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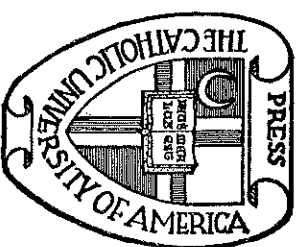
Beauty in the Pseudo-Denis

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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PREFACE

Whatever is timely in this study of a sixth century philosophy of beauty has come at the suggestion of others. Dr. Deferrari first proposed research in the field of esthetics; the late Reverend Francis Rozsaly focussed it on the mode of existence of beauty as treated by early philosophers, while the Right Reverend Monsignor John K. Ryan narrowed the subject to the Pseudo-Denis alone. The Right Reverend John Joseph Rolbiecki and the Reverend Bernardine Bonansea were kind enough to read the manuscript. The work reached completion with Monsignor Ryan's wise support, the open-minded direction and encouragement of the Reverend Leo Foley, and the perennial help of the library staff of the University. Miss Marcella Dorsey in particular seemed to delight in hunting out odd references and forgotten periodicals.

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Newton College of the Sacred Heart
November 21, 1959

The following abbreviations of the Dionysian works will be used throughout the study:

- D.N.* : *Divine Names*
C.H. : *Celestial Hierarchy*
E.H. : *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*
M.T. : *Mystical Theology*
Ep. : Letters I-X

References to the *Areopagitica* will include chapter and section as well as the column from the Migne edition.

INTRODUCTION

Standards of beauty sometimes melt away before an object whose charm seems to come from its break with all rules. Yet, this is not to say that beauty is beyond analysis or incapable of being pinned down in some fashion; rather it points out that analyses must be pushed further than the mere surface of things, into the sphere of transcendental realities, to reach the nature of beauty itself. Then, the so-called transgression of regulations turns out to be the safeguarding of an inner and more ultimate order, the law of a thing's being.

Awareness of the transcendental character of goodness, truth, and beauty has made of mediaeval esthetics a steadying science; for, whatever be its errors in the field of calculation and experiment, it is on sure ground to begin with. Edgar de Bruyne, who has made a full and rewarding study of the mediaeval contribution from Isidore of Seville to Duns Scotus,¹ and likewise Dom Henri Pouillon, who has made the transcendental the special subject of his research,² both attest to the desire among the major thinkers of the Middle Ages to grasp the basic nature of beauty and to see it, therefore, as something more than material proportion and loveliness.

The sources of mediaeval doctrine in this area lie in St. Augustine and Denis, the so-called "Pseudo-Areopagite."³ So it is that the present study, which began through an interest in the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, travelled backwards from his commentary on the *Divine Names*, which gives his longest appraisal of beauty, to Denis, the author of the *Divine Names*, and finally to Plato.

¹ *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale* (3 vols.; Bruges: "De Tempel," 1946).

² "La beauté, propriété transcendante chez les scolastiques," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge*, XXI (1946), pp. 263-341.

³ This writer, whose style and mature theology place him much later than the Apostolic Age, nowhere identifies himself with St. Paul's Athenian convert. Only once (in the letter to Polycarp) does he give himself the name of Denis. Since the expressions "Pseudo-Denis" and "Pseudo-Areopagite" bring with them a certain unhappy stigma, it will be more convenient and more courteous in the study which follows to call him simply "Denis."

Then came the surprising discovery that, in spite of the new respect which has come to Denis as a thinker in his own right and the many re-examinations of his philosophy and theology, there has been no attempt at any time to make a thorough investigation of his theory of beauty. Creuzer,⁴ Siebert,⁵ Müller,⁶ Semmelroth,⁷ and Pera⁸ have each devoted a few pages to it in works of a more general nature. They have also indicated its roots in Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrine. But no one has gone beyond the fourth chapter of the *Divine Names* to see how beauty is treated in his other writings, nor made the needed link between beauty and his metaphysics.

To make such a tie-up which might be of service to students of mediaeval esthetics and to students of Denis as well, is the aim of this essay. Certain aspects of it have been easy to carry out; others have been rather lamely done. The reading of the Corpus Dionysiacum is not a difficult task, for Denis has left only four major works (*The Celestial Hierarchy*, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, the *Divine Names*, and the *Mystical Theology*) which, with a handful of letters, fit into one volume of Migne's *Patrology*.⁹ More im-

⁴ Friedrich Creuzer (ed.), *In Plotini librum de pulchritudine* (Erm., I, 6), (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1814), Annotationes, p. 223.

⁵ Otto Siebert, *Die Metaphysik und Ethik des Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita* (Jena: H. Pöhl, 1894), pp. 39-42.

⁶ H. F. Müller, "Dionysios, Proklos, Plotinos, ein historischer Beitrag zur neoplatonischen Philosophie," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, XX (1918), pp. 49-51.

⁷ Otto Semmelroth, S.J., "Gottes überwesentliche Einheit- zur Gotteslehre des Ps. Dionysius Areopagita," *Scholastik*, XXV (1950), pp. 227-231.

⁸ Ceslas Pera, O.P. (ed.), *In librum beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio* (Turin: Marietti, 1950), pp. 115-116, n.2.

⁹ J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Patres Graeci*, III (Paris: 1856). Save for some spurious letters, the present Corpus may be regarded as authentic. Denis mentions seven other works which are either lost or fictitious. Including them, Roques gives the following tentative chronology of the Areopagica: 1) *Theological Sketches*, *On Angelic Properties*, *On the Just Judgment of God*; 2) the *Divine Names*; 3) *Symbolic Theology*; 4) *Mystical Theology*; 5) *Divine Hymns*; 6) *Celestial Hierarchy*; 7) *Of Intellects and Objects of Sense*; 8) *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. "Dens l'Aréopagite (le pseudo-)," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, fasc. XVIII-XIX (1954), cols. 262-63.

Introduction

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portant and more troublesome is the duty of placing Denis in the proper philosophical milieu and tracing the shades of meaning in his own teaching.

L'univers dionysien, the analysis made by René Roques,¹⁰ has been a stimulating guide in this matter, and, although the critical edition which all look for is still in the offing,¹¹ there are helpful texts to be had. *Dionysiaea* provides two Greek texts: the defective manuscript 437 of the Bibliothèque Nationale and the edition of Guillaume Morel done at Paris in 1562.¹² While the latter edition cannot be called critical, it is drawn from seven manuscripts and furnishes the foundation for most translations. Pera makes improvements upon the text of the *Divine Names* in his careful edition of St. Thomas's commentary,¹³ while Maurice de Gandillac notes discrepancies between manuscript 437 and the edition of Balhassar Cordier (Antwerp, 1634) reproduced in Migne's *Patres Graeci*.¹⁴ De Gandillac's French translation of the entire Corpus, if it tends to make Denis more elegant and more philosophic than he is in reality, at the same time brings out new aspects of his thought. Roit's English version, aside from some inaccuracies, shows remarkable sympathy with the Dionysian idiom.¹⁵

¹⁰ Paris: F. Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1954.

¹¹ In 1930, Joseph Pinard announced that he was preparing such an edition. However, the only critical text which has appeared to date is *pagite*, *La Hiérarchie Céleste*, with an analysis by Günter Heil (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1958). I was not able to make use of it in the present work.

¹² Philippe Chevallier, O.S.B., et al. (ed.), *Dionysiaea* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, I, 1937; II, 1950).

¹³ Pera's changes are based on the suggestions of G. Turturro, "Il Trattato regni beatorum dionysiorum dello ps. Areopagita nei Mss. Laurenziani—Contributo a una futura edizione critica," *Bessarione* (1907-08), D.N. *expositio*, Preface, pp. viii; xxvii-xlii.

¹⁴ Cf. *Oeuvres complètes du Pseudo-Denis l'Aréopagite*, trans. M. de Gandillac (Paris: F. Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1943).

¹⁵ C. E. Roit, *Dionysius the Areopagite On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology* (3rd ed.; London: Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, 1951).

By relegating the problem of Denis's identity to an appendix,¹⁶ it has been possible to follow an order of analysis which grows out of the texts themselves and out of the general nature of Dionysian thought. Thus, Chapter One deals with the transcendentals and the position of beauty among them; Chapter Two takes up the relation of beauty to the doctrine of participation and analogy; Chapter Three develops the forms of causality which belong to beauty, and Chapter Four treats of the special characteristics which flow from it. When that much has been done, the debt of Denis to Greek thinkers and the debt of mediaeval Scholastics to him should be obvious.

¹⁶ Appendix I contains the important passages from the *Divine Names* in Greek and English, while Appendix II deals with the question of identification.

CHAPTER I

TRANSCENDENT BEAUTY

Since Denis directs all his thought Godwards, it is natural that his doctrine of beauty should be sublimely objective. He cannot talk about anything save the divine perfections, the spread of the divine goodness through creation, and the return of all creatures to that same divine goodness. These are his only concern. Earthly deeds and qualities mean nothing unless they mirror the workings of God.

Beauty belongs in this theological setting. It finds a place among the divine attributes shared in a certain fashion by creatures. In fact, it is a "transcendental" in the scholastic sense of an aspect of being which runs through all being,¹ for while Denis has no word with exactly this meaning, he certainly argues that the noblest names of God are those shared by all creatures.² The chief of them are unity, goodness, and being. With other perfections of the God-head, including beauty, they form the subject matter of his longest work, *On the Divine Names*.

This treatise deals with the nature of God and the mind's awareness of Him; with God as the source of all created perfections and sharings of His being. The first three chapters are preliminary. The fourth and fundamental chapter presents the good as the foremost name of God. Chapters Five through Eight consider the participations given to creatures apart from any relations which might bring them together. These gifts are: being, life, wisdom, virtue, and justice. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters discuss the relations connected with substance, quantity, quality, time, place, and peace. The last two chapters view God's government of creatures as providence, and as the one drawing all things to Him-

¹ Sed unum quod convertitur cum ente circit omnia entia. Unde non significat aliquam naturam determinatam ad aliquod genus. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum expositio*, X, 3; ed. M.-R. Cathala (Turin: Marietti, 1935), p. 567.

² *D.N.*, V, 3/817A, B.

self.³ In this analysis of the divine attributes, beauty accompanies wisdom and peace, but most especially goodness. In the fourth chapter which takes up a third of the work, Denis ponders not only the good as such, but also light, beauty, and desire as notions bound up with the good, and evil as a privation of the good.

In his mind, beauty is ever linked with goodness. Such a bond is not surprising in a thinker who has absorbed much of Plato, either directly from Platonic dialogues or through Neoplatonic channels. On the other hand, his outlook is not a mere mimicry of Neoplatonic and Gnostic teaching, as certain scholars have claimed,⁴ but is rather the orientation of a Christian poet and metaphysician, a man steeped in the Scriptures and conscious of the Church's liturgy. If he borrows a passage from Plato's *Symposium*⁵ and many concepts from the *Parmenides*,⁶ or perhaps takes from Proclus much of his treatise on evil,⁷ and from the Gnostics and Iamblichus their threefold patterns,⁸ it is not, as he says, to "use

³ This synopsis of the *Divine Names* is based on that made by St. Thomas in *D.N. expositio*, C. IV, 1.1; Pera, p. 87, # 261-65.

⁴ For instance, Etienne Vacherot, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie*, III (Paris: 1851), pp. 23ff, and H. F. Müller, "Dionysios, Proklos, Plotinos," *passim*.

⁵ 201E-211B. Greuzer first notes the almost verbatim citation. Cf. *In Plotini librum de pulchritudine*, p. 223. The passage from the *Symposium* will be discussed with Denis's description of divine beauty.

⁶ Cf. Endre von Ivanka, "Der Aufbau der Schrift 'De divinis nominibus' des Ps.-Dionysios," *Scholastik*, XXV (1940), pp. 386-99. His study shows the dependence of *D.N.*, IX on *Parm.* 137C-140D; 145A-151E. Ivanka also notes the appearance of the triad of Proclus: being, life, wisdom. *Ibid.*, p. 398.

⁷ The treatise, *De Malorum Subsistentia*, exists only in the Latin version of William of Moerbeke. There are obvious parallels between it and *D.N.*, IV, 18-35. However, it is still possible to hold with Pera and others that Denis is prior to Proclus, or that both writers draw their doctrine from a common earlier source. Cf. Appendix II.

⁸ With St. Paul, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, he transforms certain elements of Gnosticism: the threefold division of the world, the ascent to God, and interest in the other world. Cf. Higo Ball, *Byzantinische Christentum: Drei Heiligenleben* (Munich: J. Kösel und F. Pustet, 1931), pp. 201ff.

in sacrilegious fashion the goods of the Greeks against the Greeks," but instead to wield their "divine weapons" in defence of "divine realities." For, "the knowledge of the world of existence . . . ought to enable true philosophers to rise to Him who is the author, not only of all existence, but of the very knowledge of existence."⁹

A just appraisal of the Dionysian teaching on beauty requires, therefore, an awareness both of its transcendental setting and of its genesis in Greek thought. To this end, it will be necessary to consider being, the one, and the good before turning to beauty itself.¹⁰

Being is the least significant of the trilogy, to Platonists and Neoplatonists alike. Although William David Ross points to Plato as the source of all the scholastic transcendentals (the good of the *Republic* and the *Philebus*, the being of the *Sophist*, the truth of the *Philebus*, and the one of the Idea-number theory),¹¹ he cannot claim that they receive equal emphasis. Goodness dominates most of Plato's teaching as oneness does the writings of Plotinus. Yet Plato certainly attributes a form of existence to God whom he calls "the intangible essence, without color or form—the very being with which true knowledge is concerned."¹² And, of course,

⁹ Ὁ ὁὖν λόγος τῶν ὄντων γνώσκει, . . . πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ὄντων καὶ τῆς γνώσεως αὐτῶν ἐχούνη ἀνέγερσθαι τοὺς ἀληθεῖς φιλοσόφους. *Ep.* VII/1080A, B.

¹⁰ Anyone who dares to compare one thinker with another owes an apology to his readers. Every comparison is a risk, while the brief summary is especially dangerous since it tends to harden thought which is really growing and to color what was written in the past by what impinges on the present. The short studies which follow will cause consternation to those scholars who seek shades of meaning unavoidably lost in any survey. However, the references given here to Greek thinkers are meant to serve only as a general framework in which to set the work of Denis.

¹¹ *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 245. Ross might have added the beauty of the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Philebus*. Of course, these Platonic transcendentals could scarcely have had any direct influence at the time of High Scholasticism, since the *Phaedo*, the *Meno*, and part of the *Timaeus* with the commentary of Chalcidius were the only dialogues possessed.

¹² ὁ ὁὖν λόγος ἀχρόματτος καὶ ἀχρημάτιστος καὶ ἀφανὴς οὐσία ὄντων οὐσα . . . περί τῆς ἀληθείας ἐμνησίτης γένος. *Phaedrus*, 257C; trans. adapted from that of Harold North Fowler (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 475-77.

τὸ ὅν ὁντως, whether it be applied to the demiurge or to the immutable Ideas, is beyond the world of human experience.¹³ Sensible objects share in existence and are midway between the dark realm of non-being and the bright region of being.¹⁴ However, no one has shown conclusively that the supreme Idea of the good is identical with God, or that existence belongs to it. Werner Jaeger notes in this connection two contradictory passages in the *Republic*: 509 B, where the good, as the source of being and essence, is beyond being and essence; and 532 C, where the good signifies what is best in the realm of being.¹⁵ The problem is never settled by Plato himself.

Plotinus answers the question in the negative. Being is incompatible with the perfection of the One. If the One (which is synonymous with the good) were a being, its unity would derive from something else.¹⁶ Instead, it must transcend all that proceeds from it, even being,¹⁷ while those who identify themselves with the One may be said to "outgrow being."¹⁸ The fullness of being and all its specified forms are the possession of the second hypostasis, the *ὑποκείμενα* Proclus also denies existence of the supreme One

¹³ *Phaedrus*, 249C; Fowler, p. 480.

¹⁴ *Republic*, V, 479C, D; ed. Paul Shorey (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946), I, pp. 530-32.

¹⁵ *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, translated by Gilbert Highet, II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 414, n.37. Jaeger adds: "the ambiguity in Plato's conception of the relation of Good to Being . . . is not a contradiction for him: either one alternative is true, or else both are true together." Cf. also Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, p. 43.

¹⁶ *Τὸ γὰρ ἐκείθεν ὄντος οὐ τόδε λέγει—οὐ γὰρ τήντοι—οὐδὲ ὅπου αὐτοῦ λέγει, ἀλλὰ πέρε μόνον τὸ οὐ τότο. κ.τ.λ. Ennead V, 5, 6; ed. E. Bréhier (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1924-38), p. 98.*

¹⁷ . . . οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς γινόμενοις ὡς αὐτῆς οὐσαν, ὅτι καὶ πρὸ τούτων. *Enn.*, VI, 9, 5; Bréhier, II, p. 178.

¹⁸ *Enn.*, VI, 9, 11. Yet even here, as A. H. Armstrong points out: "it is perfectly clear from all that Plotinus says about Him, in the very passages where His existence is denied that He is existent in some sense, and the supreme Existent. What Plotinus is saying is that the unity of the Good is so absolute, He is so completely One, Single, Simple, that no predicates at all can be applied to Him, not even that of existence; and that as the Source of being to all things He is not a thing, Himself." *Plotinus* (London: Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1953), Introduction, p. 31.

and moves it even lower in the hierarchy so that it is likewise excluded from the henads or gods. If they have being, they will lack unity; therefore, they must be "beyond all existents."¹⁹

Does Denis subscribe to this metaphysics? Many have thought so, even some of those who look on him as a sincere Christian. Gilson, for instance, in *Le Thomisme*, maintains that in the Dionysian scheme being does not pertain to God but to His effects.²⁰ As the One, God is able to bestow existence solely because He does not exist.²¹ A brief reading of the works of Denis by one unprepared for his hyperbolic language might lead to such an interpretation. In the *Mystical Theology* for example, being, non-being, goodness, truth, and "all things" are denied of God as the transcendent cause.²² In the *Divine Names*, the "super-essential Thearchy" is spoken of as "beyond substance and the good."²³ However, further study shows that these expressions merely stress the "hyper" mode in which being, unity, and goodness are predicated of God; for He is described elsewhere as the "true being,"²⁴ "eternal being,"²⁵ "transcendent being,"²⁶ the "being

¹⁹ *Elements of Theology*, Propositions 115, 125; ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), pp. 100-03; 110-13.

²⁰ Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, tr. L. K. Shook, C.S.B. from *Le Thomisme*, 5th ed., 1948 (New York, Random House, 1956), p. 138. See also *Being and Some Philosophers*, revised ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), p. 34.

²¹ Vladimir Losski holds a similar view and stresses that, as a result, God cannot be an object of knowledge. Cf. "La théologie négative dans la doctrine de Denis l'Aréopagite," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, XXVIII (1939), p. 206. On the other hand, René Roques feels that, according to Denis, God is the object of awareness, of a form of knowledge. Cf. "Note sur la notion de 'Theologia' chez le Pseudo-Denis l'Aréopagite," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, XXV (1949), pp. 200-212. Roques treats of "Dieu comme objet, Dieu comme initiateur, Dieu comme méthode."

²² Gilson, *Chr. Phil. St. Tho.*, p. 139.

²³ *M.T.*, V/1048A.

²⁴ *E.H.*, IV, 3, 7/481A.

²⁵ *D.N.*, IX, 4/912C.

²⁶ *C.H.*, XIII, 4/305D.

who is really perfect in Himself,"²⁷ the "being above all being."²⁸

Acquaintance with Denis as a thinker in his own right apart from the use of him made by St. Thomas, seems to have moved Gilson to change his earlier stand somewhat. In his *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, he admits that the Dionysian God is existence for all else, which shares being by participation.²⁹

There is no doubt that Denis devotes more space to the good and to its workings than he does to being, yet he insists squarely that being is the most fundamental of participations. In Chapter that being is the first name he gives to God is "I am One of the *Divine Names*, the first name he gives to God is "I am who am,"³⁰ but it is above all in Chapter Five that he dwells upon the "pure being" of God. This name, he says, is "drawn from the essence and applies to the essential manner of existing of being as being."³¹ He affirms many times that the imparting of existence by God is possible only because He is being itself.³²

He who is (ὁ ὢν), is by power and superessentially the substantial cause and the fashioner of being (ὄν), substance (ὕποστασις), substance (ὕποστασις), essence (οὐσία), nature (φύσις), . . . the being of all that is in any manner whatever . . . From *Him who is* come eternity, essence, existence, time, becoming and what becomes, things which inhere in existent things, and those which subsist in any independent fashion. For God is not being according to such and such a mode, but in an absolute and undefinable way, because He embraces in Himself beforehand the fullness of being.³³

Later, in the eleventh chapter, he sums up and reinforces this teaching.

It is no contradiction to call God power itself and life itself and at the same time to call Him the substance (ὕποστασις) of life itself, of power, and of peace. For in one case we speak of Him from the point of view of beings . . . as the cause of all beings, and in the other case, we indicate His super-

²⁷ C.H., X, 3/273C; D.N., IX, 4/912C.

²⁸ τὸ ὑπερῶτον. D.N., I, 5/593B. Cf. also C.H., VII, 2/208C.

²⁹ *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 84.

³⁰ D.N., I, 6/596A.

³¹ ἐπὶ τῇ ὁνείᾳ τοῦ ὄντος ὅντος θεολογικῇ οὐσιωγραφίᾳ. D.N.,

V, 1/816B.

³² D.N., V, 5/820B.

³³ D.N., V, 4/817C.

existence, transcending every other existence, even the most basic.³⁴

Such a notion of God as transcendent, undivided existence is distinctly foreign to Neoplatonic philosophy.

If, according to Denis, all things are contained beforehand in the being of God "by a superabundance of simplicity which excludes all division,"³⁵ at the same time, the divine unity is not lost. Rather, it is the more perfect for being shared. Denis undoubtedly inherits many of his expressions about this same divine oneness and his reverence for it as a name of God from Plotinus and from Plato himself. Ivanka has found a definite parallel between the ninth chapter of the *Divine Names* and the *Parmenides*.³⁶ In his dialogue, Plato speaks of the one which is at the same time the all-embracing whole and the undivided,³⁷ while Denis terms God "great" in the sense of all-embracing, and "small" in the sense of all-penetrating.³⁸ He continues with other Platonic antinomies: selfhood and otherness, likeness and unlikeness, rest and motion—all resolving themselves in the Parmenidean "One-which-is-one."

Perhaps, as Klibansky suggests, Denis has only an indirect knowledge of the dialogue.³⁹ In any case, the conclusion of the first hypothesis (that the one cannot be known or described in any

³⁴ ὁς ἐν τῷ πᾶσι καὶ τὰ πᾶσι ὄντα ὑπερῶν ὑπερῶτον. D.N., XI, 6/953C. Pera clarifies this passage, *D.N., expositio*, pp. 348-49, n.3.

³⁵ κατὰ μὲν ἀνλόγως ὑπερβολῇ, πᾶσι διὰ τὸν ἀσυνωπλήν. D.N., V, 9/825A.

³⁶ See note 6, p. 2.

³⁷ *Parm.*, 137C, D; 145A; ed. Harold North Fowler (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1933), pp. 236, 260.

³⁸ D.N., IX, 2-3/909C-912B.

³⁹ Raymond Klibansky, "Plato's Parmenides in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, I, No. 2 (1943), pp. 285-86. He also mentions that Nicholas of Cusa and Bessarion were aware of concepts from the *Parmenides* in the works of Denis. Klibansky quotes Bessarion as saying: *Haec, per immortalem Deum, nomine a Platone per eadem fere verba Dionysius sumpsit?* p. 310. Cf., too, Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition* (London: Warburg Institute, 1939), p. 25.

way)⁴⁰ is the conclusion of the text considered by Proclus who looks on it as final, while it also happens to be the passage which Denis incorporates into his explanation of the *via negativa*, both in the *Divine Names* and in the *Mystical Theology*.⁴¹ Here again is no malicious distortion of pagan philosophy but rather the application of the "goods of the Greeks" to things divine.

At the outset and at the close of the *Divine Names*, he praises the oneness of God. God is the "universally transcendent identity, the one beyond the principle of oneness."⁴² He is unique in the sense that He is "all things in one through the transcendence of a single unity," and in the sense that He "produces all things without departing in the least from His own unity."⁴³ He is not a unit in the multiplicity of things, nor yet the total of such units.⁴⁴ He does not share in oneness or possess it. Rather, He *is* oneness "above all oneness which is in the world."⁴⁵ He precedes "the very distinction of unity and plurality and . . . defines together both unity and plurality."⁴⁶ Yet, considered as a causal principle, the divine oneness is not a pantheistic reality, forced to pour itself out upon the universe. Denis is at pains to make clear that God is one in a manner different from the unity of creatures.⁴⁷ There is

⁴⁰ οὐδ' . . . ὄνομα ἔστιν αὐτῷ οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδὲ τις ἐκυστήρη οὐδὲ αἰσθησις οὐδὲ δόξα, . . . οὐδ' ὀνομαζέσθαι . . . οὐδὲ λέγεται οὐδὲ δοξάζεσθαι οὐδὲ γινώσκεισθαι οὐδὲ τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτοῦ αἰσθησέσθαι. *Parm.*, 142A; Fowler, p. 250.

⁴¹ *D.N.*, I, 5/593A, B; *D.N.*, XIII, 3/981A; *M.T.*, V/1048A. Cf. Losski, "La théologie négative," pp. 206, 217-218.

⁴² ἡ ὑπερ ἑνωχίαν ἑνότης; *D.N.*, II, 4/641A.

⁴³ *D.N.*, XIII, 2/977C.

⁴⁴ *D.N.*, II, 11/649C.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *D.N.*, XIII, 2/977C. Pera notes the closeness here to *Enn.* VI, 9, 1, in which all beings are said to proceed from the One. There are many verbal parallels between *Enn.* VI, 9 and *D.N.* II and XIII. Cf. *D.N. expositio*, Glossae marginales, pp. 361, 365.

⁴⁷ *D.N.*, II, 11/649C; *D.N.*, I, 1/588B. Ilarion Kanakis erred in claiming the Dionysian system to be a "transcendental monism," *Dionysius der Areopagite nach seinem Charakter als Philosoph dargestellt* (Leipzig: Rössberg, 1881), p. 14. He also considers the One of Denis to be inferior to the One of Plotinus, because the former is "the summit of the spiritual world" while the latter is "pure negation," *ibid.*, p. 34.

no element of necessity in the gift of creation, while the creatures who come from the God who is one and three are distinct from Him who made them.⁴⁸

Their oneness is the elementary principle in each of them.⁴⁹ It limits and defines.⁵⁰ If unity be taken away, existence leaves also; for without unity there can be neither whole nor part. When Denis thus brings together the notions of being and oneness, he presumes the priority of being.

Nothing in the world, he says, has completely fallen away from all unity; for that which is utterly unstable, boundless, baseless, and indefinite has neither being nor any inherence in the things that have being.⁵¹

As far as beauty is concerned, neither being nor oneness has the primary place, but rather the divine goodness,⁵² and here again it is to Plato that Denis turns.

⁴⁸ Cf. Gabriel Horn, "Note sur l'unité, l'union dans les Noms Divins du pseudo-Aréopagite," *Archives de philosophie*, II, cahier 3 (1924), p. 75.

⁴⁹ *D.N.*, XIII, 3/980B.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 980C.

⁵¹ οὐδὲν ἔστι τῶν ὄντων ὃ πάσης παντελῶς ἐνώσεως ἀποτρέπτωκε· τὸ γὰρ πᾶντι ἄτακτον καὶ ἀπειρον καὶ ἀνίδεον καὶ ἀόριστον οὗτος ὅν ἔστιν οὐτε ἐν τοῖς οὐκ. *D.N.*, XI, 5/952D-953A.

⁵² Transcendent truth has less bearing on the Dionysian doctrine of beauty. However, since truth plays a large part in the Thomistic interpretation, it cannot be overlooked altogether. In the *Phaedrus* (248C, D), Plato speaks of the divine intelligence which is truth. Aristotle calls God the "self-thinking thought" (νόησις νοήσεως νόησις) (*Met.*, XII, 1074b, 35). Elsewhere, as Jaeger points out (*Paideia*, II, p. 414, n.37) he speaks of the Divinity as "either mind, or even beyond mind" (*Dial.* frg. ed. Walzer 100; frg. 49 Rose).

Denis equates truth with the divine wisdom and intelligence. Knowledge "unites the known and the knower" (*D.N.*, VII, 3/872C). "In knowing itself . . . the divine wisdom knows all things; material things immaterially, divisible things indivisibly, multiple things as one, because through a unique act it knows and produces all" (*D.N.*, VII, 2/869B). God does not have two forms of knowledge: a proper form by which He knows Himself, and another by which He knows all other beings. "In knowing Himself, the universal cause . . . cannot ignore what proceeds from Him and what He causes (*D.N.*, VII, 2/869C). The divine λόγος is, therefore, the "pure and infallible knowledge of all things," and the "simple and really essential truth" (*D.N.*, VII, 3/872C).

Although his treatment of the good is abundant, Plato can never draw a real definition of goodness out of himself or others. He reveres it, nevertheless, as the center of life and the object of man's striving. In the *Cratylus*, the word *ἀγαθόν* is said to mean the admirable (*ἀγαρόν*) in all nature.⁵³ It differs from everything else.⁵⁴ Besides being the source of knowledge, it is the source of knowledge, it is the source of being and essence, and yet "it is of being and essence, and yet 'it is not essence (*οὐσία*), but far exceeds essence in dignity and power."⁵⁵ It is the "brightest and best of being,"⁵⁶ something which the soul must learn gradually to encounter. While it is the last of the Ideas to appear and is seen only with an effort, nothing else in the way of knowledge or possession is of any worth without it.⁵⁷

For Plotinus, the good is supreme, first, unchanging, the source and the power of being, and things are good in the measure in which they are and because they are.⁵⁸ Proclus likewise maintains that all things proceed from a single cause which is the good, and that the good keeps all things in existence.⁵⁹ It is the object of desire for all things that are. As the primal good, it can receive no addition, for that would diminish its goodness. Yet it is not self-sufficient, for then "it would be a principle fulfilled with goodness; not the primal good."⁶⁰

Denis, too, puts the name of "good" above all other names. In saying so, he is very much a Platonist. He is also in company with that other Christian Platonist, Gregory of Nyssa, for the

Finally, truth is allied with being. "The denial of the true self is a falling away from truth; but since truth is existence, a departure from truth is a departure from being" (*D.N.*, VII, 6/893B).

⁵³ 412C; 422A; ed. H. N. Fowler (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 98, 130.

⁵⁴ *Philobus*, 60B; ed. H. N. Fowler (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 374.

⁵⁵ *Rep.*, VI, 509B; Shorey, p. 106. Cf. his note b.

⁵⁶ Literally: "Being and what is most clear in being" (*τὸ ὅν καὶ τοῦ ὅντος τὸ καθαρότερον*). *Rep.*, VII, 518C; Shorey, p. 134.

⁵⁷ *Rep.*, VI, 505B; Shorey, p. 86.

⁵⁸ *Enn.*, V, 5, 3-11.

⁵⁹ *Elem. Theol.*, Prop. 13; Dodds, pp. 14-17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Props. 7, 12; Dodds, pp. 8-9, 14-15.

Cappadocian saint adopts the words and notions of Plato to describe the absolute and causal goodness of God.⁶¹

The fact that the causal good runs through Dionysian teaching shows that it is foremost in his thought.⁶² If Denis is the doctor of mystic darkness, he is at the same time the herald of the divine goodness. The good from whom all things come is the very substance of the Godhead.⁶³ It defines and reveals the entire divine nature (*ἁπαρότης*).⁶⁴ In the order of causality, it stands first; that is, from the standpoint of creatures, it is the most inclusive perfection of God, because being is imparted to them through His goodness. The good reaches even to the things which are not but which may be, while being extends only to the things which are.⁶⁵ Yet, although God is the good as far as creation is concerned, creation is not a necessary act. It is free—an act that was "decided upon" by the Trinity, a spontaneous "shining-forth."⁶⁶ This, of course, points again to the fundamental opposition between Neoplatonic and Dionysian doctrine. For both Plotinus⁶⁷ and Proclus,⁶⁸ the world emanates of necessity from the one. Denis teaches no such necessity.⁶⁹ He does insist, however, that the good is the

⁶¹ "God is . . . called by Gregory, like Plato's idea of the Good, *ἐκείνενα τῶν ὄντων* (or *τῶν ἀγαθῶν*): cf. *Plat. Rep.* VI, 509B; this is the more remarkable because the idea of the good is Plato's divine principle." Werner Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), p. 77, n.4.

⁶² Cf., for instance, *D.N.*, I, 5/593C; II, 4/641A; 1/693B-696C; *E.H.*, III, 3, 3/428D; V, 3, 7/513C.

⁶³ *D.N.*, IV, 1/693B.

⁶⁴ *D.N.*, II, 1/636C.

⁶⁵ *D.N.*, V, 1/816B.

⁶⁶ *E.H.*, I, 3/373C; *D.N.*, IX, 4/912C.

⁶⁷ *Enn.*, III, 2, 2.

⁶⁸ *Elem. Theol.*, Props. 31, 33, 37-39.

⁶⁹ Cf. on this point Ivanka, "Zum Problem des christlichen Neuplatonismus: II, in wieweit ist Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita Neuplatoniker," *Scholastik*, XXXI (1956), pp. 384-403; especially pp. 387-92. In several places (*D.N.*, IV, 1/693B; IV, 4/697D; V, 8/824C), Dionysius compares the act of creation to the passage of the sun's rays from the sun; but he makes clear elsewhere that creation is a conscious, free act. St. Thomas also uses the image of the sun (*S.T.*, I, 19, 4). For classic uses of this comparison, beginning with *Republic* VI, 508B, cf. Pera, *D.N. expositio*, pp. 92-94, n.3; p. 105, n.2.

object of an innate longing, whether conscious or unconscious, on the part of all creatures. Desire, in whatever being it is found, "divine or angelic or intellectual or animate ($\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$), must be thought of as a unifying and commingling power which moves higher things to care for those below them, equal things to a mutual communion, and lower things to turn to the better things placed above them."⁷⁰

Denis considers such a yearning to be implanted in every being, even inanimate "natures." It is finally at rest only in the absolute good "whereunto the universal longing of all creatures presses upwards according to the nature of each."⁷¹ This attractive aspect of the good has led Horn to describe it as a "moral reality."⁷² Although the expression is used here in an extended sense, if it is applied to all beings, it serves nevertheless to bring out the "sought-after" character of the good, and the fact that Denis has the spiritual order foremost in mind.

It is also with a spiritual emphasis that the good is tied up with beauty. They are linked together in what is noble, the $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\kappa\alpha\lambda\upsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\theta\eta\alpha$ of the Greeks. "Are not good things also beautiful?" Socrates asks in the *Symposium*,⁷³ while he answers in the *Republic* that the good is "the cause for all things of everything beautiful and right,"⁷⁴ and in the *Timaeus* that they are one and the same.⁷⁵ For Plato, the beautiful seems to be a manifestation of the good, and the most easily grasped manifestation of it. "If we are not able to hunt the good with one idea only, with three we may catch our prey: beauty, symmetry, truth."⁷⁶ Since measure and harmony belong both to

⁷⁰ *D.N.*, IV, 15/713A, B. The dialectic of desire will be further developed in Chapter Two.

⁷¹ *D.N.*, IV, 16/713C.

⁷² "Une Réalité 'morale' . . . qui dépasse et enveloppe en elle la perception de l'intelligence et la satisfaction du Désir universel." "Note sur l'unité," p. 78.

⁷³ 201C; adapted from ed. W. R. M. Lamb (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 172.

⁷⁴ 517C; Shorey, II, p. 130.

⁷⁵ 87C. Cf. also *Protagoras*, 328B; *Rep.*, VI, 507B.

⁷⁶ *Phil.*, 65A; Fowler, p. 390. For Aristotle also, the good is in the measure and the mean; it is that which all men seek. For both Plato and Aristotle, beauty dwells in the inner order of things and is bound up with

beauty and to virtue, the beautiful and good will be found together.⁷⁷ They are to be weighed by the same standard,⁷⁸ for the beautiful, too, is in accord with the divine.⁷⁹

In the metaphysics of Plotinus, the beautiful and the good are also to be looked for together, for beauty is being in the same manner that goodness is being. As the first principle ($\tau\acute{o}$ $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\omicron\nu$) is the good ($\tau\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\nu$), so likewise is it beauty itself ($\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu\eta$).⁸⁰ The soul is beautiful through the $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ($\tau\acute{o}$ $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{o}\nu$) and all else is beautiful through the soul.⁸¹ But the Plotinian beauty is not mere order or symmetry, since this would imply that "an assemblage of parts could create *ex nihilo* the quality which, by definition, was missing in the isolated element."⁸² If Plotinus makes any dis-

their goodness. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle refers to the beautiful and the good as if they were one supreme principle (*Met.*, V, 1013a, 22; XIV, 1091a, 30-37; 1093b, 13). In Book Thirteen, however, he makes a distinction between them which gives wider scope to the beautiful: "goodness is distinct from beauty, for it is always in actions ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\iota$), whereas beauty is also in immovable things ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\alpha\iota\omega\nu\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$) (1078a, 31-33)." The passages which equate the two are taken from books held to be of an earlier date and therefore more Platonic than the distinction quoted from Book Thirteen. Whether we assent to such a development in Aristotle's esthetics or not, we may surely say that his notion of beauty has several connotations.

⁷⁷ *Phil.*, 64E; Fowler, p. 388.

⁷⁸ *Rep.*, V, 452E; Shorey, I, 436.

⁷⁹ *Symb.*, 206D; Lamb, p. 190.

⁸⁰ *Enn.*, I, 6, 6. Cf. Thomas Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), Ch. V, especially pp. 87-89, for a discussion of $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\omicron$ $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{o}\nu$.

⁸¹ *Enn.*, I, 6, 6; *Plotini Opera*, ed. Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer (Museum Lessianum series philosophica, No. 23; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951), pp. 112-113.

⁸² Maurice de Gandillac, *La sagesse de Plotin* (Paris: Hachette, 1952), p. 51. Fiametta Bourbon di Petrella classifies three types of beauty in the universe of Plotinus: 1) sensible beauty; 2) intelligible beauty (beauty of soul, artistic beauty, spiritual beauty), and 3) the beauty of the One. *Il problema dell'arte e della bellezza in Plotino* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1956), pp. 90-164, passim. She indicates that not even sensible beauty consists solely in symmetry and magnitude, if these make up only an exterior unity. *Ibid.*, p. 93. The reference is to *Enn.*, III, 2, 3.

tion between the beautiful and the good, it is by giving to the latter a priority of necessity and a greater degree of reality.⁸³

Proclus, in much the same manner, joins the beautiful with the good. In spite of the fact that in the *Elements of Theology* he seems to place the primal beauty among the henads, rather than to link it with the one and the good,⁸⁴ in other works he associates beauty with both of them. In the *Commentary on Alcibiades I*, he makes a triad of goodness, beauty, and justice, with beauty more limited than goodness but wider in scope than justice.⁸⁵ In the *Commentary on the Timaeus*, beauty and goodness work together in the ordering of the heavens, while they are also linked in the soul's knowledge.⁸⁶ The beautiful itself is eternal, immaterial, and one, something beyond the changing beauty of phenomena.⁸⁷

In such a transcendent framework, Denis sets his own teaching about beauty. He speaks of it, especially of the divine beauty, many times, although he deals with it at length only once—in the fourth chapter of the *Divine Names*.⁸⁸ There, beauty (τὸ κάλλος) and the beautiful (τὸ καλόν) are inextricably bound up with the divine good. They are one. Beauty is goodness itself.⁸⁹ In saying so, Denis is, as we have seen, thoroughly Greek. καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν is the ideal to which the soul of man is formed, while all other

⁸³ *Enm.*, V, 5, 12. The whole of Ch. V deals with the good and intellectual beauty. Emile Brehier asserts that Plotinus is "séduit par Aristote" when it comes to sensible things (i.e., information of matter by form), but that he follows Plato when it comes to spiritual realities, passing from the doctrine of the *Hippias Major* to that of the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*. *Ennéades* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1924), pp. 93-94.

⁸⁴ *Elem. Theol.*, Props. 22 and 63; Dodds, pp. 26-27; 60-61.

⁸⁵ *In Platonis Alcibiadem priorem commentarii* ed. Victor Cousin (Paris: Eberhart, 1820), pp. 575-578.

⁸⁶ *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, ed. Ernst Diehl (3 vols., Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1906), I, pp. 42, 215.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 238.

⁸⁸ These important passages (*D.N.*, IV, 7, 701C-704D; 10, 705B-708B) are reproduced in full in Appendix I.

⁸⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A. The two attributes are referred to in combination in other sections of Chapter Four (12/709D; 13/712B; 23/725C). Elsewhere, beauty is given as a separate name to the whole Godhead, e.g., "The names which bespeak the first cause are: the good, the beautiful, being, the source of life, wisdom." *D.N.*, II, 3/640B.

attributes come to him and to the rest of creatures through the beautiful-and-good. This is the case because the good, as "beauty" and "the beautiful," is universal source and universal goal. In fact, the transcendent beauty of God is exemplar as well as efficient and final cause of all things. It is likewise shared in somehow by every being according to the nature of each one, so that "there is nothing in the world that has not a share in the beautiful-and-good."⁹⁰

The concepts of causality and participation in their relation to the beautiful will be considered in later chapters. So, too, will the special characteristics of beauty. Here, we must look at the nature of beauty and at its types. This nature appears to be: a state of perfection in which relationships, if there be any, are so unified and well-ordered that a certain radiance results.⁹¹ To be beautiful, a thing must "possess itself," so to speak, in harmony and splendor.

The two important forms that beauty takes are divine and created loveliness, with the divine beauty far outweighing created beauty, both in dignity and in the amount of space which Denis gives to it. In a paragraph which echoes the *Symposium*, he describes the beauty of God as eternal, unwavering, and unique. He uses the abstract, impersonal τὸ καλόν and follows Plato almost literally. We need only compare the two passages.

He who . . . has learned to see the beautiful in due order, will now suddenly perceive a beauty of most wondrous nature for the sake of which were all those former toils; a nature everlasting, unproduced, and indestructible, not waxing or

If one calls Him "beautiful," it is in the sense that all together He contains all beauty and surpasses all beauty, that He remains eternally beautiful with a beauty identical with Himself and constant, which is neither born nor perishes,

⁹⁰ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704B.

⁹¹ Denis nowhere gives a definition, but this summation drawn from *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C, corresponds to what he says about beauty throughout his writings.

waning; not at one time or place or relation beautiful, at another time or place or in another relation ugly; . . . but forever existing in itself and for itself, which without diminution or increase or any change is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other things.⁹²

neither waxes nor wanes,⁹³ for He is never beautiful in this and ugly in that; not at one time beautiful and at another ugly; not beautiful according to the aspects, places and ways of considering Him, but rather of a uniform beauty which remains the same in itself and for itself, holding in itself beforehand and in a surpassing way, the original source of all beauty.⁹⁴

Here, at the center of Dionysian thought are the words and images of Plato; yet there is a vast difference in meaning. Although the descriptions given to absolute beauty run parallel, for Plato that absolute is not a personal being but an abstraction, while for Denis, that beauty is God Himself.

In the third chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy*, the God-besting beauty (*τὸ θεογενεὲς κάλλος*) is set before us as simple, good, perfect and causing perfection, free from anything at odds with itself, radiant, harmonious, and of unchanging form. These are the qualities which it will grant to creatures, especially those intellectual beings (men and angels) whom it can clothe most perfectly in its own divine form.⁹⁵

⁹² πῶτον μὲν αἰὶ ὄν καὶ ὅτε γινώμενον ὅτε ἀπολλύμενον, ὅτε αὐτῶν νόμενον ὅτε φθίνον, ἔκτετα οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δ' αἰσχρόν, οὐδὲ τὸτε μέν, τὸτε δ' οὐ, οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν, οὐδ' ἔνθα μὲν καλόν, ἔνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν, ὅς τοι μὲν ὄν καλόν, τοι δὲ αἰσχρόν, . . . ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ' αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς αἰὶ ὄν, τὰ δὲ ἅλλα πάντα κατὰ ἔκαστον μετέχοντα τούτου τινὰ τοιοῦτον, ὅσον γινώμενον τε τῶν ἁλίων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων, μηδὲν ἔχεινο μῆτε τι πλέον μῆτε ἕλαττον γίνεσθαι μηδὲ πάσχειν μηδὲν. *Symp.*, 210E-211A, B; Lamb, p. 204. Some of the same expressions are used by Plotinus (*Enn.*, I, 6, 9; V, 8, 8) and by Proclus (cf. passages of note 87), but not in a way that could have given rise to Denis's description.

⁹³ Denis repeats these ideas when he treats the sameness (*ταυτότης*) of God. *D.N.*, IX, 4/912B.

⁹⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A.

⁹⁵ Τὸ δὲ θεογενεὲς κάλλος, ὅς ἀράων, ὅς ἀγαθόν, ὅς τελευταρχικόν, ἀμυγές μὲν ἔστι καὶ ὁλοῦ πάσης ὁμοιοτύπος, μεταδότην δὲ καὶ ἀξίαν

Perhaps it is to symbolize the fullness of this divine beauty that Denis has chosen to call it *ὡγαύτης*.⁹⁶ He uses the word only three times, but in each case he speaks of God and in each case he has something important to say. It appears at the outset of the passage on beauty in the *Divine Names* as the term which sums up, in a sense, the whole loveliness of God; for the other names given to Him as beauty (*τὸ κάλλος*) and the beautiful (*τὸ καλόν*) are bestowed only because they suit His "fair-fashioning and gracious beauty" (. . . εὐγενεῖς εἶναι τῆς καλοποιῶν καὶ κεχαριστομένης ὡγαύτης θεωνυμίας).⁹⁷ Later in Chapter Four, the word recurs; this time to represent the divine beauty when it is mirrored by the angels. They who are so pure, so limpid and so perfect in a creaturely way, "reflect, if one may put it thus, the whole beauty of the divine form which bears the imprint of the good."⁹⁸ Lastly, Denis takes *ὡγαύτης* to stand for the beauty of God as the aim of all hierarchic ordering.⁹⁹ In each instance, he is thinking of the summation, the totality of God's beauty, and so by one of his bold transfers¹⁰⁰ he has borrowed a word from the realm of

ἑξόστου τοῦ οὐραίου φωτός καὶ τελευταρχικὸν ἐν τελειῇ θεωράτῃ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἑαυτὸ τὸν τελούμενον ἐναγωνίως ἀναγάλαντον μόρφωσιν. *C.H.*, III, 1/164D.

⁹⁶ *ὡγαύτης* is a later Greek word which usually means "bloom of youth" or "beauty." It appears in Theophrastus, Gregory of Nyssa, and in several Psalms of the Septuagint. *ὡγαύς*, the term from which it is derived, at first signified the ripeness and seasonableness of fruits and grains. It then came to refer to anything in its prime, and to carry the special connotation of beauty and grace. Hesiod and Plato use it in both its original and its derived sense. Cf. G. H. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (New revised ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), II, p. 2036, and Demetrios Demettrikos, *μέγιστος λεξικὸν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσας* (Athens: Demettrikos, 1933-53), IX, cols. 8040-41.

⁹⁷ *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C.

⁹⁸ *D.N.*, IV, 22/724B. I am indebted to de Gandillac for the translation: "capable, si l'on ose dire, de refléter dans son entière fraîcheur cette forme divine qui porte l'impreinte du Bien." *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 117.

⁹⁹ ἱερὰν τινα καὶ ὁλοῦ διακόσμησην δηλοῦ εἰκόνα τῆς θεαρχικῆς ὡγαύτης. *C.H.*, III, 2/165B.

¹⁰⁰ It is the same sort of approach which makes him use *ἔξως* along with *ἀγάνη* to stand for the divine desire. Both terms are needed, he

matter, a word which stands for the ripeness of fields at harvest, or for the fresh loveliness of youth, and given to it a rich spiritual meaning.

The beauty which belongs to creatures and which comes to them from this divine plenitude, is of several types. It may be complete or partial, for "there are things wholly beautiful and things beautiful only in part."¹⁰¹ Things which are evil or deformed have a lesser share in beauty than those which keep their nature unsullied. Likewise, beauty varies according to the essence, powers, and merits of the beings to which it comes, while perfect beauty in creatures depends on the closeness of their resemblance to God.¹⁰²

Participated beauty may also be spiritual or material. If it is material, it remains ever subordinate to "immaterial and intelligible beauty,"¹⁰³ and a passing reflection of the splendors of the spirit. However, matter is not to be scorned, since it is a necessary means by which men rise to what is supernally fair. As Denis explains it: "this very matter, because it holds its existence from Him who alone is true beauty, keeps throughout its material ordering some traces of spiritual beauty."¹⁰⁴ Visible beauties are always the "images of invisible fairness,"¹⁰⁵ so that material arrangements are outer, tangible "coverings" (*παράτεταρα*) which make up the "beautiful exterior order."¹⁰⁶

says, to express the overwhelming love of the Godhead. Cf. *D.N.*, IV, 11/708B-18/713D.

¹⁰¹ *D.N.*, XI, 6/956B.

¹⁰² *D.N.*, XII, 2/969C, 972A; *Ep.*, IX, 5/1113A.

¹⁰³ *θεῖος καὶ νοητὸς εὐγένεια*. *C.H.*, VII, 2/208D.

¹⁰⁴ *C.H.*, II, 4/144B.

¹⁰⁵ τῆς ἀγαθότης εὐγένειας ἀρεσιλογίαν. *C.H.*, I, 3/121D.

¹⁰⁶ *E.H.*, IV, 3, 2/476B. It is clear that Denis looks on matter as something inferior but necessary. He does not teach that it is evil either relatively or absolutely as Plotinus seems to have done (*Enn.*, II, 2, 5-7 presents evil as negation or absence, while *Enn.*, I, 8, 3 and 7 presents matter as evil, completely untouched by the Good. Matter may be called the first evil only as a sequence of the μὴ ὄν. Cf. St. Augustine's interpretation, *Confessions*, VII.), nor does he verge on dualism like Iamblichus (cf. *Pera*, *D.N. expositio*, p. 185, n.3; p. 209, n.3). Rather, he argues that matter is needed for those beings in which it is an essential part, and that since it is thus necessary, it cannot be evil; for evil, which is a

Spiritual beauty, on the other hand, even as the source of the beauty of sense, is ever hidden and pure.¹⁰⁷ To reach after it or after the beauty of God, men must detach themselves from material affections.¹⁰⁸ They must become pure and inward like the beauty which they seek. This inner loveliness can come to them as individuals, or it may be given to a group, or to the entire hierarchy. When it is bestowed upon an ordered assembly, Denis describes it as *εὐγένεια*. Again, he has taken over a word which usually stands for a surface attractiveness or comeliness, and given it a spiritual significance. That he expects the term to bear the meaning of an interior order and fitness is apparent from the fact that he uses it solely to depict the divine beauty in its relations to the inner workings of the angelic and human hierarchies,¹⁰⁹ and not to designate the beauty of matter.

lack, is never necessary to anything (*D.N.*, IV, 28/729A, B). The fact that Christ took on a material body (*D.N.*, II, 9/648A; *Ep.*, IV/1072B) and that the Church makes full use of material signs (*C.H.*, II, 2/137D; *E.H.*, IV, 3, 4/477C) is sufficient to make Denis give to matter a certain reality and worth. However, it can never rank with the spiritual, and for those who are spiritual to be drawn to it is a degrading thing (*D.N.*, IV, 1/693C; VIII, 8/896C; *E.H.*, III, 3, 7/433D; VII, 1, 2/553C). *Pera* gives full notes on the relation of Denis's doctrine on evil to that of Proclus. Cf. *D.N. expositio*, pp. 156-226. The recent comments of Walther Tritsch give new light on the general question of kinship between the two thinkers. Cf. Tritsch's translation and commentary, *Mystische Theologie und andere Schriften mit einer Probe aus der Theologie des Proklus* (Munich-Planegg: O. W. Barth, 1956). A pertinent work which I have not consulted is the translation and commentary by Salvatore Scimé, *Dionysius Areopagita, Il bene e il male* (Messina: Ed. Collegio di S. Ignazio, 1955). Professor Luthomir Gleiman of Newton College of the Sacred Heart has made helpful suggestions with regard to the doctrine of Plotinus and to the text as a whole. May I thank him here.

¹⁰⁷ *E.H.*, IV, 3, 2/476B.

¹⁰⁸ *D.N.*, VIII, 8/896C.

¹⁰⁹ The word *εὐγένεια* is used thirteen times. Once it refers to the beautiful exterior order (ὁ ἔξωτος εὐγένεια) (*E.H.*, IV, 3, 2/476B), and once to the seaminess of the stars (*D.N.*, IV, 4/697B). All other references are to God, to angels, and to the hierarchic ordering. Cf. *D.N.*, I, 4/593A; *C.H.*, I, 3/121D; II, 4/144A, B; III, 2/165A; VII, 1/205C; VII, 2/208D; VIII, 2/241C; *E.H.*, IV, 3, 1/473B, C.

That spiritual beauty is prior to any manifestation in matter may be gathered from the image Denis employs in the *Mystical Theology*. In the process of denial and removal required for a knowledge of God, we are "like men who, when they carve a natural likeness in a statue, take away all that hinders a clear view of the latent image, and by the mere removal, bring to light the hidden beauty."¹¹⁰ This example seems also to point to an Aristotelian rather than a Platonic approach to the notion of form, not as something separate but as something elicited from matter.¹¹¹ At all events, beauty resides primarily in the form, in the intelligible element in things. It is present secondarily in the matter which is beautiful only insofar as it reveals the form.

Yet, Denis insists that beauty belongs to all beings. As a transcendent quality, he terms it *κάλλος*, *τὸ καλόν*, or *καλλοσύνη*. When he leaves the sphere of abstraction and turns directly to God and to creatures, he uses other expressions which serve to bring out the character of the beings he has in mind: *ὁγαρότης* to indicate the richness of the divine beauty, and *εὐγένεια* to show its fitness and the appropriateness of the angelic beauty as well. He describes the beauty of God most fully, but he tells us that the aspects we admire in it—simplicity, goodness, fundamental perfection, purity, form, harmony, and stability—are shared by creatures according to the measure of each.

¹¹⁰ *M.T.*, II/1025B.

¹¹¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII, 1033b, 5-8; ed. Hugh Tredennick (2 vols., Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1947, I, p. 344: "for this [the form, *εἶδος*] is that comes to be (*γίγνεται*) in something else, either by art or by nature or by potency (*ἢ ἐκ τοῦ τέχνης ἢ ἐκ τοῦ φύσεως ἢ ἐκ δύναμews*)."¹ A case could be made for the Aristotelianism of Denis (as it could for any Neoplatonist). Not only such terms as "essence," "potency," and "act" are used with apparent correctness, but the entire doctrine of causes is adopted effectively.

CHAPTER II

BEAUTY AND PARTICIPATION

If beauty belongs to all beings, God alone has the whole of it, for He alone is the fulness of being. However, creatures are beautiful in a real manner, although they can claim to be so only through participation. By the very fact that they spring from God who is absolute beauty, they must have some partial share in it. Yet, since they are limited and different beings, they cannot all be fair in the same way. Instead, they must be beautiful by analogy, in a fashion which leaves room for their likenesses and differences. Hence it is important to see how Denis handles participation and analogy, not merely because his writings are woven around these ideas, but because he places beauty with them in the framework of creation.

Partaking and creaturehood imply each other. The creature itself is a narrowed effect of God's causality, while its participation is the narrowing of a divine perfection. "All things to which we apply the term 'many' participate," says Plato,¹ and they participate in something above themselves, something beyond the world of matter; for the material realm is "derived, at least in its formal nature, from the spiritual world."² Denis casts his stepwise scheme of things in the Platonic mold, so that the things of sense have no worth save as reflections of what is intelligible. He appears even to take over the Platonic Ideas, or at least he grants to the *αἰδιωματώδη*, whether or not they are separate entities, much the same character that Plato furnishes for his *εἶδη*. Nevertheless, Dionysius insists that all participation stems from God and not

¹ *Parm.*, 129B; Fowler, p. 206. Socrates is here speaking of the share which things have in opposites. He uses the verb *μετάσπασσεν* which has a receptive connotation.

² Arthur Little, S.J., *The Platonic Heritage of Thomism* (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1949), p. 38. The important work of L. B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Librairie philosophique, J. Vrin, 1953), although it deals with the relationship of Plato to St. Thomas, contains no significant references to the notion of beauty as conceived by either philosopher.

partly from a demiurge who needs to look at models outside himself in order to shape his creatures. There must be in the Dionysian universe a real intercourse of created effects with a dynamic, personal being who brings them out of nothingness into existence. "The whole God-head communicates itself entirely to each of those who participate in it,"³ not in a pantheistic way, as if each creature were a fragment of divinity, but in the sense that creatures owe their whole being to God. Through their own fault they may hamper His largesse, for in the free sway of their natural powers, they can foster or stifle their own development. Denis braces his thought with a few images.

It is, he states, a common, unifying (ἡνωμένον), and unique property of the whole Godhead to be shared, full and entire (τὸ πᾶσαν αὐτὴν ἑλὼν . . . μετέχεσθαι), by each one who shares it (ἕκαστον τοῦ μετέχοντος) and by none only in part (οὐδὲν οὐδὲν μέρος); as the center point of a circle is shared by all the rays which make up the circle, and as the many imprints of a single seal partake of the original (μετέχει τῆς ἀγερύτου σφραγίδος) which is immanent completely and in the very same fashion in each of the imprints.⁴

Here and in Chapter Five of the *Divine Names*, where he suggests the example of a single sound heard by many listeners,⁵ what he wishes to underscore is the fact that the Godhead remains transcendent and one despite the numberless beings which participate in it. God Himself is unshared and incommunicable (ἀμετέωρος), and he does things in an unsharable manner.⁶ For all that He is the cause of everything, His incommunicability (ἀμετέωρος) separates Him from what He has made, nor is He affected by the flaws in His creatures.⁷

All things which have being are surpassed by Him who is beyond them all, and all who partake (μετέχοντων) and the

³ D.N., II, 5/644B.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 644A. For free will, cf. C.H., IX, 3/260C.

⁵ D.N., V, 9/825A.

⁶ D.N., XI, 6/956A, B.

⁷ D.N., II, 6/644B, C.

very participations (μετοχῶν) are surpassed by the unparticipated cause.⁸

As Durantel puts it:

When it calls beings to share in it, the Godhead becomes a separable, multiple thing, numerous in its works, without dividing itself, losing its simplicity, leaving its oneness; throughout the multiplicity, the production, the distinction of all things, it remains the same, unchangeable, indivisible.⁹

However, there is no such sameness and lack of change on the part of creatures. In fact, there is a marked gradation among them. The harmony which is an essential element of the Dionysian plan, does not exclude but rather welcomes differences. Order is not pinned down as a "systematic reduction to identity."¹⁰ "How could it be that all sharing . . . should be one and the same," he asks, "if all beings have not the same fitness to partake of its wholeness?"¹¹ There must be a scale in the commonwealth of finite beings which corresponds with the powers imbedded in them. To answer this need, Denis builds up his universe and borrows from pagan philosophy whatever may help him in his task.

Although Plato masses his ideas about the sunlike good and, according to Theophrastus, places ideal numbers above them,¹² he does not father the Dionysian hierarchy directly, nor does Plotinus. The outer frame which Denis bends to his thought is the product

⁸ D.N., XII, 4/972B.

⁹ "En appelant les êtres à sa participation, la divinité devient chose séparable, multiple, nombreuse en ses oeuvres, sans qu'elle-même se divise, perde sa simplicité, sorte de son unité; à travers la multiplicité, la production, la distinction de toutes choses, elle reste identique, inaltérable, indivisible." Jean Durantel, *Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1919), p. 20.

¹⁰ René Roques, "La notion de hiérarchie selon le Pseudo-Denis," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge*, XVII (1949), p. 198.

¹¹ D.N., IV, 20/720A.

¹² *Metaphysics*, 6C, 11-14 ed. Ross-Forbes, cited by C. J. de Vogel, "On the Neoplatonic Character of Platonism and the Platonic Character of Neoplatonism," *Mind*, LXII (1953), p. 53.

of the late Neoplatonists Iamblichus and Proclus.¹³ In erecting it, Denis never mentions either philosopher, but with the same structure and wording encloses a doctrine at odds with theirs.¹⁴

The *πρόδος* of the Areopagite differs at its very source from the Neoplatonic effusion. Underlying the Plotinian system is a universal, progressive outpouring. Just as Intelligence (*voûs*) flows from the One, and the World-Soul (*ψυχή*) emerges from *voûs*, so from *ψυχή* stream all beings down to matter or "non-being" (*μη ὄν*), the first evil and the end of the generating power of being. Denis holds that such a spreading forth of the One in ever-weakening eddies amounts to cutting God off from the universe. On the other hand, his teaching that participation is a direct dependence of each creature upon God stresses the notion that all things return to the transcendent Godhead and that nothing stays in being without His all-loving care.¹⁵

¹³ Both Roques and Durantel show the tie-up between Denis and Proclus, and each reviews the opinions of scholars as to their relationship. Roques also indicates other links with previous philosophers especially Iamblichus, and with the Church Fathers. Cf. Durantel, *St. Thomas*, pp. 12-26; Roques, *L'Unités*, *passim*.

¹⁴ While Durantel, Roques, Arnou, and Stiglmayr have taken a measured, if not always kindly, view of the Dionysian debt to Proclus, Endre von Ivanka has sometimes gone to the extreme of disclaiming any connection between the two. Cf. "La signification historique du 'Corpus Areopageticum,'" *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXVI (1949), pp. 5-24. His more recent studies show a modified outlook. He admits the external resemblance while he underlines the internal divergence. Cf. "Teilhaben," 'Hervorgang' und 'Hierarchie' bei Ps.-Dionysios und bei Proklos," *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Philosophy*, XII (1953), pp. 153-58; *Von den Namen zum Unnennbaren* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957), Introduction, pp. 11-22.

¹⁵ *D.N.*, VII, 2/869B. Roques cites von Ivanka ("La signification"): "La succession graduelle de la communication du divin, conçue par le néoplatonisme de telle sorte que le divin va se dégradant et se diminuant de degré en degré, est devenue chez Denis une multiplicité des formes de la participation immédiate au divin, participation qui demeure entière et parfaite à chaque degré, quoique suivant la nature de chacun . . ." (p. 18; italics by Roques), and adds, after several more quotations from the same article: "C'est précisément par sa doctrine des médiations hiérarchiques, si souvent réaffirmée et si intrépidement défendue contre des objections d'ordre scripturaire (renvoyons encore à *C.H.*, ch. XIII), que Denis nous semble très

The ternary division of the cosmos, common to Denis and the Neoplatonists, is also only outwardly alike. Plotinus provides a world-wide trinity. Proclus clusters triads, not in the flamboyant fashion of Iamblichus who seems to think that numerous intermediaries solve the problem of how the many come from the One, but with careful symmetry. Mind emanates from the One by means of henads or mediate unities. Thus evolved, the *voeûd* breaks into spheres each with a threefold subdivision. The soul in like manner turns into a psychic trinity of *λόγος*, *θυμός*, and *ἐνθουσία*, based on Plato's grouping of the faculties.¹⁶ But the world does not flow out from the Soul as in the plan of Plotinus. Instead, it escapes from a *δημιουργός* who is both exemplar and efficient cause and identical with *voûs*, the third member of the intellectual trio.¹⁷ This creator-god is always at work. Yet, while Proclus seems to allow it a certain freedom, he still agrees with Plotinus that necessary action is a more perfect sort of activity, and that all other processes are subordinate to the enforced action of the One.¹⁸ The One remains above all, apart even from being, so that although all multitude shares somehow in its oneness,¹⁹ this share must pass through intermediaries. Likewise, for

dépendant de Proclus. Dans cette dépendance même, il subsiste une différence essentielle, justement soulignée par Ivanka: 'Pour Denis, il n'est pas question d'une génération graduelle' (p. 18), mais d'une coactivité et d'une coopération des divers ordres avec Dieu. . . . Mais il reste . . . que les médiations hiérarchiques se veulent nécessaires et contraignantes, chez le penseur chrétien comme chez le philosophe néoplatonicien." *L'Unités*, pp. 324-25, n.4. The mediation here is one of knowledge and perfection, not existence.

¹⁶ Cf. *Republic*, 436B, Shorey, p. 380; Proclus *Diadochus, Commentary on the Republic*, ed. Victor Cousin, p. 415f, referred to by Jules Simon, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Joubert, 1845), p. 442.

¹⁷ *Εἰς τὴν γὰρ ἐκείνῃ βίαν τοῦ νοῦ. Πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐστὶν τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ νοῦ. Καὶ αὖ ἐν τῇ παραδειγματικῇ τῷ δημιουργικῇ.*

Commentary on the Timaeus, p. 98, cited by Simon, *Histoire*, p. 484.

¹⁸ *Εἰ δὲ ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος, οὗ γὰρ ἡ τοῦτο νοῦ ἀποκρίται ἐντὺν, αὐτῷ τῷ ἐκείνῃ τοῦ νοῦ.* *Commentary on the Parmenides*, Vol. 5, p. 7, cited by Simon, *Histoire*, p. 495.

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the soul to return to the One, there must be not only the efforts of the intellect set down by Plotinus, but also the use of various rites, the theurgy of Iamblichus.

There is a sure echo of the system of Proclus in the world plan which Denis unfolds. He adopts the threefold pattern. He gathers the "intelligible beings" of the *Celestial Hierarchy* into three groups of three: the classic nine choirs of angels. He shapes the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of two triads: the priestly order of bishops, priests, and lesser ministers, and the order of initiates: monks, holy persons, and those who have been cleansed. Each hierarchic level is a rigorously defined reality, separate from all the others, yet closely bound to them at the same time. Each finds its purification, enlightenment, and union through the liturgy and through the mediation of the upper reaches of being. In fact, the angels, the topmost order of creation, while they are not channels of existence itself, are the bearers of light and perfection to all other creatures.²⁰ Everything is linked together according to the universal law that a higher order of nature in its lowest members joins a lower grade in its highest manifestations.²¹ But

τὸ ἐν, which is uncaused, has maximal unity.

τὸ δν, which is caused by τὸ ἐν, has unity and maximal being.

ζωή, which is caused by τὸ δν, and τὸ δν, has unity, being and maximal life.

νοῦς, which is caused by τὸ ἐν, τὸ δν, and ζωή, has unity, being, life and maximal intelligence.

ψυχή, which is caused by τὸ ἐν, τὸ δν, ζωή and νοῦς, has unity, being, life, intelligence and discursive reasoning.

ἕφα, which are caused by τὸ ἐν, τὸ δν, ζωή and νοῦς, have unity, being, life and minimal intelligence.

γοῦρά, which are caused by τὸ ἐν, τὸ δν and ζωή, have unity, being and minimal life.

νεῦρά σώματα, which are caused by τὸ ἐν and τὸ δν, have unity and minimal being.

ἄν, which is caused by τὸ ἐν, has minimal unity.

Dodds adds: "It is worth noticing that . . . the spiritual principles, being αἰθερώτατα, add each a quality of its own to those bestowed upon it by its causes." pp. 232-233.

²⁰ Cf. *D.N.*, XI, 1/649A; *C.H.*, VIII, 2/240C.

²¹ *D.N.*, VII, 3/872B. This famous axiom has been used extensively by the mediaeval Scholastics.

the hierarchic strands are not so tightly knit as to leave no scope for interplay among them or no room for the blunders implied in human freedom.²²

Thus it appears that rites and triads do not make a pagan any more than they make a monk, and that Denis (undoubtedly a monk by conviction and consecration),²³ cannot be classed as a pagan philosopher. If he is termed a Neoplatonist, it is only because of the color which Neoplatonic works have given to his mind, and because of the framework he has borrowed from them. He accepts the scaffolding, not to coax believers into error, but by wise adaptation to house in it a truly Christian commonwealth.

His concern to make the proper distinctions is apparent. Creatures are at bottom wholly different from their creator. Their creaturehood links them closely to each other, so that although they differ from God in their very nature they depart from one another chiefly in degree. Their being comes entirely from God, while He abides aloof and unchanged.²⁴ The intelligible triads of the angelic host stand apart from the divine attributes of being, life, and wisdom. The heavenly spirits, and all creatures as far as they are able, partake of these qualities, not as belonging to them by right, but as given freely by God. In the supernatural sphere, they have the gift of grace to cross the gulf between the creature and God, a gulf which no purely natural philosophy can bridge. Roques sums up these aspects of participation as follows:

To the divine Transcendence, [the hierarchy] restores the positive attributes which Neoplatonism had stolen from it, to leave only a unity beyond understanding. The notion of creation narrows in great measure the breach between the dif-

²² Cf. *D.N.*, VII, 4/873A; *Ep.* VIII/1097A. Cf. also Otto Semmelroth, S.J., "Gottes überwesentliche Einheit—zur Gotteslehre des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita," *Scholastik*, XXV (1950), pp. 230-31.

²³ This seems to be his calling, not only because of his contemplative outlook and concern for the things of God, but also because of his familiarity with the monastic state. He explains it at greater length and more appreciatively than he does the sacerdotal orders. Cf. *E.H.*, III and *Ep.* VIII to the monk Demophilus.

²⁴ The following texts bring out this important point: *D.N.*, I, 5/593C; 7/596C; II, 5/644A; 11/649C; IV, 1/693B; V, 4/817C; 9/825A; VI, 1/856B; 3/857B; VII, 2/868C, 869B.

ferent orders of reality and gives them at the same time a sharper awareness of the only transcendence worthy of the name. Finally, the idea of grace enables us to envisage, in fresh ways and with fresh effectiveness, the mutual relations of the Transcendent and the hierarchies, which Neoplatonism seemed to have reduced to the necessary expansion and return of a purely logical dialectic.²⁵

The doctrines of creation and grace shield the Areopagitica from the Neoplatonic extremes of complete transcendence and of pantheism. They also furnish some special characteristics of Dionysian participation; for no matter what the level of being at hand, its share is always objective, interior, and directly traceable to God.²⁶ The dependence on the creator for existence has already been pointed out. How participation is objective and interior requires an explanation.

The objectivity of Dionysian participation is its reality. It is not a mere imitation or outer conformity, but an actual sharing of existence and perfection. That Denis intends it to be a real partaking rather than a copying is shown by his preference for the term *μετέχω* and its related words in comparison with *μυέσθαι* and its derivatives.²⁷ Even among the terms which signify participation there are shades of meaning which Denis seems to have

²⁵ "A la Transcendance divine, elle réstitue les attributs positifs, dont l'avait dépossédée le néo-platonisme, pour ne lui laisser qu'une unité hyper-intelligible. La notion de création atténue considérablement l'écart qui sépare les divers ordres de la réalité et leur donne en même temps un sens plus aigu de la seule transcendence qui mérite ce titre. Enfin, l'idée de grâce permettra de concevoir, selon des modalités et avec une efficacité nouvelles, les rapports réciproques du Transcendant et des hiérarchies que le néo-platonisme avait semblé réduire à l'expansion et au retour nécessaire d'une dialectique purement logique." "La notion de hiérarchie," p. 212.

²⁶ Roques suggests these aspects of the hierarchy, but he does not treat them in the sense given here. Cf. *L'Univers*, pp. 81-86.

²⁷ The compounds and derivatives of *μετέχω* are employed 185 times, *μεταμυέσθαι*, which stresses the receptive character of participation, is used 9 times, while *μυέσθαι* and its related words, including *θεομυήσις* and *θεομυήσις*, occur only 46 times. Even *θεομυήσις* and *θεομυήσις*, which have an importance in the doctrine of exemplarity, appear only 32 times, while *θεός* and *θεοδότης* are employed 141 times in that connection.

exploited deliberately. For instance, *μετνοία*, which implies an existential share coupled with fruition and enjoyment, occurs most frequently in the *Celestial Hierarchy* where it describes the angelic form of participation.²⁸ On the other hand, *μέθεξις*, which suggests rather a share by possession and involves process and growth, is the term chosen to depict the participative activity of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.²⁹ Thus, the very expressions convey the distinction between the order of angels and the world of men; the one sharing more fully and with a concomitant satisfaction, the other, still in the course of development, sharing in a lesser fashion. In the same manner, *μετοχή*, an abstract noun without any special connotations, and the verbal forms of *μετέχω* appear most often in the *Divine Names*.³⁰ This is to be expected in the most philosophic of Dionysian works in which participation is surveyed not so much from the position of the beings which share as from the standpoint of the sharable attributes.

The interiority of participation stems from the natural as well as the supernatural character of things. Grace by its very definition is an intrinsic quality in spiritual beings, lifting them to union with God.³¹ From the natural aspect also, participation is from within, not only because Denis stresses the superiority of the spiritual, which is always interior and intangible, over the sensible, but because everything essential and existential is bestowed on beings by participation.

While God Himself is incommunicable, each of the divine attributes is sharable. Denis indicates this specifically.³² He also

²⁸ *μέθεξις* is applied only once to the angels, *C.H.*, XV, 1/328C. In this context, it has a dynamic implication, since they are described as participating in order to communicate to inferiors.

²⁹ *μετέχω*, used as a verb and as a substantive, also occurs frequently. Again, it underscores the dynamic aspect of human participation, *κοινωνία*, a term used especially for participation in the sacraments, occurs 45 times in this work, 11 times in *C.H.*, 8 times in *D.N.*

³⁰ *μετέχω* as a verb and as a substantive appears 65 times and usually indicates a participation applicable to all creatures.

³¹ Grace (*χάρις*) figures only in the two *Hierarchies*, where it means any divine gift. For its special sanctifying character, cf. *E.H.*, IV, 3/484B.

³² Cf., for instance, *D.N.*, II, 5/644A, and XI, 6/956A.

makes clear the distinction between existence and the other names of God. "Existence (τὸ εἶναι)," he affirms, "is the most primitive of . . . fundamental participations."³³

The first of all participations is existence; [beings possess] existence in itself before life in itself, wisdom in itself, divine likeness in itself; and before participating in any other mode of this type, they must have part first and before all in existence.³⁴

Without this primary participation in Him "Who is the essence (οὐσία) and principle (ἀρχή) of all being, nothing would exist."³⁵

Participation in the "perfectly transcendent unity,"³⁶ with its corollary of undividedness, follows upon existence.

Nothing exists which does not participate in the One; . . . all being and all portions of being (πάντων μέρους) have a part in the One, and all must be one to exist as being.³⁷

Such unity excludes all indision, for "it is impossible to share altogether in opposite realities, or for him who enters into any communion whatever with the One to live a divided life."³⁸ From the social point of view, "it is impossible to be gathered together in relation to the One, or to share in the peaceable union of the One, if men are divided among themselves."³⁹ The power to depart from unity either socially or psychologically is the prerogative of free and rational beings, as it is their weakness.

³³ *D.N.*, V, 6/820C.

³⁴ πρὸ τῶν ὅλων αὐτοῦ μετοχῶν τὸ εἶναι προεβέβηται καὶ ἔστιν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι προεβύτερον τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔχειν εἶναι καὶ αὐτοσοφία εἶναι καὶ αὐτοσοφία θείαν εἶναι καὶ τὰ ἅλα ὅσον τὰ ὅντα μετέχοντα, πρὸ πάντων αὐτῶν τοῦ εἶναι μετέχει. *D.N.*, V, 5/820A. The αὐτομετοχή: αὐτοεἶναι, αὐτοσοφία, etc. to which reference has already been made, will be discussed in Chapter III. The translation relies on that of de Candillac, *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 131.

³⁵ *C.H.*, IV, 1/177C.

³⁶ κατὰ μέθεξιν ἀνάλωτον τοῖς μετέχουσι τῆς πάντων ὑπερημένης ἐνώσεως. *D.N.*, II, 4/641C.

³⁷ *D.N.*, XII, 2/977C.

³⁸ Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔνεστι τῶν ὅκως ἐναντίων ἅμα μετέχειν οὐδὲ τὸν κοινωνίαν τινὰ πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἑοχρηστώ μεγιστὰς ἔχειν ζωάς. *E.H.*, II, 3, 5/401A.

³⁹ οὐ γάρ ἔνεστι πρὸς τὸ ἐν συνάγεσθαι καὶ τῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς μετέχειν εἰρηναίως ἐνώσεως τοῖς πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς διηρημένους. *E.H.*, III, 3, 8/437A.

Lesser creatures have not this ability to break away from oneness, nor have they the ability to approach it as closely.

The same is true of the other divine attributes: life, wisdom, power, peace, and perfection. While power, peace, and perfection extend to all creatures in varying degrees, for "there is nothing in the world utterly bereft of all power,"⁴⁰ and "perfect peace penetrates to all things,"⁴¹ while divine perfection gives "definite form or limit to all that is indefinite,"⁴² life and wisdom are not shared by all. Life belongs only to animate beings, and wisdom to those endowed with reason and intelligence.⁴³ This leads Denis to formulate another law: those beings are closer to the Godhead whose participation is according to several modes.⁴⁴ If beings have knowledge and life as well as existence, they are more perfect than those who do not know and do not live.

There remain two other basic participations—goodness and beauty. Today, we should call them values because their presence bestows an inner worth on things which partake of them. The share in goodness and beauty is as wide as being. The good may not always be a moral good, nor the beauty a spiritual one, yet there is nothing in existence without some share in the beautiful-and-good. Cassirer concludes rightly that for Dionysius, the two hierarchies of existence and of value are not opposed but corresponding. "The degree of value depends on the degree of being."⁴⁵ Every being possesses more or less existence in the

⁴⁰ καὶ οὐδὲν ἔστι τῶν ὄντων ὃ παντελῶς ἀπῆλθεν τὸ ἔχειν τινὰ δύναμιν. *D.N.*, VIII, 3/892B.

⁴¹ Literally: "The totality of perfect peace." Διῆκεν γὰρ ἡ τῆς παντελούς εἰρήνης ὁλότης ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα. *D.N.*, XI, 2/952A.

⁴² καὶ πάντα μὲν ἀπερίεχον ὁρίων. *D.N.*, XIII, 1/977B.

⁴³ For life and the communication of life, cf. *D.N.*, VI. For wisdom, intelligence, reason, truth, cf. *D.N.*, VII; *C.H.*, XII, 2/292D; *C.H.*, IV, 1/177D.

⁴⁴ *D.N.*, V, 3/817B.

⁴⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 164. Roques speaks of the qualitative plurality of the hierarchy, "ordonnée selon la valeur des êtres qui la composent." "Significations et conditions de la contemplation dionysienne," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, LII (1951), p. 50.

measure in which it shares in the good,⁴⁶ while those who approach it most closely "participate in it abundantly."⁴⁷

Everything must be good only in proportion as it draws near to the good, since perfect goodness, penetrating all things (*διὰ πάντων πορεύσας*), reaches not only the wholly good beings (*παναγῶν οὐσιῶν*) around it, but extends even unto the lowest things: entirely present (*ὅλκιος παροῦσα*) to some, less strongly (*ἡγεμενός*) to others, and least of all (*ἐσχατός*) to others, according as each one is capable of sharing therein.

Some creatures participate wholly in the good, others lack it more or less, others have a fainter (*ἀμυδρότερον*) share in the good, while to others the good is present as but the weakest echo (*ἐσχατοῦ ἀντήχημα*).⁴⁸

This doctrine applies also to beauty. In fact, it is in the discussion of divine beauty that Denis gives to participation its widest span.⁴⁹

At the start, he makes the distinction between what is shared (*μετοχή*) and the actual sharing (*μετέχον*). What is shared is a quality; the sharing is its reception and use by a creature. In God, of course, there is no difference in the two. God is beauty (what is shared) and the beautiful (the sharing) at the same time. Creatures *are* neither. By their nature, they can *be* neither beauty nor the beautiful, although they may *have* *part* in beauty and by that partaking be beautiful. Beauty is "what is shared by the cause (God) who makes the beauty of all beautiful things."⁵⁰ He does so from the abundance of His perfect actuality, so that the divine communications or impartings which Denis speaks of are beauty-bestowing acts (*αἱ καλλοτικοὶ μεταδόσεις*), while from the creature's standpoint, they constitute its participation and make it beautiful. The di-

⁴⁶ *D.N.*, IV, 20/720D.

⁴⁷ *D.N.*, V, 3/817B.

⁴⁸ *D.N.*, IV, 20/717D-720A.

⁴⁹ The passages in question, *D.N.*, IV, 7, 10, are given in Appendix I. In the discussion which follows, if no source is given for a quotation, the reference is to these sections.

⁵⁰ The expression *καλλοτικός αἰτία*, "beautifying cause," is used by Proclus to describe the action of the demiurge. Cf. *In Tim.*; Diehl, I, pp. 269, 334, 409, 433.

vine causality reaches all things, for, in spite of the fact that no finite being is perfect beauty or beauty in itself, "there is no being that does not share (*μετέχει*) in the beautiful and good," and "there is none which is utterly bereft of the fruition (*μετερούσα*) of beauty."⁵¹

Lest anyone doubt his meaning, Denis proffers a cosmic litany which not only tells us that beauty belongs to everything, but also yields up the contents of his universe. The following outline, in his own words and order (with some general classifications added) will show the scope of created beauty. It embraces:

- I. A. 1. Motion (*κίνησις*) of heavenly minds
(*θεῶν νόες*) and souls (*ψυχαί*)
 - a. circular (*κυκλική*)
 - b. spiral (*ἐλικοειδής*)
 - c. straight (*εὐθεῖα*)
 2. Motion of material things
(*τὰ αἰσθητά*)
- } *motion, action*
- B. Permanence (*μονή*)⁵²
 - Position (*στάσις*)
 - Steadiness, grounding
(*ῥῆθυσ*)⁵³
- } *rest, or the basic state of any individual,*
- II. A. Substance (*οὐσία*)
 - Life (*ζωή*)
- } *of mind and soul*⁵⁴ — *spiritual order*
- B. 1. Smallness
(*σμικρότης*)
 - Equality
(*ἰσότης*)
 - Magnitude
(*μεγαλειότης*)
- } *of all nature*
(*πάντος φύσεως*) — *physical order*

⁵¹ *C.H.*, II, 3/141C.

⁵² The ordinary translation of *μονή* as "dwelling," "abiding," does not convey Denis's meaning. C. E. Rolt prefers the word "permanence" which is justified by the context. Cf. *Dionysius*, p. 100.

⁵³ "Grounding" is Rolt's term. *Dionysius*, p. 100.

⁵⁴ Strictly speaking, matter has no substantiality in the Dionysian scheme.

2. Measures
(μέτρα)
Proportions, relations
(ἀναλογίαι)
Harmonies
(ἀρμονίαι)
Blendings
(ἡρώσεις)
Totalities
(ὁλότητες)
Parts
(μέρη)
3. All that is one
(πάν ἐν)
All multitude
(πλήθος)
Combinations of parts
(συνθέσεις τῶν μερῶν)
Unities of all multitude
(παντὸς πλήθους ἐνώσεις)
Perfections of wholes
(τελειότητες τῶν ὁλοτήτων)
- C. 1. Quality (ποιόν)
Quantity (ποσόν)
Amount, "discrete quantity"
(πολὺκον)
The infinite (τὸ ἄπειρον)
2. Comparisons (συγκρίσεις)⁵⁵
Distinctions (διακρίσεις)
3. Everything endless (ἅσα ἄπειρία)
Every end (πάν πέρας)
All definitions (οἱ ὅροι πάντες)⁵⁶
Orders (τάξεις)
- of beings
(τῶν ὄντων)
- quantitative
aspects of
beings, taken
separately
- quantitative
aspects of
beings as
a whole
- generic partici-
pations of the
material order
- qualitative
relations
- relations of
quantity and
infinity

⁵⁵ Rolt translates this pair as "fusions and separations" (*Dionysius*, p. 100). This does not bring out the qualitative implications which Denis seems to want.

⁵⁶ πέρας and ὅρος both signify limits and boundaries, so that ὅροι here may have a semantic reference. St. Maximus comments: "Ὅροι εἰσὶν οἱ ἐξηγετητοὶ λόγοι τῆς οὐσίας ἐκείνου τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ τὸ γένους, καὶ τῆς διαφοράς, καὶ τὸ τί ἐστὶ δηλοῦντες. *Scholion*," ed. Pierre Lamsel, *Migne Patres Graeci*, IV, p. 239.

- III. A. Transcendencies (ὑπεροχαί), i.e.,
divine attributes as
properties of creatures
Elements (στοιχεῖα), i.e., matter
Forms (εἶδη)
Substance (οὐσία)
- B. Power (δύναμις)⁵⁷
Action (ἐνέργεια)
Condition (ἔξις)
- C. Perception (αἰσθησις)
Reason (λόγος)
Intellection, intuition (νόησις)
Touch, apprehension (ἐκταφή)⁵⁸
Understanding (ἐπιστήμη)
- IV. A. All unification, union
(πάν ἑνωσις)
B. All being (πάν ὄν)
All that is (πάντα ὅσα ἐστί)
All that becomes (πάντα ὅσα γίνεσθαι)
- C. All that is not being (τὰ οὐκ ὄντα),
i.e., possible being, since it is
in the beautiful supersub-
stantially (ὑπεροπείως)
- states of soul
- cognitive acts
- all reality
actual and
- possible
- This is the broadest of his lists. Others which follow derive from it. They provide little that is new and nothing that is out of keeping. The participations of being assembled in Chapter Five include: beginning (ἀρχή), end, life, immortality (ἀθανασία), wisdom (σοφία), order, harmony, power, protection (φρουρά), stability, distribution (δυναμική), intelli-

⁵⁷ I have classified power, action, and habit as "states of soul" because they almost echo the basic states given by Aristotle. Denis replaces πύξη by ἐνέργεια and probably means δύναμις to take on some of the connotation of πύξη. Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 1105b, 20; ed. H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 86.

⁵⁸ "Apprehension" is Rolt's choice (*Dionysius*, p. 100). Although not the literal meaning, it is justified by the cognitive context and by the absence of references to the other senses.

gence, reason, perception, condition, rest, motion, unity, fusion, attraction ($\phi\upsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}$), concord ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\gamma\mu\omicron\nu\eta$), distinction, definition.⁵⁹ Chapter Six gathers the participations of life: intelligence, reason, sensation, nutrition ($\theta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\varsigma$), and growth ($\alpha\upsilon\acute{\xi}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$).⁶⁰ Chapter Seven presents those of wisdom: intuition, reason, understanding, apprehension ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\gamma\eta$), perception, conjecture, ($\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$), imagination ($\varphi\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota\alpha$) and name ($\delta\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$).⁶¹ Chapter Nine handles the famous antinomies of quantity and quality: rest and motion, sameness and difference, likeness and unlikeness, smallness and largeness, limit and limitlessness, and all relations of measure. Chapter Thirteen takes up other aspects of quantity, again in the guise of antithesis: the one and the many, the part and the whole, definiteness ($\delta\acute{o}\theta\omicron\varsigma$) and indefiniteness ($\alpha\delta\omicron\theta\omicron\iota\epsilon\tau\alpha$), the end and endlessness.⁶²

All such groupings square with the vast list in Chapter Four. They repeat the Parmenidean contrast of rest and motion,⁶³ the Platonic stress on the substantiality of the spirit and the importance of the noetic, and the Pythagorean emphasis on quantity and measure which makes of matter almost a mathematical abstraction. It seems then, that the climactic peak of the *Divine Names* is reached in Chapter Four with the description of divine beauty, for the later chapters subside into quiet amplifications of what Denis has proposed there. Beauty and goodness have the widest and fullest span of all the transcendences. They pervade all things in a breadth equal to and beyond that of being, for goodness extends to non-being. They pervade also by a depth which penetrates to the richest perfection. The very fact that Denis pauses to chart out his system when he deals with the divine good considered as the beautiful, is enough to show their primacy.

⁵⁹ *D.N.*, V, 7/821B. This group contains twenty-four attributes, including being itself. The list in Chapter Four counts fifty-one participations.

⁶⁰ *D.N.*, VI, 3/857B.

⁶¹ *D.N.*, VII, 3/872A.

⁶² *D.N.*, XIII, 3/980C. Chapter Eight proposes some participations of power: intuition, reason, perception, life, substance. 3/892B.

⁶³ This is a favorite antimony of Plato's. Cf. *Rep.*, 436C-E; Shorey, pp. 282-84, and *Parm.*, 129E, 156C-E; Fowler, pp. 298-300.

Nevertheless, in the categories under their sway, three things seem to be overlooked. Matter as such is never mentioned; the appetitive element is neglected, save for the reference to $\phi\upsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ in Chapter Five, and the supernatural is avoided. Yet all three are touched by beauty. It stoops to matter, for Denis insists that matter shares in good order ($\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$), beauty ($\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$), and form ($\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$).⁶⁴ Matter is by nature beneath all other created goods, but is not on that account the evil thing that Plotinus feels it to be.⁶⁵ Secondly, beauty is the aim of all desire. Denis spends the next six sections of Chapter Four in telling us that both the yearning and its object belong to the beautiful and the good. The longing for beauty is a major part of his dialectic.

As for the sharing in supernatural beauty, it is splendidly traced in both hierarchies. The chief purpose of the hierarchic order is to foster likeness to God and oneness with Him.⁶⁶ The life of the angels is an eternal and spiritual communion ($\nu\omicron\tau\eta\iota\ \kappa\omicron\iota\nu\omega\nu\iota\alpha$) with the beauty ($\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota\alpha$) which renders all things beautiful ($\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\theta\omicron\iota\omicron\varsigma$).⁶⁷ In the household of the Church, each of the sacraments leads to the same kind of kinship with the beauty of God. At baptism, the neophyte professes his past ignorance of the really beautiful ($\tau\omicron\ \delta\upsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\nu$) and asks the honor of sharing therein.⁶⁸ In communion ($\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\xi}\iota\varsigma$), the divinely causal good grants a share in its proper beauties ($\tau\alpha\ \delta\iota\alpha\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\acute{o}$).⁶⁹ Holy oils and priestly consecration likewise raise their recipients to a beauty fully conformed to God ($\tau\omicron\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\nu\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$).⁷⁰

⁶⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 28/729A.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Ennead* I, 8, 3.7. De Gandillac interprets his doctrine thus: "Si la matière, en effet, était restée pure indétermination, . . . elle serait le laid, l'irrational, la pure absence de participation à la Pensée divine. Dans la mesure au contraire où le corps reçoit une véritable information, qui fait de sa qualité de vivant sensiblement plus qu'un reflet irisé à la surface des eaux, il participe effectivement à la Beauté." *La sagesse de Plotin* (Paris: Hachette, 1952), p. 56.

⁶⁶ *C.H.*, III, 1/164D.

⁶⁷ Cf. *C.H.*, II, 4/144A; III, 2/165A; VII, 1/205C.

⁶⁸ *E.H.*, II, 2, 5/396A.

⁶⁹ *E.H.*, III, 3, 11/441B.

⁷⁰ *E.H.*, IV, 3, 1/473B, C; V, 3, 6/513B.

Each of the three aspects of the hierarchy, its order (*τάξις*), knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), and action (*ἐνέργεια*), is meant to impart something of the sublime beauty of the Trinity.⁷¹ Knowledge, order, and action in themselves may be taken as fundamental viewpoints in the world of Denis. If the vast census of participations of beauty given in the *Divine Names* provides details of his scheme, this definition of the hierarchy furnishes the briefest summary of them. The relations of quantity and quality are forms of order, the cognitive acts are governed by *ἐπιστήμη*, while *δύναμις*, *στάσις*, and the motions of spirit and the things of sense are or lead to *ἐνέργεια*.

The triple movement of knowledge stirs each conscious being forward to full recognition of beauty. At the same time, this awareness whets desire for full possession. So it is that these two, insight and longing, are counterpoised in the dialectic of beauty. The cognitive phase is described many times. First, it is fitted to the angels.⁷² They move in a circular fashion when they are one with the endless enlightening (*ἀταλεύτως ἑλαιοῦς*) of the beautiful and good. They act longitudinally or straight downward (*εὐθείας*) when they guide and protect those beneath them, when they communicate the knowledge they have absorbed. They turn spirally in a combination of the two other motions, receiving from above, imparting below and clinging to their own identity (*ταυτότης*) which springs from the identity of the beautiful and good.⁷³

The soul repeats this threefold motion.⁷⁴ It withdraws from outer things, concentrates its knowing powers (*τὰ νοερά*), and contemplates that beauty which is one and the same (*καὶ ἓν καὶ ταῦτόν*). This is to enter into the eternal circle of

⁷¹ C.H., III, 1/164D.

⁷² D.N., IV, 8/704D-705A.

⁷³ Rogues traces these motions to the commentary of Hermias on the *Phaedrus*. Cf. *L'Univers*, p. 203, n.7. De Gandillac notes the same derivation, *Oeuvres complètes*, Introduction, p. 38. They are present also in the thought of Proclus. Cf. *In Tim.*, Diehl, III, pp. 18-21; 77-80, for material beings especially. Perra gives the most detailed reference to the question, *D.N. expositio*, pp. 123-27.

⁷⁴ D.N., IV, 9/705A, B.

divine movement by a form of intuition. When it knows discursively, the soul leaves the circular, unitive path and travels spirally in its reasoning.⁷⁵ When it gazes on the outer world and draws knowledge from the senses, its track is swift and straight, for sensation, like intuition, is a simple motion. Denis maintains that the very richness of material symbols tosses the soul back to contemplate the one whom they reflect.⁷⁶

The things of sense (*τὰ αἰσθητά*) move also in this triple way. Denis does not say how but merely states bluntly that they do.⁷⁷ He attributes this motion in a certain manner even to God.⁷⁸ Although He is truly unmoving (*ἀκίνητος*), creation is something He has set in motion. It is possible then to consider His power as a kind of movement. Its straightness shows that the creative act is steadfast (*ἀλάνης*) and unswerving (*ἀταγέγνατος*). Its spiral quality combines a persistent outpouring and a "productive stillness."⁷⁹ Its circling or centered character lies in the wealth of His own identity which enfolds all things in itself, and in the drawing power which compels the return (*ἐπιστροφή*) of all creatures to Him.

All knowledge comes to rest at last in the divine beauty. So too does all longing. This second phase of the dialectic, the awakening of desire, is also aimed at the beautiful and good, for it is desirable (*ἐσπερόν*), beloved (*ἐγαρόν*) and worthy of love (*ἀγαπητόν*). For its sake, lesser things strive after what is better, those of equal rank love their peers in a close communion, while those above look kindly upon those below. For its sake, likewise, each thing respects its own identity, keeping itself together (*συνεκτινώς*). Thus, "all things, yearning for the beautiful and good, do and will all that they do and will."⁸⁰

⁷⁵ *τὸ νοερὸς καὶ ἐνωτός, ἀλλὰ λογικὸς καὶ θεωρητικὸς καὶ οὖν συμπύκνως καὶ μεταβατικῶς ἐνεργεῖται.* D.N., IV, 9/705B.

⁷⁶ *πρὸς τὰ περὶ ταύτην προσηύχοντα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑξωθεν ὁσπερ ἀπὸ τινῶν συμπόλων περιελαμένον καὶ περιηθυσμένον ἐπὶ τὰς ἀτάδας καὶ ἡνωμένους ἀνδύεται θεολογίας.* *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ D.N., IV, 10/705B.

⁷⁸ D.N., IX, 9/916C, D.

⁷⁹ This is Rolfs's translation of γόνιμος στάσις. Cf. *Dionysius*, p. 168.

⁸⁰ *καὶ πάντα τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ἐπιβύενα ποιεῖ καὶ βούλεται πάντα ὅσα ποιεῖ καὶ βούλεται.* D.N., IV, 10/708A.

This double process of knowledge and of love owes its origin to Plato. Along with it goes the whole doctrine of participation.

Nothing, he says, makes a thing beautiful, but the presence (*παρουσία*) and communion (*κοινωνία*) of beauty itself, however it may have been gained; . . . beautiful things are made beautiful by beauty.⁸¹

The gradation of beautiful things appears in its full sweep in the *Symposium*. The banquet speech of Socrates traces the beautiful through its manifestations in lesser beings to its consummate expression in absolute beauty. Lowest in the scale is physical beauty from which man discovers that the beauty of every form (*τὸ ἐν εἶδει καλόν*) is one and the same.⁸² Then he contemplates in succession the inward beauty of soul, the beauty of laws and institutions, and the beauty of the sciences until he reaches the sole knowledge which deals with beauty itself.⁸³ This passage from becoming to being, upwards until one confronts its purest expression, is a Platonic theme. It recurs in the *Republic* where the soul is invited to strive towards the good.⁸⁴ Only by dwelling on particular, tangible things can the soul find the form they share. Diotima urges man to climb thus as on a ladder, from bodily beauties (*τὰ κατὰ αἴσθητα*) to customs (*ἐτυθησέμετα*), and to knowledge (*μάθημα*), and thence to a grasp of the very essence of beauty. When he touches it, not only will he have purified his knowledge and faced it with its true object, but he will have wrought in himself a moral cleansing as well.⁸⁵ Knowledge and virtue are inseparable.

Plotinus inherits this dialectic. He teaches that spiritual beauty is the only true one, for beauty of soul lies not in symmetry but in knowledge. For him, the musician, the lover, and the philosopher are the most fit to rise from lesser beauties in art, science,

⁸¹ *Phaedo*, 100D; ed. H. N. Fowler (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 344.

⁸² *Symp.* 210B; Lamb, p. 202.

⁸³ *ἡ ἔστι καλόν*. Cf. *Symp.*, 210D, 211C; Lamb, pp. 202-04.

⁸⁴ *Rep.*, VII, 518C; Shorey, II, p. 134.

⁸⁵ *Symp.*, 211C; Lamb, p. 206. Cf. André M.-J. Festugière, *Contemplation et vie contemplative selon Platon* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1950), pp. 164ff.

and virtue to *εἶς* itself. The shortest way thereto is by virtue. If this path be taken, it leads directly to the primal beauty.⁸⁶

Among the Church Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa stands out for his spirited use of the same doctrine. The creature's participation in the beautiful is an ever-growing process, an upward ascent toward what is best. Hans von Balthasar sees in this teaching a double form of becoming; the first, a horizontal motion in the depth of the creature's nothingness, the second, a vertical movement expressing an innate desire for God.⁸⁷ This concept of creaturely activity at the very heart of his thought, gives Gregory's work a vigorous, dynamic cast. Denis welcomes this interpretation, although he differs from Gregory on the nature of material beauty.⁸⁸ Both writers agree that the approach to God is not a passive affair and that from man's point of view it is chiefly a matter of the will. "To want ever a fuller possession of the beautiful is perhaps the perfection (*τελειότης*) of human nature."⁸⁹ To recognize that "all the perfect possession of all that is beautiful" comes from God⁹⁰ and to yearn after it, is to live up to one's total capacity. Gregory calls this the fulfillment of the divine image. Denis, at least when he talks of all creatures, explains it as the realization of an analogy (*ἀναλογία*). He reserves the term "image" (*εἰκόν* or *ὁμοίωσις*) for the spiritual order, for the supernatural *θεοποίησις*.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Cf. especially, *Enn.*, I, 6, and II, 9, 16.

⁸⁷ "Deux formes de devenir donc, les deux ensembles donnant la formule totale de l'analogie de l'être: L'une étant le mouvement horizontal de l'être créé, c'est-à-dire son fond de néant qui le sépare éternellement de Dieu, la potentialité pure . . . étant en lui-même *κείμενα καὶ οὐδὲν* (*In Hexaëtm.*, I, 80C), l'autre exprimant le mouvement ascensionnel du devenir, qui est le désir inné de Dieu dans la créature." *Présence et pensée—Essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1942), p. 11.

⁸⁸ "Toute la beauté du monde, toute sa valeur . . . est fondée sur ce qui en lui est proprement opposé au divin." *Ibid.*, p. 13. "On reconnaîtra sans peine l'opposition foncière de cette vision du monde avec celle du Pseudo-Denis, où toute la beauté et la valeur du cosmos provient de l'immanence *ἡ ἐν*, de la Participation à l'Unité suprême." *Ibid.*, p. 13, n.4.

⁸⁹ *Vita Moysis*, 301C, cited by von Balthasar, *Présence*, p. 18.

⁹⁰ *D.N.*, XII, 3/972A.

⁹¹ *ὁμοίωσις* and *ἀπομοίωσις* are the usual Dionysian expressions. *εἰκόν* is one of Gregory's terms. Denis often uses it, along with like words

The analogy Denis speaks of is a vital notion but not a precise one. It is too vast for precision. Not only does the idea encompass the many relationships expected of an analogy, but the word itself has several meanings. Semmelroth describes it as the place fixed upon for each creature in the hierarchy, and the counterpart of that place as it exists in the mind of God.⁹² Roques decides that it belongs especially to thinking beings.

συμμερία and *ἀναλογία* form two aspects of a rather complex notion. The two words, under kindred metaphors [*μέτρον, λόγος*], mean essentially the relationship of the intellect to God.

(1) On God's part, both terms signify the maximum idea assigned to each being for its share in the divine. This is fixed by God.

(2) On the creature's part, they mean a striving to become like the *ἀναλογία* fixed by God.⁹³

These basic distinctions pave the way to Losski's wider analysis. After he has tracked down the uses of *ἀναλογία*, Losski assembles them in two groups, for the analogy may dwell either in the creature or in the mind of God.⁹⁴

(*ἀναλογία, συμμερία, μέτρον, ἀνορέτωμα*), to describe the visible signs of things invisible.

⁹² "Erlösung und Erlöser im System des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita," *Scholastik*, XX-XXIV (1944-49), p. 370. He concludes: "Die geschöpfliche Aufgabe ist also diese: seinen realen Platz, die existentielle Wirklichkeit in Übereinstimmung zu halten mit der innergöttlichen Analogie und dadurch *ὁμοεργος* Gottes zu sein." Cf. also Semmelroth, "Gottes geeinte Vielheit," *Scholastik*, XXV (1950), pp. 389-403; especially pp. 399-400.

⁹³ "La *συμμερία* et l'*ἀναλογία* constituent deux aspects d'une notion assez complexe. Les deux mots, sous des métaphores voisines, signifient essentiellement le rapport de l'intelligence à Dieu." "La notion de hiérarchie," p. 193.

⁹⁴ Vladimir Losski, C. Ph., "La notion des 'analogies' chez Denis le pseudo-Aréopagite," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge*, V (1930), pp. 279-309. I shall follow Losski's points for the most part.

On the Part of Creatures

(1) "Analogy" usually means the capacity of finite beings to share in the attributes of God. When Denis speaks of sharing in any way, he generally adds a qualifying phrase: "in our mode,"⁹⁵ "in the measure of their strength,"⁹⁶ "according to the capacity of each one,"⁹⁷ "in the measure of each one's mind."⁹⁸

(2) The analogies or capacities of creatures determine the degrees of being, and the different orders of the hierarchy.⁹⁹

(3) *ἀναλογία* is not a passive faculty;—it refers to the free will of creatures and may thus be defined as their love for God, and their desire to conform to Him.¹⁰⁰

(4) *ἀναλογία* may also mean the goal of this love: union with God, a union which differs in degree with each being.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ *ὡς ἡμῖν ἐκέρχον*, "in a way that is easy for us." *D.N.*, I, 4/592C.

⁹⁶ *ὁμοεργος ἐκέρχον*, *D.N.*, VI, 1/856A. *κατὰ τὴν σφάν ἀναλογίαν*, *D.N.*, IV, 2/699C. *κατὰ τῆς οὐσίας ἀναλογίας*, *C.H.*, IV, 1/177C.

⁹⁷ *κατὰ δύναμιν ἐκέρχον*, *D.N.*, II, 11/649C. *ἐκέρχον ὅσον δύναμιν*, *E.H.*, I, 2/373A.

⁹⁸ *E.H.*, I, 2/373B; Losski, "La notion," pp. 289-292. Daniélou points to a derivation from Origen: "la doctrine de l'analogie selon laquelle Dieu se communique sous des symboles divers proportionnés aux capacités de ceux qui le reçoivent se rattache évidemment à Origène." "Bulletin de littérature patristique," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXIII (1946), p. 127. Roques indicates the Dionysian sense of *ἄλγιν*, the merit proper to the mind engaged in the way of union with God: "Notre capacité divine s'accroît dans la mesure même où s'accroissent notre générosité spirituelle et notre amour." "La notion de hiérarchie," p. 194.

⁹⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 20/717D; *C.H.*, III, 1/164D; XIII, 3/301A, B, C; *E.H.*, V, 3, 7/513D; Losski, "La notion," pp. 292-93. De Gandillac notes humorously that Denis avoids any spatial connotation in this formula: "Il ne s'agit pas d'un théâtre où l'architecte aurait assigné d'avance aux uns des fauteuils de balcon, aux autres des banquettes de poutiller." *Oeuvres complètes*, Introduction, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ *D.N.*, IV, 13/712A, B; 16/713C; Losski, "La notion," pp. 294-96. This aptitude is not the result of an arbitrary decree. Denis insists on the creature's freedom which is the source of evil in this world. Cf. *D.N.*, IV, 19/716D; *E.H.*, II, 3, 3/400B.

¹⁰¹ *D.N.*, IV, 5/701A; XI, 4/952C; *C.H.*, V, 1/196C; *E.H.*, III, 3, 3/429A; Losski, "La notion," pp. 296-99.

On God's Part

- (5) *ἀναλογία*, as the creature's end predetermined by God, stands for the divine ideas (*προορίσματα, παραδείγματα*).¹⁰²
- (6) God shows Himself to all in theophanies according to the analogies fixed for each creature in the divine ideas.¹⁰³
- (7) These model-analogies reveal themselves in the analogies of creatures. Thus, the supreme cause can be known in all beings insofar as they possess the image and likeness of the divine ideas.¹⁰⁴ Plato's use of analogy falls into this category.¹⁰⁵
- (8) These divine ideas are the measure of God's love for creatures; they are what Denis calls the "wills of God" (*θεῖα θελήματα*). The outcome of their union with the creature's analogy—its tendency toward God—is the *συνέγχεα* of the creature with God.¹⁰⁶
- (9) Entrance into the supernatural order can alone bring about the *συνέγχεα* because the fallen state of creatures prevents their own analogies from reflecting those in the mind of God. Salvation restores the *συνέγχεα* and confirms the analogies.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² C.H., IV, 1-3/177C-181A; XII, 2/293A; Losski, "La notion," pp. 299-300.

¹⁰³ D.N., I, 1/588A; I, 4/592B, C; Losski, "La notion," pp. 300-301.

¹⁰⁴ D.N., V, 9/825A; IV, 2/696C; VII, 3/872A; Losski, "La notion," pp. 302-304.

¹⁰⁵ "Such an analogy as he recognized was a certain similarity or communion between the specifically diverse Forms in heaven . . . accurately reflected by a like affinity between their particulars on earth." Little, *The Platonic Heritage*, p. 226.

¹⁰⁶ D.N., IV, 10/705C; I, 1/588A; IX, 6/913C; Losski, "La notion," pp. 304-06.

¹⁰⁷ D.N., IV, 23/725 B, C; VIII, 9/897A; Losski, "La notion," p. 306. Daniélou points out that for Gregory of Nyssa and for Denis, the likeness is not the *ὄντος*, as it might have been for a Neoplatonist, but sanctifying grace. It is not something possessed as from the creature's own being, but rather a reality communicated to it and "reflected" in it. *Platonisme et théologie mystique* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), p. 48. Cf. von Balhassar, *Présence*, pp. 84-95, and the extensive study of Roger Leys, S.J., *L'image de Dieu chez Saint Grégoire de Nyse* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951).

- (10) The union of the divine and created analogies is the work of Christ, through whom all creatures reach salvation. Each after its own fashion endeavors to become like Him—*Χριστοειδής*.¹⁰⁸

This doctrine of the mediating image, measure, or parallel is common to Gregory of Nyssa and to Denis. For Gregory, the image, whether it is the static *εἶκόν* or the dynamic *ὁμοίωσις*,¹⁰⁹ does not exist for itself but rather as a link between creatures and God. Its effectiveness lies in the divine presence within it.¹¹⁰ For Denis also, the *ἀναλογία* (the *λόγος*, or the *ἀπομοίωσις*) draws its life from the godlike form (*θεοειδής*) it bears and from the *θεός*, the "godliness," at which it aims. The *ἀναλογία* is doubly active. God not only has exemplary ideas of things, but He manifests them; creatures not only have a capacity for God, but they love Him and desire to become like Him. The *ἀναλογία* turns out to be a principle of individuation, since it marks each creature as distinct from every other.¹¹¹ No two beings receive it or fulfill it in exactly the same way. When it has been wholly wrought within them, they are truly themselves and truly unique. It is clear that *ἀναλογία* cannot claim to be the scholastic rela-

¹⁰⁸ D.N., VII, 4/872C; II, 10/648C; E.H., IV, 3, 4/477A, D; E.p. III, 1069B; Losski, "La notion," p. 307. In the same vein, Gregory of Nyssa speaks to the soul: "You alone are an imitation of the Being who surpasses every thought, a likeness of incorruptible Beauty, a mark of the true Light. Looking at it, you become what it is, for its brilliance shines in you, reflected by your purity." *De canticis canticorum*, P.G., XLIV, 805D, cited by Daniélou, *Platonisme*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Leys, *L'image*, p. 116, "L'ὁμοίωσις est la conquête ou la réalisation progressive de l'εἶκόν." Au terme les deux coïncident."

¹¹⁰ Cf. Leys, *L'image*, p. 57, and Walther Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker* (Wiesbaden, F. Steiner Verlag, 1955), pp. 28-29.

¹¹¹ Lawrence J. Rosán has found much the same teaching in Proclus, not with regard to *ἀναλογία* but with respect to *μετέωρος*. For this reason, he translates *μετέωρος* as "possess" and *μετοχή* as "possessed characteristic." He says: "This is one of Proclus' principles of individuation: the characteristic possessed by anything is its own and distinguishes it from everything else. The other principle of individuation is its return." *The Philosophy of Proclus* (New York: "Cosmos," 1949), p. 81, n.55. Denis includes both principles in his notion of analogy.

tion of proportionality. It is not meant to show that proportions in finite beings lead to the discovery of an infinite being. It is not used to avoid an equivocal fideism or a univocal pantheism. Yet it does lead to a kind of knowledge of God.

The analogy of attribution comes closer to what Denis describes. Usually, this scholastic comparison allows the quality to dwell only in the first analogate or cause. However, since the causal relation here is in the transcendental realm, the quality does not lie outside the creatures who share it, but merely exists in them in a finite manner. Such an analogy makes it possible to say that God is wise and good and beautiful because creatures are so. While Denis clings to the way of negation, he agrees that the creator is seen somehow, if darkly, in what He has made. From earthly beauties man may pass to spiritual beauties and reach out at last to beauty itself.

In spite of the stepwise order in Denis's world, each being partakes of the transcendentals directly at their source. Plato's dialectic and the triads of the Neoplatonists reappear there in Christian guise. The God who is all beautiful and beyond all beauty bestows on creatures their power to become beautiful by sharing in His beauty. Of creatures, Denis says: "Let us not forget that there is nothing which does not share in some manner in the beautiful."¹¹² Of God, he affirms:

In this simple and wondrous nature . . . there is no beauty or beautiful thing which does not pre-exist under a unique form as in its cause.¹¹³

¹¹² *C.H.*, II, 3/141C.

¹¹³ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A.

CHAPTER III

BEAUTY AND CAUSALITY

In his consideration of beauty, Denis turns twice to its causality.¹ Not only is beauty the source (*ἀρχή*) and well-spring (*πηγή*) of all creation, but it is also the fashioner (*ποιητὴν αἰτίον*), the exemplar (*παράδειγματιζόν αἰτίον*), and the end (*τέλειον αἰτίον*). It is even in some sense form and matter (*ἀρχὴ εἰδωλῇ στοιχειώδης*), since it upholds both the thing molded and the elements from which it is made.

That beauty should own the whole range of causes is not in itself to be wondered at, but it becomes so when one discovers that this ownership is unique in the Areopagitica, and that although God often appears as the origin (*ἀρχή*), the binding force (*συνωχή*), and the end (*τέλος* or *τέλος*) of creatures,² here alone, as the beautiful, does He assume the technical functions of the causes. Not even His worldwide goodness can claim such power apart from beauty. While causality in its general meaning is for Denis a manifestation (*ἐκφανσις*) of God in creatures,³ with their answering participation in His perfections, here, in the handling of beauty, three of the causes are clothed with a special character. The *ποιητὴν αἰτίον* moves things and holds them in being; the *τέλειον αἰτίον* draws them as their goal and their desire; the *παράδειγματιζόν αἰτίον* seals their limits and definitions.

Officially, the teaching on causality goes back to Aristotle. Its true genesis, however, is earlier, for the notion turns up when any thinking Greek considers the maker and what is made. Thus, in spite of the fact that Aristotle can find only material and formal

¹ *ἀρχὴ πύκνυν τὸ καλὸν ὡς ποιητὴν αἰτίον καὶ γνωστὸν τὸ ὅλα καὶ συνέχον τὸ τῆς οὐσίας καλῶν ἔσθων, καὶ πέρας πάντων καὶ ἀναγκαστὸν ὡς τέλειον αἰτίον—τοῦ καλοῦ γὰρ ἔνεκα πάντα γίνονται—καὶ παράδειγματιζόν ὅτι κατ' αὐτὸ πάντα ἀπορρίπτεται.* *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A. He repeats these and adds *εἰδωλῇ* and *στοιχειώδης*. *Ibid.*, 10/705D.

² Cf. *D.N.*, I, 7/596C; IV, 4/700A; IV, 10/705D.

³ Cf. Losski, "La notion," p. 285; "La théologie négative," p. 217. He refers to the *Scholion* of St. Maximus for his interpretation, *P.G.*, IV, 137.

causes in Plato's plan,⁴ the dialogues furnish a wealth of allusions to the effective deeds of the Ideas, the demiurge, and the soul, as well as to the aim and purpose of action which is, of course, the final cause.⁵

Aristotle fastens formal qualities on these four partners to the being and the becoming of an effect: the material cause, a passive element to be acted upon; the formal cause, a determination of the matter, its "whatness"; the efficient cause, a doer or maker; the final cause, the end or purpose of what is done.⁶ By the time these four reach Denis through the filter of Neoplatonism, they bear formal names also and the exemplar cause joins them as a favorite. So it is that when Proclus comments on the *Timaeus* and describes the shaping of the universe, he calls it a contrivance of the effective cause (δημιουργικὸν αἴτιον or ποιητικὸν αἴτιον), the *ταγεργιατικὸν αἴτιον*, and the *τελευτικὸν αἴτιον*.⁷ From him doubtless Denis derives his knowledge of these terms and some of their meaning, but there are in his works echoes of earlier and truly Platonic thoughts.

As Plato searches for the best, the highest good, the supreme

⁴ *Met.*, I, 988a, 8-19; 922a, 25-34; Tredennick, I, pp. 46-48; 74-76. Ross notes that the Platonic material cause can scarcely be interpreted in the same manner as the Aristotelian one. Cf. *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, pp. 233-34.

⁵ Cf. Thomas Henri Martin, *Études sur le Timée* (2 vols.; Paris: Ladrangue, Librairie-Éditeur, 1841), I, pp. 19-20. Philip Merlan insists rightly that the efficiency of Plato differs from that of Aristotle, at least with regard to the Ideas and the soul. For Aristotle, "it is the concrete thing (in space and time) that can cause or alter another concrete thing." *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1953), p. 174.

⁶ *Met.*, I, 3, 983a, 26ff.; V, 2, 1013a, 24ff. Denis, of course, does not stoop to earthly images of his meaning. Twice he refers to the work of the sculptor and the painter but not to explain the nature of the causes. Aristotle illustrates causality through the making of a statue, perhaps by Polyclitus. *Met.* V, 2, 1013b, 3-1014a, 16. Plotinus explains exemplarity through the work of Phidias. The sculptor will produce a better piece if he considers the Homeric Zeus in place of an external model. *Enn.*, V, 8, 2; Bréhier, p. 136. Proclus suggests that it is even better to go beyond such anthropomorphism and dwell upon the true deity. *In Tim.*, 81B-D; Diehl, I, p. 265, 18-22.

⁷ *In Tim.*, Diehl, I, pp. 4, 26-28; 17, 15-27; 213, 8-18; 263, 19-25.

beauty, he unfolds a doctrine of efficient cause somewhat as follows:⁸

1. If there is a concrete good or beauty, there must be an ideal good or beauty.
2. This supreme good or beauty is the self (αὐτό) of the concrete thing.
3. The tangible good or beauty is distinguished from the αὐτό as stemming from it.
4. The αὐτό, then, is a maker.
5. As a maker (ποιῶν), it is constant and the same for all.
6. The maker, as real being, stands apart from the fancied being of what it makes.
7. The fashioning (ποίησις) of the maker is pictured as a presence or manifestation (παρουσία) in what is made.
8. The παρουσία can be grasped only when related to a cause (αἴτιον or δύναμις). "What brings about an effect is none other than the cause."⁹

Plato seeks the source of change in the soul,¹⁰ and, at the last, in the "best soul" which sets all things in motion.¹¹ Intellect is, therefore, an efficient cause. The demiurge of the *Timaeus*, the mythical counterpart of νοῦς, is also such an agent. He molds the world from pre-existing matter and orders all the parts after an eternal model.¹² But the change he carries out is always from something to something.

This is likewise true in Aristotle's thought. When he calls the

⁸ These points have been adapted from the conclusions of H. Boeder. Cf. "Origine et préhistoire de la question philosophique de l'AITON," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, XL (1956) pp. 421-42. The chief source for this study is the *Hippias Major*, 286C-297C.

⁹ *Hip. Mai.*, 296E; *Gorg.*, 499D; cited by Boeder, "L'Origine," p. 425.

¹⁰ *Phaedrus*, 245C, D; Fowler, pp. 468-70.

¹¹ *Phil.*, 28D, E; Fowler, pp. 260-62; *Lacus*, X, 897C; ed. R. G. Bury (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926), p. 338.

¹² *Timaeus*, 29A; 30 A. Cf. R. Hackforth, "Plato's Theism," *Classical Quarterly*, XXX (1936), pp. 8-9, and J. B. Skemp, *The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), p. 66.

efficient cause "that whence is the first beginning of change or rest,"¹³ he counts upon an eternal world in which its action takes place. For him there can be no efficiency without motion, nor can there be any save among solid realities. So, too, his God is rather the final cause than the source of things.¹⁴

For Plotinus the universe turns out to be a necessary outpouring of divinity. He makes the good, through the world-soul, the fashioner of the cosmos and the object of desire. If the good is strictly an efficient cause, it has to produce an effect, for a maker as such needs the thing it begets in order to be called a maker. To avoid being driven to act, the good must be chiefly a final cause.

Denis gives his highest being both powers. Instead of a wise assembler of things which already churn about in chaos, or an aloof, impassive deity, he beholds the sovereign God who creates from nothing. His God is ἀρχή, πηγή, δημιουργός, and ποιητὸν αἰῶνος in one. As ἀρχή or πηγή, He is the supreme and surpassing reality from which springs all that is real. He is the fount of all existences,¹⁵ the origin of all life and being,¹⁶ the principle above

¹³ *Met.*, IV, 1013a, 29; Tredennick, I, p. 210.

¹⁴ *Met.*, XII, 1072a, 26-1072b, 13; Tredennick, pp. 146-48.

¹⁵ *C.H.*, XIV, 321A. The description of the first cause as a spring is not only characteristic of Denis and Proclus; it is also proper to Philo. Cf. Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2nd revised printing; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948), I, p. 211.

¹⁶ *D.N.*, I, 3/589C. This entire passage (589A-D) describes the Godhead as the source and cause of renewal, security, enlightenment, and perfection. It is interesting to see that Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas choose different key words on which to attach their analyses. Albert prefers *causa* (αἰτία) as the term through which to consider God as the productive source of each thing. He stresses the eminence of divine causality. St. Thomas develops his thought around the word *principium* (ἀρχή) which, he says, denotes efficient causality from which come operation and movement. This causality deals with particular effects, the intuition of things, perfection. Cf. Francis Ruellio, "Étude du terme ἀγαθόδότης dans quelques commentaires médiévaux des Noms Divins," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, XXIV (1957), pp. 233-35; 243-46. Father Little notes also that St. Thomas takes Aristotle's "principle" (ἀρχή) to mean efficient cause, although ἀρχή does not always carry this connotation. Cf. *The Platonic Heritage*, p. 28. However, I think St. Thomas is correct in choosing ἀρχή rather than αἰτία to signify efficiency in the works of Denis.

and before every other principle.¹⁷ As δημιουργός, He takes an active part in the created overflow of His divine being, so that creation is neither unconscious nor unwilling.¹⁸ On this account, the sun is not a demiturge in spite of its widespread gift of light, for, itself a creature, it spills its radiance and warmth unwittingly and without choice.¹⁹ On the other hand, the goodness of God shapes all freely and from nothing.²⁰ "The goodness of the divine beatitude, while it stays forever . . . identical with itself, bestows generously . . . the goodly rays of its own light."²¹

The ποιητὸν αἰῶνος belongs especially to the realm of beauty. If God is spoken of elsewhere as fashioning all things²² through His goodness,²³ through His life,²⁴ through exemplars,²⁵ if He is called οὐροποιός, δημιουργοιός, εἰδοποιός, and σοφοποιός, He is most worthily ἀγαθοποιός and καλλοποιός.²⁶ As shaper of beauty, He not only makes all things, but moves them and holds them together by their longing for their own fair fulfillment. He stirs them to the triple motions of the dialectic which bespeaks the watchful care of those above, the intermingling of those on a par, and the upward turning of those beneath. This movement of beauty leads to harmony, just as the binding power of beauty, itself harmonious, leads to perfection. And so, Denis crowds in another array of contrasts, much like the litany of participations—contrasts which bring out the ceaseless interplay of rest and motion, stumbling and rising, struggle and stillness, which is creation.

¹⁷ *D.N.*, I, 7/596C.

¹⁸ *D.N.*, IV, 30/729C, 732A; V, 4/817C.

¹⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 4/700C.

²⁰ *D.N.*, II, 5/641D-644A.

²¹ *E.H.*, II, 3, 3/397D.

²² *D.N.*, VII, 3/872B.

²³ *D.N.*, IV, 20/717C.

²⁴ *D.N.*, VI, 1/856B.

²⁵ *D.N.*, V, 8/824C.

²⁶ The following are some of the references to these terms as applied to God: "substance-making" (*C.H.*, XIII, 4/304C; *D.N.*, V, 1-2/816B, C), "power-making" (*C.H.*, VIII, 1/240A), "form-making" (*D.N.*, II, 10/648C), "wisdom-making" (*E.H.*, VII, 3, 11/568A). God is described as ἀγαθοποιός six times, e.g. *D.N.*, IV, 20/717D. He is called καλλοποιός three times in the passages which deal with beauty, *D.N.*, IV, 7, 10, and twice elsewhere: *C.H.*, II, 4/144A; VII, 2/208C.

He tells us that beauty, allied with goodness, is the cause of unions and Sunderings (*ὁμοεισότης*), of likeness and unlikeness, of sameness (that abiding state wherein all keep themselves as they are)²⁷ and otherness. It clusters and intertwines opposites without destroying the identity of anything. The bond it forges cannot be severed. Through a fellowship (*φιλία*) which does not merge them, all things—minds, souls, and bodies—follow their own natural laws in the endless pulse of becoming, movement, and repose, always in the sustaining love of the God who is all order, peace, and beauty. Several times Denis sums up this power of the divine beauty which he has here spread before us. It imbues each being with radiance and concord,²⁸ with a craving for its own creaturely loveliness.²⁹ It welds all things in harmony, sympathy, and communion.³⁰

If beauty is thus causal in bringing from nothing and in sheltering all in a glowing brotherhood, it is also the way by which its very beauty passes to the double hierarchy; not so much by a making (ποίησις) as by a transmission (μετάδοσις). To the angels and the hierarchy as a whole, "the beauty which belongs to God (θεομετρὲς κάλλος), imparting a share (μεταδοτικόν) in its own light, according to the merit of each one," brings to fulfillment in clothing with its own form, in steadfast and harmonious fashion, those whom it has wrought.³¹ So, too, in the Eucharist, God "has granted us shares (ἀνέδολε μετόχους) in His own beauties," that our minds be filled with "a divine and plenteous light and clad in beauties which befit their godlike nature."³²

This type of efficiency, not creative but bestowing, is one which finite beings may claim. The loftiest angels carry light and knowl-

²⁷ αἱ πάντων ἑαυτῶν φρουρητικαὶ καὶ ἀμετακίνητοι νομαὶ καὶ ἰδιότητες D.N., IV, 7/704B, C. "Sameness" or "identity" translates τοῦτότης.

IV, 11/104B, C. Sameness or identity translates τοὔτοιγς.

²⁸ οὗς τῆς πάντων ευνομοσύνης καὶ αγαθότητος. *D.N., IV, 7/701C*
²⁹ τῷ τῆς οὐραίας καλλοσύνης ἔξωτος. *D.N., IV, 7:704A*. This could be interpreted as “the beauty which belongs” to God; however, none of the commentators and translators have given it this meaning, since it would then imply final rather than efficient, or even more exactly, formal causality.

³⁰ ἐπαγαγωγὰ καὶ φιλία καὶ κοινωνία. D.N., IV, 7/704A.

³¹ C.H., III, 1/164D.

³² E.H., III, 3, 11/441B.

edge to lesser angels and to men,³³ while the higher members of the Church's company pass on the gifts of grace to those who follow them.³⁴ The seraph and the lowly monk impart, not as almighty nor all-wise, but as mere vessels of the Godhead, what is granted to them from above. Before it gives, each creature "must first receive,"³⁵ and in giving it must not transmit its own fairness but the beauty of God, "according to the proper nature (*ἡδύος*) of each beautiful thing," for in the long run, it is always "through the beautiful and good" that creatures do what they do.³⁶

Even the smallest particles, the least components which go to make up things, cannot escape the action of divine beauty, since it is *ἀρχὴ στοιχείου*, a source not only of elements but of the very matter which underlies them. There is a special sense in which God is an elementary principle or cause. Through His oneness³⁷ and through a sort of smallness (*τὸ μικρόν*) or subtlety (*τὸ λεπτόν*),³⁸ He is present in the simplest and lowliest things He has made. In general, the *ἀρχὴ στοιχείου* is a combination of the *αἶνον ὀργανικόν* and *ἰστικόν* of Proclus.³⁹ It is placed in contrast to the *ἀρχὴ εἰδική*,⁴⁰ and seems to include both a basal matter and an informed matter. Such matter is not an afterthought or the product of an evil principle, for Denis teaches that it is needed by those creatures which have no firm self-substance,⁴¹ and that it is not

³³Cf. *CH*, III, 3/168A; IV, 2/180A; VII, 1-2/205C-208A; XIII, 3/301C.

³⁴ E.H., I, 2/372D, 5/377A, B; III, 1/425A; VII, 3, 6/561B.

30 E.H., III, 3, 14/445A.

36 D.N., IV, 10/708A.

³⁷ D.N., XIII, 3/980B.

³⁸ D.N., IX, 3/912A.

³⁹ I have not traced the use of *στοχευώδης* by Proclus. He does not include it with the universal causes in the *Commentary on the Timaeus*, e.g.: τὸ τελικὸν τὸ παρὰδευγματικὸν τὸ ποικιλικὸν τὸ ἀγνοικικὸν τὸ εἰδητικὸν τὸ ὑλικόν, *In Tim.*, Diels, I, p. 263, 19-25.

40 D.N., IV, 10/705D.

²¹ ἀνυπατάτα ἢ ἄσφατος ἢ ἡ τοῖς ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἰδιούθῃα μὴ δινηαμένης, *D.N.*, IV, 28/772B. This is, of course, non-Platonic. "Plato nowhere recognizes a literally material element in the being of sensible things. In the *Timaeus*, the only one of his dialogues in which he seriously attempts an account of the sensible world, space is not the matter implicit in the being of sensible things, but only the medium in which they come into being." Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, p. 233.

evil because it comes from God and can serve good ends.⁴² While in itself it is formless (*ἀνείδος*) and without quality (*ἀποιός*), it is able to share in order, beauty and form.⁴³

The beautiful is also *ἀρχὴ εἰδότης*, the source of form. As such it takes over the second task of the efficient cause, that of serving as a cohesive force (*συνοχή*) which keeps each being forever knit to its own identity. The bestowal of form, or better, the presence of form, is synonymous, at least from the creator's point of view, with the *συνοχή* or binding together. God is not the container of things in an absolute sense, for Denis disavows pantheism, yet all forms exist beforehand in the Godhead and all forms are upheld in their individuality by the divine power.

The term "form" which translates *μορφή*, *μόρφωμα*, *οὔνημα*, *πλάσμα*, and *εἶδος*,⁴⁴ has two fundamental meanings in the Areopagite. It points either to the material counterpart of a spiritual reality, the thing of sense which shadows some attribute of God or some characteristic of the angels,⁴⁵ or to the true being of a

⁴² Denis, whose doctrine on matter and evil parallels that of Proclus, appears to make matter essentially good. Proclus holds that it is neither good nor evil: *Sit itaque nostra et haec sententia: neque ergo bonum esse materiam neque malum. De malorum substantia*; ed. V. Cousin (Paris, 1864), p. 237. Cf. Pera, *D.N. expositio*, pp. 375-98.

⁴³ *D.N.*, IV, 28/729A. Albertus Magnus draws from Denis' description of the good the notion of material causality: "... il interprète la proposition 'Bonum est quod omnia desiderant' dans le sens de la causalité matérielle: 'Cum desiderium sit materiae prout imperfecta aliquomodo determinatio est secundum causam materiam.' " Julien Pégibère, C.S.Sp., "La causalité du bien selon Albert le Grand," *Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales d'Ottawa*, II (Paris, J. Vrin, 1932), p. 86. This study is based on the *Summa Theologica*, I, Tr. VI, Q. 26, m. 1, a. 2, part. 1; Borgnet, XXXI, pp. 234-37.

⁴⁴ As substantives to represent "form," "figure," "shape," "formation," Denis uses the following terms: *μορφή*, *μόρφωμα*, *μορφωτόν*, *μόρφωσις*, *μορφωτότα*, *οὔνημα*, *πλάσμα*, *ἀντάσμιμα*, *τεγοτάσμιμα*, *θεοτάσμιμα*, *εἶδος*, and compounds of *εἶδος*, such as *ἐναρθεσίης*, *ἐνοεσίης*, *ὁμοεσίης*, and *συμπαρθεσίης*. The following verbs indicate the act of forming or conforming, either in the spiritual or in the material sphere: *μορφόω*, *ἀρτοποιόω*, *πλάττω*, *ἀναπλάττω*, *δυναπλάττω*, *πεφυλάττω*, *εἰδοποιέω* is employed only once: *D.N.*, IV, 3/697A.

⁴⁵ Cf., for example, *C.H.*, I, 3/121C; II, 3/141B; XV, *passim*; *D.N.*, I, 1/588B; IX, 5/913A; X, 2/937B; *Ep.* IX, 2/1108C.

thing, its *λόγος* or *ἀνάλογια*.⁴⁶ If they stand for the material symbol, Denis shifts these expressions about at will; on the other hand, he reserves the word *εἶδος* chiefly for the second interpretation, for the "form" in its own right. In this sense, each being has its proper form, thought beforehand by God (*τὸ ἐνὸς ἐκείνου προεπινοούμενον εἶδος*).⁴⁷

God, as the formal principle, the *εἰδεόγη*, is, in Dionysian fashion, both form and formlessness, for while He is far above any earthly *λόγος* or *ἀνάλογια* He is the form which gives form to all that is without form.⁴⁸ He does this as the good,⁴⁹ or as the beautiful and good.⁵⁰ Perhaps He imparts more than one substantial form, for Denis does not explain the precise nature of the forms of oneness,⁵¹ goodness,⁵² and power⁵³ which flow to creatures from these divine attributes. To any creature, forms such as these may belong; however, only to thinking beings comes the ability to be Christo-form (*χριστοειδέης*)⁵⁴ or Dei-form (*θεοειδέης*)⁵⁵ by the grace of God.

⁴⁶ Plato adopts the words *εἶδος* and *ἰδέα* for his "forms"; Aristotle prefers *εἶδος* to *μορφή*, in spite of the fact that form for him is inextricably linked with matter. Plotinus returns to the notion that form itself is a principal apart from matter. Cf. *Enn.* III, 6, 1; V, 9, 2, cited by Edouard Krakowski, *L'esthétique de Plotin et son influence* (Paris: E. de Brocard, 1929), p. 140. Plotinus holds that the form within the material thing is a mere image of the real form. *τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτοῖς εἶδος ἐστὶ τῆς εἰδωλῶν ὄντος, πᾶν τε εἶδος ἐν ἄλλῳ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ εἴς ἐκείνο ἐγγεγραμμένον καὶ ἑστὶν εἰκὼν ἐκείνου*. *Enn.* V, 9, 5; Bréhier, V, p. 165.

⁴⁷ *D.N.*, XIII, 3/980B.

⁴⁸ *εἶδος εἰδοποιόν ἐν τοῖς ἀνείδους ὡς εἰδεόγητις, ἀνείδος ἐν τοῖς εἰδουσιν ὡς ὑπὲρ εἶδος*. *D.N.*, II, 10/648C; *M.T.*, IV/1040D.

⁴⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 3/697A; 35/736B.

⁵⁰ *D.N.*, IV, 18/716A.

⁵¹ *ἐνοεσίης*: *D.N.*, IV, 9/705A; *μυνοεσίης*: *D.N.*, V, 7/821B; IX, 4/912C.

⁵² *C.H.*, VII, 4/212B; *E.H.*, III, 3, 3/429B; *D.N.*, II, 10/684C; IV, 1-2/696A, B.

⁵³ This expression, *δυνάμειος*, is used only once, of the angelic "powers." *C.H.*, VIII, 1/240A.

⁵⁴ *E.H.*, VII, 1, 2/533D; *D.N.*, I, 4/592B.

⁵⁵ This term occurs 120 times, frequently in the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Divine Names*, but most often in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.

transcendent, and secure.⁷⁷ It is also unconfused and unmixed.⁷⁸ This seems to mean that the form of each creature is inviolate; that it never merges with another, even when that other is God.

How close is the kinship between beauty, form, and *οὐροχη*? The *οὐροχη* is brought about through the thirst of each thing for its proper form. Beauty comes to the creature always *κατὰ τὸ οὐροχὸν λόγον*, and holds it together, binds and forms it through the desire it has for its own loveliness.⁷⁹ The beauty of God is of one form (*ἐννοεῖς*) in Him; it is identical with His self. So, too, the beauty of creatures, manifold in them, is of one form in Him.⁸⁰ The form of any being is linked with its beauty and order⁸¹—a lack of one means a lack of the others.⁸²

Neither Pachymeres who, in his paraphrase of the *Divine Names*,⁸³ insists that the beautiful pertains especially to form because without it matter would not be, nor Siebert,⁸⁴ who at-

⁷⁷ *D.N.*, X, 1/937A.

⁷⁸ *D.N.*, XI, 2/949C.

⁷⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *D.N.*, IV, 28/729A.

⁸² *D.N.*, IV, 27/728C, D.

⁸³ *P.G.*, IV, p. 763D.

⁸⁴ "Was ist überhaupt die Schönheit? Sie ist die Form, in der wir das Seiende erblicken. Führt Gott der Gute alles Seiende ins Dasein, so giebt Gott der Schöne allem Seiendem die ihm passende Gestalt . . . eine Schöne und Gute ist die Ursache des gesamten und vielen Schönen und Guten, das Gute in stofflicher, das Schöne in formeller Hinsicht." Otto Siebert, *Die Metaphysik und Ethik*, pp. 39–41. Semmelroth refers to the opinion of Siebert and also to that of Kanakis who maintains that the good pertains to the "inner material side" (*der inneren materiellen Seite*), and the beautiful to the "outer formal side" (*der äusseren formellen Seite*). Semmelroth rejects both views as superficial. He favors instead a special association of the beautiful with the final cause. This seems a more fundamental interpretation of the thought of Denis. Cf. "Gottes überweltliche Einheit—zur Gotteslehre des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita," *Scholastik*, XXV (1950), pp. 227–230. Albertus Magnus draws from his consideration of the *Divine Names* a notion of beauty as formal cause in which *comparatio ad materiam non sufficit*. It has a formal effectiveness apart from matter, after the manner of light. Cf. *De pulchro et de bono*, IV, 1. 5, sol. 4; ed. Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opuscula spuria (Opuscula selecta)*, Vol. V; Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1927), p. 425.

tributes to Denis an emphasis on the tangible form of the form-matter relationship, has found the mind of Denis. For the latter, beauty is more inward than outward, more of the spirit alone than of the spirit conjoined with matter, so that fullest conformity with God lies in intellectual beauty.⁸⁵ The very process of formation (*μὲνεσις*) which clothes each being in a befitting form (and in the divine form as far as possible) shows that it is an inner and sacred thing wrought by the divine beauty itself, for the *θεογενὲς κάλλος* brings about this harmonious and unwavering formation.⁸⁶

It is a short passage from the *ἀρχὴ εἰδένῃ* to the *αἶνον παρὰδευμνιστὸν* in whose image all things are defined (*ἀπορίετα*),⁸⁷ for through its causality the formal perfection of creatures dwells virtually in the divine beauty beforehand. This time, God is the archetype of everything beautiful.

The story of image and model in philosophic thought goes back again to Plato, to the central doctrine of the Ideas. It is generally agreed today that the Platonic Ideas have a real existence outside the mind of man or God.⁸⁸ They are not "concepts" in the ordinary sense but they are absolute, objective universals: goodness in itself, justice in itself, beauty in itself.⁸⁹ They have not only exemplary value, they have also effective power, since they specify the shadowy things of sense and even produce them. Fleeting phenomena are either participations or imitations of the Ideas.

⁸⁵ *E.H.*, V, 3, 6/513B.

⁸⁶ *C.H.*, III, 1/164D.

⁸⁷ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A.

⁸⁸ Cf. Léon Robin, *Platon* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1938), pp. 110–112; Auguste Diès, *Autour de Platon*, II (Paris: Beauchesne, 1927), pp. 353–361; Ross, *Plato's Theory*, esp. pp. 15–16, 80; Francis MacDonald Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus—Translation and Commentary* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), p. 196. Classic references are to *Phaedo*, 103B; *Parm.*, 132D; *Tim.*, 51Bff.

⁸⁹ Anders Wedberg suggests five classes of ideas and notes that the Idea of beauty appears more often than all the others. It is present in the *Euthydemus*, *Hippias Major*, *Cratylus*, *Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Parmenides*, *Philebus*, *Theaetetus*, and the *Seventh Letter*. *Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1955), pp. 32–33; 143, n. 8.

One who recognizes absolute beauty can "distinguish beauty in itself from the objects which share in it."⁹⁰ If absolute beauty be real, then "anything beautiful other than absolute beauty is beautiful only insofar as it partakes of absolute beauty,"⁹¹ for there is "no way in which anything comes into existence save by sharing in its own proper essence."⁹²

Later philosophers either join Aristotle in abandoning the Ideas altogether or alter them in various ways. Philo, for instance, considers them to exist first of all in the mind of God and then to exist separately as created realities.⁹³ Plotinus holds them to be *λογιστοί*, apart from and beneath the One and the Good. Because all things flow from the Good which is beyond everything, beauty is said to come from this first principle, yet actually it radiates from intelligible beauty, from the Ideas.⁹⁴

We maintain, he argues, that the things in this world [are beautiful] by participating in Form (*εἶδος*): for every shapeless thing which is naturally capable of receiving shape and form is ugly and outside the divine *λόγος* as long as it has no share in *λόγος* and form. . . . So then the beautiful body comes into being by sharing in *λόγος* which comes from the divine Forms.⁹⁵

The theme of beauty as a type or model of which tangible things are mere copies recurs in the *Enneads*.⁹⁶ Bodies are but "images, traces, shadows, and we must hurry away to that which they image."⁹⁷ If the loveliness of the world cries out to us, it is

⁹⁰ *Rep.*, V, 476D; Shorey, p. 518.

⁹¹ *Phaedo*, 100C; Fowler, p. 344.

⁹² *ὅτι οὐκ οὐθεν ἄλλως τοῦ ἑξαστοῦ γινώμενον ἢ μετασχὼν τῆς ἰδέας οὐσίας ἐξάστων οὗ ἀν μετέσχη.* *Ibid.*, 101C; Fowler, p. 346.

⁹³ Cf. *De chernubim*, XXVIII, 97; *Questions et solutions in Genesis*, IV, 1; referred to by Wolfson, *Philo*, I, pp. 204-10.

⁹⁴ *Enn.*, I, 6, 9; Henry and Schwyzer, p. 117, 34-37.

⁹⁵ *Enn.*, I, 6, 2; Henry and Schwyzer, pp. 106-107, 13-28; trans. A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, p. 147. Armstrong's translation is more exact than that of Stephen MacKenna.

⁹⁶ *Enn.*, I, 6 and V, 8 deal expressly with beauty.

⁹⁷ *Enn.*, I, 6, 8; Henry and Schwyzer, p. 115, 1-8; trans. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, p. 136.

because we behold in it "the beauty of the model and idea" (*τὸ τοῦ παραδείγματος καὶ τῆς ἰδέας κάλλος*) from which it is shaped.⁹⁸

Proclus, too, assigns beauty to a primal Form which is both efficient and exemplar cause.⁹⁹ He equates the Ideas with the intelligibility according to which things come to be. The things of sense are patterned upon a permanent image or archetype—a good in itself, beauty in itself, light in itself, harmony in itself.¹⁰⁰ Among Christian writers, Gregory of Nyssa turns to the divine beauty as a model.

As with corporeal beauty (*εἰρηγορία*), he says, the beauty is first in the living person who serves as model (*πρωτότυπον*) and secondarily in what is expressed in its image (*εἰκὼν*) by imitation; so likewise, human nature as the image of the supernatural beatitude presents also the marks of the beauty (*κάλλος*) of the good by reflecting its blessed attributes.¹⁰¹

Hans von Baltasar notes that the relation of spiritual images to their models is truly a participation, a union, a connaturality (*συγγενεα*).¹⁰² "When the soul looks upward to its archetype, then it really contemplates itself."¹⁰³

Denis borrows and reworks elements from all these sources. He is preoccupied with images of all sorts. He plays with almost as many terms as he does when he deals with the notion of light.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ *Enn.*, V, 8, 8; Bréhier, pp. 144-45. This section harks back to the *Timaeus*.

⁹⁹ *Elem. Theol.*, prop. 22; Dodds, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *In Parm.*; Cousin, pp. 796-98; 986; In *Tim.*; Diehl, pp. 169; 265-6. Whittaker takes up some of the subtleties of Proclus's argument in favor of the Ideas. *The Neo-Platonists*, pp. 253-58.

¹⁰¹ *De beatitudinibus*, P. G., XLIV, 1197B; cited by Daniélou, *Platonisme et théol. myst.*, p. 59.

¹⁰² *Présence*, p. 84. He refers to *De beatitudinibus*, 1280D; *De oratione dominica*, 1137B.

¹⁰³ "Lorsque l'âme tourne son regard vers son archétype, alors elle se contemple vraiment elle-même." *Présence*, p. 95. For full study of this question, see Leys, *L'Image de Dieu*. He notes in particular that the image does not exist for itself but only to serve as a manifestation of the archetype, p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ E.g., ἀγαμία, ἀρεσκόμενα, ἀνιζήματα, ἀποστήματα, ἀποποιήσεις, εἶδολον, εἰκόνων, ἐκτύπωμα, ἐμπέρεα, ἑοοτήτων, θεόγματος, θεωρίαν, θεο-

More often than not, these expressions have no other significance than the usual Dionysian one of material symbols which stand for spiritual realities, visible replicas of the invisible.¹⁰⁵ However, the spiritual being is itself an image on another level, as one hierarchy is the mirror of the other.

The full ordering of all things yields images (*εἰκόνες*) and likenesses (*ὁμοιώματα*) of the divine exemplars (*θεῖα παραδείγματα*).¹⁰⁶ Things which have the least bit of similarity owe it to some trace (*ἔχως*) in themselves of the divine likeness.¹⁰⁷ Thus the angelic "powers" mirror faithfully the form of power (*δυναμοειδής*).¹⁰⁸ Virtuous souls reflect the divine perfections, especially God's beauty. They pattern their intellects upon it.¹⁰⁹ In the hierarchy, there is a gradation of godly images, stretching from the baptized who walk in the divine footsteps to the summit of the priesthood.¹¹⁰ The very hierarchy itself is an image of the divine beauty (*εἰκόνα τῆς θεαγωγῆς ὁραούτητος*).¹¹¹

When Denis talks of "divine exemplars," does he mean them to stand between the first being and the individuals who share in His goodness and beauty? Critics are split on this question. Stiglmayr finds four degrees of being:¹¹²

μυήσια, ἡδύβια, ἕως, μύησις, μύησια, ὁμοίωσις, ὁμοίωσις, σὺμβολόν, ἀγγελίς, τύπος, τυπολογία, ὑποτύπωσις, and verbs compounded with τυπόω.

¹⁰⁵ Roques shows the importance of the symbol in human knowledge and indicates an affinity to Proclus. Cf. *L'Univiers*, pp. 204-209, esp. 205, n. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *D.N.*, VII, 3/869D.

¹⁰⁷ *D.N.*, IX, 6/916A.

¹⁰⁸ *C.H.*, VIII, 1/240A.

¹⁰⁹ *E.H.*, IV, 3, 1/473B, C; V, 3/817B. The soul owes its sacred character to the fact that it is *θεοειδής*. *E.H.*, IV, 3, 1/473D.

¹¹⁰ *E.H.*, II, 3, 6/404A; V, 2/508D.

¹¹¹ *C.H.*, II, 2/165B.

¹¹² "In Abnehnung an die platonische Ideenlehre unterscheidet Dionysius (1) das absolute göttliche Sein, (2) das von Gott hervorgebrachte, geschaffene, nicht indifferenzierte Sein, (3) die verschiedene Seinsprinzipien, (4) die einzelnen Wesen, die an den Universalprinzipien der betreffenden Kategorien Anteil haben. Von den Universalprinzipien sagt er dann, dass sie einerseits zuerst am Sein-an-sich als *αὐτοτεροῦτα* teilnehmen, dass aber dann hinwieder dieses am Sein-an-sich als *αὐτοτεροῦτα* teilhaben." Joseph Stiglmayr, S.J., *Des heiligen Dionysius Areopagita angebliche Schriften*

1. The absolute being of God;
2. Creative, determined being which comes forth from God,¹¹³
3. Distinct principles of being;
4. Individual beings which share in the separate categories of the universal principle.

Losski affirms that being in itself, goodness in itself, beauty in itself, and the rest, are not the divine essence but rather different principles according to which God's inexpressible essence is manifest in creatures. They are virtues, powers (*δυνάμεις*), divine wills (*θεῖα βελήματα*), by which God makes Himself omnipresent, and by which He is known.¹¹⁴

Pera,¹¹⁵ Ivanka,¹¹⁶ and Roques¹¹⁷ emphasize the fact that the prototypes do not exist as separate entities but are found in God.

über die "Göttliche Namen," (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, II; Munich: Kösel-Pustet, 1933), p. 105, n. 1. Durrant agrees that there are intermediate principles. S. Thomas, p. 179.

¹¹³ Such a reading of Denis's thought seems to have led Ulrich of Strasbourg to his doctrine of *ens commune* as the first and only direct creation of God and the source from which all other beings emanate. Cf. *Summa de bono*, Lib. II, tr. 2, c. 1, 3, 4; tr. 3, c. 1-2; "Summa De Bono of Ulrich of Strasbourg," ed. Francis Collingwood, *Nine Medieval Thinkers*, ed. Reginald O'Donnell, C.S.B. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1955), pp. 293-307; Lib. IV, tr. 2, c. 1; Martin Grabmann, "Studien über Ulrich von Strassburg," *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben* (Münich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1926), pp. 203-205, and Francis Collingwood, *The Theory of Being in the Summa de Bono (Book II) of Ulrich of Strasbourg: Philosophical Study and Text* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1952). For Ulrich's doctrine of the divine ideas as practically creative, cf. Levan Thomas, F.S.C., "Ulrich of Strasbourg: His Doctrine of the Divine Ideas," *Modern Schoolman*, XXX (November, 1952), pp. 21-32. According to this interpretation, there are divine ideas only for what actually exists. These ideas belong to the practical intellect.

¹¹⁴ "La notion," p. 285.

¹¹⁵ *D.N. expositio*, p. 349, n. 4.

¹¹⁶ "La signification historique du 'Corpus Areopagiticum,'" pp. 15, 18; "Teilhaben," pp. 157-58.

¹¹⁷ "La notion de hiérarchie," pp. 193, 210. In *L'Univiers*, he makes clear the difference between the *ἡρόδοτος* and the *αὐτοτεροῦτα* of Iamblichus and Proclus (pp. 71-76) and the teaching of Denis on these two points (pp. 76-81).

The controversial passages are from the fifth chapter of the *Divine Names* which deals with being and exemplars.

[God] contained all being beforehand in Himself, I speak here of being in itself (τὸ εἶναι αὐτό), and it is through this being in itself that He produced the substance of all beings whatever. Thus because the principles of every being all participate in being, they exist and exercise their function as principles, and they exist before being principles. And if you choose to call life in itself the principle of all living things insofar as they are living, . . . unity in itself the principle of all unities, . . . you will discover that these participations considered in an absolute fashion, participate first themselves in existence, before being principles according to such and such modes, and that it is by their participation in being that they exist and are shared. But if they themselves exist only by their share in being, this is all the more true of things which share in them.¹¹⁸

The universal cause contained beforehand in itself all the models of beings (παγαδείγματα) according to a superessential unity, for it produces essences by an outpouring (ἐκφοράς) of its own essence. What we call models are all those reasons (λόγοι), which shape the essences (οὐσιότητες) of things, which pre-exist as one in God, which Holy Scripture calls pre-definitions (προορισμοί) and godly and beneficent volitions (wills, decrees, θελήματα), because they define and shape all things; whereby the superessential (being) has predefined and made all beings.¹¹⁹

There is no doubt that these παγαδείγματα have a Platonic origin, but there is no doubt also that they are not a band of lesser gods

¹¹⁸ Καὶ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν καὶ ὑπερβεῖν ποθέων καὶ ὑπερέχων, τὸ εἶναι πᾶν (αὐτὸ φημι, καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι) προὑπερβήσασθαι, καὶ τῷ εἶναι αὐτῷ πᾶν τὸ ὄντοσόν ὃν ὑπερβήσασθαι. Καὶ γοῦν αἱ ἀρχαὶ τῶν ὄντων πᾶσαι, τοῦ εἶναι μετέχουσαι, καὶ εἰσι καὶ ἀρχαὶ εἰσι καὶ πρῶτον εἶον, ἔπειτα ἀρχαὶ εἰσι. Καὶ εἰ βούλει τῶν ζώντων, ὡς ζώντων, ἀρχὴν φάναι τὴν αὐτοζώνην, . . . καὶ τῶν ἡνωμένων, ὡς ἡνωμένων, τὴν αὐτοένωσιν, . . . τὰς αὐτομετοχὰς εὐθέως τοῦ εἶναι πρῶτον αὐτὰς μετεχούσας, καὶ τῷ εἶναι πρῶτον μενούσας, ἔπειτα τοῦδε ἡ τοῦδε ἀρχὰς οὐσας, καὶ τῷ μετέχειν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ οὐσας καὶ μετεχούσας. Εἰ δὲ ταῦτα τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ εἶναι ἔσσι, πολλῷ γε μάλλον τὰ αὐτῶν μετέχοντα. *D.N.*, V, 5/820B, C. This is a difficult passage. I have relied mainly on de Gandillac's French translation to make it clear. Cf. *Oeuvres complètes*, pp. 131-32.

¹¹⁹ *D.N.*, V, 8/824C. The scriptural references are to Rom., VIII, 29-30; I Cor., II, 7; Ephes., I, 5. Cf. also *D.N.*, XI, 6/956A.

who can create once they have been created themselves, for Denis insists:

We do not mean at all that goodness is one thing, being another, and life or wisdom another, as if all these things made up a number of causes and of greater and lesser divinities, each proceeding from the other.¹²⁰

He is even more emphatic in the eleventh chapter when he returns to the notion of the αὐτομετοχή.

Indeed, we do not say that being in itself is some sort of divine or angelic essence which would be the cause of all existence for all beings (the only principle, in fact, the only essence, the only cause of all existence, is Being itself in its superessentialness), nor . . . that essences (οὐσιότητες) and substances (ὑποστάσεις) are the productive principles of things (principles), which some have lightly taken to be gods, fashioners (δημιουργοί) of being; but in reality . . . these gods never existed.¹²¹

However, Denis leaves hanging the question of their exact nature. Even Maximus the Confessor, who comments him into orthodoxy, does not tell us exactly what they are. At one time he calls them the perfect eternal νόησις of God,¹²² at another he calls them the perfect eternal τοιότης.¹²³ In the first case, he is thinking of the divine beauty as the ἀρχὴ παγαδειματικῇ according to which (τῶς δ) things come to be. In the second, he looks not at their power to define as archetypes but at their power to determine in actual existence, for as αὐτομετοχὰι the exemplars help to bring things about. It is in this second sense that the beautiful in itself, the αὐτοκόσμος, spills out from itself all beauty in whole or in part, and measures its fairness to the capacities of creatures.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ *D.N.*, V, 2/816C.

¹²¹ *D.N.*, XI, 6/953C, D. Again, the translation relies on the French of de Gandillac. *Oeuvres complètes*, pp. 168-69.

¹²² Migne, *P.G.*, IV, 260B.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 329B.

¹²⁴ The phrase καὶ ὅλον κόσμον καὶ μετὰ τὸν κόσμον appears to mean that beauty can come to the totality of a thing or to any of its components. The phrase καὶ ὅλος κόσμος καὶ ἐν μέσῳ κόσμῳ seems to signify the gradations which result from the nature, powers, and merits of the beings which share in beauty. *D.N.*, XI, 6/956B. Albertus Magnus, as Ruello points out,

Thus, the exemplars are akin to the efficient cause, yet in their foremost function as standards by which things are bounded and defined (although creatures never resemble them fully),¹²⁵ these

draws from Denis a special doctrine of *per se participata*. "Selon Saint Albert, il y a une Vie par soi qui émane de la Vie par soi créée comme d'une principe en quelque manière univoque dont elle reçoit une certaine unité et sa raison propre. Bien plus elle apparaît comme une nature séparée car, étant créée, elle n'est pas Dieu, et étant indépendante dans l'être des réalités particulières qui la participent, elle s'en distingue sans toutefois être un existant véritable. Ainsi conçue, la Vie en soi s'oppose à la vie particularisée en chaque vivant. Pour être complet, il faut ajouter que le concept de Vie par soi créée doit se définir non seulement en fonction de la Vie par soi créée, mais encore de la Vie par soi conçue comme participable et de la Vie par soi participée." "Etude du terme *ἀνθρώπινος*," pp. 7-8. How St. Thomas interprets the *ἀνθρωπίνος* is seen by the title of the lesson in which he explains them: *De divinis perfectionibus quod per se in abstracto considerantur*, *D.N. expositio*, XI, 4; Pera, pp. 345-47. When he deals with exemplars in Chapter Five, he shows them to be *exemplaria rerum dicti rationes in Deo existentes*, *Ibid.*, V, 3; Pera, pp. 259-51. Cf. Timothy Sparks, O.P., *De divinis causae exemplaribus apud S. Thomam* (Columbus, Ohio: Rosary Press, 1936), pp. 15-21, and Robert Henle, S.J., *Saint Thomas and Platonism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 415-16.

¹²⁵ "There is no exact resemblance (*ἰσότης*) between what is caused and the causes, for the creatures possess only such images of the causes (creative originals? Rolt, *Dionysius*, p. 75, for *αἰτία*) as are possible to them, while the causes transcend and surpass the caused by the very nature of their own principle ('originality,' Rolt, *Ibid.*, for *ἀρχή*)." *D.N.*, II, 8/645C.

The term *ἀποφύετα* is variously rendered by the mediaeval translators: by Hilduin as *deliguntur*, by Scotus Erigena as *segregant*, by John Saraceni and Robert Grosseteste as *determinantur*. Later translators give it as *definiuntur* or *definiuntur*. Cf. *Dionysiacs*, p. 1844. However, the compilers of the *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales either substituted another word, or employed a different version in their explanation of the beautiful: *Pulcrum vero dicit ipsum exemplar, in quantum ars et distinctio et harmoniam differentium. Unde dicit Dionysius quod "est exemplar secundum quod omnia distinguuntur"* (the italics are mine). Pars. I, Inq. 1, Tr. III, Q. 3, m. 1, c. 1, a. 2; Ed. Quaracchi (Florence: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1924), p. 162. This verb may have been drawn from the commentary of St. Maximus, since he uses both *ἀποφύεω* and *διακρίνω* in his explanation. *P.G.*, IV, 253C.

primal patterns are tied up with the final cause, for they exist in God as *συμπαραστάτα*.¹²⁶

So, too, the *τελῶν αἴτιον* cannot leave behind the other causes. As the aim or purpose (*σκοπός*) of things, it is wedded to the *λόγος* and the *δῶς* or definition. If the exemplar cause provides the definition and the formal cause furnishes the *λόγος*, the final cause is itself the *σκοπός*.¹²⁷ Thus, the *σκοπός* of each hierarchy is the perfection of its members through contemplation and initiation of God.¹²⁸ Rarely outside of the *Divine Names* does Denis fasten a causal meaning on the words *τέλος* and *τέλος*. In his study of the two hierarchies these terms usually carry the sense of something brought to a conclusion in time: the end of trials,¹²⁹ the end of warfare,¹³⁰ the end of life.¹³¹

In the *Divine Names*, both *τέλος* and *λόγος* stand for end or terminus in a broader way. God is the principle and the end (*ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος*),¹³² He is cause and final goal (*αἰτία καὶ τέλος*).¹³³ *τέλος* includes the note of limiting or determining and is set up against *ἀτελεία* or limitlessness,¹³⁴ while *τέλος* often bears the added idea of purpose. In Chapter Five, Denis explains that God is the end (*τέλος*) as the one for whose sake (*ὅς ἕνεκα*) things come to be,¹³⁵ and the bounding and the boundlessness of all that is

¹²⁶ *D.N.*, V, 8/824B.

¹²⁷ These expressions appear together in the following passages: *D.N.*, IV, 32/732C; VIII, 4/892C; IX, 6/913C.

¹²⁸ *C.H.*, III, 2/165A; VII, 2/208A; *E.H.*, II, 1/392A.

¹²⁹ *C.H.*, XV, 5/333C.

¹³⁰ *E.H.*, VII, 1, 3/556B.

¹³¹ *E.H.*, VII, 1, 1/553A.

¹³² *D.N.*, IV, 10/705D; 10/708A; 34/736B; V, 6/821B; 10/825B; *C.H.*, X, 1/273A.

¹³³ *D.N.*, IV, 4/697C; V, 10/825B.

¹³⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 10/705C.

¹³⁵ This is Aristotle's phrase. Cf. *Met.*, I, 7, 988b, 10; II, 2, 994b, 9-17. In this latter section, Aristotle employs *τέλος* as limit, and *τέλος* as end. Of course there is finality in Plato's writings. Joseph Moreau suggests two types: an external adaptation to function and an internal subordination of parts to the whole (*Gorg.*, 503E-504A) *L'âme du monde de Platon aux stoïciens* (Paris: Société d'édition "Les belles lettres," 1939), pp. 39-40 and *La construction de l'idéalisme platonicien* (Paris: Librairie Fume, Boivin et Cie, 1939) pp. 205; 464-66. Cf. also Paul Friedländer, *Platon*, I (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1954), p. 286.

bounded or boundless, since He is above these oppositions.¹³⁶

When Denis speaks in this same section of God as the source (*ἀρχή*), means (*μεσότης*), and fulfillment (*τελευτή*) of all things, St. Maximus takes these aspects to be forms of finality. The final cause, which contains and encircles all things in safety and which motivates all production, is the source of all things as their cause, their means as so arranging them that they last, and their fulfillment as willing and being itself their end.¹³⁷ All things, to be called "whole," must have beginning, middle, and end. These are Aristotle's requisites for anything which needs sequence and order.¹³⁸ Denis takes this description of the "whole," which was originally applied to finite beings and artefacts, and gives it to God as the one and more than unique (*ὑπεργνωστική*) causality from whence all fairness comes.¹³⁹

The creature's wholeness is a sign of its perfection and its fulfillment; a token that the final cause has been realised in it. That is why God is also called the principle of perfection (*τελειότητα*).¹⁴⁰ In fact, Durantal claims that the notion of God as wholly flawless, ever expanding in Himself the absolute perfections of thought and love and communicating to creatures of His largesse, dominates the Dionysian works.¹⁴¹ God is perfection even more than He is

¹³⁶ *D.N.*, V, 10/825B.

¹³⁷ *ὅς ἀρχὴ πάντων, ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ, λέγεται, οὐκ καὶ μέσος, ὅς τὴν εἰς τὸ συνεσταύνατο παράστατον διδούς, καὶ τελευτῇ, ὅς ἐν τῇ τελειότητι αὐτοῦ περιμένον τῶν ὄντων, ἐπ' ὃν καὶ ἐπεστέλλεται, καθὼ καὶ τελευτὸν αὐτὸν φησιν, ὅς ἀρχὴν ὄντα καὶ τέλος, κατὰ τὴν θέσιν ἰσχύοντι ἐν Ἀποκαλύψει. *In D.N.*, IV, 7; *P.G.*, IV, 253B.*

¹³⁸ Cf. *Poetics*, VII, 1450b, 24-32; here, "whole" (*ὅλος*) and "perfect" (*τέλειος*) are placed together. Cf. also *Met.*, V, 1023b, 20-1024a, 11, where wholeness (*ολότης*) is called a kind of oneness (*ἐνότης*). That all things, to be whole, must have beginning, middle, and end, is a principle of Pythagorean philosophy. It has also been used by Plato (*Tim.*, 31). For the history of the principle, cf. G. Garruti, "Giusto Mezzo," *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, II (1957), cols. 807-08.

¹³⁹ *D.N.*, V, 8/824B.

¹⁴⁰ *C.H.*, III, 2/165A; VI, 1/200C; VII, 3/209C; *D.N.*, I, 3/589C.

¹⁴¹ St. Thomas, p. 239.

being; while He surpasses all perfection, He wills that creatures be perfect.¹⁴²

The return of creatures to God spells their fulfillment (*τελειότης*, *τελευτή*) and their "conversion" (*ἐπιστροφή*) in all senses of the word. God in His power turns them towards Him, drawing them to Himself through the circular sweep of His creative motion.¹⁴³ Creatures answer Him by their inborn inclination (*ἀπόρροια*) towards the really lovable,¹⁴⁴ and, if they are rational, by a reform of life.

This association of finality with perfection and desire for perfection, although it receives a special emphasis with Denis, is not new with him. Plato teaches it. He links the perfect, the object of yearning, and the wholly good;¹⁴⁵ for it is always the good which the soul craves.¹⁴⁶ Plotinus makes the One the satisfaction of all things, since they act to find the One and delight in it;¹⁴⁷ while Proclus holds that the process of return to the last cause is a journey through intermediate causes which are likewise objects of desire.¹⁴⁸

However, the role of beauty in such a recall is unique with Denis.

¹⁴² God is αὐτοτέλής, *C.H.*, X, 3/273C; *D.N.*, IX, 4/912C; XIII, 1/977B. He is ὁλοτελής, *D.N.*, II, 1/636C. He is παντέλειος, *E.H.*, II, 2, 5/396A. He is ὑπεροτελής, *D.N.*, VII, 2/869A; de Gandillac translates this: "dont c'est trop peu de dire qu'elle est . . . fin." *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 104.

¹⁴³ *D.N.*, X, 1/937A; IV, 14/712C, D; IX, 9/916D.

¹⁴⁴ *C.H.*, II, 4/144B.

¹⁴⁵ *Phil.*, 61A.

¹⁴⁶ *Rep.*, VI, 504E-509B; *Lawes*, 967A. It is in the sense of an attractive force that St. Thomas interprets the "good" of the famous axiom "bonum est diffusivum sui." He refers to the fourth chapter of the *Divine Names* not only for the axiom but also for the doctrine that the good is the measure of things already in existence, that we judge their perfection by their nearness to the goodness of God. *De Ver.*, Q. 21, 1, ad 4. The axiom is nowhere stated explicitly in the *Areopagitica*, but it is implicit throughout them, most obviously in the fourth chapter. For an analysis of St. Thomas's teaching in relation to the doctrine of earlier thinkers, cf. J. Péghaire, "L'axiome 'bonum est diffusivum sui' dans le néo-platonisme et le thomisme," *Revue de l'université d'Ottawa* I (1932), *sec. spéc.*, pp. 5-30.

¹⁴⁷ *Enn.*, III, 8, 10; Henry and Schwyzer, p. 409, 20-35.

¹⁴⁸ *Elem. Theol.*, Props. 31, 35; Dods, pp. 34, 38.

In spite of the fact that Plotinus sees the beautiful gather together separate elements "in the unity of one end," he applies this expression to the parts of a bodily whole and not to the supreme beauty.¹⁴⁹ Denis on the other hand thinks first of the beauty of God. Even though on one occasion he speaks of the "wholly surpassing good" which "calls beings to enter into communion with it in the measure at least in which each one is capable,"¹⁵⁰ it is more particularly the beautiful which makes this appeal. He builds up his theory apparently on the fanciful etymology of the *Craftylus*. There, Socrates decides that *rò kalón* means intellect (*διάνοια*), since the word is formed from *rò kalón*, what calls by name; for, he asks, "Are not all works done by mind and intelligence worthy of praise?" He answers his own question in the affirmative, because thoughtfulness (*φρόνησις*) "does things we call beautiful and in which we delight."¹⁵¹

Denis takes over this word-kinship and shifts its meaning. God has the name "beautiful" (*rò κάλλος*) as calling (*καλόν*) all to Himself and as gathering together all things within Him.¹⁵² His beauty is "the goal of all things and their beloved" since it is "for the sake of the beautiful" that they exist.¹⁵³ Once the notion of beauty as final cause is clear, Denis goes on to show that the beautiful and the good are one. However, he seems to keep this difference in mind, because as Chapter Four progresses, and he sketches out further workings of the good, his brief references to finality, always bring in the beautiful. Thus, creatures realize their acts and desires because they tend towards the beautiful and the good,¹⁵⁴ non-being comes into existence because it longs for the beautiful

¹⁴⁹ This is from the French of de Gandillac who thus translates: *πὸς δὲ τὸ ὅλον συντρέχοντα*, *Enn.* I, 6, 1, "dans l'unité d'une fin." *La sagesse de Plotin* (Paris: Hachette, 1952), p. 56.

¹⁵⁰ *C.H.*, IV, 1/177C.

¹⁵¹ *Craftylus*, 416D; Fowler, p. 112.

¹⁵² *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C. Rolt's translation keeps the play on words: "the Super-Essential Beautiful is called 'Beauty' because . . . it summons all things to fare unto Itself (from whence it hath the name of 'Fairness'), and because it draws all things together in a state of mutual interpenetration." *Diognisus*, pp. 95-96. Cf. Horn, "Note sur l'unité," p. 79.

¹⁵³ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A.

¹⁵⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 10/708A, B; 13/712B.

and good,¹⁵⁵ while angels at the other end of creation are drawn most perfectly towards the beautiful and good.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, among earthly creatures, those who can share in the supernatural are lifted up to God by the love of things beautiful, for such a love purifies, "reduces our multiple otherness, perfects us in unifying and defining our life, habits, and dispositions."¹⁵⁷

The divine beauty encompasses in this manner a wide causality, closely (and sometimes confusingly) interwoven. As exemplar, it offers a pattern which limits the creature's reflection of the God-head—a pattern which goes before the well-ordered fashioning of the efficient cause. Yet since the divine ideas manifest themselves in creatures, even as models they have the power not only to define but also to effect beauty. As maker, in turn, this same divine beauty sets things in existence and in motion, and furnishes each being with a longing for its own form or beauty. The form, of course, mirrors the beauty of the archetype, while it cooperates with the efficient cause in the *συνοχή*, that bond which secures the individuality of the creature and at the same time its union with other creatures and God. Likewise, the yearning for fulfillment of form is but one facet of the final cause, that desire of the beautiful for whose sake all things are, that lovely being to whom they shall return. If beauty in any way differs from the good, it is from this last point of view. The great work of the good is to give, while the task of the beautiful is to attract. This seems to be the lesson Denis

¹⁵⁵ *D.N.*, IV, 18/713D.

¹⁵⁶ *D.N.*, V, 3/817B. Cf. also, *D.N.*, IV, 19/716C, and IV, 23/725C. This last reference seems to make the difference pointed: "Thus they [the demons] possess their existence from the good, and are naturally good, and desire the beautiful and good in desiring the realities of being, life, and intelligence."

¹⁵⁷ *ἡμῶν τε τῶ πὸς αὐτὸν ἀνατρεμμένῳ καὶ ἡμῶς ἀνατρεφοντι τῶν καλῶν ἔργων συμπλήρωσις τὰς πολλὰς ἐκπεπτώκας καὶ εἰς ἐνωσὴν καὶ θέαν ἀποτρέφουσας ἑαῖν, ἔξιν τε καὶ ἐνέργειαν*. *E.H.*, I, 2/372B. Jaeger points out that for Gregory of Nyssa, God, as the archetype of beauty, "is the object of the infinite desire and ardent love of all who recognize Him. The act of recognition is described as *θεῶντα τὸ κάλλος*, e.g., *De vita*, 289, 11, which is taken from the *θεωρία* of the idea of the good in Plato." *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 76, n. 2. Cf. also Leys, *L'image de Dieu*, p. 53.

teaches through the compelling image of Christ the athlete. As the good, Christ came down to join in the fray and assure the victory; as the beautiful, He "provides fit rewards for those who win."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ εὐχρίδατο δέ, ὡς καλός, εὐρεσεν τοῖς νικῶσι τὰ ἑταῖρα. *E.H.*, II, 3, 6/40ID.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF BEAUTY

A world-wide cause and a focus of participation, beauty has qualities of its own. Denis presents them when he explains why God is called "Beauty." The cause of all receives this name, he says, "because it imparts to each thing a beauty which befits its nature, and because it is the cause of the harmony (ἐναρμονία) and splendor (ἀγλαία) in all things, flashing forth (ἐναστρόδωρον) upon them all, like light (φῶς), from the brightness of its own fountainhead, shares which make them beautiful; and because it summons all to itself . . . and gathers all in all unto itself."¹

Not only harmony and light stand out as the characteristics of beauty, but individuality and perfection as well, for beauty besides being the source of order and radiance is also, as this passage repeats, the object of desire and the center of perfection. To attract and to fulfill are its functions as final cause, but here they reappear from another point of view, as present within beauty itself. God is called "Beauty" because He possesses these qualities. Therefore, they must be aspects of beauty in general and be present wherever beauty lies.

The first of them is harmony, a quality akin to order, arrangement, and measure. Its presence makes of the Dionysian universe not a "geometric alignment"² but a beautiful place in which to live. Since Roques has already traced the history of the terms associated with order (τάξις, κόσμος, μέτρον, λόγος, ἀγνωσία),³ and their meaning in the works of Denis,⁴ it is

¹ *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C.

² Roques, "La notion de hiérarchie," p. 190.

³ *L'Univers*, pp. 36-67. The historical sweep takes in Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Plotinus, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Iamblichus, Proclus, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and St. Basil. For Denis's dependence upon Proclus for τάξις and κόσμος, Roques refers to Hugo Koch, *Pseudo-Dionysios in seinem Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mystertentwesen* (Mainz: 1900), pp. 271, 274; *L'Univers*, p. 59, n. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. also Ch. II, "Les caractères de l'ordre hiérarchique," *L'Univers*, pp. 68-91.

necessary here only to summarize his findings and to look briefly at the esthetic relationships he has not mentioned. Roques points out the following senses which "order" takes on:

1. As *τάξις* or *τάσσω*, it means arrangement or divine command, so that the hierarchic order is not a happy accident but the expression of God's will.⁵
2. As *διεκόσμησις* (from *κόσμος*, arrangement, suitableness, good order, universe) it stands for the triadic and hierarchic order.⁶
3. As *μέτρον*, measure (*συμμετρία*, when applied to creatures), it indicates reduction to a common standard.⁷
4. As *ἀγωνία*, it refers to the adjustment, accord, and agreement of things.⁸

At times, each of these expressions receive an esthetic stress by the addition of the prefix *εὖ*. Roques notes this fact about the words *εὐκόσμητα*, *εὐκόσμος*, and *εὐκόσμος* which Denis uses to describe the splendid ranks of the human and heavenly hierarchies.⁹ In every case, from the angelic choirs and the high

⁵ *L'Univers*, pp. 36-40. "L'ordre réalisé dans les hiérarchies ne sera pas un accident heureux . . . mais l'expression même du vouloir divin." "La notion," p. 187.

⁶ *L'Univers*, pp. 40-59. Roques notes that *διεκόσμησις* approaches *τάξις* in meaning, save that in the concrete it has a wider extension. *τάξις* never includes more than one order, while *διεκόσμησις* can be synonymous with "triad" or "hierarchy" in the narrow sense. *L'Univers*, p. 56.

⁷ *L'Univers*, pp. 59-64.

⁸ *L'Univers*, pp. 64-66.

⁹ "Par l'adjonction du préfixe, la nuance esthétique de *κόσμος* se trouve singulièrement accentuée. C'est dans ce sens que les divers rangs de la hiérarchie céleste seront dits *εὐκόσμοι* (*C.H.*, 240A/B; *E.H.*, 504A). La belle ordonnance de leur disposition est qualifiée de déiforme (*τῆς . . . θεοειδούς εὐκοσμίας*) (*C.H.*, 241C). Elle est, en effet, participation à Dieu, principe harmonieux de tout ordre (*εὐκόσμου τάξιαρχίας*) (*C.H.*, 273A), d'où procède et à quoi tend, dans un bel ordre (*εὐκόσμος*), tout arrangement harmonieux (*ἀράων εὐκοσμία*). La hiérarchie ecclésiastique vient aussi de Dieu et constitue un ordre harmonieux et saint. L'évêque y dispense les illuminations divines *ἐν εὐκοσμία καὶ τάξει*, καὶ ἀνάλογα τῆς ἐκδόρου πρὸς τὰ *ἐνὰ συμμετρίαν* (*E.H.*, 400B). Et le dernier rang de cette hiérarchie, auquel introduit le baptême, est appelé τῆς εὐκόσμου καὶ *ἐνός τάξεως* (*E.H.*, 400C). Dans cette hiérarchie, comme dans la hiérarchie

priest (that most angel-like of men) down to the newly baptized Christian, the arrangement (*εὐκομία*) is a share in the godly source of all order and for that reason is beautiful.

The same is true of *εὐτάξια*, a fine and fitting order established among the angels¹⁰ and set up also among men,¹¹ for, again, God is the master of all seen and unseen *εὐτάξια* which He bestows according to the merits of each being.¹² So, too, with *εὐμετρία*, for while symmetry (*συμμετρία*) and good order (*εὐκόσμητα*) belong together,¹³ and while all measure (*τὰ μέτρα πάντα*)¹⁴ pertains to beauty, the well-proportioned (*εὐμετρία*) and the well-ordered (*εὐτάξια*) in a special way accompany what is fair (*τὸ κάλλος*).¹⁵

Most closely tied up with beauty are the terms *ἀγωνία*, *ἐπαγωνία*, and *εὐαγωνία*. *Εὐαγωνία* is a hapax, yet it has

céleste dont elle est l'image, il n'y a rien de contraire au bon ordre (*ἀκόσμητον*) (*E.H.*, 500D). L'ordre et l'harmonie des choses divines sont en effet universels (*αὐτὴν γὰρ ἡ καθολικὴ τῶν θεῶν εὐκομία καὶ τάξις*) (*E.H.*, 445A). *L'Univers*, p. 57.

¹⁰ *C.H.*, VI, 1/200C; VIII, 1/240A.

¹¹ *C.H.*, IV, 4/181C; VIII, 2/241C.

¹² *C.H.*, XIII, 3/301B; *E.H.*, II, 3, 3/400B; *D.N.*, VIII, 7/893D.

¹³ *E.H.*, II, 3, 3/400B. Symmetry (*συμμετρία*), measure (*μέτρον*), and beauty are linked together in Plato's world. Cf. *Phil.* 64E; 66A/B; *Tim.*, 87C. Aristotle teaches that beauty consists in order (*τάξις*), and size (*μέγεθος*), or, more broadly, in order, symmetry, and definiteness (*τὸ ὁρισμένον*). Cf. *Poet.* VII, 1450b, 34-1451a, 6; *Met.*, XIII, 1078a, 36-b, 1. The Stoics stress material proportions. Cf. Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, IV, 31. Plotinus reacts by arguing that beauty cannot depend wholly upon external ordering, even in material things (*Enn.*, II, 2). This is more true in the realm of mind and morality where there are no parts to round into a whole. Cf. *Enn.*, I, 6, passim; Whitaker, *Neo-Platonists*, pp. 87-88; Eugénie de Keyser, *La signification de l'art dans les Ennéades de Plotin* (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1955), pp. 107-109; Fiammetta Bontoun di Petrella, *Il problema dell'arte e della bellezza in Plotino* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1956), pp. 91-93. Proclus returns to concepts of the *Philosophus* when he develops the idea that every mixture consists of symmetry, truth, and beauty. Cf. *In Platons thelogion*, ed. E. Porras (Hamburg: 1618), pp. 139, 379-383.

¹⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 10/705C.

¹⁵ *D.N.*, VIII, 7/893D. In this passage, divine justice measures out the creaturely adornments.

significance as the word Denis chooses for the harmony which belongs to beauty itself.¹⁶ Because of the divine harmony within the hierarchy (διὰ τούτης τῆς ἐνθέου καὶ ἑραρχικῆς ἀρμονίας), each level may share in Him who is "truly beautiful (καλόν), wise, and good."¹⁷ Beauty is the cause of harmonies (ἀρμονία) and adaptations (ἐραρχοῦντα) and of their share in its loveliness.¹⁸ Likewise, the individual being is in order when it harmonizes with its situation,¹⁹ for then it dwells in perfect accord, perfect concord and a true connaturality.²⁰ Such consonance is the outcome of the divine wisdom and the divine beauty, for ordering implies a plan in the mind of God. So it is that God as wisdom and beauty grants to creatures a divine harmony (ἀρμονία ἐνθεός) and a holy beauty (ἱερά εὐγένεια),²¹ with wisdom bringing about in beautiful fashion (καλλεργούσα) the unique sympathy (σύμπαρσις) and harmony of all.²²

Whatever word he uses, Denis expects his world to be well-ordered and beautifully arranged. In the temporal realm, harmony unites the fruition of what comes before to the start of what follows after.²³ Even the order of matter is bound up, as we have seen, with beauty and with form,²⁴ since its very ordering, coming as it does from the source of all beauty, is so planned that it keeps some trace of spiritual beauty.²⁵

Ugliness and sickness mean weakness of form and lack of order; that is, "not absolute evil, but only less beauty. When

¹⁶ *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C.

¹⁷ *E.H.*, I, 2/373A.

¹⁸ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704A, C; 10/705C.

¹⁹ *D.N.*, I, 2/589A.

²⁰ κατὰ τὴν θεϊάν αὐτῆς ἀρμονίαν ὑπερίσταται καὶ ἐναρμόζειται συμπαρόντι παντὶ καὶ ὁμοιοῦ καὶ συμπαρόντι. *D.N.*, XI, 2/949D; cf. also *D.N.*, VIII, 5/892D.

²¹ *D.N.*, I, 4/592A.

²² *D.N.*, VII, 3/872B. Volker points to Gregory of Nyssa's interest in the harmony of the universe, the tie-up between the earthly and the heavenly, the σύμπαρσις τῶν ὄντων πρὸς ὅλην. *Gregor von Nyssa*, p. 28.

²³ *D.N.*, VII, 3/872B.

²⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 28/729A.

²⁵ ἐνταῦθα καὶ αὐτὴ [ἡ] πρὸς τοῦ ὄντος καλοῦ τὴν ὑπερῆν ἐσχηκέναι κατὰ πᾶσαν αὐτῆς τὴν ὁλάν διακόσμου ἀνηγήματα πᾶς τῆς νοερός εὐγενείας ἔχει. *C.H.*, II, 4/144B.

beauty disappears entirely, as well as form and order, the body itself disappears."²⁶ While realities which exist are never destroyed according to their essence or nature, if something falls short in their natural ordering, their harmony and symmetry may fail to stay as they were.²⁷ Harmony vanishes altogether in the wake of evil, the epitome of all that is unlovely (ἀκαλός),²⁸ yet at the other end of the scale, under the impact of sanctity, harmony comes to perfection, things glow in true selfhood and in the full possession of all beauty.²⁹

In the scheme of Denis, therefore, the accord characteristic of the beautiful includes not only the ordering of a being in itself, but also and more particularly its ordering in relation to other beings, especially to the harmonious source of all order (εὐνοῦτος ταξιαρχία).³⁰ Perhaps, too, this preoccupation with harmony leads him to adopt the word εὐγένεια which usually means comeliness or exterior charm, when he ponders the beauty of the hierarchies.³¹ Derived as it is from γένεο, to fit or suit, εὐγένεια carries with it the connotation of order and thus becomes an apt

²⁶ τοῦτο δὲ οὐ πᾶν κακόν, ἀλλ' ἥττον καλόν· εἰ γὰρ παντὸς γένεοτος λόγος καλῶς καὶ εὐδὸς καὶ τάξεως, οὐχότι καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα *D.N.*, IV, 27/728D. Albertus Magnus, in his commentary, takes proportion to be the material element and clarity to be the formal element in any beautiful composition. Dom Pouillon notes this unique distinction and cites passages from the fifth lesson of Chapter IV. "La beauté, propriété transcendante," pp. 295-96. De Bruyne sums up St. Thomas's interpretation of the Dionysian harmony as "une réduction de choses diverses à l'unité . . . grâce à la proportion." Among substances, beauty brings back the diverse to oneness; among qualities, it is likeness in the unlike; among quantities, it is the equal harmonizing unequal parts. *Etudes d'esthétique*, III, p. 303.

²⁷ ὅλῃ τῇ ἐλπίσει τῆς κατὰ φύσιν τάξεως, ὅ τῆς ἀρμονίας καὶ τῆς συμπαρόντος λόγος ἀσθενεῖ μένειν ὁσαύτως ἔχον. *D.N.*, IV, 23/724D.

²⁸ In the manner of Proclus, Denis defines evil as a lack, deficiency, weakness, disproportion, error; as purposeless, unlovely, lifeless, unwise, unreasonable, imperfect, unsettled, causeless, indeterminate, sterile, powerless, disordered, incompatible, indefinite, dark, unsubstantial, and never itself possessed of any existence whatsoever. *D.N.*, IV, 32/732C, D.

²⁹ *D.N.*, XII, 3/969D-972A.

³⁰ *C.H.*, IX, 1/273A.

³¹ Denis reserves the term for the spiritual beauty of God, angels, and men. He speaks once of the order (τάξις), seemliness (εὐγένεια), and light (φῶς) of the stars (*D.N.*, IV, 4/697E) and once refers to the εὐνός εὐγένεια of the ceremony of anointing (*E.H.*, IV, 3, 2/476B).

term for the spiritual beauty of angels and men, arrayed in seemingly fashion before the eyes of God.

The concept of clarity, which Denis also allies with beauty, runs through Platonic and Neoplatonic thought³² and through the Bible. Denis inherits it, therefore, from his two chief sources, the pagan philosophy which he disclaims and the Scriptures which he cherishes. Not only in the images of the reflection-lit cave,³³ of the sun as the center of the Ideas,³⁴ or of the shaft of heavenly light in the myth of Er,³⁵—each a case where radiance takes on an other-world quality connected with true *ἐκτίστην* and the Ideas on which such knowledge is focussed—does Plato use the metaphor of light meaningfully, but also in the argument of the *Phaedrus*.³⁶ There, beauty becomes the link between the world of phenomena and the world of Ideas. Alone of them all, beauty still shines on earth, even to our senses, with some of the brilliance which it had when we first saw it in the other life. Among changing things, it stands most easily for permanence since it is the most clearly seen of the Ideas and the fairest.

Philo, who follows Plato in so many ways, draws a notion of God as creative light from the scriptural verse, "The Lord is my light and my saviour," and from the Platonic image of the sun.³⁷

³² A classic study of the theme of light was made by Clemens Baemker in "Wielö—ein Philosoph und Naturforscher des XIII Jahrhunderts," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Bd. III, Hft. 2 (1908), pp. 357-514.

³³ *Rep.*, VII, 514A-519D.

³⁴ *Rep.*, VI, 507B-511E.

³⁵ *Rep.*, X, 616B.

³⁶ 250D.

³⁷ "The concept of God as creator of everything is also expressed in his application to God of the terms spring (*πρην*) (*Fug.*, 36, 198) and light (*φῶς*) (*Soma.* I, 13, 75). The use of these two terms as a description of God, according to Philo's own statements, is based upon the scriptural verses: "Me they forsook, a spring of life," (*Jer.* 2, 13) and "The Lord is my light and my saviour" (*Ps.* 27, 1), though the analogy of light, or rather the sun, is also used by Plato. . . . Sometimes, instead of calling God light, Philo describes Him as lightgiving (*φωτοφόρος*) (*Ebr.* 11, 44) or the "intelligible sun" (*Petr.* 30, 164, *Spec.* I, 51, 279), the latter term evidently based upon a combination of Plato and of the scriptural verse, which in the masoretic Hebrew text reads "For the Lord is a sun and a shield" (*Ps.* 84, 12). Wolfson, *Philo*, I, p. 211. Cf. also Baemker, "Wielö," pp. 362-64.

Plotinus, however, is the first in this line of thinkers to make light a major element in his universe. All things proceed from light and dwell in light, and they are all the same in the very radiance which brings them into being.³⁸ If the soul is an immense light from which all lesser things emanate,³⁹ so that even material forms have a borrowed radiance,⁴⁰ it is because Plotinus sees a relation between the One which is light itself and the spiritual illumination of knowledge. The soul receives its enlightenment from the *voûs* in the same way that the moon welcomes light from the sun. Such knowledge is not an inward part of the soul, nevertheless; for the soul is not penetrated through and through with light as is the *voûs*. Yet the very *voûs* is not the source of its own light, since its inner clarity comes from the One, the simple, dynamic power of light itself.⁴¹

Even as true beauty is spiritual, so, in the Plotinian scheme, the true quality of beauty must be radiance. In an echo of the *Phaedrus*,⁴² Plotinus describes the world beyond as a place where

³⁸ *Enn.*, VI, 7, 36; VI, 8, 18.

³⁹ *Enn.*, IV, 3, 9; Bréhier, pp. 75-76. Roques states that the Plotinian light is determined rather than free: "Il est en effet de la nature de la Lumière, de la Pureté et de l'Unité parfaites, d'illuminer, de purifier et d'unir. Et l'on pourrait sans doute voir dans l'action purificatrice, illuminatrice et unitive de la Bonté en soi, un rayonnement nécessaire et naturel qui serait tout autre chose que l'initiation gratuite d'un don." "Le primat du Transcendant dans la purification de l'intelligence selon le Pseudo-Denys," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, XXIII (1947), p. 155.

⁴⁰ *Enn.*, VI, 7, 21.

⁴¹ ἀλλ' ὁ ἑστὶν ἀπεριόριστος ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ οὐσίᾳ, τὸ δὲ παρόντος τοῦτο τὸ φῶς οὐκ ἄλλο ὅν φῶς ἔστιν ἀπὸ τοῦ παρόντος τὸν δύναμιν ἐκείνων τοῦ εἶναι ὁ ἑστὶν. *Enn.*, V, 6, 4; Bréhier, p. 116. The entire intellectual order is a kind of light. Cf. *Enn.*, V, 3, 8-9; Bréhier, pp. 58-60; V, 5, 7; Bréhier, pp. 98-100. Joseph Maréchal refers to Plotinian mysticism as "L'extase lumineuse" in which "le Bien, ou l'Un, n'est pas à proprement parler, un être revêtu de lumière (qu'il puisse, ou communiquer librement, ou être contraint de communiquer), il est la lumière même, à sa source, la lumière dont l'essence est d'irradier: φῶς, μέγα φῶς, φῶς τὸ πᾶν φῶς." *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, II (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937), p. 73. Besides passages cited above, he refers to *Enn.*, VI, 7, 16; VI, 4, 7. Proclus too, provides a doctrine of the *voûs* φῶς or θεῖον φῶς which acts as ὁμογενής. Cf. *In Rem Pub.*; Kroll, I, pp. 294-95; *In Tim.*, Diehl, I, pp. 166-68; 211-13; III, pp. 80-85.

"everything is clear for all: light for light," where "the beautiful is really beautiful because there is nothing unbeautiful about it."⁴³ Even here below, it is the luminous character of things, rather than their order and proportion, which compels us to call them beautiful.⁴⁴

Denis's theology of light appears to grow directly out of Neo-platonism, yet, according to his own avowal, it is rooted in the teaching of St. John.⁴⁵ God the Father and His theandric Son, Jesus, are the source of light. Jesus is the "true light, enlightening every man who comes into the world,"⁴⁶ while the Father, in St. James's words, is the "Father of lights."⁴⁷ Denis can rarely resist the language of light when he speaks of the Godhead. For him, God is unapproachable light (*ἀπρόσβατος φῶς*), invisible light (*ἀόρατος φῶς*), spiritual light (*νοητὸν φῶς*), eternal, ineffable (*ἄβυσσος*), wholly lightsome (*πληρᾶς*), a pure and supreme clarity (*διαιρέα*).⁴⁸ He is at the same time darkness, but a dark-

⁴² 244A-257B; Fowler, pp. 464-504.

⁴³ ἀλλὰ πᾶς παντὶ φανερός εἰς τὸ εἶναι καὶ πᾶντα φῶς γὰρ φωτ. . . καὶ τὸ καλὸν καλόν, ὅτι πᾶ ἐν τῷ [μῶ] καλῷ. *Emm*, V, 8, 4; Bréhier, p. 139. On the cleansing and lightgiving power of beauty, cf. Jean Trouillard, *La purification platonienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1955), pp. 158-60.

⁴⁴ *Emm*, VI, 7, 38; cited by E. de Keyser, *La signification de l'art*, p. 107. ⁴⁵ Not only does Denis draw from St. John's Gospel (I, 2, 3, 9, 12; III, 8; V, 21; VI, 64; VII, 38; X, 11, 14, 30; XIII, 10; XIV, 23; XV, 26; XVI, 15; XVII, 10; XX, 22), his first Epistle (II, 2; IV, 12), and the Apocalypse (I, 4; II, IV; V; VII; VIII; X; XX; XXII, 16), but he also addresses Letter X to him. In it he wishes that those who maltreat John "may become his disciples and share in the light," and adds that "nothing can take from us the most fulsome radiance of John." 1117B, 1120A. The scriptural passages which Denis uses in his light theology are: Ex., III, 2; Num., XXIV, 17; John, I, 5; II, 9; Jas., I, 17; II Pet., I, 19; Apoc., XXII, 16.

⁴⁶ John, I, 9.

⁴⁷ Jas., I, 17.

⁴⁸ *D.N.*, IV, 5-6/700D-701B; 11/708D; VII, 1/865B, C; *C.H.*, II, 4/144A. The same descriptions recur frequently in the Dionysian works. That Denis is extremely light-conscious appears in the images he uses and in his choice of words. To make clear his teaching, he draws comparisons from the sun (*D.N.*, IV, 1/693B; 4/697D; V, 8/824C), from lamps (*D.N.*, II, 4/641A-C), from fire (*C.H.*, XV, 2/328D-329C), from a luminous chain which hangs from heaven (*D.N.*, III, 1/680C). As for his vocabulary, it is

ness more radiant than light (*τὸν ὑπέρφωτον . . . γνώφον*).⁴⁹ The light is His wisdom, in its dazzling rays (*ταῖς ὑπερφαιέσιν ἀκτίσιν*). He knows all things.⁵⁰ It is also His beauty (*κάλλος*), present in Himself and flashing (*ἐναστράττον*) in all creatures to fill them with splendor (*ἀγλαία*).⁵¹

As the good or the beautiful-and-good, God, the ἀρχιφωτός, reveals Himself by illuminations which proceed from the very heart of His goodness (*τὰ ἐγκράδεια τῆς ἀγαθότητος ἐξέφω φῶτα*).⁵² Denis calls them at the same time a gift of light (*φωροδοσία*), as a flood of light (*φωροχυσία*),⁵³ and a "showing" of light (*φωροφάνεια*),⁵⁴ for the creative outpouring is essentially a theophany.⁵⁵ Its sway is first of all over the spirit, over those of contempla-

scarcely possible to do more than list the terms he has chosen. Jaeger, among others, points out many (20) such Dionysian expressions in *Der neu entdeckte Kommentar zum Johannevangelium und Dionysios Areopagites* (Berlin: Preussischen Akademie des Wissenschaften, 1930), p. 16. I have included in the list below *φάνομα* and all the derivatives of *φανω* (a total of 87):

ἀγλαία, ἀγλάν, ἀκτίς, ἀνάλειμμα, ἀναφάνεια, ἀποστρέψω, ἀποφάνω, ἀρχιφωτός, δόξατος, αὐγή, αὐτοφάνης, γάνομα, διαφάνεια, διαυγής, διεσθής, εἰλεφανής, ἐκφάνω, ἐκφανής, ἐκφανεία, ἐκφαντικός, ἐκφαντορεία, ἐκφαντορικός, ἐκφάντω, ἐλλείμμα, ἐλλειψμός, ἐμφάνω, ἐμφάνεια, ἐμφανής, ἐμφανός, ἐμφαντικός, ἐναστράττω, ἐκλάμμα, ἐκφάνω, ἐκφάνεια, ἐκφάντω, θεοφάνεια, καταλάμμα, καταυγάζω, λαμπρός, λαμπρότης, λαμπρόμα, λαμπρῶ, μαγισανγῆ, διολαμής, λαμπροφάνης, πολυφωτός, πορφάνης, πορωφάνεια, πορωφάνης, τριφάνης, ὑπερλάμματος, ὑπερλάμμα, ὑπερφάνης, ὑπερφάνης, ὑπερφανός, φάνομα, φανερώσας, φανός, φανότης, φέγγος, φῶς, φωστήρ, φωστηρικός, φωταγωγία, φωταγωγικός, φωταγωγός, φωτεινός, φωτίζω, φωτίζω, φωτισμός, φωτιστικός, φωτογονία, φωτοδοσία, φωτοδότης, φωτεσθής, φωτοληγία, φωτογυγός, φωτοφάνεια, φωτοχυσία (φωτοχυνία, φωτοχυνικός).

⁴⁹ *M.T.*, II, 1025A.

⁵⁰ *D.N.*, VII, 3/872B.

⁵¹ *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C.

⁵² *M.T.*, III, 1033A.

⁵³ *C.H.*, I, 2/121B; IX, 3/260D; *D.N.*, I, 4/592C; II, 11/649D.

⁵⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 6/701A; *Ep.* V, 1073A.

⁵⁵ *C.H.*, I, 1/120B; *D.N.*, I, 3/589B.

⁵⁶ Semmelroth has made a study of creation as the radiation of God's light and above all as a manifestation of the Godhead. Scripture, the re-

tive and illuminative outlook (ἡ θεωρητικὴ καὶ ποικιλικὴ ἐξέσις).⁵⁷ Hence, one of the chief functions of each hierarchy is the channeling of light to the minds of its members.⁵⁸ This is done in the stepwise fashion we expect from Denis. Thus, the angels, "messengers of divine silence," are "shining lights" revealing God to men or to one another,⁵⁹ and among the angels, the seraphim receive the brightest gift of light because its simple splendors come to them first hand (ἀρχαῖς καὶ ἀμέσους μαγευτικαῖς ἐλλαττομένη).⁶⁰ Perfectly conformed to the divine radiance, they pass it to those beneath them so that these in turn may shed the "luminous brightness of the divine ray" (τὰς φανωτάτας τῆς θεαγωγικῆς ἀκτίνος αὐγὰς) upon beings lower still.⁶¹ Even human life receives, in its own manner, the illuminations of divine knowledge (οὐκείως ἑαυτῇ τὰς θείας ἐλλαττοεῖσθαι γνώσεως),⁶² since the last order of angels raises our high priests to the splendors of the Godhead.⁶³

vealed word, is also a light, for "we press upwards to those beams which in Holy Scripture shine upon us, wherefrom we gain the light which leads us unto the divine praises" (*D.N.*, I, 3/589B). The sacred writings are the positive and negative norm of truth, the means of beholding the theophany. "Gottes ausstrahlendes Licht," *Scholastik*, XXVIII (1953), pp. 481-503. Semmelroth traces in another article the three stages of the creature's return, under the leadership of Christ, the ποικιλικός, to the divine light. "Die Lehre des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita von Aufstieg der Kreatur zum göttlichen Licht," *Scholastik*, XXIX (1954), pp. 24-52.

⁵⁷ *E.H.*, VI, 3, 4/536B.

⁵⁸ *C.H.*, III, 2/165B. Cf. Roques, *L'Univers*, Ch. IV, "La science hiérarchique," pp. 117-131; Ch. V, "Le monde angélique," pp. 158-167; Ch. VII, "La science dans la hiérarchie ecclésiastique," pp. 200-244.

⁵⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 2/696B; *C.H.*, III, 3/168A.

⁶⁰ *C.H.*, VII, 4/212A; X, 1/272D.

⁶¹ *E.H.*, VI, 3, 6/537C; IV, 3, 6/480D; *C.H.*, III, 3/168A.

⁶² *Ep.* IX, 1/1108A.

⁶³ ἡγοῦς τὰς . . . τῆς θεαγωγικῆς αὐγῆς. *C.H.*, V, 196C. Roques points to the rigid laws, by which one level of the hierarchy may receive light only from the order directly above it and may impart light only to the order directly beneath it, as the great weakness in the Dionysian system, a weakness found in Neoplatonism and not in the Scriptures. *L'Univers*, pp. 146-149. He adds later: "Mais cet échec partiel de l'angélogie dionysienne ne doit pas nous en cacher les grands succès. Elle a voulu mettre en pleine lumière, dans un monde épris de spéculations néoplatoniciennes, toutes la richesse noétique du christianisme." *Ibid.*, p. 167. With regard to the

In every instance, the purpose of the communication is to transform its receivers into vessels of light, clear, glowing mirrors, capable of transmitting as well as receiving it; to make their lives "lucidiform" (φωτεινός), utterly resplendent.⁶⁴ With men, it is impossible that the divine ray shine otherwise than through a variety of symbols.⁶⁵ Material lights stand for the effusion of immaterial light which they image.⁶⁶ In this way, the divine brightness is tempered (αἰγλήν μέτρια) at the outset for weak human eyes which can gaze only upon a measured light (ἀνάλωτον φῶς).⁶⁷ In fact, the eyes of sense must be closed altogether if the creature would look upon the spiritual, while earthly forms of knowledge must yield to a mystic darkness which "fills with splendors more beautiful than beauty our sightless intellects."⁶⁸

Denis means the link between beauty and light to be of the closest. The very fact that he describes the divine beauty imme-

φωτεινότητα, the reception of light, Ivanka rightly insists that the creature's participation is directly in the divine radiance inasmuch as God is the only true source of light. "La signification," p. 16. He refers to *C.H.*, XII, 3; XIII, 4. Especially significant is the clause: ὅτι καὶ ὁμοίως ἐστὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις καὶ ὁμοίως ἡ τῆς θεαγωγικῆς διαγωγῆς ἀνάλωτος (ὡς ἐφαρμόζοντα) (305B).

⁶⁴ *C.H.*, III, 2/165A; *E.H.*, III, 3, 10/440B; V, 1, 4/504D; II, 3, 7/404C. Inspired by Denis, St. Thomas teaches that "since . . . angelic nature . . . perfectly reflects its source, it receives the maximum intellectual light possible for a creature. . . . As being always actually intelligible, angelic substance may be properly called a light, *lux* (S.T., I, 67, 1)." James Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), p. 184. Denis calls the human soul "lucidiform" as well (*E.H.*, II, 3 7/404C). Jaeger notes the same idea in Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius: "This idea, which is found in Gregory's treatise (*De inst. Chri.*), takes on various new forms in Macarius. The soul becomes 'all eye' (ὅλην ὀφθαλμός), 'all face' (ὅλην πρόσωπον), 'all light' (ὅλην φῶς). . . . Illuminated from above it is filled with the ineffable beauty of the glory of light radiating from the face of Christ. So the souls of the saints are the light of the world." *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 220.

⁶⁵ *C.H.*, I, 2/121B.

⁶⁶ *C.H.*, I, 3/121D.

⁶⁷ *D.N.*, IV, 5/700D; *E.H.*, V, 1, 2/501C.

⁶⁸ ἐν ἁγνότητι ἀναγεῖ καὶ ἀποδέχεται τῶν ὑπερβαλόντων ἀγλαίων ὑπερἀνθρώπων τῶν ἀνομήτων νόας. *M.T.*, I, 1/977B. Cf. also *D.N.*, I, 2/589A; *C.H.*, I, 3/121D.

diately after he has talked of the divine light, shows that he thinks of them together. When he calls God's beauty the cause of clarity, he says that beauty acts after the manner of light ($\delta\mu\lambda\eta\nu\ \phi\omega\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$), that loveliness comes from its fountain-like radiance ($\pi\eta\gamma\alpha\iota\alpha\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\iota\varsigma$), an expression which he uses elsewhere only of light.⁶⁹ So, too, in the same way that brightness belongs to the beautiful-and-good, obscurity follows upon evil.⁷⁰

Beauty both accompanies and rewards enlightenment. As wisdom and beauty are allied in the splendor of the Godhead, so in creatures, the intellectual light which is pre-eminently the gift of wisdom carries with it beauty, or is a part of beauty, for it is as luminous mirrors that they reflect the surpassing beauty which they contemplate.⁷¹ Even as he foresees that Timothy's passage through the hierarchic cleansing, illuminating, and perfecting will bring with it the light of the most radiant and the most divine beauties ($\pi\eta\lambda\alpha\nu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon\gamma\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\eta\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\gamma\alpha$),⁷² so Denis writes to Titus specifically of heaven and the souls aglow there. "If they shine thus," he says, "it is because Jesus in person places them at table, serves them, bestows on them an eternal rest, distributes among them and lavishes upon them all at once the fullness of all beauty."⁷³

While the harmony and clarity of Dionysian beauty are obvious, the remaining element, although just as fundamental, is at the

⁶⁹ *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C. Other passages which speak of the divine light as $\pi\eta\gamma\alpha\iota\alpha\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ are: *C.H.*, IX, 3/260D; *D.N.*, IV, 6/701A.

⁷⁰ *D.N.*, IV, 32/732D; *E.H.*, II, 3, 5/401B.

⁷¹ *C.H.*, III, 2/165A.

⁷² These words to Timothy come at the close of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (VII, 3, 11/568D) and thus take on the importance that belongs to any summary.

⁷³ $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\rho\acute{\eta}\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\nu\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\omega}\nu\ \delta\iota\alpha\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$. *Ep.* IX, 5/1113A. Granted that Thomas Aquinas derives his notion of the clarity of beauty first of all from Denis, Father Noon gives the proper metaphysical implications when he translates (via John Duffy and G. K. Chesterton) *et iterum claritas; unde quae habent colorem nitidum pulchra esse dicuntur* (*S.T.*, I, 39, 8) as "... a certain splendor, inasmuch as things are called beautiful which have a certain 'blaze of being' about them." William T. Noon, S.J., *Joyce and Aquinas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 25-26, and n.9.

same time less evident. In the long description of beauty in Chapter Four, Denis does not sum up this aspect in an all-inclusive word in the way that he does for the other two. Instead, he talks around it in short phrases until he has built up the impression he wants. Thus, he says that beauty is apportioned to each being "in the measure proper to it," or "according to its $\acute{\lambda}\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ "; that beauty gathers "all in all in itself" ($\acute{\omicron}\lambda\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\nu$); that beauty makes things one ($\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ \eta\gamma\omega\omicron\tau\alpha$).⁷⁴ From remarks such as these, it is clear that wholeness and selfhood are tied up with beauty. Denis makes this notion even clearer elsewhere in his more brief references to beauty, when he associates sameness and uprightness with order and radiance.

The term which best fits the quality he has in mind is $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$, sameness or identity,⁷⁵ rather than $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\tau\eta\varsigma$, $\acute{\omega}\delta\omicron\tau\eta\varsigma$, or $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\omicron\gamma\lambda\eta\gamma\iota\alpha$,

⁷⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C, 704A.

⁷⁵ The term $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$ appears as a formal expression first in Aristotle, yet the concept it embodies is present in Plato: in the relation of "the same" and "the other" ($\tau\acute{o}\ \tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\nu$) of *Parm.* 139A-140D; 146B-148D; in the elements of the first mixture, $\tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\nu$, $\tau\acute{o}\ \tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$, and existence of *Tim.* 35A, B; in the *Sophist*. Cornford says of the latter: "In the *Sophist* 'Sameness' stands for the constant identity of a Form . . . or its positive content, in virtue of which it is always 'the same as itself.'" *Plato's Cosmology*, p. 65. Aristotle uses the term twice. He speaks of the identity of children with their parents, *Nic. Eth.*, VIII, 12, 1161b, 27-32. He defines the term in the *Metaphysics* as follows: "Sameness ($\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$) is a kind of unity ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\tau\eta\varsigma$) in the being, either of two or more things, or of one thing treated as more than one; as, for example, when a thing is consistent with itself; for then it is treated as two." V, 9, 1018a, 5-9. Plotinus uses the term frequently, usually in comparison with "otherness." However, at least on one occasion, he gives it the meaning of Aristotle's definition. He speaks of being as both one and multiple. "If it is multiple, then it has otherness, and if the multiple is one, then identity." *Enn.*, VI, 2, 15. Cf. Friedrich Creuzer, *Plotini Opera Omnia* (Oxford: 1835), III, Annotationes, p. 10. Proclus employs the word extensively, almost always to show the dichotomy between the sensible and the intelligible. Cf. *In Rem Pub.*; Kroll, II, p. 88; *In Tim.*; Diehl, I, pp. 106, 132, 141, 149. He lines up the following contrasts (*In Tim.*; Diehl, I, p. 176): $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$ — $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$; $\acute{\sigma}\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ — $\kappa\epsilon\lambda\omega\tau\eta\varsigma$; $\acute{\lambda}\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ — $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\nu$; $\acute{\epsilon}\theta\omicron\varsigma$ — $\acute{\acute{\omicron}}\eta$. However, in his treatment of the noetic order, $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$ becomes a substantive, a form to be shared. Cf. *Elem. Theol.*, Prop. 63, cor.; Dodds, p. 60.

words which ordinarily mean perfection and completion.⁷⁶ To adopt ταῦτότης as the proper Dionysian expression for this quality is not justified by the passage in Chapter Four. The word appears there, but coupled with ἐτερότης, among the many things caused by the beautiful-and-good.⁷⁷ Later, however, it is singled out as coming from the all-transcendent cause together with harmony and beauty.⁷⁸

Denis uses the term in several ways: 1) to express the sameness between two or more things, 2) to serve as a foil for ἐτερότης (in this he is in line with Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition), and 3) to stand for a being's inner unity, without any implied or stated relationship to something else.⁷⁹ The last meaning is important. Denis applies it to God and to creatures, in the sense of the full λόγος of each being. He links it with propriety or "self-possession," (ἰδιότης).⁸⁰ Thus, inspired by Plato's *Parmenides*, he works out a comparison of "the same" (τὸ ταῦτόν) and "the other" as names of God. "The same" is unvarying, constant with itself, identical in all and for all.⁸¹ Diversity, at least in God, implies no change in a fixed identity, but rather the power to be present to all things.⁸²

This same divine identity imparts a unique identity to those creatures who can receive it.⁸³ Because of it, the angels have each a circle of identity, a motion which brings them back to themselves. Even in the spiral swirl which takes them down to those beneath and swings them up again, they remain in their identity and carry

⁷⁶ Plato places perfection (τὸ τέλειον) as the first quality of beauty (*Phil.*, 66B), so, of course, the notion is not new with Denis. Cf. Festingère, *Contemplation*, pp. 347-50.

⁷⁷ *D.N.*, IV, 7/704B.

⁷⁸ *D.N.*, XII, 3/969D-972A; *C.H.*, XV, 4/333A.

⁷⁹ This is in line with Aristotle's definition. Cf. n.75.

⁸⁰ *D.N.*, II, 4/641A.

⁸¹ *D.N.*, IX, 4/912B.

⁸² *D.N.*, IX, 5/912D-913B.

⁸³ *D.N.*, IX, 4/912C. It is apparent that not all creatures have a full or stable identity. According to St. Maximus, the identities Denis speaks of are powers (δυνάμεις) of intelligible beings (τῶν νοητῶν) which uplift and unite them with God, while differences lead downwards and are divisive. *P.G.*, IV, 256A, B, on *D.N.*, IV, 7/704B.

out their endless revolution without ceasing to gaze upon the beautiful-and-good, the cause of their rich selfhood.⁸⁴ Men, too, partake of a special identity granted to them in the process of enlightenment. Denis calls it the identity of truth, by which "truth is placed in them and they in the truth."⁸⁵

To the objection that not all beings tend toward universal perfection, that "more than one finds satisfaction in otherness and division," he answers:

If he who questions, understands by otherness and division the attributes proper to each one, of which no being whatever desires to be deprived, we have nothing to reply save that this very desire constitutes also a mode of the universal tendency toward peace. There is no being, in fact, which does not want to live in peace and union with itself, to preserve itself unchanged and without mishap—itsself and all that belongs to it.⁸⁶

Identity means, then, (1) *propriety*, in the sense of having all that pertains to a particular mode of being; (2) *imitation*, in the sense of remaining distinct from all other beings, and (3) *unity*, in the sense of being fully itself. All of these qualities are present in the identity which beauty bestows. Thus, God remains stable and pure in the "most beautiful limits" of His surpassing identity.⁸⁷ He is not limited, of course, in the sense of being determined by anything; rather, Denis means μέγας to stand for extent or plentitude, or as St. Thomas takes it, "heights."⁸⁸

However, when the expression is transferred to finite beings, it is applicable in the sense of limitation or determination, for the propriety of any creature, by the very fact that it possesses itself fully, cuts it off from other beings. The thing defined is most completely itself and whole in the measure in which it is separate from other things and unique. That is why Denis holds that each being is beautiful when it is established in the λόγος which befits it; in

⁸⁴ *D.N.*, IV, 8/705A.

⁸⁵ *D.N.*, VII, 4/872C, D.

⁸⁶ *D.N.*, XI, 3/952B.

⁸⁷ ἐν τοῖς καλλίστοις μέγεσιν τῆς ὑπερκοινοῦ ταυτότητος. *D.N.*, IX, 4/912B.

⁸⁸ *Idest summmitatibus. D.N. expositio*, IX, 2; *Pera*, p. 306, # 816.

the unaltered safeguarding of the qualities proper to its nature.⁸⁹ Signs of the absence of beauty and goodness are, on the other hand: indefiniteness, instability, inconstancy, lack of finality.⁹⁰ What is bad in things comes about through a change in their identity and their own qualities, from a lessening of perfection.⁹¹

This last quality of beauty, summed up rather freely here by the word ταύτης or selfhood, merits a place with the other two, for Denis insists that a divine harmony and holy beauty dwell in all things which keep their own nature incorrupted (ἀνασώφιστα).⁹² From God, first of all, in the fair realms of an identity without equal, to His least creature whose identity is housed in a wavering and weak frame, the power of self-possession accompanies harmony and light.⁹³ In Chapter Twelve, Denis offers his own poetic summary. The Godhead, he tells us, as all-surpassing cause, has made "all the utter perfection (ἀκρίβεια) of all sheer purity (καθαρότης); all the order (διάταξις) and harmonious arrangement (ὁμοφωνία) of things—banishing all disharmony (ἀναρμονία), inequality (ἀνομοία) and disproportion (ἀσυνμερία), and breaking forth into a smiling aspect⁹⁴ of well-ordered identity (εὐτατος ταύτης) and rightness (ὀρθότης) upon all worthy to share it—all the perfect possession of everything beautiful (πᾶσα ἡ παντὸς καὶ πάντων τῶν καλῶν παγκύρια)." ⁹⁵

⁸⁹ *D.N.*, I, 4/592A; IV, 7/701C; 704A. As Horn puts it: "Le beau a quelque chose d' 'uniforme,' dans son identité, sa fidélité à lui-même, restant toujours, inaltérablement beau. Toute beauté participée a aussi cet élément commun, 'Uniforme': elle dérive de la beauté suprême." "Note sur l'unité," p. 79. From the hints given him by Denis, St. Thomas has probably drawn his notion of *integritas*, *sic perfectio* which he presents as one of the three requisites of beauty. *S.T.*, I, 39, 8.

⁹⁰ These qualities form part of the description of evil, *D.N.*, IV, 32/732C, D. Cf. also *D.N.*, XI, 5/953A, and n.28.

⁹¹ ἀλλοίωσις ἢ περὶ τὴν ταύτην καὶ τὴν ἑῶν ἀσώφεια τῆς προσηκούσης αὐτοῖς ἀγγελοντεῶς ταύτης. *D.N.*, IV, 34/733C. This is said of the demons but the application carries over to all beings.

⁹² *D.N.*, I, 4/592A.

⁹³ *D.N.*, IX, 4/912B; VIII, 7/896A.

⁹⁴ "Breaks forth into a smiling aspect," is Rolt's translation of γάγρυμα, *Dionysius*, p. 181.

⁹⁵ *D.N.*, XII, 3/969D-972A.

CONCLUSION

Denis provides an objective and uplifting doctrine of beauty. His writings deal rarely with the psychological or with subjective states of any kind, so that even the *Mystical Theology* is more concerned with the God who is known and not known than with the soul's processes. Because he starts thus at the source of reality, with God and His attributes, he finds no difficulty in placing beauty among the divine names and, therefore, in the transcendental order. There, it ranks with the good and takes over some of its functions in a special way.

The metaphysics which Denis adopts is chiefly Platonic. On this account, it includes the notion of participation, by which all things, even the least of material beings, are beautiful by sharing in the beauty of God. They do so by analogy, that is, in their own way, up to their own capacity, and following upon their merits. In each case, the creature's analogy is measured by another analogy in the mind of God.

In the Dionysian plan, the formal aspect of beauty, so strongly emphasized by the mediaeval Scholastics who for all their interest in theology looked at beauty first of all in the things at hand, receives scant attention. It is not altogether neglected, yet the divine beauty is essentially efficient, exemplar, and final cause. It is most properly a final cause, for beauty "calls" creatures, gives them fulfillment, and satisfies desire.

The special features of the beautiful which flow from the causal power of God are three in number: (1) the clarity which is at bottom a spiritual quality, an intellectual enlightenment, of which visible radiance is but an image; (2) the harmony which makes of the Dionysian universe a place where creatures dwell in ordered communion, and where they climb toward God according to a well-arranged pattern, and (3) the selfhood, the wholeness, and the perfection which come from living up to one's analogy.

Granting the important influence of St. Augustine in the same field, and without pursuing this study into the Middle Ages, we can see already some of what the Scholastics owe to Denis for these significant characteristics. If for no other reason than for his influ-

ence on the doctrine of Albertus Magnus, and through him on Ulrich of Strasbourg and Thomas Aquinas, the teaching of Denis were brought to the fore, that would be sufficient motive. As it is, his thought on the subject of beauty colors the work of the earlier school of St. Victor as well as that of Albert's Studium Generale at Cologne and of Robert Grosseteste at Oxford.

St. Albert's definition of beauty as "the radiance of form on the proportioned parts of matter, or on different powers or actions,"¹ Ulrich's similar description of it as "the form considered in itself, as shedding a formal and spiritual light on matter or something receptive of form, like matter,"² and St. Thomas's three requisites of integrity, proportion, and clarity,³ all stem surely from this source.

From Denis come to them likewise the close link between beauty and goodness, and the more subtle association with divine wisdom. But above all, he gives them ready-made the transcendent, all-pervading character of beauty, because he has chosen it as a name of God, the only being who "is His own beauty."⁴

¹ Ratio pulchri in universali consistit in resplendentia formae super partes materiae proportionatas, vel super diversas vires vel actiones. *De pulchro*, Sol. 2; Mandonnet, p. 421.

² Est ergo pulchritudo realiter idem quod bonitas, ut dicit Dionysius, scilicet ipsa forma rei, sed ratione differunt, quia forma inquantum perfectio est bonitas rei, sed inquantum est forma habens in se lumen formale et intellectuale splendens super materiam vel aliquid formabile quod est ut materia, sic est pulchritudo. *Summa de bono*, Lib. II, Tr. III, c. 4; ed. Martin Grabmann, "Des Ulrich Engelberti von Strassburg, O. Pr. Abhandlung De Pulchro," *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Munich: 1925), p. 76.

³ Nam ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur. Primo quidem integritas sive perfectio; quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. Et debita proportio, sive consonantia. Et iterum claritas; unde quae habent colorem nitidum, pulchra esse dicuntur. *S.T.*, I, 39, 8.

⁴ Est enim sua pulchritudo. *De pulchro*, Sol. 3; Mandonnet, p. 423.

APPENDIX I

Here, in full, are the decisive passages on beauty with Rol's English rendering. The translation is helpful not because it clings to the Greek text but because it says what Denis might have said had he spoken English.

[C] Τοῦτο τὰγαθὸν ὑπερταί πρὸς τῶν λεγῶν θεολόγων καὶ ὡς καλὸν καὶ ὡς κάλλος καὶ ὡς ἀγάπη καὶ ὡς ἀγαπὴν καὶ ὡς ἀγαπῆτον καὶ ὡς ἀγαπῆσις εἰσι τῆς καλλοποιου καὶ μεγαλοποιουμένης ἀγαπῆτητος θεοφυίας. Τὸ δὲ καλὸν καὶ κάλλος οὐ διαφερόν ἐστὶ τῆς ἐν ἐνὶ τὰ ὅλα συνεληγουίας αἰτίας· τὰῦτα γὰρ ἐνὶ μὲν τῶν ὄντων πάντων εἰς μετοχάς καὶ μετέχοντα διαγουντες καλὸν μὲν εἶναι λέγουεν τὸ κάλλος μετέχον· κάλλος δὲ τὴν μετοχὴν τῆς καλλοποιου τῶν ὄλων καλὸν αἰτίας. Τὸ δὲ ὑπεροχόν καλὸν, κάλλος μὲν λέγεται διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αὐτοῦ πᾶσι τοῖς ὄνσι μεταδιδόμενῃν ἀξείως ἐκαστῶ καλλοπύην, καὶ ὡς τῆς πάντων εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀλότητας αἰτίου, δέξιν πρὸς ἐναρμόπιον ἄρασι τὰς καλλοποιου τῆς πηγύδας ἀκρίτως αὐτοῦ μεταδόσεις καὶ ὡς πάντα

This Good is described by the Sacred Writers as Beautiful and as Beauty, as Love or Beloved, and by all other Divine titles which befit its beautifying and gracious fairness. Now there is a distinction between the titles "Beautiful" and "Beauty" applied to the all-embracing Cause.¹ For we universally distinguish these two titles as meaning respectively the qualities shared and the objects which share therein. We give the name of "Beautiful" to that which shares in the quality of beauty, and we give the name of "Beauty" to that common quality by which all beautiful things are beautiful. But the Super-Essential Beautiful is called "Beauty" because of that quality which it imparts to all things severally according to their nature, and because it is the Cause of the harmony and splendour in all things, flashing forth upon them all, like light, the beautify-

¹ This sentence is incorrect. The Greek text says that beauty and the beautiful "do not differ" in God. The text given here is that offered by Pera, *D.N. expositio*. Cf. also, Migne, *P.G.*, 701C; *Dionysiaca*, 1783-4.

πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καλόν·—ὄθεν καὶ καλὸς λέγεται²—καὶ ὡς ὅλα ἐν ὅλοις εἰς ταῦτο συνάγουν. Καλὸν δὲ ὡς πᾶν καλὸν ἅμα καὶ πᾶν [D] καλόν, καὶ «αὐτὸ ὄν κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὁσαύτως καλὸν καὶ οὔτε γινώμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον οὐδὲ τῇ μὲν καλὸν τῇ δὲ αἰσχρὸν οὔδὲ τότε μὲν τότε δὲ οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλὸν πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρὸν οὔτε ἔνθα μὲν ἔνθα δὲ οὐ [704A], ὡς τοιοῦτον μὲν ὄν καλὸν τοιοῦτον δὲ οὐ καλόν· ἀλλ' ὡς αὐτὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ μονοειδὲς αὐτὸ ὄν³ καλόν, καὶ ὡς παντὸς καλοῦ τὴν πηγαίαν καλὸν ἔνθα ὑπερχικῶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ προέχον· τῇ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς ὑπερχικῆς τῶν ὄντων καλὸν φύσει πᾶσα καλλογὴ καὶ πᾶν καλὸν ἐνοειδὲς κατ' αὐτίαν προυφέστηκεν. Ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ τοῦτον πᾶσι τοῖς οὔσι τὸ εἶναι κατὰ τὸν οἰκεῖον λόγον ἔκαστα καλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ καλὸν αἰ πάντων ἐφαρμογὰ καὶ φύλακα καὶ κοινοῦ καὶ τῷ καλῷ τὰ πάντα ἡῶνται καὶ ἀρχὴ πάντων τὸ καλὸν ὡς ποιητῶν αὐτὸν καὶ κινούν τὰ ὅλα καὶ συνέχον τῷ τῆς οἰκειότητος καλότητος ἔργῳ, καὶ πέρας πάν-

² Plato, *Cratylus*, 416C.

³ Plato, *Symposium*, 211A, B.

ing communications of Its originating ray; and because it summons all things to *fare* unto Itself (from whence it hath the name of "Fairness"),² and because It draws all things together in a state of mutual interpenetration. And It is called "Beautiful" because It is All-Beautiful and more than Beautiful, and is eternally, unvaryingly, unchangeably Beautiful; incapable of birth or death or growth or decay; and not beautiful in one part and foul in another; nor yet at one time and not at another; nor yet beautiful in relation to one thing but not to another; nor yet beautiful in one place and not in another (as if It were beautiful for some but were not beautiful for others); nay, on the contrary, It is, in Itself and by Itself, uniquely and eternally³ beautiful, and from beforehand It contains in a transcendent manner the originating beauty of everything that is beautiful. For in the simple and supernatural nature belonging to the world of beautiful things, all beauty and all that is beautiful hath its unique and pre-existent Cause. From this Beautiful all things possess their existence, each kind being beautiful in its

των καὶ ἀγαπητὸν ὡς τελικὸν αἴτιον—τοῦ καλοῦ γὰρ ἕνεκα πάντα γίνετα·—καὶ παραδειγματικὸν ὅτι κατ' αὐτὸ πάντα ἀφοσιῶνται· διὸ καὶ ταῦτον ἔστι τὸ καλὸν τὸ καλὸν [B] ὅτι τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν πάντα ἐφέρεται καὶ οὐκ ἔστι τι τῶν ὄντων ὃ μὴ μετέχει τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ. Τοῦ μὴ οὐδὲ καὶ τοῦτο εἰπεῖν ὃ λόγος ὅτι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν μετέχει τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ· τότε γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ὅταν ἐν θεῷ κατὰ τὴν πάντων ἀφάρθεσιν ὑπερουσίως ἡμνηται. Τοῦτο τὸ ἐν ἀγαθὸν καὶ καλὸν ἕνωσις ἔστι πάντων τῶν πολλῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν αἰτίον. Ἐκ τοῦτον πᾶσα τῶν ὄντων αἰ οὐσιώδεις ὑπόψεις αἰ ἐνώσεις αἰ διασχίσεις αἰ ταυτοότητες αἰ ἐτερότητες αἰ ὁμοότητες αἰ ἀνοησιότητες αἰ κοινότητες τῶν ἑναντίων αἰ ἀσημιχίας τῶν ἡνωμένων, αἰ πρόνοια τῶν ὑπερέχον αἰ ἀλλήλων, αἰ ὁμοιοτήτων αἰ ἐνστροφὰς τῶν καταδεστέων αἰ πάντων ἑαυτῶν [C] φθορὰ καὶ ἀμετακίνητοι μοῖραι καὶ ἰδιότητες καὶ αἰθερίας αἰ πάντων ἐν πᾶσι οἰκειότητος ἐκείνων κοινότητες καὶ ἐφαρμογαὶ καὶ ἀσύγχροτοι φύλακα καὶ ἀθροῖα τοῦ παντός, αἰ ἐν τῷ παντὶ συγγράμματα, αἰ

own manner, and the Beautiful causes the harmonies and sympathies and communities of all things. And by the Beautiful all things are united together and the Beautiful is the beginning of all things, as being the Creative Cause which moves the world and holds all things in existence by their yearning for their own Beauty. And It is the Goal of all things, and their Beloved, as being their Final Cause (for 'tis the desire of the Beautiful that brings them all into existence), and It is their Exemplar from which they derive their definite limits; and hence the Beautiful is the same as the Good, inasmuch as all things, in all causation, desire the Beautiful and Good. Moreover our discourse will dare to aver that even the Non-Existent shares in the Beautiful and Good, for Non-Existence is itself beautiful and good when, by the negation of all Attributes it is ascribed Super-Essentially to God. This One Good and Beautiful is in Its oneness the Cause of all the many beautiful and good things. Hence comes all the bare existence of all things, and hence their unions, their differentiations, their identities, their differences, their similarities, their dissimilarities, their communications of opposite things, the unconfused distinctions of their interpenetrating elements;

ἀδίαυτοι συνοχαὶ τῶν ὀν-
των αἱ ἀνέλεστοι διαδοχαὶ
τῶν γνωσμένων, αἱ στάσεις
πᾶσαι καὶ αἱ κινήσεις αἱ τῶν
νοῶν αἱ τῶν ψυχῶν αἱ τῶν
σομάτων στάσεις γὰρ ἔστι
πᾶσαι καὶ κινήσεις τὸ ὑπερ πᾶ-
σαν στάσιν καὶ πᾶσαν κίνη-
σιν ἐνωθύνον ἕκαστον ἐν τῷ
ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ καὶ κινῶν ἐπὶ
τὴν οὐκείαν κίνησιν.

Pera, pp. 111-12; 117-18.

the providences of the Superiors, the interdependence of the Coordinates, the responses of the Inferiors, the states of permanence wherein all keep their own identity. And hence again the intercommunion of all things according to the power of each; their harmonies and sympathies (which do not merge them) and the co-ordinations of the whole universe; the mixture of elements therein and the indestructible ligaments of things; the ceaseless succession of the recreative process in Minds and Souls and in Bodies; for all have rest and movement in That Which, above all rest and movement, grounds each one in its own natural laws and moves each one to its own proper movement. *D.N.*, IV, 7/701C-704D. Rolt, *Dionysius*, pp. 95-98.

[705B] Τούτων ὄντων καὶ τῶν αἰοθητῶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ παντὶ τριῶν κινήσεων καὶ πολλῷ πρότερον τῶν ἑκάστου μονῶν καὶ στάσεων καὶ ἰδιότητων αἰτιῶν ἔστι καὶ συνοχαὶ ἀγαθὸν τὸ ὑπερ [Ο] πᾶσαν στάσιν καὶ κίνησιν δι' ὃ πᾶσα στάσις καὶ κίνησις καὶ ἔξ οὗ καὶ ἐν ᾧ καὶ εἰς ὃ καὶ οὗ ἔνεκα. Καὶ γὰρ ἔξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐσία καὶ ζωὴ πᾶσα καὶ νοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ πάσης φύσεως αἱ συμμετόρη-

These three motions (sc. circular, spiral, and straight, ascribed to angels and souls), and also the similar motions we perceive in this material world and (far anterior to these) the individual permanence, rest and grounding of each Kind have their Efficient, Formal, and Final Cause in the Beautiful and Good; Which is above all rest and motion; through Which all rest and motion come; and from Which and in Which, and unto Which, and for the sake of Which they

τες αἱ ἰσότητες αἱ μεγάλειότηες τὰ μέτρα πάντα καὶ αἱ τῶν ὄντων ἀνωσύγια καὶ ἀγμονία καὶ χάσεις αἱ θάύρητες τὰ μέτρα πάντων ἐν καὶ ἀήθους αἱ συνθέσεις τῶν μερῶν αἱ παντὸς πλήθους ἑνώσεις αἱ τελεώτητες τῶν ὁλοτήτων, τὸ ποῖον τὸ ποσὸν τὸ πληκὸν τὸ ἀρετὸν αἱ συγκρίσεις αἱ διακρίσεις πᾶσα ἀμετρία πᾶν πέρας οἱ ὅροι πάντες αἱ τάξεις αἱ ὑπεροχαὶ τὰ στοιχεῖα τὰ εἶδη πᾶσα οὐσία πᾶσα δύναμις πᾶσα ἐνέργεια πᾶσα ἔξις πᾶσα αἰσθησις πᾶς λόγος πᾶσα νόησις πᾶσα ἐπαγγελία καὶ ἐπιστήμη πᾶσα ἔννοσις, καὶ [D] ἀλῶσις πᾶν ὄν ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀγαθῷ ἔστι καὶ εἰς τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐπιστρέφεται καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔστι καὶ γίνεται διὰ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἔστι καὶ γίνεται καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ πάντα ὅσα καὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κινεῖται καὶ συνέχεται καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔνεκα καὶ δι' αὐτό, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ πᾶσα ἀρχὴ παρὰθεληματικὴ τελικὴ ποιητικὴ εἰδικὴ στοιχειώδης, καὶ ἀλῶσις πᾶσα ἀρχὴ πᾶσα συνοβίον εἶπω, πάντα [708A] τὰ ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ πάντα τὰ οὐκ ὄντα ὑπερουσίως ἐν τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ἔστι πάντων ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρας ὑπερέχον καὶ

are. For from It and through It are all Being and life of spirit and of soul; and hence in the realm of nature magnitudes both small, co-equal and great; hence all the measured order and the proportions of things, which, by their different harmonies, commingle into wholes made up of co-existent parts; hence this universe, which is both One and Many; the conjunctions of parts together; the unities underlying all multiplicity, and the perfections of the individual wholes; hence Quality, Quantity, Magnitude and Infinitude; hence fusions and differentiations, hence all infinity and all limitation; all boundaries, ranks, transcendencies, elements and forms, hence all Being, all Power, all Activity, all Condition, all Perception, all Reason, all Intuition, all Apprehension, all Understanding, all Communion—in a word, all that is comes from the Beautiful and Good, hath its very existence in the Beautiful and Good, and turns towards the Beautiful and Good. Yea, all that exists and that comes into being, exists and comes into being because of the Beautiful and Good; and unto this Object all things gaze and by It are moved and are conserved, and for the sake of It, because of It and in It, existeth every originating Principle—be this Exem-

ὑπερέδης, ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ τὰ πάντα, ὡς πρὸς τὸν ὁ ἱεὺς λόγος.⁴ Πᾶν οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐκαστὸν καὶ ἀγαπᾶν καὶ δι' αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα καὶ τὰ ἥτις τῶν κρείττωνων ἐπιστητικῶς ἐξῶσι καὶ κοινωνικῶς τὰ ὁμόστοιχα τῶν ὁμοταγῶν καὶ τὰ κρείττω τῶν ἡττόνων προνομικῶς καὶ αὐτὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστα συνεκτικῶς, καὶ πάντα τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ἐκρέμενα ποιεῖ καὶ βούλεται πάντα ὅσα ποιεῖ καὶ βούλεται.

Pera, pp. 128-29; 131.

plar, or be it Final or Efficient or Formal or Material Cause—in a word, all Beginning, all Conservation, and all Ending, or (to sum it up) all things that have being are derived from the Beautiful and Good. Yea, and all things that have no substantial being super-essentially exist in the Beautiful and Good: this is the transcendent Beginning and the transcendent Goal of the universe. For, as Holy Scripture saith: "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."³ And hence all things must desire and yearn for and must love the Beautiful and the Good. Yea, and because of It and for Its sake the inferior things yearn for the superior under the mode of attraction, and those of the same rank have a yearning towards their peers under the mode of mutual communion; and the superior have a yearning towards their inferiors under the mode of providential kindness; and each hath a yearning towards itself under the mode of cohesion, and all things are moved by a longing for the Beautiful and Good, to accomplish every outward work and form every act of will. *D.N.*, IV, 10/705B-708B. Rolt, *Dionysius*, pp. 99-101.

APPENDIX II

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTIFICATION

Perhaps another century will unravel the mystery of the "Pseudo-Denis." In the meantime, for those who are interested in him, the problem of his identity both baffles and tantalizes. Until the end of the Middle Ages, there was no doubt about his person. He was the disciple of St. Paul, that Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.¹ In the West, he became also, at Hil-
duin's suggestion, St. Denis the martyred bishop of Paris,² and as such he was welcomed by the mediaeval theologians. Doubts about him finally arose among the humanists of the Renaissance as they looked with cold reason at his already mature theology conning supposedly from Apostolic times. These suspicions were first voiced by Lorenzo Valla (d. 1457), a papal secretary, and were greeted by Erasmus and Luther as another instance of the insufficiency of mediaeval learning.

Since that time, Denis has been an uncertainty. Not only his person but also the place and time of his writing are unknown. However, in 1895, Koch³ and Stiglmayr,⁴ as a result of separate studies, reached some new conclusions about him, or rather, about the Areopagitica. Their work gave direction to future scholarship

¹ Acts, XVII, 34.

² For an interpretation of the political schemes of Hil-
duin, cf. Max Buchner, *Die Areopagitika des Alikes Hil-
duin von St. Denis und ihr kirchenpolitischer Untergrund: Quellenforschungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte*, III (Paderborn, 1939). For a discussion of Hil-
duin's translation of the faulty Dionysian text sent to Louis the Pious in 827, cf. Gabriel Théry, O.P., "Recherches pour une édition grecque historique du Pseudo-Denys," *New Scholasticism*, III (1929), pp. 333-442, and *Hil-
duin, traducteur de Denys: Etudes dionysiennes*, I (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932).

³ Hugo Koch, S.J., "Proklos als Quelle des Pseudo-Dionysios in der Lehre vom Bosen," *Philologus* (1895), pp. 438-59, and "Der pseudo-epi-
graphischen Charakter der dionysischen Schriften," *Theologische Quartal-
schrift*, III (1895), pp. 353-421.

⁴ Josef Stiglmayr, S.J., *Das Aufkommen der pseudo-dionysischen Schriften und ihr Einwirken in die christliche Literatur bis zur Laterankonzil* (Frei-
kirch: 1895).

by placing Denis at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century. As ground for this assertion, they pointed to definite parallels between his doctrine and mode of expression and those of Plotinus and Proclus, and stressed particularly the likeness between the *De malorum substantiis* of Proclus and the section on evil in the *Divine Names*. They also indicated a vocabulary stemming from the Council of Chalcedon (451), and an obvious neutrality about Monophysite views, probably with an eye on the *Henotheikon* published by Zeno in 482. Finally, they referred to the singing of the Credo, "the hymn of catholic faith," mentioned in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.⁵ This custom was introduced only after the middle of the fifth century.

A glance at the studies made since 1895, shows them to be centered on the same issues, either to support or to reject the opinions of Koch and Stiglmayr. Some make of Denis a thoroughgoing Neoplatonist as well as a Monophysite heretic. Both Godet and Arnou, for instance, emphasize the Platonic character of his thought. Godet lists the following topics treated by Denis—all of them favorites of the Neoplatonists—activity, providence, divine justice, angelology (the idea of intermediaries), absolute unity from which the many proceed and to which they return, the three ways (purification, illumination, union), ecstasy, intuitive vision, the deification of man.⁶ Arnou adds: beauty, love, the metaphysics of light, the transcendence of God. Theodore of Asia and Proclus, he points out, deal with the attributes of God, while Porphyry has written a work entitled *On the Divine Names*.⁷

Others deny to Denis any direct kinship with Proclus or Iamblichus, or with questionable doctrine. Pera, Elorduy, and Phyllis Hodgson prefer to place him prior to Proclus, or to say that both draw their teaching, not from each other, but from a common earlier source.⁸ As to the liturgical hymn referred to in the *Ec-*

⁵ E.H., III, 2/425C; III, 3, 7/436C.

⁶ P. Godet, "Denys l'Aréopagite (le pseudo-)," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* IV, cols. 429-436 (Part I, 1922).

⁷ René Arnou, S.J., "Platonisme des pères," *Dict. théol. cath.*, XII (Part II, 1934), cols. 2285-87; 2314-16; 2363-67.

⁸ Cf. Pera, "Denys le mystique et le theoupylia," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, XXV (1936), pp. 43ff, D.N. *expositio*, pp.

ecclesiastical Hierarchy, while the general tradition is in favor of the Credo,⁹ Athenagoras holds that it is the Gloria,¹⁰ and Thibaut suggests that it is the diaconal litany joined to the pontifical prayer of the Syriac liturgy.¹¹ Although the year 476 can no longer be taken as the date for the introduction of the Credo, there is evidence that it was in general use in the East in the sixth century, so that those who side with tradition must put Denis at least that late. They may also cite in their behalf the first public reference made to him, in 533. However, those who lodge him at an earlier time ask how he could otherwise have had such widespread fame before the middle of the sixth century.

As to the identity of Denis as an individual, there are almost as many opinions as there are scholars. Stiglmayr, for example, makes him one with Severus of Antioch, a fiery Monophysite who, according to Stiglmayr's theory, rewrote his own works and published them under a pseudonym.¹² Lebon refutes this view conclusively by pointing to the differences in style, to Severus's manner of quoting Denis, and to the fact that Severus was a mere

156-59, with the remaining notes *quoad* "parallelia" for Ch. IV; Phyllis Hodgson, "Dionysius the Areopagite and Christian Mystical Tradition," *Contemporary Review*, CLXXVI (1949), pp. 281-85; Eleuterio Elorduy, S.J., "El problema del mal en Proclo y el Ps. Areopagita," *Pensamiento*, IX (1953), pp. 486ff.

⁹ Cf. *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, trans. Thomas Campbell, C.S.C. (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1954), pp. 154-56, n.103. Father Campbell gives the opinions of Jungmann, Hanssens, Duchesne, and De Stefani, all in support of the Credo.

¹⁰ Msgr. Athenagoras, *The True Author of the Writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite* (Athens: 1932), *A Liturgical Problem in Relation to the Great Problem of the Dionysian Works* (Alexandria: 1933), *Dionysius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria, Author of the Areopagite Writings* (Alexandria: 1934). These works written in Greek have not been consulted, but are referred to by Pera ("Denys le mystique," pp. 1, 27), and by Roques ("Denys l'Aréopagite," *Dict. de spiritualité*, XVIII-XIX, cols. 252-53).

¹¹ Jean-Baptiste Thibaut, "Le pseudo-Denis l'Aréopagite et la 'prière catholique' de l'église primitive," *Echos d'orient*, XX (1921), pp. 283-94.

¹² "Der sogenannte Dionysius Areopagita und Severus von Antiochen," *Scholastik*, III (1928), pp. 1-27; 161-89, and "Um eine Ehrenrettung des Severus von Antiochen," *Scholastik*, VII (1932), pp. 52-62; 296-312.

youth at the date suggested by Stiglmayr.¹³ Honigsmann claims that Denis is Peter the Iberian, also a Monophysite bishop, whose close associate, John the Eunuch, thus becomes Hierotheus, the friend and mentor of Denis.¹⁴ Besides a parallel of lives, Honigsmann finds an identity of feasts for Hierotheus and John, on October fourth. Although this proposal appears more acceptable than that of Stiglmayr, Engberding and Turolla reject it for three reasons: the calendar from which the simultaneity of feasts is taken dates from the year 1210 (only seven hundred years later!); the passages which Honigsmann presents as Monophysite are actually orthodox;¹⁵ and lastly, there is no evidence of literary activity on Peter's part.¹⁶

Pera, Athenagoras, Elorduy, and Ivanka find in Denis no tinge of heresy, but instead a marked opposition to Platonism and a strong defence of Christianity. Elorduy is persuaded that Proclus borrowed from and simplified the writings of Denis rather than the reverse; thus, he can put forward the holy master of Plotinus, Ammonius Saccas, as the true Denis—not a pagan as Zeller and Prächter maintain, but a fervent Christian.¹⁷

¹³ Jules Lebon, "Le pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite et Sévère d'Antioche," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, XXVI (1930), pp. 880-915; "Encore le pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite et Sévère d'Antioche," *Ibid.*, XXVIII (1932), pp. 298-313. Cf. also, René Devresse, "Denys l'Aréopagite et Sévère d'Antioche," *Archives d'hist. doct. et lit. du moyen-âge*, IV (1929), pp. 159-67.

¹⁴ E. Honigsmann, "Pierre l'Ibérien et les écrits du pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite," *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Belgique: Lettres et sciences morales et politiques*, XLVII (1952), fasc. 3.

¹⁵ D.N., II, 10/649A; Ep. IV/1072C. These texts are open to either interpretation.

¹⁶ H. Engberding, "Zur neuesten Identifizierung des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, LXIV (1956), pp. 218-27, and E. Turolla, "Ancora su Dionigi Areopagita," *Sophia*, XXIV (1956), pp. 270-72.

¹⁷ Elorduy, "El problema," pp. 481-89. Arguments for placing Denis before Proclus are based on the problems taken up by Denis—problems of the third century, and on the power of synthesis which Proclus shows. A. Tovar finds the thesis attractive but inconclusive until philological studies are made. Cf. "El Pseudo-Dionisio y Ammonio Sakkas," *Emerita*, XVI (1948), pp. 277-81, and the more recent article of Jesús Corella, "Sobre Amonio Sacas como autor do 'Corpus Dionysiacum,'" *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, XXIV (1958), pp. 56-64.

According to Athenagoras, he is Dionysius the Great, bishop of Alexandria at the close of the third century, while his predecessor, Clement, is Hierotheus.¹⁸ In support of this view is their similarity of doctrine, especially on the hierarchic ascent to God.¹⁹ Yet the same teachings are to be encountered in many other Church Fathers, and, as Cavallera points out, a man scarcely takes as a pseudonym his own name and remains unidentified.²⁰

Pera places Denis in the second half of the fourth century, makes him an inhabitant of Cappadocia and a disciple of St. Basil, if not St. Basil himself.²¹ As reason for this position, Pera refers to the "theologico-trinitarian" scheme of Basil and to his opposition to *ἡεουγία*, the struggle against God waged by Arians, pagans, and Gnostics. Denis is also concerned with both themes, while he teaches a mysticism very like that of Basil and his brother St. Gregory of Nyssa.²² However, there are many drawbacks to a Cappadocian Denis.²³ It is likewise true that although he undoubtedly fights paganism and heresy, Denis uses Basil's word *ἡεουγία* only once.²⁴

Today the field is still open. Other names are suggested: Sergius of Ressaia,²⁵ and St. Ephraem the Syrian,²⁶ for example. The following table will show most of the persons proposed since the time when Denis first came into public notice.²⁷

¹⁸ *A Liturgical Problem*, p. 24; cited by Pera, "Denys le mystique," p. 27.

¹⁹ Daniélou also points to the "analogie frappante" between the hierarchies of Denis and that of the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* of Clement. "Bulletin de littérature patristique," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XXXIII (1946), p. 127.

²⁰ F. Cavallera, S.J., "Du nouveau sur le Pseudo-Denys?" *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, XVII (1936), pp. 90-95.

²¹ "Denys le mystique," pp. 5-75. In support of this view, cf. Carlo Mazzanti, "Dionigi il mistico," *Revista di filosofia neo-scolastica*, XXIX (1937), pp. 413-21.

²² Daniélou indicates similarities. Cf. *Platonisme*, passim.

²³ Cavallera, "Du nouveau," p. 95; Daniélou, "Bulletin," p. 126.

²⁴ D.N., I, 8/597C.

²⁵ Irénée Hausherr, S.J., "Doutes au sujet du 'Divin Denys,'" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, II (1936), p. 489, n.1.

²⁶ Philippe Chevallier, O.S.B., et al. *Dionysica*, II, p. 1659. This proposal is based on philological similarities.

²⁷ The article of Roques, "Denys l'Aréopagite," gives the best general survey. *Dict. de spiritualité*, XVIII-XIX, cols. 249-57.

Century:	Candidate:	Proposed by:
1st-early 2nd	Dionysius the Areopagite	All (6th-15th Century)
2nd-early 3rd	Ammونیus Saccas	Elorduy (1944)
3rd	St. Denis of Paris	Hilduin (c. 832)
	St. Denis of Alexandria	Barthier (1740), Kanakis (1890), Athenagoras (1932)
4th	St. Ephraem the Syrian	Chevallier et al. (1950)
	St. Basil of Caesarea	Pera (1936), Mazzantini (1937)
	Synesius	Veyssière la Croze (1739)
5th	Peter Fullo	Lequien (1712)
	Peter the Iberian	Honigsmann (1952)
5th-early 6th	Sergius of Ressaia	Hausherr (1936), von Balthasar (1940)
	Severus of Antioch	Stiglmayr (1928)
	Stephen Bar Sadaili	Frothingham (1886)

Each candidate has something to recommend him, yet none can be accepted with assurance. So it is that Denis still hides under the disguise he chose about fourteen hundred years ago.

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