Erôs, the Son, and the Gods as Metaphysical Principles in Proclus and Dionysius

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The importance of love in the Dionysian corpus, signified there by *erôs*, has long been recognized by scholars, although they disagree as to whether or not this *erôs* is a properly *Christian* love. On the other hand, the importance of love for the philosophy of Proclus, inspiration for much of Dionysius' thought, has been discounted as a minor detail when it is not ignored entirely. This treatment seems to be highly inconsistent with the view which much modern scholarship indicates, and which I have argued elsewhere,[1] that Dionysius' theology is profoundly influenced by Proclus. My intention here is to contribute further to rectification of this inconsistency by giving as precise an account as the material (and textual space) allows, of the metaphysical grounding of *erôs* according to both Proclus and Dionysius.[2] I shall show that, for both Proclus and Dionysius, *erôs* has a pre-ontological foundation within the Trinity for the latter and within the ranks of the Gods for the former, although I shall be careful to indicate the ways in which Dionysius diverges significantly from Proclus on the subject.[3] Accordingly, the following analysis

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1. T. Riggs, "*Eros* as Hierarchical Principle: A Re-evaluation of Dionysius' Neoplatonism," *Dionysius* 27 (2009): 71–96.

2. All of the translations of texts from these authors are my own unless otherwise noted.

3. Dionysius' relationship to, and borrowings from, Proclus have been traced in various ways, most significantly by H. Koch, "Proklus als Quelle des Dionysius Areopagita in der Lehre vom Bösen," *Philologus* 54 (1895): 438–54; Josef Stiglmayr, "Der Neuplatoniker Proclus als Vorlage des sogen: Dionysius Areopagita in der Lehre vom Uebel," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 16 (1895): 253–73; H.D. Saffrey, "Un lien objectif entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus," *Studia Patristica* 9 (1966): 98–105; *ibid.*, "New Objective Links Between the Pseudo-Dionysius and Proclus," in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. Dominic J. O'Meara (Albany: State U of New York Press, 1982), 64–74; Carlos Steel, "Denys et Proclus: L'existence du mal," In *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa posterité en Orient et en Occident*, ed. Ysabel de Andia (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 89–116; and István Perczel, "Pseudo-Dionysius and the Platonic Theology, A Preliminary Study," in *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,* ed. A.Ph. Segonds and C. Steel, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series I, 26 (Leuven/Paris: Leuven University Press/Les Belles Lettres, 2000): 491–532.

need not imply that Dionysius simply copied Proclus without modifying the latter's work for his own purposes; in fact, it will become apparent to any reader of Dionysius that the opposite is the case. Nevertheless, we will find that for both Proclus and Dionysius, *erôs* is a fundamental concept for their understanding of self-discovery, self-return and self-formation, a principle without which all philosophy is futile.

In terms of the Dionysian conception of love, the greater part of scholarship on the subject of love has focused on the metaphysical aspects of the term *erôs* as a name of God associated with the name "Good" at *DN* 1.4.[4] Particular attention is paid by most scholars to the identification which he makes between the terms *erôs* and *agapê*, and how this bears upon the authenticity of the Christian character of his work. In one way or another, all of the scholars who have approached this subject have felt compelled to enter into debate with the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren who, between 1932 and 1939, published a number of volumes on the "history" of the terms *agapê* and *erôs* from the New Testament to Martin Luther.[5] To summarize his position briefly: *agapê* is the only term which is able to authentically express the specifically Christian form of *theocentric*, self-giving love which is expressed in the New Testament, most notably by St. Paul and St. John of the Gospel, whereas *erôs* denotes a specifically Greek, *egocentric* love, which is motivated by the merit of the object of love.[6] The subsequent history of these two terms is an interplay of cross-contamination of *agapê* and *erôs* in both Christian and non-Christian authors, an interplay which results, according to Nygren, in a loss of the original meaning of Christ's message for centuries, until Martin Luther's Reformation. Dionysius does not escape Nygren's pen: despite Dionysius' assertion that, at the level of divinity, both *agapê* and *erôs* are synonymous, Nygren charges him with elevating *erôs*, and thus Greek

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4. *DN* 4.12 709B–D (157.9–158.18). Translations and citations of the works of Dionysius the Areopagite are made from the critical editions of the treatises in *Corpus Dionysiacum I: De Divinis Nominibus*, ed. B.R. Suchla (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990) and *Corpus Dionysiacum II: De Coelesti Hierarchia, De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia, De Mystica Theologia, Epistulae*, ed. G. Heil and A.M. Ritter (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991). When citing Dionysius' individual treatises, I will give the chapter divisions followed by the Migne pagination and the pagination and lineation, in parentheses, of the two volumes just indicated. These numbers will be preceded by abbreviated forms of the titles of the treatises: *DN* = *Divine Names*; *CH* = *Celestial Hierarchy*; *EH* = *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*; *MT* = *Mystical Theology*; *Ep.* = *Epistles*. *DN* is contained in the first volume, the rest of the treatises in the second.

5. I make use of the 1953 English translation of his work, A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros: A Study of the Christian Idea of Love*, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: SPCK, 1953). It does not take a reader long to realize that, for Nygren, the only people who properly understood the word *agape* were St. Paul, St. John, Martin Luther and, of course, Nygren himself. The rest of the tradition remains fundamentally in error according to this view.

6. Nygren, *Agape*, 205–210.

philosophy, over *agapê*, and thus over Christian theology. Nygren, following Martin Luther, asserts that Dionysius is "in all essentials a disciple of Plotinus and Proclus" and that, in his work, "the fundamental Neoplatonism is but scantily covered with an exceedingly thin Christian veneer."[7]

Nearly all of the scholars who have involved themselves in this debate,[8] including Nygren, allow to Proclus a 'down-flowing' love extending from the Divine to beings, although Nygren can only regard this 'down-flowing' love as a result of the influence of Christian *agapê* on Greek philosophy which otherwise maintains the doctrine of *erôs* as a primarily egocentric love.[9] The scholarly literature which attempts to rescue Dionysius' doctrine of *erôs* from Nygren is concerned, nearly without exception, to show that the 'down-flowing' love which Dionysius posits, at least as regards the Incarnation, is a genuine Christian love which, although having its foundation in neoplatonic philosophy, nevertheless moves beyond that philosophy by attributing *erôs* to the first principle.[10] This kind of reading constitutes a misunderstanding of Proclus' own reflections on the divine and serves to obscure the real differences between his and Dionysius' conceptions of *erôs*.

I shall begin, then, by outlining Proclus' account of the metaphysical grounding of *erôs* by means of a careful analysis of a number of pertinent passages and of the relatively scarce scholarly commentary which has taken note of them. When this task has been completed I will be able to locate a similar treatment of the subject by Dionysius by means of a similar kind of analysis, albeit one with a greater wealth of scholarly support.

Erôs Amongst the Gods

For Proclus, *erôs* is present first and foremost among the Gods or henads; the Gods are the first principles of the theology which he derives primarily from the Platonic dialogues, the Chaldaean Oracles, and Orphic poetry, but also from more traditional Greek sources like Homer[11] and Hesiod.[12]

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7. Nygren, *Agape*, 576.

8. S. Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΣ: *A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), at 126–27, qualifies the conception of *erôs* as a 'down-flowing' love according to Proclus by emphasizing its 'revertive' rather than its 'processive' character in the causal cycle of remaining, procession and reversion.

9. Nygren, *Agape*, 563–75; also see *ibid.*, 186–99.

10. Eric Perl seems to be alone in seeing a real continuity between Dionysius and his Neo-platonic predecessors. See e.g., E. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

11. The importance of Homer is mostly strongly affirmed by Proclus' determined defence, in his commentary on Plato's *Republic*, of his stature as an inspired poet against Plato's criticisms of the poets (in the mouth of Socrates no less).

12. A. Pertusi, (ed.), *Scholia vetera in Hesiodi Opera et dies* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1955).

Accordingly, the following investigation will take us deep into the realm of the henads and into the henadological language which separates, in thought, talk of the gods from talk of beings. The importance of this distinction has been greatly elaborated in recent articles by Edward Butler[13] and I shall make ample use of his insights in what follows.

In his *Platonic Theology*,[14] Proclus presents *erôs* as the third member of a triad of attributes—*pistis* (faith), *alêtheia* (truth) and *erôs*[15]—which has its origin amongst the Gods and proceeds from them across all levels of being, binding Gods to Gods and beings to Gods.[16] This triad is associated with another triad of attributes which Proclus locates among the Gods, namely that of *to agathon* (the Good), *to sophon* (Wisdom) and *to kalon* (the Beautiful).[17] What does it mean for both of these triads to be situated amongst the Gods? Before answering this question, I must first note the relation of priority which the triad of *to agathon—to sophon—to kalon* has to the triad of *pistis—alêtheia—erôs*. The former, superior triad, is the source of the latter and is representative of the transcendence of the Gods, while the latter is representative of the spiritual motion which, on the one hand, describes the free relationship of the Gods via their common possession of the superior triad and, on the other hand, produces Being out of the Gods' transcendence. This gives a clue to the answer but I must consider the nature of the Gods in some detail in order to give it the proper precision.

It is a well-known fact among scholars of Neoplatonism that Proclus, following his teacher Syrianus, attributed the affirmative conclusions of the second hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* to the orders of the Gods.[18] It is also a well-known fact that Proclus also attributes these same conclusions to the orders of Being. What is misunderstood more often than not is the relationship—more specifically the difference—between the henads and Being. As mentioned above, Edward Butler recently has done much to clarify this relationship; in particular, he emphasizes the difference in terminology which

13. E.P. Butler, "Polytheism and Individuality in the Henadic Manifold," *Dionysius* 23 (2005): 83–104; *idem*, "The Gods and Being in Proclus," *Dionysius* 26 (2008): 93–113.

14. Translations of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* will be cited according to the edition of the Greek in Proclus, *Theologie Platonicienne*, 5 vols., trans. and ed. H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–87). Citations will be indicated by *PT* followed by Saffrey and Westerink's book and chapter divisions and then their pagination and lineation.

15. I will use transliterated renditions of the Greek in the main body of the text for words such as *erôs*, *pistis* and *alêtheia*, which will be frequently repeated. Proclus further unfolds each member of the latter triad into a triad of attributes, but these divisions need not be considered in detail here.

16. *PT* III.22.81.11–20.

17. *Ibid*.

18. See Saffrey and Westerink's introduction to their translation and edition of the *Platonic Theology*, at LXXV–LXXXIX.

Proclus uses to describe the two groups, thereby emphasizing the paradoxical nature of talk about the henads as opposed to the intelligible nature of talk about Being. In doing so, he hopes to correct "the tendency to overlook unique logical and structural characteristics of the henadic manifold which set it apart from any *ontic* manifold."[19]

Butler argues convincingly, and with constant and diligent attention to Proclus' own explanations, that the henads are to be distinguished from noetic Forms not only by the degree of their union with each other but also by their absolute distinction from each other, that is to say by the superlative degree of their identity in distinction.[20] For example, at *In Parm.* 1048.11–26, Proclus explains that the henads are "all in all" (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν) whereas the Forms, as beings or realities, merely participate in each other (μετέχει μὲν ἀλλήλων), meaning that their powers and functions overlap but are not identical. Butler points to other differences in terminology: the Forms are characterized by such terms as "sameness" or "identity" (ταυτότης),[21] difference (ἑτερότης)[22] and unified (ἡνωμένος),[23] whereas the henads are characterized by such terms as "unity" (ἕνωσις),[24] "individuality" (ἰδιότης)[25] and "unitary" (ἑςιαίος).[26] The three characteristics of beings just mentioned imply relationships with each other which organize beings in a hierarchy of superior to inferior, cause to caused.[27] Conversely, those characteristics of the henads which I have listed point to the latter's non-relational status.[28] This is the paradoxical nature of the henads, what it means to be *hyperousios*, beyond Being, and thus beyond ontological categories.[29] Although they arrange themselves in a hierarchical order from more powerful to less,[30] they are neither arranged by way of

19. Butler, "Polytheism," 83.
20. *Ibid.*, *passim.*
21. *Ibid.*, 86; the example of *In Parm.*1048.11–26 is Butler's. I will cite the text of Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* according to the edition in *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, ed. C. Steel, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007). I will cite this text as *In Parm.* followed by the Cousin pagination and Steel lineation. Butler uses the Cousin lineation and so my citations may differ slightly from his.
22. *Ibid.*; again referring to *In Parm.*1048.11–26.
23. *Ibid.*, 90.
24. *Ibid.*, 86, 94; referring to *In Parm.*1048.11–26 cited on 86.
25. *Ibid.*, 87; citing *In Parm.*1049.
26. *Ibid.*, 90; citing *El. Th.*112.25–34. Proclus' *Elements of Theology* will be cited according to the edition of the Greek in Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, a revised text with translation, introduction and commentary by E.R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), Reprint. Citations will be indicated by *El. Th.* followed by Dodds' pagination and lineation.
27. *Ibid.*, 88–90.
28. *Ibid.*, 90–94.
29. Cf., e.g., *El. Th.*100.28–102.12.
30. *El. Th.*112.14–24; *ibid.*, 120.17–30.

substantial participation, nor by some dependence upon other henads, but rather by means of their own individuality and their specific power or role as a God.[31] Indeed, it is only through their powers that they are related to beings and can be known through and by beings.

Butler's insight into the relationship between the henads and the One is also of utmost importance. He identifies two kinds of procession, citing *In Parm.* 745: procession by way of unity (κατ᾽ ἕνωσιν) and procession by identity (ταυτότης).[32] The latter is characteristic of the procession of beings from Being whereas the former is characteristic of the procession of the henads from the One. Regarding this "production" of the henads by unity, Butler writes: "To think of the henads as caused at all, then, we must imagine the difference between producer and product as approaching zero, with no difference to separate them from their principle."[33] He takes this "imagining" a step further and demonstrates, through an analysis of a passage from *De Decem Dubitationes*[34] that the henads *are* the One; he explains it thus:

> Where it is a matter of the subsistence of the One and the Good *kath'huparxin,* which is generally where "we contemplate each thing in its own station [*kata tên heautou taxin*], neither in its cause nor in its resultant" (prop. 65),[35] the One and the Good exists *as each God.*[36]

Thus, the One, as first principle, is not anything other than each of the Gods, but rather is expressive of the contemplation of the henads prior to any taxonomical or individual distinction: the One is the character of their manner of subsistence.[37] Thus, procession by unity is not procession in the ontological sense since there is no One which is hypostatically beyond and prior to the henads as there is a cause (e.g., Intellect) beyond and prior to an effect (e.g., Soul). In his strongest statement of the identity of the One and the henads, and also the strongest statement of his defence of Proclus' polytheism, Butler writes that "There is *no such thing* as the One Itself, if we mean something *different* than the henads; Godhood is nothing but the Gods

31. Butler, "Polytheism," 91–92. This seems to be the essence of Butler's long argument concerning the distinction between the *hyparxeis* and *dunameis* of the gods.

32. *Ibid.*, 94–95. Butler notes that the procession by identity seems to be the same as the procession by difference, presented at *In Parm.* 1190. Perhaps these are indeed two ways of referring to the processive triad of identity—difference—similarity which Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, 74–76 shows to be associated with the triad remaining—procession—reversion.

33. *Ibid.*, 95.

34. *De Decem Dubitationes* X.63.

35. *El. Th.* 62.13–23.

36. Butler, "Polytheism," 97.

37. *Ibid.*, 98: "the One ultimately represents each God's uniqueness and absolute individuality." See also Butler, "Gods and Being," 99.

themselves." While this reduction of the One to the Gods may be contestable, nevertheless, I think that he is quite right in arguing that the Gods are the most complete and absolute individuals[38] and, at the same time, the most united in a union beyond the community of beings.[39]

What does all of this have to do with *erôs*? Fundamentally, it allows us to explore what Proclus means when he says that the Good, Wisdom and the Beautiful are attributes, which must be done before the role of *erôs* itself may be considered. I will return, then, to a consideration of the nature of the triad of the Good, Wisdom and the Beautiful in light of Butler's analysis of the relationship between the One and the henads.

At *El. Th.,* proposition 13, Proclus explicitly identifies the One with the Good as first principle:[40] "Every good is unificative of what participates it; and all unification is a good; and the Good is identical with the One."[41] He

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38. After all, their names, those which they have allowed us to know and have presented to us, are of utmost importance for Proclus: he works very hard in his *Platonic Theology* to understand how the Gods all work together to maintain the hierarchical order of reality.

39. *Ibid*. D.G. MacIsaac has criticized this interpretation in "The Origin of Determination in the Neoplatonism of Proclus," in *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr. Robert D. Crouse* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 141–72 at 148, arguing that by reducing the One to the henads, Butler is subverting Proclus' own ordering of the henads in relation to the One. Whether or not he was aware of this criticism when he wrote his "The Intelligible Gods in the *Platonic Theology* of Proclus," *Methexis* 21 (2008): 131–43, Butler has provided an answer of sorts in this paper. He argues there that the ordering has only to do with the activities of the henads in relation to the different orders of Being and not to the henads in their simplicity. My own view on the ordering is substantially the same, and so I should be inclined to accept Butler's reduction of the One to the henads. However, some qualification is necessary. Passages like *Elements*, proposition 113 (*El. Th.*101.5–15) where Proclus argues that the One is the 'preceding' (προηγουμένην) cause of the henads, ὡς ὁ νοερὸς τὸν νοῦν καὶ ὁ ψυχικὸς τὴν ψυχήν, and this because καὶ ἔστιν ἀνάλογον τὸ πλῆθος πανταχοῦ πρὸς τὴν αἰτίαν, seem to be more favorable to MacIsaac's suggested interpretation of the relationship between the One and the henads (he gives this interpretation directly after his criticism). In light of these competing, and (I think) both justified, interpretations, I will suggest here a compromise. I suggest that Proclus was, on the one hand, compelled by his own religious commitments to show how a 'many' could be the cause of the world, while, on the other hand, he was equally compelled by his commitments to the Platonic philosophy to explain this causality in terms of a procession from a 'one' to a 'many.' Thus, there is a certain tension between how the Gods are and how we can describe them. Conversely, Dionysius was compelled by his religious commitments to explain how a God who is one and three but not 'many' could be cause of the world. As we shall see below, he found Proclus' henadological language to be useful for explaining the relations of the Trinity. Naturally, his own use of this language is not without problems, insofar as it does not entirely avoid making God 'many' as he thinks it does.

40. The Good is identified as the first principle in proposition 12 (*El. Th.*14.1–23).

41. *El. Th.*14.24–25. Πᾶν ἀγαθὸν ἑνωτικόν ἐστι τῶν μετεχόντων αὐτοῦ, καὶ πᾶσα ἕνωσις ἀγαθόν, καὶ τἀγαθὸν τῷ ἑνὶ ταὐτόν. This is an application of proposition 118 to the attribute "Good."

does so again, although with reference to the plurality of henads, at *El. Th.* proposition 119: "Every God subsists according to a Goodness beyond being, and is good neither according to condition nor according to essence (for states and essences have a secondary and remote rank relatively to the Gods), but is good in a way beyond being."[42] The divine in both its absolutely unitary and ineffable expression, as the One, and in its plural and yet still ineffable expression, as the Gods or henads, is by its very nature good.

Thus, when we speak about the triad of the Good, Wisdom and Beauty—each of whose members correspond to the three intelligible triads which compose the intelligible order of Gods—we are indeed speaking about the unitary nature of *all* of the Gods individually and as a whole, but we are doing so through our own mode of knowing, that is through discursive reasoning. Furthermore, we only have this knowledge through the self-revelation of the Gods, in this case, through Plato[43] as a medium: Proclus draws this particular triad from Plato's *Phaedrus*.[44] This triad is but one of many which Proclus draws from various dialogues and is, essentially, one way among many of unfolding in thought the nature of the Gods through what the Gods reveal to us of themselves. Thus, we can say that *erôs* too is an attribute of the first principle insofar as the triad of *pistis—alêtheia—erôs* is 1) a series of attributes of the Gods revealed by the Gods in various sacred writings—in the Platonic dialogues and the Chaldean Oracles[45]—; 2) insofar as the same triad is a series proceeding from the superior attributes of *to agathon—to sophon—to kalon*; and 3) insofar as the henads are the One. This must put to rest interpretations such as that of de Vogel which would situate *erôs* as an attribute of, at best, a God on a low level of the henadic hierarchy which plays a relatively

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42. *Ibid.*, 104.16–19. Πᾶς θεὸς κατὰ τὴν ὑπερούσιον ἀγαθότητα ὑφέστηκε, καὶ ἔστιν ἀ γαθὸς οὔτε καθ' ἕξιν οὔτε καθ' οὐσίαν (καὶ γὰρ αἱ ἕξεις καὶ αἱ οὐσίαι δευτέραν καὶ πολλοστὴν ἔλαχον τάξιν ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν), ἀλλ' ὑπερουσίως.

43. That Proclus conceives of Plato as a divinely inspired writer is in no way controversial; rather he makes it quite clear that this is the case in the introduction to his *Platonic Theology* (*PT* I.1.5.1–8.15).

44. *PT* I.22.100.19–22.

45. See Philippe Hoffmann, "La Triade Chaldaïque ἔρω, ἀλήθεια, πίστις: de Proclus à Simplicius," in *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*, ed. A.H. Segonds et C. Steel. Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series I, 26 (Leuven/Paris: Leuven U Press/Les Belles Lettres, 2000), 459–89, for an investigation of the Neoplatonic harmonisation of the Chaldean triad of *erôs*, *alêtheia* and *pistis* with the same terms as found in Plato. Hoffmann, in considering how the triad is used by Proclus and Simplicius in particular, shows how the Neoplatonists introduced a religious aspect to Plato's treatment of these terms through this harmonisation.

minor role in Proclus' theology.[46] *Erôs* does, in fact, play a very significant role in Proclus' theology, particularly in explaining the relationship of the henads to each other and the procession and reversion from and to them that is experienced by beings.[47]

Before I consider the role of *erôs* in Proclus' thought, I shall first make a close examination of the triad of the Good, Wisdom and the Beautiful and its relationship to the ontological cycle of remaining, procession and reversion. This relationship will become apparent in reading the following passages, all of which deserve to be quoted at length:[48]

> For the Good of the Gods is the highest and most unitary term. Wisdom somehow brings to birth now intelligible light and the very First forms. In turn, Beauty[49] is founded in the highest Forms and shines forth the divine light and appears first in those which mount up [to the intelligible[50]].[51]

> Thus, the *Desirable* seats everything and possesses everything in itself, the *Capable* rouses everything to processions and procreations, and the *Perfect* completes those things which come forth in reversions and in rolling them up together. Through these three causes of all things, the Goodness of the Gods is the primary and most originating source and hearth of those things which have come to subsistence in any way whatsoever.[52]

46. C.J. de Vogel, "*Amor quo caelum regitur*," *Vivarium* 1 (1963): 2–34; *eadem*, "Greek Cosmic Love and the Christian Love of God: Boethius, Dionysius the Areopagite and the Author of the Fourth Gospel," *Vigiliae Christianae* 35 (1981): 57–81. Her interpretation rests on a judgment that *erôs* is not of great theological importance to Proclus, not only because of its origin in an inferior God (which is not correct in any case) but also on account of an observed absence of the term *erôs* in both the *Platonic Theology* and the *Elements of Theology*. However, *erôs* is clearly present, and discussed at length, in the first book of the former work (*PT* I.25) and is recapitulated in the third book (*PT* III.22). As for her observation of the absence of *erôs* in the *Elements of Theology*, this is founded upon an assumption that the object of this treatise is the full articulation of a concrete theology, as is the object of the *Platonic Theology*. However, this is not the case: while the *Elements* outlines the systematic structure of theology, a treatise like the *Platonic Theology* is required in order to provide that structure with 'concrete' content, namely the names of the gods and beings which *are* that structure in actuality. Thus, *erôs* appears implicitly in the *Elements* in the explanations of intermediary terms between unparticipated terms and the participants which revert to them. It is in the *Platonic Theology* (and elsewhere) that *erôs* is named as one of these intermediary terms.

47. Cf. W. Beierwaltes, "The Love of Beauty and the Love of God," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1986), 293–313, which affirms the importance of *erôs* in this regard.

48. Italics throughout, unless noted otherwise, are my own.

49. Although Proclus uses *kallos* here rather than *to kalon*, the meaning is the same.

50. Following the insertion made by Saffrey and Westerink in their translation.

51. *PT*.1.24.108.20–25. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀγαθὸν τῶν θεῶν ἀκρότατόν ἐστι καὶ ἑνοειδέστατον· τὸ δὲ σοφὸν ὠδίνει πως ἤδη τὸ φῶς τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὰ εἴδη τὰ πρώτιστα· τὸ δὲ αὖ κάλλος ἐπ᾽ ἄκροις ἵδρυται τοῖς εἴδεσι καὶ προλάμπει τὸ θεῖον φῶς καὶ τοῖς ἀνιοῦσι πρῶτον ἐκφαίνεται.

52. *Ibid.*, 1.22.104.13–18. Τό τε οὖν ἐφετὸν ἑδράζει τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ κατέχει, καὶ τὸ ἱκανὸν εἰς ἐπιστροφὰς καὶ συνελίξεις τελεσιουργεῖ τὰ προελθόντα· διὰ δὲ τούτων τῶν τριττῶν

It is clear from these considerations [i.e., the preceding discussion] that the category of Wisdom is triadic: it is *full of being and truth*, it is *generative of intellective truth* and it is *perfective of those things which are intellective according to energy* and itself remains in accordance with its power. Therefore, we must understand that these [characteristics] belong to the Wisdom of the Gods; in fact, this [i.e., Wisdom] is full of the divine Goodness,[53] is generative of divine truth, and perfects everything which comes after it.[54]

Thus, since it reverts everything to itself and moves everything and makes everything possessed of the Gods and calls everything back through love, this Beauty is *Beloved*,[55] leading the whole erotic series and, on the tips of its feet, raising everything up to it through longing and bewilderment.[56] Since, again, with good cheer and divine facility it [i.e., Beauty] dispenses completions to secondary things which come from it, charming and enchanting everything, elevating to a great height those things which are led by it, and, since it carries illuminations across from there [the heights], it is, and by Plato is said to be, *Graceful*. Truly, for this reason it rounds out this triad [the Good, Wisdom and Beauty] and makes to emerge the ineffable union of the Gods and, in some sense, it flows in the light of the Forms and shines forth the intelligible light and delivers the secret message of Goodness, and is thus named *Luminous*, *Glistening* and *Manifest*.[57]

The first passage provides a brief summary of the relationship between the members of the triad. There is a definite order: the Good (or Goodness), itself a God, precedes the other moments as the source of the gifts which are communicated through the mediation of Wisdom and are made manifest through the Beautiful (or Beauty) which receives them from the Good through Wisdom. The Good gives itself, while remaining itself, through Wisdom and is manifested to inferior things by its Beauty which inspires a desire for the Good by turning (or reverting) things toward its Beauty. The

αἰτίων πάντων ἄρα πρωτουργός ἐστι καὶ ἀρχηγικωτάτη πηγὴ καὶ ἐστία τῶν ὁπωσοῦν ὑφεστηκότων ἡ τῶν θεῶν ἀγαθότης. Italics in this and subsequent translations are my own.

53. As with *to kalon* and *kallos*, Proclus uses *to agathon* and *hê agathotês* synonymously.

54. *PT* 1.23.105.24–106.3. Δῆλον οὖν ἐκ τούτων ὅτι τριαδικόν ἐστι τὸ τῆς σοφίας γένος, πλῆρες μὲν ὂν τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, γεννητικὸν δὲ τῆς νοερᾶς ἀληθείας, τελειωτικὸν δὲ τῶν κατ' ἐνέργειαν νοερῶν καὶ αὐτὸ κατὰ δύναμιν ἑστός. Ταῦτα τοίνυν καὶ τῇ τῶν θεῶν σοφίᾳ προσήκειν ὑπολάβωμεν· καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνη τῆς μὲν ἀγαθότητός ἐστι τῆς θείας πλήρης, γεννᾷ δὲ τὴν θείαν ἀλήθειαν, τελειοῖ δὲ πάντα τὰ μεθ' ἑαυτήν.

55. Saffrey and Westerink translate this as "*ce qui inspire amour,*" which is not unreasonable.

56. The word here, translated as 'bewilderment' (*ekplêxiôs*), carries the suggestion of a terrifying experience.

57. *PT*.1.24.108.7–20. Διότι μὲν οὖν ἐπιστρέφει πάντα πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ κινεῖ καὶ ἐνθουσιᾶν ποιεῖ καὶ ἀνακαλεῖται δι' ἔρωτος, ἐραστόν ἐστι τὸ κάλλος, πάσης ἡγεμονοῦν τῆς ἐρωτικῆς σειρᾶς καὶ ἐπ' ἄκροις τοῖς ποσὶ βεβηκὸς καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτὸ πάντα διὰ πόθου καὶ ἐκπλήξεως ανεγείρον. Διότι δὲ αὖ μετ' εὐφροσύνης καὶ τῆς θείας ῥαστώνης ἐπορέγει τοῖς δευτέροις <τὰς> ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ πληρώσεις, κηλοῦν πάντα καὶ θέλγον καὶ μετεωρίζον <τὰ> ἀγόμενα καὶ ἐποχετευόμενα τὰς ἐκεῖθεν ἐλλάμψεις, ἁβρόν ἐστι τε καὶ λέγεται παρὰ τοῦ Πλάτωνος. Διότι γε μὴν συμπεραίνει τὴν τριάδα ταύτην καὶ προκύπτει τῆς ἀρρήτου τῶν θεῶν ἑνώσεως καὶ οἷον ἐπινήχεται τῷ φωτὶ τῶν εἰδῶν καὶ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ἐκλάμπει καὶ ἐξαγγέλλει τὸ τῆς ἀγαθότητος κρύφιον, λαμπρὸν τε καὶ στιλπνὸν καὶ ἐκφανὲς ἐπονομάζεται.

second passage unfolds the internal moments of the Good which emphasize its 'remaining' character while being the source also of processions (power, self-offerings) and reversions (inspirations): it is *Desirable* as transcendent source; it is *Capable* in that it gives inferior things their power to produce as sources themselves; and it is *Perfect* as the exemplary completion or perfect self-expression for which all things strive. The third passage similarly unfolds the internal moments of Wisdom which emphasize its 'processive' character while acknowledging that it motivates reversions and that it remains in itself and its source, the Good. Insofar as it is *full of being and truth*, Wisdom remains in itself and in the power communicated to it from the Good while it mediates this procession by being *generative of intellective truth* and it is *perfective of things which are intellective according to energy* by mediating the processions from above to those things which revert to it, thus facilitating their return. Finally, the fourth passage unfolds the internal moments of the Beautiful which emphasize its 'revertive' character although it does so through its own 'remaining' in the processions which it has received from the prior terms. However, Proclus reverses the order of the moments here:[58] it is *Beloved* as that which initiates the reversion of things to the source of the progressions which it communicates as *Graceful*, doing so while it remains in itself (its content is the processions of light from Wisdom) as manifest and *Luminous* as manifestation of Goodness. One thing to note about this triad, is that whereas the first term, the Good extends "to all things which have come to subsistence in any way whatsoever," including matter,[59] the other two terms can only extend to things capable of intellection of some kind such as Gods (in an effable and *hypernoetic* mode), superior beings like angels, demons and heroes, and souls. Furthermore, at *PT* III.22.79.1–5, we learn that this triad corresponds to the three intelligible triads: the first triad is primarily characterized by the Good, the second by Wisdom and the last by the Beautiful.[60] As Butler has argued persuasively in a recent article, the

58. Proclus does a curious thing here in changing the order of the moments in his summary from that in his main discussion. In the previous two passages, he summarized the preceding discussions of the two sets of moments in the order in which they appeared in those discussions: the terms primarily associated with 'remaining' were presented first, those associated with 'procession,' the middle term, were presented second, and those associated with 'reversion' were presented last. We would expect that Proclus would do the same in his discussion of the Beautiful but in the main discussion itself he presents the term associated with 'procession' first, that associated with 'remaining' second and that associated with 'reversion' last, while in the summary he recounts the 'reverting' term first, the 'processive' second and the 'remaining' last, presumably to highlight its revertive function.

59. *PT* I.22.102.9–12.

60. These are the triads which comprise the highest order of the Gods, named from Being (the pinnacle of the ontological realm) which participates them before all other beings. See *PT* III.21.73.25–74.11. Of course, Proclus finds other triads of attributes which are applicable

intelligible order of Gods is not expressive of a multiplicity of henads, but rather is an unfolding of the different dispositions of an individual God.[61] This means then that the internal order of the intelligible God is the origin of the whole cyclic process of creation in remaining, procession and reversion as it operates throughout the whole ontological realm.

Of the triad of the Good, Wisdom and the Beautiful, it is the latter[62] with which I am concerned in the present exposition of the metaphysical nature of *erôs*. In the passage on the Beautiful which I have already examined,[63] Proclus states that it is through *erôs* that the Beautiful effects the reversion of things. Proclus explains this in greater detail in the following chapter, at *PT*.1.25, where he discusses it along with two other terms, *pistis* (belief or faith) and *alêtheia* (truth), which form a triad with it. Just as *erôs* is the intermediary through which the Beautiful performs its function, *pistis* and *alêtheia* are the intermediaries through which the Good and Wisdom, respectively, perform their own functions. At *In Alc*.117.11,[64] Proclus says that "the divine *erôs* is activity"[65] and so it must be thought of as the *energy*[66] of the Beautiful by which the latter proceeds to things and reverts things to itself.[67] *Erôs*, as the

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to the intelligible orders; these triads account for much of the content of the third book of the *Platonic Theology*.

61. Butler, "Intelligible Gods," cited above in note 39. He rightly refers to Proclus' remark, at *In Parm*.1091, that the first multiplicity of henads only appears in the intelligible and intellective order of Gods, which constitutes the content of the fourth book of the *Platonic Theology*. Whether the exposition of the intelligible order in the third book of the *Platonic Theology* is to be read, as Butler argues, as an account of *any* God (meaning every individual God) rather than a single God which heads the hierarchy of henads, may be open to debate. I will reserve judgment until I have seen how he accounts for the lower ranks of the henads. At any rate, whether he is or is not correct is of little importance for my particular purposes in this essay.

62. Cf. Beierwaltes, "Love and Beauty," for a brief account of the full movement from the Beautiful through Wisdom to the Good.

63. *PT* I.24.108.7–20.

64. *In Alc*.117.11. Citations of this text are made from Proclus, *Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon*, T*omes I & 2*, texte établi et traduit par A.Ph. Segonds (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985). They are indicated, as here, by *In Alc*. followed by the Creuzer pagination and Segond's lineation. Westerink's edition in *Proclus Diadochus: Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato*, critical text and indices by L.G. Westerink (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1954) is still remarkably useful and so I have looked to it as well.

65. ὁ μὲν θεῖος ἔρως ἐνέργειά ἐστιν.

66. Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, 80–102 shows that activity (*energeia*) can refer to both the whole movement of remaining, procession and reversion and to reversion alone. *Erôs*, as will become clear throughout this essay, is described in both of these ways by Proclus. Gersh also outlines Proclus' usual reluctance to attribute activity or energy to the Good. Perhaps there is no contradiction here in the sense that *erôs* appears as the third term of the triad, the term which is participated most immediately by beings or, in other words, the term which expresses the outreach of the God's *pronoia* to other Gods and to beings.

67. It would be inaccurate to say that Beauty relates itself to things.

agent and activity of divine Beauty connects the "secondary Gods" (*theous deuterous*), "superior kinds" (*kreittona genê*), and the "best of souls" (*tas aristas psuchôn*) to "those things which are before them" (*tois pro heautôn*)[68] by manifesting the Beauty of the superior to the inferior and inspiring the inferior to attain to the superior.

Thus much for a brief account of the metaphysical foundation of *erôs* among the Gods. At this point I shall consider the place and role of *erôs* in Proclus' thought in a broader context. First, then, it is necessary to look back to the ontological cycle of remaining, procession and reversion and see how that works, so that we may get a better understanding of the relationships between the Gods.[69] According to the movement of the ontological cycle, then, the first term of the movement, the 'remaining' term, contains the inferior terms within itself; that is to say that the inferior terms are specifications of the first in terms of the operations proper to the first. Furthermore, the whole cycle moves in reverse from the object of the procession from the source back to the source—it is a cycle of call and response. In the downward movement, the first term expresses the originary subject's self-giving without self-diminution[70] to an object which is *like* it[71] but *differs* from it;[72] the second expresses the outward movement of its procession or self-giving toward its object; the third term expresses the manifestation of what is given by the subject to the object and its desire to receive and attain to the perfection of the originary subject.[73] In the upward part of the cycle, the third term becomes the first, and so it remains in its incompletion while turning toward its origin; the second term fills the first with the gifts from the origin; the third term is the origin and goal of the first term's reversion and expresses the latter's perfection or attainment of its own proper good

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68. *PT* I.25.109.13–16. Cf. also *In Alc.*52.10–12.

69. I am heavily indebted here to Eric Perl's explanations of this cycle, and thus, since I have not reproduced the full detail of the process, one may look to Perl's work (e.g., Perl, *Theophany*, 37-–42) for a more complete exposition.

70. *El. Th.*30.9–24. (prop.26: "Every cause productive of other things, while remaining itself in itself, produces the things which come after it and the things in succession from them."); *ibid.*, 30.25–32.9 (prop.27: "Every thing which produces is productive of secondary things through the perfection and abundance of its power"); *ibid.*, 116.15.27, where Proclus argues that each God manifests its own character first in itself then communicates its character by virtue of its super-abundance (ὑπέρπληρες).

71. *Ibid.*, 32.10–34.2 (prop.28: "Everything which produces makes to subsist things like to itself before things unlike.")

72. *Ibid.*, 34.12–27 (prop.30: "Everything which is immediately produced from something remains in what produces it and proceeds from it.")

73. *Ibid.*, 34.28–36.2 (prop.31: "Everything which proceeds from something reverts according to its being [*kat' ousian*] to that from which it proceeds.")

and being. This entire ontological cycle is expressive of the fulfillment of an individual being's being what it is; that is to say that it is expressive of the object's desire for, and attainment of, its own particular selfhood which is offered to it by its proper origin.

This same process obtains among the Gods who are themselves the origin of the process. Gersh, who has done much to clarify the doctrine of spiritual motion in Proclus,[74] points, in his discussion of the circular motion of power, to a proposition in the *Elements of Theology* (proposition 148) which expresses the relationship between the orders of the Gods. It runs as follows:

> Every divine order has an internal order of threefold origin, from its highest, its mean and its final term. For the highest term, having the most unitary power, communicates its unity and unifies the whole from above, remaining in itself. The mean term, reaching out toward both the extremes, links together the whole about itself, transmitting the gifts of the first members of its orders, drawing up the powers of the last, and implanting in all things a community and a binding-together with one another. Thus, the whole becomes a single order of those which fill and of those which are filled, of those things which converge toward the mean as to a center. The limiting term, reverting again upon its source and leading back the powers which proceeded, provides sameness and convergence in the whole order. Thus, the whole rank is one through the one-making power of the first term, through the connection in the mean, and through the reversion of the last to the origin of the processions.[75]

In condensing the sense of this triad, Gersh writes:

> The first element (ἀκρότης) in any such group is responsible for the procession of power, the second (μεσότης) is responsible both for the procession and the reversion of power, while the third element (τέλος or ἀποπεράτωσις) is responsible for the reversion of power.[76]

I shall have to modify this summary somewhat and say that the first term is responsible for the remaining, procession and reversion of power, the second

74. Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ. I refer the reader to this study for a more precise formulation and analysis of these triads.

75. *El. Th.* 130.4–19. Πᾶσα θεία τάξις ἑαυτῇ συνήνωται τριχῶς, ἀπό τε τῆς ἀκρότητος τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μεσότητος καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ τέλους. ἡ μὲν γάρ, ἑνικωτάτην ἔχουσα δύναμιν, εἰς πᾶσαν αὐτὴν διαπέμπει τὴν ἕνωσιν καὶ ἑνοῖ πᾶσαν ἄνωθεν, μένουσα ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτῆς. ἡ δὲ μεσότης, ἐπ᾽ ἄμφω τὰ ἄκρα διατείνουσα, συνδεῖ πᾶσαν περὶ ἑαυτήν, τῶν μὲν πρώτων διαπορθμεύουσα τὰς δόσεις, τῶν δὲ τελευταίων ἀνατείνουσα τὰς δυνάμεις, καὶ πᾶσι κοινωνίαν ἐντιθεῖσα καὶ σύνδεσιν πρὸς ἄλληλα· μία γὰρ οὕτως ἡ ὅλη γίνεται διάταξις ἔκ τε τῶν πληρούντων καὶ τῶν πληρουμένων, ὥσπερ εἴς τι κέντρον εἰς τὴν μεσότητα συννευόντων. ἡ δὲ ἀποπεράτωσις, ἐπιστρέφουσα πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὰς προελθούσας ἐπανάγουσα δυνάμεις, ὁμοιότητα καὶ σύννευσιν τῇ ὅλῃ τάξει παρέχεται. καὶ οὕτως ὁ σύμπας διάκοσμος εἷς ἐστι διὰ τῆς ἑνοποιοῦ τῶν πρώτων δυνάμεις <καὶ> διὰ τῆς ἐν τῇ μεσότητι συνοχῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς τοῦ τέλους εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν προόδων ἐπιστροφῆς.

76. Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, 62.

for the procession and reversion, while remaining in the power it receives from the first, and the third for the reversion only which opens up reception of the processions of the first as they are received through the second. Furthermore, just as I have shown above, this process can be inverted to show the upward process from the third to the first term. Thus, in terms of the cyclical movement mediated by the middle term, the whole triad of terms "converges" upon the middle term which binds the extremes. This is another means of expressing the ontological cycle although here it does not express the foundation of the Gods in their own subsistence as it does for beings since the Gods, by their very nature, lack nothing and so are supremely themselves;[77] rather, it is an expression of the relationship between their powers.

In the passages above, Proclus discusses, as I have pointed out, the Good, Wisdom and the Beautiful as characteristics of the Gods in general. I also mentioned that, at *PT* III.22, he attributes them primarily to the three intelligible triads. Now, although the Beautiful and its internal moments are characteristic of the third order of intelligible Gods, they are also present in the first order "unitarily" (*monoeides*); in other words, they are present in the very existence of each God. Proclus draws the following conclusions from this:

> And if the Beautiful is in the first triad secretly and becomes manifest triadically in the third, then it is clear that the intelligible intellect[78] both loves the first triad and has a love connected to its own Beauty; and this is the intelligible *erôs*, which is love of the primary Beauty. The intellective *erôs* proceeds from this along with faith and truth, as I said before: for the Good and Wisdom and the Beautiful, the intelligible monads, give subsistence to three powers which lift up both all other things and, before others, the intellective Gods.[79]

He posits two kinds of *erôs* associated with the intelligible orders: an intelligible (*noêtos*) *erôs* which is a love directed both toward the Beauty of the third intelligible order and toward the primary Beautiful in the Good of the first order; and an intellective (*noeros*) *erôs* which proceeds *away from* the intelligible triads to draw all inferior or secondary things back to the intel-

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77. *El. Th.* 112.25–34 (prop.127: "Everything that is divine is primally and especially simple, and for this reason is self-sufficient.)

78. Proclus calls the Beautiful the intelligible intellect since the third term of any divine order is associated with the term *mixture* (See Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, 19–24) which is third after the *limited* and *limitless* and is the term in which Being participates (*PT* III.8.30–10.42).

79. *PT* III.22.81.11–20. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ τριάδι τὸ καλὸν κρυφίως καὶ ἐκφαίνεται τριαδικῶς ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ, δῆλον ὡς ὁ νοῦς ὁ νοητὸς καὶ ἐρᾷ τῆς πρώτης τριάδος καὶ ἔρωτα ἔχει τῷ ἑαυτοῦ κάλλει συνημμένον· καὶ οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ νοητὸς ἔρως ὁ τῆς πρωτίστης καλλονῆς. Ἐκ δὴ τούτου πρόεισιν ὁ νοερὸς μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀληθείας, ὡς καὶ πρότερον εἴπομεν· τὸ γὰρ αγαθὸν καὶ σοφὸν καὶ καλόν, αἱ νοηταὶ μονάδες, τρεῖς ὑπέστησαν ἀναγωγοὺς δυνάμεις τῶν τε ἄλλων ἁπάντων καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν νοερῶν θεῶν.

ligible order. The intelligible *erôs* is present in the intelligible order of Gods unitarily, or indistinguishably; in this order there is no distinction between lover and beloved. Thus, the Gods are the sources of all relationship, whether between Gods (i.e., their powers) or between cause and effect in the onto-logical realm. It is for this reason that Proclus can say in his commentary on Plato's *Alcibiades Major* that "the intelligible Gods, because of their ineffable union, do not need erotic mediation."[80] The intelligible Gods—the Gods as individuals—embody love, so to speak, and therefore do not need external mediation. Relationship first becomes manifest in the intelligible and intel-lective order of Gods, where *erôs* appears in the lowest order (hence its 'intel-lective' status). This order forms a processive or mediatory one between the intelligible and intellectual orders.[81] This concise placement of *erôs* is made explicit by Proclus in his commentary on the *Alcibiades Major* where he says that *erôs*, along with *pistis* and *alêtheia*, is revealed "first in the 'unspeakable' rank of the Gods,"[82] a rank derived from the *Chaldaean Oracles* which cor-responds to the rank of the intelligible and intellective Gods.[83] *Erôs* mediates between the Gods precisely as the third term of the cyclic process, revealing the Beauty of superior Gods to inferior, leading the latter up to the former, and is expressive of the hierarchical arrangement of the divine powers and not of the causation of the Gods themselves.

This notion of the Gods' love for each other is found in a number of places in Proclus' commentary on the *Alcibiades Major*. One of these pas-sages explicitly connects the *erôs* of the Gods for each other to *erôs* as it is experienced by human beings:

> What should we say about the Gods who are said to love their own offspring, just as the myth-makers make Zeus love either Kore or Aphrodite? Is it not that such a love is providential and preservative of those things which are beloved and is perfective of them and capable of holding them together? Is it not that it is unrelated, unmixed, and of the form of the Good and immaculate? Or from where does this erotic character come to human souls, except it pre-subsist in the Gods themselves? For everything that may be good and salvific in souls has its cause determined by the Gods. For this reason Plato says that the paradigms of all excellences and of bodily goods pre-subsist there, such as health, strength, justice and self-moderation. By how much more are we to suppose that the primary cause of the erotic, given by divine gift, is in the Gods, as Socrates says

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80. *In Alc.*53.2–4. Τὰ μὲν οὖν νοητὰ διὰ τῆς ἄφραστον ἕνωσιν οὐ δεῖται τῆς ἐρωτικῆς μεσότητος.

81. Cf. *El. Th.*116.29–118.7 (prop.132: "All the orders of the Gods are bound together by the mean term.")

82. *In Alc.*51.18. ἐκφαινόμεναι δὲ πρώτως ἐν τῇ ἀφθέγκτῳ τάξει τῶν θεῶν.

83. W. O'Neill in *Proclus: Alcibiades I. A Translation and Commentary*, trans. William O'Neill (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 32–33. O'Neill, in a note, sums up the evidence pertaining to this group of Gods and cites Lewy's study of them.

in the *Phaedrus*? Indeed, Gods love Gods: the superior love the inferior providentially, and the inferior love the superior epistrophically.[84]

We see then, that the love which we experience as human beings is also experienced by the Gods toward one another, although in a much purer sense; nevertheless we participate in the divine love of the Gods according to our own capacity.[85] The paradigm of all human love is present in the Gods themselves in both their love for each other and for us. This passage, in particular, points to two kinds of *erôs*, which Cornelia de Vogel in her study of *erôs* in Proclus and Dionysius refers to as the ἔρως προνοητικός, the love of higher for lower and the ἔρως συνεκτικός, love of one's own beauty.[86] We have already encountered this last kind of love in the orders of intelligible Gods and the former in the love of the intelligible Gods for the lower orders. She mentions two others: ἔρως κοινωνικός, the love of those in the same rank for one another[87] and ἔρως ἐπιστρεπτικός, the love which reverts things to their causes (and which I have focused on for the most part so far). These distinctions have a very different meaning when they become manifest in the ontological realm and so we ought now to move on to a consideration of the transition from *erôs* among the Gods to *erôs* among beings.

It is in his commentary on the *Alcibiades Major* that Proclus describes the procession of *erôs* from the Gods to human souls. Proclus is concerned there to show that the aim (*skopos*) of Plato's dialogue is to bring to light knowledge of our being[88] and much of the commentary involves discussion of the means by which we come to this knowledge:

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84. *Ibid.*, 55.11–56.4. Τί δ' ἂν εἴποιμεν περὶ τῶν λεγομένων θεῶν ἐρᾶν τῶν οἰκείων γεννημάτων, ὥσπερ οἱ μυθοπλάσται ποιοῦσιν ἢ τῆς Κόρης ἢ αὐτῆς τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἐρῶντα τὸν Δία; Οὐχ ὡς ἄσχετος καὶ ἀμιγὴς καὶ ἀγαθοειδὴς καὶ ἄχραντος; Ἢ πόθεν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀνθρωπίναις ψυχαῖς τοῦτο τὸ ἐρωτικὸν ἰδίωμα, μὴ πρότερον ἐν αὐτοῖς προϋπάρχον τοῖς θεοῖς; Πᾶν γὰρ ὅτιπερ ἂν ἀγαθὸν καὶ σωτήριον ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ᾖ τὴν αἰτίαν ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν ὡρισμένην ἔχει· διὸ καὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν πασῶν καὶ τῶν σωματικῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐκεῖ προϋπάρχειν τὰ παραδέγματά φυσιν ὁ Πλάτων, οἷον ὑγείας ἰσχύος δικαιοσύνης σωφροσύνης. Πόσω δὴ μᾶλλον τῆς ἐρωτικῆς ἐν θεοῖς εἶναι τὴν πρωτουργὸν αἰτίαν ὑποθησόμεθα θεία δόσει διδομένης, ὡς αὐτὸς φυσιν ὁ ἐν τῷ Φαίδρῳ Σωκράτης; Καὶ θεοὶ τοίνυν θεῶν ἐρῶσιν, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν καταδεεστέρων, αλλὰ προνοητικῶς, καὶ οἱ καταδεέστεροι τῶν ὑπερτέρων, ἀλλ' ἐπιστρεπτικῶς.

85. *Ibid.*, 36.25–37.18. Here Proclus distinguishes between Divine love and the vulgar love to which human souls often turn.

86. De Vogel, "Greek Cosmic Love," 59; *eadem*, "*Amor quo caelum regitur*," 15. These distinctions are useful but, unfortunately, she gives no definite references for them.

87. The suggestion of this form of love is found at *In Alc.*140.23–141.5.

88. *In Alc.*1–7.11.

I think that the most valid and most certain starting point of the Platonic dialogues and of every philosophical contemplation is the diagnosis of our own being. If this has been posited correctly we will be able to understand, I think, the good which is appropriate to us and the evil which fights with it in every way. For it is natural that, for each of the things which are, just as their being differs, thus the perfection belonging to these is one thing, and [the perfection] belonging to others something else, according to the descent of their being along the scale.[89]

Knowledge of our essence requires knowledge of the kind of being which we have been given and how this being fits into the cosmos as a whole. Like all beings, our being has a proper 'good' associated with it or, in other words, a proper way for it to exist and it is entirely possible for us to fall away from that good by turning toward 'the evil which fights with it.'[90] This good is not something that we never completely lack, since the self-giving of the Gods is without limit either quantitatively or qualitatively, and so desire of one's proper good is not appetitive of something external. We must understand what our kind of being is before we can know its good, attainment of which constitutes our perfection, because "perfection is not perfection of itself but of the being by which it is participated,"[91] and this because the Good operates prior to Being[92] (the latter is expressive only of our bare existence). In fact, the necessity of knowing our mode of being in order to know its proper perfection is the content of the Delphic command to 'Know Thyself';[93] the Delphic command is a command to *revert* upon our cause and, in the immediate sense, this cause is intellect.[94] It is the means by which we come to this knowledge with which I am concerned, and specifically *erôs* itself as a guide to self-knowledge as it is mediated hierarchically through the superior kinds and human souls.

This knowledge of our being is fundamentally knowledge of our own selves, ἡ ἑαυτῶν γνῶσις.[95] This self-knowledge is communicated to us by the Gods through *daimonic* intermediaries which both mediate the providential love of the Gods to lower things and inspire lower things with love of the higher. Proclus wants to maintain that *erôs* is primarily a God, as we have seen, but he is also compelled to deal with Socrates' characterization of *erôs*

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89. *Ibid.*, 1.3–10. Τῶν Πλατωνικῶν καὶ πάσης, ὡς εἰπεῖν, τῆς φιλοσόφου θεωρίας, ἀρχὴν κυριωτάτην καὶ βεβαιοτάτην εἶναι νομίζομεν τὴν τῆς ἑαυτῶν οὐσίας διάγνωσιν. Ταύτης γὰρ ὀρθῶς ὑποτεθείσης καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τὸ προσῆκον ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ τούτῳ μαχόμενον κακὸν πάντως που καταμαθεῖν ἀκριβέστερον δυνησόμεθα. Πέφυκε γὰρ ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων, ὥσπερ τὸ εἶναι διάφορον, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡ τελειότης τοῖς μὲν ἄλλη, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλα, κατὰ τὴν τῆς οὐσίας ὕφεσιν.

90. Cf. *De Mal. Sub.* for Proclus' most detailed account of the way evil 'fights' with the good by a kind of parasitisation of the power of the good.

91. *In Alc.*4.5–6. Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ τελειότης, ἀλλὰ τῆς οὐσίας ὑφ' ἧς μετέχεται.

92. *Ibid.*, 1.10–4.2.

93. *Ibid.*, 4.21–5.14.

94. *Ibid.*, 3.14–15.

95. *Ibid.*, 5.16; also, *ibid.*, 4.23–24.

as a *daimôn* in the *Symposium*; he does so in the following passage:

> Indeed, it is because of this, I suppose, that the discourse in the *Symposium* calls *erôs* a great *daimôn* since he shows primarily in himself the power of this mediation, as the middle of everything which is reverted and the cause of its reversion and as desired by secondary things.[96]

The God is named a *daimôn* on account of his primary mediatory power and because, as the next passage shows, the God is the source of the *daimonic erôtes* which mediate *erôs* to secondary things:

> Now, the whole erotic series thrown forth from the cause of Beauty unites everything to it [i.e., the cause of Beauty] and calls everything back to participation in it and makes a middle procession between the beloved and those things which are led back through *erôs*. It is because of this that it has made to pre-subsist in itself the paradigm of the whole order of *daimones*, having that intermediacy among the Gods which the *daimones* have been allotted between the affairs of divinities and mortals.[97]

The mediating power of *daimones* is patterned on that which is exercised by the Gods, and it is they who fill the intervening spiritual 'space' between Gods and human souls. The remainder of this long passage goes on to unfold the processions of *daimones* which mediate *erôs* as far as to the human souls which act as *daimonic* mediators of *erôs* for other souls. Although at every level the Beauty which is the cause and object of love is mediated by *daimones* according to the mode of reception of the things at that level, nevertheless it is only really clear from Proclus' exposition how this mediation works on the level of human souls, as shown in this case through Socrates' relationship to Alcibiades.

I will finish with Proclus here by emphasizing the notion that *erôs* initiates the reversion toward perfection, or completion, of our being, and thus the return to our proper selves. As such an initiator, *erôs* acts cyclically at both the divine and ontological levels, both calling inferior things to return to their causes and thus themselves (with the caveat that this is not quite the case for the divine) and inspiring in those which are called the love for the beauty of their superiors. The other kinds of *erôs* are simply modes of this

96. *Ibid.*, 30.21–31.2. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δήπου καὶ ὁ ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ λόγος δαίμονα μέγαν ἐκάλει τὸν ἔρωτα τὴν τῆς μεσότητος ταύτης δύναμιν ἐν ἑαυτῷ πρώτως ἐπιδεικνύμενον, παντὸς τοῦ ἐπιστρεφομένου καὶ τοῦ τῆς ἐπιστρεφῆς αἰτίου καὶ ὀρεκτοῦ τοῖς δευτέροις ὑπάρχοντος μέσου.

97. *Ibid.*, 31.2–9. Ἡ τοίνυν ἐρωτικὴ πᾶσα σειρὰ τῆς τοῦ κάλλους αἰτίας προβεβλημένη συνάγει πάντα πρὸς αὐτὴν καὶ ἀνακαλεῖται πρὸς τὴν μέθεξιν αὐτῆς καὶ μέσην ἐποιήσατο πρόοδον τοῦ τε ἐραστοῦ καὶ τῶν δι' ἔρωτος ἀναγομένων· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τῆς ὅλης τῶν δαιμόνων τάξεως ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὸ παράδειγμα προεστήσατο, ταύτην ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς ἔχουσα τὴν μεσότητα ἣν οἱ δαίμονες τῶν τε θείων μεταξὺ καὶ τῶν θνητῶν ἐκπληρώσαντο πραγμάτων.

call and response.

Erôs and the Trinity

Now that I have taken my exposition of Proclus' doctrine of *erôs* as far as is necessary for my present purposes, I shall move on to consider Dionysius' doctrine of the same. In order to do so I will have to consider Dionysius' reading of Plato's *Parmenides*. It is hardly disputed by scholars that Dionysius subscribes to a Neoplatonic interpretation of this dialogue in his exposition on the divine names; rather, what is disputed is precisely *to which* interpretation it is that he subscribes. I propose to show in what follows that Dionysius is indeed following Proclus' interpretation of the *Parmenides*, specifically insofar as he attributes the second hypothesis not only to Being but also to the One reflexively; there is no dispute about the attribution of the first hypothesis to the One. Therefore, I shall begin at the summit of Dionysius' theology, as I did for Proclus, and consider how he speaks of the One and the Trinity which is the first multiplicity after the One.

The fact that Dionysius attributes the second hypothesis to God (the One) has been established by modern scholarship, but just how he does so remains open to debate. In a recent book, Sarah Klitenic Wear and John Dillon have argued that Dionysius followed what has been taken to be Porphyry's interpretation of the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* in attributing Being, Life and Wisdom to God, in opposition to the interpretation of Proclus who attributes the second hypothesis to Being and its derivatives, reserving only the first hypothesis for attribution to the One.[98] A similar thesis has been put forth by Werner Beierwaltes who also argues that Proclus' interpretation of the second hypothesis refers to these three attributes, although he argues in terms of self-thinking *Nous* and without reference to Porphyry.[99] This leads him to read *DN* 7.2 as an exposition on God, the Divine Unity, as also "absolute Self-thinking."[100] However, it is just this notion of self-thinking or self-reflection which is absent from Dionysius' exposition. At the very beginning of *DN* 7.2 he says that the Divine Wisdom (ἡ θεία σοφία) has no intellective activities but that he is compelled to consider it in relation to knowing since scripture says that it knows all things. The rest of the passage gives no suggestion of the kind of reflexive thinking upon the source which characterizes *Nous*. Rather, the Divine Wisdom knows all things "according to cause" (κατ' αἰτίαν): "Indeed, if God communicates being to all the things which are according to a single cause, then He will know everything which is from Himself and which pre-subsisted in Him according to the same he-

98. S. Klitenic-Wear and J.M. Dillon, *Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neoplatonist Tradition: Despoiling the Hellenes* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 33–50.

99. Beierwaltes, "Love and Beauty."

100. *Ibid.*, 7.

nadic cause."[101] Nowhere in this passage is there a sense of the independent existence of Forms as thoughts and differentiations of *Nous*. There can be no self-reflection in the Trinity since there is no cause to which it can revert, or upon which it can reflect since it is the primary cause of all things. In this passage, Dionysius is using language which Proclus also uses in his discussion of the Gods as henads.[102] Earlier, I showed that Proclus attributes the second hypothesis to the One, but reflexively, in such a way that this hypothesis is understood to be pointing to the orders of henads or Gods. I also showed, with Butler's aid, that the One is not other than each of the Gods both in their absolute individuality and in their equally absolute unity. Thus, I shall argue against Wear, Dillon and Beierwaltes that Dionysius has done the same with regard to the simultaneous individuality and unity of God considered as Trinity and One.

The first and most apparent point of contact between Dionysius' doctrine of the Trinity and Proclus' doctrine of henads is their common usage of the phrase, "flowers and lights beyond being" (ἄνθη καὶ ὑπερουσία φῶτά) drawn from the Chaldean Oracles; Proclus uses it to signify the henads while Dionysius uses it to signify two of the members of the Trinity, namely the Son and Spirit, in relation to the Father.[103] While this bit of evidence is hardly sufficient to prove a unity of doctrine, since it could conceivably indicate only a common literary source, the rest of the terminology which Dionysius uses does provide more certain confirmation of this unity.

For this evidence I must examine his description of the Trinity in terms of unity and difference. At *DN* 2.4 641AB, when discussing the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity, Dionysius writes that:

> [the remaining] in each other, if it is right to say so, of the *Henarchic Hypostases*, and their founding completely beyond the unified and unconfused with any part, just as the lights of lamps […] being in one house,[104] are wholes in the wholes of each other; in an unmixed and precise way they hold their distinction, standing their ground individually from each other, being unified[105] in separation and separated in union.[106]

101. *DN* 7.2 869B (197.5–7). Καὶ γὰρ εἰ κατὰ μίαν αἰτίαν ὁ θεὸς πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι τοῦ εἶναι μεταδίδωσι, κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἑνικὴν αἰτίαν εἴσεται πάντα ὡς ἐξ αὐτοῦ ὄντα καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ προϋφεστηκότα.

102. See *El. Th.* 106.10–33 (prop. 121).

103. Proclus, *De Mal. Sub.* 2, 11 & *Comm. In Parm.* 1049 (although they are referred to here as flowers and *summits*); Dionysius, *DN* 645B.

104. This seems to recall Plotinus' description of the soul's union with the One at *Enneads* 5.3.17. Plotinus says there that the soul sees the One by the very light which the One brings to the soul. In Dionysius' passage, the members of the Trinity are the same light and so their union is much more complete than that of the soul and the One.

105. See previous note. 127.2–7.

106. *DN* 2.4 641AB. ἡ ἐν ἀλλήλαις, εἰ οὕτω χρὴ φάναι, τῶν ἐναρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων μόνη, καὶ ἵδρυσις, ὁλικῶς ὑπερηνωμένη, καὶ οὐδενὶ μέρει συγκεχυμένη, καθάπερ

He uses the word ἡνώμενος (unified) to point to the unity of beings which the Trinity surpasses and which we saw was restricted to beings also by Proclus; Dionysius uses it in reference to beings again at *DN* 4.7 704B–C where he discusses Beauty as Good, when considered in a way beyond-being, and as giver of existence to beings. It is there contrasted to the Beauty as Good which acts henadically, or ἑνικῶς (in a way which excludes composition). One might object that his application of it to the Trinity at *DN* 2.4 641B would seem to indicate a break in the Proclean usage of the terminology but the contrast of ἡνωμένα to ἑνώσει gives the ἡνωμένα a special reference in this context. Here it is used to contrast the unity of the Trinitarian distinctions, named from existential relationships, with the ineffable unity of the Trinity prior to those names. For the most part, whenever Dionysius uses ἕνωσις and its derivatives, he is referring to the unity of God beyond being.[107] Other turns of phrase in this passage remind us of Proclus as well, such as "remaining in each other," "wholes in wholes" (which reminds us of Proclus' "all in all") and the precision and absoluteness of their distinction from each other. Just as the henads are inseparable from the One, or rather each one of them is the One and not a second hypostasis as Being[108] is taken to be, so too the Persons of the Trinity are inseparable from the One Godhead, or rather each of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the One and not a second, third or fourth hypostasis.[109] Dionysius' use of the word 'hypostasis' to refer to the Persons here need not indicate a 'substantial' or ontological nature: Proclus used 'hypostasis' to refer to *erôs* as a God at, amongst other places, *In Alc.*51.9.[110]

φῶτα λαμπτήρων [...] ὄντα ἐκ οἴκῳ ἑνὶ καὶ ὅλα ἐν ἀλλήλοις ὅλοις ἐστὶν, ἀκραιφνῆ καὶ ἀκριβῆ τὴν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἰδικῶς ὑφισταμένην ἔχει διάκρισιν ἡνωμένα τῇ διακρίσει, καὶ τῇ ἑνώσει διακεκριμένα.

107. This is so even when he speaks of the union of souls with the *hyperousios* divinity (e.g., *DN* 1.5 593B–C [116.14–117.4]) and when he denies the adequacy of the term (e.g., *DN* 1.5 593C [117.10]).

108. Cf. Butler, "Gods and Being," 98–99; for another recent account of the Trinity which comes to a similar conclusion (albeit without much reference to Proclus), see Bogdan Bucur, "Dionysius East and West: Unities, Differentiations, and the Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies," *Dionysius* 26 (2008): 121.

109. **Philological confirmation of this relation is found in the study made by Perczel of Dio**nysius' borrowings from Proclus' *Platonic Theology*: he shows how, in his own text, Dionysius has substituted the Godhead in place of the gods in Proclus' text in "A Preliminary Study," 510–14.

110. Ysabel de Andia in *Henosis: L'Union à Dieu chez Denys l'Aréopagite* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), at 49–53, shows Dionysius' dependence on Proclus' henadological language precisely for characterizing the Trinity but then concludes her investigation by expressing implicit agreement with H.D. Saffrey when he says that Dionysius "ne pouvait naturellement pas recevoir comme telle la doctrine des hénades et qu'elle ne devait apparaître dans son oeuvre qu'en filigrane" (*Ibid.*, 52–53). How one can adopt the language and formulae of a system of thought without its substance is unclear to me. Further on in the same chapter de Andia asserts that Dionysius' divergence from the Trinitarian doctrine of the Cappadocians "non seulement parce que Denys

Regarding the terms "individuality" (ἰδιότης)[111] and "unitary" (ἑνιαίος),[112] Dionysius uses these as well when referring to things beyond being. Likewise, he follows Proclus in using "sameness" or "identity" (ταυτότης),[113] difference (ἑτερότης)[114] and essence or being (οὐσία)[115] when discussing beings and their characteristics. Both Ysabel de Andia[116] and Wear and Dillon[117] compare this passage with one in Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* at *In Tim.* III.254, which appears to be its provenance. The latter explains the mode of unity appropriate to the Forms and makes use of the image of light emitted from lamps. What is not noticed by these authors is that Dionysius has omitted from his version of the image the terminology of Forms and has replaced it with that of the henads, thus transposing the example of lamps from the Forms to the henadic trinity.

a emprunté au néoplatonisme, pour caractériser les Hypostases, des termes procliens comme les «pousses divines»—ce qu'a bien vu le Père Saffrey—, mais aussi parce que sa réflexion théologique sur les Hypostases est tout à fait différente de celle des Cappadociens." The difference, of course, is accounted for by the fact that Dionysius' theological reflection is a neoplatonic reflection, particularly a reflection on the Proclean conception of the divine. What Dionysius *does not* take from Proclus is the cultural content (his polytheism) which fills the henadological framework which Proclus presents in his work.

111. E.g., *DN* 2.4 641A (126.17)—although it only appears once in the Chapter on the Trinity, it appears elsewhere in relation to what comes from God, e.g., at *DN* 10.3 937C (216.8).

112. E.g., *DN* 2.11 649B (136.6); *DN* 2.11 652A (137.7); *et alia*. **One passage in particular is quite remarkable insofar as Dionysius there applies this language to the vision of his teacher Hierotheus: "But when that man was leading the way to really divine things, he set forth *synoptic* definitions which comprehended many things in one, as it is possible for us, and, so many teachers of newly initiated souls among us he commanded to unfold and divide, into discourse commensurate with our abilities, the *synoptic* and unitary [*heniaios*] compactions of that man's most intellective power, and you yourself have many times urged us to this and have sent back the same book as transcending [your powers]." (*DN* 3.2 681B [140.6–12]) [Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τῷ ὄντι τὰ θεῖα πρεσβυτικῶς ὑφηγούμενος ἐκεῖνος συνοπτικοὺς ἡμῖν ὅρους ἐξέθετο καὶ ἐν ἑνὶ πολλὰ περιειληφότας ὡς οἷον ἡμῖν καὶ ὅσοι καθ' ἡμᾶς διδάσκολοι τῶν νεοτελῶν ψυχῶν ἐγκελευόμενος ἀναπτύξαι καὶ διακρῖναι τῷ ἡμῖν συμμέτρῳ λόγῳ τὰς συνοπτικὰς καὶ ἑνιαίας τῆς νοερωτάτης τἀνδρὸς ἐκείνου δυνάμεως συνελίξεις, καὶ πολλάκις ἡμᾶς καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τοῦτο προέτρεψας καὶ τήν γε βίβλιον αὐτὴν ὡς ὑπεραίρουσαν ἀνταπέσταλκας.]

113. E.g., *DN* 2.4 641A (126.7); *DN* 4.2 696B (145.1); *et alia*.

114. E.g., *DN* 1.4 589D (112.13); *DN* 4.7 704B (152.15); *et alia*.

115. E.g., *DN* 1.1 588B (109.10); *DN* 2.10 648C (134.13); *et alia*. Dionysius refers to God as *hyperousios ousia* at *DN* 1.1 588B (109.13-14) but S. Lilla in "Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Porphyre et Damascius," in *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa posterité en Orient et en Occident*, ed. Ysabel de Andia (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 117–154 at 126 gives an adequate explanation of the apparent inconsistency: "Cette contradiction apparente peut être comprise dans son sens propre si l'on tient compte d'une des lois generals qui réglent le système hiérarchique proclien et que Denys reproduit ainsi: «les propriétés des effets demeurent déjà dans leur causes d'une façon surabondante et comme part de leur essence»" (Lilla citing *DN* 2.8 645D [133.3–4]).

116. De Andia, *Henosis*, 53–55.

117. Wear and Dillon, *Despoiling*, 39.

Furthermore, just as Proclus names the orders of henads from the Being and beings which participate in them, so does Dionysius name the Godhead, both in its unity and in its distinction.[118] Dionysius distinguishes between two categories of names: there are 'unified' names derived from τὰ ἡνωμενα, or Being and its specifications,[119] and which are attributed to the entire Godhead, and there are 'divided' or 'differentiated' names, τὰ διακεκριμένα, which are attributed to the supremely individual Persons of the Trinity and which are not interchangeable or universally applicable.[120] Through the unified names, God as One is known or thought only as cause, or determination, of the various specifications of Being, the realm of created things; these names have no special relationship to individual members of the Trinity—the Father is to be identified with Being no more than He is to be identified with Worm.[121] The names are indicative of the relation between the One and Being and its specifications, or between the Persons of the Trinity and the attributes (Fatherhood and Son-ship) of which they are the source, and are not indicative of relationships which are *hyperousios*. The names are indicative of the manifestations of the *hyperousios* in the *ousia*.

The transition from *hyperousios* to *ousia* is described by Dionyius in the fourth chapter of his *Divine Names*, which is ostensibly concerned with the name 'Good'. On one side of the transition is the Trinity: at *DN* 3.1 680B, Dionysius tells us that the Trinity is at once the principle of goodness (αγαθαρχίαν) and *beyond-goodness* (ὑπεράγαθον). On the other side there is the Good prior to, but productive of, Being: at *DN* 4.1–2 693A–697A, he writes that the Good, as the essentially Good (οὐσιῶδες ἀγαθὸν), and as

118. Of course, he also finds precedence for this method of naming in Scripture; we see this at *DN* 4.4 700C (149.7–8) where he paraphrases St. Paul at *Rom* 1:20: "that 'the invisible things'" of God 'from the creation of the cosmos, are looked upon as they are perceived intellectually in the things made, namely His eternal power and deity'" [ἀλλ' ὅτι «τὰ ἀόρατα» τοῦ θεοῦ «ἀπὸ κτίσεως» κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἥ τε ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης»].

119. *DN* 2.3 640B (125). This must also include the name Good insofar as it appears to us, or insofar as it is intelligible in its various moments. The Goodness of the entire Godhead is prior to Being but is intelligized and thought according to Being, in a way which is οὐσιώδης. As cause of Goodness, Light and Beauty, the Godhead is thought, not as Being or being, but rather as the goal and paths of the striving to which each *being* is compelled insofar as it 'is' or even, in the case of non-being or matter, wishes 'to be.'

120. *Ibid.*, 2.4 640D–641C (126.3–128.7).

121. For Worm see *CH* 2.5 145A (15). Enrica Ruaro, in a recent article, "God and the worm: the twofold otherness in Pseudo-Dionysius' theory of dissimilar images," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 82.4 (2008): 581–92, has argued that Dionysius uses the image of a worm as the "prototype" of his theory of dissimilar similarities. As such a prototype, the worm can be regarded, according to ancient biological theories, both as origin of man and as radically other, and thus is somehow an adequate image of God who *is* origin and other. I find Ruaro's argument to be both convincing and highly intriguing.

revealed in Scripture (τῷ λογῷ) is the source of all gifts to beings while being prior to beings. Therefore, the name Good refers to the totality of the gifts of the Trinity as a unity, a communication of the simple *hyparxis*[122] of the unified Trinity to the divided Being of all beings, as comprehended from our perspective, itself informed by Holy Scripture. Dionysius unfolds these gifts in a descending list beginning from the angels and extending through human souls to non-beings (probably matter) from *DN* 4.1–4.3, encompassing all kinds of created being, from those which merely *are* (participating only in Being) to those which subsist wholly intellectually, that is incorporeally. For Dionysius, as for Proclus, Being refers to the modes of existence governed by the causal relationship of ground and grounded.[123] Let us take a closer look at the nature of this 'Good.'

The content of the name Good (*agathônymian*, *tagathon*) bears a great deal of similarity to the Good (*to agathon*) which Proclus ascribes first to the Gods in general and then to the intelligible orders of the Gods as a primary characteristic. Dionyius unfolds the Good into three moments—Good (*tagathon*),[124] Light (*phôs*)[125]—and Beauty (*kallos*)[126]—which correspond nearly exactly to those moments of the Good posited by Proclus—the Good (*to agathon*), Wisdom (*to sophon*) and the Beautiful (*to kalon*). As I have already shown, the Good for Dionysius is a *hyperousios* characteristic of the Deity as a unitary Godhead. It is one of those names in the category of *hênomena* which apply to the whole Godhead and so to each Person of the Trinity equally. Thus, Dionysius can say of Jesus,[127] for example,that, as Holy Word (ἱερὸς λόγος), He is "the paternal Light, 'the true being who illuminates every human being coming to the cosmos'";[128] that "the one and simple and

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122. *Contra* Wear and Dillon's account of the use made of the word *hyparxis* by Proclus, see Butler, "Polytheism," 91–92, where he shows that *hyparxis* is used to contrast the subsistence of the henads with that of beings. See also Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, 33–35, where he shows its association with the unity of the subject to which it is applied, generally as the first term of the triadic cycle of procession, and where he also affirms its particular applicability to the Gods. Dionysius uses *hyparxis* in this way in a number of places: *DN* 1.5 593D (117.11); *DN* 2.1 636C (122.1); *DN* 2.3 640C (126.1); *et al.*

123. Cf. Perl, *Theophany*, 65–81; Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, 47.

124. *DN* 4.1–4.

125. *Ibid.*, 4.5–6.

126. *Ibid.*, 4.7–10.

127. Whether 'Jesus' and 'Son' bear different significations for Dionysius—and, if so, to what degree—is discussed below.

128. *CH* 1.2 121A (7): τὸ πατρικὸν φῶς, τὸ ὂν «τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὅ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον». *Ad loc.* in the modern edition of the Dionysian Corpus, Suchla cites Plotinus, *Enn.* V 1, 6, 28ff. as the source of the quotation here, but see Perczel, "A Preliminary Study," 501, for an interesting account of Dionysius' modification of Proclean material from *PT* 1.1.

hidden [subsistence] of Jesus, the most thearchic Word, by His entrance into human being amongst us, came forth to the composite and visible [condition] unchangingly in goodness and love[129] of humanity."[130] Even the differentiated moments of goodness are attributable one and all to Jesus and, we must say, to the Father and Spirit as well.

Whereas Proclus attributes the moments of the Good primarily to the first order of the Gods, the intelligible, and despite the fact that it is common to all of the Gods, Dionysius does not follow suit: Dionysius does not have a plurality of Gods to explain—in fact he wants to deny a plurality alto-gether—and thus he seems to be more concerned than Proclus to emphasize the absolute transcendence of the Deity over any characterizations at all.[131] At this point in his reflections on the Deity there is a tension between his desire (and need) to name and his desire to preserve God's ineffability. One feels tempted to assume that he *does* associate the Persons of the Trinity with particular attributes (e.g., Being, Life and Wisdom) but it is clear from his repeated declarations of the applicability of all attributes but three (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) to the Godhead *as a unity* that he himself is not willing to make these associations.

For Dionysius, the three moments of the name Good are associated with the triad of remaining, procession and reversion. With regard to the name Good Dionysius writes that "transcendently the *theologoi* apply it to the Deity beyond deity and mark it off from all things […] calling the *thearchic hyparxis* goodness, and that the Good, by its very existence, distributes goodness to all things which are as good [*agathon*] in the form of Being [*ousiôdes*]."[132] This is a succinct representation of the Good remaining in its unitary existence or subsistence, its *thearchic hyparxis*, in distinction from its procession, its *ousiôdes agathon*. Dionysius reinforces this representation with a neoplatonic exposition of Plato's Sun simile, much like that of Proclus at *PT* 2.7.43.13–51.19,[133] according to which the Good is the transcendent cause of everything. Of course, although the emphasis in the first four sections of the

129. Love, here *philanthrôpia*, is clearly associated with the name Beauty, as in *DN* 4.

130. *EH* 3.*theoria*.12 444A (92.21–93.1).

131. E.g., even when he affirms that the two of the Persons of the Trinity are the Father and the Son, he also denies that this can be understood according to any notion of Fatherhood or Son-ship which we may have (*DN* 2.8 645C–D [132.5–133.4]). One may take as further evidence the numerous other passages in which Dionysius denies the adequacy of the attrib-utes which has previously applied to the Godhead. Finally, consider Lilla's demonstration of Dionysius' doctrinal proximity to Damascius in this regard, in Lilla, "Pseudo-Denys," 143–45.

132. *DN* 4.1 693B (143.10–144.1). ἐξῃρημένως οἱ θεολόγοι τῇ ὑπερθέῳ θεότητι καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ἀφορίζουσιν αὐτήν, ὡς οἶμαι, τὴν θεαρχικὴν ὕπαρξιν ἀγαθότητα λέγοντες καὶ ὅτι τῷ εἶναι τἀγαθὸν ὡς οὐσιῶδες ἀγαθὸν εἰς πάντα τὰ ὄντα διατείνει τὴν ἀγαθότητα.

133. In fact, the entirety of *DN* 4.1 (and probably much of 4.2 as well) seems to be a very condensed and modified version of Proclus' exposition of the Sun Simile at *PT* 2.7.

chapter is on the transcendent, 'remaining,' aspect of the Good, nevertheless it is also responsible for the procession and reversion of all the things which are.[134] Following upon this, Light is associated primarily with the processive aspect of the Good, as we would expect if Dionysius has indeed followed Proclus. The Good under the aspect of Intelligible Light (*noêtos phôs*) "fills every super-celestial mind with intelligible light, drives away all ignorance and erring which may come to be in souls, [and] gives a share of sacred light to all of these."[135] We have already seen this 'filling' of all things with intelligible light in the processive function of *to sophon* in the henads. Finally, Dionysius presents the Good under the aspect of Beauty as being primarily associated with the reversion of all things. This is amply demonstrated in the following passage, quoted here at length:

> The Beautiful[136] beyond being is called Beauty because it passes on from itself beauty to all the things which are in a way that is appropriate to each, and as just cause of the suitableness and splendor of the Light, to all things flashing forth the beautifying gifts of the ray of its primal source like lightning and as calling all things back to itself, whence it is called Beauty and as collecting all things in all things to itself.[137]

Beauty makes manifest the gifts of goodness as mediated by the Light, calling (*kaloun*)[138] all things to turn back toward their source.

Again, let us leave aside the two prior moments of Goodness and focus upon the third, Beauty. Following the passage quoted just above, Dionysius goes on to call Beauty the cause of all things and of their hierarchical order:

> For in the simple and supernatural nature of all beautiful things, every beauty and every beautiful thing pre-exists uniformly according to cause. From this Beautiful is the being for all things according to the appropriate reason-principle with respect to each beautiful thing, and through the Beautiful are the agreements and friendships and communions of all things.[139]

Remember that with Proclus, the third term is the first term which is manifest to beings and is associated with Being and Intellect, the first mixture. The

134. See especially *DN* 4.4 697B–700C (146.13–149.8).

135. *DN* 4.5 700D (149.10–13). ὅτι φῶς νοητὸν ὁ ἀγαθὸς λέγεται διὰ τὸ πάντα μὲν ὑπερουράνιον νοῦν ἐμπιμπλάναι νοητοῦ φωτός, πᾶσαν δε ἄγνοιαν καὶ πλάνην ἐλαύνειν ἐκ πασῶν, αἷς ἂν ἐγγένηται ψυχαῖς, καὶ πάσαις αὐταῖς φωτὸς ἱεροῦ μεταδιδόναι.

136. Dionysius notes the distinction between the adjective 'beautiful' and the noun 'beauty' as it pertains to beings disappears when they are attributed to the Divine.

137. *Ibid.*, 4.7 701C–D (151.5–10). Τὸ δὲ ὑπερούσιον καλὸν κάλλος μὲν λέγεται διὰ τὴν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι μεταδιδομένην οἰκείως ἑκάστῳ καλλονὴν καὶ ὡς τῆς πάντων εὐαρ—μοστίας καὶ ἀγλαΐα αἴτιον δίκην φωτὸς ἐναστράπτον ἅπασι τὰς καλλοποιοὺς τῆς πηγαίας ἀκτῖνος αὐτοῦ μεταδόσεις καὶ ὡς πάντα πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καλοῦν, ὅθεν καὶ κάλλος λέγεται, καὶ ὡς ὅλα ἐν ὅλοις εἰς ταὐτὸ συνάγον.

138. Dionysius draws this etymology of the word *kallos* from Proclus, *In Alc.* 328.

139. *DN* 4.7 704A (151.18–152.2). Τῇ γὰρ ἁπλῇ καὶ ὑπερφυεῖ τῶν ὅλων καλῶν φύσει

same goes here for Dionysius. In the next few lines, he describes Beauty as not only cause but as *source* as well:

> and all things are united to the Beautiful, and the Beautiful is the source of all things as the making cause and as moving all things and holding them together by the love of their appropriate beauty and as the limit [or goal] of all things and is beloved as final cause, for all things come to be for its sake, and as paradigmatic cause, because everything is defined according to it. For this reason the Beautiful is identical to the Good so that everything desires the Beautiful and Good according to every cause and there is no being which does not participate in the Beautiful and Good.[140]

Dionysius posits an identification between Beauty or the Beautiful and the Good, an identification which Proclus makes as well when he asserts that Beauty subsists primarily in the first rank of intelligible Gods which itself is primarily characterized by the Good. It seems to be the case that the first term must be identical to the last in order to close the cycle of procession and reversion. In other words, as the manifestation of the Good, Beauty contains the entire cycle within itself so that everything has its own particular beauty (its own static reason-principle) which it receives as a procession from Beauty ("making cause") and in which it attains to its own proper good ("holding them together") which it desires ("beloved as final cause") and actively pursues when it is reverted upon it ("moving all things"): the Beautiful and Good considered as limit or goal of all things is the good peculiar to each thing for which each thing strives in order to be what it properly is.[141] Again, we have already seen that this is present in Proclus' reflections on *erôs*.

  Now that I have shown that Dionysius models his account of the Good and its internal moments on Proclus' own, we might expect to find a corresponding account of the attributes which proceed from the Good, namely *pistis*, *alêtheia* and *erôs*. Despite our expectations, the doctrine of these three attributes proves to be a point of divergence for the two authors. Dionysius presents a well-developed doctrine of *erôs* but he presents no correspondingly

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πᾶσα καλλονὴ καὶ πᾶν καλὸν ἑνοειδῶς κατ' αἰτίαν προϋφέστηκεν. Ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ τούτου πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι τὸ εἶναι κατὰ τὸν οἰκεῖον λόγον ἕκαστα καλά, καὶ διὰ τὸ καλὸν αἱ πάντων ἐφαρμογαὶ καὶ φιλίαι καὶ κοινωνίαι.

  140. *Ibid.*, 4.7 704A (152.2–6). καὶ τῷ καλῷ τὰ πάντα ἥνωται, καὶ ἀρχὴ πάντων τὸ καλὸν ὡς ποιητικὸν αἴτιον καὶ κινοῦν τὰ ὅλα καὶ συνέχον τῷ τῆς οἰκείας καλλονῆς ἔρωτι καὶ πέρας πάντων καὶ ἀγαπητὸν ὡς τελικὸν αἴτιον, τοῦ καλοῦ γὰρ ἕνεκα πάντα γίγνεται, καὶ παραδειγματικόν, ὅτι κατ' αὐτὸ πάντα ἀφορίζεται. Διὸ καὶ ταὐτόν ἐστι τἀγαθῷ τὸ καλόν, ὅτι τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν πάντα ἐφίεται, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι τι τῶν ὄντων, ὃ μὴ μετέχει τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ.

  141. Perl, *Theophany*, 35–52, gives a much more detailed exposition of this movement associated with Beauty in Dionysius and its antecedents in Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Proclus. Of course, he is correct to emphasize the fact that this is not a temporal process (38) but rather that the process or cycle is expressive of a thing's ontological constitution.

well-developed doctrine of *pistis* or *alêtheia*. That is not to say that these terms do not appear in the *Dionysian Corpus*. It is just that in the fourth chapter on the Good where we would expect to find them developed as we do *erôs*, Dionysius either does not mention them (*pistis*) or does not give them anything like the same emphasis which Proclus gives them (*alêtheia*).[142] Why this sharp divergence? Their omission makes at least one thing clear: Dionysius wants to emphasize the importance of *erôs* for his theology where *erôs* appeared to be of tertiary importance for Proclus in relation to *pistis*, in the first rank, which connects beings to the Good through theurgy and *alêtheia*, in the second rank, which connects beings to Wisdom through philosophy. Dionysius appears to be extolling *erôs* above *pistis* and *alêtheia* as a way to union with the One. We need to clarify what this elevation of *erôs* means for Dionysius' theological reflections.

At the end of the last section of the fourth chapter in which Dionysius explicitly discusses Beauty and the Beautiful, he connects *erôs* to Beauty as the activity by which the Beautiful and Good generates beings:

> the very cause of all things, because of an excess of goodness, loves all things, makes all things, perfects all things, binds all things, reverts all things, and even the Divine Love is Good, of the Good, through the Good. For this very Love, the good-worker of all beings, pre-subsisting in the Good according to excess, does not permit itself to remain unproductive in itself, but it moves itself to action in accordance with the excess which is productive of all things.[143]

Love is the activity by which the Good (and Beautiful) goes out from itself to produce all things by an excess, or overflow as it is sometimes translated, which, rather than being understood as necessitating action by the Deity,[144]

142. *Alêtheia* is found frequently both prior to and after this chapter and only four times in this chapter (*DN* 4.13, 4.19, 4.21, 4.35); not once in this chapter does it refer to the truth as an attribute of the Good which proceeds from it. *Pistis*, on the other hand, only appears six times in the whole corpus (*DN* 2.9, 4.35 twice, 5.4 thrice), and although all of those occurrences happen to be in the *Divine Names*, none are in the fourth chapter. While the occurrences of these terms seem to carry the same meaning as they do for Proclus, still it is striking that they are not given the same development as *erôs* and are omitted precisely where they would be expected to be found.

143. *DN* 4.10 708AB (155.14–20). καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ πάντων αἴτιος δι᾽ ἀγαθότητος ὑπερβολὴν πάντων ἐρᾷ, πάντα ποιεῖ, πάντα τελεῖοι, πάντα συνέχει, πάντα ἐπιστρέφει, καὶ ἔστι καὶ ὁ θεῖος ἔρως ἀγαθὸς ἀγαθοῦ διὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν. Αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ ἀγαθοεργὸς τῶν ὄντων ἔρως ἐν τἀγαθῷ καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν προϋπάρχων οὐκ εἴασεν αὐτὸν ἄγονον ἐν ἑαυτῷ μένειν, ἐκίνησε δὲ αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πρακτικεύεσθαι κατὰ τὴν ἁπάντων γενητικὴν ὑπερβολήν.

144. As, for example, J. Rist, "Pseudo-Dionysius, Neoplatonism and the Weakness of the Soul," *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeauneau*, ed. Haijo Jan Westra (Brill: New York, 1992), 135–59 at 158; idem, "Love, Knowing and Incarnation in Pseudo-Dionysius," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. John J. Cleary (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), 375–88. Also, see the discussion of

ought to be understood as the Deity not being *limited* to itself or in the quantity of the gifts which it has to give.[145] As Golitzin rightly observed concerning God as Love, "He moves into creation because, simply, he desires it."[146] In producing all things, Divine Love fixes everything in hierarchical order:

> Thus the Beautiful and Good is desired and beloved and cherished by everything, and through it and because of it the lesser love their superiors revertively [*epistreptikôs*], things in the same rank love their fellows with community [*koinônikôs*], the greater love their inferiors with providential care [*pronoêtikôs*] and each of these themselves love themselves preservatively [*sunektikôs*], and all things since they desire the Beautiful and Good do and will everything that they do and will.[147]

Here are the four forms of love which de Vogel identified, and which I discussed above in relation to Proclus.[148] Hierarchy is the result of Beauty distributing through *erôs*, and according to their different capacities, what each thing is capable of receiving and thus what each thing is.

At *DN* 4.13, Dionysius famously declares that Divine Love is ecstatic and that this is shown by those who love according to at least three of the forms noted above, namely by *erôs pronoêtikos*, *erôs koinônikos* and *erôs epistreptikos*.[149] The existence of the fourth, the *erôs sunektikos* which is associated with love of self, seems to be contradicted by Dionysius' statement that the Divine Love "does not permit things to be lovers of themselves, but lovers of those whom they love."[150] But this is clarified, and the *erôs sunektikos* rescued from any accusation of narrow egocentrism, in what follows:

> For this reason the great Paul, having come into possession of Divine Love, and having participated in its ecstatic power, said with inspired mouth: "I do not yet live, but Christ lives in me." Thus, he is a true lover and has stood outside himself, as he says, in God and did not live his own life but rather the life of the beloved[151] as exceedingly cherished.[152]

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this matter by A. Golitzin, *Et Introibo ad Altare Dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita, with Special Reference to its Predecessors in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Thessaloniki, 1994), 78–84.

145. Perl, *Theophany*, 52.

146. Golitzin, *Et Introibo*, 66.

147. *DN* 4.10 708A (155.8–13). Πᾶσιν οὖν ἐστι τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐφετὸν καὶ ἐραστὸν καὶ ἀγαπητόν, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα καὶ τὰ ἥττω τῶν κρειττόνων ἐπιστρεπτικῶς ἐρῶσι καὶ κοινωνικῶς τὰ ὁμόστοιχα τῶν ὁμοταγῶν καὶ τὰ κρείττω τῶν ἡττόνων προνοητικῶς καὶ αὐτὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστα συνεκτικῶς, καὶ πάντα τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ἐφιέμενα ποιεῖ καὶ βούλεται πάντα, ὅσα ποιεῖ καὶ βούλεται.

148. This is repeated from the perspective of Love itself at *DN* 4.12 709D (158.13–19).

149. *DN* 4.13 712A (159.1–3).

150. *Ibid.*, 4.13 712A (158.19–159.1). οὐκ ἐῶν ἑαυτῶν εἶναι τοὺς ἐραστάς, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐρωμένων.

151. I read the variant ἐρωμένου here instead of ἐραστοῦ which is reported in the main text; otherwise the sense of the passage is lost.

152. *Ibid.*, 4.13 712A (159.3–6). Διὸ καὶ Παῦλος ὁ μέγας ἐν κατοχῇ τοῦ θείου γεγονὼς

In his Love of beings God gives Himself as their being and beauty and so when they revert upon themselves with Divine Love they are, in fact, loving God *in* them, *as* themselves; God in each thing is that thing's self, its individuality.[153] This is only possible because beings can participate in the Divine Love, because they can love as God does, but according to their own capacity.[154] Since love completes being, then in loving properly, that is to say according to God's Love, beings participate in the providence of God by helping to make *themselves*. Again, this is the essence of Proclus' conception of the manifestation of *erôs* in human souls.

Until now I have been considering *erôs* in its general relation to the creation of beings, what a number of scholars have referred to as cosmic love.[155] I come now to consider Dionysius' conception of that very special *erotic* movement, the Incarnation, which, more than anything else sets Christianity apart from other religions and must, accordingly, be accounted for by Christian thought. Thus, as Catherine Osborne rightly emphasizes,[156] the Incarnation does not fit precisely into the movement of *erôs* as I have just considered it. On the other hand, it is not a movement wholly outside of the creative framework as she would have it. This is apparent in a passage in the first chapter of *Divine Names* where Dionysius makes some remarks about Scripture's celebration of God as Incarnate Christ:

> Whence we see the thearchy praised sacredly in nearly every theological writing […] especially as loving of humanity because He had dealings wholly and truly with those things which belong to us in one of His *hypostases*, calling up toward Himself and laying upon Himself the lowliness of humanity, out of which the simple Jesus was ineffably constructed and the eternal took on the temporal and He who stands, in a way beyond being, outside of every rank according to every nature became within our nature along with the unchanging and unconfused foundation of His own properties.[157]

ἔρωτος καὶ τῆς ἐκστατικῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως μετειληφὼς ἐνθέῳ στόματι· «Ζῶ ἐγώ», φησίν, «οὐκ ἔτι, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός». Ὡς ἀληθὴς ἐραστὴς καὶ ἐξεστηκὼς ὡς αὐτός φησι, τῷ θεῷ καὶ οὐ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ζῶν, ἀλλὰ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου ζωὴν ὡς σφόδρα ἀγαπητήν.

153. See C.M. Stang, "Dionysius, Paul and the Significance of the Pseudonym." *Modern Theology* 24.4 (2008): 547–48 for a reading of this same passage within the context of apophatic anthropology. Stang shows how this passage completes the description of the soul's *ekstasis* from its self in the mystical ascent as described at *MT* 1.1; the movement of the soul outside of itself is complemented by the *ekstasis* of God Himself toward the soul (in this case St. Paul).

154. Perl, *Theophany*, 44–48, gives an excellent account of this discovery of self-hood in the being's participation in Divine Love. Also see the similar conclusion reached by Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago: Chicago U Press, 2007), 220–22, where he attempts to give a phenomenological account of this Divine Love, an account evidently much indebted to Dionysius.

155. E.g., de Vogel, "*Amor quo caelum regitur*"; *eadem*, "Greek Cosmic Love"; C. Osborne, *Eros Unveiled* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Rist, "Love, Knowing and Incarnation."

156. Osborne, *Eros Unveiled*, 198.

157. *DN* 1.4 589D–592B (112.10–113.12). Ὅθεν ἐν πάσῃ σχεδὸν τῇ θεολογικῇ πραγματεί

God, in one of His *hypostases*, or Persons, entered into humanity because of His love of humanity, and in order to *draw* humanity back to Himself. I have just shown that creation by Divine Love involves the completion of the selves of individual beings by reverting or *drawing* them back toward God.[158] The astonishing thing about this movement, of course, is the fact that the limitless and *hyperousios* God took upon Himself finitude in taking on *ousia* and that He did this precisely in order to exalt the world:

> Whence, since he came as far as nature in the name of His love of humanity and truly became a being and the One who is beyond Deity was called 'man', (and may He be propitious to us as we hymn these things beyond intellect and reason), and even in this He holds onto the super-natural and the super-substantial, not only in that He participated unchangingly and unconfusedly in us, suffering nothing in His super-fullness as a result of His unspeakable emptying, but also because—the most novel thing of all—He was beyond nature in our nature and beyond being in those things which exist according to being *raising all of the things which belong to us out of us and above us.*[159]

We human beings participate in Being, Life and Intellect, or, in other words, we participate in the full range of existence. One may object that angels do so as well but their mode of participation is as incorporeal beings; they do not participate in both the incorporeal (intellectual) as well as the corporeal (sense-perceptible) as we do. Thus, when Christ entered into human being and raised "all of the things which belong to us out of us and above us" He

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ᾳ τὴν θεαρχίαν ὁρῶμεν ἱερῶς ὑμνουμένγν […] φιλάνθρωπον δὲ διαφερόντως. ὅτι τοῖς καθ᾽ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὁλικῶς ἐν μιᾷ τῶν αὐτῆς ὑποστάσεων ἐκοινώνησεν ἀςακαλουμένη πρὸς ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἀνατιθεῖσα τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἐσχατίαν, ἐξ ἧς ἀρρήτως ὁ ἁπλοῦς Ἰησοῦς συνετέθη καὶ παράτασιν εἴληφε χρονικὴν ὁ ἀΐδιος καὶ εἴσω τῆς καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἐγεγόνει φύσεως ὁ πάσης τῆς κατὰ πᾶσαν φύσιν τάχεως ὑπερουσίως ἐκβεβηκὼς μετὰ τῆς ἀμεταβόλου καὶ ἀσυγχύτου τῶν οἰκείων ἱδρύσεως.

158. This is why Eric Perl can, with full justification, say of Dionysius' conception of the Incarnation: "In this sense it is true, as has often been remarked, that Dionysius understands the incarnation in terms of the Neoplatonic metaphysics of procession and reversion. But this need not mean that the incarnation is merely another procession, additional to and parallel with the universal, creative procession of God to all things and all things from God. Rather, Dionysius' discussions of the incarnation suggest that the whole of being, as theophany, is to be understood in incarnational terms, and that God incarnate, as the "principle and perfection of all hierarchies", is the fullness of reality itself. Being as symbol, as theophany, and hence as being, is perfectly realized in Christ, in God incarnate, the finite being which is God-made-manifest" (Perl, *Theophany*, 109).

159. *Ibid.*, 2.10 648D–649A (135.2–9). Ὅθεν ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἕως φύσεως ὑπὲρ φιλανθρωπί ας ἐλήλυθε καὶ ἀληθῶς οὐσιώδη καὶ ἀνὴρ ὁ ὑπέρθεος ἐχρημάτισεν, ἵλεω δὲ εἴη πρὸς ἡμῶν τὰ ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον ὑμνούμενα, κἂν τούτοις ἔχει τὸ ὑπερφυὲς καὶ ὑπερούσιον, οὐ μόνον ᾗ ἀ ναλλοιώτως ἡμῖν καὶ ἀσυγχύτως κεκοινώνηκε, μηδὲν πεπονθὼς εἰς τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πρὸς τῆς ἀφθέγκτου κενώσεως, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι καὶ τὸ πάντων καινῶν καινότατον ἐν τοῖς φυσικοῖς ἡμῶν ὑπερφυὴς ἦν ἐν τοῖς κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ὑπερούσιος πάντα τὰ ἡμῶν ἐξ ἡμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς ὑπερέχων.

raised *all* of Being.[160] It is through the mediation of human being that the
Deity effects the salvation of all of Its creation.

Finally, I must point out the absolute necessity of the two natures of Christ
which have been implicit in the last two passages quoted. The distinction
appears again in the following passage where Dionysius seemingly uses the
names 'Son' and 'Jesus' for two different natures:

> The differentiations are the names and attributes beyond-being of the Father, and of
> the Son and of the Spirit, since there is no interchange in them or bringing them into
> complete communion. There is, moreover, a differentiation in addition to this, [namely]
> the all-perfect and unchanged *hyparxis* of Jesus according to us [sc. our nature] and so
> many mysteries, appearing in Being, of His love of man.[161]

Dionysius calls the name Jesus a "differentiation in addition to this," meaning
by 'this' the Three Persons of the Trinity. The name 'Jesus' names a nature, or
hyparxis, in addition to the three already named, one which takes on human
nature. The full assumption of human nature is strongly implied again at *CH*
4.4 where Dionysius says that Jesus, when He entered into our condition
without change from his own condition beyond being, fully subjected Him-
self to the mediation of the angels in accordance with the humanity which
He took upon Himself.[162] Dionysius' language suggests that *both* natures
are equally present in Jesus and so there is no ground on which to posit the
presence in Christ of the Divine Nature alone as some scholars do.[163] Were

160. See E. Perl, "Symbol, Sacrament, and Hierarchy in Saint Dionysios the Areopagite,"
The Greek Orthodox Theological Review 39.3–4 (1994): 311–56, on symbolism and hierarchy in
Dionysius for a more fully developed account of this exaltation of Being as symbol. Both Perl's
conclusions and my own show that the Incarnation is not, as John Rist would have it, simply a
requirement of Dionysius' neoplatonism, that is to say a necessary compensation for the weak-
ness of the human soul; see J. Rist, "Pseudo-Dionysius, Neoplatonism and the Weakness of
the Soul," in *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in honour of
Edouard Jeauneau*, ed. Haijo Jan Westra (Brill: New York, 1992), 135–59.

161. *DN* 2.3 640C (125.19–126.2). τὰ δὲ διακεκριμένα τὸ πατρὸς ὑπερούσιον ὄνομα καὶ
χρῆμα καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ πνεύματος οὐδεμιᾶς ἐν τούτοις ἀντιστροφῆς ἢ ὅλως κοινότητος ἐπεισαγομέ
νης. Ἔστι δὲ αὖθις πρὸς τούτῳ διακεκριμένον ἡ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦ παντελὴς καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος
ὕπαρξις καὶ ὅσα τῆς κατ᾽ αὐτήν ἐστι φιλανθρωΐας οὐσιώδη μυστήρια.

162. *CH* 4.4 181C (23.10–14).

163. Most recently Wear and Dillon, *Despoiling*, 5, base their accusation of monophysit-
ism against Dionysius on the reading of just one passage in which they downplay Dionysius'
assertion that God truly becomes ἄνθρωπος. Instead, they assert that, according to Dionysius,
"the human body is simply an instrument with which he [sc. God the Son] unites in order
to do his work as Jesus Christ." This is supported by a *possible*, but by no means proven use
of Porphyry's doctrine of the relation between the soul and body. This seems highly unlikely
considering Dionysius' nearly constant preference for Proclean metaphysics. As for the charge
that Dionysius used ambiguous language in his description of Christ's nature for the sake of
avoiding condemnation as a Monophysite, I do not see that there is any sense at all in such a

Dionysius to have posited only a Divine Nature in a human body, then the exaltation of the full range of existence could not be fulfilled.

Concluding Remarks

I have shown in the preceding the fundamental consistency of doctrine between Proclus and Dionysius regarding the metaphysical grounding of *erôs*. For both authors, *erôs* is founded in the highest principles of individuation in their systematic expositions of the ground of reality, namely the henads for Proclus and the Trinity—and especially the Son—for Dionysius. Again, for both, *erôs* is expressive of a process of call and response by which beings are called upon to turn toward their own proper good, their own proper participation in the Deity, and thus to come to their proper mode of being, their proper self. *Erôs* is expressed both by the divine, whether Gods or Trinity, in calling their beloveds (beings) back to them, and by the created, in desiring the enjoyment of the Beauty which is offered to them without fail. *Erôs* is described by both authors in terms of remaining, procession and reversion, and although Dionysius never makes clear what role *erôs* plays amongst the Persons of the Trinity it remains a fact that *erôs* is attributed to the Trinity as unity. Finally, I have shown that Dionysius uses Proclus' henadological language in order to express the nature of the Son and His *philanthropia* as the central foundation of all of reality.

project. If he were only avoiding such condemnation, then why not make absolutely certain that it is avoided by using orthodox language? It seems to be much more plausible to suggest that he used ambiguous language for the sake of the pseudonym whose purported character, after all, lived long before Christological controversies and thus any need for a precise formula. Besides, Andrew Louth, in a recent article, "The Reception of Dionysius up to Maximus the Confessor," *Modern Theology* 24.4 (2008): 573–83, has argued, using evidence provided by Rorem and Lamoreaux (*John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus: annotating the Areopagite* [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998]), that the Dionysian *corpus* was not controversial amongst its first readers for any apparent heresy, monophysite or otherwise. The difficulty with the *corpus* stemmed only from the fact that earlier Church Fathers had not known of the *corpus*; furthermore, those same readers who expressed this difficulty also suggested that the Fathers would have used the *corpus* had they known of it. This could hardly be the case if the *corpus* proposed monophysite doctrine in an obvious way.