrates can have providential-descending eros for Alcibiades, while also having reversive eros for higher entities, like his guardian-spirit.

³³ Martijn [2010] does the same thing with nature in Proclus' system, focusing on his *Commentary on the Timaeus*.

³⁴ For an extensive treatment see the next part (ch.2.2:1.-2.). See also recently Chlup [2012],pp.242-243.

Thus, it is an essential feature of the Proclean divine lover, i.e. Socrates, who patterns himself upon the god Eros, to elevate his beloved along with himself towards the intelligible Beauty. The lover's reversive eros does not seem to be incompatible with his providential love.³⁵ To the contrary, in so far as the lover has a reversive eros, i.e. in so far as he is directed towards the intelligible realm, where Eros, Beauty and the Good lie, he is also providential towards his beloved. Finally, whereas Plotinus drew inspiration especially from the *Symposium*, Proclus follows the path of the *Phaedrus*, where among other things it is stated that "[t]hose who belong to... each of the... gods proceed ... in accordance with their god and seek that their boy should be of the same nature, and when they acquire him, imitating the god themselves and persuading and disciplining their beloved they draw him into the way of life and pattern of the god, to the extent that each is able, without showing jealousy or mean ill-will towards their beloved; rather they act as they do because they are trying as much as they can, in every way, to draw him into complete resemblance to themselves and to whichever god they honour."³⁶

³⁵ Cf. also Τερέζης [2002],pp.56-57.

³⁶ *Phaedrus*, 253b3-c2; cf. also Armstrong [1961],pp.108 and 117, (while in p.109 he suggests the conformity of the *Phaedrus* with Diotima's account of 'procreation' in the *Symposium*), and Dillon [1994],p.392. The translation of the *Phaedrus* is taken from Rowe [1988]. NB ll.b7-8: «οὐ φθόνῳ οὐδ' ἀνελευθέρῳ δυσμενεῖα χρώμενοι πρὸς τὰ παιδικά», since «φθόνος» is what the Platonic Demiurge lacks. Besides, this is the basic characteristic that distinguishes the real lover from the vulgar one: the latter does not have any genuine eros, is related to what is at the bottom of reality, i.e.

2.1.2. From eros to the Demiurge and the statesman

In this section I will give further illustrations of providential love by drawing analogies between Socrates as lover, Timaeus' Demiurge and the *Republic's* statesman. In all cases, the upwards direction does not impede the interaction with Alcibiades, the Receptacle and the ideal city respectively. I begin with the divine lover, whose providential attitude, with respect to both the intelligible and the intra-mundane realm, is a recurrent theme in the *Alcibiades Commentary*. It is worth giving some further illustrations of it:

“[T]he souls that have chosen the life of love are moved by the god who is the ‘guardian of beautiful youths’ to the care of noble natures, and from apparent beauty they are elevated to the divine, taking up with them their darlings, and turning both themselves and their beloved towards beauty itself. This is just what divine love primarily accomplishes in the intelligible world, both uniting itself to the object of love and elevating to it what shares in the influence that emanates from it and implanting in all a single bond and one indissoluble friendship with each other and with essential beauty. Now the souls that are possessed by love and share in the inspiration therefrom, ..., are turned towards intelligible beauty and set that end to their activity; ‘kindling a light’ for less perfect souls they elevate these also to the divine and dance with them about the one source of all beauty.³⁷

matter, and does not care whether in fulfilling his passion he may harm the beloved. See the contrasts drawn in on Alc., 34,11-37,15 and 49,13-50,21.

³⁷ On Alc.,33,3-16. For the Platonic quotations see the apparatus of Westerink ad loc.

There could hardly be a better expression of the way Proclus views, on the one hand, the combination of upwards and downwards eros, and, on the other, the intimate relation between the intelligible erotic pattern and its worldly instantiations.³⁸ This special and complex relationship is illustrated also by the fact that when “men’s souls receive a share of such [sc. erotic] inspiration, through intimacy with the god [i.e. Eros, they] are moved with regard to the beautiful, and descend to the region of coming-to-be for the benefit of less perfect souls and out of forethought for those in need of salvation.”³⁹ Note again the ‘self-sufficiency’ of the lover.⁴⁰ It is true that the *Symposium*, and perhaps the *Phaedrus*, too, in some passages, give us the impression that the lover needs his beloved, because the latter constitutes the means/instrument for the former to recollect the source of real beauty and, thus, ascend to the intelligible,⁴¹ a claim that has led modern Platonic scholars to find ‘egocentric’ characteristics in Plato’s

³⁸ Cf. also on Alc.,53,3-10: “[W]here there exists both unification and separation of beings, there too love appears as medium; it binds together what is divided, unites what precedes and is subsequent to it, makes the secondary revert to the primary and elevates and perfects the less perfect. In the same way the divine lover, imitating the particular god by whom he is inspired, detaches and leads upwards those of noble nature, perfects the imperfect and causes those in need of salvation to find the mark.”

³⁹ Ibid.,32,9-13: «Καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀνθρώπων ψυχὰι μεταλαγχάνουσι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπιπνοίας καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν οἰκειότητα κινοῦνται περὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ κατίασιν εἰς τὸν τῆς γενέσεως τόπον ἐπ’ εὐεργεσίᾳ μὲν τῶν ἀτελεστέρων ψυχῶν, προνοίᾳ δὲ τῶν σωτηρίας δεομένων.»

⁴⁰ Although Adkins [1963], e.g. pp.44-45 and 40 stresses that the Homeric ideal of self-sufficiency survives, obscures and undermines both Plato’s and Aristotle’s treatment of friendship.

⁴¹ Either on his own, which is the picture illustrated in the *Symposium*, or along with his beloved, as appears in the *Phaedrus*; cf. also Armstrong [1964],p.202.

account.⁴² Proclus, however, definitely rejects such an interpretation: the beloved cannot constitute –at least such a kind of- means to an end, since the divine lover already has communication with the higher realm.⁴³ It is precisely this bond with the intelligible world that enables the lover to take providential care of his (potential) beloved, i.e. of a person fitted for that special care,⁴⁴ and hence (try to) elevate the latter, too, to the former’s object of desire.

According to the strong unitarian Neoplatonic reading of Plato, it becomes clear that for Proclus the relationship of the divine lover with his beloved, both in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*, is the exact analogue of the Demiurge’s relation to the Receptacle, and that of the philosopher-king to his own ‘political receptacle’. The *Timaeus*’ Demiurge mediates -like eros- between the most beautiful intelligible

⁴² See for instance the classic criticisms by Vlastos [1973] and Nygren [1953], passim and pp.166-181. With respect to Proclus’ relation to his Platonic past Nygren, p.574 notes that “the idea of Eros has undergone a very radical transformation”.

⁴³ Proclus is quite explicit about that; cf. on Alc.,43,7-8: «Σωκράτης μὲν γὰρ, ἅτε ἔνθεος ὢν ἐραστῆς καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ νοητὸν κάλλος ἀναγόμενος...» (“Socrates, as being an inspired lover and elevated to intelligible beauty itself...”). It is clear from the text that Socrates’ position is independent from his relation to Alcibiades. The same holds for the Stoic sage, (although he does not have access to a transcendent realm), whose love is only pedagogical. Cf. Collette-Dučić [forthcoming], pp.2 and 9-10, whose insightful Stoic account has many affinities with my present Neoplatonic discussions –partly due to the common precedence of Plato(nism) for both schools. Cf. also Dillon [1994], pp.390-391, who notes the influence that Stoic systematic treatments of love should have had upon later Platonism.

⁴⁴ We should not forget that, as is repeated many times throughout the Commentary (see on Alc.,29,15; 98,13; 133, 17 and 20; 135,1; 137,2; 138,7; 139,6), Ἀλκιβιάδης is «ἀξιέραστος», i.e. worthy of love. From that fact we conclude that not any chance person could be the object of Socrates’ providential *eros*.

living being and the *Χώρα*. We could never think that he is assisted in grasping the former due to the existence of the latter. Contrariwise, it is in so far as he contemplates the intelligible, and is also aware of the 'disorderly moving' receptacle, that he projects the Forms into the latter, in order to set it in order, decorate it and fashion it as the best possible image of the intelligible.⁴⁵ Now, if one presses the question more, and asks why the contemplation of Forms is not sufficient for the Demiurge, but he goes on to instantiate them in the receptacle, Timaeus' answer is that the former "was good (*ἀγαθός*), and one who is good can never become jealous of anything",⁴⁶ whereby it is implied that the *Υποδοχή* was fitted (*«ἐπιτιθήδεια»*) for the Demiurge's action upon it.⁴⁷ Actually, the analogy between the divine lover and the divine craftsman is made explicit by Proclus himself. Towards the end of the following passage the Successor makes the receptacle speak to

⁴⁵ Hence, we could assume that the Demiurge is confronted with two instances of necessity. The (good) one is the necessity which the intelligible paradigm imposes upon the Demiurge for further instantiations of it. The second type of Necessity, as named in the *Timaeus*, is that presented by the Receptacle, whose constitution raises constraints as to the extent to which the Demiurge can instantiate the paragon-cosmos into the former. The model described here has been fundamental for the shaping of the Neoplatonic picture of reality. With respect to the second kind of necessity see especially Adamson [2011].

⁴⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, 29e1-2: «Ἀγαθός ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος». Cf. Proclus' Commentary ad loc.: in *Timaeum*, I. 359,20-365,3 (Diehl) and Dodds' note on prop.25 of the *Elements*, p.213, with parallels in Plotinus as well. See also Baltzly [forthcoming], (pp.15 and 20).

⁴⁷ Did not the receptacle possess the potentiality of becoming our physical cosmos, it is not clear whether the Demiurge would have acted in the way he did. Further: were the *Υποδοχή* not 'disorderly moving' it is not clear that the Demiurge would have noticed its existence, and hence act, at all.

the demiurge, as a beloved would do to its lover. Since I count this instance as the most moving and poetical moment of the whole Commentary,⁴⁸ and because we have the opportunity to see another remarkable instance of the ontological analogy between Socrates and the intelligible entities with respect to the issue of goodness and providence, it is worth citing the whole passage:

“[T]he young man seems to me⁴⁹ to admire above all these two qualities in Socrates, his goodness of will and his power of provision; which qualities indeed are conspicuous in the most primary causes of reality, are especially displayed in the creative order, and initiate the whole world-order. “For god,” he says, “having willed all things to be good, according to his⁵⁰ power set the world in order”,⁵¹ by his will tendering the good to the whole universe, and by his power prevailing over all things and everywhere extending his own creations. Socrates, therefore, faithfully reproducing these

⁴⁸ For another example of Proclus’ moving and poetical images (although not mere metaphors) see his fragment from *De sacrificio et magia*, 149,12-18 (Bidez). (I follow Καλλιγᾶς [2009], pp.16 and 31,n.1 in deleting the ‘according to the Greeks’ of the title «Περὶ τῆς [καθ’ Ἑλληνας] ἱερατικῆς τέχνης».)

⁴⁹ Proclus begins this important passage by mentioning that it is his view («δοκεῖ δέ μοι»). Does this mean that here we have an instance where Proclus adds from his own view to the Neoplatonic tradition?

⁵⁰ O’Neill translates the «κατὰ δύναμιν» (not ‘κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν’) of the Greek text as referring to the Demiurge’s capacity to fashion his subject-matter upon the paradigm. Zeyl’s neutral rendering (in Cooper [1997], ad loc.): “so far as that was possible”, where it is not obvious whether this is ascribed to the Demiurge or what lies beneath him, is preferable. However, Segonds [1985], p.197,n.5 sees in the background the Proclean triad «βούλησις-δύναμις-πρόνοια» (with further references in the literature) and in this sense O’Neill might be better off.

⁵¹ Cf. *Timaeus*, 30a2-3.

characteristics,⁵² set an ungrudging will and power over his perfection of inferiors, everywhere present to his beloved and leading him from disorder to order. Now the young man wonders at this, “what on earth is its meaning,”⁵³ and how Socrates is everywhere earnestly and providently (for this is the meaning of “taking great care”) to hand. If what “was in discordant and disorderly movement”⁵⁴ could say something to the creator, it would have uttered these same words: “in truth I wonder at your beneficent will and power that have reached as far as my level, are everywhere present to me and from all sides arrange me in orderly fashion.” This spirit-like and divine characteristic, then, and this similarity with the realities that have filled all things with themselves, he ascribes to Socrates, viz: the leaving of no suitable time or place void of provision for the beloved.”⁵⁵

We can assume that the Receptacle’s abovementioned grateful speech for its decorator could be reiterated by the ‘political receptacle’, the body of the πόλις, if all classes were united to express with one mouth their gratitude towards their own decorator.⁵⁶ We can assume that, because in the Commentary Proclus offers us, apart from the already mentioned analogies, many others for the relation of the lover with his beloved and that of the philosopher-statesman with its

⁵² Hence, we could also suggested that here Socrates is an analogue for divine providence, in so far as he allows us to come to know it.

⁵³ Cf. *Alcibiades I*,104d2-5; cf. on *Alc.*,120,10-13.

⁵⁴ *Timaeus*,30a4-5.

⁵⁵ On *Alc.*,125,2-126,3. Cf. also *ibid.*,134,16-135,1 and Baltzly [forthcoming],(pp.20 and 22).

⁵⁶ Of course, Plato himself gives us plenty of evidence, e.g. in Socrates’ introduction of the *Timaeus*, about the intimate relation between the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*, without that implying that there might not be also differences between them.

(beloved) state. Further, the Successor's language even in these political contexts clearly echoes the wording used for the demiurgic functions of the *Timaeus*.⁵⁷

These interconnections allow us to give a Proclean answer to the thorny question of the *Republic*: 'why does the philosopher have to become a ruler of the city?'; or in other words: 'why does the philosopher have to return back to the cave?'⁵⁸ Plato (or better Socrates) has always puzzled the commentators with his response that "we'll be giving just orders to just people",⁵⁹ since in the previous books justice has been defined in the 'internal' terms of the orderly relation of the parts of the soul within the individual.⁶⁰ Proclus might

⁵⁷ The following is a characteristic example; on Alc.,95,14-19: "For the lover must begin with knowledge and so end in making provision (πρόνοιαν) for the beloved; he is like the statesman, and it is abundantly clear that the latter too starts with consideration and examination, and then in this way arranges the whole constitution, manifesting the conclusions in his works." Let me add again that actually Proclus faithfully follows the (sometimes striking) similarity of vocabulary one can find in the Platonic works in question. For instance, see *Republic*, VI.506a9-b1 and VII.540a8-b1. Cf. also Baltzly [forthcoming],(pp.20-21).

⁵⁸ Glaucon puts it succinctly when he asks in *Republic*, VII.519d8-9: "Then are we to do them [sc. the philosophers-rulers] an injustice (ἀδικήσομεν) by making them live a worse life when they could live a better one?" For the Neoplatonic answer to this challenge see also O'Meara [2003],pp.73-83, esp. pp.76-77. O'Meara includes references to Proclus' *Alcibiades* and *Republic Commentaries*. Two further essays from Proclus' *Commentaries on Plato's Republic* which would seem relevant, XI: "On the speech in the *Republic* that shows what the Good is" (I. 269,1-287,17), and XII: "On the Cave in the Seventh Book of the *Republic*" (I. 287,18-296,15), are not helpful for my present purposes, because they are preoccupied solely with epistemological (and some metaphysical) questions.

⁵⁹ *Republic*,520e1-2.

⁶⁰ This difficulty is another evidence, I suppose, for the circularity of Plato's argumentation as Williams [1999], e.g. p.258, has sharply remarked.

well have responded that Socrates just did not do justice to the readers by not presenting them with the whole picture;⁶¹ in fact, it is the goodness, in which the philosopher participates, which makes him, like the Demiurge, good, «ἀγαθῶ δὲ οὐδείς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος».⁶² As is evident from the passages cited above

⁶¹ One could claim that the same holds with respect to Socrates' response to another notoriously thorny question, namely that of Cebes' in the initial pages of the *Phaedo*, 61d3-5: "How do you mean Socrates, that it is not right to do oneself violence, and yet that the philosopher will be willing to follow one who is dying?" In other words, if philosophy is "practice of death" («μελέτη θανάτου», *ibid.*, 81a1-2; cf. 67e4-5), then why should not we commit suicide, something that at least the early Stoics hesitantly resorted to? Socrates' answer has not been found quite satisfactory by interpreters. What he suggests in this early stage of the dialogue is that since, according to the language of the mysteries («ἀπορρήτοις», *ibid.*, 62b3), "the gods are our guardians and that men are one of their possessions" (*ibid.*, 62b7-8: «τὸ θεοῦ εἶναι ἡμῶν τοῦς ἐπιμελουμένους καὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦς ἀνθρώπους ἐν τῶν κτημάτων τοῖς θεοῖς εἶναι»), then "one should not kill oneself before a god had indicated some necessity to do so" (62c6-7: «μὴ πρότερον αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνουσαι δεῖν, πρὶν ἀνάγκην τινα θεὸς ἐπιπέμψῃ»), like that put to Socrates in the case of his legal (but illegitimate) conviction. Unfortunately, Proclus *Commentary on the Phaedo* is lost, while his *Alcibiades Commentary* does not draw any parallel with that specific problem. Still, there are general references to the *Phaedo*, since the latter shares the same principal position of both the *Alcibiades* and Proclus' *Commentary*, i.e. that the man, and a fortiori the philosopher, is identified with his soul, the body being a mere tool of the former (cf. e.g. on *Alc.*, 316,9-10). My main point is that the true Platonic self, i.e. our intelligent soul's relation to its body is homologous to the relation of the Demiurge with the Receptacle and the cosmos, of the philosopher-king with the state, and of the lover with his beloved, or in other words of the (Neo-Platonic) teacher with his student(s). What is more, the parallel helps us to give a more complete answer to *Phaedo's* aforementioned problem: it is exactly because the philosopher can contemplate the Forms, that he does not want to cut the indeed unfortunate relation with his body. Cf. also what Socrates states in the *Phaedo*, 67a1-b2, and Plotinus' similar position towards suicide in his small treatise devoted to that topic, *Enneads*, I.9.[16]: 'On going out [sc. of the body]'.

⁶² Cited above (n.46). Of course, as Proclus notes towards the end of the extant *Commentary*, the Just participates in the Good, the former being inferior to the latter (cf. e.g. on *Alc.*, 319,12ff.). Hence, every just instantiation is also good (but not vice versa), and, hence, the philosopher's being just is at the same time good.

there is an organic relation between goodness and providence. The 'better' an entity is, i.e. higher in the ontological hierarchy, the more providential it is, i.e. its bestowals reach further down the scale, and hence it has a wider scope. As with the Proclean divine lover, it is in so far as the statesman participates in the intelligible that he goes on to set into order its own 'disorderly moving' receptacle.⁶³ Thus, Proclus is in line with the Platonic *Alcibiades'* parallel between the relations of lover and beloved, on the one hand, and that of the statesman and the city, on the other. The way the lover educates and fashions his beloved must be the paradigm of the philosopher-politician's attitude towards the body politic.⁶⁴

And in any case, there is no question that the mature philosopher-king would need the state in order to help him grasp the Forms,⁶⁵ just as in the case of Proclus' divine lover. Now, whether this scheme of universal correspondence between the Demiurge, the philosopher-king

⁶³ NB that the word «ἐπιμελεῖσθαι» used in *Republic*,520a6-9 is the same with *Phaedrus*,246b6: «πᾶσα ψυχὴ παντὸς ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ἀψύχου», the latter being a principal Neoplatonic source of evidence for the idea that soul(s) are providential for what lies beneath them.

⁶⁴ In that way we see how the *Alcibiades* provides a viable starting point for the transmutation of the existing political system into the ideal state.

⁶⁵ It is true, though, that according to the Proclean interpretation the fact that the philosopher returns to the cave is a verification of his having genuinely grasped the Forms. Therefore, he descends to the 'prison' not because he has any need of its 'prisoners', contra the vulgar lovers in relation to Alcibiades, but exactly because he is self-sufficient, and hence able to free them and elevate them to the truth, as far as possible.

and the divine lover⁶⁶ exists in Plato is an open question.⁶⁷ We might also question the ontological elaborations with which Proclus has invested Plato. However, Proclus' insight gives us a Neoplatonic justification not to view Plato as an 'egoist' with respect to erotic matters. If this is so, then Proclus had already given a brave and articulate answer against Plato's modern critics. Finally, let me conclude by noting that in this *Commentary* Proclus spends a considerable amount of time attempting to prove that it was not in vain that the 'daimonion' let the Silenus try to elevate the son of Cleinias.⁶⁸ Unlike Socrates with Alcibiades, I do not suggest that we should necessarily be persuaded by Proclus. Nonetheless, I hope that the present reflections may at least reveal a reason why it would be fruitful for Platonic scholars⁶⁹ to consider in their discussions Neo-Platonic perspectives, as well.

⁶⁶ In both *Symposium's* and *Phaedrus'* versions.

⁶⁷ What is more, I am acutely aware that the primary objective of current scholars, such as MM McCabe, (see e.g. McCabe [2008]) is not to draw general schemes or doctrines out of the whole Platonic corpus, but rather to engage in lively dialogues with individual works, as Plato himself urges us to do.

⁶⁸ See on Alc.,85,17-92,2. The problem is that the guardian-spirit could foresee the end of this relationship; hence, why did it allow Socrates to associate with Alcibiades? After presenting some problematic solutions found in the tradition, Proclus focuses on the three following points: a) Alcibiades did become better; b) he will also be benefitted in another life; c) the daimon is good like the sun, since "he achieves his end in his activity". (In *ibid.*,91,10-15 Proclus uses also the example of Laius and the oracle.)

⁶⁹ See for instance approaches that in some respects are (unwittingly) akin to the Platonic Successor: Kraut [1973], Kraut [1992], esp. pp.328-329; Miller [2007], esp. pp.338-339 and n.28; Mahoney [1996]. Even Vlastos [1973],p.33, making a contrast with Aristotle's god, acknowledges the providential attitude of *Timaeus'* Demiurge,

2.1.3. From Platonic eros to Aristotelian friendship

Having shown how Proclus' combination of ascending and descending eros works in the same way for various Platonic dialogues, I continue in illustrating providential eros, this time by drawing its connections to «φιλία» (friendship). Again some modern scholars⁷⁰ have proposed that, in fact, Plato in the *Phaedrus* gives us an account of friendship, whose perfect type, at least, surpasses the problems of ascribing egocentric incentives with regards to the erotic desire (ἔρως), since, even when natural beauty fades out, the friendly, spiritual and non-sexual affection between the members of the ideal pair can still remain.⁷¹ In that, of course, the commentators follow Plato's own text which refers to the erotic relationship between lover and beloved as φιλία.⁷² So, for example, towards the end of his recantation, Socrates will state that "these are the blessings... so great as to be counted

but he, contra Rist [1964],pp.30-31 (and 28 with [1970],pp.165-166, despite the right qualification of Vogel [1981],pp.65-66 and p.78, n.28) and Armstrong [1961],p.110, does not seem to imagine that this could have (at least a decisively positive) bearing on Plato's views on inter-personal love...

⁷⁰ Most notably Sheffield [2011].

⁷¹ Cf. also Proclus, on Alc.,35,11-16, with many overtones from Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium*,183e:

⁷² What is more, the *Lysis*, a (maieutic) dialogue "on friendship", brings sometimes ἔρως and φιλία very close to each other in terms of connotation; see e.g. 221b7-8 and e3-4; 222a6-7. It is generally noted that ἔρως denotes a passionate desire for something contra the (calm) loving affection implied in φιλία. Cf. e.g. Aristotle, *EN*,IX.10,1171a11-12: "This is why one cannot love several people; love tends to be a sort of excess friendship, and that can only be felt towards one person". (Every Aristotelian translation comes from Barnes [1984]). Cf. also *EN*,VIII.6,1158a10-13.

divine, which will come to you [sc. the beloved] from the friendship of a lover".⁷³ Hence, it is not only the beloved's «ἀντέρως»⁷⁴ which is actually thought of as friendship,⁷⁵ as one would normally expect under the specific social and spatio-temporal circumstances,⁷⁶ but the lover himself is called «ἔνθεος φίλος».⁷⁷

Now, as would be expected, Proclus, too, uses the terms ἔνθεος ἐραστής and ἔρωσ interchangeably with divine φίλος and φιλία, perhaps in a more systematic manner than Plato does.⁷⁸ This is also important because of its consistency with the view of the divine lover as non-egoist and providential towards the beloved. Of course, it is true that the Successor also sometimes praises friendship in a quite

⁷³ *Phdr.*,256e3-4.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*,255e1. This word is coined by Plato to denote the 'loving response' of the beloved; it is translated as "backlove" by Nehamas-Woodruff (in Cooper [1997]). Proclus uses it twice in *on Alc.*:127,5 and 7.

⁷⁵ Cf. *ibid.*,255d8-e2: «...εἶδωλον (image of) ἔρωτος ἀντέρωτα ἔχων [sc. the beloved]· καλεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ οἶεται οὐκ ἔρωτα ἀλλὰ φιλίαν εἶναι.»

⁷⁶ See also Rowe's [1988] note ad loc.,p.188.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Phdr.*,255b6-7; cf. also b1-2 and 253c5.

⁷⁸ Cf. the following instances: *On Alc.*,36,15; 38,8; 40,11; 140,7; 134,12, the last one contrasting the inspired lover («ἔνθεου φίλου») with the common one («πρὸς τὸν πολὺν ἐραστήν»). Cf. also the similar case of Alcinous' *Handbook* with a short prehistory in Dillon [1994],p.388 (and p.392). On the other hand, Collette-Dučić [forthcoming],pp.1 and 6-7 stresses that for the Stoics a friendly relation is only between equals (that is the sages), while love is the asymmetrical relation of a sage for a young boy appearing to be beautiful. (Cf. also *ibid.*,pp.4ff. and a forthcoming PhD thesis by Aiste Celkyte, supervised by Prof. S. Halliwell in St Andrews.) Stoic friendship is the aim and effect of Stoic love.

Aristotelian manner.⁷⁹ However, the above identification allows him to illustrate the lover's positive disposition towards the beloved using the vocabulary of friendship. Consider the following example: "[B]y addressing the subject of disproof as 'dear' (φίλον), he [sc. Socrates] anticipates the wound by his affection (τῇ οἰκειώσει) and at the same time shows that for him a purpose of purification is friendship, because 'no god is ill-disposed to men, therefore neither does he [sc. Socrates] do anything of this sort out of ill-humour (δυσνοία),'⁸⁰ as he has observed in the *Theaetetus*,⁸¹ and because among the gods the agent of purification extends its operation to the imperfect out of goodness, not out of estrangement towards them."⁸² What is striking about this passage is that, following the characteristic Proclean strategy of drawing parallels between Socrates-Alcibiades and the ontological hierarchy, it applies the terms of friendship to (higher) godly and

⁷⁹ See for example *ibid.*,109,3-6: "for friends have the same relationship (λόγος) with each other;... Further, friendship is between good men of serious purpose (ἀγαθῶν καὶ σπουδαίων), but among villains moral character is not in evidence". Cf. also *ibid.*,221,16-222,2: "...This is the aim of virtue as a whole, so the Pythagoreans assert and also Aristotle who rightly observed that 'when all people are friends we have no need of justice,' and 'mine' and 'thine' are annulled, but 'when everyone is just we still have need of friendship' to unite us." For references to the relevant works see Westerink's critical apparatus ad loc. and O'Neill's nn.416 and 417.

⁸⁰ Cf. also *Phaedrus*,255b4: "...the goodwill (εὐνοία) that he experiences at close quarters from his lover amazes the beloved,..."; cf. Aristotle, *EN*,IX.5,1167a3-4: "Goodwill (εὐνοία) seems, then, to be a beginning (ἀρχή) of friendship", (almost identical to *idem*, *EE*,VII.7,1241a12 and 14), and *EN*,VIII.2,1155b33-34: "goodwill when it is reciprocal being friendship".

⁸¹ Cf. *Theaetetus*,151d1-2.

⁸² On *Alc.*,228,23-229,4.

(lower) human entities,⁸³ although famously Aristotle had declared that man cannot be friends with god, since there is no equality between them.⁸⁴ Indeed, Proclus will be in a position to ground the thought that “if... all belongs to the gods, all belongs also to good men

⁸³ In this light we should interpret the ascriptions of «φιλανθρωπία» (and «φιλάνθρωπον»: ‘well-disposition towards man’) to Socrates (in on Alc.,312,10 and 81,3 respectively; cf. the use of Socrates’ «φλοφοσύνη»-‘friendliness’ ibid.,25,7 and 26,7). Being a word widely used by Christian authors, e.g. pseudo-Dionysius (see infra, nn.117 and 118 in ch.3.2.), Plato uses the adjective in the superlative («φιλανθρωπότεατος») for Eros in Aristophanes’ speech in the *Symposium*,189c8-d1, and in its basic form for god Cronus in *Laws*,713d6, whereas the substantive «φιλανθρωπία» is ascribed to Socrates in *Euthyphro*,3d7. What is more, the word is included in the academic *Definitions*,412e11-13: “love of humanity, or kindness; the easy-going character state of being friendly to people; the state of being helpful to people; the trait of gratefulness; memory, together with helpfulness”. Finally, let us not forget that according to the *Symposium*, 212a6, the man who has ascended to Beauty becomes «θεοφιλής» (‘beloved by gods’; cf. also the use of the same word in *Republic* VI,501c1, *Philebus*,39e11 and a statement from Socrates’ exchange with Thrasymachus in *Rep.*,I,352b1-2, according to which a just person is friend of the gods.).

⁸⁴ Cf. *EN*,VIII.7,1158b35-1159a5: “...gods...surpass us most decisively in all good things... when one party is removed to a great distance (πολὺ δὲ χωρισθέντος), as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases”, since “friendship is said to be equality”(«λέγεται γὰρ φιλότης ἰσότης»: ibid.,1157b36; cf. *EE*,VII.6,1240b2 and ibid,VII.9,1241b11-13) and, hence, “perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in excellence” (: *EN*,1156b7-8; cf. ibid.,1160a7-8 and 1161a33-36: “where there is nothing common to ruler and ruled there is not friendship either, since there is not justice; e.g. between craftsman and tool, soul and body, master and slave”). This Aristotelian conception is consistent with the Stagirite’s view of the Unmoved Mover. On the other hand, see *EN*,X.8,1179a30-31, where, due to the wise man’s intellectual ‘assimilation to god’, it is declared that “[h]e, therefore, is the dearest to the gods (θεοφιλέστατος)”. In this case Aristotle uses in the superlative the very adjective used (in the positive) by Diotima/Socrates/Plato, when it is declared that the man who will have ascended to the Beautiful, presumably through the ‘Theaetetan assimilation to god’, will be ‘beloved by the gods’ (*Symp.*,212a6; cf. also *Tim.*,53d7). In what way Aristotle is near to the Neo-Platonic sense will be clearer in what follows. Finally, it is worth mentioning that, the friendship-theory of the *Eudemian Ethics* is interestingly different in some respects from the respective ‘Nicomachean’ one.

(σπουδαίων)⁸⁵ on the assumption of the well-known Pythagorean maxim that “the possessions of friends are held in common”.⁸⁶

Of course, these differences from Aristotle ultimately stem from Proclus’ fundamental ontological equation of Eros with Friendship. I will come back to the ontological issue later (in ch.2.2.5.). For now it may suffice to say that when in the Commentary the Successor is confronted with two distinct traditions with respect to the god of Friendship («φίλιον»),⁸⁷ the one in favour of φίλιος Zeus and the other of god Eros,⁸⁸ Proclus characteristically unites/‘contracts’ the two, claiming that “Love is contained within Zeus”.⁸⁹ Sometimes friendship seems to apply more to instances of a ‘horizontal’ union within one stratum of reality, hence between quasi-equal entities,⁹⁰ whereas eros, denoting the deficiency of an entity, fits better a vertical scheme, in

⁸⁵ On Alc.,165,3 and 2. Of course, this statement should rather be read by way of analogy and to the extent that the σπουδαίοι partake in/are assimilated to the godly realm. A good guide to understand this is the following passage from *ibid*,172,4-11.

⁸⁶ On Alc.,165,2-3: «κοινὰ γὰρ τὰ φίλων»; cf. O’Neill’s n.327 (and Westerink’s apparatus ad loc.) for references to Euripides, *Orestes*,735 and Porphyry, *De Vita Pythagorae*,33. This maxim appears quite a few times in Plato (see *Lysis*,207c10; *Rep.*,424a1-2&449c5; *Laws*,739c2 and), most notably in the end of the *Phaedrus*,279c6-7. (Cf. also *Gorgias*,507e5-6, although «κοινωνία» might have a more general sense there.) For Aristotle see EN,VIII.9,1159b31-32, EE,VII.2,1237b33 and *ibid.*,1238a16. Finally, see the strong resemblance of this Proclean syllogism with one by Diogenes the Cynic apud Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*,37,5-7; (cf. also *ibid.*,72,1-3).

⁸⁷ See on Alc.,232,10-234,5.

⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*,233,11-12: «τῆς γὰρ φιλίας αἴτιος ὁ Ἐρως». See also how Proclus introduces Empedocles’ divine principle of φιλία (see B29 Diels) in On Alc.,113,13-21.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*,233,15. I follow Westerink in writing «Ἐρως»/‘Love’ with the first letter capital, since it refers to the god Eros.

⁹⁰ See also the Aristotelian flavour (at least in its beginning and end) of *ibid*,109,3-10.

which lower strata of reality desire what lies beyond them.⁹¹ Proclus thinks of friendship when speaking of love and vice versa.⁹²

On the other hand, Proclus' diversion from Aristotle, as to the possibility of friendship between gods and humans, is not radical, since the Successor holds that there is an ontological hierarchy. Not only that, but he also thinks that the hierarchical scheme is a condition for the possibility of (productive) love/friendship between entities of different levels. This can be inferred from passages like the following: "The lover, then, must pay heed to any one fine point in the beloved in order that he may be both more perfect and immediately superior. For in this way one would lead upwards, the other be led upwards, and the former would exercise providence with some fellow-feeling (μετά τινος συμπαθείας)."⁹³ Hence, Proclus of course does not object to the

⁹¹ In fact, one possibility is not mentioned here, i.e. that of vertical-downwards eros. One could propose that Proclus had better use the term eros -implying deficiency and strong aspiration- for an entity's upwards tension, whereas to the providential one he could have applied the sole (and 'calmer') term φιλία. Still, this is a device that Proclus does not choose to exploit, since he calls both the lover and the beloved 'friends'. What is more, it would be at odds with the usual vocabulary of the relevant texts of Plato's era, where we have seen (e.g. nn.74 and 78) that the lover is supposed to have 'eros' for his beloved, although the latter's affection to the former was termed 'friendship'. Nonetheless, Proclus hardly uses the verb «φιλεῖν» to describe the aspiration of lower entities for the higher realm. In this respect of upwards striving eros has a prominence, although it does not exclude φιλία from its semantic scope, but it just makes it much tenser.

⁹² See the interweaving of the two notions early in the Commentary in on Alc.,26,2-5, alluding to *De Oraculis Chaldaicis*,p.25 (Kroll; cf. O'Neill's n.50) and the *Timaeus*,32c1-4 and 43a2

⁹³ On Alc.,140,17-20. Cf. *ibid.*,123,8 and 12-13: "Well then,... the agent (τὸ ποιῶν) must surpass the patient (τοῦ πάσχοντος) in essential being". What is more, apart from being a precondition for friendship, the hierarchical scheme still remains after

thought that gods are superior entities, and thus surpass human beings in excellence, but he follows an ontological reading of the *Phaedrus*' type relation, where, as we have seen, a) the lover and the beloved stand for entities of different ontological strata, and b) they are also called 'friends'.

However, even in that respect Proclus is not very far from Aristotle's perfect type of friendship between good, and hence equal, men. The Stagirite assumes that there is a large gap between mortals and god(s), something which is consistent with his ontology-cosmological philosophy. Nevertheless, a characteristic of especially the late Neoplatonists is the attempt to fill this vertical gap by postulating strata of mediating entities, i.e. levels of reality which can bridge the gap between the One and the material cosmos. Now, what preserves the cohesion of this vertical continuum is the similarity between the entities in different strata.⁹⁴ According to the *Elements of*

the elevation of both lovers, as the following passage suggests (ibid.,116,20-117,1): "it is never lawful for effects to escape from their causes and rise superior to the nature of the latter." Cf. also ibid.,146,1-3 and El.Th.,124,26-28. As to the importance of this qualifying "some" see infra, ch.2.1.5. 'Sympatheia' is an ontological term as well, correlated with (universal) «φιλία», used by the Stoics and then by the Neoplatonists (cf. infra n.99 and Dodds [1963],p.216).

⁹⁴ Cf. El.Th.,32,6-7: "But all things are bound together by likeness (συνδεῖ δὲ πάντα ἢ ὁμοιότης)...". Cf. also in Proclus' fragment from *De sacrificio et magia*, 148,23-149,1. NB that Proclus does not avoid the hierarchization of even the horizontal strata. Cf. El.Th.,110,11-12: "For not all things are of equal worth, even though they be of the same cosmic order". Consequently, it is more faithful to Proclus to go with Dodds [1963],passim, who speaks of the horizontal strata as "transverse". Thus, it is perhaps easier to understand why Proclus so easily conflates eros with filia, and that even a horizontal friendship of the Aristotelian ideal type cannot take place in Proclus' system.

Theology, a principle of the procession, and hence of the complementary reversion, is that it takes place through like terms.⁹⁵ The same idea is reiterated and related to the issue of eros (/friendship) in the following passage⁹⁶ from the *Alcibiades' Commentary*: “[W]hat is completely uncoordinated (ἀσύντακτον) has no communion with its inferior, but love finds its subsistence among those who are able to commune with each other, since it itself is perfected through the likeness of the inferior to the superior, through the uniting (συνδέσεως) of the less perfect with the more perfect and through the reversion of what is made complete to the causes of completion.”

We can deduce from this passage that actual and direct friendship/eros can take place only between adjacent entities, viz. between the cause and its immediate effect; that is, between the most similar possible entities. As far as ascending eros is concerned it is true that every entity aspires for the Good. Yet it actually approaches it through the former's union to its immediate progenitor, as the *Elements* claim.⁹⁷ Further, as far as downwards eros is concerned, we can assume that it directly relates adjacent entities, whereas providential eros for even remoter beings should be thought of as indirect. In other words, an entity can be providential for its off-spring; but since the off-spring gives rise to further entities, the providential preservation of the

⁹⁵ Cf. El.Th.,28,10-11 and 28-34. Cf. also *ibid*,125,10-13 and 32,3-4: “All reversion is accomplished through a likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of reversion”.

⁹⁶ On Alc.,140,20-141,4. Cf. also El.Th.,123,7-9.

⁹⁷ Cf. on Alc.,28,30-32.

former entails providential preservation of the latter, too.⁹⁸ Consequently, from Aristotle's ideal case of 'friendly' equality (of good properties), Proclus switches to the idea of 'friendly-erotic' similarity.⁹⁹ The divergence is a small one, since equality does not exclude similarity.¹⁰⁰ What constitutes a difference is the Proclean introduction of *hierarchical* similarity as a precondition for the (actual and direct)

⁹⁸ According to Proclus an entity already contains its descendants κατ' αἰτίαν (: as their cause). Cf. El.Th.,65 and on Alc.,146,1-2: "the superior powers everywhere in a simple manner comprehend (περιειληφέναι) their inferior". Cf. also El.Th.,144,21 and see in the next part (ch.2.2.). Hence, the higher entity 'knows' its inferior(s) in the manner appropriate to the former, not the latter. See El.Th.,124,10-13, with numerous parallels in On Alc. (e.g.87,12-17); cf. also El.Th.,121,10-12. An interesting consequence, exploited by Medieval and early modern philosophers (cf. Dodds' n. ad loc.,p.266), is that it gives an answer (perhaps unacceptable to us) to Vlastos' objection about the individual, qua individual, as an object of love in Plato. Vlastos [1973],passim, e.g. pp.24,26,28-33 observes that what the lover admires in the beloved is not its particular beauty, but the degraded image of the Form of the Beautiful; hence, the lover does not really appreciate the particularity of the beloved, but aspires to the abstraction of the Form. But a higher entity's more abstract mode of knowing the inferior is inevitable and necessary due to their ontological difference. For the Neoplatonists the fact that the superior does not know the inferior in the mode of being of the lower is not a mark of deficiency, but denotes the superiority of the former. In this way the Neoplatonists give their answer to *Parmenides'* 'greatest difficulty', and can explain why the philosopher-king of the *Republic* can have knowledge, and not mere belief, of matters pertaining to the intra-mundane/political realm. However, for a view (by E.P. Butler) that ascribes almost the highest position to individuality in Proclus' system (cf. the Henads) see Hankey [2011],pp.33-36 and Hankey [2009],pp.122 and esp. 124-125.

⁹⁹ The history of «ὁμοιότης» and the "similia similibus" theory, starts already from the Presocratics (e.g. Empedocles; cf. also Dodds [1928],p.141), and has been evoked by many philosophers since then; (see for instance the relevant sections of Plato's *Lysis*). Cf. also *Rep.*,IV,425c2 and *Gorgias*,510b2-4 (with the note ad loc. of Dodds [1959],p.344).

¹⁰⁰ See also the Aristotelian reverberations in on Alc.,230,16-231,2. In EN,VIII.7,1156b7-8 Aristotle himself speaks of similarity with respect to virtue between good men: "perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in excellence (καὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων)".

friendship or love to take place.¹⁰¹ What we see here is then a Proclean synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives, which in itself is the further outcome of Proclus' equation of ἔρως with φιλία.

2.1.4. Limiting the scope:

from eros to providential eros

I now move to examine Proclus' composite concept of "providential eros", and, hence, the relation between eros and providence. I will argue that in Proclus' idea of "providential eros" the emphasis lies not on 'eros', but on 'providence', whose existence is undeniable by every Neoplatonist.¹⁰² In all the passages I have cited so far, although Socrates is called 'divine lover' (or 'friend'), he is hardly ever explicitly said to be in love («ἐρᾶν») with his beloved. Though this is the only logical inference, Proclus prefers constantly to emphasize Socrates' providence («πρόνοια»)¹⁰³ towards Alcibiades. It

¹⁰¹ As to the aforementioned claim about humans being friends with gods, for Proclus the ascription of 'god' belongs to a wide range of entities. See in the next part (e.g. ch.2.2.3.).

¹⁰² This remark resembles in form Vlastos' observation about the importance of the first constituent of the *Timaeus*' formula, «εἰκῶς μῦθος» ("likely tale": *Tim.*, e.g. 29d2; cf. Vlastos [1965],p.382, acknowledged by Brisson [1998],p.129 and n.11).

¹⁰³ Apart from «πρόνοια» another standard word is «ἐπιμέλεια». Another less commonly used word is «προμήθεια» (: "forethought"; the last Greek word has the double meaning that the English 'providence' has; not only having forethought, but also *giving* in advance) met four times in *On Alc.*: 54,12; 132,15; 159,7; 161,8; (cf. the god Prometheus/*Προ-μηθεύς*, who in the *Protagoras*' myth, e.g. 320d6, is contrasted to *Ἐπι-μηθεύς*, and *Rep.*,IV,441e5, where the rational part of the soul is said to exercise «προμήθειαν» "on behalf [ὑπὲρ] of the whole soul").

is this very fact that prompted me to highlight Socrates' parallel with the Demiurge, and further with the statesman, although Plato, like Proclus, never characterizes the divine craftsman's providence for the Receptacle as 'love'. This sheds light on the Successor's approach to 'downwards-providential eros'. Proclus' principal aim is not to furnish us, further to the notion of ascending-reversive love, with a distinct account of eros per se, but rather to illustrate a distinctive case of providence which complements reversive love. That Proclean providential eros is not the only instance of (divine) providence becomes plain enough from the following passage: "As, then, other souls established according to another god visit without defilement the region of mortals and the souls that move about therein -some help (ὠφελου̅σι) the less perfect through prophecy, others through mystic rites and others through divine medicine -so also souls that have chosen the life of love¹⁰⁴ are moved by the god who is the 'guardian of beautiful youths'¹⁰⁵ to the care (ἐπιμέλειαν) of noble natures (τῶν εὖ πεφυκότων)".¹⁰⁶

As becomes clear from the *Elements*, as well as from many previous citations, it is an essential attribute of gods to be providential, that is, to extend their bestowals (i.e. their divine characteristics) upon the entities that are dependent on them, and hence are of the same rank.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. the eschatological myth of *Republic X* and the allocation of types of lives to the souls, their freedom of choice being preserved.

¹⁰⁵ That is, god Eros with *Phaedrus*, 265c2-3; cf. Plot., III.5.2, 2-3.

¹⁰⁶ On Alc., 32, 16-33, 5.

Of course, Proclus' system is not one-dimensional, like Plotinus'. In other words, it does not only have a vertical dimension, but also a horizontal one, or, more accurately, a 'transverse'.¹⁰⁷ Hence, after the ultimate unity of the One (and the Indefinite Dyad), the stratum of the Henads already consists of a multiplicity of ultimate divinities, identified with the gods of ancient Greek mythology, in conjunction with the Chaldean Oracles and Orphic religion, each of them representing certain features which are bestowed upon the orders of their descendants.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, also within the transverse dimension there are still relations of the type we see in vertical ranks, thus the superior entities communicate their characteristic features to their successors/inferior entities in the horizontal stratum.¹⁰⁹ However, if this is true of the divine realm, we should not expect that the more deficient beings of the lower strata of reality, e.g. daimonic souls should preserve the unity in multiplicity of their highest progenitors untouched. Thus, the gifted ones succeed in preserving a sole characteristic, ultimately inherited by vertical procession from a Henad, which is Proclus' understanding of the divine processions in the *Phaedrus* myth.¹¹⁰ Hence we saw in the former passage that some

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Dodds [1963], e.g. pp.255, 270 and *El.Th.*,110,11-12. See also the framework set out by Van Riel [2001].

¹⁰⁸ For this rather general account see Dodds [1963],pp.257-260.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *El.Th.*,97,9-10. See also Dodds' helpful diagram on propositions 108 and 109, (in p.255), where he shows how an entity derives each generic character horizontally/transversely, but its specific one vertically.

¹¹⁰ See *Phdr.*,246e4-247a4 and cf. also Baltzly [forthcoming],(p.6).

souls instantiate their providence for the mundane world via medicine, others via prophecy, via 'erotics' (ἐρωτική) etc. Consequently, we repeat that downwards eros is not a universal characteristic of Proclus' system, but only a particular instance of (the universal fact of) «πρόνοια».¹¹¹ Another useful way of putting this is in Aristotelian jargon: eros (or friendship) is only a species of the 'providence'-genus. It is because and in so far as Proclus is interested in providence that he speaks of downwards eros. This alone can already alleviate the apparent contrast between Plotinus' ascending eros and Proclus' descending one.

Now, there are also exceptionally gifted souls which can preserve and combine in their providence more than one way, and one such figure is undoubtedly Socrates. Proclus very early in the Commentary stresses that the Athenian gadfly is an expert in at least three 'sciences' («ἐπιστήμαι»):¹¹² that of dialectics (διαλεκτική), of maieutic/midwifery (μαιευτική) and of 'erotic' (ἐρωτική).¹¹³ What are exactly these sciences

¹¹¹ Cf. also Armstrong [1961],p.116. The criticism of Armstrong ad loc. by McGinn [1996],p.199,n.30 seems self-contradictory when contrasted with *ibid.*,p.198, while my ch.2.2.4. will show how both authors can be right in a sense.

¹¹² As has been already clear, for the Neoplatonists there is no actual Socratic ignorance. See also Layne [2009],*passim*. This is a mere ironical device. Socrates is a «φιλόσοφος» to the extent that he has already succeeded in achieving communion with the intelligible realm. If there is any subject that Socrates is unaware of, this is because no one can ever have knowledge of that. A good example of this is the ineffability of the supreme gods, let alone of the super-transcendent One, i.e. the field in which Neoplatonism comes closer than ever to Skepticism...

¹¹³ *Ibid.*,27,13-14. O'Neill translates these three "sciences" as "those of philosophical discussion, elicitation and love".

or ways of Socrates' exercising providence? According to the Successor, a very good illustration of Socrates' midwifery, as a modern student of Plato could reasonably expect, is found in the *Theaetetus*,¹¹⁴ where Socrates "proceeds as far as the cleansing away of the false opinions of Theaetetus, but thereafter lets him go as now being capable of discerning the truth by himself, which indeed is the function of the science of elicitation (μαιευτικῆς), as Socrates himself observes in that work".¹¹⁵ For Proclus, Socrates' 'elenctic' midwifery does have a definite positive result, since "through elicitation each one of us is revealed to be wise about subjects in which he is unlearned (ἀμαθής), by realizing the innate notions (λόγους) within himself concerning reality".¹¹⁶ In other words, Socrates stirs Theaetetus up "through the art of elicitation to recollection (ἀνάμνησιν) of the eternal notions of the soul", and hence the result is that his interlocutor is united with "the very first wisdom".¹¹⁷ Proclus draws a parallel with the way the recipients of Socrates' providence are elevated and come to salvation («σωτηρία»)¹¹⁸ through dialectic and 'erotic'. As we have already seen, through eros Socrates elevates and unites individuals worthy of love "to essential beauty (αὐτοκάλω)",¹¹⁹ while through dialectic he brings

¹¹⁴ Proclus' Commentary on this remarkable dialogue is now lost.

¹¹⁵ On Alc.,28,4-8; cf. *Tht.*,210b11-d1.

¹¹⁶ On Alc.,29,2-3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*,28,16-17 and 19.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*,29,9.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*,28,18-19; cf. 29,1 and 28,15-16.

round “to the vision of reality”¹²⁰ those “who love to contemplate the truth”,¹²¹ and can be thus led “even as far as the Good”.¹²²

We can draw some important conclusions from the previous remarks: first of all, it is clear that there are three distinct ways to ascend to the divine realm, namely «καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν» according to the *Phaedrus*.¹²³ Via dialectic one is elevated to the Good, via maieutic one attains to Wisdom, and through erotic one is united with the Beautiful. Hence, we are presented with three different methods, which are distinguished on the basis of the divine entity they aspire to, since, as becomes clear in the Commentary, the three aforementioned divine characteristics represent divine entities of different strata. The Good even transcends reality, Wisdom should be posited somewhere on the level of Henads, whereas the Beautiful is located in the stratum of Being. Especially in light of the fact that for Proclus, gifted souls can attain to the intelligible on their own, by independent discovery, without the aid of any teacher,¹²⁴ it becomes clear that eros is not the only means of ascent. Reversive eros is only

¹²⁰ Ibid.,28,17-18.

¹²¹ “τοῖς φιλοθεάμοσι τῆς ἀληθείας”: *ibid.*,29,5; cf. *Rep.*V,475e4. Alternative rendering: “those who love the sight of truth”.

¹²² *On Alc.*,29,4; cf.29,1 and *Rep.*VII,532a7-b5.

¹²³ *Phdr.*,246d8-e1.: “... the divine which has beauty, wisdom, goodness...”. [: *trnsl.* by Nehamas-Woodruff. It must be a clerical mistake that in Rowe’s translation the attribute of ‘wisdom’ is dropped out *ad loc.*] Cf. on *Alc.*,29,8 and *ibid.*,51,8-9 and 11-12. For a different approach to the triad «ἀληθές-ἀγαθόν-καλόν» see Βασιλάκης [2009],pp.63-75 (and p.253, which is the equivalent in the English abstract).

¹²⁴ Apparently, this is how Socrates came to have access to truth.

one path to the intelligible realm, just as providential eros is only one among various instances of providence. In both cases, what is characteristic of the 'via erotica' is that it denotes the attraction to beauty (either the Form of Beauty in the case of reversion, or beautiful particulars in the case of providence).¹²⁵

A further implication of the above remarks relates to Socrates' capacity to adjust his teaching, by elevating "each individual to his appropriate object of desire".¹²⁶ Proclus compares Socrates with the divine in a manner already familiar to us: "[A]s in the godhead all goods preexist in the manner of unity,¹²⁷ but different individuals enjoy different goods according to the natural capacity of each, so also Socrates embraces all the forms of knowledge within himself, but uses now one now another, adjusting his own activity to the requirements (ἐπιτηδεϊότητα) of the recipients".¹²⁸ This is why "it is through love that perfection comes, in the present work [sc. in the *Alcibiades I*], to those that possess this nature (in view of his possession thereof,

¹²⁵ See also on Alc.,92,8-15.

¹²⁶ Ibid.,152,11-12; cf. *ibid.*,28,10-11. Modern Pedagogy would be very proud of seeing already in Proclus an explicit mention of the fundamental tenet of the "individualization" of the learning process. See also the section 151,16-156,15 of the Commentary, e.g. on Alc.,152,1-3 and *ibid.*,153,3-5. This is connected with the way Raphael Woolf has accounted for the different picture of Socrates drawn by his two students, Plato and Xenophon in Peter Adamson's podcast of the *History of Philosophy without any gaps*, episode 17, available at <http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/Woolf-Socrates> -accessed on 01/11/2011.

¹²⁷ Since to take this utterance as a reference to the One, as O'Neill does, is a considerable step.

¹²⁸ On Alc.,28,11-15.

Alcibiades seemed to be worthy of love¹²⁹ to Socrates)”.¹³⁰ This point reminds us again the limited scope of descending eros in contrast to the universality of providence: although Socrates is providential to everyone,¹³¹ he is (providentially) erotic only to those natures that belong to the rank of Beautiful (and hence of eros, too), i.e. those who by possessing and aspiring to beauty can be elevated to Beauty itself.¹³²

Here, however, we should make a conceptual distinction with respect to the individuals’ being fitted/suitable (ἐπιτηδεια) recipients (of providence) and being of a certain nature. Although the previous passage brings these two notions together, their function is not identical. The specific nature of each individual denotes the ultimate source of its bestowals, and thus reveals the entity which is its desired object. That is, Alcibiades, in partaking in the beautiful and erotic bestowals, (can) crave for the Beautiful. On the other hand, ἐπιτηδειότης denotes the capacity of the individual to be elevated to a specific level of the intelligible. In other words, the greater ἐπιτηδειότης a person has, the higher a level he can attain in the intelligible hierarchy.¹³³ Now we can see why nature (φύσις) and

¹²⁹ «ἄξιέροστος»; see supra,n.44 (in ch.2.1.2.) and on Alc.,58,9-59,18 as to why Alcibiades was ἄξιέροστος (“eulogy upon the character of Alcibiades”).

¹³⁰ Ibid.,29,13-15.

¹³¹ In the *Apology* Socrates’ action claims to be of the benefit of the whole city.

¹³² See also infra in ch.2.2.(1.-2.).

¹³³ This point becomes clear when Proclus states that “according, then, to the measure of suitability (ἐπιτηδειότητος) that each person possesses, so he is perfected by

ἐπιτηδειότης come to be identified. The reason is that each different desired object is located within a hierarchical structure, and a particular object of desire entails also a certain level of capability of ascent. This remark can also help us understand more fully what Proclus means by separating individual natures into e.g. philosophical ones, erotic, musical ones etc.¹³⁴ But it is only those already capable of and suitable for ascent that are elevated in the end.¹³⁵ More optimistically, one might suppose that each individual has some capacity for elevation; but still, the varying natures of these individuals will still result in a strongly hierarchical picture of their possible destinations.

In any case, as we have noted above, Socrates is particularly gifted in comprising in his own personality all different kinds of identity, so that he can benefit anyone, without exception.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, since he is a single and unified personality, when exercising erotic providence he does not cease to be simultaneously dialectical and maieutic. Hence, Proclus notes that, although “the activities of the science of love prevail throughout the whole composition [i.e. the *Alcibiades I*]”, along with this we can also “find the genre of philosophical discussion (τῆς

Socrates and elevated to the divine according to his own rank (τάξις).” (: On Alc.,29,5-7.)

¹³⁴ See On Alc.,152,3-8.

¹³⁵ Cf. analogously the elitist attitude of Athenian Democracy.

¹³⁶ We could parallel Socrates with a teacher who is not only able to adjust his teaching according to the abilities of his/her student, but he can also teach them the subject which his student favours more, whatever that is (e.g. from ethical philosophy to mathematics).

διαλεκτικῆς) in this dialogue illustrated through the subject-matter itself, and everywhere” one “may detect the peculiar trait of elicitation contained in Socrates’ arguments”.¹³⁷ I have already noted that Socrates belongs to this class of rarely gifted souls which have preserved untouched the characteristic “unity in multiplicity” of the divine entities, and hence can be ‘everything, but according to their own proper manner’. Thus, in this advanced manner Socrates, according to Proclus, is in a state of exploiting midwifery and dialectics for achieving the aims of erotic, and even more, in exploiting the two former in an erotic way: “so in this dialogue he primarily demonstrates the science of love and practices in a loving manner both philosophical argument (διαλεκτικόν) and elicitation.”¹³⁸

Still it remains the case that erotic providence per se is of limited application, since it is necessarily directed only towards beautiful and love-worthy recipients. With regards to this restriction of the scope of the notion of eros, some ontological references where Proclus evokes again the ontological and “hidden” hierarchical triad of Good, Wisdom and Beauty,¹³⁹ may be helpful here. Since the Beautiful has its counterpart in Eros, we might expect something analogous for the other two members of the triad. According to the Successor, as Eros is dependent on the Beautiful, in an analogous way “Faith” («πίστις») is

¹³⁷ On Alc.,27,15-28,1.

¹³⁸ Ibid,28,8-10. Cf. *ibid*,29,16-30,4.

¹³⁹ See *ibid*,51,8-13.

related to the Good, and “Truth” («ἀλήθεια») to Wisdom; i.e. “the first founding the universe and establishing it in the good, the second revealing the knowledge that lies in all being”.¹⁴⁰ This means that as Eros is the path for union with the Beautiful, ‘faith’ is the way to grasp the Good, and ‘truth’ the window for contemplating the Wisdom of the universe.¹⁴¹ In other words, faith and truth must exemplify the function of dialectics and midwifery, exercised by Socrates, for elevation to the divine.¹⁴² It follows from the analogy that Socrates is able to exercise them because he partakes in their bestowals, and patterns himself upon them, as he does with Eros, in the case of the consideration of beauty. Consequently, it once again becomes clear that eros is only one of at least three ways to ascend/reverse to the divine realm.¹⁴³

Along with the reduction of the scope of both providential and reversive eros, another implication is erotic’s relative degradation, since it appears that dialectic/faith and maieutic/truth (for both the agent and the recipients of his providence) are more important ways to

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.,51,16-52,1.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ibid*,52,10-13; cf. also Baltzly [forthcoming],(pp.13-14).

¹⁴² I say that it “must” be so, because it is not explicitly mentioned by Proclus. He only connects dialectics-midwifery-erotic science with the triad of good-wise-beautiful, and the latter with faith-truth-eros. It is a logical entailment that there should hold a direct relation as well between dialectics-midwifery-erotic and faith-truth-eros.

¹⁴³ Besides, “‘everything’, says the oracle ‘is governed and exists in these three’; and for this reason the gods advise the theurgists to unite themselves to god through this triad.”: on Alc.,52,13-53,2; cf. *De Oraculis Chaldaicis*,p.26(Kroll).

ascend to the intelligible hierarchy, since the target-entities are ranked higher than the Beautiful, which is Eros' final end. Of course, things are not so clear cut, since the appreciation of beauty cannot be neglected in Wisdom and the Good. Recollecting again the fundamental axiom that "all things are in all things, but in each according to its proper nature", the two higher entities should be seen as "causally" (κατ' αἰτίαν) beautiful, as also the Good is "causally" 'wise'. However, it is still true that access to the (essential) Beautiful is marked as inferior to the path towards the (supra-essentially) Good. Nonetheless, Proclus notes the specific importance of beauty for our intra-mundane realm, since, following *Phaedrus'* Socrates, "there is no lustre in the images here below of justice and moderation: but, as it is, beauty alone has received this prerogative -to be most conspicuous and most lovable."¹⁴⁴ The revelation of beauty in our world has an immediate and peculiar impact on human souls, so that it becomes easier for them to pursue that target, which may elevate them towards the source of beauty itself.

Thus, it appears that beauty, and hence 'erotic' as the way to ascend to the Beautiful, have a particular privilege in comparison with the other two types of ascent.¹⁴⁵ A soul must be extraordinarily gifted

¹⁴⁴ *Phdr.*,250b1-3 and d6-e1 (in O'Neill's trnsl. because) cited in *On Alc.*,320,11-14. Cf. *ibid.*,328,6-14 (the quotation from the *Phdr.* reappearing in ll.10-11).

¹⁴⁵ One could use Aristotelian terminology and propose that the erotic ascent is "prior to us". True, it seems that Proclus would be happy ascribing a certain priority to eros. However, I am not certain if the analogue could survive after its exposure to closer scrutiny. The main problem is that (descending) eros is a way with which the

in order to be attracted and elevated to Wisdom, or even the Good itself, both of which transcend Beauty. On the other hand, not only has the erotic person better chances to succeed in his pursuit, but also “the union... with divine beauty... results” in “intimacy with the *entire* divinity”,¹⁴⁶ which is “beautiful, wise and good”, as has been already noted (e.g. n.123). In other words, even if this divine triad is hierarchical, the ascent to beauty, having “fed and watered the winged nature of the soul”,¹⁴⁷ enables the soul to continue its ascent towards further and higher summits, which are the sources of Beauty. Of course, this soul must be especially gifted/‘winged’ in order to appreciate the new summits that it has been able to behold from the top of Beauty. However, the very possibility of indirect elevation to the Good via Eros’ union with the Beautiful makes the ‘via erotica’ a much more ‘practical’ way of ascent to the source of everything, than the labours involved e.g. in dialectics, which by ‘imitating’ faith forms the direct way to get hold of the Good, as far as possible. This is not to suggest that there is only one way to ascend to the divine¹⁴⁸ (whether

intelligible communicates with what lies beneath. Contrariwise, in Aristotle’s case what is prior to us is not prior in nature. Besides, the Stagirite does not have the elaborate Neoplatonic hierarchies (e.g. of Good, Wisdom and Beauty). Still, it is true that beauty and its correlate eros are among the things that have immediate effects in the human being, and can be exploited for an ascent towards the source of apparent beauty. Consequently, from this point of view speaking of ‘erotics’ as ‘prior to us’ has a certain merit.

¹⁴⁶ On Alc.,29,15-16.

¹⁴⁷ *Phdr.*,246e1-2; cf. on Alc.,29,10-11. Cf. also *Phdr.*,*ibid.*,e3-4 and on Alc.,*ibid.*,11-12.

¹⁴⁸ Besides, it is not clear whether the elevation from the Beautiful to Wisdom and Goodness necessarily has to be mediated by ‘truth’ and ‘faith’ respectively. However,

directly or indirectly).¹⁴⁹ Although beauty has a privileged position for the souls of our intra-mundane realm particularly, eros does not have the fundamental universality we had observed in Plotinus. Furthermore, this verdict holds for both directions of Proclus' thought: both providential and ascending eros.

2.1.5. Qualifying love:

from manic eros to undefiled eros

But what exactly is providence? In this section I will juxtapose manic eros and Proclus' ideal of undefiled providential eros. The characteristic features of the Proclean notion will also provide us with a deeper insight as to the relation between providential and reversionary eros -or providence and reversion more generally-; that is, how these two notions can be regarded as two complementary aspects of an entity's single activity. Let us, then, go back to the *Elements* and see how the notion of providence is initially introduced with respect to the

even if the connections can be direct without their mediation, it is not certain that souls whose natural capacity was to attain to the Beautiful may be in a position to go even beyond that. Rather, it seems that this indirect elevation to the Good via the Beautiful is a realistic option for souls with a capacity to be elevated to the source of all. Of course, a further problem is that we can actually attain to such a summit only via theurgy; cf. again on Alc., 52,13-53,2. As for the erotic souls, we have already given another reason why direct connection with Beautiful implies indirect communion, and hence "kinship/intimacy" with Goodness and Wisdom: Beauty is good and wise 'by participation'.

¹⁴⁹ In any case, one could indirectly ascend to the Good (and descend to the Beautiful?) via Wisdom, which mediates between the two.

Henads' existence:¹⁵⁰ "Every god embraces in his substance the function of exercising providence towards the universe; and the primary providence resides in the gods."¹⁵¹

This proposition confirms our already formed picture with regards to providence as exemplified in the Platonic Demiurge and his erotic and political counterparts, and is parallel to the familiar issue of procession («πρόοδος») in Neoplatonic metaphysics. But apart from making explicit the relation between god(s), goodness and providence it tells us nothing more about the precise nature of this (divine) providence. More informative is prop.122: "All that is divine both exercises providence towards secondary existences and transcends (ἐξήρηται) the beings for which it provides: its providence involves no remission of its pure (ἄμικτον) and unitary transcendence (ὑπεροχήν), neither does its separate unity annul its providence."¹⁵²

One of the significant contributions of this proposition is its explanation as to how divine providence can be made compatible with the other fundamental Greek assumption about gods, which is their transcendence. Indeed, as also Dodds notes, the gist of the Epicurean criticism against the idea of gods' being providential for what lies beneath them was that it "credits the gods with an interest in an infinity of petty problems and so abolishes their transcendence and

¹⁵⁰ See also Butler [2010].

¹⁵¹ El.Th.,120,31-32.

¹⁵² Ibid.,122,1-4.

makes their life *πραγματειώδη καὶ ἐπίπονον*.”¹⁵³ However, for the Neoplatonic Successor “the especial glory of Platonism”¹⁵⁴ consists in the preservation of both divine transcendence and providence.¹⁵⁵ In other words, if, the ‘(hyper-)being’ of the gods entails both the fact of their transcendence as well as their providential attitude towards the inferiors, then thinking with the Epicureans that providence ‘pollutes’ divine transcendence or ‘eudaimonia’ is not the right way. Rather, there can be a compromise between these two fundamental divine aspects, and this solution is realized in the concept of «ἄσχετος» and «ἀμιγής» πρόνοια, i.e. a providence that assumes “no relation” with its recipients, making the gods “undefiled” and “pure” from anything lower to them.

Thus, the paradox¹⁵⁶ of divine providence emerges since it is a kind of (causal) relation of the divine with the lower reality, without there being any actual relation (or interference) between them at all.¹⁵⁷ We may even contend that while Proclus boasts to have solved this problem, he does not really give a solution just by insisting that the

¹⁵³ Dodds [1963],p.264; cf. Epicurus, *Principal doctrines*, (p.94 Bailey, the Greek words cited meaning “laborious and wearisome”). Cf. also idem, *Letter to Menoceus*,123,2-7(Arrighetti).

¹⁵⁴ Proclus, *Platonic Theology*,vol.1,ch.ιε',76,10ff; cf. Dodds [1963],p.265 and n.1.

¹⁵⁵ Contra Aristotle and the Stoics. Cf. again Dodds,ibid.

¹⁵⁶ The word is used in the superlative by Proclus in describing this phenomenon; cf. on Alc.,60,7.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. also El.Th.,prop.142,p.124,l.33-p.126,l.1 “But whatever is divine keeps the same station (τάξις) for ever, and is free from all relation (ἄσχετόν) to the lower and all admixture (ἄμικτον) with it (prop.98).”

gods' providence does not involve being tainted by involvement with what they care for. Doesn't this sound more like a begging of the question against the Epicureans? The answer is no: the necessity of gods' goodness and providence does not mingle with –but actually explains and is explained by- the necessity of their being transcendent, since both are necessary realizations stemming from a single nature, the super-nature of the gods. Hence, although Proclus in the previous proposition stresses as much as possible the universality of divine providence as a way of confirmation of the existence and nature of divinity, he emphasizes that “in exercising providence they [sc. the Henads/gods] assume no relation to those for whom they provide, since it is in virtue of being what they are that they make all things good, and what acts in virtue of its being acts without relation (for relation is a qualification of its being, and therefore contrary to its nature).”¹⁵⁸

Now, it is exactly this paradox of undefiled and non-relational providence that Proclus stresses when describing the (erotically providential) relation of Socrates and Alcibiades as mirrored in the structure of the intelligible hierarchy, and vice versa. The following passage from the *Alcibiades Commentary* could almost be commentary on the aforementioned proposition of the *Elements*. One should read it with particular attention to the multiple verbs and adjectives that

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.,122,13-17.

reveal what the pure transcendence («ἄμικτος ὑπεροχή») of prop.122's non-relational (ἄσχετος) πρόνοια is:

“The more accurate accounts say that there are two principal elements in divine and spiritual providence towards the secondary beings: (1) that it passes through all things from the top to the bottom, leaving nothing, not even the least, without a share in itself, and (2) it neither admits into itself anything it controls nor is it infected (μηδὲ ἀναπίμπλασθαι) with its nature nor is it confused with it (μηδὲ συμφύρεσθαι). It is not mixed up (ἀναμίγνυται) with the objects of its provision just because it preserves and arranges everything (for it is not the nature of the divine or spiritual to experience the emotions of individual souls), nor does it leave any of the inferior beings without order or arrangement¹⁵⁹ because of its distinct superiority over all that is secondary, but¹⁶⁰ it both disposes everything duly and transcends what it disposes; at the same time it has the character of the good and remains undefiled (ἄχραντος), it arranges the universe yet has no relation (ἄσχετος) to what

¹⁵⁹ Note the dense usage of words denoting Demiurgic functions (cf. also on Alc.,54,4: «κοσμεῖν», and *ibid*,1,9: «κοσμητικῆ»), while Proclus paves the way to describing the relation of Socrates and Alcibiades.

¹⁶⁰ Following O'Neill's minor deletion of «διὰ ταῦτα» “as a dittography”. Cf. his n.122 ad loc.

is arranged by it; it passes through everything and mingles with nothing (ἀμιγῆς πρὸς πάντα).”¹⁶¹

Proclus wants to stress not so much the universality of providence per se, but the way in which this very idea is compatible with the fact that it “transcends” everything in its “distinct superiority”¹⁶² over the inferior beings. Hence, among other designations, he speaks of divine providence as «ἄχραντος» (‘undefiled’), «ἄσχετος» (‘without relation’) and «ἀμιγῆς» (‘mingled with nothing’) with respect to its recipients.¹⁶³ Proclus’ obsession with ‘purity’ is exemplified and explained by the fact that he assigns to it a distinctive position among the (primary) ‘divine attributes’.¹⁶⁴ As he states in the *Elements*, the characteristic of purity («καθαρότητος») is “to liberate (ἐξαίρειν) the higher from the lower” beings.¹⁶⁵ “For the divine purity isolates (τὸ ἀμιγῆς ἐνδίδωσι) all the gods from inferior existences, and enables them to exercise providence toward secondary beings without contamination (τὸ

¹⁶¹ On Alc.,53,17-54,10. These thoughts are introduced on the occasion of some of the opening lines of *Alc.I*,103a,3-4: “-and also [sc. you are wondering] why, when the others pestered you with conversation, I never even spoke to you all these years.” The same idea is reiterated in a more concise form some pages later in the Commentary, *ibid.*,60,3-11.

¹⁶² Cf. also on Alc.,199,9-11 and *El.Th.*122,2-3 and *ibid.*,140,5-7.

¹⁶³ See also on Alc.,167,18-19 and 251,14-15. As to the strict ontological separation between superiors and inferiors see *El.Th.*124,27-28.

¹⁶⁴ For an introduction to the doctrine of divine attributes («θεῶν ιδιότητες») referred to in on Alc.,30,8ff.) see Dodds [1963],pp.278-279.

¹⁶⁵ *El.Th.*156,32-33.

ἄχραντον);... Purity,¹⁶⁶ then, being a good, is found primarily among the gods".¹⁶⁷

We could imagine an objector claiming that there is no Platonic background for Proclus' emphasis on purity. Still, in terms of vocabulary at least, Proclus has in mind a main Platonic erotic dialogue, the *Symposium*, where Diotima declares that «θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ οὐ μείγνυται».¹⁶⁸ Of course, in the Neoplatonists' elaborate theologies there are many other strata which are inferior to the proper gods, but still higher than incarnate human beings. However, Plato's succinct allusion here to an ontological separation between different levels must have had a strong impact on Neoplatonic figures with such 'pure' dispositions, such as Proclus. By maintaining the fundamental tenet of separation, the Neoplatonists were able to generalize it and apply it to more particular, subtle and fine-grained distinctions within

¹⁶⁶ The topic of purity is also related with the issue of 'purificatory' virtues (cf. e.g. Plot., I.2.3,8, and the interpretation of *Phaedo*, 69b8-c3), and the relevant Chaldean and Orphic rituals, which were means towards the reversion to the (undefiled) god(s), as Dodds, p.280 points out. He also mentions the information given by Marinus (: student and biographer of Proclus; cf. *Vita Procli sive de felicitate*, §18), that his master used to bathe at sea 'unshrinkingly' at least once in a month up to an advanced age. While Socrates was not a great friend of bathing or washing (see Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 835-7 and idem, *Birds*, 1554-5 apud Συκουτρής [1949], p.10, n.2), in the beginning of the *Symposium* (174a2), i.e. a dialogue about love, he was "just bathed" («λελουμένον», even having "put on his fancy sandals", *ibid.*, a3!). Cf. also Osborne [1994], pp.98-99 and n.60.

¹⁶⁷ *El.Th.*, 156, ll.26-27 and 4-5. Divine purity is seen by Proclus as the 'specific' form of the generic "protective" («φρουρητικόν») cause or attribute, for which see *ibid.*, 154, 1-9.

¹⁶⁸ *Symp.*, 203a1-2: "Gods do not mix with men", hence the roots of the Parmenides' Greatest Difficulty.

the intelligible realm. The same attitude to the aforementioned Platonic citation is revealed in the final stages of Diotima's 'mysteries'. Recapitulating the characteristics of the Form of Beauty, which has just been said to be unaffected by the processes of coming to be pertaining to our worldly realm,¹⁶⁹ the priestess declares that it is "absolute (εἰλικρινές), pure (καθαρόν), unmixed (ἄμεικτον),¹⁷⁰ not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality".¹⁷¹ Certainly a Neoplatonist could make a lot of this recurrent theme of ontological purity in Diotima's teaching, which is verified by the (in)famous episode of Socrates' and Alcibiades' lying on the bed together on a cold winter-night,¹⁷² while nothing happened between them.¹⁷³ As the Form of Beauty was said to be "not polluted by human flesh", so did the philosopher Socrates...

Now, we have already seen (in ch.2.1.1.), too, that Proclus is (too) faithful to Plato's parallel between the ontological and the mundane praise of eros. So, it is not surprising that immediately after the fundamental passage from the *Alcibiades Commentary* cited above,

¹⁶⁹ See *Symp.*,201e1ff.

¹⁷⁰ NB that Anaxagoras' Nous was said to be «ἀμιγής» and «καθαρός», too. Cf. Anaxagoras, A:55,5 and 100,8 DK; cf. also 61,7; 56,3 and 100,11. In A56,1-2 Nous is called both «ἀπαθής» and «ἀμιγής». On the other hand, Plotinus' insistence on Eros being a 'mixture' (cf. supra,ch.1.1.5.) is because he treats reversive, not providential eros. It is the inferior entities that desire their union (ἔνωσις) with the superior(s), not the other way round.

¹⁷¹ *Symp.*,211e1-3.

¹⁷² See *ibid.*,217c4ff.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*,219c7-d2.

describing the divine-undefiled providence as realized in the metaphysical sphere, Proclus picks up on the *Symposium's* shift, and continues to clarify and confirm the issue of undefiled providence at the level of Socrates' erotic relation to Alcibiades. Besides, this was actually the reason why Proclus invoked the issue of divine providence in the first place; he aimed to explain Socrates' relation to his beloved. This is, then, what the Neoplatonist writes:

“This spiritual and divine providence, then, Plato clearly attributes to the beneficent¹⁷⁴ forethought (προμηθεία) of Socrates for the less perfect, both maintaining its vigilance and stability (as regards the beloved) and its full use of any opportunity for zeal, and at the same time its detached (ἄσχετον), unadulterated (ἀμιγῆ) and undefiled (ἄχραντον) character and its refusal to touch (ἀνέπαφον) what belongs to him...–let this be evidence to you¹⁷⁵ of his detached (ἀσχέτου) and unentangled (ἀμιγοῦς) solicitude for his inferior. For the first relationship of man to man is to speak to him; so the failure to have even this communication with the object of his provision reveals him as completely transcendent and unrelated to his inferior. So at the same time he is both present to him and not present, he both loves and remains detached (καὶ ἐρᾷ καὶ ἄσχετός ἐστι), observes

¹⁷⁴ «ἀγαθουργῶ»: cf. El.Th.122,20-21: “...the highest is not that which has the form of goodness (ἀγαθοειδές) but that which does good (ἀγαθουργόν)”, with Dodds' thoughtful n. ad loc. (p.265): “This is not... an assertion of the superiority of *πρᾶξις* to *θεωρία*. For Neoplatonism divine *πρᾶξις* is *θεωρία*, or rather perhaps its incidental accompaniment (*παρακολούθημα* Plot.III.viii.4...)”.

¹⁷⁵ Here (as well as in other instances; see e.g. on Alc.,65,19), Proclus speaks directly to his student or reader. Since Plato never does that directly, while Aristotle hardly ever (see the exception e.g. of *Metaphysics*,Λ.5,1071a22 and 28), this gesture might have been a consequence of the conventions and practicalities served by the literary genre of a Commentary.

him from all angles yet in no respect puts himself in the same class.¹⁷⁶ Now if their behaviour assumes this manner even in the case of divine men, what must we say about the gods themselves or the good spirits?"¹⁷⁷

This remarkable passage reiterates and confirms the status of (the possibility of) divine providence in the intra-mundane realm, employing similar or even the same basic terminology to the previous passage about the gods (e.g. ἄσχετος, ἀμιγής, ἄχραντος providence).¹⁷⁸

However, within these designations of providence Proclus adds one which perhaps would be rather odd if applied to the intelligible realm. This word is the adjective «ἀνέπαφος» (untouch-ed/-ing; sc. forethought -on *Alc.*,54,15), and the oddity would arise, because, as the context makes clear, it implies the existence of (material) bodies, which of course are absent from the immaterial intelligible kingdom. Thus, we can plausibly infer that Proclus alludes to the central episode of Alcibiades' narration in the *Symposium*.¹⁷⁹ Still, there need not be only sexual connotations to the word. For Proclus the fact that, while the vulgar lovers 'pestered' Alcibiades with conversation, Socrates was

¹⁷⁶ Again, the paradox of divine providence.

¹⁷⁷ On *Alc.*,54,10-55,7.

¹⁷⁸ The peculiarity of Socrates' divine relation to Alcibiades becomes a running theme of the Commentary. In the light of confirming what providence among and by the gods is, see for instance on *Alc.*,36,5-7.

¹⁷⁹ O'Neill in n.123 supports my reading, since he helpfully glosses the idea of on *Alc.*,54,15 as Socrates' refusal "to touch Alcibiades physically", and he refers to *Alc.*I,131c, e.g. c5-7.

silent towards Cleinias' son,¹⁸⁰ is an undeniable evidence of Socrates' undefiled providence.¹⁸¹ Hence, the absence of verbal communication presents itself as an alternative, although perhaps weaker,¹⁸² visualization of what detached and non-relational providence is.¹⁸³ What the Neoplatonists read in the episode of the *Symposium* was not a condemnation of sex per se, but rather an instance of Socrates' (providential) refusal to engage with everything, if possible, that pertains to our worldly, and hence bodily, existence.

One immediate result of the above point of view is that the so much praised erotic madness («μανία») of the *Phaedrus*¹⁸⁴ looks now, perhaps, even more alien to us. For one thing, it cannot be anymore a 'mania' in the way we would conceive and feel it, despite Proclus' reassurance that "one kind of enthusiasm (μανίας) is superior to moderation (σωφροσύνης), but the other falls short of it",¹⁸⁵ the former

¹⁸⁰ Cf. again *Alc.I*,103a3-4.

¹⁸¹ Of course, in the end Socrates did speak with Alcibiades, when he thought that the appropriate time («καιρός»; cf. Proclus' relevant discussion in on *Alc.*,120,14ff.) had arrived, otherwise there would be no Dialogue at all!

¹⁸² In on *Alc.*,55,1-2 Proclus notes that "the first relationship of man to man is to speak to him".

¹⁸³ Proclus pursues further the issue of Socrates' silence immediately after addressing the mythological anthropomorphisms of gods. See on *Alc.*,56,5-16.

¹⁸⁴ See *Phdr.*,244a5ff., especially 245b1-c1. Since "the greatest of goods come to us through madness, provided that it is bestowed by divine gift", (*ibid.*,244a7-8), Socrates' giving four examples of it, among which the erotic species, we could safely infer that divine mania is identified with divine providence by Proclus.

¹⁸⁵ On *Alc.*,48,20-21.

corresponding to the divine lover, the latter to the coarse multitude.¹⁸⁶ The re-signification of the former type in the context of detached providence, which in the ideal case would exclude even communication via language, brings to the forefront another dimension noted by critics of Plato, and more generally of ancient Greek philosophy: that of ‘disinterested affection’.¹⁸⁷ There are two senses that need to be distinguished here: (a) Socrates, or any providential force, does not actually care about the recipient but just automatically gives forth. This is not how I use the phrase ‘disinterested affection’, and I have given a negative answer to this contention in section 2.1.4. (b) The providential force does care in the sense that it needs some recipient or other, but doesn’t care which recipient is going to receive its providence since any fitting (say

¹⁸⁶ See the whole context in *ibid.*,48,16-49,3, where the initial puzzle is that “*all* lovers in so far as they are enthusiastic have suffered somewhat the same experience, although some are distinguished according to the superior kind of enthusiasm, others according to the inferior.” (: *ibid.*,48,18-20.) For the negative side of mania, relating it to ignorance («ἀμαθία»), because “just as the madman (μαινόμενος) knows neither himself nor others, so also the doubly ignorant” (: *ibid.*,293,15-16), see *ibid.*,293,14-22 (on the occasion of Alc.I,113c5. Etymologically, both «μανθάνω/μάθησις» and «μαίνομαι/μανία», as well as «μαντεύω-μάντης-μαντεία», stem from the same root: «μαν-»).

¹⁸⁷ Vlastos [1973],p.6 ascribes ‘disinterested affection’ to Aristotle, but he is not actually critical there. In *ibid.*, p.33,n.100 he applies it to Plato and notes it could be egoistic. Remes [2006], who treats ingeniously Plotinus’ ethics, speaks of “disinterested interest”, as her title suggests; (see also *ibid.*,pp.3, 17, 20, 22 and cf. p.7). This formula can be seen as alternative, and in some contexts even preferable, to “disinterested affection”. In the abovementioned article Remes basically explains and shows the merits of a Neoplatonic ethical theory through Plotinus’ lenses. My critical approach to come is akin to some of the questionable aspects she mentions in *ibid.*,p.23.

beautiful) recipient will do. This is the sense in which I am interested here,¹⁸⁸ and that captures Proclus' ideal type of (manic) loving providence.¹⁸⁹ Thus, the (Neo)-Platonic tradition seems well-armed to avoid the arrows of egoism. Nonetheless, we may question whether 'disinterested affection' can describe the functions of the divine, and whether it should serve as a model for us. In other words, the hierarchical picture of ontological reality on the one hand prevents egoism, because it enables providence to be other-directed, but on the other hand it supports disinterested affection to the extent that undefiled providence explains the way two different ontological levels can relate with each other. Of course, I repeat that from Proclus' viewpoint the above critique launched against Plato would not be received as an accusation at all. Proclus would happily respond that this is exactly what he meant by reducing love to an instance of undefiled, detached and pure providence. However, there are two -rather isolated- instances in the Commentary where the explicit implications of his conception may reveal it as problematic, at least for us.

¹⁸⁸ As will be also clear from the following analysis my critical attitude should not be identified with the thesis of Verdenius (which has some affinities with the concerns of Vlastos [1973] about lack of particularity and is) presented and criticized by Armstrong [1964], pp.205-206.

¹⁸⁹ Imagine the situation of a parent who satisfies every financial need her child has (e.g. for clothing, food and education), although she lives in a different place and avoids seeing, let alone hugging, it.

In the context of the discussion as to why Socrates' guardian spirit allowed him to associate with Alcibiades, although it could foresee that the young man would not be finally benefitted by the Athenian gadfly,¹⁹⁰ and having invoked several arguments¹⁹¹ and examples,¹⁹² Proclus concludes his discussion thus: "So Socrates also achieved what was fitting (καθήκοντος);¹⁹³ for all the actions of the serious-minded man (σπουδαίου) have reference to this:¹⁹⁴ if he has acted, then, beneficently and in a divine manner, he achieves his end in his activity (ἐν τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τὸ τέλος ἔχει), even if that in him¹⁹⁵ which admits of

¹⁹⁰ See on Alc.,85,17ff.

¹⁹¹ For example, the classic one by which the failure to receive the divine and good bestowals is attributed to the receiver's inability. See Proclus' related simile with the sun and what can share in its light in on Alc.,90,22-91,6 (with O'Neill's n.213).

¹⁹² See another classic example of Laius, father of Oedipus, and the renowned Delphic oracle, in on Alc.,91,10-15, with O'Neill's n.214.

¹⁹³ The content of the angle-brackets (except for 'also') is supplied in Greek by Westerink; see his apparatus ad loc.

¹⁹⁴ O'Neill accepts the reading «αὐτὸν». However, he regards it as an exceptional case of neuter with enclitic 'ν', thus, being able to refer it to «τοῦ καθήκοντος» of l.15. Cf. his justification in n.216*.

¹⁹⁵ Westerink prints here «αὐτοῦ» with manuscript N(eapolitanus; see p.ii of his Introduction). O'Neill,n.217* explicitly agrees and takes the clause (: 'which admits... activity' = «τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον αὐτοῦ») to be referring to Socrates, noting the dependence of «αὐτοῦ» upon «ἐνδεχόμενον». However, his translation would make more sense if we read with Dodds «αὐτῶ», and this is what Segonds [1985],p.75b prints ad loc. We could also rewrite as follows: "καὶ εἰ μὴ τὸ [ἐν]δεχόμενον [αὐτοῦ] κατὰ τὴν ἐκτὸς ἐνεργεῖαν <αὐτοῦ> τετελειώται, deleting 'ἐν-' and transposing the «αὐτοῦ» after «ἐνεργεῖαν», so that the αὐτοῦ refers to Socrates' activity, whereas the 'δεχόμενον', to the recipient, i.e. Alcibiades, something which perhaps underlies Dodds' choice, too: 'even if the recipient has not been perfected in accordance with his (sc. Socrates') external activity'.

external activity also has not been perfected.”¹⁹⁶ Although the text is not fully clear, it seems safe to say that it is not for the sake of the recipient that providence (i.e. “external activity”) takes place, but rather the other way round: it is for the sake of its taking place, that a (fitted) recipient must be found, since providence is necessarily an intentional activity. This seems to suggest that Socrates might not be so interested in Alcibiades’ perfection for the sake of Alcibiades, but only to the extent that the latter is expedient as a receptacle for Socrates’ external and overflowing activity. In that way, Socrates’, or his divine analogue’s ‘affection’ must be qualified. All the more so, since Alcibiades’, or his cosmic equivalent’s failure of perfection does not seem to imply anything about Socrates’ complete status. After all, as we noted from the very beginning (e.g. ch.2.1.2.), Socrates does not need Alcibiades in order for the former to recollect the intelligible. In other words, the lover’s affection cannot be but ‘disinterested’.¹⁹⁷

This suggestion can be supported by another excerpt, where Proclus comments on a small phrase abstracted from Socrates’ initial

¹⁹⁶ On Alc.,91,15-92,1.

¹⁹⁷ In other words, Alcibiades assumes the place of a preferred “indifferent” («ἀδιάφορον») for the Stoic-like sage Socrates. The Neoplatonic sage seems wholeheartedly sympathetic (so to speak, since his own ideal is identified with the Stoic impassivity) to the view expressed in the Stoic archer analogy (see e.g. Cicero, *De Finibus*,III,§22, with n.12 of Annas [2001] ad loc.,p.72): the preferred indifferent forms only a target so that the sage can perform a virtuous action, no matter whether the target is accomplished (e.g. the preservation of his health), the actual target lying within the virtuous activity itself. This is also the gist of Collette-Dučić [forthcoming],pp.12-17, (despite p.6), esp. pp.14-15.

exchanges with Alcibiades.¹⁹⁸ Proclus explains why Alcibiades was “worthy of love” («ἀξιέραστος») and suited («ἐπιτήδειος») for Socrates’ care, as well as the importance of the lover’s knowing the individual nature of his beloved.¹⁹⁹ This is, then, what Proclus notes: “The phrase ‘so I persuade myself,’ seems to me to show clearly that the divinely-inspired lover, if he sees the beloved suited for conversion to intellect, helps him, in so far as he is able;²⁰⁰ but if he finds him small-minded and ignoble and concerned with things below, he [sc. the lover] turns back to himself (εἰς ἑαυτὸν) and looks towards himself (πρὸς ἑαυτὸν) alone, taking refuge in the proverbial ‘I saved myself.’²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ See *Alc.I*,104e8-105a1.

¹⁹⁹ See on *Alc.*,133,17ff.

²⁰⁰ It is not very clear to whom this qualification applies: to the lover or the beloved? It would be more natural for Proclus to be referring to the beloved’s deficiency, not the lover’s. However, as O’Neill’s and Segonds’ translation reveals, every other nominative to be found in the passage refers to Socrates with much more certainty. Hence, although somehow odd, it might seem that the present qualification applies to the subject of the other clauses, i.e. Socrates. Still, as the semi-colon in l.20 makes clear, we have two parts in ll.19-22: the first dominated by «μέν», the second by «δέ», while our phrase belongs to the first one. The structure of the second part need not reflect in its detail that of the first part; besides there are not specific verbal or syntactical analogies. Thus, if only the ‘μέν’-clause refers to the “worthy of love” (ἀξιέραστος -see e.g. *ibid*,133,17), “suited” and by no means “ignoble” or “small-minded” Alcibiades, who nonetheless we know that finally failed in converting to intellect, then we could still plausibly hold that the subject of «καθ’ ὅσον ἐστὶ δυνατός» is the ‘beloved’ not the lover.

²⁰¹ Cf. Archilochus, frgm.6 (Diehl) with O’Neill’s n.286 ad loc. Just one page before, Proclus used the adjectives «σμικρῶς... καὶ ἀγεννοῦς (φύσεως»); cf. on *Alc.*,138,4) to describe a young man for whom Socrates “would have long ago given up his love” (cf. *Alc.I*,104e8 and on *Alc.*,138,2-4), in contrast to what is proclaimed about Alcibiades in the Platonic dialogue.

For the persuasion and self-directed activity are an indication of this knowledge (sc. τῆς ἐρωτικῆς)."²⁰²

It is noteworthy that in both instances we are dealing with an actual beloved,²⁰³ not a candidate one. The first case, that of Alcibiades, recapitulates what we have been seeing the non-egoist and providential divine lover doing, so we need not dwell on this. The case where the potential beloved turns out to be ignoble is more interesting in that it succinctly illustrates the nature of the lover's self-sufficiency. From this description it turns out not only that the divine lover is not in need of his beloved, but actually that he is not very much troubled about the other person and his/her final perfection either (and an analogous point would hold in the cosmic context).²⁰⁴ Of course, we should not lay too much weight on the slightly surprising use of the proverbial 'I saved myself', because the lover is in any case, and regardless of the beloved's fate, already saved. We can exclude the egoistic accusation that the lover has used the beloved for the former's ascent, and then stopped caring about his 'ladder': the lover did not need the beloved right from the beginning. The beloved's failure to keep pace with him –or, in the words of the previous citation, the fact that "even if that in him which admits of external activity also has not

²⁰² On Alc.,139,18-140,2.

²⁰³ This is plain when reading «αὐτόν» in on Alc.,139,21, which refers to the «τὸν ἐρώμενον» of l.19. In other words, Proclus in both cases speaks about one beloved, whose instantiation however is at least dual, and hence refers to different particulars.

²⁰⁴ Imagine a very good teacher or lecturer who delivers talks without being interested in whether his audience understands or is benefited by him.

been perfected"- does not seem to have any impact on the tranquility²⁰⁵ of the lover's internal and self-directed activity. This, I conclude, is indicative of what disinterested affection would mean.

Perhaps then the lover was not much interested in being providential for the sake of the beloved, but rather for the activity's sake, since providence is necessarily an intentional activity. In this case, although the beloved is not necessary requirement for the divine lover's self-realization, he is reduced to a means for the manifestation of the lover's self-realization. Moreover, in our passage the lesser importance of this 'instrumentality' is evident in that the divine lover presumably can perfectly do alone with himself, as well. Thus, even if there were affection between the lover and his beloved (in both cases), this must have surely been disinterested, on the lover's behalf. Of course, it is natural enough to turn one's back on someone who does not or cannot follow. Nonetheless, it is a question whether we would like to posit that as an ethical ideal.²⁰⁶

To conclude, it seems that Proclus' divine and divine-like entities are closer to Aristotle's non-altruistic god, who "moves" only "by

²⁰⁵ Cf. the Hellenistic ideal of «ἀταραξία».

²⁰⁶ We would not do justice to Proclus if we did not mention a 'positive' side-effect of disinterested affection. On the occasion of *Alc.I,114d7*, where Alcibiades calls Socrates "insolent" («ὕβριστήν»), Proclus comments: "The fact, too, that Socrates does not reject the name of 'insolent' shows his lofty grandeur and contempt for everything inferior (τὸ περιφρονεῖν πάντων τῶν χειρόνων)..." (: on *Alc.,313,10-12*). The case is quasi-analogous to a father who, in not paying any particular respect to his child's existence and needs, would never be accused of exercising e.g. corporeal punishment upon it...

being loved”,²⁰⁷ than the vocabulary of providential eros would allow us to hold. Since for Plotinus, too, the One is a final as well as efficient cause,²⁰⁸ we find that his position is quite close to that of Proclus in this respect.²⁰⁹ Finally, undefiled providential eros gives us a further hint as to its relation to reversive eros: both are aspects of one entity’s activity, because the upwards tendency (which makes the providence undefiled) has as a by-product providence, whether erotic or of a different sort. But as I promised above, we need to move to more abstract metaphysics in order to give a firm solution to this problem.

²⁰⁷ Cf. *Metaphysics*, Λ.7,1072b3. While Moutsopoulos [1998] notes the similarities between Proclus and Aristotle in this respect with reference to the *Platonic Theology*, for Proclus’ criticism of the “Unmoved Mover” see his *Commentary on Tim.*,I.267,4-12 (cited up until I.6 by Dodds [1963],p.198). Cf. also his *Comm. on Parm.*,922,1-20 (as a part of the Greatest Difficulty’s exegesis; lemma: *Parm.*,133b4-c1/*on Parm.*,919,24-35), and Dodds [1963],p.213,n.1.

²⁰⁸ Some Neoplatonists, in particular Ammonius, son of Hermeias, went that far so as to contend that, after all, that was also Aristotle’s position. Cf. Verbeke [1982],p.46 and n.9 (in p.242).

²⁰⁹ Hence, we can apply here what Dodds says on the occasion of El.Th.130, i.e. that “[t]his doctrine, like so much else in Pr.[occlus], is but the hardening into an explicit law of what is implicit in Plotinus” (Dodds,pp.269-270; cf. *ibid.*,p.xxi). Cf. also Rist [1964],pp.215-216, Rist [1970],pp.168 and 172, Gersh [1973],p.127, McGinn [1996],p.197 (although contrast *ibid.*,pp.198 and 199), Esposito Buckley [1992],pp.40-41, 44-46, 58, and Armstrong [1961],p.113; my treatment though can give some answers to the latter’s reservations about Plotinus in *ibid.*,pp.114-115 and 117, as well as make clearer what Esposito Buckley [1992],p.57 means when speaking of “the absence of providential *care* on the part of the Plotinian One” [my italics].

2.2. Locating Eros in the intelligible hierarchy

When describing the Proclean ideal lover, I noted that a description of the position of the Eros-divinity in the intelligible universe would help us in understanding the phenomenon of providential eros. The time has come. In what follows I will not only situate Eros in the Proclean hierarchy, but I will trace its presence in the lower entities that participate in it and in its ancestors. Further, I will show the ontological connection of Eros with Friendship. One of the upshots of this chapter will be to show that Eros is to be found almost in every corner of Proclus' system. Along the way I will have the opportunity to make constant comparisons with Plotinus.

2.2.1. Divine Eros and its function

One of the important differentiations between Plotinus and Proclus is the complexity of the hierarchy: the Platonic Successor has a much more baroque picture of reality than the Neoplatonic founder. For example, contrary to Plotinus' frugal approach, Time and Eternity are hypostasized in Proclus' system.²¹⁰ Thus, we should not be surprised if Eros possesses a distinctive position in the Proclean hierarchy, whereas in my discussion of Plotinus I proposed a "synairetic" reading which contracted Soul (or Nous) with Eros, and hence did away with a separate existence of Love. In this section I will discuss Eros' location

²¹⁰ This tendency goes back at least as far as Iamblichus.

according to the *Alcibiades Commentary*, and what this tells us about the metaphysical role that Eros plays.

To begin with we need to go back to Plato, and more specifically to the *Symposium*. Proclus makes special use of two ideas found in Diotima's teaching. The first one is that of 'mediation'. "Everything spiritual (δαιμόνιον), you see, is in between god and mortal",²¹¹ says the medium from Mantinea, and adds that "[b]eing in the middle of the two, they round out (συνπληροῖ) the whole and bind fast the all to all".²¹² Later I will speak more about daimons in Proclus, and see that Proclean Eros is first and foremost a god. Still, its divine status does not negate its role as a mediator. Besides, we had asserted the same thing when treating Plotinus' image of divine Eros as the eye of a lover which mediates between the object seen and the image in the lover's mind. Thus, there is a loose and a strict sense in which «δαιμόνιον» can be used, and Proclus opts for the loose here. After all, Diotima speaks of "a *great spirit*".²¹³

The second idea exploited by Proclus is found in the dialectical interchange between Socrates and Agathon. There the gadfly makes the poet admit that Eros is love *of beauty*.²¹⁴ Although for the time being I am not interested in Socrates' conclusion that Eros must be bereft of

²¹¹ *Symposium*,202d13-e1.

²¹² *Ibid.*,202e6-7.

²¹³ *Ibid.*,202d13. This verbal formula comes up frequently in Proclus' Commentary; see e.g. on Alc.,64,8.

²¹⁴ Cf. *Symp.*,201a9-10.

beauty, we need to keep in mind the particular connection between eros and beauty (and not e.g. justice or goodness). Applying this idea to the former point about mediation, and granting that mortals desire to become like the divine, then eros must mediate between Beauty and the admirers of beauty. Moreover, its mediation forms the ‘bridge’, i.e. the condition that enables the latter group attain to the former.

Indeed, this is what Proclus states when turning to the “more secret doctrines”²¹⁵ about Love: “This god (θεὸν) one should not think to rank either among the first of the things that are or the last; he is not among the first because the object of love is beyond love, and he would not rightly be ranked among the last because what loves participates in love. One must establish him mid-way (ἐν μέσῳ) between the object of love and lovers: he must be posterior to the beautiful but precede the rest.”²¹⁶ In these few lines we have a succinct statement both of the position of Eros in the hierarchy and of its role, but we need to elaborate on these two issues. Let us start with the first one.

If Eros’ position is relative to the position of the Beautiful in the hierarchy,²¹⁷ then locating the latter will help us stipulate with greater precision the location of the former. So, with relative confidence we

²¹⁵ On Alc.,50,22-51,1: «τῶν ἀπορρητοτέρων... λόγων». Concerning eros: for the «θεωρία περὶ τὴν λέξιν» (“consideration of style”) see *ibid.*,25,19ff., and for the «ζήτησις τῶν πραγμάτων» (“actual investigation of the realities”; cf. O’Neill’s “Addenda et Corrigenda”, pp.460-461) see on Alc.,30,5ff.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*,51,1-6.

²¹⁷ Cf. also *ibid.*,329,24-330,1: “since love is immediately of beauty”; «(προσεχώς γὰρ ὁ ἔρωσ κάλλους ἐστί)».

can assert that the Beautiful is to be found at the first level of the Intelligible Triad,²¹⁸ i.e. Being. One might have the inclination to situate it lower, at the bottom of the Intelligible Triad, i.e. in Nous, based on Proclean passages like the following: “the beautiful marks off (ἀφορίζει) the intelligent (νοερόν) substance (for this reason intellect is an object both of love and desire, as Aristotle says;...)...”.²¹⁹ Elsewhere, he notes that “the beautiful [is] in the intellects (ἐν νοῖς)”.²²⁰ Nevertheless, despite this claim which expresses the presence of beauty on the Intellectual level,²²¹ just a few lines before Proclus states that the beautiful “ [is situated] secretly among (ἐν) the first of the intelligibles (νοητῶν) and more evidently at the lower limit of that order”,²²² «νοητόν» being a usual description of Being.²²³ In order for beauty to characterize the Intellectual Forms, (the source of) Beauty must be prior to this immanent expression. Besides, when Proclus writes that “the good delimits (ἀφορίζει) all divine being (οὐσίαν)”,²²⁴ regardless of

²¹⁸ See Being-Life-Nous: the threefold unfolding of the Plotinian second Hypostasis.

²¹⁹ On Alc.,317,22-318,1.

²²⁰ Ibid.,320,2, opting for a pedantic translation of «ἐν» instead of O’Neill’s “on the level of”, although he might be thinking of Aristotle’s «ἐν» in the sense of “accidental to”.

²²¹ Usually called: «τὸ νοερόν».

²²² On Alc.,319,14-15.

²²³ Being precedes Intellect and thus is only «κατ’ αἰτίαν» the object of thought. (I have already referred to this fundamental Neoplatonic principle, e.g. in n.98 of ch.2.1.3., and will adduce it later as well.) Cf. also on Alc.,221,1-2: “Since it is beautiful (καλόν), it participates in the intelligibles (νοητῶν) also –for there lies the primary beauty (κάλλος), which proceeds therefrom to all things.”

²²⁴ Ibid.,318,4-5, although now O’Neill prefers “delimit” instead of “mark off” for «ἀφορίζω».

whether we take «θεία οὐσία» to denote Being or the Henads, this cannot mean that the ineffable Primal Unity is immanent in these posterior principles. Furthermore, at another passage he stresses the superiority of Beauty by beautifully calling it “form of forms and as blooming above all the intelligible forms”.²²⁵

How much does this help us to locate Eros? For one thing, Love, qua mediator of Beauty and lovers of beauty, cannot be found at the secret levels superior to Being. But what about the long scale of beings that reaches the level of the worldly lovers? Where exactly shall we place Eros? Proclus is explicit: Love “is the primal [entity] dependent (ἐξηρητημένος) on beauty”.²²⁶ Love is immediately tied to the Beautiful, like in the pictorial representations of Eros’ being next to his beautiful mother, Aphrodite. It is not difficult to understand the reason for this immediate connection of the two entities. “Etymologically, whether it is called ‘beautiful’ (καλόν) because it summons (καλεῖν) unto itself, or because it charms (κηλεῖν) and beguiles whatever is able to gaze upon it, it is by nature an object of love (ἐραστόν)”.²²⁷ What is lower than the beautiful falls short of it and thus desires it, irrespective of the desiring entity being placed high, in the intelligible realm or low, in the sensible world. Everywhere in this rank of desirers, desire for the beautiful is presupposed. Therefore, Proclus needs to postulate the primal Erotic

²²⁵ Ibid.,111,14-15: «εἶδος εἰδῶν καὶ ὡς ἐπανθοῦν ἅπασιν τοῖς νοητοῖς εἶδεσι».

²²⁶ Ibid.,112,1.

²²⁷ Ibid.,328,11-13.

desire ‘before’ these desirers that partake in the desire. Since this desiring continuum starts immediately after the manifestation of Beauty in the hierarchy, Proclus is compelled a) to place Eros immediately after the Beautiful, and thus b) to make it the first desirer.²²⁸

More precisely, Proclus calls it a “Monad”,²²⁹ which comes third after two other Monads: Faith (Πίστις) and Truth (Ἀλήθεια). Each of these other entities is attached to a target-entity that precedes Beauty, i.e. to the Good and the Wise respectively. Hence, the Proclean triad “faith-truth-eros”²³⁰ is attached to the Phaedrean divine triad of “beautiful, wise, good”,²³¹ as its necessary complement.²³² One can compare the way that Eros is attached to Beauty to the relation of Faith with Goodness. Because I have dealt with this issue in a previous section (ch.2.1.4.), I will not pursue it further here. Besides I am particularly interested in the third Monad, Eros. What we need to keep

²²⁸ A Proclean reminiscence of “self-predication”.

²²⁹ Not a Henad. In the simple scheme of the *Elements of Theology* Dodds [1963],p.209 notes that Henads are the tops of vertical series, whereas Monads the first terms of horizontal strata. The use here is a bit more complicated. -Still, although not exactly Henads, Good, Wisdom and Beauty, can be viewed as initiating vertical ranks.

²³⁰ See e.g. on Alc.,51,15-16. This triad appears in the Chaldean Oracles, too; see Hoffmann [2000]. Regarding the addition of hope to the triad see Beierwaltes [1986], n.6 in p.311 and Hoffmann [2011].

²³¹ *Phaedrus*,246d8-e1; cf. on Alc.,29,8. For Proclus Plato has put the terms in ascending order. In terms of priority it should be the other way round; hence the verbal order in the complementary triad of Faith etc.

²³² See two useful diagrams in Μάυος [2006],pp.64 and 224 respectively, and a table in Tornau [2006],p.219; see also his analysis of the Proclean triad(s) in *ibid.*,pp.218-223, with the bibliography provided in n.81 (p.219).

in mind though is that, as with the other members of these triads, Love is the natural complement and necessary accompaniment²³³ of Beauty. Indeed, on these grounds one could draw a further parallel: Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* uses the image of a «σύμβολον» (“matching half”)²³⁴ in order to express the complementarity of the two lovers, although the analogy goes back to Empedocles.²³⁵ It is likewise appropriate to speak of Proclean Eros as the «σύμβολον» of Beauty, qua the latter's natural counterpart and follower. To be sure, the two are not the same level of entity, as in the case of Aristophanes' lovers, and Love does not complete the perfection of Beauty. The latter is Beautiful not because there are entities loving it, but rather the other entities love it because it is Beautiful. Still, even from this one-sided and asymmetrical point of view, the de facto existence of the one implies the existence of the other. The specialty in Eros' existence being totally dependent on another entity, namely Beauty, lies in that Eros is not a mere intentional entity, but the hypostatization of intention itself. If in this case the subject and the activity (intention-desire) are conflated, we can define Eros only in terms of the 'external' intended object.

²³³ Or “by-product”/«παρακοιούθημα» in more Plotinian language; cf. supra nn.157 and 174 in chs.1.2.4. and 2.1.5. respectively.

²³⁴ Cf. *Symp.*,191d4 and 5.

²³⁵ Empedocles, B63 DK; I owe the reference to Συκουτρῆς [1949], p.88,n.1, which is a comment on the aforementioned Platonic passage. Συκουτρῆς explains the social convention after which the expression is taken.

Now, having defined the relative position of Eros we are confronted with another question: is it directly dependent on Beauty in terms of a transverse or a vertical series? In other words, should Eros be situated next to the Beautiful, albeit at the level of Being, or at a lower level that participates in Being? The answer is the second alternative, and in order to verify it we need to return again to the “more secret doctrines” about love. Proclus writes that Eros “has its primary and hidden subsistence in the intelligible intellect (νοητῶν νοῶν)”.²³⁶ A few lines below he repeats that “speaking about the intelligible intellect (νοητοῦ νοῦ) the theologian [sc. Orpheus] mentions ‘dainty Love and bold Counsel (Μῆτις),’...; and concerning the intelligent (νοεσοῦ) and unparticipated intellect ‘and Counsel, first begetter, and much delighting Love’...”.²³⁷ These passages show that Eros is an Intellect,²³⁸ hence its dependence upon the Beautiful is within a vertical rank. Thus, according to Dodds’ scheme regarding propositions 108-111,²³⁹ Eros should derive a generic characteristic from

²³⁶ On Alc.,66,7-8.

²³⁷ Ibid.,66,11-67,3. For the quotations see Orphica frgm.83 and 168,9 (Kern) with Westerink’s apparatus. The last quotation reappears in on Alc.,233,16. By referring to Μῆτις in connection to Love, as Plato does in the *Symposium* myth, Proclus would satisfy Lacrosse [1994], p.63,n.185, who notes on the occasion of Plot.’s III.5.7,24-25, that Plotinus, too, could have referred to Eros’ grand-mother in his exegesis of the *Symposium*.

²³⁸ See a helpful table given by Brisson [forthcoming],p.18 (Annex 1), where he puts together a description of the hierarchies of: Proclus, the Chaldean Oracles and the Orphic Rapsodies. As is noted by Brisson,p.10, Φάνης in the third Orphic rank (second of the Intelligible-Intellect), is also known as Eros. See also the remarks of Quispel [1979],pp.196-201.

²³⁹ Dodds [1963],p.255.

the level of Beauty, but a specific characteristic from the antecedent terms in his own stratum.²⁴⁰

Nonetheless, these quotations generate further problems, since they speak of both an intelligible and an intellective (/intelligent) intellect, which represent different levels of the Proclean hierarchy. There are various ways to remedy this problem and the easiest is to suggest, as Proclus does, that Eros exists only «κατ' αἰτίαν» in the intelligible intellect, “for if it ‘leapt forth’ therefrom it is causally established therein”.²⁴¹ Hence, «καθ' ὑπαρξιν», i.e. existentially, Eros is an intellective intellect. A further problem though is that in the usual accounts of Proclus’ system Life mediates between the strata of Being and Nous. If Eros is a nous, can we still hold that it is directly dependent on Beauty? Indeed, at one point Proclus does mention Life in such a context, stating that “among the intelligible (νοητοῖς) and hidden gods it [sc. Love] makes the intelligible (νοητὸν) Intellect one with the primary and hidden beauty according to a certain mode of life (ζωῆς) superior to intellection (νοήσεως)”.²⁴² As if the aforementioned problem were not enough, the passage also implies that Eros can exercise causation upon an entity which precedes it in the hierarchy –

²⁴⁰ Characteristic that ultimately derives from the Monad, i.e. the Unparticipated first entity of a transverse series. Compare *supra*, n.229.

²⁴¹ On Alc.,66,8-9. For the quotation cf. *De Orac. Chald.*,p.25 (Kroll), again with Westerink ad loc.

²⁴² On Alc.,64,14-16 (although O’Neill renders «νοήσεως» as “intellectual perception”); in the next few lines (64,16-65,1) Proclus continues thus: “(and therefore the Greek theologian terms such love blind: ‘Cherishing in his heart blind swift Love’)...”. See also O’Neill’s n.145 ad loc.

even if in a transverse series-, namely by causing unity between intellect and the even higher Beauty. Let me tackle this last problem first. Although I will discuss eros' function shortly after, for my present purposes it suffices to invoke the distinction between «κατ' αἰτίαν» and «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» again. The erotic tendency for Beauty resides already in the intelligible intellect, but causally. This intellect's desire for Beauty not only orientates it towards the object of desire, but has also the further consequence, or 'by-product', of the generation of Eros, i.e. the manifestation of the desire itself. With this picture we come very close to a potential interpretation of Plotinus that I rejected, namely that when Heavenly Aphrodite/Soul is filled with eros for her progenitor (Nous), she also gives birth to Eros. With respect to Proclus' interpretation now, we might suggest that Eros unites his preceding intellect only in virtue of manifesting the inherent erotic tendency in this prior nous.²⁴³ What is more, we can connect this answer with the discussion of the previous problem about Life. This term is also a mediator between Being and Intellect and in a way exemplifies the mediating function of Eros.²⁴⁴ Again the «κατ' αἰτίαν» formula can

²⁴³ It might be for this reason that Proclus in the *Platonic Theology*, VI.98,17-20 states that: «Ἡ δὲ Ἀφροδίτη τῆς δι' ὅλων διηκούσης ἐρωτικῆς ἐπιπνοίας ἐστὶν αἰτία πρωτουργός, καὶ πρὸς τὸ καλὸν οἰκειοῖ τὰς ἀναγομένας ὑφ' ἑαυτῆς ζώας.» One could expect Proclus to identify the goddess of Beauty with the Beautiful itself, but this is not what he opts to do. Rather Aphrodite is cause of the erotic inspiration (as intelligible nous) that unites the posterior entities with the Beautiful, which is even higher than Aphrodite. For the place of Aphrodite in Proclus' system see Lankila [2009]. In the Hymn Proclus devotes to her, she is called «ἐρωτοτόκος» (Love-bearer). Cf. *Hymns*, 2.13 (Vogt) and Lankila, p.23 and n.6. See also n.12 in ch.1.1.2.

²⁴⁴ Cf. also Segonds, n.2 ad prim.loc.cit., p.156.

come to our rescue. Eros manifests Life when bringing into unity different elements. Thus, strictly speaking «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» Eros is not directly dependent upon Beauty, which is on the level of Being, but only in virtue of and through the erotic feature that causally subsists in Life. On the other hand, we might want to go further than that and assert that Life exemplifies not so much a stratum of reality, as the vital force and power that links the activity of Intelligence with its object (Being), or indeed the activity itself. In that way Eros, even «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» and on the level of nous, can be both vertically and directly dependent upon Beauty, despite Life's mediation.

Note though that whether in vertical or horizontal relation to Beauty, Proclus needs to reconcile his remarks with the *Symposium*: if Eros is closely dependent on Beauty and if it is a fundamental Neoplatonic principle that procession is realized through likeness,²⁴⁵ then Eros cannot lack beauty, at least to a large degree. After all, to take Agathon's side, Eros is a god; how could a god be ugly? A sophistic retort could be that qua Eros for Beauty, the former lacks the latter, but not qua divine entity not. Another more Neoplatonic response might be that Proclus does not disagree with the *Symposium*, but refines it: from absolute lack of beauty, Proclus switches to relative absence; Eros is ugly in so far as he is not as beautiful as the Beautiful itself. Still, in absolute terms he can be called Beautiful. We have

²⁴⁵ See supra, nn.94, 95 and 99 in ch.2.1.3. for references and analysis.

already seen²⁴⁶ the importance of the old “*similia similibus*” idea. An entity can communicate with another due to the similarity that characterizes them. Of course, one might wonder about the proportion of the intensity of the desire. If I am not very thirsty I am not dying to drink water. After intense physical exercise under the Mediterranean sun, however, I really desire to drink. The intuition says that less affinity with the object of desire implies looser desire. Nonetheless, we should not forget that for the Neoplatonists it is the similarity between object and subject that enables them to come into ‘contact’. And when two entities are closer to one another, the inferior can appreciate better the status of the higher entity. In other words, it is because I have studied the ingenious complexities of Bach’s fugues that I have a greater desire to listen to them again, while a music fan not steeped in this world might not be dying to listen to *The Art of the Fugue* again. It is not accidental that I have made similar observations on the occasion of the last lines of Plotinus’ erotic treatise.²⁴⁷ And as with Plotinus, Proclus’ aforementioned qualification of the *Symposium* presents him as a dynamic reader of Plato, a characteristic often missed by interpreters.

²⁴⁶ In 2.1.3., n.99.

²⁴⁷ See *infra*, ch.1.1.3., e.g. on n.57.

2.2.2. Eros as a mediator

I said before that one of the principal ideas that Neoplatonism owes to the *Symposium* is the idea of eros as mediator. This is a recurrent theme in Proclus' *Commentary*: "What effects this bond of union (σύνδεσμον) between the inferior and the superior if not love? For this god the Oracles call 'the binding (συνδετικὸν) guide of all things,'²⁴⁸... Furthermore love itself is 'a mighty spirit,' as Diotima says, in so far as everywhere it fulfils (συμπληροῖ) the mean role (τὴν μεσότητα) between the objects of love and those hastening towards them through love. The object of love holds the first position, what loves it the last, and love fills (συμπληροῖ) the middle (μέσον) between the two, uniting (συνάγων) and binding with (συνδέων) each other the desired object and what desires it..."²⁴⁹

There is, however, a puzzle here. I suggested before that due to the position ascribed to Eros in the *Symposium*, love was a 'bond' by being a 'bridge' that unites gods with mortals. Still, in the Neoplatonic refinement of Eros' position, we located it immediately after the Beautiful. Even if it is a mediator, Eros is not equally distanced from its object of desire and the rest of desiring entities. The scales lean on the side of Beauty, not of the beautiful particulars. How is Eros an effective bond, then, and of what sort? One might propose that it is a mediator only between Beauty and whichever entity is directly

²⁴⁸ See O'Neill, n.142 ad loc.

²⁴⁹ On Alc., 64, 3-6 and 8-13.

posterior to Eros. What about the entities lower in the complex Neoplatonic hierarchy then? Do they indirectly relate to Eros by depending on the entity/-ies right after him?

These questions, like those of the previous section (2.2.1.), reveal the limitations of an intellectual 'topography', i.e. the difficulty of our discursive mind to conceive intelligible structures that transcend it. Still, they also prompt us to think harder about the sense in which Eros is the bond of universe. We need to step back, then, and reflect on the following: how can an entity desire Beauty? Since Eros is the exemplification of the desire for Beauty, posterior entities must participate in Eros in order to have this erotic appetite. In fact, this is a fundamental characteristic of Proclus' system: entities high in the hierarchy bestow their characteristic feature on the posterior entities.²⁵⁰ The latter either participate directly in the originators of this feature, or indirectly by participation in entities participating in these originators and so forth. The important conclusion, though, is that before we can think or speak about the possibility of a desiring entity, we need to postulate the immediate cause of desire: as we have seen, this is not the Beautiful, the ultimate cause of erotic desire,²⁵¹ but Eros himself. Hence, we need to be careful when speaking of the "bond" between the object and the subject of desire: *prima facie* it seems that within such a pair of beloved object and loving subject Eros intervenes

²⁵⁰ See for the erotic case e.g. *ibid.*,30,14ff.

²⁵¹ Cf. e.g. *ibid.*,31,1. A desire must be desire *for* something. See *supra* in 2.2.1., (e.g. n.214).

subsequently²⁵² in order to enable the unity of the pair by filling and bridging the gap. Still, this is a misleading oversimplification: rather it is the necessarily anterior existence of Eros that enables the desiring entity to be what it is in the first instance, i.e. a desirer. We can speak of a 'pair' only due to the 'intervention' of Eros, i.e. because there is a triad; or because the real primal pair is Beauty and Eros (i.e. the desire for Beauty), whereas everything else is secondary. In other words, the idea of "mediation" is logically posterior to Love. Eros is not Eros because he is a mediator; rather, he is mediator because he is Eros. First and foremost though, Eros is a bond because he craves *his own* union with Beauty.

Now we are better prepared to understand what Proclus means when writing that Eros "binds together (συνδευτικός) what is divided, and unites (συναγωγός) what precedes and is subsequent to it, and makes the secondary revert (ἐπιστρεπτικός) to the primary and elevates (ἀναγωγός) and perfects (τελεσιουργός) the less perfect".²⁵³ The conglomeration of so many «καὶ» does not denote addition of different functions. Rather, these «καί» are explicative, each adjective making more precise what the previous ones denote: Love is a "binder" in so far as he is "reversive", i.e. he reverts the inferiors to the superior.

²⁵² The language used does not indicate temporal, but onto-logical relations.

²⁵³ On Alc.,53,4-7 (with the addition of some "and" lost in O'Neill's translation).

And what does it actually mean to ‘revert the secondary’ etc? This erotic function describes the bestowal of the erotic feature, viz. desire, as was described above.²⁵⁴ But what does this act of bestowal amount to? To providence, as we have seen in previous sections (e.g. chs.2.1:4 and 5). It is ultimately due to providence that Eros does not ‘grudgingly keep for himself’ his defining characteristic, but necessarily gives an inferior image to his participants. Hence, we should not be misled by the language used when Proclus repeats that Eros reverts the secondary etc, as if there was any downwards intentionality at play. Strictly speaking, Eros is only oriented upwards in so far as he falls short of Beauty. The downwards orientation is to be explained not in erotic terms, but in terms of providence. After all, as we have seen, to be a god, as Eros is, is to be a ‘goodness’, and this means to be providential,²⁵⁵ and more precisely detachedly providential.²⁵⁶ In other words, it is not that Eros is providential for the inferior beautiful particulars because he loves them; rather, because he loves Beauty, he is also providential towards beautiful particulars, which are fitted for the reception of the erotic desire.²⁵⁷ Consequently,

²⁵⁴ See also Μάvoς [2006],p.231 with n.60 (and n.57 in p.230).

²⁵⁵ See e.g. El.Th.prop.120 and supra, ch.2.1.5.

²⁵⁶ See also on Alc.,31,10-12: “let us perceive its [sc. the love-series]... hidden summit ineffably established among the very first orders of the gods and united to the most primary intelligible beauty apart (*χωριστῶς*) from all beings”.

²⁵⁷ Or “providentially erotic towards beautiful particulars”. Eros in the downwards sense denotes only its connection with and direction to instantiations of beauty; not that it falls short of this beauty.

Eros' being a bond for what comes after him is just a by-product of his own being, which consists in striving for the Beautiful.

With the above remarks I have given another answer as to how Proclus can simultaneously and coherently entertain the idea of providential and reversionary love. Now, before I finish, there is one more thing I want to clarify with respect to the function of erotic mediation: in a looser sense of the term, almost all entities in Proclus' system are mediators. Save for the First Principle, the Good, and its polar counterpart, Matter, every entity in the complex hierarchy is between two others, either in horizontal or vertical series. What then makes Eros different, viz. a mediator and a bond in the precise sense? This must be the dynamic element. Eros can be characterized as the movement towards the completion of a target or the fulfilling of an entity. Ironically then, Eros' mediation sows the seed of its own annihilation: if every posterior entity has a desire for Beauty, then this implies a desire to overpass the medium of Eros in order to get to Beauty. Proclus' universal laws governing procession and reversion do not allow this abruptness of order, and the hierarchy is preserved in the end.²⁵⁸ Whatever the final result however, erotic mediation entails and implies existence within a net of dynamic relations; not a system of inert rest, but of a rest in motion or a motionless motion.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ See also the combination of erotic characteristics with other divine properties (in on Alc.,30,8ff.).

²⁵⁹ See of course Gersh [1973], who devotes an Appendix (I: pp.123-127) to eros in order to connect it with the concept of activity as expounded in the main body of his

So, there are two elements we have to retain from the preceding discussion: a) that in a sense Eros is a 'universal' mediator that 'binds together' Beauty and beautiful particulars desiring Beauty; b) that the insistence on entities that desire their fulfillment via their erotic aspiration to beauty brings us close to Plotinus' syncretic reading. Whatever the scheme of Proclean participation, at least most of the entities that are posterior to Beauty, can be seen as lower instantiations of eros, in that they strive for Beauty, with the subsequent result of their self-fulfillment. These thoughts bring us back to my remarks about Plotinian Soul and Nous as being erotic with respect to the One.

To recap, I have expounded Proclus' main points about the location and function of god Eros. Love is an Intellect that is dependent upon Beauty, which shines at the level of Being. Moreover, what actually Eros does is to implant its own characteristic, i.e. desire for beauty, to the lower entities of his rank. Thus, he becomes a mediator, as Diotima would put it, between Beauty and the lower desiring entities. Among the examinations of these matters, I have raised several particular issues, such as Proclus' affinity to Plotinus, and I have also re-addressed the way that Proclus can combine the formula of

study. His succinct and enlightening remarks would be still clearer, I believe, if he had stressed eros' particular connection to Beauty, as shown in my discussion, and included, but left unexploited, in a Proclean passage cited by him in *ibid.*, p.126. This would also give another dimension to his answer to the issue of eros' absence from other Proclean writings, as was noted by Vogel [1963], pp.29, 31 and Vogel [1981], p.71 (while I do not agree with many of the distinctions she makes in *ibid.*, p.72).

providential and reversionary eros when characterizing a single entity like Eros.

2.2.3. After Eros

Now I want to address a more particular problem: not whether there are erotic entities posterior to Eros; we have seen that this is possible due to the direct or indirect participation of the former to the latter. Rather, I want to explore whether the divinity of Eros is unique in Proclus' hierarchy. In this way, I will be re-addressing the traditional problem tackled by Plotinus in his erotic treatise: whether Eros is a god or a daimon, the Plotinian solution being that the 'son', i.e. the self-fulfillment, of goddess Aphrodite is god, whereas that of the daimonic one(s) is a daimon. After all, Plotinus was trying to bring into consistency various Platonic statements about the divine or daimonic status of Eros that can be found in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*. Proclus has exactly the same concern, on the occasion though of the presence of both alternative statements within a single work, the *Alcibiades Major*.²⁶⁰ As we will see, although Proclus has a different agenda than Plotinus, there are affinities between the two.

I asserted before that as with Plotinus, so with Proclus: despite Eros' being a proper god, contra the symposiasts Socrates and Diotima,

²⁶⁰ See *Alcibiades I*,103a5 «δαιμόνιον ἐναντίωμα»; 105d5, 105e5 and 124c8: «θεός». Proclus formulates this problem explicitly in on Alc.,46,9-12 and 78,10-17, although the specific reference is to Socrates' guardian-spirit.

Love is a mediator, with the *Symposium*. In fact, it is exactly this divine feature that has set the example for the class of daimons. Proclus notes: “it [sc. the erotic series] has pre-established in itself the pattern of the whole order of spirits, possessing that intermediacy among the gods that the spirits (δαίμονες) have been allotted ‘between’ the realities of ‘gods and mortals.’”²⁶¹ Of course, the idea of daimonic mediation should be interpreted along the lines that erotic mediation was approached earlier: daimons receive bestowals by the higher gods and ‘transfer’ them to inferiors such as human souls. Ultimately, the bestowing of these properties arouses the desire in these lower entities for their divine ancestors, a process that results in the self-fulfillment of the desirers.

Fair enough; but even if we do have mediating spirits²⁶² after Eros, can we have Love after Eros? Proclus has two main points in support of the idea that we can. The first and basic one is an elaboration of the

²⁶¹ On Alc.,31,5-8 (with O’Neill’s “Corrigenda”, p.464); cf. on Alc.,67,12-13 and *Symp.*,202e1. Hence, the reason why Proclus calls Socrates both a daimonic and an erotic person; see on Alc.,63,12-64,4 and 67,9-18, esp.63,13 and 67,16.

²⁶² As Plotinus devotes a discussion on daimonology in III.5.6, so too Proclus, although the latter’s scheme is much more baroque than Plotinus’. See for example the six-fold classification given in On Alc.,71,8-72,14. I am not going to touch this general issue though. Let the reader interested in this subject be sufficed with the following references: “about the spirits in themselves [: on Alc.,68,4-70,15], further about those that have become our common guardians [: *ibid.*,71,1-78,6], and thirdly about the spirit of Socrates [*ibid.*,78,7-83,16].” (This outline is given in *ibid.*,67,19-68,1.) Within this stretch of text Proclus refers to Plotinus, critically or not. Further relevant sections from the *Alcibiades Commentary* are: 40,15-42,4; 63,12-64,4 and 67,9-18; 114,1-13; 158,3-159,10; 198,12-199,19; 281,15-282,9.

Platonic doctrine of homonymy²⁶³ within the frame of the Proclean emanationist system. He observes that “every intra-mundane god rules over some order of spirits, on which he immediately bestows his own power,... About (περὶ) each of the gods is an untold multitude of spirits, priding themselves on the same names (ἑπωυυμίας) as the gods who govern them; for they rejoice in being called ‘Apollon’ and ‘Zeus’ and ‘Hermes’ because they represent (ἀποτυπούμενοι) the peculiar characteristics of their own gods.”²⁶⁴ Thus, in our case we can have daimons each of which can be called Eros, because they partake in the rank of god Eros and, hence, they feature the erotic identity of recalling noble natures back to Beauty, albeit in a more deficient way when compared with divine Love.

Proclus’ second and ancillary point reminds us that if we can have multiple erotic daimons, there is nothing preventing us from having a vertical multiplicity of erotic gods, as well. We have seen that Eros is an Intellect; moreover, there are still levels inferior to Eros, and superior to the daimonic strata, that can be termed divine. Therefore, the entities on these levels that partake in Eros can be termed gods, too. Beyond this standard picture, though, the particular point that Proclus makes, which concerns Socrates’ guardian spirit, but can be extended to our case as well, is the following: “the (guardian) spirits of godlike souls who have chosen an intelligent and elevating life are of a certain

²⁶³ See *Phaedo*, 78d1-e5 and 102b1-2.

²⁶⁴ On Alc., 68, 16-69, 3.

godlike (θεῖοι) number superior to the whole class of spirits and participating primarily in the gods. For as there is spirit on the level of gods, so there is god on the level of spirits. But whereas in the former case the substance (ὕπαρξις) is divine and the analogy (ἀναλογία) spiritual, on the level of the spirits, the specific character is instead spiritual, and analogy indicates the divine likeness of the essential nature; for because of their superiority over the rest of the spirits, they often appear even as gods. Naturally, then, Socrates calls his own guardian spirit a god, because it was one of the foremost and highest spirits".²⁶⁵ So, Proclus' actual point relates not so much to the various godly strata, but to the clarification of what goes on in the strata near the borderline between godly and daimonic.

To understand what he suggests we need to have in mind a three-fold classification he has drawn a bit earlier in the *Commentary*. According to this distinction there are daimons a) by analogy («κατ' ἀναλογίαν»), b) by relation («κατὰ σχέσιν») and c) substantially («κατ' οὐσίαν»).²⁶⁶ A substantial daimon (c-type) is an entity properly and literally belonging to this mediating class of spirits within Proclus' hierarchy, and is defined by specific substance and activities. On the other hand, a daimon by analogy (a-type) can also be an entity which is godly in substance. Its providing for its immediately inferior entity, though, makes it analogous to the function of a substantial spirit, hence

²⁶⁵ Ibid.,79,3-12; see also ll.1-3 and 12-14. Cf. ibid.,158,3-159,10, esp.158,3-17.

²⁶⁶ See ibid.,73,18-75,1. The distinction appears within the section on guardian-spirits.

the «κατ' ἀναλογία» label. Now, a daimon by relation (b-type) can be an entity which lies inferior to daimons, e.g. a human soul like Socrates, and is so strongly related to its guardian spirit, that he acts and enjoys the unperturbed blessings of this participation as if he were a substantial daimon himself. With regards to the previous quotation, despite Proclus' double use of «analogy», he is interested in both a- and b-type cases. When he applies the spirit analogy to divine beings, he is reiterating his a-type case of daimon. But when he suggests that there are spirits (with regard to their substance) which have an analogy to the divine, he is characteristically misusing the terminology set out above. This second use of analogy picks up the b-type case ('by relation'). Still, in that case Proclus is not speaking about b-type daimons, but b-type gods. A b-type god must be a spirit whose affinity with the divine realm is so strong that it appears to be as a god when compared with other daimons. Thus, according to the passage, we can have a) by analogy daimons, qua mediators, on the level of gods, i.e. Eros; and b) also daimons who are found at the summit of the spiritual strata and are by relation gods, due to their close kinship e.g. with Eros.²⁶⁷

The conclusion of this discussion is that, unsurprisingly, Proclus can exploit various features of his Neoplatonic edifice in order to maintain both a) that there is a unique and divine entity called Eros, and b) that there is a multiplicity of entities, either godly or daimonic

²⁶⁷ See also *ibid.*,158,3-17.

and ultimately human, that can be called and are Eros, albeit in an inferior degree and by participation. Although this is not exactly what Plotinus did in *Enn.III.5*, he too was able to maintain both the divine and daimonic status of Eros. Plotinus, though, did not draw any direct line between the Eroles of the different levels. Eros owed his status to the entity to which was attached. Hence, *prima facie*, the relation of divine and daimonic Eros was indirect. Still, according to my syncretic reading, where eros is unified with his 'mother' Aphrodite, i.e. Soul, the direct dependence can be preserved: Eros becomes the expression of Undescended Soul's and World-Soul's being, both of which are directly related to each other. As so often, Proclus' system turns out to be more baroque, although the basic Neoplatonic idea is the same.

Let me finish with another affinity between the two Neoplatonists. In Plotinus' treatise there is a discussion of the individual daimonic Eroles that are attached to individual souls, and we have already seen Proclus addressing similar issues although in different ways. According to my syncretic reading again, Plotinus' individuals would fulfill their potentials in realizing themselves as Eroles. In Proclus' case I have repeatedly noted that Eros does not have the universality that we find in Plotinus.²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, in the Proclean case, too, there are entities which can be defined through their erotic function. A paradigmatic example is Socrates, who enjoys a strong bond with his

²⁶⁸ See *supra* (e.g. 2.2.1.) on Eros' particular attachment to Beauty.

daimon, which is a god by relation, and participates in the god Eros.²⁶⁹ True, I have noted Socrates' exceptionality in that he combines other non-erotic features, as well, exemplifying them at the best possible degree. But in so far as he maintains a particular connection with Eros, as is implied throughout the *Commentary*, and by extending the abovementioned Proclean theory of homonymy, we could suggest that Socrates, qua divine lover, fulfills his existence by being (called) a daimon by relation, and more specifically, (a lesser) Eros. In the end, it seems that the initial qualification of the present section was misleading: to speak of a proper erotic entity, i.e. an entity whose function is erotic, whether it features other characteristics or not, is to speak of a lesser Eros. Moreover, to assert that there are such Proclean individuals is to come close to the aforementioned Plotinian conclusion. In other words, the example of Socrates, Plato's teacher, forms a point of contact between the two Neoplatonists: should we be surprised?

2.2.4. Before Eros

Among the 'more secret doctrines about eros' Proclus states that "the intelligibles (νοητά) on account of their unutterable union have no need of the mediation of love; but where there exists both unification and separation (διάκρισις) of beings, there too love appears as

²⁶⁹ See also references in previous notes 261 and 262, e.g. on Alc.,158,20-159,10.

medium".²⁷⁰ After all, there is a separation between Beauty and what desires beauty, and we have already seen that for Proclus "the object of love is beyond love".²⁷¹ Nevertheless, if the *beloved* object is anterior to Eros, cannot this mean that we can seek for erotic traces in the intelligible hierarchy 'prior' to the actual existence of Eros? The basic presuppositions of the Proclean system allow for a positive answer. First of all, by the already invoked principle of similarity, according to which "all procession is accomplished through a likeness of the secondary to the primary",²⁷² why should we only infer that Eros is beautiful, and not that e.g. the Beautiful is erotic, as well? As to the sense in which Beauty is erotic, we may move to the second and more important Neoplatonic principle of the modes of being. I have already referred to the 'existential' and 'by participation' modes with regards to the two previous sections (2.2.1.-3). Now it is the time for the third, but most exalted, mode, the 'causal' one («κατ' αἰτίαν»). According to it "we see the product as pre-existent in the producer which is its cause (for every cause comprehends [προείληφε] its effect before its emergence, having primitively that character which the latter has by derivation [δευτέρωσ](prop.18))".²⁷³ Actually, Proclus himself makes

²⁷⁰ On Alc.,53,2-4. Cf. El.Th.,38,22-23, where Proclus notes that if mediation is needed in procession, it will be needed in reversion as well.

²⁷¹ On Alc.,51,3. See *supra*, e.g. nn.216 and 217 in ch.2.2.1.

²⁷² El.Th.29,3-4.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*,65,15-17. This proposition should be examined in conjunction with the famous prop.103, which states that "[a]ll things are in all things, but in each according to its proper nature...". Cf. also *ibid.*,56,(4-6) and prop.118 (regarding the Henads; see *infra*).

explicit reference to this principle twice regarding the generation of Eros in the *Alcibiades Commentary*. For instance, he notes that “if it [sc. Eros] ‘leapt forth’ therefrom it is causally (κατ’ αἰτίαν) established therein [sc. ἐν τῷ νοητῷ νῶ]”.²⁷⁴ For obvious reasons I was compelled to anticipate this discussion in my first section (2.2.1.), where I also tried to show how Eros’ direct and vertical relation with the Beautiful can be preserved. Thus, in what follows I will exclude references to the levels of Nous and Life, but I will not stop at the Beautiful. The «κατ’ αἰτίαν» mode of being of a characteristic cannot be confined solely to the ontological level immediately prior to the manifestation of this feature.²⁷⁵ If gods “have every [sc. attribute] in a unitary and supra-existential mode (ὑπερουσίως)”,²⁷⁶ and if ultimately the Good is the cause of everything –or everything «κατ’ αἰτίαν»-, it will be relevant to look briefly at the Good and the Henads, too. My criterion for verifying the above assumptions will be the Proclean ascription of characteristics and functions to these entities that are found in or are closely connected with Eros.

Let us start with Beauty, the object of erotic desire. As we noted earlier, Proclus connects this substantial feature of Beauty’s nature with the etymology of the word «Καλόν», which “is called ‘beautiful’ because it summons (καλεῖν) unto itself, or because it charms (κηλεῖν)

²⁷⁴ On Alc.,66,8-9. Cf. also *ibid.*,51,13-14.

²⁷⁵ See also *El.Th.*,props.56 and 57.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*,118,7. Cf. also *ibid.*,158,23. (The allusion is to Henads.)

and beguiles whatever is able to gaze upon it".²⁷⁷ At the risk of repeating myself, we need to remember that there at least two conditions enabling an entity to desire Beauty: the immediate cause of erotic desire, i.e. Eros, and the ultimate cause which is the Beautiful. In the previous sections I emphasized the former cause. Now is time for the latter. When 'calling back' the entities that are fitted for such reversion, i.e. those participating in the rank which originates from Beauty, in fact the Beautiful 'reverts' (viz. ἐπιστρέφει) these entities. In other words, it is not only Eros that "makes the secondary revert (ἐπιστρεπτικὸς) to the primary and [hence] elevates and perfects the less perfect".²⁷⁸ It is first and foremost Beauty that supplies the presuppositions to the inferior beautiful entities in order to desire their own source. I will not stress again that this is a clear instance of (undefiled) providence, and should be disconnected from anthropomorphic conceptions and downwards intentionality. On the other hand, instead of noting that within this framework Eros seems to be downgraded into the more instrumental role of just supplying further preconditions for this 'call', I will assert that Eros himself exemplifies the actual («καθ' ὑπαρξιν») return (of himself and hence of his inferiors), whose ultimate cause («αἰτία») and source is to be found

²⁷⁷ On Alc.,328,12-13. For cross-references to Greek literature that mention either etymologies, starting with *Cratylus*,416b6-d11, see Westerink's apparatus ad loc. and Segonds,p.454,nn.2 and 3 ad loc. To these add Chrysippus, *Fragmenta Moralia*, (III.)208,6 (Arnim; apud Stobaeus *Ecl.*II,105 Wachsmuth).

²⁷⁸ On Alc.,53,6-7.

in Beauty.²⁷⁹ Besides, as we saw in the beginning of the present section, “where there exists both unification and separation of beings, there too love appears as medium”.²⁸⁰

This might also be the case why in the still higher realm, where there is only unification of multiplicity, we can have entities that exemplify what Eros does, although without his intervention. More precisely, on the Platonic occasion of the connection between the just («δίκαιον») and the advantageous («συμφέρον»),²⁸¹ Proclus writes that “Socrates united the just with the good via the beautiful, since this is the medium (μέσον) and bond (σύνδεσμος) of union between them. ‘The fairest of bonds (δεσμός),’ says Timaeus ‘is that which unites as closely as possible both itself and whatever is combined with it.’²⁸² Much more, then, than any other bond, the beautiful is itself connective (συναγωγόν) and unitive (ένωτικόν) of these two, the just and the good.”²⁸³ To call specifically the Beautiful “medium” and “bond” that is “connective” of other entities amounts to repeating exactly the same ascriptions with which Proclus, following the *Symposium*, has characterized Eros earlier on in the *Commentary*.²⁸⁴ Of course, I noted before that almost all entities in Proclus’ system are in a way mediators.

²⁷⁹ Thus Beauty is both providentially and causally erotic.

²⁸⁰ On Alc.,II.3-4.

²⁸¹ Proclus’ lemma is from *Alc.I*,115a1-10.

²⁸² *Tim.*,31c1-3.

²⁸³ On Alc.,322,12-17. Cf. also *ibid.*,318,9 and 320,6-7.

²⁸⁴ See e.g. *ibid.*,53,4-5; 64,3-6 and 9-12; 67,12-13 and *supra* (e.g. ch.2.2.2.).

The explicit mentioning of Beauty in this regard and within this Commentary, though, should make us suspicious as to Proclus' motives, which must be to emphasize the bond between Beauty and Eros, and the (κατ' αἰτίαν) foreshadowing of erotic characteristics in Beauty. On the other hand, one might object that even if it is also a mediator, Beauty lacks the dynamic element I had noted above with respect to Eros. Although true, we should not forget that famously everything, including Beauty, desires the Good,²⁸⁵ hence the dynamic element is everywhere present in Proclus' system in various degrees. Secondly, to complete an earlier quotation and connect the end of this paragraph with its beginning, "the intelligibles on account of their unutterable union have no need of the mediation of love".²⁸⁶ Where there is no gap, Beauty's pre-erotic role is enough. Consequently, I hope that the above references enable us to see how Beauty's function anticipates the actual characteristics of Eros, so that we may call the former «κατ' αἰτίαν» Eros.

By means of Beauty then, let us now ascend right to the top. Around the middle of the extant Commentary the Successor asserts that "[t]he good..., if it is lawful to speak of it in this way, proceeds down to the lowest level, and illuminates all things and conserves (σώζει) them, arranges them and turns them back (ἐπιστρέφει) to

²⁸⁵ Cf. e.g. El.Th.,8,31; 12,18; 113,10-12.

²⁸⁶ On Alc.,53,2-3.

itself".²⁸⁷ Proclus is careful to remind us of the ineffability of the First Principle which is due to its absolute simplicity. Thus, the multiplicity of characteristics given should not be seen as a plurality of predicates, but as different aspects of what it is to be good from our point of view.²⁸⁸ Still, in prop.13 of the *Elements* Proclus gives a longer list: "[i]t belongs to the Good to conserve (σωστικὸν) all that exists (and it is for no other reason that all things desire it [ἔφετόν]); and... likewise that which conserves and holds together (συνεκτικὸν) the being of each several thing is unity... And... it belongs to unity to bring and keep each thing together (συναγωγόν ἐστὶ καὶ συνεκτικὸν) ,... In this way, then, the state of unification (τὸ ἡνωθῆναι) is good for all things."²⁸⁹ Combining the gist of the previous two passages we may conclude: by bestowing unity, Goodness is «συναγωγόν, συνεκτικόν» and, thus, «σωστικόν», and this amounts to making things return to it (ἐπιστρεπτικόν), i.e. desire it (ἔφετόν).²⁹⁰ Naturally, all of these attributes, which culminate in the notion of desire qua return of the desirers to the Good, are connected with Providence with which I have dealt elsewhere. What I want to do now is to recall that most of the above characteristics (in this verbal form) are used by Proclus also for

²⁸⁷ Ibid.,181,11-13.

²⁸⁸ Compare what I suggested above about the plurality of characteristics ascribed to Eros. The same can be said here.

²⁸⁹ El.Th.,13,26-29 and 32-34.

²⁹⁰ Cf. also on Alc.,317,5: «ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔφεσις σωστικὴ τῶν ἐφιμένων ἐστίν.»

Eros, and more specifically for providential eros.²⁹¹ This is not at all surprising, since I had already observed that providential eros is a species of providence. Now we have come to ascertain the same thing from a different angle: the Good is causally erotic; alternatively, Eros forms a specification of the function of the Good, since he exemplifies a particular desire (ὄρεξις), which is erotic, for an entity lower to the Good, i.e. the Beautiful. Eros implants ἔρωτα (for the Beautiful), while the Good ἔφεισιν (desire) for itself.²⁹² Moreover, regarding the desire for the Beautiful (which is ἐραστόν), I noted both the ultimate and immediate cause of it. In contrast to the Καλόν, which cannot ‘call’ its desirers back without the mediation of Eros, the Good pre-encompasses the duality of ultimate and immediate cause of desire. It is the ultimate ‘caller’ and the one that implants this desire for return. Were it not for “Faith”,²⁹³ I would propose that the duality of Beautiful-Eros exists causally in the unity of the Good, although it is not very clear to which respects Faith is analogous to Eros. Besides, to my knowledge, nowhere in his system does Proclus hypostatize «Ἐφεισις» (desire for the Good), which, unlike Faith, is the direct

²⁹¹ Apart from passages quoted above, see also *ibid.*,55,13-14: “such love is provident and preservative (σωστικός) of the beloved, able to perfect (τελειωτικός) and maintain (συνεκτικός) them”.

²⁹² Towards the end of the extant Commentary Proclus speaks of the Good as both «ἐραστόν» and «ἐφειτόν», and he notes that “love is an intense desire” (on Alc.,336,23; cf. *ibid.*,329,17-24 and 328,14-329,2). The main reason for this, however, is that on the level of soul the good, the beautiful and the just are interchangeable in contrast to the divine hierarchy (see *ibid.*,330,2-14.). Because my interest in this section is in what comes before god Eros I am not dealing with this issue at all.

²⁹³ See *supra*, ch.2.1.4.

analogue of Ἔρως, and this tells in favour of my suggestion that the pair of Beauty and Eros is foreshadowed solely in the Good. Finally, I need to remark that the Good causally exemplifies Eros only in its descending attitude, not the ascending one, although the latter is more basic in that it is the reason for the former. The reason for this, however, is that the Good is so fulfilled that its unity is the archetype of what Eros is eternally striving to do, i.e. to be completely united with its object of love. In this way, there is no ascending attitude in the Good, because the only way for it is self-concentration, the by-product of which is the providential attitude for everything that comes after it. Without surprise again, after convergence in the bottom, Proclus meets Plotinus at the top, too, since according to the Neoplatonic founder the Good is “love of himself”, the explanation and the by-product of this being exactly the same as just noted in the case of Proclus. A discrepancy would be that while Plotinus does not qualify, for Proclus it would be fair to say that the Good is eros (and καλόν) only κατ’ αἰτίαν.

Proceeding now to a more severe discontinuity with Plotinus, we can verify my previous remarks concerning the One’s causally erotic function by looking at the subsequent level of the Henads. We have descended to a level of reality which mediates between the supreme Good and Being, where the Beautiful lies and shines. Although the

exact status of the Henads is still a matter of debate,²⁹⁴ I will stick with the traditional interpretation according to which the Henads unfold the absolute unity of the One: by being separate entities-unities they bridge the gulf between the utter simplicity of the One and the multiplicity of Being. This unfolding of the Good's unity entails the original and actual manifestation of divine characteristics («ιδιότητες») each of which might be represented by various Henads, and all of which reappear in successive layers of reality (Henadic²⁹⁵ or not).²⁹⁶ There are four main groups of divine attributes each of which contains a generic and a specific form. It is in the third group that I am interested for my present purpose. It is labeled by Dodds as “conversive causes”²⁹⁷, because its two members are the “causes of all divine reversion (ἐπιστροφῆς)”.²⁹⁸ In other words, the reversive and causally erotic function of the One, which we have been talking about, is ‘initially’ and existentially («καθ’ ὑπαρξιν», or rather super-

²⁹⁴ See for instance Van Riel [forthcoming], where he makes a persuasive case for the Henads being immanent characteristics of gods at the level of Being and henceforth.

²⁹⁵ A difficult point to understand, indeed. See Dodds [1963], p.278, n. on props.151-159.

²⁹⁶ This procedure involves also “interweaving” (συμπλοκή) of characteristics. See an example with particular reference to eros within the triad faith-truth-eros in on Alc.,52,2-10.

²⁹⁷ Dodds, *ibid.* Alternatively: ‘reversive causes’.

²⁹⁸ El.Th.,153,34. For the difference between the general cause, “perfective” («τελεσιουργόν») and the specific one, “elevative” («ἀναγωγόν») see *ibid.*,158,25-29: the elevative reverts things only to their superior principles, and hence Eros must be connected primarily with it. In fact, Proclus makes the Ἔρωτες responsible for «πόθων ἀναγωγή κέντρα» in his second *Hymn*, ll.3 and 5; cf. also Dodds [1963], p.281 n. on prop.158).

essentially) manifested at the level of the Henads,²⁹⁹ and precisely its third group.³⁰⁰ If the One is causally erotic, then all the more so are the conversive causes which are closer than the One to Eros. Reverse, Love appears now more as an immediate specification of the reversive function of Henads, than of the One itself. What is more, in the *Alcibiades Commentary* Proclus explicitly connects Eros and its function with the divine attributes.

The particular way he puts things, however, might be problematic: after having mentioned several of the divine characteristics, all of which fall under three of the four aforementioned groups,³⁰¹ and while waiting for the mention of our third-‘conversive’ group, Proclus actually mentions “the whole order (τάξις) of love”, which “is for all beings the cause of reversion (ἐπιστροφή) to the divine beauty,...”.³⁰² So, is it that the “erotic order” is identified with the conversive causes? Is it another name for them? But then, is the conversive group causally or substantially erotic? We can remedy this anomaly in various ways:³⁰³ first of all, these theological enunciations appear quite early in the *Commentary*, and do not belong to the section of the “more secret doctrines” about love, where one should expect greater precision.

²⁹⁹ See also *El.Th.*158,23.

³⁰⁰ Cf. also *ibid.*,144,24-27.

³⁰¹ See on *Alc.*,30,8-14.

³⁰² *Ibid.*,ll.14-15.

³⁰³ According to the brief exposition of Riggs [2009],pp.83-85, esp. p.84, this is far from an anomaly. However, my treatment so far can allow for agreement with what he focuses on.

After all, the specific Commentary itself was the first to be taught in the late Neoplatonic Curriculum and served as an introduction addressed to students not well-versed in Platonic theology. Besides the abovementioned (in ch.2.2.2.) limitation of an ‘intellectual topography’, Proclus is not meticulous about exhaustive consistency across different works, which may have been written in different periods of his life, or even within the same work. In any case, though, it is not necessary to take that particular reference to the erotic order as interchangeable with the reversive causes, which strictly are causally erotic. A good reason for thinking this is that in the above passage Proclus does not omit to mention the end of erotic reversion, viz. the union with divine Beauty, which, as we have also seen, is situated below the Henads. Could it be that Eros reverts his posterior entities only to an entity which is below him? This untenable suggestion would lead us to many difficulties. For instance, what about the exemplification of desire in Eros? What is his own beloved object? To deny the answers I gave to these questions in the previous questions, e.g. that Eros, being an intellect is dependent on Beauty, shining at the level of Being, would unnecessarily make the edifice collapse and present Proclus as inconsistent with what he says some pages later in the Commentary. But in fact, if we take the mention of the «θεῶν ἰδιότητες»³⁰⁴ as referring to Henads, we need not assume the same for Eros.³⁰⁵ First of all, after the statement of members

³⁰⁴ On Alc.,30,8.

³⁰⁵ Actually, with van Riel’s interpretation it would not be a problem if the divine attributes were not positioned at the level of the Henads, and in this way Eros could

of the three abovementioned Henadic groups, and before stating the erotic order, Proclus adds the case of “others [viz. other divine attributes] again in charge of some other function and preserving (σώζουσαι) the universe through the communication of themselves”.³⁰⁶ This case could refer to one of the conversive causes, especially given the mention of «σωτηρία» (preservation-salvation), which we have seen explicitly connected with the reversion function of the Good. Furthermore, the whole enumeration of the divine attributes forms the first element of a comparison which is completed with the mention of Eros. Proclus writes that “[a]s (ὡσπερ) the individual natures (θεῶν ιδιότητες) of different gods have revealed themselves as differing,..., so (οὕτω) also the whole order of love is... the cause...”. He makes a comparison: referring to the functioning of the divine attributes we are assisted in understanding Eros’ own function, and this is highly reasonable if, as I expounded above, a particular group of Henadic attributes anticipates the erotic order. Finally, to the justified question why Proclus did not name any of the two conversive causes then, we might retort that, apart from my initial qualifications, the Neoplatonist might have wanted to give a pre-eminence to the topic of Eros, which is one of the principal themes of the *Alcibiades* according to his *Commentary*.

have been practically identified with them. However, I do not want to complicate the picture so much. Let us bear in mind the limitations of our human perspective noted above.

³⁰⁶ On Alc., ibid., ll. 12-14.

To conclude: having preserved the causal erotic function of the conversive divine attributes, we have verified the causal erotic aspect of the Good, which, as an object of desire, is imitated by the causally erotic Beauty, qua the immediate object of love. Thus, the off-spring of the present and the two previous sections is that despite Eros' specificity, we can still find him from the bottom to the top of Proclus' system. Such an erotic omnipresence has been enabled mainly through the exploitation of the three modes of being: «κατ' αἰτίαν, ὑπαρξιν and μέθεξιν». After all, Proclus had already prepared us: «Πάντα ἐν παῶσιν, οἰκειῶς δὲ ἐν ἐκάστῳ».³⁰⁷ Even if Plotinus' would not put things this way, I do not think that he would be disappointed with this outcome of Proclus' erotic approach.

2.2.5. Eros and Friendship

Given the omnipresence of eros from top to bottom of the Proclean system, we have so far concentrated largely on the vertical dimension of that system. Yet we should not exclude the horizontal dimension. A distinctive feature of Proclus' system is that it unfolds in both these directions.³⁰⁸ Again, as I have shown previously (ch.2.1.3.), the horizontal dimension itself is not bereft of hierarchization, since every new term in a series manifests in a more deficient way the

³⁰⁷ El.Th.103,13.

³⁰⁸ Another characteristic that must be traced back to Iamblichus.

characteristic of its predecessor. Hence we should be speaking about transverse rather than horizontal strata. Moreover, that was one of my main points when I was explaining the reasons why Proclus equates love (ἔρως) with friendship (φιλία). I will not repeat this discussion here, but simply recall an example that shows the interchangeability of the two: “since the whole order of love proceeds from the intelligible (νοητοῦ) father (‘In all things,’ as the oracles say,³⁰⁹ the father ‘has sown the fire-laden bond of love,’ in order that the whole world may be held together by the indissoluble bonds of friendship, as Plato’s *Timaeus* says)”.³¹⁰ In describing Love’s effects Proclus shifts from the word «ἔρως» in line 4 to «φιλία» in l.5. Furthermore, we should expect that if there are many kinds of attractions and relationships in the present world, their cause in the intelligible realm must be much more unified. It is no surprise that Proclus wants to unify and identify friendship with eros in the intelligible.³¹¹

The previous passage cited makes use of the characteristic of eros-friendship as “bond”, whether this is of the world or of entities at other levels, and connected to each other either vertically or transversely. I have been talking about Eros’ providential bestowal of his characteristic upon lower beings, either in vertical ranks, or transverse strata originating from the participants of the former. I

³⁰⁹ Cf. *De Oraculis Chaldaicis*, p.25 Kroll; cf. O’Neill, n.50 ad loc.

³¹⁰ On Alc., 26,2-5. Cf. Tim., 32c1-4 and 43a2. Another characteristic instance is *ibid.*, 33,8-11.

³¹¹ The ‘inspired humans’ of this world, like Socrates, preserve this unity.

proposed that in both cases, the erotic bestowal is the awakening of desire for and reversion towards the Beautiful in the lower entities that participate directly or indirectly in Eros. It might be that these lower erotic entities cannot attain to the Beautiful, which is strictly the object of Eros' desire, but each of them retains this upwards orientation. However, this image does not reveal very much about the way in which erotic entities are "bonds". One of the answers proposed was that each erotic entity imparts to a lower one the desire for erotic union with beauty; in its turn this process leads to the fulfillment of each desiring entity, with the subsequent result of a well-ordered and unified whole. Still, if the desired union is with beauty, what does this tell us about the friendly union with each other? Speaking of 'bonds', do we simply mean a mediating entity that implants desire (for union strictly with beauty), or that actually unites *one another*? The first answer to this is that the erotic desire does indeed give an entity a strong attachment to its immediately higher (and beautiful) entities, either vertically or transversely. The idea of an actual bond is thus preserved, because the continuum has no gaps. A second answer that completes the first is the following: the desire for Beauty leads to attachment to the beautiful object that each entity is able to reach.³¹² Analogously, each entity strives for the Good, but the good they end up with is their own good, i.e. their own self-fulfillment. In any case, the erotic self-fulfillment which has been caused by an attraction to

³¹² Remember the Platonic qualification "as far as possible" (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν).

Beauty, has the by-product of strong unity between adjacent beautiful entities (“the indissoluble bonds of friendship”³¹³). Consequently, these entities are erotic and friendly bonds of each other, but indirectly, because the direct aim is the union with Beauty. -Imagine a society which is well-ordered not because its citizens primarily respect their friends and enemies, but because everyone obeys the law, i.e. due to a common end. It is the direct relation to the law that results in good, friendly and fine-tuned relations.³¹⁴ In other words, erotic entities are actual bonds of friendship for one another, because they aspire for a common beloved object.³¹⁵

Let us ascend now to the friendly ontology of the «καθ’ ὑπαρξιν» level. There is a remarkable passage where Proclus engages with the problem of the identity of the «φίλιος» god stated by Socrates in *Alcibiades I*,109d7.³¹⁶ The consideration is owing to the Proclean answer to an anterior problem: “From what source then do these benefits accrue to souls, viz. friendship and unity (φιλία καὶ ἔνωσις)?”,³¹⁷ benefits exemplified in Socrates’ treatment of Alcibiades. The response lies in Socrates’ call to “the god of friendship who is their common guardian to witness his words and purpose, considering, as a man of

³¹³ On Alc.,26,4-5; cf. supra,n.310 (and n.37 in ch.2.1.2.).

³¹⁴ Like in Plato’s ideal *Republic*.

³¹⁵ The reason I put the clarification here is that the discussion of friendship as a bond between two entities reminded the tension of how to combine reversion with providence for the reversion of the others.

³¹⁶ Cf. on Alc.,231,14.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*,233,2-3.

knowledge, that union (ἔνωσις) extends to all beings from god, and, as a lover (ἐρωτικός), from the god friendship (φίλιος).³¹⁸ In other words, Proclus here verifies my first point about the interchangeability and equivalence between eros and friendship. Secondly, he reminds us of the erotic effects of the One (and the Henads), which I termed causally erotic, and to which I will return in the end of this section. Now, I want to turn to Proclus' desire to be more specific about this god of friendship, i.e. the «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» cause of friendship. While according to my treatment so far we would not hesitate to call this god Eros, Proclus' religious background confronts him with two candidates: not only a) the well-known tradition found e.g. in the *Phaedrus* which makes Eros the god of friendship, but also b) the tradition that speaks of Zeus as god of friendship.³¹⁹ As we might expect Proclus unites the two accounts: «κάλλιον δὲ συνάπτειν ἀμφοτέρους τοὺς λόγους· ἐν γὰρ τῷ Διὶ καὶ ὁ Ἔρως ἐστί.»³²⁰ Here I want to recall my first discussion of the generation of Eros qua intellectual intellect from an intelligible intellect (νοητὸς νοῦς). Proclus is actually repeating the same points put now in theological terms. He even cites the same Orphic fragment: “Counsel is first begetter and much-delighting Love,³²¹ and Love both proceeds (πρόεισι) from Zeus

³¹⁸ Ibid.,ll.4-7.

³¹⁹ See *ibid.*,7-14. Segonds' n.3,p.415 ad loc. indicates that this b-tradition is derived mainly from Platonic texts.

³²⁰ On Alc.,233,14-15: “But it is better to combine both accounts, for love is contained within Zeus,...”.

³²¹ Cf. *supra* n.237 in ch.2.2.1.

and co-exists (συνυπέστη) with Zeus among the intelligibles (νοητοῖς); for in the world above is “all-seeing Zeus’ and ‘delicate Love,’ as Orpheus says.³²² They are therefore related to, or rather united with, each other, and each of them is concerned with friendship (φίλιος).”³²³ As with my earlier discussions, Zeus’ relation to Eros is understood in terms of «κατ’αἰτίαν» and «κατ’οὐσίαν» modes of being.³²⁴ Thus, this parallel passage, occasioned by a discussion of friendship, helps us confirm the intelligible location of Eros as put forward in the first section.

But why stop at these two? Aren’t there other candidates for the role of a divine Love? Why for example not include Empedocles’ account? In fact, Proclus, imitating the generosity of his providential gods, can satisfy the Presocratic desires of his readers too. So, earlier in the Commentary he writes: “Again, true friendship is both of the gods themselves and of the classes superior to us and has also come down as far as souls that are good;... It is necessary to realize that although friendship is a thing to be revered and honoured, yet it requires a life

³²² See Westerink’s apparatus ad loc. for references.

³²³ On Alc.,233,16-234,2.

³²⁴ I.e. Zeus is κατ’αἰτίαν Eros. I do not have the space to get into details about the entity represented by Zeus in Proclus hierarchy. See also the treatment by Kirk-Raven-Schofield [1983],p.62 of a passage in Proclus, *on Tim.*,II.54,28-55,2 (Diehl), which reports the view of Φερεκύδης, and mentions Eros, Zeus, friendship and union, i.e. the principal notions of our passages. Another god who would be worth examining in conjunction is Hermes, who was ψυχαγωγός, like eros, and like Socrates according to Aristophanes, *Aves*,1555. For Hermetic references in on Alc. see 195,4-196,18; 187,19-188,6 with O’Neill,n.359 ad loc.; 258,2 with n.475(p.338); 105,2 and n.229.

that is divine (θεοπροποῦς) and intelligent (νοερᾱς); since it [sc. φιλία] subsists primarily among the gods and intelligent (νοερᾱ) life and the intelligible (νοητῶ) god of Empedocles, whom he is accustomed to term a 'sphere'."³²⁵ This passage repeats the familiar elements and adds to the previous list of Zeus and Eros the Empedoclean candidate of the φίλιος god. Exploiting the «κατ' αἰτίαν and ὑπαρξιν» formulas we can also explain how φιλία is connected with νοερᾱ life, while the god itself is also νοητός. The former corresponds to Eros on the «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» level, while the latter to Zeus' «κατ' αἰτίαν» one. The constant reference to intelligible and intellectual/intelligent layers of reality once again confirms our placing of Eros in the intelligible hierarchy, and verifies the ontological identification of Eros with Friendship.

Having exhausted the «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» level let us finish with the causal mode of erotic/friendly being. At this point we should not be surprised if the One, qua causally erotic (super-)entity was found to be the ultimate cause of friendship as well. Indeed, Proclus makes the connection explicit: "friendship is between good men of serious purpose, but among villains moral character is not in evidence; the reason is that both friendship and the good have come from the One, and from a single cause (ἀφ' ἑνός³²⁶ ἦκει καὶ μιᾶς αἰτίας). To each

³²⁵ On Alc.,113,13-15 and 17-21; cf. Empedocles, B29(Diels) with the references in Segonds,n.1,p.94 ad loc.

³²⁶ Segonds ad loc. agrees in taking this as a reference to the One. See also the more obvious case in on Alc.,38,6(ff.).

being the source of good is also the source of unity, and the source of unity is also the source of good."³²⁷ I have dealt with the Aristotelian (and Pythagorean) flavour of the passage³²⁸ elsewhere.³²⁹ Now, I only want to note how the preceding discussion has helped us to avoid attributing any inconsistency to Proclus with respect to the cause of friendship (and eros). The «κατ' αἰτίαν» formula extends up to the First principle. If Zeus-Sphere is the immediate «κατ' αἰτίαν» erotic-friendly entity, prior to the existence of Eros, the ultimate cause of Eros/Friendship is the One, as we asserted previously. As the ideal of 'unity-unification' was connected with eros, so too it can relate to friendship.³³⁰ Consequently, the present passage confirms that even the One is causally erotic and «φίλιον».

³²⁷ Ibid.,109,6-8; see also *ibid.*,ll.3-5 and the corollary in ll.8-10 which concerns Alcibiades.

³²⁸ Cf. also *ibid.*,221,16-222,2.

³²⁹ See *supra*, n.79 in ch.2.1.3.

³³⁰ Cf. also *ibid.*,274,21-24. Plotinus,V.1.9,6 connects the One with Empedocles' φιλία (to which he also refers in III.2.2.4 and IV.4.40,6; see also the analogical use for Intellect in VI.7.14,20).

CHAPTER 3

PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS AND THE *DIVINE NAMES*

As one of the first representatives of a major, albeit old, movement in Dionysian scholarship, Koch supported his view that pseudo-Dionysius¹ is more or less a plagiarizer of Proclus with a meticulous examination of parallel passages from the two authors.² One of them concerns love. It is cited for the same reason by Dodds and was used in the introduction of my chapter on Proclus:³

“So the Beautiful and the Good is desired and loved and beloved by everything; and because of it and for its sake the subordinate love the superior reversively, and the entities of the same rank [love] their peers in communion, and the superior [love] the inferior providentially, and each of these [love] themselves⁴ summarily⁵...”⁶

¹ Henceforth I will be using interchangeably the following names: pseudo-Dionysius, Dionysius, Areopagite. For a new interesting hypothesis regarding Dionysius’ pseudonymity see Stang [2012], e.g. pp.2-6. Let us bear in mind (or ear) that the name of Paul’s convert (cf. *Acts* 17:34), who became a saint, has sound similarities to the ancient Greek god of wine, Dionysus as well as Dion (Δίων), the Sicilian close friend of Plato, who, according to Nussbaum [2001], pp.228-230, lies beneath some names of the *Phaedrus*, a Platonic dialogue on love.

² A similar attitude is expressed in Koch’s contemporary, Stiglmayr [1895].

³ See n.1 in ch.2. Since then, the similarity has been also observed among others by Nygren [1953], p.579, n.2.

⁴ This last possibility, not frequently stated by Dionysius, should be interpreted along the lines of Gospel’s “love your neighbour as yourself” (cf. e.g. Mathew 19:19 and Mark 12:31 citing from *Leviticus* 19:18). Vogel [1963], p.16 refers to possible Stoic and Pythagorean connotations.

In the following sections I will attempt to address all the issues raised in this passage, i.e. I will show in which way Dionysius' system is erotic. During this voyage into Dionysius' ontology of Eros I will locate Love in the world-picture of Dionysius and also define its function, as I did in Proclus' case. Thus, I will have the opportunity to make ample comparisons with Proclus' system but also with Plotinus. Finally, I will examine some consequences of ps.-Dionysius' erotic approach within his Christian-non-Neoplatonic framework, offering some glimpses of Dionysius' Eastern reception. In my treatment I will be focusing on the *Divine Names*, because this work devotes a specific section⁷ to the revealed name of God as Eros.⁸

⁵ The not very usual Greek here is «συνεκτικῶς» and I follow the rendering of LSJ ad lem.(II), where they refer to the occurrence of the word in Proclus, on Alc.,52,7. Vogel [1963],p.12 translates “self-preservingly”.

⁶ «Πᾶσιν οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐφετὸν καὶ ἐραστὸν καὶ ἀγαπητὸν, καὶ δι' αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα καὶ τὰ ἥττω τῶν κρείττωνων ἐπιστρεπτικῶς ἐρῶσι καὶ κοινωνικῶς τὰ ὁμόστοιχα τῶν ὁμοταγῶν καὶ τὰ κρείττω τῶν ἥττωνων προνοητικῶς καὶ αὐτὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστα συνεκτικῶς,...»: Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* (henceforth: DN), §4.10, 155, 8-11 / 708A. In my system of referencing I first write the number of chapter and sub-chapter I will be referring to. Then, I give the page and line numbers of the Greek text in the standard edition of Suchla [1990]. The number and letter after the slash denotes the pagination of Migne's edition in the *Patrologia Graeca* (PG, vol.3 -reproducing B. Corderius' text), because it is followed by the standard English translation I am using, i.e. that of Luibheid-Rorem [1987] (most of the times heavily modified though).

⁷ DN, (last portions of) §4.10-§4.17 (i.e. before the long treatment of evil starts), 155,8-162,5/708A-713D.

⁸ Or «ἀγάπη» (agape/charity/love; cf. e.g. 1 John 4:8). I will not be dealing with the terminological issue. Dionysius regards the two names as interchangeable, although he prefers the name «ἔρωσ» (cf. Ignatius, *Ep.4.7.2,4* Camelot, cited in DN,4.12,157,3/709B), which 'accidentally' was the central term in the ancient Greek-pagan discussions on love. See his justification in DN,4.11-12,156,1-158,12/708C-709C,

I will first give a synopsis of the main points of my following presentation of Dionysius. There are four important stages in Dionysius' treatment. These are the harmonious effects of eros, the archetype of eros as descending power, eros as ecstasy and eros as a circular force. Each step forms an explanation of the one before it, and offers a refinement of Dionysian theory. As will be seen though, the central claim pertains to the third step.

The unifying effects of eros should not be new to a reader of Neoplatonism. We have seen that the mutual love and friendship of the entities in the cosmos make it a harmonious, beautiful and functional whole. It is noteworthy that when Dionysius discusses these relationships he does not omit to mention the love between entities of the same rank, which is an additional possibility to the instances of downwards and upwards eros, familiar to us from Proclus.⁹ The reason for this loving synthesis must be traced back to (the) Go(o)d, the efficient as well as final cause of the universe, who imbues love to His creating overflow. I will come back to these puzzling enunciations.

especially his warning (*ibid.*,4.11,156,2-3/708C), which forms a self-conscious hermeneutical principle so that we understand Dionysius' relations with various Christian and non-Christian traditions: "In my opinion, it would be unreasonable and silly to look at words rather than at the power of the meanings." I am afraid that the prejudices of Nygren [1953],pp.589-593, esp. n.1 in 589, do not let him appreciate neither the above enunciation, nor Dionysius' overall treatment. Cf. also Rist [1966],pp.236-237, 242, and Aertsen [2009],p.195. For well-balanced reasons regarding the adoption of eros-terminology by the Fathers see Βουλγαράκης [1989],pp.8-10; cf. also *ibid.*,p.11. Specifically for Dionysius see also Osborne [1994],pp.208-210.

⁹ See also a fourth possibility, rarely found even in Dionysius, *supra* in n.4.

Hence we come to the second stage: due to this love that God exhibits for the cosmos He can be named 'Eros'/'Love', or Lover. In other words the archetype of Love, which is exemplified by God in His relation to what is external to Him, is descending Eros, i.e. what the Neoplatonists can also term as Providence. But if so, then the distance from the deficiency-claim of the *Symposium* is stark. Where is eros as a desire for something one lacks? Does not the creation desire and love God? If so, how does this take place?

To these problems the third stage comes as an answer. To be more precise, what God exemplifies is not only descending Eros, but actually ecstasy, i.e. going out of Himself to give something of Himself, or even Himself to the other(s), i.e. to the cosmos. Ecstasy does not immediately imply desire (for something), which would lead us to examine the *Symposium's* abovementioned claim. It denotes the movement out of oneself, without specifying a particular reason for this movement. If so, it does not matter anymore whether the recipient of love is an entity higher or lower than the lover, i.e. whether a lover is in lack with respect to his beloved or not. Thus, God's paradigm just calls for our ecstatic response to his erotic ecstasy towards us. What I regard as the most crucial point of Dionysius' treatment is that thus eros has no specific direction (upwards or downwards). Hence, Dionysius can be more comprehensive when enumerating the various possibilities of eros I mentioned before, where he includes the strictly horizontal dimensions.

The fourth step in this ascent, the image of the circle, concludes Dionysius' picture by confirming the discussion of ecstatic eros' orientation, and this is why I suggested above that the third rather than the fourth state has prominence. The circle implies that Eros is a unique force in the universe: it starts from God and comes back to God. In this image what goes downwards is simultaneously going upwards and vice versa. The beautiful cosmos is the outcome of God's ecstasy. The sustainment of this cosmos, though, requires the loving response of the universe to God; it is God Himself that enables this erotic dialogue. Consequently, Dionysius speaks of Eros as a single force that unites the cosmos not only with respect to its parts, but also with regards to its Father. Finally, we can ascertain that for the Areopagite being is intimately connected with love; to be and to exist is to love and be erotic, i.e. ecstatic in whatever direction (whether procession or reversion).

The above brief exposition suffices to suggest that even if Eros is only a name among other divine names, Dionysius' metaphysics is essentially erotic. However, specific reasons for some of the previous claims must be traced in God's status as Trinity. What is more other of the above enunciations are verified with the Incarnation of Logos. Although neither of these issues is explicitly mentioned in Dionysius'

section on Eros, in the following pages I will try to find their traces, assess their importance and explain his silence regarding them.¹⁰

I will end this introductory section with a caveat. Although the following discussion will be most of the time abstract, without specific references to everyday life, we should not think that Dionysius' corpus is obsessed with bare metaphysics. The unifying effects of Eros in our world should also have practical and political applications.¹¹ Indeed, in one of the longest and in my opinion the most interesting and moving of Dionysian *Epistles*,¹² the Areopagite makes ample references to everyday life and specific sociopolitical structures. So, for instance, in

¹⁰ Regarding the philosophical relation between Proclus and Dionysius my discussion will show that although the latter is indebted to the former, Dionysius has enough subtle deviations from the Platonic Successor and Neoplatonism, so that we need not accuse him of plagiarism, as some scholars have done in the past. (I have already referred to the examples of Koch [1900] and Stiglmayr [1895].) Even when their language is very similar, (as is also shown in Saffrey [1982]), the underlying content of the two philosophers might be less akin. Scholarship has drawn attention to this phenomenon recently and what follows helps to confirm this interpretive trend. Most of the scholars referred to in my following notes of the chapter are more or less sympathetic to the view of Dionysius' creative and critical reception of Proclus. Cf. for instance the balanced approach of Louth [2008a],p.581 and see also Τερέζης [1986],pp.10 and 16-22, Vogel [1981],p.75, McGinn [1996],pp.(199-)200 (cf. also p.203) and Florovsky [1987],p.210; cf. also *ibid.*,pp.216-218 and 222. Stang [2012],pp.27-39 and 5 (with notes) gives a helpful literature review of modern scholarship (i.e. of the 20th century, including some decades before and after it); see also *ibid.*,pp.143-144 for his (and Chr. Schäfer's) position, which is similar to what Sorabji [1987],p.165 says about John Philoponus and Boethius of Rome. On the other hand, Rist [1999],pp.(377-)378 and 387 notes Dionysius' independence from both Neoplatonism and Christianity, due to the synthesis he offers.

¹¹ This is exactly what is successfully shown in Riggs [2009] with specific reference to the Ecclesiastical hierarchy. Cf. also Rist [1999],p.386 and Esposito Buckley [1992],pp.60-61.

¹² See Pseudo-Dionysius, *Epistle*,8:1,1-6,55 (Heil-Ritter)/1048A-1100D (PG).

the beginning¹³ we are reminded that love for God means love for our neighbours,¹⁴ even for our enemies,¹⁵ and in the end¹⁶ we see Christ being identified with those in need, whether sinners or not.¹⁷

3.1. Divine Eros and its function

The aim of this section is to show how Dionysius accommodates notions such as providential and reversive love in his system. Our guide in this enquiry will be the stipulation of the actual location and function of eros in the different levels of the Dionysian reality. The result will be that as with Proclus eros is to be found everywhere in Dionysius' universe. However, there are also subtle dissimilarities when contrasting Dionysius with Proclus and Plotinus, as we will see.

¹³ See *ibid.*, §1,19-20/1085B.

¹⁴ Many Church Fathers, like John Chrysostom, make the most out of this radical idea to be found e.g. in 1 John 4:20-21 and Matthew 25:40 (in the Parable of the Judgement); cf. Mark 3:35 and Luke 6:27-35 (on love of enemies). For the experience of the fact that 'ἀγάπη Θεοῦ=ἀγάπη ἀδελφοῦ' in contemporary saints, monks and spiritual fathers, see Παπαθανασίου [2011],n.33.

¹⁵ See also Larchet [1996].

¹⁶ See *Ep.*8.6,49-52/1100C.

¹⁷ Another early Father gives a beautiful image in order to explain how love of God entails closer bonds between people: if God is the center of the circle and we are in the other extreme of its radii, then coming close to the center we also come closer with those in the other radii. Cf. Dorotheus of Gaza, *Doctrinae diversae*, VI.78,1-25 (Préville and Regnault); the excerpt is also included in the nice anthology of Ἀγγελόπουλος [2001],(pp.105 and 110).

3.1.1. God and Eros: causally or existentially?

I begin with a bold Dionysian statement:

“And we may be so bold as to claim also that the Cause of all things loves (ἐρᾷ) all things in the superabundance of his goodness, that because of this goodness he makes all things, brings all things to perfection, holds all things together, returns all things. Divine Eros is the Good of the Good and for the sake of the Good.”¹⁸

In the chapter on Proclus we ascertained that divine eros, the entity attached to Beauty, and the erotic rank in general had the same characteristics as those expressed in the above passage, such as the attribute of returning other things toward the divine. So too with respect to Beauty itself, a specific group of Henads (the “conversive” causes) and the Good. In my exposition I stressed that the plural existence of eros in different ontological levels is explained with the aid of prop.65 of the *Elements of Theology*. The mode of ‘existential (καθ’ ὑπαρξιν) subsistence’ is preceded by the ‘causal’ (κατ’ αἰτίαν) mode. Eros is existentially erotic, whereas the principles above him are causally erotic. However, not even in this manner does Proclus ever affirm that the Good itself actually *loves* what lies beneath it. Hence, this is the first important differentiation between Proclus and ps.-Dionysius. For the latter the First Principle is a καθ’ ὑπαρξιν lover of

¹⁸ DN,4.10,155,14-20/708A-B. The last sentence is taken from the translation of McGinn [1991],p.167, as indicated in Papanikolaou [2006],p.126 and n.13 in p.135. In McGinn [1996],p.210 (and n.36) the last “and” is omitted following closely the Greek, which however has twice “and” in the beginning of the sentence that have been left untranslated.

the creation. The distance from Plotinus is also clear enough, since, despite the existence of providence, as we saw, the Neoplatonic founder had used erotic language to describe at best the ‘relation’ of the One with its own self.

For a more precise view of what it means for the First principle to love the creation the following passage is indicative:

“What is signified [sc. by the divine name ‘Eros’] is a capacity to effect a unity, an alliance, and a particular commingling in the Beautiful and the Good. It is a capacity which preexists through the Beautiful and the Good. It is dealt out from the Beautiful and the Good through the Beautiful and the Good. It binds the things of the same order in a mutually regarding union. It moves the superior to provide for the subordinate, and it stirs the subordinate in a return toward the superior.”¹⁹

The characteristics of implanting unity and harmony in the universe, as well as bringing each level of reality into communion are familiar to us from Proclus. Nonetheless, although the Good and Eros

¹⁹ DN,4.12,158,13-18/709D. Especially regarding the last three lines (:16-18) there are many other parallel passages in the DN itself: see 4.2,144,18-145,2/696A-B (although here the reference is particularly to the angels); 4.7,152,16-19/704B-(C); 4.10,155,8-11/708A (cited in the opening of my chapter); 4.13,159,1-3/712A; 4.15,161,2-5/713B (supposedly from Hierotheus). It should be noted that the first two references describe the effects of God as goodness (which we will see is identified with love; hence also n.160 in Luibheid-Rorem,p.83 with general parallel references in the Dionysian corpus about providence/procession and return/reversion. Cf. also *ibid.*,p.79,n.149, Rorem [1993],pp.151 and 169, and see Schäfer [2006], comparing Dionysius and Proclus on the basis of the triad *μονή-πρόοδος-ἐπιστροφή*). Finally, DN,7.3,198,16-20/872B and 12.4,226,1-5/972B are more loosely connected with our main passage in that they denote the unity of the cosmos due to God’s Wisdom and the first entities, i.e. first images of God, in the Dionysian hierarchies, respectively, but not in the aforementioned detailed manner.

shared similar features in Proclus, God's effects in the world were not deemed as instances of love, but rather of goodness, i.e. providence. Finally, the reader can find another presentation of the loving effects of God-Eros in our world, but in a lengthier and more elaborate manner, in the not thoroughly explored chapters of the *Divine Names* where Dionysius examines God as "Peace" («Εἰρήνη»²⁰).

Now I want to draw our attention to a reasonable question. An objector might justifiably claim that Dionysius' language is not consistent in all places. There are passages where Dionysius seems to be advocating that eros subsists causally at the level of God, not existentially. For example, few lines after the first passage cited Dionysius states that "[t]hat yearning (ἔρωσ) which creates all the goodness of the world preexisted (προϋπάρχων) superabundantly in the Good".²¹ But the fact that Dionysius employs the «κατ'αίτιαν» and

²⁰ See *ibid.*,11.1-5:217,5-221,12/948D-953B. Hence, "Peace", and its subsequent «ἡσυχία» ("tranquility"; cf. *ibid.*,11.1,218,7/949A), appears as an alternative name for "Eros" (and ἀγάπη). Another frequent term used in that section is «όμόνοια» (*passim*), while friendship («φιλία», unhelpfully rendered as "yoke" by Luibheid-Rorem *ad loc.*) is used once (*ibid.*,11.2,219,17/952A, in a context similar to those of Proclus; for «φιλία» see also *infra*, n.19 in ch.3.2.). In other words, DN,§§11,1-5, which is very close to the final section of the book, forms an enlightening complement to the section on Eros in DN,§§4.10-17. This is observed by Louth [1989],pp.95-96, too, who adds as another "twin" divine name that of "Power" (DN,§§8.1-6).

²¹ DN,4.10,155,17-18/708B. (NB the word «ἀγαθοεργός», since the contracted form «ἀγαθουργός», although absent from Plotinus, is used many times by Proclus for the Henads and the divine principles in general; e.g. in *on Alc.*,61,4 it characterizes Eros.) Cf. DN,4.12,158,13-15/709D («...προϋφεστώσης...»); *ibid.*,4.13,159,18-20/712B («...προϊδρυνται...»); *ibid.*,4.14,160,9-10/712C («...προοῦσαν...»).

the «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» formulas even together²² might make things worse, because it implies that he is confused as to their distinction. Nevertheless, this is an uncharitable reading. In what follows I will show why and will suggest a more adequate approach.

Reading his penultimate *Epistle* we can ascertain that Dionysius is very well aware of *Elements'* prop.65.²³ At one point he writes that the “image of fire takes on different meanings, depending on whether it refers to the God who transcends all conceptions, to the providential activities or reasons of God, or indeed to the angels themselves. In one instance one thinks under the heading of ‘cause,’ (κατ' αἰτίαν) in another under the heading of ‘subsistence,’ (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) in a third instance under the heading of ‘participation,’ (κατὰ μέθεξις)...”.²⁴ Not only do we see here Dionysius' knowledge of the *Elements*, but this passage is also helpful for understanding how he connects this threefold distinction with his own system, which is more frugal and synoptic than Proclus', and even Plotinus' one,²⁵ consisting of two

²² Cf. also *ibid.*,5.4,183,5/817D: «ὅλον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ εἶναι συνειληφῶς καὶ προειληφῶς.» In *ibid.*,7.2,196,18-20/896B Dionysius combines the two verbs into one: «[sc. the divine mind] ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ κατ' αἰτίαν τὴν πάντων εἶδησιν καὶ γνῶσιν καὶ οὐσίαν προέχει καὶ προσυνείληφεν» (of itself and in itself it precontains and comprehends the awareness and understanding and being of everything in terms of their cause).

²³ This is also observed by Dodds [1963] in his note ad loc.,p.236.

²⁴ *Ep.*9.2,18-22/1108D.

²⁵ Whereas in Plotinus there are three divine principles in Dionysius there is only one (since the Three Hypostases are consubstantial). NB that the notion of Dionysian hierarchy (a word coined by ps.-Dionysius) applies only to the created beings. God is outside the hierarchy because the latter's existence is owed to the varied relation that

'elements': God and the creation. So, starting from bottom, the mode of being 'by participation' refers to the angels as first members of the created order.²⁶ The other two modes apply to God, but not in the same respect. The 'causal' mode refers to God in Himself, without external relations, since he transcends the reality of created things, while the 'existential' mode of being characterizes God's providential activities that bring him in relation with the creation.²⁷ As for erotic providential activities, we should understand them in light of the

each of its members has with God. Cf. Perl [2013],pp.24-25 and 29, 32, and see the Dionysian definition in his *Celestial Hierarchy* (CH),3.1,17,3-5 (Heil-Ritter)/164D (PG) with the comments ad loc. by Louth [2010],pp.9-10. See also his broader as well as convincing approach in Louth [1989],pp.105-110 and 132-134, with various Dionysian and bibliographical references in Luibheid-Rorem [1987],pp.197-198,n.11.

²⁶ I am explaining the passage cited above. That the specific image of fire is used only for angels, not for say humans, does not exclude the possibility that the 'participation' mode applies to every other created order below the angels.

²⁷ By 'providential activities' («νοηταὶ πρόνοιαὶ ἢ λόγοι») we should not understand an intermediate level of Being between God and angels. See Dionysius' unusually fervent polemic contra polytheism (hence against pagan Neoplatonism, too) in DN,11.6,222,3-13/953C-D; cf. Σιάσος [1984],pp.123-124 and Louth [1989],pp.86-87. Of course, whether this makes the Areopagite immediately a Palamite (i.e. follower of Saint Gregory Palamas) avant la lettre is another problem: when speaking of these providential activities do we mean 'uncreated energies' (with Palamas) or created ones (with Barlaam and Aquinas)? On the other hand, this issue stirs the further question as to what the substantial difference between Proclus (cf. the Henads) and Palamas (cf. God's uncreated energies) is. (Cf. e.g. Hankey [2009],p.125.) Perhaps both problems cannot be solved with the sole aid of philosophy... For instance, regarding the first question, the motivator in Tollefsen [2012], e.g. p.2, is that Palamas is quite traditional in his hesychastic distinctions, whereas Meyendorff (e.g. in his introduction to Gendle [1983],p.21, but see also p.13) is critical of this view, advocating Palamas' modified reception of the Areopagite. See also Louth [2008b],p.585 (with the notes in p.598). With regards to the second debate, despite its title and the enlightening treatment of the encounter between Christianity and Ancient Greek culture-philosophy in other Church Fathers, Μπέγζος [2000] does not deal with Dionysius at all.

passages cited before: they are the unifying and harmonious effects of God in the world, because they bring the cosmos into communion with God. If so, the question now becomes: what does it mean for God to be eros in himself, or eros beyond any conception, or eros causally? Eros is a relational term which denotes the relationship of God and the cosmos. If we want to transcend any reference to the cosmic level, what would it mean to say that God is Eros in a causal manner?

When treating Proclus on this issue it was the unifying effects of the One that led us to speak of it as causally erotic. However, we saw that Dionysius is more radical in his demand, in that he does not consider external relations at the causal level. Perhaps, then, Dionysius wants to guide us to something closer to the Plotinian One which, as we saw, is love of itself? The answer is yes and no. If we were dealing with other Church Fathers like the Cappadocian Gregory the Theologian²⁸ and the Medieval Richard of St Victor,²⁹ or with contemporary philosophers and theologians such as Χρῆστος

²⁸ See e.g. Gregory Nazianzenus, «Λ'. Ὕμνος πρὸς Θεόν», from *Carmina Dogmatica*, 509,10-510,4(PG).

²⁹ In his *De Trinitate*, III, e.g. §§4,6,14 and 19. Cf. Ware [2013], pp.26-33 (with notes), where he also mentions and criticizes Aquinas' unjust Aristotelian criticism of Victor in this respect (ibid., pp.33-36 with n.21). Dionysius was one of the greatest authorities for Aquinas, who had written a commentary on the DN. Aertsen [2009], pp.198ff. compares the two philosophers only in terms of the "Doppelgestalt" of love, as he calls it: while we have seen (supra in n.8) that for Dionysius eros and agape are interchangeable, due to the Latin tradition and translations, the relation of the two terms acquires a new character in Aquinas, who imports a four-fold distinction: amor-dilectio-amicitia-caritas (cf. also Aertsen, p.203). McGinn [1996], pp.205ff. gives a broader comparison of Aquinas and Dionysius on love.

Γιανναροῦς³⁰ and Metropolitan Ιωάννης Ζηζιούλας,³¹ the key to our quibbles would undeniably be Trinitarian theology. God is love of himself, but not by being simply alone or just simple, like the Neoplatonic One, but because he is the loving relation between three Hypostases/Persons³² which are consubstantial (i.e. share the same substance/nature). The mystery of Christian Trinity reveals God not only as personal (as e.g. in Judaism and Islam), but also as inter-personal.³³ Without mentioning external relations with created beings, it is the internal relations of the three Divine Persons that show us why

³⁰ The most notable work in this respect is Yannaras [2007]. However, the fundamentals of his approach are already present in Yannaras [2005]. In this book, under the influence of Vladimir Lossky (see e.g. Lossky [1976], esp. ch.2:pp.23-43), Yannaras proposes that Dionysius' unknowability of God is the Eastern Orthodox alternative to the Western absence of God found in Heidegger and Nietzsche. Nihilism is avoided in Dionysius, because his God is Love, i.e. Trinity, and hence comes into loving contact with the creation, via his uncreated energies (where Yannaras employs Palamas' understanding of Dionysius. See esp. the final ch.:pp.99-110). Regarding the (creative) 'distortions' of Lossky's enterprise and its relation to the Western understandings of Dionysius as well as developments in 20th century's Roman-catholic theology see Coakley [2013], esp. pp.127-136 and 140-141. For a brief presentation of most of Yannaras' translated books in English (including the ones mentioned) see Louth [2009], esp. pp.332 and 335-338. Finally, a (perhaps unnecessarily too) critical presentation of Lossky's and Yannaras' enterprise with respect to Dionysius is given in Gavriluk [2008], pp.712-716 and 720.

³¹ See e.g. Zizioulas [1985]. For a brief introduction to the philosophical and personalist theologians just mentioned, i.e. Lossky, Yannaras and Zizioulas see Papanikolaou [2008].

³² Although the latter term is not used (in this technical sense) by Dionysius, as is duly acknowledged by Wear-Dillon [2007], p.44.

³³ For a succinct and lucid presentation of the Orthodox Christian understanding of the Trinity, with many scriptural, liturgical and patristic citations, see the corresponding chapter in Ware [1995], pp.27-42.

God is Love, dialogical and an eternal self-giving.³⁴ Moreover, they explain why, because of this loving overabundance, God is then Love when seen from the point of view of his communion with the creation.³⁵ In other words, God as Eros καθ' ὑπαρξιν is explained by the fact that God is Eros κατ' αἰτίαν, i.e. because he is a Trinity. This Christian radical innovation against the ancient background³⁶ is also

³⁴ Hence, I resist here one of Augustine's Neoplatonizing understandings of the Trinity, where the Holy Spirit, qua the relation of the Father with the Son, is their mutual Love. See e.g. *De Trinitate*, VIII.X.14; cf. also Ware [2013], p.25, n.13 and Coffey [1990], pp.194-201, who makes connections with the issue of "Filioque" and criticizes Augustine (ibid., p.201) for providing insufficient scriptural grounding. For all its Western origin, one can trace this idea also in late Byzantium, presumably via the Greek translation of *De Trinitate* by Μάξιμος Πλανούδης (accomplished in ca.1280-'81). See e.g. Gregory Palamas, *Capita physica, theologica, moralia et practica* CL, §36, 11-15 and relevant bibliography with Sinkewicz's orthodox Christian retort in Γιαγκάζογλου [1992], pp.21-22, n.19. What is more, in a personal exchange I had with fr Andrew Louth (at Senate House on 12 June 2012) he suggested that Palamas wants rather to stress the presence of the Spirit in the Church, as the Love between God and the Church. (See also Palamas, ibid., 36, 28-31.)

³⁵ Even the creation itself is explained on the basis of God's Love, (cf. DN, 4.10, 155, 17-20/708B and see Osborne [1994], pp.194-195 and Esposito Buckley [1992], p.55), whence the differentiation from the lack of envy in Plato's Demiurge. Compare also Wear-Dillon [2007], pp.52, 54 and 70-71 and Rist [1966], p.240.

³⁶ Wear-Dillon [2007], p.34 argue convincingly that Dionysius picks up Porphyry's 'heretical' interpretation of the *Parmenides*, whereby both the first two Hypotheses are attributed to the One. (Cf. ibid., pp.33 and 47.) In particular, the second Hypothesis allows for the connection of multiplicity with unity. Despite Porphyry's prominence, whose influence on Dionysius is detailed in ibid., pp.45-48, they conclude that with regard to the Trinity "Dionysius reproduces the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers, as well as the Platonic concept of the unity of the intelligibles" (esp. Being-Life-Intellect), a claim that is fleshed out in the main body of this illuminating chapter (pp.37-48). A virtue of this reading is that it explains why the processions referred to *infra* in n.52 are used in contexts about both the Trinity (internal multiplicity) and the creation (external to the Godhead multiplicity), while it parallels my discussion of how the 'causal' and the 'existential' mode refer to God. I am more resistant to accepting, though, that the Cappadocians, being influential to Dionysius, were eagerly copying Porphyry's trinitarian understanding (see ibid., pp.34 and 132).

revealed in the relational names that the Persons have, e.g. Father (of a Son)³⁷ and Son (of a Father).

Nonetheless, things unfortunately are not that clear in the case of the Areopagite. To be sure, the Trinity is not absent from his writings,³⁸ but it does not play the central role that it plays in other Church Fathers and it is not, at least evidently, employed in his section on Eros. What is more, to my knowledge, not a single time does Dionysius explicitly connect Trinity, i.e. the relations of the Persons, with Love. Hence, father Florovsky notes that “Dionysius speaks briefly and fleetingly of the Trinitarian dogma”.³⁹ However, we need to do justice to the Areopagite. In the second chapter of the *Divine Names* he makes some distinctions concerning the a) “unified” and the b) “differentiated

³⁷ Rather ironically, such an example about the relationality of Eros is already given in Socrates’ interchange with Agathon in the *Symposium*,199d1-8.

³⁸ See for example the opening prayer of *The Mystical Theology* (MT),141,2 (Heil-Ritter)/997A (PG). From DN see e.g. §1.4,112,7-113,12/589D-592B; §1.5,116,7-10/593B; §2: passim; §11.5,221,8-10 (although in Migne’s edition: PG,953A-B there is no reference to the Spirit); §13.3,229,6-10/980D-981A. Let me add that the language of ‘consubstantiality’ («ὁμοούσιον») used before, employed by Fathers like Athanasius the Great and the Cappadocians and included in the Nicene Creed, is not used by Dionysius, and reasonably so, if he would like to pretend that he writes in the Apostolic times. So, in DN,1.5,116,9/593B Dionysius indicates ‘consubstantiality’ with the adjectives «ὁμόθεος» (“possessing the same divinity”) and «ὁμοάγαθος» (“possessing the same goodness”) Trinity. On the other hand, this is not the case regarding the advanced Neoplatonic language he uses which is well ahead the Apostolic/middle-Platonic era. Finally, Loudovikos [2002],p.11 notes that, in contrast to Maximus the Confessor, the notion of consubstantiality is absent from Dionysius’ ecclesiology, too.

³⁹ Florovsky [1987],p.220. Cf. Florovsky [1933],p.109, cited (in English from Russian) by J. Pelikan in his introduction to Berthold [1985],p.7 (and n.27 in p.13). Cf. also Pelikan’s introduction in Luibheid-Rorem [1987],p.19 (and n.38) and Armstrong [1982],p.221 (with the references though in n.19, p.292).

theologies” (words of God or divine names). The names related to ‘divine unity’ express the transcendence of God, i.e. attempt to describe him without relation to his creation (e.g. ‘Ineffable’), whereas ‘divine differentiation’ includes the names that have to do with God’s relationship with the cosmic order (e.g. Eros). Each of these categories is divided into two sub-categories on the basis of the applicability to the persons of the Trinity. That is: i) ‘unity’ in each of these categories means that the corresponding divine names refer to the entire Godhead (e.g. a: beyond Being; b: Light). On the other hand, ii) ‘differentiation’ means that in each of the two categories there are also names that apply only to one or some of the Persons of the Trinity (a: Son; b: incarnated Logos).⁴⁰ Moreover, in the end of this methodological chapter, Dionysius announces the scope of his present work (DN) which pertains to subcategory (b-ii), i.e. the unified names related to divine differentiation.⁴¹ In other words, Dionysius tells us that he is interested only in the names that reveal a particular relation between (the entire) God and the cosmos. If we recall our previous discussion of Eros with respect to prop.65 of the *Elements*, this means that Dionysius is interested in the «καθ’ ὅπαρξις» mode of Eros’ existence, i.e. the one that exemplifies God’s relation with the cosmos, not the

⁴⁰ For the sake of clarity I have inverted Dionysius’ order of exposition. For (i) and (ii) see DN,2.3:125,13-126,2/640B-C. Louth [1989],p.89 notes that this distinction is familiar from the Cappadocians. For (a) and (b) and their interweaving with (i) and (ii) see *ibid.*,2.4-6:126,3-130,13/640D-644D. See also a very helpful table with these distinctions in Σιάσος [1984],pp.115-116.

⁴¹ See DN,2.11,137,8-13/652A.

'causal' mode. Therefore, it is because Dionysius limits the scope of his treatment that there is no elaborate presentation of the Trinity, and hence, presumably, no connection of Trinity with love either. It is true that in this way Dionysius' enterprise becomes more easily accessible by a Jew or a Muslim, and perhaps more frustrating for a Christian. Nonetheless, we should definitely not complain for the absence of something that the author has warned us that he is not going to deal with.

This might not be, however, the end of the story. As an answer to Florovsky's sort of complaint Σιάσοϋ wants to remain fully faithful to the details of ps-Dionysius' enunciations.⁴² In the same chapter (DN,2) the Areopagite writes that issues concerning the Trinity, as well as the Incarnation, (i.e. unified and differentiated names of unified theology: a-i and a-ii, plus differentiated names of differentiated theology: b-ii) have been dealt in another book, the *Theological Representations*.⁴³ The problem is that the existence of this book is seriously disputed since no manuscript of it exists, nor do other ancient authors cite passages from it.⁴⁴ Σιάσοϋ is convinced of its existence because it makes perfect sense within the program that Dionysius has set out with the unified and

⁴² See Σιάσοϋ [1984], p.117.

⁴³ Cf. DN,2,7,130,14-131,1/644D-645A.

⁴⁴ See also Rorem's nn.3 and 10 on DN,§1 in Luibheid-Rorem [1987], pp.49 and 52.

differentiated theologies, as well as the structure of the *Mystical Theology*.⁴⁵

Whether we follow Σιάσοσ' line, or we contend ourselves with thinking that the Areopagite urges us to do the work that he is not doing in his (extant) corpus, I would rather focus on Trinitarian clues which could be found in passages that do exist. The last Dionysian sub-chapter on Eros in DN, before the Areopagite supposedly quotes three further subchapters on Love from his teacher Hierotheus, is a very vexed one. It speaks of a sort of erotic universality to which I will return (in ch.3.1.2.). What I want to do now is to highlight some phrases relevant for our purposes. Dionysius writes that God "stirs and moves himself through himself"⁴⁶ by "revealing himself via himself"⁴⁷ and being "the good procession of [his own] transcendent unity".⁴⁸ As I said the context is unclear and one can wonder: is here Dionysius speaking about the Trinitarian God, where the Father begets the Son and proceeds the Spirit, thus revealing Deity as Trinity, or are we dealing with the providential activities of the Deity which result in the creation and sustainment of the cosmos? Despite the interpretive difficulties, the context of the whole chapter on Eros, as well as hints

⁴⁵ Cf. Σιάσοσ, pp.117-118. On the brief recapitulation of Dionysius' program in MT, but outside Σιάσοσ' argument, see n.17 in Luibheid-Rorem, p.140.

⁴⁶ DN,4.14,160,4-5/712C: «...ἢ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἑαυτῶ ἐστι προαγωγικός καὶ κινητικός.»

⁴⁷ Ibid.,160,8/712C: «...ὥσπερ ἔκφανσιν ὄντα ἑαυτοῦ δι' ἑαυτοῦ.»

⁴⁸ Ibid.,160,8-9/712C: «...τῆς ἐξηρημένης ἐνώσεως ἀγαθὴν πρόοδον...». There are many parallel phrases in this dense subchapter.

like the word “beings” («τοις οὔσι»)⁴⁹ few lines after the above enunciations reassure us that Dionysius has in mind the relation of God and the cosmos. Still, our dilemma was quite reasonable. In fact, there are places where Dionysius is employing almost identical phrases that apply very clearly to the Trinity. For instance, in the already mentioned methodological chapter 2 of DN, the Areopagite notes that with reference to the Trinity “divine differentiation applies to the goodlike processions of the divine unity, overflowing and multiplying [itself] due to goodness in a super-unified way”.⁵⁰ Taking for granted that the author must have been aware of these verbal similarities, while he makes clear that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not creatures,⁵¹ I propose that in this way he might be giving more hints to the reader in order to connect the Trinity with Love. If, that is, the term “procession” can be used both for the internal relations of the Trinity and the external relations of God,⁵² then we can constantly have in

⁴⁹ Ibid.,160,10.

⁵⁰ Ibid.,2.5,128,15-17/641D-644A: «...θεία διάκρισις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγαθοπρεπῆς πρόοδος τῆς ἐνώσεως τῆς θείας ὑπερῆνωμένως ἑαυτὴν ἀγαθότητι πληθουούσης τε καὶ πολλαπλασιαζούσης...».

⁵¹ Dionysius e.g. speaks of “theogony” («θεογονίας»; cf. Hesiod’s work with this title) in *ibid.*,128,10/641D; see also the whole passage: *ibid.*,128,10-13 and cf. Wear-Dillon [2007],p.36. Whether Dionysius is its most faithful exponent or not, the Christian dialectic of Uncreated (ἄκτιστον: a word absent from the Corpus Areopagiticum) and created (κτιστόν: appearing through Dionysius’ quotations of Paul), characteristic of e.g. Athanasius the Great, seems to be absent from (pagan) Neoplatonism.

⁵² «Πρόοδος» refers to the internal relations of the Trinity also in: *ibid.*,2.11,135,14/649B, while at the very same chapter the instances of 136,5/649B and 137,9/652A refer clearly to God’s activities with respect to creation (although the noun «δημιουργία» is not used in DN). To the latter camp belong also the «οὔσιοποιός

mind that Love might be underlying Dionysius' statements about the Trinity in chapter 2, while the Trinity might be a helpful model in order to understand God's external relations, too, in the chapter on Eros.⁵³ What is more, the insistence on this bond between Trinity and Love helps us solve another puzzle. Whereas in passages we have seen Dionysius identifies God with Eros, in other ones he states that Eros is *in* God.⁵⁴ Of course, he does not suggest that Eros is a sort of independent principle within Deity. Our treatment so far can give a neat answer: the 'in' formula applies first and foremost to the internal relations of the Trinity, i.e. to the 'causal' mode,⁵⁵ which explains why God can be said to be Eros both with respect to himself (cf. again causally) and with respect to the creation (cf. existentially).⁵⁶

Hence, so far I have shown that Trinity does play a role in Dionysius' system, albeit perhaps not the central one, and that «κατ'αίτιαν» eros can be taken as a hint to the Trinity. Nevertheless,

πρόοδος» of *ibid.*, 5.1, 180, 12-13/816B and 5.9, 188, 18/825A and the πρόοδος (both in singular and in plural) of: 5.2, 181, 18/816D; 9.5, 211, 4 and 12/913A and B; 9.9, 213, 14 and 17/916C. See also Terezis [2012].

⁵³ See also *supra*, n.21.

⁵⁴ Cf. DN, 4.12, 158, 14/709D and: 4.10, 155, 17-18/708B; 4.13, 159, 19/712B and 4.14, 160, 10/712C, where the 'in' formula is combined with the 'causal' one (cf. «προῦπάρχων», «προἰδρυται», «προοῦσαν»).

⁵⁵ Hence that Eros is in God does not mean that God simply has Eros, but He is Eros Himself.

⁵⁶ It will have become evident by now that Dionysius' 'causal' mode of being and love is to be disconnected from God's "causaliter" love as it features in Aquinas (cf. McGinn [1996], p.207, n.51), and which is the origin of love by participation, to be treated *infra* in ch.3.1.2.

we need to take also into account that the Areopagite, like all great Platonic philosophers (Plato, Plotinus, Proclus) does not rigidly stick to a technical vocabulary. My above treatment has shown that Dionysius was aware of Proclus' proposition 65, but still he adapted it to fit in his own Christian scheme. Still, this is not the only adaptation of this proposition to be found in the *Divine Names*. At one point within the long section on evil Dionysius notes that "[e]vil is not to be found in the angels either. For if the goodlike angel brings tidings of the divine goodness, he is by participation, i.e. in a secondary manner, that [sc. which he is announcing, and which exists] causally, i.e. in a primary manner."⁵⁷ A strict Proclean would not endorse the loose Proclean language Dionysius is using here. First of all, here we have a binary relation of a thing participating (cf. δευτέρως: angel) and another one which is participated (cf. πρώτως: God). We should expect that the participation (cf. κατὰ μέθεξιν) is of an entity that exemplifies the characteristic which is participated. But instead of calling this characteristic as existing «καθ' ὑπαρξιν», the Areopagite states that it is «κατ' αἰτίαν», i.e. at another stage further above. This is not to suggest that in Proclus' system an entity whose characteristic exists «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» does not participate in an entity having this characteristic 'causally'. However, participation strictly speaking is of an attribute which is exemplified by (i.e. exists καθ' ὑπαρξιν in) the

⁵⁷ «Ἄλλ' οὔτε ἐν ἀγγέλοις ἐστὶ τὸ κακόν. Εἰ γὰρ ἐξαγγέλλει τὴν ἀγαθότητα τὴν θεϊαν ὁ ἀγαθοειδὴς ἄγγελος ἐκεῖνο ὦν κατὰ μέθεξιν δευτέρως, ὅπερ κατ' αἰτίαν τὸ ἀγγελλόμενον πρώτως, ...»: DN,4.22,169,20-22/724B.

entity participated. Again, a participated entity is a cause of the thing participating, but this is different from saying that a characteristic exists causally in an entity. If the characteristic is not exemplified (καθ'ὑπαρξιν) in the participating entity, then its progenitor is not deemed as a proper cause of this very characteristic.⁵⁸ Furthermore, if someone claimed that actually Dionysius is interested in the (indirect) relation between an entity existing «κατ'αίτιαν» and another one existing «κατὰ μετοχήν», then the Dionysian language still falls short of the Proclean standards, because he should have said that the thing «κατὰ μετοχήν» exemplifies its characteristic in a “tertiary” manner (‘τρίτως’), following the trinitarian distinction of prop.65 of the *Elements*.

What does all this show us? First of all, it shows that Dionysius is not a dull and unimaginative follower of Proclus, uninterested in the latter’s meticulous classifications. Rather, Dionysius is very flexible in using Proclean schemes and adapting them in his Christian context, according to the purposes of his particular treatments. In our case, he reduces Proclus’ triadic distinction into a simpler binary one.⁵⁹ Already in my previous treatment we saw that the ‘causal’ and the ‘existential’

⁵⁸ See the helpful table by Dodds [1963], p.232.

⁵⁹ The Christian tendency not only for triads but also for pairs and dual formulas is revealed in the case of the unmediated relation between God and the cosmos. But this should not be so foreign for a Neoplatonist too: apart from the subscription to the ten Pythagorean pairs, all Neoplatonists, including Iamblichus and his incontinence regarding medium terms, contrasted the one with the many (see e.g. Proclus, *El.Th.*, prop.1 and the first Pythagorean pair).

mode applied to God (with respect to himself and to creation), whereas the ‘participatory’ one to creation (starting with the angels). The same rationale applies to this current instance although the Areopagite omits to mention the verbal formula «καθ’ ὑπαρξιν». Still, we know from the above elaborations that God is not only causally Eros but also ‘existentially’. Dionysius implies that to be the first cause and to exemplify a characteristic are one and the same thing.⁶⁰ Therefore, for him to be erotic is tantamount to being the cause of eros directly, i.e. being eros causally (apart from existentially).⁶¹

An analogous pattern of thought is exhibited when Dionysius speaks of the names «κάλλος» (beauty) and «καλόν» (beautiful).⁶² He mentions that the first is used with regard to the cause of the beautiful (the participated⁶³ entity), whereas the second with regard to beautiful participants. Nonetheless, he does not refrain from calling God, who is identified with Beauty, as Beautiful, too, i.e. as exemplifying beauty, albeit in an unprecedented manner, hence Dionysius adds also the

⁶⁰ Hence, we return to a Platonism that is characterized by ‘self-predication’. Cf. also Osborne [1994], pp.192-193, although I disagree with some of the claims she makes on this occasion.

⁶¹ This is brought out lucidly in the following phrase from DN,2.8,133,3-4/645D: “the caused things preexist more fully and more truly in the causes (περισσῶς καὶ οὐσιωδῶς προένεστι τὰ τῶν αἰτιατῶν τοῖς αἰτίοις)”.

⁶² See *ibid.*,4.7,151,2-17/701C-704A.

⁶³ Cf. *ibid.*,4.7,151,3 and 5/701C. Dionysius’ term for the Proclean participle «μετεχόμενον» is the noun «μετοχή».

usual prefix of “super-“: God is «ὑπέροκαλος».⁶⁴ Hence, we can conclude that the conjunction of something exemplifying a characteristic and being the cause of it means that this characteristic is exemplified καθ’ ὑπαρξιν, but in an ultra-cosmic manner,⁶⁵ following God’s Trinitarian super-existence.⁶⁶ Now, the reason that there is no ‘super-eros’ formula⁶⁷ might be that eros is not only a relational term,⁶⁸ but also a symmetrical one. As we will shortly see, God’s love for cosmos implies the corresponding love of cosmos for God. Thus, since we are speaking about one single phenomenon, it would be better to stay with the name “eros” without further designations. However, the linguistic fact does not negate the thought that Eros is exemplified in God’s super-being (both with respect to Trinity and in relation to the

⁶⁴ Cf. *ibid.*,151,11/701D, in the neutral form, where the adjective «πάγκαλον» is used, too. Dionysius also employs the etymology we found in Proclus, *on Alc.*,328,12, (cf. *supra*, n.277 in ch.2.1.4.), and which is ultimately derived from the *Cratylus*,416b6-d11, in DN,4.7,151,9-10/701C-D: «καὶ ὡς πάντα πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καλοῦν, ὅθεν καὶ κάλλος λέγεται».

⁶⁵ Cf. also *ibid.*,11.6:221,18-22/953C and 222,13-15/(953D-)956A.

⁶⁶ In *ibid.*,4.7,151,16 and 18/704A (for God –cf. *ibid.*,152,4- and creation respectively) another feminine noun is introduced: «καλλονή».

⁶⁷ As also with the name “Light” etc. Of course, none of Dionysius’ ‘super’-formulas is idiomatic Greek, and to my knowledge there is no antecedent in Classical or Neoplatonic literature of the composite name ‘super-eros’. For other exceptions see «ὑπερουράνιος» in Plato, *Phaedrus*,247c3; «ὑπεράγαθον» and «ὑπέροκαλος» in Plotinus, *Enn.*,VI.9.6,40 and I.8.2,8 respectively (cf. «ὑπέροκαλον» in V.8.8,21 and VI.7.33,20); «ὑπερκόσμιος» in Proclus’ *Republic Commentary*,vol.2:257,23 (one of many entries in TLG’s search). See also Wear-Dillon [2007],p.11.

⁶⁸ See also the explanation with regards to God’s name «ὁ ὦν» (from *Exodus*,3:14, instead of «ὁ ὑπερών») in DN,5.5,184,2-7/820B.

creation). In other words, in order to understand eros we need to search for God (and the other way round).

So, so far I have shown that Dionysius' is flexible in using Proclean notions in order to fit them in his more modest ontological scheme. Now, to go a step further, it is this simpler scheme that enables Dionysius to identify providence with love,⁶⁹ something that forms another deviation from Proclus. In Proclus we had underscored that with respect to descending eros, providential love was only a species of providence, determined by its recipients which were beautiful entities. Moreover we had asserted the correspondence of providence with goodness and of love with beauty, because Beauty stood lower to the Good, which was at the top of the metaphysical pyramid. It is no wonder, then, that the frugal Christian metaphysics of One (i.e. consubstantial) God led Dionysius to call him Good and Beautiful (ἀγαθὸν καὶ καλόν).⁷⁰ There does not exist anymore a hierarchy of

⁶⁹ Compare the results of God's providence and of His love in DN,4.7,152,12-153,1/704B-C, (esp.152,16-18 and 19-20) and *ibid.*,4.10,155,8-11/708A (partly cited in the chapter's beginning) respectively.

⁷⁰ Cf. e.g. *ibid.*,4.7,152,6-9/704B, which provides a short explanation for Dionysius' identification, and Vogel [1963],p.11 with nn.1-2.. The formula of «καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός» (or in the inverse order) reappears quite frequently in this sub-chapter (§4.7), as well as §§4.10 and 12, and brings to our mind the ancient Greek «πολίτης» (citizen), whose Athenian ideal was to become «καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός» (although Dionysius does not use the contraction-«κρᾶσις» of «καί» with «ἀγαθός»). Reasonable enough, since although both Aristotle and Dionysius would agree that man is "by nature a political animal" (cf. Aristotle, *Politics*,I.2,1253a2-3), for –I hope– Dionysius contra Aristotle (cf. *ibid.*,1253a27-29 and 3-4) God is not solitary (because He is Trinitarian)... Finally, there might be also resonances with Plotinus, *Enn.*,I.6, where although the main thesis is, with Proclus, that the Good is higher than the Beautiful (e.g. §9,37-39) and is its source (§9,41-42), in the vacillating final words of

principles such as beauty and goodness, hence love ceases to have a more limited scope than providence.⁷¹ To love is to be providential and vice versa.

Continuing on these lines of Dionysius' divergences from Proclus, we may observe that although in the latter's case Eros was an entity attached to and desiring Beauty, while Beauty was only causally erotic, Dionysius contracts not only the Good and the Beautiful but also Eros with them. If strictly speaking Proclean Eros exemplified the ascending love and desire, while it had downwards love as a by-product due to providence, now the unqualified archetype of Love is the descending one. Trinitarian God exemplifies Eros for the creation, which is none other than descending Eros. We can see how from Plotinus' emphasis on Eros' deficiency, Proclus' bond with providential eros has enabled Dionysius to pick this notion up in order to express a perhaps similar, but in many respects distinctive Christian vision of reality. It might be that in his 'contractions'⁷² of various terms (goodness, beauty, eros) the Areopagite may be coming close to my interpretation of Plotinus, who wants us to contract Eros with the entity that bears it, i.e. Soul or Nous. Nonetheless, in Dionysius the

the treatise (§9,39-40 and 42-43) he leaves open the possibility that the Good could be identified with the Beautiful. See Καλλιγᾶς' surprise ad loc. and his tentative explanation in Καλλιγᾶς [1998],pp.132-133.

⁷¹ Drawing on the Proclean principle that the higher an entity the deeper its effects. See El.Th.,prop.57. (Thus, in a discussion I had with Jan Opsomer he spoke of Proclus' 'onion'-image of reality.)

⁷² See supra in ch.1.1.3. on the issue of erotic «συναίρεσις» in Plotinus, *Enn.*,III.5.

contraction does not take place in lower strata, but at the very top, the Go(o)d. Moreover, because of the identification of providence with love the Areopagite does not stay at Plotinus' Good which loves only itself, but he proceeds to ascribe to God an active love (not only providence) for what exists outside him.⁷³

There remains a last issue before going to examine eros in beings other than God. For the Platonic background of Proclus it was obvious that Eros would be a mediator. However, now with Dionysius we see that there is no mediation anymore. Eros has been identified with the outer extreme which itself erotically provides for the cosmos. Does Dionysius deviate also from this Platonic background? The answer is no; Proclus and Dionysius are here close enough. When elaborating on the location of Eros in Proclus' system I emphasized that strictly speaking Eros is a bond, i.e. a mediator, in that it bestows the erotic desire on the rest of reality in order that it attain to the intelligible realm. In this sense this is also what Dionysius' erotic God does. He himself is the very bond between Him and the cosmos.⁷⁴

⁷³ NB the Trinitarian grounding noted above and contrast also Proclus, *on Alc.*,53,2-3: «τὰ μὲν οὖν νοητὰ διὰ τὴν ἀφραστον ἔνωσιν οὐ δεῖται τῆς ἐρωτικῆς μεσότητος.» (“Now the intelligibles on account of their unutterable union have no need of the mediation of love”).

⁷⁴ One might propose that Christ is the proper mediator between humanity and God. But although He exemplifies the bond of humanity and divinity, representing Him as a mediating entity is not helpful. Rather Christ encompasses everything. More on Dionysius' Christ infra in ch.3.2. A more apt case is that of Παναγία (Holy Mary), the Mother of God, who according to the hymnography is a «μεσίτρια». Dionysius without addressing this issue and without even mentioning her name seems to be

To recap, in this section I have shown the mode of existence of Eros at the level of God as well as the “synairesis” of the latter with the former, and I tried to explain how the causal mode of eros’ existence relates to the existential one. To this end I referred to the Trinity, which forms a major differentiation between Christianity and Neoplatonism and I underlined various others divergences of Dionysius from Proclus and Plotinus, many of which relate to Dionysius’ simpler and more synoptic ontological scheme. Now it is time to go downwards.

3.1.2. After God: Eros by participation

When trying to locate Eros in Proclus’ system I posed the question whether below proper divine Eros there are other erotic divine entities. Exploiting Proclus’ emanationist metaphysics we saw how this was the case using again the third-“participatory” mode of *Elements*, prop.65. In Dionysian reality, however, there is no vertical or horizontal polytheism, so there are obviously no divinities regarding their essence below God-Eros, although each being is go(o)d-like to the extent that it can participate in God.⁷⁵

Still, now we are facing another problem: according to Greek philosophers and Christians alike the cosmos desires and loves God.

referring to her dormition in DN,3,2,141,6ff./681Cff. Cf. also n.130 in *Luibheid-Rorem*,p.70.

⁷⁵ For this common Neoplatonic principle see e.g. DN,2,6,129,14-15/644B.

But whether we express the cosmos' dependence upon God as God's bringing creation into being after His image,⁷⁶ or as creation's participation in God's providential processions,⁷⁷ we have just seen that the archetype and source of these participated properties is providential/downwards love. How, then, to account for the existence of reversive love? In other words if love at the level of God is disconnected from the 'deficiency' claim which the *Symposium* bequeathed to the Neoplatonists, how can we explain the very fact of reversive love? There seem to be two options here: either we should distinguish between desire and love, admitting that created beings desire but do not love God, or we should introduce a new kind of love, the reversive/upwards one, which is disconnected from the providential one and characterizes created beings. The first option is easily denied taking into account Dionysian passages we have already quoted, where it is plain that creation does love God. My task now is to show why and how reversive love is not separated from providential love.

⁷⁶ According to the famous enunciation of *Genesis*, 1:26-27, man was made after the "image and likeness" of God. Dionysius in DN,9.6,211,19-20/913C applies this formula not only to mankind, but to everything that has demiurgically 'proceeded' from God. So, for instance, the half of the formula, i.e. the image of God, is ascribed to angels in DN,4.22,169,22-170,1/724B. (I cannot locate with certainty the other allusion to the abovementioned passage of *Genesis* indicated by the Index of Luibheid-Rorem [1987],p.294a to be CH,15.3,53/329C42, although language of similarity is present there. Due to this language the context of the passage first referred to in this note clearly reminds the reader of the Platonic *Parmenides'* first part.)

⁷⁷ On the complementarity of the two alternatives see DN,9.6,211,18-19/913C.

When speaking of divine love Dionysius adds another important section which starts as follows: “Divine eros⁷⁸ is ecstatic, not allowing the lovers to belong to themselves but to the beloveds. This is shown in the providence lavished by the superior on the subordinate. It is shown in the regard for one another demonstrated by those of the same rank. And it is shown by the subordinates in their divine return toward what is higher.”⁷⁹ Again we witness the unifying effects of Eros in the realm of being. What is new here is that the reciprocal relations of the various entities are expressed in terms not only of love, but also of «ἔκστασις» (ecstasy).⁸⁰ To love means to be ecstatic, i.e. to get outside one’s self in order to meet and unite with the other. Most importantly, the direction of love, whether ascending or descending, does not matter anymore. This is inferred by the fact that Dionysius is speaking

⁷⁸ Luibheid-Rorem have “[t]his divine yearning”, in their usual habit of not rendering «ἔρωσ» as love or plainly ‘eros’ (cf. Luibheid-Rorem,p.80,n.150). Although for this reason I prefer the rendering “[l]ove for God” found in Ware [1995],p.25, I believe that preserving the form of Dionysius’ cryptic enunciations (adjective and noun here: «θεῖος ἔρωσ», as Luibheid-Rorem do) is more efficient. So, in this case does Dionysius mean God (the divine eros par excellence) or the cosmos? Both as we shall see, and as is indicated from the preceding and following passages, are at stake, but because the source is God I would like to emphasize this aspect. (Hence “love of God” might have been better than “love for God”, where the genitive “of God” can be either objective or subjective). See also Osborne [1994],pp.28ff., who discerns a third interpretive possibility, too.

⁷⁹ DN,4.13,158,19-160,3/712A. Cf. also the parallel references given ad loc. in nn.156 and 160 by Luibheid-Rorem,pp.82-83.

⁸⁰ On this important notion see the old study of Völker [1958], who despite the old trend emphasizes Dionysius’ antecedents in previous Patristic literature, e.g. Gregory of Nyssa. Yannaras, presumably following Lossky [1974],p.120, connects the Dionysian ecstasy with Heidegger’s etymology of existence as “Ek-sistenz”. (Cf. Yannaras [2005],pp.106-107, speaking in p.106 of the “ecstatic existence of God”; cf. also *ibid.*,p.131,n.16 and n.18, where the reference to Heidegger’s relevant work.)

about “divine eros”. Owing to the context, even if he does not mean exclusively God, we have already seen that the paradigm of divine eros is the divinity itself.⁸¹ We casted this archetype as providential love before, but the harmony of the universe shows the reality of both ascending/reversive and descending/providential love. Hence, «ἔκστασις»⁸² acquires the role of unifying these two concepts. How does it do this?

Dionysius goes on to substantiate his claim first by giving a salient example from the created realm (‘upwards ecstasy’). This is Paul, who wrote that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”.⁸³

⁸¹ See/exploit also the use of «θεῖος ἔρωσ» in DN,4.10,155,16-17/708B.

⁸² Dionysius’ treatment of ἔκστασις gives solid Patristic background to fr Loudovikos’ criticism of Yannaras and Zizioulas regarding the connection of nature with necessity. It is a different thing to say that a nature or a being is ecstatic (as Dionysius does in our passage), and different to speak of a being’s “ecstasy from (or ‘for’ its) nature” as these two important contemporary personalist thinkers seem to do. See Loudovikos [2011], passim, e.g. p.686, who centers his discussion around Maximus the Confessor and shows the latter’s relevance to contemporary anthropological problems; for the ongoing debate see Loudovikos [2013]. Finally, as an example of Dionysius’ having no problem with (a being’s) nature see DN,4.26,173,14-15/728C.

⁸³ Galatians,2:20, cited in DN,4.13,159,5-6/712A: «“Ζῶ ἐγώ”, φησίν, “οὐκ ἔτι, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός”.» See the whole passage *ibid.*,159,3-8/712A. For a parallel instance of ecstasy, that of Hierotheus, see *ibid.*,3.2,141,11-12/681D, and for an admonition to do so via apophaticism see *ibid.*,7.1,194,12-15/865D-868/A. *Ibid.*,7.4,199,13-16/872D-873A is an interesting passage in which the first instance of «ἐξεσθηκώς» (perfect participle of «ἐξίσταμαι») has a negative sense, while the second instance in the next line has the positive meaning, as it happens with the words «μανία-μαινόμενος» in Proclus, *on Alc.* (see *supra*, n.186 in ch.2.1.5.), taking its lead from the famous classifications of the *Phaedrus*. (Incidentally, «μαινόμενος» in the negative sense appears in the last line of the Dionysian passage referred to.) Finally, while the ecstasy of MT,142,9-11/997B-1000A and DN,13.3,230,1-3/981B has the positive sense, it is indirectly connected with God-directedness, and directly related to ecstasy from those that put

Then Dionysius comes to the Uncreated love ('downwards ecstasy'), which "is also carried outside of himself in the providential care he has for everything. He is, as it were, beguiled by goodness, by love, and by eros and is enticed away from his transcendent dwelling place and comes to abide within all things, and he does so by virtue of his supernatural and ecstatic capacity to remain, nevertheless, within himself".⁸⁴ In both cases there is an interchangeability between lover and beloved. As soon as the loving "ecstasy" takes place the roles cannot be distinguished anymore.⁸⁵ One of the originalities of Dionysius here is that, to my knowledge, nowhere does downwards ecstasy feature in Plotinus or even in Proclus.⁸⁶ Hence, when connecting the archetype of 'providential love' with ecstasy, whereas the traditional Neoplatonic motive saw ecstasy as ascending,⁸⁷ Dionysius must not have been interested in the direction of love or

obstacles to the being's relationship and union with God. In any case, Rist [1999],pp.385-386 argues against Rorem that this instance, too, should be connected with eros, despite the absence of the word in MT.

⁸⁴ DN,4.13,159,10-14/712A-B: «...δι' ὑπερβολὴν τῆς ἐρωτικῆς ἀγαθότητος ἔξω ἑαυτοῦ γίνεται ταῖς εἰς τὰ ὄντα πάντα προνοίαις καὶ οἷον ἀγαθότητι καὶ ἀγαπήσει καὶ ἔρωτι θέλγεται καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὑπὲρ πάντα καὶ πάντων ἐξηρημένου πρὸς τὸ ἐν πᾶσι κατάγεται κατ' ἐκστατικὴν ὑπερούσιον δύναμιν ἀνεκφοίτητον ἑαυτοῦ.»

⁸⁵ This is my qualification to the informative n.266 of Luibheid-Rorem,p.130.

⁸⁶ Cf. also Rist [1966],p.239-240, Louth [1989],p.95, Aertsen [2009],p.196 and Esposito Buckley [1992],pp.39 and 56. As I indicated before (in ch.3.1.1.), the reason for this should be traced in the Trinity.

⁸⁷ See e.g. Plotinus, *Enn.*,VI.9.11,22-25, esp.l.23. For this reason Aquinas seems to be missing the point once again, since he holds that ecstasy cannot be really ascribed to God except by metaphor; cf. McGinn [1996],pp.206 and 209.

ecstasy,⁸⁸ but just in the love and union with another, whether inferior or superior in Neoplatonic/Dionysian terms.⁸⁹ In other words, Dionysian providential love becomes the paradigm of ecstasy which does not have determinate (upwards or downwards) direction. As soon as there is something other, love forces us to unite with it,⁹⁰ hence the exhaustive possibilities that Dionysius gives above: providential/descending, reversive/ascending and love between entities of the same rank.⁹¹ It is in this sense that Heraclitus' dictum acquires a new relevance with Dionysius: "The way up and the way down are one and the same".⁹²

If someone pressed us to explain reversive love the ultimate answer would be that it is rooted in the beings' natural response to the loving and ecstatic call that God has already proposed to them.⁹³ In

⁸⁸ This is not exactly what Wear-Dillon [2007] say in pp.122-123, but compare *ibid.*, pp.128-129. It is strange that, given the aims of their book, in these contexts of loving ecstasy Wear-Dillon contrast Dionysius only to Plotinus without mentioning Proclus.

⁸⁹ Contrast Perl [2007], pp.45-46.

⁹⁰ This is consonant with what Osborne [1994], esp. pp.77-79 and 80 says about love being itself a motivation with reference to Gregory of Nyssa and Origen; cf. also *ibid.*, p.219.

⁹¹ This is a possibility that we do not find formulated in Neoplatonic texts we have approached so far. Rist [1966], p.241 connects it primarily with the love between the persons of the Trinity and derivatively with the love for one's neighbours.

⁹² Heraclitus, B60 DK: «ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡστὴ.»

⁹³ Cf. 1 John 4:19: «Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτόν [i.e. God], ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς.» In Photius, *Fragmenta in epistulam ad Romanos* (in *catenis*), 493,34 (in Staab [1933]; cf. also Ζωγραφίδης [2009], p.19a) the formula has become: «ὅτι αὐτὸς ἡμῶν ἠγάσθη πρῶτος.» Cf. an analogous scheme about knowledge in Paul's Galatians 4:9.

other words, in a paradoxical way the archetype of reversive love is again the providential one.⁹⁴ But we should not forget that it is this reversive love, i.e. participation in God⁹⁵ as far as possible, that imbues an entity with divine love, with the subsequent harmonious result of the entity's ecstatic love in every possible direction,⁹⁶ both in the vertical axis, i.e. upwards (not only to God, but to the neighbouring entities, too) as well as downwards, and in a horizontal fashion.⁹⁷

Exactly due to this Heraclitean annihilation of the importance of direction, and to the gratification of a reader of Aristotle's *Physics*, VIII, Dionysius will pass beyond the linear representation of downwards and upwards eros to speak of a cycle. This move might not be surprising against the Neoplatonic background,⁹⁸ but it is not explicitly

For Maximus' elaborations on the Dionysian theme of love as ecstasy see Loudovikos [2010], pp.172-177.

⁹⁴ Thus, it is in this not quite Neoplatonic sense that we should understand the Neoplatonic similarity-principle expressed in the following enunciation of DN,9.6,211,18-19/913C: «Καὶ ἔστιν ἡ τῆς θείας ὁμοιότητος δύναμις ἢ τὰ παραγόμενα πάντα πρὸς τὸ αἴτιον ἐπιστρέφουσα.» ("It is the power of the divine similarity which returns everything toward the cause.")

⁹⁵ More accurately in God's providential activities (which are uncreated according to Palamas).

⁹⁶ See also Ράμφος [1999], p.159, who stresses the freedom of man's loving response to the divine call. Cf. *ibid.*, pp.160 and 167. (This erudite work belongs to Ράμφος' previous, "Neo-orthodox" phase of his writing career.) Cf. also Manos [1995], p.58.

⁹⁷ Cf. also Μάνοϋς [2006], p.67.

⁹⁸ See e.g. Perl [2007], pp.35, 37-40; cf. also *ibid.*, pp.41, 47-48 and 112. Especially with respect to Proclus see Vogel [1963], p.28 with n.1 and Gersh [1973], pp.124-125 and 127 (responding in a slightly oversimplified manner to Nygren). Cf. also Florovsky [1987], pp.214-215 (although he refers to other characteristics of the image of the circle, too).

stated with regard to love in Plotinus or Proclus either. Dionysius makes this move in ch.4.14, which, as I have already noted (in ch.3.1.1.), is a quite dense and obscure chapter. The specific problem it tries to address is why “theologians sometimes refer to God as Eros and Love⁹⁹ and sometimes as the object of love and the Beloved”.¹⁰⁰ After my exposition the answer is easy: in so far as God is ecstatic, i.e. an efficient cause, He is called Love, whereas qua final cause,¹⁰¹ i.e. the ultimate aim of the creation’s ecstasy He is called the Beloved. In order to see however how he introduces the idea of the cycle, I will turn to the much briefer ch.4.17, which is supposed to be the last quotation from Hierotheus:¹⁰²

“Come, let us gather all these [sc. instances of eros: on God’s and on cosmos’ behalf]¹⁰³ once more together into a unity and let us say that there is a simple self-moving power directing all things to mingle as one, that it starts out from the Good, reaches down to the lowliest of the beings, returns (ἀνακυκλοῦσα) then in due order through all the stages back to the Good, and thus turns (ἀνελιττομένη) from itself

⁹⁹ As with my n.63 (in ch.3.1.1.) on Dionysius’ term «μετοχή» instead of «μετεχόμενον», so too here Dionysius avoids the active participle «ἐρώων» and «ἀγαπῶν» for the respective nouns «ἔρως» and «ἀγάπη».

¹⁰⁰ DN,4.14,160,1-2/712C. Remember and compare the *Symposium’s* Socrates who transformed his beloveds into his lovers.

¹⁰¹ Cf. also Niarchos [1995],p.107.

¹⁰² It is an irony that Dionysius’ work serves as the unfolding of Hierotheus’ condensed teaching. Cf. DN,3.2,140,6-16, esp. ll.6-10.

¹⁰³ See *ibid.*, §§4:15 and 16.

and through itself and upon itself and towards itself in an everlasting circle."¹⁰⁴

Dionysius here speaks of the existence of a single erotic force in universe that goes forth and comes back eternally. It is true that there is a pantheistic, not to say Hegelian, flavour in the passage.¹⁰⁵ Still, apart from the dangers lurking in anachronistic readings, there are Dionysian passages which extol the gap between the ineffable first cause and its effects¹⁰⁶ and thus can acquit Dionysius from pantheism.¹⁰⁷ Hence, if the passage is seen under the light of our present discussion, what the Areopagite wants to make clear is the universality of eros as a single force that moves the universe into communion with its originator and Father. In this circular scheme¹⁰⁸ as

¹⁰⁴ DN,4.17,162,1-5/713D. ['Circle' in the translation is derived from the context.]

¹⁰⁵ Still, modern jargon speaks of the distinct notion of "pantheism", various sorts of which are detected in the Neoplatonic and the Christian structures of reality. See Culp [2013] and the contributions in Clayton-Peacocke [2004], which include Orthodox Christian perspectives on the issue, too.

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. the discussion in DN,11.6, esp.223,4-14/956A-B.

¹⁰⁷ For further bibliography on the question see Rorem [1993],p.177,n.11. Cf. also Perl [2007],p.33.

¹⁰⁸ Movement/motion should not be conceived rigidly and exclusively as locomotion, as with the Peripatetic tradition (cf. e.g. *EE*,II.6.5,1222b29). Dionysius examines the kinds of motion that pertain to divine minds (i.e. angels) in DN,4.8,153,4-9/704D-705A. The threefold (dialectical) scheme here is circular motion, straight and finally spiral. The three stages should be conceived as working not successively, but contemporaneously at different levels. The case of soul is examined in the next chapter, *ibid.*,4.9,153,10-154,6/705A-B. Here, whereas circular motion is the starting point, the two next stages are inverted: first comes spiral and in the end straight motion. The consecutive *ch. ibid.*,4.10 speaks of God as the goal and enabler of all these motions, while He is "beyond every rest and motion" (*ibid.*,4,10,154,9-10/705C). Still, beside this Platonic or Aristotelian picture of the ineffable First Principle, God also comes into communion with creation, hence in *ibid.*,9.9,213,15-20/916C-D

soon as love is downwards, i.e. it is directed towards the creation (God as Lover/Love), it is already coming back to God and forms the loving response of the creation in the natural course of God's loving providence (God as Beloved).¹⁰⁹ The ideal of love as union (but not confusion) pushes Dionysius to go beyond the already mentioned identification of the «κατ'αίτιαν» and «καθ'ὑπαρξιν» modes of existence, and to propose the ultimate kinship of the first two modes with the «κατά μετοχήν» one. If this claim be put in the non-pantheistic framework set out before, the result is that as with Proclus and Plotinus eros acquires an omnipresence in Dionysius' system. Yet, whereas in Proclus I was austere in the designations of causal, existential and participatory levels of love's existence, now eros is always construed in the way Proclus describes as existential. For example, we saw that Dionysius is ready to ascribe Eros to the First

Dionysius returns to complete and specify the topic. Now, circular motion is put at the end stage which is preceded by the straight and the spiral motion. NB that the final and the starting point in a cycle are the same. More specifically, straight motion refers to God's generation of the cosmos, whereas spiral motion to the cosmos' providential sustainment by God. Finally, "the circular movement has to do with his sameness, to the grip he has on the middle range as well as on the outer edges of order, so that all things are one and all things that have gone forth from him may return to him once again." (: Ibid.,9.9,213,18-20/916D.) In other words, circular movement here refers to Eros, as treated in my main text. (Wear-Dillon [2007],p.30 examine the Neoplatonic antecedents of the above-mentioned types of motion. See also *ibid.*,pp.55-56.)

¹⁰⁹ Hence, one can claim that although the cycle implies a unique force, the hierarchy is not affected; the earth for instance has a North and a South Pole. However, this thought forgets the presence of Christ who is both God and man, while the North Pole will never meet the South... More on this *infra* (in ch.3.2.), but see also the compelling account of Louth [1989],p.108, without invoking, at least explicitly, Christ at this point.

principle, while Proclus avoided it. What is more, in the end Dionysius went on almost to identify God's eros for the creation with creation's eros for God, i.e. the 'existential' and 'participatory' mode of eros, while in the Platonic Successor the participatory level falls short of the existential one.

Before I end I need to add a last note as a counterpoint to the identification of beauty with goodness and of providence with (descending) love in the previous section. Our examination so far shows that if we want to abstract creation's ascending response to God from the universal erotic scheme, desire and (reversive) love are identified. In Proclus we had seen that eros is related to beauty, whereas desire is attached to the Good. It is very reasonable that since in Dionysius Good and Beauty are the same, then desire and (reversive) love are identified because they have the same intentional object.¹¹⁰ Moreover, we have seen that although descending and ascending the name Eros/Love was unique. Dionysius' extraordinary image of eros as a unique circular force gives the non-Neoplatonic possibility to identify providence with desire, or at least see both of them as aspects of exactly the same movement: Eros.

To conclude, let me give a brief overview of what we achieved in this section. My main focus was the «κατὰ μετοχήν»/'participatory' mode of love's existence. I began addressing the problem of how to

¹¹⁰ Cf. e.g. DN,4.10,155,8/708A: «Πᾶσιν οὖν ἔστι τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἕφετον καὶ ἔραστὸν καὶ ἀγαπητόν, ...».

account for creation's reversionary love given the divine paradigm of providential love. The solution involved referring to the notion of «ἔκστασις», main characteristic of which is a lack of interest as to whether the direction is upwards or downwards. If for Neoplatonism there is a strong connection between being, love and ecstasy, especially for Dionysius to be is to love, i.e. being ecstatic in whatever direction. Consequently, although at the 'causal' and 'existential' level divine love acts as providential, at the level of participation eros expresses itself both as providential and reversionary because both of these are possible instances of ἔκστασις within the hierarchy of beings. The lack of dissection or dichotomy with respect to Eros' function led us to the idea of a single circular erotic force in the universe expressed in ch.4.14 and synoptically put in ch.4.17, which forms a testimony to the unifying effects of love that can bridge the gap between the transcendent God and its progeny. A final result of this treatment is that eros acquires an omnipresence in Dionysius' universe. Although we had met this idea in other Neoplatonists too, in Dionysius it receives a more emphatic and existential, i.e. «καθ' ὑπαρξιν» tone.

3.2. The Christianization of Eros?

In my treatment of ecstasy I left out that Dionysius concludes that section by calling God «ζηλωτής» (zealous),¹¹¹ i.e. a manic lover, of His beloved cosmos. We have seen that this manic love is expressed within the unending erotic dialogue of this pair of lovers. But what is its ultimate expression? The short answer is Christ's incarnation: the Uncreated God not only created the cosmos, but finally assumed in Himself the created nature of His beloved. Thus, in this last section I will examine some consequences of Dionysius' teaching on love, and especially how the person of Christ relates to Dionysius' erotic theory.¹¹² In this context I will also attempt a comparison with Proclus' counterpoint to Christ, the Platonic Socrates. Again we will see that despite the similarities there are cardinal differences, particularly with regards to the meaning of "undefiled providence".

The status of Dionysian Christology is much as with his Trinitarian theology: it exists, but it is not developed.¹¹³ Moreover, explicit

¹¹¹ Not envious («φθονερός») of course. See *ibid.*,4.13,159,14-18/712B. For the scriptural basis see e.g. *Exodus*,20:5 and 30:14 with further references in the upper apparatus of Suchla [1990],ad loc.

¹¹² Hence my disagreement with Perl's [2007] methodology enunciated in p.2.

¹¹³ The most extensive and enlightening Dionysian reference to Christ in DN forms another supposed quotation from Dionysius' «καθηγεμών», Hierotheus' *Θεολογικαὶ Στοιχειώσεις* (a title suspiciously similar with Proclus' *Elements*), and figures as ch.§2.10. In its first part Hierotheus/Dionysius exclaim Christ's divinity (DN,134,7-135,1/648C-648D), while incarnation and the paradoxical conjunction of full divinity and full humanity are extolled in the second part (*ibid.*,135,2-9/648D-649A). See also Hainthaler [1997] and cf. Louth [2008a],p.582,n.7, p.580, Armstrong [1982],n.20 in p.292 (with some reservations in p.221) and Esposito

reference to Christ is absent from Dionysius' section on Eros. Fr Meyendorff writes that "[u]ndoubtedly, Dionysius... mentions the name of Jesus Christ and professes his belief in the incarnation, but the structure of his system is perfectly independent of his profession of faith."¹¹⁴ While I believe that here Meyendorff is right and we had better look at other Fathers, like Maximus the Confessor,¹¹⁵ if we

Buckley [1992],pp.58-59. Hence, I agree with Riggs [2009],p.76 (see also *ibid.*,pp.77 and 96) and Stang [2012],p.14 (with n.7) in not assuming that Dionysius was a monophysite, as Wear-Dillon [2007],pp.4-6, 49-50, 131 and 133, do. (Cf. also Pelikan's thesis in the introduction to Luibheid-Rorem [1987],pp.13-17). Regarding the «θεανδρική ἐνέργεια» of Ep.,4.(1),19/1072C, which has been taken to suggest "monenergism" (cf. e.g. Pelikan in *op.cit.*,pp.19-21 and Wear-Dillon, pp.5-6 and 133), although Maximus the Confessor, the champion of Christ's double activity and will, did not do so, (cf. the commentators' perplexity noted by Rorem [1993],pp.9-11), Louth [1989],p.14 speaks of Dionysius' "Cyrilline way of speaking of the incarnation".

¹¹⁴ Meyendorff [1969],p.81; cf. citation by Pelikan in the introduction to Berthold [1985],p.7 (and n.28 in p.13). Cf. also Florovsky [1987],p.225, (but contrast *ibid.*,p.226). So, for instance, when in the penultimate chapter (IV) of the *MT* Dionysius stresses that the ineffable God transcends every perceptual category, we might wonder why he does not allude to Christ. Apart from the specific aims of the treatise, a response might be that he is thinking in terms of Christ's resurrected («κατὸν») body, and this might underlie Maximus' thought *infra*, in n.137. On the other hand, Dionysius' scholiast (see next n.115) does not allude to Christ either (in 197C, PG, vol.4, commenting on DN,1.4,114,6), although Christ is in the context few lines below (*ibid.*,114,7-11, esp. l.8)!

¹¹⁵ See e.g. Pelikan in Berthold [1985],p.7: "...Maximus explained the language of Dionysius in such a manner that he achieved the Trinitarian and Christocentric reorientation of the Dionysian system and thus rehabilitated it." Some lines below Pelikan speaks of Maximus' "Trinitarian Christocentrism". See also *ibid.*,p.6. Despite the long tradition reflected in Migne's *PG*, and followed even today in some modern editions/translations, like Γουελάς [2002], e.g. p.63 and note in p.41, most of the Commentary on Dionysius' works attributed to Maximus the Confessor was in fact written by John of Scythopolis. Cf. e.g. Louth [1993],pp.166-167 with references (in nn.1 and 2) to the groundwork of H.U. von Balthasar [1940] as well as the more recent study of B.R. Suchla [1980]. For a short intellectual portrait of John of Scythopolis see Louth [2008a],pp.575-578.

wanted a full-fledged and well-worked out Christology,¹¹⁶ I am more optimistic than the Palamite scholar, and hold that Christ's traces in Dionysius' corpus can help us complete the Dionysian picture of love.

The particular reason why Christology is relevant for my purposes is that in contrast to the discussion of Trinity in Dionysius, which although pivotal is not explicitly connected with eros, almost every time that the Areopagite refers to Christ, he connects Him with our topic by extolling His «φιλανθρωπία»¹¹⁷ (“love for mankind”).¹¹⁸ Admittedly, love here is denoted by «φιλία» rather than ἔρως (or

¹¹⁶ Λουδοβίκος [2003], esp. the first essay (pp.15-42) as well as passim in the “Concluding Summary” (in English, pp.103-114), forms an example of how such a Christology can be of an aid to the psychoanalyst.

¹¹⁷ On the precedents of this word in Plato and Proclus' *Comm. on Alc.* see supra, n.83 in 2.1.3. For a succinct archaeology of the word in Stoicism, Middle Platonism, Clement of Alexandria and Origen see Osborne [1994], pp.171-176, with relevant bibliography in n.24 (pp.171-172); see also nn.45 and 48 in pp.177 and 178 respectively. For the use in Gregory of Nyssa see Rist [1966], pp.237-238.

¹¹⁸ See already the first appearance of Christ in DN, where the «φιλόανθρωπον» is ascribed to the Trinity “because in one of its persons it accepted a true share (ἐκοινωνήσεν) of what it is we are, and thereby issued a call to man's lowly state to rise up to it [sc. the Divine Trinity]” (cf. DN, 1.4, 113, 6-9/592A), although some lines below, *ibid.*, 1.4, 114, 3/592B φιλανθρωπία is related primarily to the Scripture (i.e. the word of God). Again, in 2.6, 130, 9-10/644C Dionysius speaks of the «φιλόανθρωπος ὁμοβουλία» (“the identity of will that loves mankind”) of the Trinity in the context of making clear that despite this, only the second Person, who has the entirety of Godhead though, was incarnated (see *ibid.*, 130, 8-9). See also *ibid.*: 2.3, 125, 21-126, 2/640C (implicit about the incarnation) and 2.10, 135, 2-3/648D (explicitly connected with the incarnation and supposedly quoted by Hierotheus), with further references in n.56 (on CH, 4.4, 22, 23-25/181B) by Luiheid-Rorem, p.158. Finally, as was indicated above there are also instances where φιλανθρωπία is not directly related with Christ or the incarnation; see *ibid.*, 6.2, 191, 16/856D, where «ὑπέρβλυσις φιλανθρωπίας» (“overflowing of love for mankind”) is ascribed to the Godhead as (the giver of) Life (and perhaps Ep. 8.4, 15/1093D and 21-22/1096A, too). See also Rist [1966], p.238, n.11.

ἀγάπη).¹¹⁹ Still, Dionysius is here referring to God's manic love for mankind, which leads to His self-emptiness («κένωσις»)¹²⁰ and results in the incarnation. If we ask why the incarnation, the paradigm instantiation of theophany, should take place, the most succinct Patristic answer has been given by Athanasius the Great: "He became man so that we be made God".¹²¹ The Trinitarian God's providential, descending and ecstatic eros leads not only to the unification of the cosmos in itself, but implants an indissoluble bond between God and creation. The erotic effects of this unification are so strong that the "zealous" God becomes a God-Man. Hence, it is only with Christ in mind (and heart) that one can understand Dionysius' erotic image of the circle. When the erotic force that has proceeded from God returns

¹¹⁹ Apart from the philosophical preexistence of the word «φιλανθρωπία» noted above (n.117), and the rareness of Greek compounds with the word ἀγάπη or ἔρωσ («παιδεραστία» being an exception), the issue is like with «φιλοσοφία» (used by Dionysius e.g. in DN,3.3,142,11/684B): although we do not do this in the case of the noun, we describe philosophers as lovers (ἐρασταί) of e.g. truth. (See the formula «ἀληθείας...ἐρασταί» in *ibid.*,1.5,117,8/593C.) In general, there are few usages of the word «φιλία» in the *Divine Names* (while it does not appear in the other Areopagitic writings; see e.g. DN,4.21,169,7-11/724A, *ibid.*,4.19,164,13-14/717A, and in conjunction with harmony *ibid.*,4.7,152,20), as also in Plotinus (see some instances *supra*, in n.316 of ch.2.2.5.). Consequently, I do not refer further to it, as I did in Proclus' case. Finally, in the end of DN Dionysius asks Timothy's benevolence, because the former is «φίλος ἀνήρ» of the latter (cf. DN,13.4,230,22/984A) and hopes that his work is «τῷ θεῷ φίλον» ("dear to God"; cf. *ibid.*,13.4,231,6/984A. It is also in the end of the *Phaedrus*,279c6-7 that a Pythagorean maxim about friends is mentioned).

¹²⁰ There is a sole reference to "self-emptiness" («κενώσεως»: DN,2.10,135,6/649A; cf. Paul, Phil.2:7.) in the whole Dionysian corpus. For the importance of kenosis in orthodox Christian theology, spiritual life and asceticism see Sakharov [2002],pp.93-116.

¹²¹ Cf. Athanasius of Alexandria, *De incarnatione verbi*, 54.3.1-2(Kannengiesser): «Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν». Cf. a close Dionysian remark in the initial chapters of DN:1.4,113,6-9.

from the level of creation, it bears the seal of both the divine and the created. Thus, the best exemplification of this return is Christ, who is literally both divine and a created human being. This completes Dionysius' picture of the erotic cycle and ultimately acquits him from any pantheistic accusations. Moreover, it explains and anticipates Maximus' view that the end of God's overflowing creation is the person of Jesus.¹²² Finally, Christ's manic *φιλανθρωπία* should not be conceived as an exclusive love for man as opposed to the cosmos, but as the consummation of God's love for His total creation, because the microcosm of human being encompasses in itself both the spiritual (e.g. angelic) and the material (e.g. soulless) creation.¹²³

And now I come to the obvious question: if Christ is so important in completing and verifying the Dionysian erotic doctrine, why does Dionysius avoid mentioning Him in the section on Eros? He seems to be absent both from the passage of ecstatic "jealousy" (in DN,§4.13), as well as from the picture of the circle (§§4:14 and 17), despite the fact that in the latter case I was able to discover indirect references to the

¹²² See Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 60, esp. ll.33-40 and 51-55 (Laga and Steel-vol.2; see English translation in Blowers-Wilken [2003],pp.123-129, esp. pp.124 and 125). See also Βλέτσης [1994],pp.237-249, esp. pp.243-245. This is an optimistic view quite different from the one presupposed and envisaged by Osborne [1994],pp.196-199, although elsewhere (ibid.,pp.25-26) she seems to be coming close to Maximian eschatological perspectives.

¹²³ This is again the line of thought taken by Maximus the Confessor (contra Osborne [1994],p.197); cf. Louth [2004],p.192, who gives a helpful diagram. Hence, because man is the coronation of demiurgy, the possibility of "transfiguration" is granted to the entire cosmos.

Trinity. The short answer is that both Trinity¹²⁴ and Christ's «εἰρηνόχυτος φιλανθρωπία»¹²⁵ are present in the climax of the chapters on God as "Peace",¹²⁶ which I have characterized as an enlightening and necessary complement to the section on Eros. Of course, there too we do not find an elaboration on the significance of Christ, but only a brief mention.

There are two ways to answer this problem. On the one hand, if we follow the line of Σιάσος mentioned with reference to Trinitarian theology, then we would expect that these associations were mentioned in another a perhaps lost or fictitious Dionysian work, the *Theological Representations*.¹²⁷ On the other hand, we can work again on the basis of implicit hints in Dionysius' extant work and employ what I will call 'erotic hermeneutics'. It might not be an accident that the two sole instances of Dionysius' quoting his teacher Hierotheus in the DN are on love and Christ.¹²⁸ In the case of love, Hierotheus' chapters form

¹²⁴ If we accept Suchla's, not Migne/Corderius' text ad loc.

¹²⁵ "Loving-kindness of Christ, bathed as it is in peace".

¹²⁶ See DN,11.5,221,8-10 and 5 respectively. This is consistent with Rist [1966],p.243, although he proposes that in the section of Eros in DN Dionysius is interested in "cosmic theology" (ibid.,p.237, said for the corpus in general), and hence in "cosmic Eros" (ibid.,p.236). I am not sure what the distinction he implies is. Armstrong [1982],p.221 writes with regard to Dionysius that the theophany of creation out of love as well as the (redemptive) return "are cosmic and universal, not strictly tied to a particular human person or historic event". That is, he proposes that creation could be conceived as "cosmic incarnation" (ibid.,p.222), and in this respect he must be deviating from Rist's understanding.

¹²⁷ Incarnation falls under the differentiated names of differentiated theology (b-ii); see supra in ch.3.1.1.

¹²⁸ See §4.15-17 and §2.10 respectively.

a synopsis of Dionysius' teaching, whose explicit target is to explicate and develop the succinct statements of his teacher's theology,¹²⁹ while, as I have noted, Christology is only touched in passing. Still, apart from the Areopagite's relation to his teacher's writings, in the very end of *Divine Names*¹³⁰ Dionysius himself notes the human restrictions and difficulties of his enterprise, and invites the recipient of the work, i.e. Timothy or us, to take a critical stance,¹³¹ and by loving God and trying to imitate His philanthropy¹³² he urges us to attempt to correct or develop his theology, as he did with the teaching of his own divine teacher. If so, then the two key themes of love and Christ, must be first in the list of subjects calling for further exploration. Since, while brief, they already form the supposed Dionysian interpretation of Hierotheus, the reader ought to understand that these are two key themes in need of further analysis and interconnection by us, even if love figures as just one name among others. To this end we might also note that the last of Dionysius' *Epistles*,¹³³ as if the last words of his

¹²⁹ See *ibid.*, §3.2, esp.140,6-10/681B.

¹³⁰ See the methodological chapter *ibid.*, 13.4, esp.230,11-22/981C-981D.

¹³¹ In this respect Dionysius might come close to Plato's attitude toward his readers. As for 'cryptic enunciations' in need of further clarification, these are in abundance in both writers. Let us not forget that if ps-Dionysius is hidden, philosophically and literarily speaking Plato is also absent from his dialogues...

¹³² A quite independent instance is *ibid.*, 13.4,230,18/981D, where «φιλανθρωπία» is attributed to Timothy ('the one who honours God'), to whom the *Divine Names* is addressed to (see e.g. the title of the work, *ibid.*, 107,1/985A with the caveat indicated by n.2 in Luibheid-Rorem,p.49), with view to Timothy's reception of Dionysius' treatise.

¹³³ See Ep.10,1117Aff.

corpus, is addressed to John, who was the best friend and a disciple of Jesus Christ,¹³⁴ and/because he is deemed the Evangelist of Love.¹³⁵

These features hint at the centrality of Christ in Dionysius' erotic universe, and invite us to connect ecstasy with Christ's kenosis-incarnation, seeing the latter as species and perfection of the former,¹³⁶ even if Dionysius does not explicitly do so. This is precisely what we find in interpretations of the text by later Fathers. Authors like Maximus and Palamas¹³⁷ do not impose a "Christological corrective" on Dionysius, but rather develop insights implicitly present in his writing.¹³⁸ To sum up, whether we read Dionysius via the later tradition or we take Σιάσος' way, Dionysius' extant exclamation(s) of

¹³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*,§1.2-3/1117A. See also *ibid.*,1.23.

¹³⁵ Hence, I give another perspective to the one noted by Rorem (in Luibheid-Rorem,n.152,p.288) or Wear-Dillon [2007],p.10. What is more, the theme of Love that John's presence brings, along with the affirmed belief in God which supports Dionysius' hope that John will be released and return from his exile (see Ep.10,25-28/1120A), bring to mind the cardinal stages (or the Pauline triad: faith, hope, love) of the "Hymn of Love" (see 1 Corinthians 13: esp.13), written by another beloved theologian of Dionysius, Paul (see e.g. DN,3.2,140,3-4/681B. Paul is central to Stang's understanding of Dionysius; see Stang [2012],e.g. p.3).

¹³⁶ Due to her contemporary theological agenda, which is selective in that she challenges Process Theology and J. Moltmann, my suggestion is denied by Osborne [1994],pp.198 and 195; cf. also pp.186-189. In the (Einsteinian) jargon of Rist [1999],p.378 erotic ecstasy manifested in the creation corresponds to the "General Theory of Divinity", whereas incarnation belongs to the "Special Theory of Divinity". Cf. also *ibid.*,p.380 (and pp.383-384).

¹³⁷ See also Louth [2008b],pp.590-593 and 595-598 respectively. For instance, Louth emphasizes Maximus' usage of Dionysian apophatic and kataphatic theology with specific regard to Christ (*ibid.*,pp.590-591), and mentions Palamas' concern with the issue of angelic mediation, since after the Incarnation man does not necessarily need intermediaries in his communion with God (see *ibid.*,p.597).

¹³⁸ With Louth in *ibid.*,p.591 pace Meyendorff (cf. also *ibid.*,p.590 and n.14 in p.598).

Christ's 'self-emptying' φιλανθρωπία provide, for the systematic reasons I explained before, the ultimate proof of and the most adequate explanation for understanding why Dionysius concludes his treatment of erotic 'ecstasy' by calling God «ζηλωτής», i.e. a manic lover of His «καλὴ λίκαν»¹³⁹ creation.¹⁴⁰

I come now to a final comparison between Dionysius and Proclus. The topic in question is the juxtaposition between undefiled providence and incarnation. One of my central points of reference while treating Proclus' erotic doctrines was Socrates, whose presence is frequent in Proclus (although not in Plotinus). I stated that Socrates' loving relations helped us to grasp the intelligible divine relations, and that ultimately Socrates was an expression, albeit an attenuated one, of the divine in our world. Dionysius' Christian counterpoint to Socrates is Christ. As we just saw, Christ not only helps us to understand what divine eros is, but is its best exemplification. Hence, the cardinal difference between the two figures is that Christ is not just a micro-expression of the divine in our world, but actually God Himself.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Cf. *Gen.*1:31, which is used in CH,2.3,13,23/141C.

¹⁴⁰ So, if as I said the creation is explained on the grounds of God as Trinity, then also kenosis and incarnation should be explained on this basis. It cannot be an accident that in the strictly monotheistic religion of Islam God is not and cannot be incarnate, (Christ is just a prophet before Mohamed), hence the absence of divine representations in religious painting, too. The root of iconoclasm in Byzantium should be traced back to this non-Christian Eastern attitude.

¹⁴¹ Christ is perfect God and perfect Man. This is extolled by Dionysius, supposedly quoting Hierotheus, in e.g. DN,2.10,135,2-9/648D-649A.

Thus, on a first reading Dionysius differs completely from Proclus in this respect. The incarnate Christ is a clear anomaly not only for the Neoplatonic system of Proclus, but for the whole of ancient Greek philosophy.¹⁴² Furthermore, even if Socrates was said to provide for other souls, as well as for his own body, the Neoplatonic ideal was that of “undefiled providence”, where the divine principle exercises providence without any intermingling with or embodiment in the recipient of providence.¹⁴³ Socrates formed a marginal case, where in order to exercise providence he had to descend to the earthly realm,¹⁴⁴ while the ‘undefiled’ part of his care meant e.g. abstinence from sexual relations. By contrast, the quintessence of Christ’s philanthropy, i.e. the loving providence of the Uncreated First Principle, is that He descended to created mankind, “so that we may be made God”, in the abovementioned famous words of Athanasius.¹⁴⁵ Christian God’s loving ecstasy or kenosis means ‘intermingling’ with the beloved.¹⁴⁶

Yet Dionysius’ language is very close to Proclus’. First of all, without reference to Incarnation Dionysius uses the Proclean vocabulary of divine transcendence and undefiled providence. I

¹⁴² Especially when the death on the cross has been characterized as «Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον, Ἕλλησι δὲ μωρία» (1 Corinthians 1:23).

¹⁴³ Cf. El.Th.,122,2-3 and 13-16 and see supra, ch.2.1.5.

¹⁴⁴ In a work in progress I connect Socrates’ care with the philosopher-king’s providential descent to the *Republic’s* cave and I explain their relative inferiority to the providence exercised by higher Neoplatonic deities.

¹⁴⁵ Since Adam failed to become Christ (i.e. χριστός: nominated, dubbed) by grace, the New Adam became man by nature.

¹⁴⁶ Hence there is no ‘disinterested affection’ anymore (in the sense I gave in ch.2.1.5.).

choose the following example taken from outside the section on love, because it connects the two themes: “The divinity is described as omnipotent because he has power over all, and is in control¹⁴⁷ of the world in an unmixed way («ἀμιγῶς»); because he is the goal of all yearning and because he lays a happy yoke on all who wish it, the sweet toil of that holy, omnipotent, and indestructible yearning for his goodness.”¹⁴⁸ This may seem unremarkable; when trying to capture the nature of the First Principle both Neoplatonism and Christianity are bound to assert Deity’s super-transcendence. But even in the case of the incarnate First Principle, i.e. Christ, who has taken human flesh, Dionysius’ language is similar: “[The divinity of) Jesus] is the Being

¹⁴⁷ I agree with Χατζημιχαήλ [2008], p.539, n.456 in retaining Migne’s text («ἐπάροχουσα») instead of Suchla’s («ἐπαροῦσα»).

¹⁴⁸ DN,10.1,215,3-7/937A. See also the word «ἀνεκφοίτητος» (‘not proceeding from [sc. oneself]’: either in adjectival or adverbial form) used about the Deity, while accompanying and contrasted with Its πρόνοια, in *ibid.*,4.13,159,12-14/712B (esp. l.14); 2.11,135,16-136,1/649B and 137,5-7/652A; 9.5,210,7-11/912D (l.9) and 13.2,227,6-7/977C; Ep.9.3,9-25/1109B-D, esp. l.11. In DN,4.8,153,7-8/(704D)-705A there is specific reference to the divine minds, i.e. angels. Cf. also *ibid.*,4.4,147,4-8/697C (comparing Deity with the Sun). In *ibid.*,9.4,209,13/912B God is called «ἀμιγής» (‘unmixed’ or “unalloyed” with *Luibheid-Rorem ad loc.*) Being. This is used not only with regard to God’s relation to the creation (see DN,2.5,129,9-11/644B; cf. *ibid.*,2.11,136,15-17/649C), but also when illustrating the unconfused unity of the Persons of the Trinity (see *ibid.*,2.4,127,12/641B; cf. *ibid.*,127,15-128,1/641C; 2.5,128,9-10/641D). Further, God’s loving effects make also the various elements of the creation be unmixed with each other; see e.g. *ibid.*,11.2,218,18-21/949C, where only the term «ἀσύγχυτος» is used to describe the «ἔνωσις» effected by «αὐτοειρήνη», and cf. *ibid.*,8.7,204,8-10/896A and 2.4,128,5-6/641C. Finally, in *ibid.*,11.2,219,3-5/949C, peace is said to effect both the ‘unmixed’ union of the created beings with one another and with the Deity. For Proclus’ use of the word see *supra* in ch.2.1.5.

pervading all beings and remains unaffected thereby.¹⁴⁹ It is the supra-being beyond every being... In all this he remains what he is – supernatural, transcendent- and he has come to join us in what we are without himself undergoing change or confusion”.¹⁵⁰ A reader who has read Proclus and is unfamiliar with the significance that Church Fathers ascribe to Christ could think that Christ performs undefiled providence just as Proclean Socrates does. If so, these passages would mean that for Dionysius incarnation is a secondary issue, because what primarily counts is God’s divine transcendence above His creation. On this reading, God would not intermingle with the objects of its providence. However, due to the Dionysian resources regarding Christ mentioned above, we should not be left thinking that Dionysius reproduces Proclus’ ideal of “undefiled providence” adding to this mixture Christ.¹⁵¹

Here we may take note of an ancient comment (presumably by John of Scythopolis) on another paradoxical Dionysian enunciation,

¹⁴⁹ This is quoted (or rather paraphrased in Greek) by Dodds [1963],p.265 on the occasion of prop.122, (although the parallel is not very successful as I intend to show).

¹⁵⁰ DN,2.10,134,12-14/648C and 135,4-5/648D (again from the supposed quotation from Hierotheus): «...οὐσία ταῖς ὄλαις οὐσίαις ἀχράντως ἐπιβατεύουσα καὶ ὑπερουσίως ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἐξηρημένη,... κὰν τούτοις ἔχει τὸ ὑπερφυῆς καὶ ὑπερούσιον, οὐ μόνον ἢ ἀναλλοιώτως ἡμῖν καὶ ἀσυγχύτως κεκοινώνηκε». Cf. also Dionysius’ *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (EH),3.III.13,14-20, esp.ll.16-17 (Heil-Ritter)/444C (PG).

¹⁵¹ Rather in a non-polemical way Dionysius reproduces the Proclean language by radically resignifying it, (although his suggestion, following Clement of Alexandria, might be that the Greeks just distorted the language and/or content of theology). On this attitude see his explicit remarks in *Epistle*,7, esp.§1,1-3/1077B and 1,13-2,5/1080A-B. Cf. also his *Ep*.6.7-8/1077A-B and Louth [1989],p.14.

reminiscent of undefiled providence. In one of the succinct chapters on Eros, supposedly by Hierotheus, the author speaks of God as the «ἄσχετος αἰτία παντὸς ἔρωτος».¹⁵² The paradox, as with Proclus' undefiled providence, is that if eros is a relational term, how can its bearer be «ἄσχετος», i.e. non-related with its object of love? The scholiast answers: «Ἄσχετόν φησι τὸ ἀπόλυτον, οὐ πρὸς τὸ πᾶν οὐδεμία σχέσις, ἦτοι οἰκειότης φυσική».¹⁵³ The absence of intermingling between lover and beloved means that the two are fundamentally different; not soul and body as in the case of Socrates, but Uncreated and Created.¹⁵⁴ Hence, Dionysius could retain this formula when referring even to Christ, because although he is one Hypostasis which is constituted from two natures,¹⁵⁵ there is no

¹⁵² DN,4.16,161,15/713C: “the unrelated cause of all yearning”.

¹⁵³ 269B-C (PG, vol.4): “By ἄσχετον he means the absolute, of which [sc. absolute] there is no relation with the all, i.e. [there is no] *natural affinity* [of the absolute with the all]”. (My translation and my additions in brackets); see also the paraphrase of Παχυμέρης ad loc., 780B (PG, vol.3) and cf. Χατζημιχαήλ [2008],p.518,n.240 ad loc. On the occasion of God’s «ἄσχετοι μεταδόσεις» in DN,2.5,129,1/644A (cf. also His «ἄσχετος περιοχή» in *ibid.*,9.9,213,13/916C) Χατζημιχαήλ, p.505,n.134 draws again attention to John’s (even if he says Maximus’) scholion ad loc. (221A).

¹⁵⁴ In DN,6.2,192,1-5/856D Dionysius states one of his great differences from ancient Greek philosophy, i.e. that the promise for immortality refers not only to man’s soul, but also to his/her body.

¹⁵⁵ This is the “hypostatic union” enunciated in the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon, 451AD). See also from the hymnology of the Church the «Δοξαστικόν» (mode plural of the fourth): «Εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱός, διπλοῦς τὴν φύσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐ τὴν ὑπόστασιν». Whereas communion with body in Neoplatonism implies a degraded soul, in Christianity there is no natural alteration of the Uncreated nature of God when embracing the Created nature of man’s unity of soul and body.

confusion between them.¹⁵⁶ Christ's incarnation is not the same as Socrates' embodiment. The fact that Christ has received the total humanity¹⁵⁷ shows why God is a manic lover, while Socrates' undefiled providence denotes his failure when compared with higher demons or divinities; were he a higher soul he would not need to be incarnate or educate Alcibiades. The result is that whereas Socrates can elevate his body or Alcibiades only up to the divine point he has reached, Christ takes the whole man, and hence the whole creation, up to the highest level, i.e. in Himself.¹⁵⁸

To recap, in this last section I examined an important consequence of Dionysius' erotic doctrines. Dionysius' innovations as well as the deepening of the erotic doctrine are particularly evident when examining the case of Christ's manic philanthropy in contrast with the

¹⁵⁶ See another hymnographical example from the Γ' στᾶσις of the «Ἀκάθιστος Ὑμνος»: «Ὁλωσ ἦν ἐν τοῖς κάτω, καὶ τῶν ἄνω οὐδόλωσ ἀπῆν, ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος».

¹⁵⁷ From a Stoic or Neoplatonic point of view Christ is not a sage. Why to mourn for a person we love (see Christ's crying for the dead Lazarus in John 11:35-36) or why to feel fear in front of our sacrifice (see Christ's passionate prayer in Gethsemane apud e.g. Mark 14:33-35 and esp. Luke 22:40-44)? On this issue see the well-balanced position of Gavriilyuk [2004], esp. ch.2:pp.47-63, who focuses on early Church Fathers such as Cyril of Alexandria. I am in complete agreement with his verdict (ibid.,p.15) that "[i]mpassibility was not baptized without conversion". (Hence the way to understand also DN,4.21,169,5-6/721D properly, and respond to the concerns of Osborne [1994],pp.195 and 197).

¹⁵⁸ A reason for this is that Dionysius' system is not characterized by the Neoplatonic mediations of Proclus' and even Plotinus' one. Still, if per impossibile there were such mediations Christ would still come to the lower strata of the cosmos and be incarnate. Besides the Gospel assures that if we want to be among the firsts we should go with the last ones. See e.g. Matthew 20:16 and 26-27; cf. idem 19:30 and Perl [2013],p.31.

undefiled providence of Proclus' Socrates. As I tried to show, although the language is similar the very fact that Christ is a full God in contrast to Socrates changes radically the Proclean scene. Furthermore, in my general treatment in this section I was forced to employ interconnections not observable in the Dionysian surface, especially when interconnecting Trinity and Christ's philanthropy with Eros. The reader might have realized that there are indeed many ways to interpret Dionysius, as with Plato. As the Areopagite himself 'develops' the teachings of his teacher(s), let this be a hint for us, his readers to imitate him, and finally let our guide be love...

CONCLUSION

In this thesis we have passed through stations in the journey of eros' transformations or 'metamorphoses' (to recall Apuleius' novel that contains the central myth of Eros and Psyche). From the Platonic theme of deficiency in the *Symposium*, of which Plotinus makes so much, we have arrived at the idea of eros as sacrifice, exactly because Dionysius' God has no need whatsoever. As mediator in this transition stands Proclus, the Platonic Successor and Dionysian predecessor.

Save for Plotinus' nuanced interpretations and systematic exploitations of Platonic themes, as well as Dionysius' representation of the Church Fathers, I regard the chapter I devoted to Proclean eros as particularly important, because Proclus has become a bond between two traditions. For this reason, as well as because it explores previously untouched material, it was the longest chapter. Further, I dealt with the misguided and rather anachronistic debate regarding egoism versus altruism in ancient Greek philosophy, concluding that Neoplatonism is indeed other-regarding. There remains, however, a problem concerning the *quality* of the relation a Neoplatonist may develop with the other.

Trying to pin down what a single name, i.e. love (in its various Greek formulations as ἔρως, φιλία or ἀγάπη) means, reflects another important dimension of this thesis: the relation between philosophical language and content. Whereas Plotinus obviously uses the mythical vocabulary of Plato, the chapter on Proclus has been a good exercise

into unearthing philosophical kinship where vocabulary might suggest otherwise. It might not be that Proclus understood better or developed Plotinus' Neoplatonism, but that Proclus helps us understand Plotinus (and Plato) better. On the other hand, the chapter on Dionysius considers the dilemma of whether Neoplatonic philosophical language is assimilated to Christian belief or vice versa, and opts for the former.

Still, this thesis was not only concerned with the dialogue between Christianity and pagan Hellenism, but also the dialogue that needs to be strengthened between West and East. Dionysius has been a cornerstone for both European traditions, both for Aquinas and for Palamas, hence in my treatment I have been aided by both Eastern and Western interpreters. If love as well as Dionysius are central to Christianity, then love in Dionysius can form a platform for a loving dialogue between the traditions of Western Europe and Byzantium.

Hence the relevance of my discussion to the preoccupations of some contemporary thinkers. For instance, regardless of what people think Platonic love is, one might say that the shift from love as neediness to sacrificial love is owed to Romanticism (via its conscious or unconscious borrowing from Christianity). Yannaras would deny this. As I indicated in notes (30 and 80) to ch.3, Yannaras (e.g. [2005] and [2007]) believes that the absence of God, i.e. nihilism, that characterizes modern Western societies and was observed by Nietzsche and subsequently by Heidegger, but also Sartre, is in opposition to the unknowability of God that we find in Dionysius (and which is rooted

in Socratic ignorance we may add). From the time that Scholastic Mediaeval philosophers transformed God into an abstract notion, approachable, although in the end ungraspable, through reason, God stopped playing any active and erotic role in the life of the society. On the other hand, for Yannaras, who is a student of Lossky, the Eastern interpretation of Dionysian apophaticism (starting with Maximus the Confessor and extending to Gregory Palamas through John of Damascus and Symeon the New Theologian) denies that we can fit God into logical and linguistic discourse, although it affirms the possibility of having direct experience of God's presence via the participation in His erotic energies. Thus, Yannaras' conclusion is that by neglecting Palamas' distinction of *uncreated* energies and essence the West (including modern Greece and Slavonic countries) lost the game, and we should rather go back to the Eastern Fathers to resurrect God and our society (κοινωνία-sobornost) from the tomb that Nietzsche discovered and Dostoyevsky illuminated.

Whatever the diagnosis though may be, as an antidote to this fallen state we can turn to what unites all these traditions depicted in the present thesis, i.e. that philosophy is a way of life: apart from Plato or Socrates, also Plotinus, Proclus and whoever the pseudo-Dionysius is, would be very glad if we transformed our lives into eros.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Άγγελόπουλος, Ί.Κ. [2001]: *Μείζων ή αγάπη. Δώδεκα Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μιλοῦν γιὰ τὴν Ἀγάπη*, [*Love is greater. Twelve Fathers of the Church speak about Love*]. Ἡμερολόγιο μὲ CD, selection of texts-translation by Ί.Κ. Άγγελόπουλος, produced by Α.Ε. Καραβάνης and Γ.Ν. Μπιλάλης, «Λυχνία» and Μελωδικὸ Καραβι, (Ἀθήνα).

Adamson, P. [2011]: “Making a Virtue of Necessity: *Anankê* in Plato, Plotinus and Proclus”, *Études platoniciennes* 8 (2011), 9-30.

Aertsen, J.A. [2009]: “«Eros» und «Agape». Dionysius Areopagita und Thomas von Aquin über die Doppelgestalt der Liebe”, in E. Düsing and H.-D. Klein (eds.), *Geist, Eros und Agape. Untersuchungen zu Liebesdarstellungen in Philosophie, Religion und Kunst*, (Band 5 von *Geist und Seele*, ed. by E. Düsing and H.-D. Klein), Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg, pp.191-203. (The article was first published in T. Boiadjev - G. Kapriev – A. Speer (eds.) [2000]: *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*, Turnhout, pp.373-391.)

Adkins, A.W.H. [1963]: “‘Friendship’ and ‘Self-Sufficiency’ in Homer and Aristotle”, *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 13:1 (1963:May), 30-45.

Annas, J. [2001]: *Cicero. On Moral Ends*, edited by J. Annas, translated by Raphael Woolf, CUP, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, Cambridge, (repr. 2004).

Armstrong, A.H. [1961]: "Platonic *Eros* and Christian *Agape*", *The Downside Review*, 79 (No. 255), Bath, pp.105-121; (reprinted as ch. IX in Armstrong [1979]).

Armstrong, A.H. [1964]: "Platonic Love. A reply to Professor Verdenius", *The Downside Review*, 82 (No. 268), Bath, pp.199-208; (reprinted as ch. X in Armstrong [1979]).

Armstrong, A.H. [1966-1988]: Plotinus, *Enneads I-VI*, with an English Translation by A.H. Armstrong, vols. I-VII, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England.

Armstrong, A.H. [1979]: *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, Variorum Reprints, (Collected Studies series; CS102), London.

Armstrong, A.H. [1982]: "Negative Theology, Myth, and Incarnation", in D.J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, SUNY Press, (Studies in Neoplatonism, vol.3), Albany, NY, pp.213-222 (and pp.290-292: notes).

Arnou, R. [1967]: *Le Désir de Dieu dans la Philosophie de Plotin*, Presses de l'Université Grégorienne, Rome, (deuxième édition revue et corrigée; 1921).

Atkinson, M. [1983]: *Plotinus: Ennead V. 1. On the Three Principal Hypostases*, a commentary with translation by M. Atkinson, OUP, Oxford Classical and Philosophical Monographs.

Balthasar, H.U. von [1940]: “Das Scholienwerk des Johannes von Schythopolis“, *Scholastik*, 15 (1940), 16-38. (See English translation in the Appendix of H.U. von Balthasar [2003]: *Cosmic Liturgy. The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trnsl. by B.E. Daley, Ignatius Press, Communio, San Francisco, pp.359-387).

Baltzly, D. [forthcoming]: “The Human Life“, in *All From One. A Guide to Proclus*, ed. by P. d’Hoine and M. Martijn, OUP, Oxford, (pp.1-24: typescript).

Barnes, J. [1984]: *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford translation*, ed. by J. Barnes in 2 vols., Bollingen Series LXXI 2, PUP, Princeton, (61995).

Bartsch, S. [2006]: *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Βασιλάκης, Α.Δ. [2009]: *Η ὄντολογία τοῦ ὡραίου στὸ ἔργο τοῦ Πέτρου Βράϊλα-Ἀρμένη*, [The ontology of the beautiful in Petros Brailas-Armenis’ work], “Σύλλογος πρὸς Διάδοσιν Ὡφελίμων Βιβλίων” (: “Society for Spread of Beneficial Books”), Athens; (with an English Synopsis in pp.350-358).

Beierwaltes, W. [1986]: "The Love of Beauty and the Love of God", in A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality. Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, (vol.15 of World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp.293-313.

Belfiore, E.S. [2012]: *Socrates' Daimonic Art. Love for Wisdom in Four Platonic Dialogues*, CUP, Cambridge.

Berthold, G.C. [1985]: Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*, transl. and notes by G.C. Berthold, introduction by J. Pelikan, preface by I.-H. Dalmais, The Classics of Western Spirituality, New York, Mahwah.

Bidez, J. [1937]: "Un extrait du Commentaire de Proclus sur les «Ennéades» de Plotin", in *Mélanges offerts a A.-M. Desrousseaux par ses amis et ses élèves...*, Librairie Hachette, Paris, pp.11-18.

Βλέτσης, Αθ. Β. [1994]: *Ὄντολογία τῆς πτώσης στή θεολογία Μαξίμου τοῦ Ὁμολογητοῦ*, [Ontology of the Fall in Maximus the Confessor's theology], doctoral dissertation, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Θεσσαλονίκη, (available online at http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesis_BookReader/id/3709#page/1/_mode/1up and last accessed on 28/06/2014.

This work has been published under the title: *Τό προπατορικό ἀμάρτημα στή θεολογία Μαξίμου τοῦ Ὁμολογητοῦ. Ἐρευνα στίς ἀπαρχές μιᾶς ὄντολογίας τῶν κτιστῶν*, [The original sin in Maximus the Confessor's theology. Study in the beginnings of an ontology of the creatures], ἐκδ. Τέριος, Κατερίνη, 1998).

Blowers, P.M. – Wilken, R.L. [2003]: *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ. Selected Writings from St Maximus the Confessor*, trnsl. by P.M. Blowers and R.L. Wilken, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, (Popular Patristic Series Series, No 25), Crestwood, NY.

Βουλγαράκης, Η. [1989]: "Γιὰ τὸν ἔρωτα στοὺς Πατέρες" ("On eros in the Fathers"), *Σύναξη*, 32 (1989:Oct.-Dec.), 7-25.

Brisson, Luc [1998]: *Plato the myth maker*, trnsl., ed. with an introduction by G. Naddaf, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Brisson, L. [2004]: *How philosophers saved myths. Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology*, trnsl. C. Tihanyi, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London.

Brisson, L. [forthcoming]: "Proclus on Gods and Demons", in *All From One. A Guide to Proclus*, ed. by P. d'Hoine and M. Martijn, OUP, Oxford, (pp.1-18: typescript).

Butler, E.P. [2010]: "The Henadic Structure of Providence in Proclus", lecture given at Dalhousie University, Dept. of Classics, 03/11/2010, (pp.1-17); available at <http://henadology.wordpress.com/philosophy/>, last accessed on 26/06/2013.

Chiaradonna, R. [2009]: "Le traité de Galien *Sur la Démonstration* et sa postérité tardo-antique", in R. Chiaradonna & F. Trabattoni (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism. Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop, Il Ciocco*,

Castelvecchio-Pascoli, June 22-24, 2006, *Philosophia Antiqua*, vol.115, Brill, the Netherlands, pp.43-77.

Chlup, R. [2012]: *Proclus. An Introduction*, CUP, Cambridge.

Clayton P. - Peacocke A. [2004]: *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, P. Clayton and A. Peacocke (eds.), William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.

Coakley, S. - Stang, Ch.M. [2009]: *Re-thinking Dionysius the Areopagite*, edited by S. Coakley and Ch.M. Stang, *Directions in modern theology*, Wiley-Blackwell, MA, Oxford and Chichester. [The book appeared first as a volume of *Modern Theology*, 24.4 (Oct. 2008).]

Coakley, S. [2013]: "Eastern 'Mystical Theology' or Western 'Nouvelle Theologie'?: On the Comparative Reception of Dionysius the Areopagite in Lossky and de Lubac", in G.E. Demacopoulos and A. Papanikolaou (eds.), *Orthodox constructions of the West*, Fordham University Press, (NY), pp.125-141 and 308-317.

Coffey, D. [1990]: "The Holy Spirit as Mutual Love of the Father and the Son", *Theological Studies*, 51 (1990), 193-229.

Collette-Dučić, B. [forthcoming]: "Making friends: the Stoic conception of love and its Platonic background", (read at the 8th ISNS 2010 Conference in Madrid; typescript: pp.1-18).

Cooper, J.M. [1997]: *Plato. Complete works*, edited, with introduction and notes, by John M. Cooper; associate editor: D.S. Hutchinson, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis/Cambridge.

Culp, J. [2013]: "Panentheism", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/panentheism/>, accessed on 11/12/2013.

Γιαγκάζογλου, Στ. [1992]: *Προλεγόμενα στή θεολογία τῶν ἀκτίστων ἐνεργειῶν. Σπουδή στόν Ἅγιο Γρηγόριο Παλαμά* [in Greek: *Introduction to the theology of uncreated energies. Study on Saint Gregory Palamas*], ἐκδ. Τέρτιος, Katerini.

Γουνελάς, Σ. [2002]: *Διονυσίου Ἀρεοπαγίτου, Περὶ μυστικῆς θεολογίας*, introduction by Vl. Lossky, both translated [in Modern Greek] by Σ. Γουνελάς, ἐκδ. Ἀρμός, series «Γέφυρες», Αθήνα [: reprint from ἐκδ. Πολύτυπο, 1983, ed. by N. Γιανναδάκης.]

D'Andres, N. [2010]: *Socrate néoplatonicien: une science de l'amour dans le commentaire de Proclus au prologue de l'Alcibiade*, PhD dissertation submitted to the Univ. of Genève. (Available on-line in <http://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:14566>, but with private access.)

Dillon, J. [1969]: "Enn. III 5: Plotinus' exegesis of the *Symposium* myth", *Ἄγών. Journal of Classical Studies*, Berkeley Association of Classics; Department of Classics, University of California, no.3 (1969), 24-44.

Dillon, J. [1994]: "A Platonist *Ars Amatoria*", *The Classical Quarterly*, 44:2 (1994:Dec.), 387-392.

Dillon, J. - Gerson, L.P. [2004]: *Neoplatonic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, Hackett, Indianapolis/Cambridge.

Dodds, E.R. [1928]: "The Parmenides of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One'", *The Classical Quarterly*, vol.22, No.3/4 (Jul.-Oct.,1928), 129-142.

Dodds, E.R. [1959]: *Plato. Gorgias. A revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, by E.R. Dodds, at the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Dodds, E.R. [1963]: *Πρόκλου Διαδόχου Στοιχείωσις Θεολογική. The Elements of Theology*, a revised text with translation, introduction and commentary, Clarendon Press, Oxford, (1933; repr. 2004).

Dodds, E.R. [1965]: *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety. Some aspects of religious experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*, CUP, Cambridge, (reprint: 2000).

Dörrie, H. [1976]: *Platonica minora*, Wilhelm Fink GmbH & Co. KG, vol.8 of 'Studia et testimonia antiqua', München.

Düsing, E. [2009]: "Geist, Eros und Agape – eine historisch-systematisch Problemskizze", in E. Düsing and H.-D. Klein (eds.), *Geist, Eros und Agape. Untersuchungen zu Liebesdarstellungen in Philosophie, Religion und Kunst*, (Band 5 von *Geist und Seele*, ed. by E. Düsing and H.-D. Klein), Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg, pp.7-40.

Δαμάσκος, Π.Κ. [2003]: *Ἔρωτος παρουσίαση, Δεύτερο μέρος: Ὁ Ἔρωσ στὸ ἔργο τοῦ Πλωτίνου*, [Love in Plotinus' work], doctoral dissertation, (University of Athens), Ἀθῆναι.

Emilsson, E.K. [1988]: *Plotinus on sense-perception: a philosophical study*, CUP, Cambridge.

Emilsson, E.K. [2007]: *Plotinus on Intellect*, OUP, Oxford.

Esposito Buckley, L.M. [1992]: "Ecstatic and Emanating, Providential and Unifying: A study of the Pseudo-Dionysian and Plotinian Concepts of Eros", *Journal of Neoplatonic Studies*, 1:1 (1992:Fall), 31-61.

Flamand, J.-M. [2009]: "Traité 50 (III, 5) *Sur l' amour*", presentation, traduction et notes par J.-M. Flamand in *Plotin, Traités 45-50*, presents, traduits et annotés par M. Guyot, Th. Vidart, R. Dufour, Fr. Fronterotta et J.-M. Flamand, sous la direction de L. Brisson et J.-F. Pradeau, GF Flammarion, Paris, pp.407-480.

Florovsky, G.V. [1933]: *Vizantijskie otci V-VIII (veka)*, Paris. (This work has been translated into English in *The Collected Works of G. Florovsky* as vol.8: *Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth Century* and vol.9: *Byzantine Fathers of the Sixth to Eighth Centuries*, Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987.)

Florovsky, G. [1987]: *The Byzantine Ascetic and Spiritual Fathers*, vol.10 in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, gen. ed. R.S. Haugh, trnsl. by R. Miller and A.-M. Döllinger-Labriolle - H.W. Schmiedel,

Büchervertriebsanstalt, Vaduz (Europa. Exclusive Sales Agent: Notable & Academic Books, Belmont, MA; second printing).

Gavrilyuk, P.L. [2004]: *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, OUP, (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford.

Gavrilyuk, P.L. [2008]: "The reception of Dionysius in twentieth-century Eastern Orthodoxy", *Modern Theology*, 24.4 (Oct. 2008), 707-723 (= Coakley-Stang [2009], pp.177-194).

Gendle, N. [1983]: Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, edited with an introduction by J. Meyendorff, trnsl. by N. Gendle, preface by J. Pelikan, Paulist Press, The Classics of Western Spirituality, New York, Mahwah.

Gersh, S.E. [1973]: *Κίνησις Ἀκίνητος. A study of spiritual motion in the philosophy of Proclus*, (Philosophia Antiqua. A series of monographs on Ancient Philosophy ed. by W.J. Verdenius and J.H. Waszink, vol.XXVI), Leiden, E.J. Brill.

Gerson, L.P. [2006]: "A Platonic Reading of Plato's *Symposium*", in J.H. Leshner, D. Nails & F.C.C. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Center for Hellenic Studies, (Trustees for Harvard University), Washington, DC, (distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England), pp.47-67.

Gould, T. [1963]: *Platonic Love*, Free Press of Glencoe, NY; (Greenwood Press Reprint: 1981).

Hadot, P. [1990]: *Plotin, Traité 50 (III 5)*, introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Pierre Hadot, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf.

Hainthaler, Th. [1997]: "Bemerkungen zur Christologie des Ps.-Dionys und ihrer Nachwirkung im 6. Jahrhundert", in Ysabel de Andia (ed.), *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en orient et en occident*, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, (Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 151), Paris.

Halperin, D.M. [1985]: "Platonic *Erôs* and What Men Call Love", *Ancient Philosophy*, 5 (1985), 161-204.

Hankey, W.J. [2009]: "Neoplatonist Surprises: The Doctrine of Providence of Plotinus and his Followers both Conscious and Unconscious", *Dionysius*, XXVII (2009:Dec.), 117-125.

Hankey, W.J. [2011]: "God's care for human individuals; what Neoplatonism gives to a Christian doctrine of Providence", *Quaestiones Disputatae*, 2.1 & 2 (2011:Spring-Fall), 4-36.

Henry, P. - Schwyzer, H.-R. [1964-1983]: *Plotini opera; tomi I-III: Porphyrii Vita Plotini; Enneades I-VI*, Oxonii e Typographeo Clarendoniano, OCT [:editio minor].

Hoffmann, Ph. [2000]: "La triade chaldaïque ἔρως, ἀλήθεια, πίστις: de Proclus à Simplicius", in A.Ph. Segonds et C. Steel (eds. avec

l'assistance de C. Luna et A.F. Mettraux), *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne*, Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998) en l'honneur de H.D. Saffrey et L.G. Westerink, Leuven University Press – Paris, Les Belles Lettres, pp.459-489.

Hoffmann, Ph. [2011]: “*Erôs, Alêtheia, Pistis ... et Elpis : Tétrade chaldaïque, triade néoplatonicienne (Fr. 46 des Places, P 26 Kroll)*”, in H. Seng and M. Tardieu(eds.), *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel. Kontext, Interpretation, Rezeption*, (Actes du Colloque de l'Université de Konstanz, 15-18 Novembre 2006), Universitätsverlag, (coll. « Bibliotheca Chaldaica », 2), Heidelberg, pp.255-324.

Horn, G. [1925]: “*Amour et extase d'après Denys l'aréopagite*”, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, VI (1925), 278-289; (réédité en 1964 par Culture et Civilisation; réimprimé en Belgique).

Johnson, M. - Tarrant, H. [2012]: *Alcibiades and the Socratic Lover-Educator*, ed. by M. Johnson and H. Tarrant, Bristol Classical Press, London.

Kahn, C.H. [1987]: “*Plato's Theory of Desire*”, *Review of Metaphysics*, 41:1 (1987:Sept.), 77-103.

Καλλιγάς, Π. [1998]: *Ηθική και Κοσμολογία στη φιλοσοφία του Πλωτίνου: Ερμηνευτικό υπόμνημα στις δύο πρώτες Ἐννεάδες*, [*Ethics and Cosmology in Plotinus' philosophy: Commentary on the first two Enneads*], Doctoral Dissertation, National Technical University of Athens [Ε.Μ.Π.], General Department, Αθήνα, [available online at

<http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesisBookReader/id/11112#page/1/mode/2up>. This work contains the commentary of the two following volumes: *Πλωτίνου Ἐννεὰς Πρώτη* and *Πλωτίνου Ἐννεὰς Δευτέρα*, ancient text, transl., commentary by. Παῦλος Καλλιγᾶς, Academy of Athens, Βιβλιοθήκη Α. Μανούση 2 and 4, Centre for Research of Greek and Latin Literature, Ἀθῆναι, 1994 and 1997.]

Καλλιγᾶς, Π. [2004-2013]: *Πλωτίνου Ἐννεὰς Τρίτη* and *Πλωτίνου Ἐννεὰς Πέμπτη*, ancient text, transl., commentary by. Π. Καλλιγᾶς, Academy of Athens, Βιβλιοθήκη Α. Μανούση 5 and 12, Centre for Research of Greek and Latin Literature, Ἀθῆναι.

Καλλιγᾶς, Π. [2009]: Πρόκλου, *Ἡ ἱερατικὴ τέχνη – Οἱ ὕμνοι*, [*The hieratic art – The hymns*], introduction, translation, comments by Π. Καλλιγᾶς, στιγμή, Library of Ancient Authors-no.50, Athens.

Κάλφας, Β. [2009]: “Ὁ ἐρωτας στον Πλάτωνα”, [“Eros in Plato”], *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες*, [*Archaeology and Arts*, issue devoted to «Περί Ἐρωτος...»], 109 (2008:Dec.), 10a-15b (with an English abstract in p.15b)

Kelessidou-Galanos, A. [1972]: “Le voyage erotique de l’âme dans la mystique plotinienne”, *Πλάτων. Δελτίον τῆς Ἐταιρείας Ἑλλήνων Φιλολόγων*, [*Plato. Bulletin of the Society of Greek Philologists*], 24:47/48 (1972), 88-101.

Kirk, G.S. – Raven, J.E. – Schofield, M. [1983]: *The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a selection of Texts*, CUP, Cambridge, (1957; last reprint: 2005).

Koch, H. [1900]: *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen. Eine litterarhistorische Untersuchung*, Mainz, F. Kirchheim.

Kraut, R. [1973]: "Love, Egoism and Political Office in Plato", *The Philosophical Review*, vol.82, no.3 (July 1973), 330-344.

Kraut, R. [1992]: "The defense of justice in Plato's *Republic*", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. by R. Kraut, CUP, Cambridge, (repr. 1999), pp.311-337.

Lacrosse, J. [1994]: *L' amour chez Plotin. Erôs hénologique, Erôs noétique, Erôs psychique*, Ousia, Cahiers de Philosophie Ancienne No 11, Bruxelles.

Lankila, T. [2009]: "Aphrodite in Proclus' Theology", *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture*, 3 (2009), 21-43.

Larchet, J.-Cl. [1996]: "L'amour des ennemis selon saint Silouane l'Athonite et dans la tradition patristique", *Buisson Ardent. Cahiers Saint-Silouane L'athonite*, (Diffusion CERF), 2 (1996), 66-95.

Layne, D. [2009]: *Double Ignorance: An Examination of Socratic Moral Wisdom*, PhD dissertation submitted to KU Leuven.

Layne, D.A. - Tarrant, H. [forthcoming]: *Neo-Socratics: Late Antiquity and the Question of Socrates*, ed. by D.A. Layne and H. Tarrant, University of Pennsylvania Press, (forthcoming in Sept. 2014).

Liddell, H.G. - Scott, R. – Jones, H.S. (-McKenzie, R.) [1940]: *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented throughout by Sir H. Stuart Jones with the assistance of R. McKenzie, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Lossky, Vl. [1974]: *In the image and likeness of God*, (trns. by T.E. Bird et al.), St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY.

Lossky, Vl. [1976]: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY; (translated from French by members of the "Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius" and first published in English by J. Clarke & Co. Ltd., Cambridge, 1957).

Loudovikos, N. [2002]: "Eucharist and salvation: an apophatic theology of consubstantiality. A commentary on St. Maximus the Confessor", relazione presentata al Convegno internazionale di dialogo con l'Ortodossia 'Salvezza in Cristo o salvezza dal peccato? Le prospettive teologiche sulla salvezza e sull'uomo nell'Ortodossia e nelle tradizioni cristiane occidentali', Torino, 23 e 24 maggio 2002, available online at <http://www.fga.it/fileadmin/storico/UPLOAD/ALL/CEA/30.pdf> and accessed on 19/11/2013. (This paper is a chapter from π. Νικόλαος Λουδοβίκος [2002]: *Η αποφατική εκκλησιολογία του ομοουσίου. Η αρχέγονη Εκκλησία σήμερα*, Αρμός, Αθήνα, and has been translated by Dn. Chrys. Nassis.)

Loudovikos, N. [2010]: *A Eucharistic Ontology. Maximus the Confessor's eschatological ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, trnsl. E. Theokritoff, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA.

Loudovikos, N. [2011]: "Person instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' final theological position", *The Heythrop Journal*, 52 (2011), 684-699. [The article was already available online in *The Heythrop Journal* 48 (2009), 1-16: no. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2265.2009.00547.x.]

Loudovikos, N. [2013]: "Possession or wholeness? St Maximus the Confessor and John Zizioulas on person, nature and will", *Participatio. Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*, vol.4: 'T.F. Torrance and Orthodoxy', (2013), 258-286; [available only online at www.tftorrance.org/journal/participatio_vol_4_2013.pdf and accessed on 17/06/2014. Loudovikos' article is an abridged and revised version of idem, "Hell and Heaven, Nature and Person. C. Yannaras, J. Zizioulas, D. Staniloae and Maximus the Confessor", which was available online at http://www.academia.edu/5066610/Hell_and_Heaven_Nature_and_Person_Yannaras_Zizioulas_Staniloae_and_Maximus_the_Confessor_Updated (work in progress) and was accessed on 10/12/2013, pp.1-47.]

Louth, A. [1989]: *Denys the Areopagite*, (series: Outstanding Christian Thinkers), Continuum, London, NY; (reissued: 2001).

Louth, A. [1993]: "St. Denys the Areopagite and St. Maximus the Confessor: a Question of Influence", *Studia Patristica*, vol.27 (1993), pp.166-174.

Louth, A. [2004]: "The Cosmic Vision of Saint Maximos the Confessor", in Clayton-Peacocke [2004], pp.184-196.

Louth, A. [2008a]: "The reception of Dionysius up to Maximus the Confessor", *Modern Theology*, 24.4 (Oct. 2008), 573-583 (= Coakley-Stang [2009], pp.43-54).

Louth, A. [2008b]: "The reception of Dionysius in the Byzantine world: Maximus to Palamas", *Modern Theology*, 24.4 (Oct. 2008), 585-599 (= Coakley-Stang [2009], pp.55-70.)

Louth, A. [2009]: "Some recent works by Christos Yannaras in English translation", *Modern Theology*, 25.2 (April 2009), 329-340.

Louth, A. [2010]: "The nature of Eastern Orthodox Theology", Lecture at the opening of the Amsterdam Centre for Eastern Orthodox Theology, (ACEOT), on 28 May 2010 at VU University Amsterdam, available online at <http://www.aceot.nl/files/The%20Nature%20of%20Eastern%20Orthodox%20Theology.pdf> and accessed on 16/10/2013.

Luibheid, C. - Rorem, P. [1987]: Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, trnsl. by C. Luibheid, foreword, notes and trnsl. collaboration by P. Rorem, preface by R. Roques, introductions by J. Pelikan, J. Leclercq, K.

Froehlich, Paulist Press, *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, New York, Mahwah.

Λουδοβίκος, Ν. [2003]: *Ψυχανάλυση και Ορθόδοξη Θεολογία. Περί επιθυμίας, καθολικότητας και εσχατολογίας*, [Psychanalysis and Orthodox Theology. On desire, catholicity and eschatology], εκδ. Άρμός, Athens, (2006).

Mahoney, T.A. [1996]: "Is Socratic erōs in the *Symposium* Egoistic?", in *Apeiron. A journal for ancient philosophy and science*, vol.29, no.1 (March 1996), 1-18.

Manos, A. [1995]: "The Neoplatonic interpretation as to the teaching of divine love in Dionysius Areopagite", *Diotima*, 23 (1995), 55-59.

Μάνος, Α. [2006]: *Πρόκλος, ό Πλατωνικός Διάδοχος. Η έπιστήμη τών όντων μυσταγωγός προς την θεά του Ένός*, [Proclus, the Platonic Successor. The science of beings as initiator to the vision of the One], εκδ. Γρηγόρη, Athens.

Maraguianou, E. [1990]: *L'amour et la mort chez Platon et ses interpretes*, thèse de Doctorat d'Etat, Universite François Rabelais, Tours; (Atelier National de Reproduction des Theses, Universite de Lille III: available online at <http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesis/BookReader/id/2621#page/1/mode/1up>).

Martijn, M. [2010]: *Proclus on nature: philosophy of nature and its methods in Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Koninklijke Brill NV, (Philosophia antiqua; v.121), Leiden, The Netherlands.

May, S. [2011]: *Love. A History*, Yale University Press.

McCabe, M.M. [2008]: "Plato's Ways of Writing", in G. Fine (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, OUP, Oxford, pp.88–113.

McGinn, B. [1991]: *The Foundations of Mysticism. Origins to the Fifth Century*, vol. 1 of *The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, New York, Crossroad.

McGinn, B. [1996]: "God as Eros: Metaphysical Foundations of Christian Mysticism", in B. Nassif (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Theology. Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., pp.189-209.

Meyendorff, J. [1969]: *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, (trns. Y. Dubois), Corpus Books, Washington, DC.

Miller, M. [2007]: "Beginning the 'Longer Way'", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. by G.R.F. Ferrari, CUP, Cambridge, pp.310-344.

Miller, P.C. [1992]: "'Plenty sleeps there': the myth of Eros and Psyche in Plotinus and Gnosticism", in R.T. Wallis (ed.) - J. Bregman (associate ed.), *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, (International Society for Neoplatonic

Studies, vol.6 in "Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern", R. Baine Harris, general ed.), State University of NY Press, Albany, pp.223-238.

Monrad, M.J. [1888]: "Ueber den sachlichen Zusammenhang der Neuplatonischen Philosophie mit vorhergehenden Denkrichtungen, besonders mit dem Skepticismus", in *Philosophische Monatshefte*, Heidelberg, Verlag von Georg Weiss, vol.24, pp.156-193.

Mortley, R. [1980]: "Love in Plato and Plotinus", *Antichthon*, Australian Society for Classical Studies, vol.14 (1980), 45-52.

Μουτσόπουλος, Ε. [1978]: «Ὄντολογία καὶ τέχνη παρὰ Πλωτίνω», ["Ontology and art in Plotinus"], in idem, *Φιλοσοφικοί Προβληματισμοί*, [*Philosophical Problems*], vol.2, *Αναδρομαὶ καὶ Αναδομήσεις*, University of Athens, Ἀθήναι, pp.169-171.

Moutsopoulos, E. [1998]: "D'Aristote à Proclus. Mouvement et désir de l'Un dans la *Théologie Platonicienne*", in idem, *Philosophie de la Culture Grecque*, Academie d'Athènes, Athens, pp.257-262.

Μπέγζος, Μ.Π. [2000]: *Διόνυσος και Διονύσιος. Ελληνισμός και Χριστιανισμός στη συγκριτική φιλοσοφία της θρησκείας*, [*Dionysos and Dionysius. Hellenism and Christianity in the comparative philosophy of religion*], Ελληνικά Γράμματα, Αθήνα.

Niarchos, C.G. [1995]: "Good, beauty, and eros in Dionysius' doctrine of divine causality", *Diotima*, 23 (1995), 106-108.

Nussbaum, M.C. [2001]: *The Fragility of Goodness. Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, CUP, Cambridge, (revised edition; ¹1986).

Nygren, A. [1953]: *Agape and Eros. Part I. A Study of the Christian Idea of Love* (¹1932). *Part II. The History of the Christian Idea of Love* (¹1938-'39), trans. in one vol. by Ph. S. Watson, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

O'Connell, R.J. S.J. [1981]: "*Erōs and Philia in Plato's moral cosmos*", in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought. Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong*, ed. by H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus, Variorum Publications Ltd., Great Britain.

O'Meara, D.J. [2003]: *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, OUP, Oxford.

O'Neill, W. [1965]: *Proclus: Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, translation and Commentary by W. O'Neill, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, (²1971). Reprinted in vol. VI of The Prometheus Trust's "*Platonic Texts and Translations Series*", (Westbury, 2011), along with Westerink's edition of the text [1962].

Osborne, C. [1994]: *Eros unveiled. Plato and the God of Love*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, (repr. 2002).

Papanikolaou, A. [2006]: "*Liberating Eros: Confession and Desire*", *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 26.1 (2006), 115-136.

Papanikolaou, A. [2008]: "Personhood and its exponents in twentieth-century Orthodox theology", in M.B. Cunningham and E. Theokritoff (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, CUP, Cambridge, pp.232-245.

Pépin, J. [1976]: *Mythe et Allégorie. Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris, (nouvelle édition, revue et augmentée; 1958: Aubier).

Perl, E.D. [2007]: *Theophany. The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, State University of New York Press, (SUNY series in ancient Greek philosophy; ed. by A. Preus), Albany, NY.

Perl, E.D. [2013]: "Hierarchy and love in St. Dionysius the Areopagite", in J. Chryssavgis – B. V. Foltz (eds.), *Toward an Ecology of Transfiguration. Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Environment, Nature, and Creation*, with a Prefatory Letter from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and a Foreword by B. McKibben, (Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought), Fordham University Press, (NY), pp.23-33 (and 419: notes).

Pigler, A. [2002]: *Plotin. Une Métaphysique de l'Amour. L'amour comme structure du monde intelligible*, Tradition de la Pensée Classique, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris.

Price, A.W. [1989]: *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, (reprint: 2004).

Παπαθανασίου, Θ. [2011]: «Ένας ησυχαστής του Αγίου όρους στην καρδιά της πόλης: π. Πορφύριος Καυσοκαλυβίτης» [in Greek: “A hesychast of the Holy Mountain in the heart of the city: f. Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia”, *Σύναξη*, 117 (2011), 50-67 (available online through ‘Antifono’, <http://www.antifono.gr/portal/κατηγορίες/θεολογία-θρησκευολογία/γραπτός-λόγος/4661-ένας-ησυχαστής-του-αγίου-όρους-στην-καρδιά-της-πόλης-π-πορφύριος-καυσοκαλυβίτης-1906-1991.html> and accessed on 20/01/2014).

Quispel, G. [1979]: “God is Eros”, in W.R. Schoedel – R.L. Wilken (eds.), *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition in honorem Robert M. Grant*, éditions Beauchesne, (Théologie Historique; collection fondée par J. Daniélou, dirigée par C. Kannengiesser, no 54), Paris, pp.189-205.

Reeve, C.D.C. [2006]: *Plato on Love. Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades and selections from Republic and Laws*, edited (with introductions and notes) by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett, Indianapolis, (2007).

Remes, P. [2006]: “Plotinus's Ethics of Disinterested Interest”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, (published by The Johns Hopkins University Press), 44:1 (2006:Jan.), 1–23.

Rhodes, J.M. [2003]: *Eros, Wisdom, and Silence. Plato's Erotic Dialogues*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia.

Riggs, T. [2009]: "Eros as hierarchical Principle: A Re-evaluation of Dionysius' Neoplatonism", *Dionysius*, XXVII (2009:Dec.), 71-96.

Rist, J.M. [1964]: *Eros and Psyche. Studies in Plato, Plotinus, and Origen*, (*Phoenix*, Journal of the Classical Association of Canada, Supplementary Volume VI), University of Toronto Press.

Rist, J.M. [1966]: "A Note on Eros and Agape in Pseudo-Dionysius", *Vigiliae Christianae*, 20 (1966), 235-243; (North-Holland Publishing Co., Amsterdam. The article has been reprinted as ch. XVI in Rist [1985]).

Rist, J.M. [1970]: "Some interpretations of Agape and Eros", in C.W. Kegley (ed.), *The Philosophy and Theology of Anders Nygren*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Illinois, pp.156-173 and (notes: pp.) 406-409; (reprinted as ch. I in Rist [1985]).

Rist, J.M. [1985]: *Platonism and its Christian Heritage*, Variorum Reprints, London.

Rist, J.M. [1999]: "Love, Knowledge and Incarnation in Pseudo-Dionysius", in J.J. Cleary (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism. Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, Ashgate, Aldershot, Brookfield USA, Singapore, Sydney, pp.375-388.

Robin, L. [1933]: *La théorie platonicienne de l'Amour*, F. Alcan, Paris, (1908).

Romano, F. [1984]: "La passione amorosa in Plotino", *Discorsi*, 4.2 (1984), 7-21.

Rorem, P. [1993]: *Pseudo-Dionysius. A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence*, OUP, NY, Oxford.

Rowe, C.J. [21988]: *Plato. Phaedrus*, with transl. and comm. by C.J. Rowe, Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, Oxford, 1986.

Ράμφος, Σ. [21999]: *Φιλόσοφος και Θεῖος Ἔρως. Από τὸ Συμπόσιον τοῦ Πλάτωνος στοὺς ὕμνους θεῖων ἐρώτων τοῦ ἁγίου Συμεών, τὸ ἐπίκλην Νέου Θεολόγου*, [*Philosophical and Divine Eros. From Plato's Symposium to St Symeon, the so-called New Theologian's Hymns of divine eros*], Ἀρμός, Athens, (1989).

Saffrey, H.-D. [1982]: "New objective links between the pseudo-Dionysius and Proclus", (transl. by M. Brennan), in D.J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, SUNY Press, (Studies in Neoplatonism, vol.3), Albany, NY, pp.64-74 (and pp.246-248: notes).

Sakharov, N.V. [2002]: *I love, therefore I am: the theological legacy of Archimandrite Sophrony*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY; (revised ed. of *Amo ergo sum*).

Santas, G. [1988]: *Plato & Freud. Two Theories of Love*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Schäfer, C. [2006]: "Μονή, πρόοδος und ἐπιστροφή in der Philosophie des Proklos und des Areopagiten Dionysius", in M. Perkams – R.M. Piccione (eds.), *Proklos. Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik. Akten der*

Konferenz in Jena am 18.-20. September 2003, Brill, (*Philosophia Antiqua*, vol.XCVIII), Leiden, Boston, pp.340-362.

Schwyzler, R.T. [1987]: "Corrigenda ad Plotini Textum", *Museum Helveticum. Schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft*, Schwabe & Co AG Verlag, Basel, vol.44, fasc.3, pp.127-233.

Segonds, A.Ph. [1985-1986]: Proclus, *Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon*, texte établi et traduit by A.Ph. Segonds, 2 vols., Les Belles Lettres, (Coll. des Un. de France, sous le patronage de Assoc. G. Budé), Paris.

Sheffield, F.C.C. [2011]: "Beyond eros: Plato on Friendship in the *Phaedrus*", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol.CXI, part 2 (2011), pp.251-273.

Siorvanes, L. [1996]: *Proclus: neo-Platonic philosophy and science*, Yale University Press/Edinburgh Univ. Press, Gr. Britain.

Smith, A. [2007]: "Plotinus and the myth of Love", in J.H.D. Scourfield (ed.), *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity. Inheritance, Authority, and Change*, The Classical Press of Wales, pp.233-245.

Sorabji, R. [1987]: "Infinity and the Creation", in idem (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, Duckworth, London, pp.164-178.

Staab, K. [1933]: *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt*, Aschendorff, Münster.

Stang, Ch.M [2012]: *Apophysis and Pseudonymity in Dionysius the Areopagite. "No longer I"*, Oxford Early Christian Studies, OUP, Oxford.

Stathopoulou, G.M. [1999]: "Eros in Plotinus", *Φιλοσοφία. Yearbook of the Research Centre for Greek Philosophy*, Academy of Athens, vol.29 (1999), 83-88.

Stiglmayr, J. [1895]: "Der Neuplatoniker Proklus als Vorlage des sogenannten Dionysius Areopagita in der Lehre vom Übel", *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 16 (1895), 253-273 and 721-748.

Suchla, B.R. [1980]: *Die sogenannten Maximus-Scholien des Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum*, Nachrichten der Akademie des Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philol.-hist. Kl. 3, Göttingen.

Suchla, B.R. [1990]: *Corpus Dionysiacum, vol.I, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, De Divinis Nominibus*, Patristische Texte und Studien, Band 33, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York.

Σιάσος, Λ.Χρ. [1984]: *Εραστές της Αλήθειας. Έρευνα στις αφετηρίες και στη συγκρότηση της θεολογικής γνωσιολογίας κατά τον Πρόκλο και το Διονύσιο Αρεοπαγίτη* [*Lovers of Truth. An Investigation into the Origins and the Composition of the Theological Gnosiology according to Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite*], doctoral dissertation, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, *Επιστημονική Επετηρίδα Θεολογικής Σχολής*, παράρτημα no.45 of vol.28, Θεσσαλονίκη.

Συκουτρῆς, Ἰ. [ᾲ1949]: *Πλάτωνος Συμπόσιον*, text, trnsl. and interpretation by Ἰωάννης Συκουτρῆς, Academy of Athens, Hellenic Library no.1, Bookshop of “Hestia”, I.D. Kollaros & ΣΙΑΣ Α.Ε., ᾲ1934, (ᾲ1976, ᾲ1994).

Τερέζης, Χ. [1986]: *Διάμεσα-Αρχέτυπα στον Πρόκλο και τον Ψευδο-Διονύσιο Αρεοπαγίτη. Από τον ὕστερο Νεοπλατωνισμό στις απαρχές της Βυζαντινῆς φιλοσοφίας*, [*Intermediaries-Archetypes in Proclus and pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. From late Neoplatonism to the beginnings of Byzantine philosophy*], doctoral dissertation, Ἰωάννινα, (typescript; available online at <http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesis/BookReader/id/0579#page/1/mode/1up>).

Τερέζης, Χ. [2002]: “Οἱ θεολογικοὶ καὶ οἱ ἀνθρωπολογικοὶ ὄροι τοῦ ἔρωτα στὸν Νεοπλατωνικό Πρόκλο”, [“The theological and anthropological conditions of eros in the Neoplatonic Proclus”], in Α.Χ. Σιάσος (ed.), *Ἰμάτια Φωτὸς Ἀρρήτου. Διεπιστημονικὴ προσέγγιση τοῦ προσώπου*, [*Garments of Ineffable Light. Inter-scholarly approach to the person*], ἐκδ. Π.Σ. Πουρναρᾶ, Thessaloniki, pp.43-70.

Τερέζης, Χ. [2005]: *Πρόκλος. Διαλεκτικὴ και θεωρία στον νεοπλατωνικό Πρόκλο. Ἐνα σχόλιο στον πλατωνικό διάλογο Ἀλκιβιάδης*, [*Proclus. Dialectics and contemplation in the Neoplatonic Proclus. A comment on the Platonic dialogue Alcibiades*], intro.-trnsl.-interpretive comments by Χρ. Τερέζης, ἐκδ. Ζῆτρος, Θεσσαλονίκη.

Terezis, Ch. [2012]: "Aspects of the theory of Dionysius the Areopagite concerning the divine processions as generating principles of the cosmos", *Augustinianum*, 52:2 (2012:Dec.), 441-457.

Timotin, A. [2012]: *La démonologie platonicienne: histoire de la notion de daimōn de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens*, *Philosophia Antiqua*, vol.128, Brill, the Netherlands.

Tollefsen, T.T. [2012]: *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, OUP, Oxford.

Tornau, C. [2006]: "Der Eros und das Gute bei Plotin und Proklos", in M. Perkams – R.M. Piccione (eds.), *Proklos. Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik. Akten der Konferenz in Jena am 18.-20. September 2003*, Brill, (*Philosophia Antiqua. A series of Studies on Ancient Philosophy*, vol.XCVIII), Leiden, Boston, pp.201-229.

Ucciani, L. [1998]: *Sur Plotin: la Gnose et l' Amour*, editions Kimé, Paris.

Van Riel, G. [2001]: "Horizontalism or Verticalism? Proclus vs Plotinus on the Procession of Matter", *Phronesis*, 46.2 (2001), 129-153.

Van Riel, G. [forthcoming]: "The One, the Henads, and the Principles", in *All From One. A Guide to Proclus*, ed. by P. d'Hoine and M. Martijn, OUP, Oxford, (pp.1-23: typescript).

Verbeke, G. [1982]: "Some later Neoplatonic views on Divine Creation and the Eternity of the World", in D.J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and*

Christian Thought, SUNY Press, (Studies in Neoplatonism, vol.3), Albany, N.Y., pp.45-53 (and pp.241-244: notes).

Vernant, J.-P. [1990]: "One... Two... Three: *Erōs*", (trnsl. by D. Lyons), in D.M. Halperin, J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (eds.), *Before Sexuality. The construction of erotic experience in the ancient Greek world*, PUP, Princeton, N.J., pp.465-478.

Vlastos, G. [1965]: "The Disorderly Motion in the *Timaeus*", in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, ed. by R.E. Allen, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London/New York, Humanities Press, pp.379-420; (reprinted in "Routledge Library Editions: Plato", Routledge, 2013).

Vlastos, G. [1973]: "The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato", in idem, *Platonic Studies*, PUP, Princeton, pp.3-34.

Vogel, C.J. De [1963]: "Amor quo caelum regitur", *Vivarium*, 1 (1963), 2-34.

Vogel, C.J. De [1981]: "Greek cosmic love and the Christian love of God. Boethius, Dionysius the Areopagite and the author of the fourth Gospel", *Vigiliae Christianae*, 35 (1981; North-Holland Publishing Company), 57-81.

Völker, W. [1958]: *Kontemplation und Ekstase bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*, F. Steiner, Wiesbaden.

Ware, Kallistos [21995]: *The Orthodox Way*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY (: second revised edition; first published by A.R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1979).

Ware, Κάλλιστος [2013]: *Τό ἀνθρώπινο πρόσωπο ὡς εἰκόνα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος*, [*The human person as image of the Holy Trinity*], trnsl. Π. Τσαλίκη-Κιοσόγλου, ἐκδ. Παρρησία, Ἀθήνα. (This is an adapted translation of a part of Metropolitan of Diokleia, Kallistos' IOCS lectures on "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity", [esp.IV.2], available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txlatOappmA> and accessed on 20/11/2013).

Wear, S.K. – Dillon, J. [2007]: *Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neoplatonist Tradition. Despoiling the Hellenes*, Ashgate, (Ashgate studies in philosophy & theology in late antiquity), Aldershot and Burlington, VT.

Westerink, L.G. [1959]: "Exzerpte aus Proklos' *Enneaden-Kommentar* bei Psellos", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 52 (1959), 1-10.

Westerink, L.G. [21962]: *Proclus: Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, text edited by L.G. Westerink, North Holland Publishing, Amsterdam, (1954). Reprinted in vol. VI of The Prometheus Trust's "Platonic Texts and Translations Series", along with O'Neill's translation and commentary [1965].

Whittaker Th. [41928]: *The Neo-Platonists. A study in the history of Hellenism*, fourth edition with a supplement on the *Commentaries* of

Proclus, Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hildesheim, (1901; repr. 1961).

Williams, B. [1999]: "The analogy of city and soul in Plato's *Republic*", in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato*, vol.2: *Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, pp.255-264.

Williams, B. [2007]: "Pagan Justice and Christian Love", in idem, *The Sense of the Past. Essays in the history of philosophy*, ed. and with an introduction by M. Burnyeat, PUP, Princeton.

Wolters, A.M. [1984]: *Plotinus "On Eros". A detailed exegetical study of Enneads III.5*, Toronto, Wedge Publishing Foundation; (Ph.D. dissertation, Amsterdam, 1972).

Χατζημιχαήλ, Δ.Κ. [2008]: *Διονύσιος Ἀρεοπαγίτης, Περί Θείων Ὀνομάτων - Περί Μυστικῆς Θεολογίας*, preface by Χρ. Τερέζης, introduction by Α.Ο. Πολυχρονιάδης, text-trnsl.-comments by Δ.Κ. Χατζημιχαήλ, ἐκδ. Ζῆτρος, Θεσσαλονίκη.

Χριστοδουλίδη-Μαζαράκη, Α. [1983]: *Το ερωτικό στοιχείο στην πλατωνική φιλοσοφία. Πλάτων και Freud*, [*The erotic element in Platonic philosophy. Plato and Freud*], doctoral thesis, Athens, (typescript; available online at <http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesisBookReader/id/11498#page/1/mode/1up>).

Yannaras, Christos [2005]: *On the absence and unknowability of God. Heidegger and the Areopagite*, trnsl. by H. Ventis, edited and with an introduction by A. Louth, T.&T. Clark, London.

Yannaras, Chr. [2007]: *Person and Eros*, trnsl. by Norman Russell, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA.

Zizioulas, John D. [1985]: *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, (Contemporary Greek Theologians Series, No 4), Crestwood, NY.

Ζωγραφίδης, Γ. [2009]: "Βυζαντινοί έρωτες, θεϊκοί και ανθρωπινοι... Η διαλεκτική της επιθυμίας και της απάθειας", ["Byzantine Erotos, Divine and Human: The Dialectic of Desire and Apathy"], *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες*, [Archaeology and Arts, issue devoted to «Περί Έρωτος και Αγάπης»], 110 (2009:March), 12a-21b (with an English abstract in p.21b).