

**Ryan Patrick Hanley.** *Love's Enlightenment: Rethinking Charity in Modernity.* Cambridge University Press 2017. 182 pp. \$99.99 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9781107105225); \$26.99 USD (Paperback ISBN 9781107512450).

If we ignore existentialist claims that love is ontologically impossible, love directed to the other is often understood as a pity, compassion or sympathy. However, that is definitely not the original meaning of *agape* (*caritas*). In *Love's Enlightenment*, Ryan Hanley tries to examine the change love underwent in the period of the Enlightenment, when the foundations of how we understand love today were laid, and the reviewed book is the fruit of such an examination.

The starting point is a claim that love needs to be reinstalled in our society, but the important question is what kind of love it should be. Following the traditional division of love, Hanley talks about *agape*, or neighbor's love, *eros*, or longing for possession, and *philia*, or love of friends and family. These three kinds of love used to create three corners of a triangle, but the Enlightenment with its distrust of divinely oriented metaphysics changed this triangle into a line with love-of-self and love-of-others at the ends (17). The author's aim in the book is to show what we gained and lost by this change and to suggest what we should recover in the context of our present movement. He does so by studying four concepts of love: Hume's concept of humanity, Rousseau's concept of pity, Smith's concept of sympathy and Kant's concept of love. He does so with one recurrent question: doesn't such love degenerate into the self-love it was originally meant to remedy?

Intended as an aide for students of love and of the history of philosophy (19), the book is surprising at places, but in general it is a great help for everybody interested in love, not only in the Enlightenment but more generally. True, Hanley skips everything that has happened with love since the Enlightenment, but his arguments for rethinking the present meaning of *eros* and *agape* are sound. It must be pointed out that transcendent love needs a theistic basis and throughout the book love is connected to transcendence, which is impossible for some theorists, or hardly possible for others. Simple body love, erotic sexuality and love which stems from it, are not widely considered (only Smith's view of erotic love as ridiculous or repugnant is mentioned on page 108).

Hume's concept of humanity from *A Treatise of Human Nature* is presented first. Attention is paid to the fact his view of love was far from any transcendence: hence love of mankind is chimeric. However, Hanley builds his understanding of Hume on his concept of humanity, which resembles in some points the concept of *agape*, to claim that Hume's concept of love established the ground for minimal ethics: a cool preference for the well-being of others. Thus Hume, unlike Nussbaum, does not call for emotional intimacy with strangers; he just calls for preference for the socially beneficial to the socially destructive or simply selfish. Undoubtedly, Hume's view of humanity opened the door to a politics of humanity.

Next, Rousseau's big step towards politics of compassion is taken into account. Rousseau—a father of romanticism—may be often cited in connection with love, but his view was quite dark. Eros is—according to him—a wish of the self-consciousness to transcendent itself, but this wish is always spoiled by the fact that the embodied self cannot be transcendent (70). Hence, there is pity which manages self-love via sensations felt for our fellows. But pity also utilizes *amour-propre*—which Hanley sums up as a desire to live outside of or beyond one's self (89). Hume and Rousseau share several important ideas: above all, they do not resemble Christian conceptions of love and compassion at all. Where Hume's cool preference for the well-being of others makes us refrain from

negative actions, Rousseau's pity based on self-love (beyond which nothing can justify love of others) also aims to make self-love less aggressive. That's why the author continues with Smithian theory of sympathy, giving reasons for positive incentives for other-directed behavior (chapter 4).

The character of Smith's virtue was a topic of Hanley's previous work (*Adam Smith and the Character of Virtue*, Cambridge University Press 2011), thus his defense of Smith's concept of sympathy substituting both exclusionary *eros* and epistemically limited *agape* is well based. Hanley tries here to proceed to a more positively based conception of love, and in doing so, he sheds more light on Smith's view of Christian love (111-119), and his celibate distrust in erotic love (106-110). Since Smithian sympathy can do no more than limit our selfishness, it is virtue which makes us realize benevolent affections, but virtue is not the subject of Hanley's work. It moves instead to Kant, who seems an infertile philosopher as far as love is concerned, but his hostile view of love should not be a reason for writing off his philosophy.

It is necessary to point out that Kant paid attention to the shortcomings of the conception of sentiments and created a new theory of love without regressing to old conceptions of *agape* and *eros*. For his interpretation of Kant, Hanley uses the largely neglected accounts on love in Kant's pre-critical writings, along with the more widely known *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason*. Kant's distrust of love or sentiment as sources of action is notorious, however Kant also believed in a duty to love others grounded in pure reason (150), which Hanley sees as the smartest way to deal with the problem of self-love. But at the same time, it goes furthest from what we usually consider to be love, or from how we experience it (172). It may be seen as a good move, since self-love is the very problem Hanley tries to solve throughout the whole text: self-love turns us into strangers or even enemies, and self-love prevents us from transcendence. However, the epilogue, in which one expects some kind of solution together with suggestions for further research, is a bit tentative.

Returning to the main question of why these four philosophers think love does not degenerate into self-love, one must answer: sometimes it does. In Hume's cold preference for others and in Rousseau's conception of pity, self-love is only weakened, not vanquished. Smith's theory of sympathy and above all Kant's view of love as a duty stemming from pure reason try to do more: to find an incentive to other-directedness and by doing so to escape the threats of selfishness. But even though they present a good theoretical solution, they are not what we consider love. Hanley, therefore, finishes with doubts that it is possible to have 'both universal love and self-transcendence without theism' (173). That is certainly a questionable claim, whose correct explanation would require a book of a similar length and could hardly be derived only from the four presented philosophic conceptions, no matter how revolutionary and widely discussed they are now. Moreover, it is unclear how the four discussed philosophers could help with 'a recovery of the primacy of love' (1) debated in Introduction.

Aside from this objection, the book presents an original and thoughtful survey of Hume's, Rousseau's, Smith's, and Kant's transformation of traditionally seen love and it has a lot to add to the discussion of the deeply needed other-directed love in modern society. Hanley's thoughts are well written and carefully considered which makes the book one of the most important works in current discussions of love.

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