

Agape love in contrast to erotic love

[Life](#), [Love](#)



In an attempt to define love, Moline (2007) opines that love comes in several different forms, expressing itself, differently, in almost every facets of human life. Moseley (2006) adds that the philosophical understanding of love transcends and cut across several sub disciplines, and that arguments about the meaning or nature of love connect to one or all of the central theories of philosophy.

Because of the central nature of love to human nature, it is often portrayed, differently and severally, in songs, movies and books. Further, Moseley (2006) explains that the English word 'love' is derived from Germanic forms of the Sanskrit "Lubh", which means desire. However, the English concept of love is very broad, imprecise and difficult to define or explain.

Despite the difficulty in defining 'love', as it is envisioned in English, it is obvious that love presents or is expressed in several forms, thus, the various expressions of, or nature of love can be defined, examined differently and/or contrasted (Moseley 2006; Tan, 1996). Thus, this brief paper will define and contrast Agape love with Erotic Love.

The three major types or nature of love can be explained with references to their Greek origins Eros, philia and Agape. Eros is derived from the Greek word 'erasthai'. This type or nature of love constitutes an intense, passionate longing for something. This type of love is often physical, related to beauty or any other form of attraction observed in another person or object.

However, in modern concept, Eros is generally referred to as sexual desire, hence the notion of erotic love from the Greek word 'erotikos'. Agape, on the other hand, refers to the supernatural, paternal love that God, the creator,

have for His creatures. Unlike erotic love, Agape love is sublime, perfect and unending.

It is the love of God for his creatures, and the love man is expected to share with God his Creator. Deuteronomy 6: 5 aptly conveys this message " You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might". God expects man to not only reciprocate His love, but also to extend this perfect, selfless love to include a brotherly love for everyone, as stated in Leviticus 19: 18: " love thy neighbor as thyself".

In meaning, nature and expression, Agape love differs significantly from worldly erotic feelings between same or different sex. The first point of divergence between agape and erotic love can be inferred from the spiritual, emotional and physical nature of love. Erotic love is primarily a physical love.

It is nothing but a physical response to what one sees, observes or likes in another, and in most cases, is a result of physical attraction. Of course, erotic love, involves an expression of deep feelings and emotions to whatever or whoever one is physically attracted to. Such emotional expressions of love could involve caring for, listening to, companionship and so on. But once the object of attraction is gone, with it goes the physical and emotional attachment.

In contrast, agape love is mainly spiritual and exists primarily in the spiritual realm. Agape love requires no physical attraction and exists irrespective of sex or gender. The primarily example of agape love, is God's love for us. As described by Nelmes (2007), agape love is an unconditional love that is always giving and impossible to take or be a taker.

Agape love devotes total commitment to seek the highest and best in the loved object, irrespective of how the loved response to this love. Agape love is completely selfless, and unlike erotic love, does not change with physical attributes. Also, another major difference between erotic and agape love is that erotic love depends largely on reciprocity to survive. In erotic love, the object of one's love must return the love in a give-and-take- relationship.

The love gradually and eventually fades away, if the loved one does not return the love. However, with agape love, the loving is everlasting and does not diminish or fade away, irrespective of whether the love is returned or not. Nelmes (2007) posits that agape love is the original and only true love, that other forms of love, such as erotic love, are human adulterated forms of this pure love.