Athens Journal of Philosophy

Quarterly Academic Periodical, Volume 4, Issue 2
Published by the Athens Institute
URL: https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajphil Email: journals@atiner.gr
e-ISSN: 2732-9674 DOI: 10.30958/ajphil

June 2025

Athens Journal of Philosophy

Quarterly Academic Periodical, Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2025
Published by the Athens Institute
URL: https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajphil Email: journals@atiner.gr
e-ISSN: 2732-9674 DOI: 10.30958/ajphil

Athens Journal of Philosophy

Published by the Athens Institute

Editor

- **Dr. Robert Bishop,** Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Wheaton College, USA.

Co-Editors

- **Dr. Ori Soltes,** Head, Arts & Culture Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.
- **Dr. Mark Fagiano,** Deputy Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA.
- **Dr. Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva,** Deputy Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA

https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajphil/eb

Administration of the Journal

1. Vice President of Publications: Dr Zoe Boutsioli
2. General Managing Editor of all Athens Institute's Publications: Ms. Afrodete Papanikou
3. ICT Managing Editor of all Athens Institute's: Mr. Kostas Spyropoulos
4. Managing Editor of this Journal: Ms. Eirini Lentzou

Athens Institute is an Athens-based World Association of Academics and Researchers based in Athens. Athens Institute is an independent and non-profit Association with a Mission to become a forum where Academics and Researchers from all over the world can meet in Athens, exchange ideas on their research and discuss future developments in their disciplines, as well as engage with professionals from other fields. Athens was chosen because of its long history of academic gatherings, which go back thousands of years to Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum. Both these historic places are within walking distance from Athens Institute's downtown offices. Since antiquity, Athens was an open city. In the words of Pericles, Athens"…is open to the world, we never expel a foreigner from learning or seeing". ("Pericles' Funeral Oration", in Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War). It is Athens Institute's mission to revive the glory of Ancient Athens by inviting the World Academic Community to the city, to learn from each other in an environment of freedom and respect for other people's opinions and beliefs. After all, the free expression of one's opinion formed the basis for the development of democracy, and Athens was its cradle. As it turned out, the Golden Age of Athens was in fact, the Golden Age of the Western Civilization. Education and (Re)searching for the 'truth' are the pillars of any free (democratic) society. This is the reason why Education and Research are the two core words in Athens Institute's name.

The *Athens Journal of Philosophy* (AJPHIL) is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of philosophy. Many of the papers in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored by Philosophy Unit of the Athens Institute. All papers are subject to Athens Institute's Publication Ethical Policy and Statement.

Athens Journal of Philosophy
ISSN NUMBER: 2732-9674 - DOI: 10.30958/ajphil
Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2025
Download the entire issue (PDF)

Athens Journal of Philosophy

Editorial and Reviewers' Board

Editor

- **Dr. Robert Bishop,** Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Wheaton College, USA.

Co-Editors

- **Dr. Ori Soltes,** Head, Arts & Culture Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.
- **Dr. Mark Fagiano,** Deputy Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA.
- **Dr. Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva,** Deputy Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA

Editorial Board

- **Dr. Alberto Castelli**, Professor, University of Ferrara, Italy. (Political Philosophy)
- **Dr. Ewa Bobrowska,** Academic Member, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland. (Contemporary Philosophy, Philosophy of Art, Aesthetics)
- **Dr. Kabita Das,** Assistant Professor, Utkal University, India. (Ancient Greek Philosophy)
- Dr. Maria Margaroni, Academic Member, Athens Institute & Associate Professor University of Cyprus. (Feminist Philosophy)
- **Dr. Antonio dos Santos Queirós,** Researcher, Lisbon University, Portugal. (Political Philosophy and Ethics)

- **Vice President of Publications:** Dr Zoe Boutsioli
- **General Managing Editor of all Athens Institute's Publications:** Ms. Afrodete Papanikou
- **ICT Managing Editor of all Athens Institute's Publications:** Mr. Kostas Spyropoulos
- **Managing Editor of this Journal:** Ms. Eirini Lentzou

Reviewers' Board
Click Here

President's Message

All Athens Institute's publications including its e-journals are open access without any costs (submission, processing, publishing, open access paid by authors, open access paid by readers etc.) and is independent of presentations at any of the many small events (conferences, symposiums, forums, colloquiums, courses, roundtable discussions) organized by Athens Institute throughout the year and entail significant costs of participating. The intellectual property rights of the submitting papers remain with the author. Before you submit, please make sure your paper meets the basic academic standards, which includes proper English. Some articles will be selected from the numerous papers that have been presented at the various annual international academic conferences organized by the different divisions and units of the Athens Institute for Education and Research. The plethora of papers presented every year will enable the editorial board of each journal to select the best, and in so doing produce a top-quality academic journal. In addition to papers presented, Athens Institute will encourage the independent submission of papers to be evaluated for publication.

The current issue is the second of the fourth volume of the *Athens Journal of Philosophy* (AJPHIL), by the published by the Philosophy Unit of ATINER

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute

Athens Institute for Education and Research

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

20th Annual International Conference on Philosophy
26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece

The Philosophy Unit of Athens Institute organizes its 20th **Annual International Conference on Philosophy, 26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts. The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers of all areas of philosophy and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (https://www.atiner.gr/2025/FORM-PHI.doc).

Academic Members Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Patricia Hanna**, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Athens Institute, ex-Dean & Professor Emerita, University of Utah, USA.
- **Dr. William O'Meara,** Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.
- **Dr. Mark Fagiano**, Deputy Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA.

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **DEADLINE CLOSED**
- Acceptance of Abstract: **4 Weeks after Submission**
- Submission of Paper: **DEADLINE CLOSED**

Social and Educational Program

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Athens Institute.

- Greek Night Entertainment (This is the official dinner of the conference)
- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit

Conference Fees

Conference fees vary from 400€ to 2000€
Details can be found at: https://www.atiner.gr/fees

10th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology
26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece

The Humanities & Education Division of Athens Institute is organizing its 10th **Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology, 26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece**. The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers of Religion, Theology and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair of a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (https://www.atiner.gr/2025/FORM-REL.doc).

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **DEADLINE CLOSED**
- Acceptance of Abstract: **4 Weeks after Submission**
- Submission of Paper: **DEADLINE CLOSED**

Academic Member Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. William O'Meara,** Academic Member, Athens Institute & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.

Social and Educational Program

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Athens Institute.

- Greek Night Entertainment (This is the official dinner of the conference)
- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
- Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

More information can be found here: https://www.atiner.gr/social-program

Conference Fees

Conference fees vary from 400€ to 2000€
Details can be found at: https://www.atiner.gr/fees

Athens Journal of Philosophy - Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2025 – Pages 67-82

Evaluating Joseph Fletcher's Affirmation that Agapeic Love is Justice

*By William O'Meara**

This paper has five parts: (1) A First Defense of Fletcher's Thesis that Agapeic Love is Justice: This section considers the almost immediate objection to this claim since justice demands punishment whereas love might not punish but forgive a criminal. In response, the paper notes that Fletcher begins with Augustine's important affirmation that agapeic love needs a high degree of thoughtfulness and prudence, thereby distinguishing between emotional love and agapeic love such that whereas emotional love, for example, by a parent might be willing to forgive an adult child for a felony crime, agapeic love for a convicted felon can recognize that punishment is needed both for the felon to recognize the seriousness of one's crime and for society to be protected against such a felon returning too easily to the repetition of such crimes. This section also explores the acceptance of the Aristotelian Principle noted by John Rawls which is crucial in helping to determine how an adult criminal is to be treated in response to that person's responsibility. (2) A Fuller Development of Fletcher's Thesis that Agapeic Love is Justice: Fletcher strongly agrees with Augustine's important affirmation that agapeic love needs to be diligent love, love that is identical with practical wisdom. Consequently, even if we were to grant the approach of Augustine and Aquinas that justice is giving to each person what is their due, Fletcher points out that agapeic love needs to involve practical wisdom, that is, prudence, for a proper understanding of the many rights and obligations of individuals and groups in society. This prudent, agapeic love loves one's neighbor as one loves oneself by not offending against the commandments, noted by Paul in Romans 13, 8-20, not committing adultery, not committing murder, not stealing, not giving false witness and not coveting. Such love is noted by Paul to be the fulfilment of the law. (3) Reflections on Korsgaard, Outka, Confucius, and Mencius: First, we examine Korsgaard's argument that even familial love for one's child necessarily implies that the parent should have justice for all children, indeed, for all persons. Consequently, this section shall argue all the more so that agapeic love, which involves at least love of all others such that their life, rationality, freedom, and dignity need to be affirmed and respected, necessarily asserts the intrinsic dignity of all others who can be loved as the self loves itself. Second, we examine the analysis of Gene Outka who agrees with Fletcher's reading of Romans 13: 8-10 that love of neighbor involves not harming one's neighbor by violating any of tencommandments condemning actions against one's neighbor. Third, we consider the different approaches of Confucius and Mencius to justice and love and favor the approach of Mencius that great evils can only be overcome and transformed by great love. (4) Reflections on Frankena, Outka, Haring, Augustine, and Aquinas: This section evaluates the argument of Frankena that both the affirmation of persons through love towards them as having dignity and the affirmation of equal treatment of all through justice are two principles of moral philosophy irreducible to each other. This section further uses the analysis of Outka to support our evaluation of Frankena. Finally, in section (5), the paper

*Professor, James Madison University, USA.

considers agapeic love as a potential in all natural loves and uses the analyses of Haring, Augustine, and Aquinas to evaluate the overemphasis in Christian thought that agapeic love is especially to be commended in love as self-sacrifice. This section will argue, instead, that in all forms of human love noted by C. S. Lewis, whether affection, friendship, eros, or charity, we can find a realistic potential for agapeic love even if a person does not believe in God. There is no need to conceive of all human action as reducible to selfish action. Human action can take the generous form of loving one's neighbor, even one's enemy, as one loves oneself. For Augustine and Aquinas, such love comes first before explicit love of God in the order of psychological learning. Loving another self-sacrificially does not mean that one loves another more than oneself, rather one is loving the moral good of both the self and the other.

Keywords: *love, justice, Augustine, Aquinas, Mencius*

A First Defense of Fletcher's Thesis that Love is Justice

In Chapter V of *Situation Ethics*, Joseph Fletcher argues that "Love and justice are the same, for justice is love distributed, nothing else" (Fletcher, 87). The immediate doubt arises in the reader's mind that justice and love are especially distinct since the judge in a criminal conviction needs to punish the felon in accord with law even though the parents of the adult felon wish that the judge would have mercy and forgiveness for their adult child. This objection to the claim that love and justice are the same can be quickly answered by Fletcher since he is not talking about emotional love but about agapeic love. For when the gospels quote the Greek Septuagint about the two greatest commandments about love of God being the First and love of neighbor as oneself being the Second, what is being commanded is not emotional love such as filial love between friends and not erotic love of another based on the desire to be one with the beauty of another, but rather agapeic love, that is, the general will of one person for another and for others generally that wishes and wills to do that which benefits the other or others (Greek Septuagint, Internet Archive). Human agapeic love of another should be like God's love since the Gospel according to Luke has Jesus affirm that we should be compassionate for others as God is compassionate for them:

> If you love those who love you, why should you be commended? Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, why should you be commended? Even sinners do that. If you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, why should you be commended? Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be paid back in full. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend expecting nothing in return. If you do, you will have a great reward. You will be acting the way children of the Most High act, for he is kind to ungrateful and wicked people. Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate (Luke, 6:32-36) (Common English Bible biblegateway.com).

A person is commanded to love another as oneself not because that love will be returned, bringing benefit back to one's own self, but because this is the way that

God wills the good of another. Consequently, Fletcher in his acceptance of his religious understanding of agapeic love can affirm that agapeic love of the felon does not simply forgive the felon because a person who commits a felony crime will much too easily return to committing felony crimes unless the felon receives an appropriate punishment such as imprisonment.

Willing the good of another is dependent upon the acceptance of the Aristotelian Principle noted by Rawls (1971, p. 427). The good of any adult person first and foremost must be dependent upon the full responsibility of that adult not to be dependent upon others as a child would be but to take appropriate responsibility for one's actions insofar as their actions are the result of their own knowledge and free choice. So, for example, an adult who cheats at winning a lottery is not to be rewarded with the unfairly won riches of that lottery but rather is to be punished by the required return of those unfairly won benefits and by being restrained from easily corrupting a lottery again. Willing the good of another who has corruptly won a lottery means that the one who loves with agapeic love the good of this felon ought to will that the felon learn to take responsibility for one's criminal actions and to accept full responsibility for one's felony in accord with the laws of one's state. Willing with agapeic love the good of another requires that one will the proper development of the felon, that is, the development of moral responsibility for one's actions, including both true knowledge and habitual voluntary choice of what is morally good and avoidance of what is morally evil. Mere forgiveness of another's felony crimes would actually corrupt in our society the good habits of true knowledge and responsible choice of what is truly good.

A Fuller Development of Fletcher's Thesis that Agapeic Love is Justice

In his key chapter which claims that love is justice, Fletcher invokes the need for practical wisdom to be fully involved with agapeic love (Fletcher, 87). We remember the general thesis of Aristotle that virtue is "the habit of acting according to the mean between too much and too little, relative to the individual, as the person of practical wisdom would decide" (Aristotle 2009, Bk. 6, Ch. 2). The practice of every virtue necessarily includes the virtue of practical wisdom. For example, the practice of temperance involves the practical wisdom of neither indulging in excessive fulfilment of one's appetites nor in the foolish neglecting of eating in such a way that one neglects to nourish the heathy development of one's physical health, and the virtue of courage involves the practical wisdom of neither being too rash nor of being too pusillanimous in defending one's life or honor. When I teach about Aristotle's ethics and its development in the history of philosophy, I have always mentioned to my students that Augustine and Aquinas can be understood to add the following understanding to Aristotle's famous definition, "as the person of generous [agapeic] love would decide" so that the resulting definition becomes "the habit of acting according to the mean between too much and too little, relative to the individual, as the person of practical wisdom and general [agapeic] love would decide." The deeper connection that Fletcher offers really makes me think: agapeic love necessarily involves practical wisdom. For it is precisely because one loves

one's neighbor as one loves oneself, that is, with agapeic love that one needs to be practically wise in understanding the rich and complicated effects both upon one's neighbor as well as upon oneself. For example, if one's good friend has deeply offended me, it actually might be premature for the self who has been injured to assume that forgiveness should be immediately given to one's best friend. It could very well be that the friend who has done the strong offense and the person who has been deeply offended both need time to reflect upon the serious harm that has been done in order that when the agapeic forgiveness is offered and received, it occurs neither too easily nor too soon. If forgiveness is offered too easily or too soon, the one who has committed the offense against the friend may not realize the profound harm that has been done. When and how forgiveness should be offered must be most prudently calculated for the individuals involved so that both may grow in proper love of each other and of themselves.

An objection might be raised against Fletcher's strong connection between love and practical wisdom, namely that a person can be practically wise about the appropriate means to a chosen end without a general agapeic love. For example, a person can be practically wise about making a careful plan to commit a bank robbery to attain the goal of getting a big cash payout. The answer to this objection is to admit that, yes, a person does not need agapeic love as their goal of life in order to plan a practically wise way of robbing a bank. However, a would-be bank robber does need a keen interest in and commitment to one's goal. In a similar manner, if a person's general goal of life is to live with agapeic love others as one loves oneself, then it still follows that one needs to be practically wise both about self and the others in order to fulfill that goal of agapeic love of others and self. If a person did not have such love of others as they love themselves, it would be most difficult to pay attention to all the details of the life of another or even to one's own life. Without such sustaining love, a person would not be properly motivated to pay attention to self and others in the complexity of our lives.

Fletcher can be understood to be making that very point when he comments on Augustine's affirmation that the practice of love requires "more than good will, and can only be done by a high degree of thoughtfulness and prudence" (Fletcher, 87). We may note the famous quotation, "Love, and do what you like" (Augustine). Augustine is not saying, "Ama, et quod vis fac," but rather "Dilige, et quod vis fac." Of course, we get the English word 'diligent' from the Latin 'diligo,' but the Latin root is quite rich, meaning "I esteem, prize, love, have regard for" (https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/diligo). Furthermore, verb forms of the Latin word 'diligo' are used in the Last Supper discourse of Jesus to his disciples: "Ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos. ↔ Love one another, as I have loved you" *(diligo in English - Latin-English Dictionary | Glosbe* https://glosbe.com/la/en/diligo). Of course, the Greek word for 'love' here is a form of *agapao* (John 13 Greek interlinear, parsed and per word translation, free online (abarim-publications.com)). Agapeic love is diligent love, paying significant practical attention to both the other and self so that love is truly realized. One cannot esteem highly either the other or oneself unless one is attentively and practically wise in responding to the needs of the other and oneself. Consequently, Fletcher affirms, "*Christian* love and *Christian* prudence are one and the same, since they both go out to others" (Fletcher, 87-88).

Consequently, even if we were to grant the approach of Augustine and Aquinas that justice is giving to each person what is their due, Fletcher points out that agapeic love needs to involve practical wisdom, that is, prudence, for a proper understanding of the many rights and obligations of individuals and groups in society, writing:

> Agapeic love is not a one-to-one affair. (That would be *philia* or *eros*.) Love uses a shotgun, not a rifle. Faced as we always are in the social complex with a web of duties, that is, giving what is "due" to others, love is compelled to be calculating, careful, prudent, distributive (Fletcher, 89).

Furthermore, Fletcher affirms that what is due to each person whether neighbor or self is agapeic love, citing Romans 13:8 (Fletcher, 89). However, Fletcher only uses the one verse, but it is worthwhile to quote the whole passage:

> [8]Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. [9]For this, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," "Thou shalt not covet," and if there be any other commandment, all are briefly comprehended in this saying, namely: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [10]Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Agapeic love is first to be understood as not doing to your neighbor what you would not want done to yourself, namely, namely avoiding harms such as adultery, murder, stealing, and bearing false witness. Quite simply, agapeic love is justice as we usually understand it since justice first and foremost involves not harming the life, dignity, capabilities, and wellbeing of others. But even more so, justice helps the others when the others cannot help themselves. Since children cannot teach themselves the complex education needed to be fully functioning adults, since drowning persons cannot save themselves, and since people in Vermont can neither rescue themselves from a torrential flood nor repair the damages from that flood by themselves, we all have a positive duty in justice so far as we are able to help these people when they cannot do it by themselves. Agapeic love does not include the positive obligation to give benefits to others when those others are fully capable of providing for themselves. Agapeic love is not filial love which can go above and beyond what would be required in justice, for example, in helping to provide benefits to one's children and grandchildren for college education and even beyond that in graduate and professional education.

It would be correct to affirm that filial love and erotic love are not justice since such loves can freely take on obligations above and beyond mere justice unto others, but it is not correct to affirm that agapeic love is not justice. For agapeic love is, as Fletcher has argued and this paper has developed his thought, both not harming the others as the self would not want to be harmed and both helping the others when the others cannot help themselves. Agapeic love is not meant to turn the others into children who are dependent upon others, rather agapeic love both avoids harming others and assists others in becoming fully functioning adults when they cannot do so by themselves. Agapeic love is justice.

We must return to the matter of felony criminals and raise the strong objection that retributive justice goes beyond agapeic love since such justice broadly involves punishment first before any consideration of an agapeic love that might lead to forgiveness. This is a most difficult issue, but we may argue that agapeic love prohibits any punishment that would degrade the felon or even make the felon into a person who would lose the power both to repent oneself for one's wrong-doing and to turn from destructive moral behavior and towards reconstructive moral behavior. Fletcher is holding that agapeic love is justice. Such agapeic love creates the broad categories within which felony actions against society are to be judged. Such love, that is, such justice, first and foremost rules out an unjust prosecutor, an unjust judge, an unjust jury, and unjust laws such as slavery and discrimination. Such agapeic love, such justice, must respect any person accused of a crime as innocent until proven guilty and must respect the capability of the convicted felon to undergo moral transformation if it is possible. Excessive punishments such as solitary isolation, for example, must be avoided precisely because the punishment is so degrading. Whether agapeic love which is justice should rule out the death penalty is a most serious issue, but it does not need to be decided within the broad considerations of this paper. We can at least say agapeic love prohibits an unjust prosecutor who hides evidence, prohibits an unjust judge whose decisions always favor the prosecutor, prohibits an unjust jury which is corrupted by bribes, prohibits unjust laws which are prejudiced against any minority, and prohibits unjust punishments which far exceed the damage involved in any crime. Whether the death penalty is an unjust punishment is an important key issue, but the broad principle of agapeic love is that unjust punishments must be avoided, and capital punishment is a matter for another paper.

Reflections on Korsgaard, Outka, Confucius and Mencius

Korsgaard has a most interesting analysis of whether or not familial love should exist without justice being involved. She considers the case of whether a parent whose child needs an organ transplant should be guided by the parent's love for the child to consider profound harm to another child by harvesting the needed organ. Korsgaard argues that even familial love for one's child necessarily implies that the parent should have justice for all children, indeed, for all persons. She writes;

> [I]f I were prepared to kill other people's children to get their organs in order to save the life of my child, that would reveal something amiss, not merely with my general moral character and my attitude towards the other children, but with my attitude toward my own child. (…) it would be as if I felt that my child's right to her own organs derived from my love for her, and that would be the wrong way of caring about *her* (Korsgaard 2006, p. 73).

If Korsgaard is correct in her argument that true familial love for another necessarily must value the humanity, that is, the life, rationality, freedom and dignity of that other, then all the more so must we argue that agapeic love, which involves at least love of all others such that their life, rationality, freedom, and dignity need to be

affirmed and respected, necessarily asserts the intrinsic dignity of all others who can be loved as the self loves itself. That is to say, one would not want to harm others in their life, rationality, freedom and dignity just as one would not want others or even oneself to harm one's own life, rationality, freedom and dignity. Furthermore, a person should not want to neglect to help other persons in desperate need and who cannot help themselves just as that person should never will that the other persons should neglect the original person in desperate need and who cannot help themself. Agapeic love is justice.

Gene Outka offers us analyses of agapeic love as universal and therefore including justice in his important essay, "Universal Love and Impartiality" (Outka, 1992). He begins by considering the two great commandments as Fletcher also does, love of God with all one's being and love of neighbor as oneself and immediately affirms, "To love one's neighbor is to aid a person or persons in distress" (Outka, 1). He notes immediately that love of neighbor involves not harming one's neighbor by violating any of ten commandments which condemn actions against one's neighbor. However, Fletcher more importantly quotes *Romans* 13:8 which we gave in full above in *Romans* 13, 8-10, in order to emphasize that agapeic love avoids harming others. Outka, however, emphasizes agapeic love as aiding persons in distress. In contrast with Outka who assumes that only the human commitment to God's love of all created beings requires a person to come to aid of people in desperate need, this paper has argued that love of neighbor as oneself requires us to come to aid of such people in distress. For any person who was in desperate need such as a person who is drowning would reasonably will that others should help them survive the danger. Consequently, as one loves oneself, one should also love others, thereby being willing to help them when they are in distress and cannot help themselves. Outka especially views the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 28-37) and the command of Jesus that people love their enemies (Matthew 5:43) as the agapeic, that is, universal, love that is commanded by Jesus. The words of Jesus are clear:

> 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor[i] and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:43-48).

The command of Jesus that people be perfect as God is perfect is not an imperative that people need to reach an impossible perfection in behavior that only God is capable of. The scholarly analysis of "be perfect' is quite clear in avoiding perfectionism as Fred B. Craddock, professor of preaching and New Testament at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, comments:

> It helps to attend more carefully to the word "perfect." The word does not mean morally flawless but rather mature, complete, full grown, not partial. Luke uses the word to speak of fruit maturing (8:14) and a course being finished (13:32. John uses it to describe the fully realized unity of Jesus' followers (17:23) and James employs the

> same word to characterize works as the completion of faith (2:22). Paul's favorite use of the word is to portray the quality of maturity among Christians (I Cor. 2:6; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:12, 15). However, this command to be perfect comes most clearly into focus and into the realm of reasonable expectation when viewed within its context. First, the call to perfection comes within a discussion of relationships. Second, Jesus rejects for his followers relationships that are based on the double standard of love for the neighbor and hatred for the enemy. . . . God does not react, but acts out of love toward the just and unjust, the good and the evil. God is thus portrayed as perfect in relationships, that is, complete: not partial but impartial. God's perfection in this context is, therefore, love offered without partiality (Craddock, 1990, p. 123).

God's agapeic love for humanity is impartial, universal, and human agape for fellow humans, including oneself, should also be impartial, universal, even for one's enemies. The problem immediately deepens now for Fletcher's affirmation that agapeic love is justice. We have previously argued in these pages that agapeic love does not require that the person who has been grievously harmed by a felony crime needs to let go of retributive justice. For the felon may need punishment precisely because society needs to protect itself against further terrible needs that might be committed by the convicted felon. Also, the felon may not even be capable of accepting universal love or even forgiveness when the felon is first convicted. But we have argued that agapeic love of universal respect needs to be involved in the whole process of arrest, trial, conviction, and punishment.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a profound tension between justice and agapeic love which we can highlight by focusing upon the different responses of Confucius and his great commentator, Mencius, in how they advise us to respond to evil. Confucius advises responding to evil with justice whereas Mencius advice responding to evil with love. Here is a key question to Confucius and his reply:

> Someone inquired: "What do you think of 'requiting injury with kindness'?" Confucius said: "How will you then requite kindness? Requite injury with justice and kindness with kindness" (DeBary and Bloom 2000, pp. 28-29).

In contrast with Confucius, here is the approach of Mencius:

> Mencius said, "Benevolence subdues its opposite just as water subdues fire. Those, however, who now-a-days practise benevolence do it as if with one cup of water they could save a whole waggon-load of fuel which was on fire, and when the flames were not extinguished, were to say that water cannot subdue fire. This conduct, moreover, greatly encourages those who are not benevolent. 'The final issue will simply be this--the loss of that small amount of benevolence (Mencius,ch. 22).'

It is clear that both Confucius and Mencius have distinguished love from justice, Confucius recommending responding to evil with justice and Mencius recommending responding to evil with a lot of love. Nevertheless, it is the argument of this paper that agapeic love and justice are the same. For if the criminal has offended against society and is not ready to repent of their criminal actions and to transform both their heart and actions into behaviors that fully respect others, agapeic love requires that society should not out of love simply forgive the actions

of the criminal, but out of love administer justice in the form of punishment since society itself needs to be loved and protected. However, if the criminal has offended against society and is ready to repent sincerely of their criminal misdeeds and to transform their heart and actions, then it is not irrational to offer the criminal agapeic love that forgives the criminal and welcomes the criminal gradually back into full community with society. Agapeic love should not be irrationally foolish but practically wise, as Fletcher has argued. Agapeic love should be diligent, not careless. However, if some in society would argue that criminal need only be responded to with justice by society and never with agapeic love, then Fletcher and Augustine would respond that such an interpretation of justice does not recognize that the fundamental moral responsibility is that people should never will to harm others or themselves. Rather people should be willing to advance the good of others and themselves when people themselves cannot lift themselves up from their terrible moral misdeeds. We can certainly understand that people and their families who have been tremendously harmed by horrible crimes need not to be directly involved in either the punishment or the rehabilitation of criminals, but the attitude of society does not have to coincide with the attitude of those who have been terribly harmed by criminals. As Mencius has affirmed, great evils can only be overcome and transformed by great love. If greater and lesser crimes are only to be responded to with harsher or lesser penalties, then the resulting society would be a society in which retributive justice has gone to an extreme. However, when agapeic love informs the heart and soul of justice, then such diligent, practically wise agapeic love avoids the extremes of too mild justice and too harsh justice.

Reflections on Frankena, Outka, Haring, Augustine, and Aquinas

William Frankena has argued that the formation of the value of persons is insufficient to give a foundation to moral philosophy. Ethics needs, he argues, both the affirmation of the need to value persons and of the need to value impartial consideration of all persons. He states that his theory of obligation "takes as basic the principle of beneficence . . . and the principle of justice, now identified as equal treatment" (Frankena 1963, p. 52). He argues that both principles are needed, writing:

> For the principle of beneficence does not tell us how we are to distribute goods and evils; it only tells us to produce the one and prevent the other. When conflicting claims are made upon us, the most it could do . . . is to instruct us to promote the greatest balance of good over evil, and . . . we need something more. This is where a principle of justice must come in Frankena (1963, p. 48).

By justice here Frankena means distributive justice in "treating human beings as *equals* in the sense of distributing good and evil among them, excepting perhaps in the case of punishment . . . ." (Frankena 1963, p. 49). He qualifies this principle as only a prima facie one by noting that the principle of benevolence may require us to overrule it sometimes. Hence, in order to avoid harming handicapped children by spending only an equal amount of money for them that a school district would spend

upon able-bodied children, the school district should spend a higher amount of money upon handicapped children towards the goal of giving them similar benefits from their education insofar as it is possible, "helping them according to need" (Frankena 1963, p. 51). Most importantly, Frankena notes that what distributive justice needs is "good will, clarity of thought, and knowledge of the relevant facts" (Frankena 1963, p. 52).

It is clear that Frankena here is insisting upon the virtue of practical wisdom in the practice of distributive justice, and this paper will now use the importance of practical wisdom in the practice of agapeic love as a basis for critiquing Frankena. We may take his principle of beneficence as roughly equivalent to the principle of loving one's neighbor as one loves oneself since loving necessarily involves both avoiding harm to any persons and helping them seeking goods in their lives when they cannot achieve them through their own actions as mature adults. Consequently, we can evaluate Frankena's position on the foundations of moral philosophy through the emphasis in this paper on Fletcher's and Augustine's recognition that the Christian command to love persons, whether in self or others needs to be a diligent, practically wise loving. If a person were to love oneself more than others, such a love would be unwise in neglecting the needs of others. Likewise, if a person were to love others more than oneself, such a love would be unwise in neglecting the needs of self. We are, of course, considering ordinary interactions between self and others. In extraordinary circumstances, we all can understand and approve the love of parents for their children when the children are starving. It is not an unreasonable choice for parents to deny themselves what they need in order for them to help their children to survive. In a similar manner, we can affirm that it is practically wise to spend more money upon the education of handicapped children because their needs can be so great. But even here, a school district is not to neglect the normal education endeavor to educate able-bodied children according to their needs.

The evaluation of Frankena, therefore, in this paper is that practical wisdom involved in beneficence leads to fair treatment of persons, allowing at times unequal treatment of persons based upon detailed knowledge of people and their needs so that equality of results can be aimed for. We are to strive out of benevolence to bring about equal opportunity of children's abilities even if it at times requires more educational dollars and effort to educate handicapped children, for example. As Outka has argued, the principle of equality of justice is fundamentally an uplifting of the dignity of persons. He writes:

> Most fundamentally, the priority of equal regard elevates the dignity of persons. Persons are made in the image of God. That is to say, all human persons have irreducible value independent of assessment of their beliefs or actions. Their "worth and dignity" is always enjoined; it is "independent and unalterable" (Outka 1977, p. 13).

Frankena would object to my evaluation, writing:

> [T]hat justice is built into the law of love [of God and neighbor], since, in its second clause, it requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves or equally with ourselves. However, if we so construe the law of love, it is really a twofold principle, telling us to be

> benevolent to all and to be so equally in all cases. Then, the ethics of love is not purely agapistic and it identical with the view that I have been proposing (Frankena 1963, p. 58).

While some Christian authors present agapeic love as a special revelation available only to those gifted with religious belief, Frankena notes that some lower, more basic form of morality must be available to those outside this revelation. For Paul writes in *Romans* 2:14 that Gentiles who do not have such a revelation nevertheless have a fundamental moral law in their hearts. It is precisely here that this paper further evaluates the analysis of Frankena. As Fletcher himself has pointed out, Paul also writes in *Romans* which we have already quoted fully but need to repeat:

> [8]Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. [9]For this, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," "Thou shalt not covet," and if there be any other commandment, all are briefly comprehended in this saying, namely: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [10]Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (*Romans* 13:8-10).

This quotation from Paul is quite clear in affirming that the first obligation of agapeic love is to avoid doing harm to others as we would will that others not do harm to us and also that this obligation includes the requirement that we should will to help and benefit others when they are incapable of helping and benefiting themselves just as we would will that others help us as adults when we cannot help and benefit ourselves, for example, in a natural disaster whether it is the others or even ourselves who are in desperate need of help and benefit.

In support of interpreting the law written in the hearts of Gentiles as the law of love, we may turn to Bernhard Haring, a 20th century Catholic moral theologian, who offers us the commentary from Augustine and Aquinas on this important passage from 1 John, chapter 4:

> [6]We have known and have believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them. [17]This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. [18]There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. [19]We love because God first loved us. [20]Those who say, "I love God" and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don't love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! [21]This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also (1 Jn 4:16-21).

Verse 19 clearly says that people can love because God loved people first. He notes that Aquinas calls this love referred to in verse 19, which God first gives, the metaphysical priority of God's love. God's love is the original source which enables people to love. However, in the learning of how we come to receive and give love, both Augustine and Aquinas say that there must first be in our human development

some experience of true love of neighbor whom we do see before we can love the God whom we do not see. Augustine affirms this point most clearly:

> The love of God is first in the order of precept but the love of brother is the first in the order of action. ... Love, therefore, your neighbor, and look into yourself to see where this love of neighbor comes from. There you will see God insofar as you are capable. Begin, therefore, by loving your neighbour, share your bread with the hungry, open your house to the roofless, clothe the naked and despise no one of the same human race (Augustine, Tract. XVII in Jo. Ev.6ff, PL35, 1531).10 Thomas Aquinas is equally clear: "In the order of perfection and dignity, love of God comes first before love of neighbor. But in the order of origin and disposition, love of neighbor precedes the act of loving God" (Summa Theologica I II, q 68, a 8 ad 2) (Haring 1982, p. 427).

Augustine and Aquinas have both affirmed that we first psychologically learn to love our neighbor before we love God, the metaphysical origin of all created love. Augustine is quite emphatic that this love of neighbor is a generous, agapeic love through which a person shares one's bread with the hungry, shares one's shelter with the homeless, and gives clothing to the naked. This agapeic love of neighbor is meant to be universal, not partial and restricted only to one's family or people, but to anyone of the human species.

Agapeic Love as a Potential in All Natural Loves

Despite this paper's defense of agapeic love, especially despite Augustine's and Aquinas's understanding of agapeic love as psychologically learned first through receiving and giving love of neighbor there is the problem that arises from conceptualizing agapeic love as a love through self-sacrifice. For example, here is such an emphasis upon self-sacrifice in agapeic love:

> Agape – is a very well-known word that is commonly translated as love. However, it is more specific than our word love because it means a very specific aspect of love that involves preferring and/or esteeming another above oneself or in contrast to another or above all else depending on context. In light of this, it is often associated with selfless or self-sacrificing love both of which are results of preferring or esteeming another above one's self.
>
> . . . When Agape is used as love that denotes preference of someone over your own wants and needs (self sacrificially) it gets an even fuller description by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 (The Logos of Agape, 1).

In defense of Augustine's and Aquinas's analysis of neighbor love as psychologically learned prior to learning about God's self-sacrificial love, we need a closer analysis of the four kinds of natural love through which we can find therein elements of self-sacrifice. C. S. Lewis has five key chapters in his book, *The Four Loves:* Likings and Loves for the Sub-Human, Affection, Friendship, Eros, and Charity (Lewis 1960, iii).

In all five forms of love, despite the title of *The Four* Loves, we can find elements of agapeic love. In likings of people for the subhuman, we can find the

example of a human who would risk their life in order to rescue a pet from danger. In the love rooted even in mere affection for each other, it is not inconceivable that those who have affection for each other might, indeed, risk their lives for each other. In the love rooted in deep friendship for each, it is commonplace that such friends would be willing to risk their lives for each other. Even in the love rooted in eros for the attainment of something beautiful, it is also apparent that the lover of a great work of art could risk their life to preserve and protect such a beautiful reality so that others could also appreciate it and treasure it. Finally, of course, in love rooted in charity, for example, in love for one's enemies, we have seen the affirmation of Mencius that it takes a great deal of generous love of enemies to extinguish hatred just as it takes a great deal of water to put out a raging fire of a wagonload of wood.

In all forms of human love, whether affection, friendship, eros, or charity, we can find agapeic love even without explicit love of God. All moral choices involve the setting aside of one impulse, such as the impulse to be lazy or selfish, for the sake of a better impulse such as the impulse to be industrious or generous. There is no need to conceive of all human action as reducible to selfish action. Human action can take the generous form of loving one's neighbor, even one's enemy, as one loves oneself. For Augustine and Aquinas, such love comes first in the order of psychological learning. Loving another self-sacrificially does not mean that one loves another more than oneself, rather one is loving the moral good of both the self and the other. To risk giving one's physical life for the sake of preserving the physical life of another does not mean that one hates one's own moral self but rather is working for the highest stages of becoming the ideal moral self that one wishes to become. As humans we are mortal beings, and it is not unnatural for a person to risk their life for the sake of saving the physical life of another. Such an action is action of the highest moral level.

Conclusion

In Part (1), the paper considered the objection to the claim that agapeic love is justice since justice demands punishment whereas love might not punish but forgive a criminal. In response, the paper noted that Fletcher begins with Augustine's important affirmation that agapeic love needs a high degree of thoughtfulness and prudence, thereby distinguishing between emotional love and agapeic love such that whereas emotional love, for example, by a parent might be willing to forgive an adult child for a felony crime, agapeic love for a convicted felon can recognize that punishment is needed both for the felon to recognize the seriousness of one's crime and for society to be protected against such a felon returning too easily to the repetition of such crimes. This section also uses the acceptance of the Aristotelian Principle noted by John Rawls which is crucial in helping to determine how an adult criminal is to be treated in response to that person's responsibility. Willing with agapeic love the good of another requires that one will the proper development of the felon, that is, the development of moral responsibility for one's actions, including both true knowledge and habitual voluntary choice of what is morally good and

avoidance of what is morally evil. Mere forgiveness of another's felony crimes would actually corrupt in our society the good habits of true knowledge and responsible choice of what is truly good.

(2) A Fuller Development of Fletcher's Thesis that Agapeic Love is Justice: Fletcher strongly agrees with Augustine's important affirmation that agapeic love needs to be diligent love, love that is identical with practical wisdom. Consequently, even if we were to grant the approach of Augustine and Aquinas that justice is giving to each person what is their due, Fletcher points out that agapeic love needs to involve practical wisdom, that is, prudence, for a proper understanding of the many rights and obligations of individuals and groups in society. This prudent, agapeic love loves one's neighbor as one loves oneself by not offending against the commandments, noted by Paul in Romans 13, 8-20, not committing adultery, not committing murder, not stealing, not giving false witness and not coveting. Such love is noted by Paul to be the fulfilment of the law.

(3) Reflections on Korsgaard, Outka, Confucius, and Mencius: First, we accepted Korsgaard's argument that even familial love for one's child necessarily implies that the parent should have justice for all children, indeed, for all persons. Consequently, this section argued all the more so that agapeic love, which involves at least love of all others such that their life, rationality, freedom, and dignity need to be affirmed and respected, necessarily asserts the intrinsic dignity of all others who can be loved as the self loves itself. Second, we examine the analysis of Gene Outka who agrees with Fletcher's reading of Romans 13: 8-10 that love of neighbor involves not harming one's neighbor by violating any of ten commandments condemning actions against one's neighbor. Third, we considered the different approaches of Confucius and Mencius to justice and love and favored the approach of Mencius that great evils can only be overcome and transformed by great love.

(4) Evaluation of Frankena via Outka: This section has evaluated the argument of Frankena as incorrect when he argues that both the affirmation of persons through love towards them as having dignity and the affirmation of equal treatment of all through justice are two principles of moral philosophy irreducible to each other. The paper used Fletcher's and Augustine's recognition that the command to love persons, whether in self or others needs to be a diligent, practically wise loving. If a person were to love oneself more than others, such a love would be unwise in neglecting the needs of others. Likewise, if a person were to love others more than oneself, such a love would be unwise in neglecting the needs of self. Consequently, love of self and others and similar treatment of self and others come together in one commandment of love rather than, as Frankena has argued, in two distinct principles.

Finally, section (5) has used the analyses of Haring, Augustine, and Aquinas to evaluate the overemphasis in Christian thought that agapeic love is especially to be commended in love as self-sacrifice. This section has argued, instead, that in all forms of human love noted by C. S. Lewis, whether affection, friendship, eros, or charity, we can find a realistic potential for agapeic love even if a person does not believe in God. There is no need to conceive of all human action as reducible to selfish action. Human action can take the generous form of loving one's neighbor, even one's enemy, as one loves oneself. For Augustine and Aquinas, such love comes first before explicit love of God in the order of psychological learning.

Loving another self-sacrificially does not mean that one loves another more than oneself, rather one is loving the moral good of both the self and the other.

References

Agapao. John 13 Greek interlinear, parsed and per word translation, free online (abarim-publications.com).

Aristotle (2009) *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by David Ross; revised with an introduction and notes Lesley Brown. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Augustine. *Homily 7 on the First Epistle of John*. Available at: www.newadvent.org/fathers/170207.htm.

Common English Bible. https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Common-English-Bible-CEB/.

Craddock FB (1990) You Must Be Perfect as Your Heavenly Father is Perfect. In *Christian Century*. Available at: http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=712.

DeBary WT, Bloom I (2000) *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 160*. 2nd Edition. New York: Columbia University Press.

Diligo. https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/diligo.

Frankena WK (1963) *Ethics*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Greek Septuagint Greek English Interlinear. https://archive.org/details/septuagint-interline ar-greek-english.

Haring B (1982) *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral Theology for Clergy and Laity* Volumes I and II. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.

Korsgaard C (2006) Morality and the Logic of Caring. In H Frankfurt (ed.), *Taking Ourselves Seriously & Getting It Right*. Stanford University Press.

Lewis CS (1960) *The Four Loves*. Berkely, University of California.

Love. *Diligo in English - Latin-English Dictionary Glosbe* https://glosbe.com/la/en/diligo.

Mencius (1895) James Legge, Translator, Chinese Classics, Vol. 2, ch. 22. https://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/menc/menc22.htm.

Outka G (1977) *Agape: An Ethical Analysis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Outka G (1992) Universal Love and Impartiality. In Edmund N. Santurri, William Werpehowski (eds.), *The Love Commandments: Essays in Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock.

Rawls J (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

The Logos of Agape. https://thelogosofagape.wordpress.com/2018/07/11/agape-the-preferential-and-sacrificial-love.

Athens Journal of Philosophy - Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2025 – Pages 83-100

Nietzsche and Modernity

By Jacek Dobrowolski[*]

Nietzsche's views on modernity seem at first sight clearly negative, as he declared in multiple places his contempt of modern values – listing among them most frequently equality, democracy, emancipation, utilitarianism, socialism, and feminism. This list, however, is not complete in reference to modernity, and defines a particular outlook upon it, which might be questioned. Nietzsche's anthropology of the modern is disputable, as much as his evaluation thereof, which comes down to the notion, extreme enough, of "nihilism". However, upon closer look we shall find a deeper and more complex, dialectical relationship between the philosopher and the modern era, which will show how modern in fact his thinking is – making him an early precursor of modernism. In this paper I will attempt to: 1. Discuss the meaning of modernity, 2. Refer briefly to previous interpretations of Nietzsche as both modern and anti-modern thinker, 3. Discuss Nietzsche's anti-modern position, 4. Discuss how Nietzsche emerges from within modernity with reference to the notion of secularism, 5. Discuss Nietzsche's modernist position, a form of being ultra-modern. 6. Go back to Nietzsche's deepest modern/ modernist motive: the notion of power and will-to-power, that was a unique invention of modernity as such, in my view, and not of Nietzsche alone. The argument relies on a dialectical turn from the simple anti-modern through radically modern to ultra-modern moment. Nietzsche, the paper will attempt to demonstrate, was anti-modern mainly in his interpretation of the actual facts, but radically modern in his assumptions leading to these interpretations and ultra-modern with his pursuits of making modern humanity really new through a radical reinvention of its moral values.

Keywords: *Nietzsche, modernity, modernism, romanticism*

The purpose of this paper is to present the complexity of Nietzsche's situation in the intellectual history and, more broadly history of civilization. Two major matters of interpretation will come across each other in the following considerations: first, that of "modernity", second, that of the meaning of Nietzsche's philosophy, in the first place as regards his stance towards the first issue (and his own interpretation thereof), and, more generally, as this interpretation is rooted in his broader thinking about life as such. The complex task before us involves lots of hermeneutical labour, and is never leading to "hard" conclusions, or even to prove anything; it is more about suggesting some interpretative possibilities and encounters within the history of modern thought. I will attempt to interpret "modernity", and later on Nietzsche's interpretation of modernity as not only denying it, but also expressing it in a profoundly meaningful, albeit self-critical way. Nietzsche's apparent anti-modern viewpoint is, in fact, inherently and also radically modern, and also "modernist", that is precursory to "modernism", which, as will be explained later, is in fact an epoch in late modernity, one that attempted to reinvent modernity at a

[*]Assistant Professor/Adjunct, University of Warsaw, Poland.

higher level, give it a new face, new ends, in the context of the turn of the Centuries ($19^{th}/20^{th}$), and later on, until the mid-20^{th}C, when modernism finally faded away, replaced by postmodernism, less ambitiously oriented towards other issues than reinventing modernity (this last possibly belonging to Lyotard's "great narratives").

The term "modernity" is one of the most often used in humanities and social sciences, and my departure point for its further employment assumes, I believe rather uncontroversially, that modernity is the most recent civilizational formation in the universal history starting with the Renaissance in the West. This is a view well established in both the history of ideas (as we call without much dispute "modern philosophy" everything starting from early Renaissance up until the contemporary theories, the divide separating "contemporary" being much more artificially defined), and other literature, especially with classical works by Max Weber, who named it the age of rationalization and disenchantment, Marx and Marxists, including Frankfurt School, who believed that modernity is capitalism (first "trade", then "industrial") but also the age of revolutionary bourgeois heading towards their self-undoing; Braudel, who came to name it "civilization", and after him Wallerstein speaking of the "modern world-system", with such thinkers, too, as Blumenberg or Mannheim basically agreeing on the chronology and human-centeredness of modern age, and, among more recent, Sloterdijk, a late Nietzsche's disciple. Modernity (modernization process) refers to every aspect of human life, from mindset to everyday practices, and from anthropology to technology, which also makes it so difficult to define in simple undisputable terms. It also consists of many periods of varying cultural dominants (such as Enlightenment and Romanticism) that gave rise to opposite world-views – which makes modernity dialectically ambiguous rather than having a definite shape: there is an inner anti-modernity in the heart of modernity (Luther, for example, was a very early anti-modern reformist who, although opposing Renaissance movement, nevertheless initiated important modern processes by dismantling Church authority), which yet is only possible within it (this, we shall argue, is also the case with Nietzsche, a son and grandson, by the way, of Lutheran ministers).

In other words, modernity's identity, its ultimate "what?", is hardly one definite idea, but lies more in its evolving historical continuity; such as personal identity is not based on any lasting feature but on continuous life of the person. As much as the similarity between old and young person is not a matter of any simple sameness, the continuity between the Renaissance age and our contemporary is also that of traceable paths of development that led from then until now, and not that of anything being literally "the same", to state the obvious at the outset of this discussion. And there might be a few such competitive "defining points" ore core-notions of modernity, from its anthropocentricism (or ego-centricism) through to "secularization" or to Adorno/Horkheimer's "dialectics of enlightenment", or, on the other side, Arendt's idea of modern reversal of the human condition (Nietzsche-inspired, it might be argued). The fundamental disagreement concerning the "modern identity", one important also for this essay, is, I believe, the question whether "modernity" is better understood as a continuation of the long before evolution in the West (and also its possible confluent cultures) – its generally Christian inheritance – or as a radical breakthrough from the previous history and all "traditional world" - the

Age of Secularism, a leap and advancement for man towards something unprecedented and not thinkable before, self-legitimated theoretically by philosophy. This controversy has been discussed broadly by Blumenberg, who showed very well the dilemmas of "secularism" - is it just a disguised theology (a crypto-theology)? Or is it something that does away with the good old theological paradigm for the sake of renewed humanity? Is "humanism" merely a new "religion"? Or is anthropocentric turn/paradigm just a variety of the theocentric ideology, and nothing "truly new"? Is modernity legitimate in its self-understanding? (Blumenberg 1985).

I suppose there can be no conclusive answer to these questions as there can be no clear answer to whether airplane's take-off is a continuation of its previous runway or its breakthrough point? Both interpretations are true. However, it is obvious that the plane is in the air, and it makes a substantial difference compared to anything on the ground. Modernity was both a breakthrough from all the previous past, as well as it continued and emerged from the particular processes of the premodern West (the Christian Middle Ages and the Greek legacy – being the "runway"; the Ancients even having started the first take-off attempt, alas without success, either because of their material limits, or because of Christian intervention); however, as Wallerstein argued somehow in contrast to a more "Western-centric" Braudel, his teacher, this emergence occurred because of some quite accidental conjuncture (Wallerstein 1974). Now, the "breakthrough" interpretation of the modern life begins at least from the Enlightenment, which saw the earlier past as generally to be overcome, or at least revised, by humanity, as Sloterdijk argues, rather than to be continued; all Enlightenment-rooted ways of approaching modernity, such as positivism with its division of ages into "theological", "metaphysical" and "positivist" (Comte), seem usually to follow this premise. The other approach is more conservative, usually, and it sees modernity as the final stage of the Western Christian history that started in Greece and Judea – this tradition had Hegel as its most influential supporter, with Nietzsche also adhering to this general view, only that the Christian roots were for him, unlike for Hegel, a major vice of the modern man. In the more recent thought it is an interpretation of modernity defended by Taylor (for whom modern subjectivity is deeply rooted in premodern formations (Taylor 1989)) and communitarians, Siedentop (2014) who traces modern individualism back to medieval and ancient practices, or Deleuze and Guattari who added modern capitalism to their triadic construct of the becoming of the "social machines": barbaric, despotic, and capitalist regimes succeeding one another within the logic of molar becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1977). These former ones are also among thinkers who would question the validity and significance of identifying the modern time as anything unique or outstanding at all – Nietzsche, as we shall see, was not one, however.

Finally, modernity's value is also a matter of discussion, and both the "breakthrough" side, as well as the "continuation" one, could lead to opposing assessments. The author of this essay tends rather to view "modernity" as of positive value, and assumes a rather Enlightenment-inspired understanding of modernity as progressive, but also truly, and unprecedentedly in human history, empowering humankind. In terms of knowledge, humanity acquired a new perspective on nature and developed tools of mastering it, incomparable to any

previous times (Bacon's initiative of "Novum Organum": the connection between Bacon's philosophy of power and its anti-Christian sting and Nietzsche is very well discussed by Lampert (1993)). In the politics, humankind set on a new path towards more individual liberty and sovereignty (from Machiavelli, through social contract theories, to, say, Hegel, but, also the liberals, Bentham, Mill). In social history, it started a dynamics of structural changes emerging from an oscillation between ideology and utopia (as Mannheim or Eisenstadt show). In economy, it caused transition from a stagnating to an ever-growing regime of production of wealth, changing the face of human labour from the traditional toil of conserving and keeping up human world to its new and unprecedented form of creative and accelerating development thereof, by increasing efficiency (this was discovered by Locke, developed extendedly by Smith, and laid foundations to Marx). Finally, in philosophico-anthropological terms, modernity means transition of the entire human self-understanding from that of a being limited and of fixed nature defined by higher instances to that of a being unlimited by any given form or nature, or instance, "essentially" infinite not by virtue of immortality of the soul but rather because of an endless and formless "striving" of the human self-pursuing its "mastery" – a theme spanning in the modern intellectual history from Mirandola to Sartre, discussed also by Eisenstadt, Sloterdijk and others.

Nietzsche himself, as I will argue, was not so unambiguous about modernity as it might prima facie seem, the contrary should be concluded upon a deeper account: his stance towards modernity is complex and has both superficial, as well as more profound aspects. On the surface, Nietzsche seems explicitly and declaratively to disavow modernity with utmost disgust, especially when he refers to "modern values", modern humanity and their contemporary evolution, which he largely considered "decadent" and "nihilist". Anti-modern (or anti-Enlightenment) orientation of Nietzsche's philosophy is attested by many interpreters, among them Foucault, who himself developed a Nietzsche-inspired radical critique of modern institutions; Habermas (1987), for whom Nietzsche questioned the most important modern ideas of progress and rationalization; Deleuze (1983), who found in Nietzsche tools of dismantling the modern subject and counter modern institutions, too; Nehamas (1985), who saw Nietzsche's extreme individualism as a response to modern decline of values; Jameson (1991), who believed Nietzsche disavowed modernity mainly for its capitalist nature; Pippin who explored how Nietzsche questioned modern understanding of the rational subject; and Rorty (1989) who turned Nietzsche into a forerunner of postmodern thinking, with influence on its critique of the modern values. From an orthodox Marxist point of view, Nietzsche represented the most irrational and reactionary, anti-social conservatism of the slave-owners, or former slave-owners, as during Nietzsche's lifetime slavery was almost totally erased, at least legally, from the face of Earth, while at hist birth time it was still in practice in America, both North and South – that would make him a basically anti-modern, and to some extent even anti-capitalist thinker, but in a toxic, unacceptably conservative, anti-progressive way. Unorthodox and post-Marxist thinkers, however, made a lot of positive use of Nietzsche's philosophy, with mixed results.

On the other hand, Nietzsche in being anti-modern was also modern in that

his ontology expressed the nature of being in way unthinkable in any premodern theory, and utmost modern, as we shall later see, thus making him an "ultra-modern" thinker. This was shown by Heidegger (1979), who interpreted Nietzsche as a culmination of Western metaphysics, will-to-power being for him a uniquely Western attitude, terminating in contemporary nihilism. It can be agreed at least that Heidegger rightly understood Nietzsche's metaphysic as essentially "Western", even if one does not share with Heidegger his views on the contemporary developments (which implies that one does not share some of Nietzsche's views on the matter, either). If this double position of being against the current and at the same time flowing deeply within the current of things seems contradictory, it is actually "dialectical" in that the term "modern-antimodern" describes the ambiguity which is a common trait of both the modern becoming itself, and Nietzsche's philosophy, too. This shared, analogical dialectics is, I think, a meaningful coincidence showing how Nietzsche intuited into the deepest "spirit" of his time, even if his immediate opinions about this very time were to some extent mistaken.

Among other than Heidegger classical interpreters who viewed Nietzsche as essentially a modern/modernist thinker one might refer to Kaufman (1950), for whom Nietzsche's emphasis on creativity and self-overcoming represented the essence of modern ideals; Stack (1992), who believed Nietzsche to be European extension of the American philosopher Emerson – and there is nothing more purely modern than America; Gay (2007), who saw Nietzsche as essentially modernist because of his pursuit of self-liberation; Safranski (2002), who interpreted Nietzsche as being mainly concerned with the "immeasurable enormousness" and the "dividual" character of the Self. Nietzsche's affinity to Freudian psychoanalysis also attests to its modernist core. Interestingly, both Nehamas (1985) and Pippin (1991) seem to develop a dialectical interpretation of Nietzsche's critique of modernity, that assumes he struggled with modernity but also expressed its deepest pursuits – being in fact an existentialist. The existentialists, as we know, did see Nietzsche as their predecessor, and the existentialist understanding of Nietzsche is still valid. A different, but also dialectical approach can be found in Sloterdijk, who emphasizes how Nietzsche was anti-traditionalist and innovative as a prophet, or apostle, of new humanity. My approach slightly differs from most of the above listed authors, even if it also shares with them lots of assumptions and general conclusions.

Nietzsche, it could also be mentioned, was radically modern in that his nomadic, or rather early-touristic way of life especially after 1879 took much advantage of newly invented arrangements of the industrializing age; his lifestyle in material terms was avant-guard rather than traditional, as it would have been impossible without the then developing railway network connecting Europe; the telegraph, as he sometimes needed urgent help from his mother or sister; bank wires, as money was transferred to him to multiple addresses; a network of budget hotels, in which he resided for many months; and last but not least 3000 Swiss francs he got yearly as disability pensioner from his former Basel University (Safranski 2003, Britannica), and if one wanders how much it really was, one could refer to that time Swiss franc gold value established at 0.29g/1F, which gave Nietzsche the purchase power of 870g of pure gold (since gold purchase power remains rather stable, it is a good way to compare). All these arrangements were

the most state-of-the-art modern as they only could, and for his times Nietzsche lived, at least in part, an ultra-tech life defined by mobility and democratization of what had originally been luxurious goods.

To begin the proper analysis, Nietzsche, with all that he said about "sensing history", indeed seemed to believe that his thinking expressed the universal and transcendental features of being rather than historically determined ones. He had an ontology, as Lampert rightly assumes (Lampert 1993). His essential notion of the will to power (GM:III.7, A.2, BGE:13, 23, 36; TI:10.11; WP:689, 696,1067) seems to refer to metaphysical qualities of the living being. The laws connected to the will of power are transcendentally eternal, not accidental, nor transient. The more this is true about his other major idea, Eternal Rucurrence (GS:341, Z:III.*The vision and the riddle*, *The Convalescent;* BGE:56, TI:11.5, EH:*The Birth of Tragedy,* 3). There seems to occur a vicious circle between these apparently objective metaphysical truths and the ideas of "life as interpretation" plus "there are no facts, only interpretations" (WP:481; BGE: 1,2, also GM:III.24; GS:344), which open way to extreme subjectivism. There are, of course, diverse interpretations of life depending on whether the interpreter is "healthy" or "sick" (GM:I), but this in turn assumes that life should be interpreted in a healthy, "strong" way – is this "should" however not a matter of a specific interpretation of life? In other words, we have to assume that life is best interpreted as health/sickness struggle in order to give value to various interpretations of life, this meaning that our evaluation of different interpretations of life assumes our interpretation of life to be better basing on the very same interpretation of life – it is a self-justifying evaluation that evaluates-itself according to its own, apparently "subjective", but indeed "objective" criteria. This paradox, if not an inner "systemic" contradiction, could count as the main source of problems for any attempt to provide a consistent and wholistic interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy.

At first sight, the answer to the question if Nietzsche represented modernity in any significant way other than just being situated in its time, which he, as we know, held in deep contempt, seems easy – no. He is so opposite to anything that is modern in his eyes and in his understanding of modernity, to the extent that he equals it with nihilism, the will to nothingness, that is the most pervert and insane form of will, as it is a self-denying will. There are many quotes to cite explicitly disregarding the modern realities (e.g., GM:I.4,5,12; II.12; BGE:44,201-203, 212, 239, 242, 260, 287; A:1,4; TI:10.39-41), and also it appears that Nietzsche was in search of a formula that would rather originate in the archaic, in the most primitive and primordial, not "modern". In the beginning, Nietzsche looked to the Greeks, and among the Greeks to those most archaic, like Heraclitus, or Aeschilos, with Euripides and Socrates being for him already too "modern", too progressive and rational guys (BT:11-17). So this is the case for his anti-modern outlook; even among the ancients he saw a "decadent" movement that he identified also with the "modern times". Another argument would point to Nietzsche's understanding of the modern (especially modern values) as a disguised continuation of the Christendom; with God being dead but His shadows still alive (GS:125); isn't it a critique that does away with any essential modernity? Because if modernity is just the last stage of Christianity, as Nietzsche apparently claims, then there is no, and there has

never been any modernity – and that is essentially what he says. We, the modern, believe to have overcome the prejudice and left religious authority behind, but we are still religious, in a new, disguised way that keeps adhering to the same old weak values originating in the "revolt of the slaves", rather than reach back to embrace even older but nobler ones articulated by the polytheist religions of Antiquity (GM:II, 22-24). We are too altruistic and compassionate, too utilitarian and egalitarian, too feminist and socialist, and this is all just "Christian", not honestly "secular" – he says. What then makes God's death a real event, on that account?

With some misunderstandings of the modern humanity's change and pursuit process, Nietzsche would have got right the latent essence of it, namely, that modernity is a major and unprecedented secular turn in all human history; that it is not motivated by religious goals/values but is a godless endeavor from its birth. It was, and still is, a prolonged, step by step process of killing God – if not literally atheistic denial (as there are less clearly atheistic than theistic theories, Spinoza's ambiguity being illustrative – but his fellow Jews did properly understand indeed what the meaning of Spinoza's "God" really was and they reacted accordingly), then more or less directly implying God's retirement, his loss of power political and moral, his being more and more pushed away to the margins of nature, that former being demonstrated with increasing empirical evidence to be self-sufficient, self-creating (like the Spinozian *natura naturans*) and self-explaining. As the famous Lavoisier saying had it: I don't need God in my theory.

We should be reminded that the premodern religiosity of any kind had always been based on the very need that Lavoisier has not felt. God was a needed/necessary being because he best explained why finite things are (so orderly and coherent, so adjusted, so harmonious, so "intelligent"). Teleology, final cause, seems to be the deepest cause, most fundamental. And before the modern age there had been no naturalistic reasoning profound and effective enough to account for these apparent features of being, the ancient atomism having been no more convincing than Platonism, and Aristotle's teleological theory of movement/becoming having seemed for centuries superior to the atomist. That only changed with the advent of modern natural sciences, Galileo, Newton et al.; with the mathematization of "natural philosophy" that turned out so powerful a tool of cognition and technology. So, obviously, it was the dynamics of modern reason and its newborn child – science (not to be in any way seen as having simply been a continuation and further development of the ancient science, as it primarily had to get rid of the Aristotle's physics limitations and wrong assumptions – the only thing that retained its ancient substance was in fact mathematics).

If Nietzsche rightly deemed modernity to be essentially secular, he also distorted this essential quality by overlooking how much reason in its mathematico-empirical mode was responsible for that. It might be discussed, of course, to what extent Nietzsche indeed identified God's death with modern secularization, but I will not engage in that discussion, assuming that it is in fact the case. Or else, he acknowledges the role that scientists and scholars played in the killing of God, but he nevertheless diminished or disavowed that event by tracing back its motivations to a "Christian" or at least crypto-religious drive for "Absolute Truth" (GMIII). That is, sciences and scientists killed God, but in a mistaken way that closed the

horizons of possible outcome of the event, making nature, man and life mere "objects" without their own souls. Nietzsche was romantic enough (to say the least about his romantic education and cultural environment in which he grew) to not embrace that outcome as the desirable one. He did not want to see nature and human nature within it as soulless mechanism devoid of any "higher" end/pursuit. He needed an "end" in the infinite becoming, not just unpurposeful and endless one. Of course, that end for him was nothing "ideal", it was not a Hegelian absolute end, but rather an endless end of willing. On a more abstract level, if there can be more abstract level than that of Hegelian absolute, the "will" was a way to both de-rationalize and re-spiritualize the foundations of becoming in terms of an anthropomorphic, still immaterial, and "panpsychist", it could be said, vitalism-inspired super-force of life. As all the romantics, he did believe in souls, spirits and other immaterial substances (like the national spirit) – the only difference being that while "typical" romantics had a very pious, innocent and "goodly" idea of a soul, immortal and angelic, not far from the traditional Christian concepts thereof, Nietzsche, on the contrary, and along his anti-Christian stance, wanted the soul or "free spirit" to carry the features of "essential life", a sort of bio-soul - healthy, innocent immorality instead of individual immortality; shamelessness, violence, cruelty, self-empowering, self-overcoming, ever expanding, excelling in superiority, ordering ranks and hierarchies, dominating etc. (GM:I, 11-13). An assumption about life as a game of forces, predators and prey, inspired by an interpretation of Darwin mediated by Spencer, Haeckel, or Hartmann – who all influenced Nietzsche in that he viewed evolutionism through their eyes, and also by providing him ideas he denied in order to polemically define his own standpoint on life. (Life is not about mere survival/adaptation, but about growth and power (GM: II,12)). This understanding of life covers both individual souls and greater soul-like entities like e.g., the "we" that Nietzsche often relates to in his futurosophic mode.

Futurosophy of Nietzsche is a belief that, against the miserable condition of the present humanity, our future will or at least could be wiser, "nobler" than ourselves. It is a Hegelian view, and also Marxist one that marks early departure from the dark hole of romantic idealist exultation that always ended up in being hurt and frustrated by the "Now", the overwhelming actual current of life that never wills to become truly "romantic". In a gesture to overcome this typically romantic darkhole situation, Hegel, and Marx thereafter, invented, as we know, the science of the future, a futurology emerging from historiosophy that tried to demonstrate how future upcoming events will result from and do away with the "status quo", the Actual Present, that is unbearable but transient and, most importantly, "theodiceical". The misery of the now is for the good of the future humanity. Nietzsche's gesture is analogous, although diametrically opposite, too, because he conceives of the "good" future in terms totally different from Hegelian, not to mention Marxist – what he perceived as nihilism of the Now was exactly what would have made Hegelians hope for the future improvement. Safranski gave Nietzsche's futurosophy name "anthropodicy" (as opposed to theodicy) (Safranski 2003), but Marxism and Hegel are already anthropodicy thinkers. Anthropodicy means that all bad and absurd will turn for the good of some superior men to come, whose ultimate emergence will justify retrospectively all the evil of current

and past life. In Nietzsche's outlook these future men will restore and sport again what is now the most suppressed and hidden of the human nature's qualities – its predatory character (GM:I,11; BGE:201, 229). The man will be dreadful again, as the most evident of the present humanity is that it ceased to be "dangerous". This is most obviously contrary to the Marxist feeling that modern capitalism is essentially predatory and that this is exactly what makes it evil.

However, the futurosophic gesture, shared with Hegelianism, but also countering it, contesting its basic meaning, is what makes Nietzsche one of the early modernists – together with Marx. Here we come across a likely confusing part of our discourse, where it seems proper to go back to the term "modernity" and explain its relationship with "modernism".

How is modernism related to modernity? Chronologically, while the term modernity refers to an era in human history, the age after the Middle Ages that arguably lasts until today, the term "modernism" names a shorter epoch within this era: one, as already stated, that initiates in the late 19th C. and ends in the middle of the 20th C. The essential tacit premise of modernism was the recognition of modernity itself as already an old and outdated project that needs an absolute renewal, or perhaps an "acceleration", in face of the newest context of civilizational development, anthropologic complexity, and social, political, and artistic dynamics. Indeed, the other half of the 19th C., almost exactly coinciding with Nietzsche's lifetime, was a period of substantial, all-encompassing change (Hobsbawm 1962): in order not to digress from the main tread, I encourage the reader to just figure out how the 1900 world differed from the 1850 one: only the periods later into the 20th C. could compare in terms of how fast the change was, but we – living in the 21th C. - are already used to this pace of constant innovation, while back then it was something never experienced before. Simply put, the surrounding world indeed might have seemed very new and fresh to the late-19th-Century eyes, compared to what only had been the status quo one or two generations before. Modernization process seemed to accelerate and turn human nature in unprecedented, and apparently many-faceted modes; from the mass-society mode, through the imperialist mode of the emerging large-scale institutions of state and economy (with total institutions on the horizon), to the new super-individualist mode of the arts, literature, and philosophy (existentialism) that often-exulted human condition to unknown levels of metaphysical solitude but also freedom. All these modes had been anticipated in Nietzsche's thinking.

The renewal pattern is the common denominator of the many, otherwise extremely varied, movements of the modernist times, in the arts, in the architecture, even in the natural sciences, philosophy set apart. The point is, however, that modernity from its very beginning in the Renaissance was about renewal, change, advent of the unprecedented, and it was also aware of its uniquely new nature in many ways from Dante, or Mirandola to Montaigne or Bacon. So the modernist, that is late-modern drive for the new, the project of the renewal, was nothing new, in fact; it was a renewal of the renewal, a repetition thereof, a continuation that wanted to see itself as a rupture. This is what, paradoxically, modernism was essentially about: a repetition of the renewal that was to make the difference, and a major one, the difference that would modernize the world in still new ways. Simply put: modernism

wanted to reinvent modernity, refresh its postulates in a context already deeply changed by these very postulates. Modernism, whatever its scope or field of application, was to bring a new perspective, new values, new life – as really new fields of creativity opened in that time: photography, film, systematic technical innovation, large scale organized scientific research. To further modernize what already had been brought about by modernity, to push forward, to break up with all residues and remnants. To make future even more different from the now than the now is different from the past.

However, modernisms deeper circumstance which turns out its congenital defect is that it comes in during mature age of modernity, claiming its old-fashioned nature and willing but not really succeeding in turning over the whole structure of the already-established modern world. Modernists believed too radically in the possible absolute reform of the existing structures, be it social or legal, or esthetic, however it usually turns out that these structures are strong and the change can only occur within the frames of the historic process already occurring in the long term; there is no absolutely new world, no rupture, no revolution either – this is the limit and inner hindrance of the modernist movement, which, when recognized and accepted, makes one become close to postmodernism. The prospect of the renewal of the renewal, repetition of the difference, that modernist movements tried to initiate and follow, had its close limits, and modernism thus turns out pessimistic, collapsing, implosive, or catastrophic or even apocalyptical. This scheme can be traced in early Sartre, in Freud, in the Frankfurt School, and outside history of ideas – in fascism, in soviet communism etc.

Now, this basic scheme of the modernist movement that includes a drive for the absolute renewal, a deep believe in the possible making modernity even more modern, even closer to its essential driving force, and later, in a certain dialectical way, a denial, a catastrophe, an apocalypsis, a collapse – is precursored, envisioned and predefined by Nietzsche's case.

However, what makes Nietzsche a modernist thinker is not the same with what makes him a modern thinker. There are other reasons to ascribe Nietzsche to the broader and longer-term modern movement, and I will mention here just one, but major one – his embrace of the idea of power, and more precisely of the will to power. The hypothesis is: the idea of the will to power, given especially its scope ranging from psychology to metaphysics, is essentially a modern idea, one that had been the "unthinkable" of the past conceptual constellations, and that became "thinkable" only with the modern turn in the history of paradigms – the anthropocentric turn. It expresses one of the core features of the modern – the process of reshaping of the forms and their dissolution in the ever-changing being, wherein power is not preserving but formative force in the human (not divine, not semi-divine, not tradition-authorised) hands. It is also relying on a very modern move of immanentization of "infinity", whereby "infinitude" became a possible feature of the universe itself, not exclusively God – another quality that the Greek and Medieval thinking did not accept, at least in the mainstream.

Could the idea of the will to power as the driving force of the living being, the idea that suggested a constant will to expand beyond one's limits (GM:II,11-12; A:2; BGE:36), have been an ancient idea? Or perhaps could it have some ancient

equivalents? Hasn't Plato mentioned it in some way or another? Or perhaps Aristotle? Even though Nietzsche liked to believe that his thoughts had ancient origins, it is hard to see how will to power could ever be a human good for the cosmo-centric Greeks, who were basically fatalistic and limitations/forms/golden means obsessed. Plato in his „Republic" did not wish his kings-philosophers to exert will to power; they were supposed to will reason and cognition, not power. This is perhaps why Plato was boring (TI:11.2). They were the guardians of the limits and conservators of stagnation. And he did envisage those excessively "willing power" as psycho-slaves to their own drives (*The Republic*, IX.1-4). Power was part of the cosmic order of forms for them, a force preserving and conserving the forms, not transcending them, and willing it excessively was foolish. Now for Nietzsche it was essential to be faithful to one's desires in their exceeding the limits. In this Nietzsche turns out profoundly opposing the Greeks, who, to say the least, would have never come to the idea of "superhuman" - it would have been hybris for them. The same goes for Aristotle's account of power – he knew how tyranny in fact exceeded the limits and all measures, but it marked for him the inner weakness of the tyrant, not his "good" (*Politics*, V, 1314a) - Nietzsche would rather welcome tyrant's will to power as "healthy", just as much as Machiavelli did, illustrating it with the cases of Borgia and Agotocles (*The Prince*, 7-8). Moreover, the Greeks never identified the personal power and its pursuit with the metaphysical (or cosmic) force of becoming, as Nietzsche did, turning "will-to-power" into a psycho-metaphysical concept.

In Aristotle's metaphysics, and physics as well, there are three notions that capture the cause of any occurring change, movement, and becoming of things in general: dynamis (potentiality, matter in physical world), energeia (actuality, form in physical world), and entelechia (roughly, final cause of becoming, end), with the last one also defining the final form of the being (*Metaphysics*, 1049b-1050b). It all works within the logic of natural circularity. Entelechia governs the change from the potential to the actual. Energeia cannot exceed the limits imposed by entelechia. Energeia cannot be an object of anyones desire/willing, either; one cannot will energeia, because willing is energeia itself; no being accumulates or needs any excess of energeia, it only needs as much and exhaust the amount necessary for its full development, according to the laws of form. This is very different from modern (meta)physics, where no difference between active and passive forces is assumed; and power is both the ability to act and act itself (like in electric power), as much as it is being accumulated by a growing number of devices, both literally, as power of engines, and metaphorically, as power of collective organization. Power is the acting but never exhausted capability. This is why it is thinkable to "will" (more and more) power, as much as it was unthinkable to will energeia, and it is practically what modern civilization, unlike the other ones, actually made its principle: the capitalist, technology-driven limitless accumulation of power. Of course, Nietzsche, to say the least, did not embrace capitalist spirit of his time, but he still might have been unwillingly expressing it. On the other hand he did attest to the above mentioned Greek "self-limitation" interpreting it as an unconsciuos recognition of their will to power, the explosive substance that Greeks carried within, their fear of it that expressed itself in their institutions and structures (TI:11.3).

In the middle ages, very briefly speaking, it is also highly unlikely to look for "will to power" in the Nietzschean psychometaphysical sense, as the theocentric age regarded both power and will as ultimately divine features, with humans, again, having only limited and narrow competence in both willing and having power. All power comes from God and thus is finite, and given by God. Of course humans, some humans, both in ancient and medieval times, did expand their power and transcend their given limits; there has ever, or for a long time, existed "imperialism" exerted by individual men of power (like Alexander the Great or Julius Cesar) but power itself remained a sacred taboo and these great men of power not by accident were deified, if not, otherwise, executed and defamed, as was the case with many less smart men pursuing power.

Only in the modern philosophy power became a purely and exclusively "human affair" and in a way infinite, too, that is lacking any inner logic of limitation, finitude, always tending to expand further beyond and opening up an exclusively human transcendence or infinity. And it is something that an individual may "will". This is the dangerous and undermining meaning of humanism. God is dead – he lost his power to the humans. It was revealed by Machiavelli, whom Nietzsche so much admired, as one of the most intriguing and impactful inventions of the Renaissance age. The point of *Principe*, its implicit and most dangerous message, is that in the godless world everyone willing enough might become Powerful – a Prince. Man became interesting again, if not for the first time; he came to be a threat and a challenge to his environment. It is important to note that Machiavelli did not mean by "Prince" a hereditary entitlement (an aristocratic title), but a social position of the strongest individual. The path to becoming "the leader" is now open to all humans, regardless who they are, the only condition being their individual "virtue" (*virtù*, a virtue, of course, in Machiavellian sense of the word), i.e. their actual "will to power". Machiavelli's most beloved examples of that virtue and that becoming-prince had been usually men from nowhere and of no "name" who managed to get to the top of hierarchy; the first self-made men of the modern age and kind. They are not men who pursued their "entelechia", they were men of excess and self-transformation; they imposed their order instead of just fitting some existing regime.

This was the early modern origin and a significant reinvention of the idea of power, which from that moment on was assumed to be basically universally willed by humans, or even, in a broader metaphysical scope, by all beings (this last extension due to vitalist, evolution-inspired turn, but also traceable in Spinoza). Power lost its sacred, divine, tabooized essence, and was first conceived of as immanent social endeavor of transcendence, as a challenge, and, more arguably, as something originating in the individual himself, not outside the individual as it had always been acknowledged before. The "will", "free will" too became a universal quality of the human beings. Interestingly, and paradoxically enough, this conceptual change relates to the modern emancipation and expresses in fact an implicit egalitarian turn, a turn that does away, at least theoretically, with estates, ranks and inherited privilege as the legitimizing source of power. This is something that Nietzsche the admirer overlooked in Machiavelli, this egalitarian, anti-elitist, anti-class spirit of his critique.

The theme of power and its anthropological dynamics is one of the major

threads of the modern thinking. It was not Nietzsche who initiated the debate. The meaning, value and nature of Power was also raised by Bacon, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Hegel. *On the Genealogy of Morals* obviously, even if vaguely, echoes the debate of the state of nature and "social contract" (GM:II, 9-11). The will to power is no "discovery" made by Nietzsche, but rather his own resumption, or a renewal and reinvention of the modern thought that had already been subject to various theorizing. "Egoism", either, is not unknown to earlier thinking (Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau), only that it was "reasonable" egoism, whereas Nietzsche wanted egoism to go beyond rational limits/calculus. "Power" without any inner limits and the new human will of it is what really constitutes modern humanity – it is its driving force, as the famous Bacon saying illustrates: knowledge is power. As hypothetical and tentative as it may sound, one might suppose that "power" is what replaced in modern age the ancient "eudaimonia" as the ultimate human life purpose. Nietzsche himself somehow expressed this: "What is happiness? The feeling that power is rising..." (A:2).

But it was first declared by Hobbes who stated in *The Leviathan* that there is no peace in life, only infinite striving for more power (*Leviathan,* XI,1). And it was Spinoza who equaled human virtue with power [*Ethics*, IV, proposition XX: the more power you have, the more virtuous you are]. It is true that Nietzsche dismissed Spinozian power as survival rather than expansion oriented. However, the extent to which survival differs from expansion is not so clear; it might be a matter of circumstances, not essence of the very drive, and the specific goal of power, which sometimes is preoccupied with survival, while other times is expanding. It seems that the two orientations of life (survival vs. excess) are complimentary functions rather than opposite "interpretations"; sometimes survival needs expansion, sometimes expansion need survival; sometimes, finally, they might also counter each other, but this is not always the case. Neither is expansion a superior "end" of life than survival, also depending on environmental conditions. Clearly though, for Nietzsche power was much more excessive force than for the moderate egoists such as Spinoza or Hobbes; and excess was higher than mere rational self-preservation, a mark of "higher health". This is why he totally mocked the concept of utilitarian wellbeing – wellbeing is not health in Nietzsche's understanding of the term, only the exhausted and sick dream of wellbeing. The really healthy want suffering as key to delight. Eudaimonia, in fact, limited the search for power, there was an excess of it that was undesirable for the purposes of eudaimonia. Yet, exceeding the given limits of power and accumulation thereof is exactly what modern humanity has always been doing. Modernity has always been more Nietzschean than Nietzsche himself believed.

What do we do then with Nietzsche's explicit and repeatedly expressed contempt of the modern age/modern ideas? If we agree to the above interpretation of modern anthropocentric turn, which, of course, is one interpretation among others, we need first to note that Nietzsche had a very pessimistic, if not biased (with this bias having deeply romantic roots and assumptions) understanding of the modern; he held too specific and one-dimensional notion of it, based on selected modern themes, but not exhaustive, and he overlooked to large extent the very essential point of the modern life, one which also made possible and was the ultimate

condition of his own thinking: unlimited, "infinitely" power-pursuing anthropocentric humanity. He believed, more particularly, that modernity, with its mental as well as technological dynamics, is about weakening of the instinctive, archaic forces in the human, that it is decadent (GM:II.24, TI:10.39, BGE:201, 229) – it is a long before existing theme of moral philosophy, explored by Rousseau, but known already to Plato, that social development and, by consequence, growing complexity of relations between humans give way to excess sophistication, loss of original simplicity ("Yes" - "No"), suppression of life instincts, self-indulgence or oversensitivity. Even everyday wisdom knows well this common place as the proverb has it "Good time make weak people, weak people make bad times, bad times make strong people, strong people make good times" - remarkably, there's the eternal return here! So inspirations or roots to Nietzsche's evaluation of his contemporary modern world can be traced back even to such common-place platitudes. This is not to say that the widely shared evaluation of modernity as more alienating than liberating human spirit/nature is altogether wrong, but it is one-sided and does not seem broad enough to account for modernity's unique reinvention of the human being. Nietzsche would have rather said that this reinvention, although essentially inscribed in the paradigm of "new man", had not been really made, and that the future only would show how this renewal of the human nature should proceed towards its proper end.

Now, according to Nietzsche, this decadent process did not start recently, its origins, first stages date early on, with Christian turn in values (GM:I.14, GM:II.20, A:7, A:15), but perhaps even earlier, with Socrates (BT:12,13; TI:3), or maybe even earlier yet, with the emergence of the oldest profession on Earth – the priest (GM:III.14-17), or maybe a little later, when the priest invented his priestly art of turning guilt into sin (GM:II.16-22). Apparently, the right world of the authentic will to power had existed before any history – seems mythical rather than historic. This is however an extremely conservative and idealistic approach. It is conservative, or even ultraconservative because it won't embrace any change at all, faithful as it always had been to the oldest, most ancient sources, conceived of as superior to any later. Is it not, also, a secularized and disguised idea of the "Fall" of humanity at its very beginnings, transfigured yet recognizable, even if given by Nietzsche a meaning opposite to the initial? It is idealistic, because it perceived material or social development as calamity for the individual soul – hadn't Plato first observed this?

This ultraconservative idealism – so conservative in fact that it hardly could had been part of the right-wing movement of its time, even if some conservatives silently admired Nietzsche, and thus was not political (in the standard sense of the real life politics, though Nietzsche, as we know, thought of it as "higher politics" (BGE:208)) - founded its spiritual detachment from any historic movement upon the notion of Eternal Recurrence, that granted it to erase any change at all, and to finally restore the superior primitive ab initio in the next turnus (aion?). It will always remain a mystery why Nietzsche got so excited about Eternal Recurrence (EH: *Thus spoke Zarathustra*), an idea neither especially profound, nor unprecedented, the most ancient of all images of time, if we don't see it as the only hope for the return to the glorious initiatives of the most past and gone. Which promised that all things, also those great ones, will sooner or later come back. Of course, he was so taken by this promise, he did not see that in the light of Eternal Return any

futurism of the "superhuman" is meaningless, as well as any long term longing or pursuit, since what we long for was already there, it will also come again by necessity, why then strive and struggle?

This is perhaps why enthusiasm for "the most sublime idea" of Eternal Recurrence mixed in Nietzsche with many doubts and much hesitating (Loeb 2013, Lampert 1993). It was also developed in only a few places in Nietzsche's work (comparatively, "will to power" and its synonyms is mentioned much more frequently throughout), perhaps not fully, and there remains certain ambiguity as to both whether Nietzsche was entirely convinced by the idea (I am personally not convinced he was), and what was its final precise meaning for him; this last issue having been an object of studies and debates, as much as competing interpretations. Those vary from simpleminded ones (to which I lean), understanding Eternal Recurrence simply as the infinite return of the same, to very sophisticated, as Deleuze's one, claiming that the meaning of Eternal Recurrence is much less simplistic, as it assumes only a selective return of the "affirmative", while the "negative" will not come back (Deleuze 1983), which would not make ER a force of repetition but that of differentiation. Still others even refer to the possible phenomenon of "remembering the future" as explaining the actual secret (Loeb 2013). Whatever the ultimate significance, Zarathustra as the teacher of both the Eternal Recurrence and the Superhuman seems very shaky and perhaps inconsistent on that ground; in fact his greatest secret might be that he teaches the logically incoherent thought (Z.II: *On liberation*). Or else maybe that he does not care about the logical coherence and compatibility of his ideas. Eternal Recurrence is fatalism masked (if not self-evident); and Nietzsche did seem to cope with it, and also to believe that he has somehow solved this issue (Z.III: *The Convalescent*).

Summing up what I tried to demonstrate here: Nietzsche's situation in the intellectual history is not untimely or "sub specie aeternitatis"; despite his many claims to be so. He is ultra-modern and represents, to some extent prophetically, the turn to the modernist stage of modernity. His thinking is precursory to modernism and expresses a late-modern (romantic, or perhaps a trans-romantic) turn of a dialectical nature, whereby the negation of the modern, based upon radically modern assumptions, is supposed to bring the ultra-modern, the „ever more modern". In a way all modernists repeated after him, being his more or less notorious followers. If modernity is – rightly but only in part – defined as secular age, as the godless era, Nietzsche's critique is that the secular is not godless, anti-theist and anti-Christian enough. This, of course, is when we should turn to the analysis of his moral theory and the critique of morals under the idea of "revaluation of the values".

References

Works by Nietzsche cited [with number of parts in Roman, and of chapters or paragraphs in Arabic; In TI the numbers refer to chapters (unnumbered) and their sections.]

A : *The Antichrist*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*. Edited and Translated by W Kaufman. New York: Viking, 1968.
BGE : *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Judith Norman. Cambridge: 2002.
BT : *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. Translated by W Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1967.
EH : "Ecce homo." In *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, translated by W Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1969.
GM : *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by W Kaufman, RJ Hollingdale. New York: Vintage, 1969.
GS : *The Gay Science*. Translated by W Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1974.
TI : "Twilight of the Idols." In *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated by W Kaufman. New York: Viking 1954.
WP : *The Will to Power*,. Edited by W Kaufman. Translated by W Kaufman and RJ Hollingdale. New York: Vintage, 1968.
Z : *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Tranlsated by A Del Caro. Cambridge 2006.

Other works cited/referred [in case of classical texts of philosophy, with many editions and translations, I only cite the names; within the text exact reference data, part, chapter, section or paragraph where necessary, is provided in intuitive way reflecting the original source structure].

Aristotle. *Metaphysics, Politics.*
Blumenberg H (1985) *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*. Translated by RM Wallace. MIT Press.
Britannica Encyclopedia (online): entry *Friedrich Nietzsche*.
Deleuze G (1983) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Translated by H Tomilson. Columbia. (originally published 1962).
Deleuze G, Guattari F (1977) *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by R Hurley, M Seem, HR Lane. Viking Press.
Gay P (2007) *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy – From Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond*. W.W.Norton & Co.
Habermas J (1987) *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Translated by F Lawrence. MIT Press.
Heidegger M (1979) *Nietzsche* (vol 1-2). Translated by DF Krell, HarperOne. (Originally published 1936-1940).
Hobbes T. *The Leviathan.*
Hobsbawm E (1962) *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875*. Weidenfeld&Nicolson.
Jameson F (1991) *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke U.P.
Kaufman W (1950) *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. Princeton.
Lampert L (1993) *Nietzsche and Modern Times*. New Haven.
Machiavelli N. *The Prince.*
Mannheim K (1987) *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Kknowledge*. Translated by L Wirth, E Shils. Routledge.
Nehamas A (1985) *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Harvard.

Pippin R (1991) *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture*. Blackwell.
Plato. *The Republic*.
Rorty R (1989) *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge.
Safranski R (2002) *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography.* Translated by S Frisch. W.W.Norton & Co.
Siedentop L (2014) *Inventing the Individual. The Origins of Western Liberalism*. Allen Lane.
Spinoza. *Ethics.*
Stack G (1992) *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity*. Ohio U.P.
Taylor C (1989) *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Harvard.
Wallerstein I (1974) *The Modern World-System I. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the 16th Century*. Academic Press.

Athens Journal of Philosophy - Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2025 – Pages 101-114

A Study of John Locke's *Simple Ideas*

By Dipanwita Chakrabarti[*]

John Locke was a versatile philosopher. He published his views on a wide range of topics in philosophy. The present paper attempts a study of the various aspects of Locke's simple ideas. Indeed, he recognised simple ideas as the ultimate data of knowledge in his work "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding". The origin, classification, nature, definition, and the problems regarding Locke's simple ideas are examined in this work. An endeavour is made here to reflect critically on queries such as (i) if knowledge really begins with simple ideas, (ii) if the mind is passive while receiving simple ideas or (iii) in what sense did Locke use the word 'simple,' and (iv) is the distinction between simple and complex ideas acceptable in the context of the Essay. An insight into these issues is expected to lead to a better understanding of the nature of simple ideas in Locke's theory of knowledge.

Keywords: *simple ideas, knowledge, quality, experience, sensation, empiricism*

Introduction

John Locke's primary philosophical concern in his epochal work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (hereinafter referred to as the *Essay*) was to investigate into the origin, certainty, and the extent of human knowledge, along with the "… Grounds and Degrees of Belief, Opinion, and Assent" (Locke 1975, Book I, Chap. 1, Sec. 2, p. 43). With this end in view, he adopted the so-called self-propounded 'historical plain method' to enquire into the nature of human understanding, i.e., the cognitive part of the mind. By 'historical' Locke intended to suggest that his method was based on observations or experiments. He was trying to examine his own conscious experiences in the *understanding* as a cognitive being. He wanted to discover the origin and nature of knowledge by passive observation of what goes on in one's own mind.

To start with, he attempted to discover the origin of knowledge, i.e., how the ultimate data or the raw materials of knowledge come to our mind. He believed that it was essential to know how we obtained knowledge in the first place in order to inquire into what knowledge consisted of and how far it extended. He argued that every human being was conscious to himself that he could think. Thinking presupposed something about which we think. He did not believe in innate ideas or principles from which thinking may start. Instead, he espoused the belief that ideas (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. VIII, Sec. 8, and Book I, Chap. 1, Sec. 8, pp. 134, 47) that come from experience were the raw materials of knowledge. He contended that knowledge, therefore, is not innate but it originates from experience. He then proceeded to establish the rest of his philosophical findings regarding knowledge on this fundamental understanding. According to him, human

[*]Associate Professor, Vidyasagar College affiliated to University of Calcutta, India.

experience is of two kinds, namely sensation and reflection. However, Locke believed these raw materials or ideas that come to our mind from experience were, without exception, simple in nature. In reality though, our ideas are complex in experience. Our understanding analyses these complex ideas into their simple constituents. These simple constituents formed the ultimate data of knowledge.

Locke contended that all ideas, other than simple ideas, were derived from simple ideas by such operations as combining simple ideas, and comparing them or abstracting from them. Again, one has to admit that Locke's account of the ways in which complex ideas are made by combining two or more simple ideas into one, cannot be regarded as a description of the actual process that takes place. It is possible that Locke's account, in some ways, was a mere referral to a philosophical doctrine that suggests the logical relationships between complex and the simple ideas on the ground that the complex ideas were analysable into the simple ones. Besides, Locke also claimed to have determined the ways by which our understanding acquired such knowledge that were derived from simple ideas. He observed that in order to understand the nature, manner, and extent of our knowledge, we have to recognise that some of our ideas are simple and some are complex. The present review is expected to provide an insight into the nature of simple ideas and some important issues related to these ideas, especially those that pertain to simple ideas of sensation.

A cursory glance into Locke's *Essay* will provide enough evidence to the effect that Locke's main concern was with the ideas of sensation leading to our knowledge of the external world. If Locke also discussed the ideas of reflection here, which led to the psychological part of Book II, it was only in order to provide a complete account of simple ideas. The present paper is however not concerned either with the psychological issues of the *Essay* or the ideas of reflection.

Origin, Classification, and Definitions of Simple Ideas

According to Locke, mind has no innate idea or principles; all our ideas i.e., the materials of knowledge and reason, without exception, come from experience. It is important to note here that by experience, Locke implied sensation and reflection. Sensation and reflection were the fountains of knowledge from where all simple ideas were derived. Sensation furnishes the mind with simple ideas of sensible qualities while reflection provides simple ideas of its own operations such as perception or thinking, and volition or willing. Therefore, the ideas of sensation and reflection, in Locke's view, were all simple ideas and can be said to constitute the ultimate data of knowledge. All simple ideas originate from experience. In fact, Locke established his empiricism by tracing the origin of simple ideas in experience.

Locke stated that the simple ideas were of four kinds. These were (a) the ideas that come to our mind through single sense only, such as the idea of colour, sound, smell, etc.; (b) through more than one sense, namely the idea of space or extension, shape and motion, etc.; these ideas come to us through sight and touch; (c) through reflection only, where the simple ideas originate from the perception of the operations of our own minds about its other ideas. Locke here distinguished the

action of the mind under two main heads – perception or thinking and volition or willing. The power of thinking is called *Understanding* and the power of volition is called the *Will*. These two ideas, namely thinking and willing, are the simple ideas of reflection. All other ideas of reflection are complex as all such ideas constitute different modes of thinking and willing. Finally, (d) the fourth type of simple ideas convey themselves into our mind by both sensation and reflection. These ideas are the ideas of pleasure or delight, and their opposites, namely pain and uneasiness, power, existence, and unity. Beside these, Locke also added the idea of succession to this list. The fourth class thus appears to be a surprisingly heterogeneous collection of concepts. He explained that we do not get these ideas by themselves but that they come to us in a way suggesting, as if they were affixed to the other ideas which come to our mind by ways of sensation and reflection. Locke defined simple ideas in the *Essay* as:

> ...which being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but *one uniform Appearance,* or Conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different *Ideas* (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. I, p.119).

A simple idea, in accordance with this definition, is in itself un-compounded, forming one uniform appearance or conception in the mind and is not distinguishable into different component ideas. Vere C. Chappell, an American Philosopher of recent times, said that this definition of simple idea, given by Locke, suggested that the defining feature of simplicity in an idea was experiential or phenomenal (Chappell 1997, p. 36). An idea was simple if there was no perceptible variation or division within it.

However, there are other passages in the *Essay* where Locke had suggested a semantic or logical criterion of simplicity. Locke said that "The *Names of simple* Ideas *are not capable of any definitions*" (Locke 1975, Book III, Chap. IV, Sec. 4, p. 421). Apparently, Locke implied that the names of simple ideas were indefinable. It was not possible to analyse such ideas as entailing other ideas. For a better understanding of Locke's semantic logical criterion of simplicity, we have to look more closely at his views regarding definition.

Locke rejected the traditional account of definition. The traditional account of definition was based on genus and differentia (*Per genus et differentiam*). These two together make up the essence of an object. Essence signifies the very being of anything whereby it is what it is. So, to the traditionalists, the definition and essence were synonymous terms. Locke had pointed out that it was impossible to know the real essence of objects. Real essence of something is the real constitution of its insensible parts which determine the nominal essence or the discoverable qualities. However, our senses are not sharp enough to perceive the minute particles or insensible parts of bodies and discover their operations. So, Locke argued that it is not possible to know the real essence of objects. The traditional way of defining an object is not always tenable. Locke proposed a more explicit form of definition that is different from the traditional form. He made it perfectly clear that definition was made of words (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. 10, p. 413).

Locke was of the view that in defining a name of a complex idea, one should enumerate the simple ideas contained in it. However, the name of a simple idea itself could not be defined. He pointed out that the reason behind this was that a name of a simple idea could not be further analysed into parts. He said that definitions ultimately depend upon something *indefinable* which are already given to us. If all terms were definable then it would result in ad-infinitum (used as *in-infinitum* by Locke) (Locke 1975, Book III, Chap. IV, Sec. 5, p. 421)). If the term 'A' is definable by 'B', then 'B' will be definable by 'C' and so on, ad infinitum. This process will never come to an end. Locke, therefore, admitted that some names could not themselves be defined but were used to define other names. In his opinion, these names were simple in the sense of being indefinable. In reality, the names of simple ideas, Locke argued, were primitives and could not be broken down into simpler ones. Locke further explained why simple ideas were indefinable. No word was suitable to make us understand what a particular simple idea was. According to him, simple ideas were produced only by those impressions that the objects made on our mind. They were related to the material world. They could not be raised in our mind by any other way. All the words used in defining any of their names would never be able to produce in us the idea it stood for. Words were nothing but sounds and could produce no simple idea in us (Locke 1975, Book III, Chap. IV, Sec. 11, p. 424). Locke here intended to convey that we could not have an idea of the taste of a pineapple before having it. No word could produce the exact impression of the taste of the fruit in our mind. The names of simple ideas were beyond definition.

Locke's comment here regarding simple ideas remind us of John Hospers (Hospers 1981, p. 106) where the latter pointed out that simple ideas might be defined only ostensibly. The reason behind this was that there is no other way of communicating what the simple ideas mean. As simple ideas are not analysable into other ideas, there is only one way of conveying the meaning of these ideas, i.e. confronting people with the relevant sense experiences.

Chappell (1997, p. 36) has suggested that these two definitions put forward in the *Essay*, namely experiential or phenomenal and semantical or logical, might not be equivalent but this was not a serious handicap for Locke. Locke's main purpose in marking off simple ideas in this way was to establish his empiricism based on the doctrine that materials of reason and knowledge were ultimately derived from experience.

Locke's definition of simple ideas has also been criticised by several philosophers of subsequent eras.

O'Connor (1967, p. 47) has criticised Locke's experiential or phenomenal definition of simple ideas. He said that the examples of simple ideas of sensation, given by Locke, such as the coldness and hardness of ice, the whiteness of a lily, etc., are merely simple sense data which rarely present as one uniform character, indistinguishable into parts that differ sensibly from one another. He reckoned that even a coloured patch with no part of it sensibly different from any other part in hue, is clearly not uncompounded in an unqualified sense. It is, for example, made up of smaller patches, i.e., it is spatially compounded. Therefore, O'Connor argued that Locke's examples of simple idea did not satisfy his own definition.

Jolley (2004, p. 46) attempted to counter O'Connor's criticism against experiential or phenomenal definition of simple idea. He said that Locke's simple ideas may not be absolutely simple, but they are at least relatively simple with respect to the complex ones. He explained the relative simplicity with a familiar example. He said that a pile of bricks itself can be called complex with respect to one of the individual bricks which make up the pile. This distinction is still valid and useful even if someone says that individual bricks are not truly simple because each is further divisible into smaller units. However, what remains important to note is that each individual brick can still be considered to be relatively simple in relation to the pile. In the same way, Jolley argued, Locke's simple ideas can be considered as relatively simple in relation to complex ideas. Jolley reasoned that the coloured patch, referred to in O'Connor's arguments, is spatially compounded. The coloured patch could be considered to be relatively simple.

Jenkin (1985, pp. 26–27) also raised a criticism regarding Locke's semantic or logical criterion of simplicity. He pointed out that the idea of 'redness' is indefinable and can be said to be simple. However, the idea of 'squareness' is not simple in this sense since 'squareness' is definable. Locke explicitly regarded the idea of 'solidity' as a simple idea in Chapter IV of Book II, but he went on to define solidity in another part of his book (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. IV, Sec. 1, p. 123). This, Jenkin argued, belied his own claim that the idea of solidity is a simple idea. Similar arguments may be put forward, Jenkin argued, for 'power,' 'existence' and 'unity' all of which Locke classified as simple ideas.

It would probably be pertinent to state here that Locke did not give any reason for considering the ideas of 'squareness,' 'solidity,' 'power,' 'existence,' 'unity,' etc., as simple ideas despite their definability. This clearly is a flaw in his definition of simple ideas.

It cannot be said that Locke himself had made any serious attempt to apply this criterion of un-analysability to determine which ideas could be accepted as simple. Moreover, he did not clarify the sense in which this un-analysability of the content of simple ideas applied.

It is of relevance here to state Gibson's (1917, pp. 50–51) standpoint. He pointed out that like all other ideas, simple ideas were subjective in the sense that they had no existence apart from the perception or apprehension of the mind to which it was presented. However, its presence in the mind was related to the presence of specific object of thought. As 'an appearance in the mind,' simple idea possesses objectivity. It is an object of thought. So, these ideas can never be identified with elementary sensation or feeling and conceived as a purely subjective modification without any objective reference.

The Influence of Compositional Theory on Locke

The concept of 'Simple' did not originate with Locke. Indeed, many of the thinkers of seventeenth century had a role in developing this conception. They were not aware of how ideas developed through a process of evolution. They were not familiar with the concept of evolution. They primarily believed in the idea of

composition. The idea of composition presupposes a distinction between simple and complex. The complex whole, they thought, was a mere conglomeration of the simple. These simple constituents when combined to make the complex did not undergo any modification. A process of direct analysis was required in order to trace these simple constituents which are contained in the complex whole. This compositional theory had a deep influence over the different systems of thought that were then prevalent. We find this theory in different forms and in different connections. Francis Bacon and René Descartes have used this theory in some form or other. In Leibnitz's work, we find a more developed form of this theory. He asserted that all notions and truths were reducible by analysis to certain simple and primitive ones. Leibnitz also applied this simple and complex distinction to reality. He argued that everything in the world could be resolved into simple substances called monads.

Locke, with this theory in mind, proceeded to analyse the origin of ideas. No one has ever denied that Locke's theory of ideas was based on the theory of compositionalism. Jolley (2004, pp. 44–45) opined that this characteristic of the Lockean theory of ideas runs parallel with the corpuscularian hypothesis. He argued that it could not be said that one was self-consciously modelled on the other. However, it could be said that the corpuscularian hypothesis had some influence on Locke's theory of ideas. According to this hypothesis, physical objects were analysable into their smallest basic parts or atoms. Locke tried to apply this model to the mind and its contents. He perhaps believed that human thought was sometimes very complex and therefore, it was reasonable to assume that it might be composed of more basic ingredients. The contents of the mind being ideas, its basic ingredients must be simple ideas. This suggests that Locke was almost certainly a compositionalist who believed in corpuscularism.

However, it would be pertinent to note here that Locke followed the doctrine of compositionalism in a strong sense in the first edition of the *Essay*. This form of compositionalism holds that all ideas are either simple or complex. This classification is both exclusive and exhaustive. It was made in terms of the different types of objects for which the ideas stand. Besides, in this classification scheme, Locke also classified complex ideas exhaustively into modes, substances, and relations. Subsequently, in the fourth edition, Locke proceeded to deviate from this basic classification scheme and revised the official scheme of the classification so that there are ideas which are neither simple nor complex. This classification is based on the mind's activities. The mind may combine simple ideas into one compound idea, thereby forming complex ideas. Secondly, the mind can bring together two ideas, whether simple or complex, and compare them with one another without uniting them into one. These ideas are ideas of relation. Thirdly, the mind, through a process called abstraction, separate ideas from all other ideas that accompany them in their real existence and constructs all general ideas. Thus, general ideas are the products of the mind's abstraction. He maintained that these two kinds of ideas constituted two distinct categories. In the earlier editions Locke had subsumed these two kinds of ideas under the heading of complex ideas.

According to Nicholas Jolley, Aaron (1955, p. 113) had realized that Locke might have failed to tidy up the text in his later editions. An alternative and a more

plausible argument could be put forward here that Locke, far from deviating erroneously from his original classification scheme, might have made new observations in the fourth edition primarily to develop his theory of ideas further and cover up the shortcomings in the earlier editions. Locke observed in the fourth edition that some ideas could neither be classified as simple nor as complex. The nature and content of these ideas did not fit into the old scheme. Therefore, he changed the criterion of the classification in the fourth edition and classified ideas according to the activities of the mind. Locke asserted that these ideas should be classified as ideas of relation and general ideas. He maintained that these two kinds of ideas constituted two distinct categories. In the earlier editions Locke had subsumed these two kinds of ideas under the heading of complex ideas.

Does Knowledge Begin with Simple Ideas in Locke's Perspective?

It would probably be fair to say that according to Locke, human knowledge and wisdom begins with the manifestation of the qualities of individual substances, i.e., to say with complex ideas. He asserted that simple ideas are observed to exist in several combinations compounded together (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. XII, Sec. 1, p. 164). They are received in groups or in combinations in the senses. Therefore, we receive complex ideas of things through experience. He also pointed out that some simple ideas, e.g., those of existence and unity, are necessary concomitants of all other simple ideas (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. VII, Sec. 7, p. 131).

Therefore, our ideas are complex in experience. However, the understanding can analyse them into their simple constituents. These simple constituents are the ultimate data of experience. These are simple ideas of sensation. Ayer said:

> Locke's atomistic treatment of sensation does not accord with the experiential facts; and the ideas that he regards as 'simple' are not psychologically primitive (Ayer 1963, p. 11).

Ayer emphasized that we do not begin with the experience of sensible qualities in isolation and then put them together to form the idea of perceptual objects. Locke did not assert that simple ideas are, or can be, received or represented in their simplicity. Locke did not appreciate the view that knowledge of the unrelated is possible.

Therefore, Locke's account of the ways in which complex ideas are made out of simple ideas may not be regarded as a description of a factual process that really takes place. It is not a psychological doctrine about the way in which complex ideas are formed out of simple ideas. It is a philosophical doctrine that indicates the logical relationships that complex ideas hold with the simple ideas if they are to be analysable in terms of them.

Criticisms and Counter-criticisms

Fraser (1890, p. 128), a Scottish theologian and philosopher, has noted that some critics who have trusted Locke of implying that at the beginning of life each human being is conscious only of simple ideas, have complained that Locke did not offer an adequate explanation of why and how the simple ideas become complex and abstract with the attainment of adulthood.

Victor Cousin, a French philosopher and a critic of Locke, said that the process of acquisition of ideas or thoughts about things is quite opposite to that described by Locke (Fraser 1890, p. 129). While Locke believed that life begins with the consciousness of only those ideas that are simple and unrelated and that we become conscious of complex ideas only afterwards, Cousin said that all our primitive ideas are complex, particular, and concrete. He reasoned that we begin with complex ideas and then by abstraction of these ideas, we advance to the simple ones. The reason behind this is that our faculties, broadly speaking, act simultaneously. The simultaneous activity of the senses at once affords us with several simple ideas unified together in an individual substance.

Green and some other critics have charged Locke with mixing up two contradictory theories regarding ideas and the origin of knowledge (Fraser 1890, pp. 130–131). They have argued that in some parts of the *Essay*, Locke said that our knowledge begins with simple ideas of isolated sensations that gradually proceed towards complex ones, while in other parts, the critics commented, Locke was of the view that knowledge begins with individual substances manifested in their qualities, i.e., to say, with complex ideas. This is especially true in such sections of the *Essay* where Locke dealt with general terms. This showed, the critics argued, that Locke was self-contradictory.

Fraser (1890, pp. 129–130) contended that Victor Cousin's charge against Locke was unacceptable. He argued that the second book of Locke's *Essay* was open to be interpreted as a logical analysis of the complex ideas of things. Locke said in this book that simple ideas exist in different combinations united together. The mind has the power to consider them separately. He emphasized that the qualities of a thing that affect our senses are so closely united with the thing that separation between them is not possible. However, the ideas they produce in us are simple and unmixed and contain nothing but one uniform appearance or conception. Fraser said that Locke had accepted here what psychologists called *abstraction of senses*. The terminology *abstraction of senses* implies that the intellect operative in each sense, abstracts or extracts simple ideas from the objects which the mind comes across, such as those of colours (i.e., simple ideas of colour) through the eye, sound through the ear, etc. Fraser said that this does not mean that a human being, at the beginning of life, perceives simple ideas only in their simplicity or that we do not, implicitly at least, refer to them as qualities belonging to things or individual substances, our ideas of which are necessarily complex.

Fraser (1890, pp. 130–131) has also refuted the charges made by Green and other critics against Locke. He stated that these charges of confusion in Locke's theories arose due to the critics' oversight of Locke's own standpoint in those parts of the *Essay* where he seemed to say that knowledge begins with unrelated

sensations (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. 1, p. 119) and in those other parts where he treated complex ideas as the starting point (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. XII, Sec. 1, p. 164). Fraser argued that Locke did not support the view that knowledge of the unrelated is possible (Locke 1975, Book IV, Chap. I, Sec. 2, p. 525).

In one of the two passages that are supposed to be contradictory, Locke proposed a true logical analysis of the matter or the phenomenal constituents of already formed complex and abstract ideas (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. XII, Sec. 1, p. 164). In the other set, he described, like a psychologist, the generalisation of the understanding arising from the complex individual presentation of sense phenomenon or 'sense ideas,' which symbolizes the growth of our knowledge (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. 1, p. 119).

Is the Mind Passive while Receiving Simple Ideas?

According to Locke, our understanding passively receives simple ideas. Once the understanding has received these ideas, it cannot refuse, blot or alter them. It has no power to generate new simple ideas by itself. Mind is passive in the sense that it is able to receive these simple ideas but cannot invent them. Locke said that nobody can form a simple idea that he or she never received from experience i.e., from sensation and reflection (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. 1, p. 119).

There is a striking resemblance between what Locke said about simple ideas and Hume (1982, pp. 11–13) said regarding ideas and impressions. It is interesting to note that Hume's ideas and impressions stand for Locke's simple ideas and sensations, respectively. Hume advanced two arguments in favour of his thesis that says that all our ideas (i.e., feeble perceptions) are copies of our impressions (lively perceptions). The first argument says that an analysis and examination of our ideas or thoughts reveal that they are derived from preceding impressions. He argued that it is impossible to produce any idea, which is not a copy from a previous impression. He, like Locke, was convinced that no one could ever produce an idea without a previous impression.

The second argument in favour of Hume's thesis runs as follows - if anyone is deficient of an impression, he is also deficient of an idea. To quote his words, "A blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man of sounds" (Hume 1982, p. 12).

Hume however, said that there might be some exceptions to this. According to him, a man who has become acquainted with every shade of blue but one, can supply the missing shade from his imagination. Thus, we find that Hume, in drawing a distinction between impressions and ideas, is substantially in agreement with Locke. The only point of difference between them seems to be this: while Locke made ideas alone as the contents of mind, Hume looked upon both impressions and ideas, not merely ideas, as the content of mind.

Locke while arguing that the understanding passively receives simple ideas, gave the analogy of the mirror to clarify his point. He contended that the mind receives the ideas of sensation passively, as the mirror does. It cannot refuse to reflect the object placed before it (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. I, Sec. 25, p. 118). If we take this analogy literally and emphasize that the mirror is passive, a natural

criticism follows. This is that in the reception of simple ideas, the mind is active rather than passive. Aaron (1955, pp. 111–112) pointed out that Locke has not used the terms passive and active consistently. Locke has said in one of the passages that while receiving simple ideas "the *understanding* is merely *passive*;" (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. I, Sec. 25, p. 118). Again, in the heading of the same paragraph, Locke said that 'the understanding is for the most part passive.' Aaron however clarified that in spite of this inconsistency, it is evident that the mind merely perceives the simple ideas while sensing. We merely receive simple ideas. The mind does not create them. In this sense, the mind is passive. The understanding plays a passive role regarding the creation of simple ideas.

However, it may be mentioned here that mind does remain active in another sense, since receiving itself is an activity. Jenkin (1985, p. 24) has strongly supported this view. He argued that to have a simple idea, for example the idea of the colour yellow in the mind, the mind must be able to compare and discriminate yellow from ideas of other colours. Therefore, mind is active while receiving ideas of sensations. The difficulty arises because Locke did not clarify the status of these ideas. He suggested in Chapter I of the *Essay* (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. I, Sec. 1, p. 104) that ideas are the kind of things of which we are necessarily conscious. To be conscious of something, necessarily implies activity on the part of the mind such as making a contrast or a comparison. Jenkin held that it is one thing to receive sense data, where the process may be passive, but it is another to identify what one receives, for it involves an activity on the part of the understanding. He contended that there are reasons to hold that Locke did not take the mirror analogy so literally. It is evident from his explanation of the ideas of reflection that mind has many in-built powers. Jenkin further pointed out that as perception is one of these powers, it suggests that mind is active in the reception of simple ideas (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. IX, Sec. 4, p. 144).

Jenkin held that Locke's remark here perhaps suggests that his intention was not to draw a distinction between what is passive with what is active but between what is passive with what we deliberately choose. His contention is that if the senses function properly and the powers of the mind are alert, simple ideas would come to the mind. Locke believed that the contents of our sensation are immediately given but the powers of the mind must be at work to receive the simple ideas.

It is difficult to decide what Locke's opinion really was regarding passivity on the part of the understanding while receiving simple ideas. It appears that Locke believed that the mind is passive in the sense that it does not create any simple idea; it merely receives them passively. The mind plays a passive role regarding the creation of simple ideas. However, the mind is active in receiving these simple ideas since reception itself involves an operation of the understanding by which its content is noticed, compared with, and discriminated from other ideas.

In What Sense has Locke used the Word *Simple*?

It has been variously argued by O'Conner and Aaron that Locke has used the word 'simple' somewhat ambiguously in the *Essay*. O'Conner (1967, p. 48)

remarked that Locke used the term ‘simple’ in four different senses. First, the term ‘simple’ is used in the sense of the smallest unit or the ‘atom.’ A simple idea contains within itself nothing but one uniform appearance or conception and is not distinguishable into different ideas. Therefore, we can liken it to an atom. Secondly, it has sometimes been used in the sense of a single sense quality, like the colour ‘blue,’ the shape ‘square’ or a ‘sweet’ taste. Thirdly, O’Conner said that Locke used the term in the sense of what is given to the mind in experience, in contrast to what is constructed by the mind from the materials provided by sensation and reflection. Indeed, Locke said that simple ideas come into our mind either by sensations or by reflections. They are the materials of our mind. In contrast, complex ideas are what the mind makes out of these simple ideas, i.e., they are the result of the workmanship of the mind. Lastly, a simple idea sometimes refers to a determinable quality, like ‘coloured’ or ‘shaped,’ in contrast to a determinate quality like a particular shade of colour or shape. This particular meaning is obvious in Locke’s account of ideas of reflection. O’Conner has pointed out that it is very difficult to extract a perfectly clear description of simple ideas from Locke’s writings. He contended that we could characterize it negatively as ideas that are not complex.

Aaron (1955, pp. 111–113) argued in this context that Locke failed to clarify the nature of simple idea to himself primarily because the term ‘simple idea’ evoked two distinct meanings to him, namely (i) the given and (ii) the indivisible, i.e., the atom. If simple ideas were characterized as atoms of experience, they could not be described as given. Generally speaking, a simple idea is that which the understanding receives passively. Therefore, they can be considered as given. However, simple idea, according to Locke’s definition, goes as quoted below:

> … which being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but one *uniform Appearance*, or *Conception* in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different *Ideas* (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. II, Sec. 1, p. 119).

So, it is the atom. These two meanings are inconsistent. Aaron argued that the atoms are the outcome of a process of abstraction rather than products of sensation. He maintained that it is inexplicable how Locke could use the term simple sometimes in one and sometimes in another sense, thereby creating confusion.

Notwithstanding the arguments forwarded by O’Connor and Aaron, it may be noted here that Locke, while distinguishing simple ideas from complex ideas, did not assert that simple ideas are or can be received or represented in their simplicity. The ideas he regarded as simple are not psychologically primitive. We do not begin our experience of sensible qualities in isolation and then put them together to obtain the perceptual objects. According to Locke, our ideas in experience are complex ideas of things. These ideas may be reduced to their simple constituents by subsequent abstraction to give rise to simple ideas. What is given in our experience is complex ideas of things. Simple ideas can be considered as atoms of experience since we obtain such ideas from the complex ones by the process of abstraction. Simultaneously, one can also take simple ideas to be *given* in the sense that they are passively received by our understanding. The

understanding has no power to refuse, alter or blot them. Understanding plays a passive role in the matter of creation of simple ideas. It is apparent therefore that Locke's usage of the term *idea* in two distinct senses, namely as atoms of experience and as *given*, is not inconsistent. Aaron's argument that Locke used the term 'simple' in two different senses is consequently not well founded.

O'Connor has argued that Locke has used the word 'simple' in four different senses. Hence, it is difficult to extract a clear description of simple ideas.

It has to be emphasized here that simple ideas can be considered as atoms of experience as well as single-sense qualities. Our ideas are complex ideas of things in experience. The understanding can analyse them into their simple constituents. These simple constituents are the ultimate data of experience and are the simple ideas of sensation. They can be considered as atoms as they are the ultimate data of experience. These simple ideas of sensation may be single-sense qualities like the colour 'blue,' the shape 'square,' etc. Again, these simple ideas may be considered as *given* to the mind in experience, in contrast to what is constructed by the mind. The mind plays a passive role, by merely receiving them, in the process of creation of simple ideas. The three descriptions of simple ideas therefore present no ambiguity and are nothing but different characteristics of simple ideas.

However, O'Connor has pointed out that Locke has also used the term 'simple' in his *Essay* sometimes in the sense of single determinate sense qualities like the colour 'blue' or the shape 'square' and sometimes in the sense of determinable qualities like 'coloured' or 'shaped.' In this respect, we can certainly appreciate O'Connor's negative characterisation of simple ideas as *ideas that are not complex*, based on Locke's usage of the term simple idea in the *Essay*.

Is the Distinction between Simple and Complex Ideas Acceptable?

Aaron (1955, pp. 112–113) observed that Locke's distinction between simple and complex ideas in not acceptable. The question here is - whether the distinction between simple and complex ideas is the distinction between what is *given* and what is *not given* or whether it is between the atomic and the composite. None of these two distinctions is tenable. Locke remarked that "Simple ideas are observed to exist in several combinations united together" (Locke 1975, Book II, Chap. XII, Sec. 1, p. 164). Here, what Locke wanted to say is that complex ideas are also given. Again, Locke had to admit that some simple ideas are not atoms. The ideas of space and time are simple, yet the very nature of both is that they consist of parts. On the other hand, not all complex ideas are composite, for example, ideas of relations and general ideas. These ideas are not made up of simple ideas. Hence, not everything given is a simple idea and not all composites are complex ideas.

Aaron argued that since complex ideas are also given, Locke's distinction between simple and complex ideas is not tenable if the distinction is made between what is *given* and what is *not given*. This criticism of Aaron can be countered for we know that according to Locke, our ideas are complex ideas of things in experience. We receive simple ideas through abstraction from complex ideas by our understanding. Therefore, what is given in experience are complex ideas of things

and not simple ideas. Locke's distinction between simple and complex ideas can be considered as the distinction between what is *given* and what is *not given*. On the other hand, if the distinction between simple and complex ideas is the distinction between atomic and the composite, then Aaron's criticism follows necessarily. It is surely a defect in Locke's *Essay* that it offers no reason for why space and time, being simple, consist of parts while the ideas of relations and general ideas are complex ideas but not made up of simple ideas.

Conclusion

The primary objective of the present paper is (i) to present an account of Simple Ideas as conceived by Locke and an assessment of the criticisms made by philosophers belonging to both the contemporary period and to later generations, and (ii) to clarify the nature of simple ideas, recognised by Locke as the ultimate data of knowledge. Locke acknowledged ideas as the fundamental units of mental content in his *Essay*. He did not believe in innate ideas or principles. According to him our mind is a tabula rasa or a blank sheet of paper. He argued that all our ideas, without exception, come from experience i.e., from sensation and reflection. The ideas of sensation and reflection in Locke's view were all simple ideas. All other ideas, Locke argued, were derived from simple ideas. The various aspects and issues regarding simple ideas have been discussed in length at order to understand its nature appropriately.

The two definitions of simple ideas, namely experiential or phenomenal and semantical or logical, that Locke put forward in his *Essay* merely pointed out the simplicity of simple ideas from two different perspectives. Criticisms made by several critics regarding these definitions have been discussed in this work. As indicated in the text, some of these criticisms can be overcome, not all. A few of these criticisms appear to showcase, albeit indirectly, some of the defects in the *Essay*.

Critics have expressed different opinions regarding the process of acquisition of simple ideas or thoughts by an individual. Locke's observations in Book II of the Essay suggest that our ideas are complex in experience. However, our understanding has the power to analyse them into their simple constituents. These are simple ideas of sensations. Locke's account of the ways in which complex ideas are formed out of simple ideas may not be regarded as a description of any factual process that actually takes place. It is better to term it as a philosophical doctrine that indicates the logical relationships that complex ideas hold with simple ideas (if they are to be analysable in terms of them).

Simple ideas play a significant role in Locke's theory of knowledge. They are the materials of all knowledge and reason. Locke's main purpose in marking off simple ideas was to establish his empiricism. In defining complex ideas, they also play an important role.

References

Aaron RI (1955) *John Locke*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press.

Ayer AJ (1963) *British Empirical Philosophers-Locke, Berkely, Hume, Raid, J.S. Mill*. Edited by AJ Ayer and Raymond Winch, Introduction. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Chappell V (1997) Locke's theory of ideas. In Vere Chappell (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Locke*. Cambridge University Press.

Fraser AC (1890) *Locke*. Edinburg and London: William Blackwood and Sons.

Gibson J (1917) *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Hospers J (1981) *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*. Allied Publisher.

Hume D (1982) *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding with an introduction by J. N. Mohanty*. Calcutta: Progressive Publisher.

Jenkin J (1985) *Understanding Locke*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

Jolley N (2004) *Locke His Philosophical Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Locke J (1975) *An Essay concerning human understanding*. Edited by PH Nidditch. Oxford University Press.

O'Connor DJ (1967) *John Locke*. New York: Dover Books.

Athens Journal of Philosophy - Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2025 – Pages 115-136

Eroticism in its Connection with Complexity and Aesthetics

By Montserrat Sobral Dorado[±]

Drawing from primary Greek sources and contemporary analyses, this article posits that Eros embodies four fundamental manifestations: Anteros, Himeros, Hedylogos, and Pothos (Calame 2002, pp. 35, 106, Kerenyi 1997, pp. 73, 75, Vernant 2003, pp. 17–18). Each Erote symbolizes a distinct facet and impact within relationships, serving as mediators in our erotic experiences. Furthermore, these archetypes are reflected in the dynamics among characters in the Odyssey, providing insights into how these four types of erotic connections unfold over a lifetime. The selection of these specific Erotes and their modalities is primarily grounded in ontological considerations (Hartmann 1956, pp. 211–212), asserting that erotic agency extends from the physical body into the surrounding social milieu. The aim of this work is to gain a better understanding of our self-organization as individuals and members of a cultural tradition.

Keywords: *aesthetics, complexity, eroticism, self-organization*

The presence of at least one divine figure dedicated to eroticism in all cultures provides irrefutable evidence of the enduring importance of this concept to humanity over the centuries. When considering on the origins of Western culture, it becomes clear that, the concept of Eros in ancient Greece is not an immutable entity but rather evolves in time to meet the changing needs of society.

Already in the *Theogony*, Hesiod introduces the figure of Eros as a primordial force. Within this narrative, it appears alongside Gaia and is described as "the most beautiful among the gods" (2011, p. 25). However, this initial divine force is not the same as that which will later intervene in the relations between mortals and immortals, as humanity had not yet been created at this point, nor had distinctions between male and female genders been establish. Rather, at this stage, the erotic deity represents a cosmic energy —a force of attraction and repulsion that will facilitate the appearance of multiplicity.

According to Hesiod, successive divine generations will have an impact on successive modes of organization. This, in turn, results in an increase in the complexity of emotional ties between the various branches of the familial tree proposed by the archaic poet. Indeed, after the castration of Uranus by Cronus, which represents the end of a primordial generation and the transfer of power, the role of Eros is transformed (Vernant 2003, p. 37). Furthermore, the drops of blood shed during this act gave rise to the Erinyes, incarnations of hatred, memory, guilt and revenge. Eris, who represents discord, was created not only as a result of the son's confrontation and rejection of the father, but also as an indication of the multiplicity and importance of the affections that characterise the various relationships.

[±]PhD Candidate and FPI Holder, National Distance Education University (UNED), Spain.

Hesiod also recounts that the genitals of the primordial father were cast away into the sea, and from the foam produced by the friction between the water and these virile organs, Aphrodite was formed. And she was "accompanied by Eros and followed by the beautiful Himeros at first, when she was born, and then, when she went to the tribe of the gods" (2011, p. 28). Therefore, in the first divine generation, the erotic figure has an almost demiurgic function, akin to Orpheus, but after being accompanied by Aphrodite he takes on the role of Philotes (affection) and symbolizes the sexual union between mortals and immortals. He also tells us that Aphrodite emerged from the foam created in the sea when the primordial father threw away his genitals. And she was "accompanied by Eros and followed by the beautiful Himeros, first when she was born and then when she joined the tribe of the gods" (2011, p. 28).

In conclusion, the archaic Theogony delineates the initial manifestation of the erotic figure as an almost demiurgical function in the divine generation. However, following his association with Aphrodite, the goddess of love, he assumes the role of Philotes (affection) and symbolises the sexual union between mortals and immortals. This concise overview of one of the first works on cosmology and the lineage of the gods allows us to understand that Eros, and therefore the form of eroticism, evolved over time to adapt to the growing complexity of Greek culture.

This is illustrative of a society that integrated the natural and the eternal in order to gain insight into the nature of the human being and their surrounding environment (Otto 2002, p. 12). So, in Hesiod's Theogony, Eros is initially presented as a primordial force, subsequently becoming incorporated into Aphrodite's entourage. In contrast, Heraclitus of Ephesus conceptualised love relationships as a product of a relationship in which the conflict of opposites played a fundamental role. Similarly, Empedocles posited that the world was dominated by the game of love and hate. Aristotle, however, considered erotic pleasure to be a transitory phenomenon and accorded greater importance to friendship. The Epicureans, on the other hand, condemned erotic excitement, arguing that it was a distraction from spiritual composure. The Stoics, in contrast, did not conceive of Virtue is to be regarded as separate from physical beauty and the pleasure derived from its perception. Nevertheless, love should transcend carnality. Plutarch, in alignment with the Platonic conception, posits that the significant erotic role serves to unify family and social ties (Kalogeraki 2014, pp. 36–45).

Among all, the concept of Platonic understanding is oriented towards the dynamics that facilitate the elucidation of the co-evolution of affections within a framework of increasing complexity. In his Symposium, Plato presents the erotic diversity of Greek religiosity through the speeches of each of the guests as eulogies in favour of Eros. Of all the guests, it is Socrates who speaks about Diotima's point of view, in which she uses myths as popular, though not necessarily true, origin stories, which Plato uses for didactic purposes in his philosophical dialogues. It establishes a new mythological tradition with a philosophical approach to make sense of a discourse that addresses various moral aspects aligned with Diotima's description of Eros.

Diotima argues that between wisdom and ignorance, as well as between the beautiful and the ugly, and the good and the bad, there is a middle ground where

Eros is situated, acting as a bridge from the immortal gods to the mortal humans. She defines Eros as a "daimon" or demon (Plato 2021, p. 73), a classification traditionally regarded as typically Platonic. This change in the nature of Eros also implies a change in his genealogy. Diotima describes Eros as a poor, hard, and dry being, not delicate and beautiful as had been depicted in previous discourses. Moreover, Eros should not be the beloved the —object of love—, but the lover —the subject who loves—, since his love is directed toward the good and the beautiful, and his intervention in human love affairs leads to the acquisition of happiness.

Diotima posits that Eros is capable of provoking effects in people, thereby justifying his agency (Paglia 1990, p. 4). These effects have repercussions on each of the strata that comprise reality, from their composition and sensitive apprehension to the aspects that comprise the social context in which they are inscribed. In this way, Eros can be considered the agency[1] that brings about changes in our modes of relation, and thus in the ways in which those modes of relating materialize (Dover 2016, p. 244, Kauffmann 2020, p. 14, Weber 2017, p. 9).

For Plato, this transformative capacity of Eros allows us to achieve a beauty that transcends the physical and reaches the moral, that is, the beauty of inner qualities and personal virtues. In this sense, spiritual beauty is eternal, since it is not subject to the temporal inequity that, according to Plato, lurks in mortal bodies. Although attraction can begin on the physical plane, its natural sense is to go beyond this aspect, to reach the spiritual, to settle absolutely in wisdom. Through these steps, Diotima understands the transformation that Eros makes possible in all human beings (Dover 2016, pp. 243–244, Fierro 2008, pp. 25–26, Paz 1993, pp. 33–36, Vernant 2003, p. 159).

Nevertheless, eroticism possesses an aesthetic dimension that extends beyond its mere association with beauty in this Platonic sense[2]. Aesthetics, in turn, can be considered the discipline that encompasses and intertwines sensibility —manifested in behaviors and experiences—, art —as an elaboration that arises from a specific sensibility—, and culture —as a historical and social phenomenon (Claramonte 2016, p. 121). Indeed, art represents one of the most effective means of giving form to the sensations and emotions that are stirred by our pleasures and desires, as well as by what displeases and depresses us. This physiological and emotional aspect has been the subject of poetic expression since ancient times. Claude Calame observes that Eros affects the organs identified by the Greeks as the seat of emotions: the heart (*kardia*) as described by Alcman, the diaphragm (*phrénes*) as referenced by Sappho and Ibicus; as a selective sting in the work of Pindar; the soul (*thymós*) as depicted by Alcaeus, which is situated in the chest (*stêthea*). In the words of Anacreon, Eros guides the reins of the vital breath, or psyche, as the Greeks referred to it. In the words of Archilochus, the desire for love envelops the heart, darkens the eyes and causes the diaphragm to be forcibly removed from the chest (2002, p. 23).

[1]I have explored this type of agency in its aesthetic dimension in Sobral (2023).

[2]In terms of beauty as a means of achieving wholeness, which is the central theme of Diotima's discourse and on which I base my argument for the daimonic aspect of Eros. However, Plato's concept of Eros cannot be reduced to beauty, which is evidenced in other texts such as Phaedrus or The Republic.

From ancient Greece to the present day, eroticism has been intertwined with our perception and the culture we form. Our own feelings, but also the elaborations we do and the social practices we carry on —whether religious, political, health, education, family, work, ecological, entertainment or identity and belonging— are permeated by the erotic, so that its manifestations in one sphere or another may be related but do not always coincide (Dissanayake 2012, pp. 135, 139, Kauffmann 2020, pp. 1, 17, Paglia 1990, pp. 9, 13, 19).

Aesthetics as the ensemble of sensibility, art, and culture operates as a complex adaptive system (Claramonte 2020, p. 43, 2016, pp. 309–311, Maldonado et al. 2021, p. 145). Over the centuries, we can observe that this system is not organized by a single central power, but it is composed of different entities that relate to each other with a greater or lesser degree of effectiveness. These entities employ bodily, object-oriented, or cultural signals that they transmit from one entity to another and adapt through processes of learning or evolution. In the same way, throughout these centuries, eroticism has not been subject to control by a single entity. As Octavio Paz remarks in his commentary on this subject: "love is a complex phenomenon. It is a combination of diverse elements unified and driven by desire. The object of love is similarly complex and subject to frequent change" (2022, p. 47). Despite being socially regulated, it cannot be completely determined.

Eros, as a meaning-distributing daimon, transmits information at an ontological level and demonstrates adaptability through its evolution. Eros has co-evolved and its manifestations are understood, maintained and modified in both private and public spheres. It is a practical principle of experience that describes how living communities on this planet find their identity while attending to the relationships they have with each other and with the rest of the systems around them (Weber 2017, p. 9). Eros has evolved[3] and its forms are apprehended, sustained and modified within both private and public spheres (Dissanayake 2012, pp. 168–169).

In his book Modal Aesthetics (2016), Jordi Claramonte puts forth a conceptual framework that identifies four modes of relationship, which he posits as recurring patterns across different historical periods and social contexts. It is possible to consider any poetics, or mode of relationship, as a concrete, albeit variable, proportion. This can be conceptualised as an alloy of carefully crafted and relatively successful repertoire, and the variations that have the potential to contribute (or not) to nourish it. These forces represent the concept of tensegrity, a set of forces that link gravitational convergence and radiative divergence. These forces can be described as the centripetal force, which produces coherence and acts integratively on all systems, and the disintegrating and centrifugal force, which acts by dividing all systems (2016, p. 26).

The four modes of relation used by Claramonte come from the ancient school of Megara. They are the modes of the necessary, the contingent, the possible and the impossible, with their corresponding absolute modes of the effective and the

[3]In her work "Art and Intimacy: How the Arts Began," Ellen Dissanayake postulates a theory about the evolutionary origin of art and its relationship to human intimacy. Her focus focuses on how artistic activities arise as part of behaviors and experiences fundamental to humanity, such as mutual affection or love. It considers art as a universal behavior and links the emergence of art to the human need to establish and strengthen emotional and intimate connections between individuals.

ineffective. In short, the mode of the necessary refers to what we must do, the mode of the possible to what we can do, and the mode of the effective to what we actually do. At the same time we have to take into account the negative modes: with the contingent appears what we do not have to do, with the impossible what we cannot do, and with the ineffective what we do not do or fail to do. The use of a modal system of thought is the tool that facilitates the analysis of self-organised systems and allows us to understand them, since it reveals the specific modes of relation and their dynamic interaction (Claramonte 2016, p. 29, Claramonte & Mateos 2023, pp. 5, 9).

In order to gain insight in the effectiveness of Eros, this article proposes that it manifests itself through four Erotes, namely Anteros, Himeros, Hedilogos and Pothos. They represent patterns of our affective relations and give an account of how these affects constitute us. Parallel to the modes of aesthetic relation, these erotes not only point to the nature of the affect (real or ideal), but also lead us to understand it in the moment in which it occurs (Claramonte 2016, p. 305). Every being is constituted by different affects, but we can focus on the main modulation of one or another erote by paying attention to the form it takes.

As previously discussed, according to Hesiod, Himeros appears accompanied by Aphrodite and is linked to desire, to the impulse that leads one body to be attracted to another. James Hillman posits that it is the "physical desire to grasp what is immediately present in the heat of the moment" (1998, p. 286). In this context, Calame draws upon Cratylus' Socrates to illustrate two distinct methods of gratification through etymologizing exercise. Himeros represents the current (*rheî*) that impels the soul with urgency (*hiémenos*) towards a present object. In contrast, Pothos denotes the desire of the individual who is absent elsewhere, in another location (*pou*) (2002, p. 35). The Erotes of Himeros and Pothos establish the relationship between the subject and the object of desire. Himeros constitutes a proximity to the object, whereas Pothos represents a distance from its presence. Hillman himself describes Himeros as a form of nostalgia for the unattainable, yet also as a driving force that sustains desire. This is akin to Ulysses' desire for home (1998, p. 286). Pothos, as a broader factor of the erotic, leads the wandering sailor into what seems to be an impossible task to accomplish.

If Himeros is understood as an oppressive desire for a relationship that is to be consummated in the near future, and Pothos is seen as a desire that is nourished by fantasy and remembrance, then Anteros can be understood as the pleasure of mutual affection. This is the reciprocated affection of Ulysses with Penelope. Similarly, Hedilogos can be understood as the dual (or group) pleasure of exchanging tender words. Both Anteros and Hedilogos are forms of affection that arise from close relationships and shared traditions. They require a certain degree of common ground, which may vary in importance. Anteros is the mutual affection that is necessary for the bonds between the parts of a group to be maintained in effective harmony. It is the pleasure of belonging to a family or community. Hedilogos allow us to use a language so that contingencies do not render these links ineffective. They preserve the bases on which they operate and make particular variations, due to the identity of the interlocutors.

On the one hand, the culture of our affective displays provides the framework for the operation of the known and the terrain where traditions are forged, and rites

are carried out. On the other hand, our desires lead us to explore new ways of meaning towards a more or less borderline complacency, which can result in certain poetic elaborations. Aesthetic and erotic experience share modes of relationship[4] and introduce us to a differentiated time. In this context, Anne Carson posits that "Eros is the ground where logos takes root between two people who are conversing, which can be represented again on the written page. Rituals and performances take place outside the real time of people's lives, in a moment suspended from control. We love that suspended time because of its difference from ordinary time and real life" (2020, p. 198).

The bittersweet nature[5] of Eros is evident in those of the Erotes. Anteros and Hedilogos provide the most pleasurable aspects of eroticism, they are its sweetest taste; Himeros and Pothos offer the bitterness of unfulfilled desire that seeks its resolution, the insatiable search for correspondence or the melancholy of distance. Although the concept of these Erotes is most evident in relationships that resemble the contemporary notion of "love", it is important to note that, in my study of eroticism, affections are not limited to such relationships. The Erotes proposed here are not exclusive to relationships established on the basis of sexual desire. Rather, they occur between the parties according to a number of factors, including the distance between them, the type of affection that unites them, their social contexts and the effects that their affections cause.

Consequently, these Erotes cannot be conceived of in a mechanistic manner, as a mere cause and effect. Rather, they must be understood in their ontological complexity. In this regard, I will henceforth follow Nicolai Hartmann's Ontology from now on. In "The Factory of the Real World", he develops a theory that encompasses all levels of reality, from the physical to the spiritual. For the philosopher, reality is constituted by a hierarchy of strata, ranging from the inert and physical to the highest and most spiritual[6]. This hierarchy includes the inorganic, the organic or physical, the psychic or emotional, and the spiritual or social-objectified, each with its own laws and principles. Nicolai Hartmann presents a complex and structured view of the world, emphasising the diversity and depth of reality in all its dimensions.

Eroticism presented from this perspective is not only about the lover and the beloved; it also presents four patterns from which our relationships and self-organisation can be attended to and understood. Each of these four Erotes operates in all strata, although it is true that they become more evident in one or the other depending on their own characteristics. For this reason, both Anteros and Hedilogos will be more influential in the social stratum in which we socially objectify. Although affections are experienced subjectively, they are deployed in our communities through the forms of organization and the language we use in them. At the same time, Himeros and Pothos have a greater individual impact because, although they are

[4]In his Modal Aesthetics, Jordi Claramonte proposes modes of relationship as a composition of the repertoire —modes necessary and contingent—, the dispositional —modes possible and impossible— and the landscape, as an effective deployment of all this, of how it occurs and of its transformative capacity (2016, p. 20).

[5]"Again Eros who loses the limbs makes me shudder, that sweet and bitter little beast, against whom there is no one to defend himself" (Sappho 1986, Fragment 97).

[6]I am referring to the laws of stratification used by Nicolai Hartmann in the third volume of his Ontology: The Factory of the Real World. Specifically, in section III, pages 515-585.

carried out in a historical and social context, they seek to satisfy themselves with their approval or against it.

The Choice of the Odyssey

The *Odyssey* is an ideal text to examine the modulation of our erotic desires for several reasons[7]. Firstly, it is structured in a way that allows for the differentiation between simple and complex fables, as outlined by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (2014, p. 162). The former present actions in a continuous, linear course, while the latter take place with a change of fortune accompanied by agnition, peripeteias and pathetic lances. The *Odyssey* can be considered to belong to the latter category.

The vicissitudes or *peripeteia* is the change of the action in the opposite direction (Aristotle 2014, p. 163), such as the one experienced by the protagonist when, after revealing his identity to the Cyclops, he suffers the revenge of Poseidon and his return to Ithaca is truncated by a succession of events. Agnition or *anagnorisis* is the action of knowing, that is, the transition from ignorance to knowledge. Aristotle himself distinguishes several species (183): that which is produced by signs, such as the infantile scar that Odysseus has on his leg and which is immediately recognized by Eurycleia (Homer, Odyssey XIX, pp. 392–396), his nurse; the one that the poet fabricates, making one character appear to another without it being the result of the plot, as when Athena identifies herself to Odysseus on his arrival in Ithaca (XIII, 299-303); and, finally, that produced by memory, when the character brings to his memory that which is thus known again.

Of the final variant, that of Odysseus by Penelope is particularly noteworthy. Despite being informed of her husband's identity by Eurycleia, Penelope suggests that he lie on a bed different from the one made by Odysseus himself. In response, Odysseus reminds her of the significance of the original bed and the importance it held for him (XXIII, 256-285). This episode is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the protagonist's identity is of great importance throughout the novel. Secondly, this particular event is related to his wife, Penelope. She is, along with the other members of her family and court, and Ithaca, an object of her nostos, her longing to return to the system to which she belongs, and which will take her from the Pothos to the Anteros. The bed is one of the erotic symbols of the Anteros, representing both sexual union and the act of talking in bed (Calasso 2019, pp. 29–30). This is evidenced by the fact that Odysseus and Penelope had long talks in bed (Atwood 2005, p. 36, Miller 2023, pp. 261, 273).

The final requirement proposed by Aristotle in his *Poetics* is the pathetic throw: destructive or painful action, as exemplified by deaths on stage, torments or wounds. The *Odyssey* offers numerous such climaxes. To give an example, the scene in which the protagonist listens to the aedo in the palace of Alcinous sing of the

[7]As Claramonte posits: “Every work of art, like every aesthetic experience, is the memory and proposal of a concrete mode of self-organisation. It is a "memory" because the patterns of self-organisation are somehow in us, as they are in the matter that forms us. It is a "proposal" because, insofar as they pursue self-organisation, they have to be developed again and again by each person, taking into account his or her particular circumstances” (2020, p. 44).

misfortunes of Ilium and the Argive Danaans and is unable to restrain his tears (Homer, Odyssey, VIII, pp. 521–525) is pertinent, as it evinces the Pothos he feels for his comrades in battle. This pathetic act leads to the approach of King Alcinous who, upon discovering his guest's tears, request that he reveal his identity.

Another significant factor in selecting the Odyssey is its authorship. While this article does not delve into the "Homeric question"—the scholarly inquiry into the authorship, composition, and transmission of the Homeric poems—I acknowledge that this academic discourse has influenced literary works that draw upon Greek classics, including those exploring eroticism through our aesthetic engagement with the Odyssey. Examples of this point are *Odyssey* by Nikos Kazantzakis, *Ithaca* by Konstantino Kavafis, *Homer's Daughter* by Robert Graves, *Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, *Circe* by Madelleine Miller, *Ithaca* by Claire North, and many more. In these works, the authors have made use of valuable academic research from which to take up the poem at some point and offer new episodes. They are a demonstration of the emergence of art, since their reception cannot be foreseen by the author and their content is capable of offering new aesthetic values over time (Claramonte 2016, p. 103, 2021, pp. 96, 100).

For instance, Robert Graves uses his work —*Homer's Daughter*— to delve into the concept of the "Homerids", descendants of Homer. This was the term given to the aedos who agreed on the stories transmitted around the battle at Ilium —in the Iliad— and the return home of the hero Odysseus —the Odyssey—. Graves builds upon Samuel Butler's thesis from *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, where Butler suggests that the authorship of the classic is attributed to a Sicilian princess who is also symbolically represented within the poem through the character of Nausicaa, daughter of King Alcinous and Queen Arete (Butler 2022, pp. 315–325). This would explain, among other things, the importance given to *nostos* as a longing for a return to Anteros, to the affection of the family and community to which the protagonist belongs (Graves 2023, pp. 167, 303).

It is therefore pertinent to consider the reinterpretations made by women in the 21st century. The social context in which they elaborate is markedly different, resulting in variations in the affections that will be offered in this regard. However, in some cases, the characters remain the same. Margaret Atwood writes a poem in which Penelope tells her side of the story, offering a glimpse of her affections through her reflections and feelings. In her work, Miller draws upon the account provided by Hesiod in his *Theogony* (2011, p. 55), which states that Circe and Odysseus fathered a son, Telegonus, to give prominence to the goddess and imagine the episode of Odysseus on the island of Aeea.

These reinterpretations are crucial for comprehending the potency of the Odyssey. Our aesthetic experience with the work, hundreds of years after its creation, continues to evoke values that imbue it with remarkable efficacy. Ontologically, we could posit that it is intrinsic to our literary DNA, as it is a work that, in various forms, has served as a cultural reference throughout numerous generations. This is evidenced not only by the multitude of reinterpretations and adaptations that it has inspired, but also by the manner in which it addresses philosophical themes, including *metis*, *arete*, *nostos*, travel and search, desire, its

influence on poetry and narrative, the utilisation of rhythms, the temporal organisation of events, and the creation of archetypal characters.

When experiencing the *Odyssey*, we do so with our cultural baggage, the values of the traditions that make us the people we are. These traditions are those of the objectified social stratum of our 21st century. Whether or not we are aware of the immense relevance of the classic, its words continue to provoke emotions that, to a greater or lesser extent, connect us to our ancestors. It is from this emotional stratum that our need to contextualise the work in our own time emerges. The echoes of the Homeric poems are discussed and written about in book clubs, through new artistic reinterpretations, films, studies and academic articles, among many other objectifications placed in the social stratum so that new generations can take it into consideration.

Self-organization refers to the ability of a system to display behaviors that arise without the action of a controller or leader. Hence, a complex system can also be defined as "a system that exhibits nontrivial emergent and self-organizing behaviors" (Mitchell 2009, p. 13). Odysseus is a clear example of self-organization: the affections he experiences through his peripeteia push him in one direction or another, exploring the new modes of relationship to which he is doomed.

Indeed, Gregory Papanikos identifies the political influence of the Odyssey, as this poem provides ten descriptions of encounters in which collective decision-making is favoured (2020, pp. 61, 82). This can be considered a clear precedent of later democracy. The circumstances of the narrative lead us to an organisation that is prone to concord, although they can also lead us to situations of inevitable discord. One such example is the abusing of the rules of courtesy towards the guest by the suitors, their relationship with the maidens and their excessive courtship of Penelope without the certainty of her widowhood.

Homer has been and continues to be regarded by some as an erotic writer, while others categorically deny this assertion. In this context, I align with the thesis on eroticism in Homer proposed by Marcos Martínez, although this author defines eroticism as "matters of love" and does not elaborate the category as such. Nevertheless, his study of eroticism in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is enlightening and he addresses several of the elements discussed in this article (philotes, Himeros), as well as the relationships in the *Odyssey*. To achieve this, Martínez draws upon sources such as Maximus of Tyre who, in his Dissertation XVIII (8) on the erotics of Socrates, argues that Socrates was not the inventor or the pioneer of erotic discourses (*erotikoi lógoi*), since there were others before him such as Sappho, Anacreon, and Homer himself[8].

[8]"[Homer] expounds everything about love in detail: facts, ages, types and passions, the beautiful, the shameful, the prudent love, the incontinent, the just, the abusive, the maddened, the quiet, and among these there is no longer a craftsman or archaic but a skillful one..." Maximum Shot, *Dis*. XVIII, 8; trans. by J. L. López.

Methodology and Results

The version of the *Odyssey* I consulted for this investigation was translated into Spanish by Jose Manuel Pabón and edited by Gredos. The first edition of this collection was in February 2014, although I have used the ninth reprint, dated October 2014. I have also worked with the bilingual version (Greek-Spanish) by Pedro C. Tapia Zúñiga, published in 2013 by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with the second edition of 2014 in its 2019 reprint being the one used for the realization of this study. The excerpts of text presented in English and the verses referenced in this article correspond to the translation of the *Odyssey* into English by Barry B. Powell and published by Oxford University Press (2014).

The identification of Erotes throughout the Homeric text was a challenging endeavor because, given that they are present throughout the text. It is important to note that the methodology employed forms part of a broader research project. That explains the need of a tool that would allow me to import and export data while simultaneously providing a comprehensive overview of the research conducted, which can be presented in various formats.

The *Odyssey*, like the *Iliad*, consists of twenty-four Books and a total of 12,007 verses. There are three main epic groups: Telemachy, Adventures of Odysseus, and Revenge. The plot of the *Iliad* unfolds in a linear fashion in a single setting, which is the field of Troy. The Odyssey, on the other hand, presents a greater complexity: it includes multiple settings both on land and sea, and the narration, for artistic reasons, largely follows an inverted chronological order. When analysing affections, in order to attend to how they develop throughout history, I could have recreated a linear chronological line, to analyse the sequence of them. However, it seems more interesting to me to be faithful to the time jumps that the Odyssey offers the reader, precisely to maintain the relationship between the affections that run in the plot through my aesthetic experience with the work. Table 1 shows the general structure.

Table 1. *Structure of the Odyssey*

Part	Book	Title
Telemachy	I	Telemachus in Ithaca
	II	Telemachus Calls an Assembly
	III	Telemachus in Pylos
	IV	Telemachus in Sparta
Ulysses' Adventures	V	Odysseus and Kalypso
	VI	Odysseus and Nausicaä
	VII	Odysseus in the Phaeacian Court
	VIII	The Stranger in Town
	IX	Odysseus in the cave of Cyclops
	X	Odysseus and Kirkê
	XI	Odysseus in the Underworld
	XII	Odysseus on the Island of the Sun
	XIII	Home at Last
The Revenge. Part I	XIV	Odysseus in the Pig Herder's Hut
	XV	The Pig Herder's Tale
	XVI	Father and Son
	XVII	The Faithful Dog Argos
	XVIII	Presents from the Suitors

The Revenge. Part II	XIX	Odysseus' Scar
	XX	A Vision of Doom
	XXI	The Contest of the Bow
	XXII	The Slaughter of the Suitors
	XXIII	Husband and Wife
	XXIV	Father and Son

In general, each book offers a sequence of affections that mark the rhythm of the narrative. In order to reflect this rhythm, I have assigned a color to each affect: pink for the Anteros, orange for the Hedilogos, yellow for the Himeros, and green for the Pothos.

As I have already explained, the physiological effects, the emotions they provoke, the social context in which they develop, as well as the distance between the parts that relate to the Erotes have been the keys to identifying one Erote or another. In any case, I have also been able to verify that there are certain signs that are typical of one or the other Erotes. For the Anteros, the bed, the palace, the hearth, the memory, the remembrance; for the Hedilogos, the symposium, the emotion, the incongruity; for the Himeros, hunger (Frontisi-Ducroux & Vernant 2023, p. 32) in all its aspects, that is, food, sexual and power; for the Pothos, death, ineffectiveness as an individual, sleep (Frontisi-Ducroux & Vernant 2023, pp. 17, 30).

The following tables give a sample of the analysis carried out. They are not showing all the Erotes found in the text, but a guide to follow the course of the erotic affections found in it. As I have explained before, the Odyssey version used to the purpose of these tables is the translation by Barry B. Powell for Oxford University Press.

Table 2. *Examples of Erotes in "Telemachy"*

Part	Book	Title	Verses	Erotes
Telemachy	I	Telemachus in Ithaca	11-15	Pothos
			57-60	Anteros
			258-264	Hedilogos
			291-295	Himero
			301-304	Pothos
			398-403	Anteros
	II	Telemachus Calls an Assembly	83-91	Pothos
			127-132	Anteros
	III	Telemachus in Pylos	315-322	Anteros
	IV	Telemachus in Sparta	4-13	Anteros
			65-69	Hedilogos
			71-72	Himero
			85-87	Pothos
			93-101	Pothos
			121-127	Anteros
			138-146	Hedilogos
			160-164	Anteros
			191-193	Himero
			198-203	Pothos
			543-548	Anteros
			580-585	Hedilogos

Table 3. *Examples of Erotes in "Ulysses' Adventures"*

Part	Book	Title	Verses	Erotes
Ulysses' Adventures	V	Odysseus and Kalypso	3-4	Anteros
			5-6	Hedilogos
			76-79	Pothos
			71-75	Anteros
			80-86	Hedilogos
			87-90	Himero
			110-112	Himero
			140-144	Pothos
			199-202	Pothos
			209-2211	Anteros
			257-260	Hedilogos
			266	Himero
			278-279	Pothos
			312-313	Anteros
			314-316	Hedilogos
			346-349	Himero
			356-357	Pothos
			361-364	Anteros
			365-366	Hedilogos
			367-368	Himero
			374-376	Pothos
			427-4431	Pothos
	VI	Odysseus and Nausicaä	45-51	Anteros
			61-64	Hedilogos
			104-106	Himero
			127-128	Pothos
			128-131	Anteros
			138-151	Hedilogos
			152-154	Himero
			155-156	Pothos
			181-187	Anteros
			188-192	Hedilogos
			228-232	Himero
	VII	Odysseus in the Phaeacian Court	58-67	Anteros
			125-130	Anteros
			132-138	Hedilogos
			168-169	Himero
			171-172	Pothos
	VIII	The Stranger in Town	23	Anteros
			24-43	Hedilogos
			66-69	Himero
			69-77	Pothos
			228-230	Anteros
			237-238	Hedilogos
			270-273	Himero
			281-283	Pothos
			443-488	Pothos
	IX	Odysseus in the Cave of Cyclops	15-20	Anteros
			34-35	Hedilogos
	X	Odysseus and Kirkê	4-11	Anteros
			13-15	Hedilogos

			40-45	Himero
			46-50	Pothos
			60-61	Anteros
			62-65	Hedilogos
			71-74	Himero
			75-76	Pothos
			162-163	Anteros
			164-165	Hedilogos
			170-173	Himero
			174-175	Pothos
			319-320	Anteros
			321-324	Hedilogos
			324-326	Himero
			327	Pothos
	XI	Odysseus in the Underworld	64-66	Anteros
			69	Hedilogos
			70-77	Himero
	XII	Odysseus on the Island of the Sun	252-255	Anteros
			260-265	Hedilogos
			271-280	Himero
			396-400	Pothos
	XIII	Home at Last	13-15	Anteros
			16-17	Hedilogos
			27-30	Himero
			31-37	Pothos
			124	Anteros
			125-126	Hedilogos
			130-133	Himero
			145	Himero
			160-167	Pothos

Table 4. *Examples of Erotes in "The Revenge. Part I"*

Part	Book	Title	Verses	Erotes
The Revenge. Part I	XIV	Odysseus in the Pig Herder's Hut	11-15	Pothos
			59-62	Anteros
			279-305	Hedilogos
			315-318	Himero
			336-344	Pothos
			427-433	Anteros
	XV	The Pig Herder's Tale	41-43	Himero
			56-59	Himero
			118-121	Anteros
			122-123	Hedilogos
			126	Anteros
			145	Hedilogos
			175-176	Pothos
	XVI	Father and Son	17-21	Anteros
			25-27	Hedilogos
			34-36	Himero
			37-39	Pothos
			183-188	Anteros
			196-201	Hedilogos
			207-212	Anteros

	XVII	The Faithful Dog Argos	275-2777	Anteros
	XVIII	Presents for the Suitors	18-19	Anteros
			25	Hedilogos
			56-61	Hedilogos
			73-75	Hedilogos
			76-80	Himero

Table 5. *Examples of Erotes in "The Revenge. Part II"*

Part	Book	Title	Verses	Erotes
The Revenge. Part II	XIX	Odysseus's Scar	58-59	Hedilogos
			60-62	Himero
			63-66	Himero
			66-69	Pothos
			185	Anteros
	XX	A Vision of Doom	28-30	Anteros
			37-39	Hedilogos
			40-41	Himero
			42-44	Pothos
			104-105	Himero
	XXI	The Contest of the Bow	1-4	Pothos
			5-13	Anteros
			60-65	Hedilogos
			183-185	Anteros
			195-199	Anteros
	XXII	The Slaughter of the Suitors	32-37	Anteros
			38-44	Hedilogos
			67-70	Hedilogos
			94-99	Anteros
			121-123	Himero
			125	Himero
			208	Anteros
			209-212	Hedilogos
	XXIII	Husband and Wife	4-10	Hedilogos
			30-33	Himero
			49	Pothos
			49- 50	Anteros
	XXIV	Father and Son	187-194	Anteros
			195-199	Hedilogos
			241-252	Anteros
			270-280	Hedilogos
			282-285	Himero
			286-288	Pothos

I insist that these panels are only a first approximation to the sequence of affections that color the Homeric narrative. Let's have a look to some of the verses to understand how I have been identifying the Erotes that mediate the relationships between the characters. For example, Book VI deals with the arrival of Odysseus in the land of the Phaeacians. It contains numerous shades of Hedilogos, as there are several conversations in which the tone of decorum and respect sweetens the words of the interlocutors. An example of Hedilogos is the moment in which Ulysses, with

a frightful appearance and after frightening the maidens of the Princess Nausicaa, addresses her —with shrewd and soft words— :

> "I entreat you, o queen—are you a goddess, or a mortal? If you are a goddess, one of those who inhabit the broad heaven, I would compare you in beauty and stature and form to Artemis, the great daughter of Zeus. If you are a mortal, one of those who live upon the earth, then your father and revered mother are three-times blessed, and three-blessed times are your brothers. Their hearts must always be warmed with joy on account of you, when they see you entering the dance— a plant so fair. But that man is blessed in his heart above all others who prevails with his bridal gifts and leads you to his house (verses 139-149).

Upon being shipwrecked, Ulysses finds himself disoriented and unaware of his whereabouts as he encounters an unfamiliar woman named Nausicaa. His foremost concerns are his hunger and the exposure of his naked body, urgent needs that demand prompt attention. Observing Nausicaa's beauty, Ulysses deliberates on the appropriate approach to address her. Ultimately, he chooses to adopt a demeanor characterized by decorum, prudence, and formal language, incorporating flattery into his discourse to delicately negotiate his pressing requirements for clothing and sustenance.

Odysseus chooses words to appeal to repertoires that may be known to the woman in front of him in order to arouse her compassion and receive help. Although we have no indication in the text that Odysseus knows his whereabouts, it is not a random fact that he addresses Nausicaa comparing her to Artemis who, according to Karl Kerenyi, had as her domain an island of Ortygia —where she could have been born— off Syracuse, in Sicily[9] and another in Asia Minor versus Ephesus (1997, p. 133). This is accentuated when in verse 133 he compares it to a palm tree of Delos, since the palm tree is a symbol of Artemis (Valtierra 2005, p. 31) and represents the bodily and mental vigor of the hero (39), as well as rebirth (pp. 42–43). Moreover, when he refers to his mortal nature, he alludes to the fortune of his present family relations (your father and mother... also your brothers) and future ones (the fortunate one who takes you to his victorious home with his nuptial gifts).

In this book there are also moments in which the words that cross Odysseus and Nausicaa are tinged with an accentuated affection that is markedly familiar, as he tells her:

> I entreat you, o queen—are you a goddess, or a mortal? If you are a goddess, one of those who inhabit the broad heaven, I would compare you in beauty and stature and form to Artemis, the great daughter of Zeus. If you are a mortal, one of those who live upon the earth, then your father and revered mother are three-times blessed, and three-blessed times are your brothers. Their hearts must always be warmed with joy on account of you, when they see you entering the dance— a plant so fair. But that man is blessed in his heart above all others who prevails with his bridal gifts and leads you to his house (verses 167-176).

[9]Although there is no certainty about the existence of Phaeacia beyond the text, Samuel Butler considers it to be found in Sicily (315-325).

We see how this Hedilogos alludes to Anteros, affection of the family[10] and mutuality, also of good government —as that of the house— of a community. Gregory Papanikos considers that Homer disseminated the idea that good governors "are those who respect justice and keep their people and society happy" (2020, p. 62). This tendency towards concord is also shown here, but instead of being reflected in the politics of the country it is expressed in the domestic one. The Anteros is the characteristic affection of this concord, the fruit of the just and reciprocated relationship between people with a family and, by extension, social bond.

Nausicaa also feels more than compassion for Odysseus, letting her imagination run wild and opening up the possibility of desire. Seeing him again after the toilet —in which Athena made him appear stronger and taller (230),— the princess of Phaeacia says to her maidens:

> Listen to me, my white-armed ladies, attend what I say. This man has not come to the godlike Phaeacians without the will of all the gods who live on o lympos. He seemed to be rather coarse before, but now he seems like the gods who live in the broad heavens. Would that such a man, living here, might be called my husband, and that it might please him to remain here! But my ladies, give food and drink to this stranger (verses 225-232).

This case also makes it clear that our Erotes have their opposites. If hedilogos can be translated by sweet talk, "gossip" is the opposite. When Nausicaa gives Odysseus directions on how to enter the city and at what distance to keep, he is thinking of avoiding "their unkind speech" (verse 256) from the people they meet on the road, for at the time it was not looked upon favorably that the king's daughter "acted in this way, one who should associate with men against the wishes of her own father and mother, while they were still living, before she should be openly married" (verse 269-272).

In this analysis I have identified the Erote with the same name as its contrary, in an attempt to simplify the overview of the flow of the affections. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that an affection can be modulated through different ways and contexts, and it can also be represented as its counter affection. In this regard, if mutuality is one of the main characteristics to identify Anteros, in example, neglect would be its opposite, but still would be identified as Anteros in the analysis I made for this study.

There is also interesting to observe that some parts of the text, as for example Book IX, could be consider as a long Hedilogos, since the main character recounts his adventures. But, even in a dialogue, other Erotes can have more presence than the Hedilogos. This is also very clear in Book XXIII, in which Penelope identifies his husband. In that context, the main Erote is Anteros, and it is shown through many aspects as, for instance, the importance of identity to intimacy (otherwise it wouldn't be Anteros), the relevance of memory (through signs that led to agnorisis), the symbol of the bed (place dedicated to the intimacy between husband and wife,

[10]Nikos Kazantzakis will recover the character of Nausicaa and the affection of Anteros who, in general, seems to represent the Phaeacians. In his continuation of the Odyssey, Odysseus marries his son. Telemachus with the young princess Phaeacia.

but also sign of Odysseus since it was made for him). However, even in such a familiar context, where proximity is key, other affections appear, as Himeros or Pothos, painting the erotic mood with a different Erote every time.

Throughout the twenty-four Books that constitute the classic, the identification of the Erotes has allowed me to observe that their appearance follows an order: establishing the beginning in Anteros, it is followed by Hedilogos, Himeros and Pothos. This is not unjustified, since it is logical that all Hedilogos take place in a minimally known environment or through a protocol, which at the same time, indicates a community with certain known norms or references, even if they are only those of the language that is shared. On this basis, the satisfaction of something that responds to an individual desire becomes viable, and then the nostalgia of the separation of our desires after their consciousness or frustration. Since life is not effective in absolute and perpetual solitude, it is necessary to return to an Anteros, to the cultural affection that is obtained from the family and social.

The detailed analysis of each of the fragments is beyond the scope of this article, but Book XXIII serves as an example, in which Penelope recognizes Odysseus. It begins with a Hedilogos of Eurycleia who, "laughing loudly" (verse 1) approaches Penelope to announce the arrival of Ulysses. She, too, is filled with joy, but in this case the affection is the desire to see her husband, to join him (who is not present in the room with the two women). Eurycleia announces the end of her Pothos: "Now at last has your longtime hope come to pass." (verse 49) and points out that he came home alive (verse 50). Penelope continues with a questioning of the Hedilogos with which the poem began: "But this story cannot be true as you tell it...." (verse 56); and so on.

In this table they are shown with the established color code (Anteros, pink; Hedilogos, orange; Hymeros, yellow; Pothos, green) a good part of the succession of affections of Book XXIII:

Table 6. *Analysis of Erotes in Book XXIII*

Book	Text Fragments	Verses	Erotes
XXIII (Husband and Wife)	She stood over the head of Penelope and said: "Wake up, *Penelope, my child*, so that you might see with your own eyes that which you have hoped for every day! Odysseus has come and reached his home, though returning late. He has killed the proud suitors who plundered his house and ate his animals and threatened his child with violence." Then the judicious Penelope answered her: "*My dear nurse, the gods have made you mad…*"	4-10	Hedilogos
	So Eurykleia spoke, and Penelope *was thrilled*, and she leaped from the bed and embraced the old lady, and she poured down tears from her eyelids	30-33	Himero
	Now at last has *your longtime hope come to pass.*	49	Pothos
	Your *husband has come home* alive, he has found *you and his son* in the *halls.*	49-50	Anteros
	The judicious Penelope *answered her:* "*Dear nurse,* do not boast loudly over them, laughing. You know how welcome Odysseus would appear to everyone in the halls, and especially to me and my son, whom the two of us bore. But *this story cannot be true as you tell it.* Perhaps	53-56	Hedilogos
	The dear nurse Eurykleia then *answered her:* "*My child, what a word has escaped the barrier of your teeth!* That your husband, who is inside the house beside the hearth, would	63-67	Hedilogos

	never come home! Your mind is always unbelieving! But come and I will tell you another clear sign— the scar that once a boar etched in with his white tusk—*I recognized…*		
	Then the judicious Penelope *answered her:* "*Dear nurse,* it is hard for you to understand the counsel of the gods who last forever, no matter how wise you may be.	72-74	Hedilogos
	So speaking, she descended from the upper chamber. And *her mind rushed this way and that,* whether she should interrogate her husband from a distance, or whether she should stand beside him and kiss his head and take hold of his hands. And when Penelope went into the chamber and crossed the stone threshold, she took her seat opposite Odysseus in the glare of the fire against the farther wall.	76-81	Himero
	Why do you stay apart from my father and not sit by his side and exchange words with him and converse? No other woman would so *harden her heart and stand apart* from her husband who after suffering many pains came on the twentieth year again to the land of his fathers. Your heart is always harder than a stone!"	87-93	Pothos
	"My child, *the heart in my breast is amazed,* and I cannot say a word, neither to ask a question nor to look him in the face. *If this truly is Odysseus,* and he has come *home,* surely, *we will know each other* even better. For we have *special signs* that we two alone know, kept secret from others."	94-98	Anteros (endorsement of Pothos; Anteros towards Telemachus and mistrust of Anteros towards "the possible husband")
	…the much-enduring good Odysseus *smiled,*° and quickly he *spoke to Telemachos words that went like arrows*: "Well, Telemachos, let your mother put me to the test in the halls. Then she will soon know all the better.	99-102	Hedilogos
	he said to her: "You are a *strange* woman! To you beyond all women those who live in Olympos have given a heart that cannot be softened. For no other woman would dare to *stand apart from her husband,* who after suffering many sorrows came to her in the twentieth year in the land of his fathers.	146-151	Hedilogos (opposite)
	But come, nurse, prepare a *bed* for me so that I can get some rest. Her heart—it is like iron!"	151-152	Anteros
	nor do I make light of you, nor am I so amazed,° but *I know well that you looked the same* then, when you left Ithaca, traveling in your long-oared ship. But come, *make up the stout bedstead for him, Eurykleia,* and put it outside the well-built chamber that Odysseus himself built. Set up the stout bedstead there and put bedding on it, fleeces and cloaks and bright blankets." *So she spoke, putting her husband to the test.*	154-160	Anteros (testing the signs of Anteros, the identity of the relation)
	But Odysseus, *bursting with anger, spoke to his sensible wife*: "Woman—truly you have uttered a grievous word! Who has moved my bed elsewhere?...	160-162	Hedilogos (opposite)
	…he loosened her knees and melted her heart, for she recognized the sure signs that Odysseus had told her. Weeping, *she ran straight toward him and threw her arms around the neck of Odysseus and she kissed his head…*	181-185	Himero
	"Don't be angry with me, o Odysseus, for in all other things you were the wisest of men. It is the gods who gave us this sorrow, who didn't want us to enjoy our youth together and come to the threshold of old age. So do not be angry with me for this, nor resent me, because I did not welcome you when I first saw you.	185-190	Hedilogos
	So she spoke, and *she stirred in Odysseus still more the urge to weep,* and he cried, holding his beloved wife in his arms, she who was true of heart.	204-205	Himero

	"Wife, we have *not yet come to the end* of our trials. There is still *measureless labor ahead of us, long and hard*, that I must see through to the end. For thus did the breath-soul of Tiresias prophesy to me on that day when I *went down into the house of Hades* to learn of the homecoming for my companions and myself.	220-225	Pothos
	We can go to *bed* any time you want, for the gods have brought it about that *you have come back* to *your well-built house* and the *land of your fathers.*	226-229	Anteros
	come, tell me what is this trial. In time to come, as I think, I will learn of it. To know it at once is not a worse thing."	231-232	Hedilogos

Conclusion

The recognition of Erotes throughout the Odyssey has affirmed that these four affects function within relationships as archetypal forms that modulate interactions. This understanding does not seek to simplify our emotional experiences, but rather aims to highlight the profound significance of eroticism across all facets of our existence and its impact on our personal development.

The interplay of these Erotes imbues relationships with meaning, contributing to the effectiveness of our connections with others and, consequently, the fulfillment of our own lives. Moreover, this rhythmic interplay provided by eroticism is structured in a sequence that harmonizes communal living with the unique pursuit of individual fulfillment.

At the beginning of this work we have seen that, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle characterizes the *Odyssey* as a complex fable. According to the features of compositions of this type, the Homeric text presents parts of *anagnorisis*, *peripeteia* and *pathos*. Indeed, each of these parts is affected by one or the other Erote to a greater extent, although not exclusively. Recognition implies memory, remembrance, which is why it usually entails an Anteros and can be manifested through a Hedilogos. The vicissitudes entail a change of direction, which is why it usually leads us to a Himeros, moved by desire. As Aristotle himself indicates, there can also be *peripeteia* with *anagnorisis* (164), in which case we would pass from a Pothos to an Anteros.

Distinct associations help delineate the unique characteristics and manifestations of each Erote within various narratives and contexts. The physiological effects, resulting emotions, social contexts, and relational dynamics associated with the Erotes have been instrumental in identifying specific Erotes within various situations. Additionally, certain characteristic signs and contexts are indicative of particular Erotes. For Anteros, these signs include references to the bed, palace, hearth, memory, and remembrance. In the case of Hedilogos, typical contexts involve the symposium, emotional expressions, and elements of incongruity. Himeros is associated with the concept of hunger in its broadest sense, encompassing food, sexual desire, and power dynamics. Pothos, on the other hand, is linked to themes of death, a sense of individual ineffectiveness, and the realm of sleep. Moreover, the opposite affections are also imbricated in the identification I have made of each Erote.

Another aspect to bear in mind is that this study has been carried out around a text from archaic Greece. Despite its modernity and the relevance it has had in later literature, we should not be surprised by the abundance of Anteros and Hedilogos in

the work, since it is a classic. Likewise, the *nostos* is an element present throughout the books, so Pothos is an affection very present in Odysseus and also in Penelope.

This work is part of a larger investigation. Starting from the Homeric text, it would be interesting to propose this same analysis in reinterpretations of the work throughout the history of literature, in order to understand how some affects become more or less present depending on the ontological nature of the work itself. In addition, this would allow us to verify the erotic flow perceived here as Anteros-Hedilogos-Himeros-Pothos-Anteros-Hedilogos...

I understand aesthetics as a discipline that examines our sensitivity towards art and culture. This involves exploring how we perceive, create, and engage with artistic works, considering the traditional contexts that shape our interpretations and are influenced by our artistic expressions.

Simultaneously, the Erotes are deeply intertwined with our aesthetic sensibility. They inform the ways we form relationships that reflect their characteristics, and these relationship patterns permeate and shape the culture of a community, persisting if they prove effective. Consequently, these four Erotes contribute a meaningful framework to the organization of individuals within a broader societal system.

The significance of viewing eroticism through this lens extends beyond its conventional association with sexuality and love. Instead, it proposes eroticism as a fundamental element in understanding the ontology of complex systems, emphasizing its role in shaping human interactions and cultural dynamics.

References

Aristotle (2014). *Poética*. (Poetics). Edited by V García Yebra. Madrid: Gredos.

Atwood M (2005) *Penelopiad*. Grove Press.

Butler S (2022) *La autora de la Odisea*. (The author of the Odyssey). Translated by M Cisneros Perales. Athenaica.

Calame C (2002) *Eros en la Antigua Grecia*. (Eros in Ancient Greece). Madrid: Akal Ediciones Tres Books.

Calasso R (2019) *Las bodas de Cadmo y Harmonía*. (The marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia). Barcelona: Anagrama.

Carson A (2020) *Eros Dulce y Amargo*. (Eros Sweet and Bitter). Translated by IC Pérez Parra. Barcelona: Lumen.

Claramonte J (2016) *Estética Modal*. (Modal Aesthetics). Volume I. Madrid: Tecnos.

Claramonte J (2020) Estética y teoría de la complejidad. (Aesthetics and complexity theory). UMÁTICA. *Revista Sobre Creación y Análisis de la Imagen* 2(3): 31–45.

Claramonte J (2021) *Estética Modal*. (Modal Aesthetics). Volume II. Madrid: Tecnos.

Claramonte J, Mateos A (2023) Ecología Aural: una investigación categorial en sistemas autoorganizados. (Aural Ecology: A Categorical Investigation into Self-Organizing Systems). *Arbor* 199(810): a727.

Dissanayake E (2012) *Art and Intimacy*: *How the Arts Began*. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press.

Dover KJ (2016) *Greek Homosexuality*. London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Fierro MA (2008) La teoría platónica del Eros en la república. (Plato's theory of Eros in the Republic). *Diánoia* 53(60): 21–52.

Frontisi-Ducroux F, Vernant J (2023) *En el ojo del Espejo.* (In the Mirror's Eye). Translated by H Pons. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Graves R (2023) *La hija de Homero.* (Homer's daughter). Translated by F Mazía. Madrid: Alianza.

Hartmann N (1956) *Ontologia.* (Ontology). Volume III. 1st Spanish Edition. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Hesiod (2011) *Teogonía. Los trabajos y los días.* (Theogony. The works and the days). Translated by Adelaida Martín Sánchez, María Ángeles Martín Sánchez. Madrid: Alianza.

Hillman J (1998) *The essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire*. London: Routledge.

Homer (2014) *The Odyssey*. Translated by Barry B Powell. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Kalogeraki S (2014) *Eros: Love-Life in Ancient Greece*. Athens: Mediterraneo Editions.

Kauffmann S (2020) Eros and Logos. *Angelaki* 25(3): 9–23.

Kavafis KP (2023) *Ítaca*. Translated by V Fernández González. Madrid: Nórdica Libros.

Kazantzakis N (2013) *Odyssey*. Translated by M Castillo Didier. Tajamar Editores.

Kerenyi K (1997) *Los dioses griegos.* (The Greek Gods). Translated by J López-Sanz. Caracas: Monte Ávila Editores.

Maldonado C, Torres L, Yaver C, Brill D, Cendales M, García D, et al. (2021) *Estética y Complejidad. Elementos para un estado crítico del arte*. (Aesthetics and Complexity. Elements for a critical state of the art). Bogotá: Corporación Creación - Arte & Ciencia.

Miller M (2023) *Circe.* Translated by CJC Recarey Rendo. Madrid: Alianza

Mitchell M (2009) *Complexity: A Guided Tour*. Oxford University Press.

North C (2023) *Ithaca*. Madrid: Vidis.

Otto WF (2002) *Los dioses de Grecia.* (The Gods of Greece). Translated by R Berge, Ad Murguía Zuriarrain Madrid: Siruela.

Paglia C (1990) *Sexual Personae*. (Sexual Persons). Yale University Press.

Papanikos G (2020) Collective Decision Making in Homer's Odyssey. *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 7(1): 59–84.

Paz O (2022) *La llama doble: Amor y erotismo*. (The Double Flame: Love and Eroticism). Barcelona: Seix Barral.

Plato (2021) *The Symposium.* Translated by Ángel Narro (Bilingual Ed.). Tarragona: Remata Textos Griegos.

Sappho (1986) *Sappho. Poems.* Translated by C Montemayor. Mexico: Trillas.

Sobral M (2023) Volver a ver un Vermeer: nuestras acciones sobre el cuadro y los efectos que provoca. (Re-watching a Vermeer: our actions on the painting and the effects it causes). *Calle 14 revista de investigación en el campo del arte* 19(35): 28–39.

Valtierra A (2005) "Que ha de resistir el apremio" sobre lo simbólico de la palmera en el mundo griego. ("That must resist the pressure" on the symbolic meaning of the palm tree in the Greek world). *Emblemata: Revista Aragonesa De Emblemática* (11): 29–58.

Vernant JP (2003) *El universo, los dioses y los hombres: el relato de los mitos griegos.* (The universe, the gods and men: the story of the Greek myths). Translated by J Jordá. Barcelona: Anagrama.

Weber A (2017) *Matter and Desire: An Erotic Ecology.* Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.