



LOVE AS A PREMIER SCIENTIFIC AND PEDAGOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT IN THE NEOPLATONIC PROCLUS

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Abstract:

In this study, we undertake to show the ways in which the neoplatonic philosopher Proclus believes that the relations between teachers and students should be developed, using as a triggering event the meeting of Socrates with Alcibiades, in the way this meeting is presented in the Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I*. In his view, the ways in question clearly have scientific content and are distinguished into dialectic, elicitation and love. He gives special importance to all three of them, but he recognizes the pre-eminent pedagogical, moral and, more broadly, anthropological function in love. And this priority of love is based on the following: when Socrates seeks the truth, both along the didactic path of elicitation and during the research goals of dialectic, he does not cease to "embellish" both with the exciting tones that love grants. Through this versatile presence, the teacher is urged to discover, by investigating his communicative references, more and more the depth of his student's inner world. Thus, Proclus seeks - and achieves - to highlight, mainly through pedagogical love, the philosophy of personal journeys and relationships. These are situations of intense pulsation, which fascinate and activate the learner to be driven to creative initiatives and to function as a new world of intentions, meanings and actions.

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ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΙΚΑ

The aim of the following study is twofold. On the one hand, we will attempt to highlight the content and the extent of the relationship that is developed between the educator and the educated person according to the views of the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus.

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On the other hand, we will attempt to present the methodological ways in which the specific philosopher considers that the above should be approached and realized by those personal factors that pursue the relationship in question. In other words, we will attempt to examine them both in the sense that they express the humankind in general and that they define the ethical guidelines concerning behaviours, on a case-by-case basis.

As a reference and elaboration text we have the commentary of Proclus in verse 103a of the Platonic dialogue "Alcibiades I", in which the starting point of the communication between Socrates and Alcibiades is recorded. In this communication, the Neoplatonic philosopher identifies neither a simple and unambiguous pedagogical relationship, nor only the transfer of encyclopedic knowledge. He discovers a key anthropological goal, capable of transforming for the better Alcibiades as a student but also as a new political person. That is, how, through Socrates' intervention and actually in a critical way, he discovers the deepest cores of Alcibiades' existence, his intellectual capabilities, his moral values and his real interests in the collective and personal life. And the above-mentioned belong to Socrates' intentions, in order for Alcibiades to be led to his self-knowledge and afterwards to realize what that personal orientation which grants qualitative meanings to the projects he will undertake is.

Before Proclus proceeds to the analytical processing of the above issues, he considers that he should highlight the general anthropological perspective of Socrates. According thus to the renowned Athenian dialectic, the student, even before becoming a reference person to his teacher, is not only an unskilled and unformed entity, but at the same time is a source of inexhaustible but latent possibilities. These two findings do not constitute a contradiction but the real situation of a young person and budding citizen who has not yet encountered careful and systematic care for his person. In other words, it is an extremely realistic approach which also defines the duties to be undertaken by that educator who is conscious of his mission towards both the new generation and the social and political system. And it is precisely this evaluation that delineates his goals, which could be summarised as follows: how the student will realize that he is not a passive receiver of messages and instructions, but is a dynamic and personal presence with prospects for its structured development.

Thus, if the student assimilates the content of certain pedagogical movements towards him, he will become able to be led to the knowledge of even the metaphysical archetypes of the world of sensory experience. Such a personal presence will obviously have the prerequisites to communicate scientifically even with the divine that is unapproached by the direct sensory experience. This is clearly a perspective which does not serve so much a simple pedagogical planning but mainly a specific-type anthropological interpretation and its resulting perspective for future political activities. Commenting on the mentioned Platonic verse, Proclus, in fact, submits his familiar notion of man which defines the content of his pedagogical processes and proposals. Thus, in the horizon of his theoretical goals, Pedagogy is a subset of Anthropology and undertakes as a mission to specialize and implement its principles. And as we will realise, this relationship between the whole (i.e. of Anthropology) and the part (i.e. of Pedagogy) is processed by the



Neoplatonic schoolmaster in a broader philosophical light, as it is connected with key issues derived from Epistemology and Metaphysics, with the former defining systematicity and the second the challenge for man to be led to a reality that completely transcends him.¹

A] The unity and distinction of sciences

Placing from the beginning, according to his habits, his concern on methodological and epistemological issues, Proclus notes that in the dialectical episode developed in the aforementioned thematic section of the Platonic dialogue between Socrates as a teacher and Alcibiades as a student, the former seems to claim to own the possession, perhaps even the paternity, of three, mutually delimited sciences - and, obviously, of the methods which correspond to them: the dialectic, the elicitation and the love science. The first science is considered to be very comfortably depicted expressively, since, in its specificity, it is the very tool of the analytical processing of the subjects throughout the treatise of Proclus as an epistemological research basis. The second science is pervasive in the multilayered argumentation that is articulated so that the student is activated. And its function will appear, for the most part, when there will be a need for the student to be led on his own to knowledge with the methods that must be followed in a particular case of research. But the dominant one is the third science, since its specific meaning is related to the aptitude and referentiality to top-level relations, situations which are pervasive throughout the treatise.²

- 1 For the content of the Commentary *To Plato First Alcibiades*, see the extensive - both historical and systematic - introduction of A. Ph. Segonds in the critical edition of the text by the Editing House "Les Belles Lettres", Paris 1985, volume I, p.p. VII-CXXXIX. In essence, this is not an introduction but a very thorough research monograph, with the interpretative direction being very present. Actually, what mainly contributes to the above are the specialized, literary comments, which are listed after the recording of the, Greek and with its French translation, text. It should be noted that this Commentary is one of the few texts of the Neoplatonic School which refer to Practical Logos, that is, to moral and political matters, and indeed with the feeds and applications of formal Logic. However, the ontological foundations are explicit and function as a guarantee basis for the objectivity of moral propositions. Also, see Bastid, 1969, 35-44, which highlights the general basis of this Commentary by Proclus, though without persistence in its details.
- 2 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 27.16 - 28.2: «Τριττῶν τοίνυν οὐσῶν τούτων ἐπιστημῶν, ἃς ὁ Σωκράτης ἑαυτῷ φαίνεται μαρτυρῶν, τῆς διαλεκτικῆς, τῆς μαιευτικῆς, τῆς ἐρωτικῆς, εὐροις μὲν ἂν καὶ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς ἐν τῷδε τῷ διαλόγῳ εἶδος δ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων ἐπιδεικνύμενον, καὶ τῆς μαιευτικῆς πολλαχοῦ λάβοις ἂν τὴν ιδιότητα τοῖς τοῦ Σωκράτους λόγοις ἐκφερομένην, διαφερόντως δὲ ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ συγγράμματι κρατεῖ τὰ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἔργα» ("Now these sciences which Socrates evidently ascribes to himself are threefold, viz. those of philosophical discussion, elicitation and love. You will find the genre of philosophical discussion in this dialogue illustrated through the subject-matter itself, and everywhere you may detect the peculiar trait of elicitation contained in Socrates' arguments, but in a special sense the activities of the science of love prevail throughout the whole composition.") (Translation by William O'Neill from his study *Proclus: Alcibiades I. A Translation and Commentary*, ed. Martinus Nijhoff / The Hague, 1965). The above text is explicit in the integrity of the concepts it refers to, with the term 'science' strictly endorsing this choice. But what is mostly interesting is that, while Proclus for the dialectic and elicitation science uses the potential optative grammatical mood and actually as to the persons who attempt to identify them ("εὐροις αν", "λάβοις αν"), for the love science he uses the definitive grammatical mood. As a matter of fact, this definitive inclusion states a clear objective content, independent of the personal approaches ("κρατεῖ"). It should be noted that the term "science" has a very broad content in the treatises of Proclus and each time is determined by the particular subject of reference. For the place science holds in the work of Proclus, see indicatively Σιάσοσ, 1984, 17-63. Moreover, Sambursky, 1965, 1-11.



Thus, despite their distinction as highly defined, these sciences are interwoven throughout the entire treatise, but not so much in the light of the absolutely reciprocal and equivalent complementarity, but mainly in that of their integration into a general unity, in which each science works in its own familiar way. And the above priority of the love science is justified by the following: when Socrates seeks the truth, both in the teaching exercise of elicitation and in the research utilisation of dialectic, he brings to the fore those elements he considers necessary for love. And generally he uses whatever is necessary in order not to depart from the erotic content of his communication with his student, regardless of the subject he is currently working on.³

Commenting, we would mention at first that the distinction of the sciences - without, of course, breaking the link among them - proves the multiplicity of the content of the pedagogical interest and the potential arising from it. Therefore, there is no mention of a single-sided situation, which as such, highlights the inflationary function of human conscience, both during its externalization and during its employment. In fact, according to the Academy of Plato's popular views, conscience has an ontological basis and cognitive manifestations, and between these two factors there is a sober cooperation in terms of their duties, without distinction extremes or confusion. Their connections are precisely defined and thus the aim is to highlight further the structural parallel between "being" and conscience, either as something already existing, or as something desirable and appropriate. Therefore, the realism of the approaches is obvious, since both absolute idealism and absolute empiricism are excluded. So, from the beginning, a synthetic view of the epistemological question comes to the fore and thus the unity spoken of does not lead to a rigid epistemological monism, as it is a situation with various modes of manifestation, even determined by the particularity of the persons who shape it.

However, the differentiation among the sciences concerning the extent of their interventions is presented here as a major epistemological issue. So, in order to make his evaluations more specific and accurate, and to show that they are based on real data and the logical requirements they impose, Proclus resorts to the word that could work as an example. In other words, his aim appears to meet the criteria which establish objectivity in multiple perspectives. Thus, he places in a context of comparative juxtaposition and complementarity among them, the scientific - and particularly visible in the Platonic dialogue *Theaetetus* - skill of Socrates in elicitation with the exuberant erotic word that is pervasive in the dialogue he is processing here.

3 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 28.2-4: «Καὶ γὰρ μαιευόμενος φυλάττει τὸ τῷ ἐρωτικῷ προσῆκον καὶ τῇ διαλεκτικῇ χρώμενος οὐκ ἀφίσταται τῆς ιδιότητος τῶν ἐρωτικῶν λόγων» ("Even when eliciting, Socrates preserves what is appropriate to love, and when using philosophical argument, he does not depart from the particular character of discourses on love.") Commenting, we would point out that on the basis of reciprocity principles, Proclus establishes an extended scientific unit, which includes individual sciences with congenital means of presence, such that also accept common categorical definitions, with the "appropriate" validating these attributions. Extending this unit, we could describe it as "purification philosophy", in the sense that it delimits the preconditions for elevation to the truth through the systematic overcoming of situations that pose obstacles to such movement or cause pathogens. For a systematic view of dialectic in Neoplatonic thought, see indicatively Gersh 1978, 113-121.



The comparison shows that in the development of this conceptual platonic dialogue, Socrates with his elicitation science restores Theaetetus from his false views and gradually renders him autonomous in the scientific research and in the authenticity-originality of his references.⁴ That is, he grants him the prerequisites so that he sees himself also as a future creator of new or discovered knowledge.

In this critical-didactic way Theaetetus gradually becomes spiritually autonomous and able to clearly identify the truth on his own and, by extension, to distinguish it from falsehood and fallacy. That is, this is the supreme product of elicitation. It is obvious that elicitation here operates also with the perspective of the principle of falsification, as the methodic logical rejection of all those thoughts or positions that are proven erroneous in the successive upgrades concerning the approach of the reference object. Actually, this method appears to be sufficiently autonomous and not absorbed by others. It can therefore be defined even as a relatively autonomous process, at least during the initial stages of its development or application. So, as such, it will have a familiar foundational reason. On the contrary, according to the highlighting of Socrates himself, love science in the Alcibiades I dialogue certainly holds the dominant position, but does not function in an autonomous field and without any interventionist presence, but it also permeates with its familiar word the other two sciences which it exercises in a loving way.⁵ And this intervention is not without consequences. Uttering the word of Socrates is fully in line with the persons he seeks or approaches each time, since the love reference - more than any other - must permanently have a specialized, rather than standardized or inelastic, texture.⁶

4 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 28.4-9: «Ὡσπερ καὶ ἐν Θεαιτήτῳ μαιευτικός ἐστι καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα χαρακτηρίζεται, διὸ καὶ μέχρι τῆς καθάρσεως πρόεισι τῶν ψευδῶν δοξασμάτων τοῦ Θεαιτήτου, τὸ δ' ἐντεῦθεν ἀφίησιν αὐτὸν ὡς παρ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἀληθές ἤδη διαγνῶναι δυνάμενον, ὃ δὴ τῆς μαιευτικῆς ἔστιν ἔργον, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν ἐκείνοις φησὶν» "As in the Theaetetus he is skilled in eliciting, is characterized chiefly by this quality, and therefore proceeds as far as the cleansing away of the false opinions of Theaetetus, but thereafter lets him go as now being capable of discerning the truth by himself, which indeed is the function of the science of elicitation, as Socrates himself observes in that work." The above highlight has a clearly optimistic orientation, since truth is defined as a goal that can be achieved through a careful and methodological turn to internality. It could even be characterized as, to a certain extent, dogmatic. Cf. Plato's *Theaetetus*, 210c1-6. The choice of this dialogue is highly successful, as in its content the founder of the Academy led his epistemological researches to their culmination. See relatively Andriopoulos, 2009, 81-126.

5 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 28.9-12: «Οὕτω δὴ τὴν ἐρωτικὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐν τοῦτῳ πρώτως ἐπιδείκνυσσι τὸ τε διαλεκτικὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ τὸ μαιευτικὸν ἐρωτικῶς μεταχειρίζεται» ("So in this dialogue he primarily demonstrates the science of love and practices in a loving manner both philosophical argument and elicitation.") The axial distinction between the verbs "exhibiting" and "treating" is clear, with the former referring to argumentation and the latter to use and application. Thus, the hierarchy among the sciences, which has already been supported, is confirmed. Cf. Hadot, 1968, 239-246. About elicitation, see indicatively, Brès, 1973, 227-229.

6 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 28.12-13: «Πανταχοῦ γὰρ ὁ Σωκράτης τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις προσώποις οἰκείως προάγει τοὺς λόγους» ("For everywhere Socrates pronounces the discourses in a manner suited to the characters in question.") Here the Neoplatonist scholar uses, mutatis mutandis, one of his leading ontological principles: "All things are in all things" (*The Elements of Theology*, pr. 103, p. 92.13), which has its origins in the cosmological thought of Anaxagoras and which expresses the dialectic between the whole and the parts through which it appears and functions.



It should be noted, however, that the choice or interventional function of one science over the rest does not necessarily indicate a certain evaluative hierarchical priority, but is probably due to the searches or circumstances of a particular moment. In other words, it responds to the realism of the current. The approach of an object, for example, is often multi-faceted, as it displays itself a plethora of definitions and manifestations. Which of the sciences and under which rationale will be chosen first for systematic examination and then for applications is an issue which is related to the research objective that is dominant at the time. However, the link among the sciences is necessary, because it introduces a holistic research and epistemological paradigm. And the reason for this is that the unity of the object and the unity of the human mind must, in spite of their specializations, be ensured in every way, so as to prevent their break-up. By extension, they make necessary a common reason of presence between the actual data and the cognitive references. This relevance can also be characterized as dialectical in terms of reciprocity. Therefore, which methodological or scientific means will be used on a case-by-case basis, depends on what has been chosen as the dominant research or pedagogical goal. And this specialization is considered particularly needed, when the reference is addressed to a personal subject of major importance, such as a student. He is a budding citizen who, because of his multiple qualities or necessities, depending on the current circumstances, needs the corresponding approaches. But the love approach gives the issues under consideration here specializations and expansions that the other two sciences do not achieve.

B) The Sciences as methodological bases of Pedagogy

The following unit also uses the analogy. By this method, Proclus, in almost all of his relevant references, attempts - and often manages - to show the ways in which man becomes a genuine reflection of the divine, without however, becoming God. By application, the general position is as follows: all goods in their entirety pre-exist in the divine in unity among them, but each man absorbs as much as possible each time according to his personal abilities. Thus, Socrates too, though he embraces all the forms of knowledge within himself, does not distribute them all together at the same time to a particular person. He activates them at different points in time, adjusting his current energy to the requirements of the recipients.⁷

7 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 28.13-18: «Ἵσπερ ἐν τῷ θεῷ πάντων ἐνοειδῶς προϋπαρχόντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄλλος ἄλλον ἀπολαύει καθ' ὅσον ἕκαστος πέφυκεν, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης ἀπάσας ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰς ἐπιστήμας περιέχων ἄλλοτε ἄλλη χρῆται πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὑποδεχομένων ἐπιτηδειότητα τὴν οἰκείαν ἐνέργειαν παραμετρῶν» (“and as in the godhead all goods preexist in the form of the One, but different individuals enjoy different goods according to the natural capacity of each, so also Socrates embraces all the forms of knowledge within himself, but uses now one now another, adjusting his own activity to the requirements of the recipients.”) Of course, the presence of the principle of proportion (analogy) is clear, but it is necessary to pay attention to the following individual difference: the detail that makes possible the participation in the divine goods are the intrinsic qualities that a person possesses and which differ from those of the other people. In fact, no reference is made to a particular endeavor of any human being, nor is it merely emphasized that he enjoys the good that is specific to him, in a way that could be argued to be defined from the beginning. The perspective is broader. Therefore, in the case where reference is made to the teacher Socrates, we notice that he himself takes initiatives to understand what is appropriate for a student and accordingly to grant it to him in the appropriate measure. In both cases, however, the democratic manner of grant is explicit and does not lead to intangible repetitions. In general, for the method of proportion in the system of Proclus, see *About Plato's Theology*, II, 37.5 - 39.26, where the theological tone is also pervasive. Cf. Beierwaltes 1979, 153-158.



We could argue that there is reference here to the pedagogical realism that is expressed in the form of the relationship in “one-many”, which is defined by the educator. In the context of this relationship, “many” highlights the specializations of “one,” or the applications that it currently makes according to the recipients of its references and concerns, or his manifested, in a timely manner, providence.

In view of the above, the divine - and by analogy the human - providence is externalized according to its rational planning, which is adapted to the specificity of the current recipient. The perspective of the whole and systematic process is obvious and stems from the full understanding of the needs of the people we communicate with and aim at granting them what they need. Therefore, the offer makes sense when it is coordinated with the circumstances of the persons in our each reference. Such an adaptation proves that a rigid repetition is not applied, but that a flexibility which goes beyond formal and uniform regularities works. Thus sensitivity towards the particular is introduced, which makes relationships personal and with a high degree of reciprocity.

So, by applying a different method each time and without violating the individual uniqueness of the student with whom he communicates, Socrates realizes his aspirations in a way that reflects his key interpretative approach. The standard, the rashly repetitive and the mechanistic are excluded from such a perspective. A possible repetition of the same behaviour would show a pedagogical and reasoning rigidity and of course a doctrinal formalism. Thus, he elevates one student as a spiritual being through the love science, he stirs up another student to recall the eternal truths of the soul through the art of elicitation, and he brings round a third student to the consideration of reality itself by the path of dialectic. By his intervention, too, each student is connected to the ontological value that is specific to him, according to his unique personality and the idiosyncrasy of his goals. Thus, one student is connected to the true beauty, another to the very first wisdom and another student to the Good.⁸ In any case, however, there is a connection with a transcendent reality. So we would argue that the same cognitive or existential goal is achieved through multidisciplinary approaches. There is no single relationship between method and goal. The common goal in each case is the existential and the cognitive enlargement, which are specialized according to the recipient. Hence, methodological pluralism is introduced, which is due to the penetrating interpretation of the circumstances. It is also evident that with the three scientific methods, the physical and metaphysical worlds are brought closer to each other and are connected through man, who participates in both of them with the two-dimensional of his existence, remaining somehow in their borders. In essence, with all three methods it is traced how man will be elevated and cohabit with the archetypes in a sphere which ontologically transcends him but also works against him in a providential way.

8 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 28.19 – 29.1: «Τὸν μὲν διὰ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς ἀνάγει, τὸν δὲ διὰ τῆς μαιευτικῆς εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἀνακινεῖ τῶν αἰδίων λόγων τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸν δὲ κατὰ τὴν διαλεκτικὴν μέθοδον εἰς τὴν τῶν ὄντων περιάγει θεωρίαν. Συνάπτει δὲ ἄλλους ἄλλοις, τοὺς μὲν τῷ αὐτοκάλῳ, τοὺς δὲ τῇ πρωτίστῃ σοφίᾳ, τοὺς δὲ τῷ ἀγαθῷ» (“one he elevates through the science of love, another he stirs up through the art of elicitation to recollection of the eternal notions of the soul, and a third he brings round by the path of dialectic to the consideration of reality. He unites different individuals to different objects, some to essential beauty, others to the very first wisdom, and others to the Good.”) Pluralism, which is also highlighted here, removes any generalistic view of man and represents the explosively open atmosphere of the Ancient Greek Enlightenment, meritocracy and at the same time democracy of spirit, which also serves specificity. Cf. Plato’s *Phaedrus*, 246d-248e. Cf. Brès 1973, 252-254.



C. The Sciences as a potential for elevation in the metaphysical world

Next, Proclus presents Socrates to address those who love, as he himself mentions in the dialogue *Republic*, to study the truth and to inform them of the positive interventions of the three sciences. So, first, the Athenian philosopher informs them that with love they are elevated to the beautiful. Also, that with elicitation they realize the innate concepts associated with the integer metaphysical reality and that with the specific asset they acquire the prerequisites to discover that they are wise in topics they ignore. Finally, that the art of dialectic opens the way to elevate them to the divine Good.⁹ It is a multilayered or even gradual transition from the issues of the natural city to the integral states of metaphysics. It should also be noted that in Platonic teaching, absolute truth intertwines, almost exclusively, with the metaphysical world. The innate concepts of conscience are nothing else but the cognitive formulation of the archetypal Ideas. Anyone who knows and makes genuine use of the concepts communicates with the eternal and unvarying realities that constitute their ontological source and objective validation.¹⁰

Specializing on his remarks, the Neoplatonic philosopher clarifies that the perfection of the student and his elevation to the divine are assisted by Socrates, but are primarily a function of the dexterity that derives from the quality of his value as a recipient. In other words, a hierarchical ranking is indirectly highlighted among the recipients as to the quality of their dexterity and the extent to which it is utilised. However, no one is excluded from the cognitive good and from his personal fulfillment.¹¹ We would therefore argue that a system of pedagogical planning with teleological characteristics is introduced here.

9 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 29.1-7: Διὰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ἐρωτικῆς πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ἀναγόμεθα,, διὰ δὲ τῆς μαιευτικῆς σοφὸς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἀναφαίνεται περὶ ὧν ἔστιν ἀμαθής, τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ προβάλλων περὶ τῶν ὄντων λόγους, διὰ δὲ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς καὶ μέχρι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τὴν ἄνοδον εἶναι φησιν ὁ ἐν τῇ *Πολιτείᾳ* Σωκράτης τοῖς φιλοθεάμοσι τῆς ἀληθείας» ("through love we are elevated to the beautiful, through elicitation each one of us is revealed to be wise about subjects in which he is unlearned, by realizing the innate notions within himself concerning reality, and through the art of dialectic lies the way up even as far as the Good, says Socrates in the *Republic*, "for those who love to contemplate the truth.") In other words, wisdom is existent in man, while through educational learning it is recovered and not conquered, a detail that gives a special content and orientation to teaching. So, ignorance does not also mean lack of wisdom. Thus, here we can assume that the a priori ontological foundation of conscience is referred, a position that is highly obvious for Proclus, and for his teacher, Syrianos. Consequently, Plato returns to the theoretical foreground of epistemological Anthropology. Cf. *Plato's Republic*, 532a5 - d11. Cf. Trouillard, 1972, 119-120.

10 For the relationship that Plato defines between the archetypal metaphysical Ideas and the innate concepts, see indicatively Vlastos 1994, 317-586. Proclus has thoroughly addressed the topic in his Commentaries in the Platonic dialogues *Parmenides*, *Alcibiades I* and *Cratylus*. It is a subject closely linked to conceptual realism, too, which is one of the theoretical "superweapons" of Neoplatonism and Christianity. See Μπενάκης, 1975-76, 393-423. De Libera, 2005, 211-264.

11 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 29.7-10: «Ὡς οὖν ἕκαστος ἐπιτηδειότητος ἔλαχεν, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τελειοῦται παρὰ τοῦ Σωκράτους καὶ ἀνάγεται πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τάξιν» ("According, then, to the measure of suitability that each person possesses, so he is perfected by Socrates and elevated to the divine according to his own rank.") Reflection is maintained as to whether the familiar state of each man is defined by God or conquered by man himself, or whether it is a cooperation between these two factors. For the ontological bases which underpin these states, see for example, *About Plato's Theology*, III, 20.2 - 28.21. It should be added that 'aptitude' refers not only to ability but also to internal tendency or intention.



And, though this planning is aimed at top-level values, it is defined as a universal good, a feature which introduces a democratic view of the pedagogical issue. It is also emphasized that the proper dialectical relationship between the educational institutions and the student leads him to utilize and release his personal potential. So, also here the approach to the pedagogical issue is not unique, but acquires a complex content, since such liberalization requires coordinated undertakings.

Subsequently invoking Socrates' testimony in the dialogue *Phaedrus*, the Neoplatonist philosopher observes that the divine, in its entirety, embodies the properties (ontological dimension) or the concepts (cognitive dimension) of the beauty, the wisdom and the Good. He also argues that the salvation of the souls is ensured by their elevation to this transcendent sphere. Thus, he presents the divine to provide each person with the whole potential for his salvation that is for his personal fulfillment. Actually, he points out that Socrates in the same dialogue refers, in poetic terms, to the winged nature of the soul, which is fed and enriched by these properties-concepts. But also with the inverse clarification, that is, that the soul is destroyed and completely lost with obscenity and evil as well as with their opposites.¹² The soul is attributed the winged quality, obviously to justify its elevating potential towards a reality that is superior to it and literally transcendent. Thus, a moral dualism is introduced, in the sense that at the anthropological level both moral values and disgraces appear as well as their consequent implications to the formation of personal quality. In other words, every person moves between two evaluative possibilities, the positive and the negative ones. However, this moral dualism does not in any way lead to a corresponding ontological one, and thus an optimistic view of the anthropological issues is introduced. Indirectly there also come to the fore the possibility and freedom of self-governing, as a way of depositing, in both options, personal independence against what is valid and displayed propagandistically and mislead public opinion.

D] Love as a source of fulfillment of existence and life

According to the above findings, Proclus concludes that those, whose nature is adorned with the above-mentioned moral and intellectual assets, are driven to perfection with love. This result occurs also in Alcibiades, who, by owning such a wealth of soul, is judged as worthy of the love of Socrates and the protrusions to which such a profound reference leads. It is therefore necessary to combine the student's soul with the teacher's soul. Actually, in this communication context it is revealed that the familiarization and the union of the student with the divine archetypes, are accomplished, and actually in their

¹² See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 29.10-15: «Τὸ θεῖον ἅπαν καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν, ὡς ἐν Φαίδρῳ λέγεται· πρὸς ταῦτα τοίνυν ἡ ἀναγωγή καὶ διὰ τούτων ἡ σωτηρία ταῖς ψυχαῖς. Τρέφεται γὰρ τούτοις καὶ ἄρδεται τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πτέρωμα, αἰσχυρῶ δὲ καὶ κακῶ καὶ τοῖς ἐναντίοις φθίνει τε καὶ διάλλεται, καθάπερ ὁ Σωκράτης αὐτὸς φησιν ἐν ἐκείνοις» (“The whole godhead is beautiful, wise and good”, as is said in the *Phaedrus*; to such heights, then, lies the ascent, and through such means comes salvation to souls. “On such is the winged nature of the soul fed and watered, but through what is base and evil is contrary to former, it both wastes and perishes utterly,” as Socrates himself observes in that work.) This is a very narrative verse, in which metaphors increase the accuracy of meanings that have a prompting and normative content of a teleological texture. See *Phaedrus*, 246d8-e4.



entirety, through the divine beauty itself. The Socratic elicitation and dialectics, which target the soul of the student towards the essential of existence and life, contribute to a great extent to this union.¹³ Dialectics is obviously defined here as a systemic process, which, on the basis of the platonic considerations, starts from the individual beauty to be elevated to the authentic or divine beauty, from the imperfect to the perfect. Consequently, the process goes through levels, which are the necessary stations for the conquest of the truth, while at the same time proving the impasses or weaknesses of an automatic or hasty approach, which moves far from what is normatively defined by science, as the pre-eminently systematic, research-wise and theoretically, discipline.

Continuing however his findings, Proclus renotes that the situation mostly sensed and projected in this part of the treatise is love and, by extension, the love science in general. This is a science which mainly satisfies and justifies the introduction and conclusion of dialogue as well as what is presented in between, that is to say, it determines the overall body of the text. This body in fact is emphasized in a very expressive way and thus provides a particularly important indication of Socrates' preference for a particular style of language use. Again, however, it must not be forgotten that, apart from the love science, the other two sciences, elicitation and dialectics, contribute to both the foundation of what is said and the choice of the particular expressive style.¹⁴ And this detail needs to be recalled in memory at all times, so that we understand the holistic way in which Socrates approaches his student. So, the attribution of the term "science" to love moves in the atmosphere of the proper ratio and states that, as reference and ecstasy, the term has also solid structural characteristics, while also it has no relation to the vulgar, impulsive and proprietary word. Therefore, in the present theme area, love means recognition of the integer and its theoretical wording. Its continuous presence from the beginning to the end of the dialogue gives it a key epistemological function. It is also far from being a subjective sentimentality. It has order, system and organization; it is based on internal principles; and serves the issue of values. It is very much linked to morality and is constituted on the criterion of how it will permanently strengthen and enlarge human dignity. So, it will work in a highly beneficial way in the qualitative goals of the social whole.

13 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 29.16-22 «Δι' ἔρωτος μὲν ἡ τελείωσις ἐν τῷ προκειμένῳ συγγράμματι καὶ ταύτην ἔχουσι τὴν φύσιν, ἦν δὴ καὶ ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης λαχὼν ἀξιέραστος ἔδοξεν εἶναι τῷ Σωκράτει, ἡ δὲ συναφὴ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κάλλος καὶ δι' ἐκείνου ἡ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἅπαν οἰκειότης. Καὶ δὴ καὶ ἡ μαίεα τοῦ Σωκράτους καὶ τὰ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς ἔργα πρὸς τοῦτο περιάγει τὸ τέλος τὴν τοῦ νεανίσκου ψυχὴν» ("Hence it is through love that perfection comes, in the present work, to those that possess this nature (in view of his possession thereof, Alcibiades seemed to be worthy of love to Socrates): the union is made with the divine beauty, and through that results intimacy with the entire divinity.") For a systematic consideration of Proclus' views on the soul, see indicatively Trouillard 1972. Bastid 1969, 365-382. Maclsaak, 2011, 29-60.

14 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 29.22-30.4: «Προβέβληται γὰρ ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἐρωτικόν, συνεργεῖ δὲ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν εἶδη τῷ τοιοῦτῳ τέλει. Διὸ καὶ τὰ προοίμια τῆς συνουσίας καὶ τὸ συμπέρασμα τῆς ἐρωτικῆς ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμης ἀνάμιστα καὶ πάντα τὰ μεταξὺ παμπόλλην ἐνδειξιν παρέχεται τῆς κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ εἶδος ἱσταμένης τοῦ Σωκράτους ἐνεργείας» ("Further, the elicitation by Socrates and the work of philosophical discussion leads the soul of the young man round to his end; for, as we said, it is love that is realized here, but the other kinds of science assist such a purpose. Therefore, both the introduction to the conversation and the conclusion are full of the science of love, and all that lies between affords very considerable indication of the setting of Socrates' activity according to this genre.") The above issue as a whole is linked to the moral constitution of human life which is considered that it should be scientifically and evidently founded, according to the rules which have been established by the dialectical method. See Rosan 1949, 193-217. Τερέζης 2020.



After the brief consideration of the style - that is of the specificity of Plato's linguistic expression - Proclus returns to the pragmatological research of his eminent topic, i.e. how compatible love is, in any approach, with the dialogue that takes place between the two persons. In other words, he attempts to discover whether and to what extent love and love science in general are necessary and essential building blocks for the constitution and evolution of their dialogue. Attention is needed, however: the methodical process that is being undertaken is not so much aimed at the logical supporting of the arguments but at how they will respond to what must happen and, accordingly, that must be chosen. Thus, we avoid the risk of subjective idealism or of the building of philosophical thinking solely by the criteria of a dominant psychological state. With the approach of comparison and simultaneous control of the energetic properties or activities of both gods and love, the philosopher is led to the following findings: the specialized-in-their-properties gods reveal the difference among them through their various interventions in the natural world, which man observes and describes with concepts. Among their interventions there are included: the creation of the world, the constitution and classification of beings, the granting of various forms of life, the maintenance of the - apparently prescribed by their providence - unchangeable state and unbreakable coherence of things and the protection of the world.¹⁵ The example presented here is holistic from any point of view.

These are ontological properties, which reveal the exact, at all levels, determination of the physical by the metaphysical world, in the function of a movement that could be characterized as divine providence. This providence as (self-)offer emits all the qualities of love reference. So, the historical mode of existence is absolutely determined by the transcendent, is not autonomous, self-defining, or self-explanatory. It is not based on intrinsic preconditions but is essentially defined as the establishment of the state of the divine in the immediate historical events. Each god in fact offers something special and so, the entire physical world in its specializations is determined by metaphysical specializations. The acceptance of the metaphysical - with its ontological and epistemological presuppositions and extensions - realism determines and interprets what happens in the historical and physical field. Certainly, it would not be inappropriate to claim that the Neoplatonist philosopher researches the issue in the reverse, despite the fact he carefully avoids declaring such a choice. He seeks the metaphysical justifications for his experience-based observations, because he does not consider them to be self-explanatory and self-interpretable. And if we were to look at the ontological aspects of what is mentioned here, we would have valid arguments to support that the relations between the two worlds are dominated by a consistent monism, despite the ontological differences and the axiological gradations that are considered to register them in different and clearly hierarchical fields.

¹⁵ See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 30.5-16. Cf. *The Elements of Theology*, pr. 150-159, p.p. 132.1 - 140.4.



On the basis of the mentioned way of the manifestation of Gods, Proclus notes that the love state as a whole, which emanates from the divine beauty and is situated in its sphere, is the cause of the reversion of all beings to its substance. The ontological system which he builds himself by the "reversion" ensures the supporting completeness and the extrication from the situations of becoming and changing. A being, through the maturity he has conquered with his own initiatives, reverses there, that is to the transcendent sphere, where he will meet the fulfillment of his life.¹⁶ This is a highly stimulating action whose mission is the restoration of the beings to their original divine source and their participation in the fulfillment of the divine energies or qualities, with the perspective of a permanent settlement. This mission here is being carried out in two ways: on the one hand, by integrating all the, ontologically and axiologically, inferior beings into the divine beauty. On the other hand, by granting or channeling the, resulting from the specific beauty, emissions of the divine light into anything that follows in the evolution of cosmological processes. So, we could refer to a mutual dialectic. According to the Neoplatonist philosopher, the action that mediates between the returning entity and the cause of that return, just because it is desirable, justifies its characterization as a spirit with special abilities. This is a wonderful situation that is found in the Platonic dialogue *Symposium*,¹⁷ where memories of higher human and divine states are pervasive.

As an extension we would mention that the reversion also states that the intelligible or divine beauty is the final cause of all beings. It also highlights the need for rehabilitation, in the sense that the life of the physical and the historic world, despite the fact that from its origins it is not within the purview of evil, needs its reparations to ensure its fulfillment. In some way, upon their reversion, beings manifest their nostalgia and their expectation to return to where they came from. This is because the life they lead in the world to which they belong (as natural beings) does not guarantee fulfillment. It should be noted, for the needs of the processing subject, that mediation which is directly or indirectly highlighted, if not indicating a hierarchy, at least refers to the need to go through certain stages of activities. These stages are specific levels of conscience and existential fulfillment. Divine beauty cannot be conquered immediately and at one time. What is needed is an ascending passage through those levels that will gradually extend the existential quality of the passer, since he himself will solidify and extend his maturity by communicating each time with new and more authentic situations. The above procedure is also the methodological proposal for Alcibiades in order to gradually conquer the very truth.

The abovementioned lead to the fact that love is now a common way of existence both of the metaphysical and of the physical world, that it is rendered a universal law for human behaviour and that it ensures the necessary to any communication factor of reciprocity. It is a reciprocity that recognizes and expands its potential by acquiring the necessary details, which in the sensible beings are in the state of ambiguity. From the point of view of cognition, such a situation is comparable to intermediate rather than intuitive knowledge, with the result that a reasonable and coherent system of

16 For the process of "reversion" in the ontological system of Proclus, see *The Elements of Theology*, pr. 25-39, p.p 28.21-42.7. Beierwaltes 1979, 118-163. Trouillard 1982, 53-91.

17 See *To Plato First Alcibiades*, 30.16-31.1. Cf. *Plato's Symposium*, 202d9. Lacan 1991, 29-217.



teleological procedures emerges before us.¹⁸ Love thus "validates" its systematic scientific character and is a primarily reliable asset for the maturity of human conscience. So, it is an effective methodological "tool" in any attempt of pedagogical perspective. From this point on, Proclus will undertake an exhaustive and systematic analysis of the Platonic dialogue, having as the main axis of his interpretations and his assessments the spiritual love that develops and expands, through various details, between the pedagogist and the pedagogue, that is, it appears to increase existential and collective horizons.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the foregoing, we conclude to the following three findings:

- A.** Proclus defines the relationship between the pedagogist and the pedagogue with criteria based on the proper ratio. He adopts scientific data as of central importance to the realization of this relationship and detects to discover the most reliable methodologies which would lead to the precise identification of the pursued goals that are shaped in its development. In the above perspective, he excludes barren didacticism, romantic sentiments and an ad valorem morality in the compliance with strict rules. Thus, he gives this relationship dimensions which render it a so-to-speak complete and internal system of mutual reference between the two contracting parties. And it is clear that in such an environment the pedagogical goal is not limited exclusively to the provision of knowledge.
- B.** By highlighting the value of the pedagogue and by projecting his important contribution to the accomplishment of the pedagogical goal, he constitutes in a reasonable and coherent way that theory which could be called "pedagogy of the person". In the terms of constructing this theory, the sense of specificity and the absence of idealistic or exclusively mental criteria are of interest. And even to the most unsuspecting reader it becomes clear that the Neoplatonist philosopher avoids general ambiguities and insists on specialized and applicable clarifications. The pedagogist is called upon to discover all those inner qualities of the pedagogue, which, on the basis of objective and verifiable criteria, are in need of appropriate intervention, in order to be activated and exploited.
- C.** We could argue that the short text we analyzed ensures the connection of Epistemology with Metaphysics. It is a link particularly dear to Proclus, which ranks him with justified criteria in the evolution of the Platonic tradition, which is exciting for its expansions. His almost inexhaustible insistence on constructing and distinguishing among them the sciences and the methods which correspond to them is not only oriented towards the description of the empirically concrete and its

¹⁸ For the necessity of mediations in Proclus' system, see indicatively, *About Plato's Theology*, IV, 6.5-17.14, where more specifically reference is made to the ontological and functional relationships between "Being", "Life" and "Mind", i.e. the three most supreme ones, after the "One" and "Henads", of the metaphysical realities. It is a text that presents the general normative example for the way of existence and behaviour of both gods and humans. For the above mentioned metaphysical trinity, see indicatively, Beirwaltes, 1979, 93-108. Hadot, 1968, 213-246 and 260-272.



performances. It is put in the service of discovering the metaphysical sources of sensible reality. The ultimate goal is obvious: to approach in theory the unvarying realities, which make possible and explain with precise reasons the existence of those beings or phenomena that are subject to change. We could therefore argue that the metaphysical is also given meaning in terms of its physical presence, but not in the narrow context of a simplistic or one-sided religious approach to the issue. The divine archetypes are at the same time both the authentic ontological datum and the source of valid knowledge principles and methods that are coordinated with their content to highlight them in this transcendent quality. It is of course sufficient for man to make precise scientific approaches to what constitutes divine grants. And here Proclus, as a mystic, brings out the fascinating surprise: he gives to a supreme emotional-experiential-ecstatic state, to love, the characteristics of proper ratio. Thus, in the most charming pulses of human existence, he also finds a strict structure.

We should note that Proclus elaborates the concept of love in his other treatises, such as for example in *About Plato's Theology*, from where we quote as an example the following verse «Πρὸς μὲν οὖν τὸ θεῖον κάλλος τὸ συνάγον τὰ δεύτερα πάντα καὶ οἰκειοῦν καὶ τῆς πληρώσεως αἴτιον καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ἐποχεταιίας, δῆλον οἶμαι παντί, καὶ τοῦ Πλάτωνος πολλάκις λέγοντος, ὡς οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ ὁ ἔρωσ, ὃς δὴ καὶ θεοὺς ἀεὶ τοὺς δευτέρους τοῖς πρὸ ἑαυτῶν καὶ τὰ κρείττονα γένη τῶν ψυχῶν τὰς ἀρίστους συνάπτει κατὰ τὸ καλόν» (I, 109. 10-16).

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Ο ΕΡΩΣ ΩΣ ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΙΚΟ ΚΑΤΟΡΘΩΜΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΝΕΟΠΛΑΤΩΝΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΚΛΟ

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Summary:

Στην μελέτη αυτή αναλαμβάνονται να δειχθούν οι τρόποι διά των οποίων ο νεοπλατωνικός φιλόσοφος Πρόκλος εκτιμά ότι πρέπει να αναπτύσσονται οι σχέσεις μεταξύ διδασκάλων και μαθητή, έχοντας ως αφορμή την συνάντηση του Σωκράτη με τον Αλκιβιάδη κατά τον τρόπο που αυτή παρουσιάζεται στον πλατωνικό διάλογο *Αλκιβιάδης Ι*. Στην οπτική του οι εν λόγω τρόποι έχουν σαφώς επιστημονικό περιεχόμενο και διακρίνονται σε διαλεκτικό, μαιευτικό και ερωτικό. Και στους τρεις αποδίδει ιδιαίτερη σημασία αλλά την κατεξοχήν παιδαγωγική, ηθική και, ευρύτερα, ανθρωπολογική λειτουργία αναγνωρίζει στον ερωτικό. Και την εν λόγω προτεραιότητα του ερωτικού στηρίζει στο εξής: όταν ο Σωκράτης αναζητεί την αλήθεια, τόσο κατά την διδακτική διαδρομή τής μαιευτικής όσο και κατά τις ερευνητικές στοχεύσεις της διαλεκτικής, δεν παύει να "διανθίζει" και τις δύο με τους συναρπαστικούς τόνους τούς οποίους χορηγεί ο έρως. Δια της πολυδύναμης αυτής παρουσίας ο διδάσκαλος ωθείται ώστε να ανακαλύπτει, με την διερεύνηση των επικοινωνιακών αναφορών του, όλο και περαιτέρω το βάθος του εσωτερικού κόσμου τού μαθητή του. Έτσι, ο Πρόκλος επιδιώκει - και το πραγματώνει - να αναδείξει, κυρίως μέσω τού παιδαγωγικού έρωτα και την φιλοσοφία των προσωπικών διαδρομών και σχέσεων. Πρόκειται για καταστάσεις έντονων παλμών, οι οποίες γοητεύουν και ενεργοποιούν τον μαθητή ώστε να οδηγείται σε δημιουργικές πρωτοβουλίες και να λειτουργεί ως ένας νέος κόσμος προθέσεων, σημασιών και πράξεων.

Keywords:

ΑΛΚΙΒΙΑΔΗΣ,
ΠΛΑΤΩΝ,
ΠΡΟΚΛΟΣ,
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ,
ΔΙΑΛΕΚΤΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ,
ΕΡΩΤΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ,
ΜΑΙΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ,
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