

# THE REQUIREMENTS OF SCIENCE ACCORDING TO PROCLUS THE NEOPLATONIST

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**ABSTRACT.** In this study, focusing our attention on Proclus' comments on the Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I*, one of the greatest epistemological texts of the ancient Greek literature, we follow his attempt to show a philosophy of subject. More specifically, we investigate the terms in which science can be acquired by a thinking subject, which forms its broader existential identity utilizing its relation to knowledge, which subsequently can be used so as to the quality of a counsellor to be established too. Systematic learning and research are methodologically considered to be the main ways for making science, while the psychological factor and the intention of the thinking subject to turn to itself in order to gradually discover the completeness that a priori possesses are also quite important. Note that this turn towards the self reaches the highest possible point with insight.

**KEYWORDS:** Proclus, *Alcibiades I*, knowledge, science, counsellor.

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## *Introduction*

Proclus the Neoplatonist (412–485), who was a student of Syrianus and a principal of the Platonic Academy, lives and writes in a period of time in which philosophy is not any more an autonomous authentic rational and dialectical way of thinking and acting. It is the historical moment at which Christianity takes its first but quite stable steps, setting crucial spiritual questions and providing a worldview conceptually already formed and with specific answers in all the theoretical fields. It should be mentioned that this new cultural schema is found together with Neoplatonism since the third century with many similarities but also clear differences between each other. Proclus, the last chronologically speaking –

before Damascius— authentic representative of this kind of philosophy that may be included in the Platonic tradition —which has actually quite clear theological orientation—captures within his microcosm the cultural spirit of the fifth century and that is why he is considered to be one of the main typical examples of thought of that time.

However, we should not just see Proclus as such but also on the basis of the developments that he offered at all levels of reflection and thought, including his attempt to show a philosophy of the subject. Generally, his work is quite extensive and includes systematic analyses, which combine historical with systematic perspectives in an outstanding way regarding both the scientific suggestions and the intensity that they are presented. He actually offered great results, without ever showing that he was dealing with the rules of the formal logic, which, however, explicitly were applied and included in his reasoning.<sup>1</sup> In this field, he had a clear respect for Aristotle's and Porphyrius's findings. Furthermore, Proclus was an exciting encyclopaedist (in the sense that he utilized history and included it into precise categories) and, at the same time, a great scientist in mathematics and physics. Thus, he suggested that scientific research goes together with philosophy, so in his treatises one could find clear scientific suggestions, where methodology constitutes the most important regularity. Despite the fact that he suggested a holistic epistemology, in his work one can also find individual epistemological perspectives, which specify their leading source. Therefore, he thought it was necessary to provide critical approaches, following the model of skepticism.

Focusing our attention on his comments on the Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I*<sup>2</sup>, we are given the opportunity to follow a systematic approach of the gnoseological

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<sup>1</sup> S. Breton (1973, 210–224) says that Proclus defines the concepts with precision and structures his theories and analyses proving his reasoning, while he is open to new approaches.

<sup>2</sup> Let us note here that the Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I* —which is actually an attempt to understand the very deep of existence or self— was a favorite text of the representatives of middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, while it was analyzed and interpreted in detail by Proclus, the most important systematic commentator of the Platonic texts. It is remarkable that Proclus' comments on *Alcibiades I* is one of the few moral and pedagogical texts of the Neoplatonic School, whose interests were mainly focused on cosmological and ontological issues and actually formed the metaphysical point of view. Furthermore, its representatives included the anthropological and moral views in a broader metaphysical context. So, they did not deal with them as being autonomous and self-defined issues, but they approached them as dependent on transcendent to them powers. In the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD, when Proclus writes this text, human interest focuses on theology and that is why human existence is exclusively determined by principles totally regula-

question on the terms in which the thinking subject is formed while attempting to structure valid epistemological results.<sup>3</sup> Quite remarkable is that Proclus chooses not to follow, as far as this is possible, an extreme skepticism, so as to avoid agnosticism. This commentary of his can be easily included among the greatest texts of the ancient Greek literature, in which one could find the common and typical characteristic of his texts: the scientific precision or, at least, the intention for such an ending of the scientific attempts. And this is something that necessary comes with regulatory criteria and obvious scientific purposes. The systematic approach and the way in which themes are combined strengthen the original goal and lead to a specific result. So, in Proclus we find a system of knowledge which is structured in a rational, coherent and complete way combining multiple theoretical elements. In order Proclus to establish this system considers appropriate to present the theoretical principles to be followed and the prospects of the subjects elaborated, defining the concepts quite precisely and making accurate analyses and valid composite judgments. This goal meets the request for epistemological accuracy.

In this study, we are investigating the extract 176.21-177.22 in which the requirements of science are presented.<sup>4</sup> We have to mention that in the foregoing, Proclus examined the necessity and the general principles of catharsis, dialectics as a method of catharsis, the methodological steps of dialectics, the relations developed between dialectics and logic and the reasons why the definitions are necessary. These topics show the steps to be taken by the thinking subject in order to be prepared to understand the content of science both in itself and in its applications.

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tory. We could, therefore, say that the entire pedagogical relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades in this Platonic dialogue is placed by Proclus in a broader context, which defines it both generally and in detail. However, individuality does not disappear, since metaphysics is considered to be an ability to overcome the narrow anthropological boundaries, as the opening of the terms required for a way of existing that goes beyond sensible world. According to J. Trouillard (1972) 5, "la transcendance néoplatonicienne n'est pas une absence, mais un excès de présence, puisqu'elle est pour chaque esprit son foyer intérieur de libération". Thus, anthropological issues too, in the broad sense, are placed within the search on the relation between the divine and human. And in order to do that, it is first of all necessary to be scientifically elaborated.

<sup>3</sup> We have to mention here that his knowledge system fascinated Hegel and other great thinkers who had many in common with him, such as Leibniz and Spinoza.

<sup>4</sup> In this study we are going to use A. Ph. Segonds' edition (1985-1986), which includes an extensive introduction, an excellent translation into French and important philological and philosophical comments.

*A. Ways of forming the scientific result*

In order Proclus to support his argumentation on how much necessary are both a clear knowledge and the terms that establish it, he explains the general regularity requirements in which a person becomes a scientist in a specific field of reality. So, he says that every scientist receives knowledge either through learning or through science; this remark places the two terms within the relation cause-effect. In the first case, human receives a knowledge already known following a systematic process of learning, while in the second one he produces new knowledge and turns to be the inspired, or at least the original, researcher. Proclus justifies his position with a reduction ad absurdum argument, one of a kind actually, as follows: the only method for reaching a valid cognitive result –or wisdom– is the subject who is learning or searching to understand or discover what has not been yet a part of its knowledge.<sup>5</sup> In fact, this argument offers nothing new; it is a tautological analytical sentence, which just transforms a negative description into a regularity that necessarily or normally has to be true. We have to mention that here Proclus speaks about the intermediate and intuitive knowledge respectively (learning-research), without, however, providing further details or explaining.

However, the above regulatory suggestion needs the instrumental reason that will make it true. According to Proclus, two are the means that someone needs to have in order to be a counsellor. He has either to turn his attention to his self and through what naturally contains he has to discover the truth or with the assis-

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *In Platonis Alcibiadem I* 176.21-25. At this point, the elaboration of the minor premise of the syllogism starts, which defines that in order a person to be a counsellor (major premise), he has first and necessarily to be a scientist (minor premise). On the syllogism, E. Moutsopolos (1972) 63–70, says that it consists of three sentences related in such a way so as the third one, i.e. the conclusion, to be rationally included in the two premises. So, a syllogism is an analytical necessity, since thinking, by utilizing it, just draws and expresses something that already existed in the two premises. And although it does not have something new to offer to thinking and does not enrich knowledge, syllogism is practically useful and important. It should be also mentioned that Proclus at this point thinks of wisdom in a strict gnoseological way, in the sense of a moral regulatory basis –as ability– that should be a trait, both for reasons of internal order and as a desired result. It is likely that he speaks about the internal balance and rational structure of consciousness, which ensure an authentic relation with reality and precision in the formulation of the syllogisms. So, we are of the opinion that the translation of the word by A. Ph. Segonds as “savoir” is correct but limited in scope. A question that could be raised at this point is what would be the meaning of wisdom according to Aristotle in the extract here. We have to mention that this matter is elaborated in other parts of Proclus work. He obviously thinks of it in a broader sense.

tance and guidance by others, obviously more experts than him, to be lead to the same result. From the gnoseological, anthropological and pedagogical points of view, it is quite interesting the fact that indirectly he points out the difference on the degree of maturity and self-consciousness among the subjects who intend to gain knowledge. So, the first way requires a great effort, since it relies on the initiative and the responsibility of the personal activation, on how a person understands the relation with himself and the world around him and on how he chooses the right tools to actualize it. We should also include in this suggestion the researcher's belief –which is considered to be the result from the self-awareness process– on the relation between the concepts –or to be more accurate the conceptual constructions or reconstructions– found within his mind and the data coming from the external reality, provided that both are reflections of the metaphysical archetypes.

According to the context up to here, a more specific point arises: the would-be scientists stand out because they actually are aware of their abilities and the a posteriori products, i.e. the results of their research. And Proclus concludes that a good counsellor –provided that he is a scientist when compared to those that need his advice and are considered to be non-scientists– has gained a thorough knowledge in his field either on his own or by someone else and that is why he is called a counsellor.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. *In Platonis Alcibiadem I* 176.25-177.1. The word “ἐπιστρέφοντας”, meaning reverting («πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐπιστρέφοντας») in the extract here defines how necessary is to reflect; moreover, it implies that coming out from the self, in the sense of a procession, has not brought good or the intended gnoseological results. So, henoratic knowledge as a direct encounter of the consciousness with itself is the method or, more correctly, the appropriate accomplishment for this gnoseological activity. On the henoratic knowledge-method, cf. E. Moutsopoulos (1972) 55–62. Th. Penolides (2004) 58–71, commenting on the insight in Descartes, says that the way in which Descartes understands it shows us an intuitive action. According to Descartes, insight can work as certain knowledge. It can also appear as an individual case that, in the sense of nature, exceeds cognitive consciousness. No matter what, the most important is that the inherent difference of insight, i.e. the fact that insight is categorized as a cognitive certainty and as a priority of an essential element that is not a part of knowledge, is found in the very intention of the consciousness, which sets as knowledge (composition) and gives priority (requires) as an elemental identity itself. Consciousness acts like a representation, i.e. manifests itself as a positive ontic condition, which explains its position (the thing set by it) according to a specific individuality not yet formed, in the sense of a requirement. This change of position into a requirement is accomplished by the connection of the judgment. Judgment is the rational form in which knowledge stands in front of itself. We have to mention here that judgment could be included in Proclus theory, since it is a standing position of his that consciousness makes a positive ontological action –in the sense

Making then a historical retrospection –which is actually a systematic interpretation– on the scientific discoveries, he says that human research until his time has made significant progress. And we can actually identify the importance of this phenomenon in the first scientists who came up with new theories and applications in technology. According to his opinion, these inventions are worthy of admiration, since they have contributed to the general progress in theory and application<sup>7</sup>. Attempting a more general approach of the issue analyzed here, he

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of a discovery–, which works as a requirement for it. In order to understand better, J. Habermas (1972) 314, says the following on reflection: “It is no accident that the standards of self-reflection are exempted from the singular state of suspension in which those of all other cognitive processes require critical evaluation. They possess theoretical certainty. The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori (...) Taken together, autonomy and responsibility constitute the only Idea we possess a priori in the sense of the philosophical tradition. Perhaps that is why the language of German Idealism, according to which “reason” contains both will and consciousness as its elements, is not quite obsolete. Reason also means the will to reason. In self-reflection knowledge for the sake of knowledge attains congruence with the interest in autonomy and responsibility. The emancipatory cognitive interest aims at the pursuit of reflection as such”. In what way do the above make sense in Proclus? His cognitive purpose is to set free consciousness from any fallacy. And how such a purpose is accomplished? Regardless of what method or procedure is chosen, it is accomplished by turning in the self. This is where theoretical certainty is found. However, the whole plan becomes real only after consciousness is fed by a will for self-reflection. The term “will” is not found in Proclus’ text; however, it arises from the general context before and after this text. The last step is to form or to discover the transcendent consciousness and to avoid randomness, although Proclus does not exclude the specific, but quite the opposite.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *In Platonis Alcibiadem I* 177.1-5. Among the most important things mentioned in this text is the reference to an applied science, a rational attitude that apparently shows that at that time this was a goal to achieve or something necessary and appropriate to own. On the way in which Proclus understands the technique, cf. for instance *Theologia Platonica V*, 87.22-91.3, where he mentions the myth of Protagoras and attempts to explain it. We could also say that Proclus would agree with Marcuse’s view on how technique takes control. More specifically, J. Habermas (1969) 53 says for Marcuse that his sociological analysis relies on the combination of technique with domination and power, rationality with oppression. In order to explain this, he accepts that within science and technique there is a priori a plan for the world, which is defined by the interests of the ruling class and the circumstances set by a specific period of time. If we accepted that this explanation is the only possible, it would be inconceivable an emancipation without science and technique to rebel. We can find in Proclus text this kind of tendency, i.e. for a revolution, since what is highlighted is the qualitative intervention of science and

also mentions the inferior, axiologically speaking, case, which includes those who receive knowledge. That is, he speaks about the scientists who are aware of many different subjects, since they have been educated in a quite systematic way by the finest or those who are already scientists. At this point, the importance of the constitutionally organized state comes also to the fore, in which education is an institution. This is actually an open democracy, since knowledge is not the property-benefit of just oligarchy or the priests, but becomes a social good.

Examining the question on the basis of the natural origin or anthropological specifications and within the same context of comparisons-evaluations, he says that the most powerful people approach theoretically the truth through themselves, accomplishing their scientific completion by their very own power. Those who are powerless need to be taught and instructed by thinkers or scientists who are perfectly aware of the subjects of interest, since they have not yet accomplished their own completeness.<sup>8</sup> At this point it seems that Proclus speaks about

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technology. We could also say that Proclus here attempts to make an introduction on a philosophy about culture.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *In Platonis Alcibiadem I* 177.5-11. Commenting in the personal natural power, P. Hadot (1968) 183, says that it the spark of the mind that remains within the soul after its fall—a descent course taking place while the human being to which it belongs comes into birth—, which allows it, however, to ascend to its source. In our view, this is an ascent not always feasible to take place by its own; it stands however as a possibility, since it relies on what exists a priori. For the experts in Proclus' philosophy, we could say that the birth of a soul is a productive result and not a "procession" in the strict technical sense attributed to it by Proclus. "Procession" is only found in the metaphysical plane as an expression of how it develops, i.e. with no change of its nature. The interesting thing here it that Proclus seems that he defends an identity between the cognition and the object of his scientific knowledge. E. B. Ilyenkov (1977) 126–127, speaking about Hegel, says: "Hegel therefore also formulated the task of bringing logic into line with its real subject matter, with real thought, with the really universal forms and laws of development of science, technique, and morality. In other words he wanted to make the subjective consciousness of thought about itself identical with its object, with the real universal and necessary (objective) forms and laws of universal (and not individual) thought. That also meant that the principle of the identity of the subjective and the objective must be introduced into logic as the highest principle, i.e. the principle that the real forms and laws of thought must be delineated in logic exactly, adequately, and correctly. The principle of the identity of subject and object signified nothing more, and did not signify any 'hypostatisation' of the forms of subjective thought, because one and the same thought was both object and subject in logic, and it was a matter of the agreement, coincidence, and identity of this thought (as consciously performed activity) with itself as unconsciously performed productive activity, or as activity hitherto taking place with a false consciousness of its own actions". The prospect of identity could be included in Proclus' system, since one of his goals is how mind will discover its real self and will relate to it in a context of interdependence, pro-

how important is someone's natural-biological composition in the process of knowledge. However, this would be an actually naïve conclusion –at least if it was meant in an absolute way–, since it combines elements that may not be included in the same category.

According to the context, it is quite possible that the philosopher speaks about the spiritual requirements or the ability, power and flexibility of human's mind, which obviously come to the fore or are proved by their results in research and knowledge. Mental alertness and readiness regarding anything scientific new and its connection to what is considered to be scientific –by which it improves, adds or composes– are included in the above. In a broader sense, the most powerful scientist is the one who introduces new scientific regulatory principles, i.e. new ways of researching and new explanations about the world, releasing his inner power and the actual data of the world. J. Habermas, commenting on H. Marcuse's views, says that Marcuse does not speak about a new theory, but just a different one, regarding the basic principles and the methodology of science. The transcendental framework, within which nature could be transformed into the object of a new experience, would no more be the functioning cycle of the instrumental activity; modern technical control could be replaced by a kind of protection that would set free nature, since there are two kinds of dominations: the repressive and the liberating<sup>9</sup>. Proclus introduces the spirit of a let's say enlightenment, which reestablishes the actual relation between the thinking subject and the thing and in this way gnoseology is connected to the technical action, without intending to set any limits in any of the applications but to set free the acting subject and the real nature of the world. The whole process is taking place for the first time within the thinking and acting subject, since the political conditions back then were included in the national-administrative centralization. The most important thing, however, is that Proclus understands in general how necessary is choices to have an anthropological regulatory nature.

#### *B. Towards a formation of the scientific self*

Proclus then considers appropriate to think in a more systematic way, in order to describe the procedure to be followed for gaining knowledge. More specifically, he says that every scientist who learned about or discovered a specific area of knowledge, first of all, felt the need to research and, subsequently, looked for the

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vided that deceptiveness will be exceeded. When cognition turns towards the self to whom it belongs gets to reveal it and to know it. However, it is important to point out that the object is the objective forms which are necessary for consciousness. Proclus mentions quite often in his texts the specific in the sense of particular and special.

<sup>9</sup> Habermas 1969, 54.



means to achieve his goal. And this is because from the methodological point of view and while attempting to define the steps to be taken when following a program the research comes before discovery –in the sense of an invention– and teaching –in the sense of a specific process from which someone gets knowledge– comes before learning –in the sense of the final cognitive good. In this way, according to his opinion gnoseological automatism is out of the question. Another reason is that discovery requires a consistent effort and describes the way in which human mind comes gradually in touch with the thing being researched, while learning is actually a kind of participation in a perfection coming from the teacher and apparently not being a part of the student, at least not in an active state. The difference between the two planes is defined according to how an intention is distinguished from its effect. This intention includes the purpose for which it takes place and which is totally revealed by the effect. A systemic approach of the matter by the researcher has a unified character, in the sense that there is a general principle from which he starts the whole thinking process, seeking for ways to reveal its hidden prospects and dynamic nature. We have to mention that description comes before evaluation. First of all, a deficiency is found and then as an example not to be followed it is described as something not good and beneficial and, by consequence, as something to be exceeded in a regulatory way.

So, if a good counsellor has either learned the issues for which he is a counsellor or discovered them, provided that anyone who learns anything has either discovered it or searched it or was taught by teachers, two are the possible ways regarding how he gained the knowledge on the issues for which he is counselling: research or teaching by experts.<sup>10</sup> We have to mention that the two possibilities

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. *In Platonis Alcibiadem I* 177.11-22, where: “ἡ μὲν γὰρ εὕρεσις θήρα τοῦ ζητηθέντος ἐστὶ καὶ ἔντευξις, ἡ δὲ μάθησις μετάληψις ἐστὶ τελειότητος ἀπὸ τοῦ διδάσκοντος προερχομένη”. The term “ἔντευξις” shows a personal achievement accomplished with the assistance of internal mental reconstructions as a thorough effort to understand the referent. Proclus describes the dramatic emergence of the authentic science through a person who gradually discovers himself. E. Moutsopoulos (1972) 83, says that the scientific spirit is gradually formed only when human mind is purified from the inferior explanations of the phenomena and any kind of scientific obstacles, which have come from instincts, or even material images. The new information is that science is associated with evaluation. Utilizing the new knowledge it produces values too, which later understands exactly as such. And it should be mentioned that values are not a threat for the scientific nature of knowledge. J. Habermas (1972) 303–304, speaking of the evaluative neutrality of positivism, says: “Yet the very term “value freedom” reminds us that the postulates associated with it no longer correspond to the classical meaning of theory. To dissociate values from facts means counterposing an abstract Ought to pure Being. Values are the nominalistic by-products of a centuries-long critique of the emphatic concept of Being to which theo-

are presented in an exclusive way by Proclus –either as a general principle or a special application– and there is not a third alternative. In our view, a combination of these two, which are mentioned by the philosopher in order to show the necessary requirements for someone to become a scientist, is quite possible. Theoretical needs often lead to the choice of definite separations, which are not true but help scientific thinking to approach what is being under research. Regarding the way in which this is expressed and logically formed, reasoning here is analytical and develops with tautologies and simple implications, within a context where the premises and the conclusion are reasonably known from the beginning. As in other parts, this is a point at which the common concepts approach the individual ones, regardless of whether it is an induction or a deduction. Applications or reductions are accomplished almost automatically, without being necessary reflection to combine with something else or to use othergnoseological elements. Therefore, knowledge does not become a middle process, provided

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ry was once exclusively oriented. The very term "values," which neo-Kantianism brought into philosophical currency, and in relation to which science is supposed to preserve neutrality, renounces the connection between the two that theory originally intended". Including the concept of counsellor and the duties that arise for him, Proclus would agree with the above, since a) Being and Ought are closely associated to each other and b) he gives meaning in values and does not neutralize them. On the other hand, everything related to discovery and learning associate wity the active and passive knowledge respectively. On this, Edm. Husserl (1960) 77-78, says: "If we inquire first about principles of constitutive genesis that have universal significance for us, as possible subjects related to a world, we find them to be divided according to two fundamental forms, into principles of active and principles of passive genesis. In active genesis the Ego functions as productively constitutive, by means of subjective processes that are specifically acts of the Ego. Here belong all the works of practical reason, in a maximally broad sense. In this sense even logical reason is practical. The characteristic feature (in the case of the realm of logos) is that Ego-acts, pooled in a sociality- whose transcendental sense, to be sure, we have not yet brought to light -, become combined in a manifold, specifically active synthesis and, on the basis of objects already given (in modes of consciousness that give beforehand), constitute new objects originally. These then present themselves for consciousness as products (....) However, as regards the lowest levels, such as experiential grasping, explicating the experienced in respect of its parts, taking together, relating, and the like, the situation may well turn out to be different". If Proclus combined learning and discovery as successive procedures, the above would be totally appropriate for describing his views. He chose "either-or" instead of "and-and". However, in other texts of his, he follows Plato's moderate realism, although he accepts it as passive knowledge. Whether he would agree on that the reason of logic is practical, we could say yes, bearing in mind his previous remarks. Counsellor is a subject who forms his actions in an authentic way and makes them public. Utilizing what he has already achieved, he acts further.

that the requirements of thought are here limited, while what is obvious here defines things.

At this point, indirectly a self who is aware of the unity-whole of its being arises. Proclus succeeded in showing a self with a priori completeness, while the question raised was about his inability to understand himself. He introduced an anthropological parameter, which was a requirement for understanding identity, while basically dealt with the problem as if it was a technical one or an accident that can be solved. All of his attempts were about how self, who lies in the darkness, could actually see the light. This could be accomplished only by returning to self. In Th. Penolides', commenting on Hegel's logic, says that the fundamental trait of Hegel's dialectics is undoubtedly that he focuses on the simple meaning of the reason which preserves its perfectness within the being of Self. The absolute idea and truth are defined, according to Hegel, as a clear form of self – truth is not for him the unassailable Being (Parmenides), it is not the simple One (Platon), it is not the mind that reforms being as a judgment, both by means of thought and theory (Kant). If there is a philosophy, according to Penolides, that justifies the entity as a logical idea, as the knowledge of the mind on the self (Selbstvermittlung), this is Hegel's philosophy. Hegel's philosophy is in fact philosophy of the self in the sense of a trait of a primal relationship, and only as such actualizes the outstanding production of the specific, since it approaches the sensible not by its mental requirement, as the ideal condition of its possibility (Kant), but by itself. This way of approaching the intensive structure of 'reason-self' is the greatest achievement of Hegel's philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

We would not be far by truth if we suggested that in Proclus' texts consciousness produces, theoretically, the specific objects through its own self with which it has a primal relationship. Furthermore, we have to keep in mind that metaphysical Ontology in Proclus is not just what comes from Parmenides or Plato. In his six-volume work *Theologia Platonica* he undertakes to show, actually indirectly so as not to violate his sources, that Henology – which is the theory on the One and the henads goes beyond metaphysical Ontology and is considered to be its requirement<sup>12</sup>. In the second book, in a quite concise – but critical from the gno-seological point of view – chapter he describes how human soul goes through dialectical ascends towards the supreme principle of the world, the One (64.11-65.26). In the following text he says that: «Τί οὖν ἄν εἴη πρώτιστον τῆς ἐπιστήμης νόημα τῆς προϊούσης ἀπὸ νοῦ καὶ ἑαυτὴν προφαινούσης; Τί δὲ ἄλλο φήσομεν ἢ τὸ ἀπλούστατον καὶ γνωριμώτατον τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ πάντων νοημάτων; Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι καὶ τῆ τοῦ νοῦ θεωρίᾳ διαφερόντως ὁμοιώτατον. Τί οὖν τοῦτό ἐστι; Τὸ ἓν, φησὶν ὁ Παρμενίδης,

<sup>11</sup> Th. Penolides (2004) 229–230.

<sup>12</sup> R. Schümann (1982) 331–350.

εἰ ἔν ἐστιν, οὐκ ἂν εἴη πολλά» (66.2-8). In this paragraph, we see that Proclus includes human consciousness within gnoseological unity, which is found in an ontological way among natural phenomena and basically in the intelligible causes from which they come. Once again, it becomes clear that he approaches things in holistic way, relying in the rules set by realism, starting each time from a specific point and following a specific scientific process.

We have to mention too that similarity is not identity. Human, despite his great cognitive achievements, is not able to exceed his ontological boundaries. Thus, pantheism is excluded from the gnoseological point of view too. So, when saying that self reaches the highest feasible point we mean that he utilizes all the divine gifts or the divine immanence.

#### *Conclusions*

Relying on what we have discussed, we come to the following conclusions: According to Proclus, the cognitive background of a scientist is methodologically formed either by systematic learning, a process which shows the pair “cause-effect” in a teaching perspective which involves providing and receiving, or by discovery, which takes place after an exclusively internal research of a new knowledge. Discussing how a counsellor is formed, Proclus points out, thinking in the same way, that access to truth and knowledge is achieved either when someone is guided by specialists or when turning to his inner world as a thinking subject who can think in an original way and act in a similar one. The way for a subject to achieve this, depends in general on its ability and mental capability. Implicitly, the transfer of knowledge and the emergence of scientists are considered to be greatly determined by the city-state, which undertakes to strengthen this institution and make education a social benefit. We could here find Plato’s view on the politics as a royal art, which is presented as being capable of showing in a complete and a specialized way what the most important thing is.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the motivation and generally the psychological factor hold a key role when a thinking subject deals with science and receiving the quality of a scientist. This subject is presented by Proclus owning a priori plenitude, which is gradually discovered because of the guidance offered by specialists. In this sense, cognitive process becomes a reversion to the self, the most important part of which appears when the thinking subject with no mediation achieves honorific communications with the intelligible causes of the natural and historical world. In every respect, everything that we have discussed shows an applied rationality, which ensures balance for both an individual person and a social body. It also excludes extreme idealism and realism, which turns against individuality, while it does not

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Politicus*, 300e-303d.

separate humans from the divine plane. Finally, in our study we also referred to texts from the modern and contemporary thought, considering that Proclus, as in other parts of his work, also here, can be appropriate for timeless investigations. Proclus will complete his thoughts on this matter, a part of which we examined here, discussing the following topics: a) the awareness of ignorance and b) the levels of an argument.

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