

Providence College

DigitalCommons@Providence

Theology Student Scholarship

Theology

4-27-2023

The Dignity of Desire: Searching for the Place of Eros in Christian Theology

Ana Botelho
Providence College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/theology_students

Botelho, Ana, "The Dignity of Desire: Searching for the Place of Eros in Christian Theology" (2023).
Theology Student Scholarship. 6.
https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/theology_students/6

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theology at DigitalCommons@Providence. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theology Student Scholarship by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Providence. For more information, please contact dps@providence.edu.



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

The Dignity of Desire: Searching for Eros's Place in Christian Theology

ANA BOTELHO

ADVISOR: MICHAEL WAHL



Background

I. What prompted my interest?

II. Summer Undergraduate Research Grant

III. Research Questions

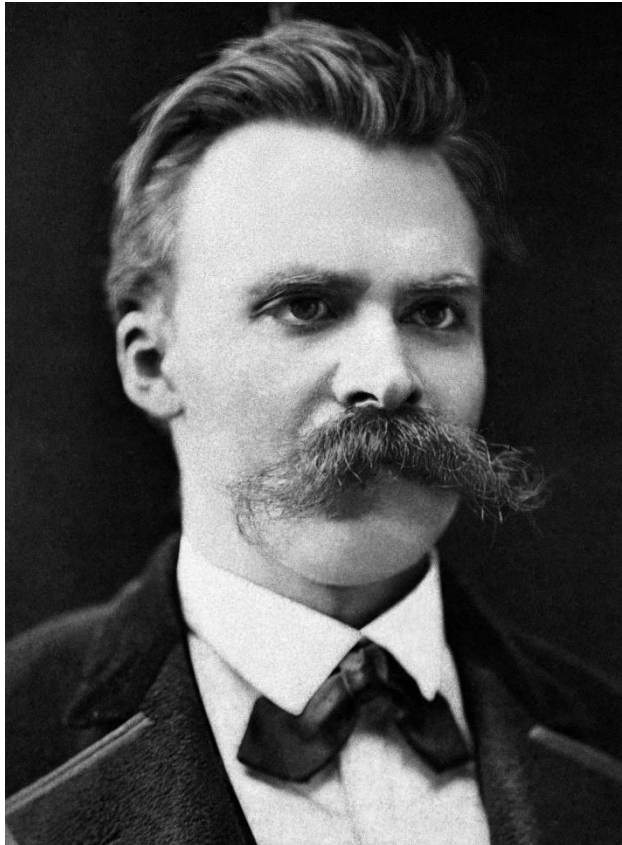
- What is eros?
- Is eros incompatible with Christian theology?

IV. Research Objectives

- Examine eros to answer Nietzsche's critique of Christianity
- Search for a true Christian understanding of eros that is relevant in the present day



Nietzsche



Nietzsche's Critique:

"Christianity gave Eros poison to drink; he did not die of it, certainly, but degenerated to Vice." *



Responses to Nietzsche and Attempts to Rehabilitate Eros

ANDERS NYGREN

Those who would subordinate or dismiss eros as a legitimate form of Christian love in favor of agape



MODERN SEXUAL THEO-ETHICISTS

Those who argue for the elevation and liberation of eros from its perceived lower position in Christian theology due to the importance and centrality of human sexuality

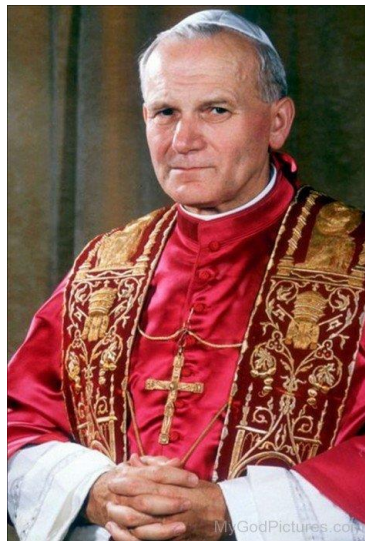




The "Middle" Ground of Christianity

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*Man and Woman He
Created Them: A Theology
of the Body*



POPE BENEDICT XVI

Encyclical Letter
Deus Caritas Est



POPE FRANCIS

Post Synodal Apostolic
Exhortation
Amoris Laetitia



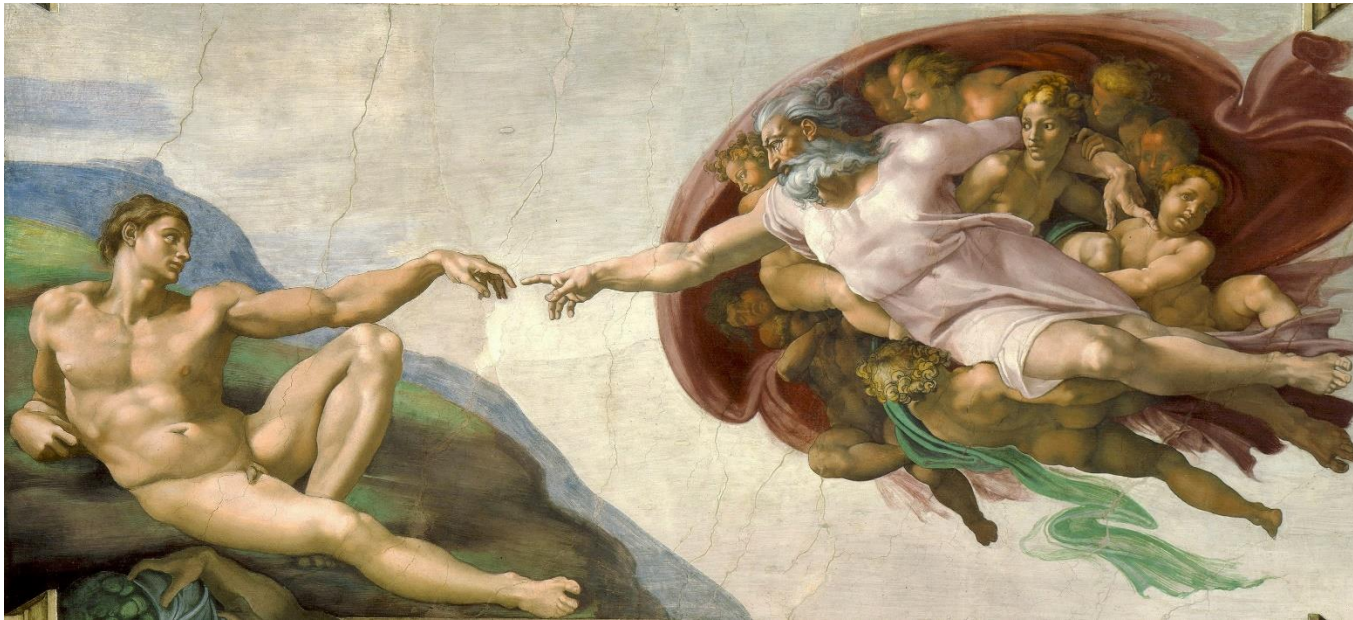


Searching for a *Katholokos* Meaning of Eros from the Three Positions

- Eros is an essential part of human nature; it is a person's most basic desire to be united with that which will ultimately fulfill one's desire
- This eros must be rightly ordered because "disciplined and purified [eros does not provide] just fleeting pleasure, but a certain foretaste of the pinnacle of our existence, of that beatitude for which our whole being yearns" *
- A recovered concept of eros must always signify its ultimate transcendent end, while also remaining expressible in the world through human means because eros is a natural human desire



Reimagining Eros in the Present Day



Divine Eros and the human participation in divine eros

The concept of eros as ontology: Human beings are transformed by their desires engaging in a cycle of "being" and "becoming"



Acknowledgments

I would like to thank:

The Centered for Engaged Learning and The Summer Undergraduate Research Committee

Dr. Michael Wahl who acted as my advisor on this project

The theology and philosophy departments for their wisdom and continued support

My family for fostering my curiosity and always helping me to seek the truth

My best friend for inspiring me to pursue studying what I love