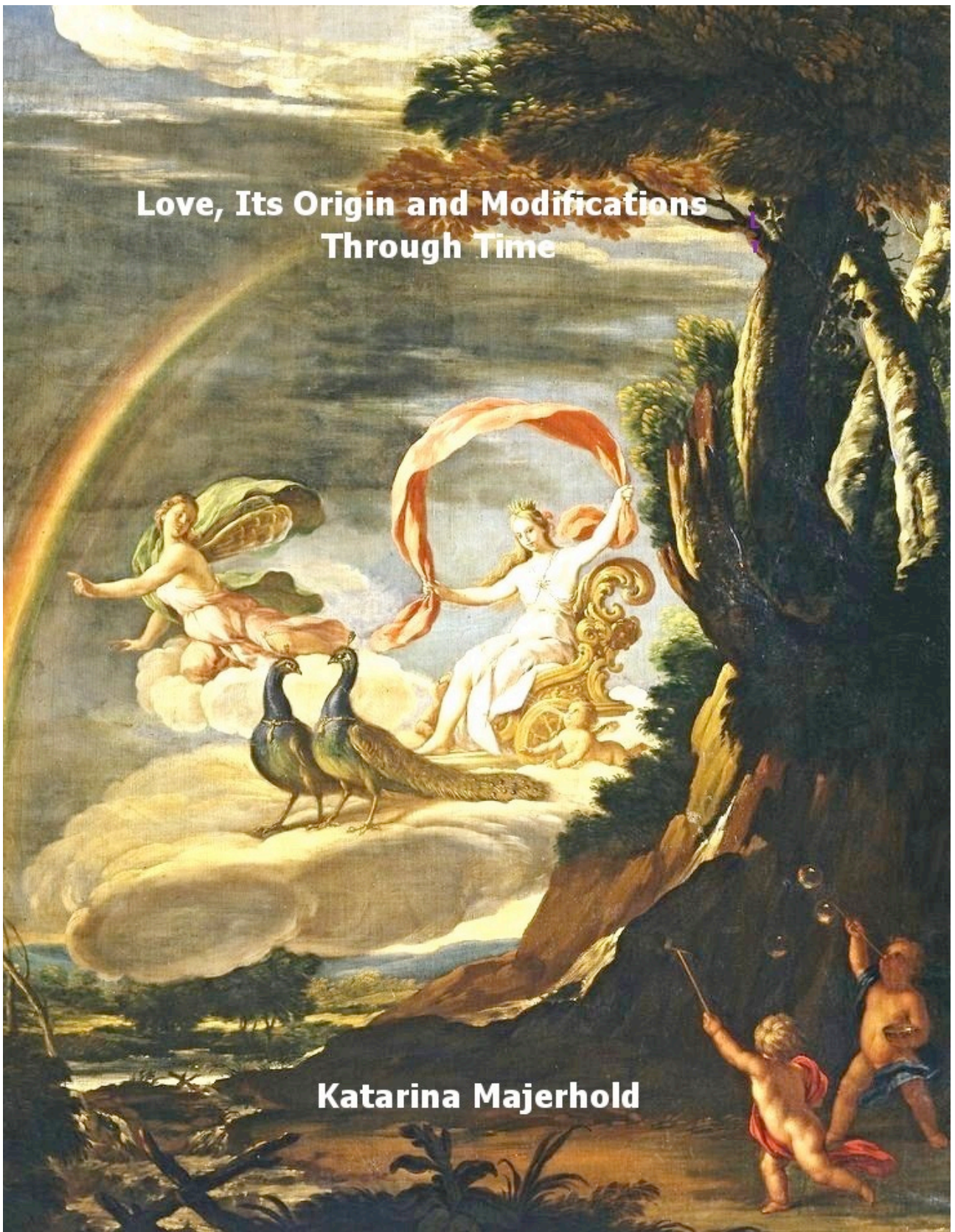


**Love, Its Origin and Modifications  
Through Time**



**Katarina Majerhold**

.....	3
.....	4
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Presocratic Period .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Empedocles (cca. 495 – 435 BCE) – Philotes and Neikos .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>3. The Classical (Socratic) Period .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>a) Plato (428 – 347 BCE) – Eros.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>b) Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE) – Philia .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<b>4. Christian Period .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>a) St. Paul (5 – 67) – Agape .....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>b) St. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) – Caritas .....</i>	<i>28</i>
<b>5. High Medieval Period.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Courtly (troubadour) Love (cca. 1100 – 1200).....</i>	<i>33</i>
<b>6. The Enlightenment Period .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<i>Rousseau (1712 – 1778) – The romantic pair .....</i>	<i>38</i>
<b>7. Modern and Postmodern Period.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<i>a) Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) – Transference love .....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>b) Feminist Perspectives on Love .....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>c) Duties to Children.....</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>d) Gay, Lesbian and Queer Theory .....</i>	<i>92</i>
<b>8. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>9. References and Further Readings .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>10. About the Author.....</b>	<b>109</b>

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**Katarina Majerhold**

**LOVE, ITS ORIGINS AND MODIFICATIONS  
THROUGH TIME**

**Main Philosophical Concepts of Love  
Through Western History**



# 1. Introduction



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: *Lovers in the Bibliothek* (1930).

What is love? We all wish to have the answer to one of the most universal, mysterious and all permeating phenomenon on this planet. And even if we perhaps have a special feeling and intuitive insight that love is: »everything is related to everything else, but closer things are more closely related«, as Waldo Tobler wrote in *First Law of Geography* (1970), we have still not found and offered a full or ultimate definition of a multifaceted, dynamic, creative and all-encompassing phenomenon such as love is. Another view of love is, as Spinoza said, that love is a product of the Common that constantly aims upward to the point of engaging in the love of God, that is, the love of nature as a whole, the common in its most expansive form. For him, every act of love, one might say, is an ontological event in that it marks a rupture within an existing being and creates new being and it is just another way of saying that what is ineluctably Common, what refuses to be privatized or enclosed, remains constantly open to all. To say love is ontologically constitutive, then, simply means that it produces the Common. However, since love is an ontological event,

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1 I sincerely wish to thank Ida Raudan and Sharon Kaye for their valuable comments, thorough reading and reviews of my book!

the creation of a new Common also coincides with different concepts throughout history since each period brings a new way of being and living. Thus each period in history offers a prevailing concept of love: in ancient, pre-Socratic times we have Empedocles' Love (Eros) and Strife (Neikos); in Socratic times, Plato's Eros and Aristotle's Philia; in the Middle Ages, St. Paul's Agape and St. Augustine's Caritas; in Renaissance Rousseau's notion of a modern romantic pair of Emile and Sophie; in modern time Freud's love as transference; in postmodern time Nussbaum's compassionate, reciprocal, erotic, and individual love; in feminist movement we get to know about women's liberation in thought, spirit and body and last but not least gay, lesbian and queer theory offers knowledge and insights into what does it mean the difference between sexual identity and sexual orientation.

This does not mean, however, that each representative concept of the period speaks of a totally new or innovative concept of love; many of them are interdependent and/or a modification of another.

## 2. Presocratic Period



Vassily Kandinsky: *Composition VII* (1913).

### **Empedocles (cca. 495 – 435 BCE) – Philotes and Neikos**

Empedocles was a Sicilian, a high born citizen of Acragas and one of pre-socratic philosophers, among whom were also Heraclitus and Parmenides. Empedocles is the last Greek philosopher who wrote in verse, which indicates that he knew the work of Parmenides who also wrote in verse style. Empedocles' work should be understood not only in relation to Parmenides' but also to Pitagora and sensualists who emphasized the notion of our senses. On the other hand, we can claim that his notion of Love and Strife as fundamental cosmic forces on which his cosmology and ethics lie is a very original thesis that no other philosopher afterwards continued (in some ways Freud was the only one who used his notions of Love and Strife in his notions of Eros and Thanatos).

In Empedocles cosmology love stands as a cosmic, consistent principle due to which the world exists through a mixture of elements, or as he says: »From these (Elements) come all things that were and are and will be; and trees spring up, and men and women, and beasts and birds and water-nurtured fish, and even the long-lived gods who are highest in honour. For these (Elements) alone exist, but by running through one another they become different; to such a degree does mixing change them.« (Empedocles, fr. 21). For Empedocles, elements are like letters in an alphabet and serve as metaphors, which emphasizes the ability of elements to form different types of matter which provide different combinations in the same way as a limited number of letters can form different words

through combination of the letters, or basic colours can be used to create different hues and patterns.

The cause of this mixture and of these combinations is the cosmic force of Love (Philotes) – the force of attraction and combination, and Strife (Neikos) – the force of repulsion and fragmentation. These two forces are engaged in the eternal dialectic and they each prevail in turn in an endless cosmic cycle: »I shall tell thee a twofold tale. At one time it grew to be one only out of many; at another, it divided up to be many instead of one. There is a double becoming of perishable things and a double passing away. The coming together of all things brings one generation into being and destroys it; the other grows up and is scattered as things become divided. And these things never cease continually changing places, at one time all uniting in one through Love, at another each borne in different directions by the repulsion of Strife.« (Empedocles, fr. 17).

This cycle of love-strife consists of four phases: two 'full' phases, governed at one time by love and at an other by strife, as well as two 'transitional' phases: a phase from strife to love, and a phase from love to strife.

In the beginning, Sphere was filled with love and the four elements were so close together that we could not discern them. After some time, however, Strife came into Sphere and Love started to outflow from it. When the Strife gained enough concentration in the Sphere, it resulted in the movement and fragmentation of the four elements into separate forms. But it seems that Empedocles needed 'evolution' (development) in his cosmology, and ensuing dynamic movement of the cosmos, and therefore he introduced movement through two transitional (alternating) phases, phases from love to strife and from strife to love. In this way, he got a third phase in which, as a consequence of the previous phases, love regains power through coming into the centre of the Sphere, while strife at the same time moves to its margin. And then, in the fourth and the last phase of the cycle, strife returns to the centre, and love moves to the margin. This process then repeats over and over again. It is believed that the idea of love and strife moving in and out of the sphere is an echo of Empedocles medical knowledge (he was also a well-known physician), especially of the function (systole and diastole) of the heart.

Thus, according to Empedocles, the world exists in continuous movement through different phases of a cycle, under which a certain type of stability exists in eternal elements. And it is precisely this continuous movement of the elements which produces a *continuous state of organic evolution* and from which all beings originate.

As we have seen, Empedocles presents a unique concept of love as the pair of opposites, love and strife, from which all life springs. Empedocles has not had many followers, but we



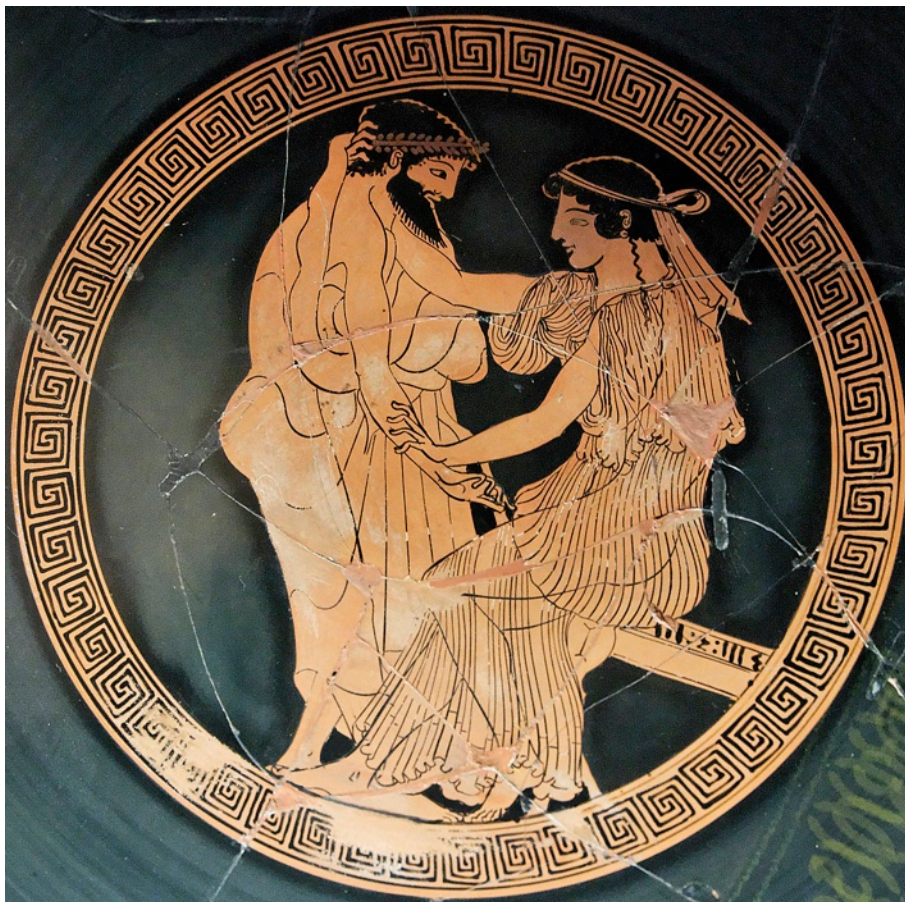
know that Freud designed his highly influential life (Eros) and death (Thanatos) drives according to Empedocles love-strife principle.



Vassily Kandinsky: *Points* (1920).

### 3. The Classical (Socratic) Period

The Socratic period is marked by two most important philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, each standing on opposite grounds. Plato, somewhat logical and abstract and at the same time mystical, is burdened by old Pythagorean and Orphic myths which somewhat connect his notion of Eros to love for Divine wisdom through which we wish to reach (through anamnesis) the world of Eternal Forms/Ideas of Truth, Beauty and Goodness (this world is in fact our home, Heaven) and Aristotle, who defined love as a form of Philia (friendship) where we strive to do good for the other's sake on one hand, while on the other he conceived marriage as a kind of biological-economical contract where each of the sexes have their own role through which they contribute to the common goal – better quality of survival and raising of the children.



Courtship (cca. 4 BCE).

#### **a) Plato (428 – 347 BCE) – Eros**

Plato, born a nobleman in an aristocratic family, was not only a philosopher but also a mathematician, a student of Socrates and, later on, a teacher of Aristotle. He was the first to lay the foundation of the Western philosophy and science. He also founded the first known academy which can be considered as the first institution of higher education in the Western world.

One of the things which had the biggest impact on his philosophy, however, was the crisis of the ancient Greek culture which had been flourishing for nearly 200 years at that time: it seemed to him that life was very much exposed to contingent *tuchē* in many different forms, while at the same time the Athenian people were obsessed with the idea that cultural progress could erase that uncontrollable contingency from their lives. And that progress found its hope in the contrast between *tuchē* (luck, what happens without our consent), and *technē* (art and science based on our knowledge, will and power). Ancient Greeks connected the story of human progress with the discovery of *technē*. Plato's *Protagoras* offers a critique of the conservative Athenian society with its philosophical addition: true societal progress lies in the development of the new *technē* – *technē* which is practical and with empiric reasoning subordinated to counting, measurement, weighing – in other words geometry, algebra, and the universal truth found in abstract mathematics and logic. His attitude is echoed also in his concept of love as presented in *Symposium*, although he changed his abstract outlook on love as universal Ideas (of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness) later in *Phaedrus* to meet also the erotic and 'subjective' aspect of the Ideal Love.

In *Symposium*, meaning a feast, he presents seven speeches in honour of love, one after another, going from left to right in the order in which they are reclining at the table. He introduces seven speakers who represent five types of love known up to that time, Socrates offering a unique and new philosophical concept of love as he was offered by Diotima and concluding with Alcibiades, the last, seventh speaker presenting his own love experience with Socrates.

Phaedrus, who is the 'father' of the idea of talking about love, claims that Love is a God, and is actually one of the most ancient Gods. According to Hesiod, he was born to Chaos and Earth. Love gives us the greatest goods and guidance. He prefers love between an older man (*erast*) and a young boy (*eromenes*) because it encourages a sense for honour or dishonour (shame), two necessary virtues of citizenship. For love will convert the coward into an inspired hero, for instance to die for the beloved.

Pausanias, who was sitting next, then takes up the tale. He says that Phaedrus should have distinguished heavenly love from the earthly one. The first of the two has a noble purpose, delights only in the spiritual nature of man, and does not act on lust. The second



one is the love of the body rather than of the soul, and is of women and boys, as well as of men. And when we are in the domain of earthly love, which operates on lust, we can see the powerful governing influence that pursuing sexual pleasure has on a person's actions and life. We can become slaves to our passions and subservient to others, a distinct threat to freedom and thus a happy life.

The turn of Aristophanes comes next, but he has the hiccups and therefore proposes that Eryximachus the physician shall cure him or speak in his turn. Eryximachus is ready to do both, and after prescribing for the hiccups, speaks as follows: he agrees with Pausanias in maintaining that there are two kinds of love; even more, his further conclusion is that this double love extends over all things – it can be found in animals, plants, as well as in humans. In the human body there are also two loves: the art of medicine shows which is the good and which is the bad love, and persuades the body to accept the good and reject the bad, and reconciles conflicting elements. Every art, sport, and marriage, as well as medicine, is the reconciliation of opposites; and this is what Heracleitus meant when he spoke of harmony (old Greek harmonia) which means successfully combining opposites. Music, too, is concerned with the principles of love in their application to harmony and rhythm according to Pythagorean teachings. In the abstract, all is simple, and we are not troubled with the twofold love; but when they are applied with their accompaniments of song and metre, then the discord begins. Love which is just and temperate (and follows the metre of harmony), however, has the greatest power, and is the source of all our happiness, health, and friendship.

Aristophanes is the next speaker. He argues that 'original' humans used to be beings with two faces, four arms and legs but we were cut into two by Zeus due to our arrogance and disobedience of the Gods. Since then people go around the world seeking their missing half. Eros, the God of love, is here to assist us in finding this missing half, which is our spiritual kin. Aristophanes also claims there were three genders of the original human beings: male (two males), female (two females), and androgynous (male-female). Males were descended from the sun, females from the earth, and those who were androgynous descended from the moon. Thus the task of Eros is making our race happy again through our completion and 'regression' to the original state. However, making us complete again is not as easy task as we would expect. When Zeus cut people in half they were at first cut in such a way that halves could not sexually merge and they were just able to kiss and hug, and were kept in this unsatisfied situation until they died. For this reason, Zeus gave them sexual (i.e. reproductive) organs. Sexual organs enabled the halves to merge in coitus and at least for a little while release the halves from their tension of desire for each other (desire to merge and become a whole). Martha Nussbaum, however, has observed



that this option pushes people to live within a domain of repetitive needs and desires which distract them from other businesses in life. Let alone that it is very difficult to meet such halves, and an even bigger puzzle is how we would recognize them (what are the signs of meeting the right half?). (Nussbaum, 2001: 174).

Socrates, being aware of this problem of Aristophanes' Eros, offered one of the solutions to the problem by offering the identity of the lover who desires and moves, and at the same time becomes a self-sufficient person (complete and satisfied in himself not desiring anyone). So Socrates, as the next speaker, offered a response to Aristophanes' notion of love.

Socrates claims that a) »love is neither love for the half or the whole, if one or the other has not some good, beauty and truth.« (Plato, 1960: 94); b) love or, in his words, Eros, is primarily a relationship between a knowledge-lover (philosopher) and ultimate knowledge (Truth which is Goodness/ Beauty/Love and part of the Heaven/Angelic domain). Thus, our love is based on the notion that the aim of love is not a person but something immaterial (the ultimate Heavenly Ideas of Truth/Beauty/Goodness) which enables us to have an anchor within ourselves.

And how can we achieve this? The next four steps up the ladder from the material towards the immaterial will show us. But before we introduce the four-steps upwards into the 'angelic' domain, we must say that the originator of the theory of Eros is not Socrates, but a Greek priestess, Diotima. Socrates says that he merely repeats what he was told by her, and that is:

1) Socrates states that the general description of Eros or love is a desire for something that we do not have - we desire what we lack.<sup>2</sup> And what do we lack? We desire beauty, goodness and truth. But if we desire something that we do not have - does it mean Eros is ugly, bad and foul? Diotima answers this question by saying that Eros is neither beautiful nor ugly, neither good or bad, neither wise or stupid, neither god or mortal, but Eros is something in between or in the middle. Eros is a great daemon, or intermediate power, who conveys to the gods the prayers of men, and to men the commands of the gods. Thus love (Eros) as something in between is always a process, always unfolding. »Love is a force of perpetual movement, perpetual rising, transformation of values« as Irigaray claims (Irigaray, 1994: 183).

We must also distinguish Eros from a beloved one, because Eros is the loving one. And such a notion of Eros resembles the position of a philosopher. According to Socrates,

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<sup>2</sup> Andres Nygren in his book *Eros and Agape* (1953) calls Socrates notion of Eros which desires that which it lacks as an acquisitional love – a love which desires what we don't have and which we consider as having a certain value for us, and that what we actually desire is the Heavenly kingdom.

»Sophia (wisdom) is one of the most beautiful things in the world. Sophia is the love of wisdom, therefore Eros must be a philosopher, that is a lover of wisdom who stands in between the fair and the foul, the good and the bad, the ugly and the beautiful.« (Plato, 1960: 96).

II) But if Eros desires the beautiful, then the question arises: What does Eros desire of the beautiful? He desires possession of the beautiful – but what is he given by that? For the beautiful lets us substitute the good, and we have no difficulty in seeing the possession of the good to be happiness, and love to be the desire of happiness. And when something makes us happy, we do not want to lose it, but wish to have the everlasting possession of the good which is in fact beautiful. And how do we achieve the everlasting possession of the good and the beautiful? By reproducing it. This is the reason men and women at a certain age are desirous of producing an offspring. And love is not of beauty only, but of birth in beauty; this is the principle of immortality in a mortal creature.

III) Eros as desire of the good and the beauty brings forth a desire for immortality;<sup>3</sup> this principle extends not only to men but also to animals. This is also why parents love their children – for the sake of their own immortality – and why men love the immortality of fame. Intellectuals and artists do not 'create' children, instead, they conceive concepts of wisdom, virtue, and legislations.

IV) Thus men who are concerned more with the physical level take care of children and love a woman, and those who are concerned about the spiritual level take an interest in justice, virtue and philosophy (world of ideas of Truth/Goodness/Beauty per se), and love Man (as mankind).

And how do we get to this Beauty/Goodness/Truth? At first, one should love one fair form (body), and then many, and learn the connection of them; and from beautiful bodies he should proceed to beautiful minds, and the beauty of laws and institutions, until he perceives that all beauty is of one kindred; and from institutions he should go on to the sciences, until at last the vision is revealed to him of a single 'science' of universal beauty, and then he will behold the everlasting nature which is the cause of all in the contemplation of that supreme love, he will be purified of earthly things, and will behold beauty (which is also good and true), not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of the mind, and will bring forth true creations of virtue and wisdom, and be the friend of God and the heir of immortality. Nussbaum evaluates this final state of the lover: »We came to the point when a lover is interested in all that he thinks is good for him and which reflects the aspirations of his soul. Since he is now part of (the unity of) Goodness, all his relationships

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<sup>3</sup> Socrates says that we can see this principle in fact in each person, for instance in the replacement of old thoughts with the new ones, everyday renovation of our cells, and the like.

are also part of the Goodness itself. This also frees him from being obsessively attached only to one object and allows him to treat all people equally and with justice. Plato's endeavour is an endeavour of ascension and purification. And for this reason Plato says not everything can be an object of desire – only the beautiful, the truthful and the good, the Divine«. (Nussbaum, 2001: 256).

The last or the seventh speech is by Alcibiades. We learn that Alcibiades is in love with Socrates because he believes that Socrates has a unique thing/trait that Alcibiades does not have despite being stunningly beautiful, an acclaimed war and strategic leader, winner of many prestigious awards and being praised and adored by many Athenians of high reputation. On the other hand, Socrates was considered to be ugly, robust and satyr-like in his appearance. Yet, is it not amazing that Alcibiades, who had everything in this world, fell in love with someone who had nothing of the above – appearance, likeability, fame? So what made such an impression on Alcibiades, who could have had any man in Athens, that he offered love to Socrates?

He fell in love because as he said: »I have heard Pericles and other great orators, and I thought that they spoke well, but I never had any similar feeling ... He is the great speaker and enchanter who ravishes the souls of men; the convincer of hearts, too.« (Plato, 1960: 104). So Alcibiades was surprised that beneath an ugly and neglected appearance there was the greatest treasure and that is why he explains his love for Socrates by first comparing him to the busts of Silenus, and secondly, to Marsyas the flute-player. »For Socrates produces the same effect with the voice which Marsyas did with the flute - he uses the commonest words as the outward mask of the divinest truths with which he touches the soul. Alcibiades describes the meeting with Socrates as like being bit by something that hurts the most and in the place that is the most sensitive. Socrates bit him in the heart or soul and awakened in him a need »that I ought not to live as I do, neglecting the wants of my own soul.« (ibid.: 105). Nussbaum claims in her article »The Speech of Alcibiades: a Reading of Plato's Symposium« that, by saying that he was hurt in the most sensitive part of himself, he appeals towards subjective experience, subjective suffering, in order to deny a Platonic outlook on the soul as the seat of personality, immortality and invulnerability (Nussbaum, 1986: 192). Then Alcibiades proceeds: »Socrates is exactly like the busts of Silenus, which are set up in the statuaries and shops, holding pipes and flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle, and have images of gods inside them ... and we will learn that his words hold the light of truth, and even more, that they are divine.« (Plato, 1960: 106). This uniqueness of Socrates is his main attraction. According to Lacan, however, we should consider a bust as an agalma – a source (or rather an object) of a lover's desire or desire of (his) love. »A particular

agalma someone sees in the other is that something he desires in this and not in the other person. Desire as such points towards a peculiar object (of desire) because it emphasizes and chooses exactly this and not any other object and makes it incomparable and incommensurable with the others.« (Lacan, 1994: 16). And that it aims strictly for a subjective and particular choice (or projection), maybe not reflecting something real in the person at all as Socrates reveals with his 'mysterious' reply to Alcibiades: »But look again sweet friend, and see whether you are not deceived in me. The mind begins to grow critical when the bodily eyes fail and it will be a long time before you get old.« (Plato, 1960: 107). So Socrates wanted to show Alcibiades that what he has sought and loved in him is actually in himself as well. Discovering your true self gives you the greatest self-satisfaction and at the same time also knowledge of how to become a better person; and this treasure can be shared with others too, becoming good, beautiful and truthful – something Socrates did by calling his endeavour a midwifery, i.e. helping others to bring forth into the light what was already in themselves.





Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg: *Socrates and Alcibiades* (1816).

In Plato's second work on love *Phaedrus*, he discusses another notion of love. He begins his work by denying the good of any love because he connects it with irrational behaviour conditioned by lust and desire. For instance, a lover driven by lust or a rejected lover may do previously unimaginable things. Sometimes a lover acts against the good of the beloved because of his desire, jealousy, possessiveness and envy, and sometimes he acts even against himself when, as a rejected lover, he takes his own life as the worst case scenario. For these reasons, Socrates favours a friend over a lover. A lover is still sound and he behaves by doing goodness for the sake of the friend(ship). Socrates thinks that if a lover behaves against his or his lover's goodness, then Eros must not be God. After all, God should do Men good and should uplift lovers into the realms of Heavenly bliss.

Socrates, however, a little later on, changes his mind and says that he was wrong by stating that Eros is not a God. In fact, Eros is connected with the true love(r). »The 'true lover' has a *mania* for the *good*, and this kind of mania, coming from the divine, is superior to human self-control of irrational passions. The mania for the good is an expression of the *desire of the immortal soul*, which has experienced the supreme good/beauty of the divine and wants to reclaim that experience of the supreme good/beauty.« (Adam Kissel, <http://home.uchicago.edu/~ahkissel/plato/phaedrus.html>). The soul, however, has the elements of the rational, harmonious, good and the disharmonious, aggressive, bad which are like the 'good horse' (metaphorically presented as a white horse), and the 'bad horse' (metaphorically presented as a black horse) that must be driven in concord; when these elements are disordered, the soul 'loses its wings' and adds a mortal body. »The goal of the incarnated soul is to learn how to manage the 'bad horse' through habitual reining-in, in order that its wings grow again; the soul must regain *self-control* and *true knowledge*.« (ibid.). But many souls mistake »their own opinions for true knowledge.« (Plato, 1963: 248b).

Souls which have better and deeper knowledge and understanding of our heavenly origins and are in better accord with their heavenly nature, are incarnated as better beings. According to this, the true lover of wisdom and the good, i.e. philosopher, is on the top of all Man. The same holds for an artist (the true lover of beauty). Others follow in the next order: the just king, the statesman, the doctor, the prophet and priest, the representational artist (poet), the manual labourer, the sophist and last, the tyrant. The just are reincarnated to a higher level, and the unjust to a lower level, until the wings grow back and heaven is regained. When an incarnated soul sees beauty on earth, it is reminded of Divine Beauty, and this helps the just soul ascend.

True and divine love occurs when a lover meets his lover on the same level, (as lovers are like mirrors to each other), which is why Socrates states that people who attract one another do so because they are the followers of a certain Deity. This simply means that when an incarnated soul sees beauty on earth, it is reminded of divine Beauty, and this helps the just soul ascend. (That is the reason why, for instance, people who love wisdom and justice follow Zeus, the ones who love royal treats follow Apollo, the ones who like to fight follow Ares, and so on). But most importantly, a »true love is a divine one as far as it is connected with virtue, justice, modesty, inspiration, enthusiasm and self-control, and it only occurs when lovers bring of each other their best godlike qualities.« (Plato, 1963: 253b).

And, in the last part of the Pheadrus, Socrates tries to discern a good speech from a false one by drawing on analogy of irrational love and true love as stated above. »Writing



speeches is not in itself a shameful thing. It's not speaking or writing well that's shameful; what's really shameful is to engage in either of them shamefully or badly. Rhetoric as a subject is morally neutral; it can yield a good or a bad crop.« (ibid.). But the biggest difference between the two types of speeches is whether they convey the truth, goodness and beauty that speaks of/and for the God or, rather, give a false impression by using truth-like speech which, instead of inspiring people to follow the divine path, leads them astray.

## b) Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE) – Philia



Plato (left) and Aristotle (right), a detail of *The School of Athens*, a fresco by Raphael (1509).

Upon Plato's death Aristotle left for Assos in Mysia (in Asia Minor, today known as Turkey), where he and Xenocrates (cca. 396 – 314 BCE) joined a small circle of Platonists (followers of Plato) who had already settled there under Hermias, the ruler of Atarneus. Under the protection of Antipater, Alexander's representative in Athens, Aristotle established a philosophical school of his own, the Lyceum, located near a shrine of Apollo. Lyceus also known as the Peripatetic School, the school took its name from its colonnaded walk, (a walk with a series of columns on either side).

Aristotle speaks about love and friendship mostly in *Nicomachean Ethics*, books VIII and IX. Here he follows Plato's lead as he speaks about philia, (friendship-like love), as the highest form of spiritual love, and having the highest spiritual value. This kind of friendship is friendship of the same and not based on any external benefits. It is led by reciprocal sympathy, support and encouragement of virtues, feelings, emotions, intellectual aspirations and spirit. »For all friendship is for the sake of good or of pleasure good, or pleasure, either in the abstract or such as will be enjoyed by him who has the friendly feeling and is based on a certain resemblance; and to a friendship of good men all the qualities we have named belong in virtue of the nature of the friends themselves ... Love and friendship therefore are found most and in their best form between such men.« (Aristotle, N. E. Bk. VIII: Ch. 3, 1156b).

We can't have many such friends, however, because our time is limited, (including our life time here on the Earth). But when Aristotle says that a person needs to abandon his philia for a friend if he changes or becomes vicious, this does not mean that he terminates friendship due to his own interest. He means that it happens because one of the friends realizes that he can't do anything to contribute to the goodness of the other.

And he also describes an example when we cannot talk of a true honest friendship any longer - when friendship is based on pleasure and benefit. In the case of friendship based on benefits, friends are used only as a means to achieve a certain purpose, (some goods, whether symbolic or material), and those who are together with others only for pleasure do not love the friend for his own sake but for their own pleasure. So these friends do not love someone for their own sake, but for the benefits or pleasure that they bring. Such friendships cannot last long because when the reasons for friendship vanish, the friendship itself disappears. Friendships formed on the basis of pleasure or benefit can be formed between two bad people or between good and bad people, but true friendship can be formed only between two good people. Good people are friends with their friends because they themselves are good. Bad people do not feel any pleasant feelings towards a friend unless he offers some kind of benefit. According to Aristotle, friendship does not

show only the values and preferences of the society and the country, but most importantly the moral character of a person.

Friends who love each other love in them what they themselves believe to be of value. »We love in friends that which represents a value for us – a friend is a representation of a certain value. Thus when a good person becomes our friend he himself is of value to us. Friends receive and give the same amount of good wishes and time, and feel the same joy or happiness in each other. True friendship is equality in all aspects, as a true friend is another self.« (Aristotle, N. E. Bk. VIII, Ch. 3: 1166a – 1172). Friends help each other to more fully realize each person's capacities as rational agents and so promote each person's happiness. However, we cannot have many friends in the same way as we cannot love many people. And last, but not least, it is very important to realize that a friend's propriety and ownership is a common propriety because commonality is the necessary condition for friendship.

And what does Aristotle say on the relationship between man and woman as seen in Book IX? Friendship between men and women, in his eyes, seems to exist by nature and humans are naturally inclined to form couples, even more than to form cities, inasmuch as the household is earlier and necessary in the same way as the city. With other animals, the union of male and female extends only to reproduction, but human beings live together not only for the sake of reproduction, but also for the various purposes of life. However, Aristotle still thought a lot within the biological domain, meaning that for him, from the start, the functions are divided, and those of man and woman are different, so they help each other by throwing their peculiar 'gifts' into the 'common stock'. It is for these reasons that both utility and pleasure seem to be found in this kind of friendship. But this friendship may be based also on virtue, for if the parties are good, each has its own virtue and they will delight in the fact of being together as spouses.

And children seem to be a bond of union (in his opinion the reason why childless people part more easily, which has proven to be nowadays not a totally accurate assumption, as almost 50 percent of today's couples divorce); for children are a good common to both, and what is common holds them together. (N.E. Bk. VIII; Ch. 12. 1162a, lines 14 – 31). Parents love their children as they love themselves, and children love their parents because their being comes from them. Siblings love each other because they were born of the same parents. The friendship of siblings and kinsmen is like that of being as a sort of comrades. Friendship between parents and children involves much more pleasure and usefulness than other friendships because of their life in common. However, this kind of friendship between parents and children is not equal, because it is another kind of friendship in which one of the parties is superior, the friendship between a parent and a child. In these

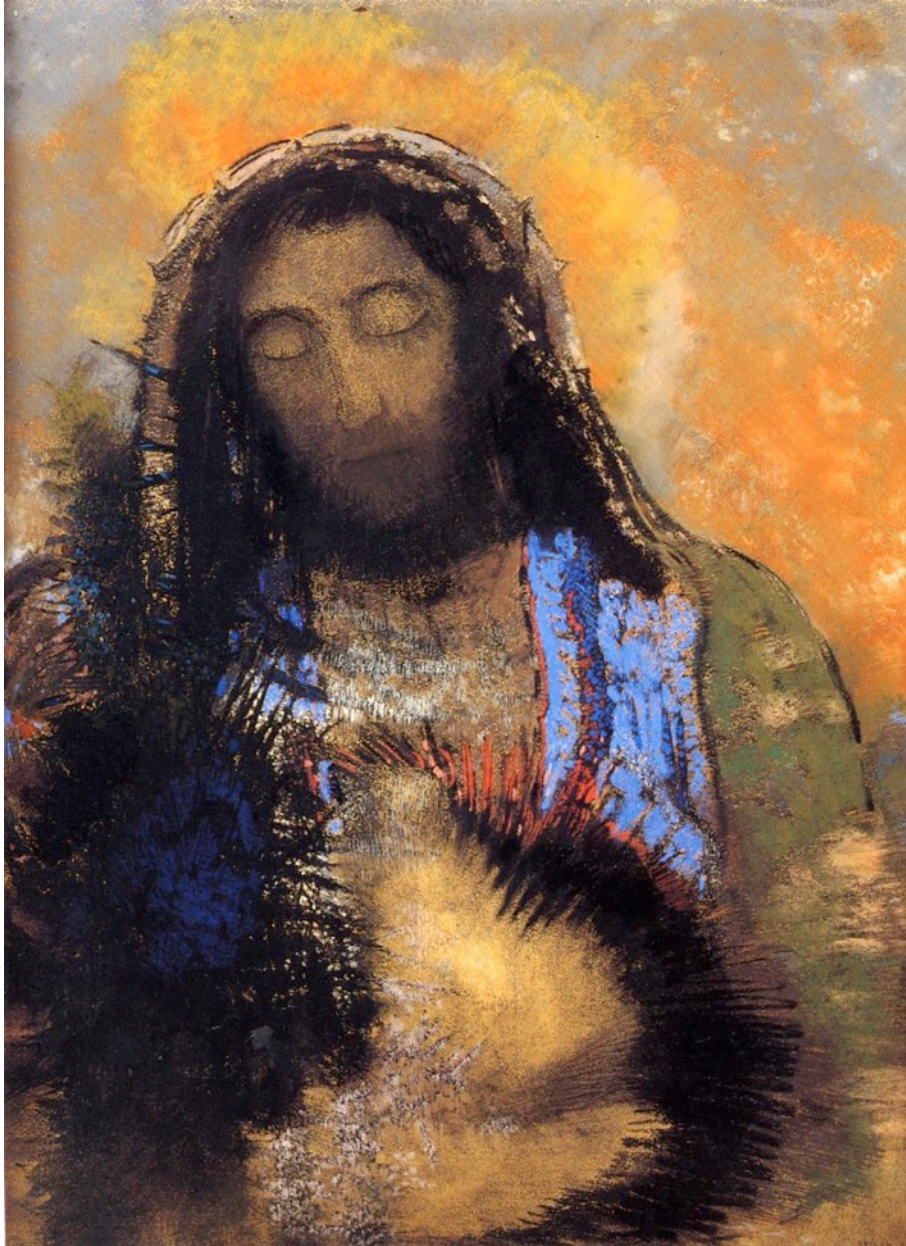


relationships, the two friends give and receive different things and also have different types of affection towards each other. And the same as holds for the relation between parents and children, in which parents are superior, Aristotle thinks also holds for man (husband) being superior to woman (wife). (However even stoics, a little later on, thought of man and woman, husband and wife, being equal since we are all endowed with a divine mind/spirit).

In being loved, on the other hand, people delight in it for its own sake; whence it would seem to be better than being honoured, and friendship is desirable in itself. But it (friendship) seems to lie in loving, rather than in being loved, as is indicated by the delight mothers take in loving (for some mothers hand over their children to be brought up, and so long as they know their fate they love them and see them prospering, and they themselves love their children even if these – their children –, owing to their ignorance, give them nothing of a mother's due).

Now, since friendship depends more on loving, and it is those who love their friends that are praised, loving seems to be the characteristic virtue of true friends, so only those in whom this (virtue of loving) is found in due measure, are lasting friends, and their friendship is the only one that endures. (N.E. Bk. VIII; Ch. 8: 1159a, lines 22 – 36). It seems that Aristotle offers a happy marriage as a 'friendship which endures', between two persons who love more than the other person loves him, but on the other level he somewhat proposes marriage as a kind of biological-economical contract where each of the sexes have their own role contributing to the common goal – better quality of survival and raising children.

## 4. Christian Period



Odilon Redon: *Sacred Heart* (1910).

### **a) St. Paul (5 – 67) – Agape**

St. Paul is the most important of the Twelve Apostles who taught the Gospel of Christ in the first century world. Fourteen epistles in the New Testament have been credited to Paul. Seven are considered to be absolutely genuine (Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon), three are doubtful

and the final three are believed not to have been written by him. It is believed that while Paul dictated his epistles, his secretary paraphrased the gist of his message. His letters, mostly addressed to the churches he had either founded or visited, contained explanations of what Christians should believe and how they should live. Paul's works contain the first written account of what it means to be a Christian and thus, the Christian spirituality.

However, St. Paul is most known by his writings of the two Letters to Romans and Corinthians. In *The First Letter of St. Paul to the Romans* he says: »For with the heart, one believes resulting in righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made resulting in salvation.« (St. Paul, Romans 10:10 <http://ebible.org/web/ROM10.htm>). One who speaks about faith in God makes the other happy, offers consolation and invites other people on the path of Jesus Christ, and secondly, one who talks about God and its revelation, recognition, prophecy and teaching, is building a church of God. Through annunciation of the holy wisdom he addresses those ready to be redeemed and consecrated into eternal life. Instead of the carnal life which knows transience and death, we are consecrated into eternal pure life through love, hope and faith. Namely, according to St. Paul there exist two bodies, the carnal (lustful) and heavenly (pure) within a unity called God's temple, or the Holy Spirit. But what is spirit(ual) and heavenly cannot be seen with the eyes nor heard with the ears. »God's eternal building in which the spiritual body resides does not need food and drink and it was not made by human hands. However, we acquire a spiritual body only through the death of the carnal, sensual body. We have a carnal body which needs to die in order to allow a spiritual body to be born through Jesus Christ, crucified God.« (Nygren, 1953: 203). Namely, Andres Nygren in his book *Agape and Eros* claims that we can call the Christian God - crucified God, or unconditional love of the cross.

For Jewish people such a God was scandalous, not because they were unable to think of a crucified Messiah, but because Agape (unconditional love) of the cross excluded all the previous schemes of values. Romans also assumed the preaching about Christ and Agape (unconditional love) of the Cross was foolishness because it was contrary to the intellectual and legal outlook of their world. However, it was obvious that Plato, with his philosophy of transcendence and ascension to the heavenly realm of Forms/Ideas (Truth, Goodness, Beauty) through the ladder of Love, suggested a path to the transcendence (God), even if it was a rather different path from a Platonic one, but nonetheless he was the one who opened the Christian road to eternal transcendence through the transient world – a space of eternal, spiritual (heavenly), and sublimed 'space'.

But discussion of Jesus and Christianity raises a paradoxical question: how did we come to this transient world if there is no other God; are things flowing into the world from two different sources? It is said, we should approach the God who is (in) this world and above,

and more than this world, differently from the perspective of death, law, desire, knowledge, and power. Instead, Paul talks of grace, faith, love and hope. Jewish religion and tradition, for instance, maintains that God is a transcendence which cannot be attained by men, however in Christianity man can 'reach' God through becoming like Christ on the Cross. The resurrection of Christ is an event which broke the law of death, knowledge, desire and power and enabled a new life with God and in God through the grace of God. And essential for this 'new life' is love (Agape), which people were given as a gift by Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself for all people: all we have to do is to open up to love.

And what is Agape (unconditional love)? St. Paul in his *First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians* says: »Love is patient and is kind; love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud, does not behave itself inappropriately ... does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will be done away with. Where there are various languages, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be done away with ... Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was also fully known. But now faith, hope, and love remain — these three. The greatest of these is love.« (St. Paul, First Letter to Corinthians, 13:5 <http://ebible.org/web/1CO13.htm>). For faith without love is dead – love is the only source in the world that combines words (thoughts) and actions. For Paul, love is faithfulness to the event of the crucified Christ – to life which is a total sacrifice to the Other (God). »Without Christ from the Cross people would never know God's love and vice versa; without God's Agape Christ's path would not lead to the Cross.« (Nygren, 1953: 117).

If we did not experience unconditional love which was found through crucified Christ, we would not know love in the Christian sense of the word. As Paul claims, Agape is God's unconditional love for the Christ from the Cross. Paul sees in the Christ from the Cross also an event of sacrifice, in fact some sort of God's own sacrifice. All things come from God who became equal with us through Christ. God's love is not the one which desires but gives. With this Paul emphasizes the features of Christian Love which is spontaneous and the altruistic nature of God's unconditional love (Agape) which clearly manifested upon Christ's death, who died for the poor, weak, ill, foreigners, enemies and atheists. Agape is then God's unconditional love for Man and not love of Man for God which is a definition of ancient Eros.





William Blake: *Jacob's Ladder* (1805).

Thus Agape, (unconditional love), as a self-sacrificed love, is reflected in the commandment: 'Love your neighbour as yourself', and is manifested in human relationships as »Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil. Cling to that which is good. In love of the brothers be tenderly affectionate one to another; in honour preferring one another; not lacking in diligence; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; enduring in troubles; continuing steadfastly in prayer; contributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality.« (St. Paul, Letter to Romans, 12:9 – 12:13 <http://ebible.org/web/ROM12.htm>). And »'For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other commandments there are, are all summed up in this saying, namely 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Love doesn't harm a neighbour. Love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.« (St. Paul, Letter to Romans, 13:09 – 13.11 <http://ebible.org/web/ROM13.htm>).

This law of God's universal love, which is mapped onto the love for your neighbour as love for yourself, Paul thus defined as love in the form of: a) undivided and undefined faith, and b) reduced the number of laws/prohibitions to the smallest number possible.

And what is the difference between Christian Agape and Platonic Eros? According to Nygren, Eros is contrary to Agape, which aims to fulfil its deficits and tries to benefit by mathematical calculations, thus making its motives non-spontaneous, uncreative and selfish. God's love does not rate or calculate on which grounds to love someone or something. Its sole basis is God's goodness, in which he gives his love spontaneously and without any ulterior motives. The difference between the two loves is in concrete terms: in ancient Greece, eromenes was loved by erast – raised into goodness, beauty and truth – if he had a certain background, was beautiful and virtuous and vice versa. Eromenes loved erast as he was an educated, respected, honoured and highly paid aristocrat, if he was also beautiful, this was a bonus. This love is, according to Nygren, an acquisitional love whereas Christian love is unselfish and reflected in the aforementioned commandment 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

Concrete implications of God's unconditional love can be seen also in the relationship between man and woman. According to Paul, women are mysterious, 'dark' and penetrable, while men are open, light and penetrating, but in the face of God all people and beings are equal, men, women, Jews, Greeks, Christians. »Let the husband give his wife the affection owed her, and likewise also the wife her husband. The wife doesn't have authority over her own body, but the husband. Likewise also the husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but the wife.« (St. Paul, First Letter to Corinthians, 7:3 – 7:5 <http://ebible.org/web/1CO07.htm>).

God in general prefers asceticism and celibacy, however good Christians need to give up on these if they wish to marry and have children. Thus God also allows sexual intercourse but only for having children because a sheer reproduction serves to continue the human species and does not encourage sin and desire for pleasure of flesh. A stark reproduction responds only to need and does not feed a desire which makes man a slave of himself and the other.

However, on the other hand, Christianity produced the difference between men and women by stating that man is better and above woman: »But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.« (St. Paul, First Letter to Corinthians, 11:3 <http://ebible.org/web/1CO11.htm>). It is obvious that in this view woman and man are not equal as stated, and thus this led to a long road of female subjugation, injustice and suffering.

But why are we faced with this paradox of inequality and difference, even more with a hierarchy among people and among man and woman which was unfortunately generated by love for yourselves as for your neighbour? Freud has given one possible answer in his book *Civilization and its Discontent*. In his opinion, the commandment 'love yourself as your neighbour' contains an implicit condition that I should love myself first and more and then the other, and that this other is similar to me in order that I can love myself in the other. »'Neighbour' does not represent only someone who can help us in the survival game and give us asexual pleasure and nice feelings, but also someone who can present a threat to fulfil his aggressive tendencies and take credit for our work, or to humiliate us, even inflict pain, torture and kill /.../ and these all can happen when spiritual contra forces that limit human aggression fail. That is when a human being shows himself as a savage that does not know how to defend its own species from ruin.« (Freud, 2001: 53).

**b) St. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) – *Caritas***





Peter Paul Rubens: *Adam and Eve* (1628 - 1629).

St. Augustine was an early Christian theologian whose writings were very influential in the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. He was on one hand Plato's follower, and his critic in the light of neoplatonists, and on the other hand he was an interpreter of Christian teachings, especially of St. Paul and other apostles. He was the first to create and establish a concept of love that included Eros and Agape in the form of Caritas.

Greatly influenced by Neo-Platonist versions of *Symposium* and versions of ascending love (through a love ladder, as offered by Socrates, and mediated by Diotima), St. Augustine used this in his early period as a positive paradigm of Christian life, in the sense of ascending love through different stages, in his works such as *De Quantitate Animae* and *De Genesi contra Manicheos*. In these works, he fought against the teachings of the



Manicheans who were inspired by Mani (3. AD in Babylonia).<sup>4</sup> Later on, however, he refutes this kind of Platonic ascension and develops his own kind of Christian Agape and platonic Eros. Augustine believed that if Plato lived again he would accept Christianity. He compared Christ's resurrection with Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, although there is no actual connection between the two. The combination of Eros and Agape creates a new love which is neither Eros nor Agape, but Caritas. »/.../ St. Augustine's views have had the biggest and longest impact in the history of Christian ideas of love, sometimes even overshadowing love described in the *New Testament*. Texts from the *New Testament* continue to be the foundation for discussion, but often they are *interpreted* through Augustine. Since his time, the notion of Christian love belongs to his categorizations.« (Nygren, 1953: 450).

But what is the reason for Augustine's combination of Eros and Agape? Where does he see a flaw in Eros that must be repaired by Agape? The answer lies in pride (*superbia*) which is connected with Eros. He writes in *Confessions*: »When the soul ascends higher and higher into the spiritual realm, person starts getting a feeling of pride and self-sufficiency which makes that person stay within himself instead of reaching beyond the self towards the heavenly.« (Augustine, 1993: 39). Thus Augustine is very much aware of the past memories, of the emotional bonds and pleasures of the flesh which we are supposed to get rid of, but if we do not, they try to drag us down to old habits and prevent us from being heavenly habitants. However, the trick is that man cannot do this by himself. Although Platonic Eros presents love built on human will, power and knowledge (which will bring us to heavenly domain of the Ideas), to Augustine this is false and only God himself can free and redeem us as he states in his famous work, *City of God*: »In order to heal human pride, God's son descended to show the way to become humble.« (Augustine, book VIII, 7. chapter, 1994: 273) and continues: »... pride is the beginning of the sin ... Therefore, humbleness is highly advised in the *City of God*.« (ibid.). This is the reason why Christian spirit emphasizes humbleness (*humilitas*), which is Jesus Christ. Augustine saw the remedy for Eros's pride and self-sufficiency, which prevents Eros reaching its goal, as God's love or Caritas. The task of love is for man to liberate himself through God's humility and start walking into his father's home (love).

And what is God? »All people see God as the highest, most beautiful, the brightest, eternal, wise, good, true and truthful entity who ever existed at all. No one on the Earth possesses the features God has. He is life itself, pure love and the origin of everything that

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4 Mani continued – as gnostics – the very old belief that we are faced with a frequent fight between light and darkness, spirit and flesh. Our world is a combination of light and darkness, however the life of man is a path towards liberation from flesh, materialism and darkness. He argued for life in contemplative self-sufficiency as an attainable and valued Christian ideal.

is: God /.../ gives preference to that which lives before to that which is dead and he is the highest Good (Summum Bonum) (Augustine, II. note, I. book, 1994: 524). Even more, death is the biggest enemy of the heavenly kingdom, therefore Augustine concludes that: »... life will be truly happy when it is going to be eternal.« (Augustine, 1994: 25). Hannah Arendt correctly observes that such a concept of love was defined in two steps: »First, that which is good is an object of yearning, i.e. something useful which can be found in this world and we hope to get into everlasting possession. In the second, good is defined through fear of death and destruction.« (Arendt; 1996: 12). Augustine's introduction of human (soul) yearning for the highest good (Summum Bonum) and eternal life reveals an additional difference between Man and God. Namely, people are, contrary to God, made creatures – we do not have life of our own depending solely on us, but only through Him. A man-made creature does not possess his own bonum but he needs to find it – which is achieved through love, as a yearning to acquire good. Happiness is thus having this good and keeping it in our life. Desire and yearning is thus a sign of a created creature, whereas God himself is without desire and lives according to himself and through himself – he does not need anything or anyone to exist. Such a God is self-sufficient and autarkical, contrary to other beings who live in connection to Him. Nygren thinks that this kind of thinking is an unusual combination of antique and Christian elements: »In ancient times a godlike life was defined as self-sufficient, fulfilled and blissful. This needs to be combined with the Christian notion of Creation. God which has Summum Bonum in himself through his creative powers, steps outside Himself and creates life, fills life with his Bonum.« (Nygren; 1953: 480).

The fundamental difference between God's made creatures and their Creator is in the metaphysical difference between eternity and time. Creatures belong to the world of changes, transformations and transitions: created beings never fully exist (the past is gone, the future is yet to be), and he exists only in now which soon turns into the past – what truly exists is only now which is not in time, but in eternity – which is God. »This present moment without any past and future, and which does not know singular goods and is itself absolute goodness (Summum Bonum) – is eternity.« (Arendt; 1996: 13). Now we better understand Augustine, love is defined in the sense of acquiring the highest good and keeping it (which also resembles Plato's notion a little), because that is what brings people happiness, meaning, sense of direction, inner peace and bliss.

However, this is not the whole story of love, because Augustine divides love into that which is good/proper/right and that which is bad/false, according to the object desired – the choice of the object is very important because we become what we love. Therefore, if a

loving one chooses created and transient objects of this world, we have love called Cupiditas, if he chooses an eternal and non-created object (God), we have Caritas.

## 5. High Medieval Period



Autorbild Konrads von Altstetten: *Meister des codex Manesse*.

### Courtly (troubadour) Love (cca. 1100 – 1200)

The practice of courtly (troubadour) love was developed in the castle life of four regions: Aquitaine, Provence, Champagne and ducal Burgundy, from around the time of the first



crusade (1099). Eleanor Aquitaine, first wife of Louis VII and later of King Henry II was also very active in the area of courtly literature. She brought ideals of courtly love from Aquitaine first to the court of France, then to England.

The main motive of troubadour love as expressed through poetry, and articulated by canso, (a love poem which describes a lady from high society in sublime language), is to write about unrequited love for an unattainable object of courtly love – a lady. This originates with William IX, Duke of Aquitaine (1026 - 1178), who wrote his poems around year 1100. William IX was in fact the first well-known troubadour and in a sense its founder. Novak asks himself why such a powerful man, an aristocrat as William IX, who could have anything he wanted and desired in this world, writes and praises an unattainable lady? His assumption is that it was probably a response to his overly secular power. In this sense, William IX decides on another sort of power, power of word (a poem): a power that the future of European and Western culture and civilisation will consider as spiritual power but sort of powerlessness in worldly matters. In this light we can understand his poem 'I desire to sing' (<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/French/FromDawnToDawn.html>):

Since my mood urges me to sing  
I'll make a verse, of my grieving:  
Yet not serve Love in anything,  
In Poitou or in Limousin.  
Now to exile I have come:  
In great fear and danger's room,  
And fierce war I'll leave my son,  
By his neighbours ill is planned.  
/.../  
If neither good nor worth he knows,  
When I'm gone from you, suppose  
They'll quickly cause his overthrow  
Knowing him young: but half a man.  
Mercy I ask of each companion,  
If I have wronged him may he pardon;  
And I ask it of Jesus in heaven  
Both in Latin and Romance.  
I was of joy and chivalry,  
But now of both I must be free;  
And to Him I now take me,  
Where sinner finds his goal at hand.

Happiness, gaiety have I seen  
But our Lord bans what has been;  
Will not suffer such ill scenes,  
When so near my end I stand.  
All have I left for love of Him,  
Chivalry and pride grow dim;  
And if God please, he'll gather me in,  
And I pray keep me at his right hand.  
I ask that my friends at my death  
Come but to honour my last breath,  
For I have had both joy and mirth  
Near and far, and in palace grand.  
So, I abandon joy and mirth,  
Vair, sable, ermine: I'll naked stand.

As said, courtly love presented in the courts of William IX and Henry II was used in social gatherings, in the form of poetry recitals, to present their view on what they saw as the relationship between a man and the object of his desire, a lady of high society. These recitals on courtly love (*fin'amour*) focused on an all encompassing and mysterious love between two souls, a 'wild' love which was bigger than either individual involved.

The main purpose of troubadours who wrote about courtly love was to rejuvenate the old world and to soften the rigid patriarchal social order/hierarchy which existed at the time. The new concept of courtly love arose in response to the crisis of medieval feudal aristocratic marriage which was based merely on economic and political interests. Kings and knights perceived marriage as nothing more than a contract, (from which personal emotions and preferences were excluded), between a free man and a free woman who belonged to the same social class. The function of marriage was predominantly to give birth to male successors – to maintain the noble family tree – and to build manly virtue, heroism.

Courtly love was in total opposition to the aforementioned function of marriage: it was about two people who did not mind about social codes, privileges, interests and benefits. The courtly love, of which the troubadours told through their rhetorical, musical and poetical fiction, contradicted the marriage contract with pure love and contradicted adultery in marriage with faithfulness within an 'outside' marriage which was based on that love.

In addition to courtly love, there was also, in these times, the notion of knightly love. But if troubadour love praises the unstoppable yearning for a lady, which might never be fulfilled because it praises (spiritual and carnal) chastity above all, knightly love praises

faithfulness to the chosen lady, while considering the possibility for a real sexual union between lovers. This is the main difference between the two concepts: one praises sexual asceticism and pure spiritual love, while the other also allows for the possibility of the union in all human capabilities and dimensions.

Or put it another way: »Because troubadour love was never dependent on military validity, they were never ashamed to love without fame if their passionate love was inspiration of spiritual enthusiasm and poetry /.../. While knights needed to earn their love with military successful actions, troubadours earned their love with the quality of their emotions.« (Nelli, 2003: 202). In knightly love, a knight earns the heart of a lady by his heroic actions: he shows his bravery by saving a feeble princess from a fierce dragon, he sacrifices himself for the weak and oppressed, and in the end earns her heart – but not in a free manner, expecting nothing in return for his bravery. On the contrary, he expects her heart as his booty: to conquer her is to subjugate her. »The historic merit of troubadours, which we can't emphasize enough, is that they championed the self-foundation of love: they were the first who perceived and experienced love as a category in itself, as a virtue that pumps its own value from itself and needs no other reasoning. A troubadour did not need to prove love with the power of a knight to conquer a lady with force; love was enough.« (Novak; 2003: 202 – 203). Troubadours were the first to demand that a relationship between a man and woman needed to be founded on true love, and that sexuality, also, need to be founded on a true love rather than being solely for pleasure (or reproduction). »Because love, *fin'amor* or fine love was not a search for sexual pleasure... but sublimed desire for uniting two hearts into a sacred bond.« (Duby, 1997: 78).

Troubadours are also entitled to the distinction of being the first ones in the Europe who showed true respect, kindness and gentleness towards women. In this sense, troubadours were the first feminists and fighters for women's emancipation and equality – which they liked to stress and were very proud of. Duby writes that a woman in courtly poetry occupied such an important and equal role compared to a man ... and her character was described with such subtlety ... that Isolde, as the most famous heroine of courtly love in the famous poem Tristan and Isolde, drank the magic potion of love as Tristan did and they were equally subjugated to the desire and magic of love: this act undermined the social (value) system of that time under which a woman should submit to a man's desire to her. Instead, they were both subjugated to each other's desire.



Edmund Blair Leighton: *Tristan and Isolde* (1902).



## 6. The Enlightenment Period



Nicolas Monsiau: *The First Kiss of Love, La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761).

### **Rousseau (1712 – 1778) – The romantic pair**

Jean Jacques Rousseau was a philosopher, pedagogue, composer, writer and first autobiographer in the world. His political ideas were highly influential for the French Revolution and later for socialism and even nationalism. In his early writings, Rousseau contended that man is essentially good when in the 'state of nature' (the state of all the other animals,

and the condition man was in before the creation of civilization and society), and that good people are made unhappy and corrupted by their experiences in society. Rousseau claimed again and again that human nature was corrupted by the habits and manners of society in the big cities, which made people shift from natural (moral, political, spiritual) values to artificial and immoral values, based only on looks, superficial talk and material goods. According to Rousseau, external looks and actions in the modern society of the 18<sup>th</sup> century did not convey what was truly inside people's hearts; that people can hear only in the silence, freed from passions and desire for reputation, background, power-position and goods. A corrupted society obsessed with materialism, power and fame does not reflect the true human nature, but instead conceals it. By concealment, he meant that a person is not being free and honest with himself, but subjugated to the rigid uniformity of civil and cultural conventions, and as he describes it: »Everything that is not in human feelings is put into rules and rules are thought to solve everything ... and even if this society was full of original people, this nation of imitators would not recognise them because no one dares to be himself. We all should work as everyone else ... is the motto of the day. In this way, people are closer to each other, but their hearts are even more apart from each other.« (Rousseau, 2<sup>nd</sup> book, 1978: 235).

And when man lost a true connection with his heart, he started working on forming (a uniformed) mask which would fulfil the needs of the corrupted man and society. And such an artificial and untrue person is always in conflict with himself which, in effect, makes him weak, irritated, anxious, reckless and more dependent on material goods and people than he needs to be. A corrupted bourgeois society tells people about benevolence and altruism, but beneath this we are faced with ruthless and brutal selfishness, greed and a hateful attitude towards other people. Rousseau notices this corruption on social and personal levels as in the relationships between men and women; thus he suggested a new way to loving relationships. In his two famous works, *Julie, or the New Heloise: Letters of Two Lovers Who Live in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps* (1761) and *Emile, or On Education* (1762), he presented a notion of a romantic, enthusiastic, honest, loving, free and trustful romantic pair who seal their love in marriage. He was also the first philosopher who imagined and portrayed marriage above all social and economic interests, and based it on true, honest, open love.

In *Julie, or the New Heloise*, we follow a romantic love story between Saint-Preux and Julie. According to Rousseau, a man and a woman seal their love in marriage when they have a feeling that they cannot change what they feel in the hearts for each other: »We share the same picture of the world ..., we have the same outlook on the world and why would I not believe that what we share in our hearts we also share in the level of our

beliefs and judgements.« (Rousseau, 1<sup>st</sup> book, 1984: 65). This led Rousseau to believe that when two people are deeply in love, they have a feeling that »our souls are the same and we are one soul.« (ibid.: 166). This feeling brought Julie and Saint-Preux to open their eyes and realize that their destinies are »bound together despite the differences in money, background, and parents« (ibid.: 49). Thus very strong components of true love, which goes beyond all social obstacles, are mutual feelings and emotions. Even more, Rousseau says that if a blind sexual desire is driven mostly by selfish fulfilment, love has a possibility of expansion beyond the self's interest, and demands an active, empathic and compassionate response from another person. Namely, another component of pure love is also benevolence: »Man can resist almost anything but benevolence, and in order to get benevolence you give it.« (ibid: 190). And there exists yet another feature of love: enthusiasm which does not provide lovers and partners only with enormous energy, but also drives them beyond themselves and towards the ideal of perfection. True love is not without enthusiasm, and true enthusiasm not without the object of perfection, true or illusionary. This ecstasy which starts with sensory and sensual experience of his lover gives a lover a new sense of himself, the other and the nature itself. »... pure sensual pleasure and experience manifests in self-oblivion. With removal of the veil, ego forgets its own history, he gives it up – he loses that obstacle in himself, in consciousness that divided him from the rest of the world and becomes one with(in) it ...« (ibid.: 32).

The lover, with his feelings of true love, reveals his 'true self', the other and the nature. That is why Saint-Preux keeps repeating: »All that we need to know about love is already in our hearts, we should not learn from books what love is. All that we need to feel is already in our hearts, and that what we need to know is already in our minds. One who goes back to his (true) self (heart) immediately knows what is good and beautiful.« (ibid.). For Rousseau, love is goodness that works and had its origin in a balanced nature. Love that originates in a good natured, nurtured nature; from a balanced combination of our instincts, heart, mind and soul: what the heart feels, the mind confirms. Reason is important for love, in order that lovers know how to lead and handle their needs and desires properly: after the initial stages of love filled with desire, passion, enthusiasm and restlessness, love starts to take into account also reason and a wise, benevolent and peaceful form, which reaches its highest form in the highest virtue.

However, what we have not told so far is that Saint-Preux was at first Julie's teacher and to his surprise, and despite of all they felt and discovered, she later married an older wealthy and educated man, de Wolmar,<sup>5</sup> and they all lived on a propriety called Clarens. Even more interesting is that Rousseau wrote a love story in which even after Julie gave birth to

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5 Julie married de Wolmar because of her parents not because she wished it on her own.

two children she remained in love with Saint-Preux and also admitted her affair to de Wolmar who was sad upon this fact but continued to love her nonetheless.

But why Rousseau put an obstacle to Saint-Preux's and Julie's love, and why Julie accepted to marry the older and wealthy de Wolmar, which prevented their love to keep fully blossoming? Jean Starobinski, in his book *Transparency and Obstacle*, provides a plausible insight: »By introducing a marriage with older, de Wolmar, and having children with him, Rousseau simply tried to include 'all' into a new kind of society he envisioned, in which no one would be left out: Julie would fulfil her parent's wishes and comply with the moral order of that time, de Wolmar would get the girl he wanted, Julie continues her pedigree and Saint-Preux and Julie remain in love: what we find again in a higher level is a new love and new society which coincide. Erotic demand and demand for order are eventually in peace with each other. In a new society which surpasses the old social order and previous blindness, all conflicts vanish and we are immersed in a total unity. In the refreshed society benevolence and gentle sympathy rule, and this is the result of a total transparency of consciousness of the people living at Clarens. Now people talk what they feel and think, all secrets are revealed... people trust each other ...« (Starobinski, 1991: 104).

All this sounds ideal, and we would expect that we reached the final level of true love and community. However, we are faced with yet another surprise – Julie's death at the end. Why would Rousseau want Julie to die? De Wolmar was sad because he knew Julie in fact loved Saint-Preux, Julie was also sad because she truly loved Saint-Preux and Saint-Preux was sad because he loved Julie and could not be with her because she was married to de Wolmar. This is the right reason why at the end Julie dies, because she had fulfilled the moral-social order, but not her personal wish for a happy peaceful life together with the one she truly loved. »The truth is that Julie does not die from love, but from fulfilling her maternal duty! Rousseau puts the main reason for death out of passionate love in the highest virtue. Julie dies for the highest virtue – she dies for God, family, and so that she and Saint Preux will finally be together in peace in heaven.« (ibid.: 131). The last words of Julie to Saint Preux clearly reveal this: »No, I am not leaving you, I go to wait for you. The virtue that set us apart on earth will bring us back together in the eternal home.« (ibid.: 409).

But if Rousseau showed us the tragic-passionate love in *Julie, or the New Heloise*, he clearly set up a description of a marriage in his famous work *Emile or On Education* where he for the first time in Western society describes a basis for a free romantic love, sealed in marriage without the pressure of social moral order.



Rousseau in the the first half of the book of *Emile* draws an analogy between a child and a person in a primitive state, his natural state. He thinks that a child relays on his instincts and material resources as primitive people do. And as primitive man had the natural ability to feel compassion, due to which he developed his relationships with people, so does the child, with his natural ability of compassion and sympathy, develop his relations with other people throughout his life. And as a person in their natural state is only a potential, so the child is only in a potential state – he needs to develop his potentials and abilities through development of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels of his being. According to Rousseau, a person develops a true moral, social and emotional being only in puberty. But we will not go deeper in the whole physical, emotional, rational, and spiritual upbringing Rousseau proposes, and according to which pedagogy as a field came into existence. We will shortly present the 5<sup>th</sup> book of *Emile*, and Rousseau's opinion of the love between Sophie and Emile who had reached puberty. At this age they both matured enough to meet each other and to seal their love in marriage. This story is less romantic than in *Julie or the New Heloise*, and more technical so to speak, but also aims for a sort of more peaceful, romantic and pragmatic relationship.



Illustration to '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*': the Departure of Saint Preux.

In *Emile or On Education*, Rousseau from the start clears out the obstacles of rank (Emile is of a higher rank than Julie and also a little older), and states that they will marry only if they themselves will choose each other based on their feelings, emotions and preference. In this way, Rousseau avoids the tragedy of the passionate love between Saint-Preux and Julie in *Julie or the New Heloise*. But in this way, he is also the first author in the Western society that puts a basis for marriage in true love and a decision made only by the lovers themselves.

Rousseau begins the story of Emile and Sophie by saying that they must develop all the features necessary for their part in the physical, emotional, intellectual and moral order. Woman is like man in everything, except in her sex (i.e. sexual organs) – she has the same organs, except the sexual ones, and the same needs and capabilities. Man and woman are the same on the level of the human species, but differ regarding their gender.

According to Rousseau, woman is in a natural order complementary to man and thus he proposes following the influence of their differences and similarities for marriage.

It is clear from the start that Rousseau does not promote equality of men and women, but sees them as complements to one another in the eyes of nature. And from the 'nature' argument he infers that a man is, (should be), superior and a woman inferior, as they both serve the same end, (their union and reproduction), but in different ways; each with their own means, capabilities and contributions. And it is based on this inference that Rousseau proposes the first moral difference between genders: a man is active, bright, strong, a leader, proud and a penetrator, and a woman is passive, dark, penetrable, weak, a follower, modest and full of grace; a man needs to have power and will (and needs to develop musculature) and a woman needs not to offer too much resistance but, instead, possess grace and charm with which to seduce. A man, he says, is more of the head (reason, intelligence, knowledge) and spirit, while a woman is more in tune with the heart, body and intuition. A man is made for ruling and the public sphere, and a woman for obeying and the domestic sphere: »By accepting this principle it entails that a woman is made especially for the pleasure of a man.« (Rousseau, 1978: 385). This, however, must also please the woman. A man's virtue lies in his power and if he is attractive to a woman, it is because of his power. And he continues: »I assure you this is not the law of love, but of nature, which is older than the law of love. If a woman is made to please a man and is subjugated, she must design herself in order to please him and not make him angry; her power is in her grace and charms with which she makes him do anything. In this way she discovers her power to use and 'manipulate' him.« (ibid.). She also needs to learn how to bring up children and please her husband, as this is her task and the reason for her origin (design). Her domain is the house, children, husband and garden, as Rousseau claims, and the husband is immersed in intellectual, creative and spiritual matters and matters of controlling, manipulating and maintaining his 'garden'. A man also needs to learn how to please his wife, however, in order not to make her bitter and angry. Because a bitter and angry wife does not fulfil her marital duties and is also not a good mother. Rousseau knew that he assigned an unequal status to men and women, yet he stated that this was due to a higher unity called family and that the new society is built on diversity and difference as seen in nature, (and which to a degree resembles Aristotle's view). In this way we can read *Emile or On Education* as some sort of guide to marriage, which was highly influential in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in some degree spread even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and has only now been modified in such a way as to express equality, freedom and reciprocity between man and woman.

But it is still unclear why Rousseau who was so liberal and open-minded in other areas was so conservative in gender matters. But the good news is that Emile and Sophie, despite their gender inequality, represent the first romantic couple in the history of Western love who grounded their marriage on their personal choice, based on their true feelings, emotions, interests and preference. Although somewhat complicated and ambiguous, Rousseau's general philosophy tried to grasp an emotional and passionate side of man which he felt was left out of most previous philosophical thinking and time.



## 7. Modern and Postmodern Period



Egon Schiele: *The Family* (1918).

### **a) Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) – Transference love**

Sigmund Freud was trained in medicine (neurophysiology) and later became the founding father of psychoanalysis. Freud, early on, became involved in research under the direction of a physiology professor named Ernst Brücke. Brücke believed in what was then a popular, if radical, notion, which we now call reductionism: no forces, other than the common physical-chemical ones, are active within the organism. Freud would spend many years trying to 'reduce' personality to neurology, a cause he later gave up on. Brücke helped him to get a grant to study, first with the great psychiatrist Charcot in Paris, then with his rival Bernheim in Nancy. Both of them were investigating the use of hypnosis with hysterics. And so Freud also set up a practice in neuropsychiatry, with the help of Joseph Breuer. That is how he came to know Anna O. who was Joseph Breuer's patient from 1880 through 1882. It was eleven years later that Breuer and his assistant, Sigmund Freud, wrote a book on hysteria in which he claimed that when a client became aware of the

meanings of his or her symptoms, (through hypnosis, for example), the unexpressed emotions, having been released, no longer need to express themselves as symptoms. Breuer called this catharsis, from the Greek word for cleansing. In this way, Anna got rid of symptom after symptom. According to Freud, Breuer also recognized that she had fallen in love with him, and that he was falling in love with her (This later served as the basis for his idea of transference love.).

One of Freud's most amazing discoveries, however, was the discovery of the unconscious mind. Freud found out from his practice that the unconscious (mind) signals coded messages, (in the form of dreams and symptoms), which must be deciphered by the analyst. Freud's way of provoking the unconscious mind was by using remembrance or associative language, which means free speech until the answer to the problem or dilemma surfaces; and this is why Lacan, (his pupil), later used to say that the unconscious is structured like a language. At some point, however, associative language could not provide any more answers and the language was interrupted – by what Freud called resistance – and silence resulted. Freud found out, however, that this silence not only serves as a birthplace for love, but also for our drives (Freud, 1995: 60). Love is that which starts showing itself in and through language, to that which is beyond language – into drives.

What is a drive? In his famous work *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) a drive presents itself without words, mostly through crying and meaningless shouts – some sort of stream of energy where there are no borders between subjects and objects. These shouts reach their limit when they come to the point of using swearwords. A moment after using the swearwords we come to the border and when it is crossed language appears and the drive disappears. Subjectivity, reflection and distance appear and the drive is transformed. The border can be crossed also from the other side. When words are without power and the subject disappears it makes a space for an uncontrolled stream of energy which flashes away the distance and intermediary and enables a state which is solid and liquid at the same time. This can be compared with the experience of riding a roller coaster; the ecstasy of losing ourselves in the speed of the train and in the crowd, when one's shouts, screams and laughs are lost among the screams and laughs of the others. It is also like the 'eternity' between the start of an orgasm, when the feeling of self disappears, and later, when subjectivity comes back in all its intensity. This moment when all walls between subjects fall away and they come together as one, is that which Lacan later calls *jouissance*, the energy of pleasure, the highest pleasure – and which spiritualists might call the enlightenment and universe appearing as one.

So, according to Freud, love which appears in and through language points beyond language – into the drive which aims at the highest pleasure of pulling down all the walls between lovers. Thus love is also deeply connected with pleasure and desire. However, Freud and later Lacan thought that love and successful relationships, (partnership or marriage), depend on a solution of the internal conflict between drive (pleasure) and desire – this duality Freud saw in the division between sexual drive and a desire for love. Other divisions are consciousness and unconscious, ego, id and superego, and sensual, sexual and emotional levels of our being.

And what is a drive which is not an animal instinct? Freud sees drives as a borderline between our body and psyche, comprised of four components: on one side we have the pair of tension and pressure and, on the other side, the pair of aim and goal. The first two have physical, and the other two, psychological bases. The overall source, however, lies in our body which is a combination of sexual organs, genes and hormones which all form some sort of tension inside the body, (some sort of energetic tension), which can be released with heterosexual intercourse as a goal and in which the other person takes part. But Belgian psychoanalyst Paul Verheaghe in his work *Love in a Time of Lonliness* is against this kind of notion of drives because, in his opinion, it ignores one of two important aspects of drives – each drive is always partial and auto-erotic. Consequently, he thinks that a drive is neither heterosexual nor homosexual. When he says that a drive is partial he means that something in particular attracts us to the other person and vice versa, (and not necessarily of the opposite sex), – this attraction includes different parts of the body, and other activities as well, (either passive or active), and this attraction does not necessarily lead to genital intercourse with the aim of procreation, but of course it can lead to this. Interestingly enough, a drive does not need the whole body, but only parts of the body, hence the different drives: oral, anal, voyaristic, exhibitionistic and like. And also, all these bodily parts represent our contact with the external world: mouth, eyes, ears, nose, breasts, feet, genitals, and anus, which accompany activities such as smelling, watching, listening, touching, sucking and penetration.

Freud identifies the beginning of a drive (pleasure) and love relationship as the mother-child relationship, and the first activity of pleasure he sees in a child's sucking of the nipples of breasts to drink milk. To Freud, however, the milk itself is not the right and true origin of pleasure. Rather, it is the activity of suckling of the breasts, along with the warmth of the mother's body, and the protection, care, love and nourishment that the child feels which is the origin of his/her pleasure; and only a part of this pleasure is connected with the food (milk) itself. (Scientists found out that suckling of breasts releases the hormone oxytocin, the so called hormone of love. This hormone promotes attachment between

mother and child, and partners, as it is released also through kissing and intercourse<sup>6</sup>). However, although food itself is not that which gives the greatest pleasure, of course a child needs it.

Besides the aforementioned functions, drive has a deeper meaning and tendency of releasing overall tension from life and achieving an ultimate 'pleasure', peace of mind, spirit and body. This perhaps shows the connection between drive and death, yet on the other hand, we see the inevitable connection between drive, sexuality and life. Freud named these two tendencies of each drive *Thanatos* and *Eros*, and claimed that they are intrinsically connected into a whole. The definitions of Eros and Thanatos are taken from Empedocles's definitions of Philotes and Neikos as fundamental ontological principles. Eros carries the power of uniting different elements into a bigger unity – Eros is the union of different elements so division does not exist anymore. Thanatos is, on the contrary, a process of fragmentation, an explosion, a big bang which releases acquired tension. Verhaeghe says that Freud thought of Eros and Thanatos as opposites, but he thinks of them as two forms of life, two different directions of life which alternate. On one hand, we have life of an individual as a separate and divided being, on the other hand we have life which is beyond a singular being and part of the commonality, a bigger unity – at one point these can come together. According to Freud, drives aim at the pleasure of reaching the original, zero tension, or unity of mind-spirit-body.

Freud, however, suggests that a basic model of love should not be sought between man and woman, but in the relationship between mother and child. The birth of desire and yearning bear witness to this lost original relationship, (of a mother and child), which serves as a matrix for all subsequent relationships, in which people try either to replicate it, or deny it and replace it with another (better) one. This kind of love, which we as grown ups try to repeat, Freud calls, as mentioned earlier, transference love. Freud came to know this through sessions with his patients who fell in love with him, although he recognized that they were not actually in love with him but had transferred their original attachment to their father to him. Transference love is the recognition of its childlike matrix, which we, to a certain extent, try to repeat in the present relationship, (and we need to work a lot on ourselves and the relationship to go beyond that matrix).

According to Freud this first relationship with our parents (especially mother) shows the following traits of:

1. *totality and exclusivity* (unity of mother and child). Pregnant women describe this feeling as a special kind of fulfillment, pleasure and joy and Lacan calls it *jouissance*. This

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6 About that Sue Carter extensively writes in her article »Neuroendocrine perspectives on social attachment and love«, *Psychoneuroendocrinology* (23.8. 1998), 779 – 818.

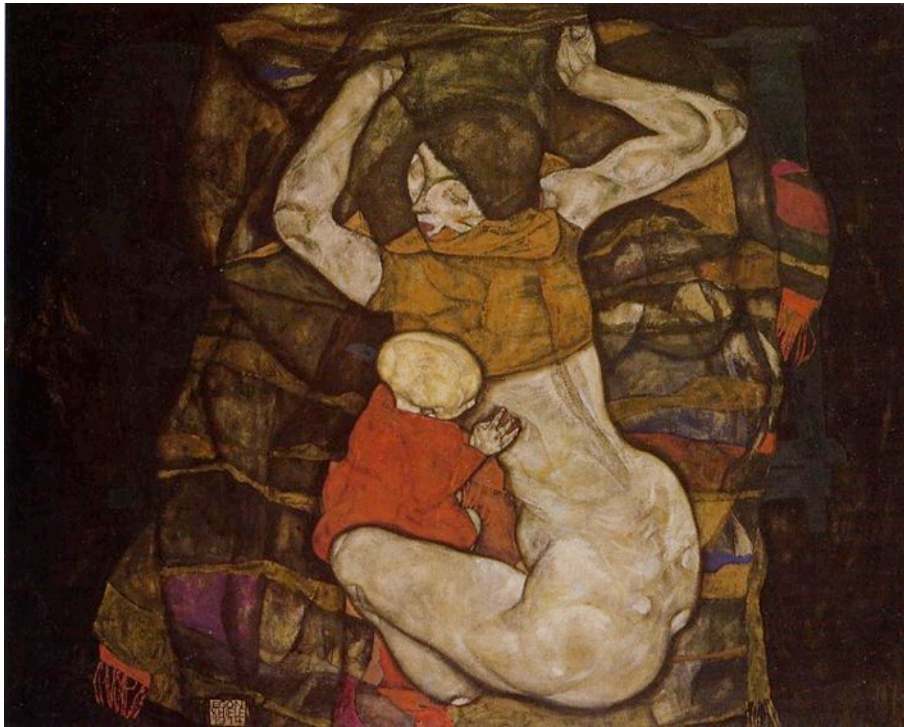


physical and emotional feeling of unity, which lasts also some time after the birth, announces a subsequent desire for exclusivity in partnership (and with it also possessiveness, jealousy, anger...and also shame and guilt).

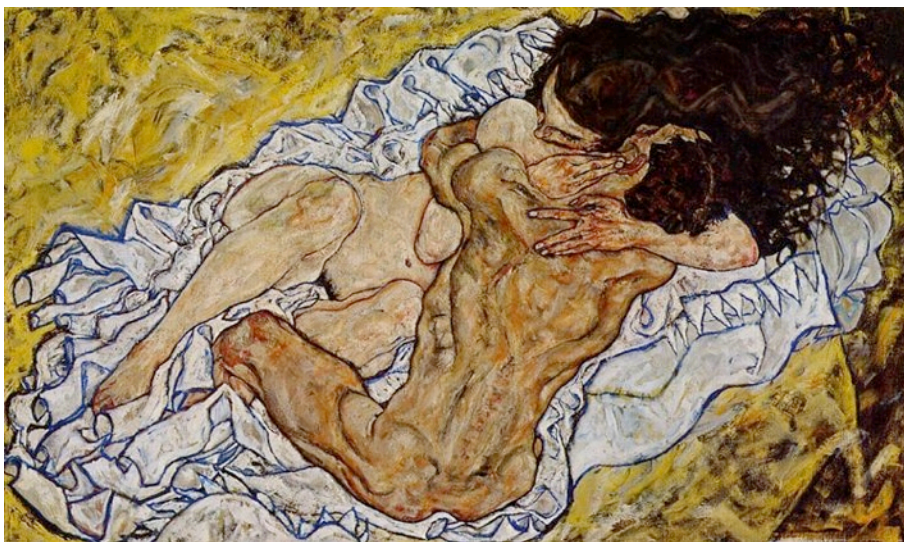
2. *Loss*. When the aforementioned totality is lost after the birth, and especially with the introduction of language, (with which each of us gets a certain role and identity, being a daughter or son of the mother, father-family), we are faced with the desire and longing for this lost totality and unity, which we (necessarily) wish to repeat in subsequent relationship(s), but which we cannot. Thus, many people are left with the feeling of not finding the right partner. But the main point is not to find the ideal partner, (ie: replica of the parent), but to establish a happy peaceful relationship with a person we chose to be with and build a relationship and family with.

3. *Power*. When a child enters into language and gets his or her identity, (she is a daughter, he is a son of this family etc.), the mother and child relationship changes and starts to include giving, receiving, rejection, forgiving and reparation, which are constitutive of their relationship, and also of the child's first love relationship. Interaction between the mother's demands and the developing child will have a big impact on the child's subsequent development, which once more shows that the power lies in mother, woman: »'God wants what woman wants' expresses one saying. According to Freud and Verhaeghe, this original power of the mother is the cause of men's fear of women, which then forms different kinds of sexism and misogamy.« (ibid.: 46). In order that this does not happen, there needs to be established a careful relationship between a child and his/her mother, where the mother carefully 'negotiates' and divides her time and energy: some for herself, some for a relationship with a spouse and some for the child. And thus, while a mother cannot always be there for a child, the child may turn alternatively to the father and thus exonerate the mother of the omni-responsibility and duty. In addition, in book *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (1913) Freud uses the story of King Oedipus to create and illustrate the so called Oedipus Complex, in which the superego (the universal law, the law of the father), uses guilt to prevent continuation of incestuously oriented relationships between mother and child. »In Western patriarchal societies the boy learns that a solution to the manque of the mother lies in replacing her with the father/man and his genital organ and by promising himself that someday he, likewise, will be a big and a powerful man.« (ibid.: 48). Verhaeghe also offers thesis that Freud with books *Totem and Taboo and Moses and Monotheism* (1939) did not establish the father as the authority figure because of the son's incestuous desire for the mother, but so that the son would feel strongly supported by his father to liberate

himself from the pressure of the mother and go into the world and grow up as an independent person who love as a morally responsible person.



Egon Schiele: *Young Mother* (1914).



Egon Schiele: *The Embrace* (1917).

## **b) Feminist Perspectives on Love**



The twentieth century was also marked by a strong feminist movement by which women tried to free themselves from hundreds of years of oppression and subjugation. Below is my personal selection of the most important feminist philosophers who write and speak about love, emotions, sexuality, social justice, education, upbringing and the like. Although feminism per se is not my explicit area of work and research, I have tried to present their work with as much exactness as possible. I was *helped extensively* in this *by professionals* who have written and lectured about their work.



Howard Miller: *We Can Do it!* (1943).

**Simone de Beauvoir** (1908 – 1986)

Simone de Beauvoir is one of the most important feminist philosophers in the twentieth century. Besides writing philosophy she also wrote literary and tv novel works. Some of her most famous works besides *The Second Sex* (1949) and *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) are *The Mandarins*<sup>7</sup> (1954), 'Must We Burn Sade?' (1951, 1952), *The Prime of Life* (1960), *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre* (1981), *Letters to Sartre* (1990) and others. Her most famous and influential philosophical work, *The Second Sex*, heralded a feminist revolution and remains to this day a central text in the investigation of women's oppression and liberation (Mussett: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/beauvoir/>).

### ***The Second Sex***

*The Second Sex* is famous because it is one of the most early attempts to confront human history from a feminist perspective. In her book Beauvoir asks herself several questions: 'what is a woman?', 'why she was labelled with the notion of 'the other', as well as 'the weaker', 'subordinated, suppressed gender working more for less?', 'who is, in fact, the measure for such an attitude towards her and why, (on what grounds)'?

She tries to give answers to the above questions from different points of view, from biology to psychoanalysis, myths, history and philosophy (Engels, Hegel). She begins with the question of what is a woman? »All agree in recognising the fact that females exist in the human species; today as always they make up about one half of humanity... Is this attribute something secreted by the ovaries? Or is it a Platonic essence, a product of the philosophic imagination?« (Beauvoir, 1949: 2). And she rightfully admits that: »biological and social sciences no longer admit the existence of unchangeably fixed entities that determine given characteristics, such as those ascribed to woman, the Jew, or the African-American. Science regards any characteristic as a reaction dependent in part upon a situation. If today femininity no longer exists, then it never existed.« (ibid.). The second question she asks is why woman was described as the Other? The answer is simple: it was male's way of artificially constructing and infusing the opposites with a simple plan of dominating a woman. For his way of reasoning is master and servant, power and control, acquisition and benefit, essence and in-essence, profit and bargain, exploit and manipulate. Equality, freedom, reciprocity, fraternity, sisterhood are still strange from a male's point of view of the world. »Woman's incapacity brought about her ruin because man regarded her in the perspective of his project for enrichment and expansion. And this project is still not enough to explain why she was oppressed; for the division of labour

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7 Her novel, *The Mandarins*, received the prestigious Prix Goncourt award in 1954



between the sexes could have meant a friendly association. If the original relation between a man and his fellows was exclusively a relation of friendship, we could not account for any type of enslavement; but no, this phenomenon is a result of the imperialism of the human consciousness, seeking always to exercise its sovereignty in objective fashion. If the human consciousness had not included the original category of the Other and an original aspiration to dominate the Other, the invention of the bronze tool could not have caused the oppression of woman.« (ibid.: 79).

Beauvoir also thinks that many women comply with, and do not really fight against, this notion because they are unaware of the situation. In her opinion, man tricked woman into subordinated positions in numerous ways, from making her believe that it is all about love, devotion, graciousness, sacrifice for family and society; to biological and anatomical (physiologically) given facts, such as she is weaker in body and has ovaries, produces eggs in correlation with his sperm in the production of a child; from an economic standpoint that she is dependent on him because he earns more, he is in a power position or owns productive means. »She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.« (ibid.: 5). Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought and other is 'a made up term' to enslave her through a kind of conflict ('war') which will show who in the end will win in the battle and thus have the privilege to dominate the other, (as in the following saying 'winner takes all'), and as Beauvoir presents in the following metaphor: »Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other against itself. If three travellers chance to occupy the same compartment, that is enough to make vaguely hostile 'others' out of all the rest of the passengers on the train. In small-town eyes all persons not belonging to the village are 'strangers' and suspect; to the native of a country all who inhabit other countries are 'foreigners'; Jews are 'different' for the anti-Semite, Negroes are 'inferior' for American racists, aborigines are 'natives' for colonists, proletarians are the 'lower class' for the privileged.« (ibid.: 10). That is why women need to be suspicious of what man presents to her as to her benefit, duties or work: »A little-known feminist of the seventeenth century, Poulain de la Barre, put it this way: 'All that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit.' Everywhere, at all times, the males have displayed their satisfaction in feeling that they are the lords of creation. 'Blessed be God ... that He did not make me a woman,' say the Jews in their morning prayers, while their wives pray on a note of resignation: 'Blessed be the Lord, who created me according to His will.' The first among the blessings for which

Plato thanked the gods was that he had been created free, not enslaved; the second, a man, not a woman.« (ibid.: 11).

But why being a woman and her destiny is so often grim? Because she has been seen, many times throughout history, as someone whose role was defined mainly on the grounds of the physiognomy of her body and what her body can offer to the society (offspring – for the needs of man, family, country, culture and society). She has almost never been seen as a strong individual with a personality of her own and with her own will, mind, emotions, wishes, choices and projects.



Roger Van der Weyden: *Kneeling woman (unknown)*.

The goal of liberation, according to Beauvoir, is therefore our mutual recognition of each other as free ethical subjects and as other and exactly the same in the realm of sexuality. She finds one situation in which this mutual recognition (sometimes) exists today, the intimate heterosexual erotic encounter where both, male and female accept each other's freedom, friendliness, mutual interests, wishes and the like. Speaking of this intimacy she writes, »The dimension of the relation of the other still exists; but the fact is that alterity has no longer a hostile implication.« (ibid.: 77). Why? Because lovers experience themselves and each other ambiguously, that is as both subjects and objects of erotic desire rather than as delineated according to social constructed positions of man and woman.



Gustav Klimt: *Girlfriends or Two Women Friends* (1916 - 17).

### **Sade and Ethics**

In her essay, 'Must We Burn Sade?', she writes in response to a request to write an introduction to Sade's *Justine*, in which she details the effects of Beauvoir's changed

position on the relationship between freedom and intimacy. The central ethical question 'the problem of the true relation between man and man', however, remains unchanged. Indeed what interests Beauvoir about Sade is that he posed the problem of the Other in its most extreme terms. What has changed is Beauvoir's understanding of the drama of inter-subjectivity, marking this change, this essay also marks a return to the question of the responsibility of the artist raised in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Sade is the epitome of maniacal passion dedicated to the project of cruelty. Because he takes full responsibility for his choices, he must be credited with choosing freedom and accepted as being authentically ethical. »This does not, however, make him either an ethical or moral figure; for his choices destroy the inter-subjective bonds of our humanity.« (Beauvoir, 1952: 32). It is a lesser known fact, however, that Sade knew that what he did was not right and that his writing, which used 'the way of nature' to justify torture, pleasure in torturing, the humiliation or destruction of other human beings and using other people for the elite's perverted ends was wrong. This is why he asked not to be buried in a grave. Instead, his ashes were thrown somewhere in his garden with no headstone or other marking.

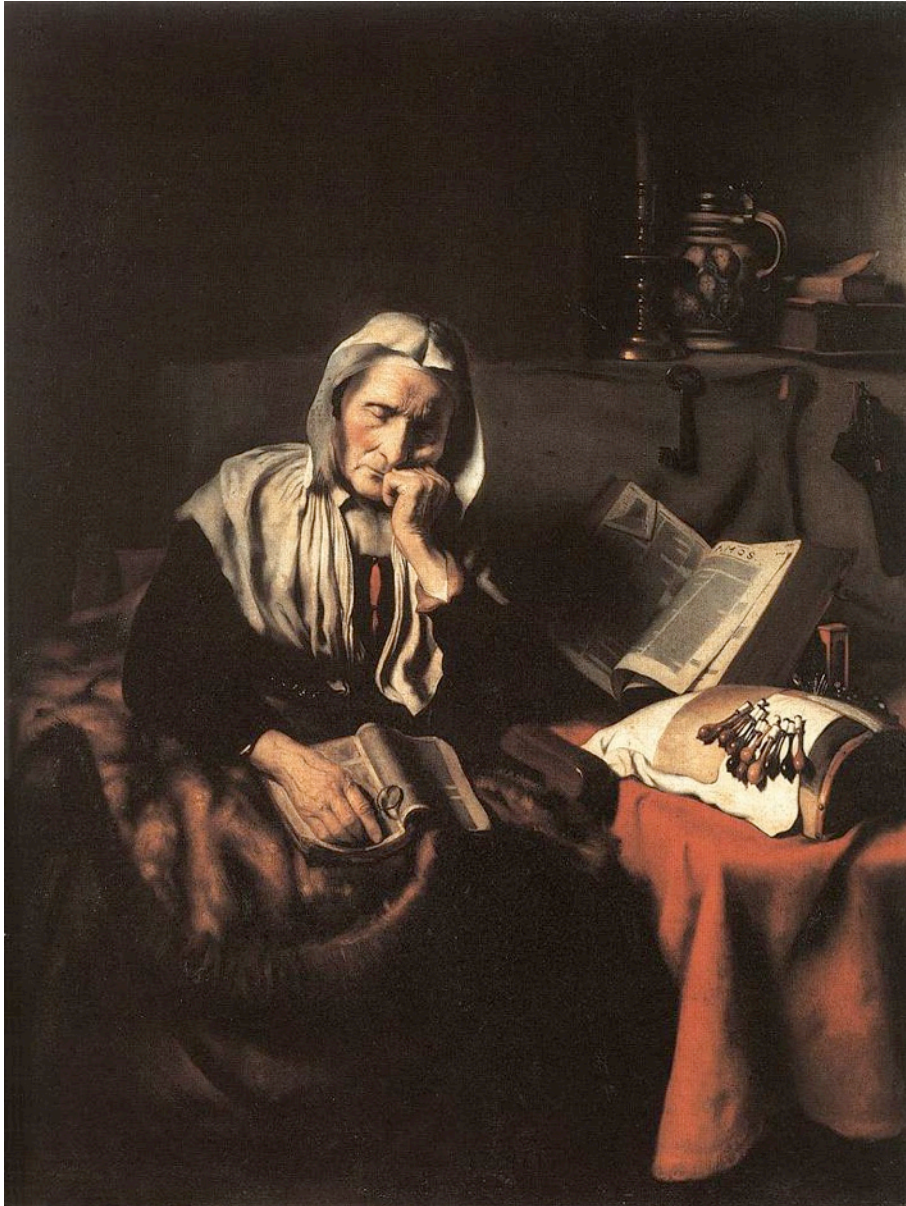
Beauvoir, as said, claims that Sade was neither an ethical nor moral being, and he missed the truth of the erotic event too. This truth, Beauvoir tells us, can only be found by those who abandon themselves to the risks of emotional intoxication. »In condemning Sade for his perversion of the erotic, Beauvoir also faults him as an artist. Though she criticizes him for being a technically poor writer, the heart of her criticism is ethical not aesthetic ... Instead of revealing the world to us in its promise and possibilities, and instead of appealing to us to work for justice, he took refuge in the imaginary and developed metaphysical justifications for suffering and cruelty.« (Bergoffen, 2010: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/beauvoir/>). It is also argued that Sade carried out some of Kant's ethical premises, as well as Hegel's premise of the master-servant logic, to the extreme. Just how harmful and hurtful those are, we can see in his work.

Beauvoir tackles evil in her other works as well. In writing *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, she identifies herself as an existentialist and identifies existentialism as the philosophy of her times because it is the only philosophy that takes the question of evil seriously (evil whether in the form of denying freedom of any kind; whether in denying decent living conditions or the right to protection, education, health-care and welfare; evil in the form of non-protection from exploitation and any other kind of abuse). Thus it is the only philosophy prepared to counter Dostoevsky's claim that without God everything is permissible. »*The Ethics of Ambiguity*, entails a logic of reciprocity and responsibility that contests the terrors of a world ruled only by the authority of power.« (ibid.). *The Ethics of Ambiguity* redeploys concepts of canonical philosophical figures. The Hegel drawn on here



is the Hegel who resolves the inequalities of the master slave relationship through the *justice of mutual recognition and respect*. The Husserl appealed to is the Husserl who introduced Beauvoir to the notion of intentionality, the same as Heidegger. Beauvoir describes the intentionality of consciousness as operating in two ways. »First there is the activity of wanting to disclose the meaning of being, of discovering the meanings of the world. Second there is the activity of bringing meaning to the world, of wanting to be the author of the world's meaning. In the first mode of activity consciousness expresses its freedom to discover meaning. In the second, it exists as the freedom of bringing meaning into the world.« (ibid.). It is rather interesting that Beauvoir identifies each of these intentionalities of freedom with a certain mood or even emotion: the first with the mood of joy and happiness, the second with the dual moods of hope and domination. Whether the second intentionality becomes the ground of projects of liberation or exploitation depends on which mood prevails. These truths of intentionality set the criteria of Beauvoir's ethics. Ethical systems from the past too many times wished to bring the absolute, (goodness, beauty and truth), but the effect of that was often the opposite; it brought totalitarian systems and even wars (such as second world war) to justify the ideology of the supreme idea. »Beauvoir rejects them in favour of ethical projects that acknowledge our limits and recognize the future as open. From this perspective her ethics of ambiguity might be characterized as an ethics of existential hope.« (ibid.)

Beauvoir detailed her phenomenological and existential critique of the philosophical status quo in her 1946 essay 'Literature and the Metaphysical Essay', and her 1965 and 1966 essays, 'Que Peut la Littérature?', and 'Mon expérience d' écrivain'. This critique, influenced by both Husserl and Heidegger, focused on the significance of lived experience which was due to her survival of the war and the era of and on the ways in which the meanings of the world are revealed in language. Heidegger turned to the language of poetry for this revelation. Beauvoir, Camus and Sartre turned to the language of the novel and the theater. She also wrote a book about the dying and death of her mother in *A Very Easy Death* (1964); six years after that was analysing the situation of the aged in *Coming of Age* (1970) where she described the process and features of ageing in numerous cases from living famous figures, such as artists, aristocrats and every day people, and eleven years subsequent to that, chronicling Sartre's last days in *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*, (1981).



Nicolaes Maes: *Old Woman Dozing* (1656).

**Alison Mary Jaggar (1970 -)**



Giorgione, Titian: *Sleeping Venus* (cca. 1510).

Alison Mary Jagger is famous for works, such as *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* and 'Love and Knowledge: Emotions in Feminist Epistemology' in a book she co-edited with Susan R. Bordo. *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (1989). In 1978, Jagger and Paula Rothenberg co-edited *Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations Between Women and Men*, a collection of documents from varied perspectives, including those on the antifeminist side of the debate. Jagger's 1983 book, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, set basic parameters for the field of feminist philosophy. It describes and analyses four 'schools' of feminist thought according to their theory, political strategies, and ideals of the good society. Its categories are still used as a starting point for most new work in the field, although as Jagger herself predicted, time has created some shifts and re-evaluations among the categories. Her interest is in contemporary social, moral and political philosophy, often from a feminist perspective. She is also interested in moral epistemology, especially in how to justify social criticism in contexts of inequality and cultural difference. More recently, she has been working on some gendered aspects of global justice.

### ***Love and knowledge***

Jagger, in her famous text 'Love and Knowledge: Emotions in Feminist Epistemology', poses a standpoint theory of emotions in which the emotions of those oppressed, which she calls 'outlaw emotions', are helpful and not detrimental to acquiring knowledge. She poses a long known distinction between reason and emotion where emotion, usually perceived as involuntary bodily responses, was excluded from producing favourable



knowledge (to support the claim that »...furiously angry or extremely sad people may fail to hear or may systematically misinterpret what other people say. Also people in love are said to be notoriously oblivious to many aspects of the situation around them.)« (Jaggar, 1986: 155). Emotions have always been considered a suspicious source of knowledge, even as early as Plato. But Jaggar rightly observes that, even in *Phaedrus*, Plato recognized the role of emotions in our knowledge – emotions have a role but they need to be guided by reason.



Vassily Kandinsky: *Composition* (1939).

Jaggar argues, however, that since the modern redefinition of rationality has been based on modern science, a redefinition of emotionality has also taken place. Even more, she shows that the Western notion of emotions, like epistemology, has been socially constructed and that its definition depends on the time and context. She presents the way in which emotions bring about the development of new knowledge. She traces a new understanding of emotions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century within the positivist notions of physiology. Positivists assumed that emotions are some kind of physiological disruptions which only hinder rational, (cold, objective, impartial), and appropriate thought. This view is often called a 'dumb view' because it mixes emotions with physiological feelings, (such as the rise in heart beat or blood pressure which is associated with either fear or love). In this sense, emotions are seen as involuntary expressions of our body. Jaggar argues that the dumb view »...is quite untenable. For one thing, the same feeling or physiological response is likely to be interpreted as various emotions, depending on the context of its experience. This point is often illustrated by reference to the famous Schacter and Singer



experiment; excited feelings were induced in research subjects by the injection of adrenalin and the subjects then attributed to themselves the appropriate emotions depending on their context... But emotions differ from feelings, sensations, or physiological responses in that they are dispositional rather than episodic. For instance, we may assert truthfully that we are outraged by, proud of, or saddened by certain events, even if at that moment we are neither agitated nor tearful.« (Jaggar, 1986: 149).

However, due to the aforementioned experiments we have been witnessing a new, so called cognitive approach towards the emotions which sees emotions as intentional, (in connection with the person, event and situation), or associated judgements, as a reflection of rational deliberation/judgement (depending on knowledge, awareness and life experiences). Thus, these newer »...conceptions emphasize that intentional judgements as well as physiological disturbances are integral elements in emotion.« (ibid.). They also suggest that »...humans develop and mature in emotions as well as in other dimensions; they increase the range, variety and subtlety of their emotional responses in accordance with their life experiences and their reflection on these.« (ibid.). However, if emotions necessarily involve judgements then they obviously require concepts: »...which may be seen as socially constructed ways of seeing and making sense of the world. For this reason, emotions are simultaneously made possible and limited by the conceptual and linguistic resources of the society.« (ibid.: 151). But Jaggar thinks that this approach to the emotions also has flaws.

In her opinion, it replicates the known distinction between reason (intellect) and emotions, insofar as they fail to explain the relation between the cognitive and affective aspects of emotion. She thinks that this approach actually reinforces the distinction between the shared, public, objective world of verifiable calculations, observations, (in the empirical sense of scientific verification of the assumptions), and the individual, private, subjective and idiosyncratic feelings and sensations. She argues that the only new thing the cognitive approach brings, in contrast to the 'dumb view', is intentionality of emotions. She argues, too, that the Western world discovered that emotions are not only intentional and affective-subjective, idiosyncratic and sometimes also involuntary bodily expressions, they are also socially constructed and change over time. She shows that a child learns, throughout his/her upbringing, how to properly respond, emotionally, to certain situations which depend on the cultural perception of emotional responses, such as to love, sadness, anger, grief etc. »Even apparently universal emotions, such as anger or love may vary cross-culturally. We have just seen that the Llongot experience of anger apparently is quite different from the modern Western experience. Romantic love was invented in the Middle Ages in Europe and since that time has been modified considerably; for instance, it is no longer

confined to the nobility, and it no longer needs to be extramarital or unconsummated. In some cultures, romantic love does not exist at all.« (ibid.: 151).

She also claims, (rightly in my opinion), that emotions are closely related to values. This seems logical because, for example, when we value our partner highly we grieve intensely when we lose her/him and we are angry if that person was taken away by force, lies or manipulation. We fear for our life when someone threatens to kill us. We are angry when someone shows disrespect towards us by exploitation, someone feels guilt when (s)he knows that (s)he actually did something wrong to us. »Certainly it is true that the evaluation of the situation as a desirable or dangerous one does not entail that it is universally desired or feared but it does entail that desire or fear is viewed generally as an appropriate response to a certain situation.« (ibid.: 153). Our emotional response is partially depended on evaluations (observations) of the situation then. However, observation is not something we are passively exposed to but observation requires our mental faculties of engagement, selection, categorization and interpretation and vice a versa how we select and interpret is emotionally biased. Plus as we have seen above, our evaluations are also depended on which culture we live in and how we are taught that our emotional appropriate response should or could be. »This is not to say that group emotions historically precede or are logically prior to the emotions of individuals; it is to say that individual experience is simultaneously social experience.« (ibid.: 151).

Then she continues on to the myth of dispassionate scientific investigation to begin bridging the gap [between emotion and knowledge] through the suggestion that emotions may be helpful and even necessary rather than inimical to the construction of knowledge. However, before going into this she rightly observes that emotions are mostly connected with subordinate groups, such as people of colour, women, immigrants etc. Being emotional or too emotional has been long attributed to women or any oppressed group, whereas people who are supposedly unemotional, rational (and in charge) are considered to be 'wasp'. From this, it becomes apparent that that the bridge she is looking to build involves a method for identifying biases of dominant groups those ultimately lead to false views of the world. The underlying notion here is that one's perspective can be altered by one's situation in the world, particularly, how one's situation in life can affect his or her emotional perspective and response. Before going on to explain the concept of emotional perspective and response which can 'bridge the gap', it should first be noted that the type of emotions Jaggar thinks are important to feminist theorists are outlaw emotions—emotional responses that do not coincide or support the norms and values that society has been conditioned to accept. But she also warns that not all outlaw emotions may be always appropriate thus we need to be cautious and we need to make sure that they are

appropriate in certain situations. Accepting »that appropriate emotions are indispensable to reliable knowledge does not mean, of course, that uncritical feeling may be substituted for supposedly dispassionate investigation, although our emotions are epistemologically indispensable, they are not always epistemologically indisputable. »Jane Goodall's scientific contribution to our understanding of chimpanzee behaviour seems to have been made possible only by her amazing empathy with or even love for these animals.« (ibid.: 161). In her study of Barbara McClintock, Evelyn Fox Keller describes McClintock's relation to the objects of her research grains of maize and their genetic properties - as a relation of affection, empathic, and »the highest form of love: love that allows for intimacy without the annihilation of difference.« (ibid.: 162). Accepting the indispensability of appropriate emotions to »knowledge means no more (and no less) than that discordant emotions should be attended to seriously and respectfully rather than condemned, ignored, discounted or suppressed.« (ibid.: 163). However, just as the appropriate emotions may contribute to the development of knowledge, so the growth of knowledge may contribute to the development of appropriate emotions.

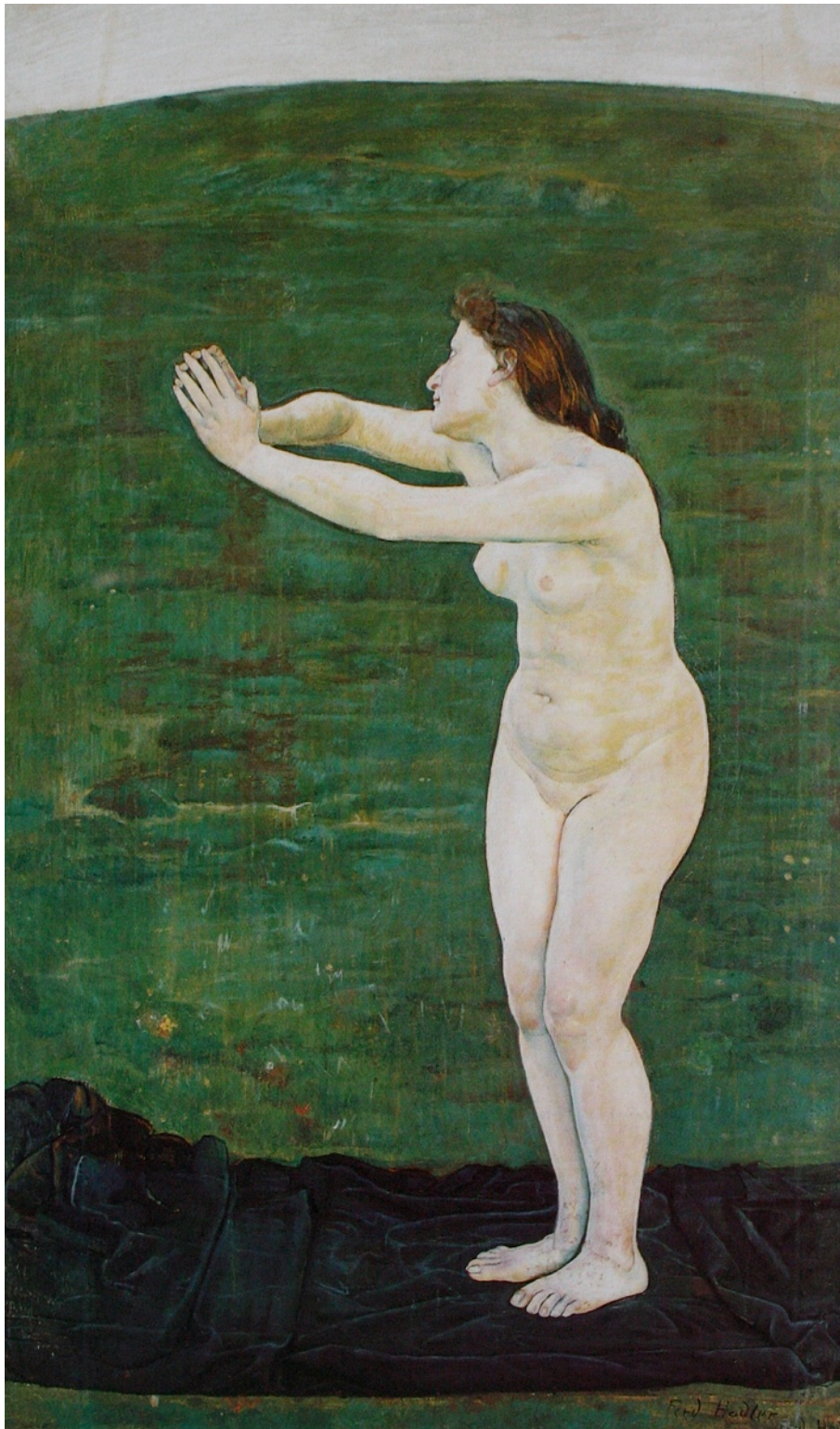


Franz Marc: *Deer in Woods* (1914).

## **Julia Kristeva (1941-)**

Kristeva's writing ranges from religious meditation to psychoanalysis in theory and practice to literature. The span of her wide interests is shown in the titles of her works, such as *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), *In the Beginning was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith* (1987), *Tales of Love* (1989), *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989), *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991). Kristeva has given a considerable amount of time to Freud and Lacan and also Saussour, Husserl and Levi Strauss.





Ferdinand Hodler: *Communication with the Infinite* (1892).

### ***“Talking Body” (semanalysis)***

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva claims that »our philosophies of language, embodiments of the Idea, are nothing more than the thoughts of archivists, archaeologists, and necrophiliacs.« (Kristeva, 1974: 13). Kristeva develops a new science, which she calls 'semanalysis', in opposition to what she sees as the necrophilia of phenomenology and

structural linguistics, which, in her opinion, study the silent or dead body. And, in the case of the body, she de-constructs woman's, (maternal), body. The maternal body is the very embodiment of the subject in process because it cannot be neatly divided into subject and object. She sees the maternal body as the embodiment of alterity within. Maternity is the most powerful model of alterity within because it exists at the heart of social, (human), life and the species. She describes semanalysis as a combination of semiology, (or semiotics), which starts with Ferdinand de Saussure, and psychoanalysis, which starts with Sigmund Freud. »Unlike traditional linguistics, semanalysis addresses an element that is beyond, heterogeneous to, language, Freud's other scene. Semanalysis, in order to avoid the necrophilia of other theories of language, must always question its own presuppositions and uncover, record, and deny its own ideological gestures.« (ibid.: 78 – 79).

Kristeva held that language and signification have two faces. Words can operate as general signifiers, where their meaning is relatively independent of personal engagement or context. Alternatively, words can signify in a personally charged situation to express a particular speaker's desires, needs or passions. Some levels of language can be stripped free of any embodied expression of an individual speaking. Magazine accounts of yesterday's events can signify without my needing to focus on the writer as a speaking embodied presence. On the other hand, hearing my friend's confession of a painful episode in childhood will focus my attention on her quite particular embodied presence – the pace and pitch of her words, the look in her eyes, perhaps even a tear shed or sighs as she speaks, a trembling or stiffness in her limbs (Namely, Freud attaches sighs, crying, shouts, whistling, laughter to the drives). Kristeva calls the first face of signification – the relatively disembodied and detached – the symbolic, and she calls the second – the embodied expression of a singular being – the semiotic. Thus, with semanalysis, Kristeva attempts to bring the speaking body, complete with drives, back into language. She does not agree with Freud that language comes into play when drives are silenced. In other words, she does not agree that drives are suppressed, (in the same way as a woman's body is), through language. She does not accept the theory of this 'split' into drives and language in the symbolic realm, whereby people speak when their biology is silenced or, in Freud's words, sublimated through language and culture.

She tries to keep 'speaking' as part of maternal, (or rather woman's), body all along. She does this in two ways. First, she argues that the logic of signification is already present in the material body. »Within Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, signification is the result of a separation, a lack, which begins in the mirror stage and is completed through castration. Lacan explains that this separation necessitates the demand that turns need into

desire.« (Kristeva, 1974: 17). While Kristeva works within the Lacanian framework, she criticizes Lacan for overlooking processes that take place prior to the mirror stage. »Thus she argues that a logic of material rejection is already operating within the body prior to the onset of signification« (and, after all, people are born out of their mother's womb, which indicates that birth is another example where 'separation' is inherent in the body) (Mamo, 2005: 424).

In other words, she argues that, despite their attention to 'the subject' and 'language,' neither Husserl nor Saussure have a place for embodied speech, the voice of this person, speaking in this tone of voice – in this physical posture, with this gesture, among these attentive particular (embodied) listeners. To give language a sort of theoretical and abstract sheen exercises the dramatic, even theatrical context of living speech and expression. Philosophers and linguists most often theorize, as Kristeva sees it, disembodied writing or speech – delivered from nowhere in particular, to no one in particular, the impersonal tightly secured at each pole of a communication (and which is characterized in the use of the abstract, disembodied word 'we'). »But living speech has its genesis in a baby's coos, eyes fixed on a mother, who returns the look and the coo. Later, it will emerge in an orator's sweaty or calming exhortations, eyes fixed on the mesmerized crowd. To insist on passion and embodiment is not to denigrate the symbolic but to resist the eclipse of particular speaking beings, who avail themselves of the symbolic and the semiotic. Performing well on a physics exam requires considerable mastery of the symbolic.« (Mooney, 2003: 8). Teaching history to a distracted student requires considerable mastery of the semiotic as well as the symbolic. As Kristeva sees it, humans participate in signifying practices from early on. The first babbles and cries of an infant are pre-symbolic, but they signify – convey, perhaps – a delight in the world or the pain of abandonment. Semiotic signification is altogether pertinent. Drives or passions are already present, as well as rhythmic and tonal modulation of expression. The semiotic communication of embodied significance continues even as symbolic capacities emerge. It never diminishes despite increasing dependence on the symbolic. Linguistic competence is marked by handling simple names, simple words for wants, simple words that 'point to facts'. Kristeva calls this second layer of human signifying 'symbolic' because the simple sounds that at first conveyed mostly pathos now, also become words that link up with things – that are 'symbols' pointing roughly to things. Signification can have a referential target, (such as asking for that apple). »Poetry, of course, picks up words and combinations of them that have ordinary 'symbolic' meaning ('the apple of my eye'), and much more. Poetry orders its words and sounds in ways that mimic the rhythmic cooing or delight of a child, or evoke shrieking, pleading, or enticing, or enact the calm of a lyric. The semiotic and symbolic merge.« (ibid.: 9).

## Tales of Horror and Tales of Love

In her book *Tales of Love* Kristeva writes about some well-known love stories and concepts through history from psychoanalytic point of view (symbolic meaning of the Father, Law, Oedipal complex, triangular viewpoint of love, love-hate relation and alike). She writes about love, emptiness, loss, suffering from the modern standpoint where subject lost its stability and lacks forming strong intimate bonds because of the prevailing narcissism. Focusing on the trajectory of Freud's theory of narcissism, Kristeva shows how it is constructed as a screen over an emptiness that is a consequence of the self's ontological instability and fascination with simulacrum in the modern period. However, she takes for granted the primacy of the death drive and the Freudian/Hegelian premise that the existence of an other can only be problematic for the self. Her notion of 'einfuhling' (involving the emphatic imagination of other people's feelings) as what installs and protects the screen of emptiness is based on the baby's identification with a metaphorical object, the Imaginary Father. In this early stage, what the baby incorporates is what she becomes; having is tantamount to being. This is not an objectal identification, as the baby identifies with an (imaginary) model instead of an object; it is not so much mimetic as reduplicatory, involving an identification »which sets up love, the sign, and repetition at the heart of the transference«. (Kristeva, 1989: 25). She relates this relationship to the transference in the analytic relationship based on the baby's immersion in the world of language prior to her capacity to symbolize: »when the object that I incorporate is the speech of the other—precisely a nonobject, a pattern, a model—I bind myself to him in a primary fusion, communion, identification«. (ibid.: 26). Hence objectless identification with an imaginary father (a 'father-mother conglomerate' in Kristeva's reading of Freud) on the part of the not-yet subject proceeds through an immediacy of the child's identification with the maternal desire of the Phallus, which eventually becomes the child's identification with the imaginary father and the Phallus, for the 'Third Party' is a space of metaphoricity that involves »a condensation of the semantic with the unrepresentable drives that sustain them«. (ibid.: 27).

Kristeva therefore offers a history of discourses of love to illustrate how the erotic - relating to the preoedipal configuration of subject, mother and imaginary father - is always sublimated into amatory love or psyche. She writes that »at the very base of philosophical discourse love and soul can not be dissociated«. (ibid.: 63). In philosophical discourse »phallic domination is elevated and metamorphosed into an apprenticeship of the Good



and the True« (ibid: 67). Platonic discourses emphasize the struggle between erotic and love impulses, between »painful, exorbitant possession, of shameful nights and bodies deriving pleasure from being ridiculed« and »superhuman effort or the part of the soul which, within the same phallic dynamics, leans itself away from the allurements of having to accede to the dignity of knowing and being«. (ibid.: 68). Whereas in *Phaedrus* Plato displays homosexual love, its libidinal economy, in *The Symposium*, with the figure of Diotima, an intermediate figure that enables sublimation, love is feminized, desexualized, »presented along the lines of an idealized object relationship that it takes for granted«. (ibid.: 71). For Kristeva Diotima is the Phallus, presenting an 'immediate vision' that is 'an intellectual transposition of a pagan jouissance'. Kristeva distinguishes between a manic homosexual Eros that »does not touch the mother and the melancholy abject state of the sosexual who »fashions a crown to a real or imaginary Diotima«. (ibid.: 80), who abjects the mother and thus preserves a fascination for the morbid in the area around the 'hole' (called the abyss, as Kristeva notes): »the adored and abhorred maternal sex«.... (ibid.: 79).<sup>8</sup>

The abjection is also the subject of her essay »Tales of Horror: An Essay on Abjection«, where Kristeva suggests that misplaced abjection and the notion of women primarily as 'objects of reproduction' is one of the biggest causes of women's oppression ... If it is necessary to abject the maternal function to become a subject, and women, maternity, and femininity all have been reduced to the maternal function, then within patriarchy, women, maternity, and femininity are all abjected along with the maternal function.« (Kristeva, 1982: 374). Therefore, abjection is fundamentally related to the maternal function. As Kristeva also claims in *Black Sun*, »matricide is our vital necessity because in order to become subjects (within a patriarchal culture) we must abject the maternal body.« (Oliver, 1993: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/Kristeva.html>).

But, because women cannot abject the maternal body with which they also identify as women, they develop what Kristeva calls a 'depressive' sexuality. Kristeva's analysis in *Black Sun* suggests that we need not only a new discourse on »maternity but also a discourse on the relation between mothers and daughters, a friendly relation and a discourse that does not prohibit the lesbian love between women through which female subjectivity is born.« (ibid.). Lesbian love means that love is not burdened by the functions

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8 In part on Romeo and Juliet Kristeva suggests a need for a third part or a triangular love: »Shadow of the third party – parents, father, husband, wife or husband of a cheating spouse – is much more important for a sexual drive than innocent seeker of a blissful marriage would like to admit. Abolish that third party and the whole structure of the relationship may fall apart because the source of its drive was taken away« (Kristeva, 23). She also offers rather a grim view of Juliet's love towards Romeo from the hate/hatred standpoint. Thus for Kristeva love is a wide range of emotions ranging from desire, passion, lust, love infatuation, emptiness, loss, melancholia and even hate.

of women set by patriarchal society but that women live according to their desires, needs and wishes, however still within the community and in harmony with it. Being a lesbian does not mean that lesbians as women are also not mothers and respected members of the community and world.



Marry Cassat: The Child's Bath (1893).

**Luce Irigary (1930-)**



Paul Émile Chabas: *September Morn* (1911).

Irigaray is a Belgian-born French feminist, philosopher, linguist, psychoanalyst, sociologist and cultural theorist. She is most known for her works *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974) and *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1977, 1985). Like Kristeva, she also participated in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic seminars, and she trained as and became an analyst. In 1968, she made a Ph.D. in Linguistics. In 1969, she analyzed Antoinette Fouque, a leader of the French women's movement. From 1970 to 1974, she taught at the University of Vincennes. Her later works are *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1984), *Sexes and Genealogies* (1987), *Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution* (1989), *Je, tu, nous: Towards a Culture of Difference* (1990), *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History* (1990), *Democracy Begins Between Two* (1994), *To Be Two* (1997), *The Way of Love* (2002).

In all her works, Irigaray tries to show how Western culture is permeated with only male-theocentric or androcentric logic that thinks of the subject only in the male terms. In endless and inexhaustible endeavors she unfolds Western obsession with only one sex that serves men at the women's expense and that ranges: »from Plato to Freud, from eighteenth-century German opera to the words of present-day Italian schoolchildren, from environmental crises to national securities«. (Khader, 2011: 1). But she does not stop there, instead, she invites us to think, envision and go beyond the androcentric culture. She invites us to make revolution in thought and ethics in order for sexual difference to

take place: »We need to reinterpret everything concerning the relations between the subject and discourse, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmos, the subject, microcosmic, macrocosmic«. (Irigaray, 1985: 6). In this sense, Irigaray proposes to re-imagine our androcentric view of sex, gender, subject, space and time, of God and of transcendence which could produce a new ethical and spiritual model. Ensuing model could create a spiritual communities that are open to differences among their members and at the same time challenge the traditional type of religion that structure communities around a shared relationship to a single vertical Other and suppress or flatten differences among the communities' members.

Re-establishment of ethical dimension is also important for women to establish their own sense of value and appreciation for themselves, which is even more important for Irigaray's claim that woman's value in Western culture is perceived only as a commodity value: like in commerce, woman is seen only as an object to sale and exchange. Latter claim is taken from Irigaray's famous book *The Sex Which is Not One* (1985) and expressed in the essay 'Women on the Market'.

### ***Exchange of women***

There she argues that »the society we know, our own culture, is based on the exchange of women. Without the exchange of women, we are told, we would fall back into the anarchy (?) of the natural world, the randomness (?) of the animal kingdom. The passage into the social order, into the symbolic order, into order as such, is assured by the fact that men, or groups of men, circulate women among themselves ... The production of women, signs, and commodities is always referred back to men (when a man buys a girl, he 'pays' the father or the brother, not the mother ...), and they always pass from one man to another, from one group of men to another«. (Irigaray, 1985: 85–86). Men make commerce of them, but they do not enter into any exchanges with them. Is this perhaps all the more true because exogamy is an economic issue, perhaps even supports the economy as such? The exchange of women as goods accompanies and stimulates the exchanges of other 'wealth' items among the groups of men. The economy in both the narrow and the broad sense that is in place in our societies thus requires that women allow themselves to alienation in consumption, and to exchanges in which they do not participate, and that men be exempt from being used and circulated like commodities (ibid. 172). But when women are, woman's body must be treated as an *abstraction*. The exchange operation cannot take place in terms of some intrinsic, immanent value of the commodity. It can only come about when two objects - two women - are in a relation of equality with a third term that is neither the one nor the other. »*Commodities thus share in the cult of the father, and*



*never stop striving to resemble, to copy, the one who is his representative.* It is from that resemblance, from that imitation of what represents paternal authority, that commodities draw their value - for men«. (ibid.: 178).

Irigaray thus utilizes Karl Marx's theory of capital and commodities to show how women are exchanged between men in the same way as any other commodity. A woman fits in with Marx's definition of commodity because she is reduced to her exchange value and her physical 'use value' disappears. Her exchange value is determined by the society, while her use value is her natural quality. This divide creates a 'split' between nature and society, with society ultimately subordinating nature to a non-value. Thus, a woman's self is divided between her use and exchange values, and she is only desired for the exchange value. In this way, this system creates three types of women: the mother, who is all use value; the virgin, who is all exchange value; and the prostitute, who embodies both use and exchange value. Seeing from this perspective, one can rightfully ask what kind of genuine relationship women and men can actually have?



Paul Émile Chabas *Two Young Girls with Starfish* (1932).

### ***Love and relationship between sexes***

In the work 'Each Other's Transcendent' (an Engagement of Flesh and Word), she analyses how male philosophers, such as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas describe the relationships between men and women. Sartre offers a rather grim notion which she rejects. According to Sartre, the body of the other is factum, reality impersonated inside

me. The other which I see and touch is thus factum. However, the other is more than factum – (s)he is consciousness: about myself, for himself/herself and also about the consciousness of the world. The other is beyond that which I sense and see as fact(um) because, according to Sartre and most of Western philosophers, consciousness represents transcendence (consciousness is transcendental to the body). He asks: 'How can I desire the other and have a sexual relationship with him/her?' In his famous work *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre explains that the only way to have a relationship is enchantment [*envoûtement*]. »It is about immersing consciousness as well as his/her freedom into our body. Consciousness of the other should be 'condensed' [*prise*] in the body in the same way as we think of 'crème being condensed' and when we get into contact of the skin of the other, his/her consciousness has been spread out through the surface of his/her body. And when I touch his/her body, I actually touch his/her free subjectivity ... That is how we (can) possess the other« adds Sartre. (Sartre in Irigaray, 1994: 15). And what has 'possession' got to do with sexuality? According to him, desire cannot be fulfilled without possession. However, if possession is desired, then the body of the other is obsessed with consciousness. That is how male (Sartre's) philosophy sees (an impossible?) ideal of desire: transcendence of the other as pure transcendence without being able to reach the sensual world, yet wanting to possess the other in his/her impersonation in the body ... Where Sartre describes a sexual relationship, he does not mention the gender of the other. We can imagine that this other is female but he does not imply the gender (difference). »This philosopher is not interested in that. He tries to make man and woman, woman and man, the same, instead of making them different.« (ibid.: 17).

Where does that orientation towards sameness come from? Irigaray mainly identifies it with description and notion of human (male and female) sexuality and, like we said, in the history of philosophy and especially with Freudian theory. She often refers to Freud's claim in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, in which he asserted that: »the hypothesis of a single identical genital apparatus — the male organ — is fundamental in order to account for the infantile sexual organization of both sexes. Freud thus maintains with consistency that the libido is always masculine, whether it is manifested in males or females, whether the desired object is woman or man.« (Freud in Irigaray, 1985: 35). Even more he claims that »'in the beginning, the little girl is a little boy.' The masculine serves 'from the beginning' as the model for what is described and prescribed of the girl's desire.« (ibid.: 139). That is why he says: »Polymorphous perversity analyzed by him according to a masculine model and bringing multiplicity back to the economy of sameness, oneness, to the same of the One«. (ibid.). And to which she adds: »Hierarchy presupposes sameness: difference must be masked by the same and suppressed by the

same.« (ibid.: 141). But that is not all. In Freud's view, the main sexual function is above all a reproductive function. The woman has to be induced to privilege this 'sexual function'; the capstone of her libidinal evolution must be the desire to give birth. But not to give birth of a girl ... because in that way she won't (re)posses what she lacks and envy ... the penis from the father ... the woman's happiness is complete only if the newborn child is a boy, bearer of the longed-for penis«. (ibid.).<sup>9</sup> But Irigaray rightfully claims that such a view on woman is not something that would reside in biology. It is socially constructed view and there is no evidence that woman would ever wish to re-posses male organ or even feel any envy towards a male organ.

And besides that, with whom we have sex and are in love with in a theo-logic or theo-centric sense which allows only copies of the one and the same and does not allow the other. Thus she asks »But how can I say 'I love you' differently? I love you my indifferent one?« (ibid.). With this question in mind she proposes a new kind of relationship in which there are no binaries and oppositions: she proposes being different from each other yet not dominating each other, life and love between equals. »Between us, 'hardness' is not the rule. We know the contours of our bodies well enough to appreciate fluidity. We are not attracted to dead bodies«. (ibid.: 77). In her eyes, the other she loves, has sex or has any kind of relationship with, is not a possessive, dominating or envious. »You are just there, like my skin ... How can I say in another way: We exist only as two? We live as two beyond images, mirages and mirrors, and where one is not original and the other is just a copy. We are two and not two long before we open our mouth to speak or kiss ... we are a mixture of ourselves and of us, we are combinations of light, darkness and shadows ... we are all of I you ... us ... And if we wish that our bodies and our sexuality don't exhaust, tire, we need to accompany them with (their new) language... If we don't invent a language, if we don't find our body's language, its gestures will be too few to accompany our story. When we become tired of the same ones, we will keep our desires secret, unrealized«. (Ibid.: 76). And all these also demand a reinvention of woman and of course reinvention of the mother/daughter relationship as well.

### ***Mother/Daughter Relationships***

According to Irigaray, while it is necessary to alter cultural norms, it is equally important to address the problematic nature of individual relationships between women-especially the

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9 »A discourse that tells the truth about the logic of truth: namely, that the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects. Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one. A single practice and representation of the sexual... with its history, its requirements, reverses, lacks, negative(s) ... of which the female sex is the mainstay. This model, a phallic one, shares the values promulgated by patriarchal society and culture, values inscribed in philosophical corpus: property, production, order, form, unity, visibility . . . and erection«. (Irigaray, 1985: 43).

mother/daughter relationship. »To emphasize how mother/daughter relationships are sundered in the contemporary Western culture, Irigaray turns to Greek mythology. For example, she discusses the myth of Demeter, the goddess of the earth (agriculture), and her daughter Persephone. In this myth, Zeus, Persephone's father, aids his brother Hades, king of the underworld, to abduct the young Persephone. Hades has fallen in love with Persephone and wants her to become queen of the underworld. When Demeter learns that her daughter is missing, she is devastated and abandons her role as goddess of the earth. The earth becomes barren. To re-establish harmony in the world, Zeus needs Demeter to return to her divine responsibilities. Zeus orders Hades to return Persephone. However, Persephone is tricked into eating a pomegranate seed that binds her to Hades forever. Under the persuasion of Zeus, Hades agrees to release Persephone from the underworld for half of each year.« (Donovan, 2003: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/irigaray/>).

Irigaray reads this myth as an example of both a positive mother/daughter relationship, and the success of men at breaking it apart. Demeter and Persephone love each other and Demeter strives to protect her daughter. However, in this myth they are ultimately at the mercy of the more powerful males. »The myth is also an example of men exchanging women as if they were commodities. Zeus conspires with his brother and, in effect, gives his daughter away without consulting either Persephone or Demeter. Irigaray believes that myths tell us something about the deterioration of the mother/daughter relationship and the manner in which men have traditionally controlled the fate of women - whether they are wives, daughters, sisters, or mothers.«<sup>10</sup> (ibid.). Irigaray uses this myth to show that mothers and daughters need to protect their relationships and strengthen their bonds to one another. The need to alter the mother/daughter relationship is a constant theme in Irigaray's work. While she believes that women's social and political situation has to be addressed on a global level, she also thinks that change begins in individual relationships between women. Thus she stresses the need for mothers to represent themselves differently to their daughters and sons, and to emphasize their daughter's subjectivity (taking their subjectivity seriously and allowing them the freedom to be an individual rather than some sort of clone of a previous generation of women, consciously emphasizing that the daughter and the mother are both subjects in their own right). Changing relationships between mothers and daughters also requires language work as she frequently repeats. She also frequently repeats a need for women's intellectual, spiritual, political and ethical

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10 »As far as the family goes, my response will be simple and clear: the family has always been the privileged locus of women's exploitation. So far as family relations are concerned, there is no ambiguity ... Of course, alienation always works both ways. But historically, appropriation isn't oriented in just any random direction. In the patriarchal family and society, man is the proprietor of woman and children ... The same is true of the objection involving 'the mother's power', as this power exists only 'within' a system organized by men«. (Irigaray, 1985: 71-72).

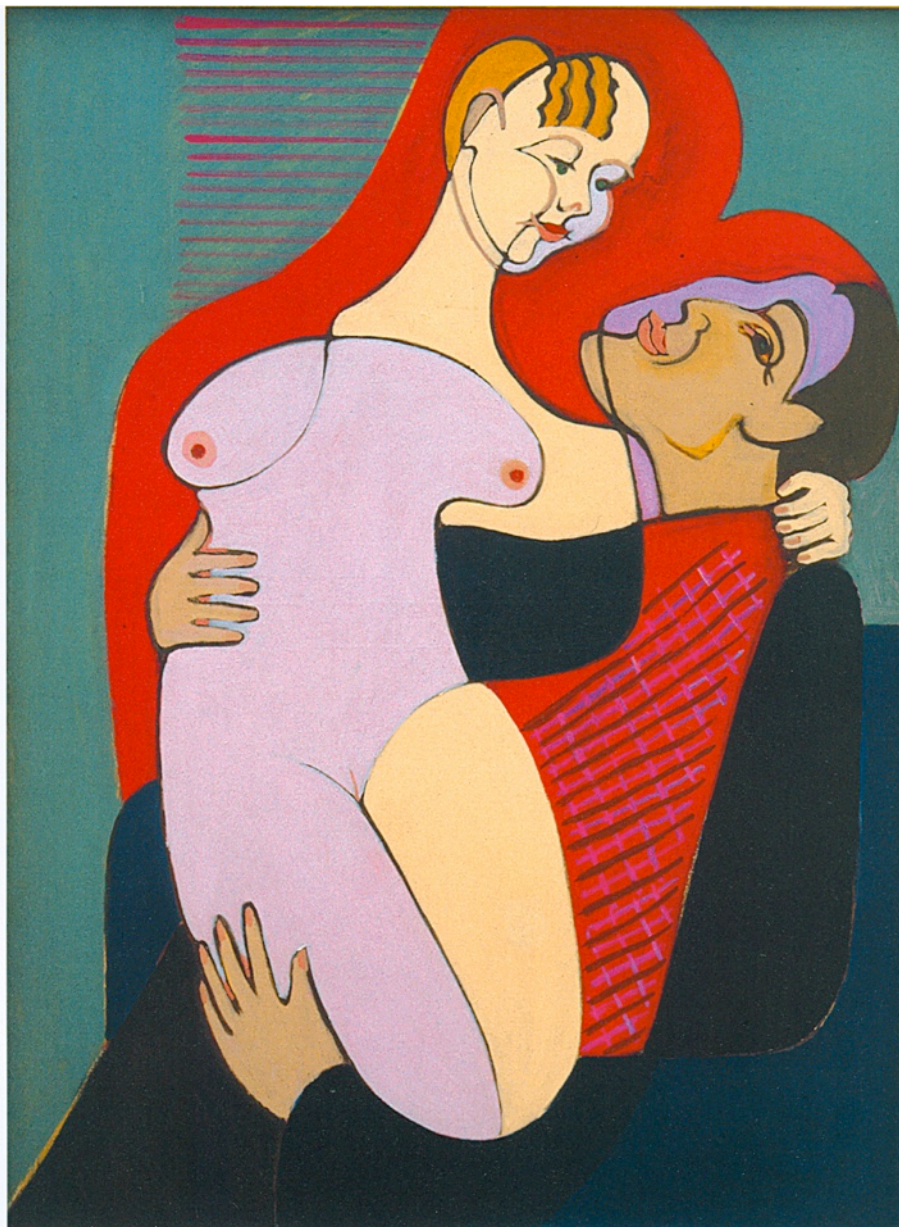


work. Now let us see how she reads a rare 'ancient' women's contribution to the notion of love in philosophy.

### ***Irigaray's reading (commentaries) on Plato's Symposium***

As Irigaray tried to show the meaning of cultivation of care, caressing, freedom of possession and utility, dialogue and inter-subjectivity between two subjects (and irreducibility of subject into object of pleasure or utility of/for the other), so does her reasonable commentaries on Plato's *Symposium* reveal a similar message of love. In Irigaray's eyes, love is not something to possess, capture or grasp, but rather something we allow to flow among subjects, (as in the case of partnership, between two subjects), and all beings in general. Her notion of love does not aim at one goal primarily, (for instance, procreation). Neither uses the other as a means to their own end; it is always a flow, a creation and a dialogue. And we can see this also in her reading of Plato's *Symposium*, or rather in her commentaries on Plato's notion of love. Socrates' notion of love can be summarized in four steps as we already presented. In general, love as Eros is something we wish for and desire because we do not have it. We wish for what is good, beautiful and truthful. However, if we wish for something that we do not have, does this mean that Eros is ugly, stupid and bad? Diotima's answer to this is negative, saying that Eros is neither beautiful nor ugly, neither bad nor good, neither mortal nor god, instead, Eros is between mortal and god, between ignorance and knowledge because it is a messenger between god and mortals. Eros's nature is built on this intermediary nature. From this notion of intermediary nature, Irigaray draws a notion of inter-subjectivity and claims that love as intermediate is never finished, finite and total but always unfolds, develops and flows. »Love is a primal force of perpetual movement, perpetual revaluation, perpetual formation.« (Irigaray, 1994: 183). Eros is not ugly although desiring beauty, nor ignorance desiring wisdom. Eros must not be mixed with beloved which represents the gentleness, beautiful and perfect, Eros is the loving (the lover). Such a notion of Eros places him next to the philosopher. »Wisdom belongs to the most beautiful things and Eros is, among other things, love towards wisdom; therefore, Eros must be a philosopher, i.e. the lover of wisdom and as such stands between wisdom and ignorance.« (Plato, 1960: 96). Second, each philosopher tries to get beauty, goodness and truthfulness into his possession, because these makes him happy. But why? Third: by getting beauty, goodness and truthfulness into our possession, we in fact see a desire to reproduce them. Love brings up a human wish of a mortal being to become immortal through reproduction (reproduction in two ways, through physical reproduction in the form of offspring, or spiritual/intellectual reproduction in the form of habits, laws, customs, religion). »All the people carry a reproductive force /.../ in body and spirit. At a certain age, our nature wishes

to reproduce.« (Plato, 1960: 99). However, Irigaray rightfully notices that Diotima went from a position of love as intermediary and balance between knowledge and ignorance towards reproduction. By placing the origin of love into the animal kingdom, love loses its everlasting creative movement and perpetual revaluation – love's driving force in Irigaray's eyes: »(...) with placing reproduction as the main goal of love, we risk losing an inner motivation of love – its fruitfulness in 'itself', her slow and steady regeneration.« (Irigaray, 1984: 184). This neatly summarizes Irigaray's position on love as everlasting re-creative process and motivation in itself.



Ernest Kirchner: *Großes Liebespaar* (1930).

**Martha Nussbaum (1947–)**



Peter Lastman: *Odysseus and Nausicaa* (1619).

Nussbaum has been most known by her works, such as *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986) and *The Therapy of Desire* (1994) dealing with ancient philosophy, especially ethics and political philosophy. However, her intellectual fame came with the text 'The Speech of Alcibiades: a Reading of Plato's Symposium' published in *The Fragility of Goodness*. Her later works such *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (1990), *For Love of Country* (1996), *Upheavals of Thoughts: the Intelligence of Emotions* (2001), *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions* (2004), *Not for Profit – Why Democracy Needs Humanities* (2010), and others brought her international fame by her position on love, sexuality, emotions, women also in connection with education, law and democracy.

### **Emotions and love**

Nussbaum, on the grounds of the Neostoic perspective of emotions, claims that emotions are just the other side of the coin of our rational and moral reasoning which composes our world-view, (a set of concepts, values, beliefs and emotions that can change due to new knowledge, insights and experiences). Let's look at the Neostoic view of the emotions as cognitive and evaluative personal judgements, and how they are also connected to cultural (macro) attitudes, beliefs and social relations. Nussbaum says that it is as important to nourish and cultivate prosocial emotions (love, compassion, peace, goodness) as to create institutions of justice. Her Neostoic view of emotions springs from the stoic philosopher



Hrisip. Hrisip inherited from Plato, Aristotle and Epicur, an outlook of emotions as being right or wrong, true or false, in regard to our rational judgement of the present situation. If we attribute to someone or something a high value then (s)he gives great pleasure and joy by his/her presence or sadness and anger with their absence. This means that emotions based on judgements attribute a high value to people and things outside of us that we cannot totally control and we can only cooperate together to reach a certain common agreement (for instance, in the case of love we both need to agree that we value, i.e. love each other in the same sense and way). Emotions are intentional, meaning they connect us with people and things and force us to cooperate with others – if we wish to have a peaceful, loving and good society we need to foster peaceful, loving, kind, happy and compassionate emotions and relations.

Until this point Hrisip followed his philosophical ancestors, but he was the first one to claim that emotions are identical or equal with judgement and belief. Hrisip acknowledged that each emotion contains a judgement of the context (person or situation) as true or false regarding our perception and knowledge of the context we are part of. To accept or reject a certain emotion as true or false is a task which requires a certain element of reasoning (acknowledgement, recognition, selection and categorization). For instance, when we finally meet the person we love (s)he feels right for us and we feel tremendous happiness, joy and enthusiasm because this feeling of love contains a judgement that this person is a very important and valuable part of our scheme of a good and happy life. Conversely, we feel a deep grief and sadness when we face the loss of this person who we value and evaluate very highly. If we lost some distant colleague we would not feel half as much pain as in the case of losing the loved one because we simply do not judge (value) her/him that highly. If we learn that the beloved person was taken from us by manipulation and lies then we would feel additional anger and disappointment, because anger contains a belief that injustice was done to us. In this sense, emotions carry different judgements, attitudes and beliefs, including beliefs about which events happened and who caused them, and special beliefs about the value of a certain object/subject. Therefore, emotions are cognitive and subjective evaluations which include a large amount of attention to ourselves, the people around us and our surroundings.

But our emotions are not only ours/personal. Nussbaum claims »that in a deep sense all human emotions are partly about the past, and bear the traces of a history that is at once human, socially constructed, and idiosyncratic.« (ibid.: 177). So emotions are not just ours, but are also connected with macro factors, a certain society in time and place. According to Nussbaum emotions are also shaped by our experience with macro factors. In this sense, human emotions include a consciousness of macro cultural factors and include love for one's country, anger at injustice, love of art, national shame, dejection about



political trends, and admiration for a form of government. Thus, she recognizes emotions being important in politics (political and other discussions concerning society and culture) and in producing sound arguments, (through critical thinking). Critical thinking is very important, because in political life people all too often follow tradition and authority without thinking for themselves. But if they are to become capable of thinking for themselves they need to develop their powers of reasoning, becoming able to detect a bad argument when they see it in a political speech or discussion, and becoming able to criticize their own arguments. A focus on argument also creates a more respectful civic culture: instead of exchanging insults and seeing debate as a way of humiliating their opponents, people need to approach one another as reasoners and to figure out how the arguments on both sides are related. Argument itself also requires certain emotions: it requires respect, sympathy, and the inhibition of anger and the desire to humiliate. But more generally in political life we need a wide range of emotions: appropriate fear of bad events (balanced by correct facts); reasonable anger at social injustices (guided, again, by a correct knowledge of history); and a broad-based sympathy for people and groups of many types. But how exactly do people learn emotions, understand them and properly react in certain contexts? Nussbaum argues that we do not learn emotions through some logical prepositions, theory or philosophical texts but through art, especially, literature, poetry and music. »Since we are all tellers of stories, and since one of the child's most pervasive and powerful ways of learning its society's values and structures is through stories it hears and learns to tell, stories will be a major source of any culture's emotional life. What fear, or love, is or will be, for a child, is a construct out of stories ...« (Nussbaum, 1990, 293). She goes on a great deal about explaining how children (and people in general) learn about emotions through art in *Love's knowledge* and *Upheavals of Thought*.

And yet, Nussbaum became famous through her views on love presented in her famous article »'A Speech of Alcibiades: a reading of the *Symposium*', published in *The Fragility of Goodness* and also through what she presents in her other mentioned books, such as *Love's knowledge* and *Upheavals of Thought*. Let us have a closer look at 'The Speech of Alcibiades: a Reading of Plato's Symposium'. The basic idea for her position seems to be inspired by Vlastos' paper 'The individual as object of love in Plato's dialogues.' (*Platonic Studies*, 1978). There, Vlastos argued that, the real object of love, according to Plato, is not a particular individual person, but that person's real, or apparent, admirable properties: virtue, beauty, knowledge, wisdom, status or whatever. Vlastos regarded this as a serious defect in Plato's theory of love. Nussbaum defends Plato against this charge. She does not deny that Diotima and Socrates advocate erotic attachment to impersonal forms rather than to particular people. In fact, she insists upon it. But she points out that Alcibiades is depicted as having been, and perhaps still being, half mad with love for one particular

person - namely Socrates. On her reading, Plato in the *Symposium* offers us a terrifying, and in some sense impossible, choice between two sets of values, two ways of life: Socrates vs. Alcibiades: Alcibiades has been thinking of the relationship as a sort of trade, or exchange. Alcibiades will give himself - his physical splendour - to Socrates in exchange for Socrates' wisdom and virtue. Socrates sees that this is how Alcibiades thinks of it, and tells him (a) that he (Alcibiades) might be wrong in believing that Socrates has the power to confer wisdom and virtue on others, and (b) even if he does have this power, the exchange would be unfair. Virtue and wisdom are worth much more than physical beauty. It seems, Socrates holds that wisdom and virtue are a great deal more valuable, more desirable, more worth having, than physical beauty. But on the other hand, it seems that Alcibiades (a great strategist in war) is thinking of the situation as a sort of battle, or contest.

The 'contest,' as Alcibiades seems to see it, is between virtue - goodness - on the one side, and beauty, plus clever strategy, on the other. If Alcibiades 'wins', he may well think 'Nobody's perfect'. And it is not without reason that Alcibiades compares Socratic virtues to statues of the gods. For, as we have seen, Socrates, in his ascent towards the Form, has become, himself, very like a form – hard, indivisible, and unchanging. His virtue, in search of science (Truth) and of assimilation of the good itself, turns away from the responsive intercourse with particular earthly goods that is Alcibiades' knowledge. »It is not only that Socrates sleeps all night with the naked Alcibiades without arousal. There is, along with this remoteness, a deeper impenetrability of spirit. Words launched 'like bolts' have no effect. Socrates might conceivably have abstained from sexual relations while remaining attentive to the lover in his particularity. He might also have had a sexual relationship with Alcibiades while remaining inwardly aloof. But Socrates refuses in every way to be affected. He is stone; and he also turns others to stone. Alcibiades is to his sight just one more of the beautiful, a piece of the form, a pure thing like a jewel.« (Nussbaum, 1986: 195). So here we have two principles: hard-stone like Socrates and beautiful strategist Alcibiades. The problem with each of them is: Socrates is too hard and principled; Alcibiades thinks of everything as a matter of conquest, competition, acquisition; the first has strong principles and the second thinks that he can change every time he pleases. The first does not want to use others to his advantage and he has a high appreciation for values such as virtue, goodness, truth, beauty, knowledge and science, while the other thinks selfishly of others, in a manner of using them to his advantage: to him everything is a matter of trade, conquest and acquisition. He cannot see the other(s) as having value in and of her/himself – he sees everything as his to use. Socrates does not see it that way, which is why he also objects sophists; he does not sell his knowledge to wealthy aristocrats but offers it to everyone. We need to know, however, that he is an aristocrat

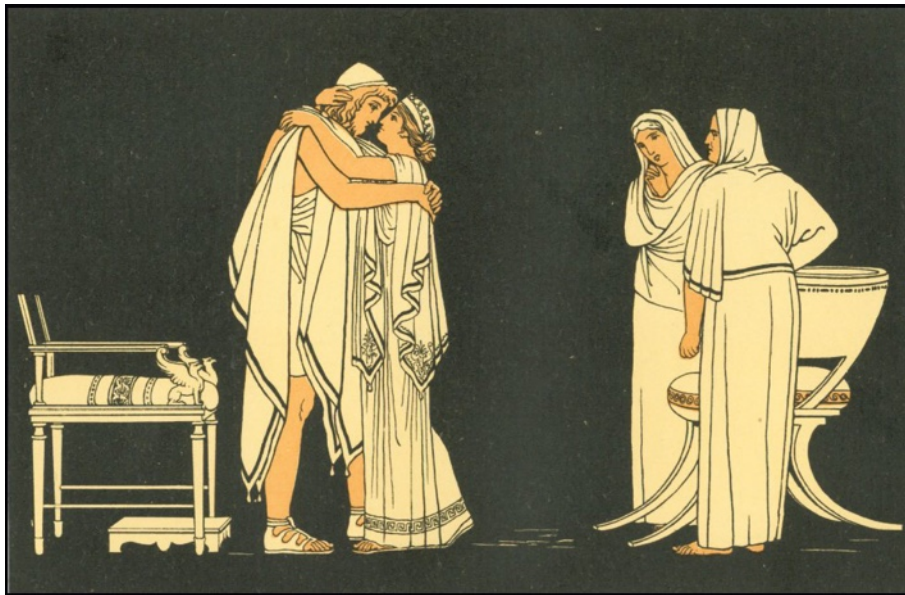
himself! What Nussbaum seems to offer is that while Alcibiades wishes to have a relationship with Socrates on every level, including erotic love, and is willing to accept the highs and lows, ecstasy and pain of corporeal, emotional, rational and spiritual love, Socrates, on the other hand, is unwilling to face everything that comes with an everyday love relationship and wishes to remain impenetrable, a highly virtuous 'rock', faithful to his principles of virtue, truth, goodness, light and beauty. But Nussbaum, while she admires Socrates, (and Diotima for this reason), she also shows that neither of the stances, (neither Socrates nor Alcibiades), present an optimal attitude. In other words, each of them has something valuable within it. That is why, in this and her other works, for instance in the third chapter of her *Upheavals of Thought*, 'Ascents of Love', she presents love as something that has not only to do with going upwards on the love ladder, as presented in Plato's and St. Augustine work on becoming an impenetrable shining rock, but also downward, as presented in various works of literature, especially in Joyce's *Ulysses*, (a love story between Molly and Leopold Bloom), Whitman's democratic desire for equality, compassion, and reconciliation of the sexes in all areas of everyday life, (from politics to marriage), Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, *Swan's Way*, (a love story between Albertine and Marcel), and Beckett's *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable*. Instead of having love only as soul-based, striped of bodily passionate love, which makes man dormant to his own desires and consequently also to his lover, as Plato and Augustine complain, or seeing a lover only as an interest-(object)based fulfilment of his appetites without true and mutual fulfilment (Kant), Nussbaum shows that love is as much upward abstract, in a universal and soulful way as it is downward by concrete (erotic) partial and bodily experience; that spirit is as important as flesh and both are sacred. She also shows in the case of Alcibiades that his invitation to Socrates under the sheets is a legitimate part of love-truth-beauty but that Socrates denied him, because he did not see love as some kind of exchange, even if it applies to the exchange of personality traits, (even more because he did not perceive himself as Alcibiades did, including what Lacan called Alcibiades's perception of Socrates as a personality possessing some sort of 'agalma'). That is why Nussbaum keeps saying that love in a modern world is free, democratic, individual, mutual, (reciprocal), sensual, erotic, and compassionate, reparative love.

And besides love and sexuality Nussbaum puts a great deal of emphasis on another important emotion; she calls it the central theme of society, compassion. In *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, Nussbaum makes an experiential argument for emotions as judgements of value. Starting from Aristotle's account, she considers compassion as a painful emotion directed at another person's misfortune or suffering. She then unravels the cognitive structure of compassion. The first cognitive requirement of compassion is a belief or appraisal that the suffering is serious rather than trivial, the

judgement of size. The second is the belief that the person does not deserve the suffering, the judgement of nondesert. The third is called the eudaimonistic judgement: this person or creature is a significant element in my scheme of goals and projects, an end whose good is to be promoted. »Compassion makes thought attend to certain human facts, and in a certain way, with concern to make the lot of the suffering as good, other things being equal, as it can be – because that person is an object of one's concern. Often that concern is motivated or supported by the thought that one might oneself be, one day, in that person's position. Often, again, it is motivated or supported by the imaginative exercise of putting oneself in that person's place. I have claimed that, other things being equal, the compassionated person will acquire motivations to help the person for whom she has compassion.« (Nussbaum, 2001: 342). Compassion is linked with benevolent action. For Nussbaum, a central challenge for society that wants to cultivate a broad and appropriate compassion would be to produce people who can live with their humanity, who can surrender omnipotence (i.e. awareness and understanding that we are not the only one here and that not everything needs to revolve around us all the time but that there are also others. Essentially, this means that we know how to limit ourselves and that we drop emotions, such as possessiveness, envy, jealousy and that people we love have also time for themselves and their interests, hobbies and friends besides us although we are someone's partner, daughter, friend etc.). »Realizing that we are merely limited, finite creatures, made of flesh, bones, and blood and wanting happiness and not wanting suffering can wake us up to true compassion with all living beings.« (Eynde, 2004: 49). Maria Eynde in her article: 'Reflection on Martha Nussbaum's Work on Compassion from a Buddhist Perspective' beautifully summarizes Nussbaum's vision of compassion in connection with politics and political systems: »The debate over compassion constructs two visions of political community and of the good citizen and judge within it. One vision is based upon the emotions; the other urges their removal. One sees the human being as both aspiring and vulnerable, both worthy and insecure; the other focuses on dignity alone, seeing in reason a boundless and indestructible worth. One sees the central task of community as the provision of support for basic needs, bringing human beings together through the thought of their common weakness and risk. It constructs a moral emotion that is suited to supporting efforts to aid the worst off. The other sees the community as the kingdom of free responsible beings, held together by the awe they feel for the worth of reason in one another; the function of their association will be to assist the moral development of each by judgements purified of passion. Each vision, in its own way, pursues both equality and freedom. The former aims at equal support for basic needs and hopes through this to promote equal opportunities for free choice and self-realization; the other starts from the fact of internal freedom – a fact that no misfortune can remove – and



finds in this fact a source of political equality. One sees freedom of choice as something that needs to be built up for people through worldly arrangements that make them capable of functioning in a fully human way; the other takes freedom to be an inalienable given, independent of all material arrangements. One aims to defeat the selfish and grasping passions through the imagination of suffering, and through a gradual broadening of concern; the other aims to remove these passions completely, overcoming retaliation with self-command and mercy. One attempts to achieve benevolence through soft heartedness; the other holds, with Kant, that this soft heartedness should not be among human beings. One holds that it is the weakness of the human being that makes it sociable. The other holds that weakness is an impediment to community, that only the truly self-sufficient person can be a true friend.« (Eynde, 2004: 53). For Nussbaum, compassion includes the thought of common humanity, which should lead us to be intensely concerned with the material (also bodily) as well as emotional, mental and spiritual happiness of others. »The fact that a person is a bearer of human capacities gives that person a claim on our material concern, providing these capacities with appropriate support. She insists that we do not properly respect those capacities if we neglect the need they have for resources, or deny that hardship or social deformation of preferences can deprive human beings of flourishing.« (Nussbaum, 2001: 371 – 372). Besides ardently speaking about justice, equality, compassion and cultivation of love, emotions and sexuality, she also advocates for women's right (*Sex and Social Justice*, 1998; *Women and Human Development: the Capabilities Approach* (2000) and all sorts of minorities, such as afro-american, handicapped, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender minorities (*From Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law*, 2010). She believes in equal distribution of goods, equal school and job opportunities and peaceful, fruitful cooperation between West and East.



Meeting of Ulysses and Penelope from *A Book of Myths and Legends*.

### c) Duties to Children

What we owe to children, and how we can philosophically justify our position?



Mary Cassatt: *Mother and Child (Reine Lefebvre and Margot before a Window)* (cca. 1902).

At one time, it was thought that children had only duties and did not have rights as well. We used to believe that children had duties to their parents, (duties such as to love thy

parents, obey them and care for them when they grow old), but times changed and philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, social workers and others started debating about the rights of children and about whether parents also had duties toward their children, such as to love them as well. For example, philosophers, such as Liao, Boylan, Davis and Feinberg, in their articles, present several positions regarding duties to children related to correlative claim rights and one of the most important is to love them. But why do they take such a position ...that duty must correlate with claim rights on one hand and why do they emphasize parents' need to love their children?

It is obvious that children are the most vulnerable beings on the planet and are prone to poverty, illness and death due to different sorts of diseases and violence in the world. The statistics show that, »every six seconds a child dies from health related causes (prominent on the list are malaria and HIV/AIDS). One third of all children on Earth are underfed (among the youngest this expresses itself through: underweight, stunting, and wasting ... and most of them are in Africa and Asia (Child Fund, 2009) ... Children are also very susceptible to violence and exploitation through child labor, land mines, war, sex trafficking, and other sorts of exploitation (no good data are available, but anecdotal data are frightening) ... And despite worldwide general enrollment of children into some sort of primary school education, many children face drop out in the secondary school and even less of them go to college and university.« (Boylan, 2010: 2).

All the facts listed show that children are a special and vulnerable group that need special care, love, understanding and protection. Before we can take a justified position regarding the duties parents may have towards their children, however, we need to understand and define what love is in this regard.. Matthew Liao in his article 'The right of Children To be Loved' argues that children, as human beings, have the right to the essential goods, possibilities and conditions necessary for human beings to pursue the good life, (their own and others). »Rights are powerful tools of protection and therefore having rights to the essential conditions for a good life is of primary importance to human beings. Whatever else they may want, most human beings would want to have a good life. Children being loved is one of the most essential conditions for a good life.« (Liao, 2006b: 424 – 425).

Mere provision of the structural goods necessary for as many options as possible is not the best of all possible worlds. Love and doing well for the child are also necessary. Nussbaum rightly warns that facilities and legal systems are not the embodiment, in and of themselves, of some eternal, perfect rules and structuralised relationships. »They are living systems which, on one side, embody people's right emotions, (love, compassion), values, beliefs and judgments and, on the other side, raise appropriate feelings, values and judgments in them. This two-way relationship runs simply because we do not have a

perfect legal system or perfect (compassionate and loving) individuals. These two things interchange with and supplement each other.« (Nussbaum; 2001: 185). So Nussbaum, in fact, claims that in order to have a pluralistic, equal and free democratic society, which will facilitate the best claim rights and duties, we need to not only set the proper institutions and laws, which will embody feelings, emotions, beliefs and judgments of people, but we also have to educate citizens and raise them to be loving, tolerant, free, equal and compassionate individuals and parents respectively. Even before Nussbaum, Rousseau and Tocqueville already showed that institutions and laws teach citizens how to define concepts of primary goods, responsibilities, convenient care and love for others and the like. They also showed how institutions can, in different ways, encourage or slow-down and form emotions which retard compassion and love.

There is something odd, however, about declaring it as a duty of parents to love their children. This is because love is often considered to be under the genus of emotions. Emotions are often taken to be out of one's direct control and »love out of inclination cannot be commanded.« (Kant, 2003: 161). Is this completely true and how can we reasonably argue for parents' duty to love their children? Again Liao, in his article 'Duties to Children', claims that children have rights not only to food, shelter, security, and schooling but also warmth, affection and love. Liao claims that a strong sense of warmth and affection is a crucial part of the emotional aspects of parental care and love. But, is it possible to require parental love as a matter of duty? Liao says that there are people who think that such a claim is absurd because love is emotion and therefore not commandable. He presents, however, a reasonable and favourable argument as to why requiring parental love is a necessary component of parenting. One strong reason and empirical fact is that children, despite »being well fed, have died or have suffered serious physical, social and cognitive harms as a result of lack of love. So, even granting that being fed is more urgent than being loved, we still should give the right of children to be loved a very high priority.« (Liao, 2005: 27). The claim that children need to be loved in this way is an empirical claim.

It is also argued that children need this emotional aspect of love in order to develop certain capacities necessary to pursue a good life. »Human beings need certain basic goods, such as food, water and air in order to sustain themselves corporeally. In order to be able to pursue the good life, they also need certain basic capacities such as the capacity to think, to feel, to be motivated by facts, to know, to choose and act freely (liberty), to appreciate the worth of something, to develop interpersonal relationships and to have control of the direction of their life (autonomy). Finally, in order to exercise these capacities they need to have some opportunities for jobs, social interaction, acquiring further



knowledge, evaluating and appreciating things and determining the direction of their lives.« (ibid.: 10 – 11). And, above all, if children are loved and being shown that they are valuable, they will have self-respect while respecting others and they will see pursuing the good life as a grown up duty towards themselves, others, the world, nature and the cosmos. Thus, the right of children to be loved is a human right.

Liao also claims that children have rights to play, to schooling, to explore and to question. And he suggests that parents need to be educated not only about scientific facts of childhood development but also on more value-laden types of parenting. In his words: »Parenting education is about helping one to acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to carry out the task of helping a child to become an adequately functioning individual. Basic parenting education should focus on teaching basic scientific knowledge about childhood education; the nature of parenting and how society can influence the parent/child relationship. Such an education would seek to inform middle to high school students about the latest scientific research and theories on prenatal development; the role of proper nutrition during pregnancy; an infant's perceptual, motor learning and social skills, sleeping patterns, eating habits and temperament; the varying needs of children from birth to adolescence; and how also how to create a safe, healthy, stimulating and loving environment for children generally ... Basic parenting education, taught in conjunction with sex and love education or other existing parenting education in schools, would provide such knowledge before abuse and neglect were able to take place. Finally, such an education also would help every student to be fully aware of a child's developmental process including a child's need for love.« (ibid. 30 – 33).

We can thus conclude with Boylan's words that »all persons on earth must consider with love the lot of all other people on earth. However, when we consider children, the dynamics change a bit. *Children* (depending upon where they are on the purposive agent continuum) are not fully agents. We often adopt an *unequal* sympathy when we confront them directly or by extension. This is generally a mistake (Benporath, Ariès). This is because children possess (in actuality) many characteristics that deserve respect (despite their status as protected individuals). Thus, children possess a dual rights claim: »(a) from their status as protected potential agents, and (b) from their actual personal ground of dignity that is born from their individual narratives (autonomy). Only children possess this dual rights claim, thus this claim requires *more* and not *less* moral consideration in providing them with at least the basic goods of agency based on love with the ultimate

purpose of enabling as many possible futures that the society and history can offer (an open future<sup>11</sup>).« (Boylan, 2000: 12).



Gustav Klimt: *Baby* (1918).

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11 Another strong advocate of children's rights is philosopher Feinberg. He argues that there are basic and necessary freedoms for every individual in our society, known as human rights, and, besides promoting children's right to be loved as one of their basic rights, Feinberg also promotes children's right to an open future. His argument is made clear in the following example. What Feinberg found and concluded from the Supreme Court's decision that Amish children were allowed to be absent from the last two years of compulsory schooling for US children due to their religious beliefs was: the idea behind a child's right to an open future focuses on the interests of the child's future self but the child's right to an open future also indirectly includes their current self's interests. As Jeffrey Morgan (2005) observed, a child's current interests are of utmost importance, for from his current interests his future interests will develop. Child rights scholars agree with Feinberg's concept of defending children's future interests in conjunction with recognizing and cultivating their current interests. They recognize it as a right that every child should have – the right for an open future. In this way Feinberg concluded against Supreme Court's decision because the jury did not also take into account children's right for an open future.

## d) Gay, Lesbian and Queer Theory<sup>12</sup>

Gay, lesbian and queer theory examines the ways in which sexuality and sexual difference play along with each other. Namely, although gay, lesbian, and queer theory are related practices, the three terms delineate separate emphases marked by different assumptions about the relationship between gender and sexuality.

In two, closely related, essays, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex' (1975) and 'Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality' (1975), Gayle Rubin elaborates a theory that has become central: that gender difference and sexual difference are related but are not the same. Gender difference refers to those spectrums of meaning governed by the binary terms man/woman, whereas sexual difference refers to those governed by the binary terms heterosexual/homosexual. Typically, sexual difference is expressed through gender difference; hence the common stereotypes of the feminine gay man and the masculine lesbian, wherein 'deviance' in relation to sexuality is made meaningful through a 'deviance' in gender identification.

Although sexual difference and gender difference are almost inextricable from each other in Western culture, it should theoretically be possible to separate them and to examine the interplays between and within them. Moreover, how gender and sexual difference interact in any given text can provide clues about the ways in which power operates in the culture producing that text. Reading these clues, by and large, has been the goal of gay, lesbian, and queer theory.

With Rubin's distinction in mind, gay, lesbian, and queer theory can be roughly defined: Gay theory examines sexual difference as it is applicable to the male gender; lesbian theory examines sexual difference as it is applicable to the female gender; queer theory attempts to examine sexual difference separate from gender altogether, or with a radical deprivileging of the status of gender in traditional discourses.

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<sup>12</sup> This section is short and again subjective selection and by no means have any pretension to offer a 'full' list of theories and views on lesbian, gay and queer theories. Just a glimpse to pay a tribute to this type of love and sexuality.



Gustave Courbet: *The Sleepers* (1866).

## Lesbian theory

Simone de Beauvoir, in *Second Sex*, warns that defining a lesbian as a person who wishes to imitate a man is condemning her as an inauthentic being. Beauvoir criticized early sexologists which described lesbians as 'inauthentic women or pseudo men'. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, if some of the capabilities and activities ascribed to men were found in women sexologists ascribed it as inauthentic woman or a form of 'protest against men'. Their reasoning was: 'some women were incapable of accepting their 'natural' female role and therefore they imitated the male role'. They thought the same way about homosexuality: that it was just an imitation of a heterosexual relationship, homosexuality as an inauthentic relationship. However, it is true that the 'initial' lesbian subculture, in the period of the 20's to the 50's of 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the United States and Germany, knew strict division of roles, such as femme for female and butch for male. In this case, sexologists analysed especially the so called introvert – lesbian playing the male role. There are numerous terms describing them: bulldyke, buldagger, bull, stud, but there is only one term for femmes, a synonym 'fish' (in a polar combination stud-fish). However, playing a butch in femme roles in the past and nowadays is a controversial issue in lesbianism. »Defenders of butch-femme roles believe that it is some sort of imitation of the heterosexual role model, yet it can still represent authentic lesbian interaction. Adversaries, mostly (lesbian) feminists, claim that in the era where new non-sexist role models have been created, the uncritical imitation of heterosexual and patriarchal practice means eroticising male power and suppression and thus impeding the development of a



new authentic lesbian eroticism and authentic production of the gender and sexuality.« (Tratnik, 2007: 3).

But in France lesbianism has emerged most forcefully as a theoretical dialogue in the work of several French feminists. In the late 1970s, a group of French feminists loosely aligned with the Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF) began to forge a theoretical practice around the notion of *aféminité* that opposed the masculine bias present in Western modes of thought.

Writers such as Luce Irigaray, Marguerite Duras, Claudia Hermann, and especially, Hélène Cixous created what has become known as '*l'écriture féminine*', or writing by/of/for women and it is translated in English as women's writing. In opposition to masculine writing, which champions a unitary vision of meaningful language structure by the phallus, women's writing prefers, theoretically, breaking up that unity and providing a plural and fragmented vision based on the unboundedness of female desire.

Because the theoretical impulse behind '*l'écriture féminine*' intends to articulate a system of meaning absolutely noncontingent on masculine parameters, the lesbian again provides a productive theoretical trope for these theorists. Cixous, for example, in her manifesto 'The Laugh of the Medusa,' implores women to remember the early American feminist slogan that "we are all lesbians," which she interprets as meaning that women should not denigrate one another as they have been denigrated by men. Although *l'écriture féminine* provides a more visible articulation of lesbianism than most other feminist practices, it again treats lesbianism as a metaphor or trope that can be strategically used to destabilize the relationship between the terms Man and Woman, which again places lesbianism within a program governed by a heterosexual gender division. The vexed relationship between gender difference and sexual difference that erases the lesbian in these previous theories is precisely what separatist lesbian theory has reacted against in both the American and French critical scenes. In America, this resistance is perhaps best embodied in the pioneering work of poet Adrienne Rich. Rich's essay 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' (1980) outlines two ideas central to lesbian theory: first, that lesbian desire exists as a continuum of desiring possibilities between women that range from friendship to sexual involvement; second, that culture presupposes heterosexuality as an inevitability, and hence the multiple manifestations of lesbian desire in culture become either erased or distorted. For Rich, then, lesbianism exists as both a disrupter of male power and a genuine bond between women or love between women. It plays within the relations of gender difference but is also a distinct form of sexual difference.



Henry Scott Tuke: *Noonday Heat* (1911).

## Gay Male Theory

As we learn from several sources that offer definitions on gay male theories »The initial stages of gay male theory seem to derive predominantly from the social constructionist precepts of Michel Foucault, whose influential *The History of Sexuality* sketches the construction of sexuality as a technology of social control, an effort to construct an identifiable meaning for people in Western societies. As such, gay male theory emerged, ironically enough, with a notion of ignoring the gay male altogether and looking instead at the category of 'the homosexual' as a disembodied social construct.« (Gay & Lesbian/ Queer Theory: <https://prezi.com/jja1hbuyza94/untitled-prezi/>). But the origin and interaction of social constructivism and the foundation of gay male theory has its roots in British sociological writings of the early 1970s. In 1968, Mary McIntosh published an article, 'The Homosexual Role,' which both predated and anticipated Foucault's work in arguing that 'the homosexual' was a social role that emerged in England in the seventeenth century. McIntosh's stance, along with the emerging work of Foucault, resulted in a number of sociological studies on sexuality which examined sexual roles as effects of the configurations of power in culture; most notable among these are Jeffrey Weeks's *Sex, Politics and Society* (1981) and *Sexuality and Its Discontents*.« (1985) (Celik, 2009: <https://ayselimo.wordpress.com/tag/gender/>).

As mentioned, many of these put emphasize on the social constructivism of sexuality, homosexuality, maleness and, in the case of gay male theory, male desire, subjectivity and/or identity, their body image etc. Regarding gay maleness and body image we can read: »Gay men can be placed into the theoretical framework of Fredrickson and Roberts. When a gay man's body is more like the desired mesomorphic type, then his body is

perceived as more valuable when objectified.« (Andorka, 2007: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.517.3484&rep=rep1&type=pdf>). Therefore, gay men will 'fix' their bodies, and only see their value in terms of form and physical attractiveness. If a gay man believes that there is a discrepancy between his ideal body image self and his actual self, then there is evidence of body shame. Due to body shame, some gay men might use body change strategies to somehow achieve their ideal body image. »Since gay men want to be both lean and muscular at the same time, they can pursue two pathways towards that goal: through restrictive eating or muscularity behaviors. Since gay men want to attract other men, they feel pressure to ensure that their physical appearance is as attractive as possible. Gay men report that the only way they can attract a sexual partner is by having a slim and attractive body (Epel, Spanakos, Kasl-Godley, & Brownell, 1996). This is also interesting because not only do gay men want a lean body, but they also want a muscular one as well (i.e., the mesomorphic ideal). The mesomorphic ideal can best be described as a naturally 'fit' body, with a V-shaped torso and the ability to gain muscle mass easily.« (ibid.).

This pressure to 'sculpt' and 'form' their body according to the ideal measure, actually, to a degree, reflects an Ancient Greece world-view which emphasized the desirability of a muscular, V-shaped torso and their homo-sexual and homo-social world that put great stress on beauty (remember its countless sculptors showing beautiful ideal male bodies).

But, as Foucault showed in his *History of Sexuality*, (volume I. and II.), it was not only the 'ideal' body which was important in dominant homo-sexual Ancient Greece, but also the care of the self, to cultivate their desire in connection to the notion of subjectivity. This care for the self, in the sense of gay male desire, was mostly theorized within social-historical context on one side and in the sense of their health on the other.

Todd Hammer (2011) offers his insights regarding his research on current and not so current gay male culture and theory. He argues that when he was writing about *The Meaning of Gay* (2009) he wanted to understand (about) »gay male desire by working from within the symbolic interactionist framework — building on the assumptions of a Deweyan notion of the subject and of experience as a radically contextualized activity-undergoing; and on a Meadian notion of the social constitution of the subject and of subjectivity as an emergent process of interaction.« (Hammer, 2009: <https://toddsammer.wordpress.com/category/social-sciences/sexuality/gay-and-lesbian-culture/>). He especially explored gay desire that had manifested itself during »the period between 1961 and 1972 in a dynamic range between two opposite views that only existed because of their social-historical context: one view was the desire to minimize, reduce, even to disappear gayness in favour of other aspects of subjective life (e.g., career identities,

family roles, etc.); the opposite view sought maximization, an expansion or extension of gayness into a pervasive and omnipresent aspect of life's activity-undergoing.« (ibid.). Another approach which posits a view on gay male culture, desire and subjectivity within two poles or opposite views is David Halperin's book *What do Gay Men Want?* (2007). But his view regarding gay male subjectivity »explores the possibilities of a re-theorization of gay subjectivity in opposition to the psychological questions raised by the putative rise in gay men's increasingly risky sexual behavior ... Halperin argues that the moralizing public conversation about 'barebacking' slides easily and quickly into a psychologically (re)pathologizing discourse that locates gay male subjectivity in the perverse, abnormal, diseased, self-hating, etc. – the very discourses gay men and women have been working to overthrow since at least from the 1960's. Halperin explains the rise in risky behaviour in significantly different terms, seeing gay men as ongoing agent-negotiators-resisters who opt for safer strategies of risk reduction to maximize or maintain access to pleasure; he uses epidemiological and sociological research to demonstrate the rationality (as opposed to pathology ...) of gay men's sexual choices in the face of what is known about HIV transmission.« (Hammer on Halperin, 2009: <https://toddshammer.wordpress.com/category/social-sciences/sexuality/gay-and-lesbian-culture/>).

Halperin's book, however, situates him within a small band of intellectuals who refuse often countless psychoanalytic views on gay sex and love, risk and subjectivity. He approaches gay male identity, (not subjectivity), with a non-psychology approach, describing works of activists and academics and thereby creating a collective politics which contests the social practice of stigma and discrimination. Instead, he proposes a new, innovative approach: he shows how the long history of gay men's uses of 'abjection' can yield alternative, non-moralistic models for thinking about gay male subjectivity; models which don't produce shame and self-denial regarding gay male identity.





Paul Cadmus: *The Fleets In* (1934).

## Queer theory

Queer theory is a diverse field of studies that involves a lot of disparate ideas and its expanding body of 'literature' (Wolters: <http://www.critical-theory.com/what-the-fuck-is-queer-theory/>).

Goldberg offers a definition of queer theory as »originally associated with the radical gay politics of ActUp, Outrage, and other groups which embraced 'queer' as an identity label that pointed to a separatist, non-assimilationist politics. Queer theory with its 'agenda' originates in socially constructionism which opposes the rigid notions of the sexes and claims that these norms and roles are socially constructed and that there is no strict 'male' or 'female', strict 'homosexual' or 'homosexual'.« (Goldberg: <https://faculty.washington.edu/mlg/courses/definitions/queer.htm>).

More precisely »it has only been named as an area since about 1991. It grew out of gay/lesbian studies, a discipline which itself is very new, existing in any kind of organized form only since about the mid-1980s. Gay/lesbian studies, in turn, grew out of feminist studies and feminist theory.« (Harris: [http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/Eng101\\_QueerDef.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/Eng101_QueerDef.pdf)).

Queer theory has thus sought to overturn society's traditional views of love, sex and sexuality and argued it is a product of sets of signifiers which create certain types of social meaning. Judith Butler, Eva Sedwick, David Halperin, Alexander Doty and others who developed queer theories, however, took their original cue from Michel Foucault, who claimed that sexuality exists on a continuum, with some people preferring sex partners of the opposite sex, others preferring partners of both sexes.

As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick said: »It's about how you can't understand relations between men and women unless you understand the relationship between people of the same gender, including the possibility of a sexual relationship between them ... Labels like 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' are societal inventions.« (Sedgwick, 1998: <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/01/17/books/queer-theory-is-entering-the-literary-mainstream.html?pagewanted=all>). This means that queer-theory challenges heterosexuality as a naturalized social-sexual norm and promotes the notion of 'non-straightness': it challenges the hegemony of 'straight' ideology. This emphasis on non-straightness lends queer theory its assimilationist, anti-essentialist cast.

Another important queer theorist, Judith Butler, in her notorious work *Gender Trouble*, with its now broadly overused concept of 'performative' sexuality and gender identity, proposed to reject stable categories altogether. Butler argued that gender, as a relation among

socially constituted subjects, works in specifiable contexts. In other words, rather than being a fixed attribute in a person, gender should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times. Each of us has a tendency to be attracted to traits of our sex and of the opposite sex and each of us carries some traits of femaleness and maleness, or as Butler says: »There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results.« (Gender Trouble, 1998: 25). In other words, gender is a performance; it's what you do at particular times, rather than a universal claim who you are.

This idea of identity as free-floating, as not connected to an 'essence', but instead a performance, is one of the main ideas in queer theory. Seen in this way, our identities, gendered and otherwise, do not express some authentic inner 'core' self but are the dramatic effect (rather than the cause) of our performances. In Butler's view, queer activities like drag and unexpected identifications and sexual practices reveal the arbitrariness of conventional gender distinctions by parodying them to the point where they become ridiculous or ineffective.<sup>13</sup> Queer theorists have taught us that most of us have character traits that swim against the gender mainstream in this or other way; all the people have mixed gender traits with different inclinations towards the same sex or the opposite sex, which means that the Phallus is no longer the center of the universe as Freud claimed.

13 David Halperin also has said: »Queer is ... whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence.« (Halperin, 1995: 62). Also »Alexander Doty's notion of 'queer reception,' in Making Things Perfectly Queer, is another way in which standard categories are challenged. Doty separates 'reception' from 'identity' and stresses the way a spectator may derive 'queer pleasure' by deviating from standard categories in viewing film and television. Thus straight-identified women spectators might experience 'queer pleasure' at the sexual tension generated between Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon in Thelma and Louise; straight-identified men might enjoy the exaggerated homoeroticism of Stallone's Rambo.« (Goldberg: <https://faculty.washington.edu/mlg/courses/definitions/queer.htm>).

## 8. Conclusion



Edward Munch: *Kiss by the Window* (1892).

I hope, therefore, that I have satisfied my reader's need for recognition of various different Western concepts of love throughout history, while having, thereby, shown that there are many, concepts of love. Even Plato acknowledged this when he wrote that several kinds of love exist at once, even though, at the time, only one concept of love was admitted and assigned the designation of true love.

I also argued to show that there exists a certain ongoing thread of concepts, a continuation which has resulted either from modification of previous concepts or according to social changes and new social demands. And, last but not least, I hope I have shown that while, throughout history, Western concepts of love have aspired towards transcendence, what we need now are new concepts, more humane and earthly concepts, which are kinder to people here and now and which help, especially, to fulfil and enrich love on the Earth.

But before my final words about the concept of love today, let us look back as I present a brief summary of the various philosophies over time which I have dealt with here: Empedocles develops his own unique cosmological concept of love which he divides into two main principles, claiming love and strife as the main forces in the cosmos; Plato presents love as *eros* in the sense of desiring something we do not have or we used to have – in particular that we used to be immortal and we 'hung out' with immortal gods

which are good, true and beautiful and therefore we wish to re-acquire the status of immortal, eternal beings (love = is our path towards divine/holiness); Christian love as *agape* serves as a path of reconnection with the holy realm which we lost due to original sin: we fell from the state of heavenly chastity and innocence by eating an apple from the tree of knowledge, but we regained our holiness by opening our hearts and souls to the mercy of Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself for humanity (love = path of God towards us); courtly passionate tragic love invents a new concept of love due to the medieval inhumane marriage relationships of the time which were based solely on contractual relations in order to increase a partner's status, wealth, power and honour. Contrary to this notion, William IX invented a well-known concept of the so called adulterous love which is based solely on personal attractions, desires and affections that two human beings (souls and bodies) have for each other regardless of their status and wealth. He desires her but she seems so distant and unattainable which produces the highest possible yearning and feelings of love. The main presentation of this type of love is the myth of Tristan and Isolde (an unrequited and tragic love); Rousseau is the first philosopher to establish a romantic complementary couple, Emile and Sophia, who are allowed to choose each other solely on their personal and romantic preferences, desires and affections regardless of their status and wealth. He also offers instructions on how to form their relationship based on their gender and socially ascribed roles; according to Freud love is a kind of transference which adults use to project the love ties they had with their parents onto their adult partners, especially with their mother (love = transfer). As an addition, I present also feminist concepts of love, especially several waves of feminist thoughts and arguments regarding finding an authentic female expression and attitude towards love, sexuality, partnership, gender notions, sexual orientation, marriage, mother-child relationships, upbringing, birth, death, existentialism, notions of good and evil and the like in the philosophy of Beauvoir, Kristeva, Jaggar, Irigaray and Nussbaumova. And in the end of the book I present a short passage on duties to children and on gay, lesbian and queer theory which reveal, uncover and acknowledge parents should love their children as much children should love their parents, and that homosexual love being as authentic as any heterosexual partnership.

It is perhaps then, to be concise, enough to say that throughout history we have been acquainted with love as desire or yearning towards something we don't have, either because we had it and lost it and we therefore wish to re-acquire it, (Aristophanes, Plato, Augustine), or because a love partnership reveals soul-based communication and the meeting of two different personalities with different personal backgrounds, as well as and a re-igniting/re-inventing of the so called family novel (Rousseau, Freud). It seems that Western concepts of love reveal a common element; we lost something early on in our existence and we wish to fill the void that was created by our loss. In this way, a human



history of love in Western society reveals how to become stronger, fuller, more self-confident, self-sufficient and yet loving, compassionate and human beings.

And last but not least, aim of writing this book is to people become aware of these different concepts of love and letting people know there is not a single or the most proper love (which most of us feel unique when we fall in love with a particular person and live it fully) and that our everyday partnerships are mostly rooted in certain concept that belongs in its origin to a certain period and place which have went throughout time through different updates and modifications. I thus call upon tolerance, cooperation, compassion, empathy and peace in our love endeavours and our everyday partnership which may or may not be different from our neighbours. In this sense this book can also serve as a practical guide how to upgrade and modify people's everyday relationships the way they wish since this book offers them insights what each of the concept is about, where and why it came from and what purpose wanted to serve at its beginning.

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