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ONTOLOGY OF LOVE

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ABSTRACT

Love in its entire ramification is an encompassing human phenomenon that is so challenging that it naturally evokes interest in academics, philosophers, psychologists, religious enthusiasts, etc. It appears however that its elusive nature has continued to fascinate man such that there seems to be no hard and fast rules about it. In any case, this paper tries to answer the questions as to whether love does exist in actuality or is just a mere concept: Is love a preserved human activity which other sentient beings do not participate or can it be extended to animate beings as well.

Keywords: Love, Friendship, Affection, Eros, Agape, Love and sex, Love and beauty, Love and truth, Love and loneliness

INTRODUCTION

Love is not just a concept but a phenomenon, an activity that is manifested in varied ways and dimensions. The enveloping and encompassing nature of love has made it quite impossible to divorce it from any reasonable consideration and discussion on Man. Daily existential operations of man bear credence to this fact. Pages of Newspapers and other mass media are inundated with issues of love and love related matters. A typical example is the story on Champion Newspaper of March 5, 1995 titled: "A girl 18 dies for love." Volumes of books are written on this topical issue. Films and songs are written and produced on the nature and effects of love. The startling fact is that the phenomenon of love defies any adequate description and comprehension. It appears that it is a phenomenon better lived and experienced than defined or described. Most often, problems associated with love seem to elude every satisfactory solution. Even the greatest Psychologist, Philosopher and Moralist is often perplexed with the issue of Love and at times becomes plagued with its malady. Homes are broken, relationships strained, life wrecked and even countries disastrously torn apart because of the problem of love. Admittedly, it will be an overstatement or a fallacy of reductionism to reduce the problem of man only to the problem associated with love. Nevertheless, it is stating the obvious that discussion on love is more pertinent since man naturally loves, desires to love, and is sometimes the beneficiary and the victim of love. In any case, this

discuss on “The Ontology of Love” goes beyond the phenomenal description of the phenomenon of Love to the most basic issue of inquiring whether love is actually a reality; in other words, is love real or is there anything called love? Is love restrictively a human phenomenon or do animals also love? What is the relationship between knowledge and love? In other words, can one love what he does not know? What does it entail to love? Can man love other existents besides man? Can self-love be referred to as love in the true sense of the word? These and other myriads of issues form the crux of this discussion on Love.

WHAT IS LOVE?

Actually, giving a precise and a concise definition of Love is difficult and problematic. In the Philosophical circle, there is no agreement either in this regard. (Dunceel, 1967), for instance, juxtaposing Love with Knowledge, sees love as “a basic psychic experience that people do not bother about what it is”. Indeed, Love naturally appears easy to describe than defined. In acknowledgement of this fact, Dillon (1980) remarks that; “it is possible to analyze Cleopatra’s love for Anthony but not easy to describe love itself apart from a concrete situation involving specific people”. Dillon further believes that “Love is intrinsically tied to the human nature and this significantly influences its dynamics. Since human nature varies, there is bound to be diversity among lovers; such diversity definitely hinders the provision of any stereotyped paradigm for the phenomenon called, love” (314). As a way out, Dillon thinks an inquiry into human nature could serve as a prior task to decipher the universal structure that constitutes human love.

In his analysis of the human nature, (Dillon, 1980) adopted Jean Paul Sartre’s existentialist tenet that “existence precedes essence”. In this case, Man has the unchequered freedom to determine his essence, since man is what he chooses. The objects of this choice are indefinite due to the unlimited possibility of man. If the essence of love is freedom, Dillon doubts whether the being of love can be defined. He therefore concludes that the being of love like that of the human person remains a–being–in-question.

Despite this pessimism, Dillon nevertheless contends that the freedom associated with love is not absolute but situated within contexts of needs, goals, concerns, influences, opportunities and impossibilities. Choices and decisions made for the sake of Love then can best be understood as responses to situations against which backdrop love related action can be adjudged as rational or irrational, far-sighted or impetuous, good or bad. Love then as constitutive of human freedom is appraised within the parameter of situated freedom: Conceived thus, “the phenomenology of Love becomes an investigation of human finitude and an inquiry into the limits of the human situation as they affect love” Dillon (1980). Frankl (1978) discussing “Sex and Humanism” in *The Unheard Cry for Meaning* is apparently in support of Dillon’s submission of Love as a specifically human phenomenon. He therefore decries the reductionist’s conception of love as sublimation of sexual desires and instinct which man shares with other animals.

On the ontological level, Frankl sees Love as an aspect of a more encompassing human phenomenon which he calls, self transcendence. It is this quality of man as a self-transcendent-being that enhances the capacity of man to reach out beyond himself; be it towards a meaning to fulfil or towards another human being lovingly to encounter. For Plato. (2003), Love is “responding to death anxieties through the channel of creation. It is love that binds a man and a woman in an act that results in pro-creation. Through their progeny, the parent perpetuates themselves and finds a sort of immortality that mitigates the death that awaits them as individuals.” Appearing existentialistic, Barbara (1980) in Loneliness and Loving describes Love as:

Creative standing in the presence of another whose being we build, nurture, encourage, let be. The standing Implies self possession, surrender-to-the-self; and acceptance of another; involves a reaching out that implies acceptance of the other as it is. Being in the presence of another, involves a reaching out that implies communion where union is not obsessive-possession but furthering of self contentment, personal honour, mutual support. To stand implies placing the self into position, accepting a vantage point and holding oneself therein. Into this sphere enters another whom I experience togetherness.... We share however a common sphere, from our vantage point, embrace by our mutual yes, to each other. We can say yes because we understand each other, that is, we support the one we love. This love is made possible, however only because of a prior self-possession. We can understand because we can stand.

Continuing Fiand notes that, on the contrary, “the person who shifts and fluctuates or even the one who holds her position out of compulsion or insecurity; the person, in other words who does not hold herself within herself, who clutches to externals, who has not yet learned surrender, cannot understand because she is afraid to Love. The one who is incapable of loving herself cannot risk loving the other (Barbara, 1980).

In the same vein, (Frankl, 1978) regards as unloved, "when one uses another human being as a means to an end, as a gratification or a tool for reducing the tensions created by libidinal or aggressive drives and instincts". Such an attitude towards a partner is specifically a neurotic distortion of the human sex. Love involves affection and intelligence more than mere instinctual satisfaction of sex. For Heidegger (1962) in Being and Time, such depraved usage of the other person constitutes what he describes as inauthentic existence. The dominator becomes a Das-man instead of Da-sein by making the other an existential robot or zombie. Similarly, such relationship has no place in Martin (1965) human relationship as enshrined in his book, I and Thou, which requires speaking with the other being on the platform of parity. Any subjugation of the other transposed the relationship into “I-It”, which is contrary to a healthy human relation but rather applies to the world of things and animals.

To love then is to affirm the person in the totality of his or her being. That affirmation is based on selection that is on choice. “We do not fall in love, we choose to love. The inner logic of this choice

reveals the essential structure of the model of love” (Dillon, 1980). The following rhymes from Barbara Fiand encapsulates it all regarding the essence of love thus:

Love me for who I am
I stand before you in surrender of myself, helpless,
I am indeed darkness in who grace lights up.
I stand; I can be no other,
Understand (Dillon, 1980).

The tenacity, overwhelming and captivating nature of the phenomenon of love must have informed King Solomon in The Holy Bible too describes love as a spiritual reality which like fire no water avail to quench, no floods can drown; for love, a man can give up all that he has in the world, and thinks nothing of his loss (Song of Songs.). The illuminating, informative and dependable capacity of Love especially in paradoxical situations is captured by Brew (1982) in this fascinatingly and thrilling poem entitled The Mesh thus:

We have come to the Cross Road
and I must either leave or come with you.
I linger over the choice.
But in the darkness of my doubts
you lifted up the lamb of Love,
and I saw in your face,
the road that I should take.

So Love fundamentally involves another person other than me. It is a powerful emotion felt for another which manifests itself in deep appreciation, devotion and sometimes sexual desires. One cannot therefore talk of love in the true essence of the word without reference to the other to whom we transcend ourselves towards in love. To love oneself or self-love then is no love, since love involves transcendence, self-surrender and accepting of the other in whom we find fulfillment and stand perpetually in want of. Love, indeed is going beyond self to the grasp of the other in order to fill the existential vacuum of incompleteness, non-fulfillment and the search for meaning. That is why Hegel defines love as a reconciliation of opposites. It is in love that contraries are reconciled. Opposites do not exist in a single individual; therefore love necessarily involves the other with whom one is reconciled.

TYPES OF LOVE

Plato. (2003) and Descartes (1960) both espoused an ontological dualism of reality. As a corollary, Plato posited a dualistic nature of Love: the intellectual love, which is oriented towards knowledge. This type of love, in Plato's reckoning, is the highest level of love which is pre-dominantly wisdom oriented and seeks to attain the divine kind of immortality. For this reason, Plato accepts death of

the body in order for man to become disembodied and emerge as pure intellect or pure spirit therefore, becoming identical with the absolute, the unchanging idea, which lies at the basis of all true knowledge. The other love, called the physical love, is linked with pro-creation. It binds the man and the woman together and through the survival of their progeny, salvages them from death that awaits every individual created existent.

Lewis (1960), in the introduction to *The Four Loves*, categorized love specifically into: Gift-Love, Need-Love and Appreciative-love. Employing the analogy of the family, Lewis describes Gift-Love as that love which moves a man to work and save for the future well-being of the family. Need-Love is that which sends a lonely or frightened child to his mother arms. In the same vein, it is Need-love that gingers a man to say to the woman, "I cannot live without you." Human love for Lewis is basically a need-Love. Man is born helpless and as soon as man is fully conscious of himself, he discovers his loneliness hence, needs others physically, emotionally, intellectually to know anything, even himself. Appreciative-Love on the other hand gazes and holds its breath, is silent, and rejoices that such a wonder exist even if it is not for him or her and would not feel wholly disappointed and dejected losing him or her. C. Lewis, however, categorizes love broadly into four types: Affection, Friendship, Erotic and Charity (Agape). Our discussion on the types of loves shall be based on this Lewis' categorization and analysis.

Affection

The Greek renders Affection as *storgé*, which is defined by the Greek Lexicon as, "the love especially of parents to off-spring but also of off-spring to parents" (Lewis, 1960). In Affection, the two dimensions of Love, Need-Love and Gift-Love are involved; (the need-Love of the child and the gift-Love of the Mother). Lewis describes Affection as 'the humblest and the most widely diffused of loves, which experiences differ at least from that of animals.' It is the least discriminatory of love, implying that the brute, the ugly, the stupid, etc., can be object of Affection. There need not be any apparent fitness between those whom it unites. It ignores the barriers of sex, age, class and education. It can exist between a clever young man from the university and an old nurse. It ignores even the barriers of species as is even evident between a dog and a man, a dog and a cat, and a horse and a hen.

Remarkably, Affection has some peculiar features. Unlike other loves, its beginning is hardly noticeable and its inception quite unknown. We can point to the day and hour we fell in erotic love or began a friendship, but not so with affection. To become aware of it, is to become aware that it has already been going on for sometimes. This point links affection intimately with the term, old (*vieux*). It is bred, fermented and matured with familiarity. Lewis gives this as a reason "why a dog barks at a stranger who never did it any harm but wags its tail for old acquaintances even if they never did it any good turn; similarly, a child will love a crusty old gardener, who has hardly ever taken any notice of him and shrinks from a visitor who is making every attempt to win his regard" (35). Affection has a homely face, gives itself no air and is modest. People are proud of being

involved and confess it readily. It usually needs absence and bereavement to elicit praise of those that only affection binds. Affection is normally taken for granted. To make a friend is not to be affectionate but as friendship grows, familiarity is also fermented and cemented, such that those things that were hitherto irrelevant to friendship become relevant and dear.

Affection can be insatiable and make insatiable demands for "if ever any germ of affection stirs in us, their demand for more and still more petrifies us" (Lewis, 1960) To prove our love, we must identify with the beloved, take side in their grievances, share their hatred, and share their joy as well. Affection says something like; "if he loves me, he would have stop greeting him." In affection, anything can be said and in any manner to each other regardless of the rules that govern public courtesy, without being hurt because it seeks even at its best neither to wound, humiliates, or dominates. Things done even at wrong moments are not condemned, are overlooked and even considered right; and any tone of voice is often appreciated.

Affection broadens the mind. Of all natural loves, it is the most catholic, the least financially involving, and the broadest. It can love the unattractive, does not expect too much, blinds the eyes to faults, revives easily after quarrel and opens the eyes to goodness, which would not have been seen or may not have been appreciated without it. It is characteristically ambivalent. It can be present amidst unhappiness. It is affection that creates tastes of appreciating and enduring the vicissitudes of life. "It systematically begins with mere notice, then endurance, to smile at, then to enjoy, and finally to appreciate" (Lewis, 1960) . Affection is expressed through kisses among the Europeans and a warm embrace among the Africans. Other gestures of expressions abounds. For instance, Professor Lorenz mentions that when Jackdaws are amorous their calls consists chiefly of infantile sounds reserved by adult Jackdaws for those occasions of King Solomon's ring (Lewis, 1960).

Lewis remarks that Affection is normally taken for granted but this is far from the truth. Much is indeed required to build affection. This explains why some children do not love their parents because they have nothing to excite their affectation. As a mammalian, man's instinct provides some degree of maternal love, but as a social being as well, familiar association provides a milieu for fermenting and grounding affection without any demand for extra-ordinary shining qualities. Affection can exist alone but can equally pervade and colours the other loves operations.

Affection too has its dark side, it is averse to change and can be extremely jealous. The jealousy imbedded in Affection can be understood because of its close connection and reliance on what is old and familiar. For instance, a mother or a sister and a brother who shared their lives, things and experiences will feel jealous towards any of them that develop serious and undue attachment or transformation to something else like music, science or religion. The jealousy is not of the brother or sister but of the thing that causes diversion often expressed by ridiculing and despising the object of distraction. If it is a book, it could be hidden or destroyed; if a radio, forcibly switched off.

Affection is the most instinctive hence, the most animalistic of all loves. Its jealousy is proportionately fierce. Once the subject of affection is pre-occupied with the other with whom it is in affection then every other person or every other thing is irrelevant and regarded as vanity. Typical examples abound in society today. For example, a Christian family whose member has become an atheist; or, an unbelieving family whose member suddenly becomes a Christian or a Moslem. The *metanoia* (sudden change of heart), is often accompanied with fanatical affectation on the part of the new convert; whereas, this swift shift in affectation is often met with stout resistance and resentment from members of the nuclear family who do not accept the "new way". Their reaction is often expressed thus; "someone has stolen our boy or girl". "No one has a right to do it". Thereafter, may follow the passionate victorian appeal: "you will break your mother's or father's heart." Describing the nature of affection Lewis submits thus:

Affectation is bitterly wounded when one member of the family fall from the family ethos into something worse-gambling, drinking, keeping an opera girl. It is equally possible to break the mother's heart by rising above the family ethos (Lewis, 1960).

Friendship

Friendship rendered as *philia* in Greek is classified among the virtues of *amicitia* of which Cicero wrote about. To the ancients, "friendship seemed the happiest and the most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue" (Lewis, 1960). Normally, it is the most neglected and never thought of as love. According to Lewis the common description of friendship is far from what it is. Few appreciate it because few experience it. It is sharply different from other loves. It is the least natural of the other loves, the least instinctive, organic, biological, gregarious and necessary. There is nothing throaty about it, nothing that quickens the pulse or turns one red or pale. The non-natural quality in friendship underscores why it was esteemed in the ancient and medieval times and sidelined in our contemporary era: The reason being that, the ancient were mostly aesthetic and world renouncing hence regarded emotions and affections as injurious to such a state. In fact, Affection and Eros were regarded as debased because of their connection to the nerves and brutes. No wonder then why Friendship was regarded as that luminous, tranquil, rational world of relationship that raises one to the level of gods or angels. This exalted regards of Friendship became slighted with the rise of Romanticism, which marks the return to nature and exaltation of sentiments.

Friendship is essentially between individuals. Immediately two people are friends, they are in some degree drawn apart together from the crowd. It withdraws from collective togetherness mostly in two's or three's. So some form of democratic sentiment are naturally hostile to it because it is selective and an affair of a few. Indeed, to say, "this is my friend" is to exclude others. On the other hand, Lewis denies the wrong notion which regards Friendship as being homosexual, explicitly or unconsciously oriented. For him, this position is of those who cannot conceive

friendship as a substantive love but only as a disguise or elaboration of Eros and, they betray the fact that they have never had a friend. Friendship unlike Eros and Affection is not a sine qua non for the survival of man. On this note Lewis writes: Without Eros, none of us would have been begotten. Without Affection, none of us would have been reared, but we can live and breed without friendship. The species biologically considered has no need of it. The community may even dislike or distrust it (Lewis, 1960).

The fundamental differences between erotic love and friendship is that while the former talks to one another about their love, the latter hardly ever do so; while the erotic lovers are normally face to face absorbed in each other; friends are side by side, absorbed in some common interest. Eros is necessarily between two but friendship is not so restricted. Two friends are delighted to be joined by the third, the third by the fourth. If the newcomer is qualified to become a real friend, they can say: "here is one who will augment our loves. For in this love, to divide is not to take away" (Lewis, 1960).

This automatically falsifies the homosexual theory of friendship. Friendship is not jealous of any further acquaintances. Nothing so enriches a friendship as the discovery that the beloved can deeply, truly and spontaneously enter into friendship with friends you already had. No doubt companionship is the matrix of friendship. Some people refer to companionship when they designate someone as their friend. Friendship arises from companionship when two people realized that they have a common interest or taste which others do not share and which individually they thought it to be their unique treasure. The typical expression of opening up friendship would be something like, "what, you too? I thought I was the only one" (Lewis, 1960). No friendship arises without this unity of vision or truth. Do you love me, according to Emerson means, "do you see the same truth or do you care about the same truth" (Lewis, 1960). In modern times, the truth could be shared common religion, common studies, a common profession, even a common recreational facility. All who share it will be our companions but few that share something more, less widely shared and less easily defined will be our friends. However, when the two people who thus discover that they are on the same secret road are of different sexes, the friendship which arises between them can easily pass into erotic love. The facilitation depends on whether both are physically repulsive to each other.

Friendship is of practical value to the community; even civilized religion began as a small group of friends. Mathematics for instance, began when a few Greek friends, called the Pythagoreans got together to talk about numbers, lines and angles. What is now known as the Royal Society was originally a few gentlemen meeting in their spare time to discuss things they had a fancy for (Lewis, 1960). Despite these benefits, friendship can be both beneficial and possible danger to the community. Beneficially, it is extremely useful for the survival of an individual which ultimately will culminate in the survival of the community. But the too closeness of those in friendship withdraws and isolate them from the general community thus killing the community spirit.

Friendship can become a good ally when alliance becomes necessary. It lends and gives where one is in need, nurses in sickness, defends against enemies, helps widows and orphans. These gestures are not essential to friendship since such gestures are both relevant and irrelevant to its existence. Gestures could be relevant because it portrays marks of true friendship; it can also be irrelevant because the role of a benefactor is always accidental to friendship. Friendship to Lewis' mind is totally free of affection. Gratitude may not enrich it since, the mark of friendship is not that help is rendered when need arises but that giving gratitude does not make any difference to it. In Friendship, appreciative-love is paramount. Each member of the circle feels in his secret heart, humbled before all the rest. Sometimes, he wonders what he is doing there among his betters. He is lucky beyond desert to be in such company especially when the whole group is together, each bringing out all that is best, wisest, and funniest in all the other.

Remarkably, friendship is mostly between men and men or between women and women. Friendship of the opposite sex based on utility or interest is somewhat difficult but not impossible because of diverse orientation. Characteristically, Friendship is not inquisitive; in a circle of friendship, each man is simply what he is: It is re-assuring and unassuming: Authorities sometimes view it as a kind of secession or even rebellion especially if it is a group of deviants and radicals: Friendship is truly speaking ambivalent in nature- it can be a school of vice or a school of virtue; but, friendship has a sense of corporate superiority.

Eros

This type of Love is described by Plato. (2003) as Venus who is referred to as a god. Eros is that state often referred to as, "being in love or that state which lovers are." It is a passionate love, with sexual desire and longing. The Modern Greek word erotas means "intimate love"; however, Eros does not have to be sexual in nature. Eros can be interpreted as a love for someone more than the philia like love of friendship. It can also apply to dating relationships as well as marriage. Eros described as "incongruous symbiosis" is linked with bodily appetite which like any other appetite, tactlessly reveals its connections with such mundane factors as weather, health, diet, circulation and digestion. This may explain why Plato and Aristotle regard Eros as the lowest type of love that is linked to the act of immortalization through pro-creation. However, Plato believes that though Eros is intimacy felt for a person, it can with contemplation become an appreciation of beauty itself.

In Eros, the bodies are naked and the lovers stand face to face. Lewis philosophically sees an element of masquerading in that action which is often regarded as the most real, the most unmasked and a genuine action man ever does. He considers the act of nudity as not being truly naked; rather, it emphasizes the common individuality and not of an individual person, which in a way, makes men more of themselves. Clothing makes man more individualistic, while in nudity the lovers cease to be John or Mary, rather the universal He and She are emphasized. Nakedness is put on as a ceremonial robe. Lewis rhetorically sees Eros in positive light in that in Eros "we are not merely ourselves but also representatives of humanity; it is not an impoverishment but an

enrichment to be aware that a force older and less personal than us is working through us"(95). Eros is naturally linked with sensory pleasure and sex. However, Eros includes other things besides sexual activity. Indeed, Pleasure seems to be the basis of all erotic desire. Therefore, describing a lustful man, prowling the street that he wants a woman is far from the truth. Strictly speaking, a woman is what he does not want. He rather seeks pleasure for which a woman is the necessary piece of apparatus. How much he cares for the woman may be gauged by his attitude five minutes after ejaculation. It is this linkage of Eros to carnality that led to the Spiritualists' regard of Eros as dangerous. The older moral theologians too subscribes to the fact that the chief safeguard against the concupiscence of marriage is that of the soul destroying surrender to the senses. However, Lewis notes that St. Paul in the letter to the Corinthians saw marriage and not erotic love as a hindrance to the uninterrupted waiting for the Lord (1Cor.7:5). It is the very mark of Eros that when we are in it we have rather share unhappiness with the beloved than be happy in other hands. Eros never hesitates to say. "Better this than parting. Better to be miserable with her than happy without her. Let our hearts break provided they break together." If the voice does not say this, it is not the voice of Eros (Lewis, 1960).

Eros has both its grandeur and terror. Glamorized in the grandeur is couched the terrific aspect of Eros, The glamour is exhibited in playfulness and countless jokes. Even when the circumstances of the two lovers are so tragic that no bystander could keep back his tears, they themselves, in want, in hospital wards, in jail are sometimes surprised by a merriment which strikes the onlooker but not them as unbearable and pathetic. It is within the grandeur of Eros that the seed of danger is concealed. Eros then at its splendour is bracingly sincere, ready for every sacrifice except renunciation.

Eros is not necessarily permanent. It is notoriously the most mortal of all loves. The world is pervaded with complaints of its fickleness. What baffles is the combination of this fickleness with the frustration of its transient nature. To be in love is to intend and to promise lifelong fidelity. However, this is far from being the case in erotic love. It is transient therefore driven by sentiment to promise what Eros cannot perform. People in Eros cannot be moved by kindness and opposition makes them feel like martyrs. Of all loves, it is at its height the most god-like therefore more prone to demand man's worship of it. It often tends to turn being in love into a kind of religion.

Charity

Charity is rendered as Agape in Greek and Charitas in Latin referring to the love of God. The Scripture in I Jn. 4:10 describes God as Love, meaning that the two realities, God and love are synonymous and identical. Lewis talks of love as a divine energy, a primal love which is a gift-Love since God is plenteous, therefore desires to be given nothing. Some theologians go further to explain charity as that divine spirit that binds the divine God-head. It therefore means that charity is specifically God's. That is why Lewis distinguishes charity from the rest previously analyzed. Affection, Friendship and Eros are called natural love while Charity is referred to as supernatural

love. However, they are not rivals or mutually exclusive. Augustine. (1960) in *The Confessions* believes that Charity should be the only Love that should prevail because of its unfailing nature. Augustine was forced by circumstance of the death of his beloved friend Nebridius, which plunged him into desolation to denounce the other loves as heart breaking because of their transient nature. He concluded that since all human beings pass away, one should not let his happiness depends on such a mirage. If love then is to be a blessing and not misery, it must be for something substantial and permanent, a beloved who will not pass away.

Against Augustine's position, Lewis argues that man cannot love God if he does not love his brother as reflected in epistle of St. John (1 Jn.1:3). Augustine's statement, he laments, will turn out to be rather an escapist's position. Lewis rhetorically asks: Does God provide the assurance? If so, Christ would not have cried: "why have thou forsaken me?" There is no safe investment in love. Love anything Lewis concludes and your heart will certainly be possibly broken. To remain intact then one must avoid entanglement. Give your heart to no one and to nothing. But no man can actually exist without the other. The desire for the other is an existential necessity which an "existential vacuum" naturally creates in man. Herein lays the paradox of human existence. However if Charity is essentially God's love and supernatural, it means then that man has nothing to do with it. How does man participate in such a love? For Lewis, "God communicates to man a share of His own gift-Love. This is different from the gift-Love God builds into nature. While the latter is pre-occupied with the gift they themselves can bestow or that fits into their pre-conceived picture of the life they want to lead, Divine gift-Love on the contrary is love Himself working in a man, wholly disinterested and desires what is simply best for the beloved. It enables man to love what is not naturally lovable like a leper, criminals, enemies, maroons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering. Finally, by a high paradox God enables man to have a gift-love towards God. Ironically, man's gift-Love with regard to God is just a reverse, giving back to God that which is God's; just as a song is the singer's. Another way of giving to God is by giving to our neighbour, a stranger or anybody in need.

Not any kind of love can pass for Charity since it involves loving something in us that cannot be loved. A typical illustration as used by Lewis is that of receiving continuously from others a love that does not depend on our own attraction or merit. For example, supposing someone you love is struck down shortly after marriage by an incurable disease which may not kill him for many years; but renders him useless, impotent, hideous, disgusting, yet full of unavoidable demands and stricken by gusts of uncontrollable temper, yet our care is inexhaustible. The man who can take this sweetly without resentment, who can abstain even from those tiresome self-deprecations is doing something which need-Love in its merely natural condition cannot attain. No doubt such wife will be doing something that surpasses the reach of natural gift-Love. In such a case, to receive is harder and perhaps more blessed than to give. But what the extreme example illustrates is of universal implications. Both the giver and the receiver are receiving charity. "Thus God admits into the human heart, transforms not only gift-love but need-love; not only our need-Love of Him but our

need-love of one another. In such a case, the Divine Love does not substitute itself for the natural love as if we have to throw away our silver and make room for gold. The natural loves are summoned to become modes of charity while others remain the natural love they are [Lewis \(1960\)](#).

Love and Sex

The natural co-relation of sex to love is taken for granted to such an extent that both are often reduced to each other. In normal parlance, to say "one is enjoying or having love is taken to mean that one is having sex." To be someone's lover is to be one's bed partner. No doubt our discussion so far has shown that there can be sex without Love and vice versa. Both are distinct yet related realities that is why Victor Frankl remarks that "sex can serve the purpose of social cohesion hence devoid of love" (105). While love as Frankl maintains is a human phenomenon by its very nature, sex becomes human as a result of developmental process called "progressive masturbation." Sex for him becomes love only at the instant of involvement of reciprocal affection. However, human sex is more than mere sex but something like meta-sex since, it is the physical expression of Love, and it is only to the extent that sex carries out this function that it is really a rewarding experience. This must have informed Maslow's submission that "people who cannot love do not get the same kind of thrill out of sex as people who love" ([Frankl, 1978](#)).

Lewis maintains that what is looked for in sex is not the object for its own sake but for the function it performs. Here is evident of the terroristic nature of Erotic love. Love involves affectation and intelligence more than the mere instinctual satisfaction of sex. For Frankl, using sex as a more satisfactory apparatus holds only in an erotic individual who is only interested in getting rid of the sperm, be it by masturbation or using the partner as just another means to an end. A normal person sees the partner as a subject, another human being; sees him in his humanness; and, if he loves him, sees in the partner another person, which means that he sees in him his uniqueness. This uniqueness constitutes the personhood of a human being ([Frankl, 1978](#)). This is not to play down on sex, which is naturally good. Used responsibly, sex essentially ferments, nurtures and preserves love. Some Spiritualists and Moralists influenced by Platonic-Christian tradition that links sex to instinctive animalistic drives regard sex derogatively leading to what Rolls May calls "the Demonization of the flesh" ([Dillon, 1980](#)). This is still prevalent in many forms today; apparently evident in Freudian suppression of the libido. Dillon on the contrary argues that "if sexual energy is accumulated and not sufficiently drawn off in its sublimated forms, it can finally threaten to engulf the total personality because there is a moral vacuum created which degrades personality resulting in erotic madness which surrounds us today" ([Dillon, 1980](#)).

Frankl sees "the inflation of sex" - expressed in adverts and other forms as arisen from this existential vacuum created by inter-alia: - the demoralization of morals and values, and the devaluation and dehumanization of sex. Thus, is observed a trend of sexual life that is not integrated into one's personal life, but rather lived out for the sake of pleasure. Such depersonalization of sex is a symptom of existential frustration of "man's search for meaning." In

Frankl's words: When the pursuit originates in a frustrated search for meaning, it is aimed at intoxication and stupefaction. In the final analysis, it is self-defeating, for happiness can arise only as a result of living out one's transcendence, one's dedication to a cause to be served or a person to be loved (Frankl, 1978).

Sex as a process of unification of the lovers physically helps to erase the conflict that would have ensued in the inter-personal dominance and sublimations tacit in every love relationship thus, releasing the tensions in love as a project of possessing another's freedom. Since sex embedded in love is rewarding and satisfactory, lack of it leads to seeking compensation which in turn demands increased and intensified stimulations as is provided by pornography and drugs. Pornography then is retrogressive according to Frankl. They are symptoms of retardation in one's sexual masturbation. However, Frankl has a dual regard for pills. On one hand, it encourages unbridled promiscuity, devoid of love. On the other hand, pills emancipate man from the tyranny of pro-creation and leave it only as a mere expression of love hence, helps sex to actualize its real potentials as an object of expression of love. This position of Frankl should not however be construed as a glorification of drug addiction since it will lead to fatal consequences of unbridled sex and incontinence.

Love and Beauty

Beauty as that, which attracts, that which is considered valuable and that which is preferred, has an intrinsic relationship to love. Love as earlier described has to do with choice of who is preferred, which of course is not absolute. The choice I make is determined by interplay of factors, beauty being one of them. That is why love is sometimes seen as an attempt to form a friendship inspired by beauty. Dillon tries a descriptive analysis of the dynamic of love as it pertains to choice thus: I choose you because your affirmation of me provides the ontological security I seek. Who you are, the value you have for me is crucial. If I do not perceive you as valuable, your affirmation of me loses value and my needs are not met (356).

Since love then depends on this relative choice of what is valuable, the sentiment evokes relates love to beauty. I choose you because you are beautiful, you are one in whom the values I cherish co-incise. This is because I perceive you as beautiful, that your choice of me provides the ontological affirmation I want. Often people's choices depend on their perception of value at the time of choice. The availability of alternatives or better still better alternatives could also influence one's choice. Appreciation of value like beauty could also depend on one's value system, which to a large extent is informed by level of maturity, educational standing, universe of experience, and perception of life generally. It therefore means that it is not only love that influences choices. Relativity in value rating also explains why certain choices are made even against all popular dissatisfaction and resentment. But if love is dependent on relative value, what behoves such a love if the value depreciates. If the value is no longer appreciable, does the love wean as well? It therefore means that love should not be based on transient values like facial beauty but on internal

beauty which is permanent; though common to hear people re-echo the sophistic position that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” which automatically makes beauty relative. But such relativity was repudiated earlier by Parmenides against the fluxation of reality of Heraclitus, and latter by Socrates and Plato who regarded such a position as unreasonable. Plato indeed rejected physical attraction as a necessary part of love, hence the use of the word platonic to mean “without physical attraction”. There is a story of a woman who chooses her spouse because of the dexterity he manipulates the piano at concerts. Unfortunately the man got involved in an accident that led to the amputation of his fingers which incapacitated him from playing the piano any longer. The wife sued for divorce thereafter, adducing his amputated fingers as a reason. What actually existed as a feeling between the duo is difficult to explain. Does it mean there was no love?

Among the Ibibios and the Africans in general, love goes beyond physical attraction. Beauty for them is not of facial appearance but the internal disposition towards the good. This, the Ibibio refer to as *edu*, literally translated as “character”. To be beautiful then involves a glowing and appreciable character that builds the society in its enduring values. It is customary to hear a popular acclamation among the Ibibios, nay all Africans as, *Eduekpetiente idem*, meaning “How I wish his or her character is as beautiful as the bodily appearance.” Authentic Love relates to beauty in this regard among the Africans. This also distinguishes the Western and African idea as to what constitutes love.

Love and Truth

The intertwining nature of Love and Being on the one hand, and knowledge and reality on the other, essentially underscores the intrinsic relationship between Love and Truth. Knowledge in its most popular acclaimed, according to C. Bittle, is justified true belief. This implies that what is claimed to be known must first of all exist, must be true, and must not have anything on the contrary. In this case, knowledge is intrinsically related to being (Hamlyn, 1977). Love on the other hand, entails believing in somebody, surrendering of self and acceptance of the other self, transcending one-self in order to accept another self without whom one is yet to be fulfilled.

The eliciting questions are: Can someone love what he or she does not know? Can love exist in ignorance? Can one love what is not true? What then would be the outcome of such striving if at the end, the other person is not what one thinks of him. This will surely and inevitably lead to infinite postponement of relationships. How would life be then without commitment and involvement called love? This may explain why so many relationships break up when the problems of love and truth stare them on the face. Epistemologically, man perceives or comes in contact at first instance with appearance, which some Philosophers especially of the rationalistic orientation, like René Descartes rejects and repudiates as unreliable. Psychologically, every man is believed to wear a mask called, personality. Behind this mask are recesses of suppressed emotions and drives that are expressed as behaviour. This issue of appearance as a reliable criterion for authentic knowledge has sparked off the whole problem of appearance and reality in metaphysical circle. The

gamut of the issues at stake could be gleaned from the consideration that love cannot be based on falsehood but on that which the participants can vouch for as worthy of eliciting commitment. But if what informs the involvement in love is based on what is presented and decoded, then the reasonableness of such a commitment is doubtful, since it can be based on make-belief which are sometimes proven to be the case. However the most bothering task is how to decipher or delineate truth from falsehood or to get to the truth upon which love should be based? How is Man to get to the real man who should be the object of love? If love is an essential quality of being, then to love is to love the truth. A person's relationship with being is based on truth and knowledge. As a constitutive element of the appetitive faculty, love needs to be informed by knowledge from the intellectual faculty to be able to choose properly. While Knowledge seeks the truth, love seeks the good. Knowledge without love cannot act and love without knowledge cannot know. In man, the action of both the intellectual and the appetitive faculties are unitary and inseparable

How then does one explain glaring cases of people loving what others abhor as bad and evil? While this appears apparently paradoxical and contradictory, the simple explanation is that the intellectual faculty requires some facility like the Intellect to operate; while choice is made through the Will. No doubt everyone is equally endowed with these faculties of *voluntatis* (choosing) and *intellectus*(knowledge), these facilities for operational exigency can be impaired or improved; improved by being informed through education, experience, maturity, exposure, etc. Most often, the person concern chooses the object of love he considers as good and true because of his/her perception of what is good and true at the time of choosing. Though goodness and truth are not relative but people's perception may differ owing to these factors mentioned above. These is what [Bacon \(1950\)](#) metaphorically referred to as distempers of knowledge or idols
Lewis discussing this issue of Love and knowledge has this to say.

In the case of mutual Love, there is, indeed, a demand for approval but the value of the approval is conditioned upon its validity. For your love to provide the ontological affirmation I need, I must perceive in you someone who sees me as I am. If you do not know me, then your love does not affirm me. Nor does your love have value for me if I know that your values are mistaken, that is, if you affirm me for reasons I regard as spurious. This is the classical erotic anxiety of the rich and the good looking. They are concerned that they are loved on the superficial values and for the sake of attributes that are not essential ([Lewis, 1960](#)).

In love, pretence is dangerous while hypocrisy is abhorrent. Love therefore demands and requires truthfulness for its fermentation, subsistence, maintenance and sustenance.

Love and Loneliness

By way of a recapitulation, love has been seen as "a creative standing in the presence of another whose being we build, nurture, and encourage, let be.... To stand implies placing the self into

possession and holding oneself therein. Into this sphere enters the other with whom I experience togetherness. We can say, "yes" because we understand each other, that is, we love" (Barbara, 1980).

Man according to the Existentialist is both a being-in-the-world and a being-with-others, meaning that he is a being that is other-related fundamentally. Man then cannot exist without relating with and to other beings and things in the world. This relatedness constitutes his existence. This position Aristotle corroborates by referring to man as a social animal, who is fundamentally so sociable that to live alone makes one either a god or a beast. What then constitutes loneliness in a world populated with beings? How can man be in the world then lives in isolation, devoid of love? It seems to be a contradiction of the very essence of man. The Africans, for instance, completely rejects the idea of living in isolation. That is why ostracization is regarded as a great punishment for hideous crimes like killing and murder. Indeed, celibacy is regarded a *contra-natura*, since the man is incomplete until joined to the women in marriage. Living in isolation is also considered anti-social and devilish since communality is not only terrestrial but involves the spiritual realities as well, that is, ontological. This is what Momoh (2000) refers to as "spiritual communalism." In fact the African principles of Complementarity of opposites and Harmonious monism are against the fact of loneliness as every being is constantly in search of the other to complete himself. This logic of existential necessity is explained by C. (Etim, 2005) thus:

The world including (x) has a missing link, which is something other than the thing (x).
The thing (x) then persistently yearns for and struggles to capture this missing link. This is achieved at the point and time of complementation at which point (x) realizes itself

By way of characterization, some psychologists in explaining the nature of man categorized man into melancholic, phlegmatic, choleric and sanguine personality wise. The classification one belongs to somewhat influences his / her relationship to others. For instance, the melancholic may not be as sociable and accessible like the sanguine. However, no one can be totally deprived of some love no matter how insignificant, whether in a form of friendship, affection or erotic love.

What does it mean to say "one is lonely then"? Barbara explains that "Loneliness is a pain of yearning for that which ought to be but is not, that is, Love (Dillon, 1980). Two deductions could be made from this position:

- (a) A lonely person is one who has not yet learnt to surrender oneself but longs for another person
- (b) A lonely person is also one who having surrendered himself to himself in vain searches for a brother or sister to share his sphere, to understand.

To avoid loneliness one needs to open up, which involves surrendering of oneself to another. In a world where fellowship is missing, "the strong" remains alone. To be loved then one needs to be lovable, since as expressed by Lewis "those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are

going nowhere can have no fellow travellers” (Lewis, 1960). Love is embedded in sharing, which is grounded in needs that establish a community of interest. The ground of this need resides in what Merleau-Ponty calls "transfer of corporal schema," which is “a pre-requisite identification of and with someone as a fellow human being. It is the foundation of all pathos or sharing and explains how your needs become mine” (Ponty, 1964).

CONCLUSION

No doubt, the foregone discussion raises some fundamental questions. If love is fundamentally a human phenomenon, can love be attributed to animals and other inanimate existents? Any answer proffered has a tendency of falling into the fallacy of *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, since no one can ascertain whether such a phenomenon exists among animals. C. Lewis, for instance, gives room for the existence of Affective love between cats and dogs, cows and hens. It implies then that certain love exists among animals. Some will be inclined to hastily attribute that to instinct. But what kind of instinct could explain affection between a cow and a hen one may ask? Both, though animals are not of the same kind. However, going by the submissions of some Anthropologist and Psychologists like Victor Frankl and Existentialists like Sartre, it is hard to attribute love to animals. Love for Frankl involves affectation and intelligence. Sartre (Sartre, 1956) on his part conceives love as embedded in freedom to choose. Do animals choose? Are animals free? Lewis (1960) too notes that Love involves some confession of being in it? Can this be done by animals? Unfortunately, Lewis has not circumvented or particularized the confession. It is then possible that these animals have a particular and unique way of confessing their loves. For instance, there is a characteristic way a cock dances before a hen. What this means is quite unknown to man. It is possible that it is confessing or professing its love for the hen.

Further, the existentialists link love to the quality of auto-transcendence of man. Since love is the opening up of oneself to another, man has to transcend its facticity in response to a thrilling and attractive force of the other, which yearns for its attention and possession. Auto-transcendence is specifically a human attribute. It therefore seems far from reality to talk of love among animals. Another problem worthy of consideration is whether man can love things like money, cars, clothes, radio etc. It seems such usage is a misnomer. According to Martin (1965), man's relationship is two dimensional: - “I -Thou” and “I – It”. “I-Thou” is specifically a man to man affair. What Heidegger calls “being-with-others;” while, “I – It,” is “man-thing” relationship. Love then winds around “I – thou” and not ‘I - It’. In effect, there is nothing like love between a man and a non-sentient being but only between a man and another man. This explains why a subjugating and exploitative usage of another as an “it” for personal gratification is regarded as unloved. The affection that ensues between a man and his car is more of likeness than of love. That is why it is often regarded as reasonable to mortgage one's life for a fellow human being but conceived as great foolhardiness to sacrifice same for a thing or for an animal. Whatever affection then ferments between a man and a thing or animal can only pass for Like and not Love. Love then is nothing

else but a human phenomenon of accepting another for what he or she is. It is more of a meta-phenomenal reality that is better experienced than described. Love of self, which is often referred to as egoism is apparently contrary to the very essence of love which must necessarily involve “the–other”. This is implied in this extract from Hegel.

Love is a distinguishing of the two, who nevertheless are absolutely not distinguished for each other. The consciousness or feeling of the identity of the two - to be outside of myself and in the other • this is love. I have my self-consciousness not in myself but in the other. I am satisfied and have peace with myself only in this other • and I AM only because I have peace with myself; if I did not have it then I would be a contradiction that falls to pieces. This other, because it likewise exists outside itself, has its self-consciousness only in me; and both the other and I are only this consciousness of being-outside-ourselves and if our identity; we are only this intuition, feeling, and knowledge of our unity. This is love, and without knowing that love is both a distinguishing and the sublation of this distinction, one speaks emptily of it (Online, 2003).

Commenting on this submission [Leihart \(2012\)](#) writes:

Among the many fascinating things here is the implication that love is the prerequisite for a unified identity. Hegel says that to be a unified self, one must be at peace; but this peace comes only through the "distinguishing and sublation of distinction" that is love for another person; MY peace, my unity as a being, depends on love, the other's love for me and my love for another. This is suggestive, though Hegel doesn't exactly explain WHY this peace comes only "in the other." Perhaps it has something to do with his insight that part of my identity is my difference from the other; to say I am Peter is, at least, to say I am not Paul or George. This means that my identity and unified self-conception includes a moment of difference. But how that this difference not turn into endless "deference"? Through mutual (almost perichoretic) love.

Let me end this treatise on love with a fascinating poem from Michael Quoist titled, Love is not a Ready-Made Garment:

Love is not a ready a ready-made garment,
but a piece of material to be cut and tailored.
It is not an apartment ready for occupation,
but a house to be designed, built, furnished and repaired.
It is not a conquered peak,
but a daunting ascent with many obstacles and falls
made in the icy cold or the fierce heat.
It is not a safe anchorage in a harbour of happiness,
but a voyage on the open sea in storm and tempest.
It is not a triumphant ‘yes’, an affirmation of success,
a magnificent final chord followed by clapping and cheers,
but ‘yes’ repeated again and again throughout life

accompanied by 'no' repeated as many times, but overcome.
It is not the sudden appearance of a new life,
perfect from the moment of its birth
but the flowing of a river from its source,
sometimes in flood and sometimes only as a trickle of water,
but always on its way to the infinite sea (Quoist, 1987) (The breath of Love:1987)

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